

Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland

Corporate Plan 2010-2013

ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN 2010-2011

INDEPENDENT IMPARTIAL INVESTIGATION

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Vision

Excellence in the independent and impartial investigation of police complaints.

Mission

Providing an effective, efficient and accountable Police Complaints system, which is independent, impartial and designed to secure the confidence of the public and police.

Goals

Building confidence.

Contributing to improving policing with the community.

Dealing with the Past.

Foreword from the Police Ombudsman

I am pleased to publish my third Corporate Plan 2010-2013 outlining the strategic direction of the Office over the next three years. It includes the specific business objectives and targets for the year 2010-2011, as well as noting the progress of those objectives and targets during the 2009-2010 reporting period.

These past two years have marked a period of transition for the office, both at an organisational leadership level and more significantly with the recent but long awaited devolution of policing and justice powers for Northern Ireland. At an organisational level, I embarked on a three year programme of quality improvement designed to better equip us for the future. As we enter our third and final year of that agenda, I now want to shift our focus and look forward to our important role within the devolved policing and justice regime.

In the past, this office has demonstrated its value in holding the police to account when required, thereby contributing to building trust. Increasing levels of trust in policing are gradually being established community by community through the efforts of the Policing Board, the District Policing Partnerships and through the work of the police themselves. Everyone will acknowledge that it is a challenging journey, and these are only the beginning steps. Some police activities of the past still overshadow present day policing; the security situation is testing the patience of the public and the police, limiting options for normalized community policing; and there are clear expectation gaps emerging between what the public expect of their police, and what the police can or do deliver.

Against this backdrop, it is clearly a responsibility of this Office to add value to policing for the community and contribute to building confidence in the police, the rule of law and justice system. Accordingly, to assist the newly devolved policing and justice administration I am establishing an additional focus for the next three years.

Three new goals have been established in support of our vision and mission. They are:

1. Building confidence.
2. Contributing to improving policing with the community.
3. Dealing with the Past.

It will be particularly important that the Northern Ireland justice institutions contribute to building public confidence in the newly devolved justice administration and Assembly, each of us demonstrating value and more 'joined up' justice for the public. Specifically, the Police Ombudsman and staff must demonstrate our value in contributing to improving policing activity and practices between the police and community. Accountability will remain important, but it is of course meaningless if results do not lead to improved policing practices. Our ability to monitor and report on this is important.

The third goal relates to 'dealing with the Past'. Views of policing practices from the past still cast a shadow over present day policing. In the absence of any results emanating from the recommendations of the Consultative Group on the Past (Eames/Bradley Report), I have taken some actions that can hopefully improve our response to the anguish experienced by the various afflicted families. I have for a third time submitted a business case to Government, now represented by the Minister of Justice, for the necessary resources to expedite slow, resource-intensive investigative processes. Additionally, we will be working with others involved in reconciliation work within the victim and survivors area in an effort to fill a clear need.

The commitment of our staff remains at a high level and we are focused on delivering an effective police complaints system for the benefit of the public and the police. I am confident with the new focus on improving confidence in policing and contributing to improving policing with the community; our office can add further value to our existing accountability role. While our office is, in my view, not the appropriate instrument to deal with societal reconciliation, we can at least try and assist families moving toward a resolution with the Past.



AL HUTCHINSON
Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland

Statutory Duties

THE POLICE OMBUDSMAN FOR NORTHERN IRELAND IS:

- Established by the Police (NI) Act 1998;
- Accountable to the Northern Ireland Assembly through the Department of Justice;
- Constituted and operated independently of the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) and the Chief Constable;
- Required to have regard to any guidance given by the Department of Justice or Secretary of State;
- An executive non-departmental public body financed by a Grant in Aid from the Department of Justice (DOJ).

THE POLICE (NI) ACT 1998 (as amended) DIRECTS THE POLICE OMBUDSMAN TO:

- Secure an efficient, effective and independent complaints system;
- Secure the confidence of the public and members of the police force;
- Observe all requirements as to confidentiality;
- Receive complaints and other referred matters and to decide how to deal with them;
- Receive and record policy complaints and refer them to the Chief Constable;
- Make recommendations to the Director of the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) for criminal action;
- Make recommendations and directions in respect of disciplinary action against police officers;
- Notify the Department of Justice and Secretary of State in some circumstances, NIPB and Chief Constable of the outcome of certain complaints, referred matters and any investigation which the Ombudsman initiates without a complaint;
- Report to the Department of Justice annually.

THE POLICE (NI) ACT 2000 DIRECTS THE POLICE OMBUDSMAN TO:

- Carry out inquiries as directed by the Department of Justice or Secretary of State in certain circumstances;
- Supply statistical information to the NIPB.

THE POLICE (NI) ACT 2003 DIRECTS THE POLICE OMBUDSMAN TO:

- Investigate a current practice or policy of the police if:
 - The practice or policy comes to his attention under the Act;
 - He has reason to believe that it would be in the public interest to investigate the practice or policy.

Public Values

INDEPENDENCE

The Police Ombudsman operates independently of the Police Service and the NIPB in Northern Ireland and strives to investigate all complaints objectively and even-handedly.

IMPARTIALITY

The Police Ombudsman and his staff handle and investigate complaints free of bias or influence.

INTEGRITY

The Police Ombudsman and his staff operate with integrity in all their dealings with the Public and the Police.

OPENNESS

The Police Ombudsman must not disclose any information in relation to a complaint except as provided by the Police (NI) Act 1998.

FAIRNESS

The Police Ombudsman gives all complainants and police officers an opportunity to state their case.

HUMAN RIGHTS

The Police Ombudsman observes the relevant international principles and standards on policing and respects human rights.

ACCESSIBILITY

The Office is open to the public during normal working hours, there is a dedicated phone number for complainants, and we acknowledge all complaints whether by e-mail, telephone, fax or via our website.

SATISFACTION

The Police Ombudsman welcomes from members of the public and police officers any complaints, criticisms or comments in relation to the manner in which complaints or investigations have been handled.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The Police Ombudsman is accountable to the Assembly and to the Courts. An Annual Report and Accounts to the Minister of Justice and laid before the Assembly.

Corporate Governance

GOVERNANCE

The Police Ombudsman, Mr Al Hutchinson, is appointed by Her Majesty, as a named person for a fixed term of seven years. The status of this public authority is that of corporate sole. The Police Ombudsman is accountable to the Assembly, through the Minister of Justice, for the duty placed on him to provide an independent and impartial police complaints system.

CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY

The status of the Office of the Police Ombudsman is that of a non-departmental public body administrated through the Department of Justice. The Accounting Officer responsibility is delegated from the Permanent Secretary of that Department to Samuel Pollock, Chief Executive, who is accountable to the Police Ombudsman for the effective and efficient control and resourcing of the Office.

SENIOR MANAGEMENT

The Chief Executive, Senior Director of Investigations and Directors carry executive responsibility for delegated functions, resources and control of operations and are required to report to the Police Ombudsman for the effective and efficient running of the police complaints system and the performance of the staff.

AUDIT COMMITTEE

An Audit Committee with independent members and representatives of the Department of Justice oversees internal audit and internal financial controls. External audit is facilitated through the Department of Justice Audit Office. The Office is the subject of inspection by the Surveillance Commissioner, the Interception Commissioner and the Criminal Justice Inspectorate.

ANNUAL REPORT

The corporate governance of the Office is manifested through regular formal reporting on a quarterly basis to the Department of Justice and with a full Annual Report and Statement of Accounts in relation to the performance and funding of the Office made to the Minister of Justice and published in the Assembly in July each year.

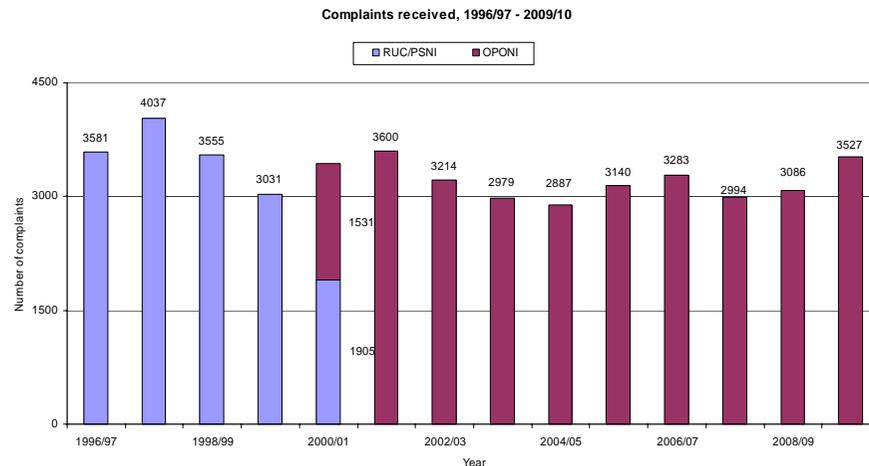
Business Priorities 2010-2011 by the Chief Executive

The Police Ombudsman has indicated the professional and administrative context in which the Office operates. The new goals set by the Ombudsman reflect what we regard as the key focus for the next three years even though the day-to-day objectives and priorities do not in themselves alter significantly.

INCREASE IN COMPLAINTS AND WORKLOAD

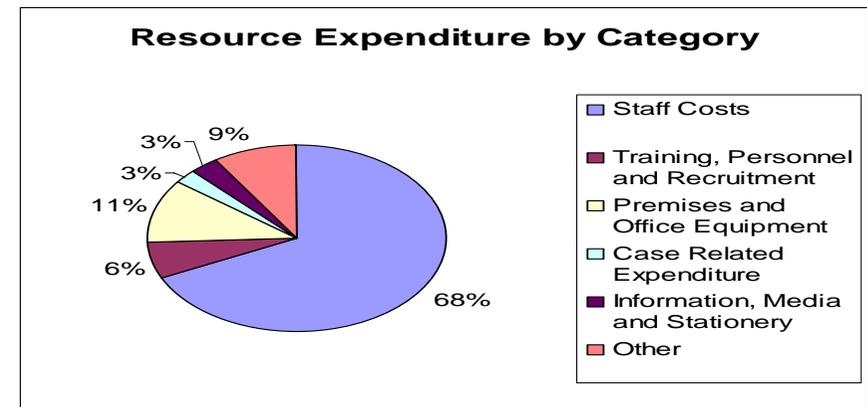
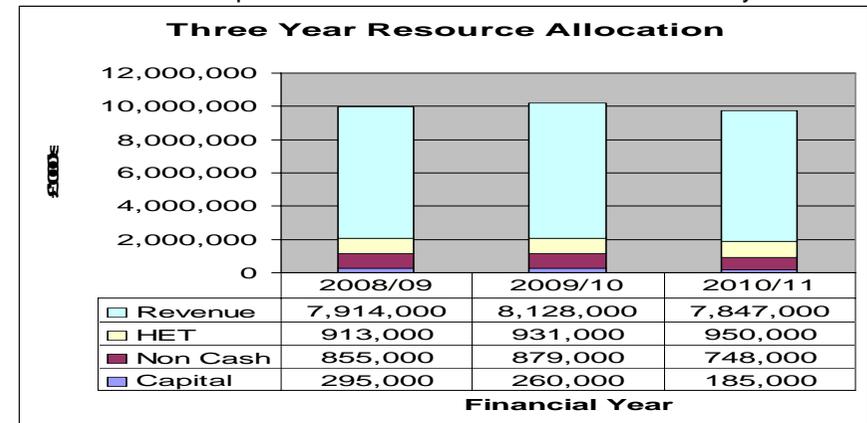
There has been an exceptional increase in the level of complaints this last year and when complaints are classified as specific allegations, it represents the highest level of new work in the history of the Office. If this trend continues into the next financial cycle it will put immense pressure on the Complaints and Investigations Teams. Caseloads are extremely high and the impact will be a backlog or delay in completion of investigations. Directors and Managers will continue to use training and supervision to maintain quality processes and not allow the effectiveness of investigations to diminish.

LEVEL OF COMPLAINTS

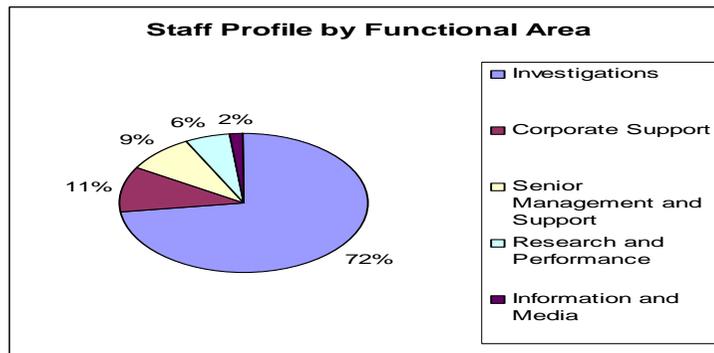


REDUCTION IN REVENUE AND RESOURCES

One of the major challenges for our Business Plan this year is an immediate reduction of £500,000 from our staffing budget. In light of the current reductions in the Public Service it would be unrealistic to believe that there may not be further reductions in resources. Our staffing complement has already reflected a net decrease in posts and it may be that we will have to plan for redundancies within this financial cycle.



Business Priorities 2010-2011 by the Chief Executive



GOVERNANCE

In the past year the Police Ombudsman has developed a new governance and management layer for the Office. A small Executive Board will concentrate on external priorities such as building confidence of the public in the Office, creating effective operational links with the new Department of Justice within the Northern Ireland Assembly and maintaining key communications and links with stakeholders. We will ensure that public accountability to Stormont in all our operations is transparent and impartial. Directors will provide executive control of the business and operations of the Office and seek to provide an effective and efficient use of resources.

PERFORMANCE

This Business Plan will continue to reflect our immediate priorities of improving the quality of processes, decreasing significant delays in the completion of investigations and ensuring that resources are dedicated to a huge workload. We will continue to keep the Assembly, Department of Justice, public and key stakeholders informed of work involving the PSNI in helping to deliver an effective complaints system.

SUMMARY

2010-2011 will be a year of great challenge in the life of the Office, making every effort to improve customer service, quality and effectiveness of investigations but doing so within reduced resources. I commend the challenges, priorities and targets indicated in this Business Plan.



SAM POLLOCK OBE
Chief Executive

Objectives and Targets 2010-2011

OBJECTIVES	TARGETS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide information to stakeholders about the work of the Office and thereby contribute to public and police confidence in the police complaints system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To publish information on trends and patterns in police complaints within agreed timelines.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure the police complaints system is addressing the needs of institutional and community stakeholders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide timely and appropriate information on matters of public interest.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To deliver high quality, effective and timely investigations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide PSNI with regular and detailed management information on police complaints.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To deliver an effective strategy for dealing with historic cases within the resources available, including contributing to wider social issues of dealing with the past. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To respond to requests for information from the Northern Ireland Executive, the public and others in a timely manner.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that there is effective and efficient management of the physical, human and financial resources of the Office. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To review the system of corporate governance within the Office.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To adapt the processes of the Office to take account of changes in statutory requirements, developments in policing and changing community needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To work in partnership with stakeholders and the community to improve awareness of and confidence in the police complaints system.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To make recommendations arising from investigations which assist police in improving their conduct, practices and delivery of a service to the community.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop and deliver a programme of engagement with the community and stakeholders to identify any areas which can help in the delivery of a police complaints system which meets their needs.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To enhance internal specialist knowledge and skills in the investigation process.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To reduce delays in investigations and completion of final reports.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To improve the customer service and complaints handling processes.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To establish structures and processes within the Investigations Directorate which deliver effective review and investigation of Historic complaints and referrals from the PSNI Historical Enquiries Team.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To contribute to reconciliation through innovative initiatives which involve bereaved families, retired police officers and other relevant institutions.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that the Office effectively manages its resources in line with operational priorities.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To have a motivated and engaged workforce with the appropriate skills, knowledge and expertise to support corporate vision.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To deal effectively with additional demands on the Office arising from the Devolution of Policing and Justice.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To produce the second Five-Year Legislative Review.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To conduct a Local Resolution pilot project.

Key Performance Indicators 2010-2011

KPI's

- To provide PSNI with monthly management information and PSNI District Commanders with six-monthly management reports on trends and patterns in complaints. (Monthly)
- To make available on the Office website regular corporate information and statistical data on complaint handling. (Ongoing)
- To provide the Northern Ireland Policing Board with six-monthly statistical reports on complaints and investigations. (October and April)
- To respond to all Freedom of Information requests within statutory timelines. (Ongoing)
- To develop a register of community stakeholder issues arising from engagement with the community. (May 2010)
- To hold a minimum of 35 meetings with institutional and community stakeholders. (March 2011)
- To engage with PSNI officers at all levels by way of presentations and training input about the work of the Office on a minimum of 50 occasions. (March 2011)
- To establish a system to record, monitor and report on outcomes of policy recommendations made by the Office. (May 2010)
- To improve satisfaction with and confidence in work of Office:
 - To maintain a level of at least 80% public awareness and confidence in the police complaints system. (Ongoing)
 - To maintain a level of at least 75% of complainants willing to use the service again. (Ongoing)
 - To maintain a level of at least 75% of police officers subject of investigation to be satisfied with the service provided by the Office. (Ongoing)
- To establish and outline criteria for the prioritisation of investigation cases. (June 2010)
- To reduce number of investigations over 120 days by 10%, current number of investigations 527. (March 2011)
- To reduce the average time taken to investigate complaints, (currently 110 days) other than of a grave or exceptional nature, by 5%. (March 2011)
- To initiate the implementation of the Information Systems/Information Technology Strategy, which is aimed at improving organisational performance. (June 2010)
- To integrate report writing as a core element of all future accredited investigators' training.
- 80% of Investigation Officers to have completed Investigative Interviewing Training Level 2. (March 2011)

Key Performance Indicators 2010-2011

KPI's

- Actions to improve customer service and complaints handling:
 - To register all appropriate matters reported to the Police Ombudsman within 3 working days of receipt. (Ongoing)
 - To action 90% of complaints within 5 working days of being registered. (Ongoing)
 - To update 85% of complainants every 6 weeks. (Ongoing)
 - To update 85% of police officers subject of investigation every 6 weeks. (Ongoing)
 - To deal with 90% of complaints, not subject to investigation or Informal Resolution, within 40 working days. (Ongoing)
 - 90% of complainants to be contacted by the Investigating Officer within 3 working days of the complaint being allocated to that Officer. (Ongoing)
 - 95% of complainants calling to the Office to be seen within 5 minutes. (Ongoing)
- To complete the restructuring of the Historic Investigations Team, including the establishment of new processes and methodology. (June 2010)
- To report on nine historic matters currently subject of investigation. (November 2010)
- To complete effective investigative reviews of 25% of the remaining historic caseload. (March 2011)
- To establish a structure involving a wide range of interested parties to advise on strategic issues associated with historic investigations, including communication with families and police officers, prioritisation of enquiries and delivery of investigative outcomes. (June 2010)
- To implement a framework for delivery of a programme of communication with families affected by historic cases, identifying new areas where the police complaints system could support them in dealing with the past. (August 2010)
- To undertake and document a programme of engagement with Non-Governmental Organisations and other groups supporting families to inform them of strategic developments in the management of historic cases. (August 2010)
- To ensure that the Office maintains its operation within 2% of the resources that are made available to it. (Ongoing)
- To establish an Annual Training Plan in line with the Learning and Development Strategy and operational learning needs to develop the competence of all staff. (July 2010)
- To maintain a level of 70% of Investigating Officers with the achievement of accredited investigator status. (Ongoing)
- To maintain a level of less than 4% staff absence per annum. (Ongoing)

Key Performance Indicators 2010-2011

KPI's

- To ensure that appropriate actions are progressed in relation to internal audit recommendations and that updates are provided to the Audit Committee on a quarterly basis. (Ongoing)
- To review and update the Corporate Risk Register. (Quarterly)
- To establish a cross-functional Devolution Steering Group within the Office. (April 2010)
- To establish an Assembly Liaison Unit within the Office. (April 2010)
- To establish a Consultative Group to review the current legislation against future needs. (June 2010)
- To produce a final report on the second Five-Year Legislative Review. (Dec 2010)
- To implement and complete a Local Resolution Pilot Project:
 - To complete a community and police awareness programme on Local Resolution prior to the launch of the pilot project. (June 2010)
 - To run the Local Resolution pilot project in PSNI 'D' District (Antrim, Carrickfergus, Lisburn and Newtownabbey). (Nov 2010)
 - To produce a final report on the Local Resolution pilot project. (Dec 2010)
- Publish Corporate Business Plan. (June 2010)
- Make Annual Report available to the Department of Justice. (June 2010)
- Report on Complainant satisfaction. (June 2010)
- Report on Police Officer satisfaction. (June 2010)
- Report on Public Attitude Survey. (June 2010)
- Publish 2006/2010 Equality Monitoring of Complainants Report. (Oct 2010)
- Complete Annual Fair Employment Monitoring Return. (May 2010)
- Complete Annual Equality Scheme Progress Report. (Sept 2010)
- Make available reports on trends and patterns in complaints within agreed timelines.

Senior Management



JIM COUPLAND
Senior Director of Complaints & Investigations

- Adviser to the Police Ombudsman on investigation strategy and outcomes
- Strategic oversight of all investigations
- Supervision of Directors of Investigations



PAUL HOLMES
Director of Investigations (Historic)

- Management and control of all historic complaints and investigations
- Supervision of Senior Investigators



PETER O'SULLIVAN
Director of Investigations (Current)

- Management and control of all current complaints and investigations
- Supervision of Senior Investigators and Senior Complaints Officer

Senior Management



GREG MULLAN
Director of Research & Performance

- Management and control of all policy and practice investigations
- Programming and resourcing of research
- Supervision of Professional Standards and Research Managers



OLWEN LAIRD
Director of Corporate Services

- Management and control of corporate services
- Secretary to and member of the Audit Committee
- Advising the Chief Executive on Corporate Governance and Risk Management Issues
- Supervision of Human Resource, Finance and IT Managers



TIM GRACEY
Director of Information

- Management and control of information and media communications
- Adviser to the Police Ombudsman on external communications
- Supervision of Information and Media Managers



JIM KITSON
Director of Legal Services

- Adviser to the Police Ombudsman on legal matters
- Advising the Chief Executive and Directors on corporate issues
- Briefing Counsel as required