



IOPC Business Plan 2024/25

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Foreword from the Director General

As the new Director General of the IOPC, I am pleased to introduce our business plan for 2024-25.

I join the IOPC at a time when our work has never been so vital. Community and stakeholder expectations have increased, and now more than ever, the IOPC plays a major role in building public trust and confidence in policing. This year we will start our ambitious transformation programme to see a better complaints system that works for everyone, overseen by a higher performing IOPC. One that has the confidence of the public and police officers and provides value for money.

We know that we have made a difference to our service users and to policing. Real life examples of this are set out in our Impact report. The Fairfield report, published earlier this year, also recognised that we are an essential and vital part of the complex system holding the police to account and commended our enthusiastic, committed workforce who are proud of the work they do. We want to build on these positive examples, but we know there is more to do and that our plans are ambitious. Our unique role is to improve policing by effectively overseeing the police complaints system and making sure this complex system is explained to the public, so that it is understood by all. We do this by conducting excellent, proportionate and timely investigations, conducting reviews and identifying the kind of learning that brings about meaningful change.

We have sought feedback from our stakeholders and service users. The Fairfield report has also shown key areas where we could make improvements to what we do. Our programme of transformation will work to address these areas focusing on service delivery across all that we do; improving timeliness of investigations and reviews, how we raise awareness of our work and how we oversee the work of police forces to ensure complaints are dealt with in a high-quality way.

We continue to face financial pressures and have worked closely with the Home Office on how we can make efficiency savings over the next three years and the funding we need to deliver our ambitious plans. We are pleased the Home Office has responded positively and will support us with a one-off payment to help us accelerate our plans for transformation.

We take our job and our responsibilities seriously. We aim to be independent, fair and effective in everything we do: we strive to be a body trusted by the police and public alike, carrying out our work with confidence and timeliness to the highest quality. We will build on our strong relationships with policing, policing stakeholders, wider stakeholder groups and the public, responding to feedback, identifying areas for collaboration and continuous improvement.

Having an independent complaints system that works for all is in the interests of the police and the public we serve. It is an honour to lead the body that is responsible for the system. This plan sets out how we will work toward our vision of a society where everyone can have trust and confidence in the police.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rachel Watson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rachel Watson

Director General, IOPC

About us – who we are and what we do

The Independent Office for Police Conduct is the police complaints watchdog. We are not the police and are completely independent of them.

We set the standards for the police complaints system. We make sure the police are investigating complaints about their conduct properly. We also investigate the most serious and sensitive incidents involving the police ourselves.

Through our work, we hold the police to account when things go wrong, recommend changes to prevent the same mistakes happening again and promote high standards of policing. We use our evidence to drive improvements in police practices for the benefit of the public and the police. This will help achieve our vision for everyone to be able to have trust and confidence in policing.

Specialist police forces, such as the Ministry of Defence Police, Civil Nuclear Constabulary and the British Transport Police, also come under our jurisdiction. Likewise, we oversee the complaints system for some additional organisations, such as His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC), the National Crime Agency (NCA), and the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA). We investigate certain serious complaints and conduct matters relating to staff from these bodies.

We also investigate criminal allegations against police and crime commissioners (PCCs) and their deputies and contractors working for the police.

Business plan overview

This is the third of five annual plans underpinning our strategy, 'Building trust and confidence in policing 2022-2027'. The plan sets out how we will realise our vision and mission and progress each of our strategic objectives in 2024/25, alongside work we must do to meet our statutory duties. Our four strategic objectives are:

1. Awareness and confidence: people know about the complaints system and are confident to use it
2. Accountability: the complaints system delivers evidence-based, fair outcomes which hold the police to account
3. Leading improvement: our evidence and influence improves policing
4. Performance: being an organisation that delivers high performance

Over the past year we worked hard to build a better understanding with the public and stakeholders, both about what we do and the wider complaints system. In 2023 we contributed to a Cabinet Office-commissioned independent review conducted by Dr Gillian Fairfield, which considered how effectively the IOPC is run, including a review into our efficiency, accountability and governance. The published report highlighted that the IOPC is an essential and vital part of the complex system holding the police to account. Dr Fairfield also makes clear that while demand is increasing, we face significant funding pressures with a projected 34% real terms cut to our budget over 7 years. The report also made a series of recommendations which we will continue to respond to in 2024/25.

We continue to face increasing external scrutiny as does policing more widely and while we have made strides to meet the demand on our services, we also know we have improvements to make. When we reached the midpoint of our 2022-2027 strategy, we conducted a stocktake to ensure we are focused on the right things. Our vision and mission remain the same. However, we want to demonstrate where we can best influence changes that matter to our service users and make more of our unique role by focusing on building confidence in the police complaints system.

We believe an effective complaints system can improve trust and confidence in policing, so we want a complaints system that delivers fair, timely outcomes for everyone. In 2024/25 we will set up a transformation programme to improve our processes and capabilities and change how our people, structures, technology and physical infrastructure all work together. This will improve the IOPC and make it a better place to work to help all our colleagues deliver a better service to our stakeholders.

The first task of our transformation programme will be to oversee the transition to our new senior management structure. This structure will be simpler, will better align to the future direction of IOPC and provide us with efficiency savings. We will also implement our estates and workforce strategies to make sure we have the right

people, in the right places to deliver our corporate strategy and enhance our performance.

We think we should be focusing on what only we can do and do it brilliantly. Our transformation programme will oversee several projects that will build our capability and capacity, resulting in more consistent, timely and higher quality outcomes for our service users. This includes our Improving Operational Delivery programme which will transform our investigations processes, providing better outcomes for service users.

We will also increase our oversight of forces this year, so we can be confident that police are handling complaints right first time and that when people raise concerns, these matters are resolved. We are investing and innovating to deliver greater oversight of the complaints system and will develop minimum complaint handling standards for forces. This allows the public to know what level of service they can expect when they raise concerns and know what to do if these standards are not met. As part of our National Operations programme, we will do more to work with police forces to ensure they get the basics right the first time they review a complaint and are able to resolve more cases at a local level. Importantly, this will speed up the complaints process for everyone involved. It will reduce the amount of time that police officers and staff are engaged with the system and reduce the demand for us to independently review a case.

This year we will also continue to influence change for our service users. In 2023/24 we responded to the Government's accountability and dismissals reviews. The public expect there to be honesty, transparency, and justice when things go wrong and in the most serious cases, they expect independence in this scrutiny. Rigorous independent scrutiny is not a threat; it is a protection, but we know that accountability and scrutiny can feel deeply uncomfortable for the individuals and organisations involved. It is vital we get the balance right. We will continue in 2024/25 to work with the Home Office and continue to use our influence to improve the police complaints system. We will also invest in our learning work and remain focused on areas where there is increased public concern, such as police's response to violence against women and girls. Our work will shine a light on this area of growing concern and help to drive improvements in policing, where necessary.

This business plan has been agreed by our Unitary Board, who monitor progress through quarterly reports which track the delivery of our business plan and progress against our strategy. We provide ongoing assurance for the Home Office, Home Secretary and Parliament that we are delivering the things we said we would, and we are using our resources effectively and efficiently.

We are transparent with the public about our performance and this plan sets out our key measures and targets. Our annual report outlines our performance against our business plan. Our annual Impact report shows how our work makes a difference to our service users and the ways we are influencing policing practice. We also monitor a range of measures across the police complaints system, which we do not fully control, but that provide important insight into how the police complaints system is performing and what people think about it.

Since our boards approved this plan at the start of the financial year, there have been some key changes. We've made small updates to the final plan to ensure its accurate and relevant, including the appointment of our new Director General (April 2024) giving her an opportunity to contribute to it, the new government (July 2024), and included the additional funding and its deliverables (May 2024).

Mission, vision & values

Our mission is:

improving policing by independent oversight of police complaints, holding police to account and ensuring learning effects change.

Our vision is:

everyone is able to have trust and confidence in the police.

Values

Our values were developed by our staff and underpin all our work. They influence the work we deliver and our interactions with service users and stakeholders. Our staff, now and in the future, will be guided by these values and we will consider how well we reflect these through surveys and engagement activity.

Seeking truth

We feel privileged to be the custodians of the police complaints system. We value the trust of the public and police and commit to being just and fair in uncovering the truth. We recognise a just outcome relies on being unbiased and transparent in getting to the truth of what happened.

Inclusive

We have an inclusive culture. We are fair and impartial in our treatment of all individuals. We work across boundaries, both internal and external, collaborating and building strong relationships.

Empowering people

We believe everyone should be a leader and play a part in shaping the direction of the IOPC. We provide a supportive and challenging environment where people can thrive and reach their potential. We trust our people to do the right things. We encourage calculated risk taking and evidence-based decision making. We support people and identify opportunities for learning and improvement when genuine mistakes are made. We make sure people can make complaints without experiencing unfair treatment.

Being tenacious

Our work requires us to be bold, resilient and committed to making a difference to the public. We take our duties as public servants to heart and our dedication is reflected in our work. We meet challenges with perseverance to attain individual and organisational goals.

Making a difference

The value of our work is not defined solely by volume. It is also defined by the impact we have on policing and public confidence. We define quality by how well our work meets our service users' needs. We focus our efforts on areas that make a difference to our communities.

Our work

Awareness and confidence

Strategic objective: People know about the complaints system and are confident to use it

Improving and maintaining public confidence in policing and the police complaints system is one of our core statutory duties. We cannot improve policing or the complaints system without engaging with the public. We need to understand where, and why, confidence in the complaints system is low. It is crucial that the public can raise concerns about the conduct of the police, or dissatisfaction with the service they receive, so we understand where things can be done better. We will ensure their concerns will be dealt with appropriately, so we can demonstrate the effectiveness of the system. We will work hard to raise awareness of the IOPC and the wider complaints system to enable this, and make sure the public understands the standards of service they can expect across the complaints system.

Our programme of activities for the year to improve people's awareness of, and confidence in, the police complaints system are:

Key result	1.1 The police complaints system is trusted to tackle concerns appropriately
Activity	IOPC service quality
Key outputs	Develop minimum standards for complaints about the IOPC and a Quality Assurance Framework
Outcome	This work will ensure that service users can understand what they can expect from us and what to do if we do not meet those standards.
Activity	Delivering our communications and engagement strategy
Key outputs	<p>We will continue to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • produce high quality publications and reports. • set out our calendar of engagement and events for the year. • develop a crisis management plan for our communications and engagement work. <p>Hold advocacy sessions for professionals working with services users with the lowest confidence in policing and delivering a digital guide for professionals '<i>How to support your service user through the police complaints process</i>'.</p>

Outcome	Our communications strategy will increase the visibility of the work we do to improve awareness and trust in our role overseeing the police complaints system.
	Professionals working with services users will be able to advocate for those with lower confidence in policing so they can access the system to raise concerns.
Key result	1.2 Those with lower confidence in policing are willing and able to access the complaints systems to raise their concerns
Activity	Violence Against Women & Girls programme
Key outputs	Launch our <i>Know Your Rights</i> campaign, which provides information and advice on how to complain about the police to victim-survivors of violence against women and girls and organisations supporting them.
Outcome	This campaign will raise awareness of the police complaints system among survivors of violence against women and girls and those who support them. We want victim-survivors to know that 'You have a Voice'
Activity	Youth Panel
Key outputs	Deliver the first year of our three-year youth panel action plan. The youth panel will publish a report on the national survey it ran 2023/24 and make recommendations on where we should focus our efforts to increase the confidence of young people in the complaints system
Outcome	The youth panel insights, report and recommendations will help to focus on improving the confidence of young people, challenge misconceptions about the complaints system and better understand the factors that contribute to low confidence.
Key result	1.3 Arrangements are in place (information, guidance and support) which make it easy to raise a complaint
Activity	Welsh Language Strategy
Key outputs	Ensure managers at the IOPC achieve at least 50% completion of their local action plans, which spell out what our staff need to do in order to comply with the Welsh Language Standards. These standards promote and facilitate the Welsh language and ensure it is not treated less favourably than the English language in Wales.

Outcome	This work will ensure arrangements are in place for Welsh speakers to access and use our services in Welsh.
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How we will measure our progress

<p><u>Key results</u></p> <p>(1.1) The police complaints system is trusted to tackle concerns appropriately.</p> <p>(1.2) Those with lower confidence in policing are willing and able to access the complaints system to raise their concerns.</p> <p>(1.3) Arrangements are in place (such as information, guidance and support), which make it easy to raise a complaint.</p> <p>(1.4) Understanding of community concerns has shaped the work we do.</p>	
<p><u>How we will measure our progress</u></p>	<p><u>We will monitor and respond to:</u></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase awareness of the IOPC to 68% (as measured by our public perceptions tracker and increased from 65% in 2023/24) • Aim to achieve at least 40% of respondents who are confident that the IOPC does a good job (new target for 2024/25, previously monitored) • Make sure the average time to resolve complaints made against the IOPC is within 20 working days (new target for 2024/25) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The percentage of respondents from Black, Asian or minority ethnic backgrounds, young people and women, who are confident that the police deal with complaints fairly (as measured by our public perceptions tracker). • The percentage of respondents who think the IOPC is independent of the police (as measured by our public perceptions tracker) • The percentage of police complaints made by people from a Black, Asian or minority ethnic background, young people and women (measured from force data)

Spotlight on the Transformation programme

Transformation is at the heart of our business plan this year. In 2024/25, we will set up a three-year transformation programme which will drive us towards achieving our 2022-2027 strategy.

What is a transformation programme?

A transformation programme will change the way we work. By the end of the programme, we will have changed our structures, and how we and where we work. We will have radically overhauled our technology to make greater use of automation and artificial intelligence (AI). Most importantly, we will have improved services that have the confidence of the public and police officers and offers value for money to the taxpayer, so we can meet our organisational vision and deliver our services better.

Why are we transforming?

The vision central to our strategy, *Building trust in and confidence in policing*, is that “everyone is able to have trust and confidence in the police”. The context in which we work has changed since the development of our 2022/27 strategy and we want to ensure we can still achieve our vision and mission. We are now operating under increased financial pressures. At the same time, we have seen an increase in demand for our services and the complexity of some cases. Stakeholders are increasingly challenging of the IOPC and we know that the entire system needs to change to respond to increasing demands. It is our view that an effective complaints system can improve trust and confidence in policing, and we know that we need to increase our capabilities to meet new service needs and new challenges.

We welcome external scrutiny of our work. In 2023, Dr Fairfield was commissioned by the Cabinet Office to review our effectiveness as a public body. In 2024, the final report was published and highlighted the progress we have made on timeliness of our investigations and the impact of issues outside of our control on delays to outcomes. As noted in the review, we know we have work to do, and our stakeholders will be keen to know how we will respond to the review during the remainder of our strategy. There are 71 recommendations for the IOPC that range in complexity and highlight areas we need to look at. These have helped us to focus on where we most need to transform what we do.

Together, increasing demand and the Cabinet Office review, provide the case for change through a more radical transformation Programme.

What will we achieve?

Our programme aims to increase trust in the complaints system, by improving performance and making it more accessible and for complaints handling to be more proportionate. We will reduce our operating costs and make sure our resources are directed where they are needed most. We will make sure our colleagues have the right tools to operate effectively, and that they have the skills needed to deliver plans now and in the future. By streamlining our processes and introducing new

technologies to support the delivery of our work, services users will receive a more predictable, consistent service that is easier to access and use.

To meet these objectives, the transformation programme will oversee many major changes and projects across the next three years. In 2024/25, it will:

- run our improvement projects (see performance spotlight below)
- implement our new senior management and governance structures
- develop our new delivery model which will ensure we are doing the right mix of work, so we can make a difference in the areas of most concern to the public and stakeholders

The Fairfield review recommendations will be completed through our programme of transformation, through work we have already started, and projects planned for 2024/25 and beyond.

Accountability

Strategic objective: The complaints system delivers evidence-based, fair outcomes which hold police to account

Our work holds police to account in an impartial, fair and evidence-based way. Our operational work includes complaint reviews, referrals, independent and directed investigations and our oversight activities with police forces. This helps us improve the police service and individual performance through learning. It also supports other processes in the justice system where final decisions on conduct are made. It is essential the system functions fairly and effectively, so both the public and police have confidence in the outcomes of our work.

We want to continue getting the best outcomes for people who complain about policing and improve the complaints system. This year we will increase our oversight activities, working with forces to help them handle complaints in such a way as they get things right first time. We will work towards complaints being handled appropriately the first-time round by forces, offering proportionate and timely outcomes. This year, we will pro-actively seek ways to improve our own processes and service delivery areas across our operations. There is more information on our Performance in our spotlight about this work, and this highlights the need for improvements to build confidence in the fairness and quality of our outcomes.

Key result	2.1 Timely, high quality and consistent handling of complaints by police forces
Activity	Increased oversight activities
Key outputs	<p>Increase our focus on oversight the complaints system. We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintain the momentum of our ‘right first time’ activities, identifying opportunities to work with forces to continually improve their complaint handling practices. • develop minimum standards for police complaint handling. • improve how we analyse complaints system and other data, using dedicated and specialist staff. The data gives insights into complaint trends and issues with handling that can then inform where we focus our oversight activities with forces and local policing bodies.
Outcome	We will support police forces to make improvements in handling complaints. If forces handle complaints ‘right first time’, we expect fewer complainants to seek a review of those decisions because they received a satisfactory outcome to their complaint the first time.

	<p>Minimum standards will help service users understand what is expected when engaging with the complaints process.</p> <p>Improving ways in which we use and present data will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhance our ability to identify areas requiring improvement • identify the best practice • increase transparency through accessible presentation of our findings to the public
Key result	2.2 Reviews (IOPC and PCCs) achieve service user focused outcomes where complaints have not been resolved locally
Activity	Improvements to the handling of reviews
Key outputs	Conduct reviews where a complainant is not satisfied with the way in which their complaint has been handled locally by forces. We will improve the processes service users are expected to follow in these reviews to ensure we continue to improve how they are handled
Outcome	We will review how police forces have handled complaints and, where this has not been reasonable and proportionate, we will make recommendations for further work to resolve those matters.
Activity	Deliver our core operational work
Key outputs	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • handle approximately 2,400 anticipated reviews • review approximately 1,100 death and serious Incident cases • process approximately 7,100 referrals <p>deliver 260-280 investigations</p>
Outcome	We will ensure our statutory duties are delivered to a high quality.
Key result	2.3 IOPC conducts high quality, timely investigations that address the most serious and sensitive matters
Activity	Quality assurance
Key outputs	<p>Improve our processes so that internal quality recommendations are used to improve our investigations.</p> <p>Automate the tracking of our quality improvement recommendations.</p>
Outcome	<p>We can provide evidence of the quality of our investigations and gain insight into how we can continue to make improvements.</p> <p>We can better monitor and report on the quality of our investigations and report on this annually.</p>

Activity	Investigation of the Hillsborough disaster and its aftermath
Key outputs	We will progress toward completion of the investigation including delivery of outcome letters to complainants, police officers who have been subjects within the investigation and interested persons. Once this phase has been completed, we will then move toward preparation for launch of the Hillsborough investigations' website and publication of the Hillsborough investigations' report, which is a detailed summary of the investigation which began in 2013. A publication date is yet to be confirmed.
	Alongside our Corporate records team, we will continue the work to transfer our Hillsborough records to the National Archive and develop our Hillsborough website.
Outcome	We can demonstrate that we comply with the <i>Public Records Act 1958</i> and preserve material for future public access, for one of the most serious and sensitive cases in modern British history.
Key result	2.4 Our work demonstrates a deliberate and agile response to issues that affect confidence in policing
Activity	Improving Operational Delivery
Key outputs	Make improvements to our operational processes by exploring options to review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • report writing • transcription • admin support for investigations • our operating model moving to national delivery
	Update and refresh our operations manual and content.
Outcome	We will improve our investigation timeliness, while maintaining our quality and consistency, against increased demand and complexity.
	We recognise that delays impact confidence in the complaints system. We will respond to this by increasing our efforts to improve our service and influence timeliness across the complaint system, where we can.
Activity	Violence against women and girls programme
Key outputs	Continue to engage with the National Police Chiefs' Council, the College of Policing, and the Home Office around police response to violence against women and girls and police perpetrated domestic abuse. We will also engage with a range of organisations working to

	tackle violence against women and girls at a national and local level.
	Support Angiolini review part 2 that will consider wider issues such as the policing and the protection of women.
Outcome	We will provide a deliberate response to matters where victim trust and confidence in the policing is lowest.
Activity	Strategic approach to mode of investigation decisions
Key outputs	Analyse trends and data to understand what the issues that most impact public confidence are and build this into our referral decision making processes.
Outcome	We will make sure our operational decisions respond to matters with the most impact on confidence.

How we will measure our progress

<p><u>Key results</u></p> <p>(2.1) Timely, high-quality and consistent handling of complaints by police forces.</p> <p>(2.2) Reviews (by the IOPC and PCCs) achieve user-focused outcomes where complaints have not been resolved locally.</p> <p>(2.3) IOPC conducts high-quality, timely investigations that address the most serious and sensitive matters.</p> <p>(2.4) Our work demonstrates a deliberate and agile response to issues which affect confidence in policing.</p>	
<p><u>How we will measure our progress</u></p>	<p><u>We will monitor and respond to:</u></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete 85% of core investigations within 12 months (maintained from 2023/24). • Complete 33% of core investigations within six months (maintained from 2023/24). • Make sure the average time taken to complete a review is 100, 90, 80, 70 working days in quarters 1-4* respectively, from receipt of background papers (changed from 23/24 of 150, 135, 125, and 115 working days) • Review locally investigated death and serious injury cases within an average of 45, 40, 35, 30 working days (Q1-4 respectively) from receipt of background papers (a change from our 23/24 target of 30 days) • Decide on the mode of investigation for all cases referred to us within an average of 5 working days (maintained from 2023/24) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the number of directed/managed investigations started and completed (new for 2024/25) • Monitor the average number of working days to complete directed/managed investigations (new for 2024/25) • Monitor the percentage of core independent investigations where the recommended outcome procedure is concluded within 12 months of our final report • Monitor the percentage of reviews upheld by the IOPC • Monitor the percentage of respondents who are confident that the police deal fairly with complaints made against them • Monitor the % of communications with service users that meet our internal quality and timeliness standards (new for 2024/25) • Monitor the percentage of reviews upheld by local policing bodies • Monitor the average number of working days local policing bodies take to complete reviews • Monitor the average number of working days forces take to finalise complaint cases under schedule 3 • Monitor the average number of working days forces take to finalise complaint cases outside of schedule 3

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aim to ensure that at least 90% of our investigators, who have been in post for at least 24 months, achieve Pearson accreditation (a change from our target of 80% in 2023/24 and moved from Objective 4)• Strive to ensure that 95% of staff have completed their mandatory training by the deadline date (a new target for 2024/25, this was previously monitored and put against objective 4)	
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Spotlight on operational performance

We understand that the quality and timeliness of this work is critical to providing confidence in the complaints system. We also recognise there are still improvements to make, and any unnecessary delays in our outcomes have a significant, negative impact on those most invested in the outcomes of our work. Dr Fairfield's review of the IOPC acknowledges that delays are not always in our control, and that improving end-to-end timeliness will be a joint endeavour. The report recommends that the government convenes a working group, with the IOPC, Home Office and other stakeholders in the system to review processes, encourage proportionality at each stage, and to hasten the conclusions of proceedings.

In 2024/25, we will take significant steps to deliver further improvement, where this is in our control through our transformation programme. Our new senior management structure will enable more effective decision making so that work is progressed quickly, improving timeliness for stakeholders. There will be clear senior points of contact for stakeholders and forces, to enable serious and sensitive matters to be raised quickly and dealt with appropriately.

Our new senior structure will lead us to a national service that is delivered by staff locally, which will make our services more consistent across all our operations.

We will develop models for how we engage with stakeholders and deliver our work. The models will outline how we will provide support and challenge to policing leaders on force specific issues and manage the end-to-end journey for complainants across forces processes. We will also develop new delivery models for how we investigate complaints, our process for reviews, and how we take on the right mix of work.

These models will shape programmes of change across all of our operations. The transformation programme will also oversee two major pieces of work in 2024/25 that will increase operational efficiency, performance and productivity by improving our processes:

National Operations programme

We will continue to build on the improvements in our casework teams (which deal with reviews). We will:

- focus efforts on process improvements to streamline the work we do and increase productivity across the Customer Contact Centre, manage demand in the Assessment Unit and assess how we can offer a more consistent service to all users.
- use funding to increase the number of staff managing our caseloads and make process improvements to meet the increased demand we are facing (an average increase of 20% since 2023/24).
- continue our work to reduce the time it takes to complete a review. Our one-off payment in 2024-25 will enable us to put resources towards activities that will improve our review performance. This will help us bring down our complete rates to 70 working days by March 2025 and 30 working days by March 2026.

Improving Operational Delivery programme

We will implement changes to our operational delivery, focusing on our investigations processes. We will:

- design a new delivery model for investigations which will articulate ways to streamline our processes, whilst maintaining quality and addressing service user needs.
- the project will ensure our operational teams are structured and skilled appropriately to meet the demand on our services and allow us to offer an improved service to users.
- we will explore opportunities to manage and share the work on our investigations across our regional offices, which will speed up the delivery of our work.
- use our one-off funding to fund activities that will help improve timeliness and increase the volume of investigations we open.

In 2024/25, we will explore automation as part of both operational improvement programmes. In 2024/25 we will focus on road mapping how AI and Automation could enhance our services. A roadmap for AI and automation will guide the step-by-step adoption of these technologies to improve efficiency and drive progress over time. We recognise that we need to be more dynamic as an organisation, but we want to have strict processes around this, to manage risks and to align the use of these technologies with the requirements of our service users.

Leading improvement

Strategic objective: Our evidence and influence improves policing

We will use our unique role to influence debates around police scrutiny and accountability to ensure the system works for those who interact with it. In 2023, we submitted evidence to the Home Office ‘accountability review’ of the investigatory arrangements which follow police use of force and police road traffic incidents. In our response to this review, we set out clear recommendations to improvements that would help end-to-end timeliness of our investigations.

Being independent doesn’t mean that we act in isolation. We work constructively with others, including HMICRFRS, NPCC and the College of Policing, to identify learning and drive improvements. In 2024/25, we will continue to proactively use our influence to drive improvements across the complaints process through increased engagement with external stakeholders and by contributing to future reviews. We will increase our strategic engagement and policy work. This will enable our senior leaders to build positive working relationships to influence and demonstrate the impact of our work to key stakeholders in government, the home office sponsor unit and senior policing. We hope this will secure confidence in our work and show our influence in the complaints system.

Key result	3.1 Evidence of improvements in policing policy, practice and culture as a result of our work
Activity	Learning the Lessons
Key outputs	Publish two of our themed Learning the Lessons magazines, targeted at frontline officers and staff, and those working in policy, learning or management roles in policing. One of these issues will focus on learning from cases involving violence against women and girls.
Outcome	Policing stakeholders can make improvements by following examples of best practice, and practical recommendations from our magazine, especially in areas that impact public confidence the most.
Key result	3.2 We influence and convene a range of partners to work with us to influence change
Activity	Super Complaints
Key outputs	Publish our response to a super complaint by the Suzy Lamplugh Trust, which raised concerns around police investigations of stalking.
Outcome	We make recommendations to police forces to improve their handling of investigations into allegations of stalking.
Activity	Stakeholder engagement

Key outputs	Conduct meetings with stakeholders and individuals involved in our work that provide an opportunity to challenge the IOPC and to provide constructive feedback on our work.
	Build a network of advocates from national charities to support potential complainants to understand their rights in the complaints system
Outcome	We will increase the confidence of stakeholders by addressing key areas of concern in policing. We will establish mutually beneficial relationships to ensure our learning recommendations are implemented.
	We will improve our practices by listening to and responding to feedback from our stakeholders.
Key result	3.3 IOPC is recognised as a leader in improving policing and a trusted, accurate and independent voice
Activity	Strategic engagement and policy work
Key output	Increase in engagement activities between our senior leaders and external stakeholders, especially policy, government officials and the Home Office.
Outcome	We will be an active voice in government reviews into police accountability and the complaints system and offer a robust defense of our role publicly. We will aim to increase the percentage of stakeholders who perceive us as leaders in improvement.
Activity	Race discrimination programme
Key outputs	Publish revised discrimination guidelines, setting out best practice for dealing with cases in which discrimination is a factor.
	Publish our race discrimination report.
	Continue to monitor and report on improvements in local handling of complaints involving discrimination and publish a toolkit for complaint handlers and local policing bodies.
Outcomes	Our race discrimination programme outputs will set standards for the handling of discrimination cases for the IOPC, local policing bodies and other stakeholders within the police complaints system.
	We will share learning to improve policing in areas disproportionately affecting Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities.

	Our work will help policing stakeholders recognise and address biases and inequalities in police practices, so they can meet legal obligations under the public sector equality duty.
Activity	External publications
Key outputs	Publish our annual impact report, annual death statistics and data from complaints on all police forces.
Outcomes	We will demonstrate how our work makes a difference to policing outcomes and influences change, as well as increasing public awareness of our impact on these improvements.

How we will measure our progress

<p><u>Key results</u></p> <p>(3.1) Evidence of improvements in policing policy, practice and culture as a result of our work.</p> <p>(3.2) We convene a range of partners to work with us to influence change.</p> <p>(3.3) IOPC is recognised as a leader in improving policing and a trusted, accurate and independent voice.</p>	
<u>How we will measure our progress</u>	<u>We will monitor and respond to:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve 80% of our para.28(a) learning recommendations that are accepted by recipients (maintained from 2023/24) • Increase the percentage of policing stakeholders who think we are effective at sharing learning to improve police practice to 67% (measured by our annual stakeholder survey, maintained from 2023/24) • Increase the percentage of policing accountability stakeholders who think we are effective at sharing learning to improve police practice to 67% (measured by our annual stakeholder survey, maintained from 2023/24) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the percentage of respondents who believe the IOPC is effective in improving public confidence in policing (measured by our annual stakeholder survey). • Monitor the percentage of respondents who believe the IOPC will help improve policing by identifying ways the police can learn from the IOPC's work (measured by our public perceptions tracker).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim to achieve 46% of non-policing stakeholders who think we are effective at sharing learning to improve police practice (measured by our annual stakeholder survey, maintained from 2023/24) • Maintain over 90% of respondents who say Learning the Lessons magazine provides useful knowledge to supplement information received from training, briefings or practical experience (new target for 2024/25 as measured by survey shared with the magazine) 	
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Spotlight on quality

The way in which complaints, conduct matters, and death and serious injury cases are dealt with has a huge impact on confidence in the police. Where they are dealt with well, it helps to restore trust and identify learning to prevent similar mistakes being repeated and bring about improvements in policing. Where matters are dealt with badly, it can damage confidence in both the police and the police complaints system.

We are committed to ensuring that service users receive a consistent, quality service across the complaints system. Our work with forces to get things 'right first time' should drive the quality and standards of local complaints handling. We will also continue to develop ways to assess ourselves against our internal quality standards for investigations and reviews. Our assessment of quality takes care to build in feedback on service user experience. We continue to develop ways to provide assurance and accountability by not only improving the quality of our work but finding ways to show evidence of this.

This year we will:

- **redevelop our operations manual and conduct a content refresh.** This tool houses guidance, policy and legislation in a central platform for our operations staff. It is an essential support for staff that promotes consistent high quality service delivery. Its redevelopment will offer cost saving opportunities to bring the platform in-house and improve the accessibility and presentation of operational policy, procedure and guidance.
- **dip sample** to assess the quality of our work by dip sampling of the assessment of referrals against our minimum standards baselines and a review of compliance with our disclosure practice. Dip sampling is a process of 'dipping in to a selection of our work to check for compliance with our processes and provide assurance about quality and consistency of our work. It allows us to share best practice or learning to improve our service in the future.
- **Focus on four key areas of quality** – compliance, consistency, service user experience and making sure everyone understands their role in quality.
- deliver findings from our **Quality improvement cycle**. This is a 12-month pilot for a new system for recording and monitoring organisational / internal learning, allowing us to demonstrate accountability and willingness to learn and improve. The findings will result in our first annual IOPC quality improvement report, which will be tested and then published externally in 2025/26.
- build **service user focus** into our assessment of quality and understand the experience that service users have with using our service. We will also develop **minimum standards on managing complaints and feedback and unacceptable service user contact**. This will provide internal and external assurance of the level of service we provide.

Performance

Strategic objective: An organisation that delivers high performance

We want to deliver high performance. This year, a key focus for us is meeting challenging external pressures. We will do this in part, by applying efficiencies across the IOPC. We will also transform our organisation to align our processes and capabilities to better deliver all our strategic objectives. In 2024/25, our transformation programme will start a series of complex changes aimed at offering value for money services and we will do this at pace. We will deliver this through several activities that will change where and how we work and develop our leadership capabilities.

We are committed to promoting equality and valuing diversity in everything we do. Following the drafting of our anti-racist statement, we will continue to embed a culture of equality to ensure we are an anti-racist organisation. We have a unique responsibility as the body that oversees the police complaints system, to challenge and address issues of race discrimination in policing. We also want to reflect this by being a leader in inclusive employment and services, demonstrating this ethos in everything we do.

Key result	4.1 Leadership that is in line with our values with a clear plan for the future
Activity	Review of senior management and governance arrangements
Key outputs	Design and implement our new senior management and governance structures.
	Welcome our new non-executive directors and provide an induction to the IOPC for them.
	Design a process so that we can review the skills of our board.
Outcome	We will ensure we have the right structure to deliver our work well, and to make the savings we need to be as effective and efficient as we can be.
	We will improve staff survey scores on the visibility of our board members and ensure they are set up to perform well in their roles.
Key result	4.2 A great place to work for our people
Activity	Commit to being an anti-racist IOPC
Key outputs	Agree and share our anti-racist position statement on our website, so that it and our commitment to it can be seen by all service users and stakeholders.

	Deliver training to staff to improve their emotional and cultural intelligence and enable them to recognise and challenge racism.
Outcomes	We will empower staff to recognise and challenge racism.
Key result	4.3 Develop capabilities for the future to enable high performance
Activity	Fairfield review
Key outputs	Progress our actions against the Fairfield review recommendations.
Outcomes	Our response to these recommendations will increase our effectiveness and help us build confidence in the accountability system.
Activity	Performance development
Key outputs	Line managers are responsible for reviewing and monitoring performance through monthly appraisals. In 2024/25 our People team will refresh our performance management processes.
Outcomes	We will increase and improve the tools available to line managers to drive performance in teams and quality of our work.
Activity	Investigator Accreditation
Key outputs	All of our investigators are accredited. This year our People team are implementing a new accreditation process with a new provider.
Outcomes	We will ensure our staff training holds up to external scrutiny and that the public and police alike can be confident in the quality and fairness of our investigations.
Activity	Transformation programme
Key outputs	We are implementing a transformation programme that will oversee complex changes and improvements across our organisation. We will appoint a new Director of Transformation who will report directly to our Director General and who will be responsible for delivering this programme.
Outcomes	The programme will oversee changes that will ensure the IOPC has the right balance of skills, capabilities and processes to do things in the most effective way. The programme will drive our focus on service users and service quality, ensuring the complaints system is consistent, trusted and proportionate.
Key result	4.4 Intelligent use of information and data
Activity	Improving the external and internal data we collect

Key outputs	Develop a roadmap to show how we could use new technologies and automation software in our work.
	Implement a database - a central repository for our operational intelligence.
	Build systems that can process police and IOPC data and create reports and responses to external enquiries.
	Training for staff to make sure they are complying with our data standards.
Outcomes	We will ensure we have the right tools to collect and manage information and data intelligently to deliver our work.
	Our plans will show how technology can, and will, make us more efficient and effective.
	The data system will provide us with better data processing, a tool to help us identify improvements to service, and a robust way to evidence our findings.
	Our data is of high quality and is relevant to our work, making us more confident in conclusions we draw.
Key result	4.5 Cost effective and sustainable use of resources
Activity	Putting the right resources in the right places
Key outputs	Continue to develop a medium-term financial plan that sets out how we will spend our funding over the next three years and where we can make efficiency savings.
	We have an estates strategy that outlines how our buildings will serve us for the future. This will be implemented during the next year.
	We will develop a workforce plan to identify which roles we need to best deliver the work we do now and in the future.
Outcomes	We will continually review whether we are using our space, resources and funding in the most effective way. Our plans mean we can respond to changes to our financial situation without impacting our services, and that we can always operate within our means.

How we will measure our progress

Key results

(4.1) Leadership in line with our values with a clear plan for the future

(4.2) A great place to work for our people

(4.3) Capabilities developed for the future to enable high performance

(4.4) Intelligent use of information and data

(4.5) Cost effective and sustainable use of resources

How we will measure our progress

- Strive to achieve a staff survey engagement score of at least 67%
- Strive to achieve a staff survey score of at least 93% of our people believe they have the skills needed to do their job effectively
- Aim to achieve a 20% representation of Black, Asian or minority ethnic background staff, so that our workforce is more representative of the UK population (new for 2024/25)
- Aim to achieve an average sickness absence rate of 8 days or less, per employee (new for 2024/25)
- Strive to achieve a voluntary staff turnover rate of 15% or less (new for 2024/25)
- Strive to achieve a staff survey score of at least 70% of our people who believe that our Leadership (members of the Corporate Leadership Network) is in line with our values (increased target for 2024/25)
- Achieve a balanced budget for the 2024/25 Financial Year

Operational environment and funding

Funding

Our main source of funding is grant in aid, which is dependent on Home Office prioritisation decisions in a difficult financial landscape across the public sector.

In 2024/25, the IOPC will receive revenue funding of £73.28m. Budgets will be delegated to the directors assigned to deliver the projects and other work set out in this Business plan.

IOPC 2024/25 BUDGET	£m
Private Office Group	1.596
Operations	30.998
Legal	3.878
Strategy & Impact	10.082
Corporate Services	7.102
Digital, Data and Technology	11.137
Estates	5.884
Hillsborough Operations	2.645
Income	(0.045)
Total IOPC	73.277

Our operating environment and challenges

The IOPC continues to be exposed to the cumulative effects of a wide range of risks, including external risks which we cannot control. We will continue to use our risk management framework to manage and mitigate internal and external risks associated with delivering the work set out in this Business plan.

Our Audit and Risk Assurance Committee oversees the framework and supports us to identify, assess and manage emerging and changing risks. The framework includes our risk management policy, which we update regularly to reflect changes in how we carry out our work. It also includes our risk appetite statement, approved by our Unitary Board, which allows us to consider which activities we will undertake and the levels of risk we are prepared to accept to drive activity forward.

We will manage risks that have the potential to reduce our ability to achieve our strategic objectives in the following areas:

The policing environment

Several high-profile cases have exposed issues in policing, leading to Baroness Casey's review into the standards of behaviour and culture of the Metropolitan Police

and the first part of the Angiolini inquiry into how an off-duty police officer was able to abduct, rape and murder Sarah Everard. There is a risk that these events will feed distrust in policing and make it difficult for us to improve confidence across the complaints system.

We will mitigate this risk by engaging with stakeholders to show the positive impact of our work. Our enhanced focus on policing oversight of police forces and local policing will continue to highlight good practice and better service to complainants. We will use our public perceptions tracker to maintain a view of how public confidence in policing is being affected by these cases and reports, so that we know which areas of policing to focus our work on.

Budget and workforce

This year we are operating in a challenging financial environment, and we expect this to continue into future years. We have a robust plan to deliver efficiencies across the IOPC over the next three years, which will enable us to invest in key areas of our strategy. We also received a once-off payment for this year, which will help us deliver key areas of our strategy and accelerate improvements to our service, particularly across our operational work.

Operational pressures

Over the last year, we made significant progress in reducing the ongoing backlog of our review cases and made improvements to our performance across operations. There are still challenges for us to meet and we understand this is a reputational risk to the IOPC, with potential to undermine confidence in us and the wider police complaints system. We want to show our service users that we have a clear plan to make improvements across this and future years and have set out details in this business plan of the work we will deliver to put us on the path to stronger performance.

Changes of leadership

This year we will welcome new Non-Executive Directors (NEDs) into our Unitary Board, a new Director General, and complete a review of the most senior roles in the IOPC. These new voices will help to set our direction in the coming years.

There are challenges associated with this. It may take time for our new senior structures to be fully embedded which may impact timely decision making. There is also potential for a loss of relationships with our external partners, which were established by our current leadership. We are working hard to ensure these changes are implemented in a staggered and considered way, to minimise any of these issues.

Political changes

The new government may wish to review or change legislation or increase our remits. In 2024/25, we will increase our strategic engagement and policy work, building relationships with government and support positive relationships across political parties.

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