

Lancashire

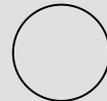
Joint Inspection Report

Dates of inspection fieldwork April/May 2019

Date of publication July 2019

Overall rating for the YOT

Good



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Acknowledgments:

This inspection was led by HM Inspector Maria Jerram supported by a team of inspectors, as well as staff from our operations and research teams. HMI Probation was joined by colleague inspectors from police, health, social care and education. The Head of Youth Offending Team Inspections, responsible for this inspection programme, is Alan MacDonald. 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.

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Foreword

Justin Russell
Chief Inspector of Probation

Overall findings

Overall, Lancashire YOT is rated as: **Good**. This rating has been determined by inspecting the YOT in three domains of its work. The findings in those domains are described below.

Organisational delivery

Our key findings about organisation delivery are as follows:

- There is a youth justice plan in place that outlines the aims and priorities of the service and is agreed by the board.
- The YOT is well resourced, particularly in relation to health services
- The Youth Justice Management Board has been without a permanent and consistent chair for the past 12 months. A new chair was appointed in March 2019 and is reviewing the structure and focus of meetings.
- There is a large board membership but the attendance of some key partners is inconsistent.
- Staff do not feel that the management team always considers their views, particularly in relation to the impact of the new structure on their workload, time and support.
- Detailed data reports are presented at the board but the contents are not always relevant to, or fully understood by, partners.
- Work with children's social care is not always integrated and consequently not all children benefit from joint planning and intervention.
- The number of young people who are not in education, employment or training has declined over the last year but is still three times higher than the general population in Lancashire.
- Case management has been affected by staffing issues and a period of significant restructure.

Court disposals

Our key findings about court disposals are as follows:

- Assessments of desistance and risk of harm to others are completed to a higher standard than assessments of the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
- Staff sufficiently encourage and enable the child or young person to engage with the work of the YOT in most cases.
- Planning does not focus sufficiently on identifying children and young people's strengths and protective factors.
- Victims views are not routinely considered in the planning process, and this means planning to manage risk of harm to others are less effective overall.
- Reviewing requires improvement to ensure that interventions are adapted appropriately in response to changing circumstances and risk.
- Service delivery does not always promote opportunities for community integration, including access to post-supervision support.

- Management oversight is not consistent and effective in making a difference to the quality of work.

Out-of-court disposals

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

- The implementation and delivery of interventions are outstanding for desistance, risk of harm to others and safety and wellbeing.
- Early indications of the new out-of-court disposal arrangements developed with Lancashire Police (implemented in December 2018) are promising.
- Joint work with the police is outstanding and decision-making for out-of-court disposals is proportionate and timely.
- In almost every case, workers focused on developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child or young person and their parents/carers.
- The YOT's recommendations to support joint decision-making are well-informed, analytical and personalised to the child or young person.
- Staff give sufficient attention to the protection of actual and potential victims.

A summary of the ratings

Overall rating for the Lancashire Youth Offending Team	Good
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1	Organisational delivery	
1.1	Governance and leadership	Requires Improvement
1.2	Staff	Good
1.3	Partnerships and services	Requires Improvement
1.4	Information and facilities	Requires Improvement

2	Court disposals	
2.1	Assessment	Good
2.2	Planning	Requires Improvement
2.3	Implementation and delivery	Good
2.4	Reviewing	Requires Improvement

3	Out-of-court disposals	
3.1	Assessment	Good
3.2	Planning	Outstanding
3.3	Implementation and delivery	Outstanding
3.4	Joint working	Outstanding

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

Lancashire YOT Manager should:

1. make sure that reviewing of statutory casework is timely and responsive, that it considers all areas of risk and need and that it leads to the necessary adjustments to any ongoing plan of work
2. produce effective plans to support interventions that promote desistance, keep children safe and manage risk of harm to others
3. analyse children and young people's health needs to inform the work of health professionals and YOT case managers, and review current services to make sure they are meeting these needs

The director of children's services should:

4. ensure that all staff have the capacity and support they need to undertake their work effectively and that management oversight is meaningful and makes a difference
5. make sure that thresholds for access to services for children and families are understood and applied consistently by children's social care
6. ensure that all children and young people receive an effective initial assessment of their educational needs, and have access to impartial advice and guidance and the resources needed to reduce any barriers to engaging in education, employment and training

Introduction

Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) supervise 10–18-year-olds 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, and instead are dealt with out of court. HMI Probation inspects both these aspects of youth offending services.

YOTs are statutory partnerships, and they are multi-disciplinary, 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 services¹. 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.

Lancashire is one of the largest YOTs in the country and is located within Lancashire County Council's (LCC) directorate for children's services. The YOT manager also has responsibility for fostering, adoption and residential services. LCC is the fourth largest council in the UK, covering an area of 2,903 square kilometres and serving a population of 1,201,855. With 12 district councils, 6 clinical commissioning groups and 4 hospital trusts within the boundaries of LCC, delivering consistent services can be challenging. The most recent Youth Justice (YJB) data reports indicate that Lancashire has a lower than average rate of first time entrants and on average, fewer young people are receiving custodial sentences than in England and Wales. Rates of re-offending are generally in line with national figures.

The YOT implemented a new structure on 1 July 2018. The YOT had been operating with three locality teams and has moved to one centralised service. The redesign was carried out because of concerns about inconsistent practice across locality teams. At the time of our inspection the service was still in the process of adapting to the changes and embedding new processes.

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 provide assurance on the effectiveness of work with adults and children who have offended to implement orders of the court, reduce reoffending, protect the public and safeguard the vulnerable. We inspect these services and publish inspection reports. We highlight good and poor practice, and use our data and information to encourage good-quality services. We are independent of government, and speak independently.

HM Inspectorate of Probation standards

¹ The *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* set out the arrangements for local YOTs and partnership working.

The standards against which we inspect 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 people who have offended².

Key facts

207	First-time entrant rate per 100,000 in Lancashire
248	First-time entrant rate per 100,000 in England and Wales
40.6%	Reoffending rate in Lancashire
40.9%	Reoffending rate in England and Wales

Caseload information

Age	10–14	15–17	
Lancashire	21%	79%	
National average	24%	76%	
Race/ethnicity	White	Black and minority ethnic	Not Known
Lancashire	85%	10%	4%
National average	71%	26%	4%
Gender	Male	Female	
Lancashire	88%	12%	
National average	84%	16%	

Population information

1,201,855	Total population of Lancashire in 2017
107,398	Total youth population of Lancashire in 2017
12,638	Total black and minority ethnic youth population in Lancashire (2011 census)

² HM Inspectorate's standards are available here: <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/about-our-work/our-standards-and-ratings/>

Detailed findings

1. Organisational delivery

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 and young people.	Requires Improvement
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The Youth Justice Management Board (YJMB) has agreed the priorities of the youth justice plan, which sets out the vision for the service. These are suitably aligned with those of other strategic boards, such as the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and the Community Safety Partnership.

The YJMB has a large membership and includes all statutory and some non-statutory members. Over the past year, efforts have been made to strengthen the board. It has put an induction in place for new members and held an away-day. However, attendance at meetings from some key partners, such as the National Probation Service (NPS), children's social care (CSC), health services and the clinical commissioning group (CCG), has been inconsistent.

The police representatives on the board are the head of Criminal Justice for Lancashire and a chief inspector, both of whom have the appropriate authority to make effective decisions. They understand the board's responsibility for challenging the YOT's performance when required. Children's social care attendance at the YJMB has been inconsistent. This reduces their influence and contribution to partnership working. The YOT is represented across relevant strategic boards, but this is not always at a senior enough level to be able to influence agendas. An example of this is the LSCB, which is attended by a team manager.

For the past year, and during a period of significant service redesign, the YJMB has been without a permanent and consistent chair. This has resulted in the YOT's head of service taking on interim responsibility for setting agendas and chairing meetings. This has had an impact on the level of challenge to the YOT and the partnership regarding quality of practice and service delivery. The executive director of the Growth, Environment & Transport directorate has been chair of the YJMB since March 2019. Board members feel optimistic about this new arrangement and the stability it will bring. The new chair recognises that attendance of YJMB members needs to improve, with more responsibility for improvements and developments shared across the partnership.

Board members have access to detailed data reports and understand performance in the context of national key performance indicators. However, better analysis of more qualitative local information is required if the needs of children and young people are to be fully understood and addressed. An example of this relates to looked after children and understanding their representation in the YOT. A small percentage of children in care are known to the service but, conversely, children in care make up a

Inspection of youth offending services: Lancashire Youth Offending Team

substantial proportion of the YOT caseload. More focused data would allow the board to identify, analyse and put appropriate strategies in place to address such issues.

During the inspection, we saw cases where young children had been made subject to stringent criminal behaviour orders (CBOs). These children were known to multiple services and, in some cases, there were concerns about criminal exploitation. Board members said that action is being taken to decriminalise children across Lancashire if exploitation has been a factor in any offending. The board needs to ensure that this approach is taken equally for young people who are known to the YOT and among those most vulnerable to exploitation.

The YJMB representative for education is the head of the virtual school. The focus has mainly been on looked after children, who are a strong priority for the authority. Reports submitted to the YJMB have shown an improving picture for the young people who become known to the YOT as NEET and who are engaged in education or employment by the end of their order. However, the current proportion of YOT young people who are over 16 and not in education is 16.6%, compared with Lancashire's overall figure of 6.7%. The reasons for such differences in outcomes require further analysis by the board.

The YOT head of service and the youth justice senior manager attend the board, but they only meet with the wider management team on a quarterly basis. We did not feel that this provided a strong enough connection between strategy and practice, especially for a service going through a process of substantial change and where continuous direction and guidance are essential.

The new service structure that was implemented on 1 July 2018 and it is recognised that new processes are still being established and embedded. The view of senior managers and board members is that the restructure is improving the delivery of services. This differed from the views that staff expressed to us and differed too from our observations of the management oversight of work and some areas of practice. In our survey, only 57% of staff stated that they felt that their views were listened to and acted upon, which indicates that communication, consultation and feedback processes are not fully effective. Senior managers need to understand and address the challenges experienced by staff in delivering interventions if they are to achieve their aim of creating a successful and resilient service.

1.2	Staff Staff within the YOT are empowered to deliver a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children and young people	Good
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The staff we met were motivated to deliver high-quality services to children and young people. Unfortunately, the quality of the casework we inspected had been adversely affected by the service restructure. Some cases had been re-allocated to new workers, which affected the interventions delivered to children and young people. At the time of the inspection there were four case manager vacancies in the service. We found caseload numbers to be variable; in some instances, they were too high.

All case managers in the service are qualified in social work or probation. In our survey, most staff stated that they feel skilled and equipped for their role. However,

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we did note that, in some high-risk cases, case managers were allocated work that was not commensurate with their level of skill and experience. For example, a case manager in their assessed first year in employment attended a case conference without the support of their practice manager. We also found that too many case managers did not fully understand children's social care thresholds and legal frameworks, so cases were not always appropriately escalated.

YOT case workers undertake assessments, create plans, produce reports and have meetings with children and young people. The delivery of interventions is supported by YOT workers, who are experienced at effectively engaging children and families. While interventions can be jointly delivered between case managers and YOT workers, planning for this can be time-consuming and case managers did not always have the capacity to do it well. This was evident in our findings on post-court work, where we assessed that planning would be strengthened if it was better coordinated and sequenced.

Staff said that working across the large geographical area is a significant challenge. Location is not always considered when work is allocated. This can increase the amount of time spent travelling, and affects workers' capacity to be flexible and responsive to the needs of children and young people. Other concerns about the new working model related to feeling isolated and having less access to managers. Staff and managers feel that opportunities for informal supervision and learning have been lost.

There is an effective staff induction in place and the appraisal process is used routinely. Staff are positive about the quality of supervision they receive. However, inspectors judged that, in domain two casework, management oversight was effective in only 60% of cases. It was slightly better in out-of-court work. Case planning meetings have recently been introduced. These take place for all new cases and should allow for additional oversight of work, support and direction for staff from the outset.

The YOT advanced practitioner has developed a training matrix for the service. It sequences training according to priority for new staff members and also includes service-wide training. Staff can undertake the Youth Justice Effective Practice Certificate (YJEPC) and work towards a social work qualification. Staff also have access to training provided by the LSCB and they have received restorative justice training from the police.

Managers stated that performance management systems within the council were robust. Where formal performance processes are required, managers receive good support from their human resources department. We saw evidence of capability processes being used effectively.

Managers recognise exceptional work done by staff and gave examples of circumstances where staff had received letters of recognition from senior management. Good news stories are shared through newsletters and through team briefings at service meetings.

It was evident that the period of restructure had affected staff, but they are motivated and optimistic that things will improve as new ways of working become embedded. Staff and managers were positive about the new roles that had been created in the structure, such as the victim worker post, the advanced practitioner and the education lead. We could see, even at an early stage, the impact that these new roles were having on driving improvements in their specific areas.

1.3	Partnerships and services A comprehensive range of high-quality services is in place, enabling personalised and responsive provision for all children and young people.	Requires Improvement
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The YOT collates and analyses data on offending to understand patterns and trends across the localities. This helped it, for example, to identify that there was a disproportionate number of girls in the youth justice system. The YOT has worked effectively to address this. The service has assessed for any over-representation black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) children and young people and no concerns have been identified.

The local authority does not have a current youth joint strategic needs assessment (JSNA) to inform the commissioning of services, and the YOT does not have a current analysis of the desistance needs of children and young people. This makes it difficult to assess the impact of interventions or ensure that the services in place meet the specific needs of children and young people. We found too many cases where interventions did not involve the right services to support community integration, particularly when YOT interventions were coming to an end.

In most cases, staff felt the right services were available to support effective work with children and young people. We agreed with this, but felt that services and interventions are not always coordinated well enough to achieve the best outcomes. For example, communication between case workers and education partners is not always sufficiently timely, detailed or accurate to ensure that the needs of children and young people are met. In terms of education, children and young people are encouraged to identify and celebrate the personal and social skills they are gaining through the Assessment and Qualification Alliance (AQA) certificate programme. However, they have not always had access to low-level (entry and level 1) accredited qualifications to fully support their future education and employment aspirations.

The YOT has good health provision. There are six child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) workers, access to substance misuse services, speech and language therapists and a safeguarding nurse. The safeguarding nurse's role is to undertake a comprehensive health assessment for all children and young people entering the service. We found that screenings were routinely undertaken but, in many cases, despite needs being identified, children did not always then get the support and interventions they needed.

Young Addaction is a substance misuse service which is commissioned by public health. In the past six months only eight referrals have been made to the service. The reason for these low referral numbers is not understood and requires analysis to

address any barriers. The commissioned provision for speech and language therapist (SALT) support for the service is currently 20 hours per month. Therapists only offer advice; they do not deliver any services to children and young people. National research identifies strong links between speech, language and communication difficulties and offending and the need in Lancashire also reflects this. As such, the current provision is not sufficient.

Lancashire police have introduced early action teams across the force area. These teams are made up of police officers and police staff, who are accountable to a divisional chief inspector. The purpose of these teams is to problem-solve community issues, including anti-social behaviour. Children who are at risk of becoming involved in crime have access to, and are often referred to, early-action teams before offending. YOT police officers are highly regarded members of the YOT team. They assist case managers through intelligence-sharing, actively participate in high-risk panel meetings and play a key role in the out-of-court disposal panel.

In the statutory cases we inspected, we found that victims were not considered often enough and that this reduced the overall effectiveness of risk management work. A recently appointed victim worker has reviewed processes and created strategies to raise the profile of victim work. Since the start of this year, there has been evidence of a marked improvement in services to victims, including their increased involvement in referral order panels and restorative justice conferences.

The Children and Family Wellbeing Service provides a wide range of services to meet local need. Despite this, we found the number of referrals from the YOT to children's social care early help to be very low. YOT staff report positive working relationships with social workers; however, we found that access to statutory children's services was not consistent and that thresholds were not always applied. This meant that, for some children and young people, YOT plans and interventions did not adequately address the underlying issues linked to offending and their safety and their wellbeing was not always prioritised. YOT staff can refer children and young people to the children's social care exploitation team, and this includes cases of criminal exploitation. Effective partnership work between the YOT and residential staff has seen a reduction in looked after children and young people being convicted for offences committed in care placements.

Child Action North West is currently commissioned to deliver most triage interventions on behalf of the YOT. Because of this, most of out-of-court interventions we inspected in Lancashire were youth cautions and youth conditional cautions. From September 2019, the YOT will deliver triage interventions, and this will allow for greater oversight of the quality of all diversion work and its impact.

As part of the service redesign, the YOT has developed a prevention service. Referrals can be received from schools, the police, children's social care and other services. There was a lack of clarity about the circumstances in which a child would be referred to the police early help team, the children's social care early help team or the YOT prevention service. Clear referral pathways must be established and shared with staff and the partnership if children and young people are to receive the most suitable support from the right service.

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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 and young people.	Requires Improvement
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There is an extensive range of up-to-date policies and guidance that are accessible and understood by those to whom they apply. Staff know how to access the right services from partners and providers.

Staff are working with young people in a variety of community settings that are appropriate for the needs of children and young people and are accessible to them. Venues are suitable, but as there is no central office, there is no duty worker on site to see a young person if they present without an appointment. Or, for example, if a young person is late for an appointment at one location, they may not be seen if the worker needs to be at different venue for another meeting.

Information-sharing is promoted by YOT staff having access to children's social care systems. Workers use laptops and smartphones to assist them in agile working, and the Careworks recording system is reliable. YOT seconded police officers can input directly into the YOT case management system. There is a lack of clarity regarding the inputting of health data onto the Careworks system and we saw limited recorded evidence of the health work being delivered.

There is an absence of clear, reliable data that is used to monitor service delivery and evaluate impact. During fieldwork, the YOT had difficulties in providing data that was requested by the inspection team about out-of-court work. It was apparent that this information is not routinely used to understand the throughput and effectiveness of work. The management team recognises that the YOT needs to focus more on the use of data to understand performance and drive improvements. The recently appointed performance, development and reviewing officer will work with the management team to focus on improving datasets and reports.

The YOT undertakes regular case audits. However, multi-agency auditing is underdeveloped and learning from the findings of audits has not yet been fully implemented.

Self-assessments are used to obtain the views and perspectives of children and young people. There is evidence that these have been analysed, but they have not been used to influence service delivery.

Training and events linked to the LSCB are open to YOT staff. The YOT has processes for reporting any serious incidents and learning from them. We found that there was limited awareness of HMI Probation's thematic inspection reports, and findings have not been used to inform developments such as new out-of-court processes.

The YOT has an established working relationship with the University of Central Lancashire. A PhD student has been assisting the team in understanding the profiles and needs of the children and young people they work with. This is being further developed with research into the effectiveness of trauma-informed practice with YOT young people. The YOT will use the findings of the current research to consider all aspects of service delivery to ensure it is sensitive to the needs of children and young people.

Summary – Organisational delivery

Strengths:

- There is a newly appointed management board chair who is committed to improving processes and governance.
- The management board includes a range of statutory and non-statutory members.
- The YOT has a very well-resourced health and wellbeing team.
- There is a committed and motivated workforce delivering services to children and young people.

Areas for improvement:

- The management board needs more nuanced local data to understand the profile and needs of children and young people.
- Staff do not feel that the management team always considers their views, particularly in relation to the impact of the new structure on their workload, time and support.
- Management oversight needs to be effective to maintain the quality and standard of work delivered to children and young people.
- Work with children’s social care is not always integrated and consequently not all children benefit from joint planning and intervention.

2. Court disposals

Work with children and young people sentenced by the courts will be more effective if it is well targeted, planned and implemented. In this inspection, we looked at a sample of 50 of these 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 or young person and their parents/carers.	Good
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In most cases we found that analysis of offending behaviour was sufficient, including analysis of the child or young person’s attitudes towards and motivation for their offending. Most assessments considered the diversity and wider familial and social context of children and young people, and workers used information held by other agencies to enhance their understanding and inform assessments. In 86% of cases, we found that consideration had been given to identifying the strengths and positive factors of children and young people. In just under two-thirds of cases, the

assessment analysed the key barriers that might prevent the child or young person from engaging with their court order.

In 88% of cases, sufficient attention was given to understanding the child or young person's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change, and their likelihood of engaging with the court disposal. In most cases, the child or young person and their parents/carers were meaningfully involved in their assessment, and their views were considered.

In almost all cases there was a clear, written record of the assessment of desistance factors. The factors identified as most significant to desistance were lifestyle, education, substance misuse and living arrangements. We found that, in 30% of cases, there was no assessment of the child or young person's desistance within an appropriate period following the start of the sentence or release on licence. Overall, we were satisfied that in 84% of cases the assessment sufficiently analysed how to support the child or young person's desistance.

Of the cases inspected, 28% of the children and young people had been subject to a child protection plan or Section 47 enquiry during their sentence. In 11 of the 50 cases we inspected, we found that risks to the safety and wellbeing of the child or young person had not been assessed well enough. Three of these cases related to children who were looked after by the local authority. Assessments did not always draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including other assessments, and agencies were not always appropriately involved. We disagreed with the assessment of safety and wellbeing in 16% of cases, as the level of concern had been underestimated. In 34% of cases, there had not been a sufficient assessment of safety and wellbeing following the start of sentence or release on licence. Overall, assessments sufficiently analysed how to keep the child or young person safe in just under three-quarters of cases.

In 92% of cases, we agreed with assessed risk of harm levels. Assessments drew sufficiently on available sources of information, including past behaviour and convictions, and involved other agencies appropriately. Equally, controls and interventions to manage and minimise the risk of harm presented by the child or young person were generally considered. There was no sufficient and timely assessment of risk of harm to others following the start of sentence or release on licence in 14 of the 50 cases inspected.

Assessment gave sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victim/s, and opportunities for restorative justice in only 64% of cases. This meant that, in too many cases, opportunities for direct reparation and restorative justice were missed. The cases we inspected pre-dated the recruitment of the YOT victim worker, and our findings in respect of victim work do not reflect current processes, which are much improved.

The following is an example of good practice:

"The case manager and YOT worker engaged the young person and family shortly after sentencing to explain the Youth Rehabilitation Order requirements and the conditions of a CBO that had been put in place. The assessment considered family dynamics and his older brother's prior involvement with the YOT. This assessment

looks at the young person holistically. Their diversity needs are considered, as are the presenting factors in relation to risk of harm to himself and to others”.

2.2	Planning Planning is well-informed, holistic and personalised, actively involving the child or young person and their parents/carers	Requires Improvement
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We assessed planning for the delivery of effective interventions to children and young people as requiring improvement. Planning to support desistance was stronger than planning to promote the safety and wellbeing of children and the safety of other people.

Overall, we found that, in too many cases, planning was not personalised and responsive to the specific needs of children and young people. Planning did not consistently capture desistance factors that had been identified in assessments. Positive factors that had been identified were not always reflected in planning. Only 60% of the plans inspected sought to reinforce and build on protective factors identified in assessments. We found that plans took sufficient account of the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child or young person in 68% of cases.

In just under three-quarters of cases, planning focused on the safety and wellbeing of the child or young person and set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote their safety and wellbeing. Not all cases involved other agencies appropriately, which meant that opportunities to deliver holistic multi-agency interventions were not properly coordinated. We found that YOT plans did not always align with other plans (such as child protection or care plans) about the child or young person. This is particularly significant when considering the number of cases we inspected where children and young people were involved with children’s social care and concerns about their vulnerability were high.

Issues relating to victims were considered in just over half of the plans we inspected. This meant that the effectiveness of planning to reduce any risk of harm to others was compromised. We found that contingency planning needs to be developed, particularly in relation to risk of harm to others, as we identified that it had been done well enough in less than half of the cases we inspected. The lives of children and young people can change very quickly and it is important that planning identifies, wherever possible, what changes might occur and what action will be taken. Effective contingency planning is essential if interventions are to be responsive rather than reactive.

An inspector noted:

“One of the main risks was to the young person’s grandparents, who they frequently went to live with. Planning could have involved exploring that relationship and involved some contingency regarding home visits to assess the family dynamics. The main objectives set out in the plan involved attending all appointments and not committing any further offences, which did not display any creativity or responsibility to the specific young person and the presenting risks”.

2.3	Implementation and delivery High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging and assisting the child or young person.	Good
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In most cases, work delivered by YOT staff focused on developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child or young person and their parents/carers. Staff encouraged and enabled compliance with the work of the YOT through the relationships they formed and consideration they gave to diversity factors and the personal circumstances of children.

In 66% of cases we inspected, we found sufficient attention was given to developing the protective factors in the lives of children and young people. However, we did not see adequate evidence of planning for the end of YOT interventions. Exit strategies were not developed, and much-needed on-going support was not always in place. This meant that opportunities to assist children and young people to access universal services that would promote community integration were sometimes missed. An example of this relates to education. Children and young people have been encouraged to identify and celebrate the personal and social skills they are gaining through the AQA certificate programme, which is in place via the YOT. However, they have not had access to low-level (entry and level 1) accredited qualifications to fully support their future education and employment aspirations.

In 82% of cases, enforcement action was taken when it was appropriate. However, it was not always clear if young people were being offered the number of appointments that had been set out in their plan. An example of this was a case where a young person was only offered half the amount of appointments that were planned. Home visits were done and this seemed to be a response to his difficulties in engaging. There were sessions where offending was discussed, but there was no consistency or follow-up. The two sessions to address his education needs were not enough and had no impact.

In 72% of the cases, there was sufficient delivery of interventions designed to keep children safe. Where deficits were identified, these were mainly due to a lack of joint working or shared understanding of specific safeguarding issues. In most relevant cases, we found that other agencies were appropriately involved in delivering interventions. We found that this could have been better coordinated to ensure that interventions were prioritised and sequenced to achieve the best outcomes.

Managing risk of harm was done less well. In only 66% of cases, we found that the services sufficiently managed any risk of harm to others. In just over half of relevant cases, interventions gave sufficient attention to the protection of actual and potential victims. This was significant to our overall assessment of the quality of risk management work. In three-quarters of cases, other agencies were appropriately involved in managing risk of harm.

The following is an example of good practice:

"The young person was interested in music, so the case manager tailored some of the interventions to address his problematic behaviour, specifically to suit him. The young person has a keen interest in grime music. He was encouraged to write a

"reparation rap" to increase his awareness of the impact of his offending on the victim. Other intervention sessions were made into rhyming and card games to hold his interest".

2.4	Reviewing Reviewing of progress is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child or young person and their parents/carers.	Requires Improvement
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We found that, when reviews were undertaken, adequate attention was given to re-evaluating strengths and protective factors. The process of reviewing provides an opportunity for workers to reflect with the young person on their achievements or to understand any new challenges or barriers that might be affecting their engagement or progress. We found that, in just over two-thirds of cases, the child or young person and their parents/carers were meaningfully involved in reviewing. The reviews considered motivation, engagement levels and any relevant barriers in just under three-quarters of cases.

Circumstances can change quickly and a swift and timely response is required if interventions are to be effective. We found that assessments of safety and wellbeing were not reviewed when they should have been and when risks were escalating. In one case an inspector noted: *" There were several changes in circumstances that should have led to a review in this case, including a new order being imposed, periods of homelessness, increased risk levels, becoming looked after and going missing. None of these led to a review taking place".*

The reviewing process is most effective when there is input from other agencies, as this ensures that the professional network has a shared understanding of the child or young person's circumstances and any plan of work being undertaken with them. We found that reviews of safety and wellbeing were informed by input from other relevant agencies in only 67% of cases. We did not see a written review of safety and wellbeing completed on all cases. When reviews were completed, they did not always lead to the necessary adjustments to promote safety and wellbeing in the on-going plan of work. Overall, we assessed that reviewing focused sufficiently on keeping the child or young person safe in 64% of cases.

The picture in relation to the management of risk of harm to others was similar. Work in this area was of a good enough standard in 67% of cases. Information-sharing with the police was effective in supporting risk management work, and the attendance of the police at the YOT high-risk panel also meant that up-to-date information was shared.

The following is an example of good practice:

" There is clear reviewing activity throughout the intervention. When the young person makes good progress, and completes the actions on their Referral Order contract, a formal review of progress is undertaken and the case manager makes an application for early revocation, which is granted".

Summary – Court disposals

Inspection of youth offending services: Lancashire Youth Offending Team

Strengths:

- Assessments are outstanding in relation to desistance and risk of harm to others.
- Workers form positive working relationships with children and young people.
- Assessments consider diversity factors and the personal circumstances of children and young people.
- The implementation and delivery of services to support the safety of the children and young people are good.

Areas for improvement:

- Staff do not always coordinate the involvement of other organisations in work relating to a child's safety and wellbeing and their risk of harm to others.
- Service delivery does not consistently build on the child or young person's strengths and enhance protective factors.
- Reviews do not lead to required changes being made in the management of cases.
- Service delivery does not routinely promote opportunities for community integration and post-supervision support.

3. Out-of-court disposals

Work with children and young people receiving out-of-court disposals will be more effective if it is well targeted, planned and implemented. In our inspection, we looked at a sample of thirty-two such 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 or young person and their parents/carers.	Good
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There was sufficient analysis of offending behaviour, including the child or young person's acknowledgement of responsibility, attitudes towards and motivation for their offending, in 81% of cases. Assessments considered the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child or young person, using information held by other agencies in the majority of cases. Assessments focused on the child or young person's strengths and protective factors and analysed the key barriers that might prevent them from engaging with interventions. Staff also considered levels of maturity, capacity and motivation to work with the YOT to address factors linked to offending. Assessments were strengthened by the involvement of children and young people and parents/carers. Overall, we found that assessments sufficiently analysed how to support the child or young person's desistance in over three-quarters of cases.

In relation to assessment of desistance, an inspector noted the following.

"The case manager completed the assessment prior to the out-of-court disposal panel meeting. The assessment involved the young person and his mother to identify his goals for the future and his attitude towards the offence was explored. The

assessment also considered trauma the young person had experienced in his early years when he witnessed domestic abuse within the home”.

In just over two-thirds of cases, assessments clearly identified and analysed risks to the child or young person’s safety and wellbeing. In most cases, available sources of information from other agencies informed assessments. Risks to the child or young person’s safety and wellbeing were not consistently considered. In 69% of cases, we agreed with the assessed level of safety and wellbeing. In those cases where we disagreed with the assessment, concerns had been underestimated.

Assessments of risk of harm drew sufficiently on available sources of information, including any other assessments that had been completed, and other evidence of the child or young person’s behaviour in just under two-thirds of cases. We agreed with the case manager’s assessment of risk of harm in 74% of cases. However, in some cases, we felt that the risk level had been assessed as too high.

An inspector noted the following in relation to assessments of risk:

“The assessment of risk of harm to others was too high. There was no evidence of a behavioural history or present concerns to support the young person posing a medium risk of serious harm to others; the information available suggested risk to the young person rather than from them”.

3.2	Planning Planning is well-informed, holistic and personalised, actively involving the child or young person and their parents/carers.	Outstanding
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Planning for out-of-court disposals was outstanding in relation to desistance, safety and wellbeing and risk of harm to others. Plans set out the services most likely to support desistance, paying sufficient attention to the available timescales and the sequencing of interventions in 81% of cases. Diversity factors and the specific needs of children and young people were considered well in planning. Sufficient account of the child or young person’s levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change were taken into account and plans considered how these could be developed. However, as with post-court work, we found that planning did not sufficiently focus on developing and reinforcing the positive factors and strengths of children and young people.

Planning considered the needs and wishes of the victim/s to a greater degree in out-of-court work than in post-court work. We saw issues relating to victims addressed in almost all relevant cases. Overall, this meant that the quality of plans to manage risk were of a high standard.

The child or young person and their parents/carers were meaningfully involved in planning, and their views were taken into account in 84% of cases.

Planning promoted the safety and wellbeing of the child or young person, sufficiently addressing risks in 83% of cases. In almost all relevant cases, planning involved other agencies where appropriate, and there was sufficient alignment with other plans (e.g. child protection or care plans) about the child or young person. As with statutory casework, planning included necessary contingency arrangements in only half of the cases inspected.

An example of good practice:

“There is ongoing planning within partner agencies to support the young person and his mother. For example, specialist education support has been provided and the young person is engaging. Mental health needs are being supported by CAMHS. Planning and interventions within the YCC seek to address the offending factors and raise the awareness of the young person in relation to the dangers and consequences of carrying knives”.

3.3	Implementation and delivery High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging and assisting the child or young person.	Outstanding
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An effective working relationship with the child or young person and their parents/carers was developed and maintained in almost every inspected case. There was also strong evidence that diversity factors had been considered and attention had been paid to understanding the circumstances and context of children and young people.

Caseworkers gave sufficient attention to sequencing interventions to make sure they could be delivered within available timescales in over three-quarters of cases. In almost every case, attention was given to encouraging and enabling the child or young person’s compliance with the work of the YOT.

Safety and wellbeing was prioritised in almost all cases, and the involvement of other organisations in keeping the child or young person safe was well-coordinated in all but one relevant case.

Attention was given to protecting actual and potential victims in all but two relevant cases and interventions delivered were sufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm in almost all cases.

The following is an example of good practice:

“The necessary work to address substance misuse, victim concerns, consequential thinking and peer influences was delivered. Most positively, a restorative justice approach was taken, and a conference between the young person and the victim of the burglary took place, which appeared to have had a positive impact on the young person”.

3.4	Joint working Joint working with the police supports the delivery of high-quality, personalised and coordinated services.	Outstanding
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Lancashire YOT delivers a low number of Community Resolution interventions, as most of this work is currently delivered by Child Action North West. Therefore, these interventions did not form part of the inspection. We looked mainly at interventions attached to youth cautions and youth conditional cautions. These were the disposals mainly put in place at the out-of-court decision-making panel. All out-of-court work

will be delivered by the YOT from September 2019, which means that all relevant children and young people will benefit from an assessment of need and a targeted bespoke intervention.

In most cases, the YOT makes a positive contribution to determining the disposal imposed at the out-of-court decision-making panel. Recommendations consider the degree of the child or young person's understanding of the offence and their acknowledgement of responsibility. The YOT's recommendations for out-of-court disposal outcomes, conditions and interventions were appropriate and proportionate in 87% of cases.

In the majority of cases, staff ensured that the child or young person, and their parents/carers, understood the implications of receiving an out-of-court disposal.

In all but three cases, the information provided to inform decision-making was timely and the rationale for joint disposal decisions was appropriate and clearly recorded. Communication with the police was done well. In most cases, we noted that the YOT informed the police of progress and outcomes in a sufficient and timely manner. We assessed that the YOT worked effectively with the police in implementing the out-of-court disposal in 86% of cases.

Summary – Out-of-court disposals

Strengths:

- Assessments of desistance are outstanding
- Assessments consider the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child or young person.
- Staff involve the child or young person and their parents or carers in the assessment, and take their views into account.
- Planning of interventions to support factors related to desistance, safety and wellbeing and risk to others is outstanding.
- Interventions delivered give sufficient attention to the protection of actual and potential victims.
- YOT staff work effectively with the police in the implementation of out-of-court disposals.

Areas for improvement:

- Planning does not include necessary contingency arrangements to manage risks that have been identified.
- The risk of harm that children and young people pose to others is sometimes over-estimated.
- Management oversight is not consistent and effective in all cases.

Annex 1 – Methodology

The inspection methodology is summarised below, linked to the three domains within our standards framework. Our focus was on obtaining evidence against the standards, key questions and prompts within the framework.

Domain one: organisational delivery

The youth offending service submitted evidence in advance and the Chief Executive 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 and young people who have offended are improved?
- What are your priorities for further improving these arrangements?

During the main fieldwork phase, we surveyed 20 individual case managers, asking them about their experiences of training, development, management supervision and leadership. The second fieldwork week is the joint element of the inspection. HMI Probation was joined by colleague inspectors from the police, and health, social care and education services. We explored the lines of enquiry that emerged from the case inspections. Various meetings and focus groups were then held, allowing us to triangulate evidence and information. In total, we conducted 46.

Domain two: court disposals

We completed case assessments over a one-week period, examining case files and interviewing case managers. 60% of the cases selected were those of children and young people who had received court disposals six to nine months earlier, enabling us to examine work in relation to assessing, planning, implementing and reviewing. Where necessary, interviews with other people significantly involved in the case also took place. In some individual cases, further enquiries were made during the second fieldwork week by colleague inspectors from the police, and health, social care education services.

We examined 50 post-court cases. The sample size was set to achieve a confidence level of 80% (with a margin of error of 5), and we ensured that the ratios in relation to gender, sentence or disposal type, risk of serious harm, and risk to safety and wellbeing classifications matched those in the eligible population.

Domain three: out-of-court disposals

We completed case assessments over a one-week period, examining case files and interviewing case managers. 40% of cases selected were those of children and young people who had received out-of-court disposals three to five months earlier. This enabled us to examine work in relation to assessing, planning, implementing and joint working. Where necessary, interviews with other people significantly involved in the case also took place. In some individual cases, further enquiries were made during the second fieldwork week by colleague inspectors from the police, and health, social care and education services.

We examined 32 out-of-court disposals. The sample size was set to achieve a confidence level of 80% (with a margin of error of 5), and we ensured that the ratios in relation to gender, sentence or disposal type, risk of serious harm, and risk to safety and wellbeing classifications matched those in the eligible population.

Annex 2 – Inspection results

1. Organisational delivery

Standards and key questions	Ratings
<p>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 and young people.</p>	Requires Improvement
<p>1.1.1. Is there a clear local vision and strategy for the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children and young people?</p>	
<p>1.1.2. Do the partnership arrangements actively support effective service delivery?</p>	
<p>1.1.3. Does the leadership of the YOT support effective service delivery?</p>	
<p>1.2. Staff Staff within the YOT are empowered to deliver a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children and young people.</p>	Good
<p>1.2.1. Do staffing and workload levels support the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children and young people?</p>	
<p>1.2.2. Do the skills of YOT staff support the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children and young people?</p>	
<p>1.2.3. Does the oversight of work support high-quality delivery and professional development?</p>	
<p>1.2.4. Are arrangements for learning and development comprehensive and responsive?</p>	
<p>1.3. Partnerships and services A comprehensive range of high-quality services is in place, enabling personalised and responsive provision for all children and young people.</p>	Requires Improvement
<p>1.3.1. Is there a sufficiently comprehensive and up to date analysis of the profile of children and young people, to ensure that the YOT can deliver well targeted services?</p>	
<p>1.3.2. Does the YOT partnership have access to the volume, range and quality of services and interventions to meet the needs of all children and young people?</p>	
<p>1.3.3. Are arrangements with statutory partners, providers and other agencies established, maintained and used effectively to deliver high-quality services?</p>	
<p>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 and young people.</p>	Requires Improvement
<p>1.4.1. Are the necessary policies and guidance in place to enable staff to deliver a quality service, meeting the needs of all children and young people?</p>	

1.4.2.	Does the YOT's delivery environment(s) meet the needs of all children and young people and enable staff to deliver a quality service?
1.4.3.	Do the information and communication technology (ICT) systems enable staff to deliver a quality service, meeting the needs of all children and young people?
1.4.4.	Is analysis, evidence and learning used effectively to drive improvement?

2. Court disposals

Standards and key questions	% yes	Ratings
2.1. Assessment Assessment is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child or young person and their parents/carers.		Rating: Good
2.1.1. Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child or young person's desistance?	84%	
2.1.2. Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child or young person safe?	74%	
2.1.3. Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	84%	
2.2. Planning Planning is well-informed, holistic and personalised, actively involving the child or young person and their parents/carers.		Rating: Requires Improvement
2.2.1. Does planning focus sufficiently on supporting the child or young person's desistance?	72%	
2.2.2. Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child or young person safe?	67%	
2.2.3. Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	61%	
2.3. Implementation and delivery High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging and assisting the child or young person.		Rating: Good
2.3.1. Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the child or young person's desistance?	68%	
2.3.2. Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of the child or young person?	72%	
2.3.3. Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?	66%	

Standards and key questions	% yes	Ratings
2.4. Reviewing Reviewing of progress is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child or young person and their parents/carers.		Rating: Requires Improvement
2.4.1. Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the child or young person's desistance?	70%	
2.4.2. Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child or young person safe?	64%	
2.4.3. Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	67%	

3. Out-of-court disposals

Standards and key questions	% yes	Ratings
3.1. Assessment Assessment is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child or young person and their parents/carers.		Rating: Good
3.1.1. Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child or young person's desistance?	81%	
3.1.2. Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child or young person safe?	69%	
3.1.3. Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	71%	
3.2. Planning Planning is well-informed, holistic and personalised, actively involving the child or young person and their parents/carers.		Rating: Good
3.2.1. Does planning focus on supporting the child or young person's desistance?	84%	
3.2.2. Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child or young person safe?	83%	
3.2.3. Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	81%	
3.3. Implementation and delivery High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging and assisting the child or young person.		Rating: Outstanding
3.3.1. Does service delivery support the child or young person's desistance?	91%	
3.3.2. Does service delivery effectively support the safety of the child or young person?	91%	

Standards and key questions	% yes	Ratings
3.3.3. Does service delivery effectively support the safety of other people?	94%	
3.4. Joint working Joint working with the police supports the delivery of high-quality, personalised and coordinated services.		Rating: Outstanding
3.4.1. Are the YOT's recommendations sufficiently well-informed, analytical and personalised to the child or young person, supporting joint decision-making?	87%	
3.4.2. Does the YOT work effectively with the police in implementing the out-of-court disposal?	86%	

Annex 3 – Glossary

AssetPlus Asset+	Assessment and planning framework tool developed by the Youth Justice Board for work with children and young people who have offended, or are at risk of offending, that reflects current research and understanding of what works with children.
Community resolution	Used in low-level, often first-time, offences where there is informal agreement, often also involving the victim, about how the offence should be resolved. Community resolution is generic term. In practice, many different local terms are used to mean the same thing.
Court disposals	The sentence imposed by the court. Examples of youth court disposals are referral orders, youth rehabilitation orders and detention and training orders.
CP	Child Protection: Work to make sure that all reasonable action has been taken to keep to a minimum the risk of a child experiencing significant harm.
Section 47 Enquiry	A Section 47 Enquiry is initiated by children's social care to decide whether and what type of action is required to safeguard and promote the welfare of a child who is suspected of, or likely to be, suffering significant harm.
CSE and CE	Child sexual exploitation is a type of child abuse that occurs when a child or young person is encouraged, forced or manipulated to take part in sexual activity for something in return, for example presents, drugs, alcohol or emotional attention. Criminal exploitation occurs when children and young people are exploited, forced or coerced into committing crimes.
Desistance	The cessation of offending or other antisocial behaviour.
Enforcement	Action taken by a case manager in response to a child or young person's failure to comply with the actions specified as part of a community sentence or licence. Enforcement can be punitive or motivational.
ETE	Education, training and employment: work to improve learning, and to increase future employment prospects.
HMIP	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation.
NEET	Children or young people not in any form of full or part-time education, training or employment.

Out-of-court disposal	The resolution of a normally low-level offence, where it is not in the public interest to prosecute, through a community resolution, youth caution or youth conditional caution.
Personalised	A personalised approach is one in which services are tailored to meet the needs of individuals, giving people as much choice and control as possible over the support they receive. We use this term to include diversity factors.
Risk of Serious Harm	Risk of Serious Harm (ROSH) is a term used in AssetPlus. All cases are classified as presenting either a low, medium, high or very high risk of serious harm to others. HMI Probation uses this term when referring to the classification system, but uses the broader term risk of harm when referring to the analysis that should take place in order to determine the classification level. This helps to clarify the distinction between the probability of an event occurring and the impact/severity of the event. The term Risk of Serious Harm only incorporates 'serious' impact, whereas using 'risk of harm' enables the necessary attention to be given to those young offenders for whom lower impact/severity harmful behaviour is probable.
Safeguarding	Safeguarding is a wider term than child protection. It involves promoting a child or young person's health and development and ensuring that their overall welfare needs are met.
Safety and wellbeing	AssetPlus replaced the assessment of vulnerability with a holistic outlook of a child or young person's safety and wellbeing concerns. It is defined as "...those outcomes where the young person's safety and well-being may be compromised through their own behaviour, personal circumstances or because of the acts/omissions of others" (<i>AssetPlus Guidance</i> , 2016).
YC	Youth caution: a caution accepted by a child following admission to an offence where it is not considered to be in the public interest to prosecute the offender.
YCC	Youth conditional caution: as for a youth caution, but with conditions attached that the child is required to comply with for up to the next three months. Non-compliance may result in the child being prosecuted for the original offence.
YOT/YOS	Youth Offending Team, is the term used in the <i>Crime and Disorder Act 1998</i> to describe a multi-agency team that aims to reduce youth offending. YOTs are known locally by many titles, such as youth justice service (YJS), youth offending service (YOS), and other generic titles that may illustrate

	their wider role in the local area in delivering services for children.
YOT management board	The YOT management board holds the YOT to account to ensure it achieves the primary aim of preventing offending by children and young people.