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CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE
CSE ®

ORGANISATION/SERVICE ASSESSED

INDEPENDENT OFFICE FOR POLICE CONDUCT (IOPC)

PREPARED BY

LORNA BAINBRIDGE, ASSESSOR

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RECOMMEND CERTIFICATION

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) oversees the police complaints system in England and Wales. The majority of complaints from the public are dealt with by police forces. However, the IOPC set and monitor the standards by which they should handle complaints. In addition, it investigates the most serious matters, including deaths following police contact and also considers certain types of appeals from people who are dissatisfied with the way they have been treated by the police. It is independent and makes decisions entirely independently of the police and government.

The Strategic Plan 2018 – 2022 clearly sets out the organisation's mission, values and priorities for the stated period. The mission is: 'To improve public confidence in policing by ensuring the police are accountable for their actions and lessons are learnt'.

The values are: Seeking Truth, Being Inclusive, Empowering People, Being Tenacious, and Making a Difference.

The current priorities of the organisation:
To work with others to improve the police complaints system.
To improve policing by identifying and sharing learning from the work undertaken.
To improve confidence in police accountability.
To be an efficient and effective organisation.

The IOPC used the Customer Service Excellence Standard as a framework to contribute to the achievement of its mission and priorities, which are reflected in the communication objectives, which include:

1. We will protect the public reputation of the IOPC as an effective, independent and impartial organisation through efficient issues management and strong stakeholder and media engagement
2. We will build continuous and meaningful engagement, raising our profile, credibility and trust in the IOPC so that we can establish a reputation with partners, opinion formers, complainants, the public and staff to influence and support us in our work
3. We will ensure our stakeholders feel fully informed on the work of the IOPC, engaging existing and new audiences with improved content, storytelling and new channels
4. We will inspire staff, engaging them in our work and supporting them to be strong ambassadors for the IOPC
5. We will improve our communications capability and systems so we have the right people, skills and tools to deliver great communications.

2. METHODOLOGY

This was an initial assessment against the Customer Service Excellence (CSE) Standard. A proposal was prepared and submitted, and subsequently accepted by the IOPC. The coordinator of the assessment from within the organisation was provided with access to Assessment Services Self-Assessment App. The narrative for each element demonstrated how they were meeting the 57 elements of the Standard. A range of case studies and documentation was also uploaded to support the narrative and provide the Assessor with additional evidence.

The assessment team comprised of two Assessors, spending a total of seven days onsite, they visited the offices in Sale, Wakefield, Cardiff, Birmingham and Canary Wharf. Interviews with members of the senior leadership team, managers and front-line staff, as well as customers (referred to as service users) and partners to bring the narrative and documentation to life. Over the course of the onsite evidence collection 143 staff were interviewed, 17 service users and 6 partners.

Verbal feedback was provided to the Operations Quality Manager and team. This included the outcome of the assessment, areas of strength which were recognised as Compliance Plus and those areas to consider for continuous improvement. There were six elements found to be Partially Compliant whereby the IOPC are encouraged to consider developing it's practices further. The areas of strength and improvement will be the focus for the first year annual review in March 2021.

The following report provides a summary of the areas of strength and those recommended for continuous improvement. A brief narrative for each element confirms that the element was Compliant, or if appropriate Compliance Plus or Partially Compliant.

3. SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS

Sections: **1.1.3, 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 2.2.2, 3.4.3**

The following elements were found to be key strengths throughout the Customer Service Excellence assessment. Reference is made to the element in brackets.

• The IOPC have identified the current and potential service user groups and gained an in-depth understanding of their characteristics. The hard-to-reach and disadvantaged groups and individuals have been identified, for example, Young People, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic, those with mental health issues, autism, experiencing domestic abuse, etc. As a result, a range of consultation activities have taken place, which has included young people, and this has been used to influence improvements to their journey as a service user. This element is awarded Compliance Plus. (1.1.3)

• The new Director General is a strong advocate for the services users; the development of the One Plan and the core values firmly places them (service users) at the heart of the way the organisation operates. The One Plan and values were communicated effectively to people and as a result there is a clear understanding of the different service users, how they contribute to the success of the IOPC and provide the service user with a positive experience. Staff confirmed that there was a clear direction for the organisation which was refreshing. This element is awarded Compliance Plus. (2.1.1)

• Also, at the heart of the organisation is 'learning', and as a result, staff and service users (Professional Standards Department and Police Forces) spoke of the focus on learning and sharing best practice to further improve the service user experience. Reference was made to the approaches used to publish the findings, for example, Learning the Lessons magazine and the website, Learning Recommendations Workshop, Subject Matter Networks, to mention a few. This element is awarded Compliance Plus. (4.2.4)

The following elements were found to be strengths throughout the Customer Service Excellence initial assessment. Reference is made to the element in brackets.

• The organisation actively seeks to protect service users' privacy in both face-to-face discussions and the transfer and storage of service user information. Performance will be review throughout the first-year annual review to establish whether this has continued to the same level. (2.1.5)

• Staff are encouraged to share their ideas and opinions through formal and informal mechanisms, and a number feel empowered to make decisions and implement changes / improvements. Many staff spoke of how their ideas and opinions, as well as findings as a result of working with the service users were utilised to inform internal systems and processes, policy development and service planning. For example, Silent Solution campaign, increase the number of Subject Matter Experts (SME) from 15 to 90 and all to have access to training, through to changes to the recording of investigations to make them more friendly, vetting process for Police Officers moving to a different Force, to mention a few. (2.1.6, 2.2.4)

• The staff in the Call Centre were observed by an Assessor to be very polite and patient, and providing the information in different ways to ensure the service user understood. In addition, throughout the interviews staff consistently made reference to the importance of being polite, professional, patient and respectful, showing a level of understanding and empathy when service users are experiencing difficult situations. (2.2.2)

• There was extensive evidence of improvements to the range, content and quality of verbal, published and web-based information to ensure it is relevant and meets the needs of the service users. Some examples included: changes to the website, being more personal and empathetic in the 28 day updates to service users through to improved presentation and content of the Statutory Guidance. (3.2.3)

Some service user comments collected throughout the assessment included:
"Asset to the organisation, extremely professional."
"No surprises – a good relationship, we can have open and frank discussions regarding the investigation."
"X is exceptional, nice and refreshing to find someone in a large bureaucratic organisation to have the attention to detail, professional and impartial."
"Satisfied with the service so far."
"Decisions are logical and fair, and relied on the information from the Subject Matter experts; the relationship is

good."

"Polite and professional."

"The letter confirmed the outcome of the investigation and the rationale, very clear direction."

"I managed to get advice out of office hours – managed to contact the organisation and received a call-back from an appropriate person within half-an-hour."

"Service level good; no real complaints."

"The report was fair."

"I also have dealing with finance and again a good, professional relationship."

"I believe it is an independent service and a very professional outlook."

"X - was a Gold Standard investigation."

"Brilliant really helpful, the person contacted me by email even though she was on annual leave."

"Egress was used to ensure security of information."

"Very responsive and professional."

"She advised me what I could do – the information and advice from X was good."

"The IOPC couldn't have done any more – so no problem with them."

"Once allocated the work it only took two weeks for a decision."

"In my experience it was positive, they explained things clearly and I understood what to expect."

4. AREAS FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Sections: **1.3.4, 4.1.2, 5.3.2, 2.2.1, 2.2.5, 3.2.1, 4.3.6, 5.2.1**

The following elements require further development in order for the IOPC to be fully compliant with the Customer Service Excellence Standard, as a result these are currently awarded Partial Compliance. Reference is made to the element in brackets.

• Whilst there is a Performance Development Review (PDR) process in place supported by regular one-to-ones to review performance and identify learning and development, there was inconsistent evidence regarding the evaluation of performance in relation to prioritising and focusing on the service user. The Assessor was advised of the new PDR process being released which focuses on the values and as a result will include reference to the service user. Once this is in place the evidence should be sufficient to address this element. (2.2.3)

• The performance against Standards and performance expectations, including timeliness and quality of service is monitored and evaluated on a monthly basis, and subsequently published via the website and other appropriate media. At the time of the assessment there was evidence that not all Standards and performance expectations were being met. Throughout the first-year annual review the Assessor will be interested in the improvements against the Standards and performance expectations. (4.1.2, 5.3.2)

• The very nature of the service provided by the IOPC results in a number of service users being dissatisfied, due to the outcome not being positive. As a result, throughout the first-year annual review the Assessor will focus upon the experience and whether this was positive for the service user. (4.2.2)

• The organisation has experienced dips in performance over the past year, which have been identified through the monitoring and evaluating activities. Consequently, actions have been taken to address the issue, however, there was limited evidence indicating that service users were aware of the dip in performance. In the future, consideration could be made to communicating performance issues and outline the action taken to ensure service users expectations are managed effectively. (4.3.1)

• Whilst there are a range of channels whereby service users are advised of the promises on timeliness and quality of service, for example, verbal, email and website, a number of service users interviewed failed to be aware of these. Consequently, in the future, consideration could be made to ensuring staff explicitly state these promises verbally and provide additional information through written materials to raise their awareness of these promises. (5.2.1)

The following elements could be considered for further improvement to contribute to IOPC's quest to provide excellent customer service. Reference is made to the element in brackets.

• Challenging and stretching targets are set for service user satisfaction, and performance levels were evidenced as improving throughout the assessment. However, whilst these were published staff failed to be aware of the target and current performance. As a result, consideration could be made to promoting and celebrating performance on satisfaction levels from time-to-time via an internal communication to raise staffs' awareness of performance levels. This is also relevant to the Standards and broader performance expectations, including timeliness and quality of service. (1.3.2, 1.3.4, 4.1.2, 5.3.2)

• Managers responsible for providing internal services to staff (Human Resources, Information Technology, Facilities and Finance) have plans to initiate surveys to measure satisfaction levels, which is encouraged. However, consideration could be made to approaching this with one survey to measure the different services, as opposed to a number of surveys, as the latter may result on a feeling of over-survey and minimal response rates gained. (1.3.1)

• The focus on the service user is embedded in the recruitment and selection process, as well as the induction training. Specific programmes, for example, Trainee Investigator, Lead Investigator and Family Liaison Manager incorporate a focus on the service user, however, this fails to be explicit at present. In the future, consideration could be made to incorporating key learning and development objectives which draw out the focus on the service user and expected behaviours. In addition, consideration could be made to designing programmes that focus upon providing a positive experience for the service user, this would contribute to developing consistency across the organisation. (2.2.1)

• The service users can access the information through various channels; face-to-face, email, telephone, text and website. Interviews with some service users indicated that they were unaware of some communication channels, in particular face-to-face. Consideration could be made to promoting all available options to service user groups, depending on their circumstances, at the start of their interaction to ensure their needs and preferences are fully addressed. (3.2.1)

• Interaction with wider communities takes place through a range of methods, for example, Oversight Officers working with the 43 Police Forces through to University Students visiting the premises and undertaking sales and marketing roles. Currently, consideration is being made to introduce staff volunteering days, which is strongly encouraged, however, the organisation is encouraged to consider how this will be captured and measured to demonstrate the impact on wider communities. (3.4.3)

• Consultation activities with service users, partners and staff has influenced the setting, reviewing and raising of local standards. In the future, information showing past and present standards can be used to compare performance in previous years. (4.1.3)

• Benchmarking takes place within the organisation and across the industry, for example, performance of the different Police Forces. In the future, consideration could be made to all support functions (Human Resources, Information Technology, Facilities and Finance) undertaking benchmarking activities to contribute to improvements to the service user. (4.2.3)