

## **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, however sometimes, something goes wrong in the Force's day-to-day dealings with the public. When this happens, we want to ensure that members of the public are aware who the appropriate body to deal with their complaint is and this document has been produced to make it easier for individuals to make a formal complaint.

We'd also like to hear if you believe any of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC)/Thames Valley Police (TVP) 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 'any expression of dissatisfaction with a police force that is expressed by, or on behalf of, a member of the public.'

**Please note that the OPCC or the Professional Standards Department (PSD) cannot investigate complaints made anonymously.**

**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 OPCC 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 TVP 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 PSD 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 TVP please contact its PSD by writing to:

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

Or by telephone 101/01865 841148

Or by email: [professional\\_standards@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk](mailto:professional_standards@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](mailto:pcc@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk)

## **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).<sup>1</sup> 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](http://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.

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

#### **4. Complaint Reviews**

PCCs now have responsibility for complaint reviews (formerly known as appeals) where the relevant appeal body was previously the Force. The PCC will assess whether the complaint was handled in a reasonable and proportionate manner.

**If you are unhappy with your TVP complaint outcome, and you have been advised in your outcome letter that the PCC is the relevant review body, you may submit your review via the following channels:**

- Using the following form: ([Complaint Review Form](#))
- Via email to [OPCCComplaintReviews@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk](mailto:OPCCComplaintReviews@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk)
- Via post to:

The Head of Governance and Compliance  
The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner  
Thames Valley Police  
Oxford Road  
Kidlington  
OX5 2NX

When submitting your review, please provide us with the following information:

- Your name (or the name of the complainant if you are appealing on their behalf)
- Address and/or email address
- Date your original complaint was made
- Name of the Force your complaint was made to
- Details of the complaint
- Date of outcome letter from the Force
- Your appeal points

Please note, that if it is determined that the IOPC is the correct appeal body, your review will be forwarded on to them.

#### **5. Independent Office for Police Conduct**

You also have the right to make a complaint against TVP directly 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](http://www.policeconduct.gov.uk)). Please note however that the IOPC may pass your complaint back to the Force.

#### **6. Other ways to make a complaint**

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 provide a written account of the issues involved. An official record will be made and you will be told how the complaint is going to be dealt with and what action may be taken as a result.

Most complaints will be dealt with by TVP and reviewed by 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 (PCP).

Depending on who the complaint is made against will determine the timescale on which you will receive a response. If your complaint is against the Chief Constable, the complainant must receive a final response within fifteen working days. If your complaint is against the PCC, these are dealt with by the PCP (as referenced above) at a sub-committee meeting, which are held bi-monthly.

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 Professional Ethics and Standards Panel (PESP) 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: January 2020

Review Date: January 2021