

Children's experiences of the Prevention and Diversion Assessment Tool

Findings from an evaluation



What is the Prevention and Diversion Assessment Tool?

It is a new assessment form for the Youth Justice Service to use. It has a list of questions that help your workers get to know you and understand your life.

It also helps them to learn about your hobbies, interests, and the things you need support with during your time together.

What did we find?

- All the children we spoke to had been assessed using the new assessment tool.
- They told us they liked working with their practitioners and found them supportive.
- They felt that practitioners helped them discover their hobbies and interests.
- Support from practitioners helped children better understand themselves.

How is it used?

Before meeting you, your practitioners look at the form to help them think about what they might like to talk to you about. This helps them make realistic plans with you to meet your goals and needs.

After they've got to know you, they'll fill in the form based on your conversation and information from other services.

What is this report about?

The Prevention and Diversion Assessment Tool was developed by the Youth Justice Board. It was created to better understand the support children need and to support Youth Justice Service practitioners to meet these needs.

This report shares what children told us about working with their practitioner after they had completed a Prevention and Diversion Assessment Tool. We spoke to 10 children from five areas across the country.



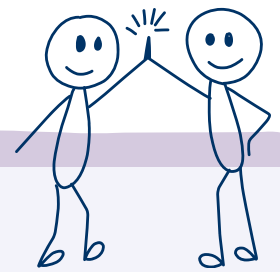
Children liked first meetings to feel informal

Children liked when the first meeting with the practitioners felt like a chat, and like they were getting to know each other. It made them feel comfortable to talk to them.

Children felt practitioners genuinely wanted to know them

Children felt that practitioners showed genuine interest in getting to know them.

They felt that practitioners wanted to understand their interests and perspective. This helped them open up more.



What did children like about working with their practitioners?

Children felt they were always told about what would happen next

Children said that practitioners always kept them updated through calls, texts, and in-person meetings about upcoming steps.



Children liked when the practitioners planned their goals with them

Children made a plan with practitioners based on the needs they had identified together.

The plan also focused on their hobbies and interests. They felt more confident and open to working with practitioners when the plan focused on what mattered to them.





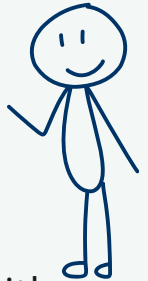
How did the Prevention and Diversion Assessment Tool positively impact children?

Improved understanding of how to keep themselves safe



Children said they had become more aware of who they could reach out to for help and safety.

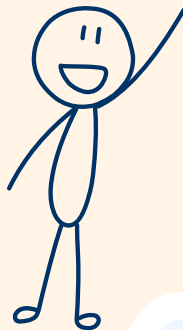
Better understood and managed emotions



Children said working with the practitioners helped them to understand and manage their emotions.

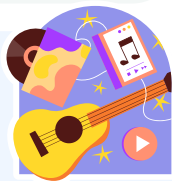
One child said that they could now manage their anger well.

Participation in school improved



Some children attended school more regularly after practitioners spoke to school staff to help them understand how to support the children.

Felt motivated to explore interests and hobbies



Children said practitioners encouraged them to try new things to find hobbies they enjoyed. Some said this support helped them discover their interests.

Things are better in school. The school listened to [the practitioner] and some teachers are now better. I have support teacher in school now.

-Isla, Elverton



What happens next?

Continuing the use of Prevention and Diversion Assessment Tool

YJS Practitioners will continue to use the PDAT when they start working with children.

Why is that?

Because this research has shown that the way practitioners are working with children, helping them meet their needs and pursue their interests is working well.

What is different about their work now?

In the past, assessment forms were not made keeping in mind what would work for children to meet their goals. The new form thinks about children's needs as can be seen from its positive impact on children.



The full report includes detailed recommendations on how to make the Prevention and Diversion Assessment Tool even better, including creative strategies used by practitioners.