



West Sussex Youth Justice Service

Guidance for Working with Children who Commit Harmful Sexual Behaviour

2021



1. General Principals

- 1.1 No member of staff or volunteer working with West Sussex Youth Justice Service (YJS) will be asked to undertake work with this group of children unless they have stated they are happy to do so. If a member of staff or volunteer states they are unhappy to work with children who engage in harmful sexual behaviours (HSB) or sexual offences, this will be accepted. As such these cases cannot be allocated in the usual manner.
- 1.2 Those staff who want to work with children who have committed HSB or sexual offences will receive appropriate training and support. They will be part of the YJS HSB Community of Practice (CoP) and attend dedicated specialist meetings and training when required. This meeting will be co-facilitated by Jane Willis from Consultation Assessment Treatment Service (CATS).
- 1.3 Given the nature of this type of offending the majority of children who commit HSB will be co-worked for the duration of their disposal. Exceptions will be given to those cases where the intervention will be undertaken by another specialist service e.g. Apple Orchard/ CATS or for those longer-term Orders, in their final stages, where the HSB intervention has been completed.
- 1.4 West Sussex YJS has staff trained in AIM3 assessments and these will be undertaken along with the AssetPlus Assessment. It is accepted that the AIM 3 assessment takes a minimum of 6 weeks to complete and so in these cases the local guidance of National Standards and intervention contact levels may need to be suspended in order to complete the assessment.
- 1.5 All children who are identified as Registered Sex Offenders (RSO) must be referred to MAPPAs under the MAPPAs guidelines. Similarly all RSO's must also be referred via the Complex Safeguarding procedures for multi-agency oversight and the YJS High-Risk Case Register for additional managerial oversight whilst subject to YJS intervention.

2. Out of Court Disposals (OOCDS)

- 2.1 If a child with a sexual offence is referred to the YJS for an OOCDS, the case should be highlighted by the Police Administrator to the Court and Initial Assessment Team Manager to be allocated outside of the normal allocation processes.
- 2.2 An AIM3 assessment or screening may be considered alongside the locally developed OOCDS assessment and planning tool. It does not have to be the same member of staff who completes both assessments, however if there are two people completing the assessment's they must share information with each other. Following completion of the AIM3 assessment or screening, consideration must be given to a referral to the Consultation, Assessment and Treatment Service (CATS) for consultation or intervention delivery.
- 2.3 A Youth Conditional Caution should be considered for those children who commit offences which are deemed more serious in nature or for sexual offences with aggravating features.

3. Bail and Remand

- 3.1 For those children who have yet to enter a guilty plea at Court, including those who are subject to a Bail Supervision and Support (BSS) Programme and those are Remanded to Youth Detention Accommodation (RYDA), limited HSB intervention may be undertaken to manage

their risk in the community. However, this intervention will need be tailored to ensure Court processes are not jeopardised in anyway. The YJS will consider the use of additional external controls and monitoring for public protection purposes in these circumstances.

- 3.2 Once the child has been convicted, a specialist assessment which may include an AIM3 assessment or screening will be undertaken to inform sentencing. The bail or remand programme the child is subject to will be reviewed by the YJS case manager, and where appropriate the secure estate case manager, to ascertain if a more bespoke intervention package to address their HSB will be delivered to manage risk between the period of the finding of guilt and sentence.

4. Pre-Sentence Reports (PSR)

- 4.1 Where a child pleads guilty or is found guilty of a HSB offence, the Court Duty Officer will advise the Court that a minimum of a 6-week adjournment period will be required to complete an AIM3 assessment. Where Court adjournment time allows for an AIM3 assessment or screening to be completed, this will be used to assist the preparation of the PSR, the determination of risk classification and the nature of intervention that will be required to reduce HSB risk. Where appropriate consultation support will be sought from CATS if they have not previously been involved. If CATS have previously completed an AIM3 assessment or are already involved with the child, their contribution will sought in regard to the PSR process and sentence proposal.
- 4.2 Where a child is at risk of a custodial sentence, contact will be made with the secure estate providers via the national Youth Custody Service (YCS) to establish the most suitable placement to ensure the delivery of HSB work whilst the child is in custody.

5. Referral Orders

- 5.1 Referral Order initial panels may have to operate outside local and national practice standards, (20 working days for contract to be agreed following Court hearing) when an AIM3 assessment needs to be undertaken. That is, unless there is already an AIM3 assessment completed prior to sentence or in some cases completed by another agency. In these cases, the assessment will be used to inform the Referral Order Report for the initial panel and it may be possible to adhere to local practice standards. Alternatively, if it is felt appropriate to hold an initial panel within local and national practice standard guidelines, this will take place and consideration will be given to their being a requirement in the contract for the child to engage in an AIM3 assessment. Where this course of action has been taken, a review panel will be held once the AIM3 assessment has been completed so the contract can be reviewed and amended as required.
- 5.2 The panel members will have the usual panel report, but this will be enhanced by the findings from the AIM3 assessment to allow them to develop the most appropriate contract with the child and their parent or carer. Depending on the assessment this contract could include compulsory attendance for treatment with CATS, hence the need to wait for the AIM3 assessment to be completed.
- 5.3 Specially convened panels will be organised for children convicted of sexual offences. These are likely to take place outside of local and national practice standards. Community volunteers and panel advisors will be trained to work with those children convicted of sexual offences. Ongoing panels such as reviews, breach, final panels will also be convened specifically to oversee these cases.

- 5.4 The relevant Team Manager may decide home visits are not to be undertaken due to the risk to staff or the possibility of allegations being made against staff. In these cases, the Team Manager in agreement with the Case Manager can suspend the requirement of one home visit per month.

6. Community Court Orders and Custodial Licenses

- 6.1 All community Court Orders and licences will operate under the same general principles highlight in section 1.
- 6.2 As with Referral Orders it maybe necessary to operate outside of local and national practice standards with regard to home visits, both in terms of monthly visits and in the case of licenses, a home visit within 5 days of release.
- 6.3 If it was not possible to complete an AIM3 assessment prior to sentence as the adjournment period did not allow this, an AIM3 assessment will be completed post sentence to inform the risk classification and intervention planning. Where possible and if appropriate, these will be completed with or in consultation with CATS. It is accepted not all cases, specifically those with a low severity level, will require the oversight or support of ATS.
- 6.4 Where appropriate, children may be required to engage in a compulsory programme of intervention with CATS as part of the requirements of their Court Order or licence. If it is assessed as appropriate, YJS staff will provide the HSB intervention without the oversight or support of CATS. This is mostly likely to be in cases where the sexual offences are of a lower severity.

7. Custodial Sentences

- 7.1 As indicated in section 4, the YJS will work with the Youth Custody Service prior to sentence to facilitate a child being placed in a secure establishment that can provide the necessary HSB intervention. West Sussex YJS will work in conjunction with the secure estate provider to ensure the HSB intervention is delivered whilst the child is in custody. Sentence planning will include resettlement work where this is appropriate or transition planning where the young person will be transferred to the National Probation Service (NPS).

Review/Contacts/References	
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