

GREATER MANCHESTER POLICE CRIME AND FIRE PANEL

Date: 16th March 2026

Subject: Professional Standards Team - One Year in Review

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PURPOSE OF REPORT

To present the current progress of the Professional Standards Team (PST) within GMFRS and describe future opportunities which are being explored.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Police, Fire & Crime Panel notes the contents of the report, the progress made to date and supports the exploration of opportunities for further development.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

- Professional Standards SLT Report September 2024.
- Professional Standards DME Report January 2025.

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IMPLICATIONS:

Risk Management – The proposed change reduces organisational risk by strengthening continuity and availability within the HMICFRS/Service Improvement function, ensuring sustained inspection readiness and removing vulnerability associated with operational abstractions.

Legal Considerations – No legal implications are anticipated. The change relates to internal structural adjustments and remains compliant with employment policies and organisational design processes.

Financial Consequences – Revenue – Converting the SM post to a Green Book role provides anticipated revenue savings through lower salary costs and reduced operational allowances, alongside improved utilisation of full-time capacity.

Financial Consequences – Capital – None. The proposal does not require any capital investment or changes to estates, equipment, or infrastructure.

Environmental Considerations – N/A

Equality Impact Assessment Considerations – N/A

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the launch of PST in April 2025, the team have had a significant impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of case management within GMFRS by achieving the key objectives outlined in the 28th January 2025 briefing, working to the Professional Standards Policy and Procedure.

The team have, and continue to, provide the organisation with; clear expectations through the introduction of new and revised policy and guidance, expedited and transparent case management with positive feedback from participants', training and guidance for employees and managers at all levels and clear pathways to resolution.

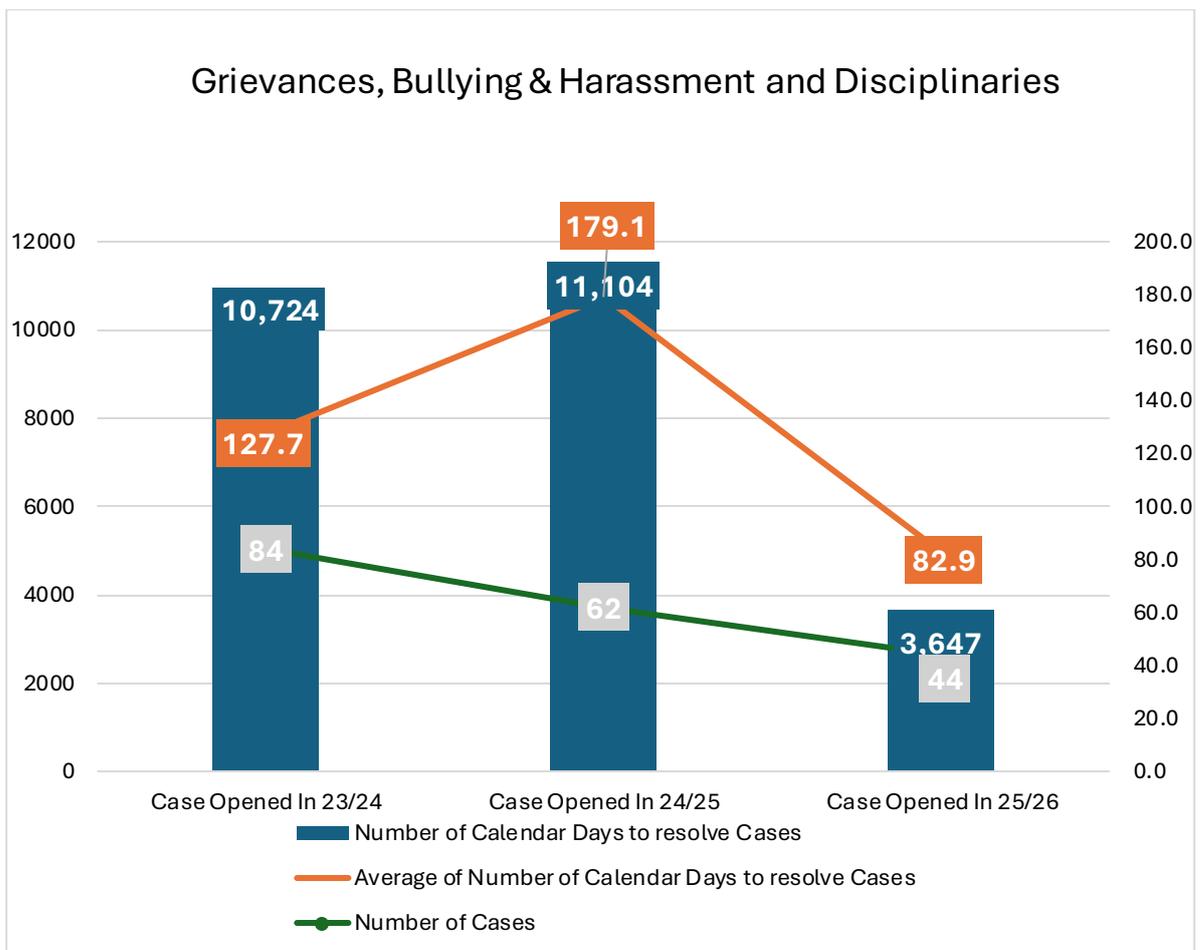
Following the successful establishment of the team, it is proposed that alterations to the team structure are explored to enhance and broaden the scope of delivery PST provides to the Service.

IMPACT OF PST

1. The key objectives of PST, as set out in the DME briefing in January 2025 were:
 - Provide better support and guidance on low level discipline management and development plans.
 - Introduce a dedicated team of investigators ensuring faster, streamlined prescribed processes and outcomes.
 - Train and support managers in expectations, accountability, standards and managing discipline.
 - Improve standards and accountability by providing clear expectations and improved learning.
2. All four of these objectives have been achieved, in line with the Professional Standards Policy.
3. The team has now been fully recruited to and has taken over all GMFRS cases since April 2025. The current structure of the PST ensures that all cases can be distributed evenly across the team to ensure dedicated support, reduction in timeframes and less impact on investigators' wellbeing.
4. In April 2025, the team took over the investigation of all cases including the oversight and of approximately 25 legacy cases, including a number of disciplinary investigations. Throughout 2025-26, PST have had oversight of 73 cases overall (disciplinary, external complaints, grievance, collective grievance and bullying & harassment – green and grey book).
5. PST has developed process structures and governance, provided a consistent approach and rationale to reasonable and balanced outcomes and introduced debriefs to capture organisational and national learning to ensure that recommendations are actioned.

- Coupled with an increase of training, development, communication and feedback sought from the organisation, alongside the introduction of structured one-to-one meetings and documented conversations (Informal Discussion Records), cases have dramatically decreased over time with the guidance and oversight of PST.

6. In addition, the approach of PST significantly decreased the timeframes of processes having a direct positive impact upon the wellbeing of those involved in the processes, as evidenced within the PST survey results obtained on conclusion of each case.



7. The ratio of green to grey book cases since April 2025 are 19 : 54. The green book Professional Standards Lead has also dealt with grey book B&H. In addition to the above information, PST also deal with external complaints and collective grievances.

8. PST have also acted as the conduit between the Contact us team and managers to provide management and oversight of external complaints from the public ensuring

adherence to timeframes set out in the Contact us Policy, of which PST have dealt with 16 in 2025/26.

9. Throughout 2025-26, PST have provided managers with learning and development at regular training sessions including; Supporting Employee Performance sessions, Frontline Leaders training, Directorate Meetings and onboarding sessions which has covered a significant amount of new and existing grey and green book managers and employees.
10. In addition to this, further written and video guidance have been cascaded in relation to the Station Standards Framework (which sets out the expected workplace standards for all front-line firefighters), One-to-Ones and Informal Discussion Records. PST have recently launched a new Welfare Officer guidance document (specific to casework) and are also working towards the launch of a new Relationships at Work policy and revised Appearance Policy which will also be accompanied by instructional videos.
11. PST are currently leading on a full policy review of relevant GMFRS Grey and Green Book Policies alongside the Employee Relations Team. This will ensure that all policies have relevant guidance, letters, forms, risk assessments, training and communication embedded, taking into account employees' voice by engaging volunteers (grey and green book including CA) in working groups.
12. PST have also revised the Recognition and Awards framework documentation and Chair the panel, ensuring a fair and consistent approach to the process.
13. Working closely with colleagues in the Talent, Attraction and Retention (TAR) team and Employee Relations, PST have overseen and completed the rollout of Enhanced DBS checks for all relevant employees across the Service ensuring that those who require vetting have undertaken the assessment. PST have managed any concerns which have arisen and put measures in place to ensure that any risk is identified and managed in accordance with the National Fire Chief's Counsel (NFCC) framework and internal risk assessments.
14. The introduction of post disciplinary process surveys has demonstrated organisational commitment to listening and learning from processes. This has been positive and

demonstrated from the feedback received that PST have been visible, proactive and positively received.

15. The debrief process has also had a positive effect by making organisational and national recommendations for continuous improvement. In addition, GMFRS' PST are one of the first teams to be established nationally and are regularly approached by other Services, providing advice on best practice and guidance to other FRS', national organisational learning and members of the NFCC working group consistently attributing best practice to these forums.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

16. As outlined in the PST policy: 'The team structure will be kept under review'. Following a year of practice, an opportunity now exists to review and refine the PST team structure with consideration to the balance between grey book and green book roles, which may present an opportunity to strengthen capacity, particularly where green book staff can offer fulltime, dedicated support and greater availability as well as potential cost efficiencies. This also adheres to the [GM People Inclusion Standard](#) 6 of 'Development and progression for all' and 8 'Retain, recognise and celebrate'.

17. In line with the opportunity described above this would also provide scope to develop green book pathways into PST where interest from green book employees has been consistent. This could include all roles within the team as well as the potential introduction of an entry level administrative support role. This would also work towards the enhancement of career pathways and diversify the skills and backgrounds within the team.