

Police Electronic Notifications to YOTs (PENY)

Police and youth offending teams join forces on notifications for under 18s

“Clearer more concise information from the Police gives a better picture of what the reality is. It helps us when we contact victims, and when doing our assessment activities” Rob Brown, Essex Youth Offending Service



“Early intervention is the only way we are going to divert a young person from crime.” PC Stephen Dewberry, Essex Police

PENY is the process that ensures police communicate with youth offending teams (YOTs) in a way that conforms to a national standard by sending agreed information on under 18s in a secure way within 24 hours of police disposal or decision.

In partnership with the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) and the Youth Justice Board’s Wiring Up Youth Justice programme (WUYJ), officers are now advising their local YOTs when they Reprimand a young person, give them a Final Warning, charge

them with an offence, or give them a Penalty Notice for Disorder.

Early interventions significantly decrease the likelihood of reoffending. That’s why YOTs are set up in every local authority and funded to provide prevention programmes targeting young people most at risk of repeated offending.



Head of Business Change at the YJB, Phil Sutton is seconded in from Wessex YOT, which covers the Hampshire Constabulary's area. "Information from police officers is the starting point for the work of YOTs with young people who offend. It helps so much if the information arrives quickly and is detailed, accurate and legible. Then our staff can swing into action to provide supervision and support where it is most needed. Intervening early provides the greatest chance of success with young people because only then can they understand the connection between what they have done wrong and the consequences of their behaviour," says Phil.

Officers will also inform YOTs about victims of youth crime (except where victim consent has

not been given) so that they can be offered an opportunity to participate in restorative interventions – a recognised way to improve victims' confidence in the Criminal Justice System, and at the same time ensure that the young people face up to the effect their behaviour has had on others.

All this information is of course sensitive and needs to be safeguarded at all times. Steve Smith, Business Improvement Manager at the NPIA says, "Often officers don't realise that using the fax to send documents to YOTs has not been permitted for some time. Offender and victim information falls within the category of Restricted information and Cabinet Office Information Security Notice 10/2006 does not allow the use of fax for messages at Restricted level."

Once officers realise this, the natural question is how to send information securely?

The answer is surprisingly simple. Criminal Justice Secure eMail is widely used in all forces and YOTs. Sending police notifications as Secure eMail attachments to YOTs' group Secure eMail in boxes allows sensitive data to be transferred quickly and securely.

British Transport Police in the North East have been piloting the PENY process since May. Justice Unit Manager, Terry Cain says, "Once we have completed the pilot, we will be focussing on getting people into the routine of automatically using Secure eMail. It will definitely speed things up for everyone."

Why PENY is needed

Early intervention by YOTs working together with the police can help tackle the problem of youth crime at source, highlighting the underlying causes and giving young people the best possible chance of rectifying their ways. **PENY contributes to a number of benefits for everyone:**

For policing

- Reduced risk to officers – Secure eMail information will not be compromised or lost when sent
- Less time – information required takes less time for officers to complete and is sent electronically to YOTs so no time wasted at fax machines
- Compliance with Cabinet Office Information Security Policy which does not allow the use of fax at restricted level
- Complies with the Flanagan review on the ‘Future of Policing’ which calls for a reduction in bureaucracy by using technology to share information across the Criminal Justice System.

For youth offending teams

- Quicker and more effective assessments based on clearer, concise and timely information
- Interventions following Final Warnings targeted on those who need them most
- More preparation time for court – for contacting other children’s services, booking places in secure accommodation and collating facts for bail and remand decisions
- Provides a more complete picture of detected youth crime in the local area, supporting strategic planning for crime prevention and youth justice services
- Promotes a more consistent approach to victims of youth crime and parents of young offenders so that they are all offered the opportunity to take part in restorative justice processes and parenting programmes.

For young people, their parents or carers, the victims of youth crime and society

- The young person has the best possible chance to address the root cause of his or her behaviour
- Parents or carers of young offenders have the chance to get help with managing their children’s challenging behaviour
- The victim has an opportunity to have a say in how ‘their’ young offender makes amends
- Appropriate police, youth court and local authority resources are spent according to the young person’s assessed risk of reoffending and risk of causing harm to others
- Reassures the public that youth justice agencies heed cautions raised by Lord Laming’s report on The Victoria Climbié Inquiry (Section 1.43), “Information systems that depend on the random passing of slips of paper have no place in modern services.”

How PENY works

Mandatory information fields that police should send to YOTs are known as the 'minimum data set'. The minimum data set is written into an online form which is held electronically at each force. The form may be a separate document which is completed and attached to a Secure eMail, or it may already be part of the NSPIS, Consortium or Niche case management systems so the

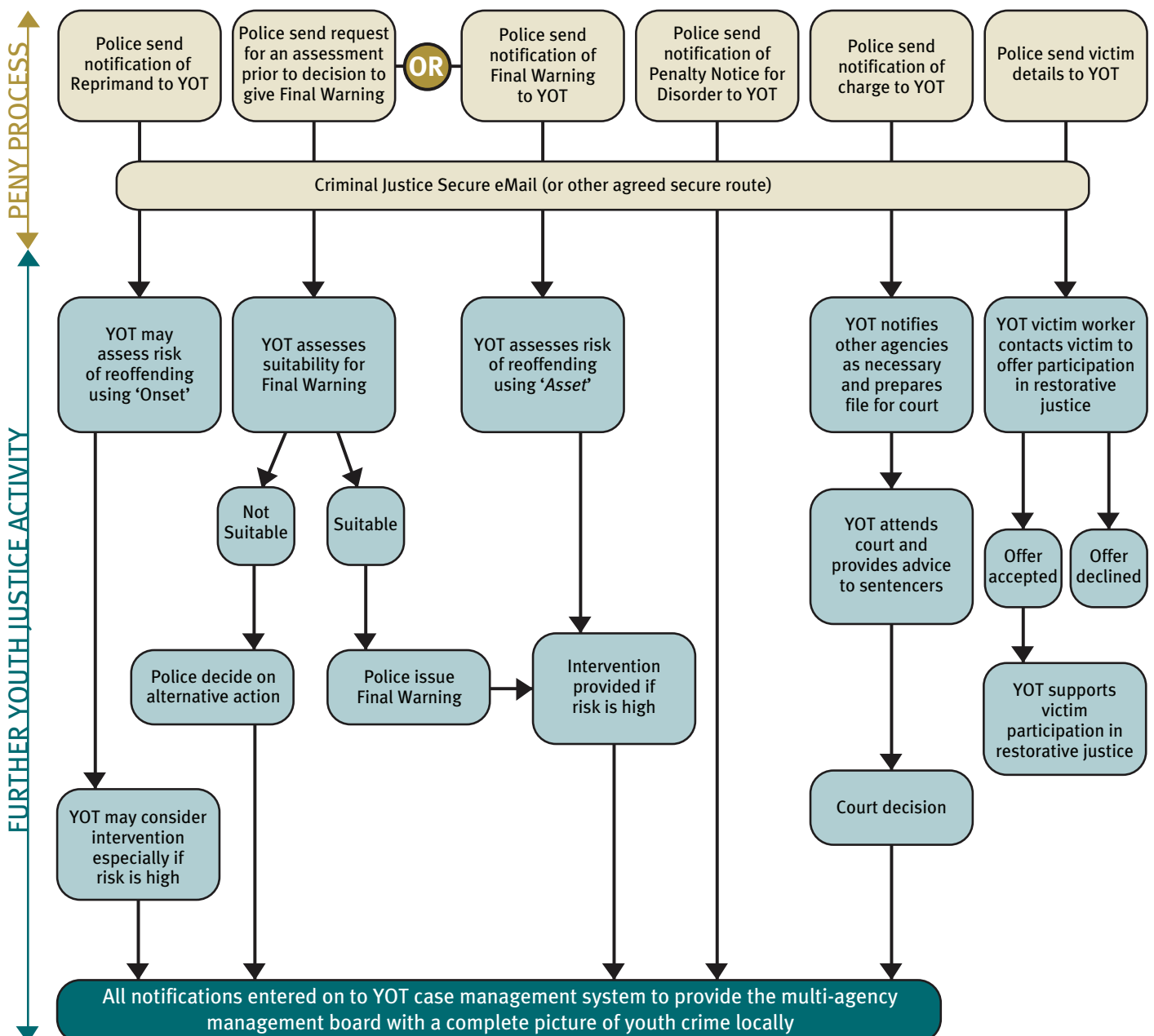
minimum data set can be sent automatically.

Within 24 hours of a police officer administering a Reprimand, Final Warning, PND, or making a decision to charge, the officer-in-case (or appointed person) completes the form and sends it to their local YOT's group Secure eMail address using their force's secure transfer method.

On receipt, the YOT checks their records to see whether or not the young person is known to them or to other children's services locally.

In many cases, the YOT undertakes a comprehensive assessment of risk of reoffending which involves contact with the family, the school, the victim and others, and then takes appropriate action.

What happens next?



Rolling out PENY

The WUYJ team will discuss PENY with a locally appointed representative from each YOT in England and Wales. At the same time, the NPIA team will do the same with each police force. Once this initial contact has been made, an engagement meeting between the force, local YOTs,

NPIA and WUYJ teams takes place to agree and plan how existing processes will change to align with the national standard, the timescales to do this and how PENY will be communicated locally. The time taken to roll out the process will be specific to each area, though typically this

takes 12 weeks.

PENY is very much led by the local force and YOTs. NPIA and WUYJ teams provide a supporting role to help meet the national standard by December 2008.



What do I have to do?

Your local PENY representative will give you specific direction at the right time, but here is an overview of the actions you will need to take:

Officer-in-case (or appointed person)

- Complete all notification fields – your knowledge is important. If the information is not available or does not apply, enter this on the form
- Use your force's secure method to transfer the information within 24hrs of police disposal
- Do not use the fax

YOT

- Check your group Secure eMail in box frequently. PENY is a national process so you may receive notifications from any force at any time
- Take urgent and appropriate action on receipt
- Forward any notifications that are appropriate to another YOT, such as a young person's 'home' YOT, using Secure eMail

Frequently asked questions

Who is driving this initiative?

PENY is a joint project led by the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) and Wiring Up Youth Justice (WUYJ), an information sharing programme within the Youth Justice Board of England and Wales (YJB).

Are Reprimands, Final Warnings, charges and PNDs the only notifications that must be advised to YOTs?

The notifications above are the nationally agreed selection, although other notifications may be sent using the PENY process. For example, some forces issue Youth Restorative Disposals and are encouraged to notify YOTs when these take place so appropriate interventions can be actioned. The PENY process may also be used for No Further Action disposals and summonses, again so appropriate intervention can take place.

How do you know PENY will be a good investment of time and money?

The only cost associated with PENY is in the education of police officers and YOT workers to use a secure communication process that protects young people's information and decreases the time taken to intervene with a young person or victim.

Why is the roll out so quick?

The PENY process is really about updating and improving the way things are currently done. Rather than sending faxes to YOTs, police should use an existing service called Criminal Justice Secure eMail (or other agreed secure route) to send agreed information, and to do this within 24 hours of police disposal or decision. No additional technology needs to be bought or installed specifically for PENY.

How will PENY affect youth crime?

Through earlier police notification and YOT action, the most appropriate resources can be directed to the young person and victim by the YOT. Early intervention provides the greatest chance of steering young people away from crime.

Will PENY increase the number of First-Time Entrants reported for my force/YOT?

PENY will have no negative impact on local authorities' performance against First-Time Entrants (FTE) target. The YJB is working with the Department for Children, Schools and Families (responsible for reducing FTE since April 2008) to ensure Police National Computer and YOT data are consistently reported.

For further information on the National Policing Improvement Agency go to www.npia.police.uk

For further information about Wiring Up Youth Justice go to www.wiringupyouthjustice.info or email wiringup@yjb.gov.uk

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