



# IOPC Business Plan 2025/26

# Contents

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<b>Foreword</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Our mission, vision and values</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Our plan for 2025/26</b> .....	<b>5</b>
Our focus for 2025/26 .....	5
<b>Performance</b> .....	<b>7</b>
An organisation that delivers high performance.....	7
<b>Accountability</b> .....	<b>9</b>
The complaints system delivers evidence-based, fair outcomes which hold police to account.....	9
<b>Awareness and confidence</b> .....	<b>12</b>
People know about the complaints system and are confident to use it.....	12
<b>Leading learning</b> .....	<b>14</b>
Our evidence and influence improves policing .....	14
<b>Our funding and our risks</b> .....	<b>16</b>
Our funding.....	16
Our risks .....	17
<b>Our strategic objectives</b> .....	<b>19</b>
Strategic objectives .....	19
Performance .....	19
An organisation that delivers high performance .....	19
Accountability.....	20
The complaints system delivers evidence-based, fair outcomes which hold police to account.....	20
Awareness and confidence .....	21
People know about the complaints system and are confident to use it.....	21
Leading improvement.....	22
Our evidence and influence improves policing .....	22
<b>Who we are</b> .....	<b>23</b>
What we do .....	23

## Foreword

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One year on since becoming Director General of the IOPC, I am delighted to present our ambitious transformation programme set out in our business plan 2025/26 and an update on our strategic objectives. We are planning to have a full review of our Strategy this year to ensure our objectives focus on the transformation we want to achieve.

Transformation to improve the performance of the IOPC and deliver our statutory duties effectively is, and will continue to be, my absolute focus. We need to do this at pace in 2025/26.

Over recent years, the environment in which we operate has become more challenging; a series of high-profile cases have damaged public trust in policing and at the same time demand for our services has never been higher. In 2023/24, we received more than 7,000 referrals from police forces and other bodies – a 72% increase since 2018. These challenges were recognised in Dr Gillian Fairfield's Independent Review of the IOPC which considered governance, efficiency, efficacy and accountability.

To achieve our organisational priorities for 2025/26, it is essential that we make this step change, that we focus on what only we can do and do it brilliantly. I want everyone who comes into contact with our service – whether complainants, police officers or bereaved family members – to have confidence in the system and our work, to be at the heart of what we do, and for us to engage positively and constructively with the police and the communities we serve.

We have already made great strides setting the foundations for our transformation. We have established a new organisational structure, made detailed plans to switch to a new national delivery model and reshaped how we will manage our independent investigations and reviews process more effectively.

My most critical priority in 2025/26 will be to improve our performance in investigations and reviews and to ensure we are a high-performing organisation. We will begin implementing new delivery models and processes, with a focus on our operational work – finding innovative ways to deliver it more efficiently, proportionately and quickly while maintaining the highest standards.

We will take a radical approach to speed up parts of our investigations. We will do this, not by compromising quality, but by streamlining processes, eliminating unnecessary duplication and being more proportionate in what we do. Where the answer falls outside our control, we will work with partners to get resolution more quickly.

Our approach will be guided by service users, so they are at the heart of shaping our transformation programme. This will ensure our processes address what matters most to them.

Alongside this, we are investing in our people so that we can create a workplace where colleagues are happy, healthy, motivated, engaged and proud to work for the IOPC. We also want to ensure we can support our leaders to implement change through transformation and build the culture we need to support our ambition.

We will invest in our enabling processes to ensure we are evidence-led, can be more proportionate in our approach and can enable our staff to take informed risks, alongside improvements to our technology.

We operate in a highly complex system and have said for some time that there needs to be radical reform to ensure the right balance between scrutiny and accountability of the police, and ensuring officers have the confidence to use their powers to keep the public safe.

There are longstanding lengthy delays across the broader system; often proceedings that follow our cases take many years to conclude. Through our transformation programme we aim to reduce the length of time taken for our investigations, but we are only one part of the system. We are committed to working with all our stakeholders to reduce delays, build confidence in both the accountability system and policing so they deliver a better service for everyone. We will work with the government to feed evidence from our work into their review of the systemic barriers to timeliness within the wider misconduct system.

During this year our remit will expand to oversee some new organisations as they take on police-like powers. We will work with these organisations to develop legislation and agree our remits, while continuing to ensure we are funded to do this work, so it does not reduce our ability to focus our resources on our core statutory functions in regard to the police.

I feel incredibly privileged to lead an organisation which is embracing change, and would like to thank the Unitary Board and all my colleagues for their achievements so far. I look forward to working with everyone – policing, our partners across the system, and communities – as we transform the IOPC to realise our ambitions.



Rachel Watson

Director General

## Our mission

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

## Our vision

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

## Our values



### **We seek the truth**

We explore the facts to gain a deeper understanding.



### **We are inclusive**

We treat everyone with equity and value their perspective.



### **We are empowered**

We trust our people and provide a supportive environment.



### **We are tenacious**

We overcome challenges to reach our goals.



### **We make a difference**

We are passionate about improving policing and public confidence.

## Our plan for 2025/26

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This business plan sets out our organisational priorities and what we will deliver in 2025/26 as we transform the IOPC.

### Our focus for 2025/26

In 2025/26 we continue to deliver our statutory duties whilst transforming the way we do things, to ensure we continue to hold the confidence of the public and police officers and offer value for money. This is **a crucial year** for us, with a core **focus on transformation** and implementing change across the organisation.

- ✓ Transformation is critical for us to achieving our strategic objectives, based on our statutory responsibilities and is integral to our ambitions
- ✓ By achieving these, we can meet the public's expectations of our service.

We also need to deliver radical change to achieve our ambition of being **high performing** in everything we do.

Pages 9-17 provide an overview of what we will deliver against each of our four strategic objectives and the organisational priorities our Management Board have set for 2025/26, against which we will measure our success. These organisational priorities are:

#### Critical

- The delivery of a radical new delivery model, which creates a consistent approach with a focus on timeliness and quality.
- To stabilise performance, and through transformation increase the IOPC's productivity, with a focus on investigations and casework.
- To instil an organisation-wide pragmatic approach around risk management and ensure we take more proportionate decisions, which reflect our newly agreed organisational risk.
- Deliver a technological and data-led ethos which drives improvements across the organisation.
- To be an effective and efficient organisation which maximises output from its resources and identifies potential investment opportunities.

## Important

- Renew our principles of engagement to be service user centred.
- Maintain good working relationships with our stakeholders to ensure we are viewed as an important and respected part of the criminal justice landscape and able to input into and effect positive change and reform.
- Continue to invest in relationships with policing system leaders and communities to ensure constructive, respected interactions.
- Apply a focused effort on increasing diversity across all levels of the organisation, with a spotlight on race and ethnicity.
- Ensure our leaders can articulate our vision for the IOPC across the business, and they are empowered to drive culture change, performance, and improvement.
- Head towards a 'one IOPC' approach, creating a unified, national identity.

To ensure we are effectively tracking performance against our business plan deliverables, we have developed annual key performance indicators (KPIs) which are listed under each of our strategic objectives. Pages 16 and 17 outline our resource allocation and risks against this plan.

# Performance

## An organisation that delivers high performance

In 2025/26, we will focus on supporting the success of the transformation programme by strengthening our leadership and performance culture. We will also build the skills and tools we need, putting our Digital, Data, and Technology roadmap into action to better use data for decision making and building evidence to show the impact of our work. Our newly agreed approach to organisational risk appetite will be put in place to ensure our processes and decisions are proportionate, but robust in areas that matter most. This approach will support our goal to work more quickly when it is appropriate to do so.

<p><b>2025/26 priorities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver a technological and data-led ethos which drives improvements across the organisation.</li> <li>• To be an effective and efficient organisation which maximises output from its resources and identifies potential investment opportunities.</li> <li>• To instil an organisation-wide pragmatic approach around risk management and ensure we take more proportionate decisions, which reflects our newly agreed organisational risk.</li> <li>• Ensure our leaders can articulate our vision for the IOPC across the business, and they are empowered to drive culture change, performance, and improvement.</li> <li>• Apply a focused effort on increasing diversity across all levels of the organisation, with a spotlight on race and ethnicity.</li> </ul>
<p><b>In 2025/26 we will:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build our cultural competence, aiming to become an anti-racist organisation, and develop an updated equality, diversity, and inclusion strategy.</li> <li>• Develop and deliver training programmes for managerial and senior leadership growth.</li> <li>• Revamp our performance management processes to encourage better conversations between staff and managers, to support our staff to develop and understand how their work contributes to our organisational values and objectives,</li> <li>• Conduct a staff survey in 2025 and use the findings to inform where we may need to act, to best support our transformation programme</li> <li>• Advance artificial intelligence and automation capability, especially where this will help us to work more quickly and efficiently</li> </ul>

<b>Measures of success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strive to increase representation of people with an ethnic minority background, and disabled people, in our overall workforce (across all grades of the IOPC), to be reflective of the UK population.</li><li>• Aim to achieve an average sickness absence rate of 8 days or less, per employee.</li><li>• Ensure that the employee turnover rate does not exceed 15% on a rolling 12-month basis.</li><li>• Increase positive employer perceptions in staff survey from 2024/25 baseline.</li><li>• Achieve a balanced budget with an increased productivity and cost efficiency per investigation</li></ul>
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# Accountability

## The complaints system delivers evidence-based, fair outcomes which hold police to account

Delivering independent investigations and reviews of how the police have handled complaints remains the key priority for the IOPC. Delivering this service, and doing it brilliantly, is the focus of our 2025/26 business plan.

We will make changes to our processes to account for new legislation and to broaden our remit to organisations with new police-like powers. Our new delivery model will optimise investigations by reorganising staff into a large national team, so we can allocate cases to any IOPC office according to their capacity. We will structure teams for better performance and decision-making and streamline processes to enhance efficiency and quality.

We will continue to work closely with forces helping them to implement our standards for handling complaints. We will review their complaints processes to make sure they are delivering the level of service that the public expects.

<p><b>2025/26 priorities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The delivery of a radical new delivery model, which creates a consistent approach with a focus on timeliness and quality.</li> <li>• To stabilise performance, and through transformation increase the IOPC’s productivity, with a focus on investigations and casework.</li> </ul>
<p><b>In 2025/26 we will:</b></p>	<p>We will continue our <b>core work</b> and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review cases referred to us by police forces each year and decide how they should be investigated.</li> <li>• Independently investigate the most serious misconduct and corruption cases involving the police. These ‘core work’ cases involve potential breaches of Articles 2 and 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights. They involve incidents that can have a significant impact on public confidence in policing.</li> <li>• Complete our investigation of police actions related to the Hillsborough disaster, including the publication of our report.</li> <li>• Carry out directed investigations into complex cases and those requiring specialist resources. Directed investigations take place under our direction and control but use police force resources to conduct and complete the investigation.</li> </ul>

- Consider requests for review from people who are dissatisfied with the way the police handled their complaint, to decide whether this was reasonable and proportionate.
- Review cases involving a death or serious injury following police contact to ensure they were handled appropriately by the police.
- Respond to requests for information, advice and guidance received each year by our Customer Contact Centre.
- Use our legal powers to present findings from our cases at disciplinary hearings, where this is in the public interest.
- Support police forces to handle complaints correctly the first time to reduce unnecessary reviews.
- Investigate super-complaints with the College of Policing and HMICFRS.
- Expand our remit, supporting the setup of organisations granted new police-like powers and ensuring staff are trained on new laws,

We will **transform** our operational processes and supporting functions and:

- continue our National Operations turnaround plan, implementing a new delivery model for reviews to increase productivity, so we can meet rising demand and deliver a consistently high-quality service.
- deliver a 'transforming investigations' programme; implementing process changes set out in our new Delivery model to increase productivity so we can start to do more investigations, more quickly.
- establish an effective Operational Policy team with relevant expertise to inform our work.
- update our Operations Manual so that it provides accessible, relevant and up-to-date guidance to support colleagues in carrying out their work to a high standard.
- introduce a new framework to improve decision-making speed, quality, and consistency.
- implement quality assurance measures, including improved supervision by line managers and an audit cycle for quality reviews.
- ensure our investigators are accredited on the nationally recognised Professional Investigations Programme (PIP).

<b>Measures of success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Complete 70% of core independent investigations in 12 months (measured on a rolling 12-month/ 6-month period. A period is calculated from receiving a referral to when our final decision is provided to the appropriate authority)</li><li>• Complete 30% of core independent investigations in 6 months.</li><li>• Complete IOPC review of police complaints process within an average of 50 working days (Working days are Monday – Friday, excluding bank holidays)</li><li>• Complete decisions on mode of investigation for all referred cases within an average of 5 working days.</li><li>• Operational staff meet 90% compliance rate with our quality indicators for all investigations and reviews.</li><li>• Aim for at least 90% of our investigators, who have been in post for at least 24 months, to achieve a nationally recognised accreditation.</li><li>• Strive for 95% of staff to complete their mandatory training by the deadline date.</li></ul>
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## Awareness and confidence

### People know about the complaints system and are confident to use it

By transforming the IOPC, our aim is to provide a consistent service that focuses on what matters most to the people who use our services.

In 2025/26, we will continue work to raise awareness of the complaints system and our role within it. We will develop a new way of working which uses insights from the public and stakeholders to help us choose the work that matters to them and that best improves public confidence — this will be our ‘control strategy’.

We will also involve our service users in shaping the improvements we make and use their experience and feedback to improve how we investigate and review cases.

<p><b>2025/26 priorities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Renew our principles of engagement to be service user centred.</li> </ul>
<p><b>In 2025/26 we will:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a new communications plan to keep stakeholders informed about our progress and raise awareness and confidence in our work with complainants, police officers and bereaved family members.</li> <li>• Deliver a new service user strategy to ensure stakeholders are involved in shaping our transformation, including creating service user feedback panels.</li> <li>• Implement a new system to manage stakeholder information and insight effectively, so this can be used to better inform our work.</li> <li>• Implement a quality assurance framework for handling complaints and feedback about the IOPC.</li> <li>• Engage with under-represented groups, raise awareness through our Youth Panel, and track public perceptions to guide our future focus.</li> <li>• Introduce new processes to focus on what matters most. This will include selecting independent investigations that respond to issues of concern to improve confidence. We will be transparent about that rationale, so all parties can trust our decisions and understand why we have prioritised our work.</li> <li>• Provide an inclusive service by making reasonable adjustments, meeting service user standards, completing</li> </ul>

	<p>equality impact assessments, and delivering our Welsh Language Standards compliance strategy.</p>
<p><b>Measures of success</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Resolve complaints made against the IOPC within an average of 20 working days (Working days are Monday – Friday, excluding bank holidays), counted from the day after receipt of complaint.</li> <li>● Increase public awareness of IOPC oversight of the police complaints system by 5% from 2024/25 baseline.</li> <li>● Increase our website monthly users by 5% from 2024/25 baseline.</li> </ul>

# Leading learning

## Our evidence and influence improves policing

In 2025/26 we will build and maintain the positive relationships we have with the policing community, partners in the accountability system, and stakeholders who represent complainants and local communities. We will continue to use our work to recommend improvements to the complaints system as well as policing policy, practice and culture.

We welcome the Government’s commitment to review delays in the misconduct system and are working with the Home Office to support reforms aimed at improving both public and officer confidence in the complaints and conduct system. We will continue to provide evidence from our work and unique position to inform those Government reviews. These aim to identify improvements to help deliver outcomes that are more timely, transparent and can be trusted by everyone involved.

<p><b>2025/26 priorities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Maintain good working relationships with our stakeholders to ensure we are viewed as an important and respected part of the criminal justice landscape and able to input into and effect positive change and reform.</li> <li>● Continue to invest in relationships with policing system leaders and communities to ensure constructive, respected interactions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>In 2025/26 we will:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Integrate lessons learned from discrimination and violence against women and girls (VAWG) investigations into routine policies and activities.</li> <li>● Publish <i>Learning the Lessons</i> examples of best magazine, which includes case studies, practices, and recommendations for improvement.</li> <li>● Engage with police standards departments to share insights from cases we reviewed, helping them to improve police handling of cases.</li> <li>● Implement a new stakeholder-focused delivery model, led by our Directors of Engagement, to enhance police complaints processes, influence senior policing figures, address community concerns, and ensure police accountability.</li> <li>● Deliver an officer confidence programme, across England and Wales, targeting front line police officers to improve awareness, trust and confidence.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with stakeholders to drive changes that improve the police complaints system and build public trust, including running public affairs campaigns.</li> <li>• Use evidence from cases to recommend changes to laws and police policies, influencing the development of new laws and supporting IOPC staff in implementing these changes.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Measures of success</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain over 90% of respondents who say Learning the Lessons magazine provides useful knowledge to supplement information received from training, briefings, or practical experience.</li> <li>• Increase stakeholder confidence in the IOPC oversight of the police complaints process against 2024/25 baseline. Stakeholder confidence is measured through a survey to stakeholders we have engaged with within the last 18 months. This includes police stakeholders, police accountability framework stakeholders (may include government departments, non-departmental public bodies, professional bodies, decision-making forums and staff associations within the policing sector) and non-police stakeholders (may include charities, community organisations, and academics). The field work for 2024/25 has just finished and we will have the baseline figure in July 2025.</li> <li>• Develop and publish accessible monthly reports on the complaints and reviews outcomes on our IOPC website by March 2026.</li> </ul>

## Our funding and our risks

### Our funding

We are funded by the Home Office through grant in aid. In 2025/26, the IOPC will receive revenue funding of £71.01m. The table below outlines our **2025/26 budget**, allocated by directorate to set clear financial boundaries for individual teams. Our budget reflects investment into our **critical priorities** in **operational performance** and **transformation**. We have invested into our operational teams, and we will have onboarded over 100 new investigations and casework staff between October 2024 and late summer 2025.

The **Transformation budget** specifically funds the **core team**, but much of our broader **resources and capacity** are being redirected toward transformation efforts this year. This includes key initiatives led by our **People & Change teams** and our Digital, Data and Technology (**DDaT**) **function**, which operates within **Finance and Corporate Resources**. Our **Policy, Strategy and Impact** directorate include teams delivering our Quality assurance activities as well as teams delivering our operational policy and guidance which support our work in Investigations, Oversight and Casework. Our **Finance and Corporate Resources** directorate non-staff costs include costs for our buildings and running costs for our Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

<b>IOPC 2025/26 BUDGET</b>	<b>Staff costs £m</b>	<b>Non-staff costs £m</b>	<b>2025/26 budget £m</b>
Investigations, Oversight and Casework	32.11	1.10	33.21
Legal	2.92	0.62	3.54
Communications and Engagement	3.07	0.26	3.33
Policy, Strategy and Impact <sup>1</sup>	4.04	0.17	4.21
Hillsborough	1.93	0.01	1.94
Finance and Corporate Resources <sup>2</sup>	7.23	10.26	17.49
People and Change	3.78	0.66	4.44
Transformation (core team only)	1.47	0.04	1.51
Director General Office	1.71	0.08	1.79
Income	(0.35)	(0.10)	(0.45)
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>57.91</b>	<b>13.10</b>	<b>71.01</b>

## Our risks

To manage the risks associated with delivering the work set out in this Business plan we will continue to review our risk management framework. This framework is overseen by our Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and supports us in identifying, assessing and managing emerging and changing risks throughout the year. It also includes our risk management policy, which we updated recently to reflect changes to the structure of our teams. The key risks to our delivery this year are noted below.

### **Hillsborough major investigation**

Following outcome letters being sent to complainants earlier this year, we are continuing to work on our overarching Hillsborough report and are reviewing our publication decisions. Given the scale and national importance of the case, it is a significant and sensitive undertaking and therefore carries risk. All stakeholders are continuing to be updated throughout the process.

### **Expansion of our remit**

From 1 May 2026, the IOPC will oversee the activities of the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and will also have authority over the Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery (ICRIR) in England and Wales.

A bill is currently going through Parliament to give additional law enforcement powers to some staff in the Public Sector Fraud Authority and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) fraud officers, under the *Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984* (PACE).

The IOPC will work with these organisations across 2025/26 to advise on the development of their legislation and to accommodate these new remits into our investigative processes. Taking on new responsibilities carries risks for the IOPC, such as losing focus on our core purpose — especially if no extra resources are provided, as noted by Dr Gillian Fairfield. We are liaising with the relevant bodies to secure the funding for the work to oversee these new organisations and continue to work closely with the Home Office to communicate any challenge that the expansion of our remits has on our core statutory functions.

### **Running the IOPC, while transforming the IOPC**

This year, we will focus on improving how we work by redesigning processes and setting up new structures through our Transformation programme. Our main goal is to speed up our outcomes for our service users, while keeping quality high and putting the needs of those we serve first. Balancing the resources to make changes whilst delivering our day-to-day activities will be challenging, but it is important for success. We will regularly review our plans and priorities to make sure we stay on track and meet our core responsibilities, using appropriate governance structures and boards to ensure accountability.

**System accountability**

We know we are not currently meeting our service users' expectations for timeliness, and ongoing delays could harm our reputation. We are in the first year of a three-year Transformation programme aimed at improving our service. While the full impact will take time, this business plan outlines the improvements we expect to deliver in 2025/26 through new delivery models and additional investment in our operational teams.

# Our strategic objectives

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We have provided an update to our strategic objectives to go alongside the business plan for 2025/26. This is to ensure our Strategy is updated to reflect our ambitious Transformation programme and the direction we want to travel. However, we are planning to have a full review of our Strategy this year to ensure it focuses on the transformation we want to achieve which we will publish in due course.

## Strategic objectives

### Performance

#### **An organisation that delivers high performance**

We are committed to being a high performing organisation where the culture and leadership enable colleagues to perform at their best and where we are described as a great place to work.

Our aim is to have a values-driven, empowered and inclusive workforce which reflects the communities we serve across England and Wales

We will ensure our managers and senior leaders are equipped with the skills and knowledge to provide effective leadership and support colleagues to grow.

To ensure we foster a positive, supportive, respectful culture which is high performing:

- We will create an environment of continuous improvement to become more efficient and effective.
- We will support colleagues with the tools and training to enable them to realise their full potential, developing career pathways to retain talent and for the future success of the organisation.
- We will become an evidence-led organisation, with insights from data guiding and transforming our work.
- We will develop an inclusive environment where everyone can be their true self at work and feel empowered to take informed risks and decisions.
- We will recognise great performance and celebrate achievements, showcasing the impact of their work on policing.
- We will look to increase the diversity of our workforce to ensure we are representative of our communities.
- We will enhance our support offers to include specialist support for colleagues to reflect the challenging and at times distressing nature of our work.

## Accountability

### **The complaints system delivers evidence-based, fair outcomes which hold police to account**

Rigorous independent scrutiny which ensures effective police accountability is a vital part of the model of policing by consent.

The IOPC is the only organisation with the powers to carry out misconduct and criminal investigations into officers and staff independently of the police service, and with a national overview of how forces across England and Wales are handling complaints.

Most complaints are handled by police forces while we set the standards by which the police should handle complaints. We independently investigate the most serious matters and review certain cases when the public are dissatisfied with the way their complaint was handled. A complainant has the right to apply for a review of the outcome of their complaint. For the reviews where the IOPC isn't the relevant review body these are dealt with by the local policing body.

Demand for our services has never been higher. The volume of complaints received by police forces in England and Wales has increased sharply following reforms to the complaints system to make it easier for the public to complain. High-profile cases, where police officers have broken the law or professional standards, have damaged public trust and led to a renewed focus across Government and policing to improve vetting of those wanting to join policing and to better identify misconduct among serving officers.

Our core focus is on improving our work to ensure there is a consistent high-quality timely service for everyone which is fair to the public and police officers.

To meet our strategic objective:

- We will change how we investigate and review cases focusing on more proportionate approaches to improve timeliness while ensuring our decisions are consistently high-quality.
- We will consider the level of calculated risk we take to enable decisions to be taken at the right level - facilitating innovation, adaption and flexibility to respond to evolving demands.
- We will work with forces to help them get complaint handling 'right first time' improving the public's experience of the complaints system.
- We will continue to meet our statutory duties investigating deaths and serious injury, public complaints and allegations of serious misconduct.
- We will work closely with the Home Office and policing bodies to support reforms to the accountability system and wider policing reform to improve performance and rebuild confidence in policing.

- We will use the learning from our work to recommend changes to prevent mistakes from happening again and promote high standards of policing.
- We will put those involved in our work at the heart of all we do and use their feedback to design improvements to how we deliver our work.

## Awareness and confidence

### People know about the complaints system and are confident to use it

Public confidence in policing and the police complaints system has fallen since 2020 following several high-profile incidents of police misconduct. Although this has since begun to stabilise, confidence has not recovered, particularly among young people and women. This has increased expectations for further scrutiny and led to new measures aimed at restoring confidence in policing and the systems that hold them to account.

We play a vital role in the police accountability system and restoring public confidence. It is essential that the complaints system is accessible and that everyone can feel confident to raise concerns.

To fulfil our statutory duty to secure and maintain confidence in the complaints system:

- We will work closely with communities, stakeholders and the public to understand issues affecting their confidence in policing. We will work with them to inform how the IOPC can use our work to respond.
- We will raise awareness of the police complaints system so people understand their right to complain, how to access the system and how they should expect the police to respond when concerns are raised.
- We will promote our role and the impact of our work, including recommendations to improve policing so the public can be confident there is independent oversight of the complaints system.
- We will involve service users in our transformation and use their experiences to shape improvements to our services.
- We will work with our youth panel to use the voices of young people to shape our work and ensure young people are aware of who we are and what we do.
- We will work to improve frontline police officers' understanding of the complaints system, so they understand our work and have increased confidence in how it works.

## Leading improvement

### Our evidence and influence improves policing

The IOPC is in a unique position to be a leading voice in improving the complaints system, promoting high standards of policing and driving best practice.

We gather evidence through our work on investigations and reviews on the causes of serious incidents and what can lead to public dissatisfaction with policing. This can highlight not only individual behaviour but systemic issues around policy, training, practice, leadership and culture. Our evidence base enables us to identify learning opportunities to improve policing, both locally and nationally.

We cannot improve policing practice and public confidence alone – improvements will need action across the system. We will work closely with policing partners to continue the drive for change and with the Home Office on reforms to the police accountability system to ensure the balance is right between scrutiny and accountability and ensuring that the police have the confidence to use their powers to keep the public safe.

To deliver this objective:

- We will use evidence from across our work to be a trusted and authoritative voice in calling for change to improve policing policy, practice and culture, particularly in areas affecting public confidence.
- We will work collaboratively with our key partners across policing to lead change across the system, together driving improvements which lead to tangible change.
- We will engage with a range of communities and stakeholders to understand their concerns and make sure our work reflects and responds to issues impacting public confidence in policing.
- We will highlight good practice across policing, sharing successful approaches for the benefit of all.
- We will use our independent voice to amplify the case for change to reduce delays and build confidence in both the accountability system and policing to deliver a better service for everyone.

## Who we are

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The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) oversees the police complaints system in England and Wales and has a statutory duty to secure and maintain public confidence in it. This includes complaints made by members of the public, most of which are handled by police force professional standards departments. It also refers to matters that forces must refer to us, which we assess and may investigate. These include allegations of police officers committing crimes, and deaths or serious injuries during or following contact with the police.

We investigate the most serious matters, including deaths following police contact regardless of whether a complaint has been made. We also set the standards by which the police should handle complaints. We use learning from our work to influence changes in policing. We are independent and make our decisions entirely independently of the police and government. Our Director General has never worked for the police in any capacity.

## What we do

The majority of complaints from the public are dealt with by police forces. However, the IOPC sets and monitors the standards by which they should handle complaints. We also consider certain types of reviews from people who are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been dealt with.

Forces must refer certain serious incidents to the IOPC, whether or not someone has made a complaint. These include where someone has died or been seriously injured following contact with police, as well as allegations of serious corruption, serious assault and certain behaviour aggravated by discrimination. We may decide to investigate such cases independently or return them to police forces for local investigation.

We assess and respond to super complaints along with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and the College of Policing (CoP). Super-complaints are complaints made by designated bodies, for example charities, about broad or systemic issues that could affect public confidence in policing.

We have powers in relation to a small number of specialist police forces and organisations that have police-like powers. These include:

- the National Crime Agency (NCA)
- Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC)
- certain specialist police forces (including the British Transport Police, Civil Nuclear Constabulary and Ministry of Defence Police)
- some activities of Home Office immigration and enforcement staff
- the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA)
- Food Standards Agency (remit starting May 2025)

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

Our remit includes oversight of the whole complaints system, no matter which organisation is handling the matter. We use learning from our work to influence changes and improvements to policing practice, leadership and culture.

The IOPC cannot drive system-wide improvements on its own and we need to work with others. This includes the Home Office who work with government to define the legislation and guidance which governs our work and policing partners such as PCCs, the CoP and HMICFRS, as well as service users and communities. With our partners, inside and outside the policing world, we make sure public complaints and investigations into misconduct and serious incidents are part of a cycle of learning which improves policing in England and Wales.

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We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh, no delays will be experienced.  
Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn y Gymraeg, ni fydd oedi mewn ymateb.