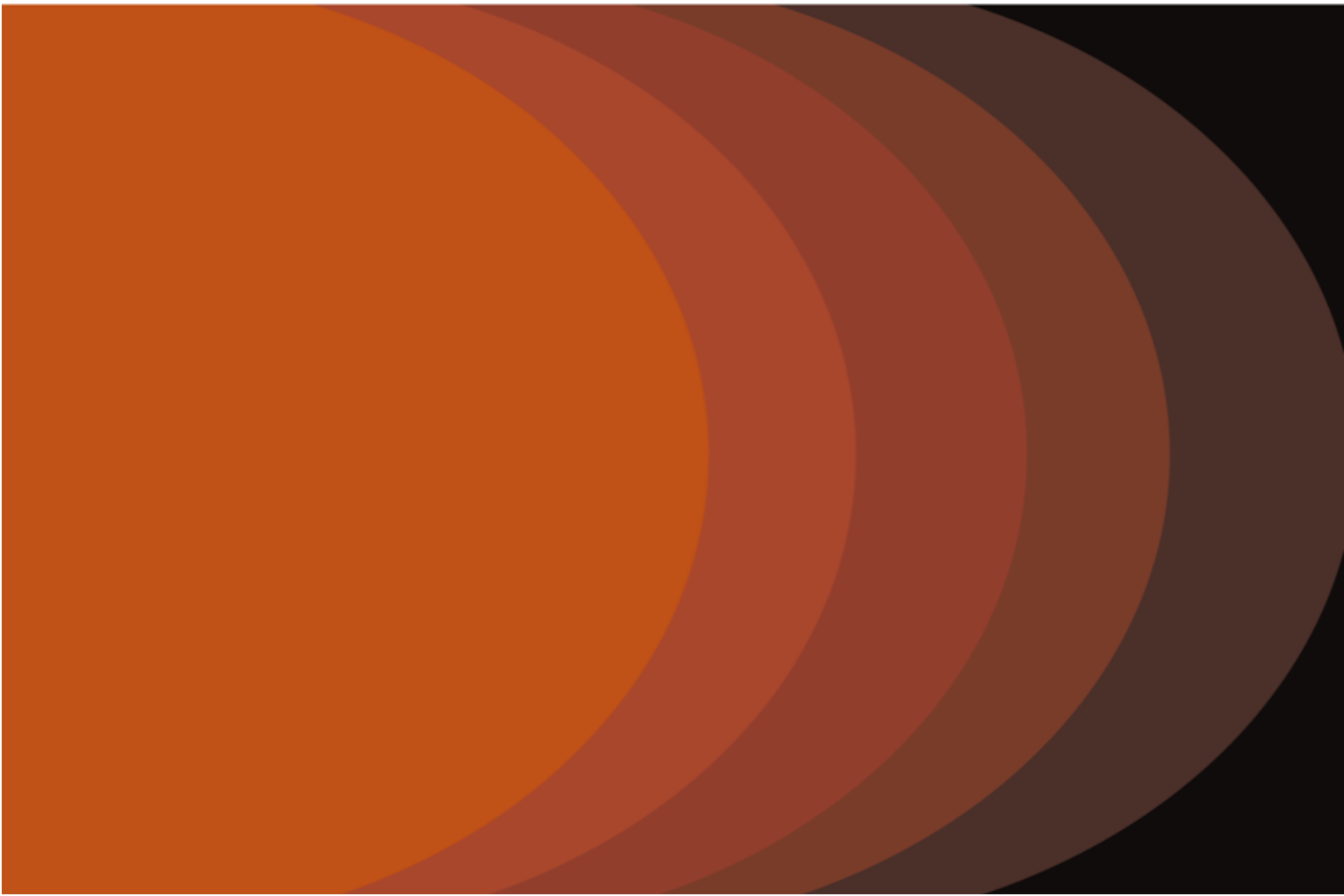




HM Inspectorate
of Probation

An inspection of youth justice services in
Salford

HM Inspectorate of Probation, May 2024



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Foreword

This inspection is part of our programme of youth justice service (YJS) inspections. We have inspected and rated Salford YJS across three broad areas: the arrangements for organisational delivery of the service, the quality of work done with children sentenced by the courts, and the quality of out-of-court disposal work.

Overall, Salford YJS was rated as 'Good'. We also inspected the quality of resettlement policy and provision, which was separately rated as 'Good'.

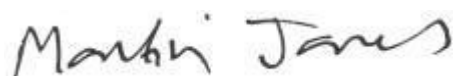
Board members are clear about the vision for the service, are consulted on its annual priorities, and members have responsibility for leading YJS priority areas. Each board starts with hearing from children, so members are reminded of the purpose of the meeting. The YJS is well represented across strategic and operational partnerships, and the board receives high-quality information on the service's performance. However, the inspection found that the profile and offending of children, particularly younger children, needs strategic analysis by the partnership, to ensure that policies and practices do not result in children being unnecessarily criminalised. This needs to include a review by the police on the use of Outcome 22¹ to make sure that all children are provided with a range of options for a diversionary outcome.

Salford's partnership working was a strength, especially its health provision and the multidisciplinary health drop-in sessions. Mentors supported children in custody and in the community, and there was a good connection with children's social care services and the complex safeguarding team. Health practitioners provide training sessions on trauma-informed practice. However, more needs to be done to ensure that the whole service is using this approach.

The YJS actively encourages staff development through management opportunities within the service and funding staff to complete external qualifications. However, the management and supervision of volunteers needs to be developed as there are limited opportunities for them to meet, and they are not well integrated into the service.

For out-of-court disposals, we found consistently high-quality work to assess, plan, and deliver interventions, particularly in relation to children's desistance. However, the quality of work to manage children's risk of harm to others in post-court cases, across assessing, planning and delivery needs to improve. The process of sharing police intelligence and the use of police checks need to be reviewed, to ensure this information is used to positively impact and inform risk management activity.

The YJS is committed to helping children achieve and has an excellent offer for them to undertake AQA awards through completing their interventions with the service. The service promotes a child-first approach, and it was pleasing to see interventions being co-created with children.



Martin Jones CBE
Chief Inspector of Probation

¹ Outcome 22 is used by the police where action has been undertaken involving diversionary, educational, or intervention activity.

Ratings

Salford Youth Justice Service
Fieldwork started January 2024

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

Good



2. Court disposals

2.1 Assessment

Requires improvement



2.2 Planning

Requires improvement



2.3 Implementation and delivery

Requires improvement



2.4 Reviewing

Good



3. Out-of-court disposals

3.1 Assessment

Good



3.2 Planning

Outstanding



3.3 Implementation and delivery

Good



3.4 Out-of-court disposal policy and provision

Good



4. Resettlement²

4.1 Resettlement policy and provision

Good



² The rating for Resettlement does not influence the overall YJS rating.

Recommendations

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

Greater Manchester Police should:

1. review the use of Outcome 22 in Salford and work with the YJS to ensure that children are provided with a range of options for a diversionary outcome
2. Alongside the YJS review the sharing of police intelligence and the use of police checks to improve the quality of children's risk management plans.

The YJS Partnership Board should:

3. make sure that policies and practices do not result in younger children being unnecessarily criminalised
4. ensure that high-quality education, training, and employment provision is available for post-school-age children known to the YJS.

The YJS Head of Service should:

5. make sure that there is a structure in place to enable volunteers to be appropriately managed, supported and integrated as part of the YJS
6. prioritise using a trauma-informed approach across the service when working with children and families and ensure that there is consistency in the quality of work across both post-court cases and out-of-court disposals
7. ensure consistent quality of practice across assessing, planning and delivery where children present a risk of harm to others.

Background

We conducted fieldwork in Salford YJS over a period of a week, beginning 22 January 2024. We inspected cases where the sentence or licence began, out-of-court disposals were delivered, and resettlement cases were sentenced or released between 23 January to 17 November 2023. We also conducted interviews with 37 case managers.

Salford YJS works across a largely urban area covering the five districts of Salford: Eccles, Worsley, Irlam and Cadishead, and Swinton and Pendlebury. Its demographics show that it is the 18th most deprived local authority, 86 per cent of the population are white British, 50.6 per cent are male, 4.9 per cent of children have an education, health and care plan, and 16.8 per cent receive special educational needs support. Greater Manchester Police operates across the region, which is covered by 10 different YJSs. The YJSs work collaboratively in the delivery of training and provision of services, with the heads of service meeting regularly to ensure that strategic partnership arrangements remain strong.

Salford YJS is a multi-agency partnership that sits within children's services in Salford City Council. The service is led by the head of youth justice, who reports to the director of children's social care. Governance of the YJS is provided by the YJS partnership board, which is chaired by the executive director of children's services, who has been chairing since February 2023.

The head of service is supported by four operational managers, all with thematic leads and areas of responsibility, and the leadership of the YJS is stable, with minimal staff turnover. At the time of the inspection, there were 53 YJS staff and 12 volunteers, and a dedicated interventions team which takes a lead role in designing and delivering interventions. In December 2023, 42 post-court interventions and 20 out-of-court disposals were open to the YJS.

In terms of prevention and diversion, the number of children being referred for diversion support has increased, which is a positive trend, showing that services are intervening with children at an earlier stage to prevent offending and reduce the number of first-time entrants. This support includes the Turnaround Programme and the 'prevention through prosecution, intervention, education, and diversion' panel. The YJS also has a prevention coordinator, who has two youth workers alongside them.

The service produces comprehensive data on the YJS cohort of children, and partner agencies' data scorecards, which are presented at the board, enabling a full analysis of the profile and holistic needs of YJS children to be available. Analysis of YJS performance data shows that the number of first-time entrants to the formal youth justice system was above the average for the region, and for England and Wales. The proportion of children who reoffend and the frequency with which they do so are lower than the average for England and Wales. Although the YJS has historically experienced high numbers of children in custody, at the time of the inspection no children were in custody.

Domain one: Organisational delivery

To inspect organisational delivery, we reviewed written evidence submitted in advance by the YJS and conducted 12 meetings, including with staff, volunteers, managers, board members, and partnership staff and their managers.

Key findings about organisational delivery were as follows.

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

Strengths:

- Governance of the YJS is provided by the YJS partnership board, which is chaired by the executive director of children's services, who has been in this role for 12 months. She works alongside the head of service providing a clear vision for the development of the board.
- Board membership includes all statutory partners, who understand the vision and risks for the YJS. There is a clear focus on setting future priorities.
- There is a comprehensive board introductory handbook, supported by induction meetings with the head of service and chair of the board.
- The board receives high-quality information on the service's performance, progress on action plans, learning from audits and inspection reports, as well as other deep-dive thematic reports and national performance.
- Partners produce a scorecard and share quantitative and qualitative data on key themes and trends within their service areas. This helps to provide a full analysis of the profile and holistic needs of YJS children across the partnership.
- Board members have lead areas which they are expected to report on, to encourage members accountability. We found evidence that this was impactful – for example, with a deep-dive analysis into children in custody.
- There is evidence of board members holding each other to account and challenging partner agencies. We saw effective challenge regarding specific issues – for example, a child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) review had resulted in an increase in provision for lower-level mental health support.
- The YJS is well represented across strategic and operational partnership forums.
- The youth justice plan has been developed through consultation with board members, staff, and children.
- Each board starts with hearing from children – for example, a child attending the board meeting, or board members listening to recorded videos made by

children, or staff members presenting children's case studies. This reminds members of the purpose of the meeting.

- The YJS has a stable and experienced leadership team; managers lead on specific areas of practice and their responsibilities are clear.
- Members of the management team attend the board and present reports based on their lead areas.
- The YJS and the partnership have a strong child-first vision and ethos, and this was positively impacting upon children, for example, through the co creation of interventions.

Areas for improvement:

- There has been inconsistent attendance at the board by police representatives. This has limited the board's ability to challenge and escalate concerns, particularly around the implementation and use of Outcome 22. The board should better monitor the police's approach to the use of Outcome 22, to ensure that children are provided with a range of options for a diversionary outcome, especially those who give 'no comment' interviews.
- The profile and offending of younger children need strategic attention by the partnership, to ensure that policies and practices do not result in these children being unnecessarily criminalised.
- The board needs to have greater oversight of the quality of risk of harm work, especially in relation to the sharing of police intelligence and how it impacts on this area of practice.
- The YJS has a diversity and disproportionality strategy, reviews over-represented groups, and has nominated diversity champions. However, this needs to be driven at a strategic level to ensure that staff are appropriately trained and supported in assessing and delivering interventions that reflect children's protected characteristics.

1.2. Staff



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

Good

Strengths:

- Staff are happy, positive, and motivated in their work. They reported feeling supported by their managers and their peers.
- The management team works well together. Staff feel supported and confident to approach managers for advice and guidance.
- Allocation considers the service's previous involvement with the family, so that consistency of case manager is prioritised. Staff feel that the allocation of work is fair and collaborative.
- Staff and managers take a child-first approach and know their children well. They do all they can to encourage good engagement with children and their families, and will advocate and challenge when appropriate, to ensure that children's needs are being met.
- Staff receive regular and purposeful monthly supervision, and seconded staff receive supervision and support from both their home agency and their YJS line manager.
- Staff access reflective peer supervision, and specialist supervision is given to staff managing harmful sexual behaviour cases.
- There is a thorough induction process for new staff, and there are procedures for addressing staff competency.
- The YJS has a comprehensive staff training and development plan, and staff feel encouraged to look for training opportunities. The YJS proactively encourages staff development and offers management opportunities within the service, as well as funding and supporting staff to complete external qualifications.
- There are monthly specialist health briefings, delivered by the YJS health practitioners, which support staff in managing children where health needs have been identified.
- Staff across the partnership work collaboratively and joint working is prioritised to meet the needs of children and families.
- Managers recognise good practice, and staff supervision includes reflecting on a positive piece of work they have done. Team meetings encourage the sharing of positive news.
- The work of the YJS interventions team is creative and inspiring, with staff co-producing interventions with children. They make use of local activities, encouraging children to be active within their community and use their time constructively.
- There is a clear focus on meeting the needs of girls. Staff are encouraged to take an individualised approach, build effective relationships, and consider ways of working creatively with them.

Areas for improvement:

- Although the panel members feel supported in their role, there are limited opportunities for them to meet and share their experiences as volunteers. We found that they are not aware of the service objectives, are not well integrated into the service, and have received limited individual or group supervision.
- Specialist health practitioners provide training sessions on trauma-informed practice, but more needs to be done to ensure that the whole service is using this approach. A framework needs to be put in place, and further staff training delivered, to ensure that all staff understand the approach and that it is consistently applied to work with children and families.
- Although we found that management oversight meets the needs of the case in post-court work, it is not always having the desired impact in ensuring the quality of practice being delivered.
- There is a discrepancy between the quality of practice in post-court work and out-of-court disposal work. Staff should work together to promote a positive learning culture, and this should include staff training to ensure a consistency of practice across the whole service in working with all children positively.

1.3. Partnerships and services



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

Good

Strengths:

- The YJS has access to a comprehensive suite of data, which is used to drive improvement – for example, in work with cared for children.
- YJS children assessed as high risk are discussed at multi-agency risk management meetings. The service meeting includes a 'risk mapping' agenda item, to ensure that risks to and from children are shared effectively.
- The YJS has an excellent offer for children to gain AQA unit awards for their education, training, and employment portfolio. The service is an AQA unit award centre and there are various awards, at different levels, that YJS children can achieve through their interventions with the service.
- The service offers a high-quality mentoring service to children through City Wall, which delivers direct support to children in custody and during their resettlement, and Remedi, which delivers mentoring and reparation services.
- There are two youth workers, seconded from the youth service, who work with children on Turnaround and deliver group work in schools. This is helping to prevent children from becoming involved with the YJS.
- The service has a dedicated victim worker. There has been a focus over the past 12 months to boost the uptake of support for victims and increase the number of restorative justice approaches.
- Reparation sessions are tailored to the child's needs and are offered to all children open to the YJS, to encourage involvement in positive activities.
- There is an education support worker, provided by Ed Start, who provides effective specialist support and guidance to case managers and partnership staff.
- There is a comprehensive range of partnership forums, which work collectively to tackle exclusions, challenge and support schools, and ease access for YJS children to further education. Education providers are responsive to the needs of YJS children, and partnership working is helping to bring about improvements in building schools' capacity to manage them and retain them in learning.
- Career Connect provides an adviser for post-school-age children, who oversees those children not engaging in education and works in partnership with case managers and other specialist workers to support integration into education, training, and employment. They offer support for each individual child and act as an advocate for them and their families, to ensure that education is a priority.
- Healthcare provision is excellent and includes a nurse, a speech and language therapist, a CAMHS worker, an educational psychologist, and a substance misuse worker. They provide a health specialist drop-in session, where health practitioners work as a multidisciplinary team with other specialist YJS practitioners to formulate children's clinical needs, as well as the services and interventions that would best help meet those needs.

- Early Break provides substance use services and supports children and other professionals working with families who require substance use information and support. It also offers a drop-in consultation session for YJS staff.
- There is a good connection with children's social care services and evidence of joint working. Staff have a clear understanding of the referral process for children's social care interventions if they are concerned about familial harm.
- There is good communication with the complex safeguarding team, leading to joint working and timely interventions.
- The YJS has a joint working agreement with children's social care services in regard to harmful sexual behaviour, and this is promoted across the partnership, and there is a clear understanding of the harmful sexual behaviour pathway.
- A seconded probation officer leads on transitions and there is a thorough process in place which ensures that they can continue to support young people when they move to the care of the Probation Service.
- The YJS has seconded police officers. New police officers visit the YJS to learn more about the service, which helps to build relationships between the YJS and the police.
- According to feedback from the court, the pre-sentence reports are of a high quality, and services delivered by the YJS ensure that children are receiving the interventions and support they need. The court is shared by a few services, and when Salford staff are in court with the children in their care, they represent them well in terms of conveying their circumstances, local issues, and the specifics of the interventions being proposed.

Areas for improvement:

- Victim feedback is collated by a questionnaire. It is acknowledged that uptake is low and that more needs to be done to capture feedback and evaluate effectiveness. The YJS does not currently monitor victim safety, and this is a process it is keen to develop.
- The partnership recognises that education, training, and employment provision for post-school-age children is limited and has a firm understanding of the barriers and the issues. Various measures have been put in place, including strategic forums, deep-dive analysis of cases, new contracts, and meeting with both potential providers and the Department for Education. This strategic focus needs to continue, with support from the partnership board, to ensure that appropriate post-school-age provision is available and accessible for YJS children and meets their needs.
- The YJS police officers share information and intelligence daily based on overnight arrests and children who are missing. However, the police do not use a 'flag' facility on their computer system to identify children managed by the YJS. This means that YJS police staff are not automatically notified when a child known to the YJS comes into contact with the police, which would improve and widen the intelligence sharing across the agencies. From the cases inspected, the lack of 'real-time' police intelligence impacted in a number of instances. There was limited evidence of police checks and ongoing police intelligence, which affected the quality of risk management plans.

1.4. Information and facilities



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

Good

Strengths:

- Diversity is addressed in policies which are updated annually. They are understood by staff and any updates are communicated through emails and discussion at team meetings.
- Staff are kept informed about accessing partner services through regular slots at the whole-service meeting, which representatives from agencies attend, to talk about the provision on offer.
- Information-sharing protocols are in place and understood across the partnership.
- There is an escalation process for all partners, to help challenge each other, and staff feel supported by managers to raise concerns.
- Most children are seen at the YJS office; as the service covers a large geographical area it provides bus passes to support those families most in need. The office is child friendly and provides a base for staff from partner agencies to work.
- Staff are flexible in how they see children, and use buildings that are accessible, safe, and suitable for children and families. Staff also see children at venues around the area, including youth centres, schools, children's centres, and through home visits.
- Staff use the 'risk-mapping' discussion during the service meeting to ensure that children are seen in suitable locations and feel safe during sessions.
- Performance data is produced for the management team, allowing it to identify and address any issues in relation to data and recording.
- YJS staff have access to children's social care systems, and some partners have their own access to the YJS case management system.
- HM Inspectorate of Probation reports are discussed at management meetings and reviewed against practice in Salford. This supports the YJS to consider learning and different options for service delivery.
- The YJS has the serious offence reviews pathway in place, which was recognised as a good practice example in the HM Inspectorate of Probation thematic inspection on remand. This local pathway ensures that the wider partnership can learn and carry out actions when a child has committed a serious offence, through the implementation of multi-agency serious offence reviews.

Areas for improvement:

- The YJS participation strategy outlines the various methods by which feedback from children, parents or carers, and victims is used. Feedback is collated by the lead manager for participation and staff participation champions, and a report is prepared for the YJS board. However, some methods and processes are yet to be fully embedded and there is a recognition that participation and feedback need a refocus.
- The approach to quality assurance of assessments and cases seems complex, with a number of managers being involved in countersigning. Managers feel that this is justified in terms of their workloads, the timeliness of the process, and promoting different perspectives. However, while the service has this quality assurance policy in place, it did not consistently drive the quality of practice in the inspected cases.

Involvement of children and their parents or carers

The YJS has various methods by which feedback from children, parents or carers, and victims is collated. Feedback from children is a standard agenda item for the monthly managers meeting, and a sample of feedback is also shared with the YJS partnership board on a quarterly basis. A child has attended the YJS partnership board to talk to members about their experience of the youth justice system and one service user forum has been held, facilitated by the two YJS participation champions. There is also an interactive team whiteboard, where feedback and comments are uploaded and collated.

The YJS contacted, on our behalf, children who had open cases at the time of the inspection, to gain their consent for a text survey. We delivered the survey independently to the 34 children who consented, and 15 children replied.

When asked how they rated the service they had received from the YJS, 13 responded, with eight giving a score of 10 out of 10. One child said about their worker:

"They were really nice and helpful, always on time and there when I needed them. They helped me understand the dangers of my drinking and that violence isn't always necessary in stressful situations."

When asked how the YJS had helped them stay out of trouble, one child said:

"They have taught me how to learn how to say no to stupid things and they have helped me grow out of that stage of getting in trouble."

Inspectors also spoke to eight children and three parents. All felt that their YJS workers had the right skills to do the work. They also felt that they had been able to access the right services and support to help them stay out of trouble.

One child, talking about their case manager, said:

"They made me feel better and learnt how to deal with situations better. I've not been in trouble since."

Another child commented:

"Everyone has the skills. They know how to speak to you. Help me to understand what I've done wrong, and I've learnt a lot."

One parent said:

"The worker has helped my son gain confidence and he seems happy to open up and engage."

Diversity

From analysis of YJS data, two groups are over-represented within the YJS cohort, and these are cared for children (representing 14 per cent of all interventions in 2022/2023) and children from a Black, Asian, and minority ethnic background (representing 17 per cent of all interventions in 2022/2023). However, there are reductions in both areas when compared with 2021/2022 data, with cared for children reducing by two per cent and children from an ethnic minority background decreasing by seven per cent.

The YJS has a diversity and disproportionality strategy which sets out the aim of the YJS and includes a number of services available within the area that can support the diverse range of needs for children. In addition, the interventions team constantly reviews and updates programmes, to ensure that they are responsive to individual needs. The YJS has diversity champions, and a cultural calendar is presented to the whole-service meeting each month. Staff have completed identity and sexuality training.

The YJS has a champion for cared for children, and they are leading on work with schools and residential units which includes restorative approaches training and developing work with cared for children's social workers to promote prevention work. The head of service has delivered a presentation to the community parenting board in relation to reducing the unnecessary criminalisation of cared for children, to raise awareness of the issue across the wider partnership.

Girls represent 29 per cent of the out-of-court disposal cohort (up from 20 per cent in 2021/2022) and four per cent of the court cohort (down from 15 per cent in 2021/2022), with an overall representation of 16 per cent of the interventions in 2022/2023 (down from 17 per cent in 2021/2022). The service has a number of female workers, and case managers are encouraged to focus on building relationships with girls and consider ways of working creatively with them. The interventions team has devised, adapted, and developed a range of programmes and resources with children, to ensure that it gives consideration to different needs, including gender.

At the time of inspection, of the 62 open interventions, 51 per cent had substance misuse issues, 79 per cent had emotional mental health and wellbeing concerns, and 41 per cent had a learning disability or learning difficulty, or were subject to an education, health, and care plan. For children in care, seven per cent of the current caseload were cared for children living within the YJS area.

The YJS does not have a lead manager to coordinate and drive the diversity and disproportionality strategy and to monitor its impact for children.

The service needs to monitor the ethnicity of children accessing prevention and Turnaround interventions, to ensure that children from an ethnic minority background are accessing appropriate services to divert them from the youth justice system.

In the staff survey, nearly all staff who had diversity needs said that these needs had been met either 'very well' or 'quite well'.

Domain two: Court disposals

We took a detailed look at 12 community sentences and one custodial sentence managed by the YJS.

2.1. Assessment



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

Requires improvement

Our rating³ for assessment is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support child desistance?	62%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	77%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	54%

AssetPlus was used for assessing children on statutory orders and out-of-court disposals. However, the quality of assessment for children on statutory orders was not as strong as that for those on out-of-court disposals.

Case managers considered children's attitude to and motivation for offending. Parents' views were prioritised, and case managers recognised children's levels of maturity appropriately. However, children's diversity needs were not fully explored in all cases, and a better understanding of their lived experiences and heritage would have led to an improved understanding of the child and their family.

In most cases, the case manager had identified and sufficiently analysed the potential risks to the child's safety and wellbeing. There was good communication with the complex safeguarding team, and children's social care services, especially in relation to children who were at risk of child criminal exploitation.

However, in too many cases, the assessment of risk of harm did not clearly identify and analyse who was at risk, and the nature of that risk. Police intelligence linked to previous concerns regarding a child's behaviour – for example, involvement in violent incidents – was not always considered when assessing the current level of risk posed by the child. By not having up-to-date intelligence or considering previous behaviours, assessments missed some key actions, including how risk to others, including potential victims, would be considered and addressed. Case managers needed to identify triggers and motivating factors in the child's past behaviours and recognise wider risks to other people, to analyse children's potential future harmful behaviour more appropriately. Case managers had not considered the wishes and needs of victims in some relevant cases.

³ 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. [A more detailed explanation is available on our website.](#)

2.2. Planning



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

Requires improvement

Our rating⁴ for planning is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does planning focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	92%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	69%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	46% ⁵

The service prioritised allocating cases to case managers who had already worked with the child and their family. Planning for the child's interventions evidenced that the case manager knew the child well, considered their personal circumstances, and understood their motivations and strengths. However, there was limited evidence that staff took a trauma-informed approach to children on statutory orders. This was evident in some of the language used in post-court processes and documents. This was acknowledged by the service, and changes were being made.

Planning linked to the child's desistance factors was strong. There was a good focus on considering children's health and learning needs, which was helped by the involvement of the speech and language therapist. The health specialist drop-in sessions were part of the planning process and meant that services and interventions could be planned that best met the children's health needs. Planning included parents or carers, but not all relevant cases took account of the wishes of victims.

Planning to keep children safe involved multi-agency meetings, which were used to make sure that information was shared, and all agencies were up to date with the child's circumstances. In most cases, practitioners planned for the interventions that were needed to support children and manage the risk to their safety and wellbeing.

Case managers used the YJS multi-agency risk management meeting and information from other agencies, where appropriate, in the planning process. There were good examples of planning to manage and reduce the level of risk of harm when children had been involved in the use of weapons and knives. However, planning promoted the safety of other people and involved other agencies in too few cases., and it was not clear how it addressed the safety of specific victims. Risk management planning was too brief and focused too much on the offence and not on the child's other concerning behaviours. Contingency planning to address escalating concerns about a child's safety and wellbeing, and the safety of other people was not sufficiently detailed or relevant to the child's specific circumstances in enough cases.

⁴ 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. [A more detailed explanation is available on our website.](#)

⁵ Professional discretion was applied at the ratings panel increasing this rating from 'Inadequate' to 'Requires Improvement'.

2.3. Implementation and delivery



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

Requires improvement

Our rating⁶ 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?	92%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of the child?	85%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?	54%

Case managers had built strong relationships with the children and their families, and this was evident in the children's engagement. All cases demonstrated the high priority that case managers gave to developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child and their parents or carers to help support desistance. Provision was in place for the child when their involvement with the YJS ended. This included using the youth workers and mentor provision, as well as reparation activities to help the child to build relationships and facilitate community integration.

Education, training, and employment staff and case managers worked with schools to ensure that children were supported to stay in the provision that best met their needs. The service had an excellent offer for children to gain AQA unit awards for their education, training, and employment portfolio, with children achieving various levels of awards when completing their interventions.

Interventions were identified to manage the child's safety and wellbeing. There was a multi-agency approach to safeguarding, and evidence of liaison and coordination with other agencies, such as children's social care services and the complex safeguarding team. There was evidence of joint working with specialist staff, including the nurse, educational psychologist, CAMHS worker, speech and language therapist, and the substance use practitioners working together to keep children safe.

The delivery of services and interventions that considered a child's risk of harm to others needed strengthening. The interventions identified in the plan were not consistently being delivered or were too generic and not specific to the child. Although the YJS police staff attended risk management meetings, they did not use the 'flag' on the police system that would notify them when a YJS child came into contact with the police. This meant that opportunities were missed to share 'real-time' intelligence or information and ensure that all professionals were updated, and that the child's risk was being appropriately managed.

⁶ 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. [A more detailed explanation is available on our website.](#)

2.4. Reviewing



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

Good

Our rating⁷ 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?	85%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	62% ⁸

Reviews were completed at key points in the order, and in most cases, there was an ongoing review of desistance factors as the order progressed. Children's engagement with interventions and the progress they were making were considered. It was pleasing that case managers continued to build on children's strengths and consider changes in their personal circumstances. There was evidence that the focus of interventions changed if needed, and in most cases the child's plan was adjusted when necessary. The reviews considered the child's motivation appropriately, and the child and their parents or carers continued to be involved in the reviewing process.

Reviews of children's safety and wellbeing mostly detailed the changes in children's circumstances. Case managers and partner agencies were involved in multi-agency discussions and meetings to ensure that provision was in place for the child when their involvement with the YJS ended. Case managers were responsive to changes in the child's circumstances and used the multi-agency risk management meetings and children's social care statutory meetings to help them manage any concerns or escalations in the risk to children's safety and wellbeing.

Reviews of the safety of other people needed strengthening in the cases inspected. Case managers did not consistently identify new risks that were emerging and review the potential impact of these on the level of risk posed by the child. Information from the police was not consistently included, although they used risk management meetings to help them manage any changing concerns or escalations in the risk to children. There was evidence that the focus of interventions changed if needed, although not all case managers adjusted the child's ongoing plan in line with the reviewing process.

⁷ 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. [A more detailed explanation is available on our website.](#)

⁸ Professional discretion was applied at the ratings panel increasing this rating from 'Requires Improvement' to 'Good'.

Domain three: Out-of-court disposals

We inspected 20 cases managed by the YJS that had received an out-of-court disposal. These consisted of five youth conditional cautions, five youth cautions, and 10 community resolutions. We interviewed the case managers in 20 cases.

3.1. Assessment



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

Good

Our rating⁹ for assessment is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	95%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	90%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	65%

Inspectors noted that the quality of assessment activity of children subject to an out-of-court disposal was stronger than for those children on post-court orders.

To help identify children's desistance factors, case managers accessed a range of sources from partner agencies, including from schools and details of education, health, and care plans. They offered an appropriate analysis of children's attitudes towards, or reasons for, their offending and focused on children's strengths and their motivation to change. Case managers involved children and their parents or carers in assessment activity, and in all relevant cases they considered the needs and wishes of victims. Assessment activity took account of the child's diversity and outlined any barriers to children accessing services to meet their needs.

In nearly all cases inspected, the case manager had sufficiently analysed the potential risks to children's safety and wellbeing. They used information from other agencies to inform their assessments, including from children's social care services, and took into account their contextual safeguarding needs. The input from health practitioners ensured that children had their health needs appropriately assessed, with services provided to meet their needs. There was evidence in these out-of-court disposal cases that case managers had considered the child's experience of trauma.

In nearly all cases, there was a clear written record of the assessment to keep other people safe. However, information from other agencies was not consistently used to inform the assessment and, similarly to the inspected post-court cases, risks to others were not identified and analysed appropriately in too many relevant cases. Police intelligence regarding a child's previous behaviour was not consistently considered when assessing the current level of risk posed by the child.

⁹ 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. [A more detailed explanation is available on our website.](#)

3.2. Planning



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

Outstanding

Our rating¹⁰ for planning is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?	85%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	85%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	80%

Planning for children subject to out-of-court disposals was enhanced by the multi-agency out-of-court disposal panel helping to formulate the plans, which resulted in this being the strongest area of practice. Planning addressed the child's desistance factors, and case managers took account of children's diversity needs. They co-produced plans with children, using different methods to engage the child, dependent on their learning style. Planning included parents or carers was proportionate to the type of disposal and also reflected the wishes and needs of victims. As some of the interventions were delivered within a short period, case managers and partner agency staff focused effectively on children's access to mainstream services and opportunities for community integration after the disposal had ended.

Planning to address children's safety and wellbeing saw case managers working alongside other agencies, including children's social care services, the complex safeguarding team, education workers, and schools. Partnership working was evident in the health drop-in sessions with specialist health practitioners, multi-agency risk management meetings, as well as discussions about children's risks in other forums across the partnership. Overall, planning focused sufficiently on keeping children safe.

Case managers planned the interventions that were needed to manage the safety of other people in most cases. Planning involved other agencies and addressed the safety of specific victims. Contingency planning to address escalating concerns about the safety of a child, and that of other people, could have been improved by ensuring that plans were not generic but a response to individual children's situations. However, staff were up to date with children's circumstances and ensured that the information they received was analysed so that their response to the child's needs was adapted accordingly.

¹⁰ 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. [A more detailed explanation is available on our website.](#)

3.3. Implementation and delivery



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

Good

Our rating¹¹ for implementation and delivery is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does service delivery effectively support the child's desistance?	90%
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of the child?	65%
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of other people?	85%

Case managers could access all the services and interventions available for children on court orders for those subject to an out-of-court disposal. The interventions delivered showed that the case manager had built a strong relationship with the child, and the work of the YJS interventions team was creative and inspiring, with staff co-producing interventions with children. They made use of local activities encouraging children to be active within their community and use their time constructively.

To help support children's desistance, case managers had considered the children's diversity needs in all cases and ensured that interventions were proportionate to the type of disposal. There was good engagement with interventions, which were mainly voluntary, and case managers worked hard to establish effective working relationships with both the children and their parents or carers. There were examples of case managers working with the education workers and health practitioners on behalf of children, to make sure that they were receiving appropriate provision that met their needs. In nearly all cases, practitioners had considered how children could be linked to mainstream services once their interventions had ended.

The delivery of interventions to support children's safety and wellbeing in out-of-court disposals was an area of practice that needed strengthening. In a small number of cases, case managers had not taken account of incidents that could make the child vulnerable and, in some cases, had not made appropriate referrals to other agencies when required. In most cases, however, there was evidence of liaison with other agencies, especially children's social care services and schools, and, overall, there was a multi-agency approach to promoting children's safety and wellbeing needs.

Case managers ensured that the interventions with children to support the safety of other people were managing and minimising the risk of harm. They considered the protection of potential and actual victims when delivering interventions in all relevant cases. Overall, the interventions delivered had supported the safety of other people in most of the cases inspected.

¹¹ 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. [A more detailed explanation is available on our website.](#)

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

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 were as follows.

Strengths:

- The YJS had a prevention and diversion policy, and had developed a strong prevention offer. This included the Turnaround programme and the multi-agency 'prevention through prosecution, intervention, education, and diversion' panel. Chaired by the prevention coordinator, it was used for voluntary interventions when children and families needed support.
- Positively, the number of children being referred for prevention and diversion support had increased, showing that services were intervening with children at an earlier stage to prevent offending and reduce the number of first-time entrants.
- The YJS had an out-of-court disposals policy and had regular meetings with the police to review process and policy.
- On receiving the out-of-court referral, the case was allocated to a case manager, to complete an AssetPlus assessment. Victim and specialist workers were also informed of the allocations, so that they could check their information to add to the assessment.
- Staff understood the process for out-of-court disposals and felt that their assessments influenced the outcome for the child.
- There was evidence of joint decision-making, and the rationales for the disposal outcomes were clearly recorded. If there were any disagreements at the panel, there was a clear escalation process in place.
- Managers screened the court list in advance of hearings, to identify potential out-of-court disposals. These children were discussed with the police, and a proposal to divert to the out-of-court disposals panel was made to the court.
- Decisions of the out-of-court disposals panel were reviewed at the Greater Manchester scrutiny panel, which looked at four Salford children every quarter.

Areas for improvement:

- At the time of the inspection, the YJS was not tracking the ethnicity of children accessing prevention or Turnaround interventions. This needed to be monitored, to ensure that ethnic minority children and families were accessing services.
- The YJS monitored the reoffending of children subject to out-of-court disposals but did not break this down to the specific outcomes. This data would have given out-of-court disposals panel members an understanding of which outcomes were having a positive impact on the rate of reoffending.
- Greater Manchester Police were still to decide how Outcome 22 would be used and implemented. This needed to be addressed, to ensure that children would not be unnecessarily criminalised due to limited options for diversionary outcomes.

4.1. Resettlement

4.1. Resettlement policy and provision



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

Good

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

Strengths:

- The YJS resettlement policy included specific consideration for children entering custody with special educational needs.
- The Greater Manchester Resettlement Consortium had worked collaboratively to put together a set of accommodation standards for children in custody.
- The YJS and children's social care services joint protocol ensured that the latter remained involved until a multi-agency decision was made about whether there was a role for the social worker as part of the child's resettlement plan.
- Data in relation to custody and resettlement was presented at the board and a review had taken place of all children sentenced to a custodial sentence, to identify any missed opportunities and learning from their experiences. This learning appeared to be having a positive impact, given that the YJS had historically experienced high numbers of children entering custody, although there were no children in custody at the time of the inspection.
- The YJS had a multi-agency resettlement panel, which was held within one month of the child's sentence and determined the sequencing of work that would take place to address the child's needs, and also the agencies' roles and responsibilities.
- The service commissioned City Wall, which provided mentors that offered direct support to children in custody and when they returned to the community as part of their resettlement.
- YJS case managers attended review meetings and regularly visited children in custody in person, to maintain and develop their working relationships.
- Staff described communication with the secure estate as effective. Each child was allocated a resettlement worker and there were weekly conversations between the YJS and the establishment.
- Finding suitable accommodation was a challenge and there had been times when children had not had accommodation confirmed until a few days before their release. However, accommodation issues were escalated quickly, and the case manager and social worker supported placement searches by explaining the child's situation. A YJS manager attended the placement tracking panel, to ensure that any issues affecting children in custody were dealt with as soon as possible.

- Education, training, and employment workers had procedures in place to ensure that they were maintaining regular contact with children in custody, and in the cases inspected there was sufficient planning and provision in place to support the child's education, training, and employment needs on release.
- There was liaison between the YJS health specialists and healthcare staff in custody, and the YJS nurse completed health assessments and supported children with their health needs on their release.
- YJS case managers worked closely with the child's social worker, including joint visits to the secure establishments and attending review meetings.
- There had been specific training in resettlement work for both YJS staff and partner agencies.
- The YJS resettlement policy was reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

Area for improvement:

- The head of service raised individual case concerns with the management board and relevant partners when specific issues needed to be escalated. However, given the critical issues that these children faced, board members should have developed their understanding of this cohort of children by being updated on these critical children's cases, including the timeliness of release arrangements, availability of education or training once they were released, and access to necessary healthcare provision.
- The limited availability of suitable accommodation was impacting on children's plans for resettlement. Continued strategic focus was necessary so that children's accommodation needs could be met, and in a timely manner.

Further information

The following can be found on our website:

- [inspection data, including methodology and contextual facts about the YJS](#)
- [a glossary of terms used in this report.](#)