

# You said, we did

An overview of how we have responded to feedback from our stakeholders

December 2019

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## > Introduction

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We work with, listen to and share information with a wide range of people, including complainants, families, police officers and staff, and community and voluntary groups.

We also work with government and other organisations that play a role in the criminal justice system to identify where individually and collectively we can make a real change. Ultimately, changes made as a result of working with our stakeholders and sharing this learning will improve the police service for everyone and contribute to protecting the public.

To ensure we are working effectively with stakeholders, we regularly undertake surveys to obtain feedback and to assess how well we have been doing. The first stakeholder survey was completed in 2016 and asked for feedback from our stakeholders about the IPCC (as we were then). The research was repeated in 2017 to provide a baseline ahead of our transition to the IOPC in January 2018. This is the first survey asking stakeholders for their feedback on the IOPC.

The research categorises stakeholders into three groups: police stakeholders, non-police stakeholders, and stakeholders in the police accountability framework. This categorisation helps us to understand how the experiences of our different stakeholder groups compare.

The feedback our stakeholders provides helps us understand what is working well, and where we need to make improvements.

This document provides a brief summary of just some of the work we have undertaken since the 2017 survey, so you can see how we have responded to your feedback, as well as some information on our future plans.

You can find more detail in our 2018/19 Impact Report on our website [www.policeconduct.gov.uk](http://www.policeconduct.gov.uk)

The 2017 and 2019 stakeholder survey results and our Stakeholder Engagement Strategy 2019-22 can also be accessed on the website.

While we know that we can and do make a positive difference, we recognise that there is still much more to do, and we look forward to continuing to work with our stakeholders to achieve this.

We look forward to sharing with you future survey results and our actions in response as we continue to strengthen our impact and make a real difference to policing, operationally, organisationally and culturally.

## > Key themes we have responded to

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### Reducing the length of investigations

Our 2017 stakeholder survey showed the **length of investigations** was one of the biggest concerns across all stakeholder groups.

In 2016/17 we completed 66 per cent of independent investigations within 12 months. Our target in 2018/19 was to complete 80 per cent of independent investigations within 12 months. We achieved this in 79 per cent of cases. If we exclude our most serious and sensitive complex cases, which are managed by our Directorate of Major Investigations, we completed 82 per cent of independent investigations within 12 months.

The number of cases we closed within nine months improved to 58 per cent in 2018/19, while the proportion of cases we closed within six months was comparable to the previous year at 30 per cent.

We have worked with others to focus on reducing the time our investigations take, to identify where improvements can be made across the system and to minimise the impact on those affected. So far, we have:

- introduced a new streamlined investigation process for lower-risk cases, helping us to reduce the average time it takes to complete our investigations
- worked with police forces' Professional Standards Departments to explore ways to reduce delays and increase efficiency during our investigations, identifying several opportunities to standardise and improve processes and communication
- contributed to the Home Office's multi-agency Deaths in Custody Implementation Working Group<sup>1</sup>, exploring how we and other agencies can better work together to improve timeliness and the experience of those affected by investigations and related proceedings
- provided the Ministerial Board on Deaths in Custody<sup>2</sup> with our views on potential ways to improve timeliness across the end-to-end processes when someone dies during or following police contact. This served as a starting point for further work, with the Home Office arranging workshops with us, the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), Chief Coroner and others to explore how to progress our ideas

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<sup>1</sup> A cross-departmental working group that supports the Ministerial Board on Deaths in Custody

<sup>2</sup> The Ministerial Board brings together decision-makers responsible for policy and issues related to deaths in custody in the Ministry of Justice, Home Office and Department of Health

This year's survey results show that not only do we need to maintain our focus on timeliness but also ensure that we are **effectively communicating** the improvements that have been made so far.

## More proactive engagement

Our stakeholder survey in 2017 showed that we could be more **proactive in our engagement**.

In 2017 we created a dedicated team to focus on our engagement with stakeholders, particularly non-policing stakeholders. Since the 2017 survey, we have:

- established a Youth Panel to help us understand why young people are less likely to have heard of the IOPC and have lower levels of confidence in the police complaints system than others, and how we can improve their trust. We are working to implement recommendations made by the Youth Panel.
- commissioned the Institute of Mental Health to help us find out how people with mental health concerns experienced the police complaints system. We shared the findings of this with other organisations and are looking at ways to improve people's knowledge of, access to and experience of both the IOPC and the complaints system more broadly
- worked with other organisations to help them develop a better understanding of the police complaints system, including running sessions about our role, and producing a short guide to the police complaints system for staff working on charity helplines
- carried out a series of round table events with people and groups who have experience or insight in some of the key themes that come up in our work (for example domestic abuse and mental health) to develop our understanding of the issues. These views have been used to inform the focus and approach to some of our work
- continued to develop relationships with organisations that can act as advocates with low-confidence and seldom heard stakeholder groups to raise awareness of and confidence in the police complaints system
- continued to work with our External Stakeholder Reference Group and Wales Stakeholder Forum – two valuable sounding boards of stakeholders from across the voluntary and community sectors, policing and public sector

The 2019 stakeholder survey shows that all stakeholder groups find it easier to deal with the IOPC than when last measured in 2017, reflecting the impact of some of this work. In addition, in 2019 we expanded our stakeholder engagement team to increase our local presence and engagement with local communities across England and Wales.

We have also produced a new three-year stakeholder engagement strategy to ensure that we listen, engage and use feedback so that:

- we identify and engage with local communities quickly and effectively to listen, communicate key messages, and address existing or potential tensions
- we continually improve the service we provide as our staff have more opportunities to hear from those with lived experience and stakeholders who work with, and represent, people impacted by our work
- we target our engagement work more effectively because we have a more sophisticated understanding of public confidence, including which demographic groups have the lowest confidence, and the influential factors that contribute to low confidence.

To achieve this, we will:

- produce and implement local engagement plans for each of our geographical areas (defining and implementing a bespoke approach to engagement in each of our regions)
- continue to work with our Youth Panel and implement the recommendations made in their 2018/19 report
- continue roundtable events with stakeholders to help inform our case selection process
- provide information and/or training to improve our network of stakeholder advocates' understanding of the police complaints system, so they can support and advise the clients they work with
- work to achieve customer service excellence accreditation so that we are more responsive to service users

## **Improved communications**

Our stakeholder survey in 2017 suggested we could provide more information, particularly around informing communities and stakeholders during serious incidents.

In 2016/17, we created a process for community and stakeholder engagement in relation to critical incidents. Since then we have carried out engagement work in relation to several investigations each year. This engagement support involves looking at current community tension levels and issues affecting confidence in the police, identifying key community figures and helping with community activities such as attending local forums, speaking with local councillors, and meeting local and national

stakeholders. Our new Regional Stakeholder Engagement Officers have increased our capacity to do this work.

In addition, we work to provide information quickly via media and social media, with a focus on providing accurate and timely information on critical incidents and how we are responding.

Publishing information from our work, and raising awareness of our findings, plays an important role in relation to learning, public confidence and police accountability. It helps to ensure that there is transparency around the most serious complaints and incidents, and that forces can learn from them. It also means that members of the public can see what issues are arising in relation to their local force and policing more generally, how they are being dealt with, and how their police force compares to others.

The information we publish includes stakeholder newsletters, annual reports on deaths during or following police contact, research into themes identified in our work, quarterly and annual police complaints statistics, investigation reports and summaries and organisational learning recommendations, as well as media releases.

## **Sharing learning from our work**

We share the learning from our work so that the police can use this to improve and other stakeholders can judge our impact and are more aware of our work. For example:

- we use our statutory powers to make formal organisational learning recommendations to the police service and other bodies. These recommendations and the responses to them are published on our website, so that the public can see what we have recommended and what the recipient intends to do as a result
- we produce a Learning the Lessons magazine, using real-life case studies as well as insight from policing experts and community representatives. The primary audience for these magazines is police practitioners, but they are also sent to many non-policing stakeholders such as community and voluntary organisations, academics and other agencies, to raise awareness of the learning that is arising from cases. The 2019 stakeholder survey shows that 67 per cent of non-policing stakeholders have heard of Learning the Lessons, 97 per cent of police and 100 per cent of police accountability framework
- we respond to a wide variety of inquiries and consultations using evidence from our work. These responses are published on our website so that stakeholders and members of the public can see the suggestions we have made

We are also testing new ways to expand our reach and impact. Following the tragic death of Kerry Power who was murdered by her ex-partner, we launched a campaign to raise public awareness of the Silent Solution system, which prompts mobile callers who are in danger and unable to speak to press 55 to let the police know that there is a genuine emergency. The campaign was supported by Women's Aid and Welsh Women's Aid, and the National Police Chiefs' Council. The campaign reached over 16 million people through on and offline media, and over 6,000 copies of our campaign poster were downloaded over an eight-week period.

We have also developed a new three-year communication strategy which sets out ambitious plans to further improve our communications. Over the next 12 months we plan to:

- launch a regular corporate e-newsletter to inform and engage with broader audiences
- review and improve our website, informed by research with users, allowing us to better target our communications and provide a better user experience
- deliver youth-focused and BME communication plans to build awareness and confidence of these audiences to make a police complaint
- launch two new information / awareness campaigns on police road traffic incidents and abuse of power for sexual purpose
- expand resource materials including videos, fact sheets and website information for dissemination to police forces and other stakeholders
- develop a set of core resources and case studies that document the difference that we are making for local people

## **Becoming the IOPC and maintaining impartiality**

At the time of the 2017 stakeholder survey we were preparing to transition from the IPCC to the IOPC. The survey showed that stakeholders were interested in how the new structure would work in practice and how the IOPC would maintain impartiality.

As the IOPC, we have a new structure and a single line of accountability to our Director General, Michael Lockwood. By law, our Director General can never have worked for the police.

From January 2018, our new Regional Directors and Director for Wales began meeting with local stakeholders and have continued to hold regular meetings to bolster engagement locally, building good relationships and awareness of our work.

We know from research that young people have lower levels of confidence in the police complaints system than others, are less willing to complain and are less likely to have heard of the IOPC. Working with Leaders Unlocked<sup>3</sup>, we established a Youth Panel to help us understand the reasons for this and to explore how we can increase young people's confidence in the system, and in our impartiality.

The panel engaged with over 800 young people across England and Wales, helping raise awareness of the police complaints system and the role of the IOPC, as well as giving young people a voice. We are in the process of implementing recommendations the Panel made as a result of these consultations.

We have also been working with the Police Federation to include them in conversations around changing practice, producing statutory guidance and other issues of learning for policing and the police complaints system. This had helped to broaden the perspectives of both organisations and increase understanding.

Since becoming the IOPC, we have looked for opportunities for operational staff to increase their understanding of different areas of police to understand the context within which decisions are made.

The 2019 stakeholder survey results suggest the transition to the IOPC is tentatively viewed as a success with a clear desire for the IOPC's evolution to continue. Police, police accountability and some non-police stakeholders feel that the IOPC is offering a more open, constructive dialogue with both families and police forces. They think that this balance comes from a recognition that independent regulation does not mean keeping distance or only engaging with parties involved in the process. Instead, they think the IOPC understands that it must engage with stakeholders openly in order to regulate effectively, while remaining impartial.

## > Further information

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Thank you to all the stakeholders who have taken part in our previous surveys.

We expect to undertake our next stakeholder survey in Spring 2020.

You can find copies of the 2017 and 2019 Stakeholder Survey at [www.policeconduct.gov.uk](http://www.policeconduct.gov.uk)

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<sup>3</sup> Leaders Unlocked provides young people with a stronger voice on issues that affect their lives. Find out more on their website: [www.leaders-unlocked.org](http://www.leaders-unlocked.org)

To find out more about our work or to request this report in an alternative format, you can contact us in a number of ways:

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We welcome telephone calls in Welsh

Rydym yn croesawu galwadau ôn yn y Gymraeg

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