



Australian Government

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations



Youth Connections

**PROGRAM GUIDELINES – UPDATE MAY 2013
FOR OUTREACH AND RE-ENGAGEMENT AND
STRENGTHENING SERVICES ELEMENTS ONLY**



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1. Service Model

1.1 Overview of the service model

Youth Connections has three service delivery elements: Individual Support Services, Targeted Engagement Services and Regional Coordination Services.

The Service Model outlined in this section, and summarised in [Diagram 1](#), provides an overview of the service elements of the Youth Connections program.

The level of effort required against each service delivery element is indicated by the percentage of Service Fees that must be allocated to each element, as detailed in providers' contracts.

1.1.1 Individual Support Services

Youth Connections providers must deliver individualised case management to young people to assist them to overcome barriers. This element of the program is unchanged. For all aspects of Individual Support Services, the September 2011 Guidelines continue to apply.

1.1.2 Changes to Outreach and Re-engagement and Strengthening Services

These revised Guidelines provide information about the change in scope for Outreach and Re-engagement and Strengthening Services. In terms of program management issues, all aspects of the previous Guidelines (September 2011) continue to apply, including for:

- Participant registration
- Assessment
- Measuring outcomes
- Recording data on YATMIS

1.1.3 Targeted Engagement Services

Formerly known as Outreach and Re-engagement Services. Youth Connections providers must offer proactive, youth focused Targeted Engagement Services across the region. Targeted Engagement Services are aimed at finding severely disengaged young people (those disconnected from school/education/training for three months or more); and connecting these young people with activities to support their re-engagement with learning, family and community. Targeted Engagement Services must be tailored to the region where services are being delivered.

While Youth Connections providers' Individual Support Services capacity may be exceeded, Targeted Engagement Services are still required to identify and connect with the most disengaged young people. These services can act as diversionary activities whilst the young person is waiting for a place in case managed services, or can connect young people with other appropriate services.

Note that referral mechanisms for Targeted Engagement Services may change. While young people will continue to be referred to Youth Connections providers through other services involving young people, self-referrals, family members or guardians, Centrelink, and Job Services Australia providers, it is anticipated that fewer referrals will be gained through schools or other education/training providers.

For more information on Targeted Engagement Services, refer to section 2.

1.1.4 Regional Coordination Services

Formerly known as Strengthening Services. Youth Connections providers must work to coordinate services for young people at risk and ensure that providers of other youth services in a region are connected. This requires a focus on joining-up all the relevant, available services to provide a more

effective approach that is responsive to the needs of young people in the region, particularly for those young people at risk.

Youth Connections providers will work with key stakeholders in the region, including state and territory programs, schools and education providers in building the capacity of those working with young people at risk.

For more information on Regional Coordination Services, refer to section 3.

1.2 Diagram 1: Overview of Youth Connections services

Individual Support Services

Connection Level 1

For young people attached to school/education but at risk of disengaging

Connection Level 2a

For young people poorly attached to school/education most at risk of disconnecting

Connection Level 2b

For young people disconnected from school/education (for 3 or more months)

- Flexible and individualised services for young people at risk.
- Assistance to young people to remain engaged or re-engage with education and/or training.
- Individualised case management to overcome personal barriers.
- Provision of mentoring opportunities.
- Referral and connection with specialist services.
- Advocacy and support to re-engage with family or community networks.
- Assistance to engage with non-school-based education or training, such as TAFE or an RTO.

Targeted Engagement Services

- Focus on finding and connecting with young people who are Not in the Labour Force (NILF).
- Go out to locations where young people spend time to make contact with young people.
- Utilise relationships with organisations to identify disconnected young people.
- Assist disconnected young people address personal barriers, and develop resilience, self-efficacy and social skills.
- Provide diversionary activities whilst the young person is waiting for a place in case managed services, or connect young people with other appropriate services.

Regional Coordination Services

- Coordinate integrated service delivery and develop effective referral mechanisms.
- Demonstrate partnerships through agreements and protocols.
- Develop relationships with potential employers, business and industry to broaden transition outcomes for young people.
- Coordinate a regional approach to support those young people into a positive transition pathway.

2. Targeted Engagement Services

2.1 Overview

Targeted Engagement Services are aimed at finding severely disconnected young people who are not engaged with education, training, employment or other support services. Targeted Engagement Services should focus on identifying and connecting with young people who are Not in the Labour Force (NILF)¹.

Youth Connections providers must offer a youth focused, regionally tailored service that aims to:

- engage severely disengaged young people (with the eventual aim of connecting them into Youth Connections case management)
- provide opportunities for severely disengaged young people to strengthen their connection with family and community through activities such as volunteering and other community events
- provide opportunities for severely disengaged young people identified through engagement services to access the individual support services offered by the provider, or other relevant support services
- provide the opportunity for young people to develop skills which may assist them to re-engage with education and/or further training.

Targeted Engagement Services involves Youth Connections workers actively going out to locations where young people spend time in order to make contact with young people who would not otherwise be identified and referred to the program. Targeted Engagement Services should focus on building a young person's resilience, social skills and self-esteem to help them re-engage with education or training.

Youth Connections providers should aim Targeted Engagement Services at small groups of less than 20 people. Running services with a large number of people in attendance may be intimidating for young people facing significant personal and social barriers. However, providers should take the opportunity to identify and connect with disengaged young people at large scale events, where relevant.

Targeted Engagement Services also provide an avenue for maintaining involvement and engagement of participants in Individual Support Services. There is also some value in having a mix of Youth Connections participants and non-participants for participants to tell the other young people about their experiences with Youth Connections. However, if an activity is only for participants in Individual Support Services, then this activity would be classified as group work and not as a Targeted Engagement Service.

Targeted Engagement Services are also intended to connect with young people who, due to high levels of disadvantage or disengagement might not access services through traditional means, e.g. schools, parents or other programs. A provider can use Targeted Engagement Services to continue engaging with a young person when Individual Support Services are full, as a way of maintaining engagement with a young person until there is capacity to take them into case management.

Services could include one-off and regular activities.

Targeted Engagement Services could include motivational and life skills programs and group activities that increase young people's skills, confidence and ability to participate in cultural, social, education and economic opportunities. Youth Connections providers should offer a range of supportive and

¹ A person can be either Employed, Unemployed (actively looking for work), or Not in the Labour Force (NILF). Young people classified as 'Not in the Labour Force' are those who are not employed or unemployed/actively seeking work.

inclusive activities to engage young people at risk, whether or not they are current participants in Youth Connections.

2.2 Examples of Targeted Engagement Services

The aim of Targeted Engagement Services is to find young people who are severely disengaged and, over time, develop a relationship of trust, and encourage them to participate in re-engagement activities and/or Individual Support Services offered through Youth Connections – with the ultimate goal of assisting them to re-engage with education and/or training.

Some examples of Targeted Engagement Services include:

- making contact with young people who would not otherwise be identified and referred to the program, in places where they spend time. The goal is to build a relationship of trust and encourage young people to participate in Individual Support Services offered through Youth Connections
- delivering proactive youth focused activities, designed to assist severely disengaged young people to address personal barriers, and develop resilience, self-efficacy and social skills
 - this can be done individually or by linking with other organisations or services in the region
- delivering motivational and life skills programs and group activities that increase young people's skills, confidence and ability to participate in cultural, social, education and economic opportunities
- providing opportunities for severely disengaged young people to strengthen their connection with family and community through activities such as volunteering and other community events
- providing opportunities for young people to develop skills which may assist them to re-engage with education and/or further training.

2.3 Activities that cannot be classified as Targeted Engagement Services

Promoting the Youth Connections program and providing generic information about the services offered under the program is not a Targeted Engagement Service. Promotional type activities and informing people about the program may be an element of Targeted Engagement Service, however, it would not be the sole purpose of an activity.

Targeted Engagement Services would not typically be targeting young people at risk of disengaging from school. Targeted Engagement Services should target young people severely disengaged and disconnected and this is not to include young people still at school.

Targeted Engagement Services should not involve providing activities for students within the school environment. The exception would be in remote communities where the school is often the only venue to run an activity, but even in these cases the target group should still be young people disengaged from school.

Services that only involve enrolled Youth Connections participants would be classified as group work under Individual Support Services, not Targeted Engagement Services. To qualify as a Targeted Engagement Service, the activity must include disengaged young people who are not currently participating in Youth Connections Individual Support Services.

3. Regional Coordination Services

3.1 Overview

Youth Connections providers must focus on developing coordinated and integrated service delivery in the region for young people at risk. This requires a focus on joining up all the relevant, available services to provide a more effective and collaborative approach that is responsive to the needs of young people in the region, particularly for those young people at risk.

Regional Coordination Services aim to provide a coordinated regional approach to support young people into a positive transition pathway. Partnerships will need to be demonstrated through mechanisms such as a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (or other similar formalised agreements between different parties), referral mechanisms and co-servicing protocols.

Regional Coordination Services must be tailored to the service region and available education, training and employment transition services.

Youth Connections providers must work closely with the Partnership Broker in their region to build partnerships that will ultimately improve services to young people. Youth Connections providers and Partnership Brokers should work together to strengthen services by exploring new or enhanced partnership arrangements to meet an identified need in the region.

3.2 Examples of Regional Coordination Services

The aim of Regional Coordination Services is to create a collaborative support network for young people at risk. Regional Coordination Services should work towards a goal to improve service collaboration for young people in the region. Youth Connections providers will need to undertake a number of small steps to progress towards the main goal (i.e. meetings, telephone calls, developing partnership papers).

Some examples of Regional Coordination Services include:

- establishing formal referral arrangements and co-servicing arrangements with available support services in the region
- coordinating a regional approach and seeking agreement with stakeholders to support young people to achieve a positive transition pathway
- developing relationships with potential employers, business and industry to broaden transition outcomes for young people.
- entering partnerships with other organisations to work towards a regional goal where partners work towards shared goals and targets, and are accountable to meet outcomes.

3.3 Activities that cannot be classified as Regional Coordination Services

Awareness raising and promotional activities Youth Connections providers undertake as part of their standard program delivery are not considered Regional Coordination Services.

It is important for Youth Connections providers to develop and maintain strong relationships with Partnership Brokers (and other services) in their regions. This is expected as part of Youth Connections usual operations and constitutes good business practice. As Youth Connections is an outcomes-focussed program, the emphasis of a Regional Coordination Service should be on the goal or outcome, rather than the means to achieve these. Individual meetings, discussions and phone-calls are not regarded as examples of Regional Coordination Services.

In order to be legitimately identified as a Regional Coordination Service, the Youth Connections provider must be an active partner or contributor to the activity. Furthermore, a Youth Connections provider's attendance or membership in stakeholder group meetings would not be considered a

Regional Coordination Service unless the provider actively builds or enhances the capacity of the group to support young people at risk in the region.

Targeted Engagement Services, including group activities undertaken in conjunction with other organisations in the region, would not be considered Regional Coordination Services unless the Youth Connections provider actively builds or enhances the capacity of the other organisations to support young people at risk in the region.

For example, in a region in Western Australia, the Youth Connections provider, together with the Partnership Broker, organised and facilitated a series of stakeholder forums across the region to develop strong networks and establish a 'Youth Strategy' in collaboration with all youth stakeholders in the region.

By bringing the stakeholders together across the region, the Youth Connections provider was able to develop a data base of key stakeholders and design and produce an e-newsletter that was distributed widely and included the list of identified priorities for the region. These included regional coordination, the need for positive mentors, youth engagement and the social and professional needs of young people.

As part of the strategy, the Youth Connections provider also organised a facilitator to deliver a series of workshops to deliver mentor training throughout the region. These workshops were attended by community members as well as representatives from agencies including the WA Police, the WA Department of Education, the School Volunteer Program, Workforce Development, Drug & Alcohol support agency, Youth Care, various Shires, the Department of Child Protection, Community Resource Centres, and other community groups.