

Voluntary Aftercare Programme Guidance

Effective Date: March 2023

Review Date: March 2025

Owner: Youth Justice Service Manager

Background

- 1.1 Some children and young people leaving the Youth Justice Service have ongoing needs and continue to be at risk of offending. Other services (Education, CSC, Family Service etc) may be involved and their intervention may be enough to meet the needs of the child or young person. However, for some individuals there may be no service currently supporting them, or the relationship with their YJS Case Manager/interventions worker may be key to preventing them from re-offending. This guidance outlines the circumstances in which the YJS can offer a Voluntary Aftercare Programme (VAP), and the standards for delivering such a programme.

Eligibility

- 2.1 A VAP may be offered to a child/young person at the discretion of a Case Manager, with the agreement of the Team Manager / Advanced Practitioner where, at the end of an Order / Out of Court Disposal:
- The child/young person remains in need of support and remains at risk of offending.
 - There is not another obvious professional to take a lead on providing support.
 - They are waiting to be allocated a mentor/transfer to another service and have agreed to ongoing support from the YJ Case Manager to support them with this transition.
- Or**
- The relationship between the Case Manager and the child/young person is a protective factor for the young person; reducing their vulnerability and assisting them to stay out of trouble.
- 2.2 A VAP should always be considered for children/young people who are identified as part of the IOM (Integrated Offender Manager) cohort, and this can be discussed at an IOM Case Review Meeting. The Case Manager should proactively encourage the child/young person to engage in a VAP.
- 2.3 Where the child/young person is starting a new ETE placement and requires additional support; ETE advisors are able support children and young people for up to 6 weeks to assist with a smooth transition. A case manager does not need to stay involved during this time. Where the support is likely to extend beyond

this time, a case manager should remain allocated to work with the child/young person.

Duration and Contact

- 3.1 A VAP should not exceed 6 months in duration.
- 3.2 Children/young people should be encouraged to maintain contact with an allocated worker, either face-to-face or by telephone at a frequency identified within an intervention plan which should be co-created with the child/young person.
- 3.3 The case manager should proactively make contact at least fortnightly. This does not need to be a face-face appointment.

Assessment, Planning and Referrals

- 4.1 A review assessment (e.g., AssetPlus, OOC review) should be completed when the order finishes to mark the end of the order and the start of the VAP. This should be reviewed every 12 weeks; or sooner if there is a significant event. Planning to address the health and safety of the child/young person and others should continue and reviewed in line with locally agreed timescales, and management oversight should continue as per local policy. A new intervention plan should be co-created with the child/young person and reviewed in line with local policy. This should be reviewed every 3 months (minimum).
- 4.2 Referrals to other agencies and within the Children and Family Services Department's should be made in the same way as if the child/young person were being supervised as part of a statutory order.

Coreplus and Recording

- 5.1 Children/young peoples should continue to have timely and accurate records inputted onto Coreplus in line with agency policy. Event entries can be recorded as **Contact Voluntary**.
- 5.2 Children/young people should be clearly allocated to a lead worker and a "Voluntary Aftercare Programme" should be indicated on Coreplus. A VAP may be held by a worker within either a locality or the interventions team and oversight of the case will be completed by the Team Manager who has responsibility for the team where the worker is based (for VAP following statutory Orders) or by the Manager / Advanced Practitioner who provided oversight for the Out of Court Disposal preceding the VAP.

Closure of Voluntary Aftercare Cases

- 6.1 Children/young people on a VAP should be closed after a maximum of six months with an appropriate exit plan agreed. At the end of the VAP the relevant assessment should be reviewed for closure.

- 6.2 A VAP may be closed prior to the six-month period at the discretion of the Case Manager after discussion with the Team Manager / Advanced Practitioner with oversight of the work that is happening. Children/young people should be fully involved in planning what will happen during a VAP, how long the support will be needed and what the exit plan will consist of. They should be part of any discussions regarding the closure of the VAP and be in agreement of this happening.
- 6.3 Upon closure of a VAP, children/young people and their parents/carers/supporters should be informed of what services are available to them and where they can go/who they should contact should they need further support.