

Report to PCC's re Norfolk & Suffolk Out of Court Scrutiny Panel

Friday 7th August 2015

About the Panel

Norfolk and Suffolk Constabulary Out of Court Disposals 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 consider the victims' wishes where appropriate. The Panel aim 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 in policy or practice. The Panel also consider performance information regarding levels and use of Out of Court Disposals, and changes to legislation, policy and practice to support them in their role.

Report

The Panel met for the seventh time on 7th August. Fourteen Panel members were present, with two apologies.

Panel Business

- The Panel agreed the Decisions Log from the April 2015 meeting.

Scrutiny of Case Files

Rationale and file selection

The panel had previously requested a focus of Community Resolutions issued in Suffolk and Norfolk for the Financial Year 2014 – 15, where any adult or youth were in receipt of two or more Community Resolutions.

- A total of 826 files were identified as meeting the above criteria.

- o There were three instances where offenders were issued four Resolutions.

Panel findings

Of these three instances, two were scrutinised, one Norfolk and one Suffolk case.

The panel concluded, in both cases, that the subsequent repetitive use of this type disposal was inappropriate.

Norfolk

- o The Panel observed that there were obvious and unfortunate delays in addressing the early stages of this repeat offending, with little thought to diverting and supporting the offender's rehabilitation. The supervision and police decision making in these instances lacked definition.

Suffolk

- o The Panel didn't feel that these disposals were an effective method to address the vulnerability of the offender in this case.

Next meeting

Friday 20th November 2015.