**Police complaints – Annual statistics for England and Wales 2022/23**

**Introduction**

1.1 The annual police complaints statistics were published on 5 October 2023, this covers the period 1 April 2022 - 31 March 2023. This is the third set of statistics published since the new police complaints regime was introduced on 1 February 2020.

**2. Findings**

2.1 There is recognition by the IOPC that there has been significant change to the complaints system and they advise to remain cautious when comparing figures with previous years as they are in a testing phase. This year’s figures suggest more complaints are being dealt with more quickly, as the new system intended, with fewer resulting in lengthy investigations

2.2 In 2022/23, there have been 81,142 complaint cases logged by forces nationally. This was an 8% increase on the total logged in 2021/22, which is likely linked to the simplifying of the system and the widening in the definition of a complaint to ‘any expression of dissatisfaction’.

In Hampshire, there were 3,729 cases logged. This puts it 3rd out of 44 forces in terms of volume alone.

2.3 It is recognised there are considerable differences in the size of police forces across England and Wales, which impacts on the number of complaint cases. The national average is 363 cases per 1,000 employees, the Hampshire rate is 646 per 1,000, putting it 2nd out of 44 forces.

2.4 On average, it takes forces five working days to log complaints from the date they were made, although most forces (29) logged complaints in five working days or less. The average in Hampshire is two working days.

In terms of initial contact with the complainant to understand their complaint and to seek their views on how it should be handled, the average number of days to do this is seven working days.

In Hampshire, the average is two working days, putting it in the top 11 forces for timeliness in contacting the complainant. This is an improvement from six working days in the previous year.

2.5 The new complaints system allows for complaints to be dealt with informally if it can be resolved quickly and to the satisfaction of the complainant. If this is not possible, or the complainant wishes it to be handled formally (in accordance with legislation and with a right of review at the end of the process), it must be formally recorded. Nationally, 31,620 complaint cases were formally recorded.

In Hampshire, 644 cases were recorded formally, which is roughly 17% of all cases logged, putting it 20th out of 44 forces.

The approach adopted by PSD’s Complaint Resolution Unit is to remedy complaints promptly to the complainants’ satisfaction through informal measures, such as by providing an explanation by email or phone after making initial enquires from available sources of information. The flexibility in the new system means there will be different ways to handle complaints and some forces will choose to handle matters in different ways to other forces. This is illustrated in Hampshire with 68% of cases handed informally, compared to the national average of 44%.

42% of formally recorded complaints were initially handled informally.

2.6 A complaint case may contain multiple allegations, and each allegation is allocated a category which aims to capture the root of the dissatisfaction. For Hampshire, the nature of the complaints are ordered by volume as follows:

* Delivery of duties or service (covers police action after contact with the public and the general level of service the police offer. Typically, these types of complaints could be about property not being returned or a member of the public not being given a regular update on progress after reporting a crime);
* Police powers, policies and procedures (including use of force, stop and search, arrest/detention);
* Individual behaviours (unprofessional attitude, impolite tone and language, lack of fairness and impartiality);
* Handling of or damage to property/premises;
* Access and/or disclosure of information.

2.7 The time taken to informally handle allegations is an average of 16 days nationally. In Hampshire, it takes just seven working days, the joint 4th quickest in the country. In 70% of cases, Hampshire provided an explanation to remedy the complaint informally.

2.8 For formal allegations handled otherwise than by investigation, the national average is 98 working days, in Hampshire, it takes an average of 83 days (81 days in 2021/22).

For formal allegations handled by investigation, the national average is 159 working days, in Hampshire, it takes an average of 219 days (133 days in 2021/22). This is likely to be due to an increase in complexity of cases and demand. This will be kept under review with PSD in our monthly oversight meetings to understand any factors that may have influenced this increase.

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| **Hampshire – Formal complaint cases resulting in actions below:** | |
| Explanation | 55% |
| No further action | 39% |
| Apology | 11% |
| Learning from reflection | 3% |
| Organisational learning | 1% |
| Referral to Reflective Practice Review Process (RPRP) | 1% |

2.9 Nationally, of those formal allegations not investigated, the majority (67%) found the service provided was acceptable. Of those formal allegations that were investigated, there was no case to answer in 47% of instances.

For Hampshire, it was determined that the service provided was acceptable in 63% of formal allegations. For those handled by investigation, 81% were found to be service provided was acceptable.

2.10 A complainant has a right to apply for a review where a complaint has been formally recorded. The independent review body will be either the OPCC or the IOPC, depending on the circumstances of the complaint.

2.11 These are the figures for the number of reviews that have been undertaken:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Police force** | **Number of complaint cases finalised under Schedule 3** | **Total LPB reviews received** | **Total IOPC reviews received** | **Total reviews received** | **Number of reviews as % of complaint cases finalised** |
|  | **N** | **N** | **N** | **N** | **%** |
| Hampshire | 684 | 100 | 68 | 168 | 25% |
| **Total** | **30,521** | **6,357** | **1,991** | **5315** | **21%** |

2.12 The average number of working days for the OPCC to complete LPB reviews is 71 days, the national average is 64 and the most similar force is 46 days. The average number of working days for the IOPC to complete Hampshire reviews is 130, the national average for the IOPC is 133.

2.13 Of those reviews that were completed during the 2022/23 year by the OPCC, the percentage of complaint outcomes that were not reasonable and proportionate was 15%, the national average is 19%. The OPCC made a recommendation to the PSD for each upheld review. (The OPCC is the review body mainly for complaints handled otherwise than by investigation).

Of those reviews that were completed during the 2022/23 year by the IOPC, the percentage of complaint outcomes non-investigation that were not reasonable and proportionate was 38%, and for complaint outcomes by investigation it was 33%. The IOPC did not provide any recommendation for the upheld decision, however they made 14 directions to the force in 2022/23.