

GREATER MANCHESTER POLICE, FIRE & CRIME PANEL

Date: 10th June 2025

Subject: Greater Manchester Police (GMP) Professional Standards Directorate (PSD)
Investigations

Report of: Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) – Terry Woods

Purpose of Report

To provide the Greater Manchester Police, Fire and Crime Panel with an update on the GMP PSD's actions to 'Ensure Fair, High Quality Disciplinary Investigations and Outcomes', in line with the Police and Crime Plan Priority One – Improving Trust and Confidence in Policing.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Panel notes the progress.

Contact Officers

DCC Terry Woods

Detective Chief Superintendent Michael Allen (Head of Professional Standards)

Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

N/A

Risk Management:

N/A

Legal Considerations:

N/A

Financial Consequences – Revenue:

N/A

Financial Consequences – Capital:

N/A

Number of attachments to the report:

None

1. Introduction/Background

GMP's PSD conduct disciplinary investigations where there is an indication of:

- A criminal offence
- A breach of the standards of professional behaviour which is so serious that disciplinary action is warranted
- Other matters where an investigation is directed by the Independent Office of Police Conduct (IOPC)

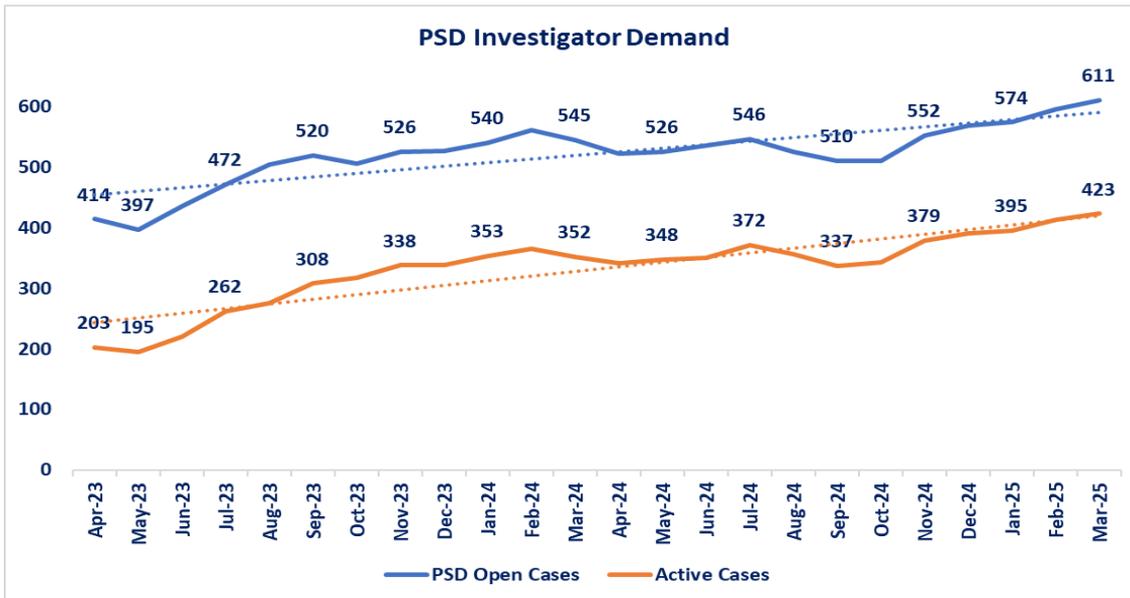
These investigations are conducted under a regulatory framework, consisting of primary and secondary legislation, and statutory guidance. This is a complex legal landscape, which sees regular addition, including supplementary new sets of police conduct regulations in 2024, new vetting regulations in 2025, and a new set of conduct, performance and complaint regulations due at the end of May 2025.

2. Detail

The demand on the PSD has been steadily increasing, with a 38% increase on the same position two years ago, and a 12.5% increase on this position last year. Since quarter (Q) 2 2023, the PSD has investigated all criminal matters against police officers and staff, whether on or off duty. 15% of the current PSD cases also have a linked criminal investigation.

This increase in demand is also against a backdrop of a reduction in the number of cases which the IOPC investigate independently, further increasing the demand on the investigators within the PSD. 742 cases have been referred to the IOPC in the last two years. 466 of the cases have been returned to PSD for a local investigation (63%), only 74 cases have been taken as independent investigations by the IOPC (10%).

The below graph shows the open demand held within the PSD investigation teams. Active cases relate to ongoing investigations, and open cases a total of all cases including those that are going through disciplinary proceedings.



The PSD invests in significant training to ensure that its investigators, and delegated appropriate authorities (AA) (this being formal role of the senior officer decision makers, under the regulatory framework) remain skilled in their work, and maintain continuous professional development (CPD). All PSD investigators receive two times one-week dedicated courses, and AAs receive a National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC) and College of Policing (Cop) five-day AA course, delivered by leading Kings Counsel on the disciplinary regime. In addition to general investigative CPD, investigators also have bespoke training to their role, including a course on managing Police Perpetrated Domestic Abuse (PPDA).

To ensure fair outcomes, all panel chairs, for both misconduct meetings and misconduct hearings, are trained in their role. For misconduct meetings, where outcomes of written and final written warnings can be given, chaired by officers at the rank of chief inspector, training is provided by an external provider prior to commencement, with bespoke case-specific guidance on a case-by case basis. For chief officers, who now undertake the role of chairing misconduct hearings (where dismissal is possible) under the new 2024 regulations, a three-day course is provided by the CoP, and all chairs attend this before undertaking the role.

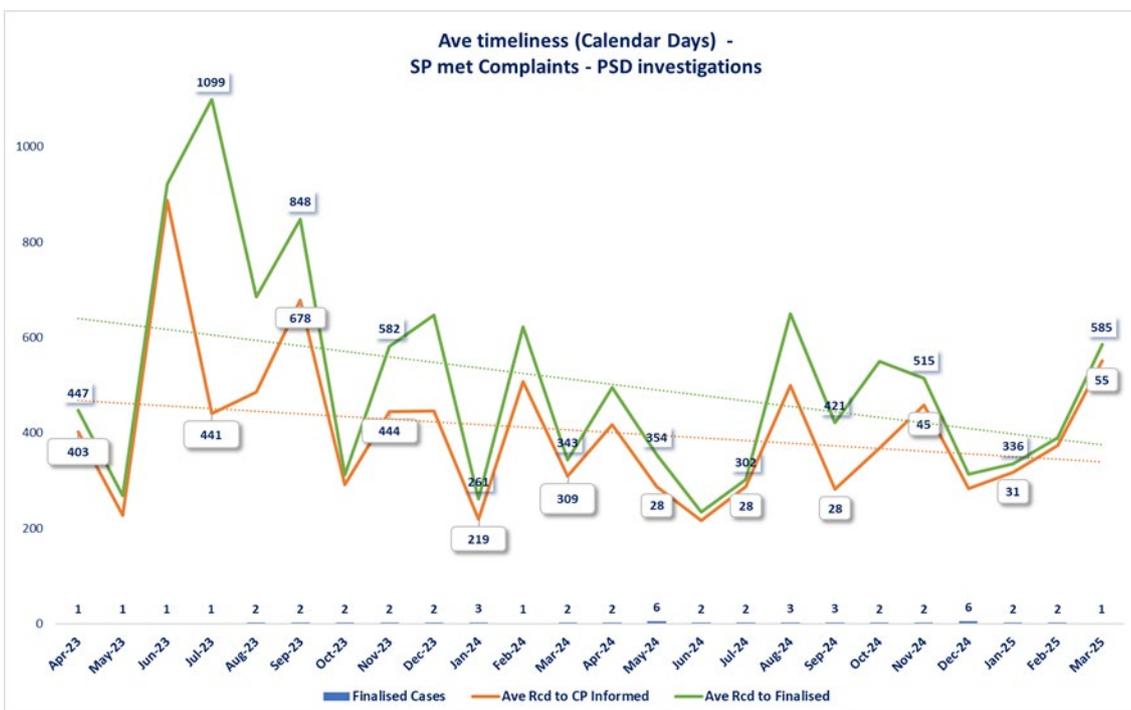
The new 2024 regulations have also built in a greater role for the Local Policing Body (LPB) overseeing policing i.e. for GMP this being the Deputy Mayor (DM) for Safer and Stronger Communities. This includes the chair informing the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) where misconduct hearings have been held in private, and the reasons for that decision.

The chair must also provide written explanation to the DM if gross misconduct is found, but the officer is not dismissed. This allows for oversight of those cases where there may be greater public concern due to a lack of transparency.

An investigation governance structure has been developed to ensure oversight and progression of cases within the PSD, which has seen a significant drop in the number of investigations over 24 months old, and an increase in files submitted by investigators for conclusion, either for no further action to be taken or consideration of disciplinary proceedings. PSD investigators have submitted 508 cases in 2024/2025, which is a 98-case increase (24%) on the year before, and this is despite the increase in the number of active cases.

This governance has also included inviting external scrutiny from the Force Crime Audit Team, to ensure that criminal investigations by the PSD are held to the same high standard as all other investigations across the Force.

There has been significant effort within the PSD to improve the timeliness of investigations; a key factor in dissatisfaction with the misconduct regime, from both victims and subject officers. This has been driven through the increased focus on crime and investigation governance, and did lead to reductions in timeliness. However, the continued increased demand has started to see an increase in the length of investigations.

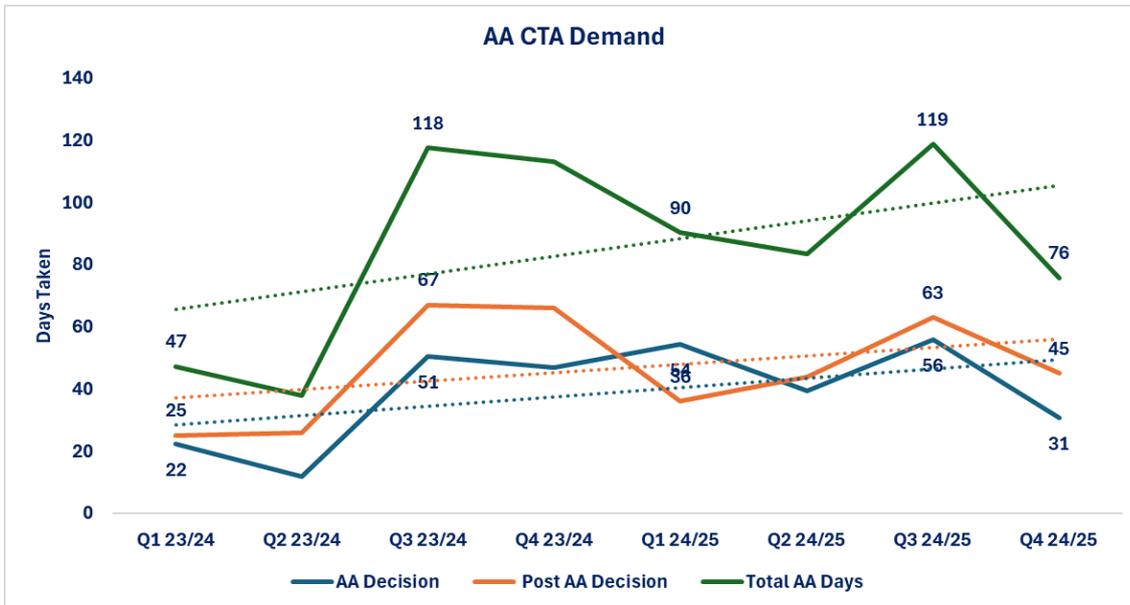


To further improve timeliness and quality of service to the public, a new team was created from within existing resources to focus on complaint and 'Death and Serious Injury' (DSI) cases, which required investigation but where there was no indication of misconduct. These cases had previously had the worst timeliness, where investigators were focussing on the most serious of misconduct cases. This new team has assisted in the timeliness reductions which have been seen.

A new team is also being launched to focus on critical enquiries; those where there is greatest risk to community trust and confidence in GMP and indeed the wider police service, so that resources can be deployed quickly, under dedicated supervision, to provide timely investigation and victim liaison.

This critical enquiry team and the other investigation teams more widely have been supported by recruitment into the PSD, and the provision of new posts, enabling the investigation teams to start to grow against the rising demand. Recruitment into the Directorate has been difficult, due to the complex nature of the legal framework in which investigators operate and the high workloads. However, the recent steady recruitment is starting to see a change of direction and a growing Directorate will likely see further improvement in attraction. New methods of recruitment are also being tried, with open days, and seeking specialist skills, such as officers with domestic abuse (DA) investigation experience.

Following an investigation into conduct matters, the investigation report is provided to one of the AAs to make a determination of whether there is a case to answer (CTA) for misconduct, and if the officer should face misconduct proceedings. This role is undertaken by officers within the PSD Senior Leadership Team (SLT) at the rank of chief inspector, superintendent and chief superintendent. These decisions are often complex, making decisions pursuant to police conduct disciplinary regime, case law, the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and employment law considerations. The SLT has been at reduced capacity for nearly 12-months, which has impacted on decision making timeliness, but the increased volume has also impacted on this.



Despite this the number of proceedings held in 2024 increased by 12.5%, with 32 officers and dismissed in 2023, rising to 47 officers dismissed in 2024. Police staff dismissals rose from 11 to 17 for the same period.

Changes have also been made to make better use of thematic data, implementing a Tactical Tasking and Co-ordinating Group, to review and monitor thematic issues from complaints and conduct cases. This group then takes action, particularly focussed on preventative work with districts and branches, to look at reducing demand long term.

The PSD are also looking at improving the use of data, through the development of a PowerBi dashboard, so that it can make quick time intelligent decisions on all available data.

3. Conclusion

The panel is asked to note this report and the efforts being made to ensure that fair, high quality disciplinary investigations are being conducted by GMP.