

SUSSEX POLICE AUTHORITY

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS COMMITTEE – INSPECTION OF COMPLAINTS REGISTER

Minutes of a meeting of the Inspection of Complaints Register held on 23 February 2010 at Sussex Police Headquarters.

Present:

Mr P Bratton, Dr R Walker, Mr G Daniel, Mr F Faiz and Mr A Smith.

INTRODUCTION

6. The theme of the inspection was "Allegations of Discriminatory Behaviour".

APOLOGIES

7. Apologies for absence were received from Prof G Bull, Ms E Daniel and Mr B Duncan.

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING OF THE INSPECTION OF COMPLAINTS REGISTER

8. A selection of files was examined by those present. The files made available to the Members represented 100 per cent of those complaints received for the year under the classification of "Complaints from Young People".
9. A discussion was held as to how files are selected. It was suggested that future inspections provide two files per Member: one according to the theme, selected randomly, and the second selected randomly outside the theme.
10. It was decided the inspection theme will be extended to look at complaints from Divisions.

ANY MATTERS ARISING FROM THE LAST MEETING OF THE INSPECTION OF COMPLAINTS REGISTER AND UPDATE ON CASES

11. The visit to Crawley Custody Centre to discuss the matter of a CCTV blind spot was discussed. It was agreed that Mr F Faiz, Mr B Duncan, Mrs D Longden and a representative from the Community and Justice Department would make an early morning or late afternoon visit to Crawley, where an informal meeting would be convened.

THEME OF INSPECTION AND ISSUES SOUGHT

12. The Committee looked at complaints in relation to allegations of discriminatory behaviour. The discussions considered the complaints files, looking in particular at timeliness; evidence to satisfy the Members and those dealing with the complaints; welfare of the complainant and the officer concerned and evidence of proportionality. There were no major issues of concern.
13. Two complaints related specifically to the length of time taken to reach a Local Resolution. The Guidelines state that Local Resolution should be completed within 28 days. The Force estimates that between 50 and 60 per cent are completed within this time. Local Resolution is generally undertaken by a sergeant or an inspector. It is not always clear at the start of a complaints procedure that Local Resolution will be acceptable.
14. Complaints can be made up to one year from the date of the incident; however the Committee found that CCTV evidence within custody centres is destroyed after 28 days and on occasions this had led to a more difficult investigation into an allegation. This matter was tabled to appear on the agenda of the Professional Standards Committee meeting on 17 March 2010.
15. The process of inspection of complaints is now more structured, resulting in ongoing development of the meeting and a far more effective use of Members', and the Head of Professional Standards Department's time.

INSPECTION OF FILES

16. The areas looked at under the theme of "Allegations of Discriminatory Behaviour" were timeliness, evidence to satisfy the Committee and those dealing with the complaint; welfare of the complainant and the officer(s) concerned; and evidence of proportionality.

ISSUES FOR REPORT

17. A review on training needs will take place in one year's time for existing members, and will be automatic for new members.
18. It was agreed the next pre-meeting presentation to the committee would be on the theme of "procedures in custody".

PETER BRATTON
Chairman