



Independent Police Complaints Commission: Stakeholder Feedback Studies



Executive summary
2017

Populus

Background

The Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) became operational in April 2004. Its primary role is to secure and maintain public confidence in the police complaints system in England and Wales. The IPCC investigates the most serious complaints and allegations of misconduct against the police, as well as handling appeals from people who are not satisfied with the way police have dealt with their complaint.

The IPCC's overarching vision is to improve the public's confidence in the police complaints system. The IPCC believes that increasing public confidence in the independence, accountability and integrity of the police complaints system depends on the public seeing an effective response to the most serious incidents involving the police.

The IPCC is committed to developing stronger and more constructive relationships with its stakeholders at national, regional and local levels, to both improve the understanding of their needs and to involve them in the shape and design of the IPCC's services.

To this end, the IPCC appointed us, Populus, a leading independent research organisation, to conduct two rounds of fieldwork (one in 2016 and one in 2017) to gather feedback from its stakeholders in order to ascertain their understanding of, and engagement with, the IPCC. Independent studies of this type are used because they gather candid, honest feedback from stakeholders.

The samples in both studies are different and for some sub-groups are based on small numbers of stakeholders. Therefore the purpose of the second study was not to track changes year on year, but rather to corroborate the top line findings that were revealed in the first study – which was the first stakeholder survey of its kind for the IPCC. This summary draws on insight from both years.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all stakeholders for providing their feedback and participating in this research. The feedback collected is an invaluable source of insight for the IPCC.

Methodology

This stakeholder feedback report summarises the findings from online and in-depth telephone interviews with stakeholders conducted by Populus in 2016 and 2017. All participants were identified by the IPCC and drawn from its database of stakeholders in past contact with the IPCC.

All those interviewed were stakeholders whose views are important to the overall success of the organisation and its reputation. The in-depth interviews were primarily discursive, though included some metric-style questions.

Interviews were conducted between February and May 2016, and June and August 2017.

Interviewees were categorised in conjunction with the IPCC and analysed by audience type. The sample breakdown is as follows:

	2016	2017
Police stakeholders – those working in police forces or Police and Crime Commissioners’ offices	226	223
Non-police stakeholders – including community representatives, advocacy groups, and politicians	99	194
Stakeholders in the police accountability framework – including the College of Policing, Crown Prosecution Service, HMIC, and Coroners’ offices	34	28

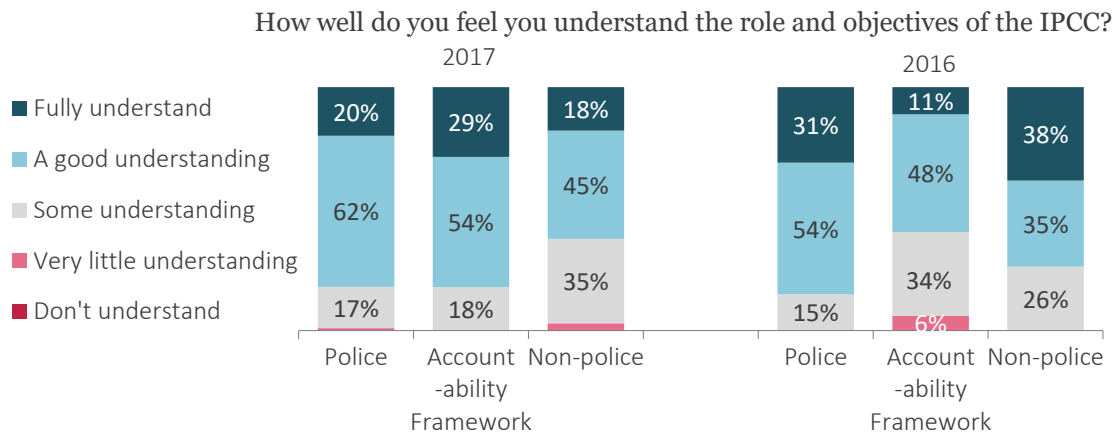
Where quantitative % results do not sum to 100 this may be the result of rounding or the exclusion of ‘don’t know’ categories.

Awareness and advocacy

Awareness

Stakeholders have a high level of awareness of, and understanding about, the IPCC. Most non-police and accountability framework stakeholders, and more than four in five police stakeholders, say that they have at least a good understanding of what the IPCC does.

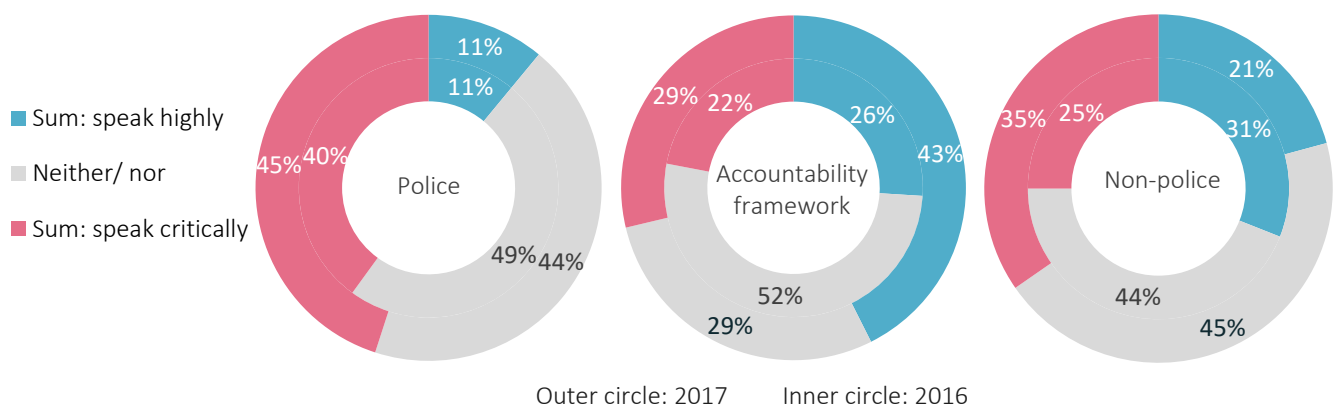
There is still room for greater levels of understanding, with a minority of each stakeholder group surveyed saying that they have only 'some understanding' of the IPCC's role and objectives.



Advocacy

Favourability towards the IPCC varies by stakeholder group. Non-police stakeholders and (particularly in the 2017 survey) accountability framework stakeholders are more positive than negative towards the IPCC, whereas police stakeholders are more negative than positive. In 2017, around half of police stakeholders said they were 'fairly' or 'very' unfavourable towards the IPCC. Similarly, police stakeholders are likely to speak critically of the IPCC whereas accountability framework stakeholders are more likely to be advocates.

Which of these statements best describes how you would speak of the IPCC to other people?



In both 2016 and 2017, positive views towards the IPCC arise from an appreciation of the importance of the IPCC's role and close engagement between stakeholders and IPCC staff, who are highly praised. Negative views are most often predicated on the perceived slow speed of investigations and a lack of

sufficient communication while investigations are ongoing. For some, an apparent lack of progress in addressing these issues has hardened their negativity over time.

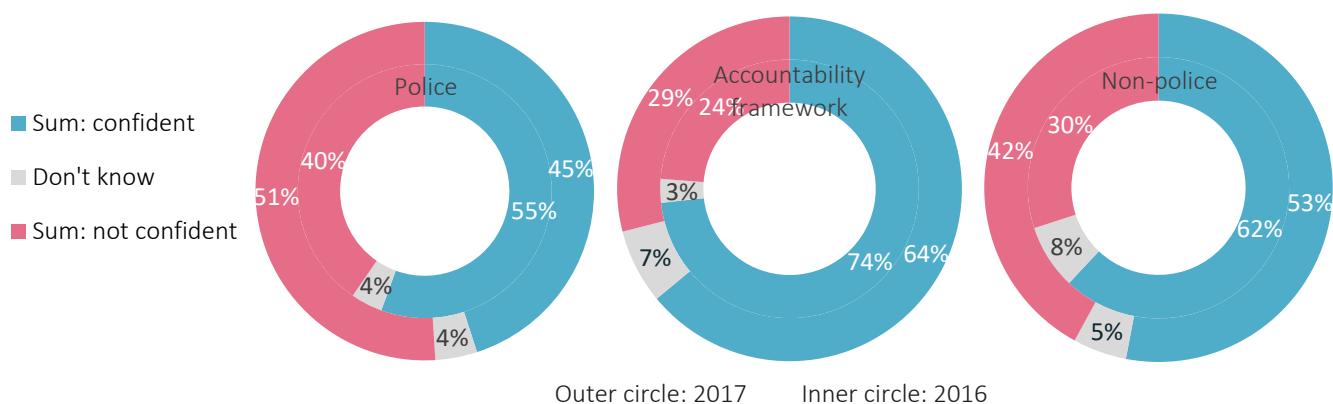
Confidence in impartiality, strengths, and weaknesses

Confidence in impartiality

In 2017, most non-police and accountability framework stakeholders are confident that the IPCC deals with its work in an impartial way, compared with just under half of police stakeholders. Stakeholders in the 2017 survey are slightly less confident overall than those in 2016.

Most stakeholders do not doubt that the IPCC is truly independent of the police, but police stakeholders sometimes argue that the IPCC is so keen to distance itself from the police that it becomes biased against it.

How confident, if at all, are you that the IPCC deals with its work in an impartial way?

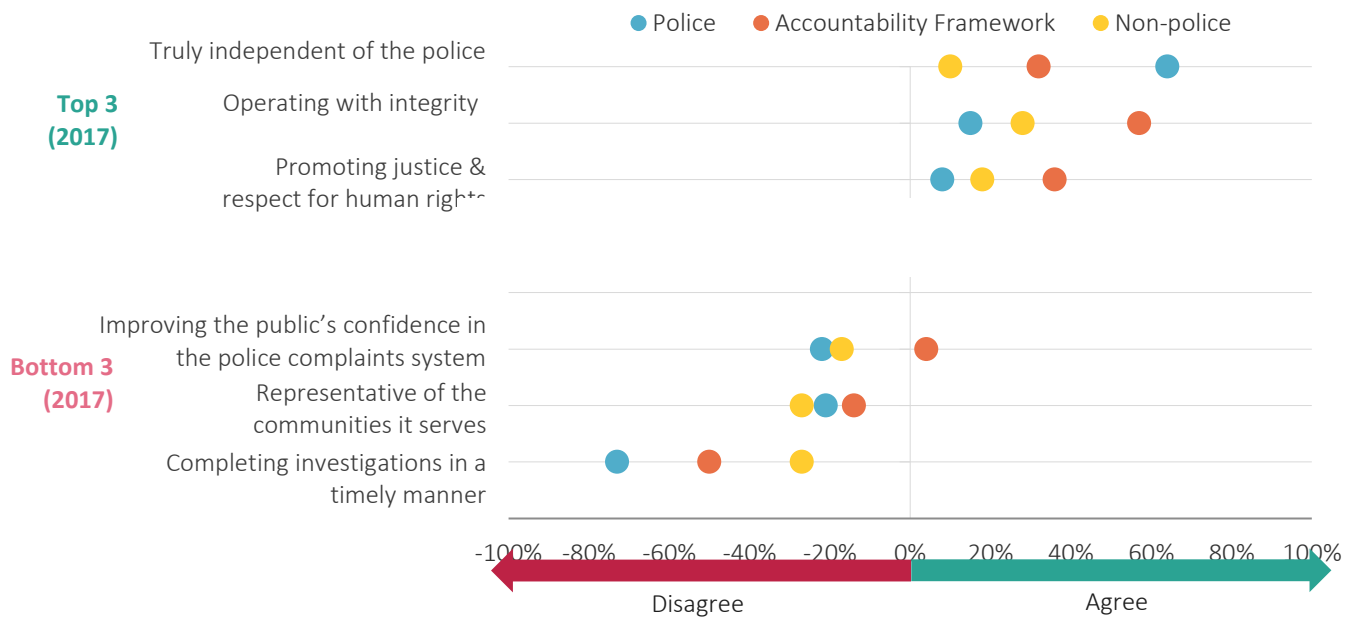


Strengths and weaknesses

The IPCC is commonly viewed as being truly independent of police and operating with integrity. Stakeholders are also more likely than not to say that it is promoting justice and respect for human rights. It is also praised, especially by police stakeholders, for ensuring that the police service learns from complaints.

Timeliness is the single biggest complaint made by stakeholders. They also tend to disagree that it is representative of the communities it serves and that it is improving public confidence in the system.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the IPCC is ...? [Showing NET scores: Agree - Disagree]



Brand personality

Stakeholders were asked to describe the IPCC in a few words or phrases by choosing from a prepared list of around 30 positive, neutral, and negative words. This 'Brand Personality' approach is a proven tool for understanding stakeholders underlying views. Responses from 2017 are shown visually below, with larger words selected by more stakeholders, and smaller sizing denoting less common selections.

Police stakeholders



Accountability framework stakeholders



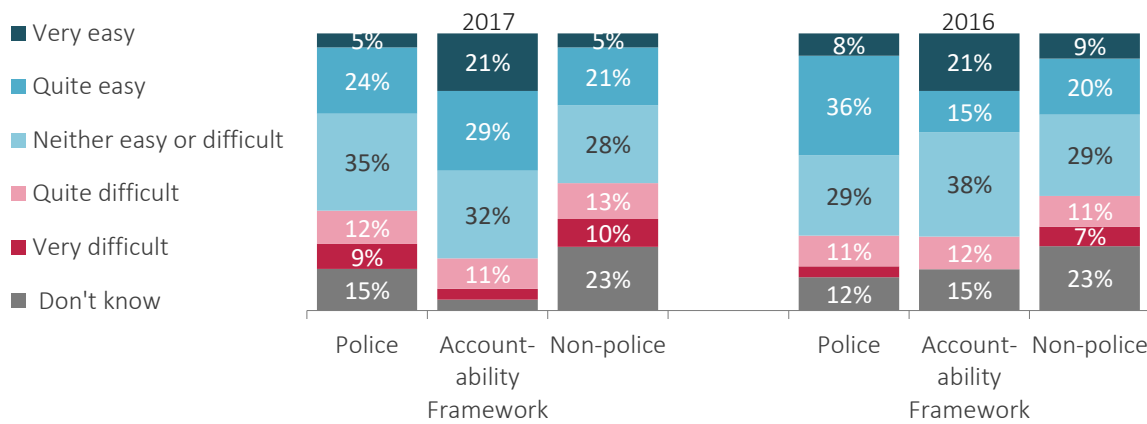
Non-police stakeholders



Communication and engagement

Most stakeholders say that their frequency of contact with the IPCC is about right, although the minority who want it to change want to have more contact, not less.

Stakeholders across all three groups are more likely than not to say that the IPCC is easy to engage with (though many also say it is 'neither easy or difficult' or that they 'don't know'). Tier 1 stakeholders are generally positive about their personal relationships with the IPCC's staff.



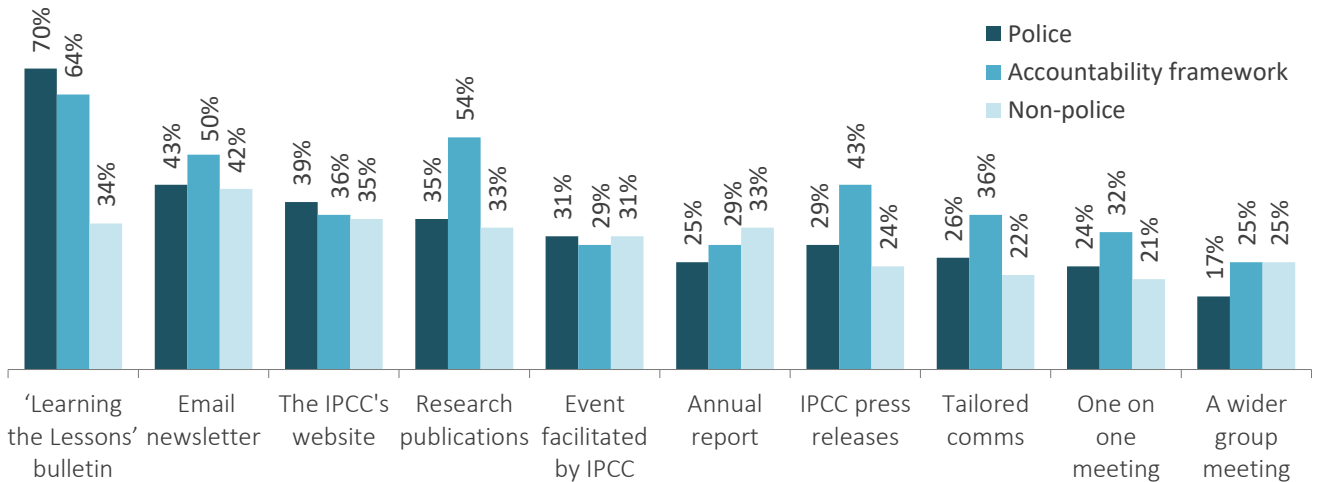
"Personally, I find them very easy to engage with." – Police stakeholder, 2017

"You know what? I can't criticise my contacts and personal relationships. It's just that the timeliness is the main issue." – Police stakeholder, 2017

Stakeholders prefer to be contacted via the Learning the Lessons bulletin and via email. The Learning the Lessons bulletin is almost universally praised. It helps to counteract the perception among police stakeholders that the IPCC focusses on blame rather than learnings.

"The 'Learning the Lessons' bulletin is really very good." – Non-police stakeholder, 2016

Through which of the following channels would you like the IPCC to communicate with you?



Becoming the IOPC

Just over half of police and accountability framework stakeholders are aware of the upcoming change to the IOPC – but only 28% of non-police stakeholders are aware.

The IPCC will become the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) at the end of the year. Was this something you were aware of before taking this survey?

