

GREATER MANCHESTER POLICE, FIRE & CRIME PANEL

Date: 10th June 2025

Subject: Improve the quality of police complaints handling by working closely with Greater Manchester Police's (GMP) Professional Standards Directorate (PSD)

Report of: Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) – Terry Woods and Neil Evans, Director for Safer and Stronger Communities, GMCA

Purpose of Report

To provide the Greater Manchester Police Fire and Crime Panel with an update on the Police and Crime Plan priority - 'Improve the quality of police complaints handling by working closely with GMP's PSD.'

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Panel notes the progress outlined in the report.

Contact Officers

DCC Terry Woods

Detective Chief Superintendent Michael Allen (Head of Professional Standards)

Neil Evans, Director for Safer and Stronger Communities, GMCA

Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

Through her scrutiny the Deputy Mayor monitors disproportionality in terms of complaints made as does the IOPC and GMP. This will be commented upon in a future annual report that presents more detailed complaint statistics to the panel.

In conducting complaint reviews the Deputy Mayor has identified that on occasions GMP have failed to make reasonable adjustments in respect of disabled people. She has brought this to the attention of the Force and will continue to monitor progress in this regard.

Risk Management:

N/A

Legal Considerations:

The conduct of the police complaints and disciplinary process is subject to statutory Police Regulations.

Financial Consequences – Revenue:

N/A

Financial Consequences – Capital:

N/A

Number of attachments to the report:

None

1. Introduction/Background

1.1 In response to declining public trust and high-profile misconduct cases, GMP has implemented significant reforms to the police complaints service it provides to the public. These changes aim to enhance accountability, streamline processes, and ensure that police officers always uphold the highest professional standards.

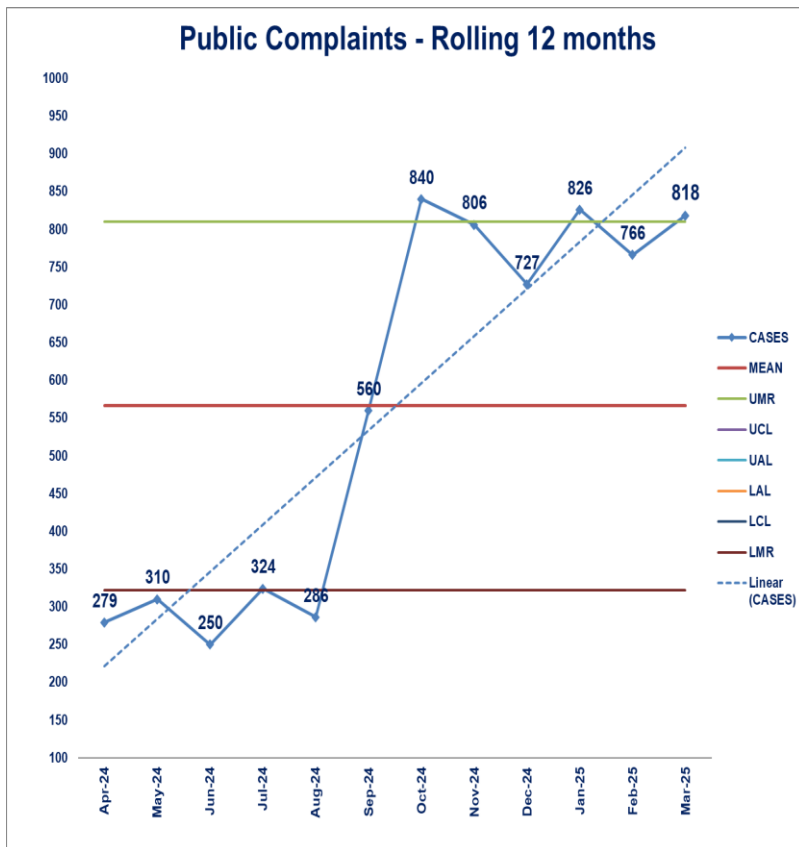
2. Detail

2.1 Significant change to use of Single Online Home (SOH):

2.1.1 The Force has standardised the way in which all complaints are recorded, which has resulted in a major change to the data reported in this paper. The Force must stress the following figures do not mean that GMP has had a big rise in complaints, in reality it hasn't, but it needed to make changes to the way complaints are recorded to ensure it delivers outstanding service to the public.

2.1.2 PSD received 6788 public complaints in 2024/2025, compared to 3406 in 2023/2024. This increase is down to the integration of SOH directly into the PSD; this change came into effect on 17th September 2024. SOH provides a digital portal that allows members of the public to report complaints through the Force website. Prior to its integration into PSD, such complaints were routed through to the Force Contact Crime and Operations (FCCO) Branch. The FCCO would then triage the complaints received via SOH, sending both serious allegations and complaints that indexed to either discrimination or use of coercive powers to the PSD. Expressions of dissatisfaction where service recovery was deemed appropriate were sent direct to districts across the PoliceWorks command and control platform, and thus many were not being captured as complaints.

<u>BOLTON</u>	<u>MANCHESTER</u>	<u>ROCHDALE</u>	<u>STOCKPORT</u>	<u>TRAFFORD</u>
<u>BURY</u>	<u>OLDHAM</u>	<u>SALFORD</u>	<u>TAMESIDE</u>	<u>WIGAN</u>



2.1.3 Since PSD took over responsibility for SOH, it has increased the ability to understand common themes of dissatisfaction, which PSD were previously unaware of. It has unlocked intelligence gaps and enabled PSD to capture information pertaining to repeat subject officers. This assists in providing a rich picture of management information data, which on its analysis by PSD, is provided to districts and branches to enable their senior leadership teams (SLT) to engage with officers generating such dissatisfaction and take appropriate intervening action to promote service improvement. This allows for a more preventative and continuous learning approach to be taken, reducing levels of public dissatisfaction by improving the service they receive, reducing Force demand and consequently improving the public's trust and confidence in GMP.

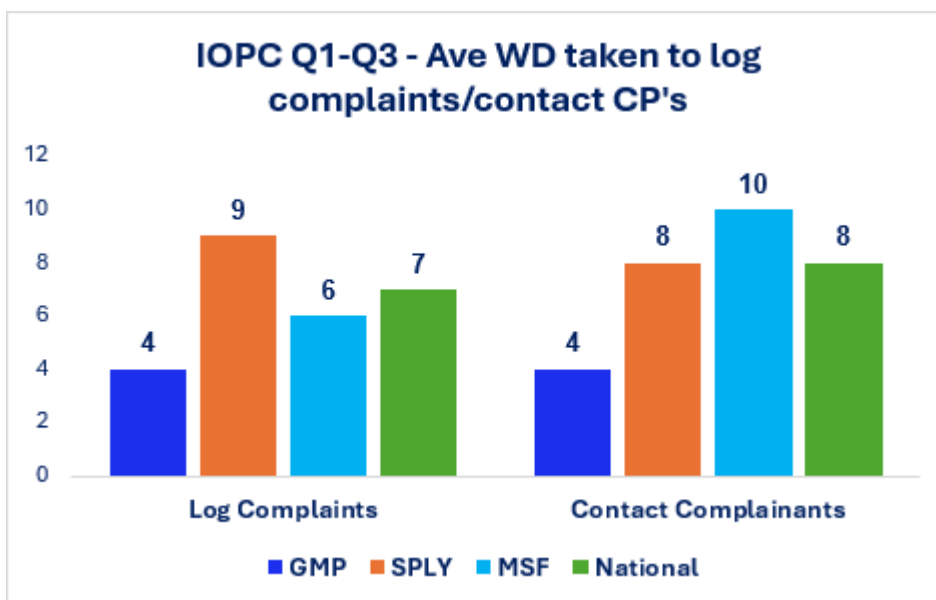
2.1.4 SOH has become the main single gateway in registering dissatisfaction with the Force and is a portal which was designed by the Digital Policing Service (DPS) in collaboration with the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) Complaint and Misconduct portfolio to ensure the public receive a consistent service across the 43 police forces of England and Wales when making a complaint.

2.1.5 The reforms to how complaints can be registered with GMP moves towards an efficient, industry standard complaints system which the public are familiar with. The SOH gateway supports complainants to detail crucial information through mandatory fields to enable GMP to appropriately assess and handle their complaint, which improves timeliness as it reduces the number of complaints registered which lack sufficient detail required for assessment.

2.2 Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

2.2.1 The PSD has introduced KPIs to provide measurable values that demonstrate how effectively they are achieving key objectives, including initial contact with complainants, recording of complaints, and allocation of complaints for handling in accordance with schedule 3, Police Reform Act 2002.

2.2.2 Despite the shift in the volume due to SOH, through process efficiencies and strong performance management, performance has not declined, and the public continue to receive a service which is significantly improved on the same period last year (SPLY), and superior to that which is provided by the most similar force (MSF).



2.3 Police Complaints Governance Group (PCGG)

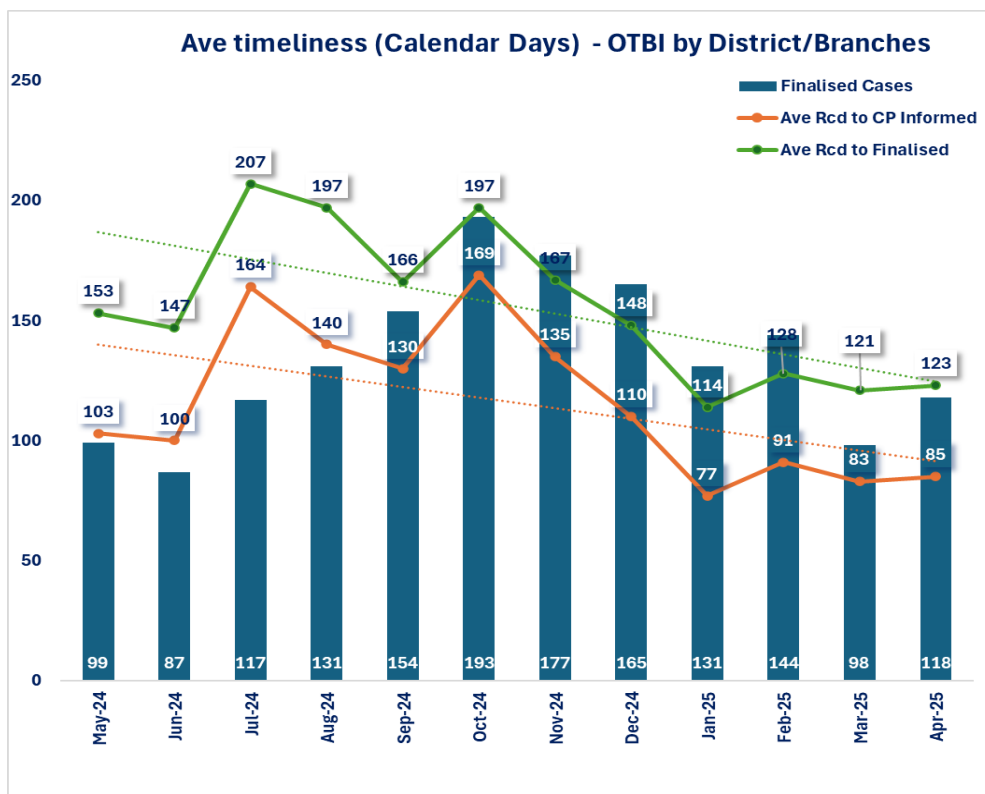
2.3.1 The PSD now holds a monthly performance meeting (PCGG) which is attended by the operations Superintendent from each district, where scrutiny is applied to their oldest locally handled other than by investigation (OTBI) complaints, with a view to driving down timeliness through governance and accountability. By way of explanation OTBI effectively means that the complaint will be recorded and handled formally but not by means of a formal investigation. This does not mean the

complaint is taken less seriously; it is a means of responding to a complaint that does not fall into the investigation category, where the complainant is entitled to a written outcome and a right to review.

Effectively there are three ways a complaint can be handled:

- Formal investigation - most serious cases.
- OTBI - these form the bulk of cases which need to be recorded but are less serious.
- Service recovery - for less serious and informal cases.

2.3.2 Invitations to this meeting are extended to representatives from the Strategic Police Reviews Team at the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), who have shared common themes which result in upheld reviews, with a view to providing invaluable feedback, as well as the Independent Office for Police Misconduct's (IOPC) Oversight Liaison Team. This monthly meeting has allowed for increased grip and accountability and has seen an increase in the number of finalised cases, as well as an improvement to timeliness.



2.4 Outcome templates

2.4.1 Complaint outcome templates were produced and replaced outcome letters. The templates are partially completed by the PSD assessment officer before, in the case of a complaint being handled OTBI, it is then handed to the district complaint handler.

The template allows for clear and concise handling, ensuring the complaint handler answers each allegation in turn and is mandated to provide an appropriate outcome to each allegation. The benefit of the revised template not only supports the complaint handler to provide a better outcome to the complainant by giving specific direction of the specific allegations, but it also makes it easier for the complainant to understand the outcome, thereby improving the overall customer experience. These templates are now being considered by the IOPC as to whether they should be promoted as best practice nationally in the handling of complaints OTBI.

2.4.2 PSD has also changed the process and taken steps to move away from grouping allegations recorded together to a position that now separates them out, which has had an impact on the numbers recorded with an increase from 9934 (23/24) to 15766 (24/25). These increases are due to process changes and do not reflect an actual increase in people making allegations.

2.4.3 With district superintendents now required to quality assure outcome templates before they are sent to the complainants, this has resulted in significant improvements to quality leading to a reduction in the number of reviews received, indicating increased public satisfaction with regards to overall complaint outcomes.

2.5 Clear accountability and collaboration between PSD and Deputy Mayor's Office.

2.5.1 In addition to the existing accountability and governance arrangements, quarterly meetings are held between the Strategic Police Reviews Team in the Deputy Mayor's office and PSD. This has enabled greater collaboration, transparency and efficiency in addressing public dissatisfaction, by streamlining communication and aligning strategic priorities. Additionally, the Strategic Police Reviews Team has been influential in providing tactical support and advice which has informed training inputs produced for newly promoted and existing inspectors (complaint handlers), outlining the expectations and responsibilities, and the common areas likely to result in an upheld review.

2.5.2 The Deputy Mayor has a key statutory role in respect of the monitoring of complaints made by members of the public. In support of this responsibility, she and her senior staff meet formally on a quarterly basis with the Deputy Chief Constable where she is able to effectively scrutinise the Force in respect of complaint handling and outcomes. The Safer and Stronger Communities Director also holds monthly meetings with the Head of Critical Complaints, and both also regularly meet with the

relevant Director of Engagement at the IOPC. The Strategic Police Reviews Team also meet quarterly with the IOPC and share best practice, themes and trends which are fed into the quarterly meetings they hold with the Appropriate Authority (senior officers who make determinations in respect of complaints and misconduct in line with Police Regulations) in PSD.

2.5.3 Over the past 12 months the Strategic Police Reviews Team and PSD have developed enhanced working relationships to improve working practices and have highlighted themes and trends at an operational level, which are then fed into the quarterly meetings held with the Deputy Mayor. The Deputy Mayor personally acts as the decision maker for each complaint review and regularly raises issues of concern. Recent examples include application of the Equality Act and how GMP is performing following the Baird Report. There is regular monitoring and oversight in this regard.

3. Conclusion

3.1 These comprehensive reforms represent a concerted and joint effort to enhance the integrity and accountability of policing in GMP. By addressing systemic issues through understanding root causes and promoting transparency, this work seeks to rebuild public trust and ensure that GMP operates with the highest professional standards.