

**R**ESearch  
**E**vidence into  
**P**OLICY **P**ROGRAMMES  
AND **P**RACTICE



REPPP  
School of Law  
University of Limerick  
[Catherine.Naughton@ul.ie](mailto:Catherine.Naughton@ul.ie)  
[Sean.Redmond@ul.ie](mailto:Sean.Redmond@ul.ie)



# A Realist Evaluation of the pilot Bail Supervision Scheme for Children

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ACJRD

Dr Catherine Naughton  
Research Psychologist  
Prof Sean Redmond  
Principal Investigator  
School of Law  
University of Limerick



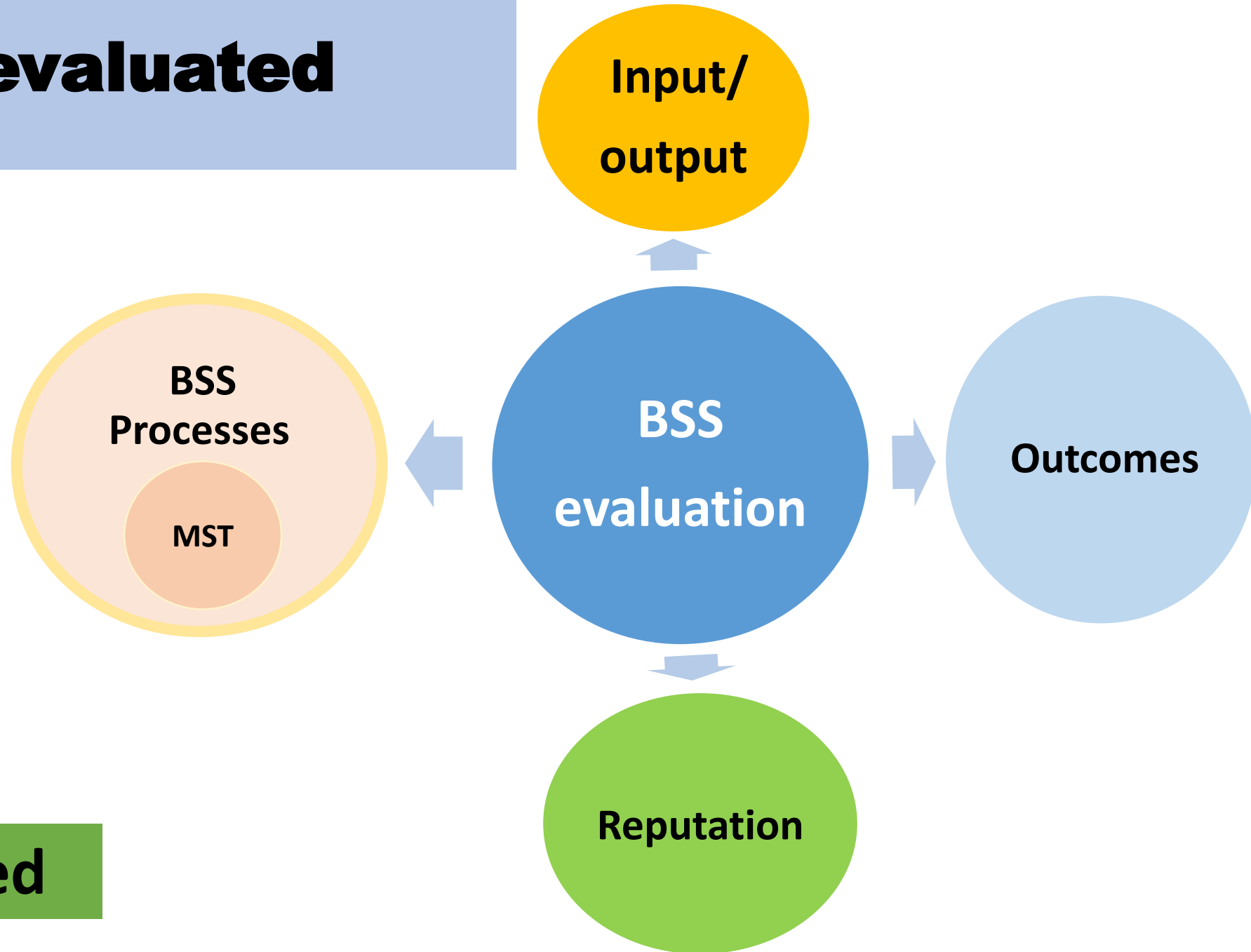
An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt  
agus Comhionannais  
Department of Justice  
and Equality

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# What we evaluated

If BSS worked

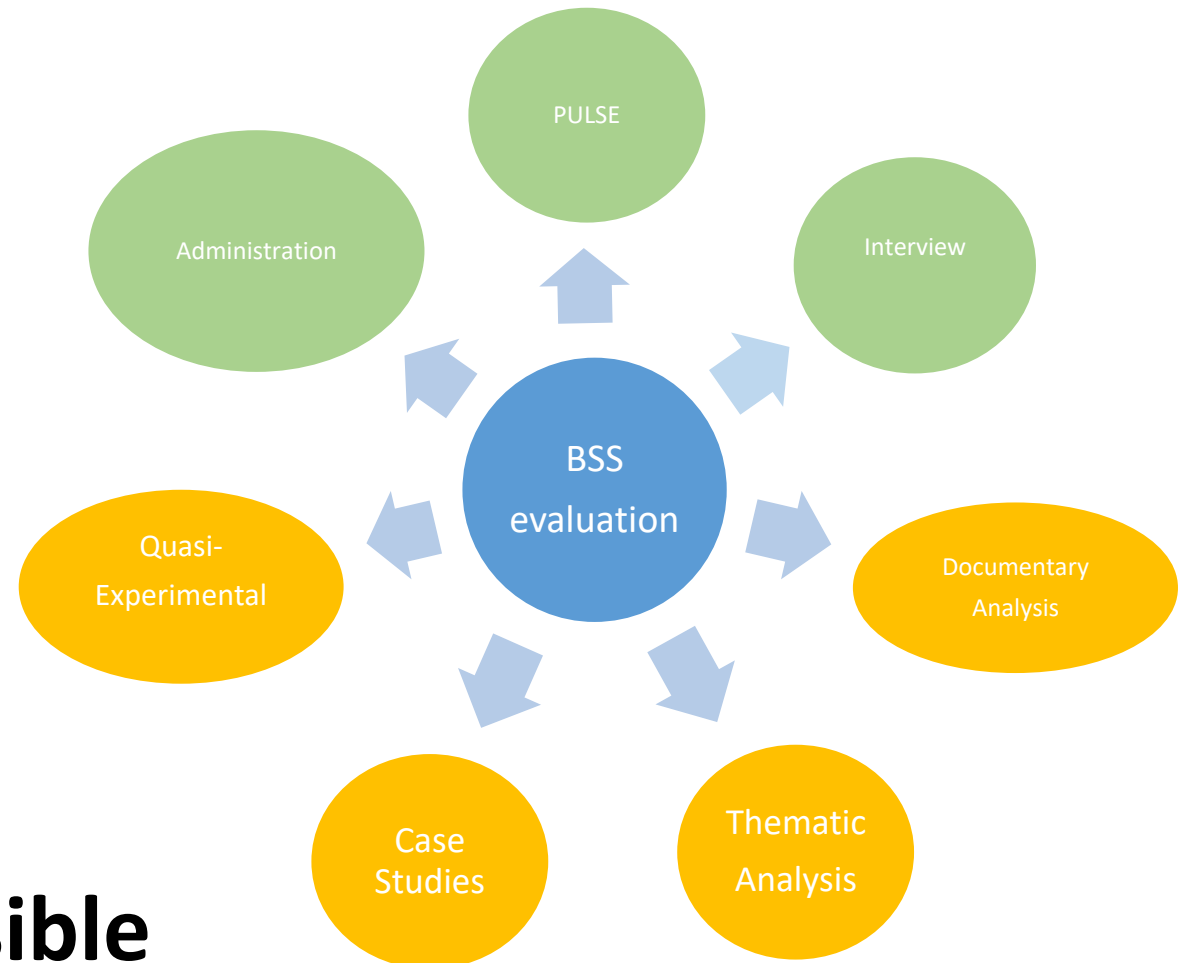


How BSS worked

# How the evaluation was conducted

## Contribution analysis

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



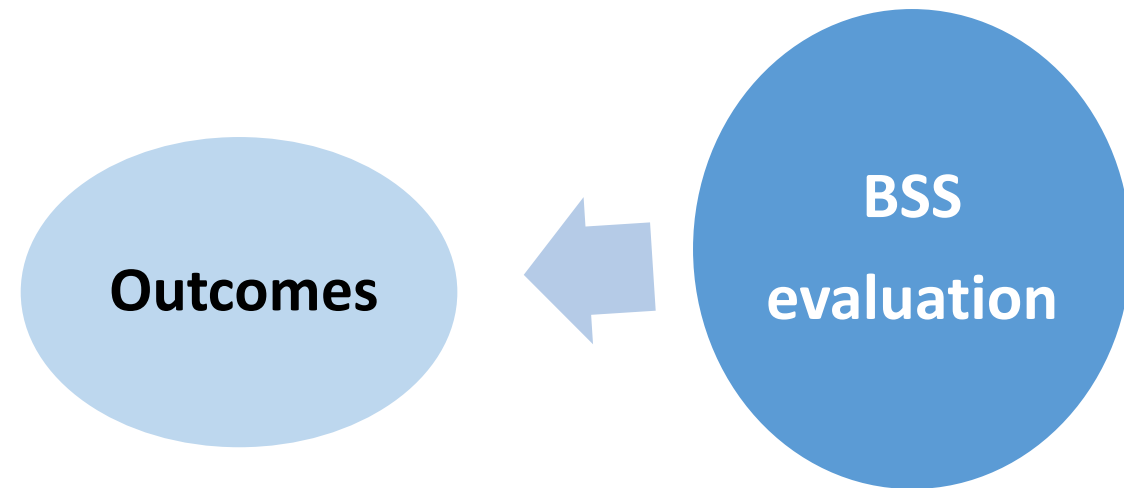
# **Our Evaluation Questions**

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

# **What we found: The **If** question**

## **Key Outcomes**

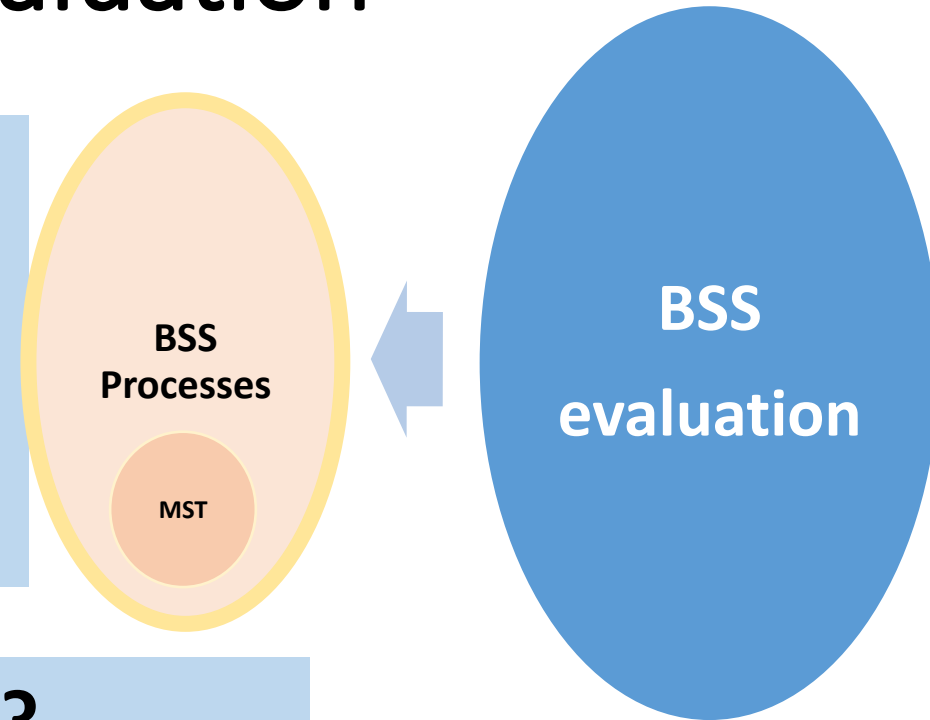
- 1. Marked reduction in levels of re-offending**
- 2. Evidence of improved adherence to bail conditions**
- 3. Majority of young people attracted non-custodial sanctions**



# 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



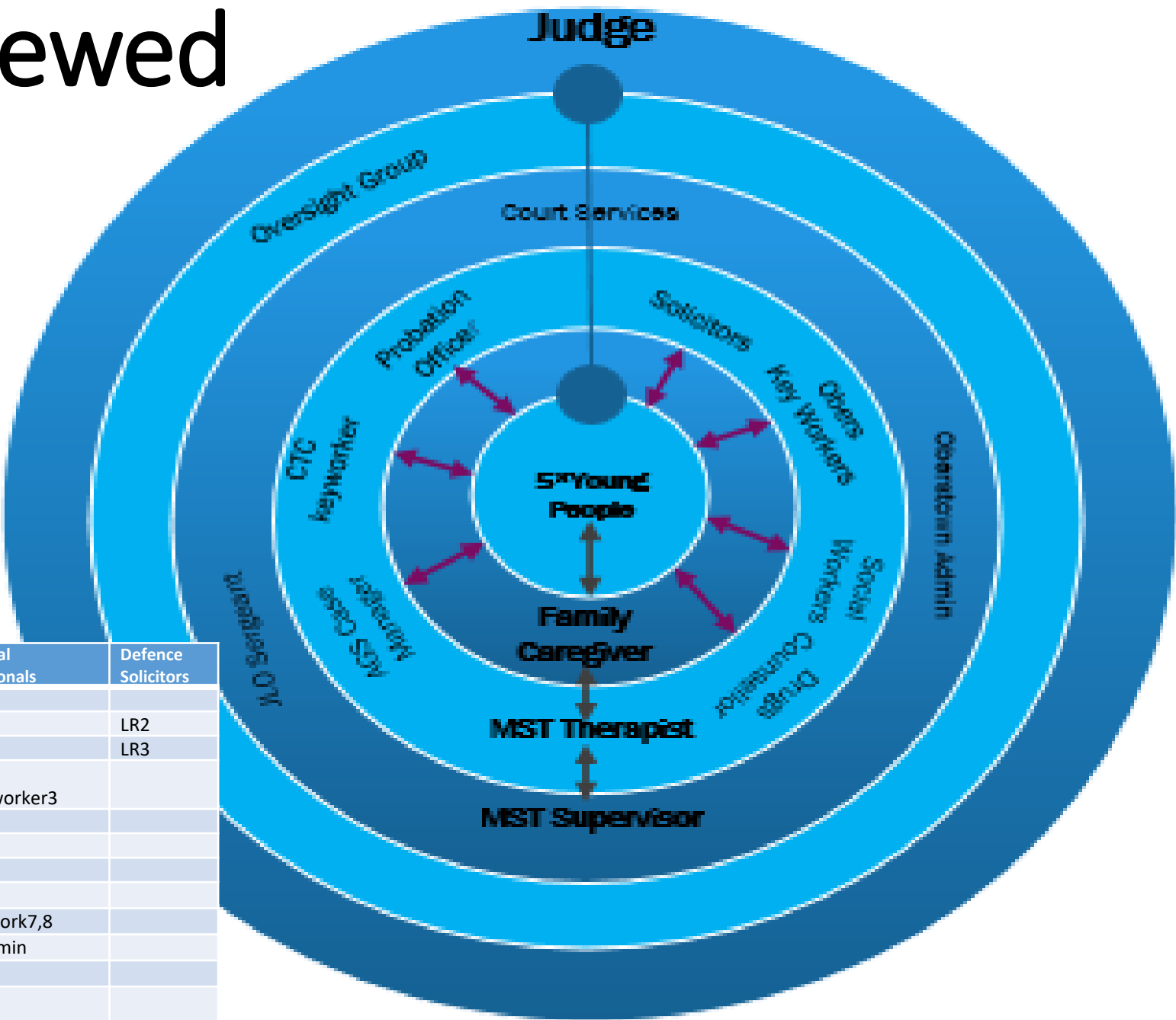
## How were the case studies chosen?

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 Sióchána	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	

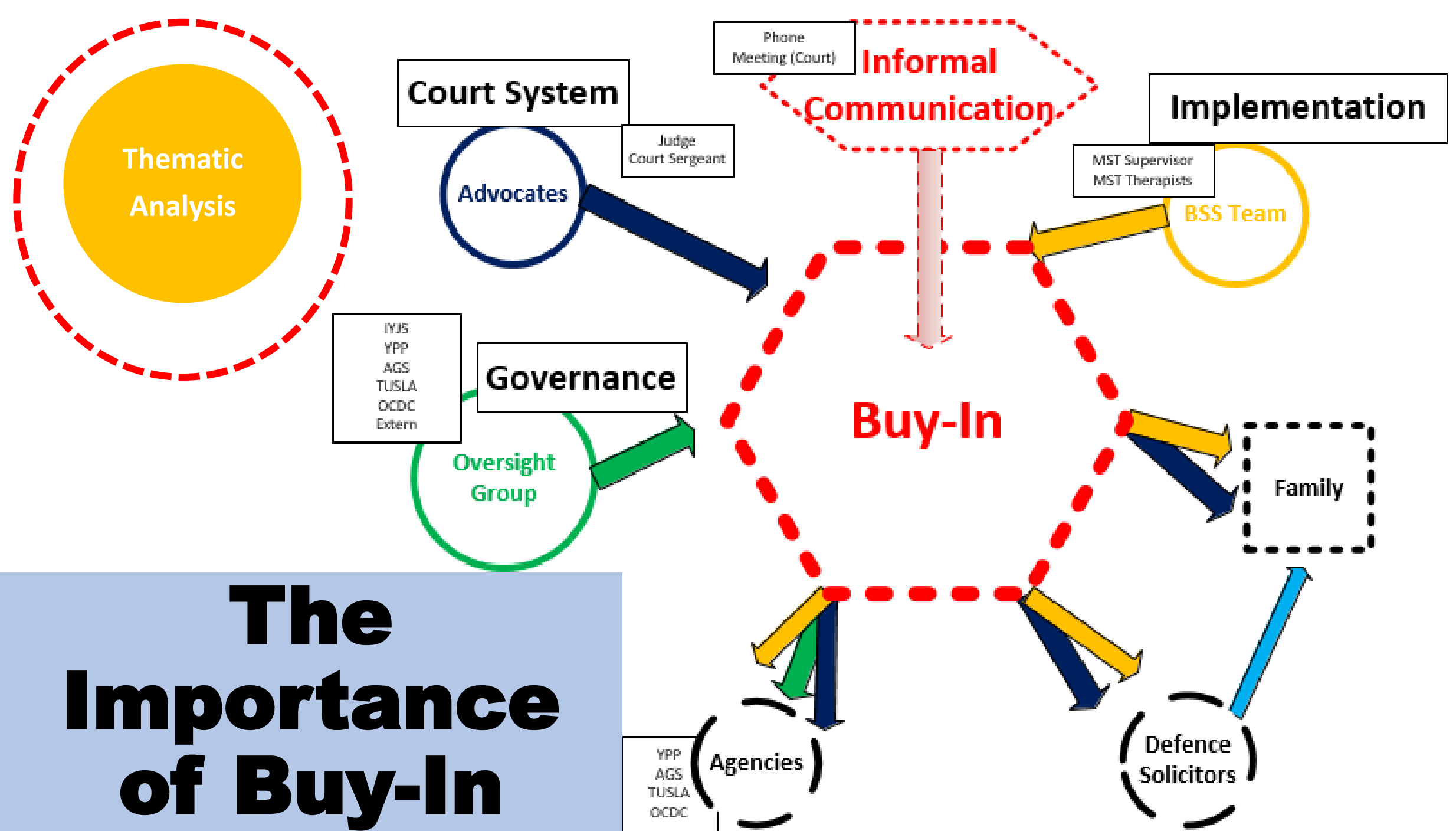


# The Five Young People

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

- **Male aged between 16 and 17 at enrolment**
- **Families history of poor engagement with services**
- **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**

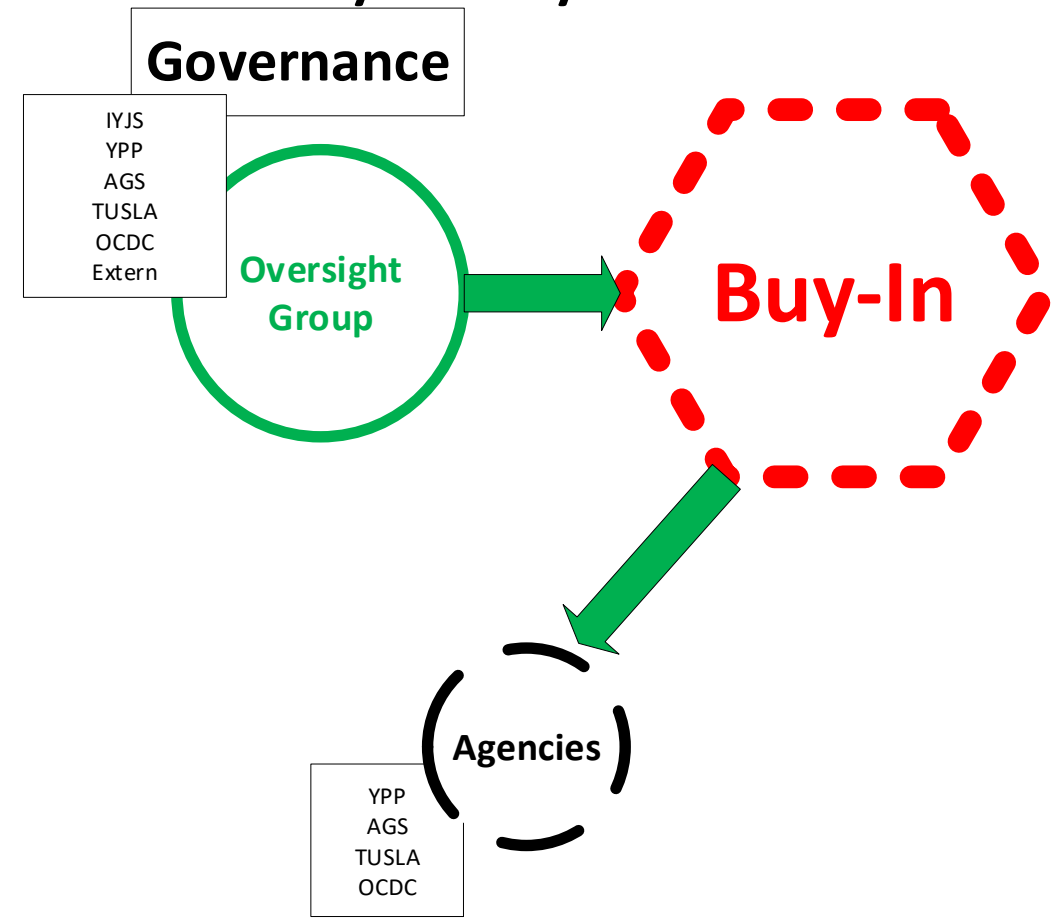




# Governance: Oversight group

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

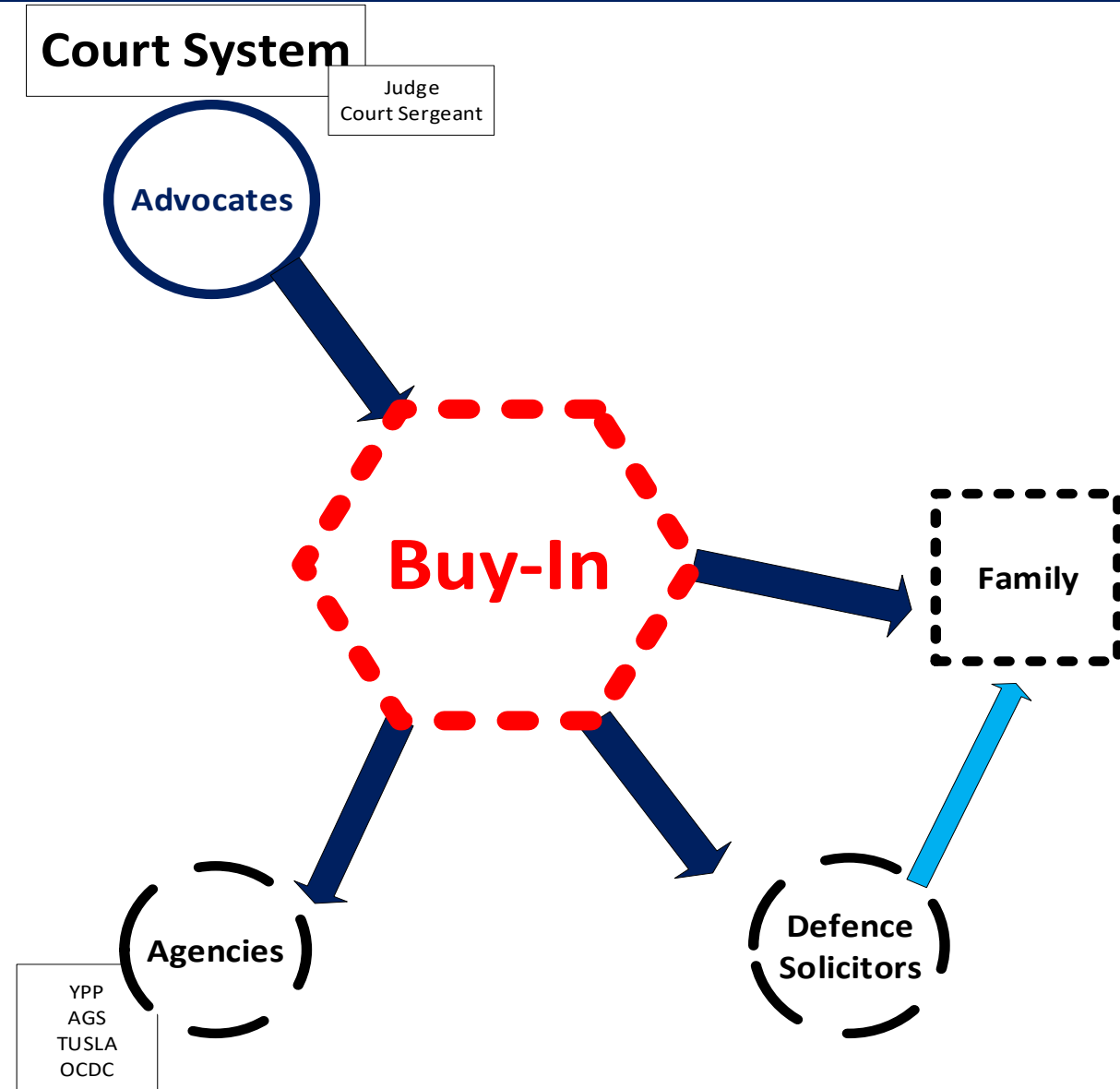
Informal communication  
between Chair and MST supervisor  
promoted timely problem solving



# Court Services: 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

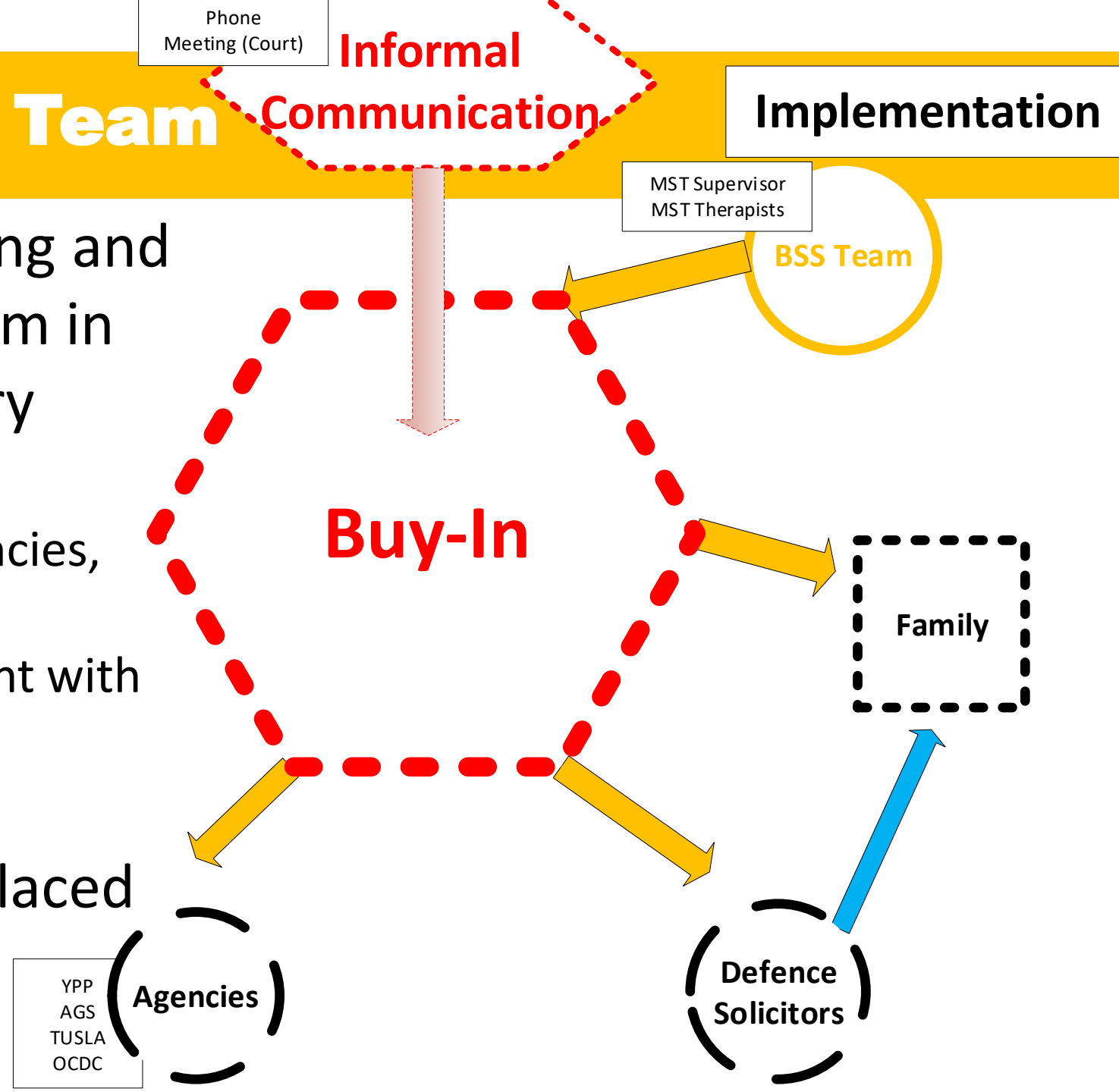


# Implementation: BSS Team

- Excellent awareness building and communication by BSS team in Court 55 and with Statutory agencies

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: Agencies Buy-In

- 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

- **Histories of poor engagement**

*‘Super saturated families with every service under the planet’* An Garda Síochaná

*‘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

# MST Processes

For therapists: Difficult to adapt from individual to holistic model;

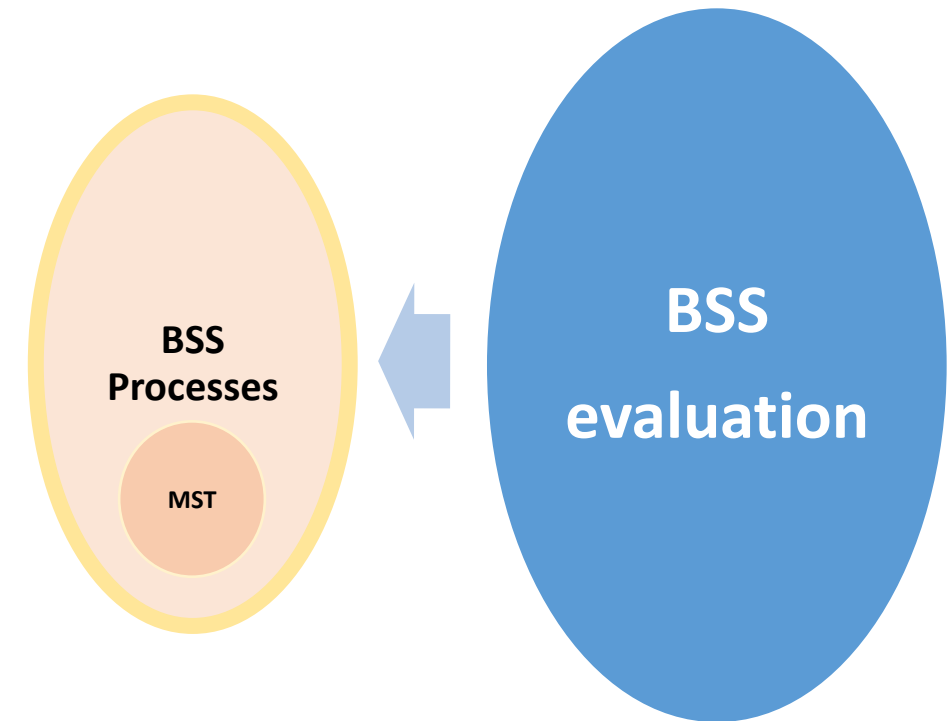
*'it's hard to make the shift'*

*'100% I wouldn't go back to the other way of working'* BSSteam

- **Analytical process;** afforded flexibility in problem solving and adaption to individual family's needs

*'It's a basic process, what's causing this problem, what are we going to tackle first, let's do something about it, did it work, back to the start and following it around'* BSSteam

**Focused on achieving goals:** *'there's no random acts . . . everything had a purpose'* BSSteam



# BSS Team: Facilitating Factors

- Evidence of strong team work, facilitating access to collective knowledge and skills
- Weekly team supervision meetings where case progress, adherence to model and challenges were discussed
- Excellent Fidelity
- Continual learning

*'continuous boosters'* training targeted at specific problem areas for example

Contingency management to tackle drug use

Techniques to manage violent and aggressive behaviour



# **BSS Challenges**

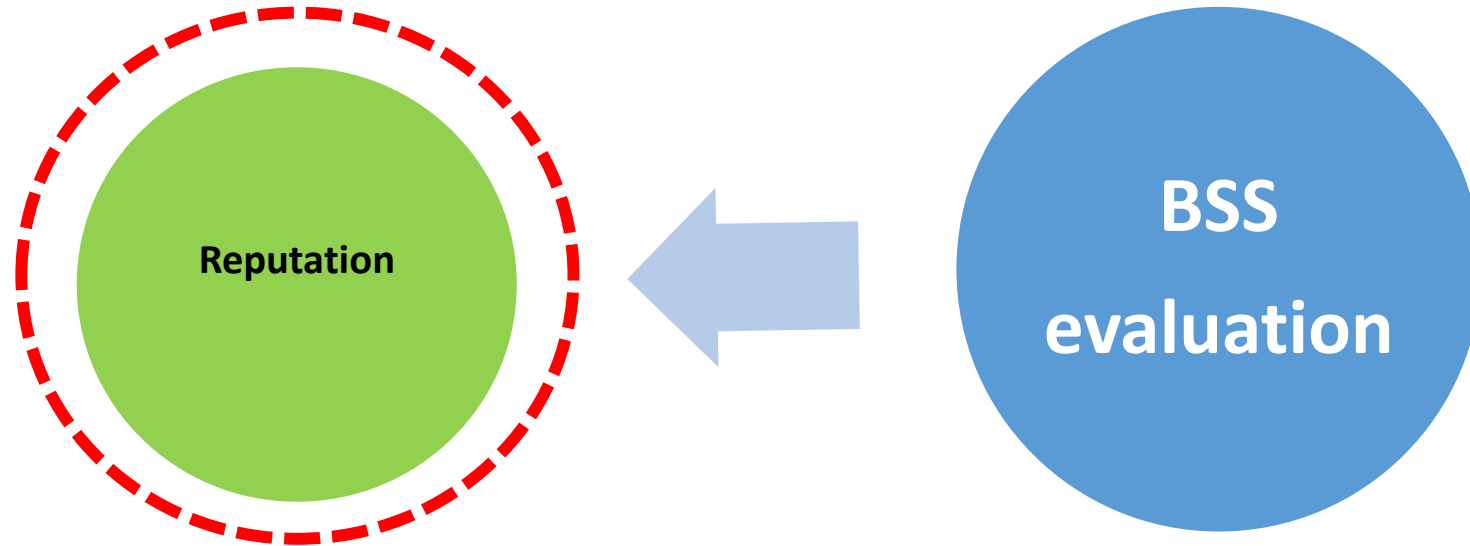
- **Requirement of BSS team to report breaches, hampered families engagement**
- **Referral procedures and length of treatment**
- **Equality: Need to look at MST exclusion criteria**

**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 family .....they 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’*  
Changed 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 [BSS team member] as well as the all the benefits’* Mother

- *‘it's the best thing that ever happened to us.’* Mother

- *‘it helps with my ma. . . [BSS team member] 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

# Our evaluation 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 key actors in the youth justice system'



**Any questions  
thoughts?**

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