



FAQs

COMMUNITY ACTION PLANNING

Community action planning frequently asked questions



YCAP

Youth crime action plan
2013–2023



These FAQs answer questions about community action planning, a key approach to tackling youth crime in the Youth Crime Action Plan (YCAP).

They will be updated regularly online. If you have a question that isn't answered here, contact us at YCAPideas@justice.govt.nz

This document is part of the 'YCAP toolkit', a collection of how-to guides and resources to help government agencies and communities to work well together. More resources will be added over the coming months. The toolkit is online at justice.govt.nz/ycap

YCAP overview

What is YCAP?

YCAP is a 10-year plan to reduce crime by children and young people and help those who offend to turn their lives around. In particular, it aims to reduce the disproportionate number of young Māori in the youth justice system and improve how the system deals with them.

YCAP is centred around:

- three overarching strategies
- three key building blocks
- 30 practical actions.

The three strategies shape how we will tackle youth crime. The three building blocks provide essential support, such as leadership, coordination and information, to those on the frontline. The 30 practical actions are a 'to-do list' of initiatives and milestones that government agencies will put in place over the first two years of the plan.

Under YCAP, government agencies will work even more closely together and partner with Māori, communities, parents, schools and others to tackle youth crime and the factors that lead to offending.

YCAP builds on and replaces the old Youth Offending Strategy.

For more information about YCAP, including details of the strategies, building blocks and actions, go to justice.govt.nz/ycap

How will YCAP make things better?

YCAP provides a blueprint that guides everything we do to tackle youth crime. It sets out a practical approach that supports youth justice services, frontline workers, service providers and volunteers.

YCAP focuses on working together in order to make a difference for young people in our communities. Examples include:

- introducing better decision-making for young people, such as the YCAP early case consultation arrangements for local Police and CYF staff
- bringing wider communities (including iwi, hapū and whānau) together to develop community action plans that will identify local youth crime problems, come up with solutions and set goals for reducing crime and dealing with young offenders
- improving and increasing family, agency and community involvement in family group conferences (FGCs)
- improving support for young people and their families after the young person returns home from a youth justice residence.

Other parts of the YCAP programme will help us better understand what is going on with youth crime. For example, we are improving the way we use and manage the data we hold on youth offenders, which will help us make better decisions.

Ultimately we want to have more collaboration. In the past, government agencies and community organisations have often worked separately. YCAP encourages us to listen more to others and to think about how our differences can complement the work we do.

YCAP will continue to evolve. The initial report sets out 30 actions to be achieved by 30 June 2015. We will look at those actions in 2015 and see what we've learnt over the plan's first two years and what we need to change.

By building on successes and confronting challenges together, we can continue to make a real difference to young people's lives and the communities they live in.

How was the community involved in developing YCAP?

The strategies in YCAP reflect what communities told us is most likely to make a difference for youth crime. The *YCAP report* was written after five months of extensive consultation:

- We held 40 meetings and workshops with frontline workers from Kaitiāia to Dunedin and met with the Youth Justice Independent Advisory Group and other youth justice experts.
- We received written submissions from 44 groups and individuals.
- The Office of the Children’s Commissioner consulted with 97 young people to feed their perspectives into the plan.
- We worked hard to get Māori perspectives through Māori-focused hui and a Māori Reference Group.

Isn’t crime going down anyway? Why do we need to focus on youth crime?

Yes, youth crime is going down, which is great news. Existing initiatives to tackle youth crime are paying off. Police apprehensions, court appearances and serious offending statistics are going down.

However, challenges remain, such as making sure we turn young lives around at the earliest opportunity, and addressing the fact that a disproportionately high number of young Māori get caught up in the youth justice system.

By building on successes and confronting challenges together, we can continue to make a real difference in communities and to young people’s lives. Dealing effectively with young offenders also offers the best chance of making sure they do not go on to offend as adults. This means YCAP also plays a role in reducing total crime and victimisation rates.

YCAP community action plans

Why are community action plans so important to YCAP?

Youth crime is a complex social problem: no single organisation or agency can hope to solve it alone.

However, research has shown that community action plans can make a real difference. Communities that work together towards shared goals have far more chance of creating real and long-lasting change than any single agency or organisation working alone.

This is known as the principle of ‘collective impact’: the more you work together, the more impact you can have.

YCAP recognises this approach and commits to providing support and guidance to local groups and organisations to develop community action plans, monitor the results and share information on what is working best.

What is a community action plan?

An action plan is like a road map for addressing youth crime in your community – it shows where your community is now, where it wants to go, and what steps you will take to get there. Each community action plan will be unique and should be developed with a range of local agencies, iwi and hapū and others.

Your action plan may be quite a simple document and list only a few actions. The goal is not to try to save the world, but to mobilise your community and take action on the things that will make the biggest difference for your young people. What’s really important is that your group thinks about local youth crime issues and takes local crime data into account.

A 7-step guide to producing a community action plan can be found in the YCAP toolkit.

7-step process for developing a community action plan



What are the benefits?

Action planning, when done well, has a wide range of benefits.

- Make more of a difference to youth**
 You can tap into the combined knowledge, energy, innovation and problem-solving ability of other people in your community who care about youth justice. You can use that energy to inspire real and long-lasting positive changes. If people in the community help develop actions to address youth crime, then they have a vested interest in making it happen. Experience tells us that this approach can lead to huge benefits.
- Save time and energy**
 Invest your efforts in the things that are most likely to make a real difference, rather than things that are not working. An action plan can take a bit of time to set up, but once it is up and running, it will help you focus on the things that really count.
- Use resources effectively**
 By working together as a group you can identify how to best use funding and other resources – and as a group, you will have more chance of influencing how funding is allocated.
- Take advantage of support**
 Various government agencies can support community action planning at both the regional level and the national level. See the YCAP *Community action planning guide* for a list of potential sources of help.

Who should lead the development of a community action plan?

A YCAP community action plan can be developed anywhere and be led by anyone.

The most important thing is that you have a group of keen and committed people to develop an action plan, including members of your local community and representatives from relevant government agencies (Ministry for Social Development, Police, Education and Health). The form or name of your group is entirely up to you.

In some cases, it might be led by a Youth Offending Team (YOT), a Social Sector Trial lead or a Better Public Services Flagship initiative. In other areas it might be led by a non-government agency or a keen group of people who want to make a difference in their community.

For more information abouts YOTs, Social Sector Trials and how YCAP fits with other government initiatives, see pages 7–8.

What part can I play in developing an action plan?

Many people, agencies and organisations have a unique and important part to play in developing a community's action plan.

FRONTLINE GOVERNMENT AGENCY STAFF

Government agencies are committed to making YCAP work. As frontline staff, you know what is happening in your community, so you are in an excellent position to make a positive change for local youth. With your colleagues in other agencies, we encourage you to:

- read, understand and implement the approaches to crime prevention outlined in the *YCAP report*, particularly the three strategies and the 'Making a difference' section
- contribute to or lead the development of a community action plan in your area (see the *YCAP Community action planning guide*)
- think about how to improve coordination and communication between government agency staff in your community
- engage more widely and more effectively with the community about youth crime problems
- come up with innovative ways to address local problems and share these with your community and with others around New Zealand on the feedback loop at justice.govt.nz/ycap
- use youth justice data to understand how your community compares to others, and identify problems and issues you should focus on (once your plan is in place, track changes in the statistics to ensure your approach is working – we can help you with this, if you need it)
- use the new YCAP tools and training resources.

REGIONAL GOVERNMENT AGENCY MANAGERS

The support of regional managers is critical to YCAP's success. You can influence the priorities of staff in your region and help them understand why YCAP is so important. We encourage you to:

- let your staff know that implementing YCAP is a priority, and that developing community action plans is an essential part of that
- give your staff guidance and support on YCAP
- plan for the fact that some of your staff will need to spend significant time working on community action plans, especially during the initial planning phase
- ensure your staff have sufficient resources to carry out YCAP successfully – for example, you might consider asking your counterparts in other agencies to share the cost of some administrative support for the action planning process (some areas have already done this)

- help your staff develop community engagement skills (or put them in touch with the local office of the Department of Internal Affairs' Community Advisory Services, who can help with community engagement)
- consider community action plans when making funding recommendations for the coming year – are there any planned initiatives or actions that will need funding, and can existing funding be re-prioritised to enable this?

MEMBERS OF THE WIDER COMMUNITY

Non-government organisations, iwi and hapū, community groups, local council members, young people, schools – and anyone else interested in YCAP

We need your ideas, insights and input to help the community action plans succeed. One of the best ways we can tackle youth crime in New Zealand is for communities and government agencies to work together. That is why creating partnerships is one of the strategies at the heart of YCAP.

Consider your own strengths and interests, and how your community is organised.

You can help find solutions to local youth crime problems by:

- volunteering to be part of a working group on youth crime in your community or setting up a group if your community doesn't have one yet
- using your contacts in the community to get more people to help develop an action plan
- working on projects set up by an action plan.

Get in touch with your local police station or Child, Youth and Family office to ask if a YCAP community action plan is underway in your area. Or contact us at YCAPideas@justice.govt.nz

Action planning – where do I start?

The *YCAP Community action planning guide* takes you through a simple 7-step process to develop an action plan. This should be read alongside the *YCAP report*, particularly the introduction (pages 3–5), the three strategies (pages 11–14) and the crime prevention approaches (pages 18–19).

If you need more help, a member of the YCAP team in Wellington may be able to arrange to visit your community or organise a teleconference or web-video conference.

What is a 'community'?

You will need to consider the geographical boundaries of your community as part of your action planning process. You might define your community in terms of a suburb, a town, a city or perhaps even wider than that.

The existing Youth Offending Teams are loosely based on Police Areas, but communities can define their own boundaries.

The YCAP *Community action planning guide* has information you might want to consider when defining your community.

How do we involve the wider community in action planning?

The YCAP *Community action planning guide* lists some suggestions for different ways to involve the community in action planning, such as:

- meet with targeted groups of people (such as iwi, Māori service providers, non-government organisations, school principals, local businesses or health providers) to brainstorm about specific issues
- visit schools, youth groups and local sports clubs to brainstorm issues and solutions with young people
- organise a public meeting where people can raise their concerns about youth crime and come up with ideas for solutions
- run a survey to gather ideas (try [surveymonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com))
- encourage members of the community to join your planning group or help in other ways.

ASK THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS FOR HELP

The Department of Internal Affairs has Community Development Advisory Services staff in 16 locations from Kaitaia to Invercargill. They can help identify who in the community could be involved in developing a YCAP community action plan and support you to run meetings to identify local youth crime problems and discuss possible YCAP goals.

HOW DO WE GET SCHOOLS INVOLVED?

The Ministry of Education currently has 10 regional offices covering all state and state integrated schools around New Zealand. Contact your local regional office to discuss how to involve schools in community action planning. Contact details are available on the Ministry of Education's website.

The Ministry of Education (in partnership with other agencies) also has a number of programmes that complement YCAP's aims and strategies:

- Education Officers in the Youth Courts
- Police in Schools
- Social Sector Trials
- Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L)
- Attendance Service.

How will we know if our action plan is making a difference?

Goals in community action plans should be realistic and measurable and will set specific targets. The YCAP *Community action planning guide* has information on deciding what to measure and how to go about it.

Working out how to measure your goals will help you know whether the individual actions in your plan are making a difference. It is especially important to know whether action plans are making a difference for young Māori, because the number of rangatahi Māori in the youth justice system is disproportionately higher than young non-Māori.

What other resources are available?

Over the next year, we will release additional guidance, such as:

- what works to reduce crime
- how community groups can work effectively together and increase their collective impact
- funding information (such as funding sources and cycles, and how to apply for funding to support projects and initiatives in your community action plan)
- posters, pamphlets and a powerpoint presentation to help you with any workshops or training sessions about YCAP.

We will also be launching a 'feedback loop' where you can share your ideas and challenges with other people around the country who are also working on action plans.

You can find statistics on youth justice and links to social and justice sector statistical information about your community at justice.govt.nz/ycap. Contact us on YCAPideas@justice.govt.nz if you need help finding what you need.

YCAP & other initiatives

How does YCAP fit with Social Sector Trials?

16 Social Sector Trials around New Zealand are testing a new way of delivering social services. In each area, Trial Leads (who are either individuals employed by government or contracted non-government organisations) lead the initiatives within trial communities and work with agencies to provide better coordinated and more collaborative services on the ground.

The YCAP and Social Sector Trials projects have agreed to aim for a 'one community, one action plan' policy.

If a Social Sector Trial is running in your community, it should take YCAP into account when developing its youth crime goals. Similarly, if you want to plan YCAP-related initiatives (including a community action plan) in a Social Sector Trial area, you should discuss it with the Trial Lead first.

Information about the trials and their locations is available at msd.govt.nz

How does YCAP fit with other government initiatives?

YCAP complements and builds on existing government initiatives, such as Whānau Ora and Turning of the Tide, the Fresh Start reforms, the Children's Action Plan, Prevention First, the Better Public Services Flagship Programme and the Prime Minister's Youth Mental Health Project. Some of these may be running in your community.

There may also be other initiatives focused on youth crime in your area. They might be led by local government, iwi or non-governmental organisations.

To avoid doing the same work:

- aim to have just one plan to reduce youth crime in your community – your plan's title isn't important, as long as the content reflects the YCAP goals and strategies
- connect with other initiatives in your area and explore opportunities for joint planning and goal setting – if you have similar goals regarding youth justice, you may be able to develop shared plans under one banner
- adapt to suit local circumstances (for example, it might make sense to deliver YCAP goals through an existing initiative, rather than in a separate group).

The important thing is that the wider community is involved and your plan to tackle youth crime reflects the goals and strategies set out in the YCAP report.



THE ARTWORK
USED HERE
WAS CREATED BY
YOUNG PEOPLE
STAYING
AT CHILD, YOUTH
AND FAMILY
RESIDENCES

YCAP & YOTs (Youth Offending Teams)

What is a YOT?

Youth Offending Teams coordinate cross-agency responses to young offenders at a local level.

There are 32 of these teams made up of frontline people from Police, CYF, Health and Education. They actively engage and involve local stakeholders and non-government organisations.

YOTs ensure that agencies and communities are working together in the most effective way to reduce youth crime. YOTs that have a wide membership of government and non-government individuals will be able to tap into a deeper understanding of the causes of youth crime in their community and will be able to develop creative and problem-solving action plans to address it.

Some of the members of the YOT may also work together on individual case management of young offenders, although these discussions should not normally take place at the YOT meeting itself, where members of the wider community may be present. Privacy issues must be taken into account: a guide on how to share information safely is included in this toolkit.

Is there a YOT in my community?

There are currently 32 YOTs covering New Zealand and most are situated to align with Police and/or CYF organisational areas.

To find out whether your area has a YOT, contact your local police station or email us on YCAPideas@justice.govt.nz

What role do YOTs play in action planning?

In many communities the local YOT will play a leading role in helping to develop an action plan.

YOTs have relationships with key government agencies and some local providers in your community. You can build on the YOT's membership to create an action planning group that represents the people who make up your community.

Who do I go to if I have questions about YCAP?

A range of resources and guidance is available on at justice.govt.nz/ycap, including the YCAP report, summary and factsheet, and a toolkit of support documents.

If you can't find what you need or you still have questions, contact us at YCAPideas@justice.govt.nz



For more information, go to justice.govt.nz/ycap

YCAPideas@justice.govt.nz