



Report to PCCs on Norfolk & Suffolk's Out of Court Disposal Scrutiny Panel

Meeting Date: Tuesday 8th March 2022

About the Panel

Norfolk and Suffolk Constabulary's Out of Court Disposal Scrutiny Panel has been set up to independently scrutinise the use of Out of Court Disposals in response to national recommendations, following concerns about their appropriate use. The role of the panel is to ensure that the use of Out of Court Disposals is appropriate and proportionate, consistent with national and local policy, and considers the victims' wishes where appropriate. The panel membership comprises a range of criminal justice services professionals including representatives from the police, Criminal Justice Service, Youth Offending Team, Magistrates and PCC Offices who aim to bring transparency to the use of Out of Court Disposals to increase public understanding and confidence in their use. Findings of the panel, together with responses to recommendations made, are to be reported publicly to support this aim.

How the Panel Operates

The panel independently review and discuss a selection of anonymised case files that have been resolved by use of an Out of Court Disposal with Norfolk or Suffolk and conclude whether the method of disposal fits one of three categories:

- Appropriate and consistent with national and local guidelines;
- Appropriate but with comments/observations from the panel;
- Inappropriate use of Out of Court Disposal.

Decisions reached by the panel on each case file are recorded, together with observations and recommendations, to inform changes of policy or practice. The panel also consider performance information regarding levels and use of Out of Court Disposals, changes to legislation, and policies and practice to support them in their role. The panel cannot endorse, resend or alter individual decisions already made.

Panel Business

The panel met on the 8th March 2022. 12 panel members were present with five apologies.

- The panel discussed all actions from the previous scrutiny meeting prior to moving onto the case files.
- Scrutiny of case files.
- Rationale and file selection.

Panel Findings

Eight cases were scrutinised: 4 x Suffolk and 4 x Norfolk cases which included 2 x Adult and 2 x Youth cases. It was the decision of the panel on this occasion to focus on individuals' who had received an out of court disposal who were not recorded as white British background. This was to ensure all areas of the community are represented and no disparity is evident between ethnic groups. All four Norfolk cases were concluded to be appropriate with one having additional comments added by the panel. All four of the Suffolk cases were concluded to be appropriate with one having additional comments added by the panel.

Suffolk Cases

- All four cases were found to be appropriate and consistent with national and local guidelines.
- Adult Case Study 2 was found to be appropriate with comments from the panel. The panel asked for confirmation on the reason why a vehicle was stopped which led to a Cannabis Warning being issued. A sufficient response was provided during the meeting.

Norfolk Cases

- All four cases were found to be appropriate and consistent with national and local guidelines.
- Adult Case study 1 was found to be appropriate with comments from the panel. The panel asked for confirmation that consideration was given to a more serious charge prior to the issue of an Adult Caution. A sufficient response was provided during the meeting.

Next Meeting Date:

- Wednesday 8th June 2022