

Joint Audit & Ethics Committee – Monday, 13th June 2022

Dip-Sampling of Complaints – Grievance Audit

Report by Committee Members Paul Richardson and David Jones

1. Introduction

- 1.1 A visit was undertaken to Lancashire Constabulary HQ on behalf of the Joint Audit & Ethics Committee (JAEC) on 26th April 2022 to conduct an audit of grievance cases closed during the period 1st January to 31st March 2022.
- 1.2 David Jones (DJ) and Paul Richardson (PR), JAEC members, initially met with Emma Cooke (EC), Constabulary Employee Relations Manager, and were provided with documentation relating to the current grievance procedure, introduced in June 2020 as well as files which had been closed during the reference period.
- 1.3 DJ and PR wish to place on record their thanks to EC for the time and effort which had gone into preparing for the audit and for the assistance provided on the day.

2. Grievance file audit findings

- 2.1 A total of eight files were examined, comprising all the closed cases during the period under review. All files had been progressed under the June 2020 procedure. The findings of the JAEC representatives are outlined below.
- 2.2 Overall summary

The panel were content that all cases had been investigated and processed in accordance with the designated procedure
- 2.3 Areas of good practice
 - Where individuals had submitted a grievance, welfare support had been proactively offered to those individuals as part of the process.
 - Where a grievance had been submitted, attempts were made by the Constabulary to reach an informal resolution as an alternative to formal resolution and, where appropriate, mediation was offered. However, the formal procedure was adopted where appropriate.

- Where a submitted grievance did not fulfil the definition of a grievance as outlined in the procedure (for example, if the grievance related to existing terms and conditions), this was identified at an early stage and the applicant was duly informed.
- A number of files contained, where appropriate, an Internal Decision Template which outlined the rationale behind the proposed conclusion for the grievance, including risks and implications.

2.4 Areas for further comment

- The visit was used to test a revised audit template. However, due to the comprehensive nature of the documentation within the files, a simplified version will be developed by the panel for future audits.
- Given the findings of the panel in the previous two visits and the relatively small number of cases, it is proposed that future audit visits be carried out on a six monthly basis.

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