**Commentary:**

The Police and Crime Commissioner is pleased to report that this latest quarter, Surrey Police continue to log public complaints within 1 day of receiving them (section A1.1), lower than the Most Similar Force (MSF) and the national average. The average days to contact a complainant has been maintained at 5 days, which remains below the national average and an increase of 3 days compared to the Same Period Last year (SPLY).  The Force has historically been proud of being one the best in the country for contacting a complainant, and this decline is a disappointment but is something the Force is looking to improve through changes to internal processes and training.

Surrey Police continues to log higher numbers of complaints and allegations than the SPLY and compared to MSFs.  Surrey recorded 1,994 complaint cases compared to 1,687 on the SPLY. The MSF average was 1, 702 complaints. There are many factors that can influence the increase in recording including and not limited to; robust and ethical recording by Surrey PSD where other force areas may differ, significantly improved understanding of the categories for recording, and higher expectations of the Surrey Public when making complaints. The Commissioner’s Office is working closely with the Force Complaints Manager to make sure that recording of complaints is an area of further scrutiny, ensuring that over-recording due to administrative issues is not a cause.

The percentage of cases recorded under Schedule 3 (section A1.2) and recorded as ‘Dissatisfaction after initial handling’ has again reduced from 31% to 25% which continues to suggest that more complaints are being successfully resolved at first contact. On reviewing the low figure compared to MSFs in relation to recording matters under the category ‘AA/body responsible for initial handling decides’, the Force is pleased to confirm that it is recording matters in line with the guidance from the IOPC (Oversight Newsletter September 2024).

The figures within the ‘allegations logged’ sections (A1.3 and A1.4) indicate that Surrey Police is in line with MSF’s and national averages, when viewed alongside the increase in complaints logged. The Force has also seen a further decrease in the use of the National Factor 'None' category (section A1.5) compared to SPLY, but it remains higher than MSF and national.  Further training and communication with complaint handlers continues to ensure this is being reduced further.

Disappointingly however, the force continues to see below average timeliness (section A2 and D2) in handling complaints outside Schedule 3 against MSF and national averages. For inside Schedule 3 complaints (section A2 and D1), Surrey Police is seeing increased timeliness in dealing with matters not subject to an investigation. This is an area of concern and the OPCC is working hard with the Complaints Manager at Surrey Police to improve complaint handling timeliness so that complainants are able to receive a timelier service.  The Force is in the process of recruiting two new complaint handlers and introducing an improvement plan to address the issue. However, it should be noted that Surrey Police continue to handle more complaints other than by investigation compared to MSF (section A3.1) who show higher numbers of matters investigated; handling matters other than by investigation is still much quicker than if Surrey Police were to investigate.

Surrey Police continues to refer more cases to the IOPC than MSF (section E referrals), and whilst in most cases these are returned to the force to handle, the IOPC have ratified the referrals as appropriate.

In relation to Local Policing Body (LPB) reviews, the Surrey OPCC received 101 requests for independent reviews which is higher that the SPLY and nearly double that of our MSF.  The average number of days to complete a LPB review has increased by 6 days and now takes an average of 38 days to complete.  This is better than the national average and 2 days longer than MSF.

In relation to outcomes from such reviews, the OPCC upheld 6 out of the 86 reviews completed.  This low number demonstrates that the handling of complaints by Surrey Police is on the majority of cases reasonable and proportionate.

The OPCC Head of Complaints continues to work closely with the Surrey Police Complaints Manager to ensure the handling of complaints are prompt, reasonable and proportionate.