

# Youth on Track

## Service Specification 2020



# Table of Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Background</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1	Introduction	4
1.2	Youth on Track's role in the Criminal Justice System	5
<b>2</b>	<b>Youth on Track Implementation</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1	Youth on Track Locations	5
2.2	Youth on Track Target Group	6
2.3	Governance of Youth on Track	7
<b>3</b>	<b>Youth on Track Operational Framework</b>	<b>8</b>
3.1	Referral and Screening	8
3.2	Eligibility and Suitability Criteria	10
3.3	Engagement	10
3.4	Assessment	11
3.5	Case Management	13
3.6	Interventions	14
3.7	Exit Planning	16
<b>4</b>	<b>Youth on Track Service Provision</b>	<b>16</b>
4.1	Trauma Informed Practice	16
4.2	Culturally Appropriate Service Provision	16
4.3	Managing Disclosures	17
4.4	Record Management	17
4.5	Youth on Track Service Provider Staffing	17
4.6	Staff Training	17
4.7	Stakeholder Engagement	18
4.8	Maintaining Contact with the Referral Source	18
4.9	Complaint Handling	18
4.10	Work, Health & Safety	19

<b>5</b>	<b>Contract Governance</b>	<b>20</b>
5.1	Review Meetings	20
5.2	Data Collection	20
5.3	Reporting Requirements	20
5.4	Performance Measures	20
5.5	Quality Assurance Process	21
5.6	Communications and Media	21
<b>6</b>	<b>Document information</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Document history</b>	<b>23</b>

# 1 Background

## 1.1 Introduction

Youth on Track is a model of early intervention support designed to coordinate services for 10-17 year old offenders before they become entrenched in the criminal justice system. Youth on Track funds suppliers to engage eligible young people and their families in case management and evidence-informed interventions to address their individual criminogenic risks.

Youth on Track provides NSW police and other eligible agencies with an opportunity to refer young people, assessed as being medium to high risk of re-offending, to a support service without requiring a mandate; the young person's engagement is voluntary.

Youth on Track has operated in the following locations since July 2013:

- Mid North Coast – Mid North Coast and Manning Great Lakes police local area commands (LACs)
- Hunter – Port Stephens, Newcastle City, and Lake Macquarie LACs
- Blacktown – Blacktown, Mount Druitt, and Quakers Hill LACs

Youth on Track has also operated in the following locations since July 2016:

- Coffs Clarence – Coffs Clarence LAC
- New England – Oxley LAC and New England LAC
- Central West – Orana LAC and Canobolas LAC

From July 2019 Youth on Track commenced in a seventh site:

- Riverina – Riverina Police District

### **Objectives**

The key objectives of Youth on Track are:

1. To identify young people at high risk of continuing in the criminal justice system in a timely way
2. To provide one-on-one case management and evidence-informed interventions targeted to address the individual criminogenic risk factors of the young person
3. To provide an evidence-informed family intervention to support the family of young offenders to reduce the young person's contact with police

### **Principles**

The 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 young 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

Non-government organisations (NGOs) are funded to engage eligible young people and their families in case management and to provide evidence-informed interventions that respond to a young person’s identified offending related risks and needs. Evidence demonstrates that programs that work across social settings, such as within the family and school, can impact on the whole of the young person’s life.<sup>1</sup>

YoT has the benefit of multi-agency support and aims to work collaboratively with other service providers to ensure consistent service provision without duplicating services.

## 1.2 Youth on Track’s role in the Criminal Justice System

Many young people who offend will stop without any form of intervention and without further contact with the criminal justice system. However, young people who come into the criminal justice system at a young age are more likely to offend for a longer time, offend at a greater frequency and go on to receive a custodial sentence. YoT focuses on intervening early, engaging families and providing targeted, individualised interventions to address the underlying causes of the young person’s involvement in crime.

The criminal justice system diverts a high number of young offenders out of the system through the use of cautions and youth justice conferences. Youth on Track works alongside this process to provide young offenders at higher risk with intensive intervention to address their criminogenic needs before they receive a supervised order with Youth Justice.

Youth on Track complements the existing criminal justice system by operating alongside and after formal contact with the system.

## 2 Youth on Track Implementation

Youth Justice, the Youth on Track service provider (the Provider) and partners of YoT work collaboratively to implement, evaluate and adapt YoT processes and procedures as necessary to continue to improve the scheme.

### 2.1 Youth on Track Locations

Youth on Track has operated in the following locations since July 2013:

Site	Local Area Commands	Main towns covered	Referrals/yr	Participants/yr
<b>Blacktown</b>	Blacktown, Mt Druitt, Quakers Hill	Blacktown, Mt Druitt, Quakers Hill	120	60
<b>Hunter</b>	Newcastle City, Port Stephens, Lake Macquarie	Newcastle, Raymond Terrace, Belmont	96	48
<b>Mid North Coast</b>	Mid North Coast & Manning Great Lakes	Kempsey, Taree, Port Macquarie, Nambucca	120	60

<sup>1</sup> Australian Institute of Criminology. (2002). *What works in reducing young people’s involvement in crime? Review of current literature on youth crime prevention*. Canberra, Australian Capital Territory: Author.

Youth on Track expanded to the following locations in December 2016:

Site	Local Area Commands	Main towns covered	Referrals/yr	Participants/yr
Central West	Orana and Canobolas	Dubbo, Narromine, Gilgandra, Cowra, Orange	96	48
Coffs	Coffs Clarence	Coffs Harbour, Grafton	96	48
New England	Oxley and New England	Tamworth, Gunnedah, Armidale, Inverell, Tenterfield	96	48

From July 2019 Youth on Track commenced in a seventh location:

Site	Local Area Commands	Main towns covered	Referrals/yr	Participants/yr
Central West	Riverina	Wagga Wagga	45	23

## 2.2 Youth on Track Target Group

YoT targets 10 – 17-year-old offenders who have a 60% or greater likelihood of re-offending (identified through the GRAM Screening Tool). These young people have received one or more formal contacts with police (cautions, youth justice conferences or charges) and are likely to also have other risk factors. The target group has not yet received a supervised order with Youth Justice.

The YoT target group often come from an unstable family background, have an increased risk of homelessness, may have one parent who has spent time in prison, have a higher likelihood of a history in care, have experienced mental health issues, and demonstrate lower than normal cognitive and academic ability. In addition, a high proportion is likely to have experienced early disengagement from education and have used alcohol or other drugs.

Using data from the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research regarding young offenders in 2016 the YoT cohort is predicted to have the following demographic characteristics:

Site / LAC	Estimated Referrals	Participant Target	ATSI	10-15 yr olds	Male
Blacktown	120	60	49%	38%	85%
Central West	96	48	82%	52%	89%
Coffs (Coffs Clarence LAC)	96	48	79%	56%	82%
Hunter	96	48	48%	51%	83%
Mid North Coast	120	60	82%	58%	95%
New England	96	48	85%	54%	96%
Riverina	45	23	86%	36%	75%
<b>Total</b>	<b>669</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>86%</b>

## 2.3 Governance of Youth on Track

YoT is supported by a two-tiered governance structure and a dedicated Department of Communities and Justice YoT Unit based in Youth Justice.

### ***Implementation Committee***

The YoT Implementation Committee oversees the high-level development, implementation and management of the YoT scheme.

The Committee is responsible for:

- the identification and resolution of any high-level interagency policy issues arising
- the coordination of any broader Government activity that may be required to support the implementation and operation of the project
- the establishment of regional governance arrangements

The Committee is led by the Director, Strategy and Engagement, Youth Justice and includes representatives from NSW Police, Office of Aboriginal Affairs, Department of Communities and Justice – Community Services, Department of Education, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Ministry of Health and NSW Treasury.

### ***Regional Governance Committees***

The Provider must establish and chair a Regional Governance Committee in each of the YoT sites. The Committees support the implementation by identifying and resolving barriers impacting effective YoT service delivery in the local site, provide an escalation pathway for resolution of individual case plans, and promote best practice and local relevance of YoT.

Regional Governance Committees meet at least quarterly for the first six months and then as decided by the Committee. The Committees should include, at a minimum, representatives from the YoT Unit, the local Youth Justice office, the Police Local Area Command, the local Community Services office, and a local education representative. Representatives should be senior manager level to enable swift decision making.

### ***Youth on Track Unit***

YoT is supported by a dedicated Department of Communities and Justice YoT Unit whose role includes:

- contract management of the Provider/s
- supporting the Provider/s to deliver YoT where required
- quality assurance
- reporting to government
- coordination with high-level stakeholders
- coordination of the expansion of the scheme to new locations
- operational functions including coordinating and providing support for all screening and referral processes from the referral sources to the Provider/s and facilitating processes for obtaining information regarding alternative case managers

The YoT Unit works closely with the Provider/s to identify and address service provision and program management issues as they appear.

## 3 Youth on Track Operational Framework

The 'What Works' literature and the Risk-Needs-Responsivity (RNR) principles provide an evidence-based approach to effective interventions with young people who offend. See the *'What Works' with Young Offenders: Youth on Track Guidelines* on the YoT website for more information. The 'What Works' literature and RNR principles inform the development of the Youth on Track Operational Framework.

YoT has six key stages:

1. Referral and screening
2. Engagement
3. Assessment
4. Case Management
5. Intervention
6. Exit planning

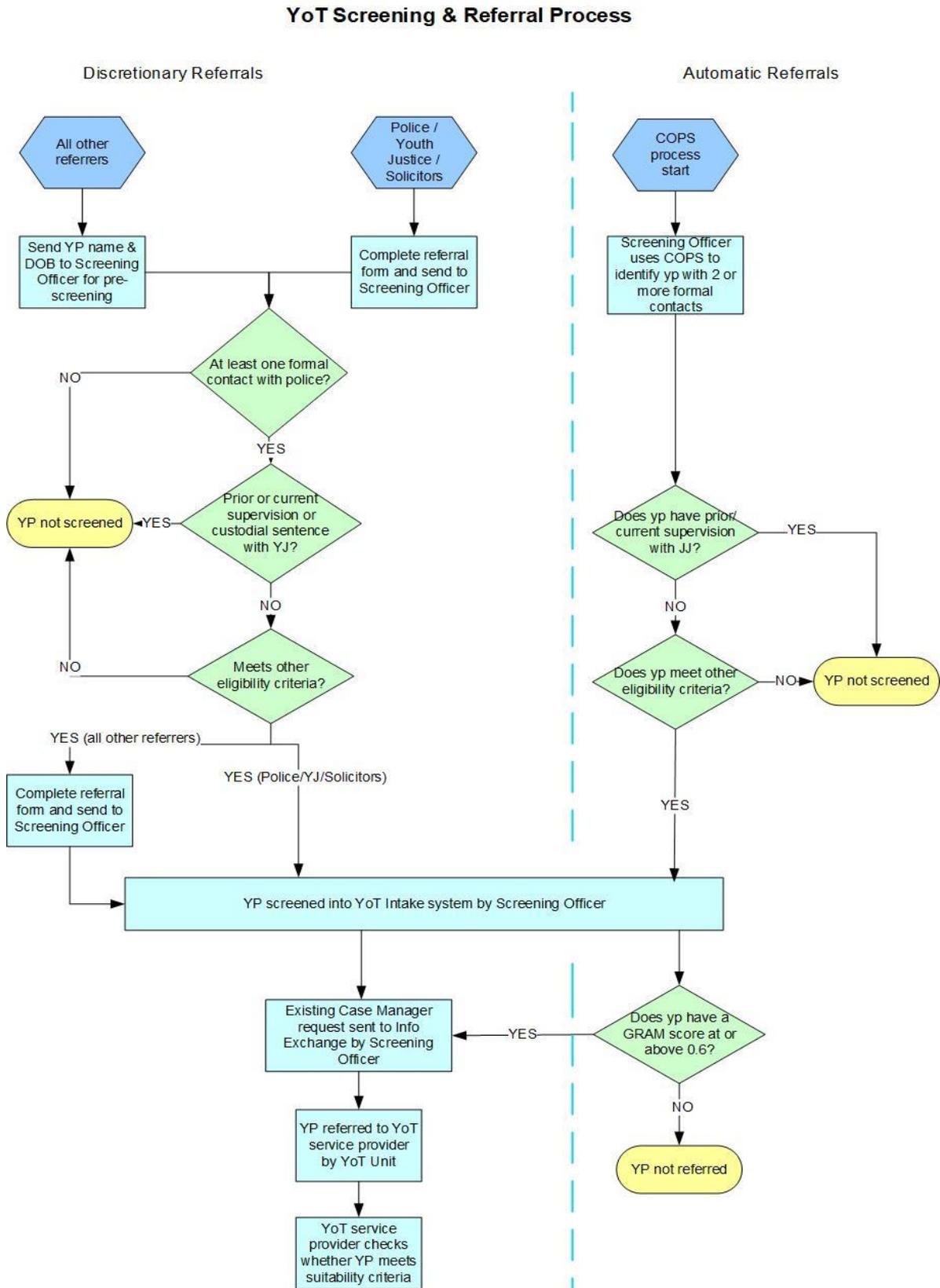
### 3.1 Referral and Screening

NSW Police, local schools, Youth Justice NSW, Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Services, solicitors, Department of Communities and Justice-Community Services, NSW Health-Community Health, Out of Home Care Providers, Family Referral Service, Headspace and other mental health services can refer young people to YoT when the young person has a range of criminogenic risk factors and has received at least one formal police contact (a caution, conference or charge). This is called a discretionary referral.

Young people who receive their second formal police contact are automatically screened to assess their eligibility for the scheme. This is called an automatic referral. All screening is completed by the Youth Justice, Youth on Track Screening Officer who co-locates with NSW Police.

Once the young person has been screened and found eligible and suitable for the scheme the Screening Officer refers them to the Provider. The referral includes information about whether the young person has an existing case manager with another agency, referral source, contact information, offences, known risks and any upcoming court or conference dates.

Figure 1: Screening and Referral Flow Chart



## 3.2 Eligibility and Suitability Criteria

A young person is eligible for YoT if they:

- offend within a YoT Local Area Command **or**
- are referred by referral agencies in the YoT site area **and**
- have at least 1 formal contact and several risk factors (discretionary referral) **or**
- have at least 2 formal contacts and have a 60% or greater chance of reoffending informed by a GRAM of 0.6 or greater (automatic) **and**
- are 10-17 years old
- have never received a supervised court order

All young people who are eligible are screened by the Screening Officer with support from the YoT Unit. The Provider identifies if the young person is unsuitable. A young person is unsuitable if:

- the young person lives too far outside of the service area of the YoT site
- the Provider completes a risk assessment of the young person and/or their family and determines them unsafe to work with prior to consent
- their existing case manager declines the young person's participation in YoT as they deem it is not in the young person's best interests

### ***Waitlist***

A waitlist is managed by the Provider when a YoT site is at full case load capacity and cannot take additional clients. **Priority on the waitlist is given to discretionary referrals** made by referral agencies and then by young people with the highest GRAM score.

If a young person reoffends while on the waitlist the YoT Unit conducts a new GRAM with the young person's latest offending information. The new GRAM is sent to the Provider to inform the young person's priority on the waitlist.

If the young person receives a supervised court order while on the waitlist the Provider will either expire the young person from the waitlist or they will accept the referral and negotiate with Youth Justice in relation to who will be the lead case manager. If Youth Justice takes the lead the Provider will list the young person as unsuitable due to existing case manager declining YoT (see 3.3 below).

If the young person turns 18 while on the waitlist the Provider is still expected to engage the young person once there is case load capacity.

## 3.3 Engagement

### ***Obtaining agreement from an existing case manager***

If the young person has an existing case manager with another agency, the Provider must contact the case manager before contacting the young person or parent. YoT will discuss with the existing case manager how YoT can complement the existing case plan to address the young person's criminogenic risks and needs and provide a behaviour intervention.

The existing case manager may not agree to the participation of the young person in YoT if they deem it is not in the young person's best interests, for example if the young person already has a significant number of other agencies involved in their life.

If the existing case manager agrees to the young person's participation in YoT, a strategy for delivering YoT interventions should be developed with the existing case manager.

If the existing case management ceases the YoT case manager should assume case coordination.

### ***Mutual clients with Youth Justice***

YoT aims to coordinate services to young people before they have multiple and increasingly serious contacts with the criminal justice system and involvement with Youth Justice. However, there are circumstances when a young person in YoT also has contact with Youth Justice. If the young person referred is known to Youth Justice, the YoT case manager should contact the Youth Justice caseworker prior to contacting the young person.

YoT and Youth Justice caseworkers will work collaboratively to support any mutual clients while ensuring that duplication of service does not occur. This can include young people who:

- receive a community-based supervised order following referral to YoT
- participate in a Youth Justice Conference, or
- Youth Justice is completing a background report.

The Provider should refer to the *Mutual Clients with Youth Justice: Youth on Track Guidelines* which can be found on the Youth on Track website.

### ***Contacting the young person and carer***

Once the young person is referred, it is the Provider's responsibility to contact the young person and their family to offer a service. Contact with the young person and their family should be attempted promptly following the referral. The Provider should work with NSW Police, local schools, community groups, and other stakeholders to locate and engage young people and their families.

If no consent is received, and therefore the young person has a 'declined' status, the Provider should notify the YoT Unit, the referral source and police youth liaison officer.

### ***Obtaining consent from the young person and carer***

The Provider must gain written consent by the parent/carer and young person to share information and participate in the scheme. Once this occurs the young person has an 'engaged' status. For more information on consent see the *Privacy, Confidentiality and Managing Disclosures: Youth on Track Guidelines* which is on the Youth on Track website.

### ***Responding to a young person who disengages***

The YoT case manager should make all attempts to encourage young people to stay engaged in YoT. If the young person disengages, the YoT case manager should employ strategies to encourage re-engagement. When all strategies have been unsuccessful the young person is deemed to have a 'disengaged' status. At this point the service provider should notify the YoT Unit, the referrer, and the Police Youth Liaison Officer within seven days of the young person being disengaged from YoT. If the young person re-offends after this time they will be re-screened and re-referred, if still eligible.

## **3.4 Assessment**

Once a young person consents to participate in YoT, the Provider must conduct two types of assessments:

- a cognitive disability screening tool
- the YLS/CMI-AA

## **Cognitive Disability Screening Tool**

Young people referred to YoT must be screened for cognitive disabilities using a validated tool. An example is the *Child and Adolescent Intellectual Disability Screening Questionnaire (CAIDS-Q)*. The tool should be used within 4 weeks of the young person consenting to participate in the scheme. The tool does not assess whether the young person has a cognitive disability but indicates whether the young person should be referred to an appropriate clinician to receive further assessment. The Provider must consider any identified disabilities when developing the case plan.

## **YLS/CMI-AA**

The Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory – Australian Adaptation (YLS/CMI-AA) is a risk/needs assessment and case management tool. The YLS/CMI-AA assesses eight domains of criminogenic risks and needs in the young person's life and informs the level and types of interventions to ensure that case planning is focused in the appropriate areas of need.

The YoT case manager should complete the YLS/CMI-AA within four weeks of the young person consenting to participate in YoT. The YLS/CMI-AA must then be reviewed 12 and 24 weeks after the first assessment and then at exit. The assessment assists with case planning, performance monitoring and evaluation. Gathering the information needed to conduct the assessment requires multiple interviews with the young person, their family and other relevant stakeholders. The case manager can only complete YLS/CMI-AA based on the information available.

YoT case managers must be trained in the application of the YLS/CMI-AA before conducting any assessments. The Provider is responsible for obtaining the licence from Multi-Health Systems to use the YLS/CMI-AA.

The YLS/CMI-AA consists of seven parts which are outlined below.

### **Part 1: Assessment of risks and needs**

The items in part 1 focus on the static and dynamic risk factors known to be associated with the risk of re-offending. The items listed in the inventory are those identified in the literature as most predictive of criminal activity in young people. Positive changes to these items are expected to lead to a reduced chance of antisocial behaviour. Part 1 also allows for the recording of areas of strength. Interventions should build on existing areas of strength. The assessor should use numerous sources of information to complete each item.

The items are categorised into the following domains:

- Prior and current offences
- Family and living circumstances
- Education / employment
- Peer relations
- Substance abuse
- Leisure / recreation
- Personality / behaviour
- Attitudes / belief

### **Part 2: Summary of risk factors**

This section provides an overall risk score and a summary of the individual risk levels recorded in Part 1. Sub scores from each of the subsections are recorded, as are the individual risk levels. Four categories of overall level of service are provided: low, medium, medium-high, and high. While the overall risk level assists in decisions about level of service to be provided, it is the pattern of needs that is most relevant to case planning.

### **Part 3: Assessment of other needs / special considerations**

The case manager should record information about a range of variables that may impact intervention and case plan decisions, although they do not directly affect the risk assessment. These variables are called 'responsivity' factors and must be considered in the client's case plan.

### **Part 4: Final risk level and professional override**

This part allows the case manager to consider all the information about the client, and then provide their own decision of the level of service to be delivered. This usually corresponds with the risk level indicated in Part 2. However, in some circumstances the case manager might feel that the level of risk is different to that produced by the inventory because of factors not listed in the ratings. The case manager must outline the reasons for the override.

## **3.5 Case Management**

YoT case management is a combined direct service case management and coordination model that will focus on criminogenic needs and responsivity factors. This combined model requires YoT case managers to coordinate service delivery, facilitate access to supports, and deliver interventions to address the young person's criminogenic needs and to increase pro-social behaviour. The Provider will provide individual casework and interventions following the RNR principles of risks, needs and responsivity.

### **Case load**

YoT staff may manage numerous participants at varying levels of service and for differing durations. The Provider needs to take these variations into consideration when allocating new participants.

As a general guide, it is expected that one case manager can case manage approximately 7 – 9 participants of varying levels of complexity at one time and 12 -16 engaged participants annually. On occasion this may be reduced or increased depending on the level of risk and geographical distance.

### **Level of Service**

The level of service provided to the young person is based on the YLS/CMI-AA assessment level. The risk principle of the Risk-Need-Responsivity model<sup>2</sup> indicates that young people should be provided with support and treatment levels that match their risk level. Therefore, more frequent and intensive intervention should be directed at higher-risk young people, while services should be minimised to lower-risk young people.

The Provider should aim to provide the following minimum hours and length of support for young people and their families via:

- case management and interventions provided by the YoT case manager

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<sup>2</sup> Bonta, J. & Andrews, D., 2007, 'Risk-Need Responsivity Model for Offender Assessment and Rehabilitation', *Rehabilitation*.

- interventions provided by the YoT family therapist, and
- interventions delivered by external services that have been negotiated by YoT as part of the case plan

Young Person's Risk/Needs Level	% of Participants at this Level	Hours of Support	Length of Support
High	Minimum 5%	6 hrs per week	At least 6 months (minimum)
Medium High	Minimum 35%	4 hrs per week	At least 6 months (minimum)
Medium	Minimum 35%	2 hrs per week	Up to 6 months
Low	Maximum 15%	2 hrs per fortnight	Up to 3 months

**Part 5: Intensity of Service (Program/Placement)**

The original YLS/CMI part 5 involved Program/Placement of young people who were under custodial or community supervision. The assessor would choose the level of supervision of the young person based on the risk level of the assessment. In keeping with the risk principle, the YoT case manager should consider the above levels of service to ensure the intensity of service matches the level of risk of the young person's YLS/CMI risk level.

**Part 6: Case Management Plan**

The YoT case manager should develop a case plan with the young person and their family that focuses on addressing the young person's individual criminogenic needs as identified through the YLS/CMI-AA and to increase pro-social behaviour. The case plan should also consider the young person's strengths and responsivity issues identified in Part I and III. The case plan should focus on achieving specific and measurable objectives directly linked to the identified criminogenic needs.

**Part 7 Case Management Review**

Case progress should be reviewed when there are changes in the young person's circumstances and when goals are achieved. The case manager should consider the initial risk ratings and any changes in the risk level. The YoT case manager should conduct the case progress review with the young person and their family to reflect on case plan goal progress and where necessary develop new goals.

**3.6 Interventions**

The Provider should offer a range of evidence-informed criminogenic interventions that meet the needs of the young person and their family and address the underlying causes of offending and antisocial behaviour.

The Provider should deliver the following types of interventions for young people unless they have an overall YLS/CMI-AA risk level of low or the relevant domain level is low.

**Family Intervention**

Family intervention should increase protective factors and decrease risk factors for the family. It should focus on such things as helping parents and children communicate more effectively and safely, collaboratively solve problems, resolve conflict, improve parenting skills and promote improved relationships. The intervention should work with the young person and the significant people in their lives such as parents, carers, and siblings.

Examples of evidence-based family intervention programs include Functional Family Therapy, Parenting with Love and Limits, and Multi Systemic Therapy<sup>3</sup>. Examples of other evidence-informed programs include Triple P and Collaborative Family Work.

### ***Behavioural Intervention***

The Provider will provide a behavioural intervention which focuses on addressing antisocial and pro-criminal thinking and behaviour as a core program. An example is cognitive behaviour therapy that focuses on offending beliefs, attitudes, behaviour, pro-social modelling and reinforcement, and improving skills in problem solving<sup>4</sup>.

### ***Education Engagement***

The Provider should work in conjunction with schools to improve access to education and increase a young person's engagement with education.

The Provider should support young people referred to YoT to continue, or re-engage with, the mainstream school environment by addressing any identified behavioural, emotional or cognitive issues which may impact upon the young person's positive educational participation.

### ***Other Interventions***

The Provider is encouraged to also develop and/ or deliver criminogenic focused interventions that will be available to young people supported through YoT. Interventions that are developed and/or delivered by the Provider must be evidence-informed and reflect 'what works' to reduce juvenile offending.

### ***Additional Programs and Services***

The Provider will provide, broker or facilitate access to other programs or services as required e.g.:

- Drug and alcohol counselling
- Training and employment programs
- Centrelink and other financial services
- Accommodation and accommodation support services
- Living skills development
- Social and personal development activities
- Recreation and leisure activities
- Cultural support programs

### ***Brokerage***

Providers can use brokerage as a helpful tool for engaging and retaining a young person's interest in the scheme. Brokerage can be used to assist family members, particularly in urgent or emergency situations, for example, paying part of an overdue electricity bill when the power is turned off. It is

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<sup>3</sup> Washington State Institute for Public Policy. 2016. Benefit Cost Results [ONLINE] Available at: [http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/BenefitCost/Pdf/1/WSIPP\\_BenefitCost\\_Juvenile-Justice](http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/BenefitCost/Pdf/1/WSIPP_BenefitCost_Juvenile-Justice) [Accessed 25 February 2016].

<sup>4</sup> Washington State Institute for Public Policy (2016)

recommended that brokerage is also used to facilitate a young person's access to services that the scheme cannot provide.

### **3.7 Exit Planning**

The YoT case manager should identify through the YLS/CMI-AA whether a young person has completed the scheme and is ready to exit YoT. A young person will complete the scheme once they have:

- reduced their YLS/CMI-AA score by a minimum of 4 points (or stabilised for those with a medium or low level YLS/CMI-AA) or reduced their overall risk level, and
- participated on the scheme for the minimum timeframes as set out in the Levels of Service.

Before a young person exits YoT, the case manager must conduct a review of outcomes against the goals set out in the case plan.

A young person may also exit YoT if they don't meet the completion criteria, but they are exited to an alternate case manager for ongoing support, such as Youth Justice or their out of home care service provider.

The case manager should work with the young person and their family to conduct a review and develop an exit plan and help facilitate access to ongoing community supports where required. The exit process should be participatory and allow the young person and their family to identify issues or concerns regarding their involvement with the YoT scheme. Exit planning should focus on strategies for the young person and their family to continue to improve outcomes and reduce the likelihood of the young person re-offending.

The Provider must develop a participant survey to collect feedback from participants about their experience with YoT. The Provider will collate and pass on feedback to the YoT Unit for review and quality assurance.

## **4 Youth on Track Service Provision**

### **4.1 Trauma Informed Practice**

Trauma-informed practice is a strengths-based framework grounded in a thorough understanding of the neurological, biological, psychological and social effects of trauma and interpersonal violence as well as the prevalence of these experiences in young people who are in contact with the criminal justice system.

The Provider is expected to deliver Youth on Track using a trauma-informed approach to ensure a more effective practice in preventing ongoing and escalating violence against young people and reducing the risk of re-traumatising young people.

The YoT Unit will monitor the Providers efforts in delivering services in a trauma-informed approach through review of the *Youth on Track Training Register* and the Quality Assurance Process, when requested.

### **4.2 Culturally Appropriate Service Provision**

The Provider is expected to deliver services in a culturally respectful way and to ensure service meets the cultural needs of young people. A substantial proportion of the YoT young people and families are of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background.

In Western Sydney approximately 16% of YoT young people and families are from culturally and linguistic diverse backgrounds. Where necessary the Provider should consider the use of interpreters.

The YoT Unit will monitor the Providers efforts for delivering culturally appropriate services through review of the Aboriginal Participation and Outcome Plan, the Equity Plan, the *Youth on Track Training Requirements*, and the Quality Assurance Process, when requested.

### **4.3 Managing Disclosures**

The Provider must be aware of limits of confidentiality and how to manage disclosures as outlined in the *Privacy, Confidentiality and Managing Disclosures: Youth on Track Guidelines* which can be found on the Youth on Track website. YoT case managers must also manage appropriately any disclosure of information by the young person or their family to YoT staff that gives rise to a reasonable belief that the young person's, or someone else's, safety is at risk, or that an offence has been or is likely to be committed at a date in the future.

### **4.4 Record Management**

The Provider must keep accurate and up to date records for each participant as outlined in the *Privacy, Confidentiality and Managing Disclosures: Youth on Track Guidelines*. It is the responsibility of the Provider to have Record Management policies and systems in place in accordance with the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (PIIP Act) and the Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 (HRIP Act). The Provider is required to verify that their Records Management policies are up-to-date at commencement of funding. The YoT Unit will review the policies annually.

All records are to be securely returned to the Department of Communities and Justice as required under the Funding Deed of Agreement. Youth on Track records must be stored securely and kept no longer than is necessary.

### **4.5 Youth on Track Service Provider Staffing**

YoT case managers are required to have the minimum qualifications or experience of a Level 4 Paypoint 4 Social and Community Services employee as per the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services (SCHCADS) Modern Award. The delivery of specific interventions may require service staff with higher qualifications.

Wherever possible, the staff mix should reflect the cultural mix of the target group. Cultural competency training should be undertaken by all staff to ensure the cultural needs of young people and their families are met.

### **4.6 Staff Training**

In addition to the minimum qualification requirement for Youth on Track staff as outlined in 4.3, Youth on Track staff will require additional training specific to the Youth on Track cohort and interventions. The *Youth on Track Training Requirements* outlines 14 mandatory training modules that all direct service staff must complete. Two modules must be completed within two months of commencing with Youth on Track, four modules within four months, three modules within six months and a further five modules must be completed within eight months of commencement.

The Provider is responsible for identifying suitable training methods to ensure all staff meet the requirements. The Provider should also consider ongoing training and assessment methods to ensure continued competence.

## 4.7 Stakeholder Engagement

It is essential to the success of the scheme that effective relationships with relevant stakeholders are developed and maintained through interagency collaboration. The Provider has responsibility for establishing and maintaining local stakeholder relationships. The Provider must establish and chair a Regional Governance Committee in each of the YoT sites for at least six months after implementation in a new site.

The Provider is encouraged to develop Service Level Agreements with local service providers when each party's role and responsibilities need clarifying. Service Level Agreements are beneficial when interacting with services that have a large number of staff or high turnover. The Agreements should be signed by the agency's management to help direct staff on how to work with YoT.

The Department has a Service Level Agreement template which outlines roles and responsibilities for key agencies, the communication and information sharing processes, dispute resolution, and data collection. The overarching agreement also includes an appendix which enables the Provider and local service providers to outline specific agreements between the local parties. All Service Level Agreements must be endorsed by the YoT Unit.

## 4.8 Maintaining Contact with the Referral Source

The Provider should retain regular contact with the referral agency. This allows the referral source to respond to the additional support needs the young person may require and help reinforce positive behaviour.

Local arrangements should also be made to ensure ongoing and positive communication between the YoT case manager and the referral source.

The YoT Unit will inform the referring agency when the young person is referred to the scheme or identified as ineligible. The Provider will report the young person's engagement status to the referring agency and the YoT Unit through weekly email reports.

## 4.9 Complaint Handling

The Provider should manage complaints and feedback quickly, transparently and as fairly as possible and ensure procedural fairness for both the complainants and staff. The Provider is required to provide their internal complaints policy to the YoT Unit as a condition of payment.

### *Implementation of complaints handling*

Department of Communities and Justice recommends a tiered approach to complaint handling based on the model provided by the NSW Ombudsman. The four tiers are:

1. **Resolution** of a complaint by YoT staff wherever possible.
2. **Review** of an unresolved complaint by a senior staff member of the Provider depending on the Provider's internal complaint processes.
3. **Escalation** of a still unresolved complaint for further review by the Department of Communities and Justice YoT Principal Project Officer.
4. **Escalation** of a still unresolved complaint for further review by an external complaint handling agency.

### ***Recording Complaints and Other Feedback***

The Provider must establish and maintain a *Complaints and Other Feedback Register*. The Provider must ensure that the register is held in secure storage to ensure that complaints remain confidential. The register should include the following details of a complaint or other feedback, including compliments:

- Date on which the feedback was received
- The source of the feedback (participant, advocate or family member)
- Details of the feedback
- Action taken to resolve/respond to the feedback
- Outcome of the response
- Date when the complaint was resolved
- Details and date of when the complaint was escalated.

The *Complaint and Other Feedback Register* must be provided to the Department's YoT Unit when requested. The Department's YoT Unit may also review the register during the quality assurance process.

## **4.10 Work, Health & Safety**

It is the responsibility of the Provider to have Work Health and Safety policies and systems in place in accordance with the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* and the *Work Health and Safety Regulations 2017*.

The Provider is required to verify that their Work Health and Safety policies are up-to-date at commencement of funding. The YoT Unit will review the policies annually.

### ***Recording WHS incidents***

The YoT Unit and 'the regulator' must be notified immediately when a 'notifiable incident' occurs as per Part 3, Section 35 of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*. The notification must include, but not limited to, the incident date, a description of the incident, and the action taken.

Where unsafe work practices become apparent the YoT Unit may request the Provider liaise with their senior management to formulate and implement an immediate response to the risk. Alternatively, depending on the seriousness of the risk, the YoT Unit may request all work relating to the risk cease until appropriate corrective action has been taken.

### ***Recording Risks***

The Provider must maintain a Risk Register of all serious or repetitive risks that eventuate. The register must outline what control measures were put in place to eliminate or minimise the risk. The register should be provided to the YoT Unit with the quarterly performance and finance reports. The Quality Assurance Process also includes the requirement for evidence of WHS management.

# 5 Contract Governance

## 5.1 Review Meetings

Department of Communities and Justice recognises that the Youth on Track scheme is a new model of early intervention, and as such may require adjustment as the scheme progresses. The Department of Communities and Justice will continue to work closely and collaboratively with the Provider to address issues that may appear and adjust the YoT implementation as necessary.

The YoT Unit meets quarterly with the Provider's Management to monitor the performance of the service, review budget expenditure, discuss stakeholder engagement and identify and address any implementation issues that may impact the YoT service.

Youth Justice may meet twice yearly with the Provider's senior management to discuss performance, contract governance and management challenges and successes.

## 5.2 Data Collection

The YoT Unit maintain the *Youth on Track Intake and Reporting System*. The Screening Officer, YoT Unit and the Provider have restricted access to the System. The Screening Officer uses the System for screening and referral. The Provider is required to regularly add a minimum data set into the system which will provide all outcome related data for each referral. The Provider can also choose to use the system as a case management tool. The System allows for the Provider and the YoT Unit to produce the Quarterly Key Performance Indicators report and the weekly client status update report for specific areas and dates.

## 5.3 Reporting Requirements

The Provider is required to provide a range of reports, notifications and updates to the YoT Unit for supporting the monitoring and performance of YoT. The following reports, notification and updates relating to a young person referred to YoT have been outlined throughout this document. They include:

1. The Quarterly Key Performance Indicators Report
2. An update every week regarding any change in client status
3. A Client Exit Report when requested by the YoT Unit
4. A participant feedback survey completed by young people and their families
5. Provider update reports for governance committees
6. Provider quality assurance annual self-assessments
7. Complaints and other feedback register as requested
8. Risk register of all serious or repetitive risks as requested

## 5.4 Performance Measures

An aim of the YoT scheme is to identify and evaluate the efficacy of the YoT early intervention scheme. The Provider is assessed against a range of outcome measures and performance standards to help monitor the Provider's performance. The YoT Unit will continue to work carefully with the Provider to ensure delivery of and compliance with the standards of service.

The performance measures and standards are outlined in the *Youth on Track Performance Framework 2018*. The Provider is expected to report quarterly. The key performance standards and targets are listed below.

Key Performance Indicators		Targets
1	% of eligible referrals (up to site target) that are accepted	100%
2	% of eligible referrals (up to site target) that led to a young people consenting to participate	50%
3	Number of suitable referrals that led to young person consenting to participate	335/year
4	% of exited and completed participants engaged in the scheme for the minimum timeframe based on their initial YLS/CMI risk level.	70%
5	% of participants who reduce their YLS/CMI score after 3 months.	50%
6	% of participants who reduce their YLS/CMI score after 6 months.	70%
7	% of participants with an initial high or medium-high YLS/CMI level who reduce their YLS/CMI score at program completion	100%
8	% of participants who reduce or stabilise their formal contacts with police 12 months post referral.	75%
9	% of participants who had a high level for Education & Employment domain at first assessment, who improve their Education and Employment Domain score at exit.	40%
10	% of participants who had a high level for Family Circumstances domain at first assessment who improve their Family Circumstances score at exit.	30%

## 5.5 Quality Assurance Process

The purpose of the quality assurance process (QAP) is to encourage a culture of continuous quality improvement within YoT. The QAP encompasses a three-phase process that involves: self-assessment, annual review and improvement review. The QAP is outlined in the *Youth on Track Performance Framework 2020*.

The *Performance Framework* also outlines the key performance indicators which are assessed on a quarterly basis (indicator 7 is assessed annually) as part of the Quarterly Key Performance Indicators Report. The results of the quarterly reports inform which Performance Standards are included in the annual quality assurance reviews.

## 5.6 Communications and Media

The Provider must adhere to requirements that ensure consistent and accurate messaging across all YoT sites; to responsibilities for the production, printing and distribution of promotional materials; to processes for responding to media enquiries; and to legislation regarding young offenders in the media.

### **Promotional Materials**

The YoT Unit will provide a referral fact sheet to all referring agencies. The YoT Unit will provide the fact sheet to the Provider for distribution to referrer's in their local area. The YoT Unit also produces a Youth on Track fact sheet which is available on the Department's Youth on Track website.

The Provider is responsible for designing and printing promotional material for service users and service providers where they see it to be appropriate/useful. The Provider must discuss with the YoT Unit whether the promotional material needs their endorsement prior to printing.

### **Website**

The Provider's website content in relation to YoT must be endorsed by the Department of Communities and Justice prior to publishing. The Provider's website must include a link to the Department's YoT website. The Department of Communities and Justice's YoT website will also include a link to each Provider's website.

### **Media enquiries**

All media enquiries relating to YoT or YoT participants must be referred to the Provider's media unit and the YoT Unit for approval before responding. YoT staff must not provide any oral comment or written information to the media about YoT or YoT participants, without prior approval from the Department of Communities and Justice.

The Provider must alert the YoT Unit of any developments / events / contentious issues involving YoT in their local area that may attract media attention or result in a news story. The Provider is also encouraged to identify and inform the Department of good news stories.

The Provider may be contacted at short notice to provide information to respond to Ministerial requests or media enquiries. The Provider needs to respond to these requests with the required urgency.

### **Media access to young people**

Media access to young people that connects the young person with a criminal proceeding is governed by Section 65 of the *Young Offenders Act 1997* and Part 2, Division 3A of the *Children (Criminal Proceedings) Act 1987*.

Generally, young people should not be interviewed about their crime(s) and the identity of the young person should be protected.

A young person who is 16 years old or over can provide consent, in the presence of an Australian legal practitioner, to have their name published or broadcast. In the case where a YoT participant over 16 years old wants to consent to be identified in a media interview, the Youth Justice Executive Director needs to be satisfied that the young person has given informed consent, is aware of his/her legal rights, and has the capacity to give consent. The Executive Director will also consider the potential impact of any interview on the victims of the crime.

Where a young person is a joint client with YoT and another government department, media access must not be granted without approval by the government agency.

(End)

## 6 Document information

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<b>Title:</b>	Youth on Track Service Specifications
<b>Business Centre:</b>	Youth on Track Unit
<b>Author:</b>	Senior Projects Officer, Youth on Track
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## 7 Document history

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Version	Date	Reason for Amendment
1.0	28/10/2103	Original Youth on Track Service Specification
2.0	22/12/2014	Edited for 2015 contract
3.0	30/05/2016	Updated for 2016 expansion and contracts
4.0	3/12/2018	Seventh Youth on Track site in Riverina added
5.0	1/07/2020	Terminology updated to Department of Communities and Justice, Youth Justice NSW and to include additional referring agencies

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