

Warwickshire Joint Audit and Standards Committee Report Summary

Meeting Date: 17 March 2021

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. Police Complaint Reviews

1.1 The complaint reviews consider whether the complaints process was reasonable and proportionate, with recommendations made to the Police Force if the review is upheld. Recommendations might include, organisational learning, review of policy or procedure, or to reinvestigate the complaint if this was not deemed to have been done properly. There may be a number of allegations in the complaint but only some of these may be upheld in the review process. Any recommendations are provided to the Professional Standards Department (PSD) who have 28 days to send a response to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) confirming if the recommendations are accepted. If the recommendations are agreed, then updates are sought every 28 days by the OPCC until the recommendations have been completed.

1.2 Since the new legislation was implemented on 1st February 2020, the OPCC has received 36 reviews at the time of writing. The majority have been for complaints that were not upheld by the Professional Standards Department but there have been others that were upheld but the complainant was not satisfied that the complaint had been dealt with in a reasonable and proportionate manner.

1.3 For those cases received and completed since the last update the allegations that were upheld by the reviews process included the following:

- Explanation to be provided to some unanswered questions in relation to a criminal case where the complainant felt that they had not been provided with sufficient answers in the investigation or complaints process.
- An organisational apology from the Police for the way a call handler made the complainant feel when they contacted the police.
- PSD advised to provide the names of all officers involved in an allegation when responding to a complaint.
- An amended contact plan has been put in place with a complainant to meet the needs of the individual as a result of the review.
- The PSD email acknowledgement has been updated to take account of the new complaints legislation.

2. Internal Ethics Committee

2.1 The Professional Standards Department set up an Internal Ethics Committee, with the inaugural meeting taking place in October 2020. The Committee discusses ethical dilemmas and has an external Chair from the University of Warwick. The meetings have been put on hold due to Covid restrictions but the next meeting will take place via Microsoft Teams on 9th March 2021. The minutes of the meeting will be shared with the JASC members once available. Helen Knee is the JASC representative on the Committee.

3. Professional Standards Department Update

3.1 There has been a delay in receiving complaint statistics from the IOPC during 2020 due to some technical issues. Although it was hoped that data for the first 3 quarters of the 2020/21 financial year would be available by this time, there have been further delays and the statistics are not expected to be published until April 2021. PSD has provided some internal data to the OPCC but it has not been possible to compare performance to other Forces over this period.

3.2 From 1st April to 31st December 2020, Warwickshire PSD logged or recorded 515 complaints. Rates have been variable each month but show a slight increase on average.

3.3 The highest three complaint types were from the following categories:

- General level of service.
- Police action following contact.
- Decisions.

3.4 From 1st February 2021, under the new complaint reforms, any complaint cases that take over 12 months have to be reported to the OPCC. At time of writing, there were no complaints that had exceeded this timescale.

3.5 The OPCC has requested early notice of any complaints that might go over the 12 month period to ensure that appropriate monitoring can take place.

4. Complaint Dip Sampling

4.1 Unfortunately, it has not been possible to conduct complaint dip sampling due to Covid restrictions. As restrictions start to be lifted, it is hoped that the dip sampling process can recommence.

4.2 It would be useful to compare the outcomes of complaint dip sampling and the complaint reviews process to establish if there are any patterns or trends that emerge.