

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS PANEL

ACTION

A meeting of the Professional Standards Panel was held on Tuesday 2nd February 2010 in the Members Conference Room at Police Headquarters.

PRESENT: Mr Ted Cox JP (Chair), Cllr Caroline Barker, Mr Aslam Hanif, Cllr Ron Lowes, Mr Mike McGrory JP, Cllr Steve Wallace and Mr Peter Race MBE.

OFFICIALS: DCC Bonnard, Supt Darren Best, Supt Martin Campbell, Mrs Joanne Monkman and Miss Kate Rowntree (CC)
Mrs Jayne Harpe (CE)

ADDITIONAL MEMBERS Cllr Victor Tumilty.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC Mr Gerard Walsh.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mary Lanigan (Vice Chair), Cllr Hazel Pearson OBE, Cllr Dave McLuckie and Mr Peter Hadfield.

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interests.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING 30 OCTOBER 2009

The minutes of 30 October 2009 were agreed as a true record.

Matters Arising

The question had been asked why Employer's Liability in Middlesbrough was high – Members had received a written reply.

OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATIONS

The Grievance Procedure had not been finalised, a report would be submitted to the Panel at a later date.

Employers Liability - Members had received a written report from the Deputy Chief Constable. This item was discharged.

Data collected in relation to Pledge 10 had been included in the Professional Standards Quarterly Progress Report and would continue in this format. This item was discharged.

Independent Custody Visitors Carers Allowance – A report was to be presented to Members by the Lead Member for the Independent Custody Visitors Association.

CIVIL CLAIM STATISTICS

The Legal Advisor presented the Civil Claim Statistics for the period 1st April 2009 – 31st December 2009. 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.

ORDERED that:

1. Members noted there had been an 8.33% increase in the number claims received when compared with the same period last year. Motor liability was the leading category.
2. There had been a 2.82% increase in the number of claims finalised when compared with the same period last year.
3. 31.50% of finalised cases during the period were successfully defended which was to be compared with 19.72% successfully defended during the same period last year.
4. The 50 cases settled during the period cost the Force £275,591. This was to be compared with the 57 cases settled during the same period last year at a cost of £296,404.
5. Middlesbrough remained the area with most claims.
6. The contents of the report be noted.

Whilst Legal Services had no control over the number of claims received, feedback was provided on a case by case basis to ensure assistance was given to Basic Command Units in managing risks.

**COMPLAINTS STATISTICS FOR ENGLAND & WALES
2008/09**

The Head of Professional Standards Department presented a report to Members which had been produced by the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC).

The report presented figures on complaints about the Police in England and Wales for the financial year 2008/09. It detailed the number and type of complaints made and how those were dealt with.

During 2008/09 Cleveland Police recorded 410 complaint cases compared to 416 recorded in the previous year, a decrease of 1%. In 2008/09 Cleveland Police recorded 735 allegations, a decrease of 9% on the previous year. This put Cleveland Police in second place when compared to the most similar forces group.

In 2008/09 Cleveland Police completed 262 investigations: 44 (17%) were substantiated and 218 (83%) were

unsubstantiated.

Cleveland Police would continue to monitor and record all elements of complaints cases in an ethical and accurate manner.

ORDERED that:

1. The content of the report be noted.

COMPLAINTS AGAINST POLICE

The Head of Professional Standards Department presented the Complaints Against Police for the period 1st October 2009 to 31st December 2009. The Quarterly Progress Report on Complaint Issues for Cleveland Police for the period 1st October to 31st December 2009 was attached to the report.

There had been a 37% increase in the number of cases recorded during that period (87 to 119), with a 48% increase in the number of complaints (up from 141 to 209).

Complaints of "other neglect/failure in duty" and "Incivility" continued to outnumber those of "Assault" allegations, 38 and 51 complaints respectively, compared to 29 in the "Assault" categories.

40% (55) of completed complaints had been locally resolved. During that period 76% (42) of locally resolved complaints had been by District and 24% (13) by the Professional Standards Department.

206 letters of appreciation had been received, an increase of 39 (+23%) over those recorded the previous year, this outnumbered the total complaints received during this period.

Included in the Head of Professional Standards report was a synopsis of Pledge 10 issues dealt with during the last quarter.

ORDERED that:

1. The contents of the report be noted.
2. Pledge 10 issues would continue to be contained in the quarterly report and that work would continue on deciding what information was needed by the panel to fulfill its' scrutiny role.

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 October 2009 to 31st December 2009 and of the operational results achieved through such forced entry and other premises searches.

Members were informed that the Force had paid out £12,871 in compensation for acts of deliberate damage, this compared to £12,110 paid out in the same period during the previous year.

Whilst 2640 searches were conducted, only 273 (10.3%) resulted in deliberate damage compared to 8.85% in the previous year. The value of property, cash and drugs seized totaled £1,397,383 and this compared to £1,801,060 seized during the same period in 2008.

The figures for Redcar and Cleveland pertaining to cash of £219,872 and drugs £13,670 being seized were queried. Members were advised that these figures would be checked and a written reply circulated.

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 VISITORS CARERS ALLOWANCE

The Lead Member for the Independent Custody Visitors Association informed Members that when it had been agreed to pay Independent Custody Visitors an Annual Honorarium it had also been agreed that consideration would be given to payment of a carers allowance. This would enable those visitors with dependents to attend training and panel meetings. The recommendation was in line with the carers allowance included in the Members Allowance Scheme.

ORDERED that:

1. Members agreed, in appropriate cases, the payment of a carers allowance in respect of training and Panel meetings and that this item be discharged.

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.