

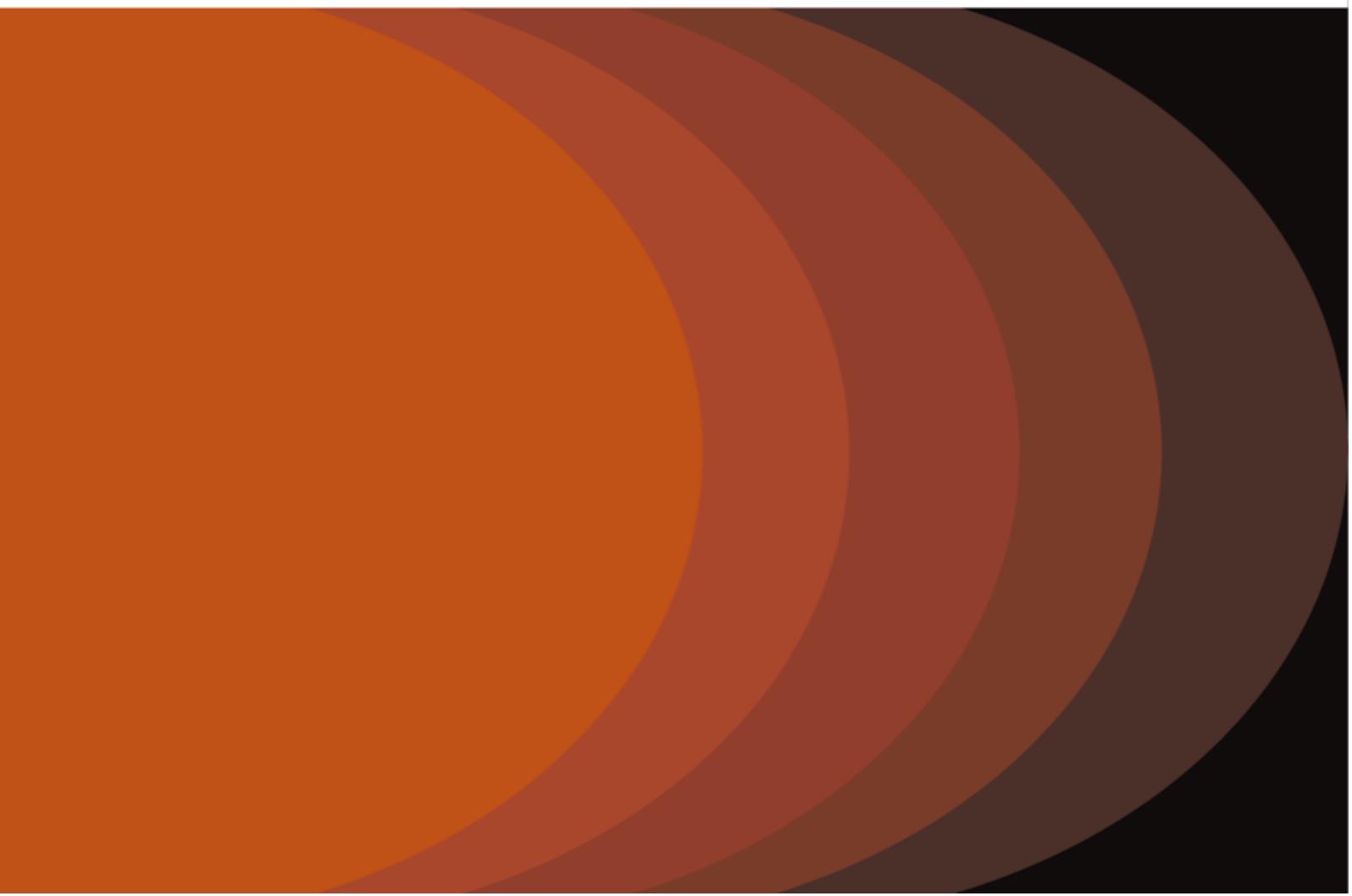


Her Majesty's
Inspectorate of
Probation

An inspection of youth offending services in

Surrey

HM Inspectorate of Probation, March 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 Surrey Youth Offending Service 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, Surrey YOS was rated as 'Good'. We also inspected the quality of resettlement policy and provision, which was separately rated as 'Good'.

Surrey YOS has made noteworthy progress since our last inspection in 2019 when we rated the service as 'Inadequate'. The partnership has taken a systematic approach to service improvement with notable results. The service still operates within the framework of an integrated service delivery model within Surrey Council's children's services directorate, but there is now far more focus now on the needs of children requiring a bespoke youth justice intervention. The recent incorporation of a dual youth justice and safeguarding adolescents approach shows promise.

The integrated model was not always effective, though, and sometimes affected the partnership's understanding of the unique needs of children in contact with YOS. This was apparent in the underdeveloped approaches to tackling disproportionality, the educational needs of school-age children, and risk assessment and planning.

The quality of the casework inspected in both court and out-of-court work was impressive. Provision for resettlement was also good. The YOS management team and practitioners know the children well and have access to an impressive range of services to address their needs. We also saw innovative practice and the multi-agency daily risk briefings were an effective way of intervening with children at an early stage.

The YOS leadership team have been central to improvements in operational delivery made in the last 18 months and are to be congratulated on the progress made in the last two years. They have developed a well-motivated and knowledgeable service backed up by robust and targeted training opportunities and the creation of a well-resourced specialist central YOS hub. The leadership team now need to focus on ensuring there are no disparities in practice between the four area-based quadrant teams, evaluate training records more systematically, and monitor staff competence in assessing risk, as there was some underestimation of risk in the cases inspected.

In this report, we make a number of recommendations which we hope will enable Surrey to make the changes necessary to deliver an even better service for children.



Justin Russell
HM Chief Inspector of Probation

Ratings

Surrey Youth Offending Service
Fieldwork started November 2021

Score 27/36

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

Good



2.3 Implementation and delivery

Outstanding



2.4 Reviewing

Good



3. Out-of-court disposals

3.1 Assessment

Good



3.2 Planning

Outstanding



3.3 Implementation and delivery

Outstanding



3.4 Out-of-court disposal policy and provision

Good



4. Resettlement

4.1 Resettlement policy and provision

Good



Executive summary

Overall, Surrey Youth Offending Service (YOS) 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.¹ Published scoring rules generate the overall YOS rating.² 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

We inspected Surrey YOS in November 2021. We interviewed the YOS management team and the chair of the management board. We held meetings with other members of the board, key stakeholders, YOS staff and volunteers, and children, parents, and carers. The context and impact of Covid-19 was considered throughout the inspection. Surrey YOS has remained operational throughout the pandemic. Staff were directly impacted but were innovative in meeting the individual needs of children. The development of additional support for children referred to the emergency duty team (EDT) was a good practice development resulting from the pandemic. The YOS had been returning to a business-as-usual model at the time of the inspection in November 2021.

Organisational delivery has improved significantly since the last inspection in 2019. Over the last 12 months, Surrey County Council has developed the integrated service model which was in place across children's services during the last inspection. While the YOS has developed a more visible youth justice-focused approach, there is still an overarching child-first ethos, and the service sits within a broader integrated service model which supports all vulnerable teenagers. Staff may therefore work with children who are not on the YOS caseload as well as those who are. In our previous inspection we found that this had led to a loss of focus on potential risks of harm and offending behaviours of the children on the YOS caseload – where we found their work to be inadequate. Since then, the YOS has reviewed training and development needs to address this and we found the work undertaken by the board and the management team had significantly improved assessment of and planning for risk and responses to criminal behaviours. The board is committed, and new governance arrangements have developed to incorporate a dual youth justice and safeguarding adolescents approach. While these arrangements are a promising development, the board needs to ensure sufficient attention is given to the needs of YOS children, as there is not yet a fully shared, detailed, understanding of the risks faced by this cohort.

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

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

² Each of the 12 standards is scored on a 0–3 scale in which 'Inadequate' = 0; 'Requires improvement' = 1; 'Good' = 2; 'Outstanding' = 3. Adding these scores produces a total score ranging from 0 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'.

The YOS leadership team have been central to improvements in operational delivery made in the last 18 months. They have developed a well-motivated and knowledgeable service backed up by robust and targeted training opportunities and the creation of a well-resourced specialist central YOS hub. The leadership team now need to focus on ensuring there are no disparities in practice between the four area-based quadrant teams, evaluate training records more systematically, and monitor staff competence in assessing risk, as there was some underestimation of risk in the cases inspected.

There are a range of effective partnership interventions demonstrating positive impacts; the daily risk briefings, Surrey 'youth offer' and the expanding health team are all contributing to positive outcomes for children. While relevant information about priorities and challenges posed by YOS children is shared within the partnership, some responses need to be developed. For example, the partnership response to addressing structural barriers to the education, training, and employment (ETE) needs of school-age YOS children since the last inspection has not been sufficiently focused. The necessary policies and guidance are in place to enable staff to deliver a quality service. Venues are largely accessible and safe for staff and children, despite the difficulties caused by Covid-19 and poor transport infrastructure in the county. The continued use of two case management systems and assessment tools could have provided challenges to the service, but these had been successfully overcome in the cases we inspected. Data integration remains problematic, but a corporate solution is being developed.

Work to address diversity and disproportionality is being undertaken but its impact needs to be better evidenced. Additionally, the views of children are actively canvassed but the YOS needs to demonstrate the impact of this feedback more explicitly.

Our key findings about organisational delivery are as follows:

- There is a shared understanding of a child-first approach, and the board shows a genuine interest and commitment to the delivery of youth justice services.
- A strong learning and development offer has been systematically planned and introduced by the YOS leadership team. There is tangible evidence that board members, managers, practitioners, and volunteers have embraced learning opportunities.
- The development of a central YOS hub has enhanced the quality of youth justice provision in the county.
- Retention rates are good and staff turnover is low.
- The YOS education lead workers are skilled and knowledgeable and link effectively with colleagues in relevant external services and organisations.
- The 'youth offer' is impressive and gives opportunities, such as the 'skill mill', that enhance the quality of post-16 ETE provision.
- The YOS health offer, while still developing, is strong and shows promise.
- The multi-agency 'daily risk briefing' provides an effective opportunity to address the needs of vulnerable children collaboratively at an early stage after arrest.

- There is evidence of attempts to provide a personalised approach to interventions, reflected in the development of the 'communication passport' for children with speech, language, and communication needs.
- Locations where children are seen are accessible and safe, though travel time to them can be a difficulty.
- The current development of the Surrey 'care system' is an innovative attempt to integrate data-sharing more effectively.

But:

- The board needs to ensure sufficient focus on the needs of YOS children and that these are always met within the integrated service delivery model.
- The broader partnership was initially slow to address the education needs of school-age YOS children following the last inspection, although a better understanding of the data is now apparent.
- The youth justice strategy risk register needs to be reviewed more systematically and a shared understanding of the risks needs to be evidenced.
- Activity to tackle racial disproportionality has been apparent but impact has not been well evidenced so far.
- The leadership team need a greater understanding of an apparent overrepresentation of children aged 15 to 17 on caseloads.
- The voice of the child is sought but the YOS needs to evidence the impact of this on service provision more consistently and effectively.
- Systems for evidencing consistency in team management oversight are underdeveloped.

Court disposals

We took a detailed look at 18 community sentences managed by the YOS. We also conducted 15 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.

Surrey YOS has worked hard to improve practice in the county across all four standards since the last inspection and the quality of some casework was impressive. Deficits were typically only found where we had assessed management oversight to be insufficient.

Work to support desistance was the strongest area identified in this domain. Assessment and planning activity were sufficient in all but two cases. Implementation and delivery of work to support desistance was sufficient in all but three and reviewing was sufficient in every case inspected.

Overall, the good quality assessments meant that planning and interventions were implemented effectively. This delivery was strengths-based and chimed with the child-first ambitions articulated in the YOS vision. There was no significant negative impact resulting from Surrey's integrated model, as there had been at the last inspection, due to an increased understanding by practitioners of the specific needs and risks of the cohort of youth justice children.

Work to keep the child safe was mostly undertaken well. However, the YOS had underestimated the risk profile of the children in a minority of cases, and we did not agree with all their classifications of risk. Other activity was stronger and, while contingency planning needed to be strengthened, overall, the implementation and delivery of services supported the safety of the child effectively. Good quality reviews were undertaken when required.

Work to keep others safe was mostly undertaken well within the four standards, although there was some failure to identify all pertinent risks at the assessment stage. Planning to keep others safe was good overall but, as with planning to keep children safe, contingency planning needs to improve. Planning to keep children safe involved other agencies, where appropriate, in all the cases. Reviewing activity was a positive picture overall, although necessary adjustments in ongoing work, where required, was not always visible.

Our key findings about court disposals are as follows:

- The service's child-first vision and integrated approach work was reflected in the strong work supporting the desistance needs of children, and its understanding of the risks to children and the risks they posed to others.
- Case managers had a good understanding of the desistance needs of children; they assessed them well and the reviewing of these needs was sufficient in every case inspected.
- Case managers were proficient at identifying structural barriers that might impact on service delivery and assessed diversity considerations well.
- Children and their parents or carers were normally involved in all activity, from assessment through to review.
- Case managers planned to keep children safe effectively.
- Planning to keep other people safe was strong and, where necessary, usually included liaison with relevant services.
- The delivery of interventions to support desistance, keep the child safe and keep others safe was strong.

But:

- Management oversight was insufficient in almost half of the cases inspected.
- Consideration of diversity issues within planning needs to be stronger.
- Some safety and wellbeing needs were underassessed by the YOS.
- Not all potential risks of harm to others were identified at assessment stage.
- Contingency planning to keep the child and others safe needs to improve.

Out-of-court disposals

We inspected 26 cases managed by the YOS that had received an out-of-court disposal. These consisted of four youth conditional cautions, one youth caution, and 21 community resolutions. We interviewed the case managers in 24 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 in place for out-of-court disposals, using evidence from documents, meetings, and interviews.

Overall, Surrey's approach was consistently effective and there have been significant improvements in policy, provision, and practice since the last inspection.

The practice that we saw was generally undertaken to a high standard, although concerns were noted relating to the service's underassessment of risk of harm classifications. Management oversight was better than that evidenced in domain two.

Work to support desistance and to keep the child safe was undertaken well. Staff assessed needs for both key questions well. Planning was also well considered for both key questions, and implementation and delivery were strong.

Work to keep others safe was undertaken well, particularly planning, and the implementation and delivery of services. As noted, the only significant area of weakness was in how risk was assessed.

Out-of-court disposal policy and provision have been reviewed extensively since the last inspection and had addressed the concerns raised then; these related to multiple inappropriate informal interventions and a failure to escalate appropriately within formal youth justice processes. We saw no evidence in the cases inspected that these practices were still occurring. There is now a joint decision-making process, although the voice of the child is an omission at the panel. The lack of a pre-panel assessment is an area of potential weakness in provision. However, Surrey's integrated service delivery model mitigates the risks involved. We saw evidence in inspected cases that decisions were made appropriately, utilising information from the wider system to inform them, and interventions were delivered effectively.

Arrangements for joint evaluation of data with the police need to be strengthened, particularly regarding street-delivered community resolutions.

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

- There is a detailed policy in place and extensive guidance for practitioners.
- Policy and provision have been developed through a systematic approach to evaluating need via audit and review.
- The youth justice module added to the early help assessment tool since the last inspection has impacted positively on practice, and there is no difference in the quality of assessment to support the child's desistance between the Asset Plus and Early Help Assessment tools.
- An assessment of how to support the child's desistance was completed sufficiently in every case inspected.
- Planning regarding supporting the child's desistance, keeping the child safe, and keeping others safe was sufficient overall.
- Implementation and delivery were sufficient in supporting the child's desistance, keeping the child safe, and keeping others safe.
- Consideration of victim's needs was sufficient, and evident in assessment planning and interventions delivered.

But:

- Assessments of how to keep others safe were not always sufficient and risks were sometimes underassessed.
- The voice of the child was missing from both joint decision-making panels and reviews of policy and provision.
- Diversity was a consideration in policy and provision, but its impact was untested.

Resettlement

We inspected the quality of policy and provision in place for resettlement work, using evidence from documents, meetings, and interviews. To illustrate that work, we inspected three cases managed by the YOS that had received a custodial sentence.

There is a collaborative approach in arrangements to develop resettlement strategy. Evaluation of the evidence base has been undertaken and has been used to set the direction of travel. Recent engagement from the commissioning team provides assurance that a systematic approach is considered.

The policy and provision in place are evidencing some positive outcomes. The local authority 'youth offer' is strong and addresses the ETE needs of this cohort comprehensively. Accommodation and health provision also have strengths identified, which were reflected in inspected cases.

The impact of some of the YOS's resettlement activity has yet to be evidenced as some is still in initial stages. Work now being undertaken to review disproportionality and gain the voice of the child will be crucial in future policy and provision development. Transition arrangements will also need review when policy is updated.

Our key findings about resettlement work are as follows:

- A resettlement policy is in place and there is evidence that it is having a positive impact on provision.
- There is a collaborative approach to developing resettlement provision supported by an engaged local authority commissioner.
- The policy and provision actively address some structural barriers and there is evidence that a focus on diversity is being considered.
- Provision to support accommodation, ETE, and health needs during a child's resettlement journey is a strength.

But:

- The impact of some activity has yet to be evidenced and evaluated, for example, that of a current review of disproportionality, although concerns about disproportionality in the broader YOS cohort have been evident for some time.
- Transition arrangements with the Probation Service were not child-friendly in one of the cases we inspected, and this aspect of the policy needs to be strengthened.
- The policy does not reference the impact of the county's poor transport infrastructure on opportunities for children leaving custody in finding appropriate ETE or accommodation.

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 Surrey. This will improve the lives of the children in contact with youth offending services, and better protect the public.

The Surrey Youth Offending Service should:

1. ensure that management oversight and quality assurance of practice are effective across the four area quadrant teams, and that there is active monitoring of staff training and development needs
2. ensure robust contingency plans are in place for all children that address their safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm to others
3. improve the quality of assessment in keeping the child safe and managing the risks to others
4. ensure that the voice of the child is always heard at the joint decision-making panel.

The Surrey Safeguarding Adolescents and Youth Justice Management Board should ensure that:

5. appropriate resourcing is available to meet the specific needs of children in contact with the YOS, particularly school-age children not receiving their statutory full-time provision
6. the partnership adopts a robust and methodical approach to the analysis of information related to areas of potential disproportionality.

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 Probation Service, and local health services.³ 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.

Surrey YOS was last inspected in 2019 by HM Inspectorate of Probation and was rated 'Inadequate'. Significant deficits were identified in the partnership approach to the delivery of youth justice provision.

Surrey YOS's current service delivery structure is made up of a centralised hub of youth justice specialist staff, who support four area-based (quadrant) targeted youth support (TYS) teams to deliver out-of-court and court disposals. The central hub's responsibilities include quality assurance and performance monitoring; case transfer and care-taking arrangements; court work and workload allocation; bail; remand and intensive support and supervision; staff development and learning; restorative practice; victim engagement and reparation.

The four quadrant teams utilise an integrated service delivery model: designated staff in these quadrants are assigned youth justice work and have received appropriate training, but they may also case-manage children subject to other children's services interventions.

In Surrey, there are 11 district and borough councils. Two integrated care systems are replacing the previous five clinical commissioning groups. The county has 53 secondary schools (of which 42 are academies). Surrey is home to 1,285,541 residents and 471,805 households. There continues to be a local population increase in school-age children.

Children aged 10 to 17 accounted for 10 per cent of the overall population in Surrey (125,506) 10 years ago.⁴ In 2011, the ethnic make-up of Surrey's population was 90.4 per cent white (including 6.9 per cent 'other white' groups), with 9.6 per cent from black and minority ethnic communities. In 2019, the number of children aged 10 to 17 rose to just under 250,000.

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

⁴ 2011 Census data, the most up-to-date information provided by Surrey. Office for National Statistics. (2012). *Census 2011*, December 2012.

Since April 2018, the children's policing and justice partnership board had held oversight for the YOS. Arrangements were aligned with police priorities for children in Surrey. However, the local authority has been developing a safeguarding adolescents model and, in September 2021, a new safeguarding adolescents and youth offending service (SAYOS) board held its inaugural meeting and agreed its terms of reference. As part of these changes, a YOS executive subgroup was formed with the remit to focus on ensuring delivery of the statutory YOS objectives. A mirror arrangement has been established for the safeguarding adolescents work. Oversight of this new arrangement is provided by Surrey safeguarding children partnership (SSCP).

Surrey YOS adjusted its practice in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. In March 2020, at the start of the first national lockdown, it introduced a continuity plan to provide guidance to staff about how youth justice work would be undertaken throughout the lockdown period. From the outset, the YOS maintained contact with all children, prioritising those who needed more frequent contact because of their vulnerabilities and presenting risks. Practitioners utilised a variety of online and face-to-face contacts and interventions, in accordance with social distancing measures.

During the pandemic, youth workers were attached to the emergency duty team (EDT) to engage children who were arrested out of normal office hours. These children were discussed the following day at the daily risk briefing, and if required, referred to the 'Engage Project' who nominated a youth worker to continue to engage with the children while their case progressed. EDT youth workers have now been mainstreamed into service provision, given the success of this approach throughout the pandemic. Overall, Surrey's operating model has now progressed towards a business-as-usual one, although changes to government pandemic guidance may affect this model going forward.

Contextual facts

Population information⁵

104	First-time entrant rate per 100,000 in Surrey ⁶
167	First-time entrant rate per 100,000 in England and Wales
36.0%	Reoffending rate in Surrey ⁷
34.8%	Reoffending rate in England and Wales
1,199,870	Total population Surrey
119,631	Total youth population (10–17 years) in Surrey

Caseload information⁸

Age	10–14 years	15–17 years
Surrey YOS	12%	88%
National average	22%	78%

Race/ethnicity	White	Black and minority ethnic	Unknown
Surrey YOS	82%	16%	3%
Surrey Local Authority ⁹	90.4%	9.6%	3%

Gender	Male	Female
Surrey YOS	88%	12%
National average	85%	15%

Additional caseload data¹⁰

109	Total current caseload, of which
56	Court disposals
53	Out-of-court disposals

⁵ Office for National Statistics. (2021). *UK population estimates, mid-2020*.

⁶ Youth Justice Board. (2021). *First-time entrants, January to December 2020*.

⁷ Ministry of Justice. (2021). *Proven reoffending statistics, January to December 2019*.

⁸ Youth Justice Board. (2021). *Youth justice annual statistics: 2019 to 2020*.

⁹ Data provided by Surrey YOS pre-fieldwork.

¹⁰ Data supplied by the YOS, reflecting the caseload at the time of the inspection announcement.

53	Total current caseload on community sentences
3	Total current caseload in custody
0	Total current caseload on licence
0	Total current caseload with a youth caution
14	Total current caseload with a youth conditional caution
39	Total current caseload with a community resolution or other out-of-court disposal
3	Current caseload 'Looked After Children' resident in the YOT area
5	Current caseload 'Looked After Children' placed outside the YOT area
8	Current caseload with child protection plan
26	Current caseload with child in need plan
0	Current caseload aged 16 and under not in school/pupil referral unit/alternative education
15	Current caseload aged 16 and under in a pupil referral unit or alternative education
14	Current caseload aged 17+ not in education, training or employment

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

Offence types ¹¹	%
Violence against the person	48%
Sexual offence (non-contact)	5%
Robbery	10%
Theft and handling stolen goods	10%
Drug offences	10%
Summary motoring offences	10%
Indictable motoring offences	5%
Other summary offences	5%

¹¹ Data from the cases assessed during this inspection.

1. Organisational delivery

The YOS arrangements for governance and leadership, staffing, partnerships and services, and information and facilities have all been rated as 'Good'.

Arrangements since the last inspection have improved and the management board is now attended by engaged senior leaders from across the partnership. New governance arrangements incorporate a dual youth justice and safeguarding adolescents approach. The YOS leadership team are knowledgeable and provide an effective and proactive link to the board. They have been central to improvements made in the last 18 months.

The board needs to be more focused in how it evaluates its strategy and ensure sufficient attention is given to the needs of YOS children. Currently, not enough analysis is undertaken in areas of need such as pre-16 education provision or disproportionality for the YOS cohort. Although the overall profile of YOS children and their risks is understood, there is not a shared, detailed understanding of the risks they face. A response is sometimes determined by the integrated model utilised by Surrey rather than a bespoke offer, and so is not always effective.

Staff are well motivated, and the service retains them effectively. There are many training opportunities, which have ensured that staff have the appropriate skills to work with children who offend. The development of a specialist workers' central hub has enhanced the quality of YOS assessments and interventions.

There is evidence that staff are well supervised and supported by managers. The leadership team now need to focus on ensuring there are no disparities in practice between quadrants, evaluate training records more systematically, and monitor staff competence in assessing risk, as there was some underestimation of risk in the cases inspected.

There are a range of effective partnership interventions demonstrating positive impacts. The daily risk briefing has been embraced by the partnership and provides a good forum for identifying children's risks and needs at an early stage. Surrey's 'youth offer' is impressive and enhances post-16 ETE provision for this cohort of children. A YOS health offer is now in place and shows promise.

While relevant information about priorities and challenges posed by YOS children is shared within the partnership, some responses need to be developed. For example, the partnership response to addressing structural barriers impacting on the ETE needs of school-age YOS children since the last inspection has not been sufficiently focused.

The necessary policies and guidance are in place to enable staff to deliver a quality service. The YOS delivers its work in sites that are sufficiently accessible to staff and children. Staff report that their service delivery environments are safe.

There is a recognition of the challenges caused by using two case management systems, and the need to access multiple other systems and datasets to complement an integrated service delivery model; the Surrey care system is being developed to integrate data-sharing more effectively.

Work to address diversity and disproportionality is undertaken but its impact will need to be better evidenced. Future staff recruitment will need to take into consideration the diverse needs of children supervised by the YOS.

The views of children are actively canvassed but the YOS needs to demonstrate the impact of this feedback more explicitly.

Strengths

- There is a shared understanding of a child-first approach, and the board shows a genuine interest and commitment to the delivery of youth justice services.
- A strong learning and development offer has been systematically planned and introduced by the YOS leadership team. There is tangible evidence that board members, managers, practitioners, and volunteers have embraced and implemented learning opportunities.
- The development of a central YOS hub has enhanced the quality of youth justice provision in the county.
- Staff retention rates are good, and turnover is low.
- The YOS education lead workers are skilled and knowledgeable, and link effectively with colleagues in relevant external services and organisations.
- The 'youth offer' is impressive and gives opportunities, such as the 'skill mill', that enhance the quality of post-16 education, training, and employment (ETE) provision.
- The YOS health offer, while still developing, is strong and shows promise.
- The multi-agency 'daily risk briefing' provides an effective opportunity to address the needs of vulnerable children collaboratively at an early stage after arrest.
- There is evidence of attempts to provide a personalised approach to interventions, reflected in the development of the 'communication passport' for children with speech, language, and communication needs.
- Locations where children are seen are accessible and safe, though travel time to them can be a difficulty.
- The current development of the Surrey 'care system' is an innovative attempt to integrate data-sharing more effectively.

Areas for improvement

- The board needs to ensure sufficient focus on the needs of YOS children and that these are always met within the integrated service delivery model.
- The broader partnership was initially slow to address the education needs of school-age YOS children following the last inspection, although a better understanding of the data is now apparent.
- The youth justice strategy risk register needs to be reviewed more systematically and a shared understanding of risks evidenced.
- Activity to tackle racial disproportionality has been apparent, but impact has not been well evidenced so far.
- The leadership team need a greater understanding of an apparent overrepresentation of children aged 15 to 17 on caseloads.

- The voice of the child is sought but the YOS needs to evidence the impact of this on service provision more consistently and effectively.
- The learning and development needs of staff are known but need to be recorded more clearly to facilitate effective oversight.
- Systems for evidencing consistency in team management oversight are underdeveloped.

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	£2,245,671
Total projected budget current for financial year	£2,245,671

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 YOS and the board work together to agree priorities. The current youth justice strategic plan sets out a 'child-first' vision. The service aims to deliver this vision via an integrated model of service delivery with a dual focus on vulnerable adolescents, which reinforces the aims and ambitions of the early help and hubs service plan. A newly formed safeguarding adolescents and youth offending management board has been developed to create governance arrangements for the delivery of the strategy. This broader focus on vulnerable children has the potential to address exploitation more effectively at an earlier stage.

The board is well attended by all statutory partners at an appropriate level, although links with the court are underdeveloped. More consistent engagement with court representatives would assist in ensuring concerns have appropriate strategic oversight. There are several well-attended subgroups feeding back into the board, although the police missed three of the last four leadership and governance working group meetings.

The board itself is diverse with a mix of ethnicities, gender, and ages. Arrangements for the development of its understanding of youth justice strategy are comprehensive; a board handbook was updated in February 2021 and sets out clear arrangements and terms of reference. A board induction programme was developed earlier in 2021.

The development of the local strategy has been overseen effectively for almost two years by an independent board chair with an extensive background in youth justice, though there is an acknowledgement that feedback from children at board meetings is underdeveloped.

Do the partnership arrangements actively support effective service delivery?

The board handbook sets out expectations for advocacy and comprehensive briefings are provided at board meetings. These briefings have been used to develop a shared understanding of youth justice service delivery. Well-established links with other strategic partnerships, such as the Surrey criminal justice board and Surrey safeguarding partnership board, provide an opportunity to integrate strategies.

Concerns were raised during the last inspection about a lack of youth justice focus within the integrated service delivery model. This integrated model is still utilised, but the youth justice focus has been enhanced by the development of a central YOS hub resourced by specialist workers and youth justice managers. This has been supported by the board and has enhanced partnership working.

However, this adherence to an integrated approach sometimes affects the partnership's detailed understanding of youth justice outcomes. For example, board members and partnership managers did not articulate a shared understanding of the risks to YOS service delivery effectively at focus groups. A more systematic approach to reviewing the youth justice strategic risk register would be of benefit.

Effective operational work with children not receiving full-time school provision has been affected by factors such as apparent low thresholds for exclusion and distance from school; partnership arrangements need to better evidence the efficacy of recent attempts to support the educational needs of this cohort and address structural barriers.

Diversity and disproportionality are a priority, but the partnership does not understand the impact of work to address this with this cohort in sufficient detail.

Does the leadership of the YOT support effective service delivery?

Greater clarity about senior management roles and responsibilities within the YOS is required. It was unclear which manager had strategic oversight of service delivery.

Nonetheless, the YOS service improvement lead and YOS service manager have provided a visible link between the YOS and the board, ensuring the strategy and vision have been put into operation effectively. They have utilised the many board subgroups to develop a consistent approach to the development of the YOS.

Team managers meet regularly to put the strategy into operation and a shared direction of travel is evaluated using YOS performance data, which is also fed into a multi-agency compendium performance report. Additionally, regular youth justice operational surgeries have been attended by board members, including the chair. However, it is noted that 20 per cent of staff responding to our survey reported they were not aware of board activity and this is an area to develop.

There is evidence that the leadership team considers diversity when developing practice. The 'communication passport' was an example of good practice identified through the leadership team's analysis of need but, elsewhere, greater scrutiny of data on racial disproportionality and a 15–17-year-old overrepresentation on caseloads is still needed.

Overall, there is evidence that the competent and skilled leadership team have been instrumental in developing a youth justice focus within an integrated service. This approach is well understood and implemented by practitioners, and is reflected within the casework we inspected.

1.2. Staff



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

Good

Key staffing data¹²

Total staff headcount (full-time equivalent (FTE))	65
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%
Average caseload case managers (FTE) ¹³	3.7
Average annual working days sickness (all staff) ¹⁴	10.9
Staff attrition (percentage of all staff leaving in 12-month period) ¹⁵	2.67%

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?

Staffing levels are sufficient and the restructure of the central YOS hub ensures specialist youth justice expertise is available across the quadrants. The integrated working model in place in Surrey also ensures enough targeted youth support (TYS) staff are employed to work with YOS children. Workloads are manageable.

Vacancies within the broader TYS teams do not impact on youth justice work and feedback from practitioners evidenced a service that was well resourced. Retention of staff is a strength; many of those we interviewed had been employed by Surrey during the last inspection and turnover in the last 12 months was extremely low.

¹² Data supplied by YOS and reflecting staffing at the time of the inspection announcement.

¹³ Data supplied by YOS, based on staffing and workload at the time of the inspection announcement. Due to the service's integrated model this figure was not reflective of the overall caseload of children for an FTE practitioner who would ordinarily be overseeing interventions with non-youth justice children.

¹⁴ Data supplied by the YOS. Average annual sickness for all staff working for the children's and family's directorate is 2.8 days.

¹⁵ Data provided by Surrey YOS during inspection.

Staff sickness does not impact on service delivery. Sickness levels for the YOS were around five times as high as that for the directorate overall, but these were due to specific circumstances and were managed appropriately. A corporate absence management policy assists in planning for unexpected absences.

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

The workforce, including volunteers, is not reflective of the diversity apparent within the cohort of YOS children. However, workforce development strategies recognise the specific demographic challenges within the county. Training has been made available to staff to develop cultural competence.

Broader training plans were developed at the request of the YOS service improvement lead when he started in role to ensure staff had the requisite skillset. This activity was facilitated by the local authority workforce development plan, although the document itself lacks a bespoke youth justice approach. Access for practitioners to specialist workers in the central YOS hub further facilitates a personalised response.

The YOS management team need to continue monitoring the risk assessment skills of practitioners to ensure the personalised approach takes all factors into consideration, as some safety and wellbeing and risk of harm levels in inspected case files were underassessed.

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

Staff employed by the local authority receive regular supervision and seconded staff receive appropriate input from their home agencies. Volunteers also have regular support and contact.

An induction programme for new staff is also delivered to staff returning to work from parental leave or other long-term absence.

The YOS has quality control processes for supervision and appraisal across the central team and the four quadrants. However, these are underdeveloped, and we found disparities between the quadrants.

Fourteen out of 41 domain two and three cases we looked at lacked sufficient management oversight. This absence had a greater impact upon domain two cases and there was some resultant inconsistency in practitioners' risk assessments when oversight was not evident.

Most staff felt that the appraisal process was valuable, though eight of the 33 staff who responded to our survey who should have had an appraisal either did not feel it was valuable or had not received one.

Are arrangements for learning and development comprehensive and responsive?

A comprehensive training plan is in place, based on a previous skills audit of practitioners. More specialist training, such as AIM 3 (Assessment, Intervention & Moving-on) is provided to relevant specialist workers rather than the generic TYS workforce. However, the YOS leadership team need a more systematic approach to monitor training records; we found that it was not straightforward to gather details of outstanding staff training needs at pre-fieldwork and fieldwork stages.

Positively, bespoke youth justice-focused days at the central YOS hub have been introduced to develop TYS staff's overall youth justice knowledge. This is particularly valuable for staff who have a limited role in the delivery of youth justice.

Volunteers have received training from the YOS, but diversity awareness and trauma-informed work need to be embedded more effectively in their training programme.

A comprehensive quality assurance framework is used to develop staff competence and there is evidence that the YOS supports acquisition of the Youth Justice Effective Practice certificate.

Do managers pay sufficient attention to staff engagement?

Staff present as well motivated and knowledgeable and, overall, felt supported by managers, particularly during the pandemic. Volunteers also felt well supported, although in our survey, 83 per cent said that they were rarely or never asked for their views. Staff noted that the YOS met their diversity needs, though this was within the context that it had identified few such needs.

Most staff understood the vision of the service and their roles and responsibilities, and this contributed to the contented picture provided by staff, where they felt valued. The YOS management team recognises exceptional work informally.

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	19%
Percentage of current caseload with substance misuse issues	28%
Percentage of current caseload with learning disability or learning difficulty or subject to an education, health and care plan	63%

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?

Activity has been evident within the partnership to analyse the desistance needs of children in contact with the YOS, and data was available from a range of sources, but domain one focus group feedback throughout the week indicated an absence of an overarching single document or repository of information focusing specifically on this cohort. This portrayed an underdeveloped partnership approach to a bespoke analysis of the needs of YOS children.

Some data presented to the board is not sufficiently analytical. For example, there has been no exploration of whether there is a correlation between the high proportion of black, Asian, and minority ethnic children excluded from school and those in contact with the YOS. Also, the partnership has a weak understanding of

YOS activity with victims, some of whom will be children potentially in contact with the YOS.

There is some understanding of safety and wellbeing factors; looked after children offending data is monitored at the board, for example, and there is some awareness of disproportionality but, overall, there was no comprehensive understanding of the needs of YOS children across the partnership, and analysis is not always shared systematically between agencies at operational level to develop service provision.

A service user strategy is in place, but greater evidence of the impact of children's feedback upon changes to service delivery is needed.

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

The education lead workers in the YOS are highly competent and provide a good link with external partners, but the strategic response outside of the YOS itself has not been sufficiently focused on the needs of YOS children and this has been reflected in previous performance outcomes. A greater focus on addressing 'upstream' structural barriers, such as the factors leading to exclusions for black, Asian, and minority ethnic children, is needed.

Substance misuse provision has been strengthened recently and a new resource will shortly be in place. The previous absence of an integrated worker in the central YOS hub affected the prompt referral of children for appropriate support.

The local authority's youth offer is a significant strength and provision within the offer, such as the 'skill mill', which targets post-16 ETE provision, is highly effective. The challenge for the partnership will be to evidence sustained improvements in outcomes for children who benefit from such provision.

The YOS health offer is comprehensive and, while some provision is still developing, it shows promise. A refresh of the strategic health needs assessment, completed before the pandemic, would assist in service development, particularly in understanding changes in emotional and health need in the last 18 months.

Consideration is given to diversity factors. For example, the 'communication passport' is used across a range of services working with YOS children with speech, language, and communication needs to facilitate their engagement effectively. Additionally, the Traveller education support team assists children from within the Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller community.

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

The youth justice strategic plan sets out arrangements with relevant partners. The effectiveness of arrangements is reflected by the multi-agency daily risk briefings, which provide an effective means of coordinating personalised interventions with children at an early stage, immediately after arrest.

However, arrangements supporting arrested children laid out in the national Child in Custody Concordat need to be strengthened and children's social care needs to develop its understanding of children impacted by this concordat. Additionally, evidence from inspected cases indicates that the police do not always share information outside of the daily risk briefing effectively and this will need to be monitored.

Evaluation of data held by partners attending daily risk briefings is in its infancy but could provide an opportunity to review impact on diverse groups more

systematically. Additionally, the police's custody scorecard is an effective means of monitoring disproportionality, and the partnership should make more use of the data in tools such as this.

Contextual safeguarding arrangements are still developing and the impact of interventions in some of the cases inspected needed to be evidenced more consistently. However, the safeguarding adolescents model that has now been implemented will assist in embedding good practice.

Practitioners previously identified access to emotional and mental health support as a weakness, but recent provision has started to have a positive impact. Good levels of engagement from strategic and operational staff tackling YOS children's needs are now apparent.

Interactions with the court have improved significantly and show signs of positive outcomes for children, but relationships between the court and management board need to strengthen.

Involvement of children and their parents and carers

There is evidence that the YOS makes attempts to listen to the voice of the child and their family. There is a corporate service user framework, led by colleagues from the service user and participation team. We saw evidence of this activity in, for example, children's feedback being incorporated into a report to the Surrey safeguarding children's partnership.

However, the impact of this activity is less clear. The voice of the child is largely absent from the management board, and children's feedback appears to have had minimal impact upon reviews of policy and provision. Gathering and implementing the views of the child seems to be a standalone process in service delivery.

Nonetheless, children, parents, and carers speak highly of the service they receive from the YOS. We spoke to 10 children and three parents and received 14 responses to our text survey, and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive. One parent noted:

"The case manager was fantastic with my son. She had patience with him, explaining things to him in ways he would understand."

It was clear also from the children and parents that we spoke to that practitioners had a strong focus on addressing issues related to wellbeing and desistance, which the children welcomed. For example, one child noted that through his case manager he had acquired:

"Two placements in Woking and Redhill and she got me a phone. I felt safer away from the area, so it was a positive move."

Other children were equally effusive, noting:

"She changed my mind set and she put in a big effort to do this ... she gave me a bigger insight on crime life and showed me there's much more to that"

"My YOS has helped me understand the consequences of my actions and who it has affected. They helped me stay out of trouble by showing me what can happen if I carried on doing dumb things"

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?

A comprehensive suite of policies is in place and reviewed appropriately; there is evidence that staff have been consulted when new policies are in development. There were signs that a collaborative approach was used when developing the youth justice strategic plan.

Policies are available on the internal shared computer drive and discussed at regular 'bitesize' sessions and at team meetings. Issues of diversity are considered within policy review, but a sophisticated use of data to tackle disproportionality in the review process is not yet in evidence.

Although policies and protocols were in place and accessible, 47 per cent of staff who responded to our survey were not always clear how to access services from partners and this is an area which requires improvement.

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

The quadrant working model means that most children are seen in a geographically convenient youth centre. Home visits and access to schools and other buildings are also a feature of service provision.

A transportation of children policy provides guidance on transporting children in the county and recognition that the size and rural nature of the county can be an access barrier for some.

Most staff and all volunteers felt buildings are safe; risk assessments are routinely undertaken. There are Covid-19 safety arrangements in buildings used by the YOS and this was evident during fieldwork at the central YOS hub.

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

An agile working policy is in place across the whole authority, which promotes home and flexible working. ICT arrangements support this approach. Staff have access to appropriate equipment and ICT training is standard.

There are memorandums of understanding and data-sharing arrangements to support information-sharing.

There is recognition of difficulties caused by working across different case management systems and the 'Surrey care system' is in development to provide a solution to data-integration difficulties. Although still in development stage, the approach is innovative. A greater youth justice focus is still required when interrogating data across the partnership, although some integrated analysis with the police has taken place.

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

The local authority and YOS quality assurance framework has been utilised to develop actions for the YOS emanating from audit activity. However, there is evidence of a variable approach to auditing across the quadrants and some staff anecdotally noted this as a potential risk to audit arrangements.

The national standards self-assessment was utilised to identify the need to focus improvement activity on transitions and custody, but the impact of work undertaken needs evaluating further.

The YOS had planned a peer review of the service, but this was cancelled due to the inspection. It was due to focus on 'planning', which had been identified as a deficit through internal quality assurance activity. Positively, feedback from learning reviews is collated and fed back to the management board and the team as a means of learning lessons.

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.

Considerations of diversity are an important feature of the YOS's ambitions in developing personalised approaches for specific groups of children in Surrey. The leadership team has a good understanding of the characteristics of the children worked with and their specific needs, though the overrepresentation of three children aged 15 to 17 on the caseload¹⁶ has not been scrutinised in depth. The board is regularly sighted on demographic data and receives performance feedback on children with special educational needs. Data on looked after children is also presented to the board and addressing the needs of this cohort is a priority in the youth justice plan.

Some good practice has developed from this scrutiny; the communication passport (see below) is given to all children with speech, language, and communication needs to assist their interactions with professionals, children from the Travelling community receive educational assistance from a broader local authority specialist team, and the YOS service improvement lead is undertaking a thematic review into disproportionality in the service.

Good practice example

Communication passports are created by speech and language therapists following consultation with practitioners working with the 'owner' of the passport (the child), and/or through direct work with the children themselves. The draft communication passports are initially shared with the child, so they have an opportunity to comment/contribute towards the content. It is not finalised until the child has had the chance to see it and agree to the content. This passport provides a method for the owner to ensure that the difficulties they experience with communication are made clear to those working with them. Strategies are described to support communication partners to empower the owner to succeed.

Communication passports can be shared with educators, trainers, employers, emergency service personnel, or any other professionals involved in the child's life.

¹⁶ Youth Justice Board. (2021). Youth Justice Annual Statistics: 2019-2020

The YOS wants to effect change in relation to disproportionality, but is still in an underdeveloped stage of activity, and attempts to address black, Asian, and minority ethnic disproportionality should have been undertaken more promptly.

For example, given the known risks of involvement in crime by children excluded from school, the partnership has made no attempt to understand if there is a correlation between the high numbers of black, Asian, and minority ethnic children excluded from school each year over the last five years¹⁷ and the disproportionate numbers entering the youth justice system.

YOS practitioners and volunteers are not ethnically representative of the children they supervise. The local authority's workforce development plan is attempting to address this, and while training such as unconscious bias, cultural awareness, conversation cafes, and identity shift has helped equip staff with the knowledge to work with particular cohorts, confidence in utilising these skills remains a barrier for some. This was evident in one case inspected where difficult conversations about race and self-identity were not happening and an inspector noted:

“There is no analysis of the impact of self-identity on a child who was being drawn back into a high harm black, Asian and minority ethnic peer group. There is no consideration of structural barriers - for example, having to commute two hours to school on public transport whilst being at significant risk of criminal exploitation.”

¹⁷ Data provided by the YOS during fieldwork indicated that, on average, 17 per cent of children who have been excluded from school each year over the last five years come from a black, Asian, and minority ethnic background; 2011 Census data indicated only 9.6% of the population came from such a background.

2. Court disposals

We took a detailed look at 18 community sentences managed by the YOS. We also conducted 15 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.

Children who receive a court disposal in Surrey should expect that both they and their parents or carers will be effectively engaged, that their diversity needs will be met, and that the YJS will work collaboratively with partners to ensure they do not reoffend and that risks to and from others are addressed. These outcomes should be achieved via high-quality and consistent assessment and planning, delivery of interventions supported by effective management oversight, and robust ongoing review of the work undertaken.

We saw consistently good practice in Surrey across all four standards and the quality of some casework was impressive, particularly considering the deficits identified during the last inspection.

Work to support desistance was the strongest area identified in this domain. Assessment and planning activity was sufficient in 16 of the 18 cases inspected; implementation, and delivery of work to support desistance were sufficient in 15 cases, and reviewing was sufficient in every case inspected. Case managers assessed desistance needs effectively, considering issues of diversity and the wider social context of the child, and the service had a good understanding of the pertinent needs affecting desistance. Consideration of diversity issues in planning was the weakest area in work to support desistance and reflected an underdeveloped strategic approach to issues of diversity noted within domain one fieldwork.

Overall, though, the good-quality assessments meant that planning and interventions were implemented effectively; this was evidenced by the identification and delivery of services most likely to have an impact. This delivery was strengths-based and maintained effective working relationships. This approach chimed with the child-first ambitions articulated in the YOS vision and it was clear that Surrey's integrated model had contributed positively to the YOS's approach to working with these children.

Work to keep the child safe was mostly undertaken well. Assessments were judged to be sufficient, and, in most cases, practitioners identified and analysed risks to the child. However, the YOS had underestimated the risk profile of the children in a number of cases, and we did not agree with all their classifications of risk. Other activity was stronger and, while contingency planning needed to be more robust, the implementation and delivery of service effectively supported the safety of the child in 15 of the 18 cases inspected. Written reviews were invariably undertaken when required and input from other agencies was often sought.

Work to keep others safe was mostly undertaken well within the four standards. Assessment classifications were reasonable, although there was some failure to identify all pertinent risks at the assessment stage. Most of the planning was good, but contingency plans needed to be stronger. When planning was done well it involved other agencies in all the cases where they were required. This liaison was reflected within the delivery of interventions; again, appropriate agencies were involved, and work was coordinated effectively. Reviewing activity was also a positive

picture overall, but necessary adjustments in ongoing work where required were not always visible.

Management oversight was insufficient in eight of 17 cases that needed it and it was those cases which lacked sufficient oversight where inspectors noted deficits.

Strengths

- The service's child-first vision and integrated approach was reflected in the strong work supporting the desistance needs of children, and its understanding of the risks to children and the risks they posed to others.
- Case managers had a good understanding of the desistance needs of children. They assessed them well and the reviewing of these needs was sufficient in every case inspected.
- Case managers were proficient at identifying structural barriers that might impact on service delivery and assessed diversity considerations well.
- Children and their parents or carers were involved in all activity from assessment through to review.
- Case managers planned to keep children safe effectively.
- Planning to keep other people safe was strong and, where necessary, usually included liaison with relevant services.
- The delivery of interventions to support desistance, keep the child safe and keep others safe was strong.

Areas for improvement

- Management oversight was insufficient in almost half of the cases inspected.
- Consideration of diversity issues within planning needs to be stronger.
- The YOS underassessed some safety and wellbeing needs.
- Not all potential risks of harm to others were identified at assessment stage.
- Contingency planning to keep the child and others safe needs to improve.

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 rating¹⁸ for assessment is based on the following key questions:

¹⁸ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. See Annexe 2 for a more detailed explanation.

	% 'Yes'
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	89%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	67%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	67%

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

In 17 of the 18 cases inspected, the assessment had sufficient analysis of offending behaviour, including the child's acknowledgement of responsibility for, attitudes towards, and motivation for their offending. Staff considered the diversity and wider social context of the child in 15 cases and used information held by other agencies in 17 cases. In 17 cases, the assessment focused on the child's strengths and their protective factors. In 16 cases, sufficient attention had been given to the child's level of maturity, ability, and motivation to change.

Structural barriers were analysed in nine of the 10 cases where this was required. The views of both the child and their parents or carers combined were considered in 17 cases and the child only in the remaining case. The needs and wishes of the victim were taken into account in 14 of the 15 relevant cases. Learning and ETE were a pertinent desistance factor in two-thirds of the 18 cases we inspected. Substance misuse and lifestyle were factors in 11 cases.

Overall, assessment of how to support desistance was undertaken well by practitioners. An inspector noted:

"The assessment contains a good analysis of Lee's offending that includes the Crown Prosecution Service information, Lee's account, and the assessor's exploration of the two accounts. Attention is paid to the child's learning disability and behaviour disorder and how they impact on his thinking and behaviour. Assessment provides insight into the challenges Lee has faced in his life, his lack of access to parental support and the barriers to his access to suitable housing."

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?

The assessment of the child clearly identified and analysed risks to their safety in 13 of the 18 cases inspected, and it drew on available sources of information where appropriate in all but one case. The assessment did not analyse controls and intervention to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child in six of the 16 relevant cases. While we thought the case manager's classification of safety and wellbeing was reasonable in 14 of the cases inspected, we felt that there was some underassessment of risk by the YOS. We judged only four of the seven cases classified as low risk to be low, and we also judged that four cases should have been classified as high risk and not two, as the YOS assessed. An inspector noted:

"The level of risk is under assessed. The child's behaviour is a concern and contextual safeguarding risks were significant. The child's links to a London borough where he is spending time with inappropriate peers have not been fully assessed. The case manager has been hampered in undertaking an effective assessment of all risks due to the lack of relevant information about peer groups being shared with her by partners."

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?

The assessment did not clearly identify and analyse risk of harm to others posed by the child in a third of the cases inspected. Furthermore, the assessment did not analyse controls and interventions to manage and minimise risks in six of the 16 relevant cases. An inspector noted:

“In reaching this judgement, I considered that the behaviours were not fully examined in terms of where, when and how the behaviour might occur and why those situations are likely or unlikely to happen.”

Despite these concerns about some of the assessments to keep other people safe, we assessed that the case manager’s classification of risk was reasonable in 15 of the inspected cases. Additionally, the assessment drew sufficiently on available sources of information, including past behaviour and convictions, and involved other agencies where appropriate in 16 cases, and there was a clear, written record of the assessment in 17 cases.

2.2. Planning



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

Good

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

	% 'Yes'
Does planning focus sufficiently on supporting the child’s desistance?	89%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	78%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	67%

Does planning focus on supporting the child’s desistance?

Planning set out the services most likely to support desistance and paid sufficient attention to timescales and sequencing in 16 of the 18 cases inspected. Diversity factors were considered sufficiently in only 12 cases. However, planning did take sufficient account of the child’s personal circumstances, strengths and level of maturity, ability, and motivation to change in all but one case. The child’s strengths and protective factors were also considered in 17 cases.

Sufficient services were planned for in 15 cases inspected, and proportionate planning was noted in 17 cases. The child and their parents were meaningfully involved in planning in 16 cases, and sufficient attention was given to the needs and wishes of the victim in 13 of the relevant 14 cases.

This positive picture about planning to support desistance was reflected by one inspector who noted:

¹⁹ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. See Annex 2 for a more detailed explanation.

“Planning focuses on the critical factors linked to desistance and the views of the child and his mother feature prominently in both case manager consideration and the contract/plan which is taken to panel. The referral order contract is bespoke and personalised to the child with achievable outcomes.”

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

Planning to address risks was sufficient in 12 of the 15 cases where it was required. Planning involved other agencies where appropriate in all the cases where they were required and set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child in 10 of the relevant 13 cases. However, there was effective contingency planning in only half of the cases inspected.

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

Planning promoted the safety of other people, sufficiently addressing risk of harm factors in 12 of the relevant 16 cases and involved other agencies where appropriate in 11 of the relevant 13 cases.

However, planning did not address specific risks and concerns related to actual and potential victims in five out of 13 cases where an actual or potential victim was identified. Plans to set out necessary controls and interventions to promote the safety of others was sufficient in only nine of the 15 cases where such controls were required. Contingency planning was weak and was missing in 11 of the 17 cases where it was required.

An inspector noted:

“There was planning to address risk of harm factors of impulsivity, victim impact, healthy relationships and peer influence. However, this planning could have been improved. For example, by considering how Jerry's activities would be monitored and by whom. Better identification of interventions and controls to keep others safe was required also. Contingency planning (to identify the potential actions that would need to be taken if risks increased) was missing.”

2.3. Implementation and delivery



High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging and assisting the child.	Outstanding
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Our rating²⁰ 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?	83%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of the child?	83%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?	83%

²⁰ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. See Annexe 2 for a more detailed explanation.

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

Services that would support desistance were delivered to 15 of the inspected children with sufficient detail given to sequencing and timescales. Services were proportionate and completed within the timescales in 15 cases and addressed desistance factors sufficiently in 14 cases.

Service delivery took diversity considerations into account sufficiently in 14 cases and reflected the wider familial and social context of the child in 16 cases. In 16 cases, there was evidence that service delivery built upon the child's strengths and protective factors, focused sufficiently on maintaining an effective working relationship with the child and their parents or carers, and promoted opportunities for community integration, including access to services post-supervision.

There were good attempts to encourage compliance in all, but one case inspected, and an inspector noted:

“Good evidence of work to support desistance including peer relationships and victims. The young person missed two appointments at the start of the order and was issued with warnings, the case manager worked hard to establish and maintain [a] relationship with [the] young person which paid off with very good engagement after second warning.”

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

The coordination of other organisations involved in keeping the child safe was sufficient in only eight of the 12 relevant cases, but service delivery supported the safety of the child effectively in 15 of the 18 cases inspected.

An inspector noted:

“Health and speech and language therapy [SLT] contact have taken place early in the order, served to inform internal and external partners of advised best methods of communication, in the form of a SLT passport. From a health perspective the worker has also arranged immunisation to bring the child up to date. The key worker has also worked to deliver 1-2-1 sessions around emotional wellbeing, involving parents within the home to support long-term coping mechanisms.”

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

Service delivery to support the safety and wellbeing of others was mostly effective. Services to manage and minimise the risk of harm were delivered in 12 of 15 cases identified where they were required.

Attention was given to protection of actual and potential victims in nine of the 13 relevant cases, and coordination of involvement of other agencies managing the risk of harm was sufficient in eight of the 10 cases where their presence was required. An inspector recognised the good practice identified by noting:

“Weapon awareness sessions completed to build internal controls. Victim contact was made but the victim did not wish to engage. While Bryan was living with his mother, home visits were undertaken as the victim was living within close proximity.”

2.4. Reviewing



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

Good

Our rating²¹ 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?	72%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	72%

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

We assessed that reviewing activity had sufficient focus to support the child's desistance in every case that we inspected.

Reviewing identified and responded to changes in factors in all relevant cases where this was required. Reviewing focused on building strengths and protective factors in all relevant cases and responded to diversity factors in all instances when required.

A written review was completed for all children. Consideration of the personal circumstances of the child was apparent in all but one of the cases when required. There was consideration of motivation and engagement in all relevant cases, and the child and their parent or carer were meaningfully involved in the review in all but two cases.

Reviewing led to necessary adjustments in ongoing work to support desistance in 11 of the 12 relevant cases.

The efficacy of the YOS's approach to this activity is reflected in one inspector's assertion that:

"Reviewing is undertaken on a regular basis via the formal referral order review meetings and case worker supervision. The former enables the child's progress to be recognised, endorsed and present him with validation while supervision presents opportunity to reflect on the progress being made with respect to the child being in employment."

Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

Reviewing identified and responded to changes in factors related to safety and wellbeing in nine of the 13 cases where changes had been noted by inspectors. A written review was completed in all 17 cases where one was required. Input from other agencies was considered in eight of the 12 cases where this was required.

²¹ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. See Annexe 2 for a more detailed explanation.

This activity resulted in necessary adjustments in ongoing work in only six of the 11 cases where this was required. One inspector noted:

“The review did not consider new information about offences including possession with intent to sell class A [drugs] and possession of a bladed article. The case manager reduced risk from medium to low based on his good progress with the order when I feel it should have remained at medium due to the possibility of criminal exploitation and carrying weapons.”

Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

Reviewing identified and responded to changes in factors related to risk of harm in five of the nine relevant cases. All cases had a sufficient written review when required.

Seven of the 11 cases which needed the input of other agencies involved in managing the risk of harm incorporated into the review evidenced this. Children and their parents or carers were meaningfully involved in seven of the 12 cases where this was assessed to be needed. Reviewing activity resulted in changes to the ongoing plan of work to manage risk in six of the 10 cases where an adjustment was required.

Overall, sufficient good practice was evidenced, and one inspector noted positively about one child inspected that:

“Risk is regularly reviewed in light of the child's changing circumstances. Evidence contained within case records of the child and key adults in his life being actively involved in discussions and a positive shift from medium to low risk of harm.”

3. Out-of-court disposals

We inspected 26 cases managed by the YOS that had received an out-of-court disposal. These consisted of four youth conditional cautions, one youth caution, and 21 community resolutions. We interviewed the case managers in 24 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.

Children who receive an out-of-court disposal in Surrey should expect that both they and their parents or carers will be effectively engaged, that their diversity needs will be met, and that the YOS will work collaboratively with partners to ensure they do not reoffend and that risks to and from others are addressed. These outcomes should be achieved via high-quality and consistent assessment and planning, delivery of interventions supported by effective management oversight, and robust ongoing review of the work.

Overall, Surrey YOS's approach was consistently effective and there had been significant improvements in policy, provision, and practice since the last inspection. The practice by staff that we inspected was of a satisfactory standard. The only significant concern related to the service's underassessment of risk of harm classification but, overall, work was undertaken well. Management oversight was better than that evidenced in domain two and was effective in 18 of the 24 cases where it was required.

Work to support desistance and to keep the child safe was undertaken well. Staff assessed needs for both key questions well and it was notable that this proficient level of competence was consistent across all out-of-court disposals. Planning was well considered for both key questions and deficiencies were only noted in a few instances. Implementation and delivery were also strong.

Work to keep others safe was undertaken well, particularly planning, and the implementation and delivery of services. As noted, the only significant area of weakness was in how risk was assessed, and there was a degree of variation between the YOS's classification and our own. Despite these concerns, enough cases were still considered to have assessed risk to others sufficiently well for us to rate this standard as 'Good'.

Out-of-court disposal policy and provision have been reviewed extensively since the last inspection, and there is evidence that audits have been used successfully to develop assessment practice and interventions. Concerns raised at the last inspection relating to multiple inappropriate informal interventions and a failure to escalate appropriately within formal youth justice processes have been addressed. We saw no evidence in the cases inspected that these practices were still occurring.

The decision-making process itself is a joint one and there are appropriate contributions from statutory partners. However, the voice of the child is an omission at the decision-making panel and minutes from the panel lacked detail overall.

Although the lack of a pre-panel assessment is an area of potential weakness in provision, Surrey’s integrated service delivery model and well-attended joint decision-making panel mitigates the risks involved in not having this. We saw evidence in inspected cases that decisions were informed, made appropriately, and interventions delivered effectively. However, this is still an area that would benefit from further review by the YOS.

Arrangements for joint evaluation of data with the police need to be strengthened, particularly for street-delivered community resolutions.

Strengths

- There is a detailed policy in place and extensive guidance for practitioners.
- Policy and provision have been developed through a systematic approach to evaluating need via audit and review.
- The youth justice module added to the Early Help Assessment tool since the last inspection has had a positive impact on practice, and there is no difference in the quality of assessment to support the child’s desistance between the Asset Plus and Early Help Assessment tools.
- An assessment of how to support the child’s desistance was completed sufficiently in every case inspected.
- Planning was sufficient overall for supporting the child’s desistance, keeping the child safe, and keeping others safe.
- Implementation and delivery were sufficient for supporting the child’s desistance, keeping the child safe, and keeping others safe.
- Consideration of victim’s needs was sufficient and evident in assessment planning and the interventions delivered.

Areas for improvement

- Assessments of how to keep others safe were not always sufficient and risks were sometimes underassessed.
- The voice of the child was missing from both joint decision-making panels and reviews of policy and provision.
- Diversity was a consideration in policy and provision, but the impact of this was untested.

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 rating²² 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?	88%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	73%

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

There was sufficient analysis of offending behaviour, including the child's acknowledgement of responsibility for, attitudes towards, and motivation for their offending, in every case inspected. This was evident across both assessment tools used in Surrey, the Asset Plus and Early Help Assessment. Lifestyle was the most common factor related to desistance, followed by substance misuse, learning, and education, training, and employment (ETE), and living arrangements

Staff considered the diversity and wider social context of the child in all but one of the cases inspected. Staff used information held by other agencies to inform the assessment in every case. Every case inspected focused on the child's strengths and their protective factors, and recognised their level of maturity, ability, and motivation to change. Structural barriers were identified in every case where appropriate.

The views of both the child and their parents or carers combined were considered in all but one of the cases we inspected. The needs and wishes of the victim were taken into account in all cases where there was a victim. Lifestyle was a pertinent desistance factor in all the cases we inspected.

A case manager summed up the good practice shown in this key question by noting:

"The assessment is well informed by social services contact: parents contact and interview with the child. It gives a clear picture of the child's life, identifying a resilient young person who has managed trauma in her life, a capable bright young person who has excelled in school ... despite challenges within the home. It also gives some indication of motive to offending, namely graffiti damage of property, peer influence and the remorse felt by the child."

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?

The assessment of the child clearly identified and analysed risks to their safety in 22 of the 26 cases inspected and drew on available sources of information where appropriate in all but one case.

While we thought the case manager's classification of safety and wellbeing was reasonable in 22 of the 26 cases inspected, we felt that the YOS had slightly underassessed the classification of risk. This was most notable for low-risk classifications; while the YOS classified 13 children as low risk, we felt this only applied to 10 children

²² The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. See Annexe 2 for a more detailed explanation.

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?

The assessment did not clearly identify and analyse risk of harm to others posed by the child in eight of the 21 cases where a risk was identified, although it drew sufficiently on available sources of information in all but two cases inspected.

We believed that the case manager's classification of risk was significantly underassessed. The YOS assessed that 73 per cent of the cases were low risk but we assessed that only 50 per cent of the children should be classified as such. This disparity in assessment was apparent across all interventions and assessment tools used. One inspector noted an example where risks had not been considered sufficiently:

“There is a history of violent behaviour. Furthermore, early help records state that this is the second time he has taken a knife into school. This first instance was not reported to the police. This was not picked up by the case manager or at the joint decision-making panel. It is not clear whether the child will seek revenge in relation to the assault he sustained.”

3.2. Planning



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

Outstanding

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

	% 'Yes'
Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?	96%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	92%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	88%

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

Planning set out the services most likely to support desistance, paying sufficient attention to timescales and sequencing in all but one of the cases inspected. Diversity factors were considered sufficiently in all but one case also. Planning took sufficient account of the child's personal circumstances, and their strengths and level of maturity, ability, and motivation to change in all cases.

Sufficient opportunities for community integration were planned for in all but one case. The child and their parents were meaningfully involved in planning in all cases, and sufficient attention was given to the needs and wishes of the victim in all but one case where there was a victim.

Good practice for this key question was summed up in one inspector's comments on a case inspected:

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.

“This was a good plan that addressed factors relating to desistance. It was to be read alongside the communication passport and considered his additional learning needs. The plan promoted attendance at college.”

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

Planning focused sufficiently on keeping the child safe in all but two cases. It promoted the safety and wellbeing of the child in 21 of the 23 cases where this was required. Planning involved other agencies in 15 of the 17 cases where appropriate. Contingency arrangements were clear in 19 of the 23 cases where they were required.

An inspector noted good practice in one inspected case:

“Planning addresses all the factors linked to the child's safety and wellbeing. It incorporates aspects of the child in need plan and includes children's social care, the child's GP, and the child's family. Planning to keep the child safe is sufficient.”

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

Planning promoted the safety of other people in 16 of the 19 cases where required. It involved planning with other agencies in 13 of the 16 cases where required. Victims were considered in 16 of the 19 cases where actual or potential victims were apparent. Contingency planning was sufficient in 15 of the 19 cases where it was needed.

3.3. Implementation and delivery



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

Outstanding

Our rating²⁴ for implementation and delivery is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does service delivery effectively support the child’s desistance?	96%
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of the child?	96%
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of other people?	92%

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

All but one child had services delivered that were most likely to support desistance and which also sufficiently addressed desistance factors. Additionally, services delivered sufficiently addressed diversity issues in all but one case. In all the cases we inspected, there was evidence that service delivery reflected the wider social and familial context of the child. Sufficient focus on developing and maintaining relationships with the child and their parents or carers was noted in 25 cases. Service delivery promoted opportunities for community integration in 24 cases.

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 Annex 2 for a more detailed explanation.

Service delivery was judged to be proportionate to the type of out-of-court disposal and completed within timescales in all but one case. Likewise, sufficient services were delivered to address identified desistance factors in all but one case.

Does service delivery focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

Overall, service delivery promoted the safety and wellbeing of the child in 21 of the 22 cases where this was appropriate, and coordinated other organisations involved in keeping the child safe sufficiently in 16 of the 17 required cases.

An inspector noted the efficacy of planning in Surrey:

“Clear joint working between YOS and the social worker and a child in need plan in place focused on addressing potential exploitation concerns, emotional wellbeing and homelessness. Ray recently had two periods of exclusion from school due to his behaviour and being under the influence of cannabis; the YOS education officer is currently working with Ray, the case manager, and the school to avoid permanent exclusion. Ray declined a referral to the mental health practitioner to address his deteriorating emotional wellbeing, but this remains an option should he change his mind. The voluntary contact is due to end and the current YOS worker will continue to work with Ray under the safeguarding adolescents’ remit.”

Does service delivery focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

Services delivered to manage and minimise the risk of harm were sufficient in 18 of the 20 cases where required. There was consideration of the actual and potential victims in 16 of the 18 cases where this was appropriate. An inspector noted:

“Interventions have been delivered to address the factors linked to harm. Responses to the work delivered are well evidenced in case recording and supervision discussions, and existing protective factors have been monitored and checked-out with parents, child and mother of person harmed by child’s actions.”

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?

There is a detailed out-of-court disposal policy in place that has been agreed with Surrey police. While there is some degree of flexibility regarding the appropriateness of interventions for children within the decision-making process, it is much more centred around risk, need, and responsivity considerations than was the case at the last inspection. We saw no evidence that the previous practice of children being given multiple out-of-court disposals for high-gravity offences had continued. The policy in place ensured that both police and YOS did not repeat these practices. For example, the policy includes clearly defined eligibility criteria. These criteria are

enhanced by the partnership's capacity to utilise a non-admissions pilot as an outcome for children who offend. The policy references an escalation process in place that allows discussion by senior YOS or police staff outside of standard decision-making arrangements if needed regarding complex children or children who continue to reoffend.

Victim engagement guidance is explicit within the policy and risk management arrangements are dependent on the outcome of the joint decision-making panel. We saw evidence that these arrangements were sufficient in cases inspected, although within the context that some assessment of risk to others had been under classified.

The policy lacks explicit detail on diversity considerations.

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

Weekly joint decision-making panel arrangements are in place, attended by a range of partners and jointly chaired by police and YOS. The panel we observed was effective and focused discussion appropriately on issues of risk, need, and responsibility. However, the panel's paperwork needs review as minutes give no indication of who attended, and details of decision-making discussions are brief.

Although the panel's paperwork template does not include details of diversity considerations, the panel we observed ensured that the Traveller status of one child being discussed was considered.

The YOS assessment of the child is not completed until after the disposal decision is made, thus denying them a voice within the decision-making process, and potentially delaying the start of intervention if the child does not engage. Normally this approach would give cause for concern. However, Surrey's integrated service delivery model mitigated the risks of not having a pre-panel assessment, particularly where a child was already engaged with targeted youth support practitioners. We saw evidence that, in many instances, attendees at the panel would have had knowledge of the child beforehand. Nonetheless, the lack of an explicit voice for the child at the panel will need further consideration by the YOS.

There is evidence that escalation processes are monitored when decisions cannot be made at the panel; a paper has been presented to board detailing these discussions to ensure there is a strategic understanding.

There is extensive guidance to ensure practitioners provide appropriate intervention; inspected casework reflected the efficacy of this guidance. Additionally, a youth justice module has been added to Surrey's Early Help Assessment tool, since the last inspection, to enhance the focus on criminogenic (causing or promoting crime) need.

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

The service improvement lead has undertaken an extensive review of out-of-court policy and provision since the last inspection. The youth justice management board has had oversight of these changes and agreed to them.

The leadership team took a systematic case audit approach to review assessment quality. This formed the basis for a decision to add a youth justice module to the Early Help Assessment to address previously noted deficits in practice.

Evaluation activity has also impacted on other areas of practice. For example, cannabis workshop interventions were introduced because of an identified need.

Further evaluation of policy and provision would be enhanced by access to police data to allow more effective comparison of joint decision youth restorative interventions and police-delivered community resolution outcomes. Currently there is a lack of understanding within the partnership about what police data is saying about the effectiveness of these street-delivered outcomes.

Issues of diversity have been considered within the review of service provision, and the non-admissions pilot²⁵ was introduced to tackle this, but there was little evidence of impact on the black, Asian, and minority ethnic community at this stage. The YOS suggests that the overrepresentation of black, Asian, and minority ethnic children in the out-of-court cohort is positive, as disproportionately more such children have been steered away from court. This may be a reasonable hypothesis, but more evaluation is needed to confirm its accuracy.

Children's feedback is sought but there is minimal evidence of how it has impacted on provision so far; the lack of the child's voice at the panel is a notable absence.

²⁵ Outcome 22 pilot in place in Surrey at time of the inspection

4. Resettlement

4.1. Resettlement policy and provision



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

Good

We inspected the quality of policy and provision in place for resettlement work, using evidence from documents, meetings, and interviews. To illustrate that work, we inspected three cases managed by the YOS that had received a custodial sentence.

Our key findings were as follows.

Strengths

- A resettlement policy is in place and there is evidence that it is impacting upon provision.
- There is a collaborative approach to develop resettlement provision supported by an engaged local authority commissioner.
- There has been an attempt to evaluate the evidence base to develop arrangements based on a constructive resettlement ethos.
- Policy and provision actively address some structural barriers, and there is evidence that a focus on diversity is being considered.
- Provision to support accommodation, education, training, and employment (ETE) and health needs during a child's resettlement journey is a strength.

Areas for improvement

- The impact of some activity has yet to be evidenced and evaluated; for example, a review of disproportionality is being undertaken but the impact of this has yet to be evidenced, despite apparent concerns for some time about disproportionality within the broader YOS cohort.
- Transition arrangements with the Probation Service were not child-friendly in one of the cases we inspected, and this aspect of the policy needs to be strengthened.
- The policy does not reference the impact of the county's poor transport infrastructure on the opportunities for children leaving custody finding appropriate ETE or accommodation.

We gathered evidence for this standard from documents and meetings, and inspected three 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?

A resettlement policy is in place. It has been recently reviewed and updated by the seconded probation officer, based on his resettlement experience and expertise. Plans to relaunch a working party to review policy provided assurance of leadership team scrutiny.

The policy provides guidance on how to overcome some structural barriers, such as how to access speech and language therapy provision for children with speech and language needs. Other structural barriers are not covered as well. For example, transport infrastructure is poor in the county and more explicit reference to tackling the barriers this causes for children upon release is needed.

Diversity considerations are noted within the policy, but there is little explicit reference to protected characteristics and how their impact will be measured for children entering custody.

The policy makes explicit reference to arrangements to keep the child, others, and victims safe, and this was reflected in the casework inspected.

Recent engagement from the local authority commissioning team undertaking appropriate commissioning activity provides reassurance of broader strategic input to support policy and provision.

Guidance in the policy outlining good practice for transition arrangements with probation needs to be more explicit to ensure that a child-focused approach is consistent. For example, one inspector noted the following concern in an inspected case:

“There is no individual handover (to probation). The YOT worker requests this in good time and is told to deal with the key worker. The YOT worker has completed the transition Asset Plus, however, there is no personal handover to an allocated prison offender manager.”

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

There is evidence that staff understand and put into practice the principles of constructive resettlement, reinforcing individualised prosocial personal support. For example, one inspector noted:

“Wasim is an Asian British Pakistani male who is also a practising Muslim. During the planning for the custodial element of the sentence there was a good focus on supporting the child to continue to practise his faith in custody and to have access to appropriate support.”

There has been work to assess the reasons for recent disproportionality of Asian children entering custody, but the impact of this evaluation needs to be evidenced. Accommodation is planned for effectively; there are 12 supported accommodation beds and spot purchase options if beds are not available.

Surrey YOS’s youth offer is strong and provides structured support for employability before release. The development of the YOS health offer also provides reassurance that needs are being met, although there is little evidence at this stage about the effectiveness of liaison with secure estate health teams; this will need to be monitored.

Positive feedback from cases inspected provides assurance that provision pays sufficient attention to keeping children safe, although consideration of contextual safeguarding risks was absent in one case inspected. MAPPA (Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements) processes were followed appropriately where required in the cases inspected.

Consideration of the needs of victims is referenced in the YOS policy and was addressed in relevant cases inspected, providing assurance that the policy is having a positive impact on practice.

Staff noted that further resettlement training is required, although said that managers supported them in resettlement activity.

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

There is evidence that the partnership had been consulted in developing current arrangements. For example, there was a positive response to HM Inspectorate of Probation's thematic inspection of resettlement,²⁶ and the 'youth offer', utilised in non-resettlement activity was also developed in a response to improve children's engagement.

Surrey YOS's national standards self-assessment has identified resettlement as an area of development and there has been review of this at the management board. However, the partnership lacked clarity about actions resulting from this review and it needs to be more systematic in evidencing the impact of changes made.

Commissioners provided assurance of plans to utilise the voice of the child when commissioning services, but this approach has not yet started.

The YOS is currently undertaking with the police a thematic learning review on disproportionality in custody for the board and participating in a disproportionality project with the Association of YOT Managers.

²⁶ [HM Inspectorate of Probation \(2019\). *Youth Resettlement - final report into work in the community, 2019*.](#)

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.²⁷

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 independent safeguarding adolescents and youth offending management board chair 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 (22–26 November 2021), we completed domain two and domain three case assessments and conducted 39 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 16 meetings, which included meetings with managers, partner organisations, and staff. The evidence collected under this domain was judged against our published ratings characteristics.

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 18 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 who had received out-of-court disposals three to five months earlier. This enabled us

²⁷ HM Inspectorate of Probation's standards can be found here:

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

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 26 out-of-court disposals. The sample size was set based on the proportion of out-of-court disposal cases in the YOS.

Resettlement

We completed case assessments over a one-week period, examining three 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 18 court disposals and 26 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 three 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:²⁸

2.1. Assessment (court disposals)	
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	
a) Is there sufficient analysis of offending behaviour, including the child's attitudes towards and motivations for their offending?	94%
b) Does assessment sufficiently analyse diversity issues?	83%
c) Does assessment consider personal circumstances, including the wider familial and social context of the child?	94%
d) Does assessment utilise information held by other agencies?	94%
e) Does assessment focus on the child's strengths and protective factors?	100%
f) Does assessment analyse the key structural barriers facing the child?	50%
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?	89%
h) Does assessment give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of victims, and opportunities for restorative justice?	78%
i) Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in their assessment, and are their views taken into account?	94%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	
a) Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risks to the safety and wellbeing of the child?	72%
b) Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including other assessments, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	94%
c) Does assessment analyse controls and interventions to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	56%

²⁸ Some questions do not apply in all cases.

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	
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?	61%
b) Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including past behaviour and convictions, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	89%
c) Does assessment analyse controls and interventions to manage and minimise the risk of harm presented by the child?	56%

2.2. Planning (court disposals)

Does planning focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	
a) Does planning set out the services most likely to support desistance, paying sufficient attention to the available timescales and the need for sequencing?	89%
b) Does planning sufficiently address diversity issues?	67%
c) Does planning take sufficient account of the child's personal circumstances, including the wider familial and social context of the child?	94%
d) Does planning take sufficient account of the child's strengths and protective factors, and seek to reinforce or develop these as necessary?	94%
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?	94%
f) Does planning give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of victims?	72%
g) Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in planning, and are their views taken into account?	89%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	
a) Does planning promote the safety and wellbeing of the child, sufficiently addressing risks?	67%
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?	67%

c) Does planning set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	56%
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?	
a) Does planning promote the safety of other people, sufficiently addressing risk of harm factors?	67%
b) Does planning involve other agencies where appropriate?	61%
c) Does planning address any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims?	44%
d) Does planning set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote the safety of other people?	50%
e) Does planning set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to manage those risks that have been identified?	33%

2.3. Implementation and delivery (court disposals)

Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the child's desistance?	
a) Are the delivered services those most likely to support desistance, with sufficient attention given to sequencing and the available timescales?	83%
b) Does service delivery account for the diversity issues of the child?	78%
c) Does service delivery reflect the wider familial and social context of the child, involving parents or carers, or significant others?	89%
d) Does service delivery build upon the child's strengths and enhance protective factors?	89%
e) Is sufficient focus given to developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child and their parents or carers?	89%
f) Does service delivery promote opportunities for community integration, including access to services post-supervision?	89%
g) Is sufficient attention given to encouraging and enabling the child's compliance with the work of the YOT?	94%
h) Are enforcement actions taken when appropriate?	44%

Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of the child?	
a) Does service delivery promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	67%
b) Is the involvement of other organisations in keeping the child safe sufficiently well-coordinated?	44%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?	
a) Are the delivered services sufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	67%
b) Is sufficient attention given to the protection of actual and potential victims?	50%
c) Is the involvement of other agencies in managing the risk of harm sufficiently well-coordinated?	44%

2. 4. Reviewing (court disposals)

Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	
a) Does reviewing identify and respond to changes in factors linked to desistance?	89%
b) Does reviewing focus sufficiently on building upon the child's strengths and enhancing protective factors?	83%
c) Does reviewing include analysis of, and respond to, diversity factors?	72%
d) Does reviewing consider the personal circumstances, including the wider familial and social context of the child?	83%
e) Does reviewing consider motivation and engagement levels and any relevant barriers?	78%
f) Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in reviewing their progress and engagement, and are their views taken into account?	89%
g) Does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work to support desistance?	61%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	
a) Does reviewing identify and respond to changes in factors related to safety and wellbeing?	50%

b) Is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in promoting the safety and wellbeing of the child?	44%
c) Does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	33%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	
a) Does reviewing identify and respond to changes in factors related to risk of harm?	28%
b) Is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in managing the risk of harm?	39%
c) Does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan all of work to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	33%

3.1. Assessment (out-of-court disposals)

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	
a) Is there sufficient analysis of offending behaviour, including the child's acknowledgement of responsibility for, attitudes towards and motivations for their offending?	100%
b) Does assessment sufficiently analyse diversity issues?	96%
c) Does assessment consider personal circumstances, including the wider familial and social context of the child?	96%
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?	65%
g) Is sufficient attention given to understanding the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change?	100%
h) Does assessment give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of victims, and opportunities for restorative justice?	69%
i) Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in their assessment, and are their views taken into account?	96%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	

a) Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risks to the safety and wellbeing of the child?	85%
b) Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including other assessments, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	96%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	
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%
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?	92%

3.2. Planning (out-of-court disposals)

Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?	
a) Does planning set out the services most likely to support desistance, paying sufficient attention to the available timescales and the need for sequencing?	96%
b) Does planning sufficiently address diversity issues?	96%
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?	100%
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?	100%
f) Does planning take sufficient account of opportunities for community integration, including access to mainstream services following completion of out-of-court disposal work?	96%
g) Does planning give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victims?	65%
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?	

a) Does planning promote the safety and wellbeing of the child, sufficiently addressing risks?	81%
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?	58%
c) Does planning include necessary contingency arrangements for those risks that have been identified?	73%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	
a) Does planning promote the safety of other people, sufficiently addressing risk of harm factors?	62%
b) Does planning involve other agencies where appropriate?	50%
c) Does planning address any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims?	62%
d) Does planning include necessary contingency arrangements for those risks that have been identified?	60%

3.3. Implementation and delivery (out-of-court disposals)	
Does service delivery effectively support the child's desistance?	
a) Are the delivered services those most likely to support desistance, with sufficient attention given to sequencing and the available timescales?	96%
b) Does service delivery account for the diversity issues of the child?	96%
c) Does service delivery reflect the wider familial and social context of the child, involving parents or carers, or significant others?	100%
d) Is sufficient focus given to developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child and their parents or carers?	96%
e) Is sufficient attention given to encouraging and enabling the child's compliance with the work of the YOT?	96%
f) Does service delivery promote opportunities for community integration, including access to mainstream services?	92%
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of the child?	
a) Does service delivery promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	81%

b) Is the involvement of other agencies in keeping the child safe sufficiently well utilised and coordinated?	62%
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of other people?	
a) Are the delivered services sufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	69%
b) Is sufficient attention given to the protection of actual and potential victims?	62%