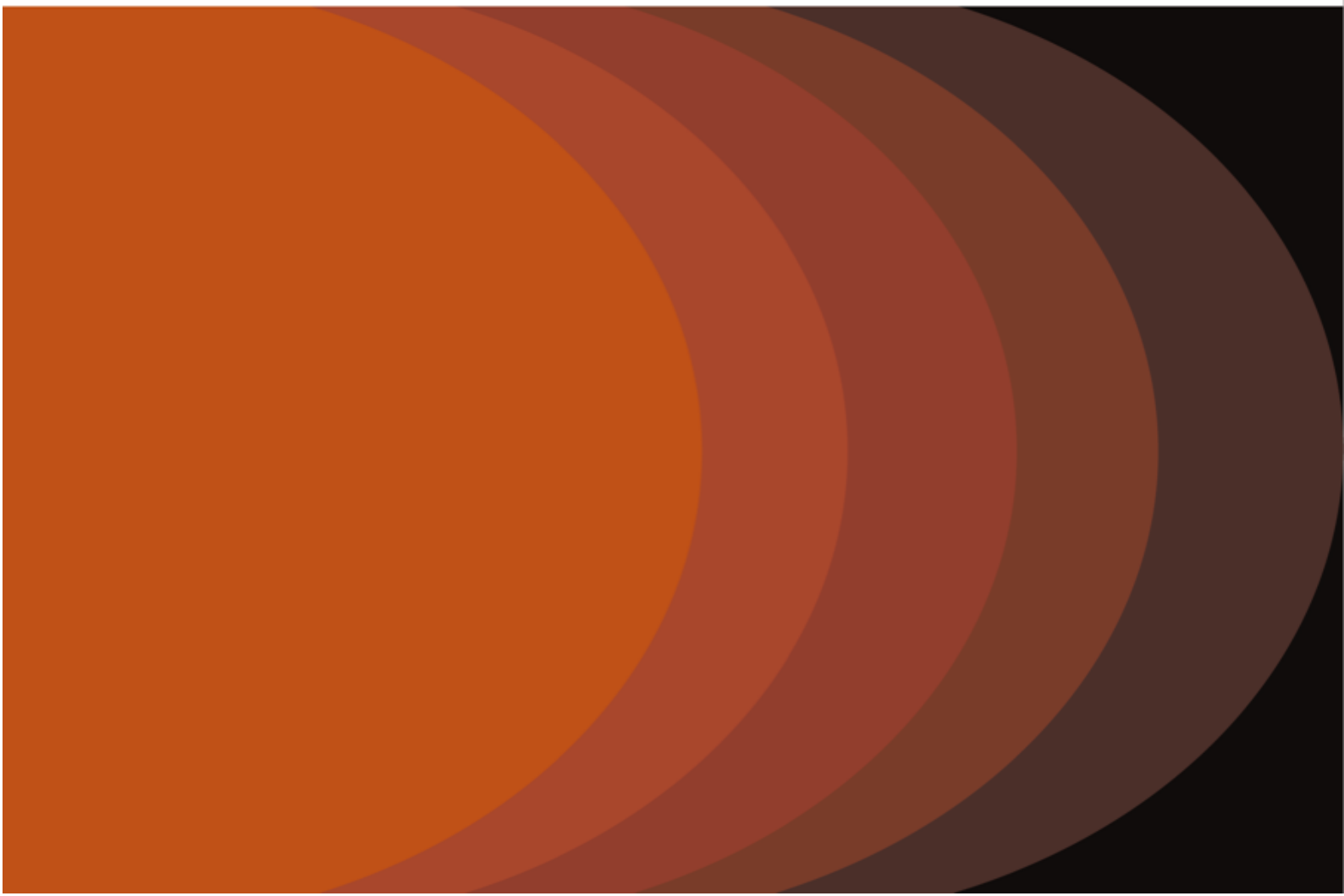




Her Majesty's
Inspectorate of
Probation

An inspection of youth offending services in
North Tyneside

HM Inspectorate of Probation, July 2021



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The role of HM Inspectorate of Probation

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation is the independent inspector of youth offending and probation services in England and Wales. We report on the effectiveness of probation and youth offending service work with adults and children.

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.

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Introduction

This inspection is part of our four-year programme of youth justice service inspections. We have inspected and rated North Tyneside Youth Justice Service (YJS) 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, North Tyneside YJS was rated as '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 YJS 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 interviews held remotely over video conferencing, took place between 26 and 30 April 2021.

North Tyneside YJS has a well-established, experienced Board, management team and staff group. It is ably led by a committed and skilful group of managers. The implementation of a trauma-informed approach to working is based on a sound understanding of the characteristics of the children with whom the YJS works. Staff at all levels strive to deliver meaningful work that makes a difference to the life prospects of children. The organisation has fostered an excellent partnership approach, with each contributor able to demonstrate a high level of skill and a focus on outcomes for children. The YJS is making good progress in reducing the number of first-time entrants to the criminal justice system, and data indicates that reoffending rates are declining within the YJS cohort of children.














The delivery of court disposals was to the highest standard possible within our rating scheme. Our inspectors were impressed by the quality of work being delivered, and feedback from children suggests that what is being done is, indeed, effective. The staff abound with enthusiasm for the work and demonstrate this through their commitment to securing the best possible outcomes for the children and families with whom they work.

Out-of-court disposal work is undertaken within a clear framework. Delivery of interventions, and the joint working underpinning this, was outstanding. We found some deficits in the assessment and planning for out-of-court disposals and these are addressed in the recommendations below.



Marc Baker
Director of Operations

Ratings

North Tyneside Youth Justice Service		Score	31/36
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	Good	
2. Court disposals			
2.1	Assessment	Outstanding	
2.2	Planning	Outstanding	
2.3	Implementation and delivery	Outstanding	
2.4	Reviewing	Outstanding	
3. Out-of-court disposals			
3.1	Assessment	Requires improvement	
3.2	Planning	Requires improvement	
3.3	Implementation and delivery	Outstanding	
3.4	Joint working	Outstanding	

Recommendations

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

The North Tyneside Youth Justice Service should:

1. increase the contribution of children and their families to the development of the work of the service
2. strengthen staff involvement in the development of the work of the service
3. identify best practices from how it operated during the pandemic and build these into future ways of working with children and their families
4. establish frictionless access to substance misuse interventions
5. increase management oversight to focus on improving the standard of assessment and planning for out-of-court disposal work.

Background

Youth offending teams (YOTs) supervise 10–18-year olds who have been sentenced by a court, or who have come to the attention of the police because of their offending behaviour but have not been charged – instead, they were dealt with out of court. HM Inspectorate of Probation inspects both these aspects of youth justice services (YJSs). 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.

Youth justice services 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 YJSs are based within local authorities; however, this can vary.

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

North Tyneside has a current population of 207,913,² which is expected to increase by two per cent by 2030. Much of this increase is in the 65 and over population. The 0-18-aged population in North Tyneside is 43,914, of which the number of 10-17-year-olds is 18,359. North Tyneside is the least deprived of the five Tyne and Wear authorities. However, while some areas are in the 10 per cent least deprived areas nationally, there are other areas of significant deprivation. A total of 6,926 children aged 0-18 in North Tyneside are entitled to free school meals (15.77 per cent), which is slightly lower than the national average (18 per cent) and lower than the North East regional average (23 per cent).³

The YJS sits within the wider Children, Young People and Learning Directorate in the local authority. The Assistant Director, Safeguarding and Children's Services provides strategic leadership and manages the YJS Manager, as well as chairing the Youth Justice Management Board.

The Children and Young People's Partnership has a shared vision, which is to:

'Make North Tyneside an even greater place for children and young people to thrive; where all, including those who are vulnerable, disadvantaged, or disabled, have the best start in life.'

North Tyneside YJS is a relatively small multi-agency team, which comprises a manager, two team leaders, seven caseworkers, a restorative justice worker, clinical psychologist, speech and language therapist, police constable, Connexions advisor and performance advisor.

The workforce is very stable, and all caseworkers have worked in the service for more than five years. The average caseload in the team is eight.

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

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

³ Information provided by North Tyneside YJS.

Contextual facts

Population information

207,913	Total population North Tyneside (2019) ⁴
18,359	Total youth population (10–17 years) in North Tyneside (2019) ⁴

Demographics of children cautioned or sentenced⁵

Age	10–14 years	15–17 years
North Tyneside YJS	37%	63%
National average	22%	78%

Race/ethnicity	White	Black and minority ethnic	Unknown
North Tyneside YJS	96%	4%	0%
National average	69%	28%	3%

Gender	Male	Female
North Tyneside YJS	76%	24%
National average	85%	15%

Additional caseload data⁶

16	Total current caseload: community sentences
0	Total current caseload in custody
3	Total current caseload: youth caution
10	Total current caseload: youth conditional caution
153	Total current caseload: community resolution or other out-of-court disposal

⁴ Office for National Statistics. (2020). *UK population estimates, mid-2019*.

⁵ Youth Justice Board. (2021). *Youth justice annual statistics: 2019 to 2020*.

⁶ Information supplied by YJS, reflecting caseload on 12 April 2021.

1. Organisational delivery



Strengths:

- The work of the YJS is overseen by well-informed and committed Board members who strongly champion the work with children.
- There is a clear vision, which translates into the work delivered by practitioners.
- The Chair of the Board provides purposeful leadership of the YJS.
- The YJS Manager is a motivated, knowledgeable and inspiring leader, working with a highly skilled management team.
- The operational team is a dedicated, skilful, knowledgeable and experienced group.
- The service has well-established partnership working.
- A trauma-informed approach to the work with children is fully supported by resources within the partnership arrangement.
- The YJS is supported by well-resourced and skilful data management.

Areas for improvement:

- The contribution of children and their families to the development of services could be usefully explored.
- Staff contribution to service improvement is not fully utilised.
- Access to substance misuse interventions needs to be streamlined.
- The flexibility of working methods, associated with maintaining contact with children during the pandemic, needs to be incorporated into future working arrangements.

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 YJS 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 stable, thoroughly engaged, well-informed and appropriately senior group of Board members, including all statutory partnership agencies. The expectations of Board members are set out in a clear role description document.

The Chair of the Board is the Assistant Director of Children's Services. She has an excellent understanding of the work and purpose of the YJS. The Management Board sets clear direction for the work of North Tyneside YJS expressed through a strategic plan, and its vision is clearly articulated:

'We are committed to a child-centred approach that puts relationships and the building of sustainable support networks at the heart of how we work alongside young people and their families.'

The plan is shaped by consultation with children and their families, victims, staff and strategic partners. Contributions from the consultation process are translated into 'key points for action' in the plan. Further direct involvement of staff in improving the work of the service would be of value.

Working arrangements with courts are well-established and there is an up-to-date, formal protocol between the YJS and Her Majesty's Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS). There is evidence from the youth bench of direct involvement in the development of the YJS strategy. The work is highly regarded, with the Chair of the youth panel commenting:

"North Tyneside is fortunate in having an experienced team with a broad base of skills working with young people. Staff attending court appear to be well briefed and provide pre-sentence reports of a good quality and are able to answer any questions arising from the reports."

Do the partnership arrangements actively support effective service delivery?

Members of the Board are active in their representation of YJS work with children and their families at local strategic forums. This was exemplified by the police Board member who sits on the Local Criminal Justice Board (Northumbria-wide) and is a strong advocate for the out-of-court disposal approach. Securing funding for the development of enhanced case management through a successful resource bid to the NHS is a further illustration of support for effective service delivery.

High-quality information on the profile of youth offending in the area is provided to the Board. There is clear evidence that the YJS Management Board monitors the performance of the YJS and that, while reducing the overall size of the YJS team over time, there has been a clear commitment to maintain a sufficient staff group and supportive partnership arrangements to deliver the work.

The Board members' understanding of the quality of the work delivered is maintained through regular case presentations by YJS caseworkers to Board meetings. There are also informal gatherings – for example, Board members attend the Summer Arts School award presentation, providing opportunities to talk to the children and their families about the activities they have completed successfully.

Does the leadership of the YJS support effective service delivery?

The YJS Manager and the management team are experienced, skilful, dynamic and knowledgeable. There is an outward-looking approach to the development of the service, with positive engagement in meetings of the six YJSs in the Northumbria police force area. The managers work within well-established structures and are accessible to staff in fostering an open, challenging and inclusive culture in the workplace.

Risks to the service are appropriately identified and managed within the development and improvement planning processes.

1.2. Staff



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

Outstanding

Key staffing data⁷

Total staff headcount (full-time equivalent, FTE)	29.9
Average caseload per case manager (FTE)	8

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?

North Tyneside has a stable, skilled, highly motivated and committed casework group, and the contribution of police, probation, health and education colleagues provides excellent partnership working in the services delivered to children.

All staff who held medium- or high-risk cases felt they were suitably qualified and experienced to undertake the work and 91 per cent of staff indicated that they were comfortable with the workload. In our view, the average caseload of eight is at a level that enables the delivery of high-quality work with children and their families.

⁷ Data supplied by YJS and reflecting the caseload at the time of the inspection announcement.

We saw creative staff responses to the operating circumstances of the pandemic, including front garden and doorstep visits, bike rides with children and increased use of information technology. The staff take the view that children have responded well to virtual means of communication, as it is a normal method of conducting relationships for many.

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

Over the last year, working practices have had to be modified in line with close attention to personal health and safety. Management time has been focused on staff health and wellbeing during the period of the pandemic and, at times, has involved daily 'check-in' meetings. All staff have been given the necessary support according to their personal circumstances.

During the period of the pandemic, the YJS has been able to maintain the quality of services for the children and their families.

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

There is active oversight of the work by managers and all cases are subject to at least monthly review. Inspectors found effective management oversight in all but one case. Supervision is enhanced by the input of the clinical psychologist in developing understanding of the needs of the children and formulating plans to work most effectively with those needs.

The supervising team managers are responsible for a total of nine staff between them, which is a reasonable span of control in conjunction with specific responsibilities within the team. The approach to supervision is reflective, strengths-based and seeks to identify areas for professional development.

Are arrangements for learning and development comprehensive and responsive?

All staff receive annual appraisals of their work within which training needs are systematically identified. Staff report good access to training opportunities, much of which is of good quality. Staff have been trained in understanding and applying a trauma-informed approach to the work. This is actively supported by the clinical psychologist through case consultation and the formulation of appropriate ways of working with the difficulties that the child or their families experience.

We found strong commitment to developing the skills of people working in the YJS through reflective supervision, case discussion, a team-working ethos and engagement in innovative methods of working.

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 YJS can deliver well-targeted services?

There is comprehensive data and needs analysis, including detailed education information and analysis of issues concerning safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm to the public. We found evidence that the data is segmented appropriately to enable attention to diversity factors, and there is capability to identify and understand factors of disproportionality. The inspectors did not identify any issues of disproportionality in the YJS caseload.

We found a strong sense of a shared purpose within the YJS, and an understanding of what is being achieved and what is being monitored and evaluated. The development of trauma-informed practice is based on careful analysis of the caseload as part of the method of securing funding from the NHS for this approach. Evaluative work on the impact of these working practices is ongoing.

There are extensive arrangements to support the helpful exchange of information, for example, information is shared with courts/HMCTS in a formal agreement. In response to our survey, the sentencers expressed a high level of satisfaction with arrangements for communication with the YJS, both day to day and through structured meetings.

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

There is an impressive range of services available to children and families working with the North Tyneside YJS.

Almost all children are engaged in appropriate education, training or employment opportunities. At the time of the inspection, all children with an education, health and social care plan (EHCP) were attending school for five days a week.

There is a well-established set of procedures for victim engagement in the YJS and a suitable range of restorative options is provided to victims. All identified victims are referred to the scheme, with clear arrangements where the victim is a corporate body and an individual cannot be identified.

The provision of a Summer Arts School is an innovative and highly successful intervention by this YJS. It is notable that the event was safely and successfully delivered in the summer of 2020 with a greatly modified regime in the context of pandemic working arrangements. In this scheme, children work with artists, literacy and numeracy practitioners, and YJS staff and achieve a range of qualifications. Among a range of positive comments from the children, one stated:

“I have been able to create some good art pieces that I can then add to my art college portfolio when I start in September.”

Out-of-court disposal work is delivered within a Northumbria police force-wide set of processes and is clearly impacting positively on the rate of first-time entrants to the criminal justice system. The number of first-time entrants in North Tyneside shows a steep decrease over time and this has been sustained over the past year. Importantly, local analysis of reoffending rates shows that the number of children committing further offences is reducing.

Children have access to the North Tyneside Participation, Advocacy and Engagement Service and this is well-used by the YJS. This provides further support to children and their families, particularly when the child is looked after by the local authority.

All staff have been trained in providing basic substance misuse interventions. There is a contractual arrangement with a substance misuse service, the North Tyneside Recovery Partnership, to enable access to more intensive or specialist interventions. The referral process appears to cause some delay in children accessing the service.

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

This is a strong partnership approach, with staff seconded from the police, National Probation Service, Connexions (information, advice and guidance), a clinical psychologist and a speech and language therapist from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). The YJS has strong links with the North Tyneside Early Help team, which means there is additional support for children and families when necessary.

From our case inspection, it is evident that the adoption of enhanced case management, the support of the speech and language therapist and oversight by a clinical psychologist is translated into high-quality services for children and their families.

Involvement of children and their parents and carers

The YJS uses a range of feedback measures to include the voice of the child and their parents or carers in developing the service. The results are incorporated into the long-term strategy, with actions to reflect the perspective of those who respond. In our text survey, we found that the YJS's services were highly rated and in almost all cases had provided meaningful help to the children and their families.

In seeking to improve, the North Tyneside YJS should explore ways of directly involving children and their families in the development and delivery of services.

1.4. Information and facilities



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

Good

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

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

There is an appropriate range of policies and guidance available to staff through electronic sources. The nature of the partnership team means that almost all services are readily accessible to staff in the YJS.

In our survey, all staff understood the policies and guidance provided for them at least 'quite well'.

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

The YJS is co-located within a children's services centre, which provides positive links and access to other children's social care resources. Some staff expressed concern about the working arrangements in the building, particularly the interviewing facilities and the management of some high-risk behaviours where other children are using the building.

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

Staff are well supported in their access to technology and this has helped them to continue to deliver high-quality work with children and their families during the period of pandemic restrictions.

The YJS employs a designated performance manager for three days per week (part of the North Tyneside performance and research team). This means there is comprehensive data management, leading to a good grasp of the characteristics of the children with whom the YJS works.

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

There is a clear commitment to using analysis and evidence to understand and address the needs of children; this translates into practice through development and improvement plans.

Outputs from quality assurance checks (six times a year) are used in staff supervision to develop practice.

Key issues from HM Inspectorate of Probation inspections are identified and actioned as part of YJS improvement planning. In line with a recent HM Inspectorate of Probation Thematic Inspection of Youth Resettlement (2019), there is a well-developed resettlement policy and a set of supporting processes. This work was agreed by the six YJSs in the Northumbria area.

It is notable that, as part of a Northumbria-wide development, North Tyneside YJS has produced a resettlement approach intended to deliver to the new inspection standard arising from the Inspectorate's thematic inspection.

As part of a national review, the North Tyneside YJS is taking part in a College of Policing study of out-of-court processes and the use of Outcome 22 (deferred prosecution).



2. Court disposals

We took a detailed look at seven community sentences. There were no custodial sentences managed by the YJS. We also conducted seven interviews with the relevant case managers. We examined the quality of assessment; planning; implementation and delivery of services; and reviewing.

Strengths:

- Work is delivered to the highest professional standards.
- Work undertaken with children carefully balances their needs and the potential risk of harm they pose to others.
- Among individual staff, there is considerable passion for the work the partnership team delivers.
- The trauma-informed approach is delivered to a high standard with the support of a clinical psychologist and speech and language therapist.
- Victim work is offered to all victims of crime, and an appropriate range of reparation and mediation work is available.

Areas for improvement:

- No areas for improvement were identified.

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 rating⁸ for assessment is based on the following key questions:

Of the 7 cases inspected	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	7	6
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	7	6

⁸ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band. See Annexe 1 for a more detailed explanation.

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	7	6
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The quality of assessment in this YJS was rated as 'Outstanding'. Almost all the cases inspected sufficiently analysed how to support desistance, and there was enough analysis to keep the child and others safe.

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

Of the 7 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Is there sufficient analysis of offending behaviour, including the child's attitudes towards and motivations for their offending?	7	7
Does assessment consider the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, utilising information held by other agencies?	7	7
Does assessment focus on the child's strengths and protective factors?	7	7
Where applicable, does assessment analyse the key structural barriers facing the child?	6	5
Is sufficient attention given to understanding the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change, and their likelihood of engaging with the court disposal?	7	7
Does assessment give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s, and opportunities for restorative justice?	7	6
Is the child and their parents and carers meaningfully involved in their assessment, and are their views taken into account?	7	5

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?

Of the 7 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risks to the safety and wellbeing of the child?	7	6
Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including other assessments, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	7	6

Where applicable, does assessment analyse controls and interventions to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	7	6
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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 past behaviour and convictions, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	6	5
Does assessment analyse controls and interventions to manage and minimise the risk of harm presented by the child?	6	5

Assessment work is done to a high standard in almost all circumstances. The breadth of issues we saw that were being considered with confidence and clarity was impressive. There is a good balance between the assessment of needs and risks in each case, understanding the life experience of the child and identifying triggers to further offending. We saw detailed, high-quality pre-sentence reports leading to assessment work which drew on all relevant sources of information.

2.2. Planning



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

Outstanding

Our rating⁹ for planning is based on the following key questions:

Of the 7 cases inspected	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does planning focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	7	7
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe? ¹⁰	6	5

⁹ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band. See Annexe 1 for a more detailed explanation.

¹⁰ This question is only relevant in cases where there are factors related to keeping the child safe.

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe? ¹¹	7	6
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The quality of planning in this YJS was rated as 'Outstanding'. Almost all the cases inspected provided sufficiently purposeful plans to support desistance, and there were enough planned interventions to keep the child and others safe.

Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?

Of the 7 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does planning set out the services most likely to support desistance, paying sufficient attention to the available timescales and the need for sequencing?	7	7
Does planning take sufficient account of the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child?	7	7
Does planning take sufficient account of the child's strengths and protective factors, and seek to reinforce or develop these as necessary?	7	7
Does planning take sufficient account of the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change, and seek to develop these as necessary?	7	7
Where applicable, does planning give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s?	5	4
Is the child and their parents and carers meaningfully involved in planning, and are their views taken into account?	7	7

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

Of the 6 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?	6	5
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?	5	5
Does planning set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	6	5

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

Does planning set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to manage those risks that have been identified?	6	3
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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	6
Does planning involve other agencies where appropriate?	4	4
Does planning address any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims?	6	5
Does planning set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote the safety of other people?	7	6
Does planning set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to manage those risks that have been identified?	7	5

The plans we inspected were of a very high standard. Plans were well-structured and written in an accessible way. There was a strong sense of relationship-building focusing on the positive aspects and strengths in the child's life. Plans were clear about what work would be done and who would be doing it. Where appropriate, other partners were involved in delivering the plan, including police, education, substance misuse or mental health specialists.

Where it was necessary, we found good work planning contingency arrangements should either the risk to the child or to others escalate.

2.3. Implementation and delivery



High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging and assisting the child.	Outstanding
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Our rating¹² for implementation and delivery is based on the following key questions:

Of the 7 cases inspected	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the child's desistance?	7	7

¹² The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band. See Annexe 1 for a more detailed explanation.

Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of the child? ¹³	6	6
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people? ¹⁴	7	7

The quality of implementation and delivery in this YJS was rated as 'Outstanding'. All the cases inspected provided evidence of work to support desistance, keeping the child safe and supporting the safety of other people.

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

Of the 7 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Are the delivered services those most likely to support desistance, with sufficient attention given to sequencing and the available timescales?	7	7
Does service delivery reflect the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, involving parents and carers or significant others?	7	7
Does service delivery build upon the child's strengths and enhance protective factors?	7	7
Is sufficient focus given to developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child and their parents and carers?	7	7
Does service delivery promote opportunities for community integration including access to services post-supervision?	7	7
Is sufficient attention given to encouraging and enabling the child's compliance with the work of the YJS?	7	7
In cases where it is required, are enforcement actions taken when appropriate?	3	3

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

Of the 6 cases with factors related to keeping the child safe:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does service delivery promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	6	5

¹³ This question is only relevant in cases where there are factors related to keeping the child safe.

¹⁴ This question is only relevant in cases where there are factors related to keeping other people safe.

Where applicable, is the involvement of other organisations in keeping the child safe sufficiently well-coordinated?	6	5
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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?	7	6
Where applicable, is the involvement of other agencies in managing the risk of harm sufficiently well-coordinated?	5	5

The work delivered by the YJS was of a high standard in all cases inspected. We found that there was an appropriate balance between maintaining productive relationships with children and the need to take enforcement action when behaviour or compliance were not acceptable. We also found good levels of engagement with family members. The staff were extremely responsive to the needs of the child and provided a personalised service in an energetic way.

The service was delivered in a systematic way, and when vulnerability increased there was a speedy and effective response. It was clear that all possibilities for education, training or employment were explored and pursued. In cases where this was relevant, interventions were enhanced by the involvement of the specialist psychologist and the speech and language therapist.

Victim work was undertaken through a range of reparation activities and exploration, with the child, of the impact of offending on others.

Throughout the cases there was positive and active management oversight of the work.

2.4. Reviewing



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

Outstanding

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

Of the 7 cases inspected¹⁶	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	7	7
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	7	7
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	6	5

The quality of reviewing in this YJS was rated as 'Outstanding'. All cases inspected were appropriately reviewed and maintained the focus on supporting desistance, keeping the child safe and supporting the safety of other people.

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

Of the 7 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?	7	7
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on building upon the child's strengths and enhancing protective factors?	7	7
Does reviewing consider motivation and engagement levels and any relevant barriers?	7	7
Is the child and their parents and carers meaningfully involved in reviewing their progress and engagement, and are their views taken into account?	7	7

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

¹⁶ 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 7 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?	7	7
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?	7	7

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?	5	5
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	5

Given the sometimes-volatile nature of children's lives, it is essential that cases are kept under constant review and we found ample evidence that the YJS caseworkers are reflecting on the work done throughout the period of engagement.

Reviewing was seen to inform key decisions in the management of cases. This included delaying children's transition to adult services, ensuring appropriate safety checks were undertaken, responding to increased substance misuse, planning for changed methods of contact, and revising what needs to be done and what should be achieved.



3. Out-of-court disposals

We inspected five cases managed by the YJS that had received an out-of-court disposal. These consisted of four youth conditional cautions and one youth caution. We interviewed the case managers in five cases.

We examined the quality of assessment; planning; and implementation and delivery of services. Each of these elements was inspected in respect of work done to address desistance. For the five cases where there were factors related to harm, we also inspected work done to keep other people safe. In the five 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.

Strengths:

- Interventions provided to children as part of an out-of-court disposal were of a high standard.
- The range of available interventions addresses the spectrum of need identified by the cases.
- There is a strong partnership approach to working with the children.
- Out-of-court disposal panel arrangements are highly effective.

Areas for improvement:

- In some cases, there was insufficient attention given to the child's safety, with issues of vulnerability not fully considered at the assessment stage.
- There was insufficient management oversight of the assessment stage of out-of-court disposal work.

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.

Requires improvement

Our rating¹⁷ for assessment is based on the following key questions:

Of the 5 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	5	5
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	5	3
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	5	4

The quality of assessment for out-of-court disposals in this YJS was rated as 'Requires improvement'. All the cases inspected demonstrated enough analysis of how to support the child's desistance, and almost all had good analysis of how to keep other people safe. In too many of the cases, however, the analysis of how to keep the child safe was insufficient.

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

Of the 5 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Is there sufficient analysis of offending behaviour, including the child's acknowledgement of responsibility, attitudes towards and motivations for their offending?	5	4
Does assessment consider the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, utilising information held by other agencies?	5	4
Does assessment focus on the child's strengths and protective factors?	5	5
Where applicable, does assessment analyse the key structural barriers facing the child?	5	5
Is sufficient attention given to understanding the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change?	5	5

¹⁷ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band. See Annexe 1 for a more detailed explanation.

Where applicable, does assessment give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s, and opportunities for restorative justice?	2	2
Is the child and their parents and carers meaningfully involved in their assessment, and are their views taken into account?	5	5

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?

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

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?

Of the 5 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risk of harm to others posed by the child, including identifying who is at risk and the nature of that risk?	5	4
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?	5	4

All cases satisfactorily explored issues concerning the child's likely desistance from further offending, with good attention paid to the child's strengths, protective factors and motivation to work with the YJS. Likewise, most assessments of the risk of harm to other people were well-considered and relevant.

Too many of the cases paid insufficient attention to the child's safety, with issues of vulnerability not fully considered at the assessment stage before the decision-making panel took place. In these cases, there was an absence of professional curiosity and this had not been picked up through management oversight of the work.

3.2. Planning



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

Requires improvement

Our rating¹⁸ for planning is based on the following key questions:

Of the 5 cases inspected	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?	5	3
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe? ¹⁹	5	3
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe? ²⁰	5	3

The quality of planning in this YJS was rated as 'Requires improvement'. Too many of the cases inspected demonstrated insufficient planning for how to support the child's desistance, how to keep the child safe and how to maintain a focus on keeping other people safe.

Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?

Of the 5 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does planning set out the services most likely to support desistance, paying sufficient attention to the available timescales and the need for sequencing?	5	3
Does planning take sufficient account of the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child?	5	4
Does planning take sufficient account of the child's strengths and protective factors, and seek to reinforce or develop these as necessary?	5	4
Does planning take sufficient account of the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change, and seek to develop these as necessary?	5	5
Does planning take sufficient account of opportunities for community integration, including access to mainstream services following completion of out-of-court disposal work?	5	4

¹⁸ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band. See Annexe 1 for a more detailed explanation.

¹⁹ This question is only relevant in cases where there are factors related to keeping the child safe.

²⁰ 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?	2	2
Is the child and their parents and carers meaningfully involved in planning, and are their views taken into account?	5	4

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

Of the 5 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?	5	3
Where applicable, does planning involve other agencies where appropriate, and is there sufficient alignment with other plans (for example, child protection or care plans) concerning the child?	4	2
Does planning include necessary contingency arrangements for those risks that have been identified?	5	3

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	3
Where applicable, does planning involve other agencies where appropriate?	3	2
Where applicable, does planning address any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims?	3	2
Does planning include necessary contingency arrangements for those risks that have been identified?	5	3

In most cases, the planning of activity was clear and engaged other services in the delivery of interventions.

In a minority of cases, however, the plans we inspected lacked clear focus on what was intended to be achieved. In some instances, issues raised in assessment indicating risks to other people, or to the child's safety, did not lead to clear actions to address these concerns. We also saw cases in which there were no clear contingency arrangements in anticipation of deteriorating behaviour or vulnerability of the child.

3.3. Implementation and delivery



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

Outstanding

Our rating²¹ for implementation and delivery is based on the following key questions:

Of the 5 cases inspected	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does service delivery effectively support the child's desistance?	5	5
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of the child? ²²	5	4
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of other people? ²³	5	4

The quality of implementation of out-of-court disposals in this YJS was rated as 'Outstanding'. All children received services that supported desistance, and almost all received the appropriate support to keep them and other people safe.

Does service delivery effectively support the child's desistance?

Of the 5 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Are the delivered services those most likely to support desistance, with sufficient attention given to sequencing and the available timescales?	5	3
Does service delivery reflect the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, involving parents and carers or significant others?	5	4
Is sufficient focus given to developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child and their parents and carers?	5	5
Is sufficient attention given to encouraging and enabling the child's compliance with the work of the YJS?	5	5
Does service delivery promote opportunities for community integration, including access to mainstream services?	5	4

²¹ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band. See Annexe 1 for a more detailed explanation.

²² This question is only relevant in cases where there are factors related to keeping the child safe.

²³ 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 5 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?	5	4
Where applicable, is the involvement of other agencies in keeping the child safe sufficiently well utilised and coordinated?	5	4

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	3
Are the delivered services sufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	5	4

When the YJS staff engaged with the child through the interventions made available, we found high-quality work being delivered in almost all cases. The work was characterised by effective working relationships, good partnership, good exploration of issues concerning offending behaviour, and good attention to issues concerning actual or potential victims.

3.4. Joint working



Joint working with the police supports the delivery of high-quality, personalised and coordinated services.	Outstanding
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Our rating²⁴ for joint working is based on the following key questions:

Of the 5 cases inspected	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Are the YJS's recommendations sufficiently well-informed, analytical and personalised to the child, supporting joint decision making?	5	4
Does the YJS work effectively with the police in implementing the out-of-court disposal? ²⁵	4	4

²⁴ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band. See Annexe 1 for a more detailed explanation.

²⁵ This question is only relevant in youth conditional caution cases.

The quality of joint working in this YJS was rated as 'Outstanding'. In almost all cases, recommendations were appropriate and there was good evidence of the YJS working effectively with the police.

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

Of the 5 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Where applicable, are the recommendations by the YJS for out-of-court disposal outcomes, conditions and interventions appropriate and proportionate?	4	4
Do the recommendations consider the degree of the child's understanding of the offence and their acknowledgement of responsibility?	4	4
Where applicable, is a positive contribution made by the YJS to determining the disposal?	5	5
Is sufficient attention given to the child's understanding, and their parents'/carers' understanding, of the implications of receiving an out-of-court disposal?	5	4
Is the information provided to inform decision-making timely to meet the needs of the case, legislation and guidance?	5	5
Where applicable, is the rationale for joint disposal decisions appropriate and clearly recorded?	5	5

Does the YJS 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 YJS inform the police of progress and outcomes in a sufficient and timely manner?	2	2
Is sufficient attention given to compliance with and enforcement of the conditions?	4	4

Out-of-court disposal work was managed sufficiently well in almost all cases inspected. The decision-making panel was, in most cases, well-supported by clear proposals from the caseworker. Decisions made were based on a good understanding of the circumstances of the child.

Annexe 1: Methodology

HM Inspectorate of Probation standards

The standards against which we inspect youth justice 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.²⁶

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 justice services (YJSs), regardless of size, are inspected to highlight good practice and to identify areas for improvement. Of course, some YJSs 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 YJSs, meet an 80 per cent confidence level, and in some of the smaller YJSs inspectors may be assessing most or all of that service's cases.

Domain one: organisational delivery

The youth justice service submitted evidence in advance and the Board Chair delivered a presentation covering the following areas:

- How do organisational delivery arrangements in this area make sure that the work of your youth justice 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 12 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 nine meetings, which included meetings with managers, partner organisations and staff. The evidence collected under this domain was judged against our published ratings characteristics.²⁶

Domain two: court disposals

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

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

²⁶ HM Inspectorate of Probation standards are available here:

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

Domain three: out-of-court disposals

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

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

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

Ratings explained

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

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

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

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

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

An element of professional discretion may be applied to the standards ratings in domains two and three. The ratings panel considers whether professional discretion should be exercised when the lowest percentage at the key question level is close to

the rating boundary – for example, between ‘Requires improvement’ and ‘Good’ (specifically, within five percentage points of the boundary; or where a differing judgement in one case would result in a change in rating; or where the rating is based upon a sample or sub-sample of five cases or fewer). The panel considers the sizes of any sub-samples used and the percentages for the other key questions within that standard, such as whether they fall within different bandings and the level of divergence, to make this decision.

Overall provider rating

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

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

Adding the scores for each standard together produces the overall rating on a 0-36 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.