

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.

New IOPC communications email addresses

Please note the IOPC has new email addresses for sending corporate communications to our stakeholders. You may have noticed that this newsletter, and other Oversight communications, will now be sent from oversightcommunications@policeconduct.gov.uk. You may also receive communications from IOPCCommunications@policeconduct.gov.uk. Please ensure your systems can receive communications from the new email addresses. Any questions or queries for the Oversight team should still be directed to oversight@policeconduct.gov.uk.

Focus 24 – suspending investigations and other handling procedures

On 2 March 2026 we published our latest issue of [Focus](#). This publication is a practical guide for complaint handlers on the handling of cases involving suspending investigations and other handling. The guidance helps to address some of the common queries the IOPC receive, and is accompanied by a new interactive [learning tool](#), which helps the complaint handler assess their knowledge.

Over the coming months we will invite feedback on the new learning tool, so please consider how this tool might support training and development within your department.

If you have any questions, or feedback on [Focus 24](#), please contact oversight@policeconduct.gov.uk

Amendments to Focus – issue 9

On 24 March 2026, we re-published [Focus 9](#) to include a section on helping appropriate authorities to decide whether cases of deaths or serious injuries involving police officers or police staff require a referral to the IOPC.

We hope you find these amendments helpful. If you have any queries, please contact oversight@policeconduct.gov.uk

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) workshops

We wrote to you on 27 March 2026 to tell you about our upcoming workshops for complaint handlers on violence against women and girls. These workshops are an opportunity to convene complaint handlers from different forces alongside violence against women and girls leads, to share what is working well and what the challenges are. We'll also embed the messages from our [Focus guidance on violence against women and girls](#).

The workshop dates are as follows:

Heads of PSD	Wednesday 6 May 2026
North West	Wednesday 20 May 2026
Midlands	Wednesday 10 June 2026
North East	Tuesday 16 June 2026
Wales and South West	Tuesday 23 June 2026
South East and London	Thursday 2 July 2026
South and London	Wednesday 8 July 2026

We ask that you nominate two complaint handlers (in most cases) and your violence against women and girls lead to attend. Please refer to the email of 27 March or full joining instructions.

If you have any questions, please email oversight@policeconduct.gov.uk

Reflective Practice Review Process (RPRP): Positive practice

Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire (BCH) Professional Standards Department (PSD) Prevent Team co-ordinate RPRP outcomes across the three forces.

When the Prevent team took over this role, it recognised the process required a defined operating model, that would have a clear standard operating procedure designed to support all employees across BCH. This would ensure those involved were provided with clarity as to the purpose of the learning requirements and received support to deliver a tangible and meaningful outcome.

To achieve this, the Prevent team reviewed previous processes and engaged stakeholders regarding the support they required to achieve the desired outcome.

BCH's SharePoint site was re-designed to host relevant learning support material including policy and guidance documents on RPRP, plus short educational videos involving subject matter experts for various topics such as use of force, where the subject matter experts are personal safety team instructors.

For all cases involving RPRP, a PSD prevent officer oversees the support for those involved. Their role is to ensure required processes are understood, with learning opportunities identified and signposting provided to additional support wherever possible.

The prevent officer remains in contact with the reviewer during the process, with progress reports provided after 28 and 56 days. If the matter runs over 56 days, the prevent manager makes additional contact to understand whether additional support is required.

The prevent managers also quality assure completed paperwork prior to finalising and utilise a feedback mechanism to evaluate the process.

BCH use data on RPRP to identify emerging risk areas, which feed into tactical tasking coordination group meetings.

The results have been extremely positive, as demonstrated by:

- the only cases exceeding 56 days involve employees on long term sick or other abstraction
- reviewers/participating officers providing feedback which highlights the benefit of engagement
- between 31 January 2025 to 31 January 2026, the Prevent team oversaw 97 RPRP processes that involved 126 officers/staff
- only six BCH employees who previously undertook RPRP were later involved in new conduct matters

BCH now follow the same process for proactive management and learning from reflection as they do with RPRP where there has been three complaints/conduct matters in a rolling 12 month period.

BCH advise their agreed operating model is clearly understood by their staff and those involved in all their learning strands. It supports them to ensure a tangible/meaningful outcome is achieved.

If you have any queries about this article and would like to liaise with BCH about it, please email oversight@policeconduct.gov.uk and we will redirect your query. For more information on RPRP, see our recently republished [Focus 21](#).

? Common questions from forces and LPBs

Q: A death or serious injury (DSI) referral was made to the IOPC and the mode of investigation (MOI) was a local investigation. A complaint was later made about the same matter. The complaint was recorded and referred to the IOPC and the IOPC decided a local investigation was to be conducted. A report was completed covering the full circumstances.

Should the appropriate authority (AA) send the report to the complainant with a right of review? Does the complaint take primacy over the DSI? And does the AA need to send a separate copy of the report to the IOPC?

A: Where a complaint is made that covers the same matters as the DSI investigation, the case converts to a complaint case. A separate DSI report is not required if the same matters are raised and a separate DSI report does not need to be sent to the IOPC. The appropriate authority should

send the report together with the right of review to the complainant, and the IOPC will not see it unless the review right is exercised.

For more information and examples on DSI matters, please see [Focus 20](#) - Local death or serious injury (DSI) report

Q: A complainant requested a copy of their complaint record from a force PSD, stating that IOPC guidelines outline the force must comply with this request. Limited complaint details were given to the complainant as the force was concerned that complaint details and officer names may be published. They were advised that, following the handling of the complaint, a subject access request can be completed. The complainant was unhappy with this and made a further complaint about the complaint handler. How should the force PSD proceed with handling this request from the complainant?

A: Paragraph 6.34 of the IOPC Statutory guidance (read in context with 6.32-6.34), can be summarised as saying that a complaint should be recorded without delay, that it should be in an auditable format and that a record should be provided to the complainant. What that looks like will depend on each force, but the complainant should be provided with a document showing how their complaint has been recorded.

The Police (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2020, explains that a local policing body or chief officer may decide not to provide a copy of a complaint if it or the chief officer believes that to do so might prejudice any criminal investigation or pending proceedings or would otherwise be contrary to the public interest. In such cases, the local policing body or chief officer must keep that decision under regular review.

Corporate news

The critical role of equipment and training in emergency police response

There are three factors that cannot be underestimated when supporting officers who are responding to incidents where someone's life is at risk. These are: the availability of 'method-of-entry' (MOE) equipment to enter locked or inaccessible buildings, the confidence of officers to use their powers to enter premises to save lives, and clear training and guidance on what to do to save a person when they have attempted to take their own life.

One of the cases we recently investigated highlighted this.

Read about the case and the issued learning recommendations in response to a [welfare concern that came into a police force](#)

Met officer dismissed for discriminating against suspect in custody

A [recent misconduct case](#) highlights the serious impact discriminatory language and disproportionate use of force can have on public trust. A custody sergeant from the Met was dismissed after colleagues raised concerns about his behaviour towards a detainee, leading to an IOPC investigation and a gross misconduct hearing. The case reinforces the importance of maintaining professionalism in high pressure situations, applying force lawfully and proportionately, and challenging unacceptable conduct when it occurs.

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.

[Gross misconduct finding for ex-Devon and Cornwall PC who gave 'dishonest' account of woman's carpark fall |](#)

[Gross misconduct proven for two former Gwent Police officers over sharing of offensive messages](#)

[South Yorkshire Police Community Support Officer sentenced after assaulting man in Doncaster](#)

[Former Northumbria Police officer who sent inappropriate messages to a child guilty of misconduct in public office](#)

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

