

Report to Police and Crime Commissioners on Norfolk and Suffolk's Out of Court Disposal Scrutiny Panel

Meeting date: 7 March 2024

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 Justice Service, Magistrates and Police and Crime Commissioner 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 by the two Offices of the Police and Crime Commissioners 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 within 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 7 March 2024. Seven panel members were present (and one Inspector from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services) with one member offering apologies. The panel discussed:

- Scrutiny of case files
- Rationale and file selection

The Panel findings

Eight cases were scrutinised: four Norfolk and four Suffolk cases. These cases were selected at random by Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies and included both adult (three) and youth (five) disposals. No individual group of people were specifically selected based solely on characteristics (such as perceived race) on this occasion, however the cases scrutinised represented a wide range of members of our communities.

Norfolk cases

The four Norfolk cases scrutinised by the panel were deemed to have met the evidential standard and were concluded to be appropriate and consistent with national and local guidelines.

No further observations or recommendations were added.

Suffolk cases

The four Suffolk cases scrutinised by the panel were also deemed to have met the evidential standard and were concluded to be appropriate and consistent with national and local guidelines.

One youth case was met with additional comments from the panel revolving around the circumstances that caused the incident to occur. The youth was put into care after the passing of their mother and was not happy with the location of the home as it was away from their friends and immediate family. The youth is being supported from a multitude of agencies to try and assist with the negative behaviours the youth has displayed since being in care. Having been provided with further information, the panel was satisfied that the resolution was appropriate and consistent with the national and local guidelines. No further recommendations were added.

Performance data

Data was provided by Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies on the number of Out of Court Disposals for each force for the Quarter 4 Period of 2023 (October 2023 to December 2023). Please see the data broken down by type of Out of Court Disposals for each force below:

Norfolk Constabulary data

Norfolk Constabulary				
Outcome	October	November	December	Total
Type 2 - Caution Youth	6	4	4	14
Type 2A - Caution Youth – alternate offence	1	0	1	2
Type 3 - Caution Adult	69	81	98	248
Type 3A - Caution Adult - alternate offence	17	14	10	41
Adult Caution - conditional	0	1	2	3
Type 4 - TIC - Taken into Consideration	27	60	41	128
Type 5 - Offender has died	2	3	0	5
Type 7 - Cannabis/Khat Warning	2	1	0	3
Type 8 - Community resolution (Crime)	163	173	149	485
Grand Total	287	337	305	929

Suffolk Constabulary data

Suffolk Constabulary				
Outcome	October	November	December	Total
Type 2 - Caution Youth	3	14	10	27
Type 2A - Caution Youth – alternate offence	0	0	1	1
Type 3 - Caution Adult	51	51	39	141
Type 3A - Caution Adult - alternate offence	2	1	4	7
Adult Caution - conditional	1	4	1	6
Type 4 - TIC - Taken into Consideration	23	28	63	114
Type 5 - Offender has died	0	4	0	4
Type 7 - Cannabis/Khat Warning	1	0	0	1
Type 8 - Community resolution (Crime)	133	106	96	335
Grand Total	214	208	214	636

Next meeting:

Thursday 6 June 2024.