

# PLAN C

Many young people live challenging lives and you probably don't get any more challenging than young people who are exposed to or involved in violent crime or gang related activities. **PLAN C** focuses on these young people. The programme aims to provide practical help with the difficulties the young person is facing as well as intensive strength based mentoring. The mentoring is designed to help build stability in the young person's life. It is focused on enabling the young person to make a conscious decision to move away from gang related activity or involvement in violent crime.

## SUCCESS STORIES

**J's progress in one year:**

- Weekly police visits at home → This has ceased
- Disruptive in learning environment → Enrolled at college, completed interview for job/apprenticeship on construction site taking CSCS card, recruiting other criminalised young men to job opportunities, improve literacy and confidence.
- Poor relationship with his mother → Improved relationship
- Did not want to engage → Now visits office frequently and independently

**K's progress:**

He had no job and no opportunities to develop job skills that would be useful in later life. But he really felt it was important to get an education. A family member is involved in drug dealing, so K's mentor was concerned that while he was unemployed he might become involved too.

His mentor has worked with him and now...

- He's obtained a bus pass, and his school attendance has increased dramatically
- He's joined a running club, he received financial support from the project for running shoes and registration fees and hasn't missed a single session. He's built self-esteem and feels proud to be part of the club
- He is very aware of consequences involved with drugs and does not like anything to do with it

## OUR APPROACH

Our mentoring is **STRENGTH FOCUSED**. This means it moves away from just looking at the risk and needs of the young person. Instead, it brings a focus on the strengths and resources he has in and around him. This might be support from other family members or the wider community, for example. Our mentoring approach focuses on how we develop those strengths further. Of course, there is an element of the programme that helps young people with the range of here-and-now practical issues they face (like school exclusion or housing problems). After all, unless we can address these challenges we very often won't get a look into what they might want to do with their lives and how they might use their strengths and talents to develop their full potential.

At the same time, however, we recognise that some of the young people we work with often live chaotic lives. So – unless we address the 'here and now' **PRACTICAL ISSUES** facing the young person (housing issues, school exclusion, and so on) – we very often won't get a look into what they might want to do with their lives and how they might use their strengths and talents.

### Strength focused Mentoring

We aim to understand the young person's world from their perspective and work with them to develop a route out of gang/criminal activity. The route we try to create aims to provide the young person with alternatives which are just as powerful to them as what they get from gang activity. Central to this process is supporting the young person to envision a new role for themselves, to see themselves in a different light with a refreshed purpose.

### Addressing Practical issues

We recognise that we can't do this without supporting the young person to address the 'here and now' issues that are contributing towards 'pulling' them to adopt 'risky' behaviours. Our mentoring also might involve addressing issues with school, employment, housing, health or family. Our role here revolves around signposting to other agencies better placed to address the issue and working alongside them to offer rounded support to the young person throughout the process.

## WHAT NEXT...

The long term goal of our mentoring is for the young person to desist from gang related criminal activity and/or wider criminal activity. We recognise that 'desistance' for young people, who have been involved in persistent offending, is a difficult and complex process.

Our aim is to kick-start or contribute to the process that results in a change in the young person's mind-set and, consequently, their behaviour. We've seen that a holistic approach is necessary, and resilience and practical support elements of mentoring often need to go hand in hand.

If you'd like to find out more about the programme, or how we could work with your town or city get in touch with the Plan C team at [brap@brap.org.uk](mailto:brap@brap.org.uk)

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