



Quality Strategy

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Introduction

The Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) has been given more resources to significantly increase the number of investigations we undertake. This goes back to the roots of why we were set up – to ensure that the police do not police themselves but are held to account by an independent body. Growth, to meet the Home Secretary's target of our dealing with all serious and sensitive referrals, is unprecedented. At the same time, we are also seeking to ensure that the police complaints system itself is reformed to make it simpler and more accessible, and we have recognised the need for revised governance arrangements for the IPCC with a single line of accountability.

Just increasing the number of investigations we undertake will not achieve our greater goal of improving public confidence in the police complaints system; we also need to maintain, and in some areas improve, the timeliness and quality of our work as we expand. We need to ensure that quality is at the heart of our Change programme, that we look critically not just at what we do but also at the way that we do it, to enable us to make the change we need.

We are already making considerable efforts to improve quality, for example, through our target operating model, the Change programme, our Knowledge and Information Management Strategy and our Learning and Development Strategy. To become a true learning organisation, with continuous improvement at its heart, all of this work needs to add up to more than the sum of its constituent parts – it needs to deliver cultural change, so that every problem is seen as an opportunity to improve. There are cultural barriers to change. Reporting must be fully transparent without a fear of delivering bad news and we need the maturity to give and receive feedback and act accordingly. In an organisation of scale, we must follow lean processes which are recognised as best practice, or explain any deviation. We also need to develop a cadre of future leaders who believe in 'how' as much as 'what'.

We need to encourage and support staff through the process, to listen to their concerns and address them. We should create short-term wins, and celebrate successes, so that people internally and externally can see the path we are on and the progress we are making. We need to monitor and evaluate progress and correct our course if necessary.

This Quality Strategy is intended as a short, simple, user-friendly distillation of the key principles contained within the work which we are already undertaking across the IPCC; to act as a ready reference for anyone seeking to understand our improvement journey.

To deliver a quality strategy successfully, we must become a learning organisation with a focus on continuous improvement, as set out in our target operating model. Commissioners, and staff at every level, must be empowered to challenge the system whenever they think it can operate more effectively. In short, we must all 'believe in better'.

Strategic quality standards

We have already adopted ten high-level strategic quality standards, which remain sound and should be the basis against which all of our work is measured.

IPCC strategic quality standards

1. We are polite, helpful, and accessible. We try to understand the key issues and the outcomes that people want; set and meet realistic timescales and keep them updated on progress; and explain our decisions.
2. We communicate effectively, by writing and speaking in good, plain English, taking account of the needs of the reader/listener, including showing empathy to those who are distressed.
3. We ensure access to the complaints system for all, and assist those who have difficulty in understanding the complaints system, or our decisions.
4. We set clear frames of reference for our work, minimise delay, focus on the key points, and take full and proper account of all the available and relevant evidence.
5. We understand and correctly apply the relevant law, policies and guidelines, and use our powers appropriately, including keeping information and evidence safe.
6. We set out the evidence we have found clearly and show how we have come to our conclusions. Where they require action, we follow through and make sure that changes happen.
7. We aim to learn from what we do, and continuously improve our practice, including paying attention to criticism, apologising for our mistakes, and doing our best to put them right.
8. We publish information on the operation of the police complaints system, which is accurate, up to date, accessible, useful and easy to understand.
9. We conduct research and produce analysis that reflects significant areas of public concern and has a positive impact on improving policing or the operation of the police complaints system.
10. We engage effectively with all stakeholders to enhance their trust in the IPCC to deliver just outcomes, and we test the quality of our interactions.

These strategic quality standards will be actively communicated, internally and externally, with renewed vigour to make sure that the focus on quality across the IPCC is widely understood and to form the bedrock of the more detailed work that must follow, to translate these high-level outcomes into a meaningful day-to-day delivery.

Delivery approach

The most common feedback that we receive from stakeholders, both internal and external, is focused around the timeliness and quality of our work. The feedback confirms that we should focus on defining excellence, identifying whether we are delivering excellence and always trying to improve the quality of what we do.

Therefore, we need to adopt the following principles:

- make clear what we mean by quality and how it will be measured, monitored and reported;
- make sure we get things right the first time; issuing guidance to staff which is clear and simple so that there is no doubt what is expected;
- identify 'never' events, which would compromise quality to the extent that there should be a proactive focus on eliminating them entirely;
- put our people at the heart of all that we do and develop meaningful partnerships with them to improve our work;
- listen carefully to feedback from all stakeholders and make sure that we learn how we can do better and then tell them what action we have taken;
- develop a culture in which the pursuit of continuous improvement is both encouraged and expected;
- take a holistic whole systems approach, where we feed learning back into the wider system to enhance confidence in it overall;
- recognise when external bodies are inextricably linked to our quality agenda and work with those bodies to ensure a shared understanding of quality expectations, particularly at points of handover;
- support and enable our staff to deliver the highest possible output by empowering them to monitor and reflect on their own performance and always be trying to improve; and
- be clear how we will measure and share information about our quality performance and be open and transparent in our assessment of quality; because if we are not honest about the quality of our services, how will we know where to focus and improve?

These principles will support us in living our values to full the full. Our values are: justice and respect for human rights, independence, valuing diversity, integrity and openness.

To develop a learning organisation, with a culture underpinned by quality and continuous improvement, three areas of focus are critical; people, processes and standards.



1. People

We need to recruit the right people, based on their skills, values and behaviours; to train and continuously develop them to meet the required standards; to provide consistent, high-quality leadership and management to support them in delivering the best quality of service possible.

2. Processes

We need to fully understand our end-to-end business processes, standardise where possible and constantly seek opportunities to improve; define the key decision points together with the inputs, outputs and quality expectation for each; ensure a shared understanding of what good looks like at each stage, supporting our people by providing value-adding quality assurance and examples of best practice.

3. Standards

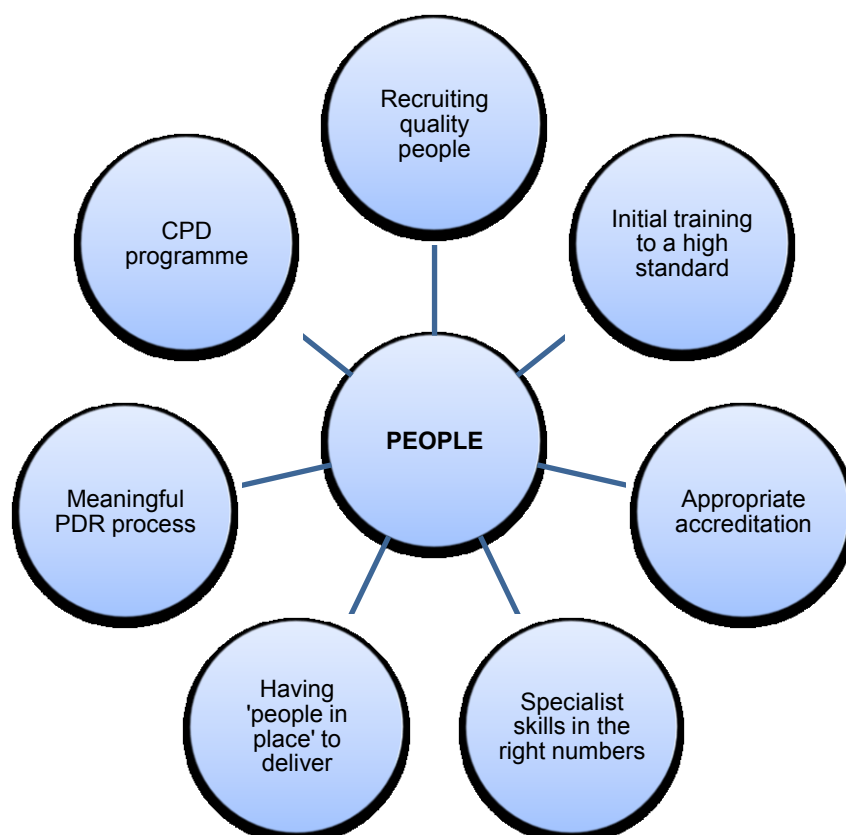
We need to have clearly defined standards to work to at each stage of the process and overall; to ensure line management and quality assurance mechanisms are in place to assure achievement of those standards through stretching but achievable measures and targets; to base our standards on thematic learning to improve consistency of approach.*

4. Learning

We need to develop a learning organisation where continuous improvement is embedded in the culture of the IPCC.

*N.B. in this context, 'standards' relate to the quality expectation at each stage of the process, rather than the 'lean' definition of the documented, best known methodology to perform a process, covered under processes.

1. People- supporting our people in delivering the best quality of service possible.



We will do this by:

- **Recruiting quality people**

We will have a recruitment process that attracts, selects and retains the right people, based on skills, values and behaviours.

- **Initial training to a high standard**

We will have an appropriate training regime for new people coming into the organisation which enables them to produce high quality work quickly, whichever area they are working in.

- **Appropriate accreditation**

We will ensure people pursue and attain recognised accreditation in their professional field, to a nationally recognised standard.

- **Specialist skills in the right numbers**

We will ensure we deliver quality services in specialist areas across the organisation.

- **Having people in place to deliver**

We will have a workforce plan to ensure we have the right people in the right places in the right numbers to deliver the quality expected, including through

supervision, support and assurance. This will be supported by an allocation process, which actively matches demand to capacity.

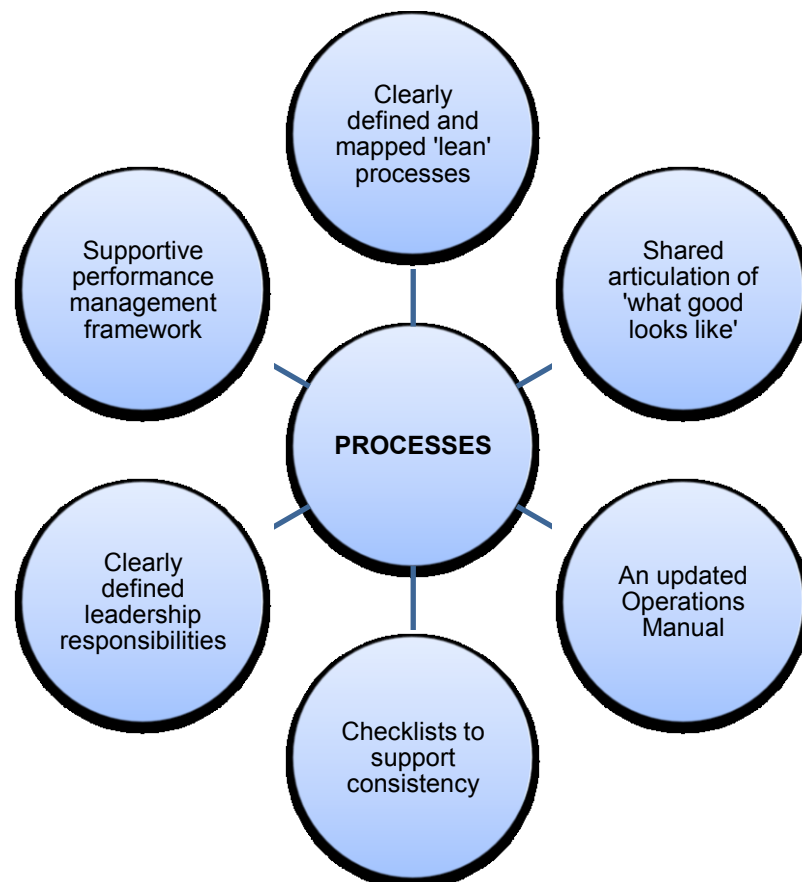
- **A meaningful performance and development review (PDR) process**

We will make sure people engage fully in their own personal development to achieve their full potential.

- **Continuing professional development (CPD) programme**

We will make sure all staff continue to develop throughout their time in the organisation, maximising their contribution and potential.

2. Processes- to have defined proportionate business processes that help drive the quality of what we do.



We will do this by having:

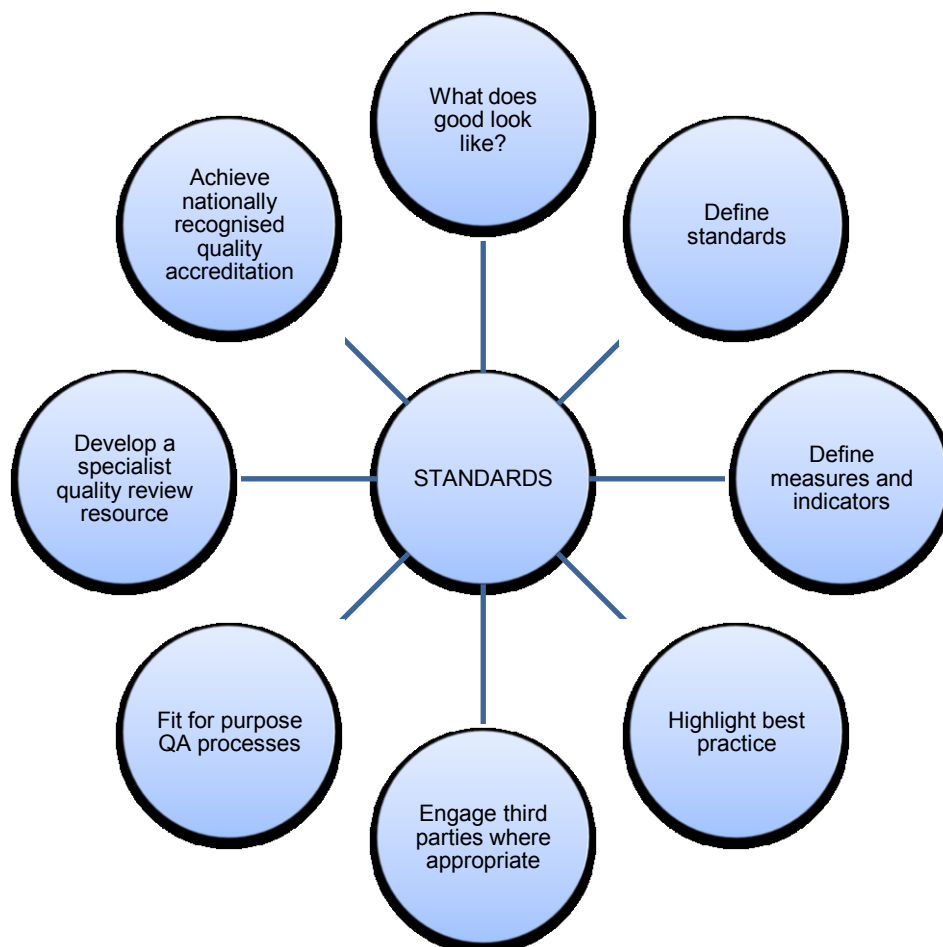
- **Clearly defined, owned and mapped lean processes**
We will ensure that work is undertaken consistently, following the most efficient process, to deliver the right quality the first time. We will embrace the fact that a 'one size fits all' approach is no longer viable.
- **A shared articulation of what good looks like**
We will ensure clarity of expectation and to minimise repetition of work, dual inputting and loss of time to do meaningful work.
- **An updated Operations Manual**
We will ensure a single definitive source of process, guidance and standards, each owned by a custodian, to support all operational staff to deliver to the appropriate quality standards.
- **Checklists**
We will take learning from the medical and airline industries, to ensure that we learn from our mistakes and capture thematic learning, thus building consistency into similar situations.
- **Clearly defined leadership responsibilities**

We will develop a culture based on support and learning in the first instance, where creativity and innovation is actively encouraged and welcomed and we have the courage to try something different, within a proper control framework.

- **A supportive performance framework**

The performance framework will have accurate management information at each stage of the process to enable us to analyse, understand and improve our business processes to drive quality.

3. Standards- to have defined standards to work to and a quality assurance regime in place to assure achievement of those standards.



We will do this by:

- **Asking what does good look like?**
We will ensure a consistent and shared understanding of our priorities, against our high level quality standards.
- **Defining standards**
We will give a clear expectation of what is required so that staff can be clear, first time, every time and managers and assurance teams have a benchmark to hold people to account.
- **Defining measures and indicators**
We will be transparent, internally and externally, about how we will measure our performance in all areas of our business.
- **Highlighting best practice**
We will use examples of our own work, and that of others where appropriate, to build a database of best practice examples to support staff in delivering quality and to ensure consistency at thematic level.

- **Engaging third parties where appropriate**

We will not seek to reinvent the wheel where expertise already exists but we will adopt the quality standards appropriate to third parties (for example, national criminal case files standards from the CPS).

- **Fit for purpose quality assurance (QA) processes**

We will ensure that we learn from our pilot and develop a system which embeds quality at the point of delivery, empowering first line managers to deliver process compliance and first line quality assurance, supported by the specialist expertise of the Quality Review team on a sample basis.

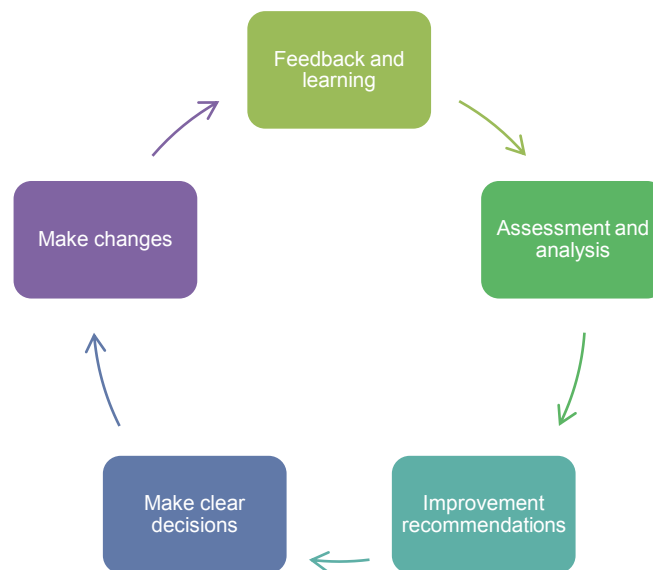
- **Develop a specialist quality review resource**

We will develop the Quality Review Unit to deliver specialist quality, lean and continuous improvement advice across the IPCC, and to undertake case panel reviews, thematic reviews etc. To develop and implement external quality assurance and post investigation reviews.

- **Achieve nationally recognised quality accreditation**

We will ensure that the standards of quality we achieve are nationally recognised and have been independently assessed.

4. Learning- to have a learning cycle in place to support continuous improvement (as defined by the Knowledge and Information Management and Learning and Development Strategies).



We will do this through:

- **Feedback and learning**

We will draw together internal and external feedback, learning and requirements for change relating to our operational work (this will include themes and learning arising from the quality review work).

- **Assessment and analysis**

We will provide for the assessment and analysis of this information (initiating further research if required) to identify the core issue and need for change/action.

- **Recommendations to improve**

We will report on this analysis and on the evidence collected; making recommendations for action (for example, changes to the Operations Manual, need for training, communication to staff or proposals to change processes).

- **Clear decisions**

We will provide a clear decision making structure. This will address quick time learning/change decisions and slower time, strategic decisions around priorities for change or action.

- **Changes**

We will take action, make changes and undertake an assessment of impact.

Accreditation

Accreditation provides the opportunity for an organisation to benchmark itself against published quality standards and to receive recognition for its performance in this area. It has the potential benefit of setting a clear target the organisation can work toward.

In the quality arena there are a number of possible accreditation routes, which we have narrowed down to ISO9001, European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) and Customer Service Excellence (CSE).

On balance, EFQM appears to provide the best route to overall IPCC accreditation; however, for first line customer contact (such as the Admin Hub and Customer Contact Centre), CSE has more direct, practical applicability.

In light of the forthcoming governance and legislative changes, which will reshape the IPCC at the most senior levels and change the processes by which we operate, it is not practicable to fully adopt and embed the accreditation criteria at this time.

We will conduct a gap analysis and adopt those quality accreditation criteria from EFQM and CSE as are relevant and appropriate for the IPCC in the current context of change, leaving the future organisation to pursue formal accreditation in due course.