

# Position Description



**Position Title: Youth Officer**

**Classification: Youth Officer**

**Grading: Level 1 Yr 6 – Level 2 Yr 4**

**LOCATION:** Various

**IMMEDIATE MANAGER/SUPERVISOR:** Unit Coordinator

**CURRENT INCUMBENT:**

**DATE OF ANALYSIS:** August 2007

**INCUMBENT'S SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**IMMEDIATE SUPERVISOR/  
MANAGER'S SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DG's SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Position Description**

### **Purpose of the position**

As part of a team, the Youth Officer provides care and supervision to young people in secure residential facilities in accordance with relevant legislation and departmental policies, procedures and directives.

### **Organisational Relationships**

The Youth Officer is one of a number of positions that report directly to the Unit Coordinator. The position holder's key contacts within the organisation are fellow team members as they work cooperatively to manage the daily routine of the unit. The Youth Officer also communicates with the Unit Coordinator for the purposes of advice, decision-making and management as well as formal and informal reviews of the position holder's performance.

The position holder liaises with other centre staff in seeking advice and information on security issues, psychological, educational and specialist programs, nursing/health services, occupational health and safety, training and equity, and daily support services. The position holder liaises with Juvenile Justice Officers in relation to casework.

Outside of the organisation, the Youth Officer liaises with parents, carers and significant others of young people through case conferences as part of the service delivery plans for the young person.

There are no direct reports to this position.

### **Organisational Context of Position**

The Department of Juvenile Justice was established as a separate autonomous government body on 1 November 1991. The department employs over 1,200 effective full-time equivalent staff including casual front-line staff. There are 8 juvenile justice centres, 38 juvenile justice community offices (including specialist counselling services and programs from two metropolitan intensive programs units, and one drug court).

The Department of Juvenile Justice is tasked with the provision of quality community and custodial services to maximise the capacity and opportunity of juvenile offenders to choose positive alternatives to offending behaviour. These young people include those who are referred and accepted for youth justice conferencing, those who are placed in a juvenile justice centre pending appearance at court and those sentenced by a court to community based supervision or to a period of custody in a juvenile justice centre. The ultimate aim of the department's work is to break the juvenile crime cycle and to assist in the successful community reintegration of young persons.

The department deals with juvenile offenders, the majority being 16 to 17 year old males committing property and theft offences and referred by the courts and/or the police. Many have experienced significant relationship problems in their families leading to periods of homelessness. The department's young people reflect the cultural diversity of the youth population of New South Wales. A large proportion of the young people are affected by neglect or physical, emotional or sexual abuse. This is particularly the case with young women who are in the department's care. Often the young people in the care of the department find it hard to relate to, or empathise with others, especially adults and authority figures.

Juvenile justice centres are located at South Grafton (Acmena), St Marys (Cobham), Kariong (Frank Baxter), Unanderra (Keelong), Dubbo (Orana), Airds (Reiby), Wagga Wagga (Riverina) and Lidcombe (Juniperina), Broken Hill (for emergency accommodation only).

Each juvenile justice centre consists of operational units and specialist and ancillary services. Each operational unit is based on a 15-bed principle and is staffed by a Unit Coordinator and three Youth Officers on each of the am and pm shifts. One Youth Officer is rostered on the night shift, supported by a Unit Coordinator supervising two units. The unit is overseen by a Unit Manager. The Youth Officer may also be required to work in admissions, program support, unit support or transport roles.

## **NATURE AND SCOPE OF POSITION**

### **Work Performed**

The Youth Officer provides care and supervision for young people in secure residential facilities in accordance with relevant legislation and departmental policies and procedures within the context of a team based approach. The position holder complies with the restrictions placed on the young person in terms of the risk assessment evaluation and informs the Unit Coordinator of any potential risk of the young person self-harming or harming others. The position holder supports the development of daily routines for young people, implements routines and monitors compliance. The position holder identifies the need for clothes for young people, arranges their issue and ensures the young people maintain unit standards of dress and comply with agreed unit rules. The position holder supervises client meal times ensuring that security is not breached and hygiene standards are met.

The Youth Officer assists in the development, implementation and review of young persons' case plans, including structured programs and informal interactions to support the young persons in their physical, intellectual, emotional and social development, and to reduce the likelihood of re-offending. The position holder records in case notes the detainee's progress towards achieving case plan goals and records and records the information in the department's Client Information Management System (CIMS). Programs can incorporate a range of therapeutic, recreational, educational, vocational and living skills activities, combined to respond to criminogenic and client needs of young persons. As part of the unit team, the Youth Officer participates in the development of the unit program, which includes unit specific incentive schemes, ensures compliance with the agreed program and scheme, recommends

rewards, and resolves complaints in regard to the unit program and the incentive scheme in line with policy.

The Youth Officer actively encourages the integration of clients to the community and, in conjunction with the Unit Coordinator and in line with the case plan, can arrange contact on their behalf with health and educational services, other agencies, potential employers and the general community. The position holder provides support and supervision of young people whilst they are in the community and encourages and facilitates positive contact between young people and their families, carers, friends, significant others and the general community. The Youth Officer assists with security checks of visitors and is either responsible for the transfer of young people to the visitor area or for supervision of the visit.

The Youth Officer maintains a secure environment for the benefit of young people, staff and the community and records client movements, conducts security checks, and monitors alarms. The Youth Officer seeks approval for the internal movement of young people and supervises those movements ensuring that security is not breached. Should an incident occur, the Youth Officer is responsible, in conjunction with other team members, for the initial management of the situation and to protect the integrity of the scene, while ensuring the safety and security of young people. The position holder requires the approval of the Unit Coordinator prior to the use of any restraints when dealing with an incident. In the case of minor misbehaviour, the Youth Officer determines whether to warn the young person and discuss alternative, more acceptable behaviour, or to formally report and log the behaviour for the Unit Coordinator to conduct an inquiry. The position holder recommends to the Unit Coordinator an appropriate punishment for the misbehaviour, based on the position holder's interactions with and knowledge of the young person.

The position holder supervises routine matters such as client haircuts, laundry, garbage removal and the issue of stores, ensuring equitable distribution of these duties amongst the team of Youth Officers. The Youth Officer will also supervise clients undertaking laundry, cleaning and gardening duties and in some cases will participate in these activities with the client as part of their case management plan. The position holder also identifies the need for centre maintenance and reports these issues to the Unit Coordinator for action. The position holder is responsible for the security of keys, radios, pouches and duress alarms under their control, and for immediately reporting problems with that equipment to the Unit Coordinator.

The Youth Officer maintains logs, registers, and other records of information regarding security maintenance and client movements on CIMS. The position holder contributes to the information exchange at the start and end of each shift to ensure continuity of client care and consistency in approaches to management and support of young people.

The general responsibilities of a Youth Officer are reflected in Section 14 of the *Children (Detention Centre) Act 1987*. These responsibilities are:

- maintain the physical, psychological and emotional wellbeing of detainees;
- promote the social, cultural and educational development of detainees; and
- maintain discipline and good order among detainees.

The Youth Officer participates in formal and informal supervision sessions with the Unit Coordinator. The position holder understands, implements, and monitors the principles of Equity, Occupational Health and Safety and the Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statement in all

aspects of their work, modelling ethical workplace behaviour in all decisions and actions taken.

The Occupational Health & Safety of staff is of paramount importance to the Department and as such is an integral part of all DJJ activities. Whilst the ultimate responsibility for these areas rests with the Director General, both management and staff play an important role in maintaining occupational health and safety in the workplace. The responsibilities and accountabilities for each level of the department have been defined and are located in the Introduction of the OHS and Injury Management System found on the DJJ Intranet.

The position holder abides by the department's information security policy so that the availability, integrity and confidentiality of information essential to the Department's services, management systems, business functions and operations are not put at risk.

### **Challenges/Problem Solving**

The major challenge for the position holder is to work as part of a team in the supervision of young people, some of whom exhibit challenging behaviour. The position holder intervenes in situations where disagreement between young people may arise, mindful of the legislative framework in which they operate and limitations placed on the young peoples activities. The position holder can also be challenged to maintain a balanced focus on both difficult and positive behaviour, and to place equal importance on rewarding acceptable behaviour and achievements, to that placed on discipline for difficult and challenging behaviour. The position holder is also challenged to ensure continuity of casework and that communication with peers and the following shift is maintained. The position holder is further challenged to prioritise their workload, balancing the supervision of young persons with the need to provide them with ongoing development in line with agreed casework outcomes. The position holder works closely with their colleagues and the Unit Coordinator to ensure sufficient time is allocated to casework duties and liaison with internal and external stakeholders including families and Juvenile Justice Officers.

### **Decision Making**

The actions of the position holder are generally defined by legislation and policies governing NSW Juvenile Justice services, principally the Children (Detention Centres) Act, Children (Criminal Proceedings) Act, Bail Act, Children (CSO) Act, Young Offenders Act and the Sentencing Act. Other legislation that defines the actions of the position holder is the Public Sector Management Act and OH&S legislation. The position holder is required to adhere to the provisions of departmental guidelines, policies and directives.

The Youth Officer has no delegated authority for expenditure.

### **Position Dimensions**

The Youth Officer is responsible for the provision of care, supervision, safety, casework and programs for young people in conjunction with other Youth Officers. No staff report to this position. No budget is allocated to this position.

## **Key Accountabilities**

- Provide care and supervision for young people in secure residential facilities in accordance with relevant legislation and departmental policies and procedures within the context of a team-based approach.
- Comply with the restrictions placed on the young people in terms of the risk assessment evaluation and inform the Unit Coordinator of any potential risk of young people self-harming or harming others.
- Support the development of daily routines for young people, implement routines and monitor compliance.
- Assist in the development, implementation and review of young persons' case plans, including structured programs and informal interactions to support the young people in their physical, intellectual, emotional and social development, and to reduce the likelihood of re-offending.
- Record in case notes the detainee's progress towards achieving case plan goals on CIMS.
- Participate in the development of the unit program, which includes unit specific incentive schemes, ensure compliance with the agreed program and scheme, recommend rewards, and resolve complaints in regard to the unit program and the incentive scheme in line with policy.
- Encourage the integration of clients to the community and, in conjunction with the Unit Coordinator and in line with the case plan, can arrange contact on their behalf with health and educational services, other agencies, potential employers and the general community.
- Provide support and supervision of the young people whilst they are in the community and encourage and facilitate positive contact between young people and their families, carers, friends, significant others and the general community.
- Assist with security checks of visitors and is either responsible for the transfer of young people to the visitor area or for supervision of the visit.
- Maintain a secure environment for the benefit of young people, staff and the community and records client movements, conducts security checks and personal searches, and monitors alarms.
- Respond to emergencies and incidents in accordance with the department's Juvenile Justice Centre Procedures Manual.
- Complete reports including centre incident and minor misbehaviour reports.
- Supervise and maintain the security of detainees within the residential unit and supervise detainee movements within the Centre to ensure detainee whereabouts are known at all times.
- Responsible, in conjunction with other team members, for the initial management of the situation and to protect the integrity of the scene, while ensuring the safety and security of young people.
- Recommend to the Unit Coordinator an appropriate punishment for the misbehaviour, based on the position holder's interactions with and knowledge of young people.
- Responsible for the security of keys, radios, pouches and duress alarms under their control, and for immediately reporting problems with that equipment to the Unit Coordinator.
- Maintain logs, registers, and other records of information regarding security maintenance and client movements. Contribute to the information exchange at the start and end of

each shift to ensure continuity of client care and consistency in approaches to management and support of young persons.

- Participate in formal and informal supervision sessions with the Unit Coordinator.
- Understand, implement, and monitor the principles of equity, Occupational Health and Safety and the Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statement in all aspects of their work, modelling ethical workplace behaviour in all decisions and actions taken.
- Act in accordance with all relevant legislation and departmental policies, including Code of Conduct and Information Security.

### **Knowledge, Skills And Experience Necessary**

- Demonstrated ability to work, motivate, support and communicate effectively with young people with challenging behaviour, and to role model appropriate, alternative behaviours.
- Demonstrated capacity to work in a team responsible for the development and safety of young people, communicating information including security and safety issues to other team members.
- Demonstrated negotiation, liaison and problem solving skills.
- Ability to implement and monitor client case plans and to assist with the provision of programs appropriate to young people's identified needs.
- Knowledge of developmental issues for young people, and of techniques for dealing with individuals and groups, and an awareness of the dynamics and interactions of detainees.
- Capacity to maintain a secure and safe environment for team members and young people from diverse backgrounds and cultures, implementing unit routines and security and emergency procedures.
- Demonstrated computer skills and knowledge of Microsoft applications.
- Understanding of ethical work practices, sensitivity to confidentiality, Occupational Health and Safety, Equal Employment Opportunities and Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statements, and capacity to implement and monitor these in decisions and actions.
- Possession of a Senior First Aid Certificate.
- Possession of a minimum Class C NSW Driver's licence.
- Completion of 3 units of competency from the Certificate IV in Youth Work (Juvenile Justice); or possession of Higher School Certificate or higher qualification; or School Certificate or equivalent plus trade/equivalent qualifications; or School Certificate plus appropriate managerial/supervisory experience.

For I identified position, an applicant's race is a genuine occupational qualification and authorised by Section 14(d) of the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977.

- Documented verification of Aboriginality.

The department will accept proof of Aboriginality confirming the following:

1. You are an aboriginal person of Aboriginal decent;
2. You identify as being Aboriginal; and
3. You are accepted as such by the community in which you live.

An acceptable form of documented verification is a "Confirmation of Aboriginality" letter, provided to you by a local Aboriginal organisation, that includes a common seal from the organisation.