



Work Area	Governance and Performance
Marking	Official
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Purpose	Ethics & Transparency Panel – Annual Complaints Reviews update

Purpose of Report

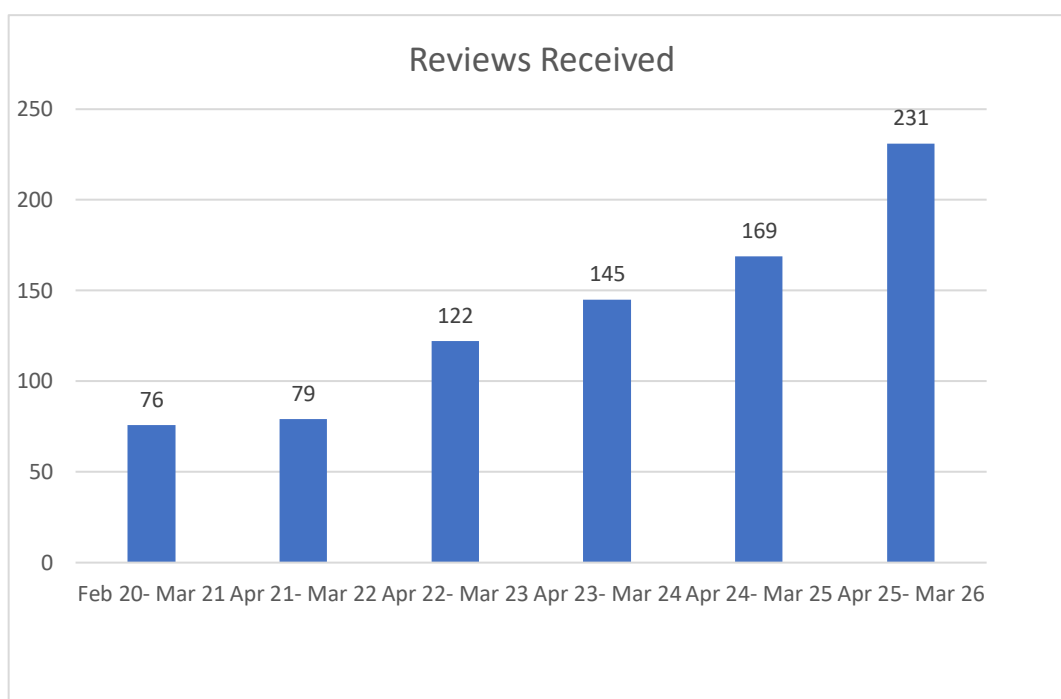
1. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the work that the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) has completed in relation to complaint reviews which have been submitted to the OPCC following the outcome that has been provided by the Professional Standards Department (PSD).
2. The report outlines the number of reviews received, timeliness, recommendations, learning and feedback which have been identified, through this work.

Background

3. Since 01 February 2020, Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) have taken on responsibility for handling requests for a complaint review from complainants who were dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint made against the police.

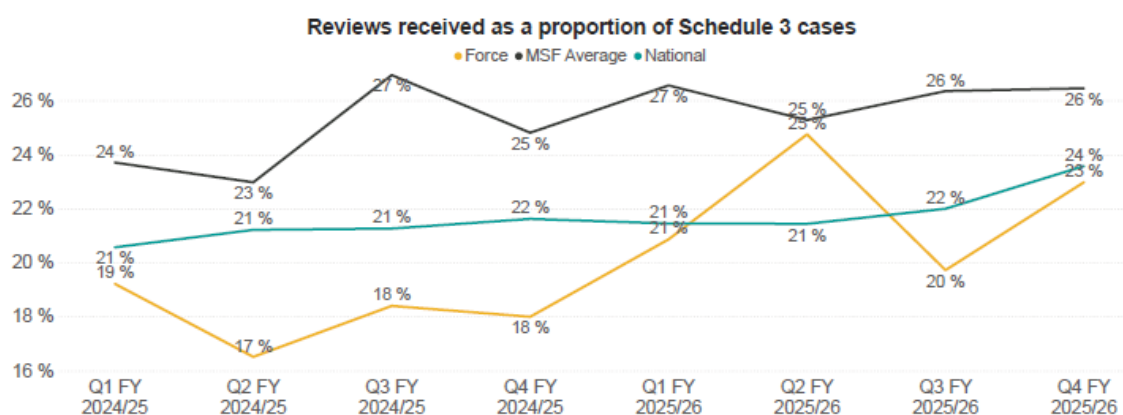
4. This change in responsibility was encompassed in the Police and Crime Act 2017. The Act provides for PCC's to be the review body for reviews previously heard by the Chief Constable for complaints against the police, thereby bringing independence to the process.
5. The review process allows for the PCC to determine whether the handling of the complaint and the outcome determined is reasonable and proportionate.
6. If the PCC believes that the force's actions were either unreasonable or disproportionate, they can make a recommendation, identify learning or provide feedback, which is then sent back to the Force to implement.
7. In the OPCC, the complaints reviews are processed by members of the Governance Team with the decision maker for all reviews being the Director of Governance and Performance.

Number of complaint reviews received



8. The number of complaint reviews which were received in the OPCC since the introduction of the review process in February 2020, has increased year on year. Between February 2020 - March 2021, 76 reviews were received increasing year on year to 231 complaint reviews received between April 2025 - March 2026. This is a 204% increase in the number of complaint reviews which have been received since 2020 by the OPCC.
9. This is reflective of the increase seen across all OPCCs and correlates to the increase of public complaints received across England and Wales.

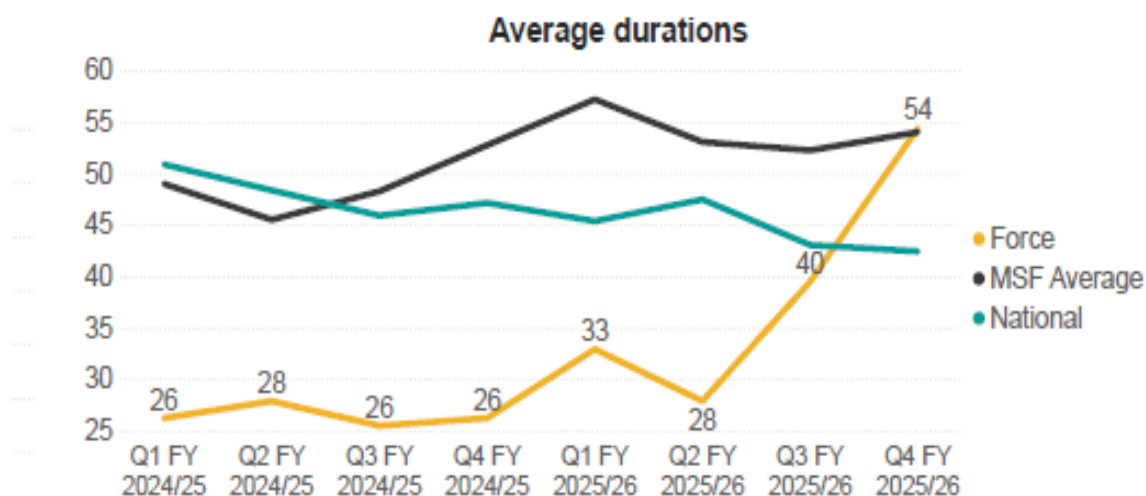
10. The chart below provides an indication of how often reviews were received in comparison to the number of complaints received, for the period 01 April 2025 – 31 March 2026.



11. Following an increase in reviews received, this trend has remained consistent with an average of 57 reviews received each quarter in 2025/2026, compared to 42 reviews received on average for the same period in 2024/2025.

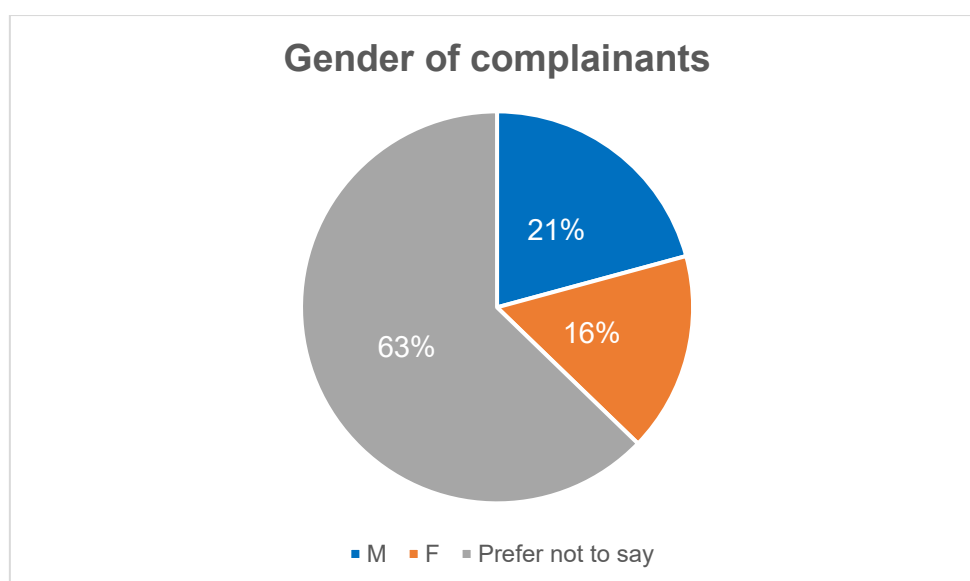
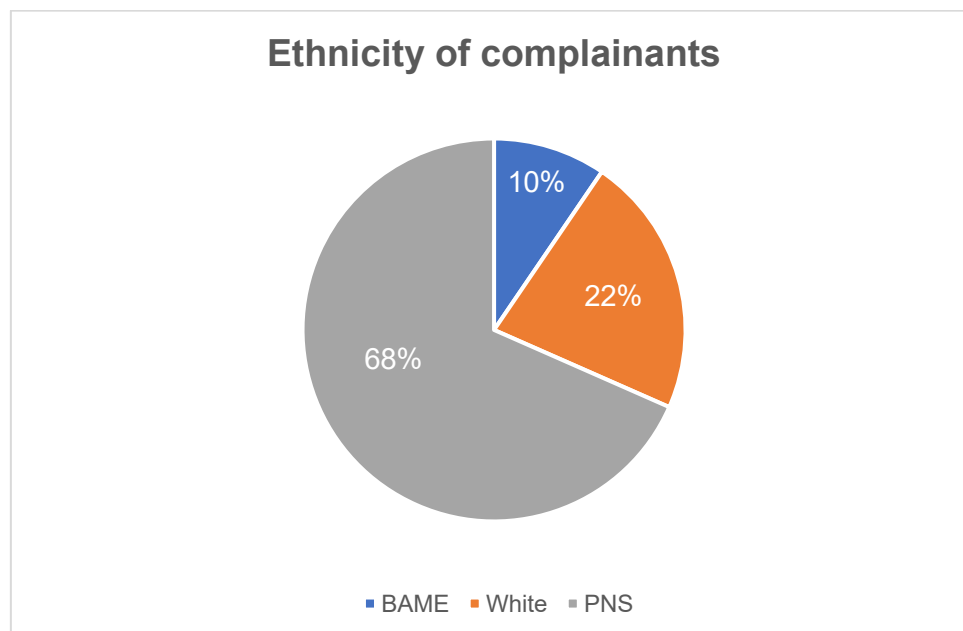
Timeliness of complaints reviews

12. The number of days to complete a review has been measured as part of the Independent Office of Police Conduct (IOPC) statistics since 2020 and compared to the National statistics and the average number of days recorded by the Most Similar Force (MSF) (Bedfordshire, Essex, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Kent, Leicestershire Nottinghamshire, Sussex).
13. The Most Similar Force groups are determined by the Home Office and are based on an analysis of demographic, social and economic characteristics relating to crime.



14. The average duration is measured from the time taken between when the complaint is received by PSD until the review is completed by the OPCC.
15. Between the period 01 April 2025 -31 March 2026, the average number of working days to complete a complaint review by the OPCC was 37 days, compared to 27 days during the same period the year before. The average number of days to complete a review recorded in the MSF was 54 days and the national average was 44 days for the same period.
16. Whilst there has been an increase in the number of reviews received the OPCC performance in the area has remained strong with the duration still below that of the national average and MSF.

Gender and Ethnicity of the complainants April 25 - March 26

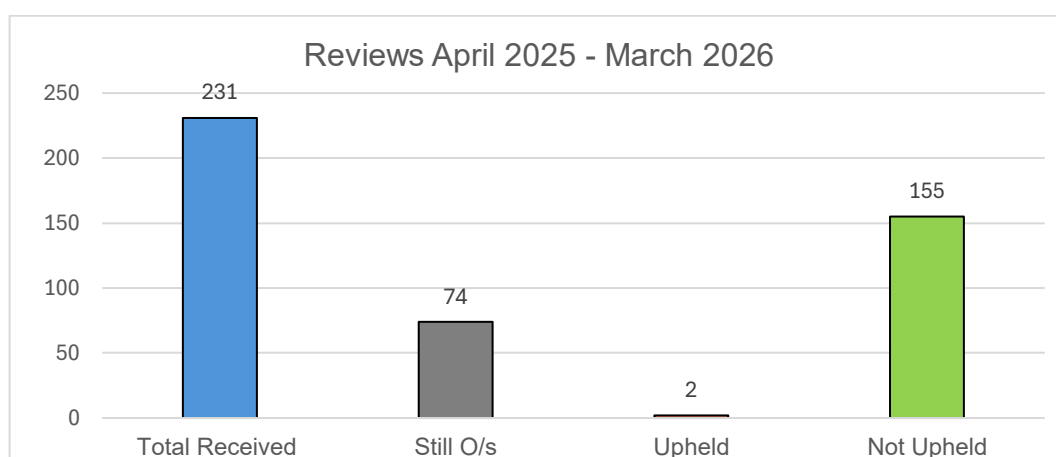


17. Between April 2025 - March 2026 there were 231 reviews received of those 22% complainants identified themselves as White British/White other, 10% complainants identified themselves as BAME and 68% of complainants preferred not to say.

18. With respect to gender, 21% of complaints identified themselves as male, 16% of the complainants identified themselves as female and 63% of complainant preferred not to say.

Outcomes of complaint reviews April 25 - March 26

19. The chart below provides an overview of the outcomes of complaints reviews. Of the 231 reviews received between April 2025 - March 2026, 2 were upheld, 155 were not upheld and 74 were still waiting to be reviewed.
20. Not upheld rates have remained consistently high with the determination made that the outcome provided by the complaint handler was reasonable and proportionate, following the review process.
21. This follows the Forces own outcomes with 85% of complaints found to be service acceptable.



Recommendations and Learning April 25 - March 26

22. Following the outcome of a complaint review, the OPCC can make recommendations, identify learning or feedback for individuals or the organisation. These are then implemented by the Force. Between April 2025 - March 2026, the following recommendations and learnings were made:

COMPLAINT REFERENCE	RECOMMENDATIONS
CO/00410/25	The complainant is contacted by a member of the Fraud Team or another person to address the matters that he has raised in his e-mails dated 18 June 2025 and 02 July 2025. The complainant is provided with clarity on if this matter has been transferred to Bedfordshire Police, and if not then why not. If the complainant has already been provided with these updates, then these are added to the Niche Occurrence Report. Learning is issued to the updating party to ensure that Police records are updated in a timely manner.
CO/01145/25	A recommendation is made that the matter is returned to PSD, and steps are taken to address the concerns raised by the complainant that the Officer was not acting impartially and a response is provided to the complainant.

COMPLAINTS REFERENCE	LEARNING/FEEDBACK
CO/01125/24	Learning has been identified for the officer that when issuing Community Resolutions, he engages with the victim and records their views on the use of this outcome.
CO/01465/24	Feedback has been provided to PSD, who have escalated this matter to the officer's supervisor to ensure that the recording of the incident dated 30 January 2025 is completed and the complainant is engaged.
CO/00566/25	Feedback provided to the complaint handler that the Complaint Handler's plan should be accurate.

CO/00988/25	Organisational Feedback to all complaint handlers to ensure that all CCTV/Ring doorbell footage (digital media) is reviewed/requested to address the complaint.
CO/00915/25	Feedback to complaint handler to ensure that the preferred method of contact is used in order to gain further details about the complaint.
CO/01390/25	A review of the current policy and processes to be completed by the lead for this area surrounding the delivery of death messages should be undertaken to ensure officers tasked with this duty are fully supported and appropriately equipped. In addition, the review should reinforce clarity around the circumstances in which a Family Liaison Officer (FLO) is required, ensuring all officers are aware of this threshold and their responsibilities. Consideration should be given to providing officers with clear, accessible information and materials outlining available support services, as well as details of the Coroner's Office. This information could be made available in the form of leaflets or other suitable materials that can be handed to, or left with, bereaved individuals at the time.

Conclusions

23. The number of complainants who have requested review of their complaint has increased since the introduction of the 2020 regulations. This increase is a trend across all OPCC and is linked to the increase in complaints which have been recorded by PSDs across the country.
24. The expectation is that these numbers will increase with complainant now being able to access the complaints system more easily.

25. Where learning or recommendations have been identified by the OPCC, these have been acted upon quickly by PSD and where relevant has helped to shape policies and procedures within the Force.
26. It is a key pledge by the PCC to increase public confidence in the Force. Part of this work is supported by ETP panel members who take part in dip sampling of complaints, with a total of 66 complaints having been reviewed by panel members between 01 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.
27. By scrutinising complaints which have been submitted the Force, the PCC is able to identify where there is more work to do through the review process and implement change through learning and recommendations. This provides reassurance to the complainant that the Force is providing a fair and accessible complaints service to everyone.