



Outcomes following IOPC independent investigations

2023/24

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The data in this report covers 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. A single investigation may consider the conduct of multiple people. The figures refer to the outcomes for individual police officers or staff and not the number of investigations, unless otherwise stated.

At times there may be a variance in figures as we continuously review and update our data to ensure the highest data quality

This report does not constitute official statistics as defined in the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007*.

Introduction

About the IOPC

The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) is the police complaints watchdog. We are not part of the police and operate entirely independently from them.

We set the standards for the police complaints system and ensure that police forces investigate complaints properly. We also carry out our own investigations into the most serious and sensitive incidents involving the police.

Through our work, we hold the police to account when things go wrong, and we make recommendations to improve policing practices and prevent similar issues from happening again. We use evidence from our investigations to drive meaningful change – for the benefit of both the public and the police. This supports our vision: for everyone to have trust and confidence in policing.

Our remit includes specialist police forces such as the Ministry of Defence Police, Civil Nuclear Constabulary, and British Transport Police. We also oversee the complaints systems for other organisations, including HM Revenue and Customs, the National Crime Agency, and the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority. We investigate serious complaints and conduct matters involving staff from these organisations, as well as criminal allegations against police and crime commissioners, their deputies, and police contractors.

Our investigations focus on understanding why incidents occurred and identifying what can be done to prevent them in future. This includes examining training, management support, and organisational culture. You can explore our recommendations, investigation summaries, and publications on our website:

www.policeconduct.gov.uk

About the police complaints and discipline systems

Responsibility for the police discipline system lies with individual police forces. Their Professional Standards Departments (PSDs) handle most complaints and allegations of misconduct.

The Home Office publishes data recorded by PSDs on the outcomes of misconduct and criminal investigations — including those carried out by the IOPC. PSDs are required to refer the most serious cases to us, whether or not a complaint has been made.

The *Police Reform Act 2002*, as amended by the *Policing and Crime Act 2017*, introduced significant reforms to the police complaints and discipline systems. These included changes to:

- the threshold for defining misconduct
- the outcomes of disciplinary proceedings

These reforms apply to cases where complaints were made — or conduct matters came to the attention of the force — on or after 1 February 2020.

Whether an investigation falls under the previous or current legislation depends on:

- the date the force's updated legislation came into effect
- the date the complaint was made or the conduct matter was identified

The appropriate authority is the person responsible for making decisions about complaint and conduct matters. This may include:

- the chief officer of the police force (or equivalent)
- the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), or their equivalent
- the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (for complaints about the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Service)

- the Common Council of the City of London (for complaints about the Commissioner of the City of London Police)

About our investigations

Police officers and staff are expected to uphold the highest standards of professional behaviour in their duties. These standards are defined in the Police (Conduct) Regulations 2012 and Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020, which apply to all police officers and special constables. Equivalent standards for police staff are set out in local policies.

Allegations of misconduct may arise from:

- complaints made by members of the public
- concerns raised internally within a police force

Forces are legally required to refer certain matters to us — for example, any death or serious injury (DSI) following contact with the police. When we receive a referral, we assess whether the matter should be:

- investigated by the IOPC, or
- referred back to the police force for local investigation

Our investigations are independent and evidence-based. We assess all available information to determine whether there is a case to answer for misconduct or gross misconduct or if someone's performance was unsatisfactory.

At the end of an investigation, we produce a final report that analyses and summarises the evidence. This is accompanied by a decision maker's opinion document, which sets out our view on conduct, performance, or learning.

We send these documents to the appropriate authority and seek their views on whether there is a case to answer. If the force disagrees with our assessment, the next steps depend on the

legislation in force. Under current legislation, the force may disagree, but the IOPC makes the final decision on whether there is a case to answer. The appropriate authority must comply with this decision.

If our investigation identifies misconduct or gross misconduct, a misconduct meeting or hearing will be arranged. You can read more about this process on [page 8](#).

In cases involving a death, the coroner considers the evidence we provide during the inquest.

If our investigation indicates that a crime may have been committed, we refer the case to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). The CPS decides whether the evidence meets the threshold for legal proceedings. If charges are brought, the courts determine whether the person is guilty of a criminal offence.

A vital part of our work is identifying the underlying causes of incidents and recommending ways to prevent them in future. Our recommendations may relate to:

- training
- policy and practice
- supervision
- safety improvements

Our Impact Report highlights how our work contributes to improvements in policing and helps reduce future risks. You can read summaries of our investigations and details of our recommendations on our website: www.policeconduct.gov.uk

About outcomes

When we refer to outcomes, this means:

- the decision we make about whether someone has a case to answer, for misconduct or gross misconduct, after our independent investigation. We will make the final decision, although we will consider the views of the appropriate authority about what should happen. The appropriate authority will carry out any disciplinary action.
- the decision we make to refer a case to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) where there is an indication someone may have committed a crime
- the results of misconduct or criminal proceedings that took place

during this reporting period or earlier. This means that investigation outcomes and proceedings data should not be directly compared, as they may refer to different timeframes.

About this report

This report outlines the decisions made at the conclusion of IOPC independent investigations, as well as any related misconduct or criminal proceedings, between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024.

The data is presented in two sections:

- Decisions following completed investigations
- Misconduct and criminal outcomes

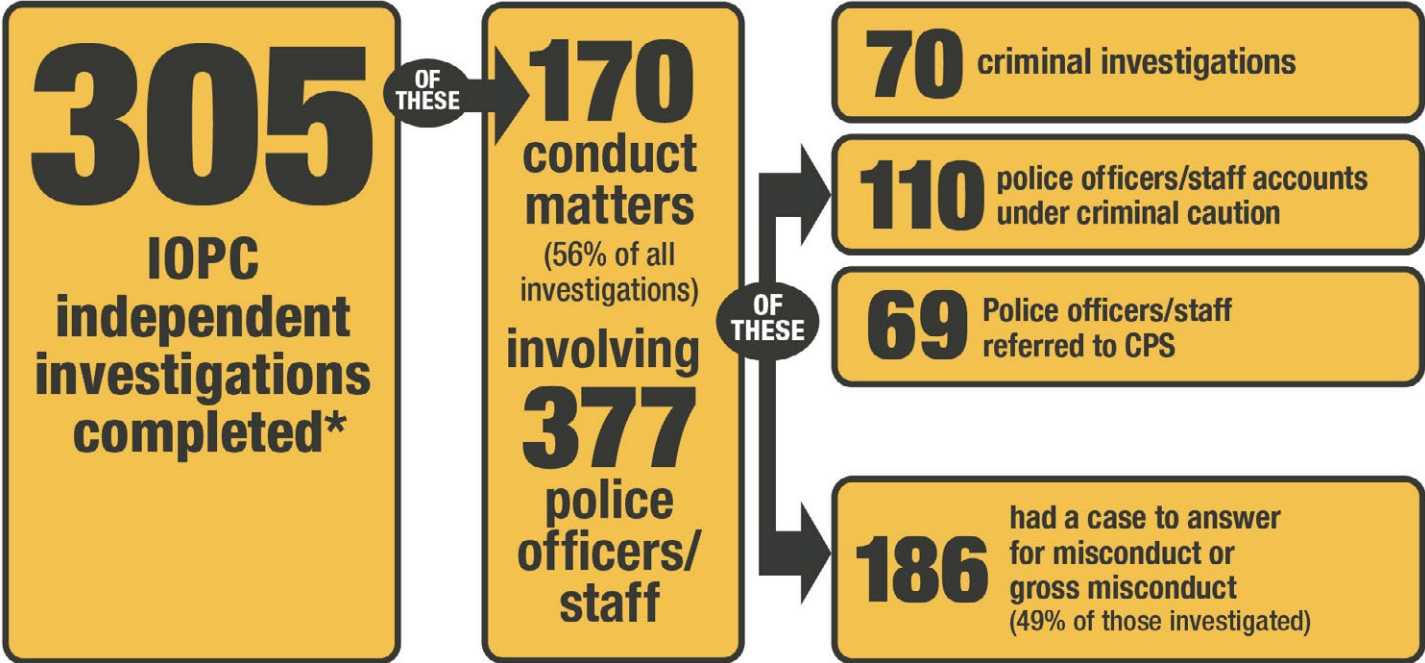
Please note that there can be a significant time gap between the end of an IOPC investigation and the conclusion of any misconduct proceedings (led by the appropriate authority) or criminal cases (prosecuted by the Crown Prosecution Service). For example, an investigation completed in 2022 may result in a misconduct hearing held in 2023.

As a result, the outcomes of misconduct or criminal proceedings included in this 2023/24 report may relate to investigations completed

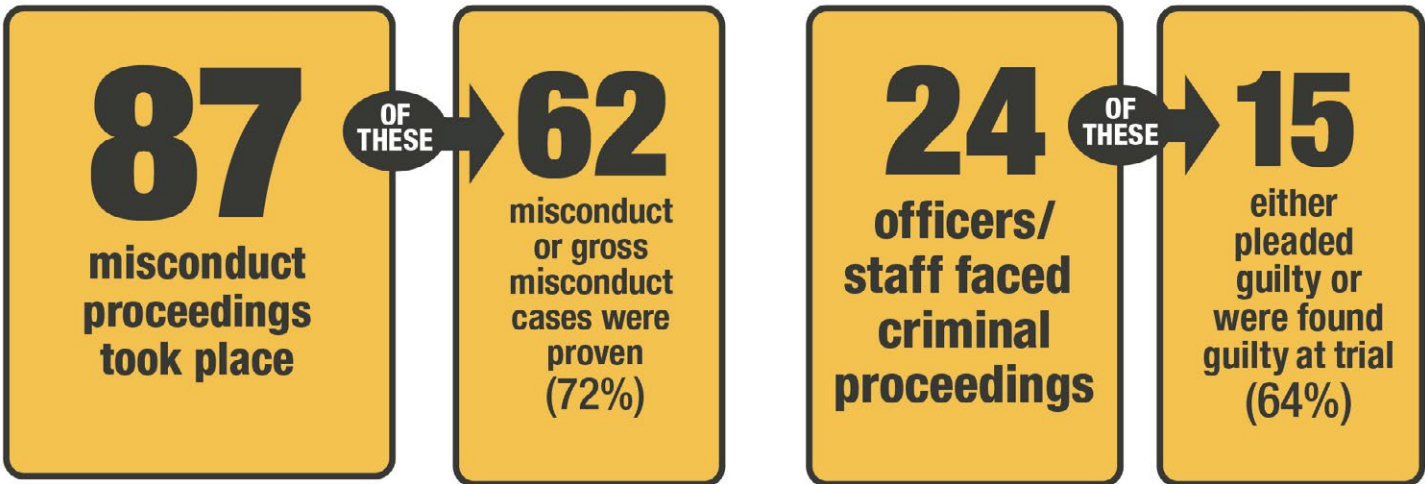
Summary of outcomes

1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

Decisions following completed investigations



Misconduct and criminal outcomes

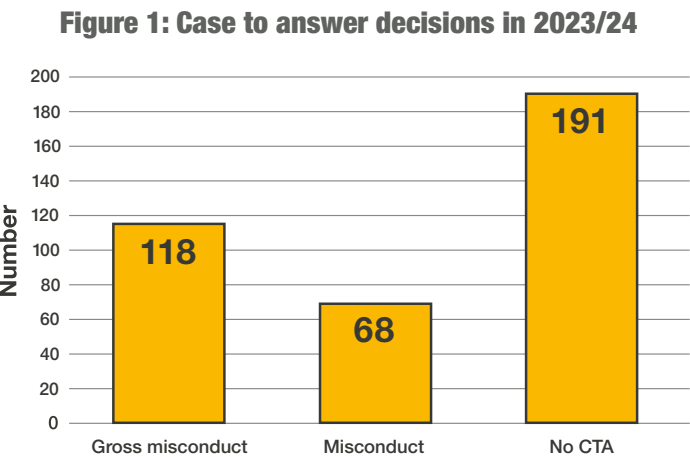


* This figure differs from the figure of 306 completed investigations shown in other reports, such as our Annual report and statement of accounts 2023/24. This is due to a revision made in August 2025.

Decisions following completed investigations

Decisions about conduct

We investigated 377 police officers/staff during 2023/24. We found 49% (186) had a case to answer for misconduct or gross misconduct.



Of the 186 officers/staff who had a case to answer, 68 involved misconduct and 118 involved gross misconduct.

Our investigations found 191 of the police officers/staff we investigated did not have a case to answer for misconduct or gross misconduct. Further action was taken in response to 37% (71) of these people. This included:

- management action or advice to improve the conduct of the officer
- unsatisfactory performance procedures
- referral to the reflective practice review process

In matters we investigate involving staff from PCCs and other elected policing bodies, the question to be determined by the investigation is whether the individual may have committed a criminal offence. Current legislation does not extend our authority to investigate any allegations of misconduct by PCCs or other elected policing bodies.

Referrals to the CPS

When our investigations suggest that a police officer or member of police staff may have committed a criminal offence, we inform those involved, explain their legal rights, and take their account under criminal caution.

In 2023/24, our investigators took cautioned accounts from 110 individuals across 70 investigations.

We only refer a case to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) if, at the conclusion of our investigation, we believe there is evidence that a criminal offence may have been committed. The CPS then decides whether to prosecute, based on its own legal threshold.

Some investigations completed during 2023/24 may still be awaiting a CPS referral decision or prosecution outcome. In some cases, the CPS may decide not to proceed if it concludes there is insufficient evidence to provide a realistic prospect of conviction.

We apply a two-part test, as set out in paragraph 23, Schedule 3 of the *Police Reform Act 2002*, to determine whether a case should be referred to the CPS. You can read more about this process in our Statutory Guidance [on our website](#).

It's important to note that the threshold we apply when deciding to refer a case to the CPS is lower than the threshold the CPS uses when deciding whether to prosecute.

In 2023/24:

- we referred 69 individuals to the CPS
- the CPS decided to prosecute 43% (30 individuals)

Misconduct and criminal outcomes

The proceedings in this section took place in 2023/24. Our investigation may have been completed in the same period or before this.

The timeliness of proceedings is not under the IOPC's direction. This is decided by the appropriate authority or the CPS.

Of the 104 proceedings which took place in 2023/24, 49 took place within 12 months of our final report.

Misconduct and criminal proceedings may conclude several months or even years after an IOPC investigation was completed. Consequently, the outcomes presented in the previous section (investigation decisions) and those in this section (proceedings outcomes) reflect different time periods and should not be directly compared.

Misconduct proceedings

There are two types of misconduct proceedings:

- For gross misconduct, a misconduct hearing is arranged by the police force (or other authority). The highest level of sanction is dismissal without notice.
- For misconduct, a misconduct meeting is arranged by the police force (or other authority). The highest level of sanction is a final written warning.

Under the previous legislation, in some situations where the appropriate authority decides there is a case to answer for misconduct, management action may be considered instead of misconduct proceedings. Under specific circumstances, a misconduct hearing may be more appropriate than a misconduct meeting. You can read more about these circumstances in our [Statutory Guidance](#).

There are different discipline systems for police officers and police staff. Police officers and special constables are subject to the regulations

set out in the Police (Conduct) Regulations 2012 or Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020. Complaints and conduct matters involving staff are covered by individual police force policies.

For police officers and special constables, if a case proceeds to a misconduct meeting, the final decision on whether misconduct is proven and any resulting sanction is made by senior police officer or manager.

If a case proceeds to a misconduct hearing, the final decision on whether misconduct is proven and any resulting sanction is made by a panel, which now is led by a senior police officer. Previously the panel was led by an independent legally qualified chair. All the hearings that are part of the statistics in this report were held under a legally qualified chair.

Figures 2 and 3 describe the various ways in which misconduct outcomes could be reached.

Figure 2: How misconduct outcomes are reached for conduct matters under the Police Reform Act 2002 (after Feb 2020)

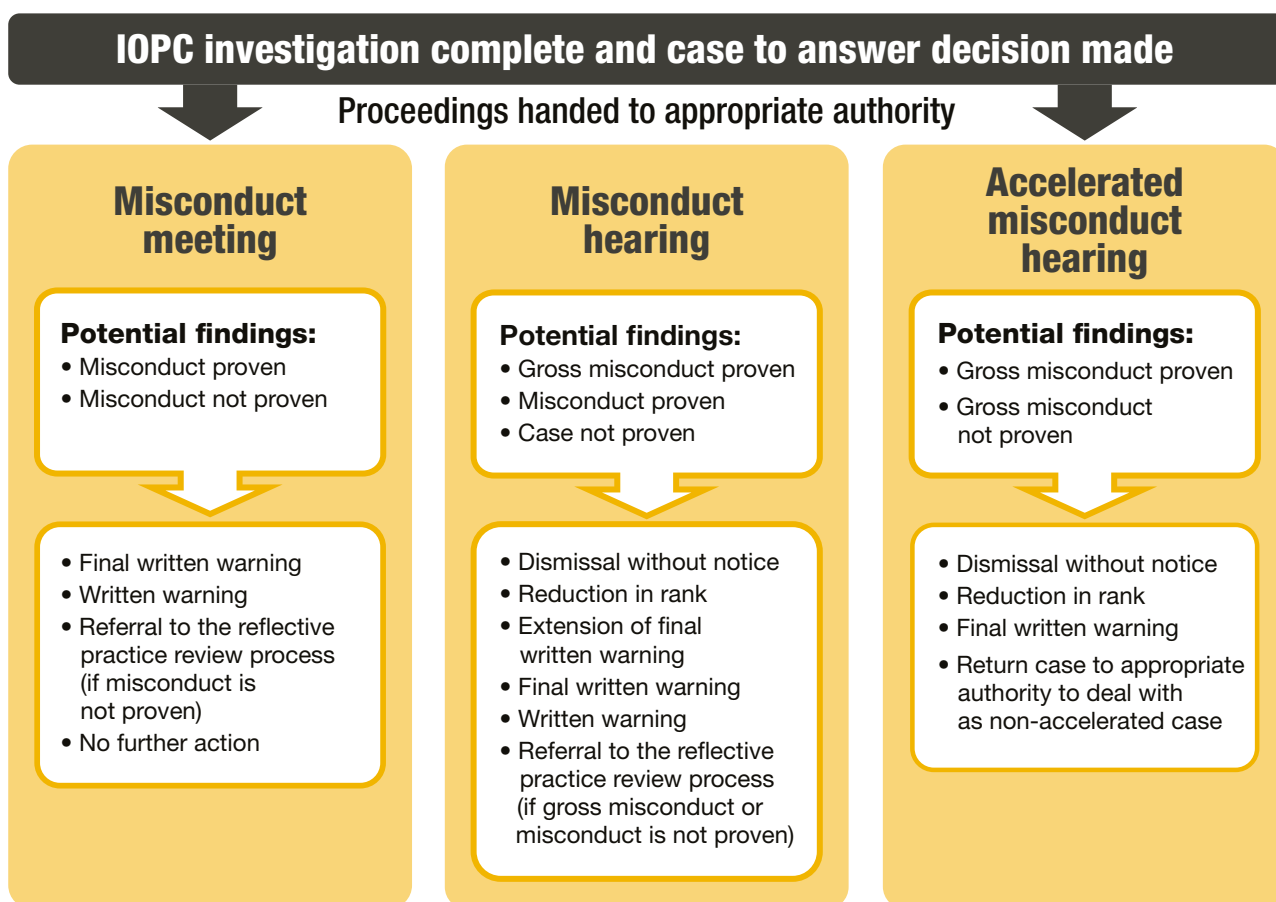
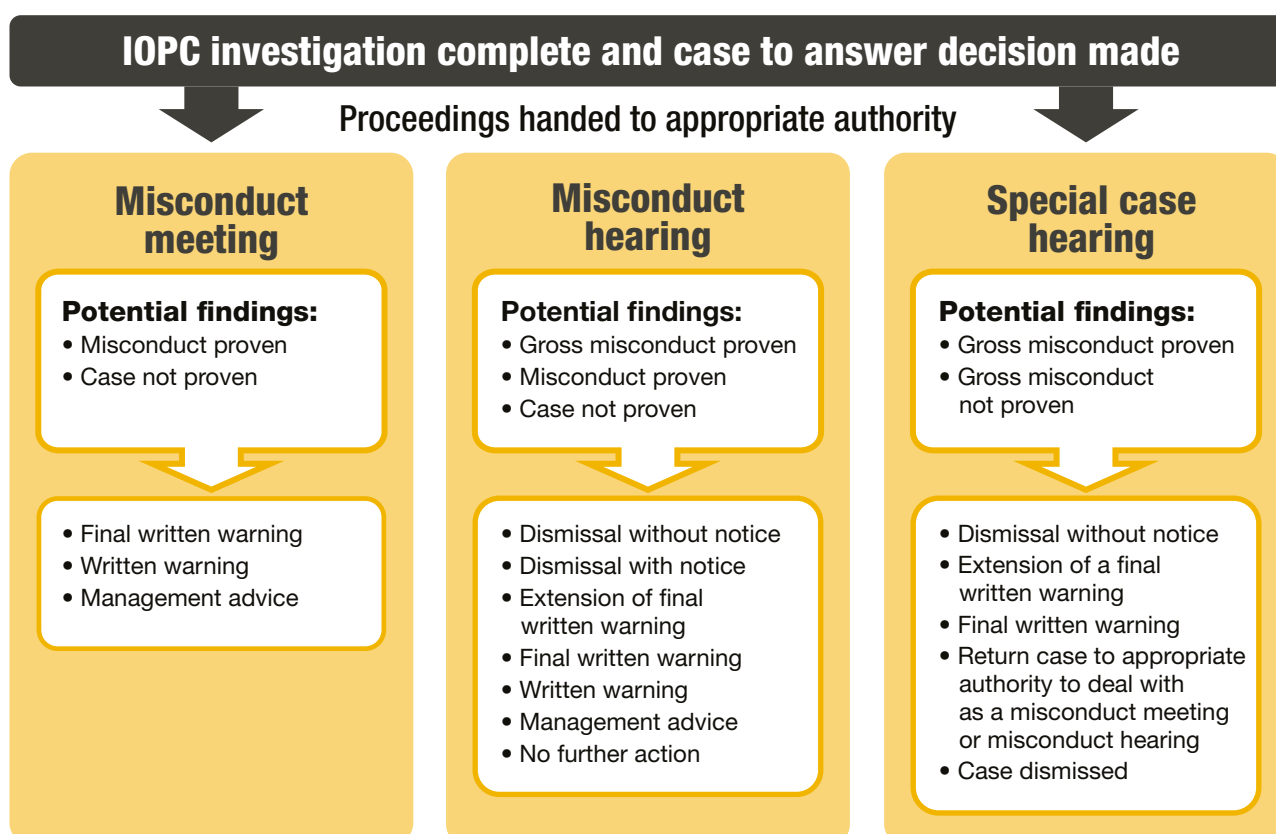


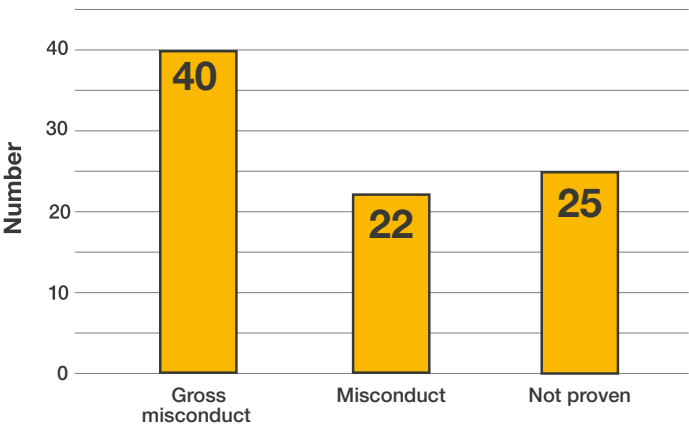
Figure 3: How misconduct outcomes are reached for conduct matters under the Police Reform Act 2002 (before Feb 2020)



Misconduct proceedings were held for 87 police officers/staff in 2023/24. It was found that 71% (62) of these officers/staff breached the standards of professional behaviour:

- gross misconduct was proven for 40 officers/staff
- misconduct was proven for 22 officers/staff
- misconduct was not proven for 25 officers/staff

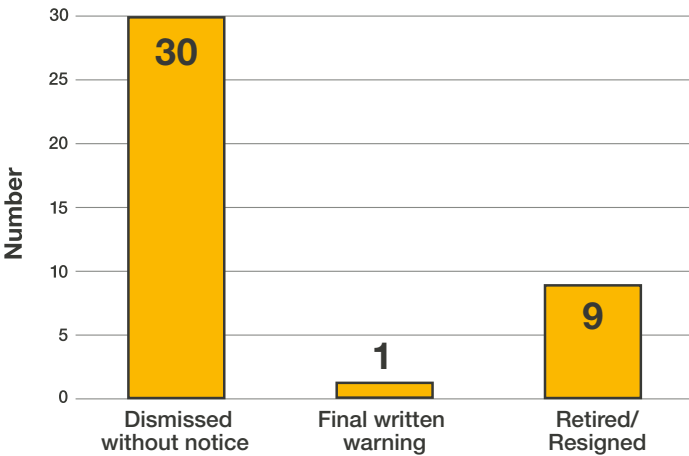
Figure 4: Outcomes following misconduct proceedings 2023/24



In the 40 proceedings where gross misconduct was proven, disciplinary actions were:

- 30 people were dismissed without notice
- nine people retired/resigned before they could receive their sanction (they would be added to the College of Policing’s barred list if the case to answer decision was gross misconduct)
- one person received a final written warning

Figure 5: Disciplinary actions following misconduct proceedings where gross misconduct was proven 2023/24

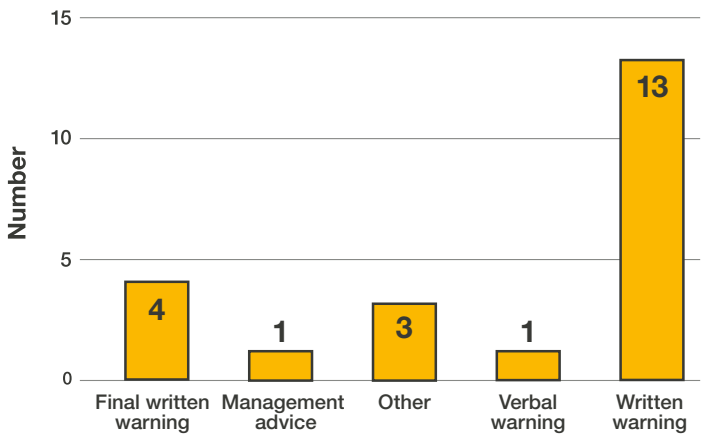


In the 22 proceedings where misconduct was proven:

- one person received a verbal warning
- 13 people received a written warning
- four people received a final written warning
- one person received management advice
- three people received other actions

Other actions could include, being referred to the reflective practice review process (RPRP), reduction in rank, or undertaking an unsatisfactory performance and attendance procedure.

Figure 6: Disciplinary actions following misconduct proceedings where misconduct was proven 2023/24



Criminal proceedings

- The fact that criminal proceedings took place during 2023/24 does not necessarily mean the associated IOPC investigation was completed within the same period.
- In 2023/24, the CPS concluded criminal proceedings against 24 police officers/staff following an IOPC independent investigation. These proceedings resulted in 15 guilty verdicts or pleas. A person can receive more than one sentence/sanction and can be charged or prosecuted for more than one offence. Therefore, there can be more sentences than verdicts and pleas.

Where the verdict (or plea) was guilty:

- nine people received a prison sentence
- three received a community sentence
- three were fined
- one received a suspended sentence
- one was disqualified from driving

The criminal proceedings also resulted in six not guilty verdicts, as shown in Figure 8.

Figure 7: Table of offences – guilty verdicts 2023/24

Offence convicted	Number
Driving offences	3
Assault	3
Misconduct in public office	9

Figure 8: Table of offences – not guilty verdicts 2023/24

Offence charged	Number
Driving offences	4
Assault	2

Thematic areas

We introduced thematic case selection in 2019/20 to focus on issues of significant public concern. In 2023/24, these themes were:

- mental health
- abuse of power for sexual purposes (APSP)
- road traffic incidents (RTI)
- race discrimination
- domestic abuse

While thematic investigations are a priority, we continue to investigate serious and sensitive cases that fall outside these areas. Such cases are considered part of our core work. Core work refers to investigations that have a certain level of seriousness or public interest that requires independent or directed investigation by the IOPC. The decision to classify a case as thematic is made at the point of referral by our Assessment Unit.

Thematic case selection is designed to identify opportunities for organisational learning and to help prevent similar incidents from occurring in future. By analysing issues and trends within these themes, we build a body of evidence that highlights systemic concerns and identifies good practice that can be shared across policing. This approach supports meaningful improvements in police conduct and culture.

Even where an investigation does not result in a misconduct finding for an individual officer or staff member, it may still lead to learning recommendations for the force. You can read more about this approach and its impact in our Impact Report.

Thematic areas for case to answer decisions 2023/24

Of the 377 police officers/staff (excluding PCCs) whose conduct was investigated in 2023/24, 148 were involved in an investigation related to one of the thematic areas.

Data on thematic areas is not provided for the outcomes of proceedings in this report. This is because many of the investigations involved in those outcomes predate the use of thematic areas.

In April 2023, we introduced violence against women and girls as a new thematic area and added this to our case selection. As a result, some cases completed during the 2023/24 financial year may not have been classified under this theme because they were started before its introduction.

This report shows the following as separate categories: domestic abuse, abuse of power for sexual purpose, and violence against women and girls. Although there is crossover between these terms, they are distinct thematic areas used at different times and with their own criteria for selecting cases.

Of the 186 police officers/staff found to have a case to answer for misconduct or gross misconduct during 2023/24, 73 were involved in thematic investigations. It is important to note that this does not necessarily mean the misconduct identified was directly related to the thematic area under which the investigation was categorised.

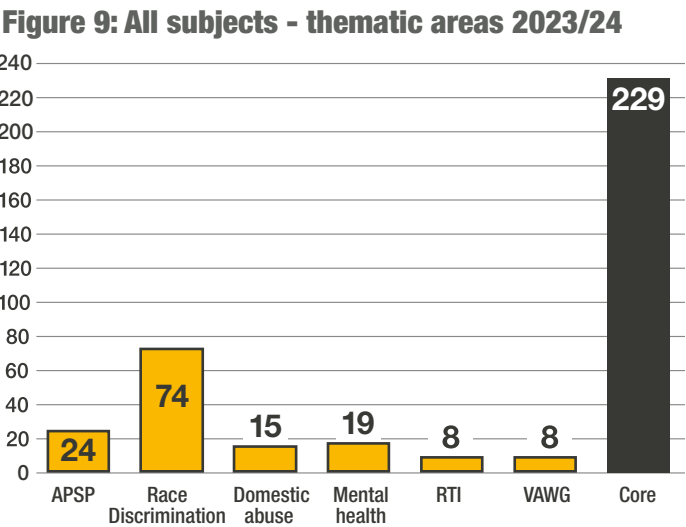
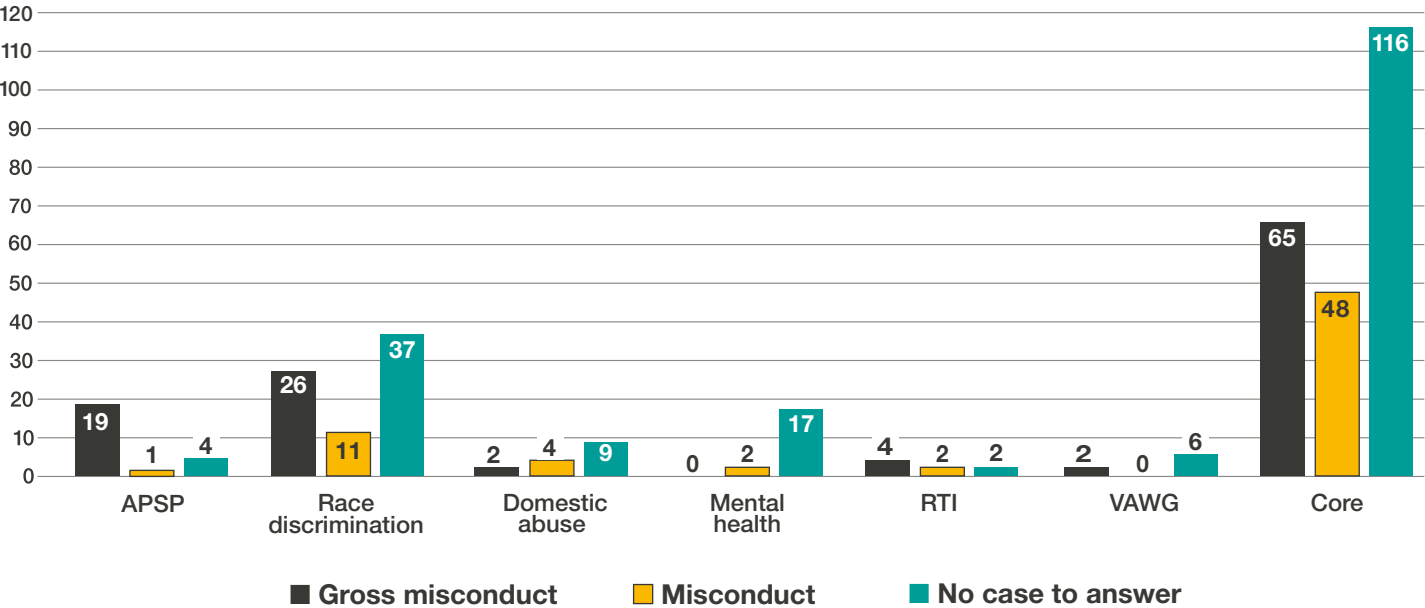


Figure 10: Thematic breakdown, gross misconduct, misconduct, and no case to answer



- Of the 118 people who had a case to answer for gross misconduct, 55% (118) were part of a core investigation. 16% (19) were part of an investigation relating to APSP, comprising 79% of the 24 people who were part of APSP related investigations.
 - Of the 68 people who had a case to answer for misconduct, 71% (48) were core investigations. 16% (11) were involved in investigations related to race discrimination.
 - Of the 191 people who did not have a case to answer, 61% (116) were involved in core investigations. 19% (37) were involved in investigations related to race discrimination, making up 50% of all people with a case to answer decision for an investigation related to this area. Further action was taken for 41% (15) of those people.
- Where there is no case to answer, there may still be learning recommendations for the relevant appropriate authority.

Annex A: glossary

Appropriate authority – the person responsible for making decisions about complaint and conduct matters. This may include:

- the chief officer of the police force
- the police and crime commissioner for the police force the complaint is about
- the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (if the complaint is about the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Service)
- the Common Council for the City of London (if the complaint is about the Commissioner of the City of London police)

Conduct – refers to the way someone behaves and the way they treat others. For example, it can include things they say or do not say and their decisions. Police officers and staff must behave in a way that meets professional standards.

Conduct matter – situations where there is an indication a person serving with the police may have committed a crime or behaved in a manner that would justify disciplinary proceedings.

Core work – investigations that have a sufficient level of seriousness and public interest that they require independent or directed investigation by the IOPC. Other matters may still attract oversight by the IOPC if they fall into one of our current thematic areas.

Disciplinary action – happens at the end of misconduct proceedings and can include the following:

- a) written warning
- b) final written warning
- c) reduction in rank
- d) dismissal without notice

Final written warning – this letter is given when a previous written warning has not been effective or where a matter is considered to be sufficiently serious. A copy of the letter will be placed on the individual's personal file.

Gross misconduct – a breach of the standards of professional behaviour that is so serious it would justify dismissal, if proven.

Management action – steps taken by a manager to improve performance or manage the behaviour of a member of staff. It is an opportunity to learn and improve. It addresses performance and conduct in a timely, proportionate and effective way. Management action is not a formal disciplinary outcome.

Management advice – for situations when management action is imposed as a formal disciplinary outcome, following misconduct proceedings or an appeal meeting.

Misconduct – a breach of the standards of professional behaviour that is so serious it would justify disciplinary action, if proven.

Misconduct hearing – deals with gross misconduct and can impose disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. It also deals with misconduct, where there is a final written warning in place.

Misconduct meeting – deals with misconduct and can impose disciplinary action up to and including a final written warning.

Misconduct proceedings – for a member of a police force or a special constable, misconduct proceedings means a misconduct meeting or a misconduct hearing. For a member of police staff, misconduct proceedings means any proceedings or management process that considers their conduct (as opposed to their performance), in order to decide whether their conduct warrants a sanction.

Reflective practice review process –

the procedures set out in part six of the Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020 for handling practice requiring improvement.

Reduction in rank – this is where an officer's rank is reduced by one or more ranks.

Thematic work – thematic areas are topics we choose to focus on, that are of public concern. Thematic work includes investigations involving these areas, even if they do not meet the requirements for core work. Our thematic areas are abuse of power for sexual purposes, domestic abuse, mental health, race discrimination, violence against women and girls and road traffic incidents.

Unsatisfactory performance procedure – used to improve someone's performance. It deals with inability or failure to perform to a satisfactory level, but without breaching the standards of professional behaviour.

Written warning – this letter may be given when a matter is considered to be sufficiently serious. A copy of the letter will be placed on the individual's personnel file.

Contact us to find out more about our work or to request this report in an alternative format:

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We welcome telephone calls in Welsh.

Rydym yn croesawu galwadau ffôn yn y Gymraeg

December 2025

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