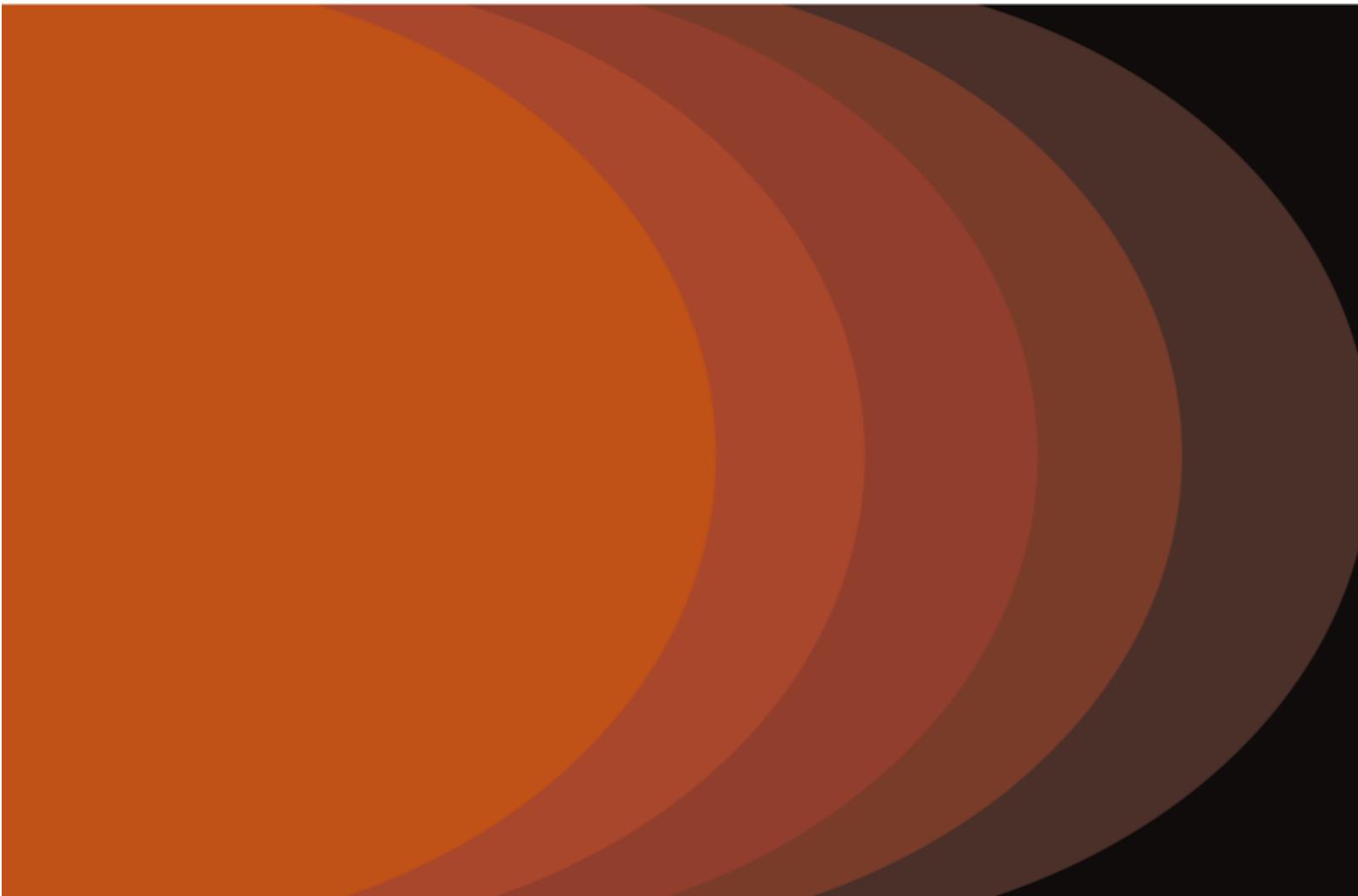




Her Majesty's
Inspectorate of
Probation

An inspection of youth offending services in
Portsmouth

HM Inspectorate of Probation, June 2022



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The role of HM Inspectorate of Probation

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation is the independent inspector of youth offending and probation services in England and Wales. We report on the effectiveness of probation and youth offending service work with adults and children.

We inspect these services and publish inspection reports. We highlight good and poor practice and use our data and information to encourage high-quality services. We are independent of government and speak independently.

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

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Foreword

This inspection is part of our programme of youth offending service (YOS) inspections. We have inspected and rated Portsmouth Youth Offending Team (YOT) 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, Portsmouth YOT was rated as 'Good'. We also inspected the quality of resettlement policy and provision, which was separately rated as 'Good'.

Strategic YOT leaders and stakeholders have worked together to produce a clear vision and plan to help children flourish and live their best lives. The management board is a relatively new collective group but is being led well. The foundations for building better and stronger are clear. Partners understand their responsibilities, thanks to effective induction arrangements and joint working protocols.

Staff are highly motivated and enthusiastic, and everyone involved in the YOT is striving to achieve positive outcomes for the children they work with. Senior leaders, managers and operational staff across the partnership have embraced a child-centred approach.

The pandemic has presented considerable challenges for the YOT but the creative and innovative way in which it has responded is praiseworthy. Statutory and non-statutory partners are positive ambassadors for the children supervised by the YOT. This has ensured that staff have been able to access wider services provided by the council throughout this challenging period.

Now, the focus needs to turn to those areas that will consolidate and improve outcomes for children.

While broad data sets are available, covering first-time entrants (FTE) and reoffending, for example, the YOT does not yet have a clear and comprehensive understanding of the profiles of its children, in particular those who are disproportionately represented. These children experience distinct disadvantages from societal and other barriers. More assurance, data collection and analysis are needed to ensure that all children have the best opportunities to succeed and achieve. Furthermore, the YOT needs to do much more to support children's safety and wellbeing and their potential to cause harm to others. Our inspection found that, across court and out-of-court work, not all staff consistently understood and applied the systems and processes to keep children safe and prevent them from committing harm to others.

The YOT can be proud of the way it is progressing and coming out of the pandemic. It must now focus on some critical service delivery matters to ensure the services offered to children are effective. In this report we make four recommendations to further improve the work of Portsmouth YOT. We trust that they will assist the YOT as it continues on its improvement journey.



Justin Russell
HM Chief Inspector of Probation

Ratings

Portsmouth Youth Offending Team
Fieldwork completed March 2022

Score 22/36

Overall rating

Good



1. Organisational delivery

1.1 Governance and leadership

Good



1.2 Staff

Good



1.3 Partnerships and services

Good



1.4 Information and facilities

Requires improvement



2. Court disposals

2.1 Assessment

Good



2.2 Planning

Requires improvement



2.3 Implementation and delivery

Requires improvement



2.4 Reviewing

Outstanding



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. Resettlement¹

4.1 Resettlement policy and provision

Good



¹ The resettlement standard does not contribute to the overall rating for the YOT.

Executive summary

Overall, Portsmouth YOT is rated as: 'Good'. This rating has been determined by inspecting the YOT in three areas of its work, referred to as 'domains'. We inspect against 12 core 'standards', shared between the domains. The standards are based on established models and frameworks, which are grounded in evidence, learning and experience. They are designed to drive improvements in the quality of work with children who have offended.² Published scoring rules generate the overall YOT rating.³ We inspected the quality of resettlement policy and provision separately and rated this work as: 'Good'. The findings and subsequent ratings in those domains are described below:

Organisational delivery

We interviewed 60 people who were involved in providing strategic leadership, overseeing operational management, supporting the YOT with partnership arrangements and delivering services directly to children.

The YOT's arrangements for governance and leadership, staffing and partnership and services are rated as 'Good'. The arrangements for information and facilities are rated as 'Requires improvement'.

The Portsmouth YOT management board has set a clear vision and strategy for delivering a high-quality service for all children. The board includes all necessary statutory and non-statutory partners. The Chair of the board is well engaged, with an excellent understanding of the YOT's responsibilities.

Most members are active in their attendance and engagement, recognising the contributions their own agencies make. Board members are advocates for the YOT's work in their wider roles, and relevant local strategic partnerships give the right level of attention to work that supports desistance and preventing harm.

Board members understand their roles and responsibilities within the partnership arrangements, and what they are accountable for. The YOT leadership team provides an effective link to the management board, which supports the board's vision and strategy to help children to live their best lives. The team effectively communicates the vision and strategy to staff and stakeholders, and promotes transparency, constructive challenge and creation of new ideas. Risks to the service are sufficiently understood by the team, and appropriate mitigations and controls are in place.

Staffing has been a challenge, but the YOT has appropriately planned and reviewed its staffing needs to meet the changing demands and profiles of the children it supervises. Staff workloads are actively managed. There is an effective strategy to maintain the quality of delivery during periods of planned and unplanned staff absence, as evidenced by the use of maternity cover and agency staff. Staff are highly motivated to deliver a quality service.

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

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

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

Cases are correctly allocated to staff who are appropriately qualified and/or experienced. Practitioners are focused on developing open, trusting, challenging and meaningful relationships with each child. Where volunteers are used, they are suitably selected and equipped to fulfil clearly defined roles. There is an appropriate plan in place to identify and develop the potential of all staff to support their learning needs and succession planning.

Staff are appropriately supervised, and there is an effective induction programme for new staff and YOT board members alike. The appraisal process is used to ensure that staff are competent to deliver a quality service. Managers give sufficient attention to identifying and addressing poor performance, while also recognising and rewarding exceptional work. The YOT identifies and plans for the learning needs of all staff and provides appropriate access to in-service and other training. A culture of learning and continuous improvement is highly promoted and valued.

The YOT partnership has access to the volume, range and quality of services, including specialist and mainstream interventions, necessary to meet the desistance needs and diversity of children. Leaders pay sufficient attention to the ability of the services to build on children's strengths and improve protective factors and individual circumstances.

The quality of services is reviewed and evaluated, with remedial action taken where required. Arrangements with partners and providers are established, maintained and used well to support desistance, maintain safety and wellbeing, and manage the risk of harm to others. The YOT ensures that courts are sufficiently aware of the services available, which supports their sentencing decisions.

The policies, procedures and guidance required to deliver a quality service that meets the needs of all children are mostly all in place. However, they are not fully understood by all those to whom they apply.

The delivery environment in Family Hubs and other community facilities is safe for working with children and for supporting effective engagement and the delivery of appropriate personalised work. However, the YOT does not deliver all of its work in places that are suitable for children and this is an area that requires development.

The ICT systems work well and enable staff to plan, deliver and record their work in a timely way, and to access information as required. There are some gaps in the YOT's quality assurance systems, and some staff do not have a comprehensive understanding of performance across all areas. For example, not all staff consistently understand children's vulnerabilities, dynamic safety and wellbeing factors, or risk of potential and actual harm to others.

Where available, learning from audits, inspection and other review processes is used well. However, data on disproportionality is limited, and there is not enough forensic analysis across casework. The views of children and their parents/carers are not always included in the evaluation of policies and service delivery is not consistently appraised or systematically reviewed.

Key findings about organisational delivery are as follows:

- The YOT management board has worked well with stakeholders to produce a clear vision and strategy that supports the delivery of high-quality services to children.

- The YOT management board includes all statutory and some non-statutory partners, and plays an active role in supporting services to help children lead their best lives.
- Partners are good ambassadors for the YOT and promote its work and the needs of the children.
- All staff are enthusiastic, positive and keen to make a lasting difference in the lives of children.
- A good range of services are in place that support individualised provision for children.
- Arrangements with partners are established, maintained and developing well.
- The ICT systems support home, office and community working.

But:

- There are gaps in the YOT's assurance and performance systems across some work areas; for example, some staff do not consistently understand children's vulnerabilities, dynamic safety and wellbeing factors or risk of harm posed to others.
- Data on disproportionality is limited, and there is not enough forensic analysis across casework.
- Service delivery is not consistently appraised through evaluation of interventions.

Court disposals

We took a detailed look at seven community cases. We also conducted five 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 work to understand why children had offended and to identify safety and wellbeing factors was sufficient. Practitioners took account of the child's strengths and protective factors, as well as their level of maturity and desire to change.
- Planning to support the child's desistance was good.
- Case managers meaningfully engaged children and their parents/carers in planning.
- Case managers focused on developing and maintaining an effective relationship with children and their parents/carers.
- Staff were creative when delivering interventions during the pandemic and used language and techniques that promoted the trauma-informed approach advocated by the YOT.
- Attention to and response to diversity needs was a strength in casework.
- The quality of formal and dynamic reviewing of work was a strength.

But:

- When assessing a child's safety and wellbeing and risk of harm to others, staff need to identify and analyse more clearly the risks to the child and from the child. They need to include who is at risk and the nature of that risk.
- The concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims are not consistently considered when planning to address the risk of harm to others.
- Not enough services are delivered to prevent children from causing harm to others.
- Staff did not consistently set out the contingency arrangements to manage the child's safety and wellbeing and their risk of harm to others in the cases inspected.
- Some of the guidance to support safety and wellbeing and risk of harm work is not always detailed enough. Managers' oversight of work is not always effective.

Out-of-court disposals

We inspected 20 cases managed by the YOT that had received an out-of-court disposal. These consisted of 13 youth conditional cautions, four youth cautions and three community resolutions. We interviewed the case managers in 17 cases.

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

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

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

- Assessment and planning activity analysing and supporting desistance was largely done well in the inspected cases.
- Attention to diversity needs and personal circumstances in most aspects of casework was good.
- Work carried out built on the strengths and protective factors of children.
- The voice of children and their parents/carers is included in the supervisory process.

But:

- The out-of-court disposal accompanying procedures do not clearly refer to managing diversity.
- Planning for work to support the child's safety and wellbeing and keep others safe is not always done well enough.
- The quality of work that supports desistance is variable.
- The delivery of work to keep children safe and prevent them from causing harm to others is inconsistent.

- The coordination of work undertaken by YOT practitioners is not always effective.

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 one case managed by the YOT that had received a custodial sentence.

The custody and resettlement policy and procedures are underpinned by the concept of resettlement as a journey for the child, rather than a single transition event. This enables greater collaboration between services to ensure a positive transition and integration into the community. The policy has been informed by research linked to achieving an 'identity shift' – from a pro-offending identity to a more pro-social identity. Practice guidance follows four key principles:

- a continued focus on resettlement throughout a sentence
- early preparation for release
- effective communication between an institution and community agencies
- a coordinated, holistic response involving multi-agency partnerships.

Pathways, including suitable accommodation, health, and education, training and employment, all feature well in the policy. The resettlement checklist ensures that key areas are covered; however, a more explicit focus on diversity is required.

Staff who manage resettlement cases are well supported by their managers. There are strong information-sharing protocols and communication with institutions is generally good. Practitioners can visit children and take parents and carers with them, in line with whatever national restrictions may be in place.

Our key findings about resettlement work are as follows:

- The partnership is committed to meeting children's resettlement needs.
- YOT staff have taken parents and carers and siblings to visits and facilitated telephone calls so that families can stay in touch.
- The service leader has a designated responsibility for overseeing resettlement work.
- There is a local arrangement with children's social care to ensure that all children are released to suitable accommodation.

But:

- There had been no specific training for staff in managing resettlement cases.
- A strategic plan is needed to ensure that the policy meets the resettlement needs of all children.

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

The Portsmouth Youth Offending Team board should:

1. ensure that there are comprehensive quality assurance arrangements in place to understand performance and respond to the profile and needs of all children supervised by the YOT
2. make sure that disproportionality data is collected and analysed, and that the learning is used to develop services.

The Portsmouth Youth Offending Team Service Leader should:

3. improve the quality of assessment, planning and service delivery work to keep children safe and manage the risk of harm they present to others
4. ensure robust contingency plans are in place for all children that address their safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm to others.

Demographics⁵

In the 2011 census the population of Portsmouth was 205,056. The mid-year 2020 estimate is 214,692. Portsmouth remains the most densely populated local authority in the UK outside of London.

The number of children aged 10 to 17 is currently estimated at 17,380, with 8,920 males and 8,460 females. 86 per cent of the population identify as White British.

Portsmouth has areas of very high deprivation. The city ranks as the 102nd most deprived of 316 local authority areas. In total, 13.4 per cent of the population are income-deprived but this masks considerable variation. For example, there is one neighbourhood in the city where 42.9 per cent of the population are income deprived. 22 of the 125 neighbourhoods in the city are in the bottom quintile for deprivation.

The overall crime rate for the city is high, with the city ranking 12th out of 15 most similar areas, with a crime rate of 106.5 per 1,000 residents (2020/2021) The YOT is covered by Hampshire Police. By far the largest group of offences for which children receive court and out-of-court disposals is offences of violence. The proportion of children receiving criminal convictions for the first time is significantly higher than the national average.

There are just under 3,100 children with SEND in the city, of which 1,250 have an education, health and care plan. At any one time, local authority children and families services care for around 380 looked-after children, 400 care leavers and 1,200 children in need of protection.

The fieldwork for the Portsmouth YOT inspection started on 14 March 2022.

⁵ Information supplied by Portsmouth YOT.

Contextual facts

Population information⁶

297	First-time entrant rate per 100,000 in Portsmouth ⁷
167	First-time entrant rate per 100,000 in England and Wales
39.1%	Reoffending rate in Portsmouth ⁸
34.2%	Reoffending rate in England and Wales
214,692	Total population Portsmouth
19,015	Total youth population (10–17 years) in Portsmouth

Caseload information⁹

Age	10–14 years	15–17 years
Portsmouth YOS	19%	81%
National average	18%	82%

Race/ethnicity ¹⁰	White	Black and minority ethnic	Unknown
Portsmouth YOS	71%	22%	7%
Youth population (10–17 years) in Portsmouth	73%	25%	2%

Gender	Male	Female
Portsmouth YOS	86%	14%
National average	85%	15%

⁶ Data supplied by the YOT.

⁷ Youth Justice Board. (2022). *First-time entrants, January 2020 – December 2020*.

⁸ Ministry of Justice. (2022). *Proven reoffending statistics, April 2019 – March 2020*.

⁹ Youth Justice Board. (2022). *Youth justice annual statistics: 2020 - 2021*.

¹⁰ Data supplied by the YOT.

Additional caseload data¹¹

20	Total current caseload of community sentences
1	Total current caseload in custody
1	Total current caseload on licence
6	Total current caseload of youth caution
20	Total current caseload of youth conditional caution
7	Total current caseload of community resolution or other out-of-court disposal
40%	Proportion of current caseload subject to court disposals
60%	Proportion of current caseload subject to out-of-court disposals
7%	Proportion of current caseload 'Looked After Children' resident in the YOS area
14%	Proportion of current caseload 'Looked After Children' placed outside the YOS area
2%	Percentage of current caseload with child protection plan
18%	Percentage of current caseload with child in need plan
85%	Percentage of current caseload aged 16 and under in full-time school
43%	Percentage of current caseload aged 17+ not in education, training or employment

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

Offence types ¹²	%
Violence against the person	43%
Burglary	14%
Robbery	14%
Theft and handling stolen goods	14%
Drug offences	14%

¹¹ Data supplied by the YOT, reflecting the caseload at the time of the inspection announcement.

¹² Data from the cases assessed during this inspection.

1. Organisational delivery

The YOT's corporate governance structure sits within the children's social care division of the council's children and families directorate.

The YOT management board has established a clear vision and strategy with its stakeholders to deliver a high-quality service for all children. The board is made up of all necessary statutory and non-statutory partners. Most members are active in their attendance and engagement. They recognise the contributions their own agencies can make to supporting positive outcomes for children.

Board members understand their roles and responsibilities within the partnership arrangements, including what they are accountable for. There is an effective link between YOT staff and the management board, which supports the board's vision and strategy to help children live their best lives.

Staffing has been a challenge, but the YOT has suitably planned and reviewed its staffing needs to meet the changing profiles of the children supervised by the YOT. Staff workloads are managed well. There is an effective strategy to maintain service delivery during periods of planned and unplanned staff absences. Staff are highly enthusiastic about delivering a quality service.

Cases are correctly allocated to staff who are appropriately qualified and/or experienced. The staff are helping to develop open, trusting, challenging and meaningful relationships with each child. Volunteers are suitably selected and equipped to fulfil clearly defined roles. There is an appropriate plan in place to identify and develop the potential of all staff to support succession planning and their learning needs.

Staff receive regular supervision, and there is an effective induction programme for new staff and YOT board members alike. The appraisal process is mostly used well to ensure that staff are competent to deliver a quality service. Managers pay sufficient attention to identifying and addressing poor performance. A culture of learning and continuous improvement is promoted and highly valued.

Analysis of the profile of children supervised by the YOT is sufficiently comprehensive and up to date. It includes desistance needs, safety and wellbeing factors and risk of harm to others. Leaders pay sufficient attention to local patterns of sentencing and offence types across the city, which helps them to anticipate future demand for services.

The YOT partnership has access to the volume, range and quality of services, including specialist and mainstream interventions, required to meet the desistance needs and diversity of children. Leaders pay appropriate attention to the capacity of services to build on children's strengths and improve protective factors and individual circumstances.

Arrangements with partners and providers are established, maintained and used well to support desistance, maintain safety and wellbeing, and manage the risk of harm to others. The YOT ensures that courts are sufficiently aware of the services available, which supports their sentencing decisions.

The policies, procedures and guidance required to deliver a quality service that meets the needs of all children are mostly in place. However, they are not fully understood by all those to whom they apply.

The delivery environment in Family Hubs and other community facilities is safe for working with children and for supporting effective engagement. However, the YOT does not deliver all of its work in places that are suitable for children.

The ICT systems are effective and enable staff to plan, deliver and record their work in a timely way, and to access information as required. There are gaps in the YOT's assurance systems. This has led to an incomplete recognition of performance across some work areas. For example, not all staff fully understand how different behaviours and circumstances affect safety and wellbeing and risk of harm to others.

Where available, learning from audits, inspection and other review processes is used well. However, data on disproportionality is limited and there is not enough forensic analysis of casework activity. The views of children and their parents/carers are not always included in the evaluation of policies. Service delivery is not consistently appraised through evaluation of interventions, and the impact of the services delivered is not systematically reviewed.

Strengths

- The YOT management board has worked well with stakeholders to produce a clear vision and strategy that supports the delivery of high-quality services to children.
- The YOT management board includes all statutory partners, with non-statutory partners playing an active role in supporting services to help children lead their best lives.
- Partners are good ambassadors for the YOT and promote its work and the needs of the children.
- All staff are enthusiastic, positive and keen to make a lasting difference to the lives of children.
- A good range of services are in place that support individualised provision for children.
- Arrangements with partners are established, maintained and developing well.
- The ICT systems support home, office and community working.

Areas for improvement

- There are gaps in the YOT's assurance systems and performance across some work areas; for example, not all staff fully understand safety and wellbeing and risk of harm.
- Data on disproportionality is limited and there is not enough forensic analysis across casework activity.
- Service delivery is not consistently appraised through the evaluation of interventions.

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

1.1. Governance and leadership



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

Good

Key data¹³

Total spend in previous financial year	£894,768
Total projected budget current for financial year	£1,017,800

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?

Portsmouth YOT has an active two-year Youth Justice Plan which supports its strategy for delivering individualised services for all children. This is reviewed regularly, enabling the YOT management board to monitor progress against its aims and priorities. Workshops attended by board members and YOT staff are held frequently to explore in more detail the areas that need additional attention. This process works well, and learning is absorbed into decision-making. Diversity is not explicitly included in the YOT Youth Justice Plan. Disproportionality is referred to on a number of occasions but needs a far clearer focus. Additionally, a stronger focus on YOT children's neurodiversity needs would be helpful.

The terms of reference and board ethos binds members together to a shared vision and goals. Induction for new board members is robust and includes the provision of an induction pack. All board members who have received an induction reported that it was valuable in helping them to understand their responsibilities and accountability.

The YOT management board works well together with partners, stakeholders and YOT staff members to set a vision that supports children to live their best lives. There is a commitment to a child-first approach across the partnership.

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) has recently committed to a three-year funding package. This provides evidence of a resourcing package that will support medium- to long-term planning.

The management board includes all statutory partners. Non-statutory partners add value to the work of the board. Notes from board meetings illustrate that regular attendance and engagement from members is positive overall. However, attendance by the Probation Service has not been consistent, and its contributions have largely comprised updates to changes resulting from its national re-organisation. The Probation Service could offer more advice and guidance on the management of harm to others caused by older children.

¹³ Data supplied by the YOT.

Board members recognise that the quality of the services they oversee is essential to enabling children to flourish. They understand their respective roles. The Chair of the board, who has been in post for the past 18 months and is immensely respected by board members, brings considerable relevant experience and understands the work of the YOT very well.

The board uses a variety of methods to ensure that the voice and views of children are actively heard. This is supported by testimonials from the children presented by YOT staff and other surveys. However, the YOT acknowledges that it needs to do more to fully incorporate the voice of the child into its local strategy.

Governance arrangements are clear, leading to the production of delivery plans that support the effective supervision of children. For example, there is a robust YOT operational plan for 2021-2022.

Do the partnership arrangements actively support effective service delivery?

Board members are well integrated into their own and other city-wide boards. This enables them to advocate for the work of the YOT and, specifically, the needs of YOT children. The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and YOT are co-located and closely aligned through established information-sharing processes. This enables staff to communicate effectively and to exchange information early in response to the changing needs of children. Joint working protocols, including between the YOT and the police, Portsmouth Targeted Early Help and Prevention, and children's social care, are examples of arrangements that support effective information exchange and service delivery to children.

The Children's Trust Plan 2020-2023 (Portsmouth's multi-agency strategy for improving outcomes for children and families from before birth to age 25) provides cross-cutting responsibilities for partners in the council. Again, roles, responsibilities and accountability are understood well. The board has begun to take a more active role in addressing disproportionality. This is encouraging and will contribute to addressing the trauma children experience in relation to their protected characteristics.

There is an active commitment from all partners to providing wider community integration services for children. Unsurprisingly, the challenges of Covid-19 have had an impact on these services.

The Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) provides an active platform to address serious youth violence in the city. The board is appropriately strengthening its links to this group. The lead member for children and families, who also holds an education portfolio, promotes the needs of YOT children across various city-wide forums. This is welcomed and is making a difference in creating opportunities for children.

Does the leadership of the YOT support effective service delivery?

The YOT Service Leader and Head of Service are supporting officers of the board. Other YOT staff attend as and when required to present information and engage with specialist items. Their contributions are respected and considered critical by board members. Items raised by YOT staff are suitably communicated to board meetings. This demonstrates a 'one team' approach.

There are effective systems in place to communicate the YOT’s vision and strategy to its wider staff group and stakeholders. Eleven out of 12 YOT staff who completed our survey reported that they understood ‘quite well’ or ‘very well’ the YOT’s vision and strategy. Three out of twelve YOT staff reported that they were not fully aware of the activities of the management board.

Action plans, procedures and policies reflect the YOT’s vision and strategy. These have been written to support the delivery of positive outcomes for children. Methods used to equip staff include resettlement checklists, reviewing of performance data and guest speakers at YOT team meetings, who discuss topics such as sexual health, risk management, and protocols for not criminalising looked after children.

Child-centred trained police officers support the work of the YOT. There is a culture promoting a ‘challenge and support’ restorative approach in the development of service delivery across all partners and YOT staff.

A risk register is regularly reviewed by the board. However, it is not clear how well all board members fully understand the specific risks to the YOT business.

1.2. Staff



Staff within the YOT are empowered to deliver a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children.	Good
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Key staffing data¹⁴

Total staff headcount (full-time equivalent (FTE))	28
Total headcount qualified case managers (FTE) ¹⁵	3.5
Vacancy rate (total unfilled posts as percentage of total staff headcount)	10%
Vacancy rate case managers only (total unfilled case manager posts as percentage of total case manager headcount)	12%
Average caseload case managers (FTE equivalent) ¹⁶	8.5
Average annual working days sickness (all staff)	17.75
Staff attrition (percentage of all staff leaving in 12-month period)	12%

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

¹⁴ Data was supplied by the YOT and reflected staffing at the time of the inspection announcement.

¹⁵ Qualified case managers are those with a relevant social work, youth justice or probation qualification.

¹⁶ Data was supplied by the YOT, and was based on staffing and workload at the time of the inspection announcement.

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

Staffing is a challenge for the YOT, and the service is carrying a number of vacancies. However, the YOT has worked hard to achieve solutions by employing agency staff and providing maternity cover following restructuring in 2020. Staffing vacancies do not have a negative impact on service delivery. However, the absence of a designated data analyst is limiting the YOT's analytical capacity, especially in quality assurance monitoring and forensic analysis. The YOT has recognised this.

All operational YOT staff (12 out of 12) who completed our survey reported that their caseloads were reasonable. All volunteers (six out of six) reported that they were satisfied with the amount of work they were asked to do. YOT team leaders reported that they were 'busy', but that the volume of work allocated to them was acceptable.

Workloads are actively managed, and supported by fortnightly, monthly and quarterly reviewing. This process works very well. During the different phases of the pandemic, the YOT followed its operating model protocols to ensure that children were not disadvantaged if their case managers became unwell.

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

Operational staff working in the YOT adequately reflect the diversity of the local population. The profile of volunteers is not diverse in terms of age or ethnicity. The service is, however, actively recruiting more volunteers from diverse backgrounds. There are very few black, Asian and minority ethnic managers and senior leaders.

Case allocation is fair and is supported by a framework tool. Before allocating a case, managers match it with the skills of YOT practitioners. For example, higher-risk cases are allocated to more qualified staff, and harmful sexual behaviour cases are allocated to staff trained in Assessment of Adolescents and Harmful Sexual Behaviour (AIM3 Assessment model). Cases requiring specialist knowledge and skills are managed and supervised jointly with children's social care.

Staff are given equal access to learning and development opportunities. This involves training courses and opportunities for secondments to other organisations. Activity is supported and informed by the Workforce Development Strategy 2021-2023. This process works well.

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

The volunteering policy and procedures ensure that volunteers receive the right support and supervision to help them participate in referral order panels and reparation work. All six volunteers who responded to our survey reported that the quality of their support was either 'quite good' or 'very good'. They reported that their 'welfare' was regularly reviewed, and they were 'engaged in conversation' about putting forward ideas.

Team leaders supervise paid operational staff monthly. This is scheduled into the working timetable. There are opportunities for clinical supervision with a forensic psychiatrist, for more complex cases. There are also regular reflective practice meetings combined with fortnightly team meetings. The Priority Young People Panel also provides additional support and learning. All 12 operational staff who completed our staff survey reported that the frequency of supervision and support was appropriate for their needs.

The induction programme for new staff is an area of strength. Those who had joined the YOT during the pandemic appreciated the one-to-one remote training that was provided. It was described as 'relevant, proportionate and informative', focusing on practice as well as staffing processes. Each staff member is also allocated a 'buddy', to help them integrate into the team effectively. Diversity is not a standalone topic that is covered during induction. Most staff report that the appraisal process is active and involves them at different stages. Appraisal meetings are planned, and regular reviews held. For a small number of staff (two out of nine), our survey found that the appraisal process was 'not that valuable' in helping them to deliver high-quality services to children.

The Portsmouth YOT Management Oversight Policy (June 2020) is used well to address poor performance.

Are arrangements for learning and development comprehensive and responsive?

The YOT holds regular workforce development meetings, the most recent of which was in March 2022. Staff training needs are reviewed, and plans put in place to enable staff to access relevant training. Where gaps are identified, there is evidence of activity to address these shortfalls. At every team meeting, space is devoted to promoting what training is available. All staff are required to attend annual mandatory training. YOT staff can access the same training as staff in children's social care. Managers are responsive to requests for bespoke training, for example for specialist workers.

Training for volunteers is comprehensive and includes restorative justice, mediation, speech, language and communication, safeguarding and child protection modules.

Six out of twelve YOT staff (50%) who completed our survey reported that their training needs to deliver effective services to children had been fully met. The rest said that their training needs had been mostly met. Findings from our case reviews show that there are inconsistencies in the knowledge, understanding and application of safety and wellbeing and risk of harm work across the practitioner group. This needs to be addressed.

The YOT's commitment to learning and continuous improvement is impressive. The YOT plays an active role in the Portsmouth Preventing Offending Champions initiative. The group is made up of partners from a range of agencies across the city. Some of the agencies represented include safeguarding, education, early help, liaison and diversion and policing. Notes of meetings show how the YOT and other stakeholders are working together to learn from the work they are undertaking.

All staff, including agency and seconded staff, have equal access to learning opportunities.

Good work carried out by staff is acknowledged and recognised through affirmation (peers and managers). This is accompanied by specific 'shout outs' to staff who have completed exceptional pieces of work. Staff celebrate each other's work. Board members also congratulate YOT staff.

Do managers pay sufficient attention to staff engagement?

Paid staff and volunteers are highly motivated, energised and enthusiastic to deliver a high-quality service that enables children to flourish. Many know the children they are working with exceptionally well.

A council-wide pulse survey is carried out annually to collect the views of staff across departments. The YOT service leader actively engages with YOT staff through weekly communications as well as one-to-one conversations. Discussions are generally appreciated by staff and improve their engagement levels. However, a small number of staff in our survey (two out of twelve) reported that they had never been asked for their views on working for the YOT through internal surveys or staff committees.

All staff who responded to our staff survey (12 out of 12) reported that their views were either 'quite well' or 'very well' listened to and acted on. This shows that, when feedback is given by staff, it is responded to. Staff value this, as it reinforces a sense of belonging and loyalty to the organisation. Throughout the pandemic, YOT managers created space for practitioners to talk about their work/life experiences and how they could be best supported. This was very much appreciated by staff across grades and functions.

Good news stories are regularly reviewed at YOT team meetings and achievements recognised. Attention to staff safety and wellbeing is strong. A review of communications with staff over the last eight months demonstrates the care with which staff are treated. This has built resilience, especially through the pandemic. More recently, individual and team reviews have been carried out to enable staff to work productively and safely.

Diversity needs identified by staff, including the need for reasonable adjustments, are met well. All staff are now able to work effectively from their home, community and office bases. The YOT responds favourably to requests for flexible working. This makes staff feel appreciated.

1.3. Partnerships and services



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

Good

Caseload characteristics¹⁷

Percentage of current caseload with mental health issues	67%
Percentage of current caseload with substance misuse issues	80%
Percentage of current caseload with an education, health and care plan	56%

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 Safer Portsmouth Partnership (2020-2021) undertook a comprehensive assessment of 'crime, anti-social behaviour, substance misuse and re-offending' in

¹⁷ Data provided by YOT.

the city. This provided a strategic overview and analysis of a range of issues, including the desistance and safety and wellbeing needs of children, as well as the types of offences being committed.

The YOT regularly uses its case management system (Core+) to collect operational management information. However, its forensic analysis of this information is underdeveloped. Information relating to the overarching needs of the children supervised by the YOT is available but needs to be used better to influence service delivery. Additionally, a more segmented analysis of disproportionality is needed. The YOT management board acknowledges that it needs to develop this important area of work. There are plans in place to do this through workshop activities.

The YOT has a stakeholder feedback strategy (2020) that sets out the various ways it collects feedback from children and families. The dynamic gathering of feedback is good, as evidenced by the positive findings in the reviews of case work. The YOT service leader provides regular summaries of feedback from children and their parents and carers. However, mechanisms for gathering feedback from victims need to be improved.

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

The YOT has developed a range of intervention packages that are delivered by case managers. These include safety mapping, emotional awareness, peer pressure, knife crime and victim awareness. Case reviews evidenced the range of interventions that were being delivered by practitioners. Specialist practitioners deliver interventions in restorative justice; education, training and employment; mental health; speech and language; and parenting support. More broadly, the YOT can refer children to the Drug and Alcohol Support Service (DASS) and access DASS-related Team Around the Worker support through the nominated 'DASS Champion' within the YOT. The YOT mental health practitioner provides case consultations and can refer children to wider (extended) CAMHS services as required, although waiting lists continue to be lengthy.

Eight out of 11 practitioners who responded to our survey reported that they mostly had access to the right level of interventions and services to work with children. The Junior Attendance Centre provides a range of relevant and current topics to support positive outcomes for children. There are plans to develop additional interventions. This illustrates the YOT's desire to respond to changing societal and environmental factors.

The speech and language therapist (SaLT) offer is strong and is achieving positive outcomes for children. The YOT has invested appropriately in this; it has provided the right level of training to practitioners, and produced a range of child-friendly resources, such as jargon-busting visuals and an 'induction pack' for children. SaLT principles have also been extended to develop operational visuals of policies and procedures.

Services build on children's strengths and support their protective factors. The small number of children and parents and carers who responded to inspectors reported that interventions had built on their strengths. Reparation projects are varied and maximise opportunities for restorative outcomes.

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

The YOT has well-established and effective links with a range of statutory partners, providers and agencies providing desistance, safeguarding and public protection interventions. Oversight is provided through various memorandums of understanding, pan-Hampshire service level agreements and terms of reference for different groups. These arrangements generally work well, although newer staff could benefit from more detailed explanations.

There are good links between the MASH and the YOT. MASH staff are part of the Joint (YOT and Police) Decision Making Panel, as well as Early Help, and provide information to support the decision-making process. MASH staff are also able to access the YOT Case Management System and identify children known to the YOT in relation to notifications received by MASH for those aged 10 to 17. The MASH provides an effective link with the liaison and diversion service in custody suites where information can be shared quickly. This helps to identify need in a timely way and signpost children into appropriate health services.

In the virtual school, educational psychologists use trauma-informed practice and deliver training to schools. The approach is joined up across the city's agencies and helps to broaden practitioners' understanding and application in working with children. The police train their officers in trauma-informed practice and have child-centred champions. The Portsmouth YOT Priority Young Person (PYP) arrangements with the police generally work well to keep children and others safe.

The YOT has a part-time seconded probation officer whose skills are under-used. It makes excellent use of the available SaLT resource it has been allocated.

The YOT provides regular briefings to its youth court. Topics are agreed jointly. The most recent briefing, in October 2021, covered the management of children convicted of serious offences. Some of the areas covered previously include assessments, planning, multi-agency public protection arrangements, adverse childhood experiences and resettlement. Feedback from sentencers on the YOT's work was largely positive. Some of the comments included, 'Case managers provide a high level of care, keep us updated on YOT developments. We have a high level of confidence in the YOT.'

Involvement of children and their parents or carers

The YOT uses a range of formal, informal and dynamic processes to collect and analyse the views of children and their parents/carers. Participation sessions enable children and their parents/carers to give feedback. The YOT is enthusiastic about using feedback, as evidenced in the design of visual images to support better understanding and engagement.

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.

Inspectors spoke to two children, and two parents/carers. They all knew the aims of the YOT and felt that their workers had the right skills to do the work.

One child said:

“They don’t talk down to you. They could see I was trying hard. They were able to tell other professionals what it is like at home.”

A parent said:

“The workers have come out to our home and seen my son at school. This has been good for him and it has been better for his concentration to be seen at school.”

1.4. Information and facilities



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

Requires improvement

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

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

The YOT policy register was established in 2018 as a central reference for both the YOT leadership team (to record all policies available and required review dates) and YOT practitioners (to readily identify what is available). The register contains a wide range of policies and arrangements to facilitate effective service delivery. Review dates are clear, along with the names of those who are responsible for the monitoring activity. This process works well.

Eleven out of the eleven YOT staff who completed our survey reported that they either ‘quite well’ or ‘very well’ understood the policies and procedures that applied to their role. The YOT needs to focus on ensuring that disproportionality is comprehensively reviewed in all policies to ensure that no children are disadvantaged.

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

YOT practitioners are now beginning to deliver work to children in Family Hubs across the city. Interventions are also delivered at youth centres and in the civic offices themselves. We were not able to visit any of these sites due to the remote nature of this inspection. During the pandemic, children were seen in their homes, gardens, outdoor spaces and, where appropriate, in community spaces.

The YOT has comprehensive risk assessments in place to determine whether a venue is suitable in terms of safety, environment and accessibility. Practitioners in focus groups reported that, barring the civic offices, where engagement was difficult, they were able to deliver personalised services in Family Hub venues and other community locations.

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

The YOT has a robust information-sharing, storage and retention policy, which was reviewed in December 2021. Case managers have access to the Microsoft Office Suite (Teams, Outlook, Word, Excel etc.), Core+ (the YOT case management system), MOSAIC (the children's social care record management system, on a read-only basis, except for YOT business support), the Youth Justice Application Framework (YJAF) and Criminal Justice Secure Mail (CJSM).

Ten out of eleven YOT staff who responded to our survey reported that they believed the ICT they were provided with was helping them to deliver quality services to children. Staff can work from home, office platforms and Family Hubs.

Management information about individual casework delivery and performance is available on ICT dashboards. This includes some information on diversity.

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

The YOT has a quality assurance (QA) strategy in place, which was issued in January 2022. Following the submission of its National Standards Self-Assessment in May 2020, the YOT introduced a revised QA framework to support improvement of frontline services. The framework contained a programme of QA activities that covered compliance with key policies as well as the quality of work. The QA framework introduced practitioners to new audit methods to support their understanding of good practice in core areas of service delivery. The arrangements were revised again in July 2021. Due to staffing challenges faced by the YOT from August to November 2021, implementation of the revised framework was postponed until December 2021. This has reduced the quality of effective management oversight.

More work is needed to embed QA processes in order to better understand the quality of practice being delivered. This will drive improvement. Findings from our case reviews, in both court and out-of-court disposals, specifically showed variable practice in planning and service delivery to manage risk of harm and safety and wellbeing. All staff need to be better equipped to recognise patterns of behaviour that place children at risk either to themselves or others.

The YOT has a range of improvement plans but it is not clear how well evidence-based findings inform these plans. There is currently no consistent in-depth evaluation of the various programmes delivered by the YOT.

The YOT uses a pan-Hampshire YOTs notification system for recording serious incidents and an internal learning review process to develop its learning from these incidents. This is an effective process. The YOT is continuously developing its strategy to better understand and hear the views of children and their parents and carers.

The YOT responds well to inspection findings. Practitioners show courage in talking with children about their diversity needs and are not afraid to take risks in exploring sensitive issues of racism, for example. This learning has been taken directly from HM Inspectorate of Probation's thematic inspection¹⁸ of the experiences of black and mixed heritage boys in the youth justice system (2021).

¹⁸ HM Inspectorate of Probation (2021). A thematic inspection of the experiences of black and mixed heritage boys in the youth justice system.

<https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/inspections/black-and-mixed-heritage-boys/>

Learning is communicated well through one-to-one conversations, team meetings and regular correspondence from the YOT board and service leader.

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 information below¹⁹ highlights some of the staffing and children diversity data held by the YOT.

- 16 per cent of children on the current caseload are girls.
- 25 per cent of children in the area covered by the YOT are black, Asian or minority ethnic, and 22 per cent of children on the current caseload are black, Asian or minority ethnic.
- 56 per cent of children on the current caseload have a learning disability, a learning difficulty or an education, health and care plan.
- 75 per cent of staff working in the YOT are female.
- 7 per cent of staff working in the YOT are black, Asian or minority ethnic.
- 10 per cent of staff have a reported disability.

YOT practitioners' attention to diversity and their analysis of how disadvantage is addressed is very strong. Findings from court and out-of-court cases showed that attention to diversity was robust in 70 per cent to 90 per cent of the cases reviewed. This is impressive when considering performance across other YOTs in England and Wales that we have inspected. Encouragingly, we found examples of work where practitioners had made themselves vulnerable by admitting to the children they were supervising that they needed help to better understand the specific impact that their difference had had on them. Practitioners also completed self-directed learning to help them to achieve better outcomes for children who had experienced much trauma over the course of their lives. Staff need to be congratulated for their personal and professional commitment to this area of work.

Senior leaders want to address issues of disproportionate outcomes for children. Conversations are now beginning to take shape and this momentum must not be lost. The Youth Justice Plan needs explicit and sharper reference to disproportionality, as does the out-of-court disposal policy. This will allow the management board, when reviewing, to ensure changes are made as necessary. The practice guidance is much stronger, and this perhaps accounts for the positive way practitioners manage cases where diversity needs have been identified.

Much more work is needed to collect and analyse data to better understand the needs of children with protected characteristics. This will inform the development of targeted services.

The daily management meeting, attended by police representatives and the MASH manager, to address any hate crimes that have occurred is impressive. The process is dynamic, and resources, for example the police community support officer, can be directed to provide a timely response. We saw examples where action had been taken to address discriminatory behaviour.

¹⁹ Information supplied by Portsmouth YOT.

Several partners have received cultural awareness training. This initiative will develop knowledge and understanding. It is important that this then translates into activity that supports change in policy and practice as and when necessary.

2. Court disposals

We took a detailed look at seven community sentences managed by the YOS. We also conducted five 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.

Our key findings about court disposals are as follows:

Strengths

- Assessment work to understand why children had offended and to identify safety and wellbeing factors was satisfactory. Practitioners took account of the child's strengths and protective factors, as well as their level of maturity and desire to change.
- Planning to support the child's desistance was good.
- Case managers meaningfully engaged children and their parents and carers in planning.
- Case managers focused on developing and maintaining an effective relationship with children and their parents and carers.
- Staff were creative when delivering interventions during the pandemic and used language and techniques that promoted the trauma-informed approach advocated by the YOT.
- Attention to and response to diversity needs was a strength in casework.
- The quality of formal and dynamic reviewing of work was very good.

Areas for improvement

- When assessing a child's safety and wellbeing and risk of harm to others, staff need to identify and analyse more clearly the risks to the child and from the child. They need to include who is at risk and the nature of that risk.
- The concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims are not consistently considered when planning to address the risk of harm to others.
- Not enough services are delivered to prevent children from causing harm to others.
- Staff did not consistently set out contingency arrangements to manage the child's safety and wellbeing and their risk of harm to others.
- Some of the guidance to support safety and wellbeing and risk of harm work does not contain enough detail.
- Managers' oversight of work is often not effective.

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

2.1. Assessment



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

Good

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

	% 'Yes'
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	100%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	86%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	71%

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

Assessment work to support children in desisting from further offending is strong. Practitioners take a forensic approach, and this gives them good access to historical and current information. Diversity needs and personal circumstances are understood well. Encouragingly, we found that practitioners had made use of information held by other agencies in all seven of the cases we reviewed. This is an aspect of assessment work that we do not always find in our core inspections. Additionally, practitioners had properly reviewed the child's level of maturity. However, more attention needs to be given to the wishes of victims.

Practitioners include the voice of children and their parents and carers to inform what they believe are the causes of their offending and other behaviours.

One inspector noted:

"Assessment activity draws on information held within children's social care, interviews with the child, his grandparents, mother/stepfather as well as information from the probation service. This is used to understand the family's involvement in criminality, involvement in drug use, diversity and desistance needs."

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?

Assessment activity sought to identify the child's safety and wellbeing needs in six out of the seven inspected cases. Practitioners appropriately gathered relevant information held by other agencies in all the reviewed cases. Inspectors reported that all the safety and wellbeing classifications made by practitioners were reasonable.

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

One inspector noted:

“Concerns around safety and wellbeing are identified and analysed specifically in relation to exploitation, bullying and emotional harm. Assessment activity is supported by information from other agencies, for example via ongoing discussions at missing, exploitation and trafficked (MET) meetings which have enabled professionals to share information around the risks linked to exploitation.”

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?

Assessments to identify all relevant factors linked to keeping other people safe were weaker. We found that, in two out of the seven cases, not all factors had been identified. In these two cases it was not clear to whom the child presented a risk and what the nature of this risk was. This meant that critical information was missed. Disappointingly, practitioners did not always obtain or verify information from other agencies. In two out of the seven cases, the practitioner did not analyse controls and interventions to minimise harm well enough.

2.2. Planning



Planning is well-informed, holistic and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents or carers.	Requires improvement
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Our rating²¹ for planning is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does planning focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	86%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	71%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	57%

Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?

Planning to support children so that they do not commit further offences is good. In six out of the seven cases reviewed, there were timely plans in place that clearly identified what work needed to be delivered. In all cases planning had taken account of the child's personal circumstances, including their broader familial situation. More account should have been taken of the child's strengths and level of maturity to engage with the services identified. Attention to the needs of victims was not covered well in three out of the seven cases.

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

Not all planning focuses well enough on promoting the child's safety and wellbeing and adequately addressing risks. While guidance is available to practitioners, it is not always applied consistently, and management oversight sometimes misses gaps in

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

planning. Effective contingency planning was absent in three out of the seven inspected cases.

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

In three out of the seven inspected cases, planning did not fully include how others would be kept safe from harm. In a similar number of cases, the actual and potential victims’ concerns and needs were not meaningfully identified. More work is needed in this area. The controls needed to offer sufficient protection were absent in three out of the six cases where they were required. Too often (four out of seven cases reviewed) there were not enough contingency arrangements in place. Children’s lives can change very quickly. Therefore, effective contingency plans are critical in managing the harm that could potentially be caused to others.

One inspector noted:

“Evidence of planning to keep actual and potential victims safe is limited; planning has taken place to address the impact of ongoing motoring offences and to address deficits in emotional regulation. There are, however, omissions around understanding self-identity and learned behaviour regarding violence and conflict. There is no planning to address the carrying and use of weapons. Additionally, contingency arrangements are weak.”

2.3. Implementation and delivery	
High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging and assisting the child.	Requires improvement

Our rating²² 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?	71%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of the child?	71%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?	57%

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

The implementation and delivery of work to help children to not reoffend needs to be developed. We found that in three of the seven cases inspected, sequencing of interventions was sometimes erratic, and the services delivered were not specific

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

enough to support desistance. Often, not enough services had been delivered to help children to not repeat their offending. Diversity needs were responded to well during service delivery and the engagement of wider family members was impressive.

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

Work in this area was not consistent. Inspectors found that in two out of the seven reviewed cases, services delivered were not always contributing to keeping children safe. This was in part due to practitioners often being unclear about what they needed to do. The variability in practice is noted below.

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

The delivery of services to support the safety of others was again not consistent. Too often, the practitioner had not paid adequate attention to protecting the needs of victims. However, the involvement of other agencies to manage the risk of harm to others was generally coordinated well. Information-sharing and joint working protocols the YOT has with other organisations help to ensure timely exchange of information.

2.4. Reviewing



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

Outstanding

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

	% 'Yes'
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	100%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	100%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	86%

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

The reviewing of work to judge the impact that interventions are having on reducing reoffending is impressive. Practitioners carry out both formal and informal reviews. Consideration of protective factors and diversity needs, as well as a robust examination of personal and familial circumstances, all appear in casework.

In all seven inspected cases, children's motivation was consistently reviewed and the barriers that were identified were addressed appropriately. Dialogue with children and their parents and carers was generally facilitated well. This helped practitioners to better understand the children's wider experiences and empowered parents and carers to get involved in their children's supervision.

²³ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. See Annexe 2 for a more detailed explanation.

Two inspectors noted:

“The case manager has completed several formal reviews which have noted and analysed changes to desistance. Reviewing activity has also been completed through looked-after children reviews with other professionals involved. Information has been shared and used well to inform reviewing.”

“When the child moved in with his grandparents and attained full-time employment, session times were adjusted, and engagement changed focus to celebrating his achievement and motivating him to consider the impact of future behaviour on his employment. Further work explored how he was going to address his daily cannabis use now that he was employed. The child engaged well with this process and this resulted in him reducing his cannabis use significantly.”

Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

The quality of reviewing activity in keeping children safe was consistently positive in the cases reviewed. Where necessary, reviewing appropriately responded to changes linked to safety and wellbeing, information was obtained from other agencies that were involved, and plans were adjusted to support ongoing work. This systematic approach was helping children to understand how their wellbeing needs were changing. This insight was helping them to build on their achievements.

One inspector noted:

“A formal written review was not required within the timescales but reviewing activity to keep the child safe was ongoing and responsive to the level of vulnerability. The case was discussed across a range of forums and the frequency of these meetings was adjusted as circumstances around the child’s wellbeing changed.”

Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

Where and when necessary, reviewing responded appropriately to changes in factors related to risk of harm. This led to informed changes in plans to better protect others from harm. Again, this applied in all inspected cases. Written reviews were completed in a timely manner in all cases as required. This ensured that other practitioners involved in delivering risk of harm work had full access to all the current information. More encouragingly, reviewing gave children and their parents and carers an overview of the progress that was being made.

3. Out-of-court disposals

We inspected 20 cases managed by the YOT that had received an out-of-court disposal. These consisted of 13 youth conditional cautions, four youth cautions and three community resolutions. We interviewed the case managers in 17 cases.

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

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

Strengths

- Assessment and planning activity analysing and supporting desistance was largely done well in the inspected cases.
- Procedures and additional guidance contain advice on how diversity needs are to be dealt with and managed.
- Attention to diversity needs and personal circumstances in most aspects of casework was good.
- Work carried out built on the strengths and protective factors of children.
- The voices of children and their parents and carers are listened to in the supervisory process.

Areas for improvement

- The out-of-court disposal policy does not clearly refer to managing diversity.
- Planning for work to support the safety and wellbeing of the child and keep others safe is not always done well enough.
- The quality of work that supports desistance is variable.
- The delivery of work to keep children safe and prevent them from causing harm to others is inconsistent.
- The coordination of work by YOT practitioners, where other agencies are involved, is not always effective.
- Contingency planning needs to be evident so that the arrangements for managing a child's risk of harm to others is clear.

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 rating²⁴ 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?	70%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	70%

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

Overall, assessment work included an appropriate level of focus on analysing why children had offended. In 16 out of 20 of the inspected cases, practitioners had sought to understand the responsibility the child took for their behaviour, their attitude towards their offending and their reasons for becoming involved in offending. This approach provided a solid basis from which practitioners could delve deeper into understanding how adverse childhood experiences and experiences of trauma for children may have resulted in their offending.

The level of attention practitioners paid to the role that diversity and individual circumstances had played in the children's offending was impressive. They had invested time in building a clearer picture of the child's lived experience. The pace of interaction was good, and children were made to feel comfortable in disclosing personal information. This strengths-based approach also helped children to talk about why they had become involved in offending, often with others.

Case managers actively sought information from other agencies. We found this to have taken place in 18 out of 20 cases inspected. This enabled them to consider patterns of previous behaviour, links to significant life events and responses to interventions.

Practitioners need to pay more attention to assessing the impact of key structural barriers, especially around education outcomes. We found that a significant number of children who were being supervised by the YOT had been excluded from school and this had led to poor attainment.

Assessment activity to understand levels of maturity, capacity and motivation to change was largely robust (16 out of 20 inspected cases). Here, self-assessment questionnaires, information from parents and carers and education records were used to consider how likely it was that a child would and could respond to different interventions. Motivation to change was an area that was particularly well explored. Not only did practitioners ask children and their parents and carers questions, we

²⁴ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. See Annexe 2 for a more detailed explanation.

found evidence to show that their views had been included in the assessment process. This was illustrated in 19 out of 20 inspected cases.

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?

Assessment work that clearly identifies and analyses risks to the child's safety and wellbeing is weaker. We found that in seven out of 20 inspected cases this area of work had failed to accurately take account of risks to the safety and wellbeing of the child. This may have been because some staff were relatively new, but we expect managers to provide effective oversight to highlight these gaps. While practitioners generally commented that they had the right skills, we found that this was not fully reflected in safety and wellbeing work.

Not all assessment activity involved gathering and analysing information held by other sources, for example statutory partners. We found this to be the case in six out of twenty of the inspected cases. This area of work needs to be improved, because if critical information is missed, this is likely to lead to a child experiencing further harm.

Encouragingly, we agreed with 16 out of 19 decisions that case managers made about their risk classification of safety and wellbeing. However, the gaps in information led to assessments that were not comprehensive.

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?

In nine out of twenty inspected cases, assessments did not clearly identify and analyse the risk of harm to others posed by the child. This included a failure to identify who is at risk and the nature of that risk. This is worrying, and immediate attention is required to protect others from harm. Too often assessments lacked depth. While information from other sources, including plans held by children's social care, had been accessed, connection to current behaviours was lacking. This meant that information remained descriptive and not sufficiently analytical to properly support the protection of actual and potential victims from harm.

One inspector noted:

"Information from other professionals has not been effectively used. There are indicators that the child has been involved in incidents with weapons. While the child has not been convicted, this information has not been used to assess potential risks. There is an overreliance on the child's account rather than analysing information from other agencies."

3.2. Planning



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

Good

Our rating²⁵ for planning is based on the following key questions:

²⁵ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. See Annexe 2 for a more detailed explanation.

	% 'Yes'
Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?	85%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	70%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	65%

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

Planning to support the child's desistance was mostly comprehensive. Plans contained the key interventions, who would deliver these services and the expected timescale for completing the work. The sequencing of services was clear. These positive attributes were seen in 17 out of 20 inspected cases. It was pleasing to find that a range of interventions had been identified and these had been revised and personalised during the pandemic. For example, some activity was completed independently, and some case work was delivered through 'walking and talking'.

Again, planning that incorporated information on diversity and personal circumstances was robust. This ensured that plans were directly relevant to meeting the children's needs.

In 18 out of 20 inspected cases, practitioners had explained clearly how the interventions would build on the child's strengths and achievements and support personal growth. This was mostly agreed jointly with children and their parents and carers. More discipline in this area of work is needed, as this will support children and their parents to engage in the preparation of more comprehensive plans.

Given that practitioners had spent meaningful time with children and their parents and carers, they had access to considerable amounts of information. This helped them to assess how likely children were to comply with interventions and how ready they were to engage with specific services.

The identification of mainstream services in the community was encouraging. While the pandemic presented significant challenges to practitioners, they nevertheless worked creatively to ensure that children and their parents and carers knew what was available. This included initiatives such as 'Pompey in the Community', an initiative to support vulnerable children.

We concluded that planning for services to address desistance was good and the plans themselves were proportionate to the level of offending and need.

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

Planning did not promote and adequately address safety and wellbeing risks in six out of twenty inspected cases. In these cases, there was not enough evidence to reassure inspectors that all staff fully understood the need for comprehensive plans that would support keeping children safe. The information contained in plans often lacked substance. Additionally, practitioners had not always diligently accessed information held by other agencies. This again created gaps in critical knowledge to keep children safe. This needs to be addressed.

Contingency planning is critical in keeping up with the quickly changing lives of children. We were disappointed to find that contingency planning was limited in six out of twenty of the inspected cases. Much more attention is needed to ensure that

all plans include arrangements that can be swiftly introduced when circumstances change.

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

Planning for work to promote the safety of other people was variable. We found that in six out of twenty cases inspected not enough priority was given to keeping other people safe. This inconsistency needs to be overcome to ensure that others are kept safe from potential harm. The involvement of other public protection agencies in planning, for example the police, was generally good. This ensured that agencies clearly understood what their roles were.

Again, contingency planning was not consistent and too often the absence of arrangements led to the potential for further harm to be caused to others. Given the earlier gaps in the assessment of safety and wellbeing and risk of harm to others, it is not surprising that similar deficits were repeated in this area. More comprehensive assessments are likely to support better planning to manage harm to actual and potential victims.

3.3. Implementation and delivery



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

Good

Our rating²⁶ for implementation and delivery is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does service delivery effectively support the child's desistance?	65%
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of the child?	65%
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of other people?	65%

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

Services delivered to support desistance were inconsistent. We found some examples where mental health support and parenting support, for example, were provided and these were making a difference in improving health and family cohesion and supporting desistance. However, in seven out of twenty inspected cases, not enough work had been carried out to help children to not reoffend. This was not due to non-compliance but rather because practitioners did not always know what they specifically had to do to enable children to desist from offending.

The volume of contact was good, and practitioners were actively engaging with children. However, the contact was largely focused on reviewing personal circumstances and gathering updates. Offending behaviour work needs to be more central to supervision and broader familial and social context considerations need to be acknowledged.

²⁶ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. See Annexe 2 for a more detailed explanation.

Does service delivery focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

Service delivery failed to support keeping the child safe in seven out of twenty inspected cases. Work with partners to keep children safe was limited and coordination of this work was done well in only 11 out of 20 cases. This needs urgent attention. Earlier shortfalls in assessment and planning for this work were having a negative impact on service delivery. The YOT has a range of assurance and gatekeeping systems in place, but these did not always enable managers to identify the gaps in delivery. Managers need to be more effective in their oversight.

Does service delivery focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

In seven out of eighteen inspected cases, not enough services were delivered to keep other people safe. The attention paid to the needs of potential and actual victims was particularly weak. There was some evidence of individualised knife crime awareness sessions, combined with effective restorative work, being delivered.

3.4. Out-of-court disposal policy and provision



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

Good

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

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

The YOT has a detailed, locally agreed out-of-court disposals policy with the police, accompanied by comprehensive operational procedures. Both documents were revised and implemented in November 2021. These now need to be embedded. The YOT aligns itself to the Hampshire Constabulary and Youth Offending Teams Triage Protocol. This has created a joint decision-making panel. The guidance is clear and sufficiently detailed.

The out-of-court disposal criteria are clearly defined and suitably broad to allow for the use of discretion. Defensible decision-making is a key principle in determining out-of-court disposals. This ensures that there is a clear rationale for certain decisions. Escalation procedures are integrated well into other mapping processes to ensure balanced decision-making. The routes for the delivery of out-of-court disposals are clearly and distinctly defined and understood by practitioners. Arrangements that best ensure children receive the care and support services they need to achieve positive outcomes are in place.

There is a commitment to a child-first approach. This involves identifying protected characteristics and reducing disproportionality for children who may be over-represented, such as those from certain ethnic communities and/or who have looked after status. The effectiveness of this commitment is not yet clear.

Arrangements to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and safety of others are clearly highlighted but the assessment and planning tools do not provide clear

enough guidance to identify all the actual and potential risks. For staff, detailed information, combined with effective management oversight, is needed to make sure that relevant information is gathered, and the intervention delivered in the right way. Encouragingly, victim engagement guidance is explicit.

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

The joint decision-making panel meets every week. Panel representation includes the YOT, police and early help and prevention. Representation from the MASH was added in June 2021 and has brought additional value to supporting defensible decision-making. The joint decision-making panel supports timely and effective diversion. There is an effective escalation process that is used when there are differences of opinion. This ensures that children are not disadvantaged in the outcomes they receive.

The recent introduction of the pre-triage assessment (PTA) now ensures that the panel has access to a range of information. The tool is generally comprehensive but more detailed guidance (and training) around safety and wellbeing and risk of harm would help practitioners to better understand these needs. This would then ensure that the right provision is delivered to effectively manage assessed need.

A wide range of out-of-court disposal interventions are available. These build on the child's strengths; look to healthy community integration; and promote positive child-first outcomes. There was evidence of the variety of interventions delivered in many of the out-of-court disposal cases reviewed.

Each child is allocated a restorative justice worker, who undertakes and oversees work to broaden the child's understanding of the harm they have caused. These arrangements work well.

There are clear guidelines on supporting compliance, with practitioners appropriately referring to the YOT's engagement, enabling compliance and enforcement policies and procedures.

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

The current out-of-court policy and procedures were reviewed in November 2021. These have led to positive changes. There is a commitment to reviewing procedures in a dynamic way, and this was evidenced in meetings with managers and senior leaders.

Management information relating to community resolutions is kept on the police system. There has been no audit or analysis of community resolutions in the past few years.

There is a pan-Hampshire YOTs out-of-court disposal scrutiny panel, whose aim is to provide reassurance to the Youth Justice Partnerships within Hampshire and the public that the use of non-charge outcomes are appropriate, ethical and comply with national frameworks. The panel seeks to scrutinise first-time entrant decision-making and diversion decision-making, and to review street-issued community resolutions. More detail is needed to ensure that disproportionality issues are monitored, along

with the planning and delivery of effective services to manage safety and wellbeing and risk of harm.

The youth lead from the OPCC chairs the scrutiny panel. This provides additional accountability and independence. Stronger links between the local joint decision-making panel and the scrutiny panel would be helpful to support learning. Within the scrutiny panel audit document, it would be helpful to include how well the views of children and their parents and carers are included.

There is a commitment to reviewing and evaluating themed topics as management information becomes available.

At the beginning of 2021, the police put themselves forward for an audit of out-of-court disposals by another police force (South Wales). This demonstrates an intention to understand performance more objectively.

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. We inspected one case managed by the YOT that had received a custodial sentence. Our key findings were as follows.

The custody and resettlement policy and procedures are underpinned by the concept of resettlement as a journey for the child, rather than a single transition event. This enables greater collaboration between partners to ensure the child's experience of transition and integration into the community is positive. The policy has been informed by research linked to achieving an 'identity shift', from a pro-offending identity to a more pro-social identity. Practice guidance follows four key principles:

- a continued focus on resettlement throughout a sentence
- early preparation for release
- effective communication between an institution and community agencies
- a coordinated, holistic response involving multi-agency partnerships.

Pathways including suitable accommodation, health and ETE all feature well in the policy. The resettlement checklist ensures that key areas are covered. However, a more explicit focus on diversity is required.

Staff managing resettlement cases are well supported by their managers. There are strong information-sharing protocols, and communication with institutions is generally good. Practitioners can visit children and take parents and carers with them in line with whatever national restrictions may be in place.

Strengths

- The partnership is committed to meeting children's resettlement needs.
- YOT staff have taken parents, carers and siblings to visits and facilitated telephone calls so that families can stay in touch.
- The service leader has a designated responsibility for overseeing resettlement work.
- There is a local arrangement with children's social care to ensure that all children are released to suitable accommodation.

Areas for improvement

- There has been no specific training for staff in managing resettlement cases.
- A strategic plan is needed to ensure that the policy meets the resettlement needs of all children.

We gathered evidence for this standard from documents and meetings and inspected one case 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?

Portsmouth YOT has a custody and resettlement policy dated April 2021. It includes the need for children to receive suitable practical support for their personal resettlement route, including accommodation; healthcare; education, training and employment; and constructive leisure. There is a strong emphasis on working with children to shift their pro-offending identities into pro-social identities. While there is no explicit reference to 'structural' barriers in the policy, there is a recognition of the need to support children and their families to overcome any barriers they may face. Practitioners understand what structural barriers are and the need to address them.

The policy identifies equality, diversity and participation as high priorities. Avoiding assumptions, guarding against stereotyping or prejudice, and challenging practitioner bias are integrated into the way children will be supervised. This is a strength. There is a strong evidence-based approach to providing constructive support. This is punctuated with the need for individualised support, building on strengths, and future effective community integration.

There are robust information-sharing processes in place to enable effective resettlement. From the resettlement work reviewed by inspectors, and information provided by practitioners involved in resettlement work, these protocols and arrangements work well.

The policy requires practitioners to carry out work that will 'reduce risks posed *by and to* children and young people, in a way which recognises them *as* children and young people, taking into account stages of child and adolescent development and maturity as well as age and behaviour'. The custody and resettlement procedures document provides good advice and guidance on the effective application of the policy. Coverage of safety and wellbeing and risk of harm to others is good.

There is a youth to adult transition policy. Transfers are managed well, with the YOT probation officer actively involved in providing support and guidance.

The policy covers victims' needs well, and it is integrated with other policies, such as the restorative justice (working with victims) policy and procedures.

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

There is a Portsmouth YOT resettlement checklist, which covers all children who are either remanded or sentenced to custody.

Practitioners are asked to consider a range of questions within timescales identified by the YOT:

- Is it clear what accommodation arrangements will be in place on release?
- Are accommodation arrangements in line with the child's wishes and likely to support effective resettlement and reintegration?
- Is specialist worker input required (for example, for education, health or substance misuse)?
- Is it clear what ETE arrangements will be in place on release?

The resettlement checklist does not explicitly refer to how a child's diversity needs will be met as they transition into resettlement.

The approach to resettlement provision is evidence-based. It focuses on effective engagement, education and training, and builds on strengths. Resettlement work is shared across practitioners. Those who had carried out resettlement work reported that they had received relevant training, as well as case work support from their managers.

The resettlement checklist helps practitioners to identify safety and wellbeing concerns sufficiently well. For example, practitioners are asked to comment on the following:

- Was a 'welfare check' completed within one working day with receiving establishment, including agreement of how any safeguarding concerns will be addressed? If safeguarding concerns are identified, please state these specifically.
- If the child requires regular medication or healthcare, have details been confirmed to ensure this is received?

It would be helpful to include more explicit guidance in the checklist about addressing any risk of harm to others posed by the child. Coverage of the needs of victims and liaison with restorative workers is strong.

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

In early 2021, the YOT consolidated all available guidance and reference material relating to custody and resettlement into over-arching policy and procedures documents, which were finalised in April 2021. When preparing those documents, the YOT 'Custody Resettlement Checklist' was updated based on learning to date and its use outlined within the Custody and Resettlement Procedures. The Joint Working Protocol between early help, children's social care and YOT and the YOT Bail and Remand Protocol were updated to tie in with this work. This was before the standard review date. It is planned that the procedures will be reviewed in April 2022 (one year after issue) to ensure they are fit for purpose.

The YOT management board receives regular reports on children being taken into custody. Practitioners undertaking resettlement work have their cases reviewed,

gatekept and countersigned. There has been a positive response to HM Inspectorate of Probation's thematic inspection of resettlement.²⁷ We were pleased to find that procedures had been developed to improve the engagement of children. The views of children and their parents and carers are sought in a dynamic way and at the end of the period of supervision.

The service leader is currently producing an inside/out resettlement programme for children, and a training workshop for YOT staff, which will be delivered jointly with an independent reviewing officer after April 2022 once the policy has been reviewed. This is a promising piece of work. The evaluation of the impact of the custody and resettlement policy needs to be more systematic.

²⁷ HM Inspectorate of Probation and HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2019). *Youth resettlement – final report into work in the community*.
<https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/cji/inspections/youthresettlementcommunity/>

Annexe 1: Methodology

HM Inspectorate of Probation standards

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

The inspection methodology is summarised below, linked to the three domains in our standards framework. We focused on obtaining evidence against the standards, key questions and prompts in our inspection framework.

Domain one: organisational delivery

The youth offending service submitted evidence in advance and the Chair of the management board delivered a presentation covering the following areas:

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

During the main fieldwork phase, we conducted 22 interviews with case managers, asking them about their experiences of training, development, management supervision and leadership. We held various meetings, which allowed us to triangulate evidence and information. In total, we conducted 16 meetings, which included meetings with managers, partner organisations and staff. The evidence collected under this domain was judged against our published ratings characteristics.²⁹

Domain two: court disposals

We completed case assessments over a one-week period, examining case files and interviewing case managers. Twenty-five 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 seven court disposals. The sample size was set to achieve a confidence level of 80 per cent (with a margin of error of five), and we ensured that the ratios in relation to gender, sentence or disposal type, risk of serious harm, and risk to safety and wellbeing classifications matched those in the eligible population.

Domain three: out-of-court disposals

We completed case assessments over a one-week period, examining case files and interviewing case managers. Seventy per cent of cases selected were those of children who had received out-of-court disposals three to five months earlier. This

²⁸ HM Inspectorate's standards are available here:

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

enabled us to examine work in relation to assessing, planning, and implementation and delivery. Where necessary, interviews with other people significantly involved in the case also took place.

We examined 20 out-of-court disposals. The sample size was set based on the proportion of out-of-court disposal cases in the YOT.

Resettlement

We completed case assessments over a one-week period, examining one case file and interviewing case managers, in cases where children had received custodial sentences or been released from custodial sentences four to twelve 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 seven court disposals and 20 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 one case 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 for each standard is aligned to the banding at the key question level where the lowest proportion of cases were judged to be sufficient, as we believe that each key question is an integral part of the standard. Therefore, if we rate three key questions as 'Good' and one as 'Inadequate', the overall rating for that standard is 'Inadequate'.

Lowest banding (proportion of cases judged to be sufficient 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:³⁰

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?	100%
b) Does assessment sufficiently analyse diversity issues?	86%
c) Does assessment consider personal circumstances, including the wider familial and social context of the child?	100%
d) Does assessment utilise information held by other agencies?	100%
e) Does assessment focus on the child's strengths and protective factors?	86%
f) Does assessment analyse the key structural barriers facing the child?	71%
g) Is enough attention given to understanding the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change, and their likelihood of engaging with the court disposal?	100%
h) Does assessment give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of victims, and opportunities for restorative justice?	43%
i) Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in their assessment, and are their views taken into account?	57%
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?	86%
b) Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including other assessments, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	100%
c) Does assessment analyse controls and interventions to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	86%

³⁰ 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?	71%
b) Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including past behaviour and convictions, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	71%
c) Does assessment analyse controls and interventions to manage and minimise the risk of harm presented by the child?	71%

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?	86%
b) Does planning sufficiently address diversity issues?	86%
c) Does planning take sufficient account of the child's personal circumstances, including the wider familial and social context of the child?	100%
d) Does planning take sufficient account of the child's strengths and protective factors, and seek to reinforce or develop these as necessary?	71%
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?	71%
f) Does planning give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of victims?	43%
g) Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in planning, and are their views taken into account?	71%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	
a) Does planning promote the safety and wellbeing of the child, sufficiently addressing risks?	86%
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?	71%
c) Does planning set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	71%
d) Does planning set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to manage those risks that have been identified?	57%

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	
a) Does planning promote the safety of other people, sufficiently addressing risk of harm factors?	57%
b) Does planning involve other agencies where appropriate?	57%
c) Does planning address any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims?	43%
d) Does planning set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote the safety of other people?	43%
e) Does planning set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to manage those risks that have been identified?	43%

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?	57%
b) Does service delivery account for the diversity issues of the child?	86%
c) Does service delivery reflect the wider familial and social context of the child, involving parents or carers, or significant others?	100%
d) Does service delivery build upon the child's strengths and enhance protective factors?	71%
e) Is sufficient focus given to developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child and their parents or carers?	100%
f) Does service delivery promote opportunities for community integration, including access to services post-supervision?	86%
g) Is sufficient attention given to encouraging and enabling the child's compliance with the work of the YOT?	86%
h) Are enforcement actions taken when appropriate?	57%

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?	71%
b) Is the involvement of other organisations in keeping the child safe sufficiently well-coordinated?	57%

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?	57%
b) Is sufficient attention given to the protection of actual and potential victims?	43%
c) Is the involvement of other agencies in managing the risk of harm sufficiently well-coordinated?	57%

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?	71%
b) Does reviewing focus sufficiently on building upon the child's strengths and enhancing protective factors?	71%
c) Does reviewing include analysis of, and respond to, diversity factors?	71%
d) Does reviewing consider the personal circumstances, including the wider familial and social context of the child?	71%
d) Does reviewing consider motivation and engagement levels and any relevant barriers?	100%
e) Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in reviewing their progress and engagement, and are their views taken into account?	57%
f) Does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work to support desistance?	43%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	
a) Does reviewing identify and respond to changes in factors related to safety and wellbeing?	86%
b) Is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in promoting the safety and wellbeing of the child?	71%
c) Does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	57%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	
a) Does reviewing identify and respond to changes in factors related to risk of harm?	57%

b) Is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in managing the risk of harm?	43%
c) Does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan all of work to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	43%

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?	80%
b) Does assessment sufficiently analyse diversity issues?	80%
c) Does assessment consider personal circumstances, including the wider familial and social context of the child?	90%
d) Does assessment utilise information held by other agencies?	90%
e) Does assessment focus on the child's strengths and protective factors?	95%
f) Does assessment analyse the key structural barriers facing the child?	55%
g) Is sufficient attention given to understanding the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change?	80%
h) Does assessment give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of victims, and opportunities for restorative justice?	55%
i) Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in their assessment, and are their views taken into account?	95%

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?	65%
b) Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including other assessments, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	70%

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?

a) Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risk of harm to others posed by the child, including identifying who is at risk and the nature of that risk?	50%
b) Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including any other assessments that have been completed, and other evidence of behaviour by the child?	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?	85%
b) Does planning sufficiently address diversity issues?	90%
c) Does planning take sufficient account of the child's personal circumstances, including the wider familial and social context of the child?	90%
d) Does planning take sufficient account of the child's strengths and protective factors, and seek to reinforce or develop these as necessary?	90%
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?	90%
f) Does planning take sufficient account of opportunities for community integration, including access to mainstream services following completion of out-of-court disposal work?	80%
g) Does planning give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victims?	50%
h) Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in planning, and are their views taken into account?	75%

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

a) Does planning promote the safety and wellbeing of the child, sufficiently addressing risks?	70%
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?	75%
c) Does planning include necessary contingency arrangements for those risks that have been identified?	70%

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

a) Does planning promote the safety of other people, sufficiently addressing risk of harm factors?	60%
b) Does planning involve other agencies where appropriate?	70%
c) Does planning address any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims?	60%
d) Does planning include necessary contingency arrangements for those risks that have been identified?	60%

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

Does service delivery effectively support the child's desistance?

a) Are the delivered services those most likely to support desistance, with sufficient attention given to sequencing and the available timescales?	65%
b) Does service delivery account for the diversity issues of the child?	85%
c) Does service delivery reflect the wider familial and social context of the child, involving parents or carers, or significant others?	70%
d) Is sufficient focus given to developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child and their parents or carers?	90%
e) Is sufficient attention given to encouraging and enabling the child's compliance with the work of the YOT?	95%
f) Does service delivery promote opportunities for community integration, including access to mainstream services?	80%

Does service delivery effectively support the safety of the child?

a) Does service delivery promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	60%
b) Is the involvement of other agencies in keeping the child safe sufficiently well utilised and coordinated?	55%

Does service delivery effectively support the safety of other people?

a) Are the delivered services sufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	55%
b) Is sufficient attention given to the protection of actual and potential victims?	50%