

Applicant Guide

Detention Youth Worker



Version 1.1

Introduction

The Queensland Government is committed to reforming the youth justice system to strengthen the prevention, early intervention, and rehabilitation responses to youth crime in Queensland and make communities safer.

Youth detention centres are secure environments and operate 24 hours-a-day, 7 days-a-week. All staff and visitors are subject to security measures at the centres.

Detention Youth Workers are key to ensuring the safety and security of a youth detention centre, for young people, staff, and visitors to the centre.

They support a diverse range of young people in custody, so it is essential for the workforce to reflect this diversity, encompassing differences in gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, and cultural background.

Detention Youth Workers support young people from different cultural backgrounds. In response to the over-representation of First Nations young people in youth detention, the provision of culturally responsive practice is critical and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and those with experience of working and engaging with people from diverse cultural backgrounds are particularly encouraged to apply for the role.

Working in a youth detention centre offers a challenging and rewarding opportunity to directly contribute to community safety, while supporting positive outcomes for young people and their families.

For more information on working with us or about our recruitment process, please contact us at YouthDetentionRecruitment@youthjustice.qld.gov.au.



The role of a Detention Youth Worker

As a Detention Youth Worker, you will have the opportunity to support and mentor young people to make positive changes to their lives and become productive members of their community. You will be a member of a multi-disciplinary team of talented and diverse individuals who are committed to supporting each other and improving the lives of young people.

In this role, you will be responsible for the management, supervision, security, care and provision of services, for young people in the youth detention centre. Detention Youth Workers supervise and support young people to attend a schedule of daily activities including educational, vocational, recreational and therapeutic programs.

Young people detained in a youth detention centre have often experienced trauma, which can result in them presenting with complex behaviours. Being able to de-escalate situations is an important skill you will learn. However, at times use of force may be required. You will complete training and receive the support necessary to respond appropriately and safely to these situations.

Formal qualifications are not required to become a Detention Youth Worker as you will be provided all the tools and training required during your induction program. We value people with life experiences who can be positive role models for young people in detention. These include relevant life skills through participation in sport, voluntary work, parenting, coaching or other areas, or a work history that indicates a capacity to follow policies, procedures or statutory requirements.

Induction training is provided over a six-to-seven-week period, with ongoing peer support, supervision, and training opportunities available during your employment. During this induction, you will be issued uniforms and body worn camera vests that you will wear during your shifts at the youth detention centre.

To support young people in a youth detention centre, our workforce needs to be equally diverse. You will need to be energetic, resilient and passionate. Excellent communication skills are vital to this role. If you are passionate about changing lives for the better, becoming a Detention Youth Worker is the ideal place to start.

For more information about a day in the life of a Detention Youth Worker, click on the following link: <https://www.qld.gov.au/law/sentencing-prisons-and-probation/young-offenders-and-the-justice-system/youth-detention/daily-life-in-detention/detention-youth-worker>.



The key responsibilities of the role

- Contribute to young people's personal development by modelling pro-social behaviour, positive relationship building, interactions and engagement.
- Supervise, support and engage young people with daily living tasks, routines and structured activities.
- Manage challenging and complex behaviours using positive behaviour strategies, identifying and rewarding pro-social behaviours, incentivising young people to address behaviours, and using de-escalation strategies that can include physical interventions and restraints.
- Maintain a safe and secure environment through applying knowledge and techniques gained in operational training, upholding situational awareness, undertaking dynamic risk assessments, and exercising specific delegations and functions as detailed in relevant legislation, policies and procedures.
- Operate and monitor safety and security technology, including visual and audio monitors, body worn cameras and radios.
- Supervise and support young people in all areas of the youth detention centre including the accommodation units, school, recreation, program and visitation activities, and undertake off centre escorts as required.
- Conduct inspections and searches of the youth detention centre, including departmental vehicles, facilities, and property for contraband, and safety and security violations.
- Complete accurate and timely records in the client information management systems in accordance with departmental policies and procedures.
- Work in a multi-disciplinary team with a range of internal and external stakeholders and service providers.
- Ensure the safety of yourself and others, by working in accordance with legislation and departmental policies and procedures.



Queensland Youth Detention Centres

Note: To meet changing operational demands, Wacol based Detention Youth Workers may be required to work across the various centres in that location. Also, Woodford Youth Detention Centre is not scheduled to open until the second half of 2027, and staff will be required to work at a Youth Detention Centre in the Wacol precinct until this time.

Brisbane Youth Detention Centre



The Brisbane Youth Detention Centre (BYDC) opened in 2001 and is located on the western outskirts of Brisbane at Wacol.

BYDC accommodates young males and females from Rockhampton to the NSW border.

BYDC has a built bed capacity of 162, across 11 accommodation units named after Australian flora (trees and bushes).

Each unit has 8 or 10 rooms, a kitchen, a lounge and dining room, a quiet area and an outdoor area.

Woodford Youth Detention Centre



The Woodford Youth Detention Centre (WYDC), currently under construction in Woodford, Moreton Bay, is set to open in 2027. The facility will provide 112 beds, across two 56-bed campuses.

Cleveland Youth Detention Centre (Townsville)



The Cleveland Youth Detention Centre (CYDC) opened in 1980 and is located in Townsville.

CYDC accommodates young males and females from north of Rockhampton to Cape York and the Torres Strait, Mount Isa to the west and the Northern Territory border.

CYDC has a built bed capacity of 112, across 15 accommodation units which are named after Australian birds.

Each unit has between 4 and 12 accommodation rooms, a kitchen, a lounge and dining room, a quiet area and an outdoor area.

Accommodation units within the centre are designed to house 4 to 8 young people and are named after animals and trees native to the rivers and forests of the traditional lands of the Jinibara people, honouring the cultural heritage of the area.

With a focus on rehabilitation and collaboration, the centre's contemporary design aims to create a supportive environment focussing on education and fostering opportunities for positive change.

West Moreton Youth Detention Centre



West Moreton Youth Detention Centre (WMYDC) opened in 2020.

The centre is located in the western suburbs of Brisbane, next to Brisbane Youth Detention Centre.

It has the same catchment as Brisbane Youth Detention Centre. WMYDC has 32 beds across 5 accommodation units.

Wacol Youth Remand Centre



The Wacol Youth Remand Centre opened in March 2025 and is located in close proximity to the Brisbane and West Moreton Youth Detention Centres.

Do you have what it takes?

- **Passion and empathy** – The willingness to work with young people while setting boundaries and supporting them to become responsible members of the community.
- **Commitment and resilience** – The ability to adapt and manage challenging situations and behaviour. Young people in detention are often impacted by trauma, mental health and substance abuse which results in complex behaviours.
- **Life skills and experience** – The ability to encourage young people to make good decisions by promoting and reinforcing good behaviour and being a positive role model.
- **Verbal and written communication** – The ability to communicate sensitively and effectively using oral and written communication skills.
- **Teamwork** – The ability to contribute and participate constructively and positively within a team environment.
- **Physical capability** – The ability to demonstrate a level of fitness, strength, flexibility, balance and stability.

Can you do what it takes?

- **Shift work** – The ability to balance a 12-hour rotational shift work roster, seven days a week with family and other personal commitments.
- **Secure environment** – The ability to remain in a secure environment for the duration of your shift with restrictions on items that are permitted in the centre.



What are the benefits?

As a departmental employee, Detention Youth Workers receive attractive employment conditions and benefits. This includes a competitive salary and superannuation, a range of generous allowances, employment security, salary packaging, access to health and wellbeing programs, and provision of meals whilst on rostered shifts. Other benefits include:

- **Career progression** – With various roles available, including senior and management roles within the youth detention centres and other areas of the department. With experience and training you can develop a rewarding career.
- **Salary packaging** – Is available to employees, reducing your taxable income and increasing your take home pay per fortnight. Salary packaging allows you to make extra contributions to your superannuation and access novated car leases.
- **Uniforms** – Are provided upon commencement of your employment and will be replaced when required, at no cost to the employee. This includes shoes.
- **Meals** – While working on centre you are provided with meals.
- **Superannuation** – 5% Employee Contribution + 12.75% Employer Contribution
- **Fitness passport** – Memberships are available to employees, providing a range of packages for you and your family. One membership for the family to use, with a range of facilities included, from pools to gyms.
- **Income protection** – May provide you with an income if you are unable to work for a period of time, due to illness or injury. It is available to all employees, including those employed on a casual basis.
- **Union** – The Queensland Government recognises your entitlement to join a registered union. While you are not obliged to join a union, the department encourages its employees to do so. Membership application forms can be obtained from the relevant union.
- **Training and professional development** – We offer learning and professional development opportunities throughout your career. You will be provided with ongoing training opportunities to keep your skills and qualifications up to date and expand on your existing knowledge.
- **Rotational shift work** – Detention Youth Worker hours of work, are regularly rotated in accordance with a shift roster covering 24 hours per day, over a seven-day week.
- **Relocation** – Successful applicants who are required to relocate may be eligible to apply for funding to assist with relocation expenses.

<https://www.forgov.qld.gov.au/employment-policy-career-and-wellbeing/directives-policies-circulars-and-guidelines/transfer-and-appointment-expenses-directive-1111>

Sample roster for a Youth Detention Centre

Shift lengths are 12 hours. Each roster rotates and averages to 76 hours a fortnight over a 12-week period (i.e. 456 hours). You will be required to work during the day, night, weekends and public holidays during each 12-week roster cycle. As a permanent employee your roster pattern will not change and therefore you will be able to project your work schedule for years in advance.

Rostering is clustered in days on and off. You will work at least two days on, with at least two days off at a time. Some roster rotations allow for five or more days off in a row. There will always be at least a 10-hour break between shifts, including when moving between a day to night or night to day shift.

Two sample rosters for a four week period are provided below. Please note, these are just examples to give you an idea of the shifts you may be required to work.

Week 1	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	7:00 19:00	19:00 7:00					
Week 2	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	7:30 19:30	7:30 19:30			7:30 19:30	7:30 19:30	7:30 19:30
Week 3	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	19:00 7:00					7:00 19:00	7:00 19:00
Week 4	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	7:00 19:00	19:00 7:00					

Week 1	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	18:00 6:00	18:00 6:00					
Week 2	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	6:00 18:00	6:00 18:00	18:00 6:00				
Week 3	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	18:00 6:00	18:00 6:00					
Week 4	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	7:30 19:30	7:30 19:30	7:30 19:30			6:00 18:00	6:00 18:00

Salary

The base salary is \$66,840. With satisfactory performance, approval will be given for you to increment through levels each year. These yearly increments will take you from a OO3-1 classification, through OO3-2, OO3-3, up to OO3-4 at which point you will earn a base of \$70,988.

The position is classified as OO3/OO4. After 12 months on OO3-4, you may be eligible to apply to go up to OO4-1. You will then move up each year incrementally for four years.

New Detention Youth Workers cannot be appointed to a paypoint higher than OO3-4. You must meet specific requirements to apply to move up from OO3-4 to OO4-1.

You will receive an additional 26.96% allowance on top of your salary to compensate for shift work and receive other additional allowances.

You may be eligible for appointment to a higher increment within the OO3 classification level, based on previous work experience. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis by the Recruitment Team as part of the recruitment process and a recommendation made for the consideration of the Executive Director. You may be asked to provide evidence of your work history such as a statement of service to support this process.

Detention Youth Workers will also be paid the Youth Justice Operational Employees' Allowance in recognition of the challenges associated with working with vulnerable young people in a youth detention centre environment. This allowance is \$4.9867 per ordinary hour worked up to a maximum of \$379.00 per fortnight.

Leave entitlements

Full time staff have access to the following leave entitlements.

- **Recreation leave** – Eligible for up to 190 hours each year on full pay.
- **Sick leave** – Eligible for up to 76 hours sick leave each year on full pay. This accumulates if not taken. It can be accessed for caring responsibilities of immediate family or household members.
- **Long service leave** – Eligible to accumulate long service leave. Employees are generally eligible for long service leave after 10 years, however you may be permitted to take long service leave for a pro-rata period after seven years continuous service.
- **Purchased leave** – Eligible employees may apply to access an extra six weeks leave over a year. While this is technically without salary, fortnightly deductions from your pay set aside money to fund this extra leave.
- **Parental leave** – Eligible employees are entitled to paid maternity/adoption leave. An employee may be granted up to two years unpaid parental leave to be their child's primary carer. Employees may also apply to work part-time upon return.
- **Special leave** – An employee may be granted leave in any 12-month period, which is reasonably required for an emergency situation or on compassionate grounds.
- **Cultural leave** – Special leave without salary, may be provided for cultural or religious leave each year.

Induction training

Before starting work in a youth detention centre, Detention Youth Workers are provided with paid mandatory induction training for approximately 7 weeks. Induction training is a mix of classroom-based learning, communication and verbal/physical de-escalation scenarios, other practical activities, and on-the-job shadow shifts, at the youth detention centre.

Induction training generally runs Monday to Friday, 8:00am– 3:30pm, with some on-site 12 hour shadow shifts at varying hours (e.g. 5:30am–5:30pm or 6:00pm – 6:00am).

Note: It is generally difficult to take leave during induction training. Please contact the recruitment team to discuss, if you know that you may need to take any time off during Induction training.

A significant portion of the Induction Program (2 weeks) is devoted to learning Communication and Resolution Techniques (CART). This is hands on physical training where you will learn how to manage difficult situations, with a view to ensuring the safety of all people in the youth detention centre.

The induction training will equip you with the skills and knowledge required to undertake the duties of the Detention Youth Worker role. The modules include, but are not limited to the following:

Foundational knowledge and skills to work in a trauma informed way

- Cultural awareness
- Human rights
- Mental health
- Disability awareness

Foundational knowledge to work safely in youth detention

- Work health and safety
- Fire safety
- Resilience and self-care

Ethics and accountability modules

- Information privacy
- Complaints management
- Training in how to use the operating systems

Practical and operational skills

- Restorative practices
- Observation and positioning
- Self-harm and suicide awareness
- Communication and resolution techniques, including use of force



Ongoing employment as a Detention Youth Worker

Note: Ongoing Employment in the Detention Youth Worker role is conditional on satisfactory completion of all mandatory training modules.

Newly appointed Detention Youth Workers (public sector employees) are subject to a probationary period of six months.

The probationary period commences from the first day of Induction training.

Recruitment process



Complete your online application through Smart jobs. You will need to submit your resume, and responses to a questionnaire. The recruitment team will review your application and shortlist against benchmarks.

A positive Blue Card is a requirement of this role. Please read the section below around what you need to do, if you do not have a Blue Card.



Shortlisted applicants will be invited to participate in an assessment centre.

The assessment centre will require you to participate in individual and group discussions and activities, which will be used to further assess your suitability for the role.



Following the assessment centre, applicants progressing will be asked to make an appointment with our medical provider to undertake a pre-employment medical and functional assessment. Associated costs are paid for by the department.

Please review the Health Self-Assessment on the last page.



After the medical and functional assessment we will commence conducting online reference checks. You will need to let your referees know that you have applied for the role.

If you have not already done so, you will also need to provide a copy of your Blue Card.

After selection panel review and delegate approval, offers of employment will be made.



We will give you at least three weeks' notice before the commencement of the induction training. Please contact the recruitment team if you require a longer notice period.

Induction training programs are held approximately times a year. For information about the next Induction intake start date, please contact YouthDetentionRecruitment@youthjustice.qld.gov.au.

How to apply

You must apply online through Smart jobs (www.smartjobs.qld.gov.au)

1. You will need to provide a current up to date resume that summarises your skills, experience and achievements as relevant to the requirements of the position. Your resume must include specific dates of employment (months and years), and status (full-time, part-time or casual).
2. As a part of the online application process, you will be asked to answer some questions including:
 - In a few sentences, and in your own words, tell us why you want to be a Detention Youth Worker and what skills, qualities and transferable work or life experience would you bring to engage with and be a positive role model to youths in detention.
 - This role may require you to use force (physical restraint) on young people for their own protection of others and/or property. You will be trained in the approved use of force techniques. Do you anticipate any difficulties or have concerns (e.g. physical, other issues) with undertaking this aspect of the role? Please briefly outline the reason for your response.

Note: You should answer these questions from a personal point of view as googled or artificial intelligence (AI) responses, or responses drawn from this Applicant Guide, do not provide the selection panel with insight into your motivation and transferable skills.

Blue Card

If your application is shortlisted, you will be asked to provide a copy of your Blue Card. This is a mandatory requirement for employment as a Detention Youth Worker.

If you do not have a Blue Card, you can [apply online](#), or you can find more information via this link. The Youth Detention Recruitment Team urge you to commence the application process as soon as possible as it can take up to six weeks, and in some circumstances, longer.

Please note, if you are from outside Queensland, the Blue Card application process will take longer. Blue Card Services have specific information about how to apply in these circumstances – see more information about this process.

If you require assistance or have questions about the Blue Card application process, you can also contact the recruitment team at YouthDetentionRecruitment@youthjustice.qld.gov.au.

Assessment centre

The assessment centre will require you to participate in individual and group discussions and activities, which will be used to further assess your suitability for the role. The recruitment team will contact you to organise your attendance.

The assessment centre is your first face to face contact with the recruitment team and youth detention centre staff. Please take this opportunity to ask any questions you might have.

You will need to attend an assessment centre session to progress through the recruitment process. The assessment centre process will take approximately three hours.

If you are unable to attend, please contact the recruitment team at YouthDetentionRecruitment@youthjustice.qld.gov.au to discuss.

Medical and functional assessment

The medical and functional assessment will be undertaken with our medical provider KINNECT. You will be advised by the recruitment team when you need to contact KINNECT and book in for this assessment.

You will be asked to complete pre-employment medical and functional screen forms online prior to your appointment. This is comprehensive and takes up to an hour. As part of this process, you will be required to disclose information about any historical or current illness or injury that may be relevant to your suitability for this role.

At the appointment, you will be required to undertake a variety of health and functional tests to assess your suitability for the role. The medical and functional assessment will take up to two hours.

KINNECT may ask you to provide information from your treating doctor about any significant medical conditions (e.g. management of diabetes). It is advisable to take a report from your doctor to your KINNECT assessment if you have any conditions that require ongoing management/treatment.

Any delay in obtaining medical clearance may have an impact on your ability to commence induction training.

Referee checks

Referee checks will be undertaken via Xref and completed through email. You will be required to provide at least two referees, one who has directly supervised you within the last two years.

Health self-assessment

A Detention Youth Worker requires a reasonable level of physical and psychological fitness to undertake daily tasks within the youth detention centre. Youth detention centres can be challenging environments. You will be responsible for the security and care of young people in this environment. This may include managing violent and aggressive behaviours and situations.

It is important to know that you may be required to do things such as, break up fights between young people or get to another part of the centre quickly to assist in responding to an incident.

A significant part of the induction training is providing you with the skills and strategies to effectively manage and respond to a range of scenarios. The physical interventions aspect of the training is demanding and requires a reasonable level of fitness.

While a medical and functional assessment is required for all applicants, to find out how your current health, wellbeing and physical fitness match up to the physical and psychological demands of the Detention Youth Worker role you might like to take our self-assessment:

Self- Assessment Questions

1. Having good cardiovascular fitness is important to help with the physical demands of our everyday work. A Detention Youth Worker can walk more than four kilometres during a shift. Good cardiovascular fitness is **critical** for undertaking the physical aspects of CART training.

Can you complete a standard YMCA 3 minute step test?

2. Psychological wellbeing is just as important as physical health in helping us maintain a healthy perspective.

If you have sought treatment for any mental health conditions in the past five years, are you and your treating practitioner comfortable that your condition is now stable?

3. The more efficient you are breathing and absorption of oxygen, the faster your body can recover from physical exertion.

Do you suffer from asthma or other lung diseases, and if so, is it medically managed? (If so, please discuss with the assessing doctor)

4. Eyesight that is corrected meets our benchmark and does not prevent you from applying. Colour-blindness is acceptable if you can differentiate shades.

Do you have current or a history of issues or medical conditions relating to your eyesight?

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5. Detention Youth Workers operate in environments of varying noise intensity, and they use various communication devices e.g. radios. It is critical that Detention Youth Workers can communicate effectively.

Do you have a current or a history of issues or medical conditions relating to your hearing? (If so, please discuss with the assessing doctor)

6. Detention Youth Workers are often required to squat and/or kneel when performing daily duties. The following questions will help rate yourself on the certain physical components of your pre-employment functional assessment.

Could you perform 10 repetitive squats?

Could you perform 10 repetitive kneels?

7. The ability to lift and carry objects in our everyday work is essential.

Do you feel you have the physical capacity to lift and carry an item up to 20 kg in weight?

8. A Youth Detention Worker's tasks may at times place stress to certain joints and muscle groups of the body and they do have the potential to aggravate existing musculoskeletal conditions should they exist.

Do you have any current or past musculoskeletal injuries that impact your function currently?

Are you scheduled to have surgery in the near future, or have you had surgery recently? (If yes, please contact the team to discuss further).

You might like to take steps to improve your fitness over the coming weeks.

You are welcome to contact the recruitment team if you have any questions, or to discuss further at YouthDetentionRecruitment@youthjustice.qld.gov.au.