



Youth Justice Agency

An Ghníomhaireacht um Cheartas i leith an Aosa Óig

Agentrie fur Young-Yins Fang'It wi tha Laa

YOUTH CONFERENCE YOUR DECISION

**MAKING COMMUNITIES SAFER BY HELPING
CHILDREN TO STOP OFFENDING**

What is the Youth Justice Agency?



The Youth Justice Agency is an organisation that works with children who get into trouble with the law. The Agency works with children aged 10 up to their 18th birthday.

We do this by:

- Talking to you about what happened and understanding why you got into trouble.
- Talking to you about what is going on in your life and any support or help you might need.
- Talking to your family and those who look after you about what they think you need help or support with.
- Help you to take steps to make things better and meet the person harmed by your actions.

What is a Youth Conference?



A youth conference is a meeting between you, your family/ carer and the person harmed by your actions (the victim).

It is a meeting that gives you the chance to talk about what you did and why you did it.

It also gives the victim the opportunity to talk to you about how they have been affected by your actions.



Preparing for your conference

After you have agreed to take part in a youth conference, a staff member from the Youth Justice Agency will meet with you and your family. This person is called a Youth Conference Coordinator and it is their job to support you and the victim to prepare and attend the meeting.

The Youth Conference Coordinator will work closely with you and your family or those who look after you. It is important that you meet with your coordinator.

Your coordinator may meet you at home, in the Youth Justice Agency office or a place that is private and comfortable for everyone.



Meet with you and your family or those who are looking after you. They will spend time getting to know you and those who care for you.



Explain what a Youth Conference is again. They will go over this to make sure you understand what will happen and what the next steps are.



Ask you what happened and how you got into trouble. They will ask you to tell your story in your own words. They will ask you what you think and how you feel.



Ask you about areas of your life such as school, family, friends, things that are going well and areas you need help and support with.

Who attends?

There are some people who must attend the meeting. These are:

You and your parent or those who look after you (an appropriate adult) such as parent, family member or social worker.

A PSNI Youth Diversion Officer who is trained for the meeting.

The Youth Conference Coordinator.

Others who can attend

There are some people who can also attend the meeting.

The victim and someone who can give the victim advice and support.

A member of your wider family circle, or a family friend.

A person who can support you to make positive changes and help you connect into your community like a youth worker, teacher etc.

What happens at the meeting?

Your Coordinator will talk to you about how long the meeting will last. Everyone will talk about what happened and how it has affected them. You may agree to an Action Plan. An Action Plan can include:

- An apology to the person harmed. (The victim)
- An activity of your choosing to show that you are sorry.
- Making a payment towards losses, where appropriate.
- Working with the Youth Justice Agency for a period of time.
- Doing unpaid work in the community.
- Participating in activities which will help you make positive changes and better choices.
- Restrictions on what you can do or places you can go.
- Treatment and support for mental health or help with drugs or alcohol problems.
- If you have been referred from court, an electronic tag or custody can be discussed as part of the Action Plan.

What happens after the meeting?

The Youth Justice Agency will tell the Public Prosecution Service or the Court what you have agreed.

If the Action Plan is accepted you will have to start it within a couple of days.


The Youth Justice Agency will support you to complete your Action Plan.




What happens if you don't finish your plan?

The Action Plan is a legal agreement showing the victim and yourself that you really want to change, stop offending and make up for the harm caused.

If you do not stick to the requirements in your Action Plan your case may be taken to court and re-sentenced.



Don't worry if you don't understand everything. Your Conference Coordinator will explain all of this to you.



Remember, coming to a youth conference meeting is the first step you have made to show others and yourself that you are willing and able to make amends and change.



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Trauma
Informed
Practice

Adverse
Childhood
Experiences

This leaflet was created in
consultation with children
and young people in YJA