

AssetPlus process evaluation

The Youth Justice Board (YJB) response to the AssetPlus process evaluation report and recommendations

December 2019

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The YJB commissioned Rand Europe to undertake an independent process evaluation of Asset Plus. This [evaluation report](#) was published in December 2019.

The report indicated that youth justice practitioners were generally supportive of the ideas underpinning AssetPlus and could see its potential benefits. However, in practice, many felt that these potential benefits were not yet being achieved.

Rand Europe made a series of recommendations to which the YJB have committed to addressing.

The five recommendations were:

1. review elements of the design and content of AssetPlus;
2. provide additional training and guidance on good assessment practice;
3. provide clarification on working practices, roles and responsibilities;
4. facilitate ongoing improvements to the model and Case Management Systems; and,
5. undertake further research on the impact of AssetPlus.

In response, the YJB commits to the following actions:

1. Review elements of the design and content of AssetPlus

The YJB is exploring how to improve the design, layout, language and content of AssetPlus in collaboration with the Case Management Suppliers (CMS).

We are exploring methods to improve user-friendliness and reductions in time spent using the tool, particularly regarding Out of Court Disposals (OoCD).

The YJB will improve the clarity of the language used across AssetPlus.

Considering the feedback received, we will be working with CMSs and requesting they improve the self-assessments across the framework.

Regarding the recommendation focusing on screening tools: we will be working with those local authorities who have already developed such approaches as part of our Pathfinder programme, proactively gathering and disseminating promising practice which the YJB are supporting through modest, one-off grant payments.

2. Provide additional training and guidance on good assessment practice

We recognise that there is more we could do to promote and signpost AssetPlus users to the existing training material freely available for new starters, refresher training, partner briefings and key stakeholder information.

The HMPPS Youth Custody Service (YCS) oversees training for secure estate staff in accordance with its responsibility for work force development of its whole staff group.

3. Provide clarification on working practices, roles and responsibilities

There were some reports of confusion in respect of the most efficient use of AssetPlus operationally and in respect of quality assurance. The YJB and HMPPS/YCS developed an AssetPlus Joint Working Protocol to assist practitioners and managers and this will be reviewed to reflect new AssetPlus data sharing functionality as this is launched. The YJB recently commissioned a nationwide series of sector-led workshops on this subject which 135/152 YOTs attended. We hope that were Rand to conduct this research again, understanding on this topic would have improved. We will also ensure that we take steps to improve the communication and signposting to such material.

The YJB will reissue new generic AssetPlus Guidance for both YOTs and the secure estate in line with the new functionality.

4. Facilitate ongoing improvements to the model and Case Management Systems

With respect to the elements of the Case Management Systems (CMS) YJB continues to work collaboratively with each of the CMS providers and will pass on the recommendations accordingly.

Two specific recommendations i.e. that (1) the YJB should collate information to inform future changes to specifications of AssetPlus and (2) to develop a change management process, are already in place within the YJB. It should be made clear however, that the YJB is not privy to the flow of information between YOTs and their CMS providers and any requests made between them; that is an exclusively commercial relationship between the local authority and their CMS provider.

5. Undertake further research on the impact of AssetPlus

The YJB commissioned an independent outcome/impact evaluation which is currently underway. This is due to report in 2021.

Any research involving the secure estate is the responsibility of HMPPS YCS, although as a key partner and stakeholder, the YJB continues to engage with them.