Response to the consultation on standards and ratings for inspection of youth offending services

September 2020

Contents

1. Introduction

Earlier this year we published our consultation document seeking your views on our proposals for revisions to our framework for inspecting youth offending services. The framework has performed well overall since its introduction in March 2018, but we want to continue to improve the way in which 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 started our work to review our standards last September, 18 months after their introduction. We listened to feedback from workshops 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. This helped us to develop the proposals for change we set out in our published consultation document with a particular focus on domain three which covers out of court disposal (OOCD) work. We were also keen, following two disappointing thematic reviews of resettlement provision, to introduce regular oversight of the role of youth offending Teams (YOTs) in delivering these services.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed significantly the landscape within which youth justice services are delivered; our approach to inspection will, in turn, be different over the coming months as we gradually emerge from the pandemic and return to a sense of normality. We are keen to resume our routine inspection programme as soon as possible and want to ensure that when we do, it will be under the auspice of our revised inspection framework. Our current expectation is that we will recommence our routine inspections in April 2021, so we are publishing our response to the consultation and our revised framework now to enable YOTs sufficient time to familiarise themselves with the new requirements ahead of implementation.

The consultation was published online on 21 April with a deadline for responses of 07 June. The consultation set out the following ten questions:

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

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

3. 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?

4. Do the key questions and prompts suggested for the new resettlement standard as set out in Annexe A, 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.

5. Do you support the introduction of a specific new standard on OOCD policy and provision to run alongside individual case assessment data?

6. Do the key questions and prompts suggested for the new OOCD 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.

7. Does the proposed new standard better allow for the local context within which the OOCD scheme operates to be taken into account?

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

9. 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?

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

This document summarises the responses received and clarifies the decisions subsequently made by the Inspectorate.

2. Summary of HM Inspectorate of Probation decisions

	Question	Post-consultation decision
1	Do you support the introduction of a specific new standard on resettlement policy and provision to run alongside individual case assessment data?	More than four in every five consultation respondents supported this proposal so we will introduce a new resettlement standard into the inspection framework. This modular standard will sit outside of our 12 core standards and the rating will not contribute to a YOT's overall composite score. However, we will introduce a hurdle whereby any YOT which is rated as 'Inadequate' on the resettlement standard is unable to achieve an 'Outstanding' composite rating.
		We will recognise and reflect upon the engagement and role of partner agencies in the delivery of resettlement services, setting out the reasons for any shortfalls, in our inspection reports. We will pay attention to other contextual or systemic issues and target and tailor recommendations to help providers make the necessary improvements. But our judgements and ratings must always reflect the quality of delivery, irrespective of the underlying reasons and rationale.
2	Do you agree that a resettlement standard must be underpinned by effective case-based evidence?	There was almost universal agreement with this proposal so we will ensure the resettlement standard is underpinned by effective case-based evidence.
3	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?	While there was overall support for this proposal, several respondents were of the view that YOTs should be rated against a resettlement standard regardless of whether or not they have any relevant cases.
		We have considered this feedback and will introduce an approach where we will apply the standard to all YOTs who have had one or more relevant cases in the 12 months preceding inspection.
4	Do the key questions and prompts suggested for the new resettlement standard cover all of the relevant factors that drive good quality delivery in this area? Have we sufficiently aligned this standard with the evidence base?	We have reviewed the suggestions respondents made for areas that could be strengthened, amended or added and have included specific reference in prompt 2.5.1(b) to pro-social identity development and added prompt 2.5.1(d) on information sharing.
		Some suggestions (for example, those relating to specific cohorts such as Looked After Children) are already, or will be, addressed through the supporting inspection guidance materials rather than through the framework itself.

	Question	Post-consultation decision
5	Do you support the introduction of a specific new standard on OOCD policy and provision to run alongside individual case assessment data?	There was almost universal support for this proposal so we will introduce a new OOCD standard into domain three of the inspection framework. We will remove the current 'Joint working' standard.
6	Do the key questions and prompts suggested for the new OOCD standard cover all of the relevant factors that drive good quality delivery in this area? Have we sufficiently aligned this standard with the evidence base?	We have reviewed the suggestions respondents made for areas that could be strengthened, amended or added. The new standard will now require an OOCD decision-making panel to be in place <u>or</u> any other suitable means of joint decision-making/decision-making process. We will also now include reference to the promotion of positive child outcomes. Some suggestions (for example, to include specific reference to, consideration of, and work with, victims) are already, or will be, addressed through the supporting inspection guidance materials rather than through the framework itself.
7	Does the proposed new standard better allow for the local context within which the OOCD scheme operates to be taken into account?	There was almost universal agreement that the new standard achieves this so, as stated above, we will introduce the new OOCD standard into domain three of the inspection framework.
8	Should we consider making the starting point for our standard level inspection ratings for OOCD work the scores relating to desistance? Would such an approach be relevant and applicable in the current policy and practice landscape?	The consultation feedback highlighted the vastly different views that exist across the sector about the strength and depth of the OOCD evidence base, the clarity of the OOCD policy position, and the definition of what constitutes OOCD work. Opinions were similarly divided on this specific proposal and there was no clear support either way. We will not, therefore, change our approach to rating OOCD standards in the way we proposed in the consultation period at this time. Instead, we will stop inspecting any sub-samples in relation to domain three questions and will consider the entire case sample against each question. We will do some further work outlining the implications of this revised approach. We will also keep both the framework and the underlying evidence base under continual review, overseen by our Head of Standards, working alongside our Head of Research. We will review the evidence base objectively, prioritising the most robust, relevant and timely findings and covering all theories and methodologies. We will consult and work with external academics where required.
9	Is there a risk that taking such an approach would	Two-thirds of respondents who answered this question said yes. As stated above, we will not be

	Question	**Post-consultation decision**
	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?	changing our approach to rating the OOCD standards at this time.
10	How can we ensure the ratio of court disposals versus out of court disposals in our case sample best reflects actual caseloads?	We will review our approach to defining the ratio split of domain two and three cases in the case sample with the intention of making this more reflective of current practice. In doing so, we will need to ensure the approach we adopt allows us sufficient time to properly determine and allocate sufficient HM Inspector resource to each inspection.

3. Summary of responses

We received 35 responses to the consultation. Some were from organisations, and others from individuals in their personal or professional capacity. As set out below, we received views from youth offending teams (YOTs) and professional bodies involved in the delivery of youth justice services, local government, fellow inspectorates, academia and others interested in our proposals:

- 18 YOTs
- Youth Justice Board
- Association of YOT Managers
- HM Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire & Rescue Services
- Estyn
- Standing Committee for Youth Justice
- London Youth Justice Strategic Leader's Network
- Centre for Justice Innovation
- Prison Reform Trust
- South and West Yorkshire Resettlement Consortium
- The Children's Commissioner for Wales
- Magistrates' Association
- One local authority
- Three academics or academic research groups
- Two private individuals.
- The vast majority of respondents supported the proposals set out in the consultation.

The main comments received are summarised below, taking each consultation question in turn.

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

The vast majority of respondents were in support of this proposal and welcomed the introduction of resettlement into the standards framework as part of the routine inspection programme. There was acknowledgement that resettlement outcomes for children to-date have not been good enough and hope that regular inspection of YOT practice in this regard will help ensure progress is made on improving the effectiveness of resettlement services. Some examples of comments received include that it will *"enhance the focus of inspection of this important area of practice"*, *"enable a focus on how well YOT Management Boards and staff are equipped to ensure resettlement policies are carried out effectively"* and *"hold YOTs more clearly to account for ensuring their policies have impact"*.

Of the respondents who did not support the proposal, the key concern expressed was that YOTs are not solely responsible for the successful delivery of effective resettlement and many of the most important elements of effective resettlement (such as the provision of appropriate accommodation) are not within a YOT's direct control. There was also concern that by inspecting resettlement provision through the lens of a YOT only, a false impression

may be given about the degree to which wider resettlement services/providers are subject to inspection. They suggested, therefore, that resettlement services must instead be inspected under the auspice of joint inspections, on a regional basis or as part of the existing domain one standards.

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

There was clear agreement that an approach that includes the inspection of case-based evidence is the best way to assess whether policies and processes are effective and being utilised appropriately.

3. 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?

More than two-thirds of respondents who answered this question agreed with the proposed arrangements, with one commenting to the effect that *"setting the minimum number of cases at five would seem to be a good balance between making sure the assessment of actual practice is both useful and fair while also trying to maximise the number of YOTs that will be in scope for this assessment". Others questioned whether a sample of five cases is enough upon which to base assessments and reach accurate conclusions.*

Several respondents felt that YOTs should be subject to inspection against a resettlement standard regardless of whether or not they have any relevant cases. For example: *"the Inspectorate should consider carefully the implications for ensuring YOT readiness for dealing with the complex needs of these children if it restricts its inspections only to situations where there are substantial numbers of cases."*

4. Do the key questions and prompts suggested for the new resettlement standard cover all of the relevant factors that drive good quality delivery in this area? Have we sufficiently aligned this standard with the evidence base?

Some suggestions were made for areas that could be included, amended or strengthened within the resettlement standard, key questions and prompts. Such suggestions were as follows:

- cross-reference the standard with the National Standards for Youth Justice
- include specific reference to child-first approaches
- include specific reference to the seven resettlement pathways including ETE and healthcare
- include transition as this is also a type of resettlement
- include a question about appropriate information sharing between agencies
- achieve greater alignment with the YJB's How to make resettlement constructive document (2018) and specific reference to the 5Cs
- include prompts on maintaining family links and working with the secure estate, with specific reference to the use of Release on Temporary Licence (RoTL)
- make reference to pro-social identity development.

5. Do you support the introduction of a specific new standard on OOCD policy and provision to run alongside individual case assessment data?

There was almost universal support for the introduction of a new standard on OOCD policy and provision, but a small number of respondents called for a fundamental rethink of the inspection framework in relation to OOCD work. Issues raised included the lack of a clear definition of what constitutes OOCD work and what is meant by 'diversion', with a couple of respondents saying that the inspection framework should specifically reference 'point of arrest' diversion and distinguish this from 'formal' OOCD work, and a lack of clarity around the role of YOTs in relation to OOCD work. There were also different views about the strength and depth of the evidence base in relation to OOCD practice and the vast majority of respondents felt the OOCD policy position requires clarification. One respondent suggested that domain three should incorporate the work done by YOTs under the 'prevention' banner.

6. Do the key questions and prompts suggested for the new OOCD standard cover all of the relevant factors that drive good quality delivery in this area? Have we sufficiently aligned this standard with the evidence base?

The vast majority of respondents agreed that the relevant factors that drive good quality delivery in this area had been covered in the proposed key questions and prompts. A few suggestions were made for areas that could be included, amended or strengthened, with the key proposals being that the requirement for all YOTs to have an OOCD decision making panel should be made less prescriptive and reference should be made to the promotion of positive child outcomes.

7. Does the proposed new standard better allow for the local context within which the OOCD scheme operates to be taken into account?

The vast majority of respondents agreed that the new standard better allows for local context to be taken into account, with comments made including that it will *"allow the inspection framework to be applied in a more structured context to individual local circumstances" and "provide a useful national framework within which local practice can be developed".*

One respondent was keen to ensure that YOTs who are piloting new approaches and building the evidence base around OOCD practice are not penalised while two respondents felt it had not gone far enough in covering local approaches to diversion and prevention work.

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

Opinion was divided on this issue. While several respondents were supportive of the proposal many said that desistance, safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm to others are equally important factors and must be treated as such.

9. 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?

Two thirds of respondents who specifically answered this question said that taking desistance as a starting point may have a detrimental impact on risk-related work. Others

felt that the issues of desistance, safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm to others are intrinsically linked and work in each regard is interrelated; this means that an effective desistance-based approach would strengthen these areas rather than negatively impacting on them. A number of respondents referred to the lack of a single risk-assessment tool for OOCD work as problematic.

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

A majority of respondents suggest that the ratio should directly reflect the local caseload, with several saying that a clear of definition of what constitutes OOCD work is needed to assist in this. One respondent said the ratio used needs to reflect the fact that the work required for court cases is often more extensive than that required for out of court cases, while another felt the critical issue is to make sure every case sample is big enough to ensure judgements are truly reflective of practice.

4. Changes to standards and ratings frameworks

Following a review of the proposals and consultation responses, HM Chief Inspector of Probation and the Senior Management Team have made the following decisions.

Resettlement

Within the consultation document we proposed the introduction of a new standard covering resettlement policy and provision, supported by case-based evidence drawn from the domain two case sample and applied only to YOTs who have had five or more relevant cases within the last 12 months.

There was overwhelming support from respondents for the introduction of a new standard and the need to underpin this with effective case-based evidence, so we will take both proposals forward in our revised inspection framework. The key concern expressed by the small number of respondents not in support was that YOTs are not solely responsible for the successful delivery of effective resettlement and many of the most important elements of effective resettlement (such as the provision of appropriate accommodation) are not within a YOT's direct control. They suggested, therefore, that resettlement services should either be inspected under the auspice of joint inspections, on a regional basis or within the existing domain one standards.

We have considered these points carefully and of course recognise that effective resettlement requires a partnership approach. However, that is true of almost every aspect of a YOT's work and we believe that it is both possible and valid for us to inspect the specific role of YOTs in the resettlement process. In doing so, we will acknowledge clearly the challenges and barriers that YOTs face and take account of the local context in which they work, but the poor outcomes we witnessed children receiving through our two thematic inspections and the significant lack of progress made in response to our recommendations have convinced us that this is an area of work that needs to be subject to regular, focused inspection if sustained improvements are to be made.

In our consultation document we proposed including the standard in domain two of the framework, but we have decided to make it a stand-alone modular standard that sits outside of the core standards framework. In this way we will be able to add and remove standards to allow us to conduct a more focused inspection of a specific area of YOT work should we consider there to be a need to do so. The standard will not, therefore, form part of a YOT's overall composite score; where the standard is applied, YOTs will be given a specific rating against it. We will also introduce a rule whereby any YOT that receives an 'Inadequate' rating for the resettlement standard will not receive an overall 'Outstanding' rating regardless of how they are rated against the core standards.

While the consultation feedback demonstrated overall support for our proposal for only YOTs with five or more relevant cases in the 12 months preceding inspection to fall within scope of the standard, a number of respondents made strong arguments for all YOTs to be inspected against the standard regardless of whether or not they have any relevant cases. We have listened to this view and are keen to ensure as many YOTs as possibly fall within scope for the standard, but we are equally conscious of the almost universally expressed view that the standard must be underpinned by case-based evidence. We intend to pilot an approach whereby the standard is applied to YOTs with one or more relevant cases in the 12 months preceding inspection, thus meaning we will be inspecting 100 per cent of relevant cases in all instances where the standard is applied. We intend to undertake this

pilot over the next few months and will make a final decision on the exact methodology we will use to apply the standard ahead of implementation next spring.

Where YOTs do not fall within the scope of the standard, we will still assess their readiness to deliver effective resettlement services. In these instances, local resettlement policies and processes will be reviewed and, where appropriate, commented on within the inspection report as part of domain one of the inspection framework. We will not specifically pull these out of the overall findings and will not rate these YOTs against the resettlement standard.

Some suggestions were made for changes to the prompts within the standards and we have updated them to include reference to the Education, Training and Employment (ETE) and healthcare resettlement pathways. We have also added an additional prompt on effective information sharing between partners.

When developing the standard, we fully considered both the national standards for youth justice and the YJB's *How to make resettlement constructive* document. We purposely drafted the standard to take account of these and promote a child-first approach. We stopped short of full alignment though, as we want to ensure that YOTs who want to take a different approach do not feel restricted from doing so by the inspection framework. We have, however, revised one of the prompts to include specific reference to pro-social identity development.

Transitions to adult justice services, the maintenance of family ties, and work with the secure estate are important elements of an effective resettlement service. Inspectors will consider these issues when making their judgements and they will be referenced specifically in our domain three CARaG and other guidance materials.

Out of court Disposals

As proposed within the consultation document, we will replace the current domain three 'Partnership Working' standard with a new standard covering OOCD policy and provision. Support for this proposal was almost universal amongst respondents although a small number called for a fundamental review of our approach to inspection in this regard.

The consultation feedback clearly highlighted a wide variation in views about the strength and depth of the OOCD evidence base, the clarity of the OOCD policy position and the definition of what constitutes OOCD work. It seems clear to us that, while YOTs should always be able to shape practice according to local circumstance and needs, a national framework is needed to provide clear definitions of what constitutes both prevention and diversion work and what the role of YOTs should be in regard to each. We are aware that the YJB has also recognised the need for this and have recently announced two new projects for this very purpose. We look forward to participating in that work as it develops.

For the same reason we have also decided that now is not the right time to change the way we rate OOCD work by making desistance the starting point for OOCD standard level ratings. Instead, we are persuaded by respondents' arguments that all elements of the framework should continue to be given equal weighting. In making this decision we have been conscious of the view expressed by respondents that the change proposed in the consultation document would indeed lead to a decreased focus on work to address safety and wellbeing needs and risk of harm to others. However, we have also listened carefully to the alternative view that the framework may be too risk focused and have decided to make a change to our domain three methodology to better enable us to ensure all elements of the framework are equally weighted.

Domain three contains three case-based standards against which YOTs are rated - assessment, planning and implementation and delivery. Under each standard there are three key questions covering desistance, safety and wellbeing and risk of harm. Our inspectors

consider the sufficiency of individual cases against each key question and a rating is determined by the percentage of cases that are deemed sufficient. The lowest level rating at key question level then determines the rating given at standard level. At present our inspectors look at the whole case sample when considering the key questions on desistance, but they only look at a 'sub-sample' of cases (those assessed as being of medium or high risk) when considering the key questions on safety and wellbeing and risk of harm.

In recognition of the generally high number of low risk domain three cases and to better ensure our assessments and ratings are equally weighted across the full range of domain three key questions, we will remove the use of sub-samples and introduce an approach whereby our inspectors look at the entire case sample against all of the domain three key questions.

Once again, some suggestions were made for changes to the prompts within the standards and we have updated them to include reference to the promotion of positive child outcomes and clarify our position in relation to OOCD decision making panels.

Case Sample Ratio

We are keen to ensure the ratio split of domain two and three cases in the overall case sample provided to us by YOTs best reflects current caseloads. We will therefore review our current ratio split with the clear intention of achieving this goal. It is essential in doing so that we adopt an approach that also enables us to clearly determine the HMI resource requirements for each inspection early enough to allow us to allocate those resources as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Other Issues

A few respondents made suggestions in relation to areas of the framework that were not covered in our consultation questions. In response to these we have added three new prompts to domain one - (1.1.1e) and (1.3.1f) to better test how well the views of children and their families/carers are gathered and the impact they have on the local vision and strategy, and (1.4.1e) to test whether or not processes are regularly analysed and reviewed to ensure effectiveness and specifically consider and address any issues of disproportionality.

Annexe A: Revised standards for youth justice services

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) Does the YOT Management Board incorporate the views of children into the YOT's local vision and strategy?

f) Are there effective governance arrangements and clear delivery plans that translate the vision and strategy into effective case supervision.

g) 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?

f) Does the analysis incorporate the views of children and families about the services they receive?

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?

e) Are YOT processes effectively and regularly reviewed, including considering issues of disproportionately?

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 the suitable and timely provision of accommodation, ETE, healthcare and other resettlement pathway services?

b) Does the resettlement policy address structural barriers to effective resettlement enabling pro-social identity development?

c) Does the resettlement policy advocate an approach to personalised support that is constructive, strengths-based and future-focused?

d) Does the resettlement policy set out the arrangements for access to, and exchange of, the right information to and from partners, providers and other key stakeholders?

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, including ETE and healthcare, 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 OOCD 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 OOCD 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 OOCD policy and practice, including joint and defensible decision-making?

b) Are the OOCD eligibility criteria clearly defined and appropriately broad to allow for the use of discretion while avoiding inappropriate net-widening?

c) Does the OOCD 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 OOCD provision promote diversion and support sustainable desistance?

a) Is there an OOCD panel or other suitable means of joint decision making in place that includes representation from the YOT, police and social care as a minimum?

b) Does the OOCD panel/decision making process support timely and effective diversion?

c) Is there a clear and effective escalation process in place when the OOCD panel/decision making process 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 OOCD interventions available that are strengths-based, future-focused and promote positive child outcomes?

f) Is sufficient attention given to compliance with, and enforcement of, conditions where appropriate?

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

a) Is OOCD 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 OOCD service?

c) Does evaluation and review identify and respond to changes in the OOCD evidence base?

d) Does evaluation and review lead to the necessary adjustments to OOCD policy and provision?

e) Are children and their parents/carers meaningfully involved in the evaluation and review of OOCD policy and provision?

Contacts

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