

**Report of the Complaints Panel to the Chair and Members
of the Police Authority Executive
10 December 2009**

Executive Officer: Joe McCarthy
Presented by: Mr Edward Cox JP, Chair Complaints Panel

Status: For information

Annual Statement on Force Professional Standards

1. Purpose of the report

1.1 To provide a statement on Force Professional Standards.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That Members note the content of the report.

3. Reasons

3.1 Under s77 of the *Police Act 1996* and s15 of the *Police Reform Act 2002*, Police Authorities are required to keep themselves informed of the handling of complaints by their Forces. This is part of the general responsibility that Authorities have to ensure that their Forces are efficient and effective. In Cleveland this oversight role is performed by the Professional Standards Panel which meets quarterly.

3.2 In June 2007 the Association of Police Authorities (APA) published 'Guidance on the role of Police Authorities in the Oversight and Scrutiny of Professional Standards Matters'. At its meeting on 31 October 2007 the Professional Standards Panel accepted and adopted the "Guidance". One recommendation contained in the Guidance was that a report be given to the full Authority annually, taking into account any comments or reports from others such as the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) and Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary (HMIC).

4. Complaints Panel

4.1 In the period 1 October 2008 to 30 September 2009 the Professional Standards Panel met four times. During this period 446 cases of Complaint against the Police were recorded and 456 completed. 72 completed files were examined by Members of the Panel, 15% resulting in 10 queries being raised all of which were satisfactorily answered. Also received during this period were 68 complaints which were correctly classified as "Direction & Control" (17 examined – 25%).

4.2 Ethnicity of Complainants

Of the 456 cases closed during the period the self declared ethnicity of complainants was as follows:

White	351	76.97%
Mixed Race	5	1.09%
Asian	14	3.07%
Black	5	1.09%
Chinese or other Ethnic Group	3	0.65%
Not Recorded/ Declined to say	78	17.10%

4.3 Gender of Complainants

In the period 1 October 2008 to 30 September 2009 there were 456 complaint cases closed of which 266 (58.33%) were from men and 190 (41.66%) from women.

5. Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC)

5.1 The IPCC recently published its Annual Report for the 2008/2009 financial year with statistics and commentary for each force. The report showed that complaints against Cleveland officers had fallen by 1%.

5.2 Our IPCC Commissioner has a standing invitation to attend all meetings of the Professional Standards Panel and receives copies of the Agenda and Papers going to the Panel. The Commissioner made one such visit during the year.

5.3 On 10 August 2009 the Local Commissioner, Chairman of the Professional Standards Panel, Deputy Chief Constable and Head of Professional Standards Department met to discuss the work of the Professional Standards Department. The Commissioner declared himself satisfied that the Force had efficient and effective processes in place to investigate complaints against Police.

6. Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary (HMIC)

- 6.1 Her Majesty's Inspector last reviewed the Professional Standards Department in April 2006 when it was graded "Good". A further inspection has not been timetabled.

8. Independent Advisory Group (IAG)

- 7.1 On 17 June 2009 the Chair of Professional Standards Panel and Head of Professional Standards Department met with the Chair of the IAG to give details of the monitoring of complaints from members of the BME Community. She expressed satisfaction with the arrangements.

8. Professional Standards Department

- 8.1 The Chief Constable has delegated oversight of the Professional Standards Department to his Deputy. The Department is staffed by 1 Superintendent, 3 Inspectors, 7 Sergeants, 2 Constables and 5 Police Staff. The Department also performs other duties which have been detailed to Members in recent briefings. In addition, bi-monthly meetings are held with Senior Officers from across the Force to discuss and highlight matters of interest. These bi-monthly meetings are attended by a Member of the Complaints Panel.

9. Implications

- 9.1 There are no Financial, Diversity and Equal Opportunities or Sustainability issues arising from this report.

10. Conclusion

- 10.1 Bearing in mind comments and reports from outside sources, our own findings, experiences and dealings with the Professional Standards Department, the Professional Standards Panel are satisfied that complaints against Police are dealt with in a professional, efficient, expeditious and proportionate manner and proper processes are in place to ensure that this is so.

11. Comment

- 11.1 Although this report is concerned with complaints against Police we feel it would be wrong to ignore the fact that during the period 1 October 2008 to 30 September 2009 when 446 complaints were recorded, 612 letters of appreciation were also received from members of the Public.