



**Lancashire  
Constabulary**

police and communities together

**REPORT TO: JOINT AUDIT AND ETHICS COMMITTEE**

**DATE: 7 MARCH 2016**

**REPORT AUTHOR: MEMBERS OF AUDIT & ETHICS COMMITTEE**

**SUBJECT: SCRUTINY OF COMPLAINT FILES – FEBRUARY 2016**

## **1 Issue for Consideration**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to enable Members of the Committee to comment at the meeting on the Constabulary's procedures for handling and investigating complaints in respect of files they have viewed.

## **2 Recommendation**

- 2.1 To receive a report on the scrutiny of complaints files.

## **3 Background**

- 3.1 The Commissioner has requested that the Joint Audit and Ethics Committee undertake the scrutiny of complaints against police officers and police staff.
- 3.2 In the last quarter, a Member of the Committee reviewed 13 files which were selected at random and comprised of a cross section of complaint type. The files reviewed had been opened over a period from March 2015 to January 2016, all of which had been closed
- The files can be analysed by type as follows:

<b>Complaint type</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
Local Resolution by Division	5	3 were resolved. 1 was appealed to PSD and the appeal was not upheld
Direction & Control	4	None of the complaints were upheld
Full investigation by PSD	1	Not upheld
Full investigation by Division	1	Not upheld
Complaint withdrawn	2	

The review also looked at a further 2 complaint files where the complaint issues had been brought to the attention of the PCC. Those two files remain open.

3.3 a) There were administrative delays in dealing with 4 of the cases, including delay in recording the complaint and initial contact with complainant. PSD have commented that the system for dealing with complaints was centralised and streamlined on 1 September 2015, and 3 of the cases with delays were dealt with under the old system. They are confident that most of these delays would not occur under the new system.

b) There were also investigative delays:

- one case which was sent for local handling, took 8 months to conclude,
- the NSR local investigation took 5 months
- NSR PSC investigation 7 months

PSD commented that, given the caseload and current resourcing the length of the NSR investigations was understandable. Additional resourcing in the Department from April 2016 should result in future time scales being reduced.

c) PSD commented that issues raised in two local handling cases :one where there was administrative delay, and one where there was investigation delay, have already been identified for training issues/feedback.

3.4 Previously concerns had been expressed about the language used and style of writing to complainants. This review found that there were substantial improvements in the language and style of correspondence and there were no examples of serious failings in this area.. There were good examples of positive engagement with complainants.

3.5 The 2 additional files remain open and it is not considered appropriate to comment further on these in this report.

3.6 Overall ,the Members did not have any issues of serious concern and were satisfied that the complaint handling process was being followed appropriately and in line with statutory and IPCC requirements.

## 4 Implications

<b>Financial:</b>	Resource requirements to enable development and implementation of the above can be found from existing
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	budgets.
<b>Legal:</b>	
<b>Equality Impact Assessment:</b>	
<b>Risks and Impact:</b>	
<b>Link to Police and Crime Plan:</b>	

## 5 List of attachments / appendices

## 6 Background Papers

- None

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