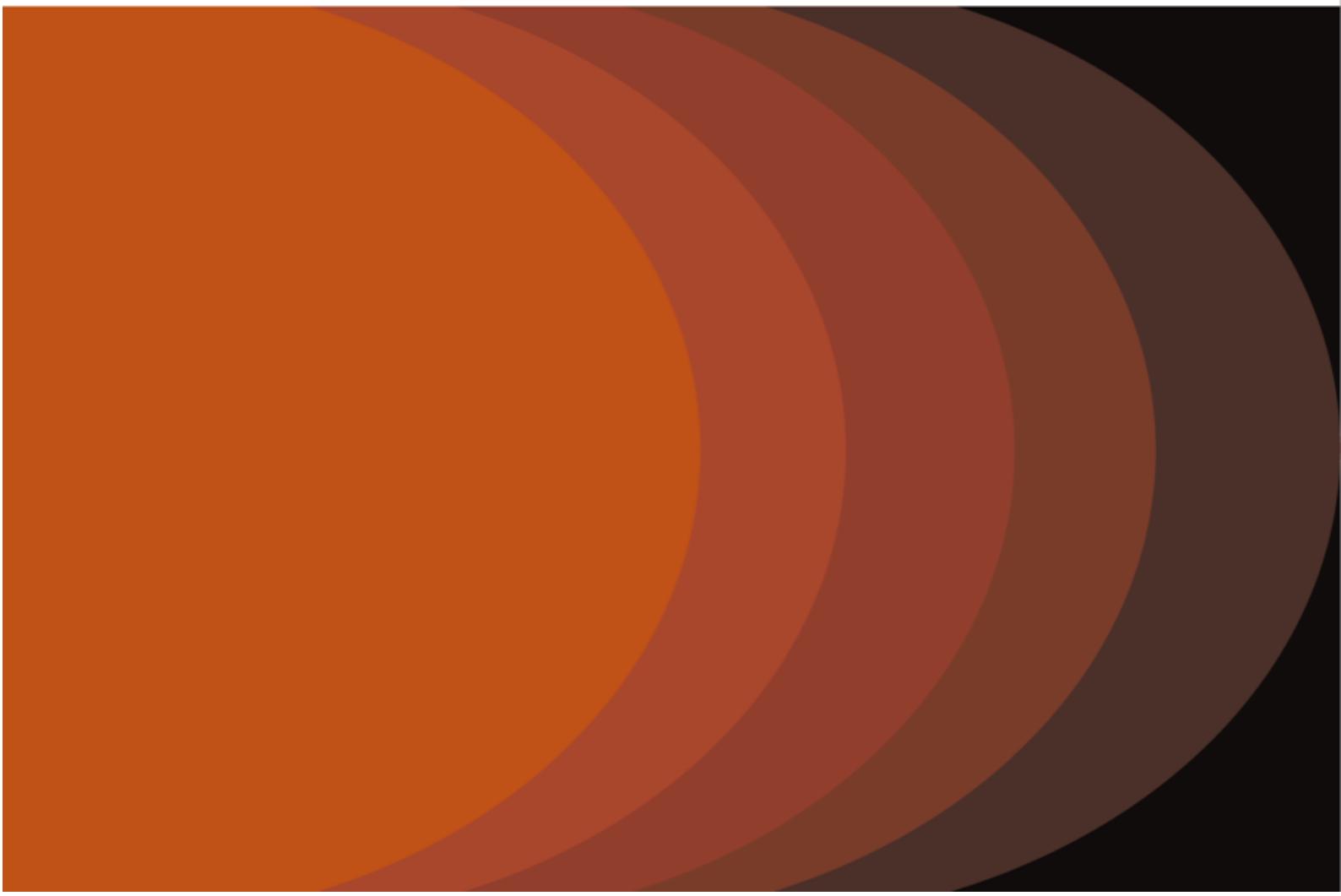




Her Majesty's
Inspectorate of
Probation

An inspection of youth offending services in
Brighton and Hove

HM Inspectorate of Probation, July 2021



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

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

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Introduction

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

Our standards are based on established models and frameworks, which are grounded in evidence, learning and experience. They are designed to drive improvements in the quality of work with children who have offended. Published scoring rules generate the overall YOS rating. The findings and subsequent ratings in those domains are described in this report. Our fieldwork, conducted through off-site analysis of case files, and telephone and video conferencing, took place between 19 April and 22 April 2021.

Our inspection of the YOS identified a cohesive and integrated approach to working positively with children. This was seen across all elements of the way the organisation is led and resourced. Strong strategic and operational partnerships support staff in the delivery of work with children, which is reflected in high-quality case management practice both for court and out-of-court disposals.

The Adolescent Management Board sets a clear vision and strategy. This is well communicated across the partnership, and arrangements are mature and collaborative. Board members model positive behaviours of partnership working, and this is reflected in their operational staff's work with children. Statutory and non-statutory partners are represented on the Board and attendance is consistently good. The partnership has an in-depth understanding of the issues and challenges facing YOS children, with excellent use of performance data to inform strategic decisions and help shape service delivery. The workforce has the full range of skills, knowledge and experience needed to develop trusting and supportive relationships with children and families.

The case management of court disposals was of a high standard. Assessment was rated as 'Outstanding' and based on a wide range of sources and detailed information. We saw thorough and balanced analysis of factors to support desistance, address safety and wellbeing, and understand the risk of harm to others. Planning was co-created between agencies and this led to strong implementation and delivery practice, with effective partnership working in every case. Reviewing was 'Outstanding', with the YOS ensuring that each child was treated as an individual. Group supervision supported case managers to manage complex YOS children, and management oversight of court orders consistently promoted high-quality casework practice.

The joint work associated with out-of-court disposals was 'Outstanding', underpinned by a joint decision-making panel and a clear protocol with relevant stakeholders. Assessment, planning, and implementation and delivery were 'Outstanding' and strengths based, and also balanced the child's welfare with the needs of victims. We found that children on out-of-court disposals accessed the same wide range of services as those on court orders.



Marc Baker

Director of Operations

Ratings

Brighton and Hove Youth Offending Service	Score	36/36
Overall rating	Outstanding	
1. Organisational delivery		
1.1 Governance and leadership	Outstanding	
1.2 Staff	Outstanding	
1.3 Partnerships and services	Outstanding	
1.4 Information and facilities	Outstanding	
2. Court disposals		
2.1 Assessment	Outstanding	
2.2 Planning	Outstanding	
2.3 Implementation and delivery	Outstanding	
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 Joint working	Outstanding	

Recommendations

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

Brighton and Hove Youth Offending Service Management Board should:

1. continue to ensure that the staff ethnicity profile properly reflects the YOS cohort of children.

Brighton and Hove Clinical Commissioning Group should:

2. support the YOS Management Board, to ensure that the YOS has a full range of pathways to access mainstream and specialist health services.

Background

Youth offending services (YOSs) supervise 10–18 year-olds who have been sentenced by a court, or who have come to the attention of the police because of their offending behaviour but have not been charged – instead, they were dealt with out of court. HM Inspectorate of Probation inspects both these aspects of youth offending services. We use the terms child or children to denote their special legal status and to highlight the obligations of relevant agencies such as social care, education and health to meet their safety and wellbeing needs.

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

YOS work is governed and shaped by a range of legislation and guidance specific to the youth justice sector (such as the National Standards for Youth Justice) or else applicable across the criminal justice sector (for example, Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements guidance). The Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB) provides some funding to YOSs. It also monitors their performance and issues guidance to them about how things are to be done.

Brighton and Hove is a unitary authority, bordered by the larger county councils of East and West Sussex. Brighton is a seaside city, with a population of around 291,000 (estimate 2019), of which approximately 51,000 are children. With high student numbers and many visitors from surrounding areas and tourism, the population is transient and diverse. There is a large lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community, and while residents are predominantly white British/European (89 per cent), 27 per cent of school-age children (2019 school census) and 21 per cent of all children under 18 (2011 census) are black, Asian or of mixed heritage. A theme, highlighted through data analysis, is disproportionality in the YOS caseload. The YOS (Youth offending service) partnership has worked to understand this better and reduce the criminalisation of black and mixed heritage children in the area.

Brighton and Hove is relatively affluent but has areas of social and economic deprivation and a higher than average rate of drug deaths. Compared with all other cities in the UK, it has the highest number of children living in households where any of the 'toxic trio' (domestic abuse, mental ill-health and substance misuse) are present (191.5 per 1,000, compared with 182.1 nationally). A large proportion of serious and violent crime is linked to the drug trade and county lines activity, with the associated exploitation issues providing one of the biggest challenges for services working with vulnerable children in the city.

In order to provide a comprehensive response to the complex needs of this cohort, the key teams in Brighton and Hove were brought together in 2018. The co-located adolescent service, with the integrated YOS, sits within children's safeguarding and care, in the Families, Children and Learning Directorate of the city council. This provides a good operational and strategic fit with the wider services for children and

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

their families. The teams work closely together while still retaining their distinct identities.

Historically, reoffending rates have been high in Brighton and Hove, and this is attributed to a small but complex cohort of children. However, the data shows an overall reduction in these rates since 2017, with a frequency rate of 1.57 now below the national average of 1.61. The YOS has seen longer-term reductions and good performance against the number of first-time entrants and custody rates since 2015/2016, despite a very recent spike in both indicators. The Board has analysed this data and produced a coordinated strategic and operational plan in response.

Contextual facts

Population information

290,885	Total population Brighton and Hove (2020) ²
22,498	Total youth population (10–17 years) in Brighton and Hove (2020) ²

Demographics of children cautioned or sentenced³

Age	10–14 years	15–17 years
Brighton and Hove YOS	3%	98%
National average	22%	78%

Race/ethnicity	White	Black and minority ethnic	Unknown
Brighton and Hove YOS	65%	33%	3%
National average	69%	28%	3%

Gender	Male	Female
Brighton and Hove YOS	90%	10%
National average	85%	15%

Additional caseload data⁴

62	Total current caseload: community sentences
6	Total current caseload in custody
3	Total current caseload on licence
87	Total current caseload of out-of-court disposals, including community resolution, youth caution, youth conditional caution or other out-of-court disposal

² Office for National Statistics. (2020). *UK population estimates, mid-2019*.

³ Youth Justice Board. (2021). *Youth justice annual statistics: 2019 to 2020*.

⁴ Information supplied by YOS, reflecting caseload on 12 April 2021.

1. Organisational delivery



Strengths:

- There is a clear vision and strategy, which is well communicated across the partnership.
- Partnership arrangements are mature and collaborative, with excellent use of data to inform strategic decisions and to demonstrate impact on YOS children.
- Board members model positive behaviours of partnership working, which are reflected in the staff's work with children.
- The YOS Board is well attended and there are strong links and mutual trust between the YOS Head of Service, YOS operational managers and the Board.
- The workforce has the full range of skills, knowledge and experience to develop supportive relationships with children and families.
- There is an in-depth understanding of the characteristics of children in the YOS cohort, with clear working protocols and well-developed pathways to a range of services to meet their need.
- The YOS partnership is heavily invested in a strategic and operational approach to contextual safeguarding.
- There is a framework provided by a workforce development plan, a suite of policies and procedures, current service level agreements and protocols.

Areas for improvement:

- The ethnicity of staff and volunteers is not representative of the YOS cohort.
- There are some gaps in the pathways for children to receiving services from mainstream Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

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

1.1. Governance and leadership



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

Outstanding

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

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

There is a clear vision and strategy, which is well communicated across the partnership. The YOS vision sits within a wider vulnerable adolescent and contextual safeguarding strategy. The remit of the YOS Management Board has an extended remit to that of an Adolescent Management Board, to ensure a strategic and operational response to the needs of this cohort of children.

The YOS Management Board Chair is the Director of Children's Services of the Brighton and Hove Families, Children and Learning Directorate. She has overseen and driven the integration of the YOS as part of a wider complex adolescent service, following a restructure in 2018. The YOS has retained its identity as a specialist service, and the Chair is a strong advocate and driver of the quality of practice.

Do the partnership arrangements actively support effective service delivery?

The positioning of the YOS with other teams in the adolescent service structure provides enhanced service delivery opportunities and supports resilience (this was clear in the arrangements for delivery during the Covid-19 crisis period).

Partnership arrangements are mature and collaborative, with excellent use of data to inform strategic decisions and demonstrate impact on YOS children. Board members model positive behaviours of partnership working, which is reflected in the work of the staff with children.

The Board is well attended and includes all statutory partners, as well as other partners, such as the courts, headteacher, community safety managers, police and crime commissioner, and the voluntary sector. Board members consistently advocate for YOS children and have sufficient seniority to make decisions and commit resources from their own agencies.

Board members have all received an appropriate induction and clear terms of reference are in place. The current Chair received a further induction when she moved from the role of Board member to Chair, to reflect the different expectations and responsibilities of that role.

There is a culture of support and challenge within the Board, with shared responsibility across strategic partners for addressing the complex needs of YOS children and vulnerable adolescents. Examples of such collaborative work include: an 'away-day' to inform strategic priorities; successfully challenging the National Probation Service (NPS) about the lack of a seconded probation officer between 2019 and 2020; undertaking a strategic 'deep dive' of custody cases; partnership learning from serious case reviews with a focus on transitions; and individual Board members' involvement in a national standards audit.

The Board is part of a network of partnership arrangements that work across Brighton and Hove, and are pan-Sussex. YOS Board members provide strategic links to other partnership forums, such as: the safeguarding children's partnership, community safety partnership, local criminal justice board and violence reduction partnership.

Board members and YOS managers are aware of business risks, with an action plan to mitigate them. Identified areas of attention across the YOS partnership include: ongoing response and demand for services arising from Covid-19; small YOT capacity; addressing staffing disproportionality; enhancing mainstream CAMHS pathways; uncertainties regarding short-term violence reduction partnership funding (potentially impacting on third-sector providers); and continuing to embed the strategic contextual safeguarding plan.

Does the leadership of the YOS support effective service delivery?

The YOS head of service is experienced and well respected within the partnership and across regional and national roles. She also acts as co-chair of the youth justice sector-led improvement programme.

There are strong links and mutual trust between the head of service, operational managers and the Board. The Board has a strong awareness of the quality of practice. Examples were given of instances where the head of service had periodically escalated individual children's cases to Board members to resolve issues successfully.

Team managers have designated lead responsibilities and sit on relevant multi-agency operational groups. Partnership managers describe mature and collaborative relationships with their YOS counterparts.

1.2. Staff



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

Outstanding

Key staffing data⁵

Total staff headcount (full-time equivalent, FTE)	18
Average caseload per case manager (FTE)	10

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

Do staffing and workload levels support the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children?

Staffing and workload levels are planned and actively reviewed. Workloads are described by staff as manageable and are currently at around 10–12 cases per full-time staff member.

The staffing and volunteer profile are not representative of the YOS cohort in terms of ethnicity. There are no black, Asian and minority ethnic staff within the YOS despite efforts to engage and recruit staff and volunteers from this community through visits to specific venues and groups, alongside promoting YOS work. This

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

is recognised as a wider local authority challenge, with the recent appointment of a practitioner to work across the city council to address the issues. The partnership identified challenges in attracting and retaining staff, given the relative proximity to London, which can attract staff through higher London-weighted salaries.

The YOS has seven case managers (all professionally qualified), who hold generic caseloads of both court and out-of-court-disposal cases. This gives managers flexibility in allocating work within this small YOS, especially given the complexity and profile of some of the cases. One example was the quick response to support practitioners during the Covid-19 lockdown, to reflect childcare issues; this is evidence of an approach whereby managers were sensitive to staff needs throughout the pandemic.

In addition to case managers, the YOS has a restorative justice coordinator and two restorative justice staff working with victims and reparation projects. There is also a seconded probation officer working half-time in the YOS and half-time in the NPS in a transitions role, and two police officers (0.6 part-time within the YOS and a full-time officer in youth integrated offender management (IOM)). There is good access to substance misuse workers, family functional therapists, extended adolescent service workers, and education, training and employment staff via the wider integrated adolescent service.

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

The workforce has the full range of skills, knowledge and experience to develop trusting and supportive relationships with children and families. Staff are very motivated and spoke of their pride in working for the YOS, with the leadership team clearly valuing staff and their work.

There are no formal reward and recognition processes for staff, and opportunities for promotion are limited, given the small size of the YOS and high retention rates. Despite this, the staff team is universally positive about working in the service. They describe leaders and managers as supportive, knowledgeable and accessible.

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

Staff reported that supervision is regular, purposeful and beneficial. Group supervision is used frequently and well, enabling a reflective and considered approach to the management of complex cases. Inspectors found consistent evidence of this approach within the cases. In every inspected court sentence and out-of-court disposal case, management oversight was judged to be sufficient.

Staff reported that they had received a full induction, with opportunities for shadowing, training and peer support/learning across the YOS and the wider adolescent service. This enabled them to understand how teams and services worked together.

All staff have a professional development plan created annually and reviewed every four to six months. For partnership staff, family functional therapists have a general 'therapies rating' quarterly, and the CAMHS clinical psychologist has an annual appraisal from the NHS. The seconded probation officer has their appraisal completed by their home organisation line manager, to which the YOS contributes, alongside a joint supervision every six weeks with NPS and YOS managers.

Are arrangements for learning and development comprehensive and responsive?

There is a comprehensive workforce development plan, and staff described a wide range of training opportunities. This has included specialist assessment intervention moving-on 2 (AIM2) training, trauma-informed approaches, anti-racist practice, life story work, emotion coaching and risk assessment. Specialist structured assessment of violence and risk in youth (SAVRY) training is scheduled for May and June 2021, as the YOS feels that such input is best undertaken in person, rather than remotely.

Some YOS staff have had the opportunity to present case studies to the Board, and others have been involved in thematic cross-grade groups (such as contextual safeguarding). Feedback is disseminated through pod meetings from serious case reviews or other key documents or reports. Overall, practitioners described a culture of learning, reflection and continuous improvement.

1.3. Partnerships and services



A comprehensive range of high-quality services is in place, enabling personalised and responsive provision for all children.

Outstanding

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

Is there a sufficiently comprehensive and up-to-date analysis of the profile of children, to ensure that the YOS can deliver well-targeted services?

There is an in-depth understanding of the characteristics of the children in the YOS cohort. Children can swiftly access a range of services and support, with specific pathways for universal, targeted and specialist provision. Inspectors found trusted and high-quality relationships between staff across the partnership, which have been sustained despite the impact of Covid-19.

A detailed analysis of data has enabled the YOS to identify a potential issue of disproportionality – particularly within the post-court caseload. Twenty-one per cent of all children under 18 in Brighton are black, Asian or of mixed heritage (based on the 2011 census), which is similar to the proportion in the out-of-court disposal caseload. However, the figure is currently 28 per cent for children subject to court orders. The YOS has subsequently found, through data from the 2020 school census, that there has been an increase in the percentage of black, Asian and minority ethnic children to 28 per cent, and it has responded with various measures to address issues of disproportionality.

The YOS is represented on the disproportionality subgroup of the local criminal justice board. Through this group, the partnership has implemented a six-month 'non-admissions' pilot, which went live on 12 April 2021. This pilot aims to allow an opportunity for a diversionary intervention with children who may not have admitted their offence initially. The partnership envisages that this will have a positive outcome for all children, but particularly the higher numbers of black, Asian and minority ethnic children who do not initially admit an offence.

Work is culturally informed and child centred. Where required, children are matched with black, Asian and minority ethnic workers across the wider adolescent service

as part of the adolescent mentalisation-based integrative therapy (AMBIT) model. YOS staff work to a wider local authority anti-racist plan and adhere to a wider anti-racism pledge – an example being verbalising a child's ethnicity when talking about that individual. This supports the child-focused, personalised approach and ensures that their experience and diversity are recognised. This is further evidenced by partnership managers within social care (particularly in strategy meetings) and by the police sergeant involved in the out-of-court-disposal panel, who state that YOS staff regularly demonstrate anti-racist practice within such arenas.

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

There are clear working protocols and well-developed pathways for children, with strong examples of innovative and responsive practice. For example, substance misuse and the normalisation of cannabis use is a big issue in Brighton, but the partnership is approaching it from a public health, rather than criminal, perspective.

The YOS has a clinical CAMHS psychologist (shared across the adolescent service) to support case formulation and reflective supervision on an individual and group level. However, pathways to mainstream CAMHS could be further developed – particularly for autism spectrum disorder and attention-deficit hyperactivity assessments and longer-term therapeutic interventions. We were pleased to see that the CAMHS representative on the Adolescent Management Board has committed resources to undertake this work.

Substance misuse services are provided by 'R-u-OK', which sits within the adolescent service health team. Funding has been approved for an adolescent service speech and language therapist to work with relevant YOS children.

Education pathways are strong and collaborative. Strategic and operational staff described how schools have a voice in setting the agenda for YOS children at the Adolescent Management Board. This allows patterns and trends to be addressed, alongside linking to attendance, and fixed-term exclusions being considered and explored in the secondary school headteachers meeting. Secondary school headteachers meet fortnightly (incorporating 10 schools) and this forum highlights what is going well and where challenge is needed. Partnership managers agreed that this has been powerful, and welcomed by secondary school headteachers.

This was echoed by staff in educational psychology, who agreed with the shared partnership view of school being a significant protective factor. The service manager for access to education and skills (who also sits on the YOS Board) reported low levels of exclusion across primary and secondary schools as a result of this approach. In the large majority of inspected cases, children were accessing suitable education provision and there were clearly established pathways between the YOS and education providers.

There is a strong range of services from third-sector providers, including a detached youth work project, a music project and a preventative project called 'Reboot' (funded by the police and crime commissioner). The partnership is undertaking a qualitative evaluation of those commissioned services delivering detached youth work around crime hotspots in Brighton. The third-sector Board member highlighted how this is being used to hear the voice of YOS children and inform the effectiveness of service delivery.

The YOS achieved the restorative standard quality mark (RSQM) accreditation in 2019, and the three restorative justice staff have delivered restorative approaches training across the wider adolescent service and YOS partnership.

There is a breadth of reparation projects, and a restorative approach runs through the delivery of work across the partnership. Alongside these projects, more tailored one-to-one indoor and outdoor reparation activities have been adapted to ensure delivery following the Covid-19 restrictions, and children have also achieved AQA qualifications as a result of their reparative work/interventions.

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

The YOS and wider adolescent service work to the AMBIT model. This 'team around the worker' relational approach identifies the person with the best relationship with the child to undertake work, rather than necessarily someone from a named agency. The team of involved professionals then supports the trusted worker. Inspectors found consistent evidence of this approach within all the inspected cases.

Public protection and safeguarding agencies are linked effectively, primarily through the adolescent vulnerability risk meeting (AVRM). This is chaired by the YOS head of service and provides the shared management of any child assessed as presenting a high risk of harm, high safety and wellbeing concerns, or a high risk of reoffending.

The youth disposal pathway – which oversees out-of-court-disposal decisions and work undertaken – is well established, with clear lines of accountability. Partners understand the role, function and benefit of the out-of-court-disposal panel. Decision-making is dynamic and responsive to need, reacting to changes in trends and individual circumstances. Examples were given of individual cases and approaches where welfare and victim considerations had been well balanced.

Within both the AVR and the out-of-court-disposal panel, the emphasis is on meeting the complex needs of children. The adolescent service model ensures that support can be provided across the partnership, in most cases by someone with whom the child has a trusted relationship.

IOM arrangements bring value by enabling information sharing in the management of relevant children, but would further improve by considering the additional benefits that IOM can bring to the supervision of children within the YOS cohort.

The YOS partnership is heavily invested in a strategic and operational approach to contextual safeguarding. Analysis by the partnership highlights it as a major issue for Brighton, as a result of demographic and individual factors within the adolescent cohort. The contextual safeguarding strategic plan was implemented in March 2021 and partners are working to embed this approach.

Sentencers expressed confidence in the quality of YOS court work, and the relationships between YOS court staff and children. The YOS team manager sits on the local court user group. This has brought benefits, including improved sentencer confidence to send cases back for out-of-court disposals and being able to monitor and mitigate issues concerning court backlogs.

The YOS head of service is sighted on delays between arrest and outcome for some children. This was not reflected in the cases inspected, but has been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The YOS had undertaken a review of arrangements in which they commissioned specialist gangs workers from the St Giles Trust. Following this evaluation, which highlighted some shortfalls in provision and information sharing, the service was decommissioned and brought in-house as part of the wider extended adolescent service. This allowed an extra specialist gangs worker to be recruited as part of this team.

Transitions processes have been reviewed and are good. The seconded probation officer fulfils a split role, whereby the cases she holds include both YOS children and 18–25-year-olds within a specialist team in the NPS. This enables transitioned cases to receive supervision and intervention according to their specific needs.

Involvement of children and their parents and carers

There was evidence of children's feedback – through the Regency Road User Group (the co-located office where adolescent services are based) and resultant surveys. Children sit in on YOS staff interviews, to strengthen the recruitment process.

The Inspectorate's children's text survey (six respondents) indicated that all were positive about the service received from the YOS.

Following a team development day, and anecdotal feedback from children, the YOS changed the referral order panel process to make it more child friendly. The new process was introduced, along with a specifically developed training pack for volunteers.

1.4. Information and facilities



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

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

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

The YOS has a suite of policies and procedures, which are regularly updated when required and are accessible to all staff. Alongside this, there are current service level agreements and working protocols across a range of organisations and services. When needed, staff described how line managers guide them in the use of these policies, which also include escalation protocols if required.

Referral pathways are clear and there are service level agreements between the YOS and key partners, such as health, education and other third-sector projects and services.

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

Although the YOS office was not visited as part of this inspection, the premises are centrally located and accessible, with good transport links. The YOS is co-located

with other teams as part of the wider adolescent service, which enables effective joint working and communication.

Staff stated that the physical office space and layout could be improved to deliver better ongoing work with children. The YOS head of service described how the facilities were being reviewed to enable reconfiguration of the office to support this.

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

The workforce described ICT systems as reliable and able to facilitate high-quality work and exchange of information with partners where required. YOS staff have access to CareFirst social care records, while partnership staff within the YOS have access both to YOS systems and their own agency system.

The production of management information is strong, and it is used operationally and strategically to shape the delivery of work across the YOS partnership.

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

There were numerous examples of how analysis has been used to demonstrate outcomes and help shape service delivery. These include: national standards audit; reoffending audit of out-of-court-disposal and court cases (including a comparative analysis with those who did not reoffend); disproportionality; custody case studies; geographical mapping of crime hotspots; and quality assurance/benchmarking activity.

The granularity of data in relation to out-of-court-disposals and reoffending could be refined to provide further evidence of ongoing impact. For example, the overall out-of-court-disposal non-reoffending rate is 68 per cent, but could be broken down into community resolutions, youth cautions and youth conditional cautions, to explore any differences.

Processes for learning lessons are well developed across the partnership. Critical learning reviews are shared at board level and disseminated to staff – an example being a serious case review in October 2019 which resulted in revised oversight and approaches to transition cases.



2. Court disposals

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

Strengths:

- Assessment work was 'Outstanding' – based on a wide range of sources, well-reasoned and in all cases correctly classified.
- Planning across desistance, keeping the child safe and keeping others safe was 'Outstanding' – being co-created, sequenced and responding to changes in circumstances.
- There was evidence of mature and effective partnership working in all cases.
- YOS staff developed excellent and trusted relationships with children and their parents and carers, which supported effective engagement.
- Reviewing for desistance, safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm to others was 'Outstanding'.
- Work to promote the safety of victims and maximise opportunities for restorative justice was well developed.
- Group supervision supported case managers to manage complex YOS children and achieve a balance between welfare and public protection.
- Management oversight of court orders consistently promoted high-quality casework practice.

Areas for improvement:

- In a minority of cases, parents and carers were not meaningfully involved in assessment.

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

2.1. Assessment



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

Outstanding

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

Of the number 9 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	9	9
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	9	9
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	9	9

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

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

Of the 9 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Is there sufficient analysis of offending behaviour, including the child's attitudes towards and motivations for their offending?	9	9
Does assessment consider the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, utilising information held by other agencies?	9	9
Does assessment focus on the child's strengths and protective factors?	9	9
Where applicable, does assessment analyse the key structural barriers facing the child?	9	8
Is sufficient attention given to understanding the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change, and their likelihood of engaging with the court disposal?	9	9
Does assessment give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s, and opportunities for restorative justice?	6	6
Is the child and their parents and carers meaningfully involved in their assessment, and are their views taken into account?	9	7

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

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?

Of the 9 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risks to the safety and wellbeing of the child?	9	8
Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including other assessments, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	9	9
Where applicable, does assessment analyse controls and interventions to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	8	8

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?

Of the 9 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risk of harm to others posed by the child, including identifying who is at risk and the nature of that risk?	9	8
Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including past behaviour and convictions, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	9	9
Does assessment analyse controls and interventions to manage and minimise the risk of harm presented by the child?	9	9

Inspectors found that assessments were well informed, strengths based and correctly classified risk of harm to others. Case managers drew together current and historical issues or behaviours, which in turn resulted in balanced and well-reasoned assessments. Every case contained information from other agencies and sources (including social care, police, education and health), and inspectors judged that all relevant cases gave sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victims and opportunities for restorative justice. In a minority of cases, parents and carers were not meaningfully involved in assessment, but consideration of the diversity and wider social and familial context of the child was evident in every case.

2.2. Planning



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

Outstanding

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

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

We rated the planning work for court disposals as 'Outstanding'. In every case, the planning to address desistance factors, the safety and wellbeing of the child, and keeping other people safe met our required standards.

Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?

Of the 9 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does planning set out the services most likely to support desistance, paying sufficient attention to the available timescales and the need for sequencing?	9	8
Does planning take sufficient account of the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child?	9	9
Does planning take sufficient account of the child's strengths and protective factors, and seek to reinforce or develop these as necessary?	9	9
Does planning take sufficient account of the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change, and seek to develop these as necessary?	9	9
Where applicable, does planning give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s?	6	6
Is the child and their parents and carers meaningfully involved in planning, and are their views taken into account?	9	9

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

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

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

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

Of the 8 cases with factors related to keeping the child safe:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does planning promote the safety and wellbeing of the child, sufficiently addressing risks?	8	8
Does planning involve other agencies where appropriate, and is there sufficient alignment with other plans (for example, child protection or care plans) concerning the child?	7	7
Does planning set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	8	8
Does planning set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to manage those risks that have been identified?	8	7

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

Of the 7 cases with factors related to keeping other people safe:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does planning promote the safety of other people, sufficiently addressing risk of harm factors?	7	7
Does planning involve other agencies where appropriate?	7	7
Does planning address any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims?	7	7
Does planning set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote the safety of other people?	7	7
Does planning set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to manage those risks that have been identified?	7	6

Planning in relation to desistance, safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm to others was co-created, sequenced and consistent with issues identified in assessments. In all cases, strong consideration was given to the needs and wishes of victims, with planning activity being responsive to the diversity needs, and social and familial context of the child.

The involvement of children and their parent or carers in plans was excellent and provided evidence of a strengths-based approach to planning, which was shared and owned across those agencies involved with the child. Within the complex YOS cohort, circumstances in a child's life can change quickly. Case managers need to consider the potential for change in each case, so that, should concerns escalate, they are

prepared and more likely to respond effectively. Inspectors found that contingency planning (both to keep the child safe and to manage the risks posed to others) was sufficient in all but one case.

2.3. Implementation and delivery



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

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

Of the 9 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the child's desistance?	9	9
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of the child? ¹¹	8	8
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people? ¹²	7	7

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

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

Of the 9 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Are the delivered services those most likely to support desistance, with sufficient attention given to sequencing and the available timescales?	9	9
Does service delivery reflect the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, involving parents and carers or significant others?	9	9
Does service delivery build upon the child's strengths and enhance protective factors?	9	9

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

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

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

Is sufficient focus given to developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child and their parents and carers?	9	9
Does service delivery promote opportunities for community integration, including access to services post-supervision?	9	9
Is sufficient attention given to encouraging and enabling the child's compliance with the work of the YOT?	9	9
In cases where it is required, are enforcement actions taken when appropriate?	5	5

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

Of the 8 cases with factors related to keeping the child safe:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does service delivery promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	8	8
Where applicable, is the involvement of other organisations in keeping the child safe sufficiently well-coordinated?	8	8

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

Of the 7 cases with factors related to keeping other people safe:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Are the delivered services sufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	7	7
Where applicable, is sufficient attention given to the protection of actual and potential victims?	6	6
Where applicable, is the involvement of other agencies in managing the risk of harm sufficiently well-coordinated?	7	6

It was clear that case managers take a strengths-based approach to their work. As part of the adolescent service, the YOS had access to a wide range of specialist staff and other resources to deliver well-coordinated and innovative interventions to children. Enforcement was used appropriately where required, with well-developed work to promote the safety of victims and maximise opportunities for restorative justice. Case managers kept a balance between a strong focus on safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm to others, working consistently with a range of agencies such as education, health, social care, substance misuse and third-sector projects.

Inspectors were impressed with the quality of recording in every inspected case and it was evident that all professionals worked in the best interests of the child.



2.4. Reviewing

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

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

Of the 9 cases inspected: ¹⁴	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	5	5
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	6	6
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	6	6

We rated the work on reviewing cases as 'Outstanding'. In all the cases we inspected, there was sufficient review of desistance factors, issues concerning the safety and wellbeing of the child, and of any risk of harm to others posed by the child. This responsiveness to changing circumstances helped to maintain children's engagement, enabled safeguarding and public protection issues to be managed, and ensured that the work delivered was effective and meaningful.

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

Of the 5 cases where there were changes in factors related to desistance:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does reviewing identify and respond to changes in factors linked to desistance?	5	5
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on building upon the child's strengths and enhancing protective factors?	5	5
Does reviewing consider motivation and engagement levels and any relevant barriers?	5	5
Is the child and their parents and carers meaningfully involved in reviewing their progress and engagement, and are their views taken into account?	5	5

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

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

Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

Of the 6 cases where there were changes in factors related to keeping the child safe:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does reviewing identify and respond to changes in factors related to safety and wellbeing?	6	5
Where applicable, is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in promoting the safety and wellbeing of the child?	5	5
Where applicable, does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	5	5

Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

Of the 6 cases where there were changes in factors related to keeping other people safe:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does reviewing identify and respond to changes in factors related to risk of harm?	6	6
Where applicable, is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in managing the risk of harm?	6	6
Is the child and their parents and carers meaningfully involved in reviewing their risk of harm, and are their views taken into account?	6	6
Where applicable, does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	6	6

Inspectors found that reviewing focused sufficiently on building on the child's strengths, enhancing protective factors and assessing the level of motivation and engagement in all cases. Reviews completed by case managers led to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work in every case. Group supervision supported case managers to manage YOS children and achieve a balance between welfare and public protection, and we saw evidence of this in many cases. The management oversight of court orders also consistently promoted high-quality casework practice. Several children supervised by the YOS had complex needs, and their circumstances could change rapidly. In all cases, reviewing was informed by the necessary input from other agencies to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child, and the risk of harm posed to others.



3. Out-of-court disposals

We inspected six cases managed by the YOS that had received an out-of-court disposal. These consisted of four youth conditional cautions and two community resolutions. We interviewed the case managers in all six cases.

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

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

Strengths:

- The joint work associated with out-of-court disposals was excellent, underpinned by a joint decision-making panel and a clear protocol.
- Decision-making was dynamic and responsive to children's needs, reacting to changes in trends and individual circumstances.
- Assessment and planning were 'Outstanding' for desistance, safety and wellbeing, and risk-of-harm work.
- The YOS took a fully inclusive approach with partners, colleagues, families and children to make sure that the appropriate disposal was delivered and implemented effectively.
- Implementation and delivery were 'Outstanding' and children could access the same wide range of services as those on court orders.
- Children and families continued to receive support from the wider adolescent service after their out-of-court disposal ended.
- Management oversight of out-of-court disposals consistently promoted high-quality casework practice.
- Out-of-court disposal work was delivering positive outcomes for children.

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

3.1. Assessment



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

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

Of the 6 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	6	6
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	6	6
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	6	5

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

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

Of the 6 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Is there sufficient analysis of offending behaviour, including the child's acknowledgement of responsibility, attitudes towards and motivations for their offending?	6	6
Does assessment consider the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, utilising information held by other agencies?	6	6
Does assessment focus on the child's strengths and protective factors?	6	6
Where applicable, does assessment analyse the key structural barriers facing the child?	4	4
Is sufficient attention given to understanding the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change?	6	6

¹⁵ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band. See Annex 1 for a more detailed explanation.

Where applicable, does assessment give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s, and opportunities for restorative justice?	5	5
Is the child and their parents and carers meaningfully involved in their assessment, and are their views taken into account?	6	6

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?

Of the 6 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risks to the safety and wellbeing of the child?	6	6
Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including other assessments, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	6	6

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?

Of the 6 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risk of harm to others posed by the child, including identifying who is at risk and the nature of that risk?	6	5
Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including any other assessments that have been completed, and other evidence of behaviour by the child?	6	5

Assessments routinely drew on information from multiple sources to gain the best understanding of a child's circumstances and history. Full and detailed assessments are completed before the joint decision-making panel meets, which assists in decision-making and determining the support and intervention required. Inspectors found that assessments were balanced, in that victim issues and opportunities for restorative justice were seen in all cases, and focus on the risk of harm to others was evident in all but one case. The involvement of the child and their parents or carers was evident in all cases, as was consideration of the diversity and wider social and familial context of the child.



3.2. Planning

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

Outstanding

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

Of the 6 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?	6	6
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe? ¹⁷	6	6
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe? ¹⁸	5	5

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

Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?

Of the 6 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does planning set out the services most likely to support desistance, paying sufficient attention to the available timescales and the need for sequencing?	6	6
Does planning take sufficient account of the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child?	6	6
Does planning take sufficient account of the child's strengths and protective factors, and seek to reinforce or develop these as necessary?	6	6
Does planning take sufficient account of the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change, and seek to develop these as necessary?	6	6
Does planning take sufficient account of opportunities for community integration, including access to mainstream services following completion of out-of-court disposal work?	6	6

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

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

¹⁸ This question is only relevant in cases where there are factors related to keeping other people safe.

Where applicable, does planning give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s?	4	4
Is the child and their parents and carers meaningfully involved in planning, and are their views taken into account?	6	6

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

Of the 6 cases with factors relevant to keeping the child safe:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does planning promote the safety and wellbeing of the child, sufficiently addressing risks?	6	6
Where applicable, does planning involve other agencies where appropriate, and is there sufficient alignment with other plans (for example, child protection or care plans) concerning the child?	6	6
Does planning include necessary contingency arrangements for those risks that have been identified?	6	6

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

Of the 5 cases with factors relevant to keeping other people safe:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does planning promote the safety of other people, sufficiently addressing risk of harm factors?	5	5
Where applicable, does planning involve other agencies where appropriate?	5	5
Where applicable, does planning address any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims?	5	5
Does planning include necessary contingency arrangements for those risks that have been identified?	5	4

Planning in relation to desistance, safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm to others was very well sequenced and involved other agencies. Strong consideration was given to victims and, as with assessment, planning was responsive to the diversity needs, and social and familial context of the child. The involvement of children and their parent or carers in plans was excellent and we saw instances where children and families continued to receive support from the wider adolescent service after their out-of-court disposal ended. Children's circumstances can change rapidly, and contingency planning needs to be in place to respond to these changes. Inspectors judged that contingency planning to keep the child safe was evident in every case, and sufficient to keep other people safe in all but one case.

3.3. Implementation and delivery



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

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

Of the 6 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does service delivery effectively support the child's desistance?	6	6
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of the child? ²⁰	6	6
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of other people? ²¹	5	5

The quality of implementation and delivery was rated as 'Outstanding'. In every inspected case, we found that implementation and delivery met our required standards in relation to desistance, keeping the child safe and managing the risk of harm that the child posed to others.

Does service delivery effectively support the child's desistance?

Of the 6 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Are the delivered services those most likely to support desistance, with sufficient attention given to sequencing and the available timescales?	6	6
Does service delivery reflect the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, involving parents and carers or significant others?	6	6
Is sufficient focus given to developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child and their parents and carers?	6	6
Is sufficient attention given to encouraging and enabling the child's compliance with the work of the YOT?	6	6
Does service delivery promote opportunities for community integration, including access to mainstream services?	6	6

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

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

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

Does service delivery effectively support the safety of the child?

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

Does service delivery effectively support the safety of other people?

Of the 5 cases with factors related to the safety of other people:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Where applicable, is sufficient attention given to the protection of actual and potential victims?	4	4
Are the delivered services sufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	5	5

The involvement of other agencies across the wider adolescent service was evident and well-coordinated, particularly where there were issues concerning safety and wellbeing and/or risk of harm to others. In all cases, we found clear multi-agency arrangements to support children who were looked after, open to social care, criminally exploited, or had emotional wellbeing or substance misuse issues. This was well balanced with the needs of victims, and inspectors judged that attention was given to the protection of actual and potential victims in all relevant cases. The inspected cases also provided consistent evidence of the AMBIT relationship-based model of working. This resulted in a high level of engagement from children and reflected the proactive approach of staff to develop and maintain meaningful relationships.

3.4. Joint working



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

Outstanding

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

Of the 6 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Are the YOT's recommendations sufficiently well-informed, analytical and personalised to the child, supporting joint decision-making?	6	6

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

Does the YOT work effectively with the police in implementing the out-of-court disposal? ²³	4	4
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Overall, joint working for delivery of out-of-court-disposals was rated as 'Outstanding'. We looked at four youth conditional caution cases as part of the sample of six out-of-court disposal cases.

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

Of the 6 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Where applicable, are the recommendations by the YOT for out-of-court disposal outcomes, conditions and interventions appropriate and proportionate?	6	6
Do the recommendations consider the degree of the child's understanding of the offence and their acknowledgement of responsibility?	6	6
Where applicable, is a positive contribution made by the YOT to determining the disposal?	6	6
Is sufficient attention given to the child's understanding, and their parents'/carers' understanding, of the implications of receiving an out-of-court disposal?	6	6
Is the information provided to inform decision-making timely to meet the needs of the case, legislation and guidance?	6	6
Where applicable, is the rationale for joint disposal decisions appropriate and clearly recorded?	6	6

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

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

The YOS provided timely information and made a positive contribution to decision-making in all cases inspected. We saw a clearly recorded rationale for disposals in every case, with all of them indicating that the child and their parents

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

or carers understood the implications of the disposal. In all but one case, the YOS informed the police of outcomes in a sufficient and timely manner. Attention was paid to compliance and the enforcement of youth conditional cautions in all cases.

Annexe 1: Methodology

HM Inspectorate of Probation standards

The standards against which we inspect youth offending services are based on established models and frameworks, which are grounded in evidence, learning and experience. These standards are designed to drive improvements in the quality of work with children who have offended.²⁴

The inspection methodology is summarised below, linked to the three domains in our standards framework. We focused on obtaining evidence against the standards, key questions and prompts in our inspection framework. It is important that all youth offending services, regardless of size, are inspected to highlight good practice and to identify areas for improvement. Of course, some YOTs have very small caseloads and so any percentages or figures quoted in these reports need to be read with care. However, all domain two samples, even for the smallest YOTs, meet an 80 per cent confidence level, and in some of the smaller YOTs inspectors may be assessing most or all of that service's cases.

Domain one: organisational delivery

The youth offending service submitted evidence in advance and both the Director of Children's Services (Chair of the Adolescent Management Board) and the head of adolescent services (including YOS) delivered a presentation covering the following areas:

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

During the main fieldwork phase, we conducted 15 interviews with case managers, asking them about their experiences of training, development, management supervision and leadership. We held various meetings, which allowed us to triangulate evidence and information. In total, we conducted 10 meetings, which included meetings with managers, partner organisations and staff. The evidence collected under this domain was judged against our published ratings characteristics.²⁴

Domain two: court disposals

We completed case assessments over a one-week period, examining case files and interviewing case managers. Nine of the cases selected were those of children who had received court disposals three to 12 months earlier, enabling us to examine work in relation to assessing, planning, implementing and reviewing. Where necessary, interviews with other people closely involved in the case also took place.

We examined nine court disposals. The sample size was set to achieve a confidence level of 80 per cent (with a margin of error of five), and where possible we ensured that the ratios in relation to gender, sentence or disposal type, risk of serious harm,

²⁴ HM Inspectorate of Probation's standards are available here:

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

and risk to safety and wellbeing classifications matched those in the eligible population.

Domain three: out-of-court disposals

We completed case assessments over a one-week period, examining case files and interviewing case managers. Six of the cases selected were those of children who had received out-of-court disposals two to 12 months earlier. This enabled us to examine work in relation to assessing, planning, implementing and joint working. Where necessary, interviews with other people closely involved in the case also took place.

We examined six out-of-court disposals. The sample size was set so that the combined case sample size comprises 60 per cent domain two cases and 40 per cent domain three. Where possible, we ensured the ratios in relation to gender, sentence or disposal type, risk of serious harm, and risk to safety and wellbeing classifications matched those in the eligible population.

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

Ratings explained

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

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

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

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

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

An element of professional discretion may be applied to the standards ratings in domains two and three. The ratings panel considers whether professional discretion should be exercised when the lowest percentage at the key question level is close to the rating boundary – for example, between ‘Requires improvement’ and ‘Good’ (specifically, within five percentage points of the boundary; or where a differing judgement in one case would result in a change in rating; or where the rating is based upon a sample or sub-sample of five cases or fewer). The panel considers the sizes of any sub-samples used and the percentages for the other key questions within that standard, such as whether they fall within different bandings and the level of divergence, to make this decision.

Overall provider rating

Straightforward scoring rules are used to generate the overall provider rating. Each of the 10 standards will be scored on a 0-3 scale, as listed in the following table.

Score	Rating (standard)
0	Inadequate
1	Requires improvement
2	Good
3	Outstanding 

Adding the scores for each standard together produces the overall rating on a 0-30 scale, as listed in the following table.

Score	Rating (overall)
0-6	Inadequate
7-18	Requires improvement
19-30	Good
31-36	Outstanding 

We do not include any weightings in the scoring rules. The rationale for this is that all parts of the standards framework are strongly linked to effective service delivery and positive outcomes, and we have restricted ourselves to those that are most essential. Our view is that providers need to focus across all the standards, and we do not want to distort behaviours in any undesirable ways. Furthermore, the underpinning evidence supports including all standards/key questions in the rating, rather than weighting individual elements.