



Inspection of
Youth
Offending

Archwilio Rhaglen Troseddwy'r Ifanc



Arolygiad ar y Cyd Cyfiawnder Troseddol

Core Case Inspection of youth offending work in England and Wales

Report on youth offending
work in:

Northamptonshire

ISBN: 978-1-84099-535-0

2012

Foreword

Our Core Case Inspection of youth offending work in Northamptonshire was undertaken as part of our Inspection of Youth Offending programme. This inspection focuses exclusively on the work undertaken by Youth Offending Teams with children and young people who have already committed an offence.

Its purpose is to assess if the work is of a sufficiently high standard to protect both the public from any harm resulting from the child or young person's offending behaviour and the child or young person themselves, whether from their own behaviour or any other source.

The inspection is based on a rigorous examination of a representative sample of cases supervised by the Youth Offending Service. Our findings are shown in the table below, outlined against those for Wales and the regions of England inspected so far. A more detailed analysis is provided in the main body of this report, and summarised in a table in Appendix 1.

We saw many examples of good work being undertaken in Northamptonshire. The YOS had access to some excellent resources, and worked well with partner agencies. However there was a need to achieve a higher consistency of work across the whole county and improve assessment and planning, particularly in relation to *Risk of Harm to others*.

Overall, we consider this a creditable set of findings. The YOS and its staff were receptive to the inspection, and saw it as a genuine opportunity to improve practice, which augers well for the future.

Liz Calderbank
HM Chief Inspector of Probation

June 2012

	Scores from Wales and the English regions that have been inspected to date			Scores for Northamptonshire
	Lowest	Highest	Average	
'Safeguarding' work <i>(action to protect the young person)</i>	37%	91%	68%	80%
'Risk of Harm to others' work <i>(action to protect the public)</i>	36%	86%	62%	68%
'Likelihood of Reoffending' work <i>(individual less likely to reoffend)</i>	43%	88%	71%	76%

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all the staff from the Youth Offending Service, members of the Management Board and partner organisations for their assistance in ensuring the smooth running of this inspection.

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Scoring and Summary Table

This report provides percentage scores for each of the 'practice criteria' essentially indicating how often each aspect of work met the level of quality we were looking for. In these inspections we focus principally on the *Public Protection* and *Safeguarding* aspects of the work in each case sample. Accordingly, we are able to provide a score that represents how often the *Public Protection* and *Safeguarding* aspects of the cases we assessed met the level of quality we were looking for, which we summarise here¹. We also provide a headline 'Comment' by each score, to indicate whether we consider that this aspect of work now requires either **MINIMUM**, **MODERATE**, **SUBSTANTIAL** or **DRASTIC** improvement in the immediate future.

Safeguarding score:	
This score indicates the percentage of <i>Safeguarding</i> work that we judged to have met a sufficiently high level of quality. This score is significant in helping us to decide whether an early further inspection is needed.	
Score: 80%	Comment: MINIMUM improvement required
Public Protection – Risk of Harm score:	
This score indicates the percentage of <i>Risk of Harm</i> work that we judged to have met a sufficiently high level of quality. This score is significant in helping us to decide whether an early further inspection is needed.	
Score: 68%	Comment: MODERATE improvement required
Public Protection - Likelihood of Reoffending score:	
This score indicates the percentage of <i>Likelihood of Reoffending</i> work that we judged to have met a sufficiently high level of quality.	
Score: 76%	Comment: MINIMUM improvement required

We advise readers of reports not to attempt close comparisons of scores between individual areas. Such comparisons are not necessarily valid as the sizes of samples vary slightly, as does the profile of cases included in each area's sample. We believe the scoring is best seen as a headline summary of what we have found in an individual area, and providing a focus for future improvement work within that area. Overall our inspection findings provide the 'best available' means of measuring, for example, how often each individual's *Risk of Harm to others* is being kept to a minimum. It is never possible to eliminate completely *Risk of Harm* to the public, and a catastrophic event can happen anywhere at any time – nevertheless a 'high' *RoH* score in one inspected location indicates that it is less likely to happen there than in a location where there has been a 'low' *RoH* inspection score. In particular, a high *RoH* score indicates that usually practitioners are 'doing all they reasonably can' to minimise such risks to the public, in our judgement, even though there can never be a guarantee of success in every single case.

¹ An explanation of how the scores are calculated can be found in Appendix 5

Recommendations for improvement

(primary responsibility is indicated in brackets)

Changes are necessary to ensure that, in a higher proportion of cases:

- (1) a timely and good quality assessment, using Asset, is completed when the case starts, or transferred in, and reviewed with a frequency consistent with national standards for youth offending services (YOS Manager)
- (2) specifically, a timely and good quality assessment of the individual's vulnerability and *Risk of Harm to others* is completed at the start, as appropriate to the specific case (YOS Manager)
- (3) as a consequence of the assessment, the record of the intervention plan is specific about what will now be done in order to make them less likely to reoffend, and to minimise any identified *Risk of Harm to others* (YOS Manager)
- (4) the plan of work with the case is regularly reviewed and correctly recorded in Asset with a frequency consistent with national standards for youth offending services (YOS Manager)
- (5) there is effective engagement with victims so that they have the opportunity to provide information to the YOS. Information is then shared with case managers and used to inform work with children and young people who have offended (YOS Manager)
- (6) management oversight is effective in ensuring the quality of assessment and plans to manage *Risk of Harm to others* and vulnerability, and ensures that planned actions are delivered (YOS Manager).

Furthermore:

- (7) the content and outcomes of contact with children and young people are clearly and consistently recorded in the case record, to support continuity of services, irrespective of which partner agency undertakes the contact (YOS Manager).

Next steps

An improvement plan addressing the recommendations should be submitted to HM Inspectorate of Probation four weeks after the publication of this inspection report. Once finalised, the plan will be forwarded to the Youth Justice Board to monitor its implementation.

Making a difference

Here are some examples of Northamptonshire YOS work that impressed us.

Delivery and Review of Interventions

General Criterion: 2.1

Badly beaten up during a street robbery and affray, the victim was traumatised. Concerned about reprisals, he was unable to continue with his college course. The YOS victim worker liaised with the young victim and his mother, and asked them to report any further incidents to the police. When they occurred, the YOS convened a risk meeting with the case managers of all the co-defendants involved in the robbery and affray, and advised them of the intimidation the victim was suffering. The local police officer was also in attendance, and she linked all the separate incidents together as witness intimidation and, with the YOS victim worker, visited the victim at home. Contact was also made with the young person who was the main offender whilst he was in custody. As a consequence, the intimidation decreased. When the young person was released, his licence conditions forbade him to contact the victim or enter the geographical area where he lived.

Delivery and Review of Interventions

General Criterion: 2.3

Seventeen year old Sharon had committed a violent offence and was on a referral order. She had mental health problems for which she was taking medication. At the start of the order, Sharon was pregnant and living with her family; however, those living arrangements broke down. She was referred to the YOS's community psychiatric nurse and accommodation worker. While Sharon would often become upset, workers were clear about boundaries and what support they could offer. Sharon learned to approach her problems in a calmer, more logical way. She accepted responsibility for her behaviour and liaised with children's social care services regarding her baby in a more mature and sensible manner. She completed reparation in a placement, which gave her valuable work experience skills in an office environment, and positively engaged with all the services working with her to protect the public, her baby and herself.

Assessment and Sentence Planning

General Criterion: 1.1 and 1.3

While awaiting trial for an offence of assault, Andrew was threatened by the victim's family; he took to carrying a knife with him for self-defence. He received a community sentence and the YOS operational manager immediately rang the police to alert them to the situation, asking them to be vigilant. The manager also liaised with children's social care services to alert them to the vulnerability of Andrew and his brother, and referred the case to MAPPA, in the light of the potential for serious harm to be caused, thereby ensuring appropriate engagement from both children's services and the police.

All names have been altered.

Service users' perspective

Children and young people

Fifty-six children and young people completed a questionnaire for the inspection.

- ◇ Fifty of the children and young people who responded said that staff explained what would happen when they came to the YOS. All but three of those who completed our questionnaire felt YOS staff were interested in helping them, while all but two said staff listened to what they had to say.
- ◇ Most of the children and young people said that YOS staff took action to deal with things they needed help with. All but one said their worker had made it easy to understand how they could help.
- ◇ Eleven children and young people said there had been something in their lives that had made them afraid whilst they were in contact with the YOS; nine said the YOS had helped them feel less afraid.
- ◇ Two-thirds of the children and young people said things had improved as a result of their work with the YOS. In particular, where relevant, they said they now understood their offending, felt able to make better decisions, and their ETE situation had improved. One child or young person said, in relation to their health: *"I am less anxious and stressed, my depression is getting treated"*.
- ◇ All but seven of the children and young people said their work with the YOS had made them less likely to reoffend, with one saying: *"I have got older and more mature. I realised a life of crime isn't the one I want to lead"*. Overall, most of the children and young people expressed satisfaction with the service they received from the YOS.

Victims

Twelve questionnaires were completed by victims of offending by children and young people.

- ◇ Eleven of the respondents said the YOS had explained the services it could offer, while all 12 said the YOS had taken their needs into account.
- ◇ Every victim who answered the question said they had been provided with the opportunity to talk about any worries they had about the offence, or the child or young person who had committed it. All but one who had a concern about their safety said the YOS had paid attention to it.
- ◇ Just two of the victims said they had benefited from any reparation work done by the child or young person who had committed the offence.
- ◇ All 11 victims who answered the question said they were either completely or mainly satisfied with the service provided by the YOS. One victim said the service offered was *"wonderful, very compassionate and understanding, particularly as we were offended against by a young neighbour and my husband is disabled"*. A different victim said: *"It would be good to get feedback about how the young person did and what interventions, if any, took place; also to know how far my wishes for reparation were taken into account"*.

1. ASSESSMENT AND SENTENCE PLANNING

OVERALL SCORE: 75%

1.1 Risk of Harm to others (RoH):

General Criterion:

The assessment of RoH is comprehensive, accurate and timely, takes victims' issues into account and uses Asset and other relevant assessment tools. Plans are in place to manage RoH.

Score:

74%

Comment:

MODERATE improvement required

Strengths:

- (1) A full RoSH analysis was required in 57% of the cases where an RoSH screening was undertaken. It was completed in all but two. It was completed on time in 79%, and to a sufficient quality in 72%. The RoSH classification was correct in 84% of the cases. In all the cases where we judged the classification to be incorrect, the YOS had assessed the RoSH at a lower level than we did.
- (2) An RMP was completed in 22 out of 24 cases where required.
- (3) We inspected nine cases that met the criteria for MAPPa at any time during the sentence. Although there was confusion amongst some case managers about what constituted a MAPPa case and when they needed to be notified/referred, we considered that eight of the cases we inspected were appropriately managed at Level 1. The YOS notified and referred the one Level 2 case to MAPPa in a timely way.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) An Asset RoSH screening was not completed in 16% of the cases; it was not completed on time in 23% or to a sufficient quality in 36%.
- (2) In one-quarter of the cases, the *RoH* assessment drew insufficiently on appropriate information from other agencies, victims and previous assessments.
- (3) Although there was a high level of completions of RMPs, one-quarter were not timely or of sufficient quality. Reasons for insufficiency, apart from

timeliness, included roles and responsibilities being unclear. In one-quarter of the cases, there was insufficient evidence of effective management oversight of the RMP.

- (4) Where there was no requirement for an RMP, or an RMP had not been produced, the need for planning for *RoH* issues had not been recognised in or acted upon in one-third of the cases.
- (5) In over one-third of cases, details of the *RoH* assessment and management were not appropriately communicated to relevant staff and agencies; in almost half of relevant cases, we were unable to evidence effective management oversight of the *RoH* assessment.

1.2 Likelihood of Reoffending:	
<p>General Criterion:</p> <p><i>The assessment of the LoR is comprehensive, accurate and timely and uses Asset and other relevant assessment tools. Plans are in place to reduce LoR.</i></p>	
<p>Score:</p> <p>75%</p>	<p>Comment:</p> <p>MINIMUM improvement required</p>

Strengths:

- (1) The initial assessment had been informed by contact with most of the other agencies when required: emotional/mental health services (82%); substance misuse (87%); police (85%); and ASB team (78%).
- (2) There was a timely sentence plan in all but one of the custodial cases we inspected, and, in three-quarters, it sufficiently addressed offending-related factors. There was an intervention plan or referral order contract in all but one of the community cases; the plan or contract was timely in 84% and sufficiently addressed offending-related factors in 77%. Where it was an issue, the plan or contract most frequently addressed thinking and behaviour (92%); perception of self and others (86%); and motivation to change (83%).
- (3) The intervention plan/referral order contract took into account Safeguarding issues (86%); included positive factors (85%); and responded appropriately to identified diversity needs (80%).
- (4) The vast majority of the community intervention plans and referral order contracts focused on achievable change and set relevant goals and realistic timescales.

- (5) The objectives within the community intervention plan or referral order contract were inclusive of appropriate Safeguarding work (85%); sensitive to diversity issues (75%); and took account of victims' issues (84%).
- (6) In 87% of custodial cases, YOS workers were actively and meaningfully involved throughout the planning process. The objectives within the custodial intervention plan were inclusive of relevant Safeguarding work (92%). In 87% of cases, the custodial sentence plan was reviewed at appropriate intervals.
- (7) YOS workers and most of the relevant external agencies were actively and meaningfully involved in the planning process throughout the sentence; of particular note, accommodation (82%); emotional/mental health services (81%); ETE (80%); and substance misuse (78%).

Areas for improvement:

- (1) Six of the cases did not contain a completed initial assessment of LoR. In almost one-quarter of the cases, the LoR assessment was not completed on time, and, in over one-third, it was of insufficient quality. The main reasons for the assessment being insufficient were unclear and/or insufficient evidence and a failure to identify offending-related factors.
- (2) In almost one-third of the cases, we were unable to evidence active engagement by the case manager in carrying out the initial LoR assessment with the child or young person, or, in relevant cases, their parents/carers.
- (3) In 53% of the cases, the *What do YOU think?* self-assessment form had not been used to inform the initial assessment. In one-half of the cases, the case manager had not assessed the learning style of the child or young person. We were unable to evidence contact with children's social care services in informing the initial assessment in 20% of the cases, and ETE providers in 24%. The initial assessment had not been reviewed at appropriate intervals in more than one-third of the cases.
- (4) In 23% of community cases, we were unable to evidence that the child or young person was actively and meaningfully involved in the planning process, while in 36% of relevant cases in the community the parents/carers had not been actively and meaningfully involved in the planning process. In half of the relevant cases, active and meaningful involvement of children's social care services in the planning process throughout sentence was not evidenced. The community intervention plan or referral order contract did not reflect the required contact levels for national standards in 28% of the cases.
- (5) The community intervention plan or referral order contract did not address family and personal relationships in over one-third of the cases where it was an offending-related factor. The plan/contract was not prioritised according to *RoH* in 45% of cases or sequenced according to offending related need in 42%. In 32% of relevant cases, the RMP had not been integrated into the plan/contract. For those cases in the custody sample, the objectives were not prioritised according to *RoH* in 73% of cases, while 47% were not sequenced in relation to LoR.

- (6) One-quarter of the community intervention plans/contracts were not reviewed at appropriate intervals.

1.3 Safeguarding:	
<p>General Criterion:</p> <p><i>The assessment of Safeguarding needs is comprehensive, accurate and timely and uses Asset and other relevant assessment tools. Plans are in place to manage Safeguarding and reduce vulnerability.</i></p>	
<p>Score:</p> <p>76%</p>	<p>Comment:</p> <p>MINIMUM improvement required</p>

Strengths:

- (1) Safeguarding needs were reviewed as appropriate in 82% of cases.
- (2) We judged that 40 cases required a VMP; 32 were completed; 29 were timely; and 28 were of a sufficient quality.
- (3) Four-fifths of the VMPs contributed to and informed interventions and, in all but one, they contributed to other plans.
- (4) In 13 out of 14 applicable custody cases, the secure establishment was made aware of vulnerability issues prior to, or immediately on, sentence.
- (5) In 89% of applicable cases, a contribution had been made through the CAF and other assessments and plans to safeguard the child or young person.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) An Asset vulnerability screening was not completed in 13% of the cases inspected; in 18% it was not completed on time, and in 31% was of insufficient quality.
- (2) In almost one-third of relevant cases, copies of care and other plans were not on file.
- (3) In one-third of cases, we were unable to evidence effective management oversight of the vulnerability assessment when required.

COMMENTARY on Assessment and Sentence Planning as a whole:

The YOS operated from two locations in Northamptonshire, and the difference in the quality of work between the two offices was significant and evidenced through the inspection findings. This was particularly true of assessment and sentence planning. In one office, we found assessments that were up to date, informed by active involvement with the child or young person and their parents/carers and other agencies, and took account of all offending-related factors. In the other location, many assessments were copied from earlier documents and failed to take account of relevant and up to date information.

There were two aspects relating to assessments noteworthy of comment. Where PSRs had been prepared for court, the case manager had often treated that assessment as the start of order assessment. While, in some cases, that may have been appropriate, more often it was not. In particular, there should have been a new assessment carried out with those children and young people who had been sentenced to custody as their situation had changed substantially from when the PSR assessment was originally prepared. There was a similar situation when the child or young people had transferred into Northamptonshire from another area. In a number of cases, the case manager had taken the assessment provided by the former area and not reviewed it even though key aspects of the original assessment were no longer up to date. It was encouraging to note that the YOS had already taken note of this last matter and, before the end of the inspection week, had produced a draft practice guidance for managing such cases that specifically addressed our concerns.

The YOS worked positively and constructively with other agencies; the linkages formed with ETE, substance misuse and emotional/mental health services were evident, as were the contacts made with accommodation services. However, engagement with children's social care services was less good, and there were a number of cases where their involvement was required but not achieved.

2. DELIVERY AND REVIEW OF INTERVENTIONS

OVERALL SCORE: 79%

2.1 Protecting the public by minimising Risk of Harm to others (RoH):

General Criterion:

All reasonable actions have been taken to protect the public by keeping to a minimum the child or young person's RoH.

Score:

70%

Comment:

MODERATE improvement required

Strengths:

- (1) Changes in *RoH* or other acute factors were anticipated, wherever feasible, in 73% of cases; identified swiftly (78%), and acted on appropriately (74%).
- (2) Case managers and other relevant staff contributed effectively to multi-agency meetings on *RoH* presented by children and young people in all but one of the custody cases, and in 33 out of 38 relevant cases when the child or young person was in the community.
- (3) Purposeful home visits to manage *RoH* were carried out in 90% of the cases when required.
- (4) Appropriate resources to manage *RoH* were allocated throughout the sentence in 85% of cases.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) *RoH* was not reviewed thoroughly, no later than three months from the start of the sentence, in 44% of the cases. Where there was a significant change, it was not reviewed thoroughly 59% of the time. The main reasons for the reviews being assessed as insufficient, apart from not being done, were lack of timeliness and quality.
- (2) Insufficient attention was given to the assessment of victim safety in 38% of relevant cases. High priority was not given to victims' safety throughout the sentence in 43% of cases where required.
- (3) Specific interventions to manage *RoH* were not delivered as planned in 27% of relevant cases in the community and 33% of those in custody. They were

not reviewed following significant change in two-fifths of the community cases and three-fifths of custodial cases.

- (4) In almost half of the community and custody cases, we were unable to evidence effective management oversight of *RoH*.

2.2 Reducing the Likelihood of Reoffending:	
General Criterion:	
<i>The case manager coordinates and facilitates the structured delivery of all elements of the intervention plan.</i>	
Score: 78%	Comment: MINIMUM improvement required

Strengths:

- (1) In four-fifths of cases we found that interventions in the community were implemented in line with the intervention plan and incorporated diversity issues. In 69%, the interventions were designed to reduce the LoR.
- (2) The YOS was appropriately involved in the review of interventions in custody in all but two of the cases.
- (3) Based on the assessment of the YOS case manager, we judged the initial Scaled Approach intervention level was correct in all but one of the cases, and, in all but three, appropriate resources were allocated according to the assessed LoR. All requirements of the sentence were implemented in 84% of the cases.
- (4) In most cases in both the community and custody, the YOS worker actively motivated and supported the child or young person throughout their sentence, reinforced positive behaviour, and actively engaged their parents/carers where appropriate.

Area for improvement:

- (1) Interventions in the community were not sequenced appropriately (44%), or reviewed appropriately (37%). Mainly as a consequence of the lack of information in the case file or electronic case diary/contact log, it was often hard to see exactly what offending-related work had been done with the child or young person; as a consequence, we judged that interventions were not appropriate to the child or young person’s learning style (39% of cases) or of good quality (34%).

2.3 Safeguarding the child or young person:

General Criterion:

All reasonable actions have been taken to safeguard and reduce the vulnerability of the child or young person.

Score:

87%

Comment:

MINIMUM improvement required

Strengths:

- (1) All necessary action was taken to safeguard and protect the child or young person in both of the relevant custody cases, and 12 out of the 14 community cases where Safeguarding was an issue. Action was taken to protect other children and young people in all of the relevant cases.
- (2) Referrals to ensure Safeguarding were made to other agencies in all of the seven custody cases where required, and all but one of the relevant cases in the community (31 out of 32).
- (3) There was good joint working by YOS workers and most other relevant agencies to promote Safeguarding in the community and in custody, particularly ETE, emotional/mental health services, substance misuse and accommodation services. We also found that during the transition from custody to the community, YOS workers and other agencies worked effectively together in most cases to ensure continuity in the provision of mainstream services.
- (4) In 86% of relevant cases, purposeful home visits were carried out in accordance with Safeguarding issues.
- (5) Specific interventions to promote Safeguarding in the community were identified in 91% of relevant cases; they incorporated actions to address needs identified in the VMP (96%); and were delivered (87%). In custody, specific interventions to promote Safeguarding were identified in all but one of the cases, and were delivered in all of them. The interventions in custody incorporated those identified in the VMP in all but two of the cases.
- (6) There was evidence of effective management oversight of Safeguarding and vulnerability needs in 71% of the relevant custody cases and 70% of those in the community.
- (7) In 15 out of the 16 cases in custody and 52 out of the 62 cases when the child or young person was in the community, the well-being of the child or young person was supported and promoted throughout the course of the sentence by all relevant staff.

Area for improvement:

- (1) Joint working with children's social care services, to promote the Safeguarding and well-being of the child or young person in the community, was not evidenced in 17 out of the 40 cases where required.

COMMENTARY on Delivery and Review of Interventions as a whole:

There was some excellent work undertaken by YOS staff and partner agencies. In particular, ETE work was imaginative and constructive. ETE workers evidenced their interventions well on the case management system which meant that case managers were always knowledgeable about the work that had been undertaken with the child or young person and were able to reinforce it. We also saw numerous referrals to, and substantial use made of, the substance misuse workers and the community psychiatric nurse, although their work was insufficiently recorded on the case file. While case managers were positive about the services provided by partner agencies or other YOS staff, they did not always know what was delivered or use the information supplied by others to inform their reviews of assessments and plans. In one office many entries on the case management system were late. In addition, it was often difficult to know what offending behaviour work had been delivered by case managers or others because the case diary/contact log did not contain the relevant information.

Case managers were vigilant to Safeguarding concerns, and were responsive to changes in circumstances of the children and young people. Risk and vulnerability panels were embedded in the work of the YOS, and we saw good evidence of management oversight on the files. Some of it was exemplary, but, in other instances, operational managers needed to follow up issues when their instructions were not acted upon by case managers or when issues of quality were insufficient.

There were a number of instances where the victim work undertaken was very good, but in other cases information about the victim was missing and not all case managers understood when a case required statutory victim contact.

3. OUTCOMES

OVERALL SCORE: 75%

Our inspections include findings about initial outcomes, as set out in this section. In principle, this is the key section that specifies what supervision is achieving, but in practice this is by necessity just a snapshot of what has been achieved in only the first 6-9 months of supervision, and for which the evidence is sometimes only provisional.

3.1 Achievement of outcomes:

General Criterion:

Outcomes are achieved in relation to RoH, LoR and Safeguarding.

Score:

71%

Comment:

MODERATE improvement required

Strengths:

- (1) Reporting instructions given to children and young people were assessed as sufficient in 92% of cases.
- (2) While there had been a reduction in risk factors linked to Safeguarding in 45% of the cases inspected where it was an issue, all reasonable action had been taken to keep children and young people safe in 85%.
- (3) In 81% of the cases, there had been a reduction in the frequency and seriousness of offending by the child or young person. This was above the average of YOTs inspected to date.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) Where there was an identified victim or potential victim, *Risk of Harm* to them was not effectively managed in almost half of the cases. Overall, all reasonable action had not been taken to keep *RoH* to a minimum in 53% of the cases; the main reasons for this were the insufficiency of the assessments (19 cases), interventions not delivered by the YOS (nine cases), and planning not having been good enough (eight cases).

- (2) Three-fifths of the children or young people had not complied with the requirements of the sentence; in those instances, in almost one-third the response by YOS staff was insufficient. The main reasons for insufficiency were unacceptable absences not being recorded, and warning letters not having been sent.
- (3) In almost half of the cases, Inspectors considered there was insufficient progress or deterioration in relation to the factors identified as making the child or young person more likely to reoffend.

3.2 Sustaining outcomes:	
General Criterion: <i>Outcomes are sustained in relation to RoH, LoR and Safeguarding.</i>	
Score: 89%	Comment: MINIMUM improvement required

Strengths:

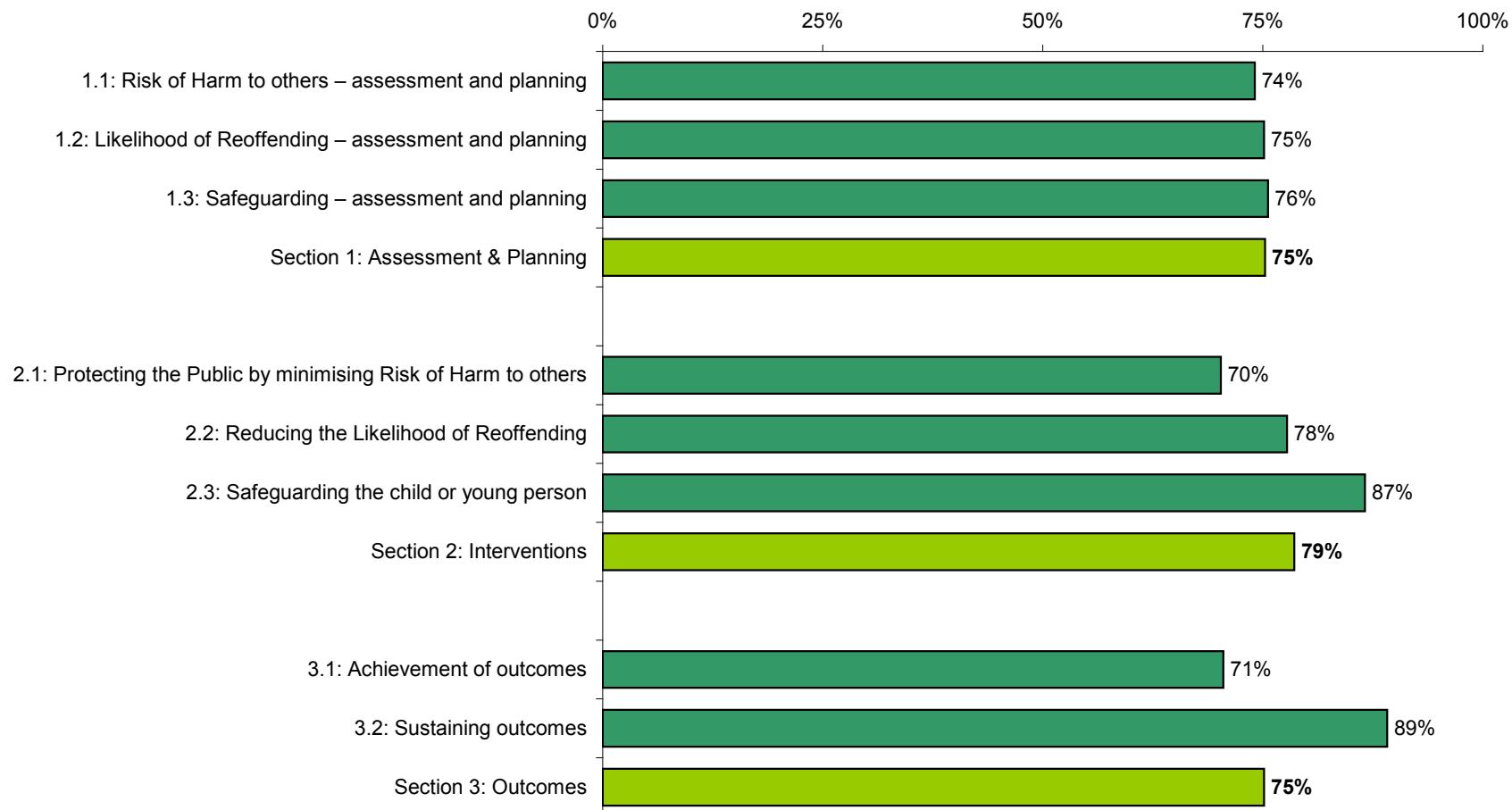
- (1) Full attention had been given to community integration issues in all but two of the custody cases, and all but eight of those when the child or young person was in the community.
- (2) Where relevant, action had been taken or there were plans in place to ensure positive outcomes were sustainable in all the custodial cases and all but five of the cases when the child or young person was living in the community.

COMMENTARY on Outcomes as a whole:

There were some good outcomes in Northamptonshire, but there were differences between the North and South of the county, which, if addressed, would have delivered significant benefits for all the children and young people who reported to the YOS.

Appendix 1: Scoring summary of sections 1-3

CCI Northamptonshire - General Criterion Scores



Appendix 2: Contextual information

Area

Northamptonshire YOS was located in the East Midlands.

The area had a population of 687,300 as measured in the ONS Mid Year Estimates 2010. 10.9% of the population were aged 10 to 17 years old (Census 2001). This was slightly higher than the average for England/Wales, which was 10.4%.

The population of Northamptonshire was predominantly white British (91%) (Resident Population Estimates by Ethnic Group 2009). The population with a black and minority ethnic heritage (9%) was below the average for England/Wales of 12%.

Reported offences for which children and young people aged 10 to 17 years old received a pre-court disposal or a court disposal in 2009/2010, at 15 per 1,000, were better than the average for England/Wales of 38.

YOS

The YOS boundaries were within those of the Northamptonshire Police area. The Northamptonshire Probation Trust and the Northamptonshire Teaching Primary Care Trust covered the area.

The YOS was located within the Safeguarding and Children's Services Department of the Adult and Children's Services Directorate. The YOS Manager reported to the Assistant Director, Safeguarding and Children's Services.

The YOS Headquarters was based in the county town of Northampton. The operational work of the YOS was based in Northampton and Kettering. ISS was provided by Catch 22, and was co-located with the YOS in the Northampton and Kettering offices.

Youth Justice Outcome Indicators 2011/2012 onwards

The national youth justice indicators for England have been replaced by three outcome indicators. These indicators will also be used in Wales.

1. The reoffending measure is a count of the number of 10 to 17 year olds who reoffend within 12 months of their conviction.

2. The first time entrants measure counts the number of young people given their first pre-court or court disposal and thus entering the youth justice system within each year.

3. The use of custody for young people aged 10 to 17 years.

For further information about current data, the YJB and the performance management of YOTs, please refer to:

<http://www.yjb.gov.uk/en-gb/practitioners/Monitoringperformance/>

Appendix 3: Inspection Arrangements

Fieldwork for this inspection was undertaken in February and March 2012 and involved the examination of 62 cases.

Model

The Core Case Inspection (CCI) involves visits to all 158 Youth Offending Teams in England and Wales over a three year period from April 2009. Its primary purpose is to assess the quality of work with children and young people who offend, against HMI Probation's published criteria, in relation to assessment and planning, interventions and outcomes. We look at work over the whole of the sentence, covering both community and custody elements.

Methodology

The focus of our inspection is the quality of work undertaken with children & young people who offend, whoever is delivering it. We look at a representative sample of between 38 and 99 individual cases up to 12 months old, some current others terminated. These are made up of first tier cases (referral orders, action plan and reparation orders), youth rehabilitation orders (mainly those with supervision requirements), detention and training orders and other custodial sentences. The sample seeks to reflect the make up of the whole caseload and will include a number of those who are a high *Risk of Harm to others*, young women and black & minority ethnic children & young people. Cases are assessed by a small team of inspection staff with Local Assessors (peer assessors from another Youth Offending Team in the region). They conduct interviews with case managers who are invited to discuss the work with that individual in depth and are asked to explain their thinking and to show where to find supporting evidence in the record. These case assessments are the primary source of evidence for the CCI.

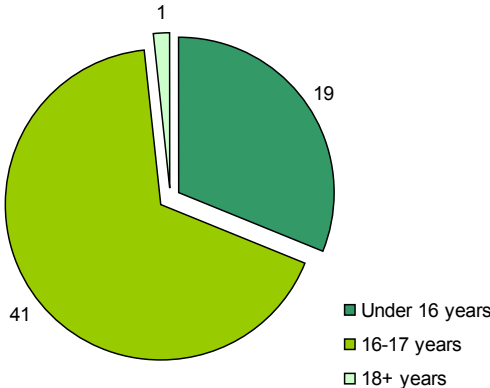
Prior to the inspection we receive copies of relevant local documents and a brief report from the Youth Justice Board. We also gather the views of service users (children & young people and victims) by means of computer and paper questionnaires.

Publication arrangements

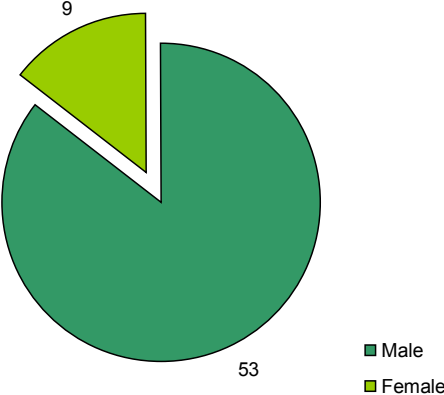
- Provisional findings are given to the YOS two weeks after the inspection visit takes place.
- A draft report is sent to the YOS for comment 4-6 weeks after the inspection, with publication following approximately 6 weeks later. In addition to a copy going to the relevant Minsters, other inspectorates, the Ministry of Justice Policy Group and the Youth Justice Board receive a copy. Copies are made available to the press and placed on our website.
- Reports on CCI in Wales are published in both Welsh and English.

Appendix 4: Characteristics of cases inspected

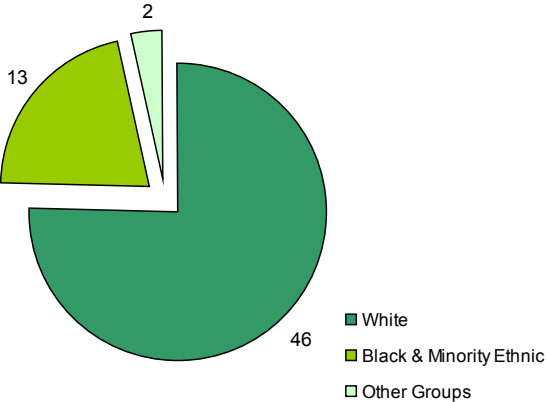
Case Sample: Age at start of Sentence



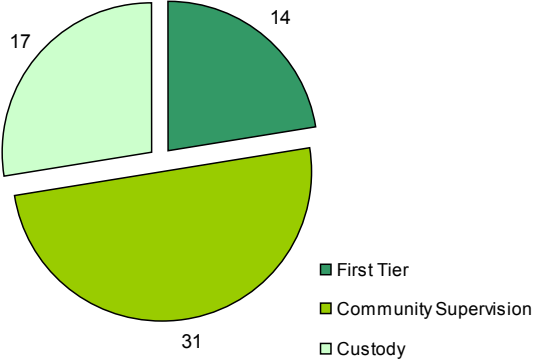
Case Sample: Gender



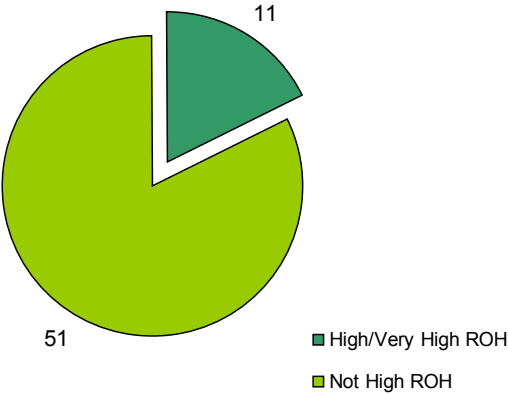
Case Sample: Ethnicity



Case Sample: Sentence Type



Case Sample: Risk of Harm



Appendix 5: Scoring approach

This describes the methodology for assigning scores to each of the general criteria and to the *RoH*, *LoR* and Safeguarding headline scores.

A typical case consists of elements of work that were done well enough and others where there is room for improvement. Therefore, the question "what proportion of cases were managed well enough?" does not itself provide a meaningful measure of performance and is not useful to inform improvements.

Rather HMI Probation measure the more focused question "how often was each aspect of work done well enough?" This brings together performance on related elements of practice from all inspected cases.

Each scoring question in the HMI Probation inspection tool contributes to the score for the relevant general criterion and section in the report. The performance of the YOT on that aspect of practice is described within the section of the report linked to that criterion. Key questions then also contribute to one or more of the headline inspection scores. In this way the headline scores focus on the key outcomes whereas the general criterion scores include the underlying detail.

The **score for a general criterion** is the proportion of questions relating to that criterion, across all of the inspected cases, where the work assessed by that question was judged sufficient (i.e. above the line). It is therefore an average for that aspect of work across the whole of the inspected sample.

For **each section in the report** the above calculation is repeated, to show the proportion of work related to that section that was judged 'above the line'.

Finally, for each of the **headline themes**, the calculation is repeated on the key questions that inform the particular theme, to show the proportion of that aspect of work that was judged 'above the line'; thereby presenting the performance as an average across the inspected sample.

This approach enables us to say how often each aspect of work was done well enough, and provides the inspected YOT with a clear focus for their improvement activities.

Appendix 6: Glossary

ASB/ASBO	Antisocial behaviour/Antisocial Behaviour Order
Asset	A structured assessment tool based on research and developed by the Youth Justice Board looking at the young person's offence, personal circumstances, attitudes and beliefs which have contributed to their offending behaviour
CAF	Common Assessment Framework: a standardised assessment of a child or young person's needs and of how those needs can be met. It is undertaken by the lead professional in a case, with contributions from all others involved with that individual
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services: part of the National Health Service, providing specialist mental health and behavioural services to children and young people up to at least 16 years of age
Careworks	One of the two electronic case management systems for youth offending work currently in use in England and Wales. See also YOIS+
Catch 22	Catch 22 is a local charity with a national reach that works with children and young people who find themselves in difficult situations. It has a contract to provide various services to Northamptonshire YOS
CRB	Criminal Records Bureau
DTO	Detention and training order: a custodial sentence for the young
Estyn	HM Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales
ETE	Education, Training and Employment: work to improve an individual's learning, and to increase their employment prospects
FTE	Full-time equivalent
HM	Her Majesty's
HMIC	HM Inspectorate of Constabulary
HMI Prisons	HM Inspectorate of Prisons
HMI Probation	HM Inspectorate of Probation
Interventions; <i>constructive</i> and <i>restrictive</i> interventions	<p>Work with an individual that is designed to change their offending behaviour and/or to support public protection.</p> <p>A <i>constructive</i> intervention is where the primary purpose is to reduce Likelihood of Reoffending.</p> <p>A <i>restrictive</i> intervention is where the primary purpose is to keep to a minimum the individual's <i>Risk of Harm to others</i>. Example: with a sex offender, a <i>constructive intervention</i> might be to put them through an accredited sex offender programme; a <i>restrictive intervention</i> (to minimise their <i>Risk of Harm</i>) might be to monitor regularly and meticulously their accommodation, their employment and the places they frequent, imposing and enforcing clear restrictions as appropriate to each case. NB. Both types of intervention are important</p>
ISS	Intensive Surveillance and Supervision: this intervention is attached to the start of some orders and licences and provides initially at least 25 hours programme contact including a substantial proportion of education, training and employment
LoR	Likelihood of Reoffending. See also <i>constructive</i> Interventions
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
LSCB	Local Safeguarding Children Board: set up in each local authority (as a result of the Children Act 2004) to coordinate and ensure the effectiveness of the multi-agency work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in that locality

MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements: where probation, police, prison and other agencies work together locally to manage offenders who pose a higher <i>Risk of Harm to others</i>
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills: the Inspectorate for those services in England (not Wales, for which see Estyn)
PCT	Primary Care Trust
PPO	Prolific and other Priority Offender: designated offenders, adult or young, who receive extra attention from the Criminal Justice System agencies
Pre-CAF	This is a simple 'Request for Service' in those instances when a Common Assessment Framework may not be required. It can be used for requesting one or two additional services, e.g. health, social care or educational
PSR	Pre-sentence report: for a court
RMP	Risk management plan: a plan to minimise the individual's <i>Risk of Harm</i>
RoH	<i>Risk of Harm to others</i> . See also <i>restrictive Interventions</i>
'RoH work', or 'Risk of Harm work'	This is the term generally used by HMI Probation to describe work to protect the public, primarily using <i>restrictive interventions</i> , to keep to a minimum the individual's opportunity to behave in a way that is a <i>Risk of Harm to others</i>
RoSH	Risk of Serious Harm: a term used in Asset. HMI Probation prefers not to use this term as it does not help to clarify the distinction between the <i>probability</i> of an event occurring and the <i>impact/severity</i> of the event. The term <i>Risk of Serious Harm</i> only incorporates 'serious' impact, whereas using ' <i>Risk of Harm</i> ' enables the necessary attention to be given to those offenders for whom lower <i>impact/severity</i> harmful behaviour is <i>probable</i>
Safeguarding	The ability to demonstrate that all reasonable action has been taken to keep to a minimum the risk of a child or young person coming to harm
Scaled Approach	The means by which YOTs determine the frequency of contact with a child or young person, based on their RoSH and LoR
SIFA	Screening Interview for Adolescents: Youth Justice Board approved mental health screening tool for specialist workers
SQIFA	Screening Questionnaire Interview for Adolescents: Youth Justice Board approved mental health screening tool for YOT workers
VMP	Vulnerability management plan: a plan to safeguard the well-being of the individual under supervision
YJB	Youth Justice Board for England and Wales
YOI	Young Offenders Institution: a Prison Service institution for young people remanded in custody or sentenced to custody
YOIS+	Youth Offending Information System: one of the two electronic case management systems for youth offending work currently in use in England and Wales. See also Careworks
YOS/YOT/YJS	Youth Offending Service/ Team/ Youth Justice Service. These are common titles for the bodies commonly referred to as YOTs
YRO	The youth rehabilitation order is a generic community sentence used with young people who offend

Appendix 7: Role of HMI Probation and Code of Practice

Information on the Role of HMI Probation and Code of Practice can be found on our website:

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/about/hmi-probation/>

The Inspectorate is a public body. Anyone wishing to comment on an inspection, a report or any other matter falling within its remit should write to:

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6th Floor, Trafford House
Chester Road, Stretford
Manchester, M32 0RS*