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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The scope of the evaluation

The evaluation of the CueTen project for persistent juvenile offenders began in May 1996; the project had been established for about eight months, and had been actively working with young people since January 1996. Data for the evaluation were collected from various sources: interviews with the young people attending CueTen; observation of the work carried out there, both formal groupwork and informal interactions; attendance at staff meetings, reviews of individual young people's progress, and meetings of the project's advisory group; interviews with parents, carers, social work staff, guidance and support teachers, college staff and other training providers; interviews with police officers, Reporters, careers advisers and local employers; and the project's written records. In addition, access was obtained to SCRO data on the young people who attended CueTen and a contemporary group of persistent juvenile offenders in Fife, who for various reasons did not attend the project, and were used as a comparison group; and the Fife police provided access to their record of charges against these young people in the twelve months before they started at CueTen, or were included in the comparison group.

Background

The CueTen project was established as a result of a Scottish Office initiative to promote the development of community-based resources for persistent juvenile offenders. Having been unsuccessful in a joint bid for funding with another organisation, CueTen's parent agency, Apex Scotland, was invited to submit a tender on its own for a project which would allow its innovative ideas on programmes for young offenders to be tested in practice. Apex Scotland, founded in 1987, already had experience of working with 16-18 year-olds, as well as of working with adult offenders. Its approach is based on the belief that employment is often the best way of diverting people from criminal careers, and its projects aim to improve offenders' chances of participation in the labour market by enhancing relevant skills and promoting attitudes favourable to employment. There is both theoretical and empirical support for this belief: if people who have been offenders can acquire enough 'social capital' through legitimate activities they may become reluctant to put this in jeopardy through further offending; and meta-analysis of evaluative research suggests that employment-based programmes for juvenile offenders show good results compared with other approaches. The programme developed for CueTen was essentially that used by Apex in its work with older age groups: a 26-week programme, the first half of which was to consist of a social skills curriculum aimed at improving employability and attitudes to training and education, while the second half would provide increasing opportunities for the independent exercise of the skills acquired, in workplaces or in further education. The innovative nature of this proposal constituted a major part of its appeal to The Scottish Office.

Apex's original proposal was for a project working on two separate sites with a total of 48 young people a year. The Scottish Office, however, envisaged a project operating from a single site, and Apex revised its proposal accordingly, in consultation

with Scottish Office staff. The proposal that was eventually accepted by The Scottish Office, which agreed in July 1995 to fund it for three years, was for a project based in Glenrothes, but serving the whole of Fife, which would work with 32 14-16 year-olds a year. Fife was an attractive location for Apex because it already had an established presence there, and premises for the project were available; it was also hoped that Fife would suffer relatively little from the local government reorganisation of April 1996. Attendance at the project was to be a requirement of a supervision order made at a Children's Hearing. The question of whether Fife had a large enough population to produce the envisaged number of persistent juvenile offenders was not closely considered.

Establishing the CueTen project

One of the features of Apex's style which appealed to The Scottish Office was its commitment to action rather than words, and Apex staff characteristically moved quickly to set the project up, with a target date in October 1995 for its commencement. Staff were appointed by this date, all but the project leader specially recruited for CueTen, but for the first three months or so they had no young people to work with: the pace of the project's establishment had outstripped the development of the inter-agency links which were needed to supply it with its intended target group. The project was set up without detailed consultation with staff in relevant agencies, such as the police and the Education Department; and it did not help that there was a history of tension in Fife between the Education and Social Work Departments. The Director of Social Work, who had been Apex's main contact and supporter, left in the course of reorganisation, and new relationships had to be built. As a result of the lack of consultation in these early stages, some basic questions were not resolved until later in the project's life (if at all): for example, the project staff never had as full or reliable information from the police as they would have wished on the young people at CueTen, and the question of who should pay for the transport of the young people to the project – CueTen or the Education Department – remained unresolved for most of the project's existence. Although social workers, who were the main agents of referral to the project, came to value it as a resource, the CueTen staff never felt that the project gained complete acceptance as a valid and important resource for juvenile offenders in Fife. Some of these difficulties would probably not have arisen had there been more extensive consultations at the outset; on the other hand, Apex's view was that such consultations were potentially endless, and that it was important that the project should begin its practical work without delay.

In discussions between Apex and Social Work staff, the following criteria for referral to the project were agreed: the project would accept referrals from social workers of young people aged 14-16

- who have appeared before a Children's Hearing on the grounds of persistent or escalating offending
- who live in the community of Fife, including those in foster care
- for whom statutory measures have not proved satisfactory or adequate
- who are at risk of custody or residential care
- with whom the programme has been fully discussed and explained and who have agreed to meet the responsibilities of the programme.

The project was to operate on the basis of four closed groups of eight young people in a year; in practice, it worked on three rather than four intakes, to allow for staff training and development, and for holidays, but came close to achieving the target figure of 32 young people a year. The first intake, of ten young people, started at the project in January 1996. At the end of the evaluation period, when the ninth intake of young people had recently started, a total of 86 young people had spent some time at CueTen, seven of them attending in a second group after an earlier failure to complete the programme.

The work of CueTen

From an early stage, the young people who came to the project presented – in many cases – problems of management and motivation that the staff had not previously encountered, and for which they were not fully prepared. The formal curriculum which was the basis of CueTen’s approach proved too demanding for many of the young people – not surprisingly, considering that few had recently been attending school with any regularity, and that most had records of persistent offending over the previous twelve months (and usually for longer). As a result, the staff had constantly to adapt and refine their practice, to provide alternative activities when a group refused to participate in what had been originally planned, to ensure that there was a manageable mix of formal work on the skills curriculum and less demanding leisure and sporting activities, and to allow more time for individual counselling. As the project developed, the second part of the programme was adapted to allow the young people to have more contact with CueTen, to provide them with support and individual attention as they tried to survive in their work or college placements. While the staff were resourceful and persevering in their efforts to respond to the young people’s demands, there were times when work had to be suspended because of disruptive behaviour, and twenty of the young people who started at CueTen in the first eight groups were excluded before the end of the programme for unacceptable behaviour, usually violence or the threat of it, or – particularly in the later groups – for drug use.

A high proportion of the young people who started at CueTen did not complete the programme. In addition to the twenty who were excluded, another 26 failed to finish the programme because of circumstances in other aspects of their lives. From the first eight intakes, 55% completed the first block of thirteen weeks, and 40% completed, or virtually completed, the entire programme. These figures are not greatly out of line with what other research would lead one to expect, but they do indicate something of the problems the project staff had in sustaining motivation and interest, while insisting on a minimum level of acceptable behaviour. Time and energy spent on immediate problems of management and non-attendance meant that the staff had little time left for the more developmental aspects of the project: links with employers did not develop as extensively as had been hoped, and the mentoring or ‘buddy’ scheme for the support of young people after they left the project failed to materialise. The disenchantment with education, and with adult authority generally, that many of these young people brought with them to CueTen would have led to problems anyway; but these were exacerbated in some cases by the rather negative messages given by social workers to young people about what they could expect from CueTen, and what it would expect from them.

In general, despite not being in a position to be selective about which young people were accepted, CueTen did work with the intended target group of persistent juvenile offenders: only nine of the 59 young people who started on the first six intakes had fewer than three charges recorded against them in the previous twelve months, and the check that was undertaken mid-way through the project by the police, and the eventual constitution of a comparison group of 39, did not show that there were substantial numbers of similarly persistent offenders who did not have a chance to attend CueTen. The difficulty for the staff was that the young people who came to CueTen had all the problems typical of any population of persistent offenders: three-quarters had experienced some family dislocation, and well over half had spent some time in care outside the family home; they had rejected, or been rejected by, the formal education system; many had some health problems, and some were at risk of drug or alcohol dependence. The staff at CueTen were not well prepared to manage young people with such problems, nor was the formal curriculum required by the programme well adapted to their needs.

Outcomes, costs and savings

The main outcomes considered are those indicating criminal activity, since no convincing case can be made that attendance at CueTen, or completion of its programme, affected the young people's immediate employment prospects. The strongest statistical association found was between number of previous charges and likelihood of completing the CueTen programme: those with the fewest charges in the previous twelve months were the most likely to complete the 26 weeks at CueTen. The outcomes in terms of known offending after starting at the project were also relatively encouraging for the group of 24 'completers' for whom a follow-up period of at least twelve months was available: only four were offending at a rate that suggested the probable development of a long term criminal career, and the total volume of known offences by this group of 24 was only 45% of the previous year's total, compared with about two-thirds for both the comparison group and the group who did not finish the programme. In their record of offending in the year after starting at CueTen compared with their record in the previous year, in the total number of offences they were known to have committed, and in the likelihood of their being sentenced to custody, this group out-performed both the group of 35 'non-completers' and the comparison group, suggesting that those who completed the CueTen programme went on to offend less seriously and less frequently than the other two groups. The differences were not, however, statistically significant, and the results are less positive when the whole CueTen population is considered. Nevertheless, it can be estimated that CueTen may have prevented about thirty crimes among this group of 24 young people who completed the programme, and that it may have prevented the development of three adult criminal careers.

On the assumption that CueTen continued to prevent crimes at a similar rate throughout its life, it can be estimated that it prevented about 44 crimes in all; and on the same assumption, it probably prevented the development of four long-term criminal careers. These figures, and similarly calculated savings on custodial sentences and residential care, allow the conclusions that CueTen saved in the short term about £30,800 in criminal justice system costs through crime prevention, and about £100,000

through reducing the number of custodial sentences. It probably also saved about £98,300 through diversion from residential care. In the longer term, if it prevented four criminal careers of ten to twelve years, it may additionally have saved about £400,000. All these figures are based on estimates of direct savings to the criminal justice system only, not on the notional marginal costs of crimes by young people. If the latter were counted, the short-term savings would increase from £229,000 to £319,000, still £251,000 below the three-year cost of the project; the long-term savings would, of course, be much greater (but still more speculative) if calculated on this basis. These figures, while they suggest that CueTen did not deliver any immediate cost-savings, do not imply that it was less cost-effective than other measures; indeed, it appears to have been rather more cost-effective than the mix of supervision, groupwork, residential care and custody received by the comparison group.

Conclusions

CueTen suffered in some respects from the circumstances of its conception. Apex Scotland assumed that the experience of working with older offenders could be readily transferred to a project for 14-16 year-olds, and this proved not to be the case. The speed with which the project was established meant that there was less inter-agency consultation than was desirable; as a consequence, the project was not universally accepted by the relevant constituencies in Fife, and staff had to work with less than adequate information about the young people in their charge, and with uncertain communications with social workers about developments in their lives.

The nature of the client group at CueTen meant that everyday life there was rarely relaxed or harmonious. Staff tended to be preoccupied by immediate problems of management and control, at the expense of work on the formal programme. There were chronic problems over attendance and participation. The staff had no access to the family lives of the young people, though these were the source of many of their problems. The number of young people who completed the programme was disappointing, but not out of line with what could have been expected.

Nevertheless, there are indications that CueTen had some impact on the offending pattern of young people who did complete the programme. The fact that these tended to be the least seriously persistent offenders is relevant to thinking about what policy lessons might be drawn from the experience of CueTen. Arguably, the place for such a project is in helping young people manage a transition. For instance, a programme like CueTen's could be used to prepare young people for release from custody, or for discharge from long term care. It could also be used as a bridge into employment and independence for young people in the community whose offending is already declining, whose emotional life is reasonably stable, who are not deeply immersed in subcultural delinquency, and who have no serious problems of drug or alcohol abuse. These might be young people who have already been helped with such problems by a more established form of intervention, such as a mix of individual counselling, offence- (or other problem-) focused groupwork, and family support. Attendance at such a programme could be voluntary, though authoritatively encouraged. The programme would need to be well embedded in the network of local agencies, and be sustained by consensual inter-agency support.

CHAPTER ONE: THE BACKGROUND

Apex Scotland, the parent organisation of the CueTen project, was established in 1987 with the declared central aim of helping to achieve equality of opportunity in the employment market for people with a criminal record. (A sister organisation was well established south of the border; Soothill (1974) provides an account of its early work.) Apex Scotland quickly became aware that there were significant numbers of young people in the 16-18 year-old age group who had a criminal record and were not catered for within the existing services. In 1988 the new organisation commissioned a study to examine training provision for this age group, and to see what Apex could do to increase the employment opportunities open to them. The subsequent report (Hurley, 1989) suggested that there was general support among staff of relevant agencies (including Social Work and Education Departments, the Training Agency and the Intermediate Treatment Resource Centre) for the principle that there should be a comprehensive inter-agency strategy for those excluded for whatever reason from the mainstream of education and training. Hurley also found that employers were more willing to help the younger age group, regarding them as more capable of reform, as presenting fewer risks, and perhaps as more deserving of support than adult offenders. The report also suggested that although 'Apex does not have a major role to play at this stage' in working with 'children under supervision from a Children's Hearing', it might become involved in

liaising with the Children's Panel, Careers, Social Work, and Education departments on the availability and nature of employment and training opportunities for those about to become sixteen, in order to ensure that these young people are fully alerted to such opportunities (Hurley, 1989, p. 44).

The origins of the CueTen project may be traced back to this suggestion.

In its initial statement to The Scottish Office about its plans for a 'Persistent Young Offenders Programme' (its location in the premises which gave it the name 'CueTen' had not yet been decided), Apex Scotland described its first aim as follows:

To provide an intensive, structured and individualised programme for persistent young offenders aged 14-16, which will use the creation and development of employment and employment related opportunities as the principal focus through which all Programme activity is channelled.

Other aims referred to an immediate and long-term reduction in offending, establishing credibility with the Children's Hearing system, the courts and the public, providing a programme which would complement existing services and take account of local need, and contributing to the development of good practice and replicability, in which monitoring and evaluation would play an important part. Among the more specific objectives was that of increasing 'the supervision options available to the Children's Hearing system for use with those young people persistently appearing before Panels on offence grounds, and including those young people referred by Court to a Panel for

a disposal'. The statement of aims in the publicity material later produced for the project expressed the same ideas in slightly different terms.

These specific ideas were developed during 1995, but the philosophy and rationale behind them went further back, and emerged from a context in which the offending of young people had become a live issue for politics and policies in Scotland. Writing for the Howard League for Penal Reform in 1994, Helena Kennedy set out the fundamental issues:

Juvenile delinquency is back on the agenda as a matter of public concern and public debate. We are right to take it seriously because of the damage and distress it causes not only to its victims but also to the offenders themselves and their families. Crime and the fear of crime has a profoundly corrosive effect on the lives of individuals and of the nation as a whole. However, the attitude we take to crime, and especially juvenile crime, is an important gauge of the kind of society we live in and the direction in which we are moving (Howard League for Penal Reform, 1994)

A specific concern which was mentioned in the course of the interviews for this evaluation was that panel members were becoming increasingly frustrated by the lack of alternatives at their disposal for juvenile offenders who were repeatedly referred to the Children's Hearing system on grounds of offending. Officials in The Scottish Office received regular complaints about the limited range of resources available to deal effectively with this relatively small number of persistent offenders, who, it was recognised, were often responsible for a high proportion of local juvenile crime; and, for reasons discussed later in the report, it is possible that these sentiments were felt more strongly in Fife than in most other parts of the country. While there was less pressure in Scotland than south of the border for overtly punitive measures (McIvor, 1994), because of the continued general acceptance of the principles of care built into the Children's Hearing system (Kelly, 1996a), The Scottish Office had to take these expressions of anxiety seriously, and was interested in developing alternative strategies which would provide the Children's Hearings with additional options for disposal, and which held some promise of providing an effective answer to the longer-term problems underlying persistent juvenile offending. The Social Work Services Group and the Crime Prevention Unit within The Scottish Office had mutual interests in finding constructive solutions, and established a working alliance aimed at a long-term reduction in crime and its associated social problems. It was felt that the Children's Panels had few middle-range alternatives at their disposal between the poles of residential care and home supervision, 'which in reality was one hour a week with a social worker' (if that, one might add). A body of opinion began to form that some intermediate options were required, particularly for 14-15 year-olds, the age group in which persistent offending seemed to be concentrated.

Discussions within The Scottish Office led to a decision to shift the focus of attention and effort in crime prevention to the offender, rather than putting more resources into schemes designed to reduce the chances of victimisation. Persistent juvenile offenders were the main object of these discussions, and lengthy debates apparently took place on how to define frequency or persistence of offending. While no single definition emerged, it was agreed that funding of new initiatives would be confined to projects which made a public commitment to working specifically with persistent offenders. It

was also agreed that the strategy should be one which maintained the traditional welfare orientation of the Children's Hearing system, and that projects should be encouraged to address and try to influence offending behaviour within a broader framework that should include issues such as individual motivation and the stimulation of new interests and potentials, rather than concentrating solely on the act of offending itself. The hope was that this approach would be effective in dealing with the immediate problem of persistent offending, and also produce guidance on the most promising longer-term strategy. One interviewee, who had been involved in these early discussions, explained:

we all have to pursue a purposeful quest to get answers to such long-term difficult problems. We don't just want a scheme to cope with today's joyriders, but one that can cope with the more sophisticated thieves of tomorrow.

The aim was, then, to encourage a broad, 'programme-driven' strategic approach, rather than merely a number of discrete short-term projects (King, 1988).

The main outcome of these deliberations which is relevant to this report was the announcement by the then Minister of State, Lord Fraser, at the Scottish Police Federation's annual conference in 1994, of his intention

to promote a major new community based initiative designed to intervene in the behaviour of persistent young offenders who account for a disproportionate number of crimes and offences (The Scottish Office, 1994).

The Scottish Office invited six voluntary child care organisations to submit proposals for pilot projects, in the expectation that projects would be funded in two areas, to enable comparisons to be made which could inform the development of best practice for possible replication elsewhere. In the event only one project was funded, the Barnardo's Freagarrach project in Central Region. Apex Scotland, in partnership with NCH Action for Children, was one of the unsuccessful bidders.

By this time Apex had an independent profile in the field of offender-centred crime prevention, but the link with NCH was thought necessary because The Scottish Office seemed to have in mind a social work element which Apex could not provide, and Apex already had links with NCH. It was, however, the Apex element of the proposal which most attracted The Scottish Office, because of its innovative ideas, in particular the notion that aspiration to the world of work could be a powerful motivator, and that even young people who had appeared to reject formal education might well be prepared to commit themselves to forms of education and training which held out the promise of providing a route into work. Apex was considered to have the ability and the potential to develop these ideas in practice, if given the opportunity. It was viewed as a different type of organisation from most of those with which The Scottish Office was accustomed to dealing, with a more practical and less cerebral orientation; and it could bring a new perspective and a different professional orientation to bear on juvenile offending.

The CueTen project was established in Glenrothes in the autumn of 1995, and received its first intake of young people in January 1996. It represented a new departure for

Apex, since it was aimed at juvenile rather than adult offenders: Apex had experience of running projects for young adults, but not of working with juveniles. The staff appointed to the project were, with the exception of the team leader, new recruits to Apex. The research began in May 1996 with interviews and discussions with people who had been identified, by those in a position to know, as having played an important role in the project's development. They included staff of Apex Scotland, in Fife and at national level, and staff in the police, the Education Department, the Schools Psychological Service, the Social Work Department and the Reporter's Office, as well as personnel in The Scottish Office who had been closely involved in the project's early planning.

Throughout the research period a wide range of sources was used to obtain data on the progress of the project and on the young people attending it. The researcher, David Lobley, visited the project regularly for direct observation of formal groupwork and non-participant observation of the informal interactions between the staff and the young people, occasionally adopting a more active role than that of pure observer (for example, when it would have been artificial and unnatural not to participate in group discussions); he also accompanied the young people and project staff on visits to local training organisations. He attended staff discussions, individual review meetings, and meetings of the project advisory group. Interviews and discussions were held with individual young people, parents, carers, social work staff, guidance and support teachers, college and other training providers, careers service advisers and employers, police officers and Reporters, in order to gain a sense of how the project was viewed both by those with immediate experience of it and by those on whose support it relied. Opportunities for informal discussion and consultation were taken as they arose, for example when attending meetings, and these too have contributed to this report.

The CueTen project (housed in unit Q10 of an industrial estate) was innovative, at least in work with juvenile offenders, since it aimed to reduce the rate of reoffending by changing young people's attitudes to training and employment rather than to deal directly with their offending and its immediate circumstances. There are good theoretical reasons for believing that if this approach is implemented successfully it should have an impact on subsequent offending: criminological control theory predicts that positive attitudes to education and training will be associated with a reduced risk of delinquency among young people, and the fact of having a job should increase the 'stake in conformity' which means that one has something to lose by offending (Braithwaite, 1989). The meta-analysis of evaluative research by Lipsey (1995) provides empirical support for this prediction, suggesting that employment-based programmes for juvenile offenders show good results compared with other approaches (though this is not true of programmes based solely on vocationally-oriented counselling). There is also evidence that unemployment is associated with an increased rate of offending, both in the lives of individuals (Farrington *et al.*, 1986) and, in respect of recorded property crime, at the level of the national economy (Field, 1990). Sampson and Laub (1993), in their re-working of the Gluecks' data on delinquency, concluded that job stability was the key variable in building the 'social capital' which reduced the risk of an adult criminal career.

Paradoxically, there is also some evidence that for some people the acquisition of a job can lead to an increase in the frequency, though not the seriousness, of self-reported

offending, presumably because the workplace provides new opportunities for crime (Graham and Bowling, 1995); and Downes (1993) discusses American evidence which suggests that, while for young offenders (in their mid to late teens) any job is protective against conviction, for young adults (in their late teens to early twenties) the protective effect is only found if the job is a reasonably good one (in terms of wages, security and prospects). Downes also explores the ways in which a high local level of long-term youth unemployment can undermine informal community controls and create opportunities for criminal activity, such as the emergence of a market in illegal drugs, suggesting that the successful creation of employment opportunities for young people may have a positive effect on local economic and social life as well as providing direct benefits for the individuals concerned.

This report is organised as follows. Chapter Two describes the establishment of the project and some of the difficulties encountered in the early stages. Chapter Three outlines some relevant characteristics of the 86 young people who attended the project up to September 1998, and describes the work that was done with them. Chapter Four discusses the expectations others, especially social workers, had of the project, sets these in the general context of the project's relationships with other agencies, and considers the extent to which the project worked with the intended target group. Chapter Five describes what happened to the young people who started at CueTen - whether they completed the programme, the reasons for non-completion, and where they went after leaving. Chapter Six analyses the longer-term outcomes, including those relating to reoffending and reconviction, for the young people on whom follow-up data for at least twelve months are available, compares these results with information on a sample of young offenders identified as a comparison group, and discusses costs and benefits. Chapter Seven summarises the main findings of the evaluation and offers some concluding reflections on the experience of CueTen.

CHAPTER TWO: ESTABLISHING THE CUETEN PROJECT

The proposal

In January 1995 the Director of Apex Scotland was invited to a meeting at The Scottish Office with members of the Social Work Services Group and the Crime Prevention Unit, to 'talk about work with young people'. The result was that Apex was invited to submit a proposal for another pilot project, in addition to the Freagarrach project mentioned in the previous chapter, which would have a distinctively 'Apex focus' - that is, it would definitely not be another social work project, but would use the world of (prospective) work as a medium for engaging with the most persistent of young offenders, and, it was hoped, help to define a new, positive and effective approach to serious juvenile delinquency.

Apex Scotland moved quickly, since The Scottish Office perception that this was an organisation committed to action rather than words was also Apex's perception of itself, and a proposal reached The Scottish Office in March. This envisaged a project working on two sites, preferably in 'urban and non-urban settings', to allow for the programme's 'applicability and value to be as widely tested as possible within the constraints of a pilot', and providing a service for 48 young offenders over a year. Attendance at the project would be a condition of a Supervision Requirement from the Children's Hearing, and the first 'programme objective' was 'to increase the supervision options available to the Children's Hearing system for use with those young people persistently appearing before Panels on offence grounds'. This statutory basis for the project was clearly in line with the original thinking behind Lord Fraser's announcement of a new initiative on persistent young offenders; but it would have been Apex's preference in any case, on the grounds that this would increase the confidence of Panel members in the project.

The proposal included details of a 26-week programme of work, organised in three distinct blocks; content, structure and length were determined by Apex's experience of projects for 16-18 year-olds. The first block, of thirteen weeks, was drawn directly from Apex's work with these older teenagers. It was to be groupwork-based, and to focus on attitudes and behaviour for employment, cognitive and negotiating skills, an introduction to vocational training and educational choices, and skills and knowledge relevant to acquiring and keeping a job. This material was to be delivered 'using group discussion, college, training and employer based experience, group and individual exercises'. In this and the other two blocks, individual counselling and a weekly group evaluation were to be built into the programme. In the second, seven-week block, the emphasis shifted from groupwork to individual counselling, though group experiences would continue in the form of sports and adventure activities, creative arts, and the development of skills in Information Technology. The aim of the individual work would be to develop plans for employment or the achievement of related goals, through vocational training and college-based work, and a gradual re-entry into mainstream schooling where appropriate. The final stage of six weeks was to focus more specifically on putting individual plans into action, identifying key tasks for their implementation and barriers to their achievement, and planning the support the young

people would need on leaving the project. The proposals for 'post-programme support' included one of the most adventurous elements of the whole scheme, the idea of a 'buddy' system in which young people in employment locally would be released from work to support young people leaving the project. Apex envisaged the recruitment of 15-20 young volunteers to do this work; Apex would be responsible for their training, management and support.

While Apex was able to draw on its previous experience to give a detailed account of the intended structure and content of the programme, other aspects of the proposal were less specific. Apart from the preference for two sites, nothing was said about the project's location. In preparing the earlier proposal with NCH Action for Children, support had been secured from four local authorities - Grampian, Tayside, Fife and Lothian. Tayside would have been willing to house the new project, but when it became clear, by May 1995, that because of funding constraints The Scottish Office (whose only stipulation over the siting of the new project was that it should not be in Central Region) saw the project as operating from a single site, the advantages of Fife became more apparent. Apex had an established presence in Fife, and links with the police, the local authority, especially the Social Work Department, and local employers. It also had suitable premises in Glenrothes, from which it provided vocational guidance through its Employment Unit and ran a Supervised Attendance Order project, introduced in September 1994 to provide a service, in partnership with the Social Work Department, to courts in Cupar, Dunfermline and Kirkcaldy. Additionally, by the spring of 1995 the imminent reorganisation of local government was a pressing reality, and Fife had the advantage that, in the view of Apex senior management, 'it wasn't going to be disaggregated': the disruption of the shift to unitary status would therefore, it was hoped, be minimal.

Another aspect of the original proposal which was relatively undeveloped was the relationship the new project would have with existing facilities and organisations. The programme depended on the cooperation of other agencies, since much of the work, especially in the second block, was to take place away from the project base, and the proposal stressed complementarity with existing services and mentioned 'consultative discussions with potential partners' in the delivery of the programme. At one stage the possibility of a joint project with Crime Concern was considered, with Apex as the prime contract-holder, an idea that got as far as a visit to London to look at some innovative work which included a version of the proposed 'buddy' system; but in the course of discussions it was agreed that Apex should be the only non-statutory organisation involved, and that its partnership should be with the local authority.

The location of the project in Fife was acceptable to The Scottish Office; Fife was considered to have enough persistent juvenile offenders for the project to have work to do. Between the submission of the original proposal in March 1995 and the formal agreement with The Scottish Office for the project's funding in July, there were discussions on, among other things, the number of young people to whom the project would offer a service in a year. With the decision that the project should operate from one site rather than two, it was natural that Apex should think of halving the original figure of 48; but ultimately a figure of 32 was agreed, after consultation with the Social Work Department to ascertain that a sufficient number of young people in the intended target group was likely to be available. At the same time, agreement was reached on

how to minimise the waiting time between acceptance on the project and starting work on the programme, always an issue for projects running closed groups with a fixed membership. Apex was able to assure The Scottish Office that at most the waiting period would be six weeks, but for the majority of young people it was hoped that it would be zero. (In reality, the organisation of the intakes resulted in a waiting period that could be in the region of ten weeks.) A precise definition of 'persistence' had still not been agreed, and Apex and the Social Work Department in Fife eventually settled on a set of fairly broad criteria (given below), which would allow for a flexible assessment of need and suitability and enable the Panel to take into account relevant circumstances other than offending history.

While keen to ensure reasonable value for money, Scottish Office staff were also aware of the risks of stressing numbers at the expense of other measures of performance; as one put it:

Too many referrals can lead to pressure, too many people are concerned with through-put and we run the risk of getting quantity at the expense of quality.

The project was to be given every chance to prove the worth of Apex's approach. At the beginning of July, six months after the initial meeting at The Scottish Office, Apex Scotland received written approval from Police Division to run a three-year project for persistent young offenders in Glenrothes, with a probable start date of November 1995.

Developing the project

Apex already had experience of developing and running projects for the 16-18 year old age group, and the staff involved felt confident that they could adapt and develop this expertise to work with the younger age group which the new project was to target. Some aspects of existing programmes could be expanded while at the same time new features were to be developed to take account of the specific needs of 14-16 year-olds: most obviously, the project needed to liaise with schools to organise a return to mainstream education for young people of compulsory school age. Apex's senior staff maintained their commitment to action rather than words in working on the project through the late summer of 1995; they 'wanted to get it up and going as quickly as was reasonable'. While refining details of the programme and its costings and preparing to recruit its staff, they also worked on developing existing relationships with other agencies in Fife and establishing new ones, through a series of presentations to the middle tier of management in the police, Social Work and Education, and contacts with the Reporter and Children's Panel members. They found a particularly sympathetic response from the then Director of Social Work, whose style of maximum action, minimum paper, fitted well with Apex's own, and who had encouraged a developmental view of social work with young offenders that was hospitable to voluntary organisations.

There was little difficulty in getting agreement from the relevant parties in Fife that there was a problem with young offenders who were already considered 'persistent', as well as those with the potential to become so, or that existing resources were inadequate. The Regional Reporter, in his Annual Report for 1995, suggested that

multiple referrals reveal amongst a small minority of children a serious problem of repeated offending (Kelly, 1996b, p. 8)

and noted that referrals for offending had increased for the third consecutive year (p.5). One knowledgeable interviewee suggested that 'there are probably about a dozen or so youngsters in each of the eight sub-divisions that are running wild and giving the local police a real headache', and another commented that 'very little is available for kids who are excluded from school and who are often running riot'. The relevant agencies were - in principle - ready to welcome a project like CueTen.

These agencies had already made a conscious effort to co-ordinate their response to children in difficulties, establishing a Childcare Strategy Working Group to encourage and facilitate cooperation between local authority departments, in particular Social Work and Education, and other agencies involved in the field. It is no secret that there had been tensions between the Social Work and Education Departments in Fife; this was a main theme of the 'Kearney Report' (The Scottish Office, 1992), which concluded that 'the relationship between the two directorates was unsatisfactory to a degree far beyond that which might ordinarily be expected' (paragraph X.4). The Director of Education had been, in particular, critical of moves by the Social Work Department to close residential establishments for juvenile offenders, without (in his view) proper consultation, and their closure was said to have left Panel members with inadequate resources at their disposal. In interviews about the development of the CueTen project it was repeatedly emphasised that it was impossible to understand the inter-agency politics of Fife without taking this history into account; equally, the reorganisation which was largely complete by the time the research began was said to have laid the foundations for a new start, since staff changes at the top of the relevant departments had consigned the old conflicts to the past.

It seems clear, however, that when Apex was working to establish the new project and the links with Social Work and Education which were essential for its functioning, relationships between the two departments, at least at senior level, remained strained; and it did not help that at times schisms appeared between sections of the same department. Local authority staff spoke of a 'general atmosphere of suspicion and mistrust', and of the feeling that any idea that came with a recommendation from the Director of Social Work would automatically be rejected by the Director of Education. At the same time, 'the local authority reorganisation was announced and people started moving'; but although this promised improvements in the long run, it created immediate difficulties and complications for Apex: valued relationships were lost and new ones had to be built - in particular, the reorganisation meant that Apex lost its close and mutually respectful relationship with the Director of Social Work. The advantages associated with the relative stability of Fife's administration were therefore not as clear-cut as Apex, and perhaps The Scottish Office, might reasonably have imagined: the legacy of old conflicts made agreement and cooperative action between Social Work and Education difficult, and personnel changes meant that the network of contacts that Apex had envisaged at the beginning of the project was disrupted.

The Childcare Strategy Working Group, including senior representatives of Social Work and Education, seems to have been one of the few settings in which a consistent

effort was made, from 1993, to develop a coherent inter-agency strategy. (Interviews suggested that it helped that the staff chiefly involved 'were both English' and therefore - it was implied - were more accustomed to inter-agency cooperation. In reality it may have been more to do with the fact that both were new to Fife.) One of the Group's main concerns was the development of the resources needed to make sense of the policy that children should be diverted from residential care and supported in the community; another was how to reduce exclusions from school. The Group made a number of approaches to voluntary organisations about the possible development of new resources. It was frustrated, however, by the apparent lack of enthusiasm from the Director of Education, to the extent that some members felt its ideas were not as widely disseminated in schools as they could have been, and the Group found it difficult to make direct contact with any sympathetic school Rectors, who might have provided the impetus for change. New tensions began to appear as Social Work representatives became impatient with what they saw as the lack of action from Education. In this context Apex's style of going ahead rather than engaging in endless talk, and of finding allies outside the formal decision-making structure, was a risky one.

The result was, in the view of some Social Work staff, that 'the project was established before all the procedures and the practical issues had been resolved'. The same view was widespread, in a stronger form, in the Education Department, which, it was generally felt, had been excluded from discussions at the planning stage. To some staff it seemed that the new initiative 'came onto the scene very quickly as if from nowhere'; even within the Strategy Group, which had been discussing the need for just such a scheme, some members were surprised when it was presented as 'all cut and dried'. This lack of initial involvement was still being referred to in interviews held two years after the first young people had started at CueTen. The practical effects of the speed with which the project was established seem to have been mainly on its links with schools. For example, although there had been a meeting between Apex staff and the Rectors in October 1995, the key representative of the Education Department on the Strategy Group (who was likely to be accepted as credible and authoritative) was not able to present the new developments to the Rectors until January 1996, when ideally 'it should have happened the previous summer'. Although the proposals received a generally positive reception, some practical issues remained unresolved. The basic practical question of who should pay for the young people's transport to the CueTen project remained a matter of contention between Apex and the Education Department for almost two years. Education staff also raised questions about the effects of removal from school for six months of 14 and 15 year-olds during what is notionally a coherent two-year course involving both coursework and examinations, and about whether attendance at the project would be monitored in the same way as attendance at school. In practice, this proved to be a non-issue, since most of the young people who attended CueTen were not in any meaningful sense removed from school in order to do so; as the next chapter makes clear, they were not attending school in the first place.

There is of course another view of the matter - Apex's; from its point of view, the only way to establish that something works is to get it up and running. In the words of one member of Apex senior management:

there is too much time and money wasted in setting up projects too slowly, trying to make sure that every thing possible is taken into account. Our target was to start on 23 October; we were ready but Social Work and Education were not.

This in effect meant that while the project staff were in place they had no young people to work with. From Apex's point of view, the reasons for the failure to start work when planned included the reluctance of some social workers to appreciate what a 'non-social work' organisation had to offer, the disruptions caused by internal reorganisation and staff changes, and the general lack of enthusiasm (with a few exceptions) on the part of the Education Department. Apex staff, used to dealing with Further Education colleges and other training providers, were not prepared for what they saw as the conservative and slow-moving character of the school system in Fife.

In the nature of the case, there is force in the arguments of both sides. Perhaps Apex should have spent more time in communicating fully with all parties, and especially with the Education Department, given that the experience staff already had of working in Fife should have sensitised them to the particular importance Education attached to being fully consulted about Social Work initiatives. On the other hand, it is surely right that it is impossible to agree every last detail in advance of starting work, and there is no doubt that many good ideas for projects have foundered in a sea of talk. In discussing the work of Safer Cities projects in England and Wales, Tilley (1992) makes an interesting distinction between 'masculine' and 'feminine' institutions and approaches to change. The terms refer not to the gender of participants but to the qualities archetypically associated with men and women. Both approaches, according to Tilley, have virtues and vices: an organisation with a masculine style will be good at getting things done, but may be perceived as threatening and thus alienate potential partners; a feminine style is more likely to gain cooperation, but entails the risk that the organisation working for change will be seen as irrelevant and thus become marginalised. Apex, one could say, adopted a masculine approach to the establishment of the CueTen project, with the benefits and costs which this entails. In the circumstances - in which, in the opinion of one local authority employee, 'the project has gone ahead against a background of almost discouragement' - there may have been no alternative.

Despite these problems, however, it should be stressed that most people who attended the introductory meetings at which Apex presented its plans responded favourably to them. There was, after all, little dispute that some additional community resource for juvenile offenders was needed. As one Assistant Reporter commented,

the Panel Members were very pleased that a new community-based resource was becoming available. There really are very few resources available for the Panel to consider, they sometimes don't know what they can do when someone starts to reoffend and they have already had all that's available.

As noted above, Apex was happy to abide by The Scottish Office's original preference that attendance on the programme should be a condition of a Supervision Requirement, and thus another resource formally available to the Children's Hearings. Some professionals, however, expressed the view that the resources Apex proposed to

provide for a highly selected group should have been more widely available on a voluntary basis. Apex staff were aware of the potential problem of a perception among the lay public, and perhaps among some professionals too (including school Rectors), that a scheme like CueTen simply means that the 'bad lads' are getting additional opportunities and resources. They were keen to ensure that the project would make use of existing local resources wherever possible, rather than developing new facilities for the exclusive use of persistent young offenders - a preference which is also, of course, in line with the long-term aim, basic to all Apex's work, of reintegrating offenders into the general community.

During the summer of 1995 Apex worked with members of the Social Work Department to refine and agree the criteria for referral to the project. Both parties were content for these to remain relatively broad, in order to allow room for flexibility and professional judgement, rather than trying to define persistence very specifically. The criteria that were agreed, and appeared in Apex's publicity material for the project, were as follows. The project would consider referrals of young people aged 14-16

- who have appeared before a Children's Hearing on the grounds of persistent or escalating offending
- who live within the community of Fife, including those in foster care
- for whom statutory measures have not proved satisfactory or appropriate
- who are at risk of custody or residential care
- with whom the programme has been fully discussed and explained and who have agreed to meet the responsibilities of the programme.

Apex was also active in recruiting staff for the project. Eleven candidates were interviewed, all of them judged appointable, for the six posts available. The successful applicants started work on 25 September 1995 in Apex's existing premises on an industrial estate on the outskirts of Glenrothes. In line with Apex's general policy of recognising the relevance of a wide range of skills and experience, the backgrounds of the staff were mixed. None was a social worker, another deliberate feature of Apex's staffing policies, since 'there's no need to replicate skills available elsewhere'. Only the person appointed to the team leader's post was already working for Apex; she had experience of working with older teenagers which had led her to feel that the same methods could be successfully applied to a younger age group. Of the others, one was a qualified teacher who wanted to 'change tack', and was able to persuade Apex that her style was sufficiently open and participative for the project; one had recently obtained a qualification in community education as a mature student, and had a wealth of experience as a volunteer; one was an ex-farmer who had more recently worked in youth training in agriculture; one had a background in training in the commercial sector; and one was a general administrator ('we don't have typists, everyone is expected to pitch in'). Apex was seeking to appoint a team in which varied skills and aptitudes would complement each other, but all the staff needed to show that they could be authoritative when necessary, as well as work flexibly as part of a team.

The team began to work on the details of the programme and its organisation and to make the relevant contacts with Panel members, social work teams and schools, 'trying to sell the scheme' and to encourage referrals. The earliest documentation on this

indicated that referrals would initially be considered by the Regional Allocation Group, a joint Social Work and Education forum, with representation from the Schools Psychological Service, set up to try to co-ordinate the departments' responses to children with special educational needs which could not be met in mainstream schools. The initial idea was that this Group (the RAG) would 'oversee' referrals and presumably make some judgement about their appropriateness; however, 'internal politics at the time' meant that the RAG was distrusted by many social workers, who saw it as dominated by educational interests; some commented that 'Education became very precious' about the children, for example by insisting on clarity about the status of young people attending CueTen who were still on school rolls although not actually at school. The referral procedures that eventually appeared in the CueTen publicity material made no mention of the RAG, and outlined the procedure as being an initial inquiry from a social worker, followed up swiftly by the project team leader for assessment purposes, with eventual ratification from a Children's Hearing. Consequently, no referrals to CueTen were ever routed via the RAG: some thought that the restructuring within the local authority had created such turmoil that the RAG had been unable to meet regularly, and that constant changes of personnel had prevented it from functioning adequately. It seems, too, that Social Work staff who were keen that referrals should start as quickly as possible to enable the project to get under way saw the RAG as an obstacle to be by-passed rather than a useful filter for referrals: having decided that referral to CueTen was the right course for a young person, they wanted to avoid any unnecessary delay.

Despite these difficulties, and the fact that CueTen was for most potential sources of referrals a new, untried and unknown facility, social workers in the area teams in Fife began to refer young people to the project. The project staff began preliminary work with a few young people towards the end of 1995, and were ready to start the first formal programme in January 1996.

The referral process

The programme developed for CueTen was ambitious: it was specifically aimed at persistent young offenders and was designed to be intensive and to require a substantial commitment from the young people who attended. From the outset they were required to agree to regular attendance at the project in Glenrothes for 26 weeks - a long time in the life of a young person, and a demanding commitment particularly for those who had not attended school regularly for a considerable time. Although the young people's own commitment was backed by a specific requirement of attendance from the Children's Hearing, successful completion of the programme required serious motivation and sustained interest. The project was initially funded on the understanding that it would aim to work with 32 young people a year, organised in four groups of eight; in practice, although the total numbers were close to the target figure, there were three rather than four intakes a year, since four starts would have placed excessive strain on the staff, and left little room for staff training and development, or for holidays.

After the first intake in January 1996, three groups started in the course of each year, at intervals of three to four months. The final group (the ninth) started in September 1998, by which time 86 young people had started to attend the CueTen project. The

normal start of the referral process was for a social worker to telephone the project to establish whether a vacancy existed at the appropriate time and whether the young person in question met the criteria for acceptance. In practice, the criterion of persistent or escalating offending was not rigidly defined: the staff's rule of thumb was that a figure of three offences in the preceding year counted as 'persistence', but this was not always adhered to. Over 80 per cent of the young people who attended the project, however, had been charged with three or more offences in the previous twelve months (details are given in the following chapter), and where this was not the case other factors, such as the young person's being 'at risk and beyond parental control', were taken into account. Other criteria were also interpreted flexibly: for instance, the first young person to be offered a place on the programme was already in residential care, not just 'at risk of residential care', but his place was agreed as part of a plan to prepare him for leaving care. Furthermore, some of the young people were accepted onto the programme without an appearance at a Children's Hearing, although in most of these cases a Hearing was pending. This willingness on the part of the staff to be flexible and adaptable in accordance with identified needs was in line with what senior managers in Apex saw as an essential feature of their approach:

we are always willing to adapt rather than stick to theoretical plans.

This does not necessarily imply a loss of the 'programme integrity' associated with success in interventions with offenders (Hollin, 1995), since the project's aims, and its basic methods, remained intact, and programme integrity should not entail refusal to change in the face of clear evidence that change is required.

The next stage in the referral process was the assessment interview. Normally the young person was taken to the project by his or her social worker, with a relevant parent or carer, for a discussion with project staff and an explanation of the aims and purpose of CueTen. If necessary, a member of the CueTen staff would accompany the social worker to the young person's home for the initial interview. The staff tried to minimise delays in the assessment process, another central feature of the 'Apex culture'. The virtues of a straightforward and reasonably quick referral process were also appreciated by social workers:

I can phone up and arrange an interview on the spot, get the kid's interest and then develop it, build on it. If we have to wait weeks or even months they totally lose interest. You must have the kids on your side, you cannot force them to do anything they don't want to.

He [the young person] always wants things to happen immediately.

If the process is time-consuming you can lose the window of opportunity, a downward spiral can take over.

We can make referrals direct - much better, enables you to keep control and it is not bureaucratic or slow.

Since CueTen operated on the basis of 'closed' groups (that is, groups with a fixed membership), and there were only three starting dates a year for new groups, these

comments only make sense in the context of social workers' awareness of when groups were due to start. A referral made at the 'wrong' time, just after a new group had started at CueTen, could be processed quickly in the sense that a decision on the young person's suitability could be made without delay, but at worst it could be almost four months before he or she actually began to attend the project. Regular contact from the project helped to keep the CueTen schedule in social workers' minds, and on occasions the staff showed their flexibility by allowing young people to join the programme after the formal starting-date, usually during the first four weeks, which evolved into an induction and assessment period, and occasionally on a pragmatic 'infill' basis, when initial numbers permitted. Although it is possible that social workers were deterred from referring potentially suitable young people by the prospect of a long wait before they started at CueTen, and subsequently decided not to pursue the idea, no such cases were identified during interviews. Nevertheless, there is an obvious tension between the principle of closed groups, with a fixed membership and duration, and the need, as perceived by social workers, to strike while the iron was hot - that is, to get a young person accepted at CueTen at a time when he or she was showing some willingness to change. Once a young person had been accepted, the social worker informed the Reporter of what was being proposed, and the CueTen staff provided a report for consideration at a Children's Hearing when requested to do so.

Among the criteria for acceptance at CueTen was that the young person should indicate a willingness to attend and show that s/he understood what was expected, but there is evidence that sometimes this 'willingness' and agreement to meet the responsibilities of the programme were less than whole-hearted. In fact, the language of assessment and selection suggests a rather more rigorous sifting of referrals than normally took place. In reality, the assessment or selection process was usually little more than a fact-gathering exercise culminating in an offer of a place on the programme. Referrals to the project never arrived in sufficient numbers for the project staff to feel they could refuse any broadly plausible candidate; it is suggested in Chapter Four that while there certainly were cases which were *prima facie* suitable but did not become referrals, the number of these was relatively small. Most of the intakes were under- rather than over-subscribed, and as a result staff offered places to young people who turned out to lack any serious motivation or intention to attend the project on any regular basis, like the one who candidly said:

I'm only attending so that it will look good at my panel.

Even when the prognosis was not very bright, and there were obvious warning signs, as when an initial assessment interview had to be cancelled because the young person had absconded, or when individuals were described as 'sullen and uncommunicative' in the course of the assessment, places on the programme could be offered. Not surprisingly, staff then had to contend with the problem of 'dropping out' - a problem for management at the individual level that also had potential implications for the project's reputation. Most of the professionals involved, however, considered that given its client group - some of the most difficult young people in Fife - it was only realistic to expect that the project should experience such problems; it could not be expected to succeed with everyone:

It was probably too much to expect them to succeed with him.

Some are getting referred because we don't have any more alternatives, and if they get the benefits [of attending the project] for at least some of the time, then that is OK from our point of view.

The messages young people received from their social workers about what to expect from CueTen, and what the project would expect from them, are also a relevant factor in shaping motivation and commitment, and this issue is considered later in the report.

Towards the end of 1997 the CueTen staff organised a series of awareness-raising seminars, to remind relevant professionals of the content, aims and referral criteria of the programme, and in the hope of encouraging more referrals. The seminars specifically aimed at social work staff produced a response that was disappointing to the CueTen staff, but those arranged for educational staff attracted far more of an audience. As a consequence of the interest displayed by the local schools, and in particular the guidance staff, the number of referrals increased, mainly coming directly from schools rather than through the designated route, via the Social Work Department. This placed the CueTen staff in a dilemma: they welcomed the increase in the number of referrals and the opportunity it gave them to be more selective, and wanted to respond positively to the new interest being shown by schools. On the other hand, some of the young people referred clearly did not meet the agreed criteria, and the established referral procedures did not include direct referrals from schools. After discussion, it was agreed that referrals from schools - mainly from guidance teachers - should go first to the Social Work Department, where their suitability for CueTen, particularly in terms of their offending, would be assessed. The episode illustrates a consistent theme throughout the life of CueTen: the need continually to promote the project in order to stimulate enough appropriate referrals.

As mentioned above, the referral procedures as initially agreed included the involvement of the Regional Allocation Group, but there is no reason to think that the referral process would have been more effective had the RAG been used as a 'gate-keeper'. Social workers believed, on the contrary, that this would have seriously slowed down the process and introduced what some considered an unacceptable level of interference. It may be that if the project had focused more on the younger end of the agreed age range, rather than the older end as it in fact did, there could have been a role for the RAG in managing referrals; but this would not have been welcomed by social workers, and might have had the effect of reducing the number of referrals, given social workers' stress on the importance of a quick, non-bureaucratic response.

Conclusions

CueTen was an ambitious and innovative project which, in the minds of its sponsors and supporters, held out the hope of pioneering a new direction for social programmes for young people in trouble. Its parent organisation, Apex Scotland, promised a distinctive approach that was neither social work nor education, but something akin to the 'social pedagogy' which features in the social programmes of many European countries as an integral part of policies for social cohesion and reintegration. CueTen's basic aim, to reduce the likelihood of further offending by increasing young people's chances in the labour market, was thoroughly compatible with the commitment to

social inclusion (Stern, 1996) that emerged in government policy not long after its establishment. But the very fact that CueTen was different, that it was attempting something never before systematically tried in work with young offenders, meant that its acceptance as a resource for social work and education had to be worked for; it could not be assumed. There were also some specific, local issues that complicated the process of CueTen's integration into the range of services for young people in Fife. There is no doubt that the project suffered in its early days from a legacy of mistrust and suspicion between the Social Work and Education Departments. It may also have suffered from the speed with which it was established (or what some influential members of its constituency saw as speed), although it is certain that if Apex Scotland had attended to all possible bureaucratic and professional sensitivities its establishment would have taken much longer. As a result of the interplay of these factors, CueTen never became as embedded into the structures of inter-agency relationships, or in the minds of some relevant professionals, as it needed to be if the staff were not to feel a constant pressure to remind others of the project's existence and purpose. It could never rely on a spontaneous flow of appropriate referrals, and was therefore exposed to occasional temptations, largely resisted, to accept young people who did not fall within the designated target group. The project had to accept young people whose motivation to succeed was fragile at best, and this, combined with the heavy expectations placed on young people by its ambitious six-month programme, meant that the drop-out rate was a continuing issue. The content of the programme, and the characteristics of the young people who attended CueTen, form the main themes of the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE: THE WORK OF CUETEN

The characteristics of young people at CueTen

The first part of this chapter considers some characteristics of the 86 young people who started at CueTen from the first intake in January 1996. This analysis is relevant to the question of whether the project worked with the intended target group; and the characteristics of the young people also had a direct and powerful impact on the style of work developed by the staff.

Offending

The project was established to work with persistent young offenders; although the definition of 'persistent' was kept relatively vague, a relevant measure of whether CueTen worked with the intended target group is to consider the number of charges recorded against each individual in the twelve months before referral. The figures are shown in Table 1. The figures in square brackets show the number of young women within each category.

Table 1: Number of charges within twelve month period prior to referral

Number of charges	Number	%
less than 3	15 [7]	17
3 - 5	20	23
6 - 10	19 [4]	22
11 - 15	14	16
16 - 25	6 [1]	7
more than 25	12 [1]	14
Total	86 [13]	

As can be seen, although a substantial proportion (40%) of the young people had fewer than six charges, a similar proportion (37%) had more than ten. The highest number of charges recorded against an individual was 47, while another five had each accumulated more than 30. None of these six young people successfully completed the programme, although one did progress onto an adult job-seekers course run by Apex.

Of the fifteen who had fewer than three charges, seven were young women, out of a total of only thirteen young women who attended the project. Of this group of seven, five were in residential or foster care, having been referred to a Children's Hearing as being beyond parental control, in need of care and protection, and/or for failure to attend school. Four of this group had not been charged in the preceding twelve months; one had only recently left residential school, but had an offending history dating back to when she was twelve years old; another had also been first charged at the age of twelve, had a very disrupted lifestyle, and was considered to be in need of some support and stability; and two had never been formally charged. Of these, both had been referred to a Children's Hearing; one was believed by her social worker to be offending, 'up to all sorts of nonsense', while the other was a chronic school-refuser, and her placement at Cue Ten resulted from a direct request from the Hearing, as an

alternative to a residential requirement. Apex's policy from the outset was that the CueTen programme would be available to both males and females, and that ideally there should be a gender mix in each group; this was achieved in the first seven intakes, in the sense that each contained at least one young woman. As with other projects for persistent offenders, however, in practice the great majority (85%) of young people worked with were male, and there is perhaps some indication that young women were more likely than young men to be referred to the project on 'welfare' rather than offending grounds (that is, on the basis of a judgement about their needs, not of the seriousness of their offending; for discussion of this issue see, for example, Gelsthorpe (1989)).

Of the remaining eight (all male) who had fewer than three charges, all but one had a history of offending, in one instance starting at the age of nine; and in most cases this was combined with referrals to a Hearing on grounds other than offending. The one young man who had not been formally charged had been referred to the Reporter on grounds of being beyond parental control and chronic truancy; he admitted offending, was described by one professional who knew him well as a 'chronic offender who is not getting caught', and at the time of referral to CueTen was also excluded from mainstream school. Although the project was never really in a position to pick and choose which young people it would accept, all of the young people who attended can be thought of as having been appropriately (or at least not inappropriately) referred: most met the criterion of persistent offending - three offences - used by Hagell and Newburn (1994) (and, with some qualifications, in the 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act in England and Wales, to establish eligibility for a Secure Training Centre). Those who did not obviously satisfy this criterion were referred to and accepted by CueTen on the grounds that they were at risk of offending and that the project had something to offer them - constructive supervision that could help in the development of social skills and the establishment of acceptable boundaries to their behaviour.

Table 2 shows when these young people were first charged by the police. The number of young women in each group is shown in square brackets.

Table 2: Age when first charged by police

Age in years	Number
8	2
9	10
10	12
11	6 [1]
12	14 [4]
13	16 [1]
14	19 [5]
15	4
not charged	3 [2]
Total	86 [13]

More than half had been charged before they became teenagers, and almost three-quarters (excluding the three against whom no charges were recorded) had been

charged before their fourteenth birthday. About the same proportion had a record of known offending going back at least two years before they came to CueTen, since, although the project was publicised as available for 14-16 year olds, in practice it worked primarily with 15 year-olds. Seventy of the 86 young people who started at CueTen were 15 years old at the time, and most of those who were 14 were close to their fifteenth birthday. The lack of any training allowance meant that 16 year-olds were unlikely to be referred, even if they were still involved with the Children's Hearing system, and those who became 16 during the programme often found the lure of paid employment, normally only temporary, irresistible.

Table 3 shows the categories of offences with which the young people had been charged in the twelve months before starting at CueTen. It combines attempted offences with those actually committed, and shows the total number of charges in each category.

Table 3: Category of offences, number and percentage of young people charged under each category, and total number of charges

Offence Category	Number of young people	Number of charges
Non-sexual violence	11 [13%]	17 [2%]
Crimes of indecency	2 [2%]	3 [<1%]
Crimes of dishonesty	69 [80%]	511 [55%]
Fire raising/vandalism	46 [53%]	146 [16%]
Other crimes	10 [12%]	17 [2%]
Miscellaneous offences	47 [55%]	165 [18%]
Motor vehicle offences	20 [23%]	71 [8%]
Total	86	930

It can be seen that four-fifths of the young people had been charged with crimes of dishonesty, which also make up by far the largest single group of charges, accounting for over half the total number of charges. Fire raising/vandalism and the 'Miscellaneous' category, which includes 'breach of the peace' and assault, account for the bulk of the remainder. It is relevant to note that the category 'Miscellaneous offences' includes 85 charges of assault against 35 young people, over half the total charges in this category; ten of these young people were also charged with non-sexual crimes of violence, so that altogether 36 of the young people who attended CueTen had been charged with assault of some kind. It is therefore not surprising that the project staff had on occasions to deal with potential and actual violence. The only other significant category is 'Motor vehicle offences'; almost one-quarter of the young people had been charged with offences in this category, though they account for only 8% of the total number of offences. The young women's offending was heavily concentrated in the

'Miscellaneous' and 'Crimes of dishonesty' categories, the miscellaneous offences being mainly minor assaults and breaches of the peace.

Other problems

A feature of working with these young people which surprised the project staff in CueTen's early stages was the extent to which their offending was just one aspect of their difficulties:

If we only had to deal with their offending this job would be quite straightforward.

As is invariably the case with a sample of persistent young offenders, many had experienced a variety of disturbances and disruptions to normal development in their short lives. In the words of one social worker:

Persistent offending is often a distress call, and we must look at what is causing the distress and meet those needs.

Fifty-seven (66%) of the young people involved with the project had previously been referred to the Reporter for issues other than offending, some several times and for several different reasons. Thirty-five had been referred on the grounds of 'failure to attend school'; the other grounds were being 'beyond parental control' and child protection issues. Thirty-six were known to have been in recent contact with other welfare professionals, mainly educational psychologists and drug counsellors, and at least 56 were considered by the CueTen staff to have a problem with drugs and/or alcohol. Others were known to have consumed these substances without this being classified as a problem, at least by the social worker at the time of referral:

He admits that he has tried cannabis but said he did not like it.

While some accepted that their alcohol or drug use did constitute a problem, and made use of the help and advice available, others refused to consider drugs or alcohol as an issue; and some at least considered these forbidden pleasures to be a natural part of growing up: events such as 'rolling my first joint' were milestones in their development to adulthood. Behavioural difficulties at CueTen resulting from drug or alcohol use seemed to become more marked as time went on: some young people were under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or both, almost every day, and this could lead directly to their suspension or exclusion from the project, a point discussed later in this chapter. Others were sometimes too hungover to participate in any activities. Although only seven young people had previously been charged with offences directly relating to the misuse of drugs, comments made during interviews suggested that some of the 511 offences of dishonesty were motivated by the desire to obtain money for drugs or alcohol, and that a similarly unknown number of the offences in the previous twelve months had been committed while the young people were under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or both: 'It was only because I was steaming.....', or 'We'd been buzzing gas....'. Some professionals working in the area thought that the pattern of drug and alcohol use at CueTen was not peculiar to this group of young people, but merely reflected the more general use of these substances in the wider teenage community.

There is no doubt, however, that this aspect of the young people's behaviour created serious problems of management for the CueTen staff, as well as limiting the young people's ability to learn from their time at the project; and the frequency of reported use by some young people suggested an emerging problem of dependency.

Family stress

Other elements of the 'distress call' identified by the social worker include the disruption to their family life that many of the young people had experienced. More than three-quarters (70) had suffered some degree of family dislocation, and were not living with both their natural parents at the time of referral. For at least three of these the disruption arose from the death of a parent, and a further two were known to have experienced the loss of a sibling. Well over half the group (50) had at some time experienced care outside the family home, in most cases formal residential care; for some this had been only short-term, for purposes of assessment, but others had spent long periods away from home, and some had experience of secure accommodation. Even compared with the findings of other studies of known offenders, which invariably report much higher levels of experience of local authority care than in the overall population, the figure for the young people at CueTen is strikingly high (Dodd and Hunter, 1992; Stewart and Stewart, 1993). Although most of the young people had been born and brought up in Fife, a few had also experienced the disruption caused by moving long distances, particularly from England. They were then in the difficult situation of having to cope with the problems of settling in a new location and in a different education system, and of learning a new and very different accent. Even in the minority of cases where the family unit was on the surface reasonably stable, it could not be assumed that the young people's experience was one of safety or security. A number of them were known to have experienced violence in the home, linked in some cases to alcohol abuse. From the information available it appeared that well over a quarter (26) of the young people were living in home circumstances where violence and/or alcohol abuse was a real threat in their daily lives, during the time when they were expected to commit themselves to the programme offered at CueTen.

Health

Another set of problems which appears to be common among samples of persistent young offenders, but is rarely given much attention in the literature, is associated with health or the lack of it. At least eighteen of the young people at CueTen were known to have health problems which in some instances had, and would go on having, a direct bearing on the type of work they were able to undertake, or the settings in which they could do it. Asthma, eczema and psoriasis were the most common ailments, and they prevented the young people affected from working, for example, in a garage (because of the risks of exposure to oil, grease etc.), and from taking up a college place which would have entailed prolonged contact with hairdressing products. Apart from the practical difficulties they entailed, some of these conditions were disfiguring, even if only temporarily, and likely to have a negative effect on the young people's self-esteem. Had it not been for the immediate impact of these ailments on the range of work and training opportunities available to the young people it is possible that their health problems would have escaped notice; the only recent study which systematically sought information on the general health (as opposed to the mental health) of a sample

of offenders is Stewart and Stewart's (1993) survey of young adult offenders, which found that almost a quarter of 17-23 year-olds known to the probation service suffered from some disability or an incapacitating chronic illness. It may be significant, too, that the conditions that were most common among young people attending CueTen, while physical in origin, are liable to be exacerbated by stress.

Education

Of the 86 young people who attended the project, 35 had been referred to the Children's Hearing on the grounds of their failure to attend school, 26 were recorded as 'excluded' from mainstream school at the time of referral, and others had previously been excluded from school and/or transferred from one school to another because of behavioural problems. Even with a generous interpretation of what might count as 'attending school', no more than twenty of the 86 could be said to have been actually at school at the time of their referral to CueTen. In an effort to keep some of the disaffected young people in contact with the school system, the Education Department arranged flexible learning 'packages', involving both off-site support centres and school-based support units. In many instances full-time attendance was not thought a realistic goal, and attendance could be required for as little as one hour a day. Some of the twenty counted as 'attending' were doing so reluctantly, having already been referred for non-attendance or excluded, or both; and twelve were at a residential school, on a part-time basis in some cases, so that non-attendance was less of an option.

It is clear that more than three-quarters of the young people who came to CueTen had not been attending any educational establishment on a regular basis, or at all. For most this was a well established pattern; and, as with disruption of family life, it is a pattern that emerges strongly in surveys of delinquent populations (Devlin, 1995). The lack in so many cases of any recent habit of attending school, let alone of any positive experience of education, was undoubtedly a major factor in the problems of attendance and commitment which constantly confronted the CueTen staff. Nevertheless, there were cases where what CueTen offered was apparently different enough to make a difference:

He was still on the roll but hadn't attended here for two years. Apex gave him stability.

Although a small number of the young people interviewed claimed never to have liked or enjoyed school, most said that the difficulties began when they started their secondary education. Some claimed that the work was too difficult, or that they could not see any purpose in learning certain subjects. Others were confused by the lay-out of the school and the requirement to move around the building between classes; this provided opportunities, which perhaps began as accidents, to 'go missing'. Many attributed their difficulties to the attitude of the teachers: those who are seen as rejecting school are liable to be rejected in turn.

It is not surprising that a project that required attendance over a 26-week period, thus removing the young person from the school system during what is supposed to be a crucial period in their education, should have received so many referrals of young

people who were achieving little at school, if they were attending at all. The CueTen record of referral asked for the expectations schools had of the young person's examination prospects, and the following quote is representative of many responses:

He is so far behind with his work owing to his very poor attendance that it is highly unlikely that he will be successful with any exams.

The project was certainly seen by some social workers as providing an important resource not so much for the persistent offender, but for the less serious offender who also had school-based problems. There is no doubt, however, that with very few exceptions the young people who started at CueTen were members of the target group originally envisaged. They were persistent offenders, by the criteria used in Fife and elsewhere, and in most cases they had already acquired a substantial criminal career by the time they came to CueTen. The problems that they brought with them were characteristic of the general population of persistent young offenders, although a higher proportion than has been found in other studies had some experience of local authority care, whether as a result of local social work practice or of a higher than usual incidence of problems in family relationships. These characteristics inevitably had implications for the kind of work that the staff were able to do, and the way they were able to do it.

The CueTen programme

Starting at CueTen

This section considers the programme of work offered at CueTen and the processes involved in delivering it, starting with the young people's first contacts with the project. As explained above, the young person and their parent or carer would initially meet some of the project staff as part of the referral process, normally visiting the premises to get an understanding of what the project had to offer and what expectations staff had of young people attending the project. The young people were then given an opportunity to reflect on what they had been told, and were handed a leaflet that outlined the structure of the programme and contained the statement of agreement to the conditions of attendance at CueTen which all young people had to sign if they were to be accepted onto the next intake.

Young people were, then, asked to make a choice about coming to CueTen; but it was a choice made within serious constraints, and there could be no guarantee at this stage of the authenticity of their commitment. Some felt that they had no real choice:

If I didn't come here I would get put away. Social worker didn't say that, but I knew it.

I have a panel pending, I don't want to get put away, the social worker said this would help, that the panel wouldn't be so strict if I was coming here.

I have to stick at this, it's my last option, most other people here have been in homes, I don't want that.

This is my last option, if I muck up here I'm going to secure; the panel said that [from a young person already in residential care].

Most of the young people had very negative attitudes to school, sometimes to the point where almost anything would have been preferable:

I chose to come here rather than school, but I wasn't sure what we'd be doing.

I agreed to come here as I would rather be here than school.

Some of those whose initial agreement was somewhat half-hearted, or who saw attendance at CueTen as the lesser of two evils, went on to participate actively and even to enjoy what the programme had to offer; they were among the group who were content to attend CueTen but had difficulty in 'moving on' to the next phase of their development:

Originally I wasn't too keen on coming here, but it's good; the work is so different from school, and it might be useful.

Even after initial visits, discussions and explanations, many of the young people had little real idea of what to expect from the CueTen programme, except that in some way it might help them to get a job:

Don't have any real expectations, suppose it might help me.

Came for interview, told me bit about it, gave me leaflet, seemed interesting.

The actual premises surprised some:

Thought it might be like a sports centre, crossed with a children's home.

Thought that a young offenders' project would have more security.

Gradually, folklore and gossip began to develop, and young people who came after the first year or so of the project had often heard something about it beforehand; they would mention a friend or relative who had been in an earlier intake and had reassured them that they would find it bearable, or even on occasions enjoyable. Their understanding of what would actually take place at CueTen remained rudimentary, however: several said that despite what they had been told they still thought that it would be like school, and they were invariably pleased when they discovered that it was not:

I thought this place was going to be like school but with *more* discipline, thought I'd be sitting in a classroom. I didn't know it was going to be so much to do with getting work; I hadn't read the leaflet.

I didn't think it could be so different, it is totally not like school.

I didn't go to school because the teachers kept making a fool of me. Here you can talk to them and you don't get a punishment exercise when you are stuck.

Here they ask my opinion, and listen. I can tell them if I have a problem.

They don't shout at you here, they *ask* you to do things.

Countless references were made in the interviews to the willingness of the CueTen staff to listen and discuss difficulties or problems. The difference between their experience of school and their experience of CueTen was crucial for these young people, virtually all of whom were not only offenders but had rejected or been rejected by the formal education system. The first task for the CueTen staff was to engage with them, to catch their imagination and mobilise their commitment as school did not. Occasionally this was spectacularly successful: one young person whose alienation from school seemed complete - 'I kept getting into trouble for bunking off, but I only had to go for two hours on a Wednesday so I didn't think it would matter' - attended CueTen daily with virtually no absences. CueTen's achievements in this respect were recognised by experienced guidance teachers:

Apex can work with the 15-year old disaffected with school; they may even do similar 'work', but it is not in a school, they are not restricted by all the rules of a school.

We will have trouble keeping him contained until he is an official leaver. Apex met his needs, but in the present format school does not.

The first block

The focus of formal activity at the project was on the world of work, or, in the words of the project's publicity material:

the creation and development of employment and employment related opportunities as the principal focus through which all the programme activity is channelled.

The twenty-six week programme at CueTen originally started with a thirteen-week block which involved daily attendance at the project. The young people were collected from their homes in the morning, normally by taxi, and returned at the end of the session. Following an induction period, during which they were introduced to the programme, and essential rules and health and safety information were explained, they would embark on a training programme designed to help them learn through active participation. The individual components, or modules, were delivered in group settings, and covered skills and topics such as drawing up a personal skills inventory, the value of training and employment and the barriers to participation, how to deal with authority and conflict, and how to disclose relevant issues from the past. The staff worked to help the young people develop realistic and reasonable attitudes, towards social life in general and towards training and employment in particular. On occasions this part of the programme was extended, to allow the staff to continue working with

young people who did not seem ready for external placements, or who were particularly reluctant to attend work or college.

Developments and refinements of practice occurred throughout the life of the project, as staff identified difficulties and sought to meet them. As the first few weeks of the early intakes had proved to be a difficult time for some young people not used to having to abide by any routine, the staff decided on the gradual phasing-in of attendance on the fifth intake, in an effort to make the initial experience of attending CueTen less daunting. The young people were expected to attend for two days in the first week, with one day added each week until full-time attendance was attained. Although not all the young people were appreciative - 'I'd rather I was coming here for the whole week, get straight into it full time' - others found the gradual build-up helpful and preferable to an immediate expectation of full-time attendance. The staff also found the later intakes generally more manageable, with their more gradual introduction to CueTen and the time this gave the young people to absorb their new circumstances and take in new information. This induction, or introductory, phase was also intended to give both parties a chance to decide in a more measured way whether attendance at the project was desirable, or even feasible. Staff hoped that the induction phase would allow the young people to make a more informed choice, by giving time for ideas and expectations to be clarified: those who positively chose to continue would then be more committed and have a greater chance of completing the programme. As explained later in this report, there is little clear evidence that this aim was achieved; failure to complete the programme remained common, despite, in some cases, intensive efforts to re-build interest and commitment through meetings and discussions with social workers and family members.

Another change, introduced during the sixth intake, was to reduce the number of days on which attendance was expected to four a week. During the first intake the normal attendance was for four full days and one half day, but to provide the staff with time to attend to other tasks, it was decided that for the second intake an additional half-day was needed, so that Mondays and Fridays had become half-days only. Staff found, however, that some young people decided that it was not worth coming to the project for only a few hours, and therefore dropped the requirement to attend on Mondays, at the same time extending the hours of attendance on Fridays; by freeing an entire day, this allowed more time for development work. During the ninth intake further modifications to the hours of attendance became necessary to accommodate staff shortages.

The differences between what CueTen expected of the young people and what they had been doing previously are striking: very few had been following anything like a normal routine of regular education before starting at CueTen. Some were described by their social workers or project staff as 'virtually out of control...not doing anything positive', and 'not having basic social skills...don't get them at home'. Throughout the programme the project staff had constantly to address these issues, encouraging the young people to reflect on their attitudes and their behaviour, and its consequences, potential and actual, for themselves and others. Their attitudes to offending and their general anti-social behaviour were constantly challenged. They were encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions and to reflect on behaviour which had led to damaging situations, in particular their abuse of drugs or alcohol. Some of the young

people refused to accept that their drug or alcohol consumption was of any real consequence, while others acknowledged that it had caused difficulties without necessarily feeling that they had to renounce its pleasures:

I know that smoking cannabis causes problems....I am going to give it up, but it keeps me in a good mood.

Now I'm not interested in drugs or thieving...still drink, can't give up everything.

Others spoke more generally of the social learning they had achieved at CueTen:

I've calmed down since I came here. Don't know why, but I definitely have.

This place has been OK, they've taught me things like how to be assertive but not aggressive, now I think about my future and will stay out of trouble and get on.

Much of what is described in these quotations is work not directly connected with employment or training, and one of the earliest discoveries made by the staff was that these young people were generally neither able nor willing to work steadily through a structured formal curriculum, as a group of well motivated older offenders might have done. Group processes required constant attention, if the content of the programme was to have any impact. Nevertheless, the project staff also tried to stress that the young people did have positive qualities and the capacity to change their circumstances. The CueTen staff were certainly not the first adults to tell them that they needed to change some of their attitudes and forms of behaviour, and in particular that they must learn what behaviour is appropriate to what setting - for instance, what may be acceptable among a group of close friends may not be acceptable in a wider, perhaps more formal, setting; but they also conveyed to the young people that they themselves could have a positive input into the process of obtaining work, or even into training as an introduction to work. Staff indicated which aspects of the young people's conduct they had to take responsibility for changing, while also stressing the positive and potentially valuable contributions they could make to improving their immediate situation and future prospects. They were encouraged to value what they had to offer, through individual work on strengths and weaknesses as well as through the groupwork programme. This could mean straightforward educational work, for example on basic literacy; and the young people who had made some commitment to the project found 'doing work' of this kind more acceptable at CueTen than they had at school:

I actually enjoy coming here, like the folks for some reason. At school I stuck out and if anything happened they blamed me.

Only missed about four days here, at school I only went about four times!

I definitely do not want to get chucked out of here and have to go back to school.

Social workers and teachers too spoke of the relevance of the work at CueTen, and the way the programme was able to focus on areas of work that were obviously appropriate to the young people's needs and interests, unlike some of the school curriculum:

What's the point of trying to make them do German? They don't see any relevance and so won't go.

Schools don't really want any of these difficult kids, they just concentrate on conventional grade subjects and no longer teach groups about things like citizenship.

The local careers service confirmed to the young people that some optimism about their entry to the world of work was reasonable as, contrary to what some apparently believed, there were jobs for young people in Fife, though they 'can't all be motor mechanics'. The young people were therefore encouraged to consider other, less traditionally 'masculine', alternatives, but the CueTen staff did manage to obtain a number of work placements in traditional fields of male employment, such as a tyre and exhaust centre - where the placement was successfully taken up by a young woman. The young people were also reassured that for many job vacancies employers were looking primarily for personal qualities, such as enthusiasm, reliability and basic communication skills, and that the requirement for formal qualifications often came low down on their list of priorities.

An essential feature of the programme was its interaction with outside agencies. In the first block, this took the form of 'guest speakers' who visited the project to offer an insight into their own organisations, such as the Army or the Fire Service, or to provide useful and relevant information, as with members of the careers service or drug awareness counsellors. Relationships with the local police developed gradually: to begin with contact was spasmodic - the speed with which the project was established meant that little attention was given to the kind of relationships it should have with the police - but the police contribution to the programme became more regular and structured over time. The police contributed on specific topics, such as drug education, as well as visiting with the more general aim of breaking down barriers and promoting mutual understanding. Both the young people and the police officers involved thought these sessions useful, once initial suspicion and hostility had been overcome. Each group paid a number of visits to local employers, designed to provide an idea of the varied employment opportunities in the area and to give a realistic impression of different working environments. The success or otherwise of these visits depended heavily on the behaviour and attitude of the young people; some were marred by disruptive behaviour, not necessarily connected with the visit itself: sometimes pressures arising from other aspects of their lives made it difficult for young people to concentrate enough for the visit to be useful. Many, though not all, of the young people felt that these visits were of some value, even if only to inform them that they 'don't want to work there'.

A very important aspect of the programme was its relationship with the local colleges in Glenrothes and Kirkcaldy. Both colleges provided various 'taster' sessions to introduce the young people to the range of courses on offer, and to give them an idea

of what the experience of attending college could be like - something of which many had little conception. Representatives from both the colleges said that the appearance of the CueTen group on college premises had been a learning experience for them and other staff. Although the college staff were said to be experienced in working with youth groups, many of whom were attending college as part of a wider programme and were quite likely to lack strong individual motivation, some had encountered difficulties with the CueTen group. As a result, more care was taken to ensure that suitable and willing staff were 'matched' with the CueTen students. This suggests that, despite moves in recent years to widen access to further education, the young people at CueTen were still noticeably different from the normal run of college students (though it should be said that not all college staff felt that the behaviour and attitude of the Apex students were significantly different from those of many others). The Apex staff developed good, productive working relationships with these colleges, and worked to maintain these throughout the project. A shared commitment developed to ensuring that the young people benefited from the link, and that college tutors and managers were adequately prepared to understand and respond to the needs of the group. As one college manager explained:

We have learnt and adjusted. It has been a useful part of staff development.

Not all organisations were able to adjust in this way: one training organisation that was used during some of the earlier intakes to provide team-building exercises found the unpredictable and often negative behaviour of the Apex groups too difficult to manage. Although his view was probably not widely shared, one of the young people suggested a possible explanation of the particular kind of challenge that staff from other agencies found in the CueTen group - suggesting, too, that even a project as committed to integrating young offenders with the wider community as CueTen may still encounter problems of labelling and stigma which can have a direct impact on behaviour:

We're from Apex, we've got to act a bit different. Yes, we have a reputation to live up to.

The 'taster' courses provided varied according to the wishes of individuals as well as college resources, but regularly included subjects such as welding, computing and catering. Following the 'tasters', the college staff arranged individual programmes of study for some of the young people from CueTen. To encourage them to realise that their achievements could be recognised, and that they had not been 'written off', Glenrothes College arranged for the award of National Records of Achievement in appropriate cases (which turned out to be few). College certification was, however, introduced and continued throughout the project: these formal college 'awards' were generally welcomed. Many of the young people considered qualifications to be desirable or even essential, but had little sense of their own abilities; anything which helped to increase their confidence without producing unrealistic expectations was, the CueTen staff believed, likely to be helpful. Overall, the project's relationship with the colleges provides a good example of its capacity to develop its work in conjunction with sympathetic local organisations; all involved gained a better understanding of the needs of CueTen participants and what could realistically be expected of the programme.

The CueTen programme always involved sporting and other physical activities, and organisations such as the Fife Institute of Physical Education, Dunfermline Athletic F.C. and Scotquest were used to provide varied programmes of work, involving fitness assessments and regular exercise. This gave the young people an opportunity to experience some sports and activities that were not available, or not sympathetically provided, at school. In the words of one mother:

The P.E. teacher at school gave him a hard time because he was no good at rugby or cross-country, even though I wrote and explained that he was very asthmatic, but now he actually enjoys doing the sport.

Not all individuals welcomed the opportunity to participate: some objected to 'fitness being compulsory' and tried to avoid exercise. For others, though, the chance to participate in the kind of outdoor pursuits that more privileged groups tend to take for granted could bring real rewards:

Yesterday was good, we all walked up a hill, it was a mountain really, and from the top we could see all of Fife, it was brilliant!

It was inherent in Apex's philosophy of integration that CueTen should make use of mainstream local facilities, and that the young people should have the same access to resources as other people in the community, rather than either being excluded from some or receiving special or preferential treatment. The project therefore regularly used local recreational as well as educational facilities, such as the ice-rink, the snooker hall and other leisure resources. Staff regarded these leisure activities as an 'incentive for participation during training and for good behaviour', and the group members seem to have understood this:

We get to go out and do things like canoeing, but they stop these trips if the group misbehaves, which is fair enough.

When CueTen was recommended by friends and relatives to prospective new group members, it was invariably on the grounds that 'we get to play pool' or 'we'll go ice skating', rather than that they would learn the principles of equal opportunities or telephone interview techniques. This perception, if widely shared, might produce the objection that bad behaviour should not be rewarded; but there is no doubt that these trips away from the project could help to build a sense of group identity and group norms, and to establish levels of acceptable behaviour in differing public settings. There is no doubt, either, that such outings helped the staff, on occasions, to maintain control over the group. In general, the staff tried to balance each day so that the young people were not in the project workroom for both the morning and afternoon sessions; they found it necessary to arrange an outside visit for one session every day, to give variety and help to maintain interest - and staff sanity, since such visits gave some relief from the immediate pressures of managing the group.

Although the CueTen programme was planned to provide a coherent training and skills development curriculum, the volatile nature of the groups and the possibility of erratic individual behaviour created a constant air of unpredictability, which some external organisations - and, often, the CueTen staff themselves - found difficult to cope with.

Inevitably, the training modules which made up the formal curriculum were sometimes modified to fit the immediate circumstances. Carefully planned sessions could be and were totally disrupted by the actions of one individual who, for reasons which might be unrelated to anything happening at CueTen, had decided not to co-operate with the staff or other group members. In such situations the staff displayed a strong sense of team identity, supporting each other in resolving the problems; they would withdraw young people from the group to allow them time to cool down, or to talk over whatever was troubling them, while trying to minimise disruption to the main groupwork programme. Staff sought to make time to respond individually to young people who were angry or distressed without neglecting the overall needs of the group - a difficult, and sometimes impossible, balance to maintain.

Blocks two and three

The CueTen programme was originally designed with a second block of seven weeks and a third block of six weeks, making up the full 26-week programme. In practice, however, there was never a clear distinction between the second and third blocks, at least as far as the young people were concerned; and in retrospect it is not obvious what was originally intended to be distinctive about the final block, apart from providing a period of preparation for moving on. It makes sense to treat the second half of the CueTen programme as a single block of thirteen weeks, which was distinguished from the first half because full-time (or near full-time) attendance at the project was no longer required; the focus was to be on the individual training plans developed towards the end of the first block, which would now be implemented, involving part-time attendance at the project, work placements coupled with college attendance, or, where relevant, negotiated return to school on a part-time basis. These individual plans were intended to build on the young people's experiences and learning during their time at CueTen and to allow them to develop the interests and aptitudes which had been identified.

The process of developing realistic plans and implementing them proved to be very time-consuming in many instances, and this second phase of the programme proved to be the more difficult to deliver. Despite the time and effort devoted to providing work experience, which was of course central to Apex's aims and approach, the number of successful work placements was very limited. Staff had to negotiate with young people who were content to attend the project, but were not prepared to attend a work placement, or who were so restrictive in their requirements as to make a successful placement almost impossible to find. Others declared an intention to attend, only to walk out after a short while or fail to return for their second day, while the behaviour of others - a minority - was so disruptive and erratic as to make them unsuitable for any work setting. The staff, in response, tried to be realistic in their assessment of the young people's motivation to follow their individual training plans, a process which took up the first few weeks of the second half of the programme, but the original assumption that young people could and would move on at this stage often proved mistaken: young people who had successfully completed the first phase of the programme were not necessarily prepared to continue their progress away from CueTen, though some would have willingly stayed there for the full 26 weeks, or longer.

In a small number of cases the work placements did prove successful, and when this happened it was enthusiastically recognised by those responsible for the young people's supervision:

He settled in fantastic, we've had a real result....not done this sort of placement before (from a manager of a work placement).

The local employers who agreed to be involved were (perhaps by definition) positive in their attitudes towards the young people, even those who were not very committed or prepared to persevere with the placement. Some employers continued to demonstrate their support and willingness to 'try again' in the face of almost constant failure. The view of most employers was that as long as involvement with CueTen did not interfere with their prime business function they were willing to try to help; successful placements included a local garden centre, tyre and exhaust centres, the dockyards at Rosyth, and a local car-dealership.

Individual programmes of study were developed where possible, and college placements were organised for areas of interest as diverse as cartoon art, horticulture, catering and general construction skills. However, this aspect of the programme did not always work out as smoothly as at first envisaged, and the staff came to recognise that some young people who could cope with regular attendance at CueTen might lack the confidence or ability to attend the much larger and busier setting of a college, even when all feasible arrangements had been made for their support by college staff and continued contact with CueTen. Return to school on a part-time basis was also arranged for a small number of the young people, although regular attendance, even part-time, proved difficult to achieve. These young people had not had positive experiences of school, and (like their social workers) saw their time at CueTen as being about moving on, making progress, and preparing to enter the adult world of employment. Despite everyone's best intentions, it was difficult for them to see a return to school as an indicator of progress. Even the terminology generally used, 'going *back* to school', suggests a retrograde step, which most were not willing to take, some declaring defiantly that they had no intention of ever returning to school.

It was part of the original planning for CueTen that in addition to attendance at school, college or work, the young people would continue to attend the project itself during the second phase. In the first intake attendance was normally only for one day a week, and staff felt that this minimal level of contact might be the reason that some young people tended to lose interest in and commitment to the project. For subsequent groups attendance was increased to at least two days for all the young people, and some continued to attend full-time into what should have been the second phase. Contact with the project involved continued individual counselling and groupwork, but the young people were also encouraged to get involved in some local community project, as part of CueTen's commitment to trying to improve their self-esteem. Projects included a rock concert to raise funds for a local charity, a sponsored pool marathon for the benefit of the Cystic Fibrosis charity (chosen because one group member had a relative suffering from this condition), and the painting of a mural on a wall in a local day centre. Although these community projects were time-consuming and sometimes difficult to manage, staff thought them worthwhile since they encouraged a sense of community involvement and introduced the young people to the

idea that others could benefit from their efforts; they were also a way of putting into practice the team-building skills introduced in the first part of the programme. The young people had to work together as a group, communicate and negotiate with each other in a reasonable manner, make decisions and establish collective goals, agree specific tasks for individuals, and work to agreed schedules, if the projects were to be successful. Not every group became involved in such a project, and levels of commitment inevitably varied, but most of the young people who did become involved were at some stage committed and enthusiastic.

Towards the end of the programme final review meetings were held with all relevant parties, where progress was analysed and future plans discussed. Although it was not always possible to define courses of action closely or finally, the CueTen staff were committed to ensuring that every young person who left had some plan for the immediate future, even if this was only referral on to another agency, such as the careers service. While being clear that the young people themselves were the primary agents of their own futures, with support where appropriate from social workers, members of staff often continued to take an active interest in them after they had officially left the project, and welcomed those who continued to visit the project. They helped to make appointments, gave assistance in the completion of application forms, arranged college placements, and even, once, gave a young person a lift to an early morning interview. This continuing work (which shows that for some young people CueTen had become a valued source of care and support), was appreciated by social workers. As one explained:

CueTen did work far beyond their basic remit; they had engaged with him, and it is quite proper that they are seen as the ones who deal with all the 'good' aspects.

Intensity of contact

The CueTen programme was meant to start with daily attendance by the young people at the project; with the first group this meant attendance for four full days and one half-day, but, recognising the need to have time for satisfactory assessment, development and self-appraisal, the staff introduced a second 'free' half-day for the second intake. The basic hours of attendance for full days were 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., including a supervised meal break; the two half-days involved attendance between 10 and 12, giving a notional normal level of attendance of 19 hours each week. As mentioned above, the staff altered the attendance requirements for the sixth intake, but the nominal weekly hours remained the same. In practice, the notional thirteen weeks of the first block were sometimes extended or contracted to accommodate holiday periods and to take account of the fact that in some groups the young people had started at different times. Because of such contingencies as staff training days, public holidays, and various acts of God such as snow blizzards and high winds, the possible period of attendance in the first block ranged from 52 to 68 days, and for most young people was about 60 days. In terms of hours, this gave a notional total of about 225 hours of direct contact with the project and its staff during the first phase of the programme (well in excess of the recommended minimum of 100 hours over six months derived from research on effectiveness by Lipsey (1995)). As noted above, this was an ambitious programme, and it is not surprising that many young people found it

difficult to cope with its demands, and that actual rates of attendance were often very different from those formally required.

The attendance rates of the 44 young people in the first eight groups who formally completed the first block are shown in Table 4. As before, the numbers of young women in each category are shown in square brackets.

Table 4: Attendance in days during block one of the programme

Attendance in days	Number of young people
less than 30	2
30 - 39	11 [1]
40 - 49	8 [3]
50 - 54	5 [1]
55 - 59	13 [2]
60 +	5 [1]
Total	44 [8]

Actual attendance ranged from 22 to 67 days. The bare figures give only a limited impression of the amount of work actually done, since, for example, the young man who attended for only 22 days received a great deal of staff attention: he came from a very disrupted background and had spent much time in residential care. In the end he did not stay at CueTen, but his social worker appreciated the efforts the staff had made:

He was so damaged. We, the system, had let him down.

Some of the other lower figures for attendance are also, in fact, better than they look, since they were achieved by young men who joined their respective groups well after their formal start dates. On the other hand, the figure of 67 days, achieved twice, was in one case less impressive than it looks, since the young man concerned was a member of the second group who lost time and restarted the programme with the third intake. The figures do show, however, that over half of these 'completers' attended the project for the equivalent of at least ten weeks, which must for many be counted as a considerable achievement in view of their previous school (non-)attendance. It should also be remembered that the young people came from all over Fife, and apart from those from Glenrothes itself (20 of the total who started at the project), all had some distance to travel. Some claimed to feel uneasy about having to pass through areas that were strange to them, and others complained about the time the journey took:

I'm always the first to be picked up and the last to be dropped off. It takes ages.

Journeys to work or college placements in the second block, which were usually by public transport, were especially arduous.

In addition to direct contact with the young people and routine correspondence, the work of the CueTen staff involved attending meetings, telephone conversations with parents, employers and other professionals, and writing reports, in particular for the Reporter. Analysis of contacts recorded by the project staff (not all were recorded) for

the members of the first seven groups showed that the young people generated between five and 100 contacts. Those who attended the project only briefly or intermittently often generated a disproportionate number of such external contacts; those whose attendance was unproblematic were likely to require fewer anxious telephone calls. The 100 contacts were on behalf of the very troubled young man who attended for only 22 days. Of its nature, the second block of the programme required frequent contacts with outside agencies, particularly when educational placements were being arranged. The average number of contacts during this period for each young person who completed the programme in the first seven groups was 51, half of these on average being with other professionals, with a range of between nine and 54. The volume of work of this kind, and the pressures on resources associated with it, were thus variable and not readily predictable.

Although the project staff did not work formally with the young people's families, parents and carers were kept fully informed of the young people's progress, and staff gave a considerable amount of support over the telephone, mostly to mothers. Mothers commented in interviews that social workers had too many people to worry about and were too busy, whereas a CueTen member of staff was almost always available. From their point of view, it was also helpful to have contact with another professional (the CueTen staff member), who was in a position to offer a usefully different perspective on their child. CueTen staff were flexible and responsive in adapting their practice to young people's immediate needs and difficulties, which undoubtedly took up more of their time and energy than the original model envisaged. While remaining clear that they were not social workers but trainers, staff nevertheless sometimes had to act very much as social workers might, in acknowledging and responding to the sheer range and difficulty of the young people's problems, which in many cases effectively blocked progress on the programme. A few mothers came to rely on the availability of a CueTen trainer as a counsellor, and on a few occasions staff visited young people at home, to encourage attendance or identify the problems that were preventing them from participating fully in the project.

Developments and problems in practice

In the period covered by this report, January 1996 to October 1998, nine groups started at CueTen, and the first seven finished the programme. Inevitably, there were changes during this time in the work of the project, including those associated with staff changes. One member of staff left in February 1997 (returning to her previous employer) and was quickly replaced; this was initially on a temporary basis, but the worker concerned was later given a permanent post after competitive interview. In July 1997 another worker, who had been finding the work within the project particularly demanding, resigned, and was replaced in September by an experienced youth worker. The staff's original contracts of employment ran until June 1998, and from the beginning of that year uncertainty about the project's future probably contributed to more staff movement; the first replacement trainer left CueTen in February to take up another job with Apex, while one of the remaining two original trainers left in May to work for another organisation. Although two members of existing Apex staff were redeployed in June 1998 and joined the team at CueTen, one of these decided to seek employment nearer to his home - and presumably employment with more secure funding - and left in September. By October 1998 only one of the original trainers

remained at CueTen (in addition to the team leader and the administrator); staff resources had become strained in the previous months, making it impossible to undertake the development work, such as making new contacts with employers and college staff, on which the project depended. At times the staff could do little more than react on a daily basis to the problems that arose in the training room. The start of the ninth group had to be deferred for a week, and it operated on the basis of a three-day week until half way through the first block. Although the possibility of a secondment to CueTen from the Social Work or Education departments was discussed with senior management in Apex, nothing happened, and towards the end of 1998 there was a sense among the staff that the project had been left to 'get on with things' and cope as best it could with dwindling staff resources. Had secondment been built into the initial plans for the project, some of the anxieties about employment security which inevitably arose towards the end of the funding period would have been avoided; but secondment had not been considered at that stage, and in any case the inter-agency tensions described in the previous chapter might well have made it impossible to organise.

As noted above, the nature of the client group meant that the staff had constantly to adapt their practice in response to demands and difficulties, both changing the programme as a whole and modifying it to accommodate individual needs and interests. Some young people enjoyed working in a small group, and responded positively to the staff's concern; others never managed to control their anger or their demands for attention enough to behave in an acceptable way. Some preferred very small groups, which came about when members of the original intake were excluded; others were happier when two groups were combined for a particular activity. Some were upset or intimidated by the disruptive or violent behaviour of other group members; some, far from constantly seeking attention, were prepared to attend without apparently being much affected by anything that happened, and needed to be prompted into participation by the staff.

Just as the behaviour of individuals differed, so did that of groups. The first group attended regularly; one young man attended on every possible day during the first block, while another five were only absent on a few occasions. In contrast, the second group had a very poor record of attendance and a generally disrupted life. Nominally there were nine members of this group, but the actual numbers attending were always lower, and there were no truly reliable attenders. New members were admitted to the programme in an attempt to boost numbers, but this created more problems than it solved, since parts of the programme had to be repeated, creating problems of boredom for some and difficulties in catching up for others. The group was never able to establish a cohesive identity, and only two young people were attending at the end of the 26 weeks. In the third group, six young people attended regularly; another, a young woman, remained in touch for virtually the whole programme, while often missing sessions because of hospital appointments. In the fourth group only three young people attended regularly, and one of them behaved so badly that he was excluded, so that only two were still attending by the end of the programme. Group five had an unsettled start, and attendance built up gradually; six young people completed the first block, but these included the two shown in Table 4 as having attended for under 30 days, and only three continued to the end of the programme. The sixth group too had a fragmented start, with new referrals being accepted as late

as week nine; four young people attended regularly, and completed, or virtually completed, the programme. The start of the seventh group was more settled, seven young people attending regularly during the first block, and five going on to complete the course. The final intake considered here, the eighth, started with nine young people, but settled to five, two of whom had less than satisfactory attendance levels. Expressed in terms of trainee days at the project, the average for the eight groups during the first block was 327, with a range of 237 days in the second group to 478 in the seventh.

The staff always took absences seriously; they investigated them promptly, by a telephone call when possible, or by letters to the young people and their parents; and on a few occasions they visited the home. The support of social workers was enlisted, with mixed results. Some social workers considered it crucial to the success of the placement at CueTen that they should provide support, particularly in the 'early days' of a young person's time at the project, and that they should consistently follow up and reinforce the messages conveyed at CueTen; these workers wanted to be informed as soon as problems arose. Others, however, acknowledged that the pressures of other duties meant that they were not able to respond to problems like non-attendance as quickly as the project staff would have liked. There were instances when the staff at CueTen had the impression that a young person had been 'dumped' on them - referred and then, at least for a time, forgotten. This impression was sometimes confirmed by grateful social workers:

They kept him off our backs, they dealt with him. That gives us respite.

That is the longest period without his mother getting onto me that I can remember.

The message that the CueTen staff tried consistently to convey, that attendance mattered, was not always reinforced by social workers. While the messages that social workers conveyed certainly did not determine the young people's responses, there is no doubt that a wavering commitment to regular attendance could be weakened by a sense that the social worker did not regard it as important - an issue addressed in the next chapter.

Attendance was in itself no guarantee that constructive work could be done. Problems of motivation, concentration and commitment on the part of the young people should have been and to an extent were expected, but the staff had to develop strategies for dealing with such problems as part of their overall learning and acquisition of new skills. Staff realised early on that if the young people decided that, for whatever reason, an activity was not going 'to work', they could ensure that it would not. In these circumstances, the staff would adapt their original plans rather than persevere with them in the face of resistance. After some diversion, they would try to return to the original activity and explore why it had been condemned as 'rubbish'. Violent and disruptive behaviour was, however, a less predictable problem, and caused severe difficulties at times; it resulted in the suspension and ultimately exclusion of some young people, and on occasions in the suspension of a whole group.

Rules and boundaries were regularly tested by many of the young people, as was to be expected, but constant negative and disruptive behaviour had damaging effects on the rest of the group and on the extent to which planned work could be undertaken. Staff had to spend considerable time and effort in challenging the negative attitudes and behaviour of some young people in an attempt to encourage them to interact within the group in an acceptable way. When such attitudes were expressed collectively, however, it became impossible to continue with the programme. An example of such a breakdown came from the fourth group, a number of whose members already knew each other; they immediately adopted a united front of non-cooperation, and the entire group was suspended on two occasions. The first suspension was for one day in the third week; all relevant parties were informed, and the group members were asked to reconsider their commitment to the project. The second period of suspension was for a whole week, during which time review meetings were held with social workers, parents and the young people themselves, to establish whether the programme could continue (which it eventually did). Although later groups presented problems of management, and individuals had to be suspended, this was the only time when the possibility of aborting the programme was seriously considered. Later groups also included some who knew each other from previous placements:

I really like it here, I've met up with mates from Melville [a residential care establishment], it's really good.

Collective disruptive action in the later groups took the form of drug-taking (which some young people claimed made them feel 'mellow' and 'placid') rather than direct confrontation, and five members of the eighth group were suspended after an incident involving drug use in the third week.

The one aspect of the programme as originally envisaged which never materialised was the 'buddy' or befriending system, intended to support the young people through the immediate post-CueTen period. No suitable or interested employers were identified initially, and the later demands of the day-to-day management of the project, including those associated with responding to crises, meant that the project staff never found time for the development work which would have been needed to make a 'buddy' system a reality. The feasibility of such a scheme therefore remained untested; although it was an inherent part of their original conception of CueTen, Apex's senior management - who might have had more time and scope than the project staff to exploit their existing network of contacts with employers - did not actively pursue the possibility.

Conclusions

To summarise this account of the content and style of work at CueTen: the programme as originally envisaged required substantial adaptation in practice. Derived from Apex's experience of working with adults, it proved too formal, too tightly structured, and too concerned with content rather than process, to be fully applicable to the juveniles who came to CueTen, generally with negative experiences of and attitudes towards education (and sometimes with no recent experience of it at all), often from disrupted and unhappy family backgrounds, and (almost by definition) heavily involved in subcultures of delinquency. The staff had constantly to adjust and adapt: the crucial

movement was away from a rational model of formal education and training to a recognition of the less rational elements of individual emotion and group processes - to something much more like social work, with both individuals and groups. While aware of the importance of family relationships for the young people's motivation and behaviour, the CueTen staff were not in a position, given the location of the project on a single site and its Fife-wide catchment area, to develop regular or formal work with families; nor is it certain that they would have had the skills or resources to do so. The staff often felt, too, that they had to cope with the demands of the young people, and adapt their practice accordingly, very much on their own: Apex collectively had no experience of working with this age group, and no management system that could deliver regular support and advice. Indeed, it was consistent with Apex's established style of work that responsibility should be devolved in this way: project staff were expected to manage, to get on with things without the expectation of the kind of support and supervision that is institutionalised in many social work agencies. The CueTen staff often found their work stressful and draining; and they had to manage the stress largely without support from their own organisation.

The major reason for the gulf between the programme as initially presented on paper and the programme as delivered lies, of course, in the characteristics of the young people who came to CueTen. The staff had no experience of working with young people whose family backgrounds were so disturbed and of such immediate importance; with older teenagers family problems are generally less pressing, either because they have broken down finally and are no longer so important, or because they have been more happily resolved. CueTen was not designed to provide systematic help or support to families, and one of the key discoveries for the staff was that the young people's offending could not be understood in abstraction from their other problems, associated with their experiences of deprivation, loss, violence and rejection. The process of work at CueTen was, as a result, far less tidy and rational than the original blueprint for the programme implied. It was also complicated, at times, by the different messages the young people had been given about what the purposes of the project were and what they could expect from it, an issue discussed in the following chapter, which places CueTen in a broader local context.

CHAPTER FOUR: CUETEN IN ITS LOCAL CONTEXT

What social workers expected from CueTen

The role of the social worker in the referral process was crucial. The original intention was always that social workers from the local area teams would make the referrals, subject to later ratification by the Children's Hearing, and apart from the brief period in which schools made referrals directly this was the system that operated. The social workers who made the referrals inevitably did so with differing hopes and expectations. For some, the referral was a 'last resort' effort:

A last-ditch attempt to help prepare him for a career.

Been through every social work system, we've tried everything with him.

He had spiralled out of control...not surprising that they [CueTen] couldn't hold onto him.

I have only used it as a last resort, as nothing else available. I didn't expect him to show any real commitment, and he hasn't.

Low expectations on the part of the social worker are likely to have been transmitted to the young people, further reducing the prospects of success. Some social workers, however, thought that a referral should be based on something more than desperation, and should take account of what CueTen had to offer:

I wouldn't refer anyone who is so disrupted and disruptive that there is very little likelihood of them succeeding or at least getting some benefit.

The very troublesome pest who is persistently bothering the local community is probably more likely to benefit from what CueTen have to offer than the embittered persistent offender.

The importance attached to attendance, both in terms of regularity and duration, varied among social workers. Some felt that the project could be most useful in helping the young people through a specific stage in their lives, and that attendance for the whole 26 weeks of the programme, while desirable, might not be essential.

What they get out of the project overall is more important than strict enforced attendance.

If they decide they aren't going to attend then so be it, we just have to accept it, that they don't see it as relevant to them at that point.

The general consensus among social workers was that these young people could not be forced to do things they were not willing to do, but most workers wanted them at least to have the opportunity to become aware of the options that would become available

to them if they stayed at CueTen long enough. Some workers, however, had more modest hopes and expectations of CueTen than Apex might have wished:

It isn't going to have much influence on many...it is effectively a short-term containing facility, but a necessary one for that group at that point in time.

At least if they are using their time constructively that is less time they have available to be offending.

The CueTen staff naturally felt at times that such limited ambitions were unhelpful; while doing their utmost to ensure full attendance and participation, they did not always receive as active support from the social workers as they would have liked.

Other social workers, however, talked more optimistically of the young people learning to behave and interact within a group and within set boundaries, of their being encouraged to feel that their input was valued, and of their learning about the process of gaining employment:

Thought he would see what opportunities do exist, what is available, give him hope.

This looked to be a novel and creative way of dealing with difficult kids.

This provides a structure, a routine to life, can help build up confidence and social skills; they hadn't enjoyed school, but can get an enjoyable positive experience while being prepared for the adult world of work.

CueTen provides a unique experience for some young people; some stick at it that we never thought would.

As already mentioned, the overall number of referrals to the project was lower than originally expected, and discussions with some social workers suggested that the original annual target of 32 'persistent young offenders' aged 14-16 and liable to be made the subject to a supervision requirement was over-ambitious:

We don't have large numbers of appropriate referrals. We get a few serious offenders, but they stand out as unusual.

Social workers also made it clear that for many the requirement that the referral be followed by a Children's Hearing was a negative feature of the referral process. Some stressed the importance of keeping young people out of the official Children's Hearing system; this stance made them reluctant to refer young people to CueTen:

We have persistent *petty* offenders that we work with on a voluntary basis. Don't see any benefit in entering the Hearing system.

Going to a panel can definitely be an issue; we would never put someone into the system to get them into CueTen. We do manage to keep some out, as panel members and Reporters know the work we are doing, and so a supervision order is superfluous as the work carries on regardless.

Some social workers were reluctant to recommend to a Hearing that attendance at CueTen should be required even when the young person had already 'entered the system'. They feared the possible consequences if the placement did not work out and the case had to be returned to the Hearing as a failure, leading to the possibility of more intrusive measures of intervention than would otherwise have been thought necessary. While formally there is no penal 'tariff' within the Children's Hearing system, in practice social workers tended to believe that disposals were likely to become more severe in the course of an offending career:

We had to up the tariff for him. If it fails they will look at residential care.

It can quickly escalate once you are in the Hearing system.

I try to avoid that sort of *interference* with the work I'm doing. If there is a hiccup I don't want to have to report back to a panel.

While there was little experience to support the view that failure at CueTen would lead to an escalation of sanctions from the Children's Hearing, the possibility of its doing so was mentioned in interview by one of the panel members:

Many would view this as the last flexible alternative within the community, and if a lad did not get on at CueTen we would look at the next step, and that would often be something more rigid and probably residential.

Some social workers would have welcomed the opportunity to work in a more flexible, collaborative way with CueTen; they felt that the chances of success would have been greater if attendance were voluntary and the young person did not feel a need to rebel against imposed authority, and that voluntary attendance would allow the development of more flexible and creative 'packages' of work. Interviews with the young people themselves suggested, however, that for many it was the element of compulsion that got them to attend in the first instance, even though this effect did not always prove durable. While voluntary attendance, with appropriate encouragement from social workers and perhaps from parents, might have produced fewer problems of resentment and disruption, it is hard to believe that more than a few young people would have come regularly to the project on a voluntary basis; the CueTen programme, however malleable staff tried to make it, was simply not designed to accommodate young people who might drop in when they felt a need for support or advice.

It might have been expected that over the life of the project social workers would become more familiar with its aims and style of work, that mutual understanding would develop, and that this would lead to more, and more appropriate referrals. While for some social workers CueTen did become an accepted feature of the local scene, problems persisted in the quality of information CueTen received from social workers, and these are discussed below. Few social workers became reliable allies of the project, in part because of a high level of change and movement in the Social Work Department: the 86 young people who started at CueTen came from more than 50 social workers. Some social workers believed that the CueTen staff expected too much of the young people, particularly in terms of their commitment to work. Others

commented that they had sometimes felt a certain inconsistency in decisions taken at the project: for no obvious reason, some young people appeared to get a number of 'final warnings', while others were excluded more quickly. Some suggested that they should have been more involved with the decision to exclude -

it could be like the referral, but in reverse. We could all get round and talk

- instead of just being told that it had happened. On the other hand, CueTen staff on occasions found it very difficult to get social workers to attend meetings to discuss the kind of problems which might lead to exclusion, which in the nature of things often had to be called at short notice. Social workers did generally accept that the staff at CueTen had to make decisions about individual young people with an eye to the overall welfare of the group, and that the project staff knew more than the social workers about current problems in the young people's behaviour. They recognised, too, that some failures were inevitable, and that success would often be partial:

Even a very limited success is better than nothing.

We can't expect to get all these young people past the finishing post, but we must all do our best to get as many as far round as we can.

Despite some reservations about the details of its practice, most social workers considered CueTen a valuable resource:

It meets a specific need, there is nothing else quite like it. Social work, and schools, will certainly notice the gap if the funding stops.

In the dominant view of social workers, the need CueTen met was quite age-specific. This view was shared by providers of education and training, and by the young people themselves. It was that CueTen was of its nature a 'post-school' resource, helpful as part of young people's transition to the 'almost adult' world, since it gave an opportunity to those still of compulsory school age, though not attending, to focus on the next phase of their lives and begin to understand the 'world of work'. The natural progression from CueTen would then be into work, training, or a college placement; a return to school could be seen as a step backwards.

I'm meant to be going back to school, but I'm not! Wouldn't mind going to college.

You can't expect them to go back to school. None of them do. It's ideal for the 15 year-old with about a term left at school.

It's impossible to get back into school after being out for 26 weeks. It's pointless to try to get them back in, they will just flounder.

Most of these kids have failed at school, but at Apex there is less pressure on them, and they are not so unique. They don't stand out, they can get on, but the younger ones might never be able to return to mainstream school.

This view may also have been that of Children's Panel members. The one known instance where a Children's Panel did not agree with the social worker's recommendation of a requirement to attend CueTen involved a boy who had just reached the age of 14. The Panel members apparently thought that it would be too difficult for him to be reintegrated into school after a period at CueTen, and instead requested residential care. The CueTen staff themselves continued to believe that the project could deal effectively with the younger age group, in an environment where there was perhaps 'less pressure' than at school and where the young person would not 'stand out', but there were in practice few cases of successful reintegration to mainstream schooling. There is little doubt that the value of CueTen was inherently that it could help with the achievement of the transition towards greater independence and 'almost adult' status.

Inter-agency communication

Chapter Two considered the circumstances in Fife at the time when CueTen was established, and the history of problematic inter-agency communication described there had direct effects on the project's work. The provision of relevant information to the project was an issue throughout its life. The project staff themselves, again reflecting Apex's general style and lack of experience with a younger age group, did not originally realise the importance of having full information on the young people at the time of referral. They assumed that they would be given all relevant details at the outset, and be kept informed of changes in the young people's circumstances, in the same way as they gave weekly reports to social workers or schools on the progress of the young people at CueTen. This was not the case, and the project staff often had to seek additional information, even after modifying the referral and initial information forms to cover all relevant issues. Although no-one explicitly said that as a voluntary (and novel) agency CueTen should not receive comprehensive information (and despite the official view of social work managers that it should), the project staff felt at times that relevant information was withheld. For example, when CueTen staff sent out forms requesting additional information from social workers, and the forms were not returned, or returned not fully completed, the staff sometimes felt that this was indicative of the way they were viewed by the 'professionals' - as marginal to their main concerns, and not deserving a high priority as social workers managed their heavy workloads.

Social workers' practice varied, of course, and some gave as much information as the CueTen staff asked for; but there were others who, the project staff knew, would not be so forthcoming. The apparent unwillingness on the part of some social workers to involve the project fully sometimes extended beyond the initial stage of referral and information-gathering; fundamental developments could take place in a young person's life, such as changes in household composition or even a move to another address, about which the project staff found out only by chance, from the driver who brought the young people to CueTen, or from another member of the group. Requests to be kept informed about changes in the circumstances of young people in local authority care were sometimes ignored, so that the staff found themselves confronted by troubled or troublesome behaviour without having any idea of possible reasons for it. Such problems of communication are certainly not unique to CueTen; they are always

liable to arise when a specialised project relies for its referrals on other agencies. Such problems are, however, more likely if the referring agents see the project as a dumping-ground for their most intractable cases, or if they have an agenda of their own and a view of the project's purposes which is not wholly compatible with the project's own perceptions. As we have seen, this was the case with some, though certainly not all, of the social workers who referred young people to CueTen. The experience of CueTen in this respect highlights the need for attention to be given from the first stages of project planning to structures of communication and support in the network of agencies within which projects have to work, a point somewhat neglected in recent research on the effectiveness of community-based programmes for offenders (Smith, 1997), which has tended to focus narrowly on the most visible aspects of work and ignore the importance of its local context (Pawson and Tilley, 1996).

Information from the police was also a problematic issue throughout the project's life. As was noted in Chapter Two, the police were not really included in the discussions which led to the establishment of CueTen, and although the project staff asked for details of young people's offending histories from the first months of the project, these were not forthcoming, and the problem was only taken up by Apex at a senior level in the third year of the project's work. It was perhaps another sign of Apex's inexperience in working with young people that systematic information on offending careers was not sought from the outset as part of the referral process, but staff quickly realised that without this knowledge their ability to plan counselling and training sessions relevant to individuals' needs was limited. All they had to go on was whatever information the social worker had given at the time of the referral, and the young person's own, not necessarily reliable, version of events. Late in the project's life talks also began between Apex management and the police about the feasibility of keeping the CueTen staff up to date with the young people's offending pattern during their time at the project, but at the time of writing nothing had been agreed, and the staff continued to rely on what information they happened to be able to glean from other sources.

Another possible symptom of the erratic state of inter-agency communication, and of the pressures which followed local government reorganisation, was that although staff in the Social Work Department and elsewhere had always intended to set up a local advisory group for the CueTen project this was not actually done until the project had been running for over a year: the group first met in March 1997. The impetus came from the Service Manager (Children and Families) in the Social Work Department rather than from Apex, whose senior staff tended to be sceptical of the value of such bodies, and it was he who chaired the group. Its members included representatives of the Reporter's Department, the police, Social Work (in addition to the chair), Glenrothes College, the Education Department, and a member of the Children's Panel. A representative of local employers was invited, but attended only one meeting, as did a representative of the young people at the project; neither group, therefore, had a voice in subsequent discussions. The advisory group was a setting in which problems of communication and information flow such as those discussed above could be explored, along with the recurring question of how to attract more referrals; but the group lacked executive authority, and never became the kind of advocate for the project which the staff had hoped for.

The circumstances of the project's establishment, and the support or lack of support which it received from local agencies, also had an impact on the CueTen staff's perspective on the project and their commitment to it. Contrary to the practice adopted in several other special projects, CueTen had no staff who were seconded from other agencies, and the destabilising effects of the consequent sense of insecurity of employment were mentioned above. Even while the project was still in its early stages staff had to consider the question of future funding and their own future employment prospects, rather than being able to concentrate without distraction on their immediate tasks and possibilities for development. These difficulties would have been largely avoided if the staff had been able to feel secure in their employment, but secondment would, of course, have required an approach to establishing a network of inter-agency support that was more measured than the one Apex in fact adopted.

Did CueTen work with the intended target group?

The previous chapter summarised some salient characteristics of the young people who started at CueTen and concluded that, in the main, they met the criteria that were agreed in Fife as defining persistent offending. The other side to this question is whether there was a substantial number of young people who also met these criteria and could have attended the project but were not referred, or not accepted. As we have seen, the overall number of referrals was lower than Apex had expected; this can be partly explained by the prevailing view of the type of young person most likely to benefit from CueTen - roughly, a 15 year-old with school problems and a developing criminal career, and the requirement that the young person should appear before a Children's Hearing must also have deterred some social workers from referring potentially eligible young people. Nevertheless, social workers tended to claim that they did not know many young people who were persistent enough offenders to satisfy the entry criteria for CueTen. To gain a firmer sense of how many potentially appropriate referrals were not made, the police agreed to check their records in March 1997 for 14 and 15 year-olds with at least three charges recorded against them in the previous 12 months, and at least one of these in the previous six months. From this check a total of 37 juveniles was identified, of whom eleven had been referred to CueTen. Of the remaining 26, four had recently been made the subject of a residential requirement (s.44(1)(b)), and had a total of almost one hundred charges logged against them, while the remainder had between three and 16 charges. Table 5 gives a breakdown of the number of charges for this group of 22 young people - 20 males and two females.

Table 5: Number of charges in twelve month period for those who had not been referred to CueTen

Number of charges	Number of young people
3 – 5	14
6 - 10	6
11-16	2
TOTAL	22

Further analysis of this group of 22 young people indicates that in the relevant twelve month period:

- five did not appear before a Children's Hearing, but instead were given warnings by the Reporter;
- seven were referred to a Children's Hearing on grounds of offending, only for the referral to be discharged;
- five were referred to a Children's Hearing on grounds other than offending, such as failing to attend school or being beyond parental control, and were made subject to supervision requirements on these grounds;
- five were referred to a Children's Hearing and made subject to supervision requirements on grounds of offending.

Because the search for persistent offenders undertaken by the police covered only those who were aged 14 or 15 in March 1997, there will inevitably have been some juveniles who were 15 years old for some, or even most, of the relevant period and were charged by the police, but did not appear on the list as they had attained the age of 16 by the date of the search. These figures do not suggest, however, that large numbers of young offenders who apparently met the referral criteria were not referred to CueTen. As we have seen, CueTen generally worked with 15 year-olds, and seven of the 22 young people identified by the police were only 14 at the time of the check, and therefore liable to be thought too young for the project; in the months that followed four of these seven were in fact referred to the project, as were three others from the group of 22. The evidence from the police records, then, largely supports the claim by social workers that there were comparatively few persistent young offenders who were not referred to CueTen, and it seems that despite the difficulties described above, and the staff's continual feeling that there ought to have been more referrals, the project did in practice retain a focus on the original target group. Whether this group was the right one for a project like CueTen is a question to be considered later.

Conclusions

The CueTen staff were presented with various problems which might not have arisen had the project been established more slowly, more carefully, and with more attention to local interests and sensibilities. Some basic questions, such as the kind of information the project required when a young person was referred, and its entitlement to know about continued offending and other developments in the young people's lives, were never satisfactorily resolved. These uncertainties increased staff anxiety and doubt as to how CueTen was viewed - what kind of resource it was thought to be. The match between the project's view of itself and others' views of it was not perfect. Some young people certainly came to CueTen without having received the messages about its purposes and expectations which the staff would have wished. Nevertheless, because there were not in fact as many young people in Fife who could reasonably be called persistent offenders as the Social Work Department had originally guessed, the project very largely worked with its intended target group, and of those who on the criterion of offending seemed to be eligible for referral but were not referred, some were not judged to be sufficiently serious offenders, others were thought to have more pressing problems, and only a few received more rather than less intensive intervention

than CueTen would have provided. The following chapter explores how the young people who did attend CueTen responded to what it offered.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG PEOPLE AT CUETEN - AND AFTER

Completion rates

It has been stressed that CueTen's programme was ambitious and, from the point of view of the young people, demanding. It was not to be expected that all the young people who started the programme would finish it. The numbers starting in each of the first eight groups, and the numbers who completed the first block and the entire programme, are shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Numbers of young people starting and completing the CueTen programme

Group Number	Number Starting	Number completing first block	Number completing all programme
One	10	7	6
Two	11	3	2
Three	12 (3)	7 (1)	7 (1)
Four	9	4	2
Five	11	6	3
Six	10 (1)	5	4
Seven	13	7	5
Eight	9 (1)	5	-
Total	85 (5)	44	29

At the time of writing, five members of Group Eight were on the second block of the programme, and the ninth group was still on the first block (and all attending). The figures in brackets show the number of young people in each group who were attending for the second time, so a total of 80 individual young people started at CueTen in the first eight groups (another eight started in the ninth group, two of them for the second time), and attended for at least one day. Young people who completed the first block or the whole programme except for a few days are counted as completers. Forty-four (55%) of those who started completed the first block; and 29 (40% of the 72 who had reached that stage by October 1998) completed the entire programme; that is, 29 (74%) of the 39 in the first seven groups who completed the first block completed the whole programme. Completion of the first block was therefore a reasonable predictor of completion of the second; despite the staff's worries about maintaining motivation when the young people were no longer in almost daily contact with the project, the attrition rate in the first block was much higher than in the second.

Another good predictor of young people's likelihood of completing the programme was their record of offending in the twelve months before starting at CueTen. Table 7 shows the relationship between the number of charges in the previous year and completion of the programme.

Table 7: Completion rates and charges in the previous twelve months

	5 or fewer charges	6-15 charges	16 or more charges
Completers	13 (54%)	10 (42%)	1 (4%)
Non-completers	8 (24%)	15 (44%)	11 (33%)

The figures relate to the first six intakes, which provide the basis for the analysis of reoffending in the next chapter, since twelve months' follow-up data are not available for the later groups. (The figures exclude one young man, who died not long after starting at CueTen.) While the completion rates for the middle group, with between six and fifteen charges recorded against them in the twelve months before they started at CueTen, are very similar, there is a statistically significant difference (at the five per cent level, using chi squared) in the completion rates of the other two groups, those who were charged least and most frequently in the previous year. More than half of the 24 young people who completed the programme had five or fewer charges in that period, compared with a quarter of the non-completers; only one of the completers was in the most heavily charged group, compared with almost a third of the non-completers. It is reasonable to conclude that the difficulties of management the project staff encountered, and the time-consuming and energy-sapping work involved in their trying to encourage regular attendance, were largely caused by the behaviour of the most persistent offenders among the young people at CueTen.

Of the ten young women in the first six intakes, five completed the programme, compared with nineteen of the 48 young men. Three of the young women who completed had fewer than five charges in the previous twelve months, and, of the five young women who did not complete the programme, two had more than fifteen charges. The higher proportion of young women who completed the programme suggests a possible gender effect, but the difference is not statistically significant, and the numbers involved are small. As with the young men, the more persistent offenders among the young women were less likely to complete the programme.

Overall, the completion rates of 55% for the first block and 40% for the whole programme are not at first sight impressive. There are, however, indications from other studies that these rates are not seriously out of line with what might have been expected of the young people with whom CueTen was working. For example, Lucas *et al.* (1992, p. 12; see also Raynor and Vanstone (1996)) report an overall completion rate of 62% (75% when non-completion for benign reasons is excluded) for the STOP probation project in Mid-Glamorgan, which was considerably less demanding than the CueTen programme in terms of overall duration and intensity of attendance required (STOP entailed a total of 35 two-hour sessions and attendance twice a week, giving an overall duration of about 4½ months). Lucas *et al.* (1992) suggest that a combination of personal problems, low motivation and further offending can produce an attrition rate of around 50%, and note that completion rates for offenders aged under 21 were somewhat lower than for the older group. It should also be remembered that participants in the STOP programme faced the prospect of a return to court, and the possibility of a much more severe sentence, if they did not maintain a satisfactory level of attendance, whereas the young people at CueTen had no such incentive. In the light of these considerations, the completion rate for CueTen, though below what was envisaged and lower than the staff would have wished, need not be taken as firm

evidence of failure. It is possible, however, that the completion rate would have been higher had social workers given more consistently positive messages to the young people about what CueTen could offer them, and about the importance of consistent attendance. The following two sections give more qualitative information, firstly, about young people who left the programme more or less of their own volition, and secondly, about those who were excluded from the project, usually for violent or threatening behaviour.

Those who left

Twenty-six young people left the project either as a result of their own decision or because their behaviour outside the project led to changes in their circumstances, such as a move into secure accommodation, which made their continued attendance impossible. The reasons for non-completion were various: of some young people it is possible only to say that they showed very little interest in the programme, 'couldn't really be bothered', or just did not like the project. Three attended for only one day, two for two days, and one for three; in these cases, it is likely that a more rigorous assessment by the social worker would have concluded that a referral to CueTen was not appropriate. But, as with the STOP programme, there could be positive as well as negative reasons why the programme was not completed. Three left at the age of sixteen, or just before, to take up jobs, a provisionally positive outcome in Apex's terms, and in at least one of these cases the social worker regarded the time spent at CueTen as a success: the young woman 'hadn't been at school for years, but she made the most of it at CueTen'. The two young men who left to go into work were both convicted of further offences in the following two years, and one received a five year custodial sentence. Another two young women who attended erratically for a few weeks seem to have had a thoroughly instrumental view of the project: one said that she only went to CueTen because it 'would look good at my panel', and when she left she went to Apex's adult unit for help in finding a job; the other, of whom her social worker said that 'she chooses what she will do, and will only co-operate if she sees something in it for her', had fond memories of her time at CueTen, and believed it had helped her, though she could not say how. Both these young women had subsequently been convicted of at least one offence, but when last contacted one seemed to be settling contentedly into motherhood, and the other was apparently in employment.

At least six of these young people were in residential or foster care when they started at CueTen. Three absconded from their care placements, and therefore failed to attend CueTen; as a result one was placed in secure accommodation. Two were given the chance to attend a later group, without positive results, but the third later attended another Apex programme. Two had further convictions, leading in one case to a custodial sentence. Of the three others, one was supposed to attend CueTen as part of an effort to resettle him in Fife after time in residential care in Glasgow; in fact he was among those who attended the project for only one day, and his behaviour led to his being sent to secure accommodation. Another was made subject to a residential requirement in Glasgow after his foster care arrangements broke down. Despite these difficulties, neither of these young men was convicted in the subsequent twelve months. The third, who attended in one of the later groups, was made subject to a warrant requiring that he be kept in a safe place, because of his behaviour in residential care, and went to CueTen for only nine days.

Another identifiable group consisted of six young men who failed to finish the CueTen programme essentially because of their continued high level of offending. Two of these initially attended with reasonable regularity, but both continued to offend, both while at CueTen and subsequently, and both have served custodial sentences. One was remanded in custody while at CueTen, and the other refused to continue when he approached his sixteenth birthday. The other four never attended regularly, one saying that he would go to CueTen if he was out of bed in time, which was apparently often not the case; of another his social worker said, 'He has just opted out and is not prepared to participate in anything'; another often disappeared after arriving at CueTen, and was said by his social worker to have produced 'his own mini crime wave'; and the fourth, who had previously been in secure accommodation, was said to have 'exhausted the region's resources'. All these young men were subsequently convicted of a substantial number of offences, and three served custodial sentences, though one of these later attended an Apex programme for adults, and showed signs of having desisted from offending.

Two young men stopped attending ostensibly because of problems at the project. One left after a few days because he had been bullied; the staff dealt with the problem, and visited the family to explain what action they had taken, and that it would be safe for him to return to CueTen. He assured the CueTen staff and his social worker that he would return, but never did so. The other left at the point when he was due to start a regular work placement; he was thought not to be confident enough to manage this, and his social worker arranged for him to go back to school; but he did not attend school either. Both these young people were subsequently convicted, as were the great majority of this group. Apart from one young man who became ill shortly after starting at CueTen, and later died, and another who left with his father to go to live in England, only five of these young people were not convicted of at least one offence in the twelve months after they started at CueTen, and two of these were referred by schools rather than by social workers; one had never been charged with an offence, and the other's school-related problems, rather than his offending, were the main reason for his referral to the project. Some of this group accumulated substantial criminal records after starting at CueTen, and at least nine had been sentenced to custody at the time of writing. It is, of course, not surprising that the conviction rate among this group should be high, since, as we have seen, continued offending was among the reasons for failing to complete the CueTen programme; and the group also contained some of the most persistent offenders to have started at CueTen, as measured by the number of charges against them in the previous twelve months.

Those who were excluded

Another twenty young people were 'permanently' excluded from CueTen (although this did not always rule out the possibility of a second referral), sometimes after a few days, sometimes after several weeks, for acts of violence against staff or other group members, threatening or abusive behaviour, vandalism, drug use or generally disruptive behaviour - or for any combination of these. As with the group discussed above, the exact circumstances which led to exclusion were very varied, but violent or abusive behaviour featured in at least ten cases: staff used phrases like 'uncontrollably threatening and abusive', 'extremely aggressive', and 'abusive and intolerable behaviour' to describe the conduct that had led to exclusion. Two of these cases involved young

women, one of whom threatened trainers with physical violence, while the other - already in care and subsequently placed in secure accommodation - assaulted another member of the group. Such aggression was invariably accompanied by a lack of commitment to the programme and the kind of lower key disruptive behaviour described earlier, which of course affected the concentration and commitment of other group members.

Such behaviour could itself lead to exclusion even when it was not associated with specific acts of verbal or physical violence. One young man, who lasted on the programme for nine weeks, was said by his guidance teacher to suffer from 'attention deficit syndrome'; he and a member of the next group, the fourth, were the subjects of frequent complaints from outside agencies, from which they were in the end effectively barred. In the second case, a company whose premises adjoined CueTen's called the police to have him removed from its property. Agencies visited by the young people at CueTen sometimes suffered acts of vandalism, as did the project itself: wilful damage to property was specifically mentioned in three of the staff's accounts of why young people were excluded, and certainly occurred in several more cases. In the later groups drug-taking became more explicitly a problem, and was the main reason for the exclusion of two young men, one of whom was excluded twice; one had become heavily drug-dependent, and homeless as a result, by the end of the follow-up period, and the other was sent to secure accommodation.

The overall picture that emerges from these accounts is of behaviour that by adult standards was drastically anti-social. To varying degrees, all these young people posed problems of management and control by their verbal aggression, threats of physical violence, actual assaults on group members, acts of vandalism and inability or unwillingness to focus on the tasks set by the CueTen staff. In some cases this behaviour was exacerbated by drug use. That so many of the young people attending CueTen should have displayed such behaviour is not surprising, given the strong association with delinquency of hyperactivity, short attention spans, a search for excitement, school failure and dislike of school and teachers, and experience of violence in the home (Farrington, 1997). Such problems did, however, come as a surprise to the staff in the early months of the CueTen project; they were simply not prepared, and not well equipped by their previous training or experience, to manage such behaviour. The constant adaptation to circumstances which characterised the development of CueTen was largely a response to behaviour that could have been foreseen, given that the great majority of these young people were genuinely persistent offenders and had long histories of educational failure. In particular, the original expectation that most of CueTen's programme would be delivered through groupwork on a formal curriculum was not a realistic one, as the staff soon recognised: many of these young people simply imported into the group at CueTen the kind of anti-social behaviour typical of delinquent peer groups, as described in a long tradition of criminological writing (e.g. Matza, 1964): bullying, threats, violence, lack of care and consideration for others or for the physical environment, and an impoverished level of oral communication.

It is almost certainly the case that some of these young people were just not ready for what CueTen had to offer, and should not have been referred; for example, the guidance teacher who described the young man with attention deficit syndrome also

thought that he needed intensive individual attention, which was not readily available in CueTen, though the staff tried hard to provide it, and were prepared to allow young people who had been excluded once a second chance. In doing so, they hoped that the young people concerned would have matured enough, or sufficiently accepted that they could learn and benefit from the CueTen programme, for a second opportunity to be worthwhile; in fact, this hope was justified in only one of five cases, that of a young woman who virtually completed the programme in the third group, having been excluded from the second. There is, however, some evidence suggestive of a maturation effect in the subsequent histories of this group of excluded young people. Although only three were not convicted or charged in the year after starting at CueTen, none of this group had accumulated a record of persistent offending as long as some of those in the group discussed above, and only two were known to have spent time in custody. One successfully completed Apex's programme for adults and obtained a regular job; one went on to attend college and had a period in work; a third was working regularly at the time of writing. While these results are not dramatic, they do suggest that exclusion from CueTen was not necessarily a disastrous outcome; it is possible that some of these young people, who had been unable to adjust their behaviour to meet the demands of CueTen, were later able to reflect constructively on the experience, and manage the transition to employment and its disciplines, presumably, in the process, loosening their ties to subcultures of delinquency and drug use.

Those who completed the programme

Twenty-nine young people, six of them young women, completed, or virtually completed, the programme in the first seven groups. Of these, twelve are known to have gone on to some form of further education or training (a relevant measure of success for Apex), and eleven, including four of those who spent time at college after leaving CueTen, are known to have spent some time in paid work, although a stable work pattern seems to have been established in only five cases. Two attended Apex's adult programme, and others were considering doing so. Seven of these young people had no convictions in the twelve months after starting at CueTen, two others had been convicted for only one offence, and one had two convictions for motoring offences. Only two had accumulated more than twenty convictions since starting at CueTen, and only one was known to have spent time in custody. Of the seven with no convictions, four had had some experience of paid employment, and another two went on to further education; the seventh did not attend a college course which had been arranged for him, nor did he return to school.

The overall picture from the immediate destinations of this group is, then, as one would expect, more positive than that for the two groups discussed above. These young people were, in general, less persistent offenders before they came to CueTen than those in the other groups. Furthermore, to complete the CueTen programme required a substantial level of commitment, personal discipline and staying power; and although some of this group did not find it easy to maintain these qualities over the 26 weeks, all attended regularly enough and for long enough to suggest that they could, in principle, make the desired adjustment to the world of work. As suggested above, this was a much more feasible and intelligible aim than returning to school, as far as the young people were concerned; and none of the seven members of this group who were

supposed to be reintegrated into school after their time at CueTen managed this without difficulties. All but one, in fact, either never attended school or did so briefly and erratically; the one who eventually did return to school, before going into further education, only did so after a period in residential care.

The difficulty of making the backward step to school was one of the problems which made life after CueTen problematic for some of these young people; another factor was continued disruption in their family lives and relationships. At least ten of those who completed the programme, four of them young women, had experienced disruption in their family lives before starting at CueTen, and for most the problems continued during their time at the project and later, sometimes in ways directly connected with offending, as when the police were called in response to violence in the home. None of this group of ten was free of subsequent convictions (or charges in the case of one who had not yet entered the adult criminal justice system), and the group includes the young man who had the most prolonged subsequent criminal career among the completers, with over 30 convictions. A further three young people were placed in residential care after their time at CueTen, as a result of their own behaviour rather than of family breakdown; but in these cases too one can assume that family relationships were under serious strain. Direct help from family members in getting employment was recorded in two cases, and no doubt in others parents and other relatives were helpful and supportive, but there is no doubt that many members of this group, like many of the early leaver and excluded groups, were having to cope with serious stress in their domestic lives during their time at CueTen - and, of course, the project staff were rarely in a position to offer direct help with such problems.

Conclusions

Of the 72 young people who had been at CueTen long enough to have completed the programme by October 1998, 29 or 40% actually did complete it, or did so apart from a few days. Another ten completed, or virtually completed, the first part of the programme, so that 54% of the young people who started at CueTen on one of the first seven intakes spent at least thirteen weeks at the project. The rate of non-completion disappointed the CueTen staff, but it was probably not out of line with what should have been expected, on the basis of other studies. There was a significant relationship between likelihood of completion and offending in the previous twelve months: only one of those who completed the programme from the first six intakes had been charged with sixteen or more offences during this period, compared with eleven of the non-completers, almost one-third of those who did not complete the programme, as a result either of their leaving (or being unable to attend because of other events in their lives), or of their being excluded for unacceptable behaviour.

A tentative conclusion at this stage could be that CueTen's approach was, on its own, simply not suitable for the most persistent juvenile offenders; it was too demanding, too cognitively based and rational, for young people deeply immersed in offending, long alienated from the education system, from troubled and unhappy home environments, and in many cases with problems associated with drug or alcohol use. The staff had no real access to the young people's families; even if they had felt that they could intervene in family relationships in a systematic way, they could not have done so. As a result, problems in family relationships were never directly tackled by the

project, and in many cases continued to disturb and preoccupy the young people, seriously reducing their ability to concentrate on the CueTen programme. It is possible that a programme like CueTen's should be thought of as most appropriate for young people towards the upper end of the intended age range - 15½ or older - who will not be expected to return to school, and whose family problems have been resolved (or at least reduced to a tolerable level), or ceased to impinge directly on their lives, as they move towards more independent living and leave the family behind.

The qualitative analysis in this chapter suggested that there were differences in immediate outcomes, in the expected direction, between the group of young people who completed the programme and those who did not. The project should, however, be judged on the basis of its apparent failures as well as its apparent successes, and the next chapter presents a more quantitative analysis of the outcomes, in terms of reoffending and reconviction, for all the young people who attended CueTen, and compares these with the results of an analysis of a contemporary group of young offenders from Fife, who did not attend the CueTen project.

CHAPTER SIX: OUTCOMES, COMPARISONS AND COSTS

Introduction

This chapter presents information on the offending records of those who attended CueTen, before they started at the project and after, distinguishing where appropriate among those who completed the various stages of the CueTen programme. The material on offending before starting at CueTen comes from the records of the Fife police, who also provided access to SCRO records for the follow-up data. Two-year follow-up data are available for the first three CueTen intakes (the third group having started in September 1996), and one-year data are available for the next three (the sixth group having started in September 1997). Two-year data are available for eighteen of the comparison group, and one-year data for the remaining 21.

The police also provided details on young offenders in Fife with comparable records of being charged as juveniles, but who did not attend CueTen. Information on this group was also obtained from the Area Reporter. Four young people originally in this group later attended CueTen, and additional cases were then sought from the police, to maintain a comparison group of a reasonable size; seven young people from these additional cases eventually attended CueTen, producing a final comparison group of 39 young people, five of them young women. This group included some young people who were in fact accepted by CueTen but for some reason did not attend, even for a day; the reasons were usually that they were placed in residential care, or that they absconded from an existing care placement. The comparison group was closely matched on age and gender with the CueTen group, the proportions of males and females, and of 14 and 15 year-olds, being virtually identical; and they had similar characteristics to the CueTen group in respect of their offending and referrals to the Reporter on other grounds.

The young people in the comparison group who failed to start at CueTen because of absconding or a residential requirement might be considered worse risks than at least some of the CueTen population, and therefore to bias the comparison group towards worse predicted outcomes; on the other hand, since CueTen did in general work with the most persistent young offenders in Fife, the proportion of young people in the comparison group in the least persistent category (with five or fewer charges in a twelve-month period) was higher than in the CueTen group (20 of the 39, or 51%, being in this category, as opposed to 22 or 37% of the 59 young people who attended CueTen in the first six intakes). Twenty-five or 43% of the CueTen group were in the middle category (six to fifteen charges), compared with twelve or 31% of the comparison group; and the figures for the most persistent category are twelve (20%) for the CueTen group and seven (18%) for the comparison group. The biases in the comparison group may be considered as almost cancelling each other out: it contained a higher proportion of low risk, but also some very high risk, young people (as reported in Chapter Two, young people who were not referred to CueTen were dealt with more as well as less stringently than if they had come to CueTen). The differences between the two groups in terms of the proportions in the 'five or fewer charges' and the 'six charges and over' categories are not statistically significant, but it should be

borne in mind that if anything the comparison group may overall consist of young people at a slightly lower risk of reoffending than the CueTen group.

In interpreting the tables that follow, it is important to remember that reconviction data are not the same as reoffending data; but they are usually regarded as an acceptable proxy measure for reoffending, and some of the problems in using and interpreting reconviction rates discussed by Mair *et al.* (1997) do not apply to the CueTen sample: because of the age of the group, there should be very few if any false positives (convictions arising from offences committed before the young person started the programme). Where information is given on offending in the year before starting at CueTen or before inclusion in the comparison group, this takes the form of charges referred to the Reporter; subsequent offending is usually measured by convictions as recorded by the SCRO, but for some of the younger offenders charges referred to the Reporter are also included, as additional information or as the best available measure of offending.

Table 8 shows aggregate figures for reconvictions in the twelve-month period after starting at CueTen or inclusion in the comparison group, separating those who completed the programme and those who did not. (This and the following tables exclude the young man who died from the figure for non-completers.)

Table 8: Reconvictions after 12 months (completers, non-completers and comparison group)

Number of Re-convictions

Group	None	1-5	6-15	16 or more	Total
Completers	10 (42%)	10 (42%)	3 (12%)	1 (4%)	24
Non-completers	11 (32%)	4 (12%)	12 (35%)	7 (21%)	34
Comparison group	10 (26%)	16 (41%)	9 (23%)	4 (10%)	39

Overall, the figures in Table 8, while they show some interesting differences among the groups, do not reach statistical significance. Bearing in mind that the young people who completed the programme were, as a group, less persistent offenders than those who did not complete, and that only one of them had been charged more than sixteen times in the previous twelve months, compared with seven of the comparison group, it would be unwise to claim from these figures that CueTen had demonstrated an effect in the desired direction; rather, the groups' subsequent reconviction rates broadly reflected their previous offending rates, with the most persistent offender group being most likely to accumulate the most subsequent convictions. Table 9 presents the comparable figures at the 24-month point, for the smaller number of cases for which these are available.

Table 9: Reconvictions after 24 months (completers, non-completers and comparison group)

Number of Re-convictions

Group	None	1-5	6-15	16 or more	Total
Completers	3 (20%)	7 (47%)	1 (7%)	4 (26%)	15
Non-completers	1 (7%)	3 (21%)	5 (36%)	5 (36%)	14
Comparison group	1 (6%)	4 (22%)	8 (44%)	5 (28%)	18

The same general pattern appears as in Table 8, with a higher proportion - two thirds - of the completers group than of the others appearing in the first two columns. Again, though, the differences are not statistically significant, and the proportions of each group who after 24 months had been convicted for over fifteen offences are similar; in respect of the group of completers, one might interpret their apparent ‘catching up’ with the other groups as suggesting the erosion of a ‘treatment’ effect from CueTen, but with such small numbers this can only be a speculation. Overall, the Table suggests that persistent juvenile offenders are most unlikely not to be convicted as young adults: only five of these 47 young people had not been convicted at all in the two years under review. It is, however, quite possible for twelve months to pass without a conviction being recorded - 31 of the 97 young people in Table 8 had no recorded convictions; and presumably this is partly because of the lapses of time between offending and conviction, and between a conviction and its appearance in the SCRO record, and partly because most of these young people only became eligible to be convicted during the first twelve months, when they reached the age of sixteen. The figures do not require the assumption of any treatment effect or of its erosion over time, and provide another reminder of the limitations of reconviction rates, especially over a short time period and with a juvenile population, as a measure of offending.

These aggregate data convey nothing of the course of individual criminal careers; nor do they say anything about the seriousness of the offences for which these young people were convicted. The following three detailed Tables present in summary form the criminal careers over both twelve months and, where possible, two years, of those who completed the CueTen programme, those who did not, and the comparison group. Each Table gives, for each young person, the number of charges referred to the Reporter in the previous twelve months, and the number of subsequent charges and convictions, and indicates the most severe penalty imposed to date (a commonly used proxy measure for offence seriousness). Where a subsequent offence was particularly serious, this is noted. In Table 10, which deals with the young people who completed the CueTen programme, there is a note in four cases of the date on which the last conviction or referral to the Reporter for offending took place, to show that in a few cases where reoffending has occurred, and where there is a substantial record of earlier offending, there may still be grounds for thinking that an adult criminal career is unlikely to develop. (The time lapse problem noted above is much less of an issue with charges than with convictions.)

Table 10: CueTen completers: charges, convictions and sentences

Charges in previous 12 months	Number of individuals	Charges and convictions since starting at CueTen over 12 and 24 months
None	2	[a] 1 charge to the Reporter (12 months) [b] 2 charges to the Reporter (12 months); 3 convictions: probation (24 months)
1	2	[a] no convictions (12 months) [b] 3 charges to the Reporter (12 months); 26 convictions: custody (24 months)
2	2	[a] 10 charges to the Reporter; 2 convictions (12 months) [b] no convictions (12 months)
3	3	[a] 2 charges to the Reporter (12 months); 3 convictions (24 months) [b] no convictions (12 months); 1 conviction (24 months) (last May 97) [c] 2 charges to the Reporter (12 months); no convictions (24 months)
4	3	[a] no convictions (24 months) [b] no convictions (24 months) [c] 4 charges to the Reporter (12 months) - last July 97
5	1	no convictions (24 months)
6	1	5 charges to the Reporter (12 months); 13 convictions: probation (24 months)
7	2	[a] 17 charges to the Reporter (12 months); 1 charge to the Reporter (24 months) [b] 2 charges to the Reporter (12 months) 2 charges to the Reporter (24 months) - last December 97
8	2	[a] no convictions (12 months); 26 convictions probation (24 months) [b] 7 charges to the Reporter (12 months)
10	2	[a] no convictions (12 months); 9 convictions probation (24 months) [b] no convictions (12 months)
11	1	5 charges to the Reporter (12 months) - last December 97
15	2	[a] 1 charge to the Reporter (12 months); no convictions (24 months) [b] no convictions (12 months); 1 conviction (24 months)
26	1	7 charges to the Reporter (12 months)
Individuals Total charges in previous 12 months	24 155	Total: 155 convictions and charges to Reporter (12-month total 70)

Table 11: CueTen non-completers: charges, convictions and sentences

Charges in prev 12 mths	Number of individuals	Charges and convictions since starting at CueTen over 12 and 24 months
None	1	no convictions (12 months)
1	1	no convictions (12 months)
2	1	6 charges to the Reporter (12 months); 2 convictions (24 months)
3	1	6 charges to the Reporter and 1 conviction (12 months); 8 convictions (24 months)
4	4	[a] 1 charge to the Reporter and 1 conviction (12 months) [b] no convictions (12 months) [c] no convictions (12 months) [d] no convictions (12 months)
5	1	21 convictions: custody (twice) (also probation and community service) (12 months)
7	2	[a] 15 charges to the Reporter and 3 convictions (12 months) [b] 7 convictions: custody (12 months)
8	2	[a] no convictions (12 months) [b] 11 charges to the Reporter (12 months)
9	4	[a] 6 charges to the Reporter (12 months); 3 convictions (24 months) [b] 51 convictions: custody (twice) (12 months) [c] 1 conviction (12 months) [d] no convictions (12 months)
11	1	8 charges to the Reporter (12 months); 17 convictions: CSO (24 months)
12	3	[a] died [b] no convictions (12 months) [c] 16 charges to the Reporter and 15 convictions: custody (12 months)
13	3	[a] 3 convictions: CSO (12 months); 2 convictions: CSO (24 months) [b] no convictions (12 months); 2 convictions (24 months) [c] 8 convictions: probation (12 months)
17	2	[a] 12 convictions (12 months); 4 convictions: custody (24 months) [b] 7 charges to the Reporter and 3 convictions: probation (12 months)
20	1	7 charges to the Reporter and 7 convictions: probation (12 months)
21	1	15 convictions: probation and CSO (12 months); 15 convictions: CSO (24 months)
26	2	[a] no convictions (12 months); 8 convictions: probation (24 months) [b] 9 convictions: CSO (12 months); 6 convictions: custody (5 years; assault and robbery) (24 months)
27	1	1 conviction (12 months); 3 convictions (24 months)
36	2	[a] 18 convictions: custody (12 months); 20 convictions: probation (24 months) [b] 25 convictions: probation, custody (three times) (12 months)
41	1	no convictions (24 months)
45	1	32 convictions: probation, CSO, custody (12 months); 30 convictions: custody (24 months)
Individuals Charges in previous 12 months	35 491	Total (34 individuals)*: 436 convictions and charges to Reporter (12-month total 316) * Excludes 1 who died after referral

Table 12: Comparison group: charges, convictions and sentences

Charges in prev. 12 mths	Number of individuals	Charges and convictions since entry into comparison group for 12 and 24 months
None	1	no convictions (12 months)
1	2	[a] 1 conviction (12 months) [b] no convictions (12 months); 8 convictions (24 months)
2	3	[a] 2 charges to the Reporter (12 months); no convictions (24 months) [b] 5 convictions: custody (12 months) [c] no convictions (12 months)
3	5	[a] 5 charges to the Reporter (12 months); 1 conviction (24 months) [b] no convictions (12 months) [c] 3 charges to the Reporter (12 months) [d] 8 convictions (12 months) [e] 8 convictions: custody (3 years for assault and robbery) (12 months)
4	6	[a] 2 convictions (12 months); 7 convictions: custody (24 months) [b] 3 convictions: probation (12 months); 1 conviction: CSO (24 months) [c] 3 charges to the Reporter (12 months) [d] 2 convictions (12 months) [e] no convictions (12 months) [f] 3 convictions (12 months)
5	3	[a] no convictions (12 months) [b] 1 convictions (12 months) [c] 2 convictions (12 months)
6	3	[a] 26 charges to the Reporter and 6 convictions (12 months); 4 convictions (24 months) [b] no convictions (24 months) [c] no convictions (12 months)
7	3	[a] 9 charges to the Reporter (12 months); 2 convictions: CSO (24 months) [b] 6 charges to the Reporter (12 months); 3 convictions: CSO (24 months) [c] 3 charges to the Reporter; 3 convictions (12 months)
8	3	[a] no convictions (12 months); 5 convictions (24 months) [b] 1 charge to the Reporter (12 months); no convictions (24 months) [c] 10 convictions (12 months)
9	1	20 charges to the Reporter (12 months); 4 charges to the Reporter (24 months)
10	1	no convictions (12 months)
11	1	10 charges to the Reporter (12 months); no convictions (24 months)
18	1	2 convictions: CSO (12 months); 13 convictions: probation (24 months)
20	1	12 convictions: CSO (12 months); 11 convictions: custody (24 months)
22	1	3 convictions: custody (12 months); 7 convictions: probation (24 months)
23	1	21 convictions: custody (12 months); 6 convictions: custody for murder (24 months)
25	1	1 conviction: custody for murder (12 months)
26	1	14 charges to the Reporter (12 months); 28 convictions: custody (twice), probation (24 months)
31	1	20 convictions (12 months)
Individuals Charges in previous 12 months	39 320	315 convictions and charges to Reporter (12-month total 215)

These tables are illuminating in several ways. Firstly, they show that there is nothing inevitable about the development of an adult criminal career, even after persistent offending as a juvenile, and that sometimes criminal careers develop unpredictably, after a modest history of juvenile offending. While there is an obvious positive relationship between the number of charges before the follow-up period and the number of charges and convictions during it, all three tables show striking exceptions to this rule. For instance, Table 10 shows that one of the CueTen completers who had been charged only once in the previous twelve months was convicted 26 times in the second year of the follow-up period, and that two of the most persistent juvenile offenders in this group, each with fifteen charges in the previous twelve months, were each known to have offended only once in the 24 months after they began to attend CueTen. Equally or more striking are the case in Table 11 of the young person with 41 charges in the previous twelve months who was not known to have offended at all in the following two years, and the case in Table 12 of the young person with six charges in the previous twelve months who accumulated 26 charges referred to the Reporter and six convictions in the following year. Table 12 also provides a dramatic example of the limitations of using the number of convictions alone as a measure of criminality, since the two cases in which a young person was convicted of murder would appear, on the offence count measure, as successes; in one case the murder conviction was the only one in the twelve month follow-up period, after 25 charges in the previous year. All the tables also provide examples of young people whose subsequent offending was minimal in the first twelve months of the follow-up period and substantial in the second twelve months, and *vice versa*.

The tables allow for a 'before and after' analysis of the offending pattern of each individual, and of the groups as a whole. Table 10 shows that fifteen of the 24 young people were known to have committed fewer offences in the follow-up period than in the previous twelve months; in eight of these cases, where the young person had been subsequently charged or convicted at least once, there was still evidence that their rate of offending was decreasing over time, and only one appeared to show a pattern of escalating offending. One young person continued to offend at the same rate as before, in the sense that there were as many recorded offences in the twelve months following his start at CueTen as in the twelve months prior to it, but he had had no offences recorded against him since July 1997. The offending rate of eight of the young people had increased in the follow-up period, in five cases substantially; six of these cases showed an apparent escalation of offending, one (with seventeen charges in the first year but only one in the second) showed a diminishing rate, and one (a low rate offender) had hardly changed. Overall, the table suggests that sixteen of these young people had a reduced rate of offending after starting at CueTen, or continued to offend at the same low level, while the offending rate of seven had escalated. Only one of these young people had received a custodial sentence, suggesting that even in the cases of persistent offending after starting at CueTen the offences were in general not especially serious.

Table 11 shows that, although on an offence count alone perhaps twenty of these 34 young people could be thought of as having a slower rate of offending in the follow-up period than in the previous twelve months, when seriousness and absolute rate of offending are taken into account it would be sensible to conclude that only thirteen appear to be unlikely to go on to a serious criminal career as adults. These are the

cases where there was no known subsequent offending, where it was minimal, and where there was a marked reduction in the rate of conviction (as in the case of the young person who had been charged with 27 offences before starting at CueTen). At least eleven cases in this table show a movement in the opposite direction, with a record of offending that escalated both in frequency and seriousness; in the remaining cases, even where the frequency of offending decreased it continued to be high, or there was little change. Ten of this group (all male) had served at least one custodial sentence; three of these had served two, and one had been sentenced to custody on three separate occasions (making a total of fifteen custodial sentences for this group). Table 12, giving figures for the comparison group, suggests that perhaps eighteen of these 39 young people had low or markedly reduced rates of offending over the follow-up period, while (conservatively) fourteen continued at a high rate or escalating rate; eight, all male, had received custodial sentences, two of whom had been sentenced to custody twice.

Thus far, the comparisons favour the group of young people who completed the CueTen programme, a higher proportion of whom showed signs of deceleration of or desistance from offending than in the other two groups, with the outcomes for the group who attended the CueTen programme, but did not complete it, being worse overall than for the comparison group. The three tables also give aggregated figures for the numbers of convictions and charges against each group in the year preceding the target date and for the subsequent one-year and two-year periods. It should be remembered that this is not a like-for-like comparison, since only charges are counted in the period before the target date, not all of which would have led to convictions in the adult system, while both charges (for those still in the Children's Hearing System) and convictions (for those in the adult system) are counted in the subsequent periods. In view of this, although all three groups had fewer offences recorded against them in the subsequent year than in the previous year, and, with the exception of the CueTen completers group, had fewer such offences in the second year after the target date than in the first, it would not be sensible to infer from these figures either a treatment effect or a maturation effect: the proportion of recorded offences that consists of charges referred to the Reporter is much lower for the second year, since nearly all the young people had by that stage moved out of the Children's Hearing system. The basis of comparison is the same for all three groups, however, and this allows the results to be compared across the three groups. The total number of convictions and charges for the group who completed the CueTen programme in the year following their starting dates was 70, 45% of the previous year's total; for the group who started at CueTen but did not finish the figure was 316, 64% of the previous year's figure; and for the comparison group the figures were 215 and 67%.

Over the first year, then, the CueTen completers' group committed less than half as many known offences as in the previous year, while the other two groups' recorded offending in the same period was at roughly two-thirds of the previous year's level. The picture changes, however, for the second year, by the end of which the CueTen completers' group had accumulated as many known offences as in the year before they started at the project; the two-year figure for the comparison group was virtually identical to the figure for the year preceding the target date, and the figure for the other CueTen group was slightly lower. That is, 55% of the subsequent known offending of the CueTen completers' group took place (or at least was formally

recorded) in the second year, compared with 28% of the non-completers' offending and 32% of the offending of the comparison group. Again, it is tempting to interpret this result as indicating the erosion of a treatment effect, but it should be remembered that the numbers for whom two-year follow-up data are available are small, and, as Table 10 shows, 52 of the 85 offences committed by this group in the second year were the responsibility of just two young people. Table 13 gives a more detailed breakdown, and shows the mean and median numbers of offences for the young people in each group over the three time periods.

Table 13: Charges and convictions over time

Charges and convictions	12 months prior	12 months after	Second 12 month period
Completers	[n=24]	[n=24]	[n=15]
Total	155	70	85
Average	6	3	6
Median	4.5	1.5	1
Non-completers	[n=34]	[n=34]	[n=14]
Total	491	316	120
Average	14	9	9
Median	11	6.5	5
Comparison group	[n=39]	[n=39]	[n=18]
Total	320	215	100
Average	8	5.5	6
Median	5	4	4

Conclusions

The analysis above has shown that there were important differences in the offending pattern of the young people who completed the CueTen programme and the other two groups. There is little doubt that the project helped some young people to modify their behaviour, and it does not require any special pleading to conclude from the figures that CueTen contributed to a reduction in both the frequency and the seriousness of offending in the group who finished the programme. Only five (just over a fifth) of this group had ten or more offences recorded against them in the follow-up period, compared with twelve (35%) in the group who did not complete the programme and eleven (28%) in the comparison group; and all six of the young people who had ten or more charges against them in the previous twelve months showed a reduced frequency of offending after starting at CueTen. The differences are not statistically significant, and it would not be sensible to claim confidently that the data on reconviction and subsequent charging demonstrate that CueTen had a lasting effect on the offending of these young people. If, however, the group who completed the programme had behaved in the same way as the other two groups, which in this respect are very

similar, in the twelve months after they started at CueTen, then the figure for known offences would have been about 100, rather than 70. It is possible to claim, then, that CueTen probably prevented about 30 offences in this period.

The two-year figures are less encouraging, but it should be remembered that two young people committed the majority of the offences recorded against members of this group in the second year, and if they are excluded then the average figure for offending in this period becomes about 2.5, lower than for the other two groups. The numbers are small, however, and it would be difficult to justify excluding these two cases, since a similar manoeuvre would also lower the average figure for the other groups. The evidence on offence seriousness is perhaps clearer: only one member of the completers group received a custodial sentence, whereas ten such sentences were imposed on members of the comparison group, and fifteen on members of the group who did not finish the CueTen programme. It is reasonable to conclude, therefore, that another eight or so custodial sentences might have been imposed during the relevant period without CueTen's intervention.

As noted at the end of the previous chapter, a project like CueTen needs to be judged on its apparent failures as well as its apparent successes, and the results become a good deal less encouraging when the whole group of young people who attended the project is considered against the comparison group. In fact, the group of non-completers showed the greatest relative reduction in frequency of known offending of all the groups when the final period of twelve months is compared with the first follow-up year or the year preceding the target date, but this figure will have been distorted by time spent in custody: members of this group were more likely than the comparison group to have been sentenced to a Young Offenders Institution, and fifteen of the 34 had been convicted or charged more than ten times during the follow-up period, in most cases persisting in the pattern of frequent offending they had displayed before starting at CueTen.

Speculating about possible longer-term outcomes, one can interpret Tables 10-12 as indicating that exactly half of the total CueTen population of 58 young people were offending over the follow-up period at a rate that suggests that they might well not go on to an active criminal career as adults; the same is true of just under half, eighteen out of 39, of the comparison group. In most of these cases the difference in the offending rate before and after the target date is not great enough to suggest a treatment effect, but in twelve of the CueTen group, and five of the comparison group, the decrease in the level of offending is marked enough to suggest that something happened in the follow-up period to reduce the likelihood of an adult criminal career. Again, the numbers are too small and the difference between the groups not impressive enough to allow for a confident conclusion, but it is the case that a higher proportion of the CueTen group than of the comparison group showed this pattern - a substantial reduction in their rate of offending, and if this is taken to be a treatment effect (a combination of encouraging desistance and inhibiting escalation), then CueTen might have helped to divert around one in twenty young people from an adult criminal career - or three of the 58 young people who are the subject of this discussion. This is, of course, no more than an informed guess; but such guesses are relevant if the analysis of costs, savings and benefits which follows is to attend to longer term as well as immediate issues.

Costs, savings, and benefits

Knapp and Netten (1997) comment on the lack of research on the economics of criminal justice compared with, for example, health services, in which methods for calculating costs, benefits and cost-effectiveness are well developed. Presumably a major reason for this lack is political: criminal justice remained relatively immune from cost-effectiveness scrutinies long after these had become routine in other areas of public service. Recently there have been signs of greater official interest in the costs of criminal justice and the financial implications of decisions within the criminal justice process; The Scottish Office, for instance, now publishes relevant material annually. Another reason for the relative neglect, however, is that to conduct convincing cost-benefit analyses in this field is difficult: characteristically, assumptions have to be made about the costs of crime which are inherently disputable, because they depend on the doubtful concept of the average crime, and - crucially - because not all the harm caused by crime can readily be assigned a cash value. Karoly *et al.* (1998), with this in mind, prefer to use the narrower approach of cost-savings analysis in their discussion of early intervention projects, by which they mean that they are primarily concerned with costs and savings to the government, rather than costs and benefits to society at large.

This approach is largely the one adopted here: the focus is on costs and savings to the government (here, by the nature of the study, mainly criminal justice system costs), rather than on costs and benefits to society more generally. This approach is more stringent than a broader approach would be in the demands it places on a project to show cost-effectiveness: for example, work by the accountants Coopers and Lybrand (1997) for the Prince's Trust in Scotland on the costs of youth crime and the benefits of preventing it suggests that a project costing £50,000 a year would have to prevent about twenty crimes by young people in order to be cost-effective, on the basis that the marginal cost of each youth crime is something over £2,700 - that is, this is what society would save on each youth crime prevented. The marginal cost of a youth crime to the criminal justice system was estimated in the same report at £700 - that is, the potential saving to the criminal justice system of each youth crime prevented; using this figure would mean that a project costing £50,000 would have to prevent over seventy crimes a year to be cost-effective. For convenience, the figure of £700 is adopted here for crimes CueTen can be said to have prevented, since although it undoubtedly leaves some real costs out of account it is more firmly related to demonstrable expenditure; and we also follow the universal convention of treating all criminal justice system and related costs as net costs, disregarding any possible benefits from the employment of criminal justice staff and the economic activity generated by the criminal justice system. The more speculative element of what follows relates to the costs of a criminal career, and the savings generated by its prevention.

The costs of CueTen

The total grant from The Scottish Office to Apex for the CueTen project was £588,162 over three years, or an average of £196,054 a year; the project's accounts

showed a small amount of additional income, but this is disregarded here. Some of the costs related to establishing the project: in a full financial year after these start-up costs had been met the project cost £190,000. The bulk of expenditure (about 56%) went on staff salaries and related costs; the next largest item in the budget was the rent for the premises. Since, over its lifetime, CueTen worked with, in effect, 93 young people (actually 86 individuals, since seven attended the project twice), the average cost per young person attending CueTen was £6,129 (counting running costs only, once the project was established). This figure can be compared with the 1997 estimate supplied by the Social Work Services Group of an average weekly cost per young person of £1,750 for secure accommodation, and around £1,000 for placement for a week in a residential establishment with educational facilities. The Scottish Office (1998) estimated the 1996 cost of a probation order at £1,700, the cost of a community service order at £1,320, and the cost of a six-month custodial sentence at £13,372. The cost of a supervision order without a residential requirement is presumably similar to that of a probation order.

In fact, the real cost of providing a place for a young person at CueTen must have varied very widely around this average figure. Young people who completed the programme will obviously have cost more than those who attended only briefly; and those whose attendance was erratic and who constantly had to be chased will have cost more than the minority of reliable attenders. The convening of a Children's Hearing was an additional cost, estimated by the Audit Commission (1996) as £880, which was incurred in those cases where a young person was excluded or ceased to attend, and the panel had to be informed, though it is impossible to say how many of these Hearings represented an extra cost (one that would not have been incurred had CueTen not existed). Similarly, it does not seem sensible to try to assign a monetary value to the contribution of other agencies to CueTen's work: although liaison with the project on the part of social workers and educational staff, and the contributions to its programme by the police and other agencies, certainly absorbed agency resources, and thus could be treated as involving opportunity costs, inter-agency communication is an inherent part of the work of staff in these agencies, not an additional burden. In fact, CueTen must have relieved both the Social Work and Education Departments of the costs that would have been incurred if social workers had been solely responsible for the young people's supervision, and teachers for their education; the marginal costs and savings for these departments that resulted from CueTen's existence may in effect have cancelled each other out.

Cost-savings achieved by CueTen

It was suggested above that in the period covered by the discussion of outcomes CueTen may have prevented 30 crimes. Over the full lifetime of the project, if the same rate of prevention was maintained, a total of 44 crimes will have been prevented (since the figure of 30 derives from work with 58 young people, and in all CueTen worked with 86; roughly, it prevented one crime on average for every two young people who attended). Using the average figure of £700 per crime as the marginal cost to the criminal justice system, the total saving can be estimated as £30,800. Even if the less demanding figure of a marginal cost to society of about £2,700 per youth crime were used, CueTen would not achieve a 'break-even' point on this measure; the 44 crimes

prevented would have saved about £119,000, well below CueTen's cost over the three years of about £570,000.

There are, however, other savings which can be attributed to CueTen's work. If it prevented eight custodial sentences among 58 young people, and maintained this level of diversion from custody, it would have prevented twelve custodial sentences over three years. Using the Scottish Office figure for a six-month sentence, this would give a saving to the prison system of about £143,500 (treating the marginal cost of a six-month sentence as about 90% of the average cost). If the average length of a custodial sentence were shorter, the saving would of course be lower, and a figure of £100,000 might be a reasonable estimate of the cost saved by a reduced use of custody. Furthermore, CueTen, like any project providing intensive supervision, removed the need for residential care in a number of cases; from what is known of the backgrounds of the 58 young people discussed above, this number can be estimated as six. If each had spent three months in a residential establishment with educational facilities (not secure accommodation), the total cost would have been about £73,000 (using the figures cited above), and the marginal cost about £65,550 (calculating this on the same basis as for the saving to the prison service); over the life of the project, this rate of diversion from residential care would produce a saving of about £98,300. It is not plausible, however, to claim that CueTen produced substantial savings to the Education Department apart from those associated with residential schools, since the young people with whom it worked were not at school in any case. Savings would have been achieved had CueTen succeeded in enabling young people to move from special education to mainstream schools, but, as discussed above, this was not the case. The total cost-savings produced by CueTen over its lifetime would, therefore, be in the region of £229,000, compared with the cost of £570,000 for the project: it would therefore fall short of the break-even point by around £341,000. The more generous estimate of the marginal cost of a crime would reduce this by about £90,000, but this would still leave a shortfall of some £251,000, a figure which could be regarded as a minimum estimate of the net cost of CueTen.

CueTen did not deliver cost-savings to government over the three years of its life, but this is not, of course, to say that in cost-benefit terms it was less effective than other measures; relative to other measures - the mix of supervision, special education, residential care and custody which was delivered to the young people in the comparison group - it was probably reasonable value for money. There is also the possibility to be considered that it may have had much longer term effects which would eventually produce substantial cost-savings. If CueTen's work diverted three young people from an adult criminal career who would not otherwise have been diverted, as suggested above, and it is assumed that over the lifetime of the project it prevented one more criminal career from developing, the government would in time be spared the cost of four criminal careers. Greenwood *et al.* (1998, p. 57) estimate the criminal justice costs of the criminal career of a high rate offender as about \$75,700 at 1993 prices (and as nearly double this with full implementation in California of the 'three strikes and you're out' legislation). Their definition of a high rate offender is simply one who commits more than the average number of offences for the known population of offenders; since CueTen worked with some of the worst risk cases among the juvenile offender population of Fife, it is reasonable to assume that any criminal careers prevented would have been at the top end of the distribution. The criminal justice

system cost of such a criminal career would, on the basis of the figures given by The Scottish Office (1998) be closer to £100,000 than the roughly £50,000 suggested by Greenwood and his colleagues (assuming, for example, that such a career would entail twenty court appearances resulting in conviction and a total of two years spent in custody, and also assuming Scottish rather than Californian sentencing practices). The cost-saving achieved by the prevention of four criminal careers would therefore be about £400,000, spread over (say) ten to twelve years, taking this as the length of a serious criminal career (Farrington, 1992). The cost benefits would of course be much greater if the total cost of crimes to society as a whole were considered, and not merely the direct cost savings to the criminal justice system.

The point of this account is not to claim definitely that CueTen prevented the development of four criminal careers - the evidence is only suggestive, and in any case the young people concerned, while they were certainly at high risk according to the best-established predictors, may have been 'false positives'. It is, rather, to illustrate the importance for policy on crime reduction to take account of possible long-term as well as immediate cost-savings; early intervention projects may not show definite cost savings or benefits for fifteen years or more (Karoly *et al.*, 1998). If the above analysis is correct, however, CueTen may have delivered long-term cost savings, albeit modest ones, which an exclusive focus on short-term results would not reveal. The concluding chapter reviews the evidence for an overall assessment of CueTen's success or failure.

CHAPTER SEVEN: AN OVERALL EVALUATION OF CUETEN

The aims of this final chapter are to summarise and review the evidence presented so far in order to provide an overall evaluation of the CueTen project, and to suggest what might be learned from its experience. This will involve some recommendations on where a project like CueTen might fit into the range of services for young offenders, and the type of young people for whom such a project might be most useful.

CueTen was established in a policy context that was favourable to innovative work with persistent juvenile offenders. The Scottish Office decided in 1994 to fund two developmental projects to work with this group of young people in the community, and invited voluntary organisations to submit proposals for funding. Initially only one project was funded, CueTen's parent organisation, Apex Scotland, having been associated with one of the unsuccessful bids. But Apex's contribution to this bid had intrigued officials in The Scottish Office, and Apex was asked to re-submit a proposal on its own. This was successful, and The Scottish Office agreed to three years' funding for what became the CueTen project, based in Glenrothes but with the whole of Fife as its catchment area.

The Scottish Office was attracted both by the innovative nature of the proposed project and by what it detected of Apex's distinctive style. Instead of the mix of groupwork and counselling for young people and their families which was the established content of community-based projects for young offenders, Apex offered a radically different approach - an adaptation of their work with older offenders, with a specific focus on skills and attitudes likely to increase employability. Apex's general style appeared more action-oriented, and less cerebral and introspective, than Scottish Office officials were used to from organisations with a social work tradition. It promised a quick translation of ideas into reality, with a minimum of bureaucracy and a commitment to practical action.

The CueTen project was, in line with these expectations, established quickly, Fife being chosen because Apex already had a presence there, and because Fife promised to be relatively unaffected by local government reorganisation. There were, however, penalties associated with its rapid appearance on the scene. Fife had a recent history of tension between the Social Work and Education Departments over alleged failures of consultation, and CueTen had to begin work in an environment of high sensitivity to the possibility of more such failures. For at least the first two years of CueTen's existence, there were complaints from senior staff, particularly in the Education Department, that it had been set up without adequate consultation and preparation. Basic practical questions, such as who should pay for the transport of young people to the project, were not resolved until much later; and the idea of a local inter-agency management group for the project took a long time to materialise.

Perhaps more crucially, the number of young people in Fife who could reasonably be defined as persistent juvenile offenders, even on the fairly relaxed definition of persistence agreed between CueTen and Social Work staff, turned out to be smaller than the original plans had envisaged. CueTen worked with about two-thirds of the

eligible young people in Fife during its three years, and very rarely strayed from its intended target group; but the staff were never in a position to be selective about which young people they accepted, which meant that some of the young people who were referred had a very low level of commitment to the project, and little interest in making a success of their time there. The problem of weak motivation and low expectations was sometimes aggravated, or at least not alleviated, by the rather minimalist messages social workers gave young people about what they could expect at CueTen, and the importance of their regular attendance there.

The problems of erratic and unwilling attendance and participation that arose from lack of commitment were compounded by the nature of the CueTen programme. It set out to deliver a well defined curriculum over an initial period of thirteen weeks, followed by a period of more individual work designed to prepare the young people for the final block of work experience or introductory training. The whole programme lasted for 26 weeks, a long time in the life of any young person, and a seriously long time for young people who had long ceased to attend school regularly, as was the case with most of those who came to CueTen. The programme proved too ambitious and demanding for many of the young people; at the end of the research period, just over half, 44 out of 80, of those who attended the project had completed the first 13-week block of the programme, and 29 out of a possible 72 had finished, or virtually finished, the whole programme. Twenty-six young people left of their own accord or as a result of circumstances in their lives unconnected with CueTen, and another 20 were excluded for violent or otherwise unacceptable behaviour. (In summary, of the 80, 29 completed the programme, 26 left, 20 were excluded, and five were still attending at the end of the research.) The modest completion rate is not surprising in view of the demands of the programme and the nature of the client group, but the CueTen staff were constantly distracted from work on the formal programme by the need to check reasons for absence.

The staff were also surprised, early in the life of the project, by the sheer weight of problems many of these young people brought with them to the project. Apex's experience and traditions had not prepared the staff to deal with the emotional, attitudinal and behavioural difficulties displayed by this group of young people, as a consequence of the experience of loss, deprivation, rejection and abuse which many of them, in common with persistent offenders in general, had suffered. The actual delivery of the CueTen programme, therefore, was never the orderly and rational process that had been set down at the beginning; the staff continually had to adapt, negotiate, and modify their plans, and spent a great deal more time in individual work than they had expected. They showed skill and perseverance in adjusting their work to the circumstances that confronted them, but their lack of access to the young people's families limited the amount of change they could expect to achieve at the individual level, since family relationships were in many cases the major source of the young people's disturbance and unhappiness. A different staff group, for instance one in which social work skills and experience were more strongly represented, would not have needed to embark on such a steep learning curve; but the problems inherent in CueTen's design - a long formal curriculum and a lack of opportunity to work on family relationships - would have remained.

Everyday life at CueTen was rarely relaxed or harmonious. The problems staff found in the basic management of the young people meant that they had little time for the more outward-looking, developmental work which was crucial to CueTen's (and Apex's) commitment to integrating the young offenders with the wider community. One aspect of the initial scheme, that the young people at CueTen should have access to a network of young people in employment locally, who would support them in the transition to the world of work, never materialised. Links with employers were never as fully developed as the staff would have wished, and were not made easier to establish by the tendency of some young people to carry their aggressive and anti-social behaviour into places of work and education. Staff morale was not helped by their sense that the particular problems of working with this group of young people were not appreciated by their managers in Apex, and by the anxiety about future employment that some staff felt towards the end of the project's period of funding.

The picture is not, however, unrelievedly bleak. There is no doubt that CueTen helped some young people to acquire new knowledge and skills, and a new sense of self-belief, and that this could be associated with a reduced rate of offending. The short-term outcomes in terms of reconvictions for all but four of the group who completed the programme were moderately encouraging, and even when those who left or were excluded are counted, there were signs that the CueTen group had slightly better prospects of avoiding a long-term criminal career than the comparison group of 39 young people, broadly similar in terms of their offending, who for various reasons did not attend CueTen. While CueTen did not demonstrate direct cost-savings during its lifetime, it may have contributed to substantial savings in the longer term; and it was probably slightly more cost-effective than the range of interventions to which the comparison group was subject. In addition, as an experimental project from which it was hoped that something could be learned, CueTen provided some potentially important messages for policy.

Firstly, CueTen was an example of a specialist project that was not well embedded in the network of agencies on which it depended not only for referrals but for support and understanding. Many, though not all, of the problems the project encountered arose from its failure to be fully accepted, at least until late in its life, by the statutory agencies in Fife, as a valid and integral part of the services available locally for young offenders. CueTen never received as much information as the staff felt would have been useful from social workers or from the police; some social workers were quite ready to use it as little more than a dumping-ground for their most intractable cases; there were enduring sources of irritation between CueTen and the Education Department, not only over the costs of transport but over the relationship between CueTen's programme and the school curriculum which, notionally, the young people were still supposed to be following; and the broad-based local steering group which was needed to promote a sense of commitment and ownership across the agencies was not established until the project's final year. More careful consultation at the initial stage of setting up the project would have at least reduced the impact of such deficiencies in communication and support, and provided a basis for continuing joint review of progress, the identification of common problems, and shared work on adapting and developing the project. Had such careful consultation taken place, indeed, it is likely that CueTen would have been a substantially different project.

Secondly, there was a strong positive relationship between successful completion of the CueTen programme and lower rates of known offending in the twelve months prior to starting it - hardly a surprising finding. It could be used, of course, to argue that a programme like CueTen should be targeted at this group - relatively infrequent or minor young offenders who are to some degree alienated from the formal education system. It is not clear, however, that this would be a sensible use of resources, since it would entail the provision of a relatively expensive specialist service, with crime reduction aims, to a group unlikely in any case to develop serious criminal careers. There would also be the danger that such a project might do more harm through negative labelling and disruption of normal development (Cleaver, 1991; Braithwaite, 1997) than it did good through the provision of new skills and knowledge; and it would contravene the 'risk principle' that intensity of intervention should be proportional to likelihood of reoffending (Andrews, 1995). A more fruitful conclusion to be drawn from the finding is that the CueTen programme was most likely to succeed with young people with reasonably well developed social skills and coping capacities, and who were not excessively burdened by stresses arising from domestic unhappiness, or deeply enmeshed in subcultures of petty crime or substance abuse. That is, the rational, cognitive approach of CueTen is generally only going to be effective with young people who have achieved the level of maturity and social adjustment required to sit attentively through a long and complex curriculum, to see the point of it in terms of their own lives and prospects, and to use their learning in making the transition to the adult world of work and its disciplines and demands. The CueTen staff could not, and should not have been expected to, act as individual counsellors on a wide range of personal difficulties, let alone as family therapists.

Thirdly, the young people who attended CueTen, as well as social workers and teachers, felt that the programme made most sense when it was conceived exactly in this way, as providing a bridge between school and employment or further education, or even from childhood to near adult status. It made much less sense when it was to be followed by a return to school, and there were in fact no cases in which a young person went back to school without difficulty after attending CueTen; the most common outcome in these cases was that the young person never went back.

This experience, combined with the point about the qualities required if young people are to cope with a programme like CueTen's, suggests a possible way of thinking about the place of such a project in the range of services. This would be a place familiar to Apex from its other work - a place of transition. One can imagine, for example, that a programme like CueTen's might be useful in preparing young people for discharge from a Young Offenders Institution, or perhaps for leaving long-term residential care. In both these settings, attendance would be voluntary, so that only the well-motivated and interested would participate; and attendance throughout the programme, while desirable, would not be a requirement. The experience of CueTen also suggests that such a programme could provide valuable support for young people with a history of persistent offending as juveniles who have reached the age when they will not be expected to return to school, so that they are moving forwards in the life-course rather than backwards, and who have already resolved some of the problems characteristic of many of the young people who attended CueTen. A programme of this kind might serve as a bridge into participation in the labour market and community life for young people who have already benefited from a more conventionally therapeutic form of

intervention, to the point where problems in family relationships have either become manageable or been transcended with a move to independent living, problems such as drug or alcohol abuse have been controlled, and delinquent subcultures have lost some of their appeal. As in the institutional setting, attendance would be voluntary (though it could also be authoritatively encouraged). This was exactly the role envisaged for Apex's unfortunately short-lived project in Stirling in relation to the Freagarrach Project, and it is to be hoped that another opportunity will arise to test the feasibility of the CueTen model of practice in this context. In the light of the first of these concluding points, any renewed attempt to provide such a service should start with extensive consultation with relevant local constituencies, and proceed only once they have committed themselves to its support.

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