

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

Meeting date: 7 December 2023

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 December 2023. Seven panel members were present with five 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 (four) and youth (four) 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.

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 the national and local guidelines.

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 the national and local guidelines.

Norfolk cases

Four Norfolk cases were found by the panel to be appropriate and consistent with national and local guidelines. No further observations or recommendations were added.

Suffolk cases

Four Suffolk cases were found by the panel to be appropriate and consistent with national and local guidelines. No further observations or 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 period of August 2023 to October 2023. Please see the data broken down by type of Out of Court Disposals for each force below:

Norfolk Constabulary data

Norfolk Constabulary				
Outcome	August	September	October	Total
Type 2 - Caution Youth	3	7	6	16
Type 3 - Caution Adult	82	87	60	229
Type 3A - Caution Adult - alternate offence	5	8	16	29
Adult Caution - conditional	0	0	8	8
Type 4 - TIC - Taken into Consideration	36	21	24	81
Type 5 - Offender has died	0	3	2	5
Type 7 - Cannabis/Khat Warning	0	2	2	4
Type 8 - Community resolution (Crime)	149	152	163	464
Grand Total	275	280	281	836

Suffolk Constabulary data

Suffolk Constabulary				
Outcome	August	September	October	Total
Type 2 - Caution Youth	1	7	3	11
Youth Conditional Caution	0	0	1	1
Type 3 - Caution Adult	54	34	44	132
Type 3A - Caution Adult - alternate offence	2	0	1	3
Adult Caution - conditional	2	4	9	15
Type 4 - TIC - Taken into Consideration	13	26	18	57
Type 5 - Offender has died	1	0	0	1
Type 7 - Cannabis/Khat Warning	1	2	1	4
Type 8 - Community resolution (Crime)	147	103	131	381
Grand Total	221	176	208	605

Next meeting:

Thursday 7 March 2024.