



One minute guide

Leeds Youth Panel

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What is the Leeds Youth Panel?

Leeds Youth Panel is a joint Leeds Youth Justice Service (YJS) and West Yorkshire Police initiative that provides a framework for decision making when young people have committed a crime and are considered potentially suitable for diverting away from formal prosecution.

Youth Panel decisions are based on a thorough understanding of the young person's risks, circumstances and history, in line with the city's ambitions to be both child friendly and restorative, whilst taking account of the impact of the offences on the victim(s) and on public safety. The Panel formally launched in June 2016.

In dealing with any offence committed by a young person under the age of eighteen, the police have a range of possible options:

- No further action (referred to in Leeds as no formal action);
- Community Resolution;
- Youth Caution;
- Youth Conditional Caution; and
- Charge.

Community Resolutions, Youth Cautions and Youth Conditional Cautions are collectively known as out of court disposals.

Which young people are discussed at the Leeds Youth Panel?

Young people aged ten to seventeen who have made an admission of responsibility or guilt are referred to the Leeds Youth Panel if: the offence they have committed is below a gravity score of four; they have previously received an out of court disposal within the past twelve months; and they are considered potentially suitable for an out of court disposal.

What does the Leeds Youth Panel aim to do?

The aims of the Leeds Youth Panel are to:

- 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; and
- Enable **restorative approaches** with victims and for young people to access services which address the cause of their offending behaviour.

How does the Leeds Youth Panel make decisions?

All appropriate young people are referred by the police to a YJS practitioner for an assessment to be prepared, covering their needs, circumstances and risks. Victims are contacted to ensure that the impact of the offence is considered by the panel, and to maximise restorative outcomes.

In coming to a decision about an appropriate outcome, Leeds Youth Panel takes into account the following factors:

- the young person's offending history, including any police intelligence;
- their willingness to comply with possible interventions;
- the likely outcome if they were to be prosecuted;
- their compliance history and their personal circumstances;
- the seriousness and circumstances of the offence; and
- any views expressed by the victim(s).

The panel is city-wide, meets weekly and is comprised of a YJS operational manager, a specialist police officer, a community volunteer and a Multi-Systemic Therapy manager. YJS victim liaison officers attend where appropriate.

What happens after the panel has made its decision?

The panel considers the most appropriate requirements for the young person as well as the outcome. For example, the young person may be expected to make some financial recompense, access support to address health or educational needs, or work with a YJS officer to address other identified areas of need.

Young people often come to panel because of domestic conflict, and in such circumstances it may be possible to offer intensive family support rather than taking formal action through the youth justice system. Young people who are diverted away from a criminal justice outcome may still receive an offer of support from the YJS, which is why we refer to 'no formal action' rather than 'no further action' in Leeds.

The young person and their parent/ carer are required to attend at the police station following the panel's decision in order to receive their out of court disposal. An intervention following receipt of an out of court disposal usually lasts for up to three months.

Key contacts and further information

For further information about the Leeds Youth Panel, please email leeds.yos@leeds.gov.uk.

You can find further information about the Youth Justice Service through the Leeds City Council [website](#).