

Minutes

Professional Standards Committee

Tuesday 26 October 2010, 13.30
at 6th Floor Meeting Room, FHQ, 25 Camden Road

The Forum
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Present:

Mrs Wendy Towers
Mr Lew Adams
Mr Ian Dobbs

Apologies:

Mr Howard Collins
Mr Neil Scales

In attendance:

Mr Paul Crowther, Deputy Chief Constable
Mr Andrew Gent, Detective Superintendent PSD

Miss Lucy Barrick, Business Support Manager & Minutes

36/2010 Welcome and Apologies

Non-Agenda

The Committee received apologies from Mr Collins and Mr Scales.

37/2010 Matters Arising From the File Review

Agenda Item 1

The Committee felt that the language in some of the standard PSD letters to complainants was too technical and could be revised to make them more easily understandable.

Agreed

- Superintendent Gent to review the language in the standard PSD letters to make them more easily understandable.

38/2010 Minutes of Meeting 27 July 2010

Agenda Item 2

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

39/2010 Matters Arising

Agenda Item 3

The Force updated that some items remained outstanding as PSD had not had an Analyst since August. A new Analyst was due in December and as such the affected actions would be rolled forward for the January meeting.

The Force updated that they were reviewing how motoring offences would be dealt with. A matrix was under development which would consider aggravating factors, such as frequency and severity, when deciding how to deal with officers and staff. The Force had also issued advice in relation to motoring offences in their lessons learned bulletin

BTP Areas had been reminded at the Force Management Team meetings that they needed to report all direction and control matters they dealt with to PSD for logging.

There had been some work with colleagues reviewing how other forces identified, recorded and communicated lessons learned. BTP was in line with others. It was also noted that the new version of Centurion which would be released shortly had a lessons learned page built in. With regard to lessons learned other than arising from complaints, the Force advised the Committee that there were various informal processes such as tasking meetings and debriefings following operations that encapsulated lessons learned.

The custody visit for the Committee had been delayed as work continued on the new London North facility. This was now expected to open in December and a visit for the Committee would be arranged in advance of this.

A formal protocol between BTPA and the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) to strengthen the audit trail of response to ICV comments was being drafted. This had been slightly delayed owing to unavoidable absence at the MPA.

The Force had engaged with the IPCC regarding suicide prevention. It was noted that the Force did a lot of work on suicide prevention. Assistant Chief Constable Beasley was leading on this for BTP and the Force had a high number of PIER plans. The Force would present to the Authority on its work in this area.

All other matters had been discharged.

Agreed

- The Force to present to the Authority on its suicide prevention work.

40/2010 Update from the Chair

Agenda Item 4

The Chair updated that she had met with DCS Fry in September. A number of matters had been outstanding but were now being progressed. The drop in local resolutions had been discussed and would be updated further in the next item on the agenda.

The Chair also updated that she had sat on two Police Appeal Tribunals since the last meeting and had attended a Gold Group meeting in relation to an ongoing complaint.

41/2010 Quarterly Report

Agenda Item 5

The Committee still had concerns regarding the complaint level on London South and was keen to see the problem profile at the next meeting.

The analysis of Complaints by Area required reviewing to ensure that it was clear whether the number of allegations or complaint cases were being reported. The Committee would like clarity on both the number of allegations for Areas and how many complaint cases these translated into.

The Committee noted that complaints from the BME population were high compared with the proportion of the population nationally that BMEs represented. However, it was further noted that the majority of BTP complaints were received from within the London Areas where the BME population was higher meaning that it was likely that it was not as disproportionate as it may first appear.

In section three where cases supervised, managed or independently investigated by the IPCC were reported it was requested that the outcomes of these were reported before the cases were removed from the report.

The Committee requested that the high profile cases be updated to include all current complaints in relation to them.

The Committee was advised that a civil claim was being brought in relation to one of the high profile cases. The Committee asked for an update of the potential value of this claim.

The Committee noted the fall in conduct allegations saying that this was encouraging and they hoped to see it continue.

The use of the Crimestoppers Integrity Line for anonymous reporting had reduced with very little being received in this format. The majority of anonymous reports were now made through the Confidential Anonymous Reporting System (CARS) which was an email system. This was something that most forces were seeing. As a result of this the Force was considering its contract with Crimestoppers for the Integrity Line as it did not represent value for money. The IPCC also had a telephone service via which officers and staff could make anonymous reports at no cost to BTP.

An increase in the number of officers resigning ahead of misconduct proceedings was evident from the report. The Force advised that it was dealing with officers pragmatically in partnership with the Federation and staff associations, discussing the likely outcome of proceedings to ensure that they were aware of the gravity of the situation. There was no longer a required to resign option available to misconduct panels, meaning that where the charges were serious enough for the officer to be likely to be required to leave the Force there was no other option to the panel but dismissal.

The Committee had concerns regarding the property store audit reports. These were normally largely positive but on this occasion there was a significant amount of negative feedback. In the case of West Ham recommendations from the preceding audit in 2008 had not been implemented leading to the same failings as previously noted. The Force agreed that a stronger oversight was required in this area to ensure that recommendations were implemented.

The number of local resolutions was decreasing and the Committee asked what was driving this. The Force responded that PSD staff were not conducting local resolutions any longer although some were still occurring on Area. The new statutory guidance from the IPCC in relation to what should and should not be recorded meant that many of the lower end matters that local resolutions had dealt with were now being resolved informally. In addition following the IPCC's guidance a greater number of proportionate investigations were being conducted and an increase could be seen here which accounted for the decrease in local resolutions.

Agreed

- Superintendent Gent to review the Complaints by Area section of the report.
- The outcomes of any IPCC supervised, managed and independently investigated cases to be reported before the cases were removed from the report.
- The Committee to be advised of the potential value of the civil claim in relation to the high profile case discussed.

- The Force to develop a stronger oversight mechanism to ensure that the property store recommendations are implemented.

42/2010 Update on PSD Plans

Agenda Item 6

The PSD Plan for 2011-12 had been discussed by the Chair with DCS Fry at their meeting, but as the budget for BTP had not yet been decided it was too early to have any firm thoughts on this. However, the Plan would follow the four overall themes that had been identified in the Strategic Review and would be closely linked to the Forcewide Strategic Plan. The PSD Plan would be developed over the next few months and a draft outline would be brought to the January meeting.

Agreed

- A draft outline of the PSD Plan 2011-12 to be brought to the January Committee meeting.

43/2010 Executive Update

Agenda item 7

The Committee was updated that two police appeal tribunals had taken place since the last meeting and four new requests had been received under the 2008 Rules.

The Independent Custody Visiting Reports did not raise any items of concern and the few matters that had been raised had been dealt with. There was a concern regarding the level of visits that the MPA was achieving which the MPA had commented on in their report and assured they would work to improve. Miss Barrick would speak with the MPA regarding this.

The Members and Staff complaints Policy would go to the Authority for approval and would not be dealt with by the Professional Standards Committee.

Agreed

- Miss Barrick to speak with the MPA regarding the level of visits completed.

44/2010 IPCC Complaint Statistics

Agenda Item 8

A draft of the structure of the performance framework had been seen by PSD but the Force was not yet aware of the family of forces with which it would be included for comparison purposes. It was expected that the IPCC would publish the performance framework before April 2011.

Date of Next Meeting - 25 January 2010
File Review 11.30 - 13.30, Meeting 13.30 - 15.30

Signed.....

Chairman