

## Social Return on Investment (SROI) of Substance Misuse Work

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### Leicestershire Youth Offending Service

#### Summary

The evaluation used the principles of Social Return on Investment (SROI) to evaluate the value of substance misuse work within Leicestershire Youth Offending. SROI is a tool that helps measure the value of the impact of a project or service by considering a range of outcomes for all stakeholders affected by the project. It aims to put a monetary value on a range of economic and social outcomes, both intended and unintended, in order to understand the total value of an activity. It also takes into account what would have happened without the intervention, and who else may have contributed towards the outcomes, to ensure that value is not over-claimed.

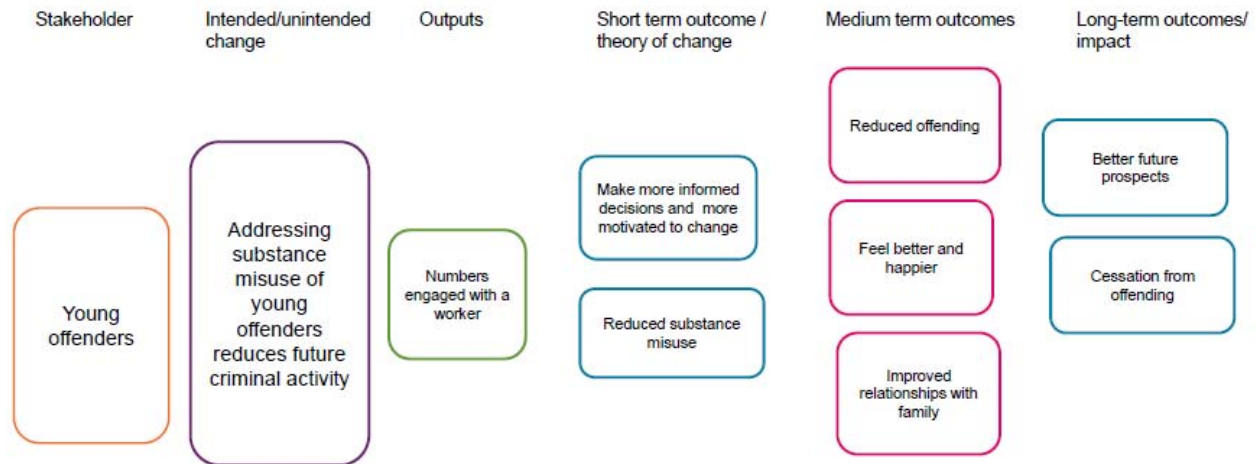
All young people who work with the Youth Offending Service are screened as part of the standard assessment process using the ASSET or ONSET assessment tool. Referral to the substance misuse specialist takes place with all young people who score two or more on ASSET or ONSET. If the young person requires treatment the specialist develops a treatment plan for the young person. Forty-four young people were assessed and assigned a substance misuse worker over a twelve month period, between April 2011 and March 2012. This cohort allows sufficient time after the intervention to track outcomes for young people (e.g. reoffending rates).

Eleven young people were consulted about what had changed for them to inform the outcomes that should be included in the evaluation. Examples included:

- “Feel fresher and feel like doing more in life”
- “Changed how smoked weed and stopped taking other drugs”
- “Don’t argue at home”
- “Head feels clearer”
- “Education and college – thinking about future”

The following Theory of Change was identified:

**Fig 1 - Theory of Change**



The interviews with young people also identified the following outcomes for other stakeholders:

- Family members: Young person reduces substance misuse and is motivated to change, leading to family members having better relationships with the young person;
- Health Services: Young person reduces substances misuse leading to reduction in health care costs of treating substance misuse;
- Criminal Justice System: Young person reduces substance misuse and is motivated to change, leading to reduction in offending and reduction in costs of managing offenders; and
- DWP: Young person improves relationships, reduces offending, and feels better, leading to better future prospects and savings to DWP due to reduction in benefit costs.

The following outcomes were collected and valued using social valuation techniques to quantify the value of the change to different stakeholders:

**Fig 2 - Identified Outcomes**

Stakeholders	Outcome	Indicator	Quantity	Value
Young Offenders (44)	Make more informed decisions and more motivated to change	Number of young people showing positive asset score change in 'motivation to change'	8	£600
	Reduced substance misuse	Number of young people showing positive asset score change in 'substance misuse'	17	£696
	Reduced offending	Number of young people who do not re-offend in 6 months	30	£2,639
	Better future prospects	Number of young people showing positive asset score change in 'education, employment and training'	11	£2,694
	Improved relationships with family	Number of young people showing positive asset score change in 'Family and personal relationships'	16	£520
Criminal Justice System	Reduced cost of managing a young offender	Number of young people who do not re-offend in 6 months	30	£16,257
Health	Reduced cost of substance misuse treatment	Number of young people showing positive asset score change in 'substance misuse'	17	£11,727
Families	Improved relationships with young person	Number of young people showing positive asset score change in 'Family and personal relationships'	16	£630
DWP	Reduced cost of supporting those out of work	Number of young people showing positive asset score change in 'education, employment and training'	11	£4,492

Impact was then adjusted to take into account duration of outcomes, the drop off over time, the contribution of other services and what would have happened without a substance misuse worker. Young offenders on similar orders without a substance misuse worker were used as a control group to compare outcomes against. This ensured that the actual impact of the service is not over claimed.

### Return on Investment

The evaluation calculated that the substance misuse work creates a Social Return of **£3.91** for every £1 invested, within **2 years**. The total value of the service is £263,564.

The proportion of value to each stakeholder is tabled below:

**Table 2 - Stakeholder Value**

Stakeholder	TOTAL Value	%
Health	£126,651.60	46%
Criminal Justice System	£83,398.41	30%
Young People	£39,960.55	14%
DWP	£20,483.21	7%
Family members	£5,405.40	2%

The outcomes that created the most value were:

- Reducing the cost to the health service of treating substance misuse
- Reducing the cost of offending to the Criminal Justice System (YOS, Police, Courts, Custody)
- Reducing DWP costs of supporting disengaged young people
- Reducing the impact of offending for young people (predominantly those on referral orders)
- Improving future prospects for young people (predominantly those on pre-referral orders)

This return is comparable to the NTA cost benefit analysis<sup>1</sup> that forecasted a ratio of £1.98 for every £1 invested for immediate benefits and between £4.66 and £8.38 in long term benefits. Overall, this evaluation of substance misuse work found that there appears to be higher additional impact for those who are pre-referral (e.g. final warning) and those with a referral order, with significant value around engagement in EET for those pre-referral and reduction in offending for those with a referral order.

While research suggests that a proportion of the young people will naturally experience remission or become non-problematic drug users *without* intervention, this SROI has evidenced that there is significant positive value to service users, their families and the public sector, even in the short term, of investing early and working with all young offenders who have substance misuse issues.

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<sup>1</sup> Specialist drug and alcohol services for young people – a cost benefit analysis, Frontier Economics, DFE, 2010