



Her Majesty's  
Inspectorate of  
Probation

# Inspecting youth offending services: the current climate

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## OUR INSPECTIONS...

- **We have continued to inspect youth justice services throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.**
- **Remote working, in the main. We are returning to on-site inspections.**
- **We are understanding the challenges Covid-19 has presented to services and inspected accordingly.**
- **By the end of September, we had inspected 76 YOTs since 2018, with a further 19 in year 4.**
- **Core inspection programme due to be completed in May 2024.**





## WHAT WE LEARNED FROM COVID-19

- **Services are resilient – they adapted to the changes brought by the pandemic quickly and effectively.**
- **There was innovation, and some of the ideas could be positive steps for future service provision.**
- **The pressure on staff and general resource has been substantial and recovery is slow.**
- **Our current inspections show familiar, pre-pandemic concerns remain – risk of harm, OOCs, victim support and boards not understanding the needs of children.**



## CURRENT PRIORITIES

- **Introduction of new inspection standards on the quality of resettlement work, diversity and OOCd policy and practice**
- **Return to on-site inspection since the end of September 2021: Wakefield, Hillingdon and Plymouth**
- **Thematic inspections: a) Supervision and support for black and mixed heritage boys b) ETE needs and services for children on YOT caseloads c) Serious youth violence (led by HMICFRS) d) Girls in custody (led by HMI Prisons)**
- **Academic insights and HMI Probation Research: OOCd, community resolutions, contextual safeguarding, children looked after, multi-agency work, and neurodiversity.**
- **Effective practice guidance and evidence summaries:**  
<https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/effective-practice/youth-justice-case-management-effectiveness-in-inspected-cases/>



## CHANGES TO OUR INSPECTION STANDARDS

**Resettlement: There is a high-quality, evidence-based resettlement service for children leaving custody.**

- 1. Is there a resettlement policy in place that promotes a high-quality, constructive and personalised resettlement service for all children?**
- 2. Does resettlement provision promote a high-quality, constructive and personalised resettlement service for all children?**
- 3. Are resettlement policy and provision regularly assessed and updated to ensure effectiveness and maintain alignment with the evidence base?**



## CHANGES TO OUR INSPECTION STANDARDS CONT.

**Out-of-court disposals: There is a high-quality, evidence-based out-of-court disposal service in place that promotes diversion and supports sustainable desistance.**

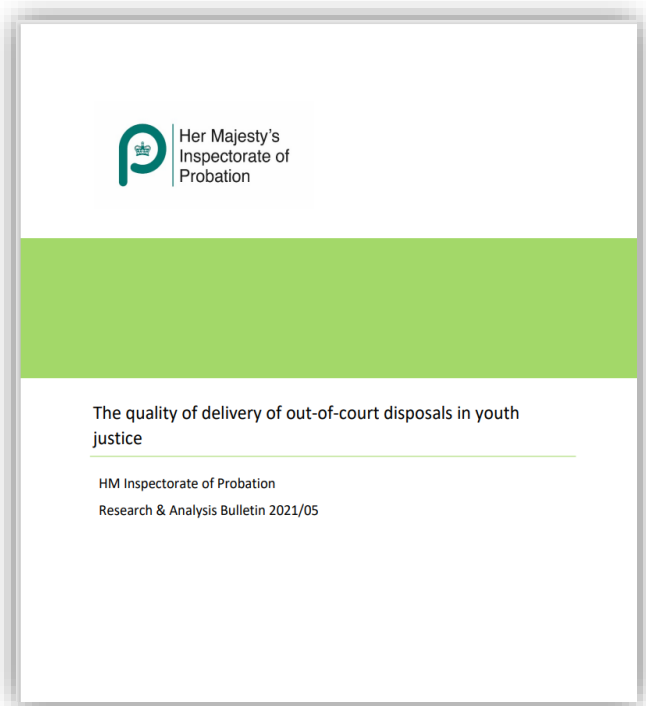
- 1. Is there a policy in place for out-of-court disposal provision that promotes appropriate diversion and supports sustainable desistance?**
- 2. Does out-of-court disposal provision promote diversion and support sustainable desistance?**
- 3. Are the OOCD policy and provision regularly assessed and updated to ensure effectiveness and maintain alignment with the evidence base?**



# THE QUALITY OF OUT-OF-COURT DISPOSALS IN YOUTH JUSTICE – PUBLISHED SEPT 2021

Increasing numbers of children subject to OOCs...

- What does quality delivery look like?
- What are the variations in quality?
- What are the barriers and enablers?



June 2018



**287** community  
resolutions

**724**  
case assessments

**116** cautions

**321** conditional  
cautions

February 2020





## KEY FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS:

### The best performing YOTs...

- **Have a robust framework for managing out-of-court disposals, where staff understood their roles and that of their partners and where inter-agency communication was strong.**
- **Board membership was sufficiently diverse, with skilled and engaged board members from key agencies able to facilitate effective multi-agency working.**
- **Work with other agencies, and with parents and carers, to try to establish a safe space to support children towards positive, healthy and pro-social lives.**

**NOTE:** The effectiveness of leadership and management was not necessarily correlated with the quality of delivery of out-of-court disposals.





## WHAT ISN'T GOING WELL...

- **The overall quality of the case-level work in relation to out-of-court disposals was below that for court disposals.**
- **The lack of standardisation of decision making, assessment, planning and delivery of out-of-court disposals has led to a number of different models considerable variations in the quality of delivery.**
- **Shortcomings were found in relation to the levels of communication, recording, performance monitoring, and feedback.**
- **Insufficient focus upon the safety of the child and/or other people. This often commenced at the assessment stage, where there was a focus upon desistance but insufficient attention given to potential safety issues.**



## KEY ENABLERS

- Seeking **early involvement** to inform panel decisions, utilising a suitable assessment and making sure that the disposal was appropriate.
- using **multiple techniques** to connect with and engage children at the assessment and planning stages.
- utilising **multiple sources** of information to build a more complete picture of the factors influencing the child's offending and relevant safety concerns.
- considering the work of **other agencies** engaged with the child to better coordinate and compliment delivery, and identify potential post-disposal work.
- ensuring plans are proportionate to the **needs of the child** and to the disposal, and build sufficiently upon the child's strengths – ensuring flexibility in the delivery of interventions, assisting with engagement and compliance.



## DRAWING ON A WIDE RANGE OF SERVICES

**We expect services and interventions accessible to the YOT cohort of children to include, (but should not be limited to):**

**Accommodation**

**Education, training and  
employment (ETE)**

**Family and Relationships**

**Such as...**

- **Parenting and family support/mentoring, domestic abuse support.**
- **Mental health (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services).**
- **Physical/sexual health (for example, the school nurse).**
- **Reparation/community payback and victim work (for example, restorative justice).**
- **Social care (child protection/Child in Need/looked after children/care leavers).**
- **Speech, language and communication needs.**
- **Substance misuse, offending behaviour work, including cognitive behavioural interventions.**



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## CAREER OPPORTUNITIES...

**Did you know we offer secondment and local area assessor opportunities?**

**We are interested in hearing from anyone who has experience of probation and youth offending services to join our inspection teams.**



- **Gain invaluable experience of our inspection programme and standards.**
- **Be part of core inspection and thematic inspection programme.**
- **Expand your career and add to your CV.**



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ANY QUESTIONS?



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## CONTACT US



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