



ORGANISATION/SERVICE ASSESSED

INDEPENDENT OFFICE FOR POLICE CONDUCT (IOPC)

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REPORT TYPE

REVIEW 2

PROJECT NUMBER

4675194702

DOCUMENT REVIEW DATE

8TH MAR 2022

EVIDENCE GATHERING ACTIVITY DATE

17TH MAR 2022

MAINTAINING CERTIFICATION

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1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Independent Office for Police Conduct (referred to as the IOPC, or Organisation throughout the report) 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 sets and monitors 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 the police have treated them. It makes decisions entirely independently of the police and government.

IOPC's mission is: 'To improve public confidence in policing by ensuring the police are accountable for their actions and lessons are learnt'.

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

The IOPC continue to use the Customer Service Excellence (CSE) Standard as a framework to contribute to the achievement of its mission and priorities. This was a second-year annual review against the CSE Standard, which reviewed the areas of strength and areas recommended for improvement following the first-year annual review in 2021. The review took into consideration both the internal service user (staff) and the external service user.

2. METHODOLOGY

The IOPC was initially certificated with the CSE Standard in March 2020. In preparation for the second-year annual review against the CSE Standard, the Assessor had a Microsoft Teams meeting with key members of the Quality and Service Improvement (QSI) team to review the date and logistics for the review. Subsequently, liaison continued to take place with the assigned coordinator.

The coordinator completed the Assessment Services Self-Assessment App, cross-referencing a number of storyboards to demonstrate how the 57 elements of the Standard continued to be met. In addition, access was provided to documentary evidence, including the Annual Report 2020/21, Impact Report 2020/21, Strategic Plan 2019 – 2022, Business Plan 2021/22, Service Standards, and monthly Performance data.

The Assessor spent 1.5 days interviewing 34 staff (senior leaders, managers, and front line) via Microsoft Teams. In addition, one service user was interviewed by telephone and two partner organisations by Microsoft Teams.

On completion of the interviews, verbal feedback was provided to members of the QSI team. Feedback included the outcome of the review, areas of strength recognised as Compliance Plus and those areas to consider for continuous improvement. There were two elements found to be Partially Compliant whereby the IOPC are encouraged to continue to address in the forthcoming year.

The following report provides a summary of the areas of strength and those recommended for continuous improvement, in the context of both the internal and external user.

3. SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS

Sections: **1.1.3, 1.2.2, 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.5, 2.1.6, 2.2.4, 2.2.5, 3.2.3, 4.2.4**

The following areas of the Customer Excellence Standard are key strengths of the IOPC and as a result, these are awarded Compliance Plus. Three areas of strength (Compliance Plus) were identified in 2020, and a further five elements were identified in 2021. Subsequently these elements continue to be a strength in 2022 (1.1.3, 1.2.2, 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.2.4, 2.2.5, 3.2.3, 4.2.4). An additional two Compliance Plus have been achieved throughout this review (2.1.5, 2.1.6). Reference to the elements is made in brackets.

The IOPC seeks to identify hard-to-reach and disadvantaged groups and individuals and subsequently consult with them to influence service improvements - the service user journey, strategies, policies, and procedures. The work continues to take place with young people, Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME), Victims, those with disabilities and mental health issues, etc. In addition, over the forthcoming year, further projects will seek to identify those with additional needs, with the aim of providing them with greater support after experiencing extensive trauma. (1.1.3, 1.2.2)

Consultation with external service users is integral to the way the IOPC works. This provides insight into the characteristics, needs and preferences of the service users and influences the changes / improvements made by the Organisation. The central and regional Stakeholder Engagement teams are tasked with engaging and involving service users through different methods, such as written responses to questions, one-to-one dialogue, and forums. The views and opinions of a representative sample of service users are gained, analysed, and reported. Subsequently, the loop is closed, and feedback to the service users is provided to demonstrate that their input is valued, and action has been taken as a result. (1.2.2, 2.1.2)

Similarly, wide consultation is undertaken with internal users, contributing to making change / improvements. The Director General (DG) shows a genuine interest in the voice of staff and hosts listening sessions. In preparation for the development of 'Strategy 2', the DG has met with over 250 staff to gain their insight. In addition, he spends a large proportion of his time informally talking to staff to find out 'how things are'. Staff believe their views and opinions are valued and listened to, as improvements are made. In addition, an online portal facilitates the opportunity for staff to share their ideas, which is subsequently responded to, again demonstrating an interest in the staff voice. (1.2.2, 2.2.4)

Staff strongly believe that senior leaders advocate for the service users and put them at the heart of how the IOPC operates. They confirmed that leaders and managers behave in line with the core values which are service user centric and emphasises the importance of providing them with a positive experience. Similarly, there is a strong focus on the internal service user, ensuring that individuals are well supported and equipped to undertake the role expected. A high proportion of interviewees confirmed that it was a great place to work, and their needs and preferences were taken into consideration. (2.1.1)

Over the past year, the IOPC has responded positively to an external Information Commissioner's Audit. Extensive work has been undertaken to ensure that policies and procedures relating to service user personal data are in place, and a robust formal approach to conducting internal audits has also been designed. Investment has been made in key roles, for example, Information Asset Managers and a Data Protection Impact Officer. Mandatory data protection training and record management training has been completed by 99.5% of staff. The aim is to ensure that external service users' personal information is secure at every stage of the journey. A digital project has been led by staff to design and deliver working practices that are safer and less invasive when a service user has to present their mobile telephone as evidence. (2.1.5)

A high proportion of staff confirmed that they felt empowered on a day-to-day basis to deliver the service and make appropriate decisions. Over the past two years, homeworking has been essential, and there is a strong belief that they are trusted and able to take ownership of the job. There was no evidence of micro-management. Staff explained that they are empowered to lead on projects such as Reverse Mentoring and Allyship, which are designed to promote equality, diversity, and inclusion across the IOPC and wider. Individuals were proud to state that senior leaders and managers were actively learning through these projects and that in the past year, behavioural and language changes had been observed across the IOPC. (2.1.6, 2.2.4)

The IOPC has a number of staff network groups, for example, LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer), Age, Sex and Families, etc. Staff volunteer to be a member of a group, and subsequently contribute

their views and opinions to influence strategies, systems, and processes in these areas. Staff strongly believe that they work in line with the Organisation's core values, and their voice has influenced changes / improvements. (2.2.4)

Interviewees genuinely felt valued and appreciated for their contribution to the IOPC over the past year. This was due to the ongoing support to balance their work and personal life and open conversations regarding the future working arrangements as IOPC staff start to return to offices. Many staff referred to the Awards, Cheers for Peers and informal thanks and praise to teams and individuals from senior leaders, managers, and peers. (2.2.5)

The IOPC continues to adopt a robust approach to improve the range, content, and quality of verbal, published and web-based information. Documents are reviewed to ensure they are in plain English, readable, and easy to understand by the service users. Once again, as changes / improvements are made to the documentation, the external and / or internal service users are consulted. In addition, information is translated, as required by service users. A project is underway to develop a new website, which is accessible and user friendly, and as a result, wide consultation has started to take place. There are plans to test the user experience for various audiences at different stages to ensure it is fit for purpose. (3.2.3)

The work undertaken by the IOPC results in learning; this can be from mistakes made or best practice gained from different stakeholders. Consistently, staff spoke of learning from Police Forces, Professional Standards Department, and the public. Subsequently, the learning is shared and published in many ways, for example, Learning the Lessons magazine and the website, Learning Recommendations Workshops, and Subject Matter Networks. (4.2.4)

4. AREAS FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Sections: **4.1.2, 5.3.2, 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 1.3.1, 1.3.5, 2.1.4, 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3, 2.2.5, 4.2.1**

The following elements were awarded Partial Compliance, which the IOPC recognised within the self-assessment. Reference is made to the element in brackets.

The performance against standards and targets, including timeliness and quality of service, is monitored and evaluated on a monthly basis. This is captured in a report which clearly indicates the performance against the standard or target, whether this has improved or decreased against the previous month's performance and RAG (red, amber, green) rated. The report is published via the website and can be viewed by stakeholders, including service users. At the time of this second-year review, not all standards and targets were being met. (4.1.2, 5.3.2)

The following areas of the Customer Excellence Standard are met. However, consideration could be made to making further improvements. Reference to the elements is made in brackets.

Over the past year, some work has been undertaken to identify staff characteristics; for example, the Learning and Development team has worked closely with the departments employing Casework Managers and Investigators. However, more could be done to gain a true understanding of the needs and preferences of staff. In the future, the support functions of IOPC (Human Resources, Finance, Information Technology, Facilities) are encouraged to gain an in-depth understanding of the characteristics, needs and preferences, particularly identifying those that may be hard-to-reach or disadvantaged. This may identify further support required by groups and individuals. (1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3)

A number of the support functions have started to implement different approaches to measure the level of staff satisfaction. In the future, these areas are encouraged to develop this further, measure satisfaction levels against stretching targets and publicise performance across the Organisation. This may result in identifying areas of improvement to further benefit staff. (1.3.1, 1.3.5)

The IOPC continues to design different approaches to measuring the external service user satisfaction levels. In the future, consideration could be made to identifying an effective way to establish whether the service users believe they are treated fairly, and that staff are polite and friendly. This would provide a measure for two elements of the CSE Standard and subsequently may influence further improvements. (2.1.4, 2.2.2)

New recruits confirmed that there was a focus on the service user (internal and external) throughout the recruitment and selection process and induction. Subsequently, the service user is at the heart of all ongoing learning and development activities. Whilst staff were aware of the learning and development opportunities, many spoke of having no time to participate in such activities. In the future, consideration could be made to encouraging staff to take ownership of their own learning and development and to access opportunities that contribute to their continuous professional development. (2.2.1)

The DRIVE methodology designed to support performance management has been effectively implemented, and managers have been well supported to undertake the one-to-ones with staff. There was evidence of a few managers not being committed to delivering a meaningful monthly DRIVE interaction with their reportees. Consequently, consideration could be made to reviewing the quality and frequency of the DRIVE conversations to ensure all staff have the opportunity to review performance and identify learning and development needs. (2.2.3)

All interviewees confirmed that they felt valued and appreciated for their contribution to putting the service user at the heart of everything they do and provided many examples of how this was demonstrated. In the future, IOPC is encouraged to use the Assessment Services Ltd staff survey as part of the CSE assessment process or include a question in the internal staff survey. This would provide a far more inclusive approach to the assessment and a robust measurement for this element. (2.2.5)

Stakeholders had a level of understanding of what they could expect of the IOPC throughout the review / appeal process. However, there was a lack of understanding concerning the level of 'power' they had when working with the police forces. Whilst this is explained to service users throughout their journey with IOPC, consideration could be made to providing greater clarity, supported by the rationale. (4.2.1)

The use of Restorative Practice is developing throughout the Organisation, and this will be of interest to the Assessor in 2023.