

Self-Assessment

Supporting Guidance

The purpose of self-assessment is to ensure that the views of young people and parents/carers are thoroughly considered at regular points of contact with services (not just at the start or end of a period) and to help young people and parents/carers to 'own' or at least actively contribute to the assessment and planning interventions process. AssetPlus therefore provides a standardised self-assessment that which is aligned to the core assessment and can be tailored to reflect the individual circumstances of the young person i.e. which point they have reached within the youth justice system.

Nacro (2009) have suggested that whether the youth justice system works effectively for individuals can depend on their involvement in assessment, planning, implementation and review. The more that participation principles are adhered to, the better the chance of success.

Encouraging the participation of young people (and their parents/carers) in the assessment and intervention planning process carries a number of important benefits. It can:

- *ensure that children and young people (and their parents/carers) understand the processes and procedures they are involved in, whether in the police station, working on a voluntary programme, at court, whilst on a court order or in custody.*
- *encourage children and young people (and their parents/carers) to play a part in planning the interventions they/their child are going to be subject to and to share their views on what may or may not work for them, and so be relevant in helping to reduce and prevent reoffending.*
- *promote engagement and compliance by involving and consulting children and young people with regard to the decisions and outcomes that will affect them. (By allowing parents/carers the opportunity to participate in the self-assessment process this should help with the relationship with the YOT worker which in turn should help the compliance and engagement of the child/young person).*
- *help children and young people to achieve their potential and gain confidence and self-esteem (involving parents/carers in this process is likely to increase the chance of success).*
- *provide children and young people (and their parents/carers) with the opportunity to give feedback about the interventions and services they have received – what they perceive to be a good quality service and discussion of any difficulties experienced – in order to increase knowledge about what is and is not effective from their perspective.*

As well as giving young people and parents/carers the opportunity to state their views, which should be taken into account during assessment and planning, the self-assessment tools are also intended to highlight issues/concerns that the practitioner may not already be aware of and to facilitate a comparison between the assessment of the practitioner and the young person's/parent's/carer's own perspective.

Overview

The early release of AssetPlus self-assessments are available as printed versions in both English and Welsh (1st person) as well as parent/carer (1st person) versions, although 3rd person versions will also be available when AssetPlus is technically implemented in organisations (i.e. available in case management systems).

Self-assessment should be viewed as a single 'entity' broken down into sub-sections (see tables below), which can be tailored by practitioners depending on the individual circumstances of the young person (i.e. what point in the assessment/planning cycle is relevant to him/her).

The suite of self-assessment options is designed to allow young people and parents/carers the opportunity to provide their views at various stages of their involvement with the YOT or secure establishment. The 'Full' AssetPlus self-assessment covers subsections (such as family, home and relationships) that will be relevant to all young people all of the time. The other sub-sections in the lower half of the table below are only relevant when the young person is at specific points in the youth justice system (e.g. bail recommendation, pre-sentence report assessment, custody and community reviews) and are referred to as 'Appendices' in the electronic versions of the tools that are released with this supporting guidance.

There is a mix of closed questions, where the young person/parent/carer is asked if the statement is like them or not, and open questions where the young person/parent/carer can write anything they wish.

The self assessments are not scored.

Self-Assessments for young people

Sub-section:	When relevant:
Family, home and relationships	Full self-assessment
Smoking, drinking and drugs	Full self-assessment
Health and how I feel	Full self-assessment
Friends	Full self-assessment
School, college and work	Full self-assessment
Offending	Full self-assessment (Statutory or combination cases only)
Behaviour	Full self-assessment (Prevention cases only)
My future	Full self-assessment
Working with the YOT	Full self-assessment
Bail	Bail recommendation, Placement notification, Pre-Sentence Report, Post Court Report
Custody	Bail recommendation, Placement notification, Pre-Sentence Report, Post Court Report, Entering custody
Working with Probation	Transfer to Probation
Review	Community review
Custody review	Custody review
End of Intervention	Case closure

Self-Assessments for parents/carers

In addition to the self-assessment tools for young people, there are also corresponding self-assessments for parents/carers. These use a similar design and format to the young people's self-assessments, and allow for the comparison of responses between the young people and their parents/carers. While it may not always be possible to obtain the views of the parents/carers, their input to the assessment process should be encouraged through the completion of the self-assessment.

The parent/carer self-assessment includes a timeline that can be used to record past significant family events, both positive and negative. Where this information is made available by the parent/carer, it can be used when completing the practitioner's core assessment to inform a list of key life events in relation to the young person.

Sub-section:	When relevant:
About your child	Full self-assessment
Health/Lifestyle	Full self-assessment
School, college and work	Full self-assessment
At home	Full self-assessment
Behaviour	Full self-assessment (Prevention cases only)
Offending	Full self-assessment (Statutory or combination cases only)
Strengths and interests	Full self-assessment
Working with the YOT	Full self-assessment
Timeline	Full self-assessment
Bail/Remand	Bail recommendation, Placement notification, Pre-Sentence Report, Post Court Report
Review	Community review
Custody review	Custody review
End of Intervention	Case closure

Completing the self assessments

It is important to record the young person's name, date of birth and date of completion of the tool at the top of the document.

The AssetPlus release contains young person and parent carer versions of the self-assessment (in English and Welsh) that are referenced as either:

- Full Prevention
- Full Statutory

or

- Appendices

As already stated the 'full' self-assessment covers a range of areas and will be relevant all of the time. The main difference between the Statutory and Prevention versions is that the former refers to 'offending' whilst the later refers to 'behaviour'. The subsections contained within these full versions are displayed in the tables above.

The appendices, however, relate to the specific circumstances of the young person and can be used as individual attachments to full self-assessment or as standalone tools depending on the circumstances of the young person. For example, they are finishing their work with the YOT so they complete the End of Intervention subsection from the appendices, as could the

parents/carers. This list of available sub-sections in the Appendices and when they will be relevant is reflected in the above tables.

The self-assessments are designed to mirror the structure of the overall AssetPlus framework and to provide information that can be revisited when completing the assessment, to reference what the young person has said about a particular aspect of their life or behaviour. In order to do this, it may be preferable (and assist with promoting the participation and engagement of the young person in the assessment process), to start the assessment process with the self-assessment. However, it will be for practitioners to decide on the best time to use it in each individual case (e.g. whether this is the first contact with him/her or whether s/he is already quite well known).

When deciding to commence with the self-assessment, practitioners should take account of the young persons' age, literacy skills and any speech, language or communication needs when considering the most suitable approach. The tools are intended to be completed by the young person. Some young people might find the form difficult to complete and will require some assistance. It is then particularly important to encourage the young person to express his/her own opinions and not just to say what s/he thinks you want to hear. The same applies to parents/carers.

Where considered useful, or where a young person is on a longer intervention, the full version of the self-assessment can be repeated, and used to show how the young person's perception of their situation may have changed over time. The 'Review' and 'End of Intervention' sub-sections are designed to also provide more information about what aspects of interventions young people perceive to have been more or less helpful to them. This information can then be revisited when planning future interventions, to help maximise their effectiveness.

Using the electronic version of the tool

As well as using a printed version the tool can be filled out electronically as a Word document, so that practitioners can save this in the young person's case record. To complete electronically:

- *Click the answer box to enter a cross. Re-click to uncross the box.*
- *Click in the area text box to enter text for each question.*
- *The rest of the tool is locked down (i.e. only answer boxes can be ticked or text entered)*
- *The timeline at the end of document can be completed more easily in hard copy.*

Other considerations

- Prior to the full technical delivery of AssetPlus, this tool can be used at the practitioner's discretion or other locally preferred self-assessments can be used (as long as they appropriately achieve the purpose set out in the first paragraph of this supporting guidance).
- Any other types of self-assessment tools that have been developed to engage with the young person (e.g. pictorial tools or interactive software packages, such as Viewpoint) can still be used or even reviewed to align with the AssetPlus self-assessments.

Reference

Nacro (2009). Youth Justice and Participation in Wales. <http://www.nacro.org.uk/data/files/youth-justice-in-wales09-746.pdf>

If you have any questions or comments on the above contents, please contact assessment@yjb.gsi.gov.uk