



**STRATEGIC POLICING AND CRIME BOARD  
13 May 2014**

**Dip Sampling of Completed Complaints Files**

**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. To report on the dip-sampling of completed complaints files undertaken by members of the Strategic Policing and Crime Board (SPCB) on Tuesday 4 March 2014.

**BACKGROUND**

2. Following a recommendation made by the Strategic Policing and Crime Board meeting on 4 February 2014 the Commissioner decided to introduce a new process for SPCB members to dip sample completed complaints files. PCCs do not have the power to investigate complaints against the police (other than a complaint against the Chief Constable) but do have a responsibility to ensure that the system for dealing with complaints against the police is effective and that it is well managed. The West Midlands Commissioner supported by the Strategic Policing and Crime Board undertake this duty by receiving regular performance reports on the work of the Professional Standards Department together with a regular programme of meetings with senior police officers to discuss complaints matters. The new dip sampling process supports this and provides a further check on the system.
3. The categories of complaints selected by the Commissioner for inclusion in the first dip sampling exercise were:
  - Sexual Assault
  - Oppressive Behaviour
  - Discriminatory Behaviour

A random selection of completed complaints files from within these categories was made available during the dip sampling session.

4. During the session SPCB members examined 10 completed complaints files. During dip sampling members restricted their examination of the files to three key issues:

- Does the decision in the case appear reasonable? (this is different from looking for a decision that is legally correct)
- Has the complaint been dealt with in a timely manner and were all communications polite and reasonable?
- Does the way in which the complaint was investigated inspire confidence?

The approach is intended to allow SPCB members to concentrate on the overall flavour of the complaint and the level of customer service being delivered and also to provide an opportunity to increase their personal knowledge and understanding of the process. It should also allow SPCB members to sample the levels of customer service in response to complaints.

5. There were no major issues or discrepancies identified during the examination of the files, and in all 10 cases it appeared that the overall outcome was justified and reasonable, and the communications with the complainant were reasonable and polite.

6. Future dip sampling sessions will take place at 9am on the following dates:

Tuesday 1 July 2014 (report to Board 2 September 2014)

Tuesday 4 November 2014 (report to Board 2 December 2014)

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

7. There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

8. Section 15 of the Police Reform Act 2002 requires the Authority to ensure that it is kept informed about complaints made against police officers.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

9. The Board is asked to:

- a) Note the outcomes of the dip sampling session.
- b) Determine whether any further action is required as a result of the dip sampling.

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