

OVERSIGHT

newsletter

Welcome to our monthly newsletter which provides updates about the work of the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC). The newsletter is for complaint handlers in forces and local policing bodies (LPBs).

Learning the Lessons 40 (abuse of position) feedback survey

In May, we published Learning the Lessons 40 on abuse of position for sexual purpose (APSP). We've launched a short feedback survey to gather your views on it and help to support the development of future issues. The survey takes just 5-10 minutes and you can complete it here: [Learning the Lessons 40 \(abuse of position\) \(smartsurvey.co.uk\)](https://smartsurvey.co.uk) We would be grateful if you could complete the survey by 31 August 2022.

Recent information

Complaint handler workshops summary report

We recently shared the [Complaint handler workshop - summary report](#) and slides from the IOPC workshops that PSDs and Model 2/3 LPBs attended in February and March 2022. The report provides an overview of our findings and next steps.

The workshops provided us with a better understanding of how complaint handling is working on the ground and we will work on addressing the issues we collectively identified. In the report, you can see what those next steps will look like. We will focus on the themes found around taking no further action with complaints.

If you did not receive a copy of the workshop presentation, please email Oversight@policeconduct.gov.uk. The slides were correct as of March 2022. While the case studies have no real right or wrong answer, they were designed to prompt discussion during the workshops.

Updated guidance for police witnesses

In July 2022, we published updated non-statutory [Guidance for police witnesses in IOPC investigations](#) effective from 13 July 2022, on our website. This is an updated and expanded version of the guidance we issued in February 2020, following the introduction of an explicit duty of co-operation under the Standards of Professional Behaviour, as part of the existing standard of 'Duties and Responsibilities'.

The updated guidance still covers what police witnesses can expect from IOPC investigations, and what the IOPC expects from witnesses, but it sets out in more detail what we think co-operation means and what we will do if we think witnesses are not co-operating. It also contains practical guidance about when statements should be taken in person and when they can be done virtually, how they should be recorded, and when written statements may be appropriate.

The guidance should not be read as making any comment on the extent to which police witnesses currently co-operate with IOPC investigations; rather it sets out what we consider co-operation to look like in general terms, and what police witnesses can expect from us. The early provision of sufficiently detailed witness accounts is key to our completing timely and robust investigations, which is in the interests of everyone. We hope this guidance will provide greater clarity about our expectations and what police witnesses may expect from us.

If you have any questions about the updated guidance, please contact Oversight@policeconduct.gov.uk

Request to suspend a complaint form

The Metropolitan Police Service implemented a form for investigators and complaint handlers to complete, to request authority for a complaint (or recordable conduct matter) to be suspended under Regulation 40 the *Police (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2020*. The form guides the user through the process and prompts relevant considerations, including consultation with the Crown Prosecution Service. The form includes a field to provide background information and an overview in support of suspending the case. Fields then capture justification and rationale as to why handling/investigating each individual allegation 'would' significantly prejudice criminal proceedings.

The form can ensure that the correct process is followed and that cases are only suspended in the appropriate circumstances. A copy of the form is attached to this Newsletter. If you have any questions or want to find out more information, please contact Oversight@policeconduct.gov.uk

? Common questions from forces and LPBs

Q: If a conduct referral is made to the IOPC and then during the course of the local investigation, additional subjects and conduct comes to light that is similar to the original conduct referred, are we required to submit further referrals or can this form part of the existing conduct investigation?

A: If additional subjects and further conduct are identified during the course of an investigation, the appropriate authority should make individual assessments on whether a new subject's conduct meets the definition of a recordable conduct matter, and consider making a fresh recording for each new subject(s). If the mandatory referral criteria applies, a new referral to the IOPC will be required. For instance, when additional officers are later identified as part of a WhatsApp group for sending discriminatory messages. If referable, the IOPC will then determine the appropriate mode of investigation for each subject and conduct matter. This applies regardless of the original mode of investigation determination.

Corporate news

IOPC recommendations on stop and search accepted by the College of Policing and NPCC

The College of Policing and the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) agreed to take steps to improve the use of stop and search – including tackling its disproportionate use on people from Black, Asian and other ethnic minority backgrounds - following recommendations that we issued earlier this year.

We published a report in April that identified a wide range of national learning aimed at improving policing practice so that people from Black, Asian, or other ethnic minority backgrounds are safeguarded from stop and searches that are influenced by stereotyping and bias. We welcome the College of Policing and NPCC's acceptance of all 15 recommendations.

In response to our recommendation to commission research into the trauma caused predominantly to people from ethnic minority backgrounds, including children and young people, the College of Policing will carry out a national survey to explore young people's experiences of police-initiated contact, including stop and search.

Both organisations agreed to identify and address disproportionality in the use of force through training and community scrutiny. The College of Policing also developed a new two-day training curriculum to address issues around de-escalation. The training has already started in some areas and all forces are expecting to complete it by late 2023.

Read the [full media release on our website](#).

IOPC recommends changes to Dorset Police missing person policy following tragic death of Gaia Pope-Sutherland

Following the tragic death of Gaia Pope-Sutherland, recommendations from IOPC investigations have led to significant changes in Dorset Police's policies and procedures on missing persons.

The young woman was reported missing by a family member in November 2017 Dorset. Her body was discovered in dense undergrowth on a cliff top by police search teams on 11 days later.

In November 2018, while the investigation was still under way, we recommended that Dorset Police review their missing person policy and procedure immediately, review their Missing Person Risk Assessment training for consistency and quality decision-making, and formulate Memorandums of Understanding with relevant partner agencies and stakeholders.

At the end of our investigation, we made more recommendations that they amend their policy to include a category for people who are missing due to illness or injury, add guidance on asking the public to review home CCTV footage, and remind all officers that Niche (a police record keeping system) must be used for missing person enquiries.

Dorset Police adopted our recommendations and findings in full and has made significant changes, including setting up joint training sessions with other emergency services and volunteer rescue organisations.

Read the [full media release on our website](#).

Latest news

Keep up to date on our investigations and other work to increase public confidence in the police complaints system. You can find our [latest IOPC news](#) on our website.

[Cambridgeshire detective in court on racially aggravated public order charge](#)

[Former Leicestershire Police PCSO would have been dismissed for gross misconduct after inappropriate contact with a woman](#)

[Investigation concludes following fatal pursuit by Manchester Police officers](#)

[Investigation under way following man's death after contact with Devon & Cornwall Police](#)

[Investigation into Lancashire Constabulary's contact with missing woman before her death](#)

[MPS to apologise for failings in the investigation of a missing person](#)

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If you have any questions, please get in touch with your Oversight Liaison or a member of the Oversight team.

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