



Meeting	Complaints and Conduct Committee
Date	4 September 2025
Location	Online
Title of Paper	Complaints Handling Backlog (Operation Glade)
Presented By	ACC Lynn Ratcliff / Supt Mann
Recommendation to Members	For Discussion
Appendix Attached	No

PURPOSE

The purpose of this briefing paper is to provide members of the SPA Complaints and Conduct committee with an update in respect of the non-criminal complaint's portfolio within Professional Standards Department (PSD).

Members are invited to discuss the contents of this paper.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Operation GLADE commenced in April 2024 as a mechanism to provide executive oversight, facilitate key discussions and co-ordinate improvements to reduce the non-criminal complaints about the Police (CAP) backlog and enhance long term PSD complaint service delivery. ACC Ratcliff continues to chair regular gold meetings to track progress and ensure focus on this critical area of business.

This paper provides further detail to the previous briefing paper submitted for the May Complaints and Conduct Committee and does not seek to repeat the detail within that paper, which covers other elements of work already completed.

2. PROGRESS AND UPDATE

- 2.1 The unallocated queue of non-criminal complaints sits currently at 1052, an increase of 11 since the last meeting. Although a slight increase since last meeting, the team continue to work hard to reduce the unallocated complaints whilst addressing daily demand. Productivity and complaints closed are closely monitored each week with the team recently closing off 51 complaints within a working week. Although there were no new complaints relating to Operation Roll, resourcing was reduced due to operational abstractions and annual leave during the summer period. The assessment team continue to maximise opportunities for Front Line Resolution (FLR).

The unallocated complaints be broken down as follows.

- Cat A+ (3)
- Cat A (420)
- Cat B (609)
- Cat C (20)

These figures have been taken on 1 August 2025.

From 1 May 2025 to 1 August 2025, 2242 complaints were received and recorded, this includes duplicate complaints, non-PSD matters, updates added to existing complaints.

39% (869) of the 2242 transactions have been resolved by FLR, 4% (84) have progressed to criminal complaints and 19% (415) to non-criminal investigations.

By removing the duplicate files submitted, complaints added to existing files, Miscellaneous Incidents, non-PSD matters and

unacceptable complainers, the total submissions of new complaints are 1576. This increases the FLR rate to 55%.

Since the last SPA CCC, a performance management tool has been introduced from 1 June 2025, to ensure weekly governance across each team and ensure robust oversight of progress. This gives weekly insights into closure of investigations. Since the introduction of this tool the non-criminal investigation have closed 291 complaints. This highlights real progress and productivity in the non-criminal investigation team.

Without the current mitigations in place in terms of performance management, introduction of civilian investigators and use of overtime, the rate of case closures would reduce and see the unallocated list of complaints increase further.

Another risk would be failure to extend the contracts of civilian investigators would see the unallocated queue increase by approximately 300.

2.2 NCARU Demand

The NCARU demand has increased during the last three-month period due to staff abstractions, officers being promoted and retirement. The total of new complaints awaiting assessment is currently 525, the team process circa 25 – 50 complaints per day depending on complexity, demand and resourcing. The NCARU continue to maximise opportunities for FLR. Given the increase in assessment numbers, two investigators from non-criminal investigations have been moved to assist during the month of August.

2.3 Resourcing

The police staff investigators recruited with revenue funding are now in a stronger position having had on-boarding, training and mentorship within the department. Of note four police staff have recently left their temporary posts seeking permanent posts elsewhere. This has reduced the number of investigators to 20 including one part time from the previously agreed 25.

The NCARU & CHR area of non-criminal continues to function with no dedicated Chief Inspector cover due to an organisational pause on temporary promotions.

Furthermore, one Inspector and three Sergeants from the non-criminal portfolio are retiring and being promoted respectively within August. Although replacements have been requested, the new officers will take a period of time to on-board and learn the non-criminal business area.

One Sergeant has also been seconded from Non-Criminal Investigations to the National Conduct Unit, due to demand in the proceedings area of PSD.

Two resources from non-criminal have been moved to NCARU to assist with increased demand due to annual leave and officers deployed to Op Roll.

2.4 Complaint Learning / Benchmarking

T/Supt Mann continues benchmarking conversations and learning via the National Complaint Handling Development Group (NCDHG). Detailed meetings have taken place with West Midlands Police, Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, Edinburgh City Council, BTP and NHS. Common themes of best practise in terms of complaint handling are as follows:

- Enhance Front Line Resolution
- Simplify administration processes
- Ensure final letters are brief and succinct, accessible to all
- Robust management processes
- Performance management of staff/ investigation teams
- Timescales/deadlines set for stages of investigation per category
- Transparency regarding timescales and delays
- Automation of determination letters

All the above are being further considered and explored.

A full-day workshop with colleagues from the Chief Data Office, Continuous Improvement and PSD took place on 9 July 2025 and walked through the end-to-end complaint handling process to identify areas for improvement. Six areas were identified as worthy of further analysis where efficiencies may be achieved through a blend of revised process and/or the use of technology. Next steps include process mapping and Centurion 8 upgrade prior to further technology enhancements.

The external BDO audit has commenced with initial meetings between BDO and non-criminal practitioners set up from 24 July 2025. The output of these discussions will aim to improve

processes and introduce efficiencies across the portfolio. A presentation to ACC Ratcliff by West Midlands Police was also delivered on Friday 1 August 2025 to demonstrate areas they improved to reduce a large complaints backlog. This was further discussed at the NCHDG, where the presentation was provided to members of the PIRC and SPA.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 An Operation Glade overtime bid has recently been requested and approved to maximise opportunities to address the unallocated list of complaints. This overtime will be shared across non-criminal, criminal and administrative teams.

4. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no personnel implications in this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no legal implications in this report.

6. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no reputational implications in this report.

7. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no social implications in this report.

8. COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 8.1 There are no community implications in this report.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no equality implications in this report.

10. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no environmental implications in this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are invited to discuss the contents of this paper.