

**DEVON AND CORNWALL POLICE AUTHORITY
PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND COMPLAINTS MONITORING GROUP**

Meetings of the Professional Standards and Complaints Monitoring Group were held on 6 March 2008 and 28 April 2008

Further information on the items referred to below can be found in the agenda, reports and notes for the meeting held on 6 March 2008 and 28 April 2008

Matters discussed included:

1. Study of Case Files

The Working Group dip sampled files based on a specific theme on (the 28 April meeting the topic was complaints regarding custody)

Issues that the group discussed included

- Members of the Group felt reassured that the reports and processes were clear and sophisticated as well as the accompanying audit trail.
- The use of the word 'advice' added to files caused some confusion and it was agreed that it would be better to substitute this with 'constructive guidance', as this fits better with the police service as a learning organisation.
- The purpose of checklists that could be used when reviewing a file
- Data availability using the Centurian system
- The identification and implementation of organisational learning arising from complaints

2. Statistics Complaints Monitoring

The statistics report regarding complaints received from 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008 was considered.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- The implementation of Centurion.
- There is a concern that the target set for 'Proportion of Local Resolutions' is not realistic and will be difficult to achieve.
- Upheld appeals by the IPCC
- Crime and gross misconduct investigations are now solely allocated to the central PSD unit for investigation.
- The need for statistics to be available in a timely fashion
- Contextual information as well as the basic statistics would be helpful
- All the South West Forces produce the same standard information for their Chief officer teams in order to make comparisons and benchmarking easier and more relevant
- The small proportion of complaints going to Local Resolution is a cause for concern and the Chief Officer Group will be monitoring this
- The recording of the ethnicity of complainants still required further attention and complainants need to be encouraged and reminded to provide ethnicity information
- Minority groups are being encouraged to make complaints and the Force is working hard to build confidence amongst groups such as the LGBT community
- Review of targets

3. Update of High Profile Cases, Suspended Officers and Work by the Anti Corruption Intelligence Unit

Updates of high profile cases were provided. The meeting also received information and statistics regarding suspended officers and work being undertaken by the Anti Corruption Intelligence Unit.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- The possibility of this group, at a future meeting, to scrutinise the audit trail and decision-making processes regarding suspending officers.
- The recent debate between the IPCC and the Federation regarding the length of suspensions and the anecdotal belief that a disproportionate time was spent on investigations prolonged by appeals to IPCC.

4. Police Authority Independent Members to sit on Misconduct Hearings

The Assistant Chief Executive reported that an advert had been placed in a local newspaper and in excess of 80 application packs had been requested. Initial returns suggested a good response rate of completed application forms. Shortlisting and interviews dates had been set – the selection panel comprising John Smith, Jill Owen and Jeremy Rowe. The scheduled timetable is for appointments to be made by the beginning of July.

5. Devon and Cornwall Police Officers with Criminal Convictions or Cautions

At the meeting on 6 March the Deputy Chief Constable provided a verbal update on the content of the report explaining the policy and decision-making processes involved, which are based on Home Office guidance. He explained the role of the Vetting unit, highlighted as good practice by HMIC, and explained the benefits of the new system in place in ensuring greater consistency; an agreed application of standards and a more appropriate level of scrutiny.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- The historic perspective and impact on consistency.
- Members of the group were satisfied with the content and approach of the new policy and its impact on the decision-making processes.
- Police Authority members' requests for information and relevant protocols.

6. Facebook and Internet Social Networks

Valerie Bennane and Louise Curtis gave a presentation on 'Risks to the Force from Social Networking websites'. It highlighted the issues and risks involved i.e. personal safety of the individual; discredit to the Force and the service in general; organisational security and national security.

The Professional Standards Department has contacted individual officers and sent out two Forcewide messages as well, which have had a marked effect. The way forward is a combination of education and marketing and providing advice on personal safety. The Deputy Chief Constable stressed that a proportionate approach is needed and that education is key.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- Transferees
- The Force is undertaking a Security Audit
- More in-depth work will be undertaken across all Social Networking websites; this work will take place later this year.
- Organisational awareness / environmental scanning.
- IT capacity of monitoring and scrutiny.

Mr Mike Nevitt
Chair, Professional Standards and Complaints Monitoring Group