

SCOTTISH POLICE
AUTHORITY

Meeting	Audit Committee Public Session
Date	22 January 2018
Location	Pacific Quay, Glasgow
Title of Paper	Police Scotland Whistleblowing Progress Report
Item Number	8.1
Presented By	Chief Superintendent Mark Hargreaves
Recommendation to Members	For Noting
Appendix Attached	No

PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to provide the Audit Committee with an overview of Q1 and Q2 referrals to the National Gateway Assessment Unit further to a request regarding the recording and management of "whistleblowing" allegations.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Following the conclusion of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) Inspection of the Counter Corruption Unit and in line with the recommendations of that review, a National Gateway Assessment Unit was established within Professional Standards Department (PSD) in February 2017.
- 1.2 This Unit is a single point of contact for all divisions and departments within Police Scotland to make referrals regarding any issues / concerns / allegations involving serving Police Officers or Members of Police Staff.
- 1.3 Once in receipt of referrals submitted, the National Gateway Assessment Unit will make a triage assessment of the referral and carry out any background or intelligence checks that require to be done. Depending on this assessment the referral will be allocated for action to the relevant department e.g. Professional Standards Department, the Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU), back to the originating Division or for progression by National Units such as the Domestic Abuse Task Force.
- 1.4 The establishment of the National Gateway Assessment Unit provides a streamlined and effective structure that allows a holistic operational approach to ACU, PSD and Divisional / Departmental activity.
- 1.5 The remit of the National Gateway Assessment Unit includes assessment of referrals from:
 - Vetting and external forces checks
 - Integrity Matters referrals
 - Notifiable Association assessment
 - Advice and Guidance assessment
 - Officers reports
 - Divisional reports
 - Intelligence reports
 - Crimestoppers
 - Telephone calls
 - Whistleblowing reports.

2. FURTHER DETAIL ON REPORT TOPIC

- 2.1 Between 1st April and 30th September 2017 inclusive a total of 562 referrals have been received at the Gateway Unit.
- 2.2 Referrals to the Gateway Unit can be received from a variety of sources including Integrity Matters, Whistleblowing reports, divisional reports, officer reports, intelligence reports, letters, anonymous reports, Crimestoppers and also direct telephone calls.
- 2.3 Seventy-four (13.16%) of these referrals have been received through the Integrity Matters reporting portal, the majority of which have been made anonymously. To date, no referrals have been received using the bespoke Whistleblowing report forms following the publication of the guidance in June 2017.
- 2.4 The Gateway referrals are categorised on the database iBase as follows:

REFERRAL CATEGORY	Q1 (01/04/2017 to 30/06/2017)	Q2 (01/07/2017 to 30/09/2017)	Total
Abuse of authority	6	23	29
Controlled drug use and supply	6	7	13
Disclosure of information	10	12	22
Inappropriate association	101	137	238
Misuse of force systems	12	6	18
Other (includes, undeclared business interests, staff performance issues, inappropriate relationships on duty, favouritism, manipulation of overtime)	106	88	194
Perverting the course of justice	1	0	1
Sexual misconduct	6	10	16
Theft and fraud	1	3	4
Vulnerability	10	17	27
GRAND TOTAL	259	303	562

2.5 Context

- 2.5.1 Most of the referrals have led to memoranda to divisions to highlight the issues raised and for divisional managers to take further action where appropriate. Examples of this are performance issues being returned to division to address; welfare matters for Divisions (who were previously unsighted) to address; and localised misconduct for consideration after assessment by PSD.
- 2.5.2 Some referrals have led to continued PSD enquiry and ownership, which has on occasion led to criminal investigations.

2.6 Whistleblowing

- 2.6.1 Notwithstanding that there have been no specific reports of "whistleblowing" using the form that supports the guidance published in June 2017, it can be argued that the availability of a number of alternative reporting mechanisms as detailed above demonstrates a confidence of officers and staff to report concerns about the behaviour of others.
- 2.6.2 In addition, the definition of whistleblowing* as per the guidance can present issues regarding subjectivity of quantitative analysis such that it could be argued that some or indeed most of the reports in the table above could in theory be regarded as "whistleblowing".
- 2.6.3 Accordingly, the figures presented in the table above is intended to demonstrate that the existing means for reporting concerns of officers and staff offers reassurance that, regardless of whether a concern can be categorised as whistleblowing, it will be robustly investigated with appropriate and consistent action taken.

**N.B. Definition of whistleblowing as per guidance: "Does it raise issues for 'others' e.g. the organisation, colleagues, clients, or the wider public? If yes, then it is likely to be treated as whistleblowing".*

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no financial implications in this report.

4. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

Audit Committee Public Session
Police Scotland Whistleblowing Progress Report
22 January 2018

4.1 There are no personnel implications associated with this paper.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no further legal implications in this paper to those listed above.

6. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are reputational implications associated with this paper in respect of allegations made against members of Police Scotland.

7. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no social implications associated with this paper.

8. COMMUNITY IMPACT

8.1 There are no community implications associated with this paper.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no equality implications associated with this paper.

10. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no equality implications associated with this paper.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to note this paper.

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Audit Committee Public Session
Police Scotland Whistleblowing Progress Report
22 January 2018

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