



An inspection of youth offending services in

South Tees

HM Inspectorate of Probation

JUNE 2019

This inspection was led by HM Inspector Tracy Green, 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.

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Contents

Foreword	4
Overall findings	5
Summary of ratings	7
Recommendations	8
Introduction	9
Contextual facts	10
1. Organisational delivery	11
1.1 Governance and leadership	11
1.2 Staff	12
1.3 Partnerships and services	13
1.4 Information and facilities.....	14
Summary.....	14
2. Court disposals	17
2.1 Assessment	17
2.2 Planning.....	18
2.3 Implementation and delivery	19
2.4 Reviewing	21
Summary.....	22
3. Out-of-court disposals	23
3.1 Assessment	23
3.2 Planning.....	24
3.3 Implementation and delivery	25
3.4 Joint working.....	26
Summary.....	26
Annex 1 – Methodology	28
Annex 2 – Inspection results	29
Annex 3 – Glossary	34

Foreword

This inspection is part of our programme of youth offending service (YOS) inspections. We have inspected and rated South Tees YOS across three broad areas: the arrangements for organisational delivery, the quality of court disposal work and out-of-court disposal work.

We have given South Tees YOS an overall rating of **'Good'**. The work being delivered to children and young people is outstanding, with assessment being a strength in both post-court and out-of-court disposals. Case managers demonstrated a clear understanding of each child or young person's life and how that affected their current behaviour and risks. Staff are creative in their delivery of work and there is good use of partnership agencies to meet the needs of the children and young people. Young people supervised by the YOS rated the service they received highly. All staff reported that their workloads are manageable and volunteers report that they receive high-quality training and ongoing support.

The Management Board is still developing and we felt that Board members need to be more challenging of each other and the performance of the YOS. There is no representation from education services at the Board level, and this is a substantial gap. An education focus is also missing from the staff group in the YOS. Feedback from case managers and information from cases indicated that not all the children were accessing their full education entitlement, this is having an impact on outcomes for young people.

We have rated work on out-of-court disposals as outstanding in relation to every area of practice. With the support of the Police and Crime Commissioner's office, the YOS is delivering high-quality interventions to triage cases, and outcomes from this work are positive. Given this, we feel that the Cleveland Police policy of restricting children and young people to only one opportunity for diversion from the formal criminal justice system for low level offending should be reconsidered. This would allow the YOS more opportunities for early intervention with this group.

South Tees should reflect on and celebrate its strengths and now look to build on this for the future.



Justin Russell

Chief Inspector of Probation


Overall findings

Overall, South Tees YOS is rated as: **Good**. This rating has been determined by inspecting the youth offending services in three domains of their work. The findings in those domains are outlined below.

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

- There is a good range of interventions for triage cases and first youth cautions.
- There is a Junior Attendance Centre which provides group-based activities to meet the needs of the children and young people.
- There are strong relationships with partner agencies.
- There was positive feedback from children and young people about their experience of the YOS.
- Attendance at the Board is not consistent, and Board members need to be more challenging of each other and of the YOS.
- There is no education representative on the Board or in a specialist role in the staff team.
- There is limited access to the relevant children's social care records, and there are no police checks on home addresses.
- The Cleveland Police policy of allowing children and young people only one triage outcome is restrictive.
- Staff would benefit from better Wi-Fi access when they are working remotely.
- There is no formal structured written communication to staff.

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

- Assessments are completed to a high standard and make good use of available information.
- Staff demonstrate a clear understanding of the child or young person's 'lived experience' and how that links with current behaviour.
- Staff, particularly support workers, are creative in their interventions.
- The monthly timetable gives structure and information to the children and young people subject to court orders.
- Reparation placements are not sufficiently engaging and meaningful.
- Victims' views are not fully incorporated into assessment and planning.

- There is a lack of specialist resource to meet the education needs of the children and young people.



Out-of-court disposals

Our key findings about court disposals are as follows:

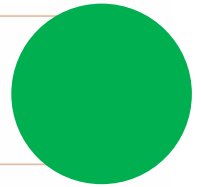
- Assessments are completed to a high standard and make good use of information from other agencies.
- Decisions are made jointly between the YOS and the police, and this is done promptly, with outcomes delivered in a timely manner.
- Staff are active in their efforts to work with young people, and there was good engagement with the young people, with a high take-up rate of the interventions.
- Feedback is provided to the police on the outcomes of all out-of-court disposals.
- The triage agreement needs to be updated, so that the child or young person and parent knows the possible implications of being made subject to this disposal. Victims' views need to be better integrated into assessment and plans.

Service: South Tees Youth Offending Service

Fieldwork started: June 2019

Overall rating

Good



1. Organisational delivery

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

2. Court disposals

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

3. Out-of-court disposals

3.1	Assessment	Outstanding	
3.2	Planning	Outstanding	
3.3	Implementation and delivery	Outstanding	
3.4	Reviewing	Outstanding	

Recommendations

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

South Tees Youth Offending Service should:

1. ensure that there is specialist education provision, in the Youth Offending Service to meet the needs of children and young people who are not accessing suitable education
2. ensure that the voice and views of the victim are integrated into young people's assessments and plans
3. develop a wider range of reparation placements which are engaging and educational for children and young people
4. address access rights for case managers to the relevant children's social care case management system
5. make better use of police checks on home addresses for assessments of young people and staff safety.

The Director of Prevention and Partnerships should:

6. ensure that there is an education representative on the Management Board
7. work with the police and other local youth offending teams to review and amend the Cleveland Police triage policy.

Introduction

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. HMI Probation inspects both of these aspects of youth offending services.

YOTs are statutory partnerships, and are multidisciplinary, 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 YOTs are based within local authorities, although 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 (MAPPA) guidance). The Youth Justice Board (YJB) for England and Wales provides some funding to YOTs. It also monitors their performance and issues guidance to them about how things are to be done.

South Tees Youth Offending Service (YOS) covers the two local authority areas of Middlesbrough, and Redcar and Cleveland. The service is based across two teams, based in each geographical area. The town of Middlesbrough is urban, with most of the population based in the town itself, whereas the area of Redcar and Cleveland is a mix of urban and rural communities. Both areas have significant levels of deprivation.

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 high-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* set out the arrangements for local YOTs and partnership working.

² HM Inspectorate of Probation's standards can be found here:

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

Contextual facts

Caseload information ³

Age	10-14	15-17		
South Tees	26%	74%		
National average	24%	76%		
Race/ethnicity	White	Black and minority ethnic	Not Known	
South Tees	86%	9%	5%	
National average	71%	26%	3%	
Gender	Male	Female		
South Tees	94%	6%		
National average	84%	16%		



Offences per 1,000 10-17-year-olds

20

South Tees YOS

13.4

England and Wales

First time entrant (rate per 100,000) ⁴

342

South Tees YOS

273

Average for England and Wales

Reoffending ⁵

Rate

41.3%

South Tees YOS

40.9%

Average for England and Wales

Frequency per offender

1.69

South Tees YOS

1.60

Average for England and Wales

³ Youth Justice Board. (2019). *Youth justice annual statistics: 2017-2018*.


⁴ Youth Justice Board. (2018). *First-time entrants, April to March 2018*.

⁵ Ministry of Justice. (2019). *Proven reoffending statistics, April 2016 to March 2017*.



1. 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	Requires improvement
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.	

There is a maturing Management Board, which is still developing the skills and knowledge to provide the detailed challenge to the performance of the YOS and its partner agencies. Support has been provided to the Board to enable it to take on this role, but there is still a mixed understanding about what the YOS does and the role that partner agencies on the Board should take to facilitate this work.

While there has been attendance at the Board from most of the key partners, this has often not been at the appropriate level, or the individuals involved have not had the knowledge and experience to play an active role in Board decisions. There has been no education representation on the Board, which means that there is limited opportunity to address the education needs of the South Tees YOS children and young people at a strategic level.

The Chair of the Board and the head of service are keen to enable the Board to progress, and have facilitated a development day and a service open day to provide detailed information about the YOS and Board members' role. Staff are also now presenting case studies and information about projects to the Board. Substantial efforts have been made to increase Board members' knowledge of the YOS, but this has not been accompanied by improvements in YOS staff understanding of the role of the Board. In the staff survey, 46 per cent of staff were not aware of the activities of the Board.

The YOS has ensured that emotional and wellbeing needs of children and young people are met, with the commission of the emotional and wellbeing post. There is also good access to Forensic Child Assessment Mental Health Services (FCAMHS). FCAMHS can work directly with the highest-risk young people and offer consultation to staff.

There are good relationships with children's social care departments from both local authorities, at strategic and operational levels. This includes joint case supervision between the YOS and social care staff for children and young people who are being supervised by the YOS and either subject to a child protection plan or are Looked After Children. There are good step-down arrangements with Early Help services, for cases that are ending YOS intervention, which ensures that those children and young people who require continued support receive it from Early Help services.


The Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC's) office has provided funding for an intervention service for young people who receive a triage outcome and first caution as an alternative to prosecution. This means that the YOS can provide an assessment and, if required, an intervention, at one of the earliest signs of offending for children

and young people. In contrast to other police areas, however, Cleveland Police has a policy of limiting children and young people to only one opportunity for diversion in their lifetime, which means that they can still enter the formal youth justice system as a result of very low-level offending.

Of the 19 young people who provided feedback about how highly they rated the YOS, the average rating was 9 out of 10.

The YOS has had some gaps in its management team, due to ill health, but these have been managed well, with suitable interim arrangements put in place.

There are regular staff briefing events and team meetings, where teams are consulted and information is shared. Information is also shared by email and in staff supervision. However, these are not as fully reinforced as they could be, through information from alternative routes, such as formal written briefings from the head of service or a service newsletter.

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.	

All staff report that their workloads are manageable. Case managers and support workers work together to manage each case and deliver the interventions. Staffing levels are reviewed to meet the demands of the service; however, the service has experienced high levels of staff sickness, including at management level, which has had an emotional and practical impact on the team. Managers have responded to this in a supportive way, to ensure continuity of service delivery.

The YOS does not have a specific specialist education worker, and evidence from the case sample and data suggest that there is a need for this post.

In the staff survey, 85 per cent of staff report that their training needs are either fully or partially met. They have received training in trauma-informed practice, and the impact of this training can be seen in the cases inspected in domains two and three. The workforce is skilled; support workers are particularly skilled at engaging with children and young people, and all staff make use of available internal and external resources to meet their needs. Staff have access to the full suite of training offered by the local authority and can access specially commissioned training.

Volunteers report that they receive high-quality training and ongoing support.

It is positive that plans are being delivered to create a progression route for staff. The route from case manager to line manager is already in place, and work has started on developing a progression route for unqualified staff to become qualified, but this has been slow to develop and staff were not fully aware of these plans.

Unqualified workers are restricted to medium and low-risk cases; however, risks often change, and when the risk of a child or young person increases to high, the unqualified worker can choose to retain the case. This could be for developmental reasons for the case manager, or in the interests of the young person, if they struggle with change or have a good relationship with that worker. While these cases are discussed during the usual supervision process, there is no additional support, such as providing a qualified worker as a mentor, or additional supervision, that will

give the unqualified worker the professional safeguards they need when managing a high-risk case.


If it is deemed necessary to reallocate a case, the same support worker will continue working with the child or young person, alongside the qualified colleague, to retain consistency.

Several staff are Assessment, Intervention and Moving-on (AIM) trained, and undertake AIM assessments jointly with children’s social care staff prior to an outcome decision. If the child is a ‘child in need’, this joint working remains in place when the child or young person is sentenced. The case manager has access to FCAMHS for consultation and advice on these cases.

Staff receive regular supervision, and 95 per cent of those surveyed said that they found supervision to be either quite or very good. The case recording system showed clear evidence of management oversight, although inspectors found management oversight to be effective in only 70 per cent of cases.

Detailed audits are undertaken regularly. These have been themed, and comprise a mix of management team and peer audits. Staff said that they have found these useful and that they have helped them to develop their practice. Partner agencies have also been used to undertake audits, to enable a greater challenge by having an external perspective. The findings of these audits are analysed to drive improvement.

Staff receive regular feedback on performance, and exceptional work is rewarded through formal and informal mechanisms.

1.3 Partnerships and services	Requires improvement
A comprehensive range of high-quality services is in place, enabling personalised and responsive provision for all children and young people.	

There is an up-to-date analysis of the children and young people on the YOS caseload This provides a comprehensive overview of their demographic profile, offence type and outcome. This could be further developed to understand and anticipate need, and plan resources. This information has been used, following the publication of the Lammy review⁷ and an anticipated change in the ethnicity of the local area, to assess whether there is an emerging picture of over-representation of any ethnic group entering the criminal justice system. Using this data, it was found that this is not occurring.

The YOS uses the live reoffending tracker to understand its reoffending cohort in a timely manner. This is now a standing item on the management team agenda, to identify emerging issues and respond.

The YOS has good access to a range of services, including the new emotional and wellbeing worker and FCAMHS. The emotional and wellbeing post was developed as a result of losing direct access to the liaison and diversion post that was co-located in the YOS. This new post allows YOS staff to refer quickly and easily to a service for children and young people who have low-level mental health problems, such as low

⁷ Lammy Review. (2007). *An independent review into the treatment of, and outcomes for Black, Asian, and Minority individuals in the criminal justice system.*

self-esteem or difficulties with anger management. There is particularly good access to FCAMHS, which provides a consultation service for case managers who have complex cases, and direct one-to-one intervention for suitable cases. Staff value this service. There is also access to child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), and there is no waiting list for this service.

There are links with the Vulnerable, Exploited, Missing and Trafficked (VEMT) team, which is co-located in the Middlesbrough office. There are good step-down arrangements for cases that are ending with the YOS, with Early Help services from both local authorities provided to these children and young people if required.

There are strong links with both local authority antisocial behaviour teams, with a shared approach and understanding of the use of antisocial behaviour legislation.

A Junior Attendance Centre, delivered from the Middlesbrough office, provides a creative and responsive programme of interventions. This includes the Youth to Adult Transitions (for 17-year-olds transitioning to probation services), 'One Punch' and Staying Safe Online programmes. There has also been a summer arts project, which engaged several young people in a creative and educational manner. This has been recommissioned for 2020, and the artwork is on display across the partnership and is also used in the Youth Justice Plan.


There are some examples of good reparation placements, such as a beach clean-up and a seasonal project for homeless people, but, overall, there is a lack of creative and innovative reparation placements for young people.

The lack of an education worker is concerning, and the process in place, using a support worker with skills and knowledge in this area, does not sufficiently recognise the importance of education.

The out-of-court disposal work is a particular strength in the YOS. The service is able to provide an assessment and, if required, an intervention for children and young people who receive a triage disposal or a first youth caution. This has been facilitated by the PCC's office, and reoffending profiles from these children and young people indicate that this is a successful programme.

The YOS has a dedicated court officer, and this is valued by the local courts, which have confidence in the service.

The YOS has recently introduced a multi-agency high-risk panel for cases identified as presenting a high risk of harm to others, and high safety and wellbeing concerns. This panel, once fully established, should provide an opportunity for good information sharing and agreement on joint actions for those high-risk cases. In addition, the YOS uses MAPPA appropriately for relevant cases.

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.	

There is a full suite of comprehensive policies, which all staff are aware of and know how to access. These are reviewed and updated.

The YOS is located in two offices: Redcar and Middlesbrough. The Redcar office is in the police station and is co-located with a number of criminal justice partners. The

space is suitable for staff, with meeting rooms and good facilities. Children and young people are rarely seen in this office, however, and a range of community venues and home visits are used. The Middlesbrough office has rooms for meeting children and young people, containing displays of art that has been completed by the young people. There is also a 'you said, we did' feedback notice board for young people. The meeting rooms are suitable and safe. Home and community visits are also used.

Although there is a lone working policy in place, there are no police checks on home visits. These checks would be beneficial for assessments of young people, as well as improving staff safety when undertaking these visits.

The Middlesbrough office is fairly cramped for practitioners, who are based there on a temporary (but long-term) basis, until the new offices in Middlesbrough are built. This new building will provide a more corporate space, where YOS staff will be located with most other local authority services.

Referral order panels take place in a community venue on the border between the two local authorities. Staff and volunteers alike report that this is a suitable and safe venue.

There is agile working across both sites, with staff expected to be in the office for meetings and supervision. All staff have laptop computers, but they can only access the internet if they are in a Wi-Fi spot. There is one mobile 'dongle' in each team, which enables staff to use the internet away from Wi-Fi spots. This is not enough to meet the needs of the teams, and limits the internet-based resources that staff can use when meeting young people, especially on home visits.

The seconded police officers put flags and alerts on the police database and are notified of any young people who come to their attention. This information is shared with the case manager, which helps to manage risks. The YOS is informed of any young people who receive youth restorative disposals, which are administered by the police.

There is insufficient access to the children's social care database for staff completing assessments. Access is limited to administration and social work staff, and some, but not all, managers. It would be beneficial for all staff who complete assessments to have access to this information directly, rather than through a third party. This could speed up assessments and ensure that information from social care staff is available.

There is evidence that feedback from young people who have attended the Junior Attendance Centre is used to develop service delivery. This has included suggestions about the sessions that should take place and a recommendation from young people that the summer arts project should be continued, and the latter has been agreed by the Board. Individual learning styles of the child and young people are identified and interventions are tailored to meet those needs. There is no evidence, however, of how collated feedback from other interventions helps to shape services.

Summary

Strengths:

- There is a good range of interventions for triage cases and first youth cautions.

- There is a Junior Attendance Centre, which provides group-based activities to meet the needs of the children and young people.
- There are strong relationships with partner agencies – in particular, the Police and Crime Commissioner’s office, Forensic Child Assessment Mental Health Services, and social care staff.
- Staff have been trained in trauma-informed practice, and the impact of this can be seen in the assessments.
- There is good use made of audit processes and learning from a range of sources, and these are implemented in practice.
- Feedback from children and young people was positive.

Areas for improvement:

- Attendance at the Board needs to be consistent, with representatives having the right level of seniority, and Board members should constructively challenge each other and the YOS.
- There should be an education representative on the Board and in a specialist role in the staff team.
- There needs to be additional support for unqualified workers managing high-risk cases.
- Staff completing assessments should be given access to the relevant children’s social care records.
- Police checks should be completed on home addresses, to assist with assessments and enhance staff safety.
- The Cleveland Police policy of restricting young people to one triage outcome as an alternative to prosecution or formal cautioning needs to be reviewed and amended.
- Staff should have better access to Wi-Fi when they are working remotely.
- Channels for internal communication with staff should be reviewed.

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 looked at 24 cases and inspected them 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.

Initial case assessments are outstanding. Case managers made good use of a range of information when undertaking assessments, including from social care and antisocial behaviour teams. In relevant cases, there was good use of probation information, where the parents of the young person were known to adult probation services. Only a small number of staff had access to the children's social care database, and so information on the cases was gathered by them. Assessments took account of the maturity and the strengths of the young person in all cases.

In the two cases we examined where the assessment did not take full account of the needs of the young person, this was because of problems of a physical nature – sight and hearing – not being fully identified and understood.

In most cases, both the child or young person and their parents were meaningfully involved in the assessment. As one inspector noted:

"The case manager was able to use the young person's self-assessment effectively, as the young person's comments, thoughts and feelings are documented in the relevant sections; for example, in the personal, family and social factors the young person said that there are arguments at home and that she would like the situation to improve".

Lifestyle, substance misuse and education were identified by inspectors as the three most important factors related to desistance in the cases reviewed.

In over 20 per cent of cases, the assessments were late, due to a combination of case managers being on leave, or delays in countersigning. Reasons for the delay in completing the assessment were clearly documented on the case file.

In addition, in over 20 per cent of cases, the assessment did not give sufficient attention to the needs of the victim.


Assessments of safety and wellbeing were good. Staff made effective use of all available information, including information from past assessments, the VEMT team, family and school, and the custodial environment. All assessments of the safety and wellbeing of the child or young person were based on an analysis of controls and interventions. Inspectors agreed with the classification of safety and wellbeing in over 90 per cent of cases.

Assessments of safety and wellbeing demonstrated a clear understanding of the child or young person's early experiences and how they affected their current behaviour,

as well as an understanding of the impact of the child or young person's peer group on their safety. One inspector noted:

"The case manager assesses that there are child safety and wellbeing concerns related to adverse childhood experiences, including previous child neglect and child protection plans, history of domestic abuse within the family home, parental separation, parental incarceration, drug-using parents, concerns about his aggressive behaviour as a result of learning behaviour in the family home, his vulnerability relating to absconding, potential criminal and sexual exploitation as a result of the behaviour and lifestyle of older peers with whom he associates".

Assessments of risk of harm to others were all good. They included a good analysis of a wide range of information, including information that did not result in a criminal conviction but was pertinent to risk, and information about possible pending offences. Inspectors agreed with the classification of the risk of harm to others in over 80 per cent of the cases. Where they disagreed, it was because the risk was assessed as too high.

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

Case managers used the AssetPlus pathways and planning document for developing plans for intervention. All of the plans reviewed took account of the child or young person's desistance factors, diversity needs, strengths and maturity. In nearly all the cases, the child or young person and their parents had been involved in the planning, and their views taken into account, and the plan was proportionate to the court outcome.

Planning was weaker in relation to the wishes of the victim. In a quarter of cases, insufficient attention had been given to this.

Planning to keep the child or young person safe was carried out well in most cases, and there was good use of the necessary controls and interventions to promote their safety and wellbeing.


In nearly 90 per cent of cases, there was an alignment with other plans concerning the young person, and of effective contingency planning. In a few cases, where a potential risk to safety and wellbeing had been identified, the contingency planning was not explicit in how to keep the child or young person safe, but focused on reviewing the documentation.

Planning to keep other people safe was also strong, with good use of other agencies, and external controls and interventions. Examples included use of home visits, liaison with probation services in relation to the father's compliance, joint visits with social care staff, and regular checks with police and the antisocial behaviour teams. One inspector noted:

"The case manager makes plans for the school to share information with her following any concerns they have relating to the young person's violence. There are

further incidents of violence within the school, and the case manager works with the school to keep others safe in the school environment”.

Where planning to keep others safe was less strong, this was because the plans were not specific to that young person or that particular risk, and a quarter of plans did not address specific concerns or risks to actual or potential victims.

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

The implementation and delivery of services was good. The YOS has a model in which the case manager undertakes the assessment, completes the plan and attends any meetings for the child or young person. Most interventions are delivered by a support worker who is linked to the case manager, supplemented by contact with the case manager.

If the case manager changes, owing to a change in the risk level of the child or young person, or there are periods of sickness, the same support worker remains, thereby ensuring that there is a stable relationship for the young person.

Children and young people are provided with a timetable at the start of each month, which lays out the appointments for each week, who they are seeing, what the appointment will cover and where it will take place.

Feedback from children and young people and their parents in the text survey was positive. Twelve out of the nineteen responses rated the YOS as ‘fantastic’, and eleven out of nineteen also said that the YOS had ‘massively’ helped them to stay out of trouble.

A young person commented:

“The people who we work with make us feel comfortable, it's not as if we were there because of a crime but simply because we made a mistake and that we can easily turn it around with their help”.

Feedback from the text survey also said that the YOS had helped them to stay out of trouble, with one young person writing:

“After being a part of the YOT, I have not once thought about committing a crime again because I want to prove to them and to my family I'm not going down that route”.

A further comment from a young person was:

“They've taught me that getting in trouble can affect your life, and the situation for others. Offending can massively ruin your life and ruin others’. It can ruin your dreams and goals in life”.

Inspectors found that the services delivered were those most likely to support desistance, and took account of the child or young person's diversity in nearly all the cases examined. A particular area of strength in interventions was the maintenance of an effective working relationship, facilitating compliance from the child or young person.

An area that needed further development was in relation to reparation. Although inspectors found examples of reparation in most cases, this was often limited to litter picking, although there was one example of a young person who was keen to study marine biology, and her reparation was a beach project.

Staff were seen to be making efforts to get their children and young people back into education, with a number securing college placements, but this was not always successful, with some children still not in full-time education or employment at the end of the order.

Feedback from staff in the staff survey, and a case that inspectors reviewed, identified the problem of delivering a full intensive supervision and surveillance (ISS) requirement for children and young people who do not have a full education provision. One inspector noted:

"He was subject to ISS but there were not sufficient plans in place to adequately fill his time; there had been no plans for an education placement prior to his release, and so referrals were made when he got out. There were apprenticeship opportunities considered but the YOT did not get the completed CV from the YOI in time and so missed the chance to apply for these options".

Implementation of services to support safety and wellbeing were delivered well in most cases. There was good use made of partner agencies, including social care, substance misuse services, mental health services and education providers for children and young people aged 16 and over.

Implementation of services to support the safety of others was good, but inspectors identified that in some cases there was a lack of assertive action to manage this risk. For example, in one case, a young person was unlawfully at large without evidence of this being actively pursued, and in another there was a self-report of further offending behaviour, without this being followed up with further information from the police. The seconded police officers put a 'notify if' flag on the police database, however, which meant that they were immediately informed if cases open to the YOS came to police attention. This meant that case managers could respond immediately to any changes in risk.

There were examples of good inter-agency working to manage risk. This included work with the probation services to transfer a young person, advocating for a young person to access adult social care services, referral to MAPP and links with the antisocial behaviour teams.

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

Reviewing work was outstanding. Staff took account of changes in desistance factors in nearly all cases and engaged with the child or young person, and this led to necessary adjustments. In the vast majority of cases, a written review was undertaken, and this considered the motivation of the young person and their engagement.

In addition to reviewing the AssetPlus, case managers review and update the referral order report, and complete a closure summary document when a case closes.

Reviewing focused sufficiently on the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in 95 per cent of cases. This included responding to changes in safety and wellbeing, and good use was made of information from other agencies. One inspector noted:

"The review identifies that the YP [young person] has responded positively to interventions delivered. The Pathways & Planning sections cover the work completed by the young person. He completes a further self-assessment document, and this is inputted into the review of the AssetPlus. The review provides an analysis of the risk of reoffending and focuses sufficiently on the safety and wellbeing of the young person. Children's services are informed of the completion of the DTO [Detention and training order], and this is recorded within the review. Reviewing involves input from those professionals involved with the YP/YP's family".

Reviewing was also strong in keeping others safe. Staff used information from other agencies in over 80 per cent of cases. In just under a third of cases, however, there was no evidence that children and young people or families were involved in reviewing, and in the same proportion of cases no written review of risk of harm had been completed.

Summary

Strengths:

- Assessments are completed to a high standard and make good use of information from other agencies.
- Staff demonstrate a clear understanding of the child or young person's 'lived experience' and how that links with current behaviour.
- Planning is appropriate to the identified needs of the child or young person.
- Staff, particularly support workers, are creative in their interventions.
- The monthly timetable gives structure and information to the children and young people.

- A range of interventions is delivered, and these are personalised to the child or young person.
- Reviews are completed in a timely manner.

Areas for improvement:

- Victims' views need to be better integrated into assessment and planning.
- Reparation placements need to be engaging and meaningful.
- There needs to be better provision to meet the education needs of the children and young people.

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 fifteen cases. In each of those cases, we inspect against four standards.


The out-of-court disposal process in South Tees YOS is particularly strong. The YOS is informed of all police disposal decisions, and these are recorded on the case management system. This includes youth restorative disposals, which is a low-level outcome administered and delivered by the police. The YOS receives information from the police on all other out-of-court proposals from the police form G26. This is initially screened by the seconded police officer and there is then a joint decision-making process between the police officer and the YOS duty manager. They consider a full range of out-of-court disposals or, if necessary, refer back for a charge.

There is a triage disposal available, which is suitable for low-level offences, and the YOS provides intervention for these cases. They can also provide intervention for first youth cautions, as well as youth conditional cautions. One area of weakness in this process is that it is police policy to allow a young person to receive only one triage outcome, irrespective of the time that has passed since a previous triage, or any exceptional circumstances. This could result in children and young people entering the formal criminal justice system based on police policy rather than offending risks.

Once the G26 has been received, the quality checks completed by the seconded police officer, and the joint decision made, the case is allocated to a case manager, to complete the assessment. This is done using the full AssetPlus assessment tool. If the assessment concurs with the joint decision, the seconded police officer administers the disposal.

The child or young person is required to sign either a triage agreement document or a youth caution form. Both of these documents specify what the child or young person is required to do following the disposal, and the potential outcomes if they do not. The triage form, however, does not clearly explain the potential consequence to the child or young person of receiving the triage on any future enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check.

The out-of-court cases in the inspection sample comprised nine triage cases, three youth cautions and three youth conditional cautions.

3.1 Assessment	Outstanding
Assessment is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child or young person and their parents/carers.	

There was a sufficient assessment of offending behaviour, the child or young person's strengths and their levels of maturity in all cases inspected. There was also meaningful engagement with the child or young person and their parents in all cases.

One inspector noted:

"The assessment is comprehensive and clear. It provides an excellent offence analysis and offers a full account of the reasons behind the offence and the young person's view of what happened".


Lifestyle, substance misuse and education were identified by inspectors as the three most important factors related to desistance in the cases reviewed.

In a small number of cases, the assessment was completed late, and the reasons for this were recorded on the case management system.

Assessments on how to keep the child or young person safe were also very good. Inspectors agreed with the safety and wellbeing classification in most of the cases; where they disagreed, it was because they thought that the case manager had assessed the risk as too high.

There was excellent use of information from a range of agencies to assist with the assessment, and this information was used well. Case managers also made good use of knowledge of the child or young person's 'lived experiences', and the impact that these had on their current situation, including safety and wellbeing risks.

Assessments to keep other people safe were also done well in nearly every case, and every case made good use of all sources of information to inform the assessment. This included information about violent behaviour (that had not led to a conviction) from self-report, police and school information. Inspectors agreed with the risk of harm to others classification in every case.

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


Planning to support desistance was done well in every case. Inspectors found that this was proportionate to the case and took account of the children and young person's maturity in every case reviewed. Areas that were slightly less strong included engaging with the child or young person and their parents in drawing up the plan and giving sufficient attention to the victim. One inspector noted:

"The plan is comprehensive for a triage disposal and proportionate to the seriousness of the offence. It covers a range of interventions to address desistance – for example, 'one punch' intervention and work on peer influences".

Planning for keeping the child or young person safe was also done well in over 90 per cent of cases. There was alignment with other agencies' plans for safety and wellbeing in most cases. This included links with the school counselling service, social care and substance misuse services.

Planning for keeping other people safe was also an area of strength, being done well in all of the cases reviewed. There were good links with other agencies, and contingency planning had been set up as required. One area where more work is

needed is in ensuring that planning addresses any specific risks to actual or potential victims, as this was found to be absent in a quarter of cases.

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

Services to support desistance were done well in over 90 per cent of cases, with sufficient attention given to maintaining an effective working relationship with the young person. In most of the cases seen, this intervention was done by one or more support workers. In some cases, the case manager was only involved at the assessment stage, and then at case closure. In order for the case manager to know the young person better, it may be beneficial for them to see them more frequently.

There were examples of excellent work delivered by support workers, and of consideration shown as to where the intervention should take place. For example, for one young person who was socially isolated, the interventions took place in the community, to support their confidence in going out. In the cases reviewed, there was a good uptake of the intervention from the children and young people.

As with the post-court cases there was limited use of reparation in the out-of-court disposals, with litter picking being used as the default option.


There was sufficient attention given to encouraging and enabling the child or young person to comply in all cases seen. There were no cases where there was a problem with compliance, although the seconded police officers said that if there was, they would go out to see the young person and support them to re-engage in the out-of-court disposal.

In all of the cases inspected, the services were proportionate and delivered in the required timescales.

Service delivery supported the safety and wellbeing of the child or young person in over 90 per cent of cases, with good support and coordination from other agencies.

Delivery of services to keep other people safe was also strong, being delivered sufficiently in all cases. One inspector said:

"The case manager identifies the critical risk as being related to the young person's inability to control difficult emotions within the school environment. There are ongoing interventions delivered by CAMHS and the school counsellor to address such matters. The YP fully engages with the appointments with these specialist agencies, which work with him to develop effective coping skills. At the completion of the disposal, he is able to identify skills that he might use in order to appropriately deal with problems within the school environment, and techniques to effectively control his emotions, thus minimising the potential risk to others".

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

The process for joint working with the police is strong in South Tees. Once the form G26 is received by the seconded YOS police officer, it is actioned quickly, with a joint decision being made between the police and the YOS duty manager. This means that there is no delay in the decision-making process.

Inspectors found that the YOS recommendations for out-of-court disposals were appropriate and proportionate in all of the cases reviewed, all of which took account of the child or young person's acknowledgement of responsibility for, and understanding of, the offence.

The YOS also worked effectively with the police in implementing the out-of-court disposal in all cases, providing information to the police on the progress of the case in all cases. Case managers provide the seconded police officer with a summary of the case when it ends, and this can be uploaded to the police system.

Summary

Strengths:

- Assessments are completed to a high standard and make good use of information from other agencies.
- Decisions are jointly made between the YOS and the police, and this is done promptly.
- Outcomes are delivered in a timely manner.
- Planning is proportionate to the outcome disposal and risk of reoffending.
- Staff are active in their efforts to engage young people.
- A range of interventions is delivered, and these are personalised to the child or young person.
- There is good engagement with the children and young people, and a high rate of take-up of the intervention.
- Feedback is provided to the police on the outcomes of all out-of-court disposals.

Areas for improvement:

- The triage agreement needs to be updated, so that the child or young person and parent know the possible implications of being made subject to this disposal.
- Victims' views need to be better integrated into assessment and plans.

- There needs to be clear guidance on how frequently the case manager sees the child or young person subject to an out-of-court disposal, and this should be monitored.
- Reparation placements need to be engaging and meaningful.

Annex 1 – Methodology

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

Domain one: organisational delivery

The YOS submitted evidence in advance, and the Director of Prevention and Partnerships 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 22 individual case managers, 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 12 meetings.

Domain two: court disposals

We completed case assessments over a one-week period, examining case files and interviewing case managers. Of the cases selected, 60 per cent 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 closely 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. Of the cases selected, 40 per cent 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 closely 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>	Requires improvement
<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>	Requires improvement

- 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?
- 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?	100%
2.1.2. Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child or young person safe?	96%

2.1.3. Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	92%
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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?	100%
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2.2.2. Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child or young person safe?	87%
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2.2.3. Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	89%
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2.3. Implementation and delivery	Good
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?	88%
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2.3.2. Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of the child or young person?	87%
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2.3.3. Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?	79%
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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?	92%
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2.4.2. Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child or young person safe?	95%
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2.4.3. Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	88%
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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>	Outstanding
<p>3.1.1. Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child or young person's desistance?</p>	100%
<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>	93%
<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>	Outstanding
<p>3.2.1. Does planning focus sufficiently on supporting the child or young person's desistance?</p>	100%
<p>3.2.2. Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child or young person safe?</p>	91%
<p>3.2.3. Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?</p>	100%
<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>	Outstanding
<p>3.3.1. Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the child or young person's desistance?</p>	100%
<p>3.3.2. Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of the child or young person?</p>	91%

3.3.3. Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people? 100%

3.4. Joint working Outstanding

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? 100%

3.4.2. Does the YOT work effectively with the police in implementing the out-of-court disposal? 100%

Annex 3 – Glossary

AIM	Assessment, Intervention and Moving-on.
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.
CAMHS	Child and adolescent mental health services.
Child Protection	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.
Court disposals	The sentences imposed by the court. Examples of youth court disposals are referral orders, youth rehabilitation orders and detention and training orders
Desistance	The cessation of offending or other antisocial behaviour.
DTO	Detention and training order: prison sentence for a child or young person. The length is specified by the court, and the child or young person is placed in either a secure children's home, secure training centre or Young Offender Institution. The placement is dependent on age and vulnerability. The detention and training order will have both custodial and community elements, when the child or young person will be released on licence
FCAMHS	Forensic Child Assessment Mental Health Services
First-time entrant	A child or young person who receives a statutory criminal justice outcome (youth caution, youth conditional caution or conviction) for the first time
ISS	Intensive supervision and surveillance
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
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

PCC	Police and Crime Commissioner. An elected post with overall responsibility for the police in a local area
Personalised	A personalised approach is one in which services are tailored to meet the needs of individuals, giving people as much choice and control as possible over the support they receive. We use this term to include diversity factors
Referral order	A restorative court order which can be imposed when the child or young person appearing before the court pleads guilty, and whereby the threshold does not meet that for a youth rehabilitation order
Risk of serious harm	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
Safety and wellbeing	AssetPlus replaced the assessment of vulnerability with a holistic outlook of a child or young person's safety and well-being concerns. It is defined as "...those outcomes where the young person's safety and well-being may be compromised through their own behaviour, personal circumstances or because of the acts/omissions of others" (AssetPlus Guidance, 2016).
Triage	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
VEMT	Vulnerable, Exploited, Missing and Trafficked team
YOT/YOS	Youth Offending Team (YOT), is the term used in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to describe a multi-agency team that aims to reduce youth offending. YOTs 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
YOT Management Board	The YOT Management Board holds the YOT to account, to ensure that it achieves the primary aim of preventing offending by children and young people
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

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
YP	Young person
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



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