

WEST YORKSHIRE OUT OF COURT DISPOSAL SCRUTINY GROUP – SUMMARY OF MEETING 4th October 2016

An out of court disposal (OCD) is a method of resolving an investigation when the offender is known and when that offender admits the offence. An OCD can only be used in limited circumstances and it should reduce re-offending by enabling restorative and reparative justice. Nationally, there are a number of methods for dealing with offenders in this way. These are universal and include community resolutions, conditional cautioning, simple cautions, cannabis warnings and Penalty Notices for Disorder.

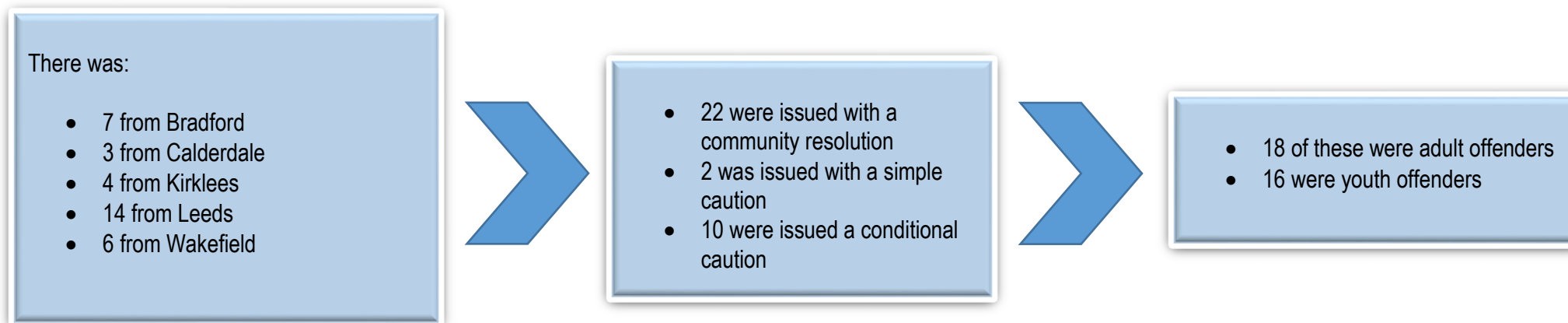
On 24 November 2014 West Yorkshire Police partially commenced implementation of a new simplified, two-tier model; the pilot only permits the use of conditional cautions and community resolutions.

The intention of the scrutiny panel is to provide transparency and accountability and an increase in public understanding, confidence and trust in how West Yorkshire Police use out of court disposals with

particular focus on the delivery of appropriate and proportionate justice and ensuring redress for victims of crime as well as addressing the root causes of offending behaviour.

The scrutiny panel has no referral or appeals capability and is not intended to re-judge cases. It will assess the relevant processes, interactions and decisions to identify any continuous organisational learning.

How many offenders were considered?



What was the overall assessment of the disposals for offenders?

16 were deemed appropriate and consistent with relevant organisational policy and procedures

7 were deemed appropriate with observations

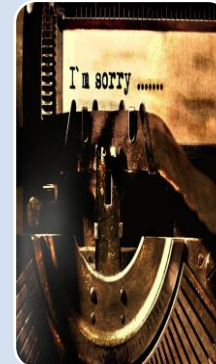
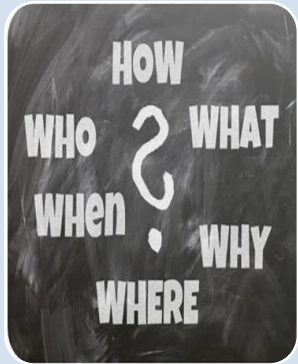
7 were deemed inappropriate and/or inconsistent with policy and procedures

There was 4 offenders where the panel failed to reach a conclusion, and further relevant information is requested.

Contact us

If you have questions about out of court disposals, how the scrutiny panel works or any feedback on the content and format of this document please contact the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner's Office on contact@westyorkshire.pcc.pnn.gov.uk

What were the key themes from the meeting?



Youth Offending age. In Youth cases there is a concern raised whereby the offender is seventeen at the time of the offence but has reached their eighteenth birthday prior to the case being concluded and as such receives an adult disposal.

Community Resolution forms
A number of community resolutions were served using the old forms that did not have room for conditions to be noted.
A concern was also raised in the time elapsed between the offence and issuance of the community resolution.

A lack of or no rationale written on the case log giving reasons for a particular disposal or to indicate if restorative justice has been considered. This rationale is required, to provide an audit trail for an outcome and a detailed explanation leading to the final decision. The panel found that where a detailed rationale was given, they could follow the decision making process.
Where the rationale was found to be good positive feedback is given to the officers.

In youth cases there is always a referral to Youth offending Services. Where other agencies are involved and YOS have no actions to undertake does it add any value?

Services for offenders to get help for offending behaviour - which can form conditions that can be attached to community resolutions or conditional cautions - are not always available for the police to make referrals to for offences such as shoplifting and drug offences for adult offenders. However there are good options available for youth offenders, and these are being well utilised.

Doing the right thing - is it actually the right thing? Domestic abuse cases have multiple sub layers, it is not simply a case of crime/offence/admission that is set out clearly in front of the officer. The panel found that the policy can be applied correctly but this did not feel morally correct in all circumstances.

Out of court disposals for low level shop theft that have a store ban or civil recovery as the conditions is not considered appropriate by the panel.