

# OVERSIGHT

## newsletter

Welcome to our monthly newsletter which provides updates about the work of the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC). The newsletter is for complaint handlers in forces and local policing bodies (LPBs).

### Race discrimination work update

As part of the IOPC's thematic focus on race discrimination, the Oversight team is delivering a programme of work to promote working practices to improve the handling of allegations involving race discrimination. Last year, we ran a series of workshops for decision-makers and complaint handlers within forces and staff from local policing bodies responsible for handling reviews and conducting scrutiny work. Following the workshops, we have been creating a bespoke toolkit for those involved in handling complaints and reviews and are in the process of reviewing a sample of cases that have been handled by forces.

We have completed our first review, which included a sample of cases from the Metropolitan Police Service. We are working with Cumbria Police and Thames Valley Police as the next two forces who are supporting us with this work and will continue with it on a rolling basis over the next few months. Each force involved in the exercise will be offered a debrief at the end of their case review. This gives each force the opportunity for immediate feedback, where we can discuss good practice and provide support around how improvements may be implemented.

We are continuing to develop our toolkit for complaint handlers and reviewers. This will contain a copy of the IOPC and force workshop presentations, a list of frequently asked questions, an aide-memoir, a list of resources and bite-size guidance. We are also responding to specific feedback from attendees at the workshops in November and are looking to create some new products. This will include a bank of case studies, and for staff handling reviews, we would like to develop a list of key pointers to help you when making assessments around reasonable and proportionate handling. The toolkit is a live resource and want it to be responsive to your needs. There is scope to update it as needed.

The IOPC held a meeting in March with its National Advisory Group, which includes a mix of policing staff, academics, and community members. The focus of this meeting centred on how we share and embed learning within our regular ways of working. We discussed feedback from complaint handlers and reviewers around the challenges of handling complaints involving race discrimination and examples of ways to overcome them. We also highlighted the practical IOPC advice and guidance available and the local force initiatives you have told us about.

### Violence against women and girls (VAWG) update

Due to increased public concern about the police's response to Violence Against Women and Girls, we have developed a thematic programme of work to tackle VAWG.

As you will be aware, we recently issued a survey to all police forces covering the police response to police perpetrated domestic abuse (PPDA). The survey has closed and I would like to thank all

those forces that took the time to respond. The information provided will help us to understand the challenges facing policing in this area and consider how we can support forces to make improvements in the handling of PPDA. We will now begin to analyse the feedback received. We are also holding discussions with six police forces during May 2024 to explore some of the survey themes further.

Following the [publication](#) of our violence against women and girls dip sampling review in February, your Oversight Liaison will talk to you about the recommendations made in the report in your upcoming meetings. We would like to understand what those recommendations mean for your force and what changes you might implement as a result.

## Learning the Lessons 43 – Feedback and understanding impact

In March, we published [Learning the Lessons issue 43](#) on the topic of mental health. We shared it directly with key contacts in all forces, and we continue to explore ways to ensure this issue reaches all those who can make use of the learning within it. This includes all areas of policing, in particular force mental health leads, force control rooms, frontline officers, and staff and those involved in the roll out of Right Care, Right Person.

We value your input to help us understand the reach and impact of issue 43. We welcome your feedback on:

- how the magazine was shared within your force
- how the magazine is being used to support the work of your force, including in the space of policy, guidance or training
- any feedback you may have received

Please email [learning@policeconduct.gov.uk](mailto:learning@policeconduct.gov.uk) with any feedback or comments on issue 43.

You can also request free hardcopies to be shared with your force for dissemination with officers and staff.

The next issue of Learning the Lessons will be on the topic of corruption, with publication due in October 2024.

## Updated minimum standards for referrals guide

The IOPC Assessment Unit has updated its [minimum standards for referrals guide](#). This guide was updated to include minimum standards for Right Care Right Person referrals, former/retired officer matters and a new section for 'all referrals'. There are also additions to the domestic abuse section, some new requirements for the complaints section, as well as other updates and new additions.

## Timeliness reports

Where an investigation reaches 12 months from the date the complaint was made, or the date the matter came to the attention of the appropriate authority, a timeliness report must be sent to the IOPC and the LPB (and every six months until completion). **Please note that these reports should be sent to the Oversight team only at [oversight@policeconduct.gov.uk](mailto:oversight@policeconduct.gov.uk).** When reports have been sent to other departments at the IOPC, this has led to delays in their handling. If you have any queries about this, please contact your Oversight Liaison.

## Common questions from forces and LPBs

**Q: Where a complaint has been withdrawn and the complainant gets in touch at a later date, can the initial complaint be reopened?**

A: A withdrawn complaint cannot be reopened as the provisions of the *Police Reform Act 2002* cease to apply. However, a new complaint can be made. Chapter 10 of our [statutory guidance](#) provides guidance on deciding how to handle a matter under Schedule 3, and the exceptions from the duty to investigate which may assist with handling.

## Corporate news

### Director General

Last month, the Home Office announced that Rachel Watson is to become our new Director General. This position, which is a government appointment, was filled on an interim basis by Deputy Director General Tom Whiting since December 2022.

The IOPC Unitary Board said:

“We welcome the appointment of Rachel Watson as Director General as her expertise and experience will be vital at a time when the system that holds police to account is under significant scrutiny.

“Tom Whiting took on the role of Acting Director General in the most difficult of circumstances and has been outstanding. We thank him for his stewardship over the past 15 months, which was commended by Gillian Fairfield in her review.

“Rachel could very easily be taking over an organisation in crisis. Instead, she inherits one with a committed and motivated workforce ready for the challenges of the future.

“The board looks forward to welcoming Rachel to the IOPC and working with her in the years to come.”

### Stephen Lawrence Day 2024: Where we are today?

On 22 April 1993, Stephen Lawrence was murdered in South East London in a senseless, racist attack. His legacy has had a profound and far-reaching impact on our community and policing.

Kemi George, our communications lead on race discrimination, shares her [reflections on Stephen Lawrence Day in this blog](#).

### Latest news

Keep up to date on our investigations and other work to increase public confidence in the police complaints system. You can find our [latest IOPC news](#) on our website.

[Learning recommendation for Lancashire Police on joint protocol to manage cross-border Grade 1 immediate and Grade 2 priority incidents](#)

[Former Cheshire Constabulary officer jailed for misconduct in public office](#)

[North Wales Police officer to appear in court charged with grievous bodily harm](#)

[Gross misconduct proven against former Dorset Police special constable over offensive WhatsApp messages](#)

[Devon and Cornwall Police officers acted in line with procedures over woman in custody who later died](#)

[Officers acted appropriately in search for missing man prior to fatal collision in Northamptonshire](#)

**Email:** [oversight@policeconduct.gov.uk](mailto:oversight@policeconduct.gov.uk)

**Tel:** 01924 811699

If you have any questions, please get in touch with your Oversight Liaison or a member of the Oversight team.

