

## ANNEX H: ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTIONS FOR YOUNG ADULTS

### *Risk assessments for young adults*

A parole dossier may present risk assessment scores from various instruments. The most common assessment tools that are used for adults may also have been applied for prisoners in the young adult range.

For young adults assessed on or after age 18, the OASys Sexual reoffending Predictor (OSP) score provides statistically derived risk scores for use with males convicted of sexual offences or sexually motivated offences. OSP predicts the likelihood of proven reoffending for a sexual offence, distinguishing between likely reoffending for a contact sexual offence or a noncontact sexual offence relating to indecent images of children, a distinction not made in RM2000<sup>1</sup>. OSP is not designed to be used in the assessment of women convicted of sexual offences.

The OGRS assessment tool is also used for young adults.

### *Assessments at an earlier age*

Some material in the dossier might be historical, including risk assessments and pathway assessments undertaken when the prisoner was younger than 18. These findings may be still available from assessments applied when the individual was aged 16 to 17.

ASSET or ASSET PLUS	Youth Offending Team's end-to-end appraisal of progress, risk of serious harm, safety and wellbeing
YOGRS	An adapted version of the Offender Group Reconviction Scale (OGRS)
SIFA or SQUIFA	Screening tools to identify mental health needs of children and young people
SAVRY	Assessment of the risk of violence by 12 to 18-year olds
ERASOR	Assessment of risk and responsivity for male sex offenders aged 12-18
AIM or AIM2	Assessment Intervention Moving On tool to establish risks posed and appropriate forms of intervention.

Best advice about current reliability and validity of such findings for someone reaching young adulthood can be requested from a psychologist member of the Parole Board. A rota of Duty Members and specialist members, available for consultation, is published weekly by the Secretariat.

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<sup>1</sup> OSP replaced RM2000 from 1 March 2021

## *Screening for maturity*

Research by the T2A programme<sup>2</sup> makes the case that developmental maturity is a better guide than strict chronological age when deciding on responses to a young adult's offending. Research has confirmed that our brains continue to develop into our mid-twenties, even our early thirties, and the last part of the brain to develop is the part responsible for higher level cognitive processes relating to maturity.

Research has found that lower levels of maturity are linked to anti-social decision-making, while higher levels are associated with desistance from crime. Young adults are found more likely to 'grow out of crime' when policy makers, sentencers, and practitioners have taken into account developmental maturity and their particular needs. Choosing an appropriate intervention can reduce the time a young adult spends in the criminal justice system; can boost positive self-identity and motivation; and can help counter perceptions of isolation and discrimination. There is a strong relationship between maturity, risk and proven reoffending outcomes and this relationship underlines the need to take maturity into account in the management of young adults and others.

Information about maturation and the implications for young adults can be found in Annex B. Implications about perceived discrimination are examined in Annex C of this guidance.

From OASys data, a 10-item maturity screening tool has been devised which aims to establish demand for services and interventions which could help young adults to mature, and to help practitioners identify those individuals with lower levels of maturity who are most in need of support. Research has found the tool also adds to the predictive power of OGRS3. This tool is not a thorough assessment of maturity but can be used to screen for those individuals who may benefit most from support with developing their maturity. Combining assessment of risk of reoffending with the assessment of maturity should help target interventions to those most in need.

The ten items of the OASys screening tool are:

- lack of awareness of consequences of actions
- poor problem solving skills
- poor perspective-taking
- recklessness and risk taking
- impulsiveness
- poor temper control
- difficulties coping with life
- low or overly grandiose self-image
- easily influenced or manipulated by criminal associates
- pressurised or led into offending by others.

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<sup>2</sup> Transition 2 Adulthood Alliance: *A Pathway Framework*

Research<sup>3</sup> shows that it is possible to screen for maturity in a meaningful way by using these OASys items. The resulting tool screening tool should be used in commissioning interventions and in sentence planning for young adults.

<p><b>HMPPS Maturity Screening Tool</b></p>	<p>Designed to establish the likely demand for services and interventions which could help a young adult to mature and inform practitioners identifying 18 to 25-year old males with low maturity who could benefit from additional support.</p> <p>The tool uses data available in a full or updated Layer 3 OASys assessment to provide a maturity score. A maturity flag is generated on the OASys summary sheet screen. There is also now a reporting function within OASys National Reports and P-NOMIS which enables the identification of individuals in a prison or region who may have low maturity, as identified via the maturity screening tool. There is also a standalone version of the screening tool for anyone who does not have a full or updated Layer 3 assessment.</p>
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An analytical summary is available describing the research behind the development and validation of this psychosocial maturity screening tool for young adult offenders.<sup>4</sup> HMPPS promotes the maturity screening tool for use with young adult males aged 18 to 25 years old. It is not available for females who may mature at a different rate and can manifest maturity in different ways to males.

If outcomes are available for male young adults, panels may consider directing a maturity assessment to support arrangements set out in risk management plans.

*Resource pack to accompany the maturity screening tool*

The Choices & Changes Resource Pack is a flexible resource which aims to promote psychosocial maturation. It can be used in custody or in the community. No formal training is required to deliver its exercises. It may be used by any member of staff but is aimed at keyworkers, Prison Offender Managers and Community Offender Managers. The resource pack has been designed to be flexible and responsive to the needs of an individual. A key factor is that the person delivering the exercises can relate to, understand and be responsive to the individual with whom they work.

<sup>3</sup> [Development and validation of a screening assessment of psychosocial maturity for adult males convicted of crime \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/661916/develop-measure-assess-psychosocial-maturity-male-prison-population-report.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/661916/develop-measure-assess-psychosocial-maturity-male-prison-population-report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/661916/develop-measure-assess-psychosocial-maturity-male-prison-population-report.pdf)

It is recognised that maturity is fluid and that not everyone will develop at the same rate. Age should not therefore be considered a factor for exclusion and the pack can profitably be used for some men over age 25.

The maturity resource pack targets the following areas based on need as informed by the maturity screening tool:



In summary:

- The pack is for use one-to-one with young adult males who have been identified as having low psychosocial maturity.
- There is great value in supporting young adults and promoting change while maturity is still developing because poor psychosocial maturity is strongly linked to reoffending.
- The pack is easy to understand and follow, having been developed with feedback from prison and probation staff.
- The resource pack is not an accredited programme but contains resources to encourage engagement and help young adults develop in maturity. It may therefore be used as a rehabilitative activity with people who are not ready to engage in an accredited programme due to their low maturity, who are not eligible to complete an accredited programme, or who cannot access accredited interventions. The resource pack can also be used with young adult men who have completed an accredited intervention, but still require support to develop maturity.
- The resource pack is not a tool on which to base sentence progression.
- It can be used flexibly in one-to-one situations and short sessions by keyworkers, Prison Offender Managers and Community Offender Managers or other community supervisor, requiring no additional resources.
- Some keyworkers may need support in developing confidence to use the pack but experience will generally be available in using techniques like the Five Minute Intervention.
- Not all young adult males need this pack, only those identified as having low maturity where the association between immaturity and risk of serious recidivism makes it particularly suitable.
- The pack allows staff to check the quality of their work in a straightforward and not time-consuming way.

The pack illustrates common myths about maturity:

MYTH	MYTH-BUSTER
Psychosocial maturity is only relevant when working with under 18s	New evidence from neuroscience shows that the brain continues to change beyond 18 until around age 25 or beyond
Young adults with low psychosocial maturity will need intensive work	Many young adults in the criminal justice system have had to “grow up” too soon and have areas of great strength: they may show more maturity in some situations and less in others
It’s best to just watch and wait whilst young adults develop maturity	Psychosocial maturity is strongly linked to reoffending, so it’s important to take active steps to support and actively encourage development
Young adults will not engage in conversations about their maturity	Speaking to young adults, the Howard League found young adults often recognised their needs and wanted support while in the criminal justice system

### *Interventions*

As part of a national strategy recommended by HM Inspectorate of Prisons<sup>5</sup>, young adults’ needs and maturity should be assessed on entering the system and this cohort should be given access to education, skills and work provision. All YOIs must provide purposeful activity and a minimal level of educational input.

YOI programmes and training courses address anger management, drugs and alcohol misuse, life skills training, and victim awareness. Mentoring is increasingly seen as an essential tool for supporting and developing young adults. In addition to education services, regimes provide forms of vocational training and physical education as well as healthcare and other support services. Restorative Justice, as an intervention for young adults, is outlined at Annex I of this guidance.

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<sup>5</sup> [A short thematic report by HM Inspectorate of Prisons: Outcomes for young adults in custody: A thematic review by HM Inspectorate of Prisons January 2021 \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk)