



Her Majesty's
Inspectorate of
Probation

Consultation on standards and ratings for inspecting youth offending services

HMI Probation, April 2020

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Foreword

In 2018 we began to inspect against our new standards for Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) which, for the first time, included consideration of out of court disposal (OCD) work as part of our inspection framework. Overall, our standards and methodology have performed well in our single youth inspections. Nonetheless, we want to continue to improve the way we inspect local services to support improvements in practice, so we have kept our methodology under review to make sure it takes account of developments in the sector. We have listened to initial feedback from discussions with the Association of YOT Managers (AYM) and other YOT Managers including those in Wales, the Youth Justice Board (YJB) and others with an interest in youth justice. We are grateful to everyone involved and would now like to reach out to a wider audience.

In this consultation we are asking for your views on the proposed changes to our standards across all three domains of our inspection framework. In particular, we are interested in your views on the possible introduction of a new specific resettlement standard against which YOTs can be rated and the replacement of our OCD 'partnership working' standard with a new standard looking at the quality of local OCD policies and provision, as well as the methodology we will use to inspect against them. Our aim, as it was when we introduced the current standards, is to remain focused on the things that make a difference to the quality of YOT work while better aligning strategic activity with operational delivery.

While we may make some changes to the standards against which YOTs are rated and are seeking views on a potential change to the way in which we apply ratings for OCD and resettlement work, our ratings for individual standards and for the overall performance of YOTs will continue to follow the established four-point scale from inadequate to outstanding. We will continue to publish the scores that underpin our ratings of individual YOTs and the detailed narrative describing our findings will continue to be presented in our reports.

The changes we are proposing are small but important. Making them will better link our judgements on the activities of YOT leaders with delivery, continue to provide a proportionate approach to inspection and allow ourselves and those who provide youth offending services to measure progress.

Our consultation closes on **Sunday 07 June 2020 at 23:59**. We would like to hear your views on the detail of our proposals and I hope you will take the opportunity to respond.



Justin Russell
Chief Inspector of Probation

1. Background

1.1. In 2018 we began to inspect YOTs against our new standards. By the end of March 2020, we had inspected 33 YOTs across three domains of activity: organisational delivery, court disposals and out of court disposals. Overall our standards and methodology have performed well and we have inspected in a transparent and fair way. However, we have received feedback that suggests we need to do more to improve the way that evidence from our individual case assessments links to the judgements we make about overall organisational delivery. While the inclusion of out of court disposal work into our inspection framework has been largely welcomed, there are mixed views about how effectively this standard and our supporting methodology is working in practice. We have reviewed our activity against this feedback and revised our standards and methodology to reflect this feedback and our learning from how we have applied this in practice.

Our role in overseeing youth offending services

1.2. YOTs are scrutinised through a combination of independent inspection, performance monitoring by the YJB, and local authority scrutiny arrangements. The YJB monitors performance of the three main strategic **outcome** measures for youth offending services in the areas of reducing reoffending, first-time entrants and the use of custody. Local authorities oversee the performance of their own youth justice services through scrutiny by their YOT Management Board.

1.3. HM Inspectorate of Probation is focused on how **inputs and activities** deliver improved outputs and, in turn, better outcomes for children. Youth offending services are less likely to meet their aims without good quality inputs (such as professional staff and comprehensive services) and activities (such as case assessment and effective interventions). We inspect against three 'domains' of activity.

1.4. Domain one of our framework covers the way in which a YOT is organised and led. There are four standards covering leadership, staff, services and information and facilities. Ratings against each standard are evidenced by the lead inspector and ratified by our ratings panel. They are based mainly on qualitative evidence drawn from a wide range of interviews and focus groups with YOT management and staff, evidence from the children themselves and an analysis of evidence provided in advance on strategies, policies and procedures as well as internal management information.

1.5. Domains two and three of our framework cover the quality of work in individual cases and how well children are being supervised, with domain two focusing on court disposal cases and domain three on out of court disposal cases. The ratings for these domains are driven by quantitative evidence – specifically the percentage of inspected cases that our inspectors find to be of sufficient quality against each of the relevant standards.

1.6. The interaction between the qualitative and quantitative evidence we gather in all of our domains is always considered both during inspection and at our ratings panel.

2. What is not changing

2.1. We will continue to deliver most of our YOT inspections as a single inspectorate, with a small number each year undertaken with partner inspectorates where we identify that their involvement is required due to the nature of the risk, the size of the YOT and its' complexity. We will also continue to conduct thematic inspections and participate in joint inspections with other inspectorates, as we do now. We are not changing HM Inspectorate of Probation's primary role or focus in relation to youth justice services.

2.2. Our inspection standards will remain grouped into the same three domains, with each standard underpinned by key questions and prompts. All the key questions and prompts will continue to have a binary yes or no response. The framework will continue to be supported by inspection guidance materials,¹ supporting reliable and valid judgements.

2.3. We are not changing our scoring approach for any of the existing standards and will not be raising or lowering our expectations of the quality of YOT work, but maintaining our established view. We want our inspections to drive improvement in all areas of practice. We are not changing our rating boundaries² for individual standards.

2.4. When we developed our standards framework, we said that we wanted our standards, key questions and prompts to be coherent, sufficiently comprehensive and balanced. This still stands. The greater the number of prompts underpinning a key question, the more difficult it becomes to balance them into a single judgement. We maintain our view that no key question should have more than ten prompts. Some have as few as three.

3. What is changing

3.1. This consultation covers the detail of three changes to our YOT inspection methodology – some minor changes to the existing standards and, more significantly, the addition of two new standards and the methodology we will use to inspect against them. The detail of all three changes is set out below and a revised set of YOT inspection standards is attached at [Annexe A](#). We have also taken the opportunity to update the language used throughout the framework to better align it with the child-first, offender-second approach so you will no longer see use of the phrase ‘young people’ anywhere within it.

Standards

3.2. Our standards are based on a set of principles that we think good YOTs should meet to deliver a quality service. In first developing our standards in 2018 we reviewed international and national standards and rules, spoke with academics, other regulators and inspectorates, ran workshops with YOTs, local authorities, the YJB and the MoJ and further workshops (in partnership with Clinks) with the voluntary sector. This led to a set of inspection standards that are based on established models and frameworks, including the well-established and recognised ASPIRE model for case supervision (Assessment, Sentence Planning, Implementation, Review and Evaluation) and grounded in evidence, learning and experience. A summary of this evidence and learning is attached at [Annexe B](#).

3.3. In reviewing our standards, we have included learning from all of our inspections to date conducted under the current framework. By replacing one of the existing OOC standards and introducing a new resettlement standard we are looking to improve our oversight of some key areas of YOT work. In some of the existing standards we are simply making small changes to the wording of the key questions and prompts to hone them based on experience and to place an additional emphasis on effectiveness.

¹ [Youth Offending Service inspections external guidance manual](#), [Standards for inspecting Youth Offending Services](#), [Youth Offending Services Inspection Domain One Characteristics](#), [Youth Offending Services Domain One Rules and Guidance](#), [Youth Offending Services Domain Two Rules and Guidance](#), [Youth Offending Services Domain Three Rules and Guidance](#).

² [See paragraph 3.23 on page 9.](#)

Domain 1 – Organisational Delivery (governance and leadership, staff, partnership and services and information and facilities)

3.4. During our recent engagement activity to prepare for this consultation, we were asked about the link between management inputs (domain one – organisational delivery) and delivery outputs (domains two and three – practice domains). While the domains are inspected and rated independently of one another, the interaction between them is considered both during the inspection and at our ratings panel which agrees the final ratings. Treating each of the domains separately in this way was a design decision made at the time that the inspection framework was developed. The intention was that this would allow us to separate out where problems lay and best describe these, but it has meant that our ability to evaluate the effectiveness of management activity can be slightly limited.

3.5. For example, when we ask: *'Is there a clear vision and strategy to deliver a high-quality service for all service users?'*, we rightly give credit for a vision and strategy being in place but we do not ask directly what the impact of that vision and strategy is on delivery. Similarly, under our partnerships and services standard we ask *'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?'*

3.6. Once again, we rightly give credit for the completion of an analysis but we do not ask directly whether this is actually being used or about its' impact on the delivery of services. Staff engagement is a key priority that we do not specifically explore in detail within the current framework and which we believe it is important to look at.

3.7. We have therefore made a few small revisions to the key questions and prompts within our domain one standards on organisational delivery to improve the link between management inputs and delivery outputs and allow us to make a more in-depth exploration of some key issues.

Domain two – Court disposals (assessment, planning, implementation and delivery and reviewing)

3.8. Our existing domain two standards are based upon the ASPIRE model for case supervision and we are not intending to make any changes to these standards. We do though want to conduct a more in-depth inspection of resettlement services than is possible under our current framework and propose to introduce a specific new resettlement standard in domain two to enable us to do so.

3.9. The resettlement of children from custody is a notoriously difficult issue, with the challenges facing YOTs including distance from home, an 'out of sight, out of mind' mentality from some local authorities, high risk behaviours, high safeguarding needs, and established and/or serious offending. The cost to the public purse of children in custody is high and the damage caused to children by repeat periods in custody is significant, so while we recognise the challenges associated with delivering effective resettlement services it is crucial that YOTs get this right.

3.10. Last October, in partnership with HM Inspectorate of Prisons, we published a thematic review of youth resettlement services. The review found a serious lack of effective resettlement services, with very little progress made since the last thematic review in 2015. This has convinced us that resettlement services need to be inspected thoroughly on a more regular basis at individual YOT level and that YOTs should be rated on this important element of the service they provide.

3.11. We are proposing to introduce a new resettlement standard (as set out at standard 2.5 in [Annexe A, page 22](#)) that will enable us to rate individual YOTs on their arrangements for effective resettlement provision by looking at their resettlement policies and processes, how these are delivered, the impact they are making and how effectively they are reviewed and evaluated. Organisational elements of resettlement work are already included in the scope of our existing domain one standards and we will strengthen our guidance on this, but the introduction of a

separate resettlement standard will enable us to draw out the specific resettlement elements of organisational delivery, make an in-depth analysis of each YOT's overall approach to resettlement, and comprehensively consider the distinct local context within which resettlement services are delivered.

Question – Do you support the introduction of a specific new standard on resettlement policy and provision to run alongside individual case assessment data?

3.12. We are clear that if we are to rate a YOT on their resettlement provision, the standard must be underpinned by case-based evidence. For example, prompt A for key question 2.5.1 in the proposed new standard asks: *'Does the resettlement policy set out the arrangements for suitable and timely accommodation to be provided?'* We will review the local policy to ensure it does indeed do this and seek assurance through interviews with managers and their staff that the processes to support this are in place, but we will then want to triangulate this with evidence from individual cases to check whether suitable post release accommodation was actually put in place in a timely way in each case and to be certain local policies and procedures are flowing through into practice and delivering effective outcomes.

3.13. Although some YOTs will deal with a significant number of custody cases each year, many will have only a few and some will have no cases whatsoever. We believe we should only inspect and rate a YOT against this standard when they have sufficient cases to enable effective triangulation of local policy against actual practice.

Question – Do you agree that a resettlement standard must be underpinned by effective case-based evidence?

3.14. If we agree this principle then we need to set a minimum number of relevant cases that must be present before we can inspect against the standard. In doing so it is important to achieve the right balance between inspecting sufficient cases to support robust analysis, while also ensuring as many YOTs as possible fall into scope. According to data on the number of children that received a custodial outcome by YOT in the financial year 2017-18, only 42 of the 156 YOTs in England and Wales had less than five children commencing a custodial sentence during that period.

3.15. An inspection of five separate cases should enable us to assess whether or not policies are consistently flowing through into practice, and we therefore propose to set the minimum case number for YOTs to be in scope for this new resettlement standard at this level. Where we do inspect a YOT against the resettlement standard, the rating for the standard will contribute to the YOT's overall composite score as we believe this is the best way to drive improvement. The overall composite score for these YOTs will then be based on 13 standards instead of 12 as it is at present, with the threshold scores for the overall rating bands adjusted accordingly.

3.16. Currently, our case sample specification asks for cases that have been dealt with in the three months prior to the inspection, and in the resettlement thematic we looked at cases based on their proximity to release. We propose extending the time-period for in-scope custody cases to one year prior to inspection to emphasise the necessity for resettlement needs to be considered from day one of a period in custody.

Question – Are the arrangements set out for deciding which YOTs are in-scope for the new resettlement standard, and what the case sample specification should be, appropriate?

3.17. In developing the proposed standard we have aimed to achieve a balance between structural factors and personal support in line with the research and inspection evidence base, recognising that both have a role in effective resettlement and are not mutually exclusive.

Question – Do the key questions and prompts suggested for the new resettlement standard as set out in [Annexe A on page 22](#), cover all of the relevant factors that drive good quality delivery in this area? Have we sufficiently aligned this standard with the evidence base? If not, we would welcome any references to relevant sources.

Domain three – Out of court disposals (assessment, planning, implementation and delivery and partnership working)

3.18. Our domain three standards cover out of court disposal (OOC) work. Domain three was introduced into our routine inspection framework for the first time in June 2018 to reflect the changing nature of YOT work and increasing use of OOCs across the sector. OOC work is still a relatively new area of YOT practice and there is currently little by way of central policy or guidance to provide a framework within which it should be conducted. Our inspection findings to date have shown that local practice varies significantly across the sector, from YOTs being involved in all community resolution cases from assessment onwards, to community resolutions being entirely dealt with by the local authority early help team or other services with no YOT involvement whatsoever. This has made it challenging to develop a single OOC inspection approach that can be applied across the sector.

3.19. Overall, the introduction of OOC work into the inspection framework has been welcomed and our inspection approach has performed well. However, feedback from our recent engagement activity and learning from our inspections to date suggests that the current structure of our OOC standards does not sufficiently allow for local context to be taken into account. We also want to improve the links between the evidence found in our organisational delivery domain and evidence from our inspections of individual OOC cases.

3.20. We have considered the feedback carefully and we do not propose to make any changes to our OOC casework standards relating to assessment (3.1), planning (3.2) or implementation and delivery (3.3). We do though propose to replace our current standard 3.4 on 'joint working' with a new standard on OOC policy and provision (as set out at standard 3.4 in [Annexe A, page 26](#)). This will enable us to rate individual YOTs specifically on their arrangements for effective OOC provision and their underpinning policies and processes as well as on the quality of their supervision of individual OOC cases themselves, enabling a more in-depth analysis of the link between policy and practice than is possible under the current framework.

Question – Do you support the introduction of a specific new standard on OOC policy and provision to run alongside individual case assessment data?

Question – Do the key questions and prompts suggested for the new OOC standard as set out in [Annexe A, page 26](#), cover all of the relevant factors that drive good quality delivery in this area? Have we sufficiently aligned this standard with the evidence base? If not, we would welcome any references to relevant sources.

Question – Does the proposed new standard better allow for the local context within which the OOC scheme operates to be taken into account?

Ratings

3.21. We currently rate YOT performance against each of our 12 standards as this enables providers to clearly see where they are performing well and where they can improve. We then provide an overall composite rating derived from the individual standard ratings. We do not propose to change this.

Domain one

3.22. Ratings for our domain one standards are driven by evidence that comes primarily from data and documents submitted by the YOT and through interviews with leaders, managers, staff, the children themselves and other relevant stakeholders. The ratings are proposed by the lead inspector in each case as a single judgement, using all the relevant sources of information, and subject to verification by our ratings panel, chaired by the HM Inspectorate of Probation Director of Operations. It is the panel's job to ensure that ratings are evidence based, fully reflect the balance of evidence and issues, and are sufficiently consistent across inspections.

Domains two and three

3.23. Our approach to applying ratings against our existing domain two and three standards is driven by the results of our inspections of individual cases. Binary yes/no judgements are made against each key question for each case inspected. The percentage of cases receiving a 'yes' judgement (i.e. which are rated as satisfactory for that standard) then drives the rating applied to it. For the consolidated results, we use four performance bandings:

% of cases assessed as achieving a 'yes' response to the key question	Rating
Large majority of cases: 80%+	Outstanding
Reasonable majority: 65-79%	Good
Too few cases: 50-64%	Requires Improvement
Minority of cases: <50%	Inadequate

3.24. For each standard (excluding our domain three standard on partnership working), we ask three key questions and the rating applied to the standard is driven by the lowest percentage of 'yes' judgements achieved against any of these three questions. The key questions for each standard cover three key issues:

- Does the work the YOT is doing with this case sufficiently focus on meeting the child's desistance needs?
- Does the work the YOT is doing with this case sufficiently focus on keeping the child safe?
- Does the work the YOT is doing with this case sufficiently focus on keeping other people safe?

3.25. Because we regard each of these aspects of supervision as equally important they all have equal weighting in relation to the overall rating that is given to the standard. That is why it is the key question with the lowest percentage of cases with a 'yes' judgement that drives the overall rating given to that standard. That means that while a YOT may be delivering good or outstanding work in relation to desistance and its work to prevent reoffending, if it is failing to keep children safe or to adequately protect the public then it may be rated as 'inadequate' or 'requires improvement' for the overall standard (for example, in relation to the quality of assessment or planning work for OOCR cases). In practice, we have found that our scores for a YOT's work in relation to safety and wellbeing and risk of harm have often been lower than for desistance and this has pulled down the overall ratings we have given for the quality of OOCR work.

3.26. When we inspect individual domain two and three cases we only look at work in relation to the safety and wellbeing and risk of harm when our inspectors assess these issues as being of medium or high risk for the case being inspected. For domain two cases (those subject to a court disposal), we find that nearly all cases will be rated as medium or high risk and this means that the sample sizes for the judgements we make about desistance, safety and wellbeing and risk of harm are reasonably similar and consistent.

3.27. For out of court cases however, we have found that a much higher proportion of cases are low risk in relation to a child's safety and wellbeing or the risk of harm they pose to others.³ This can mean that the judgments we make on the effectiveness of work to manage safety and wellbeing or risk of harm for OOC cases can be based on significantly smaller case samples than for those we make relating to work around desistance where our inspectors will be looking at the full OOC case sample.

3.28. As a result, a very small number of OOC cases can drive the overall rating achieved for each standard in this domain. In recognition of this, we have recently updated our ratings panel guidance to the effect that the panel must consider whether professional judgement should be exercised when the lowest score at key question level is based upon an assessment of five cases or less, but that consideration must be based on other compelling evidence. We are also considering how we can better reflect actual caseloads for out of court work in our case samples.⁴

3.29. During our recent workshops we were asked about the balance between desistance and risk in our approach to inspecting OOC work. There is currently no clear policy framework within which OOC work must be conducted and practice varies significantly across the sector from a largely desistance-based approach to a largely risk-based approach. Striking the right balance in this context is a difficult thing to do.

3.30. Our current approach to inspecting and rating OOC work has worked well overall and we have inspected in both a fair and transparent way. We are not convinced therefore, particularly given the lack of a clear policy position and the very mixed picture in relation to practice, that now is the right time to change it. Nevertheless, we understand there are a range of views on this issue and we are open to considering any ideas you may have that will help us to enhance our inspection approach for OOC work while continuing to strike the right balance between desistance and risk.

3.31. For example, one way to move towards a more desistance-focused inspection model for OOC work would be to make the starting point for our discussion of ratings for each OOC standard the banding achieved against the key question on desistance. The scores for key questions on safety and wellbeing and risk of harm would then be used to inform discussion at our ratings panel where the final standard level rating would be confirmed. As with our current approach, the standard level rating could be moved up or down based on relevant wider evidence. YOTs would be unlikely to achieve the highest rating at standard level unless performance is judged to be sufficient across the entire key question range. Equally though, a low score on safety and wellbeing or risk of harm would not automatically drive a low overall rating for the standard.

Question – Should we consider making the starting point for our standard level inspection ratings for OOC work the scores relating to desistance? Would such an approach be relevant and applicable in the current policy and practice landscape?

Question – Is there a risk that taking such an approach would mean insufficient priority is given to work aimed at ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the child or managing the risk of harm they may present to others? If so, how could we ensure these issues remain sufficiently prominent in our inspection framework if we made a change like this?

Case sample ratio

3.32. Domains two and three of our inspection framework centre on the quality of practice. We assess this by undertaking case inspections. Prior to inspection we ask each YOT to submit a case

³ Though this proportion may still be significant. For example, in the first year of using our current inspection framework our inspectors assessed at least 39 per cent of the community resolution cases they looked at were medium or high risk, almost half had a substance abuse issue, almost a quarter had a mental health need and one in ten had been subject to a Child Protection Plan or section 47 enquiry during the sentence period we were inspecting.

⁴ [See paragraph 3.32 below.](#)

sample long list in accordance with our case sample specification.⁵ We then follow our stratification process to select the actual case sample.

3.33. In the combined sample of domain two and three cases we draw for each YOT, 60 per cent are court disposal cases and 40 per cent are out of court cases. As there is no published data on the number of out of court disposals being dealt with by individual YOTs we have based this ratio on what inspections prior to the introduction of our current approach in 2018 told us was a typical ratio of out of court to court disposal cases. We recognise that the proportion of out of court cases being dealt with by YOTs has continued to increase since then and now often represents a much greater proportion of the overall caseload. We are, therefore, considering how we can better reflect actual caseloads for out of court work in our case samples and are keen to hear your views. We will consider all proposals carefully, but the decision on which approach we adopt will need to be taken in line with what is practicable on individual inspections and our available resources.

Question – How can we ensure the ratio of court disposals versus out of court disposals in our case sample best reflects actual caseloads?

4. Next steps

4.1. The consultation process will run until **Sunday 07 June 23:59**. We will then consider all responses carefully before deciding on our approach and update our inspection framework and supporting guidance accordingly. We are aiming to introduce any changes to our inspection approach in the early autumn. Once these changes are in place, we will continue to work with providers and others to keep our inspection standards relevant, comprehensive and up-to-date.

5. How to respond

5.1. The deadline for responses is **Sunday 07 June 2020 23:59**.

Please email responses to consultations@hmiprobation.gov.uk.

You can also send any questions you may have to that address and we will endeavour to respond as soon as we can. Alternatively, if you would like to discuss any part of the consultation please email Matthew Armer (matthew.armer@justice.gov.uk) to arrange a time to do so.

As part of your response, please ensure that:

- you state clearly who the submission is from, for example from an individual in a personal capacity or sent on behalf of an organisation
- you include a brief description of yourself/your organisation
- you state clearly if you wish your submission to be confidential and/or you do not want to be contacted with follow-up enquiries (see confidentiality statement below).

Confidentiality statement

The information you send HM Inspectorate of Probation may be published in full or in a summary of responses. All information in responses, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes (these are primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004).

If you want your response to remain confidential, you should explain why confidentiality is necessary and your request will be acceded to only if it is appropriate in the circumstances. An

⁵ [Youth Offending Services inspections case sample specification](#).

automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding.

Annexe A – Revised standards for youth justice services

Where changes have been made this is indicated with an asterisk (*).

1. Organisational delivery

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.

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

- 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?
- b) Does the YOT Management Board include all statutory partners and non-statutory partners where these would add value?
- c) Are YOT Management Board members active in their attendance and participation, recognising the contribution their own agency makes to the YOT?
- d) Is the Chair of the YOT Management Board well engaged with a sufficient understanding of the YOT's work?
- e) Are there effective governance arrangements and clear delivery plans that translate the vision and strategy into effective case supervision?*
- f) Is the impact of the strategy on delivery monitored and regularly reviewed?*

1.1.2 Do the partnership arrangements actively support effective service delivery?

- a) Do YOT Management Board members advocate the work of the YOT in their own broader roles?
- b) Do the YOT's partnerships arrangements facilitate the delivery of effective operational work?
- c) Do staff understand their roles and responsibilities within the partnership arrangements, 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?

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

- a) Does the YOT leadership team provide an effective link to the Management Board?
- b) Does the YOT leadership team effectively communicate the vision and strategy of the YOT to staff and stakeholders?
- c) Does the YOT leadership team successfully deliver and operationalise the vision and strategy?
- d) Does the YOT leadership team promote openness, constructive challenge and ideas?
- e) Are risks to the service sufficiently understood by the leadership team, with appropriate mitigations and controls in place?

1.2 Staff

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

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

- a) Are staffing levels sufficient?*
- b) Are staffing levels planned and reviewed to meet the changing demands and case profiles?
- c) Are practitioners and managers' workloads reasonable, given the profile of the cases and the range of work undertaken?
- d) Are workloads actively managed?
- e) Is there an effective strategy to maintain the quality of delivery during periods of planned and unplanned staff absences?

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

- a) Do the skills and diversity of the workforce meet the needs of the children?
- b) Are cases allocated to staff who are appropriately qualified and/or experienced?
- c) Are staff motivated to contribute to the delivery of a quality service?
- d) Is there an appropriate strategy in place to identify and develop the potential of individual staff to support succession planning?

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

- a) Do staff receive effective supervision to enhance the quality of work with children?
- b) Is there an effective induction programme for new staff?
- c) Is the appraisal process used effectively to ensure that staff are competent to deliver a quality service?
- d) Is sufficient attention paid to identifying and addressing poor performance?
- e) Is exceptional work recognised and rewarded, encouraging development and retention of staff?

1.2.4 Are arrangements for learning and development comprehensive and responsive?

- a) Does the YOT identify and plan for the learning needs of all staff?
- b) Does the YOT provide sufficient access to in-service training to support the delivery of a quality service?
- c) Does the YOT promote and value a culture of learning and continuous improvement?

1.2.5 Do managers pay sufficient attention to staff engagement?*

- a) Are staff motivated to contribute to the delivery of a quality service?*
- b) Is appropriate attention paid to monitoring and improving staff engagement levels?*
- c) Do managers recognise and reward exceptional work?*
- d) Is appropriate attention paid to staff safety and wellbeing, and building staff resilience?*

e) Are reasonable adjustments made for staff in accordance with statutory requirements and protected characteristics?*

f) Do staff from all backgrounds have equitable access to promotion opportunities and reward and recognition?*

1.3 Partnerships and services

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

1.3.1 Is there a sufficiently comprehensive and up to date analysis of the profile of children, used by the YOT to deliver well targeted services?*

- a) Is there an up to date strategic and operational analysis of the desistance needs presented by the children?
- b) Does the analysis pay sufficient attention to factors for safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm?
- c) Does the analysis pay sufficient attention to diversity factors and to issues of disproportionality?
- d) Is there sufficient analysis of local patterns of sentencing and offence types?
- e) Is the analysis used effectively to influence service delivery?

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

- a) Is there access to the right specialist and mainstream services and interventions to meet the desistance needs of children?
- b) Is sufficient attention paid to building on strengths and enhancing protective factors?
- c) Are diversity factors and issues of disproportionality sufficiently considered in the range of services provided?
- d) Is the quality of services reviewed and evaluated, with remedial action 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?

- a) Are there effective arrangements with partners and providers to support desistance through access to specialist and mainstream services?
- b) Are there effective arrangements with partners and providers to support the safety and wellbeing of children?
- c) Are there effective arrangements with partners and providers to manage the risk of harm to others?
- d) Are courts made sufficiently aware of the services available to support sentencing options?

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.

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

- a) Are the necessary policies in place that describe and guide effective service delivery?
- b) Are policies and guidance communicated effectively to all those to whom they apply?
- c) Do staff understand how to access the right services from partners and providers?
- d) Are policies and guidance regularly reviewed?

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

- a) Does the YOT deliver its work to children in accessible places?
- b) Does the YOT delivery environment enable staff to undertake appropriate personalised work and engage effectively with children?
- c) Is the YOT delivery environment a safe place for staff working with children?

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

- a) Do the ICT systems enable staff to plan, deliver and record their work in a timely way, and to access information as required?
- b) Do the ICT arrangements allow access to and exchange of the right information to and from partners, providers and other key stakeholders?
- c) Do the ICT systems support the production of the necessary management information?

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

- a) Do performance and quality assurance systems drive improvement?
- b) Are service improvement plans supported through evaluation and development of the underlying evidence base?
- c) Are processes in place to ensure that the YOT learns from things that go wrong?
- 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?
- e) Where necessary, is action taken promptly and appropriately in response to audit or inspection?
- g) Is learning communicated effectively?*

2. Court disposals

2.1 Assessment

Assessment is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents/carers.

2.1.1 Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?

- a) Is there sufficient analysis of offending behaviour, including the child's attitudes towards and motivations for their offending?
- b) Does assessment consider the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, utilising information held by other agencies?
- c) Does assessment focus on the child's strengths and protective factors?
- d) Does assessment analyse the key structural barriers facing the child?
- e) Is sufficient attention given to understanding the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change, and their likelihood of engaging with the court disposal?
- f) Does assessment give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s, and opportunities for restorative justice?
- g) Are the child and their parents/carers meaningfully involved in their assessment, and are their views taken into account?

2.1.2 Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?

- a) Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risks to the safety and wellbeing of the child?
- b) Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including other assessments, and involve other agencies where appropriate?
- c) Does assessment analyse controls and interventions to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?

2.1.3 Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?

- a) Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risk of harm to others posed by the child, including identifying who is at risk and the nature of that risk?
- b) Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including past behaviour and convictions, and involve other agencies where appropriate?
- c) Does assessment analyse controls and interventions to manage and minimise the risk of harm presented by the child?

2.2 Planning

Planning is well-informed, holistic and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents/carers.

2.2.1 Does planning focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?

- a) Does planning set out the services most likely to support desistance, paying sufficient attention to the available timescales and the need for sequencing?
- b) Does planning take sufficient account of the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child?
- c) Does planning take sufficient account of the child's strengths and protective factors, and seek to reinforce or develop these as necessary?
- d) Does planning take sufficient account of the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change, and seek to develop these as necessary?
- e) Does planning give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s?
- f) Are the child and their parents/carers meaningfully involved in planning, and are their views taken into account?

2.2.2 Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

- a) Does planning promote the safety and wellbeing of the child, sufficiently addressing risks?
- b) Does planning involve other agencies where appropriate, and is there sufficient alignment with other plans (e.g. child protection or care plans) concerning the child?
- c) Does planning set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?
- d) Does planning set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to manage those risks that have been identified?

2.2.3 Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

- a) Does planning promote the safety of other people, sufficiently addressing risk of harm factors?
- b) Does planning involve other agencies where appropriate?
- c) Does planning address any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims?
- d) Does planning set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote the safety of other people?
- e) Does planning set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to manage those risks that have been identified?

2.3 Implementation and delivery

High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging and assisting the child.

2.3.1 Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the child's desistance?

- a) Are the delivered services those most likely to support desistance, with sufficient attention given to sequencing and the available timescales?
- b) Does service delivery reflect the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, involving parents/carers or significant others?
- c) Does service delivery build upon the child's strengths and enhance protective factors?
- d) Is sufficient focus given to developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child and their parents/carers?
- e) Does service delivery promote opportunities for community integration including access to services post-supervision?
- f) Is sufficient attention given to encouraging and enabling the child's compliance with the work of the YOT?
- g) Are enforcement actions taken when appropriate?

2.3.2 Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of the child?

- a) Does service delivery promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?
- b) Is the involvement of other organisations in keeping the child safe sufficiently well coordinated?

2.3.3 Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?

- a) Are the delivered services sufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm?
- b) Is sufficient attention given to the protection of actual and potential victims?
- c) Is the involvement of other agencies in managing the risk of harm sufficiently well coordinated?

2.4 Reviewing

Reviewing of progress is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents/carers.

2.4.1 Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?

- a) Does reviewing identify and respond to changes in factors linked to desistance?
- b) Does reviewing focus sufficiently on building upon the child's strengths and enhancing protective factors?
- c) Does reviewing consider motivation and engagement levels and any relevant barriers?
- d) Are the child and their parents/carers meaningfully involved in reviewing their progress and engagement, and are their views taken into account?
- e) Does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work to support desistance?

2.4.2 Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

- a) Does reviewing identify and respond to changes in factors related to safety and wellbeing?
- b) Is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in promoting the safety and wellbeing of the child?
- c) Does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?

2.4.3 Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

- a) Does reviewing identify and respond to changes in factors related to risk of harm?
- b) Is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in managing the risk of harm?
- c) Are the child and their parents/carers meaningfully involved in reviewing their risk of harm, and are their views taken into account?
- d) Does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work to manage and minimise the risk of harm?

2.5 Resettlement policy and provision*

There is a high quality, evidence-based resettlement service for children leaving custody.

2.5.1 Is there a resettlement policy in place that promotes a high quality, constructive and personalised resettlement service for all children?

- a) Does the resettlement policy set out the arrangements for suitable and timely accommodation to be provided?
- b) Does the resettlement policy address structural barriers to effective resettlement?
- c) Does the resettlement policy advocate an approach to personalised support that is constructive, strengths-based and future-focused?

2.5.2 Does resettlement provision promote a high quality, constructive and personalised resettlement service for all children?

- a) Does the YOT Management Board ensure that suitable and timely accommodation provision is available for all children leaving custody?
- b) Are staff confident and empowered to access suitable and timely accommodation provision for all children in custody?
- c) Does the YOT Management Board ensure appropriate access to other services is available for all children leaving custody?
- d) Do staff have the skills and support to advocate on behalf of children to enable access to appropriate resettlement services?
- e) Does the YOT Management Board ensure an approach to resettlement is in place that is evidence based?
- f) Are staff specifically trained to assess, identify, plan for and respond to each child's resettlement needs?

2.5.3 Is resettlement policy and provision regularly assessed and updated to ensure effectiveness and maintain alignment with the evidence base?

- a) Is resettlement policy and provision regularly evaluated and reviewed?
- b) Does evaluation include the use of data and is it informed by necessary input from other agencies involved in delivering elements of resettlement?
- c) Does evaluation and review identify and respond to changes in the resettlement evidence base?
- d) Does evaluation and review lead to the necessary adjustments to resettlement policy and provision?
- e) Are children and their parents/carers meaningfully involved in the evaluation and review of resettlement policy and provision?

3. Out of court disposals

3.1 Assessment

Assessment is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents/carers.

3.1.1 Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?

- a) Is there sufficient analysis of offending behaviour, including the child's acknowledgement of responsibility, attitudes towards and motivations for their offending?
- b) Does assessment consider the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, utilising information held by other agencies?
- c) Does assessment focus on the child's strengths and protective factors?
- d) Does assessment analyse the key structural barriers facing the child?
- e) Is sufficient attention given to understanding the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change?
- f) Does assessment give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s, and opportunities for restorative justice?
- g) Are the child and their parents/carers meaningfully involved in their assessment, and are their views taken into account?

3.1.2 Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?

- a) Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risks to the safety and wellbeing of the child?
- b) Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including other assessments, and involve other agencies where appropriate?

3.1.3 Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?

- a) Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risk of harm to others posed by the child, including identifying who is at risk and the nature of that risk?
- b) Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including any other assessments that have been completed, and other evidence of behaviour by the child?

3.2 Planning

Planning is well-informed, holistic and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents/carers.

3.2.1 Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?

- a) Does planning set out the services most likely to support desistance, paying sufficient attention to the available timescales and the need for sequencing?
- b) Does planning take sufficient account of the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child?
- c) Does planning take sufficient account of the child's strengths and protective factors, and seek to reinforce or develop these as necessary?
- d) Does planning take sufficient account of the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change, and seek to develop these as necessary?
- e) Does planning take sufficient account of opportunities for community integration, including access to mainstream services following completion of out of court disposal work?
- f) Does planning give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s?
- g) Are the child and their parents/carers meaningfully involved in planning, and are their views taken into account?

3.2.2 Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

- a) Does planning promote the safety and wellbeing of the child, sufficiently addressing risks?
- b) Does planning involve other agencies where appropriate, and is there sufficient alignment with other plans (e.g. child protection or care plans) concerning the child?
- c) Does planning include necessary contingency arrangements for those risks that have been identified?

3.2.3 Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

- a) Does planning promote the safety of other people, sufficiently addressing risk of harm factors?
- b) Does planning involve other agencies where appropriate?
- c) Does planning address any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims?
- d) Does planning include necessary contingency arrangements for those risks that have been identified?

3.3 Implementation and delivery

High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging and assisting the child.

3.3.1 Does service delivery support the child's desistance?

- a) Are the delivered services those most likely to support desistance, with sufficient attention given to sequencing and the available timescales?
- b) Does service delivery reflect the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, involving parents/carers or significant others?
- c) Is sufficient focus given to developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child and their parents/carers?
- d) Is sufficient attention given to encouraging and enabling the child's compliance with the work of the YOT?
- e) Does service delivery promote opportunities for community integration, including access to mainstream services?

3.3.2 Does service delivery effectively support the safety of the child?

- a) Does service delivery promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?
- b) Is the involvement of other agencies in keeping the child safe sufficiently well utilised and coordinated?

3.3.3 Does service delivery effectively support the safety of other people?

- a) Is sufficient attention given to the protection of actual and potential victims?
- b) Are the delivered services sufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm?

3.4 O OCD policy and provision*

There is a high quality, evidence-based out of court disposal service in place that promotes diversion and supports sustainable desistance.

3.4.1 Is there a policy in place for O OCD provision that promotes appropriate diversion and supports sustainable desistance?

- a) Is there a clear, joint protocol in place with the police setting out locally agreed O OCD policy and practice, including joint and defensible decision-making?
- b) Are the O OCD eligibility criteria clearly defined and appropriately broad to allow for the use of discretion while avoiding inappropriate net-widening?
- c) Does the O OCD eligibility criteria include an escalation process which avoids the inappropriate over-use of specific disposals?
- d) Does the policy treat community resolutions as a distinct and substantially different response to formal out-of-court disposals?
- e) Are arrangements set out to ensure children are actively and consistently diverted into the most appropriate care and support services?

3.4.2 Does O OCD provision promote diversion and support sustainable desistance?

- a) Is there an O OCD panel in place that includes representation from the YOT, police and social care as a minimum?
- b) Does the O OCD panel support timely and effective diversion?
- c) Is there a clear and effective escalation process in place when the panel is unable to achieve consensus?
- d) Are arrangements in place to ensure out-of-court disposals are consistently applied in a timely and robust manner?
- e) Are a wide range of O OCD interventions available that are strengths-based and future-focused?
- f) Is sufficient attention given to compliance with, and enforcement of, conditions where appropriate?

3.4.3 Is O OCD policy and provision regularly assessed and updated to ensure effectiveness and maintain alignment with the evidence base?

- a) Is O OCD policy and provision regularly evaluated and reviewed?
- b) Does evaluation include the use of data and is it informed by necessary input from other agencies involved in delivering the O OCD service?
- c) Does evaluation and review identify and respond to changes in the O OCD evidence base?
- d) Does evaluation and review lead to the necessary adjustments to O OCD policy and provision?
- e) Are children and their parents/carers meaningfully involved in the evaluation and review of O OCD policy and provision?

Annexe B: Underpinning evidence and learning

Organisational delivery

Governance and leadership

Organisational design models and frameworks, informed by reviews of the evidence and the latest learning and practical experience, consistently highlight the importance of governance and leadership to high levels of employee engagement and performance.

Leaders must set out a clear vision and strategy which is compelling and authentic. They should be empowering and visible, with regular two-way communication between leaders and employees at all levels. They must be aware of current and future challenges for the YOT, both short and long term, and be proactive in assessing risks and acting to prevent them, ensuring that appropriate mitigations are in place. Progress against the strategy must be reviewed proactively and regularly, with leaders continually striving to deliver and develop the strategy, adjusting mitigations where necessary.

The YOT operating model must allow for personalised delivery for children – the evidence is clear that one-size-fits-all processes and interventions will not work. Effective partnership arrangements are crucial – enabling all to know what is expected of each other and to maximise the benefits for children through the appropriate sharing of expertise, resources and knowledge.

Staff

The highest performing organisations ensure that its staff are engaged and have the necessary resources, competencies and support to do their jobs well and deliver a quality service.

Excessive pressure at work can have a significant adverse effect on employee health and wellbeing, and staff under unreasonable levels of stress work less effectively and make less effective decisions. An adequate staff complement is thus essential to a YOT's effectiveness and efficiency, with workloads needing to be assessed in a holistic way through an assessment of the demands of individual cases. Only if workloads are reasonable can individual members of staff achieve their best practice. Management must devise strategies to manage demand and to assign a reasonable and equitable workload to its staff, with people's skills and abilities matched to the demands of the specific roles.

Staff can only perform to the expected standards when appropriately supported and where the organisation is well-ordered and well-managed. Line managers need to invest time in regular supervisions and managing performance, having open and honest conversations with their staff. Employees should receive regular and constructive feedback, and be actively supported in striving for high performance at all times. In addition to reviewing individual performance, managers must assess whether staff are adequately resourced and supported in undertaking their work. Managers must also promote positive behaviours, with systems in place to enable and encourage them to deal with unacceptable behaviour.

Evaluations have identified the positive impact of staff training upon effective practice and outcomes. Tailored learning and development opportunities must be provided to enable employees to achieve their full potential, considering their differing tasks and responsibilities, and their stages of career development. In the highest performing organisations, employees are encouraged to develop and utilise their skills. They must know what support is available and how and when to access it, and be given opportunities to learn from identified good practices.

Strong organisations also recognise the achievements of their staff. There should be a culture of appreciation where people feel valued and are recognised for their efforts and performance. At the same time, the YOT must support staff in what can be extremely demanding and complex work. This should include encouragement, motivation, professional development and responsiveness to staff concerns.

Partnerships and services

To provide the range of services required, the YOT must have a clear understanding of their children, recognising their diversity and their different needs and expectations. The children's risks and needs must be the paramount consideration in deciding on the appropriateness of differing services, which, in combination, should provide a holistic package. As highlighted in the desistance literature, services should also build upon personal strengths and skills.

A comprehensive range of services requires a diverse range of professional skills and expertise, some of which are provided by partners and other providers and agencies. Notably, some cases involve safety and wellbeing concerns and/or risks to others. These concerns/risks are most effectively managed by agencies using their skills and knowledge in a complementary way.

Working with partners and other providers can also play an important part in addressing the complex needs of children, supporting desistance. The YOT partnership should encourage and support community agencies to undertake their responsibilities to all children. Where necessary, advice should be provided to help other agencies make sure that mainstream services are relevant and readily accessible.

Effective liaison with other providers and agencies requires clear and sound inter-agency arrangements, including, for example, referral processes. Information exchange and regular communication is particularly important – in relation to specific cases and in general, helping to influence policies and practice.

It is well established that the likelihood of achieving successful outcomes is impacted by quality of delivery, and that putting procedures in place to monitor quality will improve outcomes. Monitoring 'treatment integrity' is essential, ensuring that all services are delivered as intended, with remedial actions taken when necessary. Where gaps in service delivery are identified, YOT managers should be supported in their efforts to resolve them.

Information and facilities

The highest-performing organisations ensure that their people have the necessary tools to do their jobs well and deliver a quality service. YOT staff should have access to the necessary knowledge and information, facilitated through the YOT's ICT systems, with clear policies and procedures in place to support them in making the decisions required in their specific roles.

The importance of physical environment must also be recognised. Well-designed safe and decent physical environments can support a rehabilitative culture through encouraging positive and open interactions, and can have a positive effect on staff morale, reducing stress, and maintaining safety and security.

Strong organisations have in place: (i) efficient and robust quality assurance processes through which they can evidence the ongoing quality of the service; (ii) a meaningful mix of performance measures, enabling efficiency and effectiveness (including whether the service is having the intended impact) to be monitored and reviewed. Performance trends should be analysed to understand current and potential capabilities and capacities and identify where development is needed to achieve the strategic goals.

Evidence must be used to learn and adapt, with the relevant learning translated across the YOT. Transparency is important, with the effectiveness of service delivery being evaluated, and successes and failures being communicated openly. The child or young person's experience of the value of the service received should be an important part of the YOT's learning, with attention being given to general themes that indicate both strengths and ways in which the quality of the service could be improved.

Case management

Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of case supervision, with theoretical models and research findings consistently highlighting the importance of understanding the specific characteristics of the individual child. Assessment should be well-informed, paying particular attention to the wider familial and societal context, engaging parents/carers and significant others as appropriate. It should identify factors linked to desistance, safety and wellbeing, and risks to others, as well as strengths and protective factors. Assessment should generate a holistic picture of the child and the interactions between all of these factors. It is important to ensure that the information is not merely presented but a sufficiently comprehensive analysis of the different factors affecting the child's life is conducted.

The process of assessment – how it is undertaken – is as important as the outcome. A wide range of sources of information should be utilised, including previous records and assessments and, in appropriate cases, information gained from other agencies or people who know the child. This helps to build a rounded view of the child, capturing the full range of risks and needs.

Research has highlighted the importance of engagement, not passive involvement, with the child. Engaging the child in the process of assessment provides the opportunity for them to feel listened to, meaningfully involved and supported in working out what they want to achieve. Giving the child a voice and treating them with respect helps to build the one-to-one trusting personal relationships which can be a powerful vehicle for change.

Planning

There must be a strong and natural connection between assessment and planning, with the planning process specifying what is to be done about the needs and risks identified. The well-established principle of responsiveness requires that interventions and activities are delivered so that they are accessible to the individual child and optimise their ability to engage in change, encouraging full participation. One-size-fits-all processes and interventions will not work.

Planning should be set in the wider familial and social context of the child, involving parents/carers and significant others as appropriate. Key practitioners working across different agencies should also be involved where necessary, making appropriate links to other work which may be ongoing within these agencies. Research further demonstrates the importance of services and interventions being multi-modal, holistic and sequenced, with strengths and protective factors being reinforced and developed.

Objectives should be specific and measurable (so that progress can be monitored). They must also be achievable and realistic, setting out clear timescales. Where necessary, the plan should be broken down into a smaller number of 'steps' with realistic, short-term objectives. The child may have multiple complex problems that cannot sensibly be tackled all at once and they may disengage if the work plan is over-ambitious.

As with assessment, a plan that the child does not understand sufficiently or agree with is unlikely to be implemented. Practitioners should make efforts to engage the child as an active participant

and help them to set goals. Research evidence suggests that when the child feels engaged, and the plan is drawn up collaboratively, they will be more likely to have a direct investment in achieving its outcomes. The language in the plan should be clear and easily understood, as well as making sure it avoids phrases which can label the child in a way which confirms an offending identity.

Implementation and delivery

The child should experience an integrated approach, with relationships, interventions, and services combining holistically to address their individual risks and needs. Service delivery should reflect the wider familial and social context of the child, and sufficient emphasis should be placed on building upon strengths and enhancing protective factors. Responsivity needs to be maintained so that trusting relationships continue to build and delivery remains tailored to the individual. If the child receives consistent and integrated support, particularly at critical times, through an approach which is engaging, supportive and motivating, desistance is more likely.

The desistance literature promotes the importance of positive, non-judgemental and trusting relationships between practitioners and the child. Wherever possible, practitioners should reinforce desired behaviours and use natural opportunities to demonstrate and teach thinking and behavioural skills. Attention must be given to promoting compliance, including helping the child to recognise the positive changes and benefits from a non-offending lifestyle. Any instances of non-compliance should be dealt with in a proportionate, fair and transparent manner.

Reviewing

Reviewing progress is another integral part of service delivery, recognising that a child's risks, needs, protective factors and circumstances can change over time. The reviewing process should be used to: (i) analyse new information (including information from other practitioners and agencies); (ii) verify changes in a child or young person's behaviour; (iii) adapt or change actions that are completed or no longer appropriate; (iv) explore the full range of available resources. It is also a critical opportunity to recognise and record progress.

Changes in factors related to the child's safety and welfare and/or risk of harm to others should be emphasised. Practitioners also need to be alert to the possibility of changes in the child's life that could impact upon their engagement, considering the views of parents/carers and significant others as appropriate. Work plans must be adapted to any change in the assessment. Any obstacles to compliance and engagement should be identified and discussed, with strategies developed to enable the child to fully engage.

As with planning, efforts should be made to engage the child as an active participant in the reviewing process, helping them to recognise and celebrate their achievements, to review and refresh their goals towards desistance and to take further charge of their own lives.