

# **Assessing the needs of sentenced children in the Youth Justice System**

## **Technical Note**

**2018/19**

**England and Wales**

## **Introduction**

This document provides background information on the experimental statistics presented in the publication 'Assessing the needs of sentenced children in the Youth Justice System' and is intended to be used as a guide to interpretation, methodology and publication definitions.

Key areas covered within this document are:

- 1) High-level overview of AssetPlus.
- 2) AssetPlus data fields used in the release - their definition, strengths and limitations.
- 3) Calculations underlying the accompanying tables.
- 4) Glossary of main terms.
- 5) The Youth Justice Board's plans for future publications from AssetPlus data.

## **AssetPlus – an overview**

AssetPlus is an assessment and planning interventions framework developed by the Youth Justice Board (YJB) to replace Asset and its associated tools. AssetPlus was designed to provide a holistic end-to-end assessment and intervention plan, allowing one record to follow a child throughout their time in the Youth Justice System.

AssetPlus focuses on professional judgement of practitioners and enables the development of better-focused intervention plans to improve outcomes for children. The information records practitioner assessments through multi-staged interaction with children and the underlying data provide a systematic descriptive resource.

As AssetPlus is an operational assessment tool, the data is not recorded for the specific purpose of statistical or internal performance reporting. Caution should therefore be exercised when interpreting figures from the data, given the type of data and the purpose for which it is collected.

## **AssetPlus fields used in ‘Assessing the needs of sentenced children in the Youth Justice System’**

The Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB) obtains a subset of AssetPlus data which is captured within the Case Management Systems used by Youth Offending Teams (YOTs).

The fields in this publication focus on the high-level Concerns, Care Status, Safety and Wellbeing and Risk of Serious Harm to children. YOT practitioners can record significantly more detailed information within assessments either in further explorative fields or free text which are not available to the YJB and therefore not presented in this publication.

### **Strengths and limitations**

These experimental statistics represent high-level information and show areas of particular concern with children over the year ending March 2019. Within the release data are available different sentence types and demographics as well as across the different concerns. These differences can also be compared for England and Wales.

The data underlying this release does not include the more specific, low-level details underlying the concerns. For example, with the substance misuse concern, it is not possible to tell whether the concern relates to tobacco use or class A drugs etc. Caution should therefore be taken to avoid overinterpreting the validity of the figures appearing in the accompanying tables.

## **Calculations used in the publication**

This data is from the assessment of a child that is closest to the date of their sentencing outcome and this captures only those who had an assessment completed. Within the publication, statements of the form ‘X% of children assessed’ refers to those who were assessed using AssetPlus within 30 days either side of their sentencing date.

This publication focusses on children assessed who had an outcome between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019. Because a single outcome can have multiple stages of an assessment attached to it, this release focusses on the closest assessment up to 30 days before or after the outcome. A small proportion of the assessment dates will be as early as 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2018 and as late as 30<sup>th</sup> April 2019. Not all sentences had an assessment within this 30-day period and therefore have not been included.

Practice around when AssetPlus assessments are carried out varies across different YOTs. Some teams carry out assessments on all outcomes including youth cautions and court sentences without YOT intervention, while others only carry out assessments on sentenced outcomes with YOT intervention. As such, the data in this publication focuses on assessments linked to Referral Orders, Reparation Orders, Youth Rehabilitation Orders and custodial sentences. These data are presented by sentence type, ethnicity, gender and age at outcome.

AssetPlus is a flexible, practitioner assessment and planning tool designed to facilitate the best outcomes for children who come into contact with YOTs and YOT practitioners. There is flexibility within the tool to allow practitioners to systematically assess children across multiple stages given operational and situational differences between YOTs.

## **Concerns**

Concern types refer to factors that practitioners judge to be affecting the child. The types of concerns cover their wellbeing (e.g. Mental Health, Physical Health and Safety and Wellbeing), how they relate to other people (e.g. Significant Relationships and Relations to Others), social factors and issues at home (e.g. Accommodation, Local Issues, Learning & Education, Training and Employment, Parenting or Family Behaviour) or their own behaviours (Substance Misuse, Offence Justification or Attitudes to Offending).

The available values in the Concerns data are 'Yes', 'No' and 'Yet to Clarify'. Data on some variables in some assessments has not been completed and show as Withheld or Blanks. The data are presented as the number of 'Yes' values as a proportion of the total assessments.

The number and proportion these comprise are available in the accompanying Supplementary Tables for each concern.

## **Care Status**

The factors around care status look at the child's current and previous care history (e.g. whether they are subject to a care order or child protection plan, whether they have siblings in care or are remanded to local authority accommodation or youth detention accommodation).

With the exception of Eligible Child where the available values are 'Yes', 'No' and 'Yet to Clarify', the available values for the variables in the Care Status data are 'Currently', 'Previously', 'Never' and 'Yet to Clarify'. Data on some variables in some assessments has not been completed and show as blanks or Withheld.

The data are presented as the number of 'Currently' values as a proportion of the total assessments and the number of 'Yes' values as a proportion of the total assessments for the Eligible Child variable.

The number and proportion these comprise are available in the accompanying Supplementary Tables for each Care Status type.

## **Safety & Wellbeing and Risk of Serious Harm**

The practitioner assessed ratings for Risk of Serious Harm look at the imminence and likelihood of death or serious personal injury whether physical or psychological and the ratings for Safety and Wellbeing look at the risk that a child's safety and well-being is now or in the future potentially compromised through his or her own behaviour, personal circumstances or because of the acts or omissions of others.

These concerns and ratings are based on practitioners' judgements and therefore are an indirect measure of children's needs.

**AssetPlus fields in ‘Assessing the needs of sentenced children in the Youth Justice System’ publication by available value**

Table	Field	Available value	Table	Field	Available value
Concerns	Accommodation	Yes No Yet to Clarify	Concerns	Significant Relationships	Yes No Yet to Clarify
Concerns	Care History	Yes No Yet to Clarify	Concerns	Speech, Language and Communication	Yes No Yet to Clarify
Concerns	Family Behaviour	Yes No Yet to Clarify	Concerns	Substance Misuse	Yes No Yet to Clarify
Concerns	Learning and ETE	Yes No Yet to Clarify	Concerns	YP as Parent	Yes No Yet to Clarify
Concerns	Lifestyle	Yes No Yet to Clarify	Care History	Eligible Child	Yes No Yet to Clarify
Concerns	Local Issues	Yes No Yet to Clarify	Care History	Child in need	Currently Previously Never Yet to Clarify
Concerns	Mental Health	Yes No Yet to Clarify	Care History	Child protection plan	Currently Previously Never Yet to Clarify
Concerns	Offence Justification	Yes No Yet to Clarify	Care History	Care order	Currently Previously Never Yet to Clarify
Concerns	Offences Attitudes	Yes No Yet to Clarify	Care History	Relevant child	Currently Previously Never Yet to Clarify
Concerns	Other Behaviour	Yes No Yet to Clarify	Care History	Remand to LAA	Currently Previously Never Yet to Clarify
Concerns	Parenting	Yes No Yet to Clarify	Care History	Remand to YDA	Currently Previously Never Yet to Clarify
Concerns	Physical Health	Yes No Yet to Clarify	Care History	Siblings in care	Currently Previously Never Yet to Clarify
Concerns	Relations to Others	Yes No Yet to Clarify	Safety & Wellbeing and Risk of Serious Harm	Safety and Wellbeing Rating	Low Medium High Very High
Concerns	Risk to Others	Yes No Yet to Clarify	Safety & Wellbeing and Risk of Serious Harm	Risk of Serious Harm Rating	Low Medium High Very High
Concerns	Safety and Wellbeing	Yes No Yet to Clarify			

# Glossary

## Concern types

<b>Accommodation</b>	Concerns about the child's current accommodation situation.
<b>Care History</b>	Concerns around the child's care history.
<b>Family Behaviour</b>	Concerns about behaviours/situations within the family which may impact on the child's safety and wellbeing.
<b>Learning and ETE</b>	Concerns related to the child's education, training or employment.
<b>Lifestyle</b>	Concerns about how the child spends his/her time and/or other addictive behaviours.
<b>Local Issues</b>	Concerns about the child being adversely affected by specific local tensions, pressures or issues.
<b>Mental Health</b>	Concerns about the child's mental health.
<b>Offence Justification</b>	Concerns about the way that the child has tried to justify his/her offending.
<b>Attitudes to Offending</b>	Concerns around the child's broader attitudes about their offending, including their attitude toward the victim(s); and how they feel about their actions. The parental attitude to their child's behaviour should also be considered.
<b>Other Behaviour</b>	Other behaviours of particular concern
<b>Parenting</b>	Concerns about the ability of the parents/carers to care for and supervise the child appropriately.
<b>Physical Health</b>	Concerns around the child's physical health for example having a diagnosed physical health condition, experiencing current physical health symptoms, currently prescribed medication for a physical illness, health put at risk through own behaviour
<b>Relations to Others</b>	Concerns around significant problems in the way the child relates to others.
<b>Risk to Others</b>	Concerns around the child's risk to others.
<b>Safety and Wellbeing</b>	Concerns about behaviours/situations within the family which may impact on the child's safety and wellbeing.
<b>Significant Relationships</b>	Concerns about the child's significant relationships.
<b>Speech, Language and Communication</b>	Concerns around the child's speech, language and communication.
<b>Substance Misuse</b>	Concern's around the child's use of alcohol, tobacco or drugs.
<b>YP as Parent</b>	Child's parental status - This is a drop-down box, which will generate additional questions depending on the practitioner's answer.

## Care Status

<b>Child in need</b>	A Child in Need is defined as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services.
<b>Child protection plan</b>	A child protection plan is a plan drawn up by the local authority. It sets out how the child can be kept safe, how things can be made better for the family and what support they will need.
<b>Eligible child</b>	An eligible child is one aged 16 or 17, who has been looked after by a local authority for a period (prescribed under the regulations as 13 weeks), or periods amounting in all to that period, which began after he/she reached 14 years of age and ended after he/she reached the age of 16. Only applies to England.
<b>Care order</b>	Is the child subject to a care order or has the child been subject to a care order (s.31 Children Act 1989) previously?
<b>Relevant child</b>	A relevant child is a child who is not being looked after by any local authority, but was, before last ceasing to be looked after, an eligible child, and is aged 16 or 17. Only applies to England.
<b>Remand to LAA</b>	Is the child remanded to Local Authority accommodation or have they been remanded to Local Authority accommodation previously?
<b>Remand to YDA</b>	Is the child remanded to youth detention accommodation or have they been remanded to youth detention accommodation previously?
<b>Siblings in care</b>	Any Children's Services involvement with the child's siblings.

## Risk of Serious Harm and Safety and Wellbeing

<b>Risk of Serious Harm</b>	Risk of Serious Harm is the imminence and likelihood of death or serious personal injury whether physical or psychological. This is rated as Low, Medium, High and Very High.
<b>Safety and Wellbeing</b>	Safety and Wellbeing is defined as the risk that a young person's safety and well-being is now or in the future potentially compromised through his or her own behaviour, personal circumstances or because of the acts or omissions of others. This is rated as Low, Medium, High and Very High.

## **Future publication of AssetPlus data**

The YJB Information and Analysis Team have planned to include AssetPlus data in the next Youth Justice Statistics publication in January 2021.

Given user feedback, the YJB information and Analysis Team may also consider publishing further experimental AssetPlus statistics. Future experimental publications could focus on Concerns, Care History, Safety & Wellbeing, Risk of Serious Harm by offence group and factors for and against desistance and their ratings.