Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Juvenile Liaison Officer?
A Juvenile Liaison Officer or a J.L.O. is a Garda who works full time with young people who come in contact with the law.

How do I find out who my local J.L.O. is?
You may contact your local Garda Station or the Garda Youth Diversion Office who will tell you. The list of JLOs and their respective Garda Stations can be found at www.garda.ie.

If a young person does not agree to be included in the Diversion Programme what will happen?
The case will be referred to your local Superintendent who will then consider commencing a prosecution against you in the courts.

Is a caution a conviction?
No. However, in the event of a subsequent court case, involvement in the programme can be given at the point of sentence.

Can I be charged and brought to court on my first offence?
Yes, if the Director of the Programme decides that you are unsuitable for the programme.

Can I get more than one caution?
Yes, if the Director considers it appropriate.

Is the Diversion Programme law?
Yes, it is contained in Part 4 of the Children Act 2001.
How Does The Process Work?

In all cases a local Juvenile Liaison Officer (JLO) will make contact with and meet the young person to discuss the offending behaviour. This meeting may take place in the child’s home or in the Garda Station. The child and the child’s parent/s or guardian must be present. A discussion will take place during which the offending behaviour will be discussed and challenged and the young person will be expected to undertake not to offend in the future. The J.L.O. and the family will try to support whatever efforts the young person is willing to make to prevent any future offending behaviour. The caution will be given by a JLO, a Garda Inspector or the Garda Superintendent.

Who Decides If A Person Is Suitable Or Not?

The decision to include a person in the Diversion Programme is made by a Garda Superintendent at the Garda Youth Diversion Office who is known as the Director of the Programme. In making his/her decision the Director may consider:

- The nature of the offence
- The views of the victim
- The interests of society
- The views of the arresting Garda
- The views of the J.L.O.
- The attitude and views of the young person who offended
- The views of the young persons parents or guardian
- Whether an apology has been made
- Whether or not something can be done to repair any harm caused
- The child’s previous involvement in the programme

What Is Supervision?

If a young person is given a caution, she/he may be placed under the supervision of the JLO for a period of 12 months. The nature of the supervision will be decided upon by the JLO and will vary from case to case. For instance, it may involve the young person agreeing to engage in certain activities, attendance at a youth project or it may require the young person to report on particular occasions to the JLO or another Garda.