

# Our impact on people and policing

IOPC impact publication for 2023/24

# About our Impact publication

- Our sixth annual Impact publication for 2023/24 focuses on real stories about real people.
- This presentation gives a snapshot of our impact in 4 areas: people, communities, accountability and learning.
- Read our publication for many more examples of the positive difference we make by:
  - really listening to people,
  - engaging with communities
  - holding officers to account
  - making learning recommendations to improve police practice.



This publication is available on our website in both English and Welsh, as a PDF file. There is also a plain text HTML version.

# Who we are and what we do

The Independent Office for Police Conduct is the police complaints watchdog. We are not the police and are completely independent of them.

We set the standards for the police complaints system and make sure the police handle these complaints properly. We also investigate the most serious and sensitive incidents involving the police ourselves. Through our work, we hold the police to account when things go wrong, recommend changes to prevent the same mistakes happening again and promote high standards of policing.

We use our evidence to drive improvements in police practices for the benefit of the public and the police. This will help achieve our vision for everyone to be able to have trust and confidence in policing.

OUR IMPACT – **INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES**



It has **restored**  
**my faith**  
that someone has  
**finally listened**  
**to me**

Feedback from service user



# Our impact - individuals



Our service users include members of the public and members of the police.

Many of the people we deal with have already gone through traumatic or stressful events. Navigating the police complaints system can be an unfamiliar and unsettling experience. It can also be very difficult for those under investigation.

We guide all our service users through the police complaints process. We know that the outcome and how we carry out our work has a significant impact on an individual's experience and trust.

# Supporting a man who was subjected to excessive force

We investigated a complaint from a man who was stopped and searched, and subjected to excessive force by the police. The officers were in an unmarked police vehicle, weren't in their uniforms and didn't identify themselves clearly.

The man resisted the officers' attempts to search him and when they began to use force, he tried to get away. He told us he feared for his life during the struggle because he thought he was being robbed.

He was handcuffed for 45 minutes and arrested for obstructing the police. He was later de-arrested. The officers took the man to hospital because his body, face and head were injured during the incident.

The man told us he was concerned about the consequences of making a complaint and had little confidence in the complaints system. His first language is not English, so we provided interpreters to help him understand the investigation into his complaint. The man said:

**“You approach your work very professionally... You were with me from the beginning to the end and I could always count on good treatment from you as well as approaching the matter humanely and with respect. I value your team very highly. Thank you for everything...”**

Following our investigation, one officer was dismissed from the force and has been barred from working in policing. A second officer received a written warning.

# Our impact - communities

We speak with groups and communities across England and Wales, including those that have low levels of confidence in the police.

Meaningful engagement with these communities and groups matters. It builds awareness and understanding of the police complaints system. Ultimately, this helps work toward our objective of everyone being confident enough to use it.

Sometimes we work with local communities in the aftermath of an incident involving the police. We listen to their concerns and look at ways that tensions can be addressed.





# Engage, educate, empower – youth event

A youth worker who attended a community event that we ran for young people in South London thanked us for **“an amazing session”** and told us that the young people **“...were literally buzzing all the way back to Brixton”**.

The event was part of our “3 Es” pilot project (engage, educate, empower). It aimed to create a network of young advocates who can help their peers understand and access the police complaints system.

We gave the young people an overview of the complaints system, explained how an IOPC investigation works, and brought them together with police officers to build mutual understanding.

Attendees said:

**“...the young people had come bursting out with excitement as they had found out loads of things about their rights.”**

**“Thank you for yesterday’s session, it was brilliant... Great conversation and really wonderful to see the change in how they view the IOPC. Such a big turnaround...”**

**“It was an amazing session and you and your team were fantastic. As a youth worker I can truly see when care and passion has been put into the design and delivery of a workshop.”**

One of the young people who attended the session was stopped and searched by the police a short time after. He remembered the information about his rights. The young person reminded the officer of the requirements for carrying out a stop and search. The officer’s attitude completely changed. He carried out the stop and search properly and apologised, before letting him go.

The young person felt the situation could have been very different had he not been informed about his rights in a stop and search.

OUR IMPACT – **ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEARNING**

**Thank you**  
for such  
**speedy and**  
**professional**  
work

Feedback from service user



# Our impact - accountability

We provide independent scrutiny of police conduct in the most serious incidents. We also play a key role in holding officers to account through disciplinary and criminal systems.

Through our investigations and reviews, we decide whether a police officer has a 'case to answer' for misconduct or gross misconduct and should face disciplinary proceedings.

In many cases, we find evidence of dedicated officers acting with the utmost professionalism. However, holding officers who do wrong to account is a vital protection for the police and public alike.



# Officer jailed for forming inappropriate relationships with vulnerable women

Two officers, who abused their position by forming inappropriate relationships with vulnerable women they met while on duty, were jailed for a total of six and a half years. They were convicted of misconduct in public office following a series of IOPC investigations.

Officer A began an inappropriate sexual relationship with a woman after he responded to a domestic violence incident. He sent messages to the woman from his personal phone, and they had sex after he arrested her partner.

During their relationship the woman told him she had previously been pressured into a sex act with another officer, Officer B, who had gone to her home to deal with a report of domestic abuse.



Our investigations into both officers began after the woman told other police officers several years later. By then, Officer B was in jail for sexually assaulting two different women while on duty and was dismissed from the force, following an investigation by our predecessor, the Independent Police Complaints Commission.

During our investigations, another woman came forward to say that she had been in a relationship with Officer A after he had gone to her home in an attempt to arrest her son. Officer A, who was still serving at the time of our investigation, was dismissed from the force following a misconduct hearing. He was barred from working in policing.

The judge thanked us for an “**exemplary investigation**” and said that it “**proves the overwhelming importance**” of the IOPC.

# Our impact - learning



We maximise our impact by sharing learning and driving change. Through our investigations and reviews, we look for opportunities to identify learning to improve policing at a local or national level.

We work collaboratively with policing bodies, such as the College of Policing and the National Police Chiefs' Council.

We also share good practice with forces through publications, such as our 'Learning the Lessons' magazine, and by hosting events for policing bodies.

# Strengthening safeguards for strip searches involving children

Strip searches, especially those involving the exposure of intimate parts, are among the most intrusive powers used by the police. It is critical that appropriate safeguards are in place, particularly where these searches involve children.

Our evidence was drawn from several IOPC investigations into strip searches of children by the police. We found that the wellbeing and safeguarding of children was not always prioritised. Policing laws, training and guidance needed to be updated to better protect and safeguard them.

We made ten national learning recommendations to improve policing practice of intimate searches involving children. Our recommendations were made to the Home Office, the National Police Chiefs' Council and the College of Policing.

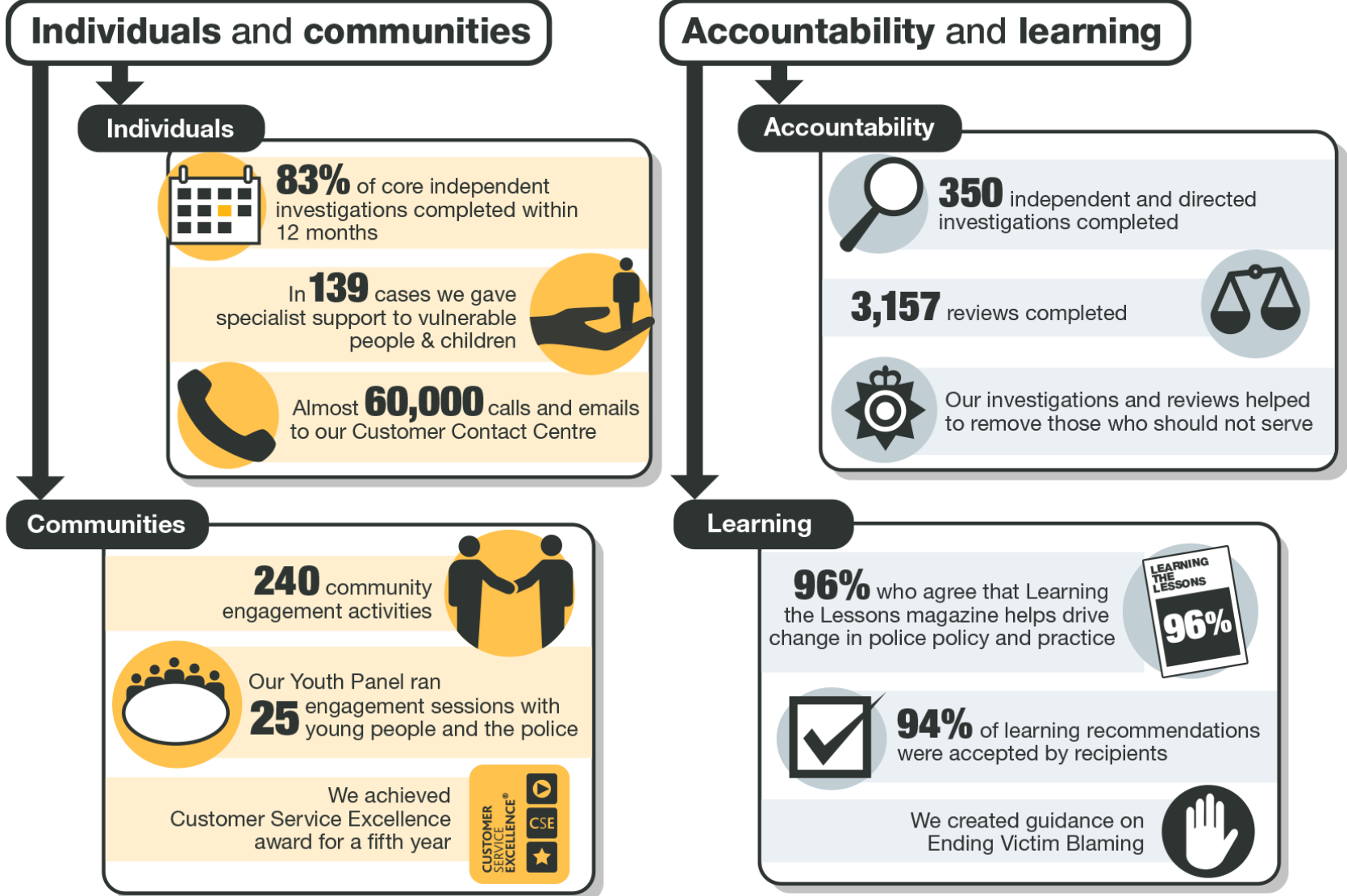
Our recommendations were accepted as a result:

- The College of Policing will review its guidance and training on strip searches involving children.
- The NPCC and College of Policing will develop a training package for officers who have the power to authorise strip searches of children.

Our recommendations have also fed into a consultation by the Home Office on proposed changes to the law.

One organisation that works with young people described these recommendations as **“a substantial stride in enhancing the protection of children during strip searches.”**

# Our impact at a glance





“I feel at last listened to and no longer a single voice in this matter. I am just **relieved that somebody impartial has looked into this matter**, and again I thank you for this...”

“Thank you - I have now read the result and it has restored my faith that someone **has finally listened to me** and taken my allegations seriously.”

“As a family we would like to acknowledge the support we have received during the investigation process... **Everyone we have spoken to ... have been nothing but kind and supportive to us** which has been much appreciated”.

“**You have been so professional, yet friendly** in all your dealings, and I have been impressed... I will always be thankful that I had such nice people to deal with.”

“I have just received and read your report and wish to **thank you for the thorough way you have undertaken your role.** I will re-read it as... [I] wish to take in every single one of your recommendations.”

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