



Information for prospective Volunteer Panel Members

September 2016

What is a Referral Order?

In April 2002 a new Court Order for young people became available. Young people who offend, and who are aged between 10 and 17 years, who are convicted by the Court for the first time, are now likely to be made subject to a Referral Order.

The only other options available to the Court in these circumstances are:

- A complete discharge
- A Hospital Order
- A Custodial sentence, for very serious offences.

The young person, and his or her parent(s)/carer, are required to attend a Youth Offender Panel, made up of at least two trained volunteers from the local community, a Youth Offending Service Officer, and sometimes the victim of the crime.

The panel will negotiate and agree a contract of activities and behaviour, tailored to the needs of the individual young person.

Additional information is also available from the website below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/youth-offenders-referral-orders>

The components of the contract may include:

Activities aimed at helping the young person to make amends for the harm caused by their behaviour. This might include them writing a letter of apology to the victim, and/or taking part in some form of reparative work to benefit the individual or the community.

Examples include:

- Conservation work, gardening and maintenance work at a variety of venues.
- Activities to help prevent further offending, such as support to get the young person back in to school, or maintaining them in school.
- Attendance at 'offence specific' groups, where the young person is encouraged to explore the consequences of their crime on all those affected by it.
- Help with alcohol, drug or substance misuse, language or communication difficulties and support within their family environment.

Youth Offender Panels

What are Youth Offender Panels for?

The panels are special because they involve local people working with young offenders,

their parents and victims. Panel members will talk and listen to these key people and agree with the young offender a plan to put right the harm already done and stop future offending. Panels aim to:

- Make sure young offenders taken responsibility for their behaviour
- Help put things right for the victim
- Bring young people back in to the law abiding community.

Who will be on the panels?

Each panel will have at least two community members who are volunteers from the local Youth Justice Service.

Who will the panel deal with?

The young person's parents or other supporter/carer will be there. The victim of the offence will normally be invited to attend and can bring someone with them to support them. If they choose to they can ask for their views to be taken in to account or be represented by someone else at the panel meeting.

We are looking for you!

We need youth offender panel members who can represent their local community. That means men and women of any age (18 or over) and from every ethnic and social

background. We want people who are good at listening and talking.

Will I be trained?

We do not expect you to have all the skills needed to be a youth offender panel member from the start. We will provide full training which will help you prepare for a challenging but worthwhile task. The training will be over 7 days. Once you become a panel member you will continue to receive regular training and supervision to support you in your work.

What if I have a criminal record?

Being a youth offender panel member involves working with children and for that reason we are required to carry out a full criminal record check. Previous convictions, especially those which are minor in nature and old will not automatically bar you from becoming a panel member. This is something we can discuss further.

How much of my time will it take?

We would expect you to spend about two to three hours every time you prepare for and sit on a panel. These would usually take place on a weekday in the early evening.

Will I be paid?

No – panel members are volunteers. You will not make money from this, but you will not be out of pocket. Travel costs will be paid.

Where can I find out more?

For further information please refer to the following website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/youth-offenders-referral-orders>

Or contact us at Sheffield Youth Justice Service on 0114 2288555.

