

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.

Submission of 7.1 referral forms for matters declared independent following telephone referral

Please ensure that 7.1 referral forms are submitted as soon as possible following a telephone referral being declared Independent. This is important as the referral form is needed to start our case management file, and any delays can impact our effectiveness and timeliness.

In contrast to the usual detail required, because the matter is already being independently investigated, the 7.1 form can contain only basic details, and you can send supporting information later.

Communicating our DSI review decisions

We recently started taking a slightly different approach when communicating our decisions for DSI reviews with you. Previously, you received an email with a letter attached setting out our decision, alongside any other matters which we wanted to bring to your attention.

In an effort to streamline our process and make things easier for you in PSD, we will now send an email with the decision set out in the content of the email, removing any attachments. This is more in line with how we communicate with you the mode of investigation decisions that result from a referral.

We are also using a more consistent format for the subject line. This format clearly sets out the case name, reference number, decision and whether any action is required. We hope you will find it beneficial to see more information at a glance, before opening the email to read our decision in full.

Reviews – the different routes for review submissions

In the summer, we updated our IOPC reviews form and asked all police forces and OPCCs to update the [link](#) to the reviews form in your standard template letters.

However, we didn't confirm the other routes that people could use to submit a reviews form. Some forces are now only providing the link to the IOPC reviews page in their outcome letters or in some cases, incorrect email addresses.

Where the IOPC is the relevant review body, please ensure that your outcome letter templates reflect that review submissions can be made via the [IOPC review form on our website](#) or by post, **only**. Please do not provide any other contact information as this may result in review applications being misdirected.

Please also ensure that you include the IOPC's reviews FAQs sheet with the outcome letter when writing to the complainant.

The postal address for reviews is:

IOPC
PO BOX 473
Sale
M33 0BW

Introducing Learning the Lessons 46 (frontline policing)

On 12 November 2025, we published [issue 46 of our Learning the Lessons magazine](#), focusing on frontline policing. We encourage you to read the issue and talk about the content with your teams and colleagues.

Issue 46 features ten case studies based on real investigations and reviews completed by the IOPC. We carefully selected these cases because they highlight themes we see in our work and because of the opportunities they create to spark reflective thinking. Key themes include call handling, use of force, children and young people, use of equipment, stop and search, providing appropriate first aid, and more.

While this issue discusses more recent IOPC cases, previous issues of the magazine – covering areas such as **roads policing**, **call handling**, **custody**, and **mental health** – contain case studies that are still very relevant. We encourage you to continue to read and consider the learning raised in these issues.

Issue 46 also contains articles highlighting work that is happening across the IOPC, the police service, academia, and community groups. They shine a spotlight on good practice initiatives, new training and research, and useful information. For more information, please click on the link provided above.

Please complete our [three-minute feedback survey](#) to tell us what you think about this issue. The **survey closes on 9 January 2026**.

If you have any upcoming conferences, meetings, or training events you can **request a small pack of free hard copies** of issue 46 or previous editions. If you would like hard copies of Learning the Lessons sent to your office, please email learning@policeconduct.gov.uk.

Reminders

Consultation period - Focus guidance on suspending investigations or other handling

On 25 November 2025 we shared with Heads of PSD, forces and OPCCs, a draft of our Focus guidance on suspending investigations or handling otherwise than by investigation. We asked for feedback on the draft Focus to ensure it provides the support and guidance complaint handlers need when making decisions to suspend a case.

Thank you to all who have responded so far. Your input is appreciated. If you haven't had a chance to provide your feedback and would still like to, please email your feedback to [!Oversight](#) by **5pm on Tuesday, 9 December 2025**.

Introduction of a National Investigations Delivery Model

In a letter dated 3 October 2025, Rachel Watson, IOPC Director General, wrote to all forces, OPCCs and Heads of PSD to explain that as part of the ongoing Transformation Programme, we are introducing a National Investigations Delivery Model. This model changes the way that we manage and deliver our investigations. Responsibilities have been separated out across new roles to build efficient, effective and robust case management. If you have not seen the letter and would like more information, please email [!Oversight](#).

Professional standards departments new starter sessions

We have arranged more new starter sessions for 2026, and the beginning of 2027, and these are now available to book. The sessions are a useful introduction and 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.

The available sessions are:

- Thursday 22 January 2026
- Tuesday 21 April 2026
- Wednesday 15 July 2026
- Thursday 15 October 2026
- Tuesday 19 January 2027

To book, please email [!Oversight](#) with the name and email address for each new starter, and their first and second choice of preferred dates. We will do our best to accommodate them.

IOPC Transforming Oversight and Casework Project – PSD and PCC's quarterly update

On 15 October 2025, we wrote to all forces, OPCCs and Heads of PSD to reflect on, and provide an update, on some of the initiatives we delivered during the 2024/25 financial year. As a result of all this work, service users are now waiting approximately eight months for a decision on their review, compared to 12 months previously. We also provided a list of new pieces of work we have started, to build on the efficiencies already gained.

If you have not received this update and would like more information, please email [!Oversight](#)

? Common questions from forces and LPBs

Q: We repeatedly receive the same complaint from the same individual, which has previously been recorded, addressed and gone through the review process. But because people can insist on having their repeat complaint recorded, we are finding the process becomes very resource intensive. How can we handle such matters more efficiently? Do we have to record their repeat complaints?

A: The complaints system must be accessible to all, and if the complaint requires recording under Schedule 3 of the *Police Reform Act 2002* – either because it fulfils the grounds listed in [paragraph 6.27 of our Statutory Guidance](#) or because the complainant wants it recorded, then the complaint must be recorded.

[Paragraph 6.30 of the IOPC Statutory Guidance](#) explains that there may be reasons to still consider recording something, even if doesn't fit the criteria for recording. For example, where there are a number of otherwise low-level complaints about the same set of circumstances or to see if there is a pattern of behaviour for a team/person/area of policing.

If, after recording, the complaint handler is satisfied that:

- the complaint is substantially the same as one or more complaints that were previously recorded and fully addressed, and
- they are certain there is no more that can be done to handle the matter and address the complainant's dissatisfaction

the complaint handler may decide to take no further action and provide a right of review.

To assist with the amount and frequency of complaint correspondence, you may wish to introduce a contact strategy to manage circumstances where a significant number of complaints are being made on a frequent basis. However, you will need to notify the complainant of any decision to introduce a contact strategy so you can manage their expectations.

You may find that by collating the allegations from the complainant, it may help to identify several allegations being about the same incident. This makes the recording process easier to manage, thereby reducing the number of reviews submitted. More guidance on managing unacceptable and unreasonable complainant behaviour can be found on our [website](#).

Corporate news

IOPC releases police complaints data for 2024/25

More people than ever before are accessing the police complaints system in England and Wales, [figures released by the Independent Office for Police Conduct \(IOPC\)](#) show.

The number of complaints logged by the 43 police forces rose to 94,940 between April 2024 and March 2025. That represents an 11 per cent increase on the previous 12 months and the most on record since the IOPC began collating and analysing complaints data.

IOPC Director of Oversight and Casework, David Ford, acknowledged the increase but noted that many police forces have improved the way they handle and record complaints.

He said: “We are seeing more public complaints being recorded, but it doesn’t necessarily mean that there is greater dissatisfaction with policing.

“We know some forces have improved their complaints handling process, centralising their receipt of complaints and decision-making systems. It is resulting in more matters being formally recorded and reported to us through their data submissions.

“The data also shows significant variations. While the total number of complaints has increased, some forces have reported a reduction in the number of complaints they received.

"The complaints data is an essential part of the IOPC’s oversight function, providing insights into complaints handling at national and force-level. We use this data to inform our ongoing oversight activities and engagement with forces, supporting improvements in complaints handling and performance, and identifying effective practices in complaints handling.

Read our full [news release on our website](#).

Knife crime named the leading policing issue for young people in new survey from the IOPC Youth Panel

Knife crime and drug dealing are the key issues young people would like police to focus their attention on, [a new survey commissioned by the Independent Office for Police Conduct \(IOPC\) Youth Panel](#) has revealed.

The results, published this week, show almost half of young people named either knife crime (26%) or drug dealing (20%) as their top policing priority. Other key areas to focus on highlighted in the survey were: sexual violence (13%), young people (9%), and violence (8%).

It comes as the IOPC’s Youth Panel publishes its 2030 Manifesto for Change, setting out its recommendations designed to drive change within policing and the police complaints system, in ways that will make improvements for young and vulnerable people.

They include: creating a new mechanism to allow community groups to make a complaint on behalf of groups of people with shared experiences; suggesting reforms to the complaints process, such as an online dashboard system, to make it more accessible; and working with police and schools to ensure young people better understand the police complaints system and how to use it.

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

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.

[Hertfordshire police community support officer to appear in court on multiple charges](#)

[Dismissal of three Met Police officers following investigation at Charing Cross station](#)

[Greater Manchester Police officer demoted after man was arrested and then died](#)

[Gwent Police officers to face disciplinary proceedings for missing persons case](#)

[Avon and Somerset Police service was unacceptable following failings in response to women’s death](#)

[Gross misconduct by West Yorkshire Police officer for inappropriate relationship with suspected drug dealer](#)

[Gross misconduct for former Wiltshire Police researcher who failed to examine Clare's Law applications](#)

[IOPC finds North Wales Police officers did not contribute to death of woman in custody](#)

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.

