



You said, we did

An overview of how we are responding to feedback from our 2023 stakeholder survey

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Introduction

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. The 2023 stakeholder survey is the fourth one carried out as 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 2023 survey, so you can see how we have responded to your feedback, as well as some information on our future plans.

Results from our previous stakeholder surveys can be found on our website www.policeconduct.gov.uk

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

Clearer, bolder communication about our role and work

Our 2023 stakeholder survey showed that there is an opportunity for us to communicate more with the public about our role and purpose. Stakeholders also want us to be bolder and more human in our communications.

One of the objectives of our five-year strategy, **Building trust and confidence in policing** is to ensure that people know about the complaints system and are confident to use it. One of the things we will do to achieve this objective is to highlight what we are doing so that the public can see that there is an independent body that oversees the police complaints system.

We have created a new **Communications and engagement strategy 2023-2027**. Through this strategy we will raise the profile of the IOPC with pro-active and confident communications and engagement. This will help to close the information gap among the public about us and our role. We will also improve our communications and engagement capability and systems, so we have the right skills, tools and resources to deliver impactful communications and engagement. This will work towards ensuring that our outputs are accessible and demonstrate our impact.

By increasing the public's knowledge of the IOPC, our role in police accountability, and the impact we have, we will improve the public's awareness of the police complaints system and increase the public's confidence that complaints and concerns raised lead to real change.

Over the next twelve months we plan to:

- Develop an annual pro-active media plan that extends our profile beyond investigations, taking into account other areas of public interest such as our thematic work and oversight work to make sure the police are investigating complaints about them properly.
- Have key spokespeople who are properly equipped to give our organisation a voice on policing issues that matter to the public.
- Maximise the opportunities to connect with communities and stakeholders with a digital-led approach by:
 - Launching the new IOPC website, and
 - Continuing to grow our existing social media audience and consider options to develop new social media channels to increase our reach.

- Ensure all our communications messages and products are accessible for the public.
- Produce a public affairs plan to support our convening and influencing activity, raise awareness of our work and change misconceptions.
- Identify areas where we will seek to make the case for legislative and procedural change to improve the police complaints system and build confidence.
- Develop public affairs campaigns to support the successful delivery of change.

We are already putting this strategy into action, through actions such as our call for a 'fitness-to-practise' model for policing.

Continuing to improve on timeliness and resourcing

The 2023 stakeholder survey demonstrated that whilst improvements to timeliness of investigations have been recognised, stakeholders want to see evidence of continued improvements in this area.

There are also concerns about the amount of work that is necessary across the system and how we resource our workload.

As part of **Building trust and confidence in policing**, we will select the right mix of work. As well as ensuring that we deliver high quality, timely investigations and reviews, we will work with police forces, PCCs and others to improve timeliness and quality across the system. This will improve the experience of service users across the police complaints system, and will help us to be confident that our work has the maximum positive impact for the public as a whole.

In core investigations we are seeing increased complexity in our work, especially criminal/conduct investigations due to the profile of referrals received. Despite this we exceeded our timeliness targets. Our target for completing investigations within 12 months was 85% and 90% was achieved; for six months the target was 33% and we achieved 38%.

We intend to invest in operational delivery where we will increase staff resources available to deal with referrals and improve the timeliness of that work.

We have already put in additional casework resources and are redesigning the process, so we can meet demand and improve service user experience. We also provide service users with realistic forecasts of the time it will take to complete their reviews and keep them updated throughout the process.

We started to see the positive effects of having additional staff in January – March 2023. Output was higher than demand for the first time, which resulted in a decrease of the previously rising caseload. We predict productivity to further increase in

2023/24 and the backlog of reviews waiting to be reviewed to reduce more quickly, significantly improving timeliness.

Taking a leadership role in making and evidencing improvements

Throughout the 2023 stakeholder survey, stakeholders discuss wanting to see more evidence of how our work leads to changes in policing. Although there is a recognition of the learning that we share, stakeholders want more to be done to embed this learning and show the impact that it has had on addressing key issues around police misconduct.

Stakeholders also call for us to take more of a leadership role in addressing issues surrounding police misconduct, and to collaborate more with other bodies to do this.

Through **Building trust and confidence in policing**, our mission is improving policing by independent oversight of police complaints, holding police to account and ensuring learning effects change. This is so that everyone is able to have trust and confidence in the police.

Our independence means that we are a trusted voice leading the call for change. We will use the evidence from our work to do this and we will work with other organisations so that our recommendations lead to change.

We will also conduct robust oversight of the police complaints system, intervening where evidence suggests this is necessary to make improvements.

Under our **Communications and engagement strategy 2023-2027** we will use our learning, evidence and influence to convene our stakeholders and identify ways that we can improve policing together.

In 2022/23 we asked forces about the actions they have taken in response to the recommendations of the stop and search learning report. The results from this are being shared with the National Police Chiefs' Council and relevant Police and Crime Commissioners to promote good practice and support scrutiny in this area.

At the start of July, we welcomed a landmark ruling by the Supreme Court which will provide significant legal clarity about how police officers who use force will be held to account.

The ruling centred on the fatal shooting of Jermaine Baker in north London in December 2015, by an officer known for legal reasons as W80. We launched a murder investigation which we completed in November 2016 and submitted a file to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).

The CPS decided not to prosecute W80 for the shooting. We found there was a disciplinary case to answer for W80's use of force. The Metropolitan Police Service disagreed with us, and W80, supported by the Met, took us to court to get our

decision overturned.

However, in its ruling, the Supreme Court found in the IOPC's favour and said our interpretation of the law was correct.

The ruling means that in use of force self-defence cases involving police officers, it is the civil law test that should be applied in police disciplinary proceedings, rather than the criminal law test. The main difference is that under the civil law test, a person who uses force cannot rely on unreasonable mistakes when seeking to justify their use of force, whereas they can in criminal proceedings. This ruling will have important implications for police accountability when force is used, providing assurance to the public that this power will be exercised responsibly, reasonably and proportionately.

We have also completed joint investigations into super-complaints about failures to address police perpetrated domestic abuse and the police response to victims of sexual abuse who are from an ethnic minority background. We also continue to work jointly with HMICFRS and the College of Policing on the investigation of a super-complaint into 'suspicion-less' stop and searches.

The IOPC is currently leading a new joint super-complaint investigation into the police response to stalking.

Engagement with vulnerable and low-confidence groups

Stakeholders want to see more engagement with vulnerable groups and people with low confidence in policing, who may also have less awareness of the IOPC and the police complaints system.

One of the objectives of our five-year strategy, **Building trust and confidence in policing** is to ensure that people know about the complaints system and are confident to use it. We will do this by talking to communities to understand their issues and to tell them about their right to complain.

We will also work to ensure that there is more meaningful engagement, collaboration, and co-production in our work.

Through our **Communications and engagement strategy 2023-2027** we will focus on increasing levels of awareness, trust and confidence among the public, particularly within those groups with the lowest confidence and on the issues of greatest concern.

Over the next 12 months we will:

- Coordinate the IOPC Youth Panel and support the delivery of their recommendations to the IOPC and policing.

- Deliver an annual programme of corporate stakeholder meetings and events to provide advice, challenge and constructive feedback on the IOPC's work.
- Undertake meaningful engagement and coproduction with stakeholders through our Stakeholder Partnerships project.
- Provide expertise and support to enable the effective delivery and increased impact of IOPC thematic work.
- Equip organisations across England and Wales with the knowledge and materials to be able to support potential complainants to understand their rights and make a complaint.
- Work more effectively with partners to share intelligence about emerging trends and issues to improve policing.
- Continue to produce regular stakeholder insight reports and improve the awareness and impact of stakeholder insights internally to shape our work, and externally to demonstrate to our stakeholders that we listen and respond.
- Implement and regularly refresh local engagement plans for each IOPC region and Wales, focused on building awareness and trust in low confidence communities.
- Support local/community accountability and scrutiny of policing.
- Develop our critical incident engagement capability and capacity through refreshed guidance, training and a review of resourcing.

In the past year, our regional engagement team have met with over 300 community-based organisations, particularly low confidence groups, to listen to their experiences of policing and improve their awareness and confidence in the police complaints system. Where helpful, we have brought together community stakeholders with local police to support better understanding of policing practice and the impact on low confidence groups, such as our Use of Force workshop in Cardiff.

Our Youth Panel have also run workshops with police to improve their understanding of young people's experience of policing, have held awareness sessions with young people across England and Wales and have conducted their first annual national survey of young people to inform their work.

We held an advocacy event for stakeholders who are able to provide advice to potential complainants across London and have held awareness sessions with national victim-focused organisations. We have also set up a national advisory group and held roundtable meetings to help advise and shape our thematic programmes of work.

Further information

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

We expect to undertake our next stakeholder survey in early 2024.

You can find copies of the 2023 Stakeholder Survey and earlier surveys at www.policeconduct.gov.uk

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