

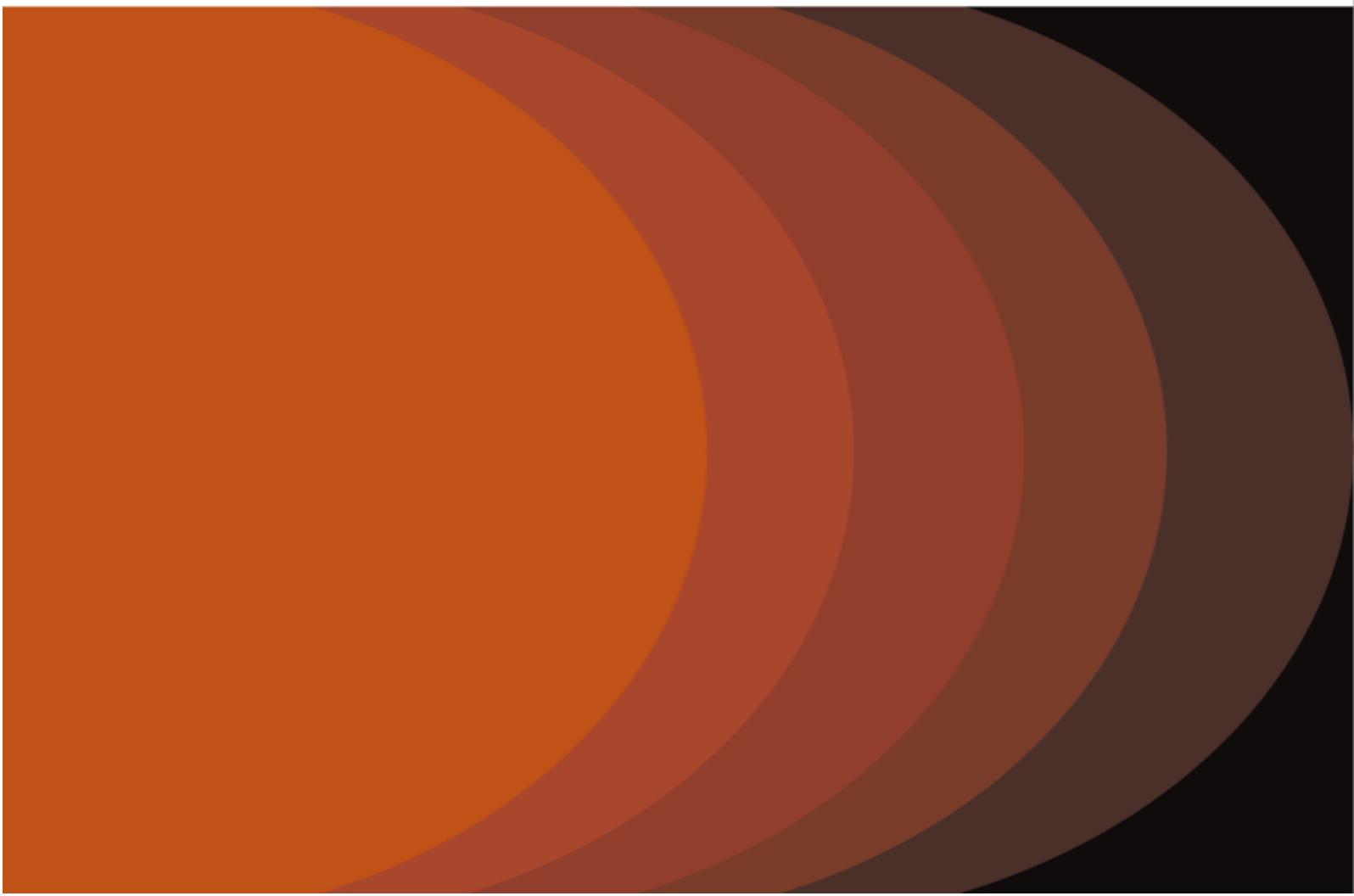


Her Majesty's
Inspectorate of
Probation

An inspection of youth offending services in

Kirklees

HM Inspectorate of Probation, October 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.

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

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Foreword

This inspection is part of our four-year programme of youth offending service (YOS) inspections. We have inspected and rated Kirklees Youth Justice Service (YJS) across three broad areas: 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. Overall, Kirklees YJS was rated as 'Requires improvement'.

Kirklees YJS has been through a period of instability and significant challenge including a restructuring and the Covid-19 pandemic. The impact of this was evident in the individual cases that we assessed in our inspection, in particular regarding the effectiveness of planning to address the needs of the children.

Overall, we were disappointed by the service delivered to children and have identified a number of areas that the YJS needs to urgently focus on to improve. Despite the shortfalls identified, we were encouraged by the actions taken by the YJS partnership and its candid and accurate self-assessment of the issues to be addressed.

Although there are currently no staff vacancies, during the period covered by the cases we inspected, we found that staffing levels did not allow for the delivery of a quality service. Despite this, staff and managers are motivated and clearly develop supportive and meaningful relationships with children. There is a comprehensive training plan, but the YJS has not consistently addressed the learning and development needs of all staff. The YJS partnership does have access to a sufficient volume, range and quality of services, but not all arrangements with partners and providers are effective. There is mixed evidence of performance and quality systems driving improvement and of learning from audits, inspection and review processes.

In court disposal work, although we found no children at imminent risk of harm, the quality of planning to address safety and wellbeing and risk of harm to others was poor and planning was not aligned with that of other agencies. There was inconsistency in the priority given to protecting victims, and reviewing risk of harm to others was found to be inadequate.

In the out-of-court disposals we inspected, the YJS did not contribute information and recommendations to the joint decision-making panel in most cases. Our case assessments highlighted shortfalls in the quality of work undertaken to address children's safety and wellbeing needs, and the risk of harm some children posed to others. Assessments require improvement and plans are inadequate, specifically in relation to contingency planning for safety and wellbeing and risk of harm to others, as well as delivery to address a child's risk of harm to others. Management oversight of both court disposal and out-of-court disposal work did not consistently promote high-quality casework practice.

In this report, we make several recommendations that will enable Kirklees YJS to make important improvements in its service for children who have offended.



Justin Russell
Chief Inspector of Probation

Ratings

Kirklees youth justice service		Score	8/36
Overall rating		Requires improvement	
1. Organisational delivery			
1.1	Governance and leadership	Requires improvement	
1.2	Staff	Requires improvement	
1.3	Partnerships and services	Requires improvement	
1.4	Information and facilities	Requires improvement	
2. Court disposals			
2.1	Assessment	Requires improvement	
2.2	Planning	Inadequate	
2.3	Implementation and delivery	Good	
2.4	Reviewing	Inadequate	
3. Out-of-court disposals			
3.1	Assessment	Requires improvement	
3.2	Planning	Inadequate	
3.3	Implementation and delivery	Inadequate	
3.4	Joint working	Inadequate	

Executive summary

Overall, Kirklees Youth Justice Service (YJS) is rated as: 'Requires improvement'. This rating has been determined by inspecting the YOS in three areas of its work, referred to as 'domains'. We inspect against 12 'standards', shared between the domains. Our fieldwork was conducted between 28 June and 02 July 2021. The 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.¹ Published scoring rules generate the overall YJS rating.² The findings and subsequent ratings in those domains are described below.

1. Organisational delivery



We interviewed the YJS manager and the chair of the management board. We held meetings with other members of the board and key stakeholders, as well as YJS staff and volunteers.

The YJS management board sets a clear vision and strategy, with a comprehensive youth justice plan. Although the board is well-attended, not all board members are of sufficient seniority to commit resources and make decisions on behalf of their agencies. Risks to the service are understood by the board chair and the YJS service manager, but this understanding was not evident across all board members and the leadership team.

The provision of staff from partner organisations is good. Staff and managers are motivated to contribute to the delivery of a quality service and develop supportive and meaningful relationships with children. However, staffing levels were not always planned and reviewed to meet the changing demands and profile of children in the YJS cohort. There is a comprehensive training plan in place, but the YJS has not yet been consistent in addressing the learning and development needs of all staff.

There is some understanding of the profile of the YJS cohort, and the partnership does have access to a sufficient volume, range and quality of services. Despite this, not all arrangements with partners and providers are established, maintained and used effectively to support desistance, maintain safety and wellbeing, or manage the risk of harm to others. The necessary policies and guidance are in place to enable staff to deliver a quality service, although they are not always communicated consistently and effectively. There is mixed evidence of performance and quality systems driving improvement and of learning from audits, inspection and review processes.

¹ HM Inspectorate of Probation's standards can be found here:

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

² Each of the 12 standards is scored on a 0–3 scale in which 'Inadequate' = 0; 'Requires improvement' = 1; 'Good' = 2; 'Outstanding' = 3. Adding these scores produces a total score ranging from 0–36, which is banded to produce the overall rating, as follows: 0–6 = 'Inadequate', 7–18 = 'Requires improvement', 19–30 = 'Good', 31–36 = 'Outstanding'.

The YJS has been through a period of restructure, in order to align with wider children's services. This restructure, alongside the challenges presented by Covid-19 and lockdown, mean the YJS has experienced a period of instability and significant challenge. The impact of this was evident in the cases assessed during the period of our inspection. The YJS has recently developed plans in response to audit activity, and senior leaders and managers recognise the issues and are committed to improvement.

Our key findings about organisational delivery are as follows:

- The YJS has a clear vision and strategy, with a comprehensive youth justice plan, approved by the management board, for 2021-2025.
- Provision of staffing from partners is good, and includes seconded police officers, probation officers and health professionals.
- Children can swiftly access a range of services and support, and there are specific pathways for universal, targeted and specialist provision.
- Staff and volunteers are motivated to deliver a quality service to children.
- Kirklees YJS has a comprehensive workforce development plan and staff described a wide range of training opportunities.
- The board chair and the YJS service manager have a good understanding of the risks facing the YJS.

But:

- Many board members do not have sufficient seniority or authority to make decisions or commit resources.
- We found limited evidence of board members being held to account in board meetings. The board relied too much on the YJS service manager to present reports and other information.
- The YJS disproportionality action plan requires review and the staffing group are not sufficiently diverse to reflect the community and YJS cohort.
- The out-of-court disposal panel does not make joint decisions for all children and is therefore not fully effective.
- Not all staff have sufficient youth justice knowledge and skills to manage the cases allocated to them.
- There are shortfalls in the use of performance data to shape strategic and operational service delivery.
- There is mixed evidence of performance, audit and quality systems driving improvement.

2. Court disposals



We took a detailed look at 21 community sentences and one custodial sentence managed by the YJS. We also conducted 19 interviews with the relevant case managers. We examined the quality of assessment; planning; implementation and delivery of services; and reviewing. Each of these elements was inspected in respect of work done to address desistance. For services to keep the child safe, we assessed the quality of planning, and implementation and delivery in the 19 cases where we expected meaningful work to take place. Similarly, for work to keep others safe, we assessed the quality of planning, and implementation and delivery in the 18 cases where meaningful work was required.

In this service, supporting desistance was the strongest area of work. Over 50 per cent of cases met all aspects of our quality requirements for assessment, although this is still lower than our standards require, and this led to our judgement of 'Requires improvement' for this element of work. Although we found no children at imminent risk of harm, planning to address safety and wellbeing was sufficient in only 32 per cent of cases and to address risk of harm to others was sufficient in just 22 per cent of cases, leading to a rating of 'Inadequate' for that standard. Implementation and delivery were rated as 'Good', as at least 78 per cent of cases were sufficient across all aspects of this work. Reviewing practice to keep the child safe and to manage the safety of others was sufficient in only 50 per cent and 39 per cent of cases respectively. This led to an overall rating of 'Inadequate' for this aspect of case management.

Our key findings about court disposals are as follows:

- There was an excellent level of involvement of children and their parents or carers in the delivery of all aspects of casework.
- Implementation, delivery and reviewing of work to address desistance were outstanding.
- Classification judgements of safety and wellbeing were correct in a large majority of the inspected cases.
- Practitioners worked hard and flexibly to maintain service provision, despite Covid-19 restrictions.

But:

- Assessments were of variable quality and lacked analysis, specifically in relation to safety and wellbeing and risk of harm to others.
- The quality of planning to address safety and wellbeing and risk of harm to others was poor and planning was not aligned with that of other agencies.
- Assessment and planning to address the needs and wishes of victims were weak and delivery of victim work required improvement.
- Reviewing of safety and wellbeing and risk of harm to others needs to improve, through obtaining consistent input from the agencies involved and adjusting ongoing plans where necessary.
- Management oversight of court orders did not consistently promote high-quality casework practice.

3. Out-of-court disposals



We inspected 15 cases managed by the YJS that had received an out-of-court disposal. These consisted of five youth conditional cautions, two youth cautions, and eight community resolutions. We interviewed the case managers in all 15 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 eight cases where there were factors related to harm, we also inspected work done to keep other people safe. In the seven 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 in the five youth conditional caution cases.

In this YJS, over 50 per cent of cases inspected met our standards for assessment, resulting in a 'Requires improvement' rating for this aspect of work. In 73 per cent of cases, there was a good level of sufficiency in the quality of planning to support desistance. However, planning to address safety and wellbeing was sufficient in only 57 per cent of cases. We also judged that planning to protect other people was poor. It met our requirements in just 13 per cent of the cases we inspected, leading to an overall rating of 'Inadequate' for this standard.

The service worked consistently well to implement and deliver services to support desistance, and this work met our expectations in 93 per cent of cases. Although we found no children at imminent risk of harm, the quality of work in relation to delivery of services to address safety and wellbeing was sufficient in just 57 per cent of inspected cases. Overall, implementation and delivery was rated as 'Inadequate', because just 38 per cent of cases met our expectations to keep other people safe.

The YJS worked effectively with the police to implement the out-of-court disposal in 80 per cent of relevant cases. The rating for joint work, however, was determined by our judgements on the sufficiency of the YJS's recommendations to support decision-making. The overall rating of 'Inadequate' for this standard was driven by the score of 27 per cent for this element of work.

Our key findings about out-of-court disposals are as follows:

- YJS staff developed positive relationships with children and their families, which supported effective engagement.
- Implementation and delivery of out-of-court disposal work to address desistance was outstanding.
- Planning to address desistance was of good quality.
- The YJS worked effectively with the police in implementing a large majority of youth conditional cautions.

But:

- The YJS did not contribute information and recommendations to the out-of-court disposal joint decision-making panel in many cases.
- Assessments were too narrow in their focus and lacked analysis of important information.

- There were shortfalls in the quality of planning, implementation and delivery for a child's risk of harm to others.
- Contingency planning for safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm to others, was poor; it was not always tailored to the needs of the case or recorded well enough.
- Planning, implementation and delivery of work to address safety and wellbeing required improvement.
- Management oversight of out-of-court disposals lacked quality and rigour.

Recommendations

As a result of our inspection findings, we have made 10 recommendations that we believe, if implemented, will have a positive impact on the quality of youth offending services in Kirklees. This will improve the lives of the children in contact with youth offending services, and better protect the public.

The Kirklees Youth Justice Service should:

1. review its board membership, role and function to make sure that its representatives have the seniority to make decisions and commit necessary resources
2. develop individual and collective knowledge and understanding of board members' roles and the service's work and provide effective challenge to partners
3. improve the analysis and use of data to shape strategic and operational delivery
4. ensure that management oversight and quality assurance of practice is more rigorous and effective
5. implement plans and actions to reduce the over-representation of black and mixed heritage children
6. improve the quality of assessment, planning and review of court disposals, focusing on keeping the child safe and managing the risk of harm to others
7. improve assessment, planning and delivery of work to reduce the risk of harm to others in out-of-court disposal casework
8. strengthen the quality of contingency planning in all YJS cases to address the child's safety and wellbeing and to manage risk of harm to others.

Kirklees Clinical Commissioning Group should:

9. support the YJS management board to continue to invest in embedding a strategic and operational approach to trauma-informed practice.

West Yorkshire Police should:

10. work with the YJS to review and develop the out-of-court disposal panel to ensure effective joint decision-making in all cases.

Background

Youth offending teams (YOTs) work with children aged 10 to 18 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.

Youth justice services (YJSs) 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 (NPS) and local health services.³ Most YOTs are based within local authorities; however, this can vary.

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

With a population of 441,290, Kirklees is the most populous borough in England that is not a city and the third largest metropolitan district by area. Approximately 100,020 (22.7 per cent) of the population are under 18 years old and 44,773 (10 per cent) are aged between 10 and 17.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (2019) ranks Kirklees 83rd out of 317 authorities for overall deprivation, compared to 93rd in 2015, with 30.6 per cent of Kirklees residents living in the top 20 per cent most deprived neighbourhoods. The school census (January 2020) reveals that the percentage of primary and secondary school children receiving free school meals stands at 19.1 per cent and 22.8 per cent respectively (an increase of over 17 per cent for both age groups since 2019), while 22.8 per cent of children are estimated to be living in poverty.⁴

Kirklees is a collection of towns and villages, with Kirklees classed as the administrative hub. It is a diverse area, with a mixture of urban and rural areas and a broad range of communities and cultures. The black, Asian and minority ethnic population is 23.3 per cent and growing (2011 census – 20.9 per cent), and 29 per cent of the child population aged 10–17 are black, Asian and minority ethnic.⁵ The area has had high and enduring rates of Covid-19 and disproportionate rates within a mix of affluent and disadvantaged areas. This has been compounded by many Kirklees residents travelling to work in Manchester, Leeds and Sheffield and the challenges that brings. At the point of inspection, Kirklees was a national area of concern (the top five in the country) and was receiving additional support through

³ The *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* set out the arrangements for local YOTs and partnership working.

⁴ Percentage of children under 16 living in families with Absolute Low Income 2018-19.

⁵ Data supplied by the YOT as part of Evidence in Advance.

surge vaccination. Throughout the first and second lockdowns it was also subject to additional restrictions.

Kirklees Youth Justice Service (YJS) was renamed in December 2020, after being a Youth Offending Team since its inception in 2000. This was to reflect a 'child-first' ethos and a more integrated position within the wider Youth Engagement Service since early 2020. The YJS is now within the Director for Children and Families portfolio, which has strengthened integration and joined-up working with the other social care services, safeguarding, Stronger Families and services for children in care.

In September 2020, Kirklees recruited a new youth justice service manager, who has a substantive background leading and managing youth justice services. The Director of Children's Services was appointed as chair of the YJS management board in April 2021. The previous chair, a police superintendent, reverted to vice-chair. Senior leaders feel that being located within the Youth Engagement Service has brought the YJS closer to other contextual safeguarding services and Early Help, to ensure that there is a dedicated and focused partnership response for children who are at risk of offending and of causing harm to others.

The YJB key performance indicators show that Kirklees currently has a first-time entrant (FTE) rate of 233 (above the national rate of 207). Reoffending performance is better, with Kirklees having a binary rate of 34.2 per cent (lower than the England and Wales rate of 37.8 per cent), although the frequency rate of 1.54 is slightly above the England and Wales rate of 1.48.

Contextual facts

Youth justice information

233	First-time entrant rate per 100,000 in Kirklees ⁶
207	First-time entrant rate per 100,000 in England and Wales
34%	Reoffending rate for Kirklees ⁷
38%	Reoffending rate in England and Wales

Population information

441,290	Total population Kirklees (2020) ⁸
44,773	Total youth population (10–17 years) in Kirklees (2020)

Caseload information⁹

Age	10–14	15–17
Kirklees YJS	29%	71%
National average	22%	78%

Race/ethnicity ¹⁰	White	Black and minority ethnic	Unknown
Kirklees YJS	65%	30%	5%
Kirklees	71%	29%	0%

Gender	Male	Female
Kirklees YJS	91%	9%
National average	85%	15%

⁶ Youth Justice Board. (2021). *First Time Entrants, January to December 2019*.

⁷ Ministry of Justice. (2021). *Proven reoffending statistics, April 2018 to March 2019*.

⁸ Office for National Statistics. (2021). *UK Population estimates, mid-2020*.

⁹ Youth Justice Board. (2021). *Youth Justice annual statistics: 2019-2020*.

¹⁰ Information supplied by the YJS. Figures may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Additional caseload data¹¹

106	Total current caseload, of which:
69 (65%)	court disposals
37 (35%)	out-of-court disposals

Of the 69 court disposals

61 (88%)	Total current caseload on community sentences
5 (7%)	Total current caseload in custody
3 (4%)	Total current caseload on licence

Of the 37 out-of-court disposals

3 (8%)	Total current caseload with youth caution
3 (8%)	Total current caseload with youth conditional caution
31 (84%)	Total current caseload: community resolution or other out-of-court disposal

For children in the inspected cases subject to court disposals:¹²

Offence types ¹³	%
Violence against the person	50%
Burglary	9%
Robbery	9%
Criminal damage	9%
Summary motoring offences	9%
Indictable motoring offences	5%
Other indictable offences	9%

¹² Information supplied by the YJS.

¹³ Data from the cases assessed during this inspection.

1. Organisational delivery



Organisations that are well led and well managed are more likely to achieve their aims. In our judgement about organisational delivery, we assessed each of the four standards of: governance and leadership; staffing; partnerships and services; and information and facilities as 'Requires improvement.'

The YJS management board sets a clear vision and strategy, with a comprehensive youth justice plan. Although new to the role, the board chair is impressive, well-engaged and has a good understanding of the YJS's work. Not all board members are of sufficient seniority to commit resources and make decisions on behalf of their agencies and, although there are connections to other strategic boards, there was limited evidence of prioritisation of YJS cases and the specific complex needs that make them different from the wider children's population. The board chair and the YJS service manager understand the risks to the service, but this understanding was not evident across all board members and the leadership team.

We found that staffing levels were not always planned and reviewed to meet the changing demands and profile of children in the YJS cohort. There were some shortfalls in the strategy for maintaining the quality of delivery during periods of planned and unplanned absences. However, provision of staffing from partners is good. Staff are motivated to contribute to the delivery of a quality service and develop supportive and meaningful relationships with children. Despite staff indicating that they receive regular and effective supervision, this was not consistently evident in the cases inspected. For some staff, the induction process was insufficient and limited. Although there is a comprehensive training and development plan, the YJS has not consistently addressed the learning and development needs of staff.

Although there is some understanding of the profile of the YJS cohort, there are some gaps, as the full range of desistance, safety and wellbeing, risk of harm and diversity factors are not captured. The YJS partnership has access to a sufficient volume, range and quality of services, but it needs to be better coordinated to build on strengths and enhance protective factors. Not all arrangements with partners and providers are used effectively to support desistance, maintain safety and wellbeing, or manage the risk of harm to others.

The necessary policies and guidance are in place to enable staff to deliver a quality service, although they are not always consistently and effectively communicated. The YJS delivers its work in places that are sufficiently accessible to staff and children, including a mix of community-based venues. Information and communication technology (ICT) systems enable staff to plan, deliver and record their work in a timely way and to access information as required. There is mixed evidence of performance and quality systems driving improvement and of learning from audits, inspection and review processes.

Despite the shortfalls identified, we were encouraged by the actions taken by the YJS partnership and its candid and accurate self-assessment of the issues to be addressed. Alongside the challenges presented by Covid-19 and lockdown, coupled with a restructure of the YJS to align with wider children's services teams, the YJS had been through a period of instability and significant challenge. The impact was evident in the cases we assessed in our inspection. The development of the YJS's six strategic priority subgroups and action plans in response to audit activity, along with

plans to use specialist consultants for external scrutiny and training, indicate the commitment of YJS senior leaders and managers to improvement.

Strengths:

- Leaders have a clear vision and strategy for the YJS, with a comprehensive Youth Justice Plan approved by the management board for 2021-2025.
- Provision of staffing from partners is good, with seconded police officers, probation officers and health professionals.
- Children can swiftly access a range of services and support, with specific pathways for universal, targeted and specialist provision.
- Staff and volunteers are motivated to deliver a quality service to children.
- Kirklees YJS has a comprehensive workforce development plan, and staff described a wide range of training opportunities.
- The board chair and the YJS service manager have a good understanding of the risks facing the YJS.

Areas for improvement:

- Many board members lack sufficient seniority or authority to make decisions or commit resources.
- We found limited evidence of board members being held to account in board meetings, with an over-reliance on the YJS service manager to present reports and other information.
- The YJS's disproportionality action plan requires review and the staffing group is not sufficiently diverse to reflect the community or the YJS cohort.
- The out-of-court disposal panel does not make joint decisions for all children and is therefore not fully effective.
- Not all staff have sufficient youth justice knowledge and skills to manage the cases allocated to them.
- There are shortfalls in the use of performance data to shape strategic and operational service delivery.

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

Key data¹⁴

Total spend in previous financial year – 2019/2020	£1.625m (of which YJB Good Practice Grant £518k) ¹⁵
Total projected budget for the current financial year – 2020/2021	£1.937 (of which YJB Good Practice Grant £557k) ¹⁵

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?

Kirklees YJS has a comprehensive youth justice plan, approved by the management board, for 2021-2025. This plan will be supported by six strategic priority sub-groups (serious youth violence/criminal exploitation, FTEs, reoffending, custody, participation and disproportionality), which have been set by the YJS board. The strategic priority to address serious youth violence/criminal exploitation is shared with the Kirklees Safeguarding Children Partnership. These sub-groups are still at terms of reference stage and are not yet fully implemented.

There is a wider local authority vision entitled 'We're Kirklees', which sets out the approach, service delivery and clearly stated organisational values and commitment to restorative practice. This sits alongside the YJS's adoption of the YJB's 'Children First, Offenders Second' vision and a commitment to partnership working.

The board reviewed its membership and terms of reference in January 2021. The board includes all statutory partners and non-statutory partners (apart from the courts). However, many members lack sufficient seniority or authority to make decisions or commit resources. Senior leaders acknowledge the priority to gradually reshape the board, and the partnership acknowledged a need for further review of how the strategic sub-groups function so that the right board member, with the correct level of seniority, leads the strategic sub-groups and is accountable to the YJS management board.

The chair of the management board is the local authority Director of Children's Services. She is well connected and attends the ambition board, the Community Safety Partnership and the Safeguarding Children Partnership – and chairs the assurance panel. She has regular access to and communication with the local authority Chief Executive, the elected mayor and other lead members. Although only

¹⁴ Information supplied by YJS.

¹⁵ The purpose of the Youth Justice Good Practice Grant is to develop and commission research with a view to achieving outcomes in reducing offending, reducing numbers of first-time entrants to the justice system and reducing the use of youth custody.

appointed as board chair in April 2021, the work she does is visible and valued by board members, staff and managers.

The board chair is focused on integrating the YJS and improving governance. Although positive about the relationships across the partnership, she acknowledges that forward planning can be improved. Kirklees management board includes a large range of partners, but we found limited evidence of board members being held to account, with an over-reliance on the YJS service manager to present reports and other information.

The board chair is aware of the need to have appropriate people on the board who can make decisions on behalf of their home organisations. The board chair remains committed to engaging with the existing range of partners. The challenge will be to ensure that, within such a large partnership, all board members contribute effectively to the work of the YJS.

Do the partnership arrangements actively support effective service delivery?

The YJS board is connected to the Kirklees Safeguarding Children Partnership board, the Safer Kirklees Partnership board and other key local and pan-West Yorkshire youth and criminal justice forums, many convened by the Police and Crime Commissioner's (now Metro-Mayor's) Office and the West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit.

New board members advised that they had received a full induction and were aware of their roles and responsibilities. However, although board members advocate for the YJS in a general sense and in different fora, this tends to be generic. There was limited evidence of prioritisation of YJS cases and the specific complex needs that make them different from the wider population.

Members of the YJS management board had attended a development day and received advice on effective governance from a consultant in April 2021. This led to a self-assessment exercise (including comparing Kirklees YJS with a range of previously inspected YOTs), which highlighted areas for improvement for the board individually and collectively.

The YJS management board undertook a strategic health review in May 2021, with the aim of embedding a trauma-informed approach and pathways. This review identified gaps, for example in speech and language therapist provision. There is ongoing work to address this, through adding a clinical commissioning group representative to the board. However, provision of staffing is evident across the wider partnership, with seconded police officers, probation officers and health nurses.

Does the leadership of the YOT support effective service delivery?

The previous YJS service manager retired in February 2020 and the post was vacant until the current service manager was appointed in September 2020. This impacted on the YJS, as, during this six-month period, the duties were split across the strategic head of service for the wider Youth Engagement Service and operational team managers. Alongside the challenges presented by Covid-19 and lockdown, coupled with a restructure of the YJS to align with wider children's services teams, the YJS has been through a period of instability and significant challenge.

The YJS board chair and the YJS service manager acknowledge that there is a need to improve links with the management board. From July 2021, YJS team managers

will work with board members in five of the six identified strategic priority sub-groups (FTEs, reoffending, disproportionality, custody and participation), while the YJS service manager will work with board members and partners across the serious youth violence/criminal exploitation strategic priority, which is shared with the Safeguarding Children Partnership board.

The YJS service manager has been proactive in inducting new board members and reinforcing their roles and responsibilities. Operationally, YJS managers have designated lead responsibilities and sit on relevant multi-agency operational groups. However, they were unclear about the YJS's vision and strategy. The child-first and restorative vision and approach are communicated, but they have not been sufficiently balanced against the core YJS responsibilities and functions around risk assessment and management.

Practice learning days were established in October 2020 as part of a wider response to the annual national standards audit. Since January 2021, some board members have attended these events, which have acted as a conduit, linking the board to the operational roles of the YJS. However, they need to be further embedded.

The board's understanding of risk is hampered by members' lack of knowledge about crucial areas such as budget and practice quality. The board chair has a good understanding of the risks facing the YJS currently. Board members lacked the same level of understanding. YJS managers were involved and consulted about the restructure, but described the management board as a 'work in progress'.

1.2. Staff



Staff within the YOT are empowered to deliver a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children.	Requires improvement
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Key staffing data¹⁶

Total staff headcount (full-time equivalent, FTE)	43.7
Total headcount qualified case managers (FTE) ¹⁷	8.6
Total headcount other case managers (FTE)	7.8
Vacancy rate (total unfilled posts as percentage of total staff headcount)	0%
Average caseload per case manager (FTE)	7
Average annual sickness days (all staff)	12.5
Staff attrition (percentage of all staff leaving in 12-month period)	7%

¹⁶ Information supplied by YJS and reflecting the caseload at the time of the inspection announcement.

¹⁷ Qualified case managers refer to those with a social work or probation professional qualification.

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?

Prior to the inspection fieldwork there were significant gaps in staffing. This was due to the ongoing restructure, and a freeze on posts, resulting in a number of unfilled vacancies and some staff leaving. This impacted on staff workloads, and the allocation of cases was often reactive and unplanned. There has been a significant gap in staffing in the restorative justice team over the past two years. A long-term sickness absence has only recently been filled, and two short-term absences meant that, for a time, the team was reduced to 25 per cent capacity. We were informed that the team had only recently (June 2021) returned to a full complement of staffing. This was reflected in many of the cases inspected, in which insufficient restorative justice and victim work had been carried out.

Inspectors noted examples where Intensive Supervision and Surveillance workers (who are not case managers) had to pick up cases. For that period, cases were allocated to staff who had only just joined from the wider Youth Engagement Service and the seconded probation officer had a full-time caseload on a 3.5-day week. Staff not accustomed to out-of-court disposals have held cases. At the time of the inspection, all staff said they had a mixed generic caseload, despite the YJS's structure being based on specialisms.

Although all vacancies have now been filled, as highlighted in the staff data table above, this is only within the last two to three months, and the YJS is only just moving to a point where all staff are in post. Managers state that there is still work to be done in skilling staff up and that some staff do not yet feel 'au fait' with out-of-court disposal work. A number of new staff have come into the YJS who have needed additional training to work with offending behaviour, above and beyond their training as social workers. There is still a potential imbalance of staffing between post-court work and out-of-court disposal work, and further data analysis and monitoring are needed.

Staff feel currently that their workloads have settled and are manageable (85 per cent indicated this in our staff survey). Organisational data indicates an average caseload of seven cases per full-time staff member. The YJS service manager accepted that staff had experienced anxiety through the restructure process, but feels that issues have been resolved and the challenge is now to focus on consolidating and developing roles, integration with the wider Youth Engagement Service and the quality of practice.

A small number of volunteers deliver the referral order panels. Some are long-serving, but recent turnover of volunteers has increased the workload for those remaining.

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

The staffing profile (paid staff and volunteers) is not sufficiently diverse and does not reflect the community and YJS cohort. The staff survey indicated that 12 per cent of staff are black, Asian or minority ethnic, compared with a black, Asian and minority ethnic population profile of 23.3 per cent in the wider community and a YJS cohort for black, Asian and minority ethnic children of 30 per cent.

Staff are motivated to contribute to the delivery of a quality service (96 per cent indicated on the staff survey) and the volunteers interviewed were clearly very motivated to deliver a quality service. There was evidence in the cases we inspected that staff encourage good relationships and compliance from the child and their family. They are child-centred, skilled and creative in engaging children to address desistance needs. This has continued despite the impact of Covid-19.

There is a pool of staff within the YJS who are suitably qualified and experienced; however, many staff have not had enough specific youth justice training, particularly in aspects of practice such as risk of harm and promoting safety and wellbeing. We were concerned to find that some staff had not received adequate AssetPlus training and often confused risk of reoffending with risk of harm. Within the inspected cases, we found that not all case managers had the skills to effectively assess and plan the management of safety and wellbeing and risk of harm, and this requires further management attention.

Although the YJS has a range of professional experience and qualifications across its practitioners, it should improve its approach to succession planning. Although there were limited examples of progression, such as social workers being supported to undertake advanced practitioner training, local arrangements mean there is no facility to recruit probation officers into qualified case manager or team manager posts, unless they are social workers registered with Social work England. We were encouraged to hear that the service manager has raised this issue with senior leaders.

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

Nearly all staff say they receive regular and effective supervision, with a clear one-to-one supervision policy in place. Staff described managers as supportive and approachable, and having an 'open door' policy. Appraisals are up-to-date and well received by staff. They contain a mixture of organisational and individual objectives. Partnership agencies have their own performance reviews, and the YJS has an opportunity to contribute to these.

Team managers are experienced, but have faced challenges managing through the restructure, Covid-19 emergency delivery and supporting new staff into post. Nevertheless, they are highly motivated despite these challenges.

Newer staff reported that they had received an induction, with opportunities for shadowing, training and peer support/learning. This was across the YJS and wider partnership services, which they felt enabled them to understand how teams and agencies work together. However, this was not the case for the team members who arrived during the period of significant staff shortage around September/October 2020. Although they reported being welcomed on a personal level, they had not been given the opportunity to have a full, comprehensive induction into the specific nature and specialism of YJS work.

The YJS service manager candidly acknowledged that practice has had shortfalls and is still a 'work in progress'. He was optimistic about recent developments such as practice learning days and the filling of staff vacancies, and described impending training commissioned through Silver Bullet consultants. He expressed faith in team managers but also acknowledged that ongoing benchmarking and quality assurance activity is critical, both for case management staff and for managers to achieve quality and consistency of practice.

Management oversight of case work lacked quality and rigour. It was sufficient in just 50 per cent of the inspected court cases and 43 per cent of the out-of-court disposal cases. The primary shortfall was that assessments and plans of insufficient quality were countersigned, particularly around safety and wellbeing and risk of harm to others.

Staff reported some limited examples of reward and recognition, specifically through local authority 'Hi-five' awards, where colleagues can nominate each other across teams and be put into a monthly draw for vouchers. There is a 'young employees' award for under-30s and staff also report instances where positive feedback is recorded in their supervision notes, if appropriate.

Are arrangements for learning and development comprehensive and responsive?

Kirklees YJS has a comprehensive workforce development plan and staff described a wide range of training opportunities. This has included specialist AIM2/3 training, trauma-informed approaches, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), serious youth violence and modern slavery/exploitation training. Specialist SAVRY (structured assessment of violence and risk in youth) training has not yet been delivered but is planned for later this year. Team managers highlighted that the Centre for Justice Innovation's online Effective Practice course was being taken by four to six members of staff and some members of the YJS leadership team had been supported to take management courses.

Staff report that managers are supportive and encourage training and development opportunities. They spoke positively about the practice learning days and the 'back to basics' training, which supports staff and managers to engage in reflective practice discussions and promotes the embedding of a formulation approach to case management.

The volunteers participate in training events alongside the paid staff. However, it was unclear whether there was a specific training and development plan for volunteers. Those interviewed for this inspection had participated in restorative practice, which they try and incorporate into their work.

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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Caseload characteristics¹⁸

Percentage of current caseload with mental health issues	70%
Percentage of current caseload with substance misuse issues	70%
Percentage of current caseload with an education, health and care plan	11.9%

¹⁸ Data supplied by YJS.

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 YJS understands the characteristics of the children in its cohort, although its analysis of some children's risk of harm to others could be stronger, particularly with mapping peer associations and links to gangs. Children can swiftly access a range of services and support, and there are specific pathways for universal, targeted and specialist provision.

Disproportionality is one of the key strategic priorities for the YJS board. Data indicates that black and mixed heritage children are over-represented within the YJS. Black children are three times more likely than white children to be open to the YJS, and mixed heritage children are twice as likely to be open to the YJS. However, the disproportionality action plan, developed in 2017, was refreshed in May 2021, but is in draft and needs to be fully reviewed.

Although the number of looked-after children in the YJS cohort has reduced over the last year (currently at 11 per cent), the YJS acknowledges that a high percentage of these children are first-time entrants (39 per cent). The YJS court officer also highlighted several instances where looked-after children had been diverted back from court. This indicates the need for a greater focus from the partnership, to ensure that, where appropriate, looked after children can be diverted before reaching this stage.

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

There are clear pathways for children to access support through a range of seconded workers, including substance misuse practitioners, Stronger Families consultants and the careers service. Staff and partners report no delays in YJS children being able to access these services, which supports the YJS partnership to respond to the diverse needs of a complex cohort.

The YJS has two health nurses. Although referral processes are swift, the volume of cases does not reflect the number of children open to the YJS, with only 27 per cent of cases receiving a health screening assessment. Referral pathways need to be reviewed to ensure that all children open to the YJS are screened on a mandatory basis. There are also delays of between 12 and 18 months in children obtaining access to specialist autism spectrum disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder assessments and interventions.

The YJS partnership has invested in a strategic and operational approach to trauma-informed practice. It has obtained funding for a specialist band seven Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service therapist (who took up their post in May 2021) to support training and roll-out of this approach across the YJS and wider Youth Engagement Service. The recent strategic health review aims to secure additional therapeutic and speech and language staff and a designated general practitioner doctor to support the health needs of YJS children.

The YJS benefits from both a seconded probation officer, who oversees transitions and liaison with the NPS, and a seconded probation service officer, who has recently moved to the out-of-court disposal team to support case management.

Police staffing has been inconsistent, and the lack of stability has impacted on the YJS's ability to facilitate changes in the out-of-court disposal scheme. In the last year there has been more consistency in police staffing, with three police staff now seconded to the YJS. However, inspectors found that YJS police officers did not carry out enough one-to-one work with children. In some of the inspected cases, we found shortfalls in the quality of joint work and information-sharing, particularly for those children who were released under investigation or 'no further actioned' (NFA'd), or where risk of harm to others was evident.

The restorative justice team works on an 'opt-out' basis. However, limited staffing has meant that it has been restricted to core functions for a considerable period. As such, it has been unable to continue to fulfil all the expectations of the service for which it received the Restorative Standards Quality Mark (RSQM) in 2019. These issues, coupled with the effects of Covid-19, have resulted in significant impact on the delivery, frequency, variety and quality of reparation.

The rate of YJS children not in education, employment or training (NEET) is 26 per cent, which compares with 3.1 per cent across the wider children's population. In a number of inspected cases, we saw evidence of work being undertaken to address education, training and employment needs. However, joint planning and work in relation to education, health and care plans and special educational needs were inconsistent.

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

We found that workers across all roles are effective in facilitating engagement and fostering positive relationships with children. Partnership managers have a broad understanding of the specialist work their staff do with YJS children and there is regular supervision, joint oversight and communication with relevant YJS team managers.

Staff and partnership managers report that working relationships between the YJS and social care have improved in the last 18 months, with a change of culture and a more integrated approach to the joint management of cases. Based on some of the cases we inspected, we found that this remains work in progress, particularly around contingency planning for children with safety and wellbeing issues.

There is an out-of-court disposal scheme and a joint decision-making panel. However, not all out-of-court disposals are referred to and discussed at the panel. First community resolutions are given automatically by the police, with joint decision-making restricted to second community resolutions, youth cautions and youth conditional cautions. This needs to be reviewed, as the YJS is missing an opportunity to refer some children into appropriate interventions and to facilitate a fully personalised and child-focused approach to decision-making. In addition, not all YJS staff were clear about the out-of-court disposal process. The out-of-court disposal panel is attended by the police, the YJS, the victim/restorative justice worker, a Stronger Families consultant and the substance misuse worker. This could be strengthened further through attendance of the allocated social worker, if the child has one.

Kirklees has a number of services that cover risk of harm, but partnership managers recognise that, previously, too many people have been involved. This recognition has resulted in the development of the multi-agency Youth Engagement Service, which

aims to provide continuity of services. The Youth Engagement Service is described by senior leaders as a 'repository of information for highlighting the needs of children the contextual environment and response'. Its objective is to improve safeguarding work before and after a child comes into contact with the criminal justice system and develop a coordinated approach to contextual safeguarding. The YJS is part of this umbrella service, but leaders acknowledge the need to integrate, yet retain, the YJS specialism. Given the relatively recent restructure, this work requires ongoing focus to ensure the YJS's work is integrated and coordinated effectively.

The YJS feeds into a variety of multi-agency operational groups and panels for those children deemed to present a high risk of harm to others or a high level of safety and wellbeing concerns. Examples include: DREAM (daily risk exploitation meetings); ESP (exploitation screening panels); MST (multi-systemic therapy); DYO (Deter Young Offenders); and the MACE (multi-agency child exploitation) panel. In all multi-agency panels and meetings, the emphasis is on meeting the complex needs of children. However, pathways were sometimes unclear to YJS staff and the partnership needs to ensure that work is not being duplicated and does not lose focus within these many arenas.

There is an all-age liaison and diversion pathway, in which all children in police custody are screened and offered support. However, there was a lack of data on the numbers of children already open to the YJS who were screened.

Following a successful pilot, utilising experienced staff across the Youth Justice Service, Youth Engagement Service and Early Support, Kirklees has introduced the Schools Transition and Reach Service (STARS). The ambition was to identify primary school children not known to services, but who may experience difficulties in the transition to secondary school. The partnership recognises that a vast majority of children vulnerable to exploitation will not be well embedded in education. The local authority looked at those in primary school who may have experienced exclusion, been exposed to domestic abuse, or had siblings who may already have been exploited and been involved with social care. They identified professionals who would work with these children and their families and then offer intensive support. Inspectors were informed that an evaluation of this programme is anticipated.

The YJS also has good transition arrangements with the NPS, with decisions on transition made according to the child's circumstances and needs.

Sentencers responding to our survey expressed confidence in the quality of YJS court work, and the relationships between YJS court staff and children. However, in several of the cases inspected, we found shortfalls and inconsistencies in the approach to sentencing practice. The chair of the youth bench indicated a preference for better outreach by senior managers and leaders with the youth court leadership in West Yorkshire, and for them to request a more individualised discussion about their specific service and the issues they feel are local court-led. Adding a court representative to the YJS management board would also ensure that magistrates are more fully aware of the services the YJS can offer.

Involvement of children and their parents and carers

Five children responded to our text survey. They were complimentary about the service they receive from the YJS. Children clearly feel positive about the one-to-one work carried out and have trusting relationships with their case managers. The YJS gathers feedback from children and parents/carers through a mixture of questionnaires, anecdotal direct feedback and ad hoc surveys. Children have been

involved in staff interviews. However, the YJS acknowledges that this needs to be drawn together and analysed more holistically, which will be the focus of the strategic sub-group looking at participation. There are no child or parent forums at present.

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 YJS has a suite of policies and procedures, which are regularly updated when required and are accessible to all staff. However, the mechanisms the YJS uses to embed the use of policies were unclear. Referral pathways are clear and there are current service level agreements and working protocols across a range of organisations and services.

There were some limited examples of staff being involved in developing policies, such as the weapons policy, the introduction of 'Me and My Plan', changes to referral order documents, children's participation and disproportionality questionnaires.

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

Although the YJS office was not visited as part of this inspection, the premises are accessible, with good transport links.

The YJS is based in two locations (Batley and Huddersfield), although both premises were closed from the first lockdown and the YJS operated without access to them. A new, temporary building opened in Huddersfield in December 2020 and Batley was re-opened in August 2020 with restrictions (to ensure a Covid-secure working environment). YJS children were given a red, amber or green rating to prioritise the service's work. The YJS used creative methods of engaging YJS children where face-to-face contact was delivered.

The Huddersfield office is close to the police custody suite, where a representative from the liaison and diversion service is based, to help divert children from the criminal justice system at the earliest opportunity. The YJS states that buildings are set up to provide a dedicated youth reception and there are security arrangements in place to manage risk. The service also uses other community youth facilities to deliver some of its work with children.

Staff raised concerns about some aspects of the YJS building in Huddersfield, specifically in relation to a lack of windows, artificial light and lack of appropriate space to ensure a child-friendly layout. This was not the case for the Batley office, which is a designated YJS premises and was previously a youth club. The YJS manager said that a decision would be made in future on whether to retain and reconfigure the Huddersfield building, or whether to find other premises.

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

Staff describe ICT systems as reliable and able to facilitate quality work and exchange of information with partners where required. YJS staff have access to Liquid Logic social care records, while partnership staff within the YJS have access to their own agency systems and the YJS case management system (ChildView). Staff who work at the 'front door' of children's social care also have access to the YJS ChildView system.

Processes for learning lessons are in place across the partnership. Critical learning reviews are shared at board level and disseminated to staff through reflective training, team meetings and email.

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

The YJS responded to the findings of its national standards audit in March 2020. It used the audit to shape an internal improvement plan and develop several initiatives, such as practice learning days, bitesize training events and development of both an audit and workforce development plan.

The practice improvement plan has also led to three sessions of Back-to-Basics Training delivered in October 2020 covering: offence analysis, risk assessment and management and transitions. A fourth, focusing on child-friendly planning, which incorporated the addition of the 'My Risk Plan' to the 'Me and My Plan', was delivered in March 2021. Practice learning days were delivered in October and November 2020; they were received positively by both staff and managers and led to additions to the team improvement plan. In 2021, the YJS delivered three more of these events, which focused on criminal exploitation, Y2A (youth to adult) transitions and education, with the latter two supported by management board representatives.

Although Kirklees' last HM Inspectorate of Probation inspection was a short quality screening in 2013, it was disappointing to see similar shortfalls in practice around safety and wellbeing and risk of harm to others, particularly the lack of quality in assessment, planning, review and management oversight of these aspects of work. The YJS recognises the importance of training and development and is committed to providing this. However, ongoing work is needed to embed the learning and improve practice. The YJS is due to commission specific AssetPlus training from Silver Bullet consultants later this year, which it envisages will support further improvement.

There is mixed evidence of performance and quality systems driving improvement. The YJS has a clear understanding of children's needs and an established audit plan. However, it relies too much on measuring performance against the three key performance indicators of reoffending, first-time entrants and custody.

The YJS is well supported by a data analyst, who can extract a range of performance information for the YJS board and operational managers. However, the data is not used well enough, nor sufficiently owned or understood across all the partners, to fully identify gaps in performance or practice. The data needs to be more granular to enable the YJS to demonstrate or evidence ongoing impact and identify trends and connections more easily. Examples include data on out-of-court disposals, evaluation of restorative justice and victim data, sentencing patterns, and release under investigations (RUIs) impacting on wider issues around education safeguarding.

Following our 2018 thematic inspection of out-of-court disposal work, Kirklees brought its delivery of community resolutions back in-house. However, this has been

insufficiently evaluated and, given the shortfalls identified in this inspection, requires further review and analysis.

The YJS has been involved in other innovative work – an example being a research project on exploring social media use (in conjunction with Huddersfield University) between 2017 to 2021. The findings and interventions have yet to be published. The YJS is also part of an impending pathfinder on RUI and out-of-court disposals across West Yorkshire.



2. Court disposals

We took a detailed look at 21 community sentences and one custodial sentence managed by the YJS. We also conducted 19 interviews with the relevant case managers. We examined the quality of assessment, planning, implementation and delivery of services, and reviewing. Each of these elements was inspected in respect of work done to address desistance. For services to keep the child safe, we only assessed the quality of planning, and implementation and delivery in the 19 cases where we expected meaningful work to take place. Similarly, for work to keep others safe, we assessed the quality of planning, and implementation and delivery in the 18 cases where meaningful work was required.

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

In this service, supporting desistance was the strongest area of work. Over 50 per cent of cases met all our quality requirements for assessment, which led to our judgement of 'Requires improvement' for this element of work. Planning for work to address desistance met our standards in 64 per cent of cases. However, planning to address safety and wellbeing was sufficient in only 32 per cent of cases and in just 22 per cent of cases to address the risk of harm to others, leading to a rating of 'Inadequate' for that standard. Implementation and delivery were rated as 'Good', as at least 78 per cent of cases were sufficient across all aspects of this work. Reviewing of work to address desistance met our standards in 88 per cent of cases; however, reviewing of work to keep the child safe and to manage safety of others was sufficient in only 50 per cent and 39 per cent of cases respectively. This led to an overall rating of 'Inadequate' for the reviewing aspect of case management.

Overall, work to support desistance was effective. Despite the constraints brought by Covid-19, YJS staff worked flexibly and used their knowledge and skills well to build relationships with families and take a strengths-based approach to meeting children's needs. However, the quality of practice varied between practitioners, and there was insufficient focus on supporting the child's safety and wellbeing and protecting other people. Work to support victims and manage related issues was insufficient in many relevant inspected cases and there was a lack of joint and contingency planning to effectively address safety and wellbeing and risk of harm to others.

Strengths:

- There was an excellent level of involvement of children and their parents/carers in the delivery of all aspects of casework.
- Implementation and delivery to address desistance and review of the work to address desistance were outstanding.

- Classification judgements of safety and wellbeing were correct in a large majority of the inspected cases.
- Implementation and delivery to address safety and wellbeing and risk of harm to others was consistently good.
- Practitioners worked hard and flexibly to maintain service provision, despite Covid-19 restrictions.

Areas for improvement:

- Assessments were of variable quality and lacked analysis, specifically in relation to safety and wellbeing and risk of harm to others.
- The quality of planning to address safety and wellbeing and risk of harm to others was poor and planning was not aligned with that of other agencies.
- Assessment and planning to address the needs and wishes of victims were weak and delivery of victim work required improvement.
- Reviewing of safety and wellbeing and risk of harm to others needs to improve, through more consistent input from the agencies involved and adjusting ongoing plans where necessary.
- Management oversight of court orders did not consistently promote high-quality casework practice.

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/carers.

Requires improvement

Our rating¹⁹ for assessment is based on the following key questions:

	% yes
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	64%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	59%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	50%

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

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

In 19 out of 22 cases inspected, the assessment included a sufficient analysis of offending behaviour, including the child's attitudes towards, and motivation for, their offending. In 15 of the 22 cases, staff considered the diversity and wider social context of the child and focused on the child's strengths and their protective factors. Assessment of structural barriers to desistance was variable, with 10 out of 18 relevant cases meeting our required standard. The victim's needs and wishes were considered in just under half of the relevant cases, limiting opportunities for restorative justice.

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?

Assessments of safety and wellbeing were inconsistent and, in some of the cases inspected, under-estimated factors and issues that impacted on the child's safety. We therefore judged practice as requiring improvement, even though the correct classification of safety and wellbeing was applied in all but one case. In 14 out of 22 relevant cases, staff sufficiently identified and analysed the risks to a child's safety and wellbeing and drew appropriately on assessments or information held by other agencies. Staff analysed the controls or interventions that best promoted the child's safety and wellbeing in just eight out of 19 relevant cases.

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?

Assessment of a child's risk of harm to others required improvement. In just under half of the 21 relevant cases, assessments identified and analysed any risk of harm to others posed by the child, including identifying who was at risk, and the nature of that risk. Case managers used available sources of information and involved other agencies, where appropriate, in 13 out of 21 relevant cases. They considered controls and interventions to manage and minimise the risk of harm to others posed by the child in just under half of cases. Although inspectors agreed with the level of classification of risk of harm to others in 16 out of 22 cases, there was a lack of reasoned analysis and drawing together of information to inform judgements or risk classification. Previous and current behaviour was not considered systematically, and there was a lack of an investigative approach in some of the inspected cases. Management oversight was variable and did not always address or remedy the shortfalls in assessment practice.

2.2. Planning



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

Inadequate

Our rating²⁰ for planning is based on the following key questions:

	% yes
Does planning focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	64%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	32%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	22%

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

Planning to support the child's desistance was sufficient in 16 out of 22 cases. A reasonable majority of plans set out the services most likely to support desistance, although only 13 out of 22 cases saw the YJS take account of diversity and factors relating to wider social context. Planning took sufficient account of strengths and protective factors in 16 out of 22 cases. Of the cases with an identifiable victim, planning considered their views in just over half. The child and their parents or carers were meaningfully involved in all the cases inspected.

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

Planning to promote the child's safety and wellbeing was addressed in 10 out of 19 relevant cases. It adequately involved other agencies in only six out of 16 cases. Inspectors found shortfalls in the quality of contingency planning for safety and wellbeing. This is important, as there should be a clear plan of action in the event of risk to the child either increasing or decreasing. In 14 out of 19 cases, contingency plans were too vague and did not clearly set out adequate actions or responses to be taken if, and when, circumstances changed. Overall, planning focused on keeping the child safe in just six of the 19 cases inspected.

We noted in one of the inspected cases:

"Planning does not explore all the factors linked to safety and wellbeing. The involvement or role of social care has not been made clear. There were no plans in relation to exploring or involving the child's father/wider family. No planning is evident to explore emotional wellbeing concerns linked to trauma from domestic abuse. There is no reference to information-sharing arrangements and how they will keep the child safe and there are no identifiable or specific contingency arrangements".

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

The quality of planning to keep other people safe was inadequate. There was sufficient planning to promote the safety of others in seven out of 18 cases inspected, with only six out of 16 relevant cases involving other agencies, where

²⁰ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. See Annexe 1 for a more detailed explanation.

appropriate. Planning to address any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims was evident in only six of the 17 cases inspected where this was relevant.

Planning set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote other people’s safety in half of the cases. Circumstances in a child’s life, however, can change quickly. Case managers need to consider the potential for change in each case so that, should concerns escalate, they are prepared and more likely to respond effectively. Inspectors found that contingency planning lacked clarity about specific actions to keep others safe, resulting in just four out of 18 cases judged sufficient in this aspect of work.

An inspector commented:

“Contingency planning simply states that if the child reoffends or fails to comply with supervision arrangements, then a significant event meeting is to be convened within 24 hours. There is no detail as to what non-compliant behaviours would be considered indicative of increasing risk, nor any details as to how any specific behaviours or actions which are considered intrinsically linked with harmful behaviour would be monitored and identified”.

2.3. Implementation and delivery



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

Good

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

	% yes
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the child’s desistance?	91%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of the child safe?	89%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?	78%

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

Implementation and delivery to support desistance was excellent. It was clear that case managers take a strengths-based approach to their work. The YJS had access to a wide range of specialist staff and other resources to deliver suitable and innovative interventions to children. Inspectors found in most cases that the YJS delivered the services most likely to support desistance. Enforcement was always used appropriately where required. It was evident in all cases that staff focused on developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child and their parents or carers. In 19 out of 22 cases, service delivery reflected the child’s diversity and wider familial and social context.

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, indicated in bold in the table. See Annexe 1 for a more detailed explanation.

Case managers encouraged the child's compliance with their court order in all cases, while implementation and delivery promoted opportunities for community integration, including access to services post-supervision, in 20 out of 22 cases.

An inspector highlighted the following good practice example:

The YJS has undertaken a comprehensive intervention. A range of work has been completed in relation to offending behaviour and victim awareness. Offence-specific work has taken place with the Driving Forward programme. Given restrictions due to Covid-19, most of the work was adapted accordingly. The child completed eight hours of reparation and worked with the careers service to produce a CV.

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

Case managers kept a strong focus on safety and wellbeing, which was sufficiently promoted in 17 out of 19 relevant cases. The YJS consistently worked with a range of agencies and organisations to deliver well-coordinated packages of support. We also found clear arrangements to support children who were looked after, open to social care, criminally exploited, or who had emotional wellbeing or substance misuse issues.

We noted:

“Children’s social care were actively involved in the case and completed a child and families assessment shortly after release. The potential risks were clear, for example a risk of revenge attack, and dangers of gang activity. Social care, along with the YJS, provided ongoing support to the family regarding accommodation. Strategy meetings were held after the child was threatened with violence and was found in another area dealing class A drugs. Information appears to have been shared widely across agencies and the case manager developed a safety plan with the child. The YJS also made a referral to the National Recovery Mechanism, which judged there were reasonable grounds to believe the child was a victim of child exploitation”.

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

In 14 out of 18 relevant cases, implementation and delivery of services effectively supported the safety of other people. However, work to promote victims' safety and maximise opportunities for restorative justice was more variable, with just eight out of 14 relevant cases deemed sufficient. Alongside this, opportunities to involve different agencies in managing the risk of harm to others were missed in just over one-third of cases.

2.4. Reviewing



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

Inadequate

Our rating²² for reviewing is based on the following key questions:

	% yes
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	88%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	50%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	39%

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

Reviewing of progress to support the child's desistance was excellent. In all but one relevant case, a written review of desistance was completed. This responsiveness to changing circumstances helped to maintain children's engagement and ensured that the work delivered was effective and meaningful. Reviewing continued to focus sufficiently on building on the child's strengths, enhancing protective factors and assessing motivation and engagement levels in a large majority of cases.

Importantly, we found that children and their parents/carers were meaningfully involved in their assessment in 16 out of 17 cases.

An inspector noted:

"There is evidence of the child commencing transition to probation at the point of turning 18 and a formal transfer taking place approximately two months later. The case record provides evidence of pre-transfer meetings being held and joint meetings between the incoming probation officer and the current YJS case manager. The 'Me and My Plan' document was reviewed via video call, due to current restrictions of Covid-19, with all interested parties in attendance, including the case manager, line manager, incoming probation officer, Intensive Supervision and Surveillance worker, education, employment and training worker and the child and his mother. This actively reflected on the interventions undertaken, attitude towards work with the YJS and the perceived progress made. The child also completed an exit questionnaire, reflecting on support he had received and where he felt positive changes had been made.

"The case manager submitted a report to the youth court when the child appeared for outstanding offences, and the decision to issue a conditional discharge was partly attributed to the positive report provided".

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

Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

The quality of reviews of children's safety and wellbeing required improvement. Case managers identified and responded to changes in safety and wellbeing in only half of the relevant cases. Information from other agencies was gathered or considered in only 12 out of 17 relevant cases. However, the reviewing process had led to the necessary changes or adjustments in the ongoing plan in just six out of 16 relevant cases. Overall, reviewing focused sufficiently on keeping the child safe in only half of the cases we inspected.

Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

Reviews of risk of harm to others were weak. In a majority of relevant cases, the case manager had not identified, or responded to, changes in risk, and half of the 16 relevant cases had not sufficiently taken account of information from other agencies. The child and their parents or carers had been meaningfully involved in reviewing the risk of harm to others, or had their views considered, in a reasonable majority of cases. However, only three out of eight relevant cases saw the reviewing process lead to necessary adjustments to the ongoing plan of work to manage and minimise these risks. Overall, reviewing focused on keeping other people safe in just seven out of 18 relevant cases.

The issue of poor-quality reviews of risk of harm was highlighted by the following case:

No risk of harm review was undertaken following the child's arrest for attempted murder, either formally via AssetPlus or informally through line management supervision/professional judgement entry. While limited information was available to the YJS, this does not eradicate the need to have reviewed the case following this significant event. The case manager subsequently reduced the risk of harm level, within a short period of months, from high to medium, stating that there had been no incidents of concern and therefore failing to consider the matter of arrest.

In interview, the case manager was clear that she felt the risk reduction was appropriate as her personal view was that the child "would not have committed such an act" and that, as so many people were arrested, there was a reduced likelihood of the child being responsible. This is an optimistic and flawed under-estimation of the presenting risk, particularly in a case already assessed as a high risk of harm to others, where such behaviour would be expected to be considered in terms of potential escalation.

3. Out-of-court disposals



We inspected 15 cases managed by the YJS that had received an out-of-court disposal. These consisted of five youth conditional cautions, two youth cautions, and eight community resolutions. We interviewed the case managers in 15 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 eight cases where there were factors related to harm, we also inspected work done to keep other people safe. In the seven cases where safety and wellbeing concerns were identified, we looked at work done to safeguard the child. We also looked at the quality of joint working with local police.

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

In Kirklees YJS, over half but less than two-thirds of cases inspected met all our standards for assessment, resulting in a 'Requires improvement' rating for this aspect of work. Although the quality of planning to support desistance was sufficient in 73 per cent of cases, planning to address safety and wellbeing was sufficient in only 57 per cent of cases. Planning to protect other people was poor, meeting our requirements in just 13 per cent of the cases we inspected, leading to an overall rating of 'Inadequate' for this standard.

The service worked consistently well to implement and deliver services to support desistance and met our expectations in 93 per cent of cases. Delivery of services to address safety and wellbeing was not as strong and was sufficient in just 57 per cent of inspected cases. Overall, this aspect of work was rated as 'Inadequate', based on work to keep other people safe meeting our expectations in just 38 per cent of cases. The YJS worked effectively with the police to implement the out-of-court disposal in 80 per cent of relevant cases. The rating for joint work, however, was determined by our judgements on the sufficiency of the YJS's recommendations to support decision-making. The overall rating of 'Inadequate' for this standard was driven by the score of 27 per cent for this element of work.

As with court disposals, the work undertaken to address desistance was effective. A reasonable majority of the bespoke out-of-court disposal assessments were of sufficient quality, which led to suitable plans. When inspectors looked at implementation and delivery, they found that YJS case managers develop positive relationships with children and parents or carers and make relevant referrals to partner agencies.

Although HM Inspectorate of Probation recognises the value of a strengths-based approach to diversion and prevention work, it is essential that interventions are delivered with a full understanding of any factors relating to risk of harm to others and safeguarding. In Kirklees, our case assessments highlighted shortfalls in the

quality of work undertaken to address children's safety and wellbeing needs of the child, and the risk of harm some children posed to others. Some of these children lived complex lives, and their offences had been committed in the context of wider worrying behaviour and experiences. In particular, the quality of contingency planning was poor.

Given that not all out-of-court disposals are referred to and discussed by the joint decision-making panel, specifically first community resolutions, the YJS did not always contribute information and recommendations to the panel. The YJS is therefore missing an opportunity to refer some children into appropriate interventions and to facilitate a fully personalised and child-focused approach to decision-making. We found that, although case managers were complimentary about their line managers, management oversight often did not address shortfalls in the quality of practice around safety and wellbeing and risk of harm to others.

Strengths:

- YJS staff developed positive relationships with children and their families, which supported effective engagement.
- Implementation and delivery of out-of-court disposal work to address desistance was outstanding.
- Planning to address desistance was of good quality.
- The YJS worked effectively with the police to implement a large majority of youth conditional cautions.

Areas for improvement:

- The YJS did not contribute information and recommendations to the out-of-court disposal joint decision-making panel in many cases.
- Assessments were too narrow in their focus and lacked analysis of important information.
- There were shortfalls in the quality of both planning and implementation and delivery for a child's risk of harm to others.
- Contingency planning for safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm to others, was poor, not always tailored to the needs of the case or recorded well enough.
- Planning and the implementation and delivery of work to address safety and wellbeing required improvement.
- Management oversight of out-of-court disposals lacked quality and rigour.

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/carers.

Requires improvement

Our rating²³ for assessment is based on the following key questions:

	% yes
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	67%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	67%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	53%

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

In 10 out of 15 inspected cases, we found that assessments sufficiently analysed how to support children's desistance. In all cases, the assessment was completed with meaningful input from children and their parents or carers. Staff focused on understanding the offending behaviour from the child's perspective, in order to analyse their motivation, attitude and sense of responsibility. In 11 out of 15 cases, diversity factors were considered. However, there was a lack of consideration of opportunities for restorative justice, with just three out of nine relevant cases deemed sufficient. The majority of assessments also lacked attention to any structural barriers facing the child.

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?

Assessment of a child's safety and wellbeing was sufficient in just over two-thirds of cases. We found that case managers drew on other sources of information in 11 out of 15 cases. Inspectors agreed with the safety and wellbeing risk classification in all but one case.

An inspector commented:

"I would agree with the medium risk of safety and wellbeing classification. The case manager has documented clear reasons to support this judgement. This includes the trauma the child suffered following a serious sexual assault, alongside evident concerns that she was being groomed prior to the assault. As the child is not in school, she was spending time with older youths who could potentially pose a risk to her. The case manager also jointly completed a sexual exploitation assessment tool with the child's social worker, with evidence on the YJS case record that social care information is documented and analysed".

²³ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. See Annexe 1 for a more detailed explanation.

However, some assessments did not contain a reasoned judgement or classification of the child's safety and wellbeing.

An inspector commented:

“Although the classification of safety and wellbeing as ‘high’ was correct and appropriate, the assessment lacked analysis and drawing together of the multiple key issues which made the child at risk from others. These included: gangs, criminal exploitation, current child in need status, substance misuse, parental substance misuse, previous child protection plan, NEET, childhood trauma, and issues of deprivation in their neighbourhood. Other sources of information had been gathered (such as from social care) but not sufficiently drawn together in analysis. Indeed, the rationale for the high safety and wellbeing judgement consisted of two short sentences and was very minimal”.

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?

Assessments of some children's risk of harm to others required improvement. Only half of the cases inspected saw the case manager use available sources of information, including other assessments or documents, to inform their own judgement. Inspectors agreed with the level of risk of harm to others in 11 out of 15 cases. However, we found that assessments lacked a reasoned analysis of past and present behaviours. In four out of 10 relevant cases, there were shortfalls in identifying and analysing risk of harm to others posed by the child, including identifying who was at risk and the nature of that risk. This was particularly evident in several cases where there were patterns of unconvicted behaviour for which the child had been NFA'd or released under investigation. Overall, assessment of risk of harm to others was sufficient in eight out of 15 cases.

We noted:

“Although classification of high risk of harm to others was correct, there was insufficient analysis and drawing together of all of the key risk factors past and present. The child had a number of NFAs for various serious offences (including robbery, arson and violence) and was also released under investigation for attempted murder. Detail around these behaviours was lacking and, again, the rationale was minimal and not sufficiently reasoned or comprehensive”.

3.2. Planning



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

Inadequate

Our rating²⁴ for planning is based on the following key questions:

	% yes
Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?	73%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	57%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	13%

Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?

Planning for desistance was strengths-based, proportionate and responsive to the child's diversity needs and social and familial context in 11 out of 15 cases. Of those seven relevant cases where there was a direct victim, planning for restorative work was variable and judged sufficient in four of them. Planning involved the child and parent or carer in every case and we saw opportunities for community integration offered in a large majority of them.

An inspector noted:

"The plan includes work on thinking and behaviour, victim awareness, cannabis use and referral to YJS careers officer. The child was involved in the process by discussing and signing the plan and timescales are clearly documented".

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

Planning promoted the safety and wellbeing of the child in four out of seven relevant cases. It was aligned with other agencies' plans in a reasonable majority of cases. However, children's circumstances can change rapidly, and contingency planning needs to be in place to respond to these changes. Inspectors judged that contingency planning to keep the child safe was weak and only sufficient in two out of seven relevant cases.

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

Planning to promote the safety of other people was sufficient in just one out of eight relevant cases and did not involve other agencies in the large majority of them. There was minimal focus on victims, with just one out of four relevant cases deemed sufficient. Inspectors found the quality of contingency planning for risk of harm to others to be poor. This is important, as there should be a clear plan of action in the event of risk to other people either increasing or decreasing. In all of the relevant eight cases, contingency plans were too vague and did not clearly set out adequate actions or responses to be taken if, and when, circumstances changed.

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, indicated in bold in the table. See Annexe 1 for a more detailed explanation.

We noted:

“There is no written plan in place to document how the risk of harm would be managed. The case manager was unable to articulate the measures in place apart from some very basic information-sharing. There is no contingency planning or identification of what an escalation in risk might look like, or what actions would need to be taken”.

3.3. Implementation and delivery



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

Inadequate

Our rating²⁵ for implementation and delivery is based on the following key questions:

	% yes
Does service delivery effectively support the child’s desistance?	93%
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of the child?	57%
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of other people?	38%

Does service delivery effectively support the child’s desistance?

Implementation and delivery work to support the child’s desistance was very strong. Inspectors found a high level of engagement from children, which reflected the proactive approach of staff and their capacity to develop and maintain meaningful relationships with them. Case managers focused sufficiently on developing and maintaining effective working relationships in a large majority of relevant cases, while in all cases staff encouraged and enabled the child’s compliance with the work of the YJS.

In 14 out of 15 cases, the services most likely to support desistance were delivered, with case managers paying sufficient attention to sequencing and the available timescales. Service delivery reflected the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, involving parents/carers or significant others in 13 out of 15 cases.

An inspector commented:

“Delivery to support desistance was good. The child was referred to the substance misuse practitioner and completed relevant sessions; offending behaviour work was completed, and the case manager liaised with the local college to support the child’s wishes to revert to an online business studies course. Desistance work was completed swiftly and well-sequenced, with links into the college and careers service for future support beyond the youth conditional caution”.

²⁵ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. See Annexe 1 for a more detailed explanation.

Does service delivery effectively support the safety of the child?

Evidence that the safety and wellbeing of the child was promoted through service delivery was found in four of the seven relevant cases, and in four out of six relevant cases we saw YJS case managers involve and coordinate other agencies in keeping children safe.

Does service delivery effectively support the safety of other people?

Attention had been given to the protection of actual and potential victims in only one of the four relevant cases. The interventions sufficiently managed and minimised the risk of harm in just three out of eight relevant cases and, overall, the safety of other people was supported effectively in only three out of eight relevant cases.

An inspector commented:

“Insufficient restorative justice work is undertaken in respect of the victim of the index offence, as there is just one worker in the team due to staff shortages. Intelligence from the DREAM meeting notes a further incident of threatening behaviour by the child, but the case manager is unclear about the review assessment process and duplicates an earlier assessment. Therefore, no adequate risk review is undertaken and there is no revised delivery of interventions, despite the child’s further incident of harmful behaviour”.

3.4. Joint working



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

Inadequate

Our rating²⁶ for joint working is based on the following key questions:

	% yes
Are the YOT’s recommendations sufficiently well-informed, analytical and personalised to the child, supporting joint decision making?	27%
Does the YOT work effectively with the police in implementing the out-of-court disposal? ²⁷	80%

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

West Yorkshire Police have a local policy which states that first-time offences can be dealt with by way of a community resolution, without prior consultation with the YJS. Therefore, only four out of 15 inspected cases showed that the YJS’s recommendations had been well informed, analytical and personalised to the child, and therefore supported joint decision-making. Where information was given, three

²⁶ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. See Annexe 1 for a more detailed explanation.

²⁷ This question is only relevant in youth conditional caution cases.

out of four cases saw timely provision to meet the needs of the case, legislation and guidance.

An inspector noted:

“The YJS was not given an opportunity to provide any assessment or analysis, so there was no effective joint working. The community resolution was issued directly by the police at the child’s grandmother’s house on the day of the offence of possession of cannabis”.

In another case, we found:

“The community resolution was issued by the police, without recourse to information from the YJS, who would not have recommended a further community resolution due to previous non-compliance and lack of engagement.

“The child had only partially completed a previous community resolution in a short period for an offence of arson. A further community resolution being issued by police without the YJS having the opportunity to inform the decision undermined the credibility of the YJS when the child again did not engage or comply. The case manager expressed her frustration with the process and reported that this happens quite frequently.”

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

The joint work undertaken by the YJS in relation to youth conditional cautions was of much better quality. The YJS kept police sufficiently up to date about progress made on the youth conditional caution in four of the five relevant cases. In all but one case, the child completed all the requirements of the disposal successfully, with enough attention given to compliance and enforcement in all cases.

Annexe 1: Methodology

HM Inspectorate of Probation standards

The standards against which we inspect youth offending services are based on established models and frameworks, which are grounded in evidence, learning and experience. These standards are designed to drive improvements in the quality of work with children who have offended.²⁸

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.

Domain one: organisational delivery

The youth justice service submitted evidence in advance and the service director (family support and child protection), the head of service (youth engagement and contextual safeguarding) and the youth justice service manager delivered a presentation covering the following areas:

- How do organisational delivery arrangements in this area make sure that the work of your YOS 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 34 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 11 meetings, which included meetings with managers, partner organisations and staff. The evidence collected under this domain was judged against our published ratings characteristics.²⁹

Domain two: court disposals

We completed case assessments over a one-week period, examining case files and interviewing case managers. 60 per cent of the cases selected were those of children who had received court disposals six to nine months earlier, enabling us to examine work in relation to assessing, planning, implementing and reviewing. Where necessary, interviews with other people significantly involved in the case also took place.

We examined 22 court disposals. The sample size was set to achieve a confidence level of 80 per cent (with a margin of error of five), and we ensured that the ratios in relation to gender, sentence or disposal type, risk of serious harm, and risk to safety and wellbeing classifications matched those in the eligible population.

²⁸ HM Inspectorate's standards are available here:
<https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmiprobation/about-our-work/our-standards-and-ratings/>

Domain three: out-of-court disposals

We completed case assessments over a one-week period, examining case files and interviewing case managers. 40 per cent of cases selected were those of children who had received out-of-court disposals two 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 significantly involved in the case also took place.

We examined 15 out-of-court disposals. The sample size was set to achieve a confidence level of 80 per cent (with a margin of error of 5), and we ensured that the ratios in relation to gender, sentence or disposal type, risk of serious harm, and risk to safety and wellbeing classifications matched those in the eligible population.

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 22 court disposals and 15 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. Exceptionally, the ratings panel considers whether professional discretion should be exercised where 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 ten 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.

Annexe 2: Inspection data

The answers to the key questions that determine the ratings for each standard are underpinned by answers to more detailed 'prompts'. These tables illustrate the proportions of the case sample with a satisfactory 'yes' response to the prompt questions. It should be noted that there is no mechanistic connection between the proportion of prompt questions answered positively, and the overall score at the key question level. The 'total' does not necessarily equal the 'sum of the parts'. The summary judgement is the overall finding made by the inspector, having taken consideration of the answers to all the prompts, weighing up the relative impact of the strengths and weaknesses.

Domain two: Court disposals

2.1. Assessment	
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	% Yes
Is there sufficient analysis of offending behaviour, including the child's attitudes towards and motivations for their offending?	86%
Does assessment consider the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, utilising information held by other agencies?	68%
Does assessment focus on the child's strengths and protective factors?	68%
Does assessment analyse the key structural barriers facing the child?	56%
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?	77%
Does assessment give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s, and opportunities for restorative justice?	47%
Is the child and their parents/carers meaningfully involved in their assessment, and are their views taken into account?	95%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	
Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risks to the safety and wellbeing of the child?	64%
Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including other assessments, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	64%
Does assessment analyse controls and interventions to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	42%

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	
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?	48%
Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including past behaviour and convictions, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	62%
Does assessment analyse controls and interventions to manage and minimise the risk of harm presented by the child?	48%

2.2. Planning

Does planning focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	% Yes
Does planning set out the services most likely to support desistance, paying sufficient attention to the available timescales and the need for sequencing?	73%
Does planning take sufficient account of the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child?	59%
Does planning take sufficient account of the child's strengths and protective factors, and seek to reinforce or develop these as necessary?	73%
Does planning take sufficient account of the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change, and seek to develop these as necessary?	77%
Does planning give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s?	56%
Is the child and their parents/carers meaningfully involved in planning, and are their views taken into account?	100%

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

Does planning promote the safety and wellbeing of the child, sufficiently addressing risks?	53%
Does planning involve other agencies where appropriate, and is there sufficient alignment with other plans (e.g. child protection or care plans) concerning the child?	38%

Does planning set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	42%
Does planning set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to manage those risks that have been identified?	26%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	
Does planning promote the safety of other people, sufficiently addressing risk of harm factors?	39%
Does planning involve other agencies where appropriate?	38%
Does planning address any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims?	35%
Does planning set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote the safety of other people?	50%
Does planning set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to manage those risks that have been identified?	22%

2.3. Implementation and delivery

Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the child's desistance?	% Yes
Are the delivered services those most likely to support desistance, with sufficient attention given to sequencing and the available timescales?	95%
Does service delivery reflect the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, involving parents/carers or significant others?	86%
Does service delivery build upon the child's strengths and enhance protective factors?	91%
Is sufficient focus given to developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child and their parents/carers?	100%
Does service delivery promote opportunities for community integration including access to services post-supervision?	91%
Is sufficient attention given to encouraging and enabling the child's compliance with the work of the YOT?	100%
Are enforcement actions taken when appropriate?	100%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of the child?	
Does service delivery promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	89%

Is the involvement of other organisations in keeping the child safe sufficiently well-coordinated?	83%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?	
Are the delivered services sufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	78%
Is sufficient attention given to the protection of actual and potential victims?	57%
Is the involvement of other agencies in managing the risk of harm sufficiently well-coordinated?	63%

2.4. Reviewing	
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	% Yes
Does reviewing identify and respond to changes in factors linked to desistance?	94%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on building upon the child's strengths and enhancing protective factors?	88%
Does reviewing consider motivation and engagement levels and any relevant barriers?	82%
Is the child and their parents/carers meaningfully involved in reviewing their progress and engagement, and are their views taken into account?	94%
Does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work to support desistance?	71%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	
Does reviewing identify and respond to changes in factors related to safety and wellbeing?	50%
Is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in promoting the safety and wellbeing of the child?	71%
Does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	38%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	
Does reviewing identify and respond to changes in factors related to risk of harm?	39%

Is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in managing the risk of harm?	50%
Is the child and their parents/carers meaningfully involved in reviewing their risk of harm, and are their views taken into account?	67%
Does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	38%

Domain three: Out-of-court disposals

3.1. Assessment	
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	% Yes
Is there sufficient analysis of offending behaviour, including the child's acknowledgement of responsibility, attitudes towards and motivations for their offending?	73%
Does assessment consider the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, utilising information held by other agencies?	73%
Does assessment focus on the child's strengths and protective factors?	80%
Does assessment analyse the key structural barriers facing the child?	29%
Is sufficient attention given to understanding the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change?	73%
Does assessment give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s, and opportunities for restorative justice?	33%
Is the child and their parents/carers meaningfully involved in their assessment, and are their views taken into account?	100%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	
Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risks to the safety and wellbeing of the child?	67%
Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including other assessments, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	73%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	
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?	40%

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?	50%
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3.2. Planning	
Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?	% Yes
Does planning set out the services most likely to support desistance, paying sufficient attention to the available timescales and the need for sequencing?	80%
Does planning take sufficient account of the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child?	73%
Does planning take sufficient account of the child's strengths and protective factors, and seek to reinforce or develop these as necessary?	80%
Does planning take sufficient account of the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change, and seek to develop these as necessary?	79%
Does planning take sufficient account of opportunities for community integration, including access to mainstream services following completion of out-of-court disposal work?	80%
Does planning give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s?	57%
Is the child and their parents/carers meaningfully involved in planning, and are their views taken into account?	100%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	
Does planning promote the safety and wellbeing of the child, sufficiently addressing risks?	57%
Does planning involve other agencies where appropriate, and is there sufficient alignment with other plans (e.g. child protection or care plans) concerning the child?	67%
Does planning include necessary contingency arrangements for those risks that have been identified?	29%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	
Does planning promote the safety of other people, sufficiently addressing risk of harm factors?	13%
Does planning involve other agencies where appropriate?	20%

Does planning address any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims?	25%
Does planning include necessary contingency arrangements for those risks that have been identified?	0%

3.3. Implementation and delivery

Does service delivery support the child's desistance?	% Yes
Are the delivered services those most likely to support desistance, with sufficient attention given to sequencing and the available timescales?	93%
Does service delivery reflect the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, involving parents/carers or significant others?	87%
Is sufficient focus given to developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child and their parents/carers?	87%
Is sufficient attention given to encouraging and enabling the child's compliance with the work of the YOT?	100%
Does service delivery promote opportunities for community integration, including access to mainstream services?	80%
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of the child?	
Does service delivery promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	57%
Is the involvement of other agencies in keeping the child safe sufficiently well utilised and coordinated?	67%
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of other people?	
Is sufficient attention given to the protection of actual and potential victims?	25%
Are the delivered services sufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	38%

3.4. Joint working	
Are the YOT's recommendations sufficiently well-informed, analytical and personalised to the child, supporting joint decision making?	% Yes
Are the recommendations by the YOT for out-of-court disposal outcomes, conditions and interventions appropriate and proportionate?	67%
Do the recommendations consider the degree of the child's understanding of the offence and their acknowledgement of responsibility?	83%
Is a positive contribution made by the YOT to determining the disposal?	27%
Is sufficient attention given to the child's understanding, and their parents/carers' understanding, of the implications of receiving an out-of-court disposal?	87%
Is the information provided to inform decision making timely to meet the needs of the case, legislation and guidance?	75%
Is the rationale for joint disposal decisions appropriate and clearly recorded?	67%
3.2.1 Does the YOT work effectively with the police in implementing the out-of-court disposal?³⁰	
Does the YOT inform the police of progress and outcomes in a sufficient and timely manner?	80%
Is sufficient attention given to compliance with and enforcement of the conditions?	100%

³⁰ This question is only asked in youth conditional caution cases