

For Information	
Public/Non Public*	Public
Report to:	Audit and Scrutiny Panel
Date of Meeting:	15 December 2014
Report of:	PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS REPORTING PROCEDURE ('WHISTLE BLOWING')
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Agenda Item:	04

*If Non Public, please state under which category number from the guidance in the space provided.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS REPORTING PROCEDURE ('WHISTLE BLOWING')

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To inform the PCC regarding the above procedure and outline how the organisation in general and the Professional Standards Directorate manages and deals with those members of the organisation who make reports concerning breaches of Professional Standards. In particular how they can be provided with support and confidentiality, when appropriate and necessary.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Panel receive assurance from the processes in place relating to whistle blowing as detailed within the report.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 To provide the PCC with relevant information and oversight in respect of how Nottinghamshire Police ensures that appropriate systems are in place to both encourage and support officers and staff to report concerns in respect of unethical behaviour or 'wrong doing'.

4. Summary of Key Points (this should include background information and options appraisal if applicable)

- 4.1 There can be no more important qualities for members of the police service than that they are honest and act with integrity. Without these key attributes public trust and confidence will be eroded. The reputation of any organisation must always be considered as one of its most cherished assets.
- 4.2 The Procedure for Professional Standards Reporting aims to create a climate where staff feel a genuine commitment to openness and transparency when reporting breaches of Professional Standards, their motivation arising from a

desire to maintain the integrity of the police service and in the knowledge that such action will be universally acknowledged as ‘doing the right thing’.

- 4.3 This force professional standards reporting procedure defines how Nottinghamshire Police will protect and support its staff by providing a broad range of options for reporting breaches of Professional Standards and providing consistent and meaningful support to colleagues who report concerns.
- 4.4 The recent HMIC Police Integrity and Corruption draft report highlighted that staff are generally confident to challenge and report wrongdoing. There is evidence that staff report unprofessional behaviour of others, either to a supervisor or to the PSD. There is good evidence to show that unethical and unprofessional behaviour is being appropriately challenged within the force. Numerous examples were provided to HMIC to demonstrate this was happening. They further identified that there is a culture of challenge within the force and members of staff are aware of their responsibility to challenge and report misconduct or unprofessional behaviour.
- 4.5 The PSD newsletter ‘Integrity Matters’ includes reminders to staff about their responsibilities and obligations in relation to integrity and their reporting of wrong doing, alongside advice and guidance on conduct.
- 4.6 Staff have a clear responsibility to report suspected breaches of Professional Standards by others in Nottinghamshire Police and should feel that they can report such breaches openly and with the support of their colleagues and managers in line with our PROUD Values and Code of Ethics
- 4.7 The procedure identifies guiding principles and some examples of what activity or conduct should be reported, before outlining the different mechanisms for making such reports which can be done anonymously, confidentially or in an open report.
- 4.8 Professional Standards Directorate have a key part to play in this procedure once information comes into the Directorate, including agreeing a ‘Statement of Expectations’ with the member of staff and including offering support from a group of trained ‘Supporters’.
- 4.9 The ‘Supporters’ have been established as part of this procedure to offer support on a one to one basis. The volunteer police officers and police staff have been given training and an input from PSD as to the procedure and they do not work within PSD, but can be utilised where necessary as a conduit for the staff member in terms of the progression and updates of any enquiry. This is in addition to any welfare support.
- 4.10 While acknowledging a culture of reporting, the HMIC Inspection also found that the Supporters Scheme is not widely known and recommended that

further steps are taken to publicise the Scheme. This we will do through the PSD newsletter and the focus groups.

- 4.11 For any officers and staff who are concerned about coming forward to report any suspicion of ‘wrong doing’ or unethical behaviour, the force has provided an anonymous and confidential e-reporting system called ‘Integrity Messenger’. This system allows two-way communication with the force counter-corruption unit while preserving the anonymity of the referee for as long as they feel the need. It also allows rapport and confidence to be built which may lead to the referee providing personal details in due course.
- 4.12 In the relevant period (April 1st to September 30th 2014) 40 referrals were made to the Counter Corruption Unit comprising of Integrity Messenger, Confidential Reporting Line & anonymous internal contact. This compares to 38 referrals in the previous six months.

5. Financial Implications and Budget Provision

- 5.1 No specific financial implications are noted

6. Human Resources Implications

- 6.1 No specific HR implications are noted

7. Equality Implications

- 7.1 This document has been drafted to comply with the general and specific duties in the Equality Act 2010; Data Protection Act; Freedom of Information Act; ECHR; Employment Act 2002; Employment Relations Act 1999 and other legislation relevant to policing.
- 7.2 This procedure is robust and the evidence shows there is no potential for discrimination and that all opportunities to promote equality have been taken.

8. Risk Management

- 8.1 It is essential the public have confidence in the service Nottinghamshire Police provide.
- 8.2 The overwhelming majority of individual members of police personnel including Police Officers, Police Staff and members of the Special Constabulary within the Nottinghamshire Police are dedicated, hard working, compassionate, and deliver policing services with a high degree of integrity. Regrettably, there are a small number of police personnel that are guilty of and vulnerable to, unethical behaviour, dishonesty and corruption. The harm they do far outweighs the numbers they represent

- 8.3 We all have a part to play in enhancing the integrity and reputation of the Force. This process starts with recognition that we are all individually accountable for our actions and responsible for our behaviour

9. Policy Implications and links to the Police and Crime Plan Priorities

- 9.1 By having a Professional Standards Reporting Procedure we are able to set out ways that staff can make reports concerning breaches of Professional Standards and ensure we support the organisations 'Vision', 'Values' (PROUD) and 'Plan' 'To cut crime and keep you safe', 'To spend your money wisely' and 'Earn your trust and confidence', ensure all relevant parts of the organisation are given help to improve our service and ultimately achieve the force priorities.

10. Changes in Legislation or other Legal Considerations

- 10.1 None

11. Details of outcome of consultation

- 11.1 None

12. Appendices

- 12.1 None