

# Standards For Children

## Self-Assessment

2023



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# Guidance

This document gives guidance to youth justice services and their strategic management boards on how to assess performance against the [Standards for Children in the Justice System](#).

In 2023, services are required to report against Standard 2: Work in Court. The assessment should be submitted to [CBU@yjb.gov.uk](mailto:CBU@yjb.gov.uk) by 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023. The assessment must have been agreed by the management board prior to submission and must be signed off by the board chair as accurate.

The YJB will then undertake validation of all self-assessments. There will be dip sampling and detailed assurance of some, which may include looking at case level information in addition to the sampled selection; and/or observing practice. The results of the exercise will be used to advise ministers on how the standards are being adhered to as well as providing information on practice to inform our oversight function and enable us to share good and innovative practice.

To complete the assessment, services should use the following process:

Section A requires a qualitative assessment of strategic performance. When making a rating against these fields, services should consider:

- Are effective and up to date policies and processes in place?
- Are these policies and processes known and adhered to?
- How far do processes follow guidance as set out in [Case management guidance - Guidance](#)

Sections B and C require an assessment of practice, considering a sample of cases going through court during the period from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. Partnerships should analyse 20% of the cases falling into that period (chosen at random); if there are fewer than 20 cases during that period, the partnership should analyse all cases.

For each field, the service should give a rating as follows:

Judgement	Section A: Strategic Rating	Sections B and C: Practice Rating
Outstanding	Effective policies and systems are in place; staff are familiar with them and there is board level knowledge and drive to support the standard	There is evidence in 80% or more of cases sampled
Good	There is evidence of effective processes which are frequently applied	There is evidence in 65%-79% of cases sampled



Requires Improvement	There is evidence of some elements of an effective system but this is not complete	There is evidence in 50%-64% of cases sampled
Inadequate	There is no evidence of an effective system	There is evidence in 49% or fewer of cases sampled

It is important that the assigned ratings are as accurate as possible. Noting that performance in some fields is in need of improvement does not in itself mean there is a cause for concern; the fact that the partnership knows this and is drawing up a plan for improvement is far less of a concern than rating a field as good or outstanding when that is not the case.



# At-Court Self-Assessment

## Section A: Strategy

Note: Management boards must have mechanisms in place to provide them with assurance against all Standards for Children.

### 1. Does your youth justice service take all possible steps\* to divert children from court?

\*At minimum, this should include having a written procedure with which staff are familiar, having an effective multi-agency decision making panel in place, effective scrutiny mechanisms and a mechanism for on the day of court diversion

**Evidence:**

**Rating:**

### 2. Does your service have an effective strategy to minimise unnecessary\* use of remands?

\* those cases where it is possible that a child or young person could have been safely supervised in the community on bail

**Evidence:**

**Rating:**

### 3. Do your court processes take all possible steps to promote fair treatment of particular groups of children\*?

\*This should include children from ethnic minority groups (including White minorities), children in care or otherwise known to Children's Services, children with neurodiversity or learning needs. It may include other groups identified locally as priorities.

**Evidence:**

**Rating:**



4. Does your management board have an action plan to tackle disproportionality, with regular analysis and reviews of progress?

**Evidence:**

**Rating:**

5. Does your service have sufficient resource to manage demand for court services, and complete written reports to court within specified timescales?

**Evidence:**

**Rating:**

6. Does your youth justice service minimise any delays from specialist assessments?

**Evidence:**

**Rating:**

7. Do you have a means to get regular feedback from magistrates and judges about your reports and court services, and engage with strategic partners\* to ensure court confidence in your work and interventions?

\*This may include LCJBs, magistrates and judiciary, Court User groups to look at congruency rates, outcomes, disproportionality

**Evidence:**

**Rating:**

8. Do you have a means to ensure children can participate effectively in court proceedings, and to secure consistent feedback from children about their experience in court?

**Evidence:**

**Rating:**



9. Do you have consistent access to custodial warrants for children remanded and sentenced to youth detention accommodation?

**Evidence:**

**Rating:**

## Section B: Reports

10. Does your youth justice service consistently provide reports which are high quality\* to all courts dealing with children within the civil and criminal codes, and for any subsequent referral order panel meetings?

\*To be judged high quality, reports must be child focussed, analytical, desistance focused, use sufficient sources of information, consider diversity, be balanced and impartial, succinct and written in plain, jargon-free language (see [Case management guidance - How to use reports - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) and [Youth-domain-two-CARaG-v7.3.pdf \(justiceinspectrates.gov.uk\)](#))

**Evidence:**

**Rating:**

11. Are reports child focussed, support desistance and contain the child's views?

**Evidence:**

**Rating:**

12. Are all reports based on an up-to-date and relevant YJB approved assessment?

**Evidence:**

**Rating:**



13. Do all reports evidence engagement with parents and carers?

**Evidence:**

**Rating:**

14. Do reports take account of impact on victims?

**Evidence:**

**Rating:**

15. Does your service have an effective Quality Assurance process for reports?

**Evidence:**

**Rating:**

## Section C: Process

16. Does your service take sufficient steps to ensure children understand and can participate in court processes?

**Evidence:**

**Rating:**

17. Do you ensure parents and carers understand court processes and receive support as needed?

**Evidence:**

**Rating:**





18. Do staff inform the parents/carers of the court outcome?

**Evidence:**

**Rating:**

19. Does your service take sufficient steps to ensure children really understand the outcome of court?

**Evidence:**

**Rating:**

20. Are court outcomes consistently recorded accurately?

**Evidence:**

**Rating:**

21. Does your service consistently provide all relevant information to the Youth Custody Service in a sufficiently timely way?

**Evidence:**

**Rating:**

22. Do you ensure parents and carers are informed about details of youth detention accommodation, including (where relevant) the Assisted Prison Visit scheme?

**Evidence:**

**Rating:**



## Signatures

The completed self-audit should be agreed as accurate by the local management board. Please provide at minimum the signatures of the Head of the youth justice service and Chair of the management board; additional signatories can be added locally if preferred.

Head of YJS \_\_\_\_\_

Chair \_\_\_\_\_

