



# One minute guide

## Leeds Children's Out of Court Disposal Panel

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### What is the Leeds Children's Out of Court Disposal (OOC) Panel?

The OOC panel is a joint Leeds Youth Justice Service (YJS) and West Yorkshire Police initiative that provides a framework for decision making when children have committed a crime and are considered potentially suitable for diverting away from formal prosecution. It is based on [Child First](#) principles.

The Children's Out of Court Disposal Panel is a multi-agency panel which sits every week and hears an assessment and proposal provided by the YJS case manager, and supporting information from the YJS police and the victim liaison officer. The Youth Justice Board (YJB) require Children's Services and Education to also be represented and provide further supporting information. In Leeds, community volunteers also attend to provide their views.

### Which children are discussed at the Children's OOC Panel?

Children aged 10 to 17 are referred to the Panel if the offence they have committed has a gravity score between 1 and 4; and it is a second or a repeat offence; or if it is a first time offence that **may** require a Youth Conditional Caution as this sits at a statutory level and requires an assessment.

While an admission of guilt is not required, the child's willingness to engage will be explored.

The panel is able to decide upon the following outcomes if certain criteria are met at each stage:

- In exceptional cases, No Further Action
- Youth Community Resolution;
- Deferred Prosecution (known in Leeds as 'Chance to Change,' recorded as Outcome 22 on police systems)
- Youth Caution;
- Youth Conditional Caution; or
- Charge

### What does the Leeds Children's OOC Panel aim to do?

- Ensure there is **joint decision making** between police and Leeds YJS, which promotes positive, proportional and individually tailored outcomes;
- **Safeguard against inappropriate disposals**, including inappropriate repeat cautioning and unnecessary entrance into the criminal justice system;
- Enable **restorative approaches** with victims;
- Agree a professionals' plan that addresses the underlying causes of the behaviour in a proportionate, sustainable and strengths-based way.

## How does the Leeds Children's OOC Panel make decisions?

Children who meet the above criteria are referred by the police to a YJS practitioner, who conducts an assessment in collaboration with the child and their family. Victims are contacted to ensure the panel considers the impact of the offence and to optimise restorative outcomes. This process is non-escalatory, with each referral evaluated based on the child's current circumstances and the nature of the offence.

When determining an appropriate outcome, the Panel considers the following factors:

- The child's personal circumstances, including any history of trauma.
- The seriousness of the offence, along with any aggravating or mitigating factors.
- The child's willingness to engage with potential interventions and their response to previous disposals.
- Concerns regarding future safety risks to the public, the victim, or the child.
- Any views expressed by the victim(s).

The Panel also develops a professionals' plan aimed at addressing structural barriers faced by the child and their family, with a focus on transitioning out of the YJS into sustainable support within mainstream services. Diversity factors are integral to this planning process.

Out-of-Court Disposals (OOCs) typically last three months and must therefore be both realistic and impactful, with the ultimate goal of fostering positive change for the child.

## What happens after the OOC Panel has made its decision?

The panel considers both the immediate outcome and future planning for the child. Any measures needed to enhance victim safety or facilitate direct or indirect restorative practices are also discussed. The agreed professionals' plan will be shared with the team supporting the child if they were not present at the panel.

Following this, the YJS case manager meets with the child and their family to explain the outcome and collaborate on the child's plan. The aim is to reflect the child's voice and build upon their areas of interest, skills, and the positives in their life.

The child and their parent/carer are required to attend an appointment with the YJS two weeks after the panel to receive their out-of-court disposal and finalise the agreed plans.

## Key contacts and further information

For further information about the Leeds Youth Panel, please email [leeds.yos@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:leeds.yos@leeds.gov.uk) . You can find further information about the Youth Justice Service through the Leeds City Council [website](#).