

 Warwickshire POLICE	PROCEDURE	
Security Classification	OFFICIAL - SENSITIVE	
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PROCEDURE TITLE	Professional Standards Reporting
REFERENCE NUMBER	WP084
Version	1.0

PROCEDURE OWNERSHIP	
DIRECTORATE	CHIEF OFFICERS
BUSINESS AREA	PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION DATE	July 2022
NEXT REVIEW DATE:	July 2025
RISK RATING	LOW
EQUALITY ANALYSIS	LOW

Warwickshire Police welcomes comments and suggestions from the public and staff about the contents and implementation of this policy.
Please e-mail policiesandprocedures@warwickshire.police.uk

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1.0 ABOUT THIS PROCEDURE

The purpose of this procedure is to outline the ways that individuals can report breaches of professional standards in a supportive and confidential environment. It aims to create a climate where all police officers, police staff and members of the Special Constabulary feel a genuine obligation to openness and transparency when reporting breaches of professional standards. Their motivation arising from a desire to maintain integrity of the police service and with knowledge that such action will be universally acknowledged as right.

- 1.1 Additionally, overriding this procedure is the Public Interest Disclosure Act. The aims of this Act are to ensure that information in the public interest is brought to the attention of the appropriate person in order that wrongdoing can be dealt with speedily. It encourages disclosure of information by giving statutory protection against victimisation and unfair dismissal to individuals who make 'protected' disclosures in good faith about certain acts of wrong-doing, or dangers in the workplace. It does so primarily by inserting new provisions into the Employment Rights Act 1996.

2.0 RISK ASSESSMENTS / HEALTH & SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

It is acknowledged that in all cases Warwickshire Police has a duty of care towards any Professional Standards Reporter (PSR). This duty of care will be dealt with via a welfare plan on an individual basis and will be documented by the PSR Welfare Officer.

3.0 PROCEDURE

It is difficult to describe the point at which a professional standards report should be made. However, the Standards of Professional Behaviour clearly define the responsibility of an individual to challenge and report improper conduct, not to ignore it. Staff will be supported by the organisation if they report conduct that has fallen below the standards expected, however, if such a report is found to be malicious or otherwise made in bad faith, then the PSR may be subject to a misconduct investigation.

- 3.0.1 Information should be reported as soon as practicable. Full consideration should be given to the key elements of The Code of Ethics, as found on the [College of Policing website](#).
- 3.0.2 There are a number of ways in which staff can make such reports. These are set out below. It is for the individual making the report to choose which method is the right one for them:

3.1 Report Direct to Line Management

This method has always been available to members of staff and concerns are usually expressed verbally or in written form. It has the advantage of enabling an immediate response, where appropriate, and direct feedback to the individual. It is important that

line management have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities when presented with this type of information.

3.1.1 Where the breach of professional standards is believed to involve the person's line manager, or where for any reason it is felt more appropriate to report it to another manager, this may be done. If there is doubt as to who is an appropriate manager then advice may be sought from the Professional Standards Department (PSD). Line Managers can then assess the information and consider reporting through other means. This report must be recorded at the time of the report in a way that allows organisational memory.

3.1.2 Alternative methods of reporting may be chosen, e.g. where the concerns raised involve PSD then a direct approach to the Chief Constable or the [Independent Office for Police Conduct \(IOPC\)](#) may be considered more suitable.

3.2 Crimestoppers: 0800 555111 & Integrity Line: 0800 111 4444

Crimestoppers provides a medium for providing information anonymously regarding crime and is, therefore, considered to be a valid alternative in appropriate circumstances.

3.2.1 [The Integrity Line](#) confidential phone line provides an independent 24-hour, 7 days a week secure phone-reporting facility. The Integrity Line facility is being offered to all members of our Force and will provide us with an additional facility to raise concerns that we might not feel able to do in the normal way.

3.3 Professional Standards Call-Out Facility.

Some PSD matters may require immediate attention. In urgent cases a full list of PSD staff can be obtained via the OCCI (Operations Communication Centre Inspector) to provide both advice and / or a central point to receive disclosures. For out of hours enquiries details of the on-call PSD representative can be found on the ['rotas' section of the intranet](#).

3.4 Concerns Brought Through the Police Federation and Staff Associations

The Police Federation, Superintendents' Association, Police Staff Trade Unions and other Staff Associations can, and do, play a key role in acting as an agent through which members can relay their concerns in a non-threatening environment. Additionally they are also experienced in dealing with issues in a confidential manner.

3.4.1 The Federation, UNISON and Staff Associations in this process offer independent advice on whether a particular case merits formal reporting. It must be emphasised that these organisations will not forward information without the knowledge and consent of the member they are representing.

3.5 Concerns Brought to the Direct Attention of Professional Standards Department

This alternative has always been available and contact may be made:

- a. Verbally
- b. In writing
- c. By Nominal Intelligence Report (NIR) on-line
- d. Email: ProfessionalStandards@warwickshire.police.uk,
- e. or by personal face to face meeting.

- 3.5.1 Such an approach will be dealt with by staff experienced in dealing with cases involving allegations of breaches of professional standards. When direct reporting is chosen an agreement of the status of the report and the degree of confidentiality necessary will be made between the PSD and the person reporting.
- 3.5.2 Reports can be made anonymously. In particular, where such reports are received outside the PSD, all managers are reminded of their duty to refer anonymous disclosures to the PSD, however, such information will be treated with the utmost caution and corroboration sought at the earliest opportunity. Any subsequent action taken to corroborate such information will firstly be subject to the test of proportionality. This particular method of reporting provides an element of independent and objective assessment of the information provided at the earliest stage. This is beneficial to both the Force and to the person reporting.

3.6 Criminal Case Review Commission

The Public Interest Disclosure Act identifies the Criminal Case Review Commission (CCRC) as the body to which any member of staff can bring to notice any allegation of a miscarriage of justice without fear of recrimination or retribution. Any member of the Police Service can raise concerns with the CCRC in accordance with this procedure. Contact details follow:

[Contact the Criminal Cases Review Commission](#)

3.7 Concerns raised through the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC)

The IOPC is an independent body, whose purpose is to see that complaints made by the public, about police officers or staff are dealt with thoroughly and above all, fairly. Members of Warwickshire Police are entitled to alternatively raise concerns via the IOPC.

[Contact the IOPC](#)

- 3.7.1 The CCRC / IOPC will action the concerns, ensuring that the individual reporting is kept apprised of progress. Whilst the CCRC / IOPC will encourage open reporting, confidentiality when requested will be given the highest priority. All staff should be aware that legal rules governing disclosure could apply.

3.8 Concerns Raised through Independent Charities

Whilst the term “Whistleblower” is recorded throughout the document and the literature attached to this procedure, the term has been found to appear offensive to witnesses and reporters. To that end the term used will be ‘Professional Standards Reporter (PSR)’.

- 3.8.1 ‘Protect’ is an independent charity that provides advice for staff and officers who wish to express concerns about fraud or other serious malpractice. Full details can be obtained from the website listed below, and contact made via email or telephone. Protect (formerly Public Concern at Work)

[Contact ‘Protect’](#)

3.9 Advice on Disclosure to Outside Bodies / Individuals.

Members of the force providing disclosure to external bodies / individuals will gain protection from disciplinary proceedings providing the disclosure is made of a kind and to a person as prescribed as detailed in the previous section on the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and in accordance with this procedure.

- 3.9.1 Disclosure to other third parties is not protected under the 1998 Act; a person making it commits an offence under other legislation, for example, under the Official Secrets Act or the Data Protection Act.
- 3.9.2 All members of the force would have to consider the confidentiality requirements of the Standards of Professional Behaviour.
- 3.9.3 A member of staff contemplating disclosure outside the terms of this procedure should obtain Professional Standards and / or legal advice before doing so. It would be necessary to check that the disclosure was a qualifying disclosure within the meaning of [S.43 \(B\) Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998](#), and that the particular disclosure could be regarded as reasonable.

3.10 Arrangements for supporting personnel.

Having established effective mechanisms through which members of staff can make professional standards reports, it is necessary to create an organisational climate where staff feel confident to report misconduct and corruption. The ethos underpinning the strategy is that where an individual reports breaches in standards they will be valued and supported throughout the process.

- 3.10.1 In most cases the person making the professional standards report will be a confidential source or a witness and / or a victim of crime. The force is committed to providing an enhanced service to such staff in a similar way to that provided to vulnerable victims and witnesses in high priority crime cases.

3.11 Welfare Plan

In both open and confidential cases an agreed welfare plan based on a risk assessment and the guiding principles will be drawn up. This will summarise what each party can expect from the other and outline minimum levels of support given to staff that make professional standards reports. This will act as the benchmark against which steps taken in each case will be judged ([See Appendix A](#)).

3.11.1 A welfare plan should be considered and drawn up and monitored as an ongoing matter, throughout the investigation of any report, by local area management. PSD staff can offer support but not management of any plan. Considerations could be:

- a. Welfare considerations of the Professional Standards Reporter (PSR) and / or other persons / witnesses involved;
- b. Security of the PSR at home and work, and carry out risk assessment. Also consider issues concerning how to maintain confidentiality where applicable;
- c. Arrangements regarding work postings and / or transfers;
- d. Action required by immediate line managers to support the PSR and / or deal with 'team building' aspects in the workplace to prevent / deal with victimisation including discipline sanctions if required;
- e. Specialist action required by Welfare, Occupational Health and / or Personnel Services;
- f. Role of Staff Associations and considerations regarding any conflict of interest involving accused personnel;

3.11.2 The agreed welfare plan will be conveyed to the person who has made the report.

3.12 Feedback on Progress of Investigation

The member of staff making the report will be kept updated by the Investigating Officer on progress of the investigation. This is particularly important when open reporting has occurred. When confidential reporting has taken place the wishes of the staff member making the report should be established at the outset. If they wish to be kept informed this should be facilitated as far as is practicable without compromising confidentiality or imposing undue burdens on the investigation.

3.13 Debriefing of Person Involved

An important part of the process will be to facilitate a debrief with the individual making the professional standards report. A debriefing session can often act in a therapeutic way for individuals and also provides an opportunity to identify both good and bad practice. It is a two-way process where the individual can raise outstanding issues and concerns, and the Service can restate its commitment to the process.

- 3.13.1 Debriefings will take place throughout the course of an investigation by the Investigating Officer following consultation with PSD where appropriate. However, at the end of the case a full debrief must be undertaken irrespective of any previous debriefs. Staff conducting debriefing must consider 'disclosure issues' in criminal cases if records are made in any format written or otherwise.

3.14 Reward / Recognition System

There will be occasions when the organisation would wish to recognise the actions of an individual who has made a professional standards report. This might include a letter of appreciation or in some circumstances; consideration may be given to awarding a formal commendation in public or in private. The Deputy Chief Constable will at the conclusion of a case consider the most appropriate method of either rewarding or recognising the actions of the Professional Standards Reporter.

- 3.14.1 It remains important to consider each case on its merits and be guided by the wishes of the individual concerned. No record will be made on the PDR or personnel file of the PSR without their consent.

3.15 Return to Work Following Prolonged Period of Absence

A person making a professional standards report may experience a greater level of stress and anxiety as a result, whilst support processes will attempt to minimise this problem, stress may on occasions lead to a period of absence from work. In such cases it may be necessary to make special arrangements to manage an individual's return to work.

- 3.15.1 In these cases the organisation should consider all the circumstances and may decide to ignore such periods of sickness absence when making deployment / promotion decisions where absence is a qualifying factor. Decisions will be dealt with on a case by case basis, and by doing so demonstrate our commitment to ensuring integrity within Warwickshire Police

4.0 ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Role of Line Management

Line management will be required to provide an action plan setting out clear lines of responsibility to ensure the professional management of individual reporter's welfare / working conditions:

- a. Actions outlined in this procedure are undertaken;
- b. An environment where members of staff are confident in coming forward to make such reports is developed and maintained;
- c. In open cases where the identity of the individual and the fact that a report has been made is known to colleagues, such reports are responded to promptly, genuinely and with sensitivity;

- d. The individuals actions are acknowledged as right and their approach to them is both supportive and positive;
- e. Protection from victimisation or harassment is provided;
- f. Positive and robust action is taken in cases of victimisation or harassment;
- g. Action is taken to prevent any other adverse repercussions including consideration of using restorative intervention and team building techniques to address personnel issues that may arise in the workplace;
- h. Only positive and supportive comments are reflected on the individual's personal file, and then only when the individual concerned agrees to their inclusion.
- i. In every case reported that falls within the terms of this procedure, a 'confidential' report, outlining the circumstances and initial action taken, will be forwarded immediately to PSD. Initial action will remain the responsibility of the line manager and may include a request for appointment of an Investigating Officer and actions normally taken on commencement of an internal investigation, in all cases of doubt, the PSD should be contacted, initially by telephone.

4.2 Role of Professional Standards Department

The Professional Standards Department will undertake the following:

- a. Provide support, guidance and advice at every stage of process;
- b. Ensure the procedure is followed in each case from beginning to end;
- c. The collection, evaluation, analysis and dissemination of intelligence (where appropriate);
- d. Ensure confidentiality issues are properly handled in accordance with this procedure;
- e. Ensure all case papers from the point at which report is made, through investigation, to prosecution stage, either criminal or discipline, are clearly marked indicating that the case falls within the procedure;
- f. Ensure compliance with the procedure;
- g. When appropriate keep the person who has made the report updated;
- h. Act as conduit for identifying good practice;
- i. Report to the Warwickshire Police Ethics Committee who will review and monitor progress.

4.3 Role of Force Occupational Health Service / Welfare Service

The occupation health / welfare service will provide information, advice and support to managers and individuals where appropriate.

4.4 Role of Police Staff Associations and Police Staff Trade Unions

To offer support, advice and assistance, wherever necessary to all parties involved.

5.0 ADMINISTRATION

All paperwork in respect of a PSR will be marked appropriately in accordance with the General Data Protection Scheme (GDPR).

6.0 MONITORING / EVALUATION

At the conclusion of a case involving this procedure it will be reviewed by the Chief Inspector, or designated officer, to ensure compliance with the procedure and to check for any adverse effect on any underrepresented group. The procedure will be reviewed every three years in line with risk rating.

7.0 CONSULTATION

This Procedure has been endorsed by the Joint Negotiating and Consultative Committee following consultation with representatives from the critical friends group, staff associations and networks.

<i>Chief Officer/Business Lead Consulted</i>	<i>Date Authorisation Received</i>
Superintendent Daf Goddard PSD	October 2021

8.0 DOCUMENT HISTORY

The history and rationale for change to procedure will be recorded using the chart below:

Date	Author / Reviewer	Amendment(s) & Rationale	Date approval / adoption
Oct 2021	DI James Coleman	Single Force Policy	

9.0 ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS

The Equality Analysis (EA), Health & Safety Assessment (HAS) and Risk Assessment (RA) associated with this document are available on request.

Appendix A

Example Welfare Plan for Professional Standards Reporter

Marking: Use appropriate GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations) marking scheme.

Statement of Expectation –If applicable, to be completed by Head of Professional Standards Department or designated officer and will only be disseminated on a ‘need to know’ basis as appropriate.

Status of Report: e.g. Criminal / Misconduct enquiry

Eg Criminal Enquiry – Misuse of WP computer system.

Include brief statement of facts.

Status of Professional Standards Reporter: Open Witness / Covert Witness / Confidential Source / CHIS

Professional Standards Reporters Details: NAME (if applicable)

Professional Standards Reporters Line Manager: NAME

Professional Standards Reporters Nominated Welfare officer: NAME

Responsible for ensuring welfare and support both offered and delivered are appropriate and subject to regular review and risk assessment.

Investigating Officer: NAME

Responsible for investigating reports made and providing regular feedback on the progress of the report to the Professional Standards Reporter.

Professional Standards Department Investigating Officer: NAME (if applicable)

Where appropriate, appointed from within the Professional Standards department following consultation with the relevant Chief Superintendent. Responsible for independently investigating reports made and providing regular feedback on progress of the report to the Professional Standards Reporter.

Appendix A

Liaison Officer: NAME

A senior manager who will have local independent responsibility for ensuring that any actions relating to the individual are carried out, e.g. local appointment of a 'friend'. All contact / interaction should be recorded on a contact sheet.

Professional Standards Reporter 'Friend': NAME

Nominated by either the officer or other independent party e.g. Police Federation. Responsible for ensuring that the suspended officer is being treated positively, and fairly in line with the Professional Standards policy and procedure.

Counsellor / Occupational Health: NAME

Occupational Health to be informed and nominated worker established.

Risk Assessment:

This risk assessment is the responsibility of the Professional Standards Reporters Nominated Welfare Officer. It should be completed immediately a person has been declared a Professional Standards Reporter, and will be subject to a review at least every four weeks.

The risk assessment is intended to identify any threats to a Professional Standards Reporter and their resulting vulnerability. To help prepare a threat assessment ask the following questions:

1. Is a real threat being made?
2. Is the person making the threat able to carry it out?
3. Is the threat an imminent one?
4. Is the threat to life or to cause injury?

For the purpose of this policy a threat is defined as a declaration or indication of an intention to inflict harm and may be sourced from intelligence or fact or both. Whilst vulnerability is defined as the extent of exposure against the possibility of harm. For example, who knows where they are, work, home and family members.

Appendix A

RISK

Threat + Vulnerability = RISK (The degree of probability of harm occurring.)

The RISK Level will be categorised as follows:

VERY HIGH

Specific intelligence or significant incidents of intimidation indicates that the witness is at a level of threat whereby life-threatening risks are imminent.

HIGH

Specific intelligence, recent events or the particular circumstances of the witness indicates that they are likely to be targeted and is, therefore, at a high level of threat.

SIGNIFICANT

Recent general intelligence in relation to the circumstances of the witness indicates that they are likely to be targeted and are at a significant level of threat.

MODERATE

The circumstances of the witness indicates that they are potentially going to be targeted for assault and is at a moderate level of threat.

LOW

There is nothing to indicate that the witness will out for an assault. However, the general circumstances on the intelligence reports suggest that they may be subject of threats or intimidation and is at a low level of threat.

Appendix A

Actions

Actions and activities to deliver welfare support to the Professional Standards Reporter are to be recorded in the table below. The ownership of this plan rests ultimately with the Divisional Commander/ Head of Department via the nominated welfare officer. To reflect the possibility of a lengthy investigation this plan should be a living document and reflect the content of the welfare officers log of contact with the Professional Standards Reporter. Hardcopies can be printed to facilitate the review and be signed and dated.

Date	Action	Owner (Name)	Agreed by subject (date)	Target date	Result (May be recorded in welfare officers log)

Review Date:

To be decided by the senior divisional / departmental overseeing manager. However, as a minimum, a four weekly review will be carried out.