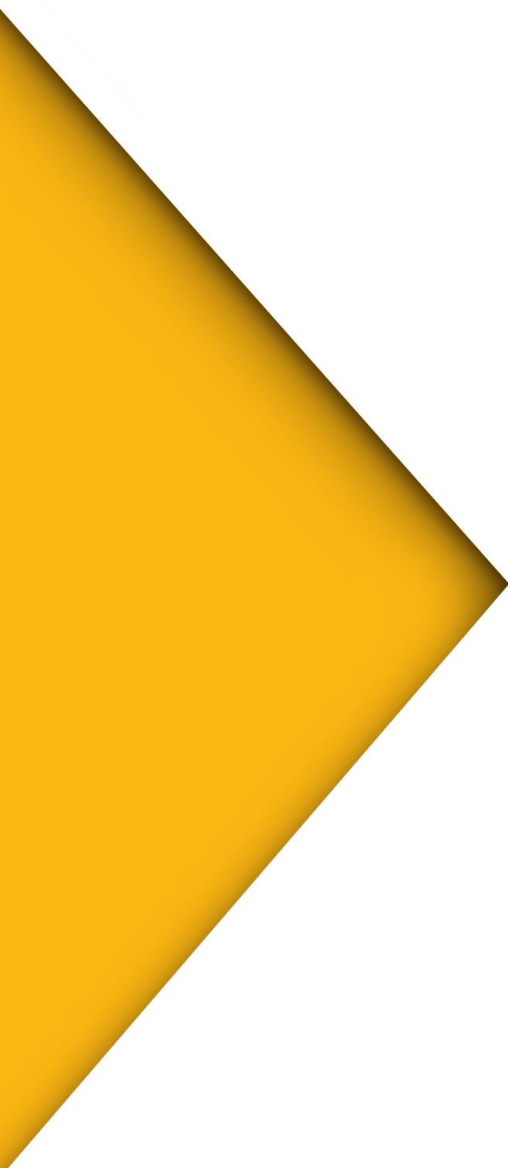


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Enhanced engagement

Information for families

July 2026

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What is enhanced engagement?

The IOPC is subject to legal obligations to provide information in all independent and directed investigations under the *Police Reform Act 2002*. This includes keeping complainants and interested persons informed of:

- the progress of the investigation
- any provisional findings of the investigation
- whether an investigation report has been submitted
- the action (if any) that is taken in respect of the matters dealt with in any such report
- the outcome of any such action

Our Statutory Guidance also states that making the final investigation report available to the complainant or interested person is the most transparent way of showing what the investigation has found.

However, in the most serious investigations, such as those involving a death or very serious injury, we provide families (or their representatives) with the option to view or receive more information than the law requires us to.

This is to allow the family to effectively participate in an investigation and in these cases, enhanced engagement will apply. If you are receiving this information leaflet, it has been decided that the investigation which you are involved in will be subject to enhanced engagement and that you are entitled to it.

What does this mean for me?

Once a decision is made that enhanced engagement applies, you will be offered the opportunity to participate in enhanced engagement until the end of the investigation. What this looks like for you will depend on the level of involvement you want, and we will discuss this with you at the beginning of the investigation. You are not obliged to participate in enhanced engagement, and you can change your mind about your level of engagement at any time during the investigation.

We want to explain to you what this means practically, and what you can expect.

Most of the information you will receive will be provided to you in an update every 28 days. However, in enhanced engagement investigations, we might have evidence to share with you at different stages of the investigation. We will discuss this with you at the start of the investigation and agree with you how and when information will be shared.

Enhanced engagement provides an opportunity for greater engagement in the investigation. However, we want to make it clear that the **IOPC is independent and ultimately retains responsibility for the decision making in the investigation**, including decisions on the outcomes for the officers involved, in line with legislation and statutory guidance.

The start of the investigation

You will be offered the opportunity to provide feedback on the terms of reference. The terms of reference for an investigation set out the scope of the investigation, clearly setting out what the investigation will look at. We will share our terms of reference with you and give you an explanation about why areas are, or are not, included. We will then give you the opportunity to provide feedback. We will consider your feedback and provide you with a detailed explanation of decisions made as soon as practicable.

During the investigation

During the investigation, we will give you an explanation of key investigative decisions, including why we have made decisions, what the decisions mean, why we decided to carry out certain lines of enquiry and, where applicable, why we are not carrying out lines of enquiry. We will listen to your feedback and consider any suggestions you make, although final investigative decisions and decisions on lines of enquiry to pursue will ultimately lie with the lead investigator, who is leading the investigation, and decision maker, who will make the decisions at the end of the investigation.

We will also explain any relevant laws, policies or procedures that we must apply and what this means, in a way that you can understand.

We will tell you about the evidence we gathered, and what the evidence tells us about the circumstances of the matter under investigation. We will also give you the opportunity to view or receive some of the key documents generated during the investigation in full, subject to the 'harm test'.

The 'harm test' means we look at whether sharing the documents could cause harm to the investigation or affect anyone involved, such as witnesses or police officers. This could mean, for example, not sharing information that may affect any criminal investigation, or information that includes details of sensitive policing operations. If we cannot share some or all the documents, we will tell you what we can, and cannot, share and explain why. On some occasions, it may be possible to remove certain words or phrases to share documents with you. Removal of certain words or phrases is called redaction. If we do this, we will explain this to you at the time we share the material with you.

It is not possible to provide you with a definitive list of the documents that will be shared in full or summarised. This will depend on what is generated during the investigation and could be different in each investigation. However, as well as written documents, our investigations often also obtain audio and visual material. For example, this could be bodyworn video footage from the police. This is likely to be of a distressing nature, and we will discuss the content with you before sharing it with you.

It may be that you do not want to receive the full documents or review audio or visual material. If this is the case, we can provide you with a summary of the information in the document. We will discuss this with you at the start of the investigation to understand the level of involvement you want to have, and you can change your mind about your level of engagement during the course of the investigation.

The end of the investigation

We will share our draft final report with you at the end of the investigation if you would like to see it. The final report summarises the evidence gathered during the investigation and provides an analysis of the evidence against relevant legislation, policies and procedures, and guidance in place. At the time of sharing the draft final report with you, we will agree a period of time for you to review the draft final report and provide representations, if you wish to do so. A representation is where you can tell the IOPC in writing if you believe anything is wrong, incomplete, misleading, or unfair in the draft report, before the findings are finalised.

For example, you may wish to make representations if you believe that further lines of enquiry could be pursued to address the terms of reference for the investigation, or if applicable, to ask us to consider your views on any learning recommendations proposed in the draft final report. We will then consider any representations and decide whether further action needs to be taken. We will explain the rationale for any action taken, or not taken, after receiving and considering your representations.

Where we do carry out further work following your feedback, we will prepare a final version of the report to send to the decision maker, who will then make their provisional decisions on outcomes.

We will share with you the IOPCs decision maker's opinion (DMO) document if you would like to see it. The DMO document sets out the decision maker's provisional opinions on outcomes. In investigations into conduct matters, where there was an indication that a person serving with the police may have committed a criminal offence or behaved in a manner which would justify the bringing of disciplinary proceedings, the decision maker will set out their decisions on conduct matters for individual officers, deciding whether, in their view, the individual has a case to answer for misconduct and at what level. The DMO will explain the decisions we are proposing to make at the end of the investigation and how we have reached our provisional decisions.

Crown Prosecution Service referral

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) make decisions on whether to charge suspects in criminal investigations.

In investigations where we investigated a criminal offence(s), we will share our decision on whether to refer the matter to the CPS with you. This will trigger your

right to request a review under our Victims Right to Review (VRR) scheme and you will be given information about this at the time, if it applies to your case.

When we decide not to investigate an incident as a criminal matter, we can share with you the reason for that decision, subject to the harm test (as above), and offer you an opportunity to comment on this.

If you have any questions about enhanced engagement, please do not hesitate to contact the Lead Investigator assigned to the investigation.

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We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh, no delays will be experienced
Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn y Gymraeg, ni fydd oedi mewn ymateb

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