

Responding to the publication of the IPCC Annual Report and the increase number of complaints against the police, Simon Reed, vice-chairman of the Police Federation of England and Wales, says:

“One of the strengths of British policing is our accountability to the public we serve but you have to look carefully at these latest complaints against police statistics and not just focus on the headline figures. These complaints not only reflect the increasing pressures on police officers but also highlight the need to invest in appropriate training for officers so they have the confidence and skills to deal with the challenging situations they face.

“Despite many of these initial complaints not being upheld or proven, these statistics demonstrate that some forces are not learning lessons and those systemic and structural faults which hinder policing need to be addressed. It needs to also be borne in mind that the very nature of policing means that often police officers are interacting with those who would rather not be stopped or questioned by police and that may explain why a considerable number of complaints are later dropped or unfounded.”

ENDS

IPCC PRESS RELEASE

IPCC publish Annual Police Complaints Statistics 2008/09

The Independent Police Complaints Commission has published its statistics detailing complaints made by members of the public against police.

During 2008/09 complaints rose 8% from the previous year to 31,259. In total, the number of complaints has risen by approximately 8,000 since 2004/05 when the IPCC first became responsible for collecting the data. As in previous years most complaints are about 'neglect of duty' (24%) and 'incivility' (21%), essentially being rude and late. The proportion of all allegations that are substantiated is 10%.

Also published today is data from research conducted as part of the British Crime Survey (BCS) 2006/07. More than a quarter of BCS respondents said they had been 'really annoyed' by their contact with police.

Reviewing the year's statistics IPCC Chair Nick Hardwick, said:

“At a time when politicians and the police are debating public confidence in the police and how to make them more accountable, the complaint figures published today give a strong indication of what the public want sorted out. Complaints about rude and late officers consistently top complaint categories and work to address this can have a positive impact.

“The public recognise the police have a difficult job to do. However, this does not alter the fact that they expect officers to do their job politely and efficiently. These statistics show that when it is not done in this manner they are likely to complain.”

The IPCC is currently consulting on changes to its 'Statutory Guidance' - the rules about how the complaint system should operate. The aim of which will be to create a simpler and less bureaucratic system.

IPCC Chair Nick Hardwick said:

"We want to make sure the system focuses on sorting out complainants' concerns and putting things right. People accept things will sometimes go wrong and on these occasions they do not necessarily want to see an officer punished. But what they do want is for the mistake to be acknowledged and not repeated, put right if possible and an apology or explanation given."

The BCS survey also found that of the 27% of people who had been 'really annoyed' by their contact with the police, only 10% made a complaint. Findings from the BCS and previous IPCC research show that those who don't complain are likely to be young people and those from BME communities, although their confidence appears to be growing.

IPCC Chair Nick Hardwick, said:

"The overall increase in the number of complaints reflects growing confidence in the system and more consistent complaint recording standards. We want to make sure all sections of society have confidence. If the police are to enjoy the confidence of the public it is important they hear from all communities about their experience of policing – good and bad."

The 35 page Complaints Statistics document includes the volume, type and outcome of complaints, as well providing data concerning the complainant. Every police force in England and Wales is included and the document provides comparative data from previous years. The data is not broken down to borough/divisional levels within forces.

Following are a selection of statistics from the report

- The number of complaints has increased from 28,963 to 31,259 – up 8%.
- One complaint can involve a number of allegations. Allegations increased from 48,280 to 53,534 – up 11%.
- Complaints about stop and search numbered 680, up 124 (27%) from the previous year.

More than one million stop and searches were conducted last year, but a complaint regarding stop and search would only be recorded as such if it breached Police and Criminal Evidence Act or other relevant legislation, otherwise it would be recorded in alternative category such as incivility.

- Neglect or failure of duty and incivility accounted for the largest rise in allegations, up approximately 2,000 collectively.
- The next largest field, 'other assault', has fallen from making up 25% of allegations in 2004/05 to 13% in 2008/09.
- The 1,519 allegations of discrimination represent 3% of all allegations – 76% of the allegations concerned race.
- 62% of all complaint cases were completed – a figure that has remained largely the same over the last decade.
- 55% of all officers complained about have less than ten years service.

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The Police Federation of England and Wales