

# OVERSIGHT

## newsletter

Welcome to our 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).

### New Learning the Lessons magazine on call handling

The force control room is often the first point of contact that the public has with the police. It is vital that this contact is handled appropriately to ensure an effective response from the police. Call handlers, dispatchers, and staff in the control room need to be equipped to respond to a vast variety of incidents to help protect the public from harm.

Despite regional differences in approaches to contact management, the ten case studies included in this issue highlight areas of learning that can be applied across all forces to encourage a quality response, when a member of the public contacts the police for help. Some of the key themes we explore are the police response to vulnerable people, the importance of completing quality risk assessments and the value of effective communication with the caller.

The magazine also includes:

- insights from ACC Alan Todd, the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) lead on contact management, about the history of call handling in policing
- an article from Tonya Cook at the College of Policing, discussing work to improve the policing response to 'safe and well' checks
- an overview of the Silent Solution campaign, and reflections on the importance of call handlers being alert to the risks of silent and abandoned 999 calls
- reflections from Cheshire Constabulary about its work to challenge bias and stereotypes in the force control room
- an article highlighting how Kent Police is providing a rapid video response to callers reporting domestic abuse
- insights from Alan Rhees-Cooper, chair of the NPCC National Missing People Policing Group, outlining how force control rooms can play a leading role in improving the handling of cross-force missing person investigations
- reflections from the Police Digital service exploring the future of contact management in policing

Please [click here](#) to read Learning the Lessons issue 41.

### Complaint handler workshops 2023

We will host a series of face to face workshops for professional standards department complaint handlers in February and March 2023. You will have recently received a 'Save the Date'

notification of the date for your region. An invitation will be sent to you soon. The content of the workshops will largely focus on reflective practice. We hope that you have an opportunity to read our issue of [Focus](#) on reflective practice, that was recently published, and put the content into practice before the workshops.

## Reminders

### 12 months timeliness reports

In accordance with our [operational advice note](#) for 12 month timeliness reports, we would like to remind you that reports should be sent to the relevant LPB and the IOPC by email to [oversight@policeconduct.gov.uk](mailto:oversight@policeconduct.gov.uk). To avoid delays, please do not send the reports to any other IOPC email address.

### Professional Standards Departments new starter sessions

As we outlined in our recent newsletters, we are developing an overview of the IOPC for new starters in professional standards departments. We will let you know when the dates of these sessions are confirmed. In the meantime, please email: [oversight@policeconduct.gov.uk](mailto:oversight@policeconduct.gov.uk) if you have new starters you would like to add to the first session, and we will do our best to accommodate you. The sessions will be held quarterly (remotely), last around 60-90 mins and will cover how the IOPC started, the work we do, complaints handling tips and a chance to ask us questions on any area of our work.

### Providing background papers when the review body changes

Following guidance in the [April 2022 newsletter](#) about providing background papers after a change of review body, we are still experiencing some delays in obtaining documents. Please note that when appropriate authorities or LPBs send a review to the IOPC after a change to a relevant review body, the background papers should be included with the review. If we are sent the review application, but then have to request and chase the background papers, it creates unnecessary delays in the allocation of the review.

## ❓ Common questions from forces and LPBs

**Q: When dealing with a complaint that the professional standards department has decided to take no further action, do the subject officers need to be made aware of the complaint?**

A: Forces and local policing bodies must inform the complainant as soon as possible that their complaint has been recorded and provide them with a copy of the record that has been made. A copy of the complaint must also be given to the person complained about (if any), unless the force or local policing body considers that to do so might prejudice any criminal investigation or pending proceedings or would otherwise be contrary to the public interest. This decision must be kept under regular review. The identity of any person may be anonymised in the copy provided.

**Q: If a death or serious injury referral is made to the IOPC and while waiting for the mode of investigation decision, a further conduct matter is identified, do forces need to wait for the initial DSI MOI decision to be made or should a further referral for the conduct be made straight away?**

A: The current principle arises from the *Police (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2020* and paragraph 9.40 of the [IOPC Statutory Guidance](#), both of which state that referrals must be made without delay. In this scenario, a further referral for the conduct matter should be made as soon as possible, making reference to the initial death or serious injury matter.

## Corporate news

### IOPC publishes figures on police complaints made in 2021/22

The Independent Office for Police Conduct published its annual 'Police Complaints Statistics' report for England and Wales 2021/22.

Previous IOPC Director General Michael Lockwood said: "These are the second set of annual complaint statistics to be published since significant reforms were made to the police complaints system in February 2020. It is important to remain cautious when comparing the figures from this year to previous years, as the statistics are experimental, meaning they are still in the testing phase and not yet fully developed.

"Notwithstanding that, the total volume of complaints rose by 11%. An increase that is likely linked to the simplifying of the system and the widening in definition of a complaint to 'any expression of dissatisfaction'...

"Meanwhile, the rise in the number of complaints resolved informally indicates more complaints are being sorted quickly, as the new system intended, with fewer complaints resulting in lengthy investigations. This is to be welcomed.

"It is disappointing to see that no further action is still the most common outcome of formally recorded complaints, as we have run workshops focusing on this. However, we have seen a significant reduction and in many cases we found actions were taken by the force, but were inaccurately recorded as no further action. We will continue to advise on this and hope to see further reductions next year."

Read [our full statement](#) or a [summary of our report](#).

### Statement in response to HMICFRS report into vetting, misconduct and misogyny in policing

Previous IOPC Director General Michael Lockwood said: "The report highlights issues we have been concerned about for some time – and I welcome the inclusion of our previous recommendations within this report. The IOPC, and our predecessor organisation the IPCC, raised a number of these concerns as far back as 2012. Many of our findings were reiterated in 2016 and again, very recently.

"Our Operation Hotton investigation) uncovered cultural issues around misogyny, bullying and harassment at Charing Cross police station. We made 15 learning recommendations which were

all accepted by the Metropolitan Police Service – and have now been rolled out nationally across England and Wales.

“And in June, following our joint investigation – alongside the College of Policing and HMICFRS – into a super-complaint by the Centre for Women’s Justice, we urged all chief constables to act on our findings that forces needed to improve how they respond to domestic abuse allegations against officers and staff.

“I have previously spoken publicly on vetting procedures and the need for change. In light of today’s report, I reiterate the need for vetting to be more intrusive and diligent - including social media and background checks on those hoping to become police officers.

“The IOPC will work collaboratively with policing stakeholders to drive learning and fundamental change. Policing now too, must use the findings of this report as an opportunity to learn and to demonstrate real change - the trust and confidence of the public depends on it.”

Read [our full statement 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.

[Former Northamptonshire Police staff member jailed for child sexual offences following undercover operation](#)

[Inquest found failings and missed opportunities regarding West Midlands police contact with two women before they were murdered](#)

[Cleveland Police officer charged with careless driving after collision left young people with serious injuries](#)

[Greater Manchester Police officers did not pursue car involved in fatal Stalybridge collision](#)

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

