

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

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 aims to bring transparency to the use of out of court disposals in order to increase 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 review and discuss case files as a group and conclude one of three categories:

- Appropriate and consistent with national and local guidelines;
- Appropriate with 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.

Report

The panel met on the 10th October 2018. Ten panel members were present with six apologies.

Panel Business

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

The panel scrutinised twelve randomly selected cases disposed of by means of out of court disposal in Suffolk and Norfolk in this meeting. It had been decided at the previous meeting that an equal number of youth and adult cases for each county would be scrutinised.

Panel Findings

12 cases were scrutinised: 6 x Suffolk cases, 3x youth and 3x adult, and 6 x Norfolk cases, 3x youth and 3x three adult.

The panel revisited a Suffolk case study that they had been unable to reach a decision on in the previous meeting on 16th May 2018. In light of new information presented to the panel it was concluded that this had been an inappropriate use of an out of court disposal.

Suffolk

- Five of the Suffolk cases were dealt with proportionately and appropriately. Admissions from the accused were clear and proportionate and the correct level of authority had been obtained in all cases. Documentation had been completed to a good standard.
- One Suffolk case was found to be appropriate but the panel added comments that some safeguarding opportunities had been missed and that there were problems in this case with completion of the paperwork and the eligibility of young children to have received a Community Resolution.

Norfolk

- Five of the Norfolk cases were dealt with proportionately and appropriately. Admissions from the accused were clear and proportionate and the correct level of authority had been obtained in all cases. Documentation had been completed to a good standard.
- One Norfolk case was concluded to be an inappropriate use of an out of court disposal.

Key Issues

- No specific key issues were identified this meeting.