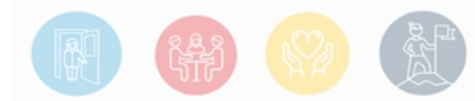


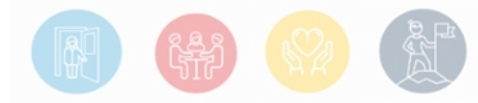
Independent Scrutiny of Police Complaints Panel

Annual Report 2025



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Foreword from the Chair

The Independent Scrutiny of Police Complaints Panel exists for a simple but important purpose: to provide independent assurance that complaints made against the police are handled fairly, proportionately, and with a clear focus on learning and improvement.

In 2025, the Panel reviewed 107 police complaint cases across four quarterly meetings, covering themes including Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), Stop and Search, discrimination, individual behaviours, and delivery of duties and service. Throughout the year, the Panel continued to focus on fairness, transparency, communication, proportionality, and organisational learning.



The Panel has continued to push for tangible improvements rather than symbolic oversight. This includes encouraging clearer communication with complainants, reducing unnecessary bureaucracy, improving consistency in complaint handling, and ensuring greater proportionality in outcomes and processes.

This year also saw the Panel evolve and strengthen, with the welcome addition of new members from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences. This has enhanced the diversity of perspectives within the Panel, bringing fresh insight, constructive challenge, and greater depth to discussions. As a result, the Panel is better equipped to reflect the communities it serves and to support robust, well-rounded scrutiny of police complaints.

Looking ahead, national changes to policing governance inevitably bring some uncertainty. However, the Panel remains committed to demonstrating the value of independent scrutiny, delivering tangible improvements, and helping to build public confidence while supporting more effective and proportionate processes. We would like to expand our thematic scrutiny into areas such as Missing Persons, Social Media, Domestic and Gender-Based Abuse, and safeguarding-related concerns. These are areas where public confidence, transparency, and independent scrutiny are particularly important.

The Independent Scrutiny of Police Complaints Panel remains committed to ensuring that scrutiny leads to practical learning, improved standards, and stronger trust between policing and the communities it serves.

Bryan Knickerbocker
Chair
Independent Scrutiny of Police Complaints Panel



What is the Independent Scrutiny of Police Complaints Panel?



Through the public's eyes: How the police manage complaints

The Independent Scrutiny of Police Complaints Panel (ISPCP) consists of independent volunteers from across Avon and Somerset who review police complaint handling from a public perspective. The Panel acts as a constructive **'critical friend'**, supporting **transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement** within Avon and Somerset Constabulary and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Panel members review completed complaint files in detail, including complaint correspondence, decision-making rationale, investigation records, and Body Worn Video (where available). The Panel focuses on **fairness, communication quality, timeliness, victim-centred practice, organisational learning, transparency, and accountability**, while also **identifying themes and areas for improvement** to support ongoing development within the Constabulary.



Figure 1: The Independent Scrutiny of Police Complaints Panel, May 2026



2025 at a Glance

4

Quarterly Meetings Held

107

Complaint Cases Scrutinised

Thematic Focus Areas

- Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG)
- Stop and Search
- Discrimination
- Individual Behaviours
- Service Delivery

HMICFRS Feedback

“The Panel has a clear and demonstrable impact.”

Quarterly Themes and Key Activity

March 2025

27 cases scrutinised with a thematic focus on individual behaviours. HMICFRS inspectors highlighted the Panel’s work positively during the Police Integrity Inspection Programme. The PCC Clare Moody attended and announced the launch of the new Police and Crime Plan (2025-2029).

June 2025

24 cases scrutinised focusing on delivery of duties and service. Superintendent Vicks Hayward-Melen briefed the Panel on Stop and Search powers and procedural fairness. Our new ISPCP Chair Bryan Knickerbocker was appointed.

September 2025

28 cases scrutinised with a thematic focus on discrimination. The Panel reviewed Stop and Search complaints alongside PSD complaint handling processes.

December 2025

28 cases scrutinised with a thematic focus on Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), safeguarding, and victim-centred approaches. Sally Fox, Director of Performance & Accountability, updated the Panel on the Government’s announcement to replace elected PCCs with a Police and Crime Board model.

Charlotte Stone, Senior Policy and Commissioning Manager (OPCC), attended the meeting and provided an overview of the national and local Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) agenda, including key responsibilities, partnership work, and ongoing challenges.



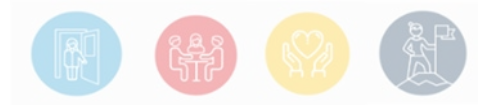
Figure 2: ISPCP meeting in progress

PSD Engagement and Organisational Learning

Throughout 2025, PSD colleagues demonstrated strong engagement with independent scrutiny. The Panel continued to emphasise that effective scrutiny depends on openness, transparency, constructive challenge, and a willingness to learn.

The Panel particularly welcomed the continued use of the Individual Learning Tracker, organisational learning mechanisms, and quality assurance dip-sampling processes.

The Panel also highlighted the importance of reducing unnecessarily lengthy correspondence, improving communication quality, strengthening victim-centred approaches, and ensuring proportionality within complaint handling processes.



ISPCP Said – PSD Did

ISPCP Feedback	PSD Response
Improve grammar, tone, and clarity in correspondence	Templates and Individual Learning Tracker introduced
Improve consistency in complaint handling	Lead person approach strengthened
Increase organisational learning	Formal learning mechanisms continued
Improve proportionality	Greater emphasis on informal resolution where appropriate
Strengthen scrutiny engagement	Expanded PSD attendance and thematic presentations

Looking Ahead to 2026

The Panel enters 2026 with a strong commitment to delivering meaningful scrutiny, expanding thematic reviews, strengthening public confidence, and ensuring scrutiny translates into practical organisational learning.

The Panel will continue its focus on reviewing discrimination and Stop and Search complaints, while monitoring PSD responses to inspections, national guidance, and emerging best practice. Oversight of inspection findings remains a core part of the Panel’s assurance role, with ongoing scrutiny of progress against the Police Integrity Inspection (February 2025) and HMICFRS recommendations, supported by regular performance data and PSD updates.

Improving accessibility and confidence for young people also remains a priority. The Panel will continue to review the IOPC Youth Panel Manifesto 2030, tracking how relevant reforms are reflected locally and seeking regular updates from PSD to ensure meaningful progress.

The Panel has identified PSD disproportionality data quality as an emerging focus area and will continue to seek assurance regarding improvements to the accuracy, consistency, and robustness of this data.

Recognising the opportunity for greater alignment, the Panel will also explore closer collaboration with other scrutiny panels to strengthen consistency and shared learning across oversight activity.

Finally, from 2026, the Panel will introduce clearly defined, evidence-based recommendations aligned to its thematic areas. This marks a significant step forward in strengthening the Panel’s impact, enabling more targeted improvement and enhancing its ability to monitor progress over time as part of its accountability and assurance function.



Comments Police & Crime Commissioner, Clare Moody

I would like to thank the Panel for its continued dedication and professionalism in fulfilling its vital role.

I am particularly pleased to see the expansion of the Panel this year, with the addition of four new members, strengthening its capacity and enriching the range of perspectives that inform its work. At a time of evolving public expectations and in challenging times for policing, your commitment to thorough and impartial oversight provides an essential foundation for transparency and accountability within the police complaints system. As we navigate a period of national Police reform and changing governance arrangements, the importance of robust external challenge and assurance is more significant than ever in ensuring high standards of policing.

Finally, I would like to warmly welcome Bryan Knickerbocker as the new Chair. I am also pleased that Kim will remain in a Deputy Chair role, continuing to support the Panel and provide valuable continuity. I would like to thank her for her exemplary leadership and ongoing commitment. I look forward to continuing to support the Panel's important work in 2026.



Comments Chief Constable, Sarah Crew

I would like to thank the Independent Scrutiny of Police Complaints Panel for its continued professionalism, independence, and constructive challenge throughout 2025.

The Panel plays a vital role in strengthening transparency, legitimacy, and public confidence in how Avon and Somerset Police respond to complaints. Your scrutiny provides both assurance and insight, helping us to better understand the experiences of the public and identify where we must continue to improve.

I am particularly encouraged by the Panel's focus on proportionality, communication, and organisational learning. The clear link between Panel feedback and tangible improvements within our Professional Standards Department reflects the strength of this constructive and collaborative relationship.

As we continue to respond to evolving public expectations, independent scrutiny of this nature is more important than ever. Your work ensures we remain open to challenge, committed to continuous improvement, and focused on delivering policing that is fair, ethical, and trusted by the communities we serve.

I look forward to continuing this important partnership in the year ahead.



Further Information

Quarterly reports and further information regarding the Independent Scrutiny of Police Complaints Panel can be accessed via the Avon and Somerset PCC website:

<https://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/reports-publications/independent-scrutiny-of-police-complaints-panel-reports/>

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