

---

# The Work of Youth Offending Teams to Protect the Public

---

An inspection by HM Inspectorate of Probation

October 2017

This inspection was led by HM Inspector Bob Smith, supported by a team of inspectors, as well as staff from our operations and research teams. The Assistant Chief Inspector responsible for this inspection programme is Helen Mercer. We would like to thank all those who helped plan and took part in the inspection; without their help and cooperation, the inspection would not have been possible.

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

© Crown copyright 2017

You may re-use this information (excluding logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence) or email [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

Where we have identified any third party copyright information, you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication and information on our role and Code of Practice is available for download at:

[www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation)

The inspectorate is a public body. Anyone wishing to comment on an inspection, a report or any other matter falling within its remit should write to:

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation  
1st Floor Civil Justice Centre  
1 Bridge Street West  
Manchester  
M3 3FX

# Contents

Foreword .....	4
Key facts .....	5
Youth Offending Teams explained.....	6
Executive summary .....	8
Recommendations.....	11
<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>2. Young people who pose a risk in their communities ...</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>3. Protecting the public.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>4. Governance, management and partnership.....</b>	<b>34</b>
Appendices .....	40
Appendix 1: References .....	41
Appendix 2: Trauma summaries .....	42
Appendix 3: Evidence provided by Waltham Forest YOT .....	52
Appendix 4: Glossary.....	54
Appendix 5: Methodology .....	57

## Foreword

In this inspection we examined the work done by Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) with young people convicted of violent and other serious offences. We focused on the work done to protect the public from the risk of harm, and found YOTs protecting the public well, and also doing good work to change young people's lives for the better. However, with some specific changes and help, they could do better still.

Most young people who commit serious crimes have had disturbing and traumatic experiences themselves, during childhood, and a good number are now in the care of their local authority. It is well understood that these young people are more likely to get into difficulties, and offend, and once in trouble they are less likely than others to trust adults or to respond to any help on offer, unless it takes account of their experiences. We have taken the unusual step of reproducing the inspector's comments on the trauma found in each relevant case. These short summaries, in Appendix 2, bring to life the many difficult experiences this group have faced as they have grown up. We found YOT staff working sensitively and intuitively with them, but with insufficient formal planning, or good, up to date and well-ordered guidance and support materials. Given the prevalence of trauma for these young people, there is a strong case for all YOTs to adopt what is known as trauma-informed practice. In doing so, they would be more likely to improve the life chances of some of the most troubled and challenging young people in society today. YOTs need assistance, support and guidance to make this change.

Social media is a large part of young people's lives, and we found it featured often enough in the build up to a serious offence. Many of these young people shun Facebook and other common applications, in favour of lesser known and, therefore, more private media. We found offence scenarios inconceivable just a few years ago, with social media used to both incite and plan crime. YOTs need help to catch up. There is not enough relevant and up to the minute advice and information available nationally to help them work with those whose offending is directly linked and fuelled by social media, but there are pockets of good material and experience that could be tapped. There is also a strong case for monitoring the social media output of young people who pose a risk to others, so as to protect others sufficiently well.

Otherwise, we found YOTs doing a good job. The staff we interviewed were almost all competent and committed. YOTs are using new assessment and planning materials effectively, although in our view they could do more to incorporate the views of young people in their plans, and to develop robust intervention plans. YOTs are also working well to protect victims, if necessary by setting exclusion or curfew conditions, and taking enforcement action when needed to keep people safe.

Making a difference to the life chances of these damaged young people is difficult, but we found positive progress in a good half of the cases we inspected. There is still more that can be done, however, to respond more effectively to the trauma that has often blighted their lives, and to understand and track their use of social media, and its impact on their offending. Both the national Youth Justice Board and local YOT Management Boards have the opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge of YOT staff in this way.



**Dame Glenys Stacey**  
HM Chief Inspector of Probation  
September 2017

## Key facts

**152**

The number of youth offending teams in England and Wales

**32,848**

The number of young people cautioned or sentenced between 01 April 2015 to 31 March 2016<sup>1</sup>

**-84%**

The change in the number of first-time entrants (those young people receiving their first reprimand, warning, caution or conviction) to the criminal justice system in the ten years between March 2007 and March 2016<sup>2</sup>

**-69%**

The reduction in the number of young people under the age of 18 years in custody between March 2007 and March 2016<sup>3</sup>

**37.9%**

The reoffending rate of young people between April 2014 and March 2015<sup>4</sup>

**81%**

The proportion of young people in the inspection sample who have experienced trauma or other adverse events (where information is available)

**41%**

The total proportion of young people in the inspection sample who have been exposed to or have committed acts of domestic abuse

1 Young people sentenced, year ending March 2016, Youth Justice Statistics 2015-2016, YJB, January 2017.

2 First-time entrants to the Youth Justice System, Youth Justice Statistics 2015-2016, YJB, January 2017.

3 Young people in custody in the youth secure estate, Youth Justice Statistics 2015-2016, YJB, January 2017.

4 Proven reoffending by young people, Youth Justice Statistics 2015-2016, YJB, January 2017.

# Youth Offending Teams explained

Youth Offending Teams supervise 10-18 year olds who have been sentenced by a court, or who have come to the attention of the police because of their offending behaviour but have not been charged – instead, they were dealt with out of court. YOTs also work with young people who have not committed a crime, but are at particular risk of doing so.

YOTs are statutory partnerships<sup>5</sup>, and they are multi-disciplinary, to deal with the needs of the whole child. They are required to have staff from local authority social care and education, the police, the National Probation Service and local health services. YOTs are mostly based within local authorities. 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.

Nowadays, YOTs are organised in many different ways. The number of young people sentenced by the courts has reduced and YOTs have shrunk in size as funding both from the YJB and local partners has reduced. In some parts of the country YOTs have merged with other local authority services for young people, and other YOTs have merged across local authority boundaries. Many are no longer called YOTs, and work under a generic title relating to services for youth or young people.<sup>6</sup>

YOTs do a wide range of things to support young people under supervision. So for example, many operate restorative justice schemes, focused on repairing the harm caused by the offender, and all operate referral order panels, where members of the local community meet with individual offenders to reduce their risk of reoffending. In this inspection we are focused on the work YOTs do to protect the public from the risk of harm posed by young people under their supervision.

The characteristics of young people under YOT supervision vary considerably, with some offending being transient and unlikely to cause harm to others. However, a minority have committed serious offences or are showing warning signs that they might. It is important that each young person is assessed by YOTs, to judge the extent to which they pose a risk of harm to others in their family or the community. YOTs use AssetPlus, developed by the YJB, to assess young people and make plans with them. AssetPlus was introduced in 2016 and replaced Asset, which had been in use since the early 2000s.

YOTs should work with young people to reduce the risk of harm, and serious harm, as well as reducing the risk of reoffending. Serious harm is defined by YJB guidance<sup>7</sup> as 'death or serious personal injury whether physical or psychological'. Risk of serious harm is the imminence of this happening, and the impact if it did.

---

<sup>5</sup> *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* Section 39.

<sup>6</sup> For simplicity, in this report the six areas inspected are referred to as YOTs irrespective of whether they have kept this name in their local structures.

<sup>7</sup> Youth Justice Board (2016) *AssetPlus Guidance Assessment and Planning Interventions Framework User Guide for youth justice practitioners*.

**Table 1: Guidance<sup>7</sup> issued to YOTs as to how to classify Risk of Serious Harm levels**

Level	Definition
Low risk	There is no evidence at present to indicate likelihood of serious harmful behaviour in future.
Medium risk	Some risk identified but the young person is unlikely to cause serious harm unless circumstances change. Relevant issues can be addressed as part of the normal supervision process.
High risk	Risk of serious harm identified. The potential event could happen at any time and the impact would be serious. Action should be taken in the near future and the case will need additional supervision and monitoring, for example, supervision by middle or senior management, local registration.
Very high risk	Imminent risk of serious harm identified. The young person will commit the behaviour in question as soon as the opportunity arises and the impact would be serious. Immediate multi-agency action is likely to be required. The potential event is more likely than not to happen imminently.

These definitions describe to some extent the action likely to be required, but leave discretion to YOTs to determine the right actions in individual cases.

# Executive summary

## Young people who pose a risk in their communities

Overall, we found that YOTs were doing a good job protecting the public, with staff often acting intuitively and sensitively. We have seen sustained improvement in YOT public protection work over time. More can be done however, if work is tailored to recognise the effects of past traumas on young people, and if all involved had a better understanding of the close connection between a young person's offending and their use of social media. Better and more ordered guidance, interventions and other tools would help also.

### Traumatic pasts

We examined the case files of 115 young people who had committed violent, sexual and/or other offences where there were potential public protection issues. Where information was available, we found that more than three in four had experienced emotional trauma or other deeply distressing or disturbing things in their lives. Research<sup>8</sup> tells us that these experiences will affect a young person's current behaviour, making it more likely that they will offend and reducing their ability to work with adults trying to help them.

The spectrum of experiences was remarkably wide, and included separation and estrangement from parents, the death of a parent or main carer, sexual abuse, severe physical chastisement, serial domestic abuse and parental substance misuse. For some young people their experiences of trauma were both multiple and severe.<sup>9</sup> Domestic abuse was prevalent: one-third had grown up in a household where there was a formal record of domestic abuse. Almost half of our sample were in local authority care, often placed some way from home.

All YOTs should be able to identify and respond effectively to emotional trauma and other adverse events in young people's lives, and apply the strategies available for tailoring services to take account of trauma. We know, for example, that the young person's relationship with the case manager is important and also that interventions should be kept as simple as possible. We found YOT staff accounting for some of these issues in their work with young people, but doing so intuitively rather than within a clear policy or practice framework. We found that the models of youth justice intervention that respond to trauma have been implemented in only a handful of YOTs.

### Social media and its relationship with offending

In one in four of the cases we inspected, the young person's use of social media was directly related to the offence they had committed. It had been the catalyst for some of the most serious and violent offences committed, and we found offence scenarios that would have been unthinkable just ten years ago. In many more cases we inspected, social media was having an impact on the young person's life.

<sup>8</sup> Beyond Youth Custody (2016) *Trauma and Young Offenders A review of the research and practice literature*.

<sup>9</sup> The inspector's summary of the trauma issue in each relevant case is reproduced in Appendix 2.

This is new behaviour. Not surprisingly, practice is lagging behind and has not kept abreast of the strong influence social media has on young people who commit serious offences, or with the wide range of social media they use and how they use it. Many strategic managers had a very limited understanding of social media and its impact on young people. As with trauma, we found that staff were often acting intuitively. With limited national or local guidance on effective strategies and interventions, case managers generally acted on their own initiative to find relevant material.

YOTs monitor young people and respond to changes in behaviour, attitude or associates. Young people's social media output offers clues as to what is happening in their lives. However, local policy frameworks for monitoring online activity are often undeveloped. Staff need up to date practice guidance and policy, consistent with current surveillance legislation<sup>10</sup> and guidance<sup>11</sup>, if they are to make good quality assessments based on a wide range of sources, including young people's social media activity.

### Guidance, interventions and other tools

YOTs have access to a wide range of resources for working with young people. However, the local cataloguing and evaluation of the material was weak. We found that many staff made little use of the resources held by the YOT and instead opted to use their own materials obtained mostly through the internet. There was little quality assurance of these resources. Work with sexually harmful behaviour was more rigorous. All of the YOTs had staff trained to undertake 'AIM (Assessment Intervention and Moving on)' assessments and they used the 'Good Lives' intervention programme. These are nationally recognised tools for working with harmful sexual behaviour.

We saw evidence of the findings of our 2016 thematic report<sup>12</sup> on desistance and young people being applied. The report identified the importance of relationships and inclusion in helping young people to change, and case managers evidenced these approaches in much of the work we examined on this inspection. Despite the difficulties in their lives, many of the young people had strengths that could be built upon. In many cases, practitioners were finding these strengths and using them as the basis for change.

### Making progress

Progress and making change is difficult with this group of young people. Most have lived through difficult and distressing experiences, and distrust adults. We found positive change had occurred during the YOT intervention in just over half of the cases we inspected. In our view, if YOTs develop their recognition and responses to both trauma and endemic use of social media, and further embed desistance principles, then the lives and life chances of these challenging young people are more likely to improve, and reoffending reduce.

---

10 *Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000.*

11 *Office of Surveillance Commissioners (2016) Procedures and Guidance.*

12 *HMI Probation (2016) Desistance and Young People.*

## **Protecting the public**

Court reports were of generally good quality and gave Judges and magistrates clear information about the young person's history and current risks. Almost all cases outlined how public protection issues would be managed in the community.

YOTs had a strong commitment to protecting victims. They used their access to information and resources to identify those victims that may be at continuing risk of harm. We saw effective use of exclusion powers to keep young people away from previous victims and good information-sharing to identify future risks.

At the time of our fieldwork, most YOTs were in the first year of implementing AssetPlus. We found they used the assessment function well. They drew on a wide range of sources of information and produced a clear reflection of both the young person's history and the factors in their lives that influenced their offending. Assessments would be more effective still if they better reflected the views of young people gained through the self assessment process. We agreed with most of the assessments of Risk of Serious Harm to others.

Intervention planning was less well developed and only one of the six sites visited was fully using the planning functions within AssetPlus. All of the YOTs had a panel or forum arrangement for planning and reviewing progress in the most complex cases. There were several models in place and the most effective panels brought new ideas to the case and challenged existing thinking. It was important to make sure that decisions were clearly recorded and that intervention plans were updated in light of panel decisions. Not all areas did so effectively.

Just over half of young people in our sample had engaged in reparation activity. Reparation typically involves young people undertaking work in their local communities to make amends for their actions. This was lower than expected and could be due to the difficulties this group of young people have adhering to court orders. We found that reparation worked best if it was tailored to the needs of the young person and the circumstances of the offence they committed.

One-quarter of our sample were due to reach the age of 18 years during the course of their court order. These cases were eligible for transfer to adult probation services, but in half of these cases the YOT decided to retain the case. Transfer to probation services was done effectively in most cases where it occurred.

## **Governance, management and partnership**

All of the YOTs we visited had a functioning Management Board that met regularly. Board members were keen to stress to us that they understood the changes to YOT caseloads in recent years and had a good understanding of frontline practice. Some areas had invited practitioners to attend Board meetings to present case studies. One area had a group of young people attend to talk about their experience of supervision, to aid the Board's understanding of the services they were responsible for. Most practitioners, however, had little contact with the Board and were unclear about membership or function.

We were pleased with the quality of management. Practice managers knew their field well and had the respect of the staff they managed. We undertook 101 case manager interviews and we were impressed in nearly all of them. Case managers

had a good understanding of the young people under their supervision and were doing their best to effect change. Many had joined the YOT with little experience or professional qualifications. They had developed their skills and knowledge to become effective practitioners, managing high levels of risk and complexity.

YOTs functioned well within local partnerships. Access to mental health services was important and was most effective when Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services workers were based in YOT premises. Joint working between YOTs and social workers was good, particularly with those young people in care. YOTs participated effectively in local Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements and domestic abuse Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences.

## Recommendations

### **The Youth Justice Board should:**

- provide practice guidance to YOTs that enables them to take proper account of the impact of trauma in young people's lives
- update AssetPlus training material to make sure that assessments reflect the views of young people and that the quality of planning is sufficient to protect the public.

### **Youth Offending Team Management Boards should:**

- make sure that practice takes account of trauma experienced by young people
- review their understanding of social media and young people, and establish if there is sufficient local policy and practice guidance for staff to operate effectively and legally when monitoring young people's social media activity
- make sure that they have an understanding of the work being undertaken by YOTs with young people who pose the greatest risks to themselves and others.

### **Youth Offending Teams should:**

- make sure that the design and delivery of services takes account of the impact of trauma on young people
- make sure local practice guidance and resources available for responding to social media related offending reflects current behaviour of young people
- review the implementation of AssetPlus to make sure it is used effectively to reflect the young person's views, create intervention plans that change behaviour and ensure the public are protected
- make sure that internal intervention planning and review meetings are effective in helping to protect the public and that they are properly recorded.

# **1. Introduction**

## 1.1. Why this thematic?

Youth Offending Teams have seen significant changes to the profile of their workload in recent years. The number of new offenders, known as first-time entrants to the youth justice system, has fallen dramatically from a peak of 110,801 in 2007 to the most recent figure of 18,263 in the year ending March 2015<sup>13</sup>. At the same time the number of young people in custody at any one time has fallen from a peak of 3,067 in 2007 to a figure of 881 (March 2016)<sup>14</sup>.

As 'lower-risk' young people are diverted away from court and statutory YOT supervision, so practitioners are working with fewer young people, but the proportion of those with complex needs (including those with vulnerabilities or posing a risk of harm) is higher than previously.

The public should be able to expect YOTs to assess and intervene effectively with young people who pose a high risk of harm to others. The main purpose of this inspection was to assess how well YOTs are protecting the public. It also examined how YOTs are responding to the changing profile of the young people they work with, and to identify practice issues that may help strengthen future work with those young people who pose the greatest risk to others in their communities.

## 1.2. Previous inspections

The early inspections of YOTs by HMI Probation in the mid 2000s identified significant shortcomings in YOTs' ability to assess risk of serious harm. Practice in most areas has improved over a number of inspection cycles.

Our Short Quality Screening inspections assessed the effectiveness of YOT public protection work alongside other areas of YOT service delivery. Percentage scores were attributed to each YOT based upon the effectiveness of their practice in managing risk of serious harm in a selected case sample. In the inspections undertaken in 2016 these scores ranged from 100% to 26% with an average of 76%. This means that in the best YOTs inspectors agreed with all of the YOTs assessments and decisions relating to risk of serious harm and in the least effective, inspectors only agreed with one-quarter of the YOTs decisions.

The 2014 HMI Probation thematic inspection of the YOT serious incident reporting process<sup>15</sup> identified shortfalls in learning when young people harmed others. Both the serious incidents and Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) thematic inspections<sup>16</sup> identified that not all MAPPA-eligible cases were identified correctly by YOTs.

---

13 First Time Entrants to the Youth Justice System, Youth Justice Statistics 2015-2016, YJB, January 2017.

14 Young people in custody in the youth secure estate, Youth Justice Statistics 2015-2016, YJB, January 2017.

15 HMI Probation (2015) *An Inspection to Assess the Effectiveness of the Reporting, Monitoring and Learning from the Youth Justice Board's Community Safeguarding and Public Protection Incident Procedures*.

16 HMI Probation, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary (2015) *A follow-up inspection of Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements*.

### 1.3. Aims and objectives

The objective of this inspection was to consider the effectiveness of YOT practice in relation to public protection. Key questions were as follows:

- How effective are YOT assessment processes in identifying potential risk of serious harm and what has been the impact of the recently introduced assessment tool, AssetPlus, on the quality risk of harm assessments and intervention plans?
- Which interventions and what types of approach appear to be effective in managing and reducing risk of serious harm?
- How effective is partnership activity, including MAPPA and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), in assisting YOTs to manage risk and complexity in young people's lives?
- How effective are governance and accountability processes, including management and training, in relation to the public protection work of YOTs?
- What is the incidence of trauma and other adverse events on young people and are YOTs taking sufficient account of these issues in their practice?
- Does the use of social media by young people feature in public-protection related offences and what are the responses of YOTs?

The inspection focused on the work of young people sentenced by the Youth or Crown Court. It did not include out-of-court disposals. There was not a specific focus on extremism. However, where extremism was a factor in cases identified during the fieldwork, any relevant learning was identified.

### 1.4. Report outline

Chapter	Content
2. Young people who pose a risk in their communities	Our findings in relation to trauma and its impact; social media and offending; changing young people's behaviour; and how outcomes can be improved.
3. Protecting the public	An examination of work done by YOTs to protect victims of youth crime and deliver restorative justice. The strengths and areas for improvement at each stage of the youth justice process from initial assessment to closure or transfer to adult probation services.
4. Governance, management and partnership	An examination of the governance and management arrangements to support YOTs. Our findings in relation to partnership working and the ability of YOTs to draw on the resources of others as well as management and practitioner effectiveness.

## **2. Young people who pose a risk in their communities**

We examined the case records of young people who had committed violent and/or sexual offences or had been assessed as high, or very high, Risk of Serious Harm (RoSH) by their supervising YOT. We undertook detailed case assessments and interviewed the allocated case manager where available. We examined the context to their offending and their case histories. We also looked for evidence of promising approaches to working with this group of young people.

## 2.1. Trauma and other significant adverse events in young people's lives

A number of recent research studies have identified significant levels of trauma in the history of young people convicted of violent offences<sup>17</sup>. During our case file assessments, and in interviews with case managers we looked for evidence of emotional trauma or other adverse events experienced by these young people. We took a broad definition of trauma, with incidents ranging from separation from parents to severe abuse and bereavement. The young person typically experienced the event as frightening, threatening or shocking.

Nearly all cases examined had been assessed using the standard YOT assessment tool, AssetPlus. AssetPlus is a relatively new assessment tool that the sites visited had been using for between 6 and 24 months. Inspectors found that the tool was used effectively to capture these significant events in young people's histories. Not all of a young person's life history is documented in the YOT records, however, and we recognised that the actual incidence of such events may well be higher than we were able to identify.

Inspectors found evidence of trauma in over 80% of cases where information was available. Of the 115 cases examined there was clear evidence of emotional trauma and other adverse events in 88 cases. In 20 cases there was no evidence of trauma and in 7 cases it was unclear. The spectrum of adverse experiences recorded on file included separation and estrangement from parents, the death of a parent or main carer, sexual abuse, severe physical chastisement, serial domestic abuse and parental substance misuse. For some young people their experiences of trauma were both multiple and severe. The inspector's summary of the trauma issues in each relevant case are reproduced in Appendix 2.

We looked for evidence of exposure to domestic abuse. In one-third of cases examined we found reference on file to domestic abuse in the family home where the young person was currently or had been previously living. In most cases the young person's mother had been the victim and her male partner (sometimes but not always the young person's father) was the perpetrator. In some cases the mother had been abused by a number of partners.

Specialist mental health practitioners told us that many young people under YOT supervision have experienced post-traumatic stress. In some cases there were relatively mild indicators and in a small number of cases there was a clinical diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

### Trauma-informed practice

Trauma-informed practice is a generic term describing a strengths-based approach to people who have experienced trauma in their lives. The research<sup>17</sup> indicates that young people who have symptoms of post-traumatic stress will find it difficult to form relationships with adults working with them. They may not be able to respond to conventional offending behaviour programmes and may also struggle to comply with demanding community programmes.

---

<sup>17</sup> Beyond Youth Custody (2016) *Trauma and Young Offenders A review of the research and practice literature*.

Interventions should be tailored to take account of the impact of trauma on their development, and a number of approaches that do that have been developed within the youth justice sector. These include the Enhanced Case Management Model<sup>18</sup> used by some Welsh YOTs and the Trauma Recovery Model<sup>19</sup> developed in the young people's secure estate.

In trauma-informed practice models, good practice begins at the court report stage, so as to increase the prospects of success and rehabilitation. Courts need all the relevant information about the young person's history, and an analysis of the impact of that history on current behaviour, so that they can sentence well. The demands of the most intensive community orders will be beyond the capabilities of some young people, and report authors should avoid proposing community programmes where the young person has little prospect of successful completion.

Instead, interventions in trauma-informed models commonly focus on building an effective working relationship between the case manager and the young person, and making initial progress with the underlying issues *before* moving to more specific offence-focused work. Helping the young person develop personal resilience should be a key objective of the intervention. Progress is inevitably slow - and should it become necessary to return the young person to court, then again, courts need full information in order to deal with the individual appropriately.

Inspectors found that case managers had responded to the identified issues of trauma and adverse events in 85% of relevant cases. Many of the trauma-related cases were referred to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) for assessment and we saw good examples of CAMHS workers providing assessments and advice to YOT practitioners on how best to intervene with young people. Young people's willingness to work with CAMHS was variable with some clearly engaging and gaining some benefit and others not motivated to engage at all. We did not see evidence of specifically identified trauma-related interventions in YOT intervention plans, although there was good evidence in many cases of a flexible relationship and a strengths-based approach being applied. These appeared to be applied intuitively rather than through a planned, structured approach to mitigating the impact of trauma.

***Good practice example:** A CAMHS practitioner in Nottinghamshire YOT had produced guidance for their colleagues on an assessment and referral pathway to mental health treatment services. The guidance included specific advice in recognising the impact of trauma and in particular the symptoms of post-traumatic stress. This enabled CAMHS to become involved in those cases where they could have most impact and helped case managers to understand the effects of previous trauma on the young person.*

The incidence of trauma and other adverse events was such that there was a need for YOT practitioners to have an understanding of trauma and its impact on young people. AssetPlus encourages case managers to look for evidence of trauma in young

<sup>18</sup> Welsh Government (2017) *Evaluation of the Enhanced Case Management Approach*.

<sup>19</sup> Skuse, T. & Matthews, J. (2015) *The Trauma Recovery Model: Sequencing Youth Justice Interventions for Young People With Complex Needs*.

people's backgrounds. YOT practitioners have access to extensive records including (via colleagues) local authority children's services, police and health services. They should exercise appropriate professional curiosity in developing their understanding of the young people with whom they are working.

Intervention should take account of trauma where it is present. There is a strong case for the development of trauma-informed practice across all YOTs. There are already a number of models available which appear to offer a promising approach to working with young people affected by emotional trauma and other adverse events in their lives.

## **2.2. Social media and young people's offending**

Social media has a central role in the lives of young people. Most young people are active across a number of social-media platforms, some of which are well known to most adults while others may be less well known. In our mainstream inspection programme of YOTs we have seen regular case examples where offences have a social-media component. In one-quarter of cases examined in this thematic inspection we found a social-media component to the main offence. The form of the social-media component varied widely. Examples included arguments and personal abuse that started on social media that led to physical assaults when the protagonists met in the street or on public transport. Offences can escalate dramatically with serious assaults taking place following arguments or personal abuse taking place on social media.

There were several offences where young people were being blackmailed online using indecent images that they had previously been pressured to upload.

In areas where gangs were present there was a significant social-media dimension. We heard from practitioners how gangs posted video material to make their gang appeal to new members, to stake their territory and to issue challenges and engage in provocation with other gangs. In one case, a young person had appeared in a gang video filmed outside of his home. A rival gang identified the location of the home and a group arrived one evening to intimidate and cause damage to the home. This incident had been highly distressing for both the young person under YOT supervision and other family members.

Some young people used social media to intimidate others. In one case a young person went to some lengths to depict an individual as a paedophile across a number of social-media outlets. They did this in order to provoke others into victimising him. The offender was creating proxies to carry out acts of harm to the victim without themselves becoming involved directly.

Access to internet pornography was a factor in a small number of cases. In one case the young person had been exposed to pornography at a young age by a cousin. This is a form of sexual abuse. He later went on to commit sexual offences. In another case, there was clear evidence of the young person researching his sexual offence against his sister online immediately prior to committing it.

In focus groups, staff described how social media was a major part of young people's lives. Even in cases where there was no social-media component to the index offence there were often underlying social-media issues in their lives such as bullying and feuds between peer groups that had started and continued online.

*“Our young people used to hang around on street corners and parks before committing offences. Now they sit alone in their bedrooms and get into arguments or plan offences on their phones, tablets or computers.” YOT worker*

### Keeping abreast

Social-media developments are fast moving, making it a formidable task for practitioners to keep up to date with young people’s use of it. Much of the conventional material developed to manage risk and vulnerability is unsuited to the online world. Many practitioners told us their best source of information was young people themselves, as they often talk freely about how they used social media and its impact on their lives. We found little research on social media and young people’s offending, however, a study published by Catch 22 during our inspection fieldwork also identified some of the ways that online behaviour can lead to violence between young people.<sup>20</sup>

A generational shift has taken place where young people now live increasingly in an online world that many adults responsible for helping them barely understand. Most of the strategic managers we met had limited understanding of social media and its impact on young people. Some senior managers were quite open that the changes in young people’s lives as a result of social media had occurred after they ceased to be close to practice and that they simply did not understand it. In the capital, however, we found managers more in tune. As a result of the gang strategies in London and the links between social media and gangs, managers were well briefed. There was greater awareness among senior managers of social media and its impact on young people.

***Good practice example:** A specialist gangs police officer based in the Waltham Forest YOT office had produced a wide range of briefing material for YOT colleagues. This included guidance on the most popular Apps among young people and how they were used, local gangs and social media and the ‘sexting codes’ used by young people (reproduced in Appendix 3). The police officer was a valuable source of advice both to practitioners and managers on many aspects of social media and young people.*

### Keeping track

Young people’s social-media activity is a useful source of information to assess the risk of further offending. It is exceptionally difficult, however, for policy and practice to keep up with the frequent changes in young people’s use of social media and consequent behaviours. Associates, attitudes and behaviours can be identified by viewing social-media activity, but we found practitioners unsure about whether they could monitor young people’s social-media activity, or how to do it. Where monitoring happened, it was unclear whether the young person had been made aware.

<sup>20</sup> Irwin-Rogers, K & Pinkey, C. (2017) *Social Media as a Catalyst and Trigger for Youth Violence*.

Few of the areas we visited had an up to date policy on staff viewing young people's social-media activity for the purposes of gathering intelligence or monitoring behaviour. However, we again found good practice in Waltham Forest, where clear processes enabled YOT staff to ask the specialist police officer to view and report on young people's social-media activity. Provided certain criteria were met, the police officer would report to the case manager what was found.

Some areas we visited were clear that the *Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act* (RIPA)<sup>21</sup> applied although not necessarily to the viewing of all social media activity. Guidance<sup>22</sup> issued by the Office of Surveillance Commissioners<sup>23</sup> states that repeated viewing of public social-media material produced by a young person is likely to fall within the scope of RIPA and should be properly authorised. YOTs should make sure that the senior responsible officer<sup>24</sup> for RIPA in their local authority is aware if they are monitoring young people's social-media activity.

### Social-media interventions

Of the cases with a social-media component in the offence we found that less than half had a specific intervention relating to social media. However, the intervention tools being used by practitioners working with internet-based, and other harmful, sexual behaviour were more evidence based. The AIM assessment tool and Good Lives intervention programme are designed for sex offenders and both factor social media and internet activity into their design.

There was limited resource material available to case managers to intervene and provide advice. Some YOTs had relevant intervention material available, but most practitioners described to us how they would undertake internet searches in order to identify suitable relevant material.

## 2.3. Changing young people's behaviour

In May 2016 we published a thematic inspection report on desistance and young people. The report identified factors in working with young people who have offended that were likely to effect change in their lives and reduce reoffending. The inspection found that a rounded model of practice should take account of the wider social context of young people's behaviour. It should acknowledge the fundamental importance of trusting professional relationships as a medium for change. It should include individual empowerment and enhanced social inclusion as legitimate objectives of YOT interventions as well as reduced reoffending.

In this inspection we looked for evidence of these desistance principles being applied. We were pleased to find that in 92% of cases examined the inspector judged that the case manager had applied these principles. Although many of the young people faced formidable difficulties in their lives, inspectors identified that case managers had worked to build upon strengths in 88% of cases examined. We saw the use of a number of specific programmes that drew on strengths-based practice

---

21 *Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000.*

22 Office of Surveillance Commissioners (2016) *Procedures and Guidance*: paragraph. 289.

23 On 01 September 2017, the Office of Surveillance Commissioners merged with other bodies to become Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office.

24 Every local authority is required to have a senior responsible officer accountable for compliance with RIPA.

and desistance. These included the Good Lives model being used with harmful sexual behaviour and the 'Four Pillars' approach used with offenders being managed under MAPPA.

While much of the practice seen in the cases that we assessed was strengths based, there were occasions when interventions were insufficiently responsive to young people's needs. The Intensive Supervision and Surveillance (ISS) programme is used as a sentence for young people most likely to be given a custodial sentence. In some ISS cases inspectors were concerned that there was insufficient flexibility in the programme. This resulted in young people being placed on orders with which they were unlikely to comply. A more bespoke approach to the range of conditions that can be attached to court orders could have been considered in these cases. This could have achieved a better balance between providing the court with a sentencing option that makes demands of the young person while delivering an intervention that was likely to have an impact.

**Good practice example:** James had experienced a number of very difficult experiences in his life including the disappearance of his father and being kidnapped by members of a gang. He had been placed out of area by a London borough. The CAMHS specialist in the caretaking YOT assessed the young person as displaying symptoms of post-traumatic stress. He was complying with the supervision element of his court order but not undertaking his reparation in the community. He was taken back to court in breach of the order and the YOT asked for the supervision element of the order to be extended and the reparation component to be removed from his order. While this would not always be appropriate, inspectors judged that it was a suitably flexible approach to a young person with many difficulties in his life.

**Good practice example:** An education specialist in Waltham Forest used a simple technique for building on strengths. Young people under YOT supervision often find it difficult to put together a CV. They can feel they have nothing to offer potential employers. In order to find strengths the CV is put together in reverse order. The young person is asked to outline their hobbies and interests. Most young people are able to do this. They then complete their education history and finally they make a statement about themselves. Young people find the task less daunting when completed in this order. In the case examined the young person's statement began:

*"I am motivated to work hard to earn money. I have helped my father with some building work and I have practical skills which can be used in many situations".*

Inspectors judged that structured interventions such as offending behaviour programmes were delivered in three-quarters of cases. Most of the YOTs had a range of material available for working with young people. This was rarely catalogued, quality assured or evaluated and some of the material had been in use for many years. Practitioners sometimes developed their own material or undertook internet research to source material. The lack of access to quality-assured intervention programmes with clear criteria for use was a weakness across all six sites visited.

Just over one-third of our sample had been convicted of or identified as being involved in harmful sexual behaviour. All of the YOTs had staff trained to work with this behaviour and we saw good assessments and interventions being delivered using the AIM and Good Lives models. These are specialist resources specifically developed for harmful sexual behaviour.

In most cases, work was undertaken with families where it was appropriate to do so. There was a wide range of resources available to YOTs. Waltham Forest YOT had access to a specialist Functional Family Therapy Team who delivered an intensive intervention to the whole family. Nottinghamshire YOT had a specialist family worker within the service. Several YOTs worked closely with their local Troubled Families Service. It was clear that work with families was an important component in effecting change.

## **2.4. Outcomes for young people under supervision**

In this inspection, we saw evidence of effective practice in work to protect the public. We did not see any cases where the public, staff or previous victims had been placed at avoidable risk because of the failure of YOTs to act. All of the areas we visited had clear internal policies and procedures for managing risk of serious harm to others. These policies were up to date and staff compliance with them was good. Managers were active in providing support to staff in managing complex cases and also ensuring oversight and accountability for the work being done.

Just over half of the young people complied with their order in that they attended appointments and cooperated with the conditions placed on them by the court. We appreciate of course that compliance with a court order is not in itself a successful outcome. Generally, a change in the young person's attitudes and behaviour has to take place, to increase life chances and stop offending.

For some young people in our case sample, the camaraderie of a delinquent peer group was a welcome escape from a neglectful and abusive home life. Change happens slowly within this population and we did not expect many indications of positive outcomes and moves away from crime over the short timeframes we were inspecting. Nonetheless, we judged that positive outcomes - for example, stable accommodation, and engagement in education, training or employment - had been achieved in more than half of the cases examined. In over half (59%) of the sample there was a reduction in frequency and/or seriousness of offending.

Case managers have to draw a balance between making sure that young people abide by the order of the court while at the same time recognising that they are sometimes living in chaotic environments and face significant challenges in their lives. We found YOTs doing this well, overall. Inspectors judged that over half (57%)

of the young people in the sample complied with their court order. Of those who did not comply appropriate action was taken by the YOT in all cases.

On analysis of our case assessment data, we found that none of the nine cases where desistance principles were absent had a positive outcome.

## **2.5. Conclusions and implications**

In order to make further progress in effecting change in the lives of young people who pose a risk to others, more needs to be done to respond to trauma and social media, and to further embed desistance principles.

The nature of young people under statutory YOT supervision has changed. The numbers are smaller and the proportion with more complex backgrounds and needs has increased. The proportion of our sample where we could say that YOTs had made real progress with the young person was relatively small. Effecting positive change with these young people so as to reduce offending and protect the public is exceptionally difficult.

We identified two significant aspects of young people's lives where YOTs were working with little in the way of policy or practice guidance: the recognition and management of past trauma, and the influence and effect of social media.

Understanding of the impact of trauma on behaviour and capacity for change is under-developed. There are some promising trauma-informed practice initiatives but so far this has been on a small scale. In the six sites visited we saw skilled and committed practitioners responding intuitively to trauma with the support of CAMHS colleagues, but more systematic and evidence-based approaches would increase the prospects of success.

We found clear links between social-media use and offending, and new and notably disturbing offence scenarios. As with trauma, we found committed practitioners acting intuitively but again with little in the way of policy and guidance to support them. Practitioners need clarity on what they can do to track social-media activity, and how to decide what is the best thing to do in each case.

In interviews and focus groups, we found that our recommendations from the 2016 thematic report on desistance and young people had led to positive changes in practice.

---

## 3. Protecting the public

In this section we examine the processes used in the youth justice system to make sure the public are protected. We begin by examining work with victims of the offenders in our sample. We then track the young person's journey through the justice system and comment on the practice issues that arise at each stage. Much of the practice we found was strong.

### 3.1. Victims of youth crime and restorative justice

YOTs cannot guarantee the safety of previous and potential victims of young people under their supervision, however, we look for evidence of YOTs doing their best to protect victims using the powers and resources available to them. We judged that work to protect previous and potential victims was strong across all of the sites we visited. There was an identifiable victim in 84% of our sample of cases (for some offences, such as possession of a knife, there was no specific victim). Inspectors judged that enough had been done by the YOT to keep previous victims safe in 87% of relevant cases. In half of the relevant cases examined, there was a specific individual who could still be at risk of harm from the offender. In nearly all those cases, the victim was clearly identified as being at risk of harm in the assessment and there were actions in place to protect that victim.

We saw examples of YOTs using a range of approaches to keeping victims safe including the use of exclusion requirements, curfews and licence conditions. Case managers worked closely with police colleagues to monitor intelligence information and acted quickly on breaches of licence or inappropriate contact with previous victims.

***Good practice example:** Adam was convicted of assaulting his girlfriend in Croydon. The case manager took a direct interest in protecting the victim who was in care in a neighbouring authority. There was a non-contact requirement in place for two months and the case manager liaised with the police and local authority children's services to monitor compliance. When the requirement finished she contacted the victim's care placement and key worker. On the basis of the contradictory information received from them she escalated matters to her manager as she had concerns that the placement was not safeguarding the victim. She identified that the victim had decided not to work with all aspects of the safety plan, although had been referred to a local domestic abuse programme which she attended with her mother who was also a victim of domestic abuse. The case manager also implemented a domestic abuse programme with Adam. Overall, the case manager was doing as much as they could to monitor risks, protect the victim and work with Adam to change his behaviour.*

YOTs succeeded in establishing victim contact in half of the cases where a victim could be identified. Direct reparation to victims took place in just five cases. Given the nature of the offending being examined this was not surprising. Practitioners told us they were cautious about re-victimising victims by bringing them face to face with the offender. Direct reparation is often inappropriate for sexual and domestic abuse offences. For some of the gang-related offences it may be unsafe to bring offender and victim together.

We would normally expect to see most young people on a YOT order undertaking reparation. However, in this sample just over half participated in reparation activity.

In our thematic inspection of desistance and young people we identified the importance of high quality reparation work taking place. Young people are more likely to respond to reparation if they can see the link to the offence or it is of some benefit to them. When reparation is done well it can raise self-esteem, improve social functioning and develop new skills for young people.

In some cases in this inspection, young people were clearly struggling to comply with the conditions attached to the court order. Case managers may have exercised their discretion and judged that the young people were unlikely to comply and the reparation was too demanding. We agreed with this judgment in some cases, but not all.

The absence of reparation in many cases represented a missed opportunity. Where young people are slotted into existing reparation projects without any thought being given as to whether they will benefit it can be counter productive. If it is tailored to the needs of the young person, is undertaken at the right time and takes account of previous trauma it can provide real benefits.

### 3.2. Offending patterns and assessments

The offences committed by the sample group were mostly violent and/or sexual. In some cases the index offence of the court order we were examining was less serious than earlier offences. One-fifth of our sample had been convicted at some point for a sexual offence and a slightly smaller proportion had exhibited harmful sexual behaviour but no conviction had taken place.

We saw regional variations in behaviour. In London, gangs and possession of knives was a notable feature. Drugs featured in different ways. In London, young people were more likely to be involved in the supply of drugs than their use. In some more rural areas we found young people becoming involved in violence under the influence 'New Psychoactive Substances'. There was just one case in the sample where extremist views were a risk factor. We had a single offence of possession of acid for use in an attack.

**Table 2: Breakdown of main offence in the court order being examined**

Index offence description	Number of cases	% value of sample
Violence against the person (including affray, violent disorder, abusive/threatening behaviour etc.)	64	56%
Sexual offences	17	15%
Criminal damage (excluding arson)	3	3%
Burglary	5	4%
Arson	2	2%
Robbery	6	5%
Drug offences	4	4%
Theft and handling stolen goods	1	1%
Motoring	5	4%
Other	7	6%

**Table 3: Evidence of harmful sexual behaviour in the cases examined**

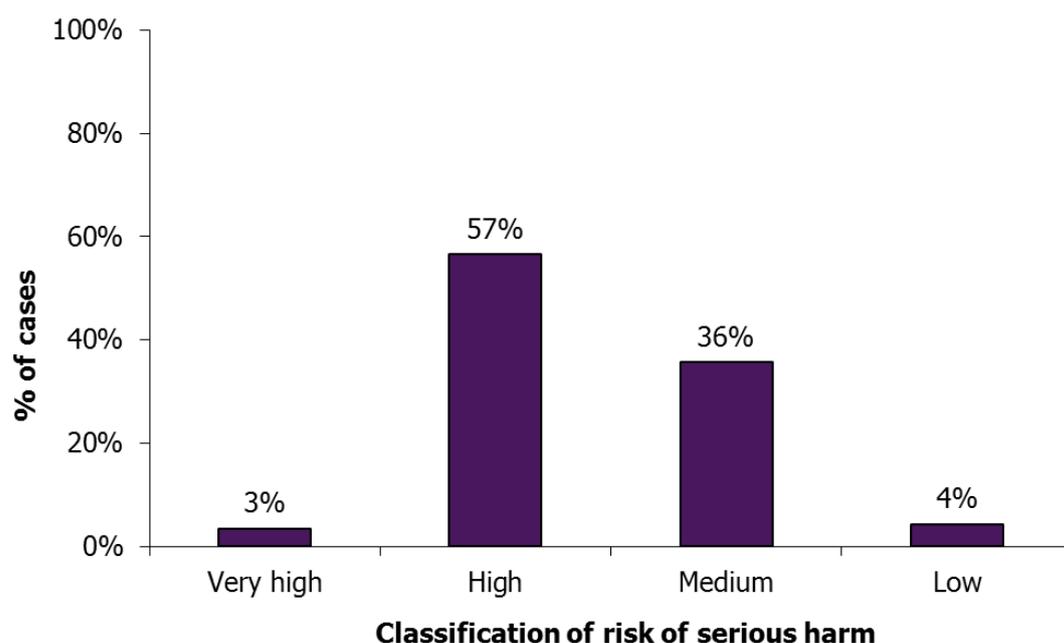
Evidence of harmful sexual behaviour by the young person	Number of cases	% value of sample
Current offence or previous conviction	23	20%
Known behaviour but no conviction	19	17%
No evidence of harmful sexual behaviour	71	63%

Inspectors judged that initial assessments were of good quality in the large majority of cases. Almost all of the cases examined had their assessment carried out using AssetPlus, which was implemented in most YOTs in England and Wales around 6 to 24 months before the fieldwork took place. Assessments captured both the issues specifically relating to the young person’s risk of serious harm to others as well as the overall circumstances of the young person. In focus groups, practitioners told us that adjusting to AssetPlus had taken time and their early assessments were very time consuming to complete. Most case managers spoke positively about AssetPlus and staff felt that, when compared to its predecessor, it enabled them to better capture the full circumstances of the young people being assessed.

YOT staff had access to a wide range of information when completing their assessments. Many staff had direct access to local authority children’s services case management systems and seconded police officers could provide information obtained from police records. Most staff displayed professional curiosity which they exercised appropriately to fill gaps in young people’s histories and to get a full understanding of the young person’s background, current strengths and concerns.

Although most of the sample group had committed a violent and/or sexual offence there was a spread of Risk of Serious Harm judgements in the assessments we examined.

**Figure 1: Highest risk of serious harm classification during current order**



Inspectors agreed with the RoSH level in 90% of cases. A number of practitioners told us that AssetPlus guided them towards making judgements of Risk of Serious Harm that were lower than if the same case had been assessed under Asset. There were a very small number of cases where inspectors judged that the level of risk of serious harm was underestimated.

The self-assessment document used to gather the young person’s views on a range of issues was completed in most cases. However, we saw little evidence of the findings informing the assessment. In interview, case managers could often articulate the young person’s views but they were often absent from the written assessment. The countersigning of assessments by managers was variable although we were told that this was often because of technical problems with the software rather than absence of management oversight.

**Table 4: Assessment components of the cases in the inspection sample**

<b>Assessment component</b>	<b>% of positive answers</b>
Did the assessment identify risk of serious harm issues in the case	89%
Did the assessment identify the range of relevant issues in the young person’s life	84%
Where there were strengths, were they identified	88%
Was there evidence of management oversight of assessments	89%

Overall, assessments were of good quality and most of the case managers knew the young people they were supervising well and had a very good understanding of their histories.

### **3.3. Reports for court and referral panels**

Pre-sentence reports (PSRs) should be based on the findings of the assessment and, overall, reports were of a good quality and addressed public protection issues well. Most young people are sentenced in the Youth Court, although more serious offences can be sentenced in the Crown Court. Of our sample, 90% were sentenced in the Youth Court. Young people appearing in the Youth Court for the first time are normally sentenced to a referral order. This is a mandatory sentence unless custody is being considered and, as a consequence, courts do not always request PSRs. Of our sample, just under half received a referral order; a similar number received a youth rehabilitation order with the remainder receiving a custodial sentence.

One-third of the sample was sentenced without a PSR. Where the offence is particularly serious and being sentenced in the Crown Court the PSR is required to address ‘dangerousness’<sup>25</sup>. Inspectors judged this was done effectively in all seven cases meeting the criteria. Most of the young people in our sample had committed

<sup>25</sup> *Criminal Justice Act 2003* amended.

serious offences. Some were persistent offenders and many faced the prospect of a custodial sentence. Reports offered a community option in all but six cases in the sample.

**Table 5: Case sample pre-sentence report quality**

Pre-sentence report quality	% of positive answers
The RoSH assessment was sufficient	96%
The PSR gave an indication of how risk of serious harm would be managed in the community	97%
Overall, a good-quality report was provided to court	94%

Several of the inspected YOTs had clear systems for demonstrating management oversight of PSRs. Some YOTs held two versions of the report, the original draft produced by the case manager as well as the final quality-assured version submitted to court. This made sure of the visibility of management oversight in the PSR production process. In Nottinghamshire, we saw a record of the manager’s observations and required changes to a PSR kept in a separate document on each case file. In the total sample, we found a very small number of reports with inappropriate and judgemental language. Generally, PSRs were of good quality. They made sentencers fully aware of the risks of harm that a young person posed while at the same time offering a constructive option for managing them in the community. Some reports outlined previous trauma in the young person’s history.

Referral orders differ from other court orders in that following a sentence in court a panel of local volunteers is convened to produce a contract for the young person, based on restorative principles. Whereas courts can make a custodial sentence if they have concerns about public safety, the role of the panel is to draw up a plan of activity in the community. The panel meets on a number of occasions during the course of the order to review progress. YOTs are required to provide the first panels with a report outlining the relevant issues in the case. We judged that most reports gave the panels appropriate information although some case managers were sometimes unsure of how much detail to provide, with one such manager saying:

*“There is a dilemma with referral order panel reports over just how much detail to include in the complex cases where there is a high risk of serious harm”.*

In our thematic review of referral orders<sup>26</sup> we stated that panel reports should not be overly long and should provide enough information for the panel to understand the offending and background of the young person. In this inspection, this was largely achieved, although in complex cases this required a judgement by the report author.

<sup>26</sup> HMI Probation (2016) *Referral Orders – do they achieve their potential?*

### 3.4. Planning and review

Planning was not as strong as assessment. The introduction of AssetPlus changed the structure of intervention planning. Previously within Asset there had been an intervention plan outlining what would be done to reduce reoffending. Where required there was also a risk management plan (RMP) which outlined specific activity to reduce risk of serious harm to others. In addition, there could be a further vulnerability management plan (VMP) to manage the risk of the young person coming to harm. AssetPlus consolidated these plans into a plan to be drawn up with the young person known as 'My Targets' and a further plan outlining 'External Controls' produced by the case manager focusing on actions to reduce vulnerability and risk of serious harm to others.

As with our mainstream YOT inspection programme, we found that plans were sometimes insufficiently outcome focused. The weakest plans contained targets such as 'Attend YOT appointments' or 'Complete reparation hours'. These targets did not articulate what was going to be done or what the desired outcome of the intervention would be. The External Controls section of the plan was under-used and of the six sites visited only Nottinghamshire were using it consistently to identify actions to manage risk of serious harm. The effect of this was that activities to manage risk that would have previously sat in the RMP or VMP were now missing from plans.

All of the YOTs had established planning meetings or forums. In most areas they held a regular, typically fortnightly, panel to review high risk cases covering both public protection and vulnerability concerns. These panels consisted of staff from the YOT and partner agencies. We were impressed by the commitment of partners to the panels with a range of health and local authority children's services staff attending regularly.

In some areas, staff were critical of the panel arrangements feeling that the balance of the discussion at the panel was tilted too far towards challenge and not far enough to supporting them in their work with the young person. In the best examples we could see how the panel had brought new thinking to the case and enhanced the intervention plan. In the weakest panels there was little evidence of impact. Recording of panel decisions was also mixed. In some cases we found it difficult to locate the record of the panel discussion on file. The panels frequently identified actions required over and above the existing intervention plan for the case. Often the AssetPlus intervention plan was not updated to take account of the planning forum decisions, resulting in multiple plans with differing actions emerging.

**Table 6: Planning quality findings**

<b>Planning quality</b>	<b>% of positive answers</b>
Quality of the plan was sufficient to address risk of serious harm	75%
Quality of plan sufficient to address risk of serious harm	75%
Timeliness of plan	86%
The plan fully addresses issues identified in the assessment	79%

We examined 17 cases where the young person was sentenced to custody. In those cases three-quarters had effective continuity of planning between custody and community.

***Good practice example:** Jack was sentenced to a six-month detention and training order for assault and possession of a weapon. The YOT (Cheshire West, Halton & Warrington) intervention plan was supported by a high risk panel meeting and linked to the plan while in custody. It appropriately addressed areas of need identified in the assessment and linked in specialist workers as required in preparation for his release.*

Just under half of the young people whose cases we examined were 'Looked After' by a local authority which meant there was also a care plan in place. In most relevant cases there was good communication between the YOT worker and the social worker responsible for the care plan.

***Good practice example:** Nottinghamshire YOT held risk strategy meetings for the most complex cases on their caseload. Attendance and minutes were clearly recorded and uploaded onto the young person's case file. Intervention plans were updated if required following the decisions of the risk strategy meeting.*

Assessment and plans should be updated at regular intervals and/or at the point of any significant event in a young person's life. We judged that review was carried out effectively, in that it identified and responded to changes in circumstances, in well over three-quarters of cases.

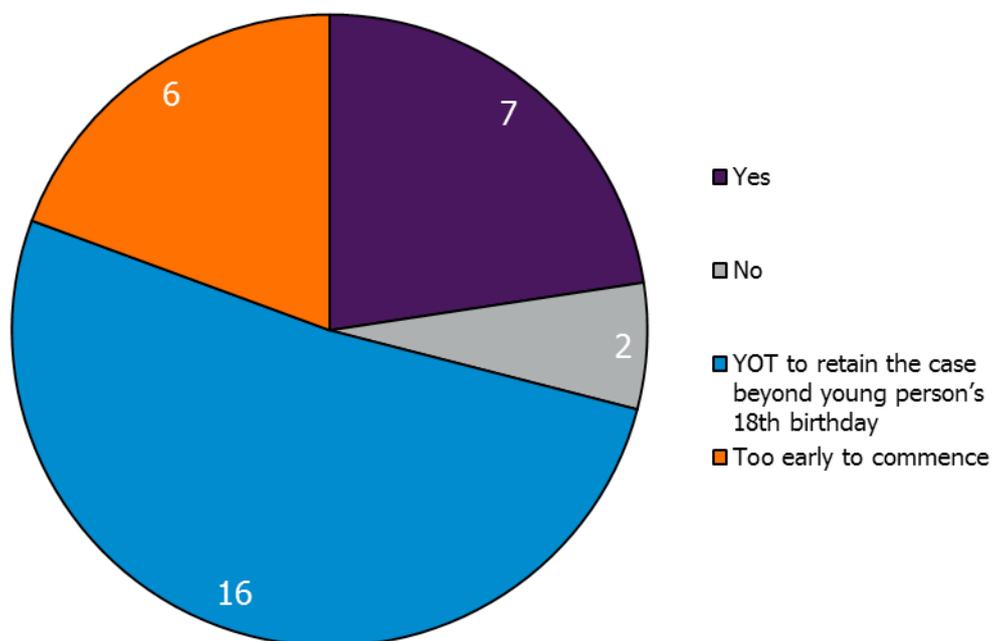
We found that cases were reviewed in a number of ways: by the case manager and sometimes involving the young person; by the case manager and their line manager together; by the planning meetings described above; and (in referral order cases) through the regular review panels held every three months. We found that, broadly, the more complex the case the more likely it was to be taken through the local YOT case planning forum or panel. We found good examples of a wide range of information sources being used to inform the review. These included police intelligence and in some cases feedback from school about behaviour, enabling the YOT to see potential warning signs of further offending and to act quickly.

### **3.5. Transfers to probation services**

One-quarter of our sample was due to reach the age of 18 years during the course of their court order. When young people reach the age of 18 years, their cases can be transferred to adult probation services and there is guidance to YOTs outlining how the transfer should take place. The process includes a number of three-way meetings involving both the YOT case manager, new probation officer and the young person. In practice, we found that the YOT had decided to retain the case in half of those eligible for transfer. Of those cases due for transfer, sufficient planning had taken place in most cases.

Reasons given for YOTs retaining cases included difficulties for the probation providers in delivering conditions attached to the order, a short period of post-18 supervision or a desire to maintain some continuity in the young person's life. We judged the explanation satisfactory in each case.

**Figure 2: Sufficient planning for transfer to adult probation for young people who became 18 years old during their order**



### 3.6. Conclusions and implications

YOTs gave a high priority to protecting previous and potential victims of young people who have offended. They identified individuals at risk and used their powers to seek court and custody licence conditions to keep offenders away from victims where necessary. They monitored behaviour through a range of information sources, particularly the police.

Reports for court and referral order panels were of a good quality and mostly gave sentencers and panel members the right information to make decisions.

We judged that the implementation of AssetPlus had been largely successful, in that we found it used effectively to aid and structure assessment, but more needs to be done to reflect the views of young people in assessments. Most of the sites visited were not using AssetPlus as effectively as a planning tool compared to its use as an assessment tool.

All of the YOTs visited had established panels or forums to undertake planning and review of their complex cases. The most successful arrangements included a range of participants, provided a positive experience for the case manager and enhanced their approach to the case. The recording of panel discussions could be better.

Restorative justice did not feature as much as we had anticipated. Direct contact between victim and offender will not always be appropriate in public protection cases, but in many cases the benefits of high quality reparation in the community had not been realised.

Transfer to adult probation services was generally done well, although it was of note that YOTs were retaining many cases beyond the normal transfer point of an 18th birthday.

---

## **4. Governance, management and partnership**

YOTs are reliant on partner agencies to deliver services that will effect change in young people and protect the public. In this section we consider how effective the governance and management arrangements of YOTs are in protecting the public. We comment on strategic and operational management in the context of public protection work and changing YOT caseloads, and we judge the capacity of frontline staff to deliver effective services to young people who present public protection risks.

## 4.1. Governance

The YOTs we visited were linked to their local authority in different ways. Mergers of services had taken place to reduce costs and achieve economies of scale. In one area, YOTs were merged across local authority boundaries and in other areas the YOT was retained within the local authority but integrated with other services for young people.

Whatever the local structures are, YOT Management Boards should oversee the work of the service and monitor its effectiveness. All of the areas we visited had a functioning Board that had met at appropriate intervals in the previous 12 months. All received quantitative performance information and also qualitative information such as the results of file audits. They were also informed of any serious incidents or Serious Further Offences that required reporting to the Youth Justice Board.

All of the Boards assured us that they had a good understanding of risks managed by YOTs. We held focus groups with representatives of the Board in each of the six areas we visited. In the two London areas, gangs and knife crime were prominent. In other areas of the country there was a wider range of concerns, including violence related to alcohol and substance misuse. YOTs located within Shire counties with adjacent cities (i.e. Hertfordshire and Cheshire West, Halton & Warrington) commented on gang overspill activity in their area. Some Boards reported child sexual exploitation as an issue in their area where young people could be involved both as perpetrators and victims. Board's assessments of local issues were broadly consistent with our findings from case reviews.

We were interested to know if Boards had case studies of the complex work undertaken by the YOT presented to them. Three told us they had not, one had managers present case studies and just two had practitioners attend their board to present their work. Where practitioners had presented case studies, Board members described it as being particularly helpful in understanding what staff actually do and the sheer complexity of the task. Waltham Forest YOT Management Board had gone one step further and invited young people to attend their Board to talk about their experiences of services.

In practitioner focus groups, most staff showed little awareness of their Management Boards, its function or membership. Greater engagement between Management Boards and frontline staff would be beneficial and Boards should take the time to understand the type of work being undertaken by YOT staff and to recognise the skills and knowledge required to deliver an effective service.

***Good practice example:** The Voices in Participation scheme in Waltham Forest involved young people being given the opportunity to contribute to service development in a number of ways. They had been involved in the recruitment of staff and on one occasion eight young people attended the YOT Management Board to share their views. They described their experience of the service, how they found the YOT helpful and topics that they would like to be able to discuss with YOT workers but did not currently have the opportunity (such as religion).*

*Good practice example: Nottinghamshire YOT Management Board members described to us how they had seen an increase in knife crime in the city of Nottingham and were concerned that the behaviour may spread into the neighbouring county of Nottinghamshire. They considered a schools-based awareness programme. However, monitoring of crime data and information from young people themselves indicated that there was no evidence of knife crime increasing in their area. As a result, they decided not to pursue the strategy any further. They judged that an awareness programme could be counter productive and make carrying a knife more attractive to young people. They continue to monitor local data and are in position to act quickly if necessary.*

## **4.2. Frontline management**

We were impressed with the quality of first-line management. There was clear evidence on file of its impact on practice and case managers generally spoke positively about their management and supervision.

Frontline managers play a crucial role in making sure practice is of a good enough standard. They oversee the work of case managers and provide direction and quality assurance. In interview, 90% of case managers described the arrangements for formal management oversight (through countersigning of key assessment and planning documents) as effective. This was consistent with our own findings when undertaking case reviews where 89% of assessments evidenced management oversight.

When managing complex cases it is important that practitioners are also able to engage in reflective supervision with their line manager. Nearly all case managers described their line manager as engaging in reflective supervision. The comments from a case manager at Cheshire West, Halton & Warrington YOT were typical:

*“I meet with my manager once a month and we always discuss high-risk cases plus have quality assurance audits and get feedback on improvement areas. We have high-risk management reviews and I make referral into those high risk meetings. My new manager completes reflective supervision and asks, for example, why decisions have been made. They are also planning to observe my practice and interaction on high risk cases.”*

### **4.3. Workforce capacity**

In focus groups, practitioners confirmed that high risk and complex cases now make up an increased proportion of the workload. Nevertheless, they described their caseloads as manageable, with good levels of contact time with young people and attendance at a wide range of meetings relating to their young people.

Some of the case managers did not hold a recognised professional qualification or have substantial previous experience of youth justice, while others were recruited at a time when YOT caseloads were quite different. We interviewed a large proportion of the total case-holding staff at each YOT and overall, we were impressed. We conducted 101 case manager interviews and judged that in over 95% of cases they demonstrated an understanding of both the principles of effective practice and the local policy and procedure framework.

Most staff demonstrated a high level of personal commitment to the young people under their supervision. Almost all staff had taken advantage of the wide range of training opportunities available to them and many had gained vocational qualifications relating to youth justice work. We did not meet any staff who we judged unsuited to the work. In focus groups, we asked staff if they could articulate the values or principles they applied to their work. They identified the quality of relationships with young people and perseverance as key, in line with the desistance approach advocated in this report.

### **4.4. Partnership working**

YOTs are multi-disciplinary, but nevertheless need the assistance of services outside of their direct control. We judged that in the large majority of cases the practitioner had access to the right resources to manage risk of serious harm and that there was sufficient commitment from partner agencies.

In some cases the YOT made use of local escalation procedures in order to secure the contribution of a partner agency. This was rare but done appropriately in the cases seen. In the small number of cases where inspectors judged that partners had made insufficient contribution, the agencies identified that should have contributed more were local authority children's services, CAMHS, housing services and substance misuse services. These incidences made up between 2% and 9% of the total sample.

In one of the areas visited, the children's mental health specialist was no longer based in the YOT premises and referrals had to be made to the local CAMHS. It was clear that this arrangement did not work as well as in those areas where a CAMHS specialist was on site. In previous inspections, housing and accommodation issues have been a major source of difficulty. This was less apparent in this inspection. Reasons for this may be the relatively high proportion (46%) being in care of a local authority. There may also have been a recognition that for some offences (for example, sex offences) it was simply less acceptable for the young person to be without suitable accommodation.

*Good practice example: John had committed a serious offence involving a knife and was sentenced to six months in custody. Prior to his release, Waltham Forest YOT had used the high risk panel process to advocate on behalf of his mother that her accommodation was inadequate and that she was concerned that if the family remained her son would commit further serious offences. This was responded to and the family were moved to another area, with Waltham Forest Council assisting in the identification of suitable accommodation.*

#### **4.5. MAPPA and MARAC**

The purpose of MAPPA is to bring key agencies including police, probation and prisons together with local children's and health services to manage those cases, both adult and young people, that present the highest risk to the public. We were satisfied that MAPPA practice in the YOTs visited in this inspection was consistent with current practice guidance.

Offenders can be designated MAPPA status by a combination of offence type for example certain sexual offences or by sentence of the court, for example, 12 months custodial sentence for a violent offence. MAPPA offenders can be managed at 3 levels; Level 1, single-agency management, Level 2, multi-agency management and Level 3, high-intensity multi-agency management. In previous inspections we have found a failure to identify where MAPPA criteria have been met. However, in our sample of a 115 cases, all 18 MAPPA-eligible cases were correctly identified.

Of these cases, 15 were being managed at Level 1 and 1 at Level 2. Two further individuals were in custody and not due to be released for some time and, as a result, it was too early to assign a MAPPA level. Practitioners told us that they had seen a reduction in the number of cases that were escalated to MAPPA Level 2 in recent years. The explanation we were given for this was that in practice, inter-agency involvement in MAPPA Level 2 rarely provided more intervention than was already available through the YOT resources.

We were pleased to see that YOT staff had contacted their local MAPPA unit for advice in relevant cases. There was less active management at MAPPA Level 2 than would have been the case in inspections of this type in previous years. Of the case managers we interviewed, 80% told us that they had recent MAPPA training.

The Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is the forum where victims of serious cases of domestic abuse can be referred to allow information sharing and enable multi-agency protection plans to be developed. One-third of our sample group had been exposed to domestic abuse in their family home and some had gone on to become perpetrators of domestic abuse. There was evidence that 6% of our sample committing acts of domestic abuse against intimate partners and a higher incidence of 16% against family members, typically sons assaulting their mothers. Some YOTs had developed 'healthy relationships' type programmes in response to the high levels of exposure to domestic abuse.

**Table 7: Cases with evidence of domestic abuse and referral to a MARAC**

<b>22 cases where evidence of domestic abuse was present</b>	<b>Number of cases</b>	<b>% value of sample</b>
Were referred to MARAC	6	27%
Did not meet the MARAC threshold	13	59%
Should have been referred, but were not	3	14%

Inspectors judged that almost all case managers interviewed had an understanding of local MARAC procedures, and in most cases appropriate referrals of the victim were made by the YOT case holder.

#### **4.6. Conclusions and implications**

Management Board members were keen to let us know that they had a clear understanding of the changes that had taken place to YOT caseloads in recent years. All were adamant that they understood the range of risks and complexity in young people's lives, but evidence of how this was achieved was limited. Most frontline practitioners had little concept of who sat on the Boards and how they supported their work. Boards make decisions about allocation of resources to YOTs and although all Boards in this inspection received both qualitative and quantitative information reports, only two had the benefit of case managers attending to describe their work and present case studies. All Boards would benefit from engaging with practitioners and learning more about the frontline practice in their YOTs.

The standard of frontline management was high. Most managers knew their subject well and were respected by the staff they managed. Case managers in YOTs are generally impressive. They have high levels of technical knowledge, a range of skills and a commitment to young people. They kept their skills up to date and staff who may have been originally recruited with little experience to manage low-risk cases had developed into skilled practitioners managing high levels of complexity.

YOTs are in themselves partnerships and have to work with a wide range of organisations to achieve the best for young people. We were impressed by the levels of cooperation that YOTs received in the cases examined. The profile of cases reviewed in this inspection is different from other inspections and it may be that where there are public protection issues partner agencies are more responsive to YOTs and young people under their supervision.

---

# Appendices

1. References
2. Trauma summaries
3. Evidence provided by Waltham Forest YOT
4. Glossary
5. Methodology

## Appendix 1: References

- Her Majesty's Stationery Office (1999) Crime and Disorder Act 1998 c.37, London: The Stationery Office
- Youth Justice Board (2016) AssetPlus Guidance Assessment and Planning Interventions Framework User Guide for youth justice practitioners, London: Youth Justice Board
- Beyond Youth Custody (2016) Trauma and Young Offenders A review of the research and practice literature, London: Beyond Youth Custody
- Her Majesty's Stationery Office (2000) Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 c. 23, London: The Stationery Office.
- Office of Surveillance Commissioners (2016) Procedures and Guidance.
- HMI Probation (2016) Desistance and Young People, Manchester: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation
- HMI Probation (2015) An Inspection to Assess the Effectiveness of the Reporting, Monitoring and Learning from the Youth Justice Board's Community Safeguarding and Public Protection Incident Procedures, Manchester: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation
- HMI Probation, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary (2015) A follow-up inspection of Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements, Manchester: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation
- Welsh Government (2017) Evaluation of the Enhanced Case Management Approach, Cardiff: Welsh Government
- Skuse, T. & Matthew, J. (2015) The Trauma Recovery Model: Sequencing Youth Justice Interventions For Young people With Complex Needs, Prison Service Journal, No 220:16-25
- Irwin-Rogers, K & Pinkey, C. (2017) Social Media as a catalyst and Trigger for Youth Violence, London: Catch 22
- HMI Probation (2016) Referral Orders – do they achieve their potential?, Manchester: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation
- Ministry of Justice (2016) MAPPA Guidance Version 4.1, London: Ministry of Justice

## Appendix 2: Trauma summaries

Inspectors made short summaries of the trauma and other adverse events they identified in each case where it was found. The comments are reproduced below with minimal editing where required to protect anonymity.

In discussion with the case manager it was clear that the young person had been drawn into gang culture from a very early age (11 years) when he was reported missing and found in gang members' houses. It is not clear what impact this may have had on his development.

He was exposed to pornography at a young age by a cousin. This may have triggered his own interest in pornography which may have in turn led to these sexual offences.

He was brought up in a household with significant domestic abuse. He was also the victim of violence from relatives. He lived on a Travellers' site where they had their caravan firebombed.

There are concerns that his father was overly physical in his chastisement of him when he was young, he was overheard saying he would whip him, but no disclosure has been made.

The mother of the young person has significant mental health problems and has also been a victim of domestic abuse. This has led to the family becoming homeless on two occasions and living in domestic abuse accommodation.

The mother is a known heroin user and has been for many years, she has not been able to show her children the level of care that they need, and it is not known what they may have witnessed in the family home. The young person now lives with his father.

There has been a history of domestic abuse in the family home while the young man was growing up, this ended when his father was sentenced to custody for a period of time. He has been placed in local authority care due to his own sexualised behaviour and has struggled with the wrench of being away from his family connections.

He was brought up in a household with significant domestic abuse. His father is a drug dealer and his mother an alcoholic. He had been taking drugs, including cocaine, since he was nine years old, probably with his parent's encouragement.

The young person lives with his mother who has received a caution for her excessive chastisement of him, his father has also been in prison for a rape offence, but very few details are known about that.

The education health and care plan refers to him as having 'experienced a great deal of trauma', however, it was unclear from the YOT assessment what the trauma was. He had been taken into care for neglect and there was reference to his mother's drug use on the assessment.

This young woman has grown up in a household where domestic violence was a regular occurrence. This has now ended, with the father leaving the family home, but more recently it has been disclosed that her mother has a mental health problem and there was a recent suicide attempt, and some indications that she may have an alcohol problem.

The mother experienced significant postnatal depression after his birth and still struggles with depression, she was unable to provide care for him until he was two years old, due to her mental health issues. There was also domestic violence in the family home while he was growing up, and he was exposed to this.

This young man has been exposed to a home environment where domestic violence was prevalent. There is also intelligence that his father exposed him to violent pornography, and that he was in the room while his father committed a rape offence. There is also intelligence that his mother used him for drug dealing from the age of eight years old, until he was placed in care as a young teenager.

He has grown up in a home where domestic abuse has been present and has been previously assaulted by his stepfather.

The mother has mental health issues. There are multiple siblings and there has been a history of social care involvement with the family for neglect and abuse.

He and his sister alleged sexual abuse by their mother and stepfather leading to a conviction of the stepfather for abusing the sister.

His mother died in 2010 before he left Africa in 2014. He came to the UK to live with his aunt and uncle but faced rejection, emotional abuse and neglect. He has now been taken into care and is living with a foster carer.

His mother died when he was a baby.

The mother is negligent, there was a previous Child Protection plan. There is a lack of parental control or boundaries in the home.

When the young person in question was a baby, her mother suffered a stroke. Dad left the home about four years ago. She has few boundaries and the relationship with her mother is wrapped up with guilt on both sides.

He is from a single-parent family with ten siblings. They have a chaotic lifestyle, with social care involvement in the past. There is a history of mother's non-compliance with social care and a parenting order.

He disclosed in the pre-sentence report interview that a friend had died in gang violence.

He was with his mother when she died from a morphine overdose and was removed from the father's care as he was physically abusive.

There was a murder in the household four years ago when his older stepbrother murdered his sister's boyfriend following an argument, although he was not present at the time.

He came to the UK from eastern Europe in 2014 as an unaccompanied minor asylum seeker. He has said very little about his family and apparently came to the UK to avoid gangs in his own country.

He is an adopted young person - he was adopted at the age of four years. His life prior to adoption was traumatic with a chaotic family life and possible sexual abuse. He is said to have exhibited unusual sexualised behaviour from an early age.

His mum and dad separated and dad spends extended periods of time in Africa; he has moved home and school. He is bullied at school - mum states that this is due to his health condition. Both mum and dad have rejected him in the past and his teacher has said something inappropriate about his condition. His older brother has autism.

He was sold by his father to traffickers to be criminally exploited in the UK. He becomes very angry when discussing his father.

He is a member of a gang and is constantly worried about his safety. His cousin was stabbed and as a result, he will not leave his home without a knife.

He is an unaccompanied asylum seeker. In 2016 he travelled from the middle east across Europe to France where he spent nine months in the 'jungle' in Calais, he made it across the channel and was picked up by the police from a lorry on the motorway. Subsequent psychiatric assessments indicated high levels of PTSD.

His father disappeared around two years ago. It is unknown what happened to him, possibly sentenced to custody, possibly deported. His disappearance coincided with the beginning of the deterioration in the young person's behaviour.

Two significant issues in the young person's life stand out. At 14 years old, he was excluded from school which he felt was unjust. His situation deteriorated, he did not settle in his new school and was drawn into gang activity. He was still resentful for several years afterwards. Later he was subject to a stabbing by members of a rival gang. This was traumatic and a later CAMHS assessment identified symptoms of PTSD.

This is a young eastern European, Romany young man who has been in care for a number of years. This is due to his mother's inability to provide boundaries for him, there was serious drug use in the family home and domestic violence. This young man has been displaying sexualised behaviour from the age of ten years old.

Her father died when she was 4 years old, and when she was 15 years, she was placed in care. There has been no recorded exploration as to why her behaviour has become so completely out of control.

He was sent abroad by his mother between the ages of 6 and 11 years because of his difficult behaviour at home. As well as the trauma of the separation, he also experienced a great deal of violence and bullying from his carers abroad.

The young person is in care due to his own offending behaviour, but there is a previous history of being a 'Child in Need' due to over-physical chastisement.

She was adopted, however, the adoption broke down and she came into care. This appeared to be the trigger to her involvement in gangs, drugs and possible sexual exploitation.

There was suspected previous sexual abuse in his earlier childhood. He was referred to children's services but it appears there was insufficient information for a full investigation.

This young man is currently living with his grandmother after experiencing a number of years of neglect while under his mother's care. She was a heroin user and he was known to have assisted her in her drug taking. As well as the neglect, there were concerns she was selling sex to pay for her drugs with a number of unknown males entering the house while the young person was there. There is also some evidence that there was domestic abuse between his mother and her partner.

This young person was present at his home address when his mother was a victim of domestic violence from his father, and he was also assaulted by his father. Following the parents divorce, he was subject to a drawn-out custody battle in the courts.

He grew up in a household where there were significant levels of domestic abuse.

He was brought up in household where there were significant levels of domestic violence which he witnessed. There was also sexual violence although it was unknown if he witnessed that. His uncle was convicted of rape of his daughter and there was a suspicion that the young person may have also been abused.

His mother has had postnatal depression, drank heavily and lacked capacity to mother him. The young person has recently stated that he was sexually abused by a relative.

The young person has no contact with his mother. His relationship with his father was so bad that in 2015 the young person was convicted of assaulting him twice and was taken into care. He is now back with the father and there are no reports of further assaults on his father by him.

His father has a criminal conviction for a sexual offence committed against the mother. The parents are now separated and his mother lives in another part of the country so that his life is split between the two. Although the young person's father nominally supports the work of the YOT, it is not certain that he is giving him positive messages when the YOT are not there.

He has been accommodated in local authority residential care because of neglect by his mother - there have been five care placements.

The separation of his parents and the bullying he underwent during school.

The young person's parents have recently separated. There was domestic abuse in the household between father and mother which he witnessed. He is a Child in Need.

She was the victim of serious physical abuse by father as a baby.

Loss - father is absent, he lives in Turkey and contact is sporadic. The young person has witnessed domestic abuse. He has spent much of his life in the care of children's services.

Her mum has a brain injury, the effect has been that she has not provided any emotional support or role modelling to the young person.

He has witnessed parental cocaine use in the home; he has also experienced neglect including lack of food and heating. There have been episodes of homelessness.

There was historic alcohol abuse and domestic abuse between mother and stepfather, the young person came into care as a result.

She was moved to live with her grandmother at a young age because of parental neglect, her mum subsequently died. The dad is an alcoholic.

Child sexual exploitation - she is previously known to have received money for sex. Her brother was removed from the home after allegations that he sexually abused the young person and their sister. She has recently been informed that she may have been conceived as result of rape. She has heard her father being violent towards her mother.

Mother has relationships where the young person has been a victim of assault by her partner and a witness of domestic abuse against her. She reports that her young daughters are also afraid of the young person when he is angry.

She was adopted at a young age; there is tension in the household because she wants to contact her birth parents.

He witnessed domestic abuse and the sexual assault of his mother in the family household from a young age. Up to the age of four years old, he suffered physical abuse including cigarette burns to his arms. Parents are separated.

This young man is on a full care order as a consequence of neglect due to his mother's alcohol problems. He has very little contact with his mother, who is in Scotland and only has contact through Facebook. His father has recently died as a result of suicide. He has been in care since he was six years old and has had a number of placements. He is now in supported accommodation.

The father is currently in prison as a result of domestic violence offences, there is a long history of domestic violence in the household which the young person is assumed to have witnessed. In addition, the young person has been threatened by individuals who were masked and armed with machetes.

When he was two years old, this young person's father committed suicide. He then lived in a household where there was domestic abuse present, however, this did cease when his stepfather left the family home. He has been in care for a number of years due to his destructive behaviour and substance misuse.

The young person has had a series of losses including family breakdown, loss of relationship with his father, the loss of a baby when his girlfriend miscarried a pregnancy and a critically-ill friend. In addition, he has also lost his hair.

The mum is a drug user. He lived with his grandmother who left him to bring himself up. He moved to live with an aunt who coerced him (her partner punched the young person) into dealing in class-A drugs. He has a family name associated locally with crime and toughness.

This young woman has been subject to periods of neglect by her mother who has alcohol and mental health problems. This eventually led to her being removed and placed in care at various locations around the country. She became involved in child sexual exploitation while away from this area. She has now returned to her home area in supportive accommodation and is now more stable.

There is a history of domestic abuse, with episodes of the birth father assaulting the mother. The birth father left the family home nine years ago and there is no contact with him. There is a younger brother (aged five years) in the family, who has autism and therefore absorbs most of his mother's time and care.

This young man's parents split up when he was young, there is information that his mother was drinking to excess immediately after the separation and he stayed with his father. He had a positive and supportive relationship with his father until his dad unexpectedly died in March this year [2017]. This left him homeless, and he went to live with his mother, who he previously had a strained relationship with, and for whom there is still intelligence of a substance misuse problem. He also lives with his girlfriend, who has previously been the victim of his offending.

The mum left home when her children were young and the dad won't speak about her. The young person contacted her on Facebook but there was a verbal altercation. Soon after this, his offending behaviour escalated.

This young person witnessed domestic violence in the family home before his parents separated. Social-care records also indicate that there were allegations that he was the victim of a sexual assault from a family member, however, there was no prosecution and the matter is not discussed within the family. The young man was never offered, and never received, support for this experience.

Indications that she may have had experience of sexual abuse. She is unsure who her father is - she remembers a lot of men in her home when she was young but the man identified as her father is in custody for sexual offending against a 13 year old. She has witnessed her stepfather physically abusing her sister.

His mother left the family home when he was young, he does not have any contact with her and he does not know where she is. This has left him with questions that his father is unable or unwilling to answer.

His mum has bipolar disorder and the grandfather, who lived with him, died suddenly recently. It has emerged since this sentence terminated that there are indicators of sexual abuse against the young person when he was younger.

The father is in prison and has been for most of the young person's life, this is due to domestic violence and drug abuse.

His father was shot in an incident abroad, possibly related to organised crime, when the young person was eight years old. The family home was raided by the police after the incident. The young person was stabbed at a party in 2016 and has since carried a knife. An uncle had recently died.

Her stepfather committed suicide in 2012. - She believed he was her biological father and since finding out he was not, she has been resentful to her mum. There was domestic abuse in the home and mum has mental health issues. The young person was raped at a party in 2013, following which the family moved to another area leading to isolation from her friends.

He was placed with his grandmother shortly after he was born. His younger siblings stayed with the mother and he had a sense of rejection. There is a suspicion that he was sexually abused by his grandfather. He exhibits some signs of PTSD.

There is significant domestic abuse in the family and there have been several referrals to local authority children's services.

Shortly after the young person was born he was placed with his grandparents by children's services because of his mother's drug use and domestic abuse in the home. He has stayed with them ever since but has contact with his stepfather. He has no contact with his birth father.

He witnessed violence in the household as a young child when his father abused his older siblings. His parents have since separated.

His father served custodial sentences when he was young and still has pro-criminal associates.

She was brought up in a household where there was significant domestic violence and substance misuse. She witnessed violence between her parents and her brother was violent towards her.

His mum has mental health issues. He was neglected as a young child and lived between the mother's and grandmother's house. He was taken into care and has had numerous foster placements. His mother and her current partner are white, however, his father is black. He is racially abused within his own household as he is of mixed race.

The young person was previously assaulted by his father within the home. He has assaulted his mum and younger siblings.

He was brought up in a home where there was domestic violence. When he was about three or four years old he went to live with a grandparent, however, that ended abruptly when there was a family rift and he has had no further contact. He came into care at around eight years old following an assault by his stepfather but was eventually returned. He experienced changes of carer, and violence growing up.

There are some indications of domestic abuse in the household. The father is in custody and has had previous spells in custody. There is a long criminal history.

He was neglected and abused by his mother from a young age and lived between his grandmother's house and mother's house on different occasions. In 2015 the young person's uncle (who he was close to) died. He was voluntarily accommodated by children's services in 2016 as his behaviour deteriorated.

There are two significant issues in the young person's history. At the age of six years he was living with his father. His father suddenly left the country without warning, taking some of the young person's clothes and some computer games. He still does not know why. He went to live with his mother. In 2015 the young person was kidnapped by a gang and was held for several days. He was seriously assaulted and has a large scar. He exhibits typical signs of PTSD.

He is in care as a result of neglect by parents who were substance misusers.

There is significant trauma in his history. Both parents were significant substance users and this young person may have foetal alcohol syndrome. There was also domestic violence growing up. He had previously lived with both parents at different times however they both rejected him resulting in him coming into care. There were also indications that he may have been sexually abused at one time.

## Appendix 3: Evidence provided by Waltham Forest YOT

These are examples of the codes used to communicate via text or other messaging services. The sexual nature of some communication may not be apparent to a parent or other adult viewing the content because of the abbreviations used. These codes were one of a number of briefing notes provided to YOT staff in Waltham Forest.

<b>143</b> – I love you	<b>LSR</b> – Loser
<b>182</b> – I hate you	<b>MIRL</b> – Meet in real life
<b>2DAY</b> – Today	<b>NAGI</b> – Not a good idea
<b>420</b> – Marijuana	<b>NIFOC</b> – Nude in front of the computer
<b>4EAE</b> – For ever and ever	<b>NM</b> – Never mind
<b>ADN</b> – Any day now	<b>NMU</b> – Not much, you?
<b>ADR</b> – Address	<b>NP</b> – No problem
<b>AFAIK</b> – As far as I know	<b>NTS</b> – Note to self
<b>AFK</b> – Away from keyboard	<b>OIC</b> – Oh I see
<b>ASL</b> – Age/sex/location	<b>OMG</b> – Oh my God
<b>ATM</b> – At the moment	<b>ORLY</b> – Oh, really?
<b>BFN</b> – Bye for now	<b>OT</b> – Off topic
<b>BOL</b> – Be on later	<b>OTP</b> – On the phone
<b>BRB</b> – Be right back	<b>P911/P999</b> – Parent alert
<b>BTW</b> – By the way	<b>PAL</b> – Parents are listening -or- Peace and love
<b>CD9</b> – Code 9 – it means parents are around	<b>PAW</b> – Parents are watching
<b>CTN</b> – Can't talk now	<b>PCM</b> – Please call me
<b>DWBH</b> – Don't worry, be happy	<b>PIR</b> – Parent in room
<b>F2F</b> or <b>FTF</b> – Face to face	<b>PLS</b> or <b>PLZ</b> – Please
<b>FWB</b> – Friends with benefits	<b>PPL</b> – People
<b>FYEO</b> – For your eyes only	<b>POS</b> – Parents over shoulder
<b>GAL</b> – Get a life	<b>PTB</b> – Please text back
<b>GB</b> – Goodbye	<b>QQ</b> – Crying. This abbreviation produces an emoticon in text. It's often used sarcastically
<b>GLHF</b> – Good luck, have fun	<b>RAK</b> – Random act of kindness
<b>GTG</b> – Got to go	<b>RL</b> – Real life
<b>GYPO</b> – Get your pants off	<b>ROFL</b> – Rolling on the floor laughing
<b>HAK</b> – Hugs and kisses	<b>RT</b> – Retweet
<b>HAND</b> – Have a nice day	<b>RU/18</b> – Are You Over 18?
<b>HTH</b> – Hope this helps/Happy to help	<b>RUOK</b> – Are you okay?
<b>HW</b> – Homework	<b>SMH</b> – Shaking my head
<b>IDK</b> – I don't know	<b>SOS</b> – Someone over shoulder
<b>IIRC</b> – If I remember correctly	<b>SRSLY</b> – Seriously
<b>IKR</b> – I know, right?	<b>SSDD</b> – Same stuff, different day
<b>ILY / ILU</b> – I love you	<b>SWAK</b> – Sealed with a kiss
<b>IM</b> – Instant message	<b>SWYP</b> – So, what's your problem?
<b>IMHO</b> – In my honest opinion/In my humble opinion	<b>SYS</b> – See you soon

<b>IMO</b> – In my opinion	<b>TBC</b> – To be continued
<b>IRL</b> – In real life	<b>TDTM</b> – Talk dirty to me
<b>IWSN</b> – I want sex now	<b>TIME</b> – Tears in my eyes
<b>IU2U</b> – It's up to you	<b>WYCM</b> – Will you call me?
<b>IYKWIM</b> – If you know what I mean	<b>TMI</b> – Too much information
<b>J/K</b> – Just kidding	<b>TMRW</b> – Tomorrow
<b>J4F</b> – Just for fun	<b>TTYL</b> – Talk to you later
<b>JIC</b> – Just in case	<b>TY</b> or <b>TU</b> – Thank you
<b>JSYK</b> – Just so you know	<b>VSF</b> – Very sad face
<b>KFY</b> – Kiss for you	<b>WB</b> – Welcome back
<b>KOTL</b> – Kiss on the lips	<b>WTH</b> – What the heck?
<b>KPC</b> – Keeping parents clueless	<b>WTPA</b> – Where the party at?
<b>L8(R)</b> – Late(r)	<b>WYCM</b> – Will you call me?
<b>LMBO</b> – Laughing my butt off	<b>YGM</b> – You've got mail
<b>(L)MIRL</b> – (Let's) meet in real life	<b>YOLO</b> – You only live once
<b>LMK</b> – Let me know	<b>YW</b> – You're welcome
<b>LOL</b> – Laugh out loud	<b>ZOMG</b> – Oh my God (sarcastic)

## Appendix 4: Glossary

AIM	Assessment, Intervention and Moving On: an assessment tool specifically for young people who have exhibited harmful sexual behaviour
Asset	Until 2016, the standard assessment tool used by YOTs to assess young people who have offended
AssetPlus	Replaced Asset in 2016 as the standard youth justice assessment tool
Case manager	The practitioner who holds lead responsibility for managing a case of a young person under YOT supervision
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service: services provided locally by the NHS for the assessment and treatment of children who may have emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties
Catch 22	A voluntary organisation providing a wide range of services to children and young people
Child in Need	A child or young person identified by the local authority children's services department as having additional needs for help and support
Child Protection	Work to make sure that all reasonable action has been taken to keep to a minimum the risk of a child coming to harm
CRC	Community Rehabilitation Company: 21 such companies were set up in June 2014, to manage most offenders who present low or medium risk of serious harm
Desistance	The cessation of offending or other antisocial behaviour
Detention and training order	A sentence of the court where the first half of the sentence is served in custody and the second half in the community under YOT supervision
First-time entrants	Young people who have offended for the first time and received a formal recorded criminal justice outcome either a caution or a sentence of the court
Four Pillars	An approach to managing high-risk MAPPA cases consisting of four elements: supervision, monitoring and control, interventions and treatment, victim safety
Good Lives	A strengths-based programme of intervention for young people who have exhibited harmful sexual behaviour

Intervention	The work undertaken by the YOT directly with the young person to change their behaviour
Intervention plan	The programme of work drawn up by the case manager in collaboration with the young person under supervision outlining what will be done on the court order
ISS	Intensive Supervision and Surveillance: a requirement that can be attached to a youth rehabilitation order requiring the young person to take part in up to 25 hours activity per week
Licence	The conditions applied to a person for a fixed period following release from custody
Looked After Child	A child or young person in the care of the local authority as a result of a court order or a voluntary agreement with the parents
MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements: where probation, police, prison and other agencies work together locally to manage offenders who pose a higher risk of harm to others. Level 1 is single agency management where the risks posed by the offender can be managed by the agency responsible for the supervision or case management of the offender. This compares with Levels 2 and 3, which require active multi-agency management
MARAC	Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference: part of a coordinated community response to domestic abuse, incorporating representatives from statutory, community and voluntary agencies working with victims/survivors, children and the alleged perpetrator
NPS	National Probation Service: a single national service which came into being in June 2014. Its role is to deliver services to courts and to manage specific groups of offenders, including those presenting a high or very high risk of serious harm and those subject to MAPPA in England and Wales
National Standards for Youth Justice	Issued by the Youth Justice Board outlining the minimum contact levels and timescales for key tasks in the YOT's delivery of court orders
PTSD	Post-traumatic stress disorder: an anxiety disorder caused by very stressful, frightening or distressing events. Someone with the disorder often relives the traumatic event through nightmares and flashbacks, and may have experience feelings of isolation, irritability and guilt
PSR	Pre-sentence report: this refers to any report prepared for a court, whether delivered orally or in a written format

Probation officer	A qualified responsible officer who has undertaken a higher education-based course for two years. The name of the qualification and content of the training varies depending on when it was undertaken. They manage more complex cases
Probation services	Organisations supervising adult offenders. Responsibility is divided between the National Probation Service (NPS) and Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRC). All YOTs include at least one probation officer seconded from the National Probation Service
Referral order	An order of the court normally given to young people appearing in court for their first offence. The order includes the requirement to meet with a panel consisting of trained volunteers to develop a contract designed to reduce offending
RoSH	Risk of Serious Harm: a term used in AssetPlus. All cases are classified as presenting a low/ medium/ high/ very high risk of serious harm to others. HMI Probation uses this term when referring to the classification system, but uses the broader term risk of harm when referring to the analysis which has to take place in order to determine the classification level. This helps to clarify the distinction between the probability of an event occurring and the impact/severity of the event. The term Risk of Serious Harm only incorporates 'serious' impact, whereas using 'risk of harm' enables the necessary attention to be given to those offenders for whom lower impact/severity harmful behaviour is probable
Sexting	Behaviour that involves the transmission of sexually explicit material via text and other messaging services. A variety of codes are used that can disguise the nature of the message being sent
Trauma	A deeply distressing or disturbing experience
Troubled Families	A government initiative that funds local authorities to target services on families that have multiple difficulties with the aim of reducing their need and demands made on welfare services
YJB	Youth Justice Board: a Government body responsible for monitoring and advising ministers on the effectiveness of the youth justice system. Provides grants and guidance to the youth offending teams
Youth rehabilitation order	A court order that requires the YOT to supervise a young person in the community for a fixed period. A wide range of additional conditions can be applied to youth rehabilitation orders

## Appendix 5: Methodology

The fieldwork was undertaken at six Youth Offending Teams during May and June 2017. The methodology was piloted in January 2017. The YOTs were chosen to achieve a balance between urban and rural areas and a mix of both strong and weak performance in previous inspections.

The YOTs visited as part of the inspection were:

Cheshire West, Halton & Warrington

Croydon

Gateshead (pilot)

Hertfordshire

North Tyneside

Nottinghamshire

Waltham Forest.

Prior to commencing fieldwork we undertook a review of standard literature on public protection, recently published research, legislation and guidance. We obtained key policy documents from the YOTs we were inspecting. We took an overview of current evidence of effective practice in relation to public protection work with young people. We undertook an analysis of existing HMI Probation data in relation to YOT public protection work from our core YOT inspection programmes.

During fieldwork we examined a sample of 115 cases across the six sites. Cases were selected because there was a public protection dimension to the current offence. Offences were typically violent or sexual. The case sample included young people sentenced to both community and custodial sentences. We were most interested in work in the community either during a community order or on release from custody. We undertook separate focus groups with practitioners and members of YOT Management Boards. We also interviewed YOT Managers.

The fieldwork consisted of:

115 case reviews

101 interviews with allocated case managers

6 meetings with YOT Managers

6 Management Board focus groups attended by 37 Board members

6 practitioner focus groups attended by 58 practitioners.

Case Profile:

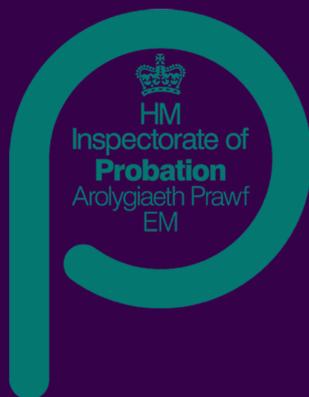
Male - 95 (83%), female - 20 (17%)

48 (42%) were recorded by the case manager as having a disability

53 (46%) were Looked After by a local authority (in care)

73 (65%) were white.

We liaised with the Youth Justice Board throughout the inspection. We were also provided with advice by the Office of the Surveillance Commissioners on aspects of the *Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act*.



ISBN: 978-1-84099-793-4