

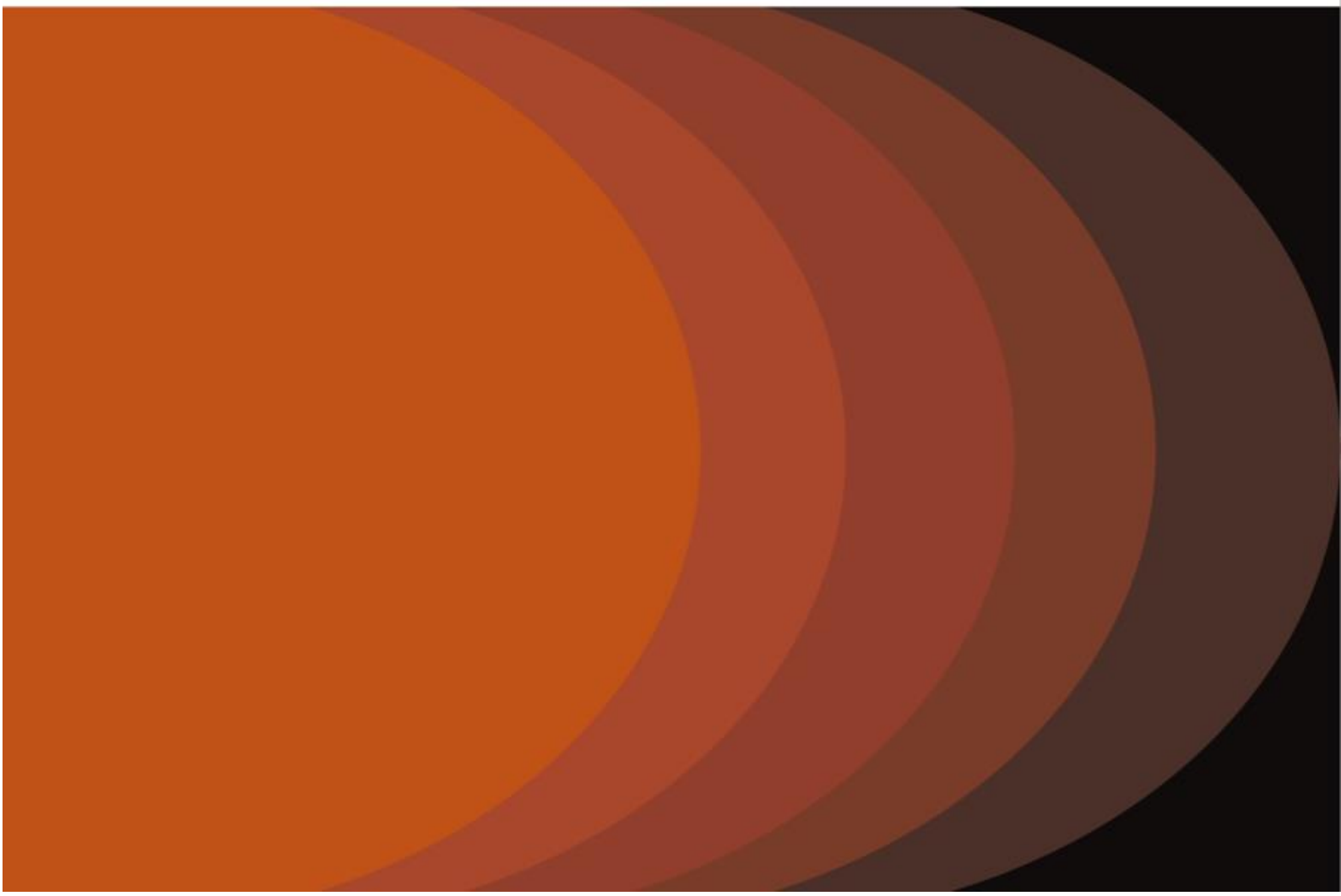


Her Majesty's  
Inspectorate of  
Probation

An inspection of youth offending services in  
**Hartlepool**

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HM Inspectorate of Probation, February 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.

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

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## Introduction

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This inspection is part of our four-year programme of youth offending service (YOS) inspections. We have inspected and rated Hartlepool Youth Justice Service (YJS) 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, Hartlepool YJS was rated as 'Good'.

Our standards are based on established models and frameworks, which are grounded in evidence, learning and experience. They are designed to drive improvements in the quality of work with children who have offended. Published scoring rules generate the overall YOS rating. The findings and subsequent ratings in those domains are described in this report. Our fieldwork, conducted through off-site analysis of case files, and telephone and video conferencing, took place between 26 October and 29 October 2020.

### **Domain one – organisational delivery**

Hartlepool Youth Justice Service (YJS) is a good service. The Board has good representation from partner agencies. Although there has been no Chair in place for nearly a year, the interim Chair knows the YJS well.

Staff are motivated and engaged, and there is excellent health provision to meet the requirements of children. There is a high level of need for substance misuse services, but not enough children are using the service in place. Too many children in Hartlepool are also not having their education needs met.

### **Domain two – court disposals**

Assessments for court cases were outstanding. Staff analysed information well and were skilled at engaging with children and their families. Staff make good use of the speech and language assessments, to ensure that the delivery of interventions meets the needs of the children, and there was an 'easy-read' plan for children.














### **Domain three – out-of-court disposals**

In nearly all cases, out-of-court work was delivered to a high standard. Assessments, planning and joint working were outstanding. There was an out-of-court panel, which had access to a wide range of information to enable the panel to make the right decisions. Staff worked well in sequencing and coordinating interventions to meet the needs of the child.



**Marc Baker**  
Director of Operations

## Ratings

<b>Hartlepool Youth Offending Service</b>		<b>Score</b>	<b>26/36</b>
<b>Overall rating</b>		<b>Good</b>	
<b>1. Organisational delivery</b>			
1.1	Governance and leadership	<b>Requires improvement</b>	
1.2	Staff	<b>Good</b>	
1.3	Partnerships and services	<b>Good</b>	
1.4	Information and facilities	<b>Good</b>	
<b>2. Court disposals</b>			
2.1	Assessment	<b>Outstanding</b>	
2.2	Planning	<b>Good</b>	
2.3	Implementation and delivery	<b>Requires improvement</b>	
2.4	Reviewing	<b>Good</b>	
<b>3. Out-of-court disposals</b>			
3.1	Assessment	<b>Outstanding</b>	
3.2	Planning	<b>Outstanding</b>	
3.3	Implementation and delivery	<b>Good</b>	
3.4	Joint working	<b>Outstanding</b>	

## Recommendations

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

### **The Hartlepool Youth Justice Service Management Board should:**

1. ensure that the identified priorities for the service correspond to the needs of the children supervised by the Hartlepool YJS, to ensure these needs are met
2. work with the relevant partner agencies (virtual school and one-stop shop) to maximise the education, training and employment opportunities for children
3. develop an effective escalation and challenge process with children's social care services
4. confirm a start date for the new Chair of the Board.

### **The Hartlepool Youth Justice Service should:**

5. use the existing process to get feedback from children and their families to develop services.

## Background

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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 multidisciplinary, 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.<sup>1</sup> 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.

Hartlepool is a small unitary authority. It has a high incidence of deprivation, with 28 per cent of its children living in a deprived household, making it the eighth most deprived authority nationwide.

Children supervised by the youth justice service (YJS) have complex needs, with the majority experiencing some problems with substance misuse, half of them being current cases with children’s social care services, and many not in full-time education, training and employment. In addition, it is estimated that one in five children in Hartlepool live with one or more of the ‘toxic trio’ (domestic abuse, mental health problems and substance misuse).

The youth court is in Middleborough, and the YJS has an arrangement with the local YOT in that area to provide court services for Hartlepool children. The police custody suite is also ‘out of area’, and Hartlepool YJS staff provide the appropriate adult service to their children in police custody.

The YJS is located within the council’s children’s and joint commissioning services directorate. The service manager is managed by the assistant director of children’s services, who also acts as the interim Chair of the Management Board.

The YJS is performing well on the YJB reduction of ‘first-time entrants’ indicator. Recent data on reoffending has been more difficult to obtain, but a manual analysis indicated that reoffending is still above the national average.

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

## Contextual facts

### Population information

<b>93,663</b>	Total population Hartlepool (2019) <sup>2</sup>
<b>8,902</b>	Total youth population (10–17 years) in Hartlepool (2019) <sup>2</sup>

### Demographics of children cautioned or sentenced<sup>3</sup>

Age	10–14 years	15–17 years
Hartlepool YJS	32%	68%
National average	<b>23%</b>	<b>77%</b>

Race/ethnicity	White	Black and minority ethnic	Unknown
Hartlepool YJS	97%	3%	0%
National average	<b>70%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>4%</b>

Gender	Male	Female
Hartlepool YJS	86%	14%
National average	<b>85%</b>	<b>15%</b>

### Additional caseload data<sup>4</sup>

<b>5</b>	Total current caseload: community sentences
<b>1</b>	Total current caseload in custody
<b>1</b>	Total current caseload on licence
<b>15</b>	Total current caseload: youth caution, youth conditional caution, triage

<sup>2</sup> Office for National Statistics. (2020). *UK population estimates, mid-2019*.

<sup>3</sup> Youth Justice Board. (2020). *Youth justice annual statistics: 2018 to 2019*.

<sup>4</sup> Information supplied by YOT, reflecting caseload on 19 October 2020.

# 1. Organisational delivery



## Strengths:

- There is excellent health provision that meets the physical, emotional and mental health needs of Hartlepool children.
- The out-of-court offer is good, with children receiving an intervention following a triage disposal, and a second triage is available for suitable cases.
- The management team is accessible and approachable to staff.
- The police officer has oversight of all children in Hartlepool subject to 'released under investigation' and out-of-court disposals, and monitors these cases to reduce the delay in outcomes.
- Staff are committed and motivated to meet the needs of the children.
- Staff have received training on speech and language need and trauma-informed practice.
- Staff have access to the databases, and information technology they need to enable them to find and share information about children. They have tablet computers for direct work with children and families.
- The premises are suitable and well located, and there is an additional community centre available for group work, with kitchen and laundry facilities.
- Feedback from children and families is collected and collated at the end of the intervention.

## Areas for improvement:

- A new Board Chair is required to lead the Management Board, and a thorough induction should take place with the post holder.
- YJS priorities are not specific enough to address the particular needs of the children supervised by the service.
- Not enough children supervised by Hartlepool YJS are achieving full-time education, training or employment. Relationships with academies are not fully developed, and there should be an increase in post-16 provision that meets the needs of these children.
- More work can be done on learning from other services, research and HM Inspectorate of Probation reports.
- 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.



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## 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?**

The youth justice plan for 2019/2020 sets out the vision and priorities for the YJS, and was agreed and signed off by the Board. Staff were consulted on the plan, and the priorities for the YJS were developed in consultation with managers, staff and Board members. Performance in relation to these priorities are reported on at each Board meeting. The priorities are closely aligned to YJB national standards and performance measures but are not responsive or bespoke to the particular needs of children supervised by Hartlepool YJS.

In line with YJB requirements, and in response to Covid-19, a business continuity plan is in place.

According to the Board's constitution, the Chair should be a police lead, as part of the Cleveland Police contribution to the YJS. The previous Chair left in December 2019, but it has not been possible to induct a new Chair into the role. There has been no police representation at the Board during this time. The interim children's social care Chair is currently chairing the Management Board, and has a good knowledge of the YJS.

With the exception of the police, the Board has representation from all statutory partners, as well as some non-statutory agencies, such as community safety and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. Board member representation is at a sufficient level of seniority where strategic decisions can be made. The courts are represented by the clerk to the court but she has not attended a meeting for some time, and there is no representation from the voluntary sector. There is an induction in place for new Board members.

While some Board members have a good operational knowledge of the YJS, this is not shared across all the members. This was recognised, and opportunities to shadow the work of the service are being developed. Owing to Covid-19, this has not moved forward.

The Board receives reports which describe performance in relation to the priorities, and has also recently had a case study presentation from the therapeutic intervention care pathway (TICP). The Board would benefit from more detailed information about the range of interventions provided by the YJS, and more analysis of areas where the children are not achieving their potential – for example, in education attendance. The Board should better understand why there is an over-representation of Looked After Children in the YJS caseload and take steps to address this.

## **Do the partnership arrangements actively support effective service delivery?**

YJS Management Board members are focused appropriately on the needs of children and the delivery of high-quality services to them. Board members advocate for the YJS in their own agencies; for example, the clinical commissioning group has commissioned a comprehensive therapeutic service, including training on trauma-informed practice, speech and language provision, psychological support and nursing provision, in response to reports on key data and Board discussions.

There is no education worker in the YJS, but the service links in with the virtual school, where workers can refer children and seek advice and information from that team. YJS staff attend the regular vulnerable children's group to review their education needs. All YJS children are identified as meeting that criterion, and are discussed at the meetings. The number of children supervised by the YJS whose education or training needs have not been met is high, with only two of the current caseload being in mainstream education, and seven not in education, training or employment. This represents one-third of the total caseload, and is too high.

The YJS has strong links with Cleveland Police, and the seconded police officer meets with the police early intervention coordinators and school liaison officers. This team works with children who have been identified as being at risk of getting involved in criminal behaviour, and provides intervention and support. The seconded officer has also undertaken a series of briefing and training events for operational police, to raise awareness of the out-of-court process and the work of the YJS. All cases involving a possible criminal outcome for children are allocated to this officer on the police recording system, which allows her to track these cases. Since this process has been in place, there has been an increase in the quality of referrals and a decrease in the time for each case to be closed, meaning quicker outcomes for children.

The police officer also uploads any speech and language assessment onto their system, so should a child come to the attention of the police, they will have a better understanding of the child's language needs. The police are also actively tracking cases that have been 'released under investigation',<sup>5</sup> to ensure that these are regularly reviewed and that any unnecessary delays on charging decisions are minimised.

There is joint work with partner agencies for children who are vulnerable or present a risk of harm to others. There is a group email process for organisations involved with these children, to ensure that all information is shared to everyone in a timely manner. The YJS is also a member of key strategic and operational groups, such as the vulnerable, exploited, missing, trafficked (VEMT) team, vulnerable children's group and community safety partnership.

## **Does the leadership of the YOT support effective service delivery?**

The service manager for the YJS also manages the intensive response team, which provides parenting support for families at risk of breakdown. He provides direct line supervision for the probation officer, senior business officer and the nurse. He is

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<sup>5</sup> 'Release under investigation' started to become practice in 2017 and has largely replaced 'release on police bail'.


supported by an assistant team manager and a senior youth justice officer. He is line managed by the assistant director for children and families.

The service has experienced a period of transition, with a new service manager and a team manager moving on, which was a major change in the leadership for a small team.

Staff are aware of the role of the Management Board, although none have attended Board meetings. The operational managers have attended the Board in a support capacity for the service manager. In the staff survey, all staff said that they were aware of the activities of the Management Board.

The YJS management team provides clear direction and makes sure that staff have the right level of training, guidance and supervision to deliver the strategy set by the Board. There are regular meetings, and information, including performance data, is shared with the staff.

Management oversight is excellent for out-of-court disposals but requires improvement for post-court orders. In the opinion of the inspectors, there was sufficient management oversight in every out-of-court disposal but in only four out of six post-court cases.

<b>1.2. Staff</b>	
Staff within the YOT are empowered to deliver a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children.	Good

### Key staffing data<sup>6</sup>

Total staff headcount (full-time equivalent, FTE)	30
Average caseload per case manager (FTE)	3

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 YJS is staffed with a full complement of case managers and seconded staff from police, probation and health services. There are also a number of sessional staff who deliver the reparation work. Reparation is completed on Saturdays and during the school holidays.

Caseloads are low, allowing staff to spend time with the children they supervise, build effective working relationships and deliver a personalised service to the children.

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

<sup>6</sup> Data supplied by the YOT and reflecting the caseload at the time of the inspection announcement.

The YOT has access to a small number of volunteers, including panel members, and a mentor. All volunteers report that the communication, training and support are good.

Court duty work is delivered by an experienced court worker from a neighbouring YOT. Feedback from the court was very positive.

Victim contact work was brought in-house, after a period during which it was delivered by a commissioned service. The victim worker is an experienced youth justice practitioner, who also manages a small caseload of out-of-court cases. This combined workload is manageable.

There is no education worker in the YJS. The YJS has links to the virtual school, where it can refer children who have education needs, and which has a link worker. There is also a named link worker for the 'one stop shop' for children over 16. Despite these arrangements, too many children supervised by the YJS were not attending 25 hours a week of education, training or employment.

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

In our staff survey, every member of staff stated that they were highly motivated to deliver high-quality services. In the same survey, a member of staff said:

*"We all know our children really well. We all have a passion to achieve the best outcome for the children we work with".*

Evidence from the cases inspected demonstrated that staff are skilled at building constructive working relationships with children and their families.

Staff deliver a range of interventions to meet the needs of the children they are supervising. This includes a regionally developed 'You Turn' intervention programme for driving offences. This has been developed using a high-profile local case, and so has more resonance with the children. They also deliver the 'One Punch' programme, on the consequences of violence. Staff have access to resources on substance misuse from the local provider, which was, until recently, co-located in the YJS premises.

A child, who was subject to bail supervision, has helped to create a knife crime programme, which is delivered by the police officer.

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

In all cases, there was management oversight, and inspected staff reported that this was sufficient. Inspectors agreed with this for all out-of-court cases but identified that management oversight was insufficient in two post-court cases. In both these cases, an escalation to children's social care services was required.

Nearly all respondents to the staff survey rated the quality of their supervision as quite good or very good. Staff said that the management team was visible and approachable.

All seconded staff retain strong links with their parent agency, attending team meetings and having access to relevant databases and sources of information. With the exception of the police officer, who is supervised by the senior youth justice officer, all seconded staff are supervised by the service manager. The probation officer has case supervision from the assistant team manager, but is line managed

by the service manager. There is the potential for this to create confused lines of accountability.

### **Are arrangements for learning and development comprehensive and responsive?**

In the staff survey, over 80 per cent of staff said that their training needs were fully met. Staff have the benefit of a comprehensive training programme on speech and language needs and the effects of trauma on childhood development, and how that relates to offending. There was evidence of the impact of this training in the cases inspected.

There has been no recent training on managing risk of harm to others.

There was evidence of training needs being identified as a consequence of quality assurance exercises or audits, and training being delivered as a response to this. New staff had an induction programme which consisted of a range of shadowing and training opportunities, and their feedback suggested that this met their needs.

The service manager is currently completing a strategic management training programme, and the two operational managers have received management training.

All staff receive an appraisal, where development and training are discussed. All staff in the post-court team are qualified in either social work or probation services. There are limited opportunities for staff to progress from the pre-court to post-court team, but staff did not identify this as a concern, and reported that they felt equally valued.

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### **1.3. Partnerships and services**



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

Good

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

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

The service manager has developed an analysis tool to understand better the identified needs of the children supervised by the YJS. This tool identified a high level of emotional and mental health needs among the children. This led to the commissioning arrangements that are now in place for the TICP and Alliance Psychological Services.

There are no children from a black, Asian and minority ethnic background currently in the YJS.

More work needs to be completed to develop a detailed understanding of the children that the YJS supervises. For example, there is no analysis of whether Looked After Children are over-represented, or of the specific issues that are preventing children from attending full-time education.

The YJS provides a management report to the Board, which includes performance against the YJB national indicators. The service has recently completed its own

manual reoffending analysis, as national information is not currently available. Information is provided to the Board on age, ethnicity, gender, outcome and offence type. This information differentiates between a referral and an outcome, allowing the YJS to demonstrate that the work it carries out that does not relate directly to outcomes, such as requests for an appropriate adult.

Performance reports identify a high rate of referral orders, sometimes repeat referral orders, and of custody cases, with very few youth rehabilitation orders, but there has been no analysis to understand this unusual sentencing profile.

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

The majority of staff and volunteers completed the survey and said that they had sufficient access to the services, interventions and partnership resources they need to work with children. A member of staff said:

*“Our health offer to children ... is excellent. We focus on not just the offence but wider issues that may have contributed to the offence being committed – that is, [using a] trauma-informed approach, [addressing] speech [and] language needs, [with input from] Alliance, and a YJS nurse. Building a rapport with [the person] is important, especially when there has been any trauma in their life”.*

This was confirmed in the cases inspected, with inspectors noting that there was access to appropriate resources in all out-of-court cases and most of the post-court cases. Gaps were identified in relation to children’s social care.

There is a comprehensive health pathway, which includes input from a speech and language therapist, specialised child and adolescent mental health services, Alliance Psychological Services and a YJS nurse. Staff working with children who are open to the TICP also receive clinical supervision, to assist them in their work.

While there is no embedded education worker, the YJS has strong links with the virtual school, which has identified all YJS children as vulnerable and therefore able to access all of its the services. Although this is helpful, there are still too many children in Hartlepool who do not have their education needs met.

Until recently, the substance misuse team was co-located in the YJS offices, and staff could access their knowledge and resources. Despite this, there was a low uptake of these services and a waiting list of referrals. The contract for this service is currently being recommissioned, but the benefits of this change will not be seen for some time.

All appropriate secondments, including police and probation staff, are in place. The police officer has links with the police early intervention team, which works in schools and with children at risk of offending.

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

The YJS has good links with partner agencies. The service manager is also the manager for the intensive response team, which provides interventions for families on the edge of breakdown. In the inspected cases, there was evidence of joint work with this team.

The YJS is represented on the vulnerable children's group, for children with education needs, and the VEMT team, and the service manager attends community safety partnership meetings and safeguarding meetings.

Developing a greater range of interventions is an area that the youth justice plan has identified as needing further work, and inspectors did not see evidence of any bespoke interventions for girls. Staff have access to a number of the bespoke interventions mentioned in the previous sections.

Staff share YouTube clips they have found for work with children, and share interventions they have used, but this is done on an ad hoc basis, rather than developing a resource portfolio.

There is a good offer of reparation placements available for children. This is available on Saturdays and during school holidays. Placements can be 'victim driven', where the victim directs the placement, or it is delivered directly to the victim. A recent beach clean project was developed into a piece of art, which was put on display at the local library and then the YJB annual convention.

### **Involvement of children and their parents or carers**

The YJS has developed a process of capturing the feedback from children and their parents or carers at the end of an intervention. A Survey Monkey questionnaire is completed at the last session with their case manager.

The information is collated, and has been presented to Board members. However, the staff team was not aware of what happened to this information, and there was no evidence of it being used to develop or amend services.

As part of the inspection process, we invite children to complete a text survey. Of the five completed responses, the average score the children gave the YJS was nearly 9/10, with one child commenting:

*"They are friendly and supportive".*

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## **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 high-quality service, meeting the needs of all children?**

The YJS has all the necessary policies and procedures in place, and most of these had been reviewed in a timely manner. In our staff survey, over 60 per cent said that they understood the policies very well. In some cases, the policies were very long and there was no quick guide available to staff who might need to understand a particular policy swiftly.

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

Owing to the Covid-19 pandemic, we were unable to view the YOT facilities, but most staff and volunteers reported that these are suitable for delivering work to children, with private interview rooms. The YJS is based in the town's main shopping centre, above the 'one stop shop'. This is well located and allows children to visit two services at the same time.

The YJS also has access to alternative premises in the town centre, which have kitchen and laundry facilities, and are suitable for reparation and groupwork.

Prior to Covid-19, all referral order panel meetings took place in a local community centre, which is in line with the principle and ethos of the referral order, which were developed to reintegrate children back into their communities.

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

Staff have access to appropriate ICT, which enables them to deliver services. They have tablet computers for work with children, and can use a range of internet-based resources and materials. They also have mobile phones, and now have laptop computers for working from home.

Staff have access to the children's social care database, to identify which children are open to children's services. They also have access to the education database, to monitor school attendance. All the seconded staff have access to their agencies' databases, to access and input information. Staff at the YJS do not currently have access to the community safety database.

The seconded police officer uses the 'notify if' flag on the Niche police recording system. This means that she is informed if any children known to the YJS come to police attention overnight for any reason, such as arrests, intelligence or being a victim of crime.

There is a central Hartlepool information team, which provides statistical information for Board reports. This is checked by the senior business officer and service manager. The case management system provides some performance information, but the needs analysis information has to be gathered on a manual basis, and spreadsheets have been developed to capture this. This is time consuming for the service manager.

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

The Board has identified a number of priorities for the YJS, and progress on these is reported at each Board meeting, but there has been a lack of a more dynamic response to new or developing information. For example, there has not been a benchmarking exercise following an HM Inspectorate of Probation resettlement report.

An improvement plan has been developed in response to quality assurance audits which has identified further training and monitoring activities to improve the quality of casework



## 2. Court disposals



We took a detailed look at four community sentences and two custodial sentences managed by the YJS. We also conducted six 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 were good and analysed all aspects of the child's life that could have an impact on their desistance, safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm to others.
- There was an 'easy-read' plan which was written in a way that was understandable to the child.
- Practitioners spent time at the beginning of court orders to build a constructive working relationship with the child they supervised.
- Appointment times and venues were arranged to best meet children's needs.
- There was good joint working between the health practitioners and case managers to address the complex health needs of children.
- Reviewing was completed in a timely manner, taking account of all new information.

### Areas for improvement:

- Contingency planning to keep children safe was not always detailed or specific enough to be effective.
- Escalation of safety and wellbeing concerns to children's social care was not always effective.

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 or carers.

Outstanding

Our rating<sup>7</sup> 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	6
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	6	6
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	6	6

We rated assessment of cases as 'Outstanding'. In every case inspected, across desistance, safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm to others, the assessments were of a good quality. Practitioners made good use of a wide variety of sources of information, and integrated information from the self-assessment questionnaire into the core of the 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 attitudes towards and motivations for their offending?	6	6
Does assessment consider the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, utilising information held by other agencies?	6	6
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	6
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	6

<sup>7</sup> 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 give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s, and opportunities for restorative justice?	6	4
Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in their assessment, and are their views taken into account?	6	5

### **Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?**

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

### **Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?**

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

Assessments were informed by inputs from a variety of sources, including children's social care, police, education and health services. Practitioners analysed this information to form a balanced picture of the child, considering their desistance, safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm to others.

Assessments demonstrated a good understanding of the role and impact of family for the children, as both a protective and risk factor. In most cases, consideration was given to the needs and wishes of the victim.

Inspectors agreed with the assessed levels of safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm to others in every case.

Practitioners used a trauma-informed model when completing their assessments and understood the impact of the child’s lived experience on their current circumstances and likelihood of offending. Practitioners had a balanced approach of considering past behaviour, including behaviour that had not resulted in a criminal outcome.

## 2.2. Planning



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

Good

Our rating<sup>8</sup> 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	6
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe? <sup>9</sup>	6	4
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe? <sup>10</sup>	6	4

Planning to support desistance was done well in every case inspected but was less strong for safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm to others. Planning demonstrated a good understanding of the need to sequence interventions, and there were links to other agencies’ plans. Contingency planning was less strong for safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm to others.

### 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	6
Does planning take sufficient account of the child’s strengths and protective factors, and seek to reinforce or develop these as necessary?	6	6

<sup>8</sup> 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.

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

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

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	4
Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in planning, and are their views taken into account?	6	6

### Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

Of the 6 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?	6	4
Does planning involve other agencies where appropriate, and is there sufficient alignment with other plans (for example, child protection or care plans) concerning the child?	6	6
Does planning set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	6	4
Does planning set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to manage those risks that have been identified?	6	5

### Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

Of the 6 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?	6	4
Does planning involve other agencies where appropriate?	6	5
Does planning address any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims?	6	4
Does planning set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote the safety of other people?	6	4
Does planning set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to manage those risks that have been identified?	6	4

The YJS has developed a specific plan which is designed to be easier for a child to read. Inspectors saw good examples of these plans being used across all court disposals. Planning built in capacity and space for building a positive working relationship with the child before a more challenging intervention took place, and there was clear evidence that practitioners thought about the sequencing of the work, dovetailing with the other professionals involved in the child’s supervision.

Planning identified where and when the interventions were to take place, including venue and time, taking into consideration all the needs of the child.

Planning was often well aligned with other agencies’ plans. While this was good, and there was evidence that the plans cross-referenced each other, in many cases children were subject to multiple plans, which could be confusing for the child and their family, and meant that there was no single plan which identified the work that was to take place.

Contingency planning for changes in risk of harm to others, and safety and wellbeing was done less well than desistance in some cases, and there was limited planning for if and when a child disengaged from services.

### 2.3. Implementation and delivery



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

Requires improvement

Our rating<sup>11</sup> for implementation and delivery is based on the following key questions:

Of the 5 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the child’s desistance?	5	5
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of the child? <sup>12</sup>	5	3
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people? <sup>13</sup>	5	3

Implementation and delivery to support desistance was done well in all cases, but was not as strong for safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm to others. There was evidence of the positive impact of the comprehensive health offer in the cases inspected.

<sup>11</sup> 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.

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

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

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

<b>Of the 5 cases inspected:</b>	<b>Relevant cases</b>	<b>Number 'Yes'</b>
Are the delivered services those most likely to support desistance, with sufficient attention given to sequencing and the available timescales?	5	5
Does service delivery reflect the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, involving parents or carers, or significant others?	5	5
Does service delivery build upon the child's strengths and enhance protective factors?	5	5
Is sufficient focus given to developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child and their parents or carers?	5	5
Does service delivery promote opportunities for community integration, including access to services post-supervision?	5	5
Is sufficient attention given to encouraging and enabling the child's compliance with the work of the YOT?	5	4
In cases where it is required, are enforcement actions taken when appropriate?	3	2

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

<b>Of the 5 with factors related to keeping the child safe:</b>	<b>Relevant cases</b>	<b>Number 'Yes'</b>
Does service delivery promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	5	3
Where applicable, is the involvement of other organisations in keeping the child safe sufficiently well-coordinated?	5	3

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

<b>Of the 5 cases with factors related to keeping other people safe:</b>	<b>Relevant cases</b>	<b>Number 'Yes'</b>
Are the delivered services sufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	5	3

Where applicable, is sufficient attention given to the protection of actual and potential victims?	5	3
Where applicable, is the involvement of other agencies in managing the risk of harm sufficiently well-coordinated?	5	3

Practitioners were skilled in engaging with the children and their families, and invested time in building constructive relationships. They took account of the communication needs of the children when delivering interventions, sometimes going at a slower pace to ensure that the child understood the aims of the intervention. Practitioners delivered intervention programmes that met the offending-related needs of each child.

For children open to the TICP, there was a good programme of interventions, delivered in partnership between the case manager and specialist workers.

There were examples where practitioners had actively escalated concerns to children's social care services, and this had sometimes resulted in an increased provision of services to support the child's safety and wellbeing needs. At other times, however, there was a lack of a partnership response to the needs of the children, leaving the YJS as the single agency managing the child's needs. On occasion, this was not sufficient.

## 2.4. Reviewing



Reviewing of progress is well informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents or carers.	Good
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Our rating<sup>14</sup> for reviewing is based on the following key questions:

Of the 6 cases inspected: <sup>15</sup>	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	6	4
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	6	4
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	6	4

We rated reviewing for desistance, safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm to others as 'Good', with case managers taking account of changes in the child's circumstances and using information from a range of sources to complete the review.

<sup>14</sup> 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.

<sup>15</sup> 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 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	4
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on building upon the child's strengths and enhancing protective factors?	6	5
Does reviewing consider motivation and engagement levels and any relevant barriers?	6	5
Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in reviewing their progress and engagement, and are their views taken into account?	6	6

### Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

Of the 6 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?	6	4
Where applicable, is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in promoting the safety and wellbeing of the child?	6	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?	6	4

### Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

Of the 6 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?	6	4
Where applicable, is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in managing the risk of harm?	6	4
Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in reviewing their risk of harm, and are their views taken into account?	6	4
Where applicable, does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	5	3

Reviews considered a full range of documentation, not just AssetPlus. They were completed at risk management meetings, Looked After Children reviews and VEMT team meetings. Reviews were completed in a timely manner, taking account of significant changes in circumstances and information from a range of different agencies. In most cases, the child and their parents or carers were involved in the reviewing process.

There was clear evidence of management oversight in the reviewing process.

In most cases, reviewing resulted in a change in the delivery of the intervention, if that was needed; however, this was not always the case, and there were examples where reviewing was completed without resulting in any changes in the delivery of interventions for the child.

### 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 and three triage disposals. We interviewed the case managers in all four 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 four cases where safety and wellbeing concerns were identified, we looked at work done to safeguard the child. We also looked at the quality of joint working with local police.

#### Strengths:

- The decision-making panel has access to a wide range of information, to enable it to make appropriate, timely and proportionate decisions.
- Assessments were analytical and made good use of all information available.
- There was good communication and liaison with other agencies to meet the needs of the children.
- Joint working with other agencies was used well.
- Interventions were sequenced.
- Practitioners engaged well with children and their families.

#### Areas for improvement:

- Interventions did not always start in a timely manner.

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 or carers.

Outstanding

Our rating<sup>16</sup> 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	4
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	4	4
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	4	4

In every case inspected, the quality of the assessment was good across all three aspects: desistance, safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm to others. The YJB AssetPlus assessment tool was used for all out-of-court assessments, including triage cases.

#### 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	3
Does assessment consider the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, utilising information held by other agencies?	4	4
Does assessment focus on the child's strengths and protective factors?	4	4
Where applicable, does assessment analyse the key structural barriers facing the child?	4	4
Is sufficient attention given to understanding the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change?	4	4

<sup>16</sup> 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.

Where applicable, does assessment give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s, and opportunities for restorative justice?	3	2
Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in their assessment, and are their views taken into account?	4	4

### 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	3
Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including other assessments, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	4	3

### 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?	4	4
Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including any other assessments that have been completed, and other evidence of behaviour by the child?	4	4

Assessments were completed using a wide range of information from a variety of sources, including children's social care services, the police, victim feedback, health services, and speech and language services. This included chronologies of previous life events. This information was evaluated and analysed to understand the child's offending. Past information was also evaluated and compared with current circumstances.

Case managers engaged children and families in their assessment, and information from the self-assessment questionnaire was incorporated into the core document. Assessments made good use of family information, including the role of the family as both a protective and risk factor.

In nearly every case, there was sufficient attention given to the needs and wishes of the victims.

### 3.2. Planning



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

Outstanding

Our rating<sup>17</sup> 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? <sup>18</sup>	4	4
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe? <sup>19</sup>	3	3

Planning was evaluated across a range of plans that the child was subject to, including AssetPlus and the YJS easy-read document, and plans from other agencies. Planning for all out-of-court disposals was sufficient across desistance, safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm to others.

#### 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	4
Does planning take sufficient account of the child's strengths and protective factors, and seek to reinforce or develop these as necessary?	4	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?	4	4
Does planning take sufficient account of opportunities for community integration, including access to mainstream	4	3

<sup>17</sup> 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.

<sup>18</sup> This question is only relevant in cases where there are factors related to keeping the child safe.

<sup>19</sup> This question is only relevant in cases where there are factors related to keeping other people safe.

services following completion of out-of-court disposal work?		
Where applicable, does planning give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s?	3	2
Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in planning, and are their views taken into account?	4	4

### Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

Of the 4 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?	4	4
Where applicable, does planning involve other agencies where appropriate, and is there sufficient alignment with other plans (for example, child protection or care plans) concerning the child?	4	4
Does planning include necessary contingency arrangements for those risks that have been identified?	4	4

### 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?	3	3
Where applicable, does planning address any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims?	3	3
Does planning include necessary contingency arrangements for those risks that have been identified?	3	3

Planning was done well in all out-of-court disposal cases. In all cases, the motivation of the child to engage with their interventions was fully considered. Their parents or carers were involved in the planning process. There were examples of planning which involved a number of agencies working together to support the child and their family, and plans identified which agency would lead on each area of concern for the child.

There was good use of other agencies' services to meet the needs of the child and, if it was in the best interest of the child, the planning identified where joint sessions with other agencies would be used.

There was planning with parents or carers on how they could manage in a crisis and what steps the family could take to ensure the safety and wellbeing of their child.

At times, children were subject to multiple plans, including YJS, early help, police and healthcare plans. This could be confusing for the child, and difficult for staff to identify which plan had priority.

### 3.3. Implementation and delivery



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

Good

Our rating<sup>20</sup> for implementation and delivery is based on the following key questions:

Of the 4 cases inspected:	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? <sup>21</sup>	4	4
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of other people? <sup>22</sup>	3	3

Implementation and delivery for safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm to others was done well in all cases. The delivery of work for desistance was done less well in one case, and this resulted in a rating of 'Good' for this area of work.

#### 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 or carers, or significant others?	4	3

<sup>20</sup> 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.

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

<sup>22</sup> 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 or carers?	4	4
Is sufficient attention given to encouraging and enabling the child's compliance with the work of the YOT?	4	4
Does service delivery promote opportunities for community integration, including access to mainstream services?	4	4

### **Does service delivery effectively support the safety of the child?**

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

### **Does service delivery effectively support the safety of other people?**

<b>Of the 3 cases with factors related to the safety of other people:</b>	<b>Relevant cases</b>	<b>Number 'Yes'</b>
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	2

The delivery of interventions and services for safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm to others was done well in all cases. Inspectors saw examples of staff carefully sequencing the work to meet the child's needs. There was good multi-agency working with the children and families, which was coordinated by the case managers, ensuring that the children were not overwhelmed and could manage the requirements of the out-of-court disposal.

Staff made good use of an email trail process to ensure that all agencies working with the child were aware of any updates, changes in circumstances and how the child had responded to sessions that had been delivered. This ensured that all agencies were aware of what was happening, and that there was no overlap of work or appointments.

Staff made good use of other agencies to deliver services to children, including Alliance Healthcare and the early help team. Interventions were delivered in a bespoke way, based on the child's speech and language needs.

Implementation and delivery for desistance was done less well, with some delay in interventions starting. Timeliness is crucial for out-of-court disposals as these are often short, focused interventions.

### 3.4. Joint working



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

Outstanding

Our rating<sup>23</sup> for joint working is based on the following key questions:

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

We rated the quality of joint work as 'Outstanding'. In all cases, the YJS was involved in the out-of-court decision-making panel. The panel consisted of the seconded police officer, senior youth justice officer and victim worker. They made joint decisions based on information from a range of databases, including health, children's social care, police, as well as their own information. If it was deemed appropriate, additional members could be co-opted onto the panel to assist with decision-making.

The panel decided on the nature of the disposal, but not the content of the requirements. A full AssetPlus assessment was completed on all cases, to develop the plan and content of the out-of-court disposal.

#### 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	4
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

<sup>23</sup> 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.

<sup>24</sup> This question is only relevant in youth conditional caution cases.

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

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

<b>Of the 1 case with youth conditional cautions:</b>	<b>Relevant cases</b>	<b>Number 'Yes'</b>
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

Joint working was of a sufficient standard in all the cases we inspected. In all cases, the YJS made a positive contribution to determining the disposal decision. The child's individual circumstances were considered when deciding what the best disposal would be, and in every case the implications of receiving an out-of-court disposal for children and their parents and carers had been made clear to them.

In every case, the disposal and interventions were proportionate and appropriate, with decisions taken in a timely manner.

## Annexe 1: Methodology

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### 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.<sup>25</sup>

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 service manager, together with the assistant director, delivered a presentation covering the following areas:

- How do organisational delivery arrangements in this area make sure that the work of your youth offending service 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 10 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.<sup>25</sup>

### 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 two to 11 months earlier, enabling us to examine work in relation to assessing, planning, implementing and reviewing. Where necessary, interviews with other people closely 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,

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<sup>25</sup> HM Inspectorate's standards are available here: <https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmiprobation/about-our-work/our-standards-and-ratings/>

and risk to safety and wellbeing classifications matched those in the eligible population.

### Domain three: out-of-court disposals

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

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 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 when 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 10 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.