



## Complaints & Standards Committee

### Meeting Minutes

**Date:** 20 March 2026

**Time:** 10:00–12:00

**Location:** Online / Hybrid

#### Attending:

|                                  |                           |                             |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Jonathan South (Inde Chair) (JS) | Anna Murphy (AM)          | Lisa Honess, OPCC (LH)      |
| Sarah Holding (SHo)              | Christine Zammit (CZ)     | Sarah Harper, TVP PSD (SHa) |
| John Wolff (JW)                  | Claire Childs (CC)        | Paul Thomas TVP PSD (PT)    |
| Richard Burdon (RB)              | Keith Budgen (KB)         | Rena Galardziak (RG)        |
| Anita Keeler (AK)                | Rachel Gilbert, OPCC (RG) | Phil McLean (PM)            |

**Apologies:** Denise Varley (DV), Chris Westcott (CW), Vicki Waskett, OPCC (VW), Ian Holding (IH)

### 1. Welcome and Introductions

JS opened the meeting, welcomed members, and introduced new attendee **KB**. Members and PSD representatives introduced themselves. The Committee now comprises **12 members**, with natural turnover expected across the two–four year tenure cycle. Confirmed no AI bots in use.

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### 2. Minutes & Actions – reviewed, see Actions Log

- Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.
- See Actions Log for updates on previous actions.
- New guides on Informal, OTBI and Formal complaints as well as changes to scrutiny forms are very helpful and no further changes required at this time.

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### 3. Case Scrutiny Session

Four cases were pre-identified for discussion. Independent members led on questions and PSD responded.

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#### 3.1 Case 1613/25 – Use of Language During Arrest

**Main Query:** Whether officer’s comment (“leave him to it”) to a self-harming detainee constituted unacceptable service.

**Committee Reflections:**

- Language viewed as unhelpful and potentially escalating.
- Concern raised regarding reputational risk if incident escalated or caused harm.
- Recognition of officers' difficult circumstances and subject's extensive risk markers.
- Discussion on how learning can be fed back without unfairly penalising officers acting under pressure.
- Suggestion that informal learning opportunities following upheld complaints would be beneficial.

**PSD Response:**

- Decision of "acceptable service" based on totality of circumstances and risk profile.
- Acknowledged comment was not ideal but considered low-level in context.
- Officer was continually observing detainee; healthcare checks followed.
- PSD agreed learning could be highlighted informally in similar cases.

**Outcome:** No change to case decision; learning recommendation to be considered for PSD internal training.

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**3.2 Case 4077/25 – Response Time / Seven-Day Deadline**

Reviewer highlighted that a seven-day response window was calculated incorrectly (closed before 7 full days had passed).

**Committee Recommendation:**

Future letters should state a *specific calendar date*, not "within seven days".

**PSD Response:**

Agreed. Process will be amended; staff will be encouraged to provide explicit deadlines and utilise workflow reminders.

**Outcome:** Learning point accepted.

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**3.3 Case 2299/25 – School Incident / 999 Response**

Concerns were raised regarding:

- Lack of clarity in explaining 999 grading.
- Head teacher's dissatisfaction with perceived non-attendance.
- Communication gaps during complaint handling.

**PSD Clarifications:**

- The intruder had already left by the time of the 999 call, therefore the risk was reduced and call downgraded appropriately.
- Officers attended later the same day, secured CCTV, took statements.
- Offender (youth) was arrested within a week for multiple linked incidents.

- Complaint resolution delay was partly due to Youth Justice process.
- Organisational learning issued to Control Room on explaining downgrades more clearly.

**Committee View:**

Clearer initial explanations could have prevented the complaint.

**Outcome:** Learning action remains with Control Room.

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### 3.4 Case 170/25 – Domestic-related Case with Allocation Delays

Committee noted:

- Confusion between areas regarding ownership.
- Complaint delayed significantly.
- Reason given (“backlog”) did not reflect the actual cause (allocation ambiguity).

**PSD Response:**

- Acknowledged complexity when officers move between departments.
- Confirmed need to strengthen clarity in allocation process.
- Recognised that explanation given to complainant could have been more transparent.

**Outcome:** Action for PSD to review allocation and notification processes.

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### 4. Broader Themes Highlighted Across Cases

- Consistent need for improved **communication with complainants**, particularly around delays and expectations.
  - Importance of capturing **learning for officers**, even when service is acceptable.
  - Recognition of **good practice**—members requested a standing agenda item to highlight positive examples from cases reviewed.
  - Reputational risk considerations increasingly important; members referenced how perception differs for key community figures.
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### 5. HMICFRS Report – PSD Update

PSD provided a verbal update on progress against Areas for Improvement (AFIs):

**Key Actions Underway**

- **Dip sampling & scrutiny checks** now embedded, with Microsoft Forms capturing trend data.
- **28-day update requirements** strengthened with new checklists for Investigating Officers (IOs).
- **New discrimination-complaint checklist** created, based on IOPC guidance.
- **Appropriate Authority (AA) sign-off** processes corrected and retrospectively applied.
- **Improved Terms of Reference** guidance being drafted.

- **Investigation plan** structure being designed for both complaints and conduct matters.
- **Reputational risk** now flagged at triage stage, with referral to coordination meetings where appropriate.

Committee noted PSD's commitment to improvement and the considerable volume of work completed since the HMICFRS visit.

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## 6. Misconduct Training for CSC Members

- Training planned for **April**.
  - Initial focus: **misconduct cases arising from complaints**.
  - Members to receive **pre-read** on standards of professional behaviour and conduct regulations.
  - Plan to pair members for consistency, mirroring the complaints review process.
  - Potential future attendance at misconduct hearings to observe the process.
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## 7. Key Messages for Publication

Members agreed the following should be included in public-facing key messages:

1. PSD to adopt **specific deadlines** in correspondence (rather than generic timescales).
  2. Committee welcomed PSD's continued **improvements to processes**, particularly around communication.
  3. Committee noted **examples of excellent officer conduct**, emphasising that scrutiny recognises good practice as well as areas for improvement.
  4. Work underway to expand scrutiny into **misconduct cases** later in 2026.
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## 8. Any Other Business

- Proposal to include "positive practice identified" as a standing agenda item.
  - No additional questions raised by online participants.
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## 9. Meeting Close

JS thanked committee members, PSD colleagues, and OPCC staff for their input.  
Group photo to be taken for website and future OPCC communications.

**Meeting closed at approximately 12:00.**

**Chair please complete feedback form at this link if not done already:**  
**[Feedback form for Scrutiny and Advisory Groups – Fill in form](#)**

### Next meeting

24<sup>th</sup> June 2026 10am-12pm

Complaint theme: Policy & Procedure Issues

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| REF<br>MMYY# | ACTION                                                                                                                               | OWNER   | NOTES                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | CURRENT<br>STATUS | COMPLETED<br>DATE |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 0625/8       | Look at what PSD meetings Committee members might be able to attend                                                                  | RG      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Closed            | 20/3/26           |
| 0825/2       | Local LCU launch events to be shared with the Committee via LH once confirmed.                                                       | DM/PM   | The CSC will be updated once these meetings have been planned.                                                                                                                                                                | Closed            | 20/3/26           |
| 0825/4       | Complete the mandatory training by end of December                                                                                   | Members | LH check                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Ongoing           |                   |
| 1225/1       | Explore options to provide laptops to volunteers and investigating new digital platforms to improve meeting and redaction processes. | RG      | 20/3/26 Look into possibility of using a “virtual desktop” for members, perhaps Citrix or a VM.                                                                                                                               | Ongoing           |                   |
| 1225/3       | Look at learning that can be shared for use of plain language (check with Victims First team)                                        | RG      | Committee reiterated the importance of clear communication in PSD correspondence. Members emphasised the value of community perspective in identifying unclear or overly technical language. PSD welcomed continued feedback. | Closed            | 20/3/26           |
| 0326/1       | PSD to review allocation and notification processes of cases                                                                         | SH      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                   |                   |
| 0326/2       | Standing process to highlight positive examples from cases reviewed.                                                                 | LH      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Closed            | 17/6/26           |

