

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS PANEL

ACTION

A meeting of the Professional Standards Panel was held on Thursday 29th July 2010 in the Members Conference Room at Police Headquarters.

- PRESENT: Mr Ted Cox JP (Chair), Cllr Caroline Barker, Cllr Ron Lowes, Mr Mike McGrory JP, Cllr Mary Lanigan and Cllr Carl Richardson.
- OFFICIALS: DCC Derek Bonnard, Sgt Steve Gillson, Mrs Joanne Monkman and Miss Kate Rowntree (CC)
Mrs Kath Allaway and Mr John Bage (CE)
- GUEST: Mr Nicholas Long (IPCC)
- WELCOME: The Chair welcomed the new Member Cllr Carl Richardson and Guest Mr Nicholas Long to the meeting.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Dave McLuckie and Mr Peter Race MBE.

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interests.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING 29 APRIL 2010

The minutes of 29 April 2010 were agreed as a true record.

Matters Arising

Members queried a reference in the previous minutes regarding the use of the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC).

The Deputy Chief Constable informed members that he had since discussed this with the Chair, to the Chair's satisfaction.

Members requested if the data regarding letters of appreciation could be broken down into categories for Districts and Departments.

The Deputy Chief Constable informed Members that this could be arranged.

DCC

OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATIONS

ORDERED that:-

1. the outstanding recommendations be noted.

IPCC MATTERS

Mr Nicholas Long informed Members of his previous meetings with the police authority in 2004 when he was invited to Cleveland in his capacity as a Member of the MPA and the interest shown in the MPA's methodology in the Brixton area of

London.

Mr Long informed Members of his new role with the IPCC covering the four Yorkshire forces and those in the north east region.

Members were informed that there appeared to be a low level of input from the IPCC into the affairs of Cleveland and he is assured from the work he has carried out that this is a true and accurate reflection.

Mr Long explained his long and experienced history of dealing with custody matters and having visited Cleveland on many occasions he is content that Cleveland's performance in custody matters is the best in the UK.

Since taking over his IPCC role, he has visited BCUs and was particularly impressed by the quality of custody facilities and arrangements for supervision of Officers. Particularly the parade rooms where there is a clear integration of rank from Constable through to Inspectors.

Mr Long informed Members that he has had a number of discussions with HMIC and stated that there may be a correlation between strong supervision and low levels of complaints and that the proactive model adopted by Cleveland is proving successful.

He is very keen to ensure that matters are dealt with locally where possible and would encourage Cleveland to increase rate of local resolution.

Mr Long offered some statistical information to place Cleveland's performance in contexts;

- 53, 534 allegations recorded nationally
- Cleveland recorded 735 allegations
- 31,259 complaint cases recorded nationally
- 410 complaint cases recorded for Cleveland
- 38% were locally resolved

He informed Members that these figures show the very significant performance levels of Cleveland compared to the rest of the UK and commended their achievements.

The Chair thanked Mr Long for his comments and attendance at the meeting.

CIVIL CLAIM STATISTICS

The Legal Advisor presented the Civil Claim Statistics for the period 1st April 2010 – 30th June 2010. The Panel was informed of the number and types of civil claims against the Force received during that period, the amount paid out for those claims finalised during the period and the amount recovered. The report also detailed a comparison between the Basic Command Units.

Members queried if it were possible to have trend information presented with-in the report.

The Chair informed Members that he would discuss these matters with the Deputy Chief Constable outside of the meeting and report back to Members.

Chair / DCC

ORDERED that:

1. the number of claims received remained the same as the number of claims received in the same period last year, with motor liability being the leading category, be noted.
2. a 225% increase in the number of claims finalised when compared with the same period last year be noted.
3. 38% of finalised cases during the period were successfully defended which was to be compared with 20% successfully defended during the same period last year, be noted.
4. the 62 cases settled during the period cost the Force £172.701 This was to be compared with the 9 cases settled during the same period last year at a cost of £30.854 be noted
5. Headquarters is the area with most claims, be noted.

COMPLAINTS AGAINST POLICE

The representative from the Professional Standards Department presented the Complaints Against Police for the period April 2010 to June 2010. The report was produced in the format to be National Intelligence Model (NIM) Compliant.

Members were informed that there had been a 7% decrease in the number of cases recorded during that period (121 to 112), with a 2% decrease in the number of complaints (down from 173 to 170).

Complaints of "other neglect/failure in duty" and "Incivility" continued to outnumber those of "Assault" allegations, 32 and 45 complaints respectively, compared to 28 in the "Assault" categories.

23% (30) of completed complaints had been locally resolved. During that period 63% (19) of locally resolved complaints had been by District and 37% (11) by the Professional Standards Department.

Members were informed about the 'Lesson's Learned' section of the report, and how this is disseminated across the Force area.

Members requested information on what was 'corrupt practice', how it was defined and how it was dealt with.

The Deputy Chief Constable informed Members of how such

matters were dealt with and assured Members that he meets with the Chair of the Panel monthly to discuss such.

The Deputy Chief Constable further assured Members that in every such case, he personally becomes involved with these matters, and that should one arise at the next meeting he would take Members through the process.

DCC

Members sought assurance on a number of matters pertaining to complaints against the police, all of which were responded to the satisfaction of Members.

Members were informed that 81 letters of appreciation had been received.

ORDERED that:

1. The contents of the report be noted.

DELIBERATE DAMAGE STATISTICS

The Deputy Chief Constable informed Members of the cost to the Force of deliberate damage by way of forced entry into premises for the period 1st April 2010 to 30th June 2010 and of the operational results achieved through such forced entry and other premises searches.

Members were informed that the Force had paid out £14,971 in compensation for acts of deliberate damage, this compared to £8,447 paid out in the same period during the previous year. Whilst 2410 searches were conducted, only 243 (10.1%) resulted in deliberate damage compared to 8.92% in the previous year. The value of property, cash and drugs seized totaled £412,282 and this compared to £940,772 seized during the same period in 2009.

ORDERED that:

1. The contents of the report be noted.
2. The operational benefits accruing to the Force in terms of property, drugs and cash seized, outweigh the cost of the damage claims be noted.

INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING ANNUAL REPORT 2009/10

The Lead Member for Custody Visiting informed Members that the purpose of the report was to provide Members with an update on the Cleveland Police Authority Independent Custody Visiting Scheme, and in particular in respect of the number of visitors, visits undertaken, training and meetings during 2009 – 2010.

Members were informed that Police Authorities are required to operate an Independent Custody Visiting Scheme within the Police Reform Act 2002. National guidance published recommended that regular visits are undertaken by volunteers

recruited and managed by the Police Authority, to Police Custody units. Within this guidance visits are undertaken in pairs and are unannounced. Visitors must be allowed access to the Custody area immediately unless there is a safety issue in which case this must be recorded.

ORDERED that:

1. Members receive the Independent Annual Report and its publication on the Cleveland Police Authority website be agreed.

INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITORS HOME OFFICE CODE OF PRACTICE

The Police Authority's Independent Custody Visitor Scheme Administrator informed Members that the Home Office had issued a new code of practice in respect of the Independent Custody Visiting Scheme.

Members were informed that there is likely to be national guidance produced in the future to go with the Code of Practice, but at this stage it is not clear when this will be published. The action plan attached at Appendix A to the report had been produced to ensure that Cleveland Police Authority is complying with the new Code.

ORDERED that:

1. the Code of Practice and the action plan be received to ensure that the Authority complies with the Code be noted.

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

ORDERED that pursuant to Section 100a(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, excluding the press and public from the meeting under Paragraphs 1 and 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

CASES FROM THE COMPLAINTS REGISTER

Members of the Complaints Panel were shown the cases from the Complaints Register which had previously been selected by the Panel Chair.