

Report on dip sample of complaint cases – Conducted 19th November 2019

A random sample of 10 complaints from a set of 148 files was examined to assess quality and timeliness within the process.

A relatively small sample was examined on this occasion as some of the sampled cases were complex in nature, involving legal proceedings, and necessitated a more extensive review. Cases examined included examples of:

- Local handling
- Non Special Requirement (NSR) investigations
- Appealed cases

The assistance and openness of Police HQ personnel in facilitating the sampling audit is acknowledged.

Nature of complaints

With regard to the files examined, complaints related, amongst other things, to Police Officer action when attending incidents, standards of service received, administrative delays and disclosure of personal information.

Recording and resolution of complaints

From the sample considered, it is evident that the initial 10 day period to record a complaint is being actively used and that, where appropriate, service recovery is proactively attempted as a means of achieving a speedy response and resolution to the complaint. Where service recovery is not possible, complaints are subsequently converted to formal complaints. It should also be noted, where it is clear from initial assessment that service recovery is not appropriate, that the formal complaint resolution procedure is adopted.

With regard to time taken between the recording of the complaint and the complaint being finalised, it was noted that the majority of files indicated a 3 to 5 month period with time often being spent in attempting to make contact with the complainant. Two specific cases took over 12 months, however, in both cases it was apparent that a significant factor in this delay related to legal proceedings or quasi-legal correspondence.

Quality of correspondence

Overall the quality of correspondence with complainants was very high with a mixture of personalised letters where appropriate and standard letters accompanied by attached investigation reports. The overall impression is one of complete transparency in that everything that has been done in regard to a complaint is made available to the complainant, including any findings of poor service.

Lessons learned

Where complaints were upheld, these fell into two main categories: individual Police Officer actions (e.g. lack of awareness of being monitored when communicating information; delays in follow ups)

and organisational or systematic failure (e.g. workloads not being re-allocated when Officers on sick or annual leave; uncertainty as to which department is taking responsibility). It is evident that, from an individual perspective, lessons are learned as management action is documented. However, from a system perspective, it is less clear how organisational lessons are disseminated.

Proposed future work

It is proposed that the next sampling exercise will focus on the following areas:

- Application of service recovery
- Recording & resolution timescales
- Dissemination of organisational learning

SUMMARY OF CASES SAMPLED (not for inclusion in paper submitted to JAEC)

CO/00012/18

CO/00346/18

CO/00087/19

CO/00089/19

CO/00116/19

CO/00142/19

CO/00234/19

CO/00241/19

CO/00297/19

CO/00355/19