

Minutes

Professional Standards Committee

Tuesday 25 January 2011, 14.00
at BTP, 140 Camden Street, London

The Forum
5th Floor North
74-80 Camden Street
London NW1 0EG

T: 020 7383 0259
F: 020 7383 2655
E: general.enquiries@btpa.police.uk

www.btpa.police.uk

Present:

Mrs Wendy Towers
Mr Lew Adams
Mr Howard Collins
Mr Ian Dobbs
Mrs Elizabeth France

Apologies:

Mr Neil Scales

In attendance:

Mr Paul Crowther, Deputy Chief Constable
Mr Martin Fry, Detective Chief Superintendent PSD

Miss Lucy Barrick, Business Manager & Minutes

01/2011 Welcome and Apologies

Non-Agenda

The Committee welcomed Mrs France to her first meeting. Apologies had been received from Mr Scales.

02/2011 Matters Arising From the File Review

Agenda Item 1

Owing to other committee work the file review had been cancelled. File reviews would recommence from the next meeting.

03/2011 Minutes of Meeting 26 October 2010

Agenda Item 2

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

04/2011 Matters Arising

Agenda Item 3

The visit to London North custody would be arranged for February. The opening of the facility had been delayed owing to various issues but it was now expected to open by the end of February.

The full London South Problem Profile requested by the Committee was not available as the new PSD Analyst had only started in post on 4 January. A preliminary profile was distributed to the Committee (copy in the minute book). From the preliminary profile it appeared that the problem had rectified itself but a full profile would still be developed to understand what the issues had been. The full profile would be distributed to the Committee by the end of February. The PCSO complaints report would be included in the next Quarterly Report.

The action for BTP to review the letters sent to complainants would be approached as a project and was expected to be completed by the end of the financial year. Progress on this would be reported to the Committee.

It was noted that Assistant Chief Constable Beasley's presentation on vulnerable people had been postponed and would now go to the March Authority meeting.

Agreed

- The full Problem Profile for London South to be distributed to the Committee by the end of February.
- The next Quarterly Report to include the six-monthly update on PCSO complaints
- The Committee to receive an update on progress on the review of standard PSD correspondence at its next meeting

05/2011 Update from the Chair

Agenda Item 4

The Chair advised she had progressed the action points from the last meeting with DCS Fry during their December meeting. She had also checked the comments from the file reviews of the last meeting and carried out a dip sample of the direction and control complaints, one of which should have been recorded as a conduct complaint.

06/2011 Quarterly Report

Agenda Item 5

The Committee noted a reduction in conduct matters. The Force reported that there was not a clear factor for this emerging but it was

likely to be the affect of the Taylor reforms and their impact on how supervisors managed their staff. Taylor meant that there was a focus on dealing with matters informally at an earlier stage rather than them being allowed to escalate and become more serious conduct matters.

The “other” category for classifying complaint allegations had been reviewed as it had been determined that some of the allegations included here could be more appropriately classified. The Committee also requested that there be clarity in the Quarterly Report on whether cases or allegations were being reported in the tables/charts.

The Committee noted that there had been increases in complaints over the last few quarters in the North Eastern and Scottish Areas. Whilst these Areas still had a lower number of complaints per 100 officers than London the Committee asked if the Force was aware of any reason for the general trend. The Force responded that they were not aware of any particular issues that could be driving this. It was agreed that the trend would be monitored and if it continued to increase an analysis would be carried out for the next meeting.

In contrast to the above it was noted that L Area had the lowest number of complaints of the Operational Areas. The Committee asked what it was that the Area was doing right.

The Committee was pleased to see that local resolutions were routinely taking place on Area now rather than through PSD which had only completed a small number of these in the last quarter.

There was some confusion with the text at the top of page 7 regarding officers complained about and their ethnicity. This would be clarified in the next report.

The Committee noted a significant increase in “abuse of authority” intelligence reports in the last quarter. It was requested that the Force review this increase and report to the next meeting on the reasons for this and any action taken.

Training for property store managers still appeared to be an issue from the audits in the last quarter. This had been identified previously and the Committee asked what was happening to rectify this. The Force responded that this had been raised at the Force Management Team (FMT) meeting and the matter was being progressed. The Committee would be updated at its next meeting. The Committee also requested

more detail on the conclusions of information security audits. The Force advised that this would be provided but also that these were monitored through the Corporate Assurance Group and escalated to DCS Fry if there were outstanding issues.

There were currently two investigations that the IPCC were involved in one of which was supervised and the other managed.

Agreed

- The report to clearly state whether complaint or allegation numbers are being stated.
- The Force to monitor the trend of an increase in complaints in the North Eastern and Scottish Areas and conduct an analysis if this trend continued.
- The Force to look at L Area for any best practice in order to try and reduce complaints.
- The text interpreting the officers complained against and their ethnicity to be clearer in the next report.
- The Force to review the increase in “abuse of authority” intelligence reports and report to the next meeting on the reasons for this and any action taken.
- The Committee to be updated on the property store manager training issue at the next meeting.
- The Force to include a note on the conclusion of information security audits in the Quarterly Report.

07/2011 Expansion of PSD Remit

Agenda Item 8

DCS Fry updated the Committee that the Corporate Risk and Assurance Team that had previously sat under the Finance and Corporate Services portfolio had been moved to PSD. This Team dealt with insurance and civil matters so there was an overlap with PSD. In addition the Legal Services Team, which had been under the Human Resources portfolio and dealt with employment tribunals, had moved to PSD.

The next step was to review the structure for efficiency savings and consolidate software packages used by the various teams. This was all taking place as part of the Futures Programme which was being monitored by the Strategy Group. Some other teams were due to move to PSD and the department would be called the Quality of Service, Compliance and Audit Team.

08/2011 Update on PSD Plans

Agenda item 6

A copy of the PSD three-year plan that was coming to a close was distributed (copy on the minute book). DCS Fry advised that an update meeting was scheduled for 1 February after which a more up-to-date version would be distributed to Members. Members were assured that all targets would be met by the end of the financial year, including the Vigilance Pro work.

A new three-year plan was under development. This would be significantly different owing to the expansion of the remit of PSD. The key strategic aims would be distributed to Members for comment before the end of February.

Agreed

- An updated version of the current plan to be distributed to Members following the update meeting on 1 February.
- The key strategic aims for the new three-year plan would be distributed to Members for comment before the end of February.

09/2011 Executive Update

Agenda Item 7

Miss Barrick updated on the current matters that were being dealt with by the Authority. There were six police appeal tribunals (PATs) that were live. This was a significant increase on previous years. Training for Members to sit in PATs was raised as an issue and the Force was asked if they might be able to provide a one-to-one training session for a member as appeals were very similar in style to misconduct hearings. The Force felt that this could be challenged and advised that they would see if any other forces would be able to offer this.

It was noted that the Authority's complaint management and oversight arrangements had been praised by the Police Complaints Commissioner Scotland (PCCS) following his audit of police boards in Scotland. Thirteen recommendations had come out of the audit and members agreed that all were accepted with the exception of recommendations 6, 7 and 12. Recommendations 6 and 7 referred to holding Professional Standards Committee meetings in public and it was felt this presented a data protection issue. Recommendation 12 involved ascertaining the cost of complaint handling and identifying opportunities to improve the complaints service. Although the Committee supported the principle it was felt that this risked straying into an executive role and did not feel that it was appropriate.

The Dip-Sampling Protocol had been reviewed by the Members and it had been considered that it remained fit for purpose. It was suggested that there were generally fewer issues with the files so it may be useful to alternate the standard review with a thematic review. The Members

agreed to trial this and it was suggested that the next file review be focused on the local investigation pilot completed files.

Agreed

- DCS Fry to contact other forces to see if any had a training package that could be used.
- The Dip-Sampling Protocol be updated to include thematic reviews.
- The file review for the May meeting to be a themed review looking at the completed complaint files from the local investigation pilot.

10/2011 Update on Local Investigation Pilot Scheme

Agenda Item 9

The local investigation pilot had been working well. The average time from complaint to resolution was 30.5 days. There had been three appeals to the IPCC resulting so far. The training for this was being rolled out to L Area and would be rolled out force-wide by the end of the financial year.

The Committee was pleased with the progress reported and requested that a short paper on the differences of this type of complaint management and the results of the pilot be brought to the next meeting.

Agreed

- A short paper on the differences of this type of complaint management and the results of the pilot be brought to the next meeting.

11/2011 London South - Problem Profile

Agenda Item 10

A preliminary report had been circulated and a full report would be distributed offline.

Date of Next Meeting - 12 May 2011

File Review 12.00 - 14.00, Meeting 14.00 - 16.00

Signed.....

Chairman