

Recorded Police Warning Scheme introduced



A new system of recorded warnings that will speed up justice outcomes was introduced yesterday.

The Recorded Police Warning Scheme will allow police officers to make greater use of their discretion when dealing with minor crimes. It replaces the Formal Adult Warning system and has been extended to include 16 and 17 year olds.

Developed following revised Lord Advocate's Guidelines, the scheme will address minor offending behaviour which is currently reported to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) and results in either a non-court disposal or no action being taken due to the minor nature of the offence and circumstances.

In 2014/15, thousands of cases reported to COPFS resulted in no proceedings being taken or the Procurator Fiscal issuing a direct fine or other similar disposal.

The Recorded Police Warning Scheme is the first step in a three-tiered disposal process – Recorded Police Warning; Fixed Penalty Notice; Standard Prosecution Report – and it is hoped that the introduction of the scheme will substantially reduce the number of reports being sent to COPFS. The Recorded Police Warning Scheme does not replace the opportunity for officers, in appropriate circumstances, to issue a verbal warning.

The Recorded Police Warning Scheme provides a proportionate response to minor offending whilst significantly reducing the volume of reports being compiled and submitted through the justice system

Operational briefings have been carried out across Police Scotland with a focus on operational officers, service centre and control room staff and custody officers. As with any new approach, full implementation will take some time to achieve, but the scheme provides a method to deliver an effective, proportionate and outcome focused way to address minor offending.