

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

WHAT IS A REFERRAL ORDER?

A referral Order is a Criminal Court Order that lasts between 3 and 12 months and is given to most young people for a first conviction that they have admitted in Court. The purpose of the order is to help you put right the harm your offending caused and help you not to offend again in the future.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

An officer from the Youth Offending Service will meet with you and your parents or carer in order to carry out an assessment. They will then write a report and arrange a 'Youth Offender Panel' who will agree with you what you have to do.

WHY AM I GOING TO A YOUTH OFFENDING PANEL?

All crime is serious and has consequences, but this is the first time you have had to go to Court for an offence. Because you pleaded guilty, you are being given the chance to be dealt with in a different way.

A panel of usually three people, two from the local community and one from the Youth Offending Service, will discuss with you and your carers what happened and if the victim attends, ask them how they feel about the offence and what they would like to happen to help put it right. The panel meeting will be much less formal than Court, but you are still expected to attend on time and to treat everyone with respect.

At the end of the meeting a contract will be agreed with you, it will include:

- Carrying out some practical reparation work for the victim or the local community, to help put right the harm done.

It could include:

- Writing a letter of explanation to the victim.
- Completing structured victim awareness work with victim liaison police and Youth Offending Service officers.
- A special programme of support, activities and advice, to help you to stop offending and find different things to do. (It might deal with difficulties you may have such as not getting the most out of school, or drug or alcohol misuse).



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Every three months you will have to attend another panel meeting with you and your carer to review your progress and discuss any problems, if you experience any difficulties with the contract you can ask to meet with the panel at any time to discuss them. Parents or carers should also ask for support if required.

WHAT ARE THE RULES?

- You must keep all the appointments given to you by the Youth Offending Officer.
- You must attend the panel meetings.
- You must do any reparation that you agreed to do.
- Tell your Officer if you change your address.
- Allow your Officer to see you at home when required.
- Do the things that are set for you in your contract.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON'T CO-OPERATE?

- You will be asked for an explanation and possibly evidence by your Supervising Officer, who will then decide if your reason is acceptable or not.
- If your explanation is unacceptable you will be warned and ultimately you will have to go before an emergency Panel Meeting which may send you back to court.
- The Court will read a report from your Supervising Officer stating why you have not completed the order to help them decide what action to take.

BUT WHAT IF I HAVE PROBLEMS WITH THE PROGRAMME?

We want your order to succeed. If you have any problems in completing the contract let your officer know as soon as possible. A panel meeting will be held and your contract may be changed.

WILL I HAVE A CRIMINAL RECORD?

If you complete the actions agreed in the contract your conviction will be 'spent' under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. This means that, in most circumstances, you will not have to tell anyone about it, nor will other people have a right to know about it.

See your supervisor for exceptions to this.

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