



HM Inspectorate  
of Probation

# Annual Report (2023)

Inspections of Youth Justice Services



# Overview

- We inspected 20 youth justice services (YJS) between Oct 2022 – Oct 2023.
- Each YJS is given an overall rating on a four-point scale:  
‘Outstanding’ ☆, ‘Good’ ●, ‘Requires improvement’ ● and ‘Inadequate’ ●
- None received an overall rating of ‘Inadequate’.

**Three** services  
rated overall as  
**‘Outstanding’**

**12** services  
rated overall as  
**‘Good’**

**Five** services  
rated overall as  
**‘Requires  
improvement’**

**Zero** services  
rated overall as  
**‘Inadequate’**



# Key findings

Manageable workloads

Stable workforce

Good-quality staff  
supervision

Sufficient training

Strong partnership  
working

Safe and child-friendly  
YJS environments

Vacant statutory  
probation secondee  
posts

Cuts to funding



Wide variation in use of  
deferred prosecution  
opportunities, such as  
Outcome 22

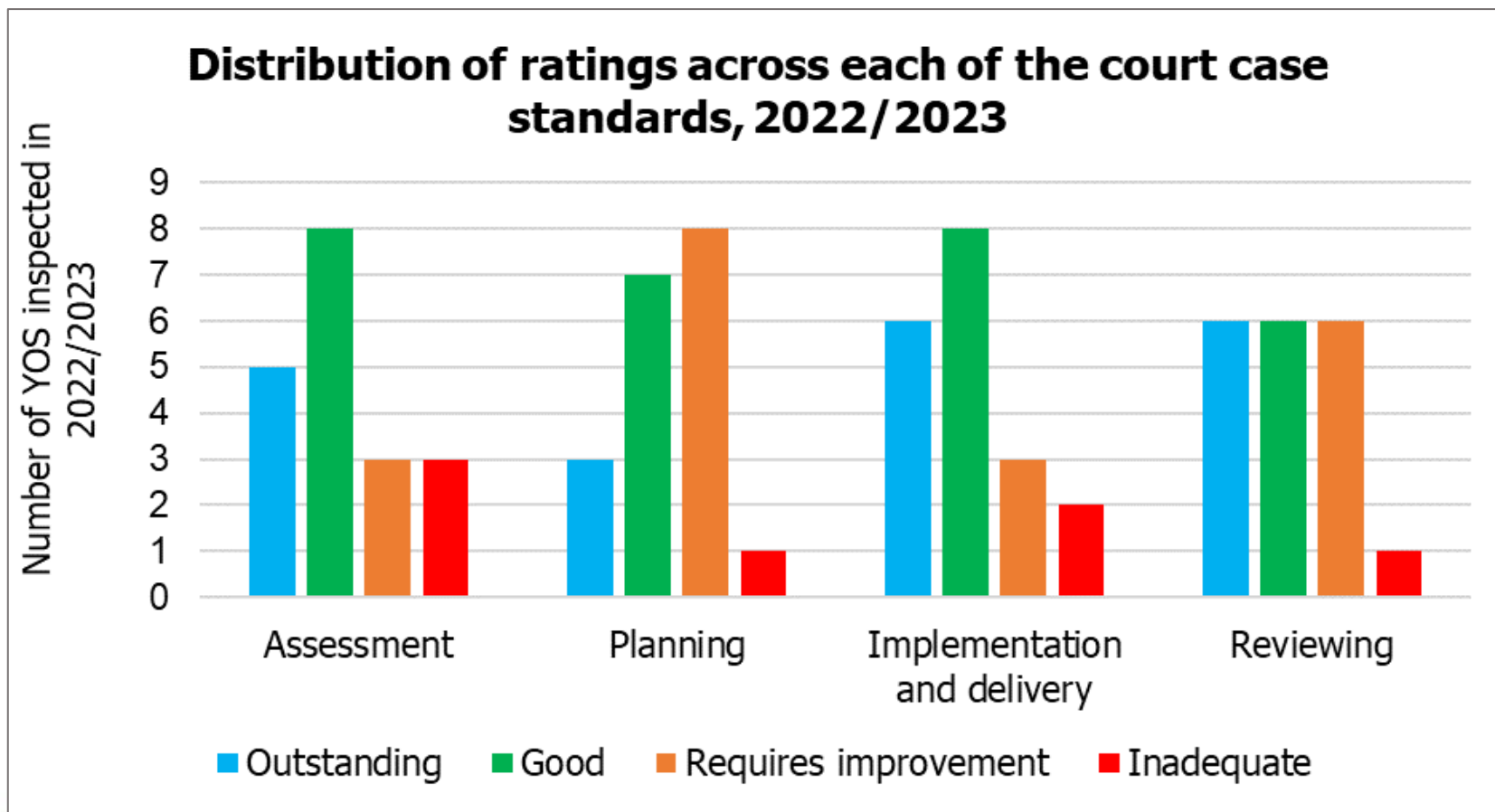


# Organisational delivery

| Governance and leadership        |                            |  |                                 |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| <b>Outstanding</b><br>2 services | <b>Good</b><br>8 services  | <b>Requires improvement</b><br>10 services | <b>Inadequate</b><br>0 service  |
| Staff                            |                            |  |                                 |
| <b>Outstanding</b><br>7 services | <b>Good</b><br>11 services | <b>Requires improvement</b><br>2 services  | <b>Inadequate</b><br>0 services |
| Partnerships and services        |                            |  |                                 |
| <b>Outstanding</b><br>1 service  | <b>Good</b><br>14 services | <b>Requires improvement</b><br>5 services  | <b>Inadequate</b><br>0 services |
| Information and facilities       |                            |  |                                 |
| <b>Outstanding</b><br>5 services | <b>Good</b><br>11 services | <b>Requires improvement</b><br>4 services  | <b>Inadequate</b><br>0 services |

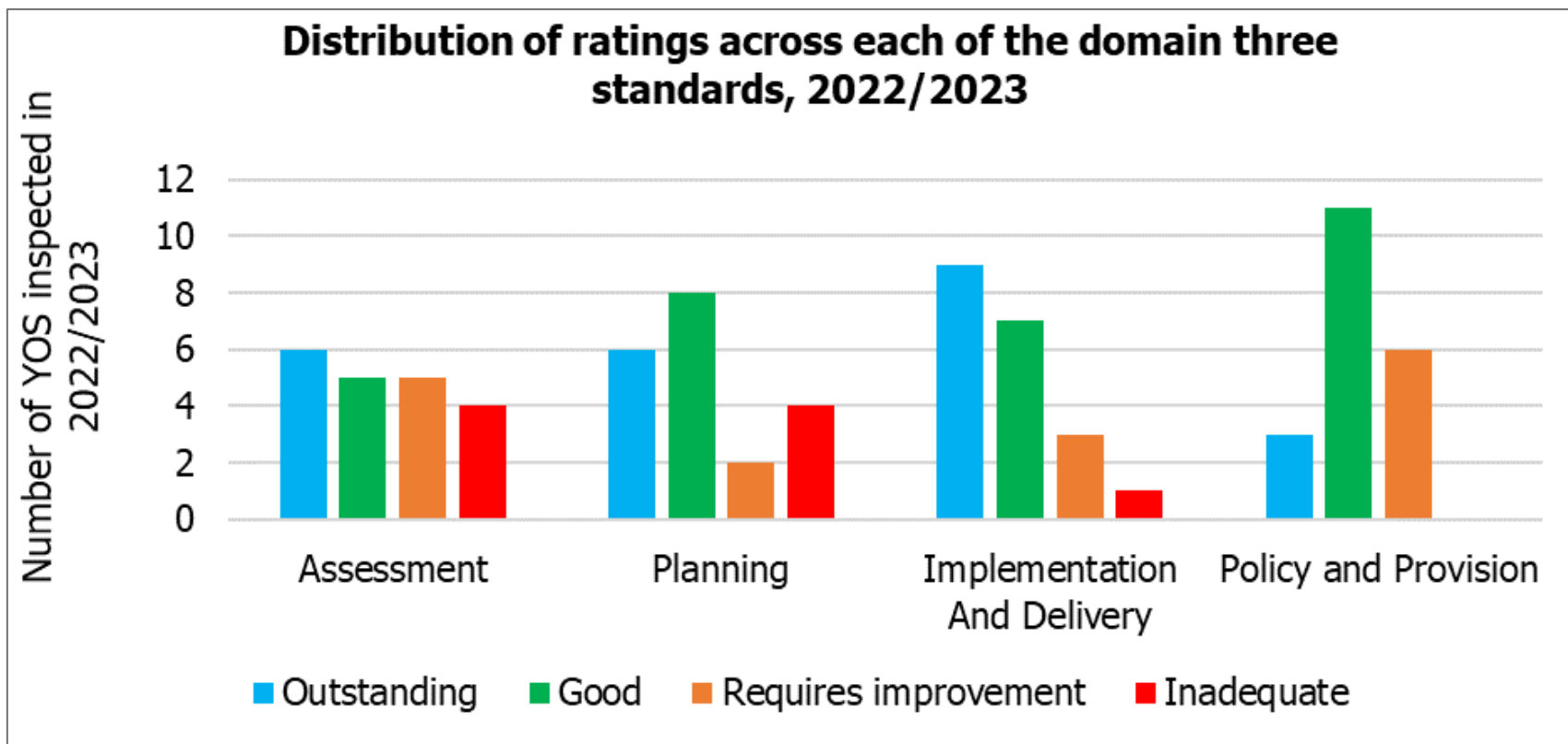


# Supervision of court orders





# Out-of-court disposals





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# Victim work

Work with and for victims remains an area for improvement in both statutory court work and out-of-court disposals.


Overall, practitioners were still not consistently paying attention to the needs and wishes of victims.

New youth programme plans = greater focus on victim work.




# Resettlement

Almost all inspected had a dedicated resettlement policy to guide processes and practice.



Keeping children and others safe was consistently seen as an area of strength in the services we inspected.

Of concern was the number of children with little or no previous involvement in the youth justice system being made subject to custodial sentences.



Addressing disproportionality of children in custody needs to remain a critical focus of national policy and local strategic planning.





## Meeting children's diverse needs

Around one in four children working with YJS are not having their diverse needs assessed, planned for, or fully considered when work is being delivered.

Most YJSs include the need to address diversity and disproportionality in their Youth Justice Plans.

But not all plans explicitly cover how this work is to be carried out.

We have seen an encouraging commitment to diversity from senior leaders.

However, a fuller understanding of the wide range of protected characteristics, as identified in the Equality Act 2010, is needed.



# Voices of children, parents, and carers

'I feel confident  
with my worker,  
and I trust them'

'They ask where  
you feel safe when  
you first meet  
them'

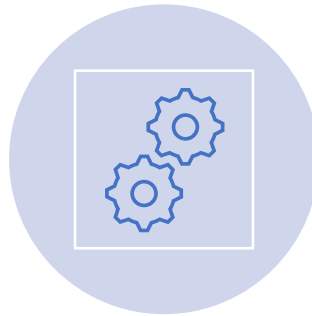
'You get warm  
vibes with them –  
you feel that you  
can talk to them'

'My son has ADHD and  
through the YJS he was  
able to access speech,  
language and  
communication support'

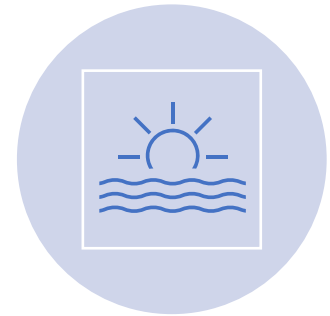
# New inspection programme



We consulted on our plans  
for the new youth  
inspection programme



We are piloting our  
proposals throughout 2024



The new inspection  
programme for YJS will be  
launched in 2025



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