

New Directions – an adult pre-charge diversion program

Barb Williams, Program Manager & Navigator



NEW DIRECTIONS



north richmond
community health
Wulempuri - Kertheba

How did this come about?

- Modelled on the Checkpoint program in Durham, England.
- Funded by a grant from the Victorian Government's Building Safer Communities Program
- Partnership between North Richmond Community Health, Neighbourhood Justice Centre, City of Yarra & Victoria Police.

What is it?

- Intervention at the earliest opportunity
- Targets early stages of criminal behaviour for low-medium level offences
- Identifies drivers of offending and provides tailored interventions
- First offenders will not get a police record
- Open to people with prior criminal record

Eligibility Criteria

- Must be over 18
- Live in the City of Yarra or offence occurred in City of Yarra
- Must be an eligible offence that is not older than 6 months
- Must not be subject to a sentencing order or bail
- Must not be assessed as high risk
- Sufficient evidence to charge
- Can have prior criminal record

What does it involve?

- Person is charged with an offence
- Police determine eligibility for program
- Person is asked if they want to be referred
- If they agree the Navigator arranges a time for needs assessment

Needs assessment

- Restorative justice process
- Victim of crime
- Accommodation
- Employment/education/training
- Recreation/leisure
- Financial situation
- Mental health
- Physical health
- Substance use
- Relationships/supports
- Attitude/thinking/behaviour
- Sexual exploitation

Agreement

- Four month agreement
 - Not offend during the agreement
 - Meet with navigator as requested
 - Identify 2 needs to work on
 - Engage with services referred to
 - On successful completion charges are dismissed

What about the victims of crime?

- Police inform the victim that the person is being referred to the program
- Police give the victim a brochure explaining the program
- ? Restorative justice process
- Victim informed of outcome of persons participation in program.

Evaluation

- Melbourne University to conduct
- Will interview agreeable participants of program and some of the services they were referred to
- Navigator to collect information at discharge

Barriers identified so far

- Difficulty getting program operational
- Finding champions for the program
- Navigator sitting away from the police stations
- Bail
- Referrals

Where to from here?

- Committee meeting fortnightly to discuss program difficulties
- Weekly meetings with sergeant
- Anybody who comes into contact with a person who they believe fits the eligibility criteria and who is interested in doing the program can contact me.

Questions?

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