



Professional Standards Department

Report into complaints and conduct against
officers and staff of sexual misconduct from
01/02/2020 to 30/09/2023

Date report produced: October 2023

Author: Dee Hackling, PSD Analysts

Issued to : Detective Chief Superintendent Ailsa Kent

C.C:

Date: 10/10/2023

Information

The Professional Standards Department of Thames Valley Police has seen an increase in the number of Freedom of Information requests for sexual misconduct in relation to complaints made by both members of the public and other police officers and staff against serving police officers.

This report is designed to be transparent with the reporting and findings of allegations of sexual misconduct to improve confidence in reporting these matters.

The data set in this report is from 01/02/2020 to 30/09/2023. February 2020 is the selected start date as that is when the current Complaint and Conduct Regulations came in to effect. The report includes all complaints and conduct matters raised by both members of the public and as a result of internal concerns.

The term “sexual misconduct” referred to is the term applied by the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) Data Capture Guidance as any allegation that is categorised as:

Category / Subcategory	Definition
G2	Abuse of position for sexual purpose
G3	Abuse of position for the purpose of pursuing an inappropriate emotional relationship
J1	Sexual assault
J2	Sexual harassment
J3	Other sexual conduct

This ensures consistency throughout the police services where sexual misconduct is discussed.

The three outcomes to the Appropriate Authority of a formal complaint not subject to special procedures (please see explanation below) are:

- Service acceptable
- Service not acceptable
- Cannot determine if service is acceptable or not

When a complaint is subject to Special Procedures, there are two additional outcomes:

- Case to answer
- No case to answer

This report will discuss the number of cases, number of allegations and the number of officers. Whilst this is in accordance with the IOPC statutory guidance on police complaints it may appear confusing as the numbers may appear distorted, but this is

not the case. It is quite common that within one complaint, there are several different aspects to it and these aspects may then form several allegations against individuals or the organisation. Then each individual allegation may have more than one officer involved (e.g., one complaint has five allegations, and each allegation involves two different officers).

There are also two strands to the reporting:

- First strand is the number of public complaints received
- Second strand is the number of conduct investigations undertaken, these may be generated by a member of the police service (who cannot make a public complaint) or from another avenue other than a public complaint

All sexual misconduct complaints will fall inside Schedule 3 of the Police Reform Act 2002. This means that the complainant has a right to review by the relevant reviewing body at the end of the investigation.

Glossary

Public complaint - A public complaint is defined as “An expression of dissatisfaction by a member of the public with the service they have received from a police force”.

It may be about the conduct of a person serving with that force. All complaints are assessed to see whether the matter requires Special Procedures (SP).

This means whether the conduct of the officer could amount to a breach of the Standards of Professional Behaviour, so serious as to warrant formal disciplinary action, where if the case was proven, at least a written warning would be justified.

The vast majority of complaints are not subject to Special Procedures and relate to the quality of service provided. These complaints are still investigated, but the outcome relates to whether the service provided, was acceptable or not acceptable.

Please also note that complaints will still be recorded, even in circumstances where initial enquiries have identified that there is compelling evidence to show that officers have not acted in the manner complained of.

Therefore complaint numbers are difficult to interpret, without further information as to the nature of the complaint and the manner in which it was dealt with.

Conduct Case - A conduct issue is an instance where it has been identified that an officer has breached the Standards of Professional Behaviour and that breach has been assessed as being so serious as to justify formal conduct proceedings, which if the case were proven, could result in a formal sanction ranging from written warning, to dismissal.

This could be conduct towards a colleague and does not require a formal complaint from a member of the public. Many of these cases will have been identified through management intervention or internal reporting.

Grounds for Discontinuance:

The complainant refuses to co-operate to the extent that it is not reasonably practicable to continue the investigation.

Where the appropriate authority has determined the complaint is suitable for local resolution.

The complaint or matter is vexatious, oppressive or otherwise an abuse of procedures for dealing with complaints, conduct matters or DSI matters.

The complaint or conduct matter is repetitive.

It is not reasonably practicable to proceed with the investigation.

Executive Summary

Since February 2020, the number of police officers has risen from 4527 full time equivalent officers to 4966 FTE Police Officers as of the 31 January 2023. This is a rise of 10%

In the same period, the number of police staff has risen from 3348 Full time equivalent staff to 3475 FTE staff. This is a rise of 4%.

Between February 2020 and September 2023, Thames Valley Police have had a total of 55 public complaints of sexual misconduct with eight public complaint cases being made in 2023.

The number of sexual misconduct conduct cases since February 2020 is 94 with 28 of these investigations commencing in 2023

The number of police officers / staff that were / are subject of the allegations of sexual misconduct since February 2020 is 166, including 40 police officers/staff having allegations of sexual misconduct made against them in 2023.

The number of allegations either finalised or still under investigation in this period is 192 with 51 allegations of these either finalised or under investigation in 2023.

38 Allegations (20%) are still being investigated

90 allegations (47%) were finalised as "case to answer"

18 Allegations (9.3%) were finalised as "service acceptable"

22 Allegations (11.4%) were finalised as "no case to answer"

1 Allegation (0.5%) were finalised as "service unacceptable"

23 Allegation (11.8%) were finalised under "no further action"¹

The number of officers, former officers, and staff who have been disciplined in this period was 37, with 22 being serving officers, six being serving police staff and nine

¹ Categories include withdrawn, Discontinuance, No further action, Not determined if service is acceptable.

former officers. There have been disciplinary misconduct findings ranging from written warnings to dismissals in relation to sexual misconduct.

Whilst the above summary shows as a percentage of police officers and staff, complaints and conduct investigations of sexual misconduct are small, they have increased significantly in previous years, with many of these allegations still being investigated. This shows that confidence is starting to increase in the reporting of these allegations. It also shows that Thames Valley Police will take decisive action when sexual misconduct allegations are made.

Scope

Between 1 February 2020 and the 30 September 2023, the report is set out to answer the following questions:

- The number of public complaints of sexual misconduct by officers/staff
- The number of Conduct Investigations into sexual misconduct
- The number of officers/staff that have been/are being investigated for sexual misconduct
- The allegation breakdown
- The number of officers and staff suspended or restricted
- The number of male and female subjects
- A breakdown in rank for allegations and outcomes
- The outcomes breakdown for allegations
- The number of officers disciplined and the outcome
- The number of police staff disciplined and the outcome

Method

The number of conduct investigations of sexual misconduct

Number of public complaints subject to Special Procedures for sexual misconduct

Number of public complaints **NOT** subject to Special Procedures

	2020	2021	2022	2023
The number of Conduct investigations of Sexual Misconduct	12	26	28	28
Number of Public Complaints subject to Special Procedures for Sexual Misconduct	7	0	5	1
Number of Public Complaints NOT subject to Special Procedures	5	12	18	7

Category of sexual misconduct allegations made in line with the IOPC Data Capture Guidance.

Complaints	2020		2021		2022		2023	
	SP	Not SP	SP	Not SP	SP	Not SP	SP	Not SP
Other Sexual Conduct	6	0	0	2	0	1	1	1
Abuse of position	1	3	0	3	2	0	0	1
Sexual Assault	0	1	0	8	3	15	0	5
Sexual Harassment	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0

NB SP equals Special Procedure, Not SP equals not subject to Special Procedures

Conduct	2020	2021	2022	2023
Other Sexual Conduct	1	4	7	7
Abuse of position	1	4	3	2
Sexual Assault	7	10	14	8
Sexual Harassment	3	5	2	9
Rape	0	3	2	2

Rank of officers and staff where an allegation of sexual misconduct has been recorded

Year - Complaints	Constable	Sergeant	Inspector	Police Staff	PCSO	Special	Unidentified
2020	10	0	0	1	0	0	0
2021	9	0	1	1	0	0	2
2022	27	0	0	3	0	1	3
2023	4	1	1	0	0	0	2

Year - Conduct	Constable	Sergeant	Inspector	Superintendent	Police Staff	PCSO	Special
2020	7	1	1	0	3	0	1
2021	22	1	1	0	2	0	1
2022	17	4	0	0	5	1	1
2023	24	3	0	1	2	0	2

Outcomes of sexual misconduct allegations in line with the IOPC Data Capture Guidance.

Complaints	2020		2021		2022		2023	
	SP	Not SP	SP	Not SP	SP	Not SP	SP	Not SP
Case to Answer	6	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
No Case to Answer	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	0
Service Acceptable	0	3	0	6	1	8	0	1
No Further Action	0	0	0	4	0	2	0	1

De Recorded/ discontinued	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Not Determined	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Service Unacceptable	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Withdrawn	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0

Conduct	2020	2021	2022	2023
Case to Answer	10	18	17	9
No Case to Answer	0	6	6	3
Discontinued	1	0	0	0

Sanctions applied to officers and staff in relation to sexual misconduct, these figures are calculated on the instigated date and not on the finalised date.

Complaints/ Conduct	2020	2021	2022	2023
Dismissal	12	7	4	1
Final Written Warning	1	0	1	0
Written Warning	2	4	2	3
Reflective Practice	1	7	7	3

Police officers and staff that have received a ‘case to answer’ determination broken down by rank.

Year - Complaints	Constable	Sergeant	Inspector	Police Staff	PCSO	Special	Unknown
2020	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
2021	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2022	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
2023	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Year - Conduct	Constable	Sergeant	Inspector	Police Staff	PCSO	Special
2020	5	1	1	3	0	0
2021	16	1	1	0	0	1
2022	11	1	0	3	0	1
2023	12	1	0	1	0	0

Officers and staff suspended or restricted due to an allegation of sexual misconduct

Total	
Suspended	37
Restricted	42
None	87

An officer/ staff can be suspended and then reduced to restricted within one case, this can occur conversely

Gender of the officer or staff where sexual misconduct has been alleged.

Total	
Male	144
Female	16
Unknown	6