Frequently Asked Questions – Work and Development Orders

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1. How does the WDO scheme work at Juvenile Justice?
All young people involved with Juvenile Justice should have any fine debt identified and be informed of the WDO scheme.

Juvenile Justice is a WDO sponsor organisation. This means that we can assess the young person’s eligibility for the scheme, submit the application and supervise the young person’s participation in the WDO.

Juvenile Justice can also refer to another approved WDO sponsor organisation if this is in the best interests of the young person. You can locate a list of approved WDO sponsors on the SDRO website at: http://www.sdro.nsw.gov.au/fines/eo/wdo.php

If the young person is interested in applying for a WDO, Juvenile Justice should assess if the young person is eligible under one of the five WDO categories, find an appropriate activity to complete then apply for a WDO. Community and custodial staff must work together to ensure that young people have the opportunity to clear their fine debt. This includes discussing and assessing together the appropriateness of a WDO for each young person’s circumstances. To complete a WDO application, follow the WDO procedure on the Operations Manual.

The WDO program is overseen by the State Debt Recovery Office (SDRO).

2. What WDO categories can young people apply under?
A young person must be eligible under one of the five WDO categories in order to apply for a WDO. All five categories can be considered for young people in both custody and community. The five categories are:

- Mental illness
- Intellectual disability and cognitive impairment
- Homelessness*
- Acute economic hardship*
- Serious addiction to drugs, alcohol or volatile substances

*For young people in custody, the eligibility for the ‘homelessness’ and ‘acute economic hardship’ categories is based on their living circumstances immediately prior to entering custody.

The WDO Guidelines outline the full definition and the proof required to meet these categories.

You can read the WDO Guidelines here:

All applications must meet the requirements outlined in the WDO Guidelines. The documents supporting the definition and proof must be retained on the client file.

3. What activities are and are not eligible for a WDO?
Eligible activities are outlined in the WDO Guidelines.
For WDOs sponsored by Juvenile Justice, the following restrictions have also been applied to WDO activities:

- A young person of compulsory school age (under 17) **cannot** use attendance at school as their WDO activity.

- Any work, treatment or courses (including Juvenile Justice approved programs) the young person has commenced prior to applying for the WDO are **not eligible** WDO activities.

- Any work, treatment or courses specifically ordered by the court are **not eligible** WDO activities.
  - If the court has made a condition to ‘accept Juvenile Justice supervision’ (or similar), JJ programs such as CHART and CSC etc **can** be included as part of a WDO.
  - If the court has made a condition to ‘attend Juvenile Justice programs’ (or similar) JJ programs such as CHART and CSC etc **cannot** be included as WDO activities.

4. **Can a young person on a short order, bail or remand apply for a WDO with Juvenile Justice?**

   It depends. You should consider the following before applying for a WDO in these circumstances:

   - Is it best to refer the young person to another approved sponsor organisation that can continue the WDO with the young person beyond their period of involvement with Juvenile Justice? This may be particularly relevant for young people subject to bail supervision.

   - Can the young person satisfy a substantial amount of their fine debt during their current order?

   - Is the young person likely to receive a further order with Juvenile Justice and will they be able to continue the WDO? For example is it likely the young person will be released from custody subject to Juvenile Justice community supervision?

5. **Can a young person completing a Youth Justice Conference apply for a WDO with Juvenile Justice?**

   No. If a young person is completing a Youth Justice Conference, they can only be referred to another approved sponsor organisation in the community to manage the WDO.

   A WDO **cannot** be included as part of the YJC outcome plan.

6. **How much credit will young people receive towards their fines?**

   The amount of credit varies depending on the activities the young person is completing. The young person can receive up to $1000 per month. Refer to the **WDO Guidelines** for information about how credit is calculated.
7. How do I apply for a WDO?
Follow the WDO procedure on the Operations Manual for full procedural steps for completing a WDO application.

All applications are to be made on the online Self Service Portal by the supervising JJO/JJC. Each Area JJCS office has access to the Self Service Portal.

8. How do I get access to the Self Service Portal?
If you do not have a user account for the SSP, talk to your Area Manager and/or the SSP administrator in your office or area to set up an account.

If you are unable to access your current user account, consult the WDO Self Service Portal User Guide located at: http://www.sdro.nsw.gov.au/business/wdo.php

Call the WDO Hotline on 1300 478 879.

Email wdosdro@osr.nsw.gov.au and include a screen shot of the error message you are receiving.

Juvenile Justice Centre staff do not have access to the SSP because WDOs cannot be transferred between locations on the SSP. Management of the WDO by the JJO/JJC allows the young person to have continuous access to complete the WDO, even if the young person moves between the centre and the community.

9. Do I need to contact the SDRO before I lodge an application?
Yes. Before you lodge an application, you must complete the pre-submission process by calling the WDO Hotline on 1300 478 879. The SDRO will provide you with a WDO Enforcement Order Number, which is the number required to help you lodge the application through the Self Service Portal.

The SDRO will also be able to tell you and the young person the amount of their fine debt.

10. How do I know if the application has been successfully submitted?
You can check that you have successfully submitted the WDO for your clients by checking the ‘Retrieve WDO’ screen. This screen will show you a list of your clients with successful WDO applications.

You will also receive the paper copy of the WDO contract, usually within 7 business days of the applications being lodged on the SSP. If you do not receive the paper contract or you are unsure if the application was submitted, you should contact the WDO Hotline on 1300 478 879.

11. Can I submit a paper application form to the SDRO?
No. The SDRO does not accept any paper application forms. Applications are not to be sent to the SDRO by fax, email or post.
The only acceptable way of submitting a WDO application is by the online Self Service Portal.

12. When can the young person commence the WDO activity?
The young person can only commence the WDO activity after the WDO application has been submitted via the Self Service Portal. Any activities commenced prior to submission cannot be backdated for inclusion in a WDO.

13. How do I record a WDO on CIMS?
All WDOs sponsored by Juvenile Justice must be entered in CIMS under Referral to other Services > SDRO > WDO.

All WDOs referred to another approved sponsor organisation must be entered in CIMS under Referral to other Services > NGO > WDO

All notes regarding WDOs should be recorded as a WDO Case Note, including conversations with other workers and the young person about a WDO. The submission of the application and the SDRO’s approval (or non-approval) must be entered as a WDO Case Note.

WDO Case Notes must be updated weekly with the number of activity hours completed by the young person. This will assist the JJO/JJC to complete the monthly Client Activity Report on the SSP.

14. I have a query about Work and Development Orders. Who do I contact?
If you have an issue or query, please refer first to the procedure on the Operations Manual. If this does not resolve your query, discuss further with your Supervisor or consider contacting the WDO Hotline on 1300 478 879.