

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.

IOPC investigator training, qualifications and development

We wanted to tell you about the training and qualifications that IOPC investigators receive.

Professionalising Investigations Programme (PIP) is the nationally recognised standard for investigators. We are introducing PIP1 and PIP2 to our staff to replace our BTEC training. PIP is a structured development programme which provides IOPC staff with the necessary skills for conducting professional investigations.

The qualifications are a mandatory requirement for all investigators joining our organisation. Alongside the PIP curriculum, there will be elements of the programme specific to our work. IOPC investigators and lead investigators will become fully accredited investigators after completing PIP.

PIP1 for IOPC investigators replaced the BTEC Level 5 Professional Certificate in IOPC investigations in October 2024.

PIP2 will replace the BTEC Level 5 Professional Diploma in Leading IOPC investigations in January 2026. From then on, IOPC lead investigators will complete PIP2. The PIP2 programme builds on the development of leadership skills that are required to lead an investigation.

Both training programmes cover key aspects of the role, including powers of an IOPC investigator, investigative interviewing skills, scene management, post incident procedures, principles of disclosure and report writing. Our lead investigators receive additional training covering all aspects of leading an investigation, including strategy, decision making and policy writing.

Both PIP programmes require our investigators to attend and complete all training elements, and demonstrate their knowledge and practical application, through a work-based portfolio of evidence.

The IOPC also has an anti-corruption unit (ACU) development programme. This is an 18-month programme that provides investigators with the skills and knowledge needed to become a lead investigator within the ACU.

You can find more information about our investigative roles on the [IOPC website](#).

Learning the Lessons 45 (violence against women and girls) – Your feedback needed

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

We would appreciate your feedback to help us understand its reach and impact, and to help make improvements in the future. This is your chance tell us how the magazine was shared in your force, how it may have supported your work, and any other feedback you wish to share. Please [complete our short feedback survey](#) by **30 June 2025**.

You can sign up to the mailing list to receive future issues, or join our virtual panel who help develop the magazine, by emailing learning@policeconduct.gov.uk. You can also request a free pack of hard copies of the latest issue to share with officers and staff at training sessions, meetings or events.

The next issue of Learning the Lessons on frontline policing will be published in autumn 2025.

Focus 23 - Violence against women and girls

On 3 June 2025, we published our [special edition violence against women and girls \(VAWG\) Focus guidance](#). This publication is a practical guide for complaint handlers on the handling of police complaints and recordable conduct matters involving VAWG. The guidance is written in two parts: the first part is about complaints of dissatisfaction about the police handling of crimes involving VAWG, the second is where the perpetrator or suspect is a person serving with the police.

When someone wants to make a complaint, where should I direct them?

To give a better service to members of the public who wish to raise a police complaint, it is important that we make the police complaints system as streamlined as possible and direct people to the correct departments.

As you are aware, in the first instance the police force is the correct body to address police complaints. Members of the public wishing to make a complaint should be directed to, and given the contact details for, your professional standards teams.

This will provide a better experience for those wishing to raise a complaint as they will connect with the right people, first time.

Please do not direct them to the IOPC Complaints and Feedback team to make a police complaint. This team deals with complaints against the IOPC and cannot assist with police complaints.

Should anyone wish to complain to the IOPC rather than directly to the force, please direct them to our [complaints form](#) and [guide to the complaints process](#).

Reminder - Professional standards department (PSD) new starter sessions

We are pleased that the uptake of the PSD new starter sessions has been very successful.

These sessions are a useful introduction to the IOPC for any new members of staff joining your teams. They cover the origins of the IOPC, the work we do, tips on complaint handling, and the opportunity to ask questions on any area of our work. They are held remotely on Microsoft Teams and last around 60-90 minutes. If you would like to book onto a future session, we have 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. Please include first and second choice date preferences and we will do our best to accommodate them.

? Common questions from forces and LPBs

Q: Can an organisation make a public complaint about a police force?

A: Organisations cannot make a public complaint about a police force under the provisions of the *Police Reform Act 2002*. The [statutory guidance](#) states that a complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction with a police force that is expressed by, or on behalf of, a member of the public. It must be from a person who meets the definition of a complainant. A representative of an organisation can make a complaint about their dealings with the police, if they are eligible to do so, but this cannot come from an organisation more generally.

The exception to this is the super-complaints system. It allows designated bodies, such as charities, to raise super-complaints about widespread or systemic issues that could affect public confidence in policing – for example, the handling of domestic abuse cases.

Super-complaints are not an alternative way to raise an individual conduct matter. Rather, super-complaints could prompt action in a particular area of policing that could lead to a change of standards by the College of Policing, an inspection by HMICFRS, or a recommendation to change a practice at one or more forces.

The system is administered by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue services (HMICFRS). A super-complaint is triaged and assessed by a committee comprising of the IOPC, HMICFRS, and the College of Policing. For more information on who can complain please see [chapter 5 of the IOPC's statutory guidance](#).

Q: A death or serious injury (DSI) matter was referred to the IOPC. The mode of investigation (MOI) decision was that the force could handle the matter reasonably and proportionately with no direction to investigate. What are the force's obligations under the *Police Reform Act 2002* to keep the injured party updated?

A: Section 21 of the *Police Reform Act (PRA) 2002* covers the duty to provide information for other persons. It states that "a person has an interest in being kept properly informed about the handling of a complaint, recordable conduct matter or DSI matter if it appears to an appropriate authority that they are a person falling within subsection 2 or 2A".

In the case of a DSI matter, the PRA states that a person falls within subsection 2 if:

- they are a relative of the person who has died
- they are a relative of the person who has sustained serious injury and that person is incapable of making a complaint, or
- they are the person who has sustained serious injury

In this case, as the MOI decision was returned to the force without the necessity to investigate, the force's requirement would be to inform the injured party that a DSI referral had been made to the IOPC and what the MOI decision was. If the MOI decision was that the force needed to conduct a local investigation, the injured party would need to be updated every 28 days until the end of the investigation.

Q: A conduct matter was referred to the IOPC and the mode of investigation (MOI) was a local investigation. Does the PSD have to provide the final report to the IOPC at the end of the investigation?

A: No. Under Regulation 13 of the Police (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2020, the appropriate authority is required to tell the IOPC in writing when a local investigation is open for longer than 12 months (and every six months after that).

At the end of an investigation, an investigation report must be completed. In a local investigation of a recordable conduct matter, the final report must be submitted to the appropriate authority by the appointed investigator. The IOPC does not need to receive the final report.

For more information on concluding an investigation please see [chapter 14 of the IOPC's statutory guidance](#).

Corporate news

Recommendation about guidance on suicide and bereavement response

The College of Policing accepted the IOPC recommendation review to review and update its guidance on suicide and bereavement response, as part of its ongoing work to review its Authorised Professional Practice on mental health.

The College also accepted our recommendation that it and the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) work together to produce clear guidance on preservation of life at the scene of a hanging, where death has not been confirmed. This should include guidance on how to manage the weight of someone hanging.

This follows two IOPC investigations where officers attended separate incidents where members of the public had taken their own lives by hanging.

Read the [full recommendations and the actions that COP and the NPCC are taking in response](#).

Recommendation about breach of bail conditions and electronic monitors

The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and Ministry of Justice (MOJ) accepted IOPC recommendations that they work together to review the process for responding to alleged breach of bail conditions to ensure that, where an electronic monitoring breach is identified, adequate checks are completed which could verify the breach notification, and inform whether any police action is required.

This recommendation followed our investigation into the fatal shooting of a man, who in the months before his death was on conditional bail and wearing an electronic monitoring device.

Read the [full recommendations and the actions that the MPS is taking in response](#).

Recommendation about guidance for Sexual Offence Investigative Trained Officers

The MPS accepted our recommendations that it review and update their Sexual Offence Investigative Trained officer (SOIT) Guidance. In order to provide clear expectations of a SOIT in their role and responsibility as a conduit for information sharing between the investigative team and victim.

The MPS also accepted our recommendation that it review and update its Sexual Offences Secondary Investigation guidance to provide clear roles and responsibilities in relation to Sexual Offence Investigative Trained officers and Officers in Charge of investigating a sexual offence.

This follows an IOPC review of a complaint investigated by the MPS whereby a victim of a sexual assault had not been provided with a significant key update. This update was that a positive DNA match was identified. The victim subsequently withdrew their statement, and the investigation was closed. Two years later, the investigation was re-opened after a serial offender was identified as a result of linked DNA profiles. The offender was subsequently charged.

Read the [full recommendations and the actions that the MPS is taking in response](#).

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.

[Jail term for Leicestershire Police ex-special constable who shared photo of crime victim's body](#)

[Nottinghamshire Police officer dismissed over use of force on a child](#)

[West Midlands Police constable dismissed for gross misconduct after dragging woman from property](#)

[Sussex officers cleared of assault charges after elderly disabled man PAVA sprayed and Tasered in care home](#)

[North Wales Police officer found not guilty of assault on a man during arrest](#)

[IOPC statement following inquest of man who died after shooting involving West Midlands Police](#)

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

