



Evaluation Report on the "Right Track" Programme

RIGHT TRACK IS AN EDUK8 CHARITABLE
TRUST INITIATIVE TE ARA TUTUKI PAI 2010

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Right Track Driver Offender Rehabilitation Programme started in Counties-Manukau in April 2007. Waitematā Police have been involved in the running of the Right Track programme since October 2008. The programme co-ordinators are John and Helen Finch from EDUK8 Charitable Trust. Right Track involves multi dimensional learning with interactive education sessions.

EDUK8 do evaluations with participants at all stages of the programme, and they show extensive evidence that the participants are learning from the session. Police wanted a more crime focused evaluation and EDUK8 provided the names of all student participants for evaluation. The evaluation figures show the Right Track programme not only reduces driver re-offending, it also has a positive impact on reducing re-offending for all criminality.

Although police can't endorse commercial programmes, (GIS586), Police can acknowledge a working partnership but need to be careful to remain neutral, especially when different organisations are vying for the same funding.

2. EVALUATION

As per the table below, the offending rates reduced considerably for both driving offences and for all criminal offences. Further breakdown is shown at the end of this document.

Driving Offences pre course	Driving Offences < 1 year post course	Driving Offences > 1 year post course	Criminal Offences pre course	Criminal Offences < 1 year post course	Criminal Offences > 1 year post course
317	55	58	532	121	110

3. FUNDING

The Right Track programme needs sustainable funding. EDUK8 have recently been approved as a CYFS provider, which proves they have thorough systems and policies.

In Waitematā the Right Track programme was originally funded by Jacki Dawson, Road Safety Coordinator at Rodney District Council and Helen Whittal, Road Safety Coordinator at North Shore City Council. Judge Lisa Tremewan was then able to secure funding for more programmes through the Waitakere Licensing Trust, & Police funded one programme.

Rodney District Council has funded a second programme scheduled to begin in June 2010. Auckland City Council has funded 2 programmes in their district. Counties-Manukau is where Right Track started, with joint funding from Manukau City Council & ACC. Police were very supportive of the programme, but were unable to secure sustainable funding.

4. FUTURE COURSES

Police would like to have the option to continue to refer young offenders to the Right Track programme. For Waitematā Police District, the number of serious under 17 year old traffic offenders we prosecute would fill 4 courses every year. Ideally we would like the courses between March and October. Any earlier in the year is too disruptive with the Xmas break, and any later in the year impacts on major school exams.

The spacing between those courses would give time for the "Right Track" to be a part of an FGC plan, and still have the offence dealt with in a timely manner.

In Waitakere, we have been running the Right Track programme with young offenders aged under 25, who the local Judges believe are suitable, and are referred from the District Court, as well as youth offenders from FGC and the Youth Court. The North Shore Judges would like to have the same sentencing options. Waitematā district has enough driving offenders to support running at least 6 courses every year, and the spacing of those courses would still have the offence dealt with through the District Court in a timely manner.

5. REFERRAL TO RIGHT TRACK

Depending on the funding providers, Police have been able to work closely with Right Track participants that are either "at risk" students identified by schools or, more commonly, youth offenders (14 - 16 years) referred through the FGC process, or young offenders (17 - 25 years) appearing in the District Court whom the sentencing Judge deems suitable for the Right Track.

At present in Waitakere Youth & District Court Judges have an overview of most referrals. Senior Sergeant Stephens has worked closely with local Police staff to ensure the referral guidelines agreed to by funders are followed.

6. STAFFING

Right Track is a community based initiative which involves presentations and interaction with people such as funeral directors, staff at the Auckland Spinal Unit, Nurses at Middlemore Hospital, Fire, St John Ambulance, and many others. Some volunteer their own time to present to the group, some organisations donate staff time, and some speakers receive remuneration for their time.

At the first Court based session, a Court attendant is present as well as at least one Judge and, in some cases in Waitakere all three of the Youth appointed Judges take part.

A Police Officer needs to be present at most of the sessions. Senior Sergeant Stephens has overseen this from a District perspective, with assistance in Waitakere from Senior Sergeant Hunter.

This Police presence is vital to the relationship & attitudinal change of the participants. In the first and last session the same Police Officers interview the participants using the same questions.

The change from the first interview to the final interview is amazing. Having a Police Officer available at all times to answer the complaints such as "we were just having fun", or "the cops pick on us because we're young / Maori / drive fast cars....", in a setting that facilitates open debate is invaluable. This interaction is core to changing the behaviours and beliefs of the participants. That behavioural change is evidenced by the evaluated drop in post course offending.

7. COURSE OUTLINE WITH PARTICIPANT EVALUATION COMMENTS

Every session of Right Track finishes with the participants completing an evaluation. John and Helen regularly send all those comments out to a large email group. Here are some quotes which illustrate the effectiveness of Right Track:

Session 1: Waitakere Youth Court -

"It was really informative and I learned a lot about how the Court system works. I think it made me think twice about getting into trouble."

Session 2: Presentations from Police Serious Crash Unit, Brain Injury Trust, Funeral Directors, and others adversely affected by crashes. ***"It was alright but it killed it a little bit because it's on my weekend and I work all week but at the end of the day I come here because it's my fault"***.

There is a 'punishment' aspect to attending this course!

Session 3:

"It was very good. I would not want to be in the real thing and is going to change all my actions in the future and make me tell my mates to wear their seatbelts."

Session 4: Risk management - practical session outside at Little Huia.

"I had a lot of fun doing all the activities and it showed me that you don't have to take stuff or drink to have fun."

Session 5: Shattered Dreams –

"It was very helpful and impressed me with the story. It makes you think about making the right choices and not making a fatal mistake."

Session 6:

"It was good. I learned a lot. Makes you not wanna drink and drive or speed. It's not worth it and life's too short to be in a wheelchair."

Session 7: Graduation - All the participants talk to the group about the impact of Right Track

"I found the connection between myself and my son improved after each session. We talked about things he learned and how he can alter things in the future. He enjoyed the interaction and day out at little Huia working as a team and making the correct decisions. He seemed to enjoy going to the sessions and tells me that he would recommend the programme to his mates. The programme has been good for me as a parent; I have got to know my son a lot better."

8. CONCLUSION

The evaluations conducted by EDUK8 show Right Track had a positive impact on all participants. The graduation ceremony itself is a moving display from all participants of how the programme has changed attitudes and I recommend attendance to all those thinking of referring offenders, or those who may be funding the course

Police are able to continue checking all participants in the future to determine if their driving offending & criminal offending has decreased. While Right Track was not designed to reduce overall criminality, the course content and the relationships established between attending Police and the participants has had a wonderful spin off benefit, and overall offending has seriously decreased.

Police are not allowed to support commercial ventures. This report was prepared purely to show whether Right Track had been successful in reducing re-offending, which it clearly has.

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