

# 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).

### Information for police

You can find lots of useful information for police officers and staff on our [website](#). This includes information and guidance for professional standards departments, complaint handlers and local policing body reviewers.

Topics include complaint handling guidance and a toolkit, IOPC discrimination guidelines, guidance on managing unreasonable and unacceptable complainant behaviour, an operational advice note on 12-month timeliness reports and more.

### Introducing Learning the Lessons 45 (violence against women and girls)

On 30 April 2025 we published [issue 45 of our Learning the Lessons magazine](#), focusing on violence against women and girls.

We know that violence against women and girls (VAWG) is a national priority in policing, constituting 20% of recorded crime and posing a significant threat to public safety. In recent years high-profile cases of police perpetrated VAWG, and failures in the police response to reports of VAWG, have significantly undermined the public's trust and confidence in policing. This issue highlights tangible opportunities for readers in all ranks and roles in policing to reflect on current policies and practices, with the aim of improving the police response to VAWG.

The magazine features nine case studies highlighting real examples of police handling of violence against women and girls, and contains reflective questions designed to unpick the learning from adverse incidents. Key themes include missed opportunities to safeguard victim-survivors from domestic abuse, awareness of the silent solution system, understanding of protective orders, effective risk assessments, and victim blaming by police. The issue also includes:

- insights by Jess Phillips MP on how the government plans to work with policing to achieve their ambition to halve VAWG in a decade
- views from National Police Chiefs' Council leads on VAWG and domestic abuse on their respective portfolios and plans for a national policing centre
- reflections on the police perpetrated domestic abuse super-complaint from the Centre for Women's Justice and promising practice updates from the College of Policing
- key research on adolescent domestic abuse, and suspected victim suicides following domestic abuse

- insight into how Operation Soteria is improving charge rates for rape and serious sexual offences, with a case study highlighting the success of a pilot force
- an article from Cheshire Constabulary on their innovative approach to tackling stalking
- explanation from an Independent Sexual Violence Advocate on their role and how they work with police
- insights from victim-survivors on how policing can work with them to improve policy
- an article from the national charity, Karma Nirvana, on their campaign for a statutory definition of honour-based abuse and the resources they provide to support police

Please complete our [three-minute feedback survey](#) to tell us what you think about this issue. The survey closes on **30 June 2025**. Please email [learning@policeconduct.gov.uk](mailto:learning@policeconduct.gov.uk) if you have any other comments or questions.

## Focus consultation (violence against women and girls)

Thank you to those who have provided their feedback on the draft issue of our Focus guidance on violence against women and girls.

We are working through the feedback received and making relevant amendments, before we go through the final editorial checks and design process. We aim to publish the Focus guidance in June 2025 and will share the final version with you.

## Cumbria Constabulary new initiative

Cumbria Constabulary has piloted a new initiative for officers who are on restricted duties due to injury and illness. Their professional standards department (PSD) is identifying suitable candidates among the officers who are on restricted duties to work within their department temporarily, to assist with complaints handled outside of Schedule 3.

A few officers from Cumbria Constabulary recently worked in their PSD. The feedback received so far, is that it was a successful strategy. The benefits of this approach are set out below:

- It gives the officer a constructive focus while they are unable to undertake their usual role.
- It provides assistance to PSDs with their demand.
- It improves the officers' overall knowledge and awareness of PSD and their ways of working.
- It gives the officers an insight into what issues can cause complaints, so they can be more mindful of this when they return to frontline duties.

In a time where PSDs are facing increasing demand and limited resources, we wanted to share this initiative so you could consider whether this might work in your force.

## Focus 14 – republished

Last month we updated our guidance, [Focus 14 - Reasonable and proportionate handling under Schedule 3 otherwise than by investigation](#), to include some minor amendments for complaint handlers about engaging with the complainant.

These are very minor changes to the advice given to forces on their contact with complainants. This includes consideration of the most appropriate method of contact to use, (e.g. face-to-face meetings or phone calls) and will help to manage expectations for complainants. The amendments also bring Focus 14 in line with the complaints system as it has developed, since the original publication of Focus 14 in 2020.

If you have any questions on the updated Focus 14 guidance, please contact the team at [oversight@policeconduct.gov.uk](mailto:oversight@policeconduct.gov.uk).

## Rationale on the relevant review body in letters to complainants

We are aware of an issue that some forces are not providing a rationale for who the Relevant Review Body (RRB) is in their letter to complainants. In one example, a force did not provide an explanation of why the IOPC were the RRB and this subsequently led to an 'out of time' review submission. This was noted as a failure to comply with regulation 29(2) of the Police (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations (PCMR) 2020. This also meant that the 28 day deadline did not start until the force had informed the complainant of the reason why the IOPC was the RRB.

As a reminder, regulation 33(2)(a) of the Police Complaints and Misconduct Regulations (2020) requires that complainants are informed of the identity of the RRB and, where the IOPC is identified as the RRB, *"the paragraph of regulation 32 relied upon in making that determination."* These are summarised at paragraph 18.6 of the [IOPC Statutory Guidance](#).

**It is important that complaint handlers set out the following in their letters to complainants:**

- **an explanation of the RRB decision, and**
- **the paragraph of regulation 32 that has been relied upon in the RRB decision**

The consequence of not providing a rationale for the RRB decision could mean that the time period for bringing the review does not start. This may lead to potential out of time review submissions being accepted.

## ? Common questions from forces and LPBs

**Q: When completing a death or serious injury (DSI) investigation, where no conduct matters are identified, the PSD would send the report to the IOPC for review. At this point the PSD would notify any interested persons that a report had been submitted to the IOPC for review.**

**What would happen where there is a complaint that covers the full events of the DSI? Would the PSD provide the complainant with a copy of the report, along with their right of review?**

A: If a complaint is received following the referral of a DSI matter that is subject to a local investigation, or if during the DSI investigation a conduct matter is identified, the complaint or conduct matter should be referred to the IOPC. There is no requirement to send a DSI final report to the IOPC as the case converts to a complaint or conduct matter.

However, if the complaint or conduct matter covers different issues to the DSI investigation, then the force is required to complete the original DSI investigation and submit a report to the IOPC.

The complaint or conduct matter would be subject to separate handling as it covers different issues.

For more information and examples on DSI matters, and when a report is required, please see [Issue 20 of Focus](#).

The [November 2024 issue](#) of this newsletter addresses whether a DSI investigation report must still be provided to the IOPC if a complaint is received or conduct is identified.

**Q: When would we add an interested person to Centurion or other case management systems?**

A: Generally, an interested person only needs to be added if that person is identified as needing to be kept informed about the progress of a complaint/conduct matter and:

- is a relative of the person whose death is alleged to be the result of the conduct complained of or to which the recordable conduct relates,
- is a relative of the person whose serious injury is alleged to be the result of the conduct complained of or to which the recordable conduct relates, and that person cannot make a complaint, or
- is a person who has suffered serious injury that is alleged to be the result of the conduct complained of or to which the recordable conduct relates

In the case of a DSI matter, a person will have an interest in being kept properly informed if it appears to the IOPC or to an appropriate authority that the person:

- is a relative of the person who has died
- is a relative of the person who suffered serious injury and that person cannot make a complaint or
- is the person who has suffered serious injury

A relative is defined as any spouse, partner, parent or appropriate adult for a child. A person who does not fall into any of the categories above may still be an interested person. The IOPC or the appropriate authority may consider that they have an interest in the handling of the complaint, conduct matter or DSI matter that is sufficient to make it appropriate for information to be provided to them. For example, this may include coroners.

A person may only be treated as an interested person under the *Police Reform Act 2002* if they have consented to information being provided to them.

## Corporate news

### **IOPC concludes Met officer should face misconduct hearing over Chris Kaba shooting**

The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) has concluded – after a thorough review of all the evidence – that the case continues to meet the threshold which requires Sergeant Martyn Blake to attend a misconduct hearing.

At the end of our investigation into the fatal shooting of Chris Kaba, we determined there was sufficient evidence to indicate he may have breached the police professional standards regarding his use of force and therefore had a case to answer for gross misconduct.

Following his acquittal in October 2024, we reviewed our original decision - thoroughly assessing the evidence examined during the trial to determine whether the weight or substance of that evidence changed the position.

We have also carefully considered representations from Mr Kaba's family, the Met and Sgt Blake.

**The threshold which the IOPC must apply is set out in legislation and Home Office guidance. It is a lower test than that for criminal proceedings, which serve a different purpose. The guidance is also clear that where the case to answer test is met, there must be compelling reasons not to direct misconduct proceedings.**

On this basis, we have concluded that there remains a case to answer and misconduct proceedings must go ahead as we have no basis to withdraw our original decision.

While we have determined that Sgt Blake still has a case to answer and must therefore attend a misconduct hearing, it is only a police disciplinary panel which can decide whether misconduct is proven or not. That is not the role of the IOPC.

IOPC Director Amanda Rowe said:

“We understand the impact this decision will have on Chris Kaba's family and Sergeant Blake and acknowledge the significant public interest in this case, particularly among our Black communities, firearms officers and the wider policing community.

“This is a decision we have taken based on examining all the evidence, views of all parties and by applying the thresholds set out in legislation and guidance which govern our work. The legal test for deciding whether there is a case to answer is low – is there sufficient evidence upon which, on the balance of probabilities, a disciplinary panel could make a finding of misconduct. This has been met and therefore we need to follow the legal process.

**“We appreciate that the Home Office is carrying out a review of the legal test for the use of force in misconduct cases, however, we must apply the law as it currently stands.”**

The next stage in this process is for the Met Police to arrange the disciplinary hearing. It is in the interests of all parties that this hearing is arranged as quickly as possible.

To find out more about this investigation, including a timeline of the case, please visit [our website](#).

## 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.

[Former Greater Manchester Police officer jailed for passing information and starting relationships with two criminals](#)

[Former Cambridgeshire officer charged with multiple criminal offences](#)

[Merseyside Police officer charged with misconduct for inappropriate contact and data offences](#)

[British Transport Police officer charged with assault for using excessive force on teenage girl](#)

[IOPC investigation into death of a man detained by Staffordshire Police following a welfare call](#)

[IOPC investigation into fatal police pursuit found that Greater Manchester Police officer acted appropriately](#)

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

