

Intensive Support and Monitoring Service (ISMS) ISMS and Beyond...

A snapshot of the service in the last two years and a longer term follow up

April 2009

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C contents

Introduction	3
Purpose.....	3
Methodological Comments	3

Part One – The Service Since 1st April 2007

Is ISMS still effective at reducing offending?.....	5
Is ISMS still effective at reducing risk?.....	7
Is ISMS still effective at reducing the use of secure care?	8
Does ISMS improve other outcomes for young people?	9

Part Two – The Service prior to 1st April 2007

What happened to the first young people in the ISMS service?	10
The longer term impact on risk.....	11
Experiences of secure and / or YOI.....	12
Involvement in Education, Employment or Training	12

Part Three: Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

ISMS was launched in Glasgow, and six other Phase One sites, in April 2005, in order to provide a direct community-based alternative to secure care. An intensive, multi-agency service package is co-ordinated around each young person according to their individual needs and risks. Where necessary, a young person can be subject to a Movement Restriction Condition (MRC) that is monitored by use of an electronic tag.

ISMS has been comprehensively evaluated, both locally (see www.glasgow.gov.uk) and nationally (www.scotland.gov.uk) and has been proven to be an effective way of working with high-risk young people. In response to this evidence the Scottish Government rolled-out the facility for ISMS to all 32 Local Authorities in 2008 and published best practice guidance, in which the Glasgow model is held up as one example of good practice. Since roll-out, less emphasis has been placed on the MRC element of the order (originally this was a requirement for an ISMS order), and Local Authorities now have more flexibility in the use of the MRC.

In Glasgow the ISMS service has continued to develop in response to an action plan stemming from the original local evaluation published in 2007.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is twofold. Firstly it will comprise a short examination of the service, covering the period from 1st April 2007 to 31st March 2009 (following on from where the previous evaluation left off). This is to ensure that the service remains focused, targeted and effective at reducing offending.

Secondly the report will revisit the original cohort of young people who were subject to an ISMS order during the first two years of operation (1st April 2005 to 31st March 2007), in order to establish the longer-term outcomes for young people since leaving the service.

This report should be read in conjunction with the earlier evaluations, particularly for readers interested in more about the background and detail of the ISMS service in Glasgow.

Methodological Comments

One of the main flaws in the original evaluation was that the use of SCRA data meant that for many young people it was not possible to monitor their offending after leaving ISMS – in many cases this data was not available to SCRA as the young person had ceased to be dealt with through the Children's Hearings System. In an attempt to address this issue this report draws on offending data obtained from the Strathclyde Police Corporate Database and looks at the period March 2005 to December 2008.

The use of a different data source means that the overall numbers of offences cannot be directly compared with previous evaluations, and there may be some discrepancies between reports (the use of Police data yields a slightly larger number of offences than SCRA data). However the methodology utilised in measuring change remains exactly the same as in earlier evaluations, and thus the amount of change is, to some extent, comparable.

However this follow-up report is much more limited in its scope than earlier evaluations, in part due to the fact that the intense scrutiny that the service has already received does not make a labour intensive evaluation worthwhile. Thus there is no focus on procedures, processes or partnerships – we know from experience that these are effective and mechanisms are in place to liaise and communicate with partner agencies as appropriate. There is no element of consultation, itself in some ways a detriment to the process of evaluation, but again in day-to-day operations there are opportunities for staff and service users to feed back their views and have their say in service development. Lastly there is no examination of the long-term impact of the service on the seriousness of offending, due to time constraints.

That said, this evaluation remains a robust attempt to expand the evidence-base about ISMS, and represents the first attempt to follow young people leaving the service over a substantial period of time.

Part One – The Service Since 1st April 2007

What does the ISMS service look like today?

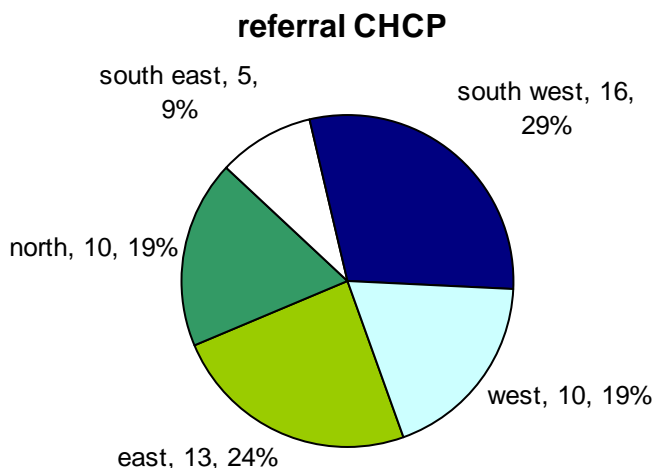
Who are the young people receiving ISMS today?

A total of **54** young people were placed on a new ISMS order between 1st April 2007 and 31st March 2009, up more than 25% on the first two years of the service.

More than two-thirds of the young people (**37**, 69%) were male and **17** were female (31%), demonstrating an increased shift to working with young women (in the first two years only 17% of ISMS young people were female).

The average age at the start of an ISMS order was 15 years 8 months, and ranged between 12 and 17.

Young people were most frequently referred from South West CHCP (30%), and least often from South East. The high usage of ISMS by South West and West CHCPs is not entirely reflective of the level of need in the area, but may rather reflect levels of available resource in the area, or other factors.



The average YLS risk assessment at the start of ISMS was **27** (or 'High')¹ and there was negligible difference between males (27.4) and females (27.2) at the start.

Service Provision

The average ISMS order now lasts for approximately 30 weeks (around 7 months), more than 50% longer than in the first two years.

Approximately half of all orders (**48%**) involve a Movement Restriction Condition (MRC) that lasts for, on average, 16.7 weeks of the ISMS order.

Each young person on ISMS receives approximately 23 hours of service input per week. This has reduced by almost 18% since the first two years. This may be due to the 'over-scheduling' that went on in the very early days of the service, or may reflect attempts to increase the targeting and focus of intervention.

¹ YLS assessments were only available for 30 out of the 54 young people at the start of their ISMS order

Attendance

Attendance at timetabled interventions reached approximately **68%**, and ranged from 25% to 100%. Gender differences in relation to attendance apparent in the earlier evaluations appear to have been removed, with the average attendance for females only slightly lower (67%) than males (69%).

Is ISMS still effective at reducing offending?

In order to answer this question the volume of offending in the six months prior to ISMS was compared with the volume of offending while on the ISMS order. Periods of time spent in secure care or a YOI prior to ISMS were excluded from the analysis as the opportunity to offend was severely limited. To ensure that the analysis compares like with like the average number of offences per month was calculated and compared across the two timescales.

The table below outlines the main impact on offending while subject to an ISMS order:

volume of offending (before and during ISMS)			
	av. offences per month as a group PRE ISMS	av. offences per month as a group DURING ISMS	% change
ISMS (n= 43)²	83.3	41.5	-50.2%

It can clearly be seen that ISMS has a tremendous impact on the volume of offending, with offending levels reduced by more than half in the last two years. However looking at averages does obscure individual successes and failures, and is easily susceptible to distortion by anomalies.

Overall the vast majority of young people reduced their offending (29, or 67%), two young people did not change (both were non-offenders on entry into ISMS) and 14 young people increased their level of offending while at ISMS (32.6%).

Closer inspection of these 14 young people shows that almost half (six) had not picked up any charges in the six months prior to ISMS, suggesting that changes were already underway in these young people's lives (most had previously been involved in offending). While it may simply be that these young people could only increase their offending, or remain non-offenders (you cannot reduce from zero), these findings also suggest that ISMS is maybe less appropriate for young people who have already begun to make positive changes.

Again it appears that six of the 14 young people that increased their offending were females (only two of whom fell into the category of non-offenders above). Thus this again raises questions about the effectiveness of ISMS for young women, despite improvements in engagement. Indeed the table overleaf compares the average change in offending, split between males and females:

² data from 11 young people was excluded: 1 young person's two orders were amalgamated into one for analysis purposes; 3 young people had no time at liberty in which to offend prior to ISMS, and 7 young people had not been on their orders long enough to gather enough data for analysis.

volume of offending (before and during ISMS)			
	av. offences per month as a group PRE ISMS	av. offences per month as a group DURING ISMS	% change
females (n= 13)²	13.8	11.0	-20.3%
males (n=30)²	66.2	31.0	-53.2%

This table highlights that ISMS is still proven to reduce the overall volume of offending in young women, albeit at a lesser rate than young males. In total less than half (46%) of young women reduced their offending while on ISMS, compared to 70% of males.

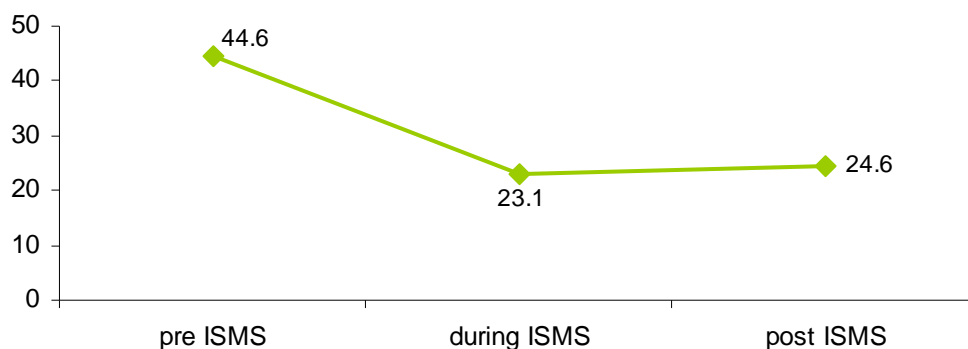
A limitation of the earlier ISMS studies in Glasgow was that the reliance on SCRA data meant that post-ISMS data was not available for many of the young people – particularly if their supervision order had been terminated at the same time as the ISMS order. To rectify this, the following table compares the rate of offending in the six months prior to ISMS and the six months post ISMS:

volume of offending (before and after ISMS)			
	av. offences per month as a group PRE ISMS	av. offences per month as a group POST ISMS	% change
ISMS (n= 21)³	44.6	24.6	-44.8%

Thus it can be clearly seen the positive impact of ISMS is sustained across the six months since leaving the service. This is the first published evidence that the effects of the service provision remain long after the service is withdrawn. There is evidence of a very small increase in offending, if the volume of offending during the ISMS order is compared with offending after (an increase of 6%), however this is to be expected after the withdrawal of such intensive supports. Overall the rate of offending remains substantially lower than prior to ISMS, as shown by the graph overleaf:

³ data from a further 22 young people was excluded because there was not enough post data available (either due to not enough time elapsing since leaving ISMS, because of a period in secure/YOI equal to the post-ISMS phase, and in one instance because the young person had moved away from Glasgow).

av. offences per month as a group (n=21)



It should also be noted at this point that some young people were excluded from the analysis as they had not been at liberty at all in the six months since leaving ISMS and therefore had no offending profile. These outcomes will be discussed further in the section concerning the impact on secure care.

Is ISMS still effective at reducing risk?

Outcome analysis in relation to risk is fairly limited in this study, as although YLS data was available for 40 young people at some point, only 14 out of 54 (26%) had a pair of YLS assessments conducted at or close to entry and exit to ISMS. The table below outlines the overall change in risk for these 14 young people:

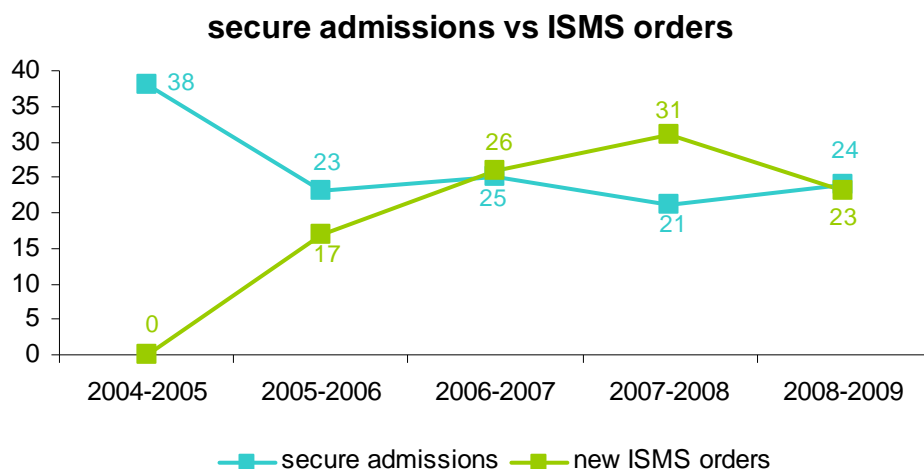
risk assessment (before and after ISMS)			
	av. YLS score PRE ISMS	av. YLS score POST ISMS	% change
ISMS (n= 14)	27.4	18.7	-31.8%

Thus it is clear that, for this small sample at least, risk as assessed by the YLS assessment was substantially reduced during ISMS. However young people still score, on average, 'Moderate' upon leaving the service, indicating that appropriate service provision after ISMS will be crucial in maintaining positive outcomes.

There was little difference between males and females in relation to the reduction of risk, although caution should be taken as the numbers involved are so small (i.e. five females averaging a 34% reduction, compared to nine males averaging a 30% reduction).

Is ISMS still effective at reducing the use of secure care?

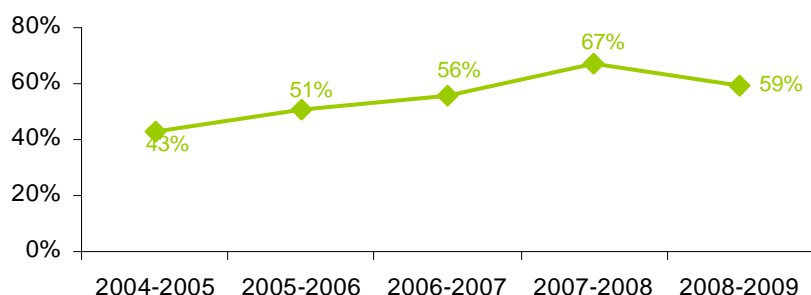
The use of secure has fallen dramatically since the introduction of ISMS, at least for young people admitted through Children's legislation, as highlighted by the graph below:



The year 2008/2009 appears to be an anomaly in this trend, with a fall in the number of new ISMS orders and a small increase in secure admissions. It is too early to say whether this is simply a blip in the trend, or if it is affected by other factors (for example, staffing levels, increased length of orders etc). However even with this change, secure admissions remain 37% lower than before the service commenced.

With ISMS estimated at £1,000 per week, and the cost of secure care in excess of £5,000 per week, this reduction should in theory have saved the council considerable sums. However an unintended consequence of the reduced use of secure has been an increased availability of beds, an opportunity which has been used by sentencers for young people on remand. The graph below shows the percentage of admissions to secure that are taken up by remands:

Proportion of admissions to secure that are remands



Again the 2008-2009 year appears to not follow the trend, although the proportion is still higher than any other year apart from 2007-2008. At this stage it is hard to establish if this could have been affected by the piloting of a small 'ISMS as an alternative to remand' service that took place within the ISMS team over the last four or five months of the year. This service was set up to address the issue of increasing remands, and will be formally launched in 2009-2010.

However as indicated by the offending analysis, some young people were excluded as they did not have an offending profile post-ISMS because they had spent all of the time period in secure or a Young Offenders Institution. A total of four young people had spent more than three months out of six in secure or a YOI post ISMS. While this is a small number, it is clearly not a positive outcome for these young people, and at odds with the aim of keeping young people out of secure care. However

the service cannot work for every young person, and in some instances (but not all) the period in secure was a result of offences picked up prior to commencing ISMS.

Does ISMS improve other outcomes for young people?

The analysis here focuses on educational outcomes for young people attending the ISMS Education Base only; again time constraints meant that it was not possible to gather outcome data from other educational establishments. A total of 25 young people (46%) attended ISMS Education during the period (ranging between one month and 18 months). The ISMS Education Base track a number of softer outcomes in relation to young people’s development, but this report concentrates on outcomes in respect of qualifications. The table below outlines the achievements of these young people:

ISMS Education Base (qualifications gained April 2007 to March 2009)			
	Qualification	No. of young people	%
ISMS (n= 25)	Maths Access 3 units	24	96%
	English Access 3 units	22	88%
	Computing Studies Access 3 units	10	40%
	Standard Grade English (General)	3	12%
	Standard Grade Maths (General)	3	12%

These are not inconsiderable achievements given the patchy education history that these young people have had prior to attendance at ISMS Education, and their prior reluctance to engage in formal education. In addition it should be noted that 6 young people have been put forward for Standard Grade English and Standard Grade Maths in 2009.

Part Two – The Service prior to 1st April 2007

What happened to the first young people in the ISMS service?

The original analysis carried out after the first two years of operation, in 2007, focused on offending data for 38 young people. This analysis looks at 37 of the young people who started ISMS within the first two years⁴. The impact on offending while the young person remains on the ISMS order was covered in the original evaluation but has been reanalysed here using the new Police data source.

volume of offending (before and during ISMS)			
	av. offences per month as a group PRE ISMS	av. offences per month as a group DURING ISMS	% change
ISMS (n= 37)	77.6	44.1	-43.2%

The table above shows that the reduction in offending identified using SCRA data still holds true when using the Police data. As expected the overall numbers of offences are slightly higher using this dataset, however the overall reduction in offending is fairly comparable (43% reduction compared to 37% in the original analysis). This use of Police data has meant that it has been possible to look at the impact on offending in the six months after leaving the service and also in the period between 18 and 24 months after leaving (see the tables below).

volume of offending (before and after ISMS)			
	av. offences per month as a group PRE ISMS	av. offences per month as a group POST ISMS	% change
ISMS (n= 31)⁵	61.1	24.8	-59.4%

⁴ 1 young person was excluded as the data source did not extend back far enough to establish his PRE profile.

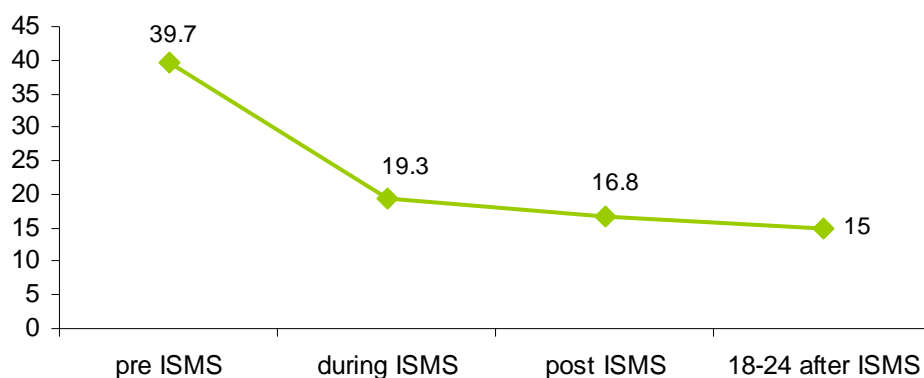
⁵ A small number of young people were excluded from the analysis due to not being at liberty at all in the six months post ISMS, and thus having no offending profile.

volume of offending (before and 18-24 months after ISMS)			
	av. offences per month as a group PRE ISMS	av. offences per month as a group POST ISMS	% change
ISMS (n= 21)⁶	51.4	21.8	-57.6%

As can be seen, young people who have been through ISMS show a sustained reduction in offending, compared to their offending profile prior to entry into ISMS, both in the short and longer term.

This is clearly illustrated when looking at the 18 young people from the sample that had full data for all time periods (i.e. at least some time at liberty before ISMS, in the six months post ISMS and between 18 and 24 months post ISMS and with sufficient enough time elapsed to cover the latter period). The graph below maps the average monthly offending for these young people across each of the time periods, and shows a steady drop in offending rates overall.

av. offences per month as a group (n=18)



The longer term impact on risk

This was again fairly difficult to assess over the longer term, not least because if young people cease to be Youth Justice clients there is little likelihood of a YLS risk assessment being carried out. In addition the YLS assessment is not recommended for young people aged over 18, and some of the young people had passed this age by the time of follow up.

However YLS 'pairs' were available for 21 of the young people, with the first assessment taken as close to the start of ISMS possible and the second at some point after leaving ISMS (this was taken an average of 10 months after leaving the service, but did vary considerably).

⁶ A small number of young people were excluded from the analysis due to data not being available yet for the 18-24 months period either because not enough time had elapsed, or because they were not at liberty during the period.

risk assessment (before and after ISMS)			
	av. YLS score PRE ISMS	av. YLS score POST ISMS	% change
ISMS (n= 21)	28.4	23.3	-18.0%

As can be seen the young people did show a sustained reduction in risk over the long term, however both scores remained in the 'High' category (albeit on the cusp of 'Moderate', as anything under 23 would be classified as Moderate.)

Experiences of secure and / or YOI

The offending analysis, by necessity, focuses on those young people who were at liberty for at least some of the time period in question i.e. at six months post ISMS, or between 18 and 24 months post ISMS. So while the offending outcomes are undoubtedly positive, they do not reflect outcomes for all young people who have been through the service.

Of the original 41 young people who received an ISMS service during the first two years, eight young people spent more than three out of the six months post ISMS in a secure establishment or YOI, although it should be stressed that four (50%) of these young people were sentenced as a result of offences committed prior to the involvement of ISMS.

A total of 25 young people had left ISMS for long enough to have 18 to 24 month data available. Out of these 25 a total of 10 young people (40%) spent more than 3 months in that time period in secure or a YOI. Half of these young people (5) were the same young people who had experienced significant periods in secure of custody immediately on leaving the service.

Thus it is clear that ISMS is not effective for everyone, and obviously cannot negate historic offending behaviour. However it is also difficult to say what the outcomes would have been without the involvement of ISMS. While not positive, in some cases the outcomes have been affected in a small way by ISMS. For example, one young man received a shorter sentence for an old offence as the Sheriff recognised his good behaviour and compliance while on the ISMS order.

Involvement in Education, Employment or Training

CareFirst case records were scrutinised for the 38 young people who had reached at least 18 months post ISMS. At 18 months, very few young people were involved in any constructive education or employment activity, and those who were positively engaged in 'education' were in a residential school. The table overleaf outlines this in more detail:

Involvement in education / training / employment (18 months post ISMS)		
Placement	Number	%
Unemployed (not actively seeking)	10	26%
Secure or YOI	7	18%
Unemployed (actively seeking)	6	16%
Employment	4	11%
Training	4	11%
Not Known	4	11%
Education	2	5%
Other	1	3%
Total	38	100%

Part Three – Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

It is clear the ISMS service remains highly effective at reducing the volume of young people's offending, and that the level of change has increased as the service has continued to evolve and has become more experienced. It is heartening to note that, while not effective for every young person, for many young people the positive outcomes achieved while at ISMS appear to be sustained over the longer-term. The service should congratulate itself on its significant achievements with a chaotic and hard to reach client group.

The service continues to reduce the use of secure care via the Children's Hearings System and in that respect continues to provide excellent value for money. The increased use of secure for remands will be directly addressed by the launch of the 'ISMS as an alternative to remand' service due to be launched in June 2009.

The anomalies in the use of secure care and new ISMS orders during 2008/2009 should be monitored to ensure that they are not part of a new trend. However the slowdown in new ISMS orders during 2008/2009 has also coincided with a period in which the ISMS team has been stretched due to a number of staff vacancies, and also staff being diverted to the 'ISMS alternative to remand' pilot. It is important to ensure that the service is fully resourced in order to ensure that it remains a robust and credible service.

It is interesting to note the increased number of young women coming through the ISMS service, despite indications from previous evaluations that the service is less effective for females. Although engagement of young women is much higher over the last two years, the outcomes in relation to offending remain substantially lower than for young men. While this may reflect the fact that offending is not often a young women's priority need, consideration should again be given to service provision for high-risk and vulnerable young women.

Lastly, a concern for wider service provision is to attempt to engage more young people into positive destinations in young adulthood. Indeed very few of the young people positively engaged at 18 months were involved in any offending at all between 18 and 24 months - a clear indicator of the importance of constructive use of time as a protective factor against further offending.