

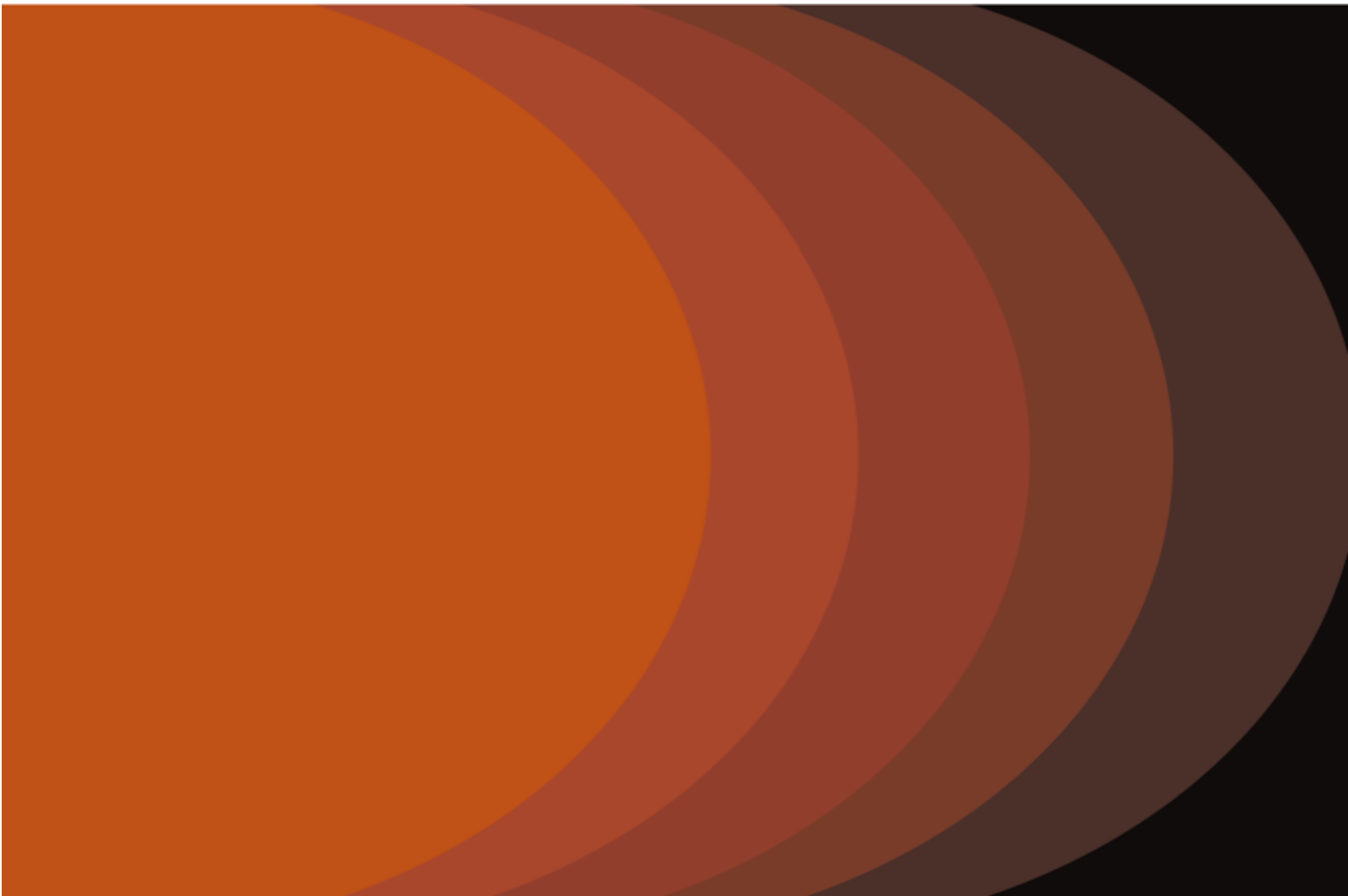


Her Majesty's
Inspectorate of
Probation

An inspection of youth offending services in

Powys

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 Powys Youth Justice Service (YJS) across three broad areas: the arrangements for organisational delivery of the service, the quality of work done with children sentenced by the courts, and the quality of out-of-court disposal work. Overall, Powys YJS is rated as 'Good'.

A strong management board advocates actively for the work of the YJS. The YJS is on a rapid improvement journey, set out in a priority action plan, which demonstrates the significant advancement that has been made over the past six months. The management board has formed an accurate assessment of the quality of service delivery, commissioning an external quality assurance exercise of the whole caseload. Managers are making substantial progress in implementing the findings, which are incorporated into the priority action plan.

Information and facilities has been rated as 'Good'. Powys YJS serves a very large rural area and has a small caseload. Services are delivered across the area in venues that are accessible to the children and their parents and carers, and are supported by the effective use of information and communication technology systems.

Policies and procedures for deciding and delivering out-of-court disposals have been strengthened, broadening the membership of the panels and improving the timeliness of decision-making. We rated them as 'Good'. They could be further improved by the inclusion of children's services as a core member of the bureau panels.

In recent years, the number of children supervised by the YJS has fallen considerably, and in 2020 the YJS underwent a major reorganisation, combining teams and reducing the number of case managers. This was a difficult process and a considerable number of experienced staff and all the YJS managers have since left. While new staff have been recruited, the current staffing lacks resilience and management oversight has been insufficient. A new management team, with an additional temporary senior manager, is now in place. However, they have yet to recruit a permanent team manager. We have rated staffing as 'Requires improvement'.

We also rated partnerships and services as 'Requires improvement'. The YJS has yet to embed new education, training and employment arrangements and there is currently no pathway for YJS children to be assessed for and access speech, language and communication services.

Inspectors judged that the implementation and delivery of interventions is strong, which is supported by the comments of the children we heard from. Reviewing was also a significant strength. However, we identified that staff are not analysing effectively all the factors which contribute to children's safety and wellbeing or giving them sufficient consideration in their classification of risk. Inspectors also found that there are gaps in planned interventions to support children's desistance, safety and wellbeing. As a consequence, we rated assessment as 'Inadequate' and planning as 'Requires improvement'.

I welcome the considerable progress that Powys YJS has made in improving services during this period. There is still further to go to consolidate progress and to continue to raise the quality of service delivery. I would encourage the YJS to pay attention to ensuring that it addresses the diverse needs of all the children it works with, to achieve equality of outcomes as well as quality of service. In this report, we make nine recommendations to improve further the work of Powys YJS and to assist in consolidating the progress that has already been made.



Justin Russell
HM Chief Inspector of Probation

Ratings

Powys Youth Justice Service
Fieldwork started: November 2021

Score 19/36

Overall rating

Good



1. Organisational delivery

1.1 Governance and leadership

Good



1.2 Staff

Requires improvement



1.3 Partnerships and services

Requires improvement



1.4 Information and facilities

Good



2. Court disposals

2.1 Assessment

Inadequate



2.2 Planning

Requires improvement



2.3 Implementation and delivery

Good



2.4 Reviewing

Outstanding



3. Out-of-court disposals

3.1 Assessment

Requires improvement



3.2 Planning

Requires improvement



3.3 Implementation and delivery

Outstanding



3.4 Out-of-court disposal policy and provision

Good



Executive summary

Overall, Powys Youth Justice Service (YJS) is rated as 'Good'. This rating has been determined by inspecting the YJS 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 YJS rating.² The findings and subsequent ratings in those domains are described below.

Organisational delivery

We interviewed a total of 34 people, including staff, volunteers, partnership staff and managers, and board members.

In 2020, at the start of the pandemic, the YJS developed its business continuity plan, a further document outlining the recovery from Covid-19 was agreed in summer 2020. In line with Welsh Government guidance, all staff were advised to work from home and continued to do so at the time of the inspection in December 2021. At the start of the pandemic, several staff from the YJS were redeployed into other business critical services across children's services but they returned to their normal duties by the end of 2020. This resulted in a delay in the delivery of some interventions. However, since this point, the YJS has maintained a 'business as usual' approach, continuing to deliver interventions at children's homes, in schools, out in the community and virtually.

Key findings about organisational delivery were as follows.

Governance and leadership has been rated as 'Good'. The YJS management board sets a clear plan for delivering a high-quality service for all children and is working with staff and children to refine the vision. The board includes all necessary statutory and non-statutory partners. The chair of the board is well engaged, with a sufficient understanding of the YJS's work. Other members are active in their attendance, recognising the contributions that their respective agencies make. However, not all diverse needs are addressed and there is insufficient emphasis on providing a service which is responsive to diversity.

Board members advocate for the work of the YJS in their broader roles. They take a child-centred approach, give priority to work to support desistance and prevent harm, and support integration with wider services. However, not all risks to the service are understood sufficiently, and there are gaps in the mitigations and controls in place.

The YJS leadership team is part-way through a process of significant change. However, it has provided an effective link to the board over the past five months since new managers were appointed, delivering and operationalising the strategy and plans successfully. The team communicates the vision and strategy effectively to staff and stakeholders, and promotes openness, constructive challenge and ideas. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities within the partnership arrangements, and what they are accountable for.

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'.

Staffing has been rated as 'Requires improvement'. Staffing levels are planned and reviewed to meet the changing demands and profiles of the children. However, there are some shortfalls in the strategy for maintaining the quality of delivery during periods of planned and unplanned staff absences. Staffing of the YJS is representative of the ethnicity of the area, but there are no male case managers. Volunteers are used and are selected appropriately to fulfil clearly defined roles, although more male volunteers are needed.

Most staff are motivated to contribute to the delivery of a high-quality service. The service has gone through a painful restructure during the Covid-19 period, losing many knowledgeable and experienced staff and managers, during and following the structural changes. While many newly appointed or promoted staff are excited about the way ahead, some established staff are still coming to terms with the recent changes, and the lack of resilience in staffing needs attending to.

The loss of experienced staff has meant that new staff have been recruited. While they are keen, there is a need to develop their skills and expertise. The induction programme for new staff currently has limitations because of Covid-19 restrictions on staff attending offices or meeting colleagues face to face.

Recently, the YJS has formulated and begun to implement plans to address the learning needs of all staff and provide appropriate access to in-service training. Processes for recognising and rewarding exceptional work are underdeveloped. Staff are satisfied with the supervision they receive, but management oversight in most of the cases inspected was judged to be insufficient.

Partnership and services has been rated as 'Requires improvement'. The YJS's analysis of the profile of children is not updated consistently and does not capture the full range of desistance needs, safety and wellbeing factors, risks of harm, or diversity factors. The YJS pays sufficient attention to local patterns of sentencing and offence types, helping to anticipate future demands. Some opportunities to use analysis to influence service delivery are being missed.

The YJS partnership has access to the volume, range and quality of services, including specialist and mainstream interventions, to meet many of the children's desistance needs. Arrangements with most partners and providers are established, maintained and used effectively to support desistance, maintain safety and wellbeing, and manage the risk of harm to others. However, there is currently no agreed pathway to address speech, language and communication needs; there is no education officer; and recently agreed pathways into education, training and employment need embedding. Services to meet the diversity needs of children are not set out. A new quality framework is in the process of becoming operational.

Information and facilities has been rated as 'Good'. Nearly all the necessary guidance and processes are in place to enable staff to deliver a high-quality service that meets the needs of all children. However, there is no equality and diversity policy, and there is no consideration of the impact of policies and guidance on diverse groups. The YJS is in the process of implementing its new suite of guidance and communicating this to staff and partner agencies.

The YJS delivers its work in places that are sufficiently accessible to staff and children. In most cases, the delivery environment supports effective engagement and the delivery of appropriate personalised work with children. However, there is a need for suitable venues for in-person referral order panels, and safe locations for working with children who present high-risk behaviours, access to which has been hindered by restrictions arising from the Covid-19 pandemic.

The information and communications technology systems enable staff to plan, deliver and record their work in a timely way, and to access information as required. The systems produce most of the necessary management information, and facilitate its exchange with partners, providers and other key stakeholders.

Improvement plans are supported by the YJS's assurance systems and performance measures. The views of children and their parents or carers are beginning to be sought, to improve service delivery in line with a developing participation strategy. The YJS is on a rapid improvement journey, set out in a priority action plan, and considerable progress that has been made over the past six months.

The following are strengths of the YJS's organisation delivery:

- knowledgeable management board members, who are effective advocates for the needs of children supervised by the YJS
- managers who have a good understanding of the quality of service provision and a sound plan for driving improvement
- manageable caseloads
- a comprehensive staff development plan, which is being implemented
- good provision of mental health and substance misuse services
- there is effective communication with the Youth Court
- services are delivered in accessible locations across Powys
- management information is used to drive improvement.

However, the following are areas for improvement:

- the lack of YJS equality and diversity policy or practice guidance
- staffing resilience
- the lack of male case managers and volunteers
- management oversight
- analysis of children's needs
- embedding of education, training and employment provision
- development of restorative justice and reparation services
- provision of speech, language and communication services
- venues for referral order panels, and facilities for confidential interviewing and interventions with high-risk children and those subject to intensive supervision and surveillance.

Court disposals

We took a detailed look at two community sentences managed by the YJS. We also conducted interviews with both 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.

Although only two referral orders fell into the sampling period for court disposals, we saw a shortfall in the assessment of children's safety and wellbeing in both cases, which is consistent with our finding for out-of-court disposals. Planning was slightly better, especially in relation to addressing safety and wellbeing, but was otherwise inconsistent

for desistance and risk of harm. However, there was a real strength in the way that case managers engaged and worked with the children to deliver effective interventions, making up for some of the earlier assessment and planning shortfalls. Although there were no changes in factors related to safety and wellbeing or risk of harm to others that required a formal review, these cases were reviewed effectively, with children and their parents fully engaged in the process and plans adjusted where appropriate.

We identified the following strengths:

- meaningful involvement of children and their parents or carers in assessments, planning and reviews
- assessments and plans taking account of children's ability, maturity and motivation
- effective engagement with children, resulting in a high level of compliance with interventions.

However, the following are areas for improvement:

- under-assessment of the classification of safety and wellbeing, and risk to others
- insufficient planning to address contingencies in plans to address risk to others.

Out-of-court disposals

We inspected five cases managed by the YJS that had received an out-of-court disposal. These consisted of one youth conditional caution, one youth caution and three community resolutions. We interviewed the case managers in all five cases.

We examined the quality of assessment; planning; and implementation and delivery of services. Each of these elements was inspected in respect of work done to address desistance, 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.

The assessment processes for out-of-court disposals are sound. However, there is room for improvement in analysing how best to support children's desistance, and identifying and weighing concerns about their safety and wellbeing. There are gaps in some of the plans to support desistance and to keep children safe, although not in addressing risk to others. Delivery of appropriate interventions is a considerable strength, even on occasions where they were not originally assessed as needed or planned for.

Although there are a few gaps, the out-of-court disposal practice guidance describes the arrangements for delivering a high-quality service for all children. Joint decision-making processes are well-established, and the panel has been broadened to include other disciplines. However, the absence of children's services as a core member is an important omission. Children and their parents or carers are involved in the assessments prior to the panel meeting, which seeks to provide a wide range of interventions, while promoting diversion where possible.

The YJS does not evaluate out-of-court disposal policy and provision regularly, or pay sufficient attention to diversity issues, and the evaluation that it does carry out does not involve all the relevant agencies. However, there has been a recent review, which has widened the membership and improved the functioning of the panel. There is scope to

involve children and their parents or carers more in the evaluation and review of out-of-court disposal policy and provision. The scheme is successful at reducing the number of first-time entrants into the criminal justice system, and the reoffending rates of those given an out-of-court disposal are low.

These are the key strengths:

- Service delivery is personalised, taking account of children's diversity and familial and social situation.
- There is effective engagement with children, leading to high rates of compliance with interventions.
- There is effective engagement with key partner agencies in planning and delivering services.
- All children and their parents or carers are seen, and an AssetPlus assessment commenced prior to the disposal being decided.
- There has been good progress in reducing the number of first-time entrants into the criminal justice system.

However, the following are areas for improvement:

- The classification of safety and wellbeing is frequently too low.
- The child's account of their substance misuse is not always incorporated into the planning and delivery of interventions.
- There is insufficient planning for contingencies for addressing factors likely to cause an increased risk of harm or concerns about safety and wellbeing.
- There is insufficient evaluation of the out-of-court disposal scheme.

Resettlement

We inspected the quality of policy and provision in place for resettlement work, using evidence from documents, meetings and interviews. There were no resettlement cases that fell within the inspection period.

Our key findings about resettlement work are as follows:

- A new resettlement policy is in place which includes a resettlement panel of partner agencies to make plans for release jointly, together with children and their parents or carers.

But:

- Children's services should be included as a core member of the resettlement panel, to ensure that children's accommodation needs are met.

Recommendations

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

The Powys Youth Justice Service should:

1. develop policy and practice guidelines for addressing diversity, equality and disproportionality in the delivery of services
2. improve management oversight of cases and support for staff
3. improve analysis of children's needs, to inform the provision of services
4. ensure that services are provided to assess and respond to children's speech, language and communication needs
5. ensure that effective services to support children's education, training and employment are delivered
6. provide suitable venues to enable referral order panels to be delivered in person and ensure that confidential facilities are available for delivering interventions with children
7. improve the quality of assessment and analysis of how to support children's desistance and how to keep them safe
8. improve planning to support children's desistance and to keep them safe, including planning for contingencies where risk is escalating
9. include children's services as core members of the out-of-court bureau and resettlement panels.

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.

Powys Youth Justice Service (YJS) is a multi-agency partnership that sits within children's services (CS) in Powys County Council. The service covers a large, rural geographical area but manages a relatively small caseload. The service is led by the head of CS, and the senior manager for intervention and prevention has responsibility for the YJS. Governance of the YJS is provided by the YJS management board, which is chaired by the executive director – people and organisational development.

In 2020, phase two of the Powys CS restructure was completed. This included the restructure of the YJS, which at that time was split into north and south teams. The restructure was part of the overall improvement work for CS. The YJS had not been reviewed since 2013. Much had changed: case numbers had fallen significantly and work in the service had not developed in line with evidence-based practice. The new structure was developed to provide sufficient staffing to meet demands, while offering the scope to develop new and innovative ways of working, with a particular emphasis on prevention.

The restructure included the removal of two separate area teams, in favour of introducing one youth justice team and a prevention and restorative justice team. The administrative support and supervisor positions joined with the wider CS business support team to provide greater resilience. The restructure challenged the existing workforce, which had not experienced any change for many years. Subsequently, the YJS has had periods without a full staffing complement because of vacant posts and periods of long-term sickness. None of the previous management team remain in post. Positively, the new structure created fresh development opportunities for existing staff, and while a

Youth Justice Service



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

permanent YJS team manager is yet to be appointed, the current management team has created a new focus for the service which aims to drive forward best practice.

Powys YJS is one of four YOTs covering the Dyfed-Powys Police area that work collaboratively in the delivery of training and provision of services. In addition to statutory partners, Powys YJS benefits from a wider involvement of voluntary organisations, including CAIS, which provides two full-time-equivalent workers supporting children with substance misuse issues. Powys YJS aims to achieve the aspirations set out in the Welsh Government's Blueprint for Youth Justice.

Contextual facts

Population information⁴

123	First-time entrant rate per 100,000 in Powys ⁵
167	First-time entrant rate per 100,000 in England and Wales
44%	Reoffending rate in Powys ⁶
35.6%	Reoffending rate in England and Wales

133,030	Total population Powys
11,314	Total youth population (10–17 years) in Powys

Caseload information⁷

Age	10–14 years	15–17 years
Powys YJS	17%	83%
Average for England and Wales	22%	78%

Race/ethnicity ⁸	White	Black and minority ethnic	Unknown
Powys YJS	87%	7%	7%
Youth population (10–17 years) in Powys	98%	2%	

Gender	Male	Female
Powys YJS	93%	7%
Average for England and Wales	85%	15%

⁴ Office for National Statistics. (June 2021). *UK population estimates, mid-2020*.

⁵ Youth Justice Board. (2021). *First-time entrants, January to December 2020*.

⁶ Ministry of Justice. (2021). *Proven reoffending statistics, October 2018 to September 2019*.

⁷ Youth Justice Board. (2021). *Youth justice annual statistics: 2019 to 2020*.

⁸ Data supplied by the YJS.

Additional caseload data⁹

28	Total current caseload, of which:
18	Court disposals
10	Out-of-court disposals

Of the 18 court disposals:

17	Total current caseload on community sentences
0	Total current caseload in custody
1	Total current caseload on licence

Of the 10 out-of-court disposals:

1	Total current caseload with youth caution
0	Total current caseload with youth conditional caution
9	Total current caseload: community resolution

Education and child protection status of caseload:

20%	Percentage of current caseload 'Looked After Children' resident in the YJS area
7%	Percentage of current caseload with child protection plan
18%	Percentage of current caseload with child in need plan
10%	Percentage of current caseload aged 16 and under not in full-time school/pupil referral unit/alternative education
19%	Percentage of children aged 16 and under in a pupil referral unit, in alternative education or attending school part-time
17%	Percentage of current caseload aged 17+ not in education, training or employment

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

Offence types ¹⁰	%
Violence against the person	50%
Indictable motoring offences	50%

⁹ Data supplied by the YJS, reflecting the caseload at the time of the inspection announcement.

¹⁰ Data from the cases assessed during this inspection.

1. Organisational delivery

Governance and leadership has been rated as 'Good'. The YJS management board sets a clear plan for delivering a high-quality service for all children and is working with staff and children to refine the vision. The board includes all necessary statutory and non-statutory partners. The chair of the board is well engaged, with a sufficient understanding of the YJS's work. Other members are active in their attendance, recognising the contributions that their respective agencies make. However, not all diverse needs are addressed and there is insufficient emphasis on providing a service which is responsive to diversity.

Board members advocate for the work of the YJS in their broader roles. They take a child-centred approach, give priority to work to support desistance and prevent harm, and support integration with wider services. However, not all risks to the service are understood sufficiently, and there are gaps in the mitigations and controls in place.

The YJS leadership team is part-way through a process of significant change. However, it has provided an effective link to the board over the past five months since new managers were appointed, delivering and operationalising the strategy and plans successfully. The team communicates the vision and strategy to staff and stakeholders effectively, and promotes openness, constructive challenge and ideas. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities within the partnership arrangements, and what they are accountable for.

Staffing has been rated as 'Requires improvement'. Staffing levels are planned and reviewed to meet the changing demands and profiles of the children. However, there are some shortfalls in the strategy for maintaining the quality of delivery during periods of planned and unplanned staff absences. Staffing of the YJS is representative of the ethnicity of the area, but there are no male case managers. Volunteers are used and are selected appropriately to fulfil clearly defined roles, although more male volunteers are needed.

Most staff are motivated to contribute to the delivery of a high-quality service. The service has gone through a painful restructure during the Covid-19 period, losing many knowledgeable and experienced staff and managers, during and following the structural changes. While many newly appointed or promoted staff are excited about the way ahead, some established staff are still coming to terms with the recent changes, and the lack of staff resilience needs attending to.

Many very experienced staff have left and been replaced with new staff, who are keen, but need to develop their skills and expertise. The induction programme for new staff has its limitations because of the current Covid-19 restrictions on staff attending offices or meeting colleagues face to face, and this has had particular impact given the number of new staff joining the service. Recently, the YJS has formulated and begun to implement plans to address the learning needs of all staff and provide appropriate access to in-service training. Processes for recognising and rewarding exceptional work are underdeveloped.

Staff are satisfied with the supervision they receive, but management oversight in most of the cases inspected was judged to be insufficient.

Partnership and services has been rated as 'Requires improvement'. The YJS's analysis of the profile of children is not updated consistently and does not capture the full range of desistance needs, safety and wellbeing factors, risks of harm, and diversity factors. While the YJS pays sufficient attention to local patterns of sentencing and offence types, helping

to anticipate future demands, some opportunities to use analysis to influence service delivery are being missed.

The YJS partnership has access to the volume, range and quality of services, including specialist and mainstream interventions, to meet many of the children's desistance needs. Arrangements with most partners and providers are established, maintained and used effectively to support desistance, maintain safety and wellbeing, and manage the risk of harm to others. The YJS ensures that courts are sufficiently aware of the services available, supporting their sentencing decisions. However, there is currently no agreed pathway to address speech, language and communication needs; there is no education officer; and recently agreed pathways into education, training and employment need embedding. Services to meet the diversity needs of children are not set out. A new quality framework is in the process of becoming operational.

Information and facilities has been rated as 'Good'. Nearly all the necessary guidance and processes are in place to enable staff to deliver a high-quality service that meets the needs of all children. However, there is no equality and diversity policy, and there is no consideration of the impact of policies and guidance on diverse groups. The YJS is in the process of implementing its new suite of guidance and communicating this to staff and partner agencies.

The YJS delivers its work in places that are sufficiently accessible to staff and children. In most cases, the delivery environment supports effective engagement and the delivery of appropriate personalised work with children. However, there is a need for suitable venues for in-person referral order panels, and safe locations for working with children presenting high-risk behaviours, access to which has been hindered by restrictions arising from the Covid-19 pandemic.

The information and communications technology (ICT) systems enable staff to plan, deliver and record their work in a timely way, and to access information as required. The systems can produce most of the necessary management information, and facilitate the exchange of information with partners, providers and other key stakeholders.

Improvement plans are supported by the YJS's assurance systems and performance measures. However, not all diversity needs are analysed sufficiently. The views of children and their parents or carers are beginning to be sought, to improve service delivery in line with a developing participation strategy. The YJS is on a rapid improvement journey, set out in a priority action plan, and considerable progress that has been made over the past six months.

Strengths:

- Management board members are knowledgeable and are effective advocates for the needs of children supervised by the YJS.
- Managers have a good understanding of the quality of service provision and a sound plan for driving improvement.
- Caseloads are manageable.
- A comprehensive staff development plan is being implemented.
- There is good provision of mental health and substance misuse services.
- There is effective communication with the Youth Court
- Services are delivered in accessible locations across Powys
- Management information is used to drive improvement.

Areas for improvement:

- There is no YJS equality and diversity policy or practice guidance.
- There is a lack of resilience in staffing.
- There are no male case managers or volunteers.
- Management oversight is insufficient.
- There is a lack of analysis of children’s needs.
- Education, training and employment provision are not embedded.
- Restorative justice and reparation services are underdeveloped.
- Speech, language and communication services are not provided.
- There is a need for venues for referral order panels, and facilities for confidential interviewing and interventions with high-risk children and those subject to intensive supervision and surveillance.

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	£864,583
Total projected budget for current financial year	£932,607

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?

In July 2021, the management board agreed its 2021/2022 strategy and youth justice plan, which sets out its priorities. Further consultation is ongoing with staff and children to develop a forward-thinking vision. The board includes all statutory partners at a senior level, in addition to a range of other partners. It has been expanded recently to include managers from community safety, drug and alcohol services, and an educational psychologist.

The board met only once in 2020. However, since January 2021 the board has met regularly, and attendance has been good. Board members are actively involved and have undertaken an exercise to reflect on the contribution that they bring to the board. The board chair fulfils the role of director of children’s and adult services. Although she was absent because of ill-health during the inspection, board minutes record her active and knowledgeable involvement throughout 2021. However, there is no vice chair in place, which is a gap.

In June 2021, an external interim senior manager for the YJS was appointed on a six-month contract. Their arrival provided additional management support to the newly appointed service manager. A detailed priority action plan has been put in place to address identified deficiencies in the work of the YJS. The interim senior manager is due to move to another YOT shortly. The priority action plan has been reviewed regularly by managers and the management board, and significant progress has been made against the identified actions.

The 2021/2022 youth justice plan recognises that Looked After Children are over-represented on the YJS caseload (20 per cent), and that children with disabilities and those with additional learning needs are under-represented, possibly because their needs are not being recognised or assessed sufficiently.

Do the partnership arrangements actively support effective service delivery?

Members of the management board connect with all relevant partnership arrangements in Powys and across the region. They demonstrated how they advocate for the needs of YJS children, with particular reference to educational inclusion, corporate parenting and transition to adult probation services.

The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) nurse is very experienced, is integrated well into wider CAMHS services and is the trauma champion for the YJS. The newly appointed probation secondee, who was due to start in January 2022, will work half-time in the YJS and half-time in adult probation services, providing a bridge for children transitioning between these services. At the time of the inspection, the seconded police officer was also covering a part-time maternity leave position in the police offender management unit, restricting her availability to the YJS but also making useful links with Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) and child exploitation services. There is no education worker at present, but the education and inclusion managers on the board have identified pathways for education referrals and are keeping this situation under review to identify any unmet needs.

There is currently no diversity strategy and not all diverse needs are recorded, identified and addressed at a strategic level.

Does the leadership of the YOT support effective service delivery?

The last permanent team manager retired in April 2021 and was replaced with an interim team manager for a few weeks, working from London. There was then a gap of six weeks where the interim senior manager from Merseyside also covered this role, before another interim team manager working in London was appointed. At the time of the inspection, the permanent team manager post was out to advert, and the board recognises that the absence of an experienced person in this substantive post, who will work locally, is a key operational risk.

The team leader for prevention and restorative justice also attends the board, in addition to the service manager (who came into post in June 2021), the interim senior manager and the interim team manager. Team meetings, where information from the board is shared with staff, take place every two weeks. In recent months, the priority action plan has been considered by the leadership team, updated and rated every two weeks to reflect changes against the specific objectives and plans. However, addressing responsiveness and diversity does not feature specifically in this plan.

Of the seven staff who completed our questionnaire, five said that they understand the current YJS vision and strategy 'quite well' or 'very well', and the same number said that they are 'quite aware' or 'very aware' of the activities of the management board, and are

sufficiently updated on budget, legislation and staffing issues. Of the seven staff, six said that they are often able to provide ideas and challenge to their managers.

The service restructure was undertaken between September and November 2020, while staff were working from home because of the Covid-19 pandemic. This was a fraught period, with many staff angry and upset about the way that the process was handled. The YJS youth justice plan incorporates a brief risk register, but the assessment of likelihood and impact is missing, and the mitigations identified need to be more refined and specific. The key risk of having lost so many experienced staff and the need to retain and build up practice knowledge is not addressed.

1.2. Staff



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

Requires improvement

Key staffing data¹¹

Total staff headcount (full-time equivalent (FTE))	17
Total headcount qualified case managers (FTE) ¹²	4
Vacancy rate (total unfilled posts as percentage of total staff headcount)	7%
Average caseload case managers (FTE equivalent) ¹³	5
Average annual working days sickness (all staff)	6
Staff attrition (percentage of all staff leaving in 12-month period, which was affected by the restructure)	34%

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

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

Since October 2020, the number of FTE posts has reduced by 1.5, to 20.9. There are 8.6 FTE case manager posts, in addition to a half-time probation officer post and a principal social worker, who has a reduced caseload.

The number of case manager posts has reduced from 15.1 FTE to 8.6, which is in line with the reduction in workload over recent years. The average caseload is five, with 25 per cent being prevention cases. All the staff surveyed said that their workload is manageable.

Powys covers one-quarter of the land mass of Wales. Previously, the YJS comprised two teams, one in the north and one in the south of Powys. The service now consists of a

¹¹ Data supplied by YJS and reflecting staffing at the time of the inspection announcement.

¹² Qualified case managers are those with a relevant social work, youth justice or probation qualification.

¹³ Data supplied by YJS, based on staffing and workload at the time of the inspection announcement.

post-court team and a prevention and restorative justice team, both of which cover the whole area, necessitating staff to travel large distances to see children.

At the time of the inspection, two of the nine case managers were on sick leave, one had just left and another was due to leave shortly. The probation officer post was vacant, with a new person due to arrive in January 2022. The recruitment of a permanent team manager is ongoing, and a business support officer, who will be responsible for the YJS data and information, was due to come into post shortly. In two of the out-of-court cases, inspectors noted that sickness absence was not covered effectively, leading to extended gaps before interventions commenced.

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

All case managers are female, the last male post holder having left the service recently. Only one of the eight volunteers is male. This imbalance in gender is problematic, especially where children need a male role model or when working with some cases of harmful sexual behaviour, where access to a male worker might be indicated. There are two black, Asian and minority ethnic members of staff, one of whom is in a leadership position, which is reflective of the ethnic make-up of the area.

The number of qualified social work and probation staff has reduced from six to four and they mainly cover the post-court work. The staff in the prevention and restorative justice team are less experienced and several are completing the Effective Practice Certificate.

Following the departure of the two restorative justice coordinators as a result of the restructure, their function was divided across the prevention and restorative justice team, with staff holding cases of children who have offended and victims alike. This unsatisfactory arrangement has now been reversed, with a full-time restorative approaches coordinator and victims worker coming into post recently. However, the intervening gap has resulted in a loss of skills and knowledge, and there is a need to build up experience and understanding of this work.

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

All seven staff responding to our survey said that the supervision they received is 'just right' and the quality of the supervision is 'very good'. When we interviewed case managers, five out of six said that management oversight of the inspected cases is effective. However, inspectors considered oversight to be insufficient in six of the seven cases reviewed. This finding concurs with the YJS's own quality audit, as a consequence of which the interim senior manager delivered a workshop for line managers on what effective oversight should comprise. Oversight of the volunteers has been patchy, and the restorative approaches coordinator has now started to have regular meetings with them.

New staff have had an induction programme, which now includes mandatory online diversity and equality learning. However, with most staff working from home, it is proving more difficult for new starters to orientate themselves and to gain first-hand knowledge of all the staff and partners they need to work with to provide an effective service.

With the various changes of line manager and the arrival of several new staff, only three of the seven staff who responded to our survey had had a recent appraisal, two describing it as 'quite valuable' and one as 'very valuable'. The service manager and interim senior manager described how poor performance is addressed through a mixture of support and challenge, moving to formal procedures with the assistance of human resources staff where necessary.

Are arrangements for learning and development comprehensive and responsive?

In July 2021, the interim senior manager produced a comprehensive training plan for the remainder of the financial year. Key programmes include training on: AssetPlus to improve assessments; enhanced case management; the trauma recovery model (March 2022); constructive resettlement; restorative justice; and Assessment, Intervention & Moving-on (AIM) 3. The training is open to all YJS staff, and the restorative justice training is also available to volunteers.

Of the respondents to the staff survey, all said that their training needs are 'mostly' or 'fully' met. However, only one of the four volunteers said that the training they received was 'very good' at meeting their needs. Some had to wait a long time from appointment to initial training. The appointment, in September 2021, of an educational psychologist for the YJS one day a week has provided opportunities for case consultation and clinical supervision.

Do managers pay sufficient attention to staff engagement?

Of the respondents to the staff survey, five of the seven staff said that they are motivated by the YJS 'to a great extent' to deliver high-quality services, and all four volunteers also said this. Staff turnover in the year to October 2020 was 20 per cent and in the past year, with the reorganisation, rose to 34 per cent. In the previous period, staff sickness was 39 days per year per member of staff, falling to six days in the past year. The senior manager surveyed staff, listened to their concerns and took a range of specific actions, which were included in a 'you said, we did' response.

There is no current reward and recognition policy in the YJS, but consideration has been given to nominate an 'employee of the month'.

Although staff said that they felt supported during the period of remote working, they expressed a wish to get back into offices with their colleagues, to counter the drawbacks of working from home. The process of the reorganisation was described as problematic, in the way that it was conducted in the midst of the pandemic, with staff isolated and lacking opportunities to meet in person with colleagues for information and support. The ripples of the reorganisation are still being felt and insufficient attention has been given subsequently to building staff resilience.

1.3. Partnerships and services



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

Requires improvement

Caseload characteristics

Percentage of current caseload with mental health issues	63%
Percentage of current caseload with substance misuse issues	67%
Percentage of current caseload with a learning disability or learning difficulty, or subject to an education, health and care plan	27%

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

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

Currently, there is no consistent analysis of the desistance needs of children. There is a considerable amount of such information available in AssetPlus; however, as the post of support services supervisor is vacant, this is not readily available, although it is provided on an ad hoc basis by the children's services business and programme service. Similarly, factors related to safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm are not analysed routinely, although data on the numbers of children in each risk category are reviewed weekly by managers. Trends in sentencing and out-of-court disposals are considered by managers as part of their resource planning.

Two per cent of the population of Powys is of ethnic minority heritage, compared with seven per cent of the current caseload (three children). No data is recorded or analysed by the YJS on children's religion and belief, sexuality or preference for a Welsh language service. Data on the number of Looked After Children in Powys has been analysed and presented to the corporate parenting board as part of an intention to reduce their over-representation in the YJS cases.

An analysis of restorative justice interventions that have been delivered has resulted in the restorative approaches coordinator becoming a full-time post, to broaden the range of services available to include the option of restorative justice conferencing. A participation strategy has been agreed recently, but this has yet to result in any collated feedback from children and families about the services that they would wish to see commissioned.

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

As of 25 October 2021, the YJS caseload included 15 post-court cases and 19 out-of-court disposals. These are spread out across Powys, which is the largest county in Wales, with a land area of over 2,000 square miles, much of which is very rural, with limited public transport. Consequently, most interventions are completed on an individual basis. While staff have been trained recently to access an online interventions hub to obtain ideas and resources for working with children, some think that they are unable to go into their offices to access their own resources. While limited access is permitted, the Welsh government guidance is for staff to continue to work from home where possible.

There are no specific services identified for those with diverse needs. Staff are using their own initiative to tailor their work or find appropriate resources. There is no policy or practice guidance on working with diversity. We were assured that services could be delivered in the Welsh language, but without any audit trail for this we could not be sure that this was being offered or provided consistently.

All staff surveyed said that they mostly or always have sufficient access to the services, interventions and partnership resources needed to work with children.

An experienced CAMHS nurse provides a full range of services to address emotional and mental health needs. There is good access to drug and alcohol services for the 67 per cent of children on the caseload with such a need, with two workers from CAIS normally co-located in YJS offices. In addition to providing a range of psychosocial interventions, CAIS provides access to the Kaleidoscope service, which delivers substitute prescribing for any child using class A drugs. CAIS also provides a mentoring service for YJS children.

There is currently no speech and language therapist in the YJS. Staff have recently had an awareness raising session, and active consideration is being given to developing a referral pathway.

Reparation is supervised on a one-to-one basis by all the members of the prevention and restorative justice team. There are projects with Newtown Football Club, and a range of outdoor projects, including litter picking. The portfolio of projects would be strengthened by consolidating expertise among fewer staff and identifying projects that are appropriate for children with differing needs and abilities.

A new quality assurance framework was agreed in June 2021 which focuses on reviewing cases, reports, assessments and referrals. An audit of the whole caseload, conducted over summer 2021 by an external consultant, identified a number of areas for attention, which have been incorporated into the priority action plan.

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

Both of the cases inspected, and the recent external quality audit commissioned by the YJS, demonstrate that some elements of partnership working are strong. Service level agreements (SLAs) have been completed recently with Dyfed-Powys Police, Powys Teaching Health Board (for CAMHS) and CAIS (for drug and alcohol services).

An SLA with children's services locality teams, setting out mutual responsibilities, has been updated this year. Nearly half (48 per cent) of YJS cases are open to children's services. While relationships are good, children's services are not included in the bureau or resettlement panel arrangements. Looked After Children comprise 20 per cent of cases, half of whom are placed in residential facilities in Powys by other local authorities. It is acknowledged that more needs to be done to reduce the criminalisation of Looked After Children in Powys, including training residential staff in restorative practices. YJS managers play a full part in child safeguarding and child exploitation arrangements.

The YJS does not have an education officer, which is a statutory requirement. Of the YJS children aged 16 years and under, 71 per cent are in full-time mainstream education. Managers have been working recently with education services to develop referral pathways, and in November 2021 signed an SLA with Careers Wales to provide information, advice and guidance services and links to employers. These arrangements are not yet embedded.

Transition to adult probation services is covered by the National Partnership Framework for Wales Youth Offending Services, and the Youth to Adult Transitions, Principles and Guidance (Wales). In line with these principles, the newly appointed probation officer will take on the transition offender manager role, holding cases in the YJS and as they move to adult services. All of these children will be included in the integrated offender management cohort, and MAPPA arrangements where specified.

A local bench chair confirmed that:

"All the YJS staff in our local area are very professional and supportive to the bench, and give a high-quality service in the youth court". The arrangements and communication in place between the YJS and the youth court are effective. A magistrate is a member of the YJS partnership board."

Involvement of children and their parents or carers

The YJS contacted the children who had open cases at the time of the inspection, to gain their consent to a text survey. The six children who consented were sent the text survey, and four children replied.

The children were asked to rate the service of the YJS on a scale of one to 10. One rated this as 10, two as nine and one as eight.

They made the following comments:

“The service is fantastic because the workers are enthusiastic and caring. All the work that is done is tailored to suit your offence”.

“My youth justice worker has helped me a lot and helped to improve my quality of life and mental wellbeing. It has been great for me – it has improved my life and even got me into boxing”.

“The YJS has helped me see my wrong and change myself for the better”.

The children were also asked to rate the YJS, on a scale of one to 10, on how far they had been helped to stay out of trouble. Two children rated this as 10, and two as seven. They were also asked to say how. The most positive children commented:

“By showing me that crime won't get me anywhere good in life”.

“Because of youth justice, especially my youth justice worker, they have kept tabs, we've done sessions, and they have helped me to get out of the situation which was causing me to offend”.

The others commented:

“Because they were showing me the right path”.

“I didn't really think I needed the referral order because my offence was a one-off bad decision, but after going through some of the work I realise it can be helpful for any young individual”.

Inspectors also sought consent from the seven children whose cases they were inspecting to speak to them about their experience of the YJS. Three gave their consent and an inspector was able to speak to two of them on the telephone.

The first child said:

“I think they aim to make sure we're doing alright, and we don't get into trouble again. [The YJS worker has the right skills] because she's easy to talk to and that's a good thing. She's interested in what I've been doing, and she really listens to me when I talk. I'm not one to get into trouble, it was an accident. But we watched a roadshow video that showed different accidents and how dangerous the roads are, and it makes you think. Anything [she] said she'll do, she did do, and I liked that; and she was interested in me”.

The second child said:

“I've got so many workers, so I can't recall all of them. But the ones I do remember, they're been extremely helpful. I needed to sort myself out and they helped me start to deal with my issues. Normally they come to my house. I feel more comfortable at home. The people who have helped have talked to me about my anger management. They're extremely helpful, they push to see some good in someone. Extremely supportive of me and I couldn't think of anyone you'd rather have. I wouldn't genuinely change anything except perhaps access to a doctor for a real diagnosis of what's going on with me”.

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?

The YJS has done a considerable amount of work this year to review and update its practice guidance, which covers most aspects of practice. However, there is no YJS policy or practice guidance in place on addressing diversity and disproportionality, which is a significant gap. The practice guidance is available on the YJS SharePoint site. A team event in November 2021 was held for staff to identify the main changes covered by these policies. There is still more work to do, to ensure that all the guidance is deployed effectively.

Of the staff surveyed, all but one said that they always know how to access services from partners and providers. However, this is more difficult for new staff, who are still working from home and not working physically alongside colleagues in the YJS and partner agencies, and therefore miss the informal opportunities for gaining such knowledge.

All policies and guidance are planned to be reviewed on a three-yearly cycle. Most policies, including those reviewed recently, do not take diversity and equality considerations into account sufficiently. Disproportionality is mentioned rarely.

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

Given the large rural area covered by Powys, it is inevitable that most service delivery takes place locally, away from the office, at home, in schools or in other community venues. There are YJS offices in Newtown and Brecon, and Powys County Council offices in Llandrindod Wells. The YJS offices have been closed to YJS children since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, given that most work does not take place in the office, this has not been as disruptive as it might be in an urban area.

Most work takes place face to face, with some appointments conducted by telephone or video call. Inspectors saw evidence of the use of a DVD resource being used by children to address poor driving and safe road use.

The YJS priority action plan includes finding community venues for referral order panels. These have taken place with the children and parents involved online or by telephone since the start of the pandemic, but were planned to resume in person shortly after the inspection. Reparation activities take place in venues across Powys. Although risk assessments are completed, these are drawn up by each of the prevention and restorative justice workers without specialist knowledge or input.

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

YJS staff use the ChildView system for case recording and have read-only access to the children's service system. They have laptop computers and mobile phones for home working.

Recently, they moved from using Skype for team and other meetings, and are now using the Microsoft Teams platform instead, which staff say is a considerable improvement. ICT support, as evidenced by the team of inspectors working remotely, is effective. Of the staff who responded to the survey, four said that their information technology helps them to deliver a high-quality service 'very well', and the other three said that it does this 'quite well'.

The YJS is using the Wales Accord on the Sharing of Personal Information to develop a comprehensive information sharing protocol between the YJS partners and the other public agencies they work with. Processes for the exchange of information appear to be reasonably effective.

The information systems can produce information on performance against targets, provided that there are sufficient skilled staff in place to produce timely reports.

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

In July 2021, the YJS commissioned a comprehensive externally audited quality assurance of all their existing cases against HM Inspectorate of Probation's youth justice standards. The results of this exercise chime fairly closely with the findings of this inspection and have already been used to drive improvement activity that has been included in the YJS priority action plan. Particular attention has been given to the completion of AssetPlus assessments and improving planning. This audit was also a driver for making the restorative approaches coordinator post full time, to increase the use of a wider range of restorative justice options.

A considerable amount of improvement activity has been taking place since the interim senior manager came into post in July 2021, with a clear priority action plan which is reviewed by the management team fortnightly and shows evidence of rapid progress against key objectives. Weekly performance management meetings currently have a focus on improving education, training and employment outcomes.

Information on the low numbers of YJS children assessed as having a disability is being used to drive improved assessment of this key factor. Similarly, the high proportion of children looked after by local authorities is beginning to drive initiatives to reduce the criminalisation of children in care.

The management board recently has approved a participation strategy. This is at an early stage of implementation. Children's views have been sought, to help develop the YJS vision. Children and their parents or carers are invited to have input at the beginning of risk management meetings, and the new 'Our Plan' is being implemented to improve children's contribution to case planning. The service manager will be leading on these developments as a priority.

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.

Although the management board appears to be keen to respond to the diverse needs of children supervised by the YJS, they have yet to produce an equality strategy and plan to address diversity and disproportionality. It recognises that Looked After Children form 20 per cent of the caseload and are disproportionately represented in the service. It is seeking ways to reduce the criminalisation of these children. In 2020/2021, just four of the YJS children were identified as having a disability. The board is concerned that the reason for the low numbers of children with additional learning needs may be that these needs have not been assessed formally, and this requires further exploration.

Of the 17 staff employed by the YJS, two (12 per cent) are from ethnic minorities, one of whom is in a leadership position. This compares favourably with the population of Powys, which is 98 per cent white. Seventy per cent of the workforce are female, including all of the nine case managers and seven of the eight volunteers. The YJS recognises that it needs to recruit more male case managers and volunteers, to ensure that it meets the needs of those children who would benefit from having a male role model.

Although the number of ethnic minority children in the YJS is low (three), they form seven per cent of the caseload, which is disproportionate compared with the 10–17-year-old population of Powys. The ethnicity of seven per cent of children is missing from the latest data. There is also an unspecified number of children with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller heritage. The current percentage of girls on the caseload (seven per cent) is less than half the 15 per cent for England and Wales as a whole. The numbers of girls and ethnic minority children are small and the approach of the YJS is to deal with each child as an individual. There are no specific resources designed to address their needs. There is a risk, therefore, that the specific needs of girls and ethnic minority children are overlooked because of these low numbers. It is suggested that the YJS develops practice guidelines and resource directories for working with these groups of children, to counter the potential impact and effects of marginalisation.

The YJS does not collect data on the religion or belief of children, their sexuality or their preference for a Welsh language service, which raises the possibility that some needs are not being met. Although we were assured that services could be delivered in Welsh, this requires a system for monitoring need and usage. From the cases inspected, we judged that assessment addressed diversity issues sufficiently in five of the seven cases. Planning addressed diversity sufficiently in six of the seven cases, while service delivery addressed the diversity of the child in all cases.

2. Court disposals

We took a detailed look at two community sentences managed by the YJS. We also conducted one interview 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.

Assessment was rated as 'Inadequate' as, although assessment of desistance was sufficient in both cases, in neither case was the assessment of safety and wellbeing sufficient, and only one was sufficient in the assessment of keeping others safe.

Planning was rated as 'Requires improvement'. While planning to keep the child safe was of a sufficient standard, planning both to support desistance and to keep others safe was sufficient in only one of the two cases.

Implementation and delivery was rated as 'Good'. It was sufficient in the delivery of services to support desistance and the safety of others, and also, in one of the two cases, to keep the child safe. Professional discretion was used to raise the rating from 'Requires improvement', as 'Good' described better our overall perception of implementation and delivery across the YJS.

There was a real strength in the way that case managers engaged and worked with the children to deliver effective interventions, making up for some of the earlier shortfalls. Although there were no changes in factors related to safety and wellbeing, or risk of harm to others that required a formal review, these cases were reviewed effectively, with children and their parents or carers fully engaged in the process, and plans adjusted where appropriate.

Strengths:

- There was meaningful involvement of children and their parents or carers in assessments, planning and reviews.
- Assessments and plans took account of children's ability, maturity and motivation.
- There was effective engagement with children, resulting in a high level of compliance with interventions.

Areas for improvement:

- The classifications of safety and wellbeing, and risk to others were under-assessed.
- There was insufficient planning to address contingencies in plans to address risk to others.

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.

Inadequate

Our rating¹⁴ 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?	0%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	50%

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

In both cases inspected, we judged that there was sufficient assessment and analysis of how to support the child's desistance. The assessments utilised information provided by other agencies. They considered the child's social and family context, and their maturity and motivation to change, and focused on the child's strengths and protective factors. The children and their parents or carers were involved meaningfully in their assessments, and their views were taken into account. In one case, however, there was insufficient analysis of the child's diversity, and in another insufficient attention was given to opportunities for restorative justice.

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?

In both cases, inspectors judged that the analysis of how to keep the child safe was insufficient. In one case, the impact of earlier trauma on the child's wellbeing was not considered and the classification of safety and wellbeing was assessed by the case manager as low rather than medium, and in the other the child's risk-taking behaviour was not paid sufficient attention. In neither case was there sufficient analysis of the controls and interventions necessary to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child.

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?

In one of the cases, the inspector judged that the assessment analysed how to keep other people safe. In the other, the inspector judged that the case manager's classification of risk was not reasonable and should have been medium rather than low, considering the physical and psychological impact on the victim. In neither case did the assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information about past behaviour. However, in both cases the analysis of controls and interventions to manage and minimise the risk of harm presented by the children was sufficient.

¹⁴ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. See Annexe 2 for a more detailed explanation.

2.2. Planning



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

Requires improvement

Our rating¹⁵ for planning is based on the following key questions:

	% 'yes'
Does planning focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	50%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	100%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	50%

Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?

In one case, there was appropriate planning to support the child's desistance. In the other, there was no plan to monitor the child's cannabis use or to support their clear future employment goals. In both cases, planning addressed the child's diversity, level of maturity and motivation to change, and the proposed interventions were proportionate to the court outcome and were capable of being delivered in the time available. In one case, planning paid insufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim, considering that their views might change over time as to whether they would want to become involved in a restorative justice outcome.

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

Planning to keep the child safe was sufficient in both cases. In one case, there were plans to help the child develop strategies to manage their heightened emotions, which, hopefully, would reduce their cannabis use. In the other, there were plans to address illegal driving and thereby keep the child safe. While planning with both children set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote their safety and wellbeing, insufficient attention was given to making effective contingency arrangements to manage any increase in the identified risks.

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

In one case, plans to address and monitor the child's illegal driving were considered sufficient to keep other people safe. In the other, there was no clear plan with the police to monitor the child's restraining order, which was deemed insufficient to keep the victim safe. In both cases, planning failed to set out the necessary contingency arrangement should the identified risks increase.

¹⁵ 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.

2.3. Implementation and delivery



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

Good

Our rating¹⁶ for implementation and delivery is based on the following key questions:

	% 'yes'
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the child's desistance?	100%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of the child?	50%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?	100%

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

Both children engaged well, complied with the requirements of their referral orders and completed planned reparation without any need for enforcement action. One of the children was supported to achieve their employment goal, while the other completed a driving awareness course workbook and was supported in accessing transport to college. Delivery of the interventions took account of the children's diversity, built on their strengths and enhanced protective factors. In one case, more work could have been done to link the child with services in the community once the order had ended.

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

In one case, the monitoring of the child's behaviour was an integral part of supervision, and the delivery of the Impact Roadshow driving awareness course was sufficient to address the risks to them from illegal driving. However, in the other case the lack of interventions to address the child's emotional regulation was judged to be insufficient.

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

In both cases, the implementation and delivery of services was judged to be sufficient to support the safety of other people, including actual and potential victims. In one case, the delivery of victim impact work was judged to be sufficient at managing any unexpected contact with the victim, in the light of the restraining order in place. In the other, the completion of a victim awareness and driving course addressed the risk of harm to the victim and other people.

¹⁶ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. See Annexe 2 for a more detailed explanation.

2.4. Reviewing



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

Outstanding

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

	% 'yes'
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	100%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	100%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	100%

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

Written reviews were completed for the referral order panels in both cases. These were detailed reviews of the progress that the children had made in supporting their desistance. The children and their parents or carers were involved fully in these reviews and their views were taken into account. With the one child that required further work, this was set out clearly.

Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

While written reviews of the child's safety and wellbeing were completed in each case, there were no changes in related factors and therefore no changes were required to the plans to keep the children safe.

Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

In both cases, there were no changes in factors related to risk of harm that would require a review of plans to keep others safe. The children and their parents or carers were involved in reviewing risk of harm to others. In one case, an additional action was added for the victim worker to make contact with the victim's family, to explore sensitively whether some form of restorative justice intervention would benefit the child victim.

¹⁷ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. See Annex 2 for a more detailed explanation.

3. Out-of-court disposals

We inspected five cases managed by the YOT that had received an out-of-court disposal. These consisted of one youth conditional caution, one youth caution and three community resolutions. We interviewed the case managers in five cases.

We examined the quality of assessment; planning; and implementation and delivery of services. Each of these elements was inspected in respect of work done to address desistance, work to keep the child safe and work to keep other people safe. The quality of the work undertaken with 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.

Assessment was rated as 'Requires improvement', as, although assessment of risk of harm to others was sufficient in the large majority of cases, analysis of how to support the child's desistance and how to keep the child safe was deficient in too many cases.

Planning was also rated as 'Requires improvement', as, similarly, while planning to keep others safe was sufficient in the large majority of cases, planning to support desistance and to keep the child safe did not meet the standard in enough cases.

Implementation and delivery was rated as 'Outstanding', as the standard was achieved against each key question in the large majority of cases.

The assessment processes for out-of-court disposals were sound. However, there was room for improvement in analysing how best to support children's desistance, and identifying and weighing concerns about their safety and wellbeing. There were gaps in some of the plans to support desistance and to keep children safe, although not in addressing risk to others. Delivery of appropriate interventions was a considerable strength, even on occasions where they were not assessed originally as needed or planned for.

Although there were a few gaps, the out-of-court disposal practice guidance described the arrangements for delivering a high-quality service for all children. Joint decision-making processes were well established, and the panel had been broadened to include other disciplines. However, the absence of children's services as a core member was an important omission. Children and their parents or carers were involved in the assessments prior to the panel meeting, which sought to provide a wide range of interventions, while promoting diversion where possible.

The YJS did not evaluate out-of-court disposal policy and provision regularly, or pay sufficient attention to diversity issues within the policy, and the evaluation that it did carry out did not involve all the relevant agencies. There had been a recent review, which had widened the membership and improved the functioning of the panel. There was scope to involve children and their parents or carers more in the evaluation and review of out-of-court disposal policy and provision. The scheme was successful at reducing the number of first-time entrants into the criminal justice system, and the reoffending rates of those given an out-of-court disposal were low.

Strengths:

- Service delivery was personalised, taking account of children’s diversity and familial and social situation.
- There was effective engagement with children, leading to high rates of compliance with interventions.
- There was effective engagement with key partner agencies in planning and delivering services.
- All children and their parents or carers were seen and an AssetPlus assessment commenced prior to the disposal being decided.
- There had been good progress in reducing the number of first-time entrants into the criminal justice system.

Areas for improvement:

- The classification of safety and wellbeing was frequently too low.
- The child’s account of their substance misuse was not always incorporated into planning and the delivery of interventions.
- There was no contingency planning for addressing factors likely to cause increased risk of harm or concerns about safety and wellbeing.
- Evaluation of the out-of-court disposal scheme needed to be improved.

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.

Requires improvement

Our rating¹⁸ for assessment is based on the following key questions:

	% 'yes'
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child’s desistance?	60%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	60%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	80%

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.

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

In four out of five cases, assessments took sufficient account of the diversity and personal circumstances of the child, focused on the child's strengths and paid attention to understanding the child's level of maturity, and their ability and motivation to change. In some cases, however, the analysis did not utilise information held by other agencies, give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim or take enough account of the child and their parent or carer's views, as in this case:

Poor practice example:

David was given an out-of-court disposal for an offence of violent disorder committed almost 10 months previously. He was reluctant to discuss the offence, citing time and limited recall because he was under the influence of alcohol. The police information is brief and contains little detail about who else was involved, so it is unclear whether there are relevant victims. David has four other offences on his record. The behaviour is not explored with him to understand any patterns or factors linked to offending; and other than a statement to say he successfully completed his last YJS intervention, there is no real assessment of past engagement. While a self-assessment was completed with David, little account is taken of his disclosure that substance misuse gets him into trouble sometimes.

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?

Inspectors disagreed with the case manager's classification of safety and wellbeing in four of the five cases. In three cases, they considered that it should have been medium rather than low, and in another that it should have been high rather than low. In the last case, they considered that the case manager's assessment was not reasonable. In all but one case, they judged that the assessment failed to draw sufficiently on available sources of information or involve other agencies where appropriate. The following is an example of this:

Poor practice example:

John is a young boy who has witnessed the domestic abuse of his mother for several years. He has been excluded from school many times in the past two years. At the time of the assessment, his family has a social worker to support mum, who struggles to parent John and his brother. He is also known to be staying up late playing adult-classified video games. None of these factors are linked to the assessment of his safety and wellbeing, which is classified as low.

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?

However, inspectors considered that the case manager's classification of risk of serious harm was correct in all but one case, where they considered it should have been medium rather than low. Assessments of harm drew sufficiently on available sources of information in three of the five cases and identified and analysed the risk in half the cases where there were risk factors. The following was considered a good assessment of risk of harm:

Good practice example:

The assessment defines serious harm and acknowledges that while physical harm was caused by Ieuan, it does not meet the definition of serious harm. It correctly classifies

leuan's risk of serious harm as low; and analyses the triggers, nature and likely context of any future harmful behaviour.

3.2. Planning



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

Requires improvement

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

	% 'yes'
Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?	60%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	60%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	80%

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

In three cases, there were gaps in what was planned to support desistance. In one case, there were no plans to address the high level of school exclusions experienced by the child. There were also gaps in addressing drug and alcohol use in some cases, and the child's views were not always fully taken into account, as in this example:

Poor practice example:

Planning does not sufficiently address the substance misuse identified as problematic by Megan and the assessor, even though Megan in her self-assessment stated that she wants help to address this. 'Though the plan was shared with Megan (and her family), because her views are not taken on board, planning does not sufficiently support her desistance.

In all cases, the interventions planned could be completed in the time available. In four out of five cases, planning took sufficient account of the child's diversity and opportunities to access mainstream services after the out-of-court disposal work finished.

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

In most cases, planning to keep children safe involved other agencies where appropriate, including children's services and the seconded CAMHS nurse, and there was good alignment with their planned work with the children. Inspectors saw examples of work planned to promote online safety, interventions for emotional self-regulation and low mood, and work to address experiences of trauma and a history of self-harm. There were, however, some gaps in the services planned to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child in two of the five cases – for example, interventions to address trauma and alcohol misuse. Contingency planning to address identified risks was sufficient in only three of the five relevant cases.

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

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

As most of the cases were assessed as posing a low risk of causing serious harm to others, planning to keep others safe was needed in only two of the five cases, and there were actual or potential victims of the child’s offending behaviour in just three of the five cases. There were positive examples of planned interventions to address knife crime, reduce impulsive behaviour and develop victim empathy. In the one case where planning was judged to be insufficient, this was due to a failure to plan to address the child’s alcohol misuse. In one of the two cases where planning was needed to address risk to others, plans to address contingencies in the event of risk escalating were absent.

3.3. 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 service delivery effectively support the child’s desistance?	100%
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of the child?	80%
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of other people?	100%

Does service delivery effectively support the child’s desistance?

Inspectors judged that, in all the cases, there were positive examples of sufficient services delivered to support children’s desistance from offending. Service delivery took into account the child’s diversity and their social and familial context. Case managers’ positive engagement resulted in high levels of compliance by the children with the interventions offered. In two of the cases, there was a delay in starting the interventions because of staff sickness. However, care was taken to promote opportunities for community integration and links with mainstream services at the end of the interventions, as in this example:

Good practice example:

Megan received a community resolution for an offence of common assault on a fellow school pupil. In addition to relationship building, sessions are delivered to address emotional self-regulation, consequential thinking, decision-making and healthy relationships. Contact is made and maintained with the relevant partner agencies, including CAIS (substance misuse), Careers Wales and the YJS CAMHS worker. The case manager has also developed a good relationship with the child's mother. Recognising that Megan would benefit from continued support while she starts to engage with partner agencies, an additional three months’ voluntary 'prevention' support was agreed and accepted.

Megan would benefit from continued support while she starts to engage with partner agencies, an additional three months’ voluntary 'prevention' support was agreed and accepted.

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 service delivery effectively support the safety of the child?

In four out of five cases, inspectors judged that service delivery promoted the safety and wellbeing of the child, and that the involvement of other agencies was well coordinated. Examples of positive interventions included referrals to substance misuse services and exercises for managing conflict to prevent future risky behaviour. In the one case that was judged not to meet this key question, this was due to a failure to involve CAMHS and to address the child's underlying trauma.

Does service delivery effectively support the safety of other people?

In all cases, sufficient services were delivered to manage and minimise the risk of harm to others, and where there were actual or potential victims, sufficient attention was given to ensuring that they were protected, as in this example:

Good practice example:

When John reports being able to access a gun at his cousin's home (where he frequents), a multi-agency referral is completed to ensure both John's young cousin and his family are protected. When John's mum reports he is becoming increasingly aggressive toward her and there are concerns about possible access to knives, the case manager completes a referral back to children's service's Team Around a Family for support to keep mum safe. There is also a review of the intervention plan to address concerns linked to weapons and to keep mum and other people safe.

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 three questions:

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

New local practice guidance on out-of-court disposals was produced following consultation and was signed off by the YJS partnership board in September 2021 before being briefed to staff. It states that disposals should be set at the lowest appropriate level, and there is guidance about the use of community resolutions for first offences of possession of cannabis and being drunk and disorderly. The guidance does not, however, set out how diversity needs will be addressed.

There is considerable room for discretion in deciding on disposals, including for offences of knife possession, and cases can be referred back to the police if it is considered that an out-of-court disposal may not be appropriate. Of the cases that came before the panel between April and September 2021 where an out-of-court disposal was agreed, 83 per cent received a community resolution. Some cases were referred back to the police, and a decision to take no further action resulted.

All children are subject to some form of AssetPlus assessment prior to a decision being reached, and if the child is assessed as posing a high risk of causing serious harm to

others, or high safety and wellbeing concerns, a risk management meeting will be convened after the disposal has been agreed.

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

In the five cases inspected, the out-of-court disposal bureau panel consisted of the YJS team manager (panel chair), a community volunteer and the seconded police officer, although on one occasion the police officer was not present. Since then, the panel membership has been widened to include the restorative approaches coordinator and victims worker, and the CAMHS nurse. Children's services staff are not formally part of the panel, which is a significant gap, and were not present in the two cases inspected of Looked After Children where the local authority was the corporate parent. Children and their parents or carers are seen (usually at home) prior to the panel as part of the assessment, and may attend the panel, which is held virtually at present.

The victims and restorative approaches coordinator consults victims prior to the panel and represents their perspectives and opportunities for restorative justice interventions. A full range of interventions is available for children subject to out-of-court disposals. The CAMHS worker is the YJS trauma champion and brings her expertise to helping the panel reach decisions and agree plans. There is a clear escalation process to the team manager and police sergeant if the panel and the police decision-maker cannot reach agreement, although this has not had to be used recently.

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

A twice-yearly report is produced about the bureau for the Welsh Government. This demonstrates progress in reducing the number of first-time entrants and the percentage of children subject to an out-of-court disposal who go on to reoffend within a year, which was 6.8 per cent for 2020/2021. The proportion of first-time entrants into the formal criminal justice process in Powys has been consistently below that of England and Wales for the past three years, suggesting that diversion into community resolutions and away from formal outcomes has been effective.

The recent review of the bureau resulted in a wider range of partners attending the panel, who are able to bring other perspectives to the decisions and proposed plans of interventions. It also brought about a faster, more streamlined assessment and decision-making process and an expectation that the panel reviews cases on closure.

There has, however, been no evaluation of diversity issues and disproportionality, including the impact of the bureau on diverting children with special needs or those looked after by local authorities.

4. Resettlement

4.1. Resettlement policy and provision

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

We inspected the quality of policy and provision in place for resettlement work, using evidence from documents, meetings and interviews. As there were no resettlement cases in the specified period for the inspection, this standard is not rated. Our key findings were as follows.

Strengths:

- A new resettlement policy was in place which included a resettlement panel of partner agencies to make plans jointly for release, together with children and their parents or carers.

Areas for improvement:

- Children's services should be included as a core member of the resettlement panel, to ensure that children's accommodation needs are met.

We gathered evidence for this standard from documents and meetings. 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 new resettlement policy was produced in August 2021 which references the latest requirements and guidance for managing resettlement cases. It includes the convening of a resettlement panel for all remand and custody cases to plan for release, whose membership includes most of the people and agencies that are needed to address the resettlement pathways.

Children's services are not a core member, which is a gap, considering their role in addressing accommodation issues. The roles of the seconded police officer, the restorative coordinator and victims worker, and MAPPA panels are set out, to ensure that the needs of victims and public safety are considered when licence conditions are proposed.

Although the policy sets out how the needs of children with additional learning needs should be addressed in custody and on release, there is no mention of how other diversity factors should be taken into account in practice.

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

The last resettlement case was a detention and training order made more than a year ago. In the last three years, the YJS has never had more than one custody case at a time

and the level of custodial sentences has remained consistently below that for England and Wales per head of the 10–17-year-old population.

Apart from the interim team manager, who is not based in Powys, only one member of the resettlement panel who we met has any experience of working with a resettlement case. The CAMHS nurse described good liaison with mental health services in a young offender institution during the Covid-19 period, which supported effective resettlement of the child on release

Training on resettlement for team members was planned for the inspection week but subsequently was postponed. It was agreed that it would be helpful for the panel to meet to plan resettlement scenarios, so that staff would be prepared for managing a resettlement case when one occurs, in line with the new policy.

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

The new resettlement policy is based on national guidance documents and not an evaluation of local data and provision in Powys. Consultation with staff and partner agencies has been limited to date. The policy is due for review in 2024, but it would be helpful to review it in light of this inspection and subsequent experiences of managing cases.

Annexe 1: Methodology

HM Inspectorate of Probation standards

The standards against which we inspect youth offending services are based on established models and frameworks, which are grounded in evidence, learning and experience. These standards are designed to drive improvements in the quality of work with children who have offended.²¹

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 chief executive delivered a presentation covering the following areas:

- How do organisational delivery arrangements in this area make sure that the work of your YOS is as effective as it can be, and that the life chances of children who have offended are improved?
- What are your priorities for further improving these arrangements?

During the main fieldwork phase, we conducted six interviews with case managers, asking them about their experiences of training, development, management supervision and leadership. We held various meetings, which allowed us to triangulate evidence and information. In total, we conducted 13 meetings, which included meetings with managers, partner organisations and staff. The evidence collected under this domain was judged against our published ratings characteristics.²²

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 two 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 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.

²¹ HM Inspectorate's standards are available here: <https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmiprobation/about-our-work/our-standards-and-ratings/>

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

Resettlement

We spoke to staff and partners, and reviewed documents to assess the sufficiency of resettlement policy and provision.

Annexe 2: Inspection data

In this inspection, we conducted a detailed examination of a sample of two court disposals and five out-of-court disposals. In each of those cases, we inspect against standards regarding assessment, planning, and implementation and 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.

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 for each standard is aligned to the banding at the key question level where the lowest proportion of cases were judged to be sufficient, as we believe 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 (proportion of cases judged to be sufficient at the 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 it is 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:²³

2.1. Assessment (court disposals)	
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	% yes
a) Is there sufficient analysis of offending behaviour, including the child's attitudes towards and motivations for their offending?	100%
b) Does assessment sufficiently analyse diversity issues?	50%
c) Does assessment consider personal circumstances, including the wider familial and social context of the child?	100%
d) Does assessment utilise information held by other agencies?	100%
e) Does assessment focus on the child's strengths and protective factors?	100%
f) Does assessment analyse the key structural barriers facing the child?	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?	100%
h) Does assessment give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of victims, and opportunities for restorative justice?	50%
i) Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in their assessment, and are their views taken into account?	100%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	% yes
a) Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risks to the safety and wellbeing of the child?	0%
b) Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including other assessments, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	50%
c) Does assessment analyse controls and interventions to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	0%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	% yes
a) Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risk of harm to others posed by the child, including identifying who is at risk and the nature of that risk?	50%

²³ Some questions do not apply in all cases.

b) Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including past behaviour and convictions, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	0%
c) Does assessment analyse controls and interventions to manage and minimise the risk of harm presented by the child?	100%

2.2. Planning (court disposals)

Does planning focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	% yes
a) Does planning set out the services most likely to support desistance, paying sufficient attention to the available timescales and the need for sequencing?	50%
b) Does planning sufficiently address diversity issues?	100%
c) Does planning take sufficient account of the child's personal circumstances, including the wider familial and social context of the child?	50%
d) Does planning take sufficient account of the child's strengths and protective factors, and seek to reinforce or develop these as necessary?	50%
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 give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of victims?	50%
g) Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in planning, and are their views taken into account?	50%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	% yes
a) Does planning promote the safety and wellbeing of the child, sufficiently addressing risks?	100%
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?	0%
c) Does planning set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	100%
d) Does planning set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to manage those risks that have been identified?	0%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	% yes
a) Does planning promote the safety of other people, sufficiently addressing risk of harm factors?	50%

b) Does planning involve other agencies where appropriate?	0%
c) Does planning address any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims?	100%
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?	0%

2.3. Implementation and delivery (court disposals)

Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the child's desistance?	% yes
a) Are the delivered services those most likely to support desistance, with sufficient attention given to sequencing and the available timescales?	100%
b) Does service delivery account for the diversity issues of the child?	100%
c) Does service delivery reflect the wider familial and social context of the child, involving parents or carers, or significant others?	50%
d) Does service delivery build upon the child's strengths and enhance protective factors?	100%
e) Is sufficient focus given to developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child and their parents or carers?	100%
f) Does service delivery promote opportunities for community integration, including access to services post-supervision?	50%
g) Is sufficient attention given to encouraging and enabling the child's compliance with the work of the YOT?	100%
h) Are enforcement actions taken when appropriate?	0%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of the child?	% yes
a) Does service delivery promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	50%
b) Is the involvement of other organisations in keeping the child safe sufficiently well-coordinated?	0%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?	% yes
a) Are the delivered services sufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	100%

b) Is sufficient attention given to the protection of actual and potential victims?	100%
c) Is the involvement of other agencies in managing the risk of harm sufficiently well-coordinated?	0%

2. 4. Reviewing (court disposals)

Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	% yes
a) Does reviewing identify and respond to changes in factors linked to desistance?	0%
b) Does reviewing focus sufficiently on building upon the child's strengths and enhancing protective factors?	50%
c) Does reviewing include analysis of, and respond to, diversity factors?	0%
d) Does reviewing consider the personal circumstances, including the wider familial and social context of the child?	50%
e) Does reviewing consider motivation and engagement levels and any relevant barriers?	0%
f) Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in reviewing their progress and engagement, and are their views taken into account?	100%
g) Does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work to support desistance?	0%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	% yes
a) Does reviewing identify and respond to changes in factors related to safety and wellbeing?	0%
b) Is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in promoting the safety and wellbeing of the child?	0%
c) Does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	0%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	% yes
a) Does reviewing identify and respond to changes in factors related to risk of harm?	0%
b) Is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in managing the risk of harm?	50%

c) Does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan all of work to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	50%
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3.1. Assessment (out-of-court disposals)

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	% yes
a) Is there sufficient analysis of offending behaviour, including the child's acknowledgement of responsibility for, attitudes towards and motivations for their offending?	60%
b) Does assessment sufficiently analyse diversity issues?	80%
c) Does assessment consider personal circumstances, including the wider familial and social context of the child?	80%
d) Does assessment utilise information held by other agencies?	40%
e) Does assessment focus on the child's strengths and protective factors?	100%
f) Does assessment analyse the key structural barriers facing the child?	60%
g) Is sufficient attention given to understanding the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change?	80%
h) Does assessment give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of victims, and opportunities for restorative justice?	60%
i) Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in their assessment, and are their views taken into account?	60%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	% yes
a) Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risks to the safety and wellbeing of the child?	60%
b) Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including other assessments, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	20%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	% yes
a) Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risk of harm to others posed by the child, including identifying who is at risk and the nature of that risk?	40%
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?	60%

3.2. Planning (out-of-court disposals)	
Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?	% yes
a) Does planning set out the services most likely to support desistance, paying sufficient attention to the available timescales and the need for sequencing?	40%
b) Does planning sufficiently address diversity issues?	80%
c) Does planning take sufficient account of the child's personal circumstances, including the wider familial and social context of the child?	60%
d) Does planning take sufficient account of the child's strengths and protective factors, and seek to reinforce or develop these as necessary?	60%
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?	60%
f) Does planning take sufficient account of opportunities for community integration, including access to mainstream services following completion of out-of-court disposal work?	80%
g) Does planning give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victims?	60%
h) Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in planning, and are their views taken into account?	60%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	% yes
a) Does planning promote the safety and wellbeing of the child, sufficiently addressing risks?	60%
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?	60%
c) Does planning include necessary contingency arrangements for those risks that have been identified?	60%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	% yes
a) Does planning promote the safety of other people, sufficiently addressing risk of harm factors?	20%
b) Does planning involve other agencies where appropriate?	20%
c) Does planning address any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims?	20%
d) Does planning include necessary contingency arrangements for those risks that have been identified?	20%

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