

POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME PANEL REPORT

Meeting Date	July 2025
Report Title	Complaints Performance Update

Information should be accessible for all. If you require this information in a different language or format, please contact the Police, Fire and Crime Team at info@northyorkshire-pfcc.gov.uk.

Purpose of this report

1. The purpose of this report is to:
 - update panel members on the complaint handling model for North Yorkshire Police complaints and dissatisfaction
 - Provide panel members with an update on performance and on ongoing activity

Background

2. In 2017, the amendments and changes introduced by the Policing and Crime Act¹ required Commissioners or Mayors to adopt one of three new statutory public complaint handling models.
3. In 2018 a High-Level Business Case² set out an opportunity for change to how police complaints were handled in North Yorkshire following the change in legislation. The then Police & Crime Commissioner consulted with the Chief Constable and adopted Model 3. The Office for Police, Fire & Crime (OPFCC) took responsibility for complaints in March 2020. The OPFCC became part of the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority (YNYCA) in May 2024.
4. North Yorkshire is one of two areas to adopt Model 3 in terms of complaint handling. Model 3 offers the opportunity to deal with complaints independently and impartially with no bias which helps to build trust and confidence in our local communities.
 - a) As of October 2024, YouGov reported that 54% of adults in Great Britain thought the police were doing a good job, down from 72% in October 2019³.

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/3/contents>

² <https://www.northyorkshire-pfcc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/The-future-of-police-complaints-in-North-Yorkshire-High-level-business-case.pdf>

³ <https://post.parliament.uk/public-trust-and-confidence-in-the-police/>

b) The Baroness Casey report⁴ said: “Time and time again, those complaining are not believed or supported. They are treated badly, or face counterclaims from those they have accused.

5. The modelling options were (and remain) as follows in this summary table as set out in legislation⁵:

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Receiving and making initial contact with complainant	Police	PCC	PCC
Handling complaints outside of Schedule 3 and recording complaints	Police	PCC	PCC
Keeping complainants and interested parties updated and informed of outcome	Police	Police	PCC
Investigating complaints	Police	Police	Police
Complaint reviews	PCC	PCC	PCC

6. All complaints are initially handled by The York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority (YNYCA) Customer Service Team this ensure fairness, for both residents and the police. The team will deal with the complaint in a reasonable and proportionate way, doing what is appropriate in the circumstances, taking into account the facts and the context in which the complaint/dissatisfaction has been raised, within the framework of legislation and guidance set out in the Statutory guidance on the police complaints system published by the Independent Office for Police Conduct⁶.

7. Upon receipt all complaints are assessed by a member of the team within 48 hours. All matters that are assessed to have a risk threat of risk or harm are actioned within 48 hours.

a) A range of steps can then be taken – for example, after working with the designated caseworker the complainant may be satisfied with an explanation or an apology. Where this is appropriate the team may be able to resolve the complaint in a less formal but nevertheless thorough way, by means of a local (informal) resolution. This can be flexible and is often the quickest and most effective way to resolve a complaint.

⁴ [BARONESS CASEY REVIEW Final Report](#)

⁵ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/3/section/13/enacted>

⁶ <https://www.policeconduct.gov.uk/complaints>

b) For more serious complaints, satisfying certain legal criteria, the team will refer the matter to North Yorkshire Police’s Professional Standards Department within 48 hours to carry out a formal assessment

8. Where a complaint has been recorded under Schedule 3 to the Police Reform Act 2002, the complainant also has a right to apply for a review of the outcome of the complaint. The outcome letter North Yorkshire Police send explains how to do this and explains who the relevant review body is, for a vast majority of complaints the Deputy Mayor holds the responsibility for carrying out reviews and we have appointed an independent adjudicator to hear these matters.
9. The YNYCA Customer Service Team has broadened its remit over time. Since its inception in 2020, it has developed to encompass not only Model 3 Police Complaints, but also complaints and compliments for North Yorkshire Fire Rescue Service as well as handling a majority of the Deputy Mayor (Former PFCC) ‘constituency casework’. For clarity this report focuses on police complaints and dissatisfaction only.
10. It is acknowledged that resourcing of the YNYCA Customer Service Team has been a challenge and that service levels have been difficult to maintain, a range of other factors, including the launch and initial development of the service during the pandemic.
11. However, additional investment in 2024 is producing a more resilient service. The initial team consisted of 1 Team Leader and 2 Advisors. Moving forward to meet demand the team the team has increased to 5 advisors (4 in post, 1 at vetting stage), 1 Team Leader and 1 Customer Service Manager. To summaries Model 3 offers:
 - a) an impartial and unbiased approach building trust a public confidence in policing, approximately 70% of complaints are resolved informally. Moving forwards there is the potential to improve this once the YNYCA Customer Service Team is fully resourced – as detailed later in this report.
 - b) allows collaborative working with our Scrutiny Panels and YNYCA Public Confidence Team engaging with local communities on specific themes and trends.

National Landscape

12. Nationally there has been an overall rise in police complaints, the most recent IOPC report Key findings for 2023/24⁷ explains:
 - a) Nationally, the total volume of complaints rose by 5%. An increase that is likely linked to the simplifying of the system and the widening in definition of a complaint to “any expression of dissatisfaction”.

⁷ <https://www.policeconduct.gov.uk/publications/police-complaints-statistics-england-and-wales-report-202324>

- b) Data relating to North Yorkshire Police is detailed later in this report. The top 3 complaint allegations for North Yorkshire Police are:
 - i. Update from officers and staff
 - ii. Timely contact from officers and staff
 - iii. Minor incivility
- c) Nationally the most commonly recorded complaint type related to delivery of duties and service. These often relate to service delivery complaints such as a lack of updates or delays in responses, rather than concerns around police misconduct.
- d) Meanwhile, a further rise in the number of complaints resolved informally indicates more complaints are being sorted quickly, as the new system intended, with fewer complaints resulting in lengthy investigations. This is to be welcomed. We continue to see that in many cases these are being replaced with responses that are more proportionate, with appropriate explanations and apologies. In fact, there was a 12% increase in the number of cases where an explanation or apology was given to resolve a complaint.

13. Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) Guidance for adopting Model 2 and Model 3

- a) Model 1 is the statutory minimum required of Police & Crime Commissioners (Mayors / Deputy Mayors) who are responsible for scrutinising their force's complaint handling, handling complaints about the Chief Constable, and for conducting reviews of complaint handling where the PCC is the relevant review body.
- b) Models 2 and 3 allow Police & Crime Commissioners (Mayors / Deputy Mayors) to carry out additional complaint handling functions that would otherwise be performed by the police. Under these models the Police & Crime Commissioner (Mayor / Deputy Mayor) is responsible for the initial handling of complaints and handling suitable complaints outside of Schedule 3 to the *Police Reform Act 2002* (referred to as Schedule 3) which is sometimes referred to as 'service recovery'. Under model 3 the PCC is also responsible for keeping complainants updated on the progress and outcome of their complaints.
- c) The complaint models, in particular models 2 and 3, present an important opportunity for PCCs to support an effective complaints service within their areas and meet the aims of the reforms.
- d) The Government has committed to exploring reform of the policing landscape. PCCs nationally are making extensive recommendations about their future role in the new models and structures
- e) There will be no single view from all PCCs, but collectively their aims are to positively influence discussions and assist the Home Secretary in their desire to improve policing outcomes for all our communities.

f) The APCC 3 Pillar Approach is summarised as follows:

- Pillar 1: Giving communities more control over local policing through their PCC. Consider making Model 2 or 3 for complaints mandatory
- Pillar 2: Sharing innovation and reducing variability to improve services to all communities
- Pillar 3: Setting the strategic direction for policing at the national level

14. HMICFRS Findings

The latest HMICFRS Integrity Inspection report⁸ undertaken in July 2025 and published in January 2025 assessed the effectiveness of North Yorkshire Police in three areas. The force was graded 'good' at vetting police officers and staff and 'requires improvement' in its professional standards and counter-corruption arrangements.

HMICFRS said that the force's vetting unit effectively uses the national decision model to make vetting decisions. It consistently uses a template to make sure decisions are clear and supported by thorough rationale.

Inspectors also said that the force conducts regular analysis of its vetting data to identify, understand and respond to any disproportionality in vetting decisions. It is working with the elected local policing body to improve applications from hard-to-reach communities.

However, HMICFRS said that the force needs to establish better processes to make sure it is providing a good service to complainants. Inspectors also said that the force doesn't always investigate complaints and misconduct thoroughly and proportionately. And its management of investigations falls short of the standards required. The delays in the initial handling of complaints by the YNYCA Customer Service Team Customer Service Team was impacting the force.

15. Latest National Inspection outcomes

Challenges around these processes are not unique to York and North Yorkshire. At the same time two other areas were inspected and reports published in January 2025:

Derbyshire Police – Model 1
Upholding the standards of professional behaviour – Adequate

Lincolnshire Police – Model1

⁸ <https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/publications/effectiveness-of-integrity-arrangements-in-north-yorkshire-police/>

Upholding the standards of professional behaviour - Requires improvement

On 30 May 2025 HMICFRS published 3 further police integrity inspection reports for three other areas that examine force vetting, professional standards and counter-corruption⁹.

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary – Model1

Upholding the standards of professional behaviour – Adequate

Surrey Police – Model 1

Upholding the standards of professional behaviour - Requires improvement

Sussex Police – Model 1

Upholding the standards of professional behaviour - Requires improvement

16. Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC)

17. Nationally complaint numbers have increased, as detailed earlier in this report and referred to in the IOPC Key findings for 2023/24¹⁰. In 2023/24, police forces and local policing bodies in England and Wales logged 85,458 complaint cases.

18. On 17 June 2025 the IOPC published their Public Perception Tracker¹¹, this includes core questions on the following topics: awareness of the IOPC, people’s perception of our independence, how likely people are to make a complaint about the police, their views about how the police deal with complaints. The public continue to be more likely to lack confidence, than feel confident, in the police to deal fairly with complaints against officer.

19. At the Association of Police & Crime Commissioners (APACCE) Annual General Meeting held on 9 June 2025 the IOPC also reported difficulties being able to meet demand:

- a) A significant uptake on Chief Officer referrals and independent investigations
- b) IOPC recruiting for investigators and their timeliness improving with a focus proportionality of their decisions.
- c) Their Backlog is reducing, currently at 8-11 months with 246 live cases and 346 cases awaiting outcomes (for example Gross Misconduct Hearings)

Demand for the service in York and North Yorkshire

20. Reducing demand at source and front end is an important objective and ambition of North Yorkshire Police, this is particularly the case in respect of generic high-volume complaints such as lack of updates, minor incivility and general good customer service.

⁹ [Three police integrity reports published - His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services](#)

¹⁰ <https://www.policeconduct.gov.uk/publications/police-complaints-statistics-england-and-wales-report-202324>

¹¹ <https://www.policeconduct.gov.uk/publications/public-perceptions-tracker-summary-report-202425>

21. Average demand for the service remains static at an average of 1400 cases per year. For the Period of 2024/25 there was an increase to 1508 cases, an average demand of approximately 125 new complaints and expressions of dissatisfaction against North Yorkshire Police per month.

	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/24	2024/2025
Total new receipts	1446	1326	1287	1439	1508

22. Throughout this period approximately 70% of all complaints have been successfully resolved using a flexible, customer focused and effective approach by the YNYCA, without the need to be escalated to North Yorkshire Polices Professional Standards Department (PSD) or the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC).

23. For more serious complaints, satisfying certain legal criteria, or matters that cannot be solved or where the complainant is unhappy with the informal outcome these matters are referred to North Yorkshire Polices Professional Standards Department (PSD) to carry out a formal assessment under Schedule 3 to the Police Reform Act 2002, the complainant also has a right to apply for a review of the outcome of the complaint.

24. Currently there are approximately 75 live complaints at formal Schedule 3 Stage with North Yorkshire Police. The oldest case is 26/10/2022, a small percentage of these cases will be paused and in “sub-judice” pending an ongoing investigation.

25. When requested under schedule 3, an Independent Adjudicator (IA) reviews the outcome of formal police complaints. These reviews are also part of the work overseen by the Police Fire & Crime Directorate and are part of the Police Fire Crime Directorate’s budget

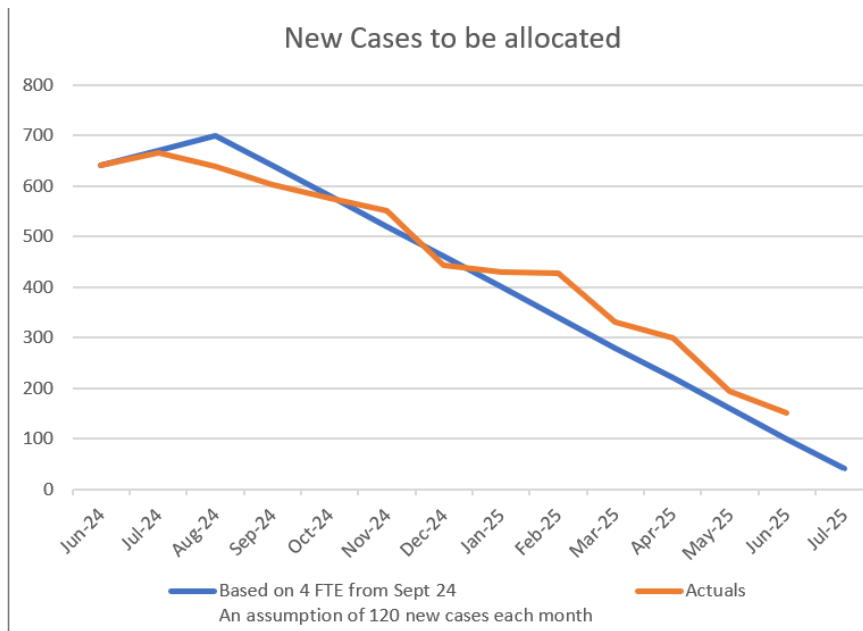
- Number of new review cases in the queue: 34 - age of oldest case: 7 August 2024
- Number of live cases with the Independent Adjudicator: 14
- YTD data for concluded reviews - 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2025

	Upheld	Part Upheld	R&P Handling	Withdrawn / Not Valid / Change of RRB	Total
Total	50	35	80	32	197

York & North Yorkshire Combined Authority Customer Service Team Performance

26. In July 2024 667 new cases required allocation with a backlog of approximately 11 months.

27. As of June 2025 151 cases require allocation, the oldest complaint requiring allocation is from March 2025. Below is a summary of the outstanding cases awaiting allocation



28. All new cases are triaged on a daily basis and any new case that requires urgent attention, for example where there is a threat of risk or harm to a member of the public, is progressed urgently or referred to North Yorkshire Polices Professional Standards Department no later than 2 working days from receipt.
29. York & North Yorkshire Combined Authority Customer Service Team resources and performance continue to be monitored at the internal Monthly Delivery and Assurance Board Meeting
30. Overall complaint and dissatisfaction performance of complaints and teams remains on the YNYCA and the North Yorkshire Police Corporate Risk Registers. These are monitored monthly at the Strategic Oversight Board meetings chaired by the Deputy Mayor for Policing, Fire and Crime.
31. The YNYCA are in regular contact with the IOPC about the progress being made to ensure we're aware of practice and performance in other areas and to evaluate whether there are other measures we could be taking, for example in March 2024 we changed the way cases are recorded on the Centurion Complaint database to ensure full transparency on IOPC published data.

Ongoing Activities to improve the performance and the customer experience

32. Additional investment in 2024 is producing a more resilient service. The initial team consisted of 1 Team Leader and 2 Advisors. Moving forward to meet demand the team the team has increased to 5 advisors (4 in post, 1 at vetting stage). The team will now be of a comparable size to Cleveland in terms of resource verses who are also a Model 3 area

for police complaints. This uplift will support the health and wellbeing of the team who have been working tremendously hard in difficult circumstances.

33. Additional in April 2025 the York & North Yorkshire Combined Authority team have started to cross train staff in similar roles to add resilience to the service, this is averaging out to approximately 37 hours per week, this support will also help the manage spikes in demand moving forwards.
34. Processes and workflows between York & North Yorkshire Combined Authority and North Yorkshire Police's Professional Standards Department are now regularly reviewed and monitored at fortnightly meetings.
35. York & North Yorkshire Combined Authority have introduced new governance checks which are reported on at the Monthly Delivery and Assurance Board Meeting and include:
 - a) Compliance control check on the triage process to provide the Deputy Mayor and Chief Officer Team with an assurance Schedule 3 cases or cases that have an allegation of risk of threat or harm are correctly identified in accordance with IOPC guidelines and timelines
 - b) Compliance Control check Accuracy of information held on the Centurion Database System – this is the system used to log complaints
36. North Yorkshire Police's Professional Standards Department have appointed an Inspector to work in Professional Standards Department with the sole responsibility of the management, resolution and oversight of complaints with the intention that all the complaints will be held centrally and resolved to a common standard.
37. Additional resilience is being added to the Complaint Review process by utilising the services of an additional third party to carry out reviews on behalf of the DMPFC. This is a system that 22 other force areas operate, and we anticipate this will reduce our costs and we anticipate this be in place during quarter 2 of this financial year. We would retain the right to use an Independent Reviewer for cases that require it.
38. An internal audit of the complaint function is currently being carried out during June 2025 specifically looking at the timeliness of complaints and will include randomly sampling complaint files worked on by York & North Yorkshire Combined Authority and North Yorkshire Police in order. The outcome will be shared with members once this is published.
39. York & North Yorkshire Combined Authority and North Yorkshire Police are working to improve performance data that identifies themes and trends at early onset, working collectively to improve organisational learning and to share best practice. These will be reported on monthly at the Strategic Oversight Board. It is anticipated this report will be available during Quarter 2 and will provide:

Complaint volumes and allocations

New Complaint Receipts	Monthly and Year to date data
Non-Schedule 3 allocated	Monthly and Year to date data
Schedule 3 allocated cases	Monthly and Year to date data

Performance

YNYCA Customer Service Team Performance

- Number of new cases assessed & pending
- Age of oldest case assessed & pending
- Number of live non-schedule 3 cases with Customer Service Advisors
- Age of oldest live assigned case

Professional Standards Performance

- Number of live cases within PSD
- Number of live cases allocated to local commands and Investigators
- Age of live oldest case

Themes and Trends by Allegation Category

- Delivery of duties and service
- Police powers, policies and procedures
- Handling of or damage to property/ premises
- Access and/or disclosure of information
- Use of police vehicles
- Discriminatory behaviour
- Abuse of position/ corruption
- Individual behaviours
- Sexual conduct
- Discreditable conduct

40. The Model 3 Complaint Model allows the Mayor and Deputy Mayor for Policing Fire and Crime to build trust and confidence, which is at a national low and national complaint have increased. Model 3 will support the Policing & Crime Plan, trust and public confidence as a fundamental part of this plan