

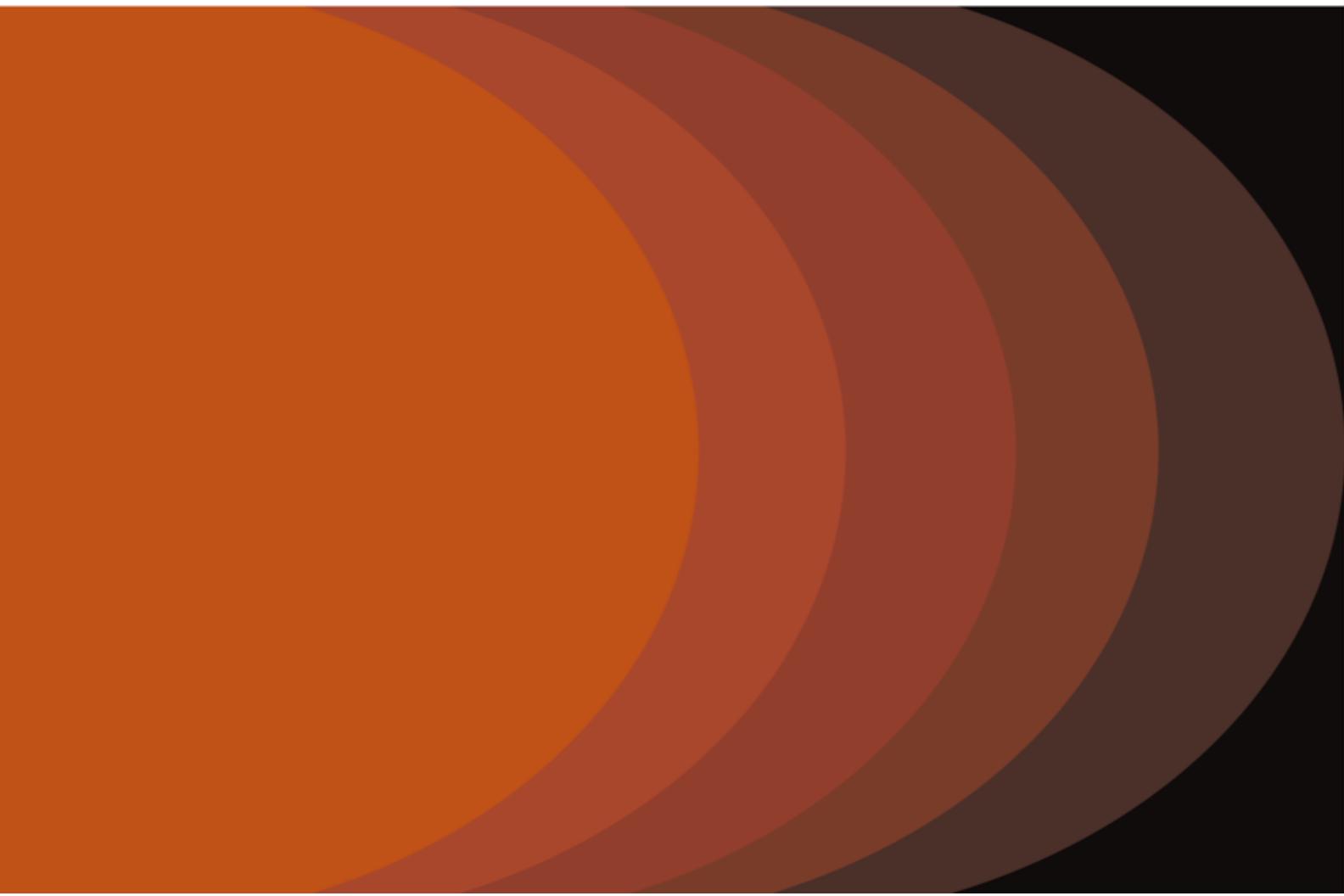


Her Majesty's
Inspectorate of
Probation

An inspection of youth offending services in

Tameside

HM Inspectorate of Probation, December 2021



Contents

Foreword	3
Ratings	4
Executive summary	5
Recommendations	10
Background	11
Contextual facts	13
1. Organisational delivery	15
1.1. Governance and leadership	17
1.2. Staff.....	21
1.3. Partnerships and services	24
1.4. Information and facilities.....	27
Diversity.....	30
2. Court disposals	31
2.1. Assessment.....	32
2.2. Planning	34
2.3. Implementation and delivery	35
2.4. Reviewing.....	37
3. Out-of-court disposals	39
3.1. Assessment.....	41
3.2. Planning	42
3.3. Implementation and delivery	44
3.4. Out-of-court disposal policy and provision.....	45
4. Resettlement	49
4.1. Resettlement policy and provision	49
Annexe 1: Methodology	52
Annexe 2: Inspection data	54

Acknowledgements

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

The role of HM Inspectorate of Probation

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

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

Published by:

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

Follow us on Twitter [@hmiprobation](https://twitter.com/hmiprobation)

ISBN: 978-1-914478-42-0

Foreword

This inspection is part of our programme of youth offending service (YOS) inspections. We have inspected and rated Tameside YJS across three broad areas: the arrangements for organisational delivery of the service, the quality of work done with children sentenced by the courts, and the quality of out-of-court disposal work. Overall, Tameside YJS was rated as 'Good'. We also inspected the quality of resettlement policy and provision, which was separately rated as 'Requires improvement'.

The inspection found a good service, with strengths clearly evident in the implementation, delivery and reviewing of court disposal casework, and in assessment, planning and delivery of casework across out-of-court disposals. The service has a strong understanding of desistance, and work to promote this was evident.

However, improvements were required in the assessment of the child's risk of harm to others, alongside more consistent work to address victim issues and improved planning to manage and mitigate identified risks to others.

Tameside YJS's arrangements for staffing and partnerships and services are good. Staff are motivated, experienced, child-centred, and receive regular supervision and access to good training and development. The YJS partnership has access to a good volume, range and quality of services, including specialist and mainstream interventions. In particular, the partnership is to be commended on adapting to the difficult local challenges that have arisen during the Covid-19 pandemic and continuing to deliver quality services.

However, the service needs to make improvements to its governance and leadership. Many of the statutory partner agencies have had their own organisational challenges, which has resulted in a turnover of senior leaders. This has impacted on the continuity and cohesiveness of the board. Relationships with some of the board attendees (particularly those new to the role) and the services they represent need to be strengthened and expectations clarified. We also found a disconnect between the board and frontline YJS practitioners.

Moving forward, the challenge is for the management board to establish a consistent, cohesive membership and set of arrangements, to allow it to communicate a clear vision across the partnership and to key stakeholders. The YJS also needs to improve the analysis and use of data around disproportionality, children's participation, resettlement and out-of-court disposals.

There is much to commend Tameside YJS and the partnership for, which is reflected in their overall rating of 'Good'. We were encouraged by their candid self-assessment of the issues to be addressed and make several recommendations that will enable the YJS to improve further.



Justin Russell
HM Chief Inspector of Probation

Ratings

Tameside Youth Justice Service		Score	21/36
Overall rating		Good	
1. Organisational delivery			
1.1	Governance and leadership	Requires improvement	
1.2	Staff	Good	
1.3	Partnerships and services	Good	
1.4	Information and facilities	Requires improvement	
2. Court disposals			
2.1	Assessment	Requires improvement	
2.2	Planning	Requires improvement	
2.3	Implementation and delivery	Good	
2.4	Reviewing	Good	
3. Out-of-court disposals			
3.1	Assessment	Good	
3.2	Planning	Outstanding	
3.3	Implementation and delivery	Outstanding	
3.4	Out-of-court disposal policy and provision	Requires improvement	
4. Resettlement			
4.1	Resettlement policy and provision	Requires improvement	

Executive summary

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

Organisational delivery

We interviewed the YJS manager and the chair of the management board. We held meetings with other members of the board and key stakeholders, as well as YJS staff and volunteers.

While the head of service is experienced and well-respected locally and regionally and board members are connected to other strategic boards across the partnership, the YJS's vision is insufficiently clear and not enough attention is given to addressing the diversity needs of YJS children. The board has had turnover in its members, which has impacted on continuity and cohesiveness. There is also a disconnect between the board and frontline YJS practitioners.

Staffing levels are planned and reviewed to meet the changing demands and profiles of the children, and staff workloads are actively managed. Staff are motivated to contribute to delivering a quality service. Staff are appropriately supervised and the YJS identifies and plans for the learning needs of all staff, providing appropriate access to in-service training.

The YJS partnership has access to a good volume, range and quality of services, including specialist and mainstream interventions, as well as additional innovative interventions for serious youth violence, prevention and child criminal exploitation. The YJS is to be commended on adapting to the difficult local challenges that have arisen during the Covid-19 pandemic and continuing to deliver quality services.

The necessary policies and processes are in place; however, they are not sufficiently assessed for their impact on diverse groups. The information and communication technology (ICT) systems allow staff to plan, deliver and record their work in a timely way, and access information as required. However, the YJS's quality assurance systems are not sufficiently embedded to influence the provision and delivery of services or development of the workforce. The views of children and parents/carers are not routinely sought and used to improve services.

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

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

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

Our key findings about organisational delivery are as follows:

- The board chair has been consistent and the YJS head of service is experienced and well-respected locally and regionally.
- Board members are connected to other strategic boards across the partnership.
- Staff are child-centred and motivated to deliver a quality service, and their workloads are manageable.
- Staff are appropriately supervised and the YJS identifies and provides for their training needs.
- The YJS partnership has access to a good volume, range and quality of services, including specialist and mainstream interventions.
- The YJS has adapted to the difficult local challenges that have arisen during the Covid-19 pandemic and continued to deliver quality services.

But:

- The YJS's vision is insufficiently clear and not enough attention is given to addressing the diversity needs of YJS children.
- The YJS management board has had turnover in its membership, which has impacted on continuity and cohesiveness.
- At strategic level, there had been drift and delay in addressing some key issues identified by the YJS, such as disproportionality, children's participation and establishing strategic board sub-groups.
- There is an evident disconnect between the board and frontline YJS practitioners.
- The necessary policies and processes are in place; however, their impact on diverse groups is not assessed well enough.
- The views of children and parents/carers are not routinely sought and used to shape service delivery.
- YJS quality assurance systems are not embedded and do not sufficiently influence service provision, delivery and workforce development.

Court disposals

We took a detailed look at seven community sentences and one custodial sentence managed by the YJS.

Although six out of eight cases met our requirements for assessment and planning across the elements of desistance and safety and wellbeing, only five cases were sufficient in relation to assessment and planning to address the risk of harm to others, resulting in an overall rating of 'Requires improvement' for both these standards.

Implementation and delivery was rated as 'Good'. There was evidence of effective partnership working in a large majority of cases, specifically those agencies involved in safeguarding and public protection. Despite the constraints brought about by Covid-19, YJS staff worked flexibly and used their knowledge and skills well to build relationships with children and families and take a strengths-based approach to meeting their complex needs.

Our rating for reviewing was 'good' for court cases. Many of the children supervised by the YJS had complex lives, and their circumstances could change rapidly. We found reviewing to be strengths-based, informed by other agencies and child-focused; the YJS achieved an appropriate balance between supporting desistance, safeguarding children and protecting the public.

Our key findings about court disposals are as follows:

- Assessment, planning and implementation to promote desistance, and safety and wellbeing were sufficient in over two thirds of cases.
- There was a consistently good level of involvement of children and their parents or carers across all elements of casework.
- Delivery and implementation of interventions to address safety and wellbeing and consider risk of harm to others were sufficient in over 80 per cent of cases inspected.
- There was evidence of effective partnership working in a large majority of cases.
- Practitioners worked hard and flexibly to maintain service provision, despite Covid-19 restrictions.
- Reviewing for desistance and safety and wellbeing was satisfactory in the majority of cases inspected.

But:

- There were shortfalls in assessment and planning to address the risk of harm to others.
- Contingency planning for safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm to others was not always tailored to the needs of the case or recorded well enough.
- Management oversight of court orders did not consistently promote high-quality casework practice.
- Assessment and planning of work to promote the safety of victims and maximise opportunities for restorative justice were variable.

Out-of-court disposals

We inspected 10 cases managed by the YJS that had received an out-of-court disposal. These consisted of two youth cautions and eight community resolutions. We did not inspect any youth conditional cautions.

Eight out of ten cases met all our requirements for planning and service delivery across all elements of desistance, safety and wellbeing and risk of harm to others. This led to a judgement of 'Outstanding' for these areas of work. Assessment for addressing a child's desistance and risk of harm to others was rated as 'Good'.

We rated out-of-court disposal policy and provision as 'Requires improvement'. The YJS does have an out-of-court-disposal policy, supplemented by detailed out-of-court-disposal guidance notes, which describes roles and responsibilities. However, this policy is overdue for review. There is some inconsistency in decision-making around community resolutions, and the evaluation and review of out-of-court-disposal policy and provision are underdeveloped. Greater focus is needed on issues of disproportionality, analysing more granular data to demonstrate impact and also involving children and their parents/carers in any review activity.

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

- Assessment work was based on a wide range of sources, with consistently good analysis of information to support desistance, address safety and wellbeing, and understand the risk of harm to others.
- Planning and implementation and delivery of out-of-court-disposal work were sufficient in 90% of inspected cases across all elements of desistance, safety and wellbeing and risk of harm to others.
- YJS staff developed positive relationships with children and their families, which supported effective engagement.
- Children subject to out-of-court disposals could access the same wide range of services as children on court orders.
- Management oversight of out-of-court disposals promoted high-quality casework practice.
- YJS staff consistently delivered opportunities for community integration and access to partnership services following completion of the out-of-court disposal work.
- Where children on out-of-court disposals were deemed to be at high risk of reoffending, or there was a high level of concern about their safety and wellbeing or risk of harm to others, they were overseen by YJS complex case panel arrangements.

But:

- Contingency planning for safety and wellbeing and risk of harm to others was not always tailored to the needs of the case or recorded well enough.
- There is some inconsistency in decision-making around community resolutions.
- Evaluation and review of out-of-court-disposal policy and provision are overdue and underdeveloped.

Resettlement

We inspected the quality of policy and provision in place for resettlement work, using evidence from documents, meetings and interviews. To illustrate that work, we inspected two cases managed by the YJS that had received a custodial sentence.

Our key findings about resettlement work are as follows:

- There is a recently developed, clear resettlement policy, based on principles of constructive resettlement.
- YJS practitioners demonstrated a high level of advocacy for YJS children in custody.
- Provision and partnership working were of good quality across key pathways of accommodation, education, training and employment and health.
- There is good communication and positive working relationships between YJS and secure estate staff.
- The YJS is represented at operational and strategic groups of the Greater Manchester Resettlement Consortium.

But:

- Formal, structured resettlement training for YJS staff is underdeveloped.
- The resettlement policy does not specifically address diversity issues.
- Victim work in YJS resettlement cases was of variable quality.
- Analysis of the YJS resettlement cohort of children lacked sufficient focus and depth at strategic and operational level.
- The work of the Greater Manchester Resettlement Consortium requires further embedding, through the recently established operational and strategic resettlement groups.

Recommendations

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

The Tameside Youth Justice Service should:

1. communicate a clear vision and establish consistent and cohesive board membership
2. address the relationship between the board and practitioners, so that all can recognise how strategic priorities influence operational delivery
3. work with other criminal justice partners to implement plans and actions to reduce the over-representation of black, Asian and minority ethnic children and looked-after children in the YJS caseload
4. improve the quality of assessment and planning in court disposal casework, focusing on managing the risk of harm to others
5. ensure that management oversight and quality assurance of practice are embedded and effective, particularly in court disposal cases
6. improve the analysis and use of data on disproportionality, children's participation, resettlement and out-of-court disposals.

Greater Manchester Police should:

7. work with the YJS to review and develop the out-of-court disposal policy and provision, to ensure effective joint decision-making in all cases.

Background

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

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

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

Tameside is a metropolitan borough in the east of Greater Manchester. With a population of 227,117, demographic information indicates that 22.4 per cent of Tameside residents are under the age of 18 and 9.6 per cent of residents are aged 10 to 17, equivalent to over 20,000 children. YJS data reveals that 87 per cent of 10-17-year-olds in Tameside are white British, compared with 80.9 per cent across England. In the latest education census, 77.3 per cent of pupils in Tameside schools were white.⁴

As a local authority and as a wider YJS partnership, Tameside has socio-economic challenges. It ranked 28th in the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019, placing it in the most deprived 10 per cent of boroughs in the country. In education, 23.6 per cent of secondary school pupils and 27.8 per cent of primary school pupils in Tameside receive free school meals, while school suspensions, exclusions and pupils with special educational needs/an education, health and care plan are all above the national average. In addition, 14.9 per cent of primary pupils and 12.9 per cent of secondary pupils speak English as a second language.

Demand for children's services and health services is high across the local authority. Over 2019/2020, an average of 2,453 children in need cases were open at any time. In the 2020 calendar year, 139 of every 10,000 children in Tameside were being cared for, compared with 67 per 10,000 across England. Healthy life expectancy in Tameside is lower than the national average, at 61.9 years for men and 58.7 years for women. The YJS partnership reports that 35.9 per cent of year six pupils are overweight or obese, and 30.5 per cent of Tameside residents are inactive (doing less than 30 minutes of exercise per week). Hospital admissions for alcohol-specific conditions in under 18s are 33.2 per 100,000, compared to 30.7 across England. The rate of admissions of under-18s for mental health conditions is below the England average of 89.5 per 100,000, at 59.2.

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

⁴ Department for Education. (2021). *School Census*

Tameside Youth Justice Service is part of Tameside Children's Services Directorate. A service re-design in April 2019 saw the service change its name from Youth Offending Team to Youth Justice Service. Due to capacity issues at a management level, the service's senior team increased from a team and a practice manager to three operational managers. Due to recruitment issues, staff leaving and maternity leave, this structure has only been fully operational since June 2020. Around this time, the service changed the way that work is allocated and delivered, following on from its National Standards self-audit findings and in recognition of the increased complexity of cases in the out-of-court arena.

The YJS describes the past 12 months as a challenging time to deliver effective services to children and their families, due to the restrictions that have been in place as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The proportion of pupils missing school in Greater Manchester due to Covid-19 (positive case/self-isolating) has been consistently higher than nationally. Data provided by the YJS partnership indicates that Covid-19-related absence reached a high of 15.9 per cent on 06 July 2021, compared with 10.9 per cent nationally.

In September 2020, in line with the local court reopening and with young people going back to school, YJS staff on the duty rota went back into the office for one day per week. The message to case managers remained that children and young people should be worked with either outdoors or virtually, unless it was agreed with a manager that this was not possible or practical, in which case pre-booked appointments took place in the office.

In May 2021, in line with the broader lifting of Covid-19 restrictions, the daily staffing levels in the office were increased and staff were instructed that all contact should go back to being face-to-face. Initially, the building remained closed to the public, with contact at the office on an appointment-only basis, with staff being more creative about where they see children. We were informed that authorisation had been given for the premises to re-open to more staff and children from the beginning of November 2021. Referral order panels have recently resumed on a face-to-face basis and direct reparation is also now taking place in the community.

At the point of inspection, the YJS partnership reported that the rate of new Covid-19 cases in Tameside was high, at 434.6 new cases per 100,000 in the seven days to September 2nd, 2021. This was the highest rate in Greater Manchester, and the 15th highest in England.

The numbers of children and young people in the YJS caseload is lower than before Covid-19. While the YJS has seen an upturn in the volume of out-of-court work, the amount of cases being heard in the youth court remains low, with no backlog to report. There is still considerable delay with Crown Court cases. The YJS has children who have been awaiting trial for a considerable length of time, reflecting a national issue with crown court backlogs.

Contextual facts

Population information⁵

99	First-time entrant rate per 100,000 in Tameside ⁶
167	First-time entrant rate per 100,000 in England and Wales
30.6%	Reoffending rate in Tameside ⁷
35.6%	Reoffending rate in England and Wales

227,117	Total population Tameside
21,771	Total youth population (10–17 years) in Tameside

Caseload information⁸

Age	10–14 years	15–17 years
Tameside YJS ⁹	18%	82%
National average	19%	81%

Race/ethnicity	White	Black and minority ethnic	Unknown
Tameside YJS ⁹	74%	23%	2%
Tameside population aged 10-17 ⁹	87%	13%	0%

Gender	Male	Female
Tameside YJS ⁹	85%	15%
National average	85%	15%

⁵ Office for National Statistics. (June 2021). *UK population estimates, mid-2020*.

⁶ Youth Justice Board. (2021). *First-time entrants, January to December 2020*.

⁷ Ministry of Justice. (July 2021). *Proven reoffending statistics, October 2018 to September 2019*.

⁸ Youth Justice Board. (January 2021). *Youth justice annual statistics: 2019 to 2020*.

⁹ Data provided by the YJS, reflecting the caseload at the time of the inspection announcement.

Additional caseload data¹⁰

66	Total current caseload: community sentences
4	Total current caseload in custody
5	Total current caseload on licence
61	Total current caseload of out-of-court disposals (including youth conditional cautions, youth cautions and community resolutions)
51%	Proportion of current caseload subject to court disposal
49%	Proportion of current caseload subject to out-of-court disposal
62%	Percentage of current caseload with Child in Need Plan, Child Protection Plan or Looked After Child plan
19%	Percentage of current caseload in a pupil referral unit, alternative education, or on reduced timetables
32%	Percentage of children NEET (not in education, employment or training)

For children subject to court disposals:

Offence types ¹¹	%
Violence against the person	25%
Robbery	38%
Theft and handling stolen goods	13%
Indictable motoring offences	25%

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

¹¹ Data from the cases assessed during this inspection may add up to more than 100 due to rounding.

1. Organisational delivery

We rated leadership and governance as 'Requires improvement'. Staffing was rated 'Good', as were partnerships and services. Information and facilities were rated as 'Requires improvement'.

The YJS's vision is insufficiently clear and not enough attention is given to addressing the diversity needs of YJS children. The board has had turnover in its membership, which has impacted on continuity and cohesiveness. Given the changes in board membership, it was evident that there had been drift and delay in dealing with some key issues identified by the YJS, such as disproportionality, children's participation and establishing strategic board sub-groups. There is a disconnect evident between the board and frontline YJS practitioners. Board members are connected to other strategic boards across the partnership, and the board chair recognises the need for development work to improve its cohesiveness and understanding. Provision of staff by partnership organisations is good, and the head of service is experienced and well-respected locally and regionally. The YJS management team are experienced individuals, but relatively new as a team. They represent the YJS on relevant operational groups.

Staffing levels are planned and reviewed to meet the changing demands and profiles of the children, and staff workloads are actively managed. There is an effective strategy to maintain the quality of delivery during periods of planned and unplanned staff absence. Staff are motivated to deliver a quality service. Cases are allocated to staff who are suitably qualified and or/experienced. Volunteers are appropriately selected and supported to fulfil clearly defined roles. Staff are appropriately supervised and there is an effective induction programme for new staff. The YJS identifies and plans for the learning needs of all staff and provides appropriate access to in-service training.

The YJS's analysis of the profile of children is, on balance, sufficiently comprehensive and up to date. It captures desistance needs, safety and wellbeing factors and risk of harm and identifies diversity factors such as an over-representation of looked-after children and black, Asian and minority ethnic children. The YJS partnership has access to the volume, range and quality of services it needs, including specialist and mainstream interventions, as well as additional innovative interventions around serious youth violence, prevention and child criminal exploitation.

Arrangements with partners are used effectively to support desistance, maintain safety and wellbeing and manage risk of harm to others. Feedback from the courts is positive about the support the YJS provides for their sentencing decisions.

The necessary policies and processes are in place; however, they are not sufficiently assessed for their impact on diverse groups. The YJS delivers its work in places that are sufficiently accessible and suitable for staff and children, although there has been an impact due to Covid-19. The ICT systems allow staff to plan, deliver and record their work in a timely way, and to access information as required. There are gaps in the YJS's quality assurance systems, and these systems are not embedded in operational practice. The views of children and parents/carers are not routinely sought and used. The YJS recognises that in future, thematic findings from quality assurance and audit will need to influence service provision, delivery and workforce development.

Strengths

- The board chair has been in place for some time, the YJS head of service is experienced and well-respected locally and regionally.
- Board members are connected to other strategic boards across the partnership.
- Staff are child-centred, motivated to contribute to delivering a quality service, and their workloads are manageable.
- Staff are appropriately supervised and the YJS identifies and provides for their training needs.
- The YJS partnership has access to a good volume, range and quality of services, including specialist and mainstream interventions.
- The YJS has adapted to the difficult local challenges that have arisen during the Covid-19 pandemic and continued to deliver quality services.

Areas for improvement

- The vision is insufficiently clear and not enough attention is given to addressing the diversity needs of YJS children.
- The YJS management board has had turnover in its membership, which has impacted on continuity and cohesiveness.
- At strategic level, there had been drift and delay in addressing some key issues identified by the YJS, such as disproportionality, children's participation and establishing strategic board sub-groups.
- There is an evident disconnect between the board and frontline YJS practitioners.
- The necessary policies and processes are in place; however, they are not sufficiently assessed for their impact on diverse groups.
- The views of children and parents/carers are not routinely sought and used to shape service delivery.
- YJS quality assurance systems are not yet embedded and do not sufficiently influence the provision and delivery of services or development of the workforce.

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

1.1. Governance and leadership



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

Requires improvement

Key data¹²

Total spend in previous financial year	£990,019 (including YJB Good Practice Grant £463,000) ¹³
Total projected budget for current financial year	£979,522 (including YJB Good Practice Grant £504,000)

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

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

The Director of Children’s Services (DCS) is the Greater Manchester DCS lead for youth justice and the Assistant Director of Children’s Services is Chair of the management board.

There is a current strategic plan. However, the board chair and members recognise that the vision needs to be clearer, to enable the YJS management board to communicate it effectively across the full range of partners and key stakeholders.

The YJS management board includes all statutory partners. However, each of the respective partner agencies has had its own organisational challenges in resourcing the board. This has resulted in a turnover of senior leaders (particularly within the police, health services, the National Probation Service (NPS) and social care), which has impacted on the continuity of membership. An education representative was added to the board in April 2021, which has strengthened the partnership. However, attendance by the community safety representative has been poor, which the chair has escalated via the DCS.

The board chair and the YJS head of service have undertaken work to shape the board over the last 18 months. They recognised that, historically, it had been fragmented and relied too much on the YJS head of service to present reports and receive actions. Both acknowledge that board meetings are now more “fluid and lively, with challenge”, and we did see evidence of input and reports to board by health representatives, although there is still further work to do.

¹² Information supplied by YJS.

¹³ The purpose of the Youth Justice Good Practice Grant is to develop and commission research with a view to achieving outcomes in reducing offending, reducing numbers of first-time entrants to the justice system and reducing the use of youth custody.

Given the changes in board personnel, it was evident that there had been drift and delay in dealing with some key issues identified by the YJS. For example, black, Asian, minority ethnic and looked-after children are over-represented in the YJS cohort. The YJS board had known about the disproportionality issue for over 18 months, but this had not been translated into a coordinated response by way of a meaningful plan or actions at strategic level. We were also disappointed to see minimal evidence of progress or a response to key issues arising from the Lammy report and the Black Lives Matter agenda, with board members unable to articulate what actions or activity took place within board arrangements.

There have been several new additions to the board since April 2021 and further work is needed to develop newer members' understanding of their roles and establish a cohesion to board arrangements. The board does have terms of reference and newer members have received an induction from the YJS Head of Service.

Board members are regularly provided with data on performance; this is detailed, and attendees have found it valuable. However, the data needs to include wider and richer analysis to help board members gain a greater understanding of desistance, safety and risk for those children who access the YJS. Indeed, the board chair voiced an aspiration to develop subsequent action plans that are child-centred, rather than process-centred.

Although the board has identified the need to gather children and family's views as a priority, this is not yet the case. This information is essential for the board to understand the lived experiences of the children.

The board has not effectively monitored the work of the out-of-court disposal panel. Specifically, it had not identified weaknesses in its operation in relation to joint decision-making, although an out-of-court disposal audit by YJS team managers in 2020/2021 did identify the need data analysis to demonstrate the impact of out-of-court disposals on outcomes.

Do the partnership arrangements actively support effective service delivery?

Relationships with some of the board attendees and the services they represent need to be strengthened and expectations clarified. This will ensure that appropriate discussions and challenges are undertaken, and decisions made, at a strategic level. The board chair and the YJS Head of Service described how, given that Tameside is a small YJS, they try to achieve a balance between board members with an appropriate level of seniority, and those with the motivation and operational knowledge to engage and advocate for YJS children. The board chair is confident that she has the links and influence needed to advocate effectively and feels the introduction of a board forward planner document has provided more structure and encouraged partners to contribute. This will need to be re-visited, given the changes in board membership and the planned board development day.

The YJS board is part of a network of partnership arrangements that work across Tameside and Greater Manchester. The board chair and YJS board members provide strategic links to other partnership forums, such as the safeguarding children partnership, health and wellbeing board, community safety partnership, and early help strategic board.

Most board members understand their responsibilities to provide services and resources to the wider YJS partnership. Indeed, statutory provision is strong. The YJS is well served by a full-time police officer, part-time (0.5 FTE) NPS worker, part-

time (0.6 FTE) mental health practitioner, part time (0.8 FTE) speech and language therapist and part-time (0.5 FTE) substance misuse worker. Relevant service level agreements are in place and the partnership has secured fixed-term funding for three specialist worker posts. These posts focus on serious youth violence, child criminal exploitation and diversionary work for children deemed to be on the cusp of entering the criminal justice system

There is a disconnect between the board and frontline practitioners. This has been attributed to the frequent changes in board members over the last 12 to 18 months, coupled with the challenges of remote working due to Covid-19. A third of staff were not aware of the activities of the management board and the majority described little or no interaction with board members.

The YJS previously had National Standards sub-groups (chaired by a board member and attended by the designated YJS operational manager and two practitioners), but these had paused in light of the various changes in board membership. The YJS states that the intention is to re-establish these sub-groups following the board development day, which will provide greater connection and visibility between senior leaders and staff.

Does the leadership of the YOT support effective service delivery?

The Head of Service is a member of Tameside's Children's Leadership Team, alongside colleagues from education services, children's social care, early help and workforce development. The Head of Service also sits on the community safety partnership, attends the Greater Manchester Police tasking and commanding group, attends various sub-groups of the Tameside safeguarding children partnership, and sits on the early help strategic board and the complex safeguarding board. This means that the service is well represented across key areas.

Within Greater Manchester (GM), the 10 local authorities work collaboratively and alongside the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, steered by the Mayor. This work is supported by a clear memorandum of understanding. Each YJS Head of Service takes the lead for different key areas. Tameside leads on out-of-court disposals and Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA); therefore, the Head of Service attends the GM out-of-court disposal scrutiny panel and GM MAPPA Strategic Management Board.

The Head of Service is well respected across the partnership and beyond. She describes an excellent working relationship with other youth justice services in GM, helped by her length of time working in the area. The joint approach across GM has been embedded for a long time, resulting in strong networks and collaborative working (such as a GM-wide court work rota, an appropriate adult service, PACE bed,¹⁴ and a pooled training budget. In addition, the YJB north west regional meetings are a strong youth justice-specific network that helps the sector to understand future risks and challenges.

The Head of Service attends all board meetings and the three YJS operational managers also attend regularly, both to make presentations about their areas of

¹⁴ If children and young people under the age of 18 are denied police bail (for example, held for court), they will usually be transferred to local authority accommodation under section 38 (6) of the 1984 Police and Criminal Evidence Act (commonly referred to as a PACE Bed). PACE transfers take place in order to limit the amount of time children & young people are required to spend in police custody. The Children Act 1989 s21 (2) provides that 'Every local authority shall receive and provide accommodation for children whom they are requested to receive under section 38 (6) of PACE 1984'.

responsibility and to feed back on the performance of their teams. Although the three operational managers are experienced and share positive relationships, they are a relatively new management team and are still settling into the service. Each has designated areas of responsibility, and they view their spans of control as manageable. One of these managers leaves the service in October 2021, so there will be re-alignment of her areas of work pending further recruitment activity.

Operational managers attend and link in with relevant multi-agency meetings, such as multi-agency child exploitation (MACE), education fair access panel, organised criminal gangs (OCG) silver group, multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH), out-of-court disposals, resettlement consortium operational group and the PIED (Prevention, Intervention, Engagement, Diversion) project.

New policies and areas of concern or significance are communicated via whole service meetings every six weeks, where organisational issues are discussed and learning from local reviews shared. The staff attend a monthly practitioners' forum, which is an arena for staff to raise practice issues, share learning and receive specialist input from partners. The key issues are subsequently followed up by email.

Given the absence of a disproportionality action plan, policy and practice do not consistently consider disproportionality in the take-up or delivery of services. Similarly, evaluation and monitoring of the fixed-term project workers (for the PIED project) is not fully informed by sufficient data. Nevertheless, some management reports (particularly the performance data scorecard) do monitor and analyse outcomes.

Tameside YJS has a detailed Covid-19 recovery plan. Its response to the Covid-19 crisis was comprehensive and included doorstep visits to children assessed as high-risk of serious harm to others, or having high safety and well-being needs, alongside risk assessments for YJS staff. Other business risks identified by the partnership include:

- the backlog of children released under investigation,
- protecting resource and finances,
- serious youth violence,
- embedding quality assurance practice,
- ongoing Covid-19 adaptations (given that, at the point of inspection, Tameside had one of the highest rates of Covid-19 infections in the country)
- developing robust actions plans to address disproportionality and increase children's participation.

1.2. Staff



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

Good

Key staffing data¹⁵

Total staff headcount (full-time equivalent (FTE))	22.5
Total case managers	6
Vacancy rate (total unfilled posts as percentage of total staff headcount)	0%
Average caseload per case manager (FTE equivalent) ¹⁶	10
Average annual working days sickness (all staff)	9

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

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

Staffing levels are sufficient. All staff who responded to the staff survey (nine respondents) felt that their workload was manageable. Workloads are actively reviewed, and caseloads are manageable. Staff reported that they are able to approach managers when workload increases, and managers are responsive. Newer staff members described how their workloads were gradually increased, as they developed knowledge and experience in their role.

In summer 2020, the service changed the way that work is allocated following National Standards self-audit findings and in recognition of the increased complexity of out-of-court cases. The YJS team includes both qualified (level 2) and unqualified (level 1) youth justice workers. The majority of out-of-court cases now have a level 2 worker allocated to them, who has overall responsibility for the assessment and planning, with level 1 staff delivering interventions and contact with children as needed. There have been some challenges in implementing this change, made harder due to the pandemic, and staff have had to adapt. Staff's views on this approach are mixed, but it was evident that they have remained motivated and child-focused in their work with YJS children.

The three YJS operational managers say that their workloads are manageable. They each have responsibility for six or seven staff, with a generic mix of case managers, level 1 intervention workers, and seconded or fixed-term partnership staff. They report that having additional capacity through practitioner and partner leads helps with their designated areas of responsibility, such as resettlement or court work. YJS managers feel there is enough resilience in the management team to cover for each other when they go on leave or planned training. There was evidence of good

¹⁵ Data supplied by YJS and reflecting staffing at the time of the inspection announcement.

¹⁶ Data supplied by YJS, based on staffing and workload at the time of the inspection announcement.

communication between them and the YJS has reintroduced a duty manager system to ensure there is always a manager available.

There are no vacant posts in the YJS and the average number of days that staff are absent each year has reduced in the last 12 months, from 11 down to nine. Return to work support packages have been put in place for returning staff. Local Tameside council policy is that annual leave is to be used to support a phased return to work.

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

The staff survey revealed that all staff feel they fully, or mostly, have the skills and knowledge to undertake their role in the YJS. Similarly, 78 per cent feel sufficiently experienced and qualified to manage their cases (with the remainder answering that this was not relevant to their role).

The service is well served by a diverse range of volunteers, who undertake work on referral order panels. All have had restorative justice training and bring varied and rich experience to the work of the YJS. Volunteers highlighted good induction and support from the YJS staff responsible for overseeing their work, with positive relationships between themselves and YJS practitioners.

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

YJS staff all receive formal monthly supervision meetings. Staff speak positively about the accessibility of managers outside of these formal meetings. The structured supervision process allows for both detailed and reflective consideration of cases. All nine of the staff who completed the staff survey rated the frequency and quality of supervision as very or quite good, which was further reflected in the staff focus group. However, in the court disposal cases inspected, management oversight was deemed satisfactory in only 50 per cent. Oversight was better in out-of-court disposals, where it was satisfactory in 80 per cent of cases.

Despite the obvious challenges for new staff members who have joined the YJS during the Covid-19 period, there is a comprehensive induction programme for all new staff that details activities and actions with specified timescales. Diversity issues are addressed within this framework and staff spoke of a holistic approach, which included an introduction to colleagues, shadowing opportunities, attendance at various panels and meetings, and even the opportunity to visit other YOTs to talk about parallel roles. Other actions included a gradual increase in caseload. We were informed that YJS colleagues are asked in their supervision meetings how they can help with a new colleague's induction.

Staff had mixed views on appraisals. The staff survey indicated that 78 per cent felt their last appraisal was very or quite valuable. However, many staff in the focus group felt that, although they had an annual appraisal and contributed towards it, the process was bureaucratic and a paperwork exercise. They felt that, as it was a Tameside council-wide document, it was not sufficiently tailored to YJS work and therefore was limited in value and onerous.

There are procedures in place to address staff competency, although in the past 12 months no member of staff has been subject to capability procedures. Work support has been actioned to help relevant staff return to work.

Are arrangements for learning and development comprehensive and responsive?

The YJS has a comprehensive training plan in place for all YJS staff and managers. It identifies that staff have undertaken a wide range of training, including: adverse childhood experiences and trauma-informed practice, AssetPlus, diversity, organised crime groups/child criminal exploitation, AIM3, family group conferencing and contextual safeguarding.

Given the profile and complexity of the YJS caseload, specialist SAVRY (structured assessment of violence and risk in youth) training is an area that needs to be addressed. However, in the staff survey 78 per cent of staff said their training and development needs were met. This was echoed in the staff focus group, where nearly all felt that the training offer was "really good".

Development opportunities are available for all staff. For example, staff have access to the Certificate in Effective Practice. There have been opportunities for some staff to act up in operational roles, alongside a corporate management programme for first line and experienced managers. Staff and managers also have access to the Greater Manchester (GM) training programmes. The budget for these is pooled across the GM YOTs.

Staff described how, in previous years, they had been involved in developing sexually harmful behaviour training and delivered it to other stakeholders. YJS managers stated that they have periodic developmental opportunities to represent the Head of Service at some strategic forums, particularly across the GM network and other regional meetings.

Do managers pay sufficient attention to staff engagement?

During the inspection fieldwork, staff and volunteers presented as highly motivated and passionate about the work that they undertake with children and families. In the staff survey, 44 per cent describe themselves as very motivated and 56 per cent stated they were quite motivated to deliver high-quality services.

Practitioner forums are used to provide information and training and outside agencies come in to provide information about their service and referral process. Along with service-wide meetings every six weeks, these forums provide a mechanism for sharing updates on YJS processes. However, some staff felt that they could be better used as a means of seeking staff engagement. Positively, staff reported that they had previously been assigned to National Standards sub-groups, and some have been designated functional leads for themes such as out-of-court disposals and transitions. The challenge for the YJS is to re-establish these sub-groups to ensure better staff engagement.

Reward and recognition processes are viewed as 'moving in the right direction'. Staff described feeling more valued by managers over the last 12 to 18 months. Recognition has taken the form of managers feeding back positive praise from partner agencies, individual opportunities for some staff to present to the YJS board, being part of a local newsletter, and some feedback in appraisals. Informally, colleagues in the team offer praise and recognition to each other. Again, the YJS would benefit from a clearer connection between board members and staff, to enable a level of recognition from senior leaders.

Of those who responded to the staff survey, 78 per cent felt that the YJS listens to, or acts on, staff's views. We saw examples where reasonable adjustments had been made in response to statutory requirements, diversity and personal circumstances.

For example, working patterns were varied during Ramadan and specific equipment was provided for those with medical needs. The YJS also offered adapted facilities, flexible working patterns, and relevant referrals for additional support such as counselling or occupational health. YJS managers described how such considerations are included in tasks such as work allocation or discussed during supervision sessions. An issue was raised around staff being required to use annual leave for phased returns to work after sick leave. This is a Tameside-wide corporate directive, but the YJS Head of Service tries to ensure that the YJS uses flexible arrangements.

1.3. Partnerships and services



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

Good

Caseload characteristics

Percentage of current caseload with mental health issues	57%
Percentage of current caseload with substance misuse issues	65%
Percentage of current caseload with learning disability (IQ under 70) or learning difficulty (special educational needs, speech language and communication needs, dyslexia, etc.) or subject to an education, health and care plan	25%

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

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

There is a business analyst attached to the YJS to provide an overview of data. They produce a monthly performance scorecard and work in collaboration with YJS managers and the board to ensure that they are receiving the performance reports. There is, on balance, a satisfactory strategic and operational analysis of the desistance needs of YJS children. This analysis contains relevant demographic, population and offence-related information; however, it could be further enhanced by more detailed analysis of areas such as outcomes for the custody and out-of-court-disposal cohorts and sentencing patterns.

The YJS has a sufficient profile of both safety and wellbeing and risk of harm issues within the cohort. Analysis indicates that 62 per cent of cases are open to complex case panel arrangements (that is, those children assessed as high risk in any one or more domains of harm, safety and wellbeing or reoffending). The YJS reports that 18 per cent of cases are looked after children; 8 per cent are child protection and 15 per cent are children in need, while 42 per cent have an education, health and care plan and 50 per cent are either in a pupil referral unit or NEET. Data also reveals that 57 per cent of YJS cases have an emotional wellbeing need. This is all evidence of a complex cohort of children in Tameside.

The YJS partnership recognises that more needs to be done to capture the views of children and families who specifically access the YJS. Senior leaders state that this

will be one of the priorities for the National Standards sub-groups to be re-established following the planned board development day.

Analysis has been used to influence service delivery, particularly in the additional funding secured for the PIED pilot and additional youth engagement workers to deliver interventions on serious youth violence and criminal exploitation.

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

Children can quickly access a wide range of universal, targeted and specialist services. Fast-track pathways for substance misuse, child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), speech and language therapists, careers service and special educational support provide evidence of the YJS's response to the complex needs of its children. Staff know the pathways for children to access services (both internally and externally). They engage children well and advocate for them when needed. Services throughout the YJS are of good quality and interventions are responsive, innovative and delivered well. Partnership managers describe mature and collaborative relationships with their YJS counterparts and regular three-way supervision arrangements are in place.

There are good working relationships between partnership and YJS staff, which benefit children and their families. The YJS service has a full-time police officer, part-time (0.5 FTE) NPS worker, part-time (0.6 FTE) mental health practitioner, part-time (0.8 FTE) speech and language therapist and part-time (0.5 FTE) substance misuse worker. In addition to this, there are pathways in place for health and education so that staff can access information, advice and support in a timely way. Of note are the monthly surgeries held by a link education welfare officer, who is able to act as a conduit for information-sharing and resolving issues with schools to ensure or advocate for suitable education provision for YJS children. The YJS also benefits from an education psychologist resource one day per week. This practitioner undertakes direct casework, offers consultancy to staff and delivers specialist training to support wider case management of YJS children.

In addition to the core staff team and seconded partnership staff, the YJS has three posts that are subject to fixed-term contracts while their impact is assessed. A youth engagement worker, funded via the Community Safety Partnership by resource allocated for dealing with serious youth violence, provides an enhanced offer of support to young people who are already in the system and identified as being at risk of getting involved in serious youth violence. We were pleased that the scope of this project focuses to some extent on black, Asian and minority ethnic children and girls.

The PIED pilot is a joint initiative with GM Police and the Violence Reduction Unit. The Community Safety Partnership funds another youth engagement worker post to support this initiative. This is a partnership approach to identifying children who have come to the attention of GM Police but have not been arrested or charged with a specific offence. They are offered voluntary support either through the youth engagement worker or through one of the partner agencies. Finally, in response to a recent serious case review that involved a young person open to the Complex Safeguarding Team but not the YJS, a new post of YJS child criminal exploitation worker was created to work across both the YJS and CST. This worker also leads on the school knife and weapons work.

Reparation is tailored to the requests of the victim and the needs of the child. Despite the challenges in delivering work during Covid-19, staff adapted and used a range of placements. These included 'Bread and Butter project', which is a scheme to combat food poverty, and Sandwich Angels, a project based in a church, to make sandwiches to donate to charities and women's refuges. Both provisions closed to volunteers during the lockdown, so the YJS did office-based sessions, which included letters of kindness, and linked with Age Concern and two care homes to receive these. Children also made bird boxes and Christmas baubles, a 'cash for kids' project and sexual health packs for the local clinic, as well as building flat-pack furniture and linking with Green Space to set up a YJS allotment. The YJS is also linked with Street Doctors, an organisation that delivers first aid courses for YJS children, who then get certificates on completion.

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

The partnership works hard operationally to optimise the benefits of joint working. In many of the inspected cases, we found evidence of a commitment to a relational approach to work, with workers across all roles facilitating engagement with children. The YJS feeds into processes to address child exploitation and holds internal complex case panel meetings for children deemed to present a high risk of harm to others or high safety and wellbeing concerns.

There is a social care working protocol that sets out expectations about how children's social care (CSC) and the YJS should work together. Strategically there are good relationships between the YJS and CSC, for example the Head of Service reports to the Divisional Director and sits in all the senior-level CSC meetings and the relationship offers high support and high challenge. However, operationally we found that this relationship is not as strong. There appears to be an inconsistency in the support and direct work that the CSC offers when the YJS is involved. YJS staff spoke of how it can be difficult to get children accepted by CSC, although they recognised that Tameside CSC has had significant staff turnover and high numbers of agency staff and high caseloads. Where needed, YJS operational managers escalate to CSC team managers, whilst the YJS Head of Service has escalated and challenged relevant issues such as inappropriate closing of cases by CSC.

Public protection agencies are linked effectively, including through MAPPA and MACE meetings. The ongoing secondment of a probation officer to the YJS enables transition work from YJS to probation supervision to take place in good time. The management of complex cases is strengthened by input from the Healthy Young Minds (CAMHS) practitioner, who fulfils a dual role of working with children and carrying out consultations with YJS staff to support them in their ongoing work.

Court work is delivered on a GM-wide collaborative basis, with a relevant protocol covering expectations. Feedback from the chair of the youth bench highlighted the quality of the work undertaken by the YJS in the youth court.

Involvement of children and their parents or carers

The YJS acknowledges that one of its key strategic and operational objectives is to improve its participation work, by capturing the voice of children and families and using it to inform service design and delivery.

We found evidence that staff took a child-centred approach in the court disposal and out-of-court disposal cases we inspected. We interviewed six children or their

parents/carers in our fieldwork, and were pleased to find that all of them understood the YJS's role and aims. All felt that YJS staff had the right skills to work with the child and all felt they had been able to access the right services and support to stay out of trouble. In summary, five out six respondents rated the YJS's services as 'very good', while one respondent rated them as 'quite good'. Despite the challenges of working during the Covid-19 pandemic, all respondents commented that contact with YJS staff took place in accessible places that were safe. The YJS partnership and staff are to be commended for this.

Although our children's text survey had just two respondents, all the children we interviewed or surveyed were overwhelmingly positive about the services they received from the YJS. Importantly, we noted that case managers established trusting relationships with children, which enabled the children to engage effectively and achieve positive outcomes. One of the children in our sample commented:

"My workers believe in me and helped me to believe in myself and believe that I have a purpose. I know they are rooting for me and genuinely care."

1.4. Information and facilities



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

Requires improvement

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

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

The YJS has a comprehensive list of policies in place to deliver its service. These are accessible to staff and include operational guidance, HR policies and referral pathways. Some policies are new (such as the resettlement policy in April 2021) and others have recently been reviewed. However, the majority do not refer specifically to how diversity needs and disproportionality are to be addressed. The service has a clear vision of a child-first approach and is dedicated to addressing diversity and disproportionality, yet this is not clearly embedded in all policies. There are joint working protocols between children's social care and the YJS, and service-level agreements between the YJS and CGL (Change Grow Live) substance misuse service, Healthy Young Minds (CAMHS) and positive steps (careers and education, training and employment).

New policies and areas of concern or significance are communicated via whole service meetings (every six weeks) where organisational issues are discussed and learning from local reviews is shared. Staff attend a monthly practitioners' forum, which is an arena for them to raise practice issues, share learning and receive specialist input from partners.

Staff are clear about the referral pathways both internally and externally. We were encouraged to hear that there are no waiting lists for relevant services such as substance misuse, speech and language therapy, positive steps (careers and guidance) and CAMHS.

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

The service is centrally located in Ashton-under-Lyne, and is accessible by bus, tram and trains, with public transport links across the borough. The building has a number of interview rooms located within the reception area, along with a larger meeting room and activity room that has facilities for cooking with the young people and access to a games console, and allows for young people to be seen away from the main reception area.

The building is also occupied by the Leaving Care Service, Positive Steps Careers Advice and YOUthink Sexual Health Service, all of which provide vital services for adolescents, creating a one-stop-shop where their needs can be met.

Staff are encouraged to see young people in the place that best meets their needs, but for many that means accessing the building. The building has been closed to the public during the Covid-19 pandemic, but staff have continued to see young people on an appointment basis at the office. The current arrangements see all staff having one duty day per week, and an additional office day when they can base themselves from the building.

Staff and managers described how they are keen to return to more normal patterns of working in the building, but recognise this will be determined by relevant corporate health and safety assessments and directives. Tameside has the second highest Covid-19 rates in the country, so public health advice had informed decisions around access to the building and staff presence.

The YJS Head of Service has advocated for staff to have an office presence, although she does acknowledge that Tameside as a local authority wants to reconfigure the use of the buildings (through the 'Worksmart' agenda) to make them more efficient. We were informed that agreement has been reached for a receptionist and Positive Steps (careers and education, training and employment service) to move back in October 2021, with the building scheduled for further re-opening from the beginning of November 2021. YJS managers said there had been a survey asking staff how they feel about returning and they were encouraging their staff to respond to this. All in the YJS want to get back to a building and are advocating for this at all levels, as it is recognised that co-location is beneficial for the children. Staff reported that the extra staff presence in the office during the inspection fieldwork week had lifted morale, given that some have felt a fragmentation during the Covid-19 period.

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

All youth justice workers have access to the children's social care casework system, alongside access to the Early Help case management system and Education Capita One system. They also have access to police information through the seconded police officers and health information through the seconded staff such as Healthy Young Minds (CAMHS) and the speech and language therapist. All partnership staff within the YJS (including the substance misuse workers) record on the YJS ChildView case management system, which allows for effective information-sharing.

The ChildView system is effective for recording and provides real-time caseload data and information, alongside a bespoke suite of reports to support management understanding and performance (in particular, the monthly scorecard is very comprehensive). The YJS is well served by an experienced data information officer, who provides direct links to the children's services performance team. The YJS also

has further training arranged for September 2021 to access the Violence Reduction Unit performance data dashboard.

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

The YJS has a monitoring system in place for quality assuring work. Senior leaders and managers recognise that this is an area of ongoing development and a priority for improvement. They describe being 'on a journey' towards embedding quality assurance into practice, which could then inform further in-depth analysis for the YJS management board. The YJS also recognises that the future thematic findings from quality assurance and audit need to influence service provision, delivery and workforce development.

The current approach to quality assurance, which has been fully operational since May 2021, involves each operational manager quality-assuring one out-of-court disposal case and one court case per month. Cases are selected randomly by the data information officer and allocated to a manager who doesn't supervise the case. The management team undertook some benchmarking with the managers to make sure that their approach and decisions were consistent. Despite some initial challenge from staff, they have embraced this approach and managers feel it encourages positive feedback and collaboration with the practitioner. However, we were informed that the process 'fell by the wayside' in August 2021 due to annual leave. Nevertheless, the YJS management team has set a six-monthly review date to look at the emergent themes in the quality assurance findings. The team also recognises that they need to keep the YJS management board updated.

The YJS undertakes peer review exercises with neighbouring youth justice teams to examine and audit its work. The leadership team has also used HM Inspectorate of Probation inspection reports to help improve performance and prepare for inspection, alongside sharing reports with youth justice staff and the YJS management board. These include using the findings from an inspection of a GM youth offending service (YOS), together with HM Inspectorate of Probation guidance and the thematic inspection of out-of-court disposals to inform the development of Tameside's out-of-court disposals procedures, guidance and assessment.

The YJS made some changes to its approach to practice following findings from the National Standards audit 2019/2020. However, actions taken to establish cross-grade National Standards sub-groups have lost impetus following changes to board members and need to be re-established.

Although the YJS has had no recent community safety and public protection incidents within the last 12 months, learning from serious case reviews are shared at board level and disseminated to staff through service meetings, training events and monthly practitioner forum. In response to a recent serious case review that involved a child open to the complex safeguarding team but not the YJS, a new post of YJS child criminal exploitation worker was created to work across both the YJS and Complex Safeguarding Team (CST). This worker also leads on the aforementioned school knife and weapons work.

Diversity

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

The 2011 census reveals that 87.1 per cent of 10–17-year-olds in Tameside are white British. However, the YJS has identified that black, Asian and minority ethnic children are over-represented in the service, as are looked-after children. Data gathered by the YJS for the whole October 2018 to September 2019 cohort showed that 12.5 per cent were looked after children, as opposed to 1.7 per cent within the wider population. Data for those statutory YJS cases from April 2020 to March 2021 saw the LAC figure at 18 per cent. The ethnic profile of Tameside YJS staff team shows that eight per cent of staff are from a black, Asian or minority ethnic background. This is broadly consistent with the figure from the previous year (9 per cent), although it is lower than the proportion of 10–17-year-olds (13 per cent) in Tameside and in the YJS caseload (24 per cent).

Of the cases inspected, three out of eight court disposals were black, Asian and minority ethnic. Overall, in five out of eight court disposal cases we inspected, we judged that assessment and planning of diversity factors was sufficient. The three cases judged as insufficient saw a lack of consideration of learning disability in one, ethnicity in another, and LAC status in another. There were two females in the out-of-court disposal case sample, whilst 2 out of 12 out-of-court disposals were black, Asian or minority ethnic children. Whilst assessment and planning for gender considerations were sufficient in both of the relevant cases, consideration of ethnicity was sufficient in only one of the two relevant cases.

Although diversity information is available in the suite of reports, it has not been used well enough to inform better analysis and develop subsequent action plans to address identified themes and issues.

Disproportionality is identified as a key priority within the YJS strategic plan; however, insufficient progress has been made in tackling this. Arrangements with partners and providers to further support the personal circumstances and diversity needs of children could be improved. The absence of an adequate wider partnership response and sufficient plans or actions to address disproportionality is reflected in the shortfalls in these arrangements.

2. Court disposals

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

When children receive a court disposal, we expect to see the service maximise the likelihood of a successful outcome by addressing desistance factors, effectively engaging with children and their parents or carers, and responding to relevant diversity factors. We also expect to see children being kept safe, and their safety and wellbeing needs being addressed. Finally, we expect everything reasonable to be done to manage the risk of harm posed by children who have offended. This should be through high-quality assessment and planning, and the delivery of appropriate interventions, effective management oversight, ongoing review of the work undertaken and partnership working across all statutory and voluntary agencies.

When inspecting cases, we have ratings boundaries that determine the overall rating applied. Six out of eight cases met all our requirements for assessment and planning across the elements of desistance and safety and wellbeing, which led to a judgement of 'Good' in these areas of work. The overall rating for these standards, however, was driven down by the score in relation to assessment and planning to address the risk of harm to others, resulting in a rating of 'Requires improvement' for both. Assessment of work to promote the safety of victims and maximise opportunities for restorative justice was variable. Planning to address specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims was not consistently to the required standard, and we found similar shortcomings in the quality of contingency planning for addressing safety and wellbeing and the risk of harm to others.

Implementation and delivery of services was rated outstanding in relation to safety and wellbeing and for addressing risk of harm to others, as seven out of eight cases met our requirements. However, the overall rating for the implementation and delivery standard was driven by fewer cases being sufficient for desistance work, resulting in a rating of 'Good'. There was evidence of effective partnership working in a large majority of cases, specifically those agencies involved in safeguarding and public protection. Despite the constraints brought by Covid-19, YJS staff worked flexibly and used their knowledge and skills well to build relationships with children and families and take a strengths-based approach to meeting their complex needs.

We judged the quality of reviewing of court disposal casework as 'Outstanding' for addressing a child's desistance and their safety and wellbeing, as all cases met our requirements. However, the overall rating was driven by a lower score of for work to address the risk of harm to others, resulting in a rating of 'Good' for this standard. Many of the children supervised by the YJS had complex lives, and their circumstances could change rapidly. We found reviewing to be strengths-based, informed by other agencies and child-focused, and the YJS achieved an appropriate balance between supporting desistance, safeguarding children and protecting the public.

Strengths

- Assessment, planning and implementation to promote desistance, and safety and wellbeing were good in the majority of cases.
- Delivery and implementation to address safety and wellbeing and consider risk of harm to others were sufficient in the great majority of cases
- There was evidence of effective partnership working in a large majority of cases.
- There was a consistently good level of involvement of children and their parents or carers across all elements of casework.
- Practitioners worked hard and flexibly to maintain service provision, despite Covid-19 restrictions.
- Reviewing for desistance and safety and wellbeing was satisfactory in all the inspected cases.

Areas for improvement

- There were shortfalls in assessment and planning to address the risk of harm to others.
- Contingency planning for safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm to others was not always tailored to the needs of the case or recorded well enough.
- Management oversight of court orders did not consistently promote high-quality casework practice.
- Assessment and planning of work to promote the safety of victims and maximise opportunities for restorative justice were variable.

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

2.1. Assessment



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

Requires improvement

Our rating¹⁷ for assessment is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	75%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	75%

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

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?

63%

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

Assessment to support desistance was judged sufficient in six out of the eight inspected cases. In all but one case, staff gained a thorough understanding of children, their strengths, and the wider familial and social context. They achieved this by liaising effectively with partner agencies in almost every case, to access information and previous assessments. Assessment of diversity issues was not as strong, with five out of eight cases deemed sufficient. However, YJS case managers ensured that children, and their parents/carers, were central to the assessment process in the majority of cases.

A key strength was the attention given to understanding the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change, and the likelihood of engaging with the court disposal. This was evident in seven of the eight cases inspected.

An inspector commented:

"The assessment is thorough. The child was previously known to the YJS case manager and she has used her knowledge regarding his previous engagement and demeanour, coupled with conversations with the child's mother, to strengthen her knowledge. The child is unwilling to engage, but the case manager has considered and commented on potential self-identity issues, family circumstances, and the role of male role models. She also has a good awareness of the child's aspirations, his engagement with education, his attitude towards offending and the level and nature of his victim empathy."

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?

Assessment to keep the child safe was rated as good overall. In five out of eight cases, assessment drew sufficiently on available sources of information, including other assessments, and involved other agencies. The YJS had access to the local children's social care case management system and could complete checks on past and present contact. Case managers were aware of the involvement of social workers and drew on information from colleagues, for instance the speech and language therapist and CAMHS specialists, to help understand the nature and level of safety and wellbeing needs.

We found the classification of safety and wellbeing to be reasonable in six of the eight cases inspected, although some case managers underestimated the level of safety and wellbeing needs. Assessment sufficiently analysed how to keep the child safe in the majority of cases. Case managers analysed the controls or interventions that best promoted the child's safety and wellbeing evident in all but one case.

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?

Assessment of a child's risk of harm to others required improvement. In five of the eight cases, assessments identified and analysed any risk of harm to others posed by the child, including identifying who was at risk, and the nature of that risk, but this was not sufficient in the remainder.

Case managers used available sources of information and involved other agencies, where appropriate, in all but one case. They considered controls and interventions to manage and minimise the risk of harm to others posed by the child in four out of six relevant cases. Although inspectors agreed with the classification level of risk of harm to others in six out of eight cases, we saw some inconsistency. Primarily, this was through a lack of reasoned analysis and drawing together of information to inform judgements. Previous and current behaviour was not always considered systematically, and there was a lack of an investigative approach in some of the inspected cases. Management oversight was variable and did not always address or remedy the shortfalls in assessment practice.

An inspector found:

“Risk to others, including serious risk of harm, was assessed as inappropriately low by the case manager, with an insufficient rationale or analysis of all factors. The child’s behaviour was referred to as ‘horseplay’, without further consideration of the potential for harm to others and there were no interventions or controls advised in this respect.”

2.2. Planning



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

Requires Improvement

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

	% 'Yes'
Does planning focus sufficiently on supporting the child’s desistance?	75%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	75%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	63%

Does planning focus on supporting the child’s desistance?

Planning to support desistance was good. In seven out of eight cases, plans set out the services most likely to support desistance, while a majority took account of diversity and wider social context factors. Planning took sufficient account of strengths and protective factors in all but one case. Of the relevant cases with an identifiable victim, planning was more variable in quality, and considered their views four out of seven cases. Inspectors found that planning meaningfully involved the child and their parents/carers in six of the eight inspected cases.

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

Overall, planning to keep the child safe was good and focused on the safety and wellbeing of the child in six out of eight cases. In most cases, we found sufficient attention to promoting the safety and wellbeing of the child. In five out of eight

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

relevant cases, we found good planning for the involvement of other agencies, and good alignment with other plans to protect or care for the child.

Inspectors found variability in the quality of contingency planning for safety and wellbeing. This is important, as there should be a clear plan of action in the event of risk to the child either increasing or decreasing. In four out of eight cases, contingency plans were insufficient, in that they were too vague and did not clearly set out adequate actions or responses to be taken if, and when, circumstances changed.

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

Planning to keep other people safe required improvement. We found that just four out of seven relevant cases had sufficient planning to address specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims.

Planning involved other agencies in five out of eight relevant cases, but did not always set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote the safety of other people. Circumstances in a child’s life can change quickly. Case managers need to consider the potential for change in each case so that, should concerns escalate, they are prepared and more likely to respond effectively. Inspectors found that contingency planning lacked clarity about specific actions to keep others safe, resulting in just four out of eight cases judged sufficient in this aspect of work.

An inspector commented:

“There is minimal evidence of any plans to liaise with other agencies such as the police, or to ensure external controls were in place. There is no evidence of any contingency planning related to keeping other people safe in this case. The YJS case manager states in the ‘dealing with changing circumstances’ section of Assetplus, that they have ‘Insufficient information to make a determination’ for risk to others.”

2.3. Implementation and delivery



High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging and assisting the child.	Good
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Our rating¹⁹ for implementation and delivery is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the child’s desistance?	75%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of the child?	88%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?	88%

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

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

Implementation and delivery to support desistance was good. It was clear that the case managers take a strengths-based approach to their work. The YJS had access to a wide range of specialist staff and other resources to deliver suitable and innovative interventions to children. Inspectors found in most cases that the YJS delivered the services most likely to support desistance. It was evident in all but one case that staff focused on developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child and their parents/carers.

In six out of eight cases, service delivery reflected the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, while implementation and service delivery promoted opportunities for community integration, including access to services post-supervision, in seven out of eight cases.

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

Services to promote the child's safety and wellbeing were delivered in nearly all of the cases. We found scope for improvement in the coordination and involvement of other organisations, with five out of eight cases deemed sufficient. Overall, however, the implementation and delivery of services supported the safety of the child effectively in seven out of the eight cases inspected.

One inspector commented:

"The safety and wellbeing risks were escalated in terms of criminal exploitation and the YJS case manager was quick to act upon these, initially making a referral to children's social care. This resulted in the child being put on a child in need plan and, later, the YJS case manager advocated for the child's case to be escalated and managed at child protection. There was good coordination by the YJS case manager with a number of different agencies involved in safeguarding the child. This included children's social care, the complex safeguarding team, and an ACT (Achieving Change Together) worker, as well as consulting with CAMHS and the speech and language therapist."

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

The safety of other people was supported effectively in all but one of the cases inspected. Services to keep other people safe, by managing and minimising the risk of harm, were delivered in seven of the eight cases inspected. In a majority of the relevant cases, staff had coordinated the involvement of other agencies. The protection of actual and potential victims had been considered in the majority of relevant cases.

We noted:

"The child was discussed at six-weekly complex case panel meetings between sentencing and the youth to adult transition (to probation supervision) being undertaken. The actions from these meetings appear, from what is recorded in the case management system, to be delivered on and evidence the appropriate management of risk of harm to others."

2.4. Reviewing



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

Good

Our rating²⁰ for reviewing is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	100%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	100%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	75%

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

Reviewing of the progress made in supporting the child's desistance was sufficient in all of the cases we looked at. In all but one relevant case, a written review of desistance was completed, leading to necessary adjustments in the plan of work in five out of seven relevant cases. This responsiveness to changing circumstances helped to maintain children's engagement and ensured that the work delivered was effective and meaningful. Reviewing continued to focus sufficiently on building on the child's strengths, enhancing protective factors and assessing motivation and engagement levels in every case inspected case. Importantly, we found that children and their parents/carers were meaningfully involved in their assessment in all cases.

Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

Overall, reviewing focused sufficiently on keeping the child safe in every relevant case. A written review of safety and wellbeing was completed all but one case. Reviewing identified and responded to changes in factors relating to safety and wellbeing in all relevant cases. Inspectors found that reviews completed by case managers led to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work in a large majority of cases. Many of the children supervised by the YJS had complex lives, and their circumstances could change rapidly. In seven out of eight cases, reviewing was informed by the necessary input from other agencies to promote the child's safety and wellbeing.

An inspector noted:

"Safety and wellbeing was reviewed within the AssetPlus, which correctly retained the classification as high. Review was evident in the case entries, particularly given that social care closed the case and the YJS then responded by taking on the relevant work around criminal exploitation and lifestyle issues. There was evident ongoing communication between the case manager and the level 1 youth justice worker, with documents such as the breach report overseen by the line manager and reviewing the issues pertinent to safety and wellbeing. A positive National Referral Mechanism

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

decision had led to active oversight and management through complex case panel procedures, which again were consistently reviewed.”

Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

Overall, reviewing of progress to keep others safe was rated as good. Reviewing responded to changes in factors related to risk of harm to others in two-thirds of relevant cases. There was necessary input from other agencies involved in managing the risk of harm in five out of seven relevant cases. Reviewing of risk of harm to others could be further improved in some aspects, particularly through adjustments to the ongoing plan of work to manage risk of harm and the involvement of the child and their parent/carer, which we found sufficient in four out of seven relevant cases. Overall, however, reviewing focused sufficiently on keeping other people safe in six out of eight cases.

3. Out-of-court disposals

We inspected 10 cases managed by the YJS that had received an out-of-court disposal. These consisted of two youth cautions and eight community resolutions. We did not inspect any youth conditional cautions. We interviewed the case managers in 10 cases.

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

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

When children receive an out-of-court disposal, we expect to see the service maximise the likelihood of successful outcomes by addressing desistance factors, effectively engaging with children and their parents or carers, and responding to relevant diversity factors. We also expect to see children being kept safe, and their safety and wellbeing needs being addressed. Finally, we expect everything reasonable to be done to manage the risk of harm posed by children who have offended. This should be through high-quality assessment and planning, with the delivery of appropriate interventions, effective leadership and management, and good joint decision-making and partnership working across all statutory and voluntary agencies.

When inspecting cases, we have ratings boundaries that determine the overall rating applied. Nine out of 10 cases met all our requirements for planning and service delivery across all elements of desistance, safety and wellbeing and risk of harm to others, which led to a judgement of 'Outstanding' in these areas of work. Similarly, a judgement of 'Outstanding' was given to assessment for addressing a child's desistance and risk of harm to others. The overall rating for this standard, however, was driven by fewer cases being sufficient in relation to assessment to keep the child safe, resulting in a rating of 'Good'.

Assessment was satisfactory in the majority of out-of-court disposals, specifically for desistance and assessing a child's risk of harm to others. Case managers considered the child's strengths and protective factors, and their level of maturity, ability and motivation to change. Where a victim had been identified, their needs and wishes were taken into account and the views of children, parents and carers were considered as part of the assessment. Assessment of a child's safety and wellbeing was sufficient in a majority of cases, although this could be further improved through better analysis and a more consistent inclusion of information from other agencies where relevant.

Planning was rated as outstanding across all elements of desistance, safety and wellbeing and risk of harm to others. Case managers took account of the child's diversity issues, their personal circumstances and their level of motivation to change. Planning set out the opportunities for community integration and access to mainstream services following completion of the out-of-court disposal work. Case managers considered the needs and wishes of victims and included the child and parents or carers in the planning process. For both safety and wellbeing and risk of harm to others, there could be improvement in setting out the contingency

arrangements to manage the risks presented. However, there was consistent evidence of joint planning in the out-of-court disposal cases inspected, which involved other agencies where appropriate.

Implementation and delivery of services were also rated outstanding in all areas of desistance, safety and wellbeing and risk of harm to others. Case managers identified the factors that were most likely to support the child's desistance, took account of the child's diversity issues and involved parents, carers, or significant others. They focused on developing and maintaining a good working relationship with children and families, which encouraged and enabled the child's compliance with the work. We were pleased to see strong and coordinated partnership working with other agencies, particularly in the management of risks to the child and the risk of harm to others.

We rated out-of-court disposal policy and provision as 'Requires improvement'. The YJS has an out-of-court disposal policy, supplemented by detailed guidance notes, which describes roles and responsibilities. However, a review of this policy was due in December 2020 and is therefore overdue. Although there have been changes in case management arrangements and delivery of out-of-court disposals, and some initial audit activity of out-of-court disposals, these changes have not prompted a review of the policy.

From summer 2020, the YJS introduced new decision-making processes for out-of-court disposals. This approach consists of a weekly referrals and screening meeting, supplemented by a fortnightly out-of-court disposal panel, which is separate to the referrals meeting. Despite this approach, there is some inconsistency in decision-making around community resolutions. Not all community resolutions are informed by a YJS assessment, as they have already been issued by the police. The use of youth conditional cautions is minimal and there is insufficient analysis of cases that could potentially be diverted from court. Evaluation and review of out-of-court disposal policy and provision are underdeveloped (which is recognised by YJS managers). The YJS needs to focus more on issues of disproportionality, demonstrating impact through analysing more granular data, and also involving children and their parents/carers in any reviews.

Strengths

- Assessment work was based on a wide range of sources, with consistently good analysis of information to support desistance, address safety and wellbeing, and understand the risk of harm to others.
- Planning and implementation and delivery of out-of-court disposal work were sufficient in the great majority (90 per cent) of inspected cases across all elements of desistance, safety and wellbeing and risk of harm to others.
- YJS staff developed positive relationships with children and their families, which supported effective engagement.
- Children subject to out-of-court disposals could access the same wide range of services as children on court orders.
- Management oversight of out-of-court disposals consistently promoted high-quality casework practice.

- YJS staff consistently delivered opportunities for community integration and access to partnership services following completion of the out-of-court disposal work.
- Where children on out-of-court disposals were deemed to be at high risk of reoffending, or there was a high level of concern about their safety and wellbeing or risk of harm to others, they were overseen by YJS complex case panel arrangements.

Areas for improvement

- Contingency planning for safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm to others was not always tailored to the needs of the case or recorded well enough.
- There is some inconsistency in decision-making around community resolutions.
- Evaluation and review of out-of-court disposal policy and provision are overdue and underdeveloped.

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

3.1. Assessment



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

Good

Our rating²¹ for assessment is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	90%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	70%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	80%

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

There was sufficient analysis of offending behaviour in nine out of the 10 inspected cases. The assessment considered the diversity of the child in eight out of the 10 cases and took account of their personal circumstances, familial and social context in every case. Assessments routinely drew on information from multiple sources to gain the best understanding of a child's circumstances and history. We were pleased to see a strengths-based approach to assessment, alongside the involvement of the

²¹ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. See Annex 2 for a more detailed explanation.

child and their parents or carers in the assessment, in all 10 cases. The child's level of maturity, ability and motivation to change were considered in all but one case. The needs and wishes of victims were taken into account in seven out of nine relevant cases.

An inspector noted:

“Good analysis of diversity and personal circumstances, with the child’s lived experience to date fully voiced throughout. Assessment also included the child’s mother and drew on a number of sources of information, particularly the school and ongoing counselling service. In summary, an assessment which clearly articulates what the child’s strengths and protective factors are.”

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?

Assessment of a child’s safety and wellbeing was sufficient in seven out of 10 cases, although could be further improved through better analysis and a more consistent inclusion of information from other agencies where relevant. Inspectors found the safety and wellbeing classification reasonable in seven out of 10 cases, but not in the remaining three.

An inspector commented:

“There was insufficient analysis in respect of peers, lifestyle, exclusion from school, denial of substance misuse, and possession of cannabis. As the child had not been known to the YJS previously, this was considered by the case manager to indicate a low classification of safety and wellbeing, which was overly optimistic.”

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?

In six out of nine relevant cases, the assessment identified and analysed the risk of harm to others, including who is at risk and the nature of the risk. The case manager had used available sources of information, including other assessments, to inform their own judgement in nine of the 10 cases. Inspectors judged the case manager’s assessment of the level of risk of serious harm to others as reasonable in eight of the 10 cases.

3.2. Planning



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

Outstanding

Our rating²² for planning is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does planning focus on supporting the child’s desistance?	90%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	90%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	90%

²² The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. See Annex 2 for a more detailed explanation.

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

Planning to support desistance was sufficient in the great majority of cases. Case managers took an inclusive approach, and in nine out of 10 cases they developed their plans with the children and their parents/carers, taking full account of the family's needs as well as the child's aspirations and interests.

The work planned was proportionate in a large majority of the cases inspected and could be achieved within the timescale of the out-of-court disposal. In all cases, staff included action on all the key areas and services to support desistance with appropriate sequencing. In all but one case, planning for the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change was a strength, as was the planning to reinforce and develop the child's protective factors.

The main desistance factors identified included: education, training and employment, living arrangements, speech, language and communication, substance misuse and self-identity. Case managers struck a good balance between interventions to support desistance and the need to complete specific offending behaviour work. In nine out of 10 cases, planning focused on supporting access to universal services to promote community integration, which supported effective exit planning and ongoing support.

Good practice example:

Planning took account of speech, language and communication needs and a consultation to inform service delivery by the Healthy Young Minds CAMHS worker. Planning took account of the child's personal circumstances and difficulties with engagement and also considered whether a male worker should be allocated. Planning also indicated that there would be joint work and visits with the YOT seconded police officer, as they had already built a positive relationship with the child. The main focus of the work was to build emotional regulation and identify triggers to the child's behaviour. Victims were within the placement and took overall account of the staff's needs.

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

In all relevant cases, there was sufficient planning to keep children safe. When this was done well, there was strong multi-agency working, aligning the YJS plan with other plans.

Overall, planning focused sufficiently on keeping the child safe in nine out of ten cases. Circumstances in a child's life, however, can change quickly. Case managers need to consider the potential for change in each case, so that, should concerns escalate, they are prepared and more likely to respond effectively. We recognise the need for proportionate planning in out-of-court disposals, where interventions may be brief, but would have expected to see more detailed contingency planning in some of the cases we inspected. This is important, as there should be a clear plan of action in the event of risk to the child either increasing or decreasing. We found contingency planning for safety and wellbeing to be sufficient in only one of the eight relevant cases.

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

Planning to keep others safe was rated outstanding. In all relevant cases, planning focused sufficiently on keeping people safe, and case managers involved other agencies in their planning processes in a large majority of relevant cases. In seven

out of nine relevant cases, planning addressed specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims.

As with safety and wellbeing, contingency planning to manage public protection is important and there should be a clear plan of action in the event of the child's risk of harm to others either increasing or decreasing. We found contingency planning for risk of harm to others to be sufficient in only one of the seven relevant cases.

An inspector observed:

“There are no plans in place to address specific risk factors through the community resolution targets and contingency planning is absent in this case. Planning related to risk should have included school and police and how often they were to be contacted, or linked with, for an update on the child’s behaviour. Planning should have considered any reports of further offending, especially where the child is currently released under investigation for an alleged serious offence.”

3.3. Implementation and delivery



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

Outstanding

Our rating²³ for implementation and delivery is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does service delivery effectively support the child’s desistance?	90%
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of the child?	90%
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of other people?	90%

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

Implementation and delivery to support the child’s desistance was satisfactory in the great majority of cases. Inspectors found a high level of engagement from children, which reflected the proactive approach of staff and their capacity to develop and maintain meaningful relationships with them. Case managers focused sufficiently on developing and maintaining effective working relationships in nine of the 10 cases, while in all cases staff encouraged and enabled the child’s compliance with the work of the YJS.

The services most likely to support desistance were delivered in all but one case, with case managers paying sufficient attention to sequencing and the available timescales. Service delivery reflected the diversity and wider familial and social context of the child, involving parents/carers or significant others in nine out of 10 cases.

²³ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. See Annexe 2 for a more detailed explanation.

An inspector commented:

“The child was fully engaged and compliant, with the case manager giving consideration to where and when she was seeing him, so as not to interfere with his education or contact time with his dad. There was some good use of consultation with CAMHS to explore the child’s emotional wellbeing issues and this was shared appropriately with other workers to inform their service delivery. Good liaison with social worker, independent reviewing officer, police, speech language therapist and substance misuse worker were evident throughout. Whilst the out-of-court disposal was completed within three months of being delivered, it was agreed to offer the child voluntary support for a short period to sustain the effective working relationship and consistency, as it was known that he would shortly receive a youth conditional caution for an offence that was committed just prior to his current out-of-court disposal being delivered.”

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

Promoting the safety and wellbeing of the child through service delivery was evident in seven of the eight relevant cases, with case managers involving other agencies in keeping children safe in all but one relevant case. Overall, service delivery supported the safety of the child in nine of the 10 cases inspected.

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

For keeping other people safe, case managers had considered the protection of actual and potential victims in all of the relevant cases. The services delivered managed and minimised the risk of harm in five out of the six relevant cases, and, overall, the safety of other people was supported effectively in nine out of the 10 cases inspected.

3.4. Out-of-court disposal policy and provision



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

Requires improvement

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

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

Tameside YJS has developed an out-of-court disposal policy that includes a clear joint protocol with the police. However, there does not appear to be evidence of formal collaborative sign-off. The policy sets out individual responsibilities of YJS staff and police staff. It is supplemented by guidance notes (developed in April 2021) that detail arrangements for eligibility criteria, escalation processes, and wider prevention and diversion pathways and set the distinction between community resolutions and formal out-of-court disposals. Guidance is also clear about the application of

out-of-court disposals to avoid overuse. The policy does not expressly detail how diversity and disproportionality are to be addressed. This would be beneficial, given that the YJS has identified that black, Asian and minority ethnic children, looked-after children and girls are over-represented in the out-of-court disposal cohort.

The management of risk to others and safety and wellbeing for out-of-court disposal cases sits within the service's wider policies for these areas. However, the out-of-court disposal supplementary guidance notes give clear guidance on how to manage cases assessed as high risk in any of the domains of harm, safety and wellbeing or reoffending. In essence, these cases are referred to and managed through the Tameside YJS complex case panel process; therefore, they receive the same oversight and process as post-court cases when in this forum.

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

Tameside YJS describes its out-of-court disposal provision as being 'on a journey'. From summer 2020 the YJS introduced new processes. A weekly referrals and screening meeting takes place, in which YJS business support interrogates YJS, social care and education systems and the YJS police officers check police systems. These meetings are attended by the designated YJS manager, out of court lead practitioners, YJS police officer, YJS business support and the victim/restorative justice worker. They discuss a variety of referrals, including community resolutions already decided by the police and where these have already been delivered. They will also discuss assessment requests from police for a youth caution, and consider diversion requests where, for example, social care have concerns that a child is at risk of offending.

Since August 2020, the YJS has had a fortnightly out-of-court disposal panel that is separate to the referrals meeting. There are terms of reference for the out-of-court disposal panel, which is more of a partnership forum. It is chaired by the designated YJS manager and attended by a range of partners, including CAMHS, education services, the police and the victim worker, as well as YJS practitioners. If social care are involved with the child, we were informed that the allocated social worker does not always attend the panel in person, but the YJS case worker will contact social care during their assessment for their views on the child. This is a shortfall and the YJS should ensure that the allocated social worker attends the out-of-court disposal panel in relevant cases.

After this, the case comes back to the panel within 20 working days with an assessment and a proposal for an outcome. This is the opportunity for partners to share any additional information, as well as to complete exit planning for those cases that have completed their out-of-court disposal. The out-of-court disposal panel terms of reference describe clear escalation processes, and the YJS designated manager described instances where the partnership has had challenging conversations during the referral process. If the YJS and police do not agree on an out-of-court-disposal outcome, following further discussion between the YJS operational manager and neighbourhood police inspector, the final decision rests with the neighbourhood inspector, as they can also offer a perspective on the neighbourhood and child's behaviour in context.

Within the inspected cases, we saw minimal evidence of challenge in relation to some decisions, which appeared to be solely police-led. We also found a small number of cases where there was inconsistency in decision-making on community

resolutions. Not all community resolutions were informed by a YJS assessment, as they had already been issued by the police.

The use of youth conditional cautions is minimal and there is insufficient analysis of cases that could potentially be diverted from court. The YJS feel that staff's ability to engage children on youth cautions, coupled with seriousness of offences, warrant the use of youth conditional cautions very rarely. The YJS cited mitigating interventions, such as the knife and weapons protocols in schools. The YJS states that it has consulted by Crown Prosecution Service about options for alternatives to court, but this happens rarely. They feel that every case that goes to court is of sufficient seriousness to warrant this and are confident that they have right outcomes in each case. We found this to be an optimistic view, with further data analysis needed to evidence this approach.

Tameside offers a wide range of prevention and diversion interventions to children. These include a knife protocol and multi-agency approach and groupwork for children who take a weapon into school, designed to help prevent exclusions. The PIED pilot is a joint initiative with GM Police and the VRU. The Community Safety Partnership funds a fixed-term youth engagement worker to support the initiative. This is a partnership approach to identifying children who are coming to the attention of GM Police, but for whom there has not been an outcome leading to intervention. They are offered voluntary support, either by the youth engagement worker or through one of the partner agencies.

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

The out-of-court disposal policy was developed in November 2018 and was due to be reviewed in December 2020. This review is overdue and has not been completed, despite an out-of-court disposal audit undertaken in summer 2021, which looked at cases between 01 April 2020 and 31 March 2021. In addition, there has been a change in local practice. Out-of-court disposal assessments are now completed by level 2 case managers (those with a relevant professional qualification), who give a presentation to staff members initially unfamiliar with out-of-court disposal work. No significant changes to either the policy or procedure has resulted from these changes, although the service manager and the designated YJS operational manager for out-of-court disposals recognise that the current out-of-court disposal policy and procedure should be reviewed.

The YJS's analysis of cases in 2020-2021 reveals that it works mainly with males between 14 and 16 years of age, who are white British from working class families. However, the YJS acknowledges that looked-after children and black, Asian and minority ethnic children are over-represented in the cohort in comparison to the wider population. In addition, a higher proportion of girls are given out-of-court disposals than are given court orders.

The YJS reports that engagement and success rates are good, and for children receiving a youth caution, there is a high congruence rate between the views of YJS and the police. Nevertheless, there are a number of shortfalls in its evaluation of out-of-court disposal policy and provision. Children and their parents/carers have not been meaningfully involved in providing feedback and the YJS has identified several areas in which it needs to look more deeply at the data. It proposes to do this through one of the National Standards sub-groups (which are currently on hold pending the outcome of a YJS board development day later this year). Likewise, the

YJS acknowledges that the work carried out by the board and service to develop a disproportionality action plan is critical, as it will enable the service to analyse and evaluate out-of-court disposals in greater depth.

Some of the key themes identified by the partnership include: an in-depth study of young people living out of area, specifically in relation to first-time entrants and knife crime; demographics and engagement rates for young people who have come to the attention of the YJS through the knife and weapons protocol; exploring how many young people from the current cohort on diversionary interventions and community resolutions have been referred back to the YJS in a given period; identifying specific patterns and themes from out-of-court through to custody, for example in relation to violence against the person offences; exploring how many young people in this cohort have identified specific health needs (for example, speech and language therapy, mental health and substance misuse) and been referred to specialist services and partner agencies; and the time between referral and allocation.

4. Resettlement

4.1. Resettlement policy and provision



There is a high-quality, evidence-based resettlement service for children leaving custody.

Requires improvement

We inspected the quality of policy and provision in place for resettlement work, using evidence from documents, meetings and interviews. To illustrate that work, we inspected two cases managed by the YJS that had received a custodial sentence. Our key findings were as follows.

Strengths

- There is a recently developed, clear resettlement policy, based on principles of constructive resettlement.
- YJS practitioners demonstrated a high level of advocacy for YJS children in custody.
- Provision and partnership working were of good quality across the key pathways of accommodation, education, training and employment, and health.
- There is good communication and positive working relationships between the YJS and secure estate staff.
- The YJS is represented at operational and strategic groups of the Greater Manchester Resettlement Consortium.

Areas for improvement

- Formal, structured resettlement training for YJS staff is underdeveloped.
- The resettlement policy does not specifically address diversity issues.
- Provision for victim work within YJS resettlement cases was of variable quality.
- Analysis of the YJS resettlement cohort of children lacked sufficient focus and depth at strategic and operational level.
- The work of the Greater Manchester Resettlement Consortium requires further embedding through the recently established operational and strategic resettlement groups.

We do not provide a separate rating for the quality of work in resettlement cases inspected under this standard. In making a judgement about resettlement policy and provision, we take into account the answers to the following three questions:

Is there a resettlement policy in place that promotes a high-quality, constructive and personalised resettlement service for all children?

Tameside YJS has a resettlement policy that sets out actions and timescales in relation to children who are sentenced to custody. The policy sets clear expectations

and actions for all aspects of resettlement activity (both before and after release) and focuses on planning across the seven pathways, which include accommodation, education, training and employment, healthcare and contact with the child's family or carer. This includes understanding the needs of the whole family, and considering key areas of sentence planning and delivery, such as visits, use of release on temporary licence, transitions and children with special educational needs.

The assessment of risk and subsequent release planning is considered in the directions for completing AssetPlus. These also set out the framework under which a child's risk should be managed. In addition, the policy ensures staff are directed to complementary policies (such as safeguarding, joint work with children's social care, and YJS risk policy), which together specify the actions for cases that are locally managed within Tameside YJS complex case panel arrangements, or which meet the criteria for MAPPA and Integrated Offender Management.

Although the policy does not directly address diversity needs, it details a clear framework for delivering work within the principles of constructive resettlement and supporting a child's identity shift. These services provide individualised interventions and a high level of support to children with complex needs. The policy would be further improved by reflecting on how it will address issues of diversity and disproportionality within the YJS cohort, and by using feedback and children's participation to shape it further.

The YJS introduced the policy only recently, in April 2021, although key elements had been implemented informally before this. Staff are aware of its implementation, through discussion at team meetings and practitioner training and development forums.

Does resettlement provision promote a high-quality, constructive and personalised resettlement service for all children?

Resettlement provision is based on a constructive resettlement approach, supported by services providing a high level of support and bespoke interventions. Within both resettlement cases, inspectors saw a high level of advocacy in relation to the placement of YJS children. In one case, a child was placed in a secure children's home (SCH) due to the particular issues and individual needs of the case, while in the other, appropriate advocacy resulted in the child being placed on the Keppel Unit in Wetherby Young Offender Institution (YOI). There was evidence of collaborative relationships with staff in custodial settings, with consistently good communication and information-sharing.

Suitable and timely accommodation was available for both of the inspected resettlement cases. One example demonstrated strong joint working between the YJS and the leaving care social worker, which resulted in the child securing semi-independent accommodation one month before release. Both saw appropriate access to suitable education, training and employment opportunities and healthcare needs, including clear arrangements for continuing work on release into the community. One case saw a child-centred response to diversity needs, as the YJS and secure estate facilitated an escorted release on temporary licence to allow the child to attend the funeral of a family member.

The staff survey indicates that only a small minority of relevant staff (one out of three who responded to the survey) have received specific resettlement training. This is identified as an area of priority and development, both within the Greater Manchester Resettlement Consortium and within the YJS itself. More recently, a pool

of approximately eight staff completed some constructive resettlement training in July 2021, but this needs to be further built on. YJS staff did report that they have had informal opportunities to shadow more experienced colleagues on visits to establishments (Covid-19 notwithstanding).

Resettlement provision does pay sufficient attention to keeping children safe. Barton Moss is the local SCH and Wetherby is the nearest YOI. YJS staff and managers describe strong relationships with Barton Moss, which allows accessible visits and proactive involvement in complex case panel meetings. This SCH is viewed as proactive and facilitates transport for children on release. The presence of a GM-wide social worker in Wetherby YOI supports information-sharing and joint working to address the specific needs of a complex cohort of children. The designated YJS manager for resettlement says there is good communication with Tameside social care leaving care team, especially as they are located in the same place. The designated YJS manager attends a weekly placement meeting where relevant custody cases are discussed, which enables the partner agencies to plan as soon as possible for accommodation on release. Positive relationships are highlighted between the YJS and the MASH and safeguarding teams.

In relation to keeping others safe, both cases saw sufficient evidence of joint work and information-sharing – again supported through complex case panel procedures. YJS staff said that there is a public protection worker in Wetherby who will deal with enquiries and participate in regular public protection meetings where young people are discussed. The resettlement practitioners will then discuss these with the case manager and give the YJS any detail or feedback from security incident reports within the establishment. The complex case panel process considers licences, to ensure that the partnership agrees to licence conditions. This then feeds into custody planning meetings. We were informed that all current children in custody are managed through the complex case panel process.

In the inspected resettlement cases, victim work was more variable. In one of the two cases there was a lack of clarity and detail about the victims and what the purpose of the additional licence conditions were in relation to them.

Are resettlement policy and provision regularly assessed and updated to ensure effectiveness and maintain alignment with the evidence base?

The formal resettlement policy was only recently introduced, in April 2021. It was based on the principles of constructive resettlement, and a review of the informal practices within the team and national standards guidance in relation to effective resettlement practice. The embryonic work of the Greater Manchester Resettlement Consortium is providing further focus and impetus on developing areas of practice, although this work needs to be embedded further through the recently established operational and strategic resettlement groups.

Children remanded into custody is a priority area for the board. Information and some data are included in the management performance reports and in board meeting minutes. This has not directly informed the resettlement policy, although it highlights the complexity of the children involved. Work has been undertaken, and presented to the YJS management board, to evaluate the custodial experience of a small cohort of children during Covid-19. However, the YJS acknowledges that further work is needed to scrutinise the quality of practice and issues of their custodial cases.

Annexe 1: Methodology

HM Inspectorate of Probation standards

The standards against which we inspect youth offending services are based on established models and frameworks, which are grounded in evidence, learning and experience. These standards are designed to drive improvements in the quality of work with children who have offended.²⁴

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

Domain one: organisational delivery

The youth justice service submitted evidence in advance and the Directors of Children's Services, the Assistant Director (and chair of the YJS management board) and the YJS Head of Service delivered a presentation covering the following areas:

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

During the main fieldwork phase, we conducted 18 interviews with case managers, asking them about their experiences of training, development, management supervision and leadership. We held various meetings, which allowed us to triangulate evidence and information. In total, we conducted 12 meetings, which included meetings with managers, partner organisations and staff. The evidence collected under this domain was judged against our published ratings characteristics.²⁵

Domain two: court disposals

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

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

Domain three: out-of-court disposals

We completed case assessments over a one-week period, examining case files and interviewing case managers. Sixty per cent of cases selected were those of children

²⁴ HM Inspectorate's standards are available here:
<https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmiprobation/about-our-work/our-standards-and-ratings/>

who had received out-of-court disposals three to five months earlier. This enabled us to examine work in relation to assessing, planning, and implementation and delivery. Where necessary, interviews with other people significantly involved in the case also took place.

We examined 10 out-of-court disposals. The sample size was set based on the proportion of out-of-court disposal cases in the YJS.

Resettlement

We completed case assessments over a one-week period, examining two case files and interviewing case managers, in cases where children had received custodial sentences or been released from custodial sentences four to 12 months earlier. This enabled us to gather information to illustrate the impact of resettlement policy and provision on service delivery. Where necessary, interviews with other people significantly involved in the case also took place.

In some areas of this report, data may have been split into smaller sub-samples – for example, male/female cases. Where this is the case, the margin of error for the sub-sample findings may be higher than five.

Annexe 2: Inspection data

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

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

The rating at the standard level is aligned to the lowest banding at the key question level, recognising that each key question is an integral part of the standard. Therefore, if we rate three key questions as 'Good' and one as 'Inadequate', the overall rating for that standard is 'Inadequate'.

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

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

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

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

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

'Outstanding' rating, regardless of how they are rated against the core standards. Where there are no relevant resettlement cases, we do not apply a rating to resettlement work.

Data from inspected cases:²⁶

2.1. Assessment (court disposals)	
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	
a) Is there sufficient analysis of offending behaviour, including the child's attitudes towards and motivations for their offending?	88%
b) Does assessment sufficiently analyse diversity issues?	63%
c) Does assessment consider personal circumstances, including the wider familial and social context of the child?	88%
d) Does assessment utilise information held by other agencies?	88%
e) Does assessment focus on the child's strengths and protective factors?	88%
f) Does assessment analyse the key structural barriers facing the child?	88%
g) Is enough attention given to understanding the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change, and their likelihood of engaging with the court disposal?	88%
h) Does assessment give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of victims, and opportunities for restorative justice?	50%
i) Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in their assessment, and are their views taken into account?	75%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	
a) Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risks to the safety and wellbeing of the child?	75%
b) Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including other assessments, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	63%
c) Does assessment analyse controls and interventions to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	88%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	

²⁶ Some questions do not apply in all cases.

a) Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risk of harm to others posed by the child, including identifying who is at risk and the nature of that risk?	63%
b) Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including past behaviour and convictions, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	88%
c) Does assessment analyse controls and interventions to manage and minimise the risk of harm presented by the child?	50%

2.2. Planning (court disposals)

Does planning focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	
a) Does planning set out the services most likely to support desistance, paying sufficient attention to the available timescales and the need for sequencing?	88%
b) Does planning sufficiently address diversity issues?	75%
c) Does planning take sufficient account of the child's personal circumstances, including the wider familial and social context of the child?	88%
d) Does planning take sufficient account of the child's strengths and protective factors, and seek to reinforce or develop these as necessary?	88%
e) Does planning take sufficient account of the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change, and seek to develop these as necessary?	75%
f) Does planning give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of victims?	50%
g) Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in planning, and are their views taken into account?	75%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	
a) Does planning promote the safety and wellbeing of the child, sufficiently addressing risks?	75%
b) Does planning involve other agencies where appropriate, and is there sufficient alignment with other plans (e.g. child protection or care plans) concerning the child?	63%
c) Does planning set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	63%

d) Does planning set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to manage those risks that have been identified?	50%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	
a) Does planning promote the safety of other people, sufficiently addressing risk of harm factors?	63%
b) Does planning involve other agencies where appropriate?	63%
c) Does planning address any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims?	50%
d) Does planning set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote the safety of other people?	63%
e) Does planning set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to manage those risks that have been identified?	50%

2.3. Implementation and delivery (court disposals)

Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the child's desistance?	
a) Are the delivered services those most likely to support desistance, with sufficient attention given to sequencing and the available timescales?	75%
b) Does service delivery account for the diversity issues of the child?	75%
c) Does service delivery reflect the wider familial and social context of the child, involving parents or carers, or significant others?	75%
d) Does service delivery build upon the child's strengths and enhance protective factors?	88%
e) Is sufficient focus given to developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child and their parents or carers?	88%
f) Does service delivery promote opportunities for community integration, including access to services post-supervision?	88%
g) Is sufficient attention given to encouraging and enabling the child's compliance with the work of the YOT?	88%
h) Are enforcement actions taken when appropriate?	25%

Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of the child?	
a) Does service delivery promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	88%
b) Is the involvement of other organisations in keeping the child safe sufficiently well-coordinated?	63%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?	
a) Are the delivered services sufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	88%
b) Is sufficient attention given to the protection of actual and potential victims?	63%
c) Is the involvement of other agencies in managing the risk of harm sufficiently well-coordinated?	75%

2. 4. Reviewing (court disposals)

Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	
a) Does reviewing identify and respond to changes in factors linked to desistance?	88%
b) Does reviewing focus sufficiently on building upon the child's strengths and enhancing protective factors?	100%
c) Does reviewing include analysis of, and respond to, diversity factors?	38%
d) Does reviewing consider the personal circumstances, including the wider familial and social context of the child?	100%
d) Does reviewing consider motivation and engagement levels and any relevant barriers?	88%
e) Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in reviewing their progress and engagement, and are their views taken into account?	100%
f) Does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work to support desistance?	63%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	

a) Does reviewing identify and respond to changes in factors related to safety and wellbeing?	88%
b) Is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in promoting the safety and wellbeing of the child?	88%
c) Does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	88%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	
a) Does reviewing identify and respond to changes in factors related to risk of harm?	50%
b) Is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in managing the risk of harm?	63%
c) Does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan all of work to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	50%

3.1. Assessment (out-of-court disposals)

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	
a) Is there sufficient analysis of offending behaviour, including the child's acknowledgement of responsibility for, attitudes towards and motivations for their offending?	90%
b) Does assessment sufficiently analyse diversity issues?	80%
c) Does assessment consider personal circumstances, including the wider familial and social context of the child?	100%
d) Does assessment utilise information held by other agencies?	80%
e) Does assessment focus on the child's strengths and protective factors?	100%
f) Does assessment analyse the key structural barriers facing the child?	10%
g) Is sufficient attention given to understanding the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change?	90%
h) Does assessment give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of victims, and opportunities for restorative justice?	70%

i) Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in their assessment, and are their views taken into account?	100%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	
a) Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risks to the safety and wellbeing of the child?	70%
b) Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including other assessments, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	70%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	
a) Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risk of harm to others posed by the child, including identifying who is at risk and the nature of that risk?	60%
b) Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including any other assessments that have been completed, and other evidence of behaviour by the child?	90%

3.2. Planning (out-of-court disposals)

Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?	
a) Does planning set out the services most likely to support desistance, paying sufficient attention to the available timescales and the need for sequencing?	100%
b) Does planning sufficiently address diversity issues?	80%
c) Does planning take sufficient account of the child's personal circumstances, including the wider familial and social context of the child?	90%
d) Does planning take sufficient account of the child's strengths and protective factors, and seek to reinforce or develop these as necessary?	90%
e) Does planning take sufficient account of the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change, and seek to develop these as necessary?	90%
f) Does planning take sufficient account of opportunities for community integration, including access to mainstream services following completion of out-of-court disposal work?	90%
g) Does planning give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victims?	90%

h) Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in planning, and are their views taken into account?	90%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	
a) Does planning promote the safety and wellbeing of the child, sufficiently addressing risks?	90%
b) Does planning involve other agencies where appropriate, and is there sufficient alignment with other plans (e.g. child protection or care plans) concerning the child?	70%
c) Does planning include necessary contingency arrangements for those risks that have been identified?	10%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	
a) Does planning promote the safety of other people, sufficiently addressing risk of harm factors?	80%
b) Does planning involve other agencies where appropriate?	40%
c) Does planning address any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims?	70%
d) Does planning include necessary contingency arrangements for those risks that have been identified?	10%

3.3. Implementation and delivery (out-of-court disposals)	
Does service delivery effectively support the child's desistance?	
a) Are the delivered services those most likely to support desistance, with sufficient attention given to sequencing and the available timescales?	90%
b) Does service delivery account for the diversity issues of the child?	90%
c) Does service delivery reflect the wider familial and social context of the child, involving parents or carers, or significant others?	90%
d) Is sufficient focus given to developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child and their parents or carers?	90%
e) Is sufficient attention given to encouraging and enabling the child's compliance with the work of the YOT?	100%

f) Does service delivery promote opportunities for community integration, including access to mainstream services?	90%
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of the child?	
a) Does service delivery promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	70%
b) Is the involvement of other agencies in keeping the child safe sufficiently well utilised and coordinated?	70%
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of other people?	
a) Are the delivered services sufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	50%
b) Is sufficient attention given to the protection of actual and potential victims?	90%