

## **Complaint Dip Sampling Joint Audit and Standards Committee**

### **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to update the Joint Audit and Standards Committee (JASC) on the complaints dip sampling process.

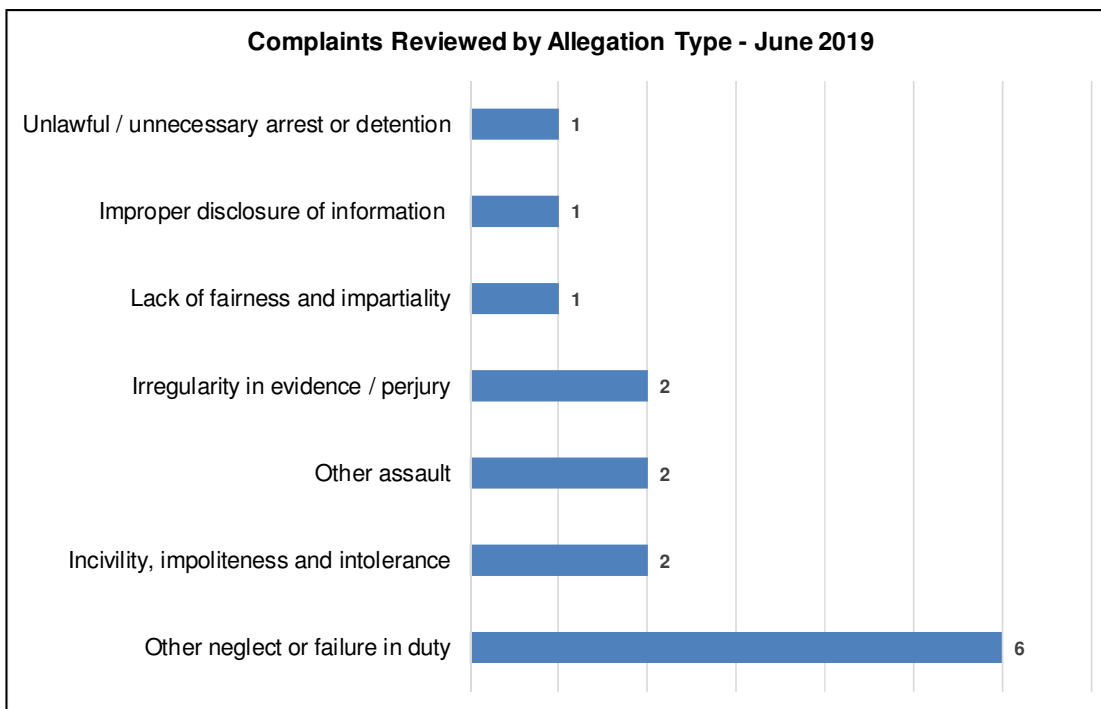
### **2. Dip Sampling Sessions**

The JASC standards and ethics leads (Helen Knee and Frazer Stuart) attended a Professional Standards Department (PSD) training session on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2019. This session included an introductory input from PSD and training on Centurion, the ICT system used by PSD to manage complaints.

The first substantive dip sampling session took place on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2019. Following Frazer's resignation from the committee, a decision was made to continue with additional resilience being provided by the policy officer lead from the West Mercia PCC's office.

The dip sampling session began with a PSD briefing covering a range of business areas including gross misconduct cases, officer / staff suspensions, IOPC investigations and demand. The key headlines from the briefing are detailed under section 3.

11 complaint files were reviewed as part of the dip sampling session; 5 Warwickshire, 6 West Mercia. A breakdown by allegation category is shown below:



Please note, the sum of allegation types in the chart will exceed 11 as a complaint can consist of more than 1 type of allegation.

A number of themes were identified through both the PSD briefing and the dip sampling of complaints. These themes will be taken forward for further review at the September dip sampling session and included:

- Concerns regarding timeliness of complainant / officer updates and the completion of the 28 day contact forms. This includes issues identified in cases where there is a delay between the submission of the investigation / local resolution report to PSD and finalisation by the Appropriate Authority (AA). Clarification from PSD has been requested for the next dip sampling session.
- PSD have observed a number of cases where Body Worn Video (BWV) devices are not being switched on in line with policy. PSD are going to explore the feasibility of identifying complaints that include BWV for future dip sampling.
- PSD have seen an increase in complaints relating to incivility, impoliteness & intolerance and other assault. This has been noted and consideration is being given to reviewing a greater volume of these complaint types in September.

### **3. PSD Briefing Overview**

#### **Upcoming Gross Misconduct Hearings**

There are no public gross misconduct hearings currently scheduled.

#### **Outcome of Recent Gross Misconduct Hearings**

The outcomes of recent gross misconduct hearings are in the public domain (including on the forces' websites) and summarised below:

- April 2019: West Mercia DC Hall – would have been dismissed if he hadn't resigned. Placed on the barred list.
- April 2019: Warwickshire PC Stephens – would have been dismissed if he hadn't retired. Placed on the barred list.
- May 2019: West Mercia PC Lawson – would have been dismissed if she hadn't resigned. Placed on barred list.
- June 2019: West Mercia PC Nairn – final written warning.

#### **Police Appeals Tribunal**

There is currently 1 live Police Appeals Tribunal in West Mercia. This process is administrated by the office of the West Mercia PCC and is ongoing.

#### **IOPC Investigations**

There are currently 9 live independent investigations with the IOPC, and 2 further cases that have been finalised but still have outstanding coroner's inquests (referenced below).

This is a considerable reduction in the number of independent investigations compared to the same period in 2018 (25 independent investigations as at June 2018). Anecdotally it is suggested that when the IPCC transitioned to the IOPC, they took on a larger volume of cases to build a caseload for their investigators (numbers of which had increased). It is believed that now the IOPC has bedded in, they are reverting back to taking on just the most serious complaints and conduct matters.

### **Live Gross Misconduct Cases**

There are currently 32 live gross misconduct complaints / cases within PSD (16 in each force). An overview of a number of key cases was provided at the dip sampling session. These investigations are still ongoing.

There are currently 2 coroner's inquests ongoing (1 in each force). This has been very resource intensive for PSD.

### **Suspended Officers and Staff**

There are currently 2 suspended officers (1 Warwickshire, 1 West Mercia) and 3 suspended members of staff (2 Warwickshire, 1 West Mercia). Over the last 2 years there has been a concerted effort to reduce the numbers of suspended officers and staff.

### **PSD Data**

The data below is for the period year-to-month (YTM; April 2019 – May 2019) and is at alliance-level.

- 138 recorded complaints
- 14 recorded conducts
- 327 miscellaneous records
- 73 service recoveries.

### **PSD Staffing**

#### Triage Team.

In February 2019 three new members of staff (Triage Team) were recruited by the Professional Standards Department to help and assist the force in the management of complaints. 2 members of staff are based in West Mercia and 1 member of staff is based in Warwickshire.

The establishment of the Triage Team was prompted by changes to the Police and Crime Act and an outline business case produced on behalf of the Head of PSD and the Warwickshire and West Mercia PCCs.

Following receipt and initial assessment of a complaint the triage team now attempt to deal with the dissatisfaction 'there and then' to ensure resolution to the satisfaction of the complainant. This process endeavours to provide a proactive response to a complaint with a potential resolution within 72 hours of receipt.

The key objectives of these roles are:-

- To ensure dissatisfactions are dealt with quickly and efficiently;
- A simplified recordable process that enables complainants to opt out of the complex complaints system;
- The ability to provide an agreeable outcome or update and identify any lesson learning;
- Improve the complainants view and confidence in the forces at the earliest opportunity.

This process will reduce the number of complaints recorded and locally investigated (reducing demand on front line officers) whilst improving opportunities to learn lessons where mistakes have been made. There have been 73 service recoveries YTM; a significant increase compared to volumes recorded during previous financial years (< 5 service recoveries).

#### Impact of the Alliance Termination

A verbal update was provided regarding the impact of the alliance termination on PSD.

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