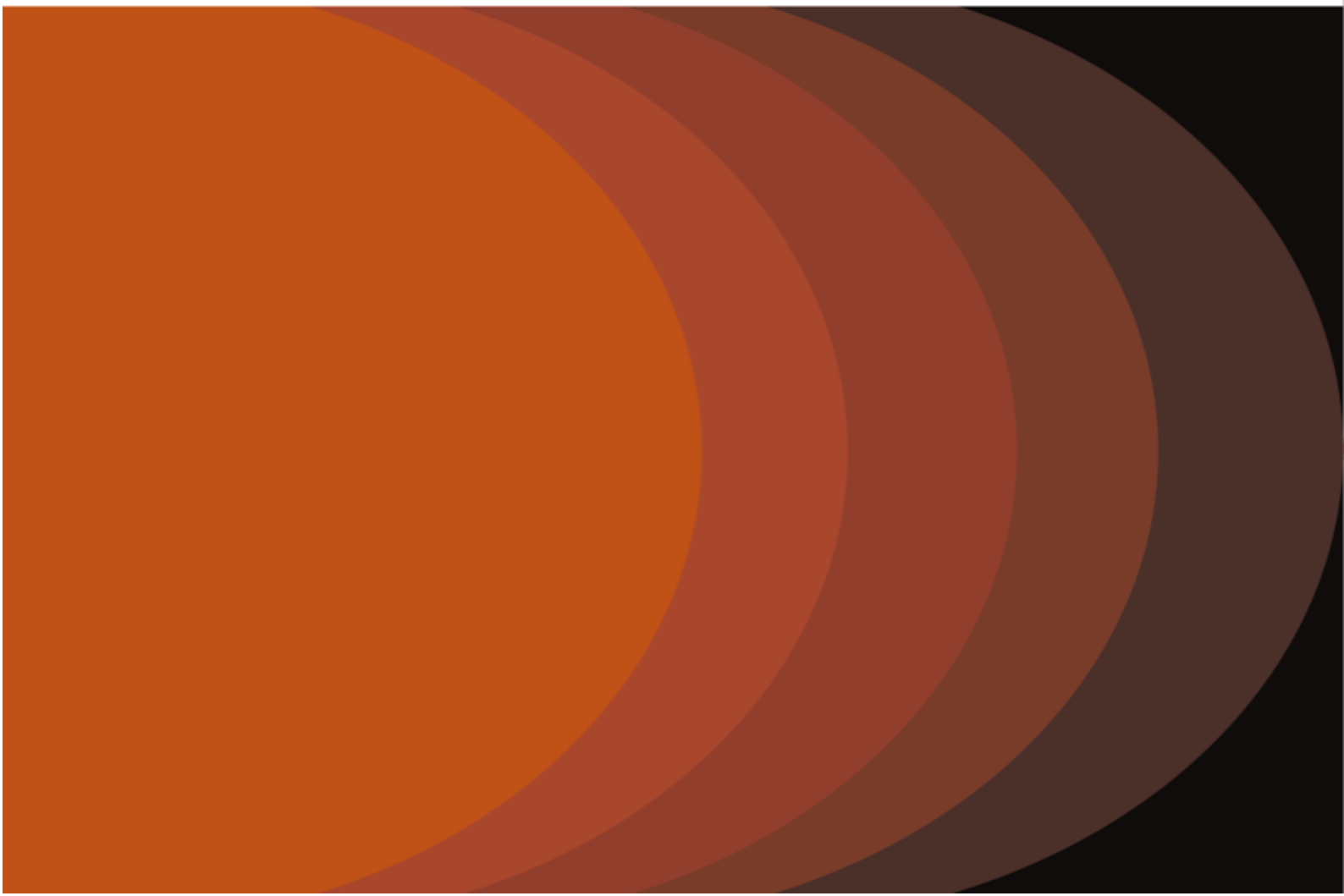




Her Majesty's
Inspectorate of
Probation

An inspection of youth offending services in
Kensington & Chelsea

HM Inspectorate of Probation, March 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 the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea 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, Kensington & Chelsea YOT was rated as 'Good'.

Our standards are based on established models and frameworks, which are grounded in evidence, learning and experience. They are designed to drive improvements in the quality of work with children who have offended. Published scoring rules generate the overall YOS rating. The findings and subsequent ratings in those domains are described in this report. Our fieldwork, conducted through off-site analysis of case files and phone and video conferencing, took place between 19 October and 22 October 2020.

Kensington & Chelsea YOT's organisational delivery is outstanding. Its Youth Crime Partnership Board and management team provide effective leadership, working collaboratively with partners to provide services that meet the assessed needs of children and victims. The YOT is well resourced; staff are empowered to take a personalised and responsive approach to practice, and children have access to a broad range of evidence-based services and interventions. This is an ambitious organisation that continually strives to strengthen provision and learn from mistakes.

Some aspects of case management are excellent, and we found that work to support desistance was thorough and achieved positive outcomes.














In the YOT's post-court work, the implementation and delivery of services and quality of review were sufficient in every case. Planning was good but assessment of the risk of harm a child posed to other people was unsatisfactory.

In the out-of-court cases we inspected, the YOT's assessment to support the safety and wellbeing of the child and to understand the risk of harm they posed required improvement, as did planning to keep other people safe. However, the YOT worked effectively to make sure that the right services and interventions were delivered, and the joint approach with the police to implement the disposal was a strength.



Marc Baker
Director of Operations

Ratings

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

Recommendations

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

The Kensington & Chelsea Youth Offending Service should:

1. take steps to make sure specialist colleagues have reasonable workloads, that enable them to work safely and effectively
2. undertake timely and sufficiently analytical assessments of how to keep the child and other people safe, and make sure that plans are in place to address relevant factors.

The Youth Crime Partnership Group should:

3. strengthen its links with community representatives to broaden its perspective when making decisions about service provision.

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 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.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.

The Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea (RBKC) sits in inner London and is the capital's smallest borough. The borough is one of the most diverse in England and Wales. It is home to some of England and Wales' wealthiest and most deprived neighbourhoods. It hosts the Chelsea Flower Show and Notting Hill Carnival. It was also the site of the 2017 Grenfell Tower tragedy.

The Youth Offending Team (YOT) for RBKC was part of a tri-borough arrangement until 2017. At this time, it became a discrete unit, joining the borough's early help department and co-locating with Families Forward, the edge of care team. However, the council still provides a bi- and tri-borough approach for a number of services that support YOT children. In 2019, the YOT expanded to include a Detached and Outreach Team (DOT) and Targeted Prevention Team (TPT). Based in the community, the DOT works with children, stakeholders, partners and community representatives to understand and respond to issues relating to serious youth violence; the TPT links with schools and alternative education providers to reduce the number of children not in education, training or employment. The borough also invested that year in the Department for Education's systemic assessment pilot and now uses its own assessment and planning tools for out-of-court disposals and referral orders.

There are an estimated 12,006 children living in RBKC. This equates to 7.7 per cent of RBKC's total population, a slightly smaller proportion than the London and national average. The number of children entering the youth justice system in RBKC decreases yearly and out-of-court disposals now constitute about half the YOT's caseload. The majority of children working with the YOT have complex needs. Many are at risk of criminal exploitation and/or are involved in the borough's lucrative drugs trade. In the year to end of March 2020, 35 per cent of offences committed by children involved with RBKC YOT involved drugs, 21 per cent violence against the person, nine per cent theft and handling and eight per cent public order offences.

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

Contextual facts

Population information

156,129	Total population Kensington & Chelsea (2019) ²
12,006	Total youth population (10–17 years) in Kensington & Chelsea (2019) ²

Demographics of children cautioned or sentenced³

Age	10–14 years	15–17 years
Kensington & Chelsea YOS	26%	74%
National average	23%	77%

Race/ethnicity	White	Black and minority ethnic	Unknown
Kensington & Chelsea YOS	13%	87%	0%
National average	70%	26%	4%

Gender	Male	Female
Kensington & Chelsea YOS	84%	16%
National average	85%	15%

Additional caseload data⁴

35	Total current caseload: community sentences
3	Total current caseload in custody
2	Total current caseload on licence
6	Total current caseload: youth caution
9	Total current caseload: youth conditional caution
25	Total current caseload: community resolution or other out-of-court disposal

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 for last four quarters July 2019 to June 2020.

1. Organisational delivery



Strengths:

- Strong partnerships, governance and leadership are used effectively to develop and deliver the YOT's ambitious programme of work.
- RBKC's focus on the wider determinants of behaviour has helped to embed a collaborative, trauma-informed and therapeutic approach to work with children.
- Service provision is needs-led, evidence-based and properly evaluated.
- The YOT is resourced to provide an effective service; children have good access to an impressive range of mainstream and specialist services to support desistance, and safety and wellbeing, and to protect other people.
- Practitioners have the skills, qualifications and support to work well with children with complex needs.
- The YOT and its partners embrace opportunities to strengthen service provision, using an intelligence-led approach to understand the factors that influence the YOT's performance.
- The victims and reparation team provides a professional service that benefits children, victims and the community.
- The voices of children and local stakeholders help to shape service provision.

Areas for improvement:

- Some statutory partners sit on three YOT Management Boards, and have been unable to provide consistent representation at the RBKC Youth Crime Partnership Board meetings.

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.

Outstanding

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

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

The Youth Crime Partnership Board (YCPB, the YOT's Management Board) is well established and advocates effectively for YOT children. It includes membership at a senior level from all statutory partners and benefits from representation by the courts and public health.

The YCPB adds value, helping the YOT to progress towards its objectives with a mix of support and challenge. Partners actively test and explore potential barriers to progress, determined to provide evidence-based results. Strong relationships between agencies enable this to happen in a constructive way. On occasions working groups are formed to find joint solutions, for example to issues relating to stop and search.

Some statutory partners sit on three YOT Management Boards, which has led to inconsistency in who attends the YCPB. This has been highlighted as a risk by the YOT's leadership, whose challenge to partners has improved the consistency of representation from education and health partners. RBKC has begun discussions with Westminster City Council about the possibility of convening a bi-borough YCPB to improve and stabilise Board attendance.

Do the partnership arrangements actively support effective service delivery?

There are sound governance structures in place. The YCPB understands its role in monitoring the work of the YOT partnership and is held to account by the borough's Community Safety Programme Board and RBKC's Local Safeguarding Children Board Partnership Group.

The YOT works effectively with its partners to embed an agreed strategic approach: partners and staff at all levels work to a shared purpose and understand how they contribute to the YOT's objectives.

There is a genuine commitment across the partnership to preventing children from entering the criminal justice system. Partners share an in-depth understanding of the lives of local children and the context within which they make their decisions and behave. This has led to significant investment in supporting the YOT's integrated, therapeutic methodology.

Does the leadership of the YOT support effective service delivery?

Senior leaders are visible and interested in the quality of practice, participating in case audits and attending practitioner meetings.

The management team translates the YOT’s strategic priorities into an effective approach to case management, working with staff to help them understand the strengths of new practices and their role in facilitating these. Staff have opportunities to discuss the YOT’s progress against its strategic objectives and to meet across teams to strengthen joint work to achieve them. Staff feel sufficiently updated on strategic issues and aware of the activities of the YCPB.

YOT leaders have a good understanding of risks to service provision. Action to mitigate these is incorporated into the YOT’s youth justice plan and reviewed as part of the YCPB’s monitoring process. The risk assessment is wide-ranging, covering issues relating to disproportionality, funding and the safety of children at court.

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)	17
Average caseload per case manager (FTE)	6

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 YOT is resourced to work effectively to meet the complex needs of its children. It is structured to help meet its strategic priorities, such as tackling serious youth violence, and to provide an integrated, therapeutic approach to practice.

As such, it is co-located with the edge of care team, the Detached and Outreach Team (DOT, that focuses on serious youth violence) and Targeted Prevention Team (TPT, that works to improve access to education, training and employment). An integrated approach is also supported through the range of specialists based in the YOT: serious youth violence workers, a number of seconded psychotherapists (art, family, education), a child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) nurse, a speech and language specialist and a substance misuse worker.

Case managers and the vast majority of YOT staff are comfortable with their caseload/workload. Practitioners appreciate the support they receive to manage their time, but some specialists whose roles cover the majority of children working with the YOT feel overwhelmed by their workloads.

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

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

We had a high response rate to our inspection staff survey. Results indicate that staff satisfaction is high. Staff have the skills, knowledge and experience to work with complex issues. They work in an inclusive environment where managers listen and act on their views, and adjustments are made to support their diversity needs.

Practitioners are supported by an established, knowledgeable, well-qualified and interested management team. This helps to promote a positive ethos among practitioners and a culture that encourages a child first, restorative approach to their work.

We were surprised that, despite the skills and motivation of practitioners, our case manager interviews identified the need to improve work to keep the child and others safe, especially in relation to the quality of assessment. We have made a recommendation to help the YOT address this.

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

Managers stay up to date with the work of their practitioners, recognising good work with verbal praise and formal reward systems.

Oversight of practice is comprehensive and enhances the quality of case management. Staff appreciate their annual performance review and the one-to-one supervision sessions with their managers which take place regularly and help them reflect on their practice. Assessments and plans are checked and comments recorded on case records. Senior leaders work with staff to complete case audits and the YOT recently completed an extensive practice audit as part of its national standards obligations to the YJB.

Volunteer panel members feel supported to fulfil their roles. They welcome the opportunity to debrief after each referral panel meeting, and to receive feedback about their performance and emotional support should they need it.

The YOT convenes multi-disciplinary case management meetings and monthly risk of harm and safety and wellbeing panel meetings, to plan and coordinate work undertaken with individual children. We found these made a valuable contribution to work to keep YOT children and others safe.

Are arrangements for learning and development comprehensive and responsive?

Staff work within a supportive, learning culture and are encouraged to develop their skills and progress within the organisation.

The YOT's training agenda dovetails appropriately with the YOT's strategic aims. Practitioners, and volunteers, have completed training in systemic practice, social graces,⁶ and ARC (attachment, regulation and competency), and Wipers training on unconscious bias and cultural competency. The YOT has systems in place to evaluate the experience of, and impact on, staff who attend training events and to embed their learning.

⁶ Based on the acronym created by John Burnham and colleagues (1993), 'GGRRAAACCEEESSS' consists of the initials for a range of equality factors such as religion, class, faith, economics, culture and spirituality.

Staff and volunteers say that their learning and development needs are met. Some found the systemic training long and challenging, but recognised the positive difference this has brought to their work.

Learning opportunities are not confined to formal training. Practitioners can participate in reflective case discussions with a senior clinician and meet together to share their areas of expertise.

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 benefited from a recent Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) that focused specifically on youth offending and serious youth violence. This was facilitated by the bi-borough public health directorate, and drew on knowledge and data from a wide range of partners. The JSNA provided a good picture of key social and contextual factors that make it more likely that a child will commit an offence or be involved in serious youth violence. The report highlighted inequalities relating to children of black, Asian and minority ethnic heritage and made recommendations to address the overrepresentation of these children. It also raised the importance of identifying, and working to meet, the specific needs of girls.

The JSNA covered Westminster and RBKC, and for some demographic factors amalgamated data sets for the two boroughs. RBKC leaders have also completed their own data analysis to gain insight into the context of offending among local children. This indicates that a child will typically be a black male (42 per cent), aged 16 or 17 years (58 per cent), living in a family home with a parent/carer (85 per cent) and in education, training or employment (69 per cent).

Eighty-seven per cent of children who are cautioned or sentenced in RBKC have black and minority ethnic heritage. This is the joint highest percentage recorded for a London borough (equal with Westminster).⁷ Tackling this is a clear priority for the YCPB and included in the YOT's youth justice plan. Work to address it includes strengthening the understanding of practitioners about issues of disproportionality; working with partners to reduce school exclusions and the impact of stop and search; offering children with black, Asian and minority ethnic heritage the opportunity to participate in tailored programmes; implementing 'social graces' and systemic practice; increasing the focus on speech and language, and children with special educational needs; and introducing the DOT and TPT teams to the YOT.

⁷ Youth Justice Board. (2020). *Youth justice annual statistics: 2018 to 2019*.

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

RBKC has made a considerable investment in embedding an evidence-based therapeutic approach to its work with children.

The YOT started to pilot a systemic assessment tool in September 2019, building on the systemic practice training programme started in 2015. This is an evidence-based approach that builds on the Signs of Safety framework and reflects the child's lived experience (living context, relationships, experience of trauma). Practitioners are supported on a case-by-case basis by a senior clinical practitioner. Implementation of this approach is overseen by a formal YCPB project process.

Children have access to an impressive range of mainstream and specialist services based in the YOT, including CAMHS (for assessment, consultation and some tier 2 intervention); substance misuse; support for their speech and language, and education, training and employment (ETE); art therapy; QPR (Queens Park Rangers) outreach; and family therapy.

The 'social graces' approach, which encourages practitioners to talk with children about their culture, colour and other diversity factors, is fully embedded into practice and was in evidence in the cases we inspected.

Children participate in reparation activities that develop their skills and compensate for the harm they have caused. Examples include buying food for the local food bank to a set budget and producing an article for the Looked After Children newsletter on training tips for indoor fitness during lockdown.

Practitioners take a holistic approach to their work, using an appropriate mix of therapeutic and traditional offending behaviour activities. Interventions delivered in the cases we inspected focused on avoiding conflict, knife crime, emotional regulation, stop and search, and self-perception. The substance misuse worker, together with the art therapist, also delivers Deal or No Deal, which uses a contextual safeguarding and therapeutic approach to support children who are or are on the edge of drug dealing.

The YOT takes a professional approach to its work with victims. The lead is accredited in restorative justice and works effectively to facilitate restorative justice conferences and mediations. We found that the wishes and needs of victims were always taken into account appropriately in our case assessments.

The intensity and length of the YOT's intervention is tailored to meet children's needs and to engage them. For instance, the QPR mentor will work with children on out-of-court disposals for up to a year and children are not automatically transferred to probation services as they turn 18 years of age.

There are systems in place to assess the quality of service delivery. Children are asked to indicate their satisfaction during and at the end of their orders. Of the 17 children who provided their views during a six-month period between 2019 and 2020, more than 90 per cent were happy with the way the YOT treated them.

The systemic practice approach, and speech and language service, were both subject to a feedback review during 2019/2020. The YOT is planning to evaluate the out-of-court disposal process and benefits of the systemic practice approach.

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

The positive relationship with partners has led to an effective, integrated approach in individual cases. We saw examples of strong joint work with children's social workers and early help colleagues. Case managers are invited to and attend meetings to safeguard children and work closely with the edge of care team to facilitate a family approach. The YOT is an active member of partner-led operational groups, for example the vulnerable children collaborative, serious youth violence panel, and London secure estate/YOT practice forum.

The police and YOT work well together to facilitate out-of-court disposal decisions. The process takes account of the need for swift justice and the shared ambition to limit the potential for unconscious bias. The police channel the needs and wishes of victims, help to facilitate restorative justice interventions and encourage engagement with voluntary disposals. There is good oversight of the out-of-court decision-making process from the YCPB and the MOPAC (the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime) out-of-court disposal scrutiny panel.

In the 12 months to June 2020, 71 per cent of children working with RBKC YOT were in suitable ETE by the close of their order or youth conditional caution (YCC), a more positive rate than achieved across London, and England and Wales. Determined to increase this rate, the YOT and partners continue to work collaboratively to increase participation in ETE, and help children to return to mainstream schooling. The educational psychologist works with the speech and language specialist and the YOT's educational personal adviser to tailor packages of support to individual children; speech and language needs identified through YOT assessments are shared with partners in education, and the TPT strengthens the YOT's ability to circumvent county lines and territorial issues that limit the school and college options available to some children.

The YOT welcomes opportunities to help partners use restorative approaches in their work. Together with an external restorative consultant, they have delivered a conflict competence programme to local secondary schools. They have also delivered restorative training to partners in education, children's care and the voluntary sector.

The YOT advocates well for children at court; together they have addressed territorial issues linked to the youth court restructure and strengthened the focus on disproportionality. The youth court values its positive relationship with the YOT and the quality of advice to inform its sentencing decisions.

The YOT's tri and bi-borough partnerships have strengthened service delivery for RBKC children. They are instrumental in the provision of specialist services that small YOTs can find difficult to commission on their own, such as CAMHS, speech and language therapists, and art therapists. The tri-borough approach has also provided for a YOT-dedicated business support team. We found this team to have an effective understanding of RBKC YOT, its processes and its children.

This has led to the provision of comprehensive and helpful performance and analysis reports.

Involvement of children and their parents and carers

Listening to the community is a priority for RBKC. The Grenfell team play a role in channelling the voice of the community into service developments and the borough completed (with the help of peer researchers) a comprehensive youth review in 2018, one outcome of which was the introduction of the TPT and DOT.

The DOT continues to help the YOT understand the lives, concerns and views of children at risk of offending and serious youth violence; the YOT manager and DOT visited the neighbourhood this year to gauge any tensions and issues for children relating to the Notting Hill Carnival and the pandemic lockdown.

We asked children working with the YOT to participate in a short text survey as part of our inspection. We received two responses. Both children rated RBKC YOT well (8/10); one felt the YOT had supported him massively to stay out of trouble, while the other felt he had learned little while working with the YOT.

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?

A range of up-to-date policies and protocols are in place to help practitioners apply a systemic approach and work collaboratively with partners to safeguard children and other people. These include procedures to help resolve partnership differences relating to safeguarding measures, and multi-agency safeguarding guidance specific to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Practitioners are confident about how to work in partnership with colleagues and access appropriate interventions. We found evidence of this in the cases assessed during this inspection.

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

The YOT is based in the north of the borough where many of its children live, and is accessible by public transport. The reception area provides a range of information for visitors and there are appropriate spaces available for confidential one-to-one discussions, group projects, reparation, and referral order panels.

The YOT building includes a large activity room that incorporates a well-equipped gym. This facility is used to encourage children's participation in constructive pursuits, strengthen their engagement in desistance work and provide an environment in which they feel safe to speak about sensitive issues.

Suitable arrangements are made to see children who are unable to visit the YOT (for example, due to territorial issues) at other community venues or at home.

Children involved in out-of-court disposals meet with the QPR mentor at the football stadium. This provides a setting that children find less formal and supports the objective to prevent the criminalisation of these children.

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

Practitioners have sufficient access to ICT to allow them to work at home or remotely in the community. They have appropriate access to partner information systems relating to education, children's social care, and, through their police colleagues, information and intelligence about offending activity.

The business support team makes good use of ICT to produce performance reports that are informative and easy to understand. It has set up monitoring systems for the YOT's victims work, a live reoffending tracker and performance reports for individual case workers that break down their caseload and help monitor outstanding work.

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

YCPB members have a good understanding of the YOT's performance. They use performance and data reports to identify lines of enquiry and ask for further analyses to help them understand the underlying determinants of behaviour and factors driving their performance against key performance targets. This has helped them to identify where and how to target their work, for instance to address issues relating to disproportionality.

With the arrival of Covid-19, YOTs have changed their approach to national reporting. This year, the YOT has produced a recovery plan and annual report. These provide a comprehensive picture of the YOT's work during the past 12 months and ample detail to help the YCPB monitor the YOT's progress against its priorities. Staff are also involved in reviewing the YOT's improvement programme and given the opportunity to provide their views about how well the YOT is meeting its priority objectives.

Leaders respond appropriately to new information, for example inspection findings and serious incidents. For instance, they commissioned ARC (trauma-informed practice) training in response to the Inspectorate's thematic inspection of youth public protection. They also cited our 2016 inspection report, on desistance and children, in support of their systemic approach to practice.



2. Court disposals

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

Strengths:

- The YOT's therapeutic and restorative approach to its work strengthened engagement and the potential for positive outcomes.
- Victims were given appropriate priority.
- Effective communication with parents/carers increased the YOT's capacity to understand and address issues as they arose.
- Case managers explored the child's lived experience to help identify the most effective way to support their desistance, and safety and wellbeing.
- The quality of collaboration between the YOT and its partners to deliver and adapt work to meet the changing circumstances of children was impressive.

Areas for improvement:

- Case managers did not always analyse in enough depth all the factors linked to a child's behaviour to understand what needed to be done to keep the child and other people safe.
- Case managers did not record the reasons for their assessment decisions well enough.

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.

Requires improvement

Our rating⁸ 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	3
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	4	2

Assessment was rated as 'Requires improvement'. There was inconsistency in the quality of practice across the three elements. Work to understand the risk the child to posed to others was the weakest area of practice and this drove the rating for this standard.

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 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?	3	3
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?	4	3

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

Does assessment give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s, and opportunities for restorative justice?	3	3
Is the child and their parents/carers meaningfully involved in their assessment, and are their views taken into account?	4	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	2
Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including other assessments, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	4	3
Where applicable, does assessment analyse controls and interventions to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	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	2
Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including past behaviour and convictions, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	4	3
Does assessment analyse controls and interventions to manage and minimise the risk of harm presented by the child?	4	3

We inspected one custodial sentence case, one youth rehabilitation order and two referral orders. Three of the children had committed a violent offence. Case managers took a family approach to understanding the children's life stories and showed a genuine interest in their diversity and the barriers they faced. They drew on assessments undertaken by their CAMHS and speech and language therapist colleagues and measures already put in place by the serious violence gangs' workers and education to understand how to complement their work. In every case where this was relevant, they considered the needs and wishes of victims.

The quality of collaboration with children's social care was inconsistent. Where the YOT initiated this, it strengthened the assessment. Case managers did not always

show enough scepticism or curiosity about a child's offending behaviour to fully understand how to keep the child and others safe or record the reasons for their assessment decisions well enough.

2.2. Planning



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

Good

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

Of the 4 cases inspected	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does planning focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	4	4
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe? ¹⁰	3	2
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe? ¹¹	4	3

Planning was rated as 'Good'. Planning to support desistance was the strongest area of practice and was rated as outstanding. Planning to keep the child and others safe was good.

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

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

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

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

Where applicable, does planning give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s?	3	3
Is the child and their parents/carers meaningfully involved in planning, and are their views taken into account?	4	4

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

Of the 3 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?	3	2
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?	3	2
Does planning set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	3	2
Does planning set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to manage those risks that have been identified?	3	2

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

Of the 4 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?	4	3
Does planning involve other agencies where appropriate?	3	2
Does planning address any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims?	3	3
Does planning set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote the safety of other people?	4	3
Does planning set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to manage those risks that have been identified?	4	3

We found examples of close collaborative planning, involving specialist colleagues, children and their families. Case managers considered how to remove or overcome barriers and the best means of communicating with the child to maximise their engagement with the planned interventions. Opportunities for restorative justice

were considered and reparation was tailored to meet the views of victims and the needs of the child.

Gaps in assessment relating to safety and wellbeing, and the need to keep other people safe, had a direct impact on the quality of planning and in one case there was no recorded plan to protect the child or address factors relating to risk of harm.

2.3. Implementation and delivery



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

Of the 4 cases inspected	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the child's desistance?	4	4
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of the child? ¹³	3	3
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people? ¹⁴	4	4

Implementation and delivery was rated as 'Outstanding'. The YOT met every one of our expectations for desistance, safety and wellbeing, and keeping others safe.

Does the implementation and delivery of services 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	4
Does service delivery reflect the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, involving parents/carers or significant others?	4	4
Does service delivery build upon the child's strengths and enhance protective factors?	4	4

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

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

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

Is sufficient focus given to developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child and their parents/carers?	4	4
Does service delivery promote opportunities for community integration including access to services post-supervision?	4	4
Is sufficient attention given to encouraging and enabling the child's compliance with the work of the YOT?	4	4
In cases where it is required, are enforcement actions taken when appropriate?	1	1

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

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

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

Of the 4 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?	4	4
Where applicable, is sufficient attention given to the protection of actual and potential victims?	3	3
Where applicable, is the involvement of other agencies in managing the risk of harm sufficiently well-coordinated?	3	3

Implementation and delivery was an area of strength. The YOT worked with partners and specialist colleagues to provide a comprehensive, integrated approach. Case managers responded effectively to new information to help keep children safe and did not shy away from addressing difficult and complex factors relating to domestic abuse, exploitation, and gang affiliation. Reparation was used well to support the community and help children develop knowledge and skills.

Engagement was given priority; the YOT worked with early help colleagues to support the family, and parents were involved as partners in decisions and their implementation. Service delivery was tailored to meet the needs of each case and

venues for meetings were chosen carefully to make sure children could attend safely. In the one case where it was necessary to enforce compliance, the YOT took appropriate action.

2.4. Reviewing



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

Outstanding

Our rating¹⁵ for reviewing is based on the following key questions:

Of the 4 cases inspected ¹⁶	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	4	4
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	3	3
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	4	4

Reviewing practice was rated as 'Outstanding'. The YOT scored 100 per cent for every element of work involved in reviewing desistance and keeping the child, and other people, safe.

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

Of the 4 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?	4	4
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on building upon the child's strengths and enhancing protective factors?	4	4
Does reviewing consider motivation and engagement levels and any relevant barriers?	4	4
Is the child and their parents/carers meaningfully involved in reviewing their progress and engagement, and are their views taken into account?	4	4

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ 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 3 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?	3	3
Where applicable, is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in promoting the safety and wellbeing of the child?	3	3
Where applicable, does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	3	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 of harm?	3	3
Is the child and their parents/carers meaningfully involved in reviewing their risk of harm, and are their views taken into account?	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?	3	3

The YOT's process of continuous review helped it to identify and take action to address issues as they arose. The serious youth violence panel and multi-disciplinary risk of harm and safety and wellbeing panels added value to this process, with actions taken to make sure tasks were completed as agreed. The collaborative approach provided for family circumstances to be included and multi-agency plans to help the family in order to support progress for the child.

Children were making progress; some to engage more readily and others to start their 'desistance journey'. Children who completed their referral orders were given certificates to celebrate their success.



3. Out-of-court disposals

We inspected three cases managed by the YOT that had received an out-of-court disposal. These consisted of one youth conditional caution, one youth caution and one community resolution (known as diversionary intervention/triage in this YOT). We interviewed the case managers in all three cases.

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

Strengths:

- Work to support desistance was a strength.
- The YOT took a family and therapeutic approach to its out-of-court work.
- The needs and wishes of victims were given sufficient priority.
- Partners worked well together to complement each other's work and avoid duplication of interventions.
- The YOT encouraged participation in interventions, taking appropriate steps if the child did not engage.
- The plan of work was proportionate to the disposal, and provided the right balance between addressing offending behaviour and supporting desistance.

Areas for improvement:

- There was insufficient in-depth analysis of safety and wellbeing and risk of harm to others to understand who to protect and the best way to do this.
- Written assessments, especially those to identify how to keep the child and others safe, were not timely or detailed enough.

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

3.1. Assessment



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

Requires improvement¹⁷

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

Of the 3 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	3	3
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	3	1
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	3	1

Assessment was rated as 'Requires improvement'. Work to understand how to support desistance was the strongest area. However, the overall rating was driven by the quality of assessment to analyse how to keep the child and others safe.

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

Of the 3 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?	3	3
Does assessment consider the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, utilising information held by other agencies?	3	3
Does assessment focus on the child's strengths and protective factors?	3	3
Where applicable, does assessment analyse the key structural barriers facing the child?	1	1
Is sufficient attention given to understanding the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change?	3	2

¹⁷ Due to the size of the sample, performance in one case adversely affected the rating for this standard. Having considered the overall quality of assessment, the ratings panel agreed to apply professional discretion to uplift the rating for assessment to 'Requires improvement' from Inadequate.

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

Where applicable, does assessment give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s, and opportunities for restorative justice?	1	1
Is the child and their parents/carers meaningfully involved in their assessment, and are their views taken into account?	3	3

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?

Of the 3 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risks to the safety and wellbeing of the child?	3	1
Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including other assessments, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	3	2

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?

Of the 3 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risk of harm to others posed by the child, including identifying who is at risk and the nature of that risk?	2	0
Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including any other assessments that have been completed, and other evidence of behaviour by the child?	2	1

3.2. Planning



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

Requires improvement¹⁹

Our rating²⁰ for planning is based on the following key questions:

Of the 3 cases inspected	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?	3	3
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe? ²¹	3	2
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe? ²²	1	0

Planning to support desistance was thorough, and to keep the child safe was good. The overall rating, however, was determined by the quality of planning to keep other people safe. This led to a rating of 'Requires improvement' for this standard.

Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?

Of the 3 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?	3	3
Does planning take sufficient account of the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child?	3	3
Does planning take sufficient account of the child's strengths and protective factors, and seek to reinforce or develop these as necessary?	3	3
Does planning take sufficient account of the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change, and seek to develop these as necessary?	3	3

¹⁹ This rating was determined by the quality of planning in one case. The ratings panel considered the disproportionate impact of this and the overall quality of planning, and agreed to apply professional discretion to uplift the rating to 'Requires improvement' from 'Inadequate'.

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 planning take sufficient account of opportunities for community integration, including access to mainstream services following completion of out-of-court disposal work?	3	3
Where applicable, does planning give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s?	1	1
Is the child and their parents/carers meaningfully involved in planning, and are their views taken into account?	3	3

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

Of the 3 cases with factors relevant to keeping the child safe:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does planning promote the safety and wellbeing of the child, sufficiently addressing risks?	3	2
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?	3	2
Does planning include necessary contingency arrangements for those risks that have been identified?	3	0

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

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

3.3. Implementation and delivery



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

Outstanding

Our rating²³ for implementation and delivery is based on the following key questions:

Of the 3 cases inspected	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does service delivery effectively support the child's desistance?	3	3
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of the child? ²⁴	3	3
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of other people? ²⁵	1	1

Implementation and delivery received a rating of 'Outstanding'. In all of the cases assessed, work sufficiently supported desistance and the safety of the child and addressed issues relating to the risk of harm to others.

Does service delivery effectively support the child's desistance?

Of the 3 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?	3	3
Does service delivery reflect the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, involving parents/carers or significant others?	3	3
Is sufficient focus given to developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child and their parents/carers?	3	3
Is sufficient attention given to encouraging and enabling the child's compliance with the work of the YOT?	3	3
Does service delivery promote opportunities for community integration, including access to mainstream services?	3	3

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 cases where there are factors related to keeping the child safe.

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

3.4. Joint working



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

Outstanding

Our rating²⁶ for joint working is based on the following key questions:

Of the 3 cases inspected	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Are the YOT's recommendations sufficiently well-informed, analytical and personalised to the child, supporting joint decision making?	3	3
Does the YOT work effectively with the police in implementing the out-of-court disposal? ²⁷	1	1

The YOT contributed well to out-of-court disposal decisions and processes and joint work was rated as 'Outstanding'. Our judgements of work with the police to implement the disposal related to the one YCC case we inspected.

²⁶ 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.

²⁷ This question is only relevant in youth conditional caution cases.

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

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

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

Of the 1 case with 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

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.²⁸

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 of family services 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 seven 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 eight meetings, which included meetings with managers, partner organisations and staff. The evidence collected under this domain was judged against our published ratings characteristics.²⁸

Domain two: court disposals

We completed case assessments over a one-week period, examining case files and interviewing case managers. All four of the cases selected were those of children who had received court disposals four to 11 months earlier, enabling us to examine work in relation to assessing, planning, implementing and reviewing.

We examined four court disposals. The sample size was set to achieve a confidence level of 80 per cent (with a margin of error of 5), and where possible we ensured that the ratios in relation to gender, sentence or disposal type, risk of serious harm, and risk to safety and wellbeing classifications matched those in the eligible population.

²⁸ HM Inspectorate of Probation standards are available here:

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

Domain three: out-of-court disposals

We completed case assessments over a one-week period, examining case files and interviewing case managers. All three of the cases selected were those of children who had received out-of-court disposals three to 11 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 three 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 four court disposals and three out-of-court disposals. In each of those cases, we inspect against four standards: assessment, planning, and implementation/delivery. For court disposals, we look at reviewing; and in out-of-court disposals, we look at joint working with the police. For each standard, inspectors answer a number of key questions about different aspects of quality, including whether there was sufficient analysis of the factors related to offending; the extent to which children were involved in assessment and planning; and whether enough was done to assess and manage the safety and well-being of the child, and any risk of harm posed to others.

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

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

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

An element of professional discretion may be applied to the standards ratings in domains two and three. The ratings panel considers whether professional discretion should be exercised 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.