



Police and Crime Commissioner

for Dyfed Powys

Complaints Dip Sampling Report

Date Quarter 3 October- December 2024

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Introduction

A series of dip sampling of complaints cases was undertaken by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) between October 2024 and December 2024.

The OPCC reviewed a total of 14 randomly selected closed complaint cases that were handled by the Professional Standards Department (PSD) between April - September 2024. The main purpose of this scrutiny work is to independently review that the recording and handling of complaints complies with the guidance set out by the Independent Office of Police Complaints (IOPC) and that the service provided to the complainant is reasonable and proportionate.

The background and purpose of scrutiny dip sampling work, alongside how dip sampling is carried out is detailed within the [Complaints Scrutiny Framework](#) which is published on the OPCC website.

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 and supporting regulations made significant changes to the police complaints and disciplinary systems. They introduced a number of changes designed to achieve a more customer-focused complaints system in February 2020.

The complaints system has expanded to cover a broader range of matters. Formerly, the way that the term 'complaint' was defined meant that it needed to relate to the conduct of an individual officer. Now a complaint can be made about a much wider range of issues including the service provided by the police as an organisation. This is designed to increase access to the police complaints system.

The IOPC expects forces to consider the information they keep about complaints with the intent of the reforms in mind – a positive obligation to increase access and to collect information that enables forces and local policing bodies to learn from complaints and other matters.

IOPC Statistics

Each quarter, the IOPC collects data from Dyfed Powys Police about how they handle complaints. The IOPC uses this to produce information bulletins. These set out performance against a number of measures and compare each force's data with their most similar force average and the overall results for all forces.

The table below (reporting period: 01 April 2024 - 31 December 2024) presents a breakdown of how allegations were handled. An allegation decision is logged for each allegation finalised. The allegation decision reflects how the complaint case has been handled, with different decisions available for the different means of handling. Both the allegation decisions and the subsequent actions available will depend on two things: firstly, whether the complaint case has been handled outside or under Schedule 3; and secondly, the means of handling where it has been dealt with under Schedule 3.

How allegations were handled (Year to date)	Force No.	Force %	MSF Average No.	MSF Average %	National No.	National %
Under Schedule 3 investigated (not subject to special procedures)	31	4 %	59	5 %	12,092	10 %
Under Schedule 3 investigated (subject to special procedures)	1	0 %	8	1 %	1,408	1 %
Under Schedule 3 - not investigated	427	50 %	674	59 %	53,990	45 %
Outside of Schedule 3	387	46 %	438	35 %	51,937	43 %
Total	846	100 %	1178	100 %	119,427	100 %

Complaints handled under Schedule 3 of the Police Reform Act 2002 are eligible for their complaint to be reviewed either by the Police and Crime Commissioner or the Independent Office for Police Conduct.

However, complaints handled informally outside of schedule 3 are not entitled to a review of their complaint.

Complaints dealt with outside the requirements of Schedule 3 must be handled with a view to resolving them to the complainant's satisfaction. Handling a complaint outside the requirements of Schedule 3 provides an opportunity to address promptly the concerns a complainant has raised. Some complaints do not require detailed enquiries in order to address them. For example, the complainant may only want an explanation, or for their concerns to be noted or passed on. Handling such complaints outside of Schedule 3, promptly, may be the most efficient, effective, and beneficial way to resolve the complaint. It can assure the complainant that their concerns have been listened to and addressed, while potentially providing a learning opportunity for the force (and, if appropriate, any individuals involved)

The table shows that 46% of complaints were dealt with Outside of Schedule 3. In the first and second quarter, the number of complaints handled Outside Schedule 3 were 52%. As a result, this round of dip sampling continued to assess the complaints handled outside of schedule 3.

Summary of findings

Positive

It was positive to see that where complaints had been assigned to the local Inspector or Sergeant that the complainant was satisfied with the outcome, in some instances complainants were receiving the outcome on the same day as the complaint was made.

Areas for Improvement

- Consideration to be given towards alternative means of communications, such as telephone. In some cases PSD had persevered with emailing the complainant to establish the complaint with no success.
- Supervisors should provide PSD with an update of any action/outcome of a complaint which they have handled informally outside of schedule
- There also needs to be consistency of record keeping, in some cases it was difficult to identify what the outcome of the complaint was or if it had been concluded.

Dip-Sample Findings

October

Case number	Complaint Summary	Handling Type	OPCC Observations
1	Complainant was dissatisfied that the Officer in Charge (OIC) had not contacted them regarding matters	Outside Schedule 3 (OS3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent communication from PSD to Complainant. • Excellent communication from PS to PSD. • Resolved in one day- this is a good example of a complaint handled OS3.

	surrounding bail. This has been done on two occasions.		
2	Complainant dissatisfied with the manner the call handler spoke to him.	OS3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Handled quickly and supervisor reviewed the call on the same day and provided a necessary report to PSD on the same day.
3	Complainant is disheartened not to have been contact by the OIC.	OS3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contacted on the next day by the Sergeant of the OIC. Complainant was satisfied with the outcome and was supportive of having the complaint logged in case of future escalation.
4	Complainant dissatisfied with the delay in returning their mobile phone which was detained.	OS3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No further action was required as complainant received their phone a week later and did not respond to PSD enquiries post complaint being made. From the point of the initial complaint and having their seized item returned was 8 days – handled in a timely manner
5	Complainant was dissatisfied that the OIC has not contacted them regarding their investigation.	OS3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact returned and allocated on the same day as the complaint was received. Contact was returned within 4 days. Another good example of a complaint handled OS3.
6	Complainant states that officers used excessive force which caused injury to arm.	OS3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complainant did not respond. PSD took appropriate enquiries to mitigate complaint by reviewing body worn video footage. Consideration- given the complainants difficulties with their mental health and the lack of correspondence, should there have been a consideration to telephone the complainant?
7	Complainant was unhappy at having their vehicle stopped and searched with suspicion of drug trafficking.	OS3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responded and allocated to Inspector on the same day. No recorded response from the Inspector.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No outcome provided. Complaint should not have been closed without receiving outcome.
8	Complainant was dissatisfied with the police investigation as they did not receive updates	OS3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficult to navigate through the correspondences. There are two complaint references. Last email that can be viewed is 25th July 2024. Cannot access any other email post this period. PSD clearly have had difficulties in establishing the complaint. Complainant has requested to be called; however, PSD have persevered with emailing when this is clearly non-productive. Whilst complaint resolution team have contacted the complainant, the duration and number of emails suggests that telephone may have been a better option. No outcome received.
9	Dissatisfied with the investigation to a stolen vehicle	OS3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An acknowledgement appears to have been sent 6 days after receiving the initial complaint; however, unable to open and verify. Complainant is dissatisfied with correspondence since the initial complaint. No response from complainant after Sergeant had made contact. The duration of the handling of OS3 appears too long in this instance; especially with the complainant having to chase up for updates.

10	Unhappy with the manner police conducted a welfare check. Officers have disclosed that they are doing a welfare check to neighbours	OS3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good communication from PSD and response from the allocated Sgt with the complainant. • Matter was resolved efficiently.
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January

	Complaint Summary	Handling Type	OPCC Observations
1	Complainant has expressed a general dissatisfaction with the police and Police Community Support Officer's as the incidents he has reported are continuing to happen.	OS3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good response from the Police Sergeant who handled the complaint. • Very detailed and a good example of handling of OS3.
2	<p>1. Complainant is alleging that the police are not dealing effectively with incidents he is reporting.</p> <p>2. The complainant believes there is a racial bias as he and his family are Irish traveller gypsies and the matters reported are hate crimes.</p>	OS3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there further information associated with this case reference? From details observed complainant remains dissatisfied. • What was the rationale for this not being recorded under Schedule 3 of the Police Reform Act 2002?

3	Over the last year the complainant and her husband have reported multiple complaints of bullying harassment and threats to them and their family from the protesters at Stradey Park Hotel which is still continuing to this day. Each and every time they have been fobbed off and not been taken seriously even to the point that a few police officers have told her husband due to the fact he is a town councillor (which is a voluntary position) that he should expect it as part of his job role.	OS3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportionate response from the complaint handler who provided an outcome to the complainant. Another good example of handling of OS3.
4	The complainant reports that she is not getting updates and has to chase up on what is happening.	OS3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unknown why this has been recorded as a Hate Crime?

PSD Comments

Area for Improvement

Consideration to be given towards alternative means of communications, such as telephone. In some cases PSD had persevered with emailing the complainant to establish the complaint with no success.

PSD Response: This is noted. Where appropriate and a telephone number exists, PSD will utilise the telephone number as a final means of attempted contact where email has not been successful.

Supervisors should provide PSD with an update of any action/outcome of a complaint which they have handled informally outside of schedule.

PSD Response: PSD have transitioned to utilising Microsoft Teams for allocating inside Sch3 complaints. Once this process has embedded, we will look to allocate outside Sch3 complaints this same way, which will enable better audit trails of outcomes.

There also needs to be consistency of record keeping, in some cases it was difficult to identify what the outcome of the complaint was or if it had been concluded.

Response: As above, a revised process in due course will assist.

Dip Sample December

1. Feedback gratefully received
2. Feedback gratefully received
3. Feedback gratefully received
4. Feedback gratefully received.
5. Feedback gratefully received
6. Feedback gratefully received. The complainant documented within their complaint form that they could be contacted either by email or phone. PSD reviewed the BWV and ascertained that the actions of police were acceptable. On the complaint form under “What would you like to see happen? It says, “an explanation from the police”. An explanation was provided via email in that the complainant lashed out at officers and their conduct was deemed acceptable. The complainant was advised that if they wish to challenge the

determination they could. It is acknowledged that the complainant has MH difficulties, however I do not believe a phone call was required by virtue of this.

7. Feedback gratefully received. The complainant was provided an email update from the allocated CH on 11/08/24. CH handler acknowledges and apologies for the delay. We do try to close the loop on outside sch 3 matters, however the revised process that we will look to implement in due course will help.
8. Feedback gratefully received. However, a member of staff had made telephone contact with the complainant on 20/12/23. It is recorded that the complainant was happy for an update from officers and that she was going to look for her crime reference so that the complaint handler could ID the right case she referred to. She was going to email. Email sent to complainant on 07/02/24 which indicates that the complaint handler had spoke to complainant again that same day. It says “.....I shall await your email update to what your concerns are before progressing. If I do not receive the update as discussed within 14 days I will close No further action as we do need to progress one way or another.”.
9. Feedback gratefully received. Slight delays in handling as initial PSD complaint handler was out of office and workload had to be re-allocated.
10. Feedback gratefully received

January

1. Feedback gratefully received
2. Feedback gratefully received. The complainant was contacted by the Police Sargent on 26/09/24 who had a 45 minute conversation with him. The complainant was initially dissatisfied as the Insp who was allocated to deal with Outside Schedule 3 failed to make contact. Once it was reallocated, contact was made and the Insp was happy to meet the complainant face to face.
3. Feedback gratefully received
4. Feedback gratefully received. Agree, no requirement for Hate Crime National Factor. I have updated the record.