

**POLICE**

**POLICE**

# Making a difference

**IOPC Impact Report 2020/21**

This report covers the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

This report is dedicated to the memory of Judy Nicholson and all those impacted by COVID-19 this year. Judy was a lead investigator based in our Sale office who sadly passed away during the year. Judy's contribution to the IOPC as a lead investigator, her great personality and the impact she had on us all will not be forgotten.

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## A message from the Director General

This is our third impact report setting out what we have achieved and the difference we have made as an organisation.

As we all know, the past 12 months have been unprecedented. A global pandemic had an effect beyond anything we could imagine, and events such as the tragic murder of George Floyd in the United States impacted on us all. Policing during the pandemic was in the spotlight, and we saw growing concerns from the community about stop and search, Taser use, discrimination and disproportionate use of force.

Police officers have significant powers that can impact on people's liberty and lives. It is vital the public have confidence that those powers are used properly, appropriately, and responsibly.

In our first three years of operation, we completed nearly 1,900 investigations and significantly improved timeliness, with 91% of core investigations now completed in 12 months.

**“Our learning recommendations have improved policing practice at both national and local levels in areas such as tactical pursuits, stalking and harassment to search warrants... As this report shows, the work we do makes a real difference to people's lives.”**

We also carried out over 3,000 reviews of local investigations into deaths or serious injuries and completed over 6,000 valid appeals from people who were unhappy with the outcome of their complaint or the way it was handled.

In February 2020, legislative changes to the police complaints system were introduced which strengthened our role and independence through new powers. These include the power of initiative to call in matters, the power to re-open an investigation and the power to recommend a remedy to resolve a complaint. We are already starting to see some evidence of improved access to the complaints system and the handling of complaints by forces.

We have also placed a much greater emphasis on learning and have now made over 400 learning recommendations since we were set up.

These learning recommendations have improved policing practice at both national and local levels in areas from tactical pursuits, stalking and harassment to search warrants. For example, our Operation Kentia recommendations have led to national changes in search warrant applications and seen more than 24,000 police officers receive further training in this area.

A key element of our mission is to improve public confidence in policing. Last year 52% of young people were confident the police deal with complaints fairly. We will continue the great work of our youth panel, which has helped us explain the rights of young people and improve their awareness of the police complaints system.

Policing during the pandemic, management of protests and the Black Lives Matter movement are all likely to have contributed to the drop in youth confidence that we have seen this year. Our focus in the year ahead will be to further understand this and continue to work with the police and others to ensure the complaints system meets their needs.

The latest results from our stakeholder surveys showed that sentiment was more positive than ever before, and our improved efforts to engage with stakeholders were highly praised. It was important for us to spend time with communities up and down the country listening to their issues and concerns

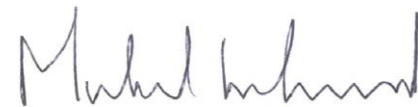
to ensure we focus on what is important to them. During the year we met with over 300 community groups and organisations with positive feedback and valuable insights gained.

Later this year we will share the results from our review of 100 Taser investigations, identifying areas of systemic learning. We will also be publishing the early outcomes from our race-based discrimination work. We expect the work on our Hillsborough investigation and on Operation Linden (historical child sexual abuse in Rotherham) to continue, with publication of final reports in the future.

COVID-19 fundamentally challenged our ways of working but thanks to our staff we quickly moved to home working and adapted to the new challenges we faced. I am incredibly proud of the adaptability and resilience they have shown throughout this time.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our Non-Executive Directors whose three-year term of office finished earlier this year for their important help and advice. I look forward to working with our new Non-Executive Directors for the knowledge and experience they bring to the organisation.

I hope you enjoy reading the attached impact report. Whilst we always have more to do, I hope it conveys to you the significant progress we have made.



**Michael Lockwood**  
Director General

## Who we are and what we do

The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) oversees the police complaints system in England and Wales and sets the standards by which police should handle complaints. We are independent, and make our decisions independently of the police, government and interest groups.

We investigate the most serious complaints and incidents involving the police and carry out reviews of police investigations involving a death or serious injury (DSI)<sup>1</sup> to ensure the outcomes are right and the investigation was appropriate.

If someone is unhappy about the outcome of their complaint or the way it has been

handled, we can consider their application for review or appeal.

We use learning from our work to influence changes in policing and make recommendations following our investigations, reviews, and appeals.

Specialist police forces such as the Ministry of Defence Police, Civil Nuclear Constabulary and the British Transport Police also come under IOPC jurisdiction. We also oversee the complaints system for other organisations, such as Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, the National Crime Agency and the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority.

We investigate certain serious complaints and conduct matters relating to staff from these organisations. We also investigate criminal allegations against police and crime commissioners, their deputies and contractors working for the police.

Our work plays a vital role in bringing about improvements in policing by ensuring the police are accountable for their actions and lessons are learnt, whether from a single complaint or incident, or by looking at systemic issues. You can read about the recommendations we make, summaries of our investigations, and our publications on our website.

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<sup>1</sup> All death or serious injury matters (DSI) that involve police officers/staff must be referred to the IOPC. If a decision is made that it will be subject to a local investigation, and a decision is made by the appropriate authority that there was no evidence of criminality, or indication of behaviour justifying disciplinary proceedings, the investigating officer must send a copy of the final report to the IOPC for review.

# Making a difference through accountability and learning

## Improving the complaints system

**SINCE**  
Our establishment in  
**2018**



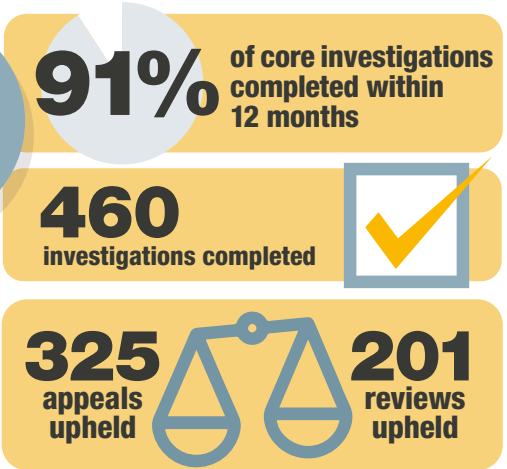
## Identifying and sharing learning



## Building public confidence



**2020/2021**





**“This case was a shocking example of predatory behaviour, and an abuse of trust and position ... Such behaviour amounts to serious corruption and those who abuse their position for sexual purpose and exploit young people have no place in policing.”**

IOPC Regional Director Graham Beesley on an investigation into police conduct



# PRIORITY



## Working with others to improve the police complaints system

We will work to improve all parts of the complaints system – both our own work and that carried out by others – so that it consistently delivers impartial, fair and evidence-based outcomes in a timely way.

We are responsible for overseeing the police complaints system. We play a key role in making sure that:

- complaints are dealt with reasonably and proportionately
- police officers and staff are held to account
- the police service learns and policing practice improves

An effective complaints system, which commands public confidence, is a vital part of the model of policing by consent. The police are given significant powers, and the complaints system provides important balance by ensuring the police are accountable for their actions.

Our work helps to ensure accountability and provides a unique insight into how police processes and procedures are working. We use this insight to bring about change and improvements to help improve public confidence in the police.

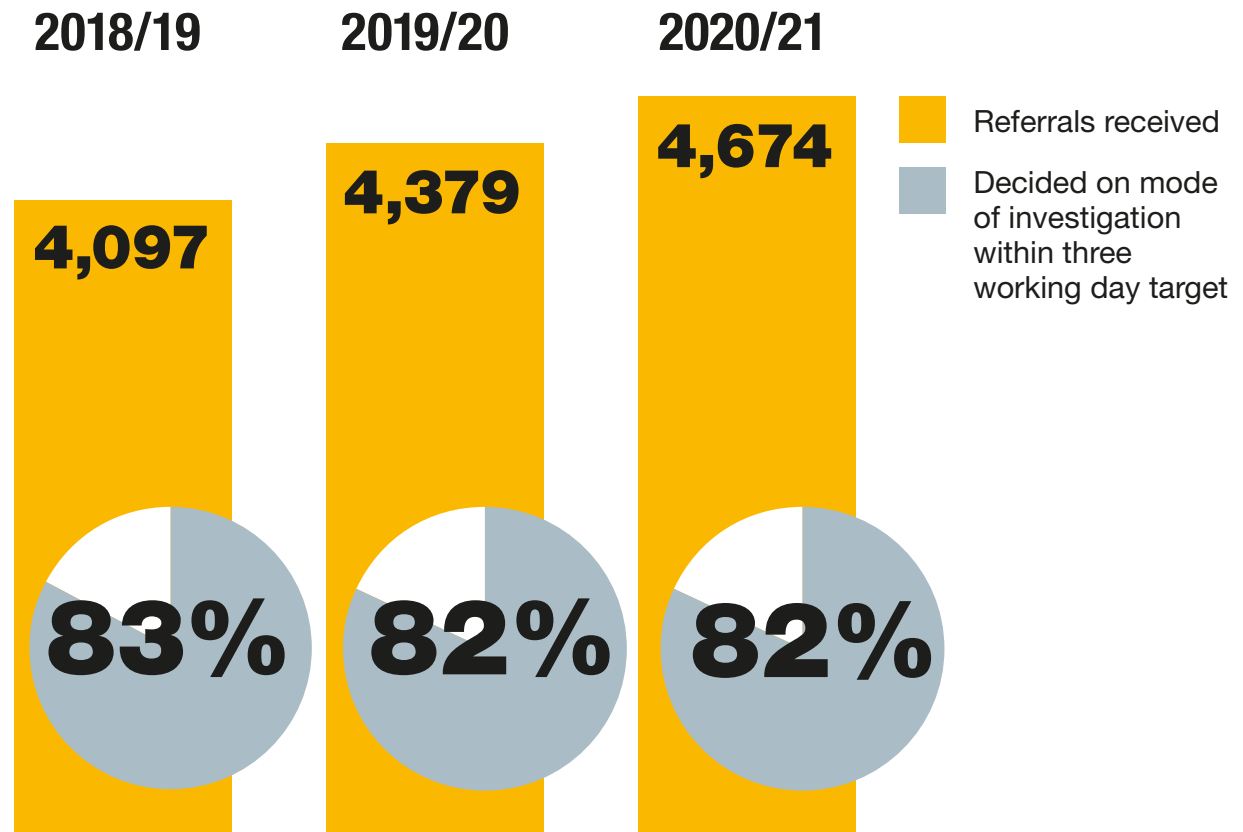
## Our investigations

We investigate the most serious and sensitive incidents and allegations involving the police. By law, the police must refer certain complaints and incidents to us. We decide whether an investigation is necessary and, if so, what level of involvement we should have.

We can conduct our own independent investigation, direct a police force to carry out an investigation under our control, or decide the matter can be dealt with locally by the police. Last year we received 4,674 referrals from forces – a 7% increase on 2019/20. Despite this increase, we decided on the mode of investigation within our three working day target in 82% of cases.

In 2020/21, we focused on improving the time our investigations take. During the year we began 465 independent investigations and completed 460. The number of investigations we are taking on has reduced as we take on increasingly more complex cases which take more resources, and due to the impacts of the pandemic. When selecting cases, we also consider if there are opportunities for learning or if there is potential for good practice to be identified.

### Referrals received per year



Source: IOPC performance statistics

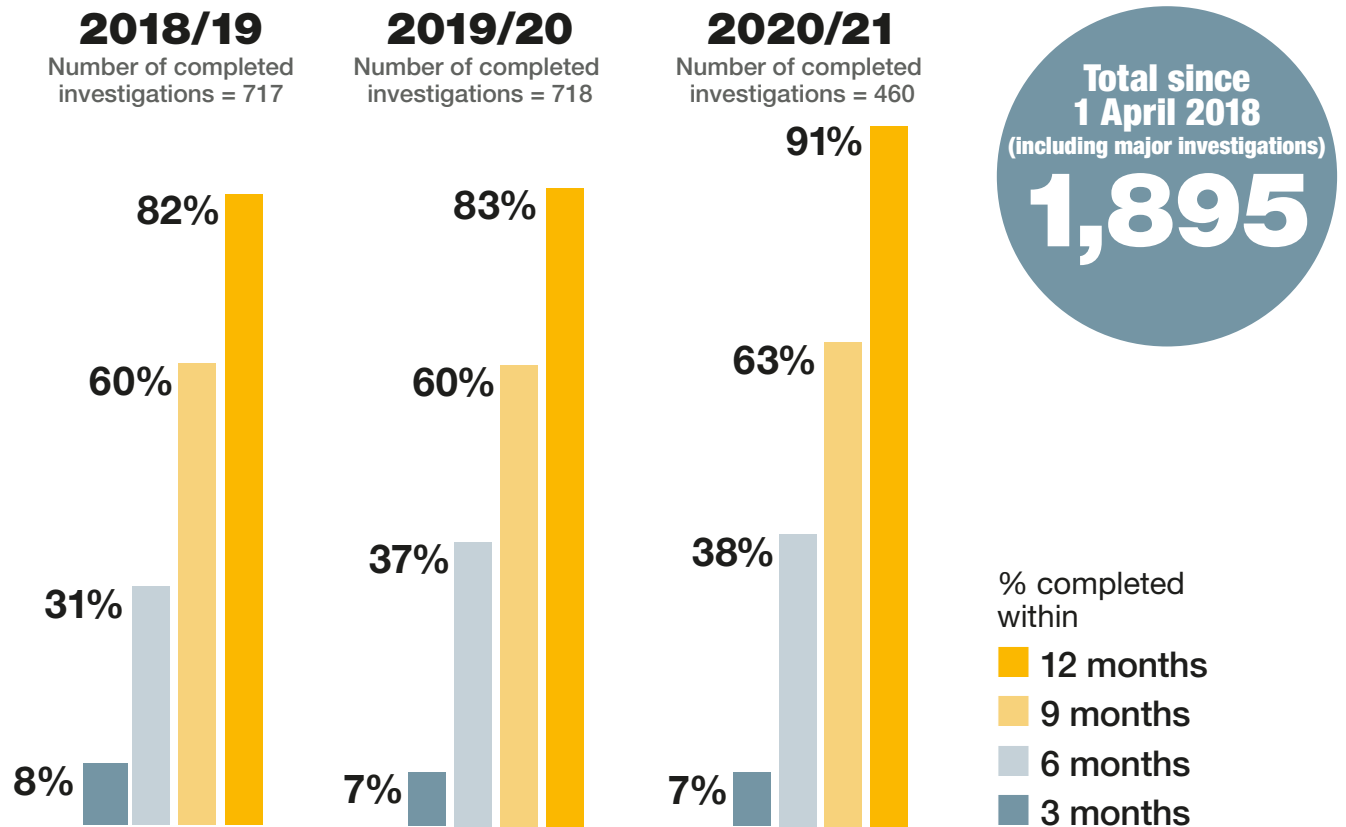
We completed 91% of our core investigations within 12 months (excluding major investigations - these are large scale or more complex cases such as our Hillsborough investigation). This compares with 83% in 2019/20, 82% in 2018/19 and 69% in 2017/18. We completed 86% of our investigations (including major investigations) within 12 months.

During the year we continued to deliver investigations of national significance. This includes our investigation into police actions in the aftermath of the Hillsborough disaster that resulted in a criminal trial held in early 2021/22.

Our Operation Linden work looking at police actions following historical allegations of child sexual abuse in Rotherham has now completed 91 investigations. We await South Yorkshire Police scheduling a conduct hearing involving one of the officers involved before we publish our final report.

### Independent investigations completed

(excluding major investigations)



Source: IOPC performance statistics

# CASE STUDIES

## An insight into some of our investigations

### Sharing inappropriate messages results in written warnings

Five officers who sent racist, misogynistic and homophobic text messages received written warnings at an independent misconduct hearing.

The messages suggested that one officer sought to establish an inappropriate relationship with a vulnerable, female member of the public he had met while on duty. His mobile phone also contained videos and audio files made of policing interactions with members of the public which were recorded on a personal device without their knowledge or consent.

### Abuse of position leads to jail sentence

In December 2020, a Hertfordshire Constabulary officer was sentenced to six and a half years in prison after being convicted of two counts of penetrative sexual activity with a child following our investigation.

His victim had been in a police cadet programme while the police sergeant was a cadet leader and contact involved sexual activity at cadet meetings, on a cadet holiday and at the officer's home address.

During the course of the investigation, which was managed by the IOPC but carried out by Hertfordshire Constabulary, shortcomings were exposed in the management of police cadet records which led us to make both local and national learning recommendations to better protect young people in the future.

### Community order after assault of a young person in custody

An officer was found guilty and given a community order to do 200 hours of unpaid work after we investigated an incident where a police sergeant assaulted a 16-year-old boy who was in police custody.

The sergeant struck the child on the face and then removed clothing, leaving him naked until a detention officer came into the cell to assist him. We sent a file of evidence to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) which authorised charging the officer with battery of a child.

## No case to answer after a complaint of racial profiling

We undertook an investigation after a complaint of racial profiling was made against a police officer who stopped and questioned a person in their car.

While the evidence indicated that the complainant had been stopped unfairly because the officer had relied on intelligence that was not current or specific to the situation, it was accepted the officer acted in good faith for a legitimate policing purpose. The officer apologised for the upset caused and acknowledged that they could have provided a clearer explanation at the time.

We found no case to answer for misconduct and we recommended the officer should reflect on this incident and the strength of the intelligence which justified the stop. We recommended the officer must consider how their actions could disproportionately impact

Black men, why the stop could be viewed as discriminatory, the impact this incident had on the person involved and the effect it could have on confidence in policing. The officer also received additional training in equality, diversity and inclusion.

**“We recommended that the officer must consider how their actions could disproportionately impact Black men, why the stop could be viewed as discriminatory, and the impact this incident had on the person involved.”**

## Our work on appeals and reviews

A key aspect of our work involves reviewing forces' handling of complaints. The majority of complaints are dealt with locally by police forces. However, when someone isn't happy with how the police dealt with their complaint, they have a right of review. We assess whether the outcome of their complaint was reasonable and proportionate. If it was not, we can direct the force to look into the complaint again.

The possible outcomes of an upheld investigation review are that the IOPC may:

- make our own findings
- direct the complaint be reinvestigated
- make a recommendation about whether a person has a case to answer or whether their performance is satisfactory
- make a recommendation that disciplinary proceedings be brought or modified

We can also make recommendations to improve police practice. We made 39 recommendations using this power during the year.

On 1 February 2020 legislative changes to the police complaints system were introduced. We had long argued the complaints system should be reformed because of concerns that it was complex, difficult to understand and difficult to access. The changes aim to simplify the complaints system, making it easier to navigate and ensuring that complaints are dealt with more quickly and effectively.

It will take time to see the full impact of the reforms but we are seeing evidence of improved access to the complaints system and good quality complaint handling, and remain confident that our new powers will lead to better outcomes for service users.

Under the appeal system our work meant that:

- in 53 cases, people's complaints were recorded and dealt with under the police complaints system, which would not have been recorded without an appeal to the IOPC. This gave them the right to have their complaint handled in a specific way under the police complaints legislation
- in eight cases, people achieved a different outcome to the one they received when the police force used local resolution to resolve their complaint
- in 253 cases, people had their complaint reinvestigated by the police force or IOPC and they achieved a different outcome to the one they received when their complaint was initially investigated

Under the review system:

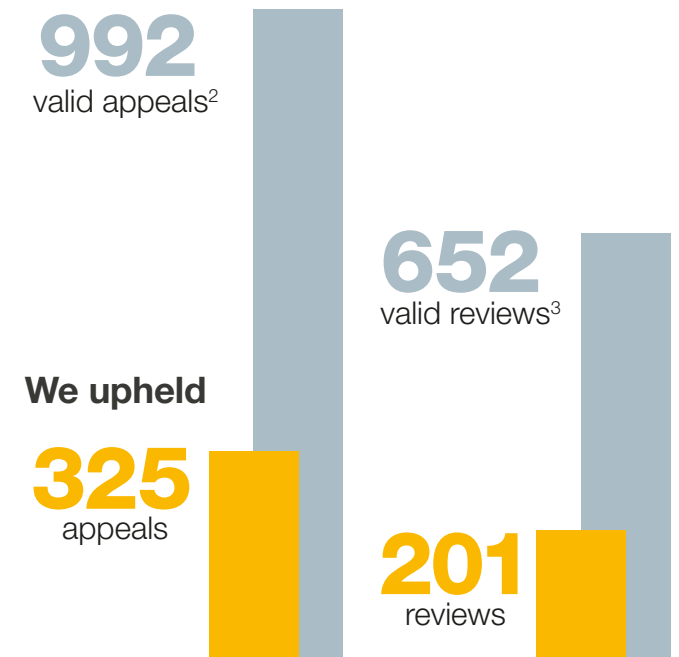
- in 88 cases, we found that people's complaints were not handled in a reasonable and proportionate way following investigation
- in 113 cases, we found that people's complaints were not handled in a reasonable and proportionate way when handled without an investigation

Following changes to legislation, the IOPC can recommend measures to remedy complaints. A remedy can be recommended following a review, independent or directed complaint investigation. Remedies the IOPC can recommend include an apology or return of property to the complainant or reflective practice for the police officer.

Our appeals and reviews work found:

- the findings of the police investigation weren't appropriate
- the complainant should have been given more information
- officers had a case to answer for misconduct or gross misconduct
- the police should have asked the Crown Prosecution Service to decide if an officer should be prosecuted
- the action (or lack of action) that the police planned to take as a result of the complaint wasn't appropriate

**During the year we dealt with**



This meant that in one-third of our cases, we provided a different outcome for complainants.

<sup>2</sup> As the relevant appeal body, we have to assess whether an appeal is valid before we can consider it. There are number of reasons why an appeal may have been judged to be invalid.

<sup>3</sup> Whether an application is treated as an appeal or review depends on the date the complaint was made. The right of appeal applies before 1 February 2020 and the right of review applies from 1 February 2020.

# CASE STUDY

## Review into arrest and rights

We carried out a review where a person was arrested and taken into custody. A custody sergeant assessed the person as attempting to frustrate custody procedures because they didn't speak and were uncooperative but compliant with requests such as to "stand there". There was no information about the person on the Police National Computer. The person was strip searched and placed in a cell.

At shift changeover, the incoming custody sergeant decided the person needed a medical assessment and an appropriate adult<sup>4</sup> present. When given writing materials, the person identified they were autistic and non-verbal.

The second custody sergeant ensured the person was given their due rights according to their vulnerability and the person was eventually released under investigation.

In their application for review, the person stated they believed the first custody sergeant hadn't used the force's vulnerability assessment framework and wanted them to carry out further training.

As part of our new ability to suggest remedies for complaints, we asked the force to consider reflective practice, which took place and resulted in learning for the officer.

**As part of our new ability to suggest remedies, we asked the force to consider reflective practice. This took place and resulted in learning for the officer.**

<sup>4</sup> The role of the appropriate adult is to safeguard the interests, rights, entitlements and welfare of children and vulnerable people who are suspected of a criminal offence, by ensuring that they are treated in a fair and just manner and are able to participate effectively.



## Working with forces to improve the complaints system

We work with police forces to help them improve their handling of complaints.

In February 2020, changes were made to the police complaints system to move to a simpler, more effective complaints system that is customer focused. During the year, we worked with forces to help them understand the changes to complaints handling and how to put them into practice through regular support.

We organised a series of workshops for police complaints handlers and local policing bodies<sup>5</sup> (LPB) to reinforce our expectations for the new complaints system and promote a more flexible way of handling complaints.

The workshops highlighted the increased focus on understanding a complainant's concerns, adopting a flexible approach and responding to individual circumstances when handling a complaint. This provided us with the opportunity to discuss review handling, share learning and good practice and promote consistency in the handling of reviews.

Early signs are that reforms to complaints handling are working, with forces being less process-driven, more responsive, providing more explanations and seeking more flexible outcomes. Replacing various processes with a requirement for reasonable and proportionate handling has seen the number of complaints recorded and investigated under the formal Schedule 3

process fall from 40% to 3% over the first nine months of 2020/21.

Through our data collection work on reviews, investigations, and national complaints we share the learning identified with forces to support the wider aims of the reforms and improve police practice.

**“I just wanted to say that the workshop was excellent. The knowledge of the IOPC staff was really in depth and the case studies enforced the learning and were really useful. I think this is the best workshop I have attended for sharing ideas and learning from, and I wanted to say thank you for your time and effort”**

**Anonymous workshop member**

<sup>5</sup> A local policing body is a collective term for: PCCs, the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (in relation to the Metropolitan Police Service), the Common Council (in relation to City of London Police) and any other mayor of a combined authority that exercises the functions of a PCC.



CITY OF LONDON  
POLICE

**“I welcome the Independent Office for Police Conduct’s review of stop and search in London. It is absolutely vital that our police service retains the trust and confidence of the communities it serves.”**

**Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London**

Source: Mayor’s Question Time, 18 March 2021

# PRIORITY

# 2

## Improving policing by identifying and sharing learning from our work

We will focus our work on areas of concern to both the public and police and work with partners to share our learning to improve policing and protect the public from harm.

While most complaints, investigations and appeals or reviews focus on individual cases, they can also have a significant wider impact when we find that learning or improvement is needed at an organisational or national level.

Our recommendations can help bring about changes to policing and protect both members of the public and the police by:

- preventing similar incidents where something has gone wrong
- raising awareness of gaps in policy or training
- highlighting issues with equipment, systems or practices
- encouraging forces to adopt good practice

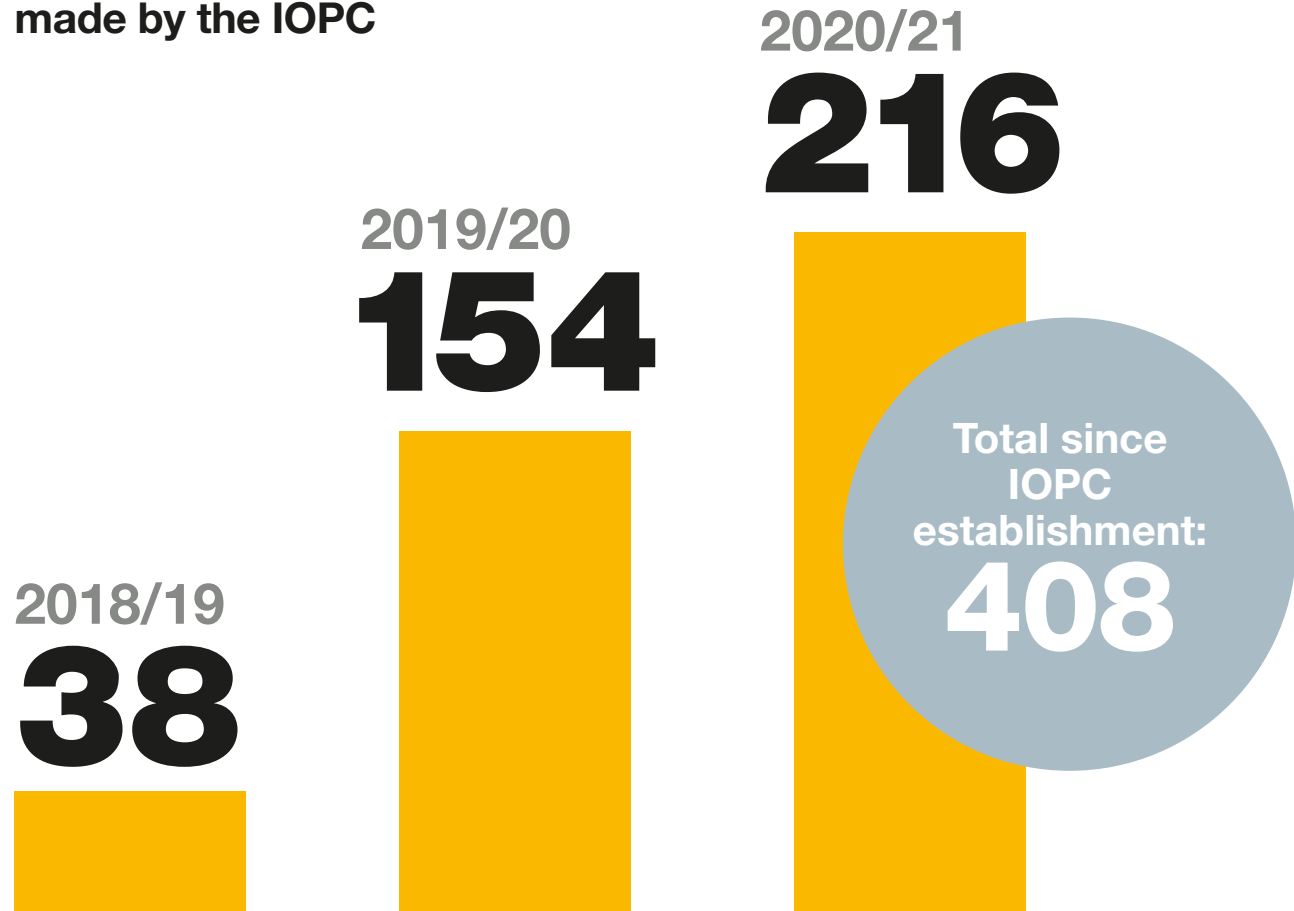
Changes made in response to learning ultimately improve policing for everyone, building confidence and protecting the public from harm.

## Organisational learning recommendations

We identify and share learning from our work on investigations, reviews and appeals. We make learning recommendations to ensure that where things go wrong, lessons are learnt and policies and practice changes, if appropriate.

Our recommendations have a significant impact when we find that learning or improvement is needed at an organisational or national level.

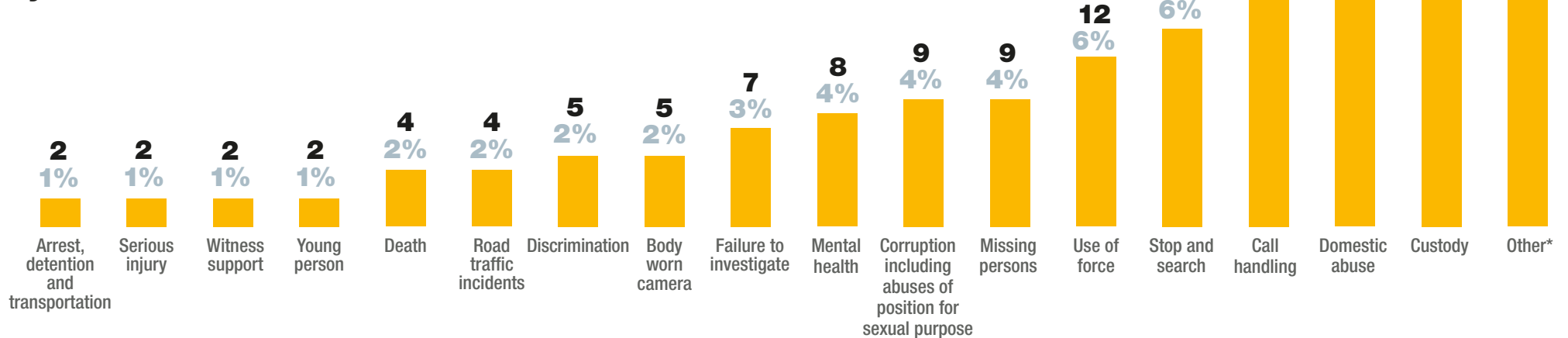
### Learning recommendations made by the IOPC



During the year we made 216 recommendations to police forces under section 28A of Schedule 3 of the *Police Reform Act 2002*:

- 185 recommendations made to local police forces
- 31 recommendations targeted at all forces or national organisations such as the National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC) and the College of Policing (CoP)
- 150 recommendations about policy or guidance
- 40 recommendations about training for police officers and staff
- 26 recommendations about other matters including the use of social media, mobile phones, incident management and the storage of evidence.

### Learning recommendations made by the IOPC by theme 2020/21



\* ‘Other’ included recommendations relating to drugs and alcohol; self-harm; storage of evidence, incident management and use of social media.

## How we use learning from our work

### Government and public bodies

- To develop and inform new legislation relating to policing and the police complaints system.
- To inform policy and legislation in other sectors – e.g. health, prisons, coronial system, health and safety.

### Community and voluntary organisations

- To hold forces to account where necessary improvements have been identified.
- To understand how to best support service users in the police complaints system.

### The police service

- To help safeguard the public and the police and avoid recurrences where something has gone wrong.
- To improve policing practice, policy, guidance, training, equipment and systems
- To improve the handling of complaints, conduct matters and deaths and serious injuries involving the police.

### International police forces and oversight bodies

- To improve policing practice, strengthen oversight mechanisms and support human rights in other countries.

### Policing bodies

- To inform national policy, guidance and training provided by the College of Policing.
- To inform inspections of police forces and custody facilities.
- To hold forces to account where necessary improvements have been identified.

### Academics and research bodies

- To inform research and scientific development.

# CASE STUDY

## Mental health and custody

As part of our work overseeing forces' handling of complaints, we reviewed a case where a man was arrested and taken into police custody. A number of warning markers were attached to the man's custody record, including suicide and self-harm. Warning markers on police records are used to give officers and other police staff important information to be aware of to protect themselves and the public.

He also disclosed a history of mental illness which he was taking medication for. The record also noted multiple previous attempts to self-harm while in custody.

While in a police cell the man attempted suicide using a Spork (a type of cutlery).

We made two recommendations, one to the local police force and a national recommendation to the NPCC both focused on the risk of leaving detainees with unsupervised access to cutlery.

The NPCC shared the recommendation with all chief officers in England and Wales and included it in their custody newsletter to all forces. The Independent Custody Visitors' Association also shared the recommendation in its national newsletter.

The local force amended its standard operating procedures and training to include clear guidance on providing cutlery to detainees, and how to mitigate any risks when doing so.

**The local force amended its standard operating procedures and training to include clear guidance on providing cutlery to detainees, and how to mitigate any risks when doing so.**

## Sharing learning to improve practice

We share learning identified from our reviews and investigations in many ways. This includes reports, investigation summaries, media releases, newsletters, briefings and presentations.

We also promote learning by highlighting issues to police leaders and our oversight partners, and influencing them to take action to improve policing.

Examples include:

- we called for more scrutiny from police and crime commissioners and the deputy mayors for policing and crime on use of Taser following a series of incidents and increasing community concerns. We have reviewed over 100 independent investigations involving Taser and have since made a number of recommendations in response to the issues identified in our review. These cover training and guidance, scrutiny and monitoring of Taser use and community engagement and input.
- following a number of investigations into police officers posting or sharing offensive material via social media, we wrote to the NPCC, asking them to remind forces of their obligations under the police Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Behaviour. As a result, the NPCC set up a task force on use of social media.



## Learning the Lessons magazine

Our Learning the Lessons magazine includes case studies and information to help police consider whether they need to make any changes in their own force.

During the year we published one issue on roads policing. The issue featured learning on the suitability of different types of vehicles for pursuits, changes to levels of authorisation and authority to execute tactical manoeuvres and findings from recent Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) roads policing inspections.

It also featured work of the IOPC roads policing subject matter network, who have helped inform new government legislation for police drivers and helped shape police policy for tactical pursuits.

The magazine was downloaded 1,297 times from our website in the three months following publication.

### Feedback from our readers



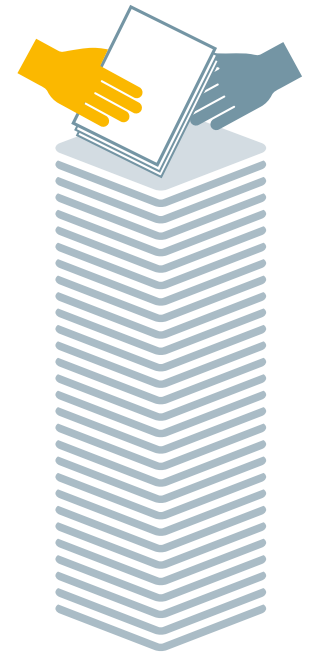
**91%**

of respondents said the magazine is a useful tool to help drive change in police policy and practice



**91%**

of respondents said the magazine provides them with useful knowledge to supplement information they receive from training, briefings or practical experience



**95%**

of respondents said they intend to share the magazine with colleagues to help share the learning it contains

Source: Learning the Lessons feedback survey, issue 38 on roads policing.  
Total number of survey respondents = 23.

## Thematic learning

Focusing on themes which matter to police and the public is a key area of our work. Our current thematic areas are:

- domestic abuse
- abuse of position for a sexual purpose
- road traffic incidents
- mental health
- discrimination

To identify issues and trends in relation to these themes, we independently investigate cases which would not ordinarily meet our threshold for investigation.

This helps build a body of evidence to identify systemic matters to be addressed and good practice that can be shared – helping to drive real improvements in police practice.

Last year we launched our thematic work on race discrimination. This work involves independently investigating more cases where racial discrimination is a potential factor in order to identify systemic issues which should be addressed. In October 2020, we identified eleven opportunities for the MPS to improve on stop and search based on five investigations involving the stop and search of Black men.

**“[Our thematic road traffic investigations] play a critical role in establishing what happened and identifying any learning to help improve policing practice....  
By improving policing practice on the roads, we hope to reduce the number of incidents resulting in death or serious injury.”**

**Steve Noonan, IOPC Strategic Lead  
for Roads Policing**

# CASE STUDY

## Disproportionality in stop and search

Evidence of disproportionality in the use of police powers has long been a concern which impacts on confidence in policing, particularly in Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities.

Eleven opportunities for the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) to improve the way it exercises stop and search powers and consider disproportionality were identified following a review of five investigations involving the stop and search of Black men by MPS officers.

We found the legitimacy of stop and searches was being undermined by:

- a lack of understanding about the impact of disproportionality
- poor communication
- consistent use of force over seeking cooperation
- the failure to use body-worn video from the outset of contact and

- continuing to seek further evidence after the initial grounds for the stop and search were unfounded.

The force accepted all our recommendations and made several changes including:

- incorporating the lived experiences of Black and minority ethnic people in their training and creating a suite of new stop and search training videos

- improving the monitoring and supervision of stop and search encounters, including a system to allow communities to review wider encounters of concern
- implementing a specific policy on handcuffing pre-arrest

The learning identified from our work also fed into the Mayor of London's action plan that focuses on disproportionality of police powers.

**“We’re deeply concerned by the...excessive use of handcuffs, inappropriate use of stop and search and failure to properly use body cameras. [The IOPC’s recommendations] ... must now be implemented in full to tackle disproportionate policing and to help rebuild faith and trust in the police in all of our communities.”**

**Mayor of Hackney Philip-Glanville and Cllr Susan Fajana-Thomas, Cabinet Member for Community Safety**

Source: Tackling disproportionate policing - Statement on the IOPC's review into stop and search ([hackney.gov.uk](https://hackney.gov.uk))



**“The information that you sent regarding the IOPC (and) how to make complaints was fantastic. I’ve used it when informing people that they have the right to complain in cases where they don’t feel as though they received a good/correct service.”**

IOPC stakeholder

# PRIORITY

# 3

## Improving public confidence in police accountability

We will engage with a range of stakeholders and communities, focusing on those with the least confidence in policing, so they understand their right to complain and expect fair and just treatment in response to complaints and serious incidents.

We work with and listen to a wide range of people, including complainants, families, police officers and staff and community and voluntary groups. We also work with organisations across the criminal justice system to identify how individually and collectively we can make a real difference.

Our work has a focus on increasing the confidence of those who we know have the least trust in the complaints system – for example, young people and those from a Black, Asian and minority ethnic background. We want to ensure these groups understand their right to complain and have confidence in accessing and using the complaints system.

Ultimately, changes made as a result of this work and listening to our service users delivers a positive impact by improving the police complaints system, improving policing and helping to protect the public.

## Working with young people

Young people come into contact with the police in many different circumstances and environments and every interaction will have an impact on their confidence in policing.

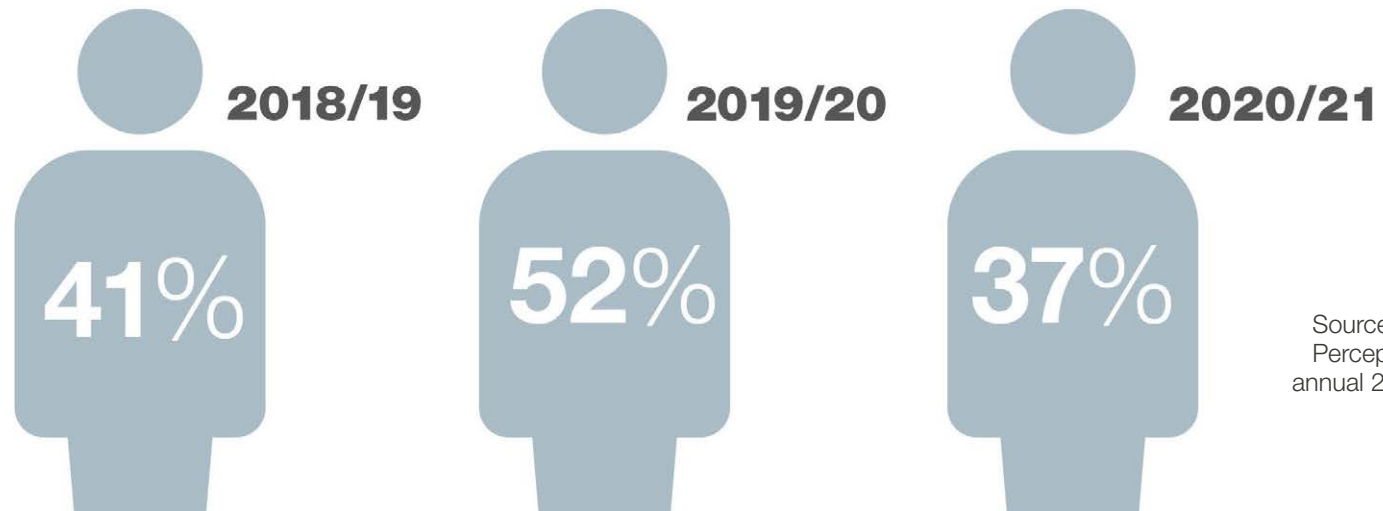
Young people have told us they are unsure of their rights and are not clear how to raise issues if they were unhappy about the way police had dealt with them.

There are several possible reasons why young people's confidence has declined. We expect that increased policing powers during the COVID-19 pandemic, the murder of George Floyd in the United States and the Black Lives Matter protests may have impacted on young people's views of policing during the year.

**“I want the police to acknowledge the negative impact low confidence can bring to society if steps are not taken to address low confidence... I believe working with the Youth Panel is the first step to making a difference and a change in this regard.”**

Saeed Ali, Youth Panel member

**Young people who are confident the police deal with complaints fairly**



Source: IOPC Public Perceptions Tracker: annual 2020/21 report summary

Our Youth Panel was set up in 2018 to help us to understand and address the drivers of low confidence among young people, the barriers to complaining and to explore how we can increase young people’s awareness and confidence in the police complaints system. During the year membership grew with 20 new members aged 16-25 years. Thirty-seven panel members in total come from a range of backgrounds across England and Wales. Nearly two-thirds of the panel are from a Black, Asian and minority ethnic background.

This year the panel helped develop and launch new guidance to support young people to make a complaint and

understand their rights. They helped identify and explain key elements of the complaints system in ways that can be easily understood by young people. Social media and video content was viewed over 7,000 times on IOPC channels and was also posted on youth-specific social media.

The guide was also widely shared with independent advisory groups, community monitoring groups, offices of PCCs, health bodies, local authorities and community-based organisations working with young people and diverse communities. The guide has been well-received by stakeholders who appreciate that it is short, informative and

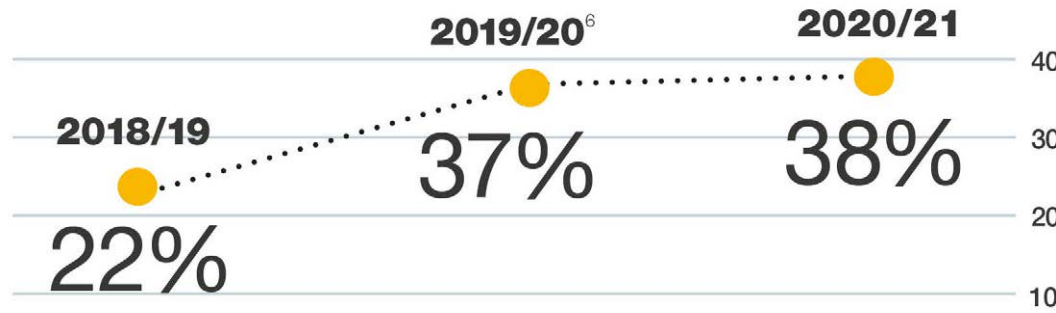
easy to share with young people and across their networks.

A hints and tips guide to working with young people was produced and distributed to all police forces across England and Wales.

The panel also worked to help improve policing practices that disproportionately affect Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities as a member of the London Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and the MPS working group on use of force.

As well as working with the IOPC, the panel worked with Leaders Unlocked on a ‘Policing the pandemic’ survey, and with the Youth Justice Board (YJB) and NPCC to create two guides for under-18s during the COVID-19 pandemic. The guides help young people and children understand their rights if they come into contact with the police during the pandemic and how to make a complaint if they feel they are not treated fairly. The YJB distributed the guide to over 3,000 of their stakeholders, including all youth offending teams.

**Young people’s awareness of the IOPC**



Source: IOPC Public Perceptions Tracker

<sup>6</sup> There was a change to the wording of the question asked in 2019/20.

## Raising awareness of the IOPC

Understanding of our role is an important part of developing confidence in the complaints system and we are working hard to improve this through better communication and engagement.

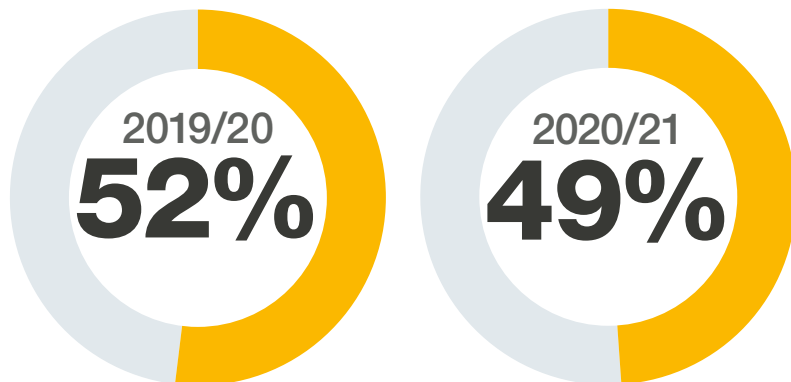
We share information via our website, social media, newsletters, reports and publications, reaching millions of people every year. Media coverage helps us to raise awareness

of our work. Last year we published 198 media releases about investigations and our work and secured several front-page stories in national newspapers, reaching millions of people across the country.

Key reports published include an annual report on deaths during or following police contact, quarterly and annual statistics on police complaints at both local force and national level and investigation reports and summaries.

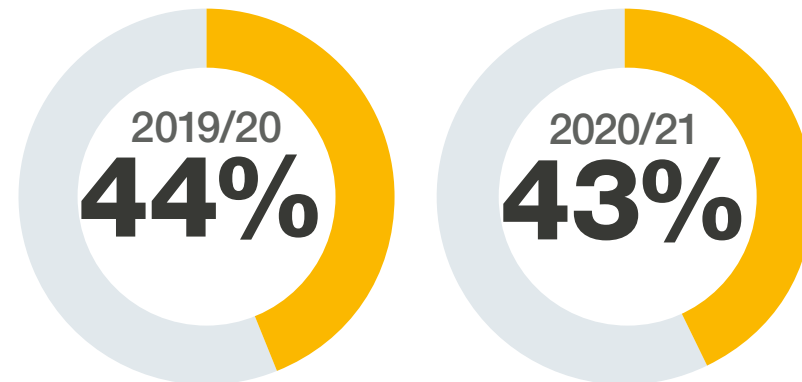
With domestic abuse reports increasing during the COVID-19 lockdown (according to the Office for National Statistics), we re-launched our 'Make yourself heard' campaign promoting the Silent Solution system. This system, overseen by the NPCC, enables a 999 mobile caller who is unable to make a noise or speak, to press 55 when prompted to inform police they are in a genuine emergency.

### Public awareness of the IOPC - “Have you heard of the IOPC (the Independent Office for Police Conduct)?”



Source: IOPC Public Perceptions Tracker

### Public confidence in IOPC – “How confident, if at all, are you that the IOPC does a good job?”



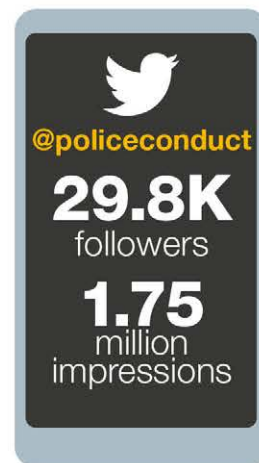
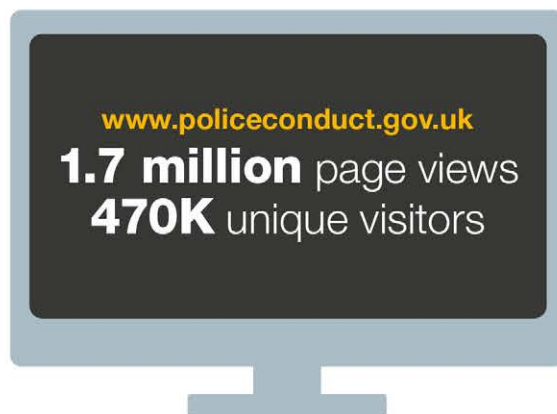
Source: IOPC Public Perceptions Tracker



Supported by the NPCC, Women's Aid and Welsh Women's Aid, we shared updated graphics with police forces, domestic abuse charities and local government authorities. The campaign secured media coverage, was shared nationally and received 164K impressions on Twitter.

**"... we welcome the transparency the IOPC's report provides on deaths following police contact. Deaths in police custody are taken seriously and subject to independent review by the IOPC in England and Wales. Today's statistics highlight a number of trends, with mental health and alcohol and substance misuse significant factors in the unfortunate deaths in and following police custody."**

APCC Mental Health & Custody Lead Matthew Scott, PCC for Kent, and Deputy Lead Martyn Underhill, PCC for Dorset, responding to IOPC Deaths Following Police Contact report 2019/20, published October 2020



Our Customer Contact Centre dealt with over

**500**

calls each week

providing advice and guidance to the public about the police complaints system



## Working with people from diverse communities

Listening to stakeholders and communities is a key part of our work to increase our understanding of the communities we serve. In the last year, despite the challenges of the pandemic we placed an even greater emphasis on working with people from diverse communities. Building trust and confidence for all groups but particularly groups that have the lowest levels of trust in policing and the complaints system is vital in a society where we police by consent. Our

work with different community groups helps to ensure their voices are widely heard.

Throughout the year discrimination was the most notable theme of discussion, particularly race discrimination and there were growing concerns about the disproportionate use of some police powers on people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, particularly the use of Taser and stop and search.

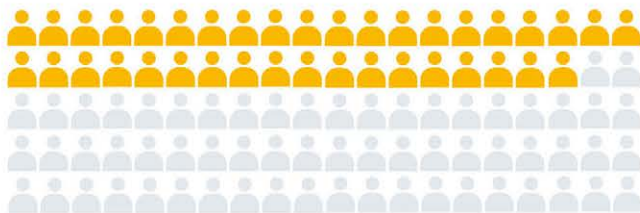
We reached out to different community groups to listen to their concerns and ensure their voices are widely heard and urged police and crime commissioners and the wider police service to do the same.

In September 2020 we launched our thematic focus on race discrimination. This work is where we focus on something that is of great concern to the public to identify any systemic issues that need to be addressed to improve policing practice.

### People from a Black, Asian and minority ethnic background who are confident the police deal with complaints fairly

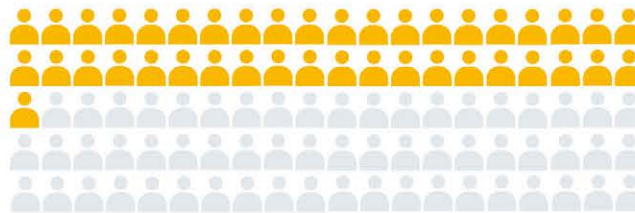
2018/19

38%



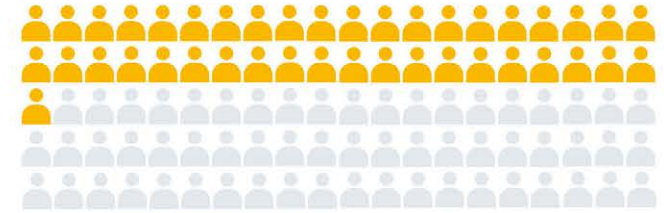
2019/20

41%



2020/21

41%



**“Our police forces can only police effectively with the trust and confidence of the community they serve. Having independent oversight and an evidence base which helps the police to learn and improve where necessary will help build that community confidence.”**

**IOPC Director General Michael Lockwood**

We are now focusing on investigating more cases where there is an indication that disproportionality impacts Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, including stop and search and use of force. We will also be investigating more cases where victims from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities have felt unfairly treated by the police.

Increasing our focus on investigating cases where racial discrimination may be a factor means we will be able to really look at these encounters between the police and the public to identify any themes. We can then see if there is a need to change policing policy or practice.

During the year there was a notable increase in race discrimination cases which pre-dates the launch of the theme.

During 2020/21, we received 233 referrals where race discrimination was recorded as a factor, a 22% increase on the previous year where 191 race discrimination referrals were received. Race discrimination referrals accounted for 5% of all referrals received during the year.

This increase in race discrimination referrals received and investigations started throughout spring and summer of 2020, coincided with the renewed focus on issues of race discrimination and policing, particularly

following the death of George Floyd and the subsequent Black Lives Matter protests.

In 2020/21 we started 53 independent investigations featuring race-based discrimination, which were not part of the core work that we would usually undertake. This helps us to help build our body of evidence to identify any systemic issues that need to be addressed.

## Working with stakeholders

We place a high value on listening to and engaging with stakeholders from policing, voluntary, community and advocacy organisations that represent complainants, or those with lowest confidence in the police complaints system.

We work with organisations such as the CoP and HMICFRS to share learning and co-operate on key areas and themes emerging from our work.

For example, following one of our investigations we identified an opportunity for national learning for police officer training to improve the way officers deal with people who present as unwell or suffering a medical emergency. We worked with the CoP and NPCC and the learning we identified from the incident has resulted in an update to training

for officers and the current national curriculum for student police officers, special constables and police community support officers.

During the year we held over 300 community-focused meetings from independent advisory groups to local government, religious groups, schools, community and advocacy groups.

We trained over 100 frontline caseworkers at Victim Support on how to make a complaint and how to support or advise someone who wishes to make a complaint about their interaction with the police. Feedback from the training found Victim Support staff felt more informed about our work and the police complaints system, and more confident when advising victims about action they could take.

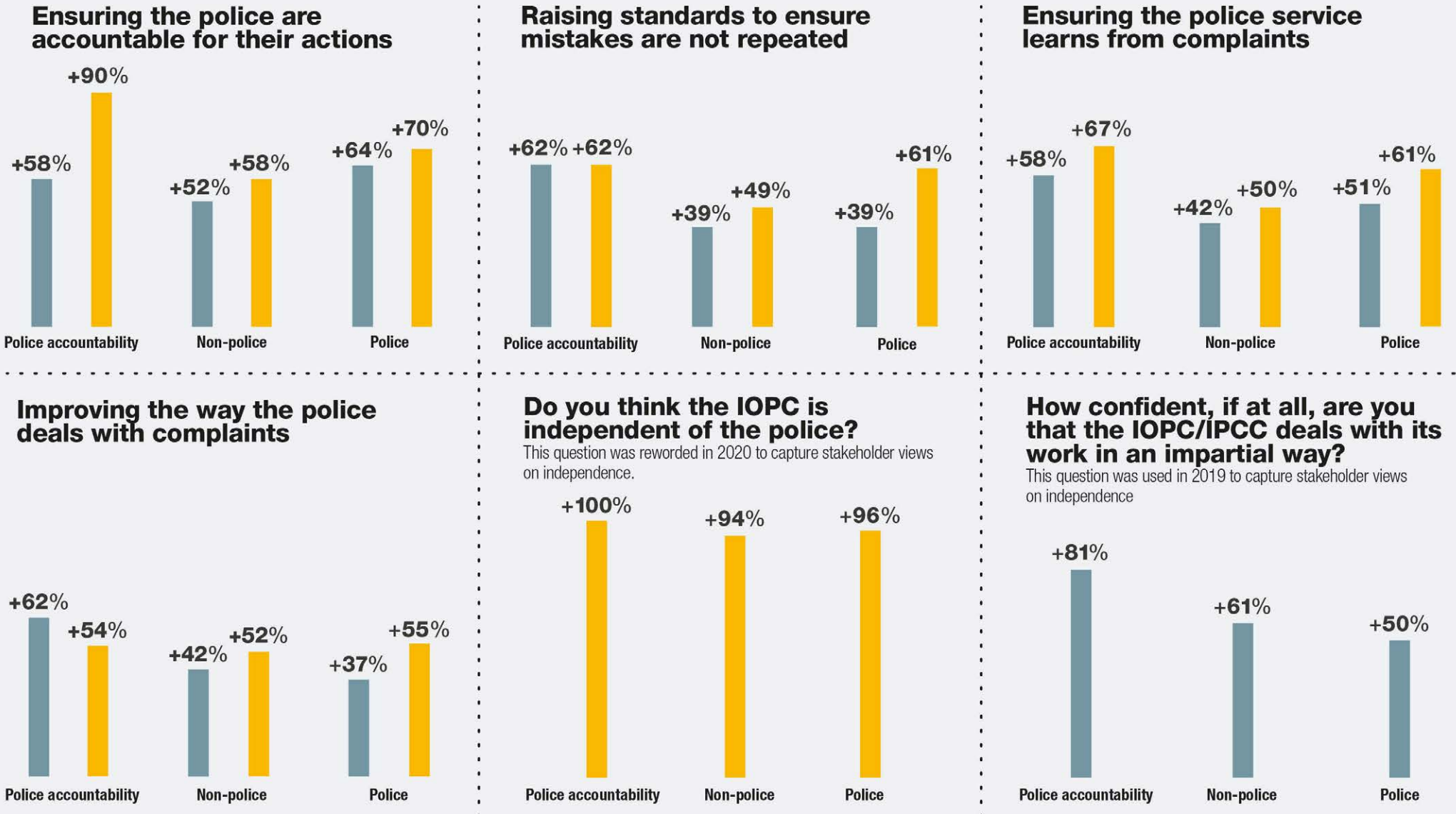
This has the potential to have a significant impact on victims, given charity carries out over 88,000 phone calls, email, and live chat conversations each year and support over 100,000 people through their community-based services.

We also continued to seek advice and feedback from our External Stakeholder Reference Group and coordinated a Wales Stakeholder Forum meeting focused on race discrimination.

# What our stakeholders say

## How effective, or ineffective, do you think the IOPC is in the following areas?

% who say 'effective' MINUS % who say 'ineffective' ■ 2019 ■ 2020



# CASE STUDY

## Engaging with local communities

During the Black Lives Matter protests and COVID-19, community tensions with police over the last 12 months have been heightened.

We increased our engagement with Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities affected by serious police incidents by setting up community reference groups to listen, share information, and increase the accessibility and transparency of the IOPC.

We have held over 30 community reference group meetings and a further seven high-profile case community meetings with local members of the community affected.

We have listened to concerns, provided people with clear information about how the investigation was undertaken and kept the stakeholders informed of what was happening.

**“Thank you for all you are doing to help Haringey react appropriately to concerning cases with the MPS in our borough.”**

**Rev John Wood, Director of Hope in Tottenham**

**“I really appreciate your holistic approach to sharing information to help develop awareness and knowledge”**

**Charles Kwaku-Odoi, Chief Officer of the Caribbean and African Health Network**

**“I really appreciate you providing the platform to speak truth to power.”**

**Zed Ali, Chief Officer at Lancashire Equalities Organisation**

## Putting service users first

In 2020/21, we retained our Customer Service Excellence accreditation, a nationally recognised standard that demonstrates our commitment to customer service.



We retained the highest rating in three areas that are central to our work:

- working with hard-to-reach and disadvantaged service user groups
- putting the service user at the heart of what we do
- being a learning organisation – both learning from best practice and sharing that learning internally and externally

**“We have restructured our team around our customers, giving each region a dedicated analyst. The improvements we have made are great and we hope to continue to create positive changes... to enable a better experience of our customers”**

IOPC analytical support officer

A photograph of two people in a meeting. In the foreground, a Black man with a beard, wearing a white button-down shirt, is smiling and looking towards the right. In the background, a woman with long brown hair, wearing a grey blazer over a white shirt, is looking forward. They are seated at a wooden table with a tablet and a glass of water. The background is a bright, modern office space with large windows and green plants.

**“I think there has been strong and decisive leadership and a willingness to listen and respond. I am grateful to work for an organisation which values staff and staff views.”**

respondent, staff pulse survey July 2020



# PRIORITY

# 4

## To be an effective and efficient organisation

We will attract and retain a highly skilled diverse workforce and provide them with a good working environment while continually improving to provide value for money.

Our ambition is to be a great place to work. We are a people organisation with a clear focus on how our people are supported and engaged so they can achieve their full potential working with us. Our people, values and culture are central to our success.

We are committed to giving our people access to the skills, information and opportunities they need to perform at their best. We are also changing how we recruit, to improve the diversity of our workforce and better represent the communities we serve.

We strive to be an efficient organisation and will continue to offer value for money to both our service users and taxpayers.

## Supporting our people during the pandemic

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic we had to significantly adapt and change the way we worked. We maintained business continuity by moving quickly to working from home, remaining flexible and adopting different ways of working from how we took witness statements to keeping our staff connected virtually.

Despite the pandemic, we delivered our strongest year of performance ever as reflected in our timeliness and learning recommendation performance indicators earlier in this report.

We sought regular feedback from staff through pulse surveys which helped inform organisational decisions and ensured our staff felt supported throughout<sup>7</sup>. Wellbeing of our people was prioritised and we put in place initiatives from counselling sessions to wellbeing tips and activities to keep staff connected.

**“I’ve really valued the openness of senior management and their willingness to engage with, and be more visible to staff... It’s felt like we’ve become a more connected organisation even though we’re physically disconnected”.**

respondent, staff pulse survey July 2020

Overall, our people told us they felt supported, that senior leaders had made good decisions quickly, and that they felt well informed and able to work remotely.

We produced guidance for staff to help them work safely and effectively and adjusted our offices to provide a safe workplace

for colleagues who needed to be in an office setting. Much change was led by small working groups who drove actions and innovation.

<sup>7</sup> 668 staff responded to a survey in April 2020, 767 to a June survey and 429 to a December survey.

## Working towards a more inclusive and diverse IOPC

We are an inclusive organisation committed to promoting equality and valuing diversity in everything we do. Equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives during the year included:

- signing up to the Race at Work Charter to demonstrate our commitment to race equality and inclusivity
  - starting the development of an equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) strategy outlining our aspirations for the next three years and an EDI policy that sets out the conduct we expect of our staff
  - taking forward a new recruitment policy to increase reach to prospective Black, Asian and minority ethnic applicants, improve diversity and build better career pathways for the diverse talent we already have
  - establishing an EDI advisory group to help shape the culture and behaviours of the organisation
- creating new inclusion ambassador roles to work alongside our staff networks and act as a point of contact for staff on EDI issues
  - launching our first allyship programme and reverse mentoring scheme to enable better inclusion and foster an environment of growth and learning

**“Being able to hear first-hand accounts of what it is like to be a black member of staff at the IOPC was eye opening for me and really encouraged me to think about how I might be a better ally in the future.”**

**Claire Bassett, Deputy Director General, Operations**

## Building our expertise

Our internal subject matter networks (SMNs) bring together disciplines from across our organisation to identify learning and ensure our operational work reflects good practice.

They aim to grow our knowledge, both internally and externally, and increase our impact as an organisation. The networks will bring about growth in our technical expertise, our people and our operational effectiveness.

This year we continued to equip our people with the skills and knowledge they need to deliver excellent service. Our SMNs delivered work ranging from producing guidance on the use of victim-blaming language to shaping staff policies on domestic abuse and guiding national and local learning recommendations in their areas of expertise.

### Our subject matter networks are focused on:



**domestic abuse**



**deaths in custody**



**discrimination**



**mental health**



**road policing**



**use of force, Taser,  
and less lethal  
options**



**abuse of position  
for sexual purpose**

# CASE STUDY

## Race-based discrimination training builds staff skills

Covering a mix of theory and practice, 70 investigators and casework managers completed race-based discrimination training during the year to support our work on race discrimination and policing.

The course was developed to improve the quality of investigations into allegations of race discrimination, with the course covering a mix of theory and practice and including a presentation by Manchester Metropolitan University on how Black, Asian and minority ethnic people can be treated differently and more harshly in the criminal justice system.

After completing the training, participants are expected to lead race-based discrimination investigations, help other lead investigators with race-based discrimination investigations, and share learning to others in their office with support from the Discrimination Subject Matter Network.

Following the training, all respondents agreed that their understanding of the subject matter had increased, they reported feeling more confident in dealing with race discrimination cases, and most felt their performance would improve following the learning.

**Following the training, staff agreed that their understanding of race-based discrimination had increased and reported feeling more confident in dealing with these cases.**

## A more efficient organisation

We remain committed to providing better systems and equipment for our staff and during the year moved to an in-house ICT support centre, which is achieving 99% satisfaction ratings from staff. This helped our staff to move quickly to homeworking during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Further information about our budget, workforce data and performance is published in our annual report, available at [www.policeconduct.gov.uk](http://www.policeconduct.gov.uk)



IOP



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