

OVERSIGHT

newsletter

Welcome to our monthly newsletter which provides updates about the work of the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC). The newsletter is for complaint handlers in forces and local policing bodies (LPBs).

Removal of Focus from IOPC website

Soon we will remove [Focus](#) issues 1 to 8 and issues 10 and 11 from our website. These issues relate to complaints and conduct matters that came to the attention of the appropriate authority under the old legislation. We advise you to save a copy of these issues should you need to refer to them for old legislation cases.

Contact oversight@policeconduct.gov.uk if you have any questions.

Recent information

Complaint handler workshops 2023

Thank you to those who attended the recent complaint handler workshops. Discussions about referral to the Reflective Practice Review Process, reflective practice techniques, and our 'right first time' work were really interesting, and your input and feedback is valued. We hope you found the workshops useful.

Thank you to everyone who completed the feedback survey. We are collating feedback and questions raised from our final workshop in March. We are considering how best to share the feedback and questions raised at all workshops with you and keep you updated about the next steps.

PSD new starter sessions

Please continue to send the names and email addresses of any PSD new starters who would like to attend a session to oversight@policeconduct.gov.uk

The remaining sessions are:

- Wednesday 20 September 2023
- Tuesday 16 January 2024

Please include first choice and second choice date preferences and we will do our best to accommodate them.

Backlog of review and investigation appeals - update

Further to the update on 7 March 2023, the IOPC publishes the timeframes for allocation of IOPC reviews on our website. These are available for PSDs and other relevant policing stakeholders (such as the Police Federation). They give some certainty about timeframes and make sure that

the most appropriate support for officers, where needed, is made available at the earliest opportunity.

We are currently working on a series of measures that are aimed at improving timeliness and are expecting to see results in the area over the course of this financial year. Our first measure was to recruit additional Casework Managers, and in April and May we will be rolling out two significant changes to the way we work, which pilots have already shown to be more efficient. Firstly, having Casework Managers working on groups of similar subject matters. And secondly, identifying reviews which can be fast-tracked and dealt with more proportionately, while still satisfying the needs of the service users. We are also looking at further initiatives over the next few months as we continue to make every effort to reduce the backlog.

We do acknowledge the impact on officer/staff welfare where the complaint handling is lengthy, and the particular impact of our reviews' backlog on this. We urge you to contact us at the earliest opportunity if you feel the review should be expedited because of concerns around welfare. We will consider whether we can allocate the review earlier. Contact the [administration department](#) if a more detailed update is needed on a specific case, or if there is a need to prioritise cases.

Contact your Oversight Liaison if you have any questions.

? Common questions from forces and LPBs

Q: Should an officer be informed of an application for review and whose responsibility is it to communicate with them?

A: Yes. An officer should be informed about any application for review, as well as all key stages of the complaint, subject to the harm test. This can be done by the appropriate authority. These requirements are further explained at Chapter 18 of the IOPC's [Statutory Guidance](#).

Q: Can you log a partially upheld review as "not upheld" if it is a minor point?

A: No. You can partially uphold a review but that would be recorded as an upheld review. There is only one right to review the handling of a complaint, and therefore only one decision. You do not have to uphold a review to address points of learning. In fact, learning and feedback can be given where the service level provided was acceptable.

[IOPC Focus19](#) provides information about identifying and feeding back as part of the review process, but without necessarily upholding reviews.

[The Guidance on capturing data about police complaints](#) provides information about the right to review arising from complaints, not allegations. It talks about how different allegations might be finalised at different times, but that only one right of review is ever given.

Q: As part of the IOPC's violence against women and girls thematic work, will the IOPC look at who is responsible for victim welfare in forces? It can be confusing who should be doing this, particularly where there is a criminal case; should it be PSDs, or victim and witness hubs, for example?

A: The [Report on the Centre for Women's Justice super-complaint](#) includes recommendations that forces and others should be considering in relation to their support for victims of police perpetrated domestic abuse (PPDA). As part of the dip sampling work, we will look at the victim experience throughout. This will focus on accessibility of the system, initial communication to understand the

nature of the complaint and the needs of the complainant/victim, and communication throughout handling and safeguarding. We are keen to look to forces for shareable practice.

Clarification of a question and answer from the September 2022 newsletter:

Q: I am handling a review and I am aware that the complaint handler has not recorded all of the allegations that are detailed within the complaint. Should I uphold the review on this basis?

A: No. We cannot comment on or consider complaints that have not been recorded and dealt with as part of the complaint handling. Although we would expect some initial contact with the complainant to clarify the allegations, failure to record any parts of the complaint should be highlighted to the complaint handler. They can learn from this and decide how the missed complaints will be handled. You are only able to consider the recorded complaint and the outcome provided in response.

Following feedback on the above question and answer, we recognise that there is some nuance that needs drawing out. We would like to clarify the correct approach. The reviewer should consider whether attempts were made by the complaint handler to understand the nature of the complaint and the full extent of the allegations made. There should be evidence that efforts were made to find out from the complainant the kind of action or outcome that might remedy their dissatisfaction. Or that there was satisfactory contact and the force believed that they had properly understood the complaint. If the reviewer believes the initial engagement with the complainant is not satisfactory enough to identify all the complaints made, then an outcome may not be reasonable and proportionate. The reviewer can uphold the review even if the specific complaints are not recorded.

Corporate news

IOPC response to Baroness Casey's review into the Metropolitan Police

Interim Director General Tom Whiting said:

"This must be a watershed moment for the leadership of the Metropolitan Police.

The Met must learn and reflect on Baroness Casey's stark findings - and seize this opportunity to fundamentally change its culture. We rightly cherish the principle of policing by consent but this relies on the trust and confidence of the public. If we want this to continue then the Met must demonstrate that it is committed to making the changes that are so clearly needed by implementing Baroness Casey's recommendations.

The Met cannot do this alone. There is a need for fundamental reform to policing as a whole to improve standards, root out wrongdoers, deal with poor performance, and support police officers to be the best they can be.

At the IOPC, as the police complaints watchdog we will continue to hold policing to account, and use learning from our work to highlight where improvements are needed. We will also work with

police and others to identify how the system can be reformed and what needs to be done to make it happen."

[Baroness Louise Casey's review examined behaviour and culture at the Metropolitan Police](#) (link is external).

Latest news

Keep up to date on our investigations and other work to increase public confidence in the police complaints system. You can find our [latest IOPC news](#) on our website.

[IOPC investigation begins into Liverpool death in custody](#)

[West Mercia Police officer given final written warning for excessive force](#)

[West Yorkshire police detention officer charged over social media posts](#)

[Investigation report into offensive messages by officers linked to Wayne Couzens](#)

[Inquest concludes into death of man after police call out](#)

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If you have any questions, please get in touch with your Oversight Liaison or a member of the Oversight team.

