

**SHEFFIELD YOUTH JUSTICE
SERVICE
INTERVENTIONS FOR YOUNG
WOMEN
INFORMATION GUIDE
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Working more effectively with young women.

Sheffield Youth Justice Service is committed to developing skills and resources in order to improve outcomes for young women and reducing the use of custody whilst protecting the public by reducing the risk of reoffending.

To ensure that Sheffield Youth Justice Service achieves this, the service has reorganised some of its resources to create a virtual team of specialist practitioners. The practitioners, who remain located within their own teams, meet on a monthly basis and have regular support and guidance from a single team manager responsible for overseeing this area of work.

Members of staff within the virtual team have developed their knowledge, skills and networks in working with young women and developed programmes to meet both gender specific criminogenic and non criminogenic needs.

All of this work is based upon emerging research on promising practice with young women who offend and is in line with the Youth Justice Board's research and guidelines regarding effective practice – <http://www.justice.gov.uk/youth-justice/diversity/working-with-girls-who-offend>.

There is an overwhelming consensus that relationships are fundamental to effective work with young people and this is especially the case regarding young women. Effective programmes must address young women's previous relationships and recognise that many will have been predominately exploitive and abusive.

A prerequisite to being able to address those experiences is the establishment of strong relationships between staff delivering the programmes and the young women who take part.

Effective intervention has to acknowledge the high levels of victimisation and trauma in the lives of many young women who offend. Such recognition is a necessary precursor to delivering assistance to young women to take control of, and successfully change, their own behaviour.

Finally, interventions with young women who offend should aim to provide a comprehensive and holistic service that addresses the multiple factors contributing to females offending including physical emotional, sexual and mental health, healthy relationships drug and alcohol awareness education and employment, self-image and identity, confidence and self-worth.

Interventions for young women

The virtual team deliver / co - deliver / advise on the following interventions either as part of the supervision component of an Out of Court Disposal, Referral Order, Youth Rehabilitation Order or, if the offence is more serious, as an additional programme requirement of the YRO or DTO Licence.

As with current practice interventions may continue beyond the statutory requirement for delivery as part of an agreed Voluntary Intervention Programme (VIP) on an assessed needs basis.

It is important to note that all programmes listed can be delivered either on a one to one basis or in group work depending on the individual needs of the young women and other considerations such as the number of young women waiting for the programmes.

Core Components:

- Smart Girls (thinking skills)
- Unique (self-esteem)
- Positive Connections (healthy relationships)
- Girls Matter (sexual health)
- Express yourself (emotional management)

Smart Girls

Aim: The programme uses sequential sessions to teach problem solving, creative thinking and social skills. It also aims to support self-efficacy, motivation and desistance from offending. The programme uses a cognitive behaviour model to help participants understand the control they have over their own decision making and lives.

Learning Outcomes

- To improve understanding of how feelings and thoughts impact upon decisions and subsequent behaviour.
- To improve problem – solving skills and critical reasoning.
- To identify techniques which help to control impulsivity.
- To identify the differences between passive, aggressive and assertive behaviour.

- To practice assertiveness techniques in a safe environment.
- To improve moral reasoning and identify the rights of others within the context of decision making.

As with all of the modules this programme takes a holistic, relationship based approach. The programme aims to focus upon the strengths of individual young women rather than focusing upon their deficits.

Unique

Aim: The programme aims to help young women improve their level of self-esteem. The programme uses a cognitive behavioural model to help participants identify internal and external factors that influence the way they think and feel about themselves, and the impact of this upon their behaviour.

Learning Outcomes

- To understand the concept of self-esteem.
- To identify factors that influence their self - esteem
- To understand the links between low self-esteem and risky situations.
- To understand how positive self – esteem can improve resilience.
- To practice assertive behaviour.
- To produce a personal action plan to improve self-esteem.

Positive Connections

Aim: The programme uses a cognitive behaviour model to help young women identify what a healthy relationship looks like in relation to friendships, family and intimate relationships and learn skills to achieve this.

Learning Outcomes

- To introduce the cognitive behaviour model and explore links between feelings, thoughts and behaviour in relationships.
- To increase understanding of what a healthy relationship is.
- To identify acceptable and unacceptable behaviour within a relationship.
- To identify the difference between passive, aggressive and assertive behaviour within relationships.
- To teach techniques for fair arguing and conflict resolution.

Girls matter

Aim: The programme addresses all aspects of sexual health and sexual encounters with the aim of enabling girls to make a positive and informed decision which will help them maintain positive and healthy personal relationships in the future.

Learning Outcomes

- To equip participants with knowledge of sex and the Law
- To increase awareness around consent
- To increase awareness of sexually transmitted infections.
- To inform young women of different contraceptive methods available.
- To look at the impact of alcohol and other substances on thinking and behaviour with particular emphasis on relationships and sex.
- To make young women aware of the grooming process and the risks of sexual exploitation.

Express yourself

Aim: The programme aims to help young women express their emotions in ways that are more positive for themselves and others. It uses the cognitive behaviour model to help participants develop knowledge and skills to take control of their thoughts and reactions.

Learning Outcomes

- To understand what triggers their anger and other strong emotions.
- To identify the bodily changes in themselves and others when angry.
- To learn how to use assertiveness to express themselves.
- To learn the time – out technique.
- To examine the concept of the rights of others and their own rights.
- To produce a personal action plan.