

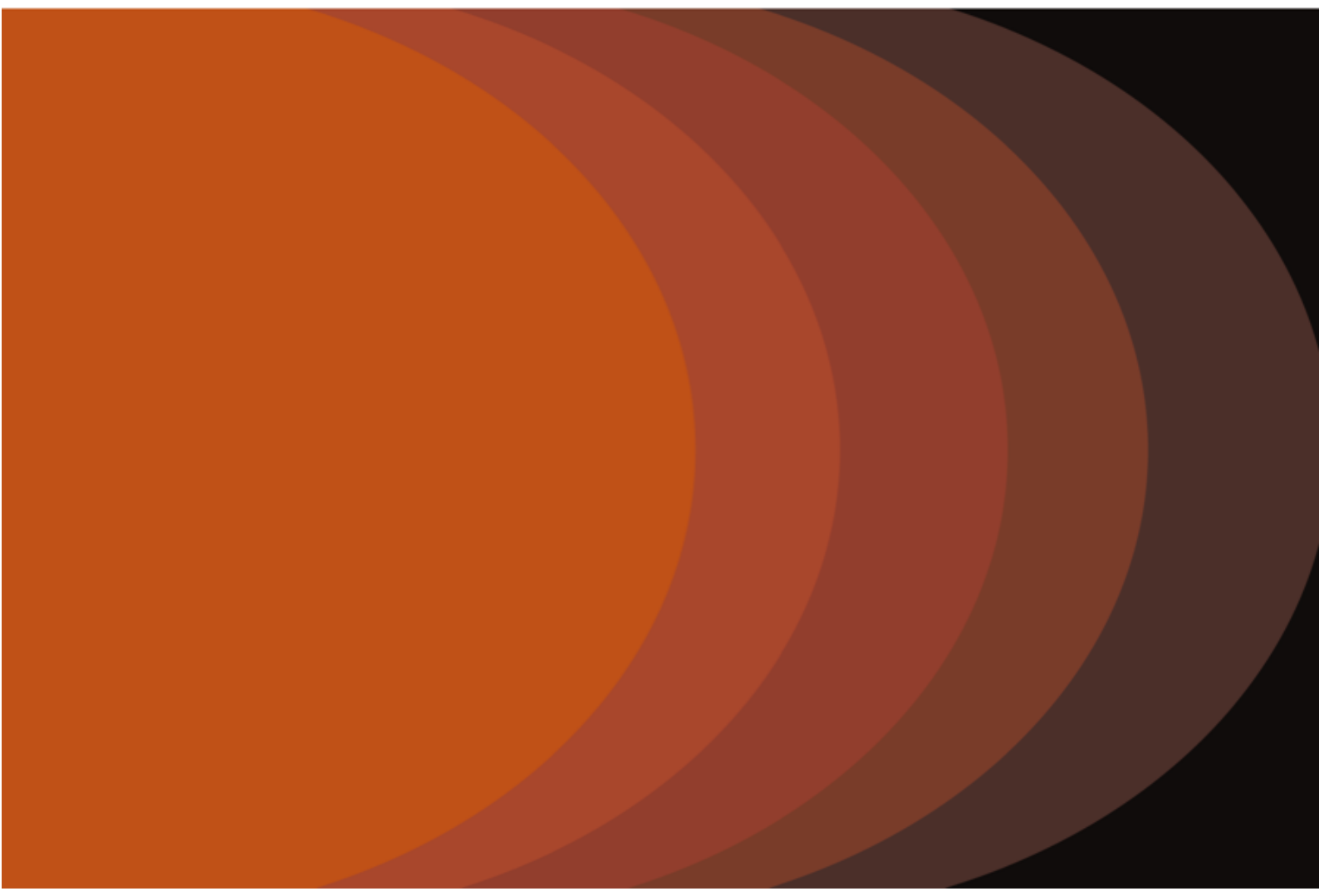


HM Inspectorate
of Probation

An inspection of youth offending services in

North Lincolnshire

HM Inspectorate of Probation, September 2023



Contents

Foreword	3
Ratings	4
Recommendations	5
Background	6
Domain one: Organisational delivery	7
1.1. Governance and leadership.....	7
1.2. Staff	9
1.3. Partnerships and services	10
1.4. Information and facilities.....	12
Domain two: Court disposals	16
2.1. Assessment.....	16
2.2. Planning.....	17
2.3. Implementation and delivery	18
2.4. Reviewing	19
Domain three: Out-of-court disposals	20
3.1. Assessment.....	20
3.2. Planning.....	21
3.3. Implementation and delivery	22
3.4. Out-of-court disposal policy and provision.....	23
Further information	25

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Foreword

This inspection is part of our programme of youth justice service (YJS) inspections. We have inspected and rated North Lincolnshire Youth Justice Partnership (YJP) 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 Lincolnshire YJP was rated as 'Good'. Board members are clear about the vision for the service, are consulted on its annual priorities, and certain members have responsibility for leading on YJP priority areas. The board recognised a gap in speech, language, and communication provision for YJP children and commissioned a pilot project, which had a positive impact. In addition to evaluating the pilot, the board created a task and finish group to ensure a clear focus remained on this. However, at the time of the inspection there was no specific speech, language or communication provision for YJP children.

North Lincolnshire's partnership working was a strength, especially its substance misuse work; its work to maintain children in appropriate education, training, and employment, and to manage children at risk of exploitation. Although there is access to a nurse, referrals are dependent on YJP practitioners completing health screenings. The inspection found that not all staff were confident in identifying health issues and there was no quality assurance process to ensure that children's health needs were consistently met.

The YJP actively encourages staff development through management opportunities within the service and supporting staff to complete external qualifications. However, due to changes in the management team, the management and supervision of volunteers was not adhering to the local authority's policy.

The service recognises that it does not have a specific diversity strategy and acknowledges that further development is needed in this area of work. It has commenced a development plan, following a peer review, and is committed to improving its understanding in relation to diversity and disproportionality. In addition, the YJP should consider implementing a framework to support staff at all levels to reflect on their knowledge and understanding across all of children's protected characteristics. Improved understanding of children's diverse needs must be driven both strategically and operationally and the YJP identify this is an area of priority for them.

The quality of statutory work needs to be improved. We found inconsistencies across assessment, planning, and reviewing, particularly in managing children's risk of harm to others. Out-of-court disposal work was stronger, especially the quality of assessments. Overall, however, the quality and consistency of management oversight of practice needs to improve.

The work the YJP has done to capture the voices of children and families is a strength, and it is creative in its approaches to gaining their feedback. The inspection found that staff do all they can to encourage children's engagement.



Justin Russell

HM Chief Inspector of Probation

Ratings

North Lincolnshire Youth Justice Partnership
Fieldwork started May 2023

Score 21/36

Overall rating

Good



1. Organisational delivery

1.1 Governance and leadership

Requires improvement



1.2 Staff

Good



1.3 Partnerships and services

Good



1.4 Information and facilities

Good



2. Court disposals

2.1 Assessment

Requires improvement



2.2 Planning

Requires improvement



2.3 Implementation and delivery

Good



2.4 Reviewing

Requires improvement



3. Out-of-court disposals

3.1 Assessment

Outstanding



3.2 Planning

Good



3.3 Implementation and delivery

Good



3.4 Out-of-court disposal policy and provision

Good



Recommendations

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

The North Lincolnshire Youth Justice Partnership Board should:

1. develop and implement a diversity strategy, ensuring that it considers all protected characteristics, and recognises and addresses the diversity needs of all staff, children, and victims accessing the service
2. ensure that children supervised by the YJP are assessed for and have access to services that address their speech, language, and communication needs
3. oversee a quality assurance process to make sure that all staff identify children's health issues appropriately, so that their needs are met.

The YJP lead officer should:

4. improve the quality of statutory work, especially in relation to assessing, planning, and reviewing
5. strengthen the quality and consistency of management oversight of practice
6. make sure there is a structure in place so that volunteers are appropriately managed, supervised, and supported.

Background

We conducted fieldwork in North Lincolnshire Youth Justice Partnership (YJP) over the week of 15 May 2023. We inspected cases where the sentence, licence or out-of-court disposal began between 16 May 2022 and 10 March 2023. There were no resettlement cases. We interviewed 10 case managers.

North Lincolnshire is a unitary authority area in the county of Lincolnshire in England. It is located on the south bank of the Humber Estuary and borders the unitary authority of North East Lincolnshire and the non-metropolitan county of Lincolnshire. It also borders South Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire and is part of the Yorkshire and Humber region.

The North Lincolnshire YJP is part of the council's children and families' directorate. The line management of the lead officer for youth justice sits with the head of children's provision. There is an independent chair of the partnership board whose experience includes management within youth justice and as an independent chair of local safeguarding children's boards. The lead officer manages the youth justice team, child exploitation team, substance misuse team, and outreach team. North Lincolnshire council has a 'one family approach' that aims to work for all children and families, in which partners work together to provide and commission integrated whole-family help for children. The ambition is 'for children to thrive in their families, achieve in their schools, and flourish in their communities'.

At the time of the inspection, there were 22 staff in the YJP. In March 2023, 10 post-court interventions were open and 57 out-of-court disposals. The service also manages prevention cases. There had been changes to some of the management roles within the service, with a relatively new management team, including managers appointed through internal development and promotion opportunities.

The YJP has access to a comprehensive suite of data across post-court orders and out-of-court disposals, analysis of which has led to deep-dive reports. These included reports on children in custody and the voice of the child. The service also has a multi-agency 'cohorts meeting' which provides an analysis and overview of specific cohorts within the youth justice population. It focuses on children who are at risk of entering and being within the youth justice arena, and identifies trends, issues, and actions required in relation to the cohort, as well as specific actions in individual cases.

Recent analysis of performance data shows that the number of first-time entrants to the formal youth justice system was less than the average for the region and for England and Wales. For reoffending, both the proportion of children who reoffend and how frequently they reoffend are lower than the average for England and Wales.

Domain one: Organisational delivery

To inspect organisational delivery, we reviewed written evidence submitted in advance by the YJP and conducted 11 meetings, including with staff, volunteers, managers, board members, and partnership staff and their managers.

Key findings about organisational delivery were as follows.

1.1. Governance and leadership



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

Requires improvement

The results of the case management inspection are such that, in line with our rules and guidance, a rating of 'Requires improvement' should be considered.

Strengths:

- The Youth Justice Strategic Partnership board has an experienced independent chair. They have attended staff team meetings and met YJP children to get their feedback about the services they have received.
- Board membership includes all statutory partners including the local authority chief executive who meets with the independent chair after each board meeting.
- There is a strong child first vision and ethos and board members are clear about the vision for the service. Board development sessions are held which provide the opportunity for discussion and consultation regarding the YJP annual priorities.
- Individual partner board members have responsibility to provide a report at each meeting to explain progress against their lead priority area, ensuring accountability across the partnership board.
- The YJP is well represented across strategic and operational partnerships, both within the local authority and across the North Lincolnshire partnerships.
- The board receives information relating to the service's performance, progress on past plans, learning from case reviews, and inspection reports, as well as other deep-dive thematic reports.
- Board members hold each other to account and challenge partner agencies about specific issues, as well as the resources provided to the service.
- There is a youth justice plan which was developed through consultation with board members, staff, and children, and is supported by a business and improvement plan.
- The board recognised the gap in speech, language, and communication provision for YJP children and commissioned a specialist speech and language teacher to run a pilot with YJP staff and children. The impact of the project was positive for all involved.

- There is a commitment to continuous improvement and a peer review was commissioned and undertaken and this assisted in supporting the service to identify areas for development, from which a action plan was created.

Areas for improvement:

- Despite the positive impact of the speech, language, and communication pilot, and the board advocating for continued speech, language and communication providing, at the time of the inspection there was no specific provision for YJP children.
- The service does not currently have a cohesive diversity strategy, and acknowledges that further development is needed in this area of work. To help it improve, a strategy should consider all protected characteristics and include processes for recognising and addressing the diversity needs of all staff, children, and victims accessing the service.
- In addition, the YJP should consider implementing a framework to support staff to reflect on their knowledge and understanding of children's protected characteristics, and enable them to be confident in asking appropriate questions about a child's heritage and their lived experiences. Improved understanding of children's diverse needs should be driven both strategically and operationally. Most of the inspected cases showed that diversity issues were assessed appropriately, but in too many this did not lead to sufficient planning or delivery of interventions to address children's diversity needs.
- Some managers are new to the role and the management team is still developing. Leaders must ensure that the managers are appropriately trained and have the skills to oversee high-quality case management practice.
- It is recognised that the management team responsibilities and lead areas are still being clarified, reviewed and developed. Whilst members of the management team have attended the board, the current links between them and the partnership board need strengthening, and further work is required to ensure governance arrangements translate into effective case supervision.
- Inconsistencies in quality assurance and management oversight were evident in the cases inspected, with six out of 15 (40 per cent) judged to have received insufficient management oversight.

1.2. Staff



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

Good

Strengths:

- Allocation of cases considers previous involvement with the family so that consistency of case manager is prioritised.
- Staff encourage good engagement and compliance from the child, staff and managers are child-centred and know their children well.
- Staff receive regular supervision and reported feeling supported by their managers and their peers.
- Seconded staff receive supervision from their home agency, who complete an appraisal, and from their YJP line manager.
- Clinical supervision is provided to seconded staff and to practitioners who are part of the harmful sexual behaviour virtual team.
- There is a comprehensive induction process for new staff, and procedures for addressing staff competency.
- There is a children and young people workforce strategy, and the YJP has a comprehensive training matrix tracker which details training for all staff. Staff reported that they feel encouraged to take up training opportunities.
- The YJP actively encourages staff development and offers management opportunities within the service and supports staff to complete external qualifications.
- In the staff survey, all respondents said their views about working for the YJP were listened to and acted on.
- Staff receive praise and appreciation emails from senior leaders and through supervision with their line managers. They are presented with certificates at the management board, and team meetings encourage the sharing of positive news and recognition of good practice.
- In the staff survey, all respondents said that exceptional work is 'sometimes' or 'always' recognised.

Areas for improvement:

- The YJP volunteers were not aware of the service objectives and had not met any members of the management board. There was no evidence that they were updated with YJP developments, and they were not integrated into the service. They have not received any individual or group supervision, and there has only been one training event in the last 12 months this is not in line with the local authority's policy.
- Although staff need to screen for children's speech, language, and communication needs, not all had been trained in this area.
- The quality of statutory work, especially in relation to assessing, planning, and reviewing, needs to improve to ensure there is effective and robust understanding of the risk of harm a child can pose to others.

1.3. Partnerships and services



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

Good

Strengths:

- The service has access to a comprehensive suite of data, which is analysed in deep-dive reports. A multi-agency 'cohorts' meeting provides an overview of specific cohorts of children within the youth justice population.
- The partnership operates the risk outside the home (ROTH) model, which has been recognised as good practice for children at risk of/or experiencing child exploitation. This approach is supported by the child exploitation intervention team and the outreach detached youth workers team.
- A daily partnership meeting Partnership Integrated Triage (PITSTOP) is in place to jointly consider police information, identify levels of need and ensure an appropriate response. It also helps to identify themes including hotspot areas and locations. This model was developed in North Lincolnshire and is recognised as a national exemplar.
- As part of a modern-day slavery pilot, North Lincolnshire developed a coordinator role that supports referrals to the national referral mechanism,¹ and allows those involved in the care of a child to support decision making and ensure children are recognised as victims of modern-day slavery.
- There is a strong substance misuse offer to the YJP through the Drug Education Liaison Treatment Agency (DELTA), which supports children and professionals working with families sharing knowledge, skills, and resources. All YJP cases can be considered at the substance misuse panel, which includes health, education, and police representatives.
- For children displaying harmful sexual behaviour there is a multi-agency 'virtual' team as well as a panel, which deals with referrals, allocations, and acts as a source of knowledge and support for the practitioner team.
- The victim liaison worker contacts victims to highlight the restorative justice opportunities available. This includes updates on how the child is progressing, signposting to other support services if necessary, views of victims about licence conditions, a letter of explanation or apology, mediation, face-to-face meetings or reparation.
- The YJP can access 'The Blue Door' provision, which delivers domestic abuse programmes, and the 'Oasis Academy Henderson Avenue' programme, which operates a number of projects from its building, including a podcast studio.
- Through the education attendance framework there are meetings across the partnership that monitor children's engagement with their education provision. Data on education exclusions, attainment, destinations, and progress is used to inform and guide decisions. There has been a focus on building schools' capacity to manage YJP children and retain them in learning.

¹ A framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery and ensuring they receive the appropriate support.

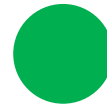
- The YJP-seconded education inclusion officer works with youth justice practitioners to support integration into education, training, and/or employment. Any YJP child not accessing suitable provision is monitored and an individual plan put in place.
- There was evidence of joint working with children's social care and a clear understanding regarding the referral process for interventions if staff are concerned about familial harm.
- The main health provision to the YJP is a child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) worker who offers assessments and case consultations. For access to a psychiatrist, the worker can fast-track YJP children. Although there have been efforts to strategically reduce waiting times, there are currently waiting lists for children with neurodiversity needs.
- Although there is no dedicated speech, language, and communication worker for the YJP the service does have a link to educational psychologist support.
- The YJP has one seconded police officer and works closely with the police community support officer in the early help service. The police officer shares information and intelligence daily and attends the YJP risk panels, providing updated intelligence on children being discussed.
- There was a gap in a seconded probation officer for over a period of 12 months. The YJP now has a seconded probation officer in post. The probation officer will work with children who are transitioning to the Probation Service and will remain as their probation officer in the adult system. When post-18 young people come to the attention of the Probation Service, contact is made with the YJP to verify if they have been previously known to them.
- Feedback from the court stated that YJP staff are always keen to support children and provide clarity and explanations to queries, programmes, and recommendations. The staff are knowledgeable and have a good understanding of the work required.

Areas for improvement:

- There are limited reparation projects in the community as most are home-based. This is a missed opportunity to work with local organisations to develop links and encourage integration for YJP children.
- At the time of the inspection not all staff involved in screening for children's speech, language and communication needs were appropriately trained. The YJP recognises the importance of this, and future training has been booked. However, presently there are gaps in some practitioner's knowledge, and this means that some children may not receive the intervention and support they currently require.
- There is a DELTA nurse attached to the YJP. She attends the joint decision allocation meeting and completes health screening checks on every child referred into the partnership. In addition, YJP practitioners screen children and identify health needs as part of the assessment process. Referrals for more specialist support can be made directly to the nurse. Some staff report they did not feel confident or had been trained in completing the health screening. The inspection also found that although health needs were considered in audits there was no specific quality assurance focus to ensure that children's health needs were being consistently identified and met.

- The inspection found that staff’s knowledge of multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) was limited and they were not clear about the process.

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

Strengths:

- A full range of policies and guidance are in place, which are understood by staff and reviewed regularly.
- Information-sharing protocols are in place and understood across the partnership.
- There is an escalation process for all partners to help in challenging other agencies, and staff feel supported by managers to raise concerns.
- The YJP is co-located with other agencies in the local authority building in the centre of Scunthorpe. They see children at venues around the area, which are safe and suitable for both staff and children.
- The YJP police officer has access to police and YJP IT systems. Humberside police has a flagging system on its record management system that automatically notifies the YJP police officer when frontline police encounter children.
- The YJP case management system enables the service to produce data on performance.
- The YJP is involved in multi-agency audits and takes part in multi-agency learning reviews.
- The YJP has been involved in several developments in capturing the voices of children and families. There is a multi-agency steering group and operational meeting, and the YJP board receives the service’s quarterly voice and engagement report, which includes a section on ‘we asked, you said, and we did.’
- There is evidence that the YJP reviews cases when serious incidents occur, and learns from the outcomes of inspections to help improve practice.

Areas for improvement:

- The YJP is part of the wider children’s services quality assurance framework. There is also a timetable in place for thematic audits as part of the integrated framework and stand-alone audit and assurance events. However, the activities need to be better co-ordinated, collated and analysed in order to monitor and drive the quality of practice, particularly in relation to the quality of statutory practice.

Involvement of children and their parents or carers

Learning from Covid-19 has enabled the YJP to be creative in its approaches to gaining feedback from children and families. These include using digital platforms such as Survey Monkey, as well as developing and co-producing a local animation film that is used as a resource to explain the services the YJP offers.

There have also been developments in capturing the voices of children and families, including the setting up of the children and families voice and engagement group. This group brings together partners across children and families work to ensure that the voice of children and their families is central. Thematic consultation questions are developed, and this meeting is used to summarise responses, learn from the voices of children and their families, and agree actions. The YJP board regularly receives a 'voice and engagement' report, including a 'we asked, you said, and we did' section.

The YJP contacted, on our behalf, children who had open cases at the time of the inspection to gain their consent for a text survey. We delivered the survey independently to the 40 children who consented, and 21 children replied.

When asked how they rated the service they had received from the YJP, 13 responded, with a score of 10 out of 10. One child said about their worker:

"They are very supportive and friendly and have helped me realise what I did was wrong and how to stay out of those situations in the future."

When asked how the YJP had helped them stay out of trouble, one child said:

"I've learnt that I need to think before I speak and not to make bad decisions because I know I'll be in more trouble with the police if I do."

Inspectors also spoke to eight children and three parents. All felt that their YJP workers had the right skills to do the work, and that they had been able to access the right services and support to help the child stay out of trouble.

One child, talking about their case manager, said:

" My worker has got to know and understand me. They value me and recognise when I'm having a bad day, or I'm upset. They understand my feelings and will talk to me in the right way."

One parent commented:

"The worker is patient and has got to know my child. They make my child feel comfortable ... I didn't think my child would connect with anyone, but they have, and they are benefiting from it."

Resettlement

The YJP did not have any relevant cases for us to rate against our resettlement standard, but we were able to look at arrangements for provision.

- The YJP has a constructive resettlement policy, reviewed in 2023, which aims to provide guidance to staff in effective resettlement practice, in line with relevant research recommendations.
- In the staff survey, nearly all of the staff who worked with children in custody said that they had received specific training in resettlement work.
- The YJP recently delivered a workshop about resettlement as part of the workforce development briefings offered to all staff across children and families services.
- No children had received a custodial sentence in 2021-2022. If a child were sentenced, YJP case managers would attend review meetings and visit children in custody in person, whenever possible, to maintain and develop their working relationships.
- Health practitioners and education colleagues would share assessments and ensure access to the right provision to assist continuity of care during and after custody. The YJP case manager would work closely with the child's social worker, including joint visits to the establishment and attending risk management meetings.
- For children needing to be resettled, there are supported housing schemes in the locality where they can be accommodated if required. For children leaving custody, accommodation can be held open if the assessment shows that a particular type of accommodation is required to meet their needs.
- If the child is turning 18, the seconded probation officer and other relevant staff would meet the child in custody. When a child transfers from child to adult custody, the Probation Service ensures the establishment is close to their home and there is a regular dialogue with the prison offender manager, supplemented by video calls to maintain regular family contact.
- Although there is no formal process when a child is sentenced to custody, the management team reviews the case and the sentence given.
- The policy needs to be reviewed, however, as it does not mention a need for multi-agency resettlement meetings in the community, especially prior to release. Also, it does not outline a process for the board to be sighted on the timeliness of release arrangements and the plans for children being released, including the availability of education or training on the day of release and access to necessary healthcare.
- Although no child in contact with the YJP has been sentenced to custody recently, it is important that it remains up to date with what is happening in the secure establishments, in particular HMP Wetherby, where the YJP children are most likely to be sent. Links with this establishment should be developed.

Diversity

- North Lincolnshire is home to approximately 173,000 people, which includes around 30,000 children. The child population is expected to grow by a further 4,000 over the next 20 years.
- Between 2016 and 2022, the North Lincolnshire primary school black and minority ethnic cohort increased from 15.2 per cent to 17.7 per cent, and in secondary schools from 11.9 per cent to 14.1 per cent. In the YJP, the number of black and minority ethnic children starting any type of programme decreased from 12 (7 per cent) in 2020-2021 to nine (4 per cent) in 2021-2022, despite an increase of 30 per cent in the total programmes between the two years. No black and minority ethnic children started a statutory programme in 2021-2022. The YJP identified that none of its workforce are black, Asian or minority ethnic.
- In January 2022, 13.1 per cent of the pupil population in North Lincolnshire were identified as having special educational needs (SEN) support, with 3.1 per cent having an education, health, and care plan (EHCP). Nationally in 2021, 12.2 per cent of pupils with SEN support were identified, 3.7 per cent having an EHCP.
- At the time of inspection, the YJP had 67 open interventions, of which 28 per cent had substance misuse issues, 43 per cent had emotional, mental health, and wellbeing concerns, and 51 per cent had a learning disability, learning difficulty or were subject to an EHCP.
- The YJP monitors its population for the proportion of children in care. The percentage of children in care for a year or more and aged 10 or over who were convicted for an offence, or received a youth caution, has been steadily decreasing. The majority of programmes starting for children in care is for diversion and prevention cases.
- The YJP has 74 per cent of staff who identify as female. The number of girls starting any programme has increased from 27 (15 per cent) in 2020-2021 to 43 (19 per cent) in 2021-2022. Leaders understand that there are more girls in the YJP cohort now because there are more prevention services and interventions available for them. All girls are given the option of a female worker, and there are plans to deliver interventions linked to building girls' self-esteem.
- The YJP has no specific diversity strategy to look at how workforce recruitment, supervision, and training could be used to create a more diverse environment within the YJP. Although some work has been undertaken, further focus is needed on this. A strategy should ensure that it considers all protected characteristics and includes processes for recognising and effectively addressing the diversity needs of all staff, children, and victims accessing the service.
- In addition, a framework is required which supports staff at all levels to reflect on their knowledge and understanding of children's protected characteristics, and enables them to be confident in asking appropriate questions about a child's heritage and their lived experiences.
- Improved understanding of children's diverse needs must be driven both strategically and operationally. There has been investment in diversity training to raise staff awareness and increase understanding. Most of the cases inspected showed that diversity issues were assessed appropriately. However, the inspection found that there was limited staff knowledge and understanding of planning and delivering services to meet the needs of YJP children with protected characteristics.

Domain two: Court disposals

We took a detailed look at six community sentences managed by the YJP.

2.1. Assessment



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

Requires improvement

Our rating² 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?	83%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	50%

The quality of assessing children using the AssetPlus assessment tool was not as strong as assessing those subject to out-of-court disposals, where a different assessment tool is used. This is unfortunate as children on statutory orders may have more complex issues that need to be identified and understood if their needs are to be met and the risks reduced.

The inspection found that assessment activity was consistently strong across children's desistance and their safety and wellbeing, but case managers did not use the assessment document sufficiently to help them to structure their analysis of children's risk of harm to others. In assessing desistance, case managers showed an awareness of the trauma that children had experienced and its impact on their behaviour and engagement.

Assessments collated information from other agencies, which helped practitioners to understand factors for and against desistance. Children's diversity needs were analysed, although a better understanding of their lived experiences and heritage would lead to an improved understanding of the child and their family. Parents' or carers' views were considered, and case managers recognised children's levels of maturity. Case managers had considered the wishes and needs of victims in most cases, allowing the offer of restorative opportunities.

Case managers identified the potential risks to children's safety and wellbeing appropriately, but information from other agencies was not used consistently to support children's safety. Screening for speech, language, communication, and general health needs relied on case managers, whose knowledge and understanding of these issues were limited.

In assessing children's risk of harm to others, although case managers had access to information from other agencies, they did not use this consistently to inform the

² 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. [A more detailed explanation is available in the data annexe.](#)

assessment. Case managers did not take account of wider concerns regarding children’s behaviours and the risk to potential victims, and did not consider who was at risk, and the nature of that risk, consistently.

2.2. Planning



Planning is well-informed, holistic and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents or carers.	Requires improvement
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Our rating³ for planning is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does planning focus sufficiently on supporting the child’s desistance?	67%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	100%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	50%

The service prioritised the allocation of cases to practitioners who had already worked with the child and their family. Planning for the child’s interventions evidenced that the case managers considered their strengths, and most understood their ability to change.

Planning was not linked consistently to the child’s assessed desistance factors. Although children’s diversity needs were assessed appropriately, inspectors found that the knowledge and understanding of staff to plan and deliver services to meet the needs of children with protected characteristics was limited.

There was little evidence that staff understood children’s protected characteristics in a way which enabled them to be confident in asking appropriate questions about a child’s heritage and their lived experiences. The views of parents or carers were taken into consideration as part of the planning process. Case managers considered the child’s ability to take part in education, training, and employment opportunities and, where necessary, involved the education inclusion officer to help advocate for the child. The DELTA team had processes to work with children with differing needs in terms of substance misuse concerns, and engaged children well. Unfortunately, the wishes of victims were not considered consistently and so this limited the opportunity for restorative justice.

Planning to keep children safe was strong in all the cases inspected. Other agencies were involved in the planning process, which was helped by the co-location of other professionals, including the child exploitation intervention, outreach youth work, and children’s services early help teams. Multi-agency meetings were used regularly to make sure information was shared and all agencies were up to date with the child’s circumstances. Case managers planned for the interventions that were needed to support children and manage the risk to their safety and wellbeing.

³ 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. [A more detailed explanation is available in the data annexe.](#)

Planning did not promote the safety of other people in half of the cases, and it was not clear how it addressed the safety of specific victims. Contingency planning to address escalating concerns about a child’s safety and wellbeing and the safety of other people was not adequately detailed in most cases. The contingency arrangements were too generic and not specific to the child and their own circumstances.

2.3. Implementation and delivery



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

Good

Our rating⁴ 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?	83%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of the child?	67%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?	83%

The delivery of services and interventions showed that case managers had built a strong relationship with the child and their family, and this was evident in the child’s engagement.

Case managers were involved in multi-agency discussions and meetings to ensure that provision was in place for the child when their involvement with the YJP ended. However, in the cases sampled we found limited use of or understanding about available reparation activities which would help support the child to build relationships and facilitate community integration.

In most cases, interventions were identified to manage the child’s safety and wellbeing. Children had access to a podcast studio, an award-winning ‘Lifestyle project’ and a boys’ group, as well as services for children displaying harmful sexual behaviour and signs of domestic abuse. Although the involvement of other agencies in helping to keep children safe was not evident in all cases, there were some examples of joint working with specialist staff, including the child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) worker and substance misuse services. Inspectors noted, however, a lack of understanding of children’s speech, language, and communication needs which, if recognised, could have improved the quality of the interventions delivered.

The delivery of services and interventions that considered a child’s risk of harm to others was positive. There was good multi-agency coordination to monitor the risks, and the communication and information sharing between the YJP police officer and

⁴ 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. [A more detailed explanation is available in the data annexe.](#)

case managers was timely and effective in ensuring all professionals were updated and the child's risk was managed. The protection of actual and potential victims, however, was not considered consistently in all cases.

2.4. Reviewing



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

Requires improvement

Our rating⁵ for reviewing is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	100%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	67%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	50%

Reviews were completed at key points in the order, and in all cases there was an ongoing review of desistance factors as the order progressed. It was pleasing that case managers continued to build on children's strengths, and consider changes in their personal circumstances. There was evidence that the focus of interventions changed if needed, and in most cases the child's ongoing plan was adjusted when necessary. The reviews considered a child's motivation appropriately as the order progressed, and the child and their parents or carers continued to be involved in the reviewing process.

When reviewing the safety and wellbeing of children, case managers included other agencies and used the multi-agency risk, safety, and wellbeing meeting to help them manage any changing concerns or escalations in the risk to children. There was evidence that the focus of interventions changed if needed, although not all cases adjusted the child's ongoing plan where necessary.

Reviewing the safety of other people needed strengthening in the post-court cases inspected. Although information was included from other agencies, this was not used effectively in too many cases. The reviews did not lead consistently to the necessary changes in the interventions delivered and, in some cases, work to manage the risk of harm to others was still not addressed or managed effectively. In too many cases, the plans for children had not been updated in line with the reviewing process.

⁵ 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. [A more detailed explanation is available in the data annexe.](#)

Domain three: Out-of-court disposals

We inspected nine cases managed by the YJP that had received an out-of-court disposal. These consisted of three youth conditional cautions and six community resolutions. We interviewed the case managers in seven cases.

3.1. Assessment



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

Outstanding

Our rating⁶ 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?	89%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	89%

The YJP uses a specific 'short quality assessment tool' based on AssetPlus for assessing all children subject to an out-of-court disposal. This assessment was mostly completed by different staff than those who had completed the AssetPlus assessment. Inspectors noted that the quality of assessing children subject to an out-of-court disposal varied considerably from children on statutory orders.

To help identify children's desistance factors, case managers accessed a range of sources from partner agencies and offered an appropriate analysis of children's attitudes towards, or reasons for, their offending. They focused on children's strengths and their motivation to change. Case managers involved children and their parents or carers in the assessment, and in most of the relevant cases they considered the needs and wishes of victims. Assessments took account of diversity requirements and outlined any barriers to provision to meet the child's needs.

In nearly all the cases inspected the potential risks to children's safety and wellbeing was sufficiently analysed. Case managers used information from other agencies to inform their assessments, including education services, police, health and children's social care. As with statutory orders, however, children's speech, language, and communication needs were not identified consistently. There was a clear written record of children's wellbeing and how to keep them safe.

In most cases, the risks to others were identified and analysed, and information from other agencies was used to inform the assessment. Practitioners recognised wider risks to other people and analysed children's potential future harmful behaviour appropriately.

⁶ 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. [A more detailed explanation is available in the data annexe.](#)

3.2. Planning



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

Good

Our rating⁷ for planning is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?	89%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	67%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	89%

Where possible, cases were allocated to staff who had already worked with the child and their family. Planning for interventions evidenced that the case manager knew the child well and understood their motivation and their strengths.

Plans addressed the child's desistance factors, although in a third of cases, staff had not considered children's diversity needs. Practitioners included children and their parents or carers and made plans proportionate to the type of disposal. Most plans reflected the wishes and needs of victims. As these interventions were delivered within a short period, case managers focused on children's access to mainstream services and opportunities for community integration after the disposal had ended.

Planning to address children's safety and wellbeing in out-of-court disposals was a weaker area of practice. As part of the planning process, staff outlined how they would communicate with the child about what types of activity could engage them. However, there was limited evidence of how the child could communicate with practitioners, and this highlights the gap in identifying children's speech, language, and communication needs. Although information was available from other agencies through various meetings and forums, it was not used consistently to help keep children safe. Contingency planning to address escalating concerns about a child's safety and wellbeing was detailed adequately in most cases.

Planning to keep other people safe was considered by case managers in nearly all cases. Case managers had used information from other agencies and considered the safety of specific and potential victims to help inform the planning process. If concerns about the child's risk of harm to others had been identified as part of the assessment, interventions to manage this were contained within the plan.

⁷ 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. [A more detailed explanation is available in the data annexe.](#)

3.3. Implementation and delivery



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

Good

Our rating⁸ for implementation and delivery is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does service delivery effectively support the child's desistance?	78%
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of the child?	78%
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of other people?	67%

Case managers could access all the services and interventions available for children on court orders for those subject to an out-of-court disposal. The interventions delivered showed that the case manager had built a strong relationship with the child, although they had not considered the children's diversity needs in all cases.

To help support children's desistance, practitioners ensured interventions were proportionate to the type of disposal. There was good engagement with interventions, which were mainly voluntary, and case managers worked hard to establish effective working relationships with both the children and their parents or carers. There were examples of case managers working with the education inclusion officer advocating on behalf of children to make sure that they were receiving appropriate provision that met their needs. In all cases, practitioners had considered how children could be linked to mainstream services once their interventions had ended.

The delivery of interventions to support children's safety and wellbeing included working alongside other professionals, without always involving too many. In most cases, there was evidence of case managers being creative in both where and how to deliver interventions to meet children's needs. Multi-agency meetings were used to share information so that agencies were up to date with children's circumstances, and in nearly all of the cases inspected, service delivery and interventions supported children's safety effectively.

In most cases, interventions with children to support the safety of other people were managing and minimising the risk of harm. Case managers, however, need to give more consideration to the protection of potential and actual victims when delivering interventions. Overall, however, the interventions delivered had supported the safety of other people in most of the cases inspected.

⁸ 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. [A more detailed explanation is available in the data annexe.](#)

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.

Good

We also inspected the quality of policy and provision in place for out-of-court disposals, using evidence from documents, meetings, and interviews. Our key findings were as follows:

Strengths:

- Humberside police has an early intervention strategy, and the YJP has prevention, diversion, and out-of-court policy and procedures which are agreed with Humberside police.
- North Lincolnshire council has a 'one family approach' that aims to work for all children and families, in which partners work together to provide and commission integrated whole-family help for children.
- Although Humberside police can issue street restorative justice disposals, these are very rare, as the preference is to refer every child to the youth justice police officer and police constable support officer for triage.
- Early intervention work is overseen by the multi-agency joint decision allocation panel (JDAP). This is chaired by a YJP team manager and attended by the two youth justice police personnel and staff from children's social care, health, CAMHS, liaison and diversion, safer neighbourhoods, victim liaison, and substance misuse workers.
- Partnership agencies screen all children to check if they or their family are known.
- The JDAP allocates the case for assessment based on the recommendation in the referral. If a youth conditional caution is not proposed, then the 'short quality assessment tool' is completed.
- The YJP intervention worker will present the assessment, which includes a proposal to the out-of-court disposal panel.
- Although the same people attend the JDAP and the out-of-court disposal panel, these two panels remain separate to give sufficient time to the different focus of each.
- Staff understand the process for out-of-court disposals, they can challenge the outcome if needed, and there is a clear escalation process, although it is rarely used.
- All the interventions and services available to children on court orders can be used for children on an out-of-court disposal.
- When a child does not comply with their disposal, efforts are made to support their engagement.
- The YJP produces a quarterly performance report to the board that tracks the number and type of out-of-court disposals given, the category of offence, the profile of the children, and whether the disposal was successfully completed.
- There is a local scrutiny panel, although it has only recently started to review youth justice cases.

Areas for improvement:

- Staff were not clear about how many out-of-court disposals a child had before they were referred to court, although the principle is that it the number depends on the child's individual needs. This process needs to be monitored more explicitly to ensure that the needs of the child are balanced with the risk they pose of reoffending and their potential for causing harm to others.
- Although the YJP lead officer completes a quality assurance exercise that looks at a random sample of out-of-court disposals, the out-of-court disposals panel itself does not regularly monitor the progress of children. A system where the panel was updated and reviewed children's progress would help in monitoring the consistency and quality of its decision-making.

Further information

The following can be found on our website:

- [inspection data, including methodology and contextual facts about the YJS](#)
- [a glossary of terms used in this report.](#)