How does the scheme work?

Youth on Track is an early intervention scheme for 10-17 year olds that identifies and responds to young people at risk of long-term involvement in the criminal justice system.

The Department of Justice funds non-government organisations to implement the scheme since 2013. Currently, the scheme is operational in the following sites:

- Mid North Coast (Bulahdelah to Nambucca)
- Coffs Clarence (Coffs and Grafton area)
- Hunter (Lake Mac to Port Stephens)
- Blacktown (incl. Mt Druitt and Quakers Hill)
- Central West (Dubbo, Cowra, Orange area)
- New England (Tamworth, Armidale area)

Youth on Track provides police and schools with an opportunity to refer young people, considered to be at medium or high risk of re-offending, to a support service without requiring a court order. The young person’s engagement in Youth on Track is voluntary.

Once a young person is eligible and referred to the scheme the Youth on Track Service Provider provides one-on-one case management focusing on the underlying causes of the young person’s involvement in crime.

Youth on Track works with the young person on their behaviour and attitudes, engaging with school, who they hang out with, alcohol and other drug issues and family support.

Why Youth on Track?

“The referral process to Youth on Track is simple and the case management is effective. I have found Youth on Track to be a valuable resource for my work and for the young offenders in the area.” Police Youth Liaison Officer

Benefits of Youth on Track include:

- experienced caseworkers
- an offending risk and need assessment tool to guide case plans
- one-on-one case management
- evidence based offence-focused behavioural and family intervention
- links to support services including education, employment, health and other community services
- a decrease of participant’s formal contact with police
- a reduction in a young person’s risk of re-offending
- improved engagement with family and education

What is the eligibility criteria?

A discretionary referral can come from local schools and police youth liaison officers for young people who have received at least one caution, conference or charge from NSW Police and are thought to be at high risk of re-offending. The young person must also:

- be 10-17 years old
- have at least one formal contact with police (caution, charge or Youth Justice Conference) where the offence occurred in one of the Youth on Track Local Area Commands
- have exhibited risk factors of offending (such as truancy, contact with police, child at risk reports, pro-criminal peer association, family history of domestic violence, and substance abuse),
- must live or go to school within a Local Area Command that is involved in Youth on Track
- not have a current or prior supervised court order or spent time in custody on a control order.

Another referral source is the automatic referrals. The Youth on Track screening officer makes
referrals by screening data contained in the NSW COPS database. Young people who have at least two formal contacts with police and who are assessed as having a 60% or greater likelihood of offending may be referred. The offence must occur in one of the Youth on Track Police Local Area Commands.

How can you be involved?

Identify suitable discretionary referrals. Follow the referral process flowchart and complete a referral form.

If you refer a young person to the scheme where possible inform the young person and their carer of the referral to Youth on Track and encourage them to participate.

Information should be provided by you to the Youth on Track service provider once the young person has been referred.

If there are safety concerns in relation to the young person and/or their home environment police should provide Youth on Track with that information.

Information sharing between Youth on Track, referral agencies and other service providers is authorised under Chapter 16A of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998. This is for the young person’s safety, welfare or wellbeing or where this will ensure the safety and wellbeing of others.

For more information

Youth on Track Offices

- Hunter office: (02) 4033 4911
- Blacktown office: (02) 8886 6300
- Mid North Coast office: (02) 6589 5000
- Central West office: (02) 6884 8526
- Coffs Clarence: 0427 317 595
- New England offices:
  - Tamworth: 0427 181 536
  - Gunnedah: 0429 056 247
  - Armidale: 0429 073 180
  - Inverell: 0429 145 176

Screening Flowchart

Discretionary Referrals

DEC Process start

DEC provides name & DOB of YP for pre-screening to Screening Officer

YLO process start

YLO submits referral to YOT for screening

Screening officer

Does YP meet eligibility criteria?

YES

YP not screened

No

YES (DEC)

YES (YLO)

YP screened and referred to Youth on Track Provider, where possible informs YP and parent.

Youth on Track Provider will contact referrer for further information.

Youth on Track Unit

- Telephone: (02) 8346 1334
- Email: youthontrack@justice.nsw.gov.au

Visit the website at www.youthontrack.justice.nsw.gov.au