

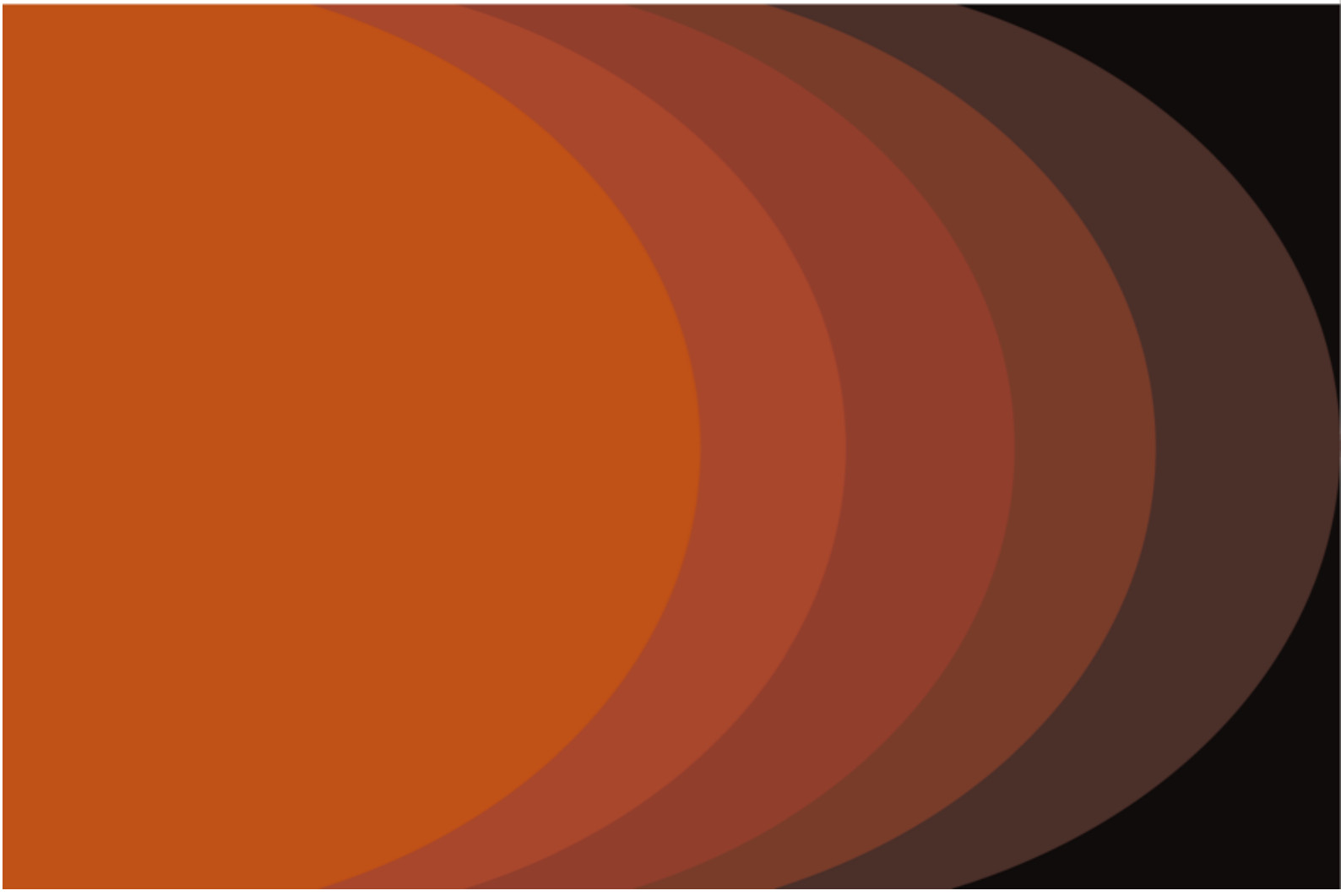


Her Majesty's
Inspectorate of
Probation

An inspection of youth offending services in

South Gloucestershire

HM Inspectorate of Probation, January 2021



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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 South Gloucestershire Youth Offending Team (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, South Gloucestershire YOT was rated as 'Outstanding'.

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 21 September and 24 September 2020.

Domain one – organisational delivery

South Gloucestershire YOT is a high-performing YOT. The YOT is well represented at all relevant partnership and Board meetings. The staff are skilled in engaging with children and are well trained and supported.

The YOT has good partnership engagement and a range of services and specialist staff who can support the children. Staff make good use of information and data to develop the service.

Domain two – court disposals

The management of court cases in South Gloucestershire was outstanding for planning, implementation and delivery of the sentence and reviewing. Assessments were good, although in some cases information on safety and wellbeing was not fully incorporated in the assessment. YOT workers were skilled in engaging children and were creative and responsive to the children's needs. They were also good at liaising and working with family members.

Domain three – out-of-court disposals

In most out-of-court disposals, the work was completed to a high standard, with good decision-making and joint working, assessment and delivery of interventions. However, the Avon and Somerset-wide youth alcohol and drug diversion disposal was not individualised to the needs of the child.



Marc Baker
Director of Operations

Ratings





South Gloucestershire Youth Offending Team **Score** **31/36**

Overall rating **Outstanding** 





1. Organisational delivery

1.1	Governance and leadership	Good	
1.2	Staff	Outstanding	
1.3	Partnerships and services	Outstanding	
1.4	Information and facilities	Outstanding	

2. Court disposals

2.1	Assessment	Good	
2.2	Planning	Outstanding	
2.3	Implementation and delivery	Outstanding	
2.4	Reviewing	Outstanding	

3. Out-of-court disposals

3.1	Assessment	Good	
3.2	Planning	Good	
3.3	Implementation and delivery	Good	
3.4	Joint working	Outstanding	

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 South Gloucestershire. This will improve the lives of the children in contact with youth offending services, and better protect the public.

The South Gloucestershire Youth Offending Team should:

1. ensure every Board member has a working knowledge of the YOT's work
2. develop methods of gathering feedback from children to inform service delivery
3. review the approach to victims taken by the 'harmed person' worker to ensure victims understand the service on offer
4. develop a framework for managing those cases that remain open on a voluntary basis to ensure these children's needs are identified and met by the most appropriate agency.

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner should:

5. review the effectiveness of the Youth Alcohol and Drug Diversion disposal, and the process for delivering it, to ensure it meets the identified needs of the children who receive this disposal.

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.

South Gloucestershire is a unitary authority in the south west of England. It comprises a mix of small towns, rural areas and urban areas on the outskirts of Bristol. It has a population of 285,000, made up of 116,000 households. It has a higher rate of employment than the national average (62.8 per cent compared with 57.1 per cent) and a lower rate of children who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) (per cent compared with 3 per cent).

The South Gloucestershire YOT is located within the local authority's Children, Adults and Health department, and the director of that service is the Chair of the partnership Board. The YOT manager is supervised by the service manager of preventative services. The YOT manager is also the manager of the newly developed Children's Support Team, which delivers prevention work.

South Gloucestershire YOT performs well on the youth justice performance measures for reducing the levels of first-time entrants and re-offending. The YOT had no custody cases, and the majority of the caseload is out-of-court cases. The YOT also has a number of cases that have remained open on a voluntary basis.

There is a stable staff team, with most staff having been in post for more than five years.

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

Contextual facts

Population information

285,093	Total population South Gloucestershire (2019) ²
25,500	Total youth population (10–17 years) in South Gloucestershire (2019) ²

Demographics of children cautioned or sentenced³

Age	10–14	15–17
South Gloucestershire YOT	27%	73%
National average	23%	77%

Race/ethnicity	White	Black and minority ethnic	Unknown
South Gloucestershire YOT	92%	8%	0%
National average	70%	26%	4%

Gender	Male	Female
South Gloucestershire YOT	73%	27%
National average	85%	15%

Additional caseload data⁴

13	Total current caseload: community sentences
0	Total current caseload in custody
0	Total current caseload on licence
29	Total current caseload: out-of-court disposals, including youth conditional caution, youth caution, community resolution, youth alcohol and drug diversion

² Office for National Statistics. (2020). *UK Population estimates, mid-2019*.

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

⁴ Information supplied by YOT, reflecting caseload on 14 September 2020.

1. Organisational delivery



Strengths:

- The YOT has good links with partner organisations and representation at all relevant partnership and Board meetings.
- The Board has a number of new members who have brought commitment and knowledge to the partnership.
- Staff are well trained, well supported and committed to their work.
- The YOT has a number of seconded and specialist workers in post to meet the complex needs of the children.
- The YOT has actively responded to concerns about a high number of children being permanently excluded from school and has been working with schools and the local authority to address this.
- The YOT makes good use of information to know and understand the needs of its children and uses this to develop services.

Areas for improvement:

- Not all Board members had an operational working knowledge of the YOT's work.
- Transition work, including sharing information about children who are transferring to probation services after the age of 18, needs developing.
- Feedback from children and their families is not always being used to develop services.

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.

Good

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 South Gloucestershire YOT is located within the local authority's Children, Adults and Health department, and the director of that service is the Chair of the partnership Board. The YOT manager is supervised by the manager of preventative services. In April 2020, a new Children's Support Team was established and is managed by the YOT manager. This team has created additional capacity for prevention work with

children who are outside the youth justice system and face worrying risks to their safety and wellbeing. The team works with children who are involved in harmful sexual behaviour, who go missing, or who are at risk of criminal and/or sexual exploitation, and other children in crisis. This allows for good links and communication between the YOT and other services, such as services for children who are missing from home or at risk of exploitation, and early help services.

The Youth Justice Partnership has many new members, including a new Chair. The Chair is committed to the work of the YOT. She has undertaken observations of practice and met many of the team members. The partnership Board is still developing, but it has a clear vision for the direction and strategy of the YOT. Nearly all of the Board members have asked to join the Board because they have an active interest in the YOT's work and can make strategic links to their own services. However, one Board member did not have had a working knowledge of their area of the YOT. This partner had recently joined the Board, and in the handover from the previous member some information was missing. The partnership Board has been engaged in the planning for Covid-19 recovery for the YOT.

Members of the Board were all involved in the Youth Justice Board national standards audit and reported that this exercise has helped them understand the YOT's work. This has been supplemented by case examples being presented at Board meetings, which are also used in the induction of new members.

Membership of the Board includes all statutory partners, as well as some non-statutory partners, for example community safety, the lead member for children and the Chair of the local youth court bench. It has changed the name of the Management Board to the Youth Justice Partnership to reflect the role that partner agencies play in delivering the YOT's work. Board membership is at the correct level of seniority, and the Board is well attended. Previous gaps in membership of the partnership Board have been identified and addressed.

Do the partnership arrangements actively support effective service delivery?

Partnership arrangements support the YOT's work, and there are service level agreements in place with agencies that do not attend the partnership Board. These include SARI (Stand Against Racism and Inequality) and Core Assets, for consultation on harmful sexual behaviour.

The partnership Board is provided with good-quality reports that help the members identify concerns and patterns in the profile of the YOT children. This has recently led to more analysis of girls who commit an offence of violence and the rising rate of over-representation of black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) children in the criminal justice system. The reports provide detailed information, which shows that dual-heritage children are the most over-represented. As a result, the YOT has worked with SARI to provide additional training for staff and support for children who have experienced racism. The partnership Board is also given data on looked after children who offend. At present, this group of children are not disproportionately over-represented in the YOT.

The YOT has been able to respond to concerns raised by partnership members about delays (pre-Covid-19) in cases coming to court. It is actively working with the court on how to manage the anticipated rise in cases. The court has also raised with the partnership Board concerns about the length of time children were taking to come to court after committing an offence. The YOT provided an analysis of this at a previous Board meeting.

The partnership has been active in increasing the capacity of the primary mental health worker (PMHW) and a part-time speech and language therapist. There is a risk to the ongoing funding of the PMHW post and the partnership has been proactive in mitigating this risk.

Partnership members have responded to issues raised by the YOT, particularly in relation to high rates of exclusions, and have acted to address these concerns. This has led to the creation of a multi-agency risk of exclusion meeting, which considers all children in the local authority who may be at risk of permanent exclusion. This meeting is attended by the YOT education worker.

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner has provided funds to all YOTs in Avon and Somerset to deliver the Youth Alcohol and Drug Diversion programme. This is a one-off intervention for children found in possession of any illegal substance, or who are drunk and disorderly. In South Gloucestershire, it is provided by the alcohol and drugs worker. These cases do not go through the out-of-court panel process. They are screened and the programme of work is delivered, with the option of follow-up support if that is required. The child's needs are not assessed before the intervention, although a screening tool is used, and the programme is not personalised to the child. If the child needs further intervention after the 50-minute programme, they can remain open to the substance misuse worker on a voluntary basis. The lack of a personalised approach to this intervention has contributed to the scores for domain three.

Does the leadership of the YOT support effective service delivery?

The YOT management team includes the YOT manager and two practice managers. There is also a performance and information officer. The YOT reports performance to the Youth Justice Partnership and the South Gloucestershire Safer and Stronger Communities Strategic Partnership and more recently to the termly Children Directors Assurance Meeting and to the Corporate Parenting Board.

The YOT also has strong links with the South Gloucestershire Children's Partnership; the Risk Management Pathway, which is developing a contextual safeguarding approach to children; and Operation Topaz, which comprises the police Child Exploitation Team, the Adverse Childhood Experiences Partnership Group, the Violence Reduction Unit, Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), the Reducing Re-offending Board, the Families in Focus project Board, Prevent, and a member of the South West Resettlement Consortium. South Gloucestershire YOT also attends the Avon and Somerset out-of-court scrutiny panel.

YOT staff are aware of the work of the partnership Board and can read the reports and minutes. They have a good understanding of the role of the Board. They have recently started to present case studies, which are then used in the induction of new partnership members. In the staff survey, 94 per cent of staff said they were aware of the activities of the partnership Board.

The inspection found that management oversight was good in most cases, and all staff rated their supervision as either quite good or very good in the staff survey we undertook.

1.2. Staff



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

Outstanding

Key staffing data⁵

Total staff headcount (full-time equivalent, FTE)	21
Average caseload per case manager (FTE)	7

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?

Seconded and specialist staff are embedded in the YOT's structure. These include a primary mental health worker, speech and language specialist, education worker, drug and alcohol worker, probation officer and police officer. There is also an information officer and a number of case managers. The YOT also has access to the Enhanced Case Management Team, which works across Avon and Somerset. This team provides additional support and case formulation for the YOT's more complex cases. We saw evidence of the benefits of this approach in the cases inspected.

The YOT is divided into two teams: pre-court and post-court. Each team has the capacity and willingness to assist with work from the other if the need arises.

Case managers' caseloads are manageable. The average caseload is seven, not including voluntary cases, and all case managers report that they are comfortable with this caseload.

The YOT has access to a small number of volunteers, including panel members, mentors and an education volunteer. All volunteers report that the YOT's communication, training and support are good.

The YOT has a stable workforce, with the majority having been there for over five years. Staff report that they like working at the YOT.

The YOT has a 'harmed person' worker. Although she has several other roles, such as court and mentoring, this does not detract from the services she provides to victims, such as shuttle mediation, letters of apology and full restorative justice conferences.

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

The staff are motivated and care about the outcomes for children. In the staff survey, 93 per cent described themselves as very motivated.

Staff have been given a number of 'champions' roles, where they develop an area of knowledge and share it with their colleagues at team meetings. Champions roles include social media, signs of safety, and Prevent.

⁵ Data supplied by YOT and reflecting the caseload at the time of the inspection announcement.

Evidence from the inspected cases confirmed that staff were skilled in engaging both children and families. Staff felt they had the skills to manage their cases, according to the staff survey.

There are two teams, pre-court and post-court, and cases are allocated on that basis. However, if there is an influx of cases in either area, staff from the other team will take on the case.

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

Staff have regular performance reviews, and opportunities for progression and professional development are discussed at these meetings. Staff receive regular feedback on their performance at supervision and appraisals.

There is a local authority recognition scheme, and two members of staff have recently been recognised for their work as part of that scheme.

Practice managers have completed quality assurance audits, and this has resulted in training being delivered to staff where areas for development were noted. Most recently, training on writing contingency plans has been provided.

In nearly every case inspected we found that staff had received adequate management supervision.

Are arrangements for learning and development comprehensive and responsive?

Newer staff reported receiving a comprehensive induction programme, which included a mix of online training, shadowing opportunities and specialist training, for example in using AssetPlus, to enable them to do their job. Staff have access to the South Gloucestershire Council online training programme.

Staff have received training in trauma-informed practice, and there was evidence of the impact of this training in the cases inspected. All respondents to the staff survey rated the quality of their supervision as very good, or quite good.

A number of staff are AIM3 trained and deliver assessments and interventions for children who have displayed harmful sexual behaviour. These staff also benefit from consultation on cases from a psychologist from a specialist organisation.

Staff are identified as 'champions' in a number of significant areas. These include social media, Research in Practice, harmful sexual behaviour, Signs of Safety and Prevent. Staff members report back and share with the service developments and information about their particular champion area.

1.3. Partnerships and services



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

Outstanding

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 YOT has access to good-quality information and is using this to understand the profile of its children. For example, it has carried out an in-depth analysis of the girls in its caseload who have committed an offence of violence. It has also analysed its data on the increasing disproportionality of black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) children in the criminal justice system. This includes responding to information in 'real time' and breaking this down into the different ethnic groups. This analysis has led to work with SARI (Stand Against Racism and Inequality) and is also raised at the court user group.

The youth court reports that it has a good understanding of services and interventions delivered by the YOT because of the information in pre-sentence reports and active engagement with the YOT team. The YOT has recently been working with the court to help it understand and manage the number of children likely to be referred to it by the courts as they reopen after the Covid-19 lockdown.

The courts are also aware of the increase in the number of BAME children in the criminal justice system and are developing a response to this concern.

The monthly priorities meeting identifies and creates actions in relation to children whose offending or other concerning behaviour is escalating or causing concern. The YOT is also able to identify children who are arrested for further offending, and also children who are voluntarily interviewed by the police.

Having recognised the high risk of permanent exclusion for children in South Gloucestershire, the council has set up a multi-agency risk panel, which reviews these cases. The YOT education worker is a key member of this panel.

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

The YOT has access to specialist seconded staff, including an embedded drug and alcohol worker, primary mental health worker, speech and language therapist and education worker. The YOT has access to partnership agencies, including SARI, for children who are either perpetrators or victims of racial abuse, and Core Assets, which provides additional support for work with children displaying harmful sexual behaviour.

Inspectors saw evidence in the cases inspected of the positive impact that the range of specialist staff has on the children.

In the cases inspected, both case managers and inspectors did not identify any gaps in the services provided by partners or the YOT.

The YOT is part of the Avon and Somerset-wide Enhanced Case Management model, which provides additional support through case formulation meetings and the advice of a psychologist on children at higher risk of offending, or children whose offending is more entrenched.

There is a probation officer in post, who works 0.8 of the time. She works all her hours in the YOT, but also attends the National Probation Service 18–25-year-old team meetings. This provides an opportunity to share learning on working with children. There are very few transitions to probation, but for the children of South Gloucestershire, moving to being supervised by probation from its central office in Bristol could present difficulties for them. Both the YOT and the probation service are

aware of this and have identified the need to develop transition arrangements for these children

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

The YOT has good links with all relevant partner agencies. The YOT manager is also the manager of the Children's Support Team, which works with children identified as being in need of additional help, including children missing from home. The staff in the YOT are able to use these services for the children they are working with.

The YOT will not automatically close a case at the end of an intervention or court order if it considers there is a good reason for keeping the case open. Examples given were if the child has an outstanding court case, or a complex harmful sexual behaviour case. The YOT calculates that as many as 30 per cent of its cases are open on a voluntary basis.

The YOT police officer undertakes a range of roles, including some limited case management. He is a key conduit for sharing information and attends a number of police and partnership meetings. There is an ethos in Avon and Somerset Police of 'dare to share', and this is evidenced in good information-sharing. The police officer will also use the police database to flag any child open to the YOT. The 'notify if' function allows any police intelligence information to be shared with the YOT.

The information manager also flags YOT children on the children's social care database. This ensures that children's services are aware of YOT involvement for any child that is referred or an open case.

A range of interventions are available, including the new 'Mankind' programme, which explores what it means to be a young man in today's society. A range of reparations are also available. The number fell during the lockdown period of Covid-19, but some continued, including writing letters to residents of care homes.

There is a commissioned Appropriate Adult service, and the Liaison and Diversion service is active in the police custody suites. The Liaison and Diversion service links with the YOT primary mental health worker to provide information on any children in police custody with mental health concerns. There is also a court liaison meeting, in which cases are reviewed. Despite this, there has been a high number of remand cases in proportion to children sentenced to custody. The children who experienced a period of remand were given a community sentence. The YOT has recognised this as a concern.

Involvement of children and their parents and carers

Children and their families are actively engaged in the work of the YOT. Children's views are taken into consideration when planning interventions, and the child's family is given regular feedback on the child's progress.

Self-assessments are completed at the start of an assessment and also when an assessment is reviewed. The views in the self-assessment are incorporated into the AssetPlus assessment.

As part of the inspection process, we invite children to participate in a text survey. Unfortunately, the number of children who returned the survey was low, but of the four responses we received, three rated the YOT as 10/10, and the other 9/10.

One child said:

“It was a great way for me to realise my wrong doings and right them by becoming a better person. The wrong doing I did helped me change my perspective on my values. The help and support I received made me realise that what I did was unlawful and I should learn from it to make better, well-thought-out decisions in the future. I really appreciate the kind support and lovely people who I met in the YOT service”.

There are no systems in place, however, to involve children and their parents/carers in shaping the delivery of services.

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.

Outstanding

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?

Practitioners have access to up-to-date protocols, guidance and policies. Additionally, managers are responsive to their requests for information and clarification. In the main, staff understand the policies and procedures that apply to their role.

All staff in the staff survey stated they understand their policies quite or very well.

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

As this was a remote inspection, inspectors weren’t able to view the premises. The YOT is based at the Patchway police station. Staff report that the premises are suitable for working, although very few children are seen there. Most appointments take place at a mixture of community venues, children’s services locality offices and home visits. This has presented some difficulties during Covid-19, as the community venues were not readily available, but the staff have continued to provide services to children through ‘walk and talk’ sessions and at council offices.

Before Covid-19, safety measures for staff were managed with a signing in and out Board. As this is no longer practical, a remote log-in facility has been set up, with measures in place if a member of staff does not ‘check in’ at the end of a visit.

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

Staff have all the equipment to work remotely, although feedback from the staff survey was that the telephones provided by the local authority do not support some virtual platforms that may have been beneficial during the lockdown period of Covid-19.

The YOT has access to a range of data from a variety of sources and uses this information to reflect on its practice and shape services. An example of this is that

when it identified the rise in the number of BAME children entering the criminal justice system, it commissioned SARI to undertake a bespoke analysis of the disproportionality the service was seeing in the sentences children were receiving. SARI already knew the YOT well, as it was delivering pieces of work for the children and training for staff. At the start of the inspection, the YOT did not have information on the number of victims taking up services, or on levels of offending following a youth alcohol and drug diversion disposal or community resolution. However, it was quickly able to provide this information, and will be using the data to maintain the changes introduced by Covid-19 to the way victims are contacted.

Staff have access to relevant databases to enable them to have good information when completing assessments on children. This includes information on children's social care and education. The police officer has access to the police database, and the primary health worker is able to access health records. A member of staff also attends the community safety meetings, so information about children involved in anti-social behaviour is shared. This range of information allows case managers to complete comprehensive assessments on children.

The YOT has a full-time information manager. He provides the data for the Board reports and can provide further information at the request of the Board or the YOT manager. A recent example was the analysis of the length of time it takes for a child to come to court after committing an offence. This was a matter that had been raised by the youth court magistrate who sits on the partnership Board.

The YOT identifies children who will be appearing in court for the first time and sends them an information leaflet on how the court works and what to expect when they attend court. If the child is interested, the court officer also provides a short visit to the court before their case is heard, to help alleviate any concerns.

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

Information from a range of quality assurance processes, reflections on serious incidents and learning from HM Inspectorate of Probation inspections have all been used to improve and develop services. The YOT has compared its current practice with the practice described in past HM Inspectorate of Probation thematic reports and developed action plans as a result. These are overseen by the partnership Board and signed off by it when complete.

The partnership Board has also analysed its performance and that of the YOT against HM Inspectorate of Probation's domain one standards. Consequently, the Board knows itself well and has developed plans to address gaps it had identified. The YOT is also actively reviewing HM Inspectorate of Probation inspection reports for examples of good practice. It liaised with a service that had scored 'Outstanding' in order to understand what it needed to do to improve its service.

There is a court user group, which audits the quality of reports to the court. The court can provide feedback on any court report either through this group or to the court officer.

Quality assurance audits are completed on cases and this has led to further training being provided for all staff.

The YOT has developed an improvement plan following the national standard audit, which clearly identifies who is responsible for completing an action and times for completion.



2. Court disposals

We took a detailed look at eight community sentences managed by the YOT. There were no custodial cases being managed by the YOT at the time of inspection. We also conducted eight interviews with the relevant case managers. We examined the quality of assessment; planning; implementation and delivery of services; and reviewing.

Strengths:

- Case managers have good engagement skills and know their children and families well.
- Assessments used information from families and considered the role of family members as both protective and risk factors.
- Practitioners took a trauma-informed approach, working with partners and families to understand and provide services to support children.
- There was timely information-sharing, which ensured all relevant information was shared to manage the risk of harm to others and safety and wellbeing of the child.
- Planning was individualised to the child and used language that the child would understand.
- There was a range of interventions and reparations in place to meet the children's individual needs.
- There was good use of partner and seconded staff's specialist skills to meet the children's needs.
- Appointment times and venues were arranged to best meet children's needs.

Areas for improvement:

- The impact of a parent's ability to safeguard their child was not always considered when assessing safety and wellbeing.
- The number of victims who engage in restorative processes or provide victim impact statements has been low.

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.

Good

Our rating⁶ for assessment is based on the following key questions:

Of the 8 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	8	7
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	8	6
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	8	7

We rated the assessment of cases as 'Good'. In nearly all cases, the assessment of desistance factors, risk of harm to others and keeping other people safe was sufficient. Staff made good use of all information available to the YOT. This included information from partner agencies and children and their families. This information was analysed and evaluated.

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

Of the 8 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Is there sufficient analysis of offending behaviour, including the child's attitudes towards and motivations for	8	8
Does assessment consider the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, utilising information held by other agencies?	8	7
Does assessment focus on the child's strengths and protective factors?	8	8
Where applicable, does assessment analyse the key structural barriers facing the child?	5	4
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?	8	7
Does assessment give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s. and opportunities for	6	5
Is the child and their parents/carers meaningfully involved in their assessment, and are their views taken into account?	8	8

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

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?

Of the 8 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?	8	6
Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including past behaviour and convictions, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	8	6
Does assessment analyse controls and interventions to manage and minimise the risk of harm presented by the child?	8	7

Case managers use the trauma-informed model when completing their assessments. They work collaboratively with partners, the children and families to understand all the factors in the case. Assessments make good use of the range of information available to them to understand the child's life. Case managers had a good understanding of desistance factors, risk to others and safety and wellbeing.

2.2. Planning



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

Outstanding

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

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 Annex 1 for a more detailed explanation.

Of the 8 cases inspected:	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? ⁸	5	4
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe? ⁹	7	7

Nearly every aspect of planning to support desistance and keep other people safe was sufficient. Planning to keep the child safe was not as strong but, overall, work against this standard was rated as 'Outstanding'.

Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?

Of the 8 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?	8	8
Does planning take sufficient account of the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child?	8	8
Does planning take sufficient account of the child's strengths and protective factors, and seek to reinforce or develop these as necessary?	8	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	7
Where applicable, does planning give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s?	6	5
Is the child and their parents/carers meaningfully involved in planning, and are their views taken into account?	8	8

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

⁸ This question is only relevant in cases where there are factors related to keeping the child safe.

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

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	4
Does planning set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote the safety and wellbeing of the	5	5
Does planning set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to manage those risks that have been identified?	5	3

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

Of the 7 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?	7	7
Does planning involve other agencies where appropriate?	6	6
Does planning address any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims?	6	6
Does planning set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote the safety of other people?	7	7
Does planning set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to manage those risks that have been identified?	7	7

Planning was sufficient in all areas. Plans were designed to build on desistance factors in the child's life and were strengths-based. They were individualised to each child and written in a language that they would understand. Where appropriate, planning included the roles of other agencies and partners and included children's family members.

Staff made good use of the Enhanced Case Management provision to formulate a plan for one child. The plan considered the child's life experiences and how he made sense of his world. This led to a strengths-based plan for this child, building on his positive relationships.

Contingency plans were in place should the risk of harm to others, or risk to the child's safety and wellbeing, change. This included the risk decreasing as well as increasing.

Planning was linked well to partner agencies' plans for the child but would have been strengthened by a single plan that was written jointly by all agencies.

In some cases, a lack of feedback from the victim prevented more robust planning in relation to victim safety, but where there was victims' feedback their needs were considered.

2.3. Implementation and delivery



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

Outstanding

Our rating¹⁰ for implementation and delivery is based on the following key questions:

Of the 8 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the child's desistance?	8	8
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of the child? ¹¹	5	5
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people? ¹²	7	7

Implementation and delivery for desistance, keeping the child safe and supporting the safety of others was sufficient in all cases. The overall rating for this standard was deemed to be 'Outstanding'.

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

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

¹⁰ 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.

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

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

In cases when it is required, are enforcement actions taken when appropriate?	2	2
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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	5
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 7 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?	7	7
Where applicable, is sufficient attention given to the protection of actual and potential victims?	6	5
Where applicable, is the involvement of other agencies in managing the risk of harm sufficiently well-coordinated?	3	3

Case managers were skilled in engaging with children and their families and used these skills to develop trusting relationships. They showed flexibility and creativity in setting both the timings and venues for the children to attend YOT appointments, and this helped overcome any barriers to engagement that the child had.

Case managers were able to coordinate and facilitate the work of partner agencies. This meant that services to children were streamlined and children were not overwhelmed with too many professionals working with them at any one time.

Inspectors saw many cases where the support of the specialist staff, such as the mental health worker, education worker or substance misuse worker, provided intervention or guidance that enabled the child to achieve their potential.

Where relevant, children received good support from SARI (Stand Against Racism and Inequality), and this helped them to build a stronger sense of self-worth and identity.

A range of suitable and interesting reparation placements were available for children, which built on their strengths while helping them to make amends for their offending. Following the restrictions introduced by Covid-19, this included writing letters to elderly residents in a care home.

2.4. Reviewing



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

Outstanding

Our rating¹³ for reviewing is based on the following key questions:

Of the 8 cases inspected: ¹⁴	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	7	7
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	7	6
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	4	4

The quality of reviewing was rated as 'Outstanding'. Reviewing for desistance and keeping other people safe was done well in all cases.

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

Of the 7 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?	7	7
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on building upon the child's strengths and enhancing protective factors?	7	7
Does reviewing consider motivation and engagement levels and any relevant barriers?	7	7
Is the child and their parents/carers meaningfully involved in reviewing their progress and engagement, and are their views taken into account?	7	7

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ 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.

Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

Of the 7 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?	7	6
Where applicable, is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in promoting the safety and wellbeing of the child?	5	5
Where applicable, does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	4	3

Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

Of the 4 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?	4	4
Where applicable, is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in managing the risk	4	4
Is the child and their parents/carers meaningfully involved in reviewing their risk of harm, and are their	4	4
Where applicable, does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	4	3

Reviewing was done well. Case managers used information from a range of agencies when undertaking reviews and adjusted the planning and intervention for the child accordingly. This included information from families, as well as police, social care and education.

Cases of children who were presenting concerning behaviour, or whose risk of harm to others, or risk to themselves, was increasing, were discussed at the priority's¹⁵ monthly meetings. Information was shared and reviews of risk of harm to others and safety and wellbeing were considered at these meetings.

Reviews used an up-to-date self-assessment completed by the child, so that their thoughts about themselves were considered.

¹⁵ Priority meetings are the name of the meeting where children with emerging issues are discussed.



3. Out-of-court disposals

We inspected six cases managed by the YOT that had received an out-of-court disposal. These consisted of one youth conditional caution, two youth cautions, and two community resolutions. We also inspected one youth alcohol and drug diversion (YADD) disposal. The YADD disposal is administered by the police and the child referred to the YOT for a substance misuse education intervention. We interviewed the case managers in six 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 three cases 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:

- A harmed person worker attended the decision-making panel, which ensured that the victim's needs and wishes were heard.
- Practitioners liaised well with other agencies and families to respond to the child's needs.
- Planning was strengths-based and responded to concerns raised by the child in their self-assessment.
- Practitioners worked well with children and their families to address a range of issues, including education, emotional and mental health, self-identity, substance misuse and staying safe.
- The YOT worked effectively with the police to implement out-of-court disposals.
- Children were offered ongoing support from the YOT after the requirements of the out-of-court disposal were completed.

Areas for improvement:

- The process for YADD disposals was not personalised and was not based on the child's identified needs.
- The ongoing support for children from voluntary workers did not have a clear plan or structure.

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 rating¹⁶ 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	4
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	6	4
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	6	4

The quality of assessments was 'Good' for most out-of-court disposals. The exception to this was the YADD cases, where assessment was based on a screening tool rather than an assessment.

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 acknowledgement of responsibility, 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	5
Where applicable, does assessment analyse the key structural barriers facing the child?	4	2
Is sufficient attention given to understanding the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change?	6	4
Where applicable, does assessment give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s, and opportunities for	4	4

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 Annex 1 for a more detailed explanation.

Is the child and their parents/carers meaningfully involved in their assessment, and are their views taken into account?	6	5
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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	4
Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including other assessments, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	6	4

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?	4	2
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	2

In most cases, the quality of the assessment for desistance, risk of harm to others and safety and wellbeing was good. Case managers engaged families and children in the assessment and used information from a range of sources, which was evaluated and analysed.

Assessments included information about the child's level of maturity and how well they understood the implications of the out-of-court disposal.

The YADD case, which followed a different process, only had a screening tool completed for it. This was not fully completed, and missing information was not followed up.

3.2. Planning



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

Good

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

Of the 6 cases inspected	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?	6	4
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe? ¹⁸	3	2
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe? ¹⁹	3	2

Planning for most out-of-court disposals was sufficient. Planning was proportionate to the disposal given, with the exception of the YADD case, where planning was not apparent, and did not take the child's circumstances into consideration.

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	5
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	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?	6	5
Does planning take sufficient account of opportunities for community integration, including access to mainstream services following completion of out of court disposal work?	6	4
Where applicable, does planning give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s?	4	4
Is the child and their parents/carers meaningfully involved in planning, and are their views taken into account?	6	4

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.

¹⁹ 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 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	2
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?	3	2
Does planning include necessary contingency arrangements for those risks that have been identified?	3	2

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

Of the 3 cases 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?	3	3
Where applicable, does planning involve other agencies where appropriate?	1	1
Where applicable, does planning address any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims?	2	1
Does planning include necessary contingency arrangements for those risks that have been identified?	3	1

Planning for desistance was done well in most cases. Plans were based on the child's strengths, and inspectors saw examples of where the child had identified concerns in their self-assessment, and these had been identified by the case manager and incorporated into the plans.

For the more complex cases, where a number of agencies were involved, the plans were not always clear about which activity each agency would be leading on. This was especially relevant when the child had remained open to the YOT on a voluntary intervention.

The planning for the YADD disposal was not personalised, nor responsive to any identified needs following the screening.

3.3. Implementation and delivery



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

Good

Our rating²⁰ for implementation and delivery is based on the following key questions:

Of the 6 cases inspected	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does service delivery effectively support the child's desistance?	6	4
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of the child? ²¹	3	2
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of other people? ²²	3	3

Implementation and delivery of services was sufficient to support desistance and safety and wellbeing in most cases, and in all cases where there was a risk of harm to others.

The YADD intervention consists of a 'one-off' education session on substances, which covered the legal status of drugs but was not personalised to the child.

Does service delivery 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	5
Does service delivery reflect the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, involving	6	4
Is sufficient focus given to developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child and their parents/carers?	6	5
Is sufficient attention given to encouraging and enabling the child's compliance with the work of the YOT?	6	5
Does service delivery promote opportunities for community integration, including access to mainstream services?	6	5

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.

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 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	3
Where applicable, is the involvement of other agencies in keeping the child safe sufficiently well utilised and coordinated?	3	2

Does service delivery effectively support the safety of other people?

Of the 3 cases 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?	3	3
Are the delivered services sufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	3	3

For most out-of-court disposals, there was good delivery of services to meet the child's needs. Inspectors saw cases where the speech and language therapist had provided input on how to communicate with the child to ensure they got the best out of the intervention. Specialist seconded staff provided interventions and support. Support from the education worker resulted in two children returning to education. There was also a good intervention in relation to a child who displayed sexually harmful behaviour.

Case managers engaged with parents to support the interventions, and parents were encouraged to put strategies in place to reduce the risks of offending.

Children were referred to specialist community resources for ongoing services.

Implementation of the YADD disposal consisted of a set 50-minute education programme, and therefore was not personalised to meet the child's needs.

3.4. Joint working



Joint working with the police supports the delivery of high-quality, personalised and coordinated services.

Outstanding

Our rating²³ for joint working is based on the following key questions:

Of the 6 cases inspected	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Are the YOT's recommendations sufficiently well-informed, analytical and personalised to the child, supporting joint decision-making?	6	5
Does the YOT work effectively with the police in implementing the out-of-court disposal? ²⁴	1	1

The quality of joint work was rated as 'Outstanding'. In most cases, the YOT was involved in the out-of-court decision-making panel. The panel decided on the appropriate disposal based on a full report which was prepared by the case manager. Inspectors considered the recommendations made to the panel proportionate and appropriate for the cases.

The panel is attended by the police, a YOT practice manager, the harmed person worker and the case manager. Most disposals are then administered by the neighbourhood police sergeant who attends the panel, often with the case manager.

The exception to this process is YADDs, where the disposal is decided and administered by the police.

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

Of the 6 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?	5	5
Do the recommendations consider the degree of the child's understanding of the offence and their acknowledgement of responsibility?	5	5
Where applicable, is a positive contribution made by the YOT to determining the disposal?	5	5

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.

Is sufficient attention given to the child's understanding, and their parents/carers' understanding, of the implications of receiving an	6	4
Is the information provided to inform decision-making timely to meet the needs of the case, legislation and guidance?	5	5
Where applicable, is the rationale for joint disposal decisions appropriate and clearly recorded?	5	5

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

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

In all the cases that went to the decision-making panel, the recommendations were proportionate and appropriate. There was also evidence that the case manager explained to the child and their family the implications of receiving an out-of-court disposal. This included community resolution cases, where the children are required to complete the intervention before the disposal is closed.

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 be 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 Director for Children, Adults and Health delivered a presentation covering the following areas:

- How do organisational delivery arrangements in this area make sure that the work of your YOT 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 14 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.²⁵

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 from 19 June 2019 to 23 September 2019, 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 five), 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.justiceinspectors.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. Six of the cases selected were those of children who had received out-of-court disposals eleven to two 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 six 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 six 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.