

Stakeholder research 2019

DECEMBER 2019

Aims and approach



Background and approach

- This report summarises the findings from online and in-depth telephone interviews with stakeholders, conducted by Populus between April-August 2019.
- These stakeholders were identified by the IOPC as those whose views are important to the overall success of the organisation and its reputation.
- The in-depth interviews were discursive, and quotes in this report are taken from those interviews. The online interviews were quantitative, and numerical data in this report is taken from those interviews.
- The online survey was conducted between 25 April – 8 August. The in-depth interviews were conducted between 7 June – 9 August.
- Both the online survey and the in-depth interviews covered overall perceptions of the IOPC, perceptions of its performance on key measures and specific areas of its work, the quality of its communications and engagement with stakeholders, and perceptions of changes the organisation has undergone in the past two years.



Respondents

Stakeholders are categorised into three groups throughout this report:



Police stakeholders

97 quantitative interviews and 8 in-depth qualitative interviews



Police accountability stakeholders

26 quantitative interviews and 10 in-depth qualitative interviews



Non police stakeholders

33 quantitative interviews and 7 in-depth qualitative interviews



Sampling notes

- Similar research was last undertaken in 2017. The samples in each study are different and for some sub-groups are based on small numbers of stakeholders.
- Where relevant, we have shown changes in the findings between 2017 and 2019, for indicative purposes.
- Any changes year on year should be treated with caution and interpreted in conjunction with the qualitative findings. Some sub-groups (in particular, non-police and accountability framework stakeholders) are based on small samples.
- Between 2017 and 2019, the IOPC's CRM database was updated and cleansed to aid stakeholder engagement and to ensure it was compliant with new GDPR legislation. This means there has been some sample change between 2017 and 2019, particularly among non-police stakeholders.
- In 2019, Populus and the IOPC took a more focussed approach to sampling, due to GDPR legislation, so that stakeholders that the IOPC had not recently engaged with were not contacted. Only those whom the IOPC had engaged with over the last 18 months were contacted.
- Some parliamentarians were interviewed online. Due to a very small sample size of 22 respondents, and none interviewed qualitatively, we have not shown this data in the report.



Summary and recommendations



Executive summary (1/3)

A story of positive change

- The 2019 stakeholder research tells a story of positive change. Stakeholders report better dealings with the IOPC than at any time in the past and an uplift in their favourability towards the organisation.
- This positive change is attributed to three areas: 1) the IOPC's much-welcomed shift in focus towards learning; 2) better stakeholder outreach and engagement; and 3) leadership that is listening to stakeholders' concerns and showing an intention to deal with them. Each of these benefits is seen as related.
- The IOPC must continue this positive engagement, and aim to get out the message among less senior police officers that its desire is to focus on learning and continuous improvement rather than on discipline.
- For positive perceptions to continue, stakeholders now want to see hard evidence of the effectiveness of the IOPC's shift towards learning and improving policing.
- Stakeholders want to see the IOPC do more to make the public aware of the service it provides and the work it does. They think that simplifying the complaints process is a critical component of this.

Executive summary (2/3)

Better engagement than ever

- Stakeholders have reported finding it easier to engage with the IOPC than at any other time. The organisation is seen as more open and accessible, with personable and approachable individuals. Michael Lockwood's engagement and leadership is highly praised by stakeholders of all categories.
- Stakeholders agree that independent regulation does not mean keeping distance with parties involved in the process. They acknowledge that the IOPC is engaging with stakeholders openly in order to regulate effectively, while aiming to remain impartial.
- The Learning the Lessons magazine is the most used and the most desired form of communication from the IOPC, and is seen as a useful tool in backing up the IOPC's new focus. However, stakeholders think it should only form one part of the approach. They suggest it should also use other, 'outside-the-box' methods to engage lower-ranking police officers and the public, who are less likely to read the magazine.
- There is a desire for more engagement with the public. Stakeholders question the level of public confidence in the IOPC and public awareness of its functions, and want to see it do more to make the public aware of the service it provides and the work it does.
- It is clear that improved engagement and a commitment to learning has repaired relations with stakeholders in the short term. The more engaged stakeholders believe that the IOPC is committed to its intention to shift but they do not think it has produced evidence to back this up. They think the IOPC needs to do more work to show improvements in police standards and/or the prevention of misconduct.

Executive summary (3/3)

Investigations remains an area of concern

- The IOPC tends to be viewed as impartial by stakeholders of all types, particularly those in the police accountability framework. However, stakeholders raise three recurring concerns about the way the IOPC conducts investigations.
- Firstly, some say that investigations are not always proportionate, and that some investigators show an intention to pursue punitive courses of action when not appropriate, sowing mistrust among rank and file police officers. Secondly, some think that IOPC investigations are inconsistent, with different investigators coming to different conclusions about similar cases. Thirdly, there is a perception that investigators lack training and experience, particularly around evidence-gathering and interviewing. Investigations are also still seen as slow, though there is a recognition that this often relates to work carried over from the IPCC.
- On each of these issues relating to investigations, some of the more engaged stakeholders attest to signs of progress, but they sense that more needs to be done to convince police officers and relevant communities that progress has been made to improve the quality and timeliness of investigations.
- Statistics that show that the duration of investigations has fallen should be widely shared, and where longer investigations are the result of 'historic' issues, this should be made clear.

Overall, a story of positive change

“The words I would associate with the IOPC?”

One would be ‘dynamic’, although I think they would probably be quite shocked at that. But as an organisation we have seen them change quite a lot in a year and actually, from a civil servant's perspective **we know how difficult it is for large organisations to change. I'm impressed with the speed of change.”**

Police accountability stakeholder

“**There has been a sea change [...].**

I was really concerned about the IPCC and about their general approach to allegations made against police officers. They had almost a default position of the officers having been involved in wrongdoing.

Now, with the IOPC, they investigate the facts and the circumstances and do so without prejudice.”

Police stakeholder

Recommendations

Learning

Continue engaging with stakeholders to build on recent successes, highlighting the shift towards learning and continuous improvement

Begin sharing statistics or other evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of that shift

Share learnings interactively and in-person, not just in writing

Do more to highlight examples of good conduct

Investigations

Continue to focus on timeliness of investigations (and evidencing improvements)

Continue to invest in training for investigators

Public engagement

Show that you are engaging with the public

Recommendations

1

Continue engaging with stakeholders to build on recent successes, highlighting the shift towards learning and continuous improvement

- The IOPC's renewed engagement with stakeholders since 2017, and its focus on learning and continuous improvement, has done much to improve perceptions of its performance among stakeholders
- This has resulted in particular in improved favourability among senior police officers
- Michael Lockwood in particular is praised for his engagement and acknowledgment of past issues
- Going forward, the IOPC must continue this engagement, and aim to get out the message among less senior police officers that its desire is to focus on learning and continuous improvement rather than on discipline

Recommendations

2

Begin sharing statistics or other evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of that shift

- Improved engagement and a commitment to learning has significantly repaired relations with stakeholders in the short term
- But it is to some extent relying on a sense of goodwill which will not last indefinitely
- The more engaged stakeholders believe that the IOPC is committed to its intention to shift but they do not think it has produced evidence to back it up
- Ideally, the IOPC would share statistics which show improvements in police standards and/or the prevention of misconduct

Recommendations

3

Share learnings interactively and in-person, not just in writing

- There is a desire for the IOPC to do more to spread awareness of its desire to shift focus *throughout* the police force
- Learning the Lessons is very valuable but...
- ...the IOPC should make more use of other, 'outside-the-box' methods to engage lower-ranking police officers who stakeholders say have less confidence in the IOPC
- These could include, for example, events hosted by the IOPC, ambassadors within the police force who can speak about their learning experiences, drop-in visits to forces, or individual constabularies sharing examples that have national significance

Recommendations

4

Do more to highlight examples of good conduct

- Part of the process of sharing learning should involve highlighting examples of best practice
- Stakeholders think that there currently is not enough emphasis on the good work that police officers do
- Stakeholders suggest that this would help convince police officers that the IOPC is interested in recognising good conduct, while also reassuring the public

Recommendations

5

Continue to focus on timeliness of investigations (and evidencing improvements)

- While the most engaged stakeholders recognise efforts made to tackle the duration of investigations, this remains one of the IOPC's perceived weaknesses
- Given the extent to which this impacts police officers' views, the IOPC should continue to focus on reducing the length of investigations
- Statistics that show that the duration of investigations has fallen should be widely shared, and where longer investigations are the result of 'historic' issues, this should be made clear

Recommendations

6

Continue to invest in training for investigators

- Again, some of the most engaged stakeholders say they have noticed improvement with regards to the quality of investigations...
- ...but in general this remains an area of perceived weakness, with stakeholders questioning investigators' proportionality, consistency, and experience
- They think investigators' ability to question those under investigation to gather evidence effectively and to judge cases is inconsistent
- This results in negative perceptions about the IOPC's impartiality
- This apparent inconsistency undermines the IOPC's broader shift towards learning and continuous improvement

Recommendations

7

Show that you are engaging with the public

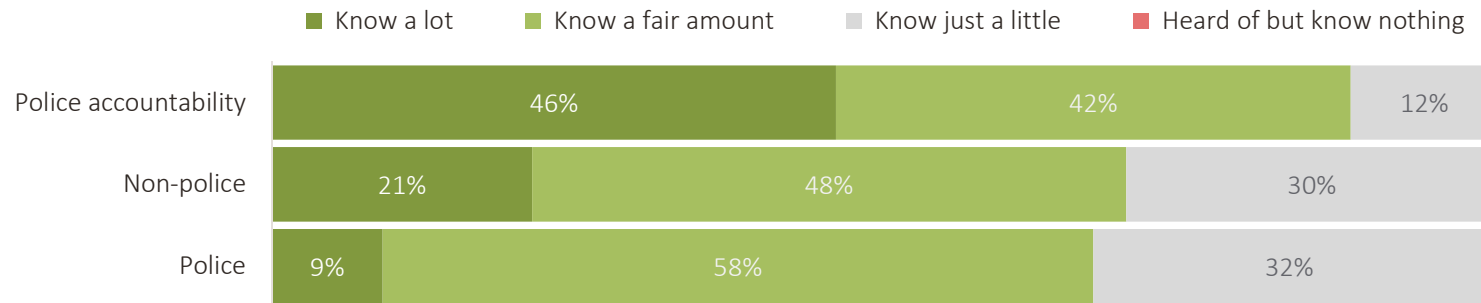
- Stakeholders question the level of public confidence in the IOPC and public awareness of its functions (which they see as related)
- They want to see the IOPC do more to make the public aware of the service it provides and the work it does
- Simplifying the complaints process is seen as a critical component of this
- Non-police stakeholders often want more engagement with specific communities who are more likely to come into contact with the police

Overall impressions

Populus



Most stakeholders are familiar with the IOPC



Q. How much, or little, do you know about the Independent Office for Police Conduct?

- Almost all stakeholders know at least a little about the IOPC
- Police accountability stakeholders are the most familiar, many dealing with the IOPC on an almost daily basis
- Police stakeholders maintain a periodic relationship with the IOPC, engaging when investigations occur and with the formal learning procedures. The most engaged deal with the IOPC at a strategic level
- For non-police stakeholders contact tends to be infrequent and more focussed on individual cases and/or specific areas

“They are **one of many groups we deal with**. They are there to look at complaints, but also to ensure that things go smoothly. As far as I know, they do quite a lot of research on how to improve things.”

Non-police stakeholder

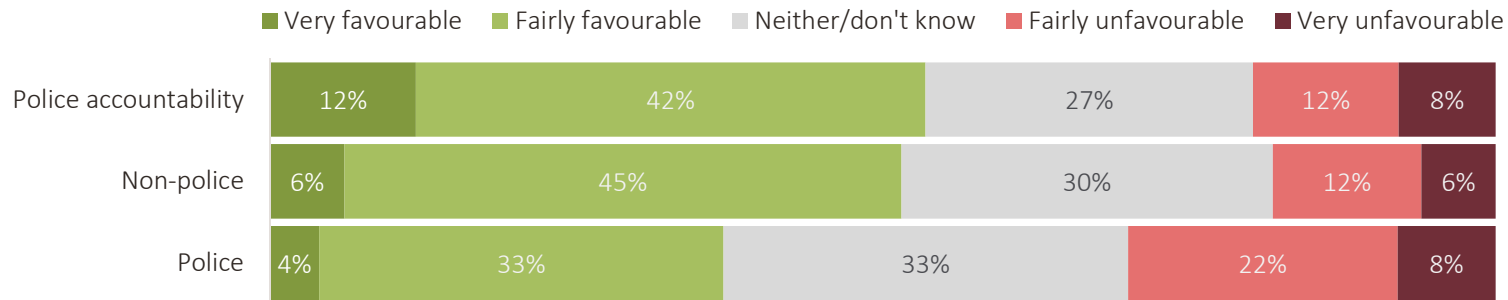
“Between me and my team we are in contact with the IOPC possibly **every other day at least.**”

Police accountability stakeholder

“I will have, **at a strategic level**, meetings periodically with one of the commissioners [sic] to make sure that from a strategic perspective, lessons learned, reporting mechanisms, all of those issues are being properly discharged.”

Police stakeholder

Most IOPC stakeholder groups feel more favourable than not towards the IOPC



Q. How favourable or unfavourable is your overall opinion of the IOPC?

- Stakeholders report an uplift in favourability in the past 18-24 months, pointing to the efforts made by the organisation to change its core approach and do more to engage with stakeholders
- For favourability to increase even further, stakeholders want to see evidence that the IOPC is delivering on its new focus

“I would go with a four and a half, five-ish. I have been **very, very impressed** with the **Director General**.”

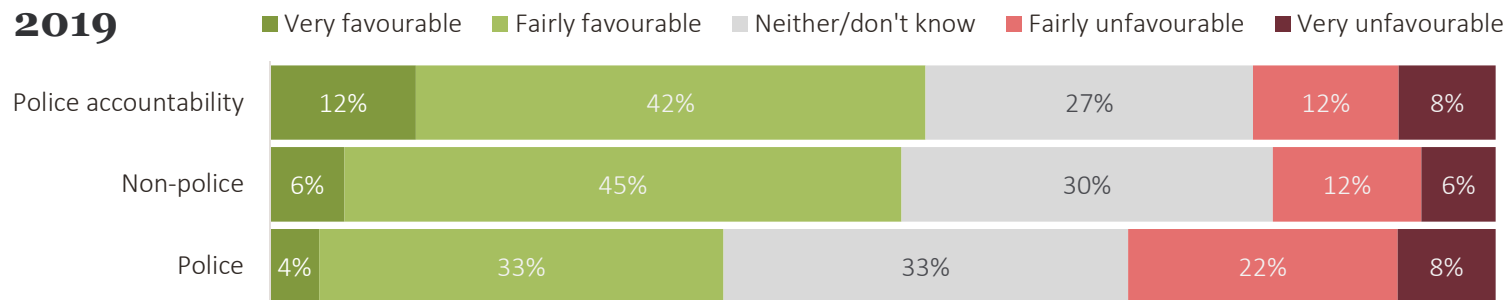
Non-police stakeholder

“It’s a four, because I’m privy to **the clear direction of travel**: an emphasis on robust investigations and a perspective of wanting to improve policing.”

Police accountability stakeholder

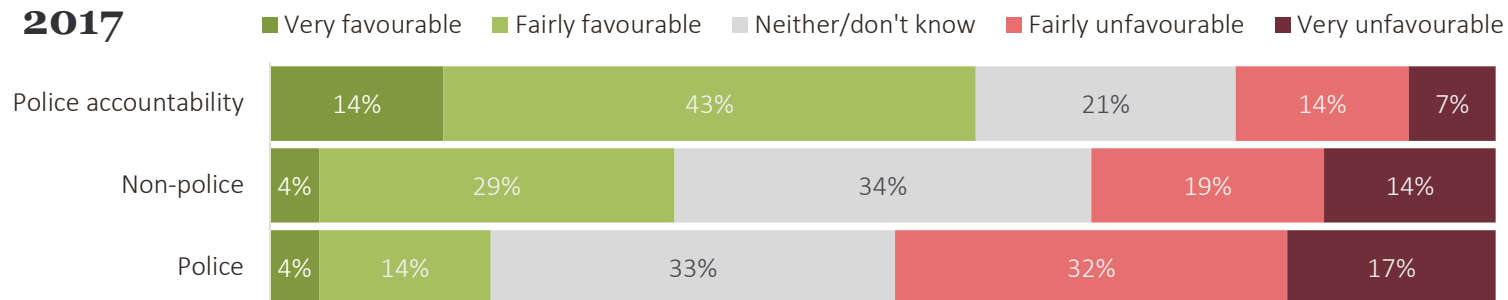
Police and non-police stakeholders are more favourable towards the organisation than when last measured in 2017

2019



Q. How favourable or unfavourable is your overall opinion of the IOPC?

2017



Q. How favourable or unfavourable is your overall opinion of the IPCC?

Stakeholders – particularly senior stakeholders and those more engaged with the IOPC – have noticed a marked improvement in the way the IOPC operates (1/2)

- Stakeholders' favourability towards the IOPC is driven by a sense that the transition to becoming the IOPC is delivering meaningful change to the way the organisation operates
- For many, the IOPC has made significant steps to addressing historic issues that limited its effectiveness in terms of both the way it conducts investigations and the way it engages with external stakeholders
- They focus on improved management of cases (and with that, more timely investigations) and a more, measured open dialogue with stakeholders and the public
- They recognise as part of this a much-needed focus (in their view) on learning and continuous improvement rather than on discipline and punishment

“There was a lot of criticism of the IPCC from many quarters; policing was one of them. It did need a refresh as **they'd become a little bit inward-looking**, batten down the hatches, tin hats pulled down.

They've become more open, approachable, willing to listen. It's all around the culture and how somebody runs an organisation and sets the vision for that organisation.”

Police stakeholder

“Its case management has been getting better. They're **dealing with a lot of the problems that have been around for a while**, it's an organisation that's been through a period of change. That's always tricky, but it's getting on top of the things it needs to be getting on top of.”

Police accountability stakeholder

Stakeholders – particularly senior stakeholders and those more engaged with the IOPC – have noticed a marked improvement in the way the IOPC operates (2/2)

“They have a lot more to do, but **they're on the right track.**”

Non-police stakeholder

“**It's gone up** from where it was. They are taking active strides to listen to feedback, to develop and to become better at what they do.”

Police stakeholder

“It has some challenges to deal with, which they are getting on with, so **in performance terms it's on the up, and has been now for a while.** It's also improving its reputation with policing. The detailed performance measures that we would all care about have been improving, and that's one of the keys to improving confidence in the system.”

Police accountability stakeholder

The IOPC is seen as more measured and open in its approach but there remains a strong desire for evidence that it is continuing to progress

“I can see **tangible changes in the way in which they're operating**, both in practical terms of **timeliness** which has been an issue previously. Also, in a more **mature and thoughtful communications strategy**, in the way which they engage in public dialogue but also dialogue with the service.”

Police stakeholder

“It's trying to change the course of an oil tanker, and it's quite hard. Do their senior managers recognise it? Yes. Are they changing how they approach things? Yes. **Has that permeated all the way down to the bottom? Definitely not.** But they recognise they've got an issue and they're trying to do something about it.”

Police accountability stakeholder

In summary, this positive change is attributed to three interrelated areas:

1

A shift of focus towards learning

2

Better stakeholder outreach and engagement

3

Leadership that listens

Stakeholders fully support a shift towards learning and think it is mutually beneficial

- The shift in focus is being felt and embraced by stakeholders, some of whom report a shift in their own practice to mirror this
- Focusing on learning rather than punitive action is seen as an effective preventative strategy against future misconduct, which is seen as advantageous to the police, the IOPC and the public

“I’m very aware that the focus on learning and preventing has become much more of a thematic priority and strategy. That challenge is where we all are actually but it’s to a) protect the public, b) learn and c) prevent it happening again. **That change in emphasis and language has been very welcome.**”

Police stakeholder

“There’s been a change in the IOPC since Lockwood came in, which is **very welcomed**. It is actually to **learn from the complaints and to try to think about what the learnings are** and to make sure that there is institutional learning and better partnerships around that.”

Police accountability stakeholder

3 areas of positive change

1

A shift of focus towards learning

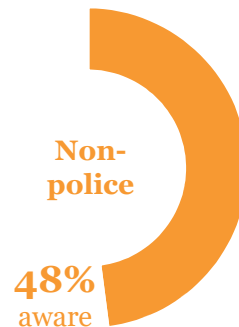
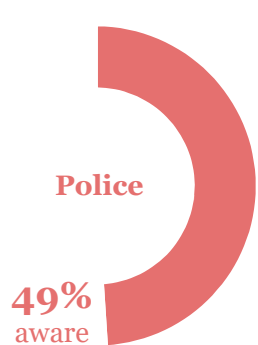
2

Better stakeholder outreach & engagement

3

Leadership that listens

Stakeholders – particularly those in the accountability framework – are aware of the IOPC’s intention to shift focus



Q. One of the IOPC's new aims is to focus more on sharing learning and continuous improvement to improve police conduct, rather than focussing on discipline.

Before taking this survey, were you aware of the IOPC's intention to shift its focus in this way?

3 areas of positive change

1

A shift of focus towards learning

2

Better stakeholder outreach & engagement

3

Leadership that listens

“I’m very aware of the fact that the **focus on learning and preventing** has become much more of a thematic priority and strategy.”

Police stakeholder

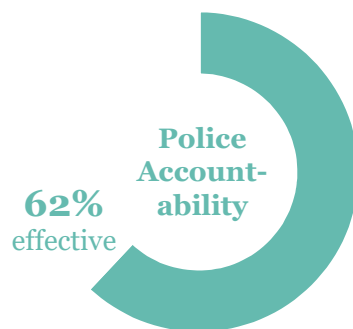
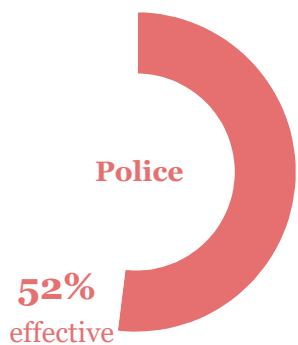
“It’s shifting away from an organisation that is primarily there to act as a police force investigating the police to **more of a supportive body to help the police learn from the mistakes** that they make.”

Police accountability stakeholder

“They have **increased their visibility**, their engagement strategy is starting to impact. They’re definitely heading in the right direction. I’ve seen evidence of the **shift to learning through case studies** and the way in which those are communicated with forces.”

Non-police stakeholder

But they want to see evidence of the effectiveness of this shift for their goodwill to continue (1/2)



Q. How effective or ineffective do you think the IOPC is in sharing learning and enacting continuous improvement to improve police conduct?

- Stakeholders want to see data clearly evidencing the successful application of the change in focus
- Effective communication of actionable learnings would demonstrate the shift in practice

“I’m not certain what the tangible results are but that change of emphasis is something that I hear people talking about. **Whether that's backed up by a metrics and data, I don't know.**”

Police stakeholder

“They're getting better at it, but **they've got some more thinking to do about how best to draw out what that learning is**, and how best to communicate it to people in a way that means it's easy for people to do something with it.”

Police accountability stakeholder

3 areas of positive change

1

A shift of focus towards learning

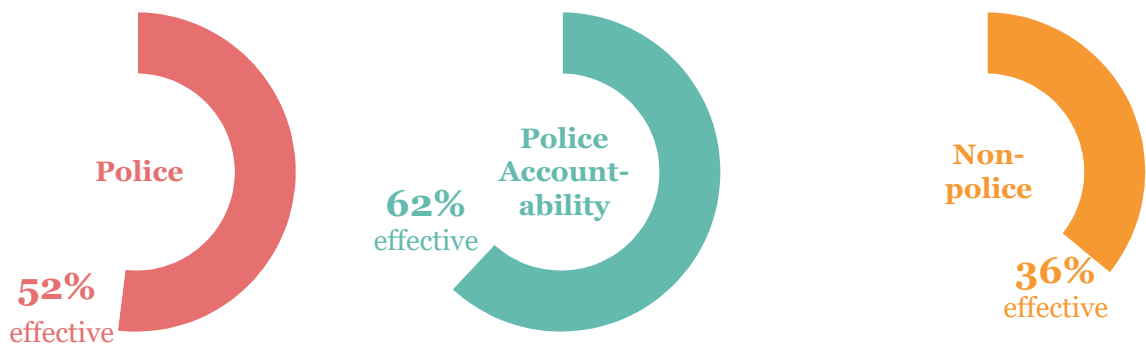
2

Better stakeholder outreach & engagement

3

Leadership that listens

But they want to see evidence of the effectiveness of this shift for their goodwill to continue (2/2)



Q. How effective or ineffective do you think the IOPC is in sharing learning and enacting continuous improvement to improve police conduct?

- Underlying the desire for more evidence is a belief that, while progress has been made, the IOPC is still at the start of its journey
- Instilling a tangible sense that the IOPC is matching words with action is crucial to driving future positivity among stakeholders

“My sense is that it's doing everything right. It'd be interesting to see how things pan out on the basis of the general shift of lesson-learning across the board. It's going to take time, there's lots of complexity in police operational culture and it's going to take a while to see how things pan out with that.”

Non-police stakeholder

“They genuinely have an interest in trying to change the culture and change how they work. We're still early days; however, I think it's a good starting point.”

Police accountability stakeholder

3 areas of positive change

1

A shift of focus towards learning

2

Better stakeholder outreach & engagement

3

Leadership that listens

Part of the reason stakeholders have noticed this change is due to improved stakeholder outreach and engagement from the IOPC

- Police, police accountability, and some non-police stakeholders feel that the IOPC is offering a more open, constructive dialogue with both families and forces
- They think that this balance comes from a recognition that independent regulation does not mean keeping distance or only engaging in closed-off engagement with parties involved in the process. Instead, they think the IOPC understands that it must engage with stakeholders openly in order to regulate effectively, while remaining impartial

“They've been frank about the pushes and pulls they have between the people that have made the complaint and the police. They are being transparent about the different challenges they face.”

Non-police stakeholder

“We see a significant difference both in the messaging that is coming out of the organisation, and from **the police that we deal with who feel a genuine change.**”

The IOPC is **more balanced**, and it's trying to balance the interaction with the families and the police. It is a difficult balance to strike. It comes out in Michael Lockwood's communication. He has made a big deal about how the **independence in the IOPC isn't about them not engaging.** It's a powerful message and it rings true for us.

We've previously found that dealing with the IPCC as an organisation, they were incredibly territorial and they would be incredibly reluctant to engage with us or the police for fear that they would be seen as less independent by the families. Actually, as an organisation it can't do its job unless it's engaging with all of those areas.”

Police accountability stakeholder

3 areas of positive change

1

A shift of focus towards learning

2

Better stakeholder outreach & engagement

3

Leadership that listens

But some non-police stakeholders in particular want to see more outreach with relevant communities

- Non-police stakeholders, who often act as advocates for victims in the complaints process, are concerned that limited outreach excludes more vulnerable communities
- A geographic engagement focus on London is felt to alienate potential victims of misconduct in other parts of the country
- Ultimately, a lack of understanding about how to engage with the complaints process among the public is seen as a major hindrance to the effectiveness of the IOPC

“How diverse are the complaints that are investigated and do older people feature within that process? What we find with dealings with **older people, they are less likely to wish to make a complaint.** They don't want to be seen as making a fuss.”

Non-police stakeholder

“How many complaints have we had from the community over the last 18 months about stop search? To hear people talk, you'd think it was hundreds. We actually had one.

What we've got to ask is 'why aren't people complaining'? Let's make it easier for people to complain. Let's push more and more to communities about what their rights are because unless you're arrested, you don't know what your rights are.”

Non-police stakeholder

“If the IOPC genuinely wants to get into a more - have better relationships locally, **they need to be speaking with victim services that are based outside of London**, to operate locally. When I say locally, I mean at a county level.”

Non-police stakeholder

3 areas of positive change

1

A shift of focus towards learning

2

Better stakeholder outreach & engagement

3

Leadership that listens

Stakeholders also want more engagement with the public to both raise awareness and increase confidence in the IOPC's impartiality and effectiveness

- The dominant perception among stakeholders is that the IOPC is currently little known among the public, with those who have heard of it mostly having limited awareness of its function
- Increasing public awareness of the work the IOPC does is seen as a route to increased confidence in the complaints process
- Stakeholders think that this will, in turn, afford greater legitimacy to the work of the police at a time when public institutions face more scrutiny

“They need to be more public with outcomes because people need to feel that where there has been wrongdoing there has been some action and when there really has been bad practice, people can feel like the IOPC and the complaints process makes a difference.”

Non-police stakeholder

“I don't know that the general public are aware of the IOPC and what they do. It's about making sure that they're messaging to the public that their responsibilities are to investigate police wrongdoing and how to report police wrongdoing. Because that goes with our legitimacy. It helps us behave better when there is an easily available complaint-reporting mechanism.”

Police stakeholder

“The IOPC has got to turn the volume up and sell itself a bit more. The public want to know that they are on top of the issues, that they are initiating the right investigations, that they are taking forward the right investigations and that they are carrying them out speedily and impartially, and that justice is being done. That's what people want to know.”

Police accountability stakeholder

3 areas of positive change

1

A shift of focus towards learning

2

Better stakeholder outreach & engagement

3

Leadership that listens

And for many, this involves making the complaints process simpler

- Currently the complaints process is felt by stakeholders to be too difficult for the public to navigate
- This is seen as the result of a general lack of awareness of the work the IOPC does and of the complaints process itself
- This obstacle to the complaints process is seen by some as diminishing the legitimacy of the IOPC and its effectiveness in preventing misconduct

“I looked at the complaints process the other day and **I think it needs to be clarified.** Some families struggle with interactions with police forces and maybe get side-lined by the police force and confused by the police force. I’m not sure how clear it is that they can go to the IOPC.”

Non-police stakeholder

“**They need to make things simpler for the public.** They need to have more easy access information about how they work and what they do and how people can access them.

It's still a little bit too unwieldy, the whole complaints system, it needs to be simpler as well. People don't understand it and wouldn't know where to begin.”

Non-police stakeholder

“I think it's **very easily misunderstood** in terms of what they can and can't do.”

Police stakeholder

3 areas of positive change

1

A shift of focus towards learning

2

Better stakeholder outreach & engagement

3

Leadership that listens

Michael Lockwood is highly praised for listening to stakeholders, understanding the issues at hand, and moving the IOPC in the right direction

- The Director General is seen as embodying the IOPC's shift in focus, displaying a clear desire for open dialogue with stakeholders
- For many stakeholders, Michael's approach inspires confidence that the progress demonstrated by the IOPC will continue and will be evidenced by improved performance data in the years to come

“Where Michael has made more of a difference is with other bodies, and **going out and talking to the policing system in an open and engaged way**, which has been really useful. The relationship with policing, was difficult, and it's got better.”

Police accountability framework

“There is a willingness, when appropriate, to work together, accepting professionally we might not always be on the same page but that actually we work in the same place and it's sensible to cooperate and work together in a professional manner. **That's something that Michael absolutely embodies.**”

Police stakeholder

“I would congratulate him on doing the workshops he did. I thought that was a great idea and **he did really strike me as a man that wanted to listen and be open.**”

I had a lot of confidence in him when I met him, I thought ‘wow, here is a guy that is really willing to listen’. So I do have quite good aspirations and hopes for it.”

Non-police stakeholder

3 areas of positive change

1

A shift of focus towards learning

2

Better stakeholder outreach & engagement

3

Leadership that listens

Some of those who were aware that the IPCC would become the IOPC were initially sceptical, but they now tentatively view the transition as a success

Expectations

The planned change was initially met with some hope and much scepticism about whether or not it would be accompanied by a genuine change in approach...

“I thought, '**you can put lipstick on a pig**'. We have this quite a lot in policing where they'll change a name of something, but it doesn't really change.”

Police accountability stakeholder

“You have **a little bit of hope**, but it's a little bit of, **we'll sit back and see** as to whether what's being promised really starts to come through.”

Police stakeholder

“I was delighted: I felt that **someone might be listening**.”

Police accountability stakeholder

“There was **a risk that it was window dressing** in terms of the name change.”

Police stakeholder

Reality

...but the transition is now tentatively viewed as a success, with a clear desire for the IOPC's evolution to continue

“We feel listened to and there's more of a **meeting halfway with us**. The decision-making is **more proportionate** and investigations seem to be concluded swifter than they were. I've received loud and **clear messaging around learning** and how do we try and prevent things happening in the future.”

Police stakeholder

“**It's dramatically improved**. There is nowhere near as much blame shunting. There is a view that we are trying to be supportive and helpful to each other. I don't think that was the case before.”

Police accountability stakeholder

“**Their aims and objectives seemed to be positive** and the way they presented how they would collect learning. That was positive. That's all I can say really. **It's an intention to change for the better**.”

Non-police stakeholder

“They're improving their performance. There are signs of a more positive relationship with policing. That's good so it's **so far, so good**.”

Police accountability stakeholder

Strengths, weaknesses, and detailed attitudes



Word associations: the IOPC is viewed as independent and professional (particularly among accountability and non-police), but also slow and bureaucratic (particularly among police)

Police



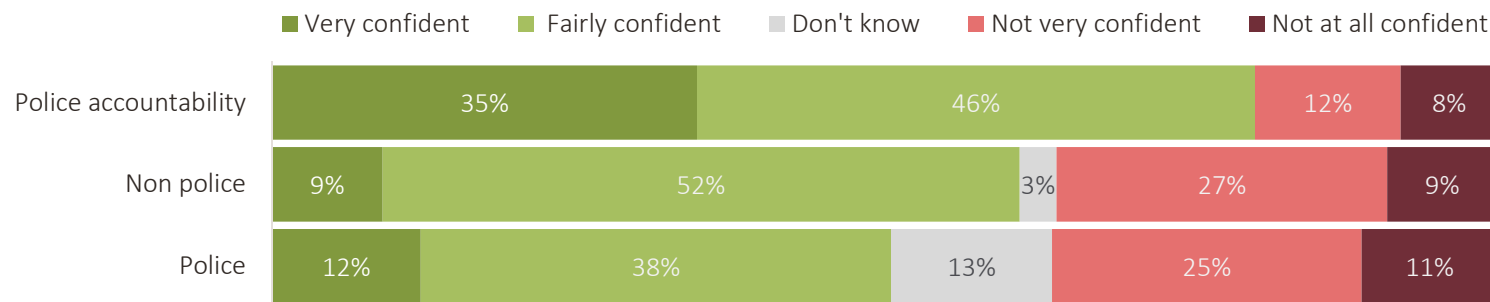
Police accountability



Non-police



The IOPC is mostly seen as independent and impartial, operating with fairness and integrity (1/2)



Q. How confident, if at all, are you that the IOPC deals with its work in an impartial way?

“Because of the way they're set up, the legal framework under which they operate, **they are truly independent.**”

Police stakeholder

“**There's been a sea change** from what I saw previously at the IPCC. I'm encouraged by the balance and fairness that is now there, where the predecessor organisation was often not fair to policing.”

Police stakeholder

“**That's one of the key things that has changed as a consequence of their shift** from the IPCC to the IOPC. The governance structure of the IPCC naturally lends itself to a them and us attitude between the organisation and the police. Having changed that structure, and new personnel in place, we certainly see a **significant difference.**”

Police accountability stakeholder

The IOPC is mostly seen as independent and impartial, operating with fairness and integrity (2/2)

To many stakeholders, the fact that they have never had cause to question the IOPC's independence and impartiality, is an indication that it embodies both of those qualities...

“I've never really questioned [it]. I've questioned many things, but **I've not questioned impartiality** before.”

Police stakeholder

“My experience of them is that **it's the organisation's DNA** to try to come to the right answer in an independent way. They've never told us things they shouldn't have told us, so actually it's an overall impression built on experience.”

Police accountability stakeholder

...however some feel that the shift to becoming the IOPC has brought a new balanced approach to investigations and communications with it that did not exist under the IPCC

“I get the impression it's improving. Traditionally, it's been seen as not being strong enough with any of its outcomes, but I think that's improving. They're **improving because of the way that they've been talking about it.**”

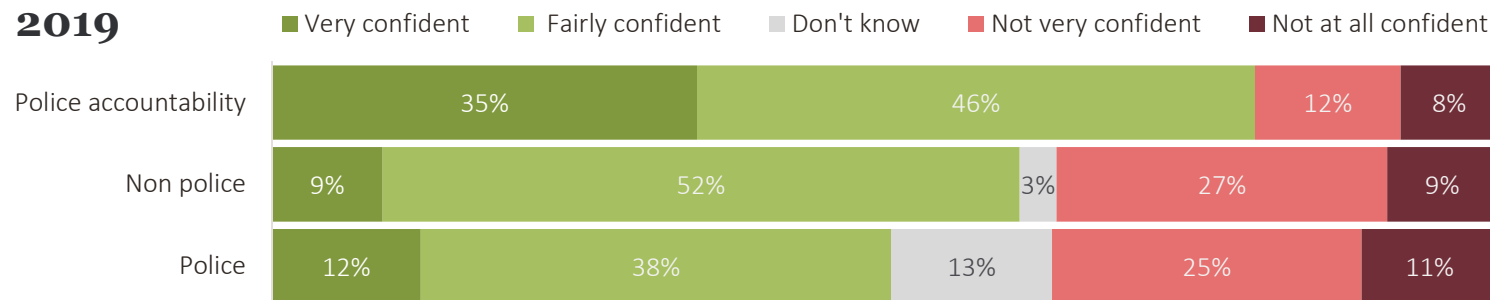
Non-police stakeholder

“It's improving under the IOPC. They are **working hard to be more open and more transparent**, and to use less publicly aggravating language, but that hasn't always been the case. Sometimes **the IPCC were almost deliberately provocative.**”

Police stakeholder

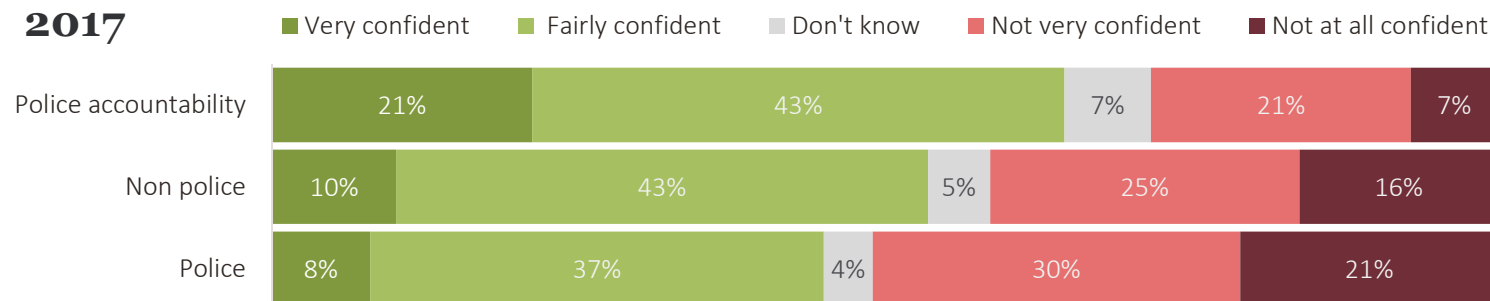
Stakeholders are slightly more likely to think the IOPC is impartial than when last measured in 2017

2019



Q. How confident, if at all, are you that the IOPC deals with its work in an impartial way?

2017



Q. How confident, if at all, are you that the IPCC deals with its work in an impartial way?

But some of those who rate the IOPC as less impartial have concerns about the way investigations are conducted. This is confined to police and police accountability stakeholders

1 Proportionality

Stakeholders say that some investigators begin pursuing gross misconduct charges when they are not appropriate, at the cost of re-enforcing the mistrust that many police stakeholders had when the organisation was known as the IPCC.

“Some officers were served with gross misconduct and also referred to the Crown Prosecution Service, but the final result was only minor management action. That is a vast difference and I was a little **concerned about the imbalance of going in at such a high level and ending up with a very low outcome.**”

Police accountability stakeholder

2 Consistency

Inconsistency in the processes and outcomes of investigations diminishes trust in the IOPC. Stakeholders say there is an element of luck in how cases are handled; they think that different investigators around the country approach cases differently.

“The investigation team is often lacking consistency with decisions across the country. You can't have **the same kind of thing and different decisions, and end results**, with some going to hearing. **It needs to be more consistent.**”

Police accountability stakeholder

3 Training and experience

It is felt that some IOPC investigators lack the necessary training to deal with serious investigations, highlighting the difference in experience between IOPC investigators and police investigators. Evidence-gathering and interview skills are criticised in particular. This is seen by many as a historic issue carried over from the IPCC.

“Some of the people that they and the IPCC employed, **their level of training is not as good as it could be, and they're coming up against highly trained investigators** that they're investigating and on some serious incidents. There's been some **eyebrows raised about their ability to investigate effectively.**”

Police stakeholder

Some recognise signs of improvement in the way investigations are conducted, but they want the change of approach apparent among senior staff to be more evident throughout the organisation

There is a definite sense that the IOPC has raised the standard of its investigations in the last two years, although there remains a long way to go

“They're definitely **improving** but they've got quite **a way to go.**”

Police stakeholder

“Eighteen months ago that **would have been a two out of five but it's a three now.**”

Police stakeholder

“It's **on an upwards trend** and they are very focused on all of this stuff.”

Police accountability stakeholder

Central to the continuation of this upward trajectory is ensuring that the change of approach reflected in the language of the leadership translates into the practice of IOPC staff on the front line

“They need to **mainstream it and make sure it's consistent**, so maintain their resourcing levels, the commitment to training people to be able to discharge their role and maintain the dialogue and discussion.”

Police stakeholder

“**The challenge is embedding that new culture** and ensuring that the statutory guidance that's being worked upon reflects it. If the statutory guidance doesn't change to reflect the ethos then there will be a failure. **If the statutory guidance doesn't properly reflect the vision and the culture then it'll hinder us all from moving forward.**”

Police stakeholder

Timeliness remains a concern... (1/2)

- Frustration remains that investigations take too long, placing undue strain on those officers accused of misconduct
- Slow investigations are adversely affecting relations between the IOPC and police forces involved, continuing some of the feelings of frustration and mistrust that were prevalent in the IPCC-era
- Clear evidence of progress on this issue would go some way to easing concerns, which are most common among police and police accountability stakeholders

“The culture's **trying to improve**, which can't be faulted **but it's still pretty slow**. [The police] can generally throw up a murder and find out who's done it within a very short space of time. **[The IOPC] are not investigating things as complicated as murder, yet take years in some cases.**”

Police accountability stakeholder

“There is a real desire to improve on timeliness. What I'd like to see from them is **some real hard performance data** to support that, to say two years ago this is how long investigations were taking, now this is how long they're taking, and a direction of travel. It can have **a massive impact on people's personal lives** and the whole well-being agenda.”

Police stakeholder

“I would like to see some documented, statistical evidence that they've improved the **timeliness** of investigations, because that's **had the biggest impact.**”

Police stakeholder

...But some acknowledge progress and recognise that some problems stem from ‘historic’ cases (2/2)

- While frustration exists, the IOPC is given some credit for making small steps towards reducing the length of investigations
- However, tackling longstanding cases from the IPCC-era is a central part of furthering the advances of the past two years, and continuing to build trust among the police
- The IOPC should communicate evidence that the length of investigations has decreased, and where longer cases are the result of ‘historic’ issues this should be made clear, as stakeholders are sympathetic to the fact that the IOPC is undergoing a transition

“The **trust and confidence** that policing has in the IOPC **will be improved when they've dealt with the legacy cases** that they are currently holding them back.”

Police stakeholder

“That's been getting better, but it's still not there yet. **They had a historic backlog of very old cases that they inherited**, and which they've been working through.”

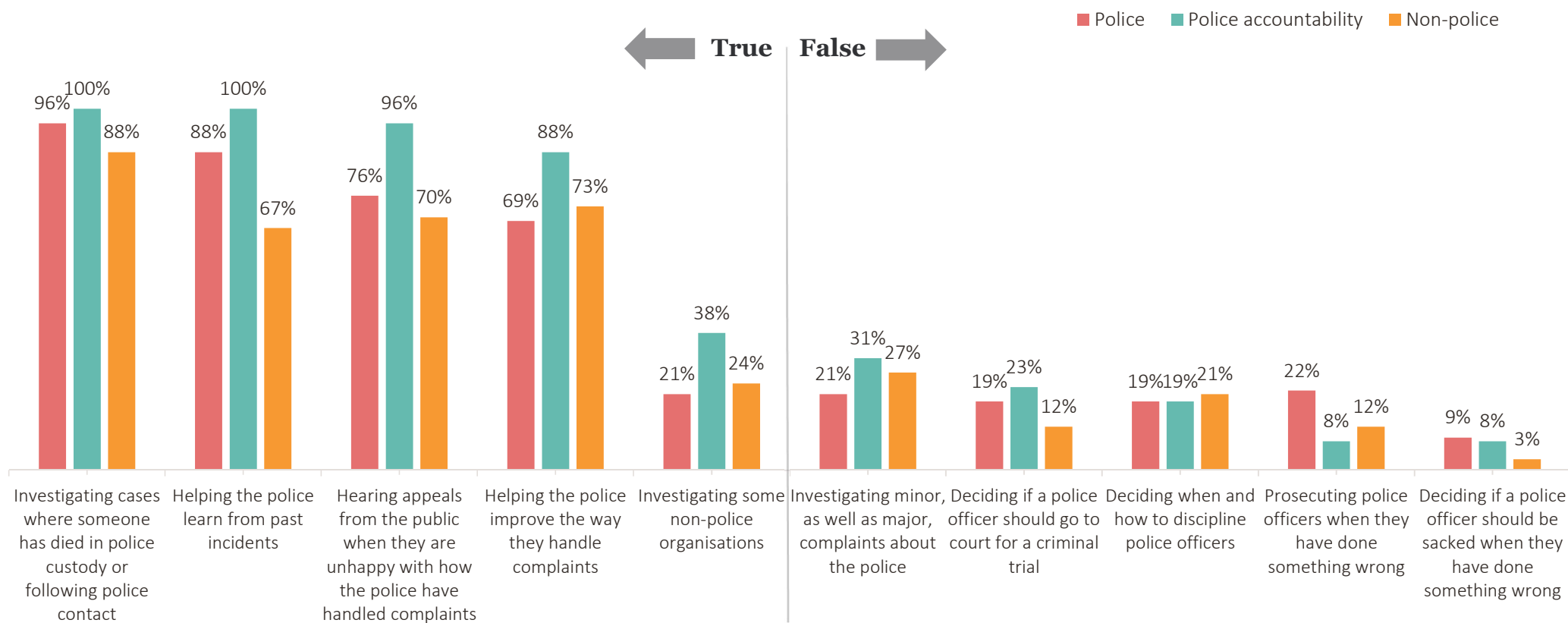
Police accountability stakeholder

“It's **improving**, but they're still not quick enough. There are **still some legacy cases outstanding from the IPCC** that have been ongoing for many years.”

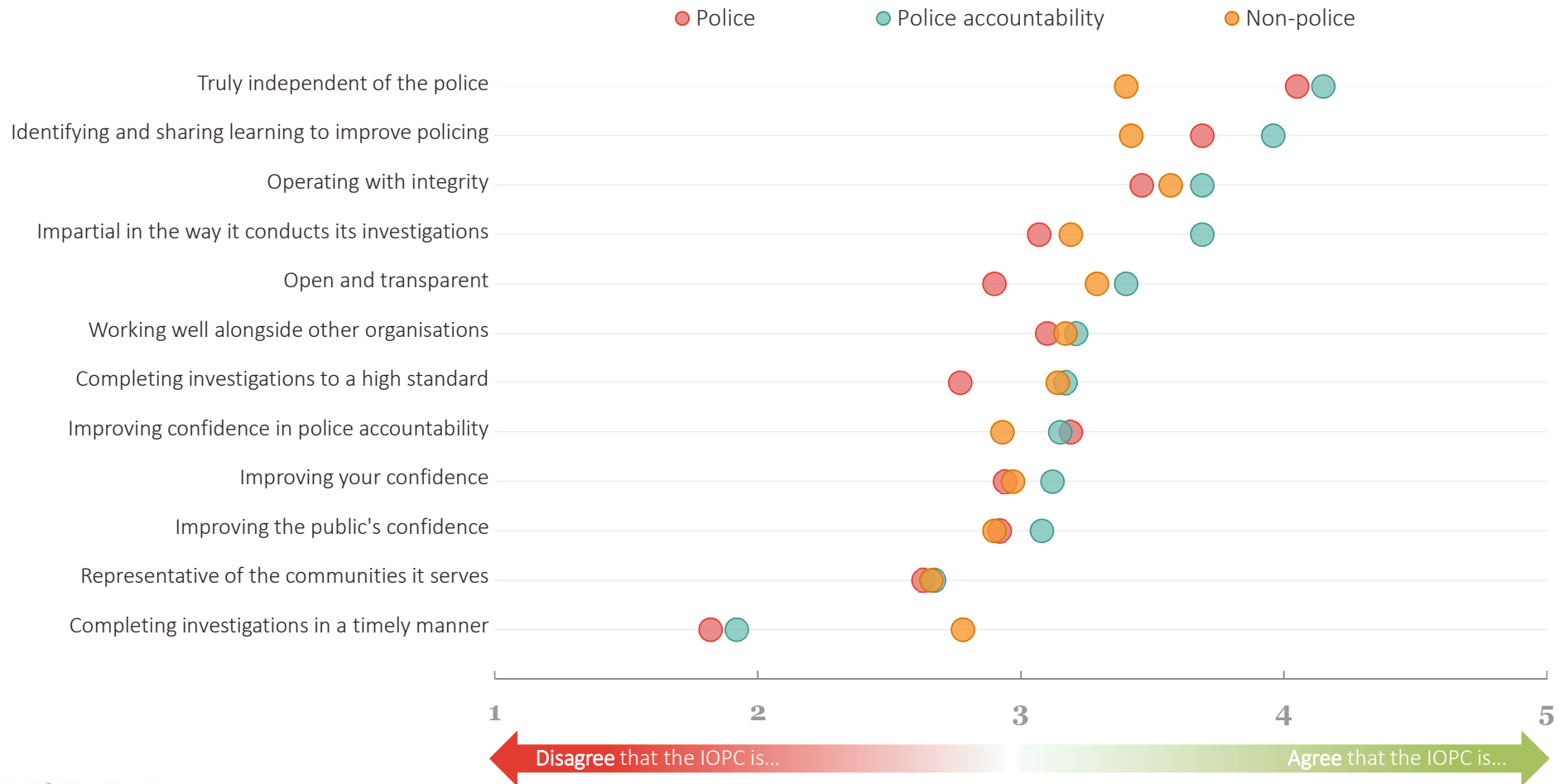
Police accountability stakeholder

Most stakeholders understand the IOPC's main responsibilities, but there remains confusion among a minority about what it is and isn't responsible for

Q. Which, if any, of the following do you think the IOPC is responsible for?

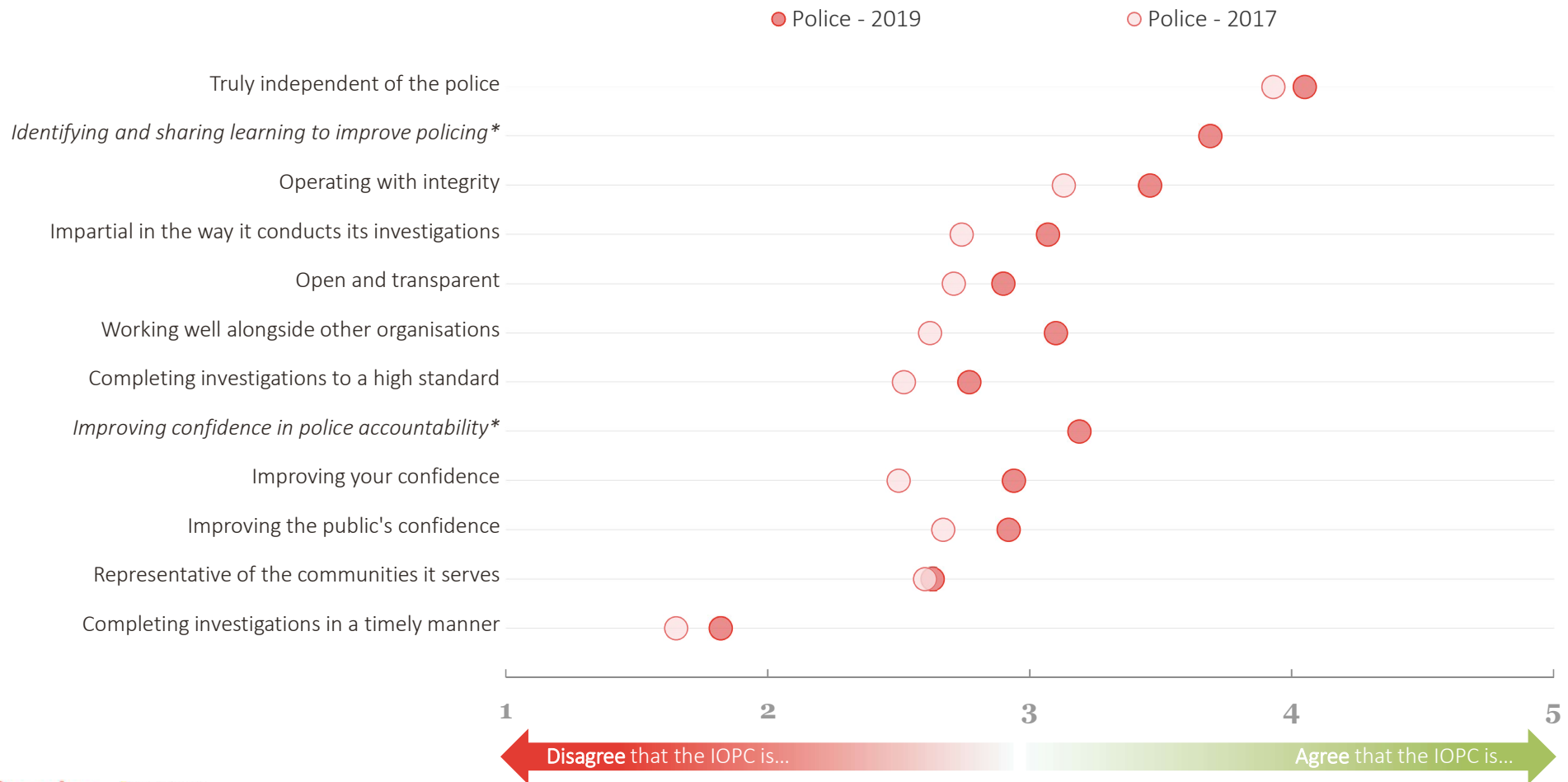


Overview of strengths and weaknesses



Base: Police (97), Police Accountability (26), Non policing (33)

Changes over time: police stakeholders rate the IOPC more highly on every measure vs 2017



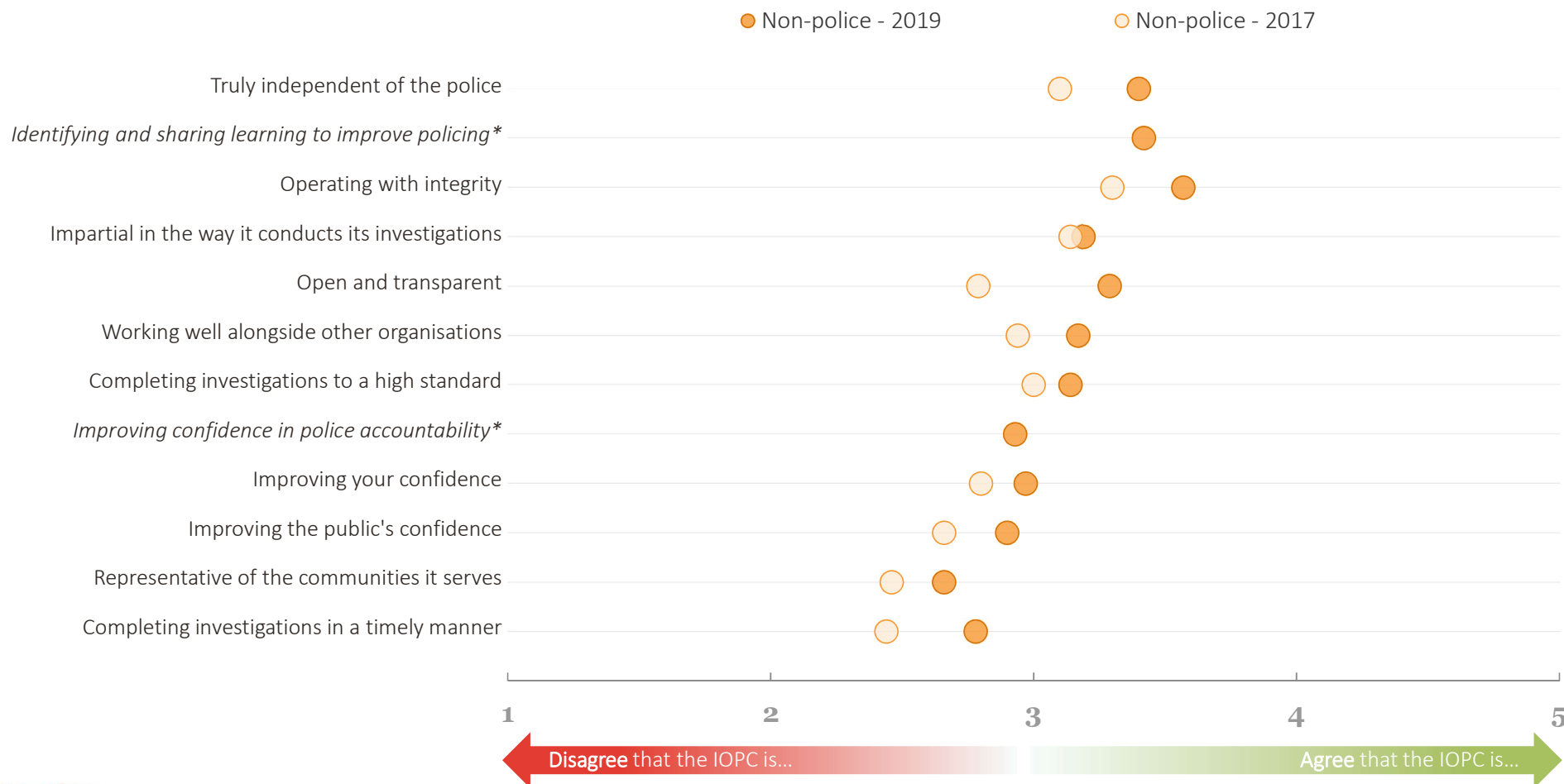
Base: 2019: Police (97); 2017: Police (223) *Only asked in 2019

Changes over time: police accountability stakeholders already rated the IOPC more highly on most measures, but it is viewed as more independent and impartial vs 2017



Base: 2019: Police Accountability (26); 2017: Police Accountability (28) *Only asked in 2019

Changes over time: non-police stakeholders also rate the IOPC more highly on every measure vs 2017



Base: 2019: Non policing (33); 2017: Non-policing (194) *Only asked in 2019

Overview of performance on key areas (1/2):

The IOPC has positive net effectiveness scores for all four key measures among each group

1 Improving the way the police deals with complaints



2 Ensuring the police are accountable for their actions



3 Ensuring the police service learns from complaints



4 Raising standards to ensure mistakes are not repeated



Overview of performance on key areas (2/2): How to improve performance further

1 Improving the way the police deals with complaints

- Stakeholders have welcomed improvements in the balance with which the IOPC handles complaints and want progress to continue
- Timeliness and consistency with which complaints are investigated remain a concern and should be prioritised

“There’s probably more to come on that but they’re supportive and helpful.”

Police stakeholder

2 Ensuring the police are accountable for their actions

- The more open approach of the IOPC has led to stakeholders to feel there has been some improvement in this area
- However, low public awareness of the IOPC and the complaints process and inconsistency of investigations are significant obstacles to ensuring all police officers are accountable for their actions

“It boils down to that consistency. They ensure the police are accountable, but it's different divisions to different levels.”

Police accountability stakeholder

3 Ensuring the police service learns from complaints

- The shift in focus to learning has been felt, and positively received by many stakeholders from all groups
- Tangible evidence of the change in emphasis in practice is needed
- Stakeholders want to know that the rhetoric of the leadership is reflected in the practice of the IOPC at all levels

“I’ve heard that it is more about learning from the outcomes but for your average officer on the ground, it’s still a very punitive process. We need evidence that forces are learning from incidents.”

Police accountability stakeholder

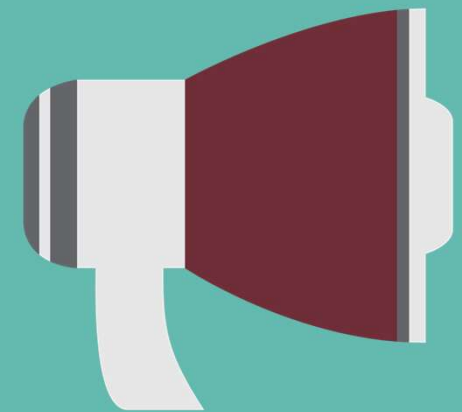
4 Raising standards to ensure mistakes are not repeated

- The change in emphasis has offered encouraging signs to stakeholders
- There is a sense that impact in this area is only likely to be felt in the long term
- Ensuring that the shift in learning translates beyond rhetoric into practice, and providing clear evidence of this change is the key to future progress in this area

“I sense it is having a bit more traction. I can't point to any specific examples whereby that learning has enabled us to prevent things, or particularly improve that service for the public, but the mere fact they're doing it, that should be the case.”

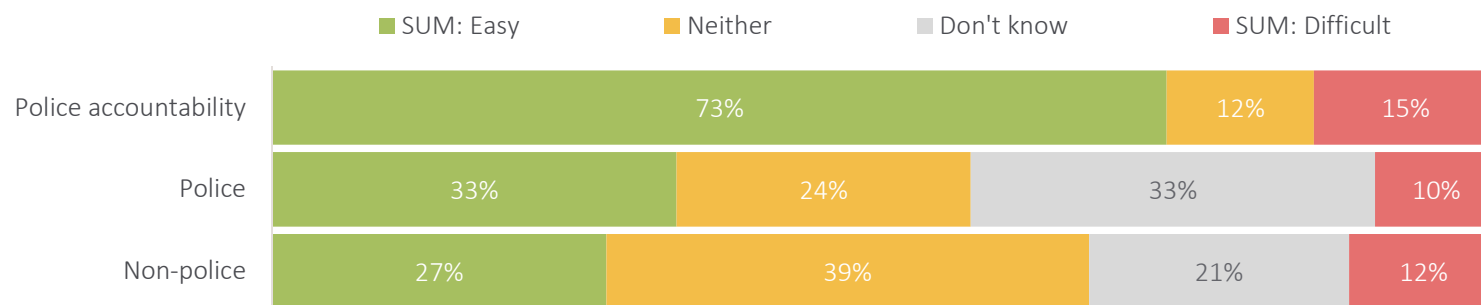
Police stakeholder

Communications



Populus

All stakeholder groups (particularly police accountability) are more likely to find the IOPC easy rather than difficult to engage with



Q. How easy or difficult do you find engaging with the Independent Office for Police Conduct?

“We have a **good relationship with the IOPC** here both at director level, and when we have investigations, they have a good relationship with our Professional Standards Department.”

Police stakeholder

“I’ve always found them **very approachable.**”

Non-police stakeholder

“I’ve had **good contact** with some in the IOPC. I’ve delivered training to them and I’m happy to do more.”

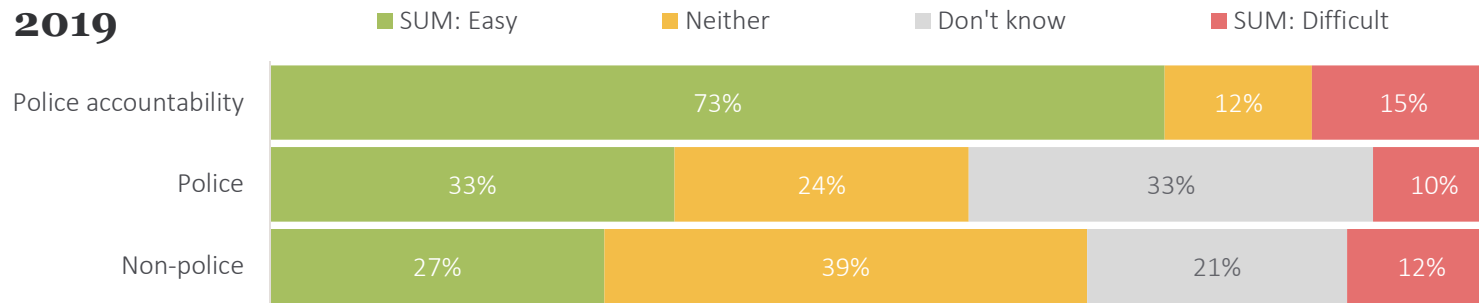
Non-police stakeholder

“I have a **really good working relationship** with everybody I come into contact with, who are very knowledgeable about the police complaints process and very clearly want the same things as the police do in relation to improving learning, improving and reducing complaints.”

Police accountability stakeholder

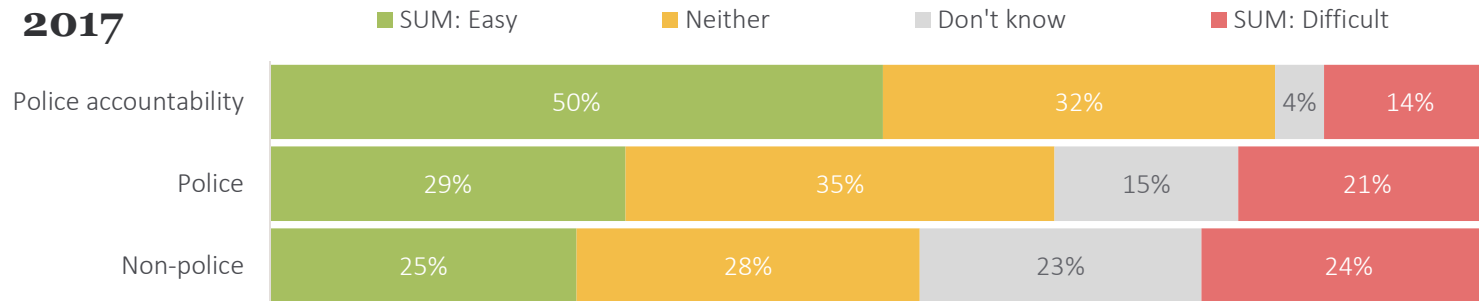
All stakeholder groups find it easier to deal with the IOPC than when last measured in 2017

2019



Q. How easy or difficult do you find engaging with the Independent Office for Police Conduct?

2017



Q. How easy or difficult do you find engaging with the Independent Police Complaints Commission?

The IOPC's engagement strengths

1 Personable and approachable individuals

“Easy. They're just **very straightforward with us**, and we're straightforward with them. It's a good relationship between the organisations. **We know all the people well, meet regularly, have open conversations.** There are things where we don't ask them, for example, about individual cases, and they wouldn't tell us anyway, but we all understand that so it's not a problem.”

Police accountability stakeholder

2 Open and accessible as an organisation

“**They're available.** If I need to speak to Michael or somebody they're available. They run stakeholder groups that are attended and fed back to. They're slightly **more open and available now than they were a couple of years ago.**”

Police stakeholder

“They've been having the stakeholder engagement meetings, and part of **their team have been going around meeting different organisations and charities**, including grassroots charities (which I think they should definitely do a lot more of).”

Non-police stakeholder

Indeed, stakeholders have noticed and appreciated an improvement in the IOPC's willingness to engage

“I really like the local engagement with our Welsh lead. **That's really helped.** She comes to meet with our head of investigations, which is really helpful actually. That we have now got a director for Wales is really helpful.”

Police stakeholder

“Michael Lockwood has not long been in the role, and I made it a bit of my mission to build a relationship with him and really try to understand what the issues were. **What I was pleased with straight away was that Michael acknowledged the issues.**”

Police accountability stakeholder

“I'm certainly **getting positive feedback from the investigators and from the head of professional standards,** and I'm certainly getting a very warm feeling from our lead officer, who is very engaging and is keen to really develop those working relationships. [...] We have a **much better working relationship** with an awful lot more early dialogue. It felt quite combative previously.”

Police stakeholder

“From what I've been involved with in the last year, **they're really trying to engage with all the stakeholders,** and I think they just need to keep that going. Their youth panel work is brilliant.”

Non-police stakeholder

The IOPC's engagement weaknesses

1 Inconsistency at lower levels

- Some suggest that they would like more collaborative engagement with IOPC investigators, whose engagement skills vary
- Others focus on the need for the IOPC to engage more with lower-ranking officers within the police force

“There are occasional investigators who... some of their attitudes mean it's like speaking to a robot sometimes; you can't get anywhere. I'm not suggesting it should be jovial – it's not like me ringing up my best mate – but it can sometimes be very wooden and stilted.”

Police accountability stakeholder

“They need to **change the way officers view the IOPC** particularly. A lot of that is legacy because they would be quite fearful of the IPCC, and that's probably where I think they've got more work to do. How they reach out to staff and officers generally.”

Police stakeholder

2 Engagement with the public

- Stakeholders think the IOPC needs to do more to demonstrate that it is educating the public on the work it does
- Part of this, in their view, means simplifying the complaints system

“I think they need to **make things simpler for the public**, and they need to have more easy access information about how they work and what they do and how people can access them.”

Non-police stakeholder

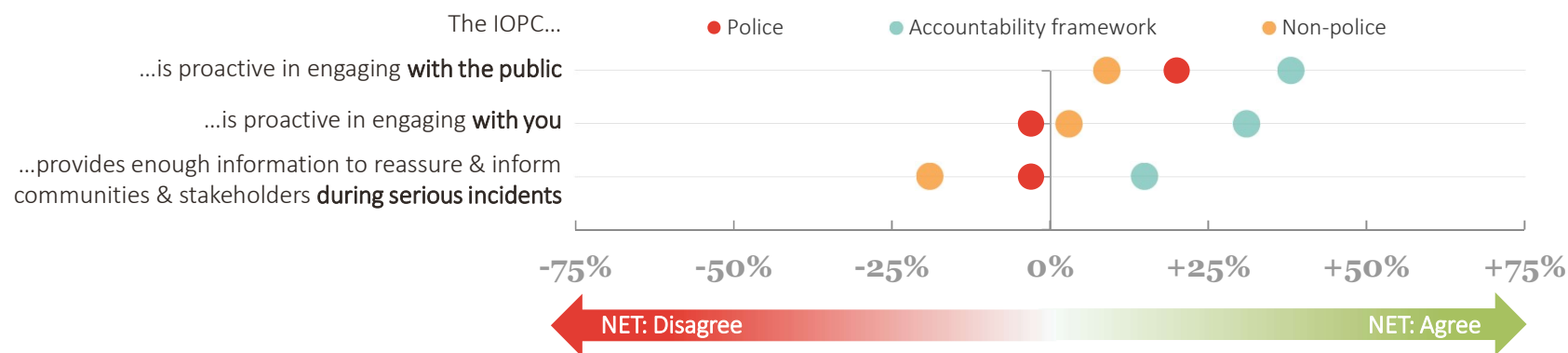
“Not with me personally, but with a lay person: [they need to improve] their brand with the public and **the public's knowledge of the IOPC**. What they are, what they do, and how they are accessed by the public.”

Police stakeholder

“I'm quite happy because I'm plugged in, but **with the wider community, no.**”

Non-police stakeholder

Less engaged police and non-police stakeholders think it could be more proactive, particularly around serious incidents



Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Showing NET scores (% who agree minus the % who disagree)

- While a couple of those stakeholders interviewed qualitatively complained that the IOPC could be more proactive, most felt that the IOPC was proactive when dealing with them personally
- They acknowledged, however, that they had access to senior individuals within the organisation

“They are a bit more on the reactive side in truth. I think there's probably a degree of inevitability about that because of the nature of their work so I'm not highly critical of that. I do think they and us could be more proactive in the prevention side of the field. They've probably just not got a lot of resources in that area at the moment.”

Police stakeholder

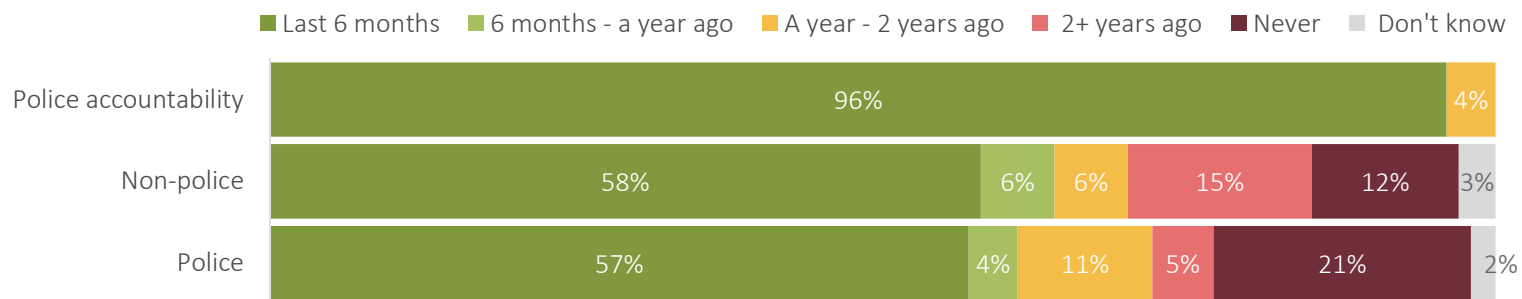
“They are proactive: they're the ones that sought the voice of different organisations.”

Non-police stakeholder

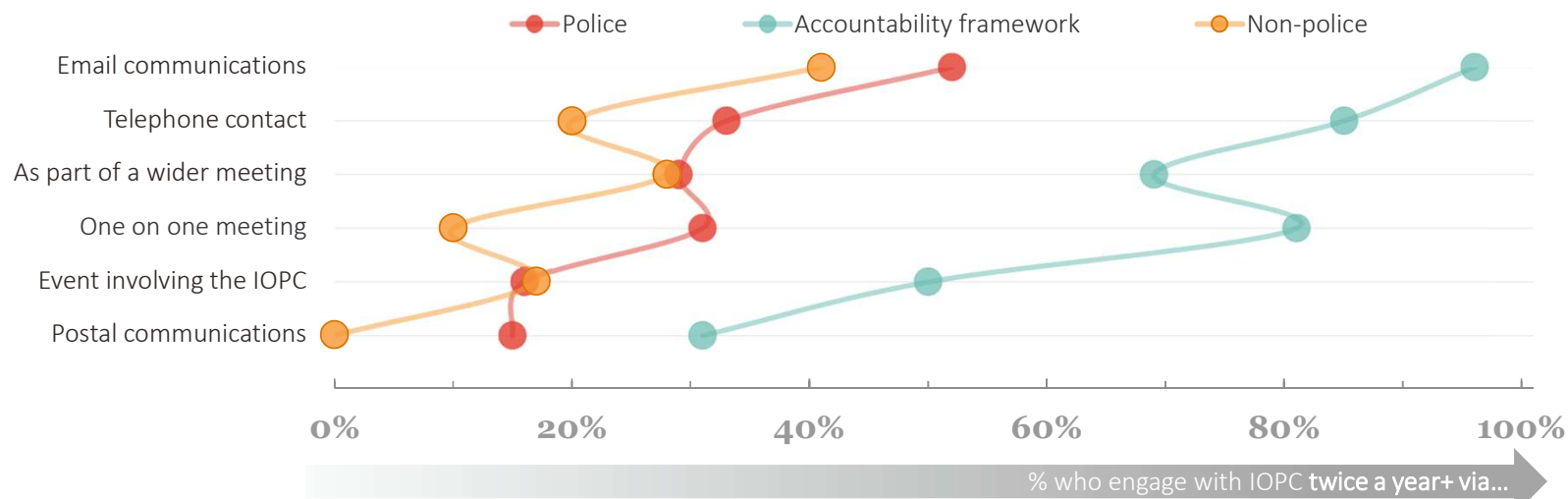
“They're a fairly proactive bunch. They just pick up a phone when they need to, but there is a proper framework anyway.”

Police accountability stakeholder

Most stakeholders – particularly accountability framework – have had direct contact with the IOPC in the past six months



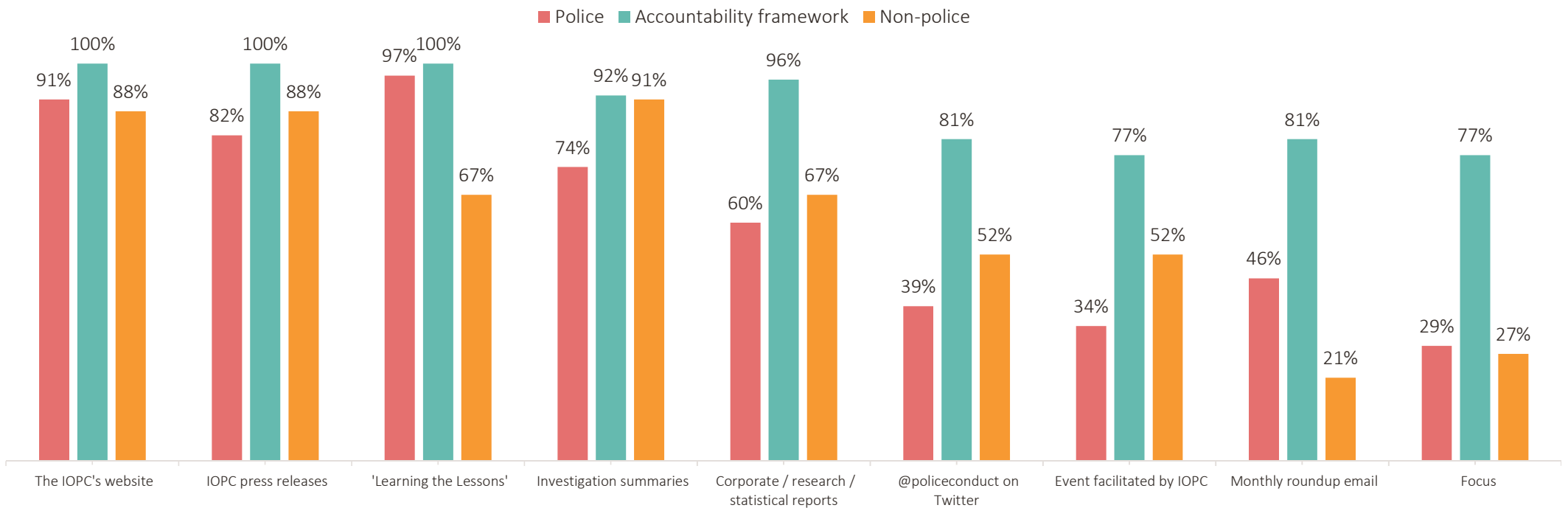
Q. When was *the last time* you had contact with the IOPC?



Q. On average, *how frequently*, if at all, do you engage with the IOPC through the following methods?

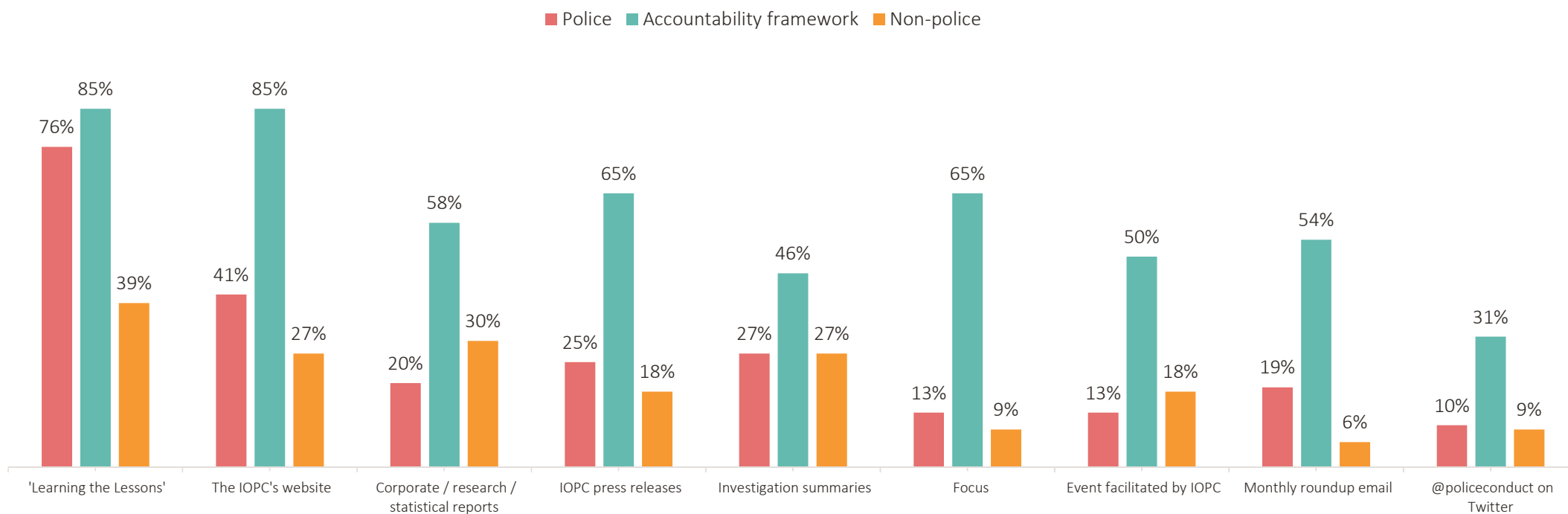
[Showing *the % who engage twice a year+ via each method*]

Awareness of IOPC communications: Most are widely known, but Focus, IOPC events, and the monthly email are less known

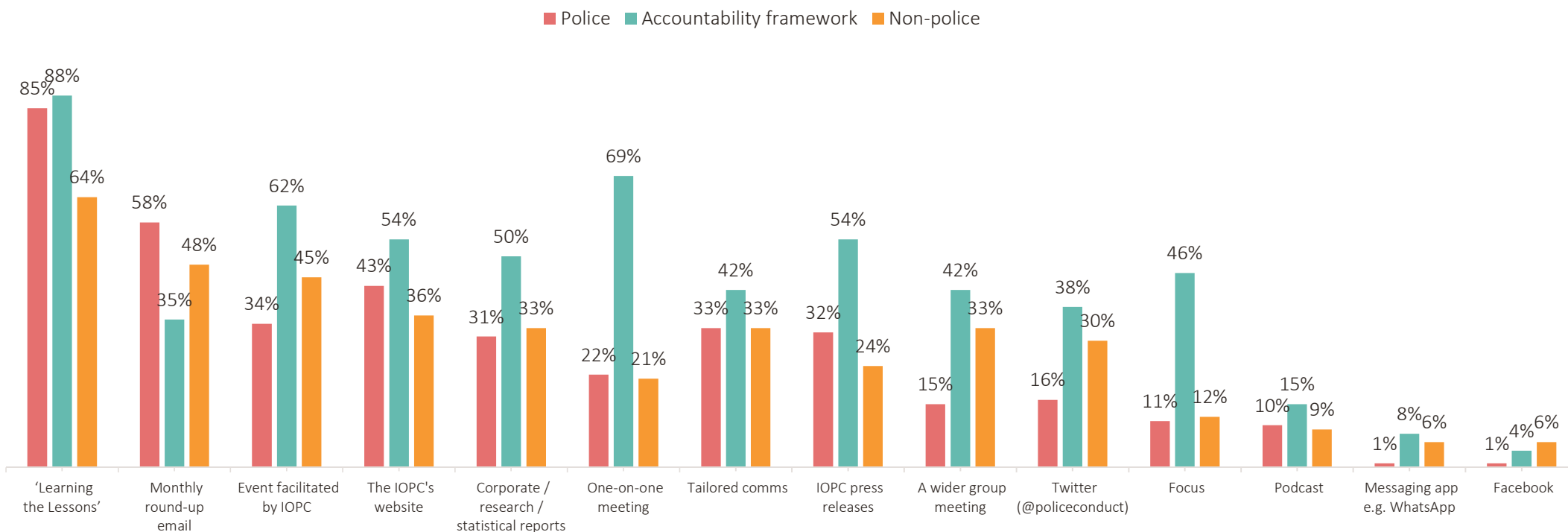


Use of IOPC communications:

The 'Learning the Lessons' magazine and the IOPC's website are the most widely used



Desired IOPC communications: Stakeholders of all types are interested in receiving the 'Learning the Lessons' magazine



The Learning the Lessons magazine is seen as very valuable, but stakeholders suggest the IOPC should also do more to proactively disseminate learning

The magazine is very valuable in sharing lessons

LEARNING THE LESSONS

But it should only constitute one part of the approach

“They do circulate learnings via bulletins and their magazine: ‘these are the recent cases we've had, there was some organisational learning in this’. Which we then disseminate across the force. **I think that's quite helpful.**”

Police stakeholder

“They do the Learning the Lessons written briefings, which **I think are good**. I think they're intending to do things more thematically, identifying the key themes that actually need more assertive attention, and I think receiving that sort of granular detail on four or five top risky topics would be really helpful.”

Police stakeholder

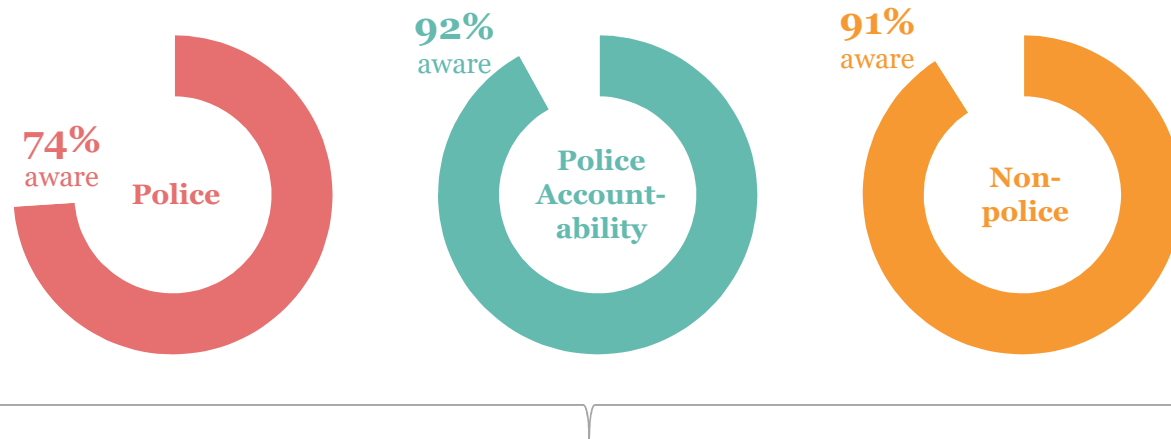
“The IOPC do produce their Learning the Lessons bulletins, which are really helpful, but they are very based on just those investigations that the IOPC have had interaction with. There is an awful lot of learning that is missing. **All 43 police forces have their own learning, and it's trying to find a way of getting that information out** of every force system, so that you can improve the whole of the police service.”

Police accountability stakeholder

“I think it needs to be much **more timely and bespoke.**”

Police stakeholder

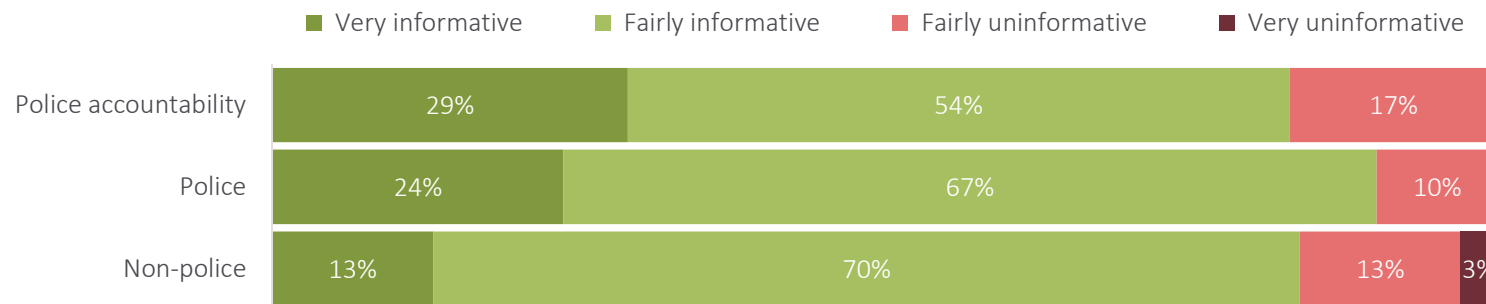
Those aware of the investigation summaries tend to find them informative



Q. Which of the following communication channels provided by the IOPC are you aware of?

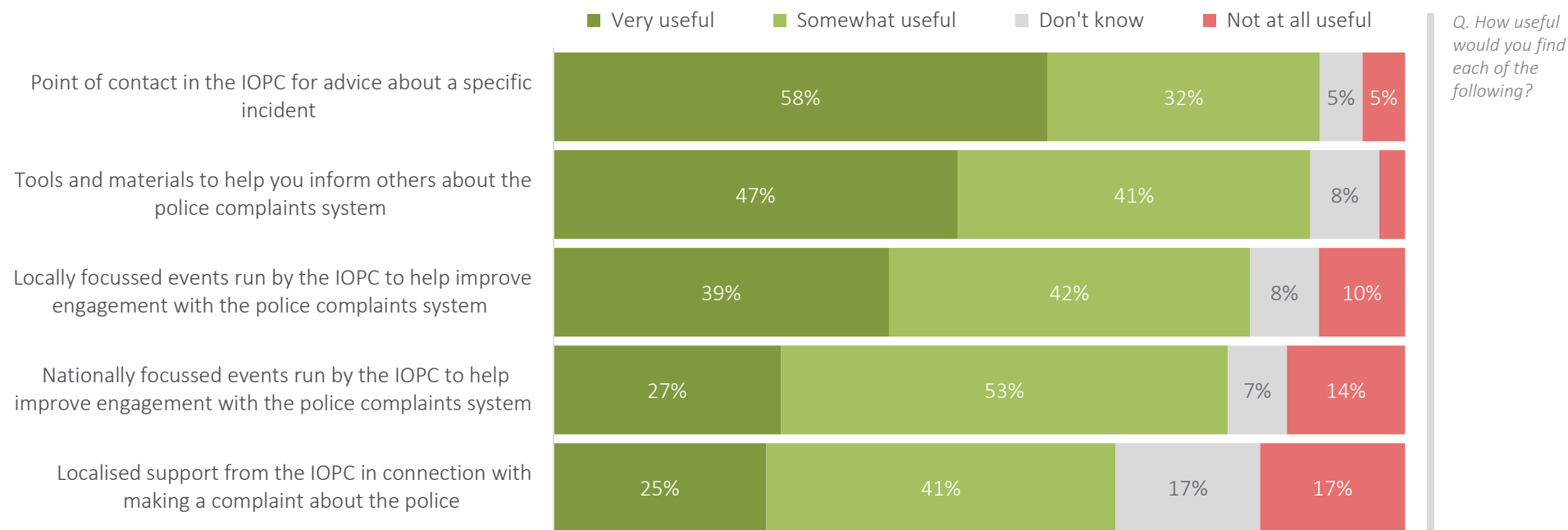
[Investigation summaries]

Q. To what extent do you find the investigation summaries informative or uninformative?



Half of non-police stakeholders say they would find an IOPC point of contact for advice about specific incidents ‘very useful’

[Non-police and police accountability stakeholders only]



In summary: “What one thing could the IOPC do to improve your opinion of it?”

1 Improved timeliness and quality of investigations

“We are very focused on timeliness at the moment. I think what I'd like to see is improvements in timeliness over the next 12 months. There needs to be discussion between the Home Office, police and IOPC about timeliness because, at the moment, **it's the Holy Grail.**”

Police accountability stakeholder

“I would like to see the timeliness of investigations and the quality of investigations continue to improve. I would like to see probably **fewer cases being classified as 'gross misconduct'.**”

Police stakeholder

2 Evidence of learning and improvement

“I would hope **that the learning is embedded** and the consistency with investigations is embedded, along with consistency and timeliness.”

Police accountability stakeholder

“I'd like to see some evidence of how they are being more independent and **how they are really creating change** through prevention, through their learning.”

Non-police stakeholder

“Even stronger focus on **that learning piece.**”

Police stakeholder

3 Increased public confidence & engagement

“Maintain **the confidence of the public** and possibly say a bit more about what they will do to improve that.”

Police accountability stakeholder

“For me, **it's about what public confidence is.** Do they feel that the organisation is listening, that they're acting in a timely manner, and able to provide an adequate, fair and balanced response?”

Non-police stakeholder

“**Better-known** branding of the IOPC for the public, who they're there to service.”

Police stakeholder

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