

RESEARCH
EVIDENCE INTO
POLICY PROGRAMMES
AND PRACTICE



A Realist Evaluation of the first pilot Bail Supervision Scheme for Children in Ireland: The importance of 'buy-in'

5th September 2019
#CAMHS2019

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agus Comhionannais
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Overview

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- Bail Supervision Scheme's fit in the youth justice system
- Why realist evaluation
- What we did
- What we found

Irish Youth Justice System

Children Act (2001) main legislation for youth justice

Majority of young people **Diverted** from the Justice System



Minority – **Children's court** (District/Circuit)



Most young people are granted **bail** until their cases are heard.



A small minority of young people are **remanded into detention** until their case is heard.

Diversion

Children Court

Bail

Custody

- Children Act & European Convention on Human Rights [ECHR]
'Detention...as a measure of last resort'
- Small number of children in detention in Ireland
- Children on-remand composed up to 50% of juvenile detainees (Oberstown Stats Q1 2017,2018)

- Remand when to Children's Detention Campus

1. Police reject to Bail

2. Persistent breaches

Irish Youth Justice System

The solution: The Bail Supervision Scheme
Alternative to on-remand detention
Incorporates a therapeutic element:
MultiSystematic Therapy
Nested within rules and court processes
Supported by a multi-agency advisory group

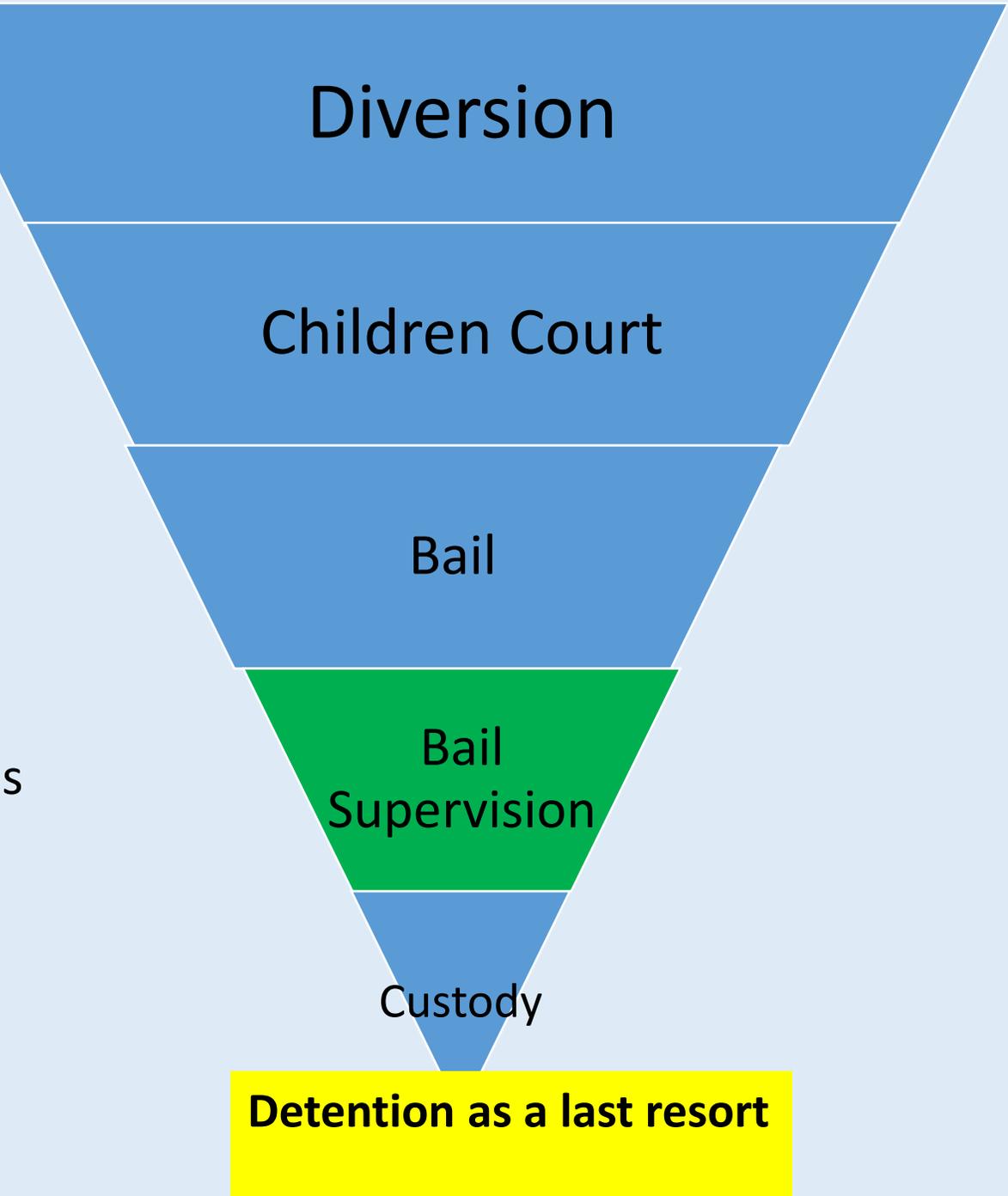
Objectives

Individual level

Increased compliance with court set bail conditions
Reduce reoffending

System level

Reduce the demand for remand places



Bail Supervision Scheme

multi- agency



Irish Youth Justice Service

Seirbhís na hÉireann um Chearta i leith an Aosa Óg



An Roinn Leanaí
agus Gnóthaí Óige
Department of Children
and Youth Affairs



An tSeirbhís Phromhaidh
The Probation Service



An tSeirbhís Chúirteanna
Courts Service
IRELAND



OBERSTOWN
CHILDREN
DETENTION CAMPUS

CARE
EDUCATION
HEALTH
WELLBEING

Why MST?

- Developed in 1970 in US, spread to over 30 countries
- Incorporates evidenced based practices
- Strengths based, identifying goals, removing barriers, applying incentives
- 24/7 support for caregiver to support behavioral change including compliance with bail conditions

- Based on Randomised Control Trial
- Insufficient knowledge of how it works

Why a Realist Evaluation?

BSS is a pilot programme-- MST embedded within a system-- Irish context

Small numbers

Realist Evaluation: gain insights into

What works

How it works

And why it works or not

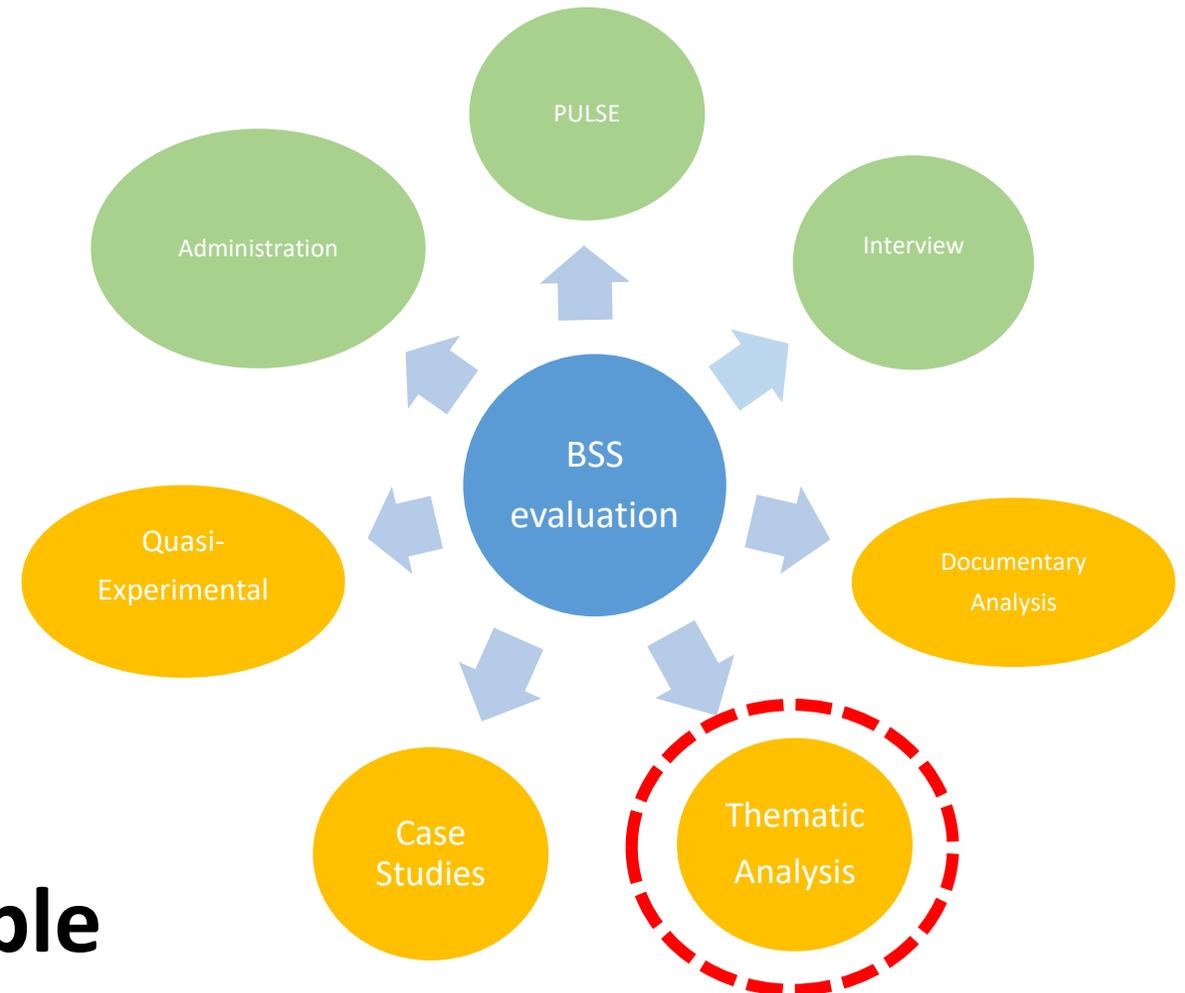
Attitudes of stakeholders to BSS

Mining for Silver While Dreaming of Gold (Epstein, 2002).

How the evaluation was conducted

Contribution analysis

- Provides plausible evidence
- Theory driven
- Incorporated multiple data sources and data types
- Triangulation of multiple methodologies
- Systematic, rigours and feasible

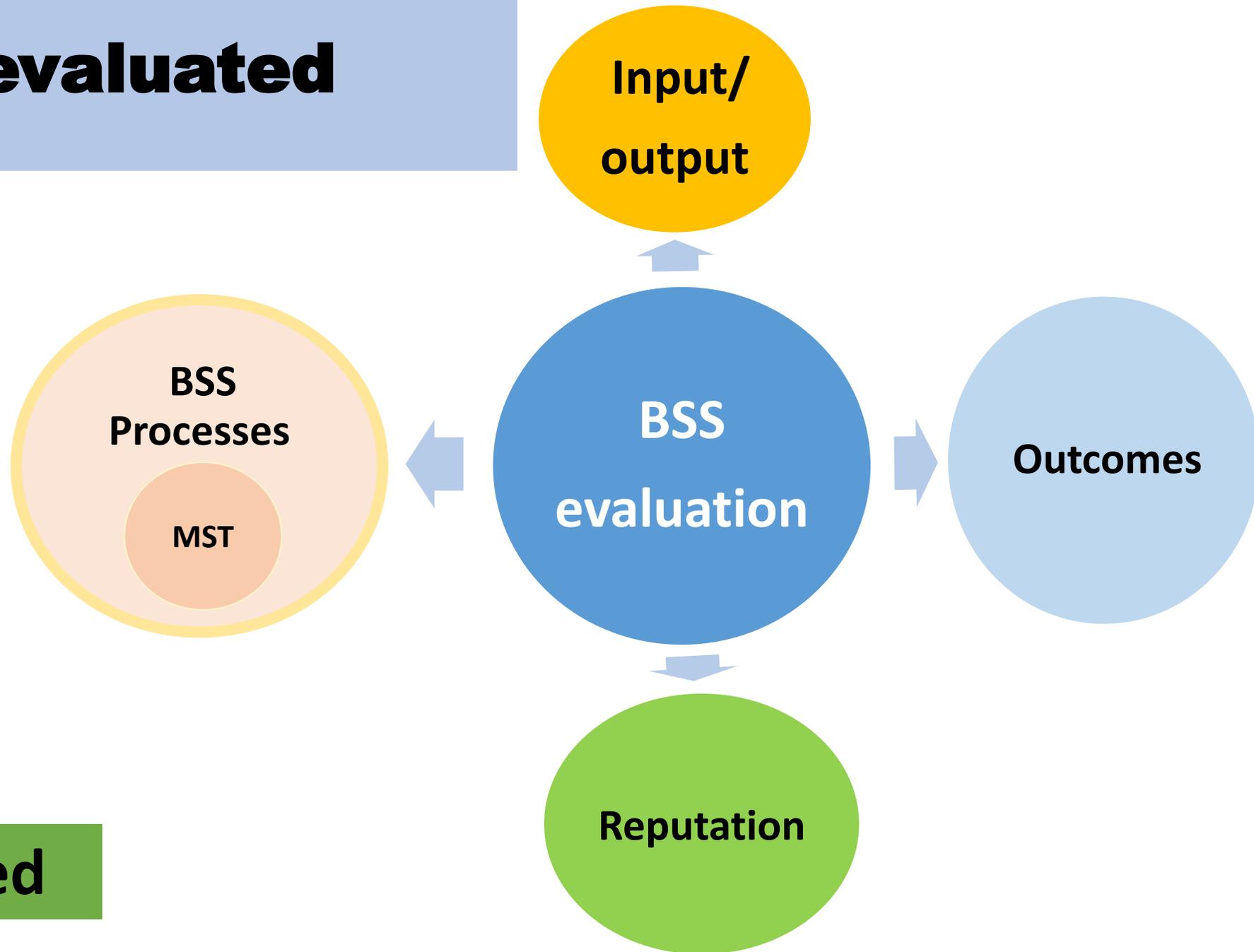


Overarching Research Questions

1. If and how the bail supervision scheme contributed to changes in the young person's behaviour including re-offending and bail compliance
2. If and how the bail supervision scheme had gained the confidence of the judicial system

What we evaluated

If BSS worked

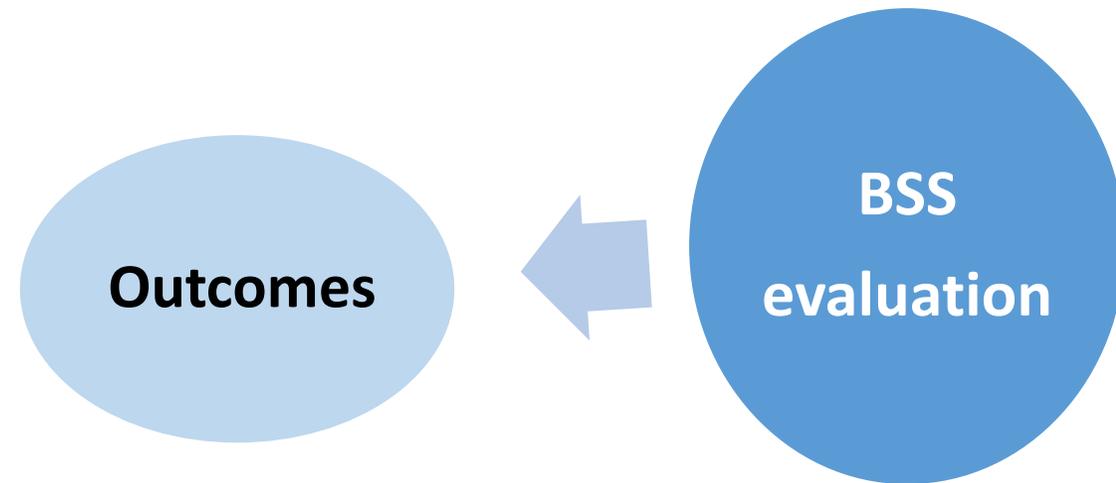


How BSS worked

What we found: The If question

Key Outcomes

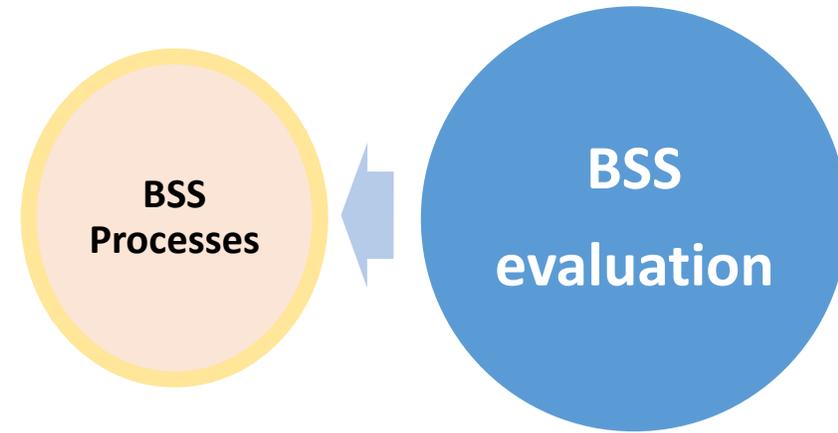
- 1. Marked reduction in levels of re-offending**
- 2. Evidence of improved adherence to bail conditions**
- 3. Majority of young people attracted non-custodial sanctions**



The how questions: Process evaluation

Central element: case studies

- Enabled the triangulation of multiple perspectives
360° view of young peoples contexts
Focused accounts of BSS processes

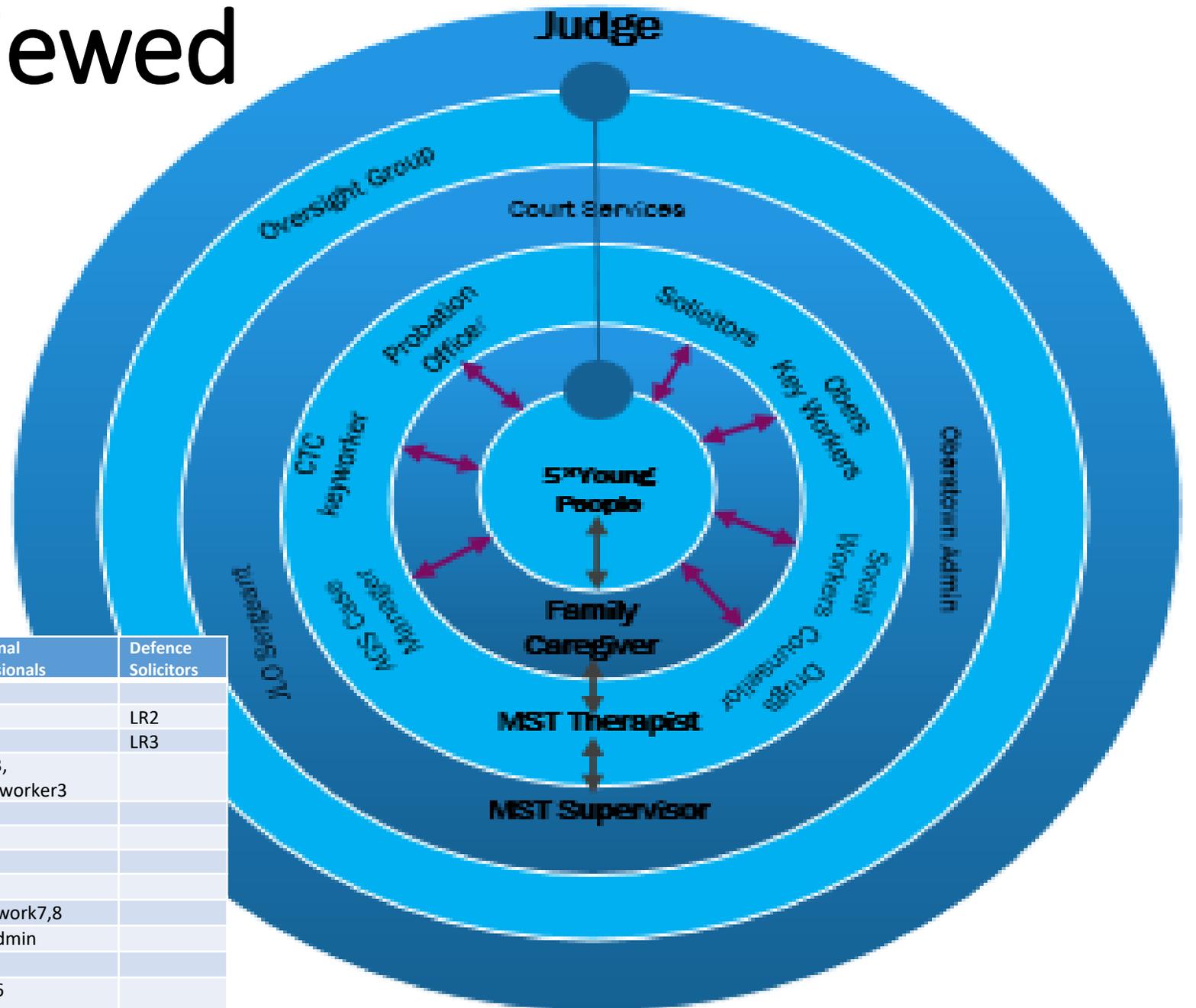


How were the case studies chosen?

1. All (n=22) caregivers and young people invited to interview
2. Six caregivers volunteered to be interviewed
3. Described as representative of the more challenging cases
(BSS Manager)

Who we interviewed

- Bottom up approach

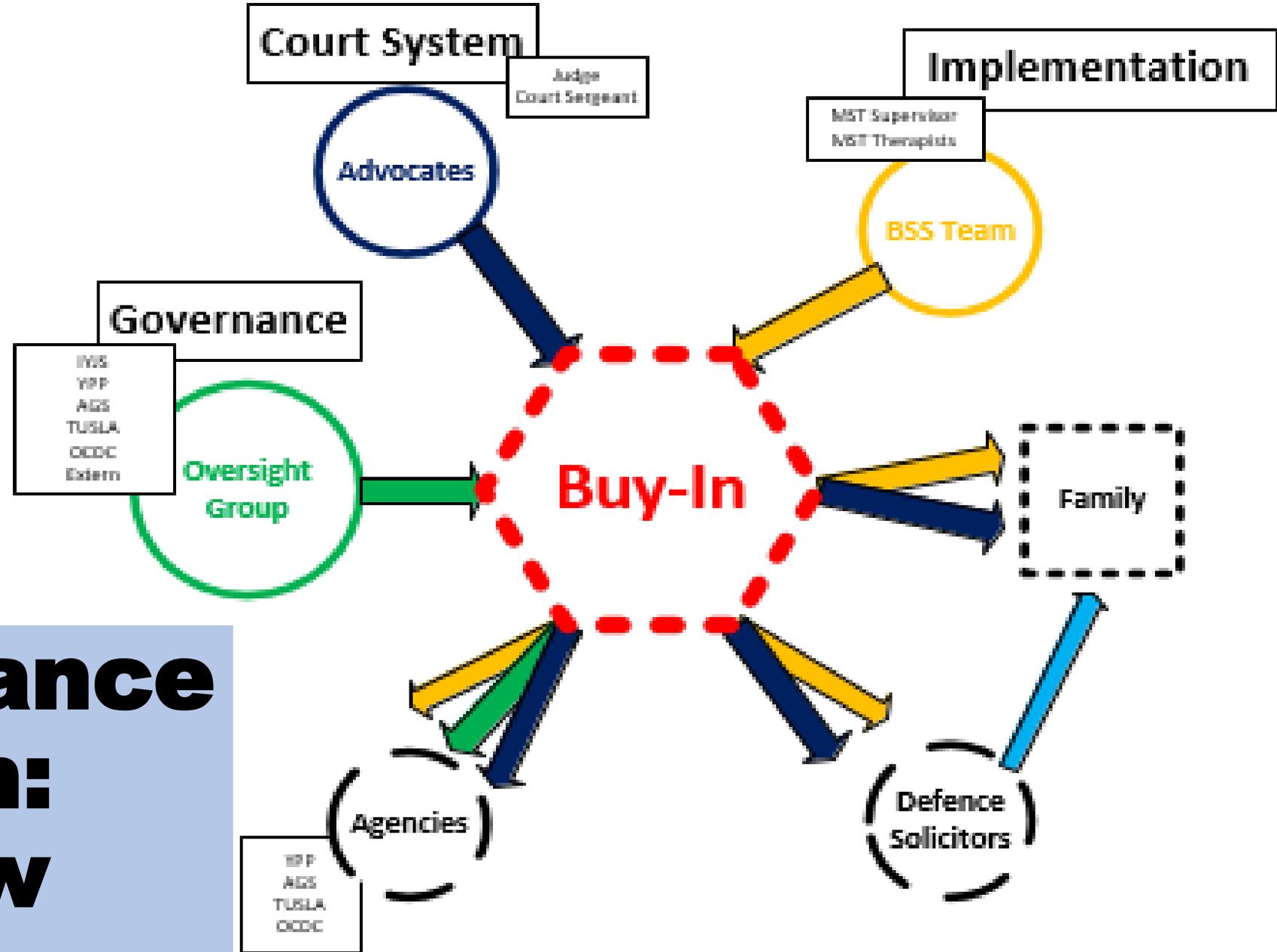
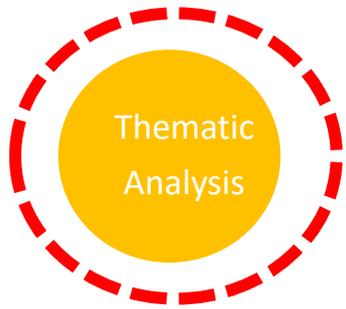


| Case | Young Person | Caregiver | MST Therapist | Probation Officer | An Garda Síochána | Additional Professionals | Defence Solicitors |
|----------------------|--------------|-----------|---------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Kevin | YP1 | CG1 | MST1 | PO1 | AGS1 | CTC1 | |
| Max | No | CG2 | MST2 | PO2 | AGS2 | CTC2 | LR2 |
| Gareth | No | CG3 | MST3 | PO3 | AGS3 | SW3 | LR3 |
| Eddie | YP4 | CG4 | MST4 | PO4 | AGS4 | DrugC3, Obkeyworker3 | |
| Zach | YP5 | CG5 | MST5 | PO5 | AGS5 | CTC5 | |
| YP6 | | CG6 | MST6 | | | | |
| | | | MST7 | | | | |
| BSS Manager | | | MST10 | | | | |
| Oberstown keyworkers | | | | | | ObKeywork7,8 | |
| Oberstown Admin | | | | | | OberAdmin | |
| Court Sergeant | | | | | AGS5 | | |
| Focus group | | | MST 8,9 | PO6 | AGS6 | TUSLA6 | |
| Oversight group | | | | | | IYJS6 | |
| Judge | | | | | | Judge | |

The Young People

**All five of them presented with
problematic behaviour
challenging contexts**

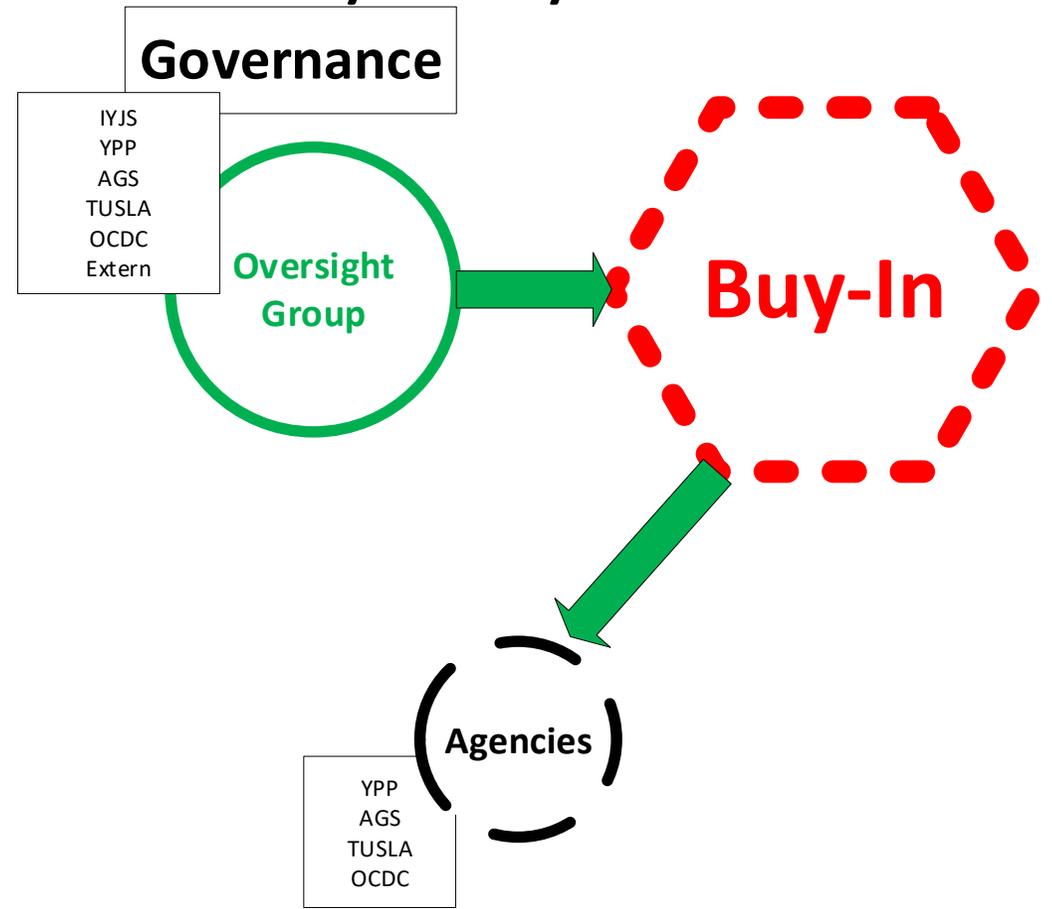
- **Male aged between 16 and 17 at enrolment**
- **All early school leavers**
- **Not involved in pro-social activities**
- **Part of problematic peer groups**
- **Illicit drug use**
- **For 4: Their problematic substance use linked directly to offending behaviour**
- **Families history of poor engagement with services**
- **Presence of mental health challenges**



The Importance of Buy-In: Overview

Oversight group

- **Oversight group** provided *scaffolding* for BSS, facilitating buy-in of statutory bodies with Extern as a non-statutory body



- Sub Theme

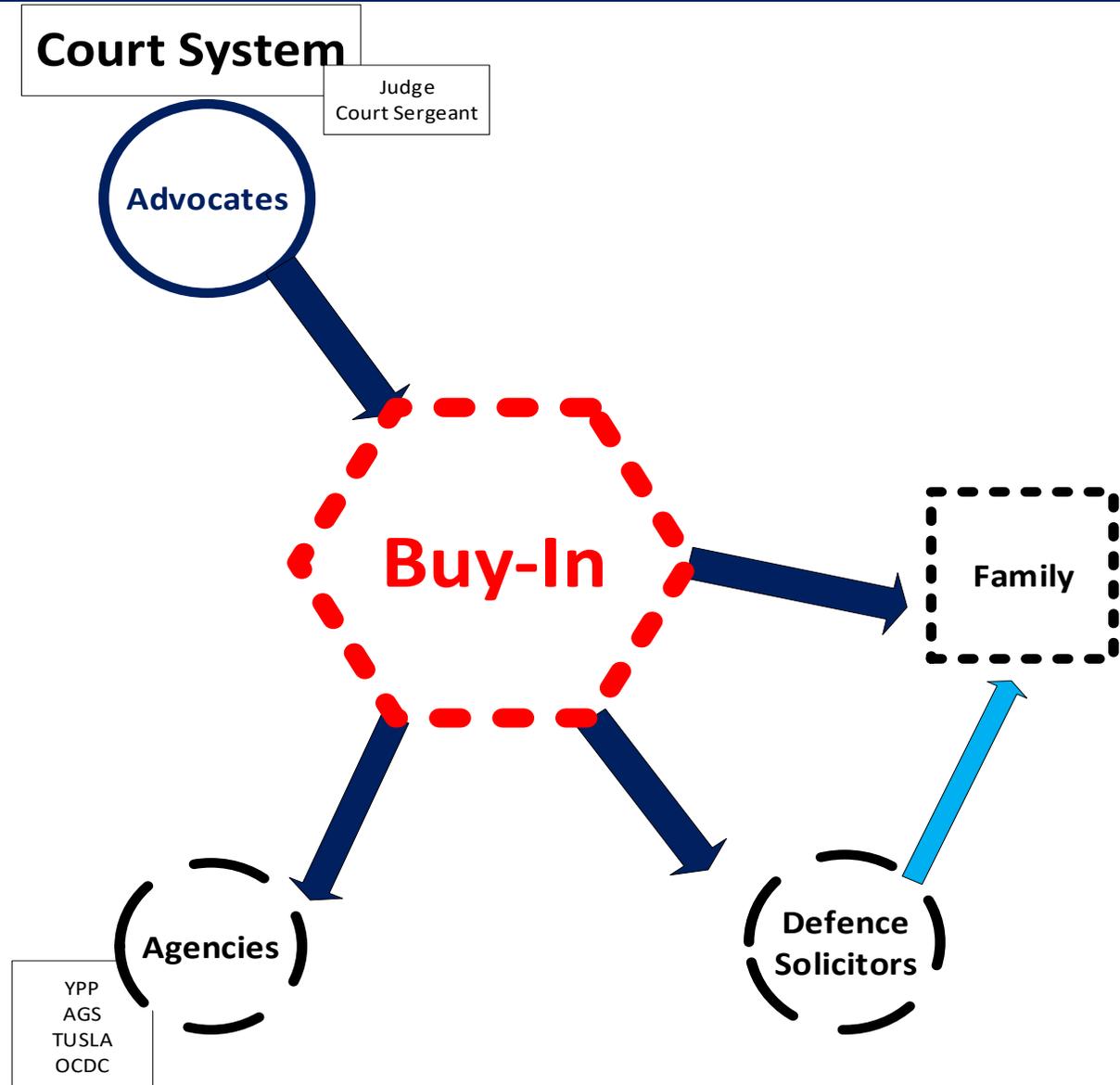
Informal communication

between Chair and MST supervisor
promoted timely problem solving

Advocates

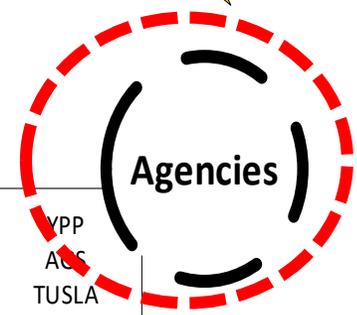
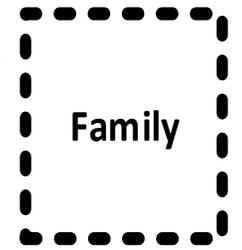
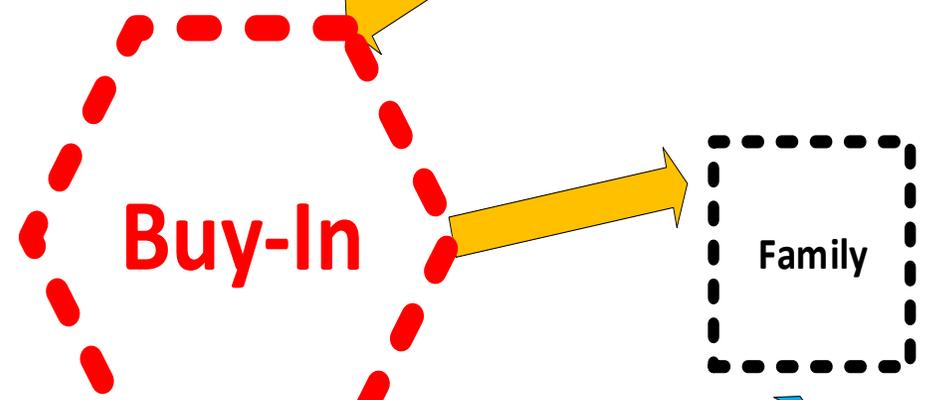
- **Judge**
- **Court Sergeant**
'essential in the whole thing... one of the first point of call'

Promoted, identified suitable referrals, provided information and safety concerns on referrals and identified case contacts within AGS



BSS Team

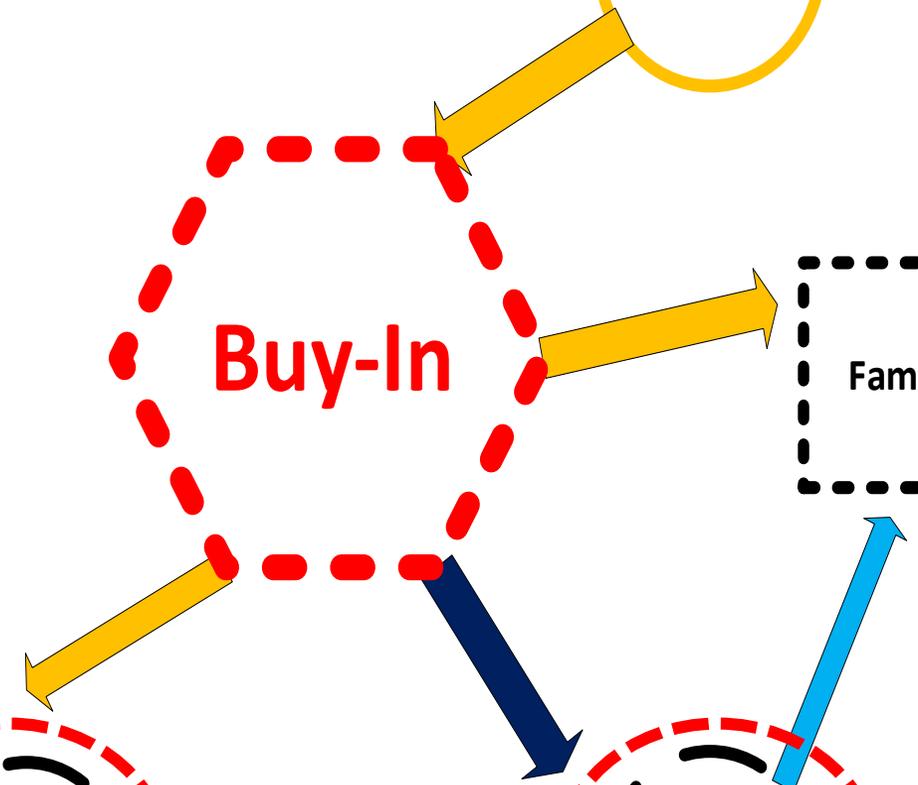
MST Supervisor
MST Therapists



YPP
ACC
TUSLA
OCDC



- Excellent awareness building and communication by **BSS team in Court 55**: followed up contacts, engaged agencies, identified barriers and brokered relationships to facilitate engagement with services
- Term '*evidence based*' replaced by '*good news stories*'



BSS Team: Informal communication

- Informal, open and regular communication between agencies '*a two way street*' Garda Case Manager

Facilitated

- Effective interagency collaboration

all agencies were '*on the same page*', provided '*joint up approach*' for families

'all of those things just all lined up together' Solicitor

- Efficient transfer of sensitive information

BSS Team: Family Buy-In

- *'Super saturated families with every service under the planet'* An Garda Síochaná

Histories of poor engagement

'If you don't have that [engagement] nothing else is going to work' BSS Team

- **Building relationships:** Empowering families; non judgmental, *'strengths focused'*, position the family as expert
- **Collaborative:** caregivers were central to all decision making

Priority given to the *'practical things that parents can take control of first'* BSS Team

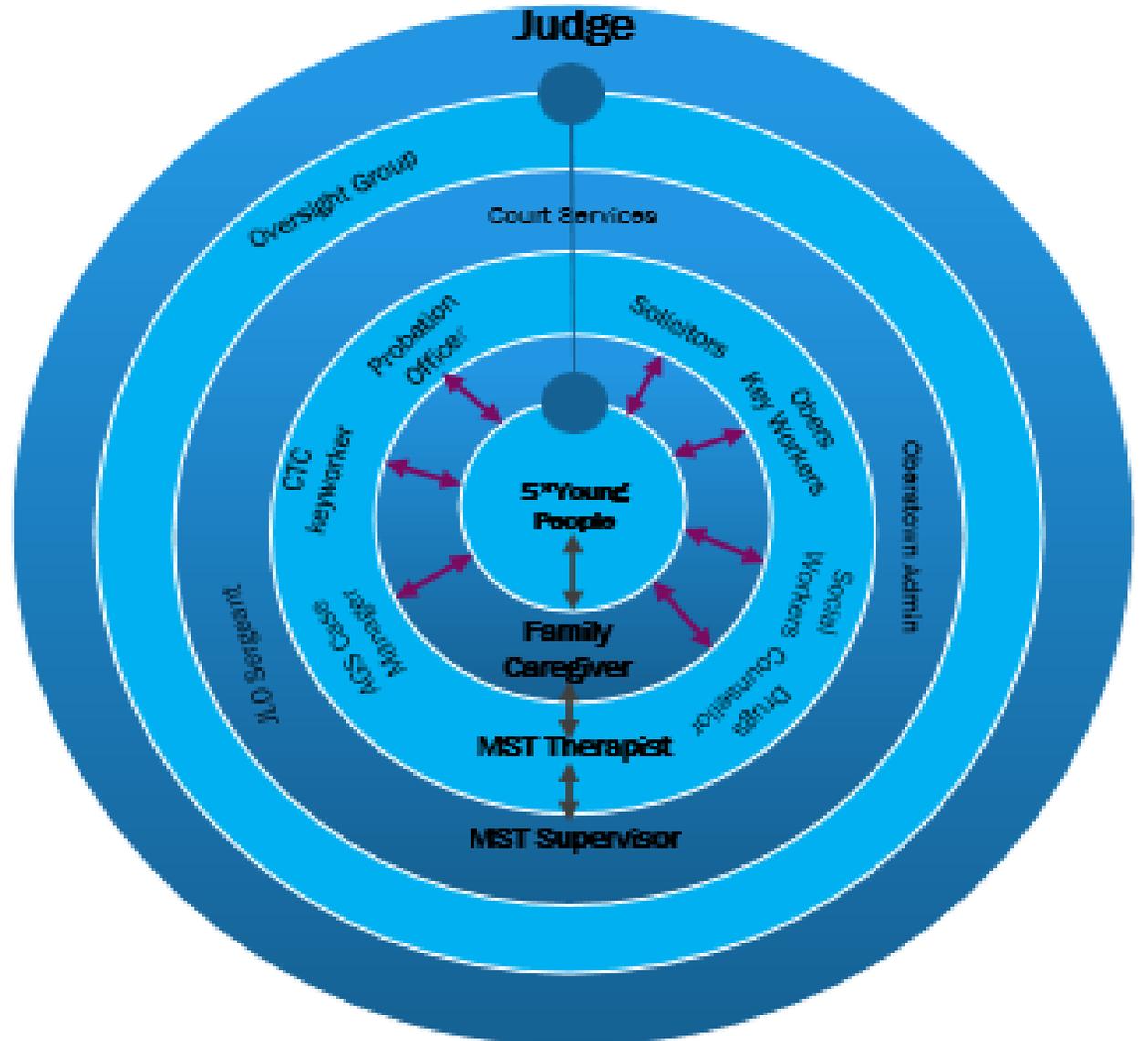
- Provided **support** at multiple levels: practical, informational and emotional
Connected to supports in their extended family and community

'this wasn't about wagging a finger at parents, but it was about actually real on the ground support. . . the first time ever that people have actually said how can we help' Solicitor

Case Studies Revisited

Synthesis of Multiple methodologies

- Thematic analysis of the interview data
- Documentary analysis of Extern's weekly case summaries
- PULSE data



Young Person 4 : Eddie

| Case | Length of BSS (Days) | PULSE Incidences | | | Bail compliance | | | Court Sanctions |
|--------------|----------------------|------------------|-----|----------|-----------------|---|-----------|--------------------------|
| | | Pre-BSS | BSS | Post-BSS | Non-compliant | Context | Compliant | |
| YP4 Eddie | 49 | 4 | 1 | 0 | Week 7 | Restricted area Restricted areas Arrest | Week 1-6 | Detained to Oberstown |

Background: Relatively stable family home, both parents employed and supportive extended family, history of family mental health issues

Characteristics: Developmental and mental health issues, problematic substance use linked to his peer group and offending history, assessed diversion system

Intervention focus: Parents develop plans for pro-social activities for Eddie.

Outcomes: Recommenced to court, re-offended. Remanded and detained to Oberstown. Thrived in structured environment of OCDC.

Of note: Parents had issues with An Garda Siochana, unhappy with breaches reporting policy, hampered their engagement

Poor Buy-In

Young Person 5 : Zach

| Case | Length of BSS (Days) | PULSE Incidences | | | Bail compliance | Court Sanctions |
|-------------|----------------------|------------------|-----|----------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| | | Pre-BSS | BSS | Post-BSS | | |
| YP5 Zach | 169 | 6 | 2 | 0 | Restricted area Restricted peers | Probation Bond |

Background: Chaotic home life, 'constant crisis', mother with history of difficulties engaging with services, problematic substance use, mental health challenges, family history of crime, father problematic substance use and homeless. Mother used exclusion from home as a form of punishment.

Characteristics : A 'likeable child with no sense of direction', easily influenced, aggressive at home.

Intervention focus: mental health challenges, reducing incidence of homelessness, safety, and pro-social activity

Outcomes: Bail compliant, ceased offending, received a probation bond

Of note: A threat on Zach's life/ currently fully employed on an apprenticeship

Good Buy-In

Challenges

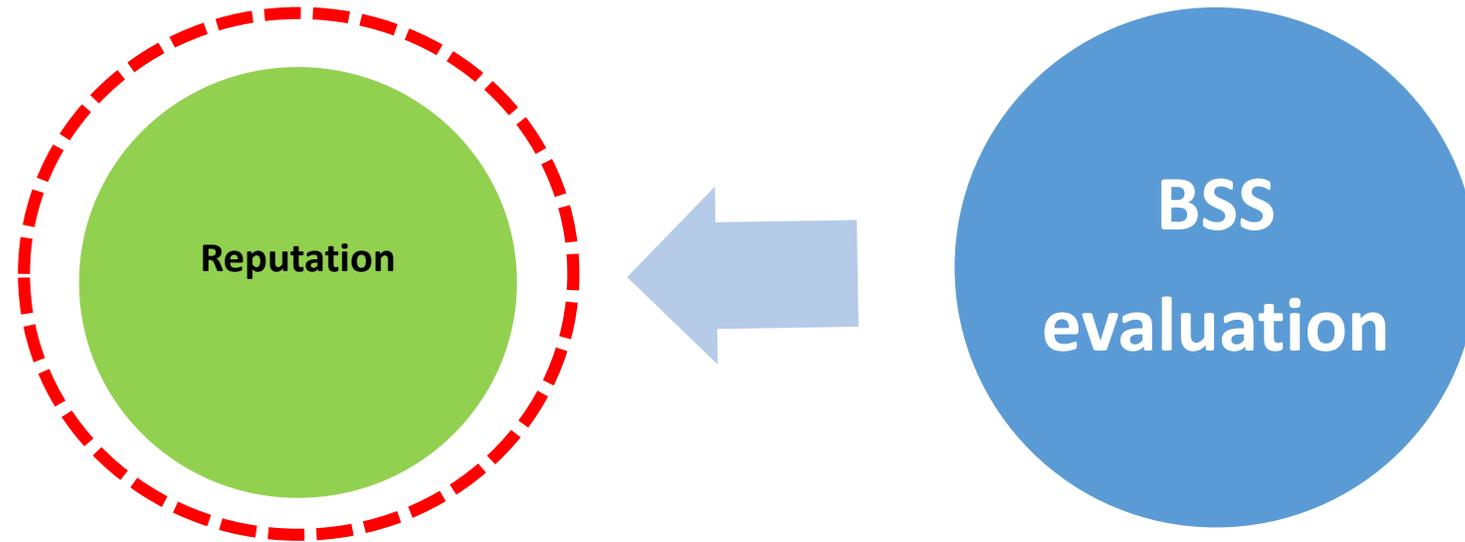
- 1. Requirement of BSS team to report breaches, hampered Buy-in**
- 2. Referral procedures and length of treatment**
- 3. Going forward: Need to look at MST exclusion criteria**

Residential Care

Age

Mental Health

Reputation



What stakeholders said

- *'it's like CCTV it's an independent witness like. . . alleviate the concerns of the Guards and also the judge'* Solicitor
- *'it was putting the whole plan in place and the **extra mile** with the bail supervision that worked'* Social worker TULSA
- *'Honestly I don't know how much more that therapist could have done without moving in with the familythey did really amazing work and are very in touch'* Probation Officer
- *'it appeared the therapist was one of the few people who'd reached him'* AGS
- Initial concerns from AGS *'another agency, more bureaucracy' 'more do-gooders' to 'sing their praises' 'fabulous in respecting the guards and the guards duties'* AGS
- *'a really wonderful experience actually to be involved in as a practitioner'* Solicitor

Last word to the families

- *'made me realise that he was still a child who needed his mum'* Mother
- *'wouldn't change any of it like, I got, like I got perfection didn't I like getting [therapist] as well as the all the benefits'* Mother
- *'it's the best thing that ever happened to us.'* Mother
- *'it helps with my ma. . . [therapist] was giving my ma tips on how to deal with problems . . . she picked up on it like, she did'* Young person
- *'it's worked out grand for me'* Young person

Overarching Questions

The contribution of the bail supervision scheme to:

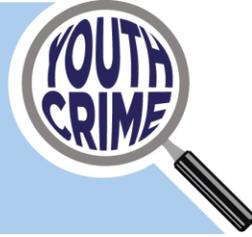
a) Young person's behaviour change including bail compliance and reduced re-offending



b) Gaining the confidence of the judicial system



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Any questions
thoughts?

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