

YOUTH JUSTICE AND CRIMINAL EVIDENCE ACT 1999

EXPLANATORY NOTES

COMMENTARY ON SECTIONS

Part I: Referrals to youth offender panels

Section 7: Attendance at panel meetings

52. **Section 7** describes how the youth offending team will be responsible for requiring the offender and others to attend panel meetings (*subsection (1)*) and sets out the arrangements for dealing with non-attendance (*subsection (2)*). If the young offender fails to attend a meeting, it may be adjourned. Alternatively, the youth offender panel may consider that this merits referring the offender back to court (as to which see Schedule 1).
53. The action taken by the panel following an offender's non-appearance will depend on a number of factors, including whether or not a reasonable explanation for non-attendance has been put forward and the general attitude of the young offender up until that point. These issues will be addressed in the guidance to be issued by the Secretary of State.
54. Apart from the duty to attend the meetings which may be imposed on the young offender's parents or guardian, there are no requirements on other adults participating in the meetings. Although it may be helpful for some of those present to play a specific role in the identified programme of behaviour with which the young offender agrees to comply (the 'contract'), any such participation would be voluntary.
55. The section also describes who else may be invited to each meeting. It is intended that the youth offender panel should consult the victims of the young offender's offending as to whether they also wish to attend. This might include anyone affected by the offence or, where appropriate, a representative of the community at large. Where the panel thinks it is appropriate for a victim to attend, he or she may be accompanied by a supporter, chosen by the victim and agreed by the panel. Meetings may also be attended by an adult supporter invited by the offender with the panel's agreement. The panel may also invite anyone they consider to be capable of having a good influence on the offender to attend.