

Business plan 2026/27

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Foreword

Our 2026/27 Business Plan builds on the hard work and dedication of our staff and our Transformation programme, which successfully delivered major changes to the way we worked in 2025/26. As a result of our transformation, in 2025/26.

- We independently investigated more of the referrals we received. In 2025/26 we started between 310 and 320 investigations, which was a 12% increase from 2024/25.
- We increased the number of investigations completed within 6 and 12 months.
- We completed more reviews than we received. This was the case every month since January 2025 and we reduced the completion time from 155 working days to 69 working days. This improvement was achieved within the context of increasing demand for reviews.
- We introduced our national delivery model, which aims to allow us to deploy our resources more flexibly across England and Wales. The introduction of that model coincided with the broadcast of the episode of Panorama, which focused on the behaviour of police officers at Charing Cross police station and the tragic shooting outside the Heaton Park Hebrew Congregation in Manchester. Our national model enabled us to pivot and respond quickly to both incidents. We referred officers involved in our Charing Cross investigation to Accelerated Misconduct Hearings and declared all officers involved in



the police shooting in Manchester as witnesses, rather than suspects, soon after both cases were referred to us.

Transformation and improving the performance of the IOPC so we are a high performing IOPC that is trusted by the public and policing alike, is my absolute focus. You will see we have made this our critical priority in the 2026/27 Business plan.

We have consistently argued that, for us to be a credible organisation with real influence, meaningful transformation was essential — and the Government's recent White Paper provides clear evidence that we have started to deliver this. Crucially, it gives strong endorsement to our Transformation programme, and we will be one of the few parts of policing that remain unaffected by the breadth of reforms the Government is taking forward. This gives us the confidence to continue our work, knowing we have the Government's clear backing to do so.

I want the IOPC to consider how we can be more radical in our redesign of processes to help us handle the increasing demand, but still provide a brilliant service to all who interact with us. Part of that work will be considering how we could use artificial intelligence to enable us to work smarter, not harder, and enable us to use our resources effectively.

It is key that the service user isn't lost in our processes. I want the service user to be at the heart of our transformed services and to improve the quality of what we do. We will seek better ways to monitor that our service is getting better through improved new quality targets.

Alongside this, we are investing in our people. We are taking a proactive and preventative approach to wellbeing, and we are improving the diversity of our staff in regard to race and disability. I want to make sure this is achieved in our senior staff as well.

I arrived at the IOPC with a clear mandate to transform the organisation, and our recent improvements in performance demonstrate the value of this work. The impact we are beginning to see from our Transformation programme is a testament to the sustained commitment and work of the IOPC staff over the last 18 months. I look forward to continuing to work with them to build on their achievements to date.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rachel Watson'.

Rachel Watson
Director General

Introduction

To reflect our focus on transforming the IOPC, we adopted our transformation objectives as our strategic objectives. We also added an additional objective on our external facing work. Our strategic objectives for 2026/27 are:

- a brilliant service for users, partners, stakeholders and communities
- systems and processes that work for our service users and us

- people who are engaged, enabled and empowered
- our work adds value and has a positive impact

Later this year we will refresh our corporate strategy, aligning it to our Transformation Programme.

Our focus for 2026/27

Pages 12-21 provide an overview of what we will deliver for each of our strategic objectives and our organisational priorities. Our organisational priorities are:

Critical

- We will drive productivity, high quality and timeliness in all parts of the IOPC to enable us to complete our investigations and casework more quickly.

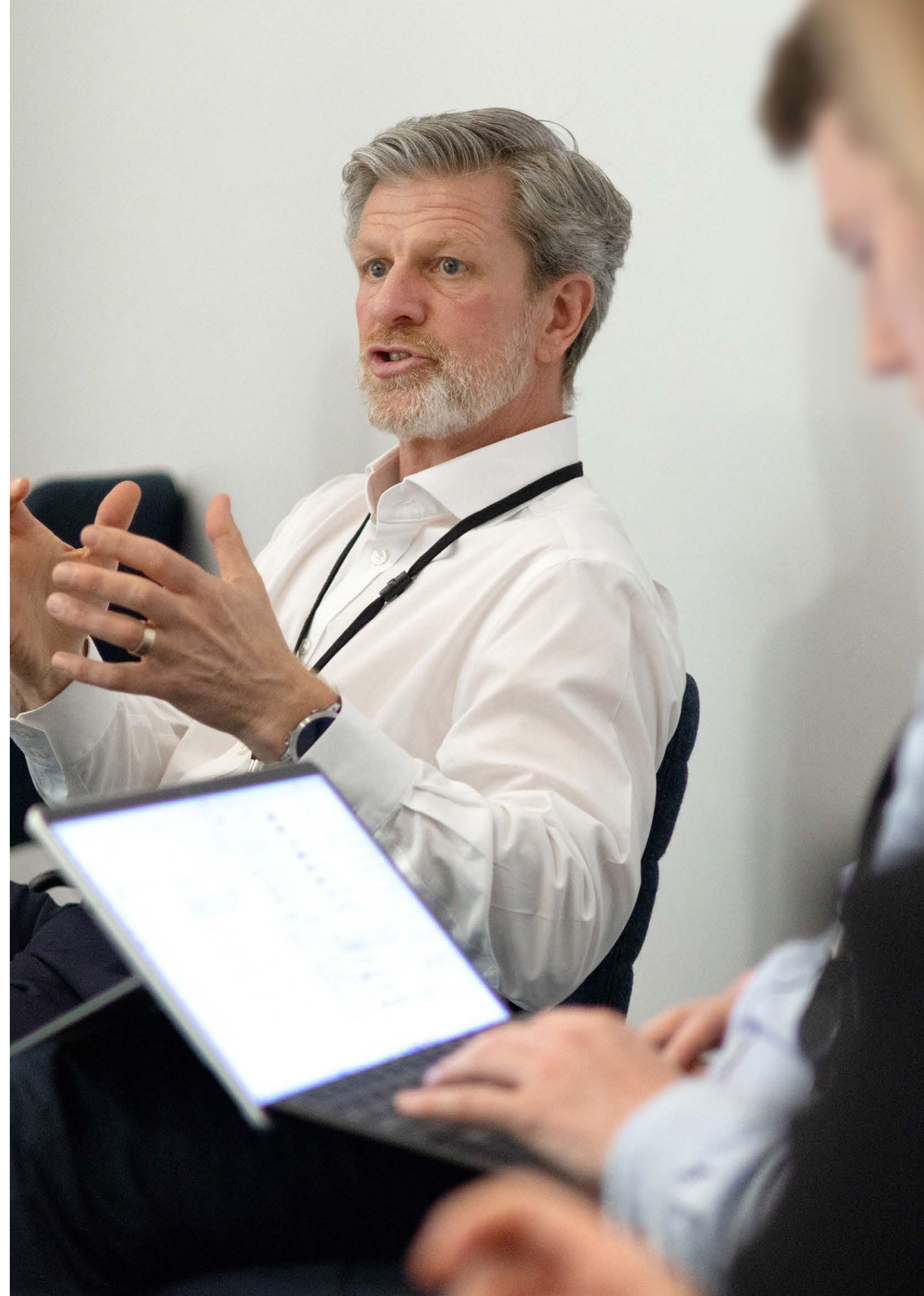
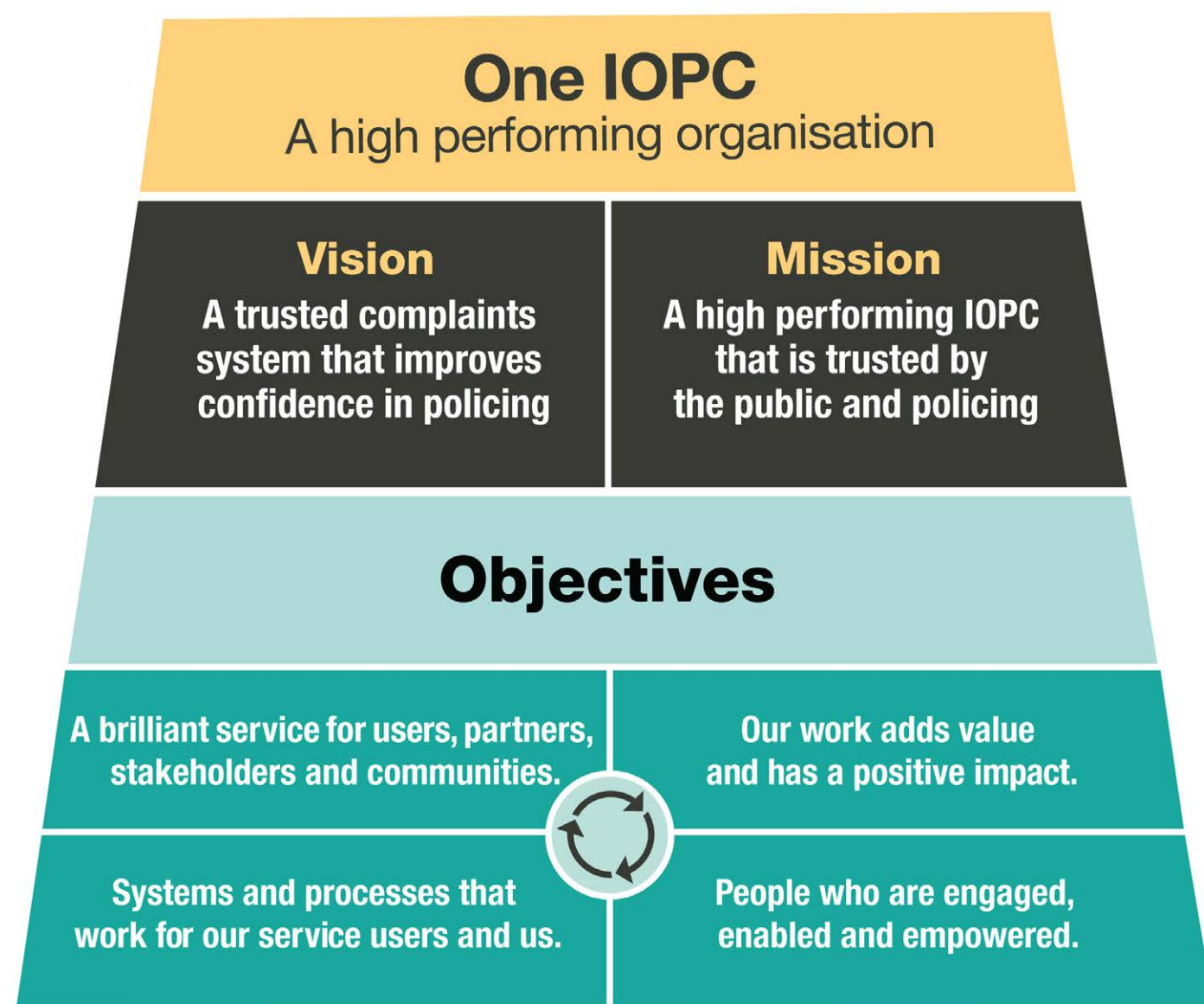
Important

- We will put the service user experience at the heart of our redefined processes.
- We will use the data at our disposal to drive improvements to the work we do and the wider complaints system.
- We will ensure that all our work supports us to be a valuable organisation.
- We will manage and develop our staff so they are able to contribute effectively to the work of the IOPC.
- We will ensure our communications and engagement work reinforces our aim to provide a brilliant service by demonstrating the impact of our work.

To track performance, we developed key performance indicators (KPIs), listed under each of our strategic objectives.

Pages 22-24 outline our resource allocation and risks for this plan.

IOPC Corporate strategy 2026/28



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



A brilliant service for users, partners, stakeholders and communities

One of the consistent pieces of feedback we receive from our stakeholders is the need to improve the timeliness of our investigations and casework. While we made excellent progress in 2025/26, we recognise that there is more we can do to increase our productivity to deliver a brilliant service for users, partners, stakeholders and communities. In 2026/27, we will make more improvements in our performance through the following activities:

2026/27 priorities

- We will drive productivity, high quality and timeliness in all parts of the IOPC to enable us to complete our investigations and casework more quickly.
- We give a consistent high-quality service to all who interact with us and ensure their experiences are at the heart of our Transformation programme.

Our 2026/2027 activities:

We will deliver our strategic objective via our core work:

- assessing cases referred to us by police forces each year and deciding how they should be investigated
- independently investigating 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 and can have a significant impact on public confidence in policing
- directing 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.)
- considering requests for review from people who are dissatisfied with the way the police handled their complaint, to decide whether this was reasonable and proportionate
- reviewing cases involving a death or serious injury following police contact to ensure they were handled appropriately by the police

- responding to requests for information, advice and guidance received each year by our Customer Contact Centre
- presenting findings from our cases at disciplinary hearings, when it is in the public interest to do so
- investigating super-complaints with the College of Policing and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS)
- responding to media enquiries about our work
- driving improvements across the IOPC informed by our regular audits and reviews of our work and effective supervision by line managers

We will also continue to transform the IOPC by:

- completing a more radical assessment of the review process to enable us to manage increasing demand with fewer resources, while delivering a consistently high-quality service. We will consider the use of artificial intelligence and how we take a more proportionate approach
- focusing our oversight and engagement activities in areas and with stakeholders where we can add the most value
- embedding our National Investigations Model to ensure that our investigations are appropriately resourced, and supported by our specialist teams where appropriate
- supporting engagement with families in the most serious cases through the continued implementation of our system of enhanced engagement. The key changes are about the publication of final reports, communication with families, and disclosure to families.

- (This will be for cases where Article 2 on right to life is engaged.)
- implementing national practices to improve disclosure and moving specialist disclosure to a national model. We will also design and implement a national model for support in proceedings and consider how that model can support our presenting unit
 - reviewing our end-to-end processes in investigations to ensure all elements are proportionate. This will include being more proportionate in our final reports to provide service users with consistent and understandable outcomes at the end of an investigation
 - implementing changes introduced by the Crime and Policing Bill, which will change our processes to apply the new referral threshold to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and victims right of review. When it becomes law, we will implement the legal test for use of force in misconduct cases
 - implementing the Public Office (Accountability) Bill, by providing investigation staff with awareness and training to understand the duty of candour on police offices and statutory misconduct in public office offences. (The Public Office (Accountability) Bill introduces a statutory duty of candour and assistance on public authorities and public officials requiring that they act with honesty, transparency and frankness when engaging with inquiries and investigations into state conduct.)
 - implementing our new service user strategy and using the feedback we gather to improve all aspects of our work
 - developing and implementing a new decision-making framework to improve the proportionality and consistency of our decision making
 - training new and existing investigation staff and supervisors to achieve nationally recognised Professional Investigations Programme (PIP) accreditation to drive proportionate and consistent investigations
 - reviewing whether our Professionalising Investigations Programme is a suitable accreditation for our casework and assessment unit teams

Measures of success

We will:

- **complete 75% of core independent investigations within 12 months**
- **complete 30% of core independent investigations within 6 months**
- **complete IOPC reviews of police complaints so the service user receives our response within 60 working days at the end of March 2027**
- **complete decisions on mode of investigation for all referred cases within an average of 5 working days**
- **increase by 5% the positive experience of service users in our investigations. (We will measure this by whether the service user has felt that they have been treated with respect and courtesy.)**
- **increase by 5% the positive experience of service users in our reviews. (We will measure this by whether the service user has felt that they have been treated with respect and courtesy.)**
- **ensure 80% of investigators achieve timely completion of a nationally recognised accreditation**

Systems and processes that work for our service users and us

To build on the improvements we made in 2025/26, we will also ensure the systems and processes on which our staff rely work for them and, crucially, for our service users. In 2026/27, we will deliver our strategic objective through the following activities:

2026/27 priorities

- We use the data at our disposal to drive improvements to the work we do and the wider complaints system
- All our work supports us to be a valuable organisation

Our 2026/2027 activities

We will deliver our strategic objective by:

- advancing artificial intelligence and automation capability in our processes, especially where this will help us to work more quickly and efficiently
- ensuring our budgets are focused on operational delivery and our strategic objectives are supported by lean and efficient corporate functions
- simplifying and integrating technology, data and analytics to provide trusted insight to support decision making
- maximising the value of the resources we have, with finance at the heart of our decision making
- ensuring our procurement processes get the best value from our suppliers and contracts
- improving governance processes, financial reporting and control, and risk management to support our effective operation
- creating a great place to work through high-quality physical environments, digital devices and technology applications that support our staff to do their jobs
- developing a central database to bring together the separate solutions we use for finance, people and recruitment to deliver better value for money

Measures of success

We will:

- resolve standard service complaints made against the IOPC within an average of 20 working days following day of receipt. (This excludes serious, complex, and dispensed-with complaints.)

People who are engaged, enabled and empowered

Providing a brilliant service to our users means that our staff must be able to perform to the best of their ability and that we help them develop the skills and abilities to do so. In 2026/27, we will deliver our strategic objective through the following activities:

2026/27 priorities

- We manage and develop our staff so they are able to contribute effectively to the work of the IOPC.

Our 2026/2027 activities

We will deliver our strategic objective by:

- developing a strategic and operational workforce plan to ensure we have the right resources in the right place at the right time and that our staff have the capability to fulfil their roles
- supporting the development of our staff through apprenticeships, coaching and mentoring
- building leadership capability across the organisation by delivering our Grow, Inspire, Lead training programme
- improving the performance management of our staff by setting objectives that will stretch them and hold them to account for the work they are expected to deliver
- revising our equality, diversity and inclusion plan to focus on increasing representation of diverse communities among staff, as well as delivering a disability action plan
- updating our policies to reflect the *Employment Rights Act 2025*.
- revising our recruitment and selection processes so that they are more efficient, enable us to fill vacancies more quickly, and support our aim to increase diversity especially at senior levels
- recognising and rewarding our staff through awards for service and living our IOPC values

- delivering the commitments in our people plan to address the feedback provided through our 2025/26 staff survey

Measures of success

We will:

- increase representation of people from an ethnic minority background in our workforce to at least 16% in line with the UK population
- increase the representation and self-disclosure of disabled employees
- achieve an average sickness absence rate of eight days or less, per employee
- increase employee engagement index score above 54%. (Employee engagement is a workplace approach designed to ensure that employees are committed to their organisation's goals and values, and are motivated to contribute to organisational success. This sits on a scale of 0% for very disengaged through to 100% for very engaged.)

Our work adds value and has a positive impact

The IOPC is critical to improving public confidence in policing in England and Wales. It is vital that we deliver an effective service to those with whom we come into contact, and that we demonstrate the benefits of our work to the wider public. We will deliver our strategic objective through the following activities:

2026/27 priorities

- Our communications and engagement reinforce our aim to provide a brilliant service by demonstrating the impact of our work.

Our 2026/2027 activities

We will deliver our strategic objective by:

- developing and implementing our Communications and Engagement strategy to ensure we can raise awareness and confidence in our work
- improving the transparency of decisions we take about the work that we do, so that our service users understand and trust our decisions
- improving policing practice through the development and issuing of learning recommendations and publication of our *Learning the Lessons* magazines
- providing effective oversight of the police complaints system through the publication of data about complaints made to all police forces and deaths following police contact, as well as through targeted and regular engagement with police Professional Standards Departments/ Directorates, and the publication of our *Focus* guidance
- using the data and insight we collect through our investigations, casework and engagement to work with the Government to improve the police complaints and conduct system, so that it maintains the trust of the public and police alike

Measures of success

We will:

- increase public awareness of IOPC to above 62%
- Increase % of policing stakeholders who think the IOPC perform well at identifying and sharing learning from its work in order to improve policing
- increase stakeholders agreement that the IOPC is improving their confidence in the police complaints system to above 49% (25/26 baseline). (This is measured through a survey to stakeholders we have engaged with within the last 18 months. This includes police stakeholders, police accountability framework stakeholders and may include government departments, non-departmental public bodies, professional bodies, decision-making forums and staff associations within the policing sector. It also includes non-police stakeholders and may include charities, community organisations, and academics.)

Our funding and our risks

Our funding

We are funded by the Home Office through grant in aid. In 2026/27, the IOPC will receive £71.01 million in revenue funding. The table below summarises our 2026/27 Home Office budget.

Over the past seven years, our budget has reduced in real terms. To manage these pressures and meet demand within our budget, we have delivered efficiencies in previous years. These include reducing our estate, reducing staff, disaggregating our ICT system and implementing a senior management restructure. Savings were reinvested into key priorities including transformation, artificial intelligence capability, and strengthening frontline operational delivery across casework and investigations. We will continue to reduce our costs as much as possible and continue to transform the organisation.

	Home Office Budget
	£m
Total Staff Costs	59.63
Travel & subsistence including fleet	0.89
Training & recruitment	0.50
Accommodation	2.76
ICT	5.74
Legal costs	0.68
Professional fees	0.37
Media and communications	0.27
Investigations direct costs	0.37
Other non-staff costs & services	0.42
Total non-staff costs	11.98
Income	(0.60)
GRAND TOTAL	71.01

Our risks

The key risks to delivery during 2026/27 are as follows:

Funding

We anticipate a number of challenges to our 2026/27 budget. We have increasing levels of demand for reviews and investigations. We are facing increased staff costs to enable us to meet the rising demand. Without overspending on our delegated budget, we will be unable to respond to this challenge and improvements we have already made through our Transformation programme will be reversed. To manage this, we are having ongoing dialogue with the Home Office who provide our funding and are taking steps to consider the impact of challenging funding over the next three years.

Increasing demand impacting our delivery

While we have consistently completed more reviews than we received each month since January 2025, demand continues to rise. Further increases in demand during 2026/27 may erode our ability to continue to deliver high levels of performance in our casework teams. We are mitigating the risk by prioritising our budget on our operational teams, as well as more radical transformation in our casework processes.

Data management and showing impact

We need to make improvements in our data management and systems to enable us to make informed decisions and provide

service users and stakeholders with evidence of improving policing practice. To address this, we set up a project that will consider the systems we have and ensure we can get insight from the data and feed this into our work. We also provided clarity to staff on the importance of identifying learning to feed into improving policing.

Cyber threat

The threat of a cyber-attack on our systems remains an ongoing concern. In the most extreme scenario, such an attack could impact our ability to function. This would undermine our reputation and the confidence of our stakeholders and service users. We are mitigating this risk through our cyber strategy and ongoing associated annual programme of work to protect, detect and respond to cyber risk. We are also making policy changes and training our legal, finance and ICT teams to address specific threats and areas of vulnerability.

Delivering Transformation

Our Transformation programme could implement changes too slowly to deliver the improvements we want to see in our timeliness and productivity. This could be due to challenges such as increased demand and funding not enabling us. This could lead to loss of confidence in the IOPC and our Transformation programme, and our ability to improve our performance. We are focusing the delivery of the programme on activity that will have the greatest impact such as artificial intelligence. We are also making staff more aware of the changes we want to make

and how this will impact them, so they are ready to receive that change.

Use of artificial intelligence

The increasing use of publicly available artificial intelligence tools introduces the risk of misinformation and disinformation to our operational work, as these tools may generate inaccurate, outdated, or fabricated content. This would undermine the confidence of our service users in our work. We are mitigating this risk by monitoring misleading information that is in the public domain and taking corrective action when necessary.

We are also seeing the use of artificial intelligence result in increased volumes of reviews, judicial reviews and enquiries into our customer contact centre. Artificial intelligence is helping members of the public navigate the system which can be complex. We will provide guidance on our website to help complainants understand their rights and when we can use our powers to help manage demand.

Complexity of the complaints and conduct system

Planned legislative changes to the police complaints and conduct system may add further complexity into the system and this may impact the ability of our staff to deliver the timely completion of our investigations and reviews. We are mitigating this risk through frequent and regular engagement with the Government as it develops its new legislation, as well as updating our internal policies and training for staff to ensure they can adapt to the changes efficiently and effectively.



More information

To find out more about our work or to request this plan in an alternative format, you can contact us in a number of ways:

www.policeconduct.gov.uk

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Instagram: **@independent_police_conduct**

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Call: **0300 020 0096**

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We welcome correspondence in Welsh and English. We will respond to you in Welsh and this will not lead to delay.

Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymr aeg. Byddwn yn ymateb i chi yn Gymraeg ac na fydd hyn yn arwain at oedi.

July 2026

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