



Independent Office  
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3 February 2020

Dear colleague

### **Launch of legislative changes on 1 February 2020**

I am writing to confirm the final phase of the legislative reforms to the police complaints system under the *Policing and Crime Act 2017*, were launched by the Home Office on 1 February 2020.

These reforms place a greater emphasis on handling complaints in a reasonable and proportionate manner. They provide greater flexibility in complaint handling and are designed to achieve a more customer-focused complaints system. Complaint handlers now have a wider range of options to resolve a complaint and must consider what is reasonable and proportionate for each individual case.

There's also a stronger focus looking at the whole organisation and reinforcing a culture of learning. This means a shift away from discipline on low level cases to a learning focus.

We've been hosting launch events on our new Statutory Guidance and how the new legislation should be applied in practice with Professional Standards Departments and local policing bodies.

Our new Statutory Guidance is an essential and comprehensive tool for complaint handlers. Many of you contributed to its development through the public consultation. We would like to thank all those who were involved in its development. Your views were invaluable and played an important role in shaping this key guidance.

To complement the Statutory Guidance and to support complaint handlers navigate the new system, we have developed:

- new guidance on capturing data about police complaints
- new guidance on managing unacceptable and unreasonable complainant behaviour

- Focus publications on specific topics:
  - Access to the complaints system
  - Data capture
  - Handling decisions and thresholds
  - Reasonable and proportionate handling outside Schedule 3
  - Reasonable and proportionate handling inside Schedule 3 other than by investigation
  - Reasonable and proportionate outcomes
  - Reviews
  - Handling allegations about the chief officer

Over the last two years we have done a lot of work to improve the timeliness of our investigations and we now complete 4 out of 5 investigations within 12 months. These new reforms will help make further improvements.

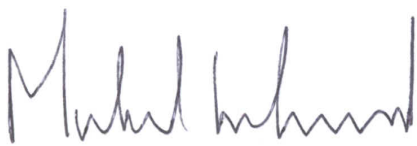
Under the new legislation, those carrying out an investigation (whether it's the police force or ourselves) will be required to write to the police and crime commissioner or chief officer when an investigation takes longer than 12 months. The changes also reduce the steps required to determine what action should be taken at the end of an investigation.

The reforms present a great opportunity for all of us to find the balance between holding individual police to account for their actions, with ensuring that systemic and organisational learning issues are better considered and addressed.

I look forward to working with you as we see these reforms come into effect.

For more information about the legislative changes or to view our new Statutory Guidance, which will be published soon, please visit our website: [www.policeconduct.gov.uk](http://www.policeconduct.gov.uk). You can also find information on the Home Office website: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/home-office](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/home-office)

Yours sincerely



**Michael Lockwood**  
Director General  
Independent Office for Police Conduct