

**Joint Audit and Standards Committee**  
**28 March 2022**

**Standards Update**

**1. Update from Fairness, Policy and Standards Meeting**

- 1.1 The last Fairness, Policy and Standards meeting was held on 04/11/21. The meeting is chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable (DCC).
- 1.2 The meeting covered a range of topics including:
- The fairness, policy & standards delivery plan;
  - Fairness at work (FAW) review;
  - Promotions process review;
  - Professional standards performance report; and
  - Internal Ethics Committee (IEC) update.
- 1.3 The force have made considerable progress on the FAW review:
- Updated the FAW policy and procedure incorporating learning and feedback from the workforce.
  - Developed an enhanced triage system involving key stakeholders from People & Organisational Development (P&OD), Legal and the Professional Standards Department (PSD).
  - Achieved ongoing reductions in the time taken to assign a fact-finder and complete a FAW investigation in comparison to 20/21.
- 1.4 The promotion process review is ongoing with activity identified for short, medium and long term delivery. This has been informed by the results of recent promotion surveys.
- 1.5 The force continue to engage with the College of Policing around promotion selection options, career pathways and leadership alignment.

**2. Update from Quarterly PSD Performance Meeting**

- 2.1 The PCC has a quarterly performance meeting with the DCC, Head of PSD and the Senior Complaints and Misconduct Manager.
- 2.2 The last meeting took place on 02/02/2022. An overview of complaints performance and live misconduct matters in Q3 (Oct- Dec 2021) was provided.
- 2.3 1,043 complaints recorded Q1-Q3 2021/22. This is a 9% reduction compared to the same period in 2020/21.
- 2.4 It is PSD's ambition to retain as many complaints within the department as possible, to reduce demand on local policing areas and to improve the

timeliness, standards and consistency of complaint resolution for the public.

- 2.5 Integral to this is the utilisation of the triage team to resolve complaints informally outside of Schedule 3 of the Police Reform Act, (however it should be noted that a proportion of complaints will always be recorded under Schedule 3 due to the severity of allegations or the wishes of the complainant).
- 2.6 In line with these ambitions, PSD have set an internal aspiration to resolve 75% of complaints through the triage team. PSD exceeded this target each month in Q3. This has led to a considerable reduction in demand on Local Policing teams, as well as improved timeliness of response for members of the public.
- 2.7 West Mercia triage a greater proportion of complaints outside schedule 3 compared to most similar forces (MSF) and the national average. This has been identified as best practice by the IOPC and was welcomed in a press release by the PCC in Jan-22
- 2.8 The volume of conduct cases continues to be sustained at higher levels than seen previously (a trend seen regionally and nationally). An update on conduct cases in terms of both volumes and context is provided to the PCC each quarter.
- 2.9 The main themes for conduct cases recorded in 2021 are:
- Domestic abuse;
  - Sexual misconduct/ abuse of position for sexual purpose;
  - Other inappropriate behaviour; and
  - Dishonesty.
- 2.10 The data pack provided to the PCC has been amended to include a greater focus on sexual misconduct; reflecting the trends above.
- 2.11 The increase in conduct cases have been escalated to a series of formal holding to account meetings with the Chief Constable (Jun-21, Mar-22). The meeting in March will include an update on the force's response to the increase, with a focus on prevention.
- 2.12 The PCC's 2022/23 budget prioritises additional resource into force vetting and professional standards, to provide reassurance to all parties that the right checks are being carried out on all police officers and staff, and to root out any individuals not suitable for the profession.

### **3. PCC Review Function**

- 3.1 As of February 2020, the PCC has become the relevant review body (RRB) for low level complaints.

- 3.2 A log has been created to monitor the progress, outcomes and learning for all complaint reviews. This data is also recorded on Centurion (the ICT system used by PSDs nationally), to ensure compliance with national data standards.
- 3.3 77 reviews have been completed year-to-date (01 Apr 2021 – 02/03/2022). 14% (11) of reviews were upheld with recommendations made to the force.
- 3.4 The PCC has recently published an assessment of the performance of the review function, as required by the Elected Local Policing Bodies (Specified Information) (Amendment) Order 2021 (see below).

#### **4. Specified Information Order**

- 4.1 As set out in the amended Specified Information Order (2021), PCCs must publish the following on their websites:
- IOPC quarterly complaints data for their force;
  - IOPC annual statistics report; and
  - An assessment setting out how the PCC is holding the Chief Constable to account in relation to complaint handling, and the PCC's assessment of their own performance in carrying out their other complaints handling functions (e.g. complaint reviews).
- 4.2 The above information was published in December 2021. A copy of the assessment in relation to complaint handling and reviews is included as an appendix to this report.