

strategic plan

2018-22



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IOPC

**Independent
Office for
Police Conduct**

Our mission and priorities

MISSION

To improve public confidence in policing by ensuring the police are accountable for their actions and lessons are learnt.



PRIORITIES

To work with others to improve the police complaints system.

To improve policing by identifying and sharing learning from our work.

To improve confidence in police accountability.

To be an efficient and effective organisation.



WHAT WE HOPE TO ACHIEVE

The police complaints system delivers impartial, fair and evidence-based outcomes in a timely way.

Our recommendations lead to improvements in policing and prevent harm to the public.

Those with low confidence in policing access and value the complaints system.

Our highly skilled, diverse workforce delivers an excellent service, which is value for money.

Foreword



This is the first Strategic Plan since the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) was launched in January 2018. Our new Board was established at the same time and includes a mix of executive and non-executive directors.

Since we came into being we have taken time to listen to feedback from our staff, service users and stakeholders. This

has given us an understanding of their experiences of the predecessor organisation, the Independent Police Complaints Commission, and helped us to determine our future direction of travel. We have also taken the opportunity to consider our organisational mission, priorities and values. This document represents a clear statement of these for the duration of this plan.

At the heart of our focus will be a commitment to learning and continuous improvement. Of course, we will continue to hold police officers (and those within our other jurisdictions) to account for poor conduct, but we also want to ensure that we improve policing by identifying and sharing learning from our work. Equally important will be our efforts to continuously improve the police complaints system so that it delivers impartial, evidenced-based and timely outcomes for all.



At the heart of our focus will be a commitment to learning and continuous improvement.



We must make sure that the public, and particularly those who have the least confidence in policing, understand their right to complain and are able to access the complaints system without fear of adverse consequences. To do this we must demonstrate that complainants receive fair and just treatment and that complaints are seen as an opportunity to learn and improve rather than as a threat.

All of this will need to be delivered alongside major changes to the complaints and conduct systems as a result of the Policing and Crime Act 2017. These changes represent a real opportunity for the IOPC to be at the forefront of delivering improvements that will impact on public confidence in the complaints system and therefore, policing in general.

We have ambitious plans that will change the focus of our organisation. This will not be possible to achieve in isolation. Building confidence in us and in the system will mean working closely with non police stakeholders

and communities to understand and respond to their concerns. System-wide improvements will only be possible through working with all of the organisations that have a role to play in improving policing. The IOPC's role in ensuring police accountability is an important part of a wider framework and we must work closely with others in this area, particularly police and crime commissioners and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services. We have been building on existing relationships with our key stakeholders, but we will need to work more closely to achieve the scale of change that we are striving for. We are looking ahead with great positivity in delivering this plan and look forward to reporting back to you on our progress.

Michael Lockwood
Director General

1 Introduction

1.1 Who we are

The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) oversees the police complaints system¹ in England and Wales. We investigate the most serious matters, including deaths following police contact, and set the standards by which the police should handle complaints. We use learning from our work to influence changes in policing.

We are independent and make our decisions entirely independently of the police and government. Our Director General and executive team, and our Director for Wales and Regional Directors have never worked for the police in any capacity.

1.2 What we do

The majority of complaints from the public are dealt with by police forces. However, the IOPC set and monitor the standards by which they should handle complaints. We also consider certain types of appeal from people who are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been dealt with.

Forces must refer certain serious incidents to the IOPC, whether or not someone has made a complaint. We may decide to investigate such cases independently or return them to police forces for local investigation.

We also have powers in relation to a small number of organisations that have police-like powers but are not police forces. These include:

- > the National Crime Agency (NCA)
- > Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC)
- > some activities of Home Office immigration and enforcement staff
- > staff who work for the College of Policing (CoP)
- > the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA).

In addition, we investigate criminal allegations against police and crime commissioners (PCCs) and their deputies and contractors working for the police.

Our remit includes oversight of the complaints system as a whole, no matter which organisation is handling the matter. We use learning from our work to influence changes in policing

¹ This term includes complaints made by members of the public, most of which are handled by police force professional standards departments. It also refers to matters that forces must refer to us, which we assess and may investigate. These include allegations of police officers committing crimes, and deaths or serious injuries during or following contact with the police.

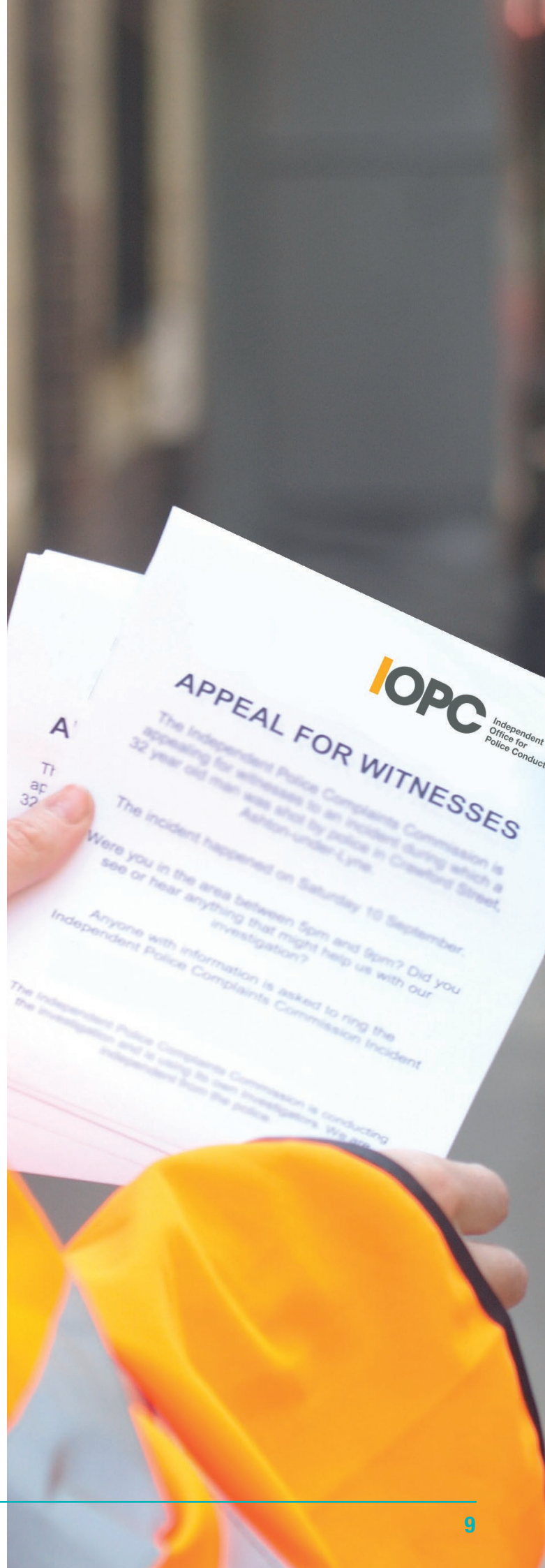
to reduce the chance that complaints and serious incidents happen again.

The IOPC cannot drive system-wide improvements on its own and we need to work with others. This includes policing bodies such as PCCs, the CoP, and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), as well as service users and communities. With our partners, inside and outside the policing world, we can make sure that our cases and the complaints system as a whole are part of a circle of learning which improves policing in England and Wales.

1.3 Our strategic plan

This is the first three-year plan for the IOPC and sets out our vision for the future and the strategy for achieving it. It explains what our priorities will be and what we hope to achieve in each of those areas. It sets out the actions we will take over the coming years and how we will measure success.

This will be the guiding document for all our work until 2022. Each year we will publish a detailed business plan setting out the specific actions we will take under each priority area, success measures and performance targets where appropriate. The first of these annual business plans will be published in April 2019.





BEING INCLUSIVE

Our staff have developed new values that will underpin all our work. The values will influence the work we deliver and our interactions with service users and stakeholders.

Our staff, future and current, will be guided by these values and we will consider how well we reflect these through surveys and engagement activity.



EMPOWERING PEOPLE



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

OUR VALUES

SEEKING TRUTH

We feel privileged to be the custodians of the police complaints system. We value the trust of the public and police and commit to being just and fair in uncovering the truth. We recognise that a just outcome relies on being unbiased and transparent in getting to the truth of what happened.

BEING INCLUSIVE

We have an inclusive culture. We are fair and impartial in our treatment of all individuals. We work across boundaries, both internal and external, collaborating and building strong relationships.

EMPOWERING PEOPLE

We believe everyone should be a leader and play a part in shaping the direction of the organisation. We provide a supportive and challenging environment where people can thrive and reach their potential. We trust our people to do the right things. We encourage calculated risk taking and evidence-based decision making. Where genuine mistakes are made, we will support people and identify opportunities for learning and improvement. We ensure that people can make complaints without experiencing unfair treatment.

BEING TENACIOUS

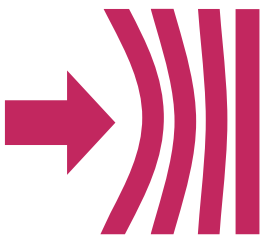
Our work requires us to be bold, resilient and committed to making a difference to the public. We take our duties as public servants to heart and our dedication is reflected in our work. We meet challenges with perseverance to attain individual and organisational goals.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The value of our work is not defined solely by volume, but by the impact our work has on policing and public confidence. We define quality by how well our work meets the service user needs. We will focus our efforts on areas that will make a difference to our communities.



SEEKING
TRUTH



BEING
TENACIOUS

1.5 Our priorities



To work 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.



To improve 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.



To improve 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.



To be an efficient and effective 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.



Youth panel session held in March 2018

2 What we will do



PRIORITY

To work with others to improve the police complaints system

Why this is important

To have confidence in the police service, the public must have trust in the police complaints system. When complaints are made, people should be assured that they will be dealt with robustly and fairly. It must also be understood that serious incidents and complaints about the conduct of police officers will be investigated impartially, that officers will be held to account for poor conduct, and that the police service will learn and improve.

There is a growing consensus that the complaints system is often too focused on blame and individual conduct rather than identifying and addressing systemic issues. To support this, we want our work to be focused on the issues that are of concern to both the public and the police. We will work with stakeholders to agree those thematic areas where our investigations can add most value.

As we oversee and set standards for the police complaints system it is important to review and continuously improve not just our own work, but also how the police service handles the complaints it receives from the public. Those who wish to access the complaints system must be able to do so without fearing adverse consequences. The system must deliver impartial, fair and evidence-based outcomes for both complainants and those subject to complaints. This is equally important across all parts of the complaints system whether it is an independent investigation into a death in custody or a complaint about the police service handled by the local force.

We know that all those involved in complaints and investigations want impartial, fair and evidenced-based decisions. They also rightly expect matters to be dealt with in a timely way.

We know that delays have a negative impact on complainants, families and police officers involved in our investigations. They also affect confidence in us as an organisation. We will continue to improve the timeliness and quality of our work, and will work with all those involved in delivering the complaints system to ensure that delays at all stages are reduced.

What we hope to achieve

The police complaints system delivers impartial, fair and evidence-based outcomes in a timely way.

How we will do it

We will:

- > ensure our work adds value by continuing to independently investigate the most serious cases and developing a clear strategy to focus on areas that concern both the public and the police. Thematic areas will be reviewed annually and could include, discrimination, mental health, road traffic incidents, domestic abuse, abuse of authority for sexual / financial gain and near misses in custody

- > improve the quality and consistency of our work through the creation of subject matter networks² to develop expertise in key areas
- > support the implementation of changes to legislation, which simplify the police complaints and discipline system
- > set standards, produce guidance and share best practice to ensure our oversight work improves quality and consistency for the majority of complainants whose complaints are dealt with by the police
- > reduce the amount of time it takes to conclude our work by acting to remove the causes of delay internally and by working with stakeholders across the complaints system. We will focus on closing those cases that have already taken longer than expected
- > identify and address factors that impact on the quality of our work and may cause inconsistent outcomes for users of our services
- > develop our knowledge and information assurance strategies so we make the best use of our data, using it to influence our work and make improvements where needed

² Subject matter networks are made up of experts from across our organisation. The networks lead on certain themes and influence our work in these areas.



PRIORITY

To improve policing by identifying and sharing learning from our work

Why this is important

Complaints from the public and the serious incidents we investigate offer opportunities to understand how policing can be improved to prevent these issues occurring in future. Changes made as a result of this learning, will ultimately improve the police service for everyone and protect the public from harm.

We must lead the way in ensuring the system has a greater focus on learning by developing our approach to investigations to better identify learning opportunities, making our learning recommendations³ more robust and ensuring our work leads to real improvements in policing.

Making system-wide improvements will only be possible through working with all those that play a role in it.

We will work closely with partners such as HMICFRS, the CoP and PCCs, to develop shared priorities, share learning across our work and develop collaborative work programmes to promote improvements.

What we hope to achieve

Our recommendations lead to improvements in policing and prevent harm to the public.

How we will do it

We will:

- > work closely with colleagues across the policing environment to improve our approach to learning recommendations and work with them to drive change within policing

³ We can make a formal recommendation to any organisation after an investigation or after considering an appeal/review.

- > use our subject matter networks to develop our knowledge and become experts on the themes in our work. This will ensure we understand the context within which the police work and engage with stakeholders to develop effective learning recommendations that drive improvements
- > publish an annual report that demonstrates the impact we have made in delivering our mission. We will share this with the public and our stakeholders to demonstrate the difference our work has made
- > continue to improve our learning the lessons magazine with our partners and promote it to frontline officers and staff, ensuring it is effective in supporting continual improvement in policing





PRIORITY

To improve confidence in police accountability

Why this is important

Independent oversight of the police complaints system is vital to maintaining public confidence in policing. Our operational decision-making is independent from the police and government.

We recognise there is more to do to improve trust in the police complaints system and ensure the public are confident that it holds the police service to account when necessary.

We will engage with a range of stakeholders and communities to understand their concerns and communicate the impact of our work.

Our work will focus on increasing the confidence of those who we know have the least trust in the system – for example, young people and those from a BME background, so they understand their right to complain, can access the complaints system and expect to receive fair and just treatment. We will continue to ensure greater transparency about both the system and the outcomes achieved through its use.

Everything we do will demonstrate our independence. This will mean that we:

- > make impartial, fair and evidence-based decisions in our work. We will listen and consider the views of all those involved carefully, but our decisions are based solely on facts and available evidence
- > explain the evidence and rationale for our decisions clearly to those subject to our investigations, complainants and the public
- > maintain a separate identity from the police, government and others, understanding the context of policing and working with others to have a greater impact
- > recognise that a power imbalance exists between the police and complainants/families and design our services with this in mind. This means we offer support and guidance to help people understand their rights and navigate the system, signposting to other organisations as required. This will not affect our decision making on cases
- > ensure that our staff understand what independence means to us and can explain and demonstrate this through their work and behaviour

What we hope to achieve

Those with low confidence in policing access and value the complaints system.

How we will do it

We will:

- > develop proposals for a separate advocacy service for the police complaints system (independent of the IOPC and the police service) which could provide support and advice to those who may find it difficult to access and navigate the system
- > continue to improve the way we communicate and engage with diverse stakeholders to enable them to influence the focus of our work, express areas of concern and provide them with accessible information about our work
- > use our regional presence to engage regularly with communities across England and Wales and ensure their views are fed into our work
- > provide opportunities for our staff to volunteer within their local communities to enable us to better understand their concerns and build awareness of and trust in our work
- > use feedback from our services to

design processes that respond to their needs and create a culture of customer focus within all parts of our organisation

- > publish Standards of Service setting out what service users can expect from us and how we will measure our performance against these standards. We will work to obtain a Customer Service Excellence accreditation to demonstrate our commitment in this area
- > review and improve our family liaison service and service user support to meet the needs of vulnerable service users and bereaved families
- > embed our values across the organisation and ensure we demonstrate independence internally and externally through all our work and behaviours
- > improve reporting on the outcomes that are achieved from our work and matters dealt with through the police complaints system



PRIORITY

To be an efficient and effective organisation

Why this is important

As a publicly funded organisation we must use our resources effectively to deliver the greatest impact and provide value for money. We will continuously improve the way we work, seeking efficiencies and ways of delivering our services using modern technology to support improvements.

To deliver this ambitious plan, we need to attract and retain a highly skilled, diverse workforce and ensure our staff receive the right training and development. We want our staff to work in an inclusive environment that allows them to flourish and reach their potential.

We know that for the public to have confidence in our work our staff must reflect the diverse population we serve.

What we hope to achieve

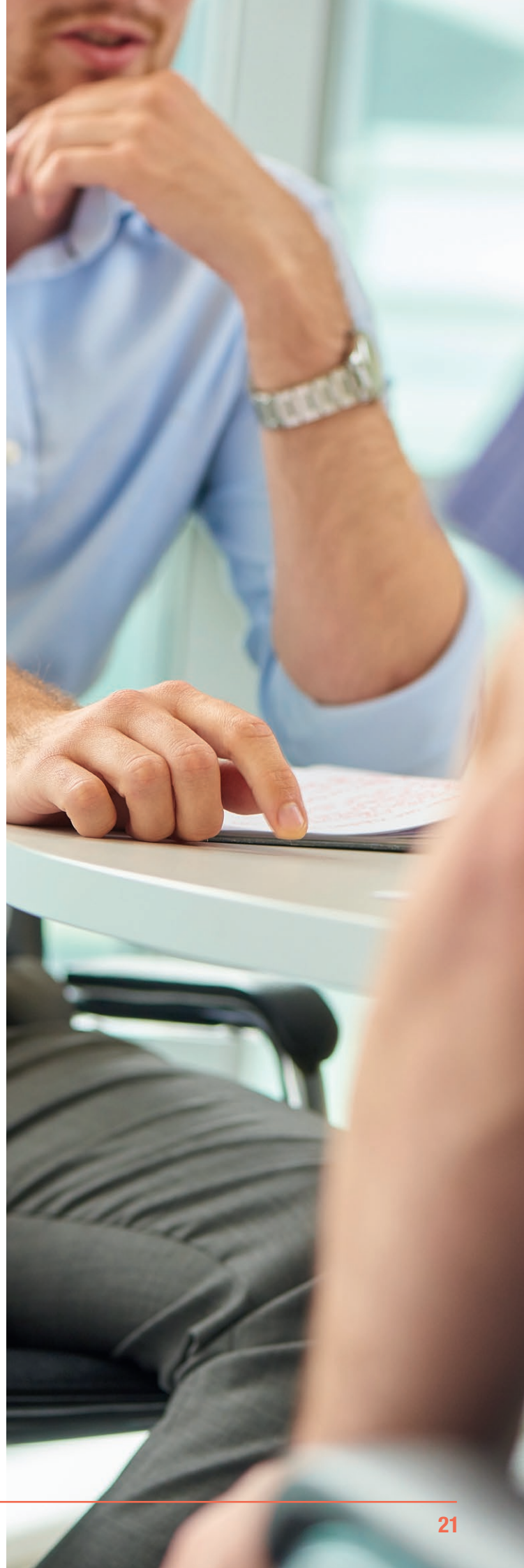
Our highly skilled, diverse workforce delivers an excellent service, which is value for money.

How we will do it

We will:

- > continue to invest in the development of our leaders and managers to create an effective and trusted IOPC leadership team who role model our values and inspire trust and confidence
- > create a culture in which our staff feel highly supported, trusted and included, where collaboration across teams is routine and our staff feel empowered to suggest innovative ways to improve and deliver value for money
- > review the performance and appraisal process for our staff so they have regular conversations about development and can focus on building upon their strengths
- > ensure our approach to recruitment focuses on attracting good-quality candidates and continue our efforts to recruit staff who are diverse in terms of demographic, experience, point of view and who reflect the communities we serve
- > review the learning and development opportunities we offer and create an environment where learning is continuous through everyday experiences

- > create a talent management strategy, which ensures that our people are supported in realising their full potential
- > develop and implement a health and wellbeing strategy to ensure we care for the welfare of our staff
- > develop an ICT strategy to ensure our staff can work efficiently, and improve the timeliness of our work by providing better equipment and systems for our people
- > review and monitor our policies and practices to ensure we comply with our duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty and the Welsh Language Standards



2.1 Successful outcomes

WHAT WE HOPE TO ACHIEVE

The police complaints system delivers impartial, fair and evidence-based outcomes in a timely way.

Our recommendations lead to improvements in policing and prevent harm to the public.

WE WILL KNOW WE HAVE SUCCEEDED WHEN

- > Complaints from the public are resolved first time leading to fewer requests for review.
 - > The time taken to respond to complaints, complete investigations and reviews is reduced across the system.
 - > The time to complete all related processes (for example, disciplinary processes) is reduced, particularly following deaths and serious injuries.
 - > Complaints and serious incidents are recorded and handled consistently across all forces.
 - > Those involved in complaints, investigations and reviews (service users) are satisfied with how their case was handled.
-
- > We routinely work closely with a range of stakeholders both within and outside of policing to identify themes and learning from our work.
 - > Our learning recommendations are accepted and we can demonstrate their impact on operational policing.
 - > We can demonstrate that our work has supported our partners (for example, HMICFRS, the CoP, the National Police Chiefs' Council) by influencing their work to improve operational policing.
 - > Stakeholders are confident that our work promotes learning and improvement.

WHAT WE HOPE TO ACHIEVE

Those with low confidence in policing access and value the complaints system.

Our highly skilled, diverse workforce delivers an excellent service, which is value for money.

WE WILL KNOW WE HAVE SUCCEEDED WHEN

- > The public have confidence in the complaints system and are willing to complain.
- > Young people and those from BME backgrounds have confidence in the system and are willing to complain.
- > The demographics of those who make complaints reflect the communities served by the police.
- > Our staff are motivated, engaged and proud to work for the IOPC.
- > The diversity of our staff is improved at all levels and our workforce reflects the communities we serve.
- > We achieve financial efficiency and make savings to reduce our unit costs, which are benchmarked against similar organisations.

2.2 Delivering our plan

One of our priorities is to ensure we are an efficient and effective organisation. Achieving this will enable us to deliver more work against our other objectives. The business plans we produce for each financial year will include further information

about how we will use our resources to deliver this plan. Our business plans will provide details of the work we will be doing, the projects we have in place, and how we will measure our success.

More information

To find out more about our work or to request this plan in an alternative format, you can contact us in a number of ways:

www.policeconduct.gov.uk

Follow us on Twitter: [@policeconduct](https://twitter.com/policeconduct)

Email us at: enquiries@policeconduct.gov.uk

Call us on: 0300 020 0096

Text relay: 18001 0207 166 3000

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We welcome telephone calls in Welsh

Rydym yn croesawu galwadau ffôn yn y Gymraeg

This document is also available in Welsh

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn y Gymraeg hefyd

November 2018