



**Kent
Police**

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Briefing Paper

Joint Audit Committee

Complaints Performance Summary for FY 25/26

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Introduction

This briefing paper presents information about complaints defined under the Police Reform Act 2002 (PRA 2002), as amended by the Police and Crime Act 2017. The legislation came into effect on 1 February 2020. It sets out Kent Police's performance against a number of measures and compares results to the same period last year (SPLY) and our most similar force (MSF) group¹. Data is taken from the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) quarterly complaints bulletins.

The definition of a police complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by a member of the public about the service they have received from a police force. Some dissatisfaction, which does not meet the criteria for recording as a complaint under Schedule 3 of the PRA 2002, may be resolved quickly outside of Schedule 3, however all expressions of dissatisfaction must still be recorded.

During the financial year 2023/24 Kent Police made a number of changes to the way in which complaints were handled and recorded on the system. Complaints that were not recorded under Schedule 3 were previously recorded separately to Schedule 3 complaints and were therefore not routinely captured within IOPC data returns. The changes that have been made have brought Kent Police in line with national best practice and IOPC guidance on capturing data about police complaints. These changes allow for meaningful comparisons to be drawn from national complaints data for 24/25 and also continuing into 25/26. Further changes to the complaints handling process introduced in April 2024 focussed on early engagement with the complainant and investing in resolving complaints at an early stage wherever possible. The success of this approach is reflected in the significantly improved timeliness statistics within this report.

Recording Complaints

This section presents information relating to the volume of recorded complainants and the allegations within these complaints. It also presents information that shows what people complain about. Allegation categories capture the root of the dissatisfaction expressed in a complaint. A complaint case will contain one or more allegation and one category is selected for each allegation logged.

Complaint cases logged

	Kent	SPLY ²	MSF ³ average	National
Complaint cases logged	3,457	3,436	2,370	108,988
Complaint cases logged per 1,000 employees	496	491	491	432

In 2025/26 police forces and local policing bodies logged 108,988 complaint cases nationally, an increase of 14.7% from 2024/25.

¹ Kent Police Most Similar Force (MSF) Group is Avon and Somerset, Derbyshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Kent, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire and Staffordshire.

² Same Period Last year

³ Most Similar Force

Kent Police recorded 3,457 complaints, representing a reduction of 23 complaints (0.66%) compared to 2024/25. This reflects a position of stability, following the improvements to recording and reporting standards implemented in April 2024, as referenced in previous reporting.

Current data indicates that Kent Police remain broadly aligned with the MSF average for complaints per 1,000 employees. The trend observed over the course of the financial year demonstrates consistency, suggesting that overall complaint volumes for 2025/26 are likely to remain stable across the reporting period.

Allegations logged

	Kent	SPLY	MSF average	National
Allegations logged	7,305	6,374	4,729	188,015
Allegations logged per 1,000 employees	1,047	911	968	746

In 2025/26 Kent Police logged 7,305 allegations, an increase of 13.2% from 2024/25.

Kent Police log an average of 1,047 allegations per 1,000 employees per annum compared with a national average of 746 per 1,000 employees and a MSF average of 968 per 1,000 employees.

The three most logged allegation categories in 2024/25 were:

- delivery of duties and service (51%)
- police powers, policies and procedures (27%)
- individual behaviours (13%)

These three categories accounted for 91% of all allegations logged.

Discriminatory behaviour made up 2% (179 allegations) of all allegations logged, compared to 3% (201 allegations) in 2024/25. The most common allegations within this category were race (47% = 84 allegations), sex (25% = 44 allegations) and disability (16% = 29 allegations).

Initial Timeliness

This section presents information relating to Kent Police contact with complainants. It shows how long it takes for the complainant to be contacted and how long it takes for the complaint to be recorded on the system.

Average number of working days to contact a complainant and log complaints

Year to Date	Complaints Logged	Per 1,000 Employees	Allegations Logged	Per 1,000 Employees	Average Working Days to Contact Complainants	Average Working Days to Log Complaints
Force	3,457	496	7,305	1,047	6	8
SPLY	3,436	491	6,374	911	6	5
MSF Average	2,370	491	4,729	968	6	5
National	108,988	432	188,015	746	8	7

When handling complaints, the body responsible must contact the complainant and seek their views about how the complaint should be handled. This should happen as soon as possible after the complaint is made.

In SPLY, Kent Police took an average of 6 working days from the date the complaint was made to contact the complainant. This has remained steady in the subsequent years reporting period of 2025/2026 of also 6 days. This is consistent with MSF and below the national average.

In the previous reporting year, Kent Police recorded an average of five days to log a complaint. This has increased to eight days in the current reporting period. Despite this rise, it represents a sustained improvement of 15 days when compared to the 2023/24 reporting period. The current position is slightly above both the MSF average of five days and the national average of seven days.

Overall Timeliness

This section shows the time it takes Kent Police to finalise complaint cases from the complainant's perspective. It gives a breakdown of the time taken to finalise complaint cases handled informally as well as a breakdown of the time taken to finalise complaint cases handled formally under Schedule 3. Timeliness is calculated from the date the complaint was made and a complaint case is finalised when all actions relating to that case are complete.

Average number of working days to finalise complaint cases dealt with outside of Schedule 3

Outside of Schedule 3	Finalised	Average days to finalise
Force	1,832	40
SPLY	1,916	24
MSF Average	1,356	19
National	70,060	23

In SPLY 2025/2026, 1,832 complaint cases were finalised outside of Schedule 3. These cases took an average of 40 working days to finalise compared with a Most Similar Force average of 19 days and a national average of 23 days.

Overall timeliness for complaints dealt with under Schedule 3 includes:

- the time during which an application to review can be made.
- the time it takes to deal with a review.
- the time it takes for actions resulting from a recommendation or direction, made either following an investigation or consideration of a review, to be completed.
- the time for the actions arising from a reflective practice review process (RPRP) meeting to be communicated to the complainant or their representative.
- the time it takes for misconduct and/or criminal proceedings to conclude.
- the time for initial outcomes of unsatisfactory performance procedures to be decided.

SPLY 2025/2026, 1,380 Schedule 3 investigations (Otherwise by Investigation) took an average of 106 days to finalise compared to 91 days in 2024/2025, whilst this is a noticeable increase, timeliness is better than Most Similar Force and national averages.

Method of Investigation

This section presents a breakdown of how complaint allegations were handled

Handling Method - Allegations	Force No.	Force %	MSF Average No.	MSF Average %	National No.	National %
Under Schedule 3 (not subject to special procedures)	556	90%	421	92%	15,207	91%
Under Schedule 3 (subject to special procedures)	65	10%	38	8%	1,568	9%

Under Schedule 3 – not investigated	4,417	64%	2,334	53%	84,550	46%
Outside of Schedule 3	1,912	28%	1,637	37%	82,415	45%

Kent Police statistics for 2024/25 demonstrate broad alignment with national and MSF approaches to complaint handling. There remains an opportunity to further review the use of outside Schedule 3 handling, ensuring that appropriate matters are managed through alternative resolution methods where suitable.

Outcomes

This section presents information about what happened as a result of an allegation. Actions are captured at allegation level and multiple actions can be selected in relation to a single allegation. The figures shown in this section are based on allegations from finalised complaint cases. As more than one action can be selected for a single allegation, the sum of all percentages will not equal 100%. The actions available once an allegation is finalised depend on how the complaint case has been handled.

Allegation actions from complaint cases handled outside of Schedule 3

Measure	Force		SPLY		MSF Average		National	
Actions on Allegations outside of Schedule 3	Allegations finalised	Percent	Allegations finalised	Percent	Allegations finalised	Percent	Allegations finalised	Percent
Explanation	886	47%	881	44%	1,179	72%	53,643	65%
Learning from reflection	510	27%	507	25%	103	6%	2,278	3%
Apology	140	7%	295	15%	86	5%	6,731	8%
No further action	136	7%	130	6%	140	9%	10,053	12%
Organisational learning	89	5%	63	3%	21	1%	337	0%
Debrief	61	3%	77	4%	15	1%	1,041	1%
Other action	56	3%	36	2%	83	5%	7,757	9%
Policy review	15	1%	18	1%	3	0%	56	0%
Goodwill gesture	10	1%	6	0%	2	0%	178	0%
Total	1,903	100%	2,013	100%	1,632	100%	82,074	100%

Allegation actions from complaint cases handled inside Schedule 3

Measure	Force		SPLY		MSF Average		National	
Actions on Schedule 3 Allegations	Allegations finalised	Percent	Allegations finalised	Percent	Allegations finalised	Percent	Allegations finalised	Percent
Explanation	3,606	72%	2,509	63%	2,036	73%	66,183	65%
No further action	559	11%	564	14%	399	14%	17,733	17%
Apology	422	8%	536	13%	100	4%	4,131	4%
Learning from reflection	199	4%	194	5%	158	6%	5,525	5%
Others	169	3%	109	3%	57	2%	1,155	1%
Organisational learning	63	1%	37	1%	29	1%	943	1%
Referral to RPRP	10	0%	25	1%	15	1%	1,328	1%
Misconduct proceedings	3	0%	6	0%	4	0%	157	0%
Debrief			6	0%	2	0%	4,219	4%
Total	5,031	100%	3,986	100%	2,800	100%	101,374	100%

These outcomes demonstrate a clear focus on resolving issues, promoting learning, and supporting improvement by encouraging those involved to reflect on their actions.

While outcome proportions remain broadly aligned with both the Most Similar Force group and national averages, Kent Police outcomes indicate a greater readiness to offer apologies where service has fallen short.

Reviews

The complainant has a right to apply for a review where a complaint has been recorded under Schedule 3 of the PRA 2002. They can apply for a review if they are unhappy with the way their complaint was handled or with the outcome.

The application for review will be considered by either the local policing body or the IOPC. The relevant review body depends on the circumstances of the complaint. The relevant review body will look at whether the handling and the outcome of the complaint were reasonable and proportionate.

There is no right of review against a complaint handled informally outside of Schedule 3. The complainant can request the complaint be recorded and handled formally if they are not satisfied with the outcome given to them. This will bring it inside the scope of Schedule 3 and, when the complaint is finalised, the complainant will get a right of review to the relevant review body.

Reviews of Schedule 3, Otherwise by Investigation cases

IOPC Reviews

IOPC Review	Investigation	Upheld	Non-Investigation	Upheld
Force	51	15	23	7
SPLY	48	14	13	5
MSF Average	30	8	40	11
National	1,152	327	2,121	555

LPB Reviews

Review Type	Complete with Outcome	Upheld
Investigation		
Force	2	0
SPLY	1	0
MSF Average	4	1
National	282	80
Non-Investigation		
Force	237	47
SPLY	224	33
MSF Average	131	22
National	4413	864

In 2025/2026, the LPB received 237 applications to review complaint cases dealt with by Kent Police by way of non-investigation. Of those, 190 cases (80%) were found to be reasonable and proportionate.

During the same period, the IOPC completed 74 applications for review of both investigation (51) and non-investigation (23) complaint cases. Of those, 22 were found to be upheld which is broadly consistent with most similar force.