

# CHILDREN AND LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY PANEL

<b>DATE</b>	17/11/2022
<b>REPORT OF</b>	Janice Spencer, Director of Childrens Services
<b>SUBJECT</b>	NEL Youth Justice Services HMIP inspection
<b>STATUS</b>	Open

## CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS

The recommendations within this report contribute to the strategic priorities of the Council to promote a Stronger Economy and Stronger Communities and is directly linked to the Outcomes Framework namely that people in North East Lincolnshire:

- **Feel Safe and are Safe** – Whilst the ethos of the NEL Youth Justice Services follows the principles of a child first, non-punitive, whole family approach they also ensure that this is equally balanced with Community safety and the wishes of the victim in relation to all criminal sanction decisions.
- **Enjoy good health & well-being** – All children within NEL Youth Justice Services are thoroughly risk assessed to ensure that their individual health and social needs are met. There is currently a very heavy focus on mental health, substance misuse and that of speech and language needs of our young people in a bid to reduce desistance (from offending in the first place)
- **Benefit from Sustainable Communities** – NEL Youth Justice Services have dedicated budget and resources to ensure that all children in our services have a positive learning experience and attain a positive destination. This shows joint collaborative working with colleagues in Skills and SEND and Inclusion services.
- **Enjoy and benefit from a strong economy** – Children are our future parents and employees, and it is the aim of NEL Youth Justice Services to assist in ensuring that future earning and learning is not hindered by simple mistakes made in their journey to adult hood. All cases are thoroughly triaged, risk assessed and tailored interventions delivered to reduce their potential future recidivism ( re offending)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2018 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) announced that over the next 4 years every Youth Offending Service (YOS) in England and Wales will receive a full inspection on the 3 domains within the service, these being 1) Governance and leadership of YOS, including the Youth partnership board (a statutory function within the Crime and Disorder Act 1998) 2) Court Disposals 3) Out of court disposals.

In May 2022 HMIP inspected North East Lincolnshire Youth Offending Service.

The report in Appendix A provides Scrutiny Panel with oversight of the full HMIP report

## MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

For Childrens and Life Long Learning Scrutiny Panel to be made aware of the outcome of NEL Youth Justice Services HMIP inspection and note the improvement plan.

## **1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES**

In May 2022 HMIP inspected North East Lincolnshire Youth Offending Service (YOS), now known as Youth Justice Service (YJS). The inspection consisted of 5 days on site where a range of partners and practitioners were interviewed as part of the inspection framework. North East Lincolnshire was rated as: 'Good' with elements of 'Outstanding'.

This rating has been determined by inspecting the Youth Justice Services in three areas of its work, referred to as 'domains as mentioned in the executive summary above. HMIP inspected against 12 core 'standards' which are detailed within the overall rating graph, within the full report, in Appendix A. 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.

The HMIP inspection has identified 7 operational recommendations and 1 strategic board recommendation, all included in the full report included in Appendix A.

The 8 recommendations have been discussed at the NEL Youth Partnership Board and developed into an improvement plan, detailing recommendations aligned to areas of further development, all included in the improvement plan in Appendix B.

## **2. RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

There are no risks to the detail within this report as the recommendations are clearly set by HMIP for service delivery improvement. All recommendations have been considered by the NEL Youth Partnership Board and developed within an improvement plan owned by board members and staff from within the Youth Offending Service to ensure both operational and strategic development. These are contained within Appendix B. This will be a standing agenda item on the quarterly board for quality monitoring.

## **3. REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS**

There are no reputational risks to the Authority as the HMIP result is very positive. NELC communications team have been provided with all the inspection material and are developing case studies which will be developed into a media release.

## **4. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

There are no financial considerations within this report as all recommendations will be further developed by current board members and staff within the Youth Justice establishment. This predominantly covered by the Youth Justice Board crime grant and Office of the Police and Crime Commissioners youth justice grant.

## **5. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS**

North East Lincolnshire (NEL) Youth Justice Services (YJS) follow the principles set out by the Youth Justice Board (YJB) as having a “Child first “and whole family approach at all times. We always prioritise the best interest of the child, build upon their individual strengths, encourage participation, and always promote a childhood being removed from the justice system by using prevention, diversion, and minimal intervention.

The ambition of our YJS is to continually build and develop a trauma informed workforce that fully understands the story behind the child thus ensuring their individual journey ends in a positive destination.

The principle ‘Child First’ guides the work of the Youth Justice Board and underpins our work and values in North Lincolnshire. We recognise that children in the justice system often have multiple and complex needs. Where possible, we seek to divert children from the justice system entirely and address these needs.

For those who do offend, our core focus continues to be rehabilitation, tackling underlying causes of youth offending, and delivering a system that gives children the support they need to break the cycle of offending and build productive and fulfilling lives. ‘Child First’ is now an evidenced based approach to delivering youth justice and North East Lincolnshire will continue to adopt and embed this approach across the partnership in line with our One Family Approach model.

We will.

- Prioritise the best interests of children.
- Build on children’s individual strengths and capabilities as a means of developing a pro-social identity for sustainable desistance from crime.
- Encourage children’s active participation, engagement, and wider social exclusion.
- Promote a childhood removed from the Justice System, using prevention, diversion, and minimal intervention.

## **6. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no climate change or environmental issues.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Youth Justice Services in North East Lincolnshire are grant funded by the Youth Justice Board and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. This result of ‘Good’ with elements of ‘Outstanding’ will provide governmental departments with confidence of NEL services to children at risk of or within the criminal justice system

**8. MONITORING COMMENTS**

In the opinion of the author, this report does not contain recommended changes to policy or resources (people, finance or physical assets). As a result, no monitoring comments have been sought from the Council's Monitoring Officer (Chief Legal Officer), Section 151 Officer (Director of Finance) or Strategic Workforce Lead.

**9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

HMIP full inspection report, Appendix A.

HMIP improvement plan, Appendix B.

**10. CONTACT OFFICER(S)**

Paul Caswell, Head of Young and Safe and statutory Youth Justice Services

**JANICE SPENCER - DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES.**



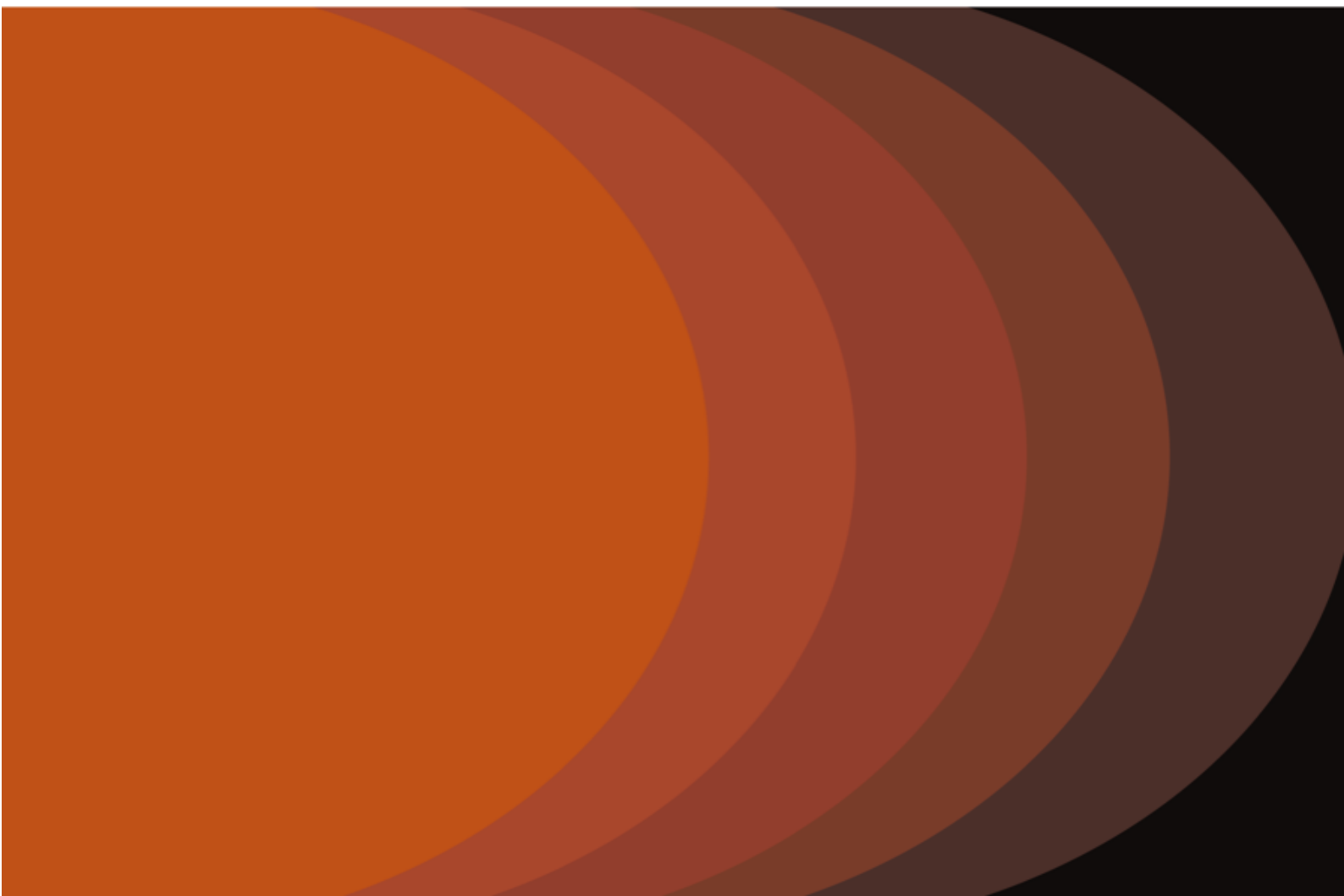
Her Majesty's  
Inspectorate of  
Probation

An inspection of youth offending services in

# **North East Lincolnshire**

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HM Inspectorate of Probation, September 2022



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## Acknowledgement

This inspection was led by HM Inspector Rebecca Howard, 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

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

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## Foreword

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This inspection is part of our programme of youth offending service (YOS) inspections. We have inspected and rated North East Lincolnshire YOS 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, North East Lincolnshire YOS was rated as 'Good'. We also inspected the quality of resettlement policy and provision, which was separately rated as 'Requires improvement'.

We last inspected North East Lincolnshire in 2014, when we undertook a short quality screening. The service has undergone significant changes since then, including relocating out-of-court disposal provision to the early help service. Considerable work has been completed to improve the partnership board, including ensuring partnership representation is of the appropriate seniority with consistent attendance by members.

The staff and volunteers are an asset to the service. They are motivated and dedicated to meeting the needs of those they work with. The service has invested in staff through training and development opportunities, and they are an experienced and knowledgeable team.

Children have access to a wide range of interventions and services, which are tailored to their needs. Recognising that county lines and exploitation are risks to the children, the partnership has created innovative and co-produced campaigns to tackle these issues. There are established multi-agency pathways for children involved in harmful sexual behaviour or substance misuse, or who require mental health provision. However, some relationships and pathways need further development to ensure that YOS children are prioritised.

The service is committed to improvement. It has internal processes to review practice robustly, and local agreements with other youth justice services to provide independent scrutiny. Some policies require more detail and clarity, although in practice the delivery model is working well. Assessments in post-court cases were a particular strength, although work to keep children safe requires further development, particularly in ensuring practitioners are confident in escalating concerns when appropriate responses from other services are lacking or delayed.

We found good-quality work across out-of-court disposals, with provision and policy, assessment, and planning rated as outstanding. We saw a service which offered a child-first approach, tailored to meeting children's needs effectively.

The service has adopted measures to monitor and address disproportionality in terms of ethnicity. We also found that practitioners recognised and considered diversity in both post-court and out-of-court disposals. However, there needs to be a sharper focus on all protected characteristics and the service should set out how it intends to address this in its plans and policies.




**Justin Russell**  
HM Chief Inspector of Probation

## Ratings

**North East Lincolnshire Youth Offending Service** Score **27/36**  
Fieldwork took place in May 2022

**Overall rating** Good 





### 1. Organisational delivery

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


### 2. Court disposals

2.1	Assessment	Outstanding	
2.2	Planning	Good	
2.3	Implementation and delivery	Requires improvement	
2.4	Reviewing	Good	

### 3. Out-of-court disposals

3.1	Assessment	Outstanding	
3.2	Planning	Outstanding	
3.3	Implementation and delivery	Good	
3.4	Out-of-court disposal policy and provision	Outstanding	

### 4. Resettlement

4.1	Resettlement policy and provision	Requires improvement	
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## Executive summary

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Overall, North East Lincolnshire Youth Offending Service (YOS) is rated as: 'Good'. This rating has been determined by inspecting the YOS in three areas of its 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.<sup>1</sup> Published scoring rules generate the overall YOS rating.<sup>2</sup> 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

The partnership board is committed to the vision and ethos of a child-first approach and focused upon successful prevention and diversion. Over the last three years, the service has made considerable efforts to develop the board and ensure that it is operating effectively. Board members understand their role, are of sufficient seniority, and consistently attend meetings. There is a thorough induction process for new members. Members have links to other locality boards, where they raise the profile of the service and advocate for the service, resolving blockages and gaps at board level to improve service delivery.

The board provides and receives a wealth of data, but it needs to do more in terms of in-depth analysis. This would enable the service to discuss and understand trends, such as the high proportion of girls receiving out-of-court disposals. In addition, routine feedback from children, parents, carers, and victims needs to be shared with the board and considered by the service to inform the YOS's strategic direction. In future planning, the service must make explicit how it will meet all diversity needs.

The team are stable, experienced, and qualified to carry out their roles. There is a comprehensive training offer, and this is enhanced by an annual skills audit where potential gaps in knowledge are identified and addressed. Staff have been given opportunities to develop specialisms and achieve qualifications and promotions. The service analyses data to understand capacity and workloads, enabling it to respond promptly to pressure points.

Staff receive frequent and high-quality supervision. There are quality assurance processes in place to support effective service delivery that meets children's needs. Staff and volunteers feel supported and valued by the service, and their hard work is acknowledged and praised. Both managers and staff are dedicated and motivated to achieve the best outcomes for children, families, and victims.

The service has developed its resources, giving children access to personalised interventions. For example, some children can gain AQA (Assessment and

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<sup>1</sup> HM Inspectorate of Probation's standards can be found here:

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

<sup>2</sup> 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'.

Qualifications Alliance) accredited certificates for work they have completed. Partnership arrangements give children access to out-of-hours services within the community, and specialist services are available for those at risk of exploitation and county lines. There are established multi-agency pathways for children involved in harmful sexual behaviour or substance misuse, or who require mental health provision. Overall, relationships and pathways are embedded, but several require further development to ensure that YOS children are prioritised. Nonetheless, the partnership is aware of gaps, and members continue to work together to address areas of need.

Policies, protocols, and guidance have been developed and are reviewed regularly. While they provide essential information, they do not fully reflect the high standard of provision that is delivered in practice. In addition, policies that cover both youth justice and early help need to outline the distinctions in practice, process, and language between the services to support practitioners' and partners' understanding of the differing service roles.

Children and staff have access to safe and child-friendly environments. The central location allows easy access. The youth justice service has recently refurbished its premises with input from the children to create friendly spaces. The ICT systems work well, and staff can access them remotely or on site. Information-sharing agreements with key partners are in place. During the pandemic, the service bought tablets for children so that they could maintain contact with youth justice, early help, and other professionals.

The service is committed to improvement and has internal processes for reviewing and evaluation by the partnership board and senior managers. It has agreements with neighbouring youth justice services for independent review of practice. Any areas that require development are noted and action plans are created.

Our key findings are:

- The partnership board and staff recognise and promote the YOS's 'child first' vision. They are dedicated to diverting children from youth justice services and avoiding bringing them into the criminal justice system.
- Attendance at the board is consistent, and partners are of appropriate seniority and understand their roles.
- Members advocate for the YOS within their own services. When YOS staff escalate concerns to the board, members resolve these to improve service delivery.
- The service promotes a culture of openness and honesty. It provides staff with a safe forum for candid feedback.
- The head of service and senior managers are visible and approachable. Staff have confidence in the board and management team.
- The service has effective mechanisms for monitoring capacity. Both staff and volunteers feel their workload is manageable.
- Supervision of staff and management oversight are effective. In the majority of cases, the frequency and quality of supervision supported staff to meet the needs of children.
- The service promotes a culture of learning and continuous development. Staff can complete formal qualifications and develop specialisms.

- Staff and volunteers are motivated and passionate. They feel valued by the service and receive praise and acknowledgement for their work.
- Children have access to a wide range of services and interventions that are tailored to meet their needs. This includes case formulation for every child working with the service.
- There are effective arrangements for children at risk of exploitation, including intervention, wraparound services, and multi-agency oversight.
- The relationship with police is strong. There is a commitment from both services to the child-first and diversion ethos.
- Children are seen in safe and child-friendly environments. These are easy to access and close to local amenities.
- The service is proactive in reviewing its practice and provision to drive improvement. It has internal processes to review its own practice and agreements with other youth justice services for additional scrutiny.

But:

- There needs to be a formal mechanism for routinely gathering, collating, and analysing the views of victims, children, parents, and carers.
- The board needs to develop a sharper focus on all areas of diversity, including every protected characteristic.
- The board needs to support the service to identify and scrutinise data trends in order to deliver services effectively.
- Links to and from the partnership board need strengthening so that strategic activity is fully understood.
- The appraisal process needs to be enhanced so that it is timely and has stronger links to the skills audit and service objectives.
- The service needs to analyse its data in more depth to understand the cohort of children and explore any trends, such as the high proportion of girls receiving out-of-court disposals.
- Relationships between the service and children's social care need to be strengthened operationally to improve communication and coordinated working.
- There needs to be direct access to speech and language provision.
- There needs to be clearer and established pathways to raise concerns about education decision-making and provision for YOS children.
- Some policies and protocols require review to ensure that they are tailored to the service, reflect the high standard of practice being delivered, and clearly map out provisions for both youth justice and early help.

### **Court disposals**

We took a detailed look at five community sentences and two custodial sentences managed by the YOS. We also conducted seven 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, to keep the child safe, and to keep other people safe.

Assessment was identified as a particular strength. We found detailed analysis that provided an in-depth understanding of the child in terms of desistance, safety, and risk to others. Planning effectively balanced areas of strength and areas of concern. However, in some cases there needed to be quicker escalation to senior managers and other services when YOS staff did not receive the information from children's social care that they needed to support planning.

Practitioners were innovative in their delivery of work, ensuring that sessions were interactive and met the child's needs. However, delivery to keep the child safe required improvement. In some cases, responses to changes in risk needed to be quicker, with better coordination with partners.

The child, parents, and carers were meaningfully involved in assessing, planning, delivery, and reviewing. This allowed the child to be at the centre of the process and ensured that it was collaborative and co-produced. Staff paid attention to the children's diversity needs, which was a strength across all areas. They recognised children's additional needs and tailored work accordingly.

Our key findings about court disposals are as follows:

- Practitioners recognised and understood diversity needs. They considered these needs in assessing, planning, delivery, and reviewing.
- The child and their parents or carers were meaningfully consulted and involved throughout the whole process.
- Practitioners produced comprehensive assessments, which provided a detailed insight into desistance, the child's safety, and risks to others.
- Planning was sequenced and proportionate to the disposal. There was an effective balance of strengths and areas of concern.
- Practitioners were innovative and creative in delivering work, ensuring that the sessions were interactive and accessible.
- Work to keep others safe was coordinated with that of other services.
- Reviewing was a continual process, involving other professionals. Practitioners made adjustments to support desistance, building on strengths, and addressing areas of concern.

But:

- Practitioners need to focus more on victims' wishes in assessments and ensure that, where applicable, sufficient attention is paid to actual and potential victims.
- In some cases, there needed to be quicker escalation of concerns to senior managers so that these could be raised with the appropriate service.
- Practitioners need to use all information and intelligence when carrying out reviews.

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

We inspected 12 cases that had received an out-of-court disposal. These consisted of two youth conditional cautions and 10 'outcome 22'<sup>3</sup> disposals. We interviewed the 12 case managers.

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, to keep the child safe and 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.

Assessment in out-of-court disposals was also a considerable strength. Practitioners used a wide range of sources, and involved the child and their parents or carers meaningfully. Practitioners were consistently able to analyse strengths, protective factors, and areas of concern, providing a balanced assessment of the child.

Planning was proportionate and sequenced effectively. Practitioners were skilled at identifying appropriate interventions to support desistance and manage risks to and from the child. They recognised the children's diversity needs and developed personalised plans involving children and their parents or carers. Contingency planning required more detail and clarity on how to respond if risks changed.

Implementation of work to support desistance and manage risks to others was sufficient in every case, but work to support the child's safety was adequate in only nine of the 12 cases. Practitioners communicated regularly with children and their families and delivered personalised sessions. We found that practitioners were skilled at developing and maintaining positive relationships with children and delivered tailored sessions to meet their needs. Practitioners prioritised the protection of victims and put measures in place to maximise safety. However, in some cases, they needed to flag concerns with children's social care more quickly and escalate these to senior managers if they did not receive an appropriate response.

Out-of-court disposal provision now sits within the early help service. This was a deliberate decision, which aims to separate out-of-court provision from youth justice to avoid children being labelled as criminals. There is a detailed policy promoting a child-first and diversion approach. Partners endorse the commitment to diversion, and this is the default position for all offences involving children.

Arrangements are in place to ensure that children eligible for diversion receive prompt contact, assessment, decision-making, and intervention. The service has developed additional measures to make sure children do not miss the opportunity for diversion, including being eligible when they make 'no comment' or no admission of guilt in police interviews.

The service is proactive in reviewing and analysing out-of-court disposal provision and data, internally and through scrutiny panels. It continually tracks and analyses reoffending rates and carries out audits to review the quality of work.

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<sup>3</sup> Outcome 22 is the code recorded by the police when it is not in the public interest to take further action in relation to a crime and the child has agreed to engage with a diversionary intervention or activity, it means that children can get support and intervention without receiving a criminal sanction.

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

- Practitioners recognised, assessed, and planned for children’s diversity needs. They tailored interventions and delivered sessions to support engagement and understanding.
- Practitioners were able to identify, assess, plan, and respond to risks to and from the child.
- There is a comprehensive out-of-court disposal policy in place and partners are committed to prioritising diversion and a child-first ethos.
- Children who give ‘no comment’ and no admission of guilt in police interviews are still eligible for diversion.
- Outcome 22 is an option for diversion, enabling the child and their family to receive support and intervention without a formal criminal sanction.
- Effective escalation processes are in place.
- There are arrangements to assess children, make decisions on disposal, and start interventions promptly.
- Children who receive an out-of-court disposal have access to the same pathways and services as those who work with the youth justice service. They complete a workbook which builds on strengths and allows the child’s voice to be central.
- The service regularly reviews and evaluates its provision. It carries out internal audits and analysis of data, and is reviewed through scrutiny panels.

But:

- Contingency planning needs to be more detailed, and practitioners need to identify actions to promote the child’s safety, and that of others, if risks change.
- The policy needs to provide more clarity on how long diversions cases remain open and ensure practitioners are aware of this.
- In some cases, there needs to be quicker escalation of concerns to senior managers, to ensure they are raised and addressed with the appropriate services.

## **Resettlement**

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

The resettlement guidance was developed in January 2022 and is based on theory and research into constructive resettlement. It identifies the pathways for resettlement but does not fully articulate how the partnership will address this nuanced area of youth justice. The guidance does not clarify lines of accountability of other partners or how to escalate concerns adequately. There is a clear commitment to a tailored, strengths-based, and child-first approach, but diversity and disproportionality require more focus. The guidance needs to be more explicit about how to manage risks to and from the child in custody, and about how to meet victims’ needs.

Practitioners and partners were aware of the resettlement policy but were not fully clear about accessing all pathways necessary to meet resettlement needs. Accommodation and education are challenging areas for resettlement, and this was reflected in the cases we reviewed. Further work is needed to embed resettlement pathways with other services, to ensure multi-agency responsibility and accountability are fully understood by the partners and practitioners.

Inspectors found that resettlement activity starts early. In both of the cases inspected, the young person's healthcare needs had been met. Practitioners took sufficient measures to manage risks to and from the young person. In the case where the young person had been released, victims had been consulted and considered.

Given the resettlement policy and protocol have only recently been put in place, the service has not yet had opportunity to evaluate them. There are plans to discuss a resettlement case at the partnership board. However, evaluation and review require a formal plan whereby partners, the secure estate, practitioners, and children and their parents or carers are consulted.

Our key findings about resettlement work are as follows:

- In the cases we reviewed, the practitioners understood the complex needs of the children and advocated for these to be met.
- Practitioners maintained good contact with the children and their families, and other professionals, while the children were in custody.
- The service has produced a leaflet to help children and their parents or carers to understand custody and resettlement. This is visually appealing and accessible.

But:

- The resettlement policy requires review and co-production with partners to ensure that the pathways to successful resettlement are identified and established, and clear lines of accountability understood.
- The service needs to embed further its resettlement processes and training for staff and partners.
- The service should focus more on diversity needs and how to overcome structural barriers.
- Risk management processes need to reflect the differing risks to and from children in custody and set out the specific processes required to address these.
- Review and evaluation processes for individual cases and resettlement provision need to be identified and implemented.

## Recommendations

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

### **The North East Lincolnshire Youth Offending Service should:**

1. develop a formal mechanism for gathering, collating, and analysing the views of victims, children, and parents or carers to inform service delivery
2. review its response to diversity, ensuring that it considers all protected characteristics; plans and policies need to provide explicit detail of how the service intends to address diversity
3. develop stronger links with education placements so that it can be involved in decisions about education for its children and have clearer escalation routes to challenge education packages
4. continue to strengthen operational relationships with children's social care to ensure that provision to keep children safe is promoted
5. support staff and managers so that they are more confident in knowing when to escalate concerns to partner services
6. develop data analysis processes to enable it to scrutinise and explore trends in data and desistance factors
7. review resettlement policy and provision to ensure that key partners are involved in and accountable for pathways to successful resettlement.

### **The Partnership Board should:**

8. continue to support the service and advocate for children in contact with youth justice and early help to have access to direct speech, language, and communication therapy.



## Background

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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 Probation Service, and local health services.<sup>4</sup> Most YOTs are based within local authorities, although this can vary.

YOT work is governed and shaped by a range of legislation and guidance specific to the youth justice sector (such as the National Standards for Youth Justice) or else applicable across the criminal justice sector (for example, Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements 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.

North East Lincolnshire is a unitary authority area in the county of Lincolnshire in England. It is located on the east coast and borders the unitary authority of North Lincolnshire and the non-metropolitan county of Lincolnshire. The three areas make up the ceremonial county. North East Lincolnshire is part of the Yorkshire and Humber region. The borough includes the towns of Immingham, Cleethorpes, and Grimsby. The population is estimated at 159,364 (2020), with 9.7 per cent (15,475) identified as aged between 10 and 17. Three per cent of children aged 10 to 17 are of black, Asian, and minority ethnic heritage. At the time of inspection there were no children from this heritage on the YOS caseload. North East Lincolnshire is one of several youth justice services covered by Humberside police. The YOS has a strong, longstanding relationship with the police.

In the last four years, the service has undergone a restructure. After the 0 to 19 commissioning review, a decision was taken to move the out-of-court disposal team to the prevention and early help part of the council. The main aim is that children and families who access out-of-court disposal provision will not be linked to youth justice, associated with the YOS or perceived as having a criminal identity. The statutory YOS remains within the young and safe service, alongside targeted youth services, outdoor learning, including the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, and the anti-social behaviour (ASB) team. Young and safe is situated in SAFER NEL with other organisational statutory functions, including the community safety partnership and the safeguarding children partnership.

All youth justice services, including out-of-court disposals, sit under the director of children's services. In October 2021, North East Lincolnshire children's social care (CSC) was judged 'Inadequate' following an Ofsted inspection. This was a decline from its inspection in 2017, where it had been rated as 'Good'. NE Lincolnshire CSC is reviewing its provision and is beginning to improve. Within the youth justice and out-of-court disposal caseload, 16 per cent of children were cared for by the local authority, seven per cent had a child protection plan, and 29 per cent had a child in need plan.

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<sup>4</sup> The *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* set out the arrangements for local YOTs and partnership working.

The pandemic had a significant impact on the YOS, but effective measures ensured that service delivery continued during the restrictions. Children with the highest need and risk were prioritised for direct contact. The service used virtual means of communication, purchasing a large number of tablets for children to maintain contact. Reparation and referral order panels mostly continued throughout the pandemic. Covid-19 restrictions have now largely been lifted, with the service returning to relative normality. Children and families are being contacted in person, and previous backlogs in the youth court have been addressed.

The area is affected by county lines and exploitation. The partnership has recognised this and has made specialist and wraparound intervention available for children. It has co-produced national campaigns with children to raise awareness of these areas and provide relatable intervention packages. The proportion of children experiencing mental health difficulties is high. Additionally, a high proportion of school-age children supervised by the YOS are not in full-time mainstream education. Although numbers can fluctuate, a high proportion of girls are currently working with early help for out-of-court disposal provision. However, there are significantly fewer girls in post-court cases.

## Contextual facts

### Population information<sup>5</sup>

<b>126</b>	First-time entrant rate per 100,000 in North East Lincolnshire <sup>6</sup>
154	First-time entrant rate per 100,000 in England and Wales
<b>38.8%</b>	Reoffending rate in North East Lincolnshire <sup>7</sup>
33.6%	Reoffending rate in England and Wales

<b>159,364</b>	Total population in North East Lincolnshire
15,475	Total youth population (10–17 years) in North East Lincolnshire

### Caseload information<sup>8</sup>

Age	10–14 years	15–17 years
North East Lincolnshire YOS	<b>21%</b>	<b>79%</b>
National average	18%	82%

Race/ethnicity <sup>9</sup>	White	Black and minority ethnic
North East Lincolnshire YOS	<b>100%</b>	<b>0%</b>
Youth population (10–17 years) in North East Lincolnshire	97%	3%

Gender	Male	Female
North East Lincolnshire YOS out-of-court disposals	<b>69%</b>	<b>31%</b>
North East Lincolnshire YOS post court cases	<b>85%</b>	<b>15%</b>
North East Lincolnshire YOS out-of-court and post-court combined	<b>76%</b>	<b>24%</b>
National average	86%	13%

<sup>5</sup> Office for National Statistics. (2021). *UK population estimates, mid-2020*.

<sup>6</sup> Youth Justice Board. (2022). *First-time entrants, October to September 2021*.

<sup>7</sup> Ministry of Justice. (2022). *Proven reoffending statistics, July to June 2020*.

<sup>8</sup> Youth Justice Board. (2022). *Youth justice annual statistics: 2020 to 2021*.

<sup>9</sup> Data supplied by the YOS.

### Additional caseload data<sup>10</sup>

<b>18</b>	Court disposals
<b>38</b>	Out-of-court disposals

### Of the 18 court disposals:

<b>15</b>	Total current caseload: community sentences
<b>3</b>	Total current caseload in custody
<b>0</b>	Total current caseload on licence

### Of the 32 out-of-court disposals:

<b>0</b>	Total current caseload: youth caution
<b>6</b>	Total current caseload: youth conditional caution
<b>0</b>	Total current caseload: community resolution
<b>26</b>	Total current caseload: outcome 22

### Education and child protection status of caseload:

<b>16%</b>	Proportion of current caseload 'Looked After Children' resident in the YOS area
<b>0%</b>	Proportion of current caseload 'Looked After Children' placed outside the YOS area
<b>7%</b>	Percentage of current caseload with child protection plan
<b>29%</b>	Percentage of current caseload with child in need plan
<b>27%</b>	Percentage of current caseload aged 16 and under in full-time school
<b>45%</b>	Percentage of children aged 16 and under in a pupil referral unit, alternative education, or attending school part-time
<b>16%</b>	Percentage of current caseload aged 17+ not in education, training or employment

### For children subject to court disposals (including resettlement cases):

Offence types <sup>11</sup>	%
Violence against the person	33%
Burglary	11%
Robbery	22%
Other indictable offences	33%

<sup>10</sup> Data supplied by the YOS, reflecting the caseload at the time of the inspection announcement.

<sup>11</sup> Data from the cases assessed during this inspection.

# 1. Organisational delivery

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The partnership board is committed to the vision and ethos of child first, prevention, and diversion with consistent attendance from members of the appropriate seniority. Its terms of reference have been refreshed and members understand their roles and responsibilities. The board needs to be given regular in-depth feedback from children, parents, carers, and victims to inform strategic direction, and the service's planning must be explicit about how it will meet all diversity needs.

Board members attend and have links to other local boards, which helps to raise the profile of the YOS. Board members advocate for the YOS and early help service, and there are many examples of gaps and blockages being escalated to the board and resolved. Board members provide and receive data that enables them to understand the needs of the service. However, the board needs to assist the service in recognising areas that require more in-depth analysis of the data. This would enable the service to discuss and understand trends, such as the high proportion of girls accessing out-of-court disposals.

Efforts have been made to increase the links between the partnership board and service, including board members attending service meetings and development days. However, awareness of board activities could be strengthened. The service has provided safe opportunities for staff to give their views on provision, including areas of strength and development. Staff have given candid feedback, which the service has started to address.

There is a stable workforce across both youth justice and early help. Staffing levels are sufficient and workloads manageable. The service analyses data on current capacity and workloads, which enables it to respond quickly if there are changes.

Staff receive frequent and effective supervision. There is a robust training offer for staff and volunteers. The service carries out a comprehensive skills audit each year, and uses this to identify and meet the development needs of staff. Several practitioners have become champions and developed specialisms. This has given them more responsibility and opportunities to support the wider partnership. Staff have been offered opportunities to gain formal qualifications, and there have been opportunities for internal promotion and secondments. Staff and volunteers are passionate and highly motivated. Exceptional work is recognised and acknowledged through feedback, supervision, and formal awards.

The service produces and receives a wealth of data from partners. This has been used to identify and focus resources effectively on children who are at risk of coming into the criminal justice system. However, to fully understand the cohort, there needs to be a more thorough interrogation of data on the children working with the service. The involvement of victims, children, parents, and carers on specific topics would provide more context and strengthen the service's awareness of need.

Relationships and arrangements with partners are established and embedded. Children have access to a wide range of interventions to build on desistance. The delivery of these is tailored to the individual children and is strengths based. Innovative strategies and services offer street-based interventions and out-of-hours provision, and target the most vulnerable children.

A range of policies, protocols, and guidance are in place, which are reviewed regularly. These provide essential detail but do not fully reflect the high standard of work that is delivered in practice, and more guidance for practitioners would be advantageous.

The youth justice and early help services have access to a safe environment in which to see children. Their offices are centrally located and close to public transport and other amenities. The ICT systems work well and enable staff to plan, deliver, and record their work in a timely way. There are information-sharing agreements with key partners.

The service is proactive in scrutinising practice and provision to drive improvement. Internal processes enable peer reviewing and evaluation by the partnership board and senior managers. There are local agreements with neighbouring services for independent review. Their feedback on areas for development is translated into action plans. Feedback from victims, children, and parents or carers needs further development to ensure that it is in-depth, collated, and routinely presented at strategic level.

### Strengths

- The partnership board and staff recognise and promote the YOS's 'child first' vision. They are dedicated to diverting children from youth justice services and avoiding bringing them into the criminal justice system.
- Attendance at the board is consistent, and partners are of appropriate seniority and understand their roles.
- Members advocate for the YJS within their own services. There are many examples of concerns escalated to board level being resolved, which has improved service delivery.
- The service promotes a culture of openness and honesty. It provides staff with a safe forum for candid feedback.
- The head of service and senior managers are visible and approachable. Staff have confidence in the board and management team.
- The service has effective mechanisms for monitoring capacity. Staff and volunteers feel their workload is manageable.
- Supervision of staff and management oversight are effective. The frequency and quality of supervision help staff to meet the needs of children.
- The service promotes a culture of learning and continuous development. Staff can complete formal qualifications and develop specialisms.
- Staff and volunteers are motivated and passionate. They feel valued by the service and receive praise and acknowledgement for their work.
- Children have access to a wide range of services and interventions that are tailored to meet their needs. This includes a case formulation for every child working with the service.
- There are effective arrangements for children at risk of exploitation, including intervention, wraparound services, and multi-agency oversight.
- The relationship with police is strong. There is a commitment from both services to the child-first and diversion ethos.

Children are seen in safe and child-friendly environments. These are easy to access and close to local amenities.

The service is proactive in reviewing its practice and provision to drive improvement. It has internal processes and agreements with other youth justice services for additional scrutiny.

### Areas for improvement

- There needs to be a formal mechanism for routinely gathering, collating, and analysing the views of victims, children, parents, and carers.
- The board needs to develop a sharper focus on all areas of diversity, including every protected characteristic.
- The board needs to support the service to identify and scrutinise data trends in order to deliver services effectively.
- Links to and from the partnership board need strengthening so that strategic activity is fully understood.
- The appraisal process needs to be enhanced so that it is timely and has stronger links to the skills audit and service objectives.
- The service needs to analyse its data in more depth to understand the cohort of children and explore any trends.
- Relationships between the service and children’s social care need to be strengthened operationally to improve communication and coordinated working.
- There needs to be direct access to speech and language provision.
- There needs to be clearer established pathways to raise concerns about educational placements and provision for YOS children.
- Some policies and protocols require review to ensure that they are tailored to the service, reflect the higher standard of practice being delivered, and map out provision for both youth justice and early help.

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.

Good

#### Key data

Total spend in previous financial year	£1,328,497
Total projected budget current for financial year	£1,262,942

In making a judgement about governance and leadership, we consider 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 youth partnership board provides strategic direction and oversight for the youth justice service. The board reports directly to the community safety partnership executive and informally to the safeguarding children partnership board. Following an independent review, the partnership board has been under development since 2019. It was recognised that membership was not at the appropriate seniority and attendance could be inconsistent. In addition, the early help service, which oversees out-of-court disposals, was not represented at the board.

Currently, board members are of sufficient seniority to represent their service and provide strategic oversight. The board now includes representation from the early help service. Several members have changed recently, but all have undertaken a thorough induction process. The board's terms of reference have been refreshed and are reviewed annually. Members must commit to at least 75 per cent attendance and send a deputy when they are not able to attend; this is being adhered to. The chair of the board is head of the probation delivery unit (PDU). He is a longstanding member and demonstrated a strong understanding of youth justice and early help. The chair has supported the development of the board, including securing appropriate representation from all partners.

There is a clear 'child first' vision, where diversion and prevention are key strands of the strategy. The board recognises and supports the vision and ethos of the service. As detailed in the terms of reference, board members understand their responsibilities in setting the strategic direction, providing challenge, and advocating for the service. Members have champion areas, which enables them to focus on their subject and promote this at board meetings.

The service seeks feedback from victims, children, parents, and carers on their experiences of youth justice and early help. However, there is no mechanism for routinely gathering, collating, and presenting their views at the board. Embedded processes that enable in-depth consultation, analysis, and evaluation with victims, children, parents, and carers would allow their voices to be considered by the service when it determines its strategic direction.

Disproportionality has been strategically explored in terms of ethnicity. Currently, children of black, Asian, and minority ethnic heritage are not over-represented in the service, but measures are in place for reporting this to the board. Nonetheless, the service needs to consider diversity, including all protected characteristics, in its future planning, and reflect this in its vision.

**Do the partnership arrangements actively support effective service delivery?**

Board members are well integrated into their own and other locality boards; this is enabling them to raise the profile of the service and the needs of the children. Members advocate for the service and have addressed concerns when these have been escalated. For instance, there were low rates of victims consenting to contact from the YOS in out-of-court disposal case. This was raised with police partners, who provided training to their staff and changed processes so that consent is consistently sought. Consent rates have increased from 57 per cent to 94 per cent.

We found evidence that the board uses data to help members understand the service's needs. For example, a joint protocol for children in custody was developed



to reduce the number kept overnight in police custody suites and to promote safeguarding. Partners continue to monitor this and report at board level. However, the board needs to support the service to identify and scrutinise data trends for effective service delivery. For example, it needs to provide more context about, and analysis of, the high percentage of children under 16 in alternative education provision.

Board members are informed about gaps and challenges; for instance, in-house speech and language provision is not currently available. The board has supported the service to secure training and upskill practitioners, with a view to accessing mainstream pathways. This will enable staff to identify, assess, and provide their own lower-level support for speech and language therapy and have a quicker and more direct route into specialist intervention. However, the board recognises that this is a short-term solution and members are working together to explore direct access to speech and language provision in the longer term.

### **Does the leadership of the YOT support effective service delivery?**

There are strong efforts to promote a culture of openness and constructive challenge. The service recently held several focus groups where staff were able to share their views on service strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This was completed in a safe and anonymous environment, enabling staff to be candid. Staff described the head of service and senior managers as visible and approachable. They reported positive working relationships with managers and that they are comfortable in raising any concerns. Most staff have confidence in the partnership board and feel that escalated concerns are discussed and addressed. For instance, they gave examples of cases where blockages had been resolved.

There is evidence of links to and from the board through attendance at team meetings and service delivery days, but this could be strengthened. In our staff survey, when asked if they were sufficiently aware of management board activities, only two out of the 20 respondents described themselves as 'very aware'; 14 said they were 'quite aware' of them and four 'not very aware'. Staff have attended the board to present their work, but when asked if they were updated on strategic issues, only five of the 20 respondents felt 'fully updated'; seven felt 'mostly updated' and eight 'occasionally updated'.

Staff are aware of and committed to the vision of child first and diversion. Practitioners were able to give many examples of how the service had put its vision into practice. One example was the early help approach to diversion, which avoids the child being labelled with a criminal identity.

### **1.2. Staff**



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

Good

### **Key staffing data<sup>12</sup>**

Total staff headcount (full-time equivalent (FTE))	39
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<sup>12</sup> Data supplied by YOS and reflecting staffing at the time of the inspection announcement.

Total headcount qualified case managers (FTE) <sup>13</sup>	5.8	
Vacancy rate (total unfilled posts as percentage of total staff headcount)	0%	
Vacancy rate case managers only (total unfilled case manager posts as percentage of total case manager headcount)	0%	
Average caseload case managers (FTE) <sup>14</sup>	3.17 for post court cases	7.6 for out-of-court disposal cases
Average annual working days sickness (all staff)	6.6	

In making a judgement about staffing, we consider the answers to the following five questions:

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

There is a stable workforce across both youth justice and early help. Staffing levels within the youth justice service are sufficient. Workloads are managed through supervision and the 'signs of safety' meetings, where capacity is reviewed. The service analyses data on workload capacity, open cases, risk classification, and intensity levels. This provides a detailed understanding of demands on staff, capacity, and workloads. Staff say that work is evenly distributed across the team. If there are instances where they are feeling overwhelmed, they raise this with managers, who respond to it. Although both services are busy, in our staff survey, all respondents stated that their workload is manageable.

The service has a team of volunteers who carry out referral order panels and appropriate adult duties. In our volunteer survey, all were satisfied with the amount of work they complete for the service.

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

Staff are experienced and appropriately qualified for their role. New starters who have less practice knowledge are paired with a member of staff to develop their learning. There is a scored system, which is used to support allocation and manage capacity. Heavier weight is given to higher-risk and high-intensity cases. Staff described allocation as a consultative process, in which managers discuss upcoming cases and review capacity.

The service has recently recruited a senior case manager, because of increases in responsibility for the team manager and head of service. The new post has eased the workload for both and provided an internal opportunity for promotion.

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

There is an induction process for volunteers and staff. This includes mandatory training and observation opportunities and increased supervision for the first few

<sup>13</sup> Qualified case managers are those with a relevant social work, youth justice or probation qualification.

<sup>14</sup> Data supplied by YOS, based on staffing and workload at the time of the inspection announcement.

months in the role. Both staff and volunteers have found the induction helpful as preparation for the role.

Staff receive monthly supervision with their line manager, which covers health and wellbeing, service team objectives, case discussions, and learning and development. In our staff survey all respondents felt that the frequency of supervision was 'just right'. In terms of quality, seven of the 18 respondents described supervision as 'very good' and 11 as 'quite good'. Seconded staff reported positive supervision and support from the service. There is an annual appraisal process. However, only one of the 18 respondents who completed our survey found this 'very valuable'; five found it 'quite valuable', and two 'not that valuable'; seven had not received an appraisal but should have. The appraisal process could be enhanced by ensuring it is timely and has stronger links to the skills audit and service objectives.

Quality assurance processes are in place; managers review assessments, plans, and reports and countersign them where required. Practitioners described senior managers as approachable, and the advice and guidance provided as helpful. We found effective oversight in six of the seven court disposal cases we inspected and 11 out of 12 of the out-of-court cases. Inspectors described oversight as being frequent, detailed, and in most cases meeting the child's needs. Alongside supervision, the service uses multi-agency forums to manage risks to and from the child. Inspectors found that these forums enabled practitioners to have reflective discussions about cases and, in most instances, provided effective actions to address risks.

### **Are arrangements for learning and development comprehensive and responsive?**

The service's commitment to learning and continuous improvement is notable. All staff complete an annual skills audit to identify any gaps in their training and knowledge. This is a comprehensive tool which covers all areas of need to deliver a high-quality service. Results from the audit are collated and used to inform training opportunities. For instance, following the audit, training in special educational needs was organised.

All staff have access to the mandatory training programme across the directorate. Most recently, staff have completed sessions on unconscious bias, cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), trauma-informed practice, AIM3 (assessment, intervention & moving-on) and Good Lives. When asked how well their learning needs are met, nine of the 18 respondents answered 'mostly' and nine stated 'fully'. In our survey, all volunteers reported that the ongoing training they receive is 'very good'.

Staff have opportunities for further development; for instance, several senior staff have completed qualifications in Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) Diploma in Leadership and Management. A member of staff has recently been promoted internally and secondment opportunities have been agreed, enabling further promotions. A number of practitioners have completed the Youth Justice Professional Certificate in Effective Practice. To enhance learning and develop a specialism, practitioners have become champions in areas that include special educational needs, harmful sexual behaviour, and substance misuse. The champions have been given further opportunities to develop and support other services; for example, the harmful sexual behaviour champion sits on the sexual behaviour panel to provide advice and guidance.

## Do managers pay sufficient attention to staff engagement?

Staff and volunteers are highly motivated, enthusiastic, and dedicated to delivering a high-quality service. They are passionate about the 'child first' vision and value the service's position on building relationships with those they work with. They know and understand the children they are working with well and are committed to achieving positive outcomes. In our volunteer survey, all respondents felt that the service motivated them to fulfil their role. In the staff survey, when asked the same question, 13 of the 18 respondents answered to a 'great extent' and five to 'some extent'.

It was evident that many staff feel valued by the service and gave many examples of where adjustments had been made and additional support provided. Practitioners described receiving frequent verbal feedback and praise from managers. Similarly, volunteers stated that their good work is acknowledged, and they receive praise. The partnership board also gives staff official commendations for excellent work.

### 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	46%
Percentage of current caseload with substance misuse issues	25%
Percentage of current caseload with a learning difficulty or disability or subject to an education, health, and care plan	32%

In making a judgement about partnerships and services, we consider 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?

Although the service does not have an analyst, it has access to a wealth of information and analysis, both provided by partners and produced internally. On a quarterly basis, the antisocial behaviour (ASB) team, police, and YOS review their data to identify 10 children at risk of coming into the criminal justice system, with resources then targeted at the children and their families to help them avoid such contact.

Reoffending rates in the area are high. The service uses a live tracker tool to support its understanding of this. The tracker provides current data on children who have reoffended, including the number in the cohort, reoffence types, and the seriousness and amount of the new offences. While this is valuable, the context and profile of this cohort needs further analysis, for example to identify and explore individual, family, and community factors linked to the cohort. This could be bolstered by discussions with children in the cohort to further understand reoffending.

Data is shared with board members and regularly discussed at meetings. However, there needs to be an enhanced analysis of data to flag trends and to focus discussions. At the time of the inspection, most children under the age of 16 were

not in mainstream education. In the post-court cases, 90 per cent of children were receiving alternative education packages. Although the actual numbers were small (nine children), the service was not able to confirm if this provision was meeting the children's needs. Further analysis in this area would identify whether there are any gaps in provision so that this could be raised at a board level.

The service gathers views of victims, children, parents, and carers, but does not analyse this in detail. The service could enhance its understanding of needs, particularly by engaging children on specific topics, such as education.

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

The service has a range of interactive intervention packages that are delivered by case managers. This includes emotional awareness, peer pressure, knife crime, and victim awareness. For out-of-court disposals, a co-produced workbook is used. Findings from case reviews evidenced not only the range of interventions that were delivered, but also that practitioners were tailoring these to meet the children's needs. Direct and indirect reparation is available and there are a wide range of projects, including cooking for a homeless shelter, a bike project, and gardening. Children are matched to projects based on their interests and skills, but are also encouraged to try new tasks.

The service is a registered unit scheme award centre and awards the children AQA 'achievements' for the intervention and reparation work they complete. At the end of their disposal, children are presented with a record of all the AQAs they have achieved. This provides a sense of accomplishment and children, parents, and carers have found it a rewarding experience.

The service sits alongside youth engagement in the young and safe directorate. It provides a street-based team and works with children in the community, including those working with youth justice and early help. The service offers targeted support to vulnerable children and can undertake out-of-hours work. This has provided wrap-around care for children who access the service. The street-based team has worked with GRAFT (Gaining Respect and Finding Trust) and Not in Our Community to target children at risk of exploitation. There have been several campaigns where groups of at-risk children have developed interactive resources to raise awareness of exploitation. The campaigns are co-produced with the children and are highly effective and impressive.

'We Are With You' provides substance and alcohol misuse intervention for children. Although there is no seconded worker within the service, children are able to access support quickly.

There is a clear pathway for children who are involved in harmful sexual behaviour and there is an established harmful sexual behaviour panel. Membership of the panel includes the early help service, children's social care, Inclusion, the police, Young Minds Matter (mental health provision), the youth justice service, a clinical psychologist, a school nurse, and an education representative. The panel uses a traffic light system to support understanding of the harmful behaviour and potential risks. Intervention is determined and delivered by practitioners trained in AIM 3. Cases can be referred for diversion or post-court support.

A youth justice coordinator leads on victim contact; they produce statements so that the victim's voice is heard at decision-making and referral order panels. Restorative justice, mediation, and direct/indirect reparation are offered. The youth justice

coordinator will work with practitioners to support victim safety planning and direct work with the child. A transition process has been developed with the probation victim liaison officer (VLO). This allows any victims working with youth justice to be transferred to the VLO when the child moves to the Probation Service. This can take place even if the offence and sentence do not meet the probation victim contact threshold.

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

There is a strong, longstanding, and effective relationship with the police, who have seconded a detective constable (DC) to the YOS. The standard tasks that a seconded policer officer would complete are done to a high standard, but the DC offers additional support in analysing data, which informs service delivery.

A 0.5 full-time-equivalent probation practitioner is seconded to the service. They are part of the 'Signs of Safety' meetings, contribute to decisions on managing risk, and support children's transition to the Probation Service. In the cases that we have reviewed, there has been a mixed response to transition. We have seen evidence of good preparation and smooth handovers. However, in other cases, links to probation and provision for the young adult once they transfer to the Probation Service need to be strengthened.

In the last few years, relationships with children's social care have improved. Children's social care and the YOS have a better understanding of each other's service and there is now strategic representation at the board. However, operationally there are gaps in provision that have had an impact on children's safety. In several of the cases we reviewed, communication and responses from children's services had been inconsistent. There had been difficulties with obtaining information, aligning plans, coordinating work, and escalating concerns. While suitable resolutions had been found in some cases, in others, escalation by the youth justice and early help services had not been quick enough. North East Lincolnshire children's social care has been under tremendous pressure and there is a high turnover of social workers. In a number of cases we inspected, children had several social workers, and this has contributed to difficulties in communication and coordinated working.

The partnership has access to GRAFT, a specialist exploitation team, who are funded through the Home Office. They offer targeted support for those at risk of exploitation, including out-of-hours provision. They also engage in disruption activity and raise awareness of exploitation in the wider community. This area is also a pilot for national referral mechanism (NRM)<sup>15</sup> decisions made in-house. This means that decisions are made more quickly, and children being exploited will be considered as victims to avoid them being brought into the criminal justice system. To embed this process further, training has been completed with local sentencers.

There are lengthy waiting lists for Young Minds Matter (YMM), which presents a gap in provision. However, there is a service level agreement under which YMM provides a formulation on every case referred to the service. NHS England has committed to a nine-year programme, with three years confirmed initially. This will be jointly delivered by Compass Go and Young and Safe, street-based team, the YOS, and the

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<sup>15</sup> The framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery and ensuring they receive the appropriate support.

early help service. It will improve access to mental health services for children, increase organisations' awareness of trauma-informed practice, and provide more support for keeping children in education. The programme was due to be launched in summer 2022.

There is a partnership agreement with the young people support service where the earning and learning service has seconded a NEET (not in education, employment or training) practitioner to the service. The practitioner works with both the YOS and early help to reduce the number of children who are or are at risk of becoming NEET. The practitioner provides education information for assessments, impartial careers advice, and opportunities for further education, training, and employment.

We found a high number of children under 16 in alternative provision. While this could be the most appropriate education placement for many of them, practitioners expressed frustration at not being able to challenge decisions on education and not being involved in managed moves and exclusion. Measures to address this include Aspire (local authority service), which reviews children at risk of exclusion or who have been excluded. There is also Edge of Education, personalised provision where youth workers support children to return to education. Other creative responses include an education bus that will travel to the children. However, there needs to be a clearer escalation route for practitioners and managers, as well as more involvement with schools, so that all relevant agencies are included in decisions about education.

Through the special educational needs and disabilities agenda, an education, health, and care plan (EHCP) single point of contact has been identified for youth justice and early help children to speed up information requests. Each quarter, a deep dive review is undertaken with children who are on an EHCP. This process has enabled escalation of concern with education providers for two children working with the service whose education packages were not meeting their needs.

Direct access to speech and language therapy is a current gap. Children can go through mainstream referrals routes, but this is a lengthy process. The service has recognised this gap and, in the short term, is procuring training and support to upskill staff and have a range of appropriate support mechanisms for the children. It is also working with partners to secure access to a speech and language therapist.

### **Involvement of children and their parents or carers**

As part of the inspection process, children are invited to participate in a text survey, and those whose cases are inspected are offered the opportunity to speak to an inspector to give their feedback. We were able to speak to four children out of the 19 cases we inspected. Three children also responded to the text survey.

In the text survey, two of the three children felt that the service had helped them. When asked why, one child said:

*“Because I am not in as much of a bad state as I was ... seeing the women has helped me quite a bit, talking about my emotions and feelings, something which I find hard to talk about.”*

All four children who participated in the survey felt that their practitioner had the right skills to work with them. They commented on the positive working relationship they had developed with their worker and that efforts had been made to understand who they are. One child said:

*“I enjoy that they understand me and are down to earth individuals. The conversations are optimistic.”*

In the three cases where intervention had begun, all of the children felt that they had access to the right services to help them build on desistance. One child stated:

*“I was given a gym membership to help me lose weight and get fit, and as I don’t have much money, I was also given a pass to the skate park. I have learnt new skills within reparation when I completed cooking and woodwork.”*

When asked what they liked about the service, children talked about the workers’ flexibility in setting times to see them, for example arranging appointments at times that avoided work commitments and conducting sessions at home or in school. The children felt listened and responded to. One child stated:

*“I really like the fact that they are good listeners. When they do the work, they make it easier for me to understand.”*

#### 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.

Good

In making a judgement about information and facilities, we consider 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 service has developed a range of policies, protocols, and guidance, which are reviewed regularly and ratified at the board. These provide basic detail but do not fully reflect all the work completed in practice, where the service is delivering to a higher standard than is officially noted. It would be advantageous to have the higher standard of delivery recorded in the policies and protocols, along with more detailed guidance for practitioners.

There are impressive co-owned and co-developed policies in place, including the children in custody joint protocol. This provides detailed guidance, as well as setting out the roles of the partnership services. However, some policies and protocols require a review to ensure that they are specific to youth justice and early help. For instance, the service uses the children social work supervision policy, but some of the language and procedures are not easily transferable to youth justice. Again, practice illustrates that supervision is effective but a supervision policy specific to youth justice would be beneficial.

In the current operating model, out-of-court disposals are managed within the early help service and rebranded as diversion, and the rest of the provision is delivered by the YOS. In practice this works well, but exact processes and lines of accountability have not been mapped out. This has caused confusion for some staff and partners. Several policies straddle both youth justice and early help, for instance the victim policy. Given that each service has different branding and uses different language, it



would be beneficial if this was replicated in the policies so that it is clear which service that part of the policy applies to.

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

The youth justice service uses the community-based Molson Centre. The central location allows easy access for children, families, and carers. The court, police station, and other local projects and amenities are within walking distance. Of the four children who spoke with our inspectors, three considered the premises were easy to access, commenting that there are good links to public transport. For some, it was within walking distance of their home. One of the children stated that he received home visits because of the distance from his home to the office.

The Molson Centre has a series of meeting rooms, which have been refurbished with soft furnishings, fidget items, games, and wall clocks. Windows have been covered with screening film to provide a sense of security and confidentiality for children. This building is also used for panel meetings, interactive intervention sessions, and the bike repair project. The kitchen facilities are used to deliver reparation and life skill sessions.

The early help service, which delivers out-of-court disposals, sees children at family hubs, community locations, and home visits. This has been a deliberate decision so that children are not attending premises where there is a link to youth justice, and is part of the ethos of not creating a criminal identity for children who access diversion.

Children also have access to a mobile bus facility, which offers a space for them to 'offload', spend time playing games consoles, and engage in preventative education. This mobile unit can also be moved to locations where the service has identified a need for it, such as where there has been an increase in antisocial behaviour.

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

The service has good ICT systems that enable full remote and on-site working, with secure connections to the local authorities' children's social care systems. Seconded staff also have access to their seconding organisation's systems. Information-sharing protocols are in place with all key agencies, including both local authorities and the police, and there is a good flow of information to support the safety and wellbeing of children and any risk posed to others. In our staff survey, when asked how well the ICT systems helped them to deliver a quality service, 13 of the 17 respondents answered, 'very well' and four 'quite well'.

During the pandemic restrictions, the service purchased a large number of tablets, which were given to children so that they could maintain contact with practitioners and other services.

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

The service actively scrutinises and reviews its practice to drive improvement. There are internal processes for quality assurance and auditing, and external parties are frequently used to provide independent feedback on their practice. In 2019 the service commissioned an independent review. This provided feedback on areas of strength and areas for development. The service has made changes to improve the quality of its work, such as increasing partnership board membership and seniority.

Local audit agreements are in place with neighbouring youth justice services. This involves a review and audit of cases with the auditing youth justice service interviewing the case managers. This process has enabled external scrutiny of cases and provided constructive feedback on the quality of work. Internal peer audits have been carried out by case managers. This involved confidential reviewing of their colleagues' cases and providing feedback. To support the embedding of the new national standards the partnership board conducted a quality self-assessment against the standards.

Following an incident where a child overdosed on MDMA, partners collectively developed a harm minimisation programme and training for professionals. The training programme began in 2021 and, to date, 600 professionals across the partnership, including in schools, have been trained.

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## Diversity

Throughout our standards, we expect 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.

Data from youth justice annual statistics for 2020 to 2021 identified that three per cent of the YOS caseload who received a caution or sentence were of black, Asian, and minority ethnic heritage. This reflects the local population of children of black, Asian, and minority ethnic heritage aged 10 to 17 years in the North East Lincolnshire area, which also sits at 3 per cent. The proportion of children from black, Asian, and minority ethnic backgrounds on the service caseload can fluctuate; at the time of the inspection, no children from these backgrounds were working with the service. Although the figures suggest that there is currently no over-representation, the service and partners have taken measures to monitor and address this area. The YOS uses the Youth Justice Board disproportionality tool, and has adopted recommendations from the Lammy Review (2017).<sup>16</sup> This includes the diversion option still being available if the child does not offer an admission of guilt or provides a 'no comment' response in police interviews. There is a practitioner champion for diversity and disproportionality, and the board intends to elect a member to champion this area.

The workforce is predominantly (90 per cent) female. While this enables girls who access the service to work with a female practitioner, more gender diversity should be considered in future recruitment of staff and volunteers. The percentage of staff of black, Asian, and minority ethnic heritage is 2.6 per cent.

The service recognises that cared-for children and those who experience learning difficulties are over-represented in the caseload. The partnership has developed an agreement and preventative protocol to divert cared-for children from the criminal justice system. A special educational needs and disability action plan has also been

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<sup>16</sup> Lammy Review. (2017). *An independent review into the treatment of, and outcomes for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals in the criminal justice system*, [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/643001/lammy-review-final-report.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/643001/lammy-review-final-report.pdf)

developed, which includes upskilling practitioners, increasing access to resources, additional monitoring, and scrutiny of data to provide an improved offer for children with these needs. This is a developing area for the partnership, but it is positive that over-representation for these cohorts has been recognised and steps taken to address this.

At the time of the inspection, 24 per cent of the caseload were girls; this represented 30 per cent of the children who had received an out-of-court disposal and 15 per cent of post-court cases. Youth justice annual statistics for 2020-2021 recorded that 10 per cent of the North East Lincolnshire caseload who received a caution or sentence were female. Although this suggests that the proportion of girls receiving a formal sanction is low, the proportion of girls accessing diversion is significantly higher. The lower proportion of girls in post-court cases suggests that interventions have been successful, but the service had not analysed or explored this in depth to better understand this area, or whether specific services are needed to support girls who access diversion services.

There is a genuine commitment from the YOS and early help service, and their partners, to address diversity and disproportionate outcomes for children. This has focused mainly on ethnicity, but all protected characteristics need to be considered. More detailed data is needed to better understand the needs of children with protected characteristics and the context and nature of these findings. Any plans and measures need to set out explicitly how the service will monitor and address all areas of diversity. To support the embedding of diversity procedures, policies need a sharper focus, detailing how these needs will be met.

## 2. Court disposals

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We took a detailed look at five community sentences and two custodial sentences managed by the YOS. We also conducted seven 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.

Assessment was identified as a strength with six out of the seven cases sufficient across desistance, keeping the child safe, and keeping others safe. Practitioners used an extensive range of sources to inform analysis and provide an in-depth understanding of the child. They were competent at recognising risks to and from the child, clearly articulating the nature and context in which these could occur.

Planning was sequenced and balanced areas of strength and concern effectively. In many of the cases, planning was coordinated with other services that worked with the child and family. However, there needed to be a quicker escalation when desired responses were not received from children's social care. We found reviewing to be a continual and collaborative process with professionals. In most cases, practitioners made appropriate adjustments to their work to meet the child's needs.

The child and their parents or carers were meaningfully involved in assessing, planning, delivery, and reviewing. This enabled the child to be at the centre of the process and ensured that it was collaborative and co-produced. Practitioners recognised and understood children's diversity needs. They considered the impact of these and developed creative and accessible interventions for children.

### Strengths

- Practitioners recognised and understood diversity needs. They considered these needs in assessing, planning, delivery, and reviewing.
- The child and their parents or carers were meaningfully consulted and involved throughout the whole process.
- Practitioners produced comprehensive assessments, which provided a detailed insight into desistance, the child's safety, and risks to others.
- Planning was sequenced and proportionate to the disposal. There was an effective balance of strengths and areas of concern.
- Practitioners were innovative and creative in delivering work, ensuring that the sessions were interactive and accessible.
- Work to keep others safe was coordinated with that of other services. Practitioners carried out considerable work with the children to help them avoid risky behaviour.
- Reviewing was a continual process, involving other professionals. Practitioners made adjustments to support desistance, building on strengths and addressing areas of concern.

## Areas for improvement

- Practitioners need to focus more on victims' wishes in assessments and ensure that, where applicable, sufficient attention is paid to actual and potential victims.
- In some cases, there needed to be quicker escalation of concerns to senior managers so that these could be raised with the appropriate service.
- Practitioners need to use all information and intelligence when carrying out reviews.

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.

Outstanding

Our rating<sup>17</sup> for assessment is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	86%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	86%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	86%

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

Assessment to support desistance was effective in six of the seven cases. Assessments continually used a wide range of sources, including information from other agencies and previous assessments, to support analysis. Analysis of offences was consistently impressive; practitioners provided comprehensive accounts that gave insight into the circumstances leading to the incidents. However, only four of the seven cases paid sufficient attention to the victim's needs and wishes. Practitioners were proficient at identifying structural barriers and the impact of these on the children. Practitioners consistently explored diversity needs and analysed in detail what these meant for the child and what measures should be adopted to encourage engagement. Practitioners were skilled at drawing out the child's strengths and protective factors as well as considering areas that would negatively affect desistance.

<sup>17</sup> 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 the child safe?

Assessment of how to keep the child safe was adequate in six of the seven cases. Assessments of safety and wellbeing made full use of information and assessments from other professionals. In the vast majority of cases, the practitioner identified the risks to the child and completed a comprehensive analysis. This provided an understanding of the complexity of the cases, including an exploration of the controls and interventions that would promote safety. It was evident that practitioners had a detailed understanding of contextual risks, including exploitation and county lines. Assessments were tailored to the children's circumstances, highlighting the nature and context of potential harm.

### Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?

Assessment to keep others safe was sufficient in six of the seven cases. In most cases, assessment drew on information from other services and past behaviours, and used police intelligence appropriately. We found comprehensive analysis of potential risks; practitioners clearly identified the nature of these, the context in which they could occur, and the potential impact on victims. In all cases, assessment had explored internal controls and illustrated strong evaluation of whether risk is escalating.

## 2.2. Planning



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

Good

Our rating<sup>18</sup> for planning is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does planning focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	100%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	<b>71%</b>
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	86%

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

Planning to support desistance was sufficient in all cases. We found that children, parents, and carers were meaningfully involved in planning. They were consulted on what the plan should look like, and their views were taken into consideration. This included how sessions should be undertaken, locations, and timings of when work would take place. This collaborative approach enabled the child to be invested and understand expectations. Planning also involved other services working with the child. Roles were clearly defined, and work was allocated to the appropriate professional. In all cases diversity needs had been considered. Planning was sequenced and achievable within the available timescales. There was a strong focus on developing strengths, while also ensuring areas of concern were addressed.

<sup>18</sup> 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 planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

Where planning was not sufficient, we found that communication with children's social care had been problematic and the matter not escalated by the service. In this case, children's social care had a vital role in planning to protect the child. Conversely, in other cases, where children had been subject to child in need plans, children's social care was actively involved and meaningfully contributed to planning. Overall, plans promoted the safety of children and effectively identified necessary controls and measures. In six cases, contingency arrangements were comprehensive and set out the essential actions that needed to be taken should risk increase.

### Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

Planning to keep others safe was sufficient in six of the seven cases we reviewed. Practitioners were able to translate assessed risks into effective plans. There was a clear focus on victims and where appropriate, their views had been incorporated into planning. Multi-agency planning was present in all cases. Professionals were consulted and their roles in the risk management were clear. Practitioners had identified necessary work and interventions. These were realistic targets, which aimed to mitigate risk.

## 2.3. Implementation and delivery



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

Requires improvement

Our rating<sup>19</sup> 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?	86%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of the child?	<b>57%</b>
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?	71%

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

Delivery of work to support the child's desistance was effective in six of the seven cases we reviewed. Practitioners provided a personalised service to the children and families, meeting their diversity needs in most cases. Adjustments were made to ensure that the children could access and understand intervention, for instance adapting language. Practitioners were effective at engaging children and families and developed positive relationships, which encouraged engagement. They ensured that children accessed services to meet their desistance needs, including constructive activities and substance misuse services. The delivery of work was tailored to the

<sup>19</sup> 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.

children’s needs. Practitioners were innovative in how they implemented sessions and used a variety of interactive and visual resources linked to the child’s interests.

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

Delivery of work to keep children safe was the lowest scoring area, with only four of the seven cases assessed as sufficient. Where cases had been deemed insufficient, we found that responses to increased risks were not prompt and there was no coordinated response to mitigate concerns. In two of the cases, the practitioners had appropriately identified the action that needed to be taken by children’s social care (CSC). However, when they did not receive an adequate response, the service had not escalated this concern with CSC. Adjustments to interventions were needed to address the changes in risk to the child, but we found that these had not been made. In the cases that were sufficient, practitioners had made referrals to services to promote the child’s safety, such as mental health provision.

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

In five of the seven cases, delivery of services effectively supported the safety of others. In most of the cases we found a coordinated, multi-agency response to managing risk. There was strong information-sharing between professionals. Cases were discussed at multi-agency risk meetings, which enabled effective oversight and monitoring of concerns. Practitioners had done considerable work with the children to help them understand risks. They were responsive to changes in risks and put measures in place to mitigate concerns. However, in three of the seven cases, the practitioner needed to pay more attention to the protection of potential and actual victims.

**2.4. Reviewing**



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

**Good**

Our rating<sup>20</sup> for reviewing is based on the following key questions:

	<b>% 'Yes'</b>
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the child’s desistance?	86%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	100%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	<b>71%</b>

**Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the child’s desistance?**

Reviewing to support desistance was effective in six of the seven cases we inspected. Reviewing of desistance factors was an ongoing process; practitioners recorded and analysed progress the child had made. They considered the child’s strengths,

<sup>20</sup> 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.



protective factors, and personal circumstances, as well as areas of concern. In six cases, the child and their parents or carers had been consulted and their views had an impact on reviewing. Five cases required adjustments to the ongoing plan of work; this was sufficient in four cases. Adjustments focused on areas of concern, but practitioners continuously reviewed the child's goals and ambitions and how they were supporting them to achieve these.

### **Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?**

Reviewing of the child's safety was the strongest area, as this was sufficient in all seven cases. In six cases there were changes in factors relating to safety that required reviewing; we found this was effective in five cases. Reviewing activity was frequent and involved other professionals working with the child. It was evident that the child and their parents or carers were involved in reviewing, and practitioners used this information to help understand the child's perception of current safety and wellbeing concerns.

### **Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?**

There were two cases where reviewing was assessed as insufficient. In one, police intelligence had not been analysed effectively, and in the other, further investigation was needed following an incident within the secure estate. However, in most cases information held by other services was used effectively to review current risks. Multi-agency risk meetings were held frequently, in which the partnership would collectively analyse concerns. Six of the cases required adjustments in the ongoing plan of work. We judged this to be effective in four. In the five sufficient cases, practitioners were responsive to changes in the level of risk; they put measures in place to manage this, including external controls as well as specific interventions.

### 3. Out-of-court disposals

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We inspected 12 cases managed by the YOS that had received an out-of-court disposal, of which five were female and seven were male. These consisted of two youth conditional cautions and 10 outcome 22 disposals. We conducted 12 interviews with the case managers.

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, keep the child safe, and 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.

Practitioners effectively assessed desistance, and risks to and from the child. They used information from other services to improve their assessments and took a balanced approach to analysing strengths, protective factors, and areas of concern. It was clear that practitioners understood the impact of adverse childhood experiences and how these can affect the child's behaviour.

Practitioners took a collaborative approach to planning, involving the children and their parents or carers. They considered the child's diversity needs, and personalised plans to meet them. Contingency planning required more detail and clarity about responses if risks changed. Nonetheless, in the majority of cases, planning involved other agencies and promoted the safety of children and others.

Implementation for desistance and risks to others was sufficient in every case. However, delivery to support the child's safety was sufficient in nine of the 12 cases. We found that practitioners were skilled at developing and maintaining positive relationships with children and delivered sessions that were tailored to meet their needs.

In all areas, work to support diversity was a strength; practitioners recognised, planned for, and tailored interventions to meet the needs of children. Measures were undertaken to protect actual and potential victims and appropriate interventions were completed to address risks presented by the child. In some cases, practitioners needed to flag concerns with children's social care more quickly, and to escalate their worries to senior managers when an appropriate response was not received.

There is a comprehensive policy and local agreement with the police that promotes a child-first approach with a clear commitment to diversion. Diversion is the default position for all youth offences and the process is open to children who have not admitted guilt or who have made 'no comment' in police interviews. Outcome 22 is available for out-of-court disposals, meaning that children can receive support and intervention without a criminal sanction.

There is a joint decision-making panel with partners, where the most appropriate disposal is determined following an assessment. Effective escalation processes are in place and are used when needed. Children who have received out-of-court disposals have access to the same pathways and services as those working with the youth justice service, including health, substance misuse, and education services.

Diversion now sits within the early help service to distance this provision from youth justice and avoid children being labelled. The current diversion process and offer was introduced following in-depth analysis and research. Evaluation and reviewing have continued and resulted in changes to policy and protocol; for instance, all youth disposals are referred for consideration of diversion. The service continually analyses rates of reoffending to explore success and carries out audits to review the quality of its work.

### Strengths

- Practitioners recognised, assessed, and planned for children’s diversity needs. They tailored interventions and delivered sessions to support engagement and understanding.
- Practitioners were able to identify, assess, plan, and respond to risks to and from the child.
- There is a comprehensive policy in place and partners are committed to prioritising diversion and a child-first ethos.
- Children who give ‘no comment’ and no admission of guilt in interviews are still eligible for diversion.
- Outcome 22 is an option for diversion, enabling the child and family to receive support and intervention without a formal criminal sanction.
- Effective escalation processes are in place.
- There are arrangements to assess children, make decisions on disposal, and start interventions promptly.
- Children who receive an out-of-court disposal have access to the same pathways and services as those working with the youth justice service. They complete a workbook that is strengths based and allows the child’s voice to be central.
- The service regularly reviews and evaluates its provision. For example, it carries out internal audits and analysis of data, and is reviewed through scrutiny panels.

### Areas for improvement

- Contingency planning needs to be more detailed, and practitioners need to identify actions to promote the safety of the child, and others, if risks change.
- The policy needs to provide more clarity on how long diversion cases remain open and ensure practitioners are aware of this.
- In some cases, there needed to be quicker escalation of concerns to senior managers so that this could be raised to the appropriate services.

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.

Outstanding

Our rating<sup>21</sup> for assessment is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	100%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	<b>83%</b>
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	<b>83%</b>

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

Assessment to support desistance was sufficient in all 12 cases. In every case, practitioners had used a wide range of sources, including other professionals working with the family and education providers. Children and their parents or carers had been engaged effectively in the assessment process and this had enhanced analysis. Obtaining the child's view and putting their voice at the centre was a key focus in the assessments; it was evident that assessing is a collaborative approach. In 10 of the 12 cases, diversity issues had been recognised and analysed. Case managers were quick to respond and made adjustments at the assessment stage to enable children to fully engage in the process. Analysis of diversity included identifying how best to work with the child and family to support ongoing intervention. Practitioners were skilled at presenting a balanced analysis of strengths and areas of concern. It was clear that identifying and understanding how to develop protective factors was a key focus in assessing. Assessments illustrated a strong understanding of trauma and adverse experiences and how these can contribute to a child's presenting behaviour. In 10 of the 12 cases sufficient attention had been given to the wishes and needs of victims, including opportunities for restorative justice.

#### **Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?**

Assessment and analysis of children's safety and wellbeing is a strength. We found this to be sufficient in 10 of the 12 cases we reviewed, and classifications of safety and wellbeing were reasonable in all cases. Practitioners had made full use of the information provided by other services, as well as consulting the child and their families for their views on safety. In the majority of cases, practitioners recognised potential adverse outcomes, including exploitation, neglect, and self-harm, and provided detailed analysis of the nature of these and the context in which they may occur. Assessments also drew out factors that may increase risks, such as substance misuse and the child's ability to manage emotional experiences.

<sup>21</sup> 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?

In 10 of the 12 cases we inspected, analysis of how to keep other people safe was sufficient. Analysis of potential risks to others was detailed and used information from other services effectively. Practitioners were skilled at specifying likely risks to others and provided detail on the nature of these and the context in which they may occur. Additionally, practitioners considered the current incident and other previous behaviour to inform their understanding of possible future harm and wider risks. One inspector noted:

*“There is a comprehensive formulation of risks to others which draws on present and wider past behaviour within other environments to arrive at an appropriate classification. P offends in the company of a younger child. Concerns around this growing relationship and the potential for the child being exploited by those exploiting P through this friendship are recognised.”*

### 3.2. Planning



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

Outstanding

Our rating<sup>22</sup> for planning is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?	92%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	<b>83%</b>
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	<b>83%</b>

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

In 11 of the 12 cases we reviewed, planning to support the child's desistance was sufficient. Practitioners' attention to diversity was a strength. The planning process explored the best way to engage with the child and how to meet any learning needs. Planning included how individual sessions should be conducted to ensure that the child could access and understand the work undertaken. In all 12 cases, planning had taken account of strengths and protective factors. We found that practitioners took a balanced approach to planning and considered the child's interests and ambitions. Practitioners recognised the importance of building on desistance and, in all cases, focused on opportunities for community integration. This included access to constructive activities and opportunities for education, training, and employment. Planning was comprehensive and a collaborative process involving the child, parents, and carers.

#### Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?


In 11 of the 12 cases, planning was required to keep the child safe; in nine of these, the involvement of other agencies and alignment of plans was sufficient. We found

<sup>22</sup> 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.

that practitioners were proactive in communicating with other agencies to determine their roles and create coordinated plans for keeping the child safe. Practitioners understood risks to the child and in most of the cases planning promoted the child's safety. This included referrals to other services, such as mental health providers and GRAFT, who work with children at risk of exploitation. Contingency planning is an area that requires development; this was sufficient in only six of the 11 cases. Actions and responses to changes in risk were not adequately detailed and it was not clear what needed to happen to keep the child safe if circumstances worsened.

### Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

Planning to keep other people safe was sufficient in 10 of the 12 cases. In the majority of cases, planning was proportionate to the identified risks, illustrating that practitioners understood potential concerns and how to promote safety. In 10 of the 12 cases, planning involved other agencies, and we found strong information-sharing and a coordinated approach to risk management. Contingency arrangements and planning for changes in the level of risk were sufficient in only seven of the 12 cases. Practitioners need to identify and detail the required responses to manage escalation in risks to others, including the roles of other services if risks from the child increase. In 10 of the 12 cases, planning addressing risks to actual and potential victims was sufficient. We found that appropriate interventions and measures to protect victims were recorded.

<b>3.3. Implementation and delivery</b>	
High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging, and assisting the child.	Good

Our rating<sup>23</sup> for implementation and delivery is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does service delivery effectively support the child's desistance?	100%
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of the child?	<b>75%</b>
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of other people?	100%

### Does service delivery focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?

Delivery of work to support the child's desistance was effective in all 12 cases. Interventions and work delivered were proportionate to the disposal and sequenced appropriately. We found that practitioners were skilled at developing and maintaining positive working relationships with children and families. There was regular communication from the practitioner to children and families, and appointments were arranged at convenient locations and times, which enhanced engagement. In 11 of the cases, practitioners had considered the child's diversity needs. Practitioners were creative and tailored existing interventions for the children. This enabled them to deliver interactive work that the child could access and understand. Implementation

<sup>23</sup> 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.

consistently built on desistance and community integration, and access to constructive activities was regularly explored. Practitioners addressed other areas of need, such as substance misuse.

### **Does service delivery focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?**

Service delivery to keep the child safe was effective in nine of the 12 cases. Where delivery was not sufficient, we found that changes in risks to the child were not promptly flagged to children’s social care and professionals did not take a coordinated approach. In some of these cases, escalation of concerns was required to promote communication and coordination with children’s social care, but this was not done quickly enough. In the majority of cases, services and intervention had been delivered to mitigate against risks, including referral to mental health and substance misuse services. Work to protect children at risk of exploitation was consistently good; practitioners understood the risks and worked well with other services to protect the child.

### **Does service delivery focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?**

In all 12 cases, delivery supported the safety of other people. Information-sharing between the services and, in particular, with the police was strong. This supported effective risk management, and practitioners responded quickly to changes. Practitioners completed varied intervention work to address risks; this was tailored to the child and identified concerns, ensuring that it was relatable and understandable. In all cases, sufficient attention was given to the protection of actual and potential victims. Practitioners considered the needs and wishes of victims, as well as any concerns. It was clear that they focused on victims’ safety and employed measures to protect them.

## **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.

Outstanding

In making a judgement about out-of-court disposal policy and provision, we consider 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?**

In 2017, following the 0 to 19 commissioning review, out-of-court disposal provision was moved from youth justice into the early help service. The aim is that children and families accessing out-of-court disposal provision will not be linked to youth justice. The early help service has rebranded the out-of-court disposal process and it is known as ‘diversion’ in North East Lincolnshire.

The YOS and the police have a detailed, locally agreed diversion policy. There are comprehensive operational procedures that set out the roles of each partner and how they contribute to the process. Both partners have committed to a child-first approach, where diversion is considered as the first option for all offences where children are involved. Where diversion is not considered, the agreed policy requires the police to justify this.

Humberside police and the YOS have formalised outcome 22 as an option. This enables them to complete diversionary, educational and/or intervention activity with the child instead of giving them a formal criminal sanction. Children can receive more than one outcome 22, although the guidance does provide parameters to avoid overuse. The gravity matrix is used to help determine the diversion outcome, but the guidance stresses the importance of considering mitigating and extenuating circumstances, which allows appropriate flexibility.

The policy states that all assessments should be tailored to the child and their family and must always consider diversity needs. The diversion offer is also available when the child does not offer an admission of guilt or provides a 'no comment' response in police interviews. Although this option is available for all children, the policy adopted the recommendation from the Lammy Review 2017 to address any potential over-representation of children from black, Asian, and minority ethnic heritage.

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

Cases eligible for out-of-court provision are referred to the detective constable seconded to the youth justice service. They are then allocated to a family first practitioner (FFP) based in early help, who undertakes an assessment of the child and family. The cases are then discussed at a decision-making panel, which includes the early help service, the police, the practitioner, the youth justice lead coordinator (when there is an identified victim), and, more recently, a representative from GRAFT (children's social care). The meetings are held weekly and are chaired by the locality lead or team manager from the early help service.

Arrangements ensure that diversion is consistently applied and timely. In the cases we reviewed, all 12 had been referred to the decision-making panel promptly with intervention with the child and family commencing soon after. The process for closing cases and determining how long they should remain open was less clear.

There is a robust pathway for children who have been involved in harmful sexual behaviour. All cases are seen at the harmful sexual behaviour panel before the decision-making panel is held. If diversion is appropriate, they are allocated to an FFP who is AIM3 trained. The harmful sexual behaviour panel continues to offer oversight and support throughout the diversion.

An effective escalation process is used when there are differences of opinion on the panel. This is a layered approach, which encourages resolution at the lowest level but allows escalation to the chief inspector, who leads in out-of-court disposals, and the specialist locality lead for diversion if required. This ensures that children are not disadvantaged in the outcomes they receive.

While the options of youth cautions and community resolutions are available to the panel, the service has steered away from using these disposals. Initially, it could appear that it is missing further opportunities to divert children. However, outcome 22 can be used more than once, and where a child would have previously received a community resolution or youth caution, they are instead given an outcome 22.

A workbook has been co-produced with children who have accessed the service and practitioners who deliver this work. It is visually appealing, and has been reviewed by a speech and language therapist to ensure that it is accessible. This booklet allows a strengths-based approach, where the voice of the child is central. Children working with early help have access to the same pathways as those working with the youth justice service, for example substance misuse, health, and education.



The diversion offer distances itself from youth justice. Children are seen in family hubs, in the community or in their home. Any paperwork, including appointment slips and interventions, do not refer to the youth justice service, crime, or offences. While this is in line with the non-labelling ethos, some partners have struggled with the new language and still describe this provision as youth justice. There are staff who straddle both youth justice and early help. More recently, youth justice staff have taken on diversion cases due to capacity. While it is evident that there is a commitment to adopting the new language, this has been challenging, particularly when other services and those who access the provision are not familiar with it. Nonetheless, the service continues to address any errors and raise its profile.

The head of the youth justice service also has oversight of ASB, youth engagement, and the community safety partnership coordinator manager. It is evident that these other services have bought into the diversion and child-first ethos and additional arrangements are in place to divert children. For instance, the ASB strategy focuses on prevention and prioritises non-punitive measures. An ASB panel, including youth justice, targeted youth work, early help, family hub, police, and housing, is held every six weeks. Cases are reviewed and any decisions about ASB are multi-agency owned. Additionally, ASB contributes data along with the police and early help to assist in identifying children at risk of coming into the criminal justice system.

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

Analysis of out-of-court disposal data was completed, reviewing a two-year period for children who had accessed the out-of-court disposal process. It also considered further research and training by the Centre of Justice. Alongside the move to early help, there was a deliberate change in language across the provision to avoid labelling children as criminal. 'Crime', 'offender', and 'criminal' have been replaced by 'behaviour', 'incident', and 'young person'.

Further evaluation led by the seconded detective constable found that the police were issuing high levels of community resolutions (street restorative justice) to children without being referred to the diversion panel. This was escalated to the partnership board, and policy and processes were altered so that all disposals involving children will be referred to the diversion panel.

The service identified that cases were referred to court when diversion should have been considered. In consultation with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and HM Courts & Tribunals Service, a new system of working was agreed. Children who may be eligible for diversion before their court hearing will be withdrawn by the CPS and referred to early help. This avoids the child having to attend court and for diversion to be considered.

The service regularly undertakes reviews of its data and provision and, when needed, develops action plans. It carries out bimonthly dip samples, which look at ethnicity, gender, disability, and the legal status of a child. Additionally, diversion cases are reviewed at the quarterly scrutiny panel which considers the appropriateness of the decision-making process. Analysis has shown an increase in successful outcomes in reducing reoffending. For instance, the previous year's analysis recorded that 83.9 per cent of children who received diversion had not reoffended in the year following completion of their intervention. The service continues to review and evaluate this data, which is demonstrating high and consistent success rates in children not reoffending.

## 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 YOS that had received a custodial sentence.

Our key findings were as follows:

#### Strengths

- In the cases we reviewed, the practitioners understood the complex needs of the children and advocated for these to be met.
- Practitioners maintained good contact with the children and their families, and other professionals, while the children were in custody.
- The service has developed a leaflet to help children and their parents or carers understand custody and resettlement. This is visually appealing and accessible.

#### Areas for improvement

- The resettlement policy requires review and co-production with partners to ensure that the pathways to successful resettlement are identified, established, and have clear escalation processes.
- The service needs to embed further its resettlement processes and training for staff and partners.
- The service should focus more on diversity needs and how to overcome structural barriers that make it difficult for children to settle into the community.
- Risk management processes need to reflect the differing risks to and from children in custody and set out the specific processes required to address these.
- Review and evaluation processes for individual cases and resettlement provision need to be identified and implemented.

We gathered evidence for this standard from documents and meetings and inspected two cases to allow us to illustrate the qualitative standards. 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 consider 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?**

There is a resettlement policy dated January 2022 which has been ratified by the partnership board. The policy details the theory and research in relation to constructive resettlement and the importance of early and tailored resettlement provision. The pathways to achieving successful resettlement are identified, such as education, healthcare, and accommodation. Nonetheless, guidance needs to provide more detail and clarity on the partnership's approach to meeting these needs strategically and operationally. Positively, the policy highlights structural barriers, but processes and escalation routes need to be identified for all pathways so that practitioners are clear on how to raise concerns.

The service has developed a leaflet for children, parents, and carers to explain custody and the resettlement process. This is visually appealing and provides clear and accessible information.

The policy is in line with the service's child-first ethos, and clearly advocates for a personalised and strengths-based approach. However, it needs to focus more on diversity and disproportionality to provide practitioners and partners with specific guidance on how to address these areas.

Resettlement guidance would benefit from more detail on the different risks that a custodial sentence can present for children and how these should be addressed. The policy does not include sufficient detail on victims and how any resettlement work should support them and meet their needs. There is the understanding that the youth justice lead coordinator will work with the case manager to identify risks and victims' wishes. However, the process and how victims' safety will be prioritised are not adequately detailed in the resettlement guidance, the victim policy or the risk and safety and wellbeing policy.

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

Practitioners and partners were aware of the new resettlement policy but were not fully clear on operational access to all the pathways and lines of accountability for each area. Training has been provided to practitioners covering home detention curfews (HDC) and early release and less experienced case managers are provided with mentor support. However, in our staff survey, five of the 10 participants who work with custody cases stated that they had not received specific training in this area.

There were two resettlement cases within the sample. In both cases resettlement activity started early and involved appropriate partners. Inspectors found that the practitioners understood the child's complex needs and were advocating for these to be met. In both cases practitioners were proactive in communicating with the secure estate, partners, the child, and their family. In the two cases, measures to keep the child safe and address risks to others were sufficient. Healthcare needs had been met, and substance misuse provision was in place for the child who had been released. Risk management had been enhanced by the victim contact and this was factored into release conditions. In both cases, management oversight was present and sufficient.

In both cases the transition to probation and other adult services had been considered: in one case, the practitioner and the exploitation team had organised for

mentoring services; in the other, the child was cared for by the local authority and provided with an 18-plus worker before release.

In both cases, planning to address accommodation was sufficient. One case required escalation to the head of service and partnership board because assessments for capacity and care were not progressing. The escalation has been successful but additional work with practitioners and partners to further embed the pathway would be beneficial.

Planning to address education was insufficient in both cases. In one case, the child had an EHCP. An appropriate placement was found but the funding was withdrawn without explanation. The youth justice service's seconded NEET practitioner provided support for the young person upon release, but appropriate education provision was not available. In the other case, the service had found it difficult to secure appropriate education because they did not know where the child would be released to.

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

The service recognised that guidance on resettlement procedures was a potential gap in its provision and developed this guidance using research and reports completed by HM Inspectorate of Probation. Given that the policy and protocol are new, the service has not yet had opportunity to evaluate its work. Any evaluation would benefit from feedback from children, families and carers, statutory partners, and the secure estate.

The two cases in the inspection case sample had areas of strength but also areas that required development. In February 2022 the partnership board asked for a resettlement case where there had been difficulties to be brought to the next meeting for discussion. This was to provide board oversight for the partnership and share any learning within individual services as well as the youth justice service.

## Annexe 1: Methodology

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### 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.<sup>24</sup>

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 offending service submitted evidence in advance and the 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 19 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 15 meetings, which included meetings with managers, partner organisations, and staff. The evidence collected under this domain was judged against our published ratings characteristics.<sup>25</sup>

#### Domain two: court disposals

We completed case assessments over a one-week period, examining case files and interviewing case managers. Forty 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 seven 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 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.

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

Where necessary, interviews with other people significantly involved in the case also took place.

We examined 12 out-of-court disposals. The sample size was set based on the proportion of out-of-court disposal cases in the YOS.

### **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, we interviewed other people significantly involved in the case.

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 seven court disposals and 12 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 for each standard is aligned to the banding at the key question level where the lowest proportion of cases were judged to be sufficient, as we believe 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 (proportion of cases judged to be sufficient 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:<sup>26</sup>**

<b>2.1. Assessment (court disposals)</b>	
<b>Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?</b>	
a) Is there sufficient analysis of offending behaviour, including the child's attitudes towards and motivations for their offending?	86%
b) Does assessment sufficiently analyse diversity issues?	86%
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?	100%
e) Does assessment focus on the child's strengths and protective factors?	100%
f) Does assessment analyse the key structural barriers facing the child?	86%
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?	86%
h) Does assessment give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of victims, and opportunities for restorative justice?	57%
i) Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in their assessment, and are their views considered?	86%
<b>Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?</b>	
a) Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risks to the safety and wellbeing of the child?	86%
b) Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including other assessments, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	71%
c) Does assessment analyse controls and interventions to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	100%

<sup>26</sup> Some questions do not apply in all cases.



<b>Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?</b>	
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?	86%
b) Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including past behaviour and convictions, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	86%
c) Does assessment analyse controls and interventions to manage and minimise the risk of harm presented by the child?	100%

## 2.2. Planning (court disposals)

<b>Does planning focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?</b>	
a) Does planning set out the services most likely to support desistance, paying sufficient attention to the available timescales and the need for sequencing?	86%
b) Does planning sufficiently address diversity issues?	100%
c) Does planning take sufficient account of the child's personal circumstances, including the wider familial and social context of the child?	86%
d) Does planning take sufficient account of the child's strengths and protective factors, and seek to reinforce or develop these as necessary?	100%
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?	86%
f) Does planning give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of victims?	71%
g) Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in planning, and are their views considered?	100%
<b>Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?</b>	
a) Does planning promote the safety and wellbeing of the child, sufficiently addressing risks?	86%
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?	71%
c) Does planning set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	86%
d) Does planning set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to manage those risks that have been identified?	86%

<b>Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?</b>	
a) Does planning promote the safety of other people, sufficiently addressing risk of harm factors?	86%
b) Does planning involve other agencies where appropriate?	100%
c) Does planning address any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims?	86%
d) Does planning set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote the safety of other people?	86%
e) Does planning set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to manage those risks that have been identified?	71%

### **2.3. Implementation and delivery (court disposals)**

<b>Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the child's desistance?</b>	
a) Are the delivered services those most likely to support desistance, with sufficient attention given to sequencing and the available timescales?	86%
b) Does service delivery account for the diversity issues of the child?	86%
c) Does service delivery reflect the wider familial and social context of the child, involving parents or carers, or significant others?	100%
d) Does service delivery build upon the child's strengths and enhance protective factors?	86%
e) Is sufficient focus given to developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child and their parents or carers?	100%
f) Does service delivery promote opportunities for community integration, including access to services post-supervision?	86%
g) Is sufficient attention given to encouraging and enabling the child's compliance with the work of the YOT?	100%
h) Are enforcement actions taken when appropriate?	43%

<b>Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of the child?</b>	
a) Does service delivery promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	57%
b) Is the involvement of other organisations in keeping the child safe sufficiently well-coordinated?	57%

<b>Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?</b>	
a) Are the delivered services sufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	71%
b) Is sufficient attention given to the protection of actual and potential victims?	57%
c) Is the involvement of other agencies in managing the risk of harm sufficiently well-coordinated?	71%

## **2. 4. Reviewing (court disposals)**

<b>Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?</b>	
a) Does reviewing identify and respond to changes in factors linked to desistance?	86%
b) Does reviewing focus sufficiently on building upon the child's strengths and enhancing protective factors?	86%
c) Does reviewing include analysis of, and respond to, diversity factors?	71%
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?	86%
e) Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in reviewing their progress and engagement, and are their views taken into account?	86%
f) Does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work to support desistance?	57%
<b>Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?</b>	
a) Does reviewing identify and respond to changes in factors related to safety and wellbeing?	71%
b) Is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in promoting the safety and wellbeing of the child?	86%
c) Does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	86%
<b>Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?</b>	
a) Does reviewing identify and respond to changes in factors related to risk of harm?	71%

b) Is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in managing the risk of harm?	86%
c) Does reviewing lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan all of work to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	57%

### 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?	92%
b) Does assessment sufficiently analyse diversity issues?	83%
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?	100%
e) Does assessment focus on the child's strengths and protective factors?	100%
f) Does assessment analyse the key structural barriers facing the child?	83%
g) Is sufficient attention given to understanding the child's levels of maturity, ability and motivation to change?	92%
h) Does assessment give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of victims, and opportunities for restorative justice?	83%
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?	83%
b) Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including other assessments, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	92%

#### 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?	83%
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?	92%

### 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?	92%
c) Does planning take sufficient account of the child's personal circumstances, including the wider familial and social context of the child?	92%
d) Does planning take sufficient account of the child's strengths and protective factors, and seek to reinforce or develop these as necessary?	100%
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?	83%
f) Does planning take sufficient account of opportunities for community integration, including access to mainstream services following completion of out-of-court disposal work?	100%
g) Does planning give sufficient attention to the needs and wishes of the victims?	91%
h) Are the child and their parents or carers meaningfully involved in planning, and are their views taken into account?	92%

#### 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?	75%
c) Does planning include necessary contingency arrangements for 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?	92%
b) Does planning involve other agencies where appropriate?	83%
c) Does planning address any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims?	83%
d) Does planning include necessary contingency arrangements for those risks that have been identified?	58%

### 3.3. Implementation and delivery (out-of-court disposals)

#### Does service delivery effectively support the child's desistance?

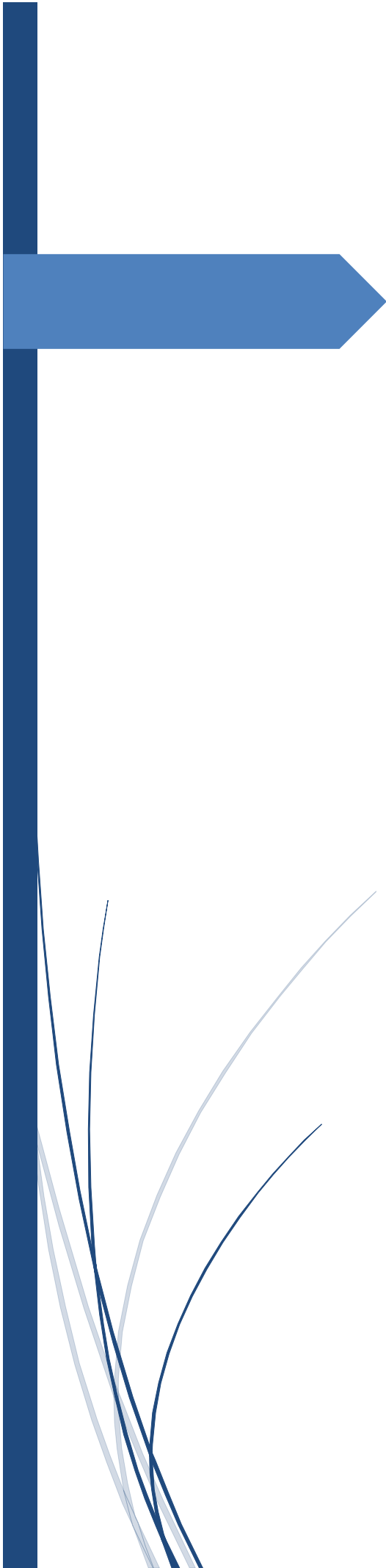
a) Are the delivered services those most likely to support desistance, with sufficient attention given to sequencing and the available timescales?	100%
b) Does service delivery account for the diversity issues of the child?	92%
c) Does service delivery reflect the wider familial and social context of the child, involving parents or carers, or significant others?	100%
d) Is sufficient focus given to developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child and their parents or carers?	100%
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?	92%

#### Does service delivery effectively support the safety of the child?

a) Does service delivery promote the safety and wellbeing of the child?	92%
b) Is the involvement of other agencies in keeping the child safe sufficiently well utilised and coordinated?	67%

#### Does service delivery effectively support the safety of other people?

a) Are the delivered services sufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm?	100%
b) Is sufficient attention given to the protection of actual and potential victims?	100%



# North East Lincolnshire Youth Justice Services HMIP improvement plan 2022-2023

Paul Caswell, Head of Service, Young and Safe  
NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

# North East Lincolnshire Youth Partnership Board

## HMIP recommendations implementation plan

### Foreword

This inspection is part of our programme of youth offending service (YOS) inspections. We have inspected and rated North East Lincolnshire YOS 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, North East Lincolnshire YOS was rated as 'Good'. We also inspected the quality of resettlement policy and provision, which was separately rated as 'Requires improvement'.

We last inspected North East Lincolnshire in 2014, when we undertook a short quality screening. The service has undergone significant changes since then, including relocating out-of-court disposal provision to the early help service. Considerable work has been completed to improve the partnership board, including ensuring partnership representation is of the appropriate seniority with consistent attendance by members.

The staff and volunteers are an asset to the service. They are motivated and dedicated to meeting the needs of those they work with. The service has invested in staff through training and development opportunities, and they are an experienced and knowledgeable team.

Children have access to a wide range of interventions and services, which are tailored to their needs. Recognising that county lines and exploitation are risks to the children, the partnership has created innovative and co-produced campaigns to tackle these issues. There are established multi-agency pathways for children involved in harmful sexual behaviour or substance misuse, or who require mental health provision. However, some relationships and pathways need further development to ensure that YOS children are prioritised.

The service is committed to improvement. It has internal processes to review practice robustly, and local agreements with other youth justice services to provide independent scrutiny. Some policies require more detail and clarity, although in practice the delivery model is working well. Assessments in post-court cases were a particular strength, although work to keep children safe requires further development, particularly in ensuring practitioners are confident in escalating concerns when appropriate responses from other services are lacking or delayed.

We found good-quality work across out-of-court disposals, with provision and policy, assessment, and planning rated as outstanding. We saw a service which offered a child-first approach, tailored to meeting children's needs effectively.

The service has adopted measures to monitor and address disproportionality in terms of ethnicity. We also found that practitioners recognised and considered diversity in both post-court and out-of-court disposals. However, there needs to be a sharper focus on all protected characteristics and the service should set out how it intends to address this in its plans and policies.

Justin Russell



HM Chief Inspector of Probation







**North East Lincolnshire Youth Partnership Board  
HMIP recommendations implementation plan**

## Ratings





**North East Lincolnshire Youth Offending Service**      **Score 27/36**  
Fieldwork took place in May 2022

**Overall rating**      **Good**      





### 1. Organisational delivery

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


### 2. Court disposals

2.1	Assessment	<b>Outstanding</b>	
2.2	Planning	Good	
2.3	Implementation and delivery	<b>Requires improvement</b>	
2.4	Reviewing	Good	

### 3. Out-of-court disposals

3.1	Assessment	<b>Outstanding</b>	
3.2	Planning	<b>Outstanding</b>	
3.3	Implementation and delivery	Good	
3.4	Out-of-court disposal policy and provision	<b>Outstanding</b>	

### 4. Resettlement

4.1	Resettlement policy and provision	<b>Requires improvement</b>	
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## North East Lincolnshire Youth Partnership Board HMIP recommendations implementation plan

Recommendations	Key lines of enquiry in report.	Board champion	Youth Justice Service champion	Progress
1. Develop a formal mechanism for gathering, collating, and analysing the views of victims, children, and parents or carers to inform service delivery	<p>Practitioners need to focus more on victims' wishes in assessments and ensure that, where applicable, sufficient attention is paid to actual and potential victims.</p> <p>There needs to be a formal mechanism for routinely gathering, collating, and analysing the views of victims, children, parents, and carers.</p>	Paul Condon	Lynne Macpherson	
2. Review its response to diversity, ensuring that it considers all protected characteristics; plans and policies need to provide explicit detail of how the service intends to address diversity	The board needs to develop a sharper focus on all areas of diversity, including every protected characteristic.	Spencer Hunt	Rachael Maeers	
3. Develop stronger links with education placements so that it can be involved in decisions about education for its children and have clearer escalation routes to challenge education packages	There needs to be clearer and established pathways to raise concerns about education decision-making and provision for YOS children.	Karen Linton  Steve Ryder  Rebecca Taylor	Jo Lawson	
4. Continue to strengthen operational relationships with children's social care to ensure that provision to keep children safe is promoted	<p>Relationships between the service and children's social care need to be strengthened operationally to improve communication and coordinated working.</p> <p>Practitioners need to use all information and intelligence when carrying out reviews.</p> <p>Contingency planning needs to be more detailed, and practitioners need to identify actions to promote the child's safety, and that of others, if risks change.</p>	TBC	Donna Abernethie	
5. Support staff and managers so that they are more confident in knowing when to escalate concerns to partner services	In some cases, there needed to be quicker escalation of concerns to senior managers so that these could be raised with the appropriate service.	Supt Paul French	Paul Caswell	
6. Develop data analysis processes to enable it to scrutinise and	The board needs to support the service to	Paul Caswell		

## North East Lincolnshire Youth Partnership Board HMIP recommendations implementation plan

<p>explore trends in data and desistance factors.</p>	<p>identify and scrutinise data trends to deliver services effectively.</p> <p>The service needs to analyse its data in more depth to understand the cohort of children and explore any trends, such as the high proportion of girls receiving out-of-court disposals.</p>	<p>Marie Anne Hall</p>		
<p>7. Review resettlement policy and provision to ensure that key partners are involved in and accountable for pathways to successful resettlement.</p>	<p>The resettlement policy requires review and co-production with partners to ensure that the pathways to successful resettlement are identified and established, and clear lines of accountability understood.</p> <p>The service needs to embed further its resettlement processes and training for staff and partners.</p> <p>The service should focus more on diversity needs and how to overcome structural barriers.</p> <p>Risk management processes need to reflect the differing risks to and from children in custody and set out the specific processes required to address these.</p> <p>Review and evaluation processes for individual cases and resettlement provision need to be identified and implemented.</p>	<p>Gemma Woods</p>	<p>Zoe Grindle</p>	
<p>8. Continue to support the service and advocate for children in contact with youth justice and early help to have access to direct speech, language, and communication therapy.</p>	<p>There needs to be direct access to speech and language provision</p>	<p>Nick Hamilton Rudd</p> <p>Paul Caswell</p>	<p>Lynne Macpherson</p>	
<p>9. Board development</p>	<p>Links to and from the partnership board need strengthening so that strategic activity is fully understood</p> <p>The board needs to support the service to identify and scrutinise data trends to deliver services effectively.</p> <p>Some policies and protocols require review to ensure that</p>	<p>Nick Hamilton Rudd</p>	<p>Paul Caswell Marie Anne Hall</p>	

**North East Lincolnshire Youth Partnership Board  
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	<p>they are tailored to the service, reflect the high standard of practice being delivered, and clearly map out provisions for both youth justice and early help</p> <p>The Out of Court / Diversion policy needs to provide more clarity on how long diversions cases remain open and ensure practitioners are aware of this</p>			
<p>10. Supporting YJS staff</p>	<p>The appraisal process needs to be enhanced so that it is timely and has stronger links to the skills audit and service objectives.</p> <p>Practitioners need to use all information and intelligence when carrying out reviews.</p>	<p>Donna Abernethie</p>	<p>Zoe Grindle</p>	