YJB Conference
Harrogate, November 2008

Achieving Positive Outcomes for Young People from Custody and Resettlement

Morality, Authority and Care in Secure Institutions for Children

Professor Alison Liebling

University of Cambridge, UK

(Daems 2008)

- “The problem of youth offending and its management in particular, [is] a *moral* problem”.

Training at the Edge:

Reflections on a staff transformation initiative in secure settings for children

Alison Liebling, Caroline Lanskey,
Deborah Drake and Joel Harvey

July 2008

Aims of the Training

For the institution

- To change / improve the culture (C)
- To reduce the use of force (C)
- To leave a lasting legacy of training capability and improvement in the institution (YAR)
- To create a supportive learning environment (YAR)

For staff

- To improve attitudes towards work with young people (C)
- To improve staff relationships with young people (C)
- To improve confidence (C)
- To improve the ability of staff to handle extreme behaviour effectively and appropriately and to reduce their use of restraint and other physical controls (YAR)
- To establish effective staff working relationships (YAR)
- To improve the capacity of staff to empower young people to maximise the choices available to them whilst in care (YAR)

For young people

- To improve levels of care for young people (C)
- To increase the take up by young people of educational and behavioural interventions whilst in custody (YAR)
- [To make an effective transition back into the community and to reduce likelihood of re-offending] (YAR)

Youth at Risk's work:

- Aimed at helping more young people 'to achieve more of their potential':
- 'How can we help them to be responsible for who they are in the world? To develop relationships that work for them in their lives? To give up habits that don't work for them?' To make breakthroughs?

Research methods

Before and After Study

- Staff surveys at pilot institutions and 2 comparator sites, before and after YAR training.
- Young people surveys at pilot institutions and 2 comparator sites, before and after training.
- Collection of institutional data for six month period, before and after YAR training.

Process Study

- Observations of residential course, staff training modules and Cascade Leader mentoring sessions
- Observations of working practices in establishments and staff–young people interactions
- Longitudinal semi-structured interview study with all staff attending course, before and at 3 and 9 months after the training.
- Semi-structured interviews with a ‘purposive sample’ of young people at both establishments (15 at Medway, 25 at Feltham)
- Interviews with senior managers

Exploratory Follow-Up Study

- Semi-structured interviews with a small sample of young people in each institution at the start of the study, shortly before their release back into the community and on their release.

Key questions

- Has there been any change between Time 1 and Time 2?
- Has the training intervention improved and increased care for children in custody?
- Has the training intervention improved and increased (staff encouragement of) constructive engagement in addressing offending behaviour?
- Has the training intervention improved behaviour management?
- Has the training intervention changed and improved the establishment's culture?
- Are there likely to be positive effects of any of the above (or any other impact of the course) on reducing reoffending by young people on release?

The Residential Course

- The course was intense, challenging, highly structured, focused (uncomfortable for some). It focused on individual accountability (the 'self as cause'), on being authentic, and on human possibility. These were highly appropriate themes in this area of work. The course challenged the existing mind set (and culture) of the staff who were present very directly (and in a way that was necessary).

- This was 'edgework': deep, intrusive, challenging - a match for those working with young people whose lives were in chaos. 'Edgework', according to Ferrell and Hamm, involves 'abandoning (in part) the security of pre-existing personal and professional identities'. It is 'a place where definitions are drawn', and therefore must involve 'some experiential danger'. The risks, in other words, are worth it. This was human engagement, not 'training', and the emphasis was on 'ways of being' rather than on developing technical skills. The course required some discomfort: 'sticking within your limits will be limiting your work with young people'.

Implementation Rating

Implementation Criteria	**Medway (Rating out of 10)**	**Feltham (Rating out of 10)**
Residential Training Course	8	8
Establishment Training :		
Delivery of sessions	6	3
Support from Youth at Risk	8	6
Institutional regime / support	6	3
Staff Access	6	4
Staff Responses	6	3
Overall Rating (Establishment Cascade x 2)	**6**	**3.75**

A typology of training outcomes:

1. The ‘converted’ (4)
2. The ‘assimilators’ or adapters (12)
3. The ‘reinforced’ (4)
4. The ‘little impact’ group (5)
5. The ‘alienated’ (4)

YPs MQPL Before and After Comparisons: Medway 2007, 2008 & Rainsbrook 2007

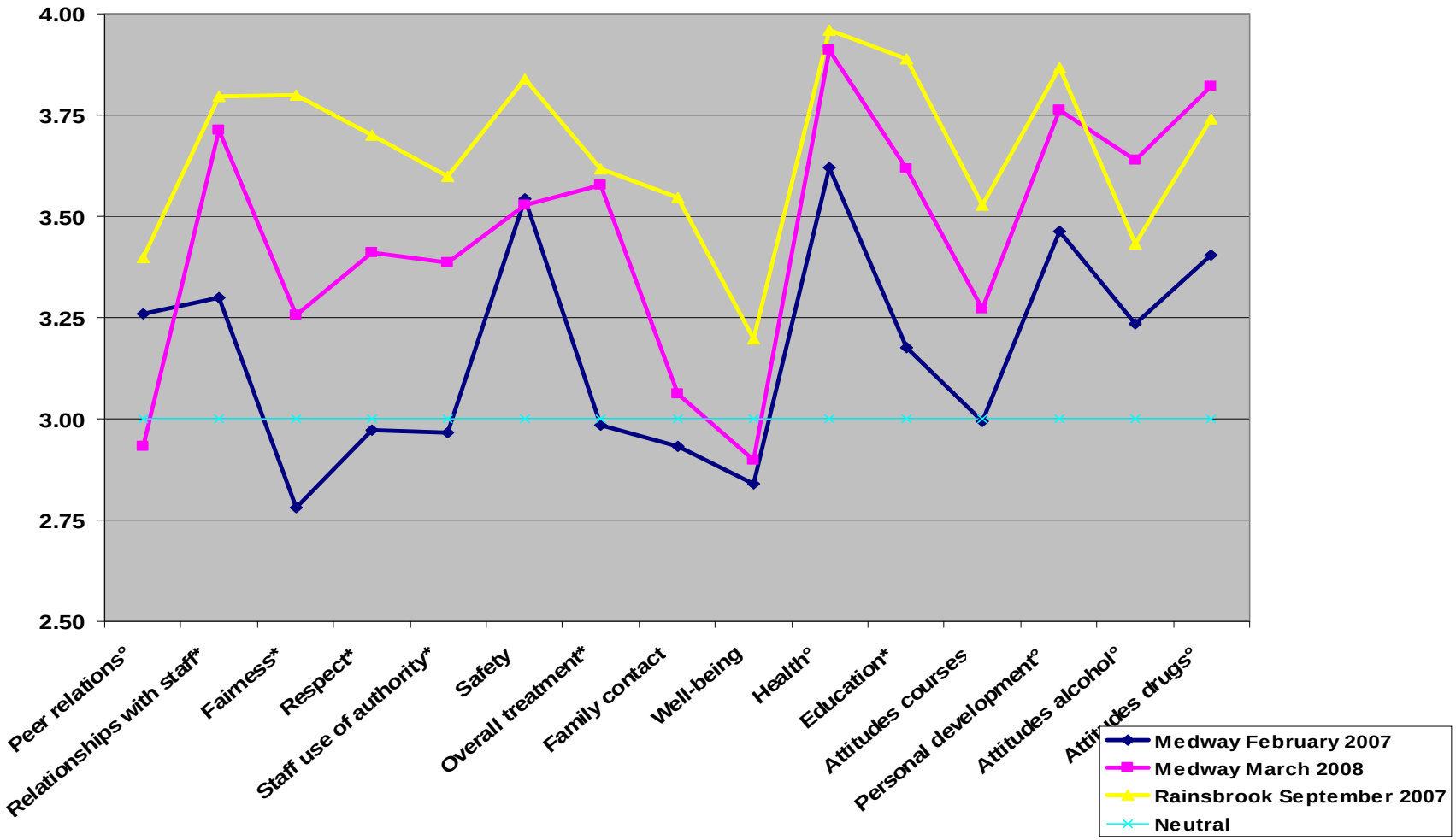


Table 1:

MQPL Before and After Comparisons: Medway YP
Dimensions Showing Significant Improvement

Medway YP Mean Scores

Dimensions	February 2007 (N=52; Response Rate=81%)	March 2008 (N=41; Response Rate=71%)	Sig Diffs (T-Test, two-tailed)	Direction of Change
Relationships with staff	3.299	3.714	0.019	↑
Fairness	2.780	3.257	0.020	↑
Respect	2.973	3.410	0.016	↑
Staff use of authority	2.966	3.387	0.011	↑↑
Overall treatment	2.984	3.577	0.001	↑↑↑
Education	3.176	3.618	0.037	↑

↑ Statistically Significant ($p < .05$)
↑↑ Highly Statistically Significant ($p < .01$)
↑↑↑ Very Highly Statistically Significant ($p < .001$)

Table 2:

MQPL Before and After Comparisons: Medway YP
Dimensions Showing a Trend of Change

Medway YP Mean Scores

Dimensions	February 2007 (N=52; Response Rate=81%)	March 2008 (N=41; Response Rate=71%)	Sig Diffs (T-Test, two-tailed)	Direction of Change
Peer relations	3.259	2.932	0.100	∓↓
Health	3.619	3.910	0.073	∓↑
Personal development	3.464	3.762	0.092	∓↑
Attitudes alcohol	3.234	3.639	0.097	∓↑
Attitudes drugs	3.403	3.820	0.065	∓↑

∓ Not statistically significant but a substantial trend in the direction of change

Table 3:

MQPL Before and After Comparisons: Medway YP
Dimensions Showing No Change

Medway YP Mean Scores

Dimensions	February 2007 (N=52; Response Rate=81%)	March 2008 (N=41; Response Rate=71%)	Sig Diffs (T-Test, two-tailed)	Direction of Change
Safety	3.542	3.529	0.939	**n.s.**
Family contact	2.933	3.063	0.316	**n.s.**
Well-being	2.838	2.897	0.675	**n.s.**
Attitudes courses	2.993	3.273	0.119	**n.s.**

n.s. Not significant

Staff MQPL Before and After Comparisons: Medway 2006, 2008 & Rainsbrook 2007

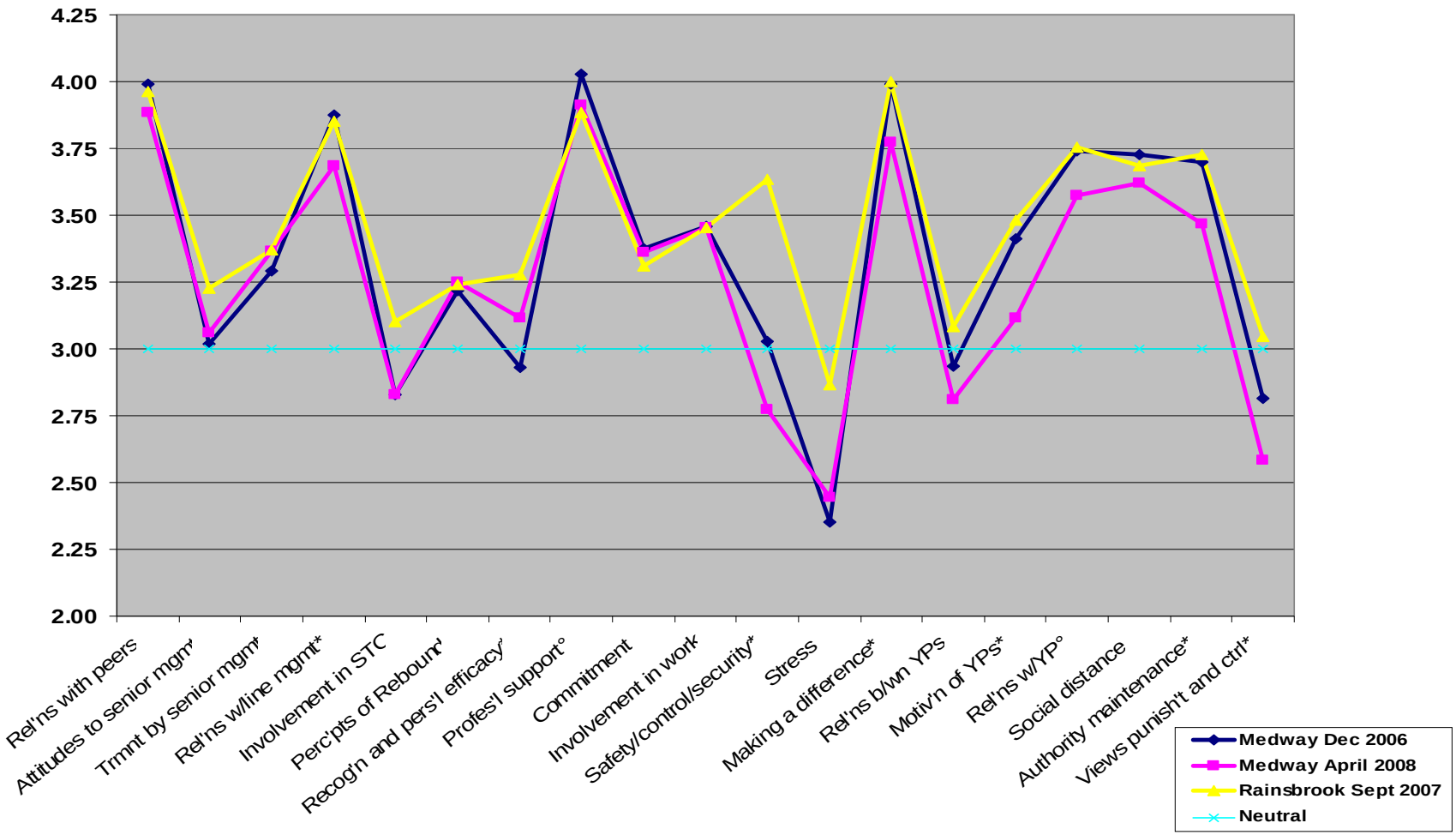


Table 4:

MQPL Before and After Comparisons: Medway Staff Dimensions Showing Significant Improvement

Dimensions	Medway Staff Mean Scores			
	Dec 2006 (N=107; Response Rate=46%)	April 2008 (N=98; Response Rate=42%)	Sig Diffs (T-Test, two-tailed)	Direction of Change
Recognition and personal efficacy	2.929	3.114	0.025	↑

↑ Statistically Significant ($p < .05$)

Table 5:

MQPL Before and After Comparisons: Medway Staff Dimensions Showing a Trend of Change

Dimensions	Medway Staff Mean Scores			
	Dec 2006 (N=107; Response Rate=46%)	April 2008 (N=98; Response Rate=42%)	Sig Diffs (T-Test, two-tailed)	Direction of Change
Professional support	4.030	3.913	0.086	∓↓
Relationships with YP	3.742	3.573	0.085	∓↓

∓ Not statistically significant but a substantial trend in the direction of change

Table 6:

MQPL Before and After Comparisons: Medway Staff
Dimensions Showing No Change

Dimensions	Medway Staff Mean Scores: Dec 2006 (N=107; Response Rate=46%)	April 2008 (N=98; Response Rate=42%)	Sig Diffs (T-Test, two-tailed)	Direction of Change
Relations with peers	3.989	3.883	0.111	**n.s.**
Attitudes toward senior management	3.019	3.059	0.675	**n.s.**
Treatment by senior managmnt	3.290	3.365	0.465	**n.s.**
Involvement in STC	2.829	2.829	0.998	**n.s.**
Perceptions of Rebound	3.216	3.251	0.666	**n.s.**
Commitment	3.377	3.359	0.869	**n.s.**
Involvement in work	3.458	3.452	0.852	**n.s.**
Stress	2.352	2.444	0.418	**n.s.**
Relations between YPs	2.935	2.809	0.137	**n.s.**
Social distance	3.727	3.622	0.171	**n.s.**

n.s. Not significant

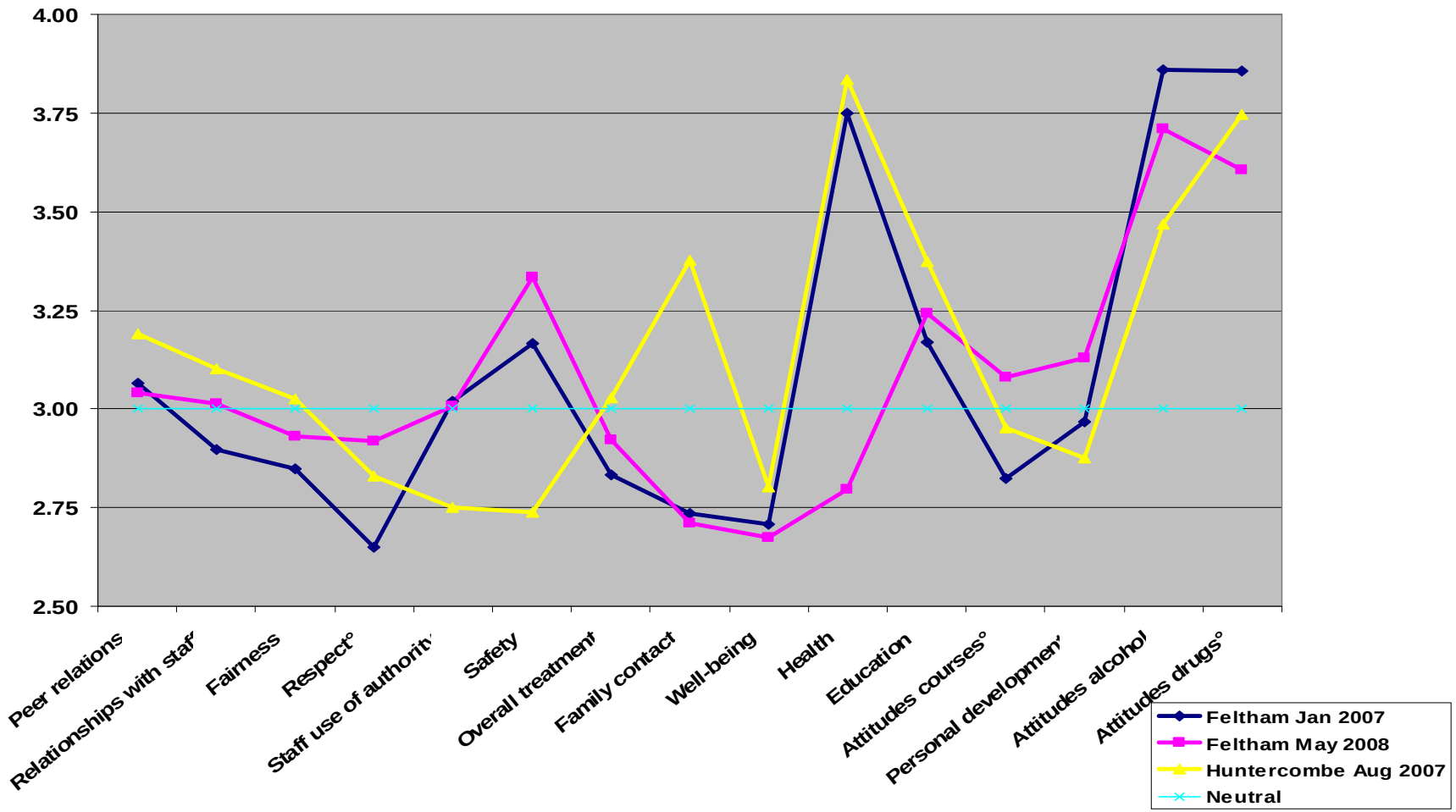
Table 7:

MQPL Before and After Comparisons: Medway Staff
Dimensions Showing Significant Decline

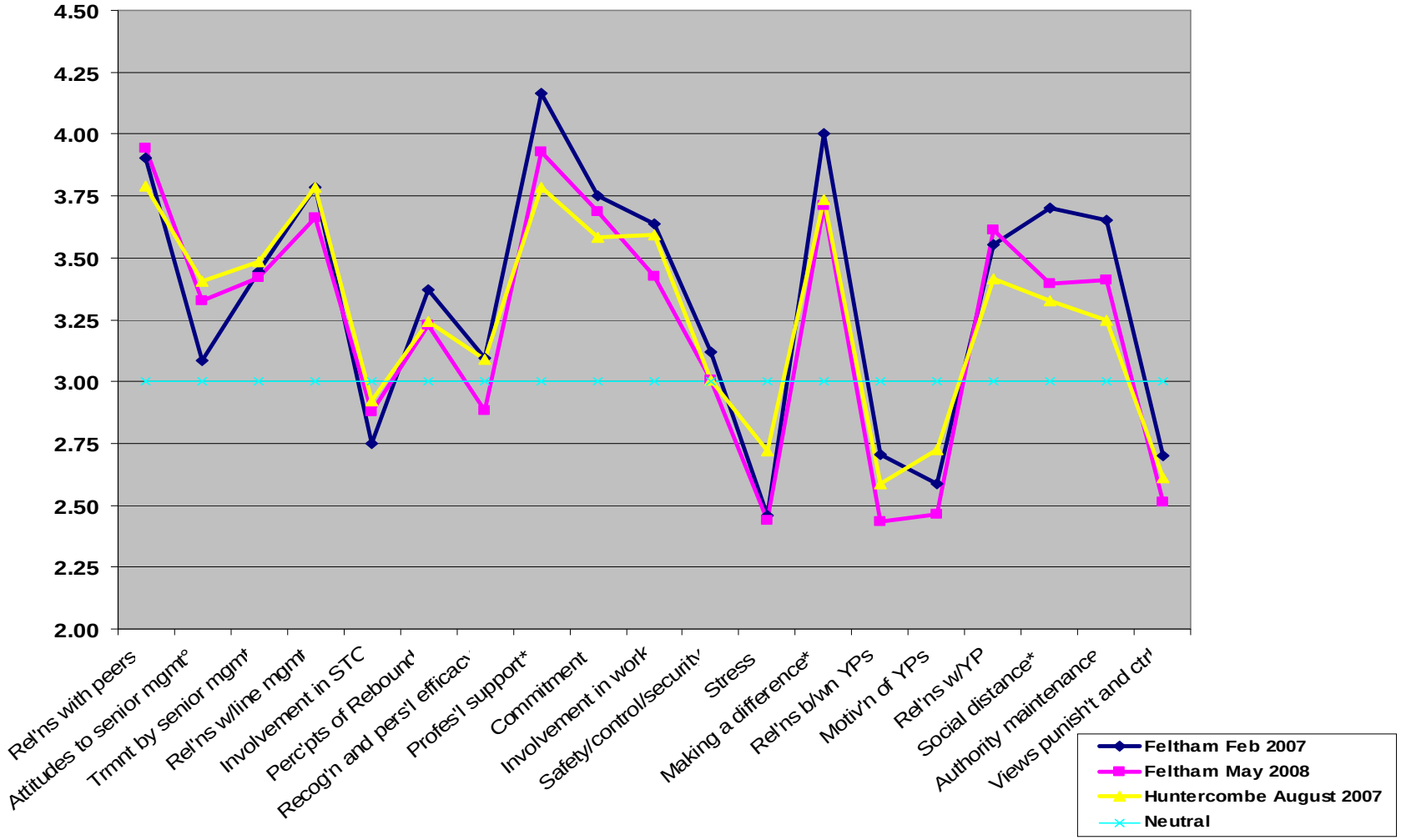
Dimensions	Medway Staff Mean Scores			
	Dec 2006 (N=107; Response Rate=46%)	April 2008 (N=98; Response Rate=42%)	Sig Diffs (T-Test, two-tailed)	Direction of Change
Relationships with line management	3.874	3.684	0.048	↓
Safety/control/security	3.029	2.771	0.003	↓↓↓
Making a difference	3.990	3.773	0.004	↓↓↓
Motivation of Yps	3.413	3.118	0.008	↓↓
Authority maintenance	3.700	3.466	0.035	↓
Views on punishment and control	2.816	2.583	0.005	↓↓↓

↓ Statistically Significant ($p < .05$)
↓↓ Highly Statistically Significant ($p < .01$)
↓↓↓ Very Highly Statistically Significant ($p < .001$)

YP MQPL Before and After Comparisons: Feltham 2007, 2008 & Huntercombe 2007



Staff MQPL Before and After Comparisons: Feltham 2007, 2008 & Huntercombe 2007



Exploratory Follow-Up Study

Research Difficulties

Access and Consent (Medway)
Population (Feltham)
Attrition rates

Outcomes - June 2008

9 young people released into the community (8 Medway, 1 Feltham):
1 re-offended (in custody)
5 breached licence (1 in custody, 2 returned from custody, 1 due in court, 1 'on run')
1 returned to court for offence committed prior to release
2 in community

Emerging themes

Complexity
Disruption
Displacement
Disconnection

Conclusions

- The institutions, and the staff, need training and development (starting point lower than expected)
- Some crucial messages in the YAR approach/good content
- Mixed implementation
- Effects on staff varied
- Some positive outcomes for young people (some added value, in a consistent direction)
- What is needed: more care for individuals, a moral framework, more guidance on application of authority, training, the *right* kind of confidence, more preparation.
- Broader context I: what are good enough institutions for children? Use of authority, care for young people (a moral framework)
- Broader context II: strengthening links between institution and life on release?

Good enough institutions: the use of authority and the provision of care

Rose suggests that some of the questions we might need to ask about institutions for young people are:

1. How child centred is the establishment?
2. How confident are the staff?
3. How clear is the vision, or framework for thinking?
4. How does the institution deal with bad incidents?
5. How consistent are staff responses to difficult behaviour? Are clear expectations set?
6. How far do the staff believe that change and growth are possible in the young people in them?
7. How do staff think about the young people in their care?
8. How skilled are the staff?
9. How supported are staff by senior managers?
10. What are the moral and emotional realities of this institution?
11. How much bullying goes on?
12. How safe and predictable (fair) is it (or how chaotic)?
13. How much care for and understanding of young people exists?
14. How much respect is there?

These are questions we can now answer, with the data at our disposal.