

Independent adjudicator ready to deal with complaints against police in Swindon and Wiltshire

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By **Beren Cross**

THE county's Police and Crime Commissioner has appointed an independent adjudicator of complaints to look at complaints made against Wiltshire Police.

Angus Macpherson, the PCC for Wiltshire and Swindon, has taken on Allan Johns, an emeritus professor at the University of Bath, who applied for the advertised role and went through a rigorous recruitment process.

If a member of the public makes a complaint to Wiltshire Police and is not satisfied with the way the police have decided to deal with it they have the right to appeal that decision.

Prof Johns will now review these complaint appeals and determine whether the findings and action Wiltshire Police decided on should stand or be changed.

This was previously carried out by the national Independent Police Complaints Commission which now only deals with a very limited number of appeals.

Mr Macpherson said: "Following the responsibility for reviewing complaint appeals being passed from the IPCC, I have a responsibility to ensure that every complaint appeal is fully investigated and that this process is fair, transparent and rigorous.

"The recruitment of Professor Johns as an appeals adjudicator not only means that we have the individual with the right skills and expertise reviewing each appeal, but also ensures objectivity and distance between my office and Wiltshire Police in relation to the overall complaints process."

As well as reviewing complaints appeals, Prof Johns' role also includes investigating any complaints made against the Wiltshire Police Chief Constable, Patrick Geenty, and monitoring how the police deals with complaints and conduct matters.

Allan Johns has experience in reviewing complaints and appeals as he was chairman of Wiltshire Police Authority's Professional Standards Committee for four years.

He was also a member of the Independent Monitoring Board at Erlestoke Prison for three years.

During this time he was responsible for overseeing the adjudication process for dealing with serious misconduct of prisoners.

Prof Johns said: "I look forward to continuing to work with both the Office of the PCC and Wiltshire Police and I will be working hard to ensure that the people of Swindon and Wiltshire can have full confidence that any concerns they have will be independently investigated and addressed.

"I feel I have the necessary skills and experience to be able to review and investigate complaints thoroughly and make impartial decisions on these matters."

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