

Acknowledgements

With thanks to the following organisations for their review:

Barton Moss Secure Care Centre

Catch 22

Cheshire East NHS Trust (CAMHS)

Department for Education

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMI Probation)

Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)

Kent Youth Offending Team

Kingston-Upon-Hull Youth Offending Team

London Probation Trust

Lucy Faithfull Foundation

Magistrates Association

Medway Secure Training Centre

National Offender Management Service (MAPPA and ViSOR unit)

National Offender Management Service (Commissioning Analysis, Scenarios and Modelling Unit)

Newcastle University (Public Health Research)

Norfolk Youth Offending Team

Offender Health Research Network

Public Health England

South Tyneside Youth Offending Team

Sunderland Youth Offending Team

Tees Valley (YMCA)

The Royal College for Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT)

Victim Support

West Berkshire Youth Offending Team

West Midlands Police (Integrated Offender Management Team)

YJ Speech and Language Therapists Network

1. Introduction

1.1 AssetPlus and the purpose of this guidance

AssetPlus is a comprehensive end-to-end assessment and planning framework for use with children and young people across England and Wales by youth offending teams (YOTs) and the secure estate. It aims to identify strengths, needs, risks and issues and to facilitate the planning of appropriate interventions for young people who have offended or are at risk of offending, both in community and custody.

The purpose of this guidance is to assist users of AssetPlus with its correct and intended application.

This guidance is aimed at practitioners working in the youth justice system who need to undertake assessments and plan interventions for young people. In addition, this guidance is also for their managers, both at a strategic and operational level, who need to be familiar with AssetPlus in order to support or advise their staff using this framework. AssetPlus guidance will be used by colleagues working in the YJB Placement Service, as existing placement documentation and processes have been incorporated into AssetPlus. It will also be of wider use to a number of other parties that have a vested interest in understanding specific aspects of youth justice assessment and planning such as courts, the police, the Probation Service and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation.

This guidance replaces a number of former YJB guidance documents:

- YJB Asset Guidance (including guidance on Risk of Serious Harm, Vulnerability Management Plans and Risk Management Plans)
- YJB Onset Guidance
- YJB Placement Information Form (PIF) Guidance
- YJB Bail Package Recommendation Guidance.

The guidance does not cover:

- the background of the AssetPlus framework development and its rationale,
- foundation training in assessment and planning,
- AssetPlus training materials,
- specific technical or case management system guidance; and,
- guidance on specialist or local assessment tools that are not included within the scope of the new framework.

This guidance should be used in conjunction with other documents, most notably:

- YJB Case Management Guidance,
- YJB National Standards for Youth Justice Services,
- YJB National Protocol for Case Responsibility,
- YJB Case management and sentence planning (for the secure estate)¹,
- the AssetPlus model and rationale documents,
- AssetPlus training materials,
- case management system user manuals; and,
- HMI Probation Case Assessment Guidance 2014².

This guidance does not constitute legal advice; it cannot account for every local variance and does not override professional judgement.

If you believe that any areas of guidance are missing or are unclear then please contact assessment@yjb.gsi.gov.uk.

1.2 The nature of assessment in a youth justice context

Assessment informs a range of activities within YOTs and secure establishments and aims to make sense of an individual's behaviour in the context of their unique circumstances. It can inform predictions about future behaviours and safety and well-being, aid professional judgement and guide decisions and actions. Youth justice practitioners should strive for excellence in delivering high quality assessments and plans with all children and young people that they work with.³

Within the specific context of youth justice, the key tasks in assessment are:

- **Collating information from a range of sources**

Information should be collated, and verified, from a range of cross-referenced sources in order to inform the assessment and enable practitioners to understand the young person's behaviours and circumstances. Sources should include the young person, their parents/carers and other relevant agencies such as children's services, health, social care and education providers.

- **Recording information**

Records should be clear and consistent to enable information to be accessed quickly and to promote accountability within the organisation.

¹ For a further list on related guidance documents please see Appendix 1.

² HMI Probation website - [Inspecting Youth Offending Work](#)

³ [Youth Justice Board Case Management Guidance \(2014\)](#)

- **Analysing information**

Assessment must go beyond merely describing facts in order to move towards an understanding of a young person's situation and the reasons for their offending/anti-social behaviour. Analysis will also inform judgements about likely future behaviours, risks and concerns regarding a young person's safety and well-being.

- **Judging and/or predicting future behaviours**

The gathered and verified information should be used to understand and explain the young person's behaviour and judge the likelihood and impact of future criminality, future harmful behaviours and potential adverse outcomes for a young person's safety and well-being. These judgements and predictions include statistical information about the likelihood of certain behaviours occurring, e.g. reconviction. Descriptions of the behaviours and adverse outcomes in terms of what might happen, when, who may be affected and imminence of adverse outcomes or behaviours are also produced.

- **Presenting conclusions**

The results of assessments need to be formally presented in pre-sentence reports to courts, reports for youth offender panels, additional assessments and when sharing information with other external bodies such as Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA). Conclusions drawn should be based on the information and evidence gathered.

- **Sharing information**

The assessment and plan should be shared with a young person, their parents/carers, and where necessary with staff in the organisation and partner organisations or agencies.

- **Reviewing assessments**

Information should be reviewed at six monthly intervals and more frequently if there is a significant change in the young person's circumstances. At the review stage, records should be updated accordingly.

- **Transferring information**

One of the primary audiences for assessments and plans are staff in other organisations, in particular where they subsequently take responsibility for managing the case. The assessment has to stand alone and be meaningful for any subsequent reader.

AssetPlus is the YJB approved assessment tool and is mandated under YJB National Standards for Youth Justice Services for young people subject to **out-of-court disposals** (Youth Cautions and Youth Conditional Cautions) and **community or custodial court orders**. Although not compulsory, it is also recommended that AssetPlus is used for prevention and triage cases.

1.3 How to use this guidance

The guidance will cover the following for each section of the AssetPlus framework:

- Purpose

The **purpose** states the key objectives of the section in the context of the framework.

- Overview

The **overview** highlights the key areas in the section.

- Section guidance

The **section guidance** gives a comprehensive account of what should be considered in completing each question within the section.

The following table/icons have also been used to indicate specific guidance themes where they occur in the framework:

Table 1: AssetPlus guidance tables and icons

TABLE/ICON	INDICATES	DESCRIPTION
	Question	This denotes a question in the framework
	Alert	Relates to flags in the framework that intend to alert the user to a particular fact or circumstance.
Further exploration		Additional question(s) prompted by a “yes” answer to a trigger question indicating that further exploration of a particular area is required.
Practice Point		Highlights good practice or important practice suggestions
Definition or example		A statement of the meaning of a term or an illustration of key points through the use of examples.
Research		References research that is related to the relevant area of AssetPlus.
Quality Assurance		Draws attention to areas that can be used as quality assurance points or where quality assurance is required.

The following should also be considered:

- This guidance cannot take account of every local definition or circumstance that occurs across the youth justice sector. Lists of examples are not exhaustive, but based on what is most likely. Professional judgement should be used to identify or evidence relevant assessment information where it is not covered in this guidance document.
- The presentation and functionality of the AssetPlus framework will vary between youth justice case management systems, therefore there are few references to specific IT guidance. For further guidance on system specific functionality or queries users should consult their case management system user manuals and system guidance.
- Where a question has been previously explained in the guidance the supporting text will not be repeated at every re-occurrence of that same question. Instead a reference to the corresponding guidance will be given.
- AssetPlus questions are not numbered so readers will need to navigate through this document using the section and sub-section headings.

Finally, youth justice professionals who will be conducting assessments and producing plans, using AssetPlus, will come from a variety of backgrounds and have varying job titles which are not possible to continuously cover in this guidance document. Therefore, the term ‘practitioner’ is generically used to address the users of AssetPlus.