



INSPECTION CRITERIA

for

SHORT QUALITY SCREENING

of

YOUTH OFFENDING WORK

in

ENGLAND and WALES

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INTRODUCTION

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- 1.1 Assessment provides a robust framework for work to reduce reoffending
- 1.2 Planning increases the likelihood of the required work being undertaken to reduce reoffending
- 1.3 Management and partnership work make a positive difference to reducing reoffending.

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- 2.3 Required work is undertaken to manage risk of harm to others and this is of good quality
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- 4.1 The likelihood of successful outcomes from the sentence is increased by good quality engagement with the child or young person and their family
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- 4.3 The likelihood of a successful outcome from the sentence is increased through attention to the health, well-being, education, training, employment and other needs of the child or young person
- 4.4 Effective management ensures that the objectives of the Youth Justice System are met

¹ The word 'Sentence' refers to all sentences of the court, whether in custody or in the community.

INTRODUCTION

These inspection criteria are for use in the Short Quality Screening (SQS) of youth offending work in England and Wales. This version applies to all inspections with fieldwork commencing on 1st September 2014 onwards.

They explain what aspects of work with children and young people who have offended are inspected. Inspectors normally make a judgement on performance against each criterion. The criteria are each followed by a list of the primary indicators that inspectors use to assess performance.

The SQS programme focuses on the quality of casework at the start of sentence through to the time post sentence when initial plans should have been in place. All the criteria are considered within this time frame, together with any reviews that had fallen due and evidence of compliance up to the date of inspection. It treats this work as an indicator of the likelihood of positive outcomes following completion of the full sentence.

SQS inspections are undertaken in local authority areas across the broad range of published performance.

The SQS runs alongside the Full Joint Inspection (FJI) programme using primarily a subset of the criteria and indicators from that programme. Separate criteria are published for the FJI programme.

HMI Probation
August 2014

Please note:

YOT - The generic term YOT is used, since this is the term found within legislation (Crime and Disorder Act 1998). However we recognise that local areas operate a variety of models and terms to deliver the objectives outlined in the legislation. We will inspect work with children and young people who have offended or who are likely to offend irrespective of who actually undertakes that work.

Management – where the term ‘management’ is used within these criteria it applies to leadership, management and partnership work linked to addressing offending behaviour by children and young people, irrespective of who undertakes it.

1. REDUCING REOFFENDING

Reoffending is reduced through the services provided by the YOT and others. Good quality initial assessment and planning with effective management and partnership work increases the likelihood of successful outcomes.

1.1 Assessment provides a robust framework for work to reduce reoffending

1.1.1 The needs of children and young people who have offended are thoroughly understood, through timely and good quality assessment.

Quality indicators:

- *Comprehensive and good quality assessment is undertaken of the factors linked to offending by the child or young person, which includes relevant aspects of their local context or family background. Assessment is accurate, timely and analytical.*
- *There is sufficient assessment of health (including emotional or mental health and physical health) and substance misuse needs, in particular as these relate to reoffending.*
- *There is sufficient assessment of education, training, employment (ETE) needs, in particular as these relate to reoffending.*
- *There is sufficient assessment of living arrangements and parenting capacity, in particular as these relate to reoffending.*
- *Positive influences such as supportive and pro-social factors are also identified and assessed.*
- *The views of children and young people, their parents/carers and other evidence are brought together to form a coherent assessment.*
- *Sufficient attention is paid to barriers to engagement and other potential discriminatory factors.*
- *In particular assessment gives sufficient attention to the first, or preferred, language of the child or young person.*
- *Assessments draw sufficiently on those previously carried out, including those of other agencies.*
- *Sufficient attention is given identifying and gaining access to assessments carried out by other agencies.*
- *All relevant staff, and other agencies as required, are actively and meaningfully involved in the assessment.*
- *The outcomes of assessments are shared as appropriate with all workers involved in the case.*
- *Assessments are regularly reviewed, as required by the needs of the case. This includes at the start of sentence when the initial assessment was carried out for a court report, and following any significant change in the child or young person's circumstances or receipt of new information.*
- *Offending, and offending related behaviour is actively and effectively monitored by staff, and responded to appropriately*

- 1.1.2 Understanding by courts of the child or young person, their circumstances and their behaviour is promoted by good quality reports.

Quality indicators:

- *Reports are effective in influencing the outcome.*
- *Reports are of good quality and meet the needs of the reader.*
- *Reports contain a thorough analytical assessment of offending related behaviour, risk of harm to others and vulnerability.*
- *Where relevant, reports contain a thorough assessment of health (including emotional or mental health and physical health), substance misuse and ETE needs.*
- *Reports provide a clear and accurate picture of the child or young person, including where relevant, maturity and other relevant diversity or potential discriminatory factors, as required by the purpose of the report.*
- *Where relevant, sufficient attention is given to the impact of a custodial sentence.*
- *Reports contain clear and appropriate proposals commensurate with the seriousness of the offence and the assessment of the child or young person.*
- *Management and other arrangements ensure the quality of reports.*

1.2 Planning increases the likelihood of the required work being undertaken to reduce reoffending

- 1.2.1 Good quality timely plans are in place for work to reduce reoffending.

Quality Indicators:

- *Intervention plans meet the assessed needs, and are targeted on those factors most likely to reduce offending.*
- *Plans give sufficient attention to health (including emotional or mental health and physical health) and substance misuse needs, in particular as these relate to reoffending.*
- *Plans give sufficient attention to ETE needs, in particular as these relate to reoffending.*
- *Plans give sufficient attention to living arrangements and parenting capacity, in particular as these relate to reoffending.*
- *Intervention plans are sequenced according to risk of harm, offending related priorities and, in appropriate cases, to reduce vulnerability.*
- *Sufficient priority is given to strengthening or reinforcing positive factors.*
- *Clear, specific and achievable goals are set that are relevant and meaningful to the child or young person.*
- *Outcome objectives and the intensity of delivery respond appropriately to diversity factors, potential discriminatory factors and the circumstances of the individual child or young person.*
- *In particular planning gives sufficient attention to the first, or preferred, language of the child or young person.*
- *Plans clearly reflect the views of the child or young person and, where relevant, their parents/carers on priorities for change.*
- *Sufficient priority is given to restorative justice and meeting the needs of victims.*
- *Staff and other agencies, including youth offender panels for referral orders, work effectively together to develop the plan.*

1.2.2 Custodial sentence plans are of good quality and support delivery of a well integrated sentence.

Quality indicators:

- *Staff, and partners where required, are actively and meaningfully involved in development and review of the custodial sentence plan.*
- *Custodial sentence plans clearly reflect the assessment of those factors most likely to reduce offending.*
- *Custodial sentence plans clearly reflect the views of the child or young person and, where relevant, their parents/carers.*
- *Custodial sentence plans are clear what aspects are to be delivered during each of the custodial and community phases of the sentence.*
- *Sufficient focus is given to resettlement planning throughout the custodial phase of the sentence.*

1.3 Management and partnership work make a positive difference to reducing reoffending.

1.3.1 Managers are effective in ensuring that reducing reoffending is addressed through the provision of good quality services.

Quality Indicators:

- *Management and other arrangements ensure the quality of work to reduce reoffending.*
- *Partners provide sufficient resources and support to the YOT so that they make an effective contribution to assessment and planning.*
- *Managers ensure that staff who undertake work to reduce reoffending have sufficient training, experience and qualifications.*
- *There are effective and timely local systems to assist staff to monitor offending behaviour.*

2. PROTECTING THE PUBLIC

Actual and potential victims are kept safe through the effective management of risk of harm to others. Good quality initial assessment and planning with effective management and partnership work increase the likelihood of successful outcomes.

2.1 Assessment provides a robust framework for work to manage risk of harm to others

2.1.1 Risk of harm to others posed by the child or young person is thoroughly understood, through timely and good quality assessment that takes account of victims' needs.

Quality indicators:

- *Risk of harm assessment, including initial screening, is of good quality; being timely, comprehensive and analytical; addressing all aspects of actual and potentially harmful behaviour that are relevant to the case.*
- *The assessment clearly specifies the nature and level of risk to actual and potential victims, including the public and staff, and responds appropriately to any diversity or potential discriminatory factors in the case.*
- *Specific attention is given to the needs of vulnerable victims, motivation and the context in which harm has or may occur.*
- *Screening of risk of harm is timely and of sufficient quality.*
- *The Risk of Serious Harm (RoSH) classification, Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) category and level, where applicable, are clear and accurate and are communicated to all relevant staff and other agencies.*
- *Reports to courts and others include a clear and thorough assessment of risk of harm to others.*
- *Agencies work together well in the assessment of risk of harm, including where appropriate in undertaking multi-agency assessments.*
- *Assessments draw adequately on MAPPA, other agencies' and previous assessments.*
- *In custodial cases the assessment is clear about the risk of harm that applies both in custody and the community.*

2.2 Planning maximises the likelihood of victims being protected

2.2.1 Timely and good quality plans maximise the likelihood of actual and potential victims being protected and risk of harm to others being reduced.

Quality indicators:

- *A comprehensive and current plan to manage risk of harm is completed where required; it covers risk to specific victims where applicable.*
- *Specific priority is given to overcoming barriers to engagement by the child or young person that may have an impact on managing risk of harm.*

- *Plans to manage risk of harm are clear and specific, appropriate to the circumstances of the case, with a clear link between assessment and the plan.*
- *Plans anticipate changes in risk of harm/acute factors wherever feasible, and include sufficient contingency planning.*
- *Plans are precise about roles and responsibilities for their delivery.*
- *Arrangements for sharing information about the case with partners or others are clear and precise. Where appropriate they are understood by, and agreed with, those involved.*
- *Plans are communicated to and agreed with all those involved in their delivery.*
- *In custodial cases plans are clear what actions are to be undertaken during the custodial phase of the sentence, including to reduce risk of harm in preparation for release, and during the community phase.*
- *Agencies work together well in the planning of risk of harm work.*
- *MAPPA are utilised effectively for appropriate cases.*
- *Intervention plans include actions to manage risk of harm where these are required and are then sequenced according to risk of harm.*

2.3 Required work is undertaken to manage risk of harm to others and this is of good quality

2.3.1 Victims are protected and risk of harm to others is minimised through active management throughout the sentence.

Quality Indicators:

- *Risk of harm is actively managed throughout the course of the sentence.*
- *Risk of harm is regularly and thoroughly reviewed at appropriate times and following a significant change that might give rise to concern.*
- *Changes in risk of harm factors are identified swiftly and acted upon appropriately, including use of breach proceedings in appropriate cases to protect the public.*
- *Action is taken, when necessary, to monitor and protect the safety of actual and potential victims particularly those deemed vulnerable.*

2.4 Effective management and partnership work ensures the public is protected

2.4.1 Managers are effective in ensuring that the risk of harm to others is properly managed, through the provision of good quality services.

Quality Indicators:

- *Operational management of risk of harm work ensures the quality of practice and is undertaken within a clear policy and practice framework, with responsibilities for the management of risk of harm understood and applied by all relevant staff and agencies.*
- *Where internal forums contribute to the oversight of work to manage risk of harm then these are effective.*

3. PROTECTING THE CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON

Children and young people are kept safe and their vulnerability reduced through effective initial management of cases by the YOT and its partners. The YOT makes an effective contribution to multi-agency child protection arrangements.

3.1 Assessment provides a robust framework for work to protect children and young people and reduce their vulnerability.

3.1.1 Child protection and vulnerability needs are thoroughly understood, through timely and good quality assessment.

Quality indicators:

- *Timely and good quality assessment by the YOT and its partners establishes the level of the child or young person's safety and vulnerability.*
- *If necessary formal child protection procedures are implemented. In these cases, there is effective and timely engagement with local child protection arrangements to support the completion of the child protection assessment.*
- *Agencies share information appropriately.*
- *The assessment clearly specifies the nature and level of risk to the child or young person, and identifies appropriately any ethnicity or other diversity factors, including where these relate to the first, or preferred, language.*
- *The child or young person and where appropriate, parents/carers are actively engaged in the assessment.*
- *There is effective liaison with children's social care services in undertaking the assessment, to ensure that it is informed by knowledge gained from any previous involvement.*
- *Assessment draws on those previously carried out by the YOT and other agencies including by the police, secure establishments, children's social care services, education, health (including emotional or mental health and physical health) and substance misuse services.*
- *In custodial cases, and cases where the child or young person is placed in secure care, the assessment is clear about the vulnerability that applies both in the establishment and in the community, and is effectively communicated to all involved in the case.*
- *Assessment of vulnerability is regularly reviewed at appropriate times and following a significant change that might give rise to concern.*
- *Reports to courts and others include a clear and thorough assessment of the vulnerability of the child or young person.*

3.2 Planning maximises the likelihood of children and young people being protected and their vulnerability reduced

3.2.1 Timely and good quality plans maximise the likelihood of children and young people being protected and their vulnerability needs addressed.

Quality Indicators;

- *A comprehensive and current plan is completed, which demonstrably takes account of ethnicity and diversity, to reduce vulnerability where assessment shows that a child or young person needs protection.*
- *The plan is clear and specific and addresses the risks and needs of the child or young person that are identified in the assessment*
- *Plans demonstrate that sufficient attention is given to health (including emotional or mental health and physical health) and to achieving a reduction of substance misuse.*
- *Plans give sufficient attention to ETE needs, particularly where these relate to protecting the child or young person and reducing their vulnerability.*
- *Plans give sufficient attention to living arrangements and parenting capacity, where these relate to protecting the child or young person and reducing their vulnerability.*
- *Staff contribute to the development of child protection plans and ensure that these properly reflect the contribution of the YOT.*
- *Where necessary staff challenge the decisions of other agencies in order to ensure that appropriate child protection plans are in place.*
- *Plans are clear and precise about roles and responsibilities for their delivery and are effectively communicated to those involved in their delivery.*
- *Arrangements for sharing information about the case with partners or others are clear and precise.*
- *Where relevant, plans to protect the child or young person and reduce their vulnerability are integrated into other plans of work with the child or young person.*
- *In all cases where children and young people are placed in the secure estate, plans specify the work to be undertaken in the establishment, in preparation for, and following release into the community.*
- *Agencies work together well in planning processes to protect children and young people and reduce their vulnerability. An effective contribution is made by the YOT to the plans of other agencies.*
- *Plans to manage safeguarding are regularly reviewed at appropriate times, and adapted as required.*
- *All necessary referrals are made to other agencies to protect the child or young person, and any other affected child or young person.*

3.3 Effective management and partnership work ensures that children and young people are protected and their vulnerability is reduced.

3.3.1 Managers ensure that work to protect children and young people and reduce their vulnerability has sufficient priority and is properly delivered at the start of the sentence through the provision of appropriate and good quality services.

Quality indicators:

- *Operational management of work to safeguard and reduce the vulnerability of children and young people ensures the quality of practice and is undertaken within a clear policy and practice framework, with responsibilities understood and applied by all relevant staff and agencies.*
- *Where internal forums contribute to the oversight of work to manage safeguarding and reduce vulnerability, then these are effective.*

4. ENSURING THAT THE SENTENCE IS SERVED

Effective initial engagement with children and young people and their families, ensuring that children and young people comply with their sentences, attention to the health and well-being of the child or young person with effective management and partnership work all increase the likelihood of successful outcomes from the sentence.

4.1 The likelihood of successful outcomes from the sentence is increased by good quality initial engagement with the child or young person and their family

4.1.1 The child or young person and their parents/carers are meaningfully engaged throughout their initial contact with the YOT.

Quality indicators:

- *There is active and meaningful engagement with the child or young person and parents/carers to carry out assessments and reviews.*
- *Assessments allow sufficient opportunity for children and young people to tell their own story.*
- *Assessments reflect the child or young person, parent/carers and any significant others views about their needs.*
- *Children and young people and their parents/carers understand reports and are provided with a copy before the court date.*
- *Children and young people and their parents/carers are actively involved in the development of plans, and are provided with a timely copy.*
- *Plans are meaningful to children and young people, being written in a language that they understand and clearly reflect their opinions on priorities for change. Sufficient attention is given to ensuring that they understand and where possible, own them.*

4.1.2 The likelihood of successful outcomes is increased through identifying and responding to barriers to effective engagement.

Quality indicators:

- *There is timely and good quality assessment of potential barriers to engagement and access to services by the child or young person, including learning needs, disability and other potential discriminatory or diverse factors. Where appropriate, plans are put into place to mitigate their impact.*
- *Sufficient attention is given to identifying the first, or preferred, language of children and young people and their parents/carers. Where appropriate sufficient attention is given to enabling the child or young person and their parents/carers to work with the YOT in their first, or preferred, language.*
- *Specific attention is given in all cases to understanding and addressing the speech, language or communication needs of children and young people to ensure methods of working meet their individual needs.*
- *Assessments and plans to address diversity factors and barriers to engagement are clearly communicated to all involved in the case.*

- *Sufficient attention is given to issues of vulnerability and health and well being, where these act as a barrier to effective engagement with the service.*

4.2 Children and young people serve the sentence that they have received

4.2.1 The initial requirements of the sentence are met and, where appropriate, enforcement action is taken following non-compliance.

Quality Indicators:

- *The child or young person and, where appropriate their parents/carers, understand the requirements of the sentence.*
- *Staff motivate children and young people to comply with the sentence.*
- *Action is taken to understand and address barriers to compliance.*
- *Children and young people comply with their sentence or, in appropriate cases, compliance with the sentence improves.*
- *Where the child or young person fails to comply with the sentence, there is an appropriate response, including breach action where needed.*
- *Sufficient contact is arranged with the child or young person to meet the requirements of the sentence.*

4.3 The likelihood of a successful outcome from the sentence is increased through initial attention to the health, well-being, education, training, employment (ETE) and other needs of the child or young person

4.3.1 Sufficient attention is given to the health, well-being, ETE and other needs of the child or young person, in particular where this may act as a barrier to successful outcomes from the sentence.

Quality indicators:

- *Required referrals are made to address health (including emotional or mental health and physical health), substance misuse, ETE, social care and other needs relating to the child or young person.*
- *Staff and other agencies work together well to promote the health, well being, ETE and other needs of the child or young person, and support them at the start of their sentence.*

4.4 The initial contribution of managers and partners increases the likelihood of Youth Justice System objectives being met.

4.4.1 Managers and partners are effective in ensuring that the YOT is able to deliver good quality services and meet the needs of children and young people.

Quality Indicators:

- *Managers have the required level of knowledge and skills to provide effective supervision of staff and oversight of work.*

- *Staff, secondees and volunteers are well supervised, trained (including through induction of new staff) and supported to deliver their work to a high standard, within a clear and consistently applied quality assurance framework.*
- *Managers ensure that case records are accurate and timely and clearly record the work that has been undertaken.*
- *Staff are trained to recognise and respond appropriately to speech, language and communication needs, and other diversity or potential discriminatory factors.*
- *Engagement with children and young people and response to non-compliance is undertaken within a clear policy and practice framework.*
- *Partnership working, including with local children's social care, education, health and accommodation services, ensures children and young people access the services they need, including those to address speech, language and communication needs.*