

Warwickshire Joint Audit and Standards Committee Report Summary

Meeting Date: 23 January 2019

Subject: Standards

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Purpose of the Report:

To provide an update on matters related to standards.

Recommendation:

That the report is noted.

1. Standards Update

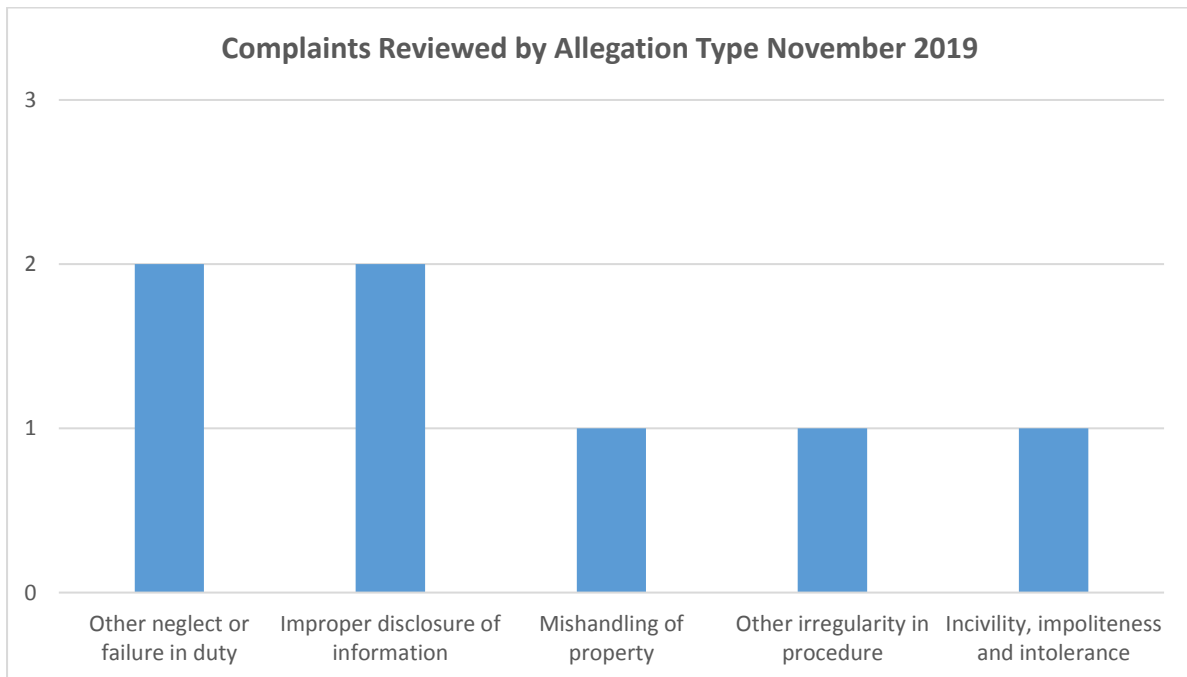
1.1 Work will start to develop on standards in the coming year. Briefings and training are being scheduled to enhance the skills and understanding of the committee members in this work area and out of this should come areas of work to focus on.

1.2 As the Force continues to move services out of the Alliance and to set up new teams and practices, the Committee will be able to delve deeper in to key areas, such as the embedding of the Code of Ethics.

2. Complaint Dip Sampling

2.1 The JASC standards and ethics lead, Helen Knee, and Debbie Mullis undertook a complaint dip sampling process on 6th November 2019.

2.2 7 complaint files were reviewed as part of the dip sampling session. A breakdown by allegation category is shown below:



2.3 Please note, the sum of allegation types in the chart can exceed the number of complaints reviewed where there is more than one allegation per complaint.

2.4 A number of themes were identified through the dip sampling of complaints. These themes will be taken forward for further review at the next dip sampling session and include:

- Concerns regarding timeliness of complainant/officer updates and the completion of the 28 day contact forms. There is often evidence to suggest that regular contact has taken place with the complainant and/or Officer but this is not recorded on the 28 day contact sheet. It was suggested that the initial e-mail from Professional Standards containing the sheet stresses the importance of completion.
- An issue with the time between an Investigating Officer submitting a report and the Appropriate Authority adding comments was highlighted. It was appreciated

that there are busy workloads in the Department, but Professional Standards was asked whether there is guidance in place and if not, if there could be guidance on timescales.

- A question was put to the Professional Standards Department to ask if there is a time limit for service recovery to take place before the case is progressed to a complaint. There were two files reviewed where service recovery had been attempted and then progressed to a proportionate investigation, with long delays.

2.5 An update on the matters raised will be provided by the Professional Standards Department at the next complaint dip sampling session and included in the next report to the Joint Audit and Standards Committee.

2.6 Consideration will be given to exploring particular themes or types of complaint at future dip sampling sessions once we have carried out further sessions and can start to identify themes.

3. Professional Standards Department Update

3.1 For the April to September 2019 period, Warwickshire Professional Standards Department recorded 116 complaints, which is a reduction on the same period in the previous year where there were 156 recorded complaints.

3.2 96% of the cases were recorded within 10 days, compared to an average of 91% nationally. In quarter 2 (July to September) 2019, all complaints were recorded within 10 days.

3.3 The average number of days nationally for finalising local resolution cases is 70, with Warwickshire achieving 46 days during the April to September 2019 period. The national target is to finalise cases in 28 days but this is not achieved nationally.

3.4 In the specified period, Warwickshire's average number of days for completing local investigations was 159 days, slightly higher than the national average of 152 days but lower than the Most Similar Forces group.

3.5 There have been 3 misconduct hearings during this period, with two PC's who would have been dismissed had they not resigned and one PC who was given a 12 month written warning.

3.6 The triage team has been in place since February 2019, with two members of staff in Warwickshire. Following receipt and initial assessment of a complaint, the triage team now attempt to deal with the dissatisfaction 'there and then' to ensure resolution to the satisfaction of the complainant. This process endeavours to provide a proactive response to a complaint with a potential resolution within 72 hours of receipt. The team will also signpost to other organisations if it is not under the remit of the Police.

3.7 The Triage Team has partly led to the reduction in complaints seen so far this financial year, in comparison to the previous year. Resolving low level contacts quickly provides a much improved service to the public who do not have to go through the time of a full complaint process for low level issues.

3.8 The Complaints Reform legislation will lead to changes in the way complaints are handled and recorded. All allegations will need to be recorded, even those lower level cases which are currently resolved by the Triage Team. This will result in a

rise in complaints that will be replicated nationally. The reforms are planned to come in to effect on 1st February 2020.

- 3.9 The handling of complaint appeals for those lower levels cases currently handled by the Police will become the responsibility of the Police and Crime Commissioner under the new legislation. Due to the low number of appeals, the Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner has decided to share a Complaints Appeals Manager post with the West Midlands Commissioner. An appointment has been made and Warwickshire will have a 0.1fte share of the position. The post holder will be based in the West Midlands office but will spend days working locally, in both the PCC's office and Professional Standards.