YOUTH ON TRACK

A model for early intervention with young people
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Youth on Track
A model for early intervention with young people

Purpose of this document

This document describes a model for identifying and responding to young people at risk of criminal offending or who may already be in the criminal justice system. The model is based on early intervention principles and an interagency approach to the management of the needs of these young people and their families.

The model takes into consideration the work and recommendations of the Noetic Group in their 2010 “Strategic Review of the NSW Juvenile Justice System”. Importantly, that review noted that the juvenile justice system in NSW needed to be considered afresh. This proposed model builds on a number of the important components of that review, especially the need to focus on intervening early and focusing on reducing those problems making some young people more likely to commit crime.

The model is also informed by a series of consultations with government and non-government organisations, community groups and others working in the field of juvenile justice.
Young People and Crime in NSW

Research shows us that while a significant proportion of young people will at some time commit some type of offence, its only a small proportion that do so on an ongoing basis. Most young people who do offend will stop without any form of intervention and without ever coming into contact with the criminal justice system.\(^1\)

However, there is a small group of juvenile offenders who do not stop, and this group has been found to be responsible for a disproportionate amount of crime. Research shows that young people who come into contact with the criminal justice system at a very young age are the most likely to continue offending for longer.\(^2\)

There are factors that have been identified that distinguish short term and more persistent offenders. Where the short-term offenders act out of opportunity, persistent offenders are often from “disadvantaged backgrounds, characterised by poor education, disrupted families and engagement in regular risk taking behaviour” such as substance abuse and acts of aggression.\(^3\) These young people are likely to continue offending into adulthood unless they receive targeted intervention to address the underlying causes of their involvement in crime.\(^4\)

Demographic profile of young people at risk of offending

The most recent survey of young people in detention provides a snapshot of the social attributes of those young people and the problems they face. Specifically they had experienced:

- disengagement from education and poor educational achievement;
- family dysfunction, such as having experienced abuse or trauma, and being placed in out-of-home care;


\(^3\) There is a body of research that has identified the high rates of juvenile offending being attributed to adolescent brain development which predisposes juveniles to be impulsive and engage in risk-taking behaviours. For example, see Steinberg, L, 2009, Should the science of adolescent brain development inform public policy? American Psychologist, 64(8), 739-750 and Van Leijenhorst, L, Zanolie, K, Van Meel, CS, Westernberg, PM, Rombouts, S, & Crone, EA, 2010, What Motivates the Adolescent? Braing Regions Mediating Reward Sensitivity across Adolescence, Cereb. Cortex, 20(1): 61-69.

\(^4\) NSW Department of Juvenile Justice, NSW Young Persons in Custody Health Survey, Key Findings Report 2003.

\(^5\) The identified risk factors associated with offending behaviour are discussed in detail in the following section.

\(^6\) Farrington, page 3.
• disability, including cognitive and mental health impairments;
• poverty and low socio-economic status;
• a family history of unemployment and welfare dependence;
• alcohol and other drug misuse and other risky behaviour;
• having an offending parent and / or exposure to a criminal lifestyle or pro-criminal attitudes;
• close friends who engage in risky behaviour and crime, and
• lack of structured activities or employment.

When we look at the young people who have been sentenced to detention, there problems are stark. The overwhelming majority, 87%, have a psychological disorder. In fact 73% of them had at least two psychological disorders. 70% of them had some type of diagnosable behavioural disorder. However given these problems less than 10% had ever been admitted to a psychiatric unit prior to detention.

Most of these young people had left school by the age of fourteen and 66% had been suspended three of more times by then. 77% scored low average or worse in intellectual ability tests and almost half had one or both parents imprisoned at some time. Alarmingly more than one in ten of them had attempted suicide at least once in their lives.

**Juvenile offending**

Recorded crime statistics provide a picture of the types of offences that bring young people to the attention of the police. The 2010 BOCSAR report on trends in juvenile crime showed that over the five year period to December 2010 the number of young people proceeded against had:

• fallen by between 5% and 12.8% in four major categories (rob with a weapon not a firearm, break and enter dwelling, break and enter non-dwelling, and motor vehicle theft);
• remained stable in nine categories (including sexual assault offences, non-domestic violence assault, steal from motor vehicle and malicious damage to property); and
• risen in three categories by between 4.2% and 12.4% (domestic-violence assault, steal from store and steal from person).

**How juveniles are proceeded against by police**

In 2010 4,619 juveniles were given warnings by police, 10,541 were given a caution and 1,566 participated in a youth justice conference. A further 8,630

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7 Young people in custody health survey, 2009
juveniles faced 24,599 charges in the Children’s Court. These figures equate to a total of 25,356 formal criminal justice proceedings for that year.

In addition to these formal contacts, in 2010 more than 50,000 juveniles were issued with penalty notices (on the spot fines) by police and other law enforcement officers.\(^9\)

**Court outcomes for juvenile offenders**

The most common penalty for most juveniles in NSW is some form of supervision in the form of a bond or probation. Around half of juveniles received one of these outcomes for the years 2006 to 2010.\(^10\)

**Crime reduction intervention**

Currently, interventions aimed at reducing re-offending behaviour are only provided following formal contact with the court system. That is, it is only after a young person has had multiple and increasingly serious contacts with the criminal justice system are they likely to be provided with intervention that is aimed at reducing their criminal behaviour.

Intervention provided at this late stage is potentially provided too late. For the greatest benefit interventions aimed at reducing criminal activity need to be provided at the first indication that the juvenile is at risk of continued offending. There is a body of research that has identified the risk factors that are associated with chronic offending. Section 2 discusses the risk factors that have been linked to offending and the protective factors that have been linked to turning offenders around. These factors are discussed in the context of developing an early intervention system that will enable interventions to be delivered at a far earlier stage than is currently possible.

**2 Risk & protective factors**

Research has demonstrated that behaviours displayed by children, as young as pre-school age, and behaviours displayed by juveniles can flag potential risk of later, or continuing criminal activity.\(^11\) As previously noted, failure to identify the risks and failure to address the underlying causes of these risks increases the likelihood of juvenile offending.

Available knowledge about juvenile offending points to the need for early intervention, and where possible, intervention that comes before contact with the criminal justice system. There is strong evidence that suggests that early intervention

\(^9\) Ibid, data from the NSW State Debt Recovery Office at page 6.
\(^10\) BOCSAR data. Request reference number to be added.
\(^11\) Homel, R Pathways to Prevention, Farrington, at page 3.
can reduce antisocial behaviour in children and delinquent behaviour in adolescents,\textsuperscript{12} especially for those living in disadvantaged communities.\textsuperscript{13}

Risk factors

A significant amount of research has been undertaken into the factors that are related to a young person’s participation in criminal activity.\textsuperscript{14} These factors can be used to flag potential risk of whether or not a person is likely to become involved in criminal activity.\textsuperscript{15}

There are a number of specific risk factors have been consistently identified in research as being associated with juvenile offending.\textsuperscript{16} Risk factors include features of a young person’s individual characteristics, their family and their social/environmental circumstances.

The main factors are:\textsuperscript{17}

- Antisocial attitudes
- Antisocial peers
- Antisocial personality patterns
- History of antisocial behaviour
- Problematic home environment
- Problems and lack of achievement at school/work
- Problematic leisure and recreational activities
- Substance Abuse

These factors are known as dynamic risks. That is, these are things in the life and environment of the young person that are amendable to intervention and change.

There are a number of other static risk factors, things that can’t be changed, that increase the likelihood of a person’s involvement in crime. These static risks include:\textsuperscript{18}

- Number of contacts with the criminal justice system
- Offence type
- ATSI status
- Experience of trauma
- Age at first contact with the criminal justice system

\textsuperscript{12} Bogenschneider, K, date, Do We Know Enough to Prevent Youth Crime?, Wisconsin Family Impact Seminars.
\textsuperscript{13} Homel et.al, 2006, The Pathways to Prevention project: doing developmental prevention in a disadvantaged community, Trends & Issues in crime and criminal justice, AIC, August.
\textsuperscript{14} Cite all the BOCSAR studies and others from previous draft
\textsuperscript{15} cite Homel and others .
\textsuperscript{16} Mackenzie, Chen et.al, Farrington, Homel.
\textsuperscript{17} Andrews and Bonta (2006). Note that other risk factors that have been identified include the experience of trauma,
\textsuperscript{18} Chen et.al 2005.
Protective factors

Research has identified a number of protective factors that can reduce the likelihood of a young person engaging in criminal behaviour. Where they are strong these factors can effectively reduce the likelihood of continued criminal behaviour through offsetting the influence of exposure to multiple risks.\(^\text{19}\)

Individuals may have similar risk factors, but differ in recidivism as a result of the presence or absence of protective factors. They represent strengths to build upon and can reduce the impact of risk factors that are present. Protective factors may involve strengths in individual disposition and competencies, family environment and relationships or external support systems.

Protective factors that have been identified as ameliorating anti-social behaviour and delinquency are:

- Pro-social behaviour (such as empathy)
- Good cognitive performance (such as appropriate language development, and good academic performance)
- Supportive, interested parents or carers,
- Engagement with community activities
- Social and problem solving skills

The research on risk and protective factors underpins the elements of the proposed early intervention model in Section 5.

Identifying Low to High risk offenders

Central to early intervention is the identification of young people who are at risk of offending. There are a number of screening tools that have been developed in other countries that are used to identify risk and protective factors in the life of a young person.

Research undertaken by BOCSAR\(^\text{20}\) has demonstrated how information that is routinely collected by government agencies in New South Wales can be used to identify young people who are at risk of re-offending. This information and the potential information sources are presented in Table 1.

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\(^{20}\) Chen, Matruglio, Weatherburn and Hua (2005); Weatherburn, Cush & Saunders (2007);
### TABLE 1 RISK FACTORS IDENTIFIED, BY INFORMATION SOURCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Indication of increased risk</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>The younger the juvenile at first contact and/or first court appearance</td>
<td>JJ / DAGJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATSI</td>
<td>Being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent</td>
<td>JJ/BOCSAR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family status</td>
<td>Not living with both natural parents</td>
<td>JJ/FACS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Placement in out-of-home care</td>
<td>JJ/FACS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One or both parents deceased</td>
<td>JJ/FACS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trauma</td>
<td>Experiencing trauma within last 5 years (death of close family member; divorce/separation;</td>
<td>JJ/FACS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>witness/victim of DV; sexual/emotional abuse)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglect/abuse</td>
<td>Being a victim of neglect or abuse</td>
<td>JJ/FACS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School attendance</td>
<td>Not attending school at time offence committed*</td>
<td>JJ/Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Has been suspended or expelled</td>
<td>JJ/Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer association</td>
<td>Association with delinquent peers/committing an offence in company</td>
<td>JJ/BOCSAR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offence type</td>
<td>Has committed a theft, deception or violent offence</td>
<td>JJ/BOCSAR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. CJS contacts</td>
<td>One or more previous contacts with the criminal justice system (incremental)</td>
<td>JJ/BOCSAR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Borderline significance

In this process, it is important to recognise the cumulative effect of risk factors on the likelihood of re-offending. That is, as the number of risk factors increases, so does the risk of re-offending.\(^{21}\)

Figure 1, reproduced from the research undertaken by BOCSAR, shows that the predicted probability of a young person being re-convicted within four years who has only one risk factor is 0.56. With the presence of two risk-factors, the probability increases to 0.71, three risk factors to 0.83, four to 0.92 and five, to 0.96.

**FIGURE 1 CUMULATIVE EFFECT OF RISK FACTORS ON RE-OFFENDING RISK**

The calculation of offending risk, based on the number of risk factors identified for the young person, would be used to determine whether they are a low risk of medium risk or high risk. This determination would inform the type and intensity of service delivery that would follow. The process of screening and assessment is discussed in Section 5.

3 What Works to reduce the likelihood of Juvenile Crime?

There is a significant body of research that has identified “what works” to reduce juvenile offending. For an intervention to be deemed successful it must have a record of proven success. Often this might be success that has been independently evaluated across a number of jurisdictions.

Central to this body of work is that for any intervention plan to be successful it must be tailored to suit the juvenile’s risks, needs and responsivity factors. That is, a one-size-fit all approach to intervention will not be effective. Another important factor is that the most successful intervention programs target both individual and family risk factors.  

There are a number of things that have been found to be successful in reducing the offending behaviour in juveniles:

- Rehabilitation programs that targeted known criminogenic risk factors;
- Skills training (social skills, lateral thinking, problem solving, negotiation, assertiveness, critical thinking);
- Re-engagement with education (alternative schools; mentoring; behavioural programs)
- Aggression Replacement Training;
- Functional family therapies;
- Cognitive behavioural therapy;
- Community employment;
- Drug treatment;
- Early intervention programs targeted at preschool and primary school children
- Multi-systemic Therapy

There are also interventions that have been found not to be successful:

- Specific deterrence interventions, such as shock probation and ‘scared straight’;

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22 Farrington, page 31.
23 Farrington, Homel, MacKenzie, Chen et.al, etc., Washington State of Public Policy.
24 Eg: head Start and the Seattle Social Development Project, Homel.
Rehabilitation programs that use vague, nondirective, unstructured counselling;
• Compliance only supervised probation or parole;
• Home confinement;
• Community residential programs;
• Urine testing;
• Correctional boot camps using a military model; and
• Juvenile wilderness programs.

4 What we currently do

Young offenders in NSW can be dealt with under Young Offenders Act 1997 (YOA) or the Children (Criminal Proceedings) Act 1987.

The YOA provides an alternative process to court proceedings through the use of warnings, cautions and youth justice conferences. The intention of the Act is to divert juveniles who commit less serious offences away from court-instituted proceedings. However, under the current system most government agencies don’t become involved with a young offender until they receive a supervised order from the Children’s Court. This is clearly too late.

Section 1 highlighted the fact that while a high proportion of juveniles commit offences, it is only a small proportion that do so on an ongoing basis. It is these juveniles who are most likely to be caught committing a crime and to come into contact with the criminal justice system.

The police will be the first formal criminal justice contact for a young person caught engaging in criminal activity. Under the YOA, police have the discretion to deal with the juvenile on a formal or an informal basis. Their decision will be dependent on a number of factors, including if this is the first time the juvenile has come to the attention of the police and the severity of the crime that was committed.

Police may issue a warning, which will be given to the young person at the time and place the offence was committed. Warnings are an immediate and direct response to low level offending. The young person is not required to admit to the offence. Warnings constitute a move on direction and police are required to record the offender’s details (name, address and date of birth). The young person’s details, along with the details of the crime are kept on the police database. However, a warning cannot be used as a record of criminal history. After a warning is issued, any further offending behaviour that comes to the attention of the police could result in formal action being taken.

Warnings not issued in the event of a violent offence or in cases where police believe justice would be better served if another approach was taken. A juvenile cannot be excluded from being given a warning on the basis of them having previously committed an offence.

If the young person continues to come to the attention of the police, a decision will be made to issue another warning or to escalate the seriousness of response to a formal caution or a referral to a youth justice conference. To be eligible for a formal caution or a youth justice conference the juvenile must admit to the offence (after
being given the opportunity to seek legal advice) and consent to the caution or conference. Eligibility for these processes is dependent on the seriousness of the offence, the degree of violence, the harm to the victim, previous offence history and any other matter deemed appropriate by the police. A denial of guilt or failure to consent to the caution or conference will result in the matter going to the court.

Formal cautions are issued by a police officer (generally a Police Youth Liaison Officer) at a police station. The offender must be accompanied by a parent or other responsible adult. Cautions can take from 20 minutes to an hour. Cautions can also be issued by a court.

Youth justice conferences are facilitated by an independent convenor and are attended by the offender and their family, the victim and victim support person/s, a Police Youth Liaison Officer and other professionals as required. Conference participants discuss the offence; the impact on the victim(s), the offender’s family and the community; and what action can be taken to right the wrong that was done.

**INTERVENTION POINT**

Under the current system, juveniles who continue to engage in criminal activity and who are caught by the police but not charged and brought before the court do not receive any intervention aimed at addressing their criminal behaviour. Regardless of how chronic that behaviour is. There is some chance that some of their problems may be addressed in a youth conferencing outcome plan, but that isn't guaranteed.

The current system requires each of the juvenile justice gatekeepers to undertake an informal risk analysis when they decide whether to proceed under the YOA or to court. This risk analysis process could be formalised and the point at which to refer for screening identified.

Whilst Police are in a position to identify (through risk assessment) young people early, the appropriate intervention may well be outside the criminal justice system.

Research has confirmed that the majority of juveniles who are given a formal caution do not come into further contact with the police. This is the group of desisters who do not require any intervention to curb their criminal behaviour. On this basis, first point of formal contact with police would not be an appropriate screening entry point.

It is important to develop a shared, validated and objective risk assessment, so there is a common understanding of high-risk young people across the sector, rather than various agencies within the sector using their own method of assessing for high-risk.

Consideration should be given to the third formal contact with the criminal justice system as the point of entry for screening.
Young people who commit serious offences, or young people assessed as ineligible to be dealt with under the YOA, will face charges in the NSW Children’s Court under the Children (Criminal Proceedings) Act 1987. This Act governs the jurisdiction of the Children’s Court and sets out the main provisions that relating to criminal proceedings.

Under the current system, it is at this time that a government agency response is made. Juvenile Justice may undertake a risk/needs assessment to assist in the development of a proposed case plan, will be responsible for over-seeing any supervised outcome orders and for the care of young offenders who are sentenced to custody.

When on bail, the juvenile may have to comply with a number of bail conditions including curfews, accommodation restrictions and/or supervision provided by Juvenile Justice. At this stage, the juvenile has not been found guilty. While on bail Juvenile Justice is responsible for supervising their bail order and the police are responsible for undertaking bail compliance checks.

A juvenile may be refused bail on the basis of the seriousness of their offence, due to concerns that they may interfere with the course of justice, or due to the absence of appropriate accommodation. Refusal of bail means that the juvenile is held in custody until their hearing, and the system does not distinguish between those who are refused on the basis of their crime and those who are refused due to their accommodation status.

The penalties a young person may receive vary depending on the seriousness of the offence and the individual circumstances of the individual. Currently it’s not until a court orders supervision by Juvenile Justice that case management is done.

Service delivery to a young offender who has been sentenced by the court is provided by a network of government and community based services that link the young offender with the support services that they need to reduce their offending behaviour and comply with their legal orders. The services that are delivered are broad and include re-offending programs, provision of accommodation services, dealing with relationship difficulties, developing employment skills, finding employment and supporting the young persons return to school.

Young people who are held in detention are also provided with comprehensive case management and program interventions through age and gender appropriate programs that aim to address the offending and developmental needs of young people in custody. The educational requirements of young people in detention are also provided for. Where possible, young people are located geographically close to their family and community to enable on-going contact with their support networks.

Both the community and detention based services provided to juveniles who have been sentenced by the court provide essential features of a crime-reduction intervention strategy. However, there is a clear need to identify the risks and develop appropriate responses before young people are sentenced by a criminal court.
5 A new approach: The Youth on Track model

Principles

There are a number of key principles that are fundamental to the design and implementation of the proposed model:

**Emphasise community safety.** Invest in innovative policy approaches and interventions that maximize the public safety by delivering better crime reduction outcomes.

**Focus on Rehabilitation.** The rehabilitation of young people who offend is both a moral imperative and a requirement for achieving reduced crime rates and improved public safety. Breaking the cycle of crime and turning lawbreakers into law-abiding citizens is a priority because it advances public safety, reduces future offending and minimizes the number of future victims.

**Use evidence based interventions.** There is a wealth of research and evidence about what works in rehabilitating young people who offend. This knowledge should lead decisions about the interventions applied with young people involved in the criminal justice system. Evaluation and review of chosen strategies to ensure adherence to what works principles.

**Make best use of taxpayer dollars.** Invest programmatic and service funds to interventions that will deliver the highest rate of reduction of offending and crime. Divest in programs for which there is no evidence of efficacy.

**Support victims.** Evidence indicates that there is a genuine benefit to incorporating practices that emphasise victim engagement, empowerment, and restitution. These concepts yield benefits not only to victims, but also to taxpayers and offenders, since an offender fully recognising and acknowledging the harm they have caused another person is often critical to rehabilitation.

Youth on Track Model

The new model aims to separate legal outcomes from intervention in most cases and places a strong emphasis on and intervening early, engaging families and responding to real and definable problems.

The model proposes creating a system of case management that can be entered by a young person who is over 10 years of age and may be identified as at risk and also follow a person who has offended through to contact with the criminal justice system, including into and out of detention.

That means that young, minor offenders won’t have to become entrenched in the system before getting services, it also means that there is no suggestion of going soft on serious offenders to be able to divert them into treatment.
This model will allow young people, who may not have committed a serious crime, but who exhibit extensive risk factors, to be referred to assessment and case management at a point far earlier than is currently possible. It also allows those young people who may have committed an offence, but may not have any signs of ongoing criminal behaviour to be dealt with on the basis of their offence.

Under the model, young offenders will be screened to determine their likelihood of re-offending. Those deemed at risk of re-offending will be assessed to determine the type and level of problems that need to be addressed. They will then be referred into a system of case management that will work with them, and their families, to reduce their re-offending behaviour.

A major component of Youth on Track proposal is a dedicated case management function. The case management of young people at risk of offending is new and fills a gap in working with young people (and their families) to curb their offending early in their criminal career. This function will be fully delivered by non government organisations contracted and funded by the Department of Attorney General and Justice.

Key principles of the Youth on Track model include:

- Intervening earlier to divert young people from the criminal justice system
- One-on-one case management to manage and support juvenile offenders and those at risk of offending
- Separating treatment from punishment
- Responding to risk and need rather than simply to crime
- Responding promptly to enable a response to an immediate problem

The Youth on Track model has six key elements:

1. Identification and Referral
2. Screening
3. Assessment
4. Case Management
5. Intervention
6. Exit

Identification and referral

Referrals to Youth on Track will be made by police and subsequently from specified schools. There will be automatic referral for young people who meet a set offending threshold, and more targeted referrals for others from police and schools.

Research by BOCSAR shows that a third formal contact is a significantly accurate indicator of future offending and the best point for referral to Youth on Track. Therefore, any young person on their third formal legal contact will be automatically referred to Youth on Track for screening.

Screening

Screening will be done using an actuarial tool that uses key data available in the justice system. The tool has been developed by BOCSAR specifically for Youth on Track. It is anticipated that the bulk of participants in Youth on Track will enter through this method of referral and this is the only method that will be used on the commencement of the program.
There is a range of other factors that can indicate the likelihood of offending for young people much earlier in their criminal career. During the first 12 months of operation the Department of Attorney General and Justice will work with NSW Police to develop a screening method, which may be able to identify this cohort of young offenders prior to their third formal involvement with the justice system.

A process for referrals from schools will be determined following further discussion with the Department of Education and Communities. All referrals will be made to a small screening unit in DAGJ, which will facilitate the screening process and then refer those who have a higher than the pre-determined level of re-offending to the relevant case manager.

Following screening, a young person who has been identified as having a high likelihood of offending/re-offending, will be assigned a case manager.

**Assessment**

If a young person is already being case managed by another agency, it is likely that case management is not targeting criminogenic risk. Youth on Track will make contact with that case manager and provide them with an assessment of the young person’s offending behaviour and advice and assistance in addressing the offending. The Youth on Track case manager will not become directly involved with the young person but will be available to assist the case manager by providing specialist advice and making services or programs available that target criminogenic risk.

If a young person is not already being case managed, the case manager will contact the young person and their family, or a person responsible for the young person, and seek to engage them in the Youth on Track program.

If the young person and their family, or a person responsible for the young person, do not consent to participate, the case manager will still develop a plan based on available information and seek to contact agencies that may be working with that young person to provide them with advice about the young person’s behaviour and strategies that may mitigate their risk.

If the young person and their family consent, the case manager will conduct a thorough assessment of level of the young person’s criminogenic risks and need. The assessment will be conducted using a specifically designed tool, the Youth Level of Service Case Management Inventory (YLS-CMI). This tool licensed from Multi-Health Systems Inc. It has been tested internationally, adjusted for Australian conditions, and has been specifically assessed in its accuracy with Indigenous young people.

**Case management**

The case management and supervisory function will be managed through contracted NGOs.

The case manager will be responsible for working directly with the young person and their family, or those responsible for the young person, to change those things in their environment that are leading to offending behaviour. They will be responsible for identifying and arranging access to, or brokering services, and programs, as well as providing some services directly (e.g. counselling and motivational interviewing).

Youth on Track will use three levels of case management: low, medium and high. The level will be set according to the outcome of the YLS-CMI assessment and level of risk and need of each young person and their family. Levels of risk and need will
vary with the individuals on the program, with some offenders having a relatively high risk but low levels of need. It will take less effort to curb these individual’s re-offending, while others may have relatively lower risks but their needs are high and require a greater level of intervention.

Case managers will be expected to have a level of professional qualification and experience in case management. Each case manager will be assigned a mix of cases across the three levels of intensity and the same case manager will work with clients as they progress through their plans. Case managers will also be able to seek specialised assistance, such as psychological assessments or treatment, for intensive clients when required.

Each case manager will have a direct Supervisor. The Supervisor’s role will be to approve all assessments and case plans and to conduct periodic reviews of progress against objectives for each plan.

**Intervention**

Following the YLS-CMI assessment, the case manager will develop a case plan. The plan will identify interventions targeting criminogenic risks and for meeting urgent social needs of the young person and their family. While each plan will be specific to the needs of the young person and their family it is anticipated that many will involve common elements, such as re-engagement with the education system and strengthening the family. Each case plan will focus on achieving specific measurable objectives directly linked to the identified criminogenic risk and need. The case plan will have a specific time limit and have set review points.

**Exit**

The Supervisor will determine if a young person moves from one stage of case management to the next and determine when a case may be closed and a person exited from the program. The Supervisor plays a crucial role in ensuring quality in the case management process, and ensuring key decisions in that process are made objectively and outside the case management relationship.