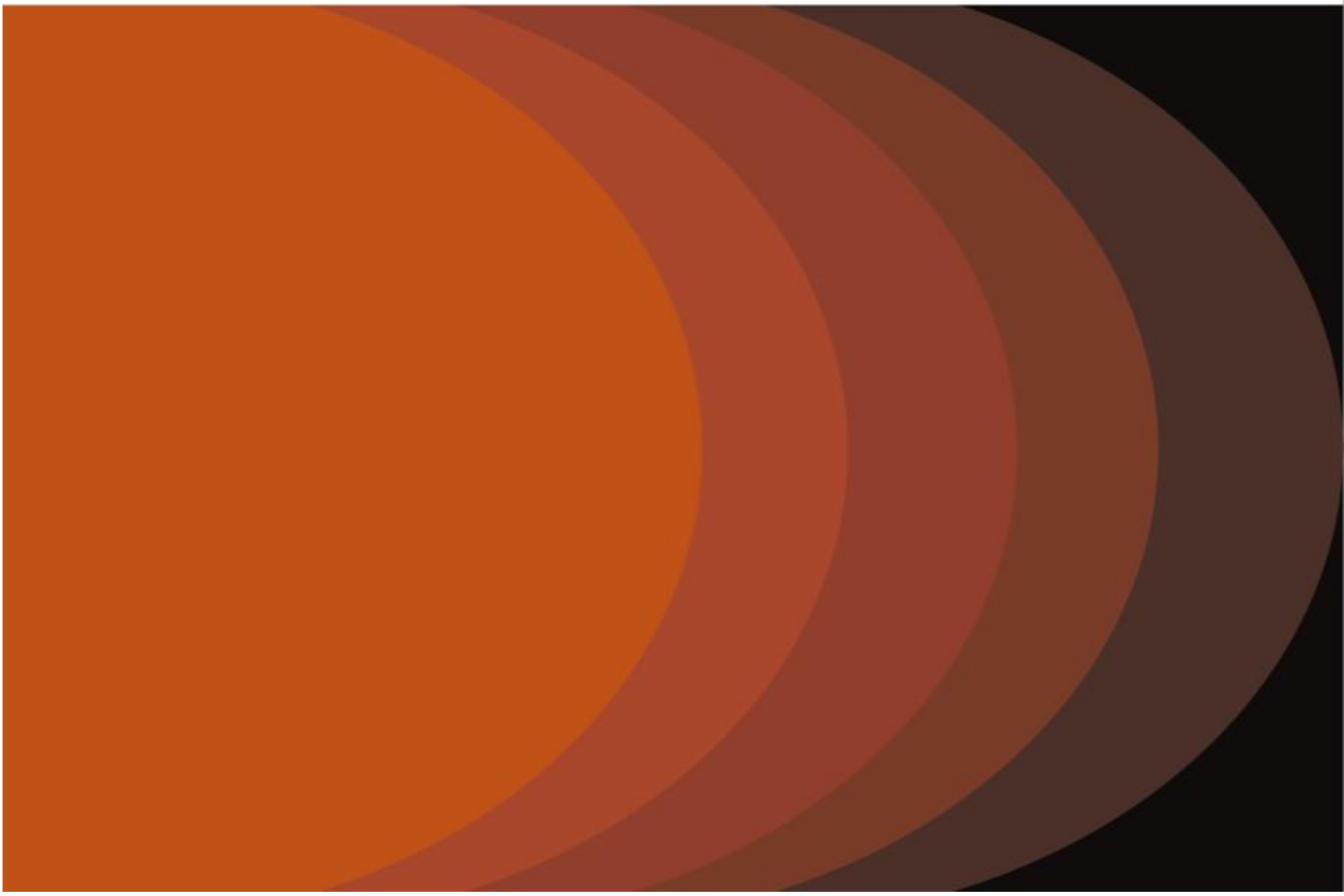




Her Majesty's
Inspectorate of
Probation

An inspection of youth offending services in
Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly

HM Inspectorate of Probation, March 2021



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

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

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Introduction

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

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

The YOS has a clear vision and strategy, and the YOS Board has sufficient links to relevant strategic networks. Statutory and non-statutory partners are represented on the YOS Management Board, but some members' attendance is sporadic. Although Board members recognise the contribution their own agency makes, there is insufficient evidence that they are held to account in Board meetings, with an over-reliance on the YOS Head of Service to present reports and other information to the Board. Good strategic and operational analysis of the YOS cohort has resulted in an enhanced case management approach for children with complex needs. The YOS has a skilled, stable and committed workforce, and children receive a strong mix of targeted, specialist and mainstream services.














The case management of court disposals was of a consistently high standard. Assessment was rated as outstanding and was based on a wide range of sources and detailed information. We saw good analysis of factors to support desistance, address safety and wellbeing, and understand the risk of harm to others. This led to strong implementation and delivery practice, with evidence of effective partnership working in most cases. Planning and review were good, with the YOS focused on making sure that each child was treated as an individual. Management oversight of court orders consistently promoted high-quality casework practice. However, contingency planning was inconsistent in some cases.

The work associated with out-of-court disposals was of a good standard, with a clear protocol for joint decision-making. Assessment, and implementation and delivery were outstanding and strengths-based, aiding the development of effective working relationships with children and their parents and carers. We found that children on out-of-court disposals accessed the same wide range of services as those on court orders. While some aspects of planning were outstanding, there were shortfalls in other areas, such as contingency planning.



Marc Baker
Director of Operations

Ratings

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

Recommendations

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

The Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Youth Offending Service should:

1. prioritise attendance at YOS Board meetings and ensure all Board members and partner agencies are held to account
2. develop the relationship between the Board and practitioners, so that all can recognise how strategic priorities influence operational delivery
3. improve planning in out-of-court-disposal cases, to keep the child safe and manage the risk of harm to others
4. strengthen the quality of contingency planning in court disposal cases to address the child's safety and wellbeing, and to manage risk of harm to others
5. ensure clearer evidence of communication between victim workers and case managers, to improve the quality of victim contact
6. make better use of quantitative data to understand and respond to the needs of victims.

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 include 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.

Cornwall is the second most deprived region in Northern Europe, with 17 of the most deprived wards in the country (Eurostat, 2018). Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government data shows that Cornwall has the second highest levels of multiple deprivation of all English county councils. Child poverty in Cornwall has increased significantly over the last 10 years. Senior leaders describe a high proportion of the working population in poverty and families that are only just managing. Levels of debt, use of food banks and risk of homelessness are increasing. There is a proven link between child poverty and adverse childhood experiences – neglect and abuse – which lead to poor outcomes for children and increase the risk of poor outcomes, including youth offending (Child Welfare Inequalities Project, 2020).

Expert analysis has forecast that Cornwall will be particularly badly impacted economically by the Covid-19 pandemic. It further suggests that coastal and former industrial towns are likely to be the worst affected, because of both the immediate impact of lockdowns and the capacity of these towns to be able to recover (Centre for Towns, 2020). The number of people in Cornwall on universal credit rose from 24,876 in March 2020 to 48,458 in June 2020, an increase of 95 per cent. The strategic partners state that the detrimental impact of Covid-19 across the region is reducing education, employment and training opportunities for all, but significantly so for children.

The Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Youth Offending Service (CIoS YOS) performance in key areas for first-time entrants, reoffending and custody is better than the England and Wales average. The decision to bring the youth offending service into Gweres Tus Yowynk (GTY), the specialist adolescent service based in Cornwall Council Children's and Family Services, was confirmed by the CIoS Youth Justice Board in October 2015. This supports an integrated and holistic response to service delivery and provides easy access to a range of interventions and support services that divert children from the youth justice system.

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

Contextual facts

Population information

571,802	Total population Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly (2019) ²
48,806	Total youth population (10–17 years) in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly (2019) ³

Demographics of children cautioned or sentenced³

Age	10–14 years	15–17 years
Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly YOS	23%	77%
National average	23%	77%

Race/ethnicity	White	Black and minority ethnic	Unknown
Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly YOS	88%	2%	10%
National average	70%	26%	4%

Gender	Male	Female
Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly YOS	81%	19%
National average	85%	15%

Additional caseload data⁴

32	Total current caseload: community sentences
3	Total current caseload in custody
1	Total current caseload on licence
51	Total current caseload: youth caution
33	Total current caseload: youth conditional caution
124	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 YOS, reflecting caseload as at 19 October 2020.

1. Organisational delivery



Strengths:

- There is a clear vision and strategy for the YOS, which is well-communicated to staff and stakeholders.
- The workforce has a range of skills, knowledge and experience to develop trusting and supportive relationships with children and families.
- There is an understanding of the characteristics of the children in the YOS cohort, with a strong mix of targeted, specialist and mainstream services.
- There are clear working protocols and well-developed pathways for children, with good examples of innovative and responsive practice.
- There are strong links between the YOS Head of Service, YOS operational managers and the Board.

Areas for improvement:

- Although statutory and non-statutory partners are represented on the YOS Management Board, some members' attendance is sporadic.
- There is insufficient evidence of Board members being held to account at or between Board meetings, with an over-reliance on the YOS Head of Service to present reports and other information to the Board.
- Staff and Board members would benefit from opportunities to improve the connection between strategic leaders and operational practitioners.
- There is no YOS-specific workforce development plan.
- Health nurses in the YOS report that their workload is high.
- Quantitative data analysis of victim take-up, interventions delivered and victim satisfaction surveys could be strengthened.

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

1.1. Governance and leadership



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

Requires improvement

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

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

Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly YOS has a clear strategic vision and a comprehensive youth justice plan, alongside a detailed Covid-19 recovery document, which has been approved by the Management Board.

The Chair of the YOS Management Board is the Service Director for Children and Families in the local authority. Although only appointed in January 2020, he has overseen the continued integration of the YOS within the wider adolescent children's service. The work he does is visible and valued by Board members, staff and managers.

Information provided to the Board is understood and integrated within YOS practice. This ensures a shared understanding of the risks and needs of children in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. However, the Board Chair and YOS managers recognise that enhanced IT system functionality could improve the granularity of the performance management information it receives. For example, by enabling a consistent comparison of the YOS cohort against the wider population of children. Although the YOS are able to analyse overall outcomes for out-of-court-disposals, this is not broken down into individual outcomes to offer a fuller analysis and evaluation.

Do the partnership arrangements actively support effective service delivery?

The YOS Board has clear terms of reference and includes all statutory agencies as well as other partners, such as the courts and community safety. There have been several recent additions to Board membership, including the senior education welfare officer and voluntary sector representation from the manager of Young People Cornwall. This has strengthened the YOS partnership strategically and operationally. There is a formal induction process for Board members, although this has been affected by Covid-19.

Statutory and non-statutory partners are represented on the YOS Management Board but some members' attendance is sporadic. The YOS Board is the arena where the sole remit of Board members and the partnership is the children in the youth justice service. Consistent attendance is important to ensure a clear and undiluted focus on those children who are at risk of offending.

The YOS Board is part of a network of partnership arrangements that work across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. YOS Board members provide strategic links to other partnership forums, such as: Safer Cornwall Board; One Vision Children's Safeguarding Partnership Board; MAPP (Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements) Strategic Board; Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Board; Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Board; and the Safeguarding Children's Partnership Quality Assurance and Performance group.

While links to other strategic Boards are important and allow cross-cutting themes to be addressed at a senior level, all designated Board members should prioritise their attendance at the YOS Management Board to ensure they fully understand their role, advocate effectively for YOS children and share collective responsibility for the service. Although Board members recognise the contribution their own agency makes, there is limited evidence of them being held to account in Board meetings, with an over-reliance on the YOS Head of Service to present reports and other information to the Board. Senior leaders are planning a development day to further strengthen partner relationships and understanding of their role. Board members should also be more visible to YOS staff.

Does the leadership of the YOT support effective service delivery?

The YOS Head of Service is an excellent advocate for the YOS and is well-respected by senior and operational managers across the partnership. She links YOS operational managers and the Board to ensure that senior leaders are provided with a clear line of sight to practice.

Board members and YOS managers are aware of business risks, with an action plan to mitigate them. Identified areas of attention across the YOS partnership include: the post-Covid-19 court backlog; managing staff capacity following reductions in resources; ongoing implementation of a trauma-based approach; and continuing to integrate with other services while retaining the YOS specialism.

Operationally, there is trust and respect between the YOS management team members. They all have designated lead responsibilities and sit on relevant multi-agency operational groups. Relationships with other sections of children's services are good, and the management team takes the best from each specialism and then integrates this with its core work with YOS children.

1.2. Staff



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

Good

Key staffing data⁵

Total staff headcount (full-time equivalent, FTE)	36
Average caseload per case manager (FTE)	12.5

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?

Staff are experienced in YOS work, with just over two-thirds having worked in the service for over three years. There is a low percentage of black, Asian and minority ethnic children in the wider Cornwall population and YOS cohort; similarly, the current profile of paid staff and volunteers is not ethnically diverse. According to the staff and volunteer surveys, there were no black, Asian or minority ethnic staff in CIoS YOS at the time of the inspection.

In addition to case managers, the YOS has a restorative justice/reparation worker and a victim worker, a seconded police officer, a 0.5 part-time seconded probation officer and three nurses, who equate to 1.8 full-time-equivalent staff. Due to seconded probation officer sickness, there has been a vacancy in the post for approximately four months, although a replacement has now been recruited. The three health nurses report that their current workload is high and additional resources would support the increased number of referrals from YOS staff.

The staff team is positive about working in the service. Staff describe YOS managers as supportive, knowledgeable and accessible. Although some staff were aware of the activities of the Management Board, they would benefit from greater opportunity to attend Board meetings to ensure an effective connection between operational staff and strategic leaders.

Workloads are actively reviewed and caseloads are manageable. However, some practitioners expressed concerns regarding the increased complexity of cases and the expected impact on workload with the loss of four youth offending service assistant posts from March 2021. YOS senior leaders felt that any risks would be mitigated by the move to a trauma-informed approach, and reassured inspectors that this was being monitored. An example of the active management of workloads is the flexibility to amend geographical team boundaries to support equity in case allocation.

Staff felt that the impending recruitment of a psychologist will help with the management and case formulation of children with highly complex needs, and support them in managing any vicarious trauma from their case management and intervention work.

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?

YOS staff are skilled and creative in engaging children. They believe in the children they work with and have high aspirations for them. They are up to date with developments such as trauma-informed practice, the 'good lives' model, contextual safeguarding and sexually harmful behaviour. Staff are suitably qualified, experienced and confident. Nearly all of the 24 respondents to the staff survey felt they had the skills and knowledge to undertake their role.

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

YOS staff receive supervision in one-to-one and group meetings. Supervision is led by the line manager and covers pastoral, development and performance aspects. Monthly effective practice meetings allow practitioners to discuss themes and topics to support their development. Staff were positive about the level of communication from YOS management, which they felt promoted consistency across teams. However, many volunteer staff felt that communication about service decisions and the work of the YOS could be improved.

Inspectors found that management oversight was sufficient in all of the post-court cases and all but one of the out-of-court disposal cases, with clear and consistent management case recording, supervision discussions and countersignature of work. In the staff survey, all respondents rated the quality of their supervision as 'very good' or 'quite good'.

Both the staff survey and evidence gathered from inspection indicated dissatisfaction with the appraisal process. Just over half of respondents described problems and barriers with the current system. The issues were not related to the quality of oversight, nor a reflection on managers' knowledge, ability or approach, but rather connected to technological shortfalls in the wider 'Oracle' software used in the local authority.

Are arrangements for learning and development comprehensive and responsive?

There is a strong training and development offer within the YOS and across the wider partnership, including trauma-informed training, Assessment, Intervention and Moving-on (AIM3), safeguarding and substance misuse. However, although there has been a workforce audit, there is no workforce development plan. Given the ambition to implement a trauma-informed approach within the YOS and GTY, such a plan would enable coordinated delivery and monitoring of this staff development work.

Staff have been involved in service design and policy development, particularly for the out-of-court-disposal panel, cannabis pathway and the integration of Gweres Kernow (harmful sexual behaviour service).

Reward and recognition processes are in place, with staff highlighting examples where volunteers or panel members had been nominated for community awards. GTY itself has been recognised and shortlisted for the national *Local Government Chronicle* Practice Awards in 2019, and team members have received Cornwall Council awards – an internal scheme which allows individuals to vote for staff, projects or outstanding work.

There is a scale progression pay panel, overseen by the YOS Head of Service and other Board members, which allows increments to be awarded on demonstration of

competence against job roles. Some staff had moved into promoted roles in the service, although many felt that opportunities were more limited than in previous years, due to resource issues.

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?

There is a good strategic and operational analysis of the YOS cohort, and the issues faced by these children. This has resulted in an enhanced case-management approach to the management of children with complex needs. Funding for the appointment of a full-time psychologist has been approved by the YOS Management Board.

The partnership works hard operationally to optimise the benefits of joint working. In some of the inspected cases, we found evidence of a commitment to a relational approach to work, with workers across all roles facilitating engagement with children.

The YOS undertook a deep-dive audit in July 2020 to explore ethnicity and disproportionality, which was presented to the Management Board. Although there was no over-representation of black, Asian and minority ethnic children in the YOS, the audit highlighted a mixed picture, with some examples of excellent work on diversity issues but areas for improvement in other elements – such as a lack of consistency in data recording of ethnicity. This led to planned work and discussion with staff in effective practice meetings, and the refining of some processes to support further data analysis.

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

A range of interventions are available and, given the rural nature of the service, are delivered on a one-to-one basis. To overcome the challenges of working in a very large rural area, the YOS does not deliver 'off-the-shelf' interventions with children, but uses a tailored individual approach, which enables wider diversity issues to be considered.

Staff know the pathways for children to access services (both internally and externally). They engage children well and advocate for them when needed. Services throughout the YOS are of good quality and interventions are responsive, innovative and well-delivered. Children can quickly access a wide range of universal, targeted and specialist services. Fast-track pathways for substance misuse, CAMHS, autism spectrum disorder (ASD), careers service and special educational support provide evidence of the YOS response to the diverse needs of its children.

The YOS has developed a positive relationship with schools, and work in this area is ongoing. Although there is no dedicated education, training and employment (ETE)

worker in the YOS, it has established links with education welfare officers, and a pupil placement panel has been set up.

The substance misuse service (YZUP), previously part of the YOS, continues to provide a specialist service. A dedicated link worker acts as a point of advice and guidance for YOS staff. This provision is being reviewed to explore a wider remit, including more outreach and consideration of the impact of exploitation linked to substance misuse.

Reparation is tailored to the requests of the victim and the needs of the child. Staff use a range of placements, including conservation, arts and crafts, horticulture and innovative projects, such as animal rescue centres and an alpaca farm.

Victim work has been a focus of development, with an internal review informing a change of approach to an 'opt-out' rather than 'opt-in' system for victims. Although the YOS's supplementary evidence provided some case studies of positive victim work, the work that we saw in the cases inspected was not consistent. Inspectors found that some cases lacked sufficient evidence of victim contact, and that communication between victim workers and case managers could have been more clearly recorded. Further development is also needed to analyse victim take-up, interventions delivered and victim satisfaction surveys. We were encouraged to see links with regional restorative justice forums, and that most staff had received in-house restorative justice training.

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

Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly YOS has an established out-of-court disposal scheme, and a joint decision-making panel that operates effectively. The out-of-court-disposal panel is attended by police, YOS, victim/restorative justice worker, YZUP (substance misuse) worker, education welfare officer and the allocated social worker, if the child has one. In addition to the agencies and professionals listed, the panel is also attended by Cornwall Partnership Trust's Criminal Justice Liaison and Diversion Service. There is a collaborative approach in place, through oversight from a wider multi-agency out-of-court disposal scrutiny panel across the Devon and Cornwall Police area.

Safeguarding and public protection agencies are effectively linked. The YOS feed into processes to address child exploitation and hold internal multi-agency management of risk panels for children deemed to present a high risk of harm to others or high safety and wellbeing concerns. The YOS was at the forefront of a recent public awareness campaign highlighting issues of criminal exploitation, launched in October 2020.

Sentencers expressed confidence in the quality of pre-sentence reports, and the relationships between YOS court staff and children. However, the sentencers' survey confirmed that communication with the judiciary could be improved to make some magistrates more aware of the services they offer. This is an area that could be addressed through a more regular HM Courts & Tribunals Service presence at the YOS Management Board.

There are good working relationships between partnership and YOS staff to the benefit of children and their families. We found that exit planning into services following completion of YOS orders was done well in the cases inspected.

Involvement of children and their parents and carers

Implementation and embedding of strengths-based practice has enabled the YOS to gather and use feedback from children and families. This is collected via annual surveys and audio feedback from children, to help shape the training and development of panel volunteers. The involvement of children and parents and carers is an important element of the YOS strategic plan and the post-Covid-19 recovery plan.

The feedback from the children's text survey saw a return of 13 respondents from 20 surveys and was overwhelmingly positive. In addition, in lead inspector telephone interviews with three children they described very positive relationships with YOS staff, as well as a flexible approach and support to access other services.

1.4. Information and facilities



Timely and relevant information is available and appropriate facilities are in place to support a high-quality, personalised and responsive approach for all children.

Good

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

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

The YOS has a full suite of policies and procedures, some of which have been recently updated as necessary. There are clear protocols and guidance for all key aspects of YOS work, which are accessible to staff and support the delivery and accountability of practice. Staff described how line managers guide them in the use of these policies, which also include escalation protocols if required.

There are service level agreements between the YOS and key partners, such as health, education and specialist services such as Gweres Kernow (the harmful sexual behaviour service).

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

The YOS is split into three geographical locations across the county: Bodmin, covering East Cornwall; St Austell, covering Mid Cornwall; and Camborne, covering West Cornwall. Although not visited by inspectors, these offices are co-located with staff from the wider GTY adolescent service and are described as suitable by both staff and managers.

Given the rural nature of the county, there are some challenges to staff because suitable venues are not always available. However, staff are creative and overcome this through home visits and delivery of one-to-one work, more recently with adaptations due to Covid-19.

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

Staff describe ICT systems as reliable, which facilitates high-quality work and exchange of information with partners where required. YOS practitioners have access

to the wider social care ICT system (MOSAIC), and seconded staff have access to both their own agencies' and YOS systems.

The YOS is well-supported by a data analyst, who works across wider children's services. There are plans to align this resource to work alongside the Children and Family Services performance and data team to further strengthen data analysis.

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

Thematic audits have been undertaken to develop, analyse and shape service delivery. The work on adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and reoffending within the YOS cohort is a good example, which led to the decision to recruit a psychologist as part of a trauma-informed approach.

A range of data reports are provided to operational and senior leaders, which include performance against local and national indicators. Nevertheless, YOS managers acknowledge that data needs "honing and refining" to allow a consistent comparison of the YOS cohort against the general children's population. For the out-of-court disposal panel, the YOS extracted data from its systems to demonstrate a positive impact of such disposals on the reoffending rate of children subject to them. However, YOS managers accepted this could be further developed by analysing outcome by the individual type of out-of-court disposal.

There are processes to ensure the YOS learns lessons from things that go wrong. Rapid response reviews are fed into the Safeguarding Children's Partnership Board and shared with the YOS Board. Findings are disseminated to staff through team meetings and monthly effective practice meetings. There is evidence of the YOS's response to inspections, with service development work resulting from findings from HM Inspectorate of Probation thematic and core inspection reports. The introduction and development of the out-of-court disposal panel is one example, alongside the review of working practices on restorative justice and victims.

Inspectors found that YOS managers were aware of problems with the wider local authority 'Oracle' human resources IT system. This has negatively affected appraisal completion, and staff expressed dissatisfaction about this software and its ability to reflect their performance fully.



2. Court disposals

We took a detailed look at seven community sentences and no custodial sentences managed by the YOS. 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:

- Assessment work was based on a wide range of sources, well-reasoned and all cases were correctly classified.
- Delivery and implementation to promote desistance, address safety and wellbeing, and consider risk of harm to others was outstanding.
- YOS staff developed very good relationships with children and their parents and carers, which supported effective engagement.
- Reviewing for desistance, safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm to others was good.
- Management oversight of court orders consistently promoted high-quality casework practice.

Areas for improvement:

- There were shortfalls in the quality of contingency planning to address the child's safety and wellbeing, and to manage some children's risk of harm to others.
- Planning to address the risk of harm to actual and potential victims was not consistent and did not always address specific concerns and risks.
- Reviews completed by case managers did not always lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work and were not always informed by the necessary input from other agencies.

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

2.1. Assessment



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

Outstanding

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

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

We rated the assessment work for court disposals as 'Outstanding'. All the cases inspected were of a sufficient standard to support desistance, keeping the child safe, and managing the risk of harm to individuals or potential victims.

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

Of the 7 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Is there sufficient analysis of offending behaviour, including the child's attitudes towards and motivations for their offending?	7	7
Does assessment consider the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, utilising information held by other agencies?	7	7
Does assessment focus on the child's strengths and protective factors?	7	7
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?	7	7

⁶ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band. See Annexe 1 for a more detailed explanation.

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

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?

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

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?

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

Assessments were clear and used information from other agencies and sources (including social care, police, education and health). Case managers drew together current and historical issues or behaviours, which resulted in well-reasoned analysis of the controls and interventions to be used in keeping the child and others safe. Consideration was given to the diversity and wider social and familial context in every case, with the involvement of the child and parents or carers evident in all but one case.

2.2. Planning



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

Good

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

Of the 7 cases inspected	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does planning focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	7	7
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe? ⁸	7	7
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe? ⁹	6	5

The quality of planning was rated as 'Good'. In all cases, inspectors judged that planning met our required standards for desistance and keeping the child safe. In a large majority of the cases inspected, planning was sufficient to manage the risk of harm some children posed to others. However, contingency planning across safety and wellbeing areas, and risk of harm to others was not as strong.

Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?

Of the 7 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?	7	7
Does planning take sufficient account of the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child?	7	7
Does planning take sufficient account of the child's strengths and protective factors, and seek to reinforce or develop these as necessary?	7	7
Does planning take sufficient account of the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change, and seek to develop these as necessary?	7	7
Where applicable, does planning give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s?	4	3

⁷ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band. See Annexe 1 for a more detailed explanation.

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

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

Is the child and their parents/carers meaningfully involved in planning, and are their views taken into account?	7	7
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Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

Of the 7 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?	7	7
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?	7	7
Does planning set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to manage those risks that have been identified?	7	4

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	5
Does planning involve other agencies where appropriate?	5	5
Does planning address any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims?	4	2
Does planning set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote the safety of other people?	6	5
Does planning set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to manage those risks that have been identified?	6	2

Planning was strengths-based and responsive to the diversity needs, social and familial context of the child. Involvement of children and parents or carers in plans was evident in all cases, and staff included actions on all the key areas to support desistance identified during their assessment. Planning involved other agencies in most cases. Circumstances in a child's life, however, can change quickly. Case managers need to consider the potential for change in each case so that, should concerns escalate, they are prepared and more likely to respond effectively.

Inspectors found contingency planning lacked clarity about specific actions to keep the child and others safe, with sufficient attention given to the needs of actual or potential victims in just half of the relevant cases.

2.3. Implementation and delivery



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

Outstanding

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

Of the 7 cases inspected	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the child's desistance?	7	7
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of the child? ¹¹	7	7
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people? ¹²	6	6

The quality of implementation and delivery was rated as 'Outstanding'. In all cases, inspectors judged that implementation and delivery met our required standards in relation to desistance, keeping the child safe and managing the risk of harm the child posed to others.

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

Of the 7 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?	7	7
Does service delivery reflect the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, involving parents/carers or significant others?	7	7
Does service delivery build upon the child's strengths and enhance protective factors?	7	7

¹⁰ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band. See Annexe 1 for a more detailed explanation.

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

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

Is sufficient focus given to developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child and their parents/carers?	7	7
Does service delivery promote opportunities for community integration including access to services post-supervision?	7	6
Is sufficient attention given to encouraging and enabling the child's compliance with the work of the YOT?	7	7
In cases where it is required, are enforcement actions taken when appropriate?	2	1

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

Of the 7 cases with factors related to keeping the child safe:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does service delivery promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	7	7
Where applicable, is the involvement of other organisations in keeping the child safe sufficiently well-coordinated?	6	6

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

Of the 6 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?	6	6
Where applicable, is sufficient attention given to the protection of actual and potential victims?	4	3
Where applicable, is the involvement of other agencies in managing the risk of harm sufficiently well-coordinated?	6	6

Inspectors found a high level of engagement from children, which reflected the proactive approach of staff and their capacity to develop and maintain meaningful relationships with them. Case managers kept a strong focus on safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm to others, consistently working with a range of agencies and organisations to deliver well-coordinated packages of support. In all but one relevant case, implementation and delivery of services effectively supported the safety of other people.

2.4. Reviewing



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

Good

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

Of the 7 cases inspected ¹⁴	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	6	5
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	5	4
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	4	4

The quality of reviewing in this YOS was rated as 'Good'. In a large majority of the cases we inspected, there was sufficient review of desistance factors and of issues concerning the wellbeing of the child. Reviewing in relation to the risk of harm posed by the child met our standard in all relevant cases. However, reviewing for safety and wellbeing was not always fully informed by all agencies work. As a result, it did not always lead to adjustments in the ongoing plan when this was necessary.

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	6
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
Is the child and their parents/carers meaningfully involved in reviewing their progress and engagement, and are their views taken into account?	6	5

¹³ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band. See Annexe 1 for a more detailed explanation.

¹⁴ We only expect to see evidence of reviewing, in cases where there have been changes in factors related to desistance, keeping the child safe and/or keeping other people safe.

Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

Of the 5 cases where there were changes in factors related to keeping the child safe:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does reviewing identify and respond to changes in factors related to safety and wellbeing?	5	4
Where applicable, is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in promoting the safety and wellbeing of the child?	4	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	2

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	3
Where applicable, does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	1	1

In most cases, reviewing focused sufficiently on building on the child's strengths, enhancing protective factors, and assessing their level of motivation and engagement. Although reviews identified changes in factors linked to safeguarding or public protection, case managers did not always make the necessary adjustments to their ongoing plans of work. Many children supervised by the YOS had complex needs, and their circumstances could change rapidly. In some of the cases inspected, reviews were not informed by the input from other agencies to keep the child safe.

3. Out-of-court disposals



We inspected five cases managed by the YOS that had received an out-of-court disposal. Community resolutions are delivered by the police and a bespoke assessment tool is used. The YOS delivers youth cautions (YCs) and youth conditional cautions (YCCs), therefore the case sample consisted of four youth conditional cautions and one youth caution. We interviewed the case managers in five 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 two cases where there were factors related to harm, we also inspected work done to keep other people safe. In the three cases where safety and wellbeing concerns were identified, we looked at work done to safeguard the child. We also looked at the quality of joint working with local police.

When children receive an out-of-court-disposal, we expect to see the YOS maximising the likelihood of successful outcomes by addressing desistance factors, effectively engaging with children and their parents or carers, and responding to relevant diversity factors. We also expect to see children being kept safe and their safety and wellbeing needs addressed. Finally, we expect everything reasonable to be done to manage the risk of harm posed by children who have offended. This should be through good-quality assessment and planning, with the delivery of appropriate interventions, effective leadership and management, and good joint decision-making and partnership working across all statutory and voluntary agencies.

Strengths:

- The work associated with out-of-court disposals was of a good standard, underpinned by a joint decision-making panel and a clear protocol.
- The YOS provided timely information, made a positive contribution to decision-making and a clearly-recorded rationale in all cases.
- Children could access the same wide range of services as children on court orders.
- Assessment work was based on a wide range of sources, and we saw consistently good analysis of information to support desistance, address safety and wellbeing, and understand the risk of harm to others.
- The YOS took a fully inclusive approach with partners, colleagues, families and children to make sure that the appropriate disposal was delivered and implemented effectively.

Areas for improvement:

- Contingency planning for safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm to others, was not always tailored to the needs of the case or recorded well enough.
- Planning, and delivery and implementation of victim work were not consistent across all cases, in that communication between victim workers and case managers could have been more clearly recorded.

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.

Outstanding

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

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

We rated the assessment work for out-of-court disposals as 'Outstanding'. In every case, the assessment of desistance factors met our required standards. Assessment of the safety and wellbeing of the child and keeping other people safe was sufficient in a large majority of the inspected cases.

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

Of the 5 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?	5	4
Does assessment consider the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, utilising information held by other agencies?	5	5
Does assessment focus on the child's strengths and protective factors?	5	5
Where applicable, does assessment analyse the key structural barriers facing the child?	5	5

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.

Is sufficient attention given to understanding the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change?	5	4
Where applicable, does assessment give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s, and opportunities for restorative justice?	4	3
Is the child and their parents/carers meaningfully involved in their assessment, and are their views taken into account?	5	5

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?

Of the 5 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risks to the safety and wellbeing of the child?	5	3
Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including other assessments, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	5	4

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?

Of the 5 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	3
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

There was a sufficient analysis of offending behaviour in nearly all cases, with involvement of children and parents or carers, and a strengths-focused approach evident in every case. Assessments routinely drew on information from multiple sources to gain the best understanding of a child's circumstances and history. This led to sufficiently detailed assessments completed before the joint decision-making panel. Assessments also considered the support and intervention required. There was a sufficient focus on safety and wellbeing issues, with appropriate classification of cases. Risk of harm assessment work was good, with most cases drawing on available sources of information from other agencies.

3.2. Planning



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

Requires improvement

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

Of the 5 cases inspected	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?	5	5
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe? ¹⁷	3	2
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe? ¹⁸	2	1

Planning to address desistance was outstanding in all of the cases inspected. The overall rating for this standard, however, was driven by the score for planning for keeping the child and other people safe, where inspectors found that not all cases met our requirements, therefore resulting in a rating of 'Requires improvement'.

Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?

Of the 5 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?	5	5
Does planning take sufficient account of the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child?	5	5
Does planning take sufficient account of the child's strengths and protective factors, and seek to reinforce or develop these as necessary?	5	5
Does planning take sufficient account of the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change, and seek to develop these as necessary?	5	5
Does planning take sufficient account of opportunities for community integration, including access to mainstream services following completion of out-of-court disposal work?	5	5

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

¹⁷ This question is only relevant in cases where there are factors related to keeping the child safe.

¹⁸ 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?	4	2
Is the child and their parents/carers meaningfully involved in planning, and are their views taken into account?	5	5

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	3
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?	2	2
Does planning include necessary contingency arrangements for those risks that have been identified?	3	1

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

Of the 2 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?	2	1
Where applicable, does planning involve other agencies where appropriate?	0	0
Where applicable, does planning address any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims?	2	1
Does planning include necessary contingency arrangements for those risks that have been identified?	2	1

Planning for desistance was strengths-based, proportionate and offered opportunities for community integration in all cases. Planning for safety and wellbeing often aligned with other agencies' plans. However, in the cases inspected, there was a lack of focus on victims. Inspectors found shortfalls in the quality of contingency planning for safety and wellbeing, and for risk of harm to others. This is important as there should be a clear plan of action in the event of risk to the child (or to other people) either increasing or decreasing. In some cases, contingency plans were too vague and did not clearly set out adequate actions or responses to be taken if, and when, circumstances changed.

3.3. Implementation and delivery



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

Outstanding

Our rating¹⁹ for implementation and delivery is based on the following key questions:

Of the 5 cases inspected	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does service delivery effectively support the child's desistance?	5	4
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of the child? ²⁰	3	3
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of other people? ²¹	2	2

We rated implementation and delivery as 'Outstanding'. In all cases inspected, the work was sufficient to support the safety of the child and address any risk of harm to other people. In all but one case, we judged that implementation and delivery met our standards in relation to the work to address desistance.

Does service delivery effectively support the child's desistance?

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

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

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

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

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	3

Does service delivery effectively support the safety of other people?

Of the 2 cases with factors related to the safety of other people:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Where applicable, is sufficient attention given to the protection of actual and potential victims?	2	1
Are the delivered services sufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	2	2

In nearly all cases, children were given access to services to support desistance, and it was clear that the case managers took a strengths-based approach to their work. The YOS had access to a wide range of specialist staff and other resources to deliver suitable and innovative interventions to children. Case managers responded to the diversity and wider social/familial context of the child and developed good working relationships. Case managers advocated on behalf of children and made timely referrals to specialist and mainstream services, such as substance misuse, CAMHS and other adolescent services. Victim work was of mixed quality but, overall, inspectors judged that delivery and implementation for the safety of other people to be good.

3.4. Joint working



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

Good

Our rating²² for joint working is based on the following key questions:

Of the 5 cases inspected	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Are the YOT's recommendations sufficiently well-informed, analytical and personalised to the child, supporting joint decision making?	5	5
Does the YOT work effectively with the police in implementing the out-of-court disposal? ²³	4	3

Overall, joint working for delivery of out-of-court-disposals was rated as 'Good'. We looked at four YCC cases as part of the sample of five out-of-court disposal cases.

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

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

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

²³ This question is only relevant in youth conditional caution cases.

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

Of the 4 cases with youth conditional cautions:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Where applicable, does the YOT inform the police of progress and outcomes in a sufficient and timely manner?	4	4
Is sufficient attention given to compliance with and enforcement of the conditions?	4	3

The YOS provided timely information and made a positive contribution to decision-making in all cases. We saw a clearly recorded rationale for disposals in every case, with all of them indicating that the child and their parents or carers understood the implications of the disposal. Attention was paid to compliance and enforcement of YCCs in all but one case.

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.²⁴

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 Chair of the YOS Management Board 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 11 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 seven meetings, which included meetings with managers, partner organisations and staff. The evidence collected under this domain was judged against our published ratings characteristics.²⁵

Domain two: court disposals

We completed case assessments over a one-week period, examining case files and interviewing case managers. Seven of the cases selected were those of children who had received court disposals three to 12 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 seven court disposals. The sample size was set to achieve a confidence level of 80 per cent (with a margin of error of five), and where possible we ensured that the ratios in relation to gender, sentence or disposal type, risk of serious harm,

²⁴ 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. Five of the cases selected were those of children who had received out-of-court disposals two to 12 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 five out-of-court disposals. The sample size was set so that the combined case sample size comprises 60 per cent domain two cases and 40 per cent domain three. Where possible, we ensured the ratios in relation to gender, sentence or disposal type, risk of serious harm, and risk to safety and wellbeing classifications matched those in the eligible population.

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

Ratings explained

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

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