



SUFFOLK
CONSTABULARY

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS DEPARTMENT

COMPLAINTS OVERVIEW

1 April to 30 September 2025

PSD

Professional Standards Department



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1. Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of public complaints, conduct investigations, and organisational learning within Suffolk Constabulary for the period 1 April to 30 September 2025. It highlights key trends, performance metrics, and outcomes in the handling of complaints and internal conduct matters, with comparative data from the previous two years.

1.1 Public Complaints and Allegations

- A total of 200 complaints were received in the reporting period, 1 April to 30 September 2025, marking a 29% increase from the previous year
- Of the 200 complaints recorded, 46.5% were linked to the South, 28% to the West and 22% to the East of the County
- 639 allegations were recorded, with the most common category being 'Police action following contact'
- Allegations have increased, aligning with the increase in complaint cases.
- The most commonly recorded National Factor is 'Investigation', in line with the previous reporting periods

1.2 Timeliness and Contact

- 87.5% of complaints were logged within 2 working days, consistent with the previous reporting period
- 59.1% of complainants were contacted within 10 working days, which is a decrease from 88.75% in the same 6 months in 2024/25

1.3 Complaint Outcomes (Schedule 3)

- 525 allegations were finalised under Schedule 3
- 64% were determined as the service provided was acceptable
- 11% were determined as the service provided was not acceptable, leading to actions such as apologies, providing an explanation and learning from reflection
- The outcomes to allegations show little percentage variance when comparing to the previous reporting periods
- The geographical location of the allegation shows little disparity between the outcomes for the South, East and West of the County

1.4 Complaint Outcomes (Outside Schedule 3)

- 71 allegations were handled outside Schedule 3, with 94.4% resolved, an increase from the previous reporting period
- 4 cases were escalated to Schedule 3 due to complainant dissatisfaction

1.5 Complaint Case Timeliness

- Schedule 3 complaints took an average of 110 working days to finalise and has increased over the last 3 years
- Outside Schedule 3 complaints took on average 26 working days and show improving timeliness

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1.6 Review Requests and Chapter 13 Reports

- The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) received 25 reviews, upholding 9 in the reporting period
- The Local Policing Body received 24 requests, none have been upheld
- 17 Chapter 13 reports were submitted in the reporting period

1.7 Demographics and Discrimination

- 208 individual complainants were recorded, with 80.8% providing ethnicity data
- 6.25% of complainants were from ethnic minority backgrounds, a decrease from previous years
- 24 allegations involved discrimination, with disability being the most cited characteristic

1.8 Conduct Investigations

- 44 internal conduct cases were recorded, involving 57 breaches of the Standards of Professional Behaviour
- The most common breaches recorded are Discreditable Conduct and Honesty and integrity (both 21%)

1.9 Misconduct Hearings and Outcomes

- 6 misconduct hearings and 4 meetings were held in the reporting period
- Outcomes include dismissals, would have been dismissed had they not resigned, Final Written Warning and no misconduct found

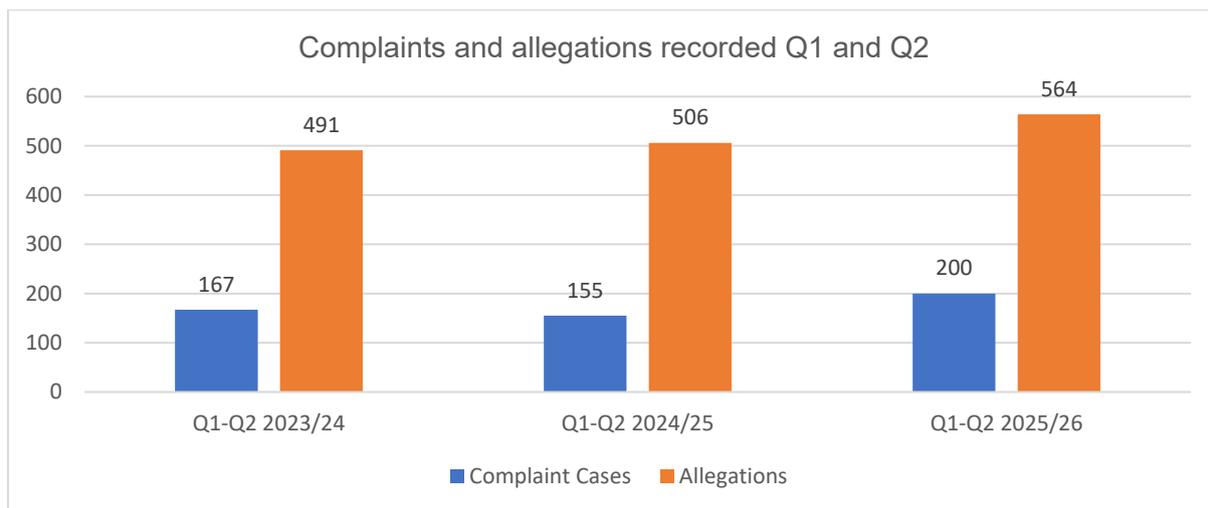
1.10 Organisational Learning

- Suffolk Constabulary aims to identify areas for improvement across the Force to address issues effectively, ensuring lessons learned and best practices are shared across the organisation
- Key initiatives in the reporting period were uniform standards, professional language and conduct and guidance around missing persons

2. Public Complaint Cases

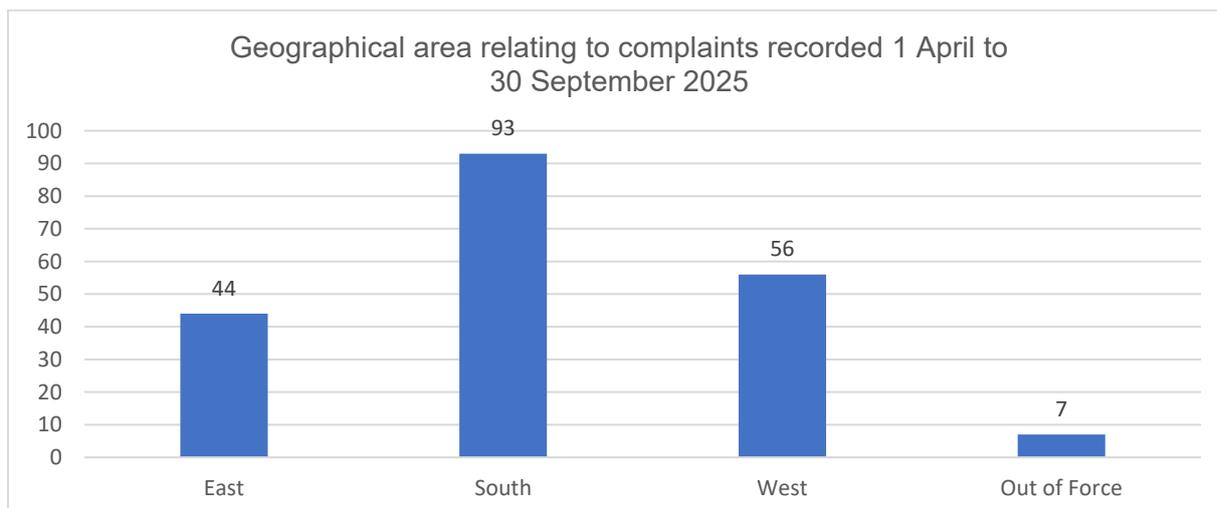
All complaints received by the Professional Standards Department are assessed and either recorded under Schedule 3 of the PRA 2002 or logged outside of Schedule 3.

(Chart 1): The chart below shows the 200 complaint cases received in the reporting period, including both Schedule 3 and outside of Schedule 3. It shows the number of complaint cases and associated allegations for the reporting period and for the same period in the previous 2 years:



There has been a 29% increase in complaint cases recorded in comparison to the same 6 months in 2024/25, and an 11% increase in allegations.

(Chart 2): A review of the geographical areas of the complaints recorded in the reporting period has been reviewed and the chart below shows the breakdown:

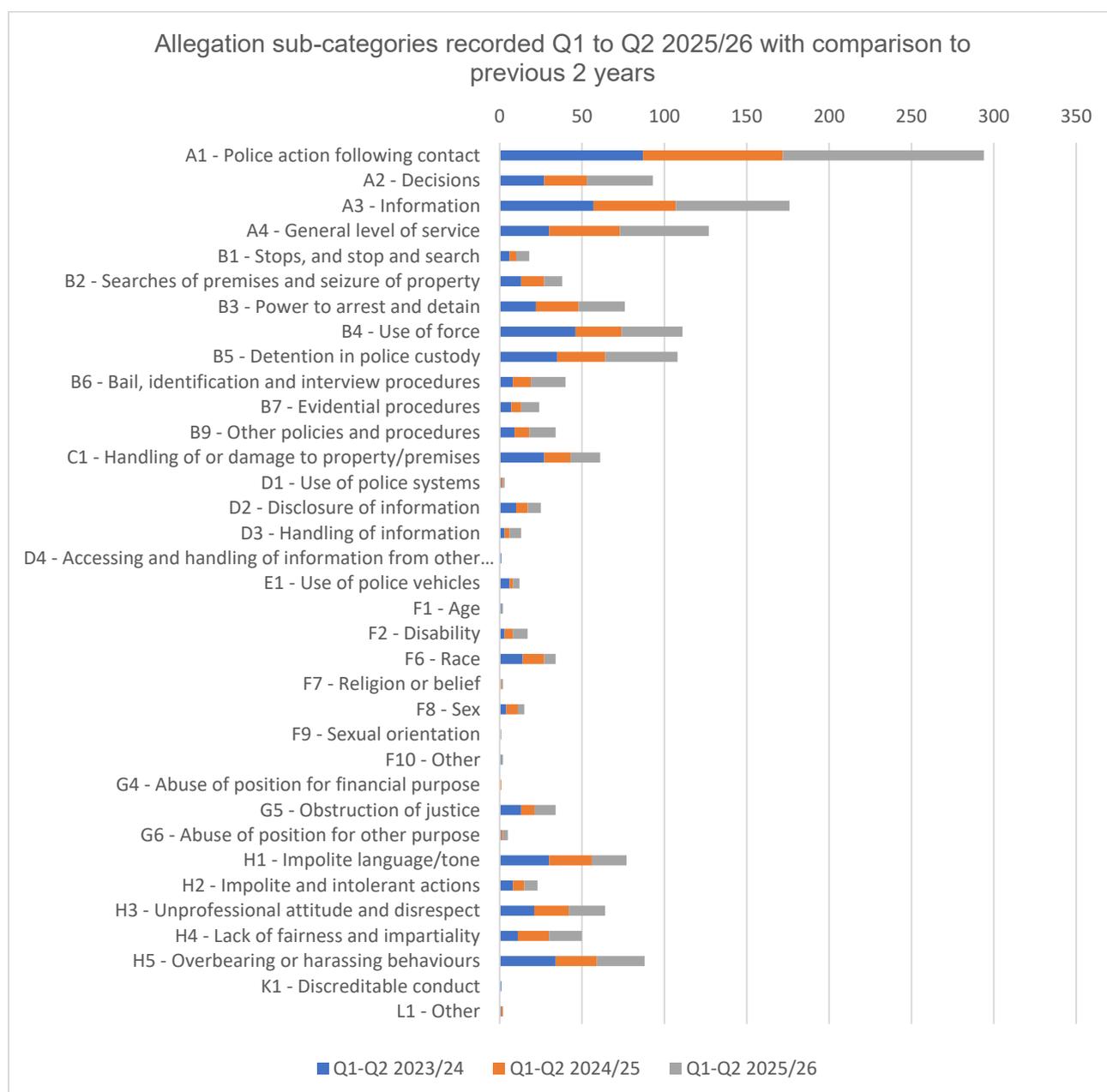


3. Public Complaint Allegations Recorded

Allegations represent specific concerns raised by complainants regarding the service they have received. Multiple allegations can be recorded on single complaint cases and new allegations may be added at any point during the complaint handling process, following discussion with the complainant to fully identify the allegations. The following data shows the allegations recorded within the reporting period and include those added to cases recorded prior to 1 April 2025.

With the change in Regulations the IOPC introduced 45 categories of complaint under which the allegations are recorded to classify the nature of the complaints made, enhancing the understanding of complaint themes.

(Chart 3): A total of 639 allegations have been recorded within the reporting period, including those added to cases initiated before 1 April 2025. The graph shows the distribution of allegations across categories for the Q1 to Q2 period over the past 3 years:



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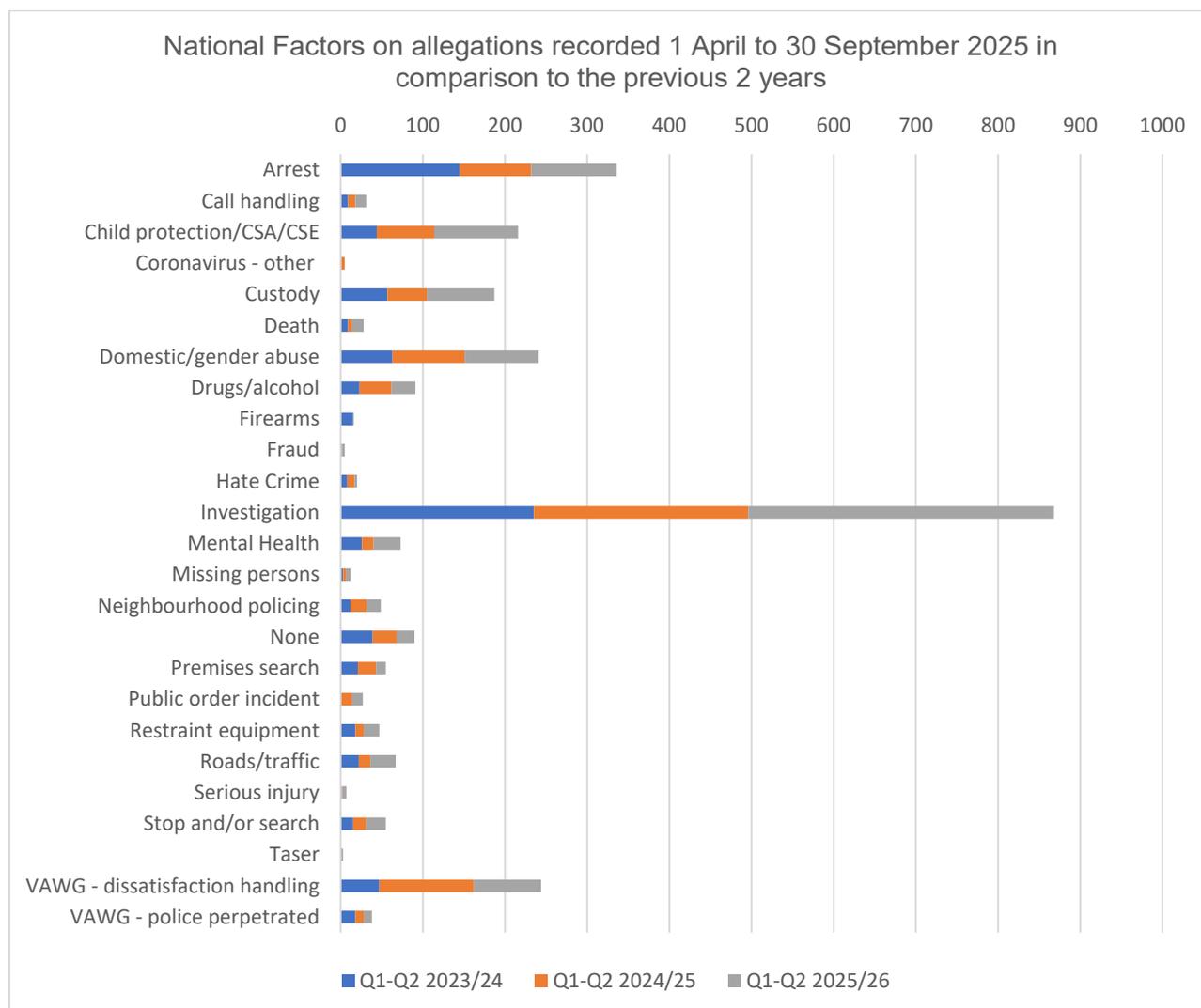
The number of allegations recorded declined in 2024/25 but then increased in 2025/26, in line with the complaint cases recorded.

In the reporting period, the most frequently recorded complaint category is 'Police action following contact' and is consistent across all three years. Almost 45% of all allegations are recorded under the IOPC category 'A – Delivery of duties and service', which incorporates Police action following contact, Decisions, Information and General level of service.

National Factors

When a complaint allegation is recorded, national factors are recorded against it. The national factors have been devised by the IOPC and are applied with the purpose of capturing the situational context of the dissatisfaction. Multiple factors can be applied to each individual allegation.

(Chart 4): The chart below shows the national factors applied to the 639 allegations recorded in the reporting period:



The highest recorded national factor is 'Investigation'. The types of concern raised are perceived failures in the investigation, securing evidence, updating, time taken to investigate and dissatisfaction with the outcome as well as concerns around property seized and the police response to incidents.

4. Timeliness for logging complaints and contacting complainants

Chapter 6 of the IOPC Statutory Guidance states that complaints should be logged, and the complainant contacted ‘as soon as possible’. Two key metrics are monitored:

- **Logging time:** The duration from receipt of the complaint in Force to the date logged by the Professional Standards Department.
- **Initial contact time:** The time from when the complaint is made to the first communication with the complainant.

(Table 1): The table below details timeliness for logging complaint cases:

<u>Measure</u>	<u>1 Apr to 30 Sept 2023</u>	<u>1 Apr to 30 Sept 2024</u>	<u>1 Apr to 30 Sept 2025</u>
% of cases logged within 2 working days	81.4%	88.4%	87.5%
% of cases logged within 3-5 working days	6%	8.4%	4%
% of cases logged within 6-8 working days	3.6%	1.3%	4%
% of cases logged in more than 8 working days	9%	1.9%	4.5%

Of the 200 complaints received in the reporting period, 87.5% were logged within 2 working days.

(Table 2): The table below details the timeliness for contacting complainants:

<u>Measure</u>	<u>1 Apr to 30 Sept 2023</u>	<u>1 Apr to 30 Sept 2024</u>	<u>1 Apr to 30 Sept 2025</u>
% of complainants contacted within 5 working days	37%	43.75%	26.9%
% of complainants contacted within 6-10 working days	39.9%	45%	32.2%
% of complainants contacted in more than 10 working days	23.1%	11.25%	40.9%

On average, initial contact with complainants occurred in 10 working days, with 59.1% of complainants being contacted within that time.

The level of contact from complainants remains high and in the reporting period 1,396 contacts were made to the Joint Professional Standards Department, compared to 1,180 in Q1 to Q2, 2024/25 and 1,221 in Q1 to Q2 2023/24.

The Complaint Management Unit (CMU) during this past year have been affected by staff turnover with the associated delay in replacing them, however the primary factor is the large increase in workload (Triage cases increased by 76%, Public Complaints up 17% based on the 12 months to 30 September 2025 compared to the previous 12 months). Consideration of these increases has not provided any root cause relating to a change in policing methods or recording practices.

In addition, the CMU currently has responsibility for the email ‘inbox’ for Professional Standards as a whole, traffic in this inbox has increased 40% (4722 from 3366) over the past year. This level of additional demand has affected some other core functions of the Complaint Management Unit.

PSD are seeking to reorganise their processes and staffing to address this increase in demand and the consequent reduction in performance in some other areas.

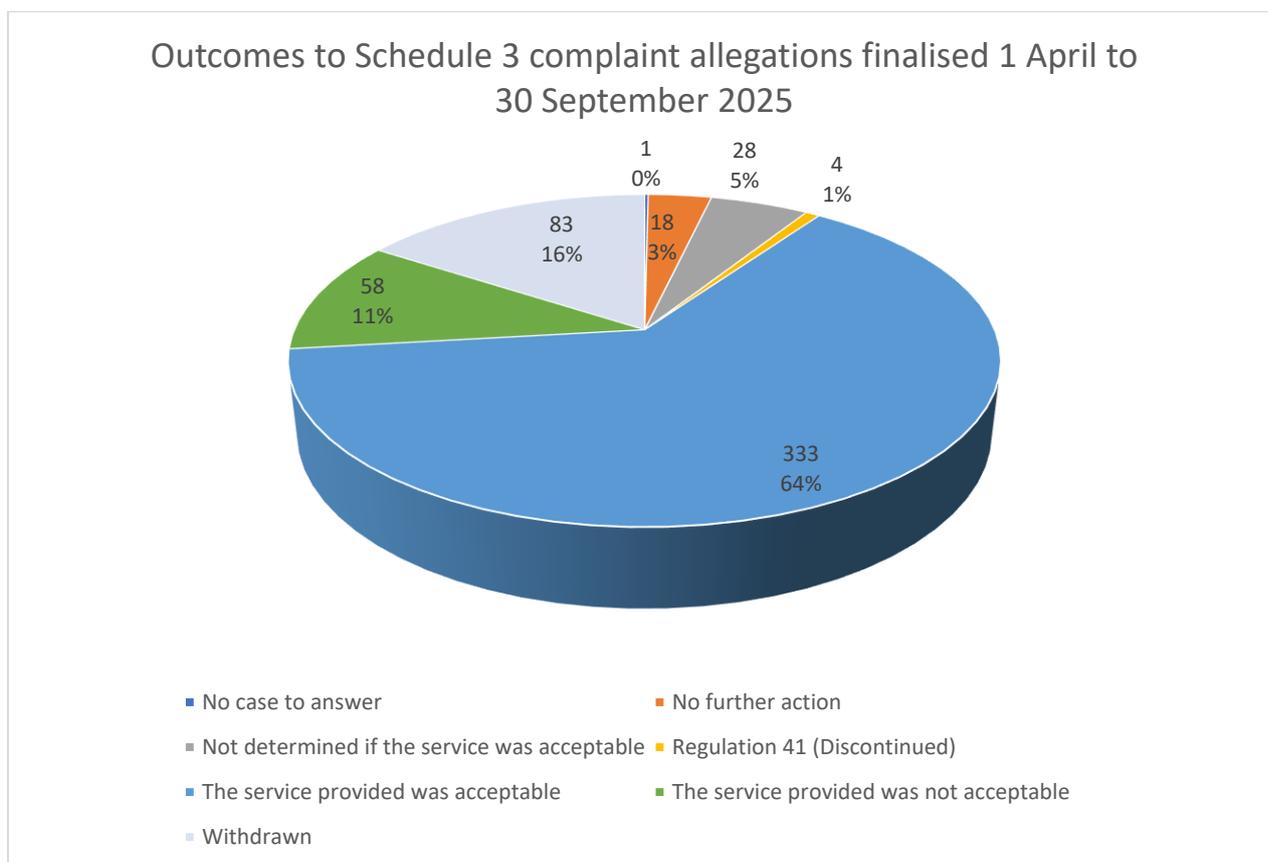
5. Complaint allegation outcomes (Schedule 3)

Schedule 3 complaints will either be investigated, handled otherwise than by investigation (responding to concerns raised and seeking to resolve them) or determined that no further action will be taken.

Some complaints may also be withdrawn by the complainant or discontinued under Regulation 41.

During the reporting period, 141 Schedule 3 complaint cases were concluded.

(Chart 5): Every complaint contains at least one allegation. The chart below details the outcomes to the 525 Schedule 3 complaint allegations finalised in the reporting period:



On reviewing the outcomes to Schedule 3 complaint allegations the percentages across all allegation outcomes show little variance when compared to the same 6-month period within the previous two years.

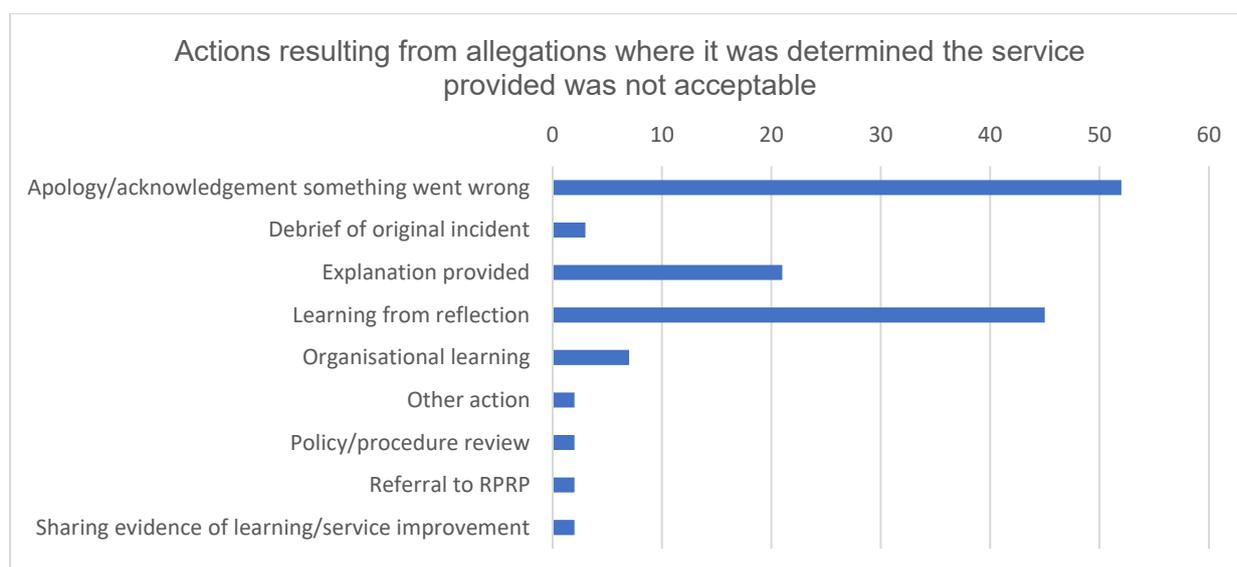
- Allegations resulting in a case to answer remain consistently below 0.5%.
- Fewer allegations are being resulted as No further action required, having dropped from 8.2% in Q1 to Q2 2023/24 to 3.4%.
- Allegations where it was not determined if the service was acceptable are consistent across the 3 reporting periods at between 4.3% and 5.3%.
- The percentage of allegations where it was determined the service provided was acceptable has also remained consistent, at 62.8% in Q1 to Q2, 2023/24 to 64% in Q1 to Q2, 2024/25 and 63.4% in the current reporting period.

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- Allegations resulted as the service provided was not acceptable have decreased from 14.8% in Q1 to Q2, 2023/24 to 11%.
- The percentage of allegations withdrawn has increased from 8.9% in Q1 to Q2, 2023/24, to 15.8% in the reporting period.
- The geographical location recorded on each finalised allegation shows little disparity between the outcomes for the East, South and West of the County. Service acceptable outcomes ranged from 57.3% to 66.8% of allegations and service not acceptable was between 9.9% and 14.5%.

Each allegation under the new Regulations included a recorded action. Multiple actions may be associated with a single allegation.

(Chart 6): It was determined that the service provided was not acceptable for 58 allegations. These allegations have resulted in the following actions:



The largest action recorded is an apology or acknowledgement to the complainant that something went wrong, followed by learning from reflection and explanation provided.

Even where it has been determined the service provided was acceptable, there are opportunities to resolve the issues and learn from the complaints in a number of ways.

In the majority of cases where the service provided was acceptable an explanation was provided to the complainant. It is important to identify all learning for individuals involved as well as the organisation, this can also include a review of Policies and Procedures as well as reviewing information held on police records. Where appropriate, an apology can be given and a debrief of the incident allows those involved the opportunity to reflect on the circumstances.

6. Complaint and allegation outcomes (Outside Schedule 3)

Cases managed outside of Schedule 3 of the PRA 2002 are addressed with the aim of resolving concerns promptly and to the complainant’s satisfaction. These cases often involve requests for clarification or acknowledgment rather than formal investigation.

During the reporting period, 71 allegations were handled outside Schedule 3. Of these, 67 were resolved representing a 94.4% resolution rate. This is an increase from 87.8% in Q1 to Q2 2024/25 and from 92% in Q1 to Q2 2023/24.

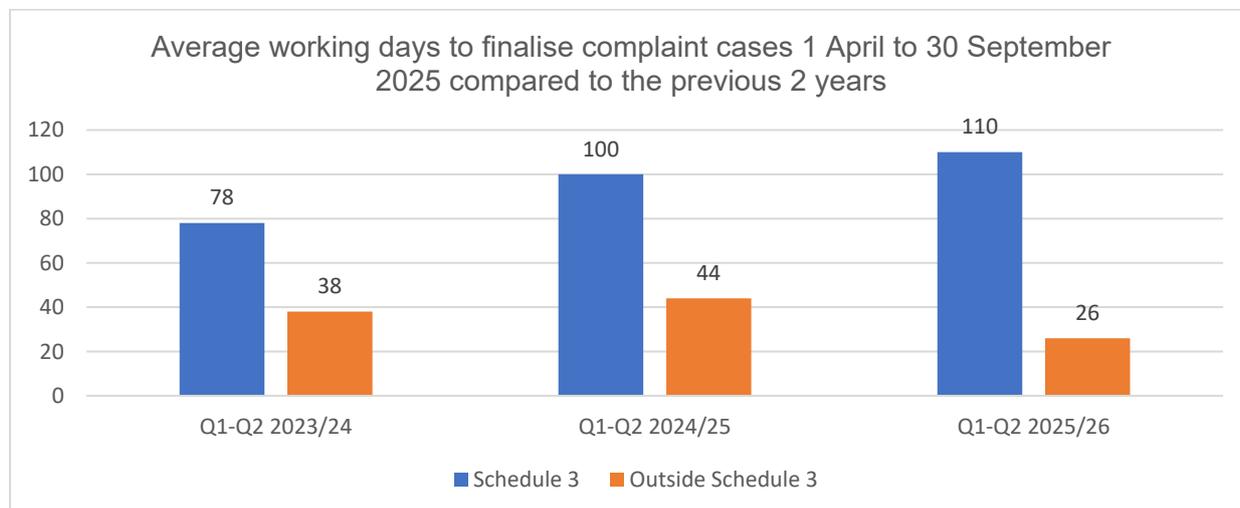
As with complaints handled under Schedule 3, there are opportunities to learn and offer an apology where appropriate. In most cases, an explanation was provided to the complainant to resolve their concerns.

Complainants retain the right to request escalation to Schedule 3 if they remain dissatisfied. In the reporting period, four cases were escalated compared to three in Q1 to Q2, 2024/25 and in the same period in 2023/24.

7. Complaint case timeliness

This section measures the number of working days from the date the complaint is recorded to the date the complainant is informed of the outcome. Periods during which cases are suspended due to legal proceedings (sub judice) are excluded from the calculation.

(Chart 7): The graph below shows the average resolution times in the reporting period, with comparisons to the same 6 months in 2024/25 and 2023/24:



The average time to conclude Schedule 3 cases has gradually increased, while resolution times for cases outside Schedule 3 have decreased, particularly in the reporting period.

On reviewing the 12 months to 30 September 2025, the average time to complete Schedule 3 complaints is 99 working days and outside Schedule 3 is 32 working days.

The difference between the time taken to conclude Schedule 3 matters compared to those outside of Schedule 3 is a reflection of the increased work required in any response. A response to a Schedule 3 complaint will most likely require consideration of obtaining officer

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accounts, reviewing media and records held by Police, followed by consideration of appropriate legislation.

The year-on-year increase in the time taken to deal with Schedule 3 matters is due to the manner of allocation. For the most part these matters are currently dealt with by managers (Inspectors or Staff equivalent), these are operational staff who have complaint handling as an additional responsibility, consequently their workload has increased due to the rise in demand already identified. The current system of complaint allocation and handling is under review.

This, often prolonged process, can be contrasted with the improvement in timeliness for matters dealt with Outside Schedule 3. Improvement in this area is the result of staff within CMU being ready to engage with the member of the public in a positive manner and seeking to establish early the nature of the complaint and the desired outcome

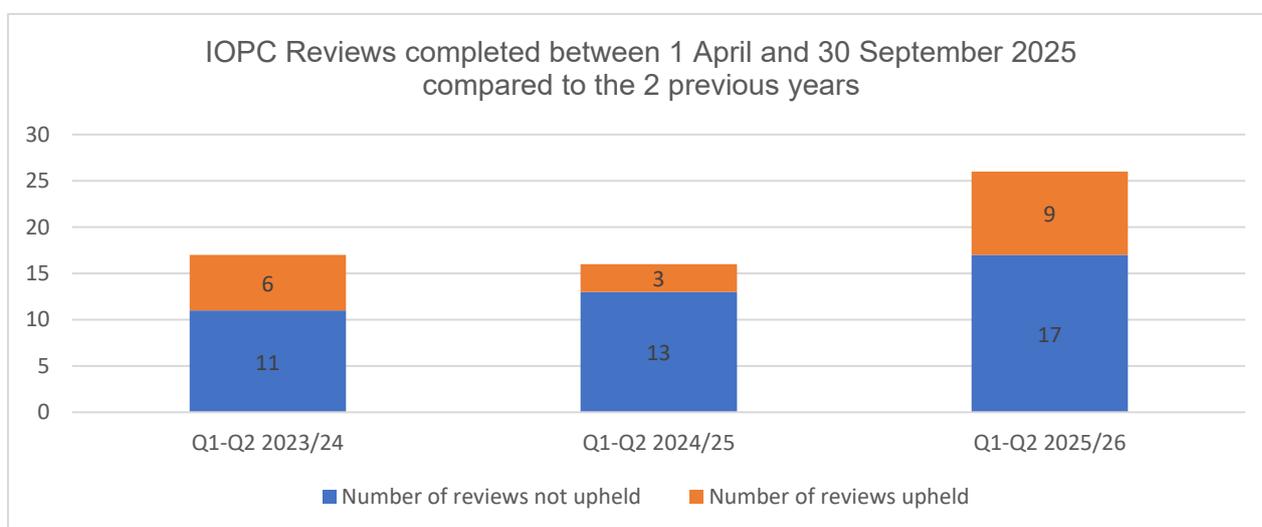
8. Reviews to IOPC and LPB

Under Schedule 3 of the PRA 2002, complainants may request a review of their case outcome if dissatisfied. Reviews are conducted by either the IOPC (Independent Office for Police Conduct) or the Local Policing Body (the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner) depending on the nature of the complaint. The outcome letter to the complainant specifies who the relevant review body is for their complaint.

IOPC reviews

In the reporting period the IOPC received 25 requests to review the outcome of the complaint.

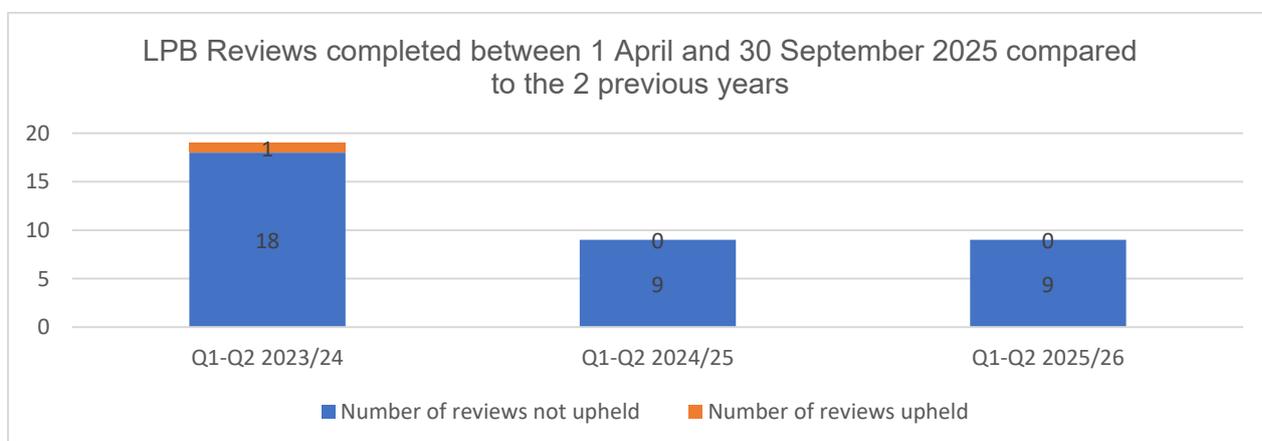
(Chart 8): The chart below details the number of reviews the IOPC completed and of those, the number which were upheld:



LPB reviews

The Local Policing Body received 24 requests to review the outcome of the complaint.

(Chart 9): The chart below details the number of reviews the LPB completed and of those, the number which were upheld:



9. Chapter 13 Reports

When a local investigation exceeds 12 months, the Appropriate Authority is required to submit a written update to both the Local Policing Body and the IOPC. This update must include:

- The status of the investigation
- Estimated completion timeliness
- Reasons for the delay
- Planned steps to progress the case

These updates, known as Chapter 13 reports (as outlined in Chapter 13 of the IOPC Statutory Guidance) must be submitted every six months following the 12-month anniversary, until the investigation concludes.

It is important to note that investigations cannot proceed while a case is suspended, such as during ongoing court proceedings, which can impact overall timeliness.

During the reporting period, 17 reports were submitted concerning 11 complaints, five conduct cases and one general file. This represents a decrease compared to 23 reports in Q1 to Q2, 2024/25 however, an increase from 10 reports in the same period in 2023/24.

10. Complainant demographic

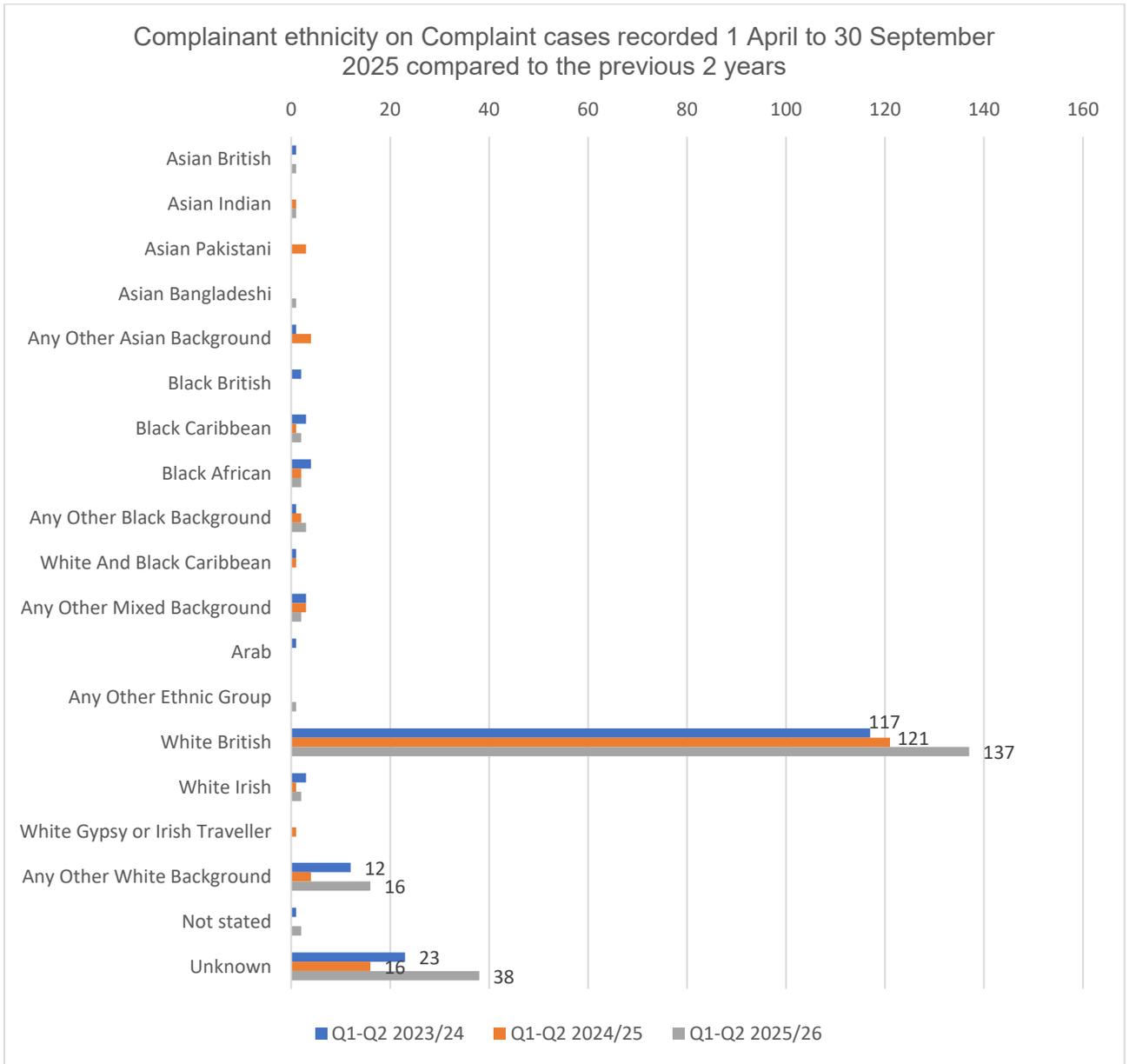
A member of the public is considered a complainant if they are directly or adversely affected by the conduct, has witnessed the conduct or is acting on behalf of someone who meets the criteria. Consequently, a single complaint case may involve multiple complainants.

During the reporting period, 1 April to 30 September 2025, 200 complaint cases were received involving 208 individual complainants. Where available, protected characteristics data, such as ethnicity and gender, is recorded.

Ethnicity data was recorded in 80.8% of cases, a decrease from 90% in Q1 to Q2 2024/25 and 86.1% in 2023/24.

Of the 208 complainants, 100 are male (48.1%), 104 are female (50%) and 4 complainants have not provided their gender (1.9%).

(Chart 10): The graph below shows the ethnicity of complainants making the complaints in the reporting period with a comparison to the same period in the previous two years:



Data labels added to the graph where the figure is 10 or more. Where complainants have made more than one complaint in the reporting period, they are counted on each individual complaint.

Complaints from Ethnic Minority Groups

A review of the complainants’ ethnicity shows that in the last 6 months, 13 of the 208 complainants identified as being from ethnic minority backgrounds which is 6.25% of all complainants recorded.

This is a decrease from 10.5% in Q1 to Q2, 2024/25 and 9.8% in Q1 to Q2, 2023/24.

Further scrutiny is being applied to these cases in conjunction with HR, code of ethics task and finish group and the ongoing work under the Suffolk PRAP.

11. Discrimination complaints

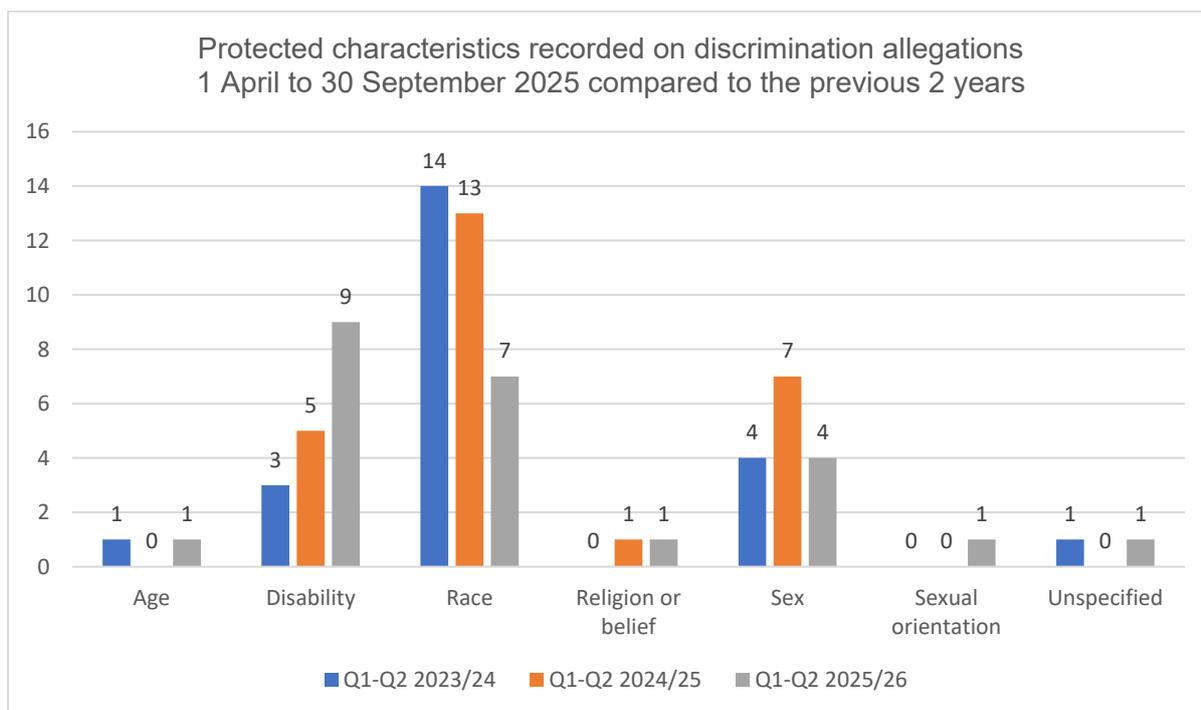
Between 1 April and 30 September 2025, the Professional Standards Department recorded 639 complaint allegations under new Regulations. Of these, 24 allegations (3.76%) involved claims of discrimination.

This represents a decrease compared to:

- 26 allegations (5.3%) in Q1 to Q2, 2024/25
- 23 allegations (4.3%) in Q1 to Q2, 2023/24

Discrimination complaints cover all protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation as well as other identifiable groups (not protected under the Equality Act 2010).

(Chart 11): The chart below shows the protected characteristics recorded on allegations of discrimination received in the reporting period compared to the same 6 months in 2024/25 and 2023/24:



Disability was the most frequently cited characteristic in the reporting period, accounting for 37.5% of all discrimination allegations and has increased over the last 3 reporting periods. Complainants report a lack of reasonable adjustments, officers making inappropriate comments and a lack of empathy.

Of the 9 disability related complaints, 3 have been finalised to date and all were determined as the service provided was acceptable.

Allegations citing race decreased notably, in comparison to the previous reporting periods.

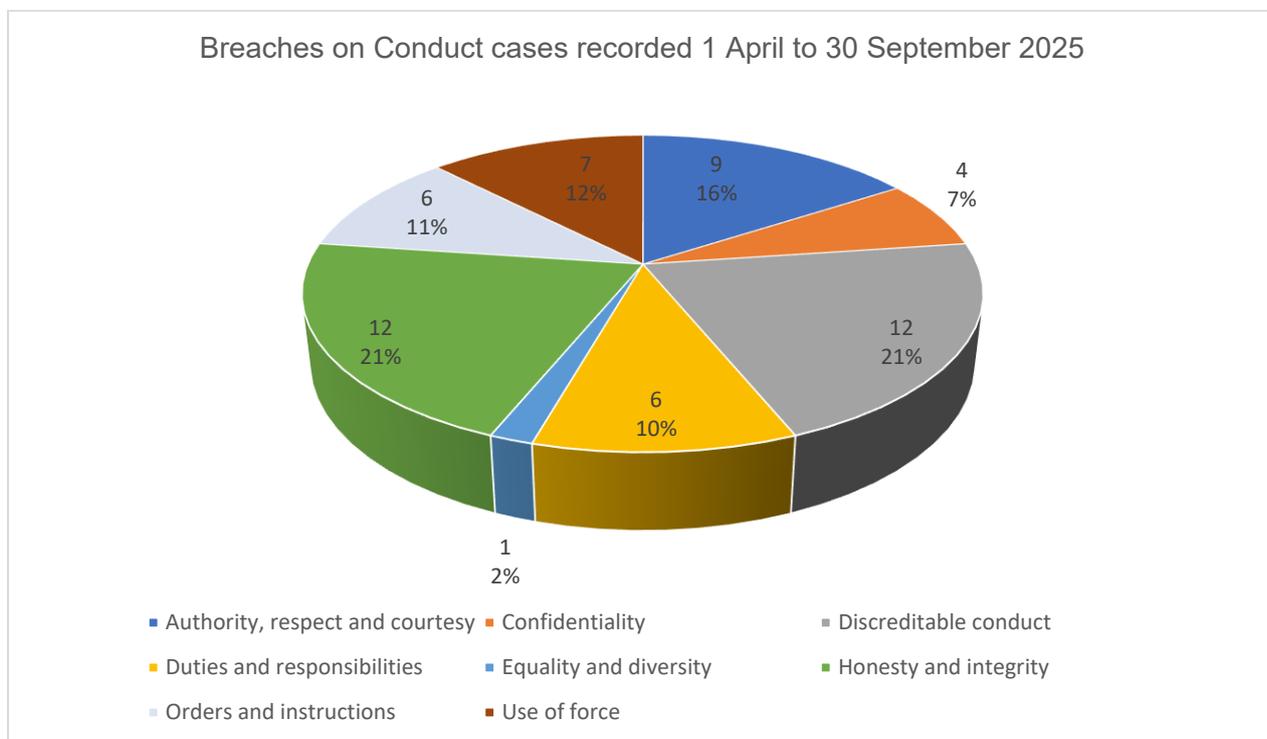
12. Conduct Investigations

Between 1 April and 30 September 2025, 44 internal conduct cases were recorded. This is a 63% increase from 27 cases in Q1 to Q2 2024/25 and an increase from 36 in the same period in 2023/24.

These cases involved 57 breaches of the Standards of Professional Behaviour, attributed to:

- 37 Police officers
- 1 Special Constable
- 9 members of Police staff

(Chart 12): The chart below displays a breakdown of the breaches recorded on the conduct cases under each category and as a percentage overall:



- Discreditable conduct and Honesty and integrity were the most common breaches recorded (both 21%), followed by Authority, respect and courtesy (15.8%).
- In Q1 to Q2, 2024/25, the most frequent breach was Authority, respect and courtesy (22.7%), followed by Discreditable conduct (18.2%) and Use of force (15.9%).
- In the same 6-month period in 2023/24, Authority, respect and courtesy accounted for 29.4% of breaches, followed by Discreditable conduct (23.5%) and Duties and responsibilities (16.2%).

13. Resignations and Public Hearings

The Policing and Crime Act (PCA) 2017 contains a number of reforms and from 15 December 2017 allows officers under investigation to resign or retire however there is an expectation that misconduct proceedings for gross misconduct will be taken to conclusion.

- The Police Barred List includes individuals dismissed following misconduct or performance proceedings.
- The Police Advisory List includes those who resigned or retired during an active investigation or before allegations came to light. Individuals remain on the list until the investigation concludes.

Both lists are maintained by the College of Policing and include officers, special constables, staff and designated volunteers.

Two police officers resigned whilst under investigation. In one case the matter was taken to proceedings, and the officer would have been dismissed had they not resigned. A secondary determination assessed the other case as misconduct and no further action was taken.

Public Hearings

Since 1 May 2015, in cases where an officer is given notice of referral to misconduct proceedings under regulation 21 (1) or 43 (1) of the conduct regulations, the case will be heard in public. This is also the case for accelerated hearings. Exemptions from this are subject to the discretion of the person chairing or conducting the hearing to exclude any person from all or part of the hearing.

The regulations do not apply to misconduct meetings or third stage unsatisfactory performance meetings.

As of 1 January 2016, hearings are chaired by legally qualified individuals. In May 2024, reforms granted Chief Constables greater authority to dismiss officers, with Assistant Chief Constables (ACC) now leading misconduct hearings.

A new ACC role has been piloted across Norfolk, Suffolk and Hertfordshire to expedite gross misconduct hearings.

During the reporting period, the ACC chaired two full hearings and one accelerated hearing for Suffolk.

14. Misconduct outcomes

Under the Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020:

- Misconduct is defined as “a breach of the Standards of Professional Behaviour that is so serious as to justify disciplinary action (written warning or above)”
- Gross misconduct is “a breach of the Standards of Professional Behaviour that is so serious as to justify dismissal”.

The number of misconduct hearings and misconduct meetings held in the reporting period for Police officers, members of Police staff and members of the Special Constabulary are detailed as follows:

Misconduct hearings:

- 2 police officers were subject to Accelerated misconduct hearings, and both would have been dismissed had they not resigned
- 2 police officers were subject to full hearings resulting in one receiving a Final Written Warning and in the other case no misconduct was found
- 2 members of police staff were subject to disciplinary hearings resulting in one dismissal and one would have been dismissed had they not resigned

Misconduct meetings:

- 4 police officers were subject to misconduct meetings resulting in 3 Written Warnings and one referral to the Reflective Practice Review Process.

(Table 3): The table below shows the number of hearings and meetings held in the reporting period, in comparison to the previous two years:

Year	Number of misconduct hearings	Number of misconduct meetings
Q1-Q2 2025/26	6	4
Q1-Q2 2024/25	3	8
Q1-Q2 2023/24	6	3

15. Organisational learning

Identifying and embedding both organisational and individual learning is critical for any organisation committed to growth and continuous improvement. Suffolk Constabulary works closely with the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) to capture learning opportunities through the complaints and review process.

Within the Professional Standards Department (PSD), the Engagement & Analytical Hub is driving a culture of ongoing learning and development. By combining the expertise of analysts and researchers with advanced tools such as Power BI, the team supports Officers and Staff in recognising learning opportunities within their daily work—particularly when managing public complaints or expressions of dissatisfaction.

The overarching aim is to identify areas for improvement across the Constabulary, applying a problem-solving approach to address issues effectively and ensuring that lessons learned and best practices are shared throughout the organisation.

During the reporting period, several key areas for improvement have been identified through complaints, reviews, and internal feedback. These issues have been addressed proactively via corporate communications and management actions to ensure clarity of expectations and reinforce professional standards across the organisation.

One area highlighted was uniform standards. Officers and Staff were reminded of the importance of maintaining a professional appearance at all times, as this reflects both individual professionalism and the reputation of the Constabulary. Clear guidance was reissued to ensure consistency and compliance with uniform policies.

Another focus was on professional language and conduct. Communications emphasised that interactions—whether with colleagues, partners, or members of the public—must always be courteous, respectful, and aligned with our organisational values. This reminder reinforces the critical role professional behaviour plays in building trust and confidence.

Finally, attention was drawn to the need for thorough and methodical searches when locating missing persons. Guidance was circulated to ensure Officers apply structured search techniques, document actions accurately, and maintain clear communication throughout the process. These steps are essential to safeguarding vulnerable individuals and delivering an effective response.

By addressing these issues through organisation-wide messaging and individual management actions, we aim to embed learning, strengthen standards, and reduce the likelihood of similar concerns arising in the future.

Organisation Learning Development

The E&A Hub is in the final stages of testing a joint-force data correlation tool developed in Power BI. This solution enables the cross-referencing of HR and PSD data, providing a powerful means to identify organisational trends and emerging themes.

The tool will support informed decision-making both within the department and across the wider organisation. In addition, its functionality has been enhanced to highlight any disproportionality in complaint and misconduct investigations, ensuring greater transparency and accountability.

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Suffolk Constabulary is in the process of creating an organisational learning board. The purpose of this initiative is to create a dedicated forum for capturing, reviewing, and embedding learning from across the organisation. The Learning Board will provide executive-level oversight to ensure that lessons identified translate into timely, meaningful, and measurable improvements.

At this early stage, the focus is on defining best practice and aligning our approach with national standards through benchmarking and engagement with sector-wide networks. This will help us develop a robust framework for organisational learning that prioritises transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement.

The Board will act as a central point for:

- **Collating learning** from incidents, audits, reviews, and staff feedback.
- **Prioritising actions** to address systemic issues and drive cultural change.
- **Monitoring implementation** to ensure lessons are embedded effectively.
- **Reporting progress** to senior leadership and stakeholders to maintain visibility and impact.

Ultimately, this initiative aims to foster a learning culture where insights are not only captured but actively shape policy, practice, and performance across the organisation.

The PSD Engagement Team has completed a comprehensive audit of all training products previously developed and delivered by the department. Following this review, a new, tailored training programme has been launched, featuring content specifically designed for different groups of officers and staff.

A key development is the creation of a new course for Sergeants and Inspector ranks, ensuring supervisors and leaders are equipped to identify and address poor performance and other misconduct-related matters effectively. These courses are closely aligned with the cultural transformation work being led by our People Directorate.

All training inputs emphasise organisational culture and learning, with content customised to reflect each participant's role and stage of professional development.

16. Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) Dip Sampling

Dip Sampling of complaint files is a key component of the oversight arrangements which are implemented by the Police and Crime Commissioners in pursuit of the statutory duties set out in the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, and further strengthened in the Policing and Crime Act 2017.

Since the last report was presented by Suffolk Constabulary, the OPCC has completed Dip Sampling from the finalised cases provided by the Constabulary's Professional Standards Department (PSD) for the periods of 1 January 2025 to 31 March 2025 and 1 April 2025 to 30 June 2025.

A total of 13 files were subject to Dip Sampling with all complaints being handled under the complaint system introduced as part of the Policing and Crime Act 2017 that came into effect on 1 February 2020.

The finalised complaints included files where investigations were conducted by both Suffolk Constabulary and PSD (and included complaints where the level of service was judged to be acceptable and not acceptable). Consideration was also given to files where it was decided to record the complaint and take no further action, where complaints were withdrawn and where it was unable to determine if the service provided was acceptable.

Overall, the files sampled were completed to the expected standard with the correct processes and procedures followed. There were many examples of positive engagement with the complainants regardless of the complaint outcome with the force taking time to understand and address the concerns raised.

Where the service was judged to be unacceptable, an apology was offered to the complainant and learning was correctly identified and followed up with the officers involved.

This Dip Sample highlighted a small area of improvement that has been discussed with the Suffolk Constabulary Professional Standard Department (PSD) with the appropriate feedback being actioned. These issues included:

No evidence that an officer was advised that a complaint had been received.
Officer not informed of a complaint withdrawal.

In conclusion, whilst there have been some minor issues highlighted, this was a very positive Dip Sample which evidences that public complaints are actioned appropriately. The OPCC will continue to monitor the complaint process to ensure the public receive the best possible service.

Glossary

Appropriate authority - the appropriate authority for a person serving with the police is:

- for a chief officer or an acting chief officer, the local policing body for the area of the police force of which that officer is a member; or
- in any other case, the chief officer with direction and control over the person serving with the police

In relation to complaints not concerning the conduct of a person serving with police, the appropriate authority is the chief officer of the police force with which dissatisfaction is expressed by the complainant.

Complaint – any expression of dissatisfaction with police expressed by or on behalf of a member of the public

Complaint handler – is any person who has been appointment to handle a complaint

IOPC Statutory Guidance – is the guidance from the IOPC to assist local policing bodies and Forces to achieve high standards in the handling of complaints, conduct matters, and death or serious injury (DSI) matters concerning those serving with the police, and to comply with their legal obligations.

Schedule 3 – The complaint must be recorded and handled under Schedule 3 of the legislation if the complainant wishes it to be or if it meets certain criteria as defined within the guidance.

Outside Schedule 3 – The complaint can be logged and handled outside of Schedule 3 with a view to resolving the matter promptly and to the satisfaction of the complainant without the need for detailed enquiries to address the concerns.

Investigation – an investigation of the matter recorded under Schedule 3.

Otherwise than by investigation – responding to concerns raised and seeking to resolve them under Schedule 3.

Service provided was not acceptable – the service provided (whether due to the actions of an individual, or organisational failings) did not reach the standard a reasonable person could expect.

Not been able to determine if the service provided was acceptable – should only be determined in situations where despite the complaint being handled in a reasonable and proportionate manner, there is too little information available on which to make the determination.

Local Policing Body – is the term for the Police and Crime Commissioners

Practice requiring improvement – underperformance or conduct not amounting to misconduct or gross misconduct, which falls short of the expectations of the public and the police service.

Regulation 41 – the Regulation under the Police (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2020 under which the appropriate authority contacts the complainant following a suspension of the investigation of a complaint to ascertain whether they wish for the investigation to be started or resumed. If the complainant does not want the investigation started or fails to

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reply, the appropriate authority must determine whether it is in the public interest for the complaint to be treated as a recordable conduct matter.

Reflective Practice Review Process – the procedures set out in Part 6 of the Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020, for handling practice requiring improvement

Relevant review body (RRB) – the relevant body (the IOPC or the Local Policing Body) to consider a review made under Paragraph 6A or 25, Schedule 3, Police Reform Act 2002.

Withdrawn complaints – a complaint that is withdrawn in accordance with regulations 38 and 39, Police (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2020 following an indication or notification from the complainant.