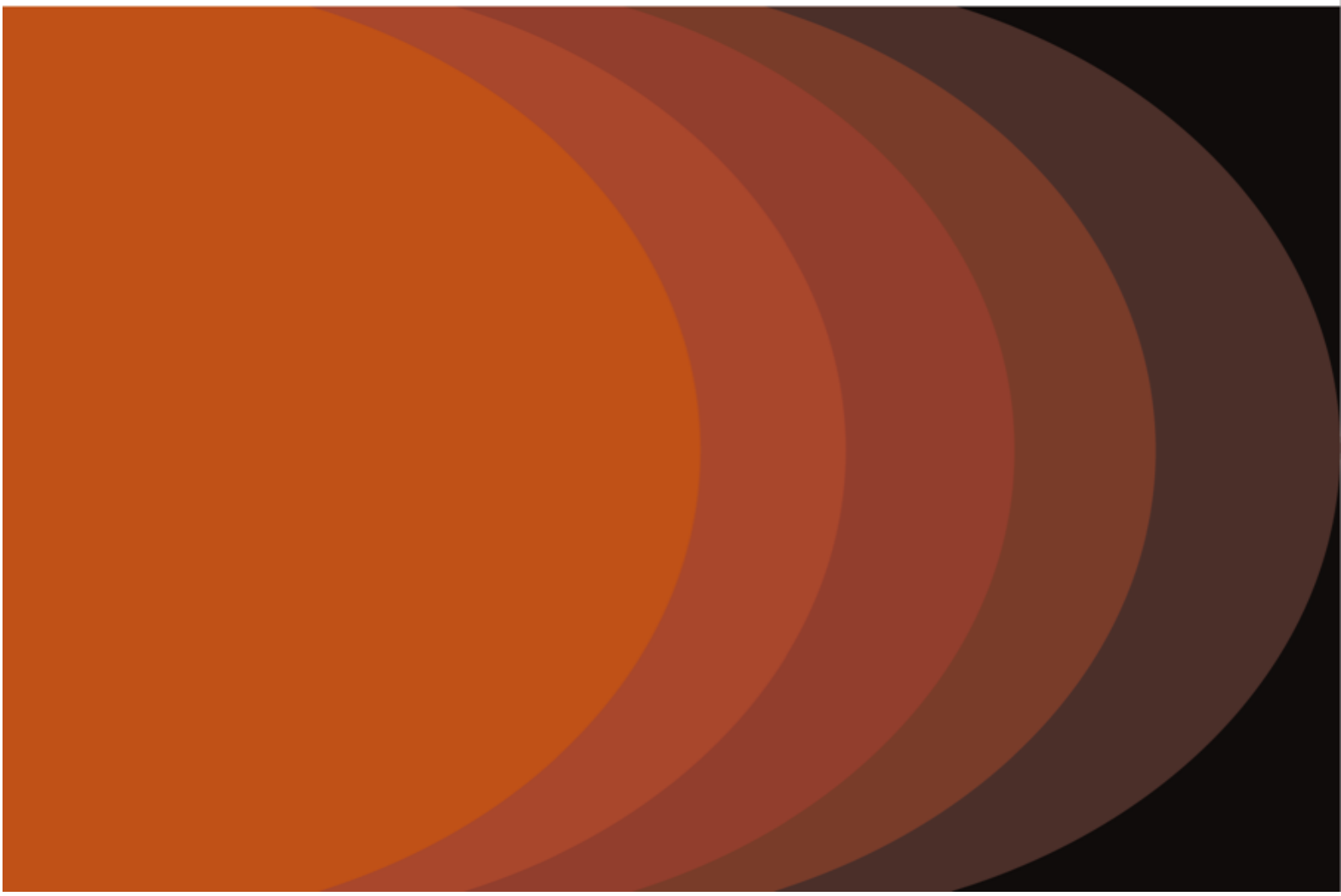




Her Majesty's
Inspectorate of
Probation

An inspection of youth offending services in
Wigan YOT

HM Inspectorate of Probation, August 2021



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The role of HM Inspectorate of Probation

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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.

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Introduction

This inspection is part of our four-year programme of youth offending service (YOS) inspections. We have inspected and rated Wigan Youth Offending Team 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, Wigan YOT was rated as 'Good'.

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 case manager interviews and analysis of case files, and telephone and video conferencing, took place between 26 April and 29 April 2021.

Overall, we found a mixed picture, with some elements of out-of-court disposal work rated as 'Outstanding'. However, we found deficiencies in the way that post-court cases were being managed, and the support provided by leaders needs to be improved. Wigan YOT's arrangements for staffing, and information and facilities are good; however, its governance and leadership, and its partnerships and services were rated as 'Requires improvement'.

Management Board membership includes all statutory partners, as well as some non-statutory agencies, and representatives who are at the right level of seniority to enable decisions to be made. The service has invested in a structure to support volunteers and there is an excellent volunteering and mentoring provision. The targeted youth support service also leads on restorative approaches in Wigan, and the YOT has a strong offer for restorative justice and victims.

The inspection found limited evidence of the Board advocating on behalf of the service and actively supporting its service delivery. The health offer to the service is poor and access to speech, language and communication provision for children known to the YOT is limited. The partnership is sighted on the over-representation of Looked After Children known to the YOT but has not coordinated a review across all agencies to ensure that they are not being unnecessarily criminalised. Although the service has a wide range of ways to capture the views of children accessing universal services, these are not specifically the views of harder-to-engage children known to the YOT.

In post-court cases, the quality of assessing, planning and reviewing a child's desistance was rated as 'Outstanding'. Assessing and delivering services to ensure the safety and wellbeing of a child was also outstanding. In high-risk cases, there was little evidence of case planning forums taking place, and management oversight required improvement for post-court orders.














For out-of-court disposal work, desistance was the strongest area of practice, with assessing, planning and delivering services rated as 'Outstanding'. Assessing and delivering interventions relating to a child's risk of harm to others were also outstanding, as were the delivery of interventions promoting a child's safety and wellbeing. Assessing and planning relating to a child's safety and wellbeing, however, required improvement.

The inspection found that staff did all they could to engage children, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown restrictions. They were adaptable and creative in how they worked with children and their families to ensure that they were offering appropriate support during difficult times.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marc Baker', with a stylized, cursive script.

Marc Baker
Director of Operations

Ratings

Wigan Youth Offending Team		Score	19/36
Overall rating		Good	
1. Organisational delivery			
1.1	Governance and leadership	Requires improvement	
1.2	Staff	Good	
1.3	Partnerships and services	Requires improvement	
1.4	Information and facilities	Good	
2. Court disposals			
2.1	Assessment	Good	
2.2	Planning	Requires improvement	
2.3	Implementation and delivery	Requires improvement	
2.4	Reviewing	Requires improvement	
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 offending services in Wigan. This will improve the lives of the children in contact with youth offending services, and better protect the public.

The Chair of Wigan YOT Management Board should:

1. make sure that the partnership understands the reasons for the over-representation of Looked After Children known to the YOT, and review the policies and practices of all agencies, to minimise the possibility of children entering the criminal justice system unnecessarily
2. ensure Board members advocate on behalf of the service and actively support its service delivery, in particular prioritising access to speech, language and communication provision for children known to the YOT.

The YOT Management Board should:

3. undertake a comprehensive health needs analysis of children known to Wigan YOT, to understand better the health provision that is being delivered to them and what needs to improve.

The YOT manager should:

4. capture the views of children and families known to the YOT, so that they can shape future service delivery
5. review the quality of risk of harm work and improve the effectiveness of management oversight in post-court orders.

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 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.

YOTs 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 YOTs are based within local authorities; however, this can vary.

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

Wigan is the largest geographical area in Greater Manchester and sits in the West quadrant of the 10 Greater Manchester local authorities. It has an estimated population of 328,662, with 75,500 children and young people being aged between 0 and 19. Of the population, 96 per cent is white British and 24.8 per cent lives in the 20 per cent most deprived areas in England. Wigan uses a model of locality working and has seven defined neighbourhoods, with population sizes ranging from 29,000 to 63,000 per area.

Wigan's vision is captured in 'The Deal 2030',² which is delivered through six key principles: having different conversations, empowering communities, being fair and inclusive, 'Be Wigan' behaviours, working together, and freedom and permission to innovate. As part of the governance arrangements, there is a 'Deal for Children and Young People Board', to which the YOT Management Board is accountable.

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

² Refer to wigan.gov.uk website for details.

Contextual facts

Population information

328,662	Total population Wigan (2019) ³
30,704	Total youth population (10–17 years) in Wigan (2019) ³

Demographics of children cautioned or sentenced⁴

Age	10–14 years	15–17 years
Wigan YOT	18%	82%
National average	22%	78%

Race/ethnicity	White	Black and minority ethnic	Unknown
Wigan YOT	96%	0%	4%
National average	69%	28%	3%

Gender	Male	Female
Wigan YOT	84%	16%
National average	85%	15%

Additional caseload data⁵

23	Total current caseload: community sentences
5	Total current caseload in custody
3	Total current caseload on licence
19	Total current caseload: out-of-court disposals

³ Office for National Statistics. (2020). *UK population estimates, mid-2019*.

⁴ Youth Justice Board. (2021). *Youth justice annual statistics: 2019 to 2020*.

⁵ Information supplied by YOT, reflecting caseload on 19 March 2021.

1. Organisational delivery



Strengths:

- Management Board membership has been reviewed and includes all statutory partners as well as some non-statutory agencies.
- Board representatives are at the right level of seniority to enable decisions to be made.
- Comprehensive performance management reports are provided for the YOT Management Board.
- The service has invested in the structure to support volunteers and there is an excellent volunteering and mentoring provision.
- The targeted youth support service (TYSS) leads on restorative approaches in Wigan and the YOT has a strong offer for restorative justice and victims.
- Staff do all they can to encourage good engagement with the child and have been creative in supporting families and delivering interventions during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Areas for improvement:

- There is limited evidence of the Board members advocating on behalf of the service and actively supporting its service delivery.
- The health offer to the YOT is poor, with an expectation placed on youth justice workers to provide interventions that should be commissioned and resourced by partner agencies.
- Access to speech, language and communication provision for children known to the YOT is limited.
- The partnership is sighted on the over-representation of Looked After Children known to the YOT, but no review has been undertaken across all agencies to ensure that they are not being unnecessarily criminalised.
- There is a wide range of ways to capture the views of children accessing universal services, but not the views of children known to the YOT.
- Staff are unclear about the model of working across the localities and within a risk-based allocation system, making the lines of management accountability confused.
- In high-risk cases, there is little evidence of case planning forums taking place as part of the risk management processes.
- Management oversight requires improvement for post-court orders.

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.

Requires improvement

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?

In Wigan, the delivery of youth justice services comes under the remit of the TYSS, which sits in the Start Well service area within the children, adults and family's directorate. The service is structured under the director of community services, with a service manager leading a management team supporting the delivery of early intervention and prevention of youth offending; youth antisocial behaviour outreach; voluntary and statutory youth justice services; restorative practice; victim engagement and support; reparation; unpaid work; attendance centre; diversionary and targeted youth activities; youth cabinet and youth voice.

The service lead for integrated services has overall responsibility for the two services of Start Well, which is an early help service, and the TYSS. The TYSS includes the YOT with prevention and antisocial behaviour, and voice and engagement teams. The TYSS is led by the principal manager, who also manages the YOT's collaboration with Greater Manchester Youth Justice Services.

There have been new strategic leaders joining the local authority over the past 12 months and this has led to a recent change in the Chair of the YOT Management Board. The Director of Children's Services has been chairing the YOT Management Board since October 2020, with the local police Chief Inspector as Vice Chair. Board membership has recently been reviewed and now includes all statutory partners, as well as some non-statutory agencies – for example, local councillors and a magistrate. The Board has the right level of seniority and representation in order for decisions to be made. It is recognised that the Board is still developing its roles and responsibilities, and, as a result, new members have completed induction sessions and training. A learning and development day was arranged for May 2021.

In September 2020, the YOT submitted its Covid-19 recovery plan to the Youth Justice Board (YJB). The plan outlined the need for the TYSS to make a saving of £500,000 within the financial year. At the point of the initial lockdown in March 2020, the local authority was about to begin a service redesign. This was put on hold, but work has now started, and full implementation is expected in late summer 2021. With the onset of Covid-19 and the impact on service delivery, it is not clear whether this saving still needs to be made and what the specific implications for the YOT structure will be.

Do the partnership arrangements actively support effective service delivery?

Some YOTs have used the requirement to complete the YJB national standards audit to include Board members in the quality assurance of YOT practice. In Wigan, two

Board members were involved in the process and all members have been briefed about the findings and have been allocated lead areas in the improvement plan.

The inspection found limited evidence of the Board advocating on behalf of the service and actively supporting its service delivery. For example, although the Board has received detailed analysis on the profile of children known to the YOT which shows concerns regarding emotional and mental health and substance misuse issues, there has been no collaborative challenge by the Board to health partners about their service provision. Likewise, the Board has not been proactive in supporting the YOT to acquire specialist speech, language and communication provision despite being aware that this has been a substantial gap for some time.

The YOT has received positive feedback from the youth court, and court staff report that there is a good relationship with the service. They have said that the quality of pre-sentence reports is excellent and that YOT officers are proactive in providing information to the court.

Does the leadership of the YOT support effective service delivery?

The principal manager for the TYSS is supported by three practice managers and four deputy practice managers. The practice and deputy practice managers lead each of the three localities, including the youth justice workers. The additional deputy practice manager has responsibility for restorative approaches.

The main link between staff and the Board is through the service lead and principal manager. They feedback from the Board through the management, locality and matrix team meetings. Practice managers attend the Board to present on specific pieces of work. Of the 29 staff members who completed the staff survey, 89 per cent said that they are aware of the activities of the Board and 85 per cent that they are updated about strategic issues.

Management oversight is good for out-of-court disposals but requires improvement for post-court orders. In the opinion of the inspectors, there was adequate management oversight in three out of four relevant out-of-court disposals but only two out of eight relevant post-court cases. An alert⁶ was raised on one post-court case owing to concerns about safeguarding, and these were resolved by the service during the inspection.

There are systems in place to recognise the good work of staff and this includes nominating individual staff members and teams for awards; sending people emails from senior leaders, praising them for work completed; and teams being mentioned in the Director of Children's Services blog.

Covid-19 has had a significant impact on service delivery, with only high-risk or vulnerable children being seen face to face throughout this period. There are issues with accessing buildings, and challenges in delivering work with victims, face-to-face diversionary activities, direct and community-based reparation projects and using the junior attendance centre. A number of staff have had to shield, and others have had to manage the balance of home schooling and work commitments. The service has also had to provide dedicated support to Looked After Children in order to reduce placement breakdown, and this has meant that some staff have been redeployed to

⁶ An individual alert encompasses practice, or practice omissions, that require immediate remedial action to be taken (usually by the organisation responsible for the case) to reduce or contain an identifiable, serious and imminent risk.

run the Wigan Youth Zone, where activities take place. Managers and staff have been stretched by all these demands, and additional support has been offered. The restrictions have been carefully monitored, and senior managers and staff briefed at each stage as part of the business continuity plan.

1.2. Staff



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

Good

Key staffing data⁷

Total staff headcount (full-time equivalent, FTE)	44
Average caseload per case manager (FTE)	7

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?

The TYSS has three locality teams, which include youth justice workers, victim workers, community coordinators (developing links with the community and reparation projects) and community deal workers (delivering youth work, prevention and antisocial behaviour interventions). Community deal workers are youth workers who deliver a range of one-to-one and group activities for children involved in antisocial behaviour or who are at risk of offending. They also run specialist groups for children in care; black, Asian and minority ethnic children; and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender children.

Some staff work across the service, and they include the education officer, the progression worker for post-16-year-olds, a volunteer coordinator and voice workers (who work with children to ensure that their views are represented at various forums). The YOT has a seconded police and probation officer, as well as limited access to a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service worker and a substance misuse worker. It is a stable staff group, with people being in post for some time. There is one vacancy, which is for the role of deputy practice manager, and this post is currently being advertised.

Work is allocated initially on a locality basis and staff are contacted by their line manager to discuss the case. If one locality is particularly busy, then the other two localities will help out. The average caseload at the time of inspection was seven, although it is anticipated that this will rise. The staff survey was completed by 29 staff members, and 74 per cent of them stated that they are comfortable with their caseload or workload.

Staff are unclear about the model of working across the localities and within a risk-based allocation system. The service promotes the principle of one staff member working consistently with the child and their family, so that relationships can be

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

developed over time. Within the localities, however, youth justice work is divided between those practitioners who work with high-risk cases and those who work with lower-risk cases. When a child's risk increases, the intention is that the high-risk worker will offer support to the lower-risk workers. On occasion, however, this leads to the reallocation of the child's case to a high-risk worker. This would seem to contradict the principle that the service is trying to maintain, with the strategic vision not being reflected in the operational model. As outlined above, the service redesign was on hold owing to Covid-19, but it is now in the process of being implemented.

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

There is evidence from the inspected cases that staff do all they can to encourage good engagement and compliance with the child and their family, and staff and managers alike are child centred and know the children in their care well.

Staff have other roles within the service, including leading specific areas of practice such as working in court and working with girls. A number of staff are trained in Assessment, Intervention and Moving-on 3 (AIM3), for working with harmful sexual behaviour. For criminal harmful sexual behaviour cases, the assessment and interventions are co-worked between members of the YOT who are trained appropriately. In the few cases where the harmful sexual behaviour is welfare based, they are co-worked with a social worker.

The service has invested in the structure to support volunteers and there is an excellent volunteering and mentoring provision, managed by a full-time volunteer coordinator. Recruitment comes from the community and universities, and includes an induction using the volunteer's skills and areas of interest to determine their roles. Training is extensive and encourages volunteers to shadow practitioners as well as attending courses. Individual supervision is offered, as is attendance at forums and peer reflection meetings. There is a focus on ensuring that volunteers feel integrated within the team, and pre-Covid-19 they would work alongside practitioners in the office. Roles include panel members, mentoring, independent visitors to children in the secure estate, and group work. Volunteers are offered employment opportunities, with some of them becoming permanent service practitioners.

Staff deliver a range of interventions, which are adapted to meet the needs of the child. Pre-Covid-19, these were delivered in person on either a one-to-one or group work basis. Examples of interventions include 'behind the blade', 'positive choices', and peer pressure and substance misuse work. Mentors are used to support children and interventions at the attendance centre, where programmes are being developed to work with children who are not in education, training and employment (ETE).

Staff have had to be creative in delivering interventions during the Covid-19 pandemic. They have used 'walk and talk' and 'doorstep' home visits to engage children. They have been given full access to the Wigan Youth Zone, to provide activities for Looked After Children. Where children have had access to technology, staff have delivered online virtual sessions to them and their families. At the beginning of April 2021, face-to-face work was reintroduced for all children, allowing more scope to deliver reparation, victim work and diversionary activities.

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

Staff receive regular supervision, called 'my time', and managers use a supervision template which looks at cases, personal reflections, and training and development.

Seconded staff receive supervision from their home agency, as well as from YOT practice managers. Staff reported that managers are approachable and make themselves available outside of supervision. The need for the service to operate on a locality basis, however, has made the lines of management accountability confused, with staff having both locality and matrix managers. This has led to inconsistencies in management direction and advice, and this will be addressed through the realignment of the TYSS.

There is an induction process in place for new staff, and there are procedures for addressing staff competency. However, for staff who have joined recently, their induction and training have been hampered by the restrictions imposed as a result of Covid-19. Annual appraisals ('my time extra') are completed, and staff feel supported both by their managers and their peers.

Are arrangements for learning and development comprehensive and responsive?

Staff feel encouraged to take up training and there is a children's, adults and families directorate learning opportunities plan, which lists mandatory training as well as specific youth justice training. Staff can also access training through the Greater Manchester Youth Justice Services arrangements, as well as the YOT commissioning specific training itself.

Safeguarding training is mandatory, and recently staff have completed courses such as AIM3 harmful sexual behaviour, dialectical behavioural training, 'behind the blade' and 'positive choices'. There are plans for staff to complete trauma-informed practice training, which was delayed because of Covid-19.

The service actively encourages staff development through offering management opportunities within the service and supporting staff to complete external qualifications, such as the 'professional certificate in effective practice'.

1.3. Partnerships and services



A comprehensive range of high-quality services is in place, enabling personalised and responsive provision for all children.	Requires improvement
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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 YOT can deliver well-targeted services?

The population of Wigan is 96 per cent white, and very few children who identify as black, Asian and minority ethnic become known to the YOT. The Management Board and the partnership are aware that the number of girls known to the YOT is slightly higher, at 16 per cent, than the national average of 15 per cent. There is a Greater Manchester Youth Justice Services policy on working with girls, and training is being delivered to develop staff coaching skills to help engage girls who have committed, or are at risk of committing, violent offences.

Comprehensive performance management reports are provided for the Management Board, and these include a mixture of local and national indicators. Analysis of these

reports showed a rise in custody figures, from six custodial sentences in April 2019 to March 2020, to nine sentences in April 2020 to March 2021. This led to the Board requesting further information by way of a reoffending audit report, a custody study and a literature review. These deep-dive analysis reports showed that violent crime has risen in the area, in line with the national trend, and that there is a disproportionate number of Looked After Children known to the YOT. Of the 52 post-court cases that were open to the YOT at the time of the inspection, 13 (25 per cent) were Looked After Children.

The partnership is sighted on the over-representation of Looked After Children and recently completed a report analysing the number in custody. They recognise that there could be various contributing factors, including the increase in the number of older children who have recently become looked after. The Board has not, however, coordinated a collaborative analysis across agencies to review how Looked After Children are entering the youth justice system, and whether there are practices in place that are leading to the unnecessary criminalisation of children.

Through the Greater Manchester violence reduction unit funding, the YOT commissioned a literature review to look at the approach that should be implemented to support children at risk of committing violent crime. The review recommended a multi-agency, trauma-informed approach to understand the adversities that the child may have experienced in early childhood. As mentioned, earlier, the training necessary to implement this work has been delayed because of Covid-19.

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

Issues impacting on youth offending are prominent on the agendas of other key strategic groups, including the Deal for Children and Young People Board, Corporate Parenting Board and Local Safeguarding Children Board. There is a multi-agency complex safeguarding team, which includes working with children who are at risk, or victims, of criminal exploitation. Two youth justice workers are seconded to the team.

Out-of-court disposals are allocated on a locality basis and staff complete the prevention framework assessment unless there is already an AssetPlus assessment on record, in which case they will complete a triage form. An AssetPlus assessment is completed if the child is thought to present a high risk of reoffending, a high risk regarding their safety and wellbeing or a high risk of harm to others, or a youth conditional caution is the likely disposal. The case manager presents the assessment at the out-of-court disposals joint decision-making panel, where the disposal is agreed. The panel includes the YOT police officer, a practice manager, the case manager and a victim worker, and meets on a weekly basis. The YOT continues to work with the police to ensure that all children are referred, so that an assessment is completed before a disposal is given.

The TYSS leads on restorative approaches in Wigan, and the YOT has a strong offer for restorative justice and victims. There is a deputy practice manager for restorative approaches, and each locality has a victim worker and a community coordinator. Community coordinators plan and risk assess the range of activities for direct and indirect reparation work, unpaid work and the attendance centre. This work is then delivered by support workers. The council is committed to the further expansion of restorative approaches and has allocated staff and resources to develop this work in schools.

The victim workers contact all victims, and pre-Covid-19 this was followed up with face-to-face visits. During the pandemic, telephone calls have been used and workers offer victims the opportunity to talk about their experience, as well as explaining their rights. The victim work involves supporting victims and offering mediation, as well as feedback from any direct or indirect reparation that the victim has requested.

There is a range of reparation projects available, including community clean-ups of an adopted mile of the canal, gardening and painting at Wigan Youth Zone, as well as sessions in the workshop. Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, the service has had to be creative and develop ways to enable children to undertake reparation at home. One example is the delivery of home kits, where children have been asked to design and paint bird boxes, which have been donated to community projects. When one child found out that his victim was in charge of a community garden, he made a number of bird boxes that she could use. He engraved the community centre logo onto one of them and this was handed over in a 'virtual' face-to-face meeting with the victim.

'We Are With You' provides substance misuse services to the YOT by one worker, one day a week. The youth justice workers deliver the lower-tier drug and alcohol work and will refer to the service for more intensive interventions.

The YOT benefits from being one of the 10 local authorities that are part of the Greater Manchester youth justice services collaboration. This includes court services and resettlement arrangements, as well as jointly commissioned training.

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

The YOT chairs a case planning forum for all high-risk cases. This includes children who are assessed as presenting a high risk of reoffending, a high risk regarding their safety and wellbeing or a high risk of harm to others. However, there was little evidence in the inspected cases of these taking place as part of the risk management processes.

There is a recently appointed release-under-investigation worker, to engage earlier and provide dedicated support to those children who have been arrested but not yet charged. There is a seconded police officer, who coordinates the out-of-court disposal process and shares both intelligence and the names of children who have been arrested, on a daily basis.

The seconded probation officer role is for three days a week, which causes some issues in terms of workload management. The probation officer covers adult court duty on the other days. The YOT probation officer takes the lead on children who could be transitioned to probation services and there are regular meetings to discuss these cases.

The YOT has an education worker who has developed links with schools, and a progression worker who works with post-16-year-old children, to engage them in ETE. A strategic focus in this area has led to performance being improved. From April 2019 to March 2020, 71 per cent of children were receiving suitable education and 65 per cent of post-16-year-olds were receiving suitable ETE. At the time of the inspection, performance had improved and, of the 52 post-court cases that were open to the YOT, two were out of borough and 43 of the remaining 50 children (86 per cent) were receiving suitable ETE.

The health provision to the YOT is poor, with an expectation placed on youth justice workers to provide interventions that should be commissioned and resourced by partner agencies. Mental health services have recently transferred to Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation, and as part of the transfer a new outcome-based service specification is being developed. The clinical commissioning group has stated that children’s emotional and mental health needs, including speech, language and communication services, are a priority area for transformation post-transfer, and that provision will be reviewed.

Greater Manchester Combined Authority has also recently completed a youth health needs assessment, which was a review of the mental and physical health needs of children in contact with local authority YOT teams. The next stage is a mapping exercise with each local authority, to establish how services align to the needs identified.

Involvement of children and their parents or carers

The TYSS has various ways of capturing the views of children, including voice and engagement workers, local voice groups and voice ambassadors. There is also the BYOU group for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender children, and Global Friends for children from different ethnic backgrounds. Wigan is also the first district to have a Greater Manchester police advisory group. TYSS children are working on the terms of reference for this group, whose eventual role will be to advise the police, review stop and searches, and ensure transparency in policing activity. Although the examples above outline ways to capture the views of children, these are not ways to capture the views of children known to the YOT. By not specifically engaging and collating the views of these children, they do not have a direct influence on improving future YOT service delivery.

As part of the inspection process, children are invited to participate in a text survey. Unfortunately, the number of children who returned the survey was low, but one child said:

“My worker is very approachable and easy to talk to and followed through with everything we discussed.”

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?

The YOT has a range of policies and guidance in place, some of which cover all the Greater Manchester youth offending services. This collaboration across the 10 local authorities means that there is a consistent approach to relevant safeguarding policies and procedures. Local information-sharing protocols are in place and are understood across the partnership.

Staff are not always clear about the pathways for accessing services from other agencies. This was especially relevant when trying to gain health, and speech, language and communication provision.

There is an escalation process for all partners, to help when there is a need to challenge another agency. Staff reported feeling supported by managers when raising concerns about other agencies.

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

Youth justice workers are placed in locality teams, and each area has different provision available. For example, the Wigan Youth Zone has been used by YOT children during the Covid-19 lockdown periods and is based in the town centre. Provision of services in Leigh, however, is developing and work is ongoing to provide a dedicated youth provision which will act as a hub for a range of activities.

Going forward, it is the intention that staff will be mobile rather than office based, promoting a multi-agency approach to using shared spaces, working in community buildings alongside other agencies.

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

The YOT uses Integrated Youth Support Services (IYSS) as their case management system, which can produce the required performance management information. It also has access to Liquid Logic, which is the children's social care system, and partner agencies have access to IYSS, which assists with the sharing of relevant information.

Understandably, because of security concerns, staff are unable to use their laptop computers when working with children. Other ways to engage children using technology are not being explored, however – for example, purchasing iPads to use interactive apps – and this limits the interventions that can be delivered.

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

The YOT has quality assurance systems in place which include managers completing bimonthly audits on cases from different localities. The findings from these audits are collated and a report is provided for the Management Board. Direct feedback is given to practitioners on a one-to-one basis and audit themes are shared at team meetings.

There is evidence that the YOT reviews cases when serious incidents occur and learns from the outcomes of inspections of other areas in order to improve practice. In 2019, the YOT took part in a peer review, and the recommendations formed part of the ongoing improvement plan for the service.

The YOT has an agreement with Salford YOT that they will capture feedback from victims on each other's behalf. This allows for an independent evaluation of the restorative justice and victim work that is being delivered.



2. Court disposals

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

Strengths:

- The quality of assessing, planning, delivering services and reviewing to promote a child's desistance was outstanding.
- Assessing and delivering services to ensure the safety and wellbeing of a child was outstanding.
- The quality of assessing a child's risk of harm to others and reviewing their safety and wellbeing was good.
- In assessing and planning to support desistance, the case manager always considered the child's strengths and protective factors.
- Case managers understood the complexities of the child's life and offered bespoke interventions to meet their individual needs.
- Staff did all they could to engage children and their families, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown restrictions. They were adaptable and creative in how they worked with children and their families to ensure that they were offering appropriate support during difficult times.

Areas for improvement:

- The quality of planning regarding a child's safety and wellbeing required improvement.
- Planning, delivering services and reviewing to manage a child's risk of harm to others required improvement.
- Parents or carers needed to be more involved, and their views taken into account, during the child's assessment.
- When delivering services, there was a lack of involvement of other agencies to minimise the child's risk of harm to others.
- Contingency planning was not always in place to manage a child's safety and wellbeing, or the risk of harm they posed to others.
- Reviewing a child's safety and wellbeing, and their risk of harm to others did not consistently involve other agencies or lead to changes being made in the ongoing plan of work.

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 or carers.

Good

Our rating⁸ 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	8
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	9	8
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	9	6

The quality of assessment overall was rated as 'Good'. We saw thorough assessments of how to support a child's desistance and their safety and wellbeing, which led to a rating of 'Outstanding', and assessments of their risk of harm to others was good.

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	8
Does assessment consider the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, utilising information held by other agencies?	9	8
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?	8	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	8

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 give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s, and opportunities for restorative justice?	7	5
Is the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in their assessment, and are their views taken into account?	9	5

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	7
Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including other assessments, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	9	8
Where applicable, does assessment analyse controls and interventions to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	8	7

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?	8	5
Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including past behaviour and convictions, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	8	6
Does assessment analyse controls and interventions to manage and minimise the risk of harm presented by the child?	8	7

In most cases, the case manager had focused on the child's motivation and their level of maturity, and in all cases the child's strengths and protective factors had been taken into account. Too few cases showed the involvement of parents or carers, or their views being taken into account, during the child's assessment. When assessing risk of harm to others, some cases did not clearly identify the risk posed by the child, although nearly all cases analysed the interventions needed to minimise the potential risk of harm to others.

2.2. Planning



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

Requires Improvement

Our rating⁹ 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	8
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe? ¹⁰	8	5
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe? ¹¹	7	4

The quality of planning was rated as 'Requires improvement'. Planning to support a child's desistance was outstanding, but planning for their safety and wellbeing, and their risk of harm to others requires improvement.

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	9
Does planning take sufficient account of the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child?	9	6
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	7
Where applicable, does planning give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s?	6	3

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.

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

Is the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in planning, and are their views taken into account?	8	7
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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	6
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	5
Does planning set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	8	7
Does planning set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to manage those risks that have been identified?	8	5

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

In all cases, planning set out the services necessary to support desistance and took account of the child's strengths and protective factors. Contingency planning was not always in place to manage a child's safety and wellbeing or the risk of harm they

posed to others. Despite the YOT’s strong provision of services to victims, it was disappointing to see that not all cases considered the wishes and needs of victims or the risks related to actual and potential victims.

2.3. Implementation and delivery



High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging and assisting the child.	Requires improvement
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Our rating¹² 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	7
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of the child? ¹³	8	7
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people? ¹⁴	7	4

The quality of implementing and delivering interventions and services was rated as 'Requires improvement'. Delivering services related to desistance was good, and for a child’s safety and wellbeing it was outstanding; however, for keeping other people safe it requires improvement.

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	7
Does service delivery reflect the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, involving parents or carers or significant others?	9	8
Does service delivery build upon the child’s strengths and enhance protective factors?	9	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.

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.

Is sufficient focus given to developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child and their parents or carers?	9	7
Does service delivery promote opportunities for community integration including access to services post-supervision?	9	6
Is sufficient attention given to encouraging and enabling the child's compliance with the work of the YOT?	9	7
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?	6	4

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	4
Where applicable, is sufficient attention given to the protection of actual and potential victims?	7	7
Where applicable, is the involvement of other agencies in managing the risk of harm sufficiently well-coordinated?	6	3

In most cases, the case manager developed a good relationship with the child and their parents or carers and encouraged the child's compliance with the court order. In all cases, the interventions delivered promoted the safety and wellbeing of the child and, where relevant, case managers considered the protection of actual and potential victims. In too many cases, however, the services delivered, and the involvement of other agencies were not managed well enough to help minimise the child's risk of harm to others.

2.4. Reviewing



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

Requires improvement

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

Of the 9 cases inspected: ¹⁶	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	6	5
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	7	5
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	4	2

Reviewing did not focus sufficiently on the risk of harm to others, although it was outstanding for promoting desistance and was good for supporting a child's safety and wellbeing. The quality of reviewing overall was therefore rated as 'Requires improvement'.

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

Of the 6 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?	6	6
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on building upon the child's strengths and enhancing protective factors?	6	6
Does reviewing consider motivation and engagement levels and any relevant barriers?	6	5
Is the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in reviewing their progress and engagement, and are their views taken into account?	6	5

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	6
Where applicable, is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in promoting the safety and wellbeing of the child?	5	3
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	5

Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

Of the 4 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?	4	2
Where applicable, is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in managing the risk of harm?	2	1
Is the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in reviewing their risk of harm, and are their views taken into account?	4	2
Where applicable, does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	3	1

In all cases, case managers responded to changes in desistance factors as part of the reviewing process and they focused on the child's strengths. In most cases, they considered the child's motivation and involved their parents or carers. When reviewing a child's safety and wellbeing, and their risk of harm to others, too few cases involved other agencies or led to changes being made in the ongoing plan of work.



3. Out-of-court disposals

We inspected five cases managed by the YOT that had received an out-of-court disposal. These consisted of one youth conditional caution, two youth cautions and two community resolutions. We interviewed the case managers in four 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 three 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:

- Assessing, planning and delivering services to support a child's desistance were outstanding.
- Assessing and delivering interventions relating to a child's risk of harm to others were outstanding.
- The delivery of interventions promoting a child's safety and wellbeing were outstanding.
- For out-of-court disposals, the recommendations were well informed and personalised to the child.
- Case managers took time to understand the child, so that they could engage with them and keep them motivated to complete the disposal.
- Reparation activities were creative and adapted to suit the child's individual needs. This was more evident because of Covid-19 and the challenges of lockdown.

Areas for improvement:

- Assessing and planning relating to a child's safety and wellbeing required improvement.
- Assessments were descriptive and did not contain enough analysis of the impact of circumstances on a child's life.
- Case managers did not consider all the risks involved in a child's life when planning for their safety and wellbeing.
- The required contingency planning to manage a child's safety and wellbeing risks was limited.

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 or 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	4
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 was rated as 'Requires improvement'. We saw thorough assessments of how to support a child's desistance and their risk of harm to others, which led to a rating of 'Outstanding', but assessing their safety and wellbeing required improvement.

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	2
Does assessment consider the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, utilising information held by other agencies?	5	3
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?	2	2
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 or 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	3

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?	3	2
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?	3	3

In all cases, the assessment focused on the child's strengths, understood their level of maturity and motivation, and involved their parents or carers by taking their views into account. Some assessments, however, were a description of circumstances and there was no analysis of the child's desistance factors, safety and wellbeing, or their risk of harm to others.

3.2. Planning



Planning is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents or 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	4
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe? ¹⁹	5	3
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe? ²⁰	3	2

The quality of planning was rated as 'Requires improvement'. We saw outstanding planning to support a child's desistance and a good level of planning for their risk of harm to others. Planning for a child's safety and wellbeing, however, required improvement.

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	4
Does planning take sufficient account of the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child?	5	5
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	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.

services following completion of out-of-court disposal work?		
Where applicable, does planning give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s?	2	1
Is the child and their parents or 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?	2	1
Does planning include necessary contingency arrangements for those risks that have been identified?	5	1

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

Of the 3 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?	3	2
Where applicable, does planning involve other agencies where appropriate?	1	1
Where applicable, does planning address any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims?	2	1
Does planning include necessary contingency arrangements for those risks that have been identified?	3	1

In all cases, planning took account of the diversity and social context of the child and considered their maturity and motivation to change. When planning for a child's safety and wellbeing, too few cases addressed the risks that were involved or put in place the necessary contingency arrangements to manage those risks.

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	3	3

The quality of implementing and delivering interventions and services was rated as 'Outstanding'. Delivering services related to desistance, a child's safety and wellbeing, and their risk of harm to other people were all outstanding.

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	5
Does service delivery reflect the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, involving parents or carers or significant others?	5	5
Is sufficient focus given to developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child and their parents or carers?	5	5
Is sufficient attention given to encouraging and enabling the child's compliance with the work of the YOT?	5	5
Does service delivery promote opportunities for community integration, including access to mainstream services?	5	5

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?	2	2

Does service delivery effectively support the safety of other people?

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

In all cases, the interventions delivered reflected the diversity and social context of the child and promoted opportunities for community integration and access to mainstream services. Case managers focused on developing and maintaining a good relationship with children and their families, and enabled the child to engage with their out-of-court disposal. The protection of actual and potential victims was considered, and the services delivered were appropriate to minimise the child's risk of harm to others.

3.4. Joint working



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

Outstanding

Our rating²⁴ for joint working is based on the following key questions:

Of the 5 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Are the YOT's recommendations sufficiently well-informed, analytical and personalised to the child, supporting joint decision making?	5	4
Does the YOT work effectively with the police in implementing the out-of-court disposal? ²⁵	1	1

The quality of joint working was rated as 'Outstanding'. In nearly all cases, the YOT's recommendations were well informed, personalised to the child and supported the joint decision-making process. Evidence of effective work with the police in implementing the disposal was also outstanding in the one relevant case.

Are the YOT'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 YOT for out-of-court disposal outcomes, conditions and interventions appropriate and proportionate?	5	4
Do the recommendations consider the degree of the child's understanding of the offence and their acknowledgement of responsibility?	5	4
Where applicable, is a positive contribution made by the YOT to determining the disposal?	5	5
Is sufficient attention given to the child's understanding, and their parents or 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	3

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.

Where applicable, is the rationale for joint disposal decisions appropriate and clearly recorded?	4	4
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Does the YOT work effectively with the police in implementing the out-of-court disposal?

Of the 1 case 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?	1	1
Is sufficient attention given to compliance with and enforcement of the conditions?	1	1

In all cases, a positive contribution was made by the YOT in determining the disposal, the information provided was relevant to the child and the rationale for the disposal decision was clearly recorded.

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.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 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 the Director of Children's Services 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 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.²⁷

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 two to seven 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,

²⁶ HM Inspectorate of Probation's standards are available here:

<https://www.justiceinspectors.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. Five of the cases selected were those of children who had received out-of-court disposals two to four 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 nine 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 0-30 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.