



Core Profile – Guidance



These notes give guidance on the questions in the *Core Profile* which require particular consideration.

Personal details

Unique ID

This refers to a unique identification number for each young person. This will be generated by the Yot's electronic case management system.

Police National Computer number

This is essential for any future re-conviction studies. It should appear on the police charge sheet and on any list of pre-convictions that come from the police.

Address/Postcode

This refers to the young person's current address or the address to which s/he plans to return if in custody.

Ethnic classification

This is the classification used for the 2001 census. The categories are quite broad and some young people may wish to classify themselves more specifically (e.g. 'Welsh' rather than just 'British'). In addition, the categories do not easily accommodate certain groups (e.g. travellers). In such cases, please tick the box that most closely applies to him/her and use the space next to the 'Any other' box to give additional information. Where there is a significant difference between your view and that of the young person, please provide details.

Information used for assessment

Please tick all boxes that apply. It is important for other people who may pick up the case to know what information your assessment was based on and to be aware of any significant information that was not available to you when completing *Asset*. This can also highlight issues about information that is routinely unavailable to Yots.

Common Assessment Framework

Further details about using information from the Common Assessment Framework in completing *Asset* can be found in *The Common Assessment Framework (CAF): Guidance for Youth Offending Teams*, available from the YJB website.

Offence details

Primary index offence – Seriousness score

The Youth Justice Board's seriousness score relates to the most serious of the current offence/s. It is a 1-8 scale and is not the same as the gravity score currently used by the police. A copy is attached at Appendix B.

Case stage

Review includes any assessments completed during the course of an order.

Other might include a full assessment for a Final Warning case (where necessary) or a specific sentence report.

Victim/s

Specific targeted victim

This includes any victim who is chosen for a particular reason (e.g. because they belong to a particular group – for instance a particular ethnic or religious group) or because the young person has a grudge against them. The key issue here is not whether the victim was already known to the young person, but whether s/he was selected for a specific reason.

Vulnerable victim

This includes the elderly, people with disabilities and children younger (or much smaller) than him/her.

Repeat victim

This means more than one offence by the young person against the victim of the current offence/s.

Offence analysis

This section is entirely narrative and no scoring or rating is required. The headings below are intended to indicate the type and range of information needed for a thorough analysis, but they need not be followed rigidly.

Actions and intentions

These are not necessarily the same and it can be quite informative to explore the differences between them. If a young person intended to carry out a very violent act, for example, but actually committed a much more minor offence it would be important to identify the mediating factors which prevented him/her from fulfilling the original intention. Conversely, if the outcome of an offence was far more serious than s/he had intended it would be essential to explore the reasons for this. The absence of any clear intentions would also be an interesting issue to consider.

The relationship between his/her intentions and actions will also be important when it comes to completing the 'Indicators of serious harm to others' section (p.24 of the *Core Profile*) which asks you to distinguish between behaviour that resulted in harm being caused and behaviour which indicates intention to cause harm.

Outcomes and consequences

As well as looking at the outcomes and consequences for the young person, you should consider the outcome for the victim/s. Consider both the immediate and the longer-term

consequences of the offence/s for them. The consequences of the offending for the young person and his/her family should also be considered here.

Reasons and motives

These are often linked, but are not necessarily the same. 'Reasons' can include the external events or circumstances which act as triggers for an offence and factors which act as disinhibitors. 'Motives' tend to be more internal and personal (e.g. attitudes, beliefs and desires. It will be particularly important, for example, to be specific about any racially motivated offending).

Again, the apparent absence of any reason or motive for offending could be significant. Seemingly random or unpredictable behaviour may cause considerable concern.

Patterns of offending behaviour

This sets the current offence/s into the broader context of his/her patterns of offending behaviour and any previous periods of desistance. Consider any similarities or differences between current and previous offences and, in particular, whether there is any evidence of increasing frequency or seriousness of offending behaviour.

Criminal history

Time since last conviction or pre-court disposal

If s/he has been previously sentenced or received another disposal at any time within the last three months, tick the 'three months' option. If it occurred in between three and six months ago, e.g. five months ago, tick 'six months', and so on. If s/he has no previous convictions, tick N/A.

Previous disposals

Other disposals

This includes fines, compensation and discharges, etc.

Any other previous contact with Yot?

This refers to any contact not already referred to in this section (e.g. intervention by a Youth Inclusion and Support Panel, involvement with Splash or Youth Inclusion Programme initiatives).

Care history

Accommodated by voluntary agreement with parents (s20 Children Act 1989)?

Once a young person who is accommodated under s20 goes into custody, he or she is no longer looked after by the local authority (although the authority may retain responsibility for providing a leaving care service, see next paragraph). In such cases, *Asset* may need to be updated after the sentence to reflect this change in status.

Is the young person an 'eligible' or 'relevant' child?

These two questions are designed to clarify whether a young person is entitled to leaving care services provided by the local authority under the provisions of the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000. If so, the entitlement continues when he or she is remanded or sentenced to custody: it is therefore important to obtain accurate information from Children's Services about a young person's status.

Any other referrals to or contact with social services

This refers to care experiences not specifically listed (e.g. via Family Proceedings Court – s25 Children Act 1989). Involvement with social services in regard to other issues (such as a residence order) can also be included. In such cases, it is important to explain the reason for his/her contact with social services in the 'Details' box.

1. Living arrangements

Who has the young person been mostly living with over the last six months?

This question asks you to focus on the people with whom the young offender has mostly been living. Tick all the options that apply. If s/he is in custody, answer the question on the basis of their living arrangements six months prior to this.

No fixed abode

This includes those who are homeless, living on the streets, staying in night shelters or constantly moving between different friends' houses.

Unsuitable, does not meet his/her needs

Refers to physical conditions/facilities in the accommodation (e.g. amenities, safety, hygiene, personal space).

Living with known offender/s

Refers to people living within the same home/household/institution as the young person (*not* neighbours).

Disorganised/chaotic

Examples could include different people constantly moving in/out of the accommodation, living in a squat, or a young person unable to cope with the practical/domestic aspects of living alone.

Other problems

This can include anything else which you consider to be problematic (e.g. isolation, accommodation provides opportunities for offending, availability of drugs within house/home).

Rate the extent to which the young person's living arrangements are associated with the likelihood of further offending.

Examples of ratings of 1 or 2

- Accommodation is unsuitable and lacks basic facilities, but there is no clear link between this and the young person's offences which are mainly driving related.
- The young person's unhappiness with the living arrangements is one of several factors contributing to feelings of stress and frustration.

Examples of ratings of 3 or 4

- The young person lives with known offenders who are clearly involving or encouraging him/her in offending behaviour.
- The young person is living on the streets and is offending to survive.
- Accommodation is stable, but s/he is living with someone they have previously stolen from or assaulted.
- Living arrangements give the young person access to potential vulnerable victims (e.g. younger siblings).

2. Family and personal relationships

This section focuses on some of the key relationships in a young person's life and highlights situations where s/he may have lost contact with someone. The phrase 'in contact with' captures a variety of interactions, both positive and negative (e.g. personal contact, letters, phone calls and so on).

Evidence of family members or carers with whom the young person has been in contact over the last six months being involved in criminal activity

This question relates to family members or carers with whom the young person has recently had meaningful contact. One would therefore not include under this, for instance, a biological father who has an extensive criminal record if the young person is not in contact with him. Only tick 'yes' if a problem is current or has occurred within the past six months. If there were significant problems before this period which are no longer current you should tick 'no', although you may still wish to record some details in the evidence box.

Evidence of family members or carers with whom the young person has been in contact over the last six months being involved in heavy alcohol misuse

This question relates to family members or carers with whom the young person has recently had meaningful contact. One would therefore not include under this, for instance, a biological father who has been involved in alcohol misuse if the young person is not in contact with him. Only tick 'yes' if a problem is current or has occurred within the past six months. If there were significant problems before this period which are no longer current (e.g. parental alcohol misuse two or three years ago which has now ceased) you should tick 'no', although you may still wish to record some details in the evidence box.

Evidence of family members or carers with whom the young person has been in contact over the last six months being involved in drug or solvent misuse

This question relates to family members or carers with whom the young person has recently had meaningful contact. One would therefore not include under this, for instance, a biological father who has been involved in drug misuse if the young person is not in contact with him. Only tick 'yes' if a problem is current or has occurred within the past six months. If there were significant problems before this period which are no longer current (e.g. parental drug or solvent misuse two or three years ago which has now ceased) you should tick 'no', although you may still wish to record some details in the evidence box.

Significant adults fail to communicate with or show care/interest in the young person

This refers to people with whom the young person has recently had meaningful contact, but who show little care or concern (e.g. a step-parent who is not really interested in him/her or an absent parent who fails to communicate with him/her).

Experience of abuse

Tick 'yes' if you are aware of any experience of abuse, regardless of when it occurred. Give details in the evidence box of the type of abuse and of how long ago it happened. In some cases, this information will not be immediately available and may only be disclosed over time. It would be appropriate to use the 'Don't know' response in such a situation and then to update the form if any new information becomes available later on.

Witnessing other violence in family context

Tick 'yes' if you are aware of any experience of violence, regardless of when it occurred. Give details in the evidence box of the type of violence, including witnessing violence in the family context, and of how long ago it occurred. In some cases, this information will not be immediately available and may only be disclosed over time. It would be appropriate to use the 'Don't know' response in such a situation and then to update the form if any new information becomes available later on.

Significant bereavement or loss

This question is about the impact of loss on the young person rather than the event itself. A 'yes' response could be triggered by any incidence of bereavement or loss which continues to have a significant impact on his/her everyday life functioning, regardless of when the event actually occurred. A 'no' response could be given in cases where s/he has experienced loss, but the impact on his/her current life and situation is small.

Difficulties with care of his/her own children

This includes anything which makes it difficult for the young person to provide appropriate care and support for his/her own child (e.g. limited financial resources, his/her own emotional immaturity, lack of support networks). This question will not be relevant for most young people, in which case circle the N/A option.

Rate the extent to which the young person's family and personal relationships are associated with the likelihood of further offending.
Examples of ratings of 1 or 2

- The young person looks up to an older brother who is criminally active, but as yet there is no evidence of them offending together or of the brother trying to directly involve him/her in offending.
- Generally stable relationships, but occasional difficulties when the young person has contact with a particular member of the family.

Examples of ratings of 3 or 4

- There is a close family member who is criminally active and is involving him/her in offending.
- Supervision is inconsistent and parents/carers do not know where the young person goes or who s/he is with.
- The young person is offending to obtain attention from carers who show no interest in him/her.
- Combinations of problems present at the same time (e.g. one parent with a mental health problem and one who is criminally active).

3. Education, training and employment

The Youth Justice Board's *Key Elements of Effective Practice – Education, Training and Employment* (2002), states that assessments should draw on a range of evidence, including:

- educational records such as test/exam results, educational plans (in particular Statements of Educational Need and Personal Education Plans for young people in the care of the local authority), school/college reports, records of achievement/progress files;
- interviews/discussion with young people, their parents/carers and other professionals such as teachers/tutors;
- practitioner observation of the way in which a young person speaks, listens, reads, writes and approaches concepts related to number, time, directions etc.

All inputs to *Asset* should show evidence that such information has been sought and/or drawn upon. Where information is not available (e.g. during the summer holiday period) you may need to mark a 'don't know' response: reasons for marking a 'don't know' answer must be recorded in the evidence box with actions as to what is being done to acquire this information. Where there is an intervention with the young person, this section should be updated at a later point when more information has been sought.

Engagement in education, training or employment (ETE)

Is the young person of compulsory school age?

The statutory school leaving date is the last Friday in June, of the school year in which the young person reaches the age of 16.

How many hours of ETE are arranged each week?

(e.g. number of hours of home tuition arranged; number of contracted hours of employment)

How many hours of ETE is s/he currently engaged in/receiving each week?

This will often be less than the number of hours officially arranged (see above).

Is there evidence of non-attendance?

'Other non-attendance' may include ill-health, carers deciding to keep the young person away from school, lack of transport/poor accessibility, bullying in the workplace.

You may wish to use the evidence box to record the name of the young person's school, college or employer.

Educational attainment

Have special educational needs (SEN) been identified?

If there are concerns about possible SEN, but no definite identification by an educational psychologist or other qualified practitioner, you should tick 'no' although you may wish to give some details in the evidence box.

Other factors relating to engagement in ETE

Bullied/Bullies others

Bullying behaviour can include name-calling and teasing, physical violence, threats, and isolating individuals from group activities.

Rate the extent to which the young person's education, training and employment is associated with the likelihood of further offending.

Examples of ratings of 1 or 2

- Offending may sometimes be linked to non-attendance, but not consistently.
- There is an indirect link with offending where under-achievement at school contributes to low self-esteem which, in turn, may contribute to criminal activity.
- The young person's frustration at not being able to find work/training may contribute to occasional aggressive behaviour.
- Occasional minor offending at work/college/school.

Examples of ratings of 3 or 4

- Most of his/her offending occurs when s/he is not attending school/college/training/employment.
- The young person offends whilst on school premises and sees school as providing opportunities for offending.
- The young person thinks that getting a job is a waste of time because it won't pay as much as s/he could get from crime.
- The young person regularly uses work opportunities (e.g. access to certain people or resources) for offending.
- The young person lacks training/work, is persistently bored and offends to fill up the time.

4. Neighbourhood

Please give a brief description of the neighbourhood in which the young person spends most of their time.

You should include specific information (e.g. name of the area or estate) and/or a general description of the neighbourhood (e.g. rural area, largely occupied by young families or older people). This will help to set the context for the other questions in this section.

Obvious signs of drug dealing and/or usage

Police may be able to give details about areas known to have a high concentration of drug dealers or users. Other evidence includes equipment left in public places and houses/locations known to have frequent callers.

Lack of age-appropriate facilities

As well as referring to an absence of facilities, this could also include situations where facilities are available but most of the young people in the neighbourhood cannot access them (e.g. they are mostly used by people coming in from different areas whilst local people cannot afford to use them).

Rate the extent to which the young person's neighbourhood is associated with the likelihood of further offending.

Examples of ratings of 1 or 2

- Neighbourhood has a lot of social difficulties, but this is not the main reason for his/her offending.
- The young person commits offences in different areas, not just one particular neighbourhood.

Examples of ratings of 3 or 4

- All of the young person's offending occurs within the same neighbourhood.
- Many opportunities for offending in the area which seem attractive and profitable to him/her.

5. Lifestyle

Lack of age-appropriate friendships

This question is not about the number of friendships that s/he may have, but about whether s/he has any friends of his/her own age. Tick 'yes' if most of the young person's friends/associates are noticeably older or younger than him/her.

Associating with predominantly pro-criminal peers

This is not just about whether the young person knows people who have committed offences, as this will apply to many young people. The focus here is on whether the majority of his/her friends are involved in criminal activity and/or whether s/he spends most of her/his time with pro-offending peers.

Lack of non-criminal friends

Research suggests that having some law-abiding friends can be a significant factor in reducing offending, even where a young person may continue to associate with pro-criminal peers. An absence of non-criminal friends, therefore, is a significant cause for concern.

Participation in reckless activity

This refers to a broad range of activities, not just offending. It includes activities which are often done to get a 'buzz' or to impress friends, and are likely to place the young person and/or others at risk of physical injury (e.g. playing on railway lines, building sites or major roads, and racing cars around residential areas).

Inadequate legitimate personal income

This will depend on the age of the young person and the context in which they are living. For a young person in a family setting, consider issues around pocket money/allowance (e.g. are adults in the family able and/or willing to provide some allowance? Is this appropriate for his/her age? Is s/he treated the same as siblings?). If the young person is accommodated by the local authority, what provision is made for him/her in this regard? For an older young person living independently, the issues will be more about employment or access to benefits.

Rate the extent to which the young person's lifestyle is associated with the likelihood of further offending.

Examples of ratings of 1 or 2

- The young person is sometimes involved in reckless activity, but this does not usually involve offending.
- The young person has pro-criminal friends, but tends to offend alone rather than with the group.

Examples of ratings of 3 or 4

- All of the young person's offending occurs with a particular group of friends.
- The young person is offending to obtain money for a gambling habit.
- The young person is bored, has little to do and sees offending as a necessary way of getting some excitement in life.
- The young person is involving younger friends in offending.

6. Substance use

The focus of this section is on the young person's own attitudes and choices about substance use. The details in the table, therefore, should normally relate to occasions when s/he has used substances independently or with friends/associates. It does not need to include certain instances of use within a family context (e.g. moderate use of alcohol with meals at an appropriate age). If parents/carers are giving him/her *inappropriate* access to substances, however, this should be included (e.g. his/her first use of illegal drugs was with family members, adults allowing excessive alcohol use at a young age).

When addressing the issues in this section it may be helpful to re-emphasise to the young person that the purpose of the assessment is to get a picture of his/her life, pastimes and problems in order to know how best to help him/her stop offending. It is important for him/her to understand that information about substance use will be used within this context and *not* for instigating new criminal proceedings.

Decisions on when and how to discuss substance use with the young person will depend on his/her age and willingness to engage. It is advised that issues about tobacco, alcohol and solvents should be raised before moving on to illegal drug use. Within such a dialogue, the young person may then be more ready to disclose information about frequency and context of illegal drug use.

It is recognised, however, that some of this information will not always be disclosed (particularly at a first interview) or that the young person may not use some, or any, of the substances; each question in the section has a 'not known to have used' option to reflect this. If new information comes to light later on (e.g. during the course of supervision) the form can be updated to take account of this. The evidence box should then be used to explain whether changes to this section reflect a real difference in his/her pattern of substance use or the disclosure of new information.

Ever used refers to any substance use in the past, including experimental or one-off use.

Recent use refers to substance use which the young person regards as an ongoing aspect of his/her life. It is not necessarily referring to frequent use, but to something which is repeated on different occasions and which s/he remains amenable to doing again. A range of behaviour can therefore be included under this question (e.g. daily alcohol use or taking ecstasy when at a particular club).

Practices which put him/her at particular risk

Methods of substance use that place the young person at particular risk include injecting, sharing equipment and poly drug/alcohol use. Any occurrence of blackouts, overdosing or withdrawal symptoms will also be of significant concern.

Sees substance use as positive and/or essential to life

This is when the young person believes the 'benefits' of substance use outweigh the risks and problems associated with it.

Noticeably detrimental effect on education, relationships, daily functioning

Consider the effects of substance use on the following:

- education – attendance, concentration, attitudes/interest in school, goals/aims for the future;
- relationships – with family, friends, teachers, staff/other professionals;
- daily functioning – lifestyle, use of free time, health, finances (e.g. a young person going without food in order to have money for cigarettes).

Rate the extent to which the young person's substance use is associated with the likelihood of further offending.

Examples of ratings of 1 or 2

- Infrequent and/or minor offending linked to occasional substance use.

Examples of ratings of 3 or 4

- A 'yes' response to the question about offending to obtain money for substances.
- All his/her offending occurs whilst under the influence of substances.
- The young person's attitudes and willingness to experiment with substances increases the likelihood of him/her being found in possession of illegal drugs.

7. Physical health

A comprehensive assessment of the young person requires some consideration of his/her physical health and development. Health problems may have an adverse impact on many other aspects of his/her life, including educational and school experiences, peer group interactions, self-presentation and self-esteem.

Health needs will clearly vary according to age and gender and this needs to be borne in mind throughout the section. Consideration should also be given to any cultural or religious beliefs of the young person and his/her family which may affect health care.

Health condition which significantly affects everyday life functioning

This could include ongoing conditions such as epilepsy or diabetes, temporary conditions such as pregnancy or broken bones; mobility, sensory or communication impairments, or other illness or injury. The emphasis here is not on the nature of a condition, but on the impact which it has on his/her everyday life. Tick 'yes' if you feel that this is significant.

Physical immaturity/delayed development

This question refers to those whose physical development is visibly and substantially behind that of their peers.

Problems caused by not being registered with GP

Where this applies, please note the reasons in the evidence box.

Lack of access to other appropriate health care services (e.g. dentist)

Where this applies, please note reasons in evidence box.

Health put at risk through his/her own behaviour

This links with issues raised in the 'Substance use' section but also covers a broader range of behaviour, including behaviour caused by a lack of knowledge, a decision to ignore known consequences, or 'thrill seeking' behaviour. Some examples are given on the form. Others might include binge drinking or refusing to take medication as prescribed.

Rate the extent to which the young person's physical health is associated with the likelihood of further offending.

The links between physical health and offending behaviour will usually be indirect and consequently there will be a tendency towards lower ratings in this section. For example:

- a condition which leads to disruptive behaviour at school and possible exclusion;
- an impairment which makes it more difficult for him/her to find suitable work or training;
- the young person's frustration with a health problem contributes to aggressive behaviour;
- other negative effects (e.g. poor school attendance, low self-esteem).

8. Emotional and mental health

Mental and emotional well-being will be influenced by issues such as personal relationships and social environment as well as medical factors. Different cultural groups will vary in their views about what constitutes emotional well-being and this needs to be borne in mind. The following three factors, however, may provide a useful framework for understanding the young person's mental health needs within the context of his/her particular situation.

- **Events/circumstances**

Events which are unpredictable and which the young person feels they have no control over are likely to be particularly stressful. The research literature also makes a helpful distinction between 'normative' events which all young people experience at some time (e.g. peer pressure, puberty, changing from primary to secondary education) and 'non-normative' events which affect particular individuals at specific times (e.g. family breakdown, illness, bereavement, abuse). A young person facing a cluster of these events is more likely to have difficulties in managing the resulting emotions.

- **Support networks**

What help and support (either formal or informal) is available to the young person?

- **Coping abilities**

The young person's age, gender and maturity will all affect the range and type of coping strategies used. Some common approaches include 'problem-focused coping' (e.g. trying to remove or reduce the cause of the stress), 'emotion-focused coping' (e.g. trying to change the emotions associated with a problem) and 'withdrawal' (e.g. denying the existence of a problem). Young people will vary in the way that they perceive stressful situations and those who have a realistic understanding of a difficult situation will be better placed to cope with any ongoing stress. Having some sense of control will also help the young person to feel that s/he can cope.

Focusing on the connections and interactions between these three factors helps to ensure that assessment of the young person's emotional and mental health is rooted in the context of his/her ongoing life experiences.

This section may raise some issues which cannot be fully assessed here (e.g. issues about mental illness or suicide attempts). *Asset* should act as a 'trigger' to highlight areas where further specialist assessment may be required (e.g. the Youth Justice Board's standardised mental health assessment tool).

Coming to terms with significant past event/s

This question looks at the impact of different events on the young person's emotional well-being. It can include events affecting the young person directly and problems faced by family members, carers, or friends who have an impact on him/her. Some of the events will have been identified in earlier sections (e.g. abuse, loss). The focus here is not on the events themselves, however, but on the way in which they currently affect his/her thoughts and emotions. Tick 'yes' if there are thoughts and feelings that have a persistent and powerful impact on his/her everyday life.

Current circumstances

This question looks at the impact of current circumstances on the young person's emotional well-being. It can include circumstances affecting the young person directly and problems faced by family members, carers, or friends who have an impact on the young person. The focus here is not on the events themselves, however, but on the way in which they currently affect his/her thoughts and emotions. Tick 'yes' if there are thoughts and feelings that have a persistent and powerful impact on his/her everyday life.

Concerns about the future

This question looks at the impact of the young person's concerns about the future on their emotional well-being. Tick 'yes' if there are thoughts and feelings that have a persistent and powerful impact on his/her everyday life.

Has there been any formal diagnosis of mental illness?

If the answer is 'yes' it is essential to give as much information as possible in the evidence box. If there has been a formal diagnosis, please specify the nature of the illness, the particular symptoms that s/he experiences and details about any medication.

Any other contact with, or referrals to, mental health services?

If the answer is 'yes' it is essential to give as much information as possible in the evidence box. If you are aware of any previous referral to mental health services, please indicate when this occurred and the reasons for it. If the information is unavailable, please indicate this in the evidence box.

Are there indications that any of the following apply to the young person?

It is important to be clear about the wording of this section. It is not asking whether the young person has definitely harmed him/herself or attempted suicide. Instead, the question asks whether there are indications of psychological difficulties, self-harm or suicide attempts. In order to tick 'yes', you must have some information to denote difficulties in one or more of these areas. This does not necessarily mean having full details – a comment made by the young person or their carer, information from a GP or from a case record could all be indications. The key point is that a 'yes' response must be based on something tangible.

A 'no' response here does not necessarily mean that these issues are not relevant to him/her, but means that there is no evidence of them at the moment. If new information comes to light later on, the form can be updated to reflect this. The 'don't know' option might be appropriate in cases where you have an intuitive feeling that s/he has experienced difficulties in some of these areas, but where there are no other clear indications. It is a way of noting a concern which can be explored more fully later on.

S/he is affected by other emotional or psychological difficulties.

This could include phobias, hypochondria, eating or sleep disorders and obsessive compulsive behaviour. Suicidal thoughts and feelings which the young person has not yet acted on should be recorded under this question.

S/he has deliberately harmed her/himself.

If there are indications that s/he has self-harmed it is essential to give details in the evidence

box. Please say where the information has come from and how much weight you attach to it (e.g. do you think s/he is quite likely to have self-harmed or are you sure that this has happened?).

S/he has previously attempted suicide.

If there are indications that s/he has previously attempted suicide it is essential to give details in the evidence box. Please say where the information has come from and how much weight you attach to it (e.g. do you think s/he is quite likely to have attempted suicide or are you sure that this has happened?).

Rate the extent to which the young person's emotional and mental health is associated with the likelihood of further offending.

Examples of ratings of 1 or 2

- The young person tends to deal with emotional difficulties 'internally' rather than turning to anti-social or offending behaviour.

Examples of ratings of 3 or 4

- There is a direct link with symptoms of mental illness (e.g. offending due to hallucinations, delusions, hearing voices).
- The young person is struggling to cope with strong feelings of anger/hatred and is likely to take this out on other people.
- Offending happens at specific times (e.g. when s/he fails to take medication or misses appointments with psychiatrist).

9. Perception of self and others

S/he has difficulties with self-identity.

The purpose of this question is to highlight cases where a young person is experiencing particular difficulties in this regard (more so than the average adolescent).

Some of the common factors that may contribute to a poor or confused sense of self-identity are:

- a lack of knowledge of personal and family history (e.g. a young person subject to a care order who has little knowledge about his/her birth family);
- experience of discrimination;
- a feeling of cultural/social isolation;
- a very unstable or highly dysfunctional family background.

S/he has inappropriate self-esteem.

A young person's level of self-esteem may vary at different times and in different contexts. The question is not referring to this fairly typical situation, but is about identifying those young people who have a persistent and pervasive problem in this area.

Indicators of low self-esteem in young people may include:

- social isolation/lack of social acceptance by peers;
- a belief that nobody understands or respects them;
- dissatisfaction with physical appearance;
- a sense of failure about relationships or academic achievement.

Indicators of self-esteem which is too high could include:

- a young person may over-estimate his/her abilities;
- s/he may appear over-confident;
- s/he may have an undue sense of their own importance and/or show little consideration for others.

S/he has a general mistrust of others.

This question is not referring to those who have a problem with trusting one or two particular individuals. Rather, it is about a 'global' mistrust of a range of different people including peers and adults, family and professionals. The young person will tend to be suspicious of people's motives and inclined to believe the worst about others.

S/he displays discriminatory attitudes towards others.

Assessing discriminatory attitudes can be particularly difficult with young people. If they make a racist remark, for example, it may not be immediately apparent whether they are expressing their own views or repeating something that they have heard at school but do not really understand. The clearest indicators will often be related to his/her actual and planned behaviour. Has his/her offending been targeted against certain groups? Has s/he been involved in any bullying at school that appears to be linked to discriminatory attitudes? Is s/he currently making threats against a member of a minority group or expressing intentions to target them?

S/he perceives him/herself as having a criminal identity.

This question is looking at the young person's mindset and how they perceive their future role in society. It is more than just admitting to having committed some offences – it is rather about seeing offending as an essential part of life. A young person with this perspective may see crime as their future 'career' and accept the risk of arrest and sentencing as a necessary part of this.

Rate the extent to which the young person's perception of self and others is associated with the likelihood of further offending.

Examples of ratings of 1 or 2

- Low self-esteem contributes to a feeling that s/he has nothing to lose by offending.
- A lack of understanding for others which – although it may not lead directly into offending – suggests that s/he could be persuaded to take part in criminal activity more easily than someone with a greater ability to empathise.

Examples of ratings of 3 or 4

- Discriminatory attitudes that provide a clear motive for his/her offending.
- The young person sees crime as his/her 'career' and thinks that s/he will always be involved in offending.
- The young person's self-esteem is dependent on the sense of achievement that s/he gets from offending.

10. Thinking and behaviour

This section draws together information about the young person from all the other *Asset* sections in order to identify patterns of thinking and types of behaviour which cause difficulties for him/her. Evidence for your judgements in this section can be drawn from information about his/her behaviour at home, at school, with friends, in the neighbourhood, with staff and, of course, details of his/her offences.

Are the young person's actions characterised by any of the following?

Tick 'yes' for an item in this section if you are of the opinion that it is a typical or recurring feature of the young person's life and behaviour. Tick 'no' if there is some evidence of these types of thought patterns/behaviour, but this was an isolated one-off event that is unlikely to occur again and was not typical of this young person.

Lack of understanding of consequences

This refers to the extent of the young person's insight into the consequences of their own and/or friends' behaviour. It includes consequences both for him/her and for other people.

It can be helpful to distinguish between different types of consequences:

- immediate and longer term consequences;
- direct and indirect consequences (e.g. a burglary will have a direct impact on the victim and an indirect impact on neighbours who may experience an increased fear of crime);
- proximal and distal consequences (e.g. consequences for the young person and those closest to him/her would be 'proximal' and consequences for people less personally involved with the young person – such as the victim or the local community – would be 'distal').

Those of a younger age may be expected to have some understanding of immediate, direct and proximal consequences. Older young people should be developing additional awareness of longer term, indirect and distal consequences. Thus when assessing whether the young person lacks understanding of consequences it is important to take account of his/her age and maturity (e.g. one would not necessarily tick 'yes' if a 12-year-old had limited awareness of long term consequences, but would choose this option if s/he had very little understanding of direct and immediate consequences).

Impulsiveness

All young people are likely to be impulsive to some extent – the issue here is whether impulsiveness is a pervasive trait of his/her behaviour. Can s/he relate the consequences to real life situations? Does s/he always rush into things without stopping to think? Does the young person often do things which s/he regrets soon afterwards?

Need for excitement

This describes a young person who deliberately seeks excitement. It is not just that they are persuaded by friends to take part in some reckless activity, but that they actively pursue, initiate or participate in ‘thrill seeking’ activities. This can involve behaviour that may be legal or illegal, planned or impulsive.

Giving in easily to pressure from others

The key point to consider here is how s/he relates to other young people of a similar age. One would not always expect a young person to be assertive with someone who was significantly older. Consider the reasons for a lack of assertiveness (e.g. fear of particular people, previous experiences of intimidation, lack of social support, s/he hasn’t thought about other ways of dealing with such situations).

Inappropriate social and communication skills

Inappropriateness is defined in terms of the young person’s age, cultural background and situation. Examples of inappropriate self-presentation could include:

- a young person who is overly or excessively friendly with someone they have never met before;
- relating to staff or teachers in the same way as to friends;
- sexually provocative postures/body language in a public place;
- a 17-year-old who presents as an 11-year-old – in conversation, manner and body language (or vice versa);
- deliberately adopting a hard, threatening, over-bearing manner.

Does the young person display any of the following types of behaviour?

The questions in this section are not just about offending behaviour – please consider all the available information about his/her behaviour in different settings.

Destruction of property

This refers to deliberate and planned behaviour. It includes any events of arson, situations where property or equipment has been put beyond use and any other behaviour causing extensive damage. It does not include minor criminal damage or events where property was accidentally damaged, e.g. loss of control of stolen car.

Aggression towards others

This includes physical and verbal aggression, violence and threats of violence. It may be directed towards peers, family, staff and people known to the young person or strangers. Consider the young person’s behaviour in different contexts, including any institutional or secure settings that s/he may have experienced. Aggressive behaviour will sometimes be related to poor temper control but can also be carefully planned and calculated.

Sexually inappropriate behaviour

The Youth Justice Board's *Key Elements of Effective Practice – Young People who Sexually Abuse* (2002), states that: 'Sexual abuse by a young person . . . can include a wide range of behaviours, in a variety of situations. It can be defined as a minor of any age who commits any sexual act with a person of any age:

- against the victim's will;
- without consent; or
- in an aggressive/exploitative manner.'

It would also be appropriate to include here other problematic behaviours (e.g. inappropriate use of sexually explicit language by a young person).

Attempts to manipulate/control others

This can refer to emotional manipulation (e.g. the young person threatens to commit self-harm or suicide if s/he does not get their own way). It can also include types of threatening behaviour (e.g. the young person threatens that, if a friend does not agree to do something, s/he will give details about the friend's drug use to parents or teachers).

Rate the extent to which the young person's thinking and behaviour is associated with the likelihood of further offending.

Examples of ratings of 1 or 2

- The young person's lack of assertiveness is relevant to offending, but only when s/he is with particular friends.
- Self-presentation is occasionally inappropriate and perceived by other people as deliberately provocative. This may lead to aggressive situations.

Examples of ratings of 3 or 4

- Combination of impulsiveness, poor temper control and aggression means a high risk of violent behaviour.
- The young person's need for excitement frequently leads him/her into offending situations.

11. Attitudes to offending

The first four questions in this section focus on the young person's attitudes towards the offences which triggered this assessment. If there are issues about attitudes to past offences which you think are particularly significant, however, these can also be included.

Please indicate whether the young person displays any of the following attitudes.

The focus of these questions should be on the young person's attitudes to the offence/s which triggered this assessment. If there are issues about attitudes to past offences which you think are particularly significant, however, these can also be included. Details should be provided in the evidence box.

Denial of the seriousness of his/her behaviour

This refers to the young person minimising the harm or damage caused by the offending behaviour.

Reluctance to accept responsibility for involvement in most recent offence/s

This type of attitude would be seen in someone who wants to blame others for what happened. If the young person was involved in a group offence, for example, s/he may admit to having been present when the incident occurred, but deny taking any personal part in it.

Lack of understanding about the impact of his/her behaviour on victims (if victimless, on society)

Does the young person recognise that there is a victim or that there has been an adverse effect on the community?

Lack of remorse

Given the young person's level of understanding, how much does s/he actually care about the impact on others? Is there any sympathy for the victim or any regret about what has been done? A young person may have a good understanding of the impact of the offence, for example, but not feel any sense of remorse. S/he may actually feel pleased about it because they think the victim deserved it or feel that the incident has helped them to attain other goals (e.g. status among peers).

Lack of understanding about impact of his/her behaviour on family/carers

This includes understanding of both the 'emotional impact' that his/her behaviour has had on family/carers and any 'legal impact' (such as his/her parents have been required to attend court or pay a fine).

A belief that certain types of offences are acceptable

This could include, for example, beliefs such as theft from shops doesn't cause any harm because they can afford it and will claim on insurance, or driving offences are not 'real offences'.

A belief that certain people/groups are acceptable 'targets' of offending behaviour

The 'targets' could be either individuals or groups and this could include beliefs such as a racist attitude that allows him/her to justify violence against minority ethnic groups, or a view that it is legitimate to take personal revenge against someone who has hurt him/her.

S/he thinks that further offending is inevitable

A 'yes' response here requires more than the young person just saying that they think further offending will occur. A 'yes' means that you believe s/he really does think offending is inevitable. This could be for a number of reasons: the young person perceives him/herself as having a criminal identity; s/he cannot see any other choices or opportunities in life or s/he has some understanding of the causes of his/her offending behaviour and knows that, until things change, reoffending is always likely.

Rate the extent to which the young person's attitudes to offending is associated with the likelihood of further offending.

Examples of ratings of 1 or 2

- Attitudes that may not directly motivate him/her to offend, but which make it unlikely s/he will refuse to participate in criminal activity if friends suggest it.

Examples of ratings of 3 or 4

- Attitude that provides a direct motive for his/her offending.
- The young person's genuine belief that further offending is inevitable.
- Clusters of these attitudes.

12. Motivation to change

Has an appropriate understanding of the problematic aspects of his/her own behaviour

This can include offending behaviour and non-offending behaviour which nevertheless causes difficulties for the young person and others. Does s/he understand which particular aspects of his/her behaviour are problematic? Does s/he understand why they are problematic? Is this level of understanding appropriate for a young person of his/her age?

Understands the consequences for him/herself of further offending

This includes both short-term consequences (such as arrest and sentence) and longer term consequences (for example, the difficulties of getting a job with a criminal record). Tick 'yes' if s/he has an understanding appropriate to his/her age, e.g. a 12-year-old might be expected to understand immediate consequences, whereas a 17-year-old should be developing awareness of the longer term issues.

Has identified clear reasons or incentives for him/her to avoid further offending

This can include short-term incentives (e.g. s/he wants to avoid upsetting a parent) or longer term incentives (e.g. s/he is keen to get a particular job on leaving school). Those of a younger age may only be able to identify short-term incentives, but these are still significant and can be built on during a period of intervention.

Shows real evidence of wanting to stop offending

An example of evidence for this question could be if s/he has started to act on some of the incentives identified in the question above. His/her motivation to stop offending is likely to fluctuate. It would be unrealistic to expect him/her to be completely motivated all of the time, but tick 'yes' if s/he shows evidence on some occasions of wanting to desist.

Rate the extent to which the young person's motivation to change is associated with the likelihood of further offending.

Examples of ratings of 1 or 2

- The young person is very motivated to stop offending, but is unlikely to receive much support from family/carers.
- The young person has a good understanding of the consequences for him/herself of further offending, but has less understanding of the impact of his/her offending behaviour on other people.

Examples of ratings of 3 or 4

- The young person has no understanding of the problematic aspects of his/her behaviour.
- The young person cannot identify any incentives to stop offending.
- There is no evidence from his/her behaviour of a desire to change.

Summary of dynamic risk factors

The summary of dynamic risk factors provides an easily accessible review of the offending-related ratings from sections 1–12. It should show which sections have higher ratings, highlighting the issues which should be included in your intervention plan. These can then be addressed in future work with the young person.

The total score gives a general indication of the extent of the offending-related factors in the young person's life. The higher the total score, the higher the likelihood of further offending.

Positive factors

As well as assessing problems facing the young person, it is also important to identify the positive aspects of the young person's life. This is essential for building up a complete picture of the young person and will also help to identify factors that may help the young person to curb or stop offending.

The questions in this section cover a variety of factors. Some relate to the young person's own attitudes and behaviour, whilst some will depend on the actions of other people. It is important to focus on factors that are specifically relevant for this young person. There might be a range of good facilities and services available in the local neighbourhood, for example, but if these are not addressing his/her particular needs then it may not be appropriate to identify this as a positive factor for him/her. It is also helpful to think about different contexts in which a factor might be relevant (e.g. 'resilience' could refer to coping with problematic family relationships or a serious health condition).

Sometimes there may be just one positive factor among a range of problems. A young person experiencing severe difficulties at school may have a good relationship with one particular teacher, for instance. Similarly, in a family setting there might be one relationship that has a stabilising influence on the young person. With an issue such as motivation, it may be that the young person is willing to deal with certain problems while refusing to acknowledge others. In each case it is important to record these factors even if they appear to be quite small in comparison to the young person's problems. Doing this will highlight areas in which to encourage the young person during any intervention.

If you cannot identify any positive factors for this young person, it would be helpful to put a note of explanation in one of the evidence boxes. If a colleague then looks at the case, they will know that these issues have been considered.

As with the rest of the *Asset* profile, this section is asking for *your* assessment of the positive factors in the young person's life. This may differ from the young person's perception and you may wish to use the evidence boxes to elaborate on the reasons for this.

Indicators of vulnerability

This section focuses on the possibility of the young person being harmed – either physically or emotionally.

It is not intended to provide a full assessment of such issues, but to act as a trigger to highlight cases where further investigation is required. Additional guidance on assessment of vulnerability can be found in the Effective Practice Reader *Managing Risk in the Community*, which identifies four categories of vulnerability:

- Low vulnerability: no specific behaviours, events or people currently indicating risk.
- Medium vulnerability: some specific vulnerability, can be addressed as part of the normal supervision process.
- High vulnerability: clear indications of specific vulnerability that require attention in the near future and may require involvement of other agencies, people etc. The case may need additional supervision and monitoring (e.g. local registration, oversight by middle/senior management).
- Very high vulnerability: statutory thresholds (child protection) or immediate action required to prevent imminent harm (e.g. suicide or self-harm). This may involve intensive multi-agency support and monitoring.

If in your assessment a young person is in the ‘medium’, ‘high’ or ‘very high’ groups, then you should also complete a vulnerability management plan (see *Managing Risk in the Community* for more detailed guidance).

The nature and level of a young person’s vulnerability can change according to circumstances. If, at the time of making the assessment, there is a possibility that a young person may receive a custodial sentence and you have specific concerns about increased vulnerability if he or she were to go into custody, these can be recorded using the last two questions. These questions do not need to be completed in cases where there are no such concerns or where custody is not a possible outcome.

Is there evidence that s/he is likely to be vulnerable as a result of the following?

This question specifies a range of factors that might result in the young person suffering harm. Some of these may already have been identified in earlier sections of *Asset*. The purpose of this particular question is to consider how these different factors link together, to assess the young person’s overall level of vulnerability and to look at whether these factors might contribute to a risk of self-harm or suicide.

Use the evidence box to give details of the nature of the harm that the young person is likely to experience, when this is likely to occur and who could be involved. Where there are combinations of factors, please explain how they relate to each other.

Are there indications that s/he is at risk of self-harm or suicide?

There will always be some uncertainty about assessment of risk in this area and it is not possible to predict exactly if and when a young person will attempt suicide or self-harm. It is possible, however, to build up a picture of the events and circumstances that might combine

to make the young person particularly vulnerable in this regard. It is helpful to distinguish between long-term underlying factors which may place the young person at greater risk and precipitating factors which may trigger the actual behaviour. An assessment therefore needs to take account of a broad range of issues, including personal characteristics, past and present social circumstances, and any current stressors in the young person's life.

Where there is any concern about a possibility of self-harm or suicide, it is essential to give details in the evidence box. As far as possible, give details of the circumstances in which such behaviour is likely to occur, how serious it will be, and how soon it may happen.

Three key issues should be considered in relation to the young person.

1) Are there life events or circumstances which make him/her particularly vulnerable?

Research has highlighted some groups of young people who are more vulnerable to self-harm or suicide than others. These include: victims of abuse; those living in poverty; young people in isolated rural areas; victims of discrimination; drug users; those on remand or in prison for the first time; young people subject to care orders who have a history of broken placements; those identified as having mental illness/mental health problems; and young people with a family history of suicide.

The common themes which link these vulnerable groups are: isolation; lack of support; low self-esteem; sense of powerlessness/helplessness; and uncertainty about the future.

There are some important gender differences. Young men are three times more likely than young women to kill themselves, although deliberate self-harm remains more widespread among young women.

2) What are the precipitating factors that might trigger this behaviour?

If the young person's personal or social circumstances indicate that s/he may be at risk, what are the particular events that may trigger an attempt at suicide or self-harm?

Common precipitating factors include: the experience of loss; a serious disagreement with parent/s (this is particularly significant for those under 16); physical or sexual abuse; rape; bullying or threats; poor physical or mental health; exam stress or failure; contact with the criminal justice system (e.g. the uncertainty of the court process, experience of being in custody).

3) Evidence of a likelihood of self-harm or suicide

When considering whether there is a real possibility of the young person committing self-harm or suicide in the foreseeable future, evidence from the following will be particularly important.

- Previous incidents of suicide or self-harm

Any such incidents in the past should have been identified in the 'Emotional and mental health' section. These are particularly significant because young people who have harmed themselves in the past are at greater risk of attempting suicide in the future. Aspects of previous self-harm/suicide attempts likely to cause particular concern would include: others not present or nearby at the time; intervention from others unlikely; precautions taken against discovery; a suicide note; feelings of sadness for most of the time prior to the act of deliberate self-harm; use of alcohol or drugs; careful planning of the event.

- Any comments by the young person about suicidal thoughts or feelings
There is an increased risk if ideas about suicide are familiar to the young person (particularly if s/he is thinking about particular methods for committing suicide).
- The *What do YOU think?* self-assessment form
This addresses a number of issues about emotions and feelings. There is also a question which refers specifically to suicidal thoughts.
- Information from other sources (e.g. case records, concerns expressed by other people)
For example, parents/carers or other colleagues who know the young person well may notice changes in his/her behaviour which cause them to be concerned.

Are there any protective factors that may reduce his/her vulnerability?

The young person's vulnerability to harm in general, and more specifically to self-harm/suicide, will vary over time with changes in his/her circumstances, attitudes and coping skills. The presence of protective factors will also affect his/her level of vulnerability at any given time.

Examples of protective factors in this context could include particular people who s/he can talk to or a change in circumstances which removes the cause of his/her stress or despair. Some of these may already have been identified in the 'Positive factors' section (see p.22 of the *Core Profile*). Please use the evidence box to explain how they can help to reduce the young person's vulnerability and how they could be developed or strengthened during a period of intervention.

If there do not appear to be any protective factors, this also needs to be explained in the evidence box.

Indicators of serious harm to others

This is found on p.25 of the *Core Profile* and should be completed for all young people being assessed.

Serious harm is defined as: 'death or injury (either physical or psychological) which is life threatening and/or traumatic and from which recovery is expected to be difficult, incomplete or impossible'.

Do any of the following apply to the young person in relation to the current offences?

The Criminal Justice Act 2003 introduces new sentencing provisions for offenders assessed by a court as 'dangerous'. Detailed guidance on the implications of the Act for YOTs can be found on the YJB website (www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk).

In summary, a *Risk of Serious Harm* form will not necessarily be required for every young person convicted of a specified offence under the Criminal Justice Act 2003, particularly if the offence is relatively minor. However, it should be completed in any of the following situations in order to inform the assessment of risk and dangerousness in the pre-sentence report:

- s/he has been convicted of a serious specified offence
- s/he is being sentenced in the Crown Court for a specified offence
- a youth court has specifically requested that the pre-sentence report risk assessment should contribute to the court's assessment of 'dangerousness' in order to determine whether to remit the case to Crown Court for sentencing.

Has the young person ever been assessed as presenting a 'risk to children'?

A multi-agency review of the use of the 'Schedule 1 Offender' designation concluded that it was no longer useful as a way of identifying people who might pose a risk to children (see, for example, Probation Circular 16/2005: *Guidance on Offences Against Children* for further details). It has been recommended that the term 'Schedule 1 Offender' should therefore be replaced with the term 'Risk to Children'.

A list of major offences against children that YOTs and other agencies can use to identify those who may present a risk to children is attached at Appendix C of this guidance. However – unlike Schedule 1 status – this is not an automatic process. A young person should **not** be identified as presenting a risk to children just because he or she has been convicted of one of the offences on the list. Professional judgment needs to be used at all times and the list is only a trigger that should lead to further assessment/review using *Asset*, liaison with other agencies if required, and sound risk management practice.

When using the list it is important to remember the following points.

- This list is not exhaustive. There are also other types of offences where a child may be the intended victim, but where the primary offence is not a child-specific offence (e.g. telecommunications offences, harassment etc).
- New offences may be created by new legislation.
- Some offences may only indicate a risk to children in certain circumstances.
- Not all convicted or cautioned young people will necessarily pose a continuing risk to children.
- There will also be cases where individuals without a conviction or caution may pose a risk to children. For example, there may be other non-offence related information to show that a young person presents a risk to children.

For all other cases

In cases where there has been a 'no' response to the first two questions in this section, the remaining questions are designed to highlight any other factors which might indicate a possibility of this young person causing serious harm to other people. If there is a 'yes' response to any question, you should go on to complete the *Risk of Serious Harm* form. If there are no indicators from this section of a risk of serious harm, you do not need to make any additional assessment at this stage.

Answering 'yes' to a question in this section does not mean that you are labelling the young person as 'high risk'. It is simply saying that there are concerns about a possible risk of serious harm which need further consideration and analysis.

Some cases are not as straightforward as they initially seem. In a case where there is no history of serious harm, for example, there may be factors about his/her current situation which indicate that s/he could soon begin to engage in harmful behaviour. It is therefore important that this section is completed for all young people, even where the current offences may appear to be quite minor.

Is there any evidence of the following?

This section is about evidence of actual behaviour by the young person. It includes both offending and non-offending behaviour, recent and past behaviour. The three questions reflect different types of behaviour that can all result in serious harm to other people.

Behaviour by the young person which resulted in actual serious harm being caused

Do you have evidence of any behaviour by the young person which resulted in someone else actually suffering serious harm?

Behaviour which indicates that s/he was intending or preparing to cause serious harm

This refers to behaviour that did not actually result in serious harm, but which shows that s/he wanted to cause harm. It covers two main types of behaviour.

- **Intentions**

The young person may have intended to cause serious harm but – for some reason – did not carry this out. In such cases, it is important to consider the intention and the outcome separately and to identify the reasons for any differences between them. A similar distinction between intentions and actions is made in the earlier 'Offence analysis' section (p.2 of these guidance notes).

- **Preparations**

This describes behaviour where the young person was actively taking steps to get into a position where s/he could cause harm. Examples may include acquiring weapons or checking out locations for possible offences.

Other (e.g. reckless or unintentional) behaviour that was very likely to have caused serious harm

This question is included because it is recognised that some young people may get into a situation which results in them causing serious harm even though they did not set out with an intention to do so. It does not refer to every incident where there might be a slight possibility of harm, but is intended to highlight behaviour where there is a high probability of serious harm being unintentionally or carelessly caused.

It is important to remember that the emphasis is on the young person's own behaviour, not that of his/her friends or associates. Dangerous driving, for example, could be included here if the young person was the driver of a car being raced through a residential area where young children were playing, but would not necessarily need to be included if s/he was a passenger.

Do any of the following indicate that there may be a risk of serious harm?

Other features of his/her offending

Even though the young person's offences may not have resulted in serious harm, there may be other aspects of his/her offending behaviour which indicate a possible risk of harm in future. Examples could include: increasingly aggressive behaviour; s/he is offending with peers or adults who have caused serious harm to others; methods of offending that are unduly sophisticated for his/her age; very unpredictable or erratic behaviour; a recent rapid increase in seriousness of offences or regular carrying of weapons.

His/her attitudes and motives

This question draws on information about his/her current attitudes from some of the other sections of the *Core Profile* (e.g. 'Emotional and mental health', 'Perception of self and others', and 'Attitudes to offending'). Do any of these attitudes provide a motive for causing serious harm? Are they strong enough to make him/her take action to cause harm? Tick 'yes' if you think that his/her attitudes or motives are likely to lead him/her towards harmful behaviour.

Current interests or activities

This can include interests/activities which s/he pursues alone or with other people. Some of these may already have been identified in 'Lifestyle' section. The same activity can have contrasting implications for different young people and it is important to consider each case individually (e.g. a collection of military paraphernalia may reflect a legitimate interest in the armed forces or it may be a sign of a potentially dangerous preoccupation with weapons. Another example could be an interest in pornographic material involving young children).

Do any of the following cause significant concern?

This section tries to capture any other possible indicators of a risk of harm. Some of these may initially seem minor, but they can provide information that is important when considered alongside a range of other factors.

Any other disconcerting or disturbing behaviour by the young person

This question covers anything else about his/her behaviour that is disconcerting or disturbing and has not already been addressed in the above questions. Consider where s/he spends time, who s/he is with and what s/he does. This may link with issues identified in the 'Lifestyle' or 'Thinking and behaviour' sections.

Young person has said, indicated, or threatened that s/he might cause serious harm to others

Has the young person said that s/he might cause harm? If, for example, s/he is worried that they might harm someone, these concerns should be considered very carefully.

Others (e.g. family, school) have expressed concern that the young person might cause serious harm to others

Has anybody else expressed concerns about the possibility of the young person causing serious harm? Are parents, carers or teachers apprehensive about aspects of the young person's behaviour and think that this may indicate a possible risk to others.

Any other intuitive or ‘gut’ feelings about possible harmful behaviour

Very rarely, there may be cases where you have concerns about a possible risk to others but you cannot quite identify the reasons behind this. This question provides an opportunity to record this, even if there are few details available at this stage. It may be important at a later date for colleagues to know that you had some concerns at this stage. It will also be a useful reminder, when the assessment is reviewed or repeated, to consider whether there is any new information which will clarify these concerns.

This can trigger the *Risk of Serious Harm* assessment, but cannot on its own lead to a young person being described as high risk. If no supporting evidence is found, s/he should not be classified as ‘high risk’ or ‘very high risk’.