

Out of Court Resolutions Scrutiny Panels

2026-27 summary report



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1: Background information

Purpose of the Out of Court Resolution (OoCR) Scrutiny Panel

The purpose of the Scrutiny Panel is to independently review a random selection of anonymised cases that have been resolved by use of an out of court resolution. Its aim is to determine whether the method of disposal is considered appropriate, based on a review of the information/ evidence available to the decision maker at the time.

Categorisation of cases

In reviewing a case, the Panel will discuss and agree a categorisation against three options:

1. Supported
2. Supported with observations
3. Unsupported.

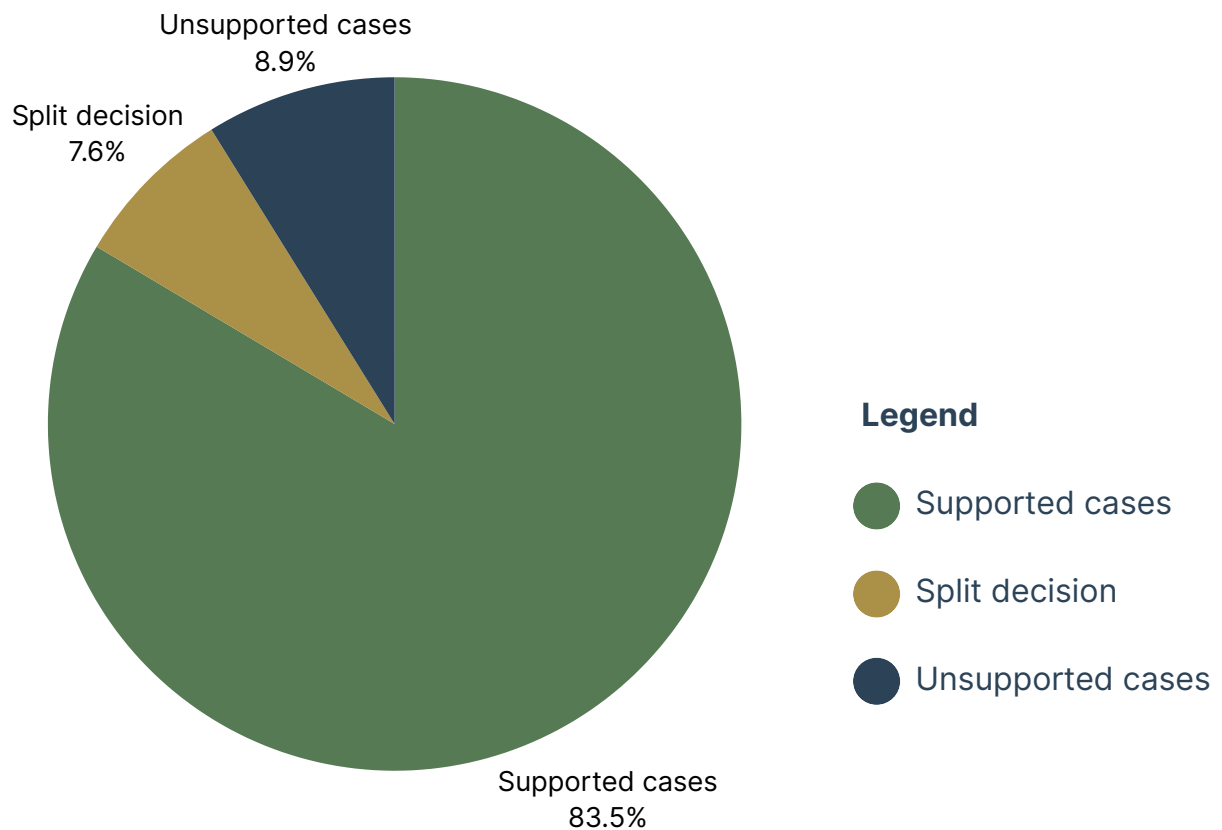
2: General summary

The table below presents summary of findings per category per scrutiny panel.

	Supported cases*	'Split' decision	Unsupported cases	Unable to reach a decision**	No crime committed	Number of cases reviewed
Eastern Panel	16	1	3	0	0	20
Northern Panel	15	2	2	0	0	19
Western Panel	16	2	2	0	0	20
Youth Panel	19	1	0	0	0	20
Total	66	6	7	0	0	79

* Category 'support cases' includes cases fully supported by the panel, but also cases supported with observations.

**New category created by the panel where they were unable to reach a decision regarding particular case in discussion due to insufficient information presented to make a judgement and where panel would recommend better investigation.



3: Factors contributing to cases being categorised as unsupported

Following factors have been identified as contributing to panel's decision of not supporting application of the Out of Court Resolution:

- The severity of the offence. (3 cases)
- Repetitive and/or obsessive nature of offending behaviour. (2 cases)
- Vulnerability of the Victim. (2 cases)
- The impact of the Suspect's behaviour and actions on the Victim. (1 case)
- Violent behaviour/level of violence used. (1 cases)
- Levels of abusive & offending behaviour and its coercive/controlling nature. (1 case)



- Offending history of the Suspect. (1 cases)
- No positive change in Suspect's behaviour. (1 case)
- Pre-meditated nature of offending behaviour. (1 cases)

4: Observations

The findings from the latest Out of Court Resolutions scrutiny panels demonstrate continued overall support for the use of Out of Court Resolutions with 66 of the 79 cases reviewed being supported by the panels. Where panels expressed concerns or did not support the outcome, discussions primarily focused on the seriousness and nature of the offending behaviour. Particular attention was given to cases involving more severe offences, repeated or obsessive conduct, use of violence or evidence of premeditation with panel members questioning whether an Out of Court Resolution provided a proportionate response in such circumstances.

Panel members also placed significant emphasis on the impact of the offending on Victims and the need to adequately consider vulnerability and safeguarding factors when determining suitability for an Out of Court Resolution. Cases involving vulnerable Victims, coercive or controlling behaviour and offences that had caused a substantial emotional or personal impact generated the greatest levels of challenge and scrutiny. These discussions reinforced the importance of ensuring that decision-making appropriately balances opportunities for rehabilitation with the need to protect Victims and maintain public confidence in the criminal justice process.

The occurrence of six split decisions across the scrutiny panels further demonstrated that some cases continue to involve complex and finely balanced considerations. These discussions reflected differing views regarding the proportionality of Out of Court Resolutions in cases where aggravating and mitigating factors were both present, highlighting the value of independent scrutiny in ensuring that decisions remain transparent, consistent and victim-focused.



5: Recommendations

Better consideration of severity of the offence

Ensuring that aggravating factors such as: severity of offending, levels of violence and/or threatening behaviour, pre-planned actions, controlling behaviour are taken into account when deciding whether case is suitable for the application of the OoCR.

Better consideration of vulnerability factors in relation to Victim

The panel found in 3 cases that the vulnerability, safety and wellbeing of Victims were not sufficiently reflected in OoCR decision-making, particularly where Victims were children or had experienced prolonged, controlling, targeted or violent behaviour.



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