

Explanations and Conclusions: Understanding Offending Behaviour

Practice Guide

Explaining behaviour to date

This section looks at understanding and explaining the child or young person's offending/anti-social behaviour so far.

It presents previous offences/anti-social behaviour on a graph and overlays this with details from elsewhere in the framework, such as:

- significant life events (entered during **Information Gathering**)
- interventions and sentences (from the **Core Record**)
- contact with services (also from the **Core Record**)

Reflecting on the graph should help you answer subsequent questions about the interconnections and interactions between different factors in a child or young person's life at different points. It can help you identify not only periods of offending but also when and why there are lulls/periods of desistance.

Please see Appendix 1 for an example of how to complete the first question in this section of Asset+.

Rating future desistance factors

The second part of this section looks towards the future and requires you to compare the different factors in a child or young person's life that might promote or hinder their desistance from offending. It recognises that there will often be competing pressures, motives and incentives in a child or young person's life and that these will fluctuate over time.

Initially you should reflect on your analysis of their past offending and try to identify one or two secondary goals that the child or young person is pursuing through their offending behaviour and what primary goods this is enabling them to obtain.

What needs or goals is the young person trying to achieve through offending or antisocial behaviour?

The Good Lives Model (Appendix 2) suggests that people pursue secondary goals, such as friendships or work, as a means to achieve primary human goods. Children or young people who offend may sometimes find it difficult to achieve these goods

through pro-social means and therefore may seek secondary goals that are problematic. For example, a young person achieving a sense of competence through developing offending skills rather than through engagement in education, training or work.

Please see Appendix 3 for an example of how to complete the question in this section about what needs/goals the child or young person is trying to achieve through their offending behaviour.

After you have identified what needs/goals the child or young person is trying to achieve through their offending behaviour you are asked to rate how influential each desistance (for and against) factor is to the child or young person's future behaviour.

If these factors are changeable you should record/rate these with a focus on what you expect to happen in the short-term.

You must ensure that the ratings given reflect the influence of the factor on previous periods of offending/desistance and they have picked up on changes in circumstances.

Please see Appendix 4 for desistance factor rating definitions and for an example of how to complete the question in this section that asks you to give reasons for the ratings you have given.

Appendix 1

Practice Example

Explanations and Conclusions: Understanding Future Behaviour Behaviour So Far: Interconnections and Interactions between Factors

- Review information collected in the quadrants in relation to the young person and his/her circumstances. Also consider any information available from other relevant assessments (e.g. AIM, specialist assessments where completed).

Taking account of this, analyse how all of these factors interact to explain the young person's offending and behaviour (*Consider: long-term pressures that could have contributed to him/her being susceptible to involvement in offending/ASB; any lulls/periods of non-offending/lack of involvement in ASB; specific situations in which the young person avoided offending when the opportunity/pressure was there*).

What you need to remember when answering this question: you need to link the event to the child or young person's behaviour.

Event

In his early childhood Billy was exposed to a number of adverse childhood experiences (i.e. domestic violence, physical abuse and neglect). Being exposed to adverse childhood experiences has impacted on Billy's social, emotional and behavioural development; this is evidenced in his school records and by the number of managed moves he has been subjected to.

Impact on
behaviour

Adverse childhood experiences have affected Billy's development of self (identity) and self esteem. Difficult relationships within the family home are likely to be a contributing factor in Billy choosing to spend increasing amounts of time in the local area, away from significant caregivers and seeking acceptance from a pro-criminal peer group.

Billy has not had a positive male role model in his life and appears to have picked up negative traits from the males he has been exposed to. He likes to be in control, have power and resorts to violence and manipulation to get what he wants.

Research shows that children who are exposed to chaotic and/or abusive homes struggle to contain negative emotions later in life, as they missed out on learning more sophisticated skills to manage them (in socially appropriate ways) in their early years. In keeping with research, it is evident from school records and his offending behaviour that Billy struggles to regulate his emotions and that his learnt problem solving strategy is aggression.

The transition from primary to secondary education appears significant. Shortly after he started secondary school Billy began coming to the attention

of the Neighbourhood Policing Team for committing acts of anti-social behaviour on the estate in which he lives.

The year after Billy started secondary school his step-dad re-entered into a relationship with mum. It is then that Billy began been reported as 'missing' and his cannabis use escalated.

A period of stability and desistance was achieved when Billy was the subject of a 9 month Referral Order in 2019; however, once statutory services withdrew support his behaviour deteriorated and contextual safeguarding concerns re-emerged.

Unanswered questions: *Identify any areas of uncertainty or any unanswered questions e.g. are there any aspects of his/her behaviour that are still difficult to explain? Is there any information which does not 'fit' with your main explanation or understanding of the behaviour?*

- Who is Billy with when he is reported missing? Why won't he disclose this information?

- Were statutory services involved in 2017 when the family lived in North Yorkshire?

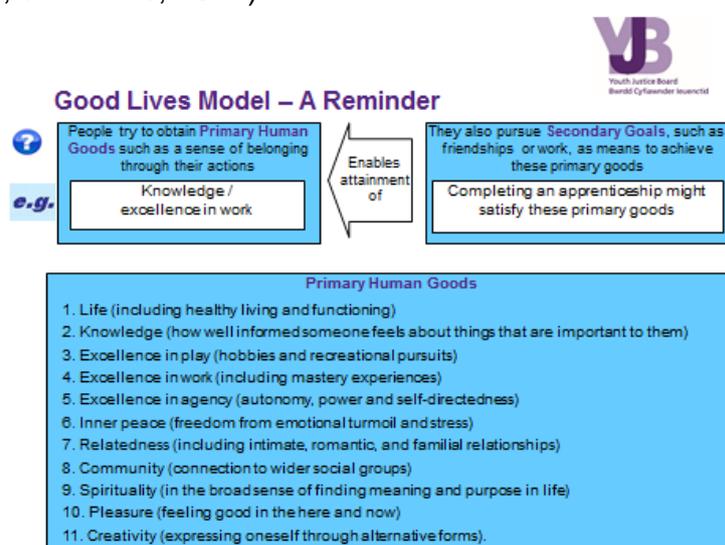
Appendix 2

The Good Lives Model

The Good Lives Model (GLM) is a strengths based approach to offender rehabilitation which aims to promote an individual's aspirations and plans for a more meaningful and personally fulfilling life (Ward, 2010).

According to the GLM, all individuals have needs and aspirations and seek 'primary human goods' which are likely to lead to psychological wellbeing if achieved. Eleven primary goods have been defined: life, knowledge, excellence in play, excellence in work, excellence in agency, inner peace, friendship/relatedness, community, spirituality, pleasure and creativity. Secondary goods are activities that individuals engage in, in order to achieve primary goods e.g. running may serve as the secondary means by which to meet the need for excellence in play. The desire to achieve primary goods is normal; however, the way in which some individuals try to meet these needs is maladaptive and they harm others in the process. This is often due to a lack of internal or external resources to meet their needs in a more pro-social manner (Willis, Yates, Gannon and Ward, 2012). For example, harmful sexual behaviour can sometimes be the secondary means by which to meet the need for inner peace or friendship/relatedness.

In order to reduce reoffending and help individuals achieve a satisfying life without harming others, the GLM views intervention as an activity that should build capabilities, strengths, opportunities and resources in individuals. The starting point in helping individuals to achieve their primary goods in pro-social ways is to help them understand their conceptualisation of what constitutes a good life. This is achieved through asking questions about the individual's core commitments in life and their valued day-to-day activities and experiences, and identifying the goals and values underlying their offending. The next stage is to collaboratively formulate a good lives plan with the individual to identify secondary goods that can satisfy their primary goods in socially acceptable ways. Individualised intervention then focuses on building internal capacity and skills, and building external resources and supports to successfully implement the good lives plan and address any dynamic risk factors that might block fulfilment of the plan (Purvis, Ward, and Willis, 2011).



Appendix 3

Explanations and Conclusions: Understanding Future Behaviour

Factors Affecting Desistance

- What needs/goals is the young person trying to achieve through offending / Anti Social Behaviour?

Being accepted by a pro criminal peer group has enabled Billy to achieve a sense of belonging.

Billy uses substances to block out his emotions, in an attempt to find inner peace.

Billy identifies crime as work ('graft') and believes that he is skilled and competent at what he does (excellence in work).

Appendix 4

Desistance factor rating definitions

Definition – Desistance factor ratings

Potential: Factors not necessarily associated with previous offending or desistance, and which are not currently occurring, but might feasibly occur in the future.

Weak: Factors which have a slight or occasional link to offending or desistance.

Moderate: Factors which are sometimes associated with either offending or desistance.

Strong: Factors which are clearly and directly associated with each occurrence of either offending or desistance.

Give reasons for the ratings, particularly where a factor (either for or against desistance) has been identified as 'strong'. E.g. young person has specific reason or motivation to stay out of trouble, deeply entrenched problem, young person has little control over the factor etc.

FOR

Engagement is a 'potential' factor because Billy is yet to demonstrate a commitment to his Court Order.

Education is a 'moderate' factor because Billy's offending increased in frequency when he was on a fixed term exclusion.

Against

Step-dad is a 'strong' factor because Billy's offending increases in frequency and seriousness when he is present in the family home.

Thinking and behaviour is a 'strong' factor because each crime reflects Billy's inability to regulate his emotions and release anger in socially acceptable ways.