

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

### **About the Panel**

Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies 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 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018. 11 panel members were present with 3 apologies.

### **Panel Business**

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

The panel had requested a focus upon cases of drug offences and/or Possession with Intent to Supply disposed of by means of out of court disposal in Suffolk and Norfolk for this meeting.

### **Panel Findings**

10 cases were scrutinised: 5 x Suffolk and 5 x Norfolk cases.

It was determined that all cases from Norfolk & Suffolk displayed an appropriate use of an out of court disposal though the panel had comments to add to one of the Norfolk case studies.

## **Suffolk**

- All five 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.
- The panel had particularly positive remarks to add for Suffolk Case Study 5 in which the officer concerned had very sensitively and thoroughly handled the case of a female youth in possession of low level drugs for a first time offence. The officer acted with the support of the youth's parents and took care to issue a disposal that would not criminalise her.

## **Norfolk**

- All five Norfolk cases were dealt with proportionately and appropriately. In four of the cases admissions from the accused were clear & proportionate. The correct level of authority had been obtained in all cases and documentation was all completed to a good standard.
- The panel concluded that Norfolk Case Study 3 was appropriate with comments that there was some ambiguity around the admission of the offender to unlawful possession of one of the class C drugs for which they received an out of court disposal.

## **Key Issues**

- No key issues were raised or highlighted during this meeting.