

# 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).

## Police perpetrated domestic abuse (PPDA) survey - reminder

On 21 March 2024 we launched a survey for all forces on police perpetrated domestic abuse (PPDA), with a particular focus on areas of concern arising from the Centre for Women's Justice (CWJ) super-complaint. This work is in response to action 1 for the IOPC arising from the super-complaint as follows:

**The IOPC will carry out a targeted programme of oversight work in relation to police handling of PPDA.** This will include:

- carrying out proactive reviews of local police handling of PPDA allegations and will include consideration of:
  - i. how forces identify, log and record PPDA matters
  - ii. whether complaints and recordable conduct matters are handled in line with relevant legislation and IOPC statutory guidance
  - iii. whether forces apply the referral criteria correctly
  - iv. whether there is evidence which supports a change to the mandatory referral criteria
  - v. how forces engage with victims and complainants

We understand that the handling of PPDA across forces is not always consistent. This is part of our Oversight work to learn from current practice and identify recommendations to improve this handling. Please ensure your force has responded to the survey by **11 April 2024**.

Since the survey launched, we have added in the ability to save your progress and return to the survey later where necessary.

## Right first time workshops

We recently ran a series of six complaint handler workshops in February and March, where we introduced a [toolkit](#) and [guidance](#) to help police forces handle and investigate complaints. The workshops were attended by complaint handlers from all forces and we hope that they provided attendees with some useful information and guidance.

The toolkit is a working document that can guide new starters through the handling of complaints. It can be used as a tool and aide memoire to newer complaint handlers and as a prompt for experienced staff.

The toolkit highlights the importance of early engagement with complainants. We believe that by investing effort and resources to engage with complainants as soon as possible after their complaint is made, complaint handlers will be better equipped to understand the complaint, build rapport with the complainant, and manage their expectations. Greater Manchester Police, Surrey

Police and Merseyside Police all provided interesting contributions to the workshops. They specifically talked about the benefits of this early engagement in their forces and the benefit to complainants. In many cases, this early contact with complainants was by telephone. We would like to thank these forces for their valuable insights and contribution to the workshops.

The toolkit is available on our website and has been shared with all forces. We hope that you will use the toolkit and guidance as part of your process when handling a complaint. We will follow up with all PSDs to see how you are making use of the toolkit and any impact it is having.

## Introducing Learning the Lessons issue 43 focused on mental health

On 27 March 2024 we released [issue 43 of our Learning the Lessons magazine](#), focusing on mental health.

Mental health is one of the most significant issues affecting policing in England in Wales. Out of the 23 people who died in police custody in 2022/23, 13 experienced mental ill health. Mental health intertwines across all areas of policing, and the eight case studies featured in this issue unpick learning arising from incidents taking place in the force control rooms, in frontline policing including at the point of arrest, and in custody. The case studies include reflective questions for readers in policing at all levels, designed to encourage reflective thinking and discussion to help identify opportunities to improve current policies and practices.

Key themes include contact management, custody, vulnerability and risk assessments, Right Care, Right Person, and police powers under the Mental Health Act.

The magazine includes eight IOPC case studies, plus:

- An overview of the IOPC's work on mental health and policing.
- The National Police Chiefs' Council lead for Right Care, Right Person discusses core aims and why partnership working is key.
- The College of Policing and National Police Chiefs' Council reflect on their mental health strategy at its mid-way point.
- Police forces and charities share insights into their local partnerships to help improve mental health and wellbeing within policing and the public.
- Oscar Kilo, The National Police Wellbeing Service, highlight work to support the wellbeing of officers and staff.
- Co-chairs of the Approved Mental Health Professionals Network answer our questions about the Mental Health Act and working with the police.
- Rethink Mental Illness call for changes to policing, mental health funding and legislation to safely meet rising mental health needs.
- The Association of Police and Crime Commissioners' lead for mental health discusses Right Care, Right Person, and the importance of accountability.

Please complete our [two-minute feedback survey](#) to tell us what you think about this issue. The survey closes **24 April 2024**. Please email [learning@policeconduct.gov.uk](mailto:learning@policeconduct.gov.uk) if you have any other comments or questions.

## Right Care Right Person – IOPC position

As you are all aware, Right Care Right Person (RCRP) is a national initiative driven by the National Police Chief's Council (NPCC) to ensure people in need are receiving the right care, from the agency with the most appropriate skills.

Since the launch of RCRP the IOPC has been asked for its thoughts on the initiative. Police forces were particularly interested in our approach when there has been a death or serious injury, and officers have followed the relevant RCRP policy. We have now published [Right Care, Right Person position statement - March 2024 | Independent Office for Police Conduct \(IOPC\)](#) on our website. To support this position, we are also developing a document on frequently asked questions, which we will publish on our website shortly and share with you. As this initiative continues to be rolled out across different forces, there may be further questions that are not covered in the FAQs. If this is the case, then please do make us aware and we will look to provide additional guidance to support you. Please send any queries to [Oversight](#).

## Corporate news

### IOPC responds to Home Office reviews and new Director General announcement

The Government has today announced a new Director General for the IOPC, alongside the publication of the Cabinet Office commissioned independent review into our effectiveness. It has also announced the results of its review into the police accountability system.

Commenting on the reviews the IOPC Unitary Board said:

“We believe it is vital to have a complaints and misconduct system which commands the confidence of both the public and the police and has independence at its heart.

“This announcement reflects what we have been saying for some time – the arrangements for holding the police to account need fundamental reform.

“We all have a part to play, and we are pleased that the progress the IOPC has made is recognised, but this is bigger than one organisation.

“Police leaders must take real and meaningful action to rebuild policing's contract with the public, particularly those parts of society who often feel marginalised, left behind or lack confidence. We stand ready to support police leaders to take that step.”

### Accountability review

The accountability review was announced by the then Home Secretary last year to provide clarity and confidence in the accountability system. The Government's response includes:

- three changes to the law which the IOPC proposed in our response to the review to make some immediate improvements
- a White Paper to look at how the entire system can be reformed

Read [our full statement](#).

## Cabinet Office commissioned independent review

In March 2023, the former Home Secretary appointed Dr Gillian Fairfield, who is the chair of the Disclosure and Barring Service, to lead an independent review of the IOPC. All arms-length bodies like the IOPC are subject to periodic reviews to ensure they are effective, efficient and work for the public good. To find out more about Dr Gillian's findings and recommendations, you can read [our full statement](#).

## Director General

The Home Office has announced that Rachel Watson is to become our new Director General. This position, which is a government appointment, has been filled on an interim basis by Deputy Director General Tom Whiting since December 2022 following the resignation of the substantive post holder. Rachel is currently Policing Director at the Home Office. Read [our full statement](#).

## 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 Greater Manchester Police officer will not face criminal charges for actions following Manchester Arena bombing](#)

[Investigation into death of a man who fell ill while in custody of Merseyside Police and later died](#)

[Former Met officer pleads guilty to misconduct in public office for accessing personal information on police computer systems](#)

[Sussex officers charged following investigation into use of force on elderly man at care home](#)

[Gwent Police officers to face gross misconduct proceedings over allegations of sharing offensive messages](#)

[IOPC investigation into a fatal police shooting found that Cumbria Constabulary officers acted in accordance with their training](#)

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

