



Police and Crime Commissioner

for Dyfed Powys

Complaints Dip Sampling Report

Date Quarter 2 July- September 2024

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Introduction

A series of dip sampling of complaints cases was undertaken by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) between July and September 2024.

The OPCC reviewed a total of 15 randomly selected closed complaint cases that were handled by the Professional Standards Department (PSD) between April 2024- June 2024. The main purpose of this scrutiny work is to independently review that the recording and handling of complaints complies with the guidance set out by the Independent Office of Police Complaints (IOPC) and that the service provided to the complainant is reasonable and proportionate.

The background and purpose of scrutiny dip sampling work, alongside how dip sampling is carried out is detailed within the [Complaints Scrutiny Framework](#) which is published on the OPCC website.

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 and supporting regulations made significant changes to the police complaints and disciplinary systems. They introduced a number of changes designed to achieve a more customer-focused complaints system in February 2020.

The complaints system has expanded to cover a broader range of matters. Formerly, the way that the term ‘complaint’ was defined meant that it needed to relate to the conduct of an individual officer. Now a complaint can be made about a much wider range of issues including the service provided by the police as an organisation. This is designed to increase access to the police complaints system.

The IOPC expects forces to consider the information they keep about complaints with the intent of the reforms in mind – a positive obligation to increase access and to collect information that enables forces and local policing bodies to learn from complaints and other matters.

IOPC Statistics

Each quarter, the IOPC collects data from Dyfed Powys Police about how they handle complaints. The IOPC uses this to produce information bulletins. These set out performance against a number of measures and compare each force's data with their most similar force average and the overall results for all forces.

The table below presents a breakdown of how allegations were handled. An allegation decision is logged for each allegation finalised. The allegation decision reflects how the complaint case has been handled, with different decisions available for the different means of handling. Both the allegation decisions and the subsequent actions available will depend on two things: firstly, whether the complaint case has been handled outside or under Schedule 3; and secondly, the means of handling where it has been dealt with under Schedule 3.

How allegations were handled (Year to date)	Force No.	Force %	MSF Average No.	MSF Average %	National No.	National %
Under Schedule 3 investigated (not subject to special procedures)	5	2 %	22	6 %	4,102	11 %
Under Schedule 3 investigated (subject to special procedures)	0		4	1 %	425	1 %
Under Schedule 3 - not investigated	107	46 %	238	60 %	17,104	45 %
Outside of Schedule 3	122	52 %	121	33 %	16,487	43 %
Total	234	100 %	385	100 %	38,118	100 %

Complaints handled under schedule 3 of the Police Reform Act 2002 are eligible for their complaint to be reviewed either by the Police and Crime Commissioner or the Independent Office for Police Conduct.

However, complaints handled informally outside of schedule 3 are not entitled to a review of their complaint.

Complaints dealt with outside the requirements of Schedule 3 must be handled with a view to resolving them to the complainant's satisfaction. Handling a complaint outside the requirements of Schedule 3 provides an opportunity to address promptly the concerns a complainant has raised. Some complaints do not require detailed enquiries in order to address them. For example, the complainant may only want an explanation, or for their concerns to be noted or passed on. Handling such complaints outside of Schedule 3, promptly, may be the

most efficient, effective, and beneficial way to resolve the complaint. It can assure the complainant that their concerns have been listened to and addressed, while potentially providing a learning opportunity for the force (and, if appropriate, any individuals involved)

The table shows that 52% of complaints were dealt with outside schedule 3. As a result this round of dip sampling will consider the complaints handled outside of schedule 3 to consider their handling.

Summary of findings

Positive

The dip sample identified best practice for a case where the complaint handler provided an update to PSD on the outcome of handling of complaint with action that had been taken for a complaint handled informally.

There were no concerns identified around the timeliness of a complaint being handled.

Area for Improvement

Supervisors should provide PSD with an update of any action/outcome of a complaint which they have handled informally outside of schedule 3.

There also needs to be consistency of record keeping, in some cases it was difficult to identify what the outcome of the complaint was or if it had concluded.

Dip-Sample Findings

July

Case number	Complaint reference	Complaint Summary	Handling Type	OPCC Observations
1	Case 1	Complainant is unhappy that Police have attended his property following a 999 call received and claims the call was a mistake and that officers have intruded causing his 5 month old baby to be upset.	Outside Schedule 3	There is a detailed audit of the actions taken to address the complaint and detailed logs provided by officers explaining their rationale and concerns that there was a history of domestic violence, with supporting Body Worn Video footage. Overall the complaint was handled well and in a timely manner. Complainant has previous history of domestic violence.
2	Case 2	Complainant was involved in an incident where a car nearly drove into him and his family. After reporting this to the police, an officer was tasked with the investigation. The complainant is unhappy that this case was closed as no further action and that the	Outside Schedule 3	Not clear what the outcome of this complaint was. PSD stated that the complaint will be sent to Supervisor and an explanation will be provided to the complainant but no evidence of this being done.

		officer provided little information and was not in regular contact.		
3	Case 3	Complainant is a victim of domestic violence. Officer who was handling the case moved and assigned it to another officer. The complainant alleges that they had not heard anything from the new officer even after an advocate chasing a response.	Outside Schedule 3	Resolved quickly, supervisor contacted the complainant..
4	Case 4	The complainant was arrested and provided consent for house keys to be passed onto her family to enter the home. The complainant alleges that the Force refused to give the keys to her son and when she got home the puppies had deceased.	Outside Schedule 3	PSD attempted to make contact with the complainant through email and post, there was no response therefore no further action was taken.
5	Case 5	Complainant was bitten by a dog on a beach. The complainant states that the	Outside Schedule 3	Not clear if an acknowledgment was provided? - PSD confirmed that no acknowledgment was sent as the inspector responded quickly to the complainant.

		attack had happened a year ago with still no outcome from the police.		<p>Sergeant provided a response to PSD but there was no evidence of this being sent to the complainant?</p> <p>Enquiries made with PSD who confirmed that the Inspector contacted the complainant on the 23rd of June. They have since not received any further communication from the complainant.</p>
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August

	Complaint Reference	Complaint Summary	Handling Type	OPCC Observations
1	Case 1	Dispute regarding environmental offences for work on a chimney	Outside Schedule 3	Quick response from PSD. No concerns.
2	Case 2	Attended custody due to believing they were required for bail. Police advised this wasn't necessary therefore at a financial loss from travelling.	Outside Schedule 3	No update provided from supervisor handling complaint. Unknown what the outcome is.
3	Case 3	Drug consumption is happening publicly near where children are getting off the bus.	Outside Schedule 3	PSD have requested a response from a supervisor in Llandrindod Wells. No update was provided from the Police Sergeant to PSD, but complaint has been finalised.
4	Case 4	Delay in returning property	Outside Schedule 3	PSD had to chase for an update from supervisor but a letter had been sent to the complainant.
5	Case 5	Police have damaged phone and damaged garage during conducting an arrest.	Outside Schedule 3	Not suitable for the complaint process. Was redirected to legal services for the purposes of claiming compensation.

September

	Complaint Reference	Complaint Summary	Handling Type	OPCC Observations
1	Case 1	Various complaints made during telephone conversation with complainant, without specifying specifics. Complainant agreed to respond with specifics via email.	Outside Schedule 3	No response from the complainant.
2	Case 2	Reporting ex-partner for harassment. No contact and no updates from police	Outside Schedule 3	Best practice as there was a clear audit trail for the handling of the complaint which had been sent out to a supervisor to deal with informally. Apology was given to the complainant and matter resolved 18/06/2024
3	Case 3	Concerns with regards to police attending the complainant's home without rationale.	Outside Schedule 3	Reassurance, explanation and apology provided in the acknowledgment email from PSD.

4	Case 4	Lack of police action towards neighbour dispute/harassment	Outside Schedule 3	No Correspondence from complainant. From reviewing the enquiries, it would appear officers involved provided an update to complainant informally.
5	Case 5	Unhappy with the manner of a police officer.	Outside Schedule 3	Body worn video shows the complainant as the aggressor and used a derogative comment of homophobic language directed at the officers. Officers were considered to have handled politely and patiently.

PSD Comments

PSD welcomes the latest Complaints Dip Sampling Report from the Police and Crime Commissioner, which provides useful feedback and a fresh perspective. This is beneficial in our continuing commitment to learning and improvement.

The overall positive feedback is welcomed and PSD are grateful for the recognition of the decision making that goes into the assessment and handling of complaints.

Areas for improvement are noted and we are continually monitoring and striving to improve. These have been taken on board by the department.

