

support them in their work.

What if I have a Criminal Record?

Youth Offender Panel members work closely with young people and their families and for that reason each member will be required undergo a complete Police Check. Previous convictions, especially those which are minor in nature and old will not prevent someone from becoming a Youth Offender Panel Member.

How much time does this involve?

It is envisaged that you would spend about 5 hours a fortnight on being a Youth Offender Panel Member. This covers preparing for and sitting on a panel meeting approximately twice a month.

Will I be paid?

Youth Offender Panels are comprised of Volunteers from the local community. Panel members do not make money from being members of the Panel, but equally members do not lose out as expenses for travel and childcare will be reimbursed.

Your local Youth Offending Team:

Covering: Ramsgate · Thanet · Dover
Apollo House · Chapel Place · Ramsgate · Kent · CT11 9SA
Tel: 01843 587976

Covering: Sittingbourne · Swale · Canterbury
Ave of Remembrance · Sittingbourne · Kent · ME10 4DD
Tel: 01795 473333

Covering: Folkestone · Shepway · Ashford
Queens House · Guildhall St · Folkestone · Kent · CT20 1DT
Tel: 01303 224289

Covering: Gravesend · Dartford · Swanley
Joynes House · New Road · Gravesend · Kent · DA11 OAT
Tel: 01474 544366

Covering: Tonbridge · Tunbridge Wells · Sevenoaks
Croft House · East Street · Tonbridge · Kent · TN9 1HP
Tel: 01732 362442

Covering: Maidstone
Bishops Terrace · Bishops Way · Maidstone · Kent · ME14 1LA
Tel: 01622 691640



A Guide to Youth Offender Panels



What is a Youth Offender Panel?

Youth Offender Panels were set up in 2002 as a completely new way of dealing with young people who commit crimes. Local people take the lead in challenging young offenders to take responsibility for their actions and help them to change their behaviour to prevent further offending.

Youth Offender Panels also give victims of offences the opportunity to say how the offence has affected them and what might help to put things right.

Youth Offender Panels are special because they involve working with young offenders, their parents or carers, and victims. Panel members will discuss the offence and consequences of the offence with all parties and having heard the discussion, will agree an action plan, the 'contract', that will involve the young person making some good to help the victim and will include activities to help prevent further offending.

This may include:

- Writing a letter of apology
- Carrying out some practical work for the victim or local community, to help put right



some of the harm done.

The aims of the Panel are to:

- Ensure young offenders take responsibility for their behaviour
- Help put things right for the victim
- Bring young people back into the law-abiding community.

Who will be on the Panels?

Each Youth Offender Panel will comprise two volunteer members of the local community and a professional from the local multi-agency Youth Offending Service whose role will be to advise the lay members of the panel.

Who will the Panel deal with?

Youth Offender Panels deal with young offenders aged 10 to 17 who have appeared at Youth Court for the first time and who have pleaded guilty. Magistrates will make a Referral Order which lasts from 3 to 12 months.

This is seen as an important opportunity to nip offending in the bud at an early stage.

Who will attend the Panel Meetings?

The parents of the young person will be present at the Youth Offender Panel meeting along with any other adults who may be able to offer support and guidance – such as Social Workers, Teachers etc.

The victim of the offence will normally be invited to attend in person and can bring someone with them to provide moral support. If they do not wish to be present then their views can be recorded and taken into account or be presented by someone else at the Panel meeting.

Youth Offender Panels will regularly review the progress of the young person throughout their Referral Order. Should the young person fail to complete any aspect of their Referral Order, the Youth Offender Panel has the power to send the young person back to Court.

How you can help

From time to time we recruit Youth Offender Panel Members who can represent their local community. Panel members can be men or women of any age (over 18) from every ethnic background. We are particularly keen to recruit panellists from under represented groups.

Youth Offender Panel members need to be good listeners and able to interact with others. No formal qualifications are required

Training

Members of Youth Offender Panels will be offered full training to help prepare them for this interesting and worthwhile task. Initial training will be over a number of sessions. Once these have been completed, Panel members will continue to receive regular training sessions to