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ORGANISATION/SERVICE ASSESSED
INDEPENDENT OFFICE FOR POLICE CONDUCT (IOPC)

PREPARED BY
LORNA BAINBRIDGE, ASSESSOR
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1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Independent Office for Police Conduct (referred to as the IOPC, or Organisation) oversees the police complaints system in England and Wales. The majority of complaints from the public are dealt with by police forces. However, the IOPC set and monitor the standards by which they should handle complaints. In addition, it investigates the most serious matters, including deaths following police contact and also considers certain types of appeals from people who are dissatisfied with the way they have been treated by the police. It makes decisions entirely independently of the police and government.

IOPC's mission is: 'To improve public confidence in policing by ensuring the police are accountable for their actions and lessons are learnt'.

The values are: Seeking Truth, Being Inclusive, Empowering People, Being Tenacious, and Making a Difference.

The current priorities of the organisation:
To work with others to improve the police complaints system.
To improve policing by identifying and sharing learning from the work undertaken.
To improve confidence in police accountability.
To be an efficient and effective organisation.

The IOPC continue to use the Customer Service Excellence (CSE) Standard as a framework to contribute to the achievement of its mission and priorities. There has been a focus on both the internal (staff) and the external service user throughout the journey, which has created a culture whereby everyone within the Organisation is actively engaged in the CSE journey.

2. METHODOLOGY

This was the first-year annual review against the CSE Standard, following successful certification in March 2020. The coordinator of the assessment from within the Organisation worked closely with the Assessor to prepare for the review. The coordinator was provided with access to Assessment Services Self-Assessment App, and provided an update indicating work undertaken in the past year to demonstrate how the 57 elements of the Standard continued to be met. A number of storyboards and documentation were also uploaded to support the narrative and provide the Assessor with additional evidence.

The Assessor interviewed the Director General and the Deputy Director General Operations and spent three days interviewing 48 staff (senior leaders, managers and front line), via Microsoft Teams. In addition, seven service users and three wider stakeholders were interviewed by telephone.

Verbal feedback was provided to the Director General, Operations Quality Manager and other members of the Quality & Service Improvement team. Feedback included the outcome of the review, areas of strength which were recognised as Compliance Plus and those areas to consider for continuous improvement. There were two elements found to be Partially Compliant whereby the IOPC are encouraged to continue to develop in the forthcoming year. The areas of strength and improvement will be the focus for the second year annual review in March 2022.

The following report provides a summary of the areas of strength and those recommended for continuous improvement, in the context of both the internal and external service user.

3. SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS

Sections: **1.1.3, 2.1.1, 4.2.4, 1.2.2, 2.1.2, 2.2.4, 2.2.5, 3.2.3**

The areas identified as Compliant Plus in the initial assessment continue to be key strengths of IOPC. Reference is made to the element in brackets.

The IOPC have identified the current and potential external service user groups and gained an in-depth understanding of their characteristics. The hard-to-reach and disadvantaged groups and individuals have been identified, for example, Young People, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic, survivors, those with mental health issues, autism, individuals experiencing domestic abuse, etc. A broad range of consultation activities have taken place specifically for these service users, which has been used to influence improvements to the service user journey, strategies, policies and approaches. (1.1.3)

The focus given to the service user by the Deputy General and his team is recognised and understood by staff through frequent communications. Staff strongly believe that senior leaders advocate for the service user. In addition, the One Plan and the core values firmly place the service users at the heart of the way the organisation operates. Whilst the IOPC is unable to provide all service users with a positive outcome, over the past year there has been a mind-set change, and a clearer understanding of providing the service user with a positive and supportive journey.

In addition, staff confirmed that as the internal service user they had also been the focus of the senior leaders. There was recognition that every consideration had been made to their individual needs over the past year and cited care plans, flexible working and extensive support to enable them to continue to provide the service to the external service user. Staff consistently made reference to the mantra that came into being at the start of Covid-19; 'No one left behind', which had been upheld by senior leaders, managers and peers. (2.1.1)

Learning from best practice and mistakes continues to be at the heart of the Organisation. Consistently, staff spoke of learning from Police Forces, Professional Standards Department and the public, and subsequently sharing this across the Organisation and externally. Reference was made to the approaches used to publish the findings; Learning the Lessons magazine and the website, Learning Recommendations Workshops, Subject Matter Networks, to mention a few. (4.2.4)

The above 1.1.3, 2.1.1 and 4.2.4 are embedded within the IOPC and really are part of its DNA. In addition, consultation with different service users is integral to contribute to continually improving the services, as well as inform strategy and policy. Many examples were gained, including but not limited to; Digital Platform, Social Media Strategy, Victims Right to Review, the Know Your Rights Campaign and an approach to reduce fingers being trapped in a door. As a result of the work undertaken by the IOPC in the past year in relation to consultation and service user's influencing strategy, policy and improvements to the service these two elements are awarded Compliance Plus. (1.2.2, 2.1.2)

Similarly, wide consultation takes place with the internal service user to inform processes, policy development and service planning. Staff described their involvement in designing the following: Case Management System, bite size videos, Recruitment and Selection Policy, thematic approach to Subject Matter Experts, Learning and Development Strategy, Wellbeing Strategy, etc. Consequently, these two elements are awarded Compliance Plus. (1.2.2, 2.2.4)

Staff genuinely feel valued and appreciated for their contribution to the Organisation over the past year, due to the support to balance their work and personal life. Health and wellbeing has been a priority, which was appreciated by staff. Reference was also made to the Awards, Cheers for Peers and informal thanks and praise for teams and individuals. This element is awarded Compliance Plus due to the consistent feedback from staff. (2.2.5)

A robust approach has been developed to improve the range, content and quality of verbal, published and web

based information. A full review of the information has taken place to ensure it is readable and easy to understand by the service users. Such reviews will be undertaken periodically. In addition, staff made reference to receiving ad-hoc feedback from service users and making appropriate changes to improve the information being provided. IOPC are also aware that English is not always the first language of service users, and as a result, information has been translated. This element is awarded Compliance Plus due to the approach adopted. (3.2.3)

Some comments from external service users, which demonstrates how the service was provided included:
"Polite, friendly, efficient and fantastic."
"Explained what he would do and why – really easy to understand."
"Timescales were managed well, managed my expectations well."
"Polite, efficient, professional, expectations were consistently managed."
"Time guidelines provided all the way through, and were managed well."
"Impartial, empathetic, sympathetic, supportive and certainly above and beyond."
"Treated with equality, respect – impartial – based on evidence."
"Certainly a timely and quality service."
"Comfortable, polite, friendly, professional and confidential service."
"Best public office I've dealt with, interested in doing the right thing by the case."
"Clearly understood what to expect, professional updates, responded to emails and telephone calls in a timely manner."

4. AREAS FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Sections: **1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 1.3.1, 1.3.2, 1.3.3, 1.3.4, 2.1.3, 2.1.4, 2.1.6, 2.2.2, 4.2.2, 4.2.3, 5.1.2, 5.2.1, 5.3.3**

The following elements require further development in order for the IOPC to be fully compliant with the Customer Service Excellence Standard, as a result these are currently awarded Partial Compliance. Reference is made to the element in brackets.

The performance against Standards and performance expectations, including timeliness and quality of service is monitored and evaluated on a monthly basis, and subsequently published via the website and other appropriate media. At the time of the first year review there was evidence that not all Standards and performance expectations were being met. Throughout the second-year annual review the Assessor will be interested in the improvements against the Standards and performance expectations. (4.1.2, 5.3.2)

The following elements could be considered for further improvement to contribute to IOPC's quest to provide excellent customer service. Reference is made to the element in brackets.

The internal services - including Human Resources, Information Technology, and Facilities believe they understand the characteristics, needs and preference of the service user, however, there was no real evidence of detailed analysis taking place on a regular basis. Consequently, these services are encouraged to gain an in-depth understanding of the characteristics, needs and preferences, including identifying those that may be hard to reach. This may identify further areas for improvement. (1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3)

Information Technology (IT) has implemented satisfaction surveys, which are acted upon in real time, and discussed during monthly DRIVE meetings and management meetings. In addition, there was evidence of surveys being introduced by Human Resources to measure satisfaction levels, however, in the future, consideration could be made to adopting a far more robust approach across all internal service areas. These areas could set challenging and stretching service user satisfaction targets and subsequently measure, analyse and publicise the results, including improvements made to the service. (1.3.1, 1.3.2, 1.3.4, 2.2.2)

The Organisation is in the process of designing different approaches to measuring the external service user satisfaction levels. IOPC is actively encouraged to continue to develop these approaches, using appropriate questions, for example, staff being polite and friendly and treating service users fairly. Subsequently, the results should be analysed and published and improvements made to the service communicated to service users. (1.3.1, 1.3.2, 1.3.3, 2.1.4, 2.2.2)

A number of internal teams have designed their own service user standards, and as a result, encouraged to ensure clear communication and measurement of performance against the requirements. (1.3.1, 1.3.3, 2.1.3, 4.2.2, 5.1.2, 5.2.1)

A majority of staff believe they are actively encouraged to promote and participate in a service user focused Organisation. In addition, staff are confident and feel empowered to raise issues at every level through different mechanisms. However, a number spoke of the Organisation being risk adverse and as a result not always feeling empowered to make appropriate decisions. In the future, consideration could be made to increasing staff confidence and creating an empowering culture across the Organisation. (2.1.6)

Benchmarking takes place within the Organisation and across the industry, for example, performance of the different Police Forces. In the future, consideration could be made to encouraging internal services to benchmark activities to contribute to improvements to the service user. (4.2.3, 5.3.3)