

# 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.

### Revised discrimination guidelines, report and new toolkit

On 27 November, we published our revised [discrimination guidelines](#) to support police and local policing bodies in their handling of complaints involving discrimination. We also published our [report into race discrimination](#), which calls for policing bodies to implement focused and measurable changes for local communities. These are changes to:

- the use of police powers and racial disparities, particularly those involving children
- police handling of complaints involving discrimination – ensuring that complaints are handled effectively first time

We are also pleased to tell you that the [toolkit](#) we created for complaint and review handlers is now available on our website. This captures helpful information from the race discrimination complaint handling workshops we held in November and December last year, and builds on the findings from our dip-sampling work on cases handled by police forces. The above link will take you directly to our toolkit page, which begins with a list of frequently asked questions (FAQs). Please scroll down the page to access the full content.

The toolkit contains the following products:

- IOPC presentation slides used in the workshops
- presentation slides used by the force guest speakers at the workshops
- recordings of some of the workshop presentations by IOPC staff, force guest speakers and IOPC Youth Panel
- a list of FAQs from the workshops

- a prompt sheet for complaint and review handlers to guide them through the handling of a complaint involving race discrimination
- bite-size guidance on racism
- bite-size guidance on adultification
- a document containing links to additional resources
- an anonymised summary of findings from our dip-sampling of cases handled by police forces
- a suite of case studies highlighting good practice in case handling and examples where the handling could have been approached differently

The toolkit aims to promote consistency in handling complaints where race discrimination is a factor and to help understand and explore more nuanced allegations. This is a live repository so we will add new products as they become available. We will update you about new products through this newsletter.

## Live streaming of all hearings to the public

Earlier this year the Professional Standards Department (PSD) for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, and Hertfordshire (BCH) began transforming its existing police estate to build a new dedicated hearing suite – Lysander House. The purpose of the new suite is to improve the accessibility and transparency of misconduct proceedings for the public and achieve savings on the increasing costs of hiring external venues for police misconduct hearings.

As part of the transformation, colleagues involved in the hearing process suggested the introduction of live streaming hearings to the public. This service aims to show accountability in the process and deliver a more professional service. The new suite is equipped with state-of-the-art technology, as well as soundproofed rooms for panel deliberations, federation / union representative consultation, and public attendance. These facilities allow members of the public to attend misconduct hearings both online and in person, offering greater flexibility and access. Staff engagement throughout the process was key to its success.

To support the new process, the PSD also created the roles of Hearings Officer and Hearings Administrator who ensure the process is handled with professionalism. They are responsible for overseeing and facilitating hearings across the three forces, providing support and assurance to staff, the public (if they choose to attend in person), victims, witnesses, and subject officers.

Misconduct proceedings are published on all three force internet sites with hearing dates published seven days in advance. To attend online or in person, the public are required to register, and detailed instructions are available for how to book. The PSD tell us this provides a smooth experience for members of the public, making it simple to engage with and attend hearings from the comfort of their own home.

Although still in the early stages, the PSD report that this initiative and the new suite has proven to be a valuable asset. With five hearings held to date, it has received positive feedback from both staff and the public alike. The PSD say this is a significant step towards reducing costs, promoting transparency, and building confidence and trust in policing.

By the end of this year, the PSD plan to publicise the redacted outcomes of misconduct meetings and hearings online. It hopes that this will ensure the public has easy access to information about misconduct processes and decisions.

If you would like more information about this initiative, please email [Oversight](#) and we will provide you with a point of contact at the PSD.

## Recent information

### More sessions for PSD new starters

We have arranged further new starter sessions for 2025 and the beginning of 2026, and these are now available to book. Rather than being a training session, they provide a useful introduction to the IOPC. 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.

The available sessions are:

- Tuesday 21 January 2025
- Thursday 10 April 2025
- Tuesday 15 July 2025
- Wednesday 15 October 2025
- Thursday 22 January 2026

To book, please email [Oversight](#) and include the name and email address for each new starter, and their first **and** second choice of preferred dates and we will do our best to accommodate them.

### Right first time toolkit

In March 2024, we published a [toolkit](#) and [guidance](#) to help police forces handle and investigate complaints. The toolkit is a working document that can guide new starters through the handling of complaints and be used as a prompt or refresher document for more experienced staff.

We recently had requests for the toolkit in Microsoft Word format so forces can add it to their own systems, including Centurion. If you would like the toolkit in Word format, please email [Oversight](#), and we will send this to you.

## ? Common questions from forces and LPBs

**Q: If a member of police staff is a victim of crime and submits a Victims Right of Review (VRR), can they also submit a complaint to the police if they feel the police have failed in their handling of the crime, and they are not employed by the force complained about?**

A: Yes. The VRR only looks at whether the decision to charge was appropriate, or not. It does not deal with the process that led to that decision or the conduct of anyone involved in that process.

Any alleged failings should therefore be dealt with through the complaints process. The member of police staff is not under the direction and control of the force they wish to complain about, and therefore they are eligible to be a complainant under the *Police Reform Act 2002*.

**Q: Where a Death or Serious Injury (DSI) was referred to the IOPC with a decision for a local investigation and is then subject of a complaint which is recorded, do we still need to provide the IOPC with a DSI investigation report?**

A: No. If a complaint is received following the referral of DSI that is subject to a local investigation, or if during the DSI investigation a conduct matter is identified, the complaint or conduct matter should be referred to the IOPC. There is no requirement to send a DSI final report to the IOPC as the case converts to a complaint or conduct matter.

However, if the complaint or conduct matter covers **different** issues to the DSI investigation, then the force is required to complete the original DSI investigation and submit a report to the IOPC. The complaint or conduct matter would be subject to separate handling as they cover different issues.

For more information and examples on DSI matters, and when a report is required, please see [Issue 20 of Focus](#).

## Corporate news

### **Our impact publication 2023/24 ‘Building trust and confidence in policing’**

Our sixth annual Impact report 2023/24 features stories about real people and the impact we’ve had on the public and policing. You can read about how we build trust and confidence by supporting those who want to use our services, by holding police to account, particularly in areas of public concern and sharing our learning to improve policing.

Our publication includes case studies about:

- opportunities we identified to improve young people’s experience of policing, recommending stronger safeguards for strip searches involving children
- how we worked to bring together local people and their police force after the deaths of two teenagers raised significant tensions in a local community
- examples of our investigations where officers faced disciplinary or criminal proceedings and received dismissals or prison sentences

Read [our impact publication on our website](#).

### **IOPC appoints two deputy directors general as part of transformation plans**

Two new Deputy Directors General - Kathie Cashell and Steve Noonan - have been appointed at the IOPC as part of a package of wide-ranging reforms. They will take up their permanent positions in the New Year.

Kathie becomes Deputy Director General (Strategy, Engagement and Communications) within the new management structure which aims to deliver a high performing organisation trusted by both the public and the police.

Steve Noonan is the new Deputy Director General (Investigations, Oversight and Casework) responsible for planning the direction of investigations and ensuring the effective delivery of all IOPC investigations, as well as overseeing the police complaints system.

The two new deputy directors general (DDG) posts are part of major transformation measures underway across the IOPC to increase the effectiveness, governance and efficiency of the organisation resulting in significant improvements for the public and the police – and are in line with the recommendations from Dr Gillian Fairfield’s Independent Review of the IOPC published in March this year.

Read [our full statement on our website](#).

## **IOPC statement on Home Secretary’s reforms to improve police performance and standards**

The IOPC welcomes the Home Secretary’s major programme of reforms announced today to improve police performance and standards.

From our unique perspective as the police complaints watchdog, we will work closely with all concerned to support the overarching aim to build confidence in policing - a commitment we all share and is fundamental to our vision where everyone has trust and confidence in the police.

### **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.

[IOPC statement in response to Panorama documentary ‘The Chris Kaba Shooting’](#)

[Ex-Sussex Police officer to face rape and sexual assault charges](#)

[Cleveland Police officer who made false incident report is dismissed](#)

[IOPC investigation into police actions prior to the death of a teenager in Somerset](#)

[Witness appeal as IOPC investigates death of man who was in contact with Merseyside Police](#)

[Actions of Thames Valley officers praised after investigation into non-fatal police shooting](#)

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

