



Youth Justice
Agency

An appropriate adult what's that?

making communities safer by helping children to stop offending

Who is an appropriate adult?

An appropriate adult is the name for a person that the young person chooses, to help them through the youth conference process. They can be a parent, relative, guardian, social worker or other professional or individual. They must be over 18.

Legally every young person who agrees to a youth conference, even if that young person is 18 themselves, must have an appropriate adult present at the conference.

What is the role of an appropriate adult?

Their role is to support the young person through their preparation meetings, the conference itself and any agreement made at the conference.

This can be done by:

- Letting the young person speak for themselves and encouraging them to take responsibility for their behaviour
- Identifying other family members to attend the conference to help support the young person
- Supporting them to understand the impact of the harm they have caused to their victim/community
- Sharing what they know about the young person's strengths
- Informing the Youth Justice Agency if the young person is known to other agencies (Sharing as much relevant information as possible about the young person will help us to provide the right type of support)

The appropriate adult will not be allowed to defend/make excuses for the young person's actions or make pleas for them.

During the conference the appropriate adult can:

- Share how the young person is managing at home, in education/training and raise any concerns they may have
- Share how this offence has affected them as a family and as a family within the wider community
- Contribute to and support the young person in developing a plan to make amends to their victim and prevent further re-offending

When the conference plan is agreed by the Court or the Public Prosecution Service

The appropriate adult has a role in encouraging and supporting the young person in working through their plan by:

- Attending any meetings called by the Youth Justice Agency to review progress and / or concerns (re non-compliance)
- Keeping the Youth Justice Agency informed about how the young person is managing within the home and within the community
- Attending the final review to talk about the efforts the young person has made to make things right for the victim, the community and themselves

The appropriate adult is a key person in the young person's life and ultimately can help the young person to help him/herself.

If you wish to receive this document in an alternative format or in a language other than English, please let us know and we will do our best to help you.

Please note that our staff are not multilingual and will not be able to respond to calls in languages other than English. However, we will be happy to receive a letter, fax or e-mail in a language other than English. We will get it translated and reply to you.

Youth Justice Agency

41 Waring Street

Belfast

BT1 2DY

Tel: **028 9031 6400**

Fax: **028 9031 6402**

Email: **info@yjani.gov.uk**

Website: **www.youthjusticeagencyni.gov.uk**



Follow us on Twitter



This leaflet was produced in conjunction with the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists