

**CUMBRIA POLICE AUTHORITY
PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

01 November 2005

Agenda Item No.

COMPLAINTS BY THE PUBLIC

A Report by the Professional Standards Department

1. Introduction

During October 2005, HMIC conducted within the Constabulary area, a thematic inspection of professional standards. This is a national inspection which will be centrally moderated, reports will not be available until the New Year time.

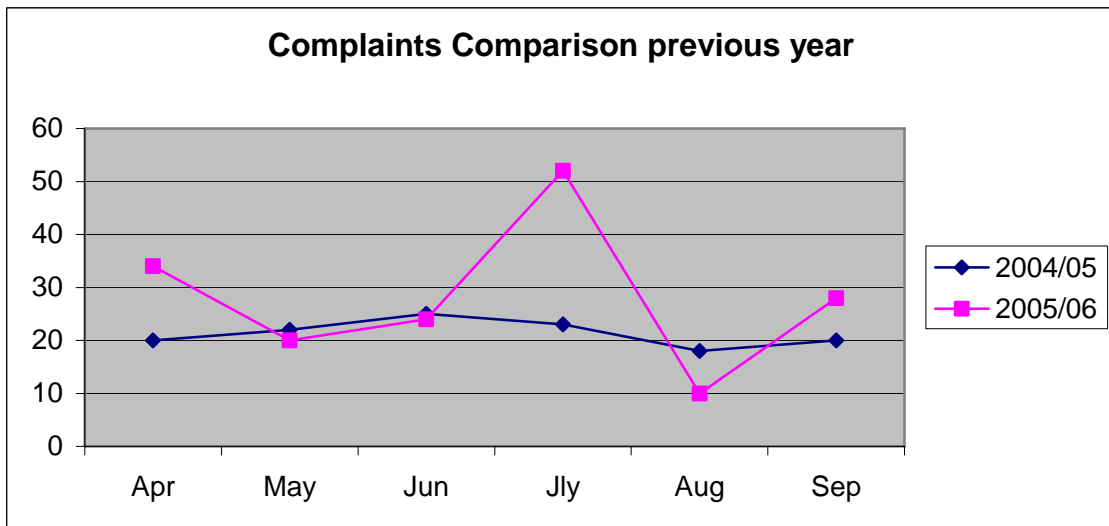
On Monday 10/10/05, IPCC visited PSD to dip sample files. Feedback was good.

We currently have four IPCC Supervised investigations; two managed investigations and are conducting two managed investigations in other Force areas (Derbyshire and Greater Manchester).

2. Suspensions

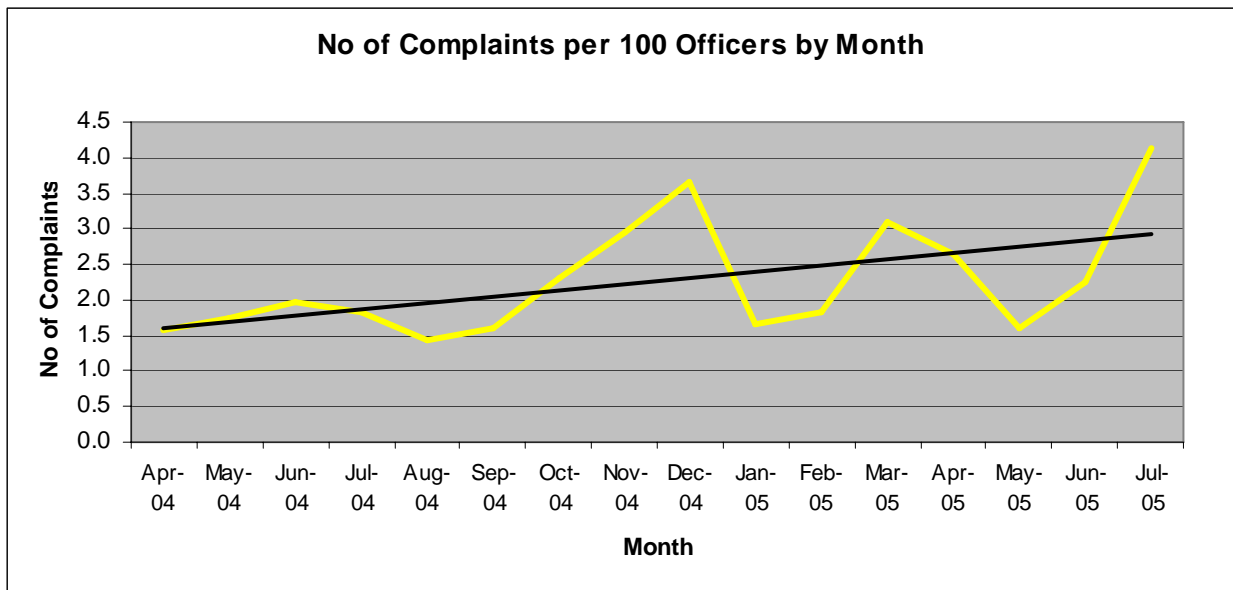
There are no Officers currently under suspension within the Constabulary.

3. Trends

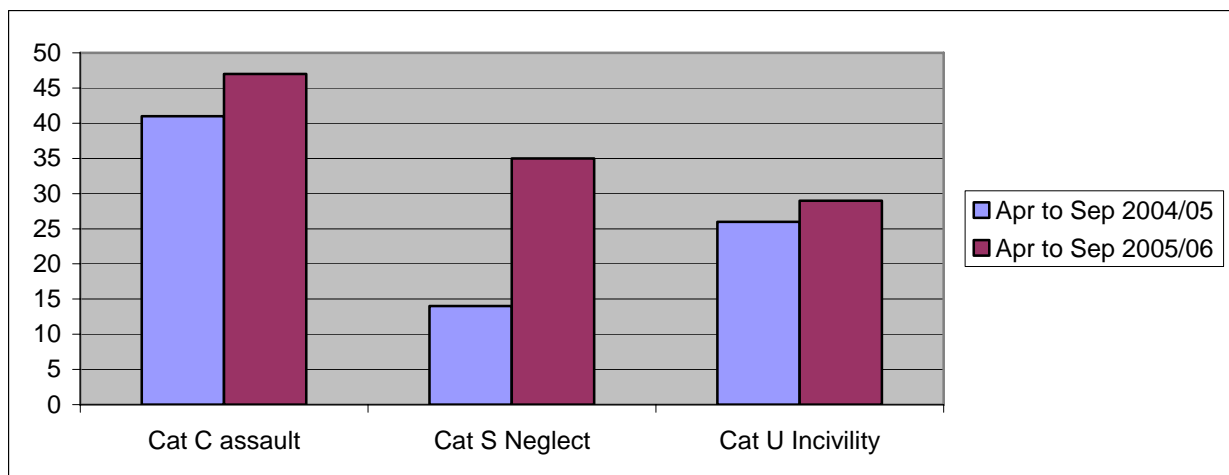


A massive increase in complaints was experienced during July of this quarter, and overall comparison of the 6 months April to September with the same period last year, shows an increase of 40 complaints (128 against 168) or 31%.

Since the 1st April 2004, the Force police officer establishment has remained around the same (1250 to 1260) but the trend in complaints shows an increase from 1.5 complaints per month per 100 Officers to 3 complaints per 100 Officers. For the purposes of the chart below, public complaints against police staff members have been excluded and actual establishment figure have been used on a month-by-month basis.



The increase can generally be attributed to the lower level incivility or neglect of duty during investigation complaints. Excessive use of force or assault during the course of an arrest still represents the largest category of complaints (26%).



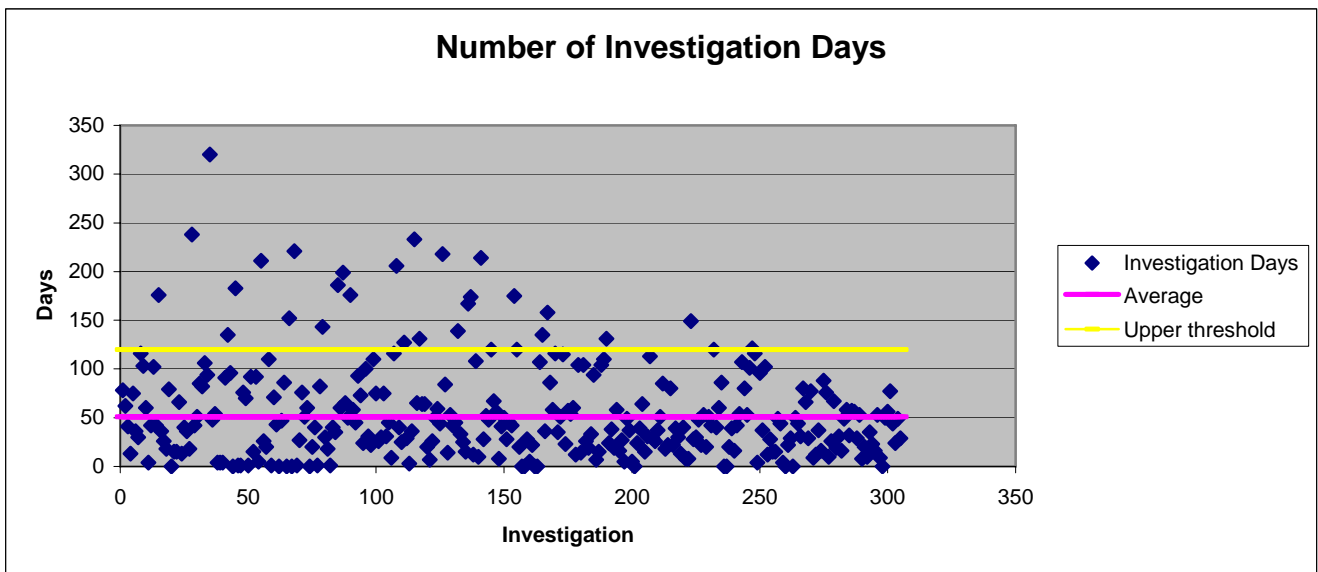
Has there actually been an increase in complaints made during the period or is it a result of the work done over the past couple of months in promoting an accessible complaints system? The Head of PSD believes that the lower end complaints were

actually already present and being dealt with in BCUs but now, following a meeting of key admin staff and redefining processes, they are being captured within PSD and the statistics. The training of Inspectors continues, North Cumbria is currently being done. Complaint files submitted to PSD demonstrate an open mindedness and improved confidence in resolving them.

It is now possible to make a complaint via the Constabulary's web site, 6 have been received in less than 3 weeks. Work with the Gypsy and Traveller community resulted in a recent call for information on how to make a complaint (albeit in another Constabulary). However this demonstrates the information is getting through.

4. Key Performance Indicators

The chart below indicates that most investigations are concluded within the 120 day target time set by the IPCC. This year, only 4 cases have exceeded the target and each has been reviewed for reasons why. The average time taken is around the 50 day mark and work continues to reduce it further.



The figures below indicate we are becoming more responsive to complaints and complainants with an increase in local resolutions and investigations against a decrease in dispensations and waivers.

Finalised in Period

Disposal	July to Sep 2004	July to Sep 2005
Dispensation/Waiver	16	6

Informal/Local resolution	35	43
Substantiated	2	1
Unsubstantiated	5	17
Withdrawn	2	8

5. Best Practice/Policy issues

Issues identified and dealt with were as follows:

Issue	Action
CCTV coverage in Workington Custody Suite	Drawn to attention of Area Commander
Proper evaluation of intelligence prior to obtaining search warrants	Drawn to attention of Area Commander
Identification of animals involved in criminal investigations.	New procedure produced and circulated via Force Orders and CJU managers.
Compliance with Force policy and use of personal mobile phone for CHIS (informant) work	Force Orders and Memorandum to Registrar and Controllers
Defence requests to interview prosecution witnesses	Good practice identified and integrated into PIP (Professionalising Investigation Project) training

6. Area breakdown

The distribution of complaints recorded between the three BCUs is as follows:

Quarter 01.07.05 to 30.9.05	
South	30
West	29
North	37

It is pleasing to see that the trend in West Cumbria is changing and that the distribution across BCUs is fairly similar. North Cumbria is slightly high but one case involves 6 category S complaints of neglect or failure in duty and they all relate to how local officers have responded to repeated calls of neighbourly dispute involving the complaint.

7. Race Equality and Ethnicity of Complainants

The one complaint of discriminatory behaviour recorded this quarter was from an Asian man who was being investigated by Officers for the unlawful imprisonment and sexual abuse of his wife. He complained that Officers involved in the investigation were not impartial and treated him differently. He says he was humiliated and put in a "white suit". The complainant has been locally resolved by PSD.

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