



Her Majesty's  
Inspectorate of  
Probation

Youth offending services  
inspection

Domain one rules and guidance

HMI Probation, May 2018

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# 1. Organisational Delivery

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## 1.1. Governance and leadership

**The governance and leadership of the YOT supports and promotes the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children.**

### Guidance:

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (Section 39) placed a duty on each local authority, acting in co-operation with statutory partners (police, the Secretary of State, probation and health), to establish for their area one or more youth offending teams. YOTs were first implemented through guidance in the Inter-Departmental Circular on Establishing Youth Offending Teams (Home Office, 1998). This determined that a steering group (later termed a YOT Management Board in the 2004 YJB guidance 'Sustaining the Success'), should be formed to provide strategic direction with the aim of preventing offending by children. The role of the YOT Management Board is to:

- determine how the YOT is to be composed and funded, how it is to operate and what functions it is to carry out
- determine how appropriate youth justice services are to be provided and funded
- oversee the formulation each year of a draft youth justice plan
- oversee the appointment or designation of a YOT manager
- as part of the youth justice plan, agree measurable objectives linked to key performance indicators, including the National Standards for Youth Justice.

Members of a YOT Management Board should be empowered with the capacity to make strategic decisions. The primary duty to ensure a YOT, and appropriate youth justice services are in place rests with the local authority.

It is recognised that in some areas the YOT Management Board may now have been merged with other local strategic boards, and/or may be known by a different name, for example Youth Justice Partnership Board. For the purposes of this document, the term 'YOT Management Board' can be taken to apply to all such variations.

Likewise, YOTs may now form part of a broader range of services, or encompass wider services within them. They may be known by alternative names in some areas, for example, Youth Justice Service.

The governance and leadership of the YOT should both maintain and take a forward-looking approach to delivering better services for children. In order to be of high-quality, services delivered should be well planned, effective, evidence-based, and take account of diversity needs. Services should be personalised, focusing on the child's specific circumstances, and responsive in addressing the assessed needs of the case.

A personalised approach is one in which services are tailored to meet the needs of individuals, giving people as much choice and control as possible over the support they receive. This personalised approach must include, but by no means be limited to, an individual's protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, and sex). It should also include a range of other diversity factors that could have an effect on the individual's ability and capacity to engage in interventions such as maturity, rurality, learning needs, mental health concerns, cultural identity. There should be evidence that that consideration has been given to how that individual will be able to respond to that intervention at that time. Evidence from desistance theory emphasises the need for a holistic, flexible and person-centred approach to supporting people.

**Judgement:**

Lead inspectors should adopt an initial default of 'requires improvement' in relation to the standard when one or more of the key questions is answered 'no' – whilst giving the LI scope to override and propose a 'good' rating when he/she thinks this is appropriate.

**1.1.1 Is there a clear local vision and strategy for the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children?**

**Guidance:**

Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 sets out responsibilities in relation to the production of an annual youth justice plan. The Act states that it is the duty of each local authority, after consultation with partner agencies, to formulate and implement an annual youth justice plan which sets out:

- how youth justice services in their area are to be provided and funded
- how the YOT will be composed and funded, how it will operate, and what functions it will carry out.

The statutory youth justice plan must be submitted to the YJB and published in accordance with the directions of the Secretary of State.

The plan should also show how strategic links with other services will be developed and maintained. The youth justice plan should therefore be linked to other local multi-agency children's plans and community safety plans, and policies relating to children, for example, those relating to anti-social behaviour.

**Judgement:**

Lead inspectors should consider the extent to which delivery is above and below the line for each prompt, and whether those aspects that are considered to be above the line outweigh those that are not. Where on balance the areas above the line outweigh those that are below, the inspector should consider a 'yes' judgement to the key question. One or more areas that are considered below the line may be of such importance that they preclude a judgement of 'yes'.

**a) Does the YOT Management Board set the direction and strategy for the YOT, prioritising the quality of service and adherence to the evidence-base?**

**Guidance:**

The inspector should consider whether the YOT Management Board effectively supports and enables the YOT to meet its objectives, in particular to deliver a personalised, individualised service to children. The Board should provide a clear strategic lead, with monitoring of the quality and effectiveness of the work and adherence to the evidence-base so that it meets the objectives of the youth justice system, in particular to reduce offending and improve the life chances of children. The Management Board should have a current, relevant and effective strategy/business plan for the YOT, which is communicated to and understood by statutory and other relevant partners. Sufficient attention should be paid to the development and delivery of out-of-court-disposals, and there should be commitment to diversion and prevention work by the YOT Partnership, including leadership within the Board. There should be a clear understanding of the profile of youth offending in the area, and the needs of children; a needs assessment should have been completed. The Board should actively promote equality of opportunity and diversity, paying attention to diversity factors throughout its work, and addressing actual or potential discriminatory factors where they exist. There should be evidence to demonstrate how the Board ensures that it is listening, and responding, to the voice of the child.

**Evidence: – may include:**

- Latest Youth Justice Plan/business plan, which has been approved by the Management Board, submitted to the YJB, and communicated appropriately to partners. (If a new plan is currently under consideration by the YOT Management Board, this should also be considered)
- current YOT action plan (if not already included in the business plan)
- YOT Management Board minutes for meetings held within the last 12 months – these could be stand-alone, or incorporated within wider strategic meetings
- agenda and papers submitted to the most recent YOT Management Board
- the latest available analysis of local offending, children or related profiles, and a needs assessment – this could be stand-alone for children, but may be more effective if it formed part of a joint strategic needs assessment for the area
- evidence of how the Management Board, and the YOT, make sure that services are personalised and suitable for the diversity of the local population
- evidence of partners' stated commitment, for example memoranda of understanding or service level agreements. An example of good practice would be a written YOT Partnership Agreement – setting out partner commitment to finance and resources (reviewed annually)
- current strategy and procedures for seeking and using the views of service users (including children and victims) to improve YOT services, with examples of how they have made a difference.

**b) Does the YOT Management Board include all statutory partners and non-statutory partners where these would add value?**

**Guidance:**

All statutory partners should be represented on the YOT Management Board i.e. Local Authority (Children’s Social Care and Education), Police, Probation, and Health. Non-statutory partners may be involved in the Board as relevant and appropriate to the area; examples may include youth court magistrates, court legal advisers, community safety managers, youth support managers, local secure establishments, housing providers, fire service managers, voluntary sector representatives and elected councillors; their contribution and added value should be clearly demonstrated. Board members should be of the appropriate seniority and have the authority to make strategic decisions, for example, with regard to financial and staffing resources. The Board should have clear and current Terms of Reference, have a clear understanding of its accountability, and be proactive in driving change. Inspectors should look for evidence of added value being provided to the YOT through the work of the Management Board.

**Evidence: – may include:**

- All statutory partners (local authority, police, probation, health) are signatories to the Youth Justice Plan/business plan at an appropriate senior level
- evidence of partners’ stated commitment, for example memoranda of understanding or service level agreements. An example of good practice would be a written YOT Partnership Agreement – setting out partner commitment to finance and resources (reviewed annually)
- evidence of contributions made by non-statutory partners, for example Community Safety initiatives linked to YOT work
- plans from different agencies integrated into the work of the YOT
- Terms of Reference for the Board.

**c) Are YOT Management Board members active in their attendance and participation, recognising the contribution their own agency makes to the YOT?**

**Guidance:**

There should be consistent and regular attendance from all statutory and non-statutory partners, with designated and named members. The non-attendance of partners should be managed effectively, for example through monitoring and challenge by the Chair of the YOT Management Board. It is important that all Board members are actively engaged in the work of the YOT and that the contribution of all agencies is meaningful and demonstrates added value. Board members should have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and recognise the contribution they are required to make. There needs to be an effective induction and training of Board members to support them in best understanding the work of the YOT, and their role within the partnership. They should take ownership of specific tasks and responsibilities, hold the YOT Manager to account, and where necessary commission

work on performance in order to support improvements. YOT Board meetings should facilitate appropriate and healthy challenge, leading to positive outcomes for children.

**Evidence: – may include:**

- YOT Management Board minutes for meetings held within the last 12 months – these could be stand-alone, or incorporated within wider meetings
- minutes should specify the names and roles of designated representatives, as well as the organisation they are representing
- register of attendance at the YOT Management Board, covering all meetings over the last 12 months (should include name, agency and role)
- weaker examples may include where a partner agency sends repeat apologies for meetings or has repeat changes of designated representatives, leading to lack of consistency, effectiveness of contribution and understanding
- induction and training records for Board members
- evidence of how the YOT Management Board holds members, and partners, to account.

**d) Is the Chair of the YOT Management Board well engaged with a sufficient understanding of the YOT's work?**

**Guidance:**

The Chair of the YOT Management Board is appointed by the chief executive of the local authority (if the chief executive is not assuming the role of chair), and any of the statutory partners may fulfil the role. The Chair should be consistent, with specific arrangements for an appropriate term of office, and should be of a sufficiently senior level to hold strategic partners to account. The Chair should have a good understanding of his or her role, have a sufficient understanding of the work of the YOT (including out-of-court disposals), and be well-engaged with the range of strategic issues facing the YOT. He or she should demonstrate effective leadership by developing synergy between members and encouraging challenge. Board members, as well as the YOT manager, should be supported and held to account in their work. The Chair should ensure that the Board makes clear and accountable decisions based on robust information.

**Evidence: – may include:**

- YOT Management Board minutes for meetings held within the last 12 months – these could be stand-alone, or incorporated within wider meetings
- minutes should reflect actions required and evidence updates of actions completed or in progress
- minutes should reflect decisions made, and those accountable for those decisions
- evidence of how the YOT Management Board monitors and addresses YOT performance

- discussion with the Chair to establish his or her understanding of the role of the Chair, and knowledge of the work of the YOT (including out-of-court disposals).

### **1.1.2 Do the partnership arrangements actively support effective service delivery?**

#### **Guidance:**

Here, inspectors are looking to see that the YOT has developed a range of partnerships, which work well together and achieve positive outcomes for children, their victims and local communities.

'Modern Youth Offending Partnerships – guidance on effective youth offending team governance in England' (YJB, 2013) outlines the existing legislation in respect of YOTs. Section 39 (1) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires the co-operation of the named statutory partners to form a YOT. Section 38 (1, 2) identifies the statutory partners and places upon them a duty to co-operate in order to secure youth justice services appropriate to their area.

These statutory partners are:

- local authority
- police
- probation service
- health

Additional partners may also be engaged to support the YOT. These may include, for example, youth court magistrates, court legal advisers, community safety managers, youth support managers, local secure establishments, housing providers, fire service officers, voluntary sector representatives, elected councillors.

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 does not specify what payments must be made in support of staffing contributions made by partners, and these payments are negotiated locally. Often YOTs operate with pooled budgets combining partner contributions into a single pot, overseen by the YOT Manager on behalf of the partnership.

There should also be good strategic and operational relationships and partnership working between the YOT and the police in the oversight and delivery of out-of-court disposals, together with links to other local initiatives which support diversion and prevention work, for example anti-social behaviour work through the Community Safety Partnership.

#### **Judgement:**

Lead inspectors should consider the extent to which delivery is above and below the line for each prompt, and whether those aspects that are considered to be above the line outweigh those that are not. Where on balance the areas above the line outweigh those that are below, the inspector should consider a 'yes' judgement to the key question. One or more areas that are considered below the line may be of such importance that they preclude a judgement of 'yes'.

**a) Do YOT Management Board members advocate the work of the YOT in their own broader roles?**

**Guidance:**

Board members should actively promote the work of the YOT within their own agencies, and act as ambassadors for the YOT so that the voice of the YOT is presented and heard at broader strategic forums, for example the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP – in most areas these have replaced the former Local Safeguarding Children Boards), Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB), MAPPA arrangements, Community Safety Partnership, Children’s Trust (or local equivalent).

**Evidence: – may include:**

- Management Board members represent the interests of the YOT at broader strategic forums
- training or awareness sessions in relation to the work of the YOT within the partners’ home agencies
- joint training between partner agencies. Examples may include MAPPA training delivered by probation, safeguarding training delivered through the LSCP
- partner agency briefing papers or presentations submitted to the Board, for example, by the police in relation to local crime trends.

**b) Do the YOT’s partnership arrangements facilitate the delivery of effective operational work?**

**Guidance:**

The Board should actively consider and respond appropriately to the YOT’s performance. The YOT should be clear about what to expect from its partners, and there should be evidence to show that partnership arrangements have had a positive impact on operational delivery, with active contributions to support improvements in services to children. Commissioned work delivered by partners should be based on assessed needs, reflecting local priorities for children who offend, or are likely to offend, and taking account of appropriate diversity factors. Services from the YOT and its partners should be available for children receiving out-of-court disposals, as well as post-court cases. The YOT should have sufficient resources to deliver its work. Partners should ensure sufficient access to the range of specialist staff that is required; there should be current, relevant secondment agreements, which state commitment to resources, tenure and how effective links are maintained with parent organisations, including ongoing training and support arrangements for seconded staff. The YOT should be appropriately staffed, as a minimum according to legislation (see above at 1.1.2, and at 1.2).

**Evidence – may include:**

- Evidence of how the YOT Management Board monitors and addresses performance

- analysis of local offending and the profile of children in the YOT cohort. Good practice would also include a needs assessment – this could be stand-alone for children, but may be more effective if it formed part of a joint strategic needs assessment for the area
- evidence of how the partnership has commissioned services in response to identified needs, and how those services are leading to better outcomes for children
- feedback to show the views of service users (including children and victims), with examples of how they have been taken into account, and have made a difference to improving YOT services
- secondment agreements
- YOT staffing levels, specifying numbers represented by agency, and identifying staffing increases/decreases over the past 12 months.

**c) Do staff understand their roles and responsibilities within the partnership arrangements, and what they are accountable for?**

**Guidance**

As multi-agency teams, YOTs incorporate staff who are seconded from a range of partner agencies, together with directly employed staff and volunteers. It is important that seconded staff maintain regular links with their parent organisations. Examples may include attending training sessions, receiving briefings, and joint supervision arrangements. They should have up-to-date knowledge and expertise from their own specialist areas, as well as working in an integrated way within the partnership, and a clear understanding of what they are accountable for. All members of the workforce should have an understanding of the range of skills within the partnership, and how those skills contribute to working with children. The YOT should be pro-active in identifying and responding to the training needs of its workforce, and in supporting staff in their ongoing professional development.

**Evidence – may include:**

- Secondment agreements with partner agencies
- supervision and appraisal arrangements
- staff training records
- feedback from discussions with staff and volunteers demonstrating that they understand their roles and responsibilities, and what they are accountable for.

**d) Do other relevant local strategic partnerships give priority to work to support desistance and prevent harm, supporting integration with wider services for children?**

**Guidance:**

YOTs have a duty to co-operate with a number of other agencies and bodies, for example:

- under Section 325 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003, YOTs are one of the named 'duty to co-operate' bodies within Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)
- under Section 10 (4) of the Children Act 2004, YOTs have a duty to co-operate with children's services in making arrangements to improve the well-being of children in the local authority's area
- the Local Safeguarding Children Boards (now Regulations 2006 (SI 2006/90) state that YOTs have a duty to co-operate in the establishment and operation of the local safeguarding children board (in most areas these have been replaced by a Local Safeguarding Children Partnership but the 2006 regulations continue to apply).

The YOT should be proactively involved in relevant local strategic partnerships such as the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP), Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB), MAPPA arrangements, Community Safety Partnership, Children's Trust (or local equivalent); there should be effective communication and a two-way flow of information between the YOT and other strategic partnerships. The needs and/or concerns of the YOT should feature in these partnerships, with relevant YOT Management Board members taking forward issues and challenges facing the YOT. Priority should be given in local strategic partnerships to work supporting desistance and preventing harm, supporting integration with wider services for children.

**Evidence – may include:**

- current local strategy and action plan for work to prevent or divert children from entering the youth justice system, including evidence of the interface between the work of the YOT and other local prevention/diversion work. Examples may include links to the Community Safety Plan, Police Youth Strategy, work with families
- arrangements in place with partners relating to the management of the risk of harm to others, or addressing safety and well-being needs. Examples may include links to MAPPA arrangements, Integrated Offender Management (IOM), LCJB work (such as domestic abuse, restorative justice and victim work), and the work of the LSCB to address safety and well-being.

**1.1.3 Does the leadership of the YOT support effective service delivery?**

**Guidance:**

Here, the inspector is looking for evidence of positive action to show that the YOT leadership team is effectively supporting service delivery.

YOT managers hold responsibility for the delivery of the duties of a YOT. This includes managing staff and resources, work allocation, staffing arrangements, liaison with the Courts, performance, and relationships with partners. There is no specific requirement with regard to the grade of the YOT manager, though it is a strategic role and the YOT manager's position should reflect that in terms of seniority in order to operate effectively. Members of the YOT leadership team should have an appropriate range of skills and experience to effectively support effective service delivery.

### Judgement:

Lead inspectors should consider the extent to which delivery is above and below the line for each prompt, and whether those aspects that are considered to be above the line outweigh those that are not. Where on balance the areas above the line outweigh those that are below, the inspector should consider a 'yes' judgement to the key question. One or more areas that are considered below the line may be of such importance that they preclude a judgement of 'yes'.

#### **a) Does the YOT leadership team provide an effective link to the Management Board?**

### Guidance

The YOT leadership team should be proactive in providing an effective link between the work of the YOT and the Management Board, leading to positive partnership working arrangements. Both formal and informal arrangements should be in place, enabling a range of relevant issues to be taken to the Management Board by the YOT leadership team.

### Evidence – may include:

- YOT Management Board minutes for meetings held within the last 12 months. The YOT manager (or in his or her absence a delegated representative from the YOT leadership team) should be present at these meetings, and there should be evidence that the YOT Manager has delivered to the Board an update on performance and finance at each meeting
- there should be evidence that the YOT Manager has input to the setting of the agenda, and is able to take both issues of concern, and examples of positive outcomes and good practice to the Board
- examples of papers or presentations by the YOT manager to the Board which report on proposals, developments, risks, challenges and positive outcomes
- systems are in place for the YOT Manager to communicate with the Chair of the YOT Management Board, and Board members, outside of the formal meeting structure, should issues of concern need to be raised.

#### **b) Does the YOT leadership team effectively communicate the vision and strategy of the YOT to staff and stakeholders?**

### Guidance

There should be effective communication between the YOT leadership team, staff and stakeholders, including volunteers, children and their parents/carers, victims of crime and sentencers, who should in turn have opportunity to contribute to its development.

### Evidence – may include:

- Newsletters, bulletins, website and/or other means of communication are used to keep staff and stakeholders informed of the YOT's vision and strategy, including updates on developments and changes where relevant
- focus groups and individual staff and stakeholders spoken to are aware of, understand, and able to give a clear account of the YOT's vision and strategy
- the vision and strategy were consulted with staff and stakeholders, and they had opportunity to contribute to its development.

**c) Does the YOT leadership team successfully deliver and operationalise the vision and strategy?**

**Guidance**

The vision and strategy of the YOT should have been effectively implemented, with business plans robustly monitored, reviewed and updated as appropriate. The YOT should be able to demonstrate outcomes to show how its vision and strategy are making a positive difference for children.

**Evidence – may include:**

- An action plan to show how the vision and strategy are being delivered and which aspects have been implemented
- evidence of ongoing monitoring and review processes
- positive outcomes for children and young people are demonstrated – these could include hard data as well as qualitative measures such as feedback from children, and case studies.

**d) Does the YOT leadership team promote openness, constructive challenge and ideas?**

**Guidance**

For an organisation to be effective it should promote a culture where staff at all levels feel able to contribute to service improvement and where they are clear about how decisions are made and how they can input to them.

Culture refers to 'the ways things are done around here'. An open culture is one where staff are routinely consulted about issues affecting them and their work, and receive clear explanations for how important decisions are made. Constructive challenge requires opportunities for staff at all levels to have channels for questioning plans and decisions affecting them and their work, for example through team meetings, and meetings between management and unions which are seen by both sides as being valuable. Processes for being open to ideas might range from suggestion schemes, through to innovation strategies, the formation of development teams, and the championing of new initiatives which staff have contributed to.

Weaker examples may include where there is a culture of secret decision making, blocks in communication or inattention to the views and ideas of front line staff.

**Evidence - may include:**

- Innovation strategies

- consultation arrangements, including minutes of management and union meetings
- examples of staff suggestions and initiatives which have been progressed
- discussions with managers and staff about 'how things are done around here' and how decisions are made.

**e) Are risks to the service sufficiently understood by the leadership team, with appropriate mitigations in place?**

**Guidance**

The YOT should have a risk register, which is regularly monitored and reviewed. The YOT leadership team should be able to explain what the risks to the service are, and demonstrate that it is able to mitigate against the risks to its service that have been identified, with clear contingency plans.

**Evidence – may include:**

- Risk register, with risks appropriately identified, and processes in place for monitoring, reviewing, mitigating and responding to identified risks
  - YOT leadership team minutes for the last 12 months, showing evidence of appropriate and regular consideration of the risks
  - contingency plans for responding to risks identified. Examples may include a business continuity plan for the management of service delivery with reduced resources, operating system failure or premises closure.
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## 1.2. Staff

**Staff within the YOT are empowered to deliver a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children**

### Guidance

In terms of minimum staffing requirements, Section 39 (5) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 states that YOTs must include at least one of each of the following:

- an officer of a local probation board or an officer of a provider of probation services
- where the local authority is in England, a person with experience of social work in relation to children, nominated by the director of children's services (who has, in turn, been appointed by the local authority under Section 18 of the Children Act 2004)
- a police officer
- a person nominated by a clinical commissioning group or a local health board, any part of whose area lies within the local authority's area
- where the local authority is in England, a person with experience in education, nominated by the director of children's services (who has, in turn, been appointed by the local authority under Section 18 of the Children Act 2004).

Staffing of the YOT is not limited to these resources, and may include, for example, substance misuse workers, housing officers, youth workers, community workers and business support staff.

There may also be a range of volunteers working with the YOT to support children – these could include Referral Order Panel members, Appropriate Adult volunteers and mentors. Where they are engaged, volunteers should be appropriately trained and supported.

### Judgement:

Lead inspectors should adopt an initial default of 'requires improvement' in relation to the standard when one or more of the key questions is answered 'no' – whilst giving the LI scope to override and propose a 'good' rating when he/she thinks this is appropriate.

### 1.2.1 Do staffing and workload levels support the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children?

#### Guidance:

YOTs are multi-agency teams and as such must be made up of nominated and seconded staff from the statutory partners. Having dedicated staff with skills and knowledge in relation to their parent organisations within the YOT helps support

multi-agency working. Services delivered by YOTs have expanded and diversified over time, hence additional specialist staff roles and support functions have developed. The YOT manager's role is to ensure appropriate staffing of the YOT and work allocation. The composition of the YOT should reflect local needs and services.

#### Judgement:

Lead inspectors should consider the extent to which delivery is above and below the line for each prompt, and whether those aspects that are considered to be above the line outweigh those that are not. Where on balance the areas above the line outweigh those that are below, the inspector should consider a 'yes' judgement to the key question. One or more areas that are considered below the line may be of such importance that they preclude a judgement of 'yes'.

#### **a) Are staffing levels planned and reviewed to meet the changing demands and case profiles?**

##### Guidance:

YOTs should have a staffing plan which is updated and reviewed at least annually to reflect changes in the profile of children in the cohort. Profile here refers primarily to the proportion of children on the total case load at each level of risk of serious harm, vulnerability and risk of re-offending, and the proportion serving each type of sentence or subject to different requirements. The plan should include realistic assumptions about the expected workload and the caseloads of staff, retention levels, staff progression and retirement, by role, parent organisation and grade. It should cover how and when staff are to be recruited, secondment durations and contingencies for cover, should there be significant fluctuations in workload or sickness levels. Flexibility should be built in to respond to changing demands which may include taking on new functions or ways of working in line with service delivery plans, in addition to increases or decreases in workload.

##### Evidence – may include:

- A formal staffing plan and reviews, including workload and other assumptions.
- In the absence of a formal plan, or in addition to it, evidence can be gathered through discussions with HR and the YOT leadership team, or from minutes of leadership team meetings.

#### **b) Are practitioners' and managers' workloads reasonable, given the profile of the cases and the range of work undertaken?**

##### Guidance:

This prompt is about good management of resources. The inspector should assess whether practitioners and managers are able to manage effectively the work they are undertaking according to its profile and context. Practitioners should be managing work appropriate to their qualifications, skills and experience, with particular consideration given to the management of risk of harm and safeguarding. Workloads should be reasonable so that practitioners are able to deliver a high-

quality service. Inspectors should also give consideration to the opposite issue, where staff may be under-employed and a high-quality service is provided, but at a very high cost. This is especially relevant in partnerships where some partners may struggle, for example to provide a full-time member of staff to each YOT.

**Evidence – may include:**

- Staff workload records showing the profile of cases allocated to staff by risk of harm and vulnerability levels
- trend data in relation to workloads
- risk management policy
- feedback from discussion with staff and managers about their workloads and how work is allocated.

**c) Are workloads actively managed?**

**Guidance:**

Work should be appropriately allocated, and workloads monitored and adjusted as necessary to reflect reasonable caseloads that are suitable to the nature of the work being undertaken. Workloads should be overseen actively and effectively by managers, with support and challenge where appropriate. Positive indications would be that staff report there is active and effective management oversight of their work, that they are supported well, and challenged where appropriate. Inspectors should look to see that management oversight is making a difference in supporting desistance, protecting others from harm and keeping children safe from harm.

**Evidence – may include:**

- Work allocation policy
- workload monitoring tool or other arrangements for monitoring in place
- YOT supervision and appraisal procedures
- supervision records, to include evidence of regular staff supervision, with caseload monitoring and case discussions
- feedback from staff about the effectiveness of supervision arrangements
- information on management oversight can be aggregated from the relevant InfoPath question (view 5). Where less than a reasonable majority (<65%) respond positively to the relevant InfoPath question this would support a negative judgement.

**d) Is there an effective strategy to maintain the quality of delivery during periods of planned and unplanned staff absences?**

**Guidance:**

The inspector should assess whether effective arrangements exist, and are consistently implemented, to maintain the continuity and quality of work during periods of planned staff absences, (for example maternity/paternity/adoption/annual leave/attendance at training) and unplanned staff absences (for example sickness/compassionate leave). Children should continue to receive consistent support and a high-quality service during periods of staff absence. Examples of

inconsistent support may include frequent changes of case managers, or gaps in the regularity of supervision/attendance.

**Evidence – may include:**

- Staff absence and leave policy
- contingency arrangements for staff absence
- specific examples of how and when these arrangements were applied, and how effective they were.

**1.2.2 Do the skills of YOT staff support the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service to all children?**

**Guidance:**

Managers should have the required levels of knowledge, skills, experience and have the time to assess and improve the quality of practice, provide effective supervision of staff and oversight of work, and hold staff to account.

The composition of the YOT staff group should meet statutory requirements (See 1.2) and also be sufficient to enable the YOT to deliver the range of youth justice services that are required and relevant to the area, for both post-court cases and out-of-court disposals. Through the use of seconded staff and otherwise, the YOT should maintain up to date knowledge of the priorities and operational practice of statutory and other partners; this should be used to ensure that the services of partners are used effectively as required and that the work with children is personalised, responsive and of a high-quality.

**Judgement:**

Lead inspectors should consider the extent to which delivery is above and below the line for each prompt, and whether those aspects that are considered to be above the line outweigh those that are not. Where on balance the areas above the line outweigh those that are below, the inspector should consider a 'yes' judgement to the key question. One or more areas that are considered below the line may be of such importance that they preclude a judgement of 'yes'.

**a) Do the skills and diversity of the workforce meet the needs of the children?**

**Guidance:**

The YOT should have up to date information about the profile of the workforce, including managers, staff and volunteers, mapped against the profile of the children it is supervising; there should be a good fit. The profile of the workforce should reflect the diversity profile of the local population.

The YOT should have a training strategy/plan, with mandatory and discretionary training requirements clearly set out and communicated to the workforce, together with up to date training records. Training needs should be regularly reviewed, any skills gaps identified, and training plans revised accordingly. Managers, staff and

volunteers should receive good quality, effective training which meets their training needs (including thorough induction of new staff). The skills of the workforce should be sufficient to meet the needs of children under their supervision.

In their workforce YOTs, should ensure they have the right balance of skills to meet the needs of the children. This includes, but is not limited to:

A range of operational staff with:

- skills at managing children with different levels of risk of harm and vulnerability, male and female children, those experiencing or perpetrating domestic abuse, sex offenders, and those associated with gangs
- skills in using a range of assessment tools
- a range of intervention skills including group-work
- skills in working with a range of partner agencies and the voluntary sector

Volunteers who:

- bring knowledge and experience in supporting children
- mentor children
- act as Appropriate Adults
- support and chair Referral Order Panels

Administrative staff who can:

- support case management
- manage facilities
- support the delivery of front and back office processes

Managers who can manage:

- operations
- people
- partnerships
- information
- resources

**Evidence – may include:**

- Current (within the last 12 months) profile of the workforce including managers, staff and volunteers, mapped against the profile of children being supervised by the YOT
- training strategy for mandatory and discretionary training, for managers, staff and volunteers
- training needs analysis, with any gaps identified and contingency arrangements in place
- up to date training records for managers, staff and volunteers.

**b) Are cases allocated to staff who are appropriately qualified and/or experienced?**

**Guidance:**

The YOT should have a clear policy to determine the allocation of medium, high and very high risk of harm cases, and cases with safety and wellbeing concerns. Allocation processes should be effectively implemented and monitored to ensure those staff holding medium, high, and very high risk of harm cases, and cases with safety and wellbeing concerns are suitably qualified and/or experienced; these cases should not be allocated to unqualified or inexperienced staff. The YOT should have in place procedures to determine who is suitably qualified and/or experienced to hold those cases. The YOT should hold a regular risk panel, chaired by a manager, where cases are discussed, resources allocated according to need, and reviewed.

**Evidence – may include:**

- Work allocation policy
- risk management policy
- minutes of risk panel meetings
- supervision records, which should evidence effective and consistent management oversight of cases in respect of medium, high, and very high risk of harm, and cases with safety and wellbeing concerns, including support and challenge
- feedback from staff about how work is allocated, and how management oversight supports them in their work
- information on management oversight can be aggregated from the relevant InfoPath question (view 5). Where less than a reasonable majority (<65%) respond positively to the relevant InfoPath question this would support a negative judgement.

**c) Are staff motivated to contribute to the delivery of a quality service**

**Guidance**

In speaking to staff and managers, the inspector will get a 'feel' for what it is like to work within the organisation, whether it has a positive ethos and supportive culture. Staff should demonstrate commitment to delivering a quality service and achieving positive outcomes for children, together with a clear understanding of how their individual contribution will support this. Positive indicators may include staff responding positively to the introduction and implementation of change. High sickness and absence levels, and high staff turnover rates, particularly where there is an increasing trend in these, can be strong indicators of discontent and lack of motivation within an organisation.

**Evidence – may include:**

- Staff survey
- records of sickness and absence monitoring
- records of staff turnover

- feedback from staff in respect of the ethos of the organisation, and how well they are supported to do their work.

**d) Is there an appropriate strategy in place to identify and develop the potential of individual staff to support succession planning?**

**Guidance:**

Succession planning is critical to ensure an adequate supply of qualified, suitable experienced and trained staff to fill key roles as they become vacant. It is also an important part of staff development and an important motivator to encourage staff to improve and progress. YOTs should have a strategy in place for succession planning as part of their staff development and appraisal processes. The strategy should include how staff are identified and considered for progression in line with the YOT's diversity and equal opportunities policies. Structured support should be available, such as coaching, mentoring, job-shadowing or temporary promotions to provide opportunities for staff to test out their capabilities and fit for more senior roles. Attention should be paid to identifying staff from under-represented groups and providing them with opportunities which might prepare them for advancement.

**Evidence - may include:**

- Staff development, people, diversity and equal opportunity policies and strategies
- succession planning strategy or specific programmes which prepare people for and support staff progression
- examples of actual staff progression i.e. people being promoted to more senior roles
- discussions with HR and YOT leadership team.

**1.2.3 Does the oversight of work support high-quality delivery and professional development?**

**Guidance:**

Inspectors should look to see whether the oversight provided to staff in their work with children is meaningful and effective in supporting high-quality delivery. Staff should be supported appropriately by the YOT in their continuous professional development, and there should be effective oversight of how staff access and utilise development opportunities.

**Judgement:**

Lead inspectors should consider the extent to which delivery is above and below the line for each prompt, and whether those aspects that are considered to be above the line outweigh those that are not. Where on balance the areas above the line outweigh those that are below, the inspector should consider a 'yes' judgement to the key question. One or more areas that are considered below the line may be of such importance that they preclude a judgement of 'yes'.

**a) Do staff receive effective supervision to enhance the quality of work with children?**

**Guidance:**

Effective and regular supervision, for example monthly or more/less often depending on the level of experience of the staff member. Supervision should pay attention to personal support and development as well as accountability for work within the individual's role or job description. The focus should not be limited to ensuring that performance targets are met, and extend to how staff are learning, developing, and applying skills which will improve and take forward the quality of work with children.

Effective supervision should take place for staff and volunteers at all levels across the YOT, and should be tailored to the nature of the work undertaken by individuals, their stage of development and individual learning needs. It may include group supervision, and for those involved in delivering case management and interventions may include live supervision to provide feedback on the quality of their interventions, the skills demonstrated and areas for improvement. There should be recognition that working with difficult and serious cases, and those where there are significant wellbeing concerns, is emotionally demanding and that provision of appropriate support is necessary for staff to continue to deliver high-quality work without burning out.

YOTs should have a supervision policy which sets out how supervision is to be conducted, the aims of supervision, what supervisees can expect and the frequency with which it should happen. Any linkage to appraisal policies should be clear. Supervision should be incorporated as part of the YOT's quality assurance processes.

**Evidence – may include:**

- Policies and procedures relating to supervision processes and performance management framework
- supervision records
- policies and procedures relating to quality assurance processes
- evidence of how quality assurance processes have been used to drive improvements in performance and the quality of services provided to children
- staff report that supervision is regular and effective
- staff report that supervision has helped them to better deliver services to children, with examples given
- information on management oversight can be aggregated from the relevant InfoPath question (view 5). Where less than a reasonable majority (<65%) respond positively to the relevant InfoPath question this would support a negative judgement.

**b) Is there an effective induction programme for new staff?**

**Guidance:**

There should be an effective induction programme which includes comprehensive and timely induction processes for all staff joining the YOT. Generic aspects relating to the YOT should form part of the programme, regardless of role, for example health and safety arrangements, first aid, equality and diversity, safeguarding, an oversight of the youth justice system, the range work the YOT is involved in and the functions of staff within the YOT. The induction programme should also offer flexibility so that aspects can be tailored specifically to the role of the staff member joining the YOT, their skills, experience and any learning needs identified. Induction programme materials should be well-prepared and presented in a readily accessible way, for example an induction pack may comprise briefings, one-to-one sessions, group sessions, workbooks, presentations and IT resources. There should be effective oversight of induction processes to ensure the various elements are completed in a satisfactory and timely manner.

**Evidence – may include:**

- Induction programme overview and expectations for completion
- comprehensive range of induction processes, including generic and role-specific elements
- high-quality materials, well-presented and readily accessible to new staff
- records of satisfactory and timely completion of induction programme.

**c) Is the appraisal process used effectively to ensure that staff are competent to deliver a quality service?**

**Guidance:**

Staff should be appraised annually within a performance management framework, in accordance with their role and identified development needs; performance management should be used to actively improve services. Effective staff appraisals and reviews should take place regularly. For seconded staff, there should be cohesive links between the YOT and parent organisation in respect of the appraisal process. Appraisals should contain realistic objectives to enhance practice and performance; they should make it clear to the member of staff how they are performing, providing both affirmation and developmental feedback.

**Evidence – may include:**

- Performance management framework, and evidence of how it is used to actively improve services
- YOT appraisal policy and procedures
- for seconded staff, evidence of how YOT appraisals link to those of parent organisations
- appraisal records show evidence of appropriate objectives, together with affirmation and developmental feedback.

**d) Is sufficient attention paid to identifying and addressing poor performance?**

**Guidance:**

The YOT should have in place formal procedures for addressing staff competence; this should enable poor performance to be identified and responded to robustly. The inspector should look to see that where poor performance has been identified, the YOT is transparent with those members of staff about their practice deficits, and that improvements in practice are monitored effectively. Quality assurance processes should be used to drive improvements in performance and the quality of services provided to children.

**Evidence – may include:**

- Competency and conduct policy and procedures
- quality assurance framework, with evidence of where this has been used to improve performance and services provided to children
- evidence of how the YOT has used learning from situations that have gone wrong to improve services
- staff reports of how poor performance is addressed in the YOT.

**e) Is exceptional work recognised and rewarded, encouraging development and retention of staff?**

**Guidance:**

It would be good practice for the YOT to have in place, and consistently use, recognition and celebration processes in respect of exceptional work, and to share examples of this work to encourage development. The YOT and partners should provide development opportunities for staff, who should be encouraged to take up such opportunities. Positive indicators may be demonstrated by relative stability in the YOT workforce, with staffing changes being appropriately managed, so that children continue to receive a high-quality service when members of staff move on. Difficulties in recruiting good quality staff, with low retention rates, can be an indicator of lack of support within an organisation, particularly if this is an ongoing issue.

**Evidence – may include:**

- Recognition and celebration processes, and evidence of these processes being used – for example, highlighted within newsletters, bulletins and websites; awards evenings and presentations
- the sharing of good practice, and how that is then followed through to encourage development. Examples may include team meetings, workshops, demonstrations, electronic or other means of communicating good practice
- evidence of development opportunities being offered to, and taken up by staff. Examples may include attendance at conferences or workshops, training courses, work shadowing, attachments to other services
- monitoring procedures in respect of staff retention rates/staff turnover.

**1.2.4 Are arrangements for learning and development comprehensive and responsive?**

**Guidance**

Here inspectors are looking for the availability and use of a diverse range of relevant learning, development and training packages, which meet the needs of the YOT partnership, and support the delivery of high-quality services to children.

**Judgement:**

Lead inspectors should consider the extent to which delivery is above and below the line for each prompt, and whether those aspects that are considered to be above the line outweigh those that are not. Where on balance the areas above the line outweigh those that are below, the inspector should consider a 'yes' judgement to the key question. One or more areas that are considered below the line may be of such importance that they preclude a judgement of 'yes'.

**a) Does the YOT identify and plan for the learning needs of staff?**

**Guidance:**

The YOT should have systems in place to identify the learning needs of its staff group, including volunteers, together with an up to date (within the last 12 months) training needs profile/analysis. The YOT should be able to demonstrate that it plans for, and responds effectively to, the identified learning needs of staff and volunteers – both for the staff group as a whole, and where individual needs have been identified. Learning needs should be regularly reviewed.

**Evidence – may include:**

- Effective systems in place to identify staff and volunteer learning needs
- training needs profile/analysis completed within the last 12 months
- up to date training records
- references in appraisal documents to objectives about the learning needs of staff and how these will be progressed during the year ahead
- staff and volunteer feedback in relation to whether their learning needs for their current role have been met.

**b) Does the YOT provide sufficient access to in-service training to support the delivery of a quality service?**

**Guidance:**

The YOT should ensure that effective systems are in place for staff and volunteers to access sufficient in-service training. A diverse range of learning and development opportunities should be available to staff and volunteers, who are then supported to engage in these opportunities. The range and availability of training should meet the identified learning needs of staff and volunteers, and support them to deliver a high-quality service to children. Training opportunities should be well communicated and readily accessible.

**Evidence – may include:**

- Electronic or other systems for staff and volunteers to access in-service training

- communications regarding the availability of training, for example newsletters, bulletins, website updates, email circulations
- examples of learning and development opportunities which have recently (within the last 12 months) been made available to staff, and which staff have taken up
- staff and volunteers report they are able to access good quality in-service training and that it meets their learning needs.

**c) Does the YOT promote and value a culture of learning and continuous improvement?**

**Guidance:**

The YOT should be able to demonstrate that it is promoting and valuing a culture of learning and continuous improvement. There should be quality assurance/auditing processes in place to support continuous improvement, for example dip-sampling of cases, case reviews and peer-support opportunities. Inspection recommendations should be responded to, including those specific to the YOT's own area, as well as recommendations from thematic inspections. The YOT should be able to demonstrate how it uses learning from situations that have gone wrong to improve services.

**Evidence – may include:**

- Quality assurance/audit processes and how these are used by the YOT to support continuous improvement
- YOT responses to inspections, for example post-inspection action plan, self-audit of processes against thematic recommendations
- evidence of learning from situations that have gone wrong, for example community safeguarding and public protection incidents (CSPPI), serious case reviews (SCR)
- staff and volunteers report that a culture of learning and continuous improvement exists within the organisation.

## 1.3. Partnerships and Services

**A comprehensive range of high-quality services is in place, enabling personalised and responsive provision for all children.**

### Guidance:

The YOT should provide, or have access to, a full set of services to meet the assessed needs of children. Services delivered should be well-planned, effective, and evidence-based. They should be tailored to meet the individual needs of children, and having capacity to adapt to changing needs.

### Judgement:

Lead inspectors should adopt an initial default of 'requires improvement' in relation to the standard when one or more of the key questions is answered 'no' – whilst giving the LI scope to override and propose a 'good' rating when he/she thinks this is appropriate.

### 1.3.1 Is there a sufficiently comprehensive and up to date analysis of the profile of children, to ensure that the YOT can deliver well targeted services?

#### Guidance:

The YOT should be able to provide a comprehensive analysis of an up to date (within the last 12 months) profile of the children in its cohort to ensure it can deliver relevant and targeted services.

**Judgement** - Lead inspectors should consider the extent to which delivery is above and below the line for each prompt, and whether those aspects that are considered to be above the line outweigh those that are not. Where on balance the areas above the line outweigh those that are below, the inspector should consider a 'yes' judgement to the key question. One or more areas that are considered below the line may be of such importance that they preclude a judgement of 'yes'.

#### a) Is there an up to date strategic and operational analysis of the desistance needs presented by the children?

#### Guidance:

Examples of factors for desistance include (AssetPlus Desistance Table guidance):

- **individual factors** - education/training and employment; pro-social peers; positive activities; self-efficacy; goals/ambitions; opportunities for 'turning points', for example change of school; resilience; has engaged well with previous interventions
- **family factors** – strong, stable relationship with at least one family member; parents/carers who value education, training and employment; family members/carers who model pro-social behaviour
- **community factors** – professional help/support, for example counselling; school is interested in the child's progress/keen to get involved; strong, stable relationship with an adult outside of the family home, for example teacher, youth worker; community offers opportunities for the child to get involved,

for example youth centre, sports facilities; if applicable, the child receives strong support from cultural and ethnic communities.

In order to provide the appropriate range of services and interventions that are responsive to individual needs and paths of desistance, it is essential that there is a comprehensive understanding, at both strategic and operational level, of factors for desistance, and the reasons why children in the YOT cohort stop offending. There should be an analysis completed within the past 12 months using approved assessment tools and other research and information, which include both the perspectives of both staff and children, providing aggregate information on the profile of children's offending and desistance needs in the area inspected. This should include both children who are subject to court orders, and out-of-court disposals. Inspectors should look to see that there is an appropriate balance between the volume and quality of information available.

**Evidence – may include:**

- A comprehensive analysis of offending by children, and their desistance needs, completed within the last 12 months
- the analysis should be sufficiently segmented to provide an informed profile of geography, age group and gender, types of offences and sentences/out-of-court disposals.

**b) Does the analysis pay sufficient attention to factors for safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm?**

**Guidance:**

The YOT should be able to demonstrate that it has a comprehensive understanding of the safety and wellbeing risks to the children in its cohort, and of the risks of harm they pose to others. The YOT should have an up-to-date (within the last 12 months) analysis of the level and nature of safety and wellbeing risks to children, as well as an analysis of the risks of harm posed to others by children. The analysis of offending-related and desistance factors (see 1.3.1 (a) above) should be linked to the safety and wellbeing risks, and the risks of harm, in order to appropriately target services and determine priorities for services and interventions to be delivered.

**Evidence – may include:**

- The current (within the last 12 months) analysis relating to offending by and desistance of children, pays sufficient attention to the safety and wellbeing risks to children in its cohort, and to the risks of harm they pose to others.

**c) Does the analysis pay sufficient attention to diversity factors and to issues of disproportionality?**

**Guidance:**

In order to ensure that services are available, appropriate and equally effective for groups of children with different diversity characteristics, it is important to know the

profile of risk, needs and desistance factors for each group and to plan services to address these factors. The YOT should be able to demonstrate understanding of where groups with different diversity characteristics are disproportionately represented. Examples may include proposals for sentences, assessments of risk of harm, types of interventions, breach proceedings. The YOT should have completed a diversity impact assessment.

**Evidence – may include:**

- The current (within the last 12 months) analysis relating to offending by and desistance of children, their safety and wellbeing risks and the risks of harm they pose to others, pays sufficient attention to diversity factors
- an analysis of disproportionality as children with different characteristics are allocated/referred to, and progress through the different processes, services and sentences
- a diversity impact assessment
- other evidence to show that the YOT has paid sufficient attention to diversity factors, for example case studies.

**d) Is there sufficient analysis of local patterns of sentencing and offence types?**

**Guidance:**

In order that appropriate services and interventions are planned and delivered in the YOT area requires an analysis of the pattern of offending and the numbers, type and trends of sentences passed over time. Patterns of offending are likely to be aggregated, but should be supplemented by more specific intelligence gathered about the prevalence of types of serious offending by children, for example gang-related or sex offending. Analysis of the trends and patterns of sentencing should be benchmarked with national and regional figures to identify significant variations.

**Evidence – may include:**

- information from the police on recent patterns of offending, supplemented by more specific intelligence on serious offending by children
- the latest sentencing data, segmented where available by gender, race and age cohort.

**e) Is the analysis used effectively to influence service delivery?**

**Guidance:**

In order to ensure that appropriate and well-targeted services are planned and delivered, the analysis of offending, desistance, safety and wellbeing, risk of harm to others and diversity factors, as well as sentencing and offence types, should produce sufficient meaningful information to influence service delivery. The YOT should be

able to demonstrate that it has used the analysis to inform the planning and provision of appropriate services and interventions.

**Evidence – may include:**

- Examples of how the YOT has used the analysis to inform planning and service provision
- evidence of services and interventions developed in response to the analysis
- evidence the YOT may be able to provide that the analysis, and response to it, are leading to better outcomes for children, such as trend data or case studies.

**1.3.2 Does the YOT partnership have access to the volume, range and quality of services and interventions to meet the needs of all children?**

**Guidance:**

The inspector will need to make a judgement on the provision and availability of appropriate high-quality services and interventions (both group-work and one-to-one interventions) to meet the assessed needs of children. The YOT's analysis of, and response to, offending and desistance data, together with safety and wellbeing, risk of harm to others and diversity considerations, should help inform the inspector's judgement.

Services and interventions accessible to the YOT cohort of children should include, but should not be limited to: -

- accommodation
- education/training and employment
- family and relationships (e.g. parenting and family support, domestic abuse, family group conferencing, mentoring)
- groups and gangs
- mental health (CAMHS)
- physical health (e.g. school nurse)
- reparation/community payback
- sexual health
- sexual offences
- social care (child protection/CIN/looked after children/care leavers)
- speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)
- substance misuse
- offending behaviour work, including cognitive behavioural interventions
- victim work (e.g. restorative justice)

**Judgement** - Lead inspectors should consider the extent to which delivery is above and below the line for each prompt, and whether those aspects that are considered to be above the line outweigh those that are not. Where on balance the areas above the line outweigh those that are below, the inspector should consider a 'yes' judgement to the key question. One or more areas that are considered below the line may be of such importance that they preclude a judgement of 'yes'.

**a) Is there access to the right specialist and mainstream services and interventions to meet the desistance needs of children?**

### Guidance:

The analysis of needs and risks identified in 1.3.1 should lead to the planning, provision of, and referral to an appropriate range of specialist and mainstream services intended to address these needs and risks, thereby supporting desistance. The YOT should have undertaken a gap analysis to identifying where there is a lack of provision and have plans to address this. Provision may be made internally by the YOT, commissioned, delivered in partnership or through a referral pathway with other organisations providing specialist services, such as substance misuse services. Services should be provided in ways that are accessible and appropriate to the circumstances of children, and should be provided in sufficient quantity to avoid waiting lists under normal circumstances. Services should be made available to both post-court cases and to those subject of out-of-court-disposals.

### Evidence – may include:

- Business plan/commissioning plans
- gap analysis
- service directories
- feedback from both operational staff and managers about access to specialist and mainstream services. (Are their responses similar/different?)
- information on appropriate service provision in individual cases can be aggregated from the views of case managers (InfoPath view 5). Where less than a reasonable majority (<65%) respond positively to the relevant InfoPath question this would support a negative judgement.

## **b) Is sufficient attention paid to building on strengths and enhancing protective factors?**

### Guidance:

In order to support and promote desistance the YOT needs to be actively working to build on the child's personal strengths and protective factors. There should be plans and interventions in place to enable children to access suitable accommodation, access or maintain education, training or employment, and be supported in relation to their mental health and substance misuse. Interventions should also be in place to support and enhance lifestyle and personal factors such as parenting and family support, self-esteem, relationships with pro-social peers, engagement in positive activities, mentoring initiatives and other projects to enhance social inclusion for children.

### Evidence – may include:

- Management information held by the YOT to show how well it is building on strengths and enhancing protective factors
- evidence to show that staff are actively working to build on the strengths of children, such as case studies and feedback from children and parents/carers.

## **c) Are diversity factors and issues of disproportionality considered in the range of services provided?**

### Guidance:

YOTs should have plans which set out how the diverse needs of children with protected characteristics are to be met, either through inclusion or specialist provision. The range of services provided and commissioned should be appropriate to meet the diversity needs of children, which should be well-considered and integrated in the services that are being delivered. Services should be reviewed with sufficient frequency to ensure they are the right ones to meet the diversity needs of children within the current YOT cohort. Where there is evidence of disproportionality i.e. the over-representation of any particular group within the criminal justice system, for example BAME, LGBT, children from the travelling community, then particular attention should be given to appropriate provision or additional support for them.

### Evidence – may include:

- YOT Business Plan
- diversity and equality plan
- contracts/service level agreements for provision
- data on take up and usage of services and interventions
- reviews of service provision
- feedback from children and parents/carers about their views on how well their diversity needs have been considered in the services they have received
- case studies.

## **d) Is the quality of services reviewed and evaluated, with remedial action taken where required?**

### Guidance:

The YOT should have a strategy and plan in place which includes arrangements for the routine review and evaluation of service delivery, and processes for checking to see that interventions are delivered in the way intended; this should include both post-court work and out-of-court disposals. These arrangements should lead to remedial action being taken where required. Where significant deficits are evident this should lead to the production and implementation of a formal action plan. Where services are not delivered directly by the YOT they should have agreed arrangements with providers which set out how the quality of those services will be reviewed and evaluated, with remedial action taken where required to improve delivery and respond to any concerns.

### Evidence – may include:

- Strategies, plans and schedules for the review and evaluation of services
- minutes of service review and evaluation meetings
- management information to show that the quality of services is routinely reviewed and evaluated, with remedial action taken where required
- service action plans
- examples showing that the YOT can demonstrate how review and evaluation processes are used effectively to drive improvements in the quality of services provided to children

- examples showing that remedial action that has been taken where required.

### **1.3.3 Are arrangements with statutory partners, providers and other agencies established, maintained and used effectively to deliver high-quality services?**

#### **Guidance:**

The statutory partners to the YOT are the local authority (children’s social care and education), police, probation, and health. The YOT should have well-established and maintained arrangements, which are used effectively, with all of these partners. Arrangements with other specialist providers, and with community and voluntary organisations should be in place as relevant and appropriate to the area, and to meet the needs of children subject to court orders and out-of-court disposals.

#### **Judgement:**

Lead inspectors should consider the extent to which delivery is above and below the line for each prompt, and whether those aspects that are considered to be above the line outweigh those that are not. Where on balance the areas above the line outweigh those that are below, the inspector should consider a ‘yes’ judgement to the key question. One or more areas that are considered below the line may be of such importance that they preclude a judgement of ‘yes’.

#### **a) Are there effective arrangements with partners and providers to support desistance through access to specialist and mainstream services?**

#### **Guidance:**

The focus of this prompt is on the effectiveness of arrangements with partners and providers delivering specialist and mainstream services to children during their sentence and following its completion. Desistance journeys for children may continue long after sentences have finished, and therefore they must be able to access services which are available more widely in the community. Effective relationships with partners and providers of services may be demonstrated through the YOT’s active participation in partnership arrangements such as children’s trusts, Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP), Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB), health and wellbeing boards, further education and training establishments, housing strategies, substance misuse commissioning and community safety partnerships etc., which result in children being able to access specialist and mainstream services that are appropriate to them both during and after their sentence, with agreed referral pathways. Effective communication is a key part of such arrangements. Protocols, agreements and communication channels should be in place with partners and providers to ensure that the specialist and mainstream services being provided support desistance. Any emerging tensions, such as barriers to children accessing services because of their convictions, for example training provision, should be effectively managed and resolved. Where significant gaps in accessing key mainstream or specialist service provision are identified, the inspector should be satisfied that robust and credible plans are in place to address this.

#### **Evidence – may include:**

- Protocols, service level agreements and referral pathways with partners and providers
- minutes of relevant fora such as community safety partnerships, substance misuse commissioning meetings
- information on access to specialist and mainstream service provision in individual cases can be aggregated from the views of case managers (InfoPath view 5). Where less than a reasonable majority (<65%) respond positively to the relevant InfoPath question this would support a negative judgement.

**b) Are there effective arrangements with partners and providers to support the safety and wellbeing of children?**

The YOT is a statutory partner of the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP – in most areas these have replaced the former Local Safeguarding Children Board). (Section 13, Children Act 2004). YOT managers should be involved in local child safeguarding arrangements at LSCP Board level, with engagement in relevant sub-groups by appropriate staff, for example training and quality assurance sub-groups. It is essential that the YOT has effective communication and established procedures with the LSCP and with the local authority children’s social care team and the police, and that these are working effectively in managing the safety and wellbeing of children. The YOT should be proactively involved in Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) arrangements, or their equivalent, and in arrangements regarding children missing from home or care, or at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), for example missing children forum. There should be good working relationships, communication and engagement at all levels in the organisation; senior managers should be engaging with their counterparts at a strategic level to ensure that working arrangements are effective, middle managers should be working to improve communication and resolve problems and practitioners should be following key agreements, protocols and pathways to ensure that information is exchanged and referrals dealt with appropriately.

The YOT may also have involvement with other agencies in respect of the safety and wellbeing of children. These may include voluntary sector organisations, such as Barnardo’s, NSPCC or the Children’s Society. Examples may include CSE training, or arrangements in respect of children missing from home or care.

The YOT should have in place a safeguarding policy and associated procedures, including how children at risk are identified and how those risks will be managed. These should include referral pathways to, and working procedures with, other agencies as appropriate. There should be clear referral pathways, protocols for information exchange and active involvement in key boards and fora. The effectiveness of these arrangements should be demonstrated through initiatives to improve joint working on specific issues, joint training initiatives and lessons learned from reviews. The YOT should be able to provide sufficient examples of where this has led to specific arrangements which promote the safety and wellbeing of children. Any emerging tensions, for example conflicts arising around thresholds for referral and access to services, should be effectively managed and resolved.

**Evidence – may include:**

- Protocols, information-sharing arrangements, service level agreements and referral pathways (including clarity around thresholds) with partners and providers
- minutes of relevant fora such as LSCB, MASH Board (or equivalent), missing children forum
- YOT involvement in multi-agency case review process and evidence of joint and single agency learning from reviews
- examples of where escalation has occurred, for example child protection referrals
- joint training with social care, police and other relevant agencies.

**c) Are there effective arrangements with partners and providers to manage the risk of harm to others?**

**Guidance:**

YOTs are one of the Duty to Co-operate (DTC) agencies for Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA). (Section 325(6), Criminal Justice Act 2003). MAPPA Guidance 2012 requires that:

- Arrangements are in place for the identification and notification of MAPPA children
- the YOT is responsible for identifying which of its cases are MAPPA cases. All MAPPA children requiring level 2 or level 3 management must be referred to the MAPPA co-ordinator
- the YOT and children's services must be suitably represented at all level 2 and level 3 meetings for children. Whenever a referral relating to a child is made by any agency other than the YOT, the YOT must attend the meeting as it may well have information relating to the case
- ViSOR is accurate in relation to children in the community.

YOTs may be involved with children who disclose domestic abuse. The highest risk of domestic abuse cases are discussed in the local Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). YOTs should have in place procedures for identifying relevant cases through an evidence-based risk assessment tool, and referral pathways to the MARAC as appropriate. Procedures may operate via children's social care, in which case the YOT should have protocols in place for such arrangements. Ideally, the YOT should be a MARAC member. Even if the YOT is not directly involved in the case concerned, they may be able to contribute to the action plan and offer their expertise.

It therefore follows that it is essential that the YOT has effective communication and established procedures with the MAPPA Board, the MAPPA Co-ordinator, and with the LCJB, police (including Public Protection Unit), the MARAC, the LSCB and local authority children's social care team, and that these are working effectively in managing the risk of harm posed by children.

The YOT should have in place a risk of harm management strategy and associated procedures, including how children who pose a risk of harm to others are identified and how those risks will be managed. These should include referral pathways to, and working procedures with other agencies as appropriate. There should be good

working relationships and communication at all levels in the organisation; senior managers should be engaging with their counterparts at a strategic level to ensure that working arrangements are effective, middle managers should be working to improve communication and resolve problems and practitioners should be following key agreements, protocols and pathways to ensure that information is exchanged and referrals dealt with appropriately.

In addition to clear referral pathways, protocols for information exchange and active involvement in key boards and fora, the effectiveness of these arrangements should be demonstrated through initiatives to improve joint working on specific issues, joint training initiatives and lessons learned from reviews. The YOT should be able to provide sufficient examples of where this has led to specific arrangements which promote the effective management of the risk of harm posed to others by children. Where there have been reported Community Safeguarding and Public Protection Incidents (CSPPi), there should be evidence of joint learning from these. Any emerging tensions, for example conflicts arising around thresholds for referral and access to services, should be effectively managed and resolved.

**Evidence – may include:**

- Protocols, service level agreements and referral pathways (including clarity around thresholds) with partners and providers
- minutes of relevant meetings e.g. MAPPA SMBs, MAPPA Panels, LSCB, LCJB, MARACs)
- joint training with MAPPA and the police
- evidence of joint learning from Community Safeguarding and Public Protection Incidents (CSPPi), and other case review processes.

**d) Are courts made sufficiently aware of the services available to support sentencing options?**

**Guidance:**

In order for courts to make appropriate use of the full range of sentencing options and to give them confidence when passing sentence, they need to have enough detail about the services provided by the YOT, what activities are likely to be delivered as part of the sentence, and what outcomes sentences are likely to achieve. The courts should have up to date information about the range of reparation activity available for children, and any opportunity for the use of restorative approaches. There should be a strategic, planned approach to sentencer liaison, both with the youth courts and crown courts.

In addition to the provision of written information, arrangements should be made by the YOT to make presentations to sentencers at bench meetings, training events and other appropriate fora, such as court user groups, about the availability of and nature of services and interventions for children in their area, the outcomes achieved and their effectiveness. Sentencer surveys should be used to ascertain whether

sentencers are content that they have the detailed information they require, and with the communications they have with the YOT, both at management and operational level.

The inspector should be satisfied that there is evidence to show that courts are sufficiently aware of the range of services and interventions available to support sentencing options for children.

**Evidence – may include:**

- Service agreements in place with the courts and/or sentencer liaison arrangements
  - YOT service directory, newsletters and other communication channels
  - minutes of liaison meetings, presentations made and evidence of training events with sentencers
  - responses to sentencer surveys
  - feedback from interviews conducted with judges and magistrates.
-

## 1.4. Information and facilities

**Timely and relevant information is available and appropriate facilities are in place to support a high-quality, personalised and responsive approach for all children.**

### Guidance:

YOTs should ensure that their staff have the necessary tools in order to do their jobs well and deliver a high-quality service. YOT staff should have access to the necessary knowledge and information, facilitated through the YOT's Information and Communication Technology (ICT) systems and other means as appropriate, with clear policies and guidance in place to support them in their specific roles.

The importance of the physical environment must also be recognised. Well-designed safe and decent physical environments, can support positive engagement with children and their parents/carers, and can have a positive effect on staff morale, reducing stress and maintaining safety and security.

### Judgement:

Lead inspectors should adopt an initial default of 'requires improvement' in relation to the standard when one or more of the key questions is answered 'no' – whilst giving the LI scope to override and propose a 'good' rating when he/she thinks this is appropriate.

### 1.4.1 Are the necessary policies and guidance in place to enable staff to deliver a quality service, meeting the needs of all children?

#### Guidance:

There should be a comprehensive range of relevant, up to date policies and guidance in place which enable staff to deliver a quality service and meet the needs of children. Where it is considered that key areas of policy or guidance are missing these should be noted and may impact on the overall judgement for this question.

**Judgement** – Lead inspectors should consider the extent to which delivery is above and below the line for each prompt, and whether those aspects that are considered to be above the line outweigh those that are not. Where on balance the areas above the line outweigh those that are below, the inspector should consider a 'yes' judgement to the key question. One or more areas that are considered below the line may be of such importance that they preclude a judgement of 'yes'.

#### a) Are the necessary policies in place that describe and guide effective service delivery?

#### Guidance:

The YOT should have in place the necessary range of policies that guide effective service delivery; these policies should be readily accessible and relevant to the YOT area. As a minimum the YOT should have policies relating to safeguarding, public protection, health and safety, home visits/lone working, information sharing, equality and diversity, conduct and competency, and quality assurance.

**Evidence - may include:**

- Copies of all policies and procedures live in the YOT
- these should include the date they were created, the date of their last completed revision, and (if applicable) the date of any scheduled review
- policies should be 'owned' i.e. clarity of who is responsible for the policy, and be signed off by the YOT Manager (or member of the YOT leadership team as appropriate)

**b) Are policies and guidance communicated effectively to all those to whom they apply?**

**Guidance:**

Policies and guidance must be communicated in such ways that they are understood by those to whom they apply, which, in addition to staff and volunteers may include children, parents/carers, victims, sentencers, partner organisations and providers. This prompt therefore refers to both internal and external communication channels which should be reflected in the YOT's communication strategies and plans. Effective communication should be matched to the needs and learning styles of recipients, should be multi modal and should allow, where appropriate, for a two-way exchange of information.

**Internal communication** to staff and volunteers, communication channels could include: -

- Internet/intranet based resources and knowledge banks
- e-mail communication and discussion forums
- presentations and road shows
- line management briefings and team meetings
- newsletters and bulletins
- question and answer sessions
- incorporation into training and development sessions
- peer support/buddying arrangements.

**External communication** channels for children, parents/carers, victims, sentencers, partner organisations and providers could include: -

- handbooks and leaflets
- internet resources
- newsletters
- briefing sessions
- liaison roles/named contacts
- telephone helplines

**Evidence – may include:**

- examination of recent implementation of key policies and guidance and the communication channels used, for example internet, intranet, emails, newsletters, briefings, videos, team meeting minutes
- this should be combined with evidence from interviews and meetings with recipients about the extent to which policies and guidance have been understood and applied
- feedback from recipients about the clarity and ease of use of communication channels
- staff should be able to explain where to find and how to access key policies and guidance, and how to apply them
- evidence of how the YOT responds in cases where staff have not followed policy requirements or guidance.

**c) Do staff understand how to access the right services from partners and providers?**

**Guidance:**

Staff should have a clear understanding of how they can access the range of services from partners and other providers. Clear referral protocols and pathways should be available and accessible to staff. The referral process should set out what information is required, the process for transmitting this securely, and how and when decisions about acceptance will be made, including any further assessments required. Guidance should be up to date and should specify who services might be suitable for, and any specific exclusions. The YOT should have in place procedures for managing tensions in relation to accessing services, for example escalation procedures for disputes around thresholds.

Clear guidance should also be available to children and their parents/carers about the range of services available and their suitability, for example in service directories, leaflets, website or other media, and how they can be referred or refer themselves.

**Evidence – may include:**

- Guidance available for staff and for children
- escalation procedures for managing tensions around access to services,
- and evidence of their use in resolving issues
- discussions with staff and children about the clarity and accuracy of the material and the ease of making referrals.

**d) Are policies and guidance routinely reviewed?**

**Guidance:**

Policies and guidance should be up-to-date and routinely reviewed. Reviews should take place annually where appropriate to changing circumstances, or as a minimum three-yearly. Reviews should be signed off by the YOT manager, or a member of the YOT leadership team as appropriate.

**Evidence – may include:**

- Routine reviews on an annual, or as a minimum, three-yearly basis

- reviews are recorded, dated and signed off by a manager.

#### **1.4.2 Does the YOT's delivery environment(s) meet the needs of all children and enable staff to deliver a quality service?**

##### **Guidance:**

The YOT may deliver its services in a range of environments throughout the area. This may include YOT office base(s), satellite offices, shared premises and hubs, community facilities (such as sports venues for positive activities or church/community halls for Referral Order panels) and sites for reparation activity. Inspectors should consider the range of delivery environments used by the YOT, and their suitability.

##### **Judgement:**

Lead inspectors should consider the extent to which delivery is above and below the line for each prompt, and whether those aspects that are considered to be above the line outweigh those that are not. Where on balance the areas above the line outweigh those that are below, the inspector should consider a 'yes' judgement to the key question. One or more areas that are considered below the line may be of such importance that they preclude a judgement of 'yes'.

#### **a) Does the YOT deliver its work to children in accessible places?**

##### **Guidance:**

In judging accessibility, it will be important to look at the location and physical environment of the delivery premises, venues and sites, the welcome they provide, signage, opening times, and information available in a range of formats and languages, along with guidance for children and their parents/carers about access to them.

Services should be delivered from premises, venues and sites which are reasonably accessible to the large majority of children; ideally they should be readily accessible by public transport, or be within a reasonable walking distance of a rail station/bus route. Where YOT premises, venues and sites may be geographically distant, as in sparsely populated rural areas, then the YOT should give consideration to how it can support compliance and engagement of children without entailing excessive travel time, for example opportunities for children to receive face to face services at locations nearer to where they live.

The YOT should give consideration, and where necessary make reasonable adjustments to premises, venues and sites so that they are accessible by children and their parents/carers with disabilities, or for whom the first language is other than English.

##### **Evidence – may include:**

- Estates strategy and plan

- health and safety risk assessments, which are current (within the last 12 months), and regularly reviewed, in relation to all delivery environments used by the YOT
- evidence that appropriate adjustments have been made to premises/venues/sites so that they are accessible by children and parents/carers with disabilities. Examples may include impact assessments, Disability Discrimination Act audits
- evidence that premises/venues/sites are accessible for those whose first language is other than English; appropriate signage and information on how to access delivery environments should be available
- feedback from children and from parents/carers about how accessible the YOT premises/venues/sites are

**b) Does the YOT delivery environment enable staff to undertake appropriate personalised work and engage effectively with children?**

**Guidance:**

YOT premises where children attend for their supervision should as a minimum provide for confidential interviewing space where they can be seen without the possibility of being overheard, including in buildings which are shared with other services and members of the public. They should provide spaces which are conducive to effective engagement by children including:

- Suitable reception environment
- rooms that are appropriately decorated, furnished, signed and well lit
- positive images, such as rehabilitative posters and quotes
- information available in a variety of formats and languages
- suitably sized rooms for group activity to be undertaken
- staff, volunteers or mentors to meet and greet
- separate secure office space for staff
- premises should be well-planned and thought through, potentially with input from children.

Delivery environments other than YOT premises should promote opportunities for personalised work and effective engagement with children. As a minimum they should provide space and opportunity for confidential discussions when required, an environment appropriate to the age-group, gender, ethnicity and ability of the children attending, and, where relevant, suitably sized/equipped group-work space(s)

**Evidence – may include:**

- Design specifications
- premises audits
- evidence of consultation with, and input from children concerning the design and decoration of spaces for their work with the YOT
- feedback from children to show that the environment being used is meeting their individual needs
- feedback from staff and volunteers to show that the environment being used is suitable to deliver personalised work and engage effectively with children
- visual observations by inspectors when visiting sites.

**c) Is the YOT delivery environment a safe place for staff working with children?**

**Guidance:**

YOT premises, venues and sites should provide a safe environment for both staff and children, along with any partner agencies, providers and other members of the public who use them. There should be up to date, and appropriate health and safety risk assessments in place for all the premises, venues and sites the YOT uses to deliver services to children. There should be an acknowledgement that health and safety should be everybody's business and that everyone has a role to play in ensuring this. A member of staff should be appropriately qualified and trained to fulfil a lead health and safety role. Health and safety inductions should be provided for all new staff (including inspectors) who use the delivery environments. There should be a guide for each delivery environment which sets out the health and safety arrangements, along with a log of accidents and incidents, health and safety inspections, emergency equipment tests and fire drills in order to comply with relevant health and safety regulations. Adequate fire detection, protection and evacuation equipment, processes and procedures should be in place and there should be evidence of regular and recent testing. First aid facilities and support from trained staff member(s) should be available and clearly signed.

Children should be safe, and feel safe, in the environments where they are supervised by the YOT. Arrangements for physical security, including the logging and monitoring of visitors and staff attendance should be in place. Where there are concerns about the potential for conflicts between certain individuals, for example rival gang members, then arrangements should be in place for separate reporting. There should be a system of incident alarms and clear procedures for responding to these. A lone working policy and procedure should be in place along with guidance on making home visits.

**Evidence – may include:**

- Health and safety reports should be a regular feature within YOT leadership team meetings. Agendas and minutes of meetings should evidence that health and safety has suitable priority
- health and safety documentation, including procedures, risk assessments, audits and logs
- health and safety risk assessments should be available for each of the delivery environments used by the YOT, detailing the risk of particular activities and the mitigation measures and training that should be in place
- lone working policy and procedures
- availability of incident alarms and procedures for response to these
- examples of how safety concerns have been responded to by the YOT, and any learning from these
- discussions with YOT leadership team members and relevant health and safety personnel

- feedback from staff and volunteers about how safe they feel in the delivery environments used by the YOT in working with children
- feedback from children about how safe they feel in the environments where they are supervised by the YOT.

### **1.4.3 Do the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) systems enable staff to deliver a quality service, meeting the needs of all children?**

#### **Guidance:**

Here inspectors look to see how effective the YOT's ICT systems are in supporting staff to deliver a quality service to children. Information and Communication Technology systems, comprise, both the hardware and infrastructure elements (IT) including telecommunications, and the software or applications systems (IS). Information systems used by YOTs include but are not limited to: -

- Assessment and case management tools such as ASSETPlus
- management information systems such as YJMIS
- knowledge sharing applications such as intranets, websites and internet
- email and word processing
- diary, booking and logistics applications.

As multi-agency organisations, seconded staff from partner agencies within the YOT should have access to ICT systems which enable them to access databases and tools relevant to their own organisation. These may include:

- Police staff access to PNC and crime intelligence systems
- probation staff access to OASys and nDelius
- health staff access to relevant systems and records
- social care staff access to relevant systems and records.

#### **Judgement:**

Lead inspectors should consider the extent to which delivery is above and below the line for each prompt, and whether those aspects that are considered to be above the line outweigh those that are not. Where on balance the areas above the line outweigh those that are below, the inspector should consider a 'yes' judgement to the key question. One or more areas that are considered below the line may be of such importance that they preclude a judgement of 'yes'.

### **a) Do the ICT systems enable staff to plan, deliver and record their work in a timely way, and to access information as required?**

#### **Guidance**

ICT systems available to staff must be fit for purpose, sufficient in capacity, and readily accessible, enabling staff to plan, deliver and record their work in a timely way, and to access information as required. Systems should be robust and reliable, avoiding the minimum of downtime. Applications should work with assistive technology to enable staff with a range of access needs to use them effectively.

Telecommunication systems should be designed to enable staff and service users to connect to the right people with minimum delay. YOTs should have processes for testing the effectiveness and ease of use of their ICT systems and be responsive to feedback from users.

**Evidence – may include:**

- ICT strategy and policies
- data on system downtime
- inspectors' experience of accessing systems
- feedback from staff about the effectiveness of ICT systems

**b) Do the ICT arrangements allow access to and exchange of the right information to and from partners, providers and other key stakeholders?**

ICT systems should facilitate the effective, consistent and appropriate sharing of information with partners, providers and other key stakeholders. Information sharing agreements and arrangements should be in place, so that the YOT is able to access and exchange the necessary information in a timely manner through its ICT arrangements. Necessary arrangements include, but are not limited to:

Information sharing with:

- children's social care on safety and wellbeing concerns, such as MASH referral procedures, children in need, child protection, offending by looked after children, support for care leavers
- other local authorities when children are transferred into, or out of the area
- the police in relation to the management of risk of harm posed by children to others
- the police regarding incidents of domestic abuse
- health in relation to both mental and physical health concerns, including health assessments as appropriate
- schools and education professionals, including education welfare officers, educational psychologists, speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) therapists as appropriate
- the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) on cases to be sentenced by the courts and previous conviction information from the police
- the courts on children appearing in court, including systems such as Libra
- the Youth Justice Board (YJB) on secure placements for children remanded or sentenced to custody.

Procedures with:

- the police and social care in relation to children missing from home or care
- the police in relation to out-of-court disposals
- probation services for accessing and sharing information when children transfer from youth justice to adult services

**Evidence – may include:**

- Information sharing agreements and protocols with relevant partners and providers, which are up to date and routinely reviewed
- meetings with YOT leadership team members and partners, providers and other key stakeholders about the effectiveness of information sharing arrangements
- discussions with staff about their understanding of, and use of, information sharing arrangements.

**c) Do the ICT systems support the production of the necessary management information?**

**Guidance:**

ICT systems should be effective in enabling the YOT to produce relevant management information, for example to inform performance reports and trend data. Systems should be designed to store and easily retrieve, collate and analyse key data accurately. This may include, but is not limited to data on:

- The characteristics of children in the YOT cohort, including age, gender and diversity data
- data relating to needs, risks, location of offending behaviour
- patterns of desistance
- sentencing data
- performance and output/outcome information
- HR data
- workload allocation and management
- staff surveys and surveys of other service users, including children, parents/carers, victims and sentencers.

**Evidence – may include:**

- Appropriate management information systems such as YJMIS are in place which can produce reports on demand in accessible and usable formats
- examples of the reports available
- discussions with the YOT leadership team on the effectiveness of ICT systems in supporting the production of the necessary management information
- responses to inspectors' requests for information.

**1.4.4 Is analysis, evidence and learning used effectively to drive improvement?**

**Guidance:**

Here the inspector is looking to see how well the YOT uses evidence and learning to drive improvement. The YOT should demonstrate that it is a learning organisation that continually reviews and evaluates the quality and effectiveness of the services provided by itself and by others on its behalf, in order to sustain positive outcomes for children.

### Judgement:

Lead inspectors should consider the extent to which delivery is above and below the line for each prompt, and whether those aspects that are considered to be above the line outweigh those that are not. Where on balance the areas above the line outweigh those that are below, the inspector should consider a 'yes' judgement to the key question. One or more areas that are considered below the line may be of such importance that they preclude a judgement of 'yes'.

#### **a) Do performance and quality assurance systems drive improvement?**

### Guidance:

The YOT should have performance management and quality assurance systems in place which cover each of its key service delivery functions. Performance measures include those which are prescribed by the YJB, but equally performance measures may be developed internally by the YOT to measure progress in the achievement of local objectives, and in the effectiveness of its processes in achieving those objectives. There should be benchmarking of systems, processes and performance measures, setting and reviewing of targets to drive forward improvement, analysing of trends and identifying and addressing the causes of performance and under performance. This should be informed by the routine provision of accessible performance information, appropriately reflected at the team and individual level, and which is interrogated to identify trends, causes and potential improvements.

Quality assurance processes may include activities such as sampling of cases, observations of practice, case reviews, peer reviews, data on outputs and outcomes achieved, feedback from staff, children and parents/carers about the services provided.

### Evidence - may include:

- Examples of how performance information and trend data is routinely analysed and monitored
- examples of how quality assurance processes are routinely used to drive improvement
- discussions with YOT managers, which should demonstrate detailed understanding of trends and causes both of good and poor performance, and the effectiveness of the YOT's work in practice
- discussions with front line staff about their understanding of what is happening in relation to performance, the effectiveness of practice, and why.

#### **b) Are service improvement plans supported through evaluation and development of the underlying evidence base?**

### Guidance:

There should be clear focus on continuous improvement for the service, with a robust evaluation and self-assessment framework that ensures development areas are understood and addressed, and the quality of provision is improved. Appropriate service action plans should be in place; these should be supported by good evidence and current information, informed by regular review and evaluation to check whether

they are achieving their aims. They should be informed by the underlying evidence base from research and effective/promising practice about what is likely to work and improve delivery.

**Evidence – may include:**

- Service action plans with examples of how they are driving improvement
- monitoring reports and reviews
- evidence of the extent to which service action plans are informed by the underlying evidence base from research and effective/promising practice.

**c) Are processes in place to ensure that the YOT learns from things that go wrong?**

**Guidance:**

The YOT should have an agreed and understood approach to organisational learning and development, which supports its journey of continuous improvement. Particular attention should be paid by the YOT to learning from things that go wrong. For the individuals, this may include specific training and development objectives. For the wider organisation, in addition to staff briefings, there should be an agreed series of actions implemented to review, monitor and strengthen service delivery processes to reduce the risk of repetition. The YOT should be able to demonstrate that it has systematically extracted the learning and ensured that it has been embedded in changes to practice and service delivery.

**Evidence – may include:**

- Reports, action plans and learning arising from Community Safety and Public Protection Incidents (CSPPIs)
- YOT participation in multi-agency case review process and action plans/learning arising from this
- YOT participation in serious case reviews (SCRs) and action plans/learning arising from them
- Practice examples which demonstrate how learning has taken place
- feedback from managers and staff about the learning culture in the YOT.

**d) Are the views of the children, their parents/carers and other key stakeholders sought, analysed and used to review and improve the effectiveness of services?**

**Guidance:**

The YOT should have a sound approach to the consultation and involvement of children, their parents/carers and other key stakeholders. This process should contribute to the improvement of services, encompassing key delivery functions. Views may be sought through a variety of mechanisms, including surveys and questionnaires, but could also include other approaches such as workshops, focus groups and service user fora to provide a more in depth understanding of the needs of service users, where there are gaps, where they are being met effectively, and how services should change to better address these needs. The analysis of these

views should reflect the different experiences of a range of service users so that their needs and issues are better understood. The views of children, their parents/carers and other key stakeholders should be fed into service reviews, and their representatives may be included directly in the groups conducting these reviews.

**Evidence – may include:**

- Service user consultation and involvement strategies
- analysis of responses to consultations and surveys
- minutes of service user fora and actions following
- discussion with representatives of children, their parents/carers and other key stakeholders
- examples of where service user consultation has led to specific improvements, changes in service delivery or activity.

**e) Where necessary, is action taken promptly and appropriately in response to audit or inspection?**

**Guidance:**

YOTs should draw up action plans to address responses to audits and HMI Probation inspections, including thematic inspections. These should be produced in a timely fashion in line with relevant guidance, including taking immediate action where necessary. Action plans should specify who is responsible for progressing them, and they should be reviewed and evaluated at appropriate intervals. They should be subject to suitable governance arrangements through the YOT Management Board to ensure that specific actions are concluded in a timely manner and necessary improvements achieved.

**Evidence – may include:**

- Action plans, with review and evaluation arrangements
- actions taken since the previous inspection and examples of the impact they have had.

## 2. Glossary

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AssetPlus

Assessment and planning framework developed by the Youth Justice Board for work with children who have offended, or are at risk of offending, that reflects current research and understanding of what works with children.

BAME	Black, Asian and minority ethnic (used to refer to members of non-white communities in the UK)
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service: services provided locally by the NHS for the assessment and treatment of children who may have emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties
Care Leaver	A young person 25 or under who has been looked after by a local authority for at least 13 weeks
Child Protection	Work to make sure that that all reasonable action has been taken to keep to a minimum the risk of a child coming to harm
CIN	Child in Need. A child identified by the local authority children's services department as having addition needs for help and support
Community Payback	Unpaid work (or Community Payback as it was known) was transferred to YOTs for all 16 and 17 year olds from probation services in 2014. The unpaid work requirement, which courts can impose when sentencing, aims at giving something back to communities and engaging children who have offended in repaying the community for the harm they have caused.
Community Resolution	Used in low-level, often first-time, offences where there is informal agreement, often also involving the victim, about how the offence should be resolved.
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
CSPPI	Community Safeguarding and Public Protection Incident. Process for reporting information to the YJB if a child is involved in a safeguarding or public protection incident while under YOT supervision
Desistance	The cessation of offending or other antisocial behaviour
HR	Human Resources
IOM	Integrated Offender Management – a cross-agency response to the crime and reoffending threats faced by local communities by managing the most persistent and problematic offenders identified jointly by partner agencies working together
Intervention	The work undertaken by the YOT directly with the child to change their behaviour
Looked After Child	A child in the care of the local authority as a result of a court order or a voluntary agreement with the parents
LBGT	Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender

LCJB	Local Criminal Justice Board. Works in partnership across agencies to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the criminal justice system, and to improve the experience of the victims of and witnesses to crime
Libra	Magistrates Court case management system
LSCP	Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (in most areas these have replaced the former Local Safeguarding Children Boards). A multi-agency body set up in every local authority, with a strategic role in protecting children. Each LSCP has an independent Chair.
MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements: where probation, police, prison and other agencies work together locally to manage offenders who pose a higher risk of harm to others. Level 1 is single agency management where the risks posed by the offender can be managed by the agency responsible for the supervision or case management of the offender. This compares with Levels 2 and 3, which require active multi-agency management.
MARAC	Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference: part of a coordinated community response to domestic abuse, incorporating representatives from statutory, community and voluntary agencies working with victims/survivors, children and the alleged perpetrator.
National Standards for Youth Justice	Issued by the Youth Justice Board outlining the minimum contact levels and timescales for key tasks in the YOT's delivery of court orders
OASys	Offender Assessment System: currently used in England and Wales by probation services to measure the risks and needs of offenders under supervision
Out-of-Court Disposal (O OCD)	The resolution of a normally low-level offence, where it is not in the public interest to prosecute, through a community resolution, youth caution or youth conditional caution
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
nDelius	National Delius: the approved case management system used by probation services in England and Wales
Partner	Partners include statutory and non-statutory organisations, working with the participant/offender through a partnership agreement.
PNC	Police National Computer
Protected Characteristics	Defined by the Equality Act 2010 as age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity

Reparation	Work by children who have offended towards repairing the harm they have caused to victims. The type of reparation provided should be based on the victim's wishes, where possible
Risk of Harm	Risk of Serious Harm (ROSH) is a term used in AssetPlus. All cases are classified as presenting a low/ medium/ high/ very high risk of serious harm to others. HMI Probation uses this term when referring to the classification system, but uses the broader term risk of harm when referring to the analysis which has to take place in order to determine the classification level. This helps to clarify the distinction between the probability of an event occurring and the impact/severity of the event. The term Risk of Serious Harm only incorporates 'serious' impact, whereas using 'risk of harm' enables the necessary attention to be given to those children for whom lower impact/severity harmful behaviour is probable.
SLCN	Speech, Language and Communication Needs
SCR	Serious Case Review. LSCBs are required, under the statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015, to undertake a SCR when a child has died or been seriously harmed as a result of abuse or neglect and where there is cause for concern about the way agencies have worked together to safeguard children
Troubled Families	A government initiative that funded local authorities to target services on families that have multiple difficulties with the aim of reducing their need and demands made on welfare services.
ViSOR	ViSOR is a national confidential database that supports MAPPA. It facilitates the effective sharing of information and intelligence on violent and sexual offenders between the three MAPPA Responsible Authority agencies (police, probation and prisons). ViSOR is no longer an acronym but is the formal name of the database
Youth Caution	A caution accepted by a child following admission to an offence where it is not considered to be in the public interest to prosecute the offender
Youth Conditional Caution	As for a youth caution, but with conditions attached that the child is required to comply with for up to the next three months. Non-compliance may result in the child being prosecuted for the original offence
Youth Offending Team (YOT)	YOTs are known locally by many titles, such as youth justice service (YJS), youth offending service (YOS), and other generic titles that may illustrate their wider role in the local area in delivering services for children
YJB	Youth Justice Board: a Government body responsible for monitoring and advising ministers on the effectiveness of the youth justice system. Providers of grants and guidance to the youth offending teams.

YJMIS

Youth Justice Management Information System. YOT data returns to the MoJ. Case level data from YOTs collected on a quarterly basis.