

Unit 5: The Role of the NI Justice System SEN (Inclusion)



Lesson 3: Young Offenders

This lesson relates to young offenders and how they can be encouraged to stop any reoffences after they have served their time behind bars. It also introduces the role of the Youth Justice Agency in Northern Ireland and looks at the similarities and differences between youth and adult experiences of imprisonment. The lesson primarily encourages pupils to consider how offenders can integrate themselves into society and respect the justice system.

Planning	
Prior Learning	<p>Pupils should have gained prior knowledge and understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • justice and lawfulness; • the role of the Northern Ireland justice system; and • the role of the PSNI.
Learning Outcomes	<p>Pupils will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe the reasons why prison isn't always the best option for people who break the law; • identify ways in which people could be prevented from reoffending once released from prison; • define the role of the Youth Justice Agency; • discuss the similarities and differences between prison life for those under 18 and those over 18; and • outline ways in which young offenders could be stopped from committing further crimes.
Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities Focus	<p>Pupils will have opportunities to develop the following:</p> <p>Managing Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ask focused questions; <p>Being Creative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learn from and value other people's ideas; • take risks for learning; <p>Working with Others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • listen actively and share opinions; • be fair; <p>Thinking, Problem Solving and Decision Making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make links between cause and effect; and • examine options and weigh up pros and cons.

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Attitudes and Dispositions	<p>Pupils will be encouraged to develop the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• empathy;• openness to new ideas; and• concern for others.
Resources	<p>Transcript of animation <i>The Role of the Northern Ireland Justice System</i> Statistics: PPT Unit 5 Lesson 1–3, slides 17 and 18 Unit 5: Lesson 3 Resource A – Preventing reoffending Unit 5: Lesson 3 Resource B – Comparison table Unit 5: Lesson 3 Resource C – Person outlines</p> <p>Youth Justice Agency NI video</p> <p>International Juvenile Justice Observatory video of Young people’s experience of the formal youth justice system</p>

Suggested Teaching and Learning Strategies

Launch

Lead a class discussion, using prompt questions and effective questioning techniques:

- 1. What is the role of the Northern Ireland justice system?**
- 2. Why do people sometimes reoffend when released from prison?**
- 3. Why do you think people under the age of 18 commit crimes?**

You may now wish to show the transcript of the animation *The Role of the Northern Ireland Justice System*.

Possible answers and discussion points:

- 1. to protect the people of Northern Ireland and ensure that when someone has committed a crime, they are dealt with fairly.*
- 2. Because they are so used to prison life, they find it hard living in normal society again.*
- 3. Because they are bored and think there is nothing else to do; because their friends are doing it and they face peer pressure; family members or groups they have joined may force them to.*

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Activities

Activity 1: Stop reoffending

- For some background information about prison reform, read Prison reform: Prime Minister's speech by David Cameron, 8 February 2016, available at www.gov.uk/government/speeches/prison-reform-prime-ministers-speech.
- Display the following statistics, on **Unit 5 Lesson 1–3-PPT: slides 16 and 17** and explain: '46% of all prisoners will reoffend within a year of release. 60% of short-sentenced prisoners will reoffend within the same period.'
- Ask the class if they think these statistics are surprising.
- Divide the class into groups of three or four. Give each group one of the questions in **Resource A – Preventing reoffending**.
- Invite them to come up with as many ideas as possible to help stop reoffending.
- Encourage groups to elect a scribe, a timekeeper and someone to feed back to the class.

Possible answers and discussion points:

- *Provide more support to ex-prisoners when they leave prison, for example help to find housing and details of key contacts in their community.*
- *Provide education and training in prison.*
- *Help provide jobs for the prisoners, so they have work to do on the outside and so that can earn their own money.*
- *Make sentences harsher, so people will be put off committing crimes in the first place.*

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Activity 2: The Youth Justice Agency

- Show the Youth Justice Agency [Introduction video](#) available on www.youtube.com.
 - Ask the pupils to work in pairs and discuss the questions below. You may wish to show the short introduction again.
1. What is the Youth Justice Agency?
 2. What does it do?

Some key points:

1. *The Youth Justice Agency was launched as an Executive Agency, as recommended in the Criminal Justice Review 2000, on 1 April 2003. It replaced the former Juvenile Justice Board. It aims to make communities safer by helping young people to stop offending. The agency works with children aged 10–17 who have offended or are at serious risk of offending.*
 2. *The agency provides a range of services, often delivered in partnership with others, to help children to address their offending behaviour, divert them from crime, assist their integration into the community and meet the needs of victims of crime. These front-line services are delivered by the Youth Justice Services and Custodial Services directorates.*
- Ask the pairs to write on a Post-it one thing they learned from the video and then stick their notes on a noticeboard or wall.
 - Read out some of the notes.

The Youth Justice Agency helps young people to stop reoffending.

- *They work with over 1200 young people each year.*
- *They help young offenders, victims, their families and communities.*
- *They help victims meet the person who carried out the crime against them.*

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Activity 3: The same or not?

- Show the video [Young people's experience of the formal youth justice system](#) available at www.youtube.com in short sections before moving on to the next section.
- Then ask the pupils to work in groups of three or four to discuss the similarities and differences between young offenders being incarcerated and those over the age of 18.
- Provide copies of **Resource B – Comparison table** for them to record the similarities and differences.
- Ask for feedback and use focused questions to facilitate further discussion.

Some key points:

Similarities

- They are kept in a secure facility and are not allowed to come and go freely. – They do not have a say in what they eat.
- They attend class and there are punishments if they don't go.

Differences

- People who work with under 18s are youth and community and social worker qualified.
- Staff don't wear uniform.
- They call cells bedrooms.
- They call the offenders young people, not prisoners, and staff are called staff, not prison officers.
- Young people have their voice heard on day-to-day activities.

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Activity 4: Turning things around

- Ask the pupils to work in pairs. Tell them they are going to put themselves in the shoes of a young offender.
- Give each pair one of the four outlines from **Resource C – Person outlines**.
- Write the following questions on the board (available on **PPT slide 21**) and ask your pupils to document their ideas around the outside of their outline:
 - *What could society do to make sure that this young person does not reoffend?*
 - *How could they become a member of society who looks out for their community and respects the justice system?*
- Ask the pupils to leave their outline on their desk and walk around the room, looking at other people's ideas.

Possible answers and discussion points:

- *They could join a local community group, where they could become a volunteer and use their free time in a productive way.*
- *They could go back to school or a further education college to gain more qualifications so they can get a better job, make more money and have a better standard of living.*
- *They could get involved in a project to help clean up their local community.*

Debrief

Discuss the following:

- 1. Do you believe that prison sentences for reoffenders should be harsher than for their first offence? Why/Why not?**
- 2. What are the main reasons why young offenders often appear to have a negative attitude towards the police?**
- 3. How can we change this attitude and ensure that young people have more trust in the justice system overall?**

Possible answers and discussion points:

- 1. Yes** – *if the sentence they were given for their first offence hasn't worked, then the sentence for reoffending should be harsher.*
No – *if someone has committed a crime before and reoffended, they may not have realised or cared about the seriousness of their actions and harsh sentencing may not be a deterrent.*
- 2.** *They might think that the police are hard on them and treat them as if they were adults. They might believe the police have a negative opinion of young offenders and nothing they do could change their mind.*
- 3.** *By training the PSNI on how to deal with young offenders; the PSNI could work with more young people in their communities to break down negative barriers and stereotypes.*

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Unit 5 Lesson 3 – Resource A

Questions: Preventing reoffending

How can **government** help prisoners not to reoffend once they are released from prison?

How can **different agencies** help prisoners not to reoffend once they are released from prison?

How can **communities** help prisoners not to reoffend once they are released from prison?

How can **individual citizens** help prisoners not to reoffend once they are released from prison?

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Unit 5: Lesson 3 Resource B Comparison table

Similarities

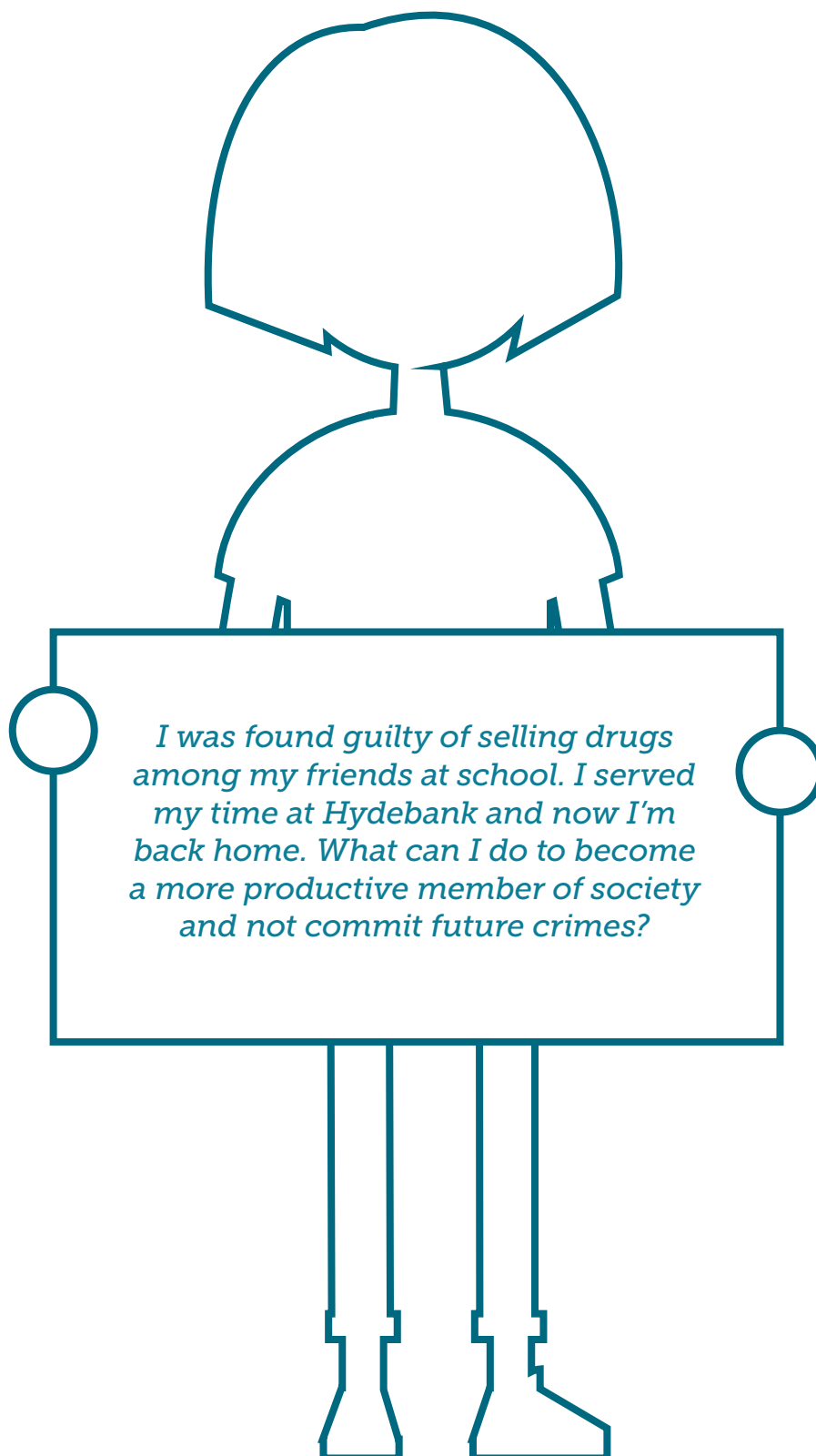
Differences

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Unit 5: Lesson 3 Resource C Person outlines



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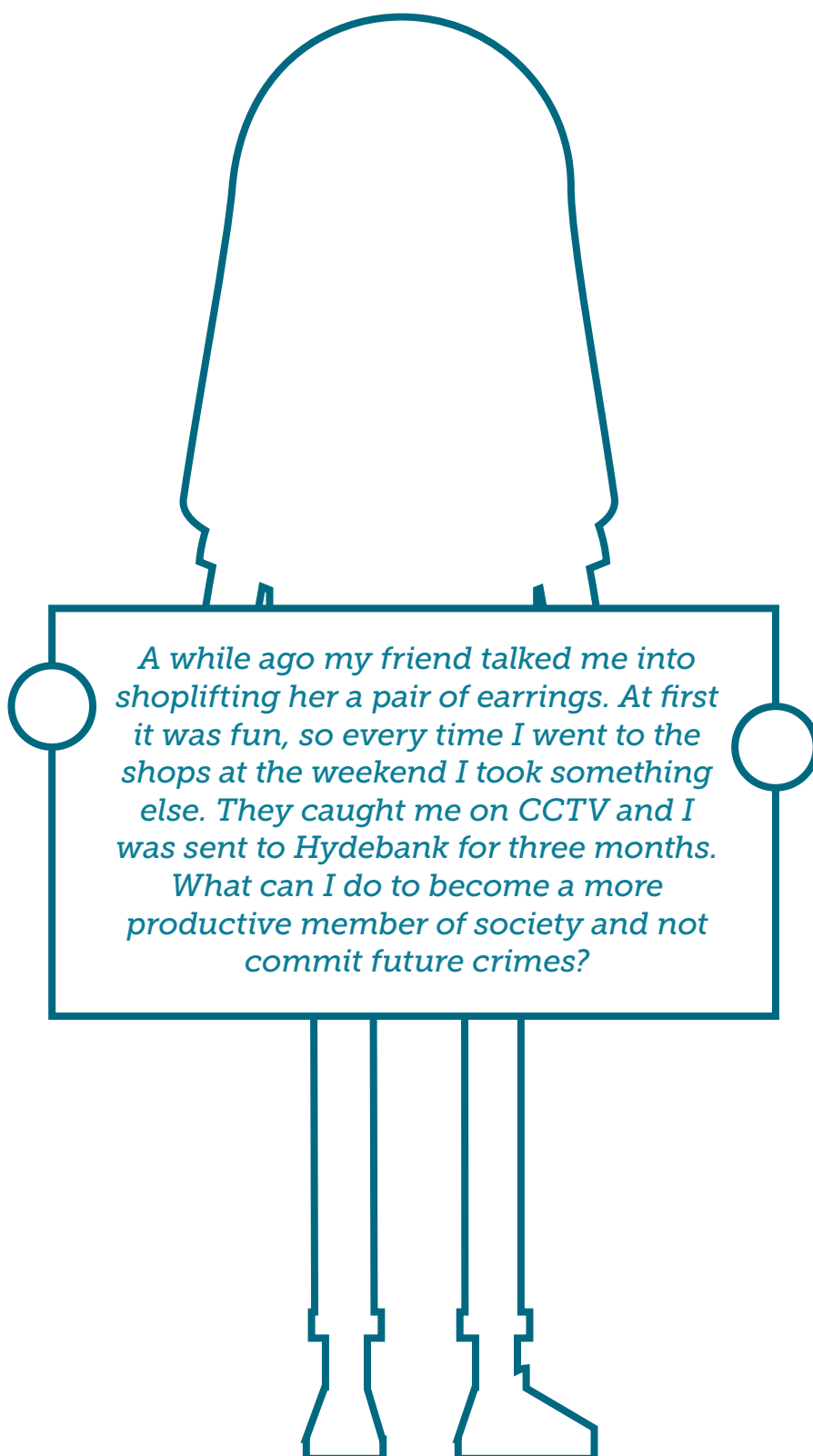
Unit 5: Lesson 3 Resource C Person outlines



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