

An inspection of youth offending services in

# Wandsworth

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HM Inspectorate of Probation

MARCH 2019

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This inspection was led by HM Inspector Pauline Burke, supported by a team of inspectors, as well as staff from our operations and research teams. The Head of Youth Offending Team Inspections, responsible for this inspection programme, is Alan MacDonald. We would like to thank all those who helped plan and took part in the inspection; without their help and cooperation, the inspection would not have been possible.

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

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## Foreword

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This inspection is part of our programme of youth offending team inspections. As planned, we have inspected and rated Wandsworth Youth Offending Team (YOT) across three broad areas: the arrangements for organisational delivery, and the quality of both court disposal and out-of-court disposal work.

We have given Wandsworth YOT an overall rating of 'Good'. Our inspection found that most areas of practice are good, with some aspects being outstanding and one area requiring improvement.

The management board provides a strategic vision for the service and there is good health provision, as well as an extensive range of specialist staff. The partnership needs to review its process for out-of-court disposals, to make sure that all outcomes, including community resolutions, are available for children and young people.

Staff are focused on maintaining an effective working relationship with children and young people, and consider their motivation and engagement levels when planning interventions. The use of management information requires improvement, so that operational data analysis is used to influence future service delivery.

The inspection found that interventions are being delivered to address knife crime in the borough. The partnership, however, needs to engage with schools to understand the different responses to dealing with children carrying knives on school premises to avoid children entering the youth justice system unnecessarily.

We rated the work on court disposals as good across each of the four standards, and work on out-of-court disposals as outstanding. Our inspection found that, although there is a variety of programmes, work with cases involving harmful sexual behaviour did not follow recommended guidance about co-working.

The recommendations in this report have been designed to assist Wandsworth YOT to build on its strengths and focus on areas for improvement.



**Dame Glenys Stacey**  
Chief Inspector of Probation

## Overall findings

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

	<b>Organisational delivery</b>
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Our key findings about organisational delivery are as follows:

- Board members hold strategic positions in their own organisations and there is an extensive range of partnership staff in the service.
- Disproportionality is a priority for Wandsworth and work to address this issue is ongoing.
- The service, alongside the Ending Gangs and Youth Violence team, provides extensive group work programmes, including knife crime and county lines programmes.
- Staff and managers are child-centred, know the children and young people well, and take account of territorialism when arranging appointments, in order to enable engagement.
- The arrangements for out-of-court disposals does not offer the opportunity for joint decision-making at the beginning of the process; and the police deliver few community resolutions, which results in children and young people receiving a more punitive outcome.
- There are different responses to dealing with children carrying knives on school premises and as a result some children may enter the youth justice system unnecessarily.
- Harmful sexual behaviour cases are not co-worked and do not follow the recommended guidance.
- The YOT does not fully utilise operational data analysis to influence service delivery.



## **Court disposals**

Our key findings about court disposals are as follows:

- The quality of assessments is outstanding, in terms of evaluating desistance and the risk of harm to others.
- The implementation and delivery of services to support a child or young person's safety and wellbeing, as well as their risk of harm to others, are outstanding.
- The multi-agency high-risk strategy panel arrangements are effective.
- Case managers are focused on maintaining an effective working relationship with the child or young person.
- The views of the child or young person and their parents or carers are not consistently considered throughout the engagement.
- Work to promote the safety of victims and maximise opportunities for restorative justice is less well developed than other areas of practice.



## **Out-of-court disposals**

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

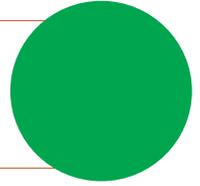
- The quality of assessments, planning and implementation is outstanding across all three areas of desistance, safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm to others.
- Planning to manage risk of harm addresses concerns related to actual and potential victims.
- A variety of group work programmes and access to specialist workers are helping to provide the appropriate interventions for the child or young person.
- Case managers prioritise developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child or young person and their parents or carers.
- The process for out-of-court disposals is police-led and the YOT does not always contribute to determining the disposal.
- There is no structured multi-agency joint decision-making panel at the beginning of the process to make sure that all outcomes, including community resolutions, are available for children and young people.

Service: Wandsworth Youth Offending Team

Fieldwork started: December 2018

Overall rating

Good



### 1. Organisational delivery

1.1	Governance and leadership	Good	
1.2	Staff	Good	
1.3	Partnerships and services	Requires improvement	
1.4	Information and facilities	Good	

### 2. Court disposals

2.1	Assessment	Good	
2.2	Planning	Good	
2.3	Implementation and delivery	Good	
2.4	Reviewing	Good	

### 3. Out-of-court disposals

3.1	Assessment	Outstanding	
3.2	Planning	Outstanding	
3.3	Implementation and delivery	Outstanding	
3.4	Reviewing	Good	

## Recommendations

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

### **The Community Safety Partnership and YOT Board should:**

1. review out-of-court disposals so that joint decision-making is integral to the process, and all outcomes are available for children and young people
2. engage with schools to understand the different responses to dealing with pupils carrying knives on school premises to avoid children entering the youth justice system unnecessarily.

### **The YOT Head of Service should:**

3. make sure that harmful sexual behaviour interventions follow the recommended guidance for co-working cases
4. use performance reports and data analysis to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and influence future service delivery.

## Introduction

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Youth offending teams (YOTs) supervise 10–18-year-olds who have been sentenced by a court, or who have come to the attention of the police because of their offending behaviour but have not been charged, and instead are dealt with out of court. HMI Probation inspects both these aspects of YOTs.

YOTs are statutory partnerships, and are multi-disciplinary, to deal with the needs of the whole child. They are required to have staff from local authority social care and education, the police, the National Probation Service and local health services.<sup>1</sup> Most YOTs are based within local authorities, although this can vary.

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

The London Borough of Wandsworth is the biggest inner-London borough and is made up of 20 wards. Approximately 60,000 children and young people under the age of 18 years live there (19 per cent of the total population in the area), and 22 per cent of these children are living in poverty. Wandsworth is a culturally diverse area. Children and young people from minority ethnic groups account for just under half of all children living in the area, and the proportion of children and young people with English as an additional language in primary schools is 46 per cent (the national average is 19 per cent) and in secondary schools is 45 per cent (the national average is 15 per cent).

### **The role of HM Inspectorate of Probation**

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation is the independent inspector of youth offending and probation services in England and Wales. We provide assurance on the effectiveness of work with adults and children who have offended to implement orders of the court, reduce reoffending, protect the public and safeguard the vulnerable. We inspect these services and publish inspection reports. We highlight good and poor practice, and use our data and information to encourage good-quality services. We are independent of government, and speak independently.

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

## **HM Inspectorate of Probation standards**

The standards against which we inspect are based on established models and frameworks, which are grounded in evidence, learning and experience. These standards are designed to drive improvements in the quality of work with people who have offended.<sup>2</sup>

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

## Key facts

**First-time entrant rate  
per 100,000**<sup>3</sup>

332

Wandsworth

273

Average for  
England and Wales

**Reoffending rates**<sup>4</sup>

56.3%

Wandsworth

41.6%

Average for  
England and Wales

### Caseload information<sup>5</sup>

#### Age

Wandsworth  
National average

#### 10-14

21%  
24%

#### 15-17

79%  
76%

#### Race/ethnicity

Wandsworth  
National average

#### White

27%  
73%

#### Black and minority ethnic

73%  
24%

#### Gender

Wandsworth  
National average

#### Male

86%  
83%

#### Female

14%  
17%



### Crime rates<sup>6</sup>

**Total recorded crime**  
(rate per 1,000  
households)

92.9

Metropolitan  
Police

84.7

England and Wales

<sup>3</sup> Youth Justice Board (YJB). *First-time entrants, April 2017 to March 2018*, .

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Justice. (July 2018). *Proven reoffending statistics, January 2016 to December 2016*.

<sup>5</sup> YJB. (January 2018). *Youth Justice annual statistics: 2016 to 2017*.

<sup>6</sup> Office for National Statistics. (October 2018). *Crime in England and Wales, Table P3* .

# 1. Organisational delivery



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

<b>1.1 Governance and leadership</b>	Good
The governance and leadership of the YOT supports and promotes the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children and young people.	

In September 2018, the Wandsworth YOT Management Board merged with the Community Safety Partnership Board to become the Community Safety Partnership and YOT Board (CSPYOTB) and is now chaired by the Chief Executive. The board includes all statutory partners and some non-statutory partners, for example the chair of the Youth Court Bench, the Fire Service and a representative from housing. Members of the board hold strategic positions in their own organisations and this is seen as a way of raising the profile of the YOT across the partnership. The board membership and terms of reference are reviewed annually.

The YOT is part of the early help division within the children’s services department of the council, reflecting the corporate commitment to early intervention and prevention. The Head of Service for the YOT is also the Head of Youth, and this allows greater access to preventative and community activities. There is a strategic youth justice plan in place for 2018 to 2019.

Issues that have an impact on youth offending are prominent on the agendas of other key strategic groups, including the Health and Wellbeing Board, Wandsworth Safeguarding Children Board and the corporate parenting panel. One of the priorities of the YOT is to tackle knife crime, and there is an initiative led by Public Health England to create a task force to deal with this issue. This involves widening the number of partnership members in this area of work by including accident and emergency departments in hospitals, sexual health services and mental health agencies.

Wandsworth has an Ending Gangs and Youth Violence (EGYV) team, which is funded through the Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC). They work across the partnership and offer specific services to the YOT, which include working with children known to the YOT, alongside case managers or as part of an exit strategy. They also help the service develop individual and group work interventions and offer consultations to other agencies, including schools.

The EGYV team is part of the Gangs Multi-Agency Partnership (GMAP). This is a meeting that reviews the level of risk that individuals are posing, using intelligence from different sources and agencies. Information is shared, and actions include mentoring young people, supporting them and their families, accompanying young people to appointments, delivering interventions and

making sure that children are kept apart, if necessary, in certain situations, such as in a court setting.

The process for out-of-court disposals is police led and does not offer a consultative approach to the different disposals available. There is no structured joint decision-making panel at the beginning of the process that can directly influence outcomes and ensure that the needs of the children and their families have been considered.

There are weekly meetings between the YOT and the police but these are not focused specifically on diversion opportunities and do not provide a rationale for the specific disposal to be delivered.

The police offer very few community resolutions, which unfairly limits the disposals available for children and young people. For those community resolutions and first youth cautions that are given, assessments and interventions are delivered through the Borough Early Intervention Team (BEIT), and this gives children and young people access to preventative early help and support.

The YOT only becomes involved in the out-of-court disposal process when child or young person receives a youth conditional caution and an AssetPlus assessment is completed. This assessment includes screening by specialist services, including substance misuse, speech and language, YOT nurse and mental health. At the end of the assessment process, a multi-agency panel is convened to decide on the appropriate interventions.

The Head of Service, their deputy and the senior analyst attend the management board. Management board members have previously attended a YOT open day and observed court to see the work of the service and meet staff. The staff survey showed that 14 out of the 30 staff who responded are not aware of the activities of the board. Interaction between the board, the management team and frontline staff needs to improve, so that everyone understands the priorities for the service and how these influence operational delivery.

The YOT management team sees its role as implementing the youth justice plan at an operational level. There are strong operational links to children's social care and there is a commitment to look at the most vulnerable children and young people across the system, through the vulnerable adolescents panel. This panel has streamlined services, coordinated involvement with children and families, and recognised gaps in provision. The panel accepts, however, that there is still more to do, especially regarding operational practice and developing a contextualised safeguarding approach to the work across all agencies.

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

In the staff survey, 83 per cent of respondents said that their workload or caseload is manageable and, although there is no specific case allocation tool, managers are aware of the caseloads and specific skills of individual staff members. There is currently a vacant case manager post and this is restricting the innovation and creativity of individual workers, as they need to concentrate on their increased caseload rather than, for example, developing group work interventions. Some roles within the YOT structure do not have adequate cover arrangements to continue to deliver the same quality of work in the staff member's absence; for example, cover arrangements for the reparation worker and the victim worker are inadequate.

There is a diverse workforce, which reflects the local community. Motivation within the staff group is high and staff are keen to promote the work they do with children and families. Staff and managers alike are child-centred and know their children very well. This is helped by the fact that, where possible, staff will work with the child or young person for the duration of their order. This allows them to build a trusting relationship with the staff member, which supports engagement and compliance.

The service provides an extensive group work programme to support individual interventions delivered by case managers and specialist staff, and this includes knife crime and county lines programmes. There is a wide variety of reparation projects, which include a bicycle project, allotments, working with homeless adults, arts and crafts and working at a football club, as well as using the grounds around the YOT office for a gardening project.

For harmful sexual behaviour cases, managers are trained in Assessment Intervention Moving on 2 (AIM2) effective supervision, and there is a lead psychologist for this area of work. Assessments are allocated to a psychologist but they are not co-worked with another practitioner and therefore do not follow the recommended guidance for these types of cases.

Staff receive regular supervision, and annual appraisals are completed and reviewed. Seconded staff receive supervision from their home agency, which completes an appraisal, as well as receiving supervision from their YOT line manager. Staff reported feeling supported by their managers and peers alike, and the service offers the opportunity for them to engage in reflective supervision.

There is an induction process in place for new staff, and there are procedures for addressing staff competency.

Service volunteers say they receive a good induction and that there is a structured framework for their ongoing development. They attend quarterly

thematic training sessions and have completed courses in restorative justice. They commented on feeling a part of the YOT team, and are supervised appropriately and valued by managers and staff alike.

A service training schedule is in place, and safeguarding is considered to be a mandatory course for all staff to complete. Staff have access to a variety of training provision and have completed courses in Signs of Safety and Prevent.

The service was one of the last YOTs to implement AssetPlus, and so for the past 12 months there has been an emphasis on AssetPlus development. This included commissioning training to support the quality of the assessments being completed. The focus for next year is on contextual safeguarding and trauma-informed practice, as this supports the vision of the early help division and the strategic direction of the YOT.

The YOT has a core group of experienced staff that have been part of a stable workforce for many years and are able to pass on their experience to new colleagues. Staff report that they receive praise from managers through emails recognising good work, and that good news is an agenda item in team meetings. There is also a council reward system in place, and YOT staff have made nominations and won awards.

1.3 Partnerships and services	Requires improvement
A comprehensive range of high-quality services is in place, enabling personalised and responsive provision for all children and young people.	

Performance management reports are provided for the board, and these include a mixture of local and national indicators. Analysis of the profile of young people known to the YOT is contained within various partnership plans, including those of child and adolescent mental health services, substance misuse services and the YOT’s performance report.

As part of the thematic reviews for 2018 to 2019, a MOPAC Locality Review was completed by consultants, on behalf of the Home Office’s Violence and Vulnerability Unit, on the Gang and Youth Violence programme. This has built a qualitative picture of the key issues around county lines, gangs, youth violence and vulnerability in Wandsworth.

Although there is a senior analyst within the YOT, the service does not fully utilise operational data analysis (for example, compliance rates and successful outcome figures) to influence service delivery.

Black and minority ethnic disproportionality is a locally identified priority for Wandsworth. The CSPYOTB commissioned a disproportionality report on the YOT cohort, which addressed issues such as black and minority ethnic young people and school exclusions, stop and search numbers by the police, involvement with services and areas of depravation. The report also considered whether black and minority ethnic young people are pleading not guilty to offences more often than their white counterparts, as this will

exclude them from accessing out-of-court-disposals. The review proposed that a number of services across the early help division need to identify and address the factors linked to disproportionality at an earlier stage.

There is a wide range of partnership staff in the service, which includes a substance misuse worker, education, training and employment worker, EGYV coordinator, parenting coordinator, probation officer and police officers. Health provision in the YOT is excellent and includes a speech and language therapist, a YOT nurse, two mental health workers and two psychologists.

There is a victim worker, who keeps victims up to date with the court process and identifies any opportunities for restorative justice. The YOT education, training and employment worker provides a targeted service to children over 16 years of age, helping them to access provision, and has connections with various placements across the area. The same partnership provision is offered to all children and young people, whether they are subject to an out-of-court disposal or a court order.

There are gaps in provision, especially access to suitable accommodation, and case managers spend time advocating for children and their families. Similarly, the youth service no longer provides the range of community activities that were delivered in the past. This means that YOT staff have to be more creative in providing interventions to children and young people. There is also the challenge that some children and young people will not cross area boundaries because of territorial issues, and certain provision may not be available in their area.

The service is aware that many YOT children are being excluded from schools. There have been several responses to this, including: local authority input into the headteacher forums; increasing the number of police officers in schools to engage with the head of safeguarding; and using early help staff to advocate for children by having early discussions about behaviour. Public Health England is leading on a zero-tolerance approach to exclusion and there have been some improvements in specific schools. Although the YOT has positive relationships with the pupil referral units in the area, more must be done to enable children to remain in mainstream provision.

There is a multi-agency risk safety panel, chaired by a YOT operational manager, that reviews all cases that are assessed as high risk of reoffending, harm to others and in terms of safety and wellbeing. The EGYV team works with health services staff, who notify the team if someone comes into the hospital with what could be considered a 'gang-related' injury. This offers the opportunity to speak to the child or young person at a potentially important time in their life. There is a similar arrangement with the police when an incident occurs in the community; however, since the police force reorganised, information sharing has become more inconsistent.

The zero-tolerance approach to knife crime in schools means that a child will be excluded if they have a knife on school premises. The experience of staff, however, is that the police are not consistently called to every incident, and there are different approaches depending on which school a child attends:

some will report a child bringing a knife into school and some will not. This can result in a discriminatory process for children and young people.

The approach also does not take account of the wider vulnerabilities of children, and can bring them into the youth justice system unnecessarily. In addition, the police deliver very few community resolutions, which means that children are not being routinely offered all the out-of-court disposals available and may lead to them receiving a more punitive outcome.

The inspection found that transition arrangements to probation do not follow national guidelines in terms of timeliness and joint introductory meetings, and this can be to the detriment of the young person. There is also a limited knowledge of MAPPA arrangements, both on a strategic and an operational level.

Feedback from sentencers indicated that YOT staff provide a good advocacy service for children and families, and communicate well with the court. Pre-sentence reports effectively address sentencing needs, proposals and recommendations. The court, however, would like more information on the types of programmes delivered, as well as data on compliance and successful outcomes of orders.

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

The YOT has a full range of policies and guidance, which are regularly reviewed and accessible to staff. There is an escalation process for all partners, to help in challenging another agency. Team meetings include guest speakers and partner agencies talking about their services and how YOT staff can access them.

The service has its own office, which is in a convenient location. There are gang issues in the borough, and staff must take account of territorialism when arranging appointments with children and young people. If they will not go into certain areas, staff will make alternative arrangements to see them in places where they feel safe. On occasion, provision is duplicated in different areas, so that all children and young people can access it.

Information sharing is aided by staff having access to the children’s social care system, and most partners have access to the YOT case management system. The service has experienced some glitches with the case management system and implementing AssetPlus, and so temporary fixes are being used until updates can be applied. As the YOT and partners are in the same building, they can access information from each other quickly.

The YOT has commissioned a participation project to review how well children are listened to, what is working for them, what can improve and how their voices can be heard in the future. This has led to young people designing one

of the intervention rooms in the office, to make it a more enabling environment, and they will be designing another, larger room.

The performance of the service is discussed in team meetings, although compliance rates or successful outcome data are not used to analyse the effectiveness of interventions. There is also no systematic approach to analysing feedback from children and their families and how this can influence future service delivery.

The service learns from audits and inspections, and there is a monitoring system for quality assuring work, especially regarding AssetPlus. A critical learning review was completed in May 2018 and the learning was shared with the CSPYOTB and the Safeguarding Children Board. Managers across the division will audit YOT cases, and vice versa, to increase people's knowledge of specialist areas and ensure a consistent quality of case management.

## Summary

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### **Strengths:**

- Board members hold strategic positions in their own organisations, ensuring a high profile for the service.
- The health offer to the YOT is excellent and there is an extensive range of partnership staff in the service.
- The EGYV team provides specific services to the YOT.
- Staff and managers are child centred and know the children and young people they are working with.
- The service provides extensive group work programmes, including knife crime and county lines programmes.
- Disproportionality is a priority for the area, and work to address this issue is ongoing.
- Staff take account of territorialism when arranging appointments with children and young people, to enable engagement.

### **Areas for improvement:**

- The process for out-of-court disposals is police led and does not offer the opportunity for joint decision-making at the beginning of the process.
- The police deliver few community resolutions, which results in children and young people receiving a more punitive outcome.
- There are different responses to dealing with children carrying knives on school premises and some children may enter the youth justice system unnecessarily.

- Harmful sexual behaviour cases are not co-worked and do not follow the recommended guidance.
- The YOT does not fully utilise operational data analysis to influence service delivery.
- A high number of children who are known to the YOT are being excluded from mainstream schools.
- Transition arrangements to probation do not always follow national guidelines, and knowledge around MAPPA is limited.



## 2. Court disposals

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

2.1 Assessment	Good
Assessment is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child or young person and their parents/carers.	

In the majority of cases, the assessment included sufficient analysis of offending behaviour, including the child or young person's attitudes towards, and motivation for, their offending. In nearly all cases, staff considered the diversity and wider social context of the child or young person by using information held by other agencies. In 92 per cent of cases, the assessment focused on the child or young person's strengths and their protective factors. Case managers were confident in referring to, and using information from, other agencies and a broad range of services were on offer.

The views of the child and their parents or carers were considered in only 58 per cent of cases. In five cases, there was no evidence of the child, or their parents or carers, being involved in the assessment and their views being taken into account.

The needs and wishes of the victim were taken into account in only 46 per cent of cases, and in seven cases there was no evidence of the victim's views being sought and therefore no opportunity for restorative justice to be considered.

The factors that were most related to a child or young person's offending were lifestyle and substance misuse. In 92 per cent of cases, the assessment sufficiently analysed how to address these factors and support desistance.

Most cases identified and analysed the risks to a child or young person's safety and wellbeing. In undertaking the assessments, all but three cases drew appropriately on other assessments, or information held by other agencies. In three cases, staff did not give enough attention to analysing which controls or interventions could best promote safety and wellbeing. Inspectors agreed with the safety and wellbeing classification in all but one of the cases.

Overall, the assessment sufficiently analysed how to keep the child or young person safe in 78 per cent of cases.

Assessing the risk of harm to others posed by a child or young person was not sufficiently identified in three cases, although most cases used available sources of information and involved other agencies where appropriate. Case

managers analysed controls and interventions to manage and minimise the risk of harm to others presented by the child or young person in the majority of cases.

Inspectors agreed with the case manager’s assessment of risk of serious harm in 83 per cent of cases, and in most cases the assessment analysed how to keep other people safe.

The case of P (m) shows the strengths of assessments in Wandsworth:

*“The assessment demonstrates a very clear understanding of the young person, their desistance factors and the identity issues which underpin their offending”.*

Overall, the quality of assessments of a child or young person’s desistance, safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm to others was judged to be good.

2.2 Planning	Good
Planning is well-informed, holistic and personalised, actively involving the child or young person and their parents/carers.	

The quality of planning that focused on supporting the child or young person’s desistance was adequate in almost all cases. In five cases, however, the planning did not take account of the diversity and social context of the child, or of their strengths and protective factors. In most cases, the plan set out the interventions and services most likely to support desistance; in line with the assessment, these were factors relating to lifestyle and substance misuse. In a third of cases, there was no evidence that the child or young person, or their parents or carers, were involved in the planning, or that their views were taken into account.

Considering the needs and wishes of victims as part of the planning process was not evident in four cases, although overall planning supported the child or young person’s desistance in 75 per cent of cases reviewed.

The risks to a child’s safety and wellbeing were addressed in 83 per cent of cases, and in most cases planning involved other agencies and aligning with their plans; however, contingency arrangements to manage those risks were not identified in five cases. Overall, planning focused on keeping the child or young person safe in 78 per cent of the cases reviewed.

The YOT uses a high-risk strategy panel to oversee the planning for cases in which the child or young person is assessed as posing a high risk of reoffending or of harm to others, or in relation to their own safety and wellbeing. These are multi-agency meetings, and the evidence from cases reviewed showed that the panel arrangements were particularly effective in planning for risk of harm to others.

There was sufficient planning to promote the safety of others in most cases inspected, and all but three cases involved other agencies where appropriate. Planning to address any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims was less well developed, and was not evident in a quarter of the cases reviewed.

There were effective contingency arrangements to manage identified risks to others in 75 per cent of cases. There was sufficient planning to keep other people safe in 80 per cent of cases, and, overall, the quality of planning was judged to be good.

In the case M (m), one inspector noted:

*“The objectives identified in planning are proportionate to the offending, and reflect the factors identified as contributing to offending behaviour. There is also a good focus on reparation and the victim”.*

2.3 Implementation and delivery	Good
High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging and assisting the child or young person.	

Implementation and delivery of services were good and reflected the extensive range of partnership staff who were involved in the cases. In 79 per cent of the cases reviewed, the services delivered were most likely to support desistance, and in all but one case the service delivered built on the child or young person’s strengths.

In 92 per cent of cases, it was clear that focus was given to maintaining an effective working relationship with the child or young person, and their parents or carers. This reflected the consistency of case managers working with children and young people during their court order, and the YOT staff’s child-centred approach. In all cases attention had been given by the case manager to encouraging the child or young person’s compliance with their court order.

This was demonstrated in the case of K (m):

*“Excellent interventions are delivered by the case manager and there is evidence of how they have slowly engaged the child working at their pace and developing the trust”.*

The delivery of services to promote the child or young person’s safety and wellbeing was evident in 91per cent of cases. Overall, the implementation and delivery of services effectively supported the safety of the child or young person in 87per cent of cases.

Services delivered to keep other people safe were of an acceptable quality in nearly all cases inspected, and the involvement of other agencies in managing

risk of harm was well coordinated in 85 per cent of cases. Case managers gave attention to the protection of actual and potential victims in 75 per cent of the cases, and there were only two cases where this was not evident. Overall, in nearly all cases the implementation and delivery of services supported the safety of other people effectively.

2.4 Reviewing	Good
Reviewing of progress is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child or young person and their parents/carers.	

Case managers were aware that children and young people’s circumstances can change rapidly, and that this can result in an increase, or sometimes decrease, in the likelihood of reoffending, risk of harm to others or risks to their safety and wellbeing. Reviews of cases resulted in the identification and subsequent response to changes in the factors linked to desistance in 92 per cent of cases, and built on the child or young person’s strengths in 91 per cent of cases.

The motivation and engagement levels of the child or young person were considered in most cases reviewed, and in 71 per cent of cases they, and their parents or carers, were meaningfully involved in the process.

The following example of the case of P (m) shows this:

*“There is evidence of formal and informal reviewing, and, positively, there is evidence of the young person and their parent being included in reviewing activity”.*

In 78 per cent of cases, the reviews led to changes in the plan of work to support desistance, and, overall, 87 per cent of cases focused sufficiently on supporting the child or young person’s desistance.

The quality of reviewing a child’s safety and wellbeing was not as good as the quality of reviewing their desistance or risk of harm. In 75 per cent of cases, information from other agencies was considered but this did not lead to the necessary changes in the ongoing plan in a third of the relevant cases. Overall, reviewing focused sufficiently on keeping the child or young person safe in 67 per cent of cases.

In reviewing the risk of harm to others, three cases did not identify and respond to changes in risk, and in two cases the case manager did not take account of information from other agencies. In 67 per cent of cases, the child or young person and their parents or carers were meaningfully involved in reviewing the risk of harm to others, and their views were considered. In 75 per cent of relevant cases, the reviewing process had led to necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work to manage and minimise these risks.

Overall, reviewing focused sufficiently on keeping other people safe in 75 per cent of cases, and it was evident in the case files that there were exit strategies for children and young people.

## Summary

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### **Strengths:**

- The quality of assessments is outstanding in terms of evaluating desistance and the risk of harm to others.
- Planning focuses on supporting the child or young person's desistance, and sets out the interventions that reflect the relevant factors in the assessment.
- The implementation and delivery of services that consider a child or young person's safety and wellbeing, and their risk of harm to others, are outstanding.
- The multi-agency high-risk strategy panel arrangements are effective.
- Case managers are focused on maintaining an effective working relationship with the child or young person by considering their motivation and engagement levels.
- Reviewing identifies and responds to changes in the factors linked to desistance, and builds on the child or young person's strengths.

### **Areas for improvement:**

- Planning does not consistently take account of the diversity and social context of the child, or of their strengths and protective factors.
- The views of the child or young person and their parents or carers are not consistently considered throughout the engagement.
- Work to promote the safety of victims and maximise opportunities for restorative justice is less well developed than other areas of practice.
- The quality of reviews of children's safety and wellbeing is not as good as reviews of their desistance or risk of harm to others.

### 3. Out-of-court disposals



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

3.1 Assessment	Outstanding
Assessment is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child or young person and their parents/carers.	

The work carried out with children and families when the child was subject to an out-of-court disposal was outstanding overall. The sample of cases included mainly youth conditional cautions where a full AssetPlus assessment had been completed. Specialist workers screened all the children and young people, and information was collated from other agencies to complete the assessment.

The quality of assessments was outstanding across all three areas of desistance, safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm, and was better than the assessment of post-court cases. In 87 per cent of cases, there was sufficient analysis of offending behaviour, and the assessment considered the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child or young person in nearly all cases. In 93 per cent of cases, the assessment focused on the child or young person's strengths and protective factors, and in all but one case staff had considered the child or young person's levels of maturity, and their ability and motivation to change. Most case managers had involved the child or young person and their parents or carers in the assessment, and taken their views into account.

In the case of B (m), one inspector stated:

*“There is a detailed assessment of the young person's vulnerabilities and diversity needs, and a good link to how these could impact their safety and wellbeing. It is clear the case manager has used multiple sources of information to inform the assessment”.*

Assessments of safety and wellbeing showed that risks to the child or young person were clearly identified and analysed in 87 per cent of cases, and used information from other agencies in most cases reviewed. The assessment sufficiently analysed how to keep the child or young person safe in 87 per cent of cases inspected.

In 80 per cent of relevant cases, the assessment analysed sufficiently how to keep other people safe, and nearly all used available sources of information, including other assessments that had been completed. Regarding levels of risk, inspectors agreed with the safety and wellbeing classification in all but

three cases where the classification was considered too low. In most cases, the assessment to keep other people safe was completed within an appropriate period following the start of the disposal.

3.2 Planning	Outstanding
Planning is well-informed, holistic and personalised, actively involving the child or young person and their parents/carers.	

The quality of planning was outstanding across all three areas of desistance, safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm, and was better than the assessment of post-court cases. In 93 per cent of cases, planning took sufficient account of the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child or young person, and in all but one case their level of maturity and motivation to change were considered. In most cases, the case managers had assessed the child or young person's strengths and protective factors, and had included them and their parents or carers in the planning process.

In two of the five relevant cases, the needs and wishes of victims had not been taken into account. In 93 per cent of cases, planning was proportionate and interventions could be completed within the appropriate timescale.

In terms of keeping the child or young person safe, 82 per cent of the plans sufficiently addressed the risks to the child. Two out of ten cases did not involve other agencies when this was appropriate, however, and a third of cases did not include contingency arrangements for the risks identified. Overall, planning focused sufficiently on keeping the child or young person safe in nearly all cases reviewed.

In the case of T (m), an inspector stated:

*“There is clear consideration of the young person's emotional wellbeing and vulnerabilities, with actions to support them identified, and consideration of adaptations to ways of working to meet the young person's diversity needs”.*

Planning to manage risk of harm promoted the safety of other people in most cases, and planning specifically to address concerns related to actual and potential victims was evident in 80 per cent of cases. Planning for contingency arrangements to manage those risks, however, had been identified in only just over half of relevant cases. Overall, planning focused sufficiently on keeping people safe in 82 per cent of cases.

3.3 Implementation and delivery	Outstanding
High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging and assisting the child or young person.	

The quality of the services implemented and delivered was outstanding across all three areas of desistance, safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm, and was better than the assessment of post-court cases. The YOT has a variety of group work programmes and access to specialist workers to help to provide the appropriate interventions for the child or young person. Interventions to support desistance were delivered in good time in 93 per cent of cases, and they reflected the diversity of the child or young person and involved parents or carers in nearly all cases.

Attention was given to developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child or young person and their parents or carers in all but one of the cases. Case managers encouraged and enabled the child or young person’s compliance in 93 per cent of cases, and the delivery of the interventions was proportionate to the type of disposal in nearly all cases reviewed. Access to mainstream services and overall support for the child or young person’s desistance were evident in most cases.

Interventions to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child or young person were evident in 82 per cent of cases. Sufficient attention had been given to keeping other people safe and the protection of actual and potential victims in all but one of the relevant cases. Overall, 91 per cent of cases effectively supported the safety of other people.

In the case of N (m), the following was noted:

*“The work sheets and materials produced by the young person with the case manager during the course of this intervention show that he had really engaged deeply in thinking about the issues involved”.*

3.4 Joint working	Good
Joint working with the police supports the delivery of high-quality, personalised and coordinated services.	

The process for out-of-court disposals is police led, and there is no structured joint decision-making panel at the beginning of the process to directly influence outcomes. Therefore, there was limited information regarding the rationale for decisions on the disposals given to children and young people.

The recommendations by the YOT for out-of-court disposal outcomes, conditions and interventions were appropriate and proportionate in only 47 per cent of cases. In the majority of cases there was no evidence that the YOT had made a recommendation. All cases where recommendations were

made considered the degree to which the child or young person understood the offence and their acknowledgement of responsibility. In most cases, the YOT did not contribute to determining the disposal when it should have done, but in all cases sufficient attention was given to ensuring that the child or young person, or their parents or carers, understood the implications of receiving an out-of-court disposal.

The YOT informed the police of progress and outcomes in only 33 per cent of the relevant cases; however, in 93 per cent of cases, staff had given sufficient attention to compliance with, and enforcement of, the conditions. Overall, the YOT worked effectively with the police in implementing the out-of-court disposal in 71 per cent of the cases inspected.

## Summary

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### **Strengths:**

- The quality of assessments, planning and implementation is outstanding across all three areas of desistance, safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm.
- The assessment benefits from the completion of the AssetPlus, tool which includes screening by specialist workers.
- Planning takes account of the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child or young person, as well as their level of maturity and motivation to change.
- Planning to manage risk of harm addresses concerns related to actual and potential victims.
- There is a variety of group work programmes and access to specialist workers who help to provide the appropriate interventions for the child or young person.
- Case managers prioritise developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the children and young people and their parents or carers.

### **Areas for improvement:**

- The process for out-of-court disposals is police led and the YOT does not contribute to determining the disposal.
- There is no structured multi-agency joint decision-making panel operating at the beginning of the process to influence outcomes.
- Contingency arrangements are not always evident in managing risk of harm to others.

## Annex 1 – Methodology

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

### **Domain one: organisational delivery**

The YOT submitted evidence in advance, and the Chief Executive and the Assistant Director for Early Help delivered a presentation covering the following areas:

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

During the main fieldwork phase, we surveyed 32 individual case managers, asking them about their experiences of training, development, management supervision and leadership. Various meetings and focus groups were then held, allowing us to triangulate evidence and information. In total, we conducted 11 meetings either face to face or by telephone.

### **Domain two: court disposals**

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

We examined 24 post-court cases. The sample size was set to achieve a confidence level of 80 per cent (with a margin of error of five), and we ensured that the ratios in relation to gender, sentence or disposal type, risk of serious harm, and risk to safety and wellbeing classifications matched those in the eligible population.

### **Domain three: out-of-court disposals**

We completed case assessments over a one-week period, examining case files and interviewing case managers. Forty per cent of cases selected were those of children and young people who had received out-of-court disposals three to five months earlier. This enabled us to examine work in relation to assessing, planning, implementing and joint working. Where necessary, interviews with other people closely involved in the case also took place.

We examined 15 out-of-court disposals. The sample size was set to achieve a confidence level of 80 per cent (with a margin of error of five), and we ensured that the ratios in relation to gender, sentence or disposal type, risk of serious harm, and risk to safety and wellbeing classifications matched those in the eligible population.

## Annex 2 – Inspection results

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### **1.1. Governance and leadership**

**Good**

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

- 1.1.1. Is there a clear local vision and strategy for the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children and young people?
- 1.1.2. Do the partnership arrangements actively support effective service delivery?
- 1.1.3. Does the leadership of the YOS support effective service delivery?

### **1.2. Staff**

**Good**

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

- 1.2.1. Do staffing and workload levels support the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children and young people?
- 1.2.2. Do the skills of YOS staff support the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children and young people?
- 1.2.3. Does the oversight of work support high-quality delivery and professional development?
- 1.2.4. Are arrangements for learning and development comprehensive and responsive?

### **1.3. Partnerships and services**

**Requires improvement**

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

- 1.3.1. Is there a sufficiently comprehensive and up-to-date analysis of the profile of children and young people, to ensure that the YOS can deliver well-targeted services?

- 1.3.2. Does the YOS partnership have access to the volume, range and quality of services and interventions to meet the needs of all children and young people?
- 1.3.3. Are arrangements with statutory partners, providers and other agencies established, maintained and used effectively to deliver high-quality services?

<b>1.4. Information and facilities</b>	<b>Good</b>
Timely and relevant information is available and appropriate facilities are in place to support a high-quality, personalised and responsive approach for all children and young people.	

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

## 2. Court disposals

Standards and key questions	Rating and % yes
<b>2.1. Assessment</b>	<b>Good</b>
Assessment is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child or young person and their parents/carers.	
2.1.1. Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child or young person's desistance?	92%
2.1.2. Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child or young person safe?	78%
2.1.3. Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	83%

<b>2.2. Planning</b>	<b>Good</b>
Planning is well-informed, holistic and personalised, actively involving the child or young person and their parents/carers.	
2.2.1. Does planning focus sufficiently on supporting the child or young person's desistance?	75%
2.2.2. Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child or young person safe?	78%
2.2.3. Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	80%
<b>2.3. Implementation and delivery</b>	<b>Good</b>
High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging and assisting the child or young person.	
2.3.1. Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the child or young person's desistance?	79%
2.3.2. Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of the child or young person?	87%
2.3.3. Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?	90%
<b>2.4. Reviewing</b>	<b>Good</b>
Reviewing of progress is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child or young person and their parents/carers.	
2.4.1. Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the child or young person's desistance?	87%
2.4.2. Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child or young person safe?	67%
2.4.3. Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	75%

### 3. Out-of-court disposals

Standards and key questions	Rating and % yes
<p><b>3.1. Assessment</b></p> <p>Assessment is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child or young person and their parents/carers.</p>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<p>3.1.1. Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child or young person's desistance?</p>	87%
<p>3.1.2. Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child or young person safe?</p>	87%
<p>3.1.3. Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?</p>	80%
<p><b>3.2. Planning</b></p> <p>Planning is well-informed, holistic and personalised, actively involving the child or young person and their parents/carers.</p>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<p>3.2.1. Does planning focus sufficiently on supporting the child or young person's desistance?</p>	93%
<p>3.2.2. Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child or young person safe?</p>	82%
<p>3.2.3. Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?</p>	82%
<p><b>3.3. Implementation and delivery</b></p> <p>High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging and assisting the child or young person.</p>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<p>3.3.1. Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the child or young person's desistance?</p>	93%
<p>3.3.2. Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of the child or young person?</p>	82%
<p>3.3.3. Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?</p>	91%
<p><b>3.4. Joint working</b></p> <p>Joint working with the police supports the delivery of high-quality, personalised and coordinated services.</p>	<b>Good</b>

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|--|-----|
| 3.4.1. Are the YOS's recommendations sufficiently well-informed, analytical and personalised to the child or young person, supporting joint decision-making? | 71% |
| 3.4.2. Does the YOS work effectively with the police in implementing the out-of-court disposal?  | 71% |
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## Annex 3 – Glossary

<b>AssetPlus</b>	Assessment and planning framework tool developed by the Youth Justice Board for work with children and young people who have offended, or are at risk of offending, that reflects current research and understanding of what works with children.
<b>Community resolution</b>	Used in low-level, often first-time, offences where there is informal agreement, often also involving the victim, about how the offence should be resolved. Community resolution is a generic term; in practice, many different local terms are used to mean the same thing.
<b>Contextual safeguarding</b>	An approach to understanding and responding to young people's experience of serious harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhood school and online can feature violence and abuse.
<b>Corporate parenting panel</b>	A multi-agency board that helps the local authority to fulfil its legal obligations and responsibilities towards providing services for looked after children and those leaving care.
<b>Court disposals</b>	The sentence imposed by the court. Examples of youth court disposals are referral orders, youth rehabilitation orders, and detention and training orders.
<b>County lines</b>	Young people who are coerced into transporting drugs or money on behalf of gangs across the country, mostly from urban to more rural areas.
<b>CSPYOTB</b>	Community Safety Partnership and YOT Board.
<b>Desistance</b>	The cessation of offending or other antisocial behaviour.
<b>EGYV</b>	Ending Gangs and Youth Violence.
<b>Enforcement</b>	Action taken by a case manager in response to a child or young person's failure to comply with the actions specified as part of a community sentence or licence. Enforcement can be punitive or motivational.
<b>HMI Probation</b>	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation.
<b>MAPPA</b>	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements: where probation, police, prison and other agencies work together locally to manage offenders who pose the highest risk of harm to others. Level 1 is single agency management, where the risks posed by the offender can be managed by the agency responsible for the supervision or case management of the offender. Levels 2 and 3 require active multi-agency management.

<b>MOPAC</b>	Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime.
<b>Out-of-court disposal</b>	The resolution of a normally low-level offence, when it is not in the public interest to prosecute, through a community resolution, youth caution or youth conditional caution.
<b>Personalised</b>	A personalised approach is one in which services are tailored to meet the needs of individuals, giving people as much choice and control as possible over the support they receive. We use this term to include diversity factors.
<b>Prevent</b>	The Prevent duty is that duty on specified authorities in the exercise of their functions to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.
<b>Risk of serious harm</b>	Risk of serious harm is a term used in AssetPlus. All cases are classified as presenting a low, medium, high or very high risk of serious harm to others. HMI Probation uses this term when referring to the classification system, but uses the broader term 'risk of harm' when referring to the analysis which should take place in order to determine the classification level. This helps to clarify the distinction between the probability of an event occurring and the impact or severity of the event. The term 'risk of serious harm' only incorporates 'serious' impact, whereas using 'risk of harm' enables the necessary attention to be given to those young offenders for whom lower impact/severity harmful behaviour is probable.
<b>Safeguarding</b>	A wider term than 'child protection' that involves promoting a child or young person's health and development, and ensuring that their overall welfare needs are met.
<b>Safety and wellbeing</b>	AssetPlus replaced the assessment of vulnerability with a holistic outlook of a child or young person's safety and wellbeing concerns. It is defined as "those outcomes where the young person's safety and wellbeing may be compromised through their own behaviour, personal circumstances or because of the acts/omissions of others" ( <i>AssetPlus Guidance</i> , 2016).
<b>Signs of safety</b>	A strengths-based, safety-focused approach to child protection casework which is grounded in partnership and collaboration.
<b>Youth caution</b>	A caution accepted by a child following admission to an offence where it is not considered to be in the public interest to prosecute the offender.
<b>Youth conditional caution</b>	As for a youth caution, but with conditions attached that the child is required to comply with for up to the next

	three months. Non-compliance may result in the child being prosecuted for the original offence.
<b>Youth rehabilitation order</b>	An overarching community sentence to which the courts apply requirements (for example, supervision requirement, unpaid work, etc.)
<b>YOT</b>	Youth offending team (YOT) is the term used in the <i>Crime and Disorder Act 1998</i> to describe a multi-agency team that aims to reduce youth offending. YOTs are known locally by many titles, such as youth justice service (YJS), youth offending service (YOS) and other generic titles that may illustrate their wider role in the local area in delivering services for children.



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