

MEDWAY YOUTH OFFENDING TEAM**And****Youth Justice Partnership Board Improvement plan**

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Youth Offending Team Improvement Plan

Our Improvement Plan has been developed in response to the formal recommendations and improvement areas highlighted by HMIP inspection of Medway YOT that took place between 24th to 28th February 2020. This action plan sets out the improvement priorities and the actions we need to take to transform our Youth Justice Service for children, young people and their families from Requires Improvement so they are ultimately 'Outstanding' which is our aspiration. We do recognise the intermediate steps that are required to be outstanding, but believe our young people deserve nothing less.

Improving the quality of services provided to children and young people is a key corporate priority. We are fully committed to working with all our partners to deliver the aspirations set out in this plan.

We will build on the solid foundations of Medway youth justice services and ensure children and young people are kept safe and obtain the right help, at the right time in their lives. To achieve this we will show strong leadership, challenge performance and allocate resources proportionately to meet need. We will use local and national evidence to inform our journey, reflecting on the work we do, identifying areas for improvement, challenge or change.

In addition to the recommendations in the HMIP inspection report, we have also undertaken (recently) the National Standards Audit. We will use the findings from this audit (once agreed by the Youth Justice Board) to identify common areas and align (combine) improvement objectives into a single improvement plan.

Foreword:

This inspection was part of HMIP four-year programme of youth offending service inspections. HMIP have inspected and rated Medway youth offending team (YOT) across three broad areas:

1. The arrangements for organisational delivery of the service,
2. The quality of work done with children and young people sentenced by the courts, and
3. The quality of out-of-court disposal work.

Overall, Medway YOT was rated as 'Requires improvement'.

Medway was 1 point away from a 'good' judgement. The Inspection report highlighted a number of improvements since the peer review in 2018. We anticipated a 'requires improvement' judgement for this domain. The narrative reflects our sustained progress over the last 18 months. After a period of uncertainty while the local authority considered outsourcing YOT provision, Medway is slowly but determinedly rebuilding its service to meet the intensive and changing needs of its caseload.

HMIP identified that senior managers drive the direction and ambition of the YOT, demonstrating their willingness and ability to advocate for children and young people to achieve the best outcomes for them.














HMIP saw examples of excellent case management and practitioners working well to understand the behaviour of children and young people and their aspirations for their future. However, there was too much inconsistency in the quality of practice, especially relating to girls and those at risk of exploitation, which left HMIP concerned about the safety and well-being of a small number of vulnerable children.

HMIP commented that the Youth Justice Partnership Board has good representation from key agencies but has too many new members so was unable to evidence its understanding of the specific issues for YOT children and young people or its strategies as a partnership, to address these needs.

HMIP noted the planned addition of a dedicated YOT data and intelligence officer should enable the board to better identify the YOT's strengths/ areas for development and improve its focus on evidence-based service provision.

HMIP commented this is a busy YOT, which works well in a number of key areas and is making steady progress to develop its service provision.

Ratings

Medway Youth Offending Team		Score	18/36
Overall rating		Requires improvement	
1. Organisational delivery			
1.1	Governance and leadership	Requires improvement	
1.2	Staff	Good	
1.3	Partnerships and services	Requires improvement	
1.4	Information and facilities	Good	
2. Court disposals			
2.1	Assessment	Good	
2.2	Planning	Inadequate	
2.3	Implementation and delivery	Good	
2.4	Reviewing	Requires improvement	
3. Out-of-court disposals			
3.1	Assessment	Good	
3.2	Planning	Requires improvement	
3.3	Implementation and delivery	Good	
3.4	Joint working	Good	

Overall against 12 areas requires improvement with:

- 7 areas of good
- 4 areas of requires improvement
- 1 areas of inadequate

The breakdown of these 23 areas identified Medway with:

- 7 Areas of **Outstanding** practice
- 9 Areas of **Good** practice
- 5 Areas that **Requires improvement**
- 2 Areas of **Inadequate** practice

Executive summary

Overall, Medway YOT was rated as: 'Requires improvement'. This rating has been determined by HMIP inspecting the YOT in three areas of its work, referred to as 'domains'. HMIP inspect against 12 'standards', shared between the domains. The standards are based on established models and frameworks, which are grounded in evidence, learning and experience. They are designed to drive improvements in the quality of work with children and young people who have offended. Published scoring rules generate the overall YOT rating. The findings and subsequent ratings in those domains are described below.

1. Organisational delivery

Over the past year YOT leaders have worked hard to increase its capacity to deliver a full range of relevant and high-quality services.

New initiatives with individual partners are intended to strengthen access to post-16 education and training and help to address the rise in serious youth violence. The YOT's approach to desistance focuses on engagement and helping children reach their goals, while work takes place in appropriate and risk-assessed environments. Out-of-court cases are increasing and the YOT is committed to making sure its strategic and operational arrangements for these cases work well.

However, the Youth Justice Partnership Board (YJPB) is underdeveloped and does not drive the direction and ambition of the YOT. It does not have the information necessary to satisfy itself that the YOT is effectively resourced or that children and young people are provided with the quality, range and volume of services and interventions necessary to meet their specific needs.

HMIP key findings:

- Strong internal/ strategic leadership drives the YOT's agenda; they advocate for its needs and those of the children and young people under YOT supervision.
- Practitioners are motivated and interested in achieving the best outcomes for those with whom they work.
- The Child First planning approach strengthens engagement.

- Leaders are working determinedly to improve the YOT's access to appropriate resourcing, using external funding sources well to achieve this.
- The YOT makes an effective contribution to out-of-court processes.

The YOT has a strong commitment to improving service provision, drawing on examples of effective work in other YOTs to help shape its own delivery model.

But:

- The Youth Justice Partnership Board does not focus well enough on the specific needs of children and young people working with the YOT.
- The board does not drive the vision and strategy of the YOT, provide sufficient scrutiny of service provision or understand the risks to effective service delivery.
- The lack of in-depth needs assessment of children and young people in the YOT caseload leaves leaders without assurance that they are providing the right level and nature of services and interventions.
- Case managers do not have access to up-to-date, evidence-based interventions that reflect contemporary lifestyles and trends in offending behaviour among children in Medway.
- There is no strategy or evidence-based approach to working with girls.

2. Court disposals

HMIP examined the quality of assessment; planning; implementation and delivery; and reviewing in each of the cases inspected. The quality of the work undertaken needs to be above a specified threshold for each aspect of supervision to be rated as satisfactory.

In this YOT, assessment and implementation and delivery were assessed as 'Good' because work on desistance, safety and well-being and to keep other people safe was sufficient.

The quality of case reviewing was rated as 'Requires improvement' because only half of the cases inspected met all our standards for this dimension of work. Although planning to support desistance was good, planning to keep the child or young person themselves, and others, safe was insufficient so the overall rating given to this standard was 'Inadequate'.

HMIP key findings:

- The YOT's Child First approach to supporting desistance encouraged children and young people to participate meaningfully in identifying the work they should complete with the YOT and increased their motivation to engage with practitioners to complete this.
- Case managers undertook thorough and well-considered assessments of how to keep other people safe.

Victims were given sufficient priority throughout the sentence; there was a good level of contact with victims to identify their needs and wishes and effective work to keep them safe.

- Reparation was managed well; children and young people could access a range of activities that supported the community and helped them to develop skills.

But:

- Assessments and planning for children in custody, who often present the highest risk of harm to others and are also the most vulnerable in terms of safety and well-being, were given less priority than for children in the community.
- There was insufficient planning to support safety and well-being and to keep others safe, especially in relation to children at risk of sexual and criminal exploitation.
- Case managers did not consistently analyse or respond well enough to indicators that risks to the child or young person or other people had increased.
- There was regular management oversight of case work, but this did not make enough positive difference to the quality of practice.

3. Out-of-court disposals

HMIP stated this YOT also provides assessment, planning and interventions in some cases where the police have decided on 'no further action'. HMIP examined the quality of assessment; planning; and implementation and delivery of services. Each of these elements was inspected in respect of work done to address desistance and delivery of work to keep other people safe.

HMIP also looked at the quality of joint working with local police. For each of our standards, the quality of the work undertaken needs to be above a specified threshold for each aspect of supervision to be rated as satisfactory.

At least 70% of cases inspected met all our standards for assessment, resulting in a 'Good' rating for this aspect of work.

The quality of planning was rated as 'Requires improvement'. While it supported desistance well (it was sufficient in nine of the ten cases inspected), it met all our standards to keep others safe in only three of the five relevant cases.

HMIP key findings:

- Case managers effectively identified and analysed a wide range of factors to understand the level and nature of risk of harm that a child or young person posed to others.
- Victims were given appropriate priority at every stage of the out-of-court process.
- The staff's focus on building relationships led to the engagement of children and young people in the voluntary activities offered by the YOT.
- The YOT contributed well to decisions about whether and what out-of-court disposals should be made.

But:

- The quality of joint work, especially with children's social care, to support safety and well-being was not always good enough. The response to new information had left 2 vulnerable children and young people unprotected.
- The YOT's response to child exploitation was inconsistent and left inspectors concerned about the quality of partnership work to support safety and well-being.

Recommendations:

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





The Medway Youth Offending Team should:




1. Make sure that case managers advocate for the needs of **children and young people in custody** and there is sufficient planning and work to support their resettlement
2. **Strengthen work with partners, particularly children's social care**, to better support the safety and well-being of children, paying particular attention to indicators that they are at risk of being exploited by others
3. Make sure that planning sufficiently addresses factors linked to **safety and well-being** and the need to keep others safe, and that this is reviewed and revised to reflect new information and the changing circumstances in a case
4. Develop an **evidence-based approach to working with girls** that takes account of their distinct needs and translates into effective partnership work to support their safety and well-being and protect other people.



The Youth Justice Partnership Board should:


5. **Strengthen its ambition** for the YOT and develop a more coherent and strategic approach to making sure that **the provision of services** is evidence based and meets the specific needs of children and young people working with the YOT.


RAG rating:

-  = No improvement
-  = Some progress
-  = Good progress
-  = Complete

<u>HMIP inspection priority</u>	Action	Lead	Timescale	Success measures	RAG
<p>1.</p> <p>Make sure that case managers advocate for the needs of children and young people in custody and</p> <p>Ensure there is sufficient planning and</p>	<p>A: Strategic development of an escalation process with the local secure estate to escalate cases where sentence planning is not planned to be delivered within the necessary timescales.</p> <p>B: Develop a process with children’s services and placements to ensure that resettlement planning in relation to accommodation commences at the start of sentence.</p> <p>C: For the Youth Offending Team to develop it’s own sentence planning process that is separate to but informs</p>	<p>A: Head Of Service</p> <p>B: Head Of Service</p> <p>C: Operations and Practice Manager</p>	<p>September 2020</p>	<p>A: Prompt timely sentence planning taking place within the custodial estate in all cases.</p> <p>B: Young people have a plan for leaving custody early, removing anxieties and reducing the likelihood of reoffending.</p> <p>C: Young people are active participants in their planning</p>	<p></p> <p></p> <p></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education, Training and Employment • Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emotional Health and wellbeing - Speech and language - Substance misuse • Safeguarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - established links with the Adolescent Team, MASH, Early Help and the Front door <p>D: The implementation of a criminal exploitation screening process within the Youth Offending Team, and a strengthening of the use of the CSE tool kit.</p>	<p>D: Operation and Practice Manager</p>		<p>YP in ETE. Young people have easy and natural access to health services improving their ability to thrive and reduce their offending risks. Increased access to services (A and T)</p> <p>Improved safeguarding outcomes for young people involved in the youth justice system.</p> <p>D: The effective identification of and response to Criminal Exploitation and Child Sexual Exploitation of young people and reduced vulnerability/ risks.</p>	
<p>3.</p> <p>Make sure that planning sufficiently addresses factors linked to safety and well-being and the</p>	<p>A: Review YOT’s current planning processes.</p> <p>B: The implementation of the strategy has a clear focus on addressing safe-guarding and risk of harm concerns.</p> <p>C: The implementation of a new multi agency planning process for all cases</p>			<p>A/ B/ C: That safeguarding and risk concerns are effectively planned for and responded to through a partnership planning process. That these safeguarding concerns are reduced.</p>	

<p>need to keep others safe.</p> <p>And</p> <p>This is reviewed and revised to reflect new information and the changing circumstances in a case</p>	<p>identified with High Risk and High safeguarding concerns.</p> <p>D: The full implementation of a MAPPA screening process on all MAPPA eligible cases.</p> <p>E: Staff are trained in the MAPPA process.</p> <p>F: Quality assurance processes to be developed in relation to planning and review.</p> <p>G: A case supervision template to be implemented in case manager supervision, to robustly address safeguarding, and risk concerns. To be used during each supervision session to identify changing circumstances.</p> <p>H: The development of administrative support processes to ensure that planning reviews are undertaken in a timely manner.</p>	<p>Operational Manager and Practice Manager.</p>	<p>September 2020</p>	<p>D/ E: That all MAPPA eligible cases are screened and appropriate cases are referred to MAPPA. That staff in the youth offending team have a clear understanding of the MAPPA process and their responsibilities to it.</p> <p>F: Plans drive improvement.</p> <p>G: That all cases are known to have been reviewed to respond to changing circumstances.</p> <p>H: An administrative system in place that supports case managers in the review of all cases where safeguarding and risk concerns are identified.</p>	
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<u>The Youth Justice Partnership Board should:</u>					
<p>5. Strengthen its ambition for the YOT and develop a more coherent and strategic approach to making sure that the provision of services is evidence based and meets the specific needs of children and young people working with the YOT.</p>	<p>A: Update strategy to reflect HMIP improvement areas.</p> <p>B: YJPB resources and support the YOT to develop evidence based toolkits/ intervention packages in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knife crime - Youth Violence - Girls - Criminal Exploitation <p>C: YJPB to develop additional resources across Medway to address serious youth violence and</p>	<p>A: Head Of Service</p> <p>B: YJPB and Head Of Service</p> <p>C: YJPB and Head Of Service</p>	<p>September 2020</p>	<p>A: Strategy sets the vision for 3 years addressing need and areas for improvement whilst ensuring Medway is clear for its ambition for young people.</p> <p>B: Medway YOT has the tools and resources to support practice and QA and reviews evidence impact.</p> <p>C: Implementation of funding addresses prevention, targeted and intensive areas of work seeing a</p>	

	<p>reoffending (PCC, HO, ESYV and VRU).</p> <p>D: Challenge partners and look at additional arrangements to strengthen the response to young people involved in the YOT.</p>	<p>D: Chair and YJPB</p>		<p>reduction in SYV and reoffending access.</p> <p>D: The YOT reflects the expectation of the Crime and Disorder Act, YJB and HMIP expectations.</p>	