



# Independent Police Complaints Commission: Stakeholder Feedback Study

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Executive Summary

October 2016



# Aims and Methodology

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## Aims

The Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) became operational in April 2004. Its primary role is to secure and maintain public confidence in the police complaints system in England and Wales. The IPCC investigates the most serious complaints and allegations of misconduct against the police, as well as handling appeals from people who are not satisfied with the way police have dealt with their complaint.

The IPCC's overarching vision is to improve the public's confidence in the police complaints system. The IPCC believes that increasing public confidence in the independence, accountability and integrity of the police complaints system depends on the public seeing an effective response to the most serious incidents involving the police.

The IPCC is committed to developing stronger and more constructive relationships with its stakeholders at national, regional and local levels, to both improve the understanding of their needs and to involve them in the shape and design of the IPCC's services.

To this end, the IPCC appointed us, Populus, a leading independent research organisation, to conduct a study to gather feedback from its stakeholders in order to ascertain their understanding of, and engagement with, the IPCC. Independent studies of this type are used because they gather candid, honest feedback from stakeholders.

## Methodology

This stakeholder feedback report summarises the findings from 331 online and 28 telephone in-depth interviews with stakeholders conducted by Populus. All participants were identified by the IPCC and drawn from its database of stakeholders in past contact with the IPCC. All those interviewed were stakeholders whose views are important to the overall success of the organisation and its reputation.

The in-depth interviews were primarily discursive, though included some metric-style questions. When quantitative questions were asked in both the online survey and the in-depth interviews the results have been collated.

Interviews were conducted between February and May 2016.

Interviewees were categorised in conjunction with the IPCC and analysed by audience type. The sample breakdown is as follows:

- 226 police stakeholders – those working in police forces or Police and Crime Commissioners' offices
- 99 non-police stakeholders – including community representatives, advocacy groups, and politicians
- 34 stakeholders in the police accountability framework - including stakeholders from the College of Policing, Crown Prosecution Service, HMIC, and Coroners' offices

Where quantitative % results do not sum to 100 this may be the result of rounding or the exclusion of 'don't know' categories.

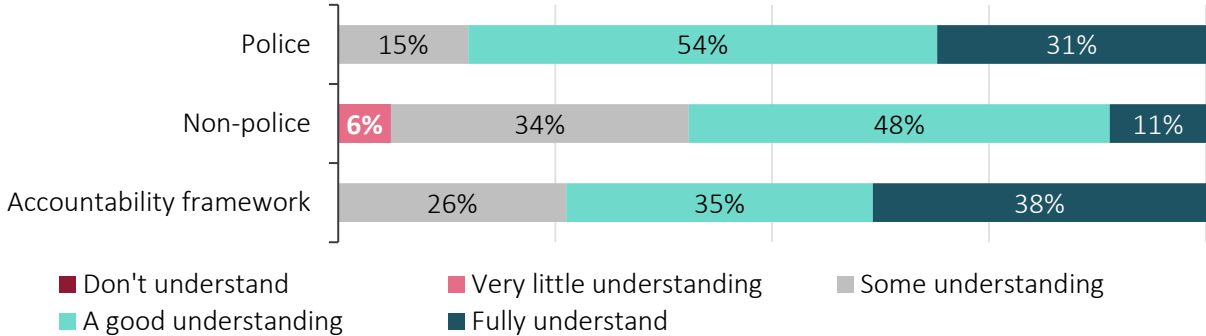
# Awareness and Advocacy

## Awareness

Stakeholders have a high level of awareness of, and understanding about, the IPCC. More than four-in-five (83%) police stakeholders, two thirds (69%) of non-police stakeholders, and more than three-in-five (64%) of those in the accountability framework feel they know the IPCC well.

There is a good level of understanding of the IPCC’s role, objectives and powers too, with police stakeholders having the strongest overall understanding of the IPCC’s functions (85%).

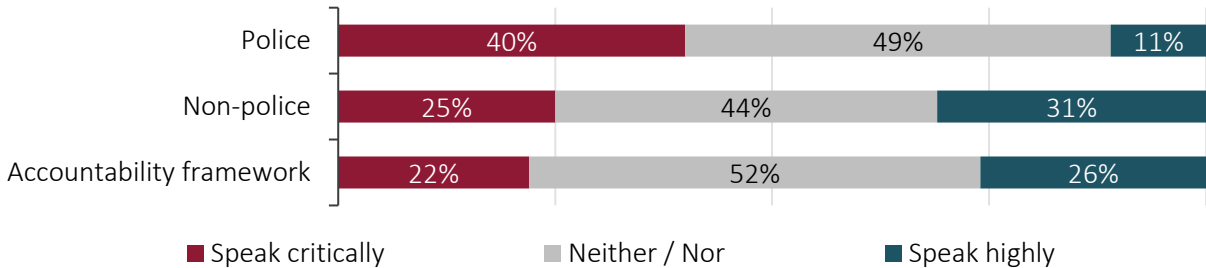
How well do you feel you understand the role and objectives of the IPCC?



## Advocacy

Favourability towards the IPCC varies by stakeholder group. Amongst police stakeholders, more hold a negative view than a positive one (33% have an unfavourable view of the IPCC, while 26% have a favourable one). Among non-police and accountability framework stakeholders the situation is reversed, with these stakeholders holding a more positive view than a negative one; 47% of non-police stakeholders have a favourable view, as do 44% of accountability framework stakeholders. Similarly, while more police stakeholders say they speak critically than highly of the IPCC, for non-police and accountability framework stakeholders this is reversed.

Which of these statements best describes how you would speak of the IPCC to other people?



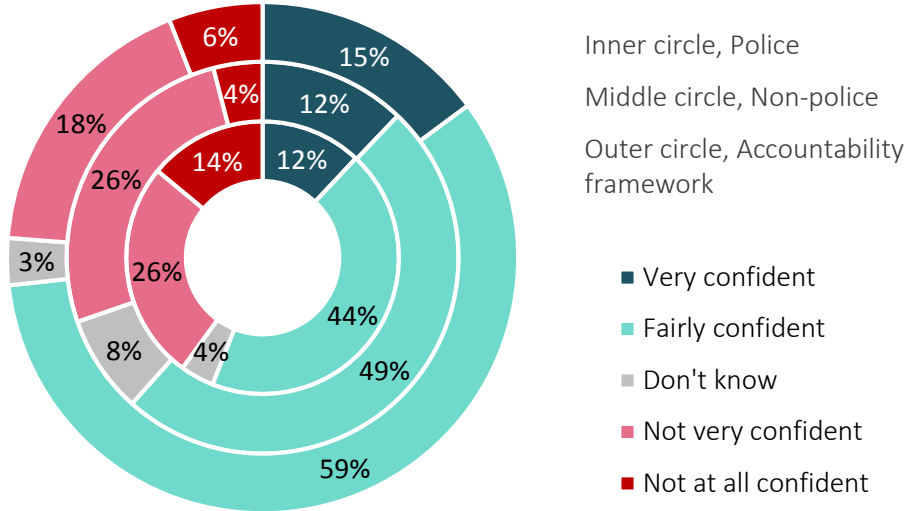
Positive views tend to be attributed to close, positive professional relationships with IPCC staff, to a belief that the IPCC successfully works independently, and an underlying recognition of the need for an independent body to investigate complaints and improve public confidence. Negative views are often caused by concern at the perceived slow speed of investigations and the lack of communication from the IPCC while they are ongoing. There are concerns too as to whether the IPCC has sufficient financial and staff resources to fulfil its remit.

# Confidence and Effectiveness

## Confidence

A clear majority of stakeholders, across every stakeholder group, are confident that the IPCC deals with its work in an impartial way.

How confident, if at all, are you that the IPCC deals with its work in an impartial way?



Similarly, a majority of police, non-police, and accountability framework stakeholders say that the IPCC operates with true independence from the police and that it works with integrity.

## Effectiveness

Stakeholders differ in their assessment of which areas of activity the IPCC is most effective at.

For **police stakeholders**, the IPCC is most effective at ensuring the service learns from complaints (54% of police stakeholders agree the IPCC is effective here, with 22% disagreeing). The IPCC is thought to be least effective at improving the way the police deal with complaints (40% of police stakeholder think the IPCC is effective, against 26% disagreeing). *“We unpick the ‘Learning the Lesson’ document ... we put it back into organisational learning.”*

For **non-police stakeholders**, it is in identifying police misconduct the IPCC is believed to be strongest (44% of non-police stakeholders say the IPCC is effective, with 23% disagreeing.) Raising standards to ensure that mistakes are not repeated is seen as the area the IPCC is least effective, with just 29% of non-police stakeholders saying the IPCC is effective at doing so. The IPCC *“is independent and has been successful at holding the police to account.”*

Stakeholders in the **police accountability framework** identify two areas of particular effectiveness, with half (50%) regarding the IPCC as effective at both improving the way the police deal with complaints and raising standards to ensure that mistakes are not repeated. *“The existence of the IPCC encourages better practice and gives the police a chance to better its handling of complaints and avoid past mistakes.”*

# Brand Personality and Key Drivers Analysis

## Brand Personality

Stakeholders were asked to describe the IPCC in a few words or phrases by choosing from a prepared list of around 30 positive, neutral, and negative words. This 'Brand Personality' approach is a proven tool for understanding stakeholders underlying views. Responses are shown visually below, with larger words selected by more stakeholders, and smaller sizing denoting less common selections.



## Key Driver Analysis

Key driver analysis is a statistical technique that identifies the most strongly correlated factors with an overall opinion. On the left, the statistical model describes the underlying drivers of confidence in the IPCC and, on the right, the drivers of broader favourability towards the IPCC. The analysis highlights the issues and attitudes that are the most important drivers of stakeholder views towards the IPCC.

Confidence	Favourability
Impartial in the way it conducts its investigations	Improving stakeholders' confidence in the police complaints system
Operates with integrity	Dealing with its work in an impartial way
Open and transparent	Open and transparent
Completing investigations to a high standard	Completing investigations to a high standard
	Lead by effective senior staff
	Improving the public's confidence in the police complaints system
	Operates with integrity

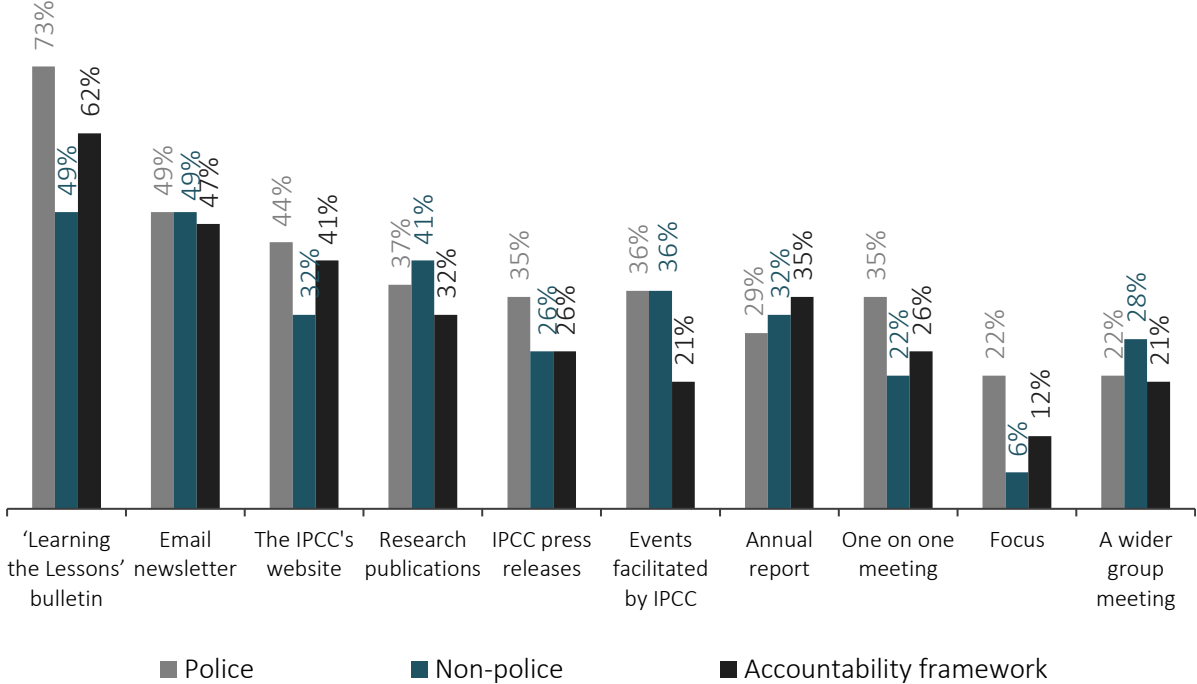
# Communication and Engagement

Police stakeholders are more likely than other stakeholders to say they find it easy engaging with the IPCC. 44% of police stakeholders say it is easy to engage with the IPCC, a figure that falls to 36% amongst accountability framework stakeholders, and to 29% with non-police stakeholders.

Those with good relationships with the IPCC praise the individual members of the IPCC team they have contact with. Those stakeholders critical about the IPCC’s engagement often lack a named point of contact or complain of being uncertain who to approach, with one stakeholder commenting *“now I have a contact it is a lot easier, it was difficult before that happened. For a long time I would struggle to get hold of someone who could help.”*

While most stakeholders feel the frequency of their contact with the IPCC is about right, those who want the frequency of their engagement to change want more contact with the IPCC not less. This is particularly pronounced amongst non-police stakeholders, more than a third (36%) say their current contact is too infrequent.

Which of the following channels would you like the IPCC use to communicate with you?



The 'Learning the Lessons' bulletin is a popular, respected, and read with interest publication. Police, non-police and accountability framework stakeholders alike praise 'Learning the Lessons' as *“really very good”*, *“a useful perspective”* and *“important to improving standards in the force.”* Those who are not familiar with 'Learning the Lessons' often describe wanting to receive a publication much like it.

There is support for the IPCC doing more to engage with both stakeholders and communities more widely. 86% of police stakeholders, 81% of accountability framework stakeholders, and 77% of non-police stakeholders support dedicated points of contact within the IPCC for advice and information about specific incidents. There is strong support too for tools and materials to help stakeholders inform others about the police complaints system.

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