



Governance and Compliance Quarterly Report

Quarter

January 2026 – March 2026

Office of the Police and Crime
Commissioner

This report is to inform the reader of the governance obligations of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC). The OPCC will publish this information on a quarterly basis, to ensure that the public can review the functions of the OPCC.

The areas of focus for this report are:

- Professional Standards Department (PSD) Dip Sampling
- Customer Services/Lower Dissatisfaction Dip Sampling
- Chief Constable Complaints
- Reviews
- Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs)
- Legally Qualified Chairs (LQCs)
- Freedom of Information / Subject Access Requests
- Trends/Patterns received by the OPCC.

Dip Sampling – Schedule 3 complaints – Professional Standards Department

The purpose of the OPCC Dip Sampling Schedule 3 complaints is that it is a critical function to the reputation of Bedfordshire Police that the public has confidence in the complaints system. To this end, both the Chief Constable and the Police and Crime Commissioner have arranged for ‘dip sampling’ to be undertaken of complaints. On a monthly basis, the OPCC will request categories of complaints from the Professional Standards Department and when the files have been received will review them in full.

The categories of complaint are:

Complaint Categories & Subcategories	
A	Delivery of Duties and Service
A1 Police action following contact / A2 Decisions / A3 Information / A4 General level of service.	
B	Police powers, policies, and procedures
B1 Stops, & stop & search / B2 Searches of premises & seizure of property / B3 Power to arrest & detain / B4 Use of force / B5 Detention in police custody / B6 Bail, identification, and interview procedures / B7 Evidential procedures / B8 Out of Court disposals / B9 Other policies and procedures	

C	Handling of or damage to property / premises
D	Access and / or disclosure of information
	D1 Use of police systems / D2 Disclosure of information / D3 Handling of information / D4 Accessing and handling of information from other sources.
E	Use of Police Vehicles
F	Discriminatory behaviour
	F1 Age / F2 Disability / F3 Gender Reassignment / F4 Pregnancy & Maternity / F5 Marriage & Civil Partnership / F6 Race / F7 Religion or Belief / F8 Sex / F9 Sexual Orientation / F10 Other
G	Abuse of Position / Corruption
	G1 Organisational corruption / G2 Abuse of position for sexual purpose / G3 Abuse of position for the purpose of pursuing an inappropriate emotional relationship / G4 Abuse of position for financial purpose / G5 Obstruction of justice / G6 Abuse of position for other purpose
H	Individual Behaviours
	H1 Impolite language or tone / H2 Impolite and intolerant actions / H3 Unprofessional attitude and disrespect H4 Lack of fairness and impartiality / H5 Overbearing or harassing behaviours
J	Sexual Conduct
K	Discreditable Conduct
L	Other

The OPCC will consider such aspects when completing the Dip Sampling:

- Timescales for completion of investigations
- Learning Identified
- Were all allegations covered fully and appropriately?
- Satisfaction
- Was Body Worn Video (BWV) used and was it useful to the complaint?
- Other aspects are considered throughout the process.

The process relates only to the Dip Sampling of closed complaints cases and does not cover either the duty to oversee ongoing complaints or the new wider power of direction of the handling of complaints against the police.

The purpose of Dip Sampling is not to interfere with the review process and decisions made by the Relevant Review Body can only be overturned by the courts through the Judicial Review Process.

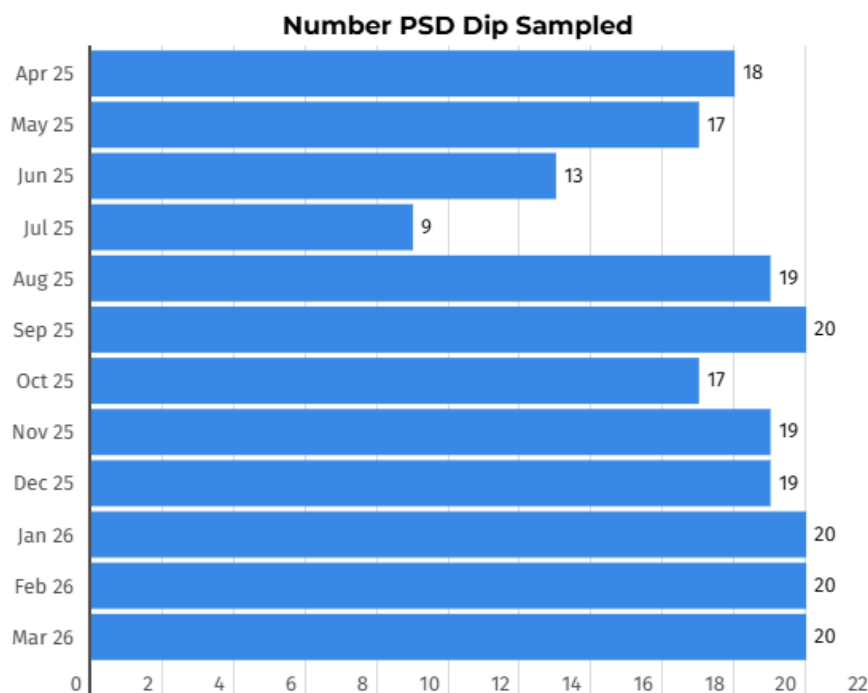
Q3 – PSD Dip Sample

During January 2026 to March 2026, 60 were dip sampled with a total of 132 allegations made. This is five more complaints than the last quarter, and a decrease of 22 allegations made.

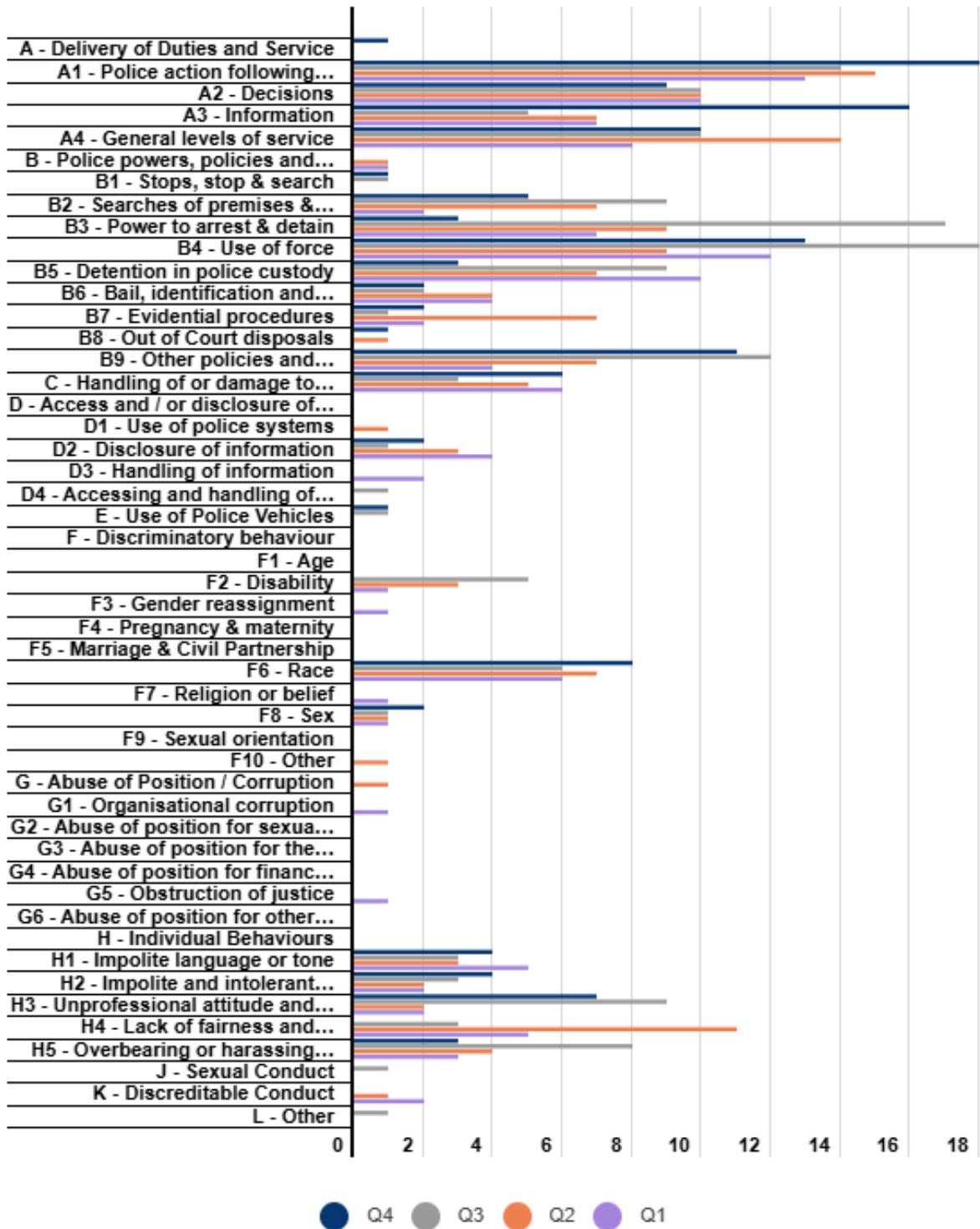
Bedfordshire OPCC dip sampled 20 complaints in January 2026. Within the 20 complaints, 52 allegations were covered.

Bedfordshire OPCC dip sampled 20 complaints in February 2026. Within the 20 complaints, 41 allegations were covered.

Bedfordshire OPCC dip sampled 20 complaints in March 2026. Within the 20 complaints, 39 allegations were covered.



Allegations within complaints April 2025 to March 2026



Bedfordshire OPCC believe that all PSD complaints dip sampled have been dealt with in a reasonable and proportionate manner, however additional learning has been passed back to the Professional Standards Department to consider.

Clarification or further information was required on 16 of the 60 PSD dip sampled.

68% of those sampled found service to be acceptable.

25% of those sampled found Service was not/partially not acceptable for all allegations.

The top three categories respectively (remaining same as the previous quarter):

- A1 - Police action following contact
- B4 - Use of Force
- A3 - Information

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office (OPCC) agreed with any learning identified within the complaint reports and identified additional points for PSDs consideration.

CRT/Lower Dissatisfaction – Dip Sample

The Compliance Officers within the Governance and Compliance team continue to undertake monthly dip-sampling of lower-level dissatisfaction complaints. This activity has always been carried out by the OPCC and has remained independent throughout. The Compliance Officers have no operational involvement in the handling of complaints, and their role is limited to assurance and oversight; dip-sampling therefore continues to be fully independent of the complaints-handling process.

Customer support and dissatisfaction dip-sampling has been in place since August 2021, undertaken by the OPCC while Bedfordshire Police retained responsibility for the handling of all complaints. In January 2026, operating arrangements changed in line with the statutory model 2 (National guidance), with responsibility for handling lower-level dissatisfaction complaints transferring to the OPCC Complaints Team. Despite this change in operational delivery, the OPCC's independent dip-sampling function has been maintained, ensuring continuity of assurance, compliance with statutory guidance, and clear separation between complaint handling and quality oversight.

The OPCC will consider such aspects when completing the Dip Sampling:

- Complaint

- Allegations
- Victims Code of Practice
- Recommendations or actions
- Timescales

The process relates only to the Dip Sampling of closed complaints cases and does not cover those that remain an enquiry.

Transfer of Initial Complaint Handling to the OPCC – January 2026

From January 2026, the Bedfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), John Tizard, assumes responsibility for the initial local stage of receiving and managing police complaints.

Previously, this stage of the complaints process was managed within the police service. Under the new arrangements, it will be delivered by a specialist team within the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC).

This new approach introduces a dedicated service designed to:

- Resolve complaints quickly and effectively.
- Provide support and guidance to complainants, ensuring they understand the process and are kept informed at every stage.
- Deliver a process that is more effective, transparent, and independent.

The PCC's decision should not be interpreted as criticism of the team previously delivering this service within the police; rather, it reflects a commitment to improving accessibility and impartiality.

Key Features of the New Service

- Clearer routes for the public to raise concerns.
- Acknowledgement of complaints within two working days.
- Focus on learning and improvement, with complaints managed to achieve resolution wherever possible.
- Crucial decisions made outside the police service, increasing public confidence that complaints are handled fairly and impartially.

Escalation Process

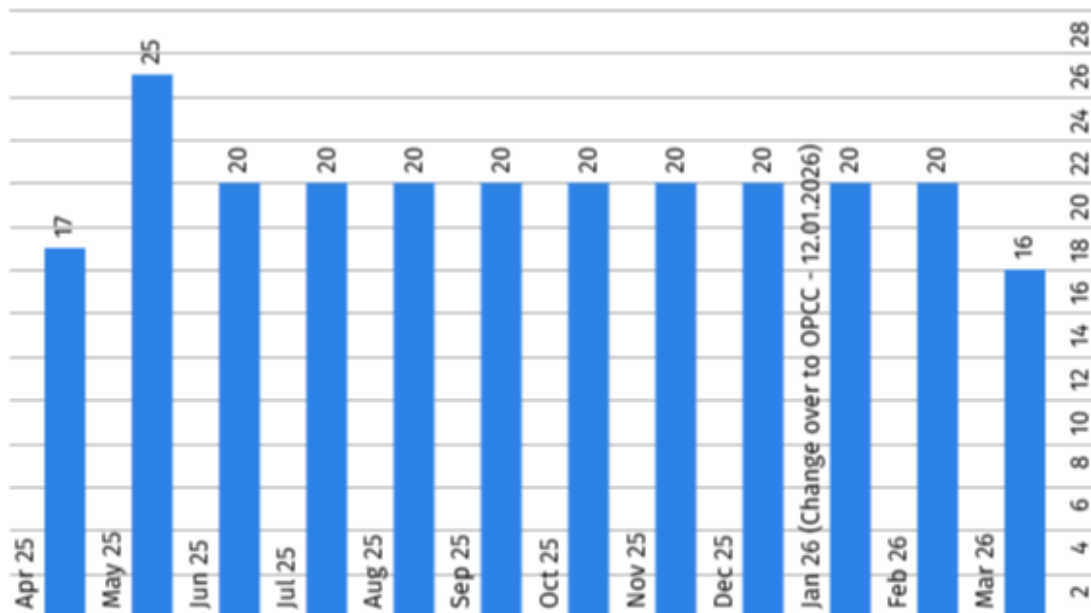
If a complaint:

Cannot be resolved locally, or falls outside the scope of local resolution, it will be referred to:

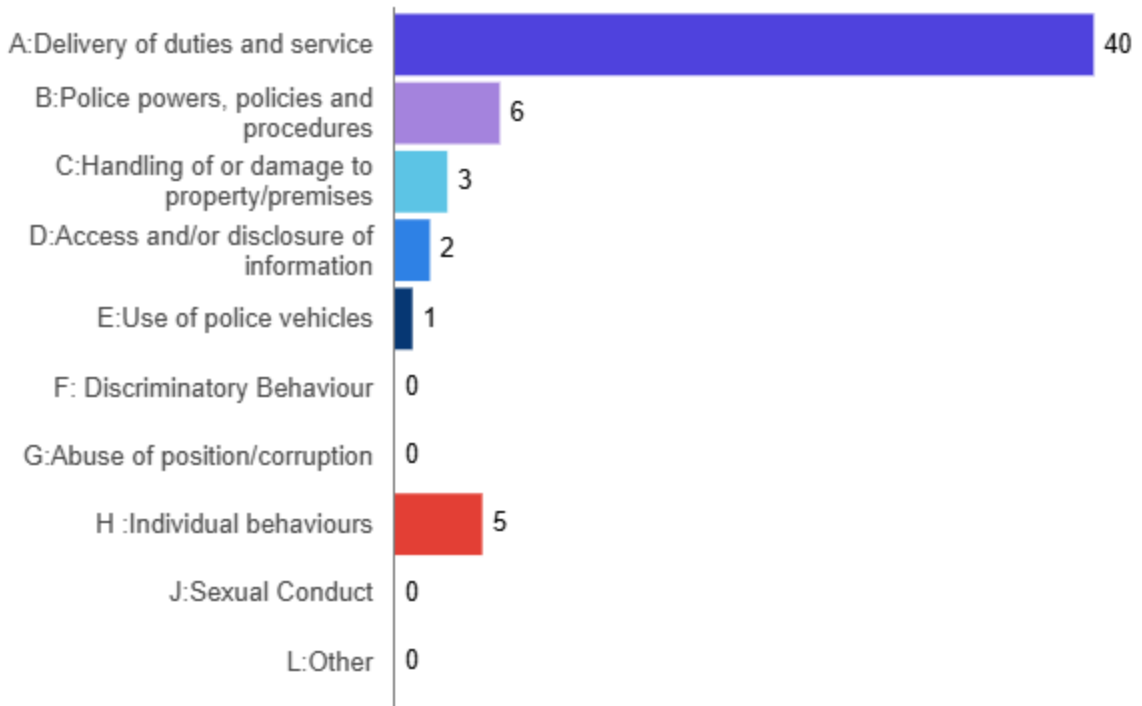
- The Professional Standards Department (PSD) for Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, and Cambridgeshire, or
- The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC), as per current statutory requirements.

Dip Sampling will continue for the new OPCC complaints team to ensure that learning is captured, documented, and applied effectively. This process will support continuous improvement and help deliver the highest standard of service to the public in Bedfordshire.

**Number of Customer Support Complaints Dip Sampled
April 2025 to March 2026**

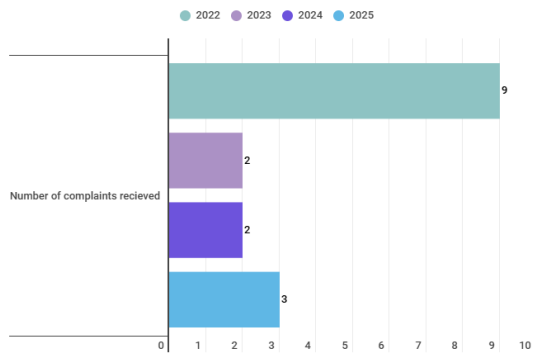


Complaint Categories - Quarter 4 January 2026 - March 2026



Chief Constable Complaints

Total Chief Constable Complaints Received



Chief Constable Complaints Received
between April 25 - March 26

2
 Number of recorded complaints
 about the Chief Constables conduct.
0

There have been no Chief Constable complaints recorded within the last quarter January 2026 – March 2026.

The OPCC has received complaints from individuals who believe they are submitting a complaint against the Chief Constable. However, unless the complaint relates directly to the personal conduct of the Chief Constable, it is not classified as a complaint against the Chief Constable.

Complainants often assume that, because the Chief Constable holds overall responsibility for the Force, they can be held personally accountable for operational decisions or actions taken by others. In practice, many responsibilities are delegated to other officers or staff within the organisation.

When the OPCC reviews such complaints, if it is immediately clear that:

- The allegations do not concern the Chief Constable's conduct, and
- The Chief Constable has had no personal involvement in the matter,

then the complaint will not be recorded as a complaint against the Chief Constable.

Statutory Guidance

The IOPC statutory guidance (Section A.7) states:

“There will be times where a complaint names the chief officer or acting chief officer, but the complaint is about something where authority has been delegated to another officer or staff member within the force. Where the local policing body receives a complaint for which it is not the appropriate authority, they must forward the complaint to the appropriate authority. Therefore, where it is immediately clear that the chief officer or acting chief officer has not been involved, the local policing body must take the steps outlined in paragraphs 6.5 – 6.7. They should explain the reasons for this to the complainant.”

In line with this guidance:

Complaints of this nature are forwarded to OPCC Complaints team, this team assesses the matter and allocates it to the appropriate individual or department within the Force for handling.

Reviews

The statutory framework for complaint reviews, introduced on 1 February 2020, remains unchanged. The governance team continues to play a critical role in ensuring compliance, transparency, and continuous improvement. This section

provides an overview of review outcomes, key learning points, and governance actions taken during the reporting period.

The chart below illustrates data on completed reviews. In addition, key findings and actions taken by the Review Officer in Bedfordshire are summarised below:

Key Outcomes and Actions

Upheld Reviews

- Additional information required – Complaint upheld due to missing or incomplete details.
- Outcome adjustment – Failings were addressed during the complaint process; however, the original outcome required amendment from “acceptable” to “not acceptable,” with no further action.
- Service not acceptable – Outcome changed to reflect that the service provided was not acceptable; an apology issued to the complainant.
- Recommendations to PSD - Amend outcome to state: “Aspects of your complaint were not acceptable.”
- Recommendations to PSD - Provide developmental feedback to the officer, including a reflective debrief on how the incident could have been managed differently, with this noted on file.

OPCC Oversight and Learning

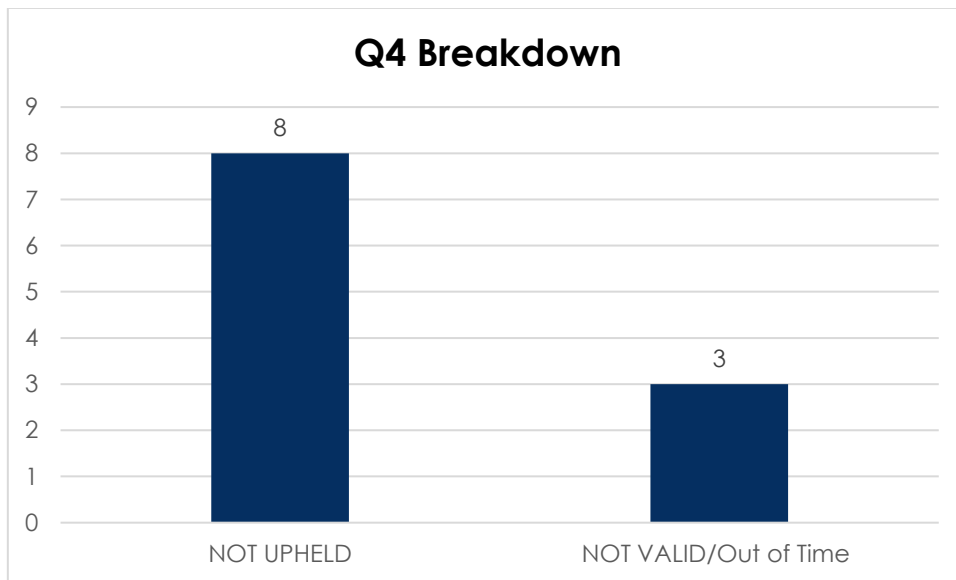
- Positive feedback provided to an officer who demonstrated professionalism and calmness, successfully de-escalating a situation.
- Officers asked to reflect on incidents and consider alternative approaches.
- Reflection requested on language used during interactions to ensure professionalism.
- Guidance issued on handling email bounce-back notifications:
 - Do not delete bounce-back messages.
 - Retain in inbox until corrective action is taken (e.g., verify recipient details, correct errors, inform complainant/victim of resolution).
- Learning shared with the officer to support future improvements.
- Communication and interaction skills identified as a development area - Officer asked to review recorded calls and reflect on handling of challenging conversations.

Learning Themes identified within Reviews

- Importance of clear communication and professional language.
- Need for proactive error handling in correspondence.
- Value of reflective practice and debriefing for continuous improvement.

The average time taken to complete a review and send the final response to the complainant within the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire (January 2025 to December 2025) is 10 days compared to 21 days the previous year.

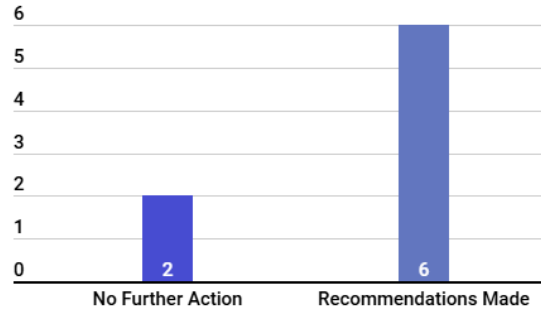
Quarter Four Information



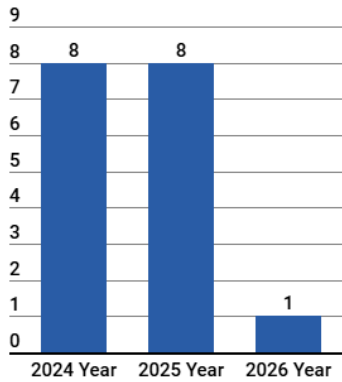
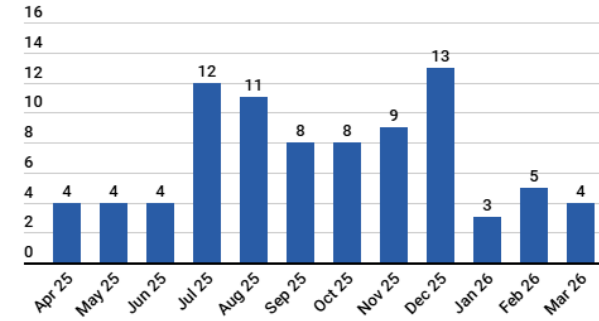
Total Reviews Received
April 2025 - March 2026

87

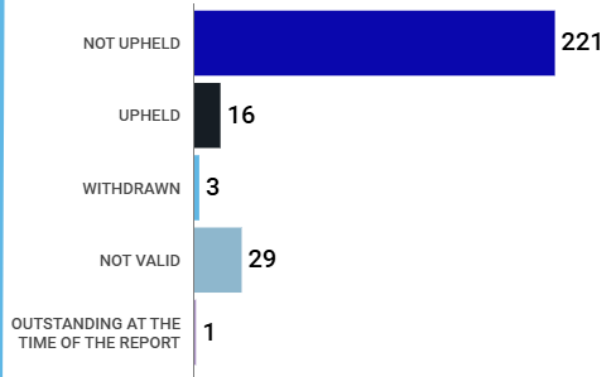
Upheld Review- Not Reasonable and
Proportionate Outcomes
April 2025 - March 2026



Reviews Received
April 2025 - March 2026



Total Reviews which noted OPCC oversight



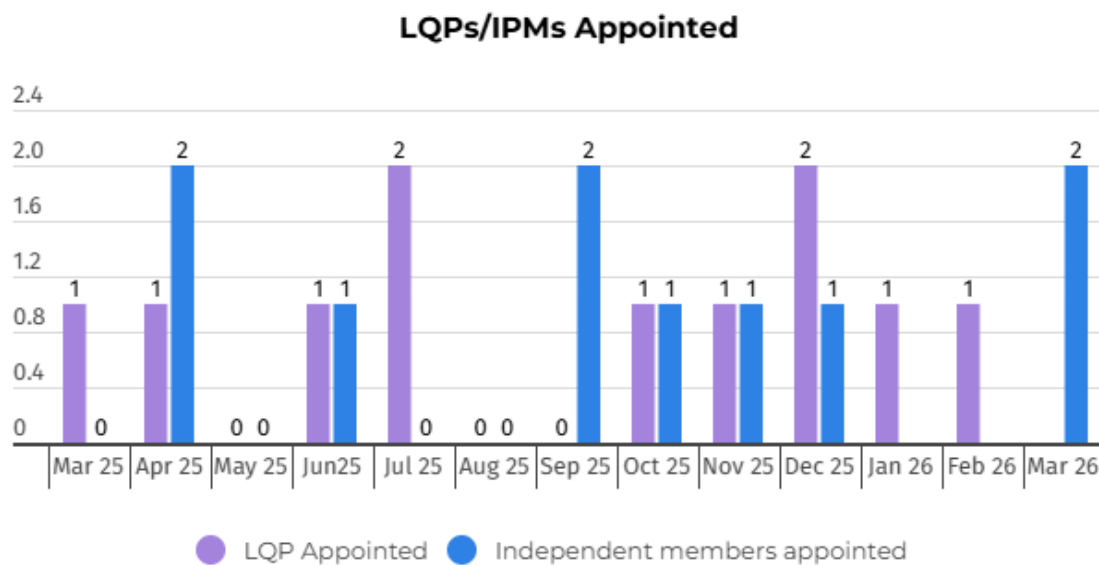
Total Reviews Upheld/Not Upheld
February 2020 - March 2026

Total Reviews Received
February 2020 - March 2026

279

Legally Qualified Persons and Independent Members

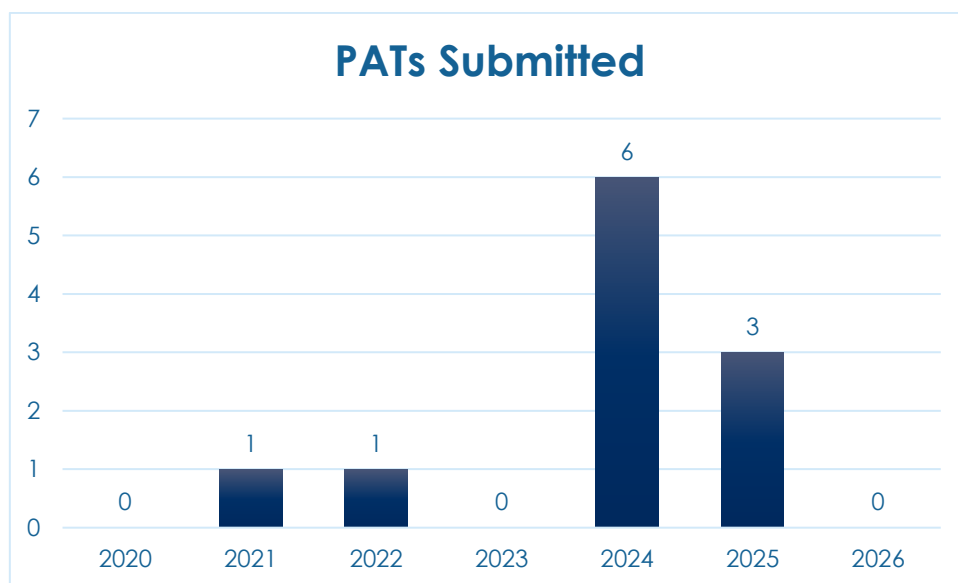
Hearings are governed by the Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020, although cases initiated before 1 February 2020 follow earlier regulations. For hearings commenced after 7 May 2024, panels include a Chair (Chief Constable or delegated senior officer), two Independent Panel Members (IPMs), and a Legally Qualified Advisor (LQA) who provides guidance but does not make decisions. Hearings formed before this date, during the transition period, consist of a Legally Qualified Chair (LQC), a police officer of at least Superintendent rank, and an Independent Member (IM).



Police Appeals Tribunals

Police Appeals Tribunals are chaired by individuals appointed by the Home Secretary and include a senior officer or former senior officer and a senior police staff member. The OPCC is responsible for appointing LQCs and IMs, and in line with the PCC's transparency pledge, appointment figures are published regularly.

Due to a national issue, PAT Chairs are not currently taking on cases. Unfortunately, this will result in considerable delays in the handling and resolution of police appeal tribunals. This matter has been escalated both locally and nationally, including to the Home Secretary, to seek a resolution as quickly as possible.



Freedom of Information/Subject Access Requests

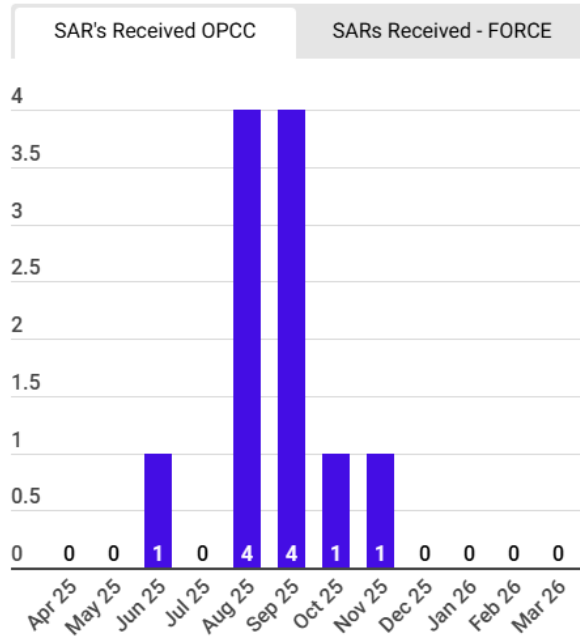
The OPCC has received several Freedom of Information (FOI) and Subject Access Requests (SARs) that were intended for Bedfordshire Police. In these cases, the Governance and Transparency team responds by confirming that the OPCC does not hold the requested information, advising that the request should be directed to the Force, and providing the appropriate contact details.

The OPCC also receives FOI and SAR requests that relate specifically to the PCC's office and completes these in line with statutory requirements. The OPCC is fully aware of its obligations under Data Protection legislation and the Freedom of Information Act, and ensures compliance at all times.

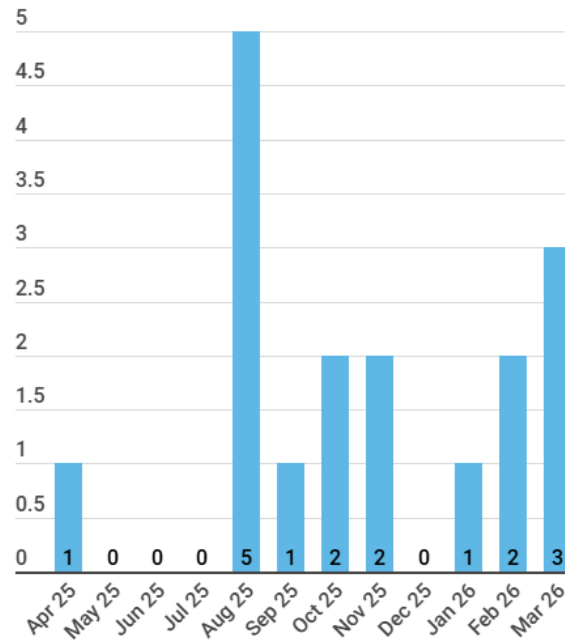
OPCC Freedom of Information Requests and Subject Access Requests

April 2025 - March 2026

Number of Subject Access Requests Received at the OPCC (OPCC & Force)



Number of OPCC Freedom of Information Requests Received



Number of Force Freedom of Information Requests OPCC have Received

