

# 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.

### Learning the Lessons 45 (violence against women and girls) – coming soon

Our latest issue of [Learning the Lessons](#) will be published in Spring 2025.

Issue 45 contains new case studies, designed to encourage discussion and reflective thinking around police responses to violence against women and girls. The case studies explore a range of scenarios, including policing responses to domestic and sexual offences. We also welcome contributions from a range of stakeholders working across policing at a national and local level to share promising practice, opportunities for learning, and to highlight areas of significant systemic change.

To make sure our latest issue reaches the right people, **please contact [learning@policeconduct.gov.uk](mailto:learning@policeconduct.gov.uk) by 23 April 2025 confirming your force's learning lead contact details, including:**

- role title
- first and last name
- email address
- any further contact information and preferences
- how you heard about Learning the Lessons (e.g. 'IOPC Oversight newsletter')

To ensure we send issue 45 to the right person, please send us your current force learning lead contact, even if you think you have previously sent us these details.

We look forward to sharing the latest issue with you soon.

Following publication of the Learning the Lessons magazine, we will also be publishing a violence against women and girls special edition of [Focus](#). We will consult with you during April 2025 on the draft content to ensure that it meets your needs.

## 12-month timeliness reports and personal data

In [October's Oversight newsletter](#), we advised you about our updated operational advice note on 12-month timeliness reports. This update focused on a reminder of the information you should include in the 12-month timeliness report updates sent to us.

When sending report updates, it is important you **do not include any additional personal data** within these reports, or as additional attachments. In accordance with data protection principles, we are required to make sure we only collect the personal data that is deemed necessary.

It has come to our attention that we are receiving additional personal data about complainants and interested parties that is not necessary for us to collect. Examples of this personal data include **email and postal addresses of complainants** in copies of letters to complainants and allegation documents.

Please send us only the required update information for a 12-month timeliness report and any subsequent 6-monthly updates. For more information and guidance on what to include in 12-month timeliness reports, please see our [Operational Advice Note](#).

If you have any questions about timeliness reports, please contact Oversight on [oversight@policeconduct.gov.uk](mailto:oversight@policeconduct.gov.uk).

## Upheld reviews – cases handled other than by investigation

For the purposes of this article, when we refer to reviews of cases handled otherwise than by investigation, we will use the term 'other handling'.

When we uphold an 'other handling' review because we disagree with the service level decision reached by the complaint handler and in cases where we do not make any recommendations or directions, we have explored whether we can require a force to replace their findings with ours. We cannot require the force to replace the findings, for the reasons explained below.

In an investigation review in which the IOPC finds that the outcome is not a reasonable and proportionate one, the IOPC is permitted to review the findings of the investigation and can substitute our own findings in place of, or in addition to, the findings of the investigation. However, in an 'other handling' review in which the IOPC finds the outcome was not reasonable and proportionate, the only options are for the matter to be investigated, for one or more recommendations to be made, or to take no action.

The distinction between the different options available for when a review is upheld is set out in [IOPC Statutory Guidance](#) at pages 140 and 142.

In an 'other handling' review, the key issue is whether the IOPC finds the outcome is reasonable and proportionate and subsequently whether the review is upheld. Where the IOPC has concluded that the service provided was not acceptable, they would then have gone on to decide whether to:

- a. determine that it is necessary for the complaint to be investigated,

- b. make a recommendation under para. 28ZA, or
- c. do nothing.

Unless the IOPC thinks an action should be taken such as a recommendation or direction, then the IOPC view of the complaint handler's determination will not provide the complainant with anything, other than the knowledge that their review is upheld and an explanation as to why the findings are not reasonable and proportionate. Police forces should consider how to record the outcome of the upheld review decision, such as on Centurion or equivalent system.

## Reminder: Professional standards department new starter sessions

We are pleased that the uptake of the professional standards new starter sessions has been very successful and we are now **fully booked for the next session in April**.

If you would like to book onto a future session, we have more places available for the following dates:

- Tuesday 15 July 2025
- Wednesday 15 October 2025
- Thursday 22 January 2026

Please email the names and email addresses of any PSD new starters who would like to attend a session to [oversight@policeconduct.gov.uk](mailto:oversight@policeconduct.gov.uk). Please include first and second choice date preferences and we will do our best to accommodate them.

## Complaint handling toolkit

The IOPC's [Complaint handling toolkit](#) template now includes a Microsoft Word version which is compatible for use within Centurion. Both the Word and PDF version are available on our web page. The PDF version of the toolkit is also editable, making it easier for you to use.

Thank you to Cumbria Police for formatting the Word version of the toolkit to enable use within Centurion and sharing the template with us for circulation.

## ? Common questions from forces and LPBs

**Q: If a police force receives a complaint about one of their officers who was working for a different police force at the time of the complaint matter, should the complaint be reviewed by their current force, or by their previous force?**

A: When a complaint is received, the appropriate authority who currently has direction and control of the officer complained of should assess and record the complaint. This is outlined in [section 29 of the Police Reform Act 2002](#).

This means the current force will need to record the complaint, provide an outcome and a review right. The force the officer currently works for is the only one that can recommend learning, other outcomes, or undertake misconduct procedures.

The appropriate authority can request assistance from the original force to look into the complaint, as they will have all the relevant information. However, the current force should make any

decisions required by an appropriate authority and carry out any actions needed that relate to the officer.

Where a complaint involves officers from multiple forces, it may be there is more than one appropriate authority. In this circumstance, the appropriate authorities should agree a way to handle it across the forces, such as agreeing for it to be handled by one complaint handler. The appropriate authorities for the individual forces would be responsible for making any final decisions and taking any action.

**Q: Can a police officer make a complaint about their own police force about how their force dealt with a criminal investigation, where they were a victim prior to them working for the police?**

A: Yes, they can make the complaint. The legislation states that you can't make a complaint about a person where, at the time, they were under the direction and control of the same chief officer.

As the police officer was **not** under the direction and control of the force they wish to complain about at the time, they are eligible to be treated as a member of the public and make a complaint under the *Police Reform Act 2002*.

For more information on who can complain please see [chapter 5 of the IOPC's Statutory Guidance](#).

## Corporate news

### IOPC publishes its annual police complaints statistics report 2023/24

The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) has published its [annual report on 'Police complaints - statistics for England and Wales in 2023/24'](#).

The report provides an overview of police complaints – identifying the volume and type of complaints made, and how forces handled them from first contact with the complainant to completion.

#### Changes to the complaints system

Significant changes were made to the complaints system in February 2020 to make it simpler and more proportionate – this included widening the definition of a complaint to “any dissatisfaction with the police service”. This is the fourth set of statistics published since the change - the data should still be treated as experimental and comparisons with previous years treated with caution.

#### Key findings

- The number of police complaints in England and Wales rose to 85,458 – a 5% increase on the total number logged in the previous year (151,538 allegations in total - a complaint case may involve more than one allegation).
- Of these 32,511 were formally recorded under Schedule 3 of the Police Reform Act 2002, a 3% increase on the previous year.
- Forces took an average of six working days to contact a complainant after the complaint was made – one day longer than the previous year.
- The largest proportion of allegations (53%) related to 'delivery of duties and service', the second highest was 'police powers, policies and procedures' at 21%, followed by 'individual behaviours' at 13%.

- 'Discriminatory behaviours' made up 3% (4,575) of allegations. 50% of these were allegations of race discrimination, 18% about disability, and 14% of sex discrimination.
- 'Discreditable conduct' was 1% of the total allegations (1,019 allegations) an increase of 37% on the previous year.
- 81,776 complaints were finalised during the year (31,182 formally and 50,594 informally) - a 4% increase on the previous year.
- Of the 31,182 complaint cases handled formally, 57% had at least one allegation resulting in an explanation being given, 13% had at least one allegation resulting in learning for an individual or a police force and 7% had at least one allegation resulting in an apology or debrief.
- 141 complaint cases (less than 1%) that were handled formally and subject to a special procedures investigation had at least one allegation resulting in either misconduct meeting or hearing.

Read our full media release, including comments from our Director General on [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 West Mercia Police officer sentenced at court with corruption for improper contact with two women](#)

[West Yorkshire Police staff member to appear in court charged with theft](#)

[Cambridgeshire officer charged with corruption for unlawfully obtaining and disclosing personal information](#)

[IOPC referral to CPS after investigation into fatal road collision involving Nottinghamshire Police](#)

[Greater Manchester Police officer dismissed without notice following accelerated misconduct hearing for making racist comment](#)

[IOPC investigation begins following death of man arrested by Border Force officers](#)

[Investigation into fatal police shooting in Derby finds officers' use of force was appropriate](#)

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

