

**Police and Crime Commissioner for Dyfed-Powys**

**Scrutiny Panel**

**Dip Sampling Exercise**

**Review of Knife Crime Cases**

**Panel Members' Findings & Feedback**

**April 2023**



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## 1.0 Overview

On the 24<sup>th</sup> April 2023 Members attended the meeting of the Dyfed-Powys Out of Court Disposal Scrutiny Panel. Members reviewed a selection of youth and adult knife crime cases, which had been dealt with by way of an Out of Court Disposal. The Panel considered a total of 18 cases, 9 involving youth suspects and 9 involving adults.

This meeting was conducted virtually via Microsoft Teams.

## 2.0 Background, purpose, and methodology

Panel Members collectively agree an area of focus for each meeting. They receive relevant case files two weeks prior to each meeting which have been randomly selected by the Panel Chair. The Panel then meets to discuss each case and where possible reach a conclusion as to the appropriateness of the disposal. **In deciding this, the Panel considers the following criteria:**

- The views and feedback from the victim and the offender.
- Compliance with force policy.
- Rationale for the decision and outcome.
- Potential community impact.
- Circumstances and seriousness of the offence.
- Potential alternative options that may have been available.

The Panel discuss each case and categorise them as one of the following:

- Appropriate use consistent with policy.
- Appropriate use with Panel Members' reservations.
- Inappropriate use or inconsistent with policy.
- Panel fails to reach a conclusion.

## 3.0 Approval by Panel Chair

I David Evans (print name) can confirm that I have read the report, and that it fully represents the views expressed by the Panel during our dip sampling exercise dated 24<sup>th</sup> April 2023.

Signed: David Evans

Date: 24/07/23

#### 4.0 Actions taken following previous panel meeting

As a result of the Out of Court Disposal Scrutiny Panel's work, the following actions have been completed since the last meeting:

- An action was taken at the last meeting to circulate a reminder to officers in relation to issuing appropriate Youth Restorative Disposals (YRDs). The Panel was informed that the matter had been raised at the recent Investigations Standards meeting.
- At the meeting held on the 30<sup>th</sup> January an action was taken to circulate a reminder to officers in relation to cautions for drug cases going against policy. The Panel was informed that in the recent meeting that the matter had been raised at the Investigations Standards meeting.

#### 5.0 Areas for improvement

The following area for improvement was identified as a result of the Panel's work this quarter:

- There is a need to ensure that the appropriate ranking officers are authorising OOC cases.

#### 6.0 Consideration of knife crime cases – youth suspects

Nine knife crime cases were considered, the cases were dealt with via: two Youth Caution, six Youth Community Resolutions and one Youth Restorative Disposal.

Members' assessment	Number of cases
Appropriate	6
Inappropriate	3

Panel Members' observations are detailed below.

##### Case 1

The suspect was found with a knife in his possession on a school bus which he used to threaten another pupil, he was given a Youth Community Resolution. Panel members agreed that this case demonstrated the appropriate use and was consistent with the policy. Panel members noted that an in-depth investigation was noted, and a thorough process was followed.

**Panel's Assessment: Appropriate**

**Case 2**

After being stopped and searched a 3-inch blade craft knife was found in the alleged offender's possession. The individual was given a Youth Community Resolution, members agreed that this was the appropriate action. Panel members noted the thorough investigation by Dyfed Powys Police and noted that the outcome was expected. It was noted that the suspect had many safeguarding needs and emphasised that it is important to support individuals such as this. Thus, an OOCd was deemed the appropriate action.

**Panel's Assessment: Appropriate****Case 3**

The suspect attended school in possession of a 25cm knife, the suspect was given a Youth Restorative Disposal. The Panel members agreed that the OOCd ordered was inappropriate. Panel members noted concerns as a Youth Restorative Disposal was not the appropriate disposal to be issued for a knife crime as this is against the policy. Panel members noted concerns over the suspects vulnerability and noted the lack of information provided.

**Panel's Assessment: Inappropriate****Case 4**

The suspect was found in possession of a bladed article when a member of the public reported that a youth was carrying a machete. The suspect was ordered with a Youth Community Resolution. Panel members agreed that this was an inappropriate use of an OOCd. Panel members noted that the suspect had previous incidents in relation to knife crime and suggested that this case should had been tried at court. The Panel members also highlighted that the police found the knife in the suspect's trousers and thus it could be seen as the suspect was trying to hide the knife.

**Panel's Assessment: Inappropriate****Case 5**

The alleged offender was found to have brought a knife to school. No threats were made, and the offender stated that the knife was to harm herself as she was being bullied. The alleged offender was issued with a Youth Community Resolution. The Panel members noted the concerns for the wellbeing and welfare of the alleged offender but noted that the OOCd was appropriate.

**Panel's Assessment: Appropriate****Case 6**

The alleged offender posted images of a knife on snapchat and was issued with a Youth Caution. Panel members agreed that this was an inappropriate use of the OOCd as the alleged offender had previous convictions relating to weapons. Panel members were concerned with the alleged offender's interest with knives and guns and noted this should had been brought to court. The Panel members requested that the individual's file was marked so that any future offences are taken to court as this was the alleged offender's second time through the bureau.

**Panel's Assessment: Inappropriate**

**Action 1:**

**Youth Case 6 to be marked so that any future offences are brought to court.**

**Case 7**

The suspect was found in possession of a knife after being searched and was ordered with a Youth Community Resolution. Panel members agreed that this was an appropriate OOCd. Panel members noted that support had been provided and that the suspect was referred to supportive agencies. Panel members noted the safeguarding concerns but considered that the supportive plan issued was appropriate.

**Panel's Assessment: Appropriate**

**Case 8**

The suspect was seen to have a flick knife in her possession and was ordered with a Youth Caution. Panel members agreed that this was an appropriate use of a OOCd as the suspect had no previous convictions and made no threats when in possession of the knife. Panel members were pleased with the plan put in place. Concerns were raised over the accessible way in which individuals could purchase flick knives as members found that online retailers such as Amazon sell a wider range of knives. Panel members suggested that the matter be brought to the attention of the Chief Constable.

**Panel's Assessment: Appropriate**

**Action 2:**

**Concerns in regard to the accessibility of purchasing knives to be brought to the Chief Constables attention.**

**Case 9**

The suspect was found to have a knife in his pocket after being stopped and searched after running from Police in relation to a stolen moped. The suspect was ordered with a Youth Community Resolution. Panel members agreed that this was an appropriate use of an OOC.

**Panel's Assessment: Appropriate**

**7.0 Consideration of knife crime cases - adult suspects**

Panel members reviewed nine cases. One had been dealt with by way of a Conditional Caution and eight via a Community Resolution.

Members' assessments were as follows:

<b>Members' assessment</b>	<b>Number of cases</b>
Appropriate	7
Appropriate with reservations	1
Inappropriate	1

**Case 10**

The suspect had produced a knife from his trousers and waved it in a threatening manner towards a member of the public. The Panel members concluded that this case was an inappropriate use of an OOC as the suspect was threatening members of the public. The Panel members noted their concerns that a sergeant authorised the disposal where an inspector should.

**Panel's Assessment: Inappropriate**

**Case 11**

The suspect was found in possession of a knife whilst being searched under the Misuse of Drugs Act. The panel agreed that this was an appropriate use of the Adult Community Resolution. Panel members noted how the knife was wrapped as if it was newly purchased and questioned whether it could have been for work purposes.

**Panel's Assessment: Appropriate**

**Case 12**



The alleged offender was found in possession of a Stanley blade in a public place. Panel members agreed that the Adult Community Resolution was appropriate as the suspect had no previous convictions and was not threatening or behaving aggressively.

**Panel's Assessment: Appropriate**

**Case 13**

The alleged offender was found to be in possession of a bladed pocket knife. Panel members agreed that this was an appropriate use of Adult Community Resolution. The Panel members questioned as to why the individual was stopped and searched but noted that there were no aggravating factors.

**Panel's Assessment: Appropriate**

**Case 14**

The suspect who was homeless attended court but forgot that there was a knife in her bag. The panel agreed that this was an appropriate use of Adult Community Resolution. Panel members noted the individual's current circumstances and that the knife could be used for cooking purposes.

**Panel's Assessment: Appropriate**

**Case 15**

The suspect was found with a Stanley knife in their driver's side door without reasonable excuse. The panel agreed that the issuing of an Adult Community Resolution was an appropriate use of the O OCD. Panel members noted that the suspect had no previous convictions and was not using it in a threatening manner.

**Panel's Assessment: Appropriate**

**Case 16**

A Stanley knife was found on the suspect as a result of a stop and search. The panel members noted that the suspect had not been using the knife in a threatening manner but questioned why the suspect was found with a knife at 2am. The panel members concluded that this was an appropriate use of the Adult Community Resolution.

**Panel's Assessment: Appropriate**

**Case 17**

Whilst conducting a search for unrelated matters, a butterfly knife was located in the suspect's bedroom. The panel members noted that the knife was found on a private property with no threats or aggravated circumstances. The panel members agreed that this was an appropriate use of the Adult Community Resolution.

**Panel's Assessment: Appropriate**

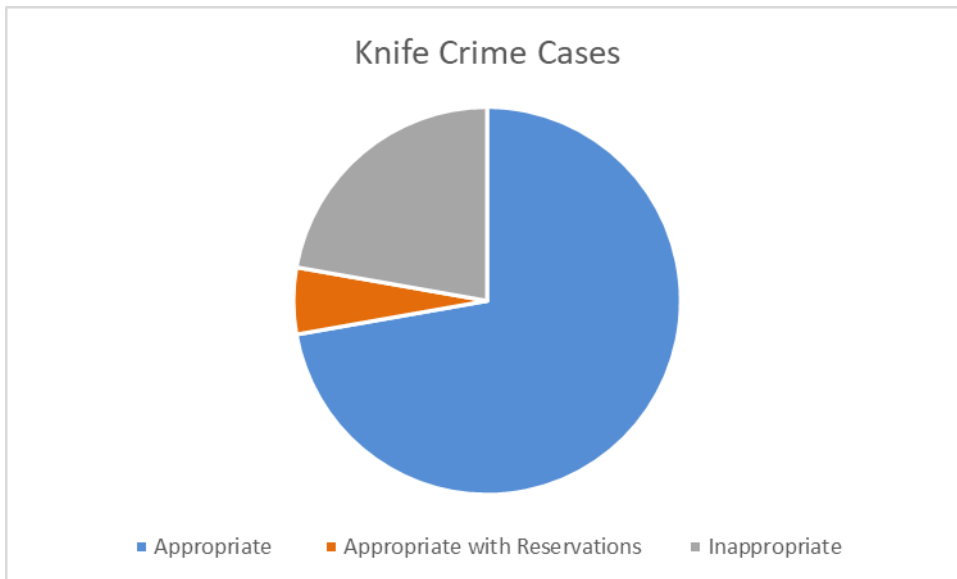
**Case 18**

The suspect was found to be in possession of a large knife. Panel members agreed that this was an appropriate use of the Adult Community Resolution but noted their reservations. Panel members noted that this case was a mental health crisis and questioned the case as the knife was surrendered.

**Panel's Assessment: Appropriate with reservations**

**8.0 Panel's assessments to date**

The chart below demonstrates the Panel's assessment of possession of knife crime cases considered at the most recent meeting:

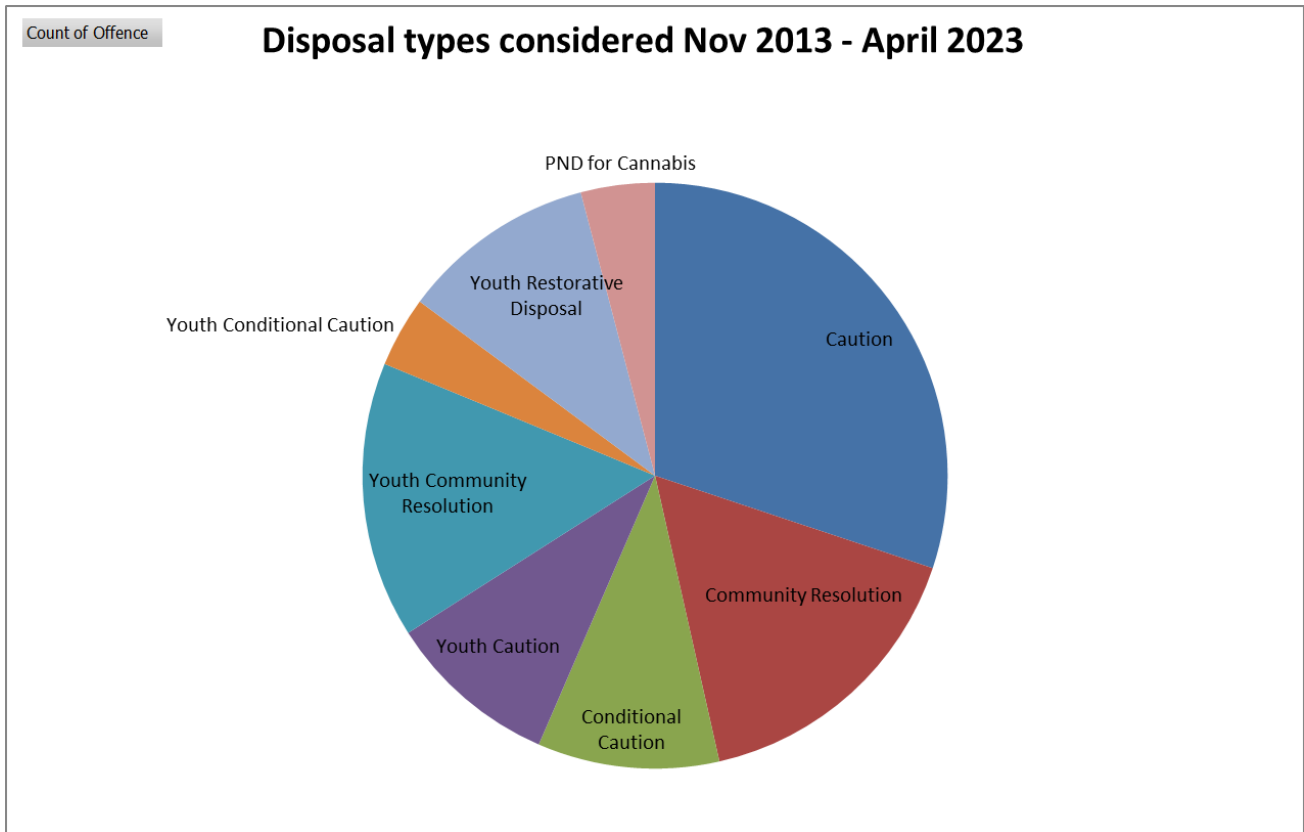


Since November 2013 the Panel has considered a range of disposals, as displayed in the graph below

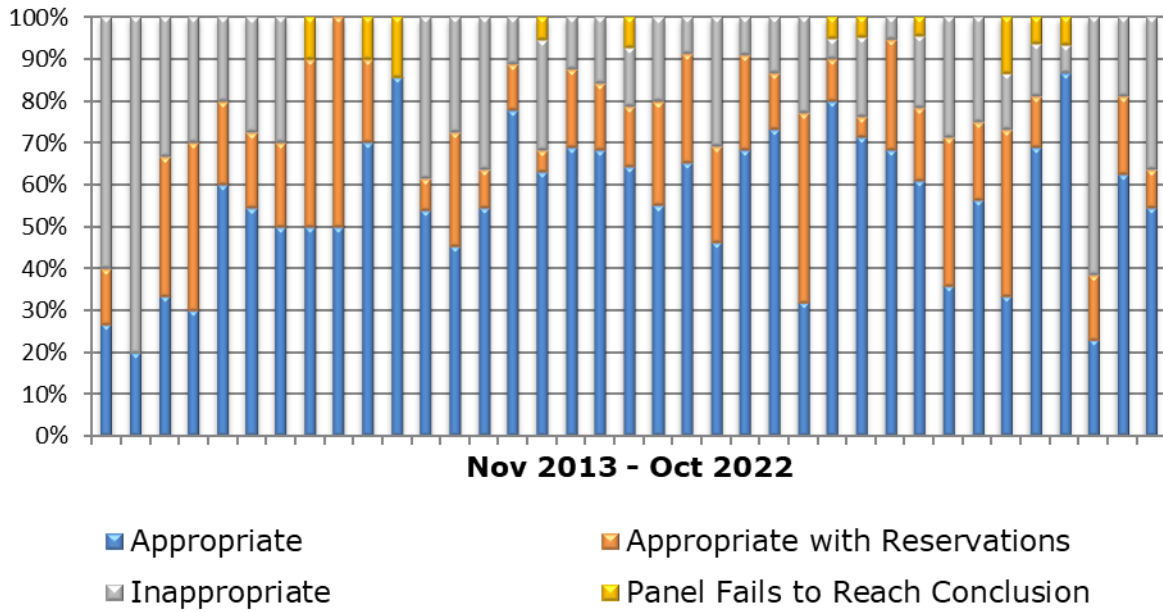
Of the 547 cases examined between April 2013 and April 2023, 57% were assessed as appropriate, 20% as inappropriate, 19% as appropriate with reservations and the panel failed to reach a conclusion in 2% of cases.

The change in conclusions reached over time can be seen in the graph below:

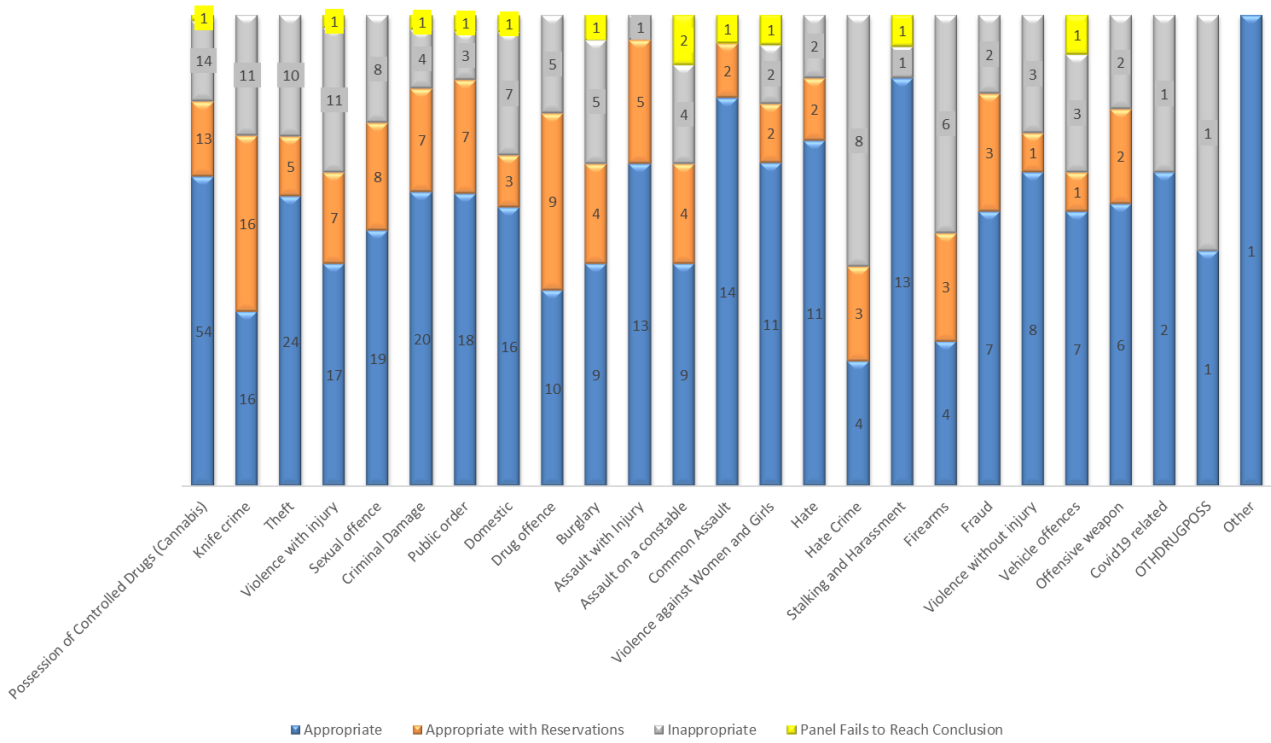
The graph below shows the breakdown by crime type as a percentage of cases considered between November 2013 and April 2023.



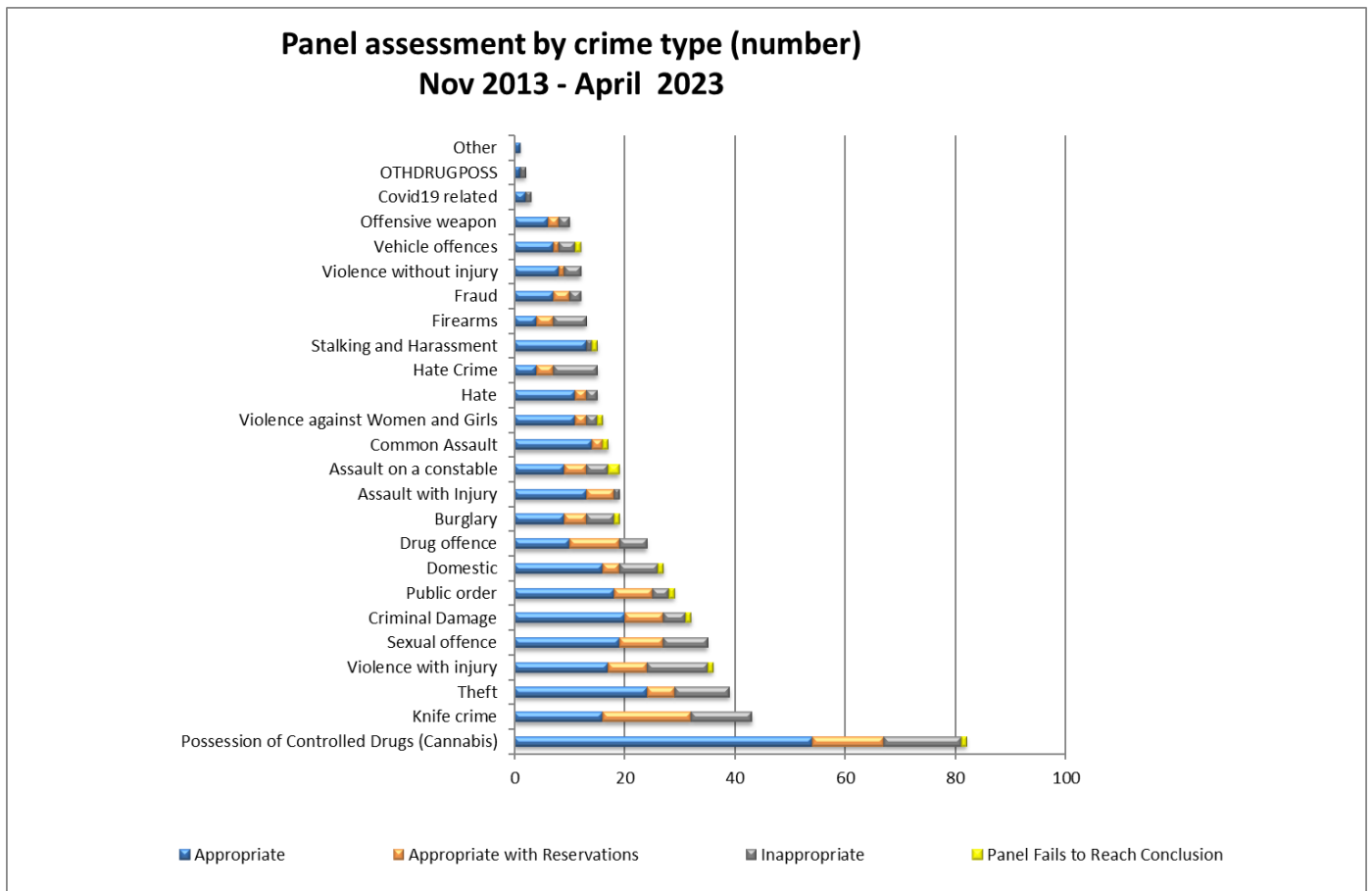
### Panel assessment over time (Covering offences Nov-2013 - April-2023)



### Panel assessment by crime type Nov 2013 - Apr 2023

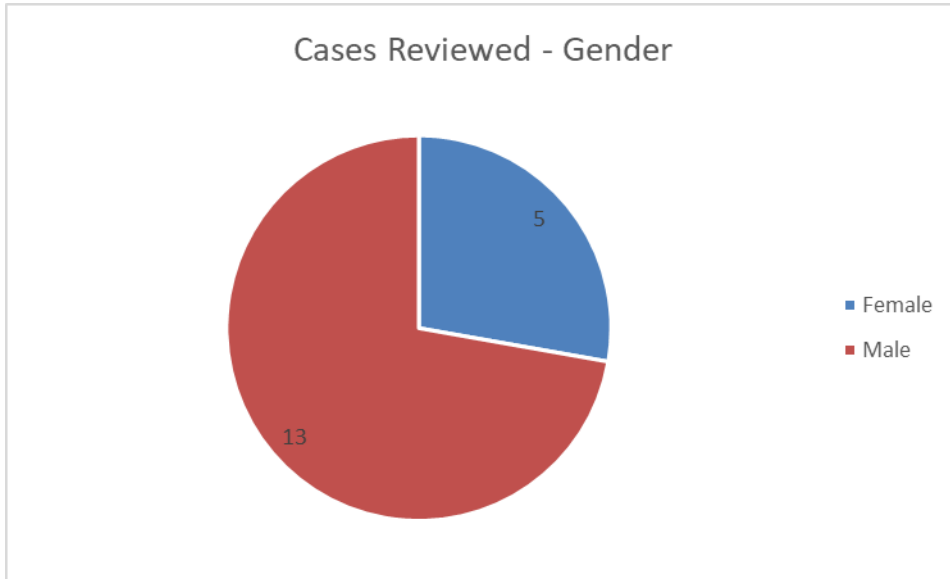


The following graph displays the actual number of cases assessed within each crime type and the resulting Panel opinions at their meetings between November 2013 and April 2023.



### 9.0 Ethnicity and Gender

The following chart shows the breakdown of cases reviewed within this meeting in terms of their gender:



The following table shows the breakdown of cases reviewed within this meeting in terms of ethnicity.

Ethnicity Noted	Suspect's Self - Assessment	Officer's Assessment
White British	15	0
White - North European	0	15
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	1	0
Unknown	1	1
Black British	1	2

There were no race or gender equality issues identified as part of the Panel's review.

### 10.0 Future Panel focus

Following a discussion, it was decided by the Panel that they would like to focus on crimes against emergency workers, common assaults and assaults with injury.

A discussion took place in relation to how the Force determine when to issue an OOOD. It was requested that the matrix used be circulated to the panel members.

**Action 3 :**

**Copy of the Force's matrix which determines when to issue an OOCB to be circulated to Panel Members.**