

Out of Court Resolutions Scrutiny Panel

Child Focus: Assault Cases

June 2025

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The OoCR Scrutiny Panel carries out independent scrutiny of the use of Out of Court Resolutions to bring transparency to the use of Out of Court Resolutions, drive improvement and increase understanding and confidence in their use.

The meeting focused on:

- **Youth Focus: Assault Cases**

About the Panel

The Panel includes Magistrates and representatives of the Crown Prosecution Service, HMCTS, Youth Justice Teams, and victim services. The role of the Panel is to ensure that the use of Out of Court Resolutions (OoCR) is appropriate and proportionate, consistent with national and local policy, and considers the victims' wishes where appropriate.

The Panel is supported by the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner (OPCC), Force Out of Court Resolutions Tactical Lead and the ASCEND Team Manager.

Findings of the Panel, recommendations, and action taken in response are published at the following link:

[Out of Court Disposals Panel Reports | OPCC for Avon and Somerset \(avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk\)](https://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/out-of-court-disposals-panel-reports)

Panel Business

- This was the annual child-focused meeting. Representatives of all five Youth

Justice Services and the Youth Justice Board were in attendance.

- The Panel welcomed new Magistrate representatives: Lascelle Samuels and Jordan Wheatley.
- succession planning purposes. Magistrates with Youth Bench experience are specifically being sought, to help strengthen scrutiny of child / youth cases.

OoCR Overview & Performance

(Rebecca Marshall, Force OoCR Tactical Lead)

National Updates

- Revised **Child Gravity Matrix** was published in February. Changes are technical updates rather than significant changes. The Child Gravity Matrix is a tool to enhance the decision making process for the police when working with children.
- National OoCR Thematic Inspection is due to be published in the summer. The North Somerset YJS Manager was part of the inspection team, bringing valuable insight on issues identified to inform learning.

Local Updates

- A Child version of the My Out of Court Resolutions App to support decision making in child cases is due to go live in the summer. The Panel welcomed this as a positive step in strengthening consistency and improving police decision making in child cases, where the options and outcomes are very different to those of adult cases. The App has been built to ensure that cases are referred to Youth Panel for decision where appropriate, and to improve recording of ethnicity. Both are issues identified by the Panel as areas for improvement.

Performance

Findings of analysis conducted to look at how OoCRs were being used across the Force area were presented:

- Bristol has low use compared with Somerset & B&NES.
- High use 'hotspots' include South Gloucestershire (due to shoplifting cases at The Mall, Cribbs Causeway).
- Analysis drills down to Team / individual officer level, enabling insight into factors in tackling disproportionality.
- Response officers are the highest user group, to be expected given their role.

Analysis of child outcomes was presented:

- Positive outcome rates are higher for children (at 50%) showing the benefits of

the Child First model and supporting interventions. It was clarified that Outcome 21s are not included in this data.

- Only 20% of child OoCR cases are currently referred to Youth Panel. Prompts in the new Child OoCR App will help to ensure that cases are being referred where they should be. YJS representatives highlighted the need to carefully manage the transition to increased referrals to test capacity.
- Apparent disparity in Outcome 20s (action taken by another agency) and Outcome 21s (child-produced sexual imagery / 'sexting') needs further analysis to understand the demographics and appropriate outcomes.

Theme: Child Focus – Assault Cases

Rationale

The Panel holds a child-focused meeting once a year to look at consistency in decision making across the five Youth Justice Service areas, support policy development and ensure independent scrutiny of child cases. The theme selected for this meeting was the application of Outcome 22 / Deferred Cautions. Cases were selected from a single crime type – assault.

Definitions & Requirements

Requirements are set out in the following documents:

- [Child Gravity Matrix v2.2 - September 2023.pdf](#) – sets out the appropriate outcome for each level, taking into account the gravity of the offence, and any aggravating or mitigating factors – both in relation to the offence and vulnerability.
- [Case management guidance - How to use out-of-court disposals - Guidance - GOV.UK](#)
- [Guideline on the Cautioning and Charging of Knife Crime Offences v5.0](#)

The guiding principle is for a **Child First approach**:

It is important that we divert children away from the formal youth justice system where appropriate. This will reduce crime, keep communities safer, cut costs, and create better outcomes for children and victims. It is recognised that diversion is not appropriate in all cases and the serious nature of an offence, or actual or potential harm, means that formal criminal justice processes are necessary. The evidence suggests that contact with the criminal justice system can lead to negative labelling and stigma. This makes it more likely that children will reoffend (see [Petrosini, Turpin-Petrosini, Guckenburg 2010](#) and [Wiley and Esbensen 2013](#)). There is particularly strong evidence that diverting children before they reach court can protect them against further involvement in crime ([Wilson et al 2018](#)). Most children will naturally mature out of offending behaviour (see [Bottoms 2006](#)).
(Case Management Guidance)

How decisions are made for children:

Decisions are either made by the police, or where appropriate should be referred to the Youth Panel:

- Form 143 sent by police, triaged/checked by CJU, sent to the relevant Youth Justice Service
- Prevention and Diversion Assessment completed
- Victims voice will be heard at panel
- Panel members meet and decide outcome
- Use child gravity matrix to inform decision but scope for defensible decision making outside this
- Decision log completed and saved to Niche.

Outcomes available:

- NFA (No Further Action)
- Community Resolution
- Outcome 20/21
- Outcome 22 (NFA after education, intervention input) – this includes Deferred Cautions, which are recorded as Outcome 22 / NFA on completion.
- Youth Caution
- Youth Conditional Caution
- Charge to court

Deferred Prosecutions are not currently available for child cases in Avon and Somerset.

Outcome 22 and Deferred Cautions:

- All Deferred Cautions should come to Youth Panel for assessment and to consider appropriate intervention.
- Interventions should involve educational input, be proportionate, and bespoke to the child. Police officer 'Words of Advice' do not constitute educational input.
- Outcome 22 / Deferred Cautions is a voluntary outcome, so police forces are not statutorily obliged to use it. Local guidance is needed to support decision making and ensure consistent practice across the Force area.

Weapon possession offences:

- Outside the Child Gravity Matrix there is guidance on weapon offences that asks for '**exceptional circumstances**' to be present to enable diversion rather than YCC (for under 16s) and use of YCC rather than charge (16 and over).
- There has been much discussion within Avon and Somerset about what constitutes '*exceptional circumstances*'.
- The decision log should clearly set out the justification for decision making in these cases.

Other considerations:

- **Disproportionality:** *You should give careful attention to diversity and disproportionality factors at an early stage in the decision-making process and within [monitoring and scrutiny arrangements](#) of out-of-court disposals. (Case management guidance)*
- **Repeat offences:** *There is no limit on the number of times a child can receive a diversion disposal. Decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis and should be based on the factors outlined in the [Child Gravity Matrix](#) including the offence and any assessed vulnerabilities or needs of the child. However, consideration should also be given to whether any previous diversion activities have been effective in meeting the child's needs and have been meaningful to them. It is also important that there is scrutiny and oversight of out-of-court disposals including their repeated use.*
- **Victim safety** concerns must be considered in deciding on an appropriate outcome.

Case Scrutiny

Summary of cases scrutinised

24 cases were scrutinised by the Panel made up of:

- 19 Child Assault Cases
 - 13 Outcome 22 / Deferred Caution cases
 - 6 Youth Deferred Caution / Caution / Conditional Caution cases (as a comparator)
- 5 Community Resolution for serious violence or sexual offences cases. The Panel scrutinises all cases recorded in the last quarter in this category at every meeting.

Criteria

The Panel discuss whether the method of disposal is considered appropriate, based on a review of the information/evidence available to the decision maker at the time, and agree a categorisation against four options:

GREEN: Appropriate and consistent with national and local policies including: the OoCD Code of Practice, NPCC Guidance, CPS Code, Force Policy, and the Gravity Matrix
YELLOW: Appropriate, but with observations from the panel
RED: Inappropriate and/or inconsistent with policy
The Panel Members fail to agree on the appropriateness of the decision made

The Panel *cannot* change the outcome of the case, but can make observations and give feedback on the case reviewed. Feedback is provided to individual officers and supervisors on cases considered inappropriate. Observations are used to identify training needs, inform development of policies and interventions and promote good practice.

Panel Decision

Disposal	Offence	Panel Decision
Community Resolution Sexual Offences Cases (all cases in last Quarter)		
Community Resolution	Sexual Assault on Female	Appropriate with observations
Community Resolution	Exposure & Voyeurism	Appropriate with observations
Community Resolution	Sexual Assault on Female	Appropriate
Community Resolution	Sexual Assault on Female	Appropriate with observations
Community Resolution	Exposure & Voyeurism	*Inappropriate
Child Cases – Outcome 22 Assault Cases		
Outcome 22	Assault ABH	*Inappropriate
Deferred Caution	Common Assault	Appropriate
Outcome 22	Common Assault	*Inappropriate
Community Resolution	Assault ABH	*Inappropriate
Deferred Caution	Assault ABH	Appropriate with observations
Outcome 22	Common Assault	*Inappropriate
Deferred Caution	Common Assault	*Inappropriate**
Outcome 22	Assault ABH	*Inappropriate
Outcome 22	Common Assault	*Inappropriate
Outcome 22	Assault ABH	*Inappropriate
Outcome 22	Common Assault	*Inappropriate **
Deferred Caution	Assault ABH	Appropriate
Deferred Caution	Common Assault	Appropriate with observations
Child Cases – Youth Deferred Caution / Caution / Conditional Caution – Assault Cases		
Youth Caution	Possession of bladed article	Appropriate
Youth Conditional Caution	Assault	***Further information requested
Conditional Caution	Assault Emergency Worker	Appropriate
Youth Conditional Caution	Common Assault	Appropriate with observations
Deferred Caution	Common Assault	*Inappropriate
Deferred Caution	Assault ABH	Appropriate

SUMMARY: Appropriate (6); Appropriate with Observations (6); Inappropriate (11).

*** A summary of cases considered inappropriate can be found below.**

****Case referred to Force Crime Incident Registrar for review**

*****Further information was requested in one case to enable the Panel to reach a decision. This will be considered at the next meeting.**

Summary of cases considered inappropriate by the Panel

Feedback on learning points was provided to the police decision maker and their supervisor in the following cases. Feedback was also provided to Youth Justice Services where relevant.

Case 1:

- **Outcome:** Community Resolution – Exposure & Voyeurism:
- **Incident:** followed victim into public toilets at a picnic area during the day and masturbated next to victim at the urinals.
- **Panel Feedback:**
- Was an acceptance of responsibility clearly made out (required to be eligible for a Community Resolution)
- Poor quality letter of apology
- Was the impact on the victim taken into account?
- Is the condition 'talk to police officer at station' (words of advice) is sufficient to address this pattern of behaviour? File states that the offender's vehicle has been identified at the same location on 40 occasions within the last 90 days.
- Was a safeguarding referral made regarding risk of sexual harm (given that grandchildren were often in his home)?

Response: Feedback provided to police decision maker and supervisor. Confirmed that safeguarding referral was made.

Case 2:

- **Outcome:** Outcome 22 – Assault / ABH
- **Incident:** assault at school – victim thrown to the ground, punches to the head causing split lip.
- **Panel Feedback:**
- Words of advice should not be recorded as Outcome 22. This does not constitute a diversionary/educational intervention.
- No formal interview held – what is the ASP policy for dealing with incidents in school?
- Should have been referred to Youth Panel for assessment to consider wider interventions and support – neurodiversity, vulnerabilities, potential permanent school exclusion, serious assault involving multiple blows and injury (split lip).

Response: Feedback provided to police decision maker and supervisor. Introduction of the Child My OoCR App is intended to ensure that relevant cases are referred to Youth Panel for assessment in future. Review of local Outcome 22 policy needed.

Case 3:

- **Outcome:** Outcome 22 – Common Assault
- **Incident:** group throwing eggs at supermarket security guards, throwing bottles, punching windows and making hand gestures.
- **Panel Feedback:**
- ABC issued (work with Robbins Foundation and Empire Fighting Chance) – query whether ABC can be issued under Outcome 22 policy.
- ABC was reviewed by partner agencies; however, case should have been referred to Youth Panel for assessment to identify appropriate support and interventions – young person was on Child Protection Plan, safeguarding concerns at ongoing pattern of behaviour.
- No BRAG assessment was completed.
- Limited information on file.

Response: Case has been reviewed by the supervisor and feedback provided to the police decision maker. Issues around the case not being referred to Youth Panel, non-completion of BRAG and appropriate interventions will be addressed through introduction of the Child My OoCR App. Review of local Outcome 22 policy needed.

Case 4:

- **Outcome:** Outcome 22 – Assault / ABH
- **Incident:** unprovoked assault on victim while out with friends, accusing victim of messaging harmer's boyfriend. Pushed to the ground and punched repeatedly. Attack recorded and video circulated.
- **Panel Feedback:**
- Recording: Recorded as Outcome 22, but Community Resolution completed. OEL describes the Community Resolution as the 'diversionary programme' given under the Outcome 22. This is not correct.
- 'Words of advice' do not constitute a diversionary/educational intervention for use with Outcome 22.
- Question acceptance of responsibility (requirement for eligibility)
- Question whether incident was too serious for outcome given: Query level of injury – assault or ABH? Aggravating factors not taken into account (pre-planned, video of incident posted on social media).
- File quality: CR form not fully completed
- **Good practice:**
- BRAG completed
- Appropriate referral to Young Victim Service

Response: Case has been reviewed by the supervisor and feedback provided to the police decision maker. Review of local Outcome 22 policy needed.

Case 5:

- **Outcome:** Outcome 22 – Common Assault
- **Incident:** group from same school threw stones at victim while at the park and made sexualised comments towards her.
- **Panel Feedback:**
- 'Words of advice' do not constitute a diversionary/educational intervention for use with Outcome 22.
- Not clear whether full acceptance of responsibility (requirement for eligibility).
- Concern at age disparity (13 / 17).
- Victim focus – sought views of the victim's father, but not the views of the victim themselves. It was clarified that YJS practice is to speak to parents first rather than the child.

Response: Feedback provided to police decision maker and supervisor. Introduction of Child My OoCR Decision App will help to clarify suitable interventions in future. Review of local Outcome 22 policy needed.

Case 6:

- **Outcome:** Deferred Caution – Common Assault
- **Incident:** victims hit on the head with metal water bottle and sprayed in the face with substance believed to be pepper spray while on a walk. Harmer attends same school.
- **Panel Feedback:**
- Offence classification: should this have been dealt with as a s5 Firearms offence given reference to pepper spray? **ACTION:** Refer to Force Crime Incident Registrar (FCIR) for review.
- Assessment of vulnerability and risk: limited investigation into why they were carrying pepper spray, where they had obtained it, and potential consideration of prevent / radicalisation risk.
- Timeliness: 5 months from incident to Youth Panel outcome.
- **Good Practice:**
- Appropriate referral to Youth Panel – 12 1:1 sessions (PAD assessment viewed)

Response: Case reviewed by FCIR and relevant Youth Justice Service. Clarified that the substance was Farbgel (not pepper spray). Because Farbgel does not contain any noxious substances and the can itself is not designed to discharge a noxious substance, it is not prohibited

by the Firearms Act. It was acknowledged that more could have been done by YJS to find out why spray was being carried and subsequently sprayed in the victim's face. It was also acknowledged that assessment of risk was not appropriate (too low) in this case. The YJS are reviewing risk assessments and have discussed feedback with managers to ensure concerns raised in this case are addressed appropriately in future. FCIR review has reclassified this case to Actual Bodily Harm (from Common Assault).

Case 7:

- **Outcome:** Outcome 22 – Assault ABH
- **Incident:** victim assaulted in school with multiple blows to a head including into a metal pole causing concussion.
- **Panel Feedback:**
 - Queried the Crime Related Incident School Protocol – clarified that this is national policy. It was noted that use of this protocol was identified as an issue in the HMIP OoCR Thematic Inspection (due for publication in July).
 - Did the outcome reflect the severity of the incident and victim impact?
 - Not clear whether the harmer admitted the offence.
 - Does not appear to have been referred to Youth Panel for assessment. Sent directly to police staff to deliver Choices & Consequences programme. Clarified that processes have since changed following an HMIP Youth Justice Service Inspection recommendation and that this programme has been stopped and is currently under review.
 - Timeliness: 5 months from incident to outcome.
- **Good practice:**
 - Referred to Child Social Services for awareness

Response: Feedback provided to police decision maker and supervisor. Introduction of the Child My OoCR Decision App will help ensure appropriate referral to Youth Panel for assessment in future. The Youth Justice Service has implemented a weekly multi-agency meeting to review all children arrested or voluntarily interviewed to identify concerns and support needs to enable early intervention at an appropriate time.

Case 8:

- **Outcome:** Outcome 22 – Common Assault
- **Incident:** Supermarket security punched in the face by harmer, who is a repeat shoplifter at the store.
- **Panel Feedback:**
 - Timeliness: 9 months from incident to intervention completion. Delay due to officer abstraction to university and case handed over.
 - Victim assaulted at work; young person is a repeat shoplifter at the store. Concern that outcome was not sufficient to address victim safety.
 - Should have been referred to Youth Panel for assessment.
 - Outcome: initially finalised as Outcome 17 – Prosecution Time Limit Expired. Reviewed by Crime Review Officer to check Data Integrity – Outcome 22 applied on the basis that young person had successfully completed intervention.
 - Intervention completed was the Choices & Consequences programme. Referral was made directly by police, without assessment by Youth Panel. Clarified that processes have since changed following an HMIP Youth Justice Service Inspection recommendation and that this programme has been stopped and is currently under review.
 - The Choices & Consequences intervention was delivered after the Statutory Time Limit had expired. This is unlawful and could prevent intervention in the future.

Response: Feedback provided to police decision maker and supervisor. Introduction of the Child My OoCR Decision App will help ensure appropriate referral to Youth Panel for assessment in future. Case highlighted with Force Crime Incident Registrar due to delivery of the intervention after the Statutory Time Limit had expired. File quality issues around signing of paperwork are being addressed through the police Investigative Standards Committee.

Case 9:

- **Outcome:** Outcome 22 – Common Assault / ABH
- **Incident:** Report from SW Ambulance Service that victim had been punched in the head by another pupil at school causing pain and blurred vision.
- **Panel Feedback:**
 - Outcome considered too lenient given injuries. No consideration of victim's views.
 - 'Words of advice' do not constitute a diversionary / educational intervention for use with Outcome 22.
 - Should have been referred to Youth Panel for assessment.
 - Wider circumstances included ongoing bullying and threats to stab victim. School had suspended both pupils. No further information on file about work carried out by school to address the situation.
 - Limited investigation and information on file. OEL refers to initial difficulties in locating the victim and communicating with the school.

Response: Feedback provided to police decision maker and supervisor. This case was dealt with by the school and should have been recorded as No Further Action. Review of local Outcome 22 policy needed. Introduction of the Child My OoCR Decision App will help ensure appropriate referral to Youth Panel for assessment in future. The Youth Justice Service has implemented a weekly multi-agency meeting to review all children arrested or voluntarily interviewed to identify concerns and support needs to enable early intervention at an appropriate time.

Case 10:

- **Outcome:** Outcome 22 – Common Assault
- **Incident:** Young person is abusive towards parents and family, hitting them with sticks and pulling out hair. Aggressive behaviour only occurs when at home or with family.
- **Panel Feedback:**
 - Young person below the age of criminal responsibility (9). **ACTION:** Refer to Force Crime Incident Registrar for review.
 - Situation involving parents struggling to manage behaviour of their child. Should be dealt with as safeguarding matter. Noted that social care referral had already been made by school for family support services.
- **Good Practice:**
 - BRAG assessment completed.
 - Referred to Child Social Services for awareness.

Response: Feedback provided to police decision maker and supervisor. Case reviewed by Force Crime Incident Registrar. Recording issues have been rectified and reclassified as Outcome 11: Child Below Age of Criminal Responsibility. Again, highlights need for review of local Outcome 22 policy.

Case 11:

- **Outcome:** Deferred Caution – Common Assault
- **Incident:** unprovoked attack on victim in shop and threats to kill, later seen waiting outside victim's home.
- **Panel Feedback:**
 - Outcome: crime reclassified from a Common Assault to Actual Bodily Harm on the basis of injury. Gravity Matrix scores were changed accordingly. Not clear whether YJS were made aware to inform their decision making.
 - Appropriate referral to Youth Panel – however process and records are confusing. Decision made on the day of the Panel despite paperwork stating that assessment was required. Should have been adjourned for assessment.
 - Intervention: letter of apology and Choices & Consequences Programme. Clarified that following an HMIP Youth Justice Service Inspection recommendation, this programme has been stopped and is currently under review.

- Victim focus – victim was not happy with an OoCR and wanted the case to go to court. It was noted that there was a history of incidents between the two families, with ongoing court proceedings.
- **Good practice:**
- Thorough police investigation including efforts to engage with reluctant parties.
- BRAG assessment completed including victim safety considerations.

Response: Confirmed that the Youth Justice Service had not been informed of the reclassification so did not have an understanding of the offence category or level of violence being escalated to ABH. The case highlights the need to ensure appropriate cover where the YJS team lead is unable to be present at the Youth Panel. Feedback submitted by the team lead in their absence was not considered by the Panel. The Panel referred the case to the Turnaround Project, to complete the PAD assessment and respond to identified needs. The offer of assessment and support was declined by the parent. It was confirmed that the young person engaged in the intervention agreed at the Panel and has not come to the attention of police since.

Further Information Requested:

- **Outcome:** Youth Conditional Caution – Common Assault
- **Incident:** female victim hit in the face by a male she knows causing bruising.
- **Panel Feedback:**
- Requested further information on the rationale to determine whether a Youth Conditional Caution was proportionate.
- Evidence around presence of a zombie knife not clear – if a zombie knife had been present, question whether there was adequate consideration of safety / public protection.
- Interventions: only condition was 'not to contact' – questioned how this would work in practice, and suggested adding wording such as: '*you know this will be complete when you finish your work with YJS*'. Acknowledged range of work ongoing with other professionals including Violence Reduction Unit, Call In programme and a buddy.
- **Good practice:**
- Referral to Youth Panel for assessment
- Vulnerability of young person taken into account at early stage and NRM referral considered (exploitation / trafficking).

Response: Further information has been requested for the Panel to consider at the next meeting.

Update: The Youth Justice Service carried out a multi-agency review of the case:

- Accepted that police should have made further enquires into allegations about the alleged knife.
- Accepted that condition should have been specific in relation to how long the non-contact condition was in effect. It was also noted that one victim stated they did not want a non-contact requirement.
- Question whether there is sufficient evidence to charge for knife possession, therefore No Further Action for this element of the offence. As the knife possession element has not been admitted, this cannot be specifically considered as part of the PAD assessment, however safety and public protection form part of offending behaviour work with the young person.

Organisational Learning

1. Need for a review of local Deferred Caution and Outcome 22 Policy

- There is inconsistent application of the Child Gravity Matrix, particularly in Outcome 22 and Deferred Caution cases.
- Outcome 22 was frequently misapplied, used in place of other Out of Court Resolutions and in cases which should have been recorded as No Further Action.
- Police "Words of Advice" were repeatedly used incorrectly and do not meet the requirement for a diversionary or educational intervention.

The Youth Justice Tactical Group is being reinvigorated to support a review of local Outcome 22 Policy (to support application of the national Child Gravity Matrix) and ensure a consistent approach across the Force area. Enhanced scrutiny of Outcome 22 recording is taking place by the Crime Data Integrity team to strengthen compliance.

2. Youth Panel Referral and Assessment

- Improvement is needed to ensure that child cases are appropriately referred to Youth Panel for assessment. Introduction of the Child My OoCR Decision App should assist with this.
- Police-led referrals directly into interventions bypassed assessment in some cases, reducing confidence that interventions were proportionate and needs-led.
- Youth Panel decision logs were not always recorded on Niche (police system).

Implementation of the A&S Child Out of Court Resolution Protocol and introduction of the Child My OoCR Decision App should help to these issues. There is an opportunity for dip sampling to be carried out by Early Intervention Team Sergeants to check whether appropriate Youth Panels referrals are being made.

3. Vulnerability, Risk and Safeguarding

- BRAG assessments were inconsistently completed or applied, particularly in police-led cases which were not referred to Youth Panel. This remains an area of focus for the Scrutiny Panel to ensure vulnerabilities are being appropriately identified and addressed.
- Cases highlighted the importance of distinguishing criminal justice responses from safeguarding responses, particularly in cases involving children.

4. Victim Focus

- Victim views were not consistently sought or evidenced, including in cases involving child victims and incidents in a school setting.
- Victim safety, especially in workplace assaults, school-based violence and repeat incidents, was not always sufficiently reflected in outcome decisions.

Victim focus will be the theme of the December Scrutiny Panel meeting to assess progress in this area.

5. Timeliness and Procedural Compliance

- Delays between incident and outcome were an issue in a number of cases, reducing the effectiveness of interventions. Case ownership changes and abstraction contributed to delays.
- In at least one case, an intervention was delivered after the statutory time limit, highlighting procedural and legal risk.

6. Recording and File Quality

- Poor file quality was a common theme, including incomplete forms, unclear rationales and limited information on file.
- Errors in outcome recording required retrospective correction by FCIR, highlighting data integrity risks.

Good Practice

1. Youth Panel and Multi-Agency Working

- Where cases were referred appropriately, Youth Panel assessments and interventions were robust, needs-led and informed by multi-agency input.
- Introduction of weekly multi-agency meetings to review all children arrested or voluntarily interviewed will strengthen the early-intervention approach.

2. Vulnerability, Risk and Safeguarding

- Good use of safeguarding referrals to Children's Social Care was evident in a number of cases. Consideration of exploitation, vulnerability and contextual safeguarding was demonstrated, including NRM considerations where appropriate.
- Where BRAG assessments had been completed, there was good consideration of risk and victim safety and referrals to specialist victim services, including Young Victim Services, were appropriately made.

What happens next?

Feedback is provided to individual officers and their supervisors to inform future decision making. Organisational learning is considered by the OoCR Tactical Group and actioned as appropriate, with updates reported back to the Panel.

Theme of the next meeting:

Chance to Change Deferred Prosecution Programme for 18-24 year olds and charged case comparators

Outcome 22 child cases follow up