

Making a difference

IOPC Impact Report 2020/21

About our Impact Report

- Our third Impact Report sets out what we have achieved and the difference we have made.
- It outlines our achievements in four priorities areas:
 - working with others to improve the police complaints system
 - improving policing by identifying and sharing learning from our work
 - improving public confidence in police accountability
 - being an efficient and effective organisation

Who we are and what we do

We oversee the police complaints system in England and Wales. We:

- investigate the most serious incidents and complaints about the police
- consider applications for review or appeal from people who are unhappy about the outcome or handling of their complaint
- set and monitor the standards that police should use to handle complaints
- publish research and statistics on specific areas of policing and the complaints system
- use learning from our work to influence changes in policing

All our decisions are made independently of the police, government and interest groups.

Making a difference through accountability and learning

Improving the complaints system

SINCE
Our establishment in
2018

1895
investigations
completed

2020/
2021

91% of core investigations
completed within
12 months

460
investigations completed



325
appeals
upheld



201
reviews
upheld

Identifying and sharing learning

408
learning
recommendations

216
learning recommendations made

10%
learning recommendations
on domestic violence

16%
learning recommendations
on custody



95%
intend to share Learning
the Lessons magazine

Building public confidence

Young people's
awareness of the IOPC



Stakeholder confidence in
effectiveness of the IOPC



Black, Asian and minority
ethnic confidence that police
deal with complaints fairly



37%
of young people
confident police deal
with complaints fairly



38%
awareness of IOPC by
young people

500 calls to our contact
centre weekly



1.7m website page views

300+ community
meetings



PRIORITY



Working with others to improve the police complaints system.

We work to improve all parts of the complaints system – both our own work and that carried out by others – so that it consistently delivers impartial, fair and evidence-based outcomes in a timely way.

We play a key role in making sure that:

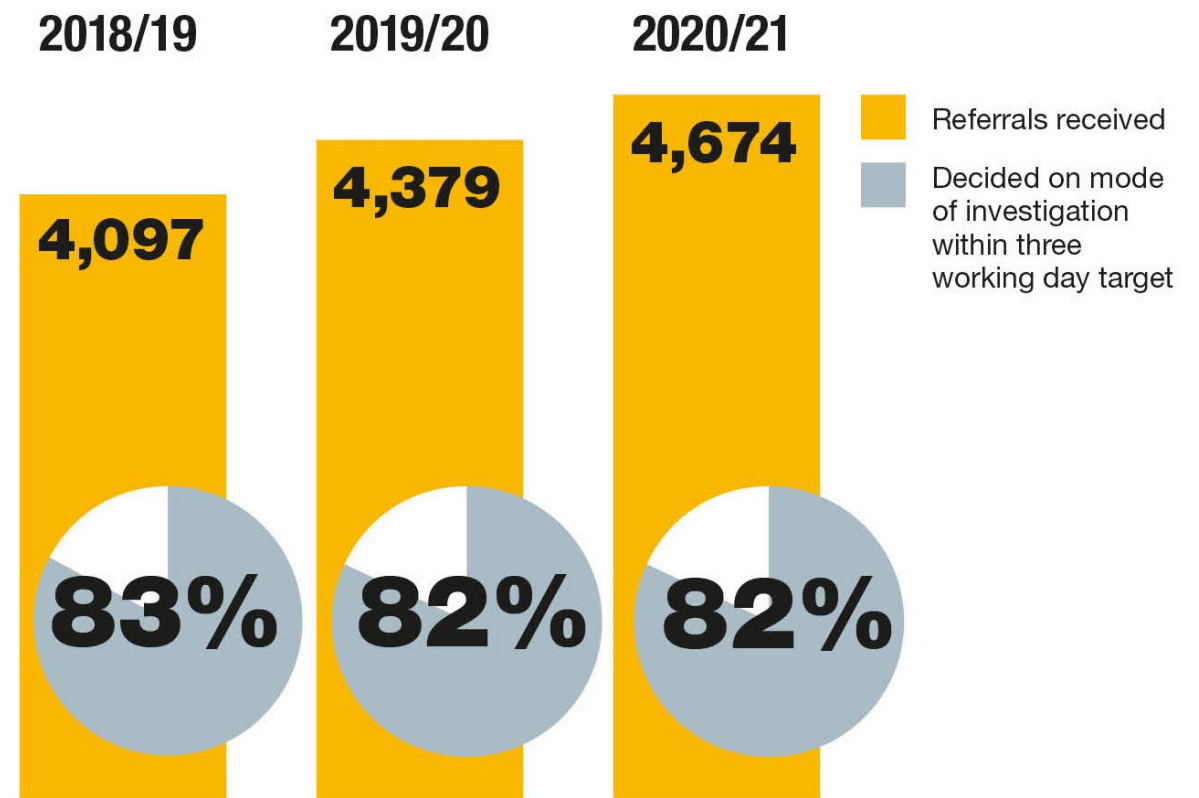
- complaints are dealt with in a reasonable and proportionate way
- police officers and staff are held to account
- the police service learns and policing practice improves

Our investigations

We investigate the most serious and sensitive incidents and allegations involving the police.

By law, the police must refer certain complaints and incidents to us. We decide whether an investigation is necessary and, if so, what level of involvement we should have.

Referrals received per year



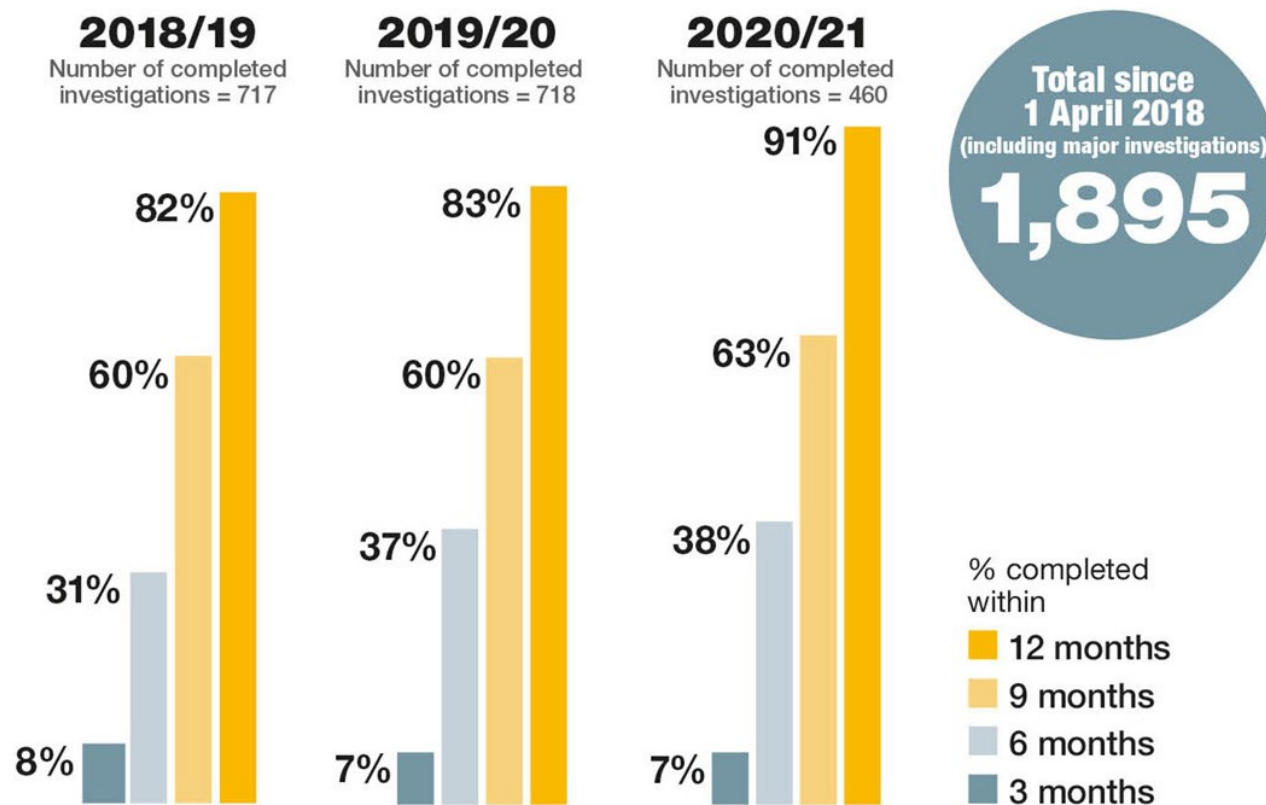
Our investigations

We focused on improving the time our investigations take.

We completed 91% of our core investigations within 12 months. This is up from 83% in 2019/20.

When selecting cases, we also consider if there are opportunities for learning or if there is potential for good practice to be identified.

Independent investigations completed (excluding major investigations)



CASE STUDIES

An insight into some of our investigations

Sharing inappropriate messages results in written warnings

Five officers who sent racist, misogynistic and homophobic text messages received written warnings at an independent misconduct hearing.

The messages suggested that one officer sought to establish an inappropriate relationship with a vulnerable, female member of the public he had met while on duty. His mobile phone also contained videos and audio files made of policing interactions with members of the public which were recorded on a personal device without their knowledge or consent.

Abuse of position leads to jail sentence

In December 2020, a Hertfordshire Constabulary officer was sentenced to six and a half years in prison after being convicted of two counts of penetrative sexual activity with a child following our investigation.

His victim had been in a police cadet programme while the police sergeant was a cadet leader and contact involved sexual activity at cadet meetings, on a cadet holiday and at the officer's home address.

During the course of the investigation, which was managed by the IOPC but carried out by Hertfordshire Constabulary, shortcomings were exposed in the management of police cadet records which led us to make both local and national learning recommendations to better protect young people in the future.

Community order after assault of a young person in custody

An officer was found guilty and given a community order to do 200 hours of unpaid work after we investigated an incident where a police sergeant assaulted a 16-year-old boy who was in police custody

The sergeant struck the child on the face and then removed clothing, leaving him naked until a detention officer came into the cell to assist him. We sent a file of evidence to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) which authorised charging the officer with battery of a child.

CASE STUDY

No case to answer after a complaint of racial profiling

We undertook an investigation after a complaint of racial profiling was made against a police officer who stopped and questioned a person in their car.

While the evidence indicated that the complainant had been stopped unfairly because the officer had relied on intelligence that was not current or specific to the situation, it was accepted the officer acted in good faith for a legitimate policing purpose. The officer apologised for the upset caused and acknowledged that they could have provided a clearer explanation at the time.

We found no case to answer for misconduct and we recommended the officer should reflect on this incident and the strength of the intelligence which justified the stop. We recommended the officer must consider how their actions could disproportionately impact

Black men, why the stop could be viewed as discriminatory, the impact this incident had on the person involved and the effect it could have on confidence in policing. The officer also received additional training in equality, diversity and inclusion.

“We recommended that the officer must consider how their actions could disproportionately impact Black men, why the stop could be viewed as discriminatory, and the impact this incident had on the person involved.”

Appeals and reviews

- When someone isn't happy with how the police dealt with their complaint, they have a right of review.
- We assess whether the outcome was reasonable and proportionate.

During the year we dealt with

992
valid appeals*

We upheld

325
appeals

652
valid reviews**

201
reviews

1/3

This meant that in one-third of our cases, we provided a different outcome for complainants.

* As the relevant appeal body, we have to assess whether an appeal is valid before we can consider it. There are number of reasons why an appeal may have been judged to be invalid.

** Whether an application is treated as an appeal or review depends on the date the complaint was made. The right of appeal applies before 1 February 2020 and the right of review applies from 1 February 2020.

Working with forces on legislative change

In February 2020, legislative reforms were launched to make the complaints system simpler and more effective.

- We provided regular support to help forces understand and implement changes to complaints handling.
- We held workshops for police complaint handlers to promote a more flexible way of handling complaints.
- We shared learning with forces from our data collection on reviews, investigations, and national complaints.
- There are early signs that reforms are working: forces were less process-driven and sought more flexible outcomes.
- The number of complaints investigated under the formal Schedule 3 process fell from 40% to 3% over first 9 months.

Legislative change workshops

“I just wanted to say that the workshop was excellent. The knowledge of the IOPC staff was really in depth and the case studies enforced the learning and were really useful. I think this is the best workshop I have attended for sharing ideas and learning from, and I wanted to say thank you for your time and effort”

Anonymous workshop member

PRIORITY

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Improving policing by identifying and sharing learning from our work.

We focus our work on areas of concern to both the public and police and work with partners to share our learning to improve policing and protect the public from harm.

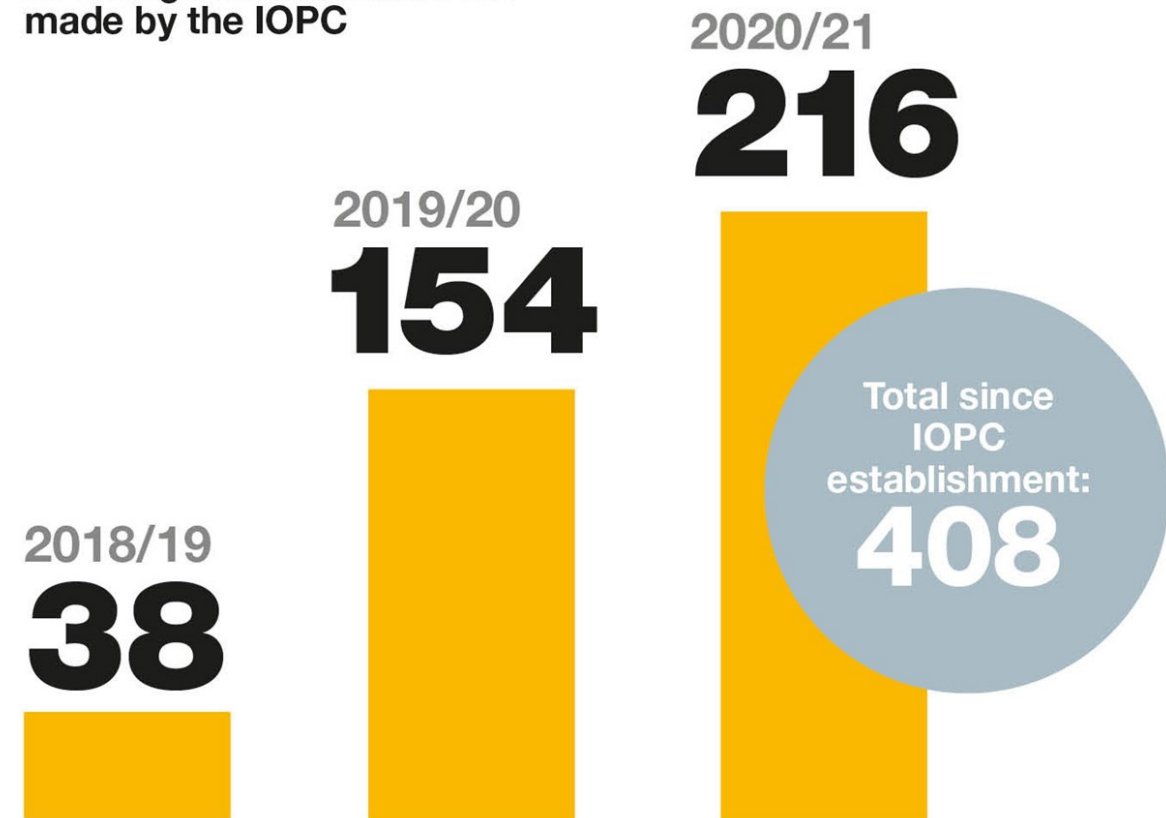
“I welcome the Independent Office for Police Conduct’s review of stop and search in London. It is absolutely vital that our police service retains the trust and confidence of the communities it serves.”

Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London

Learning recommendations

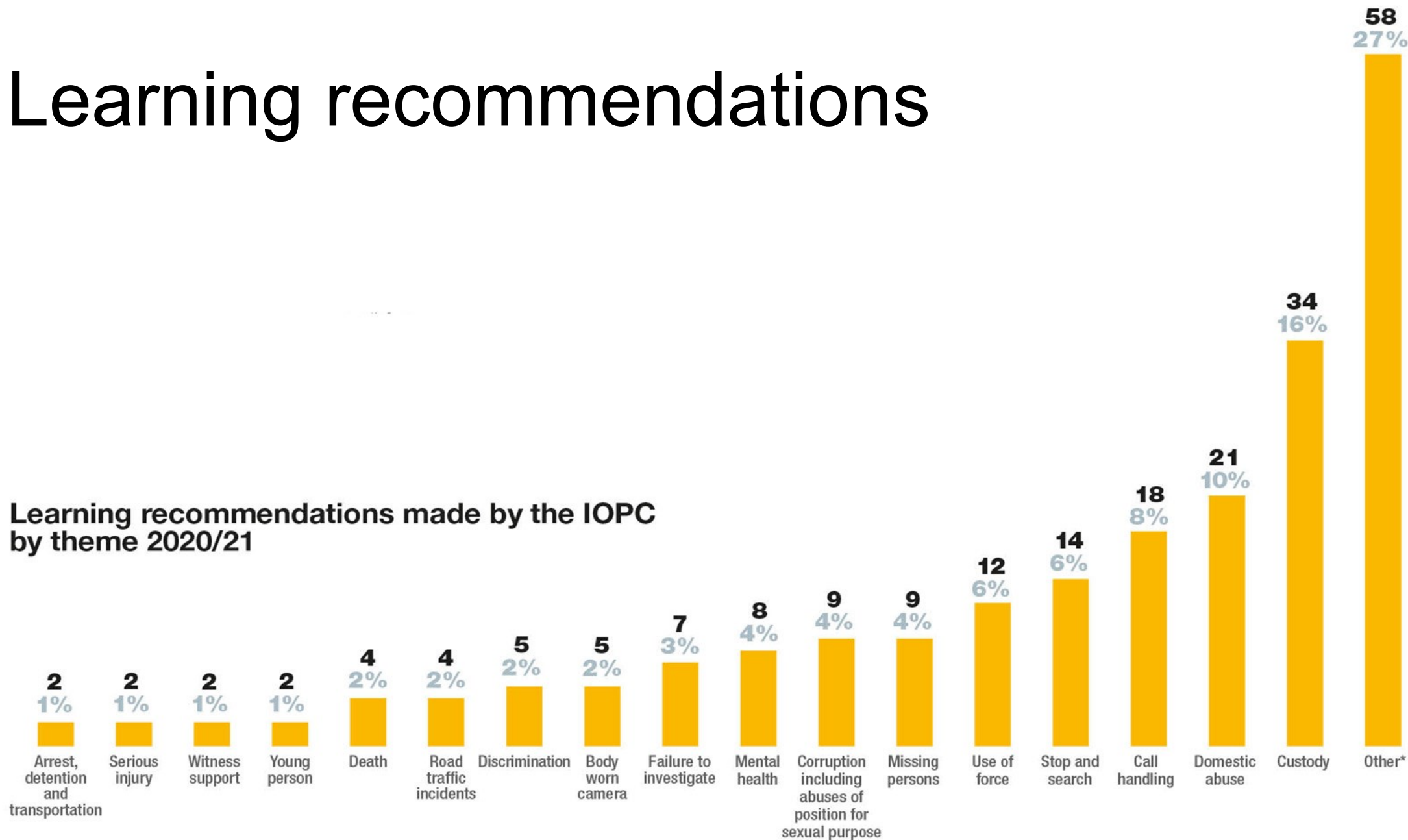
- We identify and share learning from our work on investigations, reviews and appeals.
- We make learning recommendations to ensure that where things go wrong, lessons are learnt and policies and practice changes, if appropriate.
- Operation Kentia recommendations led to national changes in search warrant applications and further training for 24,000 police officers.

Learning recommendations made by the IOPC



Learning recommendations

Learning recommendations made by the IOPC by theme 2020/21



* 'Other' included recommendations relating to drugs and alcohol; self-harm; storage of evidence, incident management and use of social media.

How we use learning from our work

Government and public bodies

- To develop and inform new legislation relating to policing and the police complaints system.
- To inform policy and legislation in other sectors – e.g. health, prisons, coronial system, health and safety.

Community and voluntary organisations

- To hold forces to account where necessary improvements have been identified.
- To understand how to best support service users in the police complaints system.

The police service

- To help safeguard the public and the police and avoid recurrences where something has gone wrong.
- To improve policing practice, policy, guidance, training, equipment and systems
- To improve the handling of complaints, conduct matters and deaths and serious injuries involving the police.

International police forces and oversight bodies

- To improve policing practice, strengthen oversight mechanisms and support human rights in other countries.

Policing bodies

- To inform national policy, guidance and training provided by the College of Policing.
- To inform inspections of police forces and custody facilities.
- To hold forces to account where necessary improvements have been identified.

Academics and research bodies

- To inform research and scientific development.

Sharing learning to improve policing

We share learning

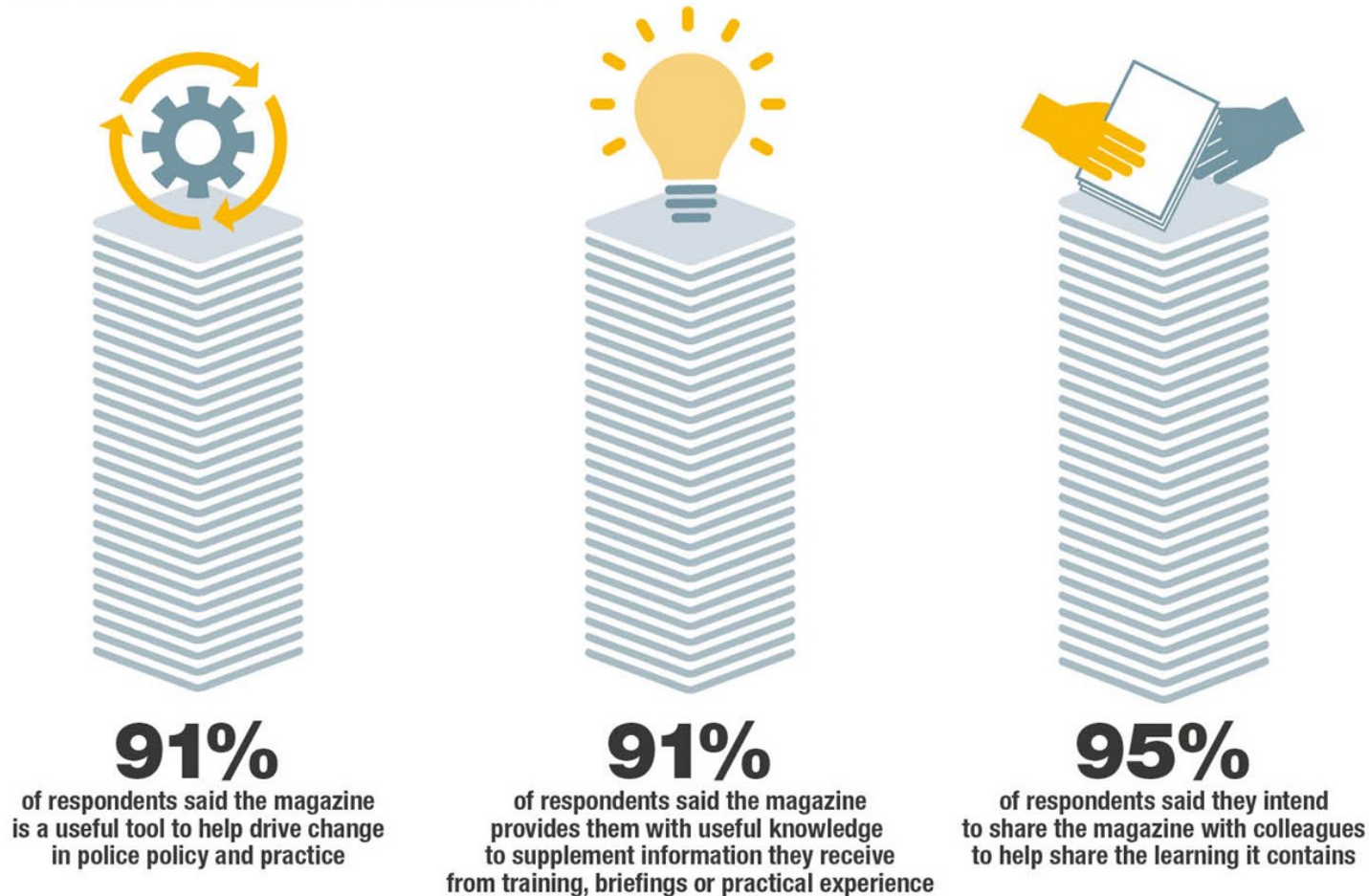
identified from our reviews and investigations through reports, investigation summaries, media releases, newsletters, briefings and presentations.

We promote learning

by highlighting issues to police leaders and our oversight partners, and recommending that they take action to improve policing (for example, in the Taser Review, NPCC social media task force).

Learning the Lessons magazine

Feedback from our readers



Source: Learning the Lessons feedback survey, issue 38 on roads policing.
Total number of survey respondents = 23.

CASE STUDY

Disproportionality in stop and search

Evidence of disproportionality in the use of police powers has long been a concern which impacts on confidence in policing, particularly in Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities.

Eleven opportunities for the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) to improve the way it exercises stop and search powers and consider disproportionality were identified following a review of five investigations involving the stop and search of Black men by MPS officers.

We found the legitimacy of stop and searches was being undermined by:

- a lack of understanding about the impact of disproportionality
- poor communication
- consistent use of force over seeking cooperation
- the failure to use body-worn video from the outset of contact and

- continuing to seek further evidence after the initial grounds for the stop and search were unfounded.

The force accepted all our recommendations and made several changes including:

- incorporating the lived experiences of Black and minority ethnic people in their training and creating a suite of new stop and search training videos

- improving the monitoring and supervision of stop and search encounters, including a system to allow communities to review wider encounters of concern
- implementing a specific policy on handcuffing pre-arrest

The learning identified from our work also fed into the Mayor of London's action plan that focuses on disproportionality of police powers.

“We’re deeply concerned by the...excessive use of handcuffs, inappropriate use of stop and search and failure to properly use body cameras. [The IOPC’s recommendations] ... must now be implemented in full to tackle disproportionate policing and to help rebuild faith and trust in the police in all of our communities.”

Mayor of Hackney Philip-Glanville and Cllr Susan Fajana-Thomas, Cabinet Member for Community Safety

PRIORITY

3

Improving public confidence in police accountability

We engage with a range of stakeholders and communities, focusing on those with the least confidence in policing, so they understand their right to expect fair and just treatment and their right to make a complaint about serious incidents.

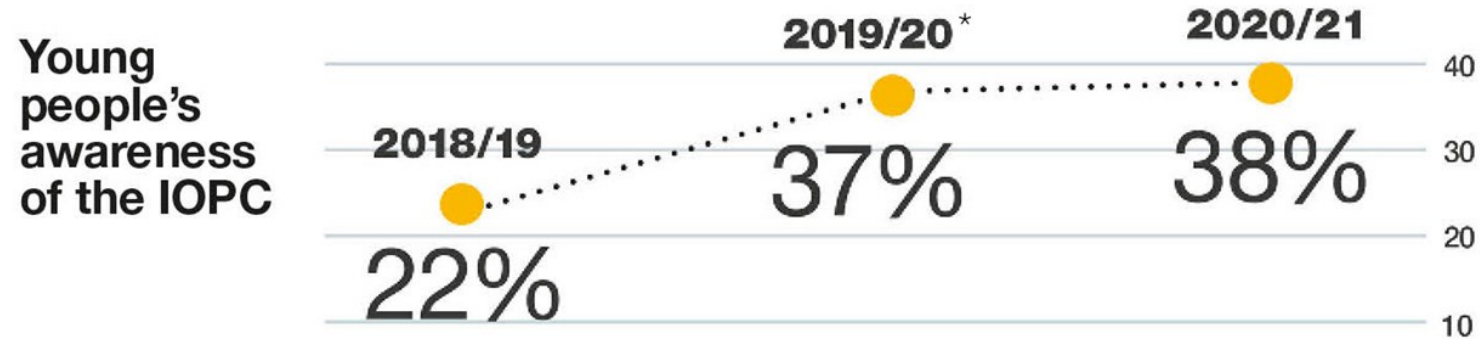
“The information that you sent regarding the IOPC (and) how to make complaints was fantastic. I’ve used it when informing people that they have the right to complain in cases where they don’t feel as though they received a good/correct service.”

IOPC stakeholder

Working with young people

- We set up the Youth Panel in 2018 to address drivers of low confidence, barriers to complaining and explore how we can increase young people's awareness.
- There are 37 members in total with 2/3 of members from a Black, Asian or minority ethnic background.
- We launched a new guide for young people to help them understand their rights. Our social media content has been viewed over 7,000 times.
- We shared the young person's guide with independent advisory groups, offices of PCCs, health bodies, local authorities and community groups.
- We sent a poster guide on tips for working with young people to all police forces across England and Wales.

Young people's views



Source: IOPC Public Perceptions Tracker

* There was a change to the wording of the question asked in 2019/20.

“I want the police to acknowledge the negative impact low confidence can bring to society if steps are not taken to address low confidence... I believe working with the Youth Panel is the first step to making a difference and a change in this regard.”

Saeed Ali, Youth Panel member

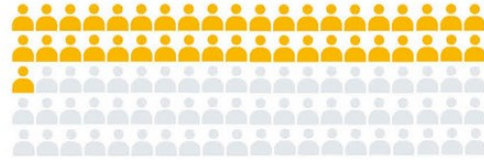
More views from the public

People from a Black, Asian and minority ethnic background who are confident the police deal with complaints fairly

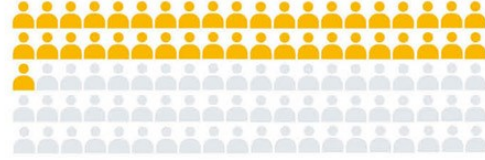
2018/19
38%



2019/20
41%

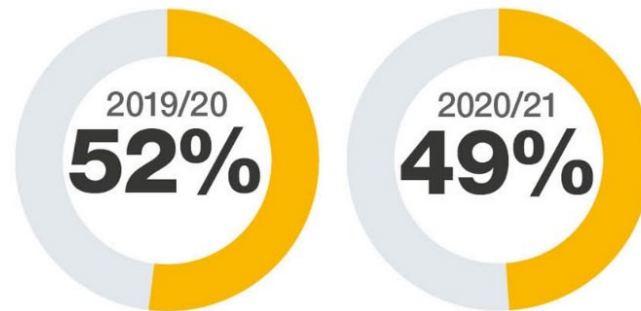


2020/21
41%



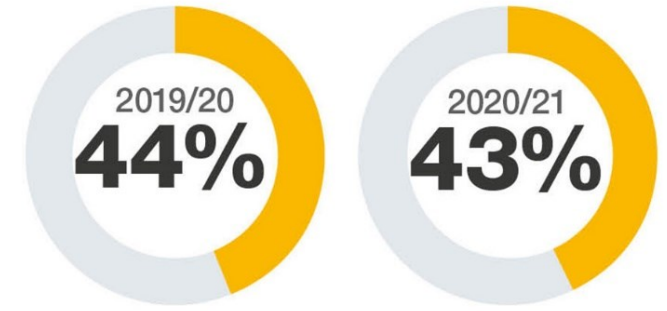
Source: IOPC Public Perceptions Tracker: Annual 2020/21 report summary

**Public awareness of the IOPC -
“Have you heard of the IOPC (the
Independent Office for Police Conduct)?”**



Source: IOPC Public Perceptions Tracker

**Public confidence in IOPC –
“How confident, if at all, are you that
the IOPC does a good job?”**

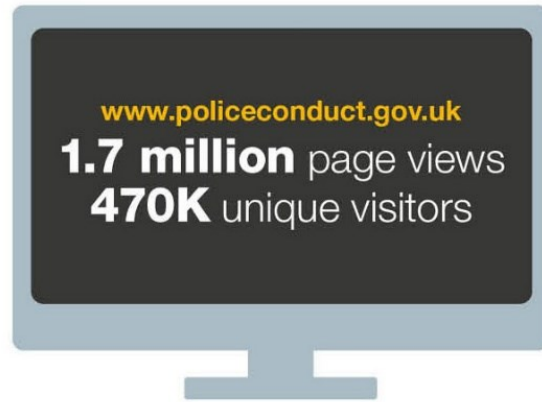


Source: IOPC Public Perceptions Tracker

Raising awareness

- We shared information via our website, social media, newsletters, reports and publications, reaching millions of people).
- We published 198 media releases about investigations and secured several front-page stories in national newspapers, reaching millions of viewers.
- We published key reports including an annual report on deaths during or following police contact, and quarterly and annual statistics on local and national police complaints.
- We relaunched our 'Make yourself heard' campaign promoting the Silent Solution system. Received media coverage and 164K Twitter impressions.

Raising awareness



“... we welcome the transparency the IOPC’s report provides on deaths following police contact. Deaths in police custody are taken seriously and subject to independent review by the IOPC in England and Wales. Today’s statistics highlight a number of trends, with mental health and alcohol and substance misuse significant factors in the unfortunate deaths in and following police custody.”

APCC Mental Health & Custody Lead Matthew Scott, PCC for Kent, and Deputy Lead Martyn Underhill, PCC for Dorset, responding to IOPC Deaths Following Police Contact report 2019/20, published October 2020

Our Customer Contact Centre dealt with over

500

calls each week

providing advice and guidance to the public about the police complaints system



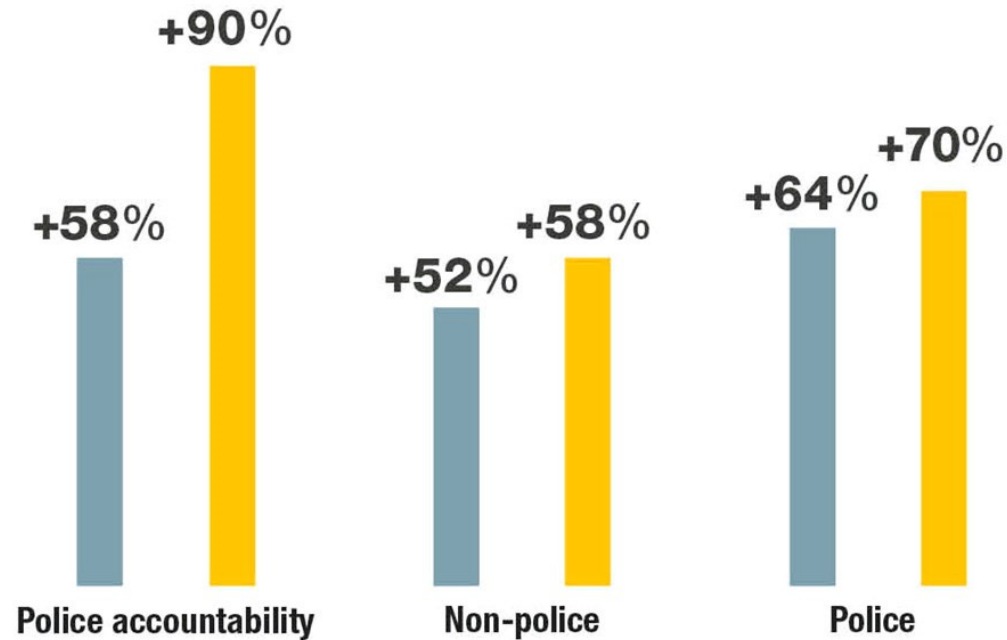
Working with stakeholders

- We value listening to and engaging with stakeholders from policing, voluntary, community and advocacy organisations and those with the lowest confidence.
- We identified a national learning recommendation on training to improve the way police officers deal with people who are unwell or suffering a medical emergency.
- The impact was that training was updated for police students, police officers, special constables and police community support officers.
- We held over 300 community focused meetings with independent advisory groups, local government, schools, religious, community and advocacy groups.
- We trained over 100 frontline caseworkers at Victim Support on how to support someone to complain (charity carries out 88K calls, emails and live chats a year).

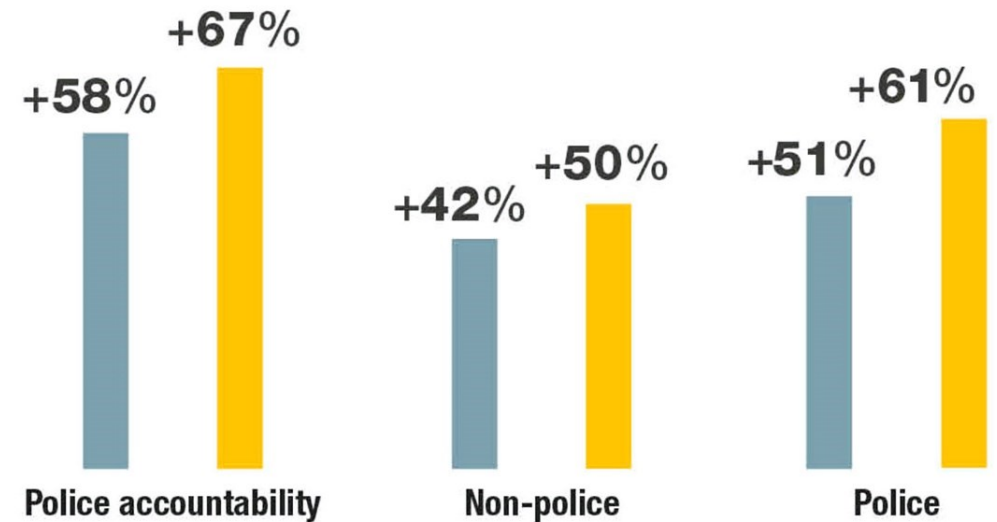
What our stakeholders say

Stakeholder views from 2019/20 and 2020/21

Ensuring the police are accountable for their actions



Ensuring the police service learns from complaints



Source: IOPC annual stakeholder surveys

Engaging with local communities

- We increased our engagement with Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities affected by serious police incidents.
- We set up community reference groups to listen, share information and increase accessibility to the IOPC.
- We held over 30 community reference group meetings and a further seven high-profile case community meetings with local people.

“Thank you for all you are doing to help Haringey react appropriately to concerning cases with the MPS in our borough.”

Rev John Wood, Director of Hope in Tottenham

“I really appreciate your holistic approach to sharing information to help develop awareness and knowledge”

Charles Kwaku-Odoi, Chief Officer of the Caribbean and African Health Network

“I really appreciate you providing the platform to speak truth to power.”

Zed Ali, Chief Officer at Lancashire Equalities Organisation

Putting service users first

We retained our Customer Service Excellence accreditation, a nationally recognised standard.
We retained the highest rating in:

- working with hard-to-reach and disadvantaged service users
- putting the service user at the heart of what we do
- being a learning organisation sharing that learning internally and externally

“We have restructured our team around our customers, giving each region a dedicated analyst. The improvements we have made are great and we hope to continue to create positive changes... to enable a better experience of our customers”

IOPC analytical support officer



PRIORITY

4

Being an effective and efficient organisation

We will attract and retain a highly skilled diverse workforce and provide them with a good working environment while continually improving to provide value for money for service users and tax payers.

**“I’ve really valued the openness of senior management and their willingness to engage with, and be more visible to staff...
It’s felt like we’ve become a more connected organisation even though we’re physically disconnected”.**

respondent, staff pulse survey July 2020

Supporting our people during the pandemic

- We adapted quickly to working from home, being flexible and adopting different ways of working (e.g. ways of taking witness statements, keeping our staff connected virtually).
- We asked for regular feedback via Pulse staff surveys to inform organisational decisions and make sure that staff felt supported throughout.
- We prioritised the wellbeing of our people and set up wellbeing initiatives (e.g. counselling sessions, wellbeing tips and activities to keep staff connected).
- Despite the pandemic, we still delivered our strongest year of performance ever for timeliness of investigations and number of learning recommendations.

A more inclusive and diverse IOPC

We are an inclusive organisation committed to promoting equality and valuing diversity in everything we do. Our actions include:

- signing up to the Race at Work Charter to show our commitment to race equality and inclusivity
- developing an equality, diversity and inclusion strategy and a EDI policy for staff conduct
- setting up a new recruitment policy to increase Black, Asian and minority ethnic applicants, improve diversity and build better career pathways for the diverse talent we already have
- launching our first allyship programme and reverse mentoring scheme to enable better inclusion, foster learning and growth

“Being able to hear first-hand accounts of what it is like to be a black member of staff at the IOPC was eye opening for me and really encouraged me to think about how I might be a better ally in the future.”

Claire Bassett, Deputy Director General, Operations

Building our expertise

Our subject matter networks are focused on:



domestic abuse



deaths in custody



discrimination



mental health



road policing



use of force, Taser,
and less lethal
options



abuse of position
for sexual purpose

Our internal subject matter networks (SMNs) aim to grow our knowledge, both internally and externally, and increase our impact as an organisation.

They bring together disciplines to identify learning and ensure our operational work reflects good practice.

SMNs produced guidance on victim-blaming language, shaped staff policies on domestic abuse and guided national and local learning recommendations in areas of their expertise.

CASE STUDY

Race-based discrimination training builds staff skills

Covering a mix of theory and practice, 70 investigators and casework managers completed race-based discrimination training during the year to support our work on race discrimination and policing.

The course was developed to improve the quality of investigations into allegations of race discrimination, with the course covering a mix of theory and practice and including a presentation by Manchester Metropolitan University on how Black, Asian and minority ethnic people can be treated differently and more harshly in the criminal justice system.

After completing the training, participants are expected to lead race-based discrimination investigations, help other lead investigators with race-based discrimination investigations, and share learning to others in their office with support from the Discrimination Subject Matter Network.

Following the training, all respondents agreed that their understanding of the subject matter had increased, they reported feeling more confident in dealing with race discrimination cases, and most felt their performance would improve following the learning.

Following the training, staff agreed that their understanding of race-based discrimination had increased and reported feeling more confident in dealing with these cases.

Questions?

To find out more

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