

Rt Hon Shabana Mahmood MP  
Home Secretary  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

13 November 2025

Dear Home Secretary

**[HMICFRS - The effectiveness of diverting children from the criminal justice system](#)**

In line with my statutory responsibilities as Police and Crime Commissioner and further to above report by HMICFRS which was published on 15 October 2025 as a joint inspection with HM Inspectorate of Probation, I am pleased to provide the following response to the HMICFRS and the Secretary of State for the Home Office.

I have liaised closely with the Chief Constable in submitting this response which addresses recommendation 11 in the report together with its various sub-bullet points.

**Recommendation 11: Chief constables should improve how out-of-court disposals are managed by:**

- **working with YJSs to establish formal data-sharing arrangements to ensure timely and consistent access to information on all types of out-of-court disposal.**

Dorset Police share automated reports with Dorset Youth Justice Services (YJS) on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. These are sent to Dorset YJS detailing children that have been arrested, bailed, released under investigation (RUI), or interviewed by voluntary attendance (VA). Updates are also provided in these reports when there is a change to a child's disposal record. Dorset Police also consult with the YJS on all youth out of court disposal decisions (YOoCD) prior to any decision being made.

- **ensuring decisions about the use of crime Outcomes 20 and 21 are consistent and appropriate and reflect revised NPCC guidance.**

A crime outcome is the final decision made about how to finalise a crime incident or investigation. Outcome 20 means that further action resulting from the crime report will be undertaken by another body or agency. Outcome 20 is used by the Dorset Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) which seeks to enhance the safeguarding of children by

improving information sharing and decision-making practices. The Dorset MASH includes staff from Dorset and BCP Councils children's social care service, alongside Dorset Healthcare and Dorset Police.

Outcome 21 is where police have decided that further investigation, resulting from the crime report, which could provide evidence sufficient to support formal action being taken against the suspect, is not in the public interest.

Outcome 21 is used in cases of Non-aggravated Self-Generated Indecent Images (SGII), also known as sexting, and in incidents reported to the police that relate to low-level offending that has occurred in schools and should be dealt with by the school under the Education Act 1996.

The Safer Schools and Communities Team (SSCT) respond to all non-aggravated SGII, this means cases where images have not been shared with malicious intent, obtained through blackmail, or where there is not a large age disparity. These non-aggravated offences are the responsibility of the SSCT to provide education to all children involved regarding relevant legislation, internet safety and keeping themselves safe.

This response is in line with national Outcome 21 SGII guidance from Home Office and the NPCC to provide a proportionate response that avoids unnecessarily criminalising children.

Some of these incidents may have had an investigation and rationale provided by an Evidential Review Officer (ERO) before being allocated to the SSCT, if there is an unknown party involved, and it has been decided that education is the most appropriate outcome. The SSCT will also respond to reported low-level school-based incidents and support the school, where appropriate, by providing education to the children within that school.

Insp Kerry Shelley, Child Centred Policing Manager, Dorset CJU, will ensure the policy for Outcome 21 decisions is clarified to include the use of the Gravity Factor Matrix (GFM) and ensure, amongst other things, that the rationale provided by the SSCT refers to the GFM.

- **ensuring that police always use the NPCC child gravity matrix guidance when making decisions relating to outcomes for children and that the rationales for those decisions are always recorded.**

Aside from the outcome codes above, the GFM is always used when making decisions relating to outcomes for children. This is also a required field on the Youth Out of Court Joint Decision-Making Form (C413) completed by the initial ERO and in the rationale provided by Sgt James Francis, the Force's Youth Justice Sergeant in their final decision making.

- **ensuring that joint decisions with the youth justice service about out-of-court disposals are made at the appropriate level of seniority.**

All decisions are made by the Force Youth Justice Sergeant and the Managers in the Dorset Youth Justice Team.

- **ensuring that children's legal rights are met before issuing a community resolution; this includes the need to caution and make sure that an appropriate adult is present.**

All children are interviewed prior to a decision being made on a youth out of court disposal. This requires the appropriate caution and the presence of an appropriate adult. If a case is referred to the Youth Justice Team that is not PACE compliant, it is returned to the Officer in Charge (OIC) and OIC supervisor to ensure that this is rectified prior to any disposal decision being made.

- **ensuring that safeguarding referrals are made when appropriate.**

All cases that are referred to the Youth Justice Team are checked to ensure a Police Protection Notice (PPN) is completed. The C413 dictates that a PPN must be completed and will be returned to the OIC if not completed. The OIC must mark 'Yes' or 'No' regarding compliance of this. If no PPN is on the occurrence it will be returned prior to any disposal decision being made.

I hope this provides appropriate reassurance in response to the recommendations in the report.

For completeness I have copied this letter to both Mr Evans and CI Tamblyn.

This response will be published on the OPCC website [HMIC Inspection Reports · Dorset Police & Crime Commissioner](#).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Sidwick', written in a cursive style.

David Sidwick  
Police and Crime Commissioner

cc: CI Danny Tamblyn, Dorset Police  
Mark Evans, Force Liaison Lead, HMICFRS