

Complaints Policy

Introduction

Under the Police Act 1996 and the Police Reform & Social Responsibility Act 2011, the Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner's for Surrey (OPCC) has a number of specific duties in relation to the handling of complaints. The OPCC has a responsibility to manage complaints it may receive against the Chief Constable of the Force, its own members of staff, contractors, and the Commissioner itself. The OPCC also has a duty to keep itself informed about complaint and discipline matters within Surrey Police Force (as set out in section 15 of the Police Reform Act 2002).

Purpose of this document

This document sets out the policy of the OPCC in relation to the above and is addressed to Members of the Public, Police Officers, Police and Crime Panel Members, the Commissioner, Staff and Contractors.

Risk

If the OPCC does not have a policy and procedure that it adheres to in relation to complaints this could have a detrimental impact on the perception that the public and partners have of the Commissioner and the Force. This would impact on the ability to deliver against the strategic priorities.

What is a complaint?

Complaints Policy

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey will:

- a) Comply with legislative or regulatory requirements and associated advice on managing and effectively handling complaints against the Force or Commissioner to ensure that all forms of complaints are dealt with properly and effectively.
- b) Provide clear information and guidance regarding the policies and procedures of the OPCC for handling complaints received against the Chief Constable, the Commissioner, and members of the OPCC staff including the Chief Executive and/or Monitoring Officer and Chief Financial Officer.
- c) Ensure that the lessons from such complaints are considered and assessed to inform the development of practice and procedure and the effectiveness of policing in Surrey.

- d) Promote an open a responsive complaints system that supports the delivery of the National Policing Requirement.

Policy Principles

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey in establishing this policy and associated procedures is:

- a) Supporting the OPCCs goal to be an organisation that inspires trust and confidence, listens, responds and meets the needs of individuals and communities.
- b) Supporting the delivery of its strategic aims and the National Policing Pledge.
- c) Embracing the principles of public life and supporting the proper use of public resources.
- d) Promoting equality and diversity within the Force and the OPCC to help eliminate discrimination, and promote equality of opportunity.
- e) Complying with the statutory requirements to oversee complaints against the police and handle complaints against the Chief Constable.
- f) To work with the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) to intervene in the handling of those complaints where the OPCC believes that the response provided by the Force is unsatisfactory.

How this Policy is implemented

In order that its policy regarding complaints is adhered to, the Commissioner's Office together with the Force, has set out a number of procedures and guidance documents for the recording, handling and oversight of complaints. These documents set out the roles and responsibilities of individuals and organisations within the complaints process:

- a) Complaints Procedure (Annex A)
- b) Persistent Complainants Policy (Annex B)
- c) Guidance to staff on Handling Complaints (Annex C)
- d) Complaints relating to the Conduct of the Chief Constable (Annex D)
- e) Complaints Protocol with the Force (Annex E)

Human Rights and Equality

In implementing this policy, the OPCC will ensure that its actions are in accordance with the requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Convention Rights embodied within it, in order to protect the human rights of complainants, other users of the police services and the OPCC.

GDPR Assessment

The OPCC will only forward, hold or retain personal information where it is appropriate for it to do so, in line with the OPCC GDPR Policy, Privacy Statement and Retention Policy.

Sam Meyer – May 2019

Freedom of Information Act Assessment

This policy is suitable for access by the General Public.

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