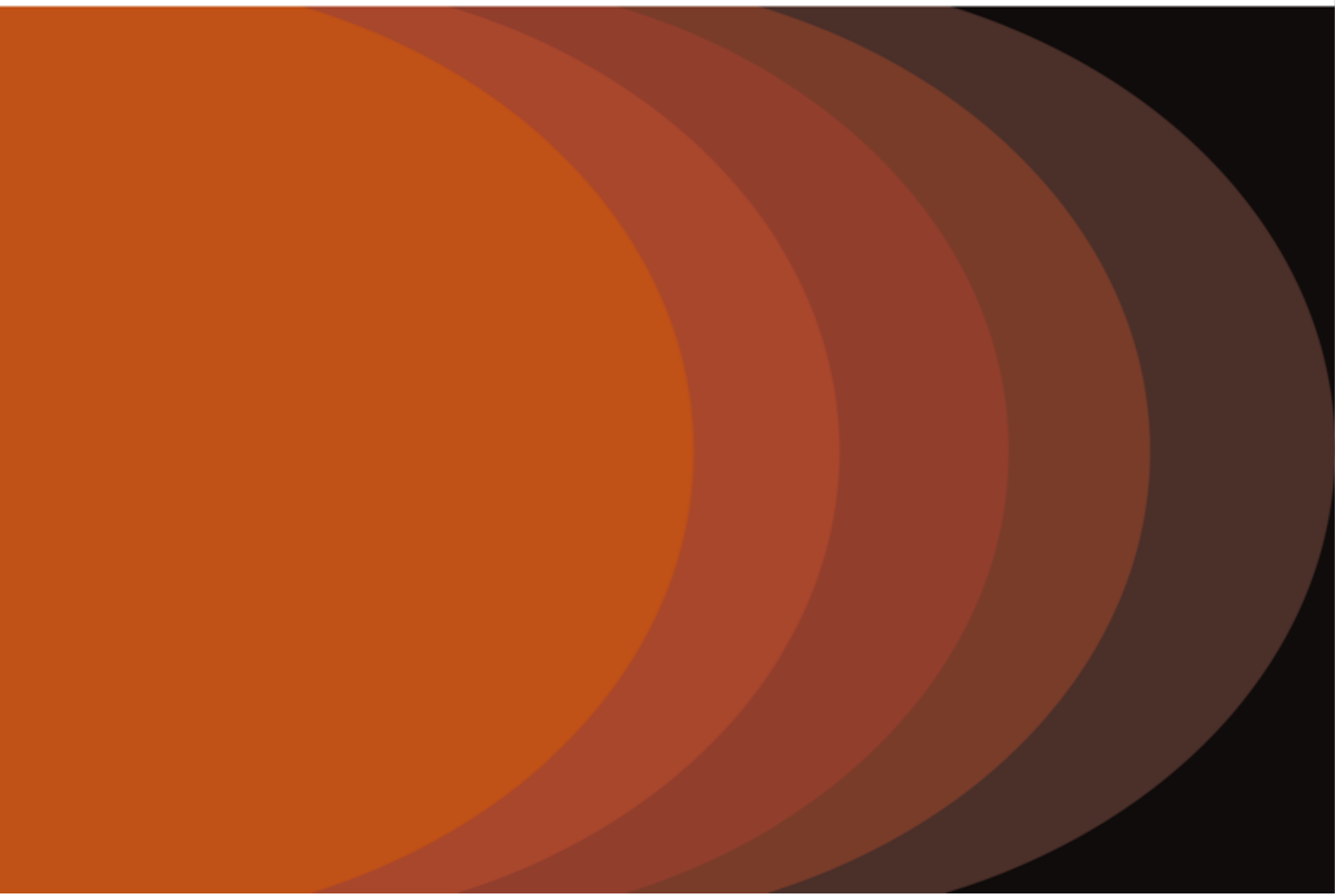




Her Majesty's
Inspectorate of
Probation

An inspection of youth offending services in
Hillingdon

HM Inspectorate of Probation, May 2022



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Acknowledgements

This inspection was led by HM Inspector Maria Jerram, supported by a team of inspectors and colleagues from across the Inspectorate. We would like to thank all those who helped plan and took part in the inspection; without their help and cooperation, the inspection would not have been possible.

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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This publication is available for download at: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation

Published by:
HM Inspectorate of Probation
1st Floor Civil Justice Centre
1 Bridge Street West
Manchester
M3 3FX

Follow us on Twitter [@hmiprobation](https://twitter.com/hmiprobation)

ISBN: 978-1-914478-43-7

Foreword

This inspection is part of our programme of youth offending service (YOS) inspections. We have inspected and rated Hillingdon 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, Hillingdon YJS was rated as 'Requires improvement'. We also inspected the quality of resettlement policy and provision, which was rated separately as 'Good'.

Like all youth justice services, Hillingdon YJS has been significantly impacted by the pandemic and we inspected casework that had been delivered during a period of national lockdown and restrictions. We found that the YJS had responded swiftly and proactively to the challenges presented. The service has also been through a recent restructure, which concluded in March 2021 and resulted in some changes of personnel. We saw a team of highly motivated practitioners and managers in Hillingdon, all committed to achieving positive outcomes for children.

The quality of partnership work in Hillingdon is a significant strength. Leaders have promoted the benefits of working with partner agencies to meet the needs of children and families and we saw evidence of this across the cases we inspected.

Services delivered to support desistance are the strongest area of work with children and this was consistent across out-of-court and post-court work. We considered that processes for out-of-court disposals were effective and promoted the delivery of good-quality services to children who have been diverted from court. The cohesive partnership approach contributed to the sound planning and delivery of out-of-court work. Planning sufficiently focused on desistance and keeping children safe and was appropriately informed by other agencies. Interventions were sufficient to keep the child and others safe and sequenced effectively.

However, we found that the risks children presented to others were often not fully understood or analysed. In relation to assessment, planning, and intervention and delivery, less than half of the post court cases we inspected were sufficient in relation to risk of harm, resulting in ratings for these three standards of 'Inadequate'

Inspectors assessed that not all staff have the level of understanding of risk management work required for those complex post-court cases and considered that further training and more effective management oversight are required to improve the quality of practice in this area.

The service has a resettlement policy in place, and there are good links between the YJS and custodial establishments. This is supporting the delivery of effective practice for children coming out of custody.

Hillingdon YJS has significant strengths but also areas it can improve on. In this report, we make a number of recommendations that we hope will enable Hillingdon to make the improvements needed to deliver a consistently high-quality service for children.



Justin Russell

HM Chief Inspector of Probation

Ratings

Hillingdon Youth Justice Service
Fieldwork started September 2021

Score 17/36

Overall rating

Requires improvement



1. Organisational delivery

1.1 Governance and leadership

Requires improvement



1.2 Staff

Good



1.3 Partnerships and services

Outstanding



1.4 Information and facilities

Good



2. Court disposals

2.1 Assessment

Inadequate



2.2 Planning

Inadequate



2.3 Implementation and delivery

Inadequate



2.4 Reviewing

Requires improvement



3. Out-of-court disposals

3.1 Assessment

Good



3.2 Planning

Good



3.3 Implementation and delivery

Good



3.4 Out-of-court disposal policy and provision

Good



4. Resettlement

4.1 Resettlement policy and provision

Good



Executive summary

Overall, Hillingdon YJS is rated as 'Requires improvement'. 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 We inspected the quality of resettlement policy and provision separately and rated this work as 'Good'. The findings and subsequent ratings in those domains are described below.

Organisational delivery

Hillingdon YJS faced significant challenges during the Covid pandemic, which made it difficult to undertake some aspects of its work. For example, police resources were limited during this time, which made it difficult to ask victims for their views and, due to national restrictions, staff were not always able to carry out assessments and interventions face-to-face. The number of cases inspected were drawn from the time period of the second national lockdown, which began in November 2020, and the third national lockdown, which began in January 2021.

Partnership and services have been rated as 'Outstanding' and this was an area of significant strength for Hillingdon. Information and facilities, and staffing have been rated as 'Good'. The arrangements for governance and leadership are rated as 'Requires improvement'.

The development of the YJS and Adolescent Development Service, and the conclusion of the service restructure in March 2021, were driven by an ongoing commitment to improve the services delivered to children and families.

The current Chair of the Board took up the post in 2017 and assessed that the board required improvement, with clearer expectations of board members. New board members were recruited and there has been a focus on ensuring that members understand their roles and responsibilities and consistently attend meetings. Board meetings have aligned strategic priorities, and the board has been responsive to requests made by the YJS Head of Service, for example in relation to additional resources.

While board members are active in their attendance, there were some gaps in their knowledge about the cohort of YJS children and we did not see convincing evidence that they consistently advocate for YJS children in their own agencies. There is a strong focus on early intervention and prevention, which is positive, and partners are clearly committed to this. However, there is less focus explicitly on what is being done for those children already involved in the youth justice system, with limited identification and focus on their specific needs, their outcomes or the risk they pose

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'.

to other people. Our case assessment scores show that governance arrangements and delivery plans are not yet leading to effective case supervision; there are some concerns about risk of harm assessment, planning and delivery for court disposals. For this reason, our overall rating for leadership is 'Requires improvement'.

Staff are comfortable with their workload, receive regular supervision and are offered opportunities for development through their roles as champions in specific areas of practice; for example, the service has a disproportionality champion. There is a champion forum and staff told us that discussions here are fed back to managers and provide an opportunity for them to influence service development. Staff are encouraged to take a child-centred approach to working with children and to use the range of services that are available to them.

Staff development is evidenced by the service promoting staff internally and by the training opportunities available. Some of those staff who have been promoted informed us that they are in the relatively early stages of their career in youth justice. Ensuring that staff have the necessary skills, oversight and management direction to assist them in managing high-risk statutory cases is essential; however, in post-court cases deficits in practice relating to the management of risk of harm had not been identified by the management or leadership team. This means that the YJS leadership team is not delivering and operationalising all aspects of the vision and strategy. Addressing this and ensuring that staff have the necessary skills and management direction to assist them in managing high-risk complex statutory cases must be a priority for the service.

The YJS service is part of a wider Adolescent Development Service, which means that children can access additional resources, including mentors. A range of prevention and early help services are available for children, as well as support for parents and carers. Children benefit from the support of the YJS health hub, with swift access to mental health support, substance misuse services, and speech and language assessments and interventions. Appropriate partnership staff are seconded to the YJS.

The YJS produces comprehensive performance reports that allow managers to analyse the data that relates to the profiles and needs of the children. Reports also monitor the performance of staff in relation to the completion of work.

There is a YJS resettlement policy, which was reviewed and updated as a result of findings from a thematic quality assurance exercise of children in custody. Training on the use of release on temporary licence to support the effective resettlement of children leaving custody was also delivered in response to the findings.

Key findings about organisational delivery are as follows:

- There has been a focused effort and ongoing commitment to improve partnership work and, as a result, joint working across agencies is a strength in Hillingdon.
- The Youth Justice Service Partnership Board (YJSPB) meetings are well attended by board members who are the right level of seniority and who have influence in other strategic fora.
- All appropriate policies and procedures are in place and they are regularly reviewed and updated.
- Staff development is evidenced through the promotion of staff internally and the training opportunities available.

- The facilities available to YJS children are good; they are welcoming and child-friendly.
- There is evidence of the service being an organisation that is keen to learn and develop.

But:

- Board members need to improve their understanding of the needs and profiles of children involved in the youth justice system, as there is limited focus on their specific needs, their outcomes, or the risk they pose to other people.
- The governance arrangements and delivery plans are not translating the vision and strategy into effective case supervision.
- There was limited convincing evidence that all board members actively advocate for YJS children in their own agencies.
- Limitations in the work to manage the risk of harm to others have not been identified by the leadership or management team and have not been captured by the risk management processes in place.
- Management oversight of casework needs to improve, particularly in relation to statutory casework.
- The leadership team needs to ensure that all staff have the necessary skills and management direction to assist them in managing high-risk complex cases.

Court disposals

We took a detailed look at 12 community sentences and one custodial sentence managed by the YJS. We also conducted 13 interviews with the relevant case managers. We examined the quality of assessment; planning; implementation and delivery of services; and reviewing. Each of these elements was inspected in respect of work done to address desistance, to keep the child safe, and to keep other people safe.

Our key findings about court disposals are as follows:

- Assessment is strong in the area of desistance.
- Case managers make good use of information held by other agencies to support their assessment of children's needs.
- Case managers involve children and their parents or carers in planning interventions.
- Case managers consider the diversity of children in the delivery of interventions and they form and sustain effective relationships with them and their parents or carers.
- The reviewing of interventions identifies and responds to changes in factors linked to desistance in the majority of cases.

But:

- The assessment, planning and delivery of work to manage risk of harm to others and keep people safe is inconsistent, with less than half the cases we inspected being sufficient in this element of supervision.

- The contingency arrangements to manage a child's safety and wellbeing and their risk of harm to others need improvement.
- Reviewing does not routinely analyse, or respond to, diversity factors.
- The delivery of work to manage risk of harm does not always reflect the assessed level of risk in the case.

Out-of-court disposals

We inspected 16 cases managed by the YJS that had received an out-of-court disposal. These were eight community resolution cases, three cautions, two youth conditional cautions and three other disposals. We interviewed the case managers in 13 cases.

We examined the quality of assessment; planning; and implementation and delivery of services. Each of these elements was inspected in respect of work done to address desistance, to keep the child safe and to keep other people safe. The quality of the work undertaken for each factor needs to be above a specified threshold for each aspect of supervision to be rated as satisfactory.

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

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

- Assessment analysed sufficiently how to support the child's desistance in 11 out of the 16 cases, and how to keep the child safe in 13 of the 16 cases.
- Case managers consider the child's personal circumstances, including their wider familial and social context.
- Case managers use information held by other agencies to inform their assessments of desistance, safety and wellbeing and risk of harm to others.
- Planning sets out the services most likely to support desistance, sequencing the delivery of interventions and taking into account diversity factors.
- In delivering interventions staff are focused on developing and maintaining good working relationships with children and families and encourage and enable the child's engagement with the work.
- The YJS has an out-of-court disposal policy in place and the delivery of work is supported by effective partnership arrangements.
- Assessments give sufficient attention to the victim's needs and wishes and to restorative justice, where these are relevant to the case.

But:

- Assessment of children's diversity needs is only done well enough in just over half of cases.
- The quality of work to assess the risk of harm to others is inconsistent.
- Contingency planning for managing risks to children's safety requires improvement.
- The level of engagement of children and their parents or carers in the assessment process is not consistent.

Resettlement

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

Our key findings about resettlement work are as follows:

- There is a resettlement policy in place, which has been updated and reviewed based on quality assurance findings.
- There are good links between the YJS staff and caseworkers in the custodial establishments.
- YJS health staff visit children in custody to support transition planning.
- Staff have been trained on the use of release on temporary licence to encourage them to use it in their release planning to support children transitioning back into the community.

But:

- Good-quality accommodation is difficult to find for children leaving custody and in one case this impacted significantly on resettlement planning.

Recommendations

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

The Director for Children’s Social Care

1. make sure that suitable placements are prioritised for children leaving custody who require accommodation, and that there is sufficient time to prepare the child for the transition, as well as to ensure effective resettlement planning.

The chair of the management board should:

2. work with management board members, so that they understand the profiles and needs of children involved with the YJS, to enable them to advocate on behalf of these children in their own services.

The youth justice service management board should:

3. ensure that it has sufficient mechanisms to assess the delivery of youth justice services and regularly review the quality of practice.

The youth justice service manager should:

4. improve the quality of management oversight of casework, specifically in relation to risk of harm work, and make sure staff are trained and supported to undertake good-quality risk assessments.

Background

Youth offending teams (YOTs) work with children aged 10 to 18 who have been sentenced by a court, or who have come to the attention of the police because of their offending behaviour but have not been charged – instead, they were dealt with out of court. HM Inspectorate of Probation inspects both these aspects of youth offending services.

YOTs are statutory partnerships, and they are multidisciplinary, to deal with the needs of the whole child. They are required to have staff from local authority social care and education services, the police, the National Probation Service and local health services.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.

Hillingdon is the second largest London borough and has a higher proportion of under 19-year olds than the London average (26 per cent). The landscape of the borough is varied, including parks and woodland as well as urban areas. The south of the borough is the most ethnically diverse area, and also has more areas of deprivation. Hillingdon sits on the outskirts of Greater London and is made up of three localities and 22 wards. The borough is bordered by Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Hounslow, Ealing, Harrow and Surrey.

Hillingdon YJS sits within the council's Social Care and Health Directorate. In 2019 the YJS was moved out of the Early Help, Prevention and Permanence Service and became part of a newly developed YJS and Adolescent Development Service. The previous YJS Head of Service role was regraded and a number of additional services, such as AXIS, were added to the larger portfolio of responsibilities for the post. The restructure has promoted an increased focus on partnership working and the alignment of priorities for delivering services to children and families.

In relation to national key performance indicators, the most recent data published by the YJB shows that the numbers of first-time entrants in Hillingdon are below the national average and custodial numbers are in line with national figures. Re-offending has increased significantly in Hillingdon: the rate of re-offending is 46.2 per cent, compared with a national average of 35.6 per cent.

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

Contextual facts

Population information⁴

117	First-time entrant rate per 100,000 in Hillingdon ⁵
167	First-time entrant rate per 100,000 in England and Wales
46%	Reoffending rate in Hillingdon ⁶
35.6%	Reoffending rate in England and Wales

309,014	Total population Hillingdon
30,621	Total youth population (10–17 years) in Hillingdon

Caseload information⁷

Age	10–14 years	15–17 years
Hillingdon YJS	18%	82%
National average	22%	78%

Race/ethnicity	White	Black and minority ethnic	Unknown
Hillingdon YJS	39%	61%	0%
National average	69%	28%	3%

Gender	Male	Female
Hillingdon YJS	89%	11%
National average	85%	15%

Additional caseload data⁸

25	Total current caseload: community sentences
0	Total current caseload in custody
2	Total current caseload on licence

⁴ Office for National Statistics. (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, reflecting the caseload at the time of the inspection announcement.

9	Total current caseload: out-of-court disposals
53	Percentage of current caseload with a child in need plan, child protection plan or looked after children plan
75	Percentage of current caseload with a learning disability or subject to an education, health and care plan
1	Number of children aged 16 and under who are not in school/pupil referral unit/alternative education
10	Number of children aged 16 and under in a pupil referral unit or alternative education (this will include some children included under the previous heading)
7	Number of children aged 17+ not in education, training or employment

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

Offence types ⁹	%
Violence against the person	50%
Robbery	6%
Drug offences	195%
Indictable motoring offences	6%
Other summary offences	13%
Other indictable offences	6%

⁹ Data from the cases assessed during this inspection.

1. Organisational delivery

Strengths

- There has been a focused effort and ongoing commitment to improving partnership work and, as a result, joint working across agencies is a strength in Hillingdon.
- The Youth Justice Service Partnership Board (YJSPB) meetings are well attended by board members who are of the right level of seniority and who have influence in other strategic fora.
- All appropriate policies and procedures are in place and are regularly reviewed and up to date.
- Staff development is evidenced through the promotion of staff internally and the training opportunities available.
- The facilities available to YJS children are good; they are welcoming and child-friendly.
- There is evidence of the service being an organisation that is keen to learn and develop.

Areas for improvement

- Board members need to improve their understanding of the needs and profiles of children involved in the youth justice system, as there is limited focus on their specific needs, their outcomes, or the risk they pose to other people.
- The governance arrangements and delivery plans are not translating the vision and strategy into effective case supervision.
- There was limited convincing evidence that board members actively advocate for YJS children in their own agencies.
- Limitations in the work to manage the risk of harm to others have not been identified by the leadership or management team and have not been captured by the risk management processes in place.
- Management oversight of casework needs to improve, particularly in relation to statutory casework.
- The leadership team needs to ensure that all staff have the necessary skills and management direction to assist them in managing high-risk complex cases.

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

1.1. Governance and leadership



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

Requires improvement

Key data

Total spend in previous financial year	1,366,175
Total projected budget for current financial year	1,460,150

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?

There has been a collaborative approach to setting the YJS's vision, involving a range of stakeholders, including senior leaders and practitioners. The vision aligns with other departments in children's services. It sets out a child-centred approach to understanding the challenges faced by children and families, including deprivation and discrimination, and improving opportunities for them to succeed. It also references the need to protect victims by taking a 'justice for all' approach.

We found that there was an expectation at board level that the YJS Head of Service will highlight issues and challenges to the board, rather than the board having mechanisms in place to proactively scrutinise service delivery to ensure that the vision and strategy are translated into effective case supervision.

Board members are active in their attendance, but we did not see convincing evidence that they proactively advocate for YJS children in their own agencies. There is a strong and positive focus on early intervention and prevention, but less focus on what is being done for those children already involved in the youth justice system. For example, some members of the board did not know if there were higher exclusion rates for the YJS children in relation to the mainstream population or were not clear about the numbers of children involved with the YJS and what needed to be done to prioritise these strategically. Three quarters of the YJS cohort have a learning disability or are subject to an education, health and care plan. However, we found that there was a lack of awareness about whether educational placements were suitable to meet the needs of children. Given the number of YJS children in alternative education placements, we would expect this to be a priority area for board members. At the time of the inspection the board had not examined the significant increase in re-offending rates in detail. The need to attend to this is recognised and developing and implementing a plan to address it is a priority for 2022.

The YJS produced a document on 'Exploring racial disparity in Hillingdon' in August 2021 and addressing inequality was identified as a priority for the partnership. A disproportionality action plan has been implemented. Although addressing disproportionality and over-representation is a strategic priority, and there has been horizon scanning to identify emerging concerns, some board members did not know which ethnic groups of children were currently over-represented in the YJS and recognised that they need to improve their awareness regarding this. The action plan refers to tailoring interventions to Asian children, but there is little relating specifically to black and mixed heritage boys, who are the over-represented groups of children in the service.

Do the partnership arrangements actively support effective service delivery?

Hillingdon Youth Justice Strategic Partnership Board (YJSPB) oversees the work of Hillingdon Youth Justice Service. Board members are of the right seniority to make decisions and have the authority to influence the agendas of their own agencies. At the time of the inspection the YJSPB was chaired by the Corporate Director, Social Care and Health, who attends several high-level meetings, such as the safeguarding board.

The Chair of the Board had a good knowledge of youth justice and had chaired the board for the past four years. The board has representation from all the relevant statutory partners, who are all at service manager or director level. There is also representation from other agencies, such as the service manager for Victim Support, the Head of Joint Commissioning and the chair of the court youth bench. There is no community representative, and the board is considering how to address this.

There are examples of the board sponsoring improvements for the YJS, such as getting agreement for ongoing funding of the AXIS service, securing funding for the speech, language and communication (SLC) post and getting agreement to purchase a new case management system.

Does the leadership of the YOT support effective service delivery?

Our detailed inspections of casework suggest that leadership of this YJS is not yet driving effective delivery against all of our quality standards. Although we found some positive scores around work relating to desistance, work to keep people safe, which is a key element of youth justice work, was insufficient in three areas of post-court work and this had not been identified by the leadership team before our inspection.

The Head of Service and the two operations managers provide a link to the management board and communicate key messages to staff to keep them updated. The majority of staff responding to our survey said that they were 'quite aware' of the activities of the board. A minority of staff felt that they were 'fully' updated on strategic issues such as staffing, with the majority reporting that they were 'mostly' or 'occasionally' updated.

All YJS staff, partnership staff and stakeholders are aware of the child-focused vision of the service and report that desistance, safety and wellbeing of children and risk of harm to the public are the primary focus.

We saw some good examples of practice where practitioners focused on the diversity needs of children in the direct work they delivered. However, this was not consistent

in all areas of practice, and this lack of consistency was not addressed by line managers.

There has been an increase in younger children coming into the service and work has started to respond to this and to review the age-appropriateness of interventions. The speech, language and communication worker has input into the YJS's interventions to make sure that they are suitable for younger children and those with additional needs. The worker has also formed good links with schools to support them in their work with this group of children, given the identified challenges that school exclusion creates for YJS children.

Most staff (81 per cent) responding to our survey said that they feel able to provide ideas and challenge managers. Most felt the views of staff were listened to and acted on either very well or quite well.

1.2. Staff



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

Good

Key staffing data¹⁰

Total staff headcount (full-time equivalent (FTE))	21
Vacancy rate (total unfilled posts as percentage of total staff headcount)	0.50%
Average caseload case managers (FTE equivalent) ¹¹	5.2
Average annual working days sickness (all staff)	34.7

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

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

Overall, we concluded that staff and managers have reasonable workloads and all staff who responded to our survey reported that they were happy with the level of work they were allocated. Sickness levels in the service appear to be high but we are informed that this relates to some longstanding health concerns rather than high levels of staff absence.

Hillingdon YJS experienced a tragic incident in 2019 which, understandably, had a significant impact on the staff team. We were impressed by the level of care and ongoing support that has been provided to the team in response to this.

There is a case allocation process in place that is responsive to the needs of children. There are processes in place to cover planned staff leave, which involve named

¹⁰ Data supplied by YJS and reflecting staffing at the time of the inspection announcement.

¹¹ Data supplied by YJS, based on staffing and workload at the time of the inspection announcement

colleagues covering meetings and appointments and ensuring that meaningful work is delivered to children when their case manager is away.

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

The workforce reflects the YJS children and families in terms of ethnicity but there are few male staff members. Addressing this has been a focus of the recent recruitment drive and a male worker is due to join the service shortly. There are also male volunteers and youth workers in the Adolescent Development Service who can support the delivery of interventions if needed.

All case-holding staff in the YJS have a degree-level qualification in a related field or have the Youth Justice Effective Practice Certificate. Some staff who have joined the service more recently have not had prior experience of youth justice work. Some of those who have been promoted into senior practitioner roles informed us that they are in the relatively early stages of their career in youth justice, with limited experience of managing complex and high-risk cases themselves, while also overseeing the management of other practitioners' casework. Inspectors did not feel that all case managers had the required level of knowledge and experience of working with high-risk cases.

In March 2021 the YJB audit tool was used to assess the skills of the staff team and any training needs. The self-assessments completed by staff members indicated some training needs around special educational needs and disability (SEND) and education, health and care plans, for example. Our inspection findings suggest that more training, support and guidance are required in relation to assessing and managing risk of harm.

The service has a mandatory training plan in place and staff have recently received trauma-informed training. However, due to the pandemic, there are waiting lists for several training sessions, including child sexual exploitation, missing children and 'walking in their shoes'. Unconscious bias and cultural competence training have been delivered to the staff team.

Hillingdon YJS has 12 volunteers, who are all referral order panel members. The volunteers we met with felt they had received an excellent induction and training for their role. The YJS uses a YJB training pack as part of its volunteer training, and includes topics such as diversity, the General Data Protection Regulation, safeguarding and restorative justice.

The service has three seconded police officers, who lead on out-of-court disposals, attend relevant risk panels and act as the conduit for sharing information and intelligence in relation to children and any risk to staff safety when they are undertaking home visits. It also has a half-time seconded probation officer who leads on transition to the probation service for children approaching 18 years old. We noted that the probation officer post had been vacant for six months before a new member of staff was recruited in March 2021.

We did not see any formal succession planning documents that set out the progression opportunities available, but we did meet with several members of staff who have been promoted within the service. Staff felt there were appropriate opportunities to develop and progress.

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

There is a corporate induction process in place and elements of this are specific to the YJS. There is an expectation that, as part of their induction, all staff will complete online equality and diversity training within their first month of employment.

Staff receive regular supervision, and they can also access reflective group supervision that is peer-led. Staff are satisfied with the frequency and quality of the supervision they receive, describing it as 'very' good (67 per cent) or 'quite' good (33 per cent). One manager told us that they have used informal capability processes to address underperformance and to support a staff member to improve their practice. They said that this had positive results.

In the past 18 months quality assurance processes and audits have been strengthened. Recently there was a joint audit with social care services and an audit of youth caution and youth conditional caution cases. The YJS has also introduced a health hub tracker, which enables it to identify and monitor children's levels of speech, language and communication needs.

We saw evidence of management oversight and discussion on case files, but the quality of this was inconsistent. We assessed management oversight to be effective in seven of the 12 post-court cases where it was required and in seven of the 13 relevant out-of-court cases. We found that some staff with line management responsibility were inexperienced in relation to the management of high-risk cases; for example, they lacked knowledge and understanding of Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) and processes.

All but one member of staff has a current and up-to-date appraisal in place and most have found the process to be valuable.

Are arrangements for learning and development comprehensive and responsive?

A mandatory training plan is in place and staff can access all training that is available through the council as well as the YJB inset training. The YJS has carried out a skills audit and the findings will inform future training plans. Staff have been allocated 'champion' roles, for example in relation to custody and diversity, and these align with the strategic priorities of the service.

The service-wide training delivered has been understandably limited due to the pandemic, but online learning courses and training have been promoted. Staff are encouraged to source learning opportunities that align with their areas of interest to support their development. Other training that staff have received includes: 'Front line manager', provided by the Youth Justice Improvement Board; understanding formative experiences of children; unconscious bias; a five-day advanced modern slavery course; an apprenticeship in management; contextual safeguarding, provided through Bedfordshire University; risk training – risk management (YJB); and AIM3, working with harmful sexual behaviour training. We assessed that staff from all backgrounds are supported to develop and progress.

Do managers pay sufficient attention to staff engagement?

The staff team are motivated and enthusiastic about delivering high-quality services to children and are encouraged to be creative in their work. They are keen to support children's families and improve outcomes for them.

Staff felt well supported following the serious incident in 2019. They were all offered clinical support within 24 hours and feel that the concern for their wellbeing has been maintained. Staff feel that they are well supported by managers. There is a

reward and recognition scheme where colleagues can nominate each other for an award, which is given at the team meeting in the form of vouchers. This is appreciated by staff.

Most staff responding to our survey felt that their individual diversity needs were recognised and responded to well. The majority feel that they able to provide ideas and to challenge their managers and that, in most cases, they are listened to either 'quite' well or 'very well'.

1.3. Partnerships and services



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

Outstanding

Caseload characteristics

Percentage of current caseload with mental health issues	64%
Percentage of current caseload with substance misuse issues	72%
Percentage of current caseload with an education, health and care plan or learning disability	75%
Percentage of current caseload with a child in need plan, child protection plan or looked after child plan	53%

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

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

The YJS has an up-to-date analysis of the profiles of the children it works with, which includes offence types, age, gender, sentencing patterns and ethnicity. The analysis also considers disproportionality and over-represented groups. The YJS recently produced a document exploring racial disparity, which references outcomes at court, pre-court, and offences.

The service has processes in place to gather the views of children and families.

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

The YJS is part of the Adolescent Development Service, which means that YJS children can benefit from additional resources such as mentors, sexual health practitioners and groupwork, and the AXIS project, which provides support for children at risk of exploitation. These additional services enable case managers to create tailored interventions for children to support and promote their desistance.

We were impressed by the 'Brilliant Parenting' service, which supports parents with a wide range of needs, including those whose children have been affected by criminal exploitation. 16 parents from diverse backgrounds who have completed the programme themselves have been recruited as facilitators. The local authority has made a substantial investment to train another 60. Also, to support parenting

services, the YJS has introduced monthly parent and child review meetings. Evidence suggests that this approach is promoting parental engagement.

The YJS sits on a range of panels to support children to remain in education. Adolescent and detached services have played a role in helping children to engage in education. This is supported by a committed education worker in the YJS and good working relationships with the SEND team.

The health hub includes a half-time Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) worker and a full-time liaison and diversion worker, as well as the 'Sorted' substance misuse provision. There are no waiting lists for access to these services. The need for speech and language provision was raised at board level and additional resources were made available to fund a full-time SLC worker for the YJS. All children now receive an SLC assessment, and the practitioner offers colleagues practical advice on working with children with SLC needs, such as use of language and written materials.

The YJS restorative justice offer is strong. Those delivering victim work have access to a range of resources, including videos and exercises to complete with children.

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

The YJS works well with the adolescent social work team, and the joint work they deliver to safeguard children from harm is strong. There is a named independent reviewing officer (IRO) for remanded children. This brings consistency for children and the worker has developed expertise in this area. This promotes effective safeguarding work for children in custody.

The YJS can access a range of services from the Adolescent Development Service and this enables them to put together packages of support that meet children's individual needs.

The courts are aware of the services the YJS can provide and they are satisfied with the quality of the reports they receive. The chair of the youth court bench sits on the YJS management board, which means they can give direct feedback to board members and be kept informed of developments within the service.

Involvement of children and their parents or carers

As part of the inspection process, children are invited to participate in a text survey, and those whose cases are inspected are offered the opportunity to speak to an inspector to give their feedback.

Ten children returned the text survey, with seven rating the YJS as eight or more out of 10 (with 10 being 'fantastic').

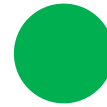
One child described the help they received from their YJS worker and their social worker:

"They both helped to keep me out of trouble and focus on better things for my future and they were always supportive".

Another child told us:

“The YOS have access to loads of different services. I wanted to do a building course and the YOS got me straight onto it. I’ve completed that and now I’m doing my CSCS ticket”.

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 a range of policies and guidance and most staff know where to access them. They are kept informed of any changes to documentation via emails and team meetings. There are up-to-date processes and guidance in place, including victim work, referral order and serious incident processes. The service has produced an out-of-court disposal guide for parents and children to support their understanding of the implications and benefits of accepting an out-of-court disposal.

The Safer Hillingdon information-sharing protocol is an agreement between the partner organisations of the Safer Hillingdon Partnership. It facilitates and governs the sharing of information related to preventing, detecting and reducing crime and disorder.

There is a disproportionality champion and working group, and there have been discussions on disproportionality at team meetings. The YJS recognises that addressing disproportionality is a work in progress and there is much more to do.

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

The YJS is co-located with other services, which enables new YJS staff to shadow workers across other disciplines. This promotes joint working and effective information-sharing.

Covid-19 has had a significant impact on the service; however, service delivery to children has been maintained through virtual meetings. Some children who did not have laptops have been provided with them. As soon as possible after lockdown restrictions were introduced, the YJS created a ‘bubble’: a space with partitioning in place to allow safe face-to-face contact between case managers and children. During lockdown, staff produced home reparation packs. These included creative writing, designing posters on crime prevention, producing food recipes and working around the house.

The YJS’s new office is excellent: well furnished, accessible, bright and well resourced. It has been designed with children in mind, and the local authority’s youth voice board has had input into its development.

The building, which is used by other children's services, has a kitchen and private meeting spaces that YJS children are able to access. The YJS's overall approach to engaging children is to be flexible and to see people in places where they feel comfortable and safe. Staff use various venues to do this and also undertake home visits.

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

The service has been struggling with the Careworks database. It is difficult to extract reports from the system. The service has got around this by using other means of creating reports, and it has recently committed to purchasing a more suitable database. The AXIS system supports information-sharing between partners. All YJS and partnership staff we met with said that this had helped them to understand emerging themes and trends in offending and anti-social behaviour 'hotspots'. This helps the partnership, including the YJS, to assess and attend to safeguarding concerns in real time to support safety planning. We saw an excellent example of contextual safeguarding work that had been done as a result of effective information-sharing via AXIS.

YJS staff have access to children's social care databases and this promotes work to keep children safe. Police officers share information from their systems and keep staff updated on matters pertaining to the safeguarding of children and risk of harm to others.

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

The education and health trackers have enabled managers to better understand operational education and health outcomes and challenges for children.

The service is using the YJB re-offending tracker, but we did not see evidence that it is using the disproportionality tracker.

There are processes in place to gather the views of children and families. Positively, Hillingdon Council has set up a youth voice board to ensure that services can obtain children's views and use their feedback to develop and deliver services. There are two YJS children on this board. YJS children are also involved in interviewing staff.

The service has done a number of deep-dive audits, for example into youth conditional cautions. It has communicated the learning from these audits to staff and made procedural changes as a result of the findings.

There is clear guidance on quality assurance in place and we saw evidence of themed audits being undertaken. For example, a joint case audit of youth justice and looked after children highlighted concerns about children moving out of the borough and losing contact with Hillingdon YJS. As a result, the Hillingdon YJS worker now stays actively involved and in contact with all children who are managed elsewhere. The management team had benchmarked cases against HMI Probation's standards and referenced reports such as the out-of-court disposal and resettlement thematic reports in developing their processes and practice.

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.

The population of Hillingdon is 60 per cent white; 39 per cent of children who are cautioned or sentenced are white. Children who identify as black, Asian and minority ethnic who become known to the YJS make up 61 per cent of the YJS caseload. More specifically, black children make up 32 per cent of the YJS cohort and this is a significant and concerning over-representation, given that black people make up only 10 per cent of the general population. The YJS is aware of this over-representation and has put a disproportionality action plan in place. However, we found that no specific services or approaches to working with this group of children have been established. The YJS interventions are being reviewed by the disproportionality lead to assess what might be needed to offer additional support to black children to make sure their specific needs are met.

For children known to the YJS, 64 per cent were assessed as having emotional mental health and wellbeing concerns and 75 per cent have a learning disability, learning difficulty or an education, health and care plan. These statistics reflect the vulnerability of this cohort of children. We found that the services in place were sufficient to meet their needs.

The YJS has analysed and reviewed youth cautions and youth conditional cautions, including looking at protected characteristics. Similarly, it has analysed the liaison and diversion provision in order to understand which groups of children are accessing the service so that it can assess any disparity.

11 per cent of the YJS cohort are girls and staff are able to refer to the Adolescent Development Service girls' group if the YJS assesses that this is appropriate to their needs.

2. Court disposals

We took a detailed look at 12 community sentences and one custodial sentence managed by the YJS. We also conducted 13 interviews with the relevant case managers. We examined the quality of assessment; planning; implementation and delivery of services; and reviewing. Each of these elements was inspected in respect of work done to address desistance, keep the child safe and keep other people safe.

The rating we apply to each standard is driven by the percentage of cases we assess as being sufficient against each of these three key elements. As we regard each of the elements as equally and separately important, the rating applied to each standard is determined by the element attracting the lowest proportion of satisfactory answers. In the case of Hillingdon YJS, this was the proportion of cases rated satisfactory in relation to the management of risk of harm to others. For assessment, planning, and intervention and delivery, less than half of the cases we inspected were sufficient in relation to risk of harm, resulting in ratings for these three standards of 'Inadequate'. Reviewing has been given the judgement of 'Requires improvement'.

By contrast, assessment of desistance was a strength for the YJS and in 85% (11 out of 13) of the cases inspected we considered the assessment had sufficiently analysed how to support the child's desistance. Case managers provided an analysis of the child's offending, which included an understanding of their personal circumstances, their maturity and their motivation to stop offending. Case managers also considered any structural barriers that the child faced that may impact on their engagement with their court order and their progress generally. They used information held by other agencies to inform assessments in almost every case, and this provided a holistic view of the child's needs. There was a direct victim in seven of the 13 cases we inspected, and in all but one of these cases we were satisfied that the victim's needs and wishes had been considered and opportunities for restorative justice had been explored. Assessments did not always consider diversity factors or focus sufficiently on the child's strengths.

In all but one case we agreed with the case manager's classification of risk to the child's safety and wellbeing. However, in just under half of cases the case manager had not sufficiently analysed how the identified risks would be managed.

We also found there were significant deficits in the quality of work to manage the risk of harm that children posed to others. We assessed the quality of risk assessments to be good enough in less than half (six out of 13) of the cases we inspected. While case managers obtained information from other agencies and professionals involved with the child, they did not use this to good effect to analyse risk of harm and assess what controls and interventions were needed.

Planning in relation to desistance and safety and wellbeing was satisfactory in eight out of the 13 cases we inspected. We found that planning took account of a child's personal circumstances, as well as their level of maturity and motivation to change.

Victims' wishes were considered in most cases, and, on the whole, children and their parents or carers were involved in the planning process. Diversity factors were not always considered, and neither were strengths and protective factors. Planning to address the risk of harm to others requires substantial improvement and it was assessed to sufficiently focus on keeping others safe in only five of the 13 cases inspected. It did not take into account risks to specific victims, nor did it set out the

necessary controls and interventions to promote the safety of other people. Contingency risk planning was ineffective or absent in the majority of cases.

Implementation and delivery of services was satisfactory in the majority of cases in the areas of desistance and safety and wellbeing (10 out of 13 cases inspected). Case managers focused on developing and maintaining an effective relationship with children and their parents or carers and they encouraged and enabled the child's compliance. However, work to deliver interventions to manage risk of harm was sufficient in only three of the 13 inspected cases. We were concerned to find that the services delivered were insufficient to address the identified risk of harm and did not promote the protection of actual and potential victims.

Reviewing identified and responded to changes in factors linked to desistance in the majority of cases, with work in relation to desistance continuing to be a strength. When reviewing assessments, case managers focused on the safety and wellbeing of children and the effectiveness of interventions in nine of the 13 cases inspected. Reviewing focused sufficiently on keeping other people safe in eight of the 13 cases and did not respond to the changing risks that the child was presenting in half of the cases where we would have expected to see this happen. Reviewing to manage the risk of harm to others is considered an area for development.

Our key findings about court disposals are as follows:

Strengths

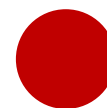
- Assessment is strong in its consideration of desistance.
- Case managers make good use of information held by other agencies to support their assessments of children.
- Case managers involve children and their parents or carers in planning interventions.
- Case managers form and sustain effective relationships with children and their parents or carers.
- Reviewing identifies and responds to changes in factors linked to desistance in the majority of cases.

Areas for improvement

- The assessment, planning and delivery of work to manage risk of harm to others and keep people safe was judged as insufficient in over half the cases inspected. Assessments need to better analyse risk of harm and assess what controls and interventions are needed.
- The quality of assessments and plans to keep children safe needs to improve.
- Identification of contingency arrangements to manage a child's safety and wellbeing and their risk of harm to others needs development.
- The work delivered to children focuses on their strengths and protective factors in less than half of cases.
- Reviewing does not routinely include analysis of, or responses to, diversity factors.

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 rating¹² for assessment is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	85%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	54%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	46%

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

Assessing desistance was an area of strength. Case managers were confident in their ability to understand what needed to be done to engage children and families and consistently did this well. In analysing the child's offending, they paid attention to the child's personal circumstances and considered what factors were contributing to the child's offending and what might be needed to help them to move on in their lives. Assessments were informed and enhanced by the inclusion of information held by other agencies. Assessments undertaken by the SLC worker and other specialist workers added value to the overall assessment and understanding of the child.

Assessments included the views of the child and their parents and carers in all but one case. However, case managers did not consistently pay attention to diversity factors. We assessed this to be sufficient in eight of the 12 cases inspected.

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?

We agreed with the assessed safety and wellbeing classification in all but one case. However, we found that the analysis and detail which accompanied the assessed risks were not always commensurate with the risk categorisation. Details about the risks to the child's safety and what needed to be done to reduce and manage them were lacking. Assessments did not include all information that was known about the child and these significant gaps undermined the quality of the work delivered to keep the child safe. Although case managers accessed and included information held by other professionals in most cases, they did not always use this to analyse and understand the current presenting risks to children.

¹² 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.

In the following case, given that there had been previous concerns, we would have expected the case manager to be more curious and analytical about the child's missing from home episodes:

Poor practice example

The case manager had considered the historical concerns relating to possible child sexual exploitation. However, they did not utilise or analyse the information provided within the parent and child self-assessment, stating that the child sometimes stayed out or away from home, which poses the question around current safety and wellbeing concerns. Although child sexual exploitation concerns were raised, this was never explored further.

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?

In only 46 per cent of cases (six out of 13) did assessments identify and analyse any risk of harm to others posed by the child, including identifying who was at risk and the nature of that risk.

As in assessments of safety and wellbeing, the analysis of risk was not reflective of or commensurate with the classification of the level of risk, so a depth of understanding regarding the risks was missing. This made it difficult to fully ascertain what risks of harm a child might present and what actions needed to be taken to manage these effectively.

One inspector noted:

“The risk of harm assessment lists a chronology of concerning police intelligence, which, whilst relevant to the assessment, is not contextualised or explained in a manner that provides sufficient analysis. There is not enough information around timescales or imminence that reflects a high level of risk of harm. The assessment does not take into account the wide-ranging harm-related behaviour reflected in the child’s previous convictions, which were initially acquisitive, but later progressed to violence and possession of weapons.”

2.2. Planning



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

Inadequate

Our rating¹³ for planning is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does planning focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	62%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	62%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	38%

¹³ 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 on supporting the child’s desistance?

Eight out of the 13 cases we inspected were satisfactory for planning in relation to desistance. We found that planning took account of a child’s personal circumstances, as well as their level of maturity and motivation to change, in most cases. Diversity factors were considered in just over half of cases, and there was not enough focus on developing the child’s strengths and protective factors. This is an area for improvement.

In most cases, planning took sufficient account of the child’s levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change, and the child and their parent or carers were meaningfully involved in the planning process.

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

Eight out of the 13 cases we inspected were sufficient for planning in relation to safety and wellbeing. Information from other agencies was gathered and used to inform the planning process. Planning set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child in just over three-quarters of cases. However, there were gaps in contingency planning, so it was not clear what action would need to be taken if concerns about the child’s safety increased.

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

Planning to address the risk of harm to others requires substantial improvement and was judged to be sufficient in only five of the 13 cases inspected. Victims’ needs and wishes were considered in just four of the 12 cases where we would have expected them to have been prioritised. Planning did not consistently set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote the safety of other people and contingency planning was ineffective or absent in a number of cases.

2.3. Implementation and delivery



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

Inadequate

Our rating¹⁴ 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?	77%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of the child?	77%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?	23%

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 Annex 2 for a more detailed explanation.

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

In the majority of cases, implementation and delivery of services to support desistance was satisfactory. Case managers focused on developing and maintaining an effective relationship with children and their parents or carers and they encouraged and enabled the child's engagement. There was a strong focus on diversity and the child's personal circumstances were considered. In nine of the 13 inspected cases, sufficient services were delivered to address the factors identified as related to desistance.

An inspector noted the following positive example of an effective intervention delivered to support desistance:

"Delivery of work is covered by the case manager appointments. Support from the education, training and employment (ETE) worker promotes engagement with BUILD, and this is strengthened by the support of a mentor. The sessions delivered appeared to be wide-ranging and covered aspects of the child's heritage and his feelings about his father being in prison. Appropriate liaison took place between the YJS case manager and his mother. When concerns were raised about the child disengaging from his ETE provision, the case manager attempted to explore the barriers to these with him."

However, the level of attention paid to building on the child's strengths through delivering interventions was variable and done well enough in less than half of cases.

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

The delivery of services to promote the child's safety and wellbeing was evident in just over three-quarters of cases, and the case manager had coordinated the involvement of other organisations in the majority of the relevant cases. Overall, the implementation and delivery of services supported the child's safety effectively in 10 out of the 13 cases inspected.

One inspector noted:

"There is evidence of a number of strategy and professionals' meetings being held with agencies working with Kevin, where critical issues such as peer influence and pressure, lifestyle, carrying weapons and concerning peer associating were discussed and actions identified. Discussions considered any barriers to engagement and how these would be overcome. There was discussion about issues that put the family at risk and how work could be done with Kevin's mother to support her to consider her options about how best to keep her family safe."

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

Services delivered to keep other people safe, by managing and minimising the risk of harm, were evident in only three of the 13 cases inspected. We were concerned to find that the services delivered were insufficient to address the identified risk of harm and did not promote the protection of actual and potential victims in just under half of relevant cases. Other services and professionals were only involved in the delivery of interventions to manage risk of harm in six of the 10 cases where we would have

expected them to be, and this undermined the quality of the work delivered in those cases.

2.4. Reviewing



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

Requires improvement

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

	% 'Yes'
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	77%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	69%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	62%

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

Reviews resulted in the identification of, and a subsequent response to, changes in the factors linked to desistance in the majority of the cases inspected. They built on the child's strengths in just half of cases and did not routinely consider the child's diversity needs. The child and their parents or carers had been involved meaningfully in the process, and their views taken into account, in all but one of the relevant cases.

Reviewing identified and responded to changes in factors linked to desistance in the majority of relevant cases and work in this area was a strength overall.

Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

Case managers focused on the safety and wellbeing of children in the reviewing of assessments and the effectiveness of interventions being delivered in nine out of 13 cases. In the majority of cases where there had been changes to the child's circumstances, plans were appropriately reviewed and, in most cases, and this was informed by information held by other agencies. Reviewing led to changes in the interventions to manage safety and wellbeing in most cases where this was appropriate, and where we expected to see adaptations made.

Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

Reviewing focused sufficiently on keeping other people safe in eight of 13 cases we inspected. These assessed the child as posing a medium, high, or very high risk of harm to other people. Reviewing only responded to changes in half of the cases where there had been changes in the factors linked to the risk of harm to other people. Positively, where it did happen, it included the input of other professionals as well as children and their parents or carers. However, reviewing did not always impact on the work being delivered to manage and reduce risk of harm and keep other people safe.

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.

3. Out-of-court disposals

We inspected 16 cases managed by the YJS that had received an out-of-court disposal. These consisted of two youth conditional cautions, three youth cautions, eight community resolutions and three other disposals. We interviewed the case managers in 13 cases.

We examined the quality of assessment; planning; and implementation and delivery of services. Each of these elements in each case was inspected in respect of work done to address desistance, work to keep the child safe and work to keep other people safe. The quality of the work undertaken for each factor needs to be above a specified threshold for each aspect of supervision to be rated as satisfactory.

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

The ratings panel applied professional discretion to the results of the assessment standard. After considering all of the evidence, and the views of the lead inspector, the HM Inspectorate of Probation ratings panel agreed that the judgements on the assessment and planning standards should move from 'Requires improvement' to 'Good'.

Assessing the child's safety and wellbeing was the strongest area of assessment practice. Case managers considered the child's strengths and protective factors, and their level of maturity, ability and motivation to change. Where a victim had been identified, their needs and wishes were taken into account and the views of parents or carers were considered as part of the assessment. Work to assess the risk of harm to others had some gaps. Assessments did not always identify and analyse all risk of harm factors and it was not always clear who was at risk or what the specific nature of the risk was. However, overall, we were satisfied that the quality of assessment across the three key areas of desistance, safety and wellbeing and risk of harm was sufficient in enough cases to meet the threshold for a 'Good' rating.

Planning was rated as 'Good' following the application of professional discretion at the ratings panel. Case managers took account of the child's diversity issues, their personal circumstances and their level of motivation to change. Planning set out the opportunities for community integration and access to mainstream services following completion of the out-of-court disposal work. Case managers considered the needs and wishes of victims in most cases; however, they only included the child and parents or carers in two-thirds of cases. In most cases, planning involved other agencies where appropriate. For both safety and wellbeing and risk of harm to others, improvements are needed in setting out the contingency arrangements to manage risks.

Implementation and delivery of services was also rated as 'Good' and there were strengths in the delivery of services around risk of harm to others and desistance. Case managers identified the factors that were most likely to support the child's desistance, took account of their diversity issues and involved parents, carers, or significant others. They focused on developing and maintaining a good working relationship with children and families and encouraged and enabled the child's compliance with the work.

The service has a joint out-of-court disposal policy with the police, and escalation processes are in place. An assessment with the child and their parents is completed

before the decision on the disposal is made, and this adds value to the process. The assessment form includes an assessment of risk of harm and safety and wellbeing. As part of this initial assessment process, the child is assessed at this stage by the SLC worker and the restorative justice worker and offered an assessment by the liaison and diversion worker. This is good practice. The case manager then presents the case at the out-of-court disposal panel within 12 days of the case being allocated. We assess that these processes assist in strengthening assessments and implementation and delivery, particularly in relation to understanding and managing the risk children might present to others. Triage interventions are four weeks long, and exit planning is a focus from the start of the order. The aim is to integrate children into mainstream services where they can receive ongoing support. There is the flexibility to work with a child for longer if they need additional support.

There are processes in place for the YJS to be informed of any children who receive a 'street community resolution' that is issued by the police. The YJS then makes contact with the child to see if there is any support they can offer. We considered this to be good practice.

Strengths

- Assessment analysed sufficiently how to support the child's desistance in 11 out of the 16 cases, and how to keep the child safe in 13 of the 16 cases.
- Case managers consider the child's personal circumstances, including their wider familial and social context.
- Case managers use information held by other agencies to inform their understanding of children.
- Planning sets out the services most likely to support desistance, sequencing the delivery of interventions and taking into account diversity factors.
- The quality of work delivered to support desistance is a significant strength.
- Staff are focused on developing and maintaining a good working relationship with children and families and encourage and enable the child's compliance with the work.
- The YJS has an out-of-court disposal policy in place and the delivery of work is supported by effective partnership work.

Areas for improvement

- Assessment of a child's diversity needs was done well enough in just over half of cases.
- Contingency planning to manage the risk of harm to other people requires significant improvement.
- Assessing the risk of harm to others had some gaps, in that assessments did not always identify and analyse all risk of harm factors and it was not always clear who was at risk or what the specific nature of the risk was.

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

3.1. Assessment



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

Good

Our rating¹⁶ for assessment is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	69%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	81%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	63%

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

Assessments of desistance considered the child's personal circumstances, including their wider familial and social context, in 15 out of the 16 inspected cases. Case managers included information from other agencies in almost every case, and routinely considered the child's strengths and protective factors. They paid attention to understanding what was motivating the child's offending and what might help them to desist, and also considered the victim's wishes and the suitability of applying restorative justice processes. Case managers focused on the child's strengths and how to promote these. There was less focus on the child's diversity, which was considered in only nine of the 16 cases. Parents and carers were involved in the assessment process in just over two-thirds of cases, although in some cases it was noted that this was because of their wish not to be involved, rather than because the case manager had not encouraged their involvement.

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?

Assessments analysed the child's safety and wellbeing in over three-quarters (13 out of 16) of the cases we inspected. In all but one case, the assessments included appropriate information from other agencies, including children's social care. We agreed with the classification of safety and wellbeing in every case. In the majority of cases, the classification of risk was high.

An inspector noted:

"There is sufficient assessment of safety and wellbeing, using historical information from children's services and a previous YJS assessment. Adverse childhood experiences are identified, as Malachi experienced physical abuse from his father when his parents were living together and he has witnessed domestic violence and his parental substance misuse within the family home. Malachi had received threats

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.

from peers and there were concerns about his possible involvement in supplying drugs. These factors were all considered in the assessment of safety and wellbeing.”

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?

Professional discretion was applied by the HMI Probation ratings panel to this area of practice to increase the rating from 'Requires improvement' to 'Good'. In the majority of cases, case managers used information held by other agencies to inform their risk assessments. This was positive, but the information was not always analysed as well as it could have been. We agreed with the assessed risk level in the majority of cases. Most children presented with a low or medium level of risk of harm to others. In the four cases where we did not agree with the risk classification, it was because the risk of harm had been under-assessed in our view and the required classification should have been higher.

3.2. Planning



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

Good

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

	% 'Yes'
Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?	69%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	63%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	81%

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

Overall, planning supported the child's desistance sufficiently in 11 of the 16 cases. In 14 of the cases, staff planned the services most likely to support desistance, paying attention to appropriate timescales and sequencing. In 13 cases, planning addressed diversity issues sufficiently, and in 15 cases staff took account of the child's wider familial and social context. The case manager considered the child's level of maturity and motivation to change in nearly every case, and in three-quarters of cases, staff had taken account of the child's strengths and protective factors.

This was demonstrated in the case below, where an inspector noted:

“Planning is proportionate for the four-week triage intervention timescale. There is a focus on the child's interests and aspirations (he wants to achieve his CSCS card and start a construction course at college in order to work on building sites) and plans to refer to the participation officer (to access ConnecMe2 service provisions). Plans were made to refer the child for an SLC assessment and for a referral to Sorted regarding substance misuse.”

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 Annexe 2 for a more detailed explanation.

Case managers had taken account of opportunities for community integration and access to mainstream services for the child after completing their out-of-court disposal in 13 of the 16 cases. Planning was proportionate to the disposal type in the cases inspected, which meant that interventions could be completed within the timescales.

Involving the child and their parents or carers in the planning process is an area for improvement, as we noted this had not happened in six of the 16 cases.

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

Professional discretion was applied to this area of practice. In 10 of the relevant 16 cases, planning promoted the child's safety and wellbeing. In 11 relevant cases, information from other agencies was included. In six cases, the overall quality of planning to keep the child safe was weakened, as contingency arrangements for making changes to the level of risk were not evident.

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

Planning to keep other people safe was an area of strength in the delivery of out-of-court disposal work. We found that some improvements could be made to contingency planning, but, overall, planning met our standards in 13 of the 16 inspected cases. In almost every case, the planning involved other agencies appropriately. This was supported by the way planning started at the out-of-court disposal panel where other professionals were present.

3.3. Implementation and delivery



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

Good

Our rating¹⁸ for implementation and delivery is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does service delivery effectively support the child's desistance?	81%
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of the child?	69%
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of other people?	88%

Does implementation and delivery focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?

Overall, support for the child's desistance was evident in 13 of the 16 cases inspected. Interventions to support desistance had been delivered in good time in 14 of the cases. The case manager had accounted for any diversity issues and had considered the social context of the child, involving parents or carers in the same number of cases.

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.

The delivery of the interventions promoted opportunities for community integration and access to mainstream services in all but two cases. Case managers developed and maintained an effective working relationship with the child and their parents or carers in most cases, and they routinely encouraged and enabled the child's compliance.

One inspector noted:

“Sufficient and proportionate services were delivered in this triage case. Additional support from the Adolescent Development Service was offered but declined by both Kyle and his mother. There is evidence that the YJS worker developed a positive working relationship with Kyle and his mother, which promoted their engagement. An exit plan was prepared that paid attention to accessing community services if the child wanted additional ongoing support.”

Does implementation and delivery focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

The safety and wellbeing of the child were promoted through service delivery in 11 of the 16 relevant cases. Case managers involved other agencies in keeping children safe in three-quarters of relevant cases.

In one case, an inspector noted:

“There were a number of indicators for child criminal exploitation for the child and this was well documented within the case. The implementation and delivery to promote safety and wellbeing has been supported through the multi-agency relationships. There are regular complex strategy meetings and risk management meetings to support this. In between meetings, there was regular communication between the YJS, police, social care and AXIS.”

Does implementation and delivery sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

For keeping other people safe, case managers had considered the protection of actual and potential victims in six out of the 10 relevant cases. The services delivered managed and minimised the risk of harm in eight of the 11 relevant cases and, overall, the safety of other people was supported effectively in 14 out of the 16 cases inspected.

3.4. Out-of-court disposal policy and provision



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

Good

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

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

There is a joint protocol between the YJS and Hillingdon police, with escalation processes in place. The protocol sets out the process for triage and youth cautions,

as well as slightly different arrangements for youth conditional cautions, mainly involving the use of AssetPlus for these cases. There is a strong focus on partnership working in the delivery of out-of-court disposals, and we saw this in the cases we inspected. The approach is for children to be swiftly integrated into mainstream services, with a support plan in place to support desistance. For most children, this is done by implementing a triage intervention, which is delivered within four weeks.

There is no specific reference to meeting the child's diversity needs in the out-of-court disposal documentation, and we found this was done well enough in only 56 per cent of out-of-court assessments. This is an area for improvement.

There are processes in place for the YJS to be informed of any children who are issued a community resolution directly by the police. In these cases, the YJS makes contact with the child to see if there is any support it can offer.

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

The police decision-makers refer the child to the YJS for an out-of-court disposal if the child meets the eligibility criteria. The case is allocated to a YJS worker to complete an assessment and undertake a home visit to meet with the child and their parent or carer. The assessment tool that is used pays equal attention to assessing desistance, safety and wellbeing and risk of harm to others. The YJS worker presents their case at the out-of-court disposal panel within 12 days of being allocated the case.

The out-of-court disposal panel is chaired by a police representative and a YJS manager. The panel is not attended by other agencies. However, before the panel, the child is screened by the SLC worker, and if the case involves a direct victim, the restorative justice worker will meet with the child to discuss restorative justice options. If there are concerns about mental health and emotional wellbeing, the child can be offered an appointment with the liaison and diversion worker for an assessment to be completed. There is no social worker routinely on the panel, but if children's social care has been working with the child, a social worker will be invited to attend.

If the panel cannot reach an agreement about the appropriate disposal, there is an escalation process in place. The YJS operations manager will discuss the case with the relevant senior police officer to agree a way forward, although this process is rarely used.

There is a scrutiny panel process in place and the panel includes the chair of the youth bench and also a YJS child. We noted this as good practice.

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

The YJS reviews the application of out-of-court disposals on an ongoing basis. The reviews check that processes have been appropriately followed. The quality of assessments and work delivered are also monitored through quality assurance and our findings on practice in this area confirm that they are effective. A thematic quality assurance exercise to look at the delivery of youth cautions and youth conditional cautions led to a process for six-weekly progress reviews to be carried out with children and their parents or carers.

In terms of tracking the impact of the interventions delivered, we were told that, for triage cases, 87 per cent of children did not come to further notice of the YJS. This indicates that the approach taken by the YJS and its partners in Hillingdon is highly effective in diverting children from offending. We did not see any evaluation of the re-offending of children who receive a youth caution or youth conditional caution, so there is a gap in understanding the effectiveness of these interventions.

We did not see any evidence that evaluation actively considered diversity factors or that children and their parents or carers were involved in the evaluation process.

4. Resettlement

4.1. Resettlement policy and provision



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

Good

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

Strengths

- There is a resettlement policy in place and a resettlement improvement plan that has been informed by quality assurance findings.
- There are good links between the YJS staff and caseworkers in the custodial establishments.
- YJS health staff visit children in custody to support transition planning.
- Staff have been trained in the use of release on temporary licence to encourage them to use it in their release planning to support children transitioning back into the community.

Areas for improvement

- Good-quality accommodation is difficult to find for children leaving custody. In one case this impacted significantly on resettlement planning and the implementation and delivery of services.

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

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

The resettlement policy sets out the arrangements for the suitable and timely provision of accommodation, education, training and employment, healthcare and other resettlement pathway services.

When we met with staff to discuss resettlement, they stated that they had considered the findings of our resettlement thematic inspection and applied this to their practice. This was positive to hear and see evidenced in the resettlement work undertaken.

The YJS resettlement policy sets out that staff should take a strengths-based approach to their work with children leaving custody. It also states that staff should

consider the individual needs of the child and focus on managing risk of harm and the safety and wellbeing of the child.

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

We inspected three resettlement cases. In one case, the child found out where he was going to live only two days before he left custody. The placement that was found for him was a long way from home and was only temporary, so there were limited opportunities to settle him in education or arrange caretaking with the local YOS. This significantly impacted on the child's reintegration and resettlement into the community. One child had returned to live at home and the third is still in custody.

A resettlement audit that was carried out led to staff training on the use of release on temporary licence and the benefits of this in supporting effective resettlement work.

Resettlement cases are discussed at the complex high-risk panel meeting, where additional resources can be considered. Housing services sit on this panel so that they can offer input if needed. Accommodation placements are discussed for children who will not be returning home. For those needing accommodation out of the area, placements are discussed with the brokerage team, who attend these meetings. Legal thresholds are considered at the meeting and welfare secure placements are considered if this is deemed necessary. There is a member of staff who leads in resettlement work.

In two of the three cases, sufficient attention was paid to the health needs of the children. For the child who was accommodated at short notice, this did not happen as well as it should have. This was in part due to the case manager trying to manage the case from London, and the child having limited access to services in the area where he was living.

In one case, there was no identifiable victim, and the child remains in custody. In another case, it was felt that victim work was satisfactory. In a third, the victim had not been contacted; however, an exclusion zone had been put in place to protect the victim and to keep the child safe from risks to his safety in that area. In this case, which was assessed as very high risk, MAPPAs had not been followed. The service has subsequently taken steps to ensure that MAPPAs are considered at the high-risk panel meetings. In two cases, effective partnership work was carried out to support the child's wellbeing and risk planning to assess risk to other people. In this case, the risk strategy meeting took place where a number of partners were present. The inspector noted that concerns were carefully considered. A clear note was placed on the file about who was at risk and what actions should be taken to minimise the risk. There were conversations about protective factors. This was supported by a case discussion to which all partners contributed.

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

A critical review of the resettlement process for cases was undertaken between April 2019 and August 2020. This led to a review of the policy and an easy-to-access flowchart being put in place to guide practitioners in their work on resettlement planning. The review made a series of recommendations to improve the quality of resettlement work. A resettlement action plan has been put in place to support the implementation of the recommendations and some progress has been made. For example, Youth Justice Application Framework refresher training has been delivered

and work is underway to forge links with the job centre to support children who need help with claiming benefits. There is a resettlement self-audit tool in place to aid practitioners in their resettlement work. A further audit is scheduled to assess the impact of the resettlement action plan.

The service and partnership are aware of the challenges in accessing suitable and timely accommodation placements for children and this has been escalated to the board. Options to address this are currently being considered. To make sure that the placement profiles of children are balanced and that risk of harm issues that can affect placements agreeing to take children are addressed, the YJS workers now work together to create the children's profiles. The Head of Stronger Families is delivering training on how to complete placement forms to make sure that they are balanced.

The majority of staff responding to our survey felt that they have had sufficient training to manage resettlement cases effectively.

The YJS education worker, SLC and CAMHS worker attend meetings for children in the secure estate to support release planning. This is good practice.

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.¹⁹

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 Corporate Director of Adults, Children and Young People Services delivered a presentation covering the following areas:

- How do organisational delivery arrangements in this area make sure that the work of your YJS 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 26 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 14 meetings, which included meetings with managers, partner organisations and staff. The evidence collected under this domain was judged against our published ratings characteristics.

Domain two: court disposals

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

We examined 13 court disposals. The sample size was set to achieve a confidence level of 80 per cent (with a margin of error of 5), and we ensured that the ratios in relation to gender, sentence or disposal type, risk of serious harm, and risk to safety and wellbeing classifications matched those in the eligible population.

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.

¹⁹ HM Inspectorate's standards are available here:

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

Where necessary, interviews with other people significantly involved in the case also took place.

We examined 16 out-of-court disposals. The sample size was set based on the proportion of out-of-court disposal cases in the YJS

Resettlement

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

In some areas of this report, data may have been split into smaller sub-samples – for example, male/female cases. Where this is the case, the margin of error for the sub-sample findings may be higher than five.

Annexe 2: Inspection data

In this inspection, we conducted a detailed examination of a sample of 13 court disposals and 16 out-of-court disposals. In each of those cases, we inspect against standards regarding assessment, planning and implementation/delivery. For court disposals, we also look at reviewing. For each standard, inspectors answer a number of key questions about different aspects of quality, including whether there was sufficient analysis of the factors related to offending; the extent to which young offenders were involved in assessment and planning; and whether enough was done to assess the level of risk of harm posed, and to manage that risk. We reviewed a further 3 cases to obtain data to illustrate our findings about resettlement policy and provision.

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

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

Lowest banding (key question level)	Rating (standard)
Minority: <50%	Inadequate
Too few: 50-64%	Requires improvement
Reasonable majority: 65-79%	Good
Large majority: 80%+	Outstanding ☆

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

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

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

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

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

Data from inspected cases:²⁰

2.1. Assessment (court disposals)	
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	
a) Is there sufficient analysis of offending behaviour, including the child's attitudes towards and motivations for their offending?	69%
b) Does assessment sufficiently analyse diversity issues?	67%
c) Does assessment consider personal circumstances, including the wider familial and social context of the child?	85%
d) Does assessment utilise information held by other agencies?	92%
e) Does assessment focus on the child's strengths and protective factors?	62%
f) Does assessment analyse the key structural barriers facing the child?	85%
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?	85%
h) Does assessment give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of victims, and opportunities for restorative justice?	46%
i) Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in their assessment, and are their views taken into account?	92%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	
a) Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risks to the safety and wellbeing of the child?	69%
b) Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including other assessments, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	92%
c) Does assessment analyse controls and interventions to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	46%

²⁰ Some questions do not apply in all cases.

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	
a) Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risk of harm to others posed by the child, including identifying who is at risk and the nature of that risk?	46%
b) Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including past behaviour and convictions, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	69%
c) Does assessment analyse controls and interventions to manage and minimise the risk of harm presented by the child?	38%

2.2. Planning (court disposals)

Does planning focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	
a) Does planning set out the services most likely to support desistance, paying sufficient attention to the available timescales and the need for sequencing?	75%
b) Does planning sufficiently address diversity issues?	54%
c) Does planning take sufficient account of the child's personal circumstances, including the wider familial and social context of the child?	69%
d) Does planning take sufficient account of the child's strengths and protective factors, and seek to reinforce or develop these as necessary?	58%
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?	77%
f) Does planning give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of victims?	77%
g) Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in planning, and are their views taken into account?	77%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	
a) Does planning promote the safety and wellbeing of the child, sufficiently addressing risks?	62%
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?	69%

c) Does planning set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	77%
d) Does planning set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to manage those risks that have been identified?	58%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	
a) Does planning promote the safety of other people, sufficiently addressing risk of harm factors?	38%
b) Does planning involve other agencies where appropriate?	46%
c) Does planning address any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims?	31%
d) Does planning set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote the safety of other people?	38%
e) Does planning set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to manage those risks that have been identified?	31%

2.3. Implementation and delivery (court disposals)

Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the child's desistance?	
a) Are the delivered services those most likely to support desistance, with sufficient attention given to sequencing and the available timescales?	85%
b) Does service delivery account for the diversity issues of the child?	83%
c) Does service delivery reflect the wider familial and social context of the child, involving parents or carers, or significant others?	77%
d) Does service delivery build upon the child's strengths and enhance protective factors?	46%
e) Is sufficient focus given to developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child and their parents or carers?	92%
f) Does service delivery promote opportunities for community integration, including access to services post-supervision?	54%
g) Is sufficient attention given to encouraging and enabling the child's compliance with the work of the YOT?	85%

h) Are enforcement actions taken when appropriate?	38%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of the child?	
a) Does service delivery promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	69%
b) Is the involvement of other organisations in keeping the child safe sufficiently well-coordinated?	85%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?	
a) Are the delivered services sufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	31%
b) Is sufficient attention given to the protection of actual and potential victims?	38%
c) Is the involvement of other agencies in managing the risk of harm sufficiently well-coordinated?	46%

2. 4. Reviewing (court disposals)

Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	
a) Does reviewing identify and respond to changes in factors linked to desistance?	75%
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?	50%
d) Does reviewing consider the personal circumstances, including the wider familial and social context of the child?	67%
d) Does reviewing consider motivation and engagement levels and any relevant barriers?	67%
e) Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in reviewing their progress and engagement, and are their views taken into account?	92%
f) Does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work to support desistance?	62%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	

a) Does reviewing identify and respond to changes in factors related to safety and wellbeing?	46%
b) Is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in promoting the safety and wellbeing of the child?	69%
c) Does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	46%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	
a) Does reviewing identify and respond to changes in factors related to risk of harm?	38%
b) Is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in managing the risk of harm?	69%
c) Does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan all of work to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	54%

3.1. Assessment (out-of-court disposals)

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	
a) Is there sufficient analysis of offending behaviour, including the child's acknowledgement of responsibility for, attitudes towards and motivations for their offending?	69%
b) Does assessment sufficiently analyse diversity issues?	56%
c) Does assessment consider personal circumstances, including the wider familial and social context of the child?	94%
d) Does assessment utilise information held by other agencies?	93%
e) Does assessment focus on the child's strengths and protective factors?	94%
f) Does assessment analyse the key structural barriers facing the child?	50%
g) Is sufficient attention given to understanding the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change?	100%
h) Does assessment give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of victims, and opportunities for restorative justice?	44%

i) Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in their assessment, and are their views taken into account?	69%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	
a) Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risks to the safety and wellbeing of the child?	73%
b) Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including other assessments, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	94%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	
a) Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risk of harm to others posed by the child, including identifying who is at risk and the nature of that risk?	63%
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?	80%

3.2. Planning (out-of-court disposals)

Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?	
a) Does planning set out the services most likely to support desistance, paying sufficient attention to the available timescales and the need for sequencing?	93%
b) Does planning sufficiently address diversity issues?	81%
c) Does planning take sufficient account of the child's personal circumstances, including the wider familial and social context of the child?	94%
d) Does planning take sufficient account of the child's strengths and protective factors, and seek to reinforce or develop these as necessary?	75%
e) Does planning take sufficient account of the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change, and seek to develop these as necessary?	94%
f) Does planning take sufficient account of opportunities for community integration, including access to mainstream services following completion of out-of-court disposal work?	81%
g) Does planning give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victims?	38%

h) Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in planning, and are their views taken into account?	63%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	
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?	69%
c) Does planning include necessary contingency arrangements for those risks that have been identified?	50%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	
a) Does planning promote the safety of other people, sufficiently addressing risk of harm factors?	56%
b) Does planning involve other agencies where appropriate?	63%
c) Does planning address any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims?	31%
d) Does planning include necessary contingency arrangements for those risks that have been identified?	38%

3.3.Implementation and delivery (out-of-court disposals)	
Does service delivery effectively support the child's desistance?	
a) Are the delivered services those most likely to support desistance, with sufficient attention given to sequencing and the available timescales?	86%
b) Does service delivery account for the diversity issues of the child?	81%
c) Does service delivery reflect the wider familial and social context of the child, involving parents or carers, or significant others?	87%
d) Is sufficient focus given to developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child and their parents or carers?	88%
e) Is sufficient attention given to encouraging and enabling the child's compliance with the work of the YOT?	81%

f) Does service delivery promote opportunities for community integration, including access to mainstream services?	88%
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of the child?	
a) Does service delivery promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	63%
b) Is the involvement of other agencies in keeping the child safe sufficiently well utilised and coordinated?	69%
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of other people?	
a) Are the delivered services sufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	53%
b) Is sufficient attention given to the protection of actual and potential victims?	38%