

An inspection of youth offending services in

Warwickshire

HM Inspectorate of Probation

December 2018

This inspection was led by HM Inspector Pauline Burke, supported by a team of inspectors, as well as staff from our operations and research teams. The Head of Youth Offending Team Inspections, responsible for this inspection programme, is Alan MacDonald. We would like to thank all those who helped plan and took part in the inspection; without their help and cooperation, the inspection would not have been possible.

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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Foreword

This inspection is part of our new programme of youth offending service inspections. As planned, we have inspected and rated Warwickshire Youth Justice Service (YJS) across three broad areas: the arrangements for organisational delivery first, and then the quality of court disposals work, and out-of-court disposals work.

We have given Warwickshire YJS an overall rating of 'Good'. Our inspection found that most areas of practice are good, with some aspects being outstanding and one area requiring improvement.

The Management Board provides a strategic vision for the service and ensures that partnership working is good. There is a wide range of resources available to meet the needs of children and their families. Staff consider the diverse needs of the child or young person, try to address barriers to motivation and demonstrate good engagement skills. The service needs to improve its performance regarding those aged 16 and above to ensure they are in appropriate education, training and employment, motivated to engage in this activity, and that suitable provision is available.

We found the service has a comprehensive approach to analysing information about factors related to desistance, safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm. It was not clear, however, that the partnership used this intelligence to influence service delivery for all children and young people across Warwickshire.

We rated the work on court disposals as 'outstanding' across each of the four standards, and work on out-of-court disposals as good. The joint working arrangements between the service and the police, however, required improvement because the procedures for out-of-court disposals are confused and there is limited joint decision-making.

Our inspection found that the views of children and young people, their parents/carers and other stakeholders were not sought and analysed in order to drive improvement and influence future service delivery.

The recommendations in this report have been designed to assist Warwickshire YJS to build on its strengths and focus on areas for improvement.



Dame Glenys Stacey
Chief Inspector of Probation

Overall findings

Overall, Warwickshire Youth Justice Service is rated as: **Good**. This rating has been determined by inspecting the Youth Justice Service in three domains of its work. The findings in those domains are described below.

	Organisational delivery
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Our key findings about organisational delivery are as follows:

- The management board is a well-chaired, fully constituted Chief Officers Board that enables good strategic partnership working.
- Through the partnership arrangements, there is a wide range of resources to meet the needs of the children and young people and their families.
- The service has a comprehensive approach to analysing information, which is focused on factors relating to desistance, safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm. The partnership, however, does not use this analysis to influence service delivery for all children and young people across Warwickshire.
- The arrangements for out-of-court disposals are confused. There is limited joint decision-making and the rationale for disposals is unclear.
- Children older than 16 years are not receiving suitable education, training or employment provision.
- Restorative justice practice does not consistently consider the wishes of victims.
- The YJS does not provide child-friendly literature, and access to services for children who have speech, language and communication needs is limited.
- The views of children and young people, their parents/carers and other stakeholders are not used to drive improvement of the service.

	Court disposals
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Our key findings about court disposals are as follows:

- Assessments are thorough and consider information from other agencies in all areas of desistance, safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm.
- Planning considers the views of the child or young person and their parents/carers and is proportionate to the court outcome.
- Interventions focus on keeping the child or young person motivated and engaged, and reviewing leads to necessary adjustments to the plan of work.

- Case managers take a strengths-based approach to their work with children and young people, and have a good understanding of how to enhance positive factors in their life.
- Work to promote the safety of victims and maximise opportunities for restorative justice is not evidenced as well as other areas of practice.
- There is limited evidence from panel reviews as to how the child or young person is progressing.



Out-of-court disposals

Our key findings about out-of-court disposals are as follows:

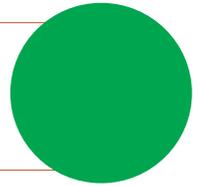
- Assessment and planning in relation to a child or young person's safety and wellbeing are strong and interventions to support desistance are appropriate.
- Staff consider the diverse needs of the child or young person, try to remove barriers to motivation and demonstrate good engagement skills.
- Not enough attention is given to ensuring that the child or young person, and their parents/carers, understand the implications of receiving an out-of-court disposal.
- Assessments regarding risk of harm are sometimes delayed and the need to plan for contingency arrangements is not always identified.
- Management oversight of out-of-court disposals is not consistent.

Service: Warwickshire Youth Offending Service

Fieldwork started: October 2018

Overall rating

Good



1. Organisational delivery

1.1 Governance and leadership

Good



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

Outstanding



2.3 Implementation and delivery

Outstanding



2.4 Reviewing

Outstanding



3. Out-of-court disposals

3.1 Assessment

Good



3.2 Planning

Good



3.3 Implementation and delivery

Good



3.4 Joint working

Requires Improvement



Recommendations

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

The Chief Officers Board should:

1. ensure that the partnership strengthens its use of performance reports and data analysis to influence service delivery to all children and young people across Warwickshire
2. track the performance data on education, training and employment for young people aged 16 and above, and ensure that these young people are engaged and that appropriate provision is available for them.

The YOS Manager should:

3. review the procedure for deciding on and delivering out-of-court disposals and ensure that the process is clear to all staff and meets the needs of children and families
4. develop a process that captures the views of children and young people, their parents/carers and other stakeholders so that they can influence future service delivery.

Introduction

Youth Offending Services (YOSs) 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. HMI Probation inspects both these aspects of youth offending services.

YOSs are statutory partnerships, and they are multi-disciplinary, to deal with the needs of the whole child. They are required to have staff from local authority social care and education, the police, the National Probation Service and local health services.¹ Most YOSs are based within local authorities; however, this can vary.

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

Warwickshire covers an area of 763 square miles and has a population of around 565,000 people, making up just over 230,000 households. The Youth Justice Service is managed as part of Warwickshire County Council. On 01 October 2018, as part of the council's transformation programme, the service moved from the Communities Directorate to the People Directorate. Warwickshire is noted within the criminal justice sector for the two multi-agency justice centres at Leamington Spa and Nuneaton, out of which all the key criminal justice agencies work, including: Warwickshire Police, the National Probation Service, the Community Rehabilitation Company, Her Majesty's Court Services, the Crown Prosecution Service, Victim and Witness Services and Youth Justice.

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 provide assurance on the effectiveness of work with adults and children who have offended to implement orders of the court, reduce reoffending, protect the public and safeguard the vulnerable. We inspect these services and publish inspection reports. We highlight good and poor practice, and use our data and information to encourage good-quality services. We are independent of government, and speak independently.

HM Inspectorate of Probation standards

The standards against which we inspect 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 people who have offended.²

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

² HM Inspectorate's standards are available here: <https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmiprobation/about-our-work/our-standards-and-ratings/>

Key facts

**First-time entrant rate³
per 100,000**

329

Warwickshire YOS

301

Average for
England and Wales

Reoffending rates⁴

39.1%

Warwickshire YOS

41.9%

Average for
England and Wales

Crime rates⁵



**Total recorded crime
(rate per 1,000 households)**

Warwickshire Constabulary

74.1

England and Wales

83.5

Caseload information⁶

Age

Warwickshire

National average

10-14

21%

24%

15-17

79%

76%

Race/ethnicity

Warwickshire

National average

White

91%

73%

Black and minority ethnic

9%

24%

Gender

Warwickshire

National average

Male

80%

83%

Female

20%

17%



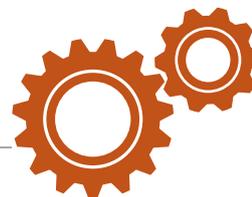
³ First-time entrants, October 2016 to September 2017, Youth Justice Board (YJB).

⁴ Proven reoffending statistics, July 2015 to June 2016, Ministry of Justice, (April 2018).

⁵ Crime in England and Wales Table P3, Office for National Statistics, (July 2018)

⁶ Youth Justice annual statistics, October 2015 to September 2016, Ministry of Justice (July 2018)

Organisational delivery



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

In Warwickshire YJS, the management board is called the Chief Officers Board. This reflects the strategic position that its members hold in their own agencies and their ability to commit resources to the YJS. The Board is chaired by the Deputy Director for Public Health, who has held the role for over two years and has a good understanding of YJS work. The Board includes all statutory partners and some non-statutory partners, such as the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Earlier in the year, the Board held a number of workshops to review the effectiveness of its work. These were facilitated by the Youth Justice Board. The workshops focused on the strategic plan that was in place for 2018 to 2019. There was evidence that the board members advocated the work of the YJS. In particular, the partnership had recently completed a health needs assessment that led to it securing Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) resources for the service. Although the group manager advised the Board of good news stories and achievements, the Board recognised that it could do more to celebrate the success of the service and of the individuals who worked within it.

The service has Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) in place for high risk of harm cases and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) arrangements for cases involving domestic abuse. There are links with the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), and the multi-agency Exploitation Team. There is a good range of partnership staff in the service, including educational psychologists, CAMHS workers, police officers and probation officers. All were clear about their role.

Two years ago, the YJS commissioned a research programme (Abuse, Loss, Trauma, Attachment and Resilience (ALTAR)), which explored the impact of these experiences on children and young people in the youth justice system. Staff were trained in Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE), and a framework was put in place to use Enhanced Case Management (ECM) techniques with these cases. Evidence from the cases inspected that were part of ECM demonstrated strong multi-agency working with a focus on the needs of the child and their family.

The process for out-of-court disposals is unclear, and its links with the prevention programme are confusing. The service offers a prevention programme, which receives referrals from schools and anti-social behaviour forums. It is a six-week voluntary intervention programme delivered on a one-to-one basis by practitioners. However, it is unclear how prevention referrals are accepted and managed, and practice is inconsistent.

There is also an Arrest Diversion Scheme (ADS) in place, where children and young people are referred to the YJS by the police. If suitable, the child or young person

attends a short one-off session. The scheme can result in no further action being taken by the police. Outside of the scheme, the police also deliver community resolutions, where the option of no further action being taken is not available. This could be seen as an unfair outcome compared with ADS. Community resolutions are delivered solely by the police and require no consultation with the YJS.

Similarly, the YJS is not always part of the decision-making process for youth cautions, although in part this is because the ADS has been set up to divert children and young people from receiving cautions. There was previously an issue with the police case management system, and the YOS was not always made aware of these disposals in a timely manner, which delayed the delivery of interventions.

For youth conditional cautions (YCC), there is a joint decision-making process between the YJS and the police, as both agencies agree which conditions should be included as part of the intervention. The YJS completes an AssetPlus assessment before the YCC is delivered. At the assessment meeting the practitioner explains to the child or young person and their parents/carers the implications and conditions of a YCC.

The out-of-court disposals process is not clear to staff and could also be confusing to children, young people and their families. There are no leaflets available for children and their families that explain the meaning of an out-of-court disposal and its consequences. The decision-making process lacks consistency between agencies, and there are gaps in the provision. Both the YJS and the police recognised the issues raised and an improvement plan is in place.

The YJS has not completed any analysis to compare the proportion of prevention and out-of-court work with post-court work and whether this is increasing or decreasing. This is key information required to allocate and manage resources for non-statutory work, and it will need to be available as part of the YJS's review of prevention services and out-of-court disposals.

Members of the management team attend board meetings on a regular basis and staff have been kept informed about the county council's restructure and the impact of the service moving from one directorate to another. However, the staff survey showed that, although 75 per cent of staff understood the YJS vision and challenges either very well or quite well, 41 per cent were not aware of the Management Board's activities. The Board should therefore improve its engagement with frontline staff.

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

Staffing levels in the YJS are appropriate, and a system is in place to cover periods of planned and unplanned absences. Seventy five per cent of staff in the staff survey said that they were comfortable with their workload/caseload.

Managers use a case allocation tool to distribute work, which includes key recommended tasks for each staff role. There is a team briefing every morning to ensure that all service delivery demands for that day are being met. Staff have capacity to deliver non-statutory prevention work.

There is a diverse workforce, and workforce development forms part of the service's strategic plan. There is evidence of access to training, which is supported and encouraged.

All staff have received restorative justice training and the service uses a generic approach to work with victims. Case managers are expected to contact victims to find out their wishes. There are Restorative Justice Council accredited practitioners in place to support the case managers, and they work with victims on the sensitive and complex cases. There is a good variety of indirect reparation projects. The service has access to the Bloxham Centre, which has a number of different workshops available. As initial contact with victims is done by individual case managers, the service needs to ensure that what is offered to victims is consistent and meets the needs of the victim. Panel members stated that they had been trained in restorative justice. However, they did not feel that this was being used effectively, and there was limited evidence in the cases that this training had been implemented in practice.

Harmful sexual behaviour assessments are co-worked by two staff allocated to the case, who are trained in Assessment Intervention Moving on 2 (AIM2). All cases are managed by an AIM2-trained person, and managers have been trained in AIM2 Effective Supervision. There is an AIM2 assessment panel, and a harmful sexual behaviour panel is held monthly to discuss any cases that have these concerns. Staff also have access to a Sexually Inappropriate Behaviour Service (SIBS) for these types of cases.

Managers have links to the MARAC meeting for domestic abuse cases and prepare reports where children or young people are known to the YJS. Social workers and probation officers are trained to recognise domestic abuse and have access to the Non-Violent Resistance package and the Free Up Programme, which looks at healthy masculinity.

Staff have received mandatory e-learning about county lines, as there were concerns about the number of young people coming into Warwickshire. The YJS police officer shares intelligence from county lines briefings and staff have experience of submitting referrals, with the support of managers, to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM).

The YJS supervision policy and procedure incorporates a supervision contract and a template for supervision sessions. These include personal reflection as well as

discussion on case management. Seconded staff are supervised by their own agency, which completes an appraisal, as well as by their YJS line manager. Panel members meet regularly with an operational manager and reported feeling well supported and valued.

There is an induction process, which includes a personalised induction plan and a checklist for supervising managers. There are procedures in place for addressing staff competency, and when poor performance is identified it is addressed. The service has a partnership agreement with the University of Worcester so that they can offer placements to students interested in this area of work.

All practitioners are given the opportunity to complete the Professional Certificate in Effective Practice (PCEP). The service is flexible in its working patterns to allow staff to have study time to support further learning and development.

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

There is a comprehensive suite of performance reports, which are presented at both strategic and operational meetings across the partnership. Reports consider all factors related to offending, including desistance, safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm to others. Health partners provide detailed quarterly performance reports that include outcomes for children and young people. The service is working with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner to identify how the data analysis influences the commissioning of services.

At a strategic level, however, it is not clear that data relating to young people is joined up; for example, the Safer Warwickshire Partnership Board has a performance dashboard where the YJS reports on the data analysis, but there is little evidence that this is understood across the partnership. Both the YJS and the partnership need to evidence that the performance data reports and analysis influence service delivery and impact on the outcomes for all children and young people across Warwickshire.

The service has seconded health workers who deliver direct work as well as brokering arrangements for mainstream services, especially around transition planning. There is a good substance misuse offer provided by an organisation called Compass, which has close links to the YJS. Through the county council arrangements, the YJS has access to Barnardo's, which was commissioned to provide the BRICS (Bail, Remand and Intensive Care and Support) accommodation scheme.

The YJS employs educational psychologists who work with children who have an education health care plan. They also help children to access the right provision for their needs from schools. They offer services to engage with children and young people to ensure that they remain in school and are not excluded.

The YJS has implemented Active Inclusion, which is funded through the European Social Fund. This allows one practitioner to work with young people aged 15 years and over who are not in suitable education, training or employment, although this is not a full-time post. This is the poorest-performing area of work in the YJS performance data. The outturn for 2017 to 2018 for young people aged 16 years and

over in suitable education, training or employment was 61 per cent. The service needs to prioritise improving performance in this area and work with education and training providers to ensure that children and young people have access to appropriate provision.

Probation transition arrangements are strong. Cases are allocated jointly to the seconded probation officer, who helps the young person understand the difference between the YJS and the probation service. They have access to probation case management systems to help in the timeliness of transition. A probation officer from the local probation office acts as the single point of contact for all transition cases.

The YJS recognises that across the partnership insufficient attention is being given to children and young people who have speech, language and communication needs. On an operational level, the child or young person’s referral order contract and intervention plan are not child-friendly and there are no child-friendly leaflets to explain the impact and conditions of out-of-court disposals.

The YJS is part of the Safer Warwickshire Partnership Board as well as being a member of the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the Serious Organised Crime Group. Through these boards, the service has strong links with the Child Sexual Exploitation, Missing from Home and Trafficking Team. It is also part of the Violence Against Women and Girls, Prevent and the Exploitation Sub Group, which looks at county lines and criminal exploitation.

The YJS is a core partner in the Integrated Offender Management steering group, which has been considering responses to knife crime. The co-location of partner agencies in the two justice centres helps partnership working and decision-making between partners. For example, the MAPPA coordinator is co-located and so can help YJS staff with referrals.

Although the Youth Court Room at Leamington Spa Justice Centre was hailed as a flagship of modern justice, it is no longer routinely used and nearly all Warwickshire youth cases are heard at Coventry Court. This has a negative impact on staff’s capacity, due to the time taken travelling and transporting children and young people. There is a concern about children and young people going to another city, and meeting up with young people from other areas. This could increase a child or young person’s vulnerability, especially as county lines is a concern across the region.

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

YJS policies and guidance are in place, up to date, reviewed regularly and communicated to all staff. The service’s volunteers felt there was a clear procedural framework to operate within and that they receive relevant information to help inform their role.

There is evidence of partner agencies coming to staff team meetings to talk about services and how to access them. There is an escalation process in place for all partners to help challenge another agency when disagreements arise.

The service has three office bases across the area. All have good facilities, are accessible for children and families and are co-located with other partners. The service tries to arrange referral order panels close to where the child or young person lives in order to ease travelling concerns, and a budget is available for room hire. There is a staff safety policy in place, and if any risks are identified then joint working is arranged.

The YJS has access to the children's services case management system and can input directly onto an individual case, which ensures good information-sharing and up-to-date recording. The service has invested in an additional component for its case management system so that staff can also access the education system. As the police and YJS are co-located, the police can access its own systems on site, and this helps with checks on children and young people as well as with feeding in intelligence to the YJS practitioners. Health colleagues have to record information in duplicate, as they need to use different computers.

The service has a quality assurance policy in place. Every new AssetPlus assessment is quality-assured by a manager and there is a monthly benchmarking meeting to ensure consistency. Low-risk cases are randomly selected and quality-assured to monitor the level of risk thresholds. Through the case review, staff reported that they received effective management oversight in 85 per cent of the cases, although in the opinion of the inspectors, management oversight of the cases selected for the sample was effective in only 69 per cent of cases. The YJS holds quarterly performance review meetings and discussions are shared at various team meetings, as well as at the annual whole-service performance review day, which includes all staff.

There is some evidence of evaluation reports being used to improve practice, such as the ALTAR report and the health and substance misuse reports, which analysed outcomes for children and young people. However, the views of children and young people, their parents or carers and other key stakeholders are not routinely sought or analysed and do not have an impact on future improvements to service delivery.

There are examples of where the YJS has learned from a negative experience, and this includes paperless referral order panels because of a file being lost. A case that was reported to the Youth Justice Board because of a serious incident had also been presented to the Management Board to identify lessons learned. The service has conducted a Victim's Code Compliance Review and has taken action as a result.

Summary

Strengths:

- The seniority of the Board enables it to make decisions proactively, especially regarding resourcing the YJS.
- Strategic partnership working is strong, and this is aided by the co-location of agencies.
- There is a skilled workforce and a commitment to training.
- Access to partnership services is good.

- The YJS provides comprehensive performance reports that analyse desistance, safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm factors on both a strategic and operational level.
- The arrangements for the transition of cases to probation are proactive and child-centred.

Areas for improvement:

- The process for out-of-court disposals is unclear and decision-making lacks consistency and is not shared between agencies.
- There are inconsistencies in the way the needs and wishes of victims are gathered in some cases across the service.
- The needs and wishes of victims are not gathered or responded to in a consistent way across the service.
- There is no evidence that the partnership used performance reports and analysis to influence service delivery to all children and young people across Warwickshire.
- The proportion of children older than 16 years receiving suitable education, training or employment provision is low and needs to improve.
- There is a gap in the services offered for children and young people who have speech, language and communication difficulties.
- The views of children and young people, their parents/carers and other stakeholders are not sought and analysed in order to drive improvement of the service as a whole.

2. Court disposals



Work with children and young people 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	Outstanding
Assessment is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child or young person and their parents/carers.	A green outline star icon, indicating an outstanding rating.

In the majority of cases, the assessment included sufficient analysis of offending behaviour, including the child or young person's attitudes towards and motivation for their offending. In nearly all cases, staff considered the diversity and wider social context of the child or young person by using information held by other agencies. In all cases, the assessment focused on the child or young person's strengths and their protective factors. Case managers took a strengths-based approach to their work with children and young people, and had a good understanding of approaches to desistance. They were confident in referring to, and using information from, other agencies. There was clearly a broad range of services on offer.

However, in four cases, the assessment did not give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s and opportunities for restorative justice, although the views of the child and their parents or carers were considered in 88 per cent of cases.

Factors related to the safety and wellbeing of the child or young person were fully identified in nearly all cases. In undertaking the assessments, all but one case drew appropriately on other assessments or information held by other agencies. In two cases, staff did not give enough attention to analysing what controls or interventions could best promote safety and wellbeing. Inspectors agreed with the safety and wellbeing classification in nearly all the cases. Where they disagreed, this was because the classification was judged to be too low.

Assessing the risk of harm to others posed by a child or young person was not as good in the areas of desistance and the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person. In four cases, the assessment did not sufficiently identify who was at risk and the nature of the risk, although most of the cases used available sources of information and involved other agencies where appropriate. Case managers did analyse controls and interventions to manage and minimise the risk of harm presented by the child or young person in the majority of cases.

The case of C (m) showed the strengths of assessments in Warwickshire:

"This was a comprehensive assessment of the young person, providing an underpinning hypothesis for his offending behaviour linking to his childhood and adolescence trauma and experience."

Overall, the quality of assessments was judged to be outstanding in regard to assessing a child or young person’s desistance, safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm to others.

2.2 Planning	Outstanding
Planning is well-informed, holistic and personalised, actively involving the child or young person and their parents/carers.	

The quality of planning that focused on supporting the child or young person’s desistance was sufficient in 92 per cent of cases. In most cases, the plan set out the interventions and services most likely to support desistance. These included factors such as substance misuse, education, training and employment, lifestyle and mental health. In nearly all cases, the planning took sufficient account of the child or young person’s strengths and protective factors, as well as their levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change.

Planning to take account of the needs and wishes of victims was not evident in three cases; however, the child or young person and their parents/carers had been involved in the planning, and their views had been considered, in all but one case.

The YJS uses a risk panel to oversee the planning for cases where the child or young person is assessed as posing a high risk of harm to others and/or there is a high level of risk in terms of their safety and wellbeing. These are multi-agency meetings and the evidence from cases reviewed showed that the risk panel arrangements were effective. In all cases, the planning was proportionate to the court outcome, with interventions capable of being delivered within an appropriate timescale.

Planning sufficiently addressed the child or young person’s safety and wellbeing in 86 per cent of cases and set out effective contingency arrangements to manage the risks in the majority of cases. The YJS involved other agencies in the planning process where necessary, and its plans aligned with those of other services in almost all cases reviewed.

Planning to keep other people safe was sufficient in most cases inspected, and all but one case involved other agencies where appropriate. Planning to address any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims was less well developed, with this not being evident in 21 per cent of cases.

Effective contingency arrangements to manage identified risks to others were in place in most cases. Planning to keep other people safe was not as good as planning for a child or young person’s desistance or for their safety and wellbeing, although overall the quality of planning was judged outstanding.

In the case of G (m), one inspector noted:

“Planning focuses sufficiently on supporting the young person’s desistance, with good collaboration from the young person’s family and victim input.”

2.3 Implementation and delivery	Outstanding
High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging and assisting the child or young person.	

Interventions designed to reduce reoffending and support desistance were comprehensive. In most cases, the services delivered were those that were most likely to support desistance and recognise and respond effectively to the diverse needs of the child or young person. In all cases, the case manager used the service delivered to build on the child or young person’s strengths and enhance their protective factors.

There was evidence from the interviews with case managers that they knew their children and young people well and were tenacious in trying to keep them engaged with the interventions. In 91 per cent of cases, staff had focused on developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child or young person and their parents/carers. In 96 per cent of cases, every attempt was made to help children and young people comply, including using home visits and making appropriate transport arrangements, and staff rarely needed to convene compliance panels.

All staff had access to a variety of interventions, although there were some gaps, especially in relation to children with speech, language and communication needs. There were some good examples of specific work with individual victims, and the use of indirect reparation was strong and varied; however, in 22 per cent of cases, not enough attention was given to the protection of actual and potential victims.

The delivery of services to promote the child or young person’s safety and wellbeing was evident in 95 per cent of cases. In most cases, the involvement of other organisations in keeping the child or young person safe was well coordinated.

This was demonstrated in the case of L (m):

“Excellent planning between the YJS and the social worker as a means of ensuring a cohesive approach to managing the young person’s safety and well-being.”

The delivery of services to keep other people safe was of sufficient quality in most cases inspected, although, like planning, some aspects were less well developed. The involvement of other agencies in managing risk of harm was well coordinated in 78 per cent of cases. Overall, in most cases the implementation and delivery of services supported the safety of other people effectively.

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

Case managers were aware that children and young people’s circumstances can change rapidly and that this can result in an increased, or sometimes decreased, likelihood of reoffending, risk of harm to others or risks to their safety and well-being. The process for reviewing referral orders did not require a report to be presented to the panel. It was meant to be a restorative conversation between the child or young person and the panel members, which looked at the progress that had been achieved. However, there was limited evidence in the case records that these discussions and updates had taken place in the way that was intended.

In line with assessment, planning, implementation and delivery, the child or young person’s barriers to motivation and engagement were reviewed in 96 per cent of cases. Once again, this demonstrated the importance that the YJS placed on encouraging children and young people to comply with orders.

In all but two cases, the reviews led to changes in the plan of work to support desistance and, in all cases, it built on the child or young person’s strengths and enhanced their protective factors. In nearly all cases, the child or young person, and their parents/carers, were fully involved in reviewing their progress and engagement, and their views were considered. In 96 per cent of cases, reviewing led to necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work to support desistance.

This was evident in the case of K (m):

“Implementation and delivery changed accordingly as more information became available in regard to the young person’s mental health, history of traumatic events, associations and health needs. The family were incorporated into the referral order and there is evidence of a good relationship between the case manager and the family. This took some time to build, and the case manager has been careful to recognise the importance of the family as a desistance factor for this young man.”

Reviewing a child’s safety and wellbeing was informed by information from other agencies in most cases, and this led to the necessary changes in the ongoing plan in 94 per cent of relevant cases. In reviewing the risk of harm to others, two cases did not identify and respond to changes in risk and two cases showed that the case manager did not take account of information from other agencies.

In 93 per cent of cases, the child or young person and their parents or carers were meaningfully involved in reviewing the risk of harm, and their views were considered. Similarly, in the same percentage of cases the reviewing process had led to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work to manage and minimise the risk of harm to others.

Overall, reviewing focused sufficiently on keeping other people safe in 93 per cent of cases and it was evident in the case files that exit strategies for children and young people were in place. These included continuing interventions on a voluntary basis as well as referrals to other partner agencies.

Summary

Strengths:

- Assessments were thorough and considered information from other agencies concerning desistance, safety and wellbeing and risk of harm.
- Planning considered the views of the child or young person and their parents/carers.
- Planning was proportionate to the court outcome and interventions were delivered within the time frame.
- Interventions focused on keeping the child or young person motivated and engaged.
- Reviewing led to the necessary adjustments to the plan of work for the child or young person's desistance, safety and wellbeing and risk of harm.
- Case managers took a strengths-based approach to their work with children and young people, and had a good understanding of how to enhance positive factors in their life.
- Exit strategies were well planned and focused on the ongoing needs of the child or young person.

Areas for improvement:

- Work to promote the safety of victims and maximise opportunities for restorative justice was not evidenced as well as other areas of practice.
- Referral order panel reviews did not accurately record what had been discussed and so this could not be reflected upon by the child or young person or their parents/carers, nor could it be shared with other agencies.

3. Out-of-court disposals



Work with children and young people 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	Good
Assessment is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child or young person and their parents/carers.	

The work carried out with children and families when the child was subject to an out-of-court disposal was good overall. However, the process, which includes a prevention programme, an arrest diversion scheme and community resolutions, as well as youth cautions and youth conditional cautions, is unclear and confused. Decision-making is not joined up between the YJS and the police, and management oversight of all these interventions is not consistent. The sample of cases contained mostly youth conditional cautions, and for these the AssetPlus assessment was completed.

The quality of assessments was good, although not as good as the assessment of post-court cases. Assessments in relation to safety and wellbeing were better than those relating to desistance and risk of harm. In 93 per cent of cases, there was sufficient analysis of offending behaviour and the assessment considered the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child or young person. In 87 per cent of cases, the assessment focused on the child or young person's strengths and protective factors, and in all but one case, staff had considered the child or young person's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change. All case managers had involved the child or young person and their parents or carers in the assessment, and taken their views into account.

As with post-court cases, work with victims was not as strong, and in 27 per cent of relevant cases the case manager had not given sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s.

In only two cases in the sample had the child or young person been subject to a child protection plan or Section 47 enquiry at any time during the sentence. Assessments of safety and wellbeing showed that risks to the child or young person were clearly identified and analysed in 87 per cent of cases. Regarding levels of risk, inspectors agreed with the safety and wellbeing classification in 80 per cent of cases. Where they disagreed, this was because the classification was judged to be too low.

One inspector stated in the case of P (f):

“The assessment sufficiently analyses how to keep the young person safe and acknowledges she is now more stable in the supported housing, and has an allocated social work practitioner.”

In 73 per cent of relevant cases, the assessment sufficiently analysed how to keep other people safe, and nearly all used available sources of information, including

other assessments that had been completed. In 93 per cent of cases, the case manager’s classification of risk of serious harm was correct. However, in a third of the cases the assessment to keep other people safe was not completed within an appropriate period following the start of the disposal.

3.2 Planning	Good
Planning is well-informed, holistic and personalised, actively involving the child or young person and their parents/carers.	

The planning of interventions to support desistance factors was good. In all but two cases the views of parents/carers were considered and interventions were proportionate and matched to the child or young person’s needs.

In 86 per cent of cases, planning took sufficient account of the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child or young person, and in all but one case it took account of their strengths and protective factors. However, in only 36 per cent of relevant cases had case managers given sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim.

Planning was good in terms of keeping the child or young person, or other people, sufficiently safe. It involved different agencies, and agency plans were aligned in most cases and included contingency arrangements for the identified risks in 73 per cent of cases. Planning to manage risk of harm promoted the safety of other people and addressed specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims in all but one case. However, planning for contingency arrangements to manage those risks had not been identified in 44 per cent of relevant cases. Overall, planning focused sufficiently on keeping people safe in 89 per cent of cases.

One inspector noted in the case of D (m):

“The YCC requirements clearly focus upon the main issues linked to the risk of re-offending (thinking and behaviour and peer influences). Additionally, sessions are delivered in a manner which promotes strengths-based factors, including involving the young person in activities within his local community centre and supporting with the education and children’s services plan.”

3.3 Implementation and delivery	Good
High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging and assisting the child or young person.	

Interventions to support desistance were delivered in good time in 71 per cent of cases. They reflected the diverse needs of the child or young person and involved parents/carers in nearly all cases.

Sufficient focus was given to developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child or young person and their parents or carers in 93 per cent of cases. As seen with post-court cases, attention was given by the case manager to

encouraging and enabling the child or young person to comply with the work. In all but two cases service delivery promoted opportunities for community integration, including access to mainstream services.

The importance of engagement is shown in the following example of S (m):

“It was clear that the case manager had made considerable effort to build an effective working relationship with the young person, evidenced by the continued compliance with what were voluntary appointments.”

In 91 per cent of cases the service promoted the safety and wellbeing of the child or young person and, in nearly all cases, staff included other organisations in keeping the child or young person safe. Regarding keeping other people safe, of the relevant cases, 67 per cent had given sufficient attention to the protection of actual and potential victims and, overall, for most cases the implementation and delivery of services supported the safety of other people effectively.

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

Joint working in out-of-court disposals was the poorest-performing area across the three domains and requires improvement. The recommendations by the YJS for out-of-court disposal outcomes, conditions and interventions were appropriate and proportionate in only 57 per cent of cases, although the recommendations did consider the degree to which the child or young person understood the offence and their acknowledgement of responsibility in 73 per cent of cases.

In 36 per cent of cases, the YJS did not contribute when it should have done to determining the disposal; and in only 57 per cent of cases was sufficient attention given to the child or young person’s understanding, and their parents’/carers’ understanding, of the implications of receiving an out-of-court disposal.

In the case of R (f), one inspector stated:

“There is no record of joint decision-making, and the significant delays in this case reflect that there was very little communication between police and YJS.”

In only 23 per cent of cases was the rationale for joint disposal decisions appropriate and clearly recorded. Overall, 50 per cent of the cases showed that the YJS recommendations were well informed, analytical and personalised to the child or young person, and so supported joint decision-making.

The YJS informed the police of progress and outcomes in only 50 per cent of relevant cases; however, in all but three cases staff had given sufficient attention to compliance with, and enforcement of, the conditions.

Summary

Strengths:

- Assessment and planning in relation to a child or young person's safety and wellbeing were strong.
- Interventions to support desistance were appropriate and delivered in good time.
- The diversity and wider familial and social context of the child or young person was routinely considered by case managers.
- Staff demonstrated good engagement skills and fully considered any barriers to the child or young person's motivation.

Areas for improvement:

- Not enough attention was given to ensuring that the child or young person, and their parents/carers, understood the implications of receiving an out-of-court disposal.
- Assessments regarding risk of harm were not completed in a timely manner.
- The need to plan for contingency arrangements to manage the risk of harm was not always identified.
- Recommendations for an out-of-court disposal were not well informed, analytical or personalised to the child or young person in all cases.
- The out-of-court disposal decision-making process was not joined up between the YJS and the police.
- The rationale for out-of-court disposals was not evidenced clearly on the case records.
- The wishes and the needs of the victims were not consistently considered as part of the planning process for out-of-court disposal cases.
- The management oversight of out-of-court disposals was not consistent.

Annex 1 – Methodology

The inspection methodology is summarised below, linked to the three domains within our standards framework. Our focus was upon obtaining evidence against the standards, key questions and prompts within the framework.

Domain one: organisational delivery

The youth offending service submitted evidence in advance and the Chief Executive (or delegated representative) delivered a presentation covering the following areas:

- How do organisational delivery arrangements in this area make sure that the work of your YOS is as effective as it can be, and that the life chances of children and young people who have offended are improved?
- What are your priorities for further improving these arrangements?

During the main fieldwork phase, we surveyed 49 individual case managers and 4 volunteers, asking them about their experiences of training, development, management supervision and leadership. Various meetings and focus groups were then held, allowing us to triangulate evidence and information. In total, we conducted 15 meetings either face to face or by telephone.

Domain two: court disposals

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

We examined 24 post-court cases. The sample size was set to achieve a confidence level of 80 per cent (with a margin of error of 5), and 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.

Domain three: out-of-court disposals

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

We examined 15 out-of-court disposals. The sample size was set to achieve a confidence level of 80 per cent (with a margin of error of 5), and 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.

Annex 2 – Inspection results

1. Organisational delivery

Standards and key questions	Rating
<p>1.1. Governance and leadership</p> <p>The governance and leadership of the YOS supports and promotes the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children and young people.</p> <p>1.1.1. Is there a clear local vision and strategy for the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children and young people?</p> <p>1.1.2. Do the partnership arrangements actively support effective service delivery?</p> <p>1.1.3. Does the leadership of the YOS support effective service delivery?</p>	Good
<p>1.2. Staff</p> <p>Staff within the YOS are empowered to deliver a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children and young people.</p> <p>1.2.1. Do staffing and workload levels support the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children and young people?</p> <p>1.2.2. Do the skills of YOS staff support the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children and young people?</p> <p>1.2.3. Does the oversight of work support high-quality delivery and professional development?</p> <p>1.2.4. Are arrangements for learning and development comprehensive and responsive?</p>	Good
<p>1.3. Partnerships and services</p> <p>A comprehensive range of high-quality services is in place, enabling personalised and responsive provision for all children and young people.</p> <p>1.3.1. Is there a sufficiently comprehensive and up-to-date analysis of the profile of children and young people, to ensure that the YOS can deliver well-targeted services?</p>	Good

- 1.3.2. Does the YOS partnership have access to the volume, range and quality of services and interventions to meet the needs of all children and young people?
- 1.3.3. Are arrangements with statutory partners, providers and other agencies established, maintained and used effectively to deliver high-quality services?

1.4. Information and facilities	Good
Timely and relevant information is available and appropriate facilities are in place to support a high-quality, personalised and responsive approach for all children and young people.	
1.4.1. Are the necessary policies and guidance in place to enable staff to deliver a quality service, meeting the needs of all children and young people?	
1.4.2. Does the YOS's delivery environment(s) meet the needs of all children and young people and enable staff to deliver a quality service?	
1.4.3. Do the information and communication technology (ICT) systems enable staff to deliver a quality service, meeting the needs of all children and young people?	
1.4.4. Is analysis, evidence and learning used effectively to drive improvement?	

2. Court disposals

Standards and key questions	Rating and % yes
2.1. Assessment	Outstanding
Assessment is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child or young person and their parents/carers.	
2.1.1. Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child or young person's desistance?	88%
2.1.2. Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child or young person safe?	88%
2.1.3. Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	83%

2.2. Planning	Outstanding
Planning is well-informed, holistic and personalised, actively involving the child or young person and their parents/carers.	
2.2.1. Does planning focus sufficiently on supporting the child or young person's desistance?	92%
2.2.2. Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child or young person safe?	86%
2.2.3. Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	83%
2.3. Implementation and delivery	Outstanding
High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging and assisting the child or young person.	
2.3.1. Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the child or young person's desistance?	91%
2.3.2. Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of the child or young person?	90%
2.3.3. Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?	83%
2.4. Reviewing	Outstanding
Reviewing of progress is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child or young person and their parents/carers.	
2.4.1. Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the child or young person's desistance?	96%
2.4.2. Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child or young person safe?	94%
2.4.3. Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	93%

3. Out-of-court disposals

Standards and key questions	Rating and % yes
<p>3.1. Assessment</p> <p>Assessment is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child or young person and their parents/carers.</p>	Good
<p>3.1.1. Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child or young person's desistance?</p>	80%
<p>3.1.2. Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child or young person safe?</p>	93%
<p>3.1.3. Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?</p>	73%
<p>3.2. Planning</p> <p>Planning is well-informed, holistic and personalised, actively involving the child or young person and their parents/carers.</p>	Good
<p>3.2.1. Does planning focus sufficiently on supporting the child or young person's desistance?</p>	73%
<p>3.2.2. Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child or young person safe?</p>	73%
<p>3.2.3. Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?</p>	89%
<p>3.3. Implementation and delivery</p> <p>High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging and assisting the child or young person.</p>	Good
<p>3.3.1. Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the child or young person's desistance?</p>	86%
<p>3.3.2. Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of the child or young person?</p>	82%
<p>3.3.3. Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?</p>	78%

3.4. Joint working	Requires improvement
Joint working with the police supports the delivery of high-quality, personalised and coordinated services.	
3.4.1. Are the YOT's recommendations sufficiently well-informed, analytical and personalised to the child or young person, supporting joint decision-making?	50%
3.4.2. Does the YOT work effectively with the police in implementing the out-of-court disposal?	71%

Annex 3 – Glossary

AssetPlus	Assessment and planning framework tool developed by the Youth Justice Board for work with children and young people who have offended, or are at risk of offending, that reflects current research and understanding of what works with children.
CE	Criminal exploitation: occurs when children and young people are exploited, forced or coerced into committing crimes.
Community resolution	Used in low-level, often first-time, offences where there is informal agreement, often also involving the victim, about how the offence should be resolved. Community resolution is a generic term; in practice, many different local terms are used to mean the same thing.
Court disposals	The sentence imposed by the court. Examples of youth court disposals are referral orders, youth rehabilitation orders and detention and training orders.
County lines	Young people who are coerced into transporting drugs or money on behalf of gangs across the country, mostly from urban to more rural areas.
CP	Child protection: work to make sure that all reasonable action has been taken to keep to a minimum the risk of a child experiencing significant harm.
Desistance	The cessation of offending or other antisocial behaviour.
Enforcement	Action taken by a case manager in response to a child or young person's failure to comply with the actions specified as part of a community sentence or licence. Enforcement can be punitive or motivational.
LA	Local authority. YOSs are often a team within a specific local authority.
MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements: where probation, police, prison and other agencies work together locally to manage offenders who pose the highest risk of harm to others. Level 1 is single agency management where the risks posed by the offender can be managed by the agency responsible for the supervision or case management of the offender. Levels 2 and 3 require active multi-agency management.
MARAC	Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference: a meeting where agencies talk about the future harm to people experiencing domestic abuse and draw up an action plan to help manage that risk.

MASH	Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub: a team comprising a group of practitioners still employed by their individual agencies (local authority, police, probation, health, etc), but co-located to facilitate early information sharing, analysis and decision-making to safeguard vulnerable children.
NRM	National Referral Mechanism: a framework for identifying victims of human trafficking or modern slavery and ensuring they receive the appropriate support.
Out-of-court disposal	The resolution of a normally low-level offence, where it is not in the public interest to prosecute, through a community resolution, youth caution or youth conditional caution
Risk of Serious Harm	Risk of Serious Harm (ROSH) is a term used in AssetPlus. All cases are classified as presenting either a low/medium/high/very high risk of serious harm to others. HMI Probation uses this term when referring to the classification system, but uses the broader term 'risk of harm' when referring to the analysis which should take place in order to determine the classification level. This helps to clarify the distinction between the probability of an event occurring and the impact/severity of the event. The term 'risk of serious harm' only incorporates 'serious' impact, whereas using 'risk of harm' enables the necessary attention to be given to those young offenders for whom lower impact/severity harmful behaviour is probable.
Safeguarding	A wider term than child protection that involves promoting a child or young person's health and development and ensuring that their overall welfare needs are met.
YC	Youth caution: a caution accepted by a child following admission to an offence where it is not considered to be in the public interest to prosecute the offender.
YCC	Youth conditional caution: as for a youth caution, but with conditions attached that the child is required to comply with for up to the next three months. Non-compliance may result in the child being prosecuted for the original offence.
YJB	Youth Justice Board: government body responsible for monitoring and advising ministers on the effectiveness of the youth justice system. Providers of grants and guidance to the youth offending teams.
YOT/YOS/YJS	Youth Offending Team is the term used in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to describe a multi-agency team that aims to reduce youth offending. YOSs are known locally by many titles, such as youth justice service (YJS), youth offending service (YOS), and other generic titles that may

illustrate their wider role in the local area in delivering services for children.



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