



HM Inspectorate
of Probation

Youth justice inspections

Rules and guidance

Domain one and work with victims

v5.9 March 2025

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Introduction

We want to ensure that the quality of delivery to children and victims is at the forefront of our inspections, enabling us to report on work to achieve positive change and keep children and communities safe. We see high-quality delivery as a product of effective governance and leadership, the right staffing arrangements and strong partnerships and services.

Our youth justice inspection standards are split into two domains. They are structured separately to allow us to judge and rate specific areas of work. There is a separate standard for work with victims.

The inspection standards apply to all youth justice services. In our youth justice service (YJS) inspection programme¹ there are two types of inspection.

In an Inspection of Youth Justice Services, we inspect and rate the service against all of these standards.

In an Inspection of Youth Justice Work with Children and Victims, we inspect and rate the service against the domain two and victims' standards; and we examine the domain one standards through the lens of the impact on the work with children and victims.

The Case Assessment Rules and Guidance (CARaG)¹ determine our judgements for domain two and victim case inspections and the Rules and Guidance (RaG) determine our judgements for the qualitative key question in the victims' standard and domain one.

We recognise the contextual, local and systemic issues that can affect a YJS's ability to deliver its work, such as the engagement and role of partner agencies in providing services. We pay attention to these and other contextual and systemic issues and set out the reasons for shortfalls in our inspection report. We target and tailor recommendations to help providers make the necessary improvements. But our judgements and ratings must always reflect the quality of delivery, irrespective of the underlying reasons and rationale.

Inspecting equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI)

Throughout our standards framework we expect YJSs to take a personalised approach to the delivery of all work with children, and to have organisational arrangements in place that support this approach. A personalised approach is one in which services are tailored to meet individuals' needs, giving children as much choice and control as possible over the support they receive.

We split our definition of a personalised approach into two parts. First, we consider diversity factors, which we define as those protected characteristics set out in the *Equality Act 2010*. These are race, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage or civil partnership and religion or belief.

Separate to this, we consider a child's personal circumstances and how well the YJS meets any needs arising from these. For example, a child who attends college or is a carer might need flexible supervision arrangements.

We will report on diversity in a separate section of our YJS inspection reports. Our aim is to describe how well the YJS meets the requirements of the public sector equality duty (domain one) and how well it meets the diversity needs of children, victims and staff (domain two and the victims' standard). This will be informed by our inspection of individual cases under domain two and the victims' standard.

¹ More information about the Youth Justice inspection programme and the CARaG are available on our website: [Youth Justice Services – HM Inspectorate of Probation](#)

How to use the domain one rules and guidance

The rules and guidance for domain one and the victims' standard explain how evidence should be assessed and how judgements should be formed against key questions and prompts for each standard. The purpose of the guidance is to provide advice, clarity and a consistent understanding of the required expectations. It outlines approaches that set high standards to assess quality.

Inspectors should read the guidance, evidence and judgement for each prompt. The guidance describes in detail what it is that inspectors are looking for.

The evidence sources listed are provided as indicators of where evidence for that prompt may be found. The evidence lists are neither exhaustive nor prescriptive; evidence that is not listed may also be used and it is not expected that all of the evidence listed will always be useful or required. The evidence lists are there to guide but not restrict inspectors. The showcase slot, where the YJS highlights effective practice against our standards for inspecting work with children, may provide evidence for any of the prompts, depending on what the YJS chooses to showcase.

The judgement guides the inspector in answering yes or no to the prompt, based on all of the evidence for that prompt.

Decision rules and decision guidance

For standards on Governance and Leadership (1.1) and Partnerships and Services (1.3), there are significant links at standard level to what we see in the delivery of work with children. To ensure those links are recognised through our standards framework the following decision rules and guidance apply. Decision rules are non-negotiable. Decision guidance should be followed other than in defensible and evidence-based circumstances.

Standard 1.1 Leadership

DECISION RULE – An 'Outstanding' rating requires that the qualitative evidence is judged as 'Outstanding', and all domain two ratings are 'Good' or 'Outstanding'.

DECISION GUIDANCE – A 'Good' rating requires that the qualitative evidence is judged as 'Good', usually with at least two 'Good' or 'Outstanding' domain two ratings and no 'Inadequate' ratings.

DECISION GUIDANCE – A 'Requires Improvement' rating requires that the qualitative evidence is judged as 'Requires Improvement', usually with at least two 'Good' or 'Requires improvement' domain two ratings.

DECISION GUIDANCE – An 'Inadequate' rating requires that the qualitative evidence is judged as 'Inadequate', usually with at least two 'Requires improvement' or 'Inadequate' domain two ratings.

Standard 1.3 Partnerships and services

DECISION RULE – An 'Outstanding' rating requires that the qualitative evidence is judged as 'Outstanding' and the rating for 2.3 is 'Outstanding'.

DECISION GUIDANCE – A 'Good' rating requires that the qualitative evidence is judged as 'Good', usually with a 2.3 rating of 'Good' or 'Requires Improvement'.

DECISION GUIDANCE – A 'Requires improvement' rating requires that the qualitative evidence is judged as 'Requires Improvement', usually with a 2.3 rating of 'Good', 'Requires improvement' or 'Inadequate'.

DECISION GUIDANCE – An 'Inadequate' rating requires that the qualitative evidence is judged as 'Inadequate', usually with a 2.3 rating of 'Requires Improvement' or 'Inadequate'.

Rules and guidance

1.1 Governance and leadership

The governance and leadership of the YJS drives a high-quality service to achieve positive change and safety for children and communities.

1.1.1 Do the YJS's strategic arrangements drive a high-quality, personalised and responsive service to achieve positive change, and keep children and communities safe?

a) Does the YJS management board set the direction and strategy for the YJS, enabling it to achieve positive change and keep children and communities safe?

Guidance:

The YJS management board ('the board') should effectively support and enable the YJS to achieve positive change and keep children and communities safe. The board should provide a clear strategic lead, monitoring the quality and effectiveness of the work and adherence to the evidence base. It should take a forward-looking approach to delivering better services for children.

The board should have a current, relevant and effective strategy/business plan for the YJS, which is communicated to and understood by statutory and other relevant partners. It should pay sufficient attention to the development and delivery of out-of-court-disposals and be committed to the diversion work carried out by the YJS and its partners. The board should have a clear understanding of the profile of the children the YJS works with. A needs assessment should have been completed to underpin the direction and strategy. The board should actively promote equality of opportunity and diversity, deliberately addressing factors of equity, diversity and inclusion throughout its work, including actual or potential discriminatory factors where they exist. The board should have evidence that demonstrates how it ensures that it is listening, and responding, to the voice of the child.

Evidence:

EiA

- completed YJS narrative document
- presentation from the Board Chair
- current youth justice strategic plan
- current YJS action plan(s) if not included in the strategic plan
- management board minutes from the last 12 months
- agenda and papers submitted to the most recent board

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the management Board Chair
- meeting with management board members (including all statutory partners, but excluding the Board Chair and any members directly employed by the YJS)
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)

Judgement:

Where there is a current strategic plan in place, based on a needs analysis and the evidence base for quality delivery that sets clear direction for the YJS, there should be a positive judgement.

Where there is no current strategic plan in place, it is not based on a needs analysis and the evidence base for quality delivery or does not set a clear direction for the YJS, there should be a negative judgement.

b) Are there effective governance arrangements and clear delivery plans that enable relational practice and effective evidence-based work with children?

Guidance:

There must be clear governance arrangements and delivery plans in place to deliver the YJS's strategy. These arrangements and delivery plans should ensure that the YJS is able to practise in a way that enables effective relationships to be built between children and practitioners and for them to work according to the evidence base. Delivery plans should set out how the YJS will deliver its work, with governance arrangements setting out clear lines of accountability and decision-making through relevant boards and meeting structures. Delivery plans should ensure that staff are provided with the time and space to deliver effective work.

Evidence:

EiA

- completed YJS narrative document
- presentation from the Board Chair
- organisational structure chart, and a structure chart identifying where the service sits within the local authority
- current youth justice strategic plan
- current YJS action plan(s) if not included in the strategic plan

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the Board Chair
- meeting with management board members (including all statutory partners, but excluding the Board Chair and any members directly employed by the YJS)
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)

Judgement:

Where governance arrangements are clear and delivery plans are evidence-based and enable relational practice, there should be a positive judgement.

Where governance arrangements are unclear and/or delivery plans are not based on evidence and/or do not enable relational practice, there should be a negative judgement.

c) Can the YJS management board explain any disproportionality and has it taken sufficient action to address this?

Guidance:

The public sector equality duty, set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, requires public bodies to address diversity and equality issues. It consists of a general equality duty, supported by specific duties that are imposed by secondary legislation. YJSs are not named under the Act's *Specific Duties and Public Authorities Regulations 2017* in the way that probation trusts are. This means that, in legal terms, only the general public sector equality duty applies to YJSs. Full information can be found here:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/essential-guide-public-sector-equality-duty>.

Disproportionality is the over-representation of any particular group within the criminal justice system, for example Black, Asian and minority ethnic children, LGBT children and children from the travelling community. Using its data and information, the board should analyse, understand and challenge disproportionality at whichever stage it exists in the system. This could be in the work of the YJS itself or work it carries out with partners. For example, if disproportionality occurs earlier in the youth justice system, the YJS management board should be working with police colleagues to explain or reform any disproportionality². The broad purpose of the general equality duty is to ensure that public authorities consider equality and good relations as part of their day-to-day business. The general equality duty requires organisations to consider how they can contribute positively to advancing equality and good relations. They must consider equality in the delivery of services and design of policies, including internal policies, and keep these issues under review. The general equality duty requires that organisations positively promote equality, not merely avoid discrimination. It was developed in order to harmonise the equality duties and include all the protected characteristics. In summary, those subject to the general equality duty must, in exercising their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

These are sometimes referred to as the three aims of the general equality duty. To meet these, the board must act to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by children due to their protected characteristics
- take steps to meet the needs of children from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other children
- encourage children from protected groups to participate in ways that meet their needs.

Evidence:

EiA

- completed YJS narrative document
- presentation from the Board Chair

² [Lammy review: final report - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612222/Lammy_review_final_report_-_GOV.UK.pdf)

- copy of the most recent youth justice strategic plan
- management board minutes from the last 12 months
- most recent submission of key performance indicators (KPI) data to the Youth Justice Board (YJB) (if not included with the board minutes)
- any available data about the proportions of children aged 10 to 17 in the YJS area who are Black, Asian or minority ethnic (this data may be available from the local authority)
- any available data analysing the protected characteristics of children working with the YJS (including race and ethnic origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation and any other factors for which there is available data), across different disposals
- copy of any equity, diversity, disproportionality and/or inclusion policies and/or action plans to address the impact of findings from data analysis

Fieldwork

- meeting with the management Board Chair
- meeting with management board members (including all statutory partners, but excluding the Board Chair and any members directly employed by the YJS)
- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)

Judgement:

Where the board can explain and proactively addresses any disproportionality, there should be a positive judgement.

Where the board cannot explain and/or does not proactively address any disproportionality, there should be a negative judgement.

d) Does the YJS management board analyse and use the views of children and parents and carers, and use them in the YJS's vision and strategy?

Guidance:

YJSs should have an approach to consulting with children, parents and carers that contributes to the improvement of services. How the YJS collects and uses these views is covered in prompt 1.1.2 d) below.

The prompt here is about how the management board effectively analyses and uses the views of children and parents and carers. The board should be sighted on, interested in and proactively use the feedback from children, parents and carers in the delivery of all its work. These views should be embedded in the board's discussion points and decision-making processes. The board should have a comprehensive of children's and parents' and carers' views, including where there are gaps, where needs are being met effectively, and how services should change to better address these needs.

The management board should understand the views of different children, including children who differ on the basis of disposal, team, gender, race, ethnicity, age and other protected characteristics, so that the needs and issues for each of these groups are better understood.

The views of children and parents/carers should be fed into any management board reviews, and children and parents/carers may be included directly in the groups conducting these reviews. The specific contributions that children and parents/carers have made to

such reviews, and the results of their input, should be drawn out and publicised to promote confidence in the consultation and involvement process.

Evidence:

EiA

- completed YJS narrative document
- presentation from the Board Chair
- analysis of feedback from children, parents and carers, and accompanying action plans
- child, parent and carer engagement strategies
- any relevant audits or evaluation of the quality of work with children
- directory of projects, activities and services available for children
- equity, diversity, disproportionality and/or inclusion policies and/or action plans to address the impact of findings from data analysis

Fieldwork

- meeting with the Board Chair
- meeting with management board members (including all statutory partners, but excluding the Board Chair and any members directly employed by the YJS)
- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)

Judgement:

Where the YJS has embedded an approach to consultation with children, parents and carers that covers key services, analyses views and has led to specific identifiable improvements in services, there should be a positive judgement.

Where the YJS does not have an embedded approach to consultation with children, parents and carers that covers key services, analyses views and has led to specific identifiable improvements in services, there should be a negative judgement.

e) Does the YJS management board include all statutory and non-statutory partners at the right level where these would add value?

Guidance:

All statutory partners should be represented on the board. These are the local authority (children's social care and education), police, probation, and health. Non-statutory partners may be involved in the board, as relevant and appropriate to the area. These could include youth court magistrates, court legal advisers, community safety managers, youth support managers, local secure establishments, housing providers, fire service managers, voluntary sector representatives and elected councillors. Their contribution and added value should be clearly demonstrated. All statutory partners should be signatories to the youth justice plan/business plan at an appropriate senior level.

Statutory and non-statutory partners should attend board meetings consistently and regularly and have designated and named members. Members of the board should be of the appropriate seniority and have the authority to make strategic decisions, for example with

regard to financial and staffing resources. The board should have clear and current terms of reference, understand its accountability, and be proactive in driving change. Lead inspectors should look for evidence that the board's work adds value to the YJS.

Evidence:

EiA

- completed YJS narrative document
- presentation from the Board Chair
- management board minutes from the last 12 months
- copy of the most recent youth justice strategic plan

Fieldwork

- meeting with the management Board Chair
- meeting with management board members (including all statutory partners, but excluding the Board Chair and any members directly employed by the YJS)
- meeting with the YJS head of service

Judgement:

Where all five statutory members attend board meetings, along with relevant non-statutory partners, there should be a positive judgement.

Where all five statutory members do not attend board meetings, and/or relevant non-statutory partners do not attend, there should be a negative judgement.

f) Are YJS management board members well engaged and active in their contribution to achieving positive change and keeping children and communities safe?

Guidance:

The Board Chair is appointed by the chief executive of the local authority (if the chief executive is not assuming the role of chair), and any of the statutory partners may fulfil the role. The Board Chair should be consistent, with specific arrangements for an appropriate term of office, and should be of a sufficiently senior level to hold strategic partners to account. The Board Chair should have a good understanding of his or her role, have a sufficient understanding of the YJS's work (including statutory court orders, out-of-court disposals, bail and remand and appropriate adult services), and be well engaged with the range of strategic issues facing the YJS. He or she should demonstrate effective leadership by developing synergy between members and encouraging challenge. The Board Chair should support board members as well as the YJS manager and hold them to account in their work. The Board Chair should ensure that the board makes clear and accountable decisions based on robust information.

The non-attendance of members should be managed effectively, for example through monitoring and challenge by the Board Chair. It is important that all board members are actively engaged in the YJS's work and that the contribution of all agencies is meaningful and adds value. Board members should have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and recognise the contribution they are required to make. Management board members need to have effective induction and training to support them in best understanding the work of the YJS, and their role within the partnership. They should take ownership of specific tasks and responsibilities, hold the YJS manager to account and, where necessary,

commission work on performance in order to support improvements. Board meetings should facilitate appropriate and healthy challenge, leading to positive outcomes for children.

Evidence:

EiA

- completed YJS narrative document
- presentation from the Board Chair
- copy of the most recent youth justice strategic plan
- management board minutes from the last 12 months
- most recent submission of KPI data to the YJB (if not included with the board minutes)

Fieldwork

- meeting with the Board Chair
- meeting with management board members (including all statutory partners, but excluding the Board Chair and any members directly employed by the YJS)
- meeting with the YJS head of service

Judgement:

Where the Board Chair is at Director of Children's Services level or above, and the board demonstrates an understanding of and commitment to the work of the YJS and holds the board to account for the decisions that it makes, there should be a positive judgement.

Where the Board Chair is below Director of Children's Services level, and/or the board does not understand and/or is not sufficiently committed the work of the YJS and/or does not hold the board to account for the decisions that it makes, there should be a negative judgement.

g) Does the YJS management board sufficiently understand and appropriately challenge the YJS's data and information?

Guidance:

The board should be proactive in requesting and analysing the YJS's data and information. This could include KPI data, board reports, audit information, staffing information and needs analysis. The board should be critical and challenging in its analysis of the YJS's data and information, actively looking for areas where there may be shortfalls or where improvements are needed. All members should understand the data and information presented and be able to contribute to the discussions about action to be taken.

Evidence:

- completed YJS narrative document
- presentation from the Board Chair
- copy of the most recent youth justice strategic plan
- management board minutes from the last 12 months
- most recent submission of KPI data to the YJB (if not included with the board minutes)

- any relevant audits or evaluation of the quality of work with children

Fieldwork

- meeting with the Board Chair
- meeting with management board members (including all statutory partners, but excluding the Board Chair and any members directly employed by the YJS)
- meeting with the YJS head of service

Judgement:

Where the board sufficiently understands and appropriately challenges the YJS's data and information, there should be a positive judgement.

Where the board does not sufficiently understand and appropriately challenge the YJS's data and information, there should be a negative judgement.

h) Do other relevant local strategic partnerships give priority to work to achieve positive change and keep children and communities safe?

Guidance:

YJSs have a duty to cooperate with a number of other agencies and bodies, for example:

- under Section 325 of the *Criminal Justice Act 2003*, YJSs are one of the named 'duty to cooperate' bodies within Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)
- under Section 10(4) of the *Children Act 2004*, YJSs have a duty to cooperate with children's services in making arrangements to improve the wellbeing of children in the local authority's area
- the Regulations 2006 (SI 2006/90) state that YJSs have a duty to cooperate in the establishment and operation of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (in most areas these have been replaced by a Local Safeguarding Children Partnership, but the 2006 regulations continue to apply).

The YJS should be proactively involved in relevant local strategic partnerships such as the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP), Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB), MAPPA, Community Safety Partnership and Children's Trust (or local equivalent). There should be effective communication and a two-way flow of information between the YJS and other strategic partnerships. The YJS's needs and/or concerns should feature in these partnerships, with relevant board members dealing with the issues and challenges facing the YJS. Local strategic partnerships should prioritise work to achieve positive change and to keep children and communities safe, including supporting integration with wider services for children. There should be a current local strategy and action plan for work to prevent or divert children from entering the youth justice system, including evidence of the interface between the work of the YJS and other local prevention/diversion work; examples may include links to the Community Safety Plan, Police Youth Strategy and work with families.

Evidence:

EiA

- completed YJS narrative document
- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed organisational data spreadsheet (template sent with announcement letter)

- organisational structure chart, and a structure chart identifying where the service sits within the local authority
- copy of the most recent youth justice strategic plan
- management board minutes from the last 12 months
- directory of projects, activities and services available for children

Fieldwork

- meeting with the Board Chair
- meeting with management board members (including all statutory partners, but excluding the Board Chair and any members directly employed by the YJS)
- meeting with the YJS head of service

Judgement:

Where there is a two-way flow of information between the YJS and other strategic partnerships, with relevant board members dealing with the issues and challenges facing the YJS, supported by proactive work done by local strategic partnerships to achieve positive change and keep children and communities safe, there should be a positive judgement.

Where there is poor information exchange between the YJS and other strategic partnerships, and/or board members do not deal effectively with the issues and challenges facing the YJS, and/or there is limited proactive work done by local strategic partnerships to achieve positive change and keep children and communities safe, there should be a negative judgement.

i) Are strategic arrangements and activity, and their impact on delivery, monitored and regularly reviewed?

Guidance:

The board should monitor the impact of the strategy. Ideally this would be an annual review that feeds into revised and updated business and delivery plans and is supported by additional reviews two or three times a year. Reviews of the strategy should include an analysis of changes in the internal and external operating environments, and changes in mandates, legislation, instructions and guidance. The reviews should be conducted after consultations with key stakeholders.

Evidence:

EiA

- completed YJS narrative document
- presentation from the Board Chair
- copy of the most recent youth justice strategic plan
- management board minutes from the last 12 months
- analysis of feedback from children, parents and carers, and accompanying action plans
- directory of projects, activities and services available for children

Fieldwork

- meeting with the Board Chair
- meeting with management board members (including all statutory partners, but excluding the Board Chair and any members directly employed by the YJS)
- meeting with the YJS head of service

Judgement:

Where there is evidence of at least annual scheduled progress reviews of the agreed strategy, using appropriate monitoring information, measuring the impact of the strategy and leading to the amendment of the delivery plans where required, there should be a positive judgement.

Where there are insufficient or unscheduled reviews of the agreed strategy, or reviews with insufficient monitoring information, and/or they do not measure the impact of the strategy and/or lead to the amendment of the delivery plans where required, there should be a negative judgement.

1.1.2 Does the YJS leadership team drive a high-quality, personalised, and responsive service to achieve positive change and keep children and communities safe?

a) Does the YJS leadership team provide an effective link to the YJS management board?

Guidance:

The YJS leadership team should be proactive in providing an effective link between the work of the YJS and the board. This should be based on open communication, with the YJS leadership team taking relevant issues to the board on both a proactive, planned basis but also where issues arise that the board needs to be aware of or has a role in working with or advising the leadership team. Both formal and informal arrangements should be in place, enabling the YJS leadership team to take a range of relevant issues to the board.

Evidence:

EiA

- completed YJS narrative document
- presentation from the Board Chair
- organisational structure chart, and a structure chart identifying where the service sits within the local authority
- copy of the most recent youth justice strategic plan
- management board minutes from the last 12 months

Fieldwork

- meeting with the management board chair
- meeting with management board members (including all statutory partners, but excluding the Board Chair and any members directly employed by the YJS)
- meeting with the YJS head of service

- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)

Judgement:

Where there are effective links between the YJS and the board that challenge and support and are based on open communication, there should be a positive judgement.

Where links between the YJS and the board are ineffective, do not challenge and support and/or are not based on open communication, there should be a negative judgement.

b) Do the YJS's partnership arrangements enable it to deliver effective operational work to achieve positive change and keep children and communities safe?

Guidance:

The board should actively consider and respond appropriately to the YJS's performance. The YJS should be clear about what to expect from its partners. There should be evidence to show that partnership arrangements have had a positive impact on operational delivery, with active contributions to support improvements in services to children. Commissioned work should be based on assessed needs, reflect local priorities for children who have offended, or are likely to offend, and take account of appropriate diversity factors. Services from the YJS and its partners should be available for children who receive out-of-court disposals or are subject to bail and remand arrangements, as well as all post-court cases.

The YJS should have sufficient resources to deliver its work. Partners should ensure that the YJS has sufficient access to the range of specialist staff that are required. There should be current, relevant secondment agreements that set out the commitment to resources, tenure and how effective links will be maintained with parent organisations, including ongoing training and support arrangements for seconded staff. The YJS should be appropriately staffed, as a minimum, according to legislation, with staff from probation, health, social care, police and education.

Evidence:

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- organisational structure chart, and a structure chart identifying where the service sits within the local authority
- copy of the most recent youth justice strategic plan
- management board minutes from the last 12 months
- any YJS policies that cover risk of harm, safety and wellbeing, delivery of work with children, out-of-court disposals, resettlement, bail and remand and restorative practice (if a policy is in the process of being updated and in draft form, we will accept this)
- any relevant audits or evaluation of the quality of work with children
- directory of projects, activities and services available for children

Fieldwork

- meeting with the Board Chair
- meeting with management board members (including all statutory partners, but excluding the Board Chair and any members directly employed by the YJS)
- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)

Judgement:

Where there is consistent commitment from all partners, supported by effective working arrangements with all partners, there should be a positive judgement.

Where there is inconsistent commitment from any partners, or effective working arrangements are not in place with all partners, there should be a negative judgement.

c) Does the YJS leadership team successfully deliver and operationalise the vision and strategy?

Guidance:

The YJS should implement its vision and strategy effectively, robustly monitoring, reviewing and updating its delivery plans as appropriate.

The YJS should be able to demonstrate how it is delivering its vision and strategy and which aspects it has implemented. Delivery plans should set out the mechanisms by which the strategy will be translated into practice, where and to whom progress should be reported, and how delivery should be reviewed, with any necessary changes to implementation agreed. Appropriate programme and project management approaches should be followed where relevant, to ensure that strategies have been implemented in a timely fashion, within an agreed budget, and to a good standard. There should be evidence of ongoing monitoring and review processes. The YJS should be able to demonstrate positive outcomes for children, through both hard data and qualitative measures such as feedback from children and case studies. Staff should be able to describe how their roles contribute to the YJS's vision and strategy. The YJS should be able to demonstrate outcomes that show how its vision and strategy are making a positive difference for children.

Where services are commissioned, this should be based on an analysis of risk, needs, and strengths, and should fully take diversity factors into account. The commissioning plan should include the arrangements with providers which set out how the quality of those services will be reviewed and evaluated, with remedial action taken where required to improve delivery and respond to any concerns.

Evidence:

EiA

- copy of the most recent youth justice strategic plan
- presentation from the Board Chair

- completed YJS narrative document
- analysis of feedback from children, parents and carers, and accompanying action plans
- any relevant audits or evaluation of the quality of work with children

Fieldwork

- meeting with the Board Chair
- meeting with management board members (including all statutory partners, but excluding the Board Chair and any members directly employed by the YJS)
- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)

Judgement:

Where delivery and action plans link to the vision and strategy, are understood by staff and are regularly reviewed, there should be a positive judgement.

Where delivery and action plans do not link to the vision and strategy, and/or are not understood by staff, and/or are not regularly reviewed, there should be a negative judgement.

d) Does the YJS leadership team seek, analyse, and use the views of children, parents and carers?

Guidance:

The YJS should have a sound approach to consulting with and involving children, their parents or carers and other key stakeholders. This process should contribute to the improvement of services and should encompass the key areas of service delivery. Views may be sought in a variety of ways, including surveys and questionnaires. Approaches such as workshops, focus groups, and fora for children can provide a more in-depth understanding of children's needs, including where there are gaps in service provision, where needs are being met effectively, and how services should change to better address these needs. The analysis of these views should reflect the different experiences of a range of children and parents/carers so that their needs and issues are better understood. The views of children, their parents or carers and other key stakeholders should be fed into service reviews, and their representatives may be included directly in the groups conducting these reviews.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- analysis of feedback from children, parents and carers, and accompanying action plans

- child, parent and carer engagement strategies
- any relevant audits or evaluation of the quality of work with children
- directory of projects, activities and services available for children

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- meeting with the YJS head of service
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work, and resettlement)
- children's participation feedback

Judgement:

Where the YJS has an embedded approach to consultation with children, their parents or carers, and other key stakeholders with feedback analysed and leading to identifiable improvements in services, there should be a positive judgement.

Where the YJS does not have an embedded approach to consultation with children, their parents or carers, and other key stakeholders or their feedback does not lead to identifiable improvements in services, there should be a negative judgement.

e) Can the YJS leadership team explain any disproportionality in their delivery area, and have they taken sufficient action to address this?

Guidance:

The YJS manager and senior staff should take responsibility for compliance with the general equality duty. This includes analysis of engagement of children and staff by protected characteristics and analysis of any disproportionate representation of different protected characteristic groups at any stage in the delivery of a YJS's work. The leadership of the YJS should consider and address any shortfalls in the following areas:

- the information the YJS has in relation to children and staff with particular protected characteristics, including from contact with children
- where there are services or protected characteristics for which the YJS does not have information; engagement can help to establish how accurate its information is and fill any gaps
- staff knowing their responsibilities, what these responsibilities mean in practice and where they can access relevant information
- early assessment of the impact of policy and practice on equality to ensure that policies and processes do not discriminate against certain groups or miss obvious opportunities to advance equality of opportunity or to foster good relations; where a policy is likely to be relevant to certain groups but there is no reliable data, engagement with the relevant groups can help with this
- the use of a consistent methodology for assessing the impact of policies and processes to build consistency and enable progress to be measured over time
- assessing the impact on equality of any commissioning decisions the YJS makes

- making sure staff know their responsibilities, what this means in practice and where they can access relevant information
- a clear action plan, agreed with other youth justice system partners (such as the police and courts), to tackle any disproportionality in outcomes or treatment of different groups within the caseload.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- copy of the most recent youth justice strategic plan
- management board minutes from the last 12 months
- any available data about the proportions of children aged 10 to 17 in the YJS area who are Black, Asian or minority ethnic (this data may be available from the local authority)
- any available data analysing the protected characteristics of children and victims working with the YJS (including race and ethnic origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation and any other factors for which there is available data), across different disposals
- copy of any equity, diversity, disproportionality and/or inclusion policies and/or action plans to address the impact of findings from data analysis

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- meeting with the YJS head of service
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)

Judgement:

Where the YJS leadership team actively considers the needs of and impact on individuals with protected characteristics when it develops new policies and processes and reviews existing ones, there should be a positive judgement.

Where the YJS leadership team does not actively consider the needs of and impact on individuals with protected characteristics when it develops new policies and processes and reviews existing ones, there should be a negative judgement.

f) Do staff understand their roles and responsibilities within the partnership arrangements, and what they are accountable for?

Guidance:

As multi-agency teams, YJSs incorporate staff who are seconded from a range of partner agencies, together with directly employed staff and volunteers. It is important that seconded staff maintain regular links with their parent organisations. Examples may include attending training sessions, receiving briefings, and joint supervision arrangements. They should have

up-to-date knowledge and expertise from their own specialist areas, as well as working in an integrated way within the partnership, and a clear understanding of what they are accountable for. All members of the workforce should understand the range of skills within the partnership and how those skills contribute to working with children. The YJS should be proactive in identifying and responding to the training needs of its workforce, and in supporting staff in their ongoing professional development.

Evidence:

EiA

- completed YJS narrative document
- organisational structure chart, and a structure chart identifying where the service sits within the local authority
- overview of staff training for case managers and middle managers in last 12 months
- details of any seconded staff, including vacancies

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work, and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)

Judgement:

Where staff of all roles and grades fully understand their roles and responsibilities, with seconded staff supported to maintain links with their home organisation, there should be a positive judgement.

Where all staff do not fully understand their roles and responsibilities, and/or seconded staff are not supported to maintain links with their home organisation, there should be a negative judgement.

g) Are the necessary policies in place and understood by all those to whom they apply?

Guidance:

Policies and guidance should be in place, covering, as a minimum, complaints, safeguarding, risk, interventions and referrals across post-court, resettlement, out-of-court disposals, bail and remand and appropriate adult services. These should be current and reviewed on a regular basis. Policies and guidance should be communicated effectively, ensuring that relevant staff know how to work within the requirements of the policies and guidance.

Communication should be effective and matched to the needs and learning styles of recipients.

For internal communication of policies and guidance to staff, communication channels could include:

- intranet-based resources and knowledge banks

- email communication and discussion fora
- presentations and road shows by managers
- line management briefings and team meetings
- newsletters and bulletins
- question and answer sessions
- training and development sessions.

Evidence:

EiA

- completed YJS narrative document
- any YJS policies that cover risk of harm, safety and wellbeing, delivery of work with children, out-of-court disposals, resettlement, bail and remand and restorative practice (if a policy is in the process of being updated and in draft form, we will accept this)
- directory of projects, activities and services available for children
- overview of staff training for case managers and middle managers in last 12 months

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff, covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work, and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)

Judgement:

Where the relevant policies and guidance are in place, current, regularly reviewed and understood by those who need to apply them, there should be a positive judgement.

Where the relevant policies and guidance are not in place, or are not current and/or regularly reviewed, or they are not understood by those who need to apply them, there should be a negative judgement.

1.1.3 Does the YJS leadership team actively engage with staff to deliver a high-quality, personalised, and responsive service to achieve positive change and keep children and communities safe?

a) Does the YJS culture promote openness, constructive challenge, and ideas?

Guidance:

For any organisation to be effective, it should promote a culture where staff at all levels feel able to contribute to service improvement and are clear about how decisions are made and how they can contribute to them.

Culture refers to 'the ways things are done around here'. An open culture is one where staff are routinely consulted about issues that affect them and their work and receive clear

explanations about how important decisions are made. Constructive challenge requires that staff at all levels have opportunities to question plans and decisions that affect them and their work, for example through team meetings and meetings between management and unions, which are seen by both sides as valuable. Processes that demonstrate being open to ideas might range from suggestion schemes to innovation strategies, the formation of development teams, and the championing of new initiatives that staff have contributed to.

Organisations that are weaker in this area may have, for example, a culture of secret decision-making, blocks in communication or inattention to the views and ideas of frontline staff.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)
- staff and volunteer survey

Judgement:

Where there are opportunities for constructive challenge, with open communication up and down the organisation, and where ideas from staff, children and partner organisations are sought and put into practice, there should be a positive judgement.

Where there are limited opportunities for constructive challenge, and/or a lack of open communication up and down the organisation, and/or where ideas from staff, children and partner organisations are not sought or put into practice, there should be a negative judgement.

b) Are staff well engaged and motivated?

Guidance:

Staff motivation depends on a range of factors. Indicators include that staff take pride in their work and want to come to work to do a good job and make a difference. Managers should be aware of the various motivations of different staff and diverse groups; they should monitor motivation levels and have approaches in place that ensure that high levels of motivation are sustained. In speaking to staff and managers, the inspector will get a 'feel' for what it is like to work within the YJS and whether it has a positive ethos and supportive culture.

Leaders should give attention to maintaining staff motivation when changes are proposed and implemented, to enable staff to respond positively. Sickness and absence levels can be symptomatic of low motivation and should be managed well and within appropriate limits. High staff turnover rates should be investigated to see whether they are linked to low levels of motivation. High sickness and absence levels, and high staff turnover rates compared

with similar organisations, can be strong indicators of discontent and a lack of motivation within an organisation, particularly where there is an increasing trend in these.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)
- staff and volunteer survey

Judgement:

Where staff are well supported, enthusiastic, and motivated to deliver a high-quality service, with low sickness and low staff turnover, there should be a positive judgement.

Where staff are not well supported, enthusiastic, and motivated to deliver a high-quality service, and/or there is high sickness and/or high staff turnover, there should be a negative judgement.

c) Are the views of staff sought, analysed and used to review and improve the effectiveness of services?

Guidance:

There should be a comprehensive, proactive approach to consultation with staff, and this should contribute to improvements in service delivery. This may be achieved in a number of ways such as through individual supervision, team meetings or regular staff fora. Staff views should be considered in business-as-usual arrangements and also as part of any change programmes. There should be examples of where the views and inputs of staff have led to identifiable changes in the YJS.

Staff should feel confident in bringing forward their views and know that they will be fully considered.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service

- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)
- staff and volunteer survey

Judgement:

Where the YJS takes a proactive approach to staff consultation, welcoming and acting on feedback, there should be a positive judgement.

Where the YJS does not take a proactive approach to staff consultation and does not welcome and act on feedback, there should be a negative judgement.

d) Do managers equitably recognise and reward exceptional work?

Guidance:

YJSs must provide equity in access to promotion opportunities and reward and recognition practices to staff from all backgrounds and in all roles. There should be a visible and proactive approach to ensuring this equity of access. The YJS monitors which staff are promoted and which receive reward and recognition, including checks for any bias, with action taken to deal with this. Positive action practices should be in place, promoting equity of access both to promotion opportunities and to reward and recognition. The YJS should be able to demonstrate how it monitors equity of access and addresses any issues.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)
- staff and volunteer survey

Judgement:

Where the relevant policies and provision are in place and being operated fairly and monitored appropriately, there should be a positive judgement.

Where the relevant policies and provision are not in place and/or are not operated fairly and monitored appropriately, there should be a negative judgement.

e) Is appropriate attention paid to staff safety and wellbeing, and building staff resilience?

Guidance:

Work in a YJS can be difficult and dangerous on occasions, and there is a legal duty to promote the safety and wellbeing of staff.

Staff wellbeing goes further than health and safety. It includes the provision of welfare facilities; support after critical incidents; occupational health services (immunisations, wellbeing clinics, and so on); and support for staff experiencing stress and personal problems which are impacting on their work. YJSs should have strategies and facilities that are designed to support a healthy workforce, so that they are better able to provide high-quality services. This includes resilience training for staff.

Arrangements should be set out in relevant policies, procedures, and guidance, which should cover, but not be limited to:

- health and safety inductions for all new staff who use the premises
- arrangements for physical security, including the logging and monitoring of visitors and staff attendance
- a system of incident alarms and clear procedures for responding
- clearly signed and readily available first-aid and welfare facilities
- a lone working policy and procedure, along with guidance on making home visits
- regularly completed and logged display screen equipment assessments
- effective health and safety oversight arrangements
- health and safety reports featuring in senior management and governance meetings
- a member of staff appropriately qualified and trained to fulfil a lead health and safety role.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- overview of staff training for case managers and middle managers in last 12 months
- health and safety policy and process
- lone working policy and procedure

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)
- staff and volunteer survey

Judgement:

Where there are comprehensive and consistently applied health and safety policies and systems in place, along with a range of staff wellbeing practices, there should be a positive judgement.

Where health and safety policies and systems are not comprehensive and/or inconsistently applied, and/or staff wellbeing practices are insufficient, there should be a negative judgement.

f) Is there support for staff if they feel discriminated against or experience any form of discrimination?

Guidance:

There should be a process in place that outlines the support that will be available if any member of staff feels discriminated against or experiences any form of discrimination. This can be a stand-alone policy or included within the grievance and complaints policy arrangements.

However it is presented, the arrangements should be clear, accessible, publicised, and understood by staff. They should include robust processes of support at appropriate levels, and escalation points.

Arrangements should be publicised widely, understood by all staff and supported by regular reviews and analysis where the processes have been used, to ensure that resolutions have been followed through and that any trends have been identified and addressed.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- complaints policy (staff)

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers, and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)
- staff and volunteer survey

Judgement:

Where there are clear arrangements, understood by all staff and including monitoring and analysis, there should be a positive judgement.

Where arrangements are unclear, not understood by all staff and/or not monitored or analysed, there should be a negative judgement.

g) Is there a clear and understood process for staff complaints?

Guidance:

The YJS should have a staff complaints process. This can be a stand-alone process or be included within the grievance and complaints policy arrangements.

However it is presented, the process should be clear, accessible, publicised, and understood by staff. The arrangements should include robust processes of support at appropriate levels, and escalation points. The policy and process should include arrangements for monitoring and analysing grievances and complaints. There should be recognised channels for raising concerns and responding to staff concerns, and managers should clearly communicate how and why decisions are reached. Grievance and complaints procedures should be publicised and understood by staff. The YJS should monitor grievances and complaints and analyse the results.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- complaints policy (staff)

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)
- staff and volunteer survey

Judgement:

Where there is a clear route for complaints, understood by all staff, and including monitoring and analysis, there should be a positive judgement.

Where there is no clear route for complaints, and the route is not understood by all staff and/or is not monitored or analysed, there should be a negative judgement.

h) Is there a clear and understood process for complaints from children, parents and carers?

Guidance:

The YJS should have a complaints policy and process for use by children and parents and carers. This should be publicised, easily accessible and understood by all children and parents and carers regardless of speech and language or learning needs.

The arrangements should include support for children and parents and carers in making a complaint. The YJS should have arrangements for monitoring and analysing complaints. There should be recognised channels for raising concerns and responding to concerns raised. Managers should communicate clearly with children, parents and carers who make a complaint and enable them to understand how and why decisions are reached.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- complaints policy (children, parents and carers)

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)
- staff and volunteer survey

Judgement:

Where there is a clear route for complaints, understood by children, parents and carers and including monitoring and analysis, there should be a positive judgement.

Where there is no clear route for complaints, and it is not understood by children, parents and carers and/or is not monitored or analysed, there should be a negative judgement.

i) Do YJS leaders understand and promote the meeting of diverse needs, including the need to make reasonable adjustments for staff in accordance with protected characteristics?

Guidance:

Reasonable adjustments should be made for all staff who have a disability that falls within the definition in the *Equality Act 2010*, to enable them to work effectively. Regional leaders must ensure that they monitor and record disability for all staff. Where staff identify disabilities that require reasonable adjustments, leaders must make provision for them, which might include, but is not limited to:

- an accessible workplace
- appropriate furniture and furnishings
- provision of assistive technology
- additional support staff
- reduced workload or reduced hours.

YJS leaders must also undertake health and safety risk assessments for pregnant staff and make reasonable adjustments to enable them to continue working effectively and safely. They should give reasonable consideration to adjusting the hours and working patterns of staff with parental and dependent caring responsibilities.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers, and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)
- staff and volunteer survey

Judgement:

Where the relevant policies and provision are in place and being operated fairly and appropriately, there should be a positive judgement.

Where the relevant policies and provision are not in place and/or are not being operated fairly and appropriately, there should be a negative judgement.

1.1.4 Do leaders use analysis, evidence, and learning to drive a high-quality, personalised and responsive service to achieve positive change and safety for children and communities?

a) Are policies regularly evaluated and reviewed, including responding to changes in the evidence base and paying due regard to diversity issues?

Guidance:

The YJS should have a clear focus on continuous improvement, with a robust evaluation and self-assessment framework that ensures managers understand and address development areas and improve the quality of provision. Appropriate YJS action plans should be in place; these should be supported by good evidence and current information and informed by regular review and evaluation to check whether they are achieving their aims. They should be informed by the underlying evidence base from research, and effective/promising practice about what is likely to work and improve delivery.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- any YJS policies that cover risk of harm, safety and wellbeing, delivery of work with children, out-of-court disposals, resettlement, bail and remand and restorative practice (if a policy is in the process of being updated and in draft form, we will accept this)
- any relevant audits or evaluation of the quality of work with children

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)

Judgement:

Where policies are evaluated and reviewed in line with the evidence base and paying due regard to diversity issues, there should be a positive judgement.

Where policies are not evaluated and reviewed in line with the evidence base and paying due regard to diversity issues, there should be a negative judgement.

b) Is the delivery of partnership services informed by regular, robust, evidence-based monitoring, evaluation, and review, including a review of the impact on diverse groups?

Guidance:

For partnerships to be effective, they must be informed by regular and routine monitoring to check whether they are achieving their aims. They should also be informed by evidence from research about what is likely to work and improve delivery.

Monitoring, evaluation and review should include examination of the process improvements, to identify whether they are achieving what was intended, with feedback from stakeholders on how they are working in practice. Partnership arrangements should be monitored routinely by someone responsible for managing the relevant process, reporting under an appropriate governance arrangement. They should be aligned with the evidence base, both building on existing research and, where appropriate, contributing to it. Monitoring, evaluation and review should include a review of the impact on diverse groups.

Where appropriate, external monitoring, evaluation and review should be considered, to improve the integrity of the process, and opportunities for engaging researchers, or collaborative working with similar organisations undertaking a comparable improvement process should be considered, to benchmark progress and maximise learning.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- any YJS policies that cover risk of harm, safety and wellbeing, delivery of work with children, out-of-court disposals, resettlement, bail and remand and restorative practice (if a policy is in the process of being updated and in draft form, we will accept this)
- any relevant audits or evaluation of the quality of work with children

- any available data about the proportions of children aged 10 to 17 in the YJS area who are Black, Asian or minority ethnic (this data may be available from the local authority)
- any available data analysing the protected characteristics of children working with the YJS (including race and ethnic origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation and any other factors for which there is available data) across different disposals
- copy of any equity, diversity, disproportionality and/or inclusion policies and/or action plans to address the impact of findings from data analysis

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)

Judgement:

Where partnership arrangements are informed by regular monitoring, evaluation and review, which includes a review of the impact on diverse groups, there should be a positive judgement.

Where partnership arrangements are informed by regular monitoring, evaluation and review which includes a review of the impact on diverse groups, there should be a positive judgement.

c) Are service improvement plans regularly evaluated and reviewed, including responding to changes in the evidence base?

Guidance:

For service improvement plans to be effective, they must be informed by regular and routine monitoring to check whether they are achieving their aims. They should also be informed by evidence from research about what is likely to work and improve delivery.

Monitoring should include examination of the process improvements to identify whether they are achieving what was intended, with feedback from stakeholders on how they are working in practice. Improvement plans should be monitored routinely by someone responsible for managing the relevant process, reporting under an appropriate governance arrangement. They should be aligned with the evidence base, both building on existing research and contributing to it.

Where appropriate, external monitoring should be considered, to improve the integrity of the process, and opportunities for engaging researchers, or collaborative working with similar organisations undertaking a comparable improvement process, should be considered, to benchmark progress and maximise learning.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document

- any YJS policies that cover risk of harm, safety and wellbeing, delivery of work with children, out-of-court disposals, resettlement, bail and remand and restorative practice (if a policy is in the process of being updated and in draft form, we will accept this)
- any relevant audits or evaluation of the quality of work with children
- any available data about the proportions of children aged 10 to 17 in the YJS area who are Black, Asian or minority ethnic (this data may be available from the local authority)
- any available data analysing the protected characteristics of children working with the YJS (including race and ethnic origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation and any other factors for which there is available data) across different disposals
- copy of any equity, diversity, disproportionality and/or inclusion policies and/or action plans to address the impact of findings from data analysis

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)

Judgement:

Where there are service improvement plans in place, which build on an evidence base, there should be a positive judgement.

Where service improvement plans are not in place or do not build on an evidence base, there should be a negative judgement.

d) Does evaluation include the use of data and information and is it informed by necessary input from other agencies, including those delivering out-of-court, post-court, bail and remand, appropriate adult and resettlement services?

Guidance:

Robust evaluation and data-based quality assurance are an intrinsic part of service delivery and should include careful analysis of diversity factors. They should involve partners and other providers, where appropriate, across the breadth of the YJS's work, with a focus on identifying good practice and aspects for improvement.

The YJS should use the data that it collects not just to identify, mitigate or remove poor practice, but also to identify ways to advance equality of opportunity. Driving improvement across provision will likely involve partners and providers external to the YJS, so any learning and action taken should be disseminated through appropriate structures internally and externally. Learning could be communicated internally, externally and between partners and providers.

Collaboration with other providers, agencies and the local community is integral to planning services to achieve positive change and keep children and communities safe, and ensures that services meet children's needs and allow for appropriate innovation.

YJSs should also use information from partner agencies. For example, a check of all disposals on the police system, to ensure the YJS is being informed of all relevant outcomes. The YJS can also use referral rates from partner organisations and completion rates when evaluating the policy and provision.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- any YJS policies that cover risk of harm, safety and wellbeing, delivery of work with children, out-of-court disposals, resettlement, bail and remand and restorative practice (if a policy is in the process of being updated and in draft form, we will accept this)
- any relevant audits or evaluation of the quality of work with children
- any available data about the proportions of children aged 10 to 17 in the YJS area who are Black, Asian or minority ethnic (this data may be available from the local authority)
- any available data analysing the protected characteristics of children working with the YJS (including race and ethnic origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation and any other factors for which there is available data) across different disposals
- copy of any equity, diversity, disproportionality and/or inclusion policies and/or action plans to address the impact of findings from data analysis

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)

Judgement:

Where evaluation uses data and information and is informed by other agencies across the breadth of YJS provision, there should be a positive judgement.

Where evaluation does not use data and information sufficiently and/or is not fully informed by other agencies across the breadth of YJS provision, there should be a negative judgement.

e) Does evaluation include active consideration of diversity issues?

Guidance:

The YJS's evaluation of its services should include an assessment of their impact on children with different protected characteristics to ascertain whether they meet diversity needs and minimise disadvantages. This is a part of complying with the general public sector equality duty set out in the *Equality Act 2010*. Full information can be found here

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/essential-guide-public-sector-equality-duty>.

When evaluating its services, the YJS should use the diversity information that it collects not just to identify, mitigate or remove poor practice but also to identify ways to advance equity of opportunity.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- any relevant audits or evaluation of the quality of work with children
- any available data about the proportions of children aged 10 to 17 in the YJS area who are Black, Asian or minority ethnic (this data may be available from the local authority)
- any available data analysing the protected characteristics of children working with the YJS (including race and ethnic origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation and any other factors for which there is available data), across different disposals
- copy of any equity, diversity, disproportionality and/or inclusion policies and/or action plans to address the impact of findings from data analysis

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)

Judgement:

Where diversity issues are an intentional and integral part of the YJS's evaluation activities, with reasons for any inequity explained and action set out to reform where possible, there should be a positive judgement.

Where diversity issues are neither an intentional nor integral part of the YJS's evaluation activities, with reasons for any inequity not explained and/or no action set out to reform where possible, there should be a negative judgement.

f) Do performance and quality assurance systems drive improvement?

Guidance:

YJSs should have appropriate performance and quality assurance systems to enable leaders and staff to understand the effectiveness of the work they are delivering. These systems should be fit for purpose, including being easy to understand and clearly measuring progress as well as areas for improvement. The YJS should have performance management and quality assurance systems in place that cover each of its key service delivery functions. Performance measures include those prescribed by the YJB and those the YJS has

developed internally to measure its progress, and the effectiveness of its processes, in achieving local objectives. The YJS should benchmark systems, processes and performance measures, set and review targets to drive improvement, analyse trends and identify and address the causes of both high performance and underperformance. This should be informed by the routine provision of accessible performance information that is appropriately analysed at the team and individual level, and interrogated to identify trends, causes and potential improvements.

Quality assurance processes may include activities such as sampling of cases, observations of practice, case reviews, peer reviews, data on outputs and outcomes achieved, and feedback from staff, children and parents or carers about the services provided.

YJSs should draw up action plans to address the findings of performance and quality mechanisms and HM Inspectorate of Probation inspections, including thematic inspections. These should be produced in a timely fashion in line with relevant guidance, including taking immediate action where necessary. Action plans should specify who is responsible for putting them into practice, and they should be reviewed and evaluated at appropriate intervals. Plans should be subject to suitable governance arrangements through the YJS management board to ensure that specific actions are concluded in a timely manner and necessary improvements achieved.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- most recent submission of KPI data to the YJB (if not included with the board minutes)
- analysis of feedback from children, parents and carers, and accompanying action plans
- any YJS policies that cover risk of harm, safety and wellbeing, delivery of work with children, out-of-court disposals, resettlement, bail and remand and restorative practice (if a policy is in the process of being updated and in draft form, we will accept this)
- any relevant audits or evaluation of the quality of work with children

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)

Judgement:

Where there are clear, fit for purpose performance and quality systems, with effective action planning supported by appropriate governance arrangements, there should be a positive judgement.

Where performance and quality systems are unclear or not fit for purpose, and/or there is ineffective action planning and/or inappropriate governance arrangements, there should be a negative judgement.

g) Does the YJS learn systematically and communicate effectively when things go wrong, including serious incidents?

Guidance:

The YJS should have an agreed and understood approach to organisational learning and development, which supports its journey of continuous improvement. It should pay particular attention to learning from things that go wrong. For the individuals, this may include specific training and development objectives. For the wider organisation, in addition to staff briefings, there should be an agreed series of actions to review, monitor and strengthen service delivery processes to reduce the risk of repetition. The YJS should be able to demonstrate that it has systematically extracted the learning and ensured that this has been embedded in changes to practice and service delivery.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)

Judgement:

Where there is an agreed, consistent approach to organisational learning which can be demonstrated through a number of different practice examples, there should be a positive judgement.

Where there is not an agreed, consistent approach to organisational learning and/or this cannot be demonstrated through a number of different practice examples, there should be a negative judgement.

1.2 Staffing

Staff are enabled to deliver a high-quality, personalised, and responsive service to achieve positive change and keep children and communities safe.

1.2.1 Do staff and workload levels support staff to deliver a high-quality, personalised, and responsive service to achieve positive change and keep children and communities safe?

a) Are YJS staffing levels sufficient?

Guidance:

Staffing levels across *all roles* within the YJS should be sufficient to enable staff to deliver high-quality, relational, evidence-based and personalised work. Sufficiency of staffing levels are dependent on many factors, such as delivery models and the needs, risk and strengths of the children that staff are working with. For non-frontline roles, staffing levels must be sufficient to enable these roles effectively to deliver high-quality, relational, evidence-based and personalised work. This means that staffing levels should enable tasks to be completed to a good standard, within normal working hours, most of the time.

The YJS's own guideline figure for, or definition of, acceptable workloads should not be routinely exceeded. YJSs should have a staffing plan that is updated and reviewed at least annually to reflect changes in the profile of children. The plan should include realistic assumptions about the expected workload and caseloads of staff, retention levels, staff progression and retirement, segmented by role and grade. It should cover how and when staff are to be recruited, and contingencies, including the use of sessional and agency staff should there be significant fluctuations in workload or sickness levels. There should be guiding principles about how decisions on staffing are to be made and who is responsible for making them. Flexibility should be built in to respond to changing demands, which may include taking on new responsibilities or ways of working in line with service delivery plans, in addition to increases or decreases in workload.

YJSs should avoid role overload and role drift. Role overload is a situation that results from an individual taking on a role or multiple roles in which they are asked to do more than they are capable of doing in a specific period of time (quantitative overload) or where they are stretched beyond their knowledge, skills, and abilities (qualitative overload). Role drift occurs where core work duties for a specific role or grade are undertaken increasingly by other staff, typically where work is delegated to more junior staff.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- completed organisational data spreadsheet
- organisational structure chart, and a structure chart identifying where the service sits within the local authority
- copy of the most recent youth justice strategic plan
- details of any seconded staff, including vacancies
- domain two evidence

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)
- staff and volunteer survey

Judgement:

Where staffing levels are sufficient, planned, and reviewed across the organisation, including effective arrangements to respond to changing demands, there should be a positive judgement.

Where staffing levels are insufficient or responses to changing demands are ad hoc or simply reactive, there should be a negative judgement.

b) Do YJS practitioners have manageable workloads, given the nature of their workload and the range of work undertaken?

Guidance:

YJS practitioners should be able to manage the work they are undertaking effectively within the hours available, most of the time. Workloads should be reasonable so that practitioners can deliver high-quality services, and relational, evidence-based and personalised work with children. This should include when staff are absent, whether this is planned or unplanned.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- completed organisational data spreadsheet
- organisational structure chart, and a structure chart identifying where the service sits within the local authority
- copy of the most recent youth justice strategic plan
- details of any seconded staff, including vacancies
- domain two evidence

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)

- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)
- staff and volunteer survey

Judgement:

Where YJS practitioners are able to deliver high-quality, relational, evidence-based and personalised work within the hours available, most of the time, there should be a positive judgement.

Where YJS practitioners are unable to deliver high-quality, relational, evidence-based and personalised work within the hours available, most of the time, there should be a negative judgement.

c) Do YJS specialist staff have manageable workloads, given the nature of their workload and the range of work undertaken?

Guidance:

YJS specialist staff should be able to manage the work they are undertaking effectively within the hours available, most of the time. Workloads should be reasonable so that these staff can deliver high-quality services, and relational, evidence-based and personalised work with children. This should include when staff are absent, whether this is planned or unplanned.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- completed organisational data spreadsheet
- organisational structure chart, and a structure chart identifying where the service sits within the local authority
- copy of the most recent youth justice strategic plan
- details of any seconded staff, including vacancies
- domain two evidence

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)
- staff and volunteer survey

Judgement:

Where YJS specialist staff are able to deliver high-quality, relational, evidence-based and personalised work within the hours available, most of the time, there should be a positive judgement.

Where YJS specialist are unable to deliver high-quality, relational, evidence-based and personalised work within the hours available, most of the time, there should be a negative judgement.

d) Do support staff have manageable workloads, allowing them to support YJS work effectively?

Guidance:

YJS support staff should be able to manage the work they are undertaking effectively within the hours available, most of the time. Workloads should be reasonable so that these staff can support YJS practitioners and specialists can deliver high-quality services, and relational, evidence-based and personalised work with children. This should include when staff are absent, whether this is planned or unplanned.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- completed organisational data spreadsheet
- organisational structure chart, and a structure chart identifying where the service sits within the local authority
- copy of the most recent youth justice strategic plan
- details of any seconded staff, including vacancies
- domain two evidence

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)
- staff and volunteer survey

Judgement:

Where YJS support staff are able to deliver high-quality, relational, evidence-based and personalised work within the hours available, most of the time, there should be a positive judgement.

Where YJS support are unable to deliver high-quality, relational, evidence-based and personalised work within the hours available, most of the time, there should be a negative judgement.

e) Do leaders and managers have manageable workloads?

Guidance:

YJS leaders and managers should be able to manage the work they are undertaking effectively within the hours available, most of the time. Workloads should be reasonable so that these leaders and managers can ensure that high-quality services and relational, evidence based and personalised work are delivered for children. This should include when any staff are absent, whether this is planned or unplanned.

The extent to which middle managers are responsible for other areas of business or administrative support is relevant, as are the size of the geographical area they are responsible for and the number of office locations. Middle managers should be in a position to provide effective supervision and support for their staff, to hold them accountable for their work, and to support and develop them.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- completed organisational data spreadsheet
- organisational structure chart, and a structure chart identifying where the service sits within the local authority
- copy of the most recent youth justice strategic plan
- details of any seconded staff, including vacancies
- domain two evidence

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)
- staff and volunteer survey

Judgement:

Where YJS leaders and managers are able to enable high-quality, relational, evidence-based and personalised work within the hours available, most of the time, there should be a positive judgement.

Where YJS leaders and managers are unable to enable high-quality, relational, evidence-based and personalised work within the hours available, most of the time, there should be a negative judgement.

f) Are workloads managed actively, with resources being redeployed when this is reasonable and necessary, in response to local pressures?

Guidance:

Work should be allocated appropriately and workloads monitored and adjusted as necessary to ensure that caseloads are reasonable and suitable for the nature of the work being undertaken. Managers should actively and effectively oversee workloads, with support and challenge where appropriate. Indications that managers are doing this include staff reporting that there is active and effective management oversight of their work, and that they are supported well, and challenged where appropriate. It should be evident that management oversight supports high-quality, relational, evidence-based, personalised work and that it contributes to achieving positive outcomes and keeping children and communities safe.

Work should be allocated appropriately, with workloads monitored and adjusted as necessary. There should be evidence that this is the case consistently across all roles in the YJS. There should be a clear set of priorities in place to signify which work or tasks should take precedence in times of significant pressure and there should be evidence that appropriate tasks are prioritised. Pressures, such as sickness, parental leave, resignations, and spikes in workload, may require that resources be redeployed. In addition to prioritising work, this could include moving staff between tasks or locations, or bringing in additional resources, such as sessional or agency staff. Active management should aim to maintain the quality of work and prioritise those who pose the greatest risk. Managers should not simply be firefighting.

Managers should take care to avoid role overload or role drift. Role overload is a situation that results from an individual taking on a role or multiple roles in which they are asked to do more than they are capable of doing in a specific period of time (quantitative overload) or where they are stretched beyond their knowledge, skills, and abilities (qualitative overload). Role drift occurs where core work duties for a specific role or grade are undertaken increasingly by other staff, typically where work is delegated to more junior staff.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- completed organisational data spreadsheet
- organisational structure chart, and a structure chart identifying where the service sits within the local authority
- copy of the most recent youth justice strategic plan
- details of any seconded staff, including vacancies
- domain two evidence

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)
- staff and volunteer survey

Judgement:

Where processes are in place to move work or staffing resources in response to local pressures, and there are examples of this happening appropriately, there should be a positive judgement.

Where there are no processes in place to move work or staffing resources in response to local pressures, and no examples of this happening appropriately, there should be a negative judgement.

1.2.2 Do the skills and profile of staff support the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service to achieve positive change and keep children and communities safe?

a) Does the workforce reflect adequately the diversity of the local population?

Guidance:

The YJS should have up-to-date information about the profile of the workforce, mapped against the profile of the children it is supervising.

YJSs should be taking action to achieve a workforce that reflects the diversity of the local communities it serves; this is to promote understanding and confidence in delivery, and to ensure that services are designed to best meet the needs of children. YJS leaders should be aware of the diversity of their workforce and be working proactively to ensure that there is consistency with the local population. There should be up-to-date information about the profile of the workforce across all roles. Where the profile of the workforce does not reflect the diversity profile of the local population, there should be action under way to address this.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- completed organisational data spreadsheet
- details of any seconded staff, including vacancies

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service

- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)
- staff and volunteer survey

Judgement:

Where diversity across all roles reflects the diversity of the wider population adequately, there should be a positive judgement.

Where diversity across the workforce, including managers, staff, and volunteers, does not reflect the diversity of the wider population adequately, and this is not understood and/or no action is being taken to address it, there should be a negative judgement.

b) Do the skills and diversity of the workforce meet the needs of children?

Guidance:

In their workforce, YJSs should ensure they have the right balance of skills and diversity to meet children's needs. This includes, but is not limited to:

A range of operational staff with:

- skills in managing children with different levels of risk of harm and vulnerability, male and female children, those experiencing or perpetrating domestic abuse, children displaying sexually harmful behaviour and those associated with gangs
- skills in using a range of assessment tools
- a range of intervention skills, including group work if applicable
- skills in working with a range of partner agencies and the voluntary sector.

Volunteers who:

- have knowledge and experience of supporting children
- mentor children
- act as 'appropriate adults'
- support and chair Referral Order panels.

Support staff who can:

- support case supervision
- manage facilities
- support the delivery of front- and back-office processes.

Managers who can manage:

- operations
- people
- partnerships

- information
- resources.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- completed organisational data spreadsheet
- details of any seconded staff, including vacancies
- domain two evidence

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)
- staff and volunteer survey

Judgement:

Where the skills and diversity of the workforce are sufficient to meet the needs of children, there should be a positive judgement.

Where the skills and diversity of the workforce are insufficient to meet the needs of children, there should be a negative judgement.

c) Is work with children allocated to staff who are appropriately qualified and/or experienced?

Guidance:

The YJS should have a clear policy for allocating medium, high and very high risk of harm cases, and cases with safety and wellbeing concerns. Processes for allocating cases should be implemented effectively and monitored to ensure that staff who hold medium, high and very high risk of harm cases, and cases with safety and wellbeing concerns, are suitably qualified and/or experienced. These cases should not be allocated to unqualified or inexperienced staff. The YJS should have in place procedures to determine who is suitably qualified and/or experienced to hold those cases. The YJS should hold a regular risk panel, chaired by a manager, where cases are discussed and reviewed and resources are allocated according to need.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document

- completed organisational data spreadsheet
- details of any seconded staff, including vacancies
- domain two evidence

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)
- staff and volunteer survey

Judgement:

Where work with children is allocated in a way that ensures effective management of risk and the addressing of safety and wellbeing concerns, there should be a positive judgement.

Where work with children is not allocated in a way that ensures effective management of risk and/or the addressing of safety and wellbeing concerns, there should be a negative judgement.

d) Are the learning needs of staff identified and met?

Guidance:

The YJS should have systems in place to identify the learning needs of its entire staff, including volunteers, together with an up-to-date (within the last 12 months) training needs profile/analysis. The YJS should be able to demonstrate that it plans for, and responds effectively to, the identified learning needs of staff and volunteers, both for the staff group as a whole and where individual needs have been identified. Learning needs should be reviewed regularly.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- completed organisational data spreadsheet
- overview of staff training for case managers and middle managers in last 12 months

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)

- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)
- staff and volunteer survey

Judgement:

Where there are effective systems in place that identify the learning needs of staff, and these learning needs are met, there should be a positive judgement.

Where there are ineffective systems in place for identifying the learning needs of staff, and/or these learning needs are not met, there should be a negative judgement.

e) Is a culture of learning and continuous improvement actively promoted?

Guidance:

The YJS should be able to demonstrate that it promotes and values a culture of learning and continuous improvement. There should be quality assurance/auditing processes in place to support continuous improvement, for example dip-sampling of cases, case reviews and peer support opportunities. The YJS should respond to inspection recommendations, both those specific to the YJS, and those from thematic inspections. The YJS should be able to demonstrate how it uses learning from situations that have gone wrong to improve services.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- any available data about the proportions of children aged 10 to 17 in the YJS area who are Black, Asian or minority ethnic (this data may be available from the local authority)
- any available data analysing the protected characteristics of children working with the YJS (including race and ethnic origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation and any other factors for which there is available data) across different disposals
- copy of any equity, diversity, disproportionality and/or inclusion policies and/or action plans to address the impact of findings from data analysis
- any available data analysing the levels of risk of serious harm and safety and wellbeing of children, across different disposals
- any relevant audits or evaluation of the quality of work with children

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)
- staff and volunteer survey

Judgement:

Where the YJS is committed to a culture of learning and continuous improvement and can evidence a range of recent (in the last 12 months) examples of how this is working in practice, there should be a positive judgement.

Where the YJS does not have a culture of learning and continuous improvement, there should be a negative judgement.

f) Is the potential of staff identified and developed?

Guidance:

YJSs should identify and support staff potential. This can be done in a variety of ways, such as coaching, mentoring, job-shadowing and temporary promotions, to provide opportunities for staff to test out their capabilities and fit for more senior roles. YJSs should identify staff from under-represented groups and provide them with opportunities that will prepare them for advancement.

Developing staff is critical to ensure an adequate supply of qualified, suitable, experienced and trained staff to fill key roles as they become vacant. It is also an important part of staff development and an important motivator to encourage staff to improve and progress. YJSs should have a strategy in place for succession planning as part of their staff development arrangements. The strategy should include how staff are identified and considered for progression in line with the YJS's diversity and equal opportunities.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- completed organisational data spreadsheet
- organisational structure chart, and a structure chart identifying where the service sits within the local authority
- overview of staff training for case managers and middle managers in last 12 months
- details of any seconded staff, including vacancies

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)
- staff and volunteer survey

Judgement:

Where there is a strategic approach to succession planning and clear examples of where this has operated in practice with individuals, there should be a positive judgement.

Where there is not a strategic approach to succession planning and/or clear examples of where this has operated in practice with individuals, there should be a negative judgement.

1.2.3 Does the oversight of work support high-quality delivery and professional development to achieve positive change and keep children and communities safe?

a) Is an effective induction programme, that addresses issues of diversity and is accessible to all, delivered to all new staff?

Guidance:

The YJS should have an effective induction programme that includes comprehensive and timely induction processes for all staff joining the YJS. Generic information about working at the YJS should form part of the programme, regardless of role. As a minimum, this should include equity and diversity, health and safety arrangements, first aid, safeguarding, an overview of the youth justice system, the range of work the YJS is involved in and the functions of staff within the YJS. The induction programme should also offer flexibility so that it can be tailored to the individual staff member's role, their skills and experience and any learning needs identified. Induction programme materials should be well prepared and presented in a readily accessible way, for example an induction pack may comprise briefings, one-to-one sessions, group sessions, workbooks, presentations and IT resources. There should be effective oversight of induction processes to ensure the various elements are completed in a satisfactory and timely manner.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- an overview of the induction programme and expectations for completion

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)
- staff and volunteer survey

Judgement:

Where there is a consistent, comprehensive and accessible approach to induction, which is confirmed by recently appointed staff, there should be a positive judgement.

Where the approach to induction is inconsistent, limited or inaccessible and/or there are examples of recent staff who have not been through an induction process, there should be a negative judgement.

b) Do staff receive effective child-focused supervision that supports them and enables them to take a relational approach to working with children?

Guidance:

Staff and volunteers at all levels across the YJS should receive effective supervision, and this should be tailored to the nature of their work and their stage of development and individual learning needs. It should pay attention to personal support and development, as well as accountability for work within the individual's role or job description. It may include group supervision. YJSs should have a supervision policy that sets out how supervision is to be conducted, its aims, how frequently it should happen, and what supervisees can expect. Any links to appraisal policies should be clear. Supervision should be part of the YJS's quality assurance processes.

Supervision should be prioritised and take place regularly, for example monthly depending on the level of experience of the staff member. The focus should not be limited to ensuring that targets are met; it should also include how staff are learning, developing and applying skills that will improve the quality of work with children. Sufficient time and space must be set aside for supervision to enable discussion about individual children. For those individuals delivering interventions directly with children, it may include live supervision to provide feedback on the quality of their interventions, the skills they have demonstrated and areas for improvement. Managers should recognise that working in a relational way with some children is emotionally demanding and ensure that appropriate support is in place where needed if staff are to continue to deliver high-quality work without burning out.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- supervision and quality assurance policy and process

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)
- staff and volunteer survey

Judgement:

Where there are supervision arrangements that support staff to deliver effective, relational work with children, there should be a positive judgement.

Where supervision arrangements do not support staff to deliver effective, relational work with children, there should be a negative judgement.

c) Are there effective management oversight arrangements that enhance and sustain the quality of work with children?

Guidance:

Effective management oversight is much more than countersigning. It includes elements of quality assurance, staff supervision, dealing with developing areas of concern in work with individual children, and facilitating improvements in practice. It focuses particularly on ensuring that actual or potential victims and children themselves are protected sufficiently from harm. Our full policy statement on management oversight can be found here: [HM Inspectorate of Probation management oversight \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmip/probation/management-oversight/).

Oversight of risk of harm and work to achieve safety for children and the community is different from regular staff supervision and the general oversight of practice. However, it may sometimes be undertaken at the same time, and discussions in supervision may help to identify the need for management oversight. In particular, management oversight should focus on cases that YJSs have assessed as medium or higher risk of harm to others or as a medium or higher level of safety and wellbeing needs. However, managers should also be aware of, and actively monitoring, cases that are not currently assessed at these levels of risk of harm or safety and wellbeing but have the potential to increase.

Effective management oversight takes account of the unique demands of working with an individual child, and the skills, knowledge and experience of the practitioner. A skilled manager, taking a fresh look at a case and exercising professional curiosity, can encourage a practitioner to exercise respectful uncertainty and critical thinking, address any misplaced professional optimism and take a balanced and informed view. This promotes defensible decision-making and enables the practitioner to feel confident and supported to manage risk and identify appropriate interventions and responses. This requires sufficiently trained managers and staff, a professionally curious approach, and sufficient resources being available to allow for effective management oversight to take place.

Whichever level management oversight is at – the quality of assurance of process, supervisory oversight, or the management of immediate risk – effective management oversight should produce sufficient assurance that all that should be done is being done.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- domain two evidence
- management oversight policy

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)
- staff and volunteer survey

Judgement:

Where the management oversight arrangements and activity show a positive difference to the quality of work undertaken, there should be a positive judgement.

Where the management oversight arrangements and activity are inconsistent and/or do not make a positive difference to the quality of work undertaken, there should be a negative judgement.

d) Is the appraisal process used effectively to ensure that staff are delivering a high-quality service?

Guidance:

Staff should be appraised at least annually within a performance management framework, in accordance with their role and identified development needs. Performance management should be used to actively improve services. For seconded staff, there should be cohesive links between the YJS and parent organisation in respect of the appraisal process. Appraisals should contain realistic objectives to enhance practice and performance; they should make it clear to the member of staff how they are performing, providing both affirmation and developmental feedback.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- domain two evidence
- appraisal/staff performance policy and process

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)
- staff and volunteer survey

Judgement:

Where effective and regular appraisals are routinely conducted, with appropriate objectives set, there should be a positive judgement.

Where appraisals are not effectively and routinely conducted, and/or appropriate objectives are not set, there should be a negative judgement.

e) Is poor staff performance identified and addressed?

Guidance:

The YJS should have in place formal procedures for addressing staff competence; this should enable poor performance to be identified and responded to robustly. The lead inspector should check that, where poor performance has been identified, the YJS is transparent with those members of staff about the deficits in their practice, and that improvements in practice are monitored effectively. Quality assurance processes should be used to drive improvements in performance and the quality of services provided to children.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- appraisal/staff performance policy and process

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)
- staff and volunteer survey

Judgement:

Where the YJS identifies underperformance and then consistently applies effective performance improvement processes, there should be a positive judgement.

Where the YJS does not identify underperformance and/or does not consistently apply effective performance improvement processes, there should be a negative judgement.

f) Where volunteers and mentors are used, are they supported to fulfil clearly defined roles?

Guidance:

Volunteers and mentors refer to people from a range of backgrounds, including those who may have lived experience of the criminal justice system. Everyone should be recruited and selected safely by interview, following Disclosure and Barring Service checks and with references taken up; for those with previous experience of the criminal justice system, the process and decisions made should be signed off by a manager with an appropriate level of seniority.

Clear role descriptions should apply, and tasks should be defined carefully. Volunteers and mentors should be supported, with arrangements for appropriate supervision in place. There should be clear accountability for work through a defined management structure, and appropriate training and supervision. Care should be taken when matching people to tasks and individuals, and records of activity must be maintained and shared with relevant practitioners and entered into case management systems.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- organisational structure chart
- domain two evidence

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)

Judgement:

Where the YJS has a clear policy for recruiting, selecting, training, supporting, supervising and deploying volunteers and mentors, there should be a positive judgement.

Where the YJS does not have a clear policy for recruiting, selecting, training, supporting, supervising and deploying volunteers and mentors, there should be a negative judgement.

1.3 Partnerships and services

A comprehensive range of high-quality, personalised, and responsive services are in place, achieving positive change and keeping children and communities safe.

1.3.1 Does the YJS have a comprehensive and up-to-date analysis of the profile of children that it uses to deliver well-targeted services?

a) Is there an up-to-date analysis of all children's needs?

Guidance:

The YJS should have an up-to-date analysis of the needs presented by the children that they work with. It is essential that the YJS has a comprehensive understanding, at both strategic and operational level, of presenting needs. The YJS should have completed this analysis within the past 12 months using approved assessment tools and other research and information, including the perspectives of both staff and children.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- any available data about the proportions of children aged 10 to 17 in the YJS area who are Black, Asian or minority ethnic (this data may be available from the local authority)
- any available data analysing the protected characteristics of children working with the YJS (including race and ethnic origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation and any other factors for which there is available data) across different disposals
- any available data analysing the levels of risk of serious harm and safety and wellbeing of children, across different disposals

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service

Judgement:

Where there is an analysis of children's needs that has been completed in the last 12 months, there should be a positive judgement.

Where an analysis of children's needs has not been completed in the last 12 months, there should be a negative judgement.

b) Does the analysis pay sufficient attention to factors relating to achieving positive change and keeping children and communities safe?

Guidance:

The YJS's needs analysis should demonstrate that it has a comprehensive understanding of the safety and wellbeing risks to the children in its cohort, and of the risk of harm they pose to others. This should enable the YJS to target resources where it can best meet needs in order to achieve positive change with children and keep children and communities safe. It should include custodial sentences, court orders, out-of-court disposals, bail and remand

and the needs of children using appropriate adult services. There should be both a volume and quality of information available.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- any relevant audits or evaluation of the quality of work with children
- any available data analysing the protected characteristics of children working with the YJS (including race and ethnic origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation and any other factors for which there is available data) across different disposals
- any available data analysing the levels of risk of serious harm and safety and wellbeing of children, across different disposals
- current (within the last 12 months) analysis of offending by and desistance of children, which pays sufficient attention to the safety and wellbeing risks to children in its cohort, and to the risk of harm they pose to others
- the analysis should be sufficiently segmented to provide an informed profile of geography, age group and gender, types of offence and sentences/out-of-court disposals/bail and remand/appropriate adult services

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service

Judgement:

Where the analysis of children's needs is comprehensive and addresses factors to achieve positive change and keep children and communities safe across all types of interventions, there should be a positive judgement.

Where the analysis of children's needs is not comprehensive and/or insufficiently addresses factors to achieve positive change and keep children and communities safe across all types of interventions, there should be a negative judgement.

c) Does the analysis pay sufficient attention to diversity factors and to issues of disproportionality?

Guidance:

In order to ensure that services are available, appropriate and equally effective for groups of children with different diversity characteristics, it is important that the YJS knows and is able to act on the basis of the needs of different groups of children. The YJS should be able to demonstrate an understanding of where groups with different diversity characteristics are disproportionately represented and what it is doing about this with other criminal justice partners. Examples may include proposals for sentences, assessments of risk of harm, types of interventions and breach proceedings. The YJS should have completed a diversity impact assessment.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- any available data analysing the protected characteristics of children working with the YJS (including race and ethnic origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation and any other factors for which there is available data) across different disposals
- any available data analysing the levels of risk of serious harm and safety and wellbeing of children across different disposals
- current (within the last 12 months) analysis of offending by and desistance of children, which pays sufficient attention to the safety and wellbeing risks to children in its cohort, and to the risk of harm they pose to others

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service

Judgement:

Where relevant information about the needs of children, segmented by protected characteristics, has been collected and analysed to inform the planning and commissioning of services, explaining and addressing issues of disproportionality, there should be a positive judgement.

Where relevant information about the needs of children, has not been collected and analysed to inform the planning and commissioning of services and/or is not segmented by protected characteristics and/or does not explain and address issues of disproportionality, there should be a negative judgement.

d) Is there sufficient analysis of local patterns of sentencing, offence types and the use of out-of-court disposals?

Guidance:

To plan and deliver appropriate services and interventions in its area, the YJS must analyse patterns of offending, and the numbers, type and trends of sentences passed over time. Patterns of offending are likely to be aggregated but should be supplemented by more specific information about the prevalence of types of serious offending by children, for example gang-related or sexually harmful behaviour. The YJS should benchmark its analysis of the trends and patterns of sentencing against national and regional figures to identify significant variations.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- any available data analysing the protected characteristics of children working with the YJS (including race and ethnic origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation and any other factors for which there is available data) across different disposals

- any available data analysing the levels of risk of serious harm and safety and wellbeing of children across different disposals
- current (within the last 12 months) analysis of offending by and desistance of children, which pays sufficient attention to the safety and wellbeing risks to children in its cohort, and to the risk of harm they pose to others

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service

Judgement:

Where the YJS has considered and analysed the most recent local offending and sentencing data from the police force and judicial areas they cover, and has used this to plan an appropriate response, there should be a positive judgement.

Where the YJS has not considered and sufficiently analysed the most recent local offending and sentencing data from the police force and judicial areas they cover, and/or has not used this to plan an appropriate response, there should be a negative judgement.

e) Is the analysis used effectively to drive service delivery?

Guidance:

In order to ensure that appropriate and well-targeted services are planned and delivered, the YJS's analysis should produce sufficient meaningful information to influence service delivery. The analysis should include offending, desistance, safety and wellbeing, risk of harm to others and diversity factors, as well as sentencing and offence types. The YJS should be able to demonstrate that it has used the analysis to inform the planning and provision of appropriate services and interventions.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- copy of the most recent youth justice strategic plan
- management board minutes from the last 12 months
- analysis of feedback from children, parent and carers, and accompanying action plans
- any relevant audits or evaluation of the quality of work with children
- directory of projects, activities and services available for children

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)

Judgement:

Where the YJS has collected and analysed enough information about children's needs to inform effective service delivery, and has fully considered issues of disproportionality, there should be a positive judgement.

Where the YJS has not collected and analysed enough information about children's needs to inform effective service delivery, and/or has not fully considered issues of disproportionality, there should be a negative judgement.

f) Does the analysis incorporate the views of children, parents, and carers about the services they receive?

Guidance:

To provide the right range of services and interventions, which are responsive to individual needs, it is essential that the YJS has a well-informed understanding of the reasons why children have offended and what will help them to stop offending. The YJS should have completed an analysis of this within the past year and may have called it 'a strategic needs assessment'. This should actively incorporate the views of children and families about the range of services and interventions that they receive.

The analysis should include factors relating to the achievement of positive outcomes with children and keeping children and communities safe. For example:

- strength of professional relationships and engagement
- social and family contexts
- diversity needs
- opportunities for change, participation and community integration
- levels of motivation
- sense of identity and self-worth
- opportunities for engaging in restorative justice
- accommodation
- education, training and employment
- finance, benefits and debt
- relationships
- emotional wellbeing, including mental health
- drug misuse
- alcohol misuse
- thinking and behaviour
- attitudes to offending.

Evidence:

EiA

- analysis of feedback from children, parents and carers, and accompanying action plans
- child, parent and carer engagement strategies

- directory of projects, activities and services available for children

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)

Judgement:

Where service planning and commissioning are based on a comprehensive analysis of children's needs and risks, and identify how these will be met, there should be a positive judgement.

Where service planning and commissioning are not based on a comprehensive analysis of children's needs and risks, and/or do not identify how these will be met, there should be a negative judgement.

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

a) Are there effective arrangements to ensure access to the right specialist, mainstream and follow-on services to meet the needs of all children?

The YJS should have arrangements in place that ensure all children have access to the right specialist, mainstream and follow-on services and interventions to meet their needs. This should include, but is not limited to:

- accommodation
- education, training and employment
- family and relationships (such as parenting and family support, domestic abuse support, family group conferencing, and mentoring)
- groups and gangs
- mental health
- physical health
- wellbeing
- sexual health
- reparation
- children's social care
- speech, language and communication needs
- substance misuse
- offending behaviour work.

The analysis of needs identified in 1.3.1 should lead to the planning and provision of, and referral to, an appropriate range of specialist and mainstream services to address these needs, to promote positive outcomes and keep children and communities safe. The YJS should have undertaken a gap analysis to identify where there is a lack of provision and have plans to address this. Provision may be made internally by the YJS, or it may be commissioned from, or delivered in partnership or through a referral pathway with other organisations providing specialist services, such as substance misuse services. Services

should be provided in ways that are accessible and appropriate to the circumstances of children and in sufficient quantity to avoid waiting lists under normal circumstances. Services should be made available to both post-court cases and to those subject to out-of-court disposals.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- most recent submission of KPI data to the YJB (if not included with the board minutes)
- any relevant audits or evaluation of the quality of work with children
- directory of projects, activities and services available for children
- copy of any equity, diversity, disproportionality and/or inclusion policies and/or action plans to address the impact of findings from data analysis
- domain two evidence

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)
- multi-agency case discussions of work with children

Judgement:

Where there are effective arrangements to ensure that the right services are available to meet children's needs, there should be a positive judgement.

Where there are ineffective arrangements that do not ensure that the right services are available to meet children's needs, there should be a negative judgement.

b) Are services available in a timely manner for all children?

Guidance:

Services should be available to children without excessive waiting times. This requires services to be resourced sufficiently to meet demand flexibly. For individual children, acceptable waiting times will be determined by their needs and the length of time that they will be working with the YJS.

Appropriate services should be available to children, without excessive travelling times. Excessive travelling times are defined as in excess of one hour travelling time each way. Ideally, they should be readily accessible by public transport, for example within a reasonable walking distance of a rail station/bus route. Where YJS premises, venues and sites are geographically distant, as in sparsely populated rural areas, then the YJS should

consider how it can support children's engagement without requiring excessive travel time. For example, it could provide opportunities for children to receive face-to-face services at locations nearer to where they live.

There should be travel policies in place which specify reasonable travel expectations for accessing services and how children will be supported.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- most recent submission of KPI data to the YJB (if not included with the board minutes)
- any relevant audits or evaluation of the quality of work with children
- directory of projects, activities and services available for children
- copy of any equity, diversity, disproportionality and/or inclusion policies and/or action plans to address the impact of findings from data analysis
- travel policy (for children)
- domain two evidence

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)
- multi-agency case discussions of work with children

Judgement:

Where there is sufficient access to provision to meet the needs of all children, with waiting lists that are not excessive, and acceptable travelling times, there should be a positive judgement.

Where access to provision does not meet the needs of all children and/or waiting lists are excessive, and/or travelling times are unacceptable, there should be a negative judgement.

c) Are building strengths, future focus and enhancing resilience central to the delivery of services?

Guidance:

In order to achieve positive change and keep children and communities safe, the YJS needs to work actively to build on the child's personal strengths and protective factors. There should be an organisational approach that supports staff to work with children's strengths and protective factors, and services in place that also build on this. The YJS arrangements should support staff, giving them the time and space to build effective relationships with

children and use these relationships to enhance children's resilience and help them to focus on their future through a strengths-building approach. Interventions should also be in place to support and enhance lifestyle and personal factors such as parenting and family support, self-esteem, relationships with pro-social peers, engagement in positive activities, mentoring initiatives and other projects to enhance social inclusion for children.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- copy of the most recent youth justice strategic plan
- management board minutes from the last 12 months
- any YJS policies that cover risk of harm, safety and wellbeing, delivery of work with children, out-of-court disposals, resettlement, bail and remand and restorative practice (if a policy is in the process of being updated and in draft form, we will accept this)
- child, parent and carer engagement strategies
- any relevant audits or evaluation of the quality of work with children
- directory of projects, activities and services available for children
- overview of staff training for case managers and middle managers in last 12 months
- details of any seconded staff, including vacancies
- any available data about the proportions of children
- copy of any equity, diversity, disproportionality and/or inclusion policies and/or action plans to address the impact of findings from data analysis
- any available data analysing the levels of risk of serious harm and safety and wellbeing of children across different disposals
- domain two evidence

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)
- multi-agency case discussions of work with children

Judgement:

Where the YJS actively enables staff to work with children in a way that builds strengths, is future-focused and enhances resilience, there should be a positive judgement.

Where there are barriers to staff working with children in a way that builds strengths, is future-focused and enhances resilience, there should be negative judgement.

d) Are services to children delivered in safe places?

Guidance:

Work delivered directly by the YJS and by those services to which children are referred should provide a safe environment. Premises, venues and sites should provide a safe environment for both staff and children, along with any partner agencies, providers and other members of the public who use them. Children should feel safe, both in the places where services are delivered and in their journeys to and from those services. The YJS should be actively considering this for all children.

Children should be safe, and feel safe, in the environments where they are supervised by the YJS. Arrangements for physical security, including the logging and monitoring of visitors and staff attendance, should be in place. Where there are concerns about the potential for conflict between particular children, for example rival gang members, then arrangements should be in place for them to report separately. There should be a system of incident alarms and clear procedures for responding to these. A lone working policy and procedure should be in place, along with guidance on making home visits.

There should be up-to-date and appropriate health and safety risk assessments in place for all the premises, venues and sites the YJS uses to deliver services to children. The YJS should acknowledge that health and safety is everybody's business and that everyone has a role to play in ensuring this. A member of staff should be appropriately qualified and trained to fulfil a lead health and safety role. Health and safety inductions should be provided for all new staff (including inspectors) who use the delivery environments. There should be a guide for each delivery environment that sets out the health and safety arrangements, along with a log of accidents and incidents, health and safety inspections, emergency equipment tests and fire drills in order to comply with relevant health and safety regulations. Adequate fire detection, protection and evacuation equipment, processes and procedures should be in place and there should be evidence of regular and recent testing. First aid facilities and support from trained staff member(s) should be available and clearly signed.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- any YJS policies that cover risk of harm, safety and wellbeing, delivery of work with children, out-of-court disposals, resettlement, bail and remand and restorative practice (if a policy is in the process of being updated and in draft form, we will accept this)
- domain two evidence

Fieldwork

- context visit, for the lead and deputy lead inspector to understand the context within which the youth justice service is working and where children are living, to understand the impact that locations and geography have on achieving positive outcomes for children
- meeting with the YJS head of service

- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)

Judgement:

Where YJS delivery environments are safe for children, staff and other users, there should be a positive judgement.

Where YJS delivery environments are unsafe for children, staff and/or other users, there should be a negative judgement.

e) Are services to children delivered in accessible places?

Guidance:

Work delivered directly by the YJS and by those services to which children are referred should be delivered from premises, venues and sites that are accessible for children. This applies to all sites that the YJS uses. The YJS should make reasonable adjustments to premises, venues and sites, where necessary, so that they are accessible to children and their parents or carers with disabilities, or whose first language is not English.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- any YJS policies that cover risk of harm, safety and wellbeing, delivery of work with children, out-of-court disposals, resettlement, bail and remand and restorative practice (if a policy is in the process of being updated and in draft form, we will accept this)
- domain two evidence

Fieldwork

- context visit, for the lead and deputy lead inspector to understand the context within which the youth justice service is working and where children are living, to understand the impact that locations and geography have on achieving positive outcomes for children
- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)

Judgement:

Where services are delivered in places that are accessible for children, there should be a positive judgement.

Where services are delivered in places that are not accessible for children, there should be a negative judgement.

f) Do delivery environments enable appropriate relational, strengths-based, personalised work to be undertaken?

Guidance:

The environment where children attend for their supervision should provide a confidential interviewing space where children can be seen without the possibility of being overheard, including in buildings that are shared with other services and members of the public. Environments should be appropriate to the protected characteristics of the children attending and, where relevant, have suitably sized and equipped groupwork space(s).

There should be comfortable, non-threatening spaces that are conducive to effective engagement and building relationships with children and the delivery of personalised work, including:

- a suitable reception environment
- rooms that are appropriately decorated, furnished, signed and well lit
- positive images, such as rehabilitative posters and quotes
- information available in a variety of formats and languages
- suitably sized rooms for group activities
- staff, volunteers or mentors to meet and greet children
- separate secure office space for staff
- premises should be well planned and thought through, potentially with input from children.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- domain two evidence
- child, parent and carer engagement strategies
- any relevant audits or evaluation of the quality of work with children
- directory of projects, activities and services available for children

Fieldwork

- context visit, for the lead and deputy lead inspector to understand the context in which the YJS is working and where children are living, to understand the impact locations and geography have on achieving positive outcomes for children
- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)

Judgement:

Where delivery environments are appropriate for the delivery of relational, personalised work to all children, there should be a positive judgement.

Where delivery environments are not appropriate for the delivery of relational, personalised work to all children, there should be negative judgement.

g) Are diversity factors and issues of disproportionality addressed sufficiently in the way that services are delivered?

Guidance:

YJSs should have plans that set out how the diverse needs of children with protected characteristics are to be met, either through inclusion or specialist provision. The range of services provided and commissioned should be appropriate to meet children's diversity needs, which should be well considered and integrated into the services that are being delivered. Services should be reviewed with sufficient frequency to ensure they are the right ones to meet the diversity needs of children within the current YJS cohort. Where there is evidence of disproportionality, then the YJS should pay particular attention to providing appropriate services or additional support for the children affected by this.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- any relevant audits or evaluation of the quality of work with children
- directory of projects, activities and services available for children
- any available data about the proportions of children aged 10 to 17 in the YJS area who are Black, Asian or minority ethnic (this data may be available from the local authority)
- any available data analysing the protected characteristics of children working with the YJS (including race and ethnic origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation and any other factors for which there is available data) across different disposals
- copy of any equity, diversity, disproportionality and/or inclusion policies and/or action plans to address the impact of findings from data analysis

Fieldwork

- multi-agency case discussions on work with children
- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- multi-agency case discussions of work with children
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)

Judgement:

Where diversity factors and issues of disproportionality are addressed sufficiently in the delivery of services, there should be a positive judgement.

Where diversity factors and issues of disproportionality are addressed insufficiently in the delivery of services, there should be a negative judgement.

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

a) Are there effective collaborative arrangements with partners and providers to achieve positive change for all children?

Guidance:

There should be effective relationships with partners and providers of services who deliver specialist and mainstream services to children during their time working with the YJS and beyond. To achieve positive change, children must be able to access services that are available more widely in the community.

The YJS should actively participate in partnership arrangements that enable children to access appropriate specialist and mainstream services, both during and after their sentence, with agreed referral pathways. These partners and providers include Children's Trusts, the LSCP, the LCJB, health and wellbeing boards, further education and training establishments, housing strategies, substance misuse commissioning and Community Safety Partnerships. Effective communication is a key part of such arrangements. Protocols, agreements and communication channels should be in place with partners and providers to ensure that the specialist and mainstream services being provided support desistance. Any emerging tensions, such as barriers to children accessing services because of their convictions, for example training provision, should be managed and resolved effectively. Where the inspector identifies significant gaps in accessing key mainstream or specialist service provision are identified, they should be satisfied that robust and credible plans are in place to address this.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- copy of the most recent youth justice strategic plan
- management board minutes from the last 12 months
- most recent submission of KPI data to the YJB (if not included with the board minutes)
- any YJS policies that cover risk of harm, safety and wellbeing, delivery of work with children, out-of-court disposals, resettlement, bail and remand and restorative practice (if a policy is in the process of being updated and in draft form, we will accept this)
- any relevant audits or evaluation of the quality of work with children
- directory of projects, activities and services available for children
- domain two evidence

Fieldwork

- multi-agency case discussions on work with children
- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)

Judgement:

Where the YJS has effective collaborative relationships to achieve positive change for children with key specialist and mainstream providers, there should be a positive judgement.

Where the YJS does not have effective collaborative relationships to achieve positive change for children with key specialist and mainstream providers, there should be a negative judgement.

b) Are there effective collaborative arrangements with partners and providers to achieve safety for children and communities?

The YJS is a statutory partner of the LSCP. YJS managers should be involved in local child safeguarding arrangements at LSCP board level. YJS staff should participate in relevant sub-groups, for example for training and quality assurance. It is essential that the YJS has effective communication and established procedures with the LSCP, the local authority children's social care team and the police, and that these procedures are working effectively in managing the safety and wellbeing of children.

The YJS should be proactively involved in collaborative multi-agency risk management and safeguarding arrangements (MASA) or their equivalent. It should also be involved in arrangements for children who are missing from home or care, or at risk of child criminal exploitation (CCE) or child sexual exploitation (CSE), for example the missing children forum. There should be good working relationships, communication and engagement at all levels in the YJS. Senior managers should be engaging with their counterparts at a strategic level to ensure that working arrangements are effective; middle managers should be working to improve communication and resolve problems; and practitioners should be following key agreements, protocols and pathways to ensure that information is exchanged and referrals dealt with appropriately. The YJS may also be involved with other agencies to manage the safety and wellbeing of children. These may include voluntary sector organisations, such as Barnardo's, the NSPCC or the Children's Society. Examples may include training in CSE or CCE, or arrangements in respect of children missing from home or care.

The YJS should have in place both a safeguarding policy and associated procedures, including a policy that sets out how children at risk are identified and a risk management policy. These should include referral pathways to, and procedures for working with, other agencies, as appropriate. There should be clear referral pathways, protocols for exchanging information and active involvement in relevant boards and fora. The effectiveness of these arrangements should be demonstrated through initiatives to improve joint working on specific issues, joint training initiatives and lessons learned from reviews. The YJS should be able to provide sufficient examples of where this work has led to specific arrangements to promote the safety and wellbeing of children and the safety of others. Any emerging

tensions, for example conflicts arising around thresholds for referral and access to services, should be managed effectively and resolved.

YJSs are one of the Duty to Co-operate (DTC) agencies for MAPPA (Section 325(6) of the *Criminal Justice Act 2003*). MAPPA Guidance 2012 requires that:

- arrangements are in place for the identification of which cases are MAPPA cases; all MAPPA children requiring level 2 or level 3 management must be referred to the MAPPA coordinator
- the YJS and children's services are suitably represented at all level 2 and level 3 meetings for children; whenever any agency other than the YJS makes a referral relating to a child, the YJS must attend the meeting, as it may have information relating to the case
- arrangements are in place for children at risk of being radicalised
- ViSOR is accurate in relation to children in the community.

YJSs may be involved with children who disclose domestic abuse. The cases with the highest risk of domestic abuse are discussed in the local Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). YJSs should have in place procedures for identifying relevant cases through an evidence-based risk assessment tool and referral pathways to the MARAC, as appropriate. Procedures may operate through children's social care, in which case the YJS should have protocols in place for such arrangements. Ideally, the YJS should be a member of MARAC.

It therefore follows that it is essential that the YJS has effective communication and established procedures with the MAPPA board, the MAPPA coordinator, and with the LCJB, the police (including the Public Protection Unit), the MARAC, the LSCP and the local authority children's social care team, and that these agencies are working effectively in managing the risk of harm posed by children.

The YJS should have in place a risk of harm management strategy and associated procedures, including how to identify children who pose a risk of harm to others and how to manage those risks. These procedures should include referral pathways to, and working procedures with, other agencies as appropriate. There should be good working relationships and communication at all levels in the organisation. Senior managers should be engaging with their counterparts at a strategic level to ensure that working arrangements are effective; middle managers should be working to improve communication and resolve problems; and practitioners should be following key agreements, protocols and pathways to ensure that information is exchanged and referrals dealt with appropriately.

In addition to clear referral pathways, protocols for exchanging information and active involvement in relevant boards and fora, the effectiveness of these arrangements should be demonstrated through initiatives to improve joint working on specific issues, such as joint training initiatives and lessons learned from reviews. The YJS should be able to provide sufficient examples of where such joint working has led to specific arrangements that promote the effective management of the risk of harm posed to others by children. Where community safeguarding and public protection incidents have been reported, there should be evidence of joint learning from these. Any emerging tensions, for example conflicts arising around thresholds for referral and access to services, should be managed and resolved effectively.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- copy of the most recent youth justice strategic plan
- management board minutes from the last 12 months
- most recent submission of KPI data to the YJB (if not included with the board minutes)
- any YJS policies that cover risk of harm, safety and wellbeing, delivery of work with children, out-of-court disposals, resettlement, bail and remand and restorative practice (if a policy is in the process of being updated and in draft form, we will accept this)
- any relevant audits or evaluation of the quality of work with children
- directory of projects, activities and services available for children
- domain two evidence

Fieldwork

- multi-agency case discussions on work with children
- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)

Judgement:

Where there are effective collaborative arrangements with partners and providers to promote positive change and keep children and communities safe, supported by clear referral pathways and appropriate information exchange, there should be a positive judgement.

Where collaborative arrangements with partners and providers to promote positive change and keep children and communities safe are not collaborative, and/or not supported by clear referral pathways and appropriate information exchange, there should be a negative judgement.

c) Are there effective arrangements for the provision of appropriate adults?

Guidance:

Appropriate adults should be available for all children who need them on a 24/7 basis and arrive as soon as possible. This includes for custody and voluntary interviews. Further information about the type of interview can be found here

<https://www.appropriateadult.org.uk/policy/voluntary-interviews>. Children should not be held in detention longer than necessary because of the lack of an appropriate adult. The

period of time between an appropriate adult being authorised and an appropriate adult arriving should be minimal.

Children should be supported throughout a detention episode. This does not always mean that the appropriate adult has to be physically present at all times. Instead, PACE requires the presence of an appropriate adult for procedures and requires that a child is also able to have a private consultation with their appropriate adult at any time.

There should be effective arrangements for information exchange between the appropriate adult and the YJS, including in advance of and during the detention of a child. The YJS should ensure either that information is sought from parents about a child's needs and vulnerabilities, or that information and support is provided where a parent acts as an appropriate adult. The YJS should assure themselves that police are providing parents and carers with independent information on the role as follows:

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-appropriate-adults/being-an-appropriate-adult>)

and that police are seeking information from parents and carers when parents and carers can be contacted but cannot act as appropriate adult.

Appropriate adults should receive high quality training and support. Arrangements should be independent of policing, with appropriate adults able to challenge the police where appropriate, including on the need for detention.

Appropriate adult arrangements should be monitored, evaluated and reviewed on a regular basis (at least once a year) by the YJS to ensure the best outcomes for children.

Evidence:

EiA

- appropriate adult policy
- appropriate adult procedures (where the service is in-house)
- appropriate adult commissioning and contract arrangements (where the service is contracted out)
- appropriate adult training records
- self-assessment against national standards
- staff feedback
- feedback from children
- HMICFRS police custody inspections (evidence of availability and timeliness)

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)

Judgement:

Where appropriate adults are always available when needed, individuals are skilled and supported in their roles, and arrangements are regularly monitored, evaluated and reviewed, there should be a positive judgement.

Where appropriate adults are not always available when needed, and/or individuals are insufficiently skilled and/or insufficiently supported in their roles, and/or arrangements are not regularly monitored, evaluated and reviewed, there should be a negative judgement.

d) Are arrangements set out and understood by staff to ensure that children are actively signposted, referred, and supported into the most appropriate services?

Guidance:

YJS staff should understand how to access the range of services from partners and other providers. Clear referral protocols and pathways should be available and accessible to staff. The referral process should set out what information is required, the process for transmitting this securely, and how and when decisions about acceptance will be made, including any further assessments required. Guidance should be up to date and should specify who services might be suitable for, and any specific exclusions. It should cover suitability, availability, referral processes and any waiting lists.

The YJS should have in place procedures for managing tensions in relation to accessing services, for example escalation procedures for disputes about thresholds.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- organisational structure chart, and a structure chart identifying where the service sits within the local authority
- most recent submission of KPI data to the YJB (if not included with the board minutes)
- any YJS policies that cover risk of harm, safety and wellbeing, delivery of work with children, out-of-court disposals, resettlement, bail and remand and restorative practice (if a policy is in the process of being updated and in draft form, we will accept this)
- directory of projects, activities and services available for children

Fieldwork

- multi agency case discussions on work with children
- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)

Judgement:

Where there is current, comprehensive and well understood guidance for staff about how to signpost, refer and support children to access right services from partners and providers, there should be a positive judgement.

Where guidance about how to signpost, refer and support children to access the right services from partners and providers is not current, comprehensive and well understood by staff, there should be a negative judgement.

e) Is there a clear joint protocol in place with the police, setting out a locally agreed out-of-court disposal policy and practice, including joint and defensible decision-making?

Guidance:

There should be a policy in place for out-of-court disposals that meets the needs of the children in the YJS area. The policy should be clear on how and when the police will share information with the YJS about any disposals and what the YJS will do with that information. The policy should consider the aims of the youth justice system: to prevent offending and consider the welfare of the child. Therefore, the policy should set out what works when preventing further offending, such as targeted appropriate intervention, and the impact of the disposal on the safety and welfare of the child. The policy should set out the agreed arrangements for delivery, including how decisions will be made jointly and defensibly.

Any policy should consider how and when there will be joint decision-making. If this is by a panel process, the policy should be clear about who is involved in the joint decision-making and what their role in the process is.

Evidence:

EiA

- YJS out-of-court disposal policy

Fieldwork

- multi-agency case discussions on work with children
- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)

Judgement:

Where there is a clear joint protocol between the YJS and the police that sets out the agreed arrangements for delivery, including how decisions will be made jointly and defensibly, there should be a positive judgement.

Where there is no clear joint protocol between the YJS and the police, or the policy does not set out the agreed arrangements for delivery and include how decisions will be made jointly and defensibly, there should be a negative judgement.

f) Does the out-of-court disposal eligibility criteria include an escalation process which avoids the inappropriate overuse of specific disposals?

Guidance:

The YJS should have an out-of-court disposal policy that has clear eligibility criteria and includes the full range of out-of-court disposals available in the local area. There should be strategic monitoring of the nature and number of disposals that are administered, based on offence type. The policy should include any contingency arrangements for if a child does not engage in the disposal, and processes to ensure that this does not lead to a more punitive disposal than the nature of the offence requires.

Evidence:

EiA

- YJS out-of-court disposal policy
- domain two evidence

Fieldwork

- multi-agency case discussions on work with children
- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)

Judgement:

Where the eligibility criteria for out-of-court disposals include an escalation process that avoids the over-use of specific disposals and is monitored by the YJS, there should be a positive judgement.

Where the eligibility criteria for out-of-court disposals does not include an escalation process that avoids the over-use of specific disposals and/or is not monitored by the YJS, there should be a negative judgement.

g) Are there suitable arrangements for out-of-court joint decision-making that include contributions from the YJS, police and social care as a minimum?

Guidance:

Any out-of-court disposal should have a foundation of solid and accountable decision-making to ensure that the process is transparent and applied consistently. There should be a joint decision-making process that as a minimum includes the YJS, police and social care. An independent member of the community may be part of this process, and this should provide a level of independence.

In September 2023, the National Police Chiefs' Council published its revised Child Gravity Matrix. This replaces the ACPO Youth Offender Case Disposal Gravity Factor Matrix from March 2013 and its approach aligns with child-first principles, which seek to prevent the unnecessary criminalisation of children.

While these improvements mark a significant step forward, it is crucial to remember that the Child Gravity Matrix should be used as a guide, not a rigid rulebook. Each case should still be examined on an individual basis to ensure that justice is served in the best interests of the child and victims – the exercise of professional judgement is crucial.

A formal decision-making panel is an approach adopted by many but not all YJSs. Whatever the process, the agencies involved should have the opportunity to contribute to the decision on the most appropriate outcome for the child. The joint decision-making process should take the victim's wishes into account and give priority to what is most likely to support the child to desist from offending. The child, and their parent/carer, should be engaged with the YJS before the disposal decision, so that the YJS can motivate them and understand their perspective. It is not appropriate for the disposal decision to be decided between a YJS police officer and a YJS manager before the panel meets.

For decision-making to be a genuinely joint process, whether in a panel or otherwise, all members of the decision-making body should have sufficient seniority and delegated authority to interpret policy in the light of individual circumstances and to make defensible decisions.

Evidence:

EiA

- YJS out-of-court disposal policy
- domain two evidence

Fieldwork

- multi-agency case discussions on work with children
- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)
- staff focus group meeting (including case managers and support staff covering bail and remand, court disposals, out-of-court work and resettlement)
- partnership managers group meeting, including probation (link managers from statutory and other partners)

Judgement:

Where there is a joint decision-making process in place that includes the YJS, police and social care as a minimum and supports the child's needs, there should be a positive judgement.

Where there is no joint decision-making process in place that includes the YJS, police and social care as a minimum and supports the child's needs, there should be a negative judgement.

h) Are courts made sufficiently aware of the services available to support sentencing options?

Guidance:

In order for courts to make appropriate use of the full range of sentencing options and to give them confidence when passing sentence, they need to have enough detail about the services provided by the YJS, what activities are likely to be provided as part of the sentence, and what outcomes sentences are likely to achieve. The courts should have up-to-date information about the range of reparation activities available for children and any opportunity to use restorative approaches. The YJS should take a strategic, planned approach to liaising with sentencers, both with the youth courts and Crown Courts.

In addition to providing written information, the YJS should make presentations to sentencers about the availability and nature of the services and interventions for children in their area and the outcomes these achieve. These presentations can be made at, for example, bench meetings, training events and other appropriate fora, such as court user groups. The YJS should carry out surveys of sentencers to ascertain whether they have the detailed information they require and are content with the communications they have with the YJS, both at management and operational level. There should be evidence to show that courts are sufficiently aware of the range of services and interventions available to support sentencing options for children.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- sentencer survey

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- meeting with the YJS management team (operational and other managers, excluding the YJS head of service)

Judgement:

Where the YJS takes a strategic, planned approach to liaising with sentencers, both at the magistrates' and Crown Courts, there should be a positive judgement.

Where the YJS does not take a strategic, planned approach to liaising with sentencers, both at the magistrates' and Crown Courts, there should be a negative judgement.

Victims' standard: key question v 1.2

Work with victims is high-quality, individualised, and responsive, driving positive change and safety for victims.

V1.2 Do organisational arrangements and activity drive a high-quality, individualised, and responsive service for victims?

a) Are management board members well engaged and active in their contribution to work with victims?

Guidance:

Management boards should take a deliberate and proactive approach to their contribution to the YJS's work with victims. Board members should have a clear understanding of their responsibilities in relation to this work and recognise the contribution they are required to make, both to the management board and through their own agencies. The management board should provide a clear strategic lead, supporting and enabling the YJS to meet its objectives in delivering services to victims. YJSs should encourage a representative from a victims' organisation to be a part of the board.

The management board should understand the demographics of victims and their presenting needs. There should be reporting on the victim KPI to the management board, with ensuing discussion, challenges, action and support. This reporting must include an analysis of equity, diversity and inclusion in the YJS's work with victims. The board should monitor the quality and effectiveness of the YJS's work with victims and ensure that the work adheres to the evidence base to enable high-quality, individualised and responsive services to be delivered to victims. Where relevant, members should provide data and information from their own services.

Management board members should be sighted on up-to-date research, legislation and codes of practice for effective work with victims. They should and actively support and challenge the YJS to enable it to deliver effective evidence-based services. In particular, management board members should understand the link between children as victims and children as perpetrators of offences, and that victims can move to become perpetrators. The management board's analysis and planning activities should take the research and evidence base into account.

The management board should be sighted on and looking for opportunities to improve work with all victims, including adult, corporate, family, emergency services, children and other vulnerable or intimidated victims.³ They should take ownership of specific tasks and responsibilities, hold the YJS manager to account and, where necessary, commission work on performance to support improvements. The management board should actively promote equity of opportunity and diversity, deliberately addressing diversity factors throughout its work, including addressing disproportionality and actual or potential discriminatory factors where they exist. The YJS management board should have evidence that demonstrates how it ensures that work with victims is equitable for all victims. Management boards should be aware of the impact of different factors and ensure that there are services to address all the impact groups, i.e. equitable access

Management board members should actively promote the YJS's work with victims in their own agencies and act as ambassadors for the YJS, including support for brokering services where needed. This should enable the YJS's voice to be presented and heard at broader strategic forums, for example the LSCP (in most areas these have replaced the former Local

³ [MoJ Victims Code 2020 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Safeguarding Children Boards), LCJB, MAPPA, Community Safety Partnership, and Children's Trust (or local equivalent).

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- completed organisational data spreadsheet
- management board minutes from the last 12 months

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- focus group with operational staff involved in work with victims, including victim workers, and any restorative justice workers and reparation workers

Judgement:

Where management board members are well engaged and active in their contribution to work with victims, and understand the accountability associated with this, there should be a positive judgement.

Where management board members are not well engaged and active in their contribution to work with victims, or do not understand the accountability associated with this, there should be a negative judgement.

b) Are there effective arrangements in place with police for obtaining consent and the sharing of victim details?

Guidance:

Before the YJS is able to have any contact with a victim, the victim must have given their consent. This is usually done by the police and would most usually be done by the officer in charge or seconded police officer. Once consent has been obtained, the police must pass the victim's contact details to the relevant individual in the YJS in order for the YJS to contact the victim.

Arrangements for obtaining consent and for sharing victims' contact details vary across YJSs. Some YJSs have direct access to the police databases (NICHE) and are able to see where a victim has provided consent. Other YJSs rely on the police to tell them where there is a victim that has provided consent in order for the YJS to get in touch and offer services. Whatever the process is, it is important that protocols are in place to enable the YJS to do this consistently, efficiently and effectively.

Police should be well briefed by the YJS about the victims offer.

Evidence:

EiA

- any relevant audits or evaluation of the quality of case management and victim practice, including analysis of victim consent and take-up rates
- YJS policy that covers work with victims

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- focus group with operational staff involved in work with victims, including victim workers, and any restorative justice workers and reparation workers

Judgement:

Where there are effective, consistently used arrangements in place with police, both for obtaining consent and for sharing victims' details, there should be a positive judgement.

Where arrangements in place with the police for obtaining consent and for sharing victims' details are ineffective or inconsistently used, there should be a negative judgement.

c) Is there an effective policy and process in place for delivering high-quality, individualised and responsive work with victims?

Guidance:

The YJS should have a victim policy that sets out the arrangements for work with victims. As a minimum, this should include court disposals, out-of-court disposals, resettlement and input into risk and safety planning. This should explain how the YJS will provide a service that is individualised and responsive and should be supported by effective processes. The policy should cover arrangements both for victim support and victim safety. The policy and process should take deliberate account of diversity issues, including protected characteristics and personal circumstances. A one-size-fits-all approach to providing victim services will not meet the needs of all victims, and the policy should reflect this. The YJS policy should ensure that all of the rights set out in the Victims' Code of Practice are met and should include the arrangements for working with the probation victim liaison officer, where relevant.

Effective partnership arrangements are crucial. The policy should set out for all partners what the expectations and accountabilities of their role are. It should also set out arrangements for the appropriate access to and exchange of information, expertise, resources and knowledge. The policy and process should begin with the first contact with victims and go right through to arrangements for exiting/closure.

Policy and processes must take account of the needs of different victims and recognise that child, vulnerable and intimidated victims may have specific needs. All victims should have their needs assessed. There is no evidence base to say that offence type is linked to impact, but some other factors may be linked to impact. For instance, child victims and vulnerable victims may be more impacted than adult victims. The policy and process should ensure equitable access to services for all victims. For instance, there should be alternatives in place for those victims who do not want to talk to police officers, in which case arrangements with a local victim liaison officer should be available.

The general public sector equality duty applies to YJSs in their work with victims. Full information can be found here: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/essential-guide-public-sector-equality-duty>. This requires YJSs to consider how they can contribute positively to advancing equality and good relations. They must consider equality in the delivery of services and the design of policies, including internal policies, and keep these issues under review. The general equality duty aims to shift responsibility for promoting equality from individuals to organisations.

To meet the aims of the general equality duty, the YJS's victim policy should set out how the YJS will:

- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by victims due to their protected characteristics
- take steps to meet the needs of victims from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other victims
- encourage victims from protected groups to participate in YJS services in ways that meet their needs.

The YJS should review victim policy and process at appropriate intervals. Reviews should take account of changes in any national standards or guidance and developments in effective practice and should consider the views of victims and key stakeholders. Reviews should include an assessment of the impact on victims' protected characteristics. Monitoring, evaluation and review should be aligned with the evidence base, both building on existing research and contributing to it. Where appropriate, the YJS should consider external monitoring to improve the integrity of the process. They should consider opportunities to engage researchers or work collaboratively with similar organisations undertaking a similar improvement process, to benchmark progress and maximise learning.

Evidence:

EiA

- YJS policy that covers work with victims
- any relevant audits or evaluation of the quality of case management and victim practice, including analysis of victim consent and take up rates
- directory of projects, activities and services available for victims

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- focus group with operational staff involved in work with victims, including victim workers, and any restorative justice workers and reparation workers

Judgement:

Where there is a policy in place that sets out the arrangements and role accountabilities for working with victims, supported by an effective process, there should be a positive judgement.

Where there is no policy in place, or it does not clearly set out the arrangements and role accountabilities for working with victims, or is not supported by an effective process, there should be a negative judgement.

d) Do staff that work with victims have manageable workloads?

Guidance:

There should be sufficient staff in place to meet the needs of victims. Staffing levels must be sufficient to enable staff who work with victims to provide a service that is high quality, responsive and individualised. This means that staffing levels should enable tasks to be completed to a good standard, within normal working hours, most of the time. Staff working with victims and their managers should have a shared understanding of what a manageable workload for their roles looks like and this should not be routinely exceeded.

Inspectors should check for role overload and role drift for staff who work with victims. Role overload is a situation that results from an individual taking on a role or multiple roles in which they are asked to do more than they are capable of in a specific period of time (quantitative overload) or where they are stretched beyond their knowledge, skills, and abilities (qualitative overload). It may be that in small YJSs the role of a victim worker is not full time, and they have other responsibilities. YJSs should not be penalised for this if the individual roles are clearly set out and structured and sufficient time is allowed for the role(s) to be carried out effectively. Role drift occurs when core work duties for a specific role or grade are undertaken increasingly by other staff, typically where work is delegated to more junior staff.

Evidence:

EiA

- organisational structure chart

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- focus group with operational staff involved in work with victims, including victim workers, and any restorative justice workers and reparation workers

Judgement:

Where the workloads of those who work with victims, including managers, staff and volunteers, are sufficient to meet the needs of those victims, there should be a positive judgement.

Where the workloads of those who work with victims, including managers, staff and volunteers, do not meet the needs of those victims, there should be a positive judgement.

e) Do staff who work with victims have the right skills to deliver a high-quality, individualised, and responsive service to victims?

Guidance:

The YJS should have a training strategy/plan that includes staff working with victims and recognises the specialist skill set required by this role. Mandatory and discretionary training requirements should be set out and communicated to the staff working with victims, who should have up-to-date training records. Training needs should be regularly reviewed, any skills gaps identified, and training plans revised accordingly. Managers, staff and volunteers should receive good-quality, effective training that meets their training needs. The skills of staff working with victims should be sufficient to meet the needs of all victims. Managers responsible for victim work should have the required levels of knowledge, skills and experience and have the time to assess and improve the quality of practice, provide effective supervision and oversight of staff working with victims and hold staff to account.

Staff working with victims should receive distinct and specialist training for the role, including trauma-informed approaches, equity, diversity and inclusion, assessment of needs, delivering interventions, the dynamics of victims' experiences of harm and abuse, age-appropriate language for talking about harm, methods of communication and engagement, approaches to risk assessment, and safety planning.

Evidence:

EiA

- any relevant audits or evaluation of the quality of case management and victim practice
- evidence from key question V1.1
- overview of training for case managers, victim workers and middle managers in the last 12 months
- analysis of feedback from victims, and accompanying action plans

Fieldwork

- overview of training for case managers, victim workers and middle managers in last 12 months
- analysis of feedback from victims, and accompanying action plans

Judgement:

Where the skills of those who work with victims, including managers, staff and volunteers, are sufficient to meet the needs of those victims, there should be a positive judgement.

Where the skills of those who work with victims, including managers, staff and volunteers, do not meet the needs of those victims, there should be a positive judgement.

f) Are staff who work with victims effectively supported in the delivery of their work?

Guidance:

The YJS should have an effective induction programme that includes comprehensive and timely induction processes for staff and volunteers who work with victims. Generic information about working at the YJS should form part of the programme, regardless of role. As a minimum, this should include equity, diversity and inclusion, health and safety arrangements, first aid, safeguarding, an overview of the youth justice system, the range of work the YJS is involved in and the functions of staff within the YJS. The induction programme should also be tailored to the needs of staff who work with victims. Induction programme materials should be well prepared and presented in a readily accessible way. For example, an induction pack may comprise briefings, one-to-one sessions, group sessions, workbooks, presentations and IT resources. There should be effective oversight of induction processes to ensure the various elements are completed in a satisfactory and timely manner. Staff who work with victims tend to be in small teams or stand-alone workers and appropriate recognition of and support for this should be provided.

Effective management oversight should be in place for staff who work with victims. This should include elements of quality assurance, staff supervision, dealing with any areas of concern in work with individual victims and facilitating improvements in practice.

Supervision should be effective and take place regularly. It should pay attention to personal support and development, as well as accountability for the work that the member of staff delivers to victims. This should include how staff are learning, developing and applying skills that will improve the quality of work with children. Managers should recognise that working with victims can be emotionally demanding and should ensure that appropriate support is necessary if staff who work with victims are to continue to deliver high-quality work without burning out.

Staff who work with victims should be appraised annually within a performance management framework, in accordance with their identified development needs. Performance management should be used to actively improve services to victims. Effective staff appraisals and reviews should take place regularly and contain realistic objectives to enhance practice and performance. Appraisals for staff who work with victims should make it clear to the member of staff how they are performing, providing both affirmation and developmental feedback.

Evidence:

EiA

- any relevant audits or evaluation of the quality of case management and victim practice
- evidence from key question V1.1
- overview of training for case managers, victim workers and middle managers in the last 12 months
- analysis of feedback from victims, and accompanying action plans

Fieldwork

- overview of training for case managers, victim workers and middle managers in the last 12 months
- analysis of feedback from victims, and accompanying action plans

Judgement:

Where there is evidence of comprehensive induction, effective and regular supervision and appraisal and appropriate management oversight for staff who work with victims, there should be a positive judgement.

Where any of the following are not evidenced: comprehensive induction, effective and regular supervision and appraisal and appropriate management oversight for staff who work with victims, there should be a negative judgement.

g) Is there a range of support and services available, with effective risk management processes in place?

Guidance:

In working with victims, YJSs should provide services to promote victims' safety and support. Both of these elements of the offer to victims are essential in delivering a high-quality, individualised and responsive service for them. Victims should be supported to make safe and informed decisions about how they want to communicate with criminal justice agencies about their case, and clear information about what information will be shared and with whom. This includes giving children the ability to indicate who they would like to receive communications, including opting for direct communication where this is judged to be safe and appropriate. Services must have due regard to the relevant data protection principles which allow them to share personal information, as provided for in the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (GDPR).

A YJS may have different processes for victims of offences that were dealt with in court to those dealt with out of court. Whatever the process is, the YJS should ensure that there is support to heal after harm, regardless of the justice outcome. There should be meaningful consultation and engagement and victims must have a choice about how they want to be

engaged and with whom. Child victims should be asked how they want to communicate with professionals. For some children, direct communication may be most appropriate. For other children, it may be more appropriate to have a representative such as a parent or an advocate, but this should not preclude giving children choice about who is best placed for this role. Services must strike a balance between not adultifying child victims but ensuring that the criminal justice process is not disempowering. Communications should be focused on the needs of victim, not on the child who has offended.

The YJS should undertake an analysis of the needs of and risks to victims, which should lead to it providing and/or referring victims to an appropriate range of specialist and mainstream services to address these needs and risks. Provision may be made internally by the YJS, or it may be commissioned or delivered in partnership or through a referral pathway with other organisations providing specialist services. Services to victims should be provided in ways that are accessible and appropriate to the victim's individual circumstances and that are responsive to their needs. Services should be available in a timely way for all victims, avoiding waiting lists under normal circumstances. Services should be made available to all victims who have consented to working with the YJS.

The YJS should be able to provide the right services for each victim at the time that the victim needs them. Victim services should not be seen in terms of any hierarchy of support but instead in terms of the ability to support victims and make them feel safe. Exit planning and signposting should be undertaken where there are remaining needs once a YJS has completed an intervention(s) with a victim. Wider support services should include specialist, community-based services that provide long-term recovery support, such as counselling and therapeutic support, as well as prevention from further harm.

Risk management for victims should be underpinned by effective information-sharing between the YJS and relevant partners. There should be an approach across the YJS that promotes open dialogue across teams and individuals working with children who have offended and teams and individuals working with victims.

Evidence:

EiA

- presentation from the Board Chair
- completed YJS narrative document
- completed organisational data spreadsheet
- most recent submission of victims' KPI data to the YJB (if not included with the board minutes)
- any relevant audits or evaluation of the quality of case management and victim practice, including analysis of victim consent and take-up rates
- directory of projects, activities and services available for victims
- analysis of feedback from victims, and accompanying action plans
- YJS policy that covers work with victims

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- focus group with operational staff involved in work with victims, including victim workers, and any restorative justice workers and reparation workers

Judgement:

Where there are sufficient, high-quality services in place to meet the needs of all victims, providing support for victims and keeping them safe, there should be a positive judgement.

Where services are insufficient in volume, range or quality, making them unable to meet the needs of all victims, there should be a negative judgement.

h) Are services to victims regularly monitored, evaluated, and reviewed?

Guidance:

The YJS should have a clear focus on the continuous improvement of the services that it provides for victims, and this should be underpinned by monitoring, evaluation and review. Regularly and effectively undertaken, monitoring, evaluation and review should enable the YJS to check that it is meeting its aims. Monitoring, evaluation and review should be aligned with the evidence base, both building on existing research and contributing to it. It should shape the type and nature of interventions offered for the future, as well as the nature of contact offered.

Where appropriate, YJSs should consider external monitoring to improve the integrity of the process. They should consider opportunities to engage researchers or work collaboratively with similar organisations that are undertaking a similar improvement process, to benchmark progress and maximise learning. We are looking for adjustments to policy, practice and provision in line with findings from monitoring, evaluation and review. This should include examples of innovation and effective practice, where needed.

Evaluation of services for victims should include an assessment of the impact on victims with different protected characteristics to ascertain whether policy, practice and provision meet equity, diversity and inclusion needs and minimise disadvantages. The YJS should use the diversity information that it collects not just to identify, mitigate or remove poor practice, but also to identify ways to advance equality of opportunity. This is a part of complying with the general public sector equality duty set out in the *Equality Act 2010*. Full information can be found here <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/essential-guide-public-sector-equality-duty>.

If a YJS does not have diversity information about the victims it works with, it should be working to fill the information gaps.

Evidence:

EiA

- copy of the most recent youth justice strategic plan
- any relevant audits or evaluation of the quality of case management and victim practice, including analysis of victim consent and take-up rates
- directory of projects, activities and services available for victims
- analysis of feedback from victims, and accompanying action plans
- YJS policy that covers work with victims

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- focus group with operational staff involved in work with victims, including victim workers, and any restorative justice workers and reparation workers

Judgement:

Where monitoring, evaluation and review are proactive, evidence-based and regular, include consideration of equity, diversity and inclusion, and result in service improvements, there should be a positive judgement.

Where monitoring, evaluation and review are not proactive, evidence-based and regular, do not include consideration of equity, diversity and inclusion and/or do not result in service improvements, there should be a negative judgement.

i) Are the views of victims sought, analysed and used to inform an effective service for victims?

Guidance:

To provide the right range of services and interventions, which are responsive to individual needs, it is essential that the YJS gathers and analyses the views of victims who have used its services. This proactive analysis of victims' views should feed into the monitoring, evaluation and review of the service provided to victims. It should be used by the YJS as part of its monitoring and review activity to ensure that services are high quality, including being evidence-based, responsive and individualised. The YJS should actively incorporate the views of victims into its work to shape the delivery of future services.

YJSs should seek and analyse victims' views on the service provided for them and whether it met their needs and use these views to inform future services. Victims' views should not just be sought in interviews or surveys at the end of an intervention, although this is one way to do it. Equally valuable is an ongoing evaluation of services with victims as those services are provided. Such ongoing evaluation has the added benefit of being able to shape the service that the individual victim receives too.

Evidence:

EiA

- any relevant audits or evaluation of the quality of case management and victim practice, including analysis of victim consent and take up rates
- directory of projects, activities and services available for victims
- analysis and accompanying action plans of feedback from victims
- YJS policy that covers work with victims

Fieldwork

- meeting with the YJS head of service
- focus group with operational staff involved in work with victims, including victim workers, and any restorative justice workers and reparation workers

Judgement:

Where victims' views are proactively sought and analysed and then used to inform the delivery of future services, there should be a positive judgement.

Where victims' views are not sought and effectively analysed or they are not used to inform the delivery of future services, there should be a negative judgement.