

---

**Independent Scrutiny Panel Meeting Notes 17/01/17**

**Welcome and Introductions**

Supt Wratten welcomed all the members of the panel and introductions of Panel members were made

**Notes and Actions from previous Panel**

The Panel were in agreement with the notes and conclusions circulated from the previous meeting held on 04/10/16.

**Legal Updates and Justice Project Updates**

Nicola Vallins gave an update and overview of the new trespass initiative which was first mooted at the previous scrutiny panel and had been evolved in partnership with the industry; there were separate educational inputs for adults and youths. The aim of the inputs is to educate offenders about the dangers of trespassing on, or close to, the railway without criminalising them in the first instance. She then showed the trespass power-point slideshow which was intended to be used as part of the educational course; this was well received.

There then followed a general discussion concerning the offence of trespass; it was agreed that trespass was regarded as a minor offence and yet the ramifications of the offence, in extreme cases, could be significant; it was conceded that this was something that wasn't always taken into consideration whilst deliberating potential penalties in court. The panel agreed that it would be beneficial to know where an offender had already received a trespass educational input and was appearing in court for another similar offence; it was agreed that the MG5 could contain this information. This would be a good way of making CPS aware of such a situation and may lead to more serious penalties being awarded to such offenders; perhaps referral orders rather than fines.

Nicola Vallins then gave an overview of the new victim awareness course which had been conceived in conjunction with the victim support service. She stated that it was intended to reduce the disposal options for low level volume crime to either a community resolution or a conditional caution. Under certain circumstances, the offender would be given a community resolution and would be able to attend a Victim Awareness Course (VAC), as part of the 'resolution', as an alternative to prosecution; the course would cost the offender £55 and would only be available to those who were able to pay. This approach has been tried and tested and is currently being used in 13 Home Office force areas.

There followed a general discussion in relation to the cases that were being discussed at this particular scrutiny panel as to what types of case they were i.e. were they 'typical' types of case that BTP generally deal with. It was also noted that, even though there were more and more shops at railway stations, there had been no shoplifting or theft against the person cases selected for discussion. Supt Wratten stated that the cases before the panel for discussion at this current panel had been randomly selected and were typical of the types of case which BTP dealt with on a day to day basis. Regarding the lack of theft cases, he stated that such cases had been discussed at previous panels and it was more than likely that these types of case would be subject to a charge disposal rather than an out of court disposal type; hence their absence.

---

In response to a question asking whether the findings of the scrutiny panel were disclosed to Home Office, Supt Wratten stated that they were not but, that they were published on both the BTP intranet and internet sites and was subject to scrutiny by the BTP Authority.

In response to a question from the panel, Supt Wratten stated that any suggested 'themes' for future panels would be considered; indeed the main focus of this particular panel was youth offences with over 50% of the cases at this panel referring to such.

### **Case File Reviews**

Conclusion templates were completed for all cases, including a summary of the surrounding discussion and additional actions and feedback where appropriate. The templates have been included within the minute circulation.

### **Feedback**

At the last meeting, the panel expressed interest in the number of suicides that BTP dealt with. Supt Wratten gave an update to the panel, referencing the latest figures from the Suicide and Mental Health team; he reported that the overall figures for suicides had reduced in comparison with the same period last year.

### **AOB / Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held at 10am on the 16th May 2017 in room G3 at Force Headquarters, 25 Camden Road London NW1 9LN.