



HM Inspectorate
of Probation

Inspection standards for youth justice services

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Introduction

In our youth justice service inspection programme there are two types of inspection.

In an Inspection of the Youth Justice Services (IYJS), we inspect and rate the service against all of our standards across domain one, domain two and the victims' standard.

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

More information about the youth justice inspection programme, types of inspection, and ratings, is available on our website:

[Youth Justice Services – HM Inspectorate of Probation](#)

Domain one: organisational delivery

This domain covers the arrangements and activity that support all areas of a Youth Justice Service's (YJS) work with children, including out-of-court disposals, court disposals, appropriate adult work, bail and remand, and resettlement. These standards are inspected and rated in IYJS inspections.

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?
- b) Are there effective governance arrangements and clear delivery plans that enable relational practice and effective evidence-based work with children?
- c) Can the YJS management board explain any disproportionality and has it taken sufficient action to address this?
- 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?
- e) Does the YJS management board include all statutory and non-statutory partners at the right level where these would add value?
- f) Are YJS management board members well engaged and active in their contribution to achieving positive change and keeping children and communities safe?
- g) Does the YJS management board sufficiently understand and appropriately challenge the YJS's data and information?
- h) Do other relevant local strategic partnerships give priority to work to achieve positive change and keep children and communities safe?
- i) Are strategic arrangements and activity, and their impact on delivery, monitored and regularly reviewed?

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?
- b) Do the YJS's partnership arrangements enable it to deliver effective operational work to achieve positive change and keep children and communities safe?
- c) Does the YJS leadership team successfully deliver and operationalise the vision and appropriate adult strategy?
- d) Does the YJS leadership team seek, analyse, and use the views of children, parents and carers?
- e) Can the YJS leadership team explain any disproportionality in their delivery area, and have they taken sufficient action to address this?

- f) Do staff understand their roles and responsibilities within the partnership arrangements, and what they are accountable for?
- g) Are the necessary policies in place and understood by all those to whom they apply?

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?
- b) Are staff well engaged and motivated?
- c) Are the views of staff sought, analysed, and used to review and improve the effectiveness of services?
- d) Do managers equitably recognise and reward exceptional work?
- e) Is appropriate attention paid to staff safety and wellbeing, and building staff resilience?
- f) Is there support for staff if they feel discriminated against or experience any form of discrimination?
- g) Is there a clear and understood process for staff complaints?
- h) Is there a clear and understood process for complaints from children, parents and carers?
- 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?

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?
- 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?
- c) Are service improvement plans regularly evaluated and reviewed, including responding to changes in the evidence base?
- 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?
- e) Does evaluation include active consideration of diversity issues?
- f) Do performance and quality assurance systems drive improvement?
- g) Does the YJS learn systematically and communicate effectively when things go wrong, including serious incidents?

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?
- b) Do YJS practitioners have manageable workloads, given the nature of their workload and the range of work undertaken?
- c) Do YJS specialist staff have manageable workloads, given the nature of their workload and the range of work undertaken?
- d) Do support staff have manageable workloads, allowing them to support YJS work effectively?
- e) Do leaders and managers have manageable workloads?
- f) Are workloads managed actively, with resources being redeployed when this is reasonable and necessary, in response to local pressures?

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?
- b) Do the skills and diversity of the workforce meet the needs of children?
- c) Is work with children allocated to staff who are appropriately qualified and/or experienced?
- d) Are the learning needs of staff identified and met?
- e) Is a culture of learning and continuous improvement actively promoted?
- f) Is the potential of staff identified and developed?

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?
- b) Do staff receive effective child-focused supervision that supports them, and enables them to take a relational approach to working with children?
- c) Are there effective management oversight arrangements that enhance and sustain the quality of work with children?
- d) Is the appraisal process used effectively to ensure staff are delivering a high-quality service?
- e) Is poor staff performance identified and addressed?
- f) Where volunteers and mentors are used, are they supported to fulfil clearly defined roles?

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?
- b) Does the analysis pay sufficient attention to factors relating to achieving positive change and keeping children and communities safe?
- c) Does the analysis pay sufficient attention to diversity factors and to issues of disproportionality?

- d) Is there sufficient analysis of local patterns of sentencing, offence types and the use of out-of-court disposals?
- e) Is the analysis used effectively to drive service delivery?
- f) Does the analysis incorporate the views of children, parents, and carers about the services they receive?

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 and interventions to meet the needs of all children?
- b) Are services available in a timely manner for all children?
- c) Are building strengths, future focus, and enhancing resilience central to the delivery of services?
- d) Are services to children delivered in safe places?
- e) Are services to children delivered in accessible places?
- f) Do delivery environments enable appropriate relational, strengths-based, personalised work to be undertaken?
- g) Are diversity factors and issues of disproportionality addressed sufficiently in the way that services are delivered?

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?
- b) Are there effective collaborative arrangements with partners and providers to achieve safety for children and communities?
- c) Are there effective arrangements for the provision of appropriate adults?
- d) Are arrangements set out and understood by staff to ensure that children are actively signposted, referred, and supported into the most appropriate services?
- 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?
- f) Does the out-of-court disposal eligibility criteria include an escalation process which avoids the inappropriate overuse of specific disposals?
- 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?
- h) Are courts made sufficiently aware of the services available to support sentencing options?

Domain two: work with children

This domain covers work with children across all areas of the YJS's delivery, including out-of-court disposals, court disposals, bail, and remand and resettlement.

These standards are inspected and rated in IYJWCV and IYJS inspections.

2.1 Assessing

Assessing is well-informed and personalised, effectively analysing how to achieve positive change and keep children and communities safe.

2.1.1 Does assessing sufficiently analyse how to achieve positive change for the child?

- a) Does assessing analyse the context of the child, including the wider familial and social environment?
- b) Does assessing draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including other assessments, and involve other agencies where appropriate?
- c) Does assessing include the active participation of and co-production with the child?
- d) Does assessing sufficiently analyse whether work could be undertaken collaboratively with the child's parents or carers, that would achieve positive change for the child?
- e) Does assessing analyse the child's strengths and protective factors including the key structural factors affecting the child?
- f) Does assessing analyse capacity for change, participation, and community integration?
- g) Does assessing sufficiently recognise and analyse diversity issues?
- h) Does assessing analyse the child's attitudes, motivations, and behaviour within the context of the child?
- i) Is assessing responsive to change, including to ensure continued effective arrangements to manage those issues that have been identified to achieve positive change?

2.1.2 Does assessing sufficiently analyse how to keep the child and the community safe?

- a) Does assessing clearly identify and analyse risks to the safety and wellbeing of the child?
- b) Does assessing clearly identify and analyse what is needed to achieve safety for other people, sufficiently considering risks?
- c) Does assessing sufficiently identify and analyse issues of vulnerability, victimisation and exploitation?
- d) Does assessing incorporate the needs and wishes of the victims?
- e) Does assessing sufficiently analyse whether work could be undertaken collaboratively with the child's parents or carers that would keep the child and community safe?
- f) Is assessing responsive to change, including to ensure continued effective arrangements to manage those issues that have been identified to achieve safety for the child and the community?

2.2 Planning

Planning is well-informed, holistic and personalised, focusing on how to achieve positive change and keep children and communities safe.

2.2.1 Does planning focus sufficiently on how to achieve positive change for the child?

- a) Does planning take sufficient account of the context of the child, including the child's wider familial and social environment?
- b) Does planning include the active participation of and co-production with the child?
- c) Does planning take sufficient account of the child's strengths and protective factors, including the key structural factors affecting the child and seek to reinforce or develop these in order to build resilience?
- d) Does planning create opportunities for change, participation and community integration?
- e) Does planning sufficiently include and consider all the child's diversity factors?
- f) Is there sufficient planning of delivery with other services, including for exit planning and referral to mainstream services?
- g) Does planning take sufficient account of the child's ability and motivation to change, and seek to develop these as necessary?
- h) Does planning address the child's attitudes, motivations, and behaviour within the context of that child?

2.2.2 Does planning focus sufficiently on how to keep the child and community safe?

- a) Does planning set out how to achieve safety and stability for the child as foundations for change?
- b) Does planning set out what is needed to keep other people safe, sufficiently addressing risks?
- c) Does planning sufficiently address issues of vulnerability, victimisation, and exploitation?
- d) Does planning give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victims, and opportunities for restorative justice?
- e) Does planning address any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims?
- f) Does planning set out how work will be undertaken collaboratively with the child's parents and carers to keep the child safe?
- g) Does planning pay sufficient attention to the available timescales, coordinating with any other agencies' planning and the need for sequencing?
- h) Is planning responsive to change, including to ensure continued effective arrangements to manage those issues that have been identified?

2.3 Delivery

High-quality, well-focused, personalised, and coordinated services are delivered, achieving positive change and keeping children and communities safe.

2.3.1 Does the delivery of well-focused, personalised and coordinated services achieve positive change for the child?

- a) Does the YJS focus sufficiently on developing and maintaining a working relationship with the child, with their active participation, that encourages and enables engagement?
- b) Does delivery take sufficient account of the context of the child, including the child's wider familial and social environment?

- c) Does delivery take sufficient account of the child's strengths and protective factors, including the key structural factors affecting the child and seek to reinforce or develop these in order to build resilience?
- d) Does delivery achieve opportunities for change, participation and community integration, including access to services post-supervision?
- e) Does delivery sufficiently include and consider all the child's diversity factors?
- f) Do interventions address the child's attitudes, motivations and behaviour within the context of that child?
- g) Is the YJS's work sufficiently aligned and coordinated with the delivery of other services including exit planning and referral to universal services?
- h) Is the quality of the work with the child reviewed and adapted where necessary?

2.3.2 Does the delivery of well-focused, personalised, and coordinated services keep the child and the community safe?

- a) Are the right services delivered to achieve safety and stability for the child as foundations for change?
- b) Are services delivered collaboratively with the child's parents and carers to build safety and protection for the child and the community?
- c) Does delivery of services sufficiently address issues of vulnerability, victimisation and exploitation?
- d) Are the right services delivered to keep other people safe, sufficiently managing risks?
- e) Is sufficient attention given to the protection of actual and potential victims in the delivery of services?
- f) Do the interventions delivered pay sufficient attention to the available timescales and the need for sequencing?
- g) Does delivery respond effectively to changes when required?
- h) Is engagement supported effectively, including by taking enforcement action when appropriate?

Victims

This standard is inspected and rated in IYJWCV and IYJS inspections.

V1 Work with victims is high-quality, individualised, and responsive driving positive outcomes and safety for victims.

V1.1 Is work with victims high-quality, individualised, and responsive?

- a) Are victims supported to make informed choices about their needs, including any direct work with children?
- b) Is clear information given to victims about what they can expect at different points in a child's work with the YJS?
- c) Are the individual needs of the victim well understood?
- d) Does the support offered to the victim sufficiently promote their safety and wellbeing?
- e) Is there effective engagement and relationship building with victims that enables individualised, responsive support and access to services?

- f) Are there effective arrangements and relationships with practitioners across the YJS to enable the needs of the victim to be met?
- g) Does the support delivered meet the needs of the victim?

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?
- b) Are there effective arrangements in place with police for obtaining consent and the sharing of victim details?
- c) Is there an effective policy and process in place for delivering high-quality, individualised, and responsive work with victims?
- d) Do staff that work with victims have manageable workloads?
- e) Do staff that work with victims have the right skills to deliver a high-quality, individualised, and responsive service to victims?
- f) Are staff that work with victims effectively supported in the delivery of their work?
- g) Is there a range of support and services available, with effective risk management processes in place?
- h) Are services to victims regularly monitored, evaluated, and reviewed?
- i) Are the views of victims sought, analysed, and used to inform an effective service for victims?