

INDEPENDENT OFFICE FOR POLICE CONDUCT (IOPC)

IOPC Stakeholder Research 2020/21

October 2021

.YONDER

Aims and approach

Methodology & research objectives

Exploring stakeholder perceptions towards the IOPC

- + This report summarises the findings from online and in-depth telephone interviews with stakeholders, conducted by Yonder between December 2020 – February 2021.
- + These stakeholders were taken from a list identified by the IOPC as those whose views are important to the overall success of the organisation and its reputation.
- + The quotes in this report are taken from the in-depth interviews. The online interviews were quantitative, and numerical data in this report is taken from those interviews.
- + The online survey was conducted between 15 December 2020 – 7 February 2021. The in-depth interviews were conducted between 18 January 2021 – 26 February 2021.
- + Both the online survey and the in-depth interviews covered overall perceptions of the IOPC, perceptions of its performance on key measures and specific areas of its work, the quality of its communications and engagement with stakeholders, and perceptions of the organisation’s overall strategy.



Sampling approach

Stakeholders are categorised into three groups throughout this report:

1

Police stakeholders

119 quantitative interviews and 8 in-depth qualitative interviews

2

Non-police stakeholders

103 quantitative interviews and 9 in-depth qualitative interviews

3

Police accountability framework stakeholders

39 quantitative interviews and 8 in-depth qualitative interviews

A NOTE ON THE SAMPLING

Similar research was last undertaken in 2017 and in 2019. The samples in each study are different and for some sub-groups are based on small numbers of stakeholders.

Where relevant, we have shown changes in the findings between 2017, 2019 and 2020/21, for indicative purposes.

Any changes year on year should be treated with caution and interpreted in conjunction with the qualitative findings. Some sub-groups (in particular police accountability framework stakeholders) are based on small samples.

In 2020, Yonder and the IOPC took a more focussed approach to sampling, due to GDPR legislation, so that stakeholders that the IOPC had not recently engaged with were not contacted. Only those whom the IOPC had engaged with over the last 18 months were contacted. This means there has been some sample change between 2017, 2019 and 2020/21, particularly among non-police and police accountability framework stakeholders.

Some parliamentarians were interviewed online. Due to a very small sample size of 10 respondents, and none interviewed qualitatively, we have not shown this data in the report. See data tables for parliamentarian responses.

Summary and recommendations

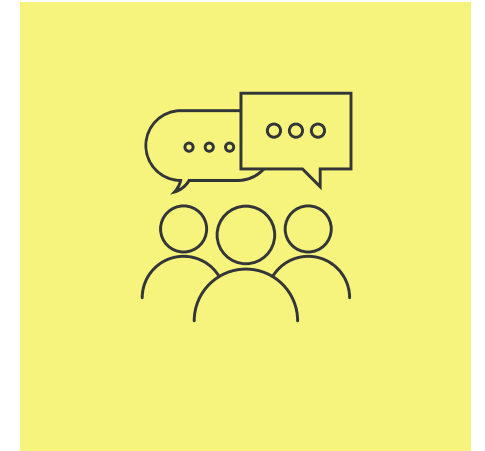
Executive summary

The story of positive change continues, but some key concerns from 2019 remain unaddressed

Stakeholders are more favourable than ever before and the IOPC's improved engagement with them is highly praised. The focus on learning lessons has been widely noted and has driven improvement across a range of key measures relating to police accountability and standards. Fewer stakeholders would speak critically of the IOPC than before and most stakeholders think the organisation is completely, or at least somewhat, independent of the police.

Nevertheless, some key concerns last raised in the 2019 research still remain:

- + Stakeholders continue to question the level of public confidence in and awareness of the IOPC. They want to see it do more to make the public aware of the service it provides and the work it does
- + Stakeholders still question the timeliness (and sometimes the quality) of the IOPC's investigations. Some of the more engaged stakeholders attest to signs of improvement, done to convince police officers and relevant communities that progress has been made to improve



Recommendations (1/3)

1. **Demonstrate public engagement**
2. Continue focussing on investigation timeliness (and quality)
3. Evidence that learnings lead to change

Stakeholders are concerned about perceived low levels of public confidence in policing and in the police complaints system, particularly among young people and BAME communities. At a time when the police are tasked with enforcing coronavirus restrictions and amid heightened debate with regards to police accountability and systemic racism, they also feel fear confidence levels might drop even further.

In order to remedy this, they call for the IOPC to push engagement further and seek to drive up awareness in a way that is focussed on the public benefits the IOPC brings. Stakeholders representing BAME communities especially call for the IOPC to engage with members of the public with Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds.

The IOPC needs to show stakeholders that it is engaging with the public – increasing awareness of the organisation and confidence in it, specifically among BAME communities.

Recommendations (2/3)

1. Demonstrate public engagement
- 2. Continue focussing on investigation timeliness (and quality)**
3. Evidence that learnings lead to change

Stakeholders are still concerned about the IOPC's investigations – especially the time it takes to conduct them, but also the standard to which they are conducted.

Stakeholders acknowledge that the IOPC has tried to reduce the time investigations take and many have seen some degree of positive change. Nevertheless, there are still lingering perceptions, especially among police stakeholders, that investigations take too long. This seem to be mostly, but not entirely, in relation to legacy cases. Some also question whether investigators are trained to a sufficient standard.

The IOPC needs to further show evidence of reduced investigation times and assure police stakeholders about the quality of investigations.

Recommendations (3/3)

1. Demonstrate public engagement
2. Continue focussing on investigation timeliness (and quality)
- 3. Evidence that learnings lead to change**

The focus on sharing lessons is now well embedded among stakeholders. They believe the IOPC is very good at sharing lessons learnt. They think that content around learning lessons is useful and informative and describe the benefits to their own work brought about by the new focus.

However, questions still remain about the extent to which these learnings are implemented across police forces and the extent to which they lead to real change.

A majority of stakeholders believe the IOPC has enough power to enforce its recommendations. Rather than getting new powers, they think the IOPC should work more closely with forces across the country to ensure its recommendations are being taken up.

The IOPC needs to show stakeholders that it is working with police forces to ensure that the lessons it shares can lead to real change.

Overall perceptions and impressions

OVERALL PERCEPTIONS AND IMPRESSIONS

Favourability towards the IOPC has improved again.

The progress first noticed by stakeholders in 2019 has continued, with the fundamental change of direction towards sharing learnings and engaging more openly continuing to drive positivity among all stakeholder groups.

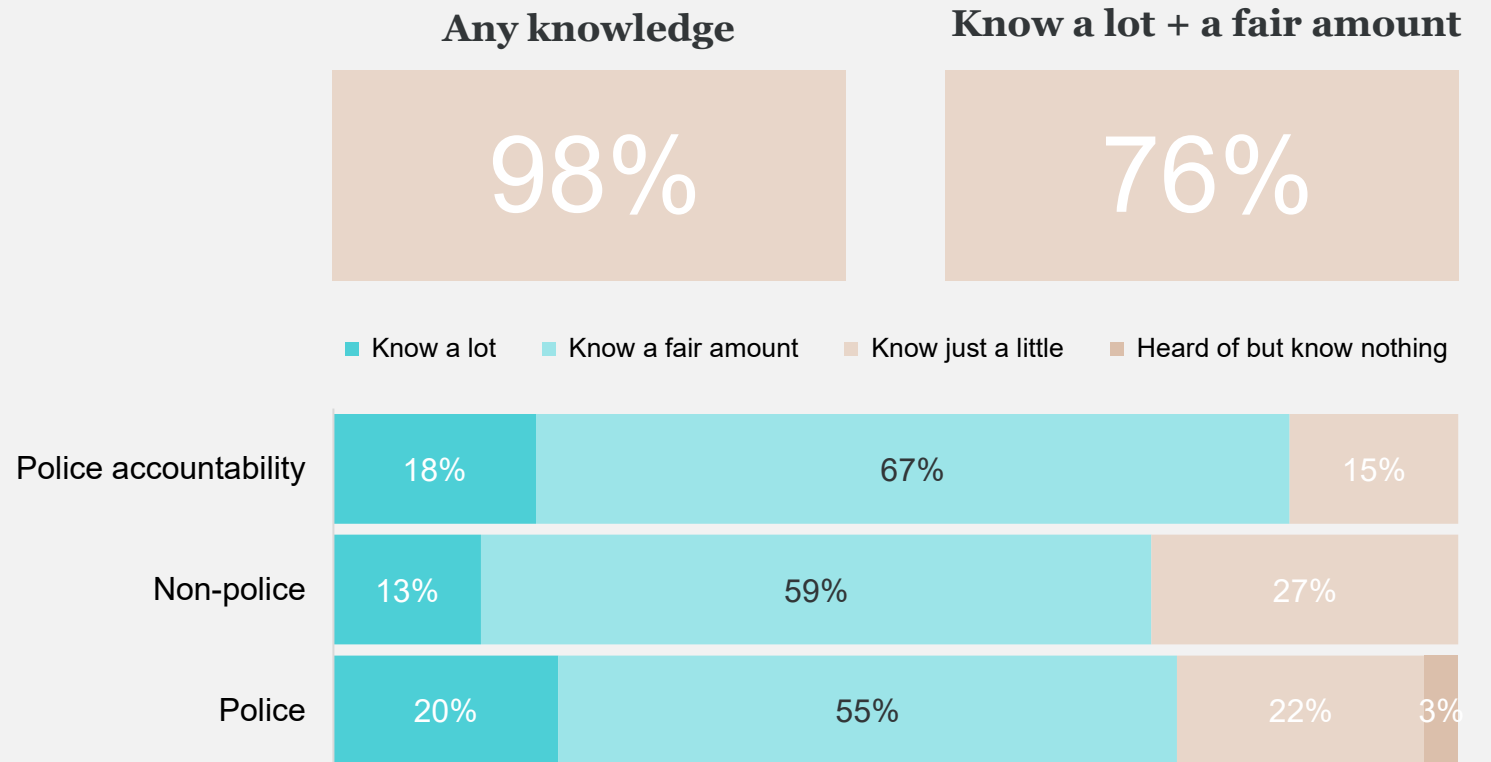
Familiarity of the IOPC is high among all stakeholders

Q. How much, or little, do you know about the Independent Office for Police Conduct?

At an overall level, knowledge of the IOPC is high

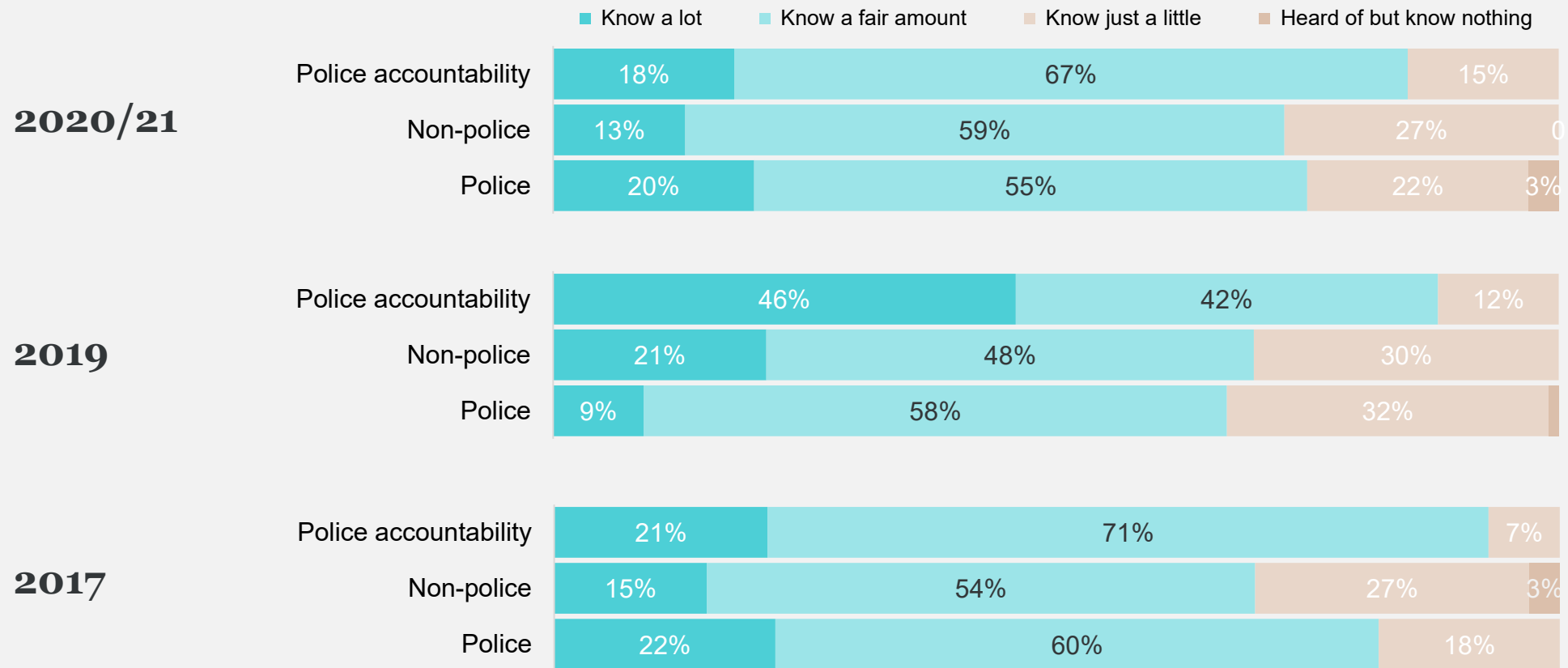
The vast majority of all three stakeholder groups say they know at least a fair amount about the IOPC. Of all three, police accountability stakeholders are most likely to have some knowledge.

Only a minority across all three groups, however, say they know a lot about the IOPC.



Familiarity is broadly in line with previous years (with police accountability more familiar this year vs last year due to sampling variation)

Q. How much, or little, do you know about the Independent Office for Police Conduct?



Most stakeholders understand the IOPC's key roles and responsibilities

Stakeholders mention independence, police accountability and confidence in policing when asked about the IOPC's roles and responsibilities.

Most agree that the IOPC's responsibilities do not differ vastly from that of the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC).

Instead, they understand the transition to the IOPC to relate to changes in the organisation's structure and increased focus on improving stakeholder management and sharing relevant lessons.

Be independent

"It's in the first word of their title, their acronym. It's to be independent and **independently investigate** and assess complaints that members of the public make."

Non-police stakeholder

Hold the police to account & share relevant learnings

"To independently investigate on behalf of the public, in the public interest, and to hold officers and staff to account in the public interest and to **share any learning and improvement across policing.**"

Police stakeholder

Maintain confidence in policing

"The first responsibility is to **maintain police confidence in the policing** by consent. They are the arbiters of discipline. The second role would be to efficiently and expeditiously investigate serious complaints against police officers and police crime commissioners."

Police accountability framework stakeholder

Most stakeholders are favourable towards the IOPC

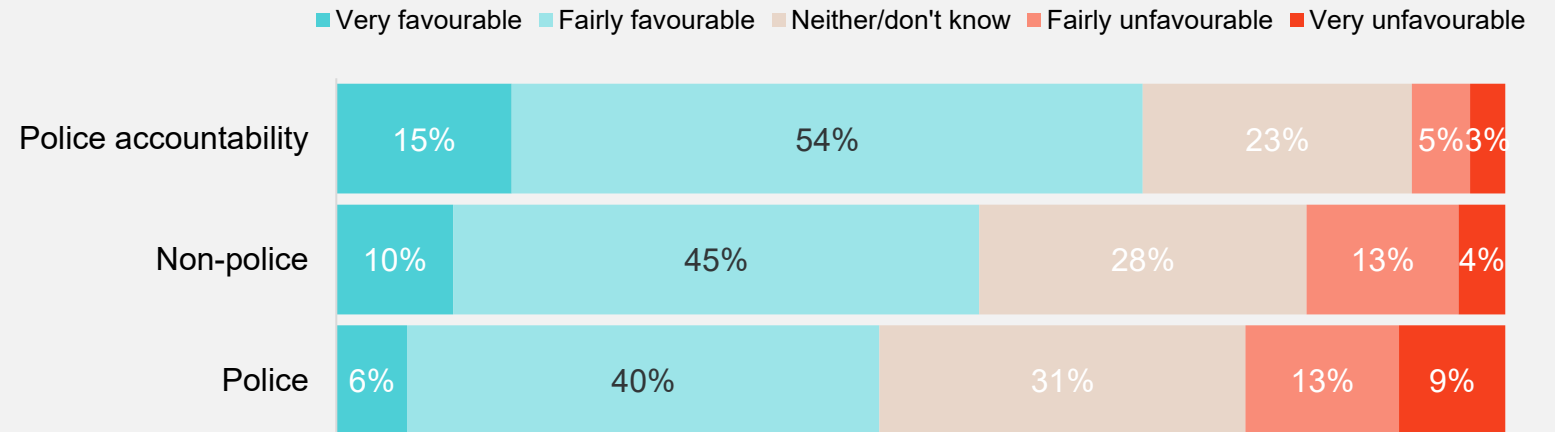
Q. How favourable or unfavourable is your overall opinion of the IOPC?

Across all three stakeholder groups, stakeholders are more favourable than unfavourable towards the organisation

Stakeholders describe the IOPC as 'doing its best' and appreciate the difficult task of earning the trust of both the public and police forces when handling matters involving both parties.

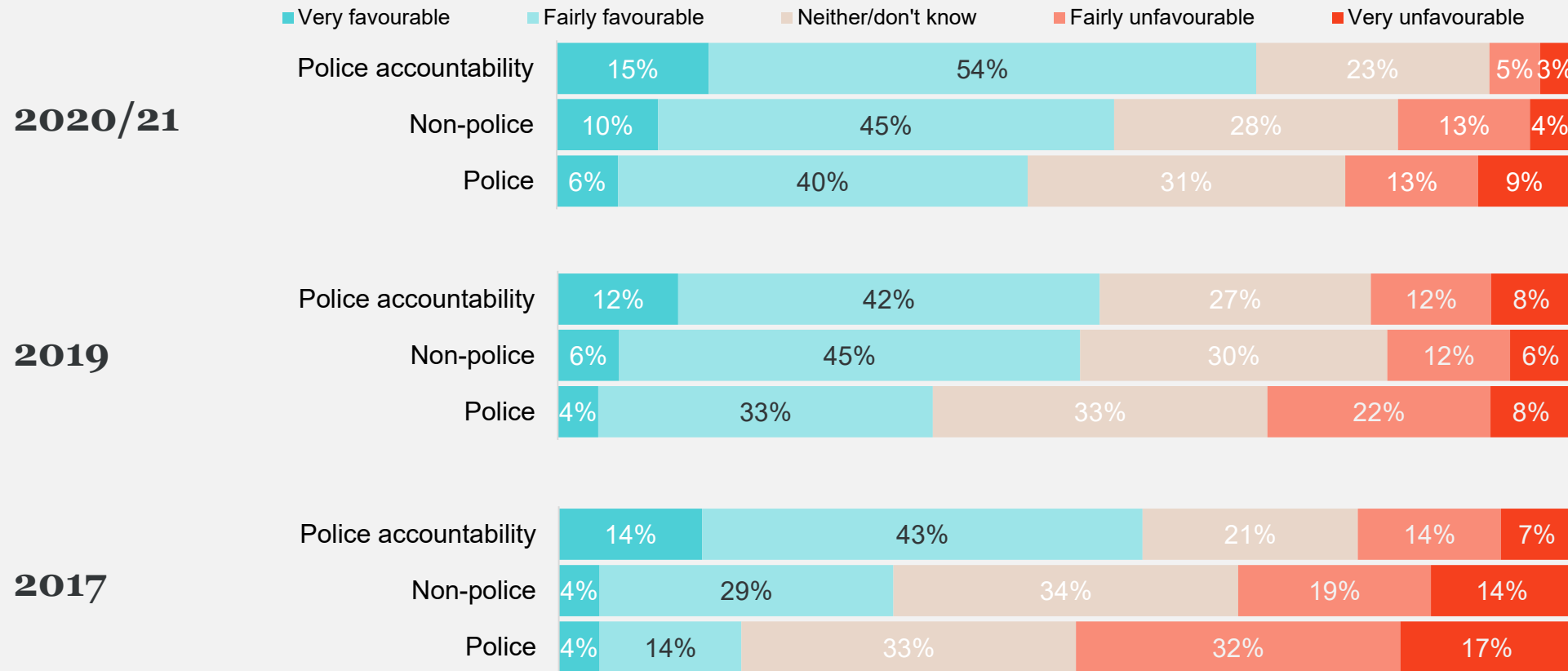
Stakeholders see the IOPC's work and purpose as necessary and broadly believe that its strategic focusses are appropriate.

Favourability across all groups **53%**



Favourability has improved among all stakeholder groups again

Q. How favourable or unfavourable is your overall opinion of the IOPC?



Similarly, many would also speak highly of the IOPC, whilst few would speak critically of it

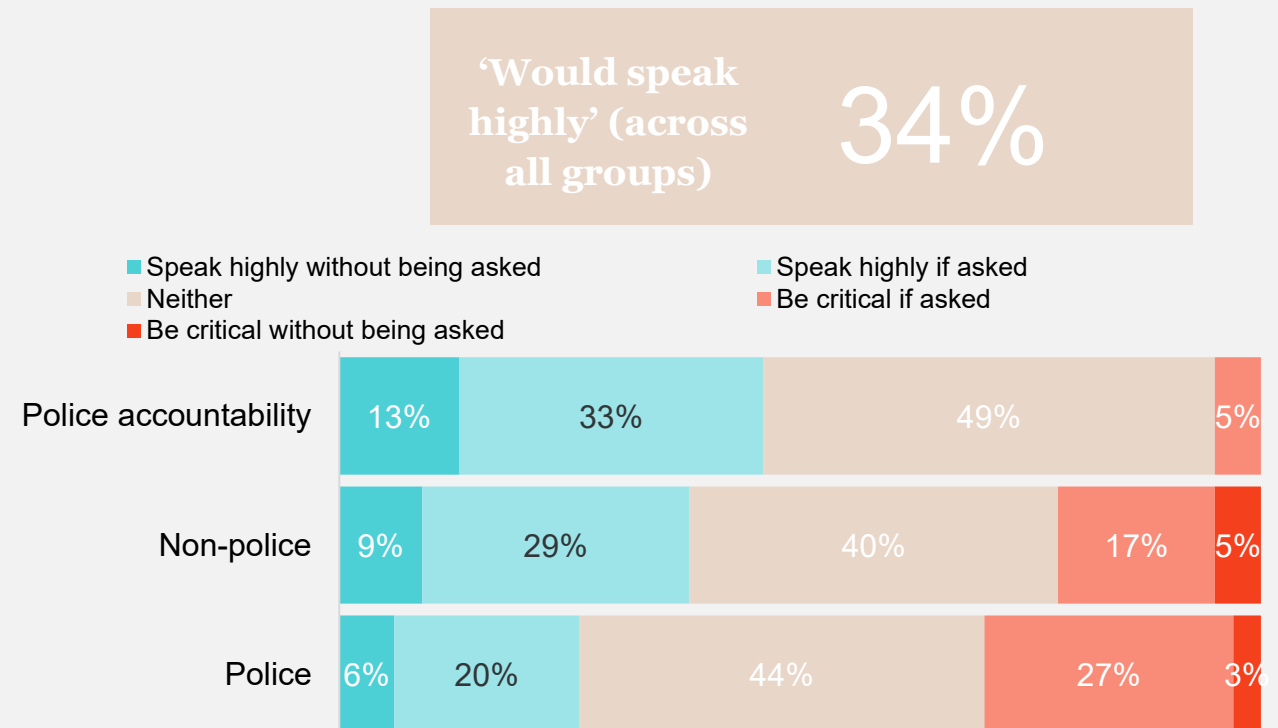
Q. Which of these statements best describes how you would speak about the Independent Office for Police Conduct?

Stakeholders' impressions of the IOPC continue to improve

In 2019, the positive change was driven by three key factors: a shift of focus towards learning, better stakeholder outreach and engagement, and leadership that listened. Stakeholders continue to respond positively to each of these areas of the IOPC's work.

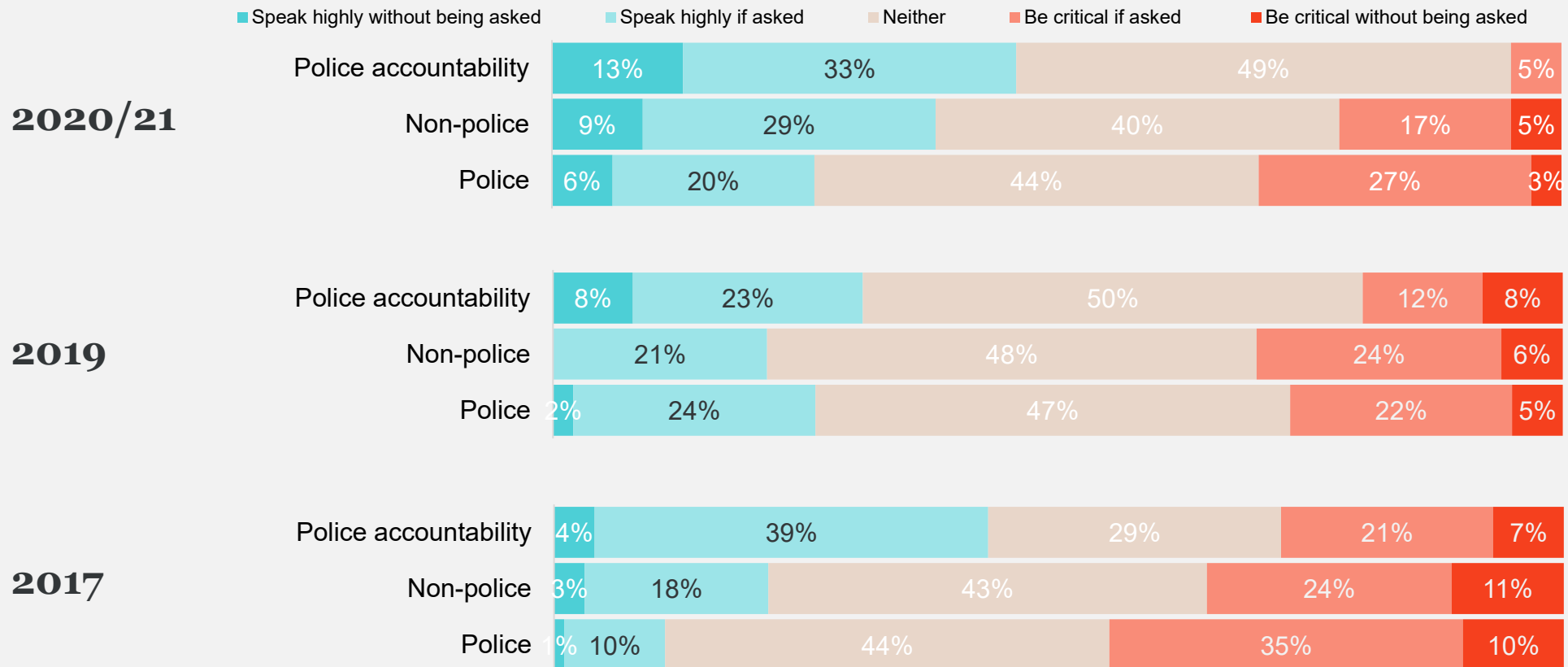
Those who are still critical tend to focus on two main areas: 1) the perception of slow investigations and 2) perceived low public awareness and lack of community engagement.

Many, however, still say they would not speak neither highly nor critically of the IOPC – this is most often due to stakeholders feeling it would be inappropriate to do either in their professional role.



Fewer stakeholders would speak critically of the IOPC today than in 2019

Q. Which of these statements best describes how you would speak about the Independent Office for Police Conduct?



Favourability vs. unfavourability: in stakeholders' own words...

High favourability driven by change in direction

“**They've made huge changes.** They can make more changes, but I think they're **definitely going in the right direction** and any folk that I currently deal with who have made complaints against the police certainly seem generally to be more satisfied than people in the past who've been in the same circumstances.”

Non-police stakeholder

“They are lots better than they have been in the past. I think that there is a real good opportunity **under the leadership of Mr Lockwood to build on some success.**”

Police stakeholder

“**The change recently towards trying to move the complaints system towards learning outcomes is a good thing** and will help the service and will help the relationship between the police and the IOPC to make that more collaborative.”

Police stakeholder

But some concern about speed & public/BAME outreach

“**They could be doing more around diversity and inclusion** in terms of internal recruitment, and **in terms of outreach with people from minority communities.** I think they're on a journey. They're on the right track, but there's still more that could potentially be done.”

Non-police stakeholder

“The thing that's probably my biggest detraction from being hugely supportive of the IOPC is **the timing issue** that I've already alluded to. How long it takes to deal with investigations.”

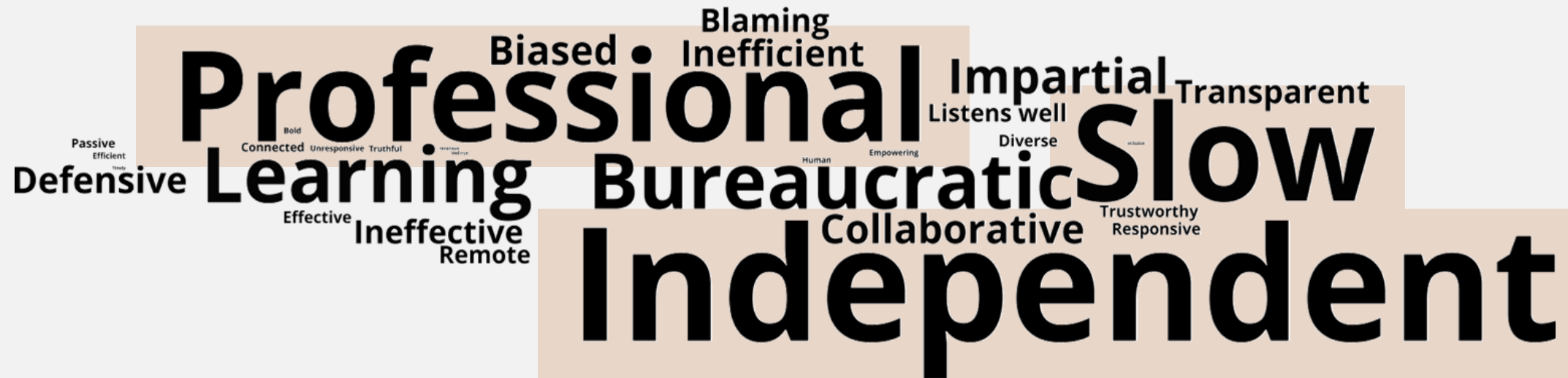
Police stakeholder

“I am favourable of an independent body and an organisation that can oversee police conduct and the workings of an organisation. What I am not happy about **is the length of time and the undue pressure and bearing that they have on police officers, their families and victims of any allegations because of the length they take in dealing with investigations,** some of which are very, very minor and lead to people being very anxious and actually suffering mental ill health because of it.”

Police stakeholder

Most stakeholders associate the IOPC with words such as ‘independent’ and ‘professional’, but also ‘slow’

Q. Which, if any, of the following words or phrases do you think best describe the IOPC? Please choose up to three words.



Professional, well-led & independent

Professional, well-led

The IOPC's staff and leadership team are praised for their professional attitude and renewed stakeholder engagement

“Professional. Well led. I think it runs through the whole organisation. There's a clear message, **there's a clear vision for the IOPC that wasn't there before**, and that filters through.”

Police accountability framework stakeholder

“I find in my discussions with **people there, that they are really professional** and excellent.”

Police accountability framework stakeholder

Independent

The IOPC is also widely seen as independent in the way it works

“I know they're independent from - they **don't have to answer anyone**. They're **independent from the government** - and obviously **from the police**.”

Police accountability framework stakeholder

But does the example set by the leadership permeate through the organisation?

Some question whether these standards are held throughout the organisation, particularly among IOPC investigators

“The **message from the top hasn't percolated down through the organisation** of the IOPC in the way that the sector would have wanted it to at this stage.”

Police stakeholder

Slow: lingering concerns remain about the speed of investigations

Stakeholders still think bureaucracy and poorly trained investigation staff hold back the IOPC's reputation

Many stakeholders have direct or indirect experience of lengthy investigations. Where they perceive investigations are long, they attribute the long lead time on these to scarce resources, bureaucracy, and poorly trained investigation staff.

However, some stakeholders do acknowledge that their perceptions are based to some degree on old cases and recognise that work has been done to speed up the investigation process as well as raise the standard of investigations.

This alone does not ease concerns, however, and many believe there is more the IOPC can do to speed up investigations.

Slow

"I know of at least one IOPC investigation that took three-and-a-half to four years, another one that took three years. It would seem to me that **the time they take is still excessive.**"

Police stakeholder

Some see improvement

"They're an organisation that has significantly **improved in the last few years.** For example on the speed of their investigations. They've successfully managed to **clear the backlog of the legacy cases** they had from the previous organisation."

Police stakeholder

"Some investigations are taking too long. Some investigators are hopeless and not competent. **What would take me probably the best part of a week or two to investigate,** deal with, weigh the evidence and come to a determination on, **takes some people in the IOPC,** at the investigator level, **probably the best part of six months to a year.**"

Police stakeholder

Most stakeholders (particularly police accountability) are confident that the IOPC does a good job

Q. How confident, if at all, are you that the IOPC does a good job?

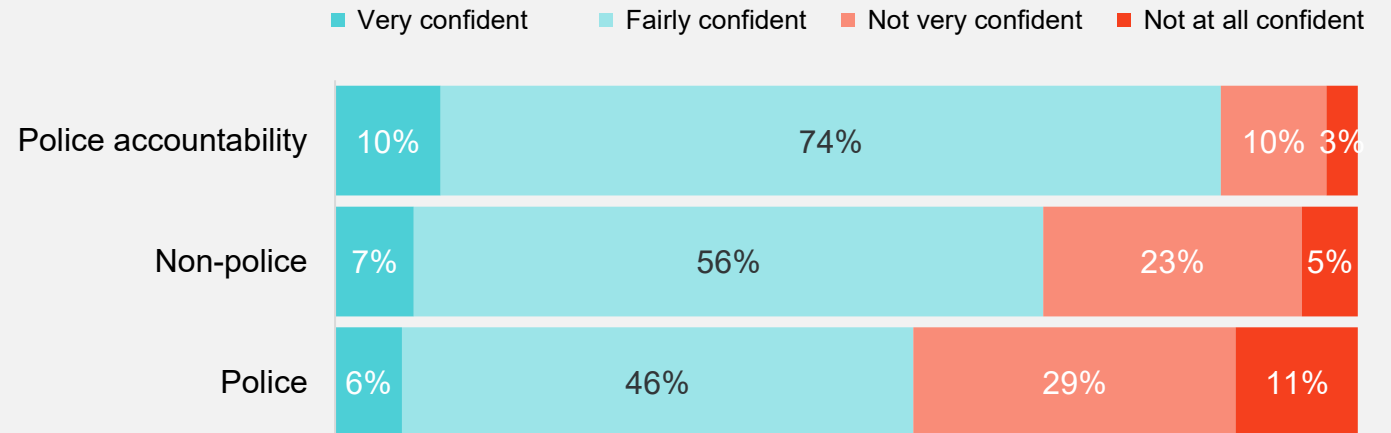
“I am **very confident** they do a good job. I've seen nothing so far to show it in the same light as its predecessor.”

Police accountability framework stakeholder

“Fairly confident. I think **they try and do a good job**. I just think that maybe they're working to the wrong set of principles and standards.”

Non-police stakeholder

Total confidence
(across all groups) **61%**



Almost all stakeholders see the IOPC as independent, but some are not sure it is completely impartial

Q. Do you think the IOPC is independent of the police?

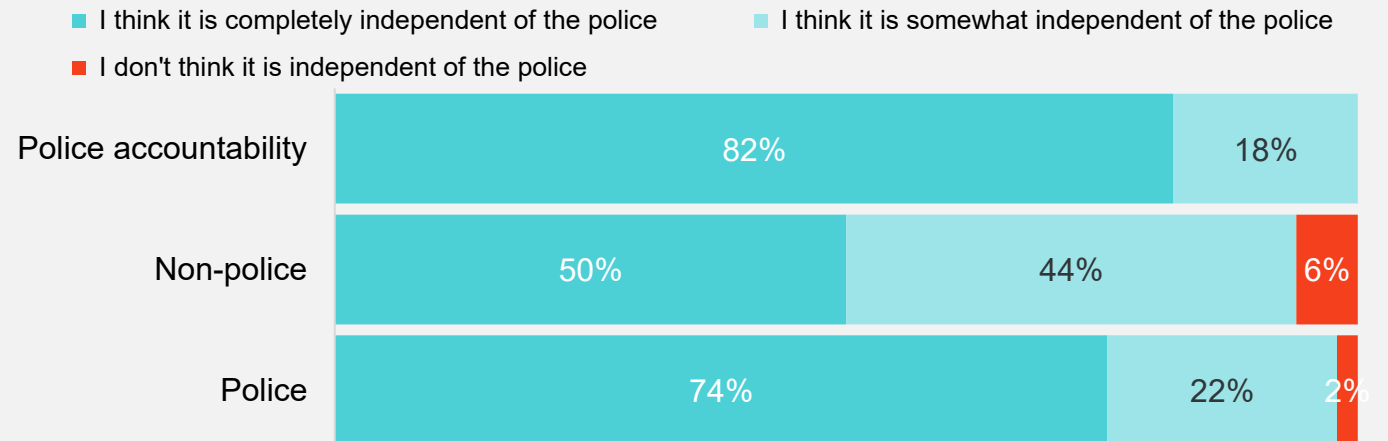
Although almost no stakeholders question the independence of the IOPC, views around impartiality are mixed

Some stakeholders have not experienced or witnessed any bias and therefore believe the IOPC behaves in an impartial way.

There are however some non-police stakeholders that believe the IOPC favours the police. These beliefs are most often based on first-hand experience of cases in which police officers were not, in their view, sufficiently punished. Some of these stakeholders worry that a high number of ex-police officers at the IOPC reduces its claim to impartiality.

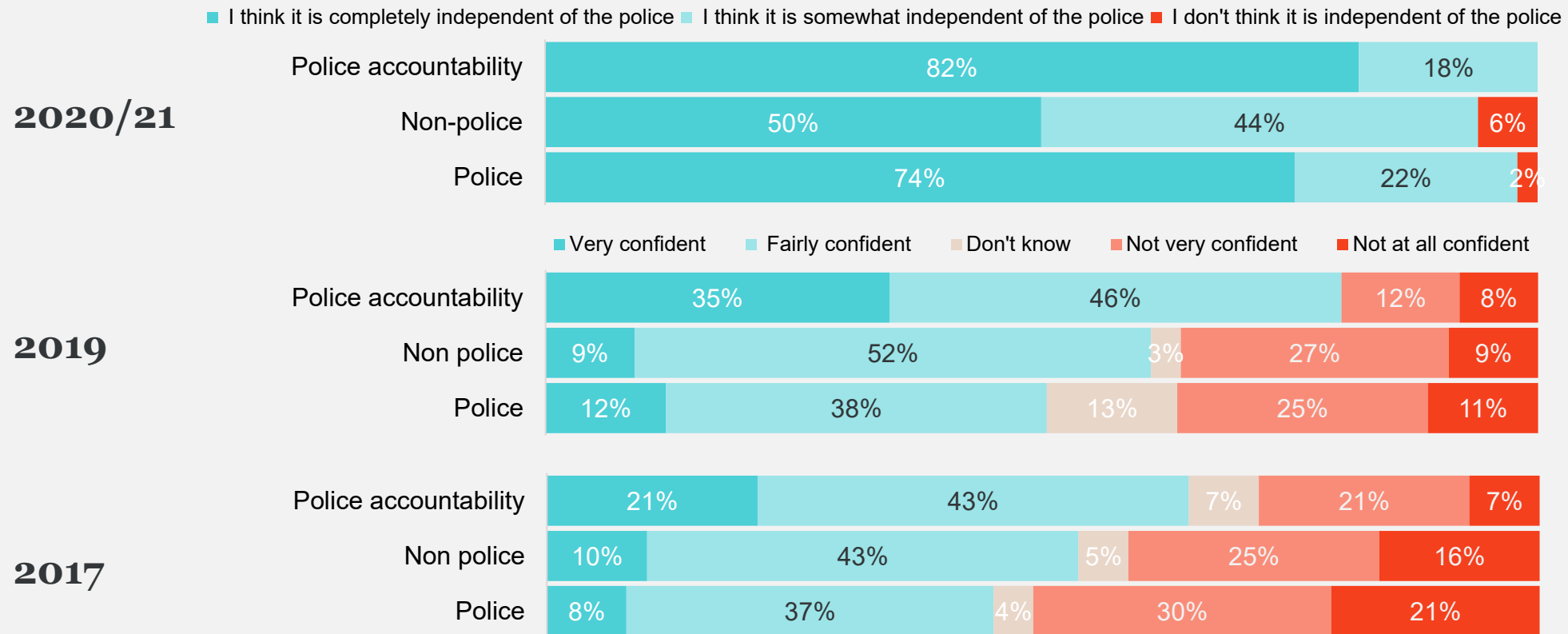
On the other hand, a few police stakeholders believe that the IOPC and its investigators implicitly favour the public. They point towards cases of officers being reprimanded in ways they believed were undeserved.

Total: completely or somewhat independent of the police **95%**



Independent scores in 2020/21 vs impartiality scores in 2019 and 2017

Q. Do you think the IOPC is independent of the police? How confident, if at all, are you that the IOPC / IPCC deals with its work in an impartial way?*



Independence and impartiality: in stakeholders' own words...

Many stakeholders say the IOPC is becoming more independent

"I have **never come across any bias**. In relation to cases I have, I've seen no bias whatsoever in relation to race or religion or gender. There used to be a sense that perhaps they felt they were representing a family as opposed to having the kind of role that the police have, which is an investigatory function, which is keeping an open mindset to investigate, but **I've seen much less of that lately**. They are an independent-thinking organisation."

Police accountability framework stakeholder

"**Very confident that they are impartial**. I think the changes brought about by Michael, particularly about disproportionality, are shining a light on particular police forces behaving badly. He's shining a light on disproportionality. That **all tells me this is an independent organisation** that's doing well."

Police accountability framework stakeholder

But some question whether the IOPC has an 'agenda' (though they don't agree about whether this favours the police or the public)

"If they're truly independent, then they should be doing better. If they're **ex-police staff, they might as well just be police**, because they're always **going to investigate themselves as okay**. I don't really have much confidence that they are independent from the police."

Non-police stakeholder

"I suspect, that **they have their agenda**. (...) I've had a look at some of their case studies, and thought to myself - 'well, to me as a police officer I can't see mistakes being made'."

Police stakeholder

Strength, weaknesses and detailed attitudes

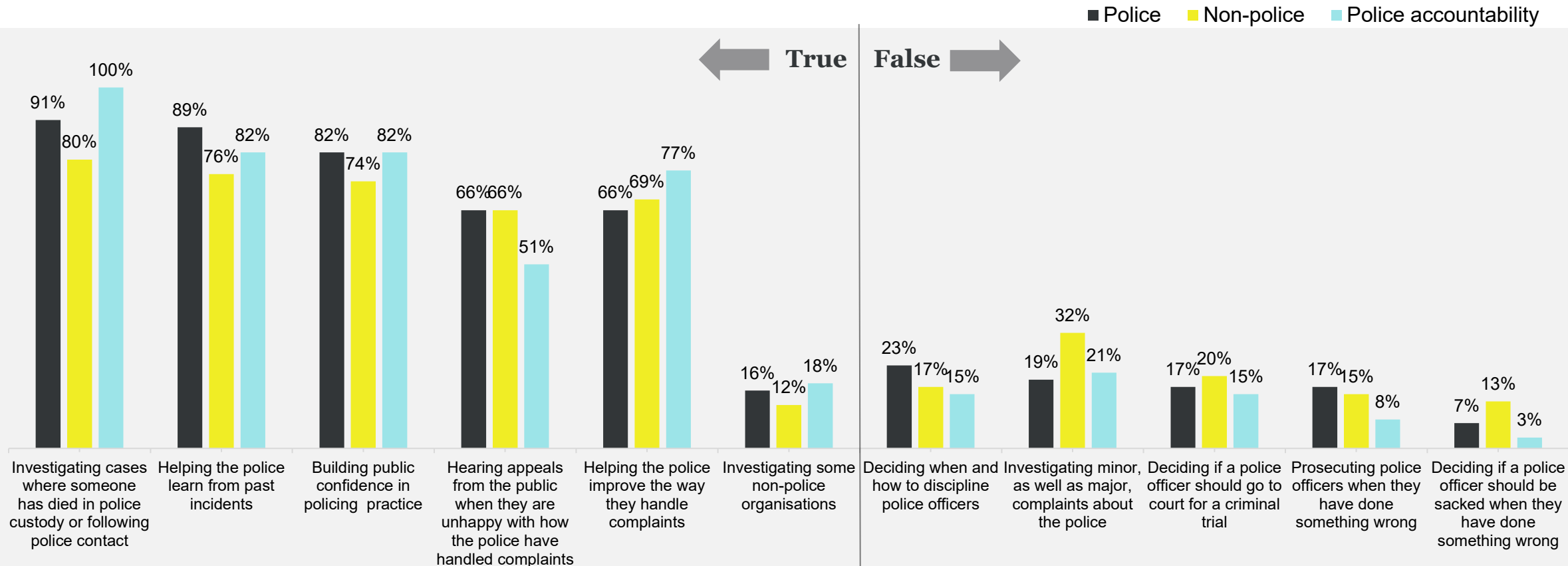
STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, AND DETAILED ATTITUDES

There have been considerable improvements on key measures, particularly on the way police deal with complaints and ensuring the police learn from complaints.

But stakeholders think there is more to do to embed those learnings throughout police forces and when engaging with the public.

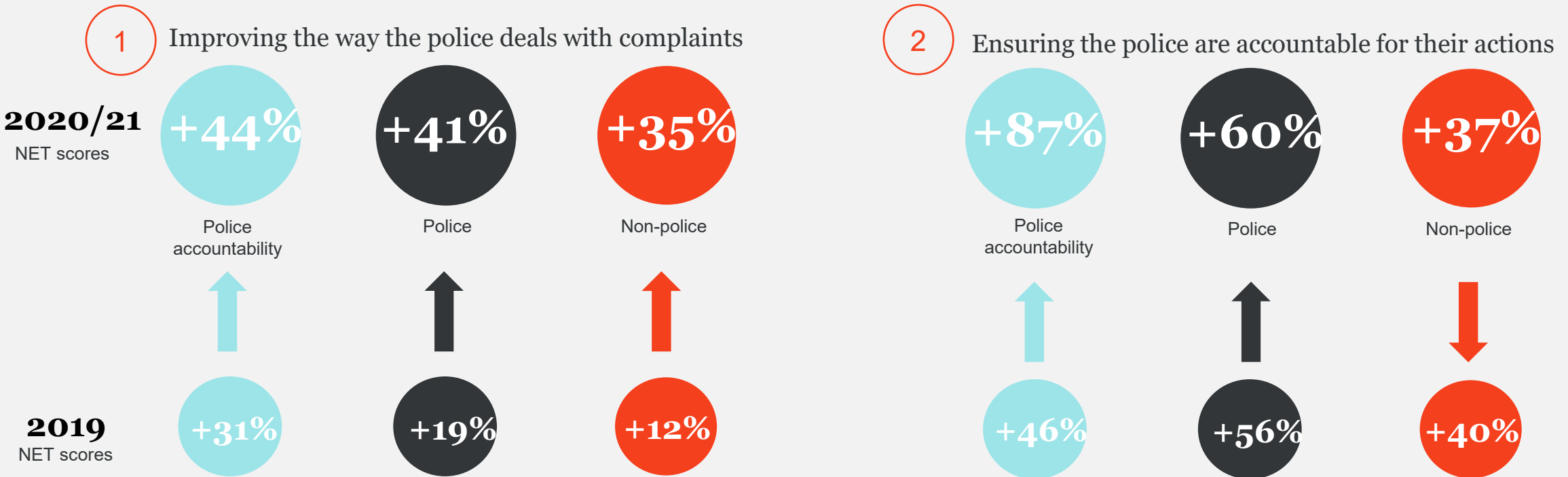
Overall, most stakeholders understand the IOPC's main responsibilities – but some think it has powers it doesn't

Q. Which, if any, of the following do you think the IOPC is responsible for?



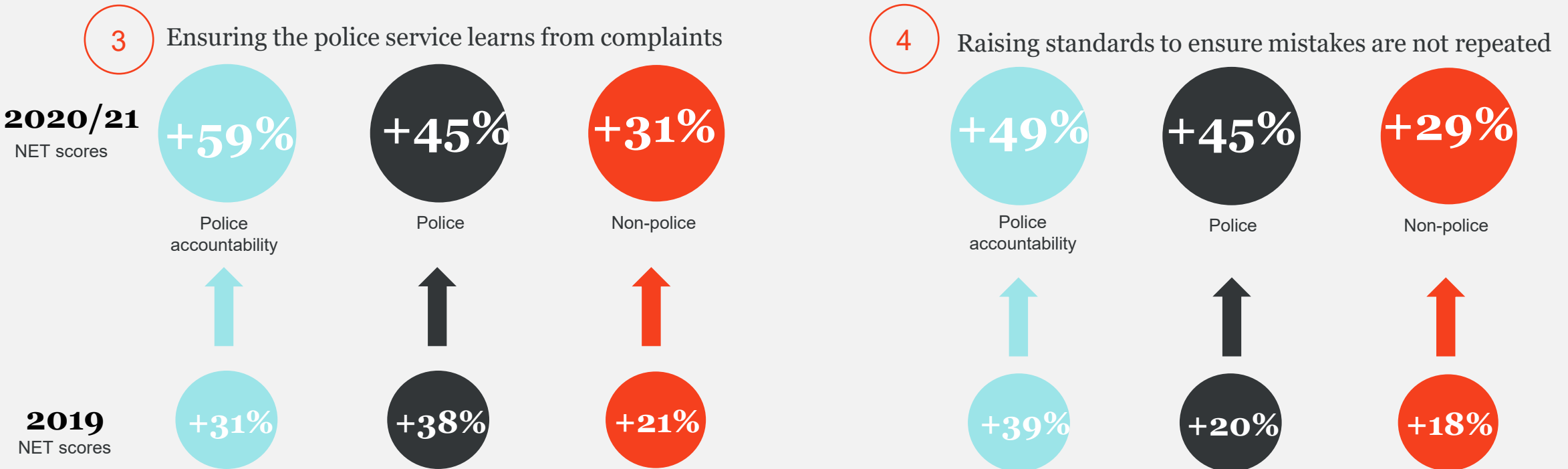
Overview of performance on key areas: there has been large improvement on key measures since 2019

Q. How effective, or ineffective, do you think the IOPC is in the following areas? % who say 'effective' MINUS % who say 'ineffective'



Overview of performance on key areas: stakeholders believe the IOPC is much better at learnings and raising standards

Q. How effective, or ineffective, do you think the IOPC is in the following areas? % who say 'effective' MINUS % who say 'ineffective'



However, some wonder how well-embedded the recommendations and lessons are

Although all stakeholder groups agree that the IOPC have improved, some still have concerns about a few areas...

Ensuring the police are accountable for their actions

- + Some feel the IOPC truly holds the police accountable
- + However, some worry that the IOPC's recommendations are not fully implemented, claiming that police officers are not always reprimanded after the IOPC investigations suggest they are guilty of wrongdoing

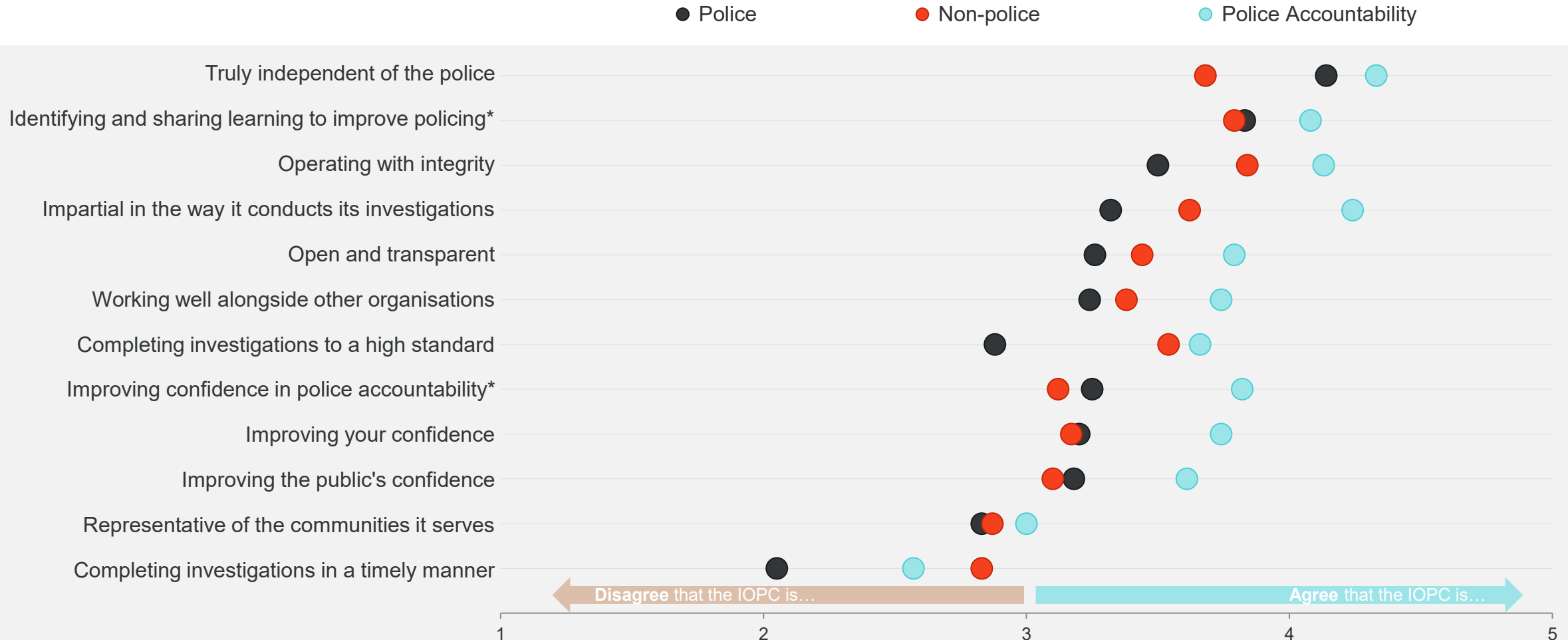
Ensuring the police service learns from complaints

- + Most stakeholders believe that the IOPC is very good at sharing learning materials such as reports and bulletins
- + However, some stakeholders wonder whether lessons from these materials are being adopted and used in the police force to the extent that they would like
- + Some also believe that there are no proper structures in place, within the police force, to disseminate learnings effectively, and therefore question how the IOPC can ensure that standards are raised, and mistakes aren't repeated

Raising standards to ensure mistakes are not repeated

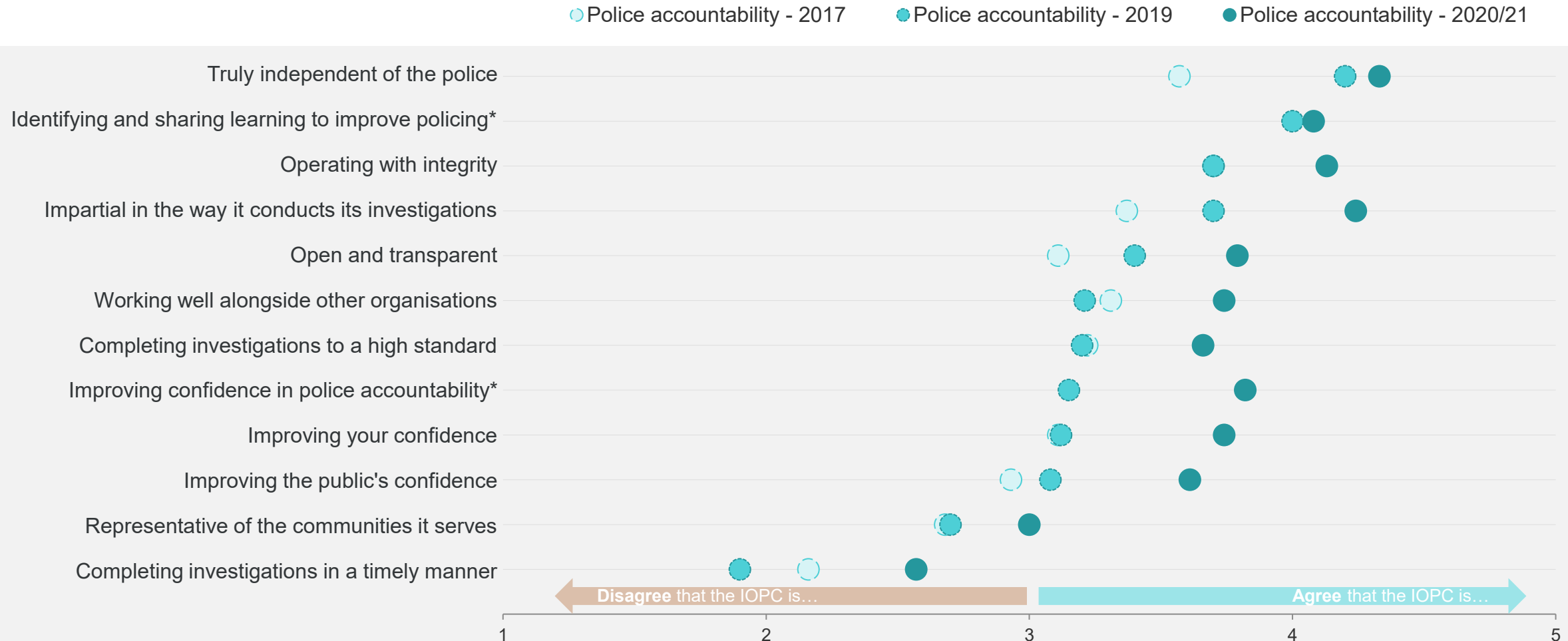
Overview of strengths and weaknesses

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the IOPC is ...?



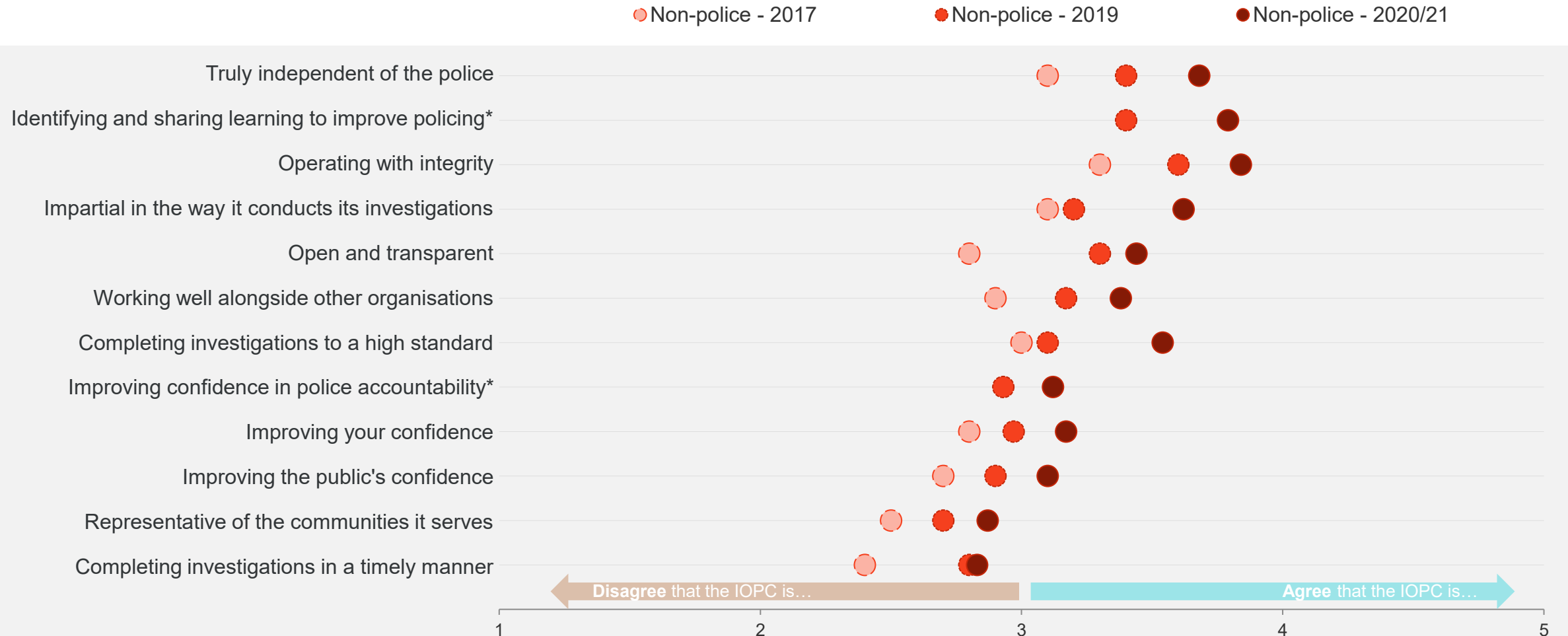
Changes over time: police accountability stakeholders rate the IOPC more highly on every measure vs 2019

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the IOPC is ...?



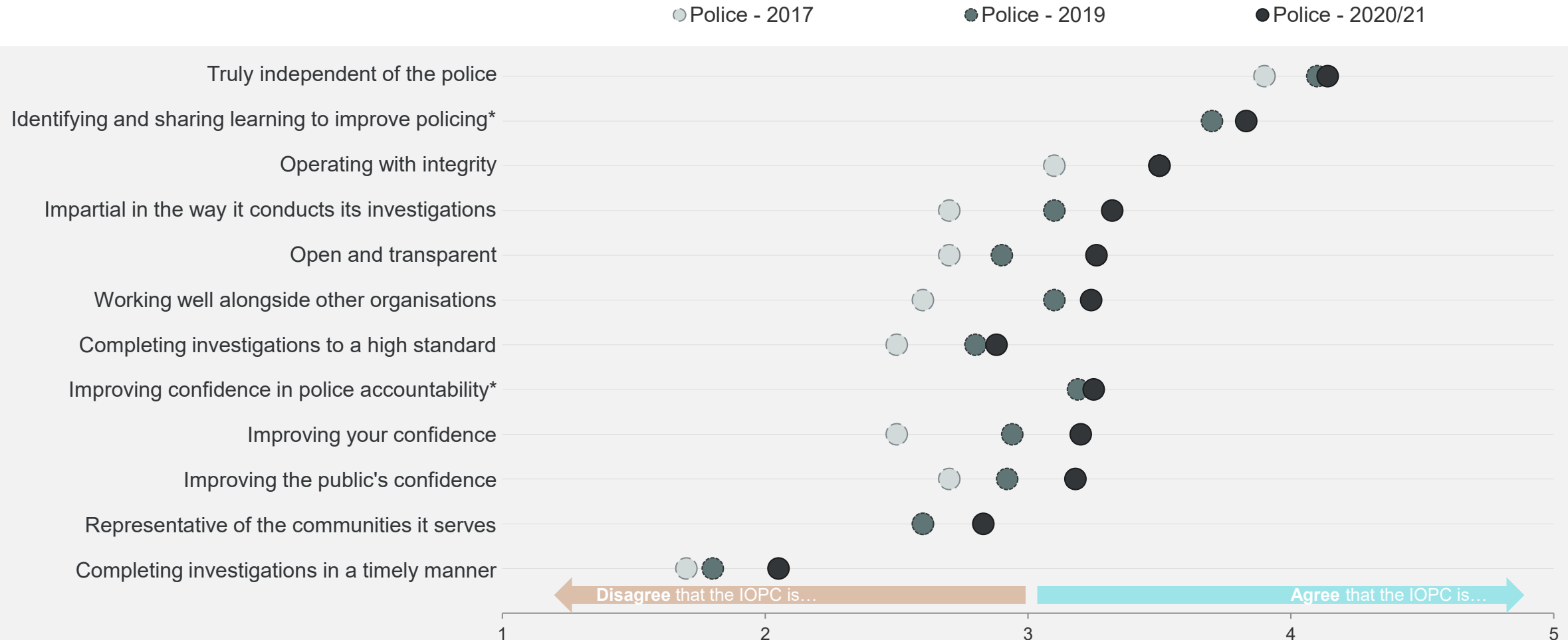
Changes over time: non-police stakeholders also rate the IOPC more highly on all measures

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the IOPC is ...?



Changes over time: police stakeholders are also more likely to agree with all statements than in 2019

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the IOPC is ...?



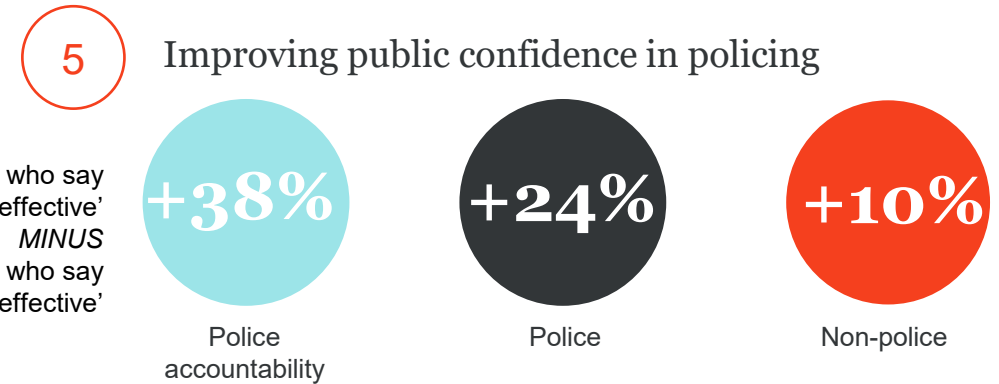
The measure on which stakeholders believe there is most room for improvement is improving public confidence

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

All stakeholder groups view improving public confidence as a relative weakness of the IOPC

Though stakeholders give the IOPC positive scores more often than negative in relation to improving public confidence in policing, they believe more generally that the public has low awareness of the IOPC and that it does not do enough to engage with communities.

Some are sympathetic to the difficulty of the task of public engagement given the nature of the IOPC's work and the legacy reputation of the IPCC, but the consensus is that the IOPC should do more to engage with the public to improve public confidence.



“I don't think the IOPC has a high profile with the general public. I know that obviously certain stakeholders would have knowledge of it, but I just wonder about the general public. Not the stakeholders, but actually **the guys in the street – do they know that the IOPC is actually overseeing police conduct?”**

Police accountability framework stakeholder

“Nobody's ever really heard of them except if you're in the sector. So how can they improve public confidence if the public's never heard of them.”

Non-police stakeholder

Communications and engagement

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, AND DETAILED ATTITUDES

Stakeholders have appreciated the IOPC's open, accessible, and more proactive engagement, with big improvements on engagement scores across all stakeholder types.

They want the IOPC to focus on engaging more with the public, the media, and relevant community groups.

Around half of stakeholders say the IOPC is easy, rather than difficult, to engage with

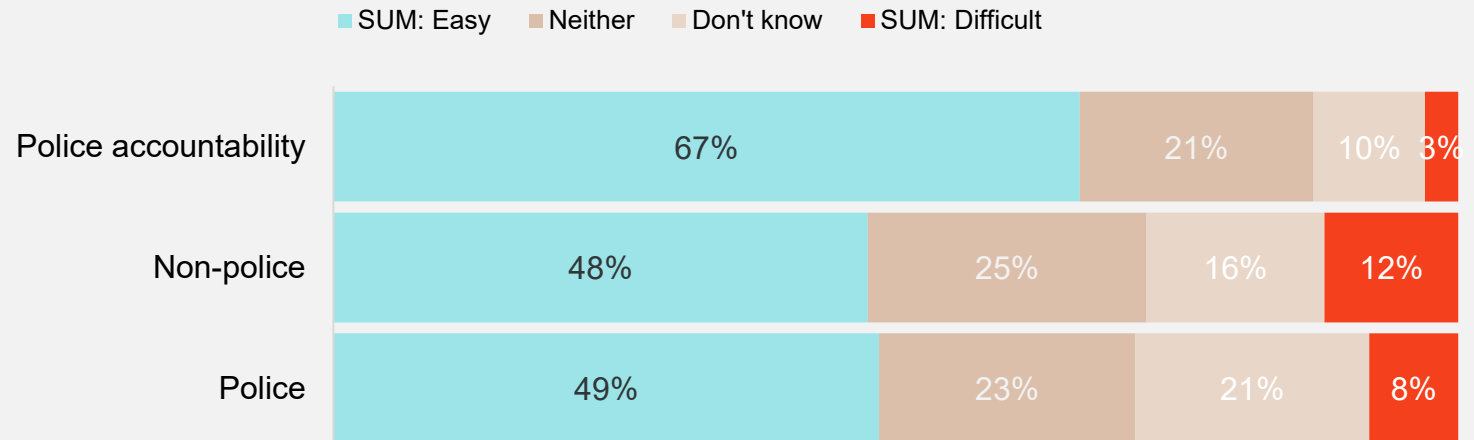
Q. How easy or difficult do you find engaging with the Independent Office for Police Conduct?

Police accountability stakeholders are most likely to think the IOPC is easy to deal with, but around half of police and non-police stakeholders believe so too

Overall, the majority also agree that the engagement is very good and that the channels and frequency of communications are right.

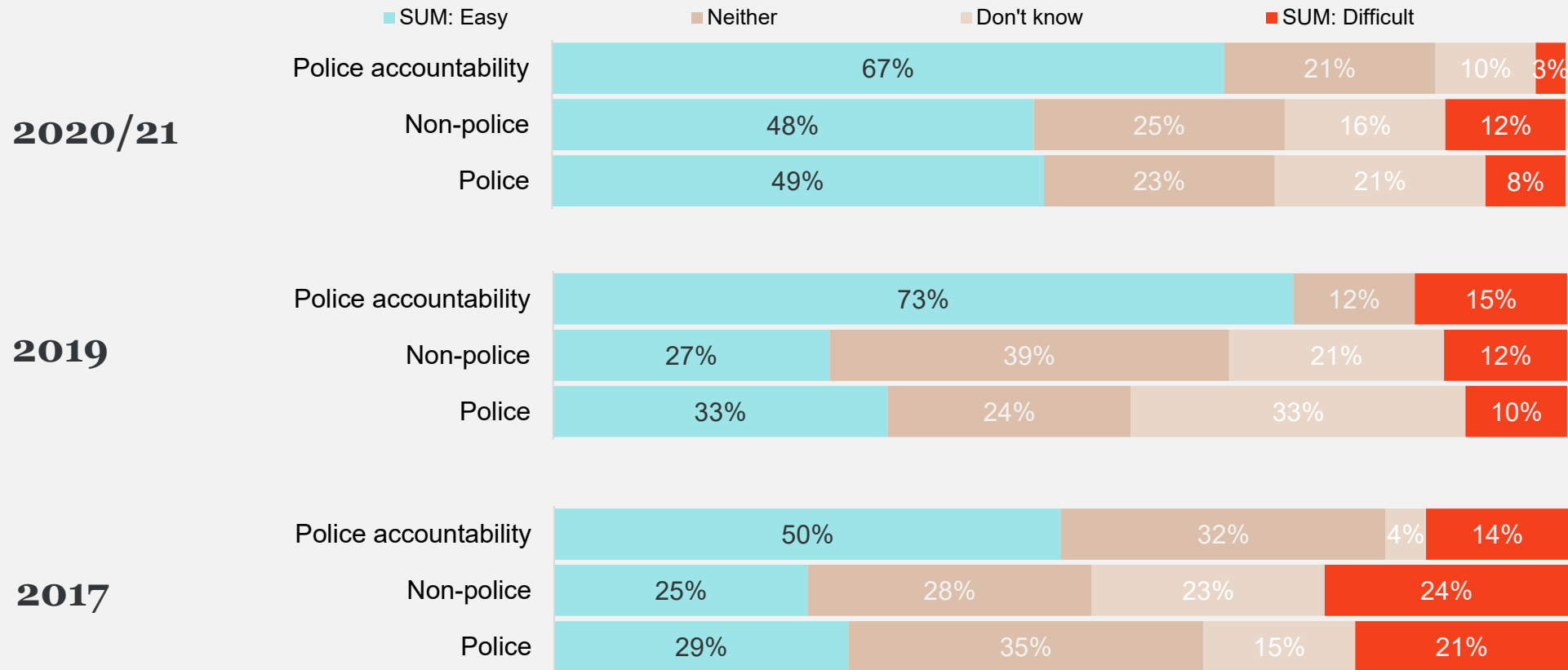
Most stakeholders who have a direct point of contact within the IOPC, whether on a national or local level, are very happy with their point of contact and their relationship, and often cite improvements in openness in recent years.

Total 'easy' across all groups **51%**



Significant improvements in engagement scores

Q. How easy or difficult do you find engaging with the Independent Office for Police Conduct?



Accessible, open and informative engagement are reasons for the improvement in engagement scores

Accessible, open, and informative engagement

“I think it **starts at the top, and at an executive level Michael Lockwood is very accessible**. He has made several appearances at Chiefs' Council to talk about the IOPC. (...) Regionally, certainly in the northwest, **Amanda Rowe is very good at making herself accessible** to you if you are the appropriate authority or head of professional standards, in very much the same way. I think accessibility is really important.”

Police stakeholder

“I deal with them on a personal professional level, so one to one with people to take forward particular pieces of work. Then I've also been involved with them around getting support to police forces that were in trouble. Then we get **regular updates** so I get their **lessons learned documents** and then also they do a **stakeholder update** as well and I get that as well, so it's all pretty good.”

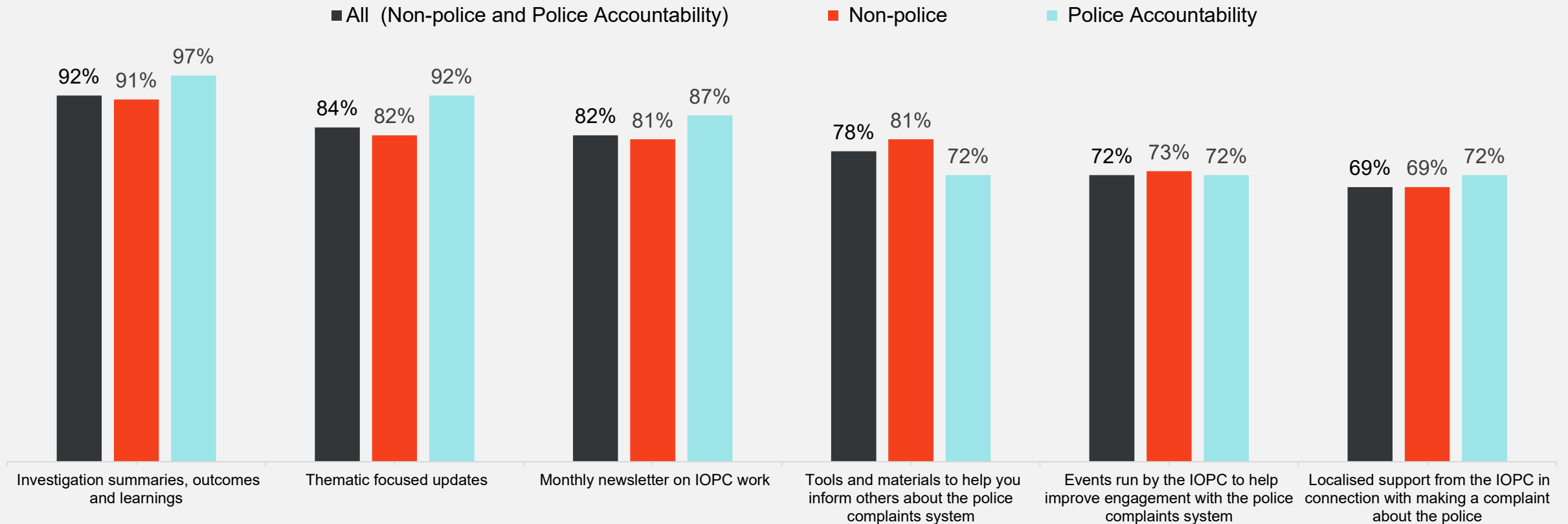
Police accountability framework stakeholder

“The contact I've had with them was good. (...) In terms of approachability and the way they've dealt with me, has always been **very respectful, always engaging, always including**. The meetings were **informative**, but I can only base it on the stakeholder meetings that I go to.”

Non-police stakeholder

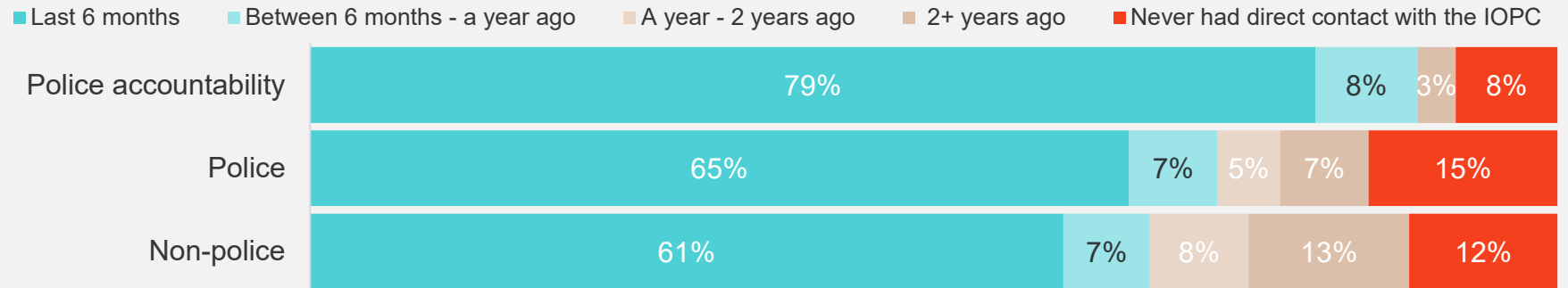
Non-police and police accountability stakeholders would find the investigation summaries, outcomes and learnings the most useful

Q. How useful would you find each of the following? NET: Useful



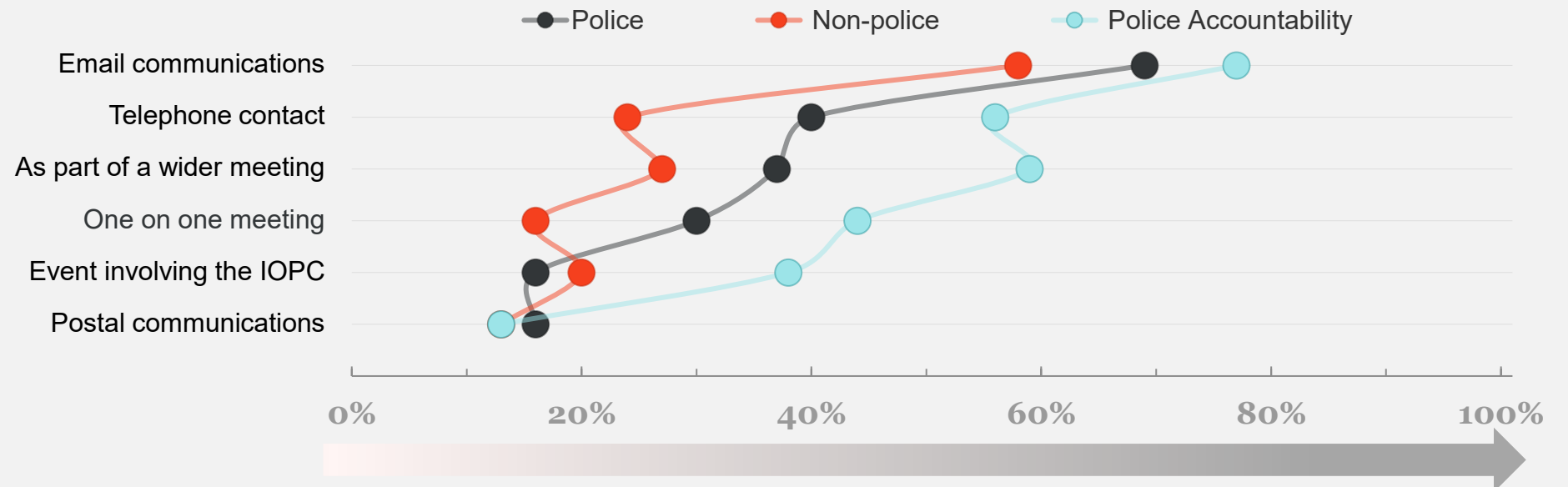
Most stakeholders have had contact with the IOPC in the last 6 months, mostly via email

Q. When was the last time you had contact with the IOPC?



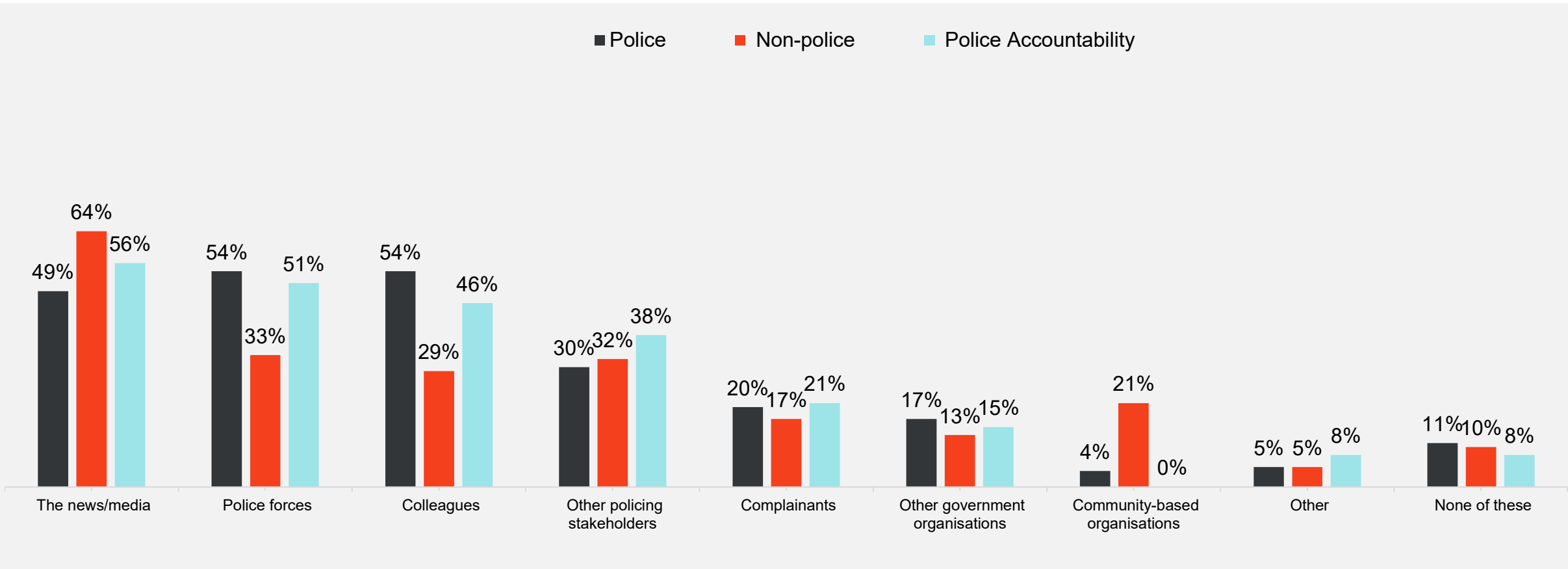
Q. On average, how frequently, if at all, do you engage with the IOPC through the following methods?

[Showing the % who engage twice a year+ via each method]



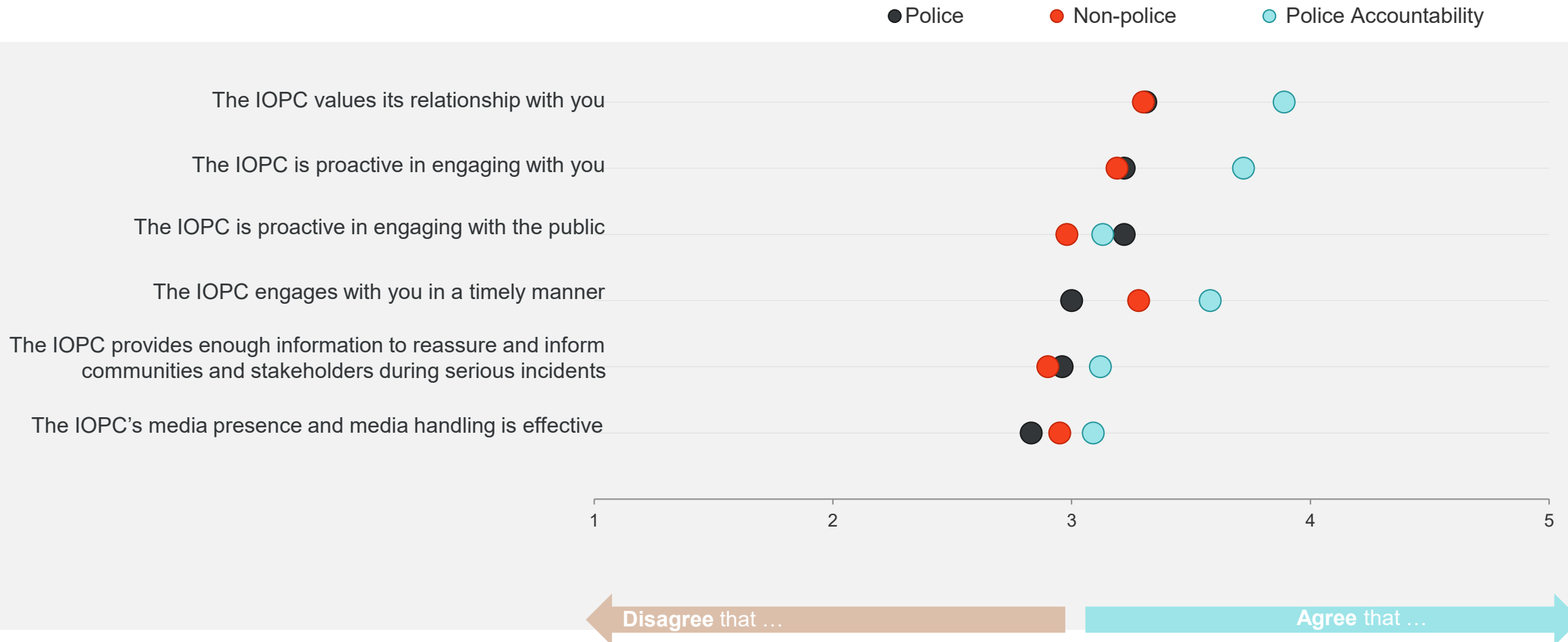
Apart from the IOPC itself, most stakeholders receive information about the organisation from the news and media

Q. Apart from the Independent Office for Police Conduct itself, from where or who do you get information about the IOPC?



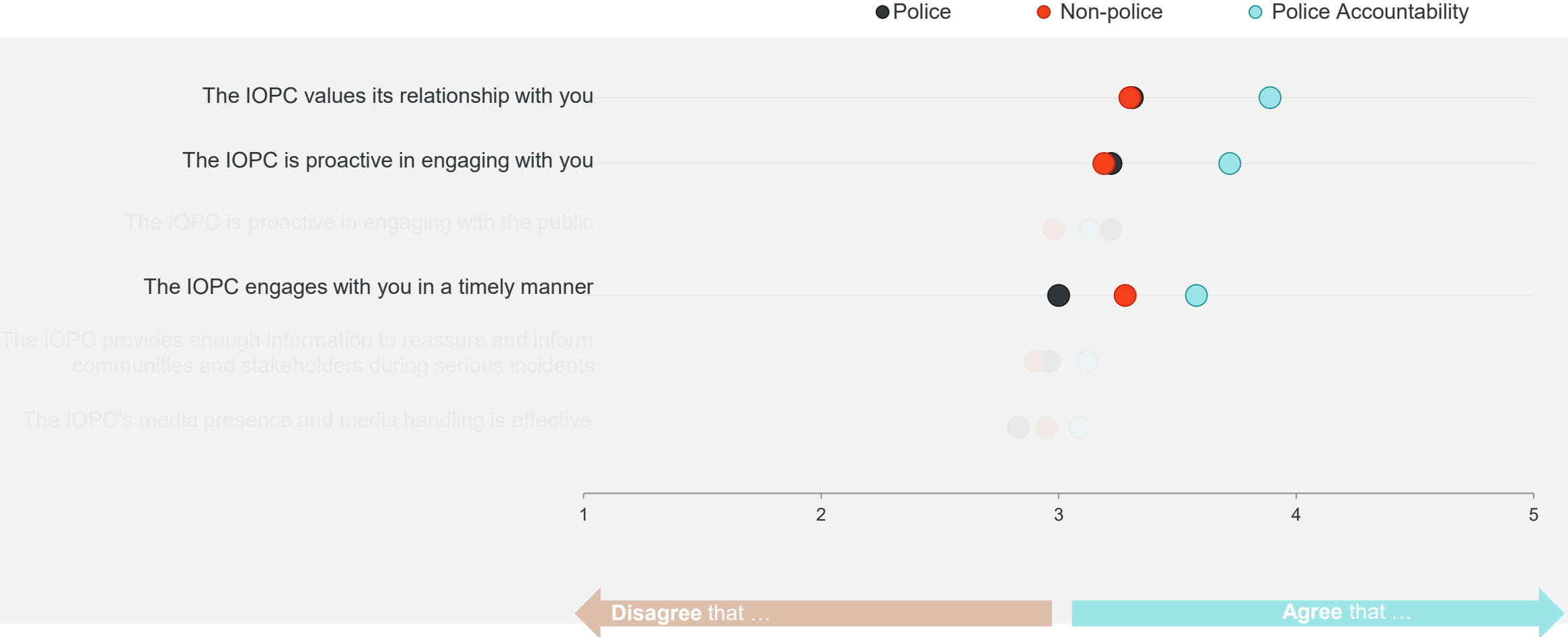
Police accountability stakeholders are the most positive towards their relationship with the IOPC and its communication

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements...?



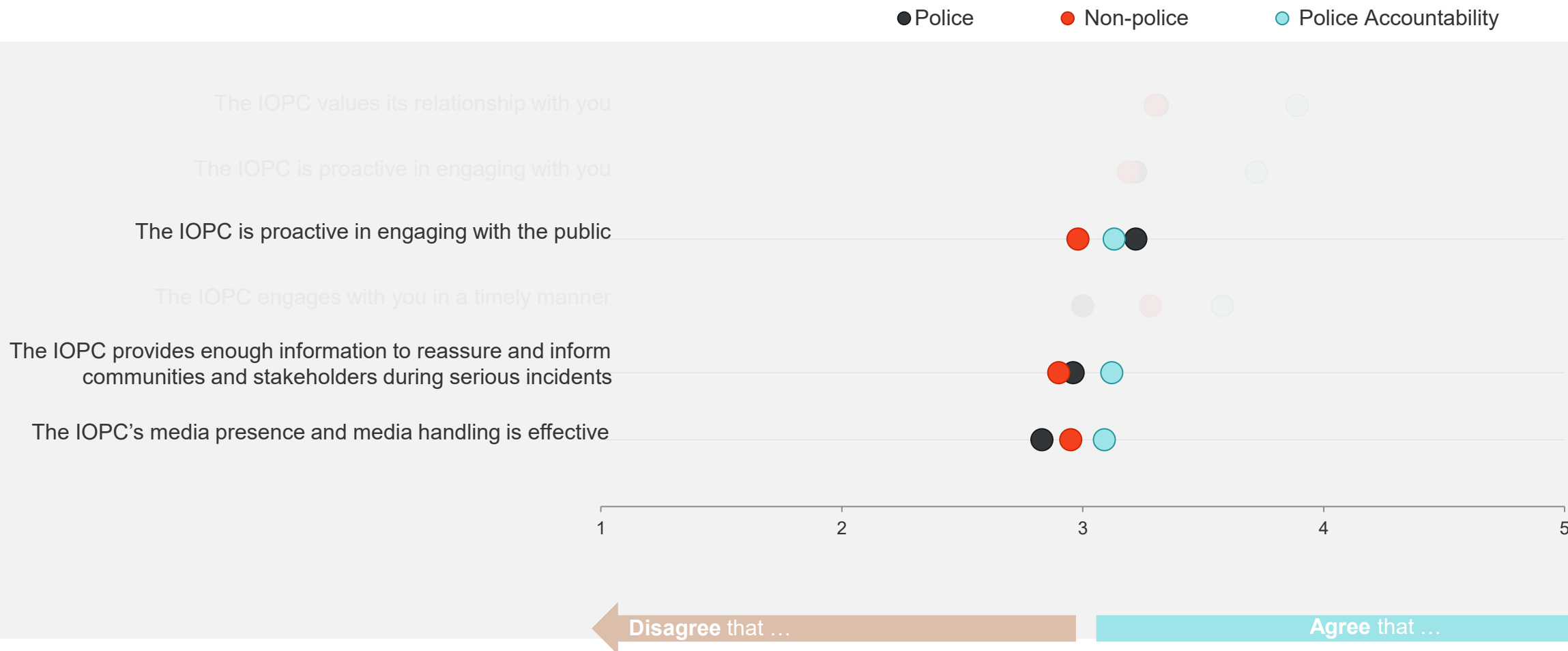
The IOPC is rated most highly for engagement with stakeholders themselves (but with mixed response on timeliness)

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements...?



But it is rated less highly for its engagement with the public, communities, and the media

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements...?



Stakeholders praise the openness of senior staff within the IOPC but feel this could be reflected throughout the organisation more

Stakeholders, especially police stakeholders, praise the openness of senior staff within the IOPC

However, while stakeholders widely believe that senior staff are accessible and proactive, they suggest that this behaviour is not prevalent throughout the organisation.

Therefore, few stakeholders see the IOPC as proactive overall and some call for more formal opportunities to input and feedback on the organisation's work.

Openness & accessibility

"The IOPC are **very happy to engage with me** and identify learnings that may be relevant to help me improve the areas that I'm looking at."

Police stakeholder

"At the level that I engage with them, which is **regional director, deputy director and director, they are proactive**. Now, when you go down to the ground, I suppose, **when you're dealing with maybe an investigator or a manager in the local area that may be a lot of more patchy in relation to proactive engagement.**"

Police accountability framework stakeholder

Room for being more proactive

"It would be better if their stakeholder management was more proactive. If the IOPC is doing something or making a change, that they actually reach out to invite us in to a round table or whatever format they want so that actually we know what they're doing. So we can input into what they're doing. There are **very few formal opportunities** given to do that, so I guess we feel very much like we stand there knocking on the door until it gets answered."

Non-police stakeholder

Stakeholders say the IOPC's main comms/engagement weakness is its engagement with the public

Just as stakeholders believe the IOPC could do more to in improving public confidence in policing (see pg. 38), they also think there is a lot of room for improvement when it comes to the IOPC's communication and engagement with the public

Stakeholders feel more communication with the general public would help build awareness of the IOPC and in turn increase public confidence in policing.

Stakeholders call for communication that is accessible and simple – even for those whose native language is not English. They also suggest the need for increased community engagement at local levels.

“To be honest what I **don't see is a lot of local level community engagement**, particularly across regions. I tend to see national campaigns, the national work that they do via social media channels, etc. But there's a limit to the effectiveness of that.

Police accountability framework stakeholder

“Their **communication should be accessible to everybody**. If they started on that basis, they should be thinking of the person as English is not their first language - so **keep it simple, keep their messages short**, and making sure that everybody in the public is aware of what they're doing.”

Non-police stakeholder

“There are improvements to be had with the general public. They **need to do more with engaging with the general public**, most definitely, so that people begin to understand who they are.”

Non-police stakeholder

Stakeholders representing BAME communities highlight the need to specifically engage with these groups

Non-police and police accountability framework stakeholders representing various BAME communities call for more active engagement with BAME groups

Stakeholders acknowledge the low levels of confidence BAME groups have for both the police and in turn the police complaints system. Therefore they think it is crucial to engage more deeply with these communities moving forward.

Some stakeholders recognise that the IOPC does engage with these communities, but they think it should do more to show it is listening to the perspectives of BAME individuals while also informing them about the work the IOPC can and can't do.

“Black communities have the least confidence in policing, and also the least confidence in the police complaints system. There is more to be done there. The IOPC should be working more [on these issues] with the other arm's length bodies in the policing system. So HMICFRS, the inspectorate, and the College of Policing.”

Police accountability framework stakeholder

“What they're doing to improve public confidence is good – community reference groups or whatever they're called – however, they're not making an impact at the moment. The community lacks confidence in the IOPC. There are often unrealistic expectations about what will come out of an IOPC investigation in terms of consequences for police officers. It's very difficult to get through to people. But outside of incidents, they should have more engagement with communities about what they can do, what they can't do. Members of the public will say 'how can something not have happened?', which is a problem for them, particularly for black communities.”

Police accountability framework stakeholder

Stakeholders think the IOPC could increase its media presence, though some recognise change in this regard already

Only 24% of stakeholders agree that the IOPC's media presence and handling is effective

Overall, there is low recognition of the IOPC's media presence – many do not think it is doing enough to reach the public through the media or have not seen enough evidence to determine whether it is or not.

Some of the more engaged stakeholders say they have noticed the IOPC being more effective and proactive in handling the media and praise it for this change.

However, some police stakeholders say the IOPC should work more closely with the police to ensure that communications with the media from both parties are beneficial to public confidence in the police.

“I don't think their media engagement is perfect. They need to get more timely, and they need to get better at handling the media (...) Some of the dialogue in the national media, I'm talking particularly about *The Guardian* and the *Daily Mail* is quite anti-IOPC. **I think they need to get better at broadcasting what they do in a bigger way.**”

Police accountability framework stakeholder

“The press setup is pretty strong. I get the impression they are **much more effective and are proactive at pushing out stories.** I think they are in a good place at the moment when it comes to media.”

Police accountability framework stakeholder

“There's **often a rub between police forces and the IOPC.** Sometimes police forces will want to be proactive and on the front foot in really putting a position statement out into the media for obvious reasons, for confidence levels and transparency within communities. Sometimes the IOPC don't want to do it and therefore there's a rub sometimes between the force and the IOPC at a very early stage.”

Police stakeholder

Stakeholders believe that timeliness and transparency are important in improving public confidence

When stakeholders are asked for the greatest thing the IOPC could do to improve public confidence in policing practices, the most common answers are timeliness and transparency

Many stakeholders (21%) think that increasing timeliness of investigations is key to both improving police officers' and the public's confidence in policing practices.

The second most common response (16%) is being more transparent. In a similar vein, 12% also suggest that the IOPC should raise its profile, educate and update the public and increase community engagement in order to improve public confidence.

“Improve the quality and speed of investigations. Slow investigations reduce confidence and provide an opportunity for other narratives to develop. Slow investigations are also very harmful to the reputation of IOPC amongst police officers. **This in turn will affect public confidence** (as the officers, their families and contacts are members of the public).”

Police stakeholder

“The IOPC needs to complete its investigations in a timelier manner and build better trust with police officers and their staff associations. While there is mistrust neither the IOPC nor the police service will benefit from swift, open and transparent investigations where police officers fully cooperate, and the public can get an honest account of what happened in a timely manner.”

Police accountability framework stakeholder

“Be very transparent and open about their reasons for investigating and release as much information as possible as they go along in the investigation so that the public do not think they are hiding something. Also **being very candid about the reasons for investigating a matter so that the public know they have to investigate in some circumstances,** not because anyone has done something wrong. Also emphasising to the public when something good has happened.”

Non-police stakeholder

“To continue to ensure that the public are aware of their presence; what they are doing on behalf of the public, and public concerns. To ensure that they **remain totally independent of the police,** Police Commissioners, and any other body that they be accused of being biased towards.”

Police accountability framework stakeholder

Assessing organisational change, and other strategic issues

The IOPC is praised for its continued focus on sharing lessons and recommendations.

Stakeholders tend to think it has the right amount of power to enforce them, though some think it doesn't have enough.

They want more evidence of the impact that sharing lessons and recommendations has, and to see more engagement with the public about its work.

Most stakeholders think that the IOPC is effective in sharing learnings to improve police practice

Q. How effective or ineffective do you think the IOPC is in sharing learning to improve police practice?

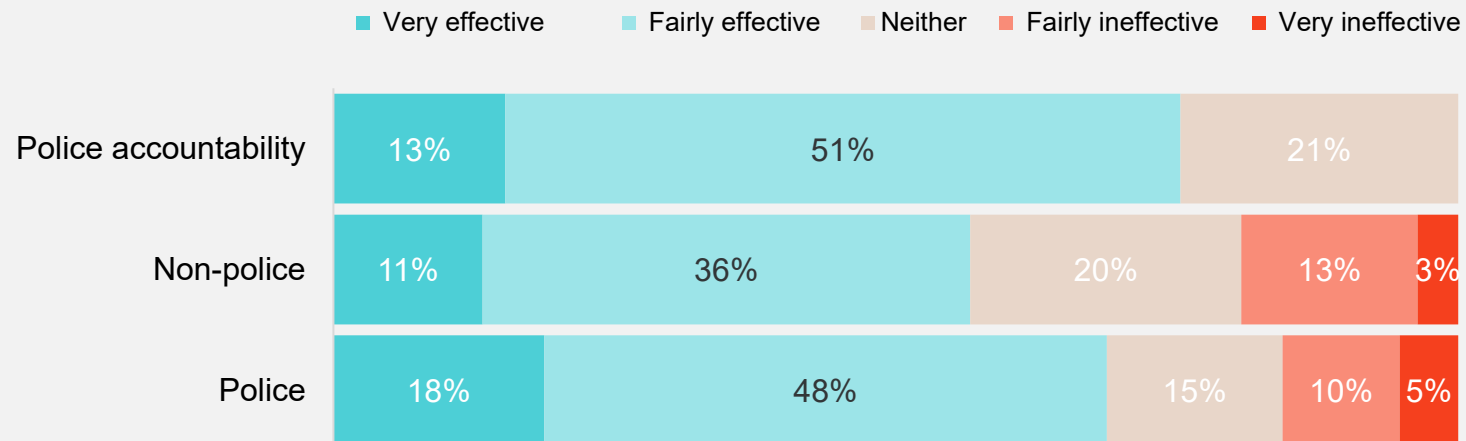
All three stakeholder groups think the IOPC is effective at sharing learnings

Most stakeholders believe that the IOPC is very good at sharing learning materials such as reports and bulletins.

However, some wonder whether lessons from these materials are being adopted and used consistently in police forces. Some also believe that there are no proper structures in place to disseminate learnings effectively.

Therefore, these stakeholders feel the IOPC should provide evidence of learnings leading to improvement.

Total 'effective' across all groups **58%**



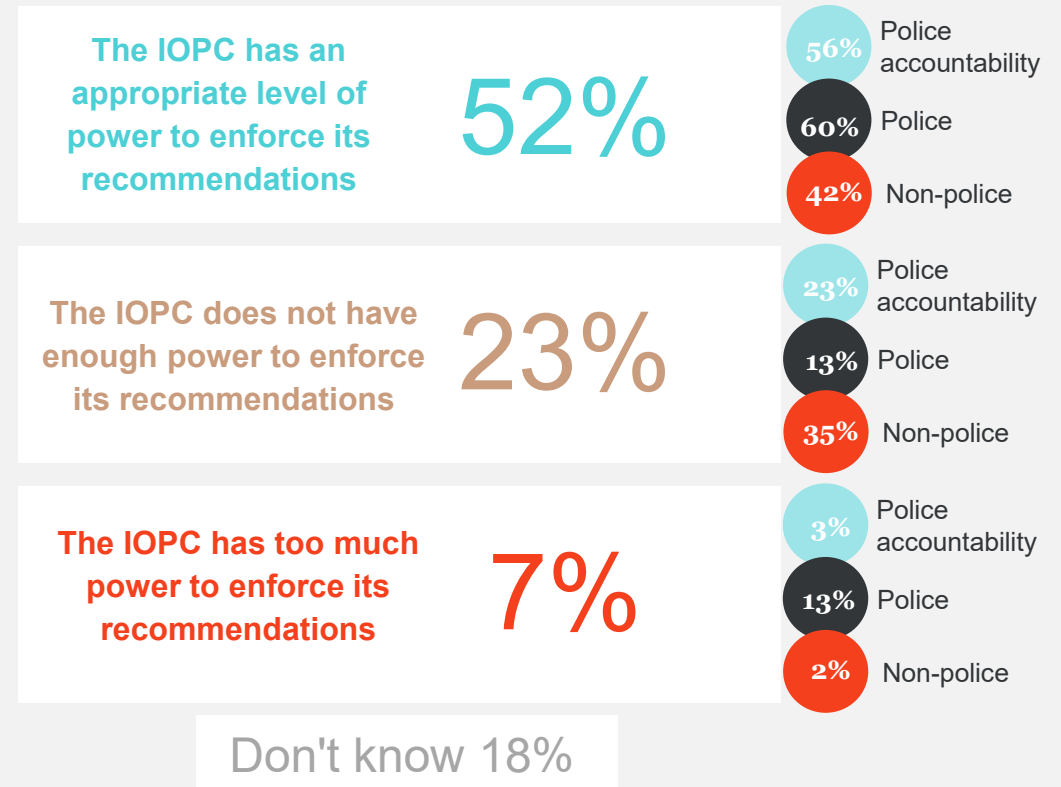
Many stakeholders also believe that the IOPC has the right amount of power to enforce its recommendations

Q. Which of the following statements regarding the IOPC's powers comes closest to your view?

This belief holds true for police (60%), police accountability (42%) and non-police stakeholders (56%) alike

Police stakeholders are most likely to believe that the IOPC has too much power to enforce its recommendations. On the other hand, police accountability and non-police stakeholders are more likely to think that the IOPC does not have enough power.

A few stakeholders say that this perceived lack of power means the IOPC is not as effective as it could be at putting learnings into practice. However, most of these stakeholders also suggest that the level of power that the IOPC has cannot be and should not be changed.



Stakeholders consider public confidence, COVID-19 and timeliness of investigations to be key challenges

Q. In your view, what is the biggest challenge facing the IOPC in the coming months?

Some stakeholders mention, unprompted, that public awareness and in turn public confidence in policing to be the biggest challenges facing the IOPC in the coming months.

The emphasis they place on public confidence stems in part from increased scrutiny over policing in the past year, both as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement, but also from their general perception that the public does not know enough about the role the IOPC plays.

This was the second most mentioned challenge, with a lot of stakeholders also considering COVID-19 itself to be a challenge for the organisation.

Finally, some mention timeliness of investigations.

Increasing public awareness

“Making sure that everybody in the public is aware of what they're doing. Then the public will be more confident because they'll know that the IOPC are trying to reach them and are trying to show the public its learning.”

None-police stakeholder

Improving the timeliness & quality of investigations

“The quality of the investigations and the timeliness. All their effort should be spent on that. The results will, then, speak for themselves.”

Police stakeholder

Increasing public confidence

“It's the confidence question. This is a question facing policing as a whole. Not just the IOPC, but confidence in policing is arguably dipping slightly. (...) IOPC have obviously got a role to help improve confidence and I think that's a particular issue for confidence among communities that have the least confidence at the moment or have done traditionally. So black communities and other ethnic minority communities. Young people.”

Police accountability framework stakeholder

The effect of COVID-19

Many stakeholders flag COVID-19 as a key challenge facing the IOPC. This challenge is seen as two-fold

Firstly, some believe that the pandemic and its subsequent lockdowns has and will lead to more remote working, which could slow down investigations.

Secondly, stakeholders recognise that policing during a pandemic is extremely difficult. Many therefore fear that COVID-19 will reduce confidence in policing over time, if those difficulties were to lead to a rise in complaints.

“I think their biggest challenge will be COVID-19. That's going to lead to a huge rise in police complaints. Their other big challenge is remote working.”

Police accountability framework stakeholder

“The policing of the pandemic may change confidence levels or deplete confidence further.”

Police accountability framework stakeholder

In summary: “What one thing could the IOPC do to improve your opinion of it?”

In 2019, stakeholders said...

- 1 Improved timeliness and quality of investigations
- 2 Evidence of learning and improvement
- 3 Increased public confidence & engagement

In 20/2021, stakeholders continue to stress similar points...

- 1 **Show evidence of improved timeliness and quality of investigations**
- 2 **Show that learnings are implemented and lead to improvement**
- 3 **Engage with the public to increase confidence, focus on BAME groups especially**

“They really need to **get on top of the timeliness of investigations**. They need to be updating police officers under investigation more regularly and they need to **make sure they've got staffing levels at the appropriate level with the right accreditation** of investigation standards.”

Police stakeholder

“The IOPC, in fairness to them, have done an exceptional amount of work over the last few years to make the learning more accessible with the *Learning the Lessons* reports. However, a wider problem is that **most forces don't have systems and structures in place to help disseminate any learning that is identified by the IOPC** even if there was a willingness to embrace that learning.”

Police stakeholder

“Continue to have **dialogue with the community**, particularly those disproportionately affected.”

Non police stakeholder

“**Engagement with the public**, I'd like them to raise their profile in most areas where they can.”

Police accountability framework stakeholder

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