

Referral Order

What is a Referral Order?

Referral Orders are used for the majority of young people appearing before the Court for the first time and pleading guilty, but can be used in other circumstances too. The Court will decide on the length of the order which will be between 3 and 12 months, depending on the seriousness of the offence. The Order will start on the day you agree your contract at the Referral Order Panel.

What happens next?

A member of the Youth Offending Team will see you to discuss your offending and to prepare a report for the Referral Order Panel (The Panel). You will have a chance to discuss this report with your YOT Officer before your Panel meeting.

Panel Meetings – What are they?

Once a Referral Order has been made, you will be asked to attend a Referral Order Panel meeting which will be held at a local venue. Your parents, guardian or a member of the Local Authority will also be required to attend the Panel meeting. The Panel will be made up of two members of the community and a member of the Youth Offending Team. The Panel will see your report before they meet with you. The Referral Order Panel will agree a contract with you. Once the contract has been drawn up, the Panel will review your progress. Review meetings will be held after 1-3 months and at the completion of your order. If you fail to enter into a contract or fail to comply you may be returned to court.

Parents' responsibility

If you are under 16 years of age at least one parent will be required to attend all Referral Order Panel meetings with you. The Court can also insist that parents or guardians of young offenders who are over 16 also attend the Panel meetings (where the Court considers it appropriate).

What may be included in the contract?

Part of the contract will include reparation and the victim will be invited to attend a Referral Order Panel meeting to discuss how the crime affected them. It will also include a personal programme to avoid re-offending.

What are the rules?

To comply with your Referral Order you must:

- Attend Referral Order Panel meetings when required.
- Arrive on time for an appointment.
- Allow your YOT Officer to see you at home when required.
- Comply with any reasonable directions of the YOT Officer.
- Agree and sign a contract (if you agree with the contents).

The Referral Order can be discharged up to three months early if you have completed the contract and the Panel recommend it to the court.

You should also note that, during the Order, the following behaviour is not acceptable on

Youth Offending Team premises, or when you are accompanied by Youth Offending Team staff:

- Attending while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, thereby being unable to take part in supervision.
- Fighting, violent or aggressive behavior or threats of violence.
- Other conduct or language that might reasonably give serious offence to Youth Offending Team staff, other persons under supervision or members of the public.
- Other willful or persistent non cooperation or behavior which will affect the purpose of your or others' Orders.

What happens if I do not cooperate?

If you do not comply with the conditions of the Referral Order the Youth Offending Team will hold a meeting and the Contract may be varied or, if you are unable to offer a reasonable explanation, the Panel must refer you back to the Court. If the Court considers that you have `breached' your Order, it may:

- Tell you to complete the Referral Order.
- Extend the Referral Order by up to three months
- Revoke the Referral Order and pass another sentence.

Complaints:

If you are not happy about the service you receive you should talk to your YOT Officer. If you still feel dissatisfied you can raise your issues with the Youth Offending Team Manager:

West Berkshire Youth Offending Team,
Merchant House, 14-20 Oxford Road,
Newbury, Berkshire RG14 1PA.
Tel: 01635 553600.

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Merchant House, 14-20 Oxford Road, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 1PA.

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