

Report to: Police Authority
Item: 14
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Subject: People and Standards Committee
Sponsor: Committee Chairman
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For: Information

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1. Purpose of paper

- 1.1 This report summarises key matters arising out of the People and Standards Committee meeting that took place on 27 April 2016.

2. Standards

File Review

- 2.1 The Committee reviewed a sample of Complaint and Conduct cases, including cases containing Use of Force allegations, Discriminatory Behaviour and cases containing both those allegations. The types of allegations were selected following a small number of high profile cases fitting these criteria. The Committee was interested in examining any trends as well as reviewing how the BTP followed the IPCC Guidelines for handling discrimination allegations. Of the reviewed cases, none gave cause for concern. One of the learning points stemming from the exercise was understanding how a discrimination component flowed through an investigation. There was some evidence that the IPCC Guidelines had been referred to in the investigations, but this was not always consistent and it could be improved.
- 2.2 Members found it useful to understand the challenges of conducting investigations in often fluid and fast-moving circumstances, particularly when reviewing body-worn video or CCTV footage. There was a brief discussion concerning reputational damage in cases where allegations were not proven, and about the Force's ability to seek reparations against 'malicious' complaints.

Standards Quarterly Report

- 2.3 The picture was generally positive in relation to the activities of the Professional Standards Department. The analysis of PSD Complaint-handling data showed good performance in Q4. The volume of complaint cases remained consistent, whilst the total number of allegations had increased marginally. It was highlighted that that the number of the most serious allegations such as corrupt practice and sexual assault was extremely small. Finally, the number of upheld finalised complaints stood at 14% which was comparable with the national average of 13%.
- 2.4 In terms of conduct, it was highlighted that 2 of the 3 current IPCC investigations had been internally generated (through whistleblowing), which was an encouraging sign. Members noted the comparatively high number of allegations of 'other assaults' and the Head of PSD commented that many ticket gate interactions were classified in this manner.

Authority work

- 2.5 Members noted that the Authority has received one complaint in the last quarter. The Authority was currently handling on Police Appeals Tribunal case as well.
- 2.6 In terms of the policy update, the Committee noted that the Policing and Crime Bill introduced to Parliament in February 2016 contained wide-ranging elements of police reform, including an overhaul of the police complaints and disciplinary system. All Authority members were sent a summary and analysis of the Bill's provisions on 18 March 2016.
- 2.7 The provisions had a significant impact on the functions of the Force's Professional Standards Department and the Authority, both of which administer aspects of the complaints and disciplinary systems. The BTP/BTPA have traditionally adopted Government reforms in this area, and it was important for our effective working relationship with the wider police service to continue to take a similar approach. There continued to be excellent engagement between the BTPA and Home Office officials as the Bill progressed.
- 2.8 Proposed changes to the complaint handling system included the transfer of responsibility for complaint handling from the Force to the PCC. The BTPA's policy position was that unless a majority of PCCs decide to take on this responsibility, there would be no change to existing arrangements.

- 2.9 The Bill also contained provisions to extend the disciplinary regime to former officers, as well as changes to the make-up of Police Appeals Tribunals. The BTPA was expected to adopt these.

3. People

Quarterly Update

- 3.1 The Committee received a general update on many strands of the People's Strategy, including the work on leadership, the demand review, the review of Terms and Conditions, etc.
- 3.2 The Director of Capability and Resources provided an update on the progress of the Leadership Programme, which comprised elements such as training, qualifications and career development. Members were keen to understand the key challenges faced by the BTP in terms of succession planning and the Director explained that though the Force possessed strong talent, there was not always sufficient preparation. The Programme aimed to address this issue through College of Policing development courses as well as cross-sector opportunities. During the discussion, Members highlighted how important it was for individuals to be allowed to identify their own personal development.
- 3.3 Members also received an update on the demand review, which had rationalised the large number of existing shift patterns to just four. The consultation was to start in the coming weeks and there was a degree of optimism based on the initial response from the staff associations.
- 3.4 Further to an action arising at the March meeting of the Authority, Committee considered comprehensive data relating to sickness absence. Members noted that comparative data showed that the BTP performed substantially better than the majority of Home Office forces. There was also significant evidence of active management of long-term sickness, leading to unsatisfactory performance action in many cases. The Force, however, was not complacent and had instituted a series of additional measures to improve case management, including a refreshed sickness absence policy and "star chambers" to discuss and review each case individually. Members were reassured that sickness absence was not an area of major concern when compared to other forces and were also satisfied with the new initiatives being introduced to drive further improvements. They also noted a new system to track and monitor cases of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) more effectively, which was a very welcome move.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1 Members to note the contents of this report.