

Introduction

This report will be exploring three separate sections in regards to a youth offender named Jack Roberts, who is going to be released from a Youth Offenders institution. This report will be following the framework of the Asset Plus model, which is specifically designed for individuals under the age of eighteen years old, and assesses the service users background and their health needs, in order to provide an appropriate plan to ensure the service users future is in line with their goals and aspirations. Section one will be exploring who Jack is as an individual, his personal life, his background and exploring his offence. This section will be done in bullet point form and will be brief. Section two will be exploring further what issues Jack is faced with and identifying various supportive services and positive solutions to support Jack in planning for his future. Section three will be assessing what was stated in sections one and two, and whether the report follows the requirements of the Asset Plus model framework, as well as engaging with the advocacy principles stated in the Advocacy Code of Practice, which are imperative to the Advocates role. Section three will also be identifying in further detail what actions need to be taken in order to support the service user, and why they are important.

Client's Name: Jack Roberts

Client's Age: 17

Brief outline of Offence: A noise disturbance complaint was made regarding a property that many youths were found to be drinking alcohol in and taking illegal drugs. This included Jack who was found to be under the influence of drugs, and was found attempting to break into cars with the intent of driving them, which is a previous conviction of his.

Asset Plus: This report will be using the Asset Plus framework to assess and explore the needs of the client. This framework is appropriate as it applies only to those who are under the age of eighteen who are within the youth justice system, while also allowing for assessments and person centred plans to be made in order to support the client from reoffending. The Asset Plus framework also works with the aim to support the client with achieving the goal of having a safe and secure life. This framework encourages those working with the client to have an understanding of their background and social situation in order to understand their actions, which is relevant to Jack's situation. The framework acknowledges the client's own views on their actions and behaviours, and how it is important that their personal view is taken into consideration. It is vital in the Asset Plus framework to keep a detailed record of the clients contextual information, as this helps to have an understanding of the clients personal situation and behaviour.

Core Section 1:

Personal information

- Jack Roberts is a young male who has been looked after by the local authority for nine years, and has been with various foster parents during this time. He was removed from his parents' care due to both parents being drug addicts, and his father having involvement in many drug related crimes.

- Jack was unable to live with his maternal grandmother, who is the only blood relative involved in Jack's life beside his siblings, due to her own health issues which would not allow for her to have Jack in her care, however he does have regular contact with her and maintains a close relationship.
- Jack currently lives with his two foster parents and has done so for the past year, however they have expressed they are unhappy with Jack's behaviour and the possible risk of his behaviour being witnessed by the younger children in their care, therefore have expressed they wish for him to be removed from their care.
- Jack has two siblings, two younger sisters, one aged 14 and one aged 12. Jack and his sisters have different foster parents, due to Jack's behaviour and criminal offences. However, Jack has regular contact with them.
- Jack suffers from behavioural issues such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) as well as suffering from bouts of depression since the passing of his mother when he was fourteen years old, who died due to a drug overdose.
- Jack has been arrested two times prior to his latest offence. The first offence was for antisocial behaviour while under the influence of drugs, and the second offence was for attempting to break into cars, each time he received a fine, and with the latter, a strict curfew.
- Jack has a group of friends who he has been friends with since secondary school, who all partake in the same crimes as Jack and have had regular issues with the police. The majority of his friends are not currently in education nor do they have a job.
- Jack left school at sixteen years old, and obtained 5 GCSE's with a grade of C and above, however has not been actively looking for a job or shown interest in going to College.
- Jack does have a great interest in cars, and it is a subject he happily discusses, therefore this interest may be a good opportunity for Jack to pursue an apprenticeship to become a mechanic.
- Due to Jack's previous offences in relation cars, there is the risk of Jack joyriding in the future, however this may be able to be changed if Jack is able to put his interest in cars to use through an apprenticeship.
- Jack has been in the care of the local authority since nine years old, and has had a social worker from that age, who he gets on well with, however in recent months has become more withdrawn and does not talk with him as much as he once did.
- Jack has not shown any violent tendencies towards others, therefore is unlikely to be a harm to the public. However, due to Jack's depression and continuous drug use, may be a risk to himself, therefore may benefit from counselling to support him through this time.
- Due to Jack's ongoing issues in relation to his drug taking, a referral to his GP may be beneficial in order for him to get into a rehab programme to receive the correct treatment. Jack is also suffering from depression since the death of his mother, therefore counselling may be helpful for him. As already mentioned above, Jack is very interested in cars, therefore a good way to not only stop him from committing offences regarding cars would be to do a

mechanic apprenticeship, but it would also mean that he is doing something beneficial for him and his future.

Core Section 2:

Young person's personal situation and social factors:

Jack was removed from his parents care at nine years of age, and placed in the care of the local authority along with his two siblings due to his parents ongoing drug addictions, as well as his fathers ongoing involvement regarding crimes related to drugs. Jack was exposed to drugs from a very young age, according to NSPCC (2021) children who are exposed to substance misuse from a young age can have a negative effect on children which will appear later in their lives, which puts them at risk of suffering with behaviour issues and being exposed to drug use themselves, as well as criminal activity. Jack suffers from Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), which can affect his behaviour, although he is receiving regular medication to support Jack in feeling calmer and to help Jack with his concentration in order to practice and learn new skills (NHS, 2018).

Drug misuse and depression:

With the death of Jack's mother when he was fourteen years old, he began to suffer from depression and began to take drugs with his friends, which resulted in Jack not attending school consistently, and committing criminal offences. Since the age of fourteen, there was a drastic change in his behaviour, which resulted in him being moved to different foster parents. However, as his behaviour declined, he was placed in his current foster parents care. Within the last year, Jack's foster parents have noticed that when he returns home he is often under the influence of drugs and has become regular. Many of the criminal offences that Jack has been involved in are often when he is under the influence of substances, therefore a referral to a drug intervention programme such as rehab may be the appropriate intervention while Jack is still only seventeen years old, according to Winters, K.C., Tanner-Smith, E.E., Bresani, E. and Meyers, K., (2014) there is a great potential that continuous substance misuse can cause serious long term harm, which can include delirious brain changes, therefore it is crucial to face these issues as early as possible. In order to get Jack onto a drug intervention program such as rehab, a referral needs to be made, with Jack's consent, to a GP who can further to process and make a referral themselves to ensure Jack receives the appropriate treatment and care, such as residential rehabilitation services, and Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) which can support Jack with his depression as it is a common use of therapy which is used to treat depression (NHS, 2021).

Personal relationships:

Jack has been placed in the care of the local authorities since he was nine years old, and has been with various foster parents since. Jack has close contact with his grandmother and his two younger sisters, although does not live with them. As both his parents were drug addicts and his father was heavily involved in drug related crimes, this meant Jack and his siblings were at risk of neglect and exposure to drug misuse within the home. Jack has been living with his current foster parents for just over one year, and they have expressed their concerns of how Jack's behaviour has changed and are worried that his behaviour may affect and influence some of the younger children in their care, expressing that if there is not a positive change, that they wish for him to be removed from their care. According to Rahilly

and Hendry (2014), children who are constantly in and out of the care system or moving between foster homes can be detrimental to a child's mental health and their emotional well-being, and may also be a key barrier which prevents them from forming healthy relationships with the adults in their lives who are caring for them.

Apprenticeship possibility:

Since leaving school at 16, he has not furthered his education by going to college or studying for his A-levels, neither has Jack actively sought out a job. Since leaving school Jack has spent more time with his friends, less time at his home with his foster parents and has had less contact with his grandmother and two younger sisters. As Jack currently has nothing in his life to motivate him such as a job or being in education, he has been taking part in criminal offences more often and his substance misuse has increased. The offences that Jack has committed have often involved cars, which research suggests that breaking into cars and car theft with the intent to joyride is predominantly carried out by males (Dawes, 2002). To ensure that Jack's issue with Joyriding stops, his interest in cars has been taken into account and a suggestion is to enroll Jack into an apprenticeship course with Coleg Sir Gar in Pibwrlwyd college, where they offer three different types of automotive training courses, where he can put his interest into action (Coleg Sir Gar, n.d).

Self-assessment:

A self assessment may also be beneficial for Jack by empowering him, as this will demonstrate that he is agreeing and engaging with those who are working with him, showing he is taking accountability for his actions and providing those who are working with him a better insight into Jack's wishes, thoughts and feelings. (Youth Justice Resource Hub, 2021).

Core Section 3:

In section one and two of the clients needs report, the approach has been person centred, by acknowledging the needs and wishes of the service user and basing the solutions and outcomes off what they want, as it states in the Advocacy Code of Practice (2014). The report has been based on the Asset Plus framework, which is used to work with individuals under the age of eighteen years old. This particular framework works in a way that ensures the process takes a person centred approach, as it appreciates the service users future goals, and makes plans to support the service user in pursuing them, with the aim of reducing recidivism (RAND EUROPE, 2019). The Asset Plus framework also aims to have an understanding of the service users background, in order to have an understanding of their behaviour, as this will help the Advocate to better understand them in order to support them more efficiently (Youth Justice Board, 2014).

As it states in the Asset Plus framework, it is crucial to have a deeper understanding of the service users background. Jack was placed in the care of the local authorities at nine years of age, and prior to this was exposed to substance misuse through his parents, as well as criminal behaviour as his father was heavily involved in drug related crimes. Due to this, it is likely that this has had a large impact on Jack's mental health and well-being, which has affected him in his later life, and has resulted in behaviour problems (NSPCC, 2021). Jack also has Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and although Jack receives medication to support him with his ADHD, a referral for behavioural therapy may be suitable, for his fosters parents to have a better understanding of ways in which to support Jack more

efficiently (NHS, 2021). Jack also suffers with depression after the passing of his mother when he was fourteen years old, therefore, with Jack's permission, a referral for psychological counselling may be a positive option, as Jack will have the opportunity to talk through his issues with a professional (Mayo Clinic, 2021). By acknowledging and identifying Jack's behaviour issues and struggles with his mental health, this will allow the advocate to have a better understanding of the service user, and will allow for the appropriate referrals to be made. Not only will this help the service users mental health, but it will help with reducing recidivism, as it allows the advocate to separate the service users health needs from their needs which contributed to offending (AssetPlus model document, 2014). It is important to acknowledge that Jack's behaviour is similar to that of his parents, as both his mother and father were addicted to drugs, and his father was heavily involved in drug related crimes. Due to this Jack may have self-stigmatised himself as a "criminal offender", following the stereotype to which his father would have been labelled as, which is internalised (Moore, Tangey and Stuewig, 2016).

Each time Jack has committed an offence, he has been under the influence of drugs, and his foster parents have stated their concerns of his substance misuse. In section 2 of the report when discussing Jack's drug misuse, it states that a referral needs to be made to a GP in order for Jack to receive further support, as it states in the Advocacy Code of Practice that advocates should work in unison with the service user to achieve mutually agreed plans, and that advocacy support is given in the way that service user wishes (Advocacy Code of Practice, 2014). A further referral that can be made is for Jack to receive Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) which is offered to individuals who suffer with depression and also those who have issues with drug misuse, therefore is relevant to Jack's situation (NHS, 2021). The Asset Plus framework states that it is important to create plans that will address the service user's current issues, in Jack's case one of these is substance misuse, therefore the referrals for a rehabilitation service and CBT will be beneficial for Jack in the long term, and work towards him having a successful and safe life (RAND EUROPE, 2019). As it states in the AssetPlus model document (2014), the purpose of the document is to ensure that the service user's issues and their needs have been identified, in order to make the appropriate referrals, and this was done efficiently in sections one and two of the report. If the appropriate referrals are made in relation to Jack's substance misuse and depression, this will be a key factor for him to lead a better life. The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 also acknowledges that it is important for a looked after child to receive support from an advocate, ensuring that the requirements for an advocate are appropriate and necessary to the cause, which in Jack's situation, it is highly necessary and has been followed through in accordance with the Asset Plus framework (Welsh Government, 2018).

As it states in the AssetPlus model document (2014) it is important to gain information on the service user's background, which includes personal relationships with family members as well social factors, and the relationship he has with his friends, which has been explored in sections one and two, which identified that Jack has a strained relationship with his current foster parents due to his behaviour and substance misuse, this information is beneficial to the advocate as it can provide an explanation for the service user's behaviour and is something to refer back to when arranging and planning interventions as it states in the AssetPlus model document (2014).

Many of Jack's criminal offences have surrounded substance misuse, as well as cars. Jack has been caught attempting to break into cars with his friends, with the intent to joyride, which appears to be something that regularly occurs with his group of friends. It is evident that Jack has a keen interest in cars, and according to Kellet and Gross (2007), joyriding is considered addictive by some individuals, stating that there could be a link with this activity and those with addictive behaviours. This would be relevant in Jack's situation as he already has an addiction to drugs, therefore, the link of addictive behaviours may be considered by some as noteworthy. Considering Jack's love of cars, and as it states in the AssetPlus model document (2014) that it is important to focus intently on the service users offending behaviour as it can support the advocate in having a more detailed description of any patterns in their behaviour, and in order to reduce recidivism it is important to consider what a solution could be. In Jack's situation, since leaving school at sixteen he has not furthered his education nor has he made attempts to obtain a job, therefore a solution to this dilemma would be enrolling Jack into a mechanic apprenticeship in college. This would reduce the chances of him reoffending in this area, while also doing something he enjoys. In section two this has been identified by gathering information on mechanic apprenticeships which are local for Jack, which would be an automotive course in Coleg Sir Gar, Pibwrlwyd College (Coleg Sir Gar, n.d). This also supports the framework as it is creating progressive plans for Jack's future (RAND EUROPE, 2019).

In the Advocacy QPM Code of Practice (2014) it states that it is important for the advocate to ensure their client feels empowered, by prioritising them by guaranteeing the service user is present and active in regards to all the decisions which are being made in regards to themselves as much as possible. In section two it is suggested that Jack partake in a self assessment, which will ensure that the service user feels engaged in the process and is a part of the decision of intervention process by expressing their views, thoughts and feelings through the assessment (AssetPlus model document, 2014). The self assessment is tailored to what stage the service user is at within the youth justice system, giving them the opportunity to speak in both first and third person. This assessment will allow the service user to further reflect on the offence they were convicted for, to address their perception of the events that took place, addressing their feelings regarding the consequences they faced due to their actions as well as exploring their future goals and desires, and how they can achieve these goals, which is empowering for them as individuals and ensures they are present through the process (AssetPlus model document, 2014). By participating in the self assessment process, this will demonstrate the service user is taking responsibility for their actions and showing their engagement (AssetPlus model document, 2014). Which will in return empower them, as they have a voice in the decisions that are being made about them (Advocacy QPM Code of Practice, 2014).

Conclusion

In conclusion, this report has utilised the framework of the Asset Plus model in both sections one and two, ensuring each vital piece was followed and carried out. It is essential for an advocate to explore a service user's background in order to gain knowledge and information so that they are able to provide the service user with the best support. In section one and two of the report several of Jack's issues were addressed, his continuous issues regarding substance misuse, suffering with depression and his interest in cars which led to criminal activity. While assessing the offence and the contributing factors to the criminal activity,

several interventions were suggested and put forward in order to not only reduce recidivism but to ensure a plan was out in place to provide a safer and more successful future for Jack, taking into account his personal goals and interests. This is in line with the requirements that are stated in the Asset Plus model framework, and has been successfully explored in both sections one and two of the report. To promote empowerment and self-agency in the service user, the suggestion was made in section two of the report that carrying out a self assessment would be useful and beneficial to only the advocate, but more importantly, the service user. As stated in the Asset Plus model document, it would encourage engagement and demonstrate participation from the service user, as well as self reflection on their offence and looking forward to the future, which demonstrates they are a part of the decision process by having their thoughts and views heard, which is a crucial component in what an advocate is attempting to promote in their client, as stated in the Advocacy Code of Practice. By carrying out this report, it will ensure that other advocates have access to this essential information, which will ensure that necessary and appropriate interventions will be put into place in order for the service user to not reoffend and to have the opportunity to have a successful future.

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