



Meeting	Complaints and Conduct Committee
Date	4 September 2025
Location	Video Conference
Title of Paper	Police Scotland Professional Standards Department Quarterly Performance Report (Q1 – 25/26)
Presented By	Assistant Chief Constable Lynn Ratcliff and Chief Superintendent Helen Harrison, Professional Standards Department.
Recommendation to Members	For Discussion
Appendix Attached	Appendix A – Performance Report (Q1 – 25/26) Appendix B – The Standard Appendix C – Misconduct Outcomes

PURPOSE

To report to Members of the Complaints and Conduct Committee, for the purposes of noting, statistical information on the overarching performance activity in relation to complaints and conduct matters about members of Police Scotland for period 1 April 2025 – 30 June 2025.

Members are invited to discuss the content of this report.

1. BACKGROUND

The attached performance report provides data relating to the period ending Quarter 1 (1 April 2025 – 30 June 2025).

Data contained in this report is management information and is correct as of 21 July 2025, unless elsewhere specified.

2. FURTHER DETAIL ON THE REPORT TOPIC

2.1 There are no further details on this report.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no financial implications in this report.

4. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The nature of the matters reported inevitably leads to implications for both individual and wider personnel matters. These are considered on a case-by-case basis to ensure welfare, conduct and both individual and organisational learning opportunities are identified and addressed.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no legal implications in this report.

6. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 As per Item 4.1, each case is assessed for individual and organisational reputational risks and implications and appropriate action taken.

7. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The nature of the data reported in this paper is related to complaints about the police and conduct matters. By its very nature, the subject matter implies a level of negative social, community and equalities impact. By addressing the individual matters and thereafter considering holistically that which has been

reported, Police Scotland seeks to mitigate the negative impact of those cases reported.

8. COMMUNITY IMPACT

8.1 As per 7.1 above.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 As per 7.1 above.

10. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no environmental implications in this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are invited to discuss the content of this report.



Professional Standards (PSD) SPA Performance Report - Quarter 1 of 2025/26

Meeting Date: 04 September 2025

PSD - Summary of Preventions Activity

PREVENTIONS AND PROFESSIONALISM PROGRAMME

The Preventions and Professionalism Tactical and Operational Groups continue to meet on a bi-monthly basis to drive prevention activities aligned to the themes and trends identified through complaint and conduct investigations.

Momentum continues with the online prevention engagement sessions with first and second line managers. The most recent sessions (23rd July & 11th August – 2nd date held due to Op Roll) focussing on DSI referrals and PECSS. Total 220 participants. The next session scheduled for September will focus on PIP/PIM. Learning from these sessions is augmented through publication of the Standard Newsletter.

The Standard Newsletter– Edition 9 – focussed on PECSS and implementation of Duty of Candour as a SoPB. Published on 21st August. Engagement with Line Managers and Senior Management Teams by PSD form part of business as usual and encourages the use of these products to generate discussion at team briefings to further reinforce preventions messaging and learning

Ethics Panels –

Regional & Independent Ethics panels were held on 11th & 12th August 2025. All discussion notes and reports submitted to dilemma holder to inform policy and decision making going forward. Further ethical dilemmas under development and Training Day arranged with SYP (Youth Ethics Advisory Panel) for a training day and panels to be held to discuss 2 dilemmas on 27th September 2025.

Training events –

PSD Learning and Development are working closely with probationer training to further improve understanding of the Standards of Professional Behaviour and embed learning in everyday practice. Additional material is being developed to create a “Gold Standard” input which is fully accessible. Probationer training conducting review of full course materials and work will remain ongoing.

Senior Leaders CPD Event –

On 19th August 2025, PSD held a Senior Leaders PSD CPD event with 25 CIs & Supts in attendance. Inputs focussed on Conduct, DSI & PIP/PIM & PECSS.

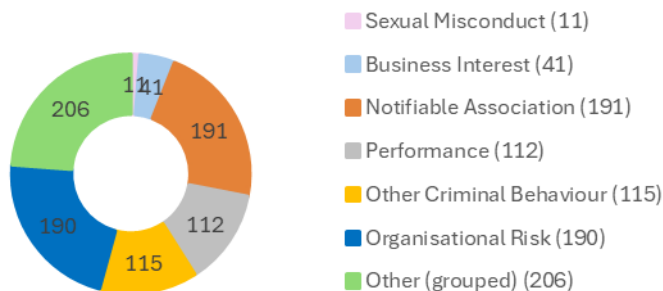
POLICE (ETHICS, CONDUCT AND SCRUTINY) (SCOTLAND) BILL

The consultation with regards the Code of Ethics for Policing in Scotland commenced on 1 August 2025. The emails have been sent to the persons named within schedule 2ZA of the PECSS Act. Once all feedback has been received, it will be collated and a paper prepared to lay before parliament by the Chief Constable.

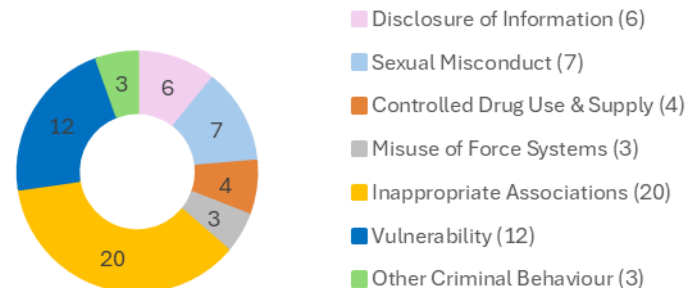
PSD Service Delivery Dashboards

PSD Business Areas

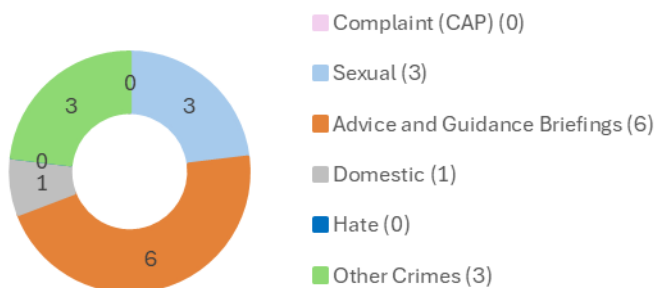
866 Gateway referrals YTD



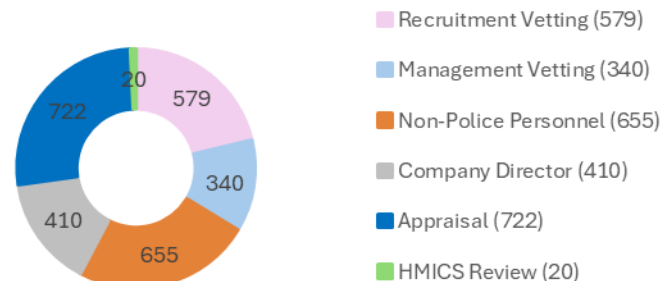
55 ACU referrals YTD



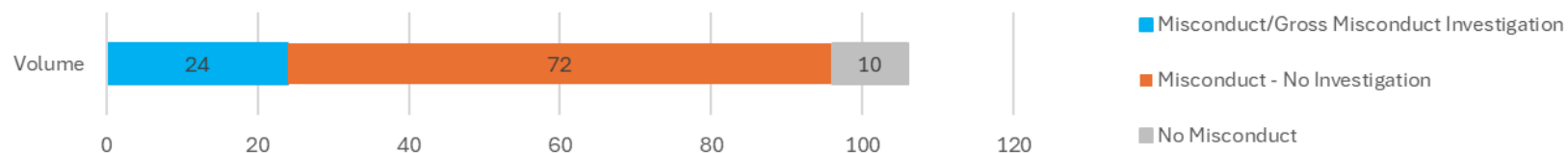
13 Specialist Investigations referrals YTD



2,726 Vetting Applications YTD



106 Preliminary Conduct Assessments



PSD Service Delivery Dashboards

PSD Business Areas

Complaint Monitoring <i>(*Further details held within main body of the report)</i>			Service Delivery	
Complaints Received, by Financial Year (from 2020/21)		Excessive Force ▲ 200 (+45) <i>Increased volume compared to the five-year average linked to increases in Forth Valley and North East.</i>	20.2%	Non Criminal (not FLR) complaints closed YTD within 56 days
1,388 -26.4% from 2024/25 -24.2% from 5 year avg.		Discriminatory Behaviour ▼ 21 (-16) <i>Decreased volume compared to the five-year average.</i>	780	Complaints resolved by Frontline Resolved (FLR)
Allegations Received, by Financial Year (from 2019/20)			40	CHR learning points
2,512 -21.3% from 2024/25 -23.9% from 5 year avg.		56.2% Complaints Frontline Resolved (FLR) Q1 2025/26		
76.8%	6	99 Statutory Referrals YTD	38.4%	16.1%
Statutory Referrals YTD – No Investigation by PIRC	Assault referrals YTD (assessed) – No Investigation by PIRC	61 Assault Referrals YTD	CHR Allegations YTD assessed as being handled to a reasonable standard	Allegations closed YTD resulted as upheld

PSD Service Delivery Dashboards – Executive Summary

- A total of **1,388** complaints were received during 2025/26 YTD (down **26.4%** from the PYTD and down **24.2%** against the five-year average).
- **56.2%** were Frontline Resolved (FLR), an increase from the PYTD rate of **47.7%**.
- **33** CHRs were received YTD, with **38.4%** of allegations reviewed found to be handled to a reasonable standard (down **30.2%** from PYTD).
- Approximately **2.4%** of complaints reported are subject of CHR.
- **99** statutory referrals were made to PIRC, a **50.0%** increase from the PYTD. Of these, **76.8%** resulted in no investigation by PIRC.
- A total of **90** Police officers were suspended and a further **111** subject to duty restrictions at the conclusion of Q1 YTD, with **16** members of Police staff also suspended at this time.
- **Four** misconduct hearings in respect of Gross Misconduct were scheduled YTD with **2** dismissals and **2** resign/retire outcomes.

Complaints Received

1,388 complaints were received YTD, down 26.4% from the PYTD and down 24.2% from the five-year average. Complaints YTD are at a reduced level, affirmed by this volume sitting within the upper and lower confidence limits (i.e. 95 times out of 100 the number of complaints YTD will range between 1,602 and 1,912), based on the current YTD and the prior five year-to-date periods.

- 780 complaints (56.2%) were Frontline Resolved (FLR), compared with 47.7% PYTD.
- 27.7% were Non-Criminal (385), 5.5% Abandoned (77), 2.4% Withdrawn (34), 2.2% Ongoing (31) plus 5.8% Criminal (81).

North Command

- 307 complaints received YTD, down 28.8% from PYTD and down 26.3% against the five-year average.
- Decreases are noted across all territorial divisions in the North, compared to the PYTD and the five-year average. Each divisional YTD volume sits below confidence limits. Allegations of Excessive Force in North East division have however increased when compared to the five-year average (up 10 allegations).

East Command

- 409 complaints received YTD, down 29.2% on the PYTD and down 27.4% against the five-year average.
- Decreases are widespread across all territorial divisions in the East, compared to the PYTD and the five-year average. All territorial divisions currently sit below confidence limits. Allegations of Excessive Force in Forth Valley division are however up 242.9% (17 more allegations) when compared to PYTD and up 233.3% (16.8 more allegations) against the five-year average. Allegations of Incivility in Edinburgh division are also up from the PYTD and the five-year average (by 10 and 8 allegations respectively).

Chart 1: Complaints Received, by YTD Period

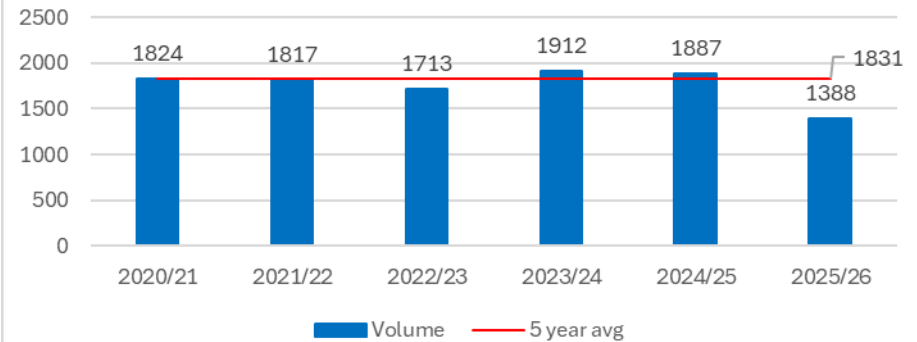
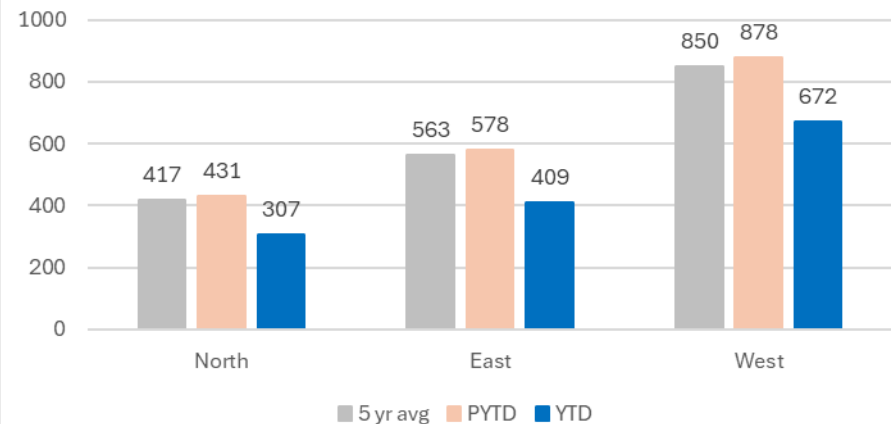


Chart 2: Complaints Received, By Command Area and Period



Complaints Received (continued)

West Command

- 672 complaints received YTD, down 23.5% from PYTD and down 21.0% against the five-year average.
- Decreases are noted across all territorial divisions in the North, compared to the PYTD and the five-year average. Each divisional YTD volume sits below confidence limits. West region notes decreases against most of the allegation types with the exception of Traffic Irregularity/Offence which is up 60.0% on PYTD and up 130.8% on five-year average. The YTD increase is split across the region with increases recorded in Greater Glasgow (up 4), Ayrshire (up 3), Lanarkshire (up 3) and Ayrshire (up 1), Argyll & West Dunbartonshire (up 1) and Renfrewshire & Inverclyde (up 3). All five divisions note similar increases from the five-year average. Dumfries & Galloway is the only division to record a YTD decrease against this allegation type.

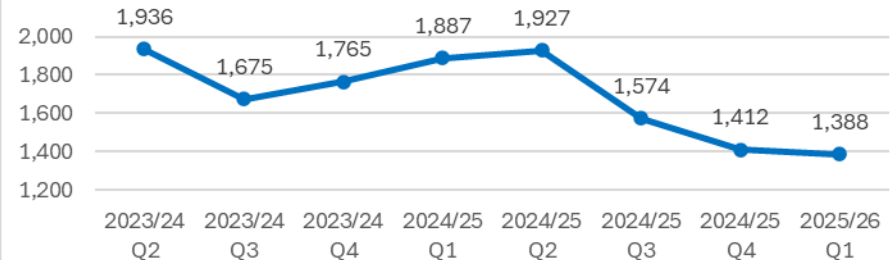
As seen in Chart 3, complaint volumes spiked during Quarter 2 YTD in both 2023/24 and 2024/25. Since Quarter 2 2024/25 however, a downward trend has been observed in the volume of complaints recorded.

Complaints per 100 Employees

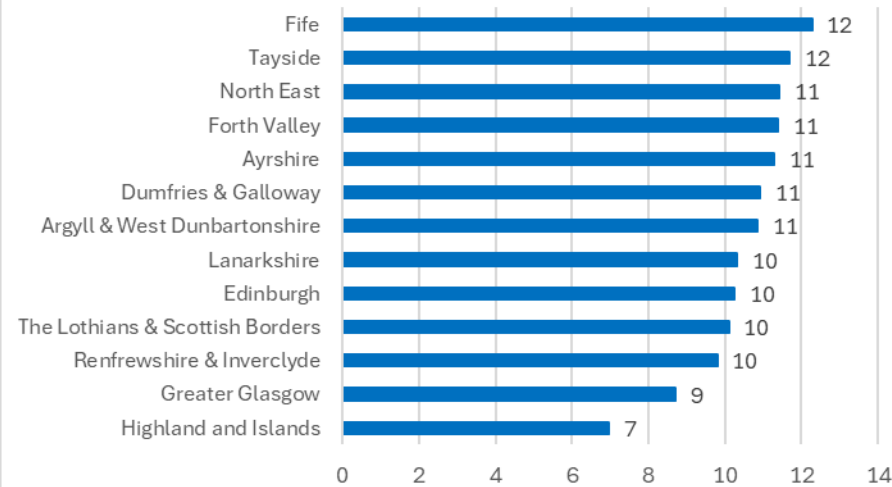
Further analysis comparing YTD rates of complaint per employee headcount identified variance across territorial divisions, ranging from a low of 7 complaints per 100 employees in Highland & Islands Division to a high of 12 complaints per 100 employees in both Fife and Tayside Divisions.

Each complaint may involve multiple subject officers and, where the complaint involves only Quality of Service allegations, there may be no subject officers attached.

**Chart 3: Complaints Received, by Quarter
(latest eight quarters)**



**Chart 4: Complaints per 100 employees, by
Division**



Emerging Trends

- Discriminatory Behaviour allegations have decreased from the PYTD (15 fewer allegations) and from the five-year average (16 fewer allegations), with 21 received YTD. The decrease from the five-year average is chiefly linked to allegations with a Race sub type (down 14 allegations from PYTD and down 9 allegations from the five-year average), with 10 allegations received YTD. Age (down 1 allegation), Disability (down 2 allegations), Gender (down 5 allegations) and sexual orientation (down 2 allegations) all also record decreases against the five-year average. Age and Disability have both however recorded a slight increase (1 and 2 allegations respectively) when compared to PYTD.
- Excessive Force allegations have increased from the PYTD (24 more allegations) and the five-year average (45 more allegations), with 200 received YTD. This is influenced by increases in Forth Valley (17 more allegations from PYTD and 17 more allegations from five-year average) and North East (1 more allegation from PYTD and 10 more allegations from five-year average).
- Assault allegations have decreased from both the PYTD (66 fewer allegations) and the five-year average (42 fewer allegations). A total of 88 allegations were received YTD. Nine of the 13 divisions recorded decreases against PYTD and five-year average. G Division (down 27 allegations), Q Division (down 12 allegations) and N Division (down 10 allegations) all noted the most significant decreases compared to PYTD. Very slight increases have been noted against PYTD in P Division (up 1 allegation), U Division (up 1 allegation) and V Division (up 3 allegations).

Chart 5: Discriminatory Behaviour Allegations, by Sub Type and Period

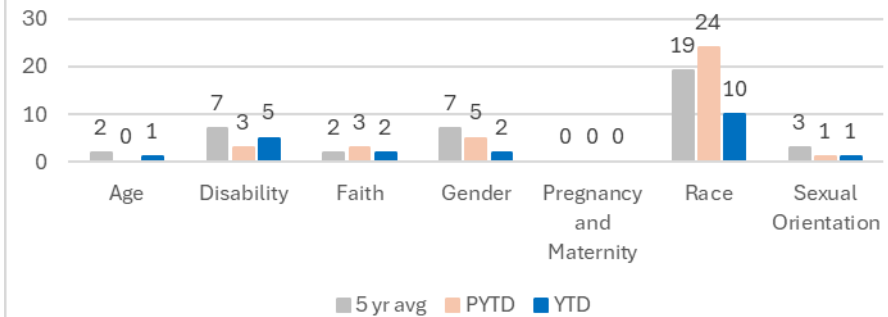
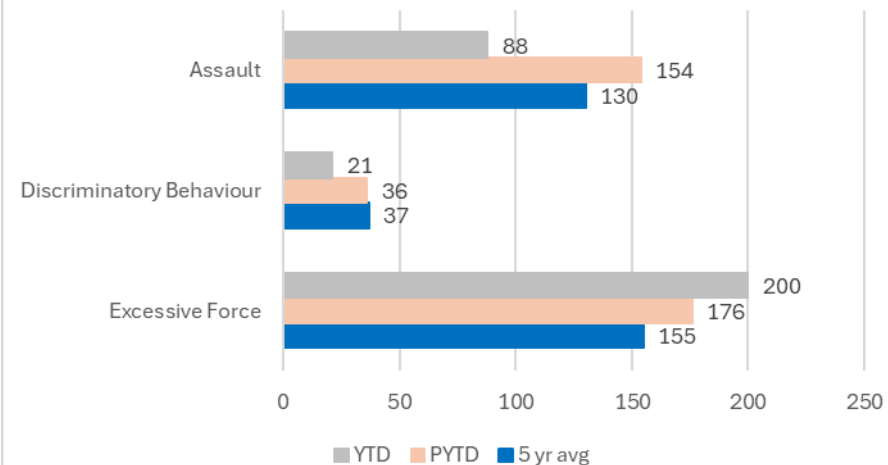


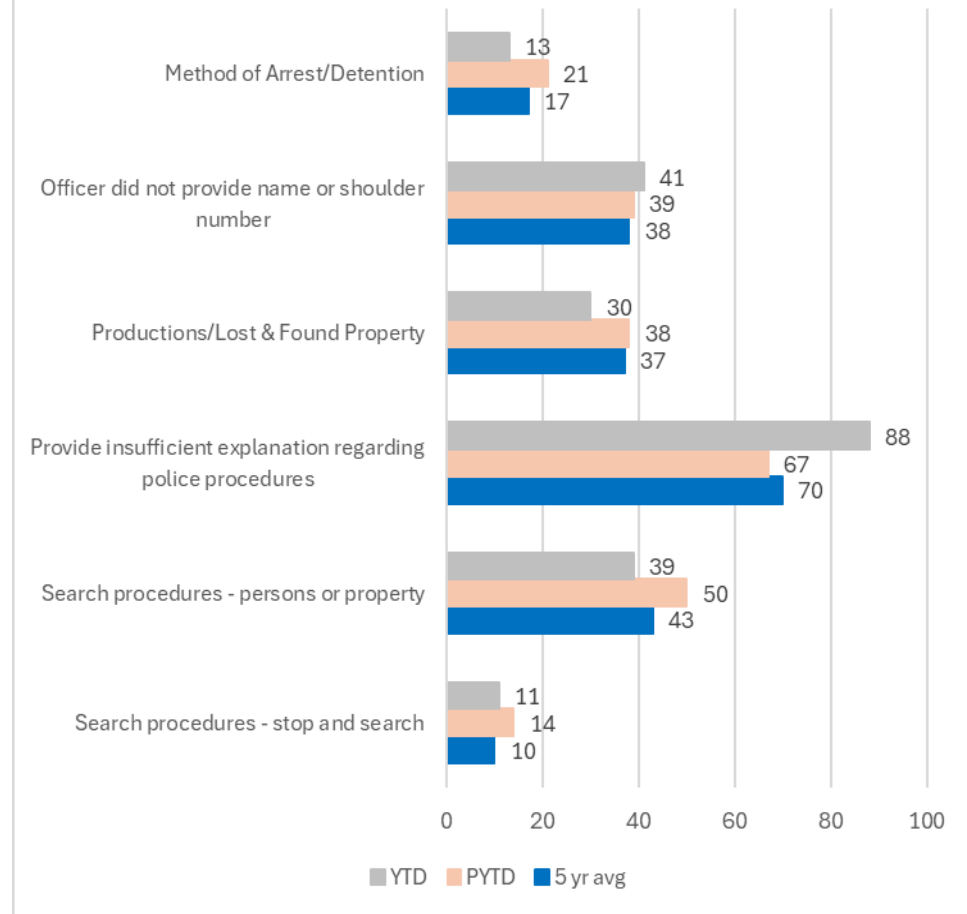
Chart 6: Allegations Received, by Type (selected) and Period



Emerging Trends (continued)

- Irregularity in Procedure - Provide insufficient explanation regarding police procedures allegations have increased from the PYTD (+21) and the five-year average (+18), with 88 received YTD. This increase is widespread, with eight divisions recording a volume increase against both PYTD and the five-year average.
- Irregularity in Procedure – Method of Arrest/Detention allegations have decreased from the PYTD (8 fewer) and the five-year average (4 fewer), with 13 received YTD. Ten divisions noted a decrease compared to the five-year average, with six divisions down on PYTD.
- Irregularity in Procedure - Search procedures – persons or property allegations down from the PYTD (11 fewer) and the five-year average (4 fewer), with 39 received YTD. The majority of divisions recorded a decrease on both periods with G Division the only division to note an increase (up 4 and 7 allegations respectively).
- Irregularity in Procedure - Productions/Lost & Found Property allegations have decreased from PYTD (8 fewer) and the five-year average (7 fewer), with 30 received YTD. Decrease primarily due to small reductions in A, D and Q divisions. Small increases YTD were recorded in C, J, K and L divisions however.
- Irregularity in Procedure - Search procedures - stop and search allegations have decreased from the PYTD (3 fewer) but note an increase against the five-year average (1 more), with 11 received YTD. No allegations were recorded in 9 of the 13 divisions with slight differences noted in the other 5 divisions.
- Irregularity in Procedure - Officer did not provide name or shoulder number allegations have increased from PYTD (2 more) and the five-year average (3 more), with 41 allegations received YTD. Divisionally, the largest volume increase YTD was in P Division (4 more) followed by E and N divisions (2 more each). The majority of the remaining divisions however noted a decrease against both PYTD and five-year average.

Chart 7: Irregularity in Procedure Allegations (selected), by Sub Type and Period



Emerging Trends (continued)

A breakdown of the 2,512 allegations received YTD, by type, are summarised here in Chart 8.

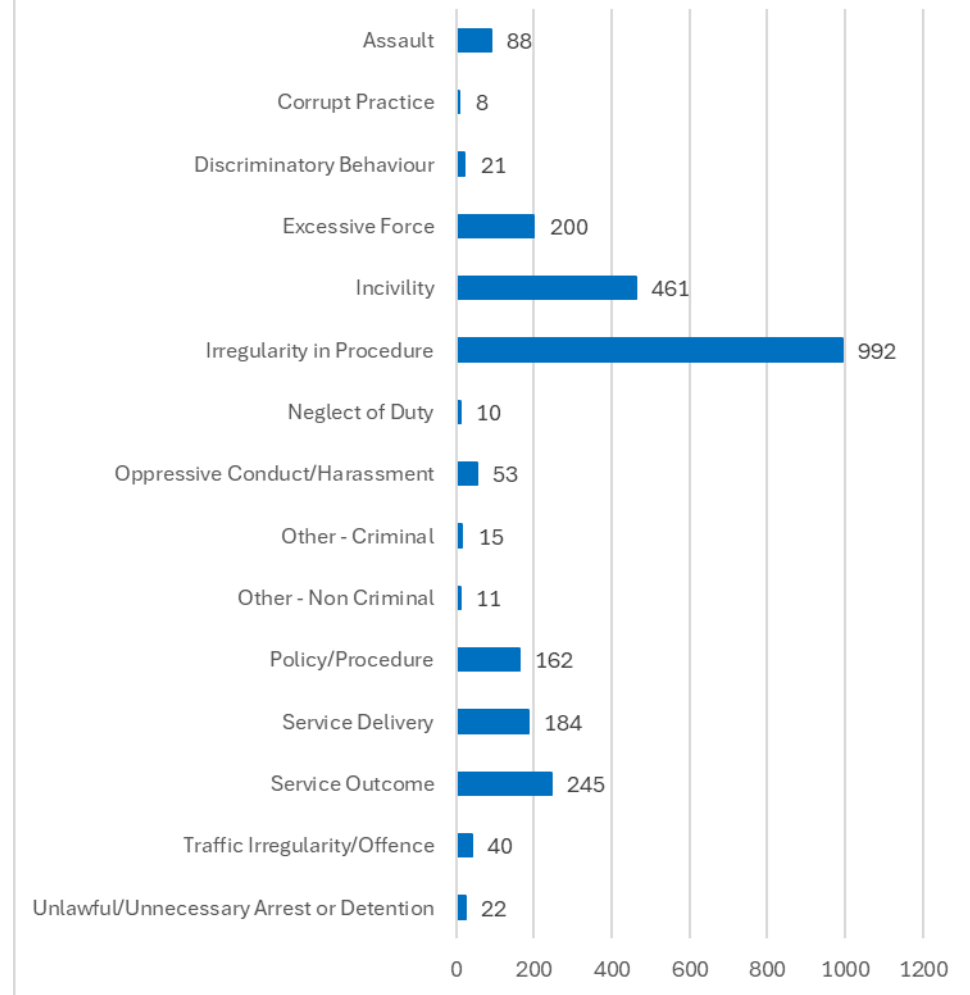
Moreover, the allegation type of Irregularity in Procedure involves a further nineteen sub types. The highest volume of those are detailed below:

- Other (205)
- Insufficient Enquiry carried out (200).
- Custody Procedures/Care of Prisoners (106).
- Provide insufficient updates to the complainant (103).

Quality of Service allegations also involve several sub types, with the highest volume of those listed below:

- Service Outcome – Lack of satisfaction with action taken (170).
- Policy/Procedure – Policing Procedure (112).
- Service Delivery – Type of Response (98).

Chart 8: Allegations Received, by Type (YTD)



Service Delivery

- 514 allegations attached to completed complaint investigations (criminal and non-criminal) concluded YTD, with 16.1% upheld representing an increase from PYTD (+1.0%) and the five-year average (+1.8%).
 - The largest volume of the 83 allegations upheld YTD were Irregularity in Procedure (34) and Service Delivery (32).
 - Highest volume sub types involved were: Insufficient Enquiry carried out (16) and Time of Response (26).
- 20.2% of the 114 non-criminal (not FLR) complaints concluded YTD were closed within 56 days, an increase on the PYTD rate of 9.4% (up 10.7% points) but a decrease against the five-year average rate of 26.0% (down 5.9% points). The average closure time YTD was 417 days, an increase from the PYTD average of 268 days and the five-year average of 165 days.
- 33 Complaint Handling Reviews (CHRs) were received YTD, with 73 allegations considered. 28 (38.4%) were found to have been handled to a reasonable standard (down 30.2% from PYTD).
- Discretionary decisions from PIRC also impact on the rate handled to a reasonable standard, as those are considered to have been handled to a standard whereby a full review is not required.
- 37 recommendations and 40 learning points were received YTD. The majority of recommendations received were categorised as requiring 'further enquiry' or 'fuller/further response' (73.0% and 21.6% respectively). A further 5.4% were categorised as 'Other'.

Chart 9: Allegations Upheld, by YTD Period

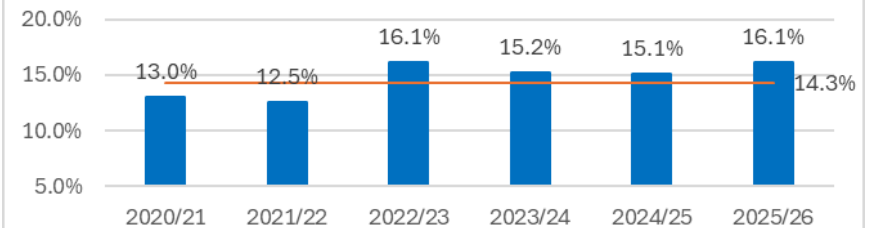


Chart 10: Non-Criminal (not FLR) Complaint Timescales, by Days to Close (YTD)

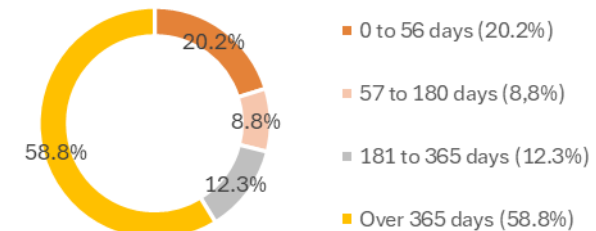
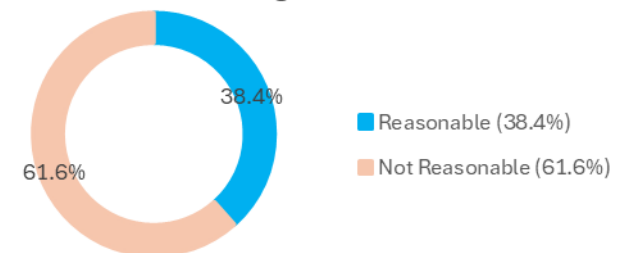


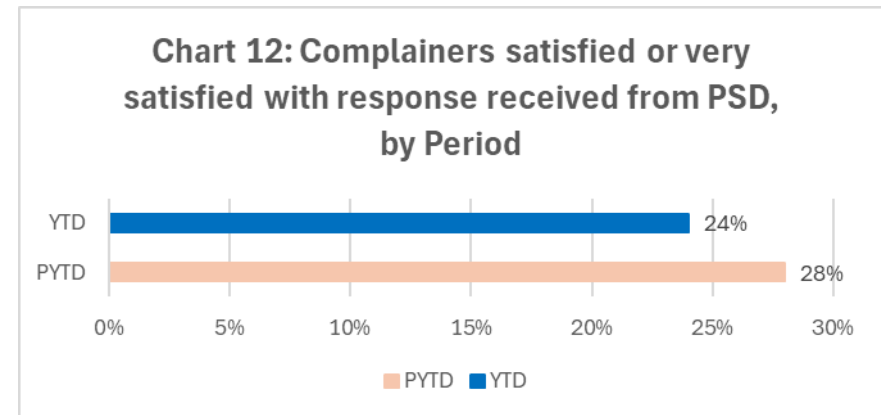
Chart 11: CHR Allegations YTD, by Outcome

33 CHRs, 73 allegations



Service Delivery (continued)

- A total of 217 user experience survey responses were received YTD from complainers contacted. Of those, 24% responded that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the response received from the Professional Standards Department regarding their complaint (down 4% points from the 28% satisfied or very satisfied in the PYTD).



PIRC Referrals

- 99 statutory referrals were made to PIRC during the YTD, a 50.0% increase on the PYTD total of 66.
 - Armed Policing (18 more), Serious Injury following Police Contact (14 more) and Death Following Police Contact (7 more) have all increased YTD.
 - Armed Policing and Serious Injury following Police Contact referrals are the highest volume categories YTD.
- Of the 99 statutory referrals YTD, 10 are subject to PIRC investigation (10.1%). This an increase from the 6.1% of referrals PYTD which were subject to investigation.
- This is linked to an increased number of investigations for Death Following Police Contact (+5 investigations). Also, increases in investigations were identified in relation to Serious Injury Following Police Contact (+3) and Crown Directed Criminality (+2).
- All allegations of On Duty Assault and any associated criminal allegations are also referred to PIRC for assessment and potential investigation. 61 such referrals were made to PIRC YTD, a 38.4% decrease from PYTD. Of those assessed, 38 are subject to PIRC investigation (86.4%), with 17 awaiting a decision from PIRC regarding possible investigation. The remaining 6 cases have been marked as no investigation by PIRC.

Chart 13: Statutory Referrals to PIRC, by Category and Period

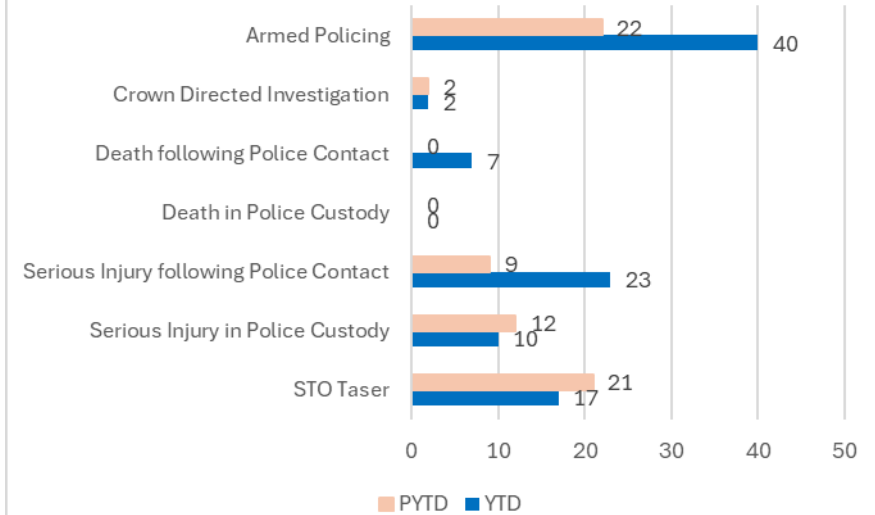
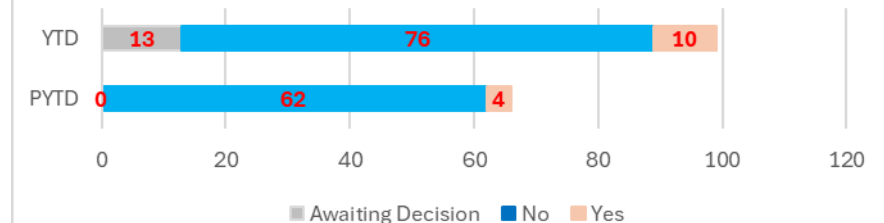


Chart 14: Statutory Referrals to PIRC, by Decision Type and Period



Conduct Unit

At the conclusion of Q1 YTD, 90 Police officers were suspended and 111 subject to duty restrictions. A further 16 members of Police Staff were suspended at this time.

The Police Service of Scotland (Conduct) Regulations 2014 is the primary legislation through which allegations of misconduct by serving police officers up to the rank of Chief Superintendent are considered. These regulations are underpinned by Scottish Government guidance and supported by Staff Associations, Scottish Government and Police Scotland.

The misconduct procedures aim to provide a fair, open and proportionate method of dealing with alleged misconduct while recognising that police officers have a special status as holders of the Office of Constable.

The procedures are intended to encourage a culture of learning and development for individuals and the organisation. Disciplinary action has a part, when circumstances require this, but improvement will always be an integral dimension of any outcome.

Conduct Assessments

- 106 preliminary conduct assessments were undertaken YTD, down 13.1% from the PYTD total of 122.
- Assessments categorised as 'Gross Misconduct' and 'Misconduct – Investigation' are down 22.6% (7 fewer) whilst misconduct – no investigation assessment are up 2.9% (2 more).
- The volume of preliminary assessments has increased in SCD (up 5), North East (up 4), Lanarkshire (up 3), The Lothians & Scottish Borders (up 2), CSD (up 1), Edinburgh and Renfrewshire & Inverclyde (up 1). These are however mitigated by decreases across 7 divisions. Most notably, Greater Glasgow (down 12), Ayrshire (down 4), Dumfries & Galloway (down 4), Argyll & West Dunbartonshire (down 4) and Forth Valley (down 3).

Chart 15: Police Officers Restricted and Suspended, by period (as at 01 July)

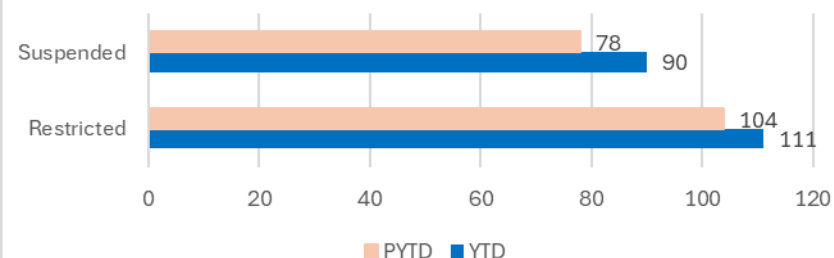
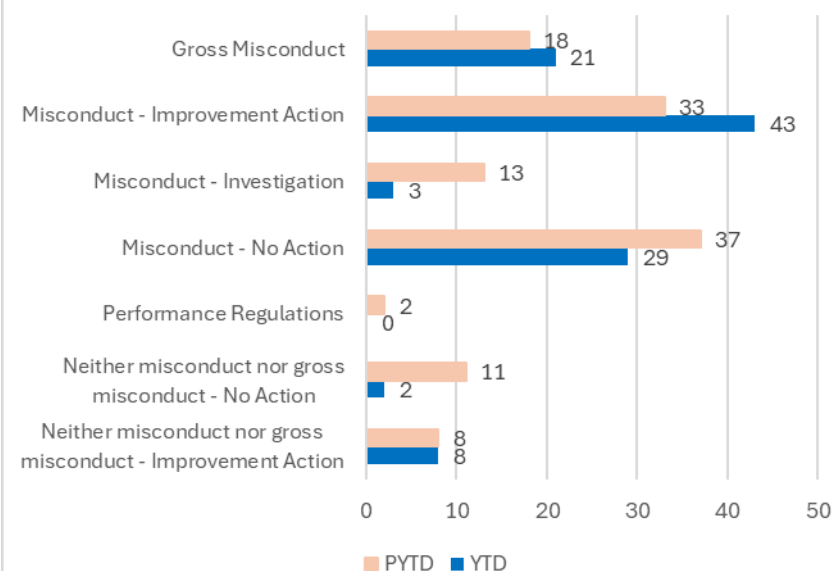


Chart 16: Conduct Assessments YTD



Conduct Unit (continued)

Misconduct Hearing and Meetings

- Please note that each meeting or hearing may involve multiple subject officers and multiple allegations, with a disposal attached to each allegation.

Time period for when the Regulation 10 (assessment) was completed for live investigations and proceedings.

Date Reg 10 completed	Number of cases
Quarter 2 of 2023/24	1
Quarter 3 of 2023/24	1
Quarter 4 of 2023/24	2
Quarter 1 of 2024/25	8
Quarter 2 of 2024/25	9
Quarter 3 of 2024/25	23
Quarter 4 of 2024/25	25
Quarter 1 of 2025/26	19

Average time duration for gross misconduct/misconduct investigations and proceedings that have concluded in 2024/25 (till Q1 end).

Category	Days
Average time under investigation	227
Average time for investigation and proceedings	377

Chart 17: Four Misconduct Hearings YTD

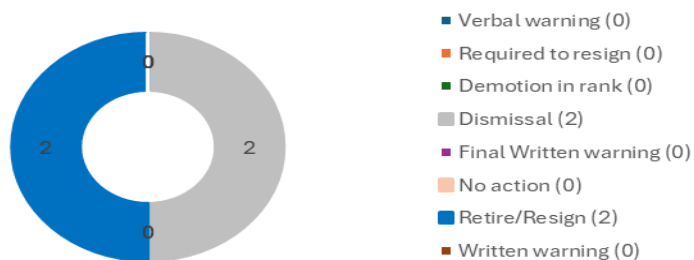
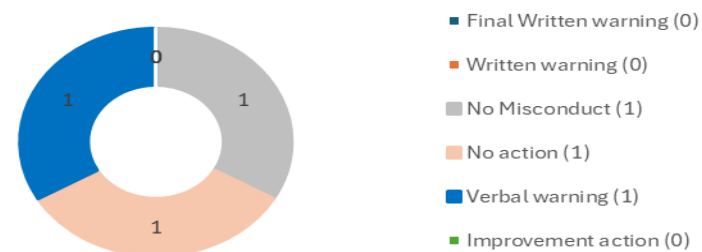


Chart 18: Three Misconduct Meetings YTD



Organisational Learning

Learning from PIRC investigations, CHRs, PSD investigations and other sources are disseminated through bulletins, individual feedback and used to inform training packages. In the last quarter, PSD has disseminated learning from a variety of incidents. The following learning outcomes are of particular note:

Learning identified via PIRC CHRs and Discretionary Decisions:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The PIRC statutory guidance outlines the importance of good communication during the complaint handling process: <i>“confidence in the complaint system requires regular and effective communication with the complainer through-out the process”</i>. During our review, the applicant informed us that her experience with (the Investigating Officer and (their Supervisor) had been very positive. She further advised that she had felt heard, understood and reassured. This is a good example of complaint handling practice, and we would encourage all complaint handlers to adhere to this standard of practice. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall, despite the shortcoming identified in Learning Point 1, the record-keeping in this case by (the assessing Officer) (the Supervisor) and (the Investigating Officer) was very good. The CHF was kept updated throughout the six-stage process, with clear entries recorded in the appropriate section to detail contact with the complainer and enquiries undertaken. This enhanced our ability to carry out an effective and efficient complaint handling review. We consider this to be good complaint handling practice, which we encourage complaint handlers to follow in future. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following assessment, we have exercised our discretion not to conduct a complaint handling review on this occasion. <p>This is because (the Signatory Officer’s) response provides a clear explanation of the enquiries that were carried out into the complaint, alongside his rationale for why the complaints were not upheld. The complaint enquiry has been sufficient to address the crux of the complaint, with the information gathered supporting both (the Signatory Officer’s) complaint response and the complaint determination. Furthermore, (the Signatory Officer) acknowledged that the Police Scotland took longer than expected to deal with the complainer’s complaint. He therefore recorded and upheld a quality-of-service complaint and the complainer with an apology. This is good complaint handling practice.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (The Investigating Officer) invested significant time speaking to the complainer and her representatives to ensure that he had a clear understanding of her concerns. The rationale for not recording some matters as complaints about the police was very well-documented, as was the scope and outcome of the complaint enquiry itself. This was in turn clearly set out in the complaint response. This demonstrates how documenting the nature and outcome of engagement with the complainer and retaining thorough records of the complaint enquiry are more likely to result in a detailed and well-reasoned complaint response. This approach will serve to increase public confidence in the complaint handling process. |

Organisational Learning (continued)

Learning identified via PIRC Investigation report recommendations

- The Professional Standards Department have taken cognisance of communication from the PIRC in respect of our need to be mindful of the requirements to disclose “relevant material” to Senior Investigating Officers in respect of ongoing or future criminal proceedings for consideration of disclosure to COPFS.
- Following a recent recommendation from the PIRC, a national reminder has been issued to all Specially Trained Officers (STOs) to draw more fully on all available options when processing their decisions around the use/discharge of Taser against subjects in control of motor vehicles.
- As a result of a recent PIRC Investigation following a low-speed pursuit and containment of a suspect’s vehicle, all General Police Drivers across the organisation have been issued with a reminder of the tactics available to them in line with their current level of driver authorisation.

Appendix B

The Standard Issue 9

Welcome to this edition of The Standard, which focuses on The Police (Ethics, Conduct & Scrutiny) (Scotland) Act 2025.

Known as [PECSS](#), this legislation has brought about changes to our Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Behaviour, complaint handling and misconduct procedures, as well as our approaches to vetting.

The Act, which came into force on 25 June, 2025, underpins our organisation's commitment to creating greater fairness, transparency, accountability and proportionality in policing, while protecting the human rights of everyone involved.

So, what changes?

- There is now legal recognition for the Code of Ethics for Policing in Scotland with a requirement for all officers and staff to be trained about the code.
- The introduction of [Duty of Candour](#), adding to the ten existing [Standards of Professional Behaviour](#) for police officers in Scotland.
- The introduction of a Vetting Code of Practice for police staff and constables.
In respect of constables only, there is a requirement for regulations to be made which provide for constables to be re-vetted on an ongoing basis and with cause and for dismissal, if unable to maintain vetting.

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- Changes which relate to the role of the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner (PIRC) and procedures which deal with senior officers and former officers.
 - The introduction of a Scottish police advisory list and Scottish police barred list.

These provisions, along with others in the Act, aim to positively enhance culture and behaviours within policing and, consequently, seeks to enhance public trust and confidence.

Why are these changes happening?

In 2018, the Scottish Government and the Lord Advocate jointly commissioned an [Independent Review of Complaints Handling, Investigations and Misconduct in Relation to Policing](#). Police Scotland has worked to implement the 111 recommendations to improve transparency, accountability and proportionality in policing.

59 of the 111 non-legislative recommendations have been implemented, while 39 required legislative change. PECSS will assist in the implementation of these recommendations.

The legislation is relevant to everyone within Police Scotland. It underpins the work of [Policing Together](#) by embedding, promoting and upholding our values and standards. It also supports [our 2030 vision](#) - especially that of a thriving workforce and building public trust and confidence.

Duty of Candour – Additional Standard of Professional Behaviour

“candour - the quality of being open and honest; frankness:”

One of the elements PECSS has introduced is the [Duty of Candour](#) as a [Standard of Professional Behaviour](#) for police constables.

This outlines the requirement for constables to act with candour, to be open and truthful in their dealings without favour to their own interests or the interests of the police service.

Additionally, constables will attend interviews and assist and participate in proceedings (including investigations against constables) openly, promptly, and professionally, in line with the expectations of a police constable.

This also means the implementation of an organisational requirement of candour for all officers and police staff.

This means the police service should be candid and co-operative in proceedings, including all investigations. It places an explicit duty of candour to co-operate fully with all investigations into allegations whether made against officers, staff or others.

Code of Ethics for Policing in Scotland

Police Scotland's [Code of Ethics](#) was introduced in 2013 and set out the standards expected of all individuals who contribute to policing in Scotland and existed entirely outside of the statutory framework.

At the heart of policing is the organisation's [Code of Ethics and values](#) of Integrity, Fairness, Respect and a commitment to upholding Human Rights.

From this, we derive a direct link to values-based policing, which reflects and represents our communities. This is vital for public trust, confidence and consent, from which policing draws its legitimacy.

The Code of Ethics is entwined with the Standards of Professional Behaviour and is of central importance to policing in Scotland.

Example 1

Two police officers are on uniform mobile patrol in a marked police vehicle when they become involved in a pursuit (Code 44) with another vehicle.

All pursuit procedures are followed correctly and the controller, in the C3 control room, maintained all the appropriate contact and updates.

The vehicle being pursued crashes into a road sign after a couple of minutes of the pursuit. The passenger is seriously injured and is transferred to hospital in a critical condition.

All initial observations and investigation identifies no criminality, and all officers and staff involved are identified as witnesses. The matter is referred to PIRC as a serious injury following police contact.

The passenger (constable) and the C3 controller both refuse to give a statement or version of events.

Why is this a breach?

The constable and controller both have a responsibility to be open and truthful in their dealings without favour to their own interests or the interests of the police service. The officer has a professional duty of candour to be honest and transparent when something goes wrong.

Refusing to provide a witness statement, or deliberately withholding relevant information, undermines accountability and can be seen as protecting wrongdoing, even if the incident itself isn't criminal. This can lead to disciplinary consequences for the officer who refuses to engage, separate from any outcome of the original investigation.

This does not remove the right to silence and the privilege against self-incrimination.

Example 2

Within the custody suite, a sergeant was working with two Police Custody Security Officers (PCSO) and a constable. The sergeant started to shout, use inappropriate language and gesture towards one of the PCSO's. This matter was raised as a grievance by the PCSO.

During the grievance process one of the PCSO's stated they did not wish to get involved and refused to co-operate to give any details or a statement to assist the investigation. At the conclusion of the grievance process the matter was referred to the National Conduct Unit with regards to the sergeant and his behaviour. The PCSO was referred to HR for refusing to assist with the investigation and provide any details of what they had witnessed.

Why this is a breach?

The organisational Duty of Candour places a responsibility on all employees of Police Scotland to be candid. The reference being the police service should be candid and co-operative in proceedings including all investigations.

Oath of Office

On 10 July, 2025, the latest cadre of recruits were sworn into the office of Police Constable and took the revised declaration of a constable, which reflects the additional Standard of Professional Behaviour and the revised Code of Ethics for Policing in Scotland.

"I, do solemnly, sincerely and truly declare and affirm that I will faithfully discharge the duties of the office of constable with fairness, candour, integrity, diligence and impartiality, that I will follow the Code of Ethics for policing in Scotland and that I will uphold fundamental human rights and accord equal respect to all people, according to law."

Training

A training package has been designed to explain the key changes and implications of the PECSS Act.

On conclusion of consultation, the training package will be rolled out across the service.

While completion is mandatory, it is also intended as a resource to ensure staff and officers are well equipped and confident in understanding the new legislation.

Legacy

The PECSS Act is an important part of Police Scotland's commitment to delivering Lady Elish Angiolini's recommendations and will affect every person who works for Police Scotland, up to and including the rank of Chief Constable.

The Act will ensure our openness and transparency around ethics in policing, as well as supporting independent scrutiny by PIRC and the Scottish Police Authority (SPA).

It will empower and develop our people and culture as per our 2030 vision.

Scottish police barred & advisory lists

The police barred and advisory lists aim to provide information about officers who are subject to disciplinary procedures for gross misconduct or who have been dismissed or would have been dismissed had they still been in office (prior to resigning or retiring).

Their creation will bring Scotland in line with England and Wales and provide a consistent approach across jurisdictions in Great Britain.

The barred and advisory lists were introduced in England and Wales as part of the UK Government's commitment to improving police integrity by increasing the accountability of those who are dismissed from policing. This further improves the transparency of the police discipline system by publishing details of individuals, where appropriate, to raise public confidence in the police.

The barred and advisory aspect of the legislation requires secondary regulations to be drafted and created by the Scottish Government.

The barred and advisory lists are expected to be introduced in Autumn 2026.

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Gross Misconduct Hearing Outcomes - April - June 2025

27/08/2025

The [11 Standards of Professional Behaviour](#) set out the legislative standards expected of police officers while on and off duty as outlined in the [Police Service of Scotland \(Conduct\) Regulations 2014](#). These regulations govern all police conduct matters. Officers who breach these standards risk finding themselves subject to misconduct proceedings, which may result in dismissal or demotion.

Officers and staff will be aware that police misconduct is subject to greater public and professional scrutiny than ever. The Standards of Professional Behaviour are designed to reflect the values and ethics of Police Scotland, of integrity, fairness and respect, and a commitment to upholding human rights. They also ensure we maintain public confidence in policing and are part of a Service in which we can be truly proud.

This is the tenth publication of Gross Misconduct hearing outcomes, and covers the first quarter of the fiscal year 2025-26.

GROSS MISCONDUCT

It is important to understand there is a range of disposal options available upon a finding of gross misconduct and dismissal is not always considered necessary. However, this publication focusses on conduct cases where officers were either dismissed or resigned prior to a hearing.

In the first quarter of 2025-26, April to June 2025, three officers were scheduled to attend a gross misconduct hearing before an independent chairperson of the rank of Chief Superintendent.

One officer resigned in advance of their attendance at a gross misconduct hearing.

Two officers were dismissed without notice, however, these remain within the appeal window.

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Below is a summary of the circumstances which led to gross misconduct proceedings being instigated, however, the officer resigned prior to attendance at a hearing:

Standard of Professional Behaviour – Discreditable Conduct, Confidentiality, Authority Respect and Courtesy.

An officer resigned prior to attending their gross misconduct hearing which related to several allegations:

- Initiating electronic contact and thereafter engaging in sexual activity with someone involved in a domestic incident;
- Accessing police systems to view personal information without a valid policing purpose;
- Attending at the home address of a member of the public unannounced, causing concern as to how that address was obtained;
- Identifying themselves as a police officer online and thereafter requesting communications of an explicit nature from a member of the public;
- Engaging in sexual activity with the victim of a domestic incident attended by the officer;
- Inappropriately communicating electronically with officers under their line management, failing to treat them with respect and courtesy.

Police officers are placed in an extraordinary position of trust. Any officer found to be abusing this position of trust for a sexual purpose will be dealt with robustly. This behaviour will not be tolerated by the organisation and our message is clear - those who can't or won't live our values and standards don't belong in policing.

Police officers must conduct themselves in an appropriate manner at all times, whether on or off duty. Behaviour of this manner falls significantly short of the standards expected of, and by, Police Scotland and there is no place in policing for inappropriate physical behaviour towards any member of the public.

Standard of Professional Behaviour - [Discreditable Conduct](#); officers behave in a manner which does not discredit the police service or undermine public confidence, whether on or off duty.

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Standard of Professional Behaviour – [Confidentiality](#); officers treat information with respect and access it or disclose it only in the proper course of our duties.

Standard of Professional Behaviour - [Authority, Respect and Courtesy](#); officers act with self-control and tolerance, treating members of the public and colleagues with respect and courtesy in line with our values.

ENDS

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