

OVERSIGHT

newsletter

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

Information for police

You can find lots of useful information for complaint handlers on our [website](#). This includes information and guidance for professional standards departments, complaint handlers and local policing body reviewers.

Topics include complaint handling guidance and a toolkit, IOPC discrimination guidelines, guidance on managing unreasonable and unacceptable complainant behaviour, an operational advice note on 12-month timeliness reports and more.

Violence against women and girls workshops

We have now concluded our series of Oversight on violence against women and girls (VAWG), holding seven workshops and reaching over 200 policing stakeholders in total. We discussed case studies, the principles in our [Focus guidance](#), and avoiding victim blaming language, and shared positive practice from guest speakers.

We'd like to thank all the attendees who gave up their time and engaged in the workshops (especially in the very hot weather). We'd also like to express our appreciation to the guest speakers from Dorset Police, Northumbria Police, South Yorkshire Police and West Midlands Police who shared some insightful initiatives that are happening in their forces.

We'll collate all of the positive practice and insights we gathered from the workshops, which we will share with you. Thanks again for your engagement and your support.

IOPC findings on reviews

A question sometimes arises about the status of findings made by the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) when upholding an investigation review and making conclusions that differ from those of the appropriate authority.

In these circumstances, the IOPC's findings are neither a recommendation nor a direction. Under paragraph 25(4C)(a) of Schedule 3, where the IOPC finds that the outcome of the complaint is not a reasonable and proportionate outcome, the IOPC has the power to make its own findings. These findings may replace the findings of the local investigation or be made in addition to them.

This is a standalone statutory power and does not require the IOPC to issue a recommendation or direction for those findings to take effect. The appropriate authorities' records should be updated to reflect any alternative or additional findings made by the IOPC.

In some cases, however, a recommendation or direction may still be necessary to implement the practical consequences of the IOPC's findings. For example, where the IOPC makes findings under paragraph 25(4C)(a) which support a conclusion that an officer has a case to answer for misconduct or gross misconduct, the IOPC may issue a recommendation under paragraph 25(4C)(c) to ensure the appropriate action is taken.

It is important to note that different rules apply where a complaint has been handled otherwise than by investigation. In these cases, the IOPC does not have the power to substitute or add its own findings. Instead, it may determine that a re-investigation is required or make a recommendation under section 28ZA.

Professional standards department new starter sessions

These sessions are a useful introduction to the IOPC for any new members of staff joining your teams. They cover the origins of the IOPC, the work we do, tips on complaint handling, and the opportunity to ask questions on any area of our work. They are held remotely on Microsoft Teams and last around 60-90 minutes. If you would like to book onto a session, we have places available for the following dates:

- Thursday 15 October 2026
- Tuesday 19 January 2027

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

Learning the Lessons 47 (use of force) – Your feedback needed

In May, we published [Learning the Lessons, issue 47](#) on the topic of use of force. This edition includes ten case studies, covering themes such as restraint, incapacitant spray, Taser, firearms, mental health, and children and young people.

Issue 47 also shines a spotlight on a proactive approach that one force is taking to improve its practices in response to Learning the Lessons. The article outlines how Staffordshire Police embedded learning from issue 46 (frontline policing) to help reinforce best practice, identify gaps and support consistency across teams. To learn about their approach, see page 51 of issue 47.

We would appreciate your feedback to understand the reach and impact of this issue. We welcome your feedback on:

- how the magazine has been shared within your force
- how the magazine has been used to support the work of your force, including within policy, guidance or training
- any feedback you may have received

Email your feedback to learning@policeconduct.gov.uk. You can also contact us to request a free pack of printed magazines to give to officers and staff at training sessions, meetings or events.

Our next issue on children and young people will be available in autumn 2026.

Recent Information

IOPC enhanced engagement

The IOPC is subject to legal obligations to provide information under the *Police Reform Act 2002*. However, there are now certain categories of investigations involving the most serious incidents, such as deaths and very serious injuries, where we need to do more than the statutory scheme provides to allow effective participation in an investigation. In these cases, enhanced engagement will apply.

When the IOPC determines that enhanced engagement applies to an investigation, the bereaved family, next of kin, or the injured person themselves, will receive an enhanced level of information so they know more about the investigation. Families and interested persons will receive a leaflet explaining our approach.

In July, we wrote to forces to share the current draft version of the leaflet for awareness. The leaflet explains what enhanced engagement is, who it applies to, and what it means for families and interested persons.

IOPC oversight meetings – Microsoft Teams transcription

In June, we wrote to advise you that we will now use the transcription function in the regular meeting calls organised by IOPC Oversight staff.

Using transcription allows us to be even more focused on the conversations held, without the demands of note taking. Our staff will summarise the transcribed notes will be summarised and check them for accuracy before they are shared as formal records. Once this has been done, the transcriptions will be deleted.

We will, of course, check at the start of each Microsoft Teams call that participants are comfortable with the recording of the meeting for transcription purposes.

For other Microsoft Teams calls – for example, workshops organised by the Oversight team – we will consider whether any form of recording is appropriate. This will again include checking with attendees at the start of the calls.

If you have any questions about this, please contact oversight@policeconduct.gov.uk

? Common questions from forces and LPBs

Q: If the handling of a complaint being dealt with otherwise than by investigation exceeds 12 months, is it a requirement to inform the IOPC of the reasons for the delay?

A: No. Regulation 13 of the *Police (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2020* which requires a timeliness report to be submitted to the IOPC at 12 months (and every six months after that) only applies to investigations. Although you do not need to submit a timeliness report or inform the IOPC, handling otherwise than by investigation is intended to be a prompt and proportionate way of handling a complaint and it should not typically exceed 12 months. More guidance on timeliness reporting can be found in the [Operational Advice Note](#) on 12 month timeliness reports.

Q: If a death or serious injury (DSI) incident happens on a weekend, is it acceptable for the incident to be reported to the appropriate authority on Monday and referred to the IOPC on Tuesday?

A: DSIs and any other mandatory referrals must be made as soon as possible without delay. Appropriate authorities and local policing bodies must ensure there is both appropriate training and processes in place to ensure that referable matters are identified and the appropriate people alerted promptly. Any delays seriously impact our ability to deploy IOPC investigators (if necessary) and make a timely mode of investigation decision.

For incidents occurring out of hours, the IOPC on-call number should be used to notify us in real time of incidents such as:

- any death in custody
- any life threatening or life changing injuries that occurred in custody
- a death following police contact, where there is an ongoing incident/scene or a post incident procedure may be held
- the circumstances of a DSI may require the declaration of a critical incident or there is potential for community impact
- the incident meets the mandatory or voluntary referral criteria and a PIP is being considered
- the circumstances of the incident give rise to the possibility of Article 2 being engaged

Corporate news

IOPC response to the Police Leadership Commission report

Statement from Rachel Watson, Director General of the IOPC, on the [Police Leadership Commission report](#).

“I welcome the Police Leadership Commission report. It is an important, necessary area of work aimed at strengthening the ethos in policing.

“The IOPC was asked to contribute evidence and suggestions towards the report, including data relating to our investigations into chief officers. I understand it has helped underpin anecdotal evidence the Commission has heard.

“Police leaders set the culture for police forces so it’s vital the right people occupy chief officer positions, people with effective leadership skills and who come from diverse backgrounds, including experience away from policing. People should not reach chief officer ranks simply because their face ‘fits’.

“As the police complaints watchdog, we are uniquely placed to identify issues, and areas of concern, as well as ways to improve policing.”

Read the [full statement](#) on our website.

IOPC policy on amended use of force standard in current misconduct cases

The IOPC has confirmed its [position](#) on applying the amended law change to the use of force standard of professional behaviour for current misconduct cases.

In October 2025, the Home Secretary announced the government accepted a recommendation to change the test for use of force in police misconduct cases from the civil law test to the criminal law test, which would require amendments to legislation.

On 9 June, we received the wording of the legislation change, which was clear that the test for use of force in police misconduct cases will change from the date the law change came into effect – which occurred on 30 June. The law change is not applied retrospectively to case to answer decisions that were previously made using the civil law test.

[Read the full article](#) which sets out how we will apply the legislation to current cases.

IOPC Youth Panel driving change in police treatment of young detainees

Teenagers and young adults on the Independent Office for Police Conduct's Youth Panel are helping drive improvements in the way police deal with young people in custody.

Members of the IOPC Youth Panel – made up of 42 young people aged 16 to 25 – met with senior officers and national police groups for a roundtable event focused on a key recommendation from their new manifesto.

The recommendation – one of 10 in the Panel's Manifesto for Change – calls for police to clearly communicate to young people that they have the right to complain or give feedback following all interactions with police. And the Panel say this is particularly important when young people have been stopped and searched or arrested.

[Read more](#) about the event, the resulting pledges, and future roundtable events.

Latest news

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

[Ex-Derbyshire detective jailed for dangerous driving which resulted in a fatal collision](#)

[West Yorkshire Police officer found guilty of assaulting Leeds man who had been on a moped](#)

[Investigation into Lincolnshire Police response to welfare concerns where children needed hospital treatment](#)

[Investigation into Staffordshire police response to man running in between traffic who died](#)

[Investigation into conduct of Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary officers in Henry Nowak case](#)

[Investigation into Avon and Somerset Police over house explosion deaths following stalking allegations](#)

Email: oversight@policeconduct.gov.uk

Tel: 01924 811699

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