

CONDUCT COMPLAINTS: MEMBER DIP SAMPLING OF COMPLETED CASE FILES

BACKGROUND

1. The Police Authority, through this Committee, has an important role in the monitoring and oversight of complaints against the Force. To complement the Chief Constable's report that this Committee receives on complaints received over the last quarter (previous agenda item), at its meeting on 31 August 2004, the Audit & Strategy Committee approved a programme of Members' dip sampling completed case files for complaints relating to conduct matters (minute 79 refers). A programme of dip sampling has been developed to allow Members to understand further the complaints processes as they are operated in Humberstone and to check this against the Force's policy and procedure.
2. This report sets out the key issues arising from the dip sampling visits to Professional Standards Branch (PSB) in September and October 2005.

COMPLETED VISITING MEMBER RECORD SHEETS

3. The forms completed by Members following the visits made in September and October are held by the Secretariat, along with the forms completed at previous visits.
4. The issues arising from the visits in September and October are set out below. Members may wish to note the issues in any future visits they undertake:-
 - i. One Member raised an issue regarding legal representation of an officer facing formal misconduct proceedings. His queries were fully answered by Chief Supt Everett during the visit.
 - ii. After considering a case where the Force had applied for and was subsequently granted dispensation from investigating the complaint by the IPCC (because it was not practicable to proceed with the complaint because of a refusal or failure by the complainant to cooperate), the same Member commented that a lot of time had been wasted and needless trauma suffered by the officers concerned.
 - iii. Another Member commented that the quality of completion of Form 640 was unsatisfactory in one case. In response to this observation, the Head of PSB has emailed all supervisors and revamped the guidance booklet to supervisors. In addition, PSB staff are monitoring

completion of the form and informing liaison inspectors when forms are not filled in correctly, who in turn are discussing such problems with those officers who complete the forms in the first place. Satisfactory completion of Form 640 obviously affects the quality of the statistics that PSB are able to compile.

FUTURE VISITS TO PSB

5. A new programme of visits to PSB to dip sample conduct complaints has previously been circulated to Members of this Committee. There remain a number of vacant slots in the programme and Members are requested to discuss with the Member Support Manager whether they can fill these.

RECOMMENDATIONS

6. It is recommended that Members discuss the issues arising from the September and October dip sampling visits at paragraph 4, take account of these issues in future dip sampling visits and carry out further visits over the coming year.

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Background documents: Secretariat File 2.2.9