

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

Monday 11th January 2016

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 eighth time on 11th January 2016. Twelve Panel members were present, with six apologies.

Panel Business

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

Scrutiny of Case Files

Rationale and file selection

The panel requested a focus upon detected Hate Crimes, disposed by means of Out of Court Disposal, that were issued in Suffolk and Norfolk between January and October 2015.

- A total of 59 instances were identified (Suffolk 48 & 11 Norfolk).

Panel findings

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

The panel concluded that there is an obvious disparity between each County and this type disposal.

Norfolk

o The Panel observed that the victim was at the centre of this investigation, the appropriate resolution was achieved swiftly and diligently in line with local and national guidelines.

Suffolk

o The Panel observed that there were obvious and definitive delays in addressing the early and key stages of this investigation, resulting in key evidence not being secured. The supervision, police decision making, in this instance, lacked definition and the inherent delay appeared to drive the disposal type.

Next meeting

Friday 22nd April 2016.