

# Volunteering with the YOT

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If you are looking for a new challenge, are living or working in West Berkshire, aged 18 or over and genuinely want to make a difference for young people regardless of your previous experience then volunteering with West Berkshire Youth Offending Team (YOT) may suit you.

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## What opportunities are available?

The YOT use volunteers in a number of ways, including becoming a Referral Order Panel Member, Reparation Supervisor or Education Mentor.

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### Referral Order Panel Member

Youth offender panels give the community a say in creating effective programmes that ensure young people who offend take responsibility for their actions, repair the harm done and are given positive help to prevent further offending. A young person is referred to the panel by the courts through a sentence called a Referral Order. A Referral Order can be for 3 to 12 months, depending on the seriousness of the crime. A Youth Offender Panel consists of two volunteers recruited directly from the local community, alongside a member of the YOT. The panel will meet with the young person, and their parents or guardians, to talk about the reasons for their offending behaviour and together agree a tailor-made contract aimed at putting things right. The victim is also offered the opportunity to attend the meeting to tell the young person how the crime affected them. The contract is supervised by the YOT and reviewed at regular panel meetings. The conviction is “spent” when the order is successfully completed. However, if the young person fails to comply, the case is sent back to court and a different sentence may be given.

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### Reparation Supervisor

The purpose of reparation is to enable young people to face up to the consequences of their crime and to pay back for the loss, damage or harm they have caused. This can benefit the victims and change the young person’s attitude and behaviour.

Reparation is delivered as part of a statutory court order managed by the YOT but often the reparation is supervised by a volunteer in the community. As a volunteer reparation supervisor you will be responsible for working alongside and directing the efforts of a young person whilst they complete the tasks associated with their reparation. Reparation projects are often sought at the victim’s request, however, general community reparation may involve assisting at a charity shop or being involved in a conservation project to benefit West Berkshire. As a supervisor you may also be involved in assisting in the transport of young people to the placement. All reparation placements are assessed for the potential risks they pose to the young person or supervisor and all the young people worked with have been assessed for their suitability and attitude.

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## Education Mentor

The Education Support Mentoring Service takes referrals from the Youth Offending Team, Family Intervention Team and the Looked After Children's Education Service. It aims to reduce offending risk factors attached to low achievement and/or attendance at school and to support vulnerable young people engage positively in learning and educational provision. The service offers each young person weekly individualised mentoring support with service staff or by trained volunteer mentors from the community. For younger students and often for post -16 year olds the focus is upon improving competencies in basic literacy and numeracy skills. For secondary school pupils mentoring support can be linked to National Curriculum targets in a variety of subjects and particularly to GCSE examinations in Year 11. Since its beginning the mentoring service has formed increasingly strong links with schools and pupil referral units in West Berkshire. In the main, mentoring support for 10-16 year olds takes place during school hours. For those who are not able to access schooling it can offer crucial support to maintain their studies and motivation to achieve.

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## You can do it!

Volunteering with the YOT can be arranged around your existing work and other commitments; it is challenging yet rewarding. If you want to see less crime in your community, this is the perfect opportunity to get actively involved.

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## How do I get involved?

West Berkshire YOT has an annual cycle of volunteer recruitment. To find out when the next cycle of recruitment is taking place or to request an information pack please contact the YOT on 01635 553600

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### West Berkshire Youth Offending Team

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