



Her Majesty's
Inspectorate of
Probation

Youth offending service inspections

External guidance manual

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1. Statement of purpose and values

1.1. Statement of purpose

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation is the independent inspector of youth offending and probation services in England and Wales. We report on the effectiveness of probation and youth offending service work with adults and children. We publish reports following each inspection, highlighting good and poor practice. We also rate each organisation as 'Outstanding', 'Good', 'Requires improvement' or 'Inadequate'. We are independent of government, and speak independently.

1.2. Values

Integrity

We work in an independent, honest, open, professional, fair and polite way.

Accountability

We are reliable and stand by the evidenced conclusions we reach. We will always fully account for our actions.

Effectiveness

We report and publish inspection findings and recommendations for improvement, focused on service practice quality, in good time and to a high standard. We check the impact of our inspections. We disseminate widely to enable improvement across England and Wales.

Inclusion

We promote attention to diversity in all aspects of our work, including within our own employment practices and organisational processes. We are committed to pursuing equality of outcomes for all.

1.3. Our mandate

HM Chief Inspector of Probation's responsibilities are set out in Section 7 of the *Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000*, as amended by the *Offender Management Act 2007*, section 12(3)(a). This requires the chief inspector to inspect (section 1) and report to the Secretary of State (section 3) on the arrangements for the provision of probation services.

Under Section 7(6) of the *Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000*, HM Chief Inspector of Probation is also conferred to inspect and report on youth offending teams (YOTs), established under section 39 of the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998*, and bodies acting on their behalf.

We are the independent source of fair comment for ministers and the public on the effectiveness of the work of probation and youth justice providers.

We test the effectiveness of provision and provide assurance. Critically, we make recommendations to identify and disseminate best practice, challenge poor performance and

encourage improvement. Our reports provide evidence-based intelligence for commissioners and providers, designed to play a key part in facilitating and encouraging improvement in effective service delivery.

1.4. Confidentiality

In group meetings and case interviews with practitioners, we provide an assurance that information shared will only be used in an aggregated form, and will not identify individual staff members, unless immediate action is needed to protect an individual.

Although information provided to us, in written form or verbally, by staff working for the inspected organisation, or under contract to that organisation, will be anonymised before inclusion in any publication, it is not treated as confidential. We use all available evidence to help us make an inspection judgement. Similarly, information provided to us by stakeholders invited to contribute to the inspection, is not treated as confidential.

2. Overview of youth inspection

2.1. Introduction

The term youth offending team (YOT) is used throughout this document to describe the provision of youth offending services regardless of how they are structured and named locally. The term YOT is consistent with the wording of the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998*.

Key features of the inspection programme are:

- underpinning our inspections and judgements with agreed standards
- rating each YOT using a four-point scale from 'Outstanding' to 'Inadequate'
- the inclusion of out-of-court disposal work alongside sentenced cases
- evidence-based judgements about organisational delivery.

The selection of YOTs for inspection is undertaken on a risk and non-predictable basis and is guided by our published YOT selection criteria.¹ The inspection standards cover three domains. Domain one covers organisational delivery, including how well the YOT is led and governed. Domains two and three look at the quality of post-court supervision and the quality of out-of-court disposals respectively.

Most inspections of YOTs are 'single' inspections, where HMI Probation is the only Inspectorate involved. A small number of YOTs receive a joint inspection. In these we inspect against the standards across all three domains and include inspectors from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services and the Care Quality Commission. In England, social care and learning and skills inspectors are part of the team, and in Wales we are joined by the Care Inspectorate Wales, Health Inspectorate Wales and Estyn.

We publish a report following each inspection and we also report at the end of the series of inspections against each standard on the extent to which the enduring aims of youth justice are being met across the system as a whole.

HMI Probation select YOTs for inspection using a 'risk and random' approach. More information is available on the website.¹

2.2. Standards for inspection

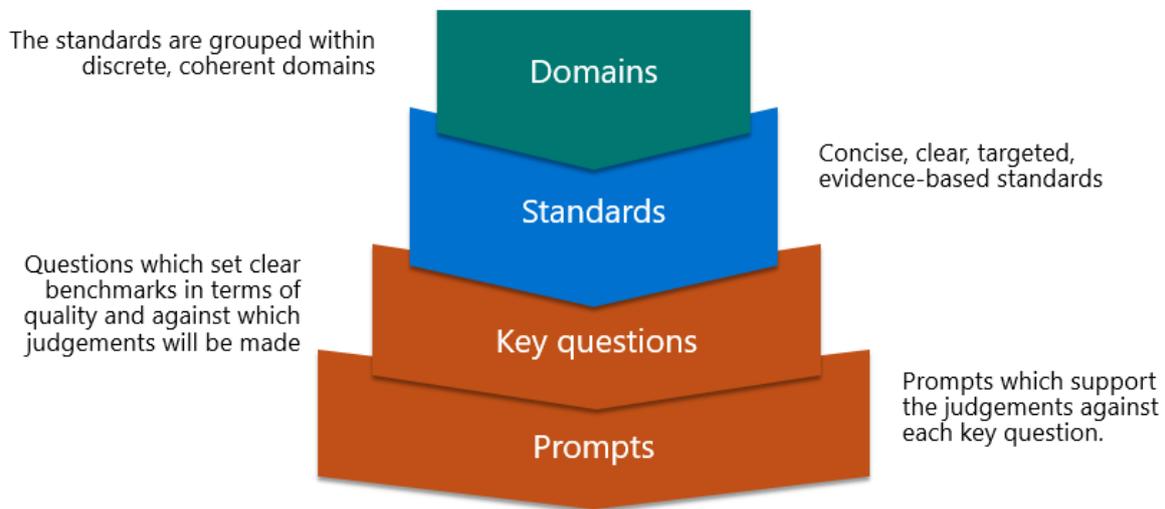
Our standards are based on a set of principles that we think good YOTs should meet to deliver quality youth justice practice. They are based on established models and frameworks, and are grounded in evidence, learning and experience.

The standards are grouped into domains, with each standard underpinned by key questions and prompts, which aim to be coherent, sufficiently comprehensive and balanced. Domain one covers organisational arrangements, including governance and leadership, staffing, partnerships and services, information and facilities. Domain two covers the quality of work in cases subject to a court disposal. Domain three covers work delivered under out-of-court

¹ www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/about-our-work/documentation-area/youth-offending-services-inspection/

disposals. The framework is supported by inspection guidance materials that assist reliable and valid judgements.

Figure 1: The standards structure



This guidance manual sets out the arrangements for the inspection programme, covering all aspects of the inspection process and methodology, as well as roles and responsibilities of HMI Probation staff.

2.3. Inspection principles

How we inspect

We assess quality rather than either the specifics of a process or the use of any particular tool. For example, we consider the quality of assessment in the round rather than the use of any document, tool or process. The wording of our key questions and prompts reflects this.

What we judge

We decide on a rating based on what and how an organisation is achieving. We also acknowledge effort in the report narrative. We are interested in the performance of the organisation at the time we inspect and do not make judgements about how policy and practices may influence future impact.

How we score domains

In domains two and three each key question is integral to effective case delivery, linked to the core purposes of youth offending services, and sufficient attention needs to be given to all of them. Therefore, the rating that can be achieved for the standard is set at the lowest score achieved at key question level.

Domain one is different, in that there is a greater number and range of key questions. So, a deficiency against one key question will not necessarily override strengths in the others and a qualitative judgement is made on the appropriate rating.

More information about our standards is available on our website:

<https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/about-our-work/documentation-area/probation-inspection>

2.4. Summary of inspection phases

The inspection consists of three phases:

Phase I: Pre-fieldwork planning and preparation

Phase II: Fieldwork

Phase III: Post-fieldwork.

Phase I: Pre-fieldwork planning and preparation

The pre-fieldwork phase commences four weeks before the fieldwork with the announcement of the inspection and the issue of documentation to assist the planning and preparation. A telephone planning meeting takes place the week following the announcement (week -3).

Phase II: Fieldwork

For single inspections, there is one week of fieldwork, during which case inspections and meetings take place.

Joint inspections only:

The first fieldwork week comprises case inspections only. It is followed by an off-site review week and then a second fieldwork week. During the second fieldwork week the majority of meetings take place, and issues arising out of cases inspected during the first fieldwork week are followed up by partner inspectorates.

Phase III: Post-fieldwork

On completion of the fieldwork phase, the lead and deputy lead inspector prepare draft ratings proposals and summarise evidence and key findings for an internal HMIP 'ratings panel' meeting, held the week after fieldwork is completed.

The ratings panel is chaired by the HMIP director of operations and includes the lead inspector and the head of the youth inspection programme. The deputy lead inspector and assistant inspectors attend if available. The panel ensures that ratings fully reflect the balance of the evidence, and that they are sufficiently consistent across inspections. A summary of the ratings panel decision is sent to the inspected body on the Friday after the meeting has been held.

The lead inspector then prepares an inspection report, which is submitted to the inspected organisation for factual accuracy checking on the Monday of week 5 (i.e. five weeks after the end of fieldwork). There is a deadline to return any comments to the lead inspector and head of inspection by the Monday of week +7. The report is normally published in week +10 in England and in week +13 in Wales to allow for translation. We confirm the anticipated publication date once factual accuracy checking is complete.

3. Phase I: Pre-fieldwork and planning

3.1. The inspection team for phase I

The inspection team for phase I consists of:

- lead inspector
- information and data team
- administrator operations (inspection)
- head of inspection programme.

3.2. Pre-fieldwork activity

The administrator and lead inspector start to prepare for the inspection four weeks before fieldwork (week -4). Before the announcement telephone call is made, key documents and background information are collated by the information and data team to support the lead in planning the inspection.

After the inspection announcement, the YOT is required to submit the required evidence in advance; identify the case samples for domains two and three; and arrange interviews and meetings with key staff members and stakeholders.

Background information

The information and data team provides the lead inspector with background information at week -7. This information pack contains published data on caseload, performance, crime levels, proven reoffending, education, training and employment (ETE) information, offending by looked-after children, and population characteristics. The lead inspector assesses and analyses this information before fieldwork.

The background information provided includes:

- offenders supervised in the community at period end
- first-time entrants
- use of custody
- reoffending rates
- previous inspection information
- MAPPA (multi-agency public protection arrangements) data by area
- list of all community safeguarding or public protection incidents
- published OFSTED/Estyn inspections of local authority child safeguarding arrangements/JTAI [Joint Targeted Area Inspections] for the previous 12 months
- published CQC/HIW inspections of drug and alcohol and mental health treatment
- names and addresses all youth and Crown courts in the area.

3.3. Inspection announcement

Each inspection is announced on the Friday four weeks before the fieldwork commences. The announcement is made by the lead inspector (or the deputy lead inspector if the lead inspector is not available) by telephone to the YOT manager, or the most senior manager available.

Following the announcement call, the inspected area receives an email confirming the inspection including the project plan, guidance for submitting domain one evidence in advance, case sample specifications, leaflets for staff, and information about surveys of sentencers and young people.

3.4. Project plans

The external project plan provides the inspected organisation with details of key timescales and activities required, from pre-fieldwork to post-fieldwork.

The YOT receives the project plan with the announcement letter, at the end of week -4. The link manager for the YOT needs to check the key dates and identify any conflicts with other significant commitments. The link manager should raise any issues with the project plan with the administrator who works with the lead inspector to consider changes where necessary. The YOT should ensure all relevant staff involved in the inspection planning processes are familiar with the project plan.

3.5. Telephone planning meeting

The telephone planning meeting takes place as soon as possible following the announcement, usually on the Tuesday of week -3. The telephone planning meeting may simply be a one-to-one conversation between the lead inspector and the link manager, or it may involve others.

The lead inspector facilitates the meeting and covers the following:

- an outline of the inspection methodology in more detail, explaining the domains and processes
- case sample selection criteria, spreadsheet completion and deadline for return to HMI Probation (Section 4 provides detailed guidance on the criteria for each domain)
- a discussion about the evidence required to be submitted in advance of the inspection
- clarification of the local organisational arrangements, offices where the case assessments will take place
- case sample issues
- case manager interviews and scheduling
- surveys to be conducted, including all staff and volunteers, a youth court representative and a text survey of young people
- management meetings and other inspection activity
- access to IT, rooms and buildings
- proposed schedules and key dates

- arrangements for the on-site logistics meeting and the local authority presentation.

Joint inspections only

The planning meeting also considers wider partnership issues that need to be included in the second fieldwork week. The YOT is asked to nominate a link manager from within the YOT for each partner inspector, with responsibility for the aspect of local arrangements that the inspector is focusing on. This link manager will be the inspector’s first point of contact when making final arrangements whilst on-site. A more detailed planning meeting for the second fieldwork week takes place during fieldwork week one.

A list of standard meetings is provided for all inspections (see section 5). The planning meeting provides the opportunity, for the lead inspector to request additional meetings during fieldwork.

The planning meeting is documented by the lead, including notes on any key questions raised by the YOT. A copy of the minutes is issued to the link manager, the HMIP administrator and any other relevant people.

3.6. Evidence in advance

The lead inspector uses the evidence in advance submitted by the YOT to assess against the domain one standards and to identify relevant topics to be followed up during fieldwork. The YOT is provided with a checklist of standard evidence required in advance, and also a list of further evidence that should be submitted if available. Finally, the YOT is asked to identify any additional evidence against our domain one standards. We provide a domain one evidence source grid for the YOT to complete to map submitted evidence against our standards.

Standard evidence in advance (single and joint inspections)

- A brief description of the YOT’s local context, up to three pages
- YOT organisation chart, including names and roles of managers
- Structure chart showing where the YOT sits in relation to the local authority
- Description of local arrangements for out-of-court disposals, including any arrangements/tools/processes in place for assessment, planning and delivery of interventions
- Latest approved YOT business plan
- Current YOT improvement plan
- Log of attendance at the YOT management board (previous 12 months)
- Minutes of all YOT management board meetings (previous 12 months)
- Agenda and all papers of the most recent YOT management board
- List of all community safeguarding or public protection incidents (previous 12 months)

Where available, the following information is also required:

- Evidence of how the YOT responds to inspections, including HMIP thematic inspections
- Current local strategy and action plan for prevention work
- Local safeguarding children policy
- Local policy for assessing and managing risk of harm

List of policies and procedures on case management, including safety and well-being and public protection

List of memoranda of understanding, service level agreements, secondment arrangements

Evidence of how the YOT management board monitors performance

Evidence of how the YOT management board holds members and partners to account

Latest available analyses of local offending

Details of arrangements with *partners* for managing risk of harm to others or addressing safety and well-being of children and young people

Copy of any service agreement with the youth court

Evidence of how the YOT management board makes sure services are suitable for the diversity of the local population, including addressing disproportionality in the justice system

Current strategy for seeking the views of children and young people, parents/carers and victims, including examples of how they made a difference to services

Evidence of how the YOT has used learning from community safeguarding and public protection incidents (CSPPIs) and other events to drive improvements

Evidence of how quality assurance systems or other processes have been used to drive improvement

Evidence of how staff training needs are addressed and assessed

Evidence of how workload and staffing levels are managed and how cases are allocated to staff

Evidence of how the YOT partnership makes sure the nature and diversity of workforce responds to local needs

Additional guidance

- evidence should be recent or current (normally produced within the last 12-18 months, unless it is a key policy that has been in place longer)
- use of our YOT management board attendance log is optional, if the YOT has a local register that can be submitted
- we do not want details of community safeguarding or public protection incidents, just a log

Completion of domain one evidence in advance grid

The YOT uses the domain one evidence in advance grid to assist gathering of documentary evidence against the domain one standards, key questions and prompts. The YOT maps the submitted documents against the published domain one inspection standards. Where evidence is contained in longer documents, it is helpful to indicate the section/page where the lead inspector can locate the relevant evidence.

In many cases, documents from the standard evidence in advance list will cover the relevant questions. In other cases, the YOT may need to identify their own additional evidence to submit. If the YOT has no available evidence for a particular question, it is better to leave that question blank than to submit material that does not inform our standards. HMIP asks that the YOT sends their best evidence, rather than all available evidence, to inform each of the key questions. It is not necessary to provide evidence against each prompt; normally, three-five documents for each key question is sufficient. The lead inspector may request additional evidence as the inspection progresses.

Organisational data spreadsheet

An organisational data spreadsheet is sent to the YOT with the announcement letter. This document requests a range of data, including the budget, staff profile, caseloads and services. We request this to allow us to:

- triangulate against the data collected from other sources, including case managers, on issues like caseload and staff engagement
- ensure that contextual data related to inspection of domain one is collected in a consistent way across different services
- support further, national level research and analysis of the factors underlying high quality youth offending provision, to advance our understanding of effective practice

We recognise that some services may not be able to provide all this data. Where data is not available, or does not exactly meet our specifications, the spreadsheet allows this to be explained.

Submission of evidence in advance

Evidence in advance, including the domain one evidence in advance grid and the organisational data spreadsheet, must be supplied electronically to HMI Probation. Our email system and servers are part of the MoJ secure network. Evidence should be sent to youthinspections@HMIProbation.gov.uk and copied to the lead inspector.

If the YOT has access to an existing secure website to allow information sharing, and would prefer to use that method to share evidence in advance, the lead inspector can facilitate that.

Joint inspections only

The lead inspector shares relevant evidence in advance with partner inspectors, prior to the second fieldwork week. The following additional evidence is requested, to support the work of partner inspectors during their fieldwork. Some of this information may need to be requested from the relevant partner organisations.

Joint inspection only, additional evidence in advance

Structure chart and names of education, training and employment (ETE), health and substance misuse, police and other specialist staff working within, or closely with, the YOT

Structure chart that shows links between YOT and other agencies in the area, including criminal justice, local authority, committee safety health and children's services

Local police force procedure for out-of-court disposals, including any policy/procedures used to decide when to refer young people who have received, or are being considered for, and out-of-court disposal to the YOT for assessment or intervention

List of children or young people currently supervised subject to multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) and Integrated Offender Management (IOM)

List of children and young people currently subject to MAPPA management (level 2 or 3) or IOM

List of all children/young people who have received an out-of-court disposal (including any issue directly by police) in the previous three months; indicating whether or not the case was referred to the YOT for any reason

List of currently supervised children or young people in receipt of alcohol or substance misuse treatment, physical or emotional health intervention, speech and language intervention, or awaiting treatment or assessment for any of these issues

Details of health and substance misuse providers (including liaison and diversion) working with the YOT, and contact details for a link manager in each organisation

List of all children or young people currently supervised by the YOT who have a child protection plan, child in need plan, or are looked after (including information about whether the inspected local authority is home or host). Also note whether any of these children/young people are listed as missing from home or identified as being at risk of criminal or sexual exploitation

List of providers of early help and/or other specialist services working with the YOT

Monitoring information that shows ETE achievements of children and young people supervised by the YOT, including those at school, pupil referral unit, custodial institutions and elsewhere

List of current education providers for children and young people supervised by the YOT (pupil referral units, alternative education or equivalent)

List of children or young people currently being supervised who are listed as children missing education or identified as not in education, training or employment

This additional evidence is submitted during the week prior to the second fieldwork week, and is discussed in more detail at the planning meeting during the first fieldwork week.

3.7. Presentation by the local authority

On the first day of the fieldwork, there is a presentation from the local authority chief executive or chair of the YOT management board. The lead inspector should be informed in advance if a substitute will deliver the presentation. Other relevant staff may be involved or attend, as agreed with the lead inspector.

Guidance on the presentation

Please cover the following, with specific reference to domain one (organisational delivery) of the HMI Probation youth inspection standards:

- What does HMI Probation need to know to understand the local context for this YOT?
- How does the governance and leadership of the YOT support and promote the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children and young people?
- How are staff within the YOT empowered to deliver a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children and young people?
- Is there a comprehensive range of high-quality services in place to enable personalised and responsive provision for all children and young people?
- Is timely and relevant information available, with appropriate facilities in place, to support a high-quality, personalised and responsive approach for all children and young people??
- How have you responded to findings and recommendations from previous inspections, including thematic inspections?
- What are your current challenges?

- What are your priorities for further improvement?

These questions relate specifically to domain one (organisational delivery) of the HMI Probation inspection standards for youth offending work. The presentation should directly address the inspection standards and their supporting questions and prompts, and should support the inspection team to find evidence to make their judgements. Any specific examples or evidence presented should relate to work carried out within the previous 18 months.

Arrangements for presentation

One hour is allowed for the presentation, to include 10 minutes for any discussion. The purpose of the discussion is to identify additional sources of evidence, either documents that can be provided or individuals or groups with whom the inspectors could meet during this second fieldwork week.

An electronic copy (Word, PowerPoint or pdf file) of the presentation should be provided to the lead inspector. A paper copy should also be provided at the start of the presentation to all inspectors who are present, to assist them when making notes.

How evidence from the presentation will be used in the inspection:

The presentation and materials will be used to help the lead inspector prepare for the inspection, and, to inform inspection findings on domain one (organisational delivery).

The presentation should not be regarded as a substitute for the structured evidence in advance submission.

Joint inspections only

The presentation takes place on the Monday afternoon of the second fieldwork week. It is usually attended by the full inspection team, including partner inspectors.

We do not provide a template for the presentation.

3.8. Local assessors

On most youth inspections, HMI Probation include local assessors in the inspection team. Local assessors are professionals from other YOTs, working with HMI probation on a short-term basis. During inspections they examine and assess the quality of practice carried out by front-line staff in individual cases, against HMI Probation's published inspection standards.

Local assessors:

- complete the HMI Probation case assessment training
- work on a YOT inspection team for a full week each, in a location other than their normal place of work (or any other place where they may have a conflict of interest)
- receive support and assistance from HMI Probation inspection team while working on inspection

4. Case sample

4.1. Case sample confidence levels

The margin of error (or confidence interval) for our case assessment findings depends on the selected sample size: the larger the sample size is as a proportion of the overall caseload, the surer we can be that our findings reflect the eligible population.

The case samples for youth inspections consist of domain two (post-court) cases and domain three (out-of-court disposal) cases. Based on what previous inspections have told us is a typical ratio of out of court to post court cases, in the combined sample we draw for each YOT, 60% will be domain two cases and 40% domain three. The size of domain two case samples ranges across our inspections from 12 to 68, and the size of domain three case samples ranges from 8 to 46. The total size of the case sample depends on the size of the YOT.

The larger case samples are handled by having more HMI Probation assistant inspectors and local assessors on site during the inspection fieldwork week. Our initial calculations for the required domain two sample sizes have been based on achieving a margin of error of five percentage points and a confidence level of 80% for a simple random sample of monthly commencements. This means, for example, that if our inspection of a sample of cases shows that 47% are being satisfactorily supervised we can be 80% sure that the true percentage for the total eligible caseload is between 42% and 52%. Importantly, this assumes that the sample is truly random – which links to the sampling method (see next section). For inspection purposes, an 80% confidence level provides a balance between cost-efficiency and statistical precision.

We calculate our sample sizes based on annual published data about your workloads. Occasionally, a YOT may find the number of cases within our specified time periods is smaller than the required case sample. In those circumstances, we inspect all available cases, but do not extend the case sample timeframe.

4.2. Stratification

The case sampling approach is based on the following two stages:

Stage 1: Where applicable, in larger YOTs, cases are chosen from across sites or teams. For most YOTs, this stage is not required.

Stage 2: HMI Probation then adopts a stratified sampling approach to the selection of the final inspection sample for both post-court and out-of-court cases. We ensure that the proportion of cases in the selected sample in each stratification group closely matches the proportion in the longlist.

Stratified sampling – the eligible population (of cases being supervised by the YOT) is divided into non-overlapping strata (subgroups), and cases are then randomly selected from within each stratum. The number of strata and the variables used are linked to the issues being explored (that is, where there are likely to be differences in our findings). The stratification variables for children and young people (our secondary sampling units) are

gender, disposal type and the assessed level of safety and well-being and risk of serious harm (RoSH).

4.3. Specification and selection

The case sample long list should be submitted by the YOT by the Friday of week -3.

Domain two (post-court) case sample specification

The YOT is asked to provide a long list of all cases sentenced to a referral order, community order or custody during a specific timescale. The sample should exclude:

- cases where the initial order was not made out to the inspected YOT
- cases where the only requirement was a curfew, unpaid work or attendance centre
- youth rehabilitation orders where there is no element of supervision or intensive supervision and surveillance requirement
- cases consisting of an extension to an existing referral order

On the case sample long list, the YOT is asked to identify any cases that potentially meet our exclusion criteria:

- cases that have been formally transferred out of the YOT, or have terminated within four weeks of their commencement or release from custody
- cases where the inspected YOT acted as a 'host' YOT for looked after child
- cases which are (or have been during the sample period) subject to community safeguarding and public protection incident (CSPPPI) procedures

HMI Probation may exclude cases meeting any of these criteria from inspection, but cases must still be included on the case sample spreadsheet.

The HMIP administrator organises the longlist and applies the stratification variables using the YOT case sample calculator. The stratification groups are:

- Boys: community sentence; High/very high RoSH and/or safety and well-being
- Boys; community sentence; Non-high/very high RoSH and/or safety and well-being
- Boys; post-custody
- Girls

A final selected case sample is then chosen, avoiding excluded cases but matching the stratification proportions. This is used for preparing the schedule.

Domain three (out-of-court) case sample selection

The YOT is asked to provide a longlist of cases subject to an out-of-court disposal during a specific timescale. The sample should include **all** out-of-court disposal cases, where the YOT has been asked to undertake an assessment **and/or** deliver interventions; **including** services delivered directly by the YOT, delivered under other local authority or partnership arrangements, delivered on a commissioned basis by another provider.

On the case sample long list, the YOT asked to identify any cases that potentially meet our exclusion criteria:

- cases where the young person lives outside the YOT area (including looked after children where the YOT is the home YOT), unless the YOT being inspected undertook initial assessment in that case
- cases where the consideration for delivery of an out-of-court disposal was undertaken by a different police force, unless the inspected YOT undertook initial assessment in that case
- any cases which are (or have been during the sample period) subject to community safeguarding and public protection incident (CSPPPI) procedures
- cases that have been transferred out unless the inspected YOT undertook initial assessment in the case.

HMI Probation may exclude cases meeting any of these criteria from inspection, but cases subject to these potential exclusion criteria must still be included on the case sample spreadsheet.

The HMIP administrator organises the longlist and applies the stratification variables using the YOT case sample calculator. The stratification groups are:

- Boys: youth cautions
- Boys; youth conditional cautions
- Boys; Community resolutions or equivalent
- Girls

A final selected case sample is then chosen, avoiding excluded cases but matching the stratification proportions. This is used to prepare the schedule.

5. Schedules

5.1. Weekly schedules

Fieldwork week, single inspections

The lead and deputy are each allocated two or three cases per inspection, depending on the YOT inspected. The remainder of their activity during the fieldwork week includes gathering domain one evidence, through meetings with YOT staff and other stakeholders. A team of assistant inspectors and local assessors undertakes most case inspections and, where necessary, lead and facilitate meetings. On some inspections, assistant inspectors may also have time allocated to conduct meetings or observations.

The YOT is issued with the final schedules for the fieldwork week by the Wednesday of the week before fieldwork starts. The schedule identifies the time of each case manager interview, which lasts up to 60 minutes for a domain two case and 45 minutes for a domain three case. The YOT should inform case managers of the times scheduled for interviews.

Fieldwork weeks, joint inspection

The first fieldwork week for joint inspections consists almost entirely of case inspections for domains two and three.

The lead and deputy lead inspectors then normally spend a week off-site reviewing the evidence from the case inspections, before the second fieldwork week takes. During the second fieldwork week, the lead and deputy conduct most of the domain one meetings. They are joined by partner inspectors from HMICFRS and CQC, and dedicated social care and education and skills inspectors, who follow up any case-related issues identified in the initial fieldwork week and undertake meetings with relevant staff about the partnership arrangements. These include a mix of one-to-one and group meetings. The YOT needs to provide all those taking part in interviews and meetings with information about the venue, date and timings.

5.2. Domain one meetings

Domain one scheduling

Planning the schedule for domain one takes place during the pre-field work phase. The list of core meetings below sets out the standard meetings that inspectors hold during the fieldwork week.

An outline schedule is sent by HMIP to the inspected service following the announcement of an inspection, indicating the days and times inspectors are available for meetings. Some meetings are fixed in the schedule, for others the YOT has the flexibility to identify when it is most convenient to hold them.

Depending on the geography of the YOT inspected, some meetings may be scheduled to take place by telephone. Depending on the YOT, an individual might need to cover more than one of the tasks outlined in the list of core meetings. In that case, we only need to schedule one meeting with that person. Similarly, if the role identified is covered jointly by two or more people, the YOT can schedule them all to attend.

For group meetings, the optimum number of attendees is between six and 10.

This list below covers the core meetings we routinely wish to cover. Other meetings may be arranged either during the planning meeting, or as the fieldwork progresses.

YOT inspection meetings - single inspections

Individual meetings

Management board chair (if not available, the acting chair)

YOT manager (or designated manager with direct operational and strategic responsibility for delivery of YOT services)

Group meetings

YOT management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YOT manager)

Staff focus group (including case managers and support staff, covering court disposals and out-of-court work)

Partnership staff group (representing staff of statutory partner organisations either co-located in the YOT, or with direct responsibility for working with YOT cases, and any other partners the YOT works closely with)

Board members group (including all statutory partners, but excluding board chair and any members directly employed by the YOT)

Partnership managers group (link managers from statutory and other partners)

Restorative justice and victim workers (staff directly delivering restorative justice, victim engagement and reparation)

Out-of-court disposal scheme (operational managers from YOT, police decision-maker and other partners, including link to other diversionary/early prevention work)

Volunteers (including referral order panel members, may also include mentors or other volunteers if used)

YOT inspection meetings - additional meetings for joint inspections only

Individual meetings

Information manager and quality assurance/performance manager (people responsible for provision of information to the board and internal quality assurance)

Local authority chief executive (unless also board chair; in YOTs covering multiple local authorities, this meeting could involve a group of chief executives, or one acting as a representative)

Local authority elected member (with clear responsibility covering the work of the YOT)

Probation services link managers (operational link managers, NPS and CRC, including line manager officer of any seconded staff)

Police inspector meetings

YOT seconded police staff
Line manager of YOT secondment police staff
Local MAPPA coordinator
Police IOM link
Police member of YOT management board
Observation of internal YOT risk planning forum (if scheduled)
Observation of delivery of out-of-court disposal
Visit to local police station and custody suite

Health inspector meetings

YOT manager responsible for liaison with health partners
Individual meetings (by specialism) with health staff seconded to or working closely with the YOT
Individual meetings (by specialism) with line managers of manager of health staff seconded to or working closely with the YOT
Health member of YOT management board (separate meetings if multiple)
Local NHS Commissioner for children and young people
Child and adolescent mental health strategic lead (if not health member of management board)

Children's social care inspector meetings

Lead operational manager in YOT for safeguarding and child protection
Strategic lead in children's services with responsibility for children known to the YOT and/or at risk of offending (focus on looked after children, care leavers, children in need, children with child protection plans)
Children's social care member of YOT management board
Director of children's services (England)/Director of social services (Wales) (if not the social care member of YOT management board)
Representatives of other strategic boards (LSCB/scrutiny) (any arrangements responsible for overseeing the effectiveness of joint work with the YOT)
Local authority children's services operational managers, including managers responsible for care leavers, out of area provision, looked after children

Education, learning and skills inspector meetings

ETE workers in the YOT or engaging closely with the YOT
YOT middle manager responsible for ETE workers in the YOT or engaging closely with the YOT

Learning and skills or education members of the YOT management board

Senior officer education (England) or equivalent, Director of education (Wales) (if not education board member)

Local provider of information, advice and guidance services

Education welfare link for the YOT in the local authority

Observation of education/training provision attended by young people from the YOT

We recognise that arrangements vary between YOTs and local authorities, so the standard list of meetings is just for guidance. In general, we would not want to meet with the same person more than once, and the planning meeting is an opportunity to identify the most relevant attendees.

5.3. Team meetings

Team meetings for the inspection team are held on the Wednesday afternoon and Friday during the fieldwork week on single inspections, and the first fieldwork week of joint inspections. During the second fieldwork week of joint inspections, team meetings are held daily. A meeting room may be required for this; no ICT access is required in this room.

6. Phase II: Fieldwork

6.1. Methodology

Domain one: organisational delivery

In domain one, the lead and deputy lead inspectors focus on governance and leadership, staff, partnerships and services, and information and facilities. During the pre-fieldwork period, the lead assesses the evidence submitted in advance by the YOT, identifying any gaps or areas for clarification in the evidence for standards and key questions. The fieldwork week (two weeks for joint inspections) includes meetings where further evidence can be gathered, and provides an opportunity to triangulate evidence and information. Inspectors are looking for evidence of the impact of organisational delivery on the quality of work in cases inspected in domains two and three.

Domain two: post-court supervision

Domain two centres on the quality of practice. We examine those tasks relating to the supervision of children and young people, specifically assessing, planning, implementing and reviewing. The lead and deputy undertake some case inspections, with most cases completed by assistant inspectors and local assessors. The case inspections take place during the fieldwork week. Section four provides more detailed information about the selection process, exclusion criteria and sample sizes.

Case inspections include reading and assessing relevant information available through electronic records and assessment and planning tools. Inspectors need access to the local case management system and any other electronic recording system. YOTs need provide any additional paper documents relevant to the case inspected.

We undertake face-to-face interviews with the case manager for each case within the selected sample. These include discussions about assessment, planning, implementation and reviewing. Case managers are also asked about their broader experience of management oversight, and access to services for children and young people. Where the case manager is unavailable, a telephone interview can be arranged or an interview held with a suitable replacement. If this is not possible, the case is undertaken as a file read.

Domain three: out-of-court disposals

Domain three examines the quality of practice in the supervision of children and young people subject to out-of-court disposal supervision, including assessment, planning, implementation, joint working. This is inspected using the same methodology as domain two. Section four provides more detailed information about the selection process, exclusion criteria and sample sizes.

Joint inspections

When the YOT is subject to a joint agency inspection, domains two and three are inspected during the first fieldwork week.

The cases are then reviewed by the relevant partner inspectors at the start of the second fieldwork week, and any activities or further information are followed up during that week.

The lead inspector identifies lines of enquiries and summarise the initial findings from the first fieldwork week.

Dealing with cases that should have been excluded

Occasionally, during fieldwork, it becomes apparent that a case on the schedule does not meet the case sample specification, and should have been excluded at an earlier stage. This is a difficult situation, particularly when the case manager has turned up for interview by the time an inspector realises the case should have been excluded. The inspector has a brief conversation with the case manager, to let them know that the case should not have been put forward for inspection.

The inspector then speaks to the deputy lead inspector about whether a substitute case needs to be identified as a file read. If possible, the inspector conducting the file read arranges a telephone conversation or brief meeting with the responsible officer.

6.2. Domain guidance material

Guidance has been developed for each domain. This explains how evidence should be assessed and how to form judgements against key questions and standards. The purpose of the guidance is to provide advice, consistency and a shared understanding of the required expectations. The guidance material is separated into the following documents:

Domain one: rules and guidance (RaG) and ratings characteristics documents

Domain two: case assessment rules and guidance (CARaG)

Domain three: case assessment rules and guidance (CARaG)

Purpose of the domain one rules and guidance

The domain one rules and guidance explains how evidence should be assessed and how judgements should be formed against key questions and standards. The rules and guidance are based on international and national youth offending standards and rules, and our own standards and benchmarks.

Role of the rating characteristics

The rating characteristics indicate what will guide a lead inspector to recommend a specific rating. They provide a framework to support the lead inspector's recommendation rather than being a checklist; we do not expect every characteristic to be present for the corresponding rating to be given.

The characteristics for 'Good' and 'Requires improvement' are closely aligned to the key questions and prompts in the standards framework.

The characteristics for 'Outstanding' capture whether the organisation is:

- innovative and creative
- forward-looking and proactive
- open and transparent
- supportive, empowering and inclusive
- agile and responsive

- collaborative and outward-looking.

The characteristics for 'Inadequate' capture whether the organisation is:

- solely reactive
- defensive and blaming
- characterised by division and conflict
- unresponsive
- inward-looking.

Purpose of the domain two and three case assessment rules and guidance

Domain two and domain three case assessment rules and guidance (CARaGs) are comprehensive sets of published rules and guidance to be followed by inspectors and local assessors in their assessment of individual cases. The CARaGs promote transparency and consistency in our inspection of cases. Inspection staff and local assessors should use the appropriate CARaG as a reference document when assessing a case.

Guidance is provided in the CARaGs for the key questions and prompts. The CARaGs are regularly updated to ensure that they remain consistent with any changes that we make at standard, question and prompt level and so that they remain linked to evidence. The CARaGs also contain links where relevant to more detailed guidance and HMI Probation

Copies of the guidance documents can be found on the HMI Probation website.

<https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/about-our-work/documentation-area/youth-offending-services-inspection/>

6.3. The inspection team for phase II

The inspection team for phase II consists of:

- lead inspector
- deputy lead inspector
- assistant inspectors.
- local assessors.

6.4. Inspection sites (including administration/business support)

During the pre-fieldwork phase, the inspection sites are identified and the inspection team allocated to specific offices. The inspectorate is aware that private office space may not be available in all inspection sites for the whole fieldwork phase. The YOT may allocate the team to a desk in an open office with access to private interview rooms, in accordance with the schedule.

On arrival, YOT gives an induction to the building, including a health and safety briefing. Inspection staff need access to fobs, and information on opening and closing times.

6.5. IT access to case files

All inspection staff need access to, and a briefing on, the local YOT case management system. The lead inspector makes arrangements for IT access during the planning meetings with the YOT.

Inspectors should be provided with any additional paper documents or access to local folders if relevant information is stored separately.

For organisations subject to a joint agency inspection, the partnership inspectorates need access to their relevant case recording systems for fieldwork week two.

6.6. Case manager interviews

As part of our assessment of a case, an inspector interviews the case manager for that case. This interview provides an opportunity for the case under inspection to be discussed in more detail, and to gather evidence for domain two or three. Inspectors provide an introduction and overview to the case manager to help them understand the process of the inspection. The interview includes constructive feedback to the case manager, delivered in a productive and sensitive manner to encourage reflective discussions. The detail of the interview will not be discussed with line managers, unless there are serious concerns about the case (prompting an 'alert' to be raised – see below).

Where the case manager is not available, we ask that another suitable person with a sufficient understanding of the case attends the interview. That would normally be the line manager or supervisor of the case manager, although in some circumstances another colleague with knowledge of the case may be suitable. The inspector will contact that person prior to the interview to check how much they know about the case. If they have little knowledge of the case, a telephone call during the scheduled interview slot may be arranged as an alternative, to avoid unnecessary travel. If no alternative is available, the case is assessed based on the written material alone (as a file read).

We sometimes get asked if the second person can attend the interview with the current case manager. Our preference is to interview the current case manager alone, with following exceptions:

- where a recent change of case manager means the previous one can add something useful to the assessment of the case
- where a second person has played a key role in delivery of an intervention
- where the responsible officer is very new to the role and needs support from a colleague.

6.7. Alert process

Individual Alerts

Where we identify a significant actual or potential risk of harm to other people, or to the individual concerned, or where there is organisational practice that requires immediate attention, we have a responsibility to act on our concerns. The following procedures provide all inspection staff with an effective and consistent mechanism for tackling serious situations that require immediate attention.

An alert encompasses practice, or practice omissions, that require immediate remedial action to be taken (usually by the organisation responsible for the case) to reduce or contain an identifiable, significant and imminent risk.

Inspection staff should ask themselves:

- What might happen if no action is taken?
- How serious is the risk?
- When might it happen (that is, how imminent is it)?

If we are concerned that there is danger to life and limb, or an incident from which recovery will be difficult or impossible, or that an offence has taken place or is taking place (for example, fraud), then we need to act.

Through the individual alert process we are seeking assurance, confirmed by evidence, that actions have been taken. We do not manage the risk directly. The deputy lead inspector's role is to make sure that the organisation (or third party) responsible for the case takes sufficient action to address the concerns. Any incidents recorded via the individual alert system may inform the inspection findings or recommendations.

Organisational Alerts

The organisational alert procedure provides all inspection staff with an effective and consistent mechanism for tackling situations of identifiable, systemic, significant and imminent risk which require immediate attention. Organisational alerts are not designed to address general poor practice even if this is on large scale.

The purpose of the organisational alert procedure is to assist inspected bodies to address issues of identifiable, systemic, significant and imminent risk where this has not otherwise been done. The fact that an organisational alert has been raised will be described in the published inspection report.

6.8. Meeting format

Meetings with groups of staff should ideally consist of six to ten people; in larger groups, some participants could be overlooked, while smaller ones might not generate sufficient diversity of views. Staff should be of the same grade (or doing the same role), and should not be included in groups with their line managers or senior managers. If attendees are not of the expected role or grade, inspectors may advise them that their attendance is not required. Certain meetings might require consistency of factors such as gender, age and ethnicity of attendees.

Meetings with groups normally last between 45 and 90 minutes. The meeting should take place in a space that is private, not subject to interruptions and with sufficient comfortable seating. The inspected organisation is responsible for identifying the best location for meetings to take place, ensuring there is a good representation.

6.10. Quality assurance

HMIP undertake a range of quality assurance activity, both on-site during inspection fieldwork, and remotely at other times. The lead inspector informs the link manager of any planned quality assurance activity.

6.9. Closing the inspection fieldwork

The fieldwork phase on single inspections ends on Friday at 1pm. For joint inspections, the second week of fieldwork concludes on Thursday evening.

On the final day of the inspection, the lead inspector:

- ensures all fobs/security passes have been returned
- explains the process for confirming ratings for standards and the overall rating for the organisation
- makes arrangements for a telephone call with the head of service after the ratings panel
- outlines the process for report writing and submission of the draft report
- discusses the process if there are factual inaccuracies in the draft report
- explains the process for challenging ratings
- highlights key dates and the next steps for improvement plans and final report publication
- explains that the head of inspection programme will contact the SPOC or chief executive after publication of the report, for their general feedback about the conduct of the inspection.

Single inspections

At the end of fieldwork, the lead inspector will not have a full analysis of data, and the findings will not have been discussed at the ratings panel. Therefore, it is not possible to provide feedback on findings to the YOT at this stage.

Joint inspections

In the final meeting with the head of service, on the Thursday morning of the second week of fieldwork, the lead inspector gives some feedback, where possible, about the anticipated ratings for domains two and three. No feedback is given about the ratings for domain one at this stage. There is an opportunity for discussion of these after the Inspectorate's ratings panel has met and the ratings panel report has been agreed and shared with the inspected service, which normally takes place five days after the end of fieldwork.

7. Phase III: Post-fieldwork

7.1. Ratings explained

Domain one ratings

Domain one ratings for each inspection are not led by our findings in individual cases, although we always check the correlation between domains and the need for further analysis. Instead, the evidence we need for domain one ratings comes primarily from data, documents and evidence submitted by the YOT, and through interviews with leaders, managers, staff, staff and volunteer surveys, feedback from children and young people and other relevant stakeholders.

Domain one ratings are proposed by the lead inspector in each case. The rating characteristics provide a framework for the lead inspector's recommendation; we do not expect every characteristic to be present for the corresponding rating to be given.

The characteristics are closely aligned to the key questions and prompts in the standards framework.

The characteristics for 'outstanding' capture whether the organisation is:

- innovative and creative
- forward-looking and proactive
- open and transparent
- supportive, empowering and inclusive
- agile and responsive
- collaborative and outward-looking.

The characteristics for 'inadequate' capture whether the organisation is:

- solely reactive
- defensive and blaming
- characterised by division and conflict
- unresponsive
- inward-looking.

More detail about domain one ratings can be found in the *Youth domain one ratings characteristics* guide, available on the website at:

<https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/about-our-work/documentation-area/youth-offending-services-inspection/>

Domain two/three ratings

Domains two and three ratings are based on the results of the inspection of individual cases. Ratings are at the standard level, and are based on the consolidated results (at key question level) of all cases inspected in the relevant domain.

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

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

In this example, based on an analysis of 23 cases, the score for one of the key questions under the Assessment standard, falls into the 'Outstanding' band, and for another in the 'Good' band; but as the score for the final key question is in the 'Requires improvement' band (61% of cases inspected rated as satisfactory), the overall standard is rated as 'Requires improvement'.

Assessment			
Requires Improvement			
A 1 S	Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child or young person's desistance?	#	%
	Yes	20	87%
	No	3	13%
A 2 S	Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child or young person safe?	#	%
	Yes	15	65%
	No	8	35%
A 3 S	Does assessment analyse how to keep other people safe?	#	%
	Yes	14	61%
	No	9	39%

We use case sub-samples for some of the key questions in domains 2 and 3. For example, when judging whether planning focused sufficiently on keeping the child or young person safe, we exclude those cases where the inspector deemed there were no factors related to safety and well-being. This is because we focus on those cases where we expect meaningful work to take place.

An element of professional judgement may be applied to the standards ratings in domains two and three. Exceptionally, the ratings panel will consider whether professional discretion should be exercised in relation to a rating for a domain two or three standard where the lowest percentage at the key question level is close to the rating boundary, for example between 'requires improvement' and 'good' (specifically, within five percentage points of the boundary or where a differing judgement in one case would result in a change in rating). The panel will consider the sizes of any sub-samples used and the percentages for the other

key questions within that standard, such as whether they fall within different bandings and the level of divergence, to make this decision. See section 4.1 for more information about confidence levels.

In the example below, the provisional rating at the standard level would be 'Requires improvement', as the lowest score at the key question level is 63%. The upper boundary of the 'Requires improvement' band is 64%, so the ratings panel considers whether other inspection data would support increasing the rating at standard level to 'Good'. Here, the panel would take into account the scores for the other key questions under this standard, and other evidence from inspected cases, to decide whether or not the provisional rating should be varied.

Planning			
Requires Improvement			
P 1 S	Does planning focus sufficiently on supporting the child or young person's desistance?	#	%
	<i>Note: question not applicable for all cases</i>		
	Yes	18	78%
	No	5	22%
P 2 S	Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child or young person safe?	#	%
	<i>Note: question not applicable for all cases</i>		
	FALSE	12	63%
	No	7	37%
P 3 S	Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping people safe?	#	%
	<i>Note: question not applicable for all cases</i>		
	Yes	13	72%
	No	5	28%

Overall YOT rating

Straightforward scoring rules are used to generate the overall YOT rating. Each of the 12 standards are scored on a 0–3 scale in which 'inadequate' = 0; 'requires improvement' = 1; 'good' = 2; and 'outstanding' = 3. Adding these scores produces a total score ranging from 0-36, which is banded to produce the overall rating, as follows:

- 0-6 = inadequate
- 7-18 = requires improvement
- 19-30 = good
- 31-36 = outstanding.

We do not include any weightings in the scoring rules. The rationale for this is that all parts of the standards framework are strongly linked to effective service delivery and positive outcomes. Our view is that YOTs need to focus across all the standards, and we do not want to distort behaviours through weighting.

7.2. Ratings panel meeting

The ratings panel, an internal HMI Probation meeting normally takes place on the Tuesday morning of the week following completion of the fieldwork. The panel normally consists of the director of operations (who chairs and records the decision of the panel), the lead inspector and head of the youth inspection programme. The chief inspector and deputy lead inspector may attend, if available; the head of standards and head of inspection methodology and assurance attend some ratings panels.

The lead inspector presents the proposed ratings to the panel in a structured way, and in line with the following principles and processes:

- the panel checks that the proposed ratings for domain one are evidence-based and balanced, and in line with published HMIP rules and guidance
- the panel considers the validity, source and weighting of the evidence for domain one and determines whether the rating proposed by the lead inspector is appropriate
- the panel ensures linkages are made between domain one standards (particularly leadership) and ratings for domain two and domain three
- the panel considers whether professional discretion should be exercised in relation to any of the domain two or three ratings. The panel only revises the domain two or domain three scores at the key question level if they believe that to do otherwise would not be a true reflection of how the inspected organisation is performing
- the panel makes sure that ratings are consistently applied across inspections
- the panel provides a level of protection and challenge for the lead inspector
- the panel focuses only on ratings and key findings and does not quality assure other aspects of the inspection.

Use of professional discretion

The ratings panel must consider whether professional discretion should be exercised in relation to a rating for a domain two or three standard in all cases when the lowest percentage at the key question level:

- is within five percentage points (and thus the margin of error) of the rating boundary; and/or
- would fall into a different rating boundary from a change in judgement in one case; and/or
- is based upon a sample or sub-sample of five cases or fewer.

When considering whether to exercise professional discretion, the panel must consider:

- the percentages for all the key questions within the standard, noting their bandings, whether within five percentage points of the rating boundaries, and the levels of divergence;
- the sizes of all the samples and sub-samples used; and
- supporting qualitative evidence relating to the specific standard.

Following the ratings panel, the chair of the panel completes the ratings panel summary. The administrator sends the inspected organisation a copy of the summary of the ratings panel meeting, which includes the agreed ratings. This arrives with the inspected body on the Friday after the ratings panel (week + 1) at 0900

7.3. HMI Probation ratings challenge process and complaints procedure

We are committed to ensuring our inspectorate processes are transparent and fair and of a professional standard. This includes handling complaints proficiently, in an open and rigorous way, investigating the matters raised thoroughly, and replying as quickly as possible to any concerns raised with us.

Organisations can make a complaint if they are dissatisfied with the way in which we carry out, or fail to carry out, our business. This includes the quality of our work or the way we work, including the conduct of the organisation or individual members of staff. It can also include issues with our inspection judgements. Our complaints policy can be found on our website: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/about-hmi-probation/complaints/

While our formal complaints policy covers any issues organisations may have with the findings of our inspections, the expectation is that these are dealt with informally, negating the need to invoke the formal complaints policy.

There is therefore an opportunity to raise such issues at the factual accuracy check. Providers are discouraged from raising such issues prior to this, for example when they receive the initial ratings panel summary, as they will not be in possession of the more detailed evidence base that supports the inspection ratings. The HMIP director of operations is the final decision-maker on any matters of factual accuracy and/or challenge to inspection ratings.

We aim to address any concerns or dissatisfaction as early as possible, preferably before they are escalated to formal complaint. If an organisation is not satisfied with the response from the director of operations concerning a challenge to ratings, they can then invoke the formal complaints procedure. That will need to be supported with new evidence. We will not reconsider on the basis that our judgements are disappointing to the organisation.

7.4. Report writing

As the public product from the inspection, it is important that the report is well presented, credible and accessible to the intelligent lay reader. Equally, to drive improvement in practice, the report needs to present the information required by the technical audience

The lead inspector is allocated two weeks to complete the first draft of the report, including presenting their recommended judgements to the ratings panel in the first week after the fieldwork is completed. The following processes are carried out to finalise the report:

- initial editing by an external contractor (checking on grammar, house style etc.)
- structure, accuracy and quality check by the head of youth inspection (strategic editing)
- review by director operations

- factual accuracy check by the YOT
- statistics checking by data and information team

Final review and sign off by HMI Probation

The YOT receives a copy of the draft report on Monday morning of week +5 with a deadline to return any comments to the head of YOT inspection and lead inspector in 10 working days. The head of YOT inspection and lead inspector consider the comments from the YOT and provide a response.

7.5. Report publication

The report will usually be published during week +10 in England, and week +13 in Wales. Changes to this publication date may be made in advance. The lead inspector will discuss any changes in the anticipated publication date with the inspected organisation.

Prior to publication, the communications team organise a communications planning meeting. The meeting brings together communications colleagues, the lead inspector, head of inspection programme and director of operations to discuss the communications approach for the report, including the content and tone of the press release. The communications team then prepares the press release, which is agreed with inspection colleagues before final review by the chief inspector. The communications team submit the final report and press release to the Secretary of State around five working days before publication; the team then send an embargoed copy of the report and press release to the inspected organisation.

7.6. Action plans

The YOT draws up an action plan to address the report's recommendations. The lead inspector considers the action plan, working with the head of YOT inspection programme. The lead inspector then sends an acknowledgement letter, noting acceptance of the plan or identifying amendments if required.

The action plan is followed up during the next inspection, when progress is reviewed.
