



An inspection of youth offending services in

# Derby

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HM Inspectorate of Probation

AUGUST 2018

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

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

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# Contents

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Foreword.....	4
Overall findings.....	5
Summary of ratings.....	7
Recommendations.....	8
Introduction.....	9
Key facts .....	10
<b>1. Organisational delivery .....</b>	<b>11</b>
1.1. Governance and leadership .....	11
1.2. Staff .....	12
1.3. Partnerships and services.....	13
1.4. Information and facilities .....	14
Summary.....	15
<b>2. Court disposals .....</b>	<b>16</b>
2.1. Assessment.....	16
2.2. Planning .....	17
2.3. Implementation and delivery.....	18
2.4. Reviewing .....	18
Summary.....	19
<b>3. Out-of-court disposals.....</b>	<b>20</b>
3.1. Assessment.....	20
3.2. Planning .....	21
3.3. Implementation and delivery.....	21
3.4. Joint working .....	22
Summary.....	23
Annex 1 - Methodology .....	24
Annex 2 - Inspection results .....	25
Annex 3 - Glossary .....	30

## Foreword

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This inspection is the first of our new programme of YOS inspections. As planned, we have inspected and rated Derby youth offending services across three broad areas: the arrangements for organisational delivery first of all, and then the quality of court disposals work, and out of court disposals work.

We have given Derby Youth Offending Service (YOS) an overall rating of 'Good'. There were many areas of work that were innovative and that demonstrated a good understanding of the needs of the children and young people.

Derby YOS's strongest area of practice was its work to reduce reoffending. Children and young people referred to the YOS can access an impressive range of support and services to help them stop offending. And unusually, their siblings can also access support to prevent them getting involved in antisocial behaviour or crime.

A new Head of Service was appointed in November 2017. The management team has started to review and change performance and practice under his leadership. Some of the intended outcomes had not been fully realised when we inspected, and some work had been undermined by staff sickness levels.

At an organisational level we found a good picture. The Chair of the management board was knowledgeable, and effective partnerships were in place. However, board members should understand performance data and management information in a more detailed way, to challenge the YOS effectively, and to drive improvements. The board needs to maintain its success in reducing first-time entrants to the criminal justice system, and promising trends in reoffending rates and the use of custody so that they are closer to the national average.

Reducing reoffending aside, we found Derby YOS could and should do more to assess and respond accurately to safety and wellbeing concerns, and the risks that some children and young people pose to others. We also found the YOS did not give sufficient attention to the needs of victims.

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



**Dame Glenys Stacey**  
Chief Inspector of Probation

## Overall findings

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Overall Derby was rated as: **good**. This rating was determined by inspecting the youth offending services against three domains: organisational delivery; court disposals; and out-of-court disposals.

	<b>Organisational delivery</b>
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Our key findings about organisation delivery were as follows:

- The current youth justice plan, agreed by the board, provided a clear vision for the service. Objectives were based appropriately on improving performance and aligned with the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) objectives.
- The Board Chair, PCC and National Probation Service (NPS) members acted as advocates for the work of the YOS, and this had led to some improvements in practice, including transition of children and young people to adult probation services and reducing criminalisation of Looked After Children.
- Staff sickness absence, although well managed, caused disruption to casework, with cases being reallocated and gaps in key aspects of practice, for example, reviewing the effectiveness of work with a child or young person.
- Performance management systems did not give managers a full picture of the strengths and areas for improvement of case management.
- Children and young people had timely access to an impressive range of services provided by partner agencies. Pathways for children and young people to access these services were effective.
- There was an overall YOS staff training plan. Training needs were identified individually. This meant that training opportunities were coordinated and responsive to service needs.
- Further work was needed to identify and minimise the impact of discrimination and disadvantage in the criminal justice system, especially for girls, and children and young people from a black and minority ethnic background.



## Court disposals

Our key findings about court disposals were as follows:

- Assessment and work to prevent further offending and promote desistance was the strongest area of practice. Elements of planning, implementation, and delivery and review were outstanding.<sup>1</sup>
- Work to keep children and young people safe was good, but planning and review of risk of harm to others, especially victims, needed to improve.
- Case managers and staff from other agencies knew the children and young people well.
- Children and young people had prompt access to an impressive range of services provided by partner agencies, with effective pathways to access them. This was a key strength of the work.
- There was a good focus on the impact of offending on siblings and parents/carers, with support available for them.



## Out-of-court disposals

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

- Children and young people could access a wide range of support to make them less likely to offend; the reducing reoffending priority was shared by the YOS and the PCC for Derbyshire.
- A range of agencies worked together to identify children and young people at risk of entering the criminal justice system. Once identified, the agencies shared relevant information to make appropriate decisions on the type of out-of-court disposal they gave the young person. This led to a judgement of outstanding in joint work.
- Assessment, planning and work to keep children safe and manage risk of harm required improvement, but there was good ongoing communication with the police to inform them of progress.
- The safeguarding needs and vulnerability of children and young people were often underestimated and assessments in this area were inadequate.
- Children and young people with out-of-court disposals had access to the same range of services as those subject to court orders.

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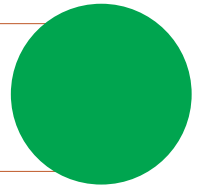
<sup>1</sup> Details of our ratings system can be found here:  
<https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/about-our-work/our-standards-and-ratings/>  
Further explanation can be found in Annex 1: Methodology.

Service: Derby Youth Offending Service

Fieldwork started: June 2018

Overall rating

Good



### 1. Organisational delivery

1.1 Governance and leadership

Good



1.2 Staff

Requires improvement



1.3 Partnerships and services

Good



1.4 Information and facilities

Good



### 2. Court disposals

2.1 Assessment

Good



2.2 Planning

Requires improvement



2.3 Implementation and delivery

Good



2.4 Reviewing

Good



### 3. Out-of-court disposals

3.1 Assessment

Inadequate



3.2 Planning

Requires improvement



3.3 Implementation and delivery

Requires improvement



3.4 Joint working

Outstanding



## Recommendations

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

### **Derby Youth Offending Service should:**

1. accurately assess the safeguarding, wellbeing and vulnerability of all children and young people subject to an out-of-court disposal
2. identify and minimise the impact of discrimination and disadvantage in the criminal justice system, especially for girls, and children and young people from a black and minority ethnic background
3. ensure that the needs and wishes of victims are given greater attention by YOS staff.



## Introduction

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

YOTs are statutory partnerships and they are multidisciplinary, dealing with the needs of the whole child or young person. They are required to include staff from local authority social care and education, the police, the National Probation Service (NPS) and local health services.<sup>2</sup> Most YOTs are based in 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) and also those applicable across the criminal justice sector (for example, multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) 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 their work is to be carried out.

Derby YOS is located within Derby City Council's People Service. The YOS is overseen by a multi-agency partnership board, which meets quarterly. The board is chaired by the Director for Children's Integrated Services.

The YOS reports to the Children, Families and Learners Board via the Youth Justice Partnership Board.

Leadership of the YOS changed in November 2017, with a new Head of Children's Specialist Services coming into post. He has the responsibility for the YOS, Disabled Children's Service and Children in Care.

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

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

### **HM Inspectorate of Probation standards**

The standards against which we inspect are based on established models and frameworks, which are grounded in evidence, learning and experience. These standards are designed to drive improvements in the quality of work with people who have offended.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* sets out the arrangements for local YOTs and partnership working.

<sup>3</sup> HM Inspectorate's standards are available here:  
<https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/about-our-work/our-standards-and-ratings/>

## Key facts

**First time entrant rate<sup>4</sup> per 100,000**

458

Derby City YOS

301

Average for England and Wales

**Reoffending rates<sup>5</sup>**

36.6%

Derby City YOS

41.9%

Average for England and Wales

**Caseload information<sup>6</sup>**

**Age**

Derby

National average

**10-14**

34%

24%

**15-17**

66%

76%

**Race/ethnicity**

Derby

National average

**White**

80%

73%

**Black and minority ethnic**

20%

24%

**Gender**

Derby

National average

**Male**

87%

83%

**Female**

13%

17%



**Population information**



**Total population Derby (2017)**

**257,034**

Total youth population (2017)

24,564

(9.6%)

Total black and minority ethnic youth population (2011 census)

6,284

(26%)

<sup>4</sup> First Time Entrants, October 2016 to September 2017, Youth Justice Board (YJB).


<sup>5</sup> Proven reoffending statistics, July 2015 to June 2016, Ministry of Justice, April 2018.

<sup>6</sup> Youth Justice annual statistics: 2016 to 2017, YJB, January 2018

# 1. Organisational delivery



Organisations that are well led and well managed are more likely to achieve their aims. We inspect against four standards (1.1 to 1.4 below).

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

A change in the Derby YOS leadership in November 2017 had brought a new approach to the delivery of a personalised and responsive service for children and young people.

Close work between the Head of Service and the Board Chair had effectively aligned a range of services and built on existing partnership arrangements. We inspected during a period of change and development, so some of the intended outcomes had not yet been realised, but there was established planning for these to be achieved.

The approach outlined in the Youth Justice Action Plan had been agreed by the board. This linked to and supported the plans developed by the local authority, Derbyshire Constabulary, the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and health services. There was a clear joint aim to reduce youth offending.


The YOS management board comprised all the statutory partners, and membership had been stable. There had been two meetings since January 2018; performance data had been presented at both, and used to prompt discussion. The board had identified that it needed to understand its performance information better, and had recently used a data analyst to help achieve this.

Most board members did not have a working understanding or experience of children and young people in the criminal justice system, or of the effectiveness of case management. The Board Chair had recognised this and had well-developed plans for board members to spend time with YOS staff to understand the nature of their work.

Some board members had used their experience gained as a board member to improve their own services, such as in the work between the National Probation Service (NPS) and the YOS to improve transitions of children and young people into adult services.

The board had also recognised the need for a representative from education to attend and advise. A deputy head from Kingsmead School, a school for children with special education needs, was due to attend the next planned meeting.

The Board Chair was closely engaged with a range of partners and had an excellent understanding of the work and aims of the YOS. She could represent the needs of the YOS well. As a result, children and young people benefited from a range of specialist services.

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

Staffing levels in the YOS were appropriate and caseloads were manageable. Staff from the YOS and partner agencies worked effectively together and were motivated. Most staff knew the children and young people well.

The YOS had three team leaders, all knowledgeable in YOS work. YOS policy was that individual staff performance was monitored through supervision and appraisal. Some staff we spoke to said that they were well supported and that they received frequent feedback.

The quality of case management work was undermined by two key issues - the level of staff sickness absence and a too-narrow performance management system.

The YOS management team was working hard to manage sickness absence in a fair and reasonable way. In the period April 2017 to February 2018, the YOS had lost the equivalent of 211 staff days. The management of this was made more difficult due to the number of episodes, including long, short and intermittent periods of absence. In some months the impact was negligible but in others it was significant, amounting to the loss of a full-time post. Despite the management team's best efforts, we found that some cases had been reallocated too often and that in others key work, including assessments, planning and reviewing, had not been done.

Supervision and appraisal systems were the key processes used to identify the quality of practice. These were supplemented by the management oversight of some aspects of case management, including countersigning of AssetPlus (the standard youth justice assessment tool), the risk and safeguarding panel, the intervention planning panel and the custody panel. These panels focused on a specific aspect of the case (risks, interventions or custody) but they did not review the case in its entirety. These systems allowed managers to understand the quality of specific parts of work, but they did not have a system to understand the effectiveness of all of the work by individual staff, team or workforce. For example, managers were not able to identify which staff had the best compliance of children and young people or the variabilities in practice. Staff were not aware of systems to track and monitor their own performance, even though these were available on AssetPlus.

Planning for the training and development needs for staff was sound. Staff told us that they could access a range of compulsory training, and some had recently undertaken specialist training. There was an overall YOS training plan, but some staff did not know how decisions were made on who did which training.

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

The YOS engagement with partners and other council services had resulted in children and young people having access to an impressive range of services. The influence of several board members meant that the needs of children and young people who had contact with the YOS had been highlighted and then reflected in the plans of partners.

There was an up-to-date analysis of the desistance needs of children and young people, and sufficient attention given to safety and wellbeing and risk of harm.

The analysis had enabled the board and partner agencies to identify emerging issues, such as an increase in offending and vulnerability of children and young people from Eastern Europe, and a rise in knife crime. A council-wide strategy had been implemented to respond to knife crime, including the Drop the Knife intervention delivered by the police officer seconded to the YOS.

The board minutes showed that local patterns of offending and sentencing were monitored and reviewed, but the board needed to expand the performance data it received to influence the direction the YOS should be taking in thematic areas of practice, for example, the impact of domestic abuse.

We saw many examples of high-quality provision for children and young people. The YOS had worked effectively with partners to develop clear and accessible pathways into mainstream and specialist services. All children and young people were offered a health appointment, where they could discuss and receive help with any health-related matter. There was a particularly good focus on emotional and mental health through the Futures in Mind project. This health initiative had funded a youth wellbeing worker, who had recently started work, with the aim of reaching children and young people who had the most difficulty in accessing services, due to emotional or mental health needs.

Unusually, the YOS contributed to the funding of a prison officer at HMP Nottingham, who provided the YOS with a wide range of information and practical help with the management of children and young people in custody. The officer attended key meetings (risk, release and planning) and coordinated with a wide range of YOS staff. In one example, a young person in custody for the first time had not had any visits from his family. When this was shared with the parenting officer at the custody scrutiny panel, the family was visited to see if help was needed. Following support, the mother visited and the relationship between her and her son improved. He went home on release.

There were a wide range of interventions to support desistance - in fact, the only gap in provision was in addressing harmful sexual behaviour (HSB). A service to deliver this intervention had been in place until six months before our inspection. Since then, 24 staff (12 in the YOS) had been trained in using AIM (assessment, intervention and moving-on project), a specialist assessment to identify risk and needs of children and young people who commit sexually harmful behaviour.


Children and young people who were given an out-of-court disposal had access to the same impressive range of services, as it was recognised that they often met the threshold for preventative services. The Head of Service also managed the Early Help

Service, and had made sure that the two services worked well together to identify and meet the needs of these children and young people, their siblings and their family.

Regular contract and partnership meetings at strategic and operational level resulted in effective and responsive service delivery. However, monitoring of new initiatives was underdeveloped.

The youth justice plan had identified a few key groups with specific needs in the criminal justice system, including Looked After Children. There was some good work with children's homes to set clear expectations of behaviour management that did not lead to criminal convictions unnecessarily.

Not enough attention had been given to the disadvantage faced by other groups with protected characteristics, including those from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, and the specific needs of girls.

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

A comprehensive range of policies and procedural documents were in place and available to staff. Most had been reviewed recently, but the risk of harm policy was too generic and did not provide sufficient advice on the practical arrangements for risk management. It was clear from our interviews with staff that they understood policies and processes. As part of case assessment, we asked 27 staff if they had received effective management in the case we were discussing, and 22 said that they had. We agreed with them in all the out-of-court disposal cases, but in only half the court order cases.

The YOS was based in the Connexions office in the town centre, with a wide range of agencies located there. Children and young people entering the building were not identifiable as young offenders. The reception area was clean and welcoming, and rooms were available to speak to children and young people in private. Other suitable venues were also used, including schools and the child or young person's home. Children and young people were routinely asked where they wanted to be seen and their wishes were given full consideration.

All staff had access to the Child View case management system, which meant that partnership staff could make detailed and useful entries directly on to the system. All partnership workers had access to their own IT systems, which helped with information sharing. Staff were well supported in using the IT systems, and issues could be resolved when needed.

The YOS management team had a variety of systems and methods to disseminate learning from events, including inspection findings and practice issues. Professionals we spoke to described the YOS managers and staff as open to challenge, eager to learn and improve, transparent and approachable. We agreed with them.

## Summary

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### **Strengths:**

- Effective partnership arrangements, meaning that the needs of children and young people were known and shared.
- Committed and knowledgeable workforce, including case managers and partnership workers.
- Clear and focused management and leadership.
- Children and young people had access to an impressive range of support and services to help them stop offending.

### **Areas for improvement:**

- The management board needed to understand data in a more sophisticated way. The board had recognised this and had allocated resources to improve this.
- Performance management information at individual staff, team and workforce levels was not used to drive improvements. Staff were unclear of their overall individual performance.

## 2. Court disposals



Work with children and young people sentenced by the courts will be more effective if it is well targeted, planned and implemented. In our inspections we look at a sample of cases. In each of those cases we inspect against four standards (2.1 to 2.4 below).

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

The assessment of factors promoting or acting as barriers to desistance was good, with the individual needs of children and young people considered. Staff understood children and young people's strengths, their levels of maturity and the barriers that might stop them complying with their orders, including the effect of ADHD, autism and problems with trusting adults. Staff had a good understanding of the effect of learning disability and trauma on children and young people.

The information from parents/carers, children and young people's social care and the parenting officer was used to good effect, as assessments often considered the individual's family and social background. Particular attention had been given to supporting siblings, who were offered help to avoid becoming involved in antisocial behaviour or crime, or to minimise the impact of having a brother or sister who was involved with offending. We saw several examples where a referral had been made to the children's services for early help; this was good practice.

The wishes of victims and opportunities for restorative justice were not as prominent in assessments; we found they were good enough in only 60% of relevant cases.

Assessments were not completed quickly enough in a third of cases, and there were long delays before assessments were started and completed. This included children and young people who were sentenced to custody, and two cases where the delay was over three months.

Assessment of safety and wellbeing was sufficient in almost three quarters of cases. These assessments drew on information from other agencies, which gave case managers relevant information on which to base their assessments. In the 30 Derby cases we selected, 11 had been subject to child protection investigations or planning during the order. Just over half the assessments of safety and wellbeing were completed in good time, and considered the necessary controls needed to keep children and young people safe.

Inspectors agreed with the safety and wellbeing risk classification in just under three-quarters of cases (22 out of 30). We disagreed where we thought case managers had underestimated the risks.




“Harry” was on a child protection plan, due to neglect and emotional abuse. He had witnessed frequent domestic abuse, often fuelled by dad’s alcohol use. Harry had been missing from home five times since the order started. The assessment said that neglect and emotional abuse were “possible” despite clear evidence that the risk was real and ongoing. We took the view that the classification of medium risk was too low.

Risk of harm to others was assessed accurately in over two-thirds of cases. In one case the inspector noted:

*“Assessment concluded that a pattern of aggressive/disruptive behaviour was developing in school and in the community with peers. A very analytical assessment, which really unpicked and challenged his experience at school.”*

Less than two-thirds of these assessment were completed on time; however, classifications were usually correct.


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

The quality of planning was variable, being very good for desistance factors, good for safety and wellbeing, but weaker in managing risk of harm to others. Planning for desistance factors accurately targeted the right services and interventions, was well sequenced, and built on children and young people’s existing strengths. In almost all cases, planning covered levels of maturity and motivation. Where children and young people were not motivated to change, planning included help for them to see the implications for their future. The needs and wishes of victims were not given as much attention.

The service had set up three meetings to assist with planning: the custody scrutiny panel, the risk and safety panel, and the intervention planning clinic. All cases went through one of these. Case managers saw the meetings as helpful; they were well attended and partners often suggested suitable interventions, resulting in referrals to other services. This process enabled agencies to act together.

*“In one case, Children’s Social Care had completed an initial assessment and concluded that the mother was able to protect the children in the family. The young person on the order was out past the agreed home time when the offence was committed. The YOS added a doorstep curfew as an additional measure to support the mother with enforcing boundaries.”*

Planning to manage risk of harm to others was often not good enough, not involving other agencies when needed, and failing to specify what actions were needed to protect victims. We found many examples where the protection of victims was either not considered or not given adequate attention, especially where there was repeated ongoing contact with the victim. Limited contingency planning meant that predictable behaviours were not always reduced. As the service did not have any interventions to address harmful sexual behaviour, there was very little planning to manage and reduce these risks.

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

Interventions designed to reduce reoffending and support desistance were comprehensive and well used. Interventions recognised and responded effectively to diverse needs. There had also been work with magistrates to help them understand how children and young people with ADHD and autism could present at court.


The service had allocated case manager “champions” to build up a specialist knowledge and offer support and advice to colleagues and managers. The champions we spoke to had given careful consideration to how the role could improve practice and outcomes for children.

The delivery of work was often better than that recorded or planned. It was clear that YOS workers prioritised direct work and that there were good relationships to undertake joint work. YOS staff understood how their roles complemented each other. The following comments from an inspector were not untypical:

*“Kevin, 16, a Looked After Child with an extensive offending history, had difficulties in trusting adults and with complying with court orders. The work of the case manager made this case come to life, through supporting Kevin and being a consistent feature, not giving up, and promoting hope and change for him. He has received warnings for failing to attend when appropriate and has responded well to them. The case manager was flexible with her approach, and involving a mentor meant that a consistent and pro-social message was given to Kevin at all times. He has now accessed education and has sat his GCSEs. Although he is not ready to deal with the trauma he has faced, he is in a much better position to deal with this when he is ready.”*

Every attempt was made to help children and young people comply. We saw individual and innovative approaches taken, including support to parents and schools, home visits and the use of text messages. Careful consideration was given to the best methods to communicate with children and young people and to check their understanding of what was happening. Enforcement action was taken when needed.

As we found in assessment and planning, work to address the needs of victims was not as strong as it needed to be. There were some good opportunities for restorative justice, but these were not always considered, due in part to underestimation of the victim's needs.

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

Overall, reviewing practice was generally strong. The process of reviewing can happen on an ongoing basis or at a set period. Either way, case managers should take stock of the case, especially if there is a significant change, and decide what

action needs to be taken. Reviewing of factors related to desistance and reoffending were very good, but attention was needed to reviewing the safety and wellbeing and risk of harm to others.

Although not always recorded, case managers almost always reviewed the situation when there was a change to factors linked to desistance. These reviews considered motivation and engagement, and involved the child or young person and their parent/career. Adjustments were made as needed.

In the majority of relevant cases, changes in risk of harm to others led to an adjustment to the ongoing plan of work - although this did not happen in eight cases.

The safety and risk panels did mostly, but not always, identify the need to review the case, and some risks were underestimated.

Just over two-thirds of reviews were recorded in AssetPlus, mainly in case contacts. This sometimes made it difficult for managers and other partnership workers to quickly identify changes and actions that should be taken as a result. This was an issue for Remedi (an organisation that supports victims).

## Summary

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### **Strengths:**

- Work to reduce offending was well planned and effectively delivered.
- Children and young people could access a wide range of interventions and support services.
- Effective communication and joint work between YOS and partnership workers.
- The focus on the individual needs of children and young people, siblings and parents.
- Good understanding of the effect of learning disability and trauma on children and young people.

### **Areas for improvement:**

- Planning and reviewing of risk of harm factors were variable.
- Safety and wellbeing of children and young people and risk of harm to victims were sometimes underestimated.
- Variability of the quality of work was not understood by team leaders.

### 3. Out-of-court disposals



Work with children and young people receiving out-of-court disposals will be more effective if it is well targeted, planned and implemented. In our inspections we look at a sample of cases. In each of those cases we inspect against four standards (3.1 to 3.4 below).

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

The process of deciding on an out-of-court disposal was well established. Decisions were made by a panel that met with representatives from key agencies, including a team leader from the YOS. Each agency provided information to aid decision-making, and made recommendations for work and support to reduce offending behaviour. There were two police officers who administered all of the cautions within a few days. Following the caution, the case was referred to the YOS for allocation. Until recently, assessments had only been undertaken on children and young people who had had youth conditional cautions (YCCs). The implications of this was that in the majority of out-of-court disposals (youth cautions and restorative justice disposals) there was no assessment of offending-related need. Our assessment was based on analysis of 20 YCCs.

The YOS used the AssetPlus assessment tool to assess the needs of children and young people. The quality of assessments was inadequate; this was the lowest-rated area for Derby. Assessments analysed offending-related desistance factors in almost two-thirds of cases, including motivation, strengths and the views of parents/carers. However, a third were not completed in sufficient time to inform case planning.

Assessments were not based on information from all sources. As a result, risk of harm to others and safety and wellbeing were often underestimated, as not all known information was taken into account or the relevance of the information given adequate consideration.

In one example the inspector recorded that in the case of a 16-year-old-girl:

*“The assessment focuses on her aggressive behaviour and building on attendance at appropriate activities, such as boxing and dance classes, even though there had been two incidents of violence at the dance class. The case manager discussed the girl’s self-harm and anxiety in the interview, but these are not recorded as part of the assessment. There was no information from the social care worker involved with the family, other than that basic needs are met.”*

Assessments of safety and wellbeing were not sufficient in over half of cases, a quarter of cases underestimated the safety of the child or young person, and there were too few records of assessments. This meant that partner agencies would not be aware of issues or the case manager’s view of the child or young person’s safety. When assessments were undertaken many were very late. Assessments had been done in the three cases where children’s social care was involved; while wider


concerns were known, the offending-related vulnerabilities were not assessed. A further three cases had no assessment of safety.

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

The planning of interventions to support desistance factors was good. The views of parents/carers were considered in over two-thirds of cases, and in a similar proportion, interventions were proportionate and matched to needs. Interventions were sequenced and adapted to meet diversity needs. Where other agencies were involved, care was taken to prioritise actions and make sure that the range of interventions were complementary.

Planning for safety and wellbeing and risk of harm to others was not as strong. Just over half of the plans had sufficient actions to keep the child safe and promote welfare, included contingency actions, or were aligned with other plans. Several children and young people were known to carry knives, but not all planning included the potential risk to the child or young person inherent with this.

Planning to manage risk of harm to others was sufficient in almost two-thirds of cases, but in two cases there was no planning at all. The impact of this was that there was not enough attention to keeping victims safe.


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

Interventions to support desistance were delivered in good time in over two-thirds of cases. YOS work focused on helping children and young people to better integrate into the community or school. Maintaining education was a priority. For schoolchildren who were excluded, education could be delivered at the YOS until they could return to school. There was also work to help children and young people understand peer pressure; this work was often delivered individually by case managers. Interventions took account of diversity needs, and workers developed appropriate relationships with children and parents. There were opportunities for restorative justice and mediation work.

Service delivery was less effective in promoting safety; there were interventions to address safety concerns in only just over half of the relevant cases. Sufficient attention had been given to actual and potential victims in three of the five cases where it was needed. In one of these cases, the inspector said:

*“Some victim perspective work has been completed by the victim worker but there had been no credible work around emotional management and aggression, other than some work in the last two weeks around recognition of body cues to aggression. The case manager recognised delays in provision, and that the young person had not*

*received the interventions they needed to address their pattern of aggressive behaviour.”*

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

The decision-making processes were good and based on a multi-agency approach. The initial meeting, “the clinic”, was well attended and considered a wide range of relevant information, including any previous antisocial behaviour or contact with the police. Information from schools and health services was good. The police could gather further information about the incident directly from police officers, especially if the police report forms did not have enough information. Although decision-making was not recorded on the YOS system, the police provided us with minutes from the clinics that showed that a range of decision were made; these were proportionate to the incidents and the best interests of the child or young person.

Youth conditional cautions (YCCs) were issued two days after the clinic at a police station. There were two police officers who delivered all cautions, providing continuity of approach. They could tell us how they explained the potential consequences of accepting a YCC, although we remained concerned about the child or young person’s ability to understand the long-term implications. In some cases, YOS case managers took time to explain the implications to children and young people, but this good practice was inconsistent. There were no leaflets or written information on the implications of the YCC, other than the wording on the caution itself.

Ongoing communication between the YOS and the police was good. Where a child or young person did not comply, YOS workers notified the police, but this followed attempts to re-engage the child or young person. The police were also informed when all conditions of the caution had been completed.

The effectiveness of the YCC scheme was monitored and outcomes discussed with the police. The most recent information, provided by the YOS, showed that around 80 per cent of children and young people who had a YCC did not go on to commit further offences. YOS managers could, and did, challenge outcomes and decisions when needed.

As we found for those on court orders, support was offered to siblings to prevent any adverse effects of offending within the family.

## Summary

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### **Strengths:**

- Assessment and planning of interventions to support desistance from offending and to manage risk of harm were good.
- Plans were routinely followed and interventions delivered were well targeted.
- Decisions on the type of out-of-court disposals were made by a multidisciplinary panel, and were informed by relevant and current information about the child or young person.
- YOS workers kept the police informed of the child or young person's compliance with YCC, including any problems and successful completion.
- Good multi-agency working meant that children and young people on out-of-court disposals could access the same range of help and support as those who had court orders.
- Analysis by the YOS and police showed that almost 80 per cent of children and young people did not come to their attention again.
- The YOS and partners had a clear focus on helping not only the child or young person but also their siblings.

### **Areas for improvement:**

- Assessment of safeguarding and vulnerability often underestimated risks or were not completed at all.
- Planning and service delivery did not always specify the actions needed to manage risk or how to promote children and young people's safety.

## Annex 1 - Methodology

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

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

The youth offending service submitted evidence in advance and the Chief Executive delivered a presentation covering the following areas:

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

During the main fieldwork phase, we surveyed 27 individual case managers, asking them about their experiences of training, development, management supervision and leadership. Various meetings and focus groups were then held, allowing us to triangulate evidence and information.

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

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

We examined 30 post-court cases. The sample size was set to achieve a confidence level of 80 per cent (with a margin of error of 5), and we ensured that the ratios for gender, sentence or disposal type, risk of serious harm, and risk to safety and wellbeing classifications matched those in the eligible population.

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

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

We examined 20 out-of-court disposals. The sample size was set to achieve a confidence level of 80 per cent (with a margin of error of 5), and we ensured that the ratios for gender, sentence or disposal type, risk of serious harm, and risk to safety and wellbeing classifications matched those in the eligible population.

### **Ratings**

Details of our standards and ratings are available on our website:

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



## Annex 2 - Inspection results

### 1. Organisational delivery

Standards and key questions	Rating
<p><b>1.1. Governance and leadership</b></p> <p>The governance and leadership of the YOT supports and promotes the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children and young people.</p> <p>1.1.1. Is there a clear local vision and strategy for the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children and young people?</p> <p>1.1.2. Do the partnership arrangements actively support effective service delivery?</p> <p>1.1.3. Does the leadership of the YOT support effective service delivery?</p>	<b>Good</b>
<p><b>1.2. Staff</b></p> <p>Staff within the YOT are empowered to deliver a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children and young people.</p> <p>1.2.1. Do staffing and workload levels support the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children and young people?</p> <p>1.2.2. Do the skills of YOT staff support the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children and young people?</p> <p>1.2.3. Does the oversight of work support high-quality delivery and professional development?</p> <p>1.2.4. Are arrangements for learning and development comprehensive and responsive?</p>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
<p><b>1.3. Partnerships and services</b></p> <p>A comprehensive range of high-quality services is in place, enabling personalised and responsive provision for all children and young people.</p> <p>1.3.1. Is there a sufficiently comprehensive and up-to-date analysis of the profile of children and young people, to ensure that the YOT can deliver well-targeted services?</p>	<b>Good</b>

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

<b>1.4. Information and facilities</b>	<b>Good</b>
Timely and relevant information is available and appropriate facilities are in place to support a high-quality, personalised and responsive approach for all children and young people.	
1.4.1. Are the necessary policies and guidance in place to enable staff to deliver a quality service, meeting the needs of all children and young people?	
1.4.2. Does the YOT's delivery environment(s) meet the needs of all children and young people and enable staff to deliver a quality service?	
1.4.3. Do the information and communication technology (ICT) systems enable staff to deliver a quality service, meeting the needs of all children and young people?	
1.4.4. Is analysis, evidence and learning used effectively to drive improvement?	

## 2. Court disposals

Standards and key questions	Rating and % yes
<b>2.1. Assessment</b>	<b>Good</b>
Assessment is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child or young person and their parents/carers.	
2.1.1. Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child or young person's desistance?	77%
2.1.2. Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child or young person safe?	70%
2.1.3. Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	70%

<b>2.2. Planning</b>		<b>Requires improvement</b>
Planning is well-informed, holistic and personalised, actively involving the child or young person and their parents/carers.		
2.2.1.	Does planning focus sufficiently on supporting the child or young person's desistance?	83%
2.2.2.	Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child or young person safe?	68%
2.2.3.	Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	61%
<b>2.3. Implementation and delivery</b>		<b>Good</b>
High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging and assisting the child or young person.		
2.3.1.	Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the child or young person's desistance?	87%
2.3.2.	Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of the child or young person?	75%
2.3.3.	Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?	65%
<b>2.4. Reviewing</b>		<b>Good*</b>
Reviewing of progress is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child or young person and their parents/carers.		
2.4.1.	Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the child or young person's desistance?	87%
2.4.2.	Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child or young person safe?	67%
2.4.3.	Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	61%*

*\* Limited professional discretion was exercised with key question 2.4.3, resulting in this overall standard being rated 'Good'.*

### 3. Out-of-court disposals

Standards and key questions		Rating and % yes
<b>3.1. Assessment</b>		<b>Inadequate</b>
Assessment is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child or young person and their parents/carers.		
3.1.1.	Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child or young person's desistance?	70%
3.1.2.	Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child or young person safe?	45%
3.1.3.	Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	70%
<b>3.2. Planning</b>		<b>Requires improvement</b>
Planning is well-informed, holistic and personalised, actively involving the child or young person and their parents/carers.		
3.2.1.	Does planning focus sufficiently on supporting the child or young person's desistance?	70%
3.2.2.	Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child or young person safe?	56%
3.2.3.	Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	60%
<b>3.3. Implementation and delivery</b>		<b>Requires improvement</b>
High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging and assisting the child or young person.		
3.3.1.	Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the child or young person's desistance?	75%
3.3.2.	Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of the child or young person?	56%
3.3.3.	Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?	60%

<b>3.4. Joint working</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
Joint working with the police supports the delivery of high-quality, personalised and coordinated services.	
3.4.1. Are the YOT's recommendations sufficiently well-informed, analytical and personalised to the child or young person, supporting joint decision-making?	85%
3.4.2. Does the YOT work effectively with the police in implementing the out-of-court disposal?	90%

## Annex 3 - Glossary

<b>AssetPlus Asset+</b>	Assessment and planning framework tool developed by the Youth Justice Board for work with children and young people who have offended, or are at risk of offending, that reflects current research and understanding of what works with children.
<b>Court disposals</b>	The sentenced imposed by the court. Examples of youth court disposals are referral orders, youth rehabilitation orders and detention and training orders (explained below).
<b>CP</b>	Child protection: work to make sure that that all reasonable action has been taken to keep to a minimum the risk of a child or young person experiencing significant harm.
<b>CSE and CE</b>	<p>Child sexual exploitation is a type of child abuse, occurring when a child or young person is encouraged, forced and manipulated to take part in sexual activity for something in return, for example presents, drugs, alcohol or emotional attention.</p> <p>Criminal exploitation occurs when children and young people are exploited, forced or coerced into committing crimes.</p>
<b>Curfew</b>	Restrictive intervention requiring a child or young person to remain at an agreed address during a pre-determined period. The curfew may be monitored electronically (electronic tag) or by the police (doorstep curfew).
<b>Desistance</b>	The cessation of offending or other antisocial behaviour.
<b>Enforcement</b>	Action taken by a case manager in response to a child or young person's failure to comply with the actions specified as part of a community sentence or licence. Enforcement can be punitive or motivational.
<b>ETE</b>	Education, training and employment: work to improve learning, and to increase future employment prospects.
<b>FTE</b>	First-time entrants: a child or young person who receives a statutory criminal justice outcome (youth caution, youth conditional caution or conviction) for the first time.
<b>HMIP</b>	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation.
<b>HMPPS</b>	Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service: a government department responsible for carrying out sentences given by the courts, in custody and the community.
<b>LA</b>	Local Authority: YOTs are often a team within a specific local authority.
<b>Learning style</b>	A theory that individuals have a preferential way to absorb, process, comprehend and retain information. It can include, for example, solitary or group learning, discussion or practical teaching styles.

<b>MAPPA</b>	Multi-agency public protection arrangements: where probation, police, prison and other agencies work together locally to manage offenders who pose the highest risk of harm to others. Level 1 is single agency management where the risks posed by the offender can be managed by the agency responsible for the supervision or case management of the offender. Levels 2 and 3 require active multi-agency management.
<b>NEET</b>	Children or young people not in any form of full or part-time education, training or employment.
<b>Personalised</b>	A personalised approach is one in which services are tailored to meet the needs of individuals, giving people as much choice and control as possible over the support they receive. We use this term to include diversity factors.
<b>Protected characteristics</b>	Defined by the Equality Act 2010 as age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity.
<b>Risk of Serious Harm</b>	Risk of Serious Harm (ROSH) is a term used in AssetPlus. All cases are classified as presenting either a low/medium/high/very high risk of serious harm to others. HMI Probation uses this term when referring to the classification system, but uses the broader term "risk of harm" when referring to the analysis to determine the classification level. This helps to clarify the distinction between the probability of an event occurring and the impact/severity of the event. "Risk of serious harm" only incorporates "serious" impact, whereas using "risk of harm" enables the necessary attention to be given to those young offenders for whom lower impact/severity harmful behaviour is probable.
<b>Safeguarding</b>	A wider term than child protection that involves promoting a child or young person's health and development, and ensuring that their overall welfare needs are met.
<b>Safety and wellbeing</b>	AssetPlus replaced the assessment of vulnerability with a holistic outlook of a child or young person's safety and wellbeing concerns. This assessment is defined as "those outcomes where the young person's safety and wellbeing may be compromised through their own behaviour, personal circumstances or because of the acts/omissions of others" ( <i>AssetPlus Guidance</i> , 2016).
<b>YC</b>	Youth caution: a caution accepted by a child or young person following admission to an offence where it is not considered to be in the public interest to prosecute the offender.
<b>YCC</b>	Youth conditional caution: as for a youth caution, but with conditions attached that the child or young person is required to comply with for up to three months. Non-compliance may result in prosecution for the original offence.

<b>YOT/YOS</b>	Youth offending team is the term used in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to describe a multi-agency team that aims to reduce youth offending. YOTs are known locally by many titles, such as youth justice service (YJS), youth offending service (YOS) and other generic titles that may illustrate their wider role in the local area in delivering services for children and young people.
<b>YOT management board</b>	The YOT management board holds the YOT to account to ensure it achieves the primary aim of preventing offending by children and young people.
<b>YJB</b>	Youth Justice Board: government body responsible for monitoring and advising ministers on the effectiveness of the youth justice system. Provider of grants and guidance to the youth offending teams.





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