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Minutes

Professional Standards Committee

Thursday 12 May 2011, 14.00

at BTP, 140 Camden Street, London

Present:

Mrs Wendy Towers

Mr Lew Adams

Mr Ian Dobbs

Mrs Elizabeth France

Mr Neil Scales

Apologies:

Mr Howard Collins

In attendance:

Mr Paul Crowther, Deputy Chief Constable

Mr Martin Fry, Detective Chief Superintendent PSD

Mrs Stephanie Calvert, Complaints Process Manager

Miss Lucy Barrick, Business Manager & Minutes

12/2011 Welcome and Apologies

Non-Agenda

Apologies had been received from Mr Collins. The Committee was introduced to Acting Detective Superintendent Bunyard who would be deputising for Detective Chief Superintendent Fry whilst he was carrying out other duties. Mrs Calvert was welcomed to her first meeting.

13/2011 Matters Arising From the File Review

Agenda Item 1

The Committee had completed its first thematic file review looking at completed files from the London South Local Handling Pilot. The Committee had been impressed by the files noting that the turnaround time was faster than the current processes and the files were well ordered. The Committee noted that the local handling approach had now been rolled out Forcewide and that the London South files set a standard for the Areas to aspire to.

14/2011 Minutes of Meeting 25 January 2011

Agenda Item 2

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

15/2011 Matters Arising

Agenda Item 3

The Committee was advised that the standard letters had been reviewed and amendments made to make these more user friendly and less bureaucratic.

The management of confiscated property remained an issue but there was a plan in place to deliver further training and resolve the current problems. Visits were being conducted and an improvement was expected to be seen over the next few months. The Committee said that it would continue to monitor the audits to see if there was an improvement.

All other matters had been discharged.

16/2011 Update from the Chair

Agenda Item 4

The Chair updated that most of the matters that had been discussed with DCS Fry at the interim meetings were on the agenda for the meeting.

17/2011 Quarterly Report

Agenda Item 5

There had been 108 complaints recorded in the last quarter of 2010/11 which was a reduction from 122 in the previous quarter. The Committee noted that there had been some swings between complaint categories and they would monitor this but did not consider that this was anything to be concerned about at present.

It was noted that one of the issues when analysing the complaints was that they were recorded according to when they were received and this did not necessarily match with the date of the incident involved. Therefore it was not easy to attribute blips in particular complaint categories to particular events. PSD was working on analysis by date of incident for more accurate analysis but this was work in progress.

The Committee asked where the locally handled complaints were recorded in the Disposals Table for finalised complaints. The Committee was advised that these had been subsumed into the upheld/not upheld categories with other investigated complaints. It was agreed that in future the locally handled complaints would be shown separately in the table. Also, in regards to the Disposal Table, the Committee asked for clarification on the difference between de-recorded and discontinued complaints. The Force advised that they would provide this at the next meeting.

PCSO conduct breaches appeared to be disproportionately high as they represented a higher percentage of conduct breaches than they did of the

overall BTP population. The Committee asked for some historical information on this to see if there was an issue that needed further work.

It was noted that there were currently two cases with IPCC involvement one of which was supervised and the other a managed investigation. The Committee also noted that there were no current suspensions which was positive. There had also been a reduction in the number of hearings.

Agreed

- The locally handled complaints to be differentiated from other investigated complaints in the Disposal Table.
- Clarification to be provided on the difference between de-recorded and discontinued complaints.
- The Committee to receive historical information on PCSO conduct breaches to see if there is an issue that needs reviewing.

18/2011 Final Report on 2010/11 PSD Plan and Introduction to 2011/12 Plan

Agenda Item 6

The majority of the actions in the 2010/11 Plan had been completed and those that had not had been transferred to the 2011/12 Plan. The 2011/12 Plan had been renamed as a business plan rather than departmental plan. A Strategic Plan for the Department had also been produced with the 2011/12 Business Plan being developed from this. The Strategic Plan ensured that the departmental objectives were aligned with the Force's overall strategic objectives.

The Committee said that it was good to see the clear link back to the organisational objectives. Their only concern was that the Business Plan did appear very ambitious with 28 actions included. DCS Fry responded that he was confident that the PSD could achieve the actions set out.

The Committee commented that the wording of the "reducing misconduct" objective may benefit from some more thought, as this could give the wrong message to staff. It was noted that the Force was consulting with staff associations on the plans and would see what they suggested. In a similar vane the "changing perceptions of PSD" objective could benefit from an amendment to say "improving perceptions" for clarity.

In terms of the structure of the Business Plan the Committee commented that it was not clear what success would look like for each of the objectives. It was suggested that the outcomes could be clearer as they appeared to be dates at the moment rather than products.

Finally, it was suggested that the action to reduce costs under the Improving Quality objective should state that this was reducing costs whilst *maintaining* quality.

Agreed

- To consider the wording of the "reducing misconduct" objective and the message this could give. Action to be taken once feedback from staff associations' received.
- The "changing perceptions of PSD" to be amended to "improving perceptions".
- The outcomes to be linked to the KPIs
- The action to reduce costs under the improving quality heading to be redrafted to say "reducing costs whilst maintaining quality".

19/2011 Executive Update

Agenda Item 7

The Committee was updated on the latest complaints received by the Authority, the majority of which had been passed to the Force as the appropriate authority. The number of police appeal tribunals was slowly reducing and two had been closed in the last quarter.

Independent Custody Visiting (ICV) feedback remained positive. The Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) had improved their attendance, although there still remained some training and communication issues with BTP and BTPA but these were fairly minor. Merseyside Police Authority was expected to sign an agreement with BTPA to provide ICVs for the BTP custody facility in Liverpool in the next few days. Provision for Scotland should also be in place shortly with the Authority's Scottish solicitors working on amending the contract for use in Scotland. The Committee asked that the Force ensure that all officers were aware of the ICV role. This was of particular importance in those areas where custody facilities were only used on occasion as this was where there was sometimes an issue.

The Dip-Sampling Protocol had been revised following the last meeting with the addition of a provision to conduct thematic sampling as well as the standard sampling by disposal. The Protocol was approved, with the amendment that it should state when conducting thematic sampling the sample should be 20% of the total number of completed complaint cases for the quarter and not 20% of the files in that thematic category.

Agreed

- The Dip-Sampling Protocol was approved with the agreed amendment regarding sample size in thematic audits.
- The Force to ensure that all officers are aware if the ICV role.

20/2011 Locally Handled Complaints Enquiries

Agenda Item 8

There had been discussion on this following the thematic file review.
The report was noted.

21/2011 PSD Risk Register

Agenda Item 9

The Committee noted the risk register. It was agreed that this should be presented to the Committee on an annual basis.

The Committee asked if there were any risks arising from the restructure of the PSD that should be included. The Force responded that it was considered that any potential risks had been mitigated and as such no additional entry had been made.

Agreed

- The Risk Register to be presented to the Committee on an annual basis to the April/May Meeting.

22/2011 London South – Problem Profile

Agenda Item 10

It was noted that there was a large variation between station detection rates although all seemed positive. There did not appear to be a specific link between the detection rate and number of complaints on the face of it, but further work could be carried out to try and reach informed conclusions. It was further noted that different styles of policing were in the place in different areas with some being more proactive and this could affect the number of complaints received.

The Force advised that the Profile had been shared with the Area and discussed. The Committee was concerned that once the work had been done all the intelligence should be gathered from it and used appropriately. The Force responded that it was using the document for these purposes and would be conducting similar exercises for each Area.

23/2011 Restructuring of PSD

Agenda Item 11

The Committee asked for a briefing on the objective of the restructuring activity. The Force responded that there had been a division of information between PSD and Human Resources around grievances, confidential reports and complaints and it had been considered logical to bring all of these together to ensure that no links between information were missed.

As part of the restructure PSD was monitoring grievances and legal services only became involved where there was a requirement owing to the seriousness or complexity of the case.

The Force was considering moving unsatisfactory performance management to PSD. There was also discussion regarding audit compliance and where this should sit. Initial discussions had centred on the link between audit and risk and as such risk may be separated from the insurance and claims work and moved with audit to a suitable location.

24/2011 Annual Review of BTPA Business Cycle and Committee Structure – Professional Standards Committee Focus

Agenda Item 12

The only significant change proposed for the PSC was the addition of oversight of employment tribunals and grievances. This was suggested as these were not currently covered in any significant way in other committees or groups and with the move of Legal Services to PSD it was logical to cover them at the PSC.

It was noted that the PSC would be limited in the way that it conducted this work as it could not receive information regarding the detail of open cases as otherwise members could potentially be called as witnesses. Therefore, it was agreed that the Committee would begin by receiving baseline information at its next meeting which would include information on:

- Timeframes within which grievances are dealt with
- The number of grievances resolved at the various grievance stages
- A breakdown of those raising grievances by
    - rank/grade
    - ethnicity
    - gender
    - age
    - BTP Area
- The categories of grievances
- Any trends

The Committee noted that it would be useful to have some historical information to put the figures into context. The Committee would also receive anonymised data on current employment tribunals.

DCS Fry said that he would discuss this with his team and then update the Chair at their interim meeting on what information could be provided.

Agreed

- The Committee agreed the above changes and that they would recommend them to the Authority.
- DCS Fry to discuss the data requested with his team and update the Chair at their interim meeting on what could be provided.

Date of Next Meeting – 27 July 2011
File Review 12.00 – 14.00, Meeting 14.00 – 16.00

Signed.....

Chairman