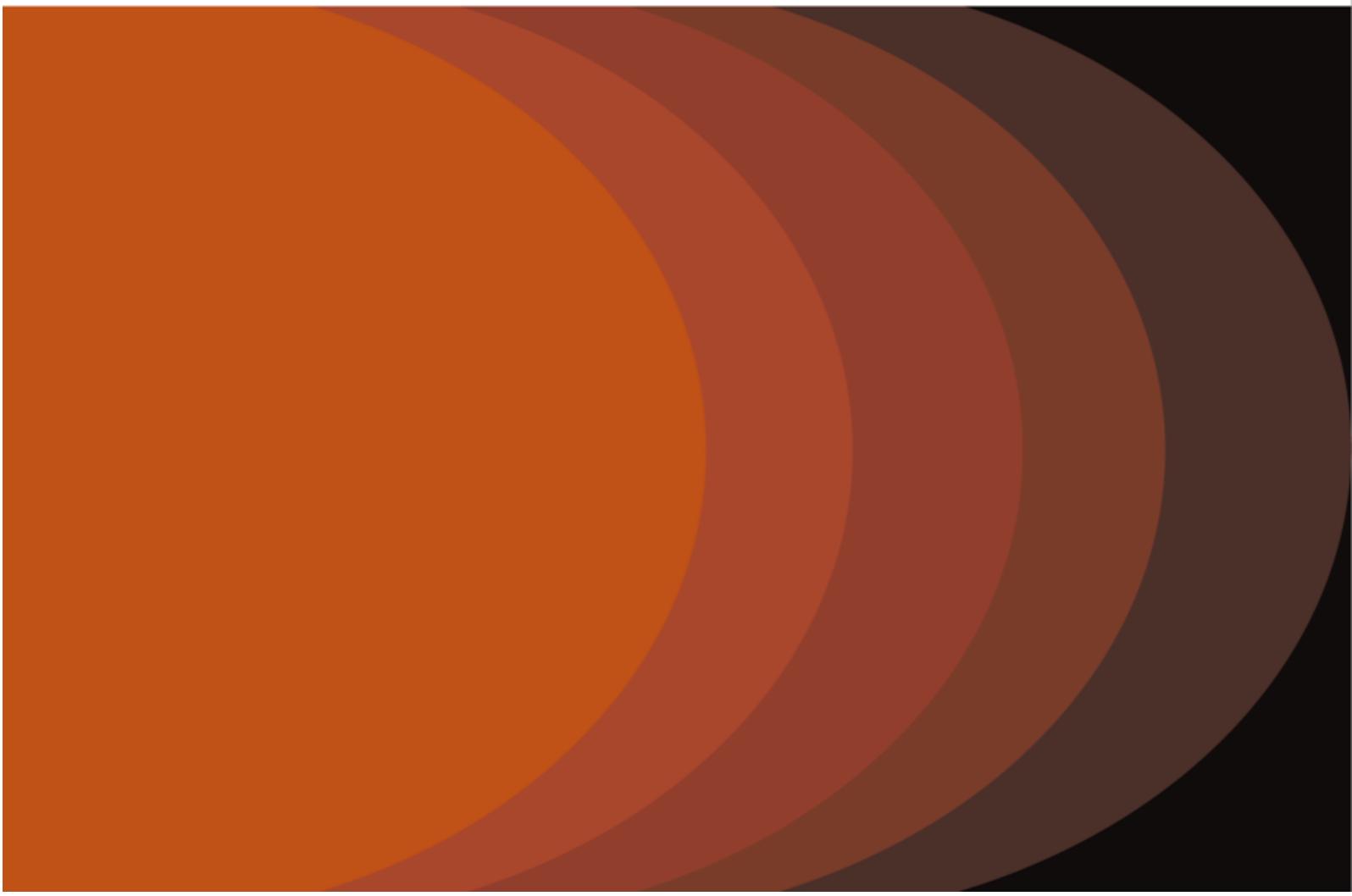




Her Majesty's
Inspectorate of
Probation

An inspection of youth offending services in
Milton Keynes

HM Inspectorate of Probation, August 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 offending service (YOS) inspections. We have inspected and rated Milton Keynes Youth Offending Team (YOT) 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, Milton Keynes 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 YOT 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 phone and video-conferencing, took place between 24 May and 27 May 2021.

We inspected Milton Keynes YOT just as it was implementing a number of significant changes to its management and leadership arrangements. These changes are designed to align multi-agency work and build on the existing strong partnerships. The management board had a clear and shared vision for children, but a more detailed understanding of how the YOT works will assist with decision-making for the future.

Work with children who are subject to court orders is sound, based on good, insightful assessments, clear planning and access to a wide range of support and interventions. Changes in the child's life, offending and risk to others are identified quickly and responded to effectively. Work is sometimes undermined by the lack of safe and confidential spaces to work with children.

Out-of-court disposal work focuses on diverting children from involvement with criminal justice services at the earliest possible stage and helping them desist from offending. A wide range of support is used to support children and give them better chances to achieve and attain. The service is prepared to develop and use different approaches to support children who are trying to deal with some significant negative life experiences. However, planning to protect victims was inadequate.

The approach to victims is underdeveloped and does not always respect their expressed wishes or put their safety on an equal footing with the safety of the child.



Marc Baker
Director of Operations

Ratings

Milton Keynes Youth Offending Team		Score	23/36
Overall rating		Good	
1. Organisational delivery			
1.1	Governance and leadership	Good	
1.2	Staff	Good	
1.3	Partnerships and services	Good	
1.4	Information and facilities	Requires improvement	
2. Court disposals			
2.1	Assessment	Good	
2.2	Planning	Good	
2.3	Implementation and delivery	Good	
2.4	Reviewing	Outstanding	
3. Out-of-court disposals			
3.1	Assessment	Outstanding	
3.2	Planning	Inadequate	
3.3	Implementation and delivery	Good	
3.4	Joint working	Good	

Recommendations

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

The Milton Keynes Youth Offending Team should:

1. review the way in which victims of crime are contacted and supported so that their expressed wishes are respected and that planning to keep them safe is effective.

The Milton Keynes management board should:

2. provide safe and confidential premises for children and staff to meet and undertake necessary work.

The National Probation Service should:

3. recruit a probation officer to be deployed in the youth offending service.

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.

Milton Keynes was established 57 years ago. It is the largest town in Buckinghamshire and is now the size of a large outer-London borough. It is one of the UK's fastest growing towns; the population expanded by 18 per cent between 2004 and 2014 and this increase has continued. The population is projected to increase by 24 per cent between 2011 and 2026, compared with 11 per cent growth in England over the same period. The Office for National Statistics estimates that the population will reach 300,000 by 2025.

The diversity of the town is changing. Milton Keynes Council's report in May 2021 on 'Equality and Diversity in Milton Keynes'² highlights the town's changing demographics and growing diversity. It states that *'the proportion of the black, Asian and minority ethnic school population has increased from 31 per cent in 2010 to 45 per cent in 2020'*.

When we inspected the Milton Keynes YOT, it had been subject to a rapid review conducted in January 2021, with recommendations implemented by April 2021. The management structure had changed completely, and the service had moved from community services to children's services. These changes were very new. They had occurred quickly, and staff and managers were still coming to terms with the implications.

Milton Keynes is in the Thames Valley Police force area, which covers nine YOTs. We inspected cases that began and were managed during the Covid-19 pandemic, when the YOT had to adapt quickly to new ways of working.

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

² Milton Keynes Council. (2021). *'Equality and Diversity in Milton Keynes'*.

Contextual facts

Population information

269,457	Total population of Milton Keynes (2019) ³
29,032	Total youth population (10–17 years) of Milton Keynes (2019) ³

Demographics of children cautioned or sentenced⁴

Age	10–14 years	15–17 years
Milton Keynes YOT	30%	70%
National average	22%	78%

Race/ethnicity	White	Black and minority ethnic	Unknown
Milton Keynes YOT	84%	16%	0%
National average	69%	28%	3%

Gender	Male	Female
Milton Keynes YOT	86%	14%
National average	85%	15%

Additional caseload data⁵

27	Total current caseload: community sentences
2	Total current caseload in custody
1	Total current caseload on licence
39	Total current caseload: community resolution or other out-of-court disposal

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 in May 2021.

1. Organisational delivery



Strengths:

- The partnership has a clear and shared vision to support children at the earliest possible time and to prevent and divert them from entering the criminal justice system. Action has been taken across the partnership to intervene early.
- The YOT has a clear strategy in place to deliver this vision. Implementation is driven by the board chair and the YOT manager.
- There are examples of strong partnership work and collaboration. Some partnerships have been sustained over years and have led to nationally recognised service improvements.
- The quality and range of partnerships have improved significantly over recent times, in part because the YOT has been relocated within children's services. Staff and managers welcome the closer alignment of the services.
- The relocation of the YOT within children's services is designed to further strengthen work to meet the complex needs of the children who are supervised by the YOT. The distinct role of the YOT will need to be defined within this wider partnership.
- Children benefit from a staff team who have the skills to motivate children and form trusting relationships.

Areas for improvement:

- The communication between the board and frontline service delivery is not yet effective. As a result, board members rely on broad YOT performance measures rather than having a detailed and nuanced understanding of the issues that affect the way the partnership's vision is translated into practice.
- Services and responses to the victims of crime are underdeveloped. The service is reviewing its approach, but we found a small number of examples where victims' needs were not paramount. Planning for the needs and wishes of victims in out-of-court disposals was by far the weakest area of practice, resulting in the only 'Inadequate' rating.
- The YOT building was closed last year, as it could not be made Covid-19 secure. Since the easing of Covid-19 restrictions, alternative community venues have been used for work with children. While these are suitable for the majority of children, the lack of a specific safe and confidential space is presenting ongoing issues for the staff and children.

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.

Good

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?

The vision of the service and its partners is to provide support at the earliest possible point to divert children away from the criminal justice system. Where possible, the YOT takes action to reduce the factors that can make it more likely that children are vulnerable to becoming involved in crime and problematic behaviour. There is a strategy in place to deliver this vision, and its implementation has been driven by the board chair and YOT management team.

The location of the YOT within children's services is a recent change. This is designed to strengthen work to safeguard the complex needs of children supervised by the service.

Do the partnership arrangements actively support effective service delivery?

The membership of the board has been reviewed and refreshed over the past 12 months, to better reflect existing partnerships and to strengthen some key areas, including early help and links with education providers.

The use of speech, language and communication therapists is a strong example of partnership working and collaboration. This has been sustained over years and has led to nationally recognised service improvements.

The board has effective methods to identify key performance indicators. Members have identified a range of wider measures that they want to capture and understand. To do this, they have started to use existing data in a better way and are considering what they need to do to interrogate partnership data sets.

Priorities for improvement are accurately targeted. The findings of this inspection support those identified by the board. Work to safeguard and protect children is strong at a strategic level and informs sound operational practice.

There are links with wider criminal justice partnerships, including the Community Safety Partnership. The Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner has a place on the board, although there has been no representation to date.

The board chair is fully engaged and driving improvement. Recent changes to the YOT line management will further the board's understanding of the YOT's work. This is needed, as the current communication between the board and frontline service delivery is not fully effective. As a result, board members rely on performance

measures rather than having a detailed and nuanced understanding of the issues that affect the way the vision is translated into practice.

Risks to the service are identified, but there are examples of decisions made at board level where the full impact on service delivery was not thoroughly understood.

Does the leadership of the YOT support effective service delivery?

There have been very recent changes to the leadership team of the service. Staff appointed to key posts have a good knowledge of the YOT's work. They have been appointed from within the team. However, arrangements were too new for the inspection team to be able to form a clear view on their effectiveness. We found examples of how the management team had advocated for the needs of children to the wider partnership on behalf of the service.

1.2. Staff



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

Good

Key staffing data⁶

Total staff headcount (full-time equivalent, FTE)	21
Average caseload per case manager (FTE)	7–12

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?

Staff workloads are monitored and there is active allocation of work. This enables the YOT to balance workloads, complexity and other aspects of case management, which supports the delivery of high-quality services. All case-holding staff who responded to our survey were comfortable with their caseload and felt sufficiently experienced and qualified.

Arrangements are in place to provide continuity of provision to cover planned and unplanned absences. The team has a positive attitude to covering workloads for both planned and unplanned absences.

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

The YOT management team has tried to mitigate the effects of difficulties that partners have faced in filling some key posts. For example, the board monitored the difficulties that the National Probation Service faced in recruiting and deploying a qualified probation officer. The YOT used the financial contribution from probation to

⁶ Data was supplied by YOT and reflected the caseload at the time of the inspection announcement.

employ a YOT worker who was also an experienced and qualified former probation officer.

Staff said that their training and development needs were met, fully (33 per cent), mostly (43 per cent) or partially (24 per cent). There is a suitable training offer of general and specialist training, including joint training with other children's services staff. The service was on track to have half of the team trained in AIM3, but this has been disrupted by Covid-19.

There are opportunities for staff progression, as recent appointments to deputy YOT manager and senior practitioner roles demonstrate.

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

Management oversight of work is provided in different ways, including through reviewing work in a variety of multi-agency risk meetings and through direct oversight and countersigning of work. Staff said that managers were responsive and accessible when needed and that they had received consistent management oversight. We found that all of the cases in our sample had received management oversight, which was effective in two-thirds of the cases.

Staff felt that they missed the opportunities for informal support and advice that they used to get when they worked from a permanent base. Managers are looking at ways to replicate this while staff remain working mainly from home.

Are arrangements for learning and development comprehensive and responsive?

There is a well-established learning culture across the partnership and within the YOT. Systems have been improved to learn from case reviews and in response to inspection. However, there are limited systems for recognising and rewarding good and exceptional work in order to promote the behaviours the board and managers would want other staff to consider.

1.3. Partnerships and services



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

Good

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 service prepares performance reports that are scrutinised by the board. These contain a range of indicators; some are required, and others are those that the board has chosen to monitor. These include monitoring for any disproportionality and trying to understand trends and patterns that may need attention. The performance officer draws information from a range of sources, including the Youth Justice Board's disproportionality toolkit. This shows that there is no ethnic group with statistically significant over-representation. The YOT's self-assessment highlighted the need for the staff team to be more representative of the community. The YOT has made a

recommendation to the board to consider targeted recruitment to improve the diversity of the staff team.

The board recognises that it needs to do more to understand the data it is given. Members have an ambition to align data sets across the partnership to provide meaningful information. The board sufficiently understands children's desistance needs. It uses monthly performance reports, audits and some examples of in-depth analysis to design and review service provision. The strongest evidence is found in work to divert children from entering the criminal justice system via the Early Support Project, where rates of offending are 3.6 per cent.

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

The YOT'S own self-assessment against inspection standards highlighted the need to improve children's access to mental and physical health support. Recruitment has taken place to fill the mental health worker role, and the clinical psychiatrist has provided some support on a consultation basis. However, the school nursing service is used to meet physical and sexual health needs, which is ineffective.

Other than those identified gaps, children can access a wide range of services and interventions to meet their needs. All children are assessed to identify any speech, language or communication needs, vulnerability to exploitation and their access to education and post-16 learning.

The quality and range of partnerships have improved significantly over recent times, in part due to the relocation of the YOT with children's services. Staff and managers also recognise the positive effect of co-location in the civic centre on relationships with children's social care.

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

There is a strong and fully supported partnership approach to meeting children's desistance needs at the earliest opportunity, with complementary support services now reaching primary-age children.

Milton Keynes YOT has been a national advocate for the use of speech and language assessment for this cohort of children. All children are assessed and screened out rather than in. The findings from assessments are incorporated into AssetPlus and other assessments to give a clear indication of how communication difficulties can contribute to offending.

The YOT reports that the number of children who are not in education, training or employment has stabilised, going from 53 per cent to 39 per cent in the past year. Over the past year there has been a reduction, from 34 per cent to 25 per cent, in the proportion of children on part-time timetables. A specific project, Promoting Reintegration and Reducing Exclusions, aims to reduce exclusions by providing speech, language and communication assessments to children at risk of exclusion. This project is subject to external evaluation.

Children benefit from strong work to keep them safe. The partnership has invested in services to identify and respond to substance misuse and emotional and mental health issues.

Partnerships with social care and early help are strong, aided by multi-agency approaches, including the complex cases panel, risk management panels and joint work in individual cases. There are good relationships at strategic and operational levels, aided by the commitment of the Director of Children’s Services, who chairs the YOT management board. He has taken the opportunity to align partnership services for this cohort of children.

The YOT offers a range of programmes and interventions to support safety and wellbeing, desistance and risk of harm. Staff are trying hard to deliver these as the service recovers from Covid-19 restrictions; however, the lack of a suitable working space has had a negative effect.

Involvement of children and their parents and carers

Staff demonstrated good skills in engaging children and parents and included their views in assessments. At a strategic level, the board had set an objective to improve consultation with children and parents to inform service delivery. We noted that children had not been consulted on the effects of delivering services from community venues rather than a specific YOT building.

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.

Requires improvement

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 full range of up-to-date policies and procedures, which are accessible to staff. Staff understand how to access services, and pathways are straightforward. Escalation processes are known but rarely required. Some policy decisions are proactive, an example being the screening-out approach to speech, language and communication needs. This leads to a greater understanding of children’s need for the wider partnership.

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

The YOT building was closed during the lockdown, as it could not be made Covid-19 secure. Alternative arrangements are in place, including the use of community venues, and these will be beneficial for the majority of children. However, these arrangements are not suitable in all circumstances. Staff do not currently have access to safe and confidential places to undertake work with children who pose a high risk of harm to others, including other children and staff. Staff and managers expressed justified concern about the lack of safe and suitable premises. We were given examples where the safety of staff and legal requirements placed on children were compromised. The board is aware of the issue but is not fully informed about the impact on staff in critical cases. 89 per cent of staff in our survey said that they did not have a suitable working environment.

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

Effective ICT systems are in place. Staff have the technology to work at home during the pandemic and portable devices for remote work in the community.

Information-sharing is effective. Partners understand what information to share and when this needs to be done. Staff have access to the social care system in order to access relevant information. Quality assurance systems are being revised in line with the new management arrangements, and performance data is available to managers. The management team is very new, so it is too early to demonstrate how they would use information to improve performance.

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

There are some good examples of how learning and evidence are being used to drive improvements, including the Early Support Project to help children desist from initial offending. However, more detailed analysis needs to be developed to help the board and service managers track children's access to services and to be able to identify which programmes and interventions are working.



2. Court disposals

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

Strengths:

- Work to protect children was the strongest area, with interventions delivered to reduce risks. All children are screened for potential exploitation.
- Well-informed, balanced assessments are improved by the use of specialist speech, language and communication assessments.
- Reviewing is ongoing and active. When changes are identified, these are acted on quickly.
- The child's strengths and protective factors are identified alongside structural barriers. Planning builds on the child's strengths and actions are taken to try and reduce the effects of barriers.
- Children benefit from a wide range of interventions delivered with skill and speed.
- Building trusting relationships is the core of the YOT's work, and staff show persistence and flexibility in engaging children and their parents and carers.

Areas for improvement:

- There were some delays in accessing Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, due to a year-long unfilled vacancy.
- In a few cases, work was affected by the lack of a safe and confidential place to meet children and undertake assessments.
- Staff safety was also compromised on occasion, when there was not a safe place to meet children.

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.

Good

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

Of the 9 cases inspected	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	9	7
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	9	7
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	9	7

The quality of assessments undertaken by this YOT was 'Good'. The YOT used a range of information and specialist assessments to gain a rounded view of the child's strengths and any factors that might contribute to further offending. Staff paid close attention to the child's strengths and protective factors and how adverse experiences faced by the child had affected their ability to make decisions. Staff had used the assessments to provide the context of offending-related needs. Assessments of desistance, safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm were all of the same quality.

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	7
Does assessment consider the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, utilising information held by other agencies?	9	7
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?	7	7
Is sufficient attention given to understanding the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change,	9	9

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

and their likelihood of engaging with the court disposal?		
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?	9	8

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	7
Where applicable, does assessment analyse controls and interventions to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	8	8

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?

Of the 9 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risk of harm to others posed by the child, including identifying who is at risk and the nature of that risk?	8	6
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

2.2. Planning



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

Good

Our rating⁸ 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? ⁹	9	7
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe? ¹⁰	9	7

Planning for desistance was slightly better than for safety and wellbeing and risk of harm. Plans specified the work and services most likely to reduce offending. Staff had considered the best way to engage the child to make sure they could undertake interventions. In all cases the child and parent were involved in planning processes. Plans included the actions of other agencies and sought to support ongoing work and progress. We found good use of restrictive interventions to manage risk, and good multi-agency risk management processes that added to plans. Contingency planning was not always evident; however, changes to risk and needs were identified quickly and responded to.

Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?

Of the 9 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does planning set out the services most likely to support desistance, paying sufficient attention to the available timescales and the need for sequencing?	9	8
Does planning take sufficient account of the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child?	9	7
Does planning take sufficient account of the child's strengths and protective factors, and seek to reinforce or develop these as necessary?	9	7

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.

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

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

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	8
Where applicable, does planning give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s?	6	6
Is the child and their parents and carers meaningfully involved in planning, and are their views taken into account?	9	9

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

Of the 9 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?	9	7
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	6
Does planning set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	9	8
Does planning set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to manage those risks that have been identified?	9	6

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

Of the 9 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?	9	7
Does planning involve other agencies where appropriate?	8	7
Does planning address any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims?	6	6
Does planning set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote the safety of other people?	9	7
Does planning set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to manage those risks that have been identified?	9	7

2.3. Implementation and delivery



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

Good

Our rating¹¹ 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? ¹²	9	8
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people? ¹³	9	7

Delivery of interventions was strongest for safety and wellbeing needs. Staff supported children to comply with the requirements of the order, using both enforcement and encouragement. We found numerous examples of how staff had established and maintained effective, trusting relationships with children, including during periods when restrictions were in place due to Covid-19. In most cases we saw very good contact with other agencies and workers to check on the child's progress, including substance misuse services and care staff in residential homes. Where the child posed a risk to others, again we found good collaboration with other agencies, including the police, and use of multi-agency risk management panels such as Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements. We noted that agreed actions had been taken.

Where the child needed to be protected, staff made efforts to check out the situation the child was in, including good use of home visits and using information from parents, the child and other agencies, although this could be reactive rather than coordinated.

Staff worked hard to keep in contact with children and undertake work with them. In most cases, this was done using community venues such as youth clubs and libraries; however, in a few cases these venues were not suitable, as confidentiality could not be guaranteed. On occasion, undertaking home visits because there was no safe, viable alternative placed staff at risk.

¹¹ 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.

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

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

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 and carers or significant others?	9	8
Does service delivery build upon the child's strengths and enhance protective factors?	9	8
Is sufficient focus given to developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child and their parents and carers?	9	9
Does service delivery promote opportunities for community integration including access to services post-supervision?	9	7
Is sufficient attention given to encouraging and enabling the child's compliance with the work of the YOT?	9	9
In cases where it is required, are enforcement actions taken when appropriate?	3	3

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

Of the 9 cases with factors related to keeping the child safe:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does service delivery promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	9	8
Where applicable, is the involvement of other organisations in keeping the child safe sufficiently well-coordinated?	8	6

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

Of the 9 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?	9	7
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?	7	6

2.4. Reviewing



Reviewing of progress is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents and carers.	Outstanding
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Our rating¹⁴ for reviewing is based on the following key questions:

Of the 9 cases inspected ¹⁵	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?	5	5
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	6	6

Reviewing was an active and ongoing activity used effectively by staff to think about the actions they were taking and whether these were right for the child. We saw staff focusing particularly on the child's motivation and strengths. To help with this, staff used Signs of Safety, which used very clear language about what was and wasn't working in the approach taken to working with the child. Staff quickly identified changes, especially in issues that might mean that the child was becoming more vulnerable or that risk of harm to others was increasing. Once these had been identified, staff took action to mitigate risks and shared information, which enabled other partners to review their actions.

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

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ 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.

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	5
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	6
Is the child and their parents and carers meaningfully involved in reviewing their progress and engagement, and are their views taken into account?	6	5

Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

Of the 5 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?	5	5
Where applicable, is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in promoting the safety and wellbeing of the child?	5	5
Where applicable, does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	5	5

Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

Of the 6 cases where there were changes in factors related to keeping other people safe:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does reviewing identify and respond to changes in factors related to risk of harm?	6	5
Where applicable, is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in managing the risk of harm?	6	6
Is the child and their parents and carers meaningfully involved in reviewing their risk of harm, and are their views taken into account?	6	6
Where applicable, does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	6	5



3. Out-of-court disposals

We inspected six cases managed by the YOT that had received an out-of-court disposal. These consisted of three youth conditional cautions and three community resolutions. 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:

- Assessments were of a consistently high standard, detailed and insightful. Staff understood the principles of assessment and applied these to the various formats used.
- Staff were given time to undertake assessments and to start to form relationships with children, parents and carers.
- Joint work with the police to agree outcomes was good, with sufficient challenge.
- Delivery of a wide range of support and interventions was good, especially for desistance and safety and wellbeing.
- The Early Support Project, designed to prevent children from offending, offered a structured support package. Very few children went on to commit a further offence.

Areas for improvement:

- Planning to manage risk of harm was not good enough in too many cases. It failed to focus on keeping actual and potential victims safe. Sometimes it took too long to implement actions to protect family members.

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

3.1. Assessment



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

Outstanding

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

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

The quality of assessments for out-of-court disposals was rated as 'Outstanding'. Assessments were completed to a consistently high standard. Screening tools were detailed enough to make appropriate decisions, and were followed up by a number of different assessment tools. Staff understood what made a good assessment and could apply this to each format. They made good use of a wide range of information, and their decisions and judgements were well balanced and proportionate. Again, we saw that there was detailed work to understand the child's strengths and protective factors, which could be built on. The links between communication and education and offending were assessed well and shared with relevant agencies, to increase their understanding of the child's needs.

The impact of adverse childhood experiences and exploitation was incorporated into assessments, along with the effect of these on the child's behaviour and reactions.

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

Of the 6 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Is there sufficient analysis of offending behaviour, including the child's acknowledgement of responsibility, attitudes towards and motivations for their offending?	6	6
Does assessment consider the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, utilising information held by other agencies?	6	6
Does assessment focus on the child's strengths and protective factors?	6	6

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

Where applicable, does assessment analyse the key structural barriers facing the child?	6	6
Is sufficient attention given to understanding the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change?	6	4
Where applicable, does assessment give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s, and opportunities for restorative justice?	5	4
Is the child and their parents and carers meaningfully involved in their assessment, and are their views taken into account?	6	4

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?

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

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?

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

3.2. Planning



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

Inadequate

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

Of the 6 cases inspected	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?	6	4
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe? ¹⁸	5	4
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe? ¹⁹	5	2

Planning to manage risk of harm was poor, leading to the rating of 'Inadequate'. Too little focus was given to how other people could be kept safe, including in cases where violence was perpetrated in the family home against parents or siblings and in cases of sexual assault. Planning did not include the wishes of victims. These were not always known or, where the victim had expressed their views, they were not always followed up. This applied to actual victims; planning did not always provide actions for potential victims, including peers.

In a few cases, one of the issues that prevented effective risk management planning was that of timeliness. There were long delays between the offence and the decision on the disposal or the time elapsed to undertake the assessment. In these situations, where the child was identified as having harmed someone, swifter planning and action were needed to manage and reduce the opportunity for the child to repeat the harmful behaviours.

Planning to keep the child safe and support desistance was much stronger, with accurately targeted interventions being proposed. We were pleased to find that in all cases consideration had been given to the child's diversity needs. This led to planning that was achievable and realistic.

Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?

Of the 6 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does planning set out the services most likely to support desistance, paying sufficient attention to the available timescales and the need for sequencing?	6	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.

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

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

Does planning take sufficient account of the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child?	6	6
Does planning take sufficient account of the child's strengths and protective factors, and seek to reinforce or develop these as necessary?	6	5
Does planning take sufficient account of the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change, and seek to develop these as necessary?	6	5
Does planning take sufficient account of opportunities for community integration, including access to mainstream services following completion of out-of-court disposal work?	6	6
Where applicable, does planning give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s?	5	3
Is the child and their parents and carers meaningfully involved in planning, and are their views taken into account?	6	6

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

Of the 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	4
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?	5	5
Does planning include necessary contingency arrangements for those risks that have been identified?	5	4

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?	5	4

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

3.3. Implementation and delivery



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

Good²⁰

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

Of the 6 cases inspected	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Does service delivery effectively support the child's desistance?	6	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	3

The delivery of interventions to support desistance and to keep the child safe was the strongest areas of work. Staff made considerable efforts to encourage children to engage with the work. They used explanation, and interventions that played to the children's strengths and interests also helped. Interventions started quickly and were delivered by case managers and partner agencies without delaying or extending the child's involvement with the service. Children could, if they wished, keep working with the services once the formal involvement had ended.

Children on out-of-court disposals accessed the same range of services and interventions as those on court orders. We saw case managers working with persistence and flexibility to engage the child and their parents. If there were problems, they tried to understand what was causing the difficulties and then adapted their approach. Again, we saw use of home visits, remote access via technology and adapted methods of contact being used. The support and advocacy of the speech and language therapists were sought and respected. Case managers valued the insight the assessment gave.

²⁰ Professional discretion applied at the ratings panel.

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.

Not enough work was delivered to reduce the risk of harm to others. The experiences of victims were not given the same weight as keeping the child safe or preventing further offending.

Does service delivery effectively support the child's desistance?

Of the 6 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Are the delivered services those most likely to support desistance, with sufficient attention given to sequencing and the available timescales?	6	5
Does service delivery reflect the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, involving parents and carers or significant others?	6	6
Is sufficient focus given to developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child and their parents and carers?	6	5
Is sufficient attention given to encouraging and enabling the child's compliance with the work of the YOT?	6	6
Does service delivery promote opportunities for community integration, including access to mainstream services?	6	6

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	5
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	2
Are the delivered services sufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	5	4

3.4. Joint working



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

Good

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

Of the 6 cases inspected	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Are the YOT's recommendations sufficiently well-informed, analytical and personalised to the child, supporting joint decision-making?	6	5
Does the YOT work effectively with the police in implementing the out-of-court disposal? ²⁵	3	2

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

The YOT undertakes a detailed screening process, gathering information in order to make well-informed recommendations. This includes the impact and future effects of involvement with the criminal justice system. There are open and robust discussions about cases and outcomes. An escalation process is in place, although it is rarely needed. In the cases we assessed, all had an outcome that was in the best interests of the child.

The screening process also proposes the areas of work that should be undertaken with the child to meet identified needs. This forms the basis of a plan, and referrals for services can be made at this point. Following the decision, the case is allocated to a case manager and then a full assessment is undertaken. The screening provides a solid foundation for the assessment.

Decisions are subject to scrutiny by the police to ensure that decision-making is consistent.

Of the 6 cases inspected:	Relevant cases	Number 'Yes'
Where applicable, are the recommendations by the YOT for out-of-court disposal outcomes, conditions and interventions appropriate and proportionate?	6	5
Do the recommendations consider the degree of the child's understanding of the offence and their acknowledgement of responsibility?	6	5
Where applicable, is a positive contribution made by the YOT to determining the disposal?	6	5

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.

Is sufficient attention given to the child's understanding, and their parents'/carers' understanding, of the implications of receiving an out-of-court disposal?	6	4
Is the information provided to inform decision-making timely to meet the needs of the case, legislation and guidance?	6	5
Where applicable, is the rationale for joint disposal decisions appropriate and clearly recorded?	6	6

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

Relationships between the service and the police are effective at strategic and operational level. Thames Valley Police are trying to improve the timeliness of their referral processes. These are showing some signs of improvement but can remain very long. This results in difficulties for the child in recalling events and potential delays in managing risk.

The police have worked with the YOT to deliver a new Drugs Diversion scheme, which was introduced at the end of last year. This is a 'help approach' rather than a more onerous formal outcome. It can be used not just for a first offence but also for subsequent offences if the child continues to engage with services.

The progress and outcomes of youth conditional cautions are shared with the police in a timely way. Breaches are notified so that staff can take action to enforce the conditions of the caution.

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

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 chair of the management board, YOT manager and management group 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 14 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 eight 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. Five of the cases selected were those of children who had received court disposals approximately three to six 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.justiceinspectrates.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 three to five months earlier. This enabled us to examine work in relation to assessing, planning, implementing and joint working. Where necessary, interviews with other people closely involved in the case also took place.

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

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

Ratings explained

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

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

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

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

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

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

Overall provider rating

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

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

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

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

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