

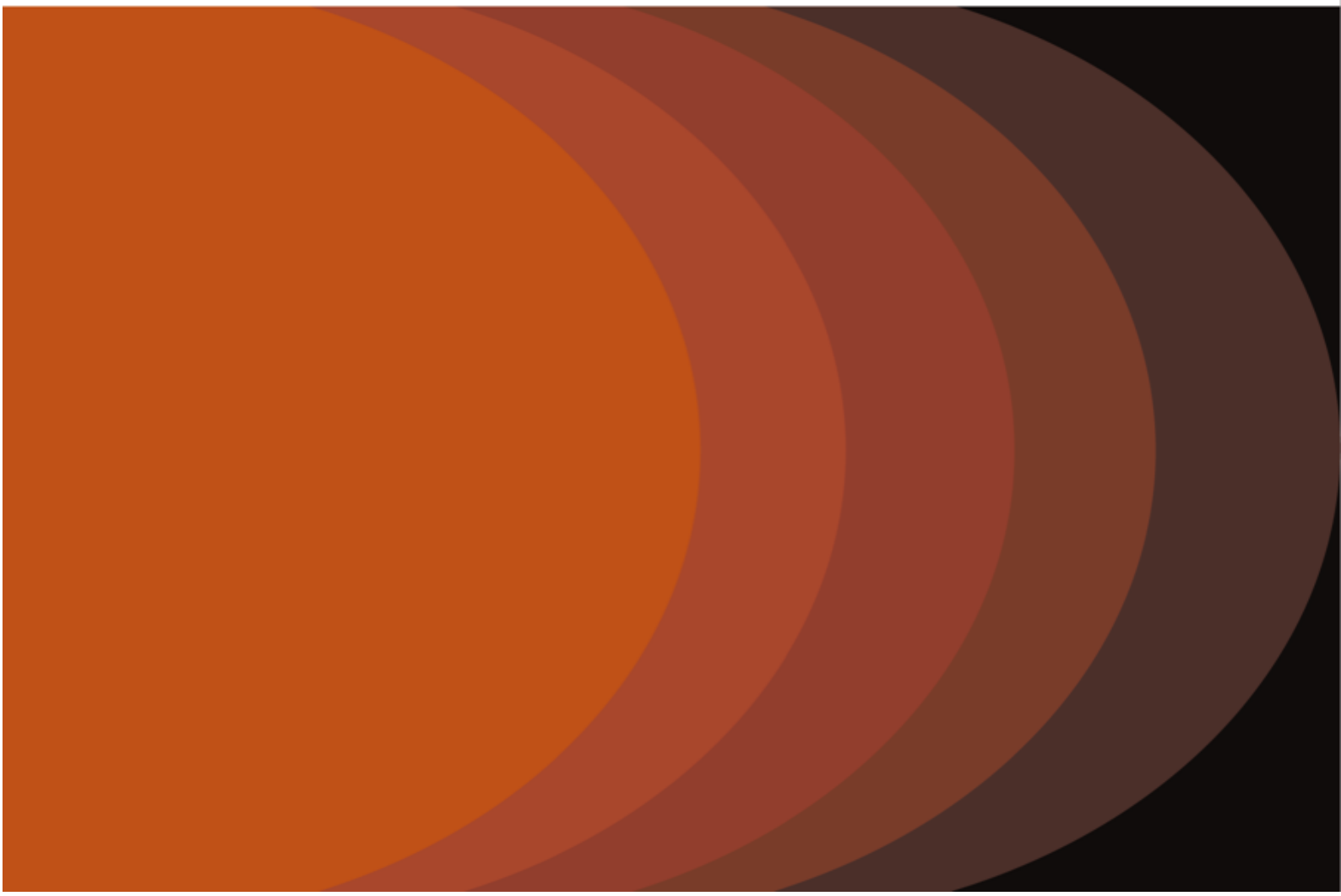


Her Majesty's
Inspectorate of
Probation

An inspection of youth offending services in

Peterborough

HM Inspectorate of Probation, November 2020



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The role of HM Inspectorate of Probation

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation is the independent inspector of youth offending and probation services in England and Wales. We report on the effectiveness of probation and youth offending service work with adults and children.

We inspect these services and publish inspection reports. We highlight good and poor practice and use our data and information to encourage high-quality services. We are independent of government and speak independently.

Please note that throughout the report the names in the practice examples have been changed to protect the individual's identity.

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Introduction

This inspection is part of our four-year programme of youth offending service (YOS) inspections. We have inspected and rated Peterborough YOS across three broad areas of its work, referred to as 'domains': the arrangements for organisational delivery of the service, the quality of work done with children sentenced by the courts, and the quality of out-of-court disposal work. We inspect against 12 'standards', shared between the domains. Overall, Peterborough YOS was rated as 'Good'.

Our standards are based on established models and frameworks, which are grounded in evidence, learning and experience. They are designed to drive improvements in the quality of work with children who have offended. Published scoring rules generate the overall YOS rating. The findings and subsequent ratings in those domains are described in this report. Our fieldwork, conducted through off-site analysis of case files and phone and video conferencing, took place between 17 and 20 August 2020.

A summary of the Peterborough YOS inspection findings for each domain is as follows:

Domain one – organisational delivery

The Peterborough YOS is well-governed and has the support of a highly committed, resourceful and resilient management team. The commitment to partnership working and collaboration is illustrated by the sharing of management staff in key strategic positions across Cambridgeshire County Council and the Peterborough Unitary Authority.

The YOS Board has a clear role in facilitating partnership arrangements which support the quality of services provided.

There is a skilled and experienced group of operational staff, who are committed to delivering high-quality services. This is complemented by good access to services provided by partner agencies. The high-quality management oversight of the work is an outstanding feature of the YOS.

Domain two – court disposals

The management of cases in the Peterborough YOS was outstanding in terms of assessment, planning and the implementation and delivery of the sentence of the court. We found some inconsistency in the quality of case reviews, although they were generally completed to a good standard.

YOS case managers demonstrated great skill in establishing useful working relationships with children and their parents or carers and were able to harness the involvement of other services speedily and effectively.

Domain three – out-of-court disposals

Work with children to deliver out-of-court disposals was sufficient in all cases, as was partnership working and decision-making leading to such a disposal. We found that the nature and intensity of work matched the children's needs and risks.

We found some inconsistent practice in the assessment of cases to support decision-making and in delivering youth cautions and other community resolutions, and too few of these cases had a good written plan.














From an already strong base we believe, if our recommendations are fully implemented, that the YOS can increase still further the quality of youth offending services in Peterborough and achieve positive outcomes for the children it supervises.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marc Baker', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Marc Baker

Director of Operations

Ratings

Peterborough Youth Offending Service	Score	29/36
Overall rating	Good	
1. Organisational delivery		
1.1	Governance and leadership	Outstanding 
1.2	Staff	Outstanding 
1.3	Partnerships and services	Good 
1.4	Information and facilities	Good 
2. Court disposals		
2.1	Assessment	Outstanding 
2.2	Planning	Outstanding 
2.3	Implementation and delivery	Outstanding 
2.4	Reviewing	Good 
3. Out-of-court disposals		
3.1	Assessment	Good 
3.2	Planning	Inadequate 
3.3	Implementation and delivery	Outstanding 
3.4	Joint working	Outstanding 

Recommendations

As a result of our inspection findings we have made four recommendations that we believe, if implemented, will have a positive impact on the quality of youth offending services in Peterborough. This will improve the lives of the children in contact with youth offending services, and better protect the public.

The Peterborough Youth Offending Service should:

1. develop and improve working arrangements that aim to reduce the number of children who are not in education, employment or training
2. develop methods for ensuring that the views of children and their parents or carers are considered in Board and management decision-making
3. stimulate community involvement in the work of the YOS by greater engagement with the local voluntary sector
4. increase management oversight of the assessment and planning work done to support out-of-court-disposal work.

Background

Youth offending services (YOS) supervise 10–18 year-olds who have been sentenced by a court, or who have come to the attention of the police because of their offending behaviour but have not been charged – instead, they were dealt with out of court. HM Inspectorate of Probation inspects both these aspects of youth offending services. We use the terms child or children to denote their special legal status and to highlight the obligations of relevant agencies such as social care, education and health to meet their safety and wellbeing needs.

YOSs are statutory partnerships, and they are multi-disciplinary, to deal with the needs of the whole child. They are required to have staff from local authority social care and education services, the police, the National Probation Service and local health services.¹ Most YOSs are based within local authorities; however, this can vary.

YOS work is governed and shaped by a range of legislation and guidance specific to the youth justice sector (such as the National Standards for Youth Justice) or else applicable across the criminal justice sector (for example Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements guidance). The Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB) provides some funding to YOSs. It also monitors their performance and issues guidance to them about how things are to be done.

Peterborough city is one of the United Kingdom's fastest-growing urban centres (one of 23 areas that has seen population growth of more than a quarter since 2001).²

The Peterborough YOS has a well-established place within an extensive set of partnership arrangements. In terms of governance, the YOS is accountable to a joint Youth Justice Management Board, which oversees the work of the two youth offending teams in Cambridgeshire County Council and the Peterborough unitary authority. The YOS works within a Targeted Youth Support Service (TYSS), in which the Youth and Family Team and Community and Interventions Services are also situated and co-located.

The YOS budget has reduced by over ten per cent in the last two years, and the partnership approach has permitted some economies of scale. The cost of management across several local government departments and two local authorities has been shared. This is an essential component of a cost-reduction strategy that seeks to maintain the level of frontline staff in the context of reduced funding. Operational staffing levels have remained constant over time.

The YOS's caseload is increasing, both in the numbers commencing community sentences and in the number of custodial sentences. This reflects a wider increase, in Peterborough, in the identification of criminal exploitation of children and associated serious youth violence.

After a period of staff shortages, the YOS now has a full complement of people in operational posts.

¹ The *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* set out the arrangements for local YOSs and partnership working.

² Office for National Statistics. (2020). *Population projections for local authorities*.

Contextual facts

Population information

202,259	Total population Peterborough (2019) ³
20,211	Total youth population (10–17 years) in Peterborough (2019)
4,541	Total black and minority ethnic youth population Peterborough (2011) ⁴

Demographics of children cautioned or sentenced⁵

Age	10–14	15–17
Peterborough YOS	21%	79%
National average	23%	77%

Race/ethnicity	White	Black and minority ethnic	Unknown
Peterborough YOS	75%	19%	6%
National average	70%	26%	4%

Gender	Male	Female
Peterborough YOS	86%	14%
National average	85%	15%

Additional caseload data⁶

41	Total current caseload: community sentences
6	Total current caseload in custody
2	Total current caseload on licence
18	Total current caseload: youth caution
18	Total current caseload: youth conditional caution
26	Total current caseload: community resolution or another out-of-court disposal

³ Office for National Statistics. (2020). *UK population estimates, mid-2019*.

⁴ Office for National Statistics. (2012). *Census 2011*.

⁵ Youth Justice Board. (2020). *Youth justice annual statistics: 2018 to 2019*.

⁶ Information supplied by YOS, reflecting caseload on 31 March 2020.

1. Organisational delivery



Strengths:

- An ethos of partnership working and collaboration is at the heart of the Peterborough YOS, from the Board through to service delivery.
- There is a powerful sense of purpose throughout the organisation.
- The YOS is supported by an impressive group of senior and middle managers, whose enthusiasm percolates through the organisation.
- The location of the YOS with other teams in the TYSS structure improves opportunities for service delivery and supports resilience.
- The trauma-informed approach to understanding children's behaviour is translated into clear working arrangements, supported by specialist psychologists.
- There is good access to useful information across the range of the YOS's work, and there are working systems to support improvement in most aspects of service delivery.

Areas for improvement:

- The YOS and its partners need to focus more on supporting 16 and 17-year-olds into education, employment or training
- There is scope to improve representation of the child's and their parents' or carers' views at management and Board levels.
- Greater engagement with the voluntary sector would provide scope for enhanced community contribution and involvement in the YOS's support of children.

Organisations that are well led and well managed are more likely to achieve their aims. We inspect against four standards.

1.1. Governance and leadership



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

Outstanding

In making a judgement about governance and leadership, we take into account the answers to the following three questions:

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

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough YOS Management Board has set a clear strategy to deliver 'effective multi-agency working' to support the delivery of 'key

youth justice outcomes'. The Board monitors performance against national indicators (reoffending, first-time entrants, disproportionality, use of custody), and locally agreed indicators (education, training and employment, accommodation, and remands). Performance measurement is augmented by enhanced monitoring of reoffending, through case audits of the quality of work being delivered, and through individual case studies.

The Board is actively involved in overseeing the YOS's work, and members show a strong commitment to the partnership ethos of services for children and their families. This is exemplified by their thorough investigation of issues of disproportionality using a 'task and finish' group, which reported directly to the Board.

The Chair of the Board is relatively new to the role but has a sound grasp of the issues facing the YOS and encourages a positive sense of striving for continuous improvement in the services being delivered.

Do the partnership arrangements actively support effective service delivery?

The Management Board has appropriate membership from across the partnership, with senior representation from Cambridgeshire Constabulary, the clinical commissioning group, education, the magistrates' court, the National Probation Service, the Police and Crime Commissioner's office, social care and the voluntary sector. Each member keenly supports the YOS's work and is of sufficient seniority to support operational work through their own organisations.

There is clear alignment of the YOS with well-developed collaborative arrangements between the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough local authorities. There is a range of shared responsibilities, including a shared Chief Executive and shared senior management roles in people and communities, public health and children's services. There is a shared domestic abuse service and a joint adult and children safeguarding board. Included in these collaborative arrangements is a shared youth offending head of service.

The YOS is part of a wider organisational structure, the Targeted Youth Support Service (TYSS), and is co-located with colleagues from the Youth and Family Team and Community and Interventions Services. This allows for ready access to a wide range of services, yet with a retained, specialist, youth offending staff group. The group's expertise in the field of youth justice is widely acknowledged by local partnership workers.

Does the leadership of the YOS support effective service delivery?

The level of attainment identified through the inspection process indicates strongly that the leaders of the organisation support effective service delivery. Outcome measures in relation to first-time entrants, reoffending rates and use of custody are positive when compared with similar-sized YOSs. The management team is resilient, knowledgeable, enthusiastic and fosters a collaborative, partnership approach that is in keeping with the strategic intentions of the Management Board.

There is a clear sense of mission around the delivery of the youth offending service. Leaders attach considerable importance to understanding behaviour in the light of a well-established, trauma-informed approach to working with children.

1.2. Staff



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

Outstanding

Key staffing data⁷

Total staff headcount (full-time equivalent, FTE)	20.5
Average caseload per case manager (FTE)	10

In making a judgement about staffing, we take into account the answers to the following four questions:

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

Currently, Peterborough YOS is fully staffed to support high-quality work and the workload is, in our view, manageable.

During a period of staff shortages (September 2019 to March 2020), there was evidence of some delay in completing core documentation such as AssetPlus assessments. This does not appear to have had an adverse effect on the YOS's performance in terms of key outcome measures for first-time entrants, reoffending and the use of custody. There is evidence that staff are prioritising face-to-face work within their workload, leading to some delay in completion of written work.

Staff say that partnership arrangements within TYSS are a critical element in being sufficiently resilient to work as effectively as possible given the disruption to the service caused by Covid-19.

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

The YOS's staff and partnership colleagues impress as a highly motivated and capable group of workers. One of the partnership members of staff referred to the YOS case managers as being *"the glue that holds the support packages [for children] together"*.

There is a powerful sense of purpose within the team and an impressive balance is maintained between the sometimes-conflicting demands of meeting children's needs and managing the risk of harm to others that can result from negative behaviours.

The dedicated psychologist resource, part of the TYSS psychology team, has an input into 45 per cent of the cases being worked with, and specialist psychologists are involved in case formulation (planning) and risk management meetings.

All appropriate secondments, particularly police and probation staff, are in place and lead to sound working practices in out-of-court disposals and transition to adult services.

⁷ Data supplied by YOS and reflecting the caseload at the time of the inspection announcement.

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

All staff involved in managing cases, including seconded staff, receive high-quality monthly supervision from their manager in the YOS. This complements oversight of their work through safety reviews, risk management planning and the range of formal case review meetings.

Describing the monthly case audits undertaken by managers, one member of staff informed the inspector that "... *there is a good focus on strengths; they are very constructive and always lead to face-to-face feedback*".

Are arrangements for learning and development comprehensive and responsive?

There is a clear workforce development plan, with prioritised and resourced training in assessment and planning, the Good Lives Model (desistance-based interventions), child criminal exploitation, trauma-informed approaches and the positive parenting programme. Access to workforce development support is identified in annual personal development reviews, training analysis, quality assurance workshops and through training delivered by the Safeguarding Board.

1.3. Partnerships and services



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

Good

In making a judgement about partnerships and services, we take into account the answers to the following three questions:

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

There is live, tracked data concerning the profile of children in the Peterborough YOS caseload. The data is sufficiently segmented to enable the YOS to know the children's age, gender and ethnicity. Staff have a clear understanding of reoffending data, offending types, sentence/disposal types, the method of case management being used (on a scaled approach), the numbers at risk of child criminal exploitation and analysis of educational involvement.

Regarding issues of disproportionality, eastern European children are clearly over-represented within the YOS caseload, comprising 31 per cent of cases. The YOS addresses this at an operational level by early identification of individual differences and consequent needs, such as language, looked-after child status or learning needs. It is evident, both from our inspection sample and from discussions with staff, that the YOS takes a highly sensitive and responsive approach to addressing the diverse needs of children.

The YOS has recently recruited an eastern European member of staff to support the work with this group of children.

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

A comprehensive range of high-quality services is available to support children's needs. Services include a Home Office-funded SAFE team (funded in conjunction with the Police and Crime Commissioner to work with children deemed to be at a moderate or significant risk of exploitation) to work on child criminal exploitation, a dedicated substance misuse intervention, and direct access to a specialist psychological service (as part of public health, this affords good access to community child and adolescent mental health services). There is also dedicated restorative justice and victims work and access to specialist work for children missing education (CME) and older children not in education, employment or training (NEET).

The services available provide a good range of practical activities and specialist support to address the needs of the children

13 per cent of the children in the YOS caseload had an education, health and care plan (EHCP). It is of note that the YOS's performance has improved with regard to the CME figure for children of statutory school age; however, the proportion of children aged 16 or over who are designated as NEET remains stubbornly high, at 62.5 per cent. This is an area where financial constraints have had a direct effect on the services being provided. A referral system to children's workers and NEET workers in the Community and Interventions Team has replaced an education worker based in the YOS.

Looked-after children in the YOS caseload benefit from the TYSS structure that means there is ready access to support from the Youth and Family Team or co-working at 'early help' and 'complex children in need' levels. The aim of this work is to prevent children's circumstances needing to escalate to 'in care' status.

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

There are clearly delineated arrangements demonstrating the YOS's alignment with a system of 'Peterborough Partnership Governance'. This links the YOS to the Health and Wellbeing Board, a county-wide Community Safety Board and the Executive Safeguarding Board.

The reduced financial circumstances within which the YOS operates have had an adverse effect on the role of the voluntary sector in YOS services. Previous arrangements involving mentors and parent counsellors have diminished, and the remaining volunteers work exclusively on the referral panels overseeing referral orders. The YOS has yet to re-engage fully with the voluntary sector in the locality.

Involvement of children and their parents and carers

Our survey of children and their parents or carers for this inspection found that they hold a strongly positive view of the YOS's work.

In direct work with children and their parents or carers, YOS staff have a well-developed approach to eliciting, and considering, their views on all aspects of supervision and intervention. There is also evidence that children are engaged in the development of facilities through consultation focus groups.

There are parent and carer forums within the wider TYSS arrangements. Through this work, the YOS identified high proportions of children with attention deficit

hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in the caseload. It is now developing neurologically-based ways of working with these children to prevent them from committing crimes and entering the justice system.

Children and their parents or carers are not directly involved in the oversight of the YOS at management and Board levels.

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.

Good

As this inspection was undertaken remotely, we were unable to view the YOS's premises. In making a judgement about information and facilities, we take into account the answers to the following four questions:

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

The YOS has a full range of relevant and up-to-date policies, each with a designated owner and subject to sign-off and review arrangements. These are deployed effectively through management systems.

Staff are clear how to access services from partners and providers. Information gathered from the cases we inspected indicates that staff are very confident in their ability to access services that support desistance, the safety and wellbeing of the child and the management of risk of harm to others.

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

The YOS delivers work in local authority premises subject to standardised health and safety arrangements. There was evidence that children helped to design the layout of some of the facilities used, and much of the service is delivered in children's homes.

We were advised that, during the restrictions applied as a consequence of Covid-19, options for contact away from the home have increased, as a greater number of locations became available for direct contact work with children.

Do the information and communication technology (ICT) systems enable staff to deliver a quality service, meeting the needs of all children?

The Peterborough YOS is supported well by ICT infrastructure. A typical example of the level of analysis available is in the operation of the SAFE team for children at risk of criminal exploitation. Using a Safeguarding Board Risk Assessment Matrix process, managed by the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), the scheme can identify the numbers at risk, the level of risk and the numbers actively involved with the YOS and differentiate between sexual and other criminal exploitation. Children at moderate to significant risk of exploitation are referred to the SAFE team.

Are analysis, evidence and learning used effectively to drive improvement?

There is a good fit between the use of data, quality assurance work and the delivery of the service.

The YOS learns from serious incidents following critical learning reviews and Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements serious case reviews. It also focuses on extracting and applying learning from HM Inspectorate of Probation reports.

Issues identified

are incorporated into routine quality audits undertaken by managers.

The YOS, in an internal review of performance, has identified that it needs to improve its performance in respect of the numbers of NEET cases. This is an example of the systems not having the requisite impact in all areas of practice.



2. Court disposals

We took a detailed look at seven community sentences and one custodial sentence managed by the YOS. We also conducted seven interviews with the relevant case managers or a manager with current knowledge of the case. We examined the quality of assessment; planning; implementation and delivery of services; and reviewing.

Strengths:

- Working relationships with the child and their parent or carer are positive and supportive of the work being delivered.
- Assessments are based on a wide range of sources, and we saw good analysis of information to support children's desistance, improve their safety and wellbeing and understand the risk of harm they posed to others.
- There is consistent and good involvement of the child and their parent or carer at all stages of the work.
- A trauma-informed approach to working with children is clearly at the heart of case management.
- The work is underpinned by effective partnership working.

Areas for improvement:

- Concerns about risk of harm were not always incorporated into case reviews.
- Contingency planning for when risk to the child's safety and wellbeing or risk of harm to others increases is not always given sufficient attention.

Work with children sentenced by the courts will be more effective if it is well targeted, planned and implemented. In our inspections, we look at a sample of cases. In each of those cases, we inspect against four standards.

2.1. Assessment



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

Outstanding

Our rating⁸ for assessment is based on the following key questions:

Of the 8 cases inspected	Number 'Yes'
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	7

⁸ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band. See Annexe 1 for a more detailed explanation.

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	7
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	7

The quality of assessment in this YOS was rated as 'Outstanding'. Almost all the cases inspected were of a sufficient standard regarding supporting the child's desistance, keeping the child safe and attending to any apparent risks to individual or potential future victims.

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

Of the 8 cases inspected:	Number 'Yes'
Is there sufficient analysis of offending behaviour, including the child's attitudes towards and motivations for their offending?	7
Does assessment consider the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, utilising information held by other agencies?	6
Does assessment focus on the child's strengths and protective factors?	7
Where applicable, does assessment analyse the key structural barriers facing the child?	5
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?	7
Where applicable, does assessment give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s, and opportunities for restorative justice?	5
Are the child and their parents/carers meaningfully involved in their assessment, and are their views taken into account?	6

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?

Of the 8 cases inspected:	Number 'Yes'
Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risks to the safety and wellbeing of the child?	6
Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including other assessments, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	7
Where applicable, does assessment analyse controls and interventions to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	7

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?

Of the 8 cases inspected:	Number 'Yes'
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?	7
Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including past behaviour and convictions, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	7
Does assessment analyse controls and interventions to manage and minimise the risk of harm presented by the child?	7

The assessment work inspected was typically based on an appropriately broad set of information sources, including children's social care, police, and mental health services, where relevant to the needs of the child. There was convincing evidence of the child and their parent or carer being closely involved and engaged in the assessment process.

The trauma-informed approach of the YOS workers is reflected in the level of information-gathering and analysis of troubled life experiences we saw in case assessment. The needs of the child were identified clearly and there was a good balance of focus on desistance, safety and wellbeing and risk of harm to others.

2.2. Planning



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

Outstanding

Our rating⁹ for planning is based on the following key questions:

Of the 8 cases inspected	Number of relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does planning focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	8	8
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe? ¹⁰	8	8

⁹ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band. See Annexe 1 for a more detailed explanation.

¹⁰ This question is only relevant in cases where there are factors related to keeping the child safe.

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe? ¹¹	6	6
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The planning in all cases inspected was sufficient in respect of the focus on desistance and keeping the child safe. All of the cases where risk of harm to others was a factor had sufficient plans to keep people safe.

Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?

Of the 8 cases inspected:	Number 'Yes'
Does planning set out the services most likely to support desistance, paying sufficient attention to the available timescales and the need for sequencing?	8
Does planning take sufficient account of the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child?	7
Does planning take sufficient account of the child's strengths and protective factors, and seek to reinforce or develop these as necessary?	8
Does planning take sufficient account of the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change, and seek to develop these as necessary?	8
Where applicable, does planning give attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s?	6
Are the child and their parents/carers meaningfully involved in planning, and are their views taken into account?	7

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

Of the 8 cases with factors related to keeping the child safe:	Number 'Yes'
Does planning promote the safety and wellbeing of the child, sufficiently addressing risks?	8
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?	8
Does planning set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	8

¹¹ This question is only relevant in cases where there are factors related to keeping other people safe.

Does planning set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to manage those risks that have been identified?	5
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Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

Of the 6 cases with factors related to keeping other people safe:	Number 'Yes'
Does planning promote the safety of other people, sufficiently addressing risk of harm factors?	6
Does planning involve other agencies where appropriate?	6
Does planning address any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims?	5
Does planning set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote the safety of other people?	6
Does planning set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to manage those risks that have been identified?	3

In all the cases inspected there was sufficient planning to support desistance work and in almost all of the cases there was a good level of involvement of the child and their parent or carer in the planning process. All cases were assessed as sufficient in respect of keeping the child safe and keeping other people safe. Some improvement could be achieved by developing contingency planning to manage increases in risks to the wellbeing of the child and the risk of harm presented to others.

2.3. Implementation and delivery



High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging and assisting the child.	Outstanding
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Our rating¹² for implementation and delivery is based on the following key questions:

Of the 8 cases inspected	Number of relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the child's desistance?	7	7

¹² The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band. See Annexe 1 for a more detailed explanation.

Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of the child? ¹³	7	7
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people? ¹⁴	5	5

In all cases the implementation and delivery of services sufficiently supported desistance, the safety of the child, and the risk of harm to others.

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

Of the 8 cases inspected:	Number 'Yes'
Are the delivered services those most likely to support desistance, with sufficient attention given to sequencing and the available timescales?	7
Does service delivery reflect the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, involving parents/carers or significant others?	7
Does service delivery build upon the child's strengths and enhance protective factors?	7
Is sufficient focus given to developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child and their parents/carers?	7
Does service delivery promote opportunities for community integration including access to services post-supervision?	7
Is sufficient attention given to encouraging and enabling the child's compliance with the work of the YOS?	7
Are enforcement actions taken when appropriate?	3 ¹⁵

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

Of the 7 cases with factors related to keeping the child safe:	Number 'Yes'
Does service delivery promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	7
Where applicable, is the involvement of other organisations in keeping the child safe sufficiently well-coordinated?	7

¹³ This question is only relevant in cases where there are factors related to keeping the child safe.

¹⁴ This question is only relevant in cases where there are factors related to keeping other people safe.

¹⁵ This figure refers to the three cases where appropriate enforcement action was taken.

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

Of the 5 cases with factors related to keeping other people safe:	Number 'Yes'
Are the delivered services sufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	5
Where applicable, is sufficient attention given to the protection of actual and potential victims?	5
Where applicable, is the involvement of other agencies in managing the risk of harm sufficiently well-coordinated?	5

This is an impressive set of inspection findings, with the case managers meeting all the requirements of HM Inspectorate of Probation's standards in all cases. Interventions are started promptly and there is good evidence that school-age children engage with education. There was consistent evidence of positive partnership working, underpinned with effective communication between agencies by the case worker. The supportive relationship-building between the case manager and child shines through in the delivery of work.

2.4. Reviewing



Reviewing of progress is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents/carers.	Good
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Our rating¹⁶ for reviewing is based on the following key questions:

Of the 8 cases inspected ¹⁷	Number of relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	8	8
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	8	7
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	7	5

¹⁶ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band. See Annexe 1 for a more detailed explanation.

¹⁷ We only expect to see evidence of reviewing in cases where there have been changes in factors related to desistance, keeping the child safe and/or keeping other people safe.

In some of the cases inspected there was evidence that emerging concerns about risk of harm had not been incorporated into the review of the case and, consequently, the work plan had not been adjusted in the light of these factors.

Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the child’s desistance?

Of the 8 cases where there were changes in factors related to desistance:	Number ‘Yes’
Does reviewing identify and respond to changes in factors linked to desistance?	8
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on building upon the child’s strengths and enhancing protective factors?	8
Does reviewing consider motivation and engagement levels and any relevant barriers?	8
Are the child and their parents/carers meaningfully involved in reviewing their progress and engagement, and are their views taken into account?	8

Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

Of the 8 cases where there were changes in factors related to keeping the child safe:	Number ‘Yes’
Does reviewing identify and respond to changes in factors related to safety and wellbeing?	7
Where applicable, is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in promoting the safety and wellbeing of the child?	8
Where applicable, does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	7

Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

Of the 7 cases where there were changes in factors related to keeping other people safe:	Number ‘Yes’
Does reviewing identify and respond to changes in factors related to risk of harm?	5
Where applicable, is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in managing the risk of harm?	6
Are the child and their parents/carers meaningfully involved in reviewing their risk of harm, and are their views taken into account?	6

Where applicable, does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work to manage and minimise the risk of harm?

4

We rated the work on reviewing cases as 'Good'. In all the cases we inspected, there was sufficient review of desistance factors and of issues concerning the wellbeing of the child.

In some of the cases we identified new factors that escalated the risk of harm to others, and these were not fully incorporated into the arrangements for working with the child. This impacted on the rating of the reviewing standard.

3. Out-of-court disposals



We inspected five cases managed by the YOS that had received an out-of-court disposal. These consisted of one youth conditional caution, two youth cautions, and two community resolutions. We interviewed the case managers in three cases and a line manager in two further cases.

We examined the quality of assessment; planning; and implementation and delivery of services. Each of these elements was inspected in respect of work done to address desistance. For the five cases where there were factors related to harm, we also inspected work done to keep other people safe. In the five cases where safety and wellbeing concerns were identified, we looked at work done to safeguard the child. We also looked at the quality of joint working with local police.

Strengths:

- The responsibilities of the key partners in this area of work are carefully outlined in a joint working agreement between the police and the YOS.
- Assessment work was consistently of a good standard in relation to supporting desistance and considering the risk of harm to others.
- The delivery of out-of-court disposal work was of a high standard.
- The joint work associated with out-of-court disposals was of a high standard, reflecting a developed, coherent and well-implemented approach.
- The involvement of the child and their parent or carer in the process was good in all cases.

Areas for improvement:

- Assessment of risk to the safety and wellbeing of the child was not consistently of a sufficient standard.
- Planning work was not good enough in too many cases.

Work with children receiving out-of-court disposals will be more effective if it is well targeted, planned and implemented. In our inspections, we look at a sample of cases. In each of those cases, we inspect against four standards.

3.1. Assessment



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

Good

Our rating¹⁸ for assessment is based on the following key questions:

Of the 5 cases inspected:	Number 'Yes'
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	4
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	3
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	4

We rated the assessment of cases as 'Good'. In almost all the cases the assessment of desistance factors and keeping other people safe was sufficient. A few cases did not have enough work done regarding keeping the child safe.

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

Of the 5 cases inspected:	Number 'Yes'
Is there sufficient analysis of offending behaviour, including the child's acknowledgement of responsibility, attitudes towards and motivations for their offending?	4
Does assessment consider the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, utilising information held by other agencies?	3
Does assessment focus on the child's strengths and protective factors?	4
Where applicable, does assessment analyse the key structural barriers facing the child?	4
Is sufficient attention given to understanding the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change?	4
Where applicable, does assessment give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s, and opportunities for restorative justice?	4
Are the child and their parents/carers meaningfully involved in their assessment, and are their views taken into account?	4

¹⁸ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band. See Annexe 1 for a more detailed explanation.

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?

Of the 5 cases inspected:	Number 'Yes'
Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risks to the safety and wellbeing of the child?	3
Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including other assessments, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	2

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?

Of the 5 cases inspected:	Number 'Yes'
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?	4
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?	4

The cases inspected were mostly of a sufficient quality. There was particularly strong involvement of the child and their parents/carers in nearly all cases. In some cases, insufficient attention was given to the safety and wellbeing of the child. We also found a few cases where assessment of the needs of the child had been delayed.

3.2. Planning



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

Inadequate

Our rating¹⁹ for planning is based on the following key questions:

Of the 5 cases inspected	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?	5	2
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe? ²⁰	5	3
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe? ²¹	5	2

¹⁹ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band. See Annexe 1 for a more detailed explanation.

²⁰ This question is only relevant in cases where there are factors related to keeping the child safe.

²¹ This question is only relevant in cases where there are factors related to keeping other people safe.

We rated the planning work of out-of-court disposals as 'Inadequate'. Planning in too few cases was sufficient in relation to desistance work and the risk of harm to others the child presented.

Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?

Of the 5 cases inspected:	Number 'Yes'
Does planning set out the services most likely to support desistance, paying sufficient attention to the available timescales and the need for sequencing?	2
Does planning take sufficient account of the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child?	2
Does planning take sufficient account of the child's strengths and protective factors, and seek to reinforce or develop these as necessary?	4
Does planning take sufficient account of the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change, and seek to develop these as necessary?	3
Does planning take sufficient account of opportunities for community integration, including access to mainstream services following completion of out-of-court disposal work?	3
Where applicable, does planning give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s?	3
Are the child and their parents/carers meaningfully involved in planning, and are their views taken into account?	4
Is planning proportionate to the disposal type, with interventions capable of being completed within appropriate timescales?	5

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

Of the 5 cases with factors relevant to keeping the child safe:	Number 'Yes'
Does planning promote the safety and wellbeing of the child, sufficiently addressing risks?	3
Where applicable, 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?	4
Does planning include necessary contingency arrangements for those risks that have been identified?	2

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

Of the 5 cases with factors relevant to keeping other people safe:	Number 'Yes'
Does planning promote the safety of other people, sufficiently addressing risk of harm factors?	2
Where applicable, does planning involve other agencies where appropriate?	4
Where applicable, does planning address any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims?	2
Does planning include necessary contingency arrangements for those risks that have been identified?	2

Our rating for the planning of cases is based on the identification of some important shortfalls in the standard of work. In too many cases the child's motivation to undertake the work being proposed had not been sufficiently considered. Some key aspects of the child's circumstances, for example substance misuse, lifestyle choices, education planning and emotional health, had been overlooked in the planning process. There was too little consideration of the steps that would need to be taken if the child's circumstances changed in a way that was likely to put their wellbeing at risk or increased the risk of harm they posed to others.

As described below, the work delivered in an out-of-court disposal was sufficient in all aspects, but the written planning documentation did not fully support this. The planning for a case should underpin delivery. Where it does not, there are clear risks to the continuity of work should, for example, the case worker become ill or need to be absent from work for other reasons.

3.3. Implementation and delivery



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

Outstanding

Our rating²² for implementation and delivery is based on the following key questions:

Of the 5 cases inspected	Number of relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does service delivery effectively support the child's desistance?	5	4

²² The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band. See Annexe 1 for a more detailed explanation.

Does service delivery effectively support the safety of the child? ²³	5	4
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of other people? ²⁴	5	5

We rated the delivery of out-of-court disposal work as 'Outstanding'. In almost all cases inspected the work was sufficient to support the child's desistance. In almost all the cases there was sufficient work undertaken to support the safety of the child and other people.

Does service delivery effectively support the child's desistance?

Of the 5 cases inspected:	Number 'Yes'
Are the delivered services those most likely to support desistance, with sufficient attention given to sequencing and the available timescales?	4
Does service delivery reflect the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, involving parents/carers or significant others?	4
Is sufficient focus given to developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child and their parents/carers?	4
Is sufficient attention given to encouraging and enabling the child's compliance with the work of the YOS?	4
Does service delivery promote opportunities for community integration, including access to mainstream services?	3

Does service delivery effectively support the safety of the child?

Of the 5 cases with factors related to the safety of the child:	Number 'Yes'
Does service delivery promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	4
Where applicable, is the involvement of other agencies in keeping the child safe sufficiently well utilised and coordinated?	3

²³ This question is only relevant in cases where there are factors related to keeping the child safe.

²⁴ This question is only relevant in cases where there are factors related to keeping other people safe.

Does service delivery effectively support the safety of other people?

Of the 5 cases with factors related to the safety of other people:	Number 'Yes'
Where applicable, is sufficient attention given to the protection of actual and potential victims?	4
Are the delivered services sufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	4

The delivery of out-of-court disposal work is well-structured, involves an impressive range of partner agencies and provides well-documented evidence of comprehensive packages of intervention. These arrangements match the highly complex needs of the children who are being worked with.

3.4. Joint working



Joint working with the police supports the delivery of high-quality, personalised and coordinated services.	Outstanding
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Our rating²⁵ for joint working is based on the following key questions:

Of the 5 cases inspected	Number of relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Are the YOS's recommendations sufficiently well-informed, analytical and personalised to the child, supporting joint decision making?	5	5
Does the YOS work effectively with the police in implementing the out-of-court disposal? ²⁶	1	1

We rated joint working as 'Outstanding', as all the cases inspected met HM Inspectorate of Probation's standards.

²⁵ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band. See Annexe 1 for a more detailed explanation.

²⁶ This question is only relevant in youth conditional caution cases.

Are the YOS's recommendations sufficiently well-informed, analytical and personalised to the child, supporting joint decision-making?

Of the 5 cases inspected:	Number 'Yes'
Where applicable, are the recommendations by the YOS for out-of-court disposal outcomes, conditions and interventions appropriate and proportionate?	5
Do the recommendations consider the degree of the child's understanding of the offence and their acknowledgement of responsibility?	5
Where applicable, is a positive contribution made by the YOS to determining the disposal?	5
Is sufficient attention given to the child's understanding, and their parents/carers' understanding, of the implications of receiving an out-of-court disposal?	3
Is the information provided to inform decision making timely to meet the needs of the case, legislation and guidance?	4
Where applicable, is the rationale for joint disposal decisions appropriate and clearly recorded?	5

Does the YOS work effectively with the police in implementing the out-of-court disposal?

Of the 1 case with a youth conditional caution:	Number 'Yes'
Where applicable, does the YOS inform the police of progress and outcomes in a sufficient and timely manner?	1
Is sufficient attention given to compliance with and enforcement of the conditions?	1

Joint working is of a sufficient standard in all the cases we inspected. It is underpinned by a clear decision-making process, good recording systems and a positive contribution by the YOS team in each case. The implications of receiving an out-of-court disposal were not made clear to children and their parents/carers in all cases.

Annexe 1: Methodology

HM Inspectorate of Probation standards

The standards against which we inspect youth offending services are based on established models and frameworks, which are grounded in evidence, learning and experience. These standards are designed to drive improvements in the quality of work with children who have offended.²⁷

The inspection methodology is summarised below, linked to the three domains in our standards framework. We focused on obtaining evidence against the standards, key questions and prompts in our inspection framework. It is important that all youth offending services, regardless of size, are inspected to highlight good practice and to identify areas for improvement. Of course, some YOSs have very small caseloads and so the percentages and figures quoted in these reports need to be read with care. However, all domain two samples, even for the smallest YOSs, meet an 80 per cent confidence level and in some of the smaller YOSs inspectors may be assessing all of that service's cases.

Domain one: organisational delivery

The youth offending service submitted evidence in advance and the youth offending service management Board Chair delivered a presentation covering the following areas:

- How do organisational delivery arrangements in this area make sure that the work of your YOS is as effective as it can be, and that the life chances of children who have offended are improved?
- What are your priorities for further improving these arrangements?

During the main fieldwork phase, we conducted nine interviews with case managers, asking them about their experiences of training, development, management supervision and leadership. We held various meetings, which allowed us to triangulate evidence and information. In total, we conducted nine meetings, which included meetings with managers, partner organisations, and staff. The evidence collected under this domain was judged against our published ratings characteristics.²⁸

Domain two: court disposals

We completed case assessments over a one-week period, examining case files and interviewing case managers. Eight of the cases selected were those of children who had received court disposals five to twelve months earlier, enabling us to examine work in relation to assessing, planning, implementing and reviewing. Where necessary, interviews with other people significantly involved in the case also took place.

We examined eight court disposals. The sample size was set to achieve a confidence level of 80 per cent (with a margin of error of 5), and where possible we ensured

²⁷ HM Inspectorate's standards are available here:
<https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmiprobation/about-our-work/our-standards-and-ratings/>

that the ratios in relation to gender, sentence or disposal type, risk of serious harm, and risk to safety and wellbeing classifications matched those in the eligible population.

Domain three: out-of-court disposals

We completed case assessments over a one-week period, examining case files and interviewing case managers. Five cases selected were those of children who had received out-of-court disposals five to twelve months earlier. This enabled us to examine work in relation to assessing, planning, implementing and joint working. Where necessary, interviews with other people significantly involved in the case also took place.

We examined five out-of-court disposals. The sample size was set so that the combined case sample size comprises 60 per cent domain two cases and 40 per cent domain three. Where possible, we ensured the ratios in relation to gender, sentence or disposal type, risk of serious harm, and risk to safety and wellbeing classifications matched those in the eligible population.

In some areas of this report, data may have been split into smaller sub-samples – for example, male/female cases. Where this is the case, the margin of error for the sub-sample findings may be higher than five.

Ratings explained

Domain one ratings are proposed by the lead inspector for each standard. They will be a single judgement, using all the relevant sources of evidence. More detailed information can be found in the probation inspection domain one rules and guidance on the website.

In this inspection, we conducted a detailed examination of a sample of eight court disposals and five out-of-court disposals. In each of those cases, we inspect against four standards: assessment, planning, and implementation/delivery. For court disposals, we look at reviewing; and in out-of-court disposals, we look at joint working with the police. For each standard, inspectors answer a number of key questions about different aspects of quality, including whether there was sufficient analysis of the factors related to offending; the extent to which children were involved in assessment and planning; and whether enough was done to assess and manage the safety and wellbeing of the child, and any risk of harm posed to others.

For each standard, the rating is aligned to the lowest banding at the key question level, recognising that each key question is an integral part of the standard.

Lowest banding (key question level)	Rating (standard)
Minority: <50%	Inadequate
Too few: 50-64%	Requires improvement
Reasonable majority: 65-79%	Good
Large majority: 80%+	Outstanding ☆

We use case sub-samples for some of the key questions in domains two and three. For example, when judging whether planning focused sufficiently on keeping other people safe, we exclude those cases where the inspector deemed the risk of serious harm to be low. This approach is justified on the basis that we focus on those cases where we expect meaningful work to take place.

An element of professional discretion may be applied to the standards ratings in domains two and three. The ratings panel considers whether professional discretion should be exercised where the lowest percentage at the key question level is close to the rating boundary, for example between 'Requires improvement' and 'Good' (specifically, within five percentage points of the boundary; or where a differing judgement in one case would result in a change in rating; or where the rating is based upon a sample or sub-sample of five cases or fewer). The panel considers the sizes of any sub-samples used and the percentages for the other key questions within that standard, such as whether they fall within different bandings and the level of divergence, to make this decision.

Overall provider rating

Straightforward scoring rules are used to generate the overall provider rating. Each of the ten standards will be scored on a 0-3 scale as listed in the following table.

Score	Rating (standard)
0	Inadequate
1	Requires improvement
2	Good
3	Outstanding ☆

Adding the scores for each standard together produces the overall rating on a 0-30 scale as listed in the following table.

Score	Rating (overall)
0-6	Inadequate
7-18	Requires improvement
19-30	Good
31-36	Outstanding ☆

We do not include any weightings in the scoring rules. The rationale for this is that all parts of the standards framework are strongly linked to effective service delivery and positive outcomes, and we have restricted ourselves to those that are most essential. Our view is that providers need to focus across all the standards, and we do not want to distort behaviours in any undesirable ways. Furthermore, the underpinning evidence supports including all standards/key questions in the rating, rather than weighting individual elements.