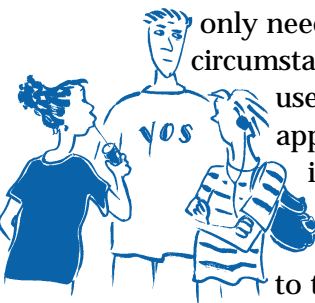


A Referral Order can last from 3 months to one year. You will be expected to carry out the various elements of your plan during that period. The Youth Offending Service will help support you through this period.

Every three months or so you will be asked to attend a panel meeting so that your progress may be reviewed and any problems may be addressed. If you fail to complete any activity on your plan you will have appear before the panel who may send you back to Court.

If you successfully complete all the actions required in your contract then there will be a panel meeting at the end of your sentence period. Your conviction will be “spent” as soon as the order is discharged and therefore

only needs to be declared in special circumstances. This may be very useful to you if you are applying for a job for instance. Further details can be given by the YOS worker when you speak to them.



What Happens Now?

You will be contacted at home, and an appointment made to discuss the process with you and your parents. A date will then be made for the panel meeting.

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

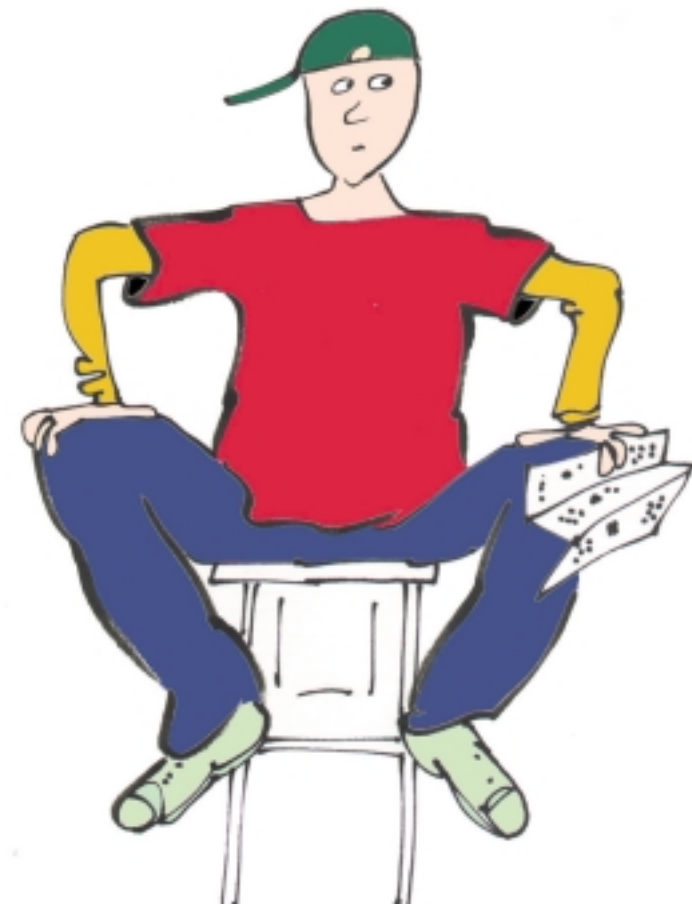
Covering: Folkestone · Shepway · Ashford
 Queens House · Guildhall St · Folkestone · Kent · CT20 1DT
 Tel: 01303 224289

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 Referral Orders



What is a Referral Order?

The length of the Order is decided by the Magistrates at the Youth Court according to the seriousness of the offence. The Youth Offender Panel will discuss the offence and look at ways to help you to put things right.

The purpose of a Referral Order is to help prevent further offending, by

- Helping you not to re-offend
- Helping your family & friends support you in stopping offending; and
- Hearing how the victim of the offence feels and help you to put right some of the harm that has been done.

Why a Youth Offender Panel?

As this is your first time in Court and you have admitted your guilt, you will be referred to a Youth Offender Panel. This panel is made up of two volunteers usually from the area in which you live and an officer from the local Youth Offending Service.



When first introduced in April 2002 Youth Offending Panels were a new way of dealing with young people who offend. Local people take the lead in discussing with the young person their offence and the consequences of their offence with the aim of helping them take responsibility for their actions and helping them to change their behaviour to prevent further offending.

Youth Offender Panels also give the victim of the offence the opportunity to tell the young person how the crime has affected them and how the young person may help to put matters right.

Victims can choose whether to attend or not but you should be prepared for this.

What happens after Court?

A member of the Youth Offending Service will arrange to meet with you to discuss the procedure. You will be given a date for you to attend a Youth Offender Panel and write a report. If you are under 16 Years old your parent or guardian must attend with you.

It is important that you attend this meeting. Failure to do so will result in your being returned to Court. If your parents or guardians fail to attend with you when the Court has ordered them to, they may be taken to Court.

What Happens at the panel?

The order itself actually starts from the date of the first panel. Each person (including you and your parents) present will be given the opportunity to discuss the offence and how it has affected them.

The victim of the offence will be given the opportunity to say how they feel about what happened and what they would like to see happen now. If the victim chooses not to attend, their views may well be reported to the panel.

The panel, having heard the discussion, will agree with you an action plan, the 'contract', that will involve you making some good the harm done to the victim and will include activities to help prevent you offending again.

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.
- A special programme of support, activity and advice to help you stop offending and find different things to do. It might deal with any difficulties you may have with school, drugs or alcohol.