

COMPLAINTS AND CONDUCT COMMITTEE
27 August 2020

**Minute of the Scottish Police Authority Complaints and Conduct
Committee held by videoconference on Thursday 27 August 2020.**

Committee Members

Matt Smith (Chair)
Michelle Miller
Grant Macrae

Scottish Police Authority

Robin Johnston, Head of Legal
David Collie, Complaints and Conduct Manager
Stuart Milne, Complaints and Conduct Co-ordinator
Graham Ravenscroft, Complaints and Conduct Co-ordinator
Karen Vallance, Committee Co-ordinator (Minutes)

Police Scotland

ACC Alan Speirs
Superintendent Norrie Conway

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting and confirmed the video conference contingency arrangements.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minute relating to Meeting held on 05 May 2020

The Committee **APPROVED** the minute from the Complaints and Conduct Committee held on 05 May 2020.

4. Action Log and Matters Arising

The committee **NOTED** the updates provided. There were no matters arising.

5. Decision on taking business in private (Items 12 -17)

In accordance with paragraphs 21 and 22 of the SPA Standing Orders, the Committee **AGREED** to consider items 12 - 17 on the agenda in private for the reasons set out in the agenda.

6. SPA Quarterly Performance Report (Q1) – David Collie

The Committee considered the SPA Complaints Quarterly Performance Report. Members noted performance statistics which reflected the position at the end of Quarter 1, 2020/21. David Collie (DCollie) highlighted a number of key points as detailed in the paper. In addition to the content of the paper and during discussion the following matters were noted and discussed;

- Albeit a low number, Members queried the number and nature of SPA complaints. They were advised that the SPA number includes Forensic Services complaints which tend to involve more public contact.
- Members requested further work be undertaken to identify how the website can be clearer in directing people on how to make a complaint.
- ACC Alan Speirs (ACCSpeirs) observed that in Police Scotland's experience, many complaints are made by Officers.
- Members shared disappointment on the progress of planned improvements for SPA Complaints. DCollie informed Members unplanned absences had impacted on progress. Members questioned whether the proposal regarding informing Officers of complaints procedures could be done remotely – saving both time and money. DCollie agreed to consider the suggestion and progress through the Complaints Handling Group. The Committee Chair agreed to discuss resourcing issues with DCollie and raise with the Interim Chief Executive if necessary.

The Committee resolved to:

- **NOTE** the SPA Quarterly Performance Report.
- **AGREE** the following actions:

ACTON 20200827-CCC-001: Further work to be undertaken to identify how website can be improved to make details clearer for regarding making complaints.

7. Dip Sampling Report on Covid-19 Complaints – Graham Ravenscroft

The Committee considered a report which contained information on the dip-sampling exercise of Police Scotland's closed Covid-19 related Complaints, plus non-criminal complaints closed in the period 23 March 2020 to 20 July 2020. Graham Ravenscroft (GRavenscroft) highlighted a number of key points as detailed in the paper. In addition to the content of the paper and during discussion the following matters were noted and discussed;

- ACCSpeirs informed Members that Police Scotland did not change their approach or process in relation to complaints during the lockdown period. Resourcing of the Professional Standards Department was altered in order to handle more complaints via front line resolution.
- GRavenscroft confirmed only closed Covid-19 specific complaints were looked at, to supplement the work undertaken by the Independent Advisory Group. Although not reported directly to the group, the information was available through the published report.

The Committee resolved to:

- **NOTE** the Review of SPA Complaints Report.

8. Police Scotland Professional Standards Quarterly Performance Report (Q1) – ACC Alan Speirs/ Superintendent Norrie Conway

Members considered the report which provided the statistical information relating to the investigation of complaints about members of Police Scotland for the period 1 April 2020 – 30 June 2020. ACCSpeirs provided an overview of the report and highlighted a number of key points as detailed in the paper. In addition to the content of the paper and during discussion the following matters were noted and discussed;

- ACCSpeirs reassured Members that during the lockdown period, the priority for the Professional Standards Department was complaints. Some resources had been move to front line policing therefore work within the department was re-prioritised.
- ACCSpeirs advised Members that, in terms of business interests, there was no aspirations to see reductions in gateway referrals and it was encouraging to see the numbers reported.
- Members were encouraged to see information on PIRC Complaint Handling Referrals (CHR), however, they noted that

outcomes are either reasonable or not reasonable and discussed the benefits of more objective language being used. ACCSpeirs agreed, highlighting that if it is noted that Police Scotland have responded over and above what was required, it is still noted as reasonable. Superintendent Norrie Conway (SuptConway) added there has been a lot of good collaboration and dialogue with PIRC regarding CHR's and PIRC continue to highlight any positive feedback.

- Members questioned whether there were any themes identified across the 25% of CHR's which were not reasonable. ACCSpeirs responded that the process was complicated however many highlighted are due to technical issues.

The Committee resolved to:

- **NOTE** the Police Scotland Professional Standards Quarterly Performance Report (Q1).

9. Review of Complaints Handling, Investigations and Misconduct in Relation to Policing – SPA Update - David Collie

Members considered the report which provided an update on the actions related to Recommendations in the Preliminary Report published by Dame Elish Angiolini, from an SPA perspective. In addition to the content of the paper and during discussion the following matters were noted and discussed;

- Robin Johnstone (RJohnstone) assured Members that all work which can be done has been undertaken. He highlighted that a number of actions are dependent on ongoing consultation.
- Members noted that Police Scotland have regular dialogue with Dame Angiolini and asked if SPA have the same level of communication. DCollie informed Members that the complaints team do not have regular formal meetings. RJohnstone added that he reviews all SPA submissions and is in dialogue with the review team on occasion.

The Committee resolved to:

- **NOTE** the Review of Complaints Handling, Investigations and Misconduct in Relation to Policing – SPA Update.

10. Review of Complaints Handling, Investigations and Misconduct in Relation to Policing – Police Scotland update – Supt. Conway

Members considered the report which provided an update on the actions related to Recommendations in the Preliminary Report published by Dame Elish Angiolini, from a Police Scotland perspective. SuptConway provided examples of work undertaken by P&D in the recruitment process which assists in delivering the recommendations.

ACCSpeirs informed Members that the Strategic Oversight Group (consisting of Police Scotland, SPA, PIRC, Scottish Government and Crown Office), was temporarily paused during lockdown but has met recently to oversee the work undertaken by Police Scotland and SPA. He confirmed he was satisfied with the progress taken thus far.

The Committee resolved to:

- **NOTE** the Review of Complaints Handling, Investigations and Misconduct in Relation to Policing – Police Scotland Update.

11. Complaints and Conduct Committee Work Plan

The Committee resolved to **NOTE** the work plan.

The Chair concluded the public session of the committee