

Complaints Procedure

We want people to be safe and feel safe in the Thames Valley and for the police to provide you with the best service possible. Everyone has a right to fair and honest treatment by the police. Sometimes, something goes wrong in the Force's day-to-day dealings with the public. When this happens, we want to ensure that the appropriate person or body responsible for putting it right hears about it and this document has been produced to make it easier for you to make a formal complaint.

We'd also like to hear if you believe any of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner/Thames Valley Police staff or officers have exceeded your expectations and gone further to help resolve your query, question or crime. However, if you do wish to make a complaint, the procedure for complaining will depend on the type of complaint you wish to make. A complaint can vary in its severity but it is defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction with the way someone has been treated or with the service they have received'.

1. Do you wish to make a complaint against the Thames Valley Police Force, including its officers and staff below the rank of Chief Constable?

- (i) While the Office of the PCC has a role in monitoring how the police respond to complaints, it does not become involved in complaint investigations against the Force. If you are dissatisfied with the service you have received from Thames Valley Police we would recommend that in the first instance you try and take up any issue with the officer concerned and/or their line manager. Often this is the most straightforward way of resolving a matter. However, if this is not possible or appropriate, the Force's Professional Standards Department is responsible for handling all complaints against officers and staff below the rank of Chief Constable as well as general complaints regarding the provision of the policing service in Thames Valley including policy and procedures.

- (ii) If you wish to make a complaint against Thames Valley Police please contact its Professional Standards Department by writing to:

Professional Standards Department
Thames Valley Police Headquarters
Oxford Road
Kidlington
OX5 2NX

Or by telephone 101/01865 841148

Or by email: professionalstandards@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

Or by using the following link,

<https://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/fo/feedback/tc/thanks-and-complaints>

Alternatively you can walk into your local police station and explain to the station duty officer what it is you wish to complain about.

2. Do you wish to make a complaint against the Chief Constable?

The Police and Crime Commissioner (the PCC) has a statutory duty to consider complaints against the Chief Constable. If you wish to make a complaint against the Chief Constable you will need to address your complaint to the Chief Executive at the OPCC using the following details:-

The Chief Executive
Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
The Farmhouse
Thames Valley Police Headquarters
Oxford Road
Kidlington
OX5 2NX

Or email: pcc@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

Please note that the OPCC or the Professional Standards Department cannot investigate complaints made anonymously.

3. Do you wish to make a Complaint against the OPCC?

- (i) Whenever you come into contact with the OPCC you have the right to expect a professional service that meets your needs. Should the level of service fall below expectations you have the right to complain about:
- The PCC's Office itself, our policies or practice;
 - The PCC or Deputy PCC;
 - A Member of Staff of the OPCC, including contractors;
 - A volunteer working on behalf of the OPCC.
- (ii) If you wish to make a complaint relating to anything listed in point 3 (i) you must use the address details in point 2 above. In relation to complaints made against the PCC and Deputy PCC, the Chief Executive will record your complaint and forward it to the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel, (unless exceptional circumstances apply).¹ If you wish to find out more about the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel you can do so by using the following link
www.thamesvalleypcp.org.uk

If you wish to make a complaint against the Chief Executive you may write directly to the PCC using the address provided at point 2 above.

¹ regulation 9(1) of the Elected Local Policing Body (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2012

4. Independent Office for Police Conduct

You also have the right to make a complaint against Thames Valley Police direct to the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC). Information on the work of the IOPC and the complaints process can be found on the IOPC website (www.policeconduct.gov.uk).

5. Other ways to make a complaint

You should complain if you have been treated badly by the police or if you have witnessed the police treating someone in an unacceptable manner. There are many ways to make your complaint without going directly to the Force or PCC, and you can choose the one that suits you best:

- A solicitor
- Your local MP
- Your local councillor
- A “Gateway” organisation (such as the Citizen’s Advice Bureau)

You can also ask a friend or relative to make the complaint on your behalf. For these complaints to be considered, you will need to provide written permission for the person who will be making the complaint.

What happens next?

Whatever type of complaint you make, the police will need to know as much as possible about the circumstances so that they can deal with it as quickly and efficiently as possible. They may ask you to fill in a form or make a written account of the issues involved, and someone will be on hand to provide any help you may need to do this. An official record will be made and you will be told how the complaint is going to be dealt with, what action may be taken as a result and how the decision will be made.

Most complaints will be dealt with by Thames Valley Police or the OPCC but the more serious complaints are likely to involve the IOPC. Complaints against the PCC and Deputy PCC are normally dealt with by the Police and Crime Panel. The Thames Valley Police/the OPCC will agree with you how often – and by which method – you would like to be kept updated of progress in line with statutory deadlines and obligations

The OPCC monitors closely how complaints are handled by the Force and receives monthly updates on the Force’s performance. Random dip-checks of PSD files will also be carried out by the Complaints, Integrity and Ethics Panel to ensure that procedures are followed properly.

The Force and the OPCC welcome your comments and use the information to improve the service offered to all our communities.

Dated: September 2018

Review Date: September 2019