



## What do YOU think? – Guidance



This form is to be completed by the young person. It can be used either in a paper format or electronically (for example, commercially available interactive software packages).

### Purpose of *What do YOU think?*

This form is intended to:

- give the young person a clear and explicit opportunity to state his/her views;
- ensure that the assessment takes the young person's views into account;
- highlight issues that s/he is worried about of which you may not yet be aware;
- facilitate a comparison between your assessment and the young person's own perspective.

### Content and format

The form mirrors the order of the sections in the core profile. It will help you when comparing your assessment with the views expressed by the young person in this document.

Most of the questions are written in the third person ('some young people . . .') and the young person is asked to say how much the descriptions are like him/her. This format was chosen because, when dealing with sensitive personal issues, it is less threatening than asking the questions directly.

As well as these very specific questions, there are also some more 'open' questions where the young person can write in anything they choose.

### How to use *What do YOU Think?*

The *What Do YOU Think?* form needs to be seen in the context of your relationship with the young person and the process of engaging with him/her. If used appropriately, it can assist in developing the relationship and can help the young person to see that you are genuinely interested in his/her views.

*National Standards for Youth Justice* (2000) allow for some flexibility in the use of the self-assessment form. It is recognised that it may not always be appropriate to use this form at the pre-sentence report stage and sometimes it could be used more effectively at the start of supervision. It will be for you to decide on the best time to use it in each individual case. This will depend on factors such as the young person's age, literacy skills, the amount of time you have available, whether this is your first contact with him/her, or whether you already know him/her quite well.

Some young people might find the form difficult to complete and will require some assistance. It is then particularly important to encourage the young person to express his/her own opinions and not just to say what s/he thinks you want to hear.

If the young person is in secure accommodation, please ask him/her to complete *What do YOU think?* on the basis of his/her situation before going in to the institution.

The self-assessment can be repeated at any point and can show how the young person's perception of his/her situation may have changed over time. Using *What do YOU think?* at the end of an intervention would also provide a useful indicator of change.