

Panel date:	26/05/2026
Number of panel members in attendance:	16
Constabulary attendees:	<i>Caitlin Bones, Inclusion & Legitimacy Co-ordinator, Inspector Nick Stubbs</i>
OPCC attendees:	<i>Matilda Pearson, Senior Policy Officer & Charmaine Christie, Governance Compliance and Reviews Officer</i>
Previous Minutes and Actions	Previous minutes had been circulated in advance and no queries raised and so these have been taken as approved.
	Action 1 Constabulary to feedback to local authority re the need for secure accommodation. This has been highlighted to the Youth Justice Board, as a finding from the Community Scrutiny Panel, that there is a need for a secure PACE bed locally. For context, there is a national shortage of secure PACE bed provision. The latest update given at panel 29/01/26 is that this remains a topic at YJB as that is the appropriate multiagency network to be discussing this. Keep this action live and update where possible.
	ACTION 2 From 25/07/25 meeting entry 2290. The Constabulary were asked to look into to look why this was not recorded as a late review and/or if the review was not late why did it take an hour for the juvenile to be booked in. Update for 23/10/25: None provided. Update for 29/01/26: Update requested and will be shared once provided.

	Update for 26/05/2026: From Inspector GORE: It was not a late review, it did take a considerable amount of time to book the juvenile in as they were not prioritised. Comms did go out after this to remind custody staff that a quick RA should be conducted of everyone that enters the custody suite, this will allow them to understand if they are juvenile or have additional needs and if that is the case they should be prioritised to the front of the queue. ACTION CLOSED
	Action 3: In January's meeting a recommendation was made to the force to consider adding a prompt to the template used for custody records, to record why the wait time to get before a sgt is as long as it is. This was taken through to the Constabulary's Organisation Learning group. The group recognised the importance of detainees having a risk assessment as soon as possible to be able to determine the safety of them being detained. The Legal rep at OLG stated how helpful this would be when it comes to potential claims where detainees state they have been held for an inappropriate/unlawful amount of time. Custody Sergeant's booking in 'Cut and Paste' section of Q&As now includes a wait time section. Therefore, any wait over 45 minutes in holding should have a brief explanation as to what caused the delay. ACTION CLOSED
Introductory meeting notes	Theme: Refusal of bail Insp NS reminded panel members of the custody process

	and investigation element. He explained the 4 disposal options from custody: NFA, bail for further enquiries, charged with a criminal offence, out of court disposal. He gave information on what each of the above would look like for a detainee. The criteria that custody officers must follow to refuse bail was presented to members. Custody records will be reviewed and RAG rating will be given for the justification of the refusal of bail based on the information provided in the record.
Scrutiny Feedback	In body of minutes
Date of next meeting	Thursday 25th June 2026 – Use of Force @ HQ

The following is the agreed way that incidents reviewed in this meeting will be graded:

Green	All in Order, no significant observations or follow up required.
Amber	Some observations, or discrepancies identified, that require either feedback to the officer, or further investigation by the Inspector.
Red	A significant error or anomaly has been identified, that is either a breach of PACE, or a potential conduct issue. Review by Chief Inspector.

Record 1

The 15-year-old detainee was refused bail and remanded due to significant risks to her welfare, public safety, and the justice process. She has a history of absconding, escalating violence, and offending while on bail, including multiple assaults on carers shortly after release.

There is a high likelihood she would reoffend, fail to surrender, and interfere with witnesses if released. She also presents a serious risk to herself, with recent self-harm behaviours. Due to the withdrawal of her placement and lack of suitable accommodation, detention was deemed necessary, proportionate, and lawful.

Summary of comments, concerns and/or compliments from panel members:		
It was considered reasonable and necessary to refuse bail in order to safeguard the individual, with custody viewed as the only viable option for her safety due to the lack of suitable accommodation. The final court decision is to be confirmed, with NS to provide feedback. It was also noted that this information is for context only and should not influence RAG rating decisions. NS highlighted that courts and police use different decision-making frameworks, with police focusing on immediate risk and protection, while courts consider a broader range of factors.		
RAG rating:	Green – 15 Amber – 0 Red – 0 1 member abstained as not in attendance for this case.	
Chairs Comments:	None provided.	
OPCC Summary:	All members were happy with the justification and did not have any queries.	
Actions arising:		Feedback:
The panel would like a follow up of how many of all cases covered at this meeting were remanded at court and an explanation of why if someone was not remanded.		N/A

Record 2

The juvenile detainee was refused bail due to risks to his own safety, likelihood of further offending, and concerns he would fail to attend court. Detention was also considered necessary in his own interests.

Continued detention was authorised as he is charged with a serious violent offence involving a knife, with a realistic prospect of custody. He has shown disregard for legal controls, including committing robberies while subject to a CPN, and lacks effective parental supervision.

His offending is escalating, linked to criminal influences and debt, and presents a significant risk of serious harm to himself and the public. Remand was deemed necessary to protect the public, safeguard the detainee, and enable further assessment by Youth Justice and Social Care.	
Summary of comments, concerns and/or compliments from panel members:	
The detention appears to have been a proportionate response, undertaken in the interests of both the individual and others. There are also indications that the child may be perceived as having a debt, potentially linked to drug-related activity. Even where police have seized substances, those involved may continue to hold the child accountable, which can explain ongoing exploitation.	
RAG rating:	Green – 13 Amber – 0 Red – 0 3 members abstained – no reason provided.
Chairs Comments:	None provided.
OPCC Summary:	Members who abstained were encouraged to provide a reason, none provided. All were reminded that it is ok to vote with their own thoughts as all votes are recorded.
Actions arising:	Feedback:
N/A	N/A

Record 3
The detainee was refused bail due to the nature of the offences and relevant previous convictions. Continued detention was authorised as the detainee has a history of similar offences, including offending while on bail, and is currently breaching Magistrates' Court bail conditions. There are strong grounds to believe that, if released, the detainee would continue to commit further offences.
Summary of comments, concerns and/or compliments from panel members:
There was discussion about the need for more detailed information, as the justification

provided was considered too brief for panel members to fully understand the case. While limitations within Athena (such as dropdown options) may restrict input, this was not seen as sufficient to explain the lack of detail, and it was agreed that stronger free text explanation is needed.

Despite this, some members felt that, given the individual was already on bail, remand was the appropriate and justified decision. It was acknowledged that the rationale was present but lacked depth. Panel members also noted the importance of recognising that such decisions are often made under pressure and in challenging circumstances, which should be taken into account when reviewing them retrospectively.

RAG rating:	Green – 11 Amber – 5 Red – 0
Chairs Comments:	None provided.
OPCC Summary:	The split RAD rating is explainable due to the feelings amongst the panel members regarding more information needed to justify the decision.
Actions arising:	Feedback:
Feedback for the Custody Officer: the use of Athena drop downs appears a bit clumsy and more information is needed for the justification.	

Record 4

The detainee was refused bail due to risks of further offending, failure to appear in court, and potential interference with witnesses and the investigation.

Continued detention was authorised due to the presence of vulnerable and intimidated witnesses, and the detainee's proximity to the offence location, creating a significant risk of witness interference. The detainee has also demonstrated evasive behaviour, including previously fleeing police and taking steps to avoid detection following the offence.

The seriousness of the current offence, alongside an apparent escalation in behaviour

and unclear motive, supports the necessity for continued detention.

Summary of comments, concerns and/or compliments from panel members:

The panel initially sought NS's perspective, but the Chair reminded members to discuss the case first before hearing Constabulary input. Clarification was provided that remand can only apply where an imprisonable offence has been committed. There was some discussion about whether forms are completed under time pressure as it would appear they were. NS explained that demand fluctuates.

Overall, the information was felt to lack clarity. While it was suggested that including the specific offence could strengthen the rationale for refusing bail, the panel agreed this was not necessary as the information is recorded elsewhere. It was also noted that in cases involving serious offences, such as murder, remand would be expected and would not require extensive justification.

RAG rating:

Green – 15
Amber – 1
Red – 0

Chairs Comments:

None provided.

OPCC Summary:

This case in particular feels a bit messy. It also is not clear that these statements are reviewed by anyone as this one seems to end without a completed sentence. Are these records reviewed and these kind of errors picked up by anyone?

Actions arising:

Constabulary are to confirm whether these records are reviewed for errors.

Feedback:

N/A

Record 5

The detainee was refused bail due to risks of further offending, harm to others, and concerns for his own welfare as a juvenile.

Continued detention was authorised as he has repeatedly breached strict bail conditions, including while subject to electronic monitoring, and has continued to commit serious offences involving bladed weapons. This demonstrates a clear disregard for legal controls

and an ongoing risk to public safety.

There is strong evidence against him, including CCTV and witness accounts, and a risk he may retaliate against victims or witnesses once aware of the case against him. No suitable secure accommodation is currently available, and alternative arrangements would not adequately manage the risk.

Detention was deemed necessary and proportionate to protect the public and safeguard victims and witnesses.

Summary of comments, concerns and/or compliments from panel members:

The panel raised questions regarding procedural aspects, including the presence of an appropriate adult, with clarification that one should be present at the point of charge, even where this occurs remotely in exceptional circumstances.

It was confirmed that, for juveniles, observation levels are determined through the same risk-based assessment as adults, although additional support is available, such as a SPOC (single point of contact).

There were concerns about the clarity of the information, particularly in linking the listed offences to the accompanying description. Limitations within the system were highlighted, with confirmation that dropdown selections are required before free text can be added.

Despite these issues, this was noted as the most detailed explanation reviewed. However, further discussion took place around readability and whether the overall quality and structure of the written account were sufficiently clear and accessible.

RAG rating:	Green – 16 Amber – 0 Red – 0
Chairs Comments:	None provided.
OPCC Summary:	The summary is not easy to follow, as it is unclear which justifications or comments relate to each offence. This raises questions about whether the level of clarity is sufficient. It may be argued that this does not present an issue from a Constabulary perspective, as the record is not public-facing, it does create

	challenges for panel scrutiny. NS advised that individuals within the Constabulary, and other relevant professionals, would be familiar with the format and would typically refer directly to the free text section for context. However, from a panel perspective, the lack of clear structure and linkage between offences and rationale makes it difficult to interpret.
Actions arising:	Feedback:
OPCC to investigate who reviews Athena – complete and info provided at the end of the minutes.	

Record 6	
The detainee was refused bail due to risks of failing to attend court and interfering with the victim and investigation. Continued detention was authorised due to a pattern of escalating behaviour, including stalking, threats to kill, and assault against the same victim, who is considered an intimidated witness. The offences were committed while the detainee was on court bail for similar matters, with repeated breaches of conditions and a previous failure to appear. The detainee has actively intimidated the victim, causing significant fear and distress. Given the ongoing risk to the victim, likelihood of further interference, and failure to comply with bail, remand in custody was deemed necessary and proportionate.	
Summary of comments, concerns and/or compliments from panel members:	
This record appears a lot clearer and easier to read.	
RAG rating:	Green – 16 Amber – 0 Red – 0
Chairs Comments:	None provided.
OPCC Summary:	There was not a lot of conversation on this case.

Actions arising:	Feedback:
N/A	N/A

Record 7

The detainee was refused bail due to a clear risk of failing to appear in court.

Continued detention was authorised based on a proven pattern of non-compliance, including previous failures to surrender and a history of repeated offending while on bail (17 recorded instances). This demonstrates a persistent disregard for court orders and a high likelihood of further offending if released. Given these factors, no bail conditions were considered sufficient, and remand in custody was deemed necessary, proportionate, and justified.

Summary of comments, concerns and/or compliments from panel members:

One panel member felt that the justification for refusal of bail was appropriate. However, there was discussion about whether more detailed reasoning should be provided when citing “failure to appear” as a justification. NS advised that best practice would include specific details, such as the number of previous failures to appear and the most recent occurrence, to strengthen the rationale.

RAG rating:	Green – 13 Amber – 0 Red – 0 3 members abstained – no reason provided.
Chairs Comments:	None provided.
OPCC Summary:	Quite a straight forward case, very little discussion on this.
Actions arising:	Feedback:
N/A	N/A

Record 8

The detainee was refused bail due to risks of further offending, harm to others, and

concerns for her own safety.

Continued detention was authorised as she demonstrated immediate and serious offending upon release from custody, including assaulting multiple care staff and causing injury. She has a persistent history of violent behaviour towards carers, repeated breaches of bail, and shows no deterrence to legal restrictions.

She also presents a significant risk to herself, with a history of self-harm and recent attempts whilst in custody. With no secure accommodation available and no effective alternative measures to manage the risk, detention was deemed necessary and proportionate to protect both the public and the detainee.

Summary of comments, concerns and/or compliments from panel members:

A panel member sought clarification on the phrase “they continue to be unphased in their offending,” with NS confirming this referred to the individual having previously been bailed, failing to comply with those conditions, and reoffending.

This case was considered to be closer to the expected “gold standard” in terms of justification. However, there was some initial confusion around whether the offence was imprisonable. There also appeared to be an inconsistency in the record, as only one charge was listed, yet the wording suggested multiple offences. While one imprisonable offence had been used to justify the refusal of bail, the way the information was presented created confusion and was likely due to user error, which should be reviewed.

RAG rating:	Green – 16 Amber – 0 Red – 0
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Chairs Comments:	None provided.
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OPCC Summary:	I am in agreement with the concerns raised regarding the confusion and the need for this issue to be reviewed.
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Actions arising:	Feedback:
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Constabulary to investigate the error in recording.	
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Actions arising:	Feedback:
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	N/A
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The Athena system (used by several UK police forces such as Essex, Kent, Norfolk, and Suffolk) is not overseen by a single individual but is managed through shared governance and organisational responsibility.

Each participating police force is responsible for how Athena is used within their organisation, including data quality, supervision, and compliance.

Strategic oversight sits with the Athena Management Board (or Joint Governance Board), which includes senior representatives from the partner forces. They set direction, policy, and system priorities.

Day-to-day system management and development are usually supported by a dedicated Athena programme team / ICT teams across the forces. **The system provider (NEC / Northgate Public Services) is responsible for maintaining and technically supporting the software itself.** There is also accountability for data protection and compliance, typically held by each force's senior officers (e.g. Chief Constables) and monitored by bodies like the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).