



Her Majesty's
Inspectorate of
Probation

An inspection of youth offending services in

Plymouth

HM Inspectorate of Probation, February 2022



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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 programme of youth offending service (YOS) inspections. We have inspected and rated Plymouth Youth Justice Service (PYJS) 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, Plymouth Youth Justice Service was rated as 'Good'. We also inspected the quality of resettlement policy and provision, which was separately rated as 'Good'.

A joint targeted area inspection report in early 2020 criticised the governance arrangements for youth justice in Plymouth.¹ Plymouth City Council subsequently removed youth justice from the pan-Devon arrangement and established its own youth justice board in February 2020. Our inspection found that this change has transformed the provision of youth justice in Plymouth. There are now improved governance arrangements and strong strategic partnerships which oversee effective multi-agency working and the delivery of high-quality services to children and young people.

A comprehensive annual analysis of youth offending in Plymouth informs strategic decision-making and operational delivery. Changes that have resulted from this analysis include the expansion of services such as mental health, and the availability of a service to support children from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds. The timing of interventions and services has also been adjusted to maximise their effect. A victim worker has recently been appointed to the team. We welcome this development but believe this area of work still requires additional resources. The current part-time post is insufficient to cover the range of activities required.

The court orders we inspected were well managed by PYJS. The cases demonstrated the team's emphasis on engaging with parents, carers and the key adults in the lives of the children and young people. A range of services and interventions were delivered, and these were underpinned by effective professional relationships. The processes and information-sharing in place to manage the risk of serious harm are excellent, and the cases demonstrated that these are consistently adhered to. Staff in PYJS feel very supported by their managers but this was not always evident in the review of cases, and the recording of management oversight needs to be improved.

The out-of-court disposal work in Plymouth is supported by a coherent policy which ensures that pre-panel assessments are completed on all the children and young people. The panel's work is supported by innovative provision for reparation and the Impact diversion scheme. Resettlement work is also strong in PYJS. There is an established resettlement policy, and we saw evidence of strong advocacy by youth justice workers, on behalf of children and young people, to secure appropriate services after release from custody.

The progress PYJS has made is embodied in its recent move to new premises. These offer a child-friendly and accessible environment, enabling a range of services and interventions to be delivered.















¹ Ofsted. (2020). *Joint area targeted inspection of the multi-agency response to mental health in Plymouth conducted under section 20 of the Children Act 2004*.

We welcome the progress made by PYJS in all areas of its work. It is now important that this is sustained. In this report, we make six recommendations to further improve the work of PYJS and to help consolidate the progress that has already been made.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Justin Russell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and 'R'.

Justin Russell
HM Chief Inspector of Probation

Ratings

Plymouth Youth Justice Service		Score	24/36
Overall rating		Good	
1. Organisational delivery			
1.1	Governance and leadership	Good	
1.2	Staff	Good	
1.3	Partnerships and services	Good	
1.4	Information and facilities	Good	
2. Court disposals			
2.1	Assessment	Good	
2.2	Planning	Requires improvement	
2.3	Implementation and delivery	Outstanding	
2.4	Reviewing	Outstanding	
3. Out-of-court disposals			
3.1	Assessment	Good	
3.2	Planning	Requires improvement	
3.3	Implementation and delivery	Good	
3.4	Policy and provision	Good	
4. Resettlement			
4.1	Policy and provision	Good	

Executive summary

Overall, Plymouth YJS is rated as: 'Good'. This rating has been determined by inspecting the YOS in three areas of its work, referred to as 'domains'. We inspect against 12 core 'standards', shared between the domains. 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.² Published scoring rules generate the overall YOS rating.³ We inspected the quality of resettlement policy and provision separately and rated this work as: 'Good'. The findings and subsequent ratings in those domains are described below.

Organisational delivery

The Plymouth Youth Justice Service (PYJS) arrangements for governance and leadership; staffing; partnership and services; and information and facilities are rated as 'Good'.

The establishment of the Plymouth Youth Justice Board in February 2020 has transformed PYJS. The chair has provided strong leadership and is fully engaged in the work and development of the service. The board is made up of senior representatives from both statutory and third-sector services. The representatives' strong advocacy of youth justice work has directly resulted in increased staffing resources and expanded service provision in the youth justice team. The 12-month youth justice plan is wide-ranging and accessible. It is underpinned by a comprehensive annual analysis of youth offending. This analysis provides information in relation to offence type, risk, ethnicity, gender and geography. It informs both strategic decision-making and operational delivery.

Workloads are well managed, and the PYJS team includes seconded police officers, community psychiatric nurses, a speech and language therapist and a clinical psychologist. A part-time victim worker has recently been added to the team. Although welcome, this level of resource is insufficient to cover all the required areas of victim work within the team. Staff receive regular supervision and there is a positive team culture founded on clear performance expectations and constructive working relationships between the management team and staff. However, in some cases, there was no record of actions directed by managers being completed. PYJS managers should ensure that their directions are followed and that this is consistently recorded on the case records.

There are strong relationships with partner agencies, which have been the foundation of the improved service delivery. The joint PYJS and police approach to out-of-court and diversion work has resulted in significant improvements in this area. Similarly, the strong relationship between the PYJS and the education department

² HM Inspectorate of Probation's standards can be found here:

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

³ 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 to 36, which is banded to produce the overall rating, as follows: 0–6 = 'Inadequate', 7–18 = 'Requires improvement', 19–30 = 'Good', 31–36 = 'Outstanding'.

and institutions in the city has helped reduce the number of children on the PYJS caseload who are not in education, employment or training (NEET).

The work of the board and service is supported by detailed information on performance and quality assurance. This includes monitoring further offences committed by children within 12 months of having contact with PYJS. The PYJS uses information from this re-offending tracker to inform interventions and service delivery. The PYJS has recently re-located to new premises. This is an excellent facility and in an accessible location. It provides a suitable environment for a range of interventions and enables PYJS to provide services in the evening and at weekends.

Our key findings about organisational delivery are as follows:

- The establishment of the Plymouth Youth Justice Board has resulted in effective governance arrangements for the youth justice service.
- The partnership arrangements at strategic level are effective and have resulted in the expansion of the youth justice service and the improved delivery of appropriate interventions for children and young people.
- The youth justice plan 2021-2022 is comprehensive and accessible. It appropriately prioritises reducing first-time entrants, embedding trauma-informed practice and developing victim work, although the resources provided to do this are insufficient.
- Strategic decision-making and operational delivery are underpinned by a comprehensive annual report on youth offending in Plymouth, which includes the analysis of ethnicity; offence type; risk of harm; children in care; geography; and service outcomes.
- PYJS offers a comprehensive range of programmes to children and young people, which include interventions on substance misuse; anger and conflict; hate crime; emotional health; and healthy relationships.
- PYJS operates in newly acquired premises that offer accessible and flexible facilities to deliver a range of interventions and activities.

But:

- The current part-time victim officer resource is not sufficient for the post's span of responsibilities.
- PYJS managers should ensure that the management oversight of cases is consistently recorded on case records.
- The transition protocol outlining the arrangements for the transfer of young people to supervision by the probation service at the age of 18 is inconsistently applied.

Court disposals

We took a detailed look at four community sentences managed by the PYJS. We also conducted two 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, to keep the child safe, and to keep other people safe.

For the assessment of desistance, all four cases met all of our requirements. For the assessment of safety and wellbeing, 75 per cent of the cases were judged sufficient,

and for risk of harm, 50 per cent. As the lowest score was 50 per cent, assessment overall falls within our 'Requires improvement' range. However, this was a small sample and we saw some good examples of cases being assessed well. Therefore, our ratings panel applied professional discretion and amended the overall rating for assessment to 'Good'.

For planning, the scores were similar. For the planning of both desistance and safety and wellbeing work, 75 per cent of the cases were sufficient but only 50 per cent were judged in that category for the planning of work to manage risk of harm. As the lowest score was 50 per cent, the overall rating for planning is 'Requires improvement'. We considered that this was a fair summary of the planning work we saw being done and therefore the ratings panel did not exercise discretion to increase the rating.

For implementation and delivery, all of the cases met our requirements in the areas of desistance, safety and wellbeing and risk of harm. As a result, our rating for implementation and delivery is 'Outstanding'. We also rated court disposals as 'Outstanding' for reviewing. Again, all of the cases were judged sufficient across the areas of desistance, safety and wellbeing and risk of harm.

The management of court orders by PYJS is effective and inspectors found some excellent practice. In the cases inspected, there was evidence of strong relationships between the case manager and both the child or young person and their parents or carers. This is in line with the PYJS policy to understand and manage children within their family and social context. There was also evidence that interventions to implement and deliver supervision are sequenced immediately when an order begins. This practice was introduced by the management team following their analysis of caseload outcomes. It is a good example of information analysis informing practice.

Planning is an area for improvement in the management of court orders. Planning for desistance and safety and wellbeing is good but requires improvement in relation to keeping other people safe. PYJS should focus particularly on considering the child's previous behaviour and on contingency planning in this area of case management.

Across all areas of work, inspectors found effective multi-agency work and information-sharing. Appropriate interventions were identified, available and delivered to vulnerable children and young people. The partnership arrangements also ensured that key information was routinely reviewed in multi-agency meetings and, where necessary, appropriate safeguarding actions were taken. PYJS's good relationship with the police and children's social care also ensured that behaviour and actions were comprehensively reviewed to protect victims and potential victims.

Our key findings about court disposals are as follows:

- The engagement with children and young people is excellent and this is underpinned by strong professional relationships.
- Diversity and individual circumstances are routinely considered in the management of cases.
- The coordination of services and other agencies is effective.
- Interventions are sequenced effectively, primarily at the start of court orders.
- There is a consistent approach to working with parents and the key adults in a child's or young person's life.

- The processes for managing cases with a high risk of harm are applied consistently and effectively. This includes multi-agency cooperation and the coordination of services and actions.
- Cases are consistently reviewed where there are concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing or a potential increase in the level of serious harm.

But:

- Contingency planning is inconsistent and does not routinely identify all the potential risks and the necessary actions should they arise.
- The assessment of risk of serious harm does not consistently include all the relevant factors, including previous high-risk behaviour.

Out-of-court disposals

We inspected eight cases managed by PYJS that had received an out-of-court disposal. These consisted of five youth conditional cautions, two youth cautions and one community resolution. We interviewed the case managers in three 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, to keep the child safe and to keep other people safe. The quality of the work undertaken for each factor needs to be above a specified threshold for each aspect of supervision to be rated as satisfactory.

We also inspected the quality of policy and provision for out-of-court disposals, using evidence from documents, meetings and interviews.

For assessment, 88 per cent met all our requirements for desistance, but for the assessment of safety and wellbeing, 63 per cent of the cases met our standards. The score for keeping other people safe was again 88 per cent. As the lowest score was between 50 and 64 per cent, the overall score for assessment falls within our 'Requires improvement' range. However, our judgement is that this was not representative of all the assessment work being done in out-of-court disposals. Our ratings panel therefore applied professional discretion and amended the overall rating for assessment to 'Good'.

Planning was strongest for keeping people safe where all the inspected cases were sufficient. but the score fell to 63 per cent for the planning of safety and wellbeing. As this score was between 50 and 64 per cent, the overall rating for planning was 'Requires improvement'.

In line with the findings for court orders, PYJS's performance in the area of implementation and delivery was strong. Service delivery sufficiently supported the child's desistance in 75 per cent of the inspected cases. The scores for the support of the child's safety and wellbeing and support for the safety of other people were 88 and 100 per cent respectively. As the lowest score was between 65 and 79 per cent, the overall rating for implementation and delivery was 'Good'.

PYJS has an effective out-of-court disposal policy, which is underpinned by a comprehensive assessment process and committed multi-agency involvement. This includes innovative reparation projects and the Impact diversion scheme. The implementation of this policy is helping to reduce Plymouth's historically high number of first-time entrants.

As with court orders, there was evidence in the inspected cases of a consistent focus on working with children and young people in their wider social context. Other strengths included effective working arrangements with other agencies to keep other people safe and the building of strong professional relationships with the children and young people. The focus on keeping people safe was evident across all the areas of practice in PYJS's out-of-court disposal work.

Areas for improvement included the assessment of, and planning for, the child or young person's safety and wellbeing. In some cases, the potential risks had been underestimated and, as with court orders, contingency planning required greater detail. There were also cases where issues related to desistance had not been addressed in the delivery of the service.

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

- Both individual circumstances and the family context are incorporated into the planning of out-of-court disposals.
- Parents and carers are effectively engaged in the assessment process.
- Effective multi-agency work and information-sharing is evident across all areas of out-of-court disposal work.
- There are effective procedures in place for keeping people safe and for planning risk management.

But:

- The potential risks to children's and young people's safety and wellbeing are not consistently analysed.
- Contingency planning for safety and wellbeing does not clearly identify actions and responses, including the roles of other agencies, should circumstances change or the risk increase.
- The delivery of services does not consistently address all of the key issues related to a child's or young person's desistance.

Resettlement

We inspected the quality of policy and provision for resettlement work for children leaving custody, using evidence from documents, meetings and interviews. To illustrate that work, we inspected two cases managed by the YJS that had received a custodial sentence.

PYJS's resettlement policy is based on a trauma-informed approach and effective practice principles. It sets out actions and timescales for the children or young people sent to custody. This includes actions in relation to accommodation; education, training and employment; mental health; substance misuse; and the frequency of contact with the child or young person. The needs of the child's or young person's family are also central to resettlement practice.

In the cases inspected, there was good evidence of youth justice workers advocating on behalf of the child or young person to secure suitable accommodation after release. There was also evidence of good liaison with secure establishments to ensure appropriate education, training and employment (ETE) provision was made available.

Overall, we rated PYJS's resettlement provision as 'Good'.

Our key findings about resettlement work are as follows:

- The implemented resettlement policy details expectations in relation to the level of contact with the child or young person; accommodation; safety and wellbeing; and the management of the risk of serious harm.
- Resettlement provision is based on a trauma-informed approach and supported by services that provide a high level of support and bespoke interventions.
- Youth justice workers advocate effectively for children and young people in relation to accommodation and education, training and employment.
- There are good multi-agency arrangements focused on keeping both the children themselves, and other people they come into contact with, safe.
- There is evidence that PYJS adjusts its policy and procedure after reviewing cases of children or young people who are sent to custody.

But:

- Transition arrangements between PYJS and the probation service after young people turn 18 are applied inconsistently.
- The case recording on resettlement cases is inconsistent.

Recommendations

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

Plymouth Youth Justice Board should:

1. ensure that there is sufficient victim staff resource in place to deliver the necessary victim-focused work across PYJS.

The Plymouth Youth Justice Service should:

2. improve the quality of contingency planning to address children's safety and wellbeing and to manage risk of harm to others
3. improve the quality and recording of management oversight for both court orders and out-of-court disposals
4. ensure that service delivery, referrals to services, statutory orders and out-of-court disposals are monitored and analysed, for disproportionate access and outcomes for black, Asian and minority ethnic children
5. improve the quality and consistency of recording on resettlement cases.

The Plymouth Youth Justice Service and the Probation Service should:

6. review the current transition protocol for children and young people transferring between the services and ensure that the timescales and actions are adhered to.

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.

YOTs are statutory partnerships, and they are multidisciplinary, to deal with the needs of the whole child. They are required to have staff from local authority social care and education services, the police, the National Probation Service and local health services.⁴ Most YOTs are based within local authorities, although this can vary.

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

Plymouth is the 15th largest city in England, with a growing population of approximately 262,800.⁵ Children and young people under 18 account for 20 per cent of the population (53,291). In some areas of the city, deprivation is recorded as 43 per cent higher than the average for England and Wales. These areas are in the top 10 per cent of the most deprived areas nationally. Three of these areas, Stonehouse, Devonport and Barne Barton, are home to the majority of the cases managed by PYJS. A fifth of children in Plymouth live in poverty, with that number rising to more than half in some of the deprived areas of the city. The percentage of Plymouth children living in poverty is reported to be 31 per cent,⁶ after housing costs are taken into account.

The proportion of Plymouth's population that is white British is higher than the UK national average, but this is decreasing. The 2011 national census recorded 93 per cent of the city's population as coming from this background.⁷ The 2020-2021 school roll recorded that 91 per cent came from a white background with 86 per cent being identified as white British. Eight per cent of children are recorded as coming from a black, Asian and minority ethnic background.⁸ Thirteen per cent of PYJS's current caseload is from a black, Asian and minority ethnic background.⁹ There are at least 43 main languages spoken in the city and nearly 100 different languages are spoken in Plymouth schools. The Polish, Chinese and Kurdish communities are among the largest in the city.

⁴ The *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* set out the arrangements for local YOTs and partnership working.

⁵ The Office of National Statistics. *Mid-2020 population estimate*.

⁶ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. (2019). *English indices of deprivation*.

⁷ Office for National Statistics. (2012). *Census 2011*.

⁸ Plymouth City Council. (2021). *School role 2020-2021*.

⁹ Information provided by Plymouth Youth Justice service during the inspection.

Contextual facts

Population information¹⁰

223	First-time entrant rate per 100,000 in Plymouth ¹¹
167	First-time entrant rate per 100,000 in England and Wales
31.1%	Reoffending rate in Plymouth ¹²
35.6%	Reoffending rate in England and Wales

262,839	Total population in Plymouth
22,963	Total youth population (10–17 years) in Plymouth

Caseload information¹³

Age	10–14 years	15–17 years
Plymouth YOS	29%	71%
National average	22%	78%

Race/ethnicity	White	Black and minority ethnic	Unknown
Plymouth YOS ¹⁴	87%	13%	-
Plymouth school-age population ¹⁵	91%	8%	1%
National average	69%	28%	3%

Gender	Male	Female
Plymouth YOS	87%	13%
National average	85%	15%

¹⁰ Office for National Statistics. (2021). *UK population estimates, mid-2020*.

¹¹ Youth Justice Board. (2021). *First-time entrants, January to December, 2020*.

¹² Ministry of Justice. (2021). *Proven reoffending statistics, October 2018 to September 2019*.

¹³ Youth Justice Board. (2021). *Youth justice annual statistics: 2019 to 2020*.

¹⁴ Information provided by Plymouth Youth Justice Service during the inspection.

¹⁵ Information from Plymouth school roll for 2020-2021.

Additional caseload data¹⁶

55	Total current caseload, of which:
24	Court disposals
31	Out-of-court disposals

Of the court disposals

20	Total current caseload on community sentences
3	Total current caseload in custody
1	Total current caseload on licence

Of the out-of-court disposals

0	Total current caseload with youth caution
9	Total current caseload with youth conditional caution
22	Total current caseload: community resolution or other out-of-court disposal

Education and child protection status of caseload

53%	Proportion of current caseload open to a children's social care plan
0.5%	Current caseload with child protection plan
62%	Current caseload with child in need plan
0%	Current caseload aged 16 and under not in school/pupil referral unit/alternative education
19%	Current caseload aged 16 and under in a pupil referral unit or alternative education
11%	Current caseload aged 17+ not in education, training or employment

For children subject to court disposals (including resettlement case):

Offence types ¹⁷	%
Violence against the person	67%
Burglary	17%
Robbery	17%

¹⁶ Data supplied by the YOS, reflecting the caseload at the time of the inspection announcement.

¹⁷ Data from the cases assessed during this inspection.

1. Organisational delivery

The Plymouth Youth Justice Service (PYJS) arrangements for governance and leadership; staffing; partnership and services; and information and facilities are rated as 'Good'.

The establishment of the Plymouth Youth Justice Board in February 2020, separate from the previous pan-Devon Board, has resulted in the transformation of PYJS. The chair has provided strong leadership and is fully engaged in the work and development of the service. The board is made up of senior representatives from both statutory and third-sector services. The representatives' strong advocacy for youth justice work has directly resulted in increased staffing resources and expanded service provision in the youth justice team. The 12-month youth justice plan is wide-ranging and accessible. It is underpinned by a comprehensive annual analysis of youth offending. This analysis provides information on offence type, risk, ethnicity, gender and geography. It informs both strategic decision-making and operational delivery.

Workloads are well managed, and the PYJS team includes seconded police officers, community psychiatric nurses, a speech and language therapist and a clinical psychologist. A part-time victim worker has recently been added to the team. Although welcome, this level of resource is insufficient to cover all the required areas of victim work within the team. Staff receive regular supervision and there is a positive team culture founded on clear performance expectations and constructive working relationships between the management team and staff. However, in some cases, there was no record of actions directed by managers being completed. PYJS managers should ensure that their directions are adhered to and that this is consistently recorded on the case records.

There are strong relationships with partner agencies, which have been the foundation of the improved service delivery. The joint PYJS and police approach to out-of-court and diversion work has resulted in significant improvements in this area. Similarly, the strong relationship between the PYJS and the education department and institutions in the city has helped to reduce the number of children on the PYJS caseload who are NEET.

The work of the board and the service is supported by detailed information on performance and quality assurance. This includes monitoring further offences committed by children within 12 months of having contact with PYJS. The information from this re-offending tracker is used to inform interventions and service delivery. PYJS has recently re-located to new premises. This is an excellent facility and in an accessible location. It provides a suitable environment for a range of interventions and enables PYJS to provide services in the evenings and at weekends.

Strengths

- The establishment of the Plymouth Youth Justice Board has resulted in effective governance arrangements for the youth justice service in the city.
- The partnership arrangements at strategic level are effective and have resulted in the expansion of the youth justice service and the delivery of appropriate interventions for children and young people.

- The youth justice plan 2021-2022 is comprehensive and accessible. It appropriately prioritises reducing first-time entrants, embedding trauma-informed practice and developing victim work.
- Strategic decision-making and operational delivery are underpinned by a comprehensive annual report on youth offending in Plymouth, which includes the analysis of ethnicity; offence type; risk of harm; children in care; geography; and service outcomes.
- PYJS offers a comprehensive range of programmes to children and young people, which include interventions on substance misuse; anger and conflict; hate crime; emotional health; and healthy relationships.
- PYJS operates in newly acquired premises that offer accessible and flexible facilities to deliver a range of interventions and activities.

Areas for improvement

- The current part-time victim officer resource is not sufficient for the post's span of responsibilities.
- PYJS managers should ensure that their directions are adhered to and that this is consistently recorded on the case records.
- The transition protocol between PYJS and the probation service is inconsistently applied.

Organisations that are well led and well managed are more likely to achieve their aims. We inspect against four standards.

1.1. Governance and leadership



The governance and leadership of the YOT supports and promotes the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children.

Good

Key data

Total spend in previous financial year	£853,894
Total projected budget current for financial year	£862,995

In making a judgement about governance and leadership, we take into account the answers to the following three questions:

Is there an effective local vision and strategy for the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children?

The Plymouth Youth Justice Board (PYJB) was set up in February 2020 following concerns that the previous governance arrangements in a pan-Devon board did not

effectively address the key social and demographic issues affecting the city of Plymouth. This change in governance was led by the board chair, who is the Service Director for Children, Young People and Families in the city. She has extensive experience of strategic management boards and has ensured the subsequent effectiveness of the governance arrangements. This includes ensuring that there is representation on the board from the statutory and non-statutory organisations at the right level of seniority. In addition, the chair has led the board in ensuring that attendance at board level has been translated into the comprehensive delivery of operational services.

The board is well attended and board members pro-actively represent the work of PYJS in their own organisations. In the 19 months since the board's formation, this has resulted in the increased provision of staff, services, and data analysis to PYJS. PYJS's youth justice plan is comprehensive and accessible. It includes details of the governance arrangements, key developments and priority areas. Priority areas for 2021-2022 include reducing the number of first-time entrants, embedding trauma-informed practice and developing victim work. Identified drivers of the PYJS plan include a response to the Lammy Review¹⁸ and a detailed analysis of youth offending in Plymouth, which includes a breakdown of offending in terms of ethnicity and gender.

PYJS has key operational policies in place, which include risk management, safety and wellbeing, out-of-court disposals and resettlement. Comprehensive performance reports are reviewed at each board meeting, detailing PYJS's performance against its performance indicators. Case studies of complex children are considered in detail and feedback is received from the moderation panel made up of managers from across children's services, which oversees the case supervision of PYJS.

The views of young people are a standard agenda item at each board meeting, and different methods have been considered to ensure the child's voice is heard. To this end, additional management resources have recently been allocated to develop children and young people's participation in the service.

Do the partnership arrangements actively support effective service delivery?

PYJS sits under children's services in Plymouth City Council and has direct links with the key strategic and management partnerships. This includes the community safety partnership in Plymouth, where it is represented at the monthly partnership management group meeting. The chair of the youth justice board attends the Safer Plymouth executive board, for which the PYJS produces quarterly reports and youth justice is a standing agenda item.

Since the establishment of the independent PYJB, the resources made available to the youth justice service have been significantly expanded. Staff providing services in relation to mental health; speech and language; probation; education, training and employment (ETE); and victim work are now present in the team. The board's determination to implement an enhanced case management model has resulted in a clinical psychologist being appointed in July 2021 to work in the team three days a week.

¹⁸ David Lammy. (2017). *The Lammy Review: An independent review into the treatment of, and outcomes for, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals in the Criminal Justice System*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/lammy-review-final-report>

The Service Director for Education, Participation and Skills in Plymouth City Council sits on the PYJS board. This has helped PYJS to address the issue of NEET children on its caseload. PYJS now has a strong relationship with the NEET taskforce in the city and has developed direct relationships with local schools and colleges. For school-age children, a joint process has been developed with the head of inclusion and attendance in the city to notify headteachers of any concerns about a PYJS child. In July 2021, 100 per cent of PYJS's school-age children were in full-time education.

The first-time entry rate for children in the city has been historically high and continues to exceed the national and regional average. The need to improve performance in this area of service provision is recognised by the board. PYJS's response has included the introduction of a revised out-of-court disposal framework in January 2020. This year it has introduced the Impact diversion scheme with the police. The success of the out-of-court disposal process is demonstrated by the fact that the first-time entry rate in Plymouth fell by 34 per cent between 2019 and 2020.

Does the leadership of the YOT support effective service delivery?

The service manager has developed strong relationships with partner agencies, which have been the foundation of improved service delivery. The effective working partnership, particularly with the police, has resulted in the implementation of an effective out-of-court disposal framework. There are also effective relationships with health, education and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), which have resulted in increased team resources and improved service delivery.

The service manager and team managers attend board meetings to report on the PYJS's performance. The service manager also produces an annual analysis of youth offending in Plymouth. This comprehensive report includes an analysis of offending in relation to disproportionality, geography, offence type, age and desistance factors.

1.2. Staff



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

Good

Key staffing data¹⁹

Total staff headcount (full-time equivalent (FTE))	34
Number of case managers (FTE)	9
Vacancy rate (total unfilled posts as percentage of total staff headcount)	0%
Vacancy rate case managers only (total unfilled case manager posts as percentage of total case manager headcount)	0%

¹⁹ Data supplied by YOS and reflecting staffing at the time of the inspection announcement.

Average caseload case managers (FTE equivalent) ²⁰	9
Average annual working days sickness (all staff)	8

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

Do staffing and workload levels support the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children?

PYJS includes qualified social workers, youth justice officers, a seconded police officer, a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) psychiatric nurse, a speech and language worker, a post-careers worker, an educational welfare officer, a seconded probation officer and a victim worker. In the last three months a clinical psychologist and two diversion workers have been added to the team. The clinical psychologist’s primary responsibility will be to introduce an enhanced casework model of practice to the team. The diversion workers work as part of the Impact diversion scheme, funded by PYJS and the police, which was introduced in June 2021.

PYJS has an allocation policy that provides clear direction on timescales, transfers, absences and diversity considerations. There is also a workload weighting tool used by managers to make equitable resourcing decisions. The tool scores the different types of cases and assessments to measure the workload and to inform allocation. The informed management of the team’s workload ensures that it is reasonable for case managers. At the time of the inspection, the average caseload was nine. Twelve out of the 13 respondents to the staff survey viewed their workload as manageable.

PYJS emphasises the importance of families and key individuals in the lives of the children they manage and the importance of understanding children in their social context. This has been developed over the last two years, and the team has been encouraged to work with both children and the key individuals in their lives, in order to promote positive outcomes. This change in the working culture is ongoing but there was evidence in the inspected cases that this approach is becoming embedded.

Reparation is central to PYJS’s management of children in both the statutory and non-statutory settings. Staff take a bespoke approach with each child or young person to channel them into activities that build on both their skills and their desires. Activities include work on the team’s allotment, a woodwork project and individual activities, such as working for a local zoo. As well as the specific activities, the projects aim to empower the children and to increase their confidence and social skills.

The probation officer seconded to PYJS is part time, and there is an agreement with the probation service that a part-time probation service officer will also be seconded. For young people approaching the age of 18, there is a transition protocol in place between the PYJS and the probation service, which outlines timescales and actions for the transfer of cases. The inspection found, however, that this was inconsistently applied.

The PYJS victim officer is part time and only took up the post in January 2021. This post has designated responsibilities for both the statutory cases and the out-of-court

²⁰ Data supplied by YOS, based on staffing and workload at the time of the inspection announcement.

disposal process. The current resource is not sufficient for this span of responsibilities and, given the importance of the role, there should be a full-time victim worker.

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

PYJS's work with children is governed by a child-first, trauma-informed approach. The addition of a clinical psychologist to the team to implement an enhanced case management model is designed to improve this method of working. How the enhanced case management model will operate in practice is still to be decided, although there will be an emphasis on a shared team understanding of the approach to be taken with each child or young person.

The ethnic profile of the PYJS staff team shows that three per cent are from an ethnic minority background and 66 per cent are women. Thirteen per cent of the children and young people managed by PYJS are from a black, Asian or minority ethnic background and 13 per cent are also girls. This disparity impedes the ability of PYJS to consistently match children and young people with workers from a similar background. Children and young people assessed as high risk of serious harm are allocated to one of three qualified social workers. In line with the child-first approach, the PYJS prioritises building consistent relationships. However, the proactive approach taken to allocation ensures that cases are re-allocated if the level of risk changes or staff performance issues arise.

The Children's Directorate at Plymouth City Council operates a talent management policy to develop and retain staff. This includes temporary deployments both between and within teams. PYJS's close working relationship with children's social care has allowed the team's social workers to update their safeguarding knowledge and maintain their professional registration. This relationship has also enabled a social worker from children's social care to cover sickness absence in PYJS.

The volunteer work for PYJS is primarily linked to the referral panels. They have a comprehensive induction and regular meetings with the volunteer coordinator. They report excellent communication with the team and feel very involved and included. They have access to appropriate training. For instance, some volunteers have attended training on the impact of county lines on youth offending.

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

Staff feel supported by the PYJS management team and highlight managers' accessibility as well as the quality of the formal supervision. Formal monthly supervision sessions are held with team members and the supervision policy emphasises the importance of emotional intelligence and reflection when working with young people. The policy also prioritises maintaining professional standards. For example, to ensure the social work qualified team manager maintains her registration, she has additional supervision with a qualified social worker as well as from the service manager. In our staff survey, 92 per cent of staff were satisfied with the quality of their supervision.

Although staff feel adequately supported, our inspection of cases found the management oversight arrangements to be inconsistent. In the court cases, inspectors found it to be sufficient in two out of the four cases and for the

out-of-court disposals, it was sufficient in three out of the eight cases. In some cases, actions were directed by managers but there was no subsequent follow-up to ensure they were completed. PYJS managers should ensure that their directions are adhered to and that this is consistently recorded on the case records.

PYJS has a combined quality assurance and staff oversight policy. Each month, 20 per cent of the caseload is quality assured, with the findings subject to a moderation panel made up of senior managers from PYJS and children's social care. These procedures ensure that casework is routinely monitored. In addition, they have identified concerns both in relation to behaviour at specific schools and child exploitation, and ensured these concerns are addressed.

All staff receive annual appraisals that are linked to both performance and personal development. Staff have confidence in this process as a way of accessing development opportunities. There is a comprehensive induction programme for all new staff that details activities and actions with specified timescales.

Are arrangements for learning and development comprehensive and responsive?

Staff have access to a mandatory training programme across the children's directorate, which includes safeguarding and risk management courses. Staff managing cases involving sexually harmful behaviour have to complete AIM 3 training. In addition, training is available to address specific areas of concern, such as county lines or child exploitation. In the staff survey, 92 per cent of staff said they mostly, or fully, had the skills and knowledge to undertake their role.

The comprehensive quality assurance and monitoring processes in operation enable both individual and service learning to be captured and disseminated. This includes feedback from serious incidents and custody cases.

PYJS actively encourages staff development through the national assessment and accreditation system pathway, available from the Academy of Social Work in Plymouth. PYJS staff undertaking the pathway must attend mandatory presentations and seminars and then complete themed action learning sets. These include domestic abuse, neglect and drug and alcohol use.

Do managers pay sufficient attention to staff engagement?

The management team has consciously developed a positive team culture built on trust and relationship-building. The constructive culture, built on support and transparency, in combination with clear expectations and boundaries, is acknowledged across both the staff teams and the partner agencies.

The PYJS staff are highly motivated and recognise the progress that has been made in developing and delivering the service. Managers recognise personal circumstances and diversity considerations and there is evidence that reasonable adjustments are made to working arrangements.

Staff felt supported throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and received clear communication in relation to policy and procedure. Weekly meetings ensured that they were supported in home working and had clear directions in relation to work. The return to work has been equally supportive, with staggered returns and flexible working arrangements facilitated. The management team has responded effectively to staff members' individual circumstances, such as pregnancy and child-care.

1.3. Partnerships and services



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

Good

Caseload characteristics

Percentage of current caseload with mental health issues	20%
Percentage of current caseload with substance misuse issues	24%
Percentage of current caseload with an education, health and care plan	26%

In making a judgement about partnerships and services, we take into account the answers to the following questions:

Is there a sufficiently comprehensive and up-to-date analysis of the profile of children, used by the YOT to deliver well-targeted services?

The service manager compiles an annual report of youth offending in Plymouth, which includes an analysis of ethnicity, offence types, risk of serious harm, children in care, geography and outcomes. This comprehensive report is used effectively to inform strategy and decision-making. For instance, it was identified that re-offending by children managed by PYJS was prevalent both in the first three months of an order being made and after it had ended. As a result, the management team reviewed the sequencing of interventions and decided that the key interventions should be delivered to the children and young people very soon after the child or young person's order began.

From 01 April 2020, PYJS introduced a tracker process to monitor the re-offending of young people who had worked with the team from that date. This process records re-offending for offences committed by children and young people within 12 months of starting work or having contact with PYJS. The cohort of children who had received an outcome between 01 April 2020 and 26 August 2021 consisted of 113 children. The tracker process revealed that 14 had re-offended, with an overall re-offending rate for the cohort of 12 per cent. As well as re-offending outcomes, this information informs the delivery of interventions and the allocation of cases.

Fifty-three per cent of the current PYJS caseload is open to a children's social care plan. The progress of these children is closely monitored by PYJS, with the working relationships of the two services underpinned by a service level agreement. PYJS receives weekly reports from the children's social care data team; the service manager holds monthly meetings with his counterparts in the key children's social care teams; and PYJS workers attend child protection and child in need meetings.

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

The out-of-court disposal panel is chaired by the police and PYJS and attended by representatives from key services, such as CAMHS, adolescent support and the victim

worker. The panel has access to both police and children's social care information, and PYJS staff can request further assessment from the individual agencies, if they need this to aid decision-making.

The Impact diversion scheme is an example of the effective joint working arrangements between the PYJS and the police. The scheme was jointly implemented in May 2021 and links directly to Street Games, which is a diversion intervention funded by the OPCC. The out-of-court disposal panel can refer directly to this diversion scheme, which provides a range of activities, including sports and mentoring.

PYJS includes workers from all the key services linked to desistance and youth offending. Until recently, the speech and language therapist worked part time. However, in response to a three-month waiting list, the OPCC, through the board, agreed to fund a full-time post. There are no other delays to any of the services. Both the number and the take-up of referrals are actively monitored by the PYJS management team and the board.

PYJS offers a comprehensive range of both groupwork and individual programmes. These include substance misuse; anger and conflict; hate crime; emotional health; and healthy relationships. PYJS also runs a junior attendance centre, which is situated in the same building as the main office. Following the Covid-19 restrictions, this was re-launched in October 2021. The centre runs a six-week rolling programme based on individual activities and does not rely solely on groupwork. As a direct result of feedback from PYJS children, the junior attendance centre runs in the evening rather than at the weekend.

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

The PYJS's service level agreement with children's social care is the basis for their effective operational relationship. This includes monthly reviews of shared data and individual cases at management level to identify potential problems or concerning patterns. PYJS is also represented at the weekly multi-agency criminal exploitation (MACE) meetings, where information on vulnerable children is shared. Since August 2021, PYJS has been located in the same building as the city's adolescent support service and the family group conference team. The co-location of the teams has improved information-sharing and cooperation in the delivery of services to families and children who are in contact with PYJS.

PYJS has developed strong relationships with local education providers, in part through the participation of the education service director on the board. Similarly, there is a strong relationship with local sentencers, and the Youth Panel Chair sits on the PYJS board. Quarterly meetings between the management team and sentencers are held and magistrates are fully informed of the range of services delivered by the PYJS team. Proposals in pre-sentence reports always include individually tailored support packages for convicted children.

Involvement of children and their parents or carers

For the text survey, nine children were contacted and five responded. All rated PYJS positively. The scores for whether PYJS had helped them stay out of trouble were seven, nine and 10 (with 10 being 'helped massively'). One child commented:

"the staff were very cooperative and understanding. My key worker tried their hardest to help me understand things."

Positive relationships with staff were also highlighted by three out of the four children and young people who responded to our request for interviews. The three children and young people were positive about their experiences, and one particularly welcomed their access to mental health services. One young person commented:

"Everyone I spoke to seemed nice. I was never made to feel patronised. I was spoken to as a person [of] 17 years old. They were normal conversations. My worker was really nice".

PYJS has used various methods to obtain feedback from children and young people, including questionnaires, one-to-one interviews and the use of a mobile phone app. The young person's voice is a standing agenda item at board meetings. Issues that have been discussed include feedback from the young people on their experience of Covid-19; the need for support at the end of orders; and the move to the new PYJS premises. It is evident that PYJS seeks and acts on the voice of the young people. This is demonstrated by the junior attendance centre's change of hours following feedback and the naming of the diversion scheme as Impact, as a result of a consultation exercise with young people.

1.4. Information and facilities



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

Good

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

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

Since the establishment of a youth justice board solely for Plymouth, the management team has developed a comprehensive list of policies to deliver the service. The change in governance arrangements is still relatively recent and this means that some of the policies are not fully embedded and have not been reviewed. The policies are, however, accessible to staff and include operational guidance, human resources policies and referral pathways. The implementation of the policies in PYJS is always accompanied by a specific review date. There is evidence of these reviews being completed when they have been due. For example, the review of the quality assurance and management oversight policy took place in December 2020 and the out-of-court disposal policy was reviewed in June 2021.

Performance, practice and policy information is communicated to the staff team mainly through monthly team meetings, emails and supervision meetings. Staff have confidence in the referral pathways, both internally and externally. However, the management team is very aware that, to embed both new policies and working culture, effective informal communication and reinforcement of expectations are essential. This has evidently been prioritised, as the changes have been implemented.

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

In August 2021, PYJS moved to new office located in an old primary school that was previously a youth centre. It is located close to the city centre and is very accessible to many of the children and young people on the caseload. The service manager pushed for this move, on the basis that the previous office was part of a corporate building and not child friendly. Feedback from the children about the new building has been positive, and the junior attendance centre is also located there. At this stage, the potential of the new building has still to be fully realised, but it has suitable facilities for individual work, group work, physical activity and, in a fully equipped woodwork shed, reparation.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, PYJS worked closely with the adolescent support team to ensure that children received the appropriate level of contact and support. Cases were prioritised according to risk of serious harm and vulnerability, and this determined the level of face-to-face contact with PYJS workers. Home visits were prioritised and PYJS staff given clear guidance on how these should be undertaken. Reparation also continued during this period, with children and young people provided with activities and equipment to undertake tasks at home.

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

Information-sharing is promoted by PYJS staff having access to the children's social care system and relevant partners having access into the PYJS case management system. Police information is accessible because there is a police officer in the team. Currently, CAMHS nurses do not have direct contact to their case management systems on site. This delays the availability of information, but it does not delay the delivery of mental health services. At management level, performance, information and data are routinely shared between PYJS, the police and children's social care.

Comprehensive performance reports are produced by the service manager for consideration in the board, management, team and supervision meetings. The annual analysis of youth offending in Plymouth is wide-ranging and has been the basis for strategic decision-making by the board.

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

PYJS has an effective monitoring system in place both for quality assuring work and for informing the service delivery. All AssetPlus assessments are quality assured. PYJS also quality assures 20 per cent of its caseload on a monthly basis. A random sample of the quality assured cases is then selected for consideration by the moderation panel, made up of managers from both PYJS and children's social care. This panel undertakes deep dives into the cases, to ensure that all relevant learning is being identified. Themes and actions identified by the moderation panel are

reviewed at subsequent meetings, with individual staff and managers held to account.

PYJS participates in the multi-agency critical learning reviews, held under the umbrella of Safer Plymouth, if it has been involved in a case. There is evidence of the service changing recording practice and voluntary contact arrangements as a result of its involvement in such a review. The analysis of violent offending undertaken by PYJS identified that a significant majority of the offences occurred within the family. This directly resulted in the development of the respect programme, which addresses family and personal relationships.

The joint targeted area inspection report published in January 2020 was strongly critical of the governance arrangements for PYJS and the operational relationships with the multi-agency safeguarding hub. An action plan was implemented in response to this inspection report. The changes in governance and the now effective relationships with the police and children's social care demonstrate that the PYJS learned the significant lessons from that report.

Diversity

Throughout our standards, we expect a personalised and responsive approach for all children, which includes taking account of their diversity and protected characteristics. Those factors may influence our judgements in specific standards. Here, we present an overall summary of the approach to diversity that we found in this YOT.

Black, Asian and minority ethnic children account for 13 per cent (seven children or young people) of the overall PYJS caseload. This compares with eight per cent of children from a black, Asian and minority ethnic background recorded on the Plymouth City Council school roll. These figures indicate that children from a black, Asian and minority ethnic background are over-represented on the PYJS caseload.²¹ PYJS's own analysis has identified other concerns in respect of disproportionality. Its analysis, undertaken by using the Youth Justice Board ethnic disproportionality tool, demonstrated that violent offences constituted 93 per cent of the crimes committed by children and young people from a black, Asian and minority ethnic background on the caseload. The proportion for children and young people from a white background was 29 per cent. By examining the cases in detail, including talking to the children and young people directly, PYJS identified that the racist provocation of black, Asian and minority ethnic children and young people was a key factor in this disproportionate rate of offending. PYJS has responded to this analysis by arranging for Beyond Face, a Plymouth-based company that supports the local black, Asian and minority ethnic population, to provide an on-site support service for their children and young people. Combating racism is a city-wide responsibility and, within PYJS, bespoke hate crime and respect programmes are run specifically to address discriminatory behaviour and promote healthy relationships.

²¹ Information from Plymouth City Council school roll for 2020-2021.

The analysis of disproportionality in the caseload is supported by the board, which has responded to the Lammy Review²² and ensured that disproportionate outcomes are reviewed at board level. The steps taken to analyse the caseload are positive, but more work is still required to monitor outcomes and referral rates for services. In our review of both court orders and out-of-court disposals, we found that, in the main, the PYJS addressed diversity issues in the management of cases. For example, in the court orders inspected, diversity was considered appropriately as part of the assessment in all of the four cases. In the out-of-court disposals inspected, this was the case in six of the eight cases examined. We saw some good practice in relation to the recording of young people's sexuality and there was a positive case example where a young person was well supported in relation to their sexual identity. There was, however, also a case where a young person's racist attitudes, evident at the time of the offence, were not addressed. PYJS responded positively to our concerns in relation to this case, but this was evidently a significant oversight.

Overall, PYJS is taking positive steps to address disproportionality and to provide relevant services to its children and young people. However, it still needs to monitor further the impact of both statutory and out-of-court interventions. This is recognised by the management team, as is the need for better understanding and awareness of diversity issues within the team. Equality and diversity training for all staff is therefore part of the management plan for 2021-2022.

²² David Lammy. (2017). *The Lammy Review: An independent review into the treatment of, and outcomes for, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals in the Criminal Justice System*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/lammy-review>

2. Court disposals

We took a detailed look at four community sentences managed by the PYJS. We also conducted two 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, keeping the child safe and keeping other people safe.

For the assessment of desistance, all four of the cases met all our requirements. For the assessment of safety and wellbeing, three of the cases were judged sufficient, and for risk of harm, two of the cases. As the lowest score was 50 per cent, assessment overall falls within our 'Requires improvement' range. However, this was a small sample and there were good examples of cases being assessed well. Our ratings panel therefore applied professional discretion and amended the overall rating for assessment to 'Good'.

For planning, the scores were similar. For both the planning of desistance and safety and wellbeing, three of the four cases were sufficient but only two were judged in that category for the planning of risk of harm. As the lowest score was 50 per cent, the overall rating for planning is 'Requires improvement'. We considered that this was a fair summary of the planning work we saw being done and therefore the ratings panel did not exercise discretion to increase the rating.

For implementation and delivery, all of the cases met all our requirements in the areas of desistance, safety and wellbeing and risk of harm. As a result, our rating for implementation and delivery is 'Outstanding'. We also rated court disposals as 'Outstanding' for reviewing. Again, all of the cases were judged sufficient across the areas of desistance, safety and wellbeing and risk of harm.

The management of court orders by PYJS is effective and inspectors found some excellent practice. In the cases inspected there was evidence of strong relationships between the case manager and both the child or young person and their parents or carers. This is in line with the PYJS policy to understand and manage children within their family and social context. There was also evidence that interventions to implement and deliver supervision are sequenced immediately an order begins. This practice was introduced by the management team following their analysis of caseload outcomes. It is a good example of information analysis informing practice.

Planning is an area for improvement in the management of court orders. Planning is good for desistance and safety and wellbeing but requires improvement in relation to keeping other people safe. PYJS should focus particularly on considering previous behaviour and on contingency planning in this area of case management.

Across all areas of work, inspectors found effective multi-agency work and information-sharing. Appropriate interventions were identified, available and delivered to vulnerable children and young people. The partnership arrangements also ensured that key information was routinely reviewed in multi-agency meetings and, where necessary, appropriate safeguarding actions were taken. PYJS's excellent relationship with the police and children's social care also ensured that behaviour and actions were comprehensively reviewed to protect victims and potential victims.

Strengths

- The engagement with children and young people is excellent and this is underpinned by strong professional relationships.
- Diversity and individual circumstances are routinely considered in the management of cases.
- The coordination of services and other agencies is effective.
- Interventions are sequenced effectively, primarily at the start of court orders.
- There is a consistent approach to working with parents and the key adults in a child's or young person's life.
- The processes for managing cases with a high risk of harm are applied consistently and effectively. This includes multi-agency cooperation and the coordination of services and actions.
- Cases are consistently reviewed where there are concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing or a potential increase in the level of serious harm.

Areas for improvement

- Contingency planning is inconsistent and does not routinely identify all the potential risks and the necessary actions should they arise.
- The assessment of risk of serious harm does not consistently include all the relevant factors, including previous high-risk behaviour.

Work with children sentenced by the courts will be more effective if it is well targeted, planned and implemented. In our inspections, we look at a sample of cases. In each of those cases, we inspect against four standards.

2.1. Assessment



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

Good

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

	% 'Yes'
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	100%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	75%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	50%

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 2 for a more detailed explanation.

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

The assessment of desistance was a strong area of practice in PYJS. The inspection found comprehensive analysis of offending in all four cases and there was clear evidence of effective engagement with the children and young people. In all cases, there was meaningful involvement with the child or young person and their parents or carers. Diversity and individual circumstances were considered appropriately. In the relevant cases, victim information was incorporated effectively into the assessment.

In one case, an inspector commented:

“The assessment of desistance is comprehensive over a number of documents and explores the child's experiences of being a looked after child with a long history of involvement with children's social care, adverse childhood experiences, including sexual assaults, substance misuse and lifestyle. The assessor also makes a link between the child's menstrual cycle and her aggressive behaviour”.

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?

In the four cases inspected, inspectors agreed with the overall classification of safety and wellbeing but there was insufficient analysis in one case of the potential risks to the safety and wellbeing of the child. In all four cases, the assessment drew on sufficient sources of information, and in three of the four cases, the assessment of controls and interventions promoted the safety and wellbeing of the child or young person.

An example of good assessment of safety and wellbeing practice was highlighted by one inspector:

“From the early stages of the order, partnership agencies have informed the assessment process and contributed to keeping the child safe. High-risk meetings have been undertaken from the initial stages of the order. The assessor effectively explores the impact of the child's lived experiences and trauma. The factors assessed include exploitation, substance misuse, mental health (trauma) and the absence of an appropriate carer in the child's life”.

Overall, in three of the four cases, the assessment sufficiently analysed how to keep the child safe.

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?

Risk of harm was the weakest area of the assessment work we inspected in the PYJS court cases. In only half of the cases were all the relevant factors identified for assessment. In one case, the risk of serious harm was underestimated. In all four cases, there was evidence of good information-sharing with other agencies to inform the assessment, although in one case, the assessment did not sufficiently analyse the controls and interventions to minimise the risk of harm. The information-sharing arrangements evident in the cases included participation in the high risk review meetings, which are a central plank of PYJS's procedures to manage high risk of harm cases.

One inspector noted:

“The assessor has underestimated the risks/potential risks that the child poses to others. Indicators of the potential to cause serious harm have not been sufficiently analysed. These include a domestic violence incident involving the child and his girlfriend; violence and threats to his father; an assault of an emergency worker; and pending charges for offences of violence committed two days following the imposition of the order”.

Overall, in two of the four cases, the assessment sufficiently analysed how to keep other people safe.

2.2. Planning



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

Requires Improvement

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

	% 'Yes'
Does planning focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	75%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	75%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	50%

Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?

In three out of the four cases inspected, planning was effective to support the desistance of the children and young people. In these cases, planning included the appropriate services and incorporated the child or young person's individual circumstances, including diversity issues. For example, in one case the youth justice worker's planning of the case was sensitive to the young person's mental health issues and sexual identity. The planning in three out of the four cases also demonstrated an understanding of the child or young person's maturity and motivation to change. This ensured the effective sequencing of appropriate interventions.

One inspector recorded:

“Planning involves contributions from other agencies, and this was evidenced from the initial stages of the order. Plans have been tailored to meet the child's needs. These include a consideration of the child's diagnosis of conduct disorder, ADHD and traits of autism. The child's potential lack of compliance with the requirements of the order (curfew and reparation hours) have been reflected in plans”.

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 2 for a more detailed explanation.

In the one case where planning for desistance was judged insufficient, this was primarily due to the absence of an intervention plan to underpin the sequencing of interventions.

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

In all of the four cases inspected, where appropriate, other agencies were effectively involved in the planning of the cases. In these cases, there was good evidence that interventions and actions were coordinated with substance misuse agencies, CAMHS, the police and children’s social care. This cooperation between agencies enabled the planning to set out the necessary controls and sequencing of interventions.

Contingency planning to keep children and young people safe was inconsistent. It was judged sufficient in only two out of the four cases. Potential risks to safety and wellbeing were identified, and in the cases judged as insufficient, there was a lack of detail as to how these would be addressed.

Overall, in three out of four cases, the planning focused sufficiently on keeping the children or young people safe.

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

Planning sufficiently focused on keeping people safe in two of the four cases. In three of the four cases, planning sufficiently addressed the key risk of harm factors. In all of the relevant cases, the risks to victims and potential victims were also addressed. In all of the cases, there was evidence that the PYJS’s procedures for managing high risk of harm cases had been implemented. These included close working arrangements with children’s social care and regular reviewing of cases at the multi-agency high risk meetings.

The shortfalls identified in planning were that staff did not incorporate the implications of previous high-risk behaviour into plans, and there was a lack of detail in contingency planning.

One inspector noted:

“The contingency plan does not identify any factors that would indicate that the child’s risk is increasing and the plan to manage any changes in risk are too generic to effectively manage escalating risk and keep people safe in this case”.

2.3. Implementation and delivery



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

Outstanding

Our rating²⁵ 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?	100%

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 2 for a more detailed explanation.

Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of the child?	100%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?	100%

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

In all four of the inspected cases, the implementation and delivery of services to support desistance were judged sufficient and inspectors identified some outstanding practice. In all of the cases, the appropriate agencies were effectively engaged and interventions were sequenced appropriately. It was evident that PYJS prioritised starting interventions at the beginning of the order.

One inspector recorded:

“Interventions start promptly, and the child is initially seen five or six times a week in accordance with his intensive supervision and surveillance requirement. There is very much a desistance focus in ensuring the child attends transferable Skills Training (ETE) in preparation for future employment. The case manager also acts as an advocate for the child and his mother in addressing the outstanding notice of possession served as a consequence of noise nuisance. The planned programmes (Stop Think, consequential thinking and victim awareness) are well delivered. He engages well and his understanding of the intervention is regularly checked. The case manager also arranges habitual appointments (same days and time weekly) to make it easier for the child to remember them. Contact is maintained with the child's parents to ensure they are abreast of his progress”.

PYJS also focuses on working with key family members and adults in the child's or young person's life. In all of the cases inspected, this policy was evident and there were effective working relationships with parents and carers. In the two cases where enforcement was necessary, this was taken appropriately, and in all four cases the delivery of services took place within the required timescale.

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

The excellent implementation and delivery of services in relation to desistance was repeated in respect of supporting the safety of the child. The management of the four cases inspected consistently promoted the child's or young person's wellbeing and this was supported by the effective coordination of the key agencies involved. The services involved included the police, children's social care and CAMHS. There was also evidence of the effectiveness of high-risk review meetings in sharing information and coordinating actions. In one case, these meetings ran effectively alongside looked after child reviews, to ensure the child's safety and wellbeing.

One inspector recorded:

“The agencies identified in planning have contributed positively to delivery. Safeguarding information has been communicated well (between all agencies involved with the child and his family). The child's parents have both been included in the delivery of work. PYJS have engaged well with the child and multi-agency risk meetings have been frequently undertaken. Communication between agencies and

professionals has been good. PYJS, children’s social care and the police have sufficiently monitored the child’s safety, including concerns about the child’s criminal and sexual exploitation”.

Overall, in all of the four cases, implementation and delivery effectively supported the child’s safety.

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

Practice to support the safety of other people was consistent with the other areas of implementation and delivery. In all of the four cases inspected, the appropriate services to manage and minimise risk of harm were delivered. In addition, where necessary, sufficient attention was given to protecting victims and potential victims. Again, an outstanding feature of the inspected work was the multi-agency cooperation and the consequent coordination of actions.

One inspector noted:

“The delivery of interventions alongside the monitoring of the victim no contact requirement on the child’s order by the case manager, support workers and the police have all contributed to keeping the victim and other people safe”.

Overall, all of the four cases inspected effectively supported the safety of other people.

2.4. Reviewing



Reviewing of progress is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents or carers.	Outstanding
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Our rating²⁶ for reviewing is based on the following key questions:

	% ‘Yes’
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the child’s desistance?	100%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	100%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	100%

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

The reviewing practice was sufficient to support the child or young person’s desistance and engagement in all of the four cases inspected. The reviews responded effectively to any changes in the child’s or young person’s circumstances and focused on building on their strengths and the positive factors in their life. Alongside other agencies, this included a review of the child or young person’s living arrangements, family relationships and social contacts, to agree actions and

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 2 for a more detailed explanation.

interventions to help them avoid further offences. A consistent feature in the positive practice was the involvement of the child or young person in the review.

Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

In the four inspected cases, reviews were consistently undertaken where concerns about a child or young person's safety and wellbeing arose. Reviews were prompted by concerns from members of the public and changes in the child's or young person's immediate circumstances, including their living arrangements. In the cases inspected, the reviews were undertaken promptly and, where necessary, adjustments made to the ongoing intervention plans. In one case, investigations were undertaken jointly with children's social care to check on a child's wellbeing. There was also evidence of effective information exchange between agencies, including the coordination of reviews with looked after children reviews.

Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

In two of the four inspected cases, there were significant events that should have prompted a review focused on keeping other people safe. In both cases, PYJS undertook the necessary reviews and, in line with other areas of reviewing, the practice was excellent. The relevant agencies were involved in the review and the child or young person and their parents or carers were meaningfully consulted. The factors that prompted the two reviews included the child's immediate circumstances and further offences.

One inspector recorded:

“Sufficient attention was given to keeping other people safe. The arrangements for joint working are good and several risk management reviews have been undertaken, which include discussions in relation to additional charges. The child received a detention and training order for a violent offence and information was shared to support the management of the case. All agencies involved with the child's family have contributed to reviewing.”

3. Out-of-court disposals

We inspected eight cases managed by the YOT that had received an out-of-court disposal. These consisted of five youth conditional cautions, two youth cautions and one community resolution. We interviewed the case managers in three 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, work to keep the child safe and work to keep other people safe. The quality of the work undertaken for each factor needs to be above a specified threshold for each aspect of supervision to be rated as satisfactory.

We also inspected the quality of policy and provision in place for out-of-court disposals, using evidence from documents, meetings and interviews.

For assessment, 88 per cent met all our requirements for desistance and for keeping other people safe, but for the assessment of safety and wellbeing, 63 per cent of the cases met our standards. As this score was between 50 and 64 per cent, the overall score for assessment falls within our 'Requires improvement' range. However, our judgement is that this was not representative of all the assessment work being done in out-of-court disposals. Our ratings panel therefore applied professional discretion and amended the overall rating for assessment to 'Good'.

Planning was strongest for keeping people safe where all the inspected cases were but the score fell to 63 per cent for the planning of safety and wellbeing. As this was between 50 and 64 per cent, the overall rating for planning was 'Requires improvement'.

In line with the findings for court orders, PYJS's performance in the area of implementation and delivery was strong. Service delivery sufficiently supported the child's desistance in 75 per cent of the inspected cases. The scores for the support of the child's safety and wellbeing and support for the safety of other people were 88 and 100 per cent respectively. As the lowest score was between 65 and 79 per cent, the overall rating for implementation and delivery was 'Good'.

PYJS has an effective out-of-court disposal policy, which is underpinned by a comprehensive assessment process and committed multi-agency involvement. This includes innovative reparation projects and the Impact diversion scheme. The implementation of this policy is helping to reduce Plymouth's historically high number of first-time entrants.

As with court orders, there was evidence in the inspected cases of a consistent focus on working with children and young people in their wider social context. Other strengths included effective working arrangements with other agencies to keep other people safe and the building of strong professional relationships with the children and young people. The focus on keeping people safe was evident across all the areas of practice in PYJS's out-of-court disposal work.

Areas for improvement included the assessment of and planning for a child or young person's safety and wellbeing. In some cases, the potential risks had been underestimated and, as with court orders, contingency planning required greater detail. There were also cases where issues related to desistance had not been addressed in the delivery of the service.

Strengths

- Both individual circumstances and the family context are incorporated into the planning of out-of-court disposals.
- Parents and carers are effectively engaged in the assessment process.
- Effective multi-agency work and information-sharing are evident across all areas of out-of-court disposal work.
- There are effective procedures in place for keeping people safe and for planning risk management.

Areas for improvement

- The potential risks to children's and young people's safety and wellbeing are not consistently analysed.
- Contingency planning for safety and wellbeing does not clearly identify actions and responses, including the roles of other agencies, should circumstances change or the risk increase.
- The delivery of services does not consistently address all the key issues related to a child's or young person's desistance.

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

3.1. Assessment



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

Good

Our rating²⁷ for assessment is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	88%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	63%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	88%

²⁷ 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 2 for a more detailed explanation.

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

Assessment to support desistance in out-of-court disposals is a strong area of practice in PYJS. In seven out of eight cases, assessments considered personal circumstances and the wider familial context. In six out of eight cases, diversity issues were appropriately incorporated into the assessment. In line with PYJS's emphasis on engaging with the child's or young person's key adult contacts, in all eight cases, parent and carers were meaningfully involved in the assessment. There is also evidence in the assessment of desistance of effective, child-centred relationships being developed with the child or young person. One inspector recorded:

"The assessment is detailed and analytical, containing information from various sources. It provides the reader with good insight into the child's past experiences of trauma and alcohol use and how they contributed to the offending. The assessor details the child's remorse, acceptance of responsibility and desire to make amends. The 17-year-old is employed, and the assessment details the likely impact of a criminal conviction on their current employment and future aspirations. The voice of the child and their parents and the professionals' view can be clearly heard throughout the written assessment".

Overall, seven out of eight cases sufficiently analysed how to support a child's desistance.

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?

Assessments to keep the child or young person safe was the lowest scoring area of out-of-court disposal assessment practice. Inspectors judged five out of the eight cases to be sufficient.

There were some positive areas of assessment practice and in six out of the eight cases the assessments analysed risks and drew on the appropriate information. However, in five of the cases, inspectors disagreed with the subsequent classification of the risk of harm. In all of these cases, inspectors felt the risk to the child had been underestimated and was medium and not low. In some cases, inspectors felt that available information had not been sufficiently analysed. One inspector noted:

"The assessment does not adequately explore the current or previous factors linked to the child's safety and wellbeing. There has been very little exploration of the information shared by partnership agencies. The breakdown of family relationships should have been clearer in terms of changes of address and the circumstances surrounding these events. Previous safeguarding concerns have been raised in relation to the child and there have been incidents and concerns about domestic abuse and child neglect. The child's cannabis use, vulnerabilities to associates and gaps in education (eight fixed-term exclusions) have not been sufficiently analysed".

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?

Assessment to keep people safe was another strong area of PYJS out-of-court disposal practice. In most cases, risks were identified and the assessment incorporated the available information. Again, there was evidence of good information-sharing with other agencies. The cases inspected had all been assessed

as low risk of serious harm. Inspectors agreed with this classification apart from in one case, where they judged that the risk should have been assessed as medium.

Overall, seven out of the eight cases were sufficient in analysing how to keep other people safe.

3.2. Planning



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

Requires Improvement

Our rating²⁸ for planning is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?	88%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	63%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	100%

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

The planning to support a child or young person's desistance was characterised by good engagement, through effective professional relationships. In most cases, diversity issues were considered as part of the planning process, as were the child's levels of maturity and ability to cooperate with the planned activities. In all of the cases, the child's parents or carers were meaningfully involved in the planning. In five of the six relevant cases, there was also evidence that planning had taken into consideration the child's or young person's prospects for community integration and access to mainstream services.

"Planning acknowledges that the offences were triggered by a very specific set of circumstances. It focuses on providing support for the child outside the youth justice system and enabling them to make amends for her behaviour".

Overall, planning to support a child's desistance was sufficient in seven of the eight relevant cases.

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

Planning focused sufficiently on the safety and wellbeing of the child or young person in five of the eight relevant cases. The weakest area of practice was in relation to contingency planning, where inspectors found it to be insufficient in all of the five relevant cases. Some of the inspected cases demonstrated the child's or young person's complexity and vulnerable personal situation. Circumstances in these situations can change rapidly. It is therefore important that contingency plans, detailing the necessary action, are in place to respond to any potential changes.

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

The inspectors assessed all but one of the cases as low risk of harm, and identified the need for planning to keep other people safe in two cases. In both of these cases

²⁸ 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 Annex 2 for a more detailed explanation.

the planning addressed the key risk triggers and involved the key partners such as the police and children’s social care. It was also evident from the cases that the seconded police officers in PYJS play a proactive role in risk management planning. As with the court orders, the inspection found that, for out-of-court orders, PYJS has effective procedures in place for risk management planning.

3.3. Implementation and delivery



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

Good

Our rating²⁹ for implementation and delivery is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does service delivery effectively support the child’s desistance?	75%
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of the child?	88%
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of other people?	100%

Does service delivery focus sufficiently on supporting the child’s desistance?

Delivery to support the child’s desistance was sufficient in six out of the eight inspected cases. Again, performance was strong in relation to the building of effective relationships with the children or young people. However, in some cases, the issues relating to the child’s desistance were not addressed and not all the necessary interventions were utilised. In one case, the offending had included racist communication to the victim, but this was only addressed after it was highlighted by the inspector.

Does service delivery focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

In seven out of the eight relevant cases, the delivery of services focused sufficiently on keeping the child safe. In these cases, the necessary services were coordinated effectively to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child. Again, inspectors identified good practice in the building of relationships with the child or young person, and their parents or carers. This focus was also maintained in cases where family members were resistant to contact. In these cases, inspectors saw concerted efforts by the youth justice workers to develop relationships and to deliver services. One inspector recorded:

“Every effort was made by PYJS to engage with the child ... the child’s mother did not agree with the assessment and this made it difficult to engage with the child. Following two home visits, several telephone contacts and a visit from the police the assessment was completed.”

²⁹ 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 2 for a more detailed explanation.

Does service delivery focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

In all eight cases, the delivery of services was sufficient to support the safety of other people. In these cases, where it was necessary, services were used to manage the risk of harm, and actions were taken to protect both the victims and potential victims. Inspectors saw positive examples of non-association requirements being used to manage the risk of harm. It was also evident from the cases that the seconded police officers played a proactive role in enabling PYJS to manage the risk of harm to other people.

3.4. Out-of-court disposal policy and provision



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

Good

In making a judgement about out-of-court disposal policy and provision, we take into account the answers to the following questions:

Is there a policy in place for out-of-court provision that promotes appropriate diversion and supports sustainable desistance?

The PYJS out-of-court disposal policy was jointly developed with the police. It clearly sets out the processes for diversion, community resolutions, youth cautions and youth conditional cautions. Referrals to the out-of-court disposal panel (named the partnership panel in Plymouth) from police officers are initially reviewed by the PYJS practice manager and the seconded police officer, who then allocate the case to a youth justice worker for either an Impact or full AssetPlus assessment. The Impact assessment tool includes all the key areas, including family history, offending, risk of harm, education and desistance. It is used when children and young people are being considered for diversion activities, community reparations or youth cautions. A full AssetPlus assessment is completed on cases where a youth conditional caution is being considered. The assessment process routinely involves contact with the child and their parent or carer. It also enables victims to have the opportunity to express their view.

The partnership panel sits weekly, with representatives from services such as mental health and substance misuse attending. The panel has access to police and children's social care information and is chaired by the practice manager and the seconded police officer. If a restorative justice conference is appropriate, this is arranged through Making Amends, a project commissioned by the OPCC. In the event of disagreement, cases are escalated for consideration to the service manager and a senior police officer.

Does out-of-court disposal provision promote diversion and support sustainable desistance?

A child-centred policing team has been set up in Plymouth and its operation incorporates the principles of trauma-informed practice. PYJS has strong links with this team and a youth justice worker is always present when a youth caution or community reparation is administered. The interventions, sports activities and

mentoring input offered by the Impact diversion scheme can be used either as a diversion activity or as part of an out-of-court disposal. The stated purpose of the project is to enhance the positive desistance factors in a child's life and to encourage positive decision-making.

The partnership panel considers cases within 10 days of a case being referred for assessment, following the initial sifting by the panel chairs. Further assessments and information may be sought from partner agencies if this is required, but the intention is to ensure that the process is carried out quickly. The panel takes an individual approach to out-of-court disposals and there is no stated limit for how many disposals a child can have. Similarly, a child made the subject of a statutory order can still be considered for an out-of-court disposal.

Are the out-of-court disposal policy and provision regularly assessed and updated to ensure effectiveness and maintain alignment with the evidence?

There is a tracking process for all children made subject to an out-of-court disposal, which includes the monitoring of outcomes. Although the first-time entry rate for children in Plymouth remains higher than the national average, it reduced by 34 per cent between 2019 and 2020. Out-of-court disposal cases are included routinely in PYJS's quality assurance arrangements, whereby 20 per cent of the caseload is monitored each month. In addition, the police and PYJS have agreed with the University of Plymouth for a PhD to research the effectiveness of the diversion arrangements in the city.

4. Resettlement

4.1. Resettlement policy and provision



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

Good

Strengths

- The implemented resettlement policy details practice expectations in relation to the level of contact with the child or young person; accommodation; safety and wellbeing; and the management of the risk of serious harm.
- Resettlement provision is based on a trauma-informed approach and supported by services that provide a high level of support and bespoke interventions.
- Youth justice workers advocate effectively for children and young people in relation to accommodation and education, training and employment.
- There are good multi-agency arrangements focused on keeping both the children and young people and other people safe.
- There is evidence that PYJS adjusts its policy and procedure after reviewing cases of children or young people who are sent to custody.

Areas for improvement

- Transition arrangements with the probation service are applied inconsistently.
- The case recording on resettlement cases is inconsistent.

We gathered evidence for this standard from documents and meetings and inspected two cases to allow us to illustrate the qualitative standards. We do not provide a separate rating for the quality of work in resettlement cases inspected under this standard. In making a judgement about resettlement policy and provision, we take into account the answers to the following three questions:

Is there a resettlement policy in place that promotes a high-quality, constructive and personalised resettlement service for all children?

PYJS implemented its resettlement policy in February 2021 and the policy refers to the seven pathways for resettlement identified by the Youth Justice Board as effective practice. The policy sets out actions and timescales in relation to children sentenced to custody. The actions include post-sentence interviews; planning for accommodation; contact with education, CAMHS and substance misuse workers; and contact with the child's family or carer. The policy emphasises that the needs of the family should be considered as part of resettlement practice.

The resettlement policy outlines an individual approach to supporting the development of a child's identity. It emphasises the importance of understanding and

including diversity factors in the planning. The staff team are aware of the policy and this approach.

The assessment of risk and subsequent release planning is considered in the directions for the completion of AssetPlus. The framework under which a child's risk should be managed is also detailed. In addition, the policy specifies the actions for cases that meet the criteria for MAPPA.

Does resettlement provision promote a high-quality, constructive and personalised resettlement service for all children?

Resettlement provision is based on a trauma-informed approach, supported by services that provide a high level of support and bespoke interventions. Key timescales are set out for the involvement of the community-based services, such as substance misuse. The expected level of contact with the child and secure institution is also set out. In line with PYJS's approach to community cases, there is an emphasis on working with the family and important individuals in the child's life.

PYJS has agreed a transition protocol with the probation service and the service level agreement with children's social care includes arrangements for working with the leaving care team. These arrangements are included in the policy.

In the two cases inspected, there was evidence of youth justice workers remaining in contact with children during their sentence. One case provided an excellent example of a youth justice worker proactively advocating for a child when a supported accommodation placement was withdrawn close to the child's release. The inspector recorded:

"The recording of information on the resettlement cases was not consistent, but inspectors were able to confirm that there was good information exchange between PYJS and the secure institutions. It was also evident that positive work had been completed on both cases in relation to education, training and employment".

There was also good evidence of multi-agency work to keep both the young person and other people safe. One inspector noted:

"In one case, the child was supervised by the probation service on release from custody. The transition arrangements laid out in the resettlement policy were not fully adhered to and the child had not been referred to the transition panel prior to the transfer. Resettlement planning, however, was undertaken and the child was released into appropriate accommodation".

Are resettlement policy and provision regularly assessed and updated to ensure effectiveness and maintain alignment with the evidence base?

PYJS's resettlement policy will be formally reviewed in February 2022. The cases of PYJS children sent to custody are always the subject of review, through the quality assurance process. The cases are also reviewed by the moderation panel, to ensure there is a multi-agency understanding of events. The performance report, prepared for board meetings, always includes information on children in custody. The reoffending tracker developed by PYJS is also able to track the outcomes of children on licence.

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.³⁰

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 offending service submitted evidence in advance and the Director of Children's Services and the Children's Service Director 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 five 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 13 meetings, which included meetings with managers, partner organisations and staff. The evidence collected under this domain was judged against our published ratings characteristics.³¹

Domain two: court disposals

We completed case assessments over a one-week period, examining case files and interviewing case managers. Forty 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 four 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.

Domain three: out-of-court disposals

We completed case assessments over a one-week period, examining case files and interviewing case managers. Sixty per cent of cases selected were those of children

³⁰ HM Inspectorate's standards are available here:

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

who had received out-of-court disposals three to five months earlier. This enabled us to examine work in relation to assessing, planning, and implementation and delivery. Where necessary, interviews with other people significantly involved in the case also took place.

We examined eight out-of-court disposals. The sample size was set based on the proportion of out-of-court disposal cases in the YJS.

Resettlement

We completed case assessments over a one-week period, examining 2 case files and interviewing case managers, in cases where children had received custodial sentences or been released from custodial sentences four to 12 months earlier. This enabled us to gather information to illustrate the impact of resettlement policy and provision on service delivery. Where necessary, interviews with other people significantly involved in the case also took place.

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.

Annexe 2: Inspection data

In this inspection, we conducted a detailed examination of a sample of four court disposals and eight out-of-court disposals. In each of those cases, we inspect against standards regarding assessment, planning and implementation/delivery. For court disposals, we also look at reviewing. 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 young offenders were involved in assessment and planning; and whether enough was done to assess the level of risk of harm posed, and to manage that risk. We reviewed a further two cases to obtain data to illustrate our findings about resettlement policy and provision.

To score an 'Outstanding' rating for the sections on court disposals or out-of-court disposals, 80 per cent or more of the cases we analyse have to be assessed as sufficient. If between 65 per cent and 79 per cent are judged to be sufficient, then the rating is 'Good' and if between 50 per cent and 64 per cent are judged to be sufficient, then a rating of 'Requires improvement' is applied. Finally, if less than 50 per cent are sufficient, then we rate this as 'Inadequate'. Resettlement cases are not separately rated; the data is for illustrative purposes only.

The rating at the standard level is aligned to the lowest banding at the key question level, recognising that each key question is an integral part of the standard. Therefore, if we rate three key questions as 'Good' and one as 'Inadequate', the overall rating for that standard is 'Inadequate'.

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 ☆

Additional scoring rules are used to generate the overall YOT rating. Each of the 12 standards are scored on a 0–3 scale in which 'Inadequate' = 0; 'Requires improvement' = 1; 'Good' = 2; and 'Outstanding' = 3. Adding these scores produces a total score ranging from 0 to 36, which is banded to produce the overall rating, as follows:

- 0–6 = Inadequate
- 7–18 = Requires improvement
- 19–30 = Good
- 31–36 = Outstanding.

Domain one standards, the qualitative standard in domain three (standard 3.4) and the resettlement standard (standard 4.1) are judged using predominantly qualitative evidence.

The resettlement standard is rated separately, and does not influence the overall YOT rating. We apply a limiting judgement, whereby any YOT that receives an 'Inadequate' rating for the resettlement standard is unable to receive an overall

'Outstanding' rating, regardless of how they are rated against the core standards. Where there are no relevant resettlement cases, we do not apply a rating to resettlement work.

Data from inspected cases:³²

2.1. Assessment (court disposals)	
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	% yes
a) Is there sufficient analysis of offending behaviour, including the child's attitudes towards and motivations for their offending?	100%
b) Does assessment sufficiently analyse diversity issues?	100%
c) Does assessment consider personal circumstances, including the wider familial and social context of the child?	100%
d) Does assessment utilise information held by other agencies?	100%
e) Does assessment focus on the child's strengths and protective factors?	100%
f) Does assessment analyse the key structural barriers facing the child?	100%
g) Is enough attention given to understanding the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change, and their likelihood of engaging with the court disposal?	100%
h) Does assessment give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of victims, and opportunities for restorative justice?	75%
i) Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in their assessment, and are their views taken into account?	75%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	% yes
a) Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risks to the safety and wellbeing of the child?	75%
b) Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including other assessments, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	100%
c) Does assessment analyse controls and interventions to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	75%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	% yes
a) 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?	50%

³² Some questions do not apply in all cases.

b) Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including past behaviour and convictions, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	100%
c) Does assessment analyse controls and interventions to manage and minimise the risk of harm presented by the child?	75%

2.2. Planning (court disposals)

Does planning focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	% yes
a) Does planning set out the services most likely to support desistance, paying sufficient attention to the available timescales and the need for sequencing?	75%
b) Does planning sufficiently address diversity issues?	75%
c) Does planning take sufficient account of the child's personal circumstances, including the wider familial and social context of the child?	75%
d) Does planning take sufficient account of the child's strengths and protective factors, and seek to reinforce or develop these as necessary?	75%
e) Does planning take sufficient account of the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change, and seek to develop these as necessary?	75%
f) Does planning give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of victims?	100%
g) Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in planning, and are their views taken into account?	100%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	% yes
a) Does planning promote the safety and wellbeing of the child, sufficiently addressing risks?	75%
b) 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?	100%
c) Does planning set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	100%
d) Does planning set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to manage those risks that have been identified?	50%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	% yes
a) Does planning promote the safety of other people, sufficiently addressing risk of harm factors?	75%

b) Does planning involve other agencies where appropriate?	75%
c) Does planning address any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims?	75%
d) Does planning set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote the safety of other people?	100%
e) Does planning set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to manage those risks that have been identified?	75%

2.3. Implementation and delivery (court disposals)

Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the child's desistance?	% yes
a) Are the delivered services those most likely to support desistance, with sufficient attention given to sequencing and the available timescales?	100%
b) Does service delivery account for the diversity issues of the child?	100%
c) Does service delivery reflect the wider familial and social context of the child, involving parents or carers, or significant others?	100%
d) Does service delivery build upon the child's strengths and enhance protective factors?	100%
e) Is sufficient focus given to developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child and their parents or carers?	100%
f) Does service delivery promote opportunities for community integration, including access to services post-supervision?	100%
g) Is sufficient attention given to encouraging and enabling the child's compliance with the work of the YOT?	100%
h) Are enforcement actions taken when appropriate?	100%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of the child?	% yes
a) Does service delivery promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	100%
b) Is the involvement of other organisations in keeping the child safe sufficiently well-coordinated?	100%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?	% yes
a) Are the delivered services sufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	100%
b) Is sufficient attention given to the protection of actual and potential victims?	75%

c) Is the involvement of other agencies in managing the risk of harm sufficiently well-coordinated?	100%
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2. 4. Reviewing (court disposals)

Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	% yes
a) Does reviewing identify and respond to changes in factors linked to desistance?	100%
b) Does reviewing focus sufficiently on building upon the child's strengths and enhancing protective factors?	100%
c) Does reviewing include analysis of, and respond to, diversity factors?	100%
d) Does reviewing consider the personal circumstances, including the wider familial and social context of the child?	100%
d) Does reviewing consider motivation and engagement levels and any relevant barriers?	75%
e) Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in reviewing their progress and engagement, and are their views taken into account?	100%
f) Does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work to support desistance?	75%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	% yes
a) Does reviewing identify and respond to changes in factors related to safety and wellbeing?	100%
b) Is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in promoting the safety and wellbeing of the child?	100%
c) Does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	75%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	% yes
a) Does reviewing identify and respond to changes in factors related to risk of harm?	50%
b) Is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in managing the risk of harm?	50%
c) Does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan all of work to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	50%

3.1. Assessment (out-of-court disposals)

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	% yes
a) Is there sufficient analysis of offending behaviour, including the child's acknowledgement of responsibility for, attitudes towards and motivations for their offending?	88%
b) Does assessment sufficiently analyse diversity issues?	75%
c) Does assessment consider personal circumstances, including the wider familial and social context of the child?	88%
d) Does assessment utilise information held by other agencies?	86%
e) Does assessment focus on the child's strengths and protective factors?	75%
f) Does assessment analyse the key structural barriers facing the child?	50%
g) Is sufficient attention given to understanding the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change?	88%
h) Does assessment give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of victims, and opportunities for restorative justice?	38%
i) Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in their assessment, and are their views taken into account?	100%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	% yes
a) Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risks to the safety and wellbeing of the child?	75%
b) Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including other assessments, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	75%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	% yes
a) 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?	29%
b) 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?	86%

3.2. Planning (out-of-court disposals)

Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?	% yes
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a) Does planning set out the services most likely to support desistance, paying sufficient attention to the available timescales and the need for sequencing?	80%
b) Does planning sufficiently address diversity issues?	83%
c) Does planning take sufficient account of the child's personal circumstances, including the wider familial and social context of the child?	100%
d) Does planning take sufficient account of the child's strengths and protective factors, and seek to reinforce or develop these as necessary?	67%
e) Does planning take sufficient account of the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change, and seek to develop these as necessary?	83%
f) Does planning take sufficient account of opportunities for community integration, including access to mainstream services following completion of out-of-court disposal work?	83%
g) Does planning give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victims?	17%
h) Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in planning, and are their views taken into account?	100%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	% yes
a) Does planning promote the safety and wellbeing of the child, sufficiently addressing risks?	50%
b) 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?	50%
c) Does planning include necessary contingency arrangements for those risks that have been identified?	0%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	% yes
a) Does planning promote the safety of other people, sufficiently addressing risk of harm factors?	33%
b) Does planning involve other agencies where appropriate?	33%
c) Does planning address any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims?	17%
d) Does planning include necessary contingency arrangements for those risks that have been identified?	33%

3.3. Implementation and delivery (out-of-court disposals)

Does service delivery effectively support the child's desistance?	% yes
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a) Are the delivered services those most likely to support desistance, with sufficient attention given to sequencing and the available timescales?	80%
b) Does service delivery account for the diversity issues of the child?	80%
c) Does service delivery reflect the wider familial and social context of the child, involving parents or carers, or significant others?	80%
d) Is sufficient focus given to developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child and their parents or carers?	100%
e) Is sufficient attention given to encouraging and enabling the child's compliance with the work of the YOT?	100%
f) Does service delivery promote opportunities for community integration, including access to mainstream services?	40%
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of the child?	% yes
a) Does service delivery promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	60%
b) Is the involvement of other agencies in keeping the child safe sufficiently well utilised and coordinated?	40%
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of other people?	% yes
a) Are the delivered services sufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	20%
b) Is sufficient attention given to the protection of actual and potential victims?	20%