
VOLUNTEER POSITION DESCRIPTION

POSITION TITLE	INDEPENDENT PERSON VOLUNTEER
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Status	Volunteer
Reports to	Designated YRIPP Regional Officer
Contact phone number	9340 3777

PROGRAM AREA

The Youth Referral and Independent Person Program (YRIPP) delivers a high quality system of adult volunteers called "Independent Persons".

These volunteers attend police interviews with young people in police custody when a parent or guardian is not available.

YRIPP also seeks to divert young people from future offending through early intervention at the point of police contact.

YRIPP is supported by the Victorian Government and delivered by the Centre for Multicultural Youth and the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria in partnership with community legal centres and Victoria Police.

YRIPP provides:

- Volunteer Independent Persons to attend Victorian police stations 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- Up-to-date training and ongoing support for volunteer Independent Persons.
- Information about helpful support services for young people.
- Resources about the youth justice system and support services for police and parents.
- Access to 24-hour telephone legal advice for young people in police custody, provided by lawyers from Victoria Legal Aid.
- Evidence based policy advice, advocacy and assistance to improve the criminal justice system for young people.

POSITION SUMMARY

Volunteer Independent Persons attend police interviews with young people under 18 years at designated police stations around Victoria.

The Independent Person is there to compensate for the inherent disadvantage young people in police custody face when interviewed by police and clarify to them what is happening and why.

The parameters of the Independent Person role are set out in the YRIPP Independent Person Manual.

The responsibilities of the Independent Person are to:

- Provide support for the young person, monitor their welfare and assist to reduce any apprehension the young person may feel, particularly during questioning.
- Make an objective and accurate record of the young person's time at the police station to be able to present that account at any later court proceedings.
- Facilitate communication between the young person and the police, if required.
- Ensure that the young person understands their legal rights, the processes available to them and the role that Independent Persons have in protecting their rights.
- Observe whether the police or others involved in the call-out process are acting properly, fairly and with respect for the rights of the detained young person.
- Take appropriate action (based on your observations and the young person's wishes) if it appears the police or others are not acting properly, fairly, and with respect for the rights of the young person.
- Offer information about local support services that may be able to help the young person and if the young person agrees, complete relevant YRIPP referral forms.

ACCOUNTABILITIES

Under the direction of a YRIPP Regional Officer, an Independent Person will:

1. Perform the role of the Independent Person in accordance with policies set out in the YRIPP Independent Person Manual, as amended from time to time.
2. Maintain an up-to-date roster of at least two 12 hour shifts per week, with some exceptions in high priority areas (negotiated with Regional Officer).
3. Attend a rostered police station within 30 minutes (20 minutes travel time), when contacted by YRIPP's call centre during a rostered shift, unless exceptional circumstances exist.
4. Complete relevant documentation about each police interview fully and accurately and post to the Regional Officer within 24h of interview.
5. Participate in YRIPP training (minimum of one session each year, unless training is not offered in that year) and complete assessment requirements if required.
6. Participate in regular volunteer support meetings (minimum one session each year).
7. Provide feedback to YRIPP about program policies, direction and systems that could be improved including as part of the annual volunteer survey.
8. Accept and respond to feedback, participate in regular debriefs with the Regional Officer and comply with all directions given by YRIPP staff about the performance of the Independent Person role.
9. Be prepared to attend court in your capacity as an Independent Person as required.

KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

1. Commitment to supporting young people and an interest in making a positive contribution to the youth justice process.
2. Excellent communication and social skills, including sufficient written skills in English to complete detailed paperwork.
3. Demonstrated ability to engage young people, remaining non-judgemental, and displaying positive and unconditional regard, regardless of religion, gender, race, sexuality, age or ability.
4. Ability to work sensitively and appropriately with young people from culturally diverse backgrounds (including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds).
5. Ability to carry out basic computer and administration tasks including mobile phone skills.
6. Ability to maintain an up-to-date roster, be reliable in responding to phone calls and attend police stations when rostered and called upon to attend.
7. Demonstrated fair and balanced attitude towards the police.
8. Ability to navigate complex situations demonstrating flexibility, professionalism and impartiality.
9. Demonstrated ability to remain calm but assertive, and apply sound decision making when under pressure.
10. Ability to follow process, and exercise good judgement in identifying and reporting/escalating issues for further support and follow up.
11. Demonstrated ability to identify, respond to and manage own stress.
12. Ability to be self-reflective and engage in ongoing two-way feedback processes.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. Independent Persons are required to be independent of police and the justice process. YRIPP has policies in place that require volunteers to declare and avoid situations that may compromise this independence and any perceived and actual conflicts of interest.
2. Independent Person volunteers must have access to a mode of transport that will ensure they arrive at a police station within 30 minutes of receiving a call from YRIPP's call centre (20 minutes travel time).
3. Prior to undertaking the YRIPP training program, applicants are asked to commit to volunteering with YRIPP for at least 12 months after completing the training.
4. Acceptance into the YRIPP training program is dependent on completion of (a) online application and selection interview, (b) two reference checks, at least one from a person who has directly supervised the applicant in a professional capacity. Applicants will be assessed against Key Selection Criteria at each of these steps.
5. All applicants must successfully complete the YRIPP initial training program before being accepted as a YRIPP volunteer. The initial training program involves 10-15 hours of on-line training and at least 10 hours of face-to-face training and assessment.
6. Acceptance as a YRIPP volunteer is subject to the satisfactory completion of a National Police Record Check and Working with Children Check (free for volunteers). YRIPP will pay for costs associated with a Police Record Check. YRIPP volunteers are required to maintain a Working with Children Check, disclose any criminal charges or findings of guilt that arise and submit to regular police checks as required.
7. Independent Person volunteers are subject to a probation period of three months, if four call outs are completed during this time, or four call-outs if the volunteer takes more than three months to complete four call-outs.
8. YRIPP seeks to apply the National Volunteer Standards to support volunteers.

9. YRIPP volunteers are subject to relevant CMY policies set out in YRIPP Volunteer Policies as amended from time to time, including equal opportunity, internal complaints, Occupational Health and Safety and accident and incident management.
10. YRIPP takes Child Safety seriously and applicants are subject to child safety screening and assessment against child safety standards as part of our volunteer recruitment process. These include but are not limited to Police Record and Working With Children Checks, and child safety focused reference checks.
11. YRIPP retains the right to revoke the status of a volunteer to act as an Independent Person. This decision will be made by the YRIPP Coordinator in line with YRIPP Volunteer Policies.

DOCUMENT REVIEW DETAILS

Date Reviewed Aug 2018
Date of next Review Aug 2019