

Complaints & Standards Committee

Update – March 26

The Complaints & Standards Committee (CSC) is made up of independent community members who review how Thames Valley Police handles complaints. We don't reinvestigate cases; we check the *fairness, quality and clarity* of the complaints process to help improve trust and confidence.

1. Activity This Period

- **Meetings date:** 20 Mar 2026
- **Independent Committee members present:** 9
- **Cases scrutinised:** 11
- **Questions / observations raised:** 9

2. What We Looked At

The overall theme of complaints was "policy and procedure issues". A summary of the types of issues brought to scrutiny this period:

- Insufficient care demonstrated to the complainant when he threatened to bang his head against the side of the van
- Poor communication following a 999 call
- Excessive force used during arrest (Committee found no issues with handling of this complaint)

3. What the Committee Found

The Committee identified the following learning points and observations:

- Officer language and communication with complainants.
- Clarity and accuracy of deadlines provided to complainants including 28-day updates
- Explanation of 999 grading decisions and expectations set with victims.
- Inefficiency in how a case was allocated across departments.

4. What Happens Next

Learning points were identified relating to the following items which Professional Standards Department (PSD) was asked to support improvements on:

- Informal learning for officers when language or approach could be improved.
- Ensuring clearer explanations when 999 calls are regraded.
- Improving clarity in allocation and notification of complaint processes.

The Independent Members noted examples of excellent officer conduct and asked for positive practice to be a standing agenda item going forward. Examples from this meeting include:

- DCI Richard Cow is to be commended on his prompt responses, clear concern for the complainant, offer of personal conversations to clarify the reasons for actions taken and strong reassurance that she had done nothing wrong in talking to TVP about her concerns. This was considered extremely positive for the transparency of the force's response to complaints and ensuring that voices are heard.
- The investigating officer documented clearly that the BWV was reviewed and did not support the complaint. This was explained well and clearly in the outcome detail.
- It was really positive practice that the Officer visited the complaint to explain the situation to them as well as taking down the [social media] post to help relationships

PSD provided broader update on actions linked to the recent HMICFRS report, including strengthened 28-day updates, improved guidance, and new checklists to support consistency.

5. Why This Matters

Independent scrutiny helps ensure complaints are handled fairly, clearly, and in line with national guidance. This transparency supports stronger community trust and helps Thames Valley Police improve the experience of people who raise concerns.

If you have feedback about your experience with policing, we encourage you to share it — your voice directly shapes improvements.