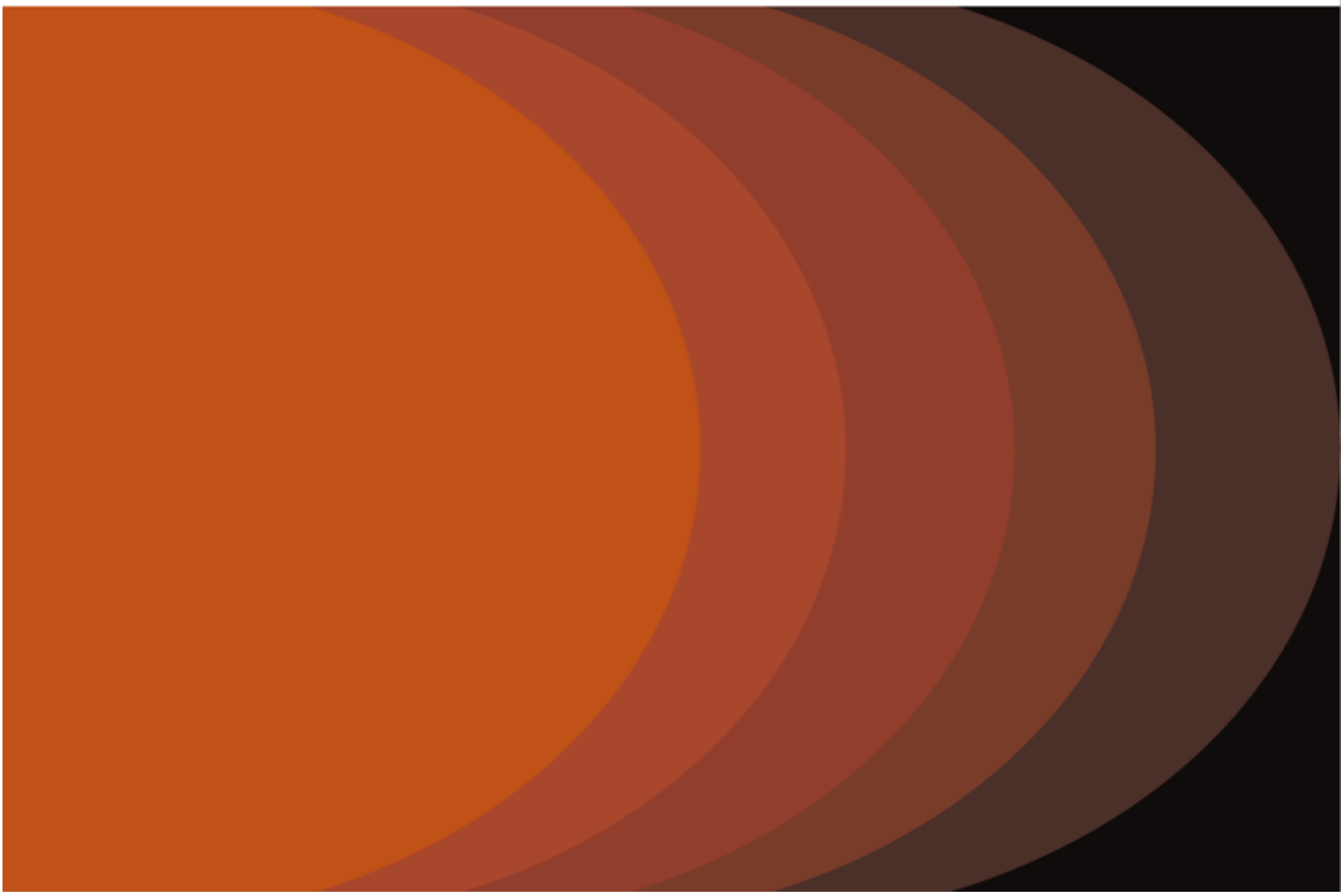




Her Majesty's
Inspectorate of
Probation

An inspection of youth offending services in
Rotherham

HM Inspectorate of Probation, December 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.

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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 Rotherham YOT 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, Rotherham YOT was rated as 'Requires improvement'.

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 YOT 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 14 and 17 September 2020.

The youth offending team's arrangements for staffing and information and facilities are good; however, its governance and leadership, and partnership activities require improvement.

The Chair of the YOT Management Board is a strong advocate for children and he is involved in developing service delivery. There are good transition arrangements between the YOT and the local probation services.

Board members do not appreciate the specific needs of children known to the YOT and so do not advocate effectively on their behalf in their own agencies. This is particularly so regarding the poor health provision for YOT children. The partnership lacks focus on the issues of the YOT having a high number of Looked After Children, and post-16-year-old children not in education, training or employment.














Staff are motivated and engage well with children. In post-court cases the quality of desistance work is outstanding, as are planning and the delivery of services to promote a child's safety and wellbeing. The quality of assessing risk of harm to others, though, is inadequate, and planning, delivering interventions and reviewing require improvement. The needs and wishes of victims are not consistently considered.

For out-of-court disposal work, desistance is the strongest area of practice, with planning being outstanding. Planning and the delivery of services for a child's safety and wellbeing, and for keeping people safe are poor. Case managers do not consistently analyse information and fail to recognise the trauma a child has experienced. Management oversight is poor both for post-court orders and for out-of-court disposals.



Marc Baker
Director of Operations

Ratings

Rotherham Youth Offending Team		Score	11/36
Overall rating		Requires improvement	
1. Organisational delivery			
1.1	Governance and leadership	Requires improvement	
1.2	Staff	Good	
1.3	Partnerships and services	Requires improvement	
1.4	Information and facilities	Good	
2. Court disposals			
2.1	Assessment	Inadequate	
2.2	Planning	Requires improvement	
2.3	Implementation and delivery	Requires improvement	
2.4	Reviewing	Requires improvement	
3. Out-of-court disposals			
3.1	Assessment	Requires improvement	
3.2	Planning	Inadequate	
3.3	Implementation and delivery	Inadequate	
3.4	Joint working	Requires improvement	

Recommendations

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

The Chair of the YOT Management Board should:

1. make sure that Board members understand the specific needs of children known to the YOT and advocate on their behalf in their own agencies.

The YOT Management Board should:

2. ensure the partnership understands the reasons for the significant number of Looked After Children known to the YOT, and reviews the policies and practices of all agencies to minimise the possibility of children entering the criminal justice system unnecessarily
3. undertake a comprehensive health needs analysis of YOT children to better understand the health provision being delivered and what needs to be developed
4. review the quality and accessibility of education, training and employment provision for post-16-year-old children known to the service.

The YOT Service Manager should:

5. review the quality of risk of harm work and improve the effectiveness of management oversight in all cases.

Background

Youth offending teams (YOTs) 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.

YOTs 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 YOTs are based within local authorities; however, this can vary.

YOT 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 YOTs. It also monitors their performance and issues guidance to them about how things are to be done.

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) is part of South Yorkshire. It has a population of 264,671 of which 9.3 per cent are between the ages of 10 and 17 years, which is higher than the England and Wales average of 9.1 per cent. Over the last 10 years, there has been a significant increase in the Roma population from Slovakia and the Czech Republic, with concentrated communities settling in neighbourhoods in the central area of the town.

In January 2016, Rotherham introduced its three-year Early Help Strategy, which has led to integrated locality teams and the creation of a borough-wide intervention hub. The youth offending team is located within the Early Help, Family Engagement and Business Support Service. As part of rebuilding the early help offer, the YOT went through a restructure during 2019, which introduced changes in staffing and information and communications technology (ICT), and further developed the prevention and out-of-court disposal work.

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

Contextual facts

Population information

264,671	Total population Rotherham (2018) ²
24,634	Total youth population (10–17 years) in Rotherham (2018) ²

Demographics of children cautioned or sentenced³

Age	10–14	15–17
Rotherham YOT	21%	79%
National average	23%	77%

Race/ethnicity	White	Black and minority ethnic	Unknown
Rotherham YOT	83%⁴	18%	0%
National average	70%	26%	4%

Gender	Male	Female
Rotherham YOT	81%	19%
National average	85%	15%

Additional caseload data⁵

19	Total caseload: community sentences
4	Total caseload: in custody
2	Total caseload: on licence
174	Total caseload: out-of-court disposals (including youth caution, youth conditional caution and community resolutions)

² Office for National Statistics. (2019). *UK Population estimates, mid-2018*.

³ Youth Justice Board. (2020). *Youth Justice annual statistics: 2018 to 2019*.

⁴ In some circumstances, figures may not total or may exceed 100. This is due to the rounding up/down of figures.

⁵ Information supplied by YOT, reflecting caseload submitted to the YJB for the last four quarters.

1. Organisational delivery



Strengths:

- The Chair of the YOT Management Board is very committed to his role and is a strong advocate for children.
- There is priority given to involving children, listening to what they say and responding to their feedback in order to influence future service delivery.
- The Management Board and the partnership are aware that there is a disproportionate number of black, Asian and minority ethnic children known to the YOT, and have projects in place to try to address the issue.
- YOT staff do all they can to encourage good engagement and compliance from the child and their family, and staff and managers are child-centred and know their children well.
- The YOT has good transition arrangements with the National Probation Service and the Community Rehabilitation Company, which includes regular transition meetings where cases are monitored and reviewed.
- The service has good links with the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Team, and the Head of Inclusion is a member of the YOT Management Board.

Areas for improvement:

- Although health provision is available through the Early Help Service, the arrangements do not recognise the specialised needs of children known to the YOT, including physical and emotional, mental health and wellbeing concerns.
- The pathways for YOT staff to access health services, for example speech, language and communication provision, lack clarity.
- Board members do not understand the specific needs of YOT children so cannot effectively advocate on their behalf in their own agencies.
- The Management Board and the partnership have not focused on why so many Looked After Children are known to the YOT.
- YOT figures for post-16-year-old children who are not in education, training and employment are high, and the partnership has not done enough work to review what provision is available in the locality for this cohort of children.
- Although YOT practitioners can access the interventions that are available as part of the wider Rotherham early help offer, there is little evidence that these services are regularly used for children known to the YOT.
- The inspection found that management oversight is poor both for post-court orders and out-of-court disposals.

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

Requires improvement

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?

Rotherham Youth Offending Team (YOT) is located in the Early Help, Family Engagement and Business Support Service within the council directorate of Children and Young People's Service. Over the past 18 months it has been restructured to strengthen its management team and become more integrated within early help. The service manager with responsibility for the YOT was confirmed in post in April 2019 and also manages the early help evidence-based hub, family group conferencing and the outdoor education centre. She is managed by the Assistant Director for Early Help, Family Engagement and Business Support, who became Chair of the YOT Management Board in 2017.

The Chair knows the role that the Board needs to have in driving the YOT forward and has the vision to make this happen. The Youth Justice Plan for 2019-21, which was approved by the Management Board, is in place and is supported by an action plan that is regularly reviewed.

Membership of the Board includes all statutory partners as well as some non-statutory partners, for example, a representative from housing and one from the fire and rescue service. To support a number of new members joining the Board over the last 12 months, the Chair has developed an induction package and a 'jargon-buster' document. This document is shared before every meeting to help partners understand the acronyms used in youth justice and enables them to take an active part. A Board development day in June 2019 was well attended by Board members. The agenda included a reflection of what was working well, a case study and agreeing priority actions for the future.

Do the partnership arrangements actively support effective service delivery?

There is evidence that the Chair is very committed to his role and is a strong advocate for YOT children. For example, he visits all children in secure establishments. In one case this led to the child and the establishment getting new guitars from a charity. The child then formed a band within the institution and this intervention helped to influence his mindset about his future. On release he began volunteering with the local authority and is soon to start an apprenticeship as a youth support worker.

Members of the Board recently completed the Youth Justice Board national standards audit alongside YOT staff members, and they reported that this exercise has helped them to understand more about the YOT. However, further work is still needed for

them to understand the specific needs of children known to the YOT so that they can advocate on their behalf in their own agencies.

The Board has links to other key strategic meetings, and issues impacting on youth offending are prominent on their agendas. These groups include the Safer Rotherham Partnership Board, RMBC Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, and the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

At present, police officers can offer restorative justice and community resolutions to children without referring to the YOT. They are, however, encouraged to send all referrals to the YOT police officer who, alongside the YOT triage officer, completes a screening. This screening checks information from other agencies' databases to see if the child or the family is known. An initial recommendation is made, and the case is allocated to a YOT worker. If the child or their family is not already known, then an early help assessment is completed, which takes a holistic look at the whole family. After the assessment, an out-of-court disposal is agreed, which is explained and delivered at the youth caution clinic. This area of practice is still developing, and the YOT manager is working with South Yorkshire police to ensure that all children are referred to the YOT to be assessed before a disposal is agreed. Taking this approach would improve the out-of-court process overall, as each child and family would receive interventions that met their individual needs.

The inspection noted that there is a high number of Looked After Children known to the YOT, and they are particularly over-represented in the post-court cohort. Between January and March 2020, 18 children had statutory orders, of whom five (27.8 percent) were Looked After Children. In recent years, little work has been done with the local children's residential homes to ensure a restorative approach to incidents happening within them. There was evidence of children being charged with multiple offences within the care home, and the response from the police and the Crown Prosecution Service to these incidents has not been analysed by the local partnership. The Management Board and its partners need to understand why so many Looked After Children are known to the YOT and ensure that agencies do not have policies and practices that are leading to the unnecessary criminalisation of children.

Does the leadership of the YOT support effective service delivery?

The Chair and the YOT Service Manager recognise the YOT needs to improve. Several initiatives that were ready to be implemented have been postponed due to Covid-19. These include improving links through the senior practitioners with the pupil referral unit to develop relationships between case managers and the provision, in order to ensure educational needs were being met. The implementation of the YJB 'levelling the playing field' project (outlined below) has also been delayed.

The YOT management team includes the Service Manager, the youth justice co-ordinator and senior practitioners. They reported feeling supported by the Chair of the Board who keeps in touch with them regularly.

The staff survey, which was completed by 18 of the 21 staff members, showed that 63 per cent were aware of the activities of the Management Board and understood its role. This awareness is helped by staff attending the Board to make presentations on different aspects of practice and sharing communication from the Board at team meetings. The survey also noted that 88 per cent of staff were updated on strategic issues affecting the YOT.

The inspection found that management oversight is poor for post-court orders and out-of-court disposals. In the opinion of the inspectors, there was inadequate management oversight in three out of six post-court cases and three out of four out-of-court disposals, and this needs urgent attention.

1.2. Staff



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

Good

Key staffing data⁶

Total staff headcount (full-time equivalent, FTE)	21
Average caseload per case manager (FTE)	13

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?

The nature of YOT work in Rotherham has changed over the last 12 months as staff have been working with more prevention and out-of-court disposal cases. As the service is now integrated with early help, YOT staff are completing the early help assessment, which takes a holistic whole-family approach. This means that they have two assessments to complete: for statutory orders (including youth conditional cautions) they complete AssetPlus; and for out-of-court disposals they complete the early help assessment. Although staff reported this was confusing at first, they received the relevant training on both assessments and are clear about the process they follow.

YOT staff manage a generic caseload which includes prevention, out-of-court disposals and post-court orders. The youth justice co-ordinator or the senior practitioners allocate the work and have a case discussion with the proposed case manager. The approximate number of cases for each case manager in August 2020 was 13, and the staff survey showed that 93 per cent of staff were comfortable with their caseload or workload.

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

The service tries to maintain the principle of one worker working consistently with the child and their family so that relationships can be developed over time. YOT staff also have other responsibilities within the service, including attending court and leading in specific areas of practice. For example, a staff member leads on working with children and families from Gypsy, Roma or Traveller (GRT) backgrounds and attends the GRT forum. This forum encourages a stronger relationship to be built

⁶ Data supplied by YOT and reflecting the caseload at the time of the inspection announcement.

with the community, and some creative interventions with children have included using the arts to explore heritage work.

There is evidence in the inspected cases that staff do all they can to encourage good engagement and compliance from the child and their family, and both staff and managers are child-centred and know their children well.

The YOT has good transition arrangements with the National Probation Service (NPS) and the Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC). The seconded probation officer works half time with the YOT and half time with the NPS and works with children who are transitioning to adult services. A regular meeting considers cases for transfer and puts plans in place. Children who have already transitioned are monitored and their plans reviewed.

A seconded police officer takes the lead on out-of-court disposals and sharing information between the police and the YOT. The YOT Service Manager and the police recognise that there are capacity issues with the role, and further resources are being discussed.

There are no specific health secondees to the YOT, although YOT staff have access to a liaison and diversion worker who will assess children in the police cells and pass information to the YOT.

YOT staff deliver interventions to address offending behaviour, including the Boys-to-Men domestic abuse programme, Be Share Aware, and Crime and Consequences, which can be accessed through groupwork or on a one-to-one basis. Staff also encourage children to help others by creating resources; for example, one child who was released from custody has written a booklet about his experience for other children. Another child has developed a resource from her own experience of being at risk of child exploitation.

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

Staff receive regular supervision and managers use a supervision template which looks at cases, personal reflections, and training and development. Seconded staff receive supervision from their home agency, who also complete their appraisal.

There is an induction process for new staff, and procedures for addressing staff competency. Annual appraisals are completed, and staff feel supported by both their managers and their peers. They stated that managers and senior practitioners are approachable and make themselves available outside of the supervision process.

The volunteer survey was completed by two panel members. Although they both feel they can manage the work they do in their role, they do not feel that ongoing training is meeting their needs.

Are arrangements for learning and development comprehensive and responsive?

The restructure in the YOT allows those staff who are not social work-qualified to progress to management positions, which enables opportunities for staff development.

The YOT staff workforce development needs are included in the YOT improvement plan, which was updated as part of the national standards audit. Staff feel encouraged to take up training to develop their knowledge and skills. They can

access training through the RMBC eLearning portal and the local safeguarding children Board, as well as training that is specific to youth justice.

YOT staff have received training on signs of safety and trauma-informed practice, but there was limited evidence of how these approaches impact on their interventions with children in the cases inspected.

1.3. Partnerships and services



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

Requires improvement

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 YOT can deliver well-targeted services?

The Management Board and the partnership are aware that there is a disproportionate number of black, Asian and minority ethnic children known to the YOT. From January to March 2020, they made up 18 per cent of the offending population but only 9 per cent of the 10-17-year-old population. The partnership is sighted on this and managed to secure funding for the YJB 'Levelling the Playing Field' programme, which uses sports and mentoring to engage earlier with black, Asian and minority ethnic children at risk of entering the criminal justice system. However, due to Covid-19 the implementation of this initiative has been delayed.

The YOT provides a management performance report to the Board, which includes national and local indicators. The profiling of children known to the service is developing through these reports, and recently they have included monitoring the number of school exclusions that YOT children receive.

The YOT's performance is included in the early help scorecard and shared with elected members and the multi-agency early help steering group for scrutiny and challenge. It is also monitored by the Safer Rotherham Partnership as well as the Improving Lives Select Commission. It is therefore disappointing that the YOT Management Board and the partnership were not using the data available to them to analyse and understand why Looked After Children are over-represented in the YOT.

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

Restorative justice and victim services are commissioned locally and are delivered by Remedi. Performance is monitored through contract reviews, and the staff are fully integrated within the YOT team. Reparation sessions are delivered individually with children, and a range of projects are available. The reparation worker has promoted the use of Restorative Action Projects (RAPs), which have included a food RAP where one child, who had completed a cookery course in the secure estate, prepared a meal for elderly residents in a community project. Another example of reparation was children designing a friendship bench for a school, which was part of an anti-bullying initiative.

The Remedi victim worker is experienced and innovative, and offers a range of interventions, including various forms of mediation. From October to December 2019, 52 cases had been referred to the victim worker and she had spoken to all 52

victims. As a result, ten victims had a direct contact with the child known to the YOT and 19 victims had an indirect restorative justice process, for example a letter exchange. It was noted that there was more engagement from victims linked to out-of-court disposals than with those for court orders, and this is supported in the inspection findings. Remedi and the YOT are looking at the reasons for this to ensure that all victims have equal access to services.

Remedi also provides a hate crime officer who delivers workshops to schools and on a one-to-one basis for children at risk of, or who have committed, a hate crime. These sessions help children to understand what hate crime is and how it impacts on victims, families and communities. It aims to empower them to have the confidence to identify signs and report hate crime, as well as helping victims to know where they can access support.

The national rehabilitation charity Change Grow Live (CGL) provides substance misuse services to the YOT through its Divert project. Although there is no seconded person or specific link officer, a screening tool has been developed and all YOT staff have been trained in using it.

YOT practitioners can access the services and interventions available as part of the wider Rotherham early help offer. These services are intended to form part of the 'wrap-around' support for the family and the child. The YOT worker is expected to contact the locality team where the child lives and access the interventions available. These include boys' and girls' groups, activity programmes, mind, body and soul groups, barriers to learning and counselling sessions, and all of these interventions can also be completed one to one. There are also various evidence-based parenting programmes available. However, in the cases inspected, there is little evidence that this approach is used for children known to the YOT.

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

The YOT Chairs the Youth Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (YMARAC). Attendees include education, police, probation, the child sexual exploitation manager, a special educational needs and disability (SEND) team member and a member of staff from Barnardo's. The meeting discusses the management of all children that are high risk of reoffending, safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm to others. Barnardo's, through The Junction project, is commissioned to deliver assessments and interventions for children who display harmful sexual behaviour. The YOT has AIM2-trained staff who work jointly with the project. Staff from The Junction attend the YMARAC where there is a specific agenda item that looks at the management of harmful sexual behaviour cases.

The YOT is also a part of the risk assessment meeting (RAM), chaired by the child sexual exploitation manager, which discusses all cases where child exploitation is a concern. This is a multiagency meeting that includes the child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS), early help, police and children's social care. Agencies share information and intelligence about specific children, and a risk assessment is completed. Depending upon the outcome of the assessment, a multiagency meeting is convened, for example, a strategy, child in need or core group meeting.

The partnership is aware that there is a lengthy waiting list for CAMHS neuro-developmental service. There are no health provider secondees or specific link roles to the YOT. Although YOT staff complete various screening tools, for example

for speech, language and communication, the pathways for staff to access health services are unclear. Health provision is available through the Early Help Service, of which the YOT is a part, but these generic arrangements do not recognise the specific needs of children known to the YOT. Where health professionals are linked to a YOT they can develop relationships with case managers and a specialist knowledge that helps them to understand YOT children.

The YOT has a positive relationship with schools and colleges, and a specific worker in the YOT leads on developing these relationships. Senior practitioners were due to make further links with the pupil referral unit, however due to Covid-19 these arrangements have been put on hold. The service also has good links with the SEND team and the head of inclusion sits on the YOT Management Board. A member of the SEND team attends YMARAC to discuss individual cases.

The YOT has access to the outreach and engagement team, who are street-based and work to engage children in activities. A good example of this is targeted youth support staff who work at weekends in areas known for youth-related antisocial behaviour and try to engage children in positive community activities. Over the past 12 months, 28 children (29.5 per cent of the current YOT caseload) were engaged through this localised support.

The social enterprise Really NEET project is commissioned to work with post-16-year olds and target children who have struggled in mainstream education. It is disappointing to note that the YOT figure for this age group who are not in education, training or employment is 33 per cent (as at 31 March 2020), and the partnership has not reviewed what provision is available in the locality for this cohort of children.

Involvement of children and their parents and carers

The YOT listens to children, and a voice and influence worker attends the Management Board. The voice and influence team are commissioned to explore ways to represent children's views to the Board, and support those who attend to share their experiences.

The YOT has also, in the past, had parts of its service inspected by children through the young inspectors' programme.

Through children's social care, the YOT has access to a 'Right to Rights' worker who gives an additional voice to Looked After Children. YOT case managers work alongside this worker, advocating on behalf of children, especially on accommodation issues and financial allowances for children who are leaving care.

Our inspection process includes a survey for children known to the YOT and their parents and carers to get feedback on how they rate the YOT service, and whether it has helped the child stay out of trouble. There were 22 responses of which 14 rated the YOT as 'fantastic' and two rated it as poor, ten scored the YOT full marks for helping them (children) or their child stay out of trouble (parents), and two said they had not helped at all.

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

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 YOT has a range of policies and guidance, including relevant safeguarding policies and procedures. Information-sharing protocols are in place and understood across the partnership. There is an escalation process that all partners use to resolve any disagreements.

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

Pre-Covid-19, the YOT was based in the Eric Mann's Building, Rotherham. The view from staff was that this was not a child-friendly space and so they used other venues in the local area, as well as visiting children in their homes.

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

YOT staff input data on to two case management systems. They use CorePlus for the statutory work and Liquid Logic for the out-of-court disposal cases – where use is shared with the rest of children's social care. Although they initially found this time-consuming, they have received the relevant training and are confident navigating across the two systems. Using the same Liquid Logic system also allows information and intelligence to be accessible to other agencies, and both systems can produce performance management data. Partner agencies have access to CorePlus, which assists with the sharing of relevant information for statutory YOT cases.

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

The YOT has a monitoring system for quality assuring work. YOT cases are included in the early help multiagency audits, audits linked to Ofsted's joint thematic area inspection programme and internal YOT scrutiny, where managers regularly quality assure randomly sampled cases. Despite these quality assurance systems, there is little visible impact on practice.

In the staff survey, 60 per cent reported that they had not been asked their views about working for the service. However, they did say how they received feedback from the Management Board, managers and peers for any good work they have completed.

There is evidence that the service has taken part in several peer reviews, keeps up to date on both regional and national research developments, and uses good practice from other areas to help shape local provision. The YOT improvement plan is constantly updated and reviewed to help develop the quality of service delivery.



2. Court disposals

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

Strengths:

- Assessing, planning, implementing and delivering interventions, and reviewing were outstanding for desistance.
- Case managers understood the complexities of the child's life and took account of their individual needs.
- Planning for a child's safety and wellbeing was outstanding, and contingency planning was evident when trying to keep children safe.
- The views of children and their parents and carers were taken into account throughout the case management process.
- Case managers did all they could to engage children and their families.

Areas for improvement:

- Assessing, delivering interventions and reviewing to keep other people safe were poor areas of practice that require improvement.
- The needs and wishes of victims were not always considered, and the potential impact on victims was not adequately assessed.
- A lack of health input in relevant cases meant that some children's needs were not met.
- When children were discussed at multiagency meetings it was not always evident in their cases what impact this had on their level of risk and the interventions delivered.
- Although staff had received training on signs of safety and trauma-informed practice, there was limited evidence that these approaches were used with children in the cases inspected.

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.

Inadequate

Our rating⁷ for assessment is based on the following key questions:

Of the 6 cases inspected	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	6	5
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	6	3
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	6	2

The quality of assessment is rated as 'Inadequate'. We saw thorough assessments to support desistance but fewer cases had a sufficient assessment of the child's safety and wellbeing. Assessing a child's risk of harm was the poorest area of practice and led to the overall rating of 'Inadequate'.

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

Of the 6 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Is there sufficient analysis of offending behaviour, including the child's attitudes towards and motivations for their offending?	6	4
Does assessment consider the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, utilising information held by other agencies?	6	5
Does assessment focus on the child's strengths and protective factors?	6	6
Where applicable, does assessment analyse the key structural barriers facing the child?	6	2
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?	6	5
Does assessment give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s, and opportunities for restorative justice?	6	1
Is the child and their parents/carers meaningfully involved in their assessment, and are their views taken into account?	6	6

⁷ 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 6 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risks to the safety and wellbeing of the child?	6	3
Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including other assessments, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	6	5
Where applicable, does assessment analyse controls and interventions to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	6	2

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?

Of the 6 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	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?	5	1
Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including past behaviour and convictions, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	5	3
Does assessment analyse controls and interventions to manage and minimise the risk of harm presented by the child?	5	1

In some assessments the case manager was fully aware of and understood the complexities of the child's life, and there was a multi-agency approach to keeping the child safe. Some cases, however, lacked analysis when assessing risk of harm to others; they did not consider the potential of the child to cause harm and the impact this could have on victims.

2.2. Planning



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

Requires improvement

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

Of the 6 cases inspected	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does planning focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	6	5
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe? ⁹	5	4
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe? ¹⁰	5	3

The quality of planning is rated as 'Requires improvement'. Planning relating to desistance and safety and wellbeing was outstanding. Planning for keeping other people safe, however, required improvement and this has led to the overall rating of 'Requires improvement'.

Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?

Of the 6 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	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?	6	6
Does planning take sufficient account of the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child?	6	5
Does planning take sufficient account of the child's strengths and protective factors, and seek to reinforce or develop these as necessary?	6	6
Does planning take sufficient account of the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change, and seek to develop these as necessary?	6	6
Where applicable, does planning give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s?	6	1
Is the child and their parents/carers meaningfully involved in planning, and are their views taken into	6	6

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.

⁹ This question is only relevant in cases where there are factors related to keeping the child safe.

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

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

Of the 5 cases with factors related to keeping the child safe:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does planning promote the safety and wellbeing of the child, sufficiently addressing risks?	5	4
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?	5	4
Does planning set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	5	3
Does planning set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to manage those risks that have been identified?	5	2

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

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

In some cases, there was a partnership approach to planning, especially where there were care-taking arrangements with other areas. Contingency planning was also evident when trying to keep children safe. Planning to protect victims, however, was not always considered, and children's plans overall did not take a trauma-informed approach when it was appropriate to do so.

2.3. Implementation and delivery



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

Requires improvement

Our rating¹¹ for implementation and delivery is based on the following key questions:

Of the 6 cases inspected	Number of relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the child's desistance?	6	5
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of the child safe? ¹²	5	4
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people? ¹³	5	2*

*Professional discretion applied

The quality of implementing and delivering interventions and services is rated as 'Requires improvement'. Delivering services relating to desistance and safety and wellbeing was outstanding; however, for keeping other people safe it was inadequate. As the lowest percentage at the key question level is close to the rating boundary and relates to one case, having reviewed the case data evidence was identified that risk of harm was being partly addressed. Therefore, professional discretion has been applied and the judgement has been moved up from inadequate to 'Requires improvement'.

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

Of the 6 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Are the delivered services those most likely to support desistance, with sufficient attention given to sequencing and the available timescales?	6	6
Does service delivery reflect the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, involving parents/carers or significant others?	6	6
Does service delivery build upon the child's strengths and enhance protective factors?	6	6

¹¹ 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.

¹² This question is only relevant in cases where there are factors related to keeping the child safe.

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

Is sufficient focus given to developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child and their parents/carers?	6	6
Does service delivery promote opportunities for community integration including access to services post-supervision?	6	5
Is sufficient attention given to encouraging and enabling the child's compliance with the work of the YOT?	6	6
In cases when it is required, are enforcement actions taken when appropriate?	2	2

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

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

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:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Are the delivered services sufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	5	2
Where applicable, is sufficient attention given to the protection of actual and potential victims?	5	2
Where applicable, is the involvement of other agencies in managing the risk of harm sufficiently well-coordinated?	5	2

Case managers took account of a child's diversity and provided interventions that related to their individual needs. There was, however, a lack of health input in relevant cases, and limited evidence of what changes were made to a child's level of risk, or interventions delivered, when they were discussed at a multiagency meeting.

2.4. Reviewing



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

Requires improvement

Our rating¹⁴ for reviewing is based on the following key questions:

Of the 6 cases inspected ¹⁵	Number of relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	6	6
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	5	3
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	5	2*

*Professional discretion applied

The quality of reviewing is rated as 'Requires improvement'. When case managers reviewed desistance, the quality was outstanding. However, reviewing a child's safety and wellbeing required improvement, and when focusing on keeping other people safe reviewing was inadequate. As the lowest percentage at the key question level is close to the rating boundary and relates to one case, the case was reviewed. Although there was little evidence of reviewing captured on the records, the child had been discussed at different panels on a number of occasions, and for this reason it was considered that sufficient reviewing activity had taken place. Therefore, professional discretion has been applied and the judgement has been moved up from inadequate to 'Requires improvement'.

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

Of the 6 cases where there were changes in factors related to desistance:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does reviewing identify and respond to changes in factors linked to desistance?	6	5
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on building upon the child's strengths and enhancing protective factors?	6	6
Does reviewing consider motivation and engagement levels and any relevant barriers?	6	6

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ 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.

Is the child and their parents/carers meaningfully involved in reviewing their progress and engagement, and are their views taken into account?	6	6
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Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

Of the 5 cases where there were changes in factors related to keeping the child safe:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does reviewing identify and respond to changes in factors related to safety and wellbeing?	5	4
Where applicable, is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in promoting the safety and wellbeing of the child?	5	3
Where applicable, does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	5	3

Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

Of the 5 cases where there were changes in factors related to keeping other people safe:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does reviewing identify and respond to changes in factors related to risk of harm?	5	2
Where applicable, is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in managing the risk of harm?	5	3
Is the child and their parents/carers meaningfully involved in reviewing their risk of harm, and are their views taken into account?	5	2
Where applicable, does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	5	2

Reviewing focused on positive progress and took account of the child's engagement with both the YOT and other services. In some cases, reviewing did not consider changes in the pattern of a child's behaviour, especially in relation to their risk of harm to others.

3. Out-of-court disposals



We inspected four cases managed by the YOT that had received an out-of-court disposal. These consisted of one youth conditional caution, one youth caution and two community resolutions. We interviewed the case managers in three 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 one case where there were factors related to harm, we also inspected work done to keep other people safe. In the three 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:

- As with court order work, desistance was the strongest area of practice and planning for desistance was outstanding.
- Early help assessments, when they were completed well, provided a holistic view of the child and their family.
- In out-of-court disposals the needs and wishes of victims were considered.
- Reparation activities were adapted to suit the child's needs.

Areas for improvement:

- The lack of health provision in relevant cases hampered the work done to keep children safe.
- Not all children were assessed before a disposal was delivered.
- For out-of-court work generally, there was a capacity issue with the role of the seconded police officer, as there was insufficient resource to meet the workload.
- Planning and the delivery of services for a child's safety and wellbeing and for keeping other people safe were poor.
- Case managers did not consistently analyse information available to them and failed to recognise the trauma a child had experienced.

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.

Requires improvement

Our rating¹⁶ for assessment is based on the following key questions:

Of the 4 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	4	2
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	4	2
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	4	3

The quality of assessment is rated as 'Requires improvement'. We saw good assessments of a child's risk of harm to others but assessing desistance and safety and wellbeing required improvement. This led to the overall rating of 'Requires improvement'.

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

Of the 4 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Is there sufficient analysis of offending behaviour, including the child's acknowledgement of responsibility, attitudes towards and motivations for their offending?	4	2
Does assessment consider the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, utilising information held by other agencies?	4	2
Does assessment focus on the child's strengths and protective factors?	4	3
Where applicable, does assessment analyse the key structural barriers facing the child?	3	1
Is sufficient attention given to understanding the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change?	4	2
Where applicable, does assessment give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s, and opportunities for restorative justice?	3	3
Is the child and their parents/carers meaningfully involved in their assessment, and are their views taken into account?	4	3

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.

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?

Of the 4 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risks to the safety and wellbeing of the child?	4	2
Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including other assessments, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	4	1

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?

Of the 4 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	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?	2	1
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?	2	1

Some assessments took account of the individual needs of the child and appropriately analysed the risk of harm they pose to others. A few, however, lacked basic information and failed to recognise the trauma the child had experienced.

3.2. Planning



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

Inadequate

Our rating¹⁷ for planning is based on the following key questions:

Of the 4 cases inspected	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?	4	4
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe? ¹⁸	3	1

¹⁷ 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.

¹⁸ 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? ¹⁹	1	0
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The quality of planning is rated as 'Inadequate'. Planning relating to desistance was outstanding but planning for a child's safety and wellbeing and keeping other people safe was inadequate, and this has led to the overall rating of 'Inadequate'.

Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?

Of the 4 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	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?	4	4
Does planning take sufficient account of the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child?	4	1
Does planning take sufficient account of the child's strengths and protective factors, and seek to reinforce or develop these as necessary?	4	3
Does planning take sufficient account of the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change, and seek to develop these as necessary?	4	3
Does planning take sufficient account of opportunities for community integration, including access to mainstream services following completion of out of court disposal work?	4	2
Where applicable, does planning give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s?	3	3
Is the child and their parents/carers meaningfully involved in planning, and are their views taken into account?	4	3

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

Of the 3 cases with factors relevant to keeping the child safe:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does planning promote the safety and wellbeing of the child, sufficiently addressing risks?	3	1
Where applicable, does planning involve other agencies where appropriate, and is there sufficient alignment	3	1

¹⁹ This question is only relevant in cases where there are factors related to keeping other people safe

with other plans (e.g. child protection or care plans) concerning the child?		
Does planning include necessary contingency arrangements for those risks that have been identified?	3	1

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

Of the 1 case with factors relevant to keeping other people safe:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does planning promote the safety of other people, sufficiently addressing risk of harm factors?	1	0
Where applicable, does planning involve other agencies where appropriate?	1	0
Where applicable, does planning address any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims?	1	0
Does planning include necessary contingency arrangements for those risks that have been identified?	1	0

In some cases, planning was proportionate to the disposal given, and the needs and wishes of victims had been considered. In other cases, no health provision had been identified to help support the child, and the potential risk to their safety and wellbeing was not consistently addressed.

3.3. Implementation and delivery



High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging and assisting the child.	Inadequate
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Our rating²⁰ for implementation and delivery is based on the following key questions:

Of the 4 cases inspected	Number of relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does service delivery effectively support the child's desistance?	4	3
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of the child? ²¹	3	1

²⁰ 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.

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

Does service delivery effectively support the safety of other people? ²²	1	0
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The quality of implementing and delivering interventions and services is rated as 'Inadequate'. Delivering services to promote desistance was good; however, for safety and wellbeing and keeping other people safe it was inadequate.

Does service delivery effectively support the child's desistance?

Of the 4 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Are the delivered services those most likely to support desistance, with sufficient attention given to sequencing and the available timescales?	4	3
Does service delivery reflect the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, involving parents/carers or significant others?	4	2
Is sufficient focus given to developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child and their parents/carers?	4	3
Is sufficient attention given to encouraging and enabling the child's compliance with the work of the YOT?	4	3
Does service delivery promote opportunities for community integration, including access to mainstream services?	4	2

Does service delivery effectively support the safety of the child?

Of the 3 cases with factors related to the safety of the child:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does service delivery promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	3	1
Where applicable, is the involvement of other agencies in keeping the child safe sufficiently well utilised and coordinated?	3	1

²² 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 1 case with factors related to the safety of other people:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Where applicable, is sufficient attention given to the protection of actual and potential victims?	1	0
Are the delivered services sufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	1	0

Some cases showed a creative response to reparation activities which were adapted to suit the child's needs. The lack of health support in relevant cases, however, hampered the work done to keep children safe.

3.4. Joint working



Joint working with the police supports the delivery of high-quality, personalised and coordinated services.	Requires improvement
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Our rating²³ for joint working is based on the following key questions:

Of the 4 cases inspected	Number of relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Are the YOT's recommendations sufficiently well-informed, analytical and personalised to the child, supporting joint decision making?	4	3
Does the YOT work effectively with the police in implementing the out-of-court disposal? ²⁴	1	0*

*Professional discretion applied

The quality of joint work is rated as 'Requires improvement'. The YOT's recommendations were well-informed, personalised to the child and supported the joint decision-making process. However, evidence of effective work with the police in implementing the disposal was inadequate. As the lowest percentage at the key question level is close to the rating boundary and relates to one case, the case was reviewed. The evidence suggested that, as the police appeared to be involved with the child, there was a possibility that joint working had taken place which had not been recorded. Therefore, professional discretion has been applied and the judgement has been moved up from inadequate to 'Requires improvement'.

²³ 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.

²⁴ This question is only relevant in youth conditional caution cases.

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

Of the 4 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Where applicable, are the recommendations by the YOT for out-of-court disposal outcomes, conditions and interventions appropriate and proportionate?	4	3
Do the recommendations consider the degree of the child's understanding of the offence and their acknowledgement of responsibility?	4	4
Where applicable, is a positive contribution made by the YOT to determining the disposal?	4	4
Is sufficient attention given to the child's understanding, and their parents/carers' understanding, of the implications of receiving an out of court disposal?	4	3
Is the information provided to inform decision-making timely to meet the needs of the case, legislation and guidance?	3	2
Where applicable, is the rationale for joint disposal decisions appropriate and clearly recorded?	3	3

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

Of the 1 case with youth conditional cautions:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Where applicable, does the YOT inform the police of progress and outcomes in a sufficient and timely manner?	0	0
Is sufficient attention given to compliance with and enforcement of the conditions?	1	1

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.²⁵

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 YOTs have very small caseloads and so any percentages or figures quoted in these reports need to read with care. However, all domain two samples, even for the smallest YOTs, meet an 80 per cent confidence level and in some of the smaller YOTs inspectors may be assessing most or all of that service's cases.

Domain one: organisational delivery

- The youth offending service submitted evidence in advance and the Assistant Director for Early Help, Family Engagement and Business Support 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 eight 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. Evidence collected under this domain is judged against our published ratings characteristics.²⁵

Domain two: court disposals

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

We examined six 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 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.

²⁵ HM Inspectorate's standards are available here:

<https://www.justiceinspectrates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/about-our-work/our-standards-and-ratings/>

Domain three: out-of-court disposals

We completed case assessments over a one-week period, examining case files and interviewing case managers. Four of the cases selected were those of children who had received out-of-court disposals seven to eleven 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 four 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 six court disposals and four 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 well-being 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.