

<b>For Information</b>	
<b>Public/Non Public*</b>	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report to:</b>	<b>Audit and Scrutiny Panel</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>30<sup>th</sup> May 2018</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Chief Constable</b>
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<b>Agenda Item:</b>	<b>16</b>

## **PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS CONFIDENTIAL REPORTING PROCEDURE**

### **1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To inform the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) regarding the above procedure and outline how the organisation in general and the Professional Standards Directorate (PSD) 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 confidential reporting 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 (a) breaches in standards of professional behaviour and (b) refer any matter that may amount to an allegation of criminal conduct.

### **4. Summary of Key Points**

- 4.1 Police officers, staff and volunteers, must be honest and act with integrity at all times. This is a principal and absolute standard of professional behaviour, from which there can never be any departure. Without personnel possessing such attributes, public trust and confidence would be eroded, the Police would lack legitimacy and the service provided would become ineffective.
- 4.2 The reporting procedure for referring potential breaches in standards of professional behaviour, aims to create a climate where staff feel a genuine commitment to openness and transparency when reporting breaches of Professional Standards. Police personnel should be motivated with a desire to maintain the integrity of the Police service and feel assured that reporting misconduct and criminal transgression will be universally acknowledged as 'doing the right thing.'

- 4.3 The Force's 'Professional Standards Reporting Procedure' (PD462) defines how Nottinghamshire Police will protect and support its officers, staff and volunteers, by both (a) providing a broad range of options for reporting breaches and (b) providing consistent and meaningful support to colleagues who report concerns.
- 4.4 The Code of Ethics as set by the College of Policing, places a positive obligation on Police personnel to report suspected breaches in the standards of professional behaviour by their colleagues. Officers, staff and volunteers must be able to report such breaches openly, with the support of their peers and line managers and have the utmost confidence that in doing so, they will never be subject of victimisation, discrimination or disadvantage.
- 4.5 The reporting procedure identifies guiding principles and some examples of what activity or conduct should be reported, before outlining the different mechanisms and gateways for making such reports, which can be done anonymously, confidentially or in an open report.
- 4.6 The PSD have a key part to play in this procedure once a referral is made to the Directorate. Where open reports have been made, appropriate support will be given to the informant from the outset and proactive central and / or local management support and action will continue throughout the lifetime of the investigation and where necessary beyond that.
- 4.7 Confidentiality when requested will be given the highest priority. Nevertheless, relevant information will be subject of statutory rules governing disclosure. For misconduct cases that fall outside the scope of a criminal investigation, confidential information will be handled in a similar way to criminal intelligence. Where there can be no adverse effect on the person accused and a fair hearing can be guaranteed, immunity as to the disclosure of confidential information will always be sought.
- 4.8 For any officers, staff or volunteers who are concerned in coming forward to report any suspicion of corruption or misconduct, the Force provides an anonymous and confidential digital reporting platform called 'Integrity Messenger.' This system allows two-way communication with the PSD Counter Corruption Unit (CCU), whilst still preserving the anonymity of the person reporting for as long as they feel the need. Two way digital dialogue allows for rapport and confidence building, which in turn can lead to the person reporting providing their personal details. This affords any linked investigation with an opportunity to pursue further lines of enquiry.
- 4.9 A confidential telephone reporting system, maintained by the CCU, is also available to all Officers and Staff. Telephone calls are taken in person between the hours of 8am and 4pm and outside of these times, there is a voicemail facility. This facility operates on both an external and internal telephone number.

In the relevant period (1<sup>st</sup> August 2017- 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018) 34 referrals were made via Integrity Messenger.

Those falling within the counter corruption categories were:

- Disclosure of information x 1
- Sexual Misconduct x 2
- Controlled drug Use x 1
- Commission of a crime x 1
- Theft and Fraud x 1

Of those falling outside the NCA corruption categories, the majority related to performance issues (9) with equal reporting numbers for Conduct issues (6) and Bullying/grievance (6).

Looking at the outcomes from referrals made, one has initiated an investigation resulting in formal misconduct proceedings being commenced and two concern matters/staff members that are already under investigation.

No anonymous written referrals were made.

- 4.10 It is submitted that the reduction in referrals from 56 in the last reporting period should not be considered a concern. No information exists within the Force to suggest that there has been a reduction in the confidence of the confidential reporting gateways provided to police officers, police staff and volunteers. The organisation appear comfortable reporting issues openly in person to PSD. A recent survey commissioned by the OPCC revealed this to be the case.

## **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, staff and volunteers within 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 Force vision and values.

## **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