

Ethics and Transparency Panel – Public Complaints

Author:	Deputy Chief Constable Michaela Kerr
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Subject:	Public Complaints

1. Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Force performance for dealing with public complaints during the period on Force performance in dealing with public complaints for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 (Quarter 4).

The report outlines identified good practice and highlights any emerging areas of concern in relation to how the Force deal with public complaints.

This data is taken from the IOPC Complaints and Information Bulletin for the reporting period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. It relates to complaint cases closed during the reporting period (data downloaded from the Force Centurion IT system).

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board:

- Notes the content of this report
- Notes the continuing positive organisational performance when handling public complaints.

3. Background:

In 2025/2026, the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) reported that the number of police complaints recorded in England and Wales increased to 108,988, representing a rise on the previous reporting year. This increase reflects a combination of contributory factors, including heightened public awareness, the advent of Artificial Intelligence (AI), and willingness to report concerns following several high-profile cases involving police officers.

In addition, improvements in complaint recording practices and greater transparency in how police forces manage, and report complaints have also influenced the rise in recorded figures.

Panel members of the ETP currently undertake quarterly dip-sampling exercises, during which they review complaints to assess whether they have been handled appropriately and in accordance with police policies and procedures.

During the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026, a total of 66 complaints were reviewed by panel members.

4. Organisational Structures

Leicestershire Police Professional Standards Department is made up of 4 distinct functions: Public Complaints, Conduct, Counter-Corruption and Vetting units.

The Public Complaints team is overseen by a dedicated Complaints and Discipline Manager, Mick Gamble, reporting directly into the Head of the Professional Standards Department, Detective Superintendent Nicole Main.

Both Detective Superintendent Main and Complaints manager, have specific responsibilities and authority levels set by the nationally Approved Professional Practice for the Standards of Professional Behaviour and have attended the requisite national training and accreditation requirements. Both individuals have delegated responsibility to act as the Appropriate Authority.

Due to the sensitivity, impact and levels of decision making required in managing our responsibilities and expectations around Professional Standards, the department sits within the Deputy Chief Constable's portfolio.

When a complaint is received by the force, it can be handled in the following ways:

- An allegation can be handled informally (outside of Schedule 3 of the Police Reform Act 2002) or formally handled under Schedule 3
- Schedule 3 allegations can be handled without investigation OR by investigation.
- Where handled by investigation this may be subject to 'special procedures' (meaning that a finding of a case to answer for misconduct may be found)
- If not subject to special procedures, a finding of the service provided being acceptable

5. Force Performance 1st April 2025 – 31st March 2026:

5.1 Review of public complaints made to Leicestershire Police

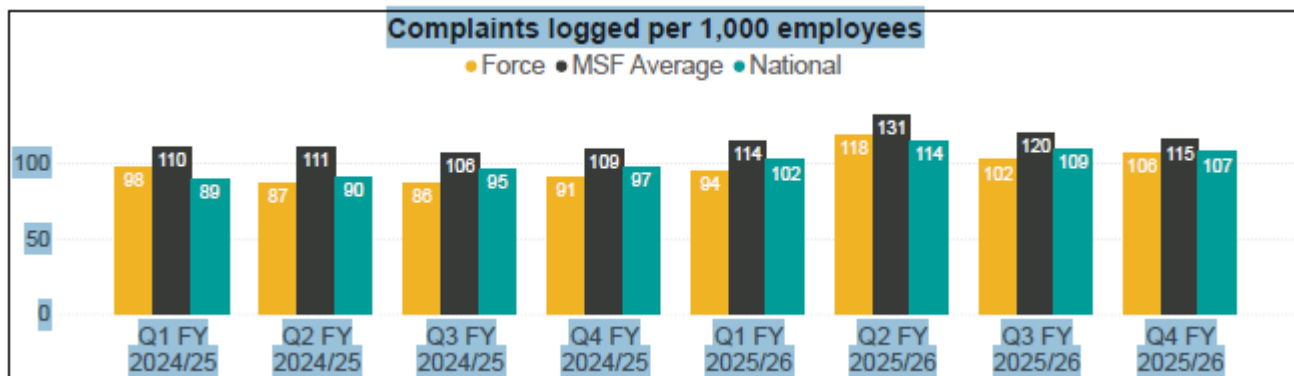
Leicestershire Police recorded an increase of in public complaints for the financial year 25/26.

The numbers of public complaint cases recorded by Leicestershire Police over the last 3 years are as follows:

Year	Number of Complaints	Percentage Change
2023/24 Q4	1522	27.4%
2024/25 Q4	1537	0.9%
2025/26 Q4	1731	11%

This was in line with the nationally recorded increase in complaints received by forces, which stood at 11%.

The chart below outlines the number of **complaints** recorded by Leicestershire police per 1000 employees compared to the most similar forces grouping and national average. This shows Leicestershire police is consistently below MSF averages and just below National average.



5.2 Review of Allegations made to Leicestershire Police

It is important to note that within each complaint submitted there can be multiple allegations. Each complaint case may have one or more allegations attached to it. A complainant may make additional allegations during the progress of their case. Allegations are added to the centurion records as soon as practicable, and verification takes place when the case is closed.

The number of allegations recorded over the past 3 years are as follows:

Year	Number of Allegations	Percentage Change
2023/24 Q4	3085	21.6%
2024/25 Q4	2976	- 3.5%
2025/26 Q4	3356	11%

Nationally there has been an 11% increase in allegations for Quarter 4 2025/26. Leicestershire Police have experienced an 11% rise in allegations.

5.3 Review of Top 5 Category of Allegations

The top 5 most recorded categories of **allegations** by the force were as follows:

	Allegation	2025/2026 Q4 data
1	Delivery of duties and service	1818 (54%)
2	Police powers, policies and procedures	680 (20%)
3	Individual Behaviours	453 (13%)

4	Handling of or damage to property/premises	137 (4%)
5	Discriminatory Behaviours	113 (3%)

This table suggests that 54% of all allegations made during 2025/26 were recorded in the “**Delivery of duties and service**” category. This category includes sub-categories of Police Action following contact, Decisions, General level of service and Information. This demonstrates that the significant percentage of public complaints are relation to the service provided as opposed to individual behaviours. This figure is comparable to the same period last year (52%). The proportions listed in the table above mirror the national trends, with delivery of duties and service accounting for 54%.

5.4 Review Of Top 3 National Factors

Complaint factors capture the situational context of the dissatisfaction expressed in a complaint.

Each allegation should have a single category selected. However, multiple factors can be selected on a single allegation. Therefore, the sum of factors will not equal the total allegations logged in each category. This data is used to inform the environments / circumstances where complaints are being made.

	Factor	Force 2023/24 Q4	Force 2024/25 Q4	Force 2025/26 Q4
1	Investigation	1287	1054	2034
2	Arrest	345	252	317
3	None			306
4	Custody	213	226	243

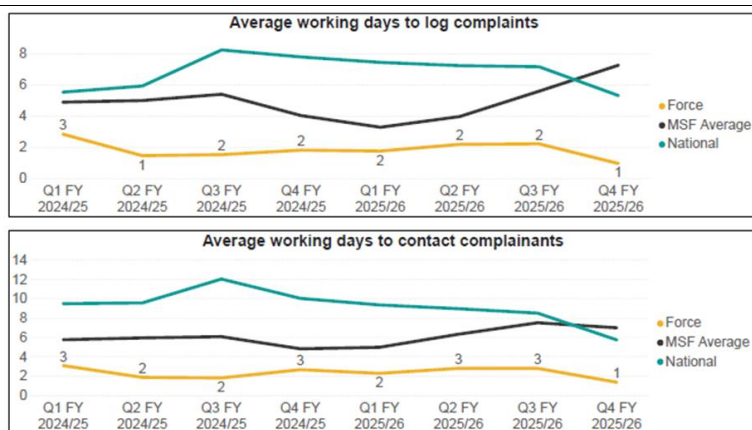
This shows that the highest number of allegations arise from the criminal investigations conducted by the force. There has been a significant increase of the use of this factor in 25/26 Q4 period in comparison to the previous 2 years..

5.5 Review of Time Taken to Log Complaint

Table shows the time taken (days) from the initial receipt of a complaint to when it is formally logged as a complaint by PSD.

	Force	MSF (Most Similar Force)	National
2023/24	2	7	5
2024/25	2	5	7
2025/26	2	5	7

The below charts demonstrate force performance visually against MSF and National for both logging the initial complaint and average days to contact complainant.



The force has continued to demonstrate consistent strong performance with regards to the interaction with complainants and timeliness of public complaint recording and initial contact and is consistently significantly outperforming both our MSF and National data.

5.6 Review of Time Taken to finalise allegations (days)

Depending on the seriousness of the allegations made, complaints can be dealt with by three main methods.

- Outside Schedule 3 – For lower-level complaints and service recovery
- Under Schedule 3 - For more serious complaints that require a broader range of enquiries and responses from persons subject to the complaint.
- Under Schedule 3 Investigation– For the most serious, challenging, complex and multi-faceted complaints which have been referred to the IOPC or may include an indication of misconduct by persons subject to the complaint.

The charts below present the time it takes the force to finalise allegations by how they were handled. The force should contact the complainant and log (record) the complaint as soon as possible after the complaint has been raised (see performance recorded at point 5.5).

Handling method	Force	SPLY	MSF Average	National
Outside of Schedule 3	7	9	21	22
Under Schedule 3 - not subject to investigation	35	48	79	104
Under Schedule 3 - by local investigation	139	156	196	225
Under Schedule 3 - by directed investigation	0	0	0	48
Under Schedule 3 - by independent investigation	0	235	203	338

Table 6 shows a positive performance against MSF and National. Most public complaints are handled under schedule 3 (not investigation) which are completed within 35 days on average which also includes the statutory 28-day review period. Force performance in terms of timeliness has improved across all handling methods when compared to SPLY.

5.7 Review of allegation outcomes

The section outlines outcome and performance data with regards to public complaints across Q4 (2025/26).

This section presents actions taken on allegations (multiple actions can be selected, where appropriate, on single allegation). As more than one action can be selected for a single allegation, the sum of all percentages will not equal 100%.

For those complaints recorded outside of schedule 3 allegations (dealt with informally and does not trigger the full legal process) 518 allegations were resolved in this way (16%). These are either 'resolved' or 'not resolved' This is significantly below the MSF and National average at 44 and 45% respectively.

The chart below indicates that for 89% of the allegations finalised, an explanation is offered this is significantly higher than the national average. This is viewed positively by the IOPC and is in part due to work and guidance provided to manager / CMD / AIU departments to support dealing with expressions of dissatisfaction at source. This is a healthy organisational culture and supports the public receiving an explanation / resolution at the earliest opportunity.

Measure Actions on allegations outside of Schedule 3	Force		SPLY		MSF Average		National	
	Allegations finalised	Percent	Allegations finalised	Percent	Allegations finalised	Percent	Allegations finalised	Percent
Explanation	461	89%	441	85%	1,383	71%	53,643	65%
Learning from reflection	24	5%	41	8%	122	6%	2,278	3%
Goodwill gesture	18	3%	12	2%	5	0%	178	0%
Organisational learning	10	2%	5	1%	26	1%	337	0%
Apology	5	1%	16	3%	162	8%	6,731	8%
Debrief					15	1%	1,041	1%
No further action					151	8%	10,053	12%
Other action			3	1%	87	4%	7,757	9%
Policy review					3	0%	56	0%
Total	518	100%	518	100%	1,954	100%	82,074	100%

For those complaints recorded under Schedule 3 (dealt with formally, triggers the full legal process and right to review). The finding will either be 'service acceptable' / 'service unacceptable' "Unable to determine whether service provided was acceptable".

The below chart details that 80% of those recorded inside schedule 3 receive an explanation as an outcome. This has been consistent over the last 2 years data and significantly above National performance.

Measure Actions on Schedule 3 allegations	Force		SPLY		MSF Average		National	
	Allegations finalised	Percent	Allegations finalised	Percent	Allegations finalised	Percent	Allegations finalised	Percent
Explanation	2,238	80%	2,103	81%	1,768	71%	66,183	65%
No further action	263	9%	191	7%	393	16%	17,733	17%
Learning from reflection	230	8%	215	8%	149	6%	5,525	5%
Organisational learning	56	2%	38	1%	27	1%	943	1%
Apology	21	1%	20	1%	102	4%	4,131	4%
Others	5	0%	10	0%	52	2%	1,155	1%
Misconduct proceedings	1	0%			2	0%	157	0%
Debrief					0	0%	4,219	4%
Referral to RPRP			20	1%	13	1%	1,328	1%
Total	2,814	100%	2,597	100%	2,505	100%	101,374	100%

Leicestershire has a significantly lower 'no further action' outcome. Those included in this number are vexatious, abuse of process, no consent. There is limited opportunity to affect this figure.

For all of the allegations for the force recorded within schedule 3, either not investigated or investigated result in 83% and 84% findings respectively of service acceptable.

5.8 Review of Appeal rate

Leicestershire experience a lower than national local policing body (LPB) appeal rate (14% for Leicestershire compared to 23% national). This indicates that Leicestershire PSD complaint team have good assessment and performance in the initial handling of the complaint when compared to MSF and National.

The table below presents information about the decisions made on reviews for LPB and IOPC. When a review finds that the outcome of the complaint was not reasonable and proportionate, that review is 'upheld'.

Q4 – LPB Reviews	Force	SPLY	MSF (Most Similar Force)	National
Investigation	2	0	3	282
Non-Investigation	164	163	138	4413
UPHELD	2	7	22	944

Q4 – IOPC Review	Force	SPLY	MSF (Most Similar Force)	National
Investigation	17	9	29	1152
Non-Investigation	29	31	32	2121
UPHELD	5	7	17	882

The force total reviews submitted to the relevant body is 212. This equates to 12% (nationally 7.3%) of all complaints logged. Those upheld are 0.4% (Nationally 1.6%) of all complaints logged and 3% (Nationally 11%) of all total reviews submitted.

6. Identified Good Practice:

Overall, the data presented for 2025/26 suggests that the force is providing a consistently good service to the public in relation for the timely, fair recording of public complaints, performing well in relation to the length of investigation and providing a comprehensive and satisfactory outcome to the complaint recorded. This is evidenced by the data presented, lower than average appeal rate and further supported by the ETPs findings when independently conducting dip sample reviews on complaint investigations.

An area of positive practice identified throughout the latest financial year has been the improvement of the recording of factors applied to the allegations. The percentage of 'None' has reduced from 39% to 9% when comparing the same period of the previous year – this suggests the Force is much better placed to deeper understand the situational context around complaints. This improvement is also leading the way from a national and similar force's perspective.

Measure type Factor	Force		SPLY		MSF Average		National	
	Logged	%	Logged	%	Logged	%	Logged	%
Investigation	2,034	61%	1,054	35%	2,094	44%	73,421	39%
Arrest	317	9%	250	8%	534	11%	22,210	12%
None	306	9%	1,002	34%	843	18%	38,333	20%
Custody	243	7%	226	8%	262	6%	10,815	6%
Call Handling	142	4%	93	3%	225	5%	8,177	4%
VAWG - dissatisfaction handling	138	4%	95	3%	162	3%	8,309	4%
Domestic / gender abuse	132	4%	92	3%	260	6%	10,436	6%
Stop and/or search	116	3%	57	2%	87	2%	3,979	2%
Premises search	96	3%	94	3%	124	3%	4,962	3%
Mental health	52	2%	46	2%	102	2%	5,209	3%
Child protection / CSA / CSE	43	1%	18	1%	81	2%	3,496	2%
Restraint equipment	32	1%	27	1%	51	1%	1,756	1%
Roads/traffic	31	1%	27	1%	231	5%	11,324	6%
Neighbourhood policing	27	1%	27	1%	235	5%	8,171	4%
Missing persons	18	1%	18	1%	29	1%	1,194	1%
Drugs / alcohol	15	0%	11	0%	35	1%	1,991	1%
Public order incident	13	0%	2	0%	27	1%	1,348	1%
Death	9	0%	34	1%	36	1%	1,616	1%
	7	0%	3	0%	18	0%	1,626	1%
Social media	7	0%	7	0%	18	0%	890	0%
VAWG - police perpetrated	3	0%	2	0%	22	0%	827	0%
Covert policing	2	0%			2	0%	79	0%
Taser	2	0%	3	0%	4	0%	189	0%
Fraud	1	0%			17	0%	1,447	1%
VAWG - police victim	1	0%			7	0%	161	0%
Firearms			13	0%	25	1%	875	0%
Hate Crime			2	0%	18	0%	836	0%
Police dogs or horses					2	0%	115	0%
PPDA					6	0%	168	0%
PPDA - Police victim					0	0%	5	0%
Prejudicial and improper behaviour					0	0%	29	0%
Serious injury			1	0%	6	0%	352	0%

7. Emerging areas of concern:

7.1. Whilst cases where discrimination of any factor is a recorded category against an allegation are low 113 recorded out of 3356 (3%) an emerging area of concern for the Force is in relation to the increase in recorded disability discrimination allegations (26/113 = 23%). This has doubled when compared to SPLY (11%).

This includes any issue where an element of discrimination was involved or was perceived to be involved. It also includes any instances where the possible discriminatory behaviour is identified by the person receiving, recording, or investigating a complaint. Complaints in this category can be organisational or can be about individual behaviour.

The recorded factors associated with disability discrimination has increased from 12% to 26% when compared to the previous year. This does however more closely align with the national proportion (22%) and still relates to relatively low volumes (equating to 0.8% of all allegation factors recorded).

7.2 Complaints and associated allegation continue to rise at a steady rate- this trend has continued into the first 2 months of 26/27. The advent of AI being used by those submitting complaints is adding complexity and volume to submissions. This is a sustained issue rather than an emerging one.

8. Summary

The number of public complaints (and allegations contained) submitted remains on an upward trajectory. Departmental capacity and capability, if complaints continue to rise, has the potential to undermine the Force's ability to meet its statutory requirements to handle public complaints. This would need to be addressed in line with the FMS highlighted risk areas. Should this start to outstrip resource the timeliness of resolution will increase likely to have a negative impact on the trust and confidence in the service provided.

Leicestershire Police Complaint handling team continues to demonstrate a high level of performance when benchmarked against MSF and National data in terms of timeliness of logging and handling of complaints.