



Her Majesty's
Inspectorate of
Probation

An inspection of youth offending services in

Vale of Glamorgan

HM Inspectorate of Probation, August 2022



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Acknowledgements

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

The role of HM Inspectorate of Probation

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

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

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

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

Published by:

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

Follow us on Twitter
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ISBN: 978-1-914478-74-1

Foreword

This inspection is part of our programme of youth offending service (YOS) inspections. We have inspected and rated the Vale of Glamorgan Youth Offending Team (YOT) across three broad areas: the arrangements for organisational delivery of the service, the quality of work done with children sentenced by the courts, and the quality of out-of-court disposal work. Overall, the Vale of Glamorgan YOT was rated as 'Good'.

We found that the Vale of Glamorgan YOT had many of the ingredients of a very successful organisation. There was stability at board level, a passionate and experienced staff group, and a well-developed set of partnership arrangements. The use of information technology is appropriate to the needs of service delivery and we found that the main building used by the YOT was fit for purpose.

We found overall good practice in the standards related to organisational delivery, though it is unfortunate that the YOT board's efforts to continually improve the quality of services to children appear to have stalled. There has been progress in key policy documents and development after a period of delay. However, they remain in draft and we would urge the management board to attend to these matters promptly.

The YOT has a well-developed out-of-court disposal scheme, with use of the comprehensive AssetPlus assessment tool. There were good areas of assessment work; however, there was some inconsistency in work to keep the child safe which was exacerbated by insufficient management oversight and rigour. We would urge the YOT to make sure that assessments for out-of-court work address the safety and wellbeing of the child in every case.

Post-court work was of a good standard in most aspects, and particularly strong in relation to the implementation and delivery of court orders. Planning of work was strengths-based and there was evidence of multi-agency plans aligning well. YOT staff were delivering appropriate interventions, often in conjunction with partner agencies, while maintaining a good focus on the safety and wellbeing of children and the safety of others.

It is encouraging that the YOT was rated positively in almost all of our questions relating to the diversity of the children in our detailed inspections of case work. This now needs to be replicated at a strategic level with the implementation of the 'addressing disproportionality' policy.

In order to help the YOT work towards more ambitious outcomes for the children that it works with, we have provided six recommendations that we think will drive further improvement.



Justin Russell
HM Chief Inspector of Probation

Ratings

Vale of Glamorgan Youth Justice Team

Fieldwork started: May 2022

Score 22/36

Overall rating

Good



1. Organisational delivery

1.1 Governance and leadership

Requires improvement



1.2 Staff

Good



1.3 Partnerships and services

Good



1.4 Information and facilities

Good



2. Court disposals

2.1 Assessment

Good



2.2 Planning

Good



2.3 Implementation and delivery

Outstanding



2.4 Reviewing

Good



3. Out-of-court disposals

3.1 Assessment

Inadequate



3.2 Planning

Good



3.3 Implementation and delivery

Good



3.4 Out-of-court disposal policy and provision

Good



Executive summary

Overall, Vale of Glamorgan YOT is rated as 'Good'. This rating has been determined by inspecting the YOT in three areas of its work, referred to as 'domains'. We inspect against 12 core 'standards', shared between the domains. The standards are based on established models and frameworks, which are grounded in evidence, learning and experience. They are designed to drive improvements in the quality of work with children who have offended.¹ Published scoring rules generate the overall YOS rating.² The findings and subsequent ratings in those domains are described below.

Organisational delivery

We carried out 14 interviews with groups of staff, partners and stakeholders. Key findings were as follows:

- There is an experienced and well-connected board chair
- All partner agencies are represented at an appropriate level of seniority
- There is good evidence that board members are able to advocate on behalf of the YOT in order to maintain or improve services to the children
- Partnership arrangements are formalised and monitored effectively by the management board
- There is an experienced management team, with a new leader committed to ambitious development of the YOT's work
- Staff workloads are at a level where it is reasonable to expect high-quality work to be delivered
- There is a range of partnership services available, and these are accessible to the children
- Data is used well by the Vale of Glamorgan YOT, particularly to provide reports to the management board.

But:

- The vision for the YOT's work remains at a draft stage of development, due mainly to changes in the management team
- In developing the board's vision, there needs to be a renewed focus on meeting the diverse needs of children working with the YOT through refinement, ratification and implementation of the 'addressing disproportionality' policy

¹ HM Inspectorate of Probation's standards can be found here:

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

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

- The resettlement policy needs further development and board sign-off to ensure it is fit for purpose
- The voices of the child and their parents or carers are not sufficiently represented at board level
- The board's oversight of the provision of effective case supervision is not strong
- The management oversight of work does not foster professional curiosity sufficiently well
- There is limited access to timely assessments of children's speech and language needs and input from therapists, and this is an area the partnership needs to develop.

Court disposals

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

Our key findings about court disposals are as follows:

- Assessment work was based on a good understanding of the individual child's circumstances
- Where appropriate, case managers considered the information and perspectives of other agencies in formulating an assessment of the child
- Planning work is strengths-based. There is good involvement of other agencies and evidence of multi-agency plans aligning well
- The work delivered to the child was well grounded in evidence; the approach was child-centred, trauma-informed and based on restorative principles
- Key services such as mental health support and substance misuse interventions were available quickly
- Our expectations that the diverse needs of the children are understood and acted upon were met in almost all circumstances
- The voices of children and their parents or carers were incorporated into all aspects of case management

But:

- Case managers did not always identify potential increased risk of harm to others
- Management oversight of the case managers' work did not always help to identify risk of harm to others in assessment, planning or reviewing in the cases inspected.

Out-of-court disposals

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

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

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

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

- An appropriate assessment tool (AssetPlus) is used in each case referred to the YOT before it goes to a decision-making panel
- The panel makes decisions jointly, and there is an appropriate escalation procedure if it does not reach a consensus
- The YOT's out-of-court policy has driven a diversionary approach, and there has been a marked decline in the number of first-time entrants to the system
- Most aspects of planning work were carried out to a good standard
- Services delivered to the children were flexible and personalised
- Within the partnership there is a shared ethos of child-centred, trauma-informed methods of understanding and working with the children.

But:

- The out-of-court policy does not address how to identify, understand and manage children's diversity
- Assessment work gives too little attention to issues concerning the child's safety and wellbeing and the risk of harm to others that the child may present
- Management oversight of cases is insufficiently rigorous in promoting professional curiosity
- There is no mechanism for gathering the views of children and their parents or carers on their experience of the scheme.

Recommendations

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

The Vale of Glamorgan Youth Offending Team should:

1. establish the vision and ambition of the organisation within the next 12 months
2. ratify and effectively implement a resettlement policy within the next 12 months
3. adopt a disproportionality policy with attendant action plans within the next 12 months
4. develop methods of incorporating the perspectives of children and their parents or carers into the board's development of the YOT's work over the next 12 months
5. develop methods of engaging staff members in the development of policy and services within the next 12 months
6. improve the quality of management oversight of cases to address shortcomings in the management of the safety and wellbeing of the children and the risk of harm to others.

Background

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

YOTs are statutory partnerships, and they are multidisciplinary, to deal with the needs of the whole child. They are required to have staff from local authority social care and education services, the police, the National Probation Service and local health services.³ Most YOTs are based within local authorities, although this can vary.

YOT work is governed and shaped by a range of legislation and guidance specific to the youth justice sector (such as the National Standards for Youth Justice) or else applicable across the criminal justice sector (for example, Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements guidance). The Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB) provides some funding to YOTs. It also monitors their performance and issues guidance to them about how things are to be done.

The Vale of Glamorgan, often referred to as the 'Vale', is a county borough on the south-east coast of Wales. Its eastern neighbour is the Welsh capital, Cardiff; however, it covers a much more rural area of 335 square kilometres, made up of small towns, villages, hamlets, farms, coastal walks, holiday parks and beaches. The county headquarters are based in Barry, which is the Vale's largest town, with a population of 51,502. It includes the famous beach, family amusements and pleasure park of Barry Island. The diverse area of the Vale comprises very different communities with different levels of affluence and social deprivation, social structures, aspirations, needs and concerns.

Real differences can be observed between areas, and in some more deprived areas it is estimated that 38 per cent of people are living in income deprivation and 53 per cent of children are living in poverty. There are proven links between child poverty and adverse childhood experiences, with related poorer outcomes for children, including offending.

There are a range of issues that can affect the social wellbeing of individuals and communities, and that are relevant to services. For example, 16 per cent of school-age pupils have an additional learning need (ALN). The largest ALN groups are children and young people with learning difficulties.

The Vale of Glamorgan Youth Offending Team is an integral part of the Children and Young People's Service and works closely with partner statutory agencies and voluntary organisations. It focuses on prevention and diversion, taking a holistic approach to diverting children and young people from offending and reoffending.

Alongside the alignment with local authority services, including education and housing, there is a strong, active set of working relationships with South Wales Police, the probation service, Cardiff and Wales University Health Board and the voluntary and community sector.

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

In terms of key performance indicators, the number of first-time entrants to the criminal justice system is reducing, the rate of reoffending is decreasing, and no custodial sentence has been imposed on a child for over two years.

The Vale of Glamorgan YOT has a well-developed understanding of the characteristics of the children, presented as the 'Profile of Vale of Glamorgan YOS cohort'. This includes the collation of data in respect of all protected characteristics of the children. Reflecting the local population, the caseload of the YOT is predominantly made up of white children.

A recent increase in the proportion of girls on the caseload has been identified and a comprehensive 'Girl's action plan' has been developed.

Contextual facts

Population information⁴

150	First-time entrant rate per 100,000 in Vale of Glamorgan ⁵
167	First-time entrant rate per 100,000 in England and Wales
45.7%	Reoffending rate in Vale of Glamorgan ⁶
34.2%	Reoffending rate in England and Wales
135,295	Total population Vale of Glamorgan
12,862	Total youth population (10–17 years) in Vale of Glamorgan

Caseload information⁷

Young people cautioned or sentenced by age

Age	10–14 years	15–17 years
Vale of Glamorgan YOS	27%	73%
National average (Wales)	18%	82%

Percentage of children on the YOT caseload

Race/ethnicity ⁸	White	Black and minority ethnic	Unknown
Vale of Glamorgan YOS	89.7%	11.3%	0%
Youth population (10–17 years) in Vale of Glamorgan	96.5%	3.5%	0%

Percentage of the YOT caseload by gender⁹

Gender	Male	Female
Vale of Glamorgan YOS	81.5%	18.5%

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

⁵ Youth Justice Board. (2022). *First-time entrants, January to December 2020*.

⁶ Ministry of Justice. (January 2022). *Proven reoffending statistics, April 2019 to March 2020*.

⁷ Youth Justice Board. (January 2022). *Youth justice annual statistics: 2020 to 2021*.

⁸ Data supplied by the YOT.

⁹ Data supplied by the YOT.

Additional caseload data¹⁰

109	Total current caseload, of which:
21	Court disposals
88	Out-of-court disposals

Of the 21 court disposals:

20	Total current caseload: community sentences
0	Total current caseload in custody
1	Total current caseload on licence

Out-of-court disposals:

88	Total current caseload
14	Total youth cautions
6	Total youth conditional cautions
68	Total community resolutions

Education and child protection status of caseload:

34.8%	Proportion of current caseload 'Looked After Children' resident in the YOS area, or with child protection plan or child in need plan
36.4%	Percentage of current caseload aged 16 and under in full-time school
63.6%	Percentage of children aged 16 and under in a pupil referral unit, alternative education, or attending school part-time
13%	Percentage of current caseload aged 17+ not in education, training or employment

¹⁰ Data supplied by the YOT, reflecting the caseload at the time of the inspection announcement.

1. Organisational delivery

Our ratings for this set of standards are based on a review of evidence provided in advance of the inspection, and 14 interviews with staff, volunteers, partnership organisations and key stakeholders.

We also conducted online surveys of staff, volunteers, children and their families and the magistrates' court.

This is an established management board, well-attended by members of an appropriate level of seniority within their own organisations. However, the disruption of the pandemic, coupled with a change in senior management of the YOT, challenged the board's capacity to develop new areas of work. With the impact of Covid-19 reducing, the board is now in a better position to tackle its priorities. This should be enhanced by the recent appointment of a new head of service.

While we considered the governance and leadership of the YOT to be mostly effective and to have the potential to drive improvements in the service, we were concerned at the backlog of key policy developments, all of which need to be underpinned by a clear statement of the vision and ambition of the YOT.

The operational staff are an experienced, well-trained and committed group. The staff were confident that their new senior manager would prove to be a positive influence on the work going forward. In relation to the board, there was a view that, historically, the staff group had not been "involved and included". The staff were positive that their new management arrangements would make a marked difference.

We found that the partnership and services arrangements functioned well in the Vale of Glamorgan. The services available to the children were of good quality and supported responsive working. However, access to specialist work, e.g. speech and language assessment or therapy, was not as speedy as would be required for many of the children.

We found that the facilities in which the work took place were of an acceptable standard for the delivery of high-quality services.

Data presented to the board was accessible and varied in style of presentation – documents, PowerPoint and info-graphs were all used. The presentation of the profile of the children's needs was particularly effective, showing the range of issues facing children working with the YOT.

Key findings about organisational delivery were as follows:

Strengths

- There is an experienced and well-connected board chair.
- All partner agencies are represented at an appropriate level of seniority.
- There is good evidence that board members are able to advocate on behalf of the YOT in order to maintain or improve services to the children.
- Partnership arrangements are formalised and monitored effectively by the management board.

- There is an experienced management team, with a new leader who is committed to ambitious development of the YOT's work.
- Staff workloads are at a level where it is reasonable to expect high-quality work to be delivered.
- A range of partnership services are available, and these are accessible to the children.
- Data is used well by the Vale of Glamorgan YOT, particularly in providing reports to the management board.

Areas for improvement

- The vision for the Vale of Glamorgan YOT's work remains at a draft stage of development, due mainly to changes in the management team.
- In developing the board's vision, there needs to be a renewed focus on meeting the diverse needs of children working with the YOT through refinement, ratification, and implementation of the 'addressing disproportionality' policy.
- The resettlement policy needs to be adopted and deployed by the management board.
- The voices of children and their parents or carers are not sufficiently represented at board level.
- The board's oversight of the provision of effective case supervision is not strong.
- The management oversight of work does not encourage case managers to display professional curiosity.
- There is limited access to timely assessment of children's speech and language needs and input from therapists.

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

1.1. Governance and leadership



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

Requires Improvement

Key data

Total spend in previous financial year	£1,295,795
Total projected budget current for financial year	£1,287,467

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

Is there an effective local vision and strategy for the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children?

The vision for the YOT's work remains at a draft stage of development, due mainly to changes in the management team. Nonetheless, throughout the partnership there is a sense of working towards shared aims with the children. There is a positive culture in relation to working with children. Staff across the partnership demonstrate a commitment to the principle of seeing the child as a 'child first' and the offending behaviour being, most often, a consequence of adverse childhood experiences. This, coupled with an ingrained restorative approach, leads to the work with children being about the identification and promotion of strengths in the child's life.

The board chair is the Vale of Glamorgan Director of Social Services. In this capacity, the chair ensures the YOT is well connected to all of the local and regional strategic agencies through which services are commissioned and developed. The chair has a clear understanding of the YOT's work and fosters a strong sense of engagement and commitment among board members.

There is an active, well-attended board and the members understand their role and what their contribution means to the delivery of YOT services. All statutory partners are engaged in the management board, and the voluntary sector is also represented by the Vale Centre for Voluntary Services (VCVS).

The Vale of Glamorgan Youth Justice Plan has a clear set of objectives and actions to monitor the over-representation of specific groups on the YOT caseload; it emphasises work with girls in the light of an upsurge of referrals to the YOT caseload and work is ongoing to develop services which address the needs of these children.

The voices of the child and their parents or carers are not sufficiently represented at board level and we found this to be an underdeveloped area of the board's work. We would certainly expect the YOT board to develop methods of gathering the views of children and their parents or carers at the completion of YOT intervention, and to ensure these views inform service delivery.

The link between the board and the provision of effective case supervision needs to be strengthened in order to support the members' knowledge of how strategic intent

translates into the delivery of effective services. Prior to the pandemic, the board undertook developmental work with the staff group. We would hope that this type of work will be recommenced.

Do the partnership arrangements actively support effective service delivery?

Board members gave clear evidence that they support the work of the YOT within their own agencies. The management board identified deficits in access to education provision and mental health services for children working with the YOT and remedied this through better working arrangements in the form of seconded staff. In our case inspections we saw clear evidence of additional support being provided to the children, and multi-agency oversight of the work.

YOT board membership aligns well with local and regional strategic working arrangements, through the Vale of Glamorgan Community Safety Partnership and Safeguarding Boards (both local and regional).

Seconded staff roles and responsibilities are formalised in service level agreements or service protocols.

Monitoring of the YOT's key performance measures is a good basis for facilitating the delivery of effective work. Reports to the board are clearly set out and accessible.

In developing its vision, the board needs a renewed focus on meeting the diverse needs of children who work with the YOT. The disproportionality policy is currently in draft form.

Does the leadership of the YOT support effective service delivery?

The YOT has a well-resourced, committed and experienced management team, and the recently appointed head of service provides the key link between staff and the board. Although it is noted that the staff team considered there had been a gap in operational and strategic sides of the organisation, there was optimism that the new management arrangements were likely to improve relationships.

Although there is no documented vision statement, discussions with staff suggested that there is a common purpose across the partnership at all levels. There was a clear commitment to a trauma-informed understanding of the children's behaviour. All staff aimed to work in a way that put the child's needs first.

In keeping with this approach, the YOT has increasingly moved towards diversionary and preventative work with children who are deemed to be at risk of school exclusion or of offending. This work is well resourced, involving three full-time prevention officers.

The YOT work is monitored through a comprehensive 'risk profile' approach. This approach clearly indicates the high priority for the board of further work regarding equality of provision.

1.2. Staff



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

Good

Key staffing data¹¹

Total staff headcount (full-time equivalent (FTE))	30
Total headcount qualified case managers (FTE) ¹²	7.4
Vacancy rate (total unfilled posts as percentage of total staff headcount)	12%
Average caseload per case manager (FTE equivalent) ¹³	7.14
Average annual working days sickness (all staff)	13
Staff attrition (percentage of all staff leaving in 12-month period)	23%

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

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

Case managers have reasonable workloads (seven to 12 cases), and these are actively managed at times of pressure. Of the staff surveyed, eight out of nine reported that their caseload was manageable; and seven out of eight reported that they were at least to 'some extent' sufficiently qualified and experienced to manage their cases. We consider that the level of staffing is sufficient for us to expect high-quality services to be provided for each child working with the YOT.

In our view, there is sufficient management capacity to support the delivery of high-quality services. There are comprehensive quality assurance and audit arrangements, yet the experience of practitioners suggests that these are more process-focused than concerned with reflection on the quality of work with individual children, and we found that management oversight needs greater rigour to ensure the quality of work with children.

YOT services were maintained effectively within the constraints of Covid-19 models of delivery. At the time of inspection, the local authority had some residual restrictions governing face-to-face meetings.

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

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

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

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

This is a skilled and experienced staff group that demonstrates strong commitment to the children and builds effective working relationships with them. The work of the case workers is consistently sensitive to the needs of children.

Of the staff surveyed, eight out of nine considered that they had the skills and knowledge to undertake their role in the YOT.

There is an experienced and settled case management group, most of whom are qualified in social work. We found a strong sense of supportive teamwork among operational staff.

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

New entrants to the organisation report that they received an appropriate induction and have clear paths to professional development.

In the inspected cases, we considered that the manager's contribution to case management was insufficient in two-thirds of the cases inspected. We found that key issues concerning risk to the child's safety and wellbeing or the risk that they may present to others had not been identified and worked with. Staff are supported by managers during supervision without being overly challenged and it is evident that this is an area for development.

Only four out of nine staff indicated that their most recent annual appraisal was valuable.

Are arrangements for learning and development comprehensive and responsive?

Of the staff surveyed, eight out of nine considered that their training and development needs were mostly met.

YOT staff and partnership staff have a common purpose, fostered more strongly through access to training than strategic direction.

Staff report that training is accessible and useful for their development. Arrangements are in place to facilitate their attendance. A comprehensive range of training packages are made available to all staff working in the partnership.

Do managers pay sufficient attention to staff engagement?

This is a highly motivated group of staff who display a great deal of commitment to the children and families with whom they are working.

Work to improve staff engagement began in 2020, through the process of joint audit work with board members. However, this was discontinued during the period of pandemic restrictions. In our meetings, there was a perception of a chasm between the work of the board and that of operational staff. This is an issue that is clearly in the sights of the board chair and senior manager as needing urgent attention.

Of the staff surveyed, seven out of nine considered that exceptional work is at least sometimes recognised and five out of six staff with individual diversity needs thought that these needs were recognised and responded to.

Staff have good access to supportive services provided by the local authority.

1.3. Partnerships and services



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

Good

Caseload characteristics

Percentage of current caseload with mental health issues	57%
Percentage of current caseload with substance misuse issues	52%
Percentage of current caseload with a learning disability or difficulty	17.3%

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

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

Staff have a good understanding of the needs of the children currently working with the YOT. Accessible data is contained in the profile of YOT children documentation. Staff identify the complexity of the children's needs in relation to their adverse childhood experiences, the extent of their additional educational needs, their vulnerability to exploitation and their experience of the care system.

We found good analysis of offence types and local use of criminal justice disposals by the court and through diversionary processes. There has been a distinct shift in resources towards more preventative intervention, based on a good level of understanding that children's needs should be addressed much earlier in their lives. This is expressed in the Vale of Glamorgan YOT's prevention strategy and plan, which is translated into the establishment of a distinct prevention team within the YOT. A considerable proportion of the YOT's work capacity is allocated to this area of work.

Key performance indicators show a trend of improvement in important organisational aims such as reducing the number of first-time entrants to the system and limiting the use of custody for children.

The perspective of the child and their parents or carers needs to be gathered more systematically and used to inform service development. In all aspects of the cases inspected we found that the child and their parent or carer were meaningfully involved in the work with the case manager.

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

The Vale of Glamorgan YOT provides in-house support for education, training and employment, through an inclusion officer who works directly with education services. There is a protocol to support this work, and identified objectives include being engaged in 25 hours of statutory school education, or 16 hours of post-16 training or employment.

The local authority Learning and Skills Directorate has adopted a trauma-informed approach to education, which aligns with the core principles of the YOT's work. We found that these were often articulated by participants in the partnership.

There is direct access to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) through the seconded specialist nurse. There is also direct access to the seconded substance misuse nurses.

There is a strong offer of reparative work. This is based on practical work that can be supplemented achieving a CSCS (Construction Skills Certification Scheme) qualification where this is appropriate to the child's needs for future employability. Staff take an active approach to work with victims, and the victim's perspective is represented throughout the child's work with the YOT. Restorative justice conferencing is offered as an integral part of out-of-court disposals and is available for all other interventions, depending on the victim's wishes.

Discussions with staff indicate that the approach taken across the partnership is child-first, trauma-informed and based on an understanding of the prevalence of adverse childhood experiences. It adopts a strengths-based approach to work with the children and their families.

Children have access to high-quality accommodation services through a third-sector provider, Llamau. This is a long-established and respected third-sector organisation operating throughout South Wales. All participants in partnership work with the children seek to deliver personalised services, and we found, in the cases inspected, that diversity issues were almost always addressed and formed part of the delivery of interventions.

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

There is good and timely access to many specialist services. Relationship-building undertaken by case managers is considered by partners to be vital to promote child safety in individual cases.

There is extensive practice guidance on 'Working with risk and concern in the youth offending service'. This outlines practice and procedure around issues of risk of harm to others and risk to the safety of children. This is translated into clear working arrangements to identify and manage child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation. There are well-established arrangements to utilise case planning forums, multi-agency risk forums (MARF) and clear links to Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA). YOT staff have a good awareness of the relevant processes, including the National Referral Mechanism.

We found that YOT staff and partner agencies have a good appreciation of risk of harm to others, and this was mostly borne out in the cases we inspected. All services take a personalised approach to the work, which addresses the unique needs of the child.

In our survey, courts expressed high levels of satisfaction with the YOT's work.

Not enough children were able to access speech, language and communication therapy. This service is available to children as part of mainstream provision but the prevalence of this concern, and related neurodivergent conditions, means that more needs to be done to secure timely access to these services.

Involvement of children and their parents or carers in developing services was underdeveloped in the Vale of Glamorgan YOT.

1.4. Information and facilities



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

Good

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

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

Our meeting with the staff responsible for post-custody resettlement left us assured that everything that could be in place was, indeed, in place. It should be noted that no child from the Vale of Glamorgan has received a custodial sentence for over two years. We were assured that areas critical to successful resettlement – accommodation, education, health and mental health – would be speedily addressed.

Key documents, such as the board’s vision statement, the resettlement policy, and the disproportionality policy and action plan, are still being developed. The board needs to ensure that diversity considerations are included throughout.

Staff are very clear about how to access the right services from partners for the children, and evidence from post-court cases suggests delivery of a high-quality service to children.

Communication between the board and operational staff is underdeveloped. A systematic review of policies could provide a useful stimulus to greater staff engagement.

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

The main centre for YOT work is a suitably located office premises in the town of Barry. Staff visit children at home where necessary and use local contact centres when this is appropriate.

The premises are suitable for personalised work with children. The building is accessible, has child-friendly facilities for work and includes a separate area in which confidential work with medical practitioners can take place. There is also a large garden, which includes an allotment that the children work on, and a young person’s kitchen, education room and art room, so promoting relationship-based and child-focused work.

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

All staff have access to suitable ICT support, including laptops and mobile phones. The system used by the YOT is Child View, and this is a suitable platform for information-sharing between the YOT and other agencies.

The data management system provides good-quality information for the purposes of reporting to the board on key performance measures. There is a good supply of

information from key partner agencies, including information on diversity. This information is being refined as the local authority develops the capacity to use enhanced data analysis tools.

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

There is a clear link between the practice we observed in the Vale of Glamorgan YOT and the growing evidence base to support trauma-informed approaches to understanding and working with children who offend or are at risk of offending. There are clear quality assurance systems in place, with regular case audits and designated staff to undertake this work. These need to be further developed to include the promotion of a child-centred, trauma-informed approach to the work.

Service improvements, such as the development of preventative interventions, are based on the growing evidence that early intervention can provide a successful route to divert children from criminal justice intervention. Developments in service are primarily promoted through training, and our inspection suggests that this has proved an effective means of promoting effective working practices.

The perspectives of children and their parents or carers are not gathered systematically and the YOT recognises that this is an area for development.

Diversity

Throughout our standards, we expect a personalised and responsive approach for all children, which includes taking account of their diversity and protected characteristics. Those factors may influence our judgements in specific standards. Here, we present an overall summary of the approach to diversity that we found in this YOT.

At an operational level, we found that practitioners had a keen interest in identifying, understanding and adapting work with the child, with appropriate regard to the child's diversity and protected characteristics. In our case inspection sample, diversity was appropriately addressed in almost all circumstances.

At an organisational level, the policy on working with children from groups who are disproportionately represented in the YOT caseload needs to be endorsed by the board. This will provide a clear strategic steer to staff and partners alike.

The developing work contains useful information that compares the Vale of Glamorgan with the rest of Wales in respect of key demographic factors. There is comprehensive data about the profile of the YOT cohort of children in the 'Profile of Vale of Glamorgan YOS cohort' document, which encompasses all protected characteristics and a range of important factors in children's lives. This includes the assessed extent of child sexual exploitation, children reported as missing, children with poor parental supervision, children with a speech, language or communication disability and children's experience of the care system. All staff have received training in working with children with speech and language needs and we found evidence in case inspections of the work being adjusted in accordance with children's individual needs. The education provision of the pupil referral unit is particularly attuned to the needs of children working with the YOT, as it has adopted a trauma-informed approach to the provision of services.

As mentioned, protected characteristics among the children are monitored. Where concerns are identified, action plans are developed. In the context of a rise in the number of females on the caseload, the YOT has a well-developed action plan for delivering services to girls, based on a clear understanding and analysis of the issues facing them.

2. Court disposals

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

Our key findings about court disposals are as follows:

Strengths

- Assessment work is based on a good understanding of the individual child's circumstances.
- Where appropriate, case managers considered the perspectives of other agencies in formulating an assessment of the child.
- Planning work is strengths-based. There is good involvement of other agencies in this activity and evidence of multi-agency plans aligning well.
- The work delivered to the child was well grounded in evidence; the approach was child-centred, trauma-informed and based on restorative principles.
- Key services such as mental health support and substance misuse interventions were speedily available.
- Our expectations that the diverse needs of the children are understood and acted upon were met in almost all circumstances.
- The voices of the child and their parents or carers were incorporated into all aspects of case management.

Areas for improvement

- Case managers did not always identify potential increased risk of harm to others.
- Management oversight of the case managers' work did not always help to identify risk of harm to others in assessment, planning or reviewing in the cases inspected.

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

2.1. Assessment



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

Good

Our rating¹⁴ for assessment is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	100%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	100%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	67%

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

In the cases we inspected, the case managers considered how to support the child's desistance consistently well. We found that children's personal histories were understood and that the case manager had drawn on an appropriate range of information sources to analyse how relevant factors were influencing the child's behaviours.

Alongside an appropriate range of information sources, the voices of the child and their parent or carer were clearly incorporated into the assessment of all cases.

In one case, the inspector observed that:

Assessment clearly identifies factors against desistance and links these to the child's offending behaviour and other behaviours of concern. Strengths, albeit minimal, are also highlighted. Assessment draws on information from other services for which the child is both currently/historically known, including children's services, substance misuse services, school, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and the education placement. The child and his parents' (father and stepmother – also victims) voices are evident across the assessment.

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?

Safety and wellbeing concerns were appropriately addressed in the assessment work we inspected. Issues of concern were clearly identified and analysed, and the case manager's understanding was based on all available sources of information.

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?

In two of the three cases we inspected, the analysis of the child's likelihood of causing harm to other people was done well enough. In these cases, the context of offending, potential victims and the probability of repeated harmful behaviour were considered.

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

In one of the cases, the case manager had not updated existing assessment work in the light of an increased severity of offending and this should have been done. We would expect this omission to be picked up by the manager overseeing the work and this, also, had not been completed.

2.2. Planning



Planning is well-informed, holistic and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents or carers.	Good
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Our rating¹⁵ for planning is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does planning focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	100%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	100%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	67%

Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?

In each case, we saw a good range of individualised planning work, with a good focus on the child's interests and capabilities. There was a positive level of planning to support the child's strengths and promote protective factors.

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

We found good planning work that aimed to keep the child safe in all cases. Where necessary, the plan was formulated and reviewed by a multi-agency review body. A strong feature of the work in the Vale of Glamorgan YOT was the alignment of plans developed by the YOT case manager with other activities in which the child was involved, such as child protection planning.

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

In two of the three cases inspected, the planning work addressed potentially harmful behaviours displayed by the child through a range of interventions, including knife crime awareness, restorative work, peer influence, building resilience, victim empathy work and consequential thinking.

In one case, we were concerned that the case manager had not planned to address the fact that the child had exhibited sexually harmful behaviours as they were felt to be unrelated to the offences that had led to involvement with the YOT. These issues were well documented, yet they did not form part of the planned work with the child. This omission was not detected or resolved through the process of management oversight and improving management oversight is an area of development for the YOT.

¹⁵ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. See Annexe 2 for a more detailed explanation.

2.3. Implementation and delivery



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

Outstanding

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

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

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

In all cases inspected, the case manager had provided supportive interventions to the child. Where work had been planned, it was delivered. For example, children were helped to access the Construction Skills Certificate Scheme card to improve their employment prospects or were supported to attend school or college.

The case managers took a trauma-informed approach to the work, with an emphasis on building productive relationships with the children. Work was tailored to the child's learning needs and capabilities.

We found good levels of engagement with the child's family members, where this was appropriate.

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

There was good use of a range of interventions. We found that access to services was speedy and reliable, particularly where there were mental health needs or concerns about substance misuse.

Where there were significant issues about the child's safety and wellbeing, the case manager was able to play a full part in multi-agency arrangements. There were strong and effective information-sharing arrangements with the police and the professional network surrounding the child.

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

Services were delivered to the children in a manner that supported other people's safety effectively. This was very much a strengths-based approach – seeking to build on the child's resources and support the child in positive activity aimed at reducing the likelihood of further risky behaviour.

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

We found a strong focus on developing consequential thinking through interventions such as knife crime awareness. This, combined with restorative practice aimed at promoting understanding of the perspective of current and potential future victims, gave clear evidence that case managers promoted children’s understanding of themselves and their impact on other people.

2.4. Reviewing



Reviewing of progress is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents or carers.	Good
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Our rating¹⁷ for reviewing is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the child’s desistance?	67%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	100%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	67%

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

In two of the three inspected cases, reviews maintained an appropriate focus on the child’s desistance. Reviews were undertaken at points of significant change in the child’s life and plans were modified to support the child with changed circumstances.

In one case, where a key desistance factor had been overlooked by the case manager, this was not identified through the process of management supervision or other review.

Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

We found that the focus on keeping the child safe was maintained in each of the cases inspected. Reviewing identified and responded to changes in factors relating to safety and wellbeing, where required. Reviewing also ensured that the necessary adjustments were implemented when required. Of note was engagement with the local criminal exploitation officer, where this was deemed necessary, and the successful escalation of identified safeguarding issues through the National Referral Mechanism.

Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

In two of the inspected cases, we found that the review had considered all relevant factors associated with risk of harm to others and was informed by the contribution of other relevant agencies. Reviewing identified and responded to changes in factors related to risk of harm when required.

In one case, the case manager had not updated the assessment of the case in line with the occurrence of a more serious, violent offence. This had also not been identified through the supervision process and is an area that requires development.

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

3. Out-of-court disposals

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

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

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

Assessment work is undertaken using the AssetPlus tool for all cases referred to the Vale of Glamorgan YOT. Desistance was assessed as sufficient in all cases. In two of the cases, risk of harm to others was appropriately considered. However, the assessments did not address the child's safety in two of the three inspected cases.

The planning of work sufficiently focused on desistance in keeping other people safe in all the cases inspected. In one case, the risk to the child's safety and wellbeing was not adequately considered.

In all cases the implementation and delivery of work with the child were to a good standard with regard to desistance and risk of harm to others. In one case, the risk to the child's safety and wellbeing was not adequately considered.

The out-of-court disposal policy and practice are well documented, with clarity about the contributions of the relevant partners. This was reflected in discussion with the participating staff members. The policy is subject to appropriate review and update.

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

Strengths

- An appropriate assessment tool (AssetPlus) is used in each case referred to the YOT before it goes to a decision-making panel.
- The panel makes decisions jointly, and there is an appropriate escalation procedure if it does not reach a consensus.
- The YOT's out-of-court policy has driven a diversionary approach, and there has been a marked decline in first-time entrants to the system.
- Most aspects of planning work were carried out to a good standard.
- Services delivered to the children were flexible and personalised.
- Within the partnership there is a shared ethos of child-centred, trauma-informed methods of understanding and working with the children.

Areas for improvement

- The out-of-court policy does not address how to identify, understand and manage children's diversity.
- Assessment work gives too little attention to issues concerning the child's safety and wellbeing and the risk of harm to others that the child may present.
- Management oversight of cases is insufficiently rigorous in promoting professional curiosity.
- There is no mechanism for gathering the views of children and their parents or carers on their experience of the scheme.

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

3.1. Assessment



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

Inadequate

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

	% 'Yes'
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	100%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	33%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	67%

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

All cases inspected contained sufficient analysis of how to support the child's desistance and this was based on a good understanding of the child's diversity and personal circumstances.

In each case the needs and wishes of victims were taken into account. There was good evidence that the child's and their parents' or carers' views were taken into account as part of the assessment process.

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?

In one case, the child's complicated personal circumstances were clearly identified in the assessment and the impact on safety and wellbeing was carefully considered.


¹⁸ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. See Annexe 2 for a more detailed explanation.

In the two further cases, while the case managers identified issues that required attention, such as alcohol or substance misuse, they made no link between these areas of concern and the child's safety and wellbeing.

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?

In two of the cases, the assessment appropriately analysed the child's behaviour in the context of their life and analysed who was at risk of harm and what the impact of the behaviour was.

In the other case, there was no analysis of the harmful behaviour shown by the child.

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

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

	% 'Yes'
Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?	100%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	67%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	100%

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

With all the children there was a clear plan to address desistance needs. These plans involved a range of partner organisations in delivering services where this complemented the case manager's individual work.

We found that there was good attention to the children's diversity needs and that they were engaged in the process of planning, as were their parents or carers. We also found that there was good attention to the intended work in relation to the child's learning style, learning needs and emotional state.

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

In two of the cases the planning included interventions that demonstrated a high degree of sensitivity to the child's needs and aligned well with the work of other agencies, particularly children's social care. Contingency planning was also sufficient in these cases, providing safety arrangements should the risks to the child increase.

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

Planned interventions and working arrangements focused well on keeping other people safe in all three cases inspected. Behaviour considered to present a risk of harm to others is addressed by arranging personalised activities.

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

Contingency planning was done well enough with each child, either at an individual level or as part of a multi-agency safety plan.

3.3. Implementation and delivery



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

Good

Our rating²⁰ for implementation and delivery is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does service delivery effectively support the child's desistance?	100%
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of the child?	67%
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of other people?	100%

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

In all aspects, we found that the work with children was of sufficient quality to support desistance from further offending. Children's needs were addressed in a supportive manner and there was evidence of the service being extended in the context of the child's needs rather than being delivered rigidly within the limited time constraints of an out-of-court disposal.

Does service delivery focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

In two of the cases we found that the case manager focused on keeping the child safe. In both instances this involved other agencies being engaged in actively supporting the child and their families.

There was a clear omission in one case, where the services delivered missed the opportunity to help the child address an issue of substance misuse that linked to his safety and wellbeing.

Does service delivery focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

Through victim-focused work, the engagement of partner agencies and the building of positive working relationships, the case managers were able to demonstrate that the risks the child may present to other people had been addressed effectively.

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

3.4. Out-of-court disposal policy and provision



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

Good

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

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

The joint protocol between the Vale of Glamorgan YOT and South Wales Police is well-documented and clear. All relevant roles in decision-making and delivering services in and around the disposals are contained in the protocol.

Eligibility criteria are set out carefully in relation to each type of disposal, and a formal escalation process was adopted following internal audit work in 2020. At that time, it was identified that informal mechanisms had worked well to support appropriate decision-making, but that these needed better documentation.

The process has an agreed failsafe in relation to cases that can be bailed by courts for consideration of an out-of-court disposal.

Arrangements for children's safety and the safety of other people form part of the protocol and, in practice, we found that diversity issues were analysed sufficiently in all of the inspected cases.

We were concerned that the protocol does not include a clear position in respect of addressing the child's diversity needs.

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

The Vale of Glamorgan YOT uses the AssetPlus assessment tool for all cases before the joint decision-making panel takes place.

Joint decision-making takes place at an out-of-court disposal panel and this is supported by the Neighbourhood Resolution Panel, where the restorative part of any disposal is planned and reviewed.

There is an escalation process to manage cases where the panel cannot reach a consensus, and the decision-making process works to well-established guidelines in terms of who does what and when, ensuring appropriate timeliness in most cases.

The general principle applied is that all YOT services and interventions are available to children who are subject to these disposals. We saw this borne out in the inspected case sample. Establishing and supporting engagement are viewed as key to effective work.

In practice, we considered that case managers need to pay more attention to the child's safety and wellbeing.

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

There is a clear policy, in the form of an out-of-court disposal protocol. The document is up to date and was last reviewed in March 2021.

Evaluation and review of the scheme are based on well-presented data that enables the YOT to monitor outcomes for children by age, gender and ethnicity. The data also contains information on types of offence and gravity.

There is good evidence of actions being developed and implemented through the process of review (for example, team training on the out-of-court disposal process). There is a strong monitoring process for the effectiveness of this work through the Police and Crime Commissioner's scrutiny panel.

There is no current mechanism for gathering and analysing the views of children and their parents or carers on their experience of out-of-court disposals.

Annexe 1: Methodology

HM Inspectorate of Probation standards

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

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

Domain one: organisational delivery

The youth offending service submitted evidence in advance and the Director of Children's and Adult Services delivered a presentation covering the following areas:

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

During the main fieldwork phase, we conducted six interviews with case managers, asking them about their experiences of training, development, management supervision and leadership. We held various meetings, which allowed us to triangulate evidence and information. In total, we conducted 14 meetings, which included meetings with managers, partner organisations and staff. The evidence collected under this domain was judged against our published ratings characteristics.²²

Domain two: court disposals

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

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

Domain three: out-of-court disposals

We completed case assessments over a one-week period, examining case files and interviewing case managers. All the cases selected were those of children who had received out-of-court disposals three to five months earlier. This enabled us to examine work in relation to assessing, planning, and implementation and delivery.

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

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

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

Annexe 2: Inspection data

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

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

The rating for each standard is aligned to the banding at the key question level where the lowest proportion of cases were judged to be sufficient, as we believe that each key question is an integral part of the standard. Therefore, if we rate three key questions as 'Good' and one as 'Inadequate', the overall rating for that standard is 'Inadequate'.

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

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

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

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

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

'Inadequate' rating for the resettlement standard is unable to receive an overall 'Outstanding' rating, regardless of how they are rated against the core standards. Where there are no relevant resettlement cases, we do not apply a rating to resettlement work.

Data from inspected cases:²³

2.1. Assessment (court disposals)	
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	
a) Is there sufficient analysis of offending behaviour, including the child's attitudes towards and motivations for their offending?	100%
b) Does assessment sufficiently analyse diversity issues?	67%
c) Does assessment consider personal circumstances, including the wider familial and social context of the child?	100%
d) Does assessment utilise information held by other agencies?	100%
e) Does assessment focus on the child's strengths and protective factors?	100%
f) Does assessment analyse the key structural barriers facing the child?	100%
g) Is enough attention given to understanding the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change, and their likelihood of engaging with the court disposal?	100%
h) Does assessment give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of victims, and opportunities for restorative justice?	100%
i) Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in their assessment, and are their views taken into account?	100%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	
a) Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risks to the safety and wellbeing of the child?	100%
b) Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including other assessments, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	100%
c) Does assessment analyse controls and interventions to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	100%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	

²³ Some questions do not apply in all cases.

a) Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risk of harm to others posed by the child, including identifying who is at risk and the nature of that risk?	33%
b) Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including past behaviour and convictions, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	100%
c) Does assessment analyse controls and interventions to manage and minimise the risk of harm presented by the child?	100%

2.2. Planning (court disposals)

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

a) Does planning set out the services most likely to support desistance, paying sufficient attention to the available timescales and the need for sequencing?	100%
b) Does planning sufficiently address diversity issues?	100%
c) Does planning take sufficient account of the child's personal circumstances, including the wider familial and social context of the child?	100%
d) Does planning take sufficient account of the child's strengths and protective factors, and seek to reinforce or develop these as necessary?	100%
e) Does planning take sufficient account of the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change, and seek to develop these as necessary?	100%
f) Does planning give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of victims?	100%
g) Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in planning, and are their views taken into account?	100%

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

a) Does planning promote the safety and wellbeing of the child, sufficiently addressing risks?	100%
b) Does planning involve other agencies where appropriate, and is there sufficient alignment with other plans (e.g. child protection or care plans) concerning the child?	100%
c) Does planning set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	100%

d) Does planning set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to manage those risks that have been identified?	67%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	
a) Does planning promote the safety of other people, sufficiently addressing risk of harm factors?	67%
b) Does planning involve other agencies where appropriate?	100%
c) Does planning address any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims?	33%
d) Does planning set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote the safety of other people?	67%
e) Does planning set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to manage those risks that have been identified?	67%

2.3. Implementation and delivery (court disposals)

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

a) Are the delivered services those most likely to support desistance, with sufficient attention given to sequencing and the available timescales?	100%
b) Does service delivery account for the diversity issues of the child?	100%
c) Does service delivery reflect the wider familial and social context of the child, involving parents or carers, or significant others?	100%
d) Does service delivery build upon the child's strengths and enhance protective factors?	100%
e) Is sufficient focus given to developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child and their parents or carers?	100%
f) Does service delivery promote opportunities for community integration, including access to services post-supervision?	100%
g) Is sufficient attention given to encouraging and enabling the child's compliance with the work of the YOT?	100%
h) Are enforcement actions taken when appropriate?	67%

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

a) Does service delivery promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	100%
b) Is the involvement of other organisations in keeping the child safe sufficiently well-coordinated?	100%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?	
a) Are the delivered services sufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	100%
b) Is sufficient attention given to the protection of actual and potential victims?	67%
c) Is the involvement of other agencies in managing the risk of harm sufficiently well-coordinated?	67%

2. 4. Reviewing (court disposals)

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

a) Does reviewing identify and respond to changes in factors linked to desistance?	33%
b) Does reviewing focus sufficiently on building upon the child's strengths and enhancing protective factors?	33%
c) Does reviewing include analysis of, and respond to, diversity factors?	0%
d) Does reviewing consider the personal circumstances, including the wider familial and social context of the child?	67%
d) Does reviewing consider motivation and engagement levels and any relevant barriers?	0%
e) Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in reviewing their progress and engagement, and are their views taken into account?	100%
f) Does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work to support desistance?	33%

Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

a) Does reviewing identify and respond to changes in factors related to safety and wellbeing?	67%
b) Is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in promoting the safety and wellbeing of the child?	100%

c) Does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	0%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	
a) Does reviewing identify and respond to changes in factors related to risk of harm?	67%
b) Is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in managing the risk of harm?	100%
c) Does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan all of work to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	33%

3.1. Assessment (out-of-court disposals)

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

a) Is there sufficient analysis of offending behaviour, including the child's acknowledgement of responsibility for, attitudes towards and motivations for their offending?	100%
b) Does assessment sufficiently analyse diversity issues?	100%
c) Does assessment consider personal circumstances, including the wider familial and social context of the child?	100%
d) Does assessment utilise information held by other agencies?	67%
e) Does assessment focus on the child's strengths and protective factors?	100%
f) Does assessment analyse the key structural barriers facing the child?	67%
g) Is sufficient attention given to understanding the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change?	100%
h) Does assessment give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of victims, and opportunities for restorative justice?	100%
i) Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in their assessment, and are their views taken into account?	100%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	
a) Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risks to the safety and wellbeing of the child?	33%

b) Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including other assessments, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	100%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	
a) Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risk of harm to others posed by the child, including identifying who is at risk and the nature of that risk?	100%
b) Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including any other assessments that have been completed, and other evidence of behaviour by the child?	67%

3.2. Planning (out-of-court disposals)

Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?	
a) Does planning set out the services most likely to support desistance, paying sufficient attention to the available timescales and the need for sequencing?	100%
b) Does planning sufficiently address diversity issues?	100%
c) Does planning take sufficient account of the child's personal circumstances, including the wider familial and social context of the child?	100%
d) Does planning take sufficient account of the child's strengths and protective factors, and seek to reinforce or develop these as necessary?	100%
e) Does planning take sufficient account of the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change, and seek to develop these as necessary?	100%
f) Does planning take sufficient account of opportunities for community integration, including access to mainstream services following completion of out-of-court disposal work?	100%
g) Does planning give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victims?	100%
h) Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in planning, and are their views taken into account?	100%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	
a) Does planning promote the safety and wellbeing of the child, sufficiently addressing risks?	67%

b) Does planning involve other agencies where appropriate, and is there sufficient alignment with other plans (e.g. child protection or care plans) concerning the child?	67%
c) Does planning include necessary contingency arrangements for those risks that have been identified?	67%

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

a) Does planning promote the safety of other people, sufficiently addressing risk of harm factors?	100%
b) Does planning involve other agencies where appropriate?	67%
c) Does planning address any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims?	100%
d) Does planning include necessary contingency arrangements for those risks that have been identified?	100%

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

Does service delivery effectively support the child's desistance?

a) Are the delivered services those most likely to support desistance, with sufficient attention given to sequencing and the available timescales?	100%
b) Does service delivery account for the diversity issues of the child?	100%
c) Does service delivery reflect the wider familial and social context of the child, involving parents or carers, or significant others?	100%
d) Is sufficient focus given to developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child and their parents or carers?	100%
e) Is sufficient attention given to encouraging and enabling the child's compliance with the work of the YOT?	100%
f) Does service delivery promote opportunities for community integration, including access to mainstream services?	100%

Does service delivery effectively support the safety of the child?

a) Does service delivery promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	67%
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b) Is the involvement of other agencies in keeping the child safe sufficiently well utilised and coordinated?	67%
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Does service delivery effectively support the safety of other people?	
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a) Are the delivered services sufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	100%
b) Is sufficient attention given to the protection of actual and potential victims?	100%