

A guide to IOPC independent investigations

What does the IOPC do?

We are an independent and expert organisation set up to make the police more accountable to the public.

Funded by the Home Office, we carry out our own independent investigations into the most serious and sensitive incidents and allegations involving the police.

We are an impartial body: we are completely independent of the police and the government.

The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) used to be the Independent Police Complaints Commission. We became the IOPC in early 2018 with a new structure and increased powers, to reflect changes introduced by the Police and Crime Act 2017.

In 2018/19 the IOPC opened 687 new independent investigations and closed 717.

Who carries out IOPC investigations?

We have our own investigators who carry out independent investigations.

Our Director General is responsible for all of our work.

In the most serious cases, one of our Regional Directors or our Director for Wales is directly responsible for key decisions during the investigation. In other cases, these decisions may be delegated to others within the IOPC, such as operations managers.

What does an IOPC independent investigation involve?

Our investigators will obtain evidence to establish all the circumstances. This may involve taking witness statements, interviewing police officers/members of staff, analysing CCTV footage and obtaining other documents.

We provide regular updates to people involved in our investigations.

We may also engage with the wider community.

An investigation may also include:

- > forensic analysis
- > independent evidence from experts
- > liaison with the Coroner and/or Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)
- > liaison with other agencies – for example, the Health and Safety Executive

What happens once the investigation is over?

At the end of an investigation, our investigator will produce a final report, where they summarise and analyse the evidence that has been collected.

If we think a police officer or member of police staff may have committed a criminal offence, we will pass our report to the CPS. The CPS is then responsible for deciding whether the person should be prosecuted.

We consider whether particular action could be taken to help prevent a similar matter happening again and will say if we think lessons could be learned by the police.

Where an inquest will be held, we provide our report and evidence to the Coroner to be considered at the inquest.

Our final report will explain our opinion on conduct, performance or learning. We will send our report to the police force involved and seek their views. While we will consider those views, we will make the final decision on what happens as a result of our investigation.

We also give a copy of our report to interested parties.

The process of an IOPC independent investigation

We take initial action:

- > Our staff go to the scene (where necessary) and provide instructions to the local police force about evidence gathering, securing the scene, and securing evidence from officers and staff involved.
- > Our staff start gathering evidence.
- > We consider any indications of criminal/conduct matters.
- > We identify any immediate learning.

We liaise with:

- > family
- > Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)
- > Coroner
- > media
- > community

We investigate, including:

- > assessing questions from the family or complainant
- > agreeing terms of reference
- > collecting and analysing evidence, including witness statements, CCTV and other technical data, policies, forensic evidence, and independent expert evidence
- > interviewing witnesses/suspects, including police
- > consideration of use of legal powers if necessary. For instance in criminal investigations, our investigators have the powers and privileges of a constable, such as the power to arrest or to seize evidence.
- > continuing liaison with family, CPS, Coroner, media and community

We produce an investigation report



We decide whether to refer to the CPS, which then decides whether to prosecute.	We decide whether disciplinary or performance proceedings should take place.	Police receive our report and can make representations.	We consider those views but make the final decision on what happens as a result of our investigation.
We share findings of our report with family/complainant.	Police undertake disciplinary or performance proceedings.	We identify any learning from the case and share with police force.	Report and evidence fed into any trial or inquest (this can happen before or after the conclusion of the investigation).

We publish the investigation report or an anonymised investigation summary (usually after inquest, prosecution and/or disciplinary action completed).

How can I find out more?

Visit our website to find out more about the police complaints system and the work of the IOPC – www.policeconduct.gov.uk – or call our Customer Service team, available Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm – **0300 020 0096**.