

Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland:

Corporate Plan 2008-2011

Annual Business Plan 2008-2009

Additional copies of this and other publications are available from:

Information Directorate
Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland
New Cathedral Buildings
St. Anne's Square
11 Church Street
Belfast
BT1 1PG

Tel: 028 9082 8600
Fax: 028 9082 8659
Minicom: 028 9082 8759
Witness Appeal Line: 0800 0327 880
Email: info@policeombudsman.org

These publications and other information about the work of the
Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland are also available on the Internet at:

Website: www.policeombudsman.org



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

INDEPENDENT IMPARTIAL INVESTIGATION



I am pleased to publish my first Corporate Plan outlining the strategic direction of the Office over the next three years. It includes the specific business objectives and targets for the year 2008-2009. I have kept the fundamental vision and mission that has served the organisation so well in the past.

The previous Ombudsman, Dame Nuala O'Loan, the Chief Executive, Sam Pollock, and their team have delivered very effective strategic and corporate direction, such that the Office is recognised nationally and internationally as the premium model for independent and impartial investigation of police complaints. My goal is to build on that solid foundation.

There are however two strategic and inter-related issues impacting the future of our service to the public. The first issue is that the unresolved legacy of the past means that I effectively have a core business with two significant but competing elements: -

1. Investigating allegations of police wrongdoing for the past (1968-1998) and,
2. Investigating allegations of police wrongdoing in the present and into the future.

Issues of the past are overwhelming our capacity to deal with present and future complaints investigations. The second issue relates to the need to focus internally on improving our efficiency and effectiveness. You will note that I have established goals to deal with both issues, and also a 3-year organisational development strategy designed to improve the quality of our service to the public and the police.

This is a very confident and capable organisation, staffed with talented and committed people. I have no doubt that together we will achieve our goals.

Al Hutchinson
Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland

Contents

Statutory Duties and Public Values	4
Vision and Mission	6
Corporate Plan 2008-2011	7
Business Plan 2008-2009	9
Key Performance Indicators 2008-2009	12
Making a Complaint	14

Corporate Governance

Executive Management and Functions

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 corporation sole. The Police Ombudsman is accountable to Parliament, through the Secretary of State, 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 Northern Ireland Office. 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.

Executive Control

A Senior Management Team convenes monthly, or more often if required, and comprises the Police Ombudsman, the Chief Executive, Senior Director of Investigations and four Directors. Directors carry executive responsibility for delegated functions, resources and control of operations and are required to report through the Senior Management Team 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 Northern Ireland Office oversees internal audit and internal financial controls. External audit is facilitated through the Northern Ireland Audit Office. The Office is the subject of inspection by the Surveillance Commissioner, the Interception Commissioner and the Criminal Justice Inspectorate, as well as reporting to the Oversight Commissioner on progress and achievement of relevant Patten recommendations.

Annual Report

The corporate governance of the Office is manifested through regular formal reporting on a quarterly basis to the Northern Ireland Office and with a full Annual Report and Statement of Accounts in relation to the performance and funding of the Office made to the Secretary of State and published in Parliament in July each year.



Samuel Pollock
Chief Executive

- Accountable to the Police Ombudsman
- Accounting Officer reporting to the Permanent Secretary
- Adviser to the Police Ombudsman on corporate and executive matters



Jim Coupland
Senior Director of Complaints and Investigations

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



Olwen Laird
Director of Corporate Services

- Management and control of corporate services
- Secretary to and member of the Audit Committee
- Supervision of Human Resource, Finance and IT Managers



John Larkin
Director of Complaints and Investigations

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



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



Greg Mullan
Director of Policy and Practice

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



Jim Kitson
Director of Legal Services

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

Statutory Duties

The Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland is:

- Established by the Police (NI) Act 1998;
- Accountable to Parliament through the Secretary of State;
- 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 Secretary of State;
- An executive non-departmental public body financed by a Grant in Aid from the Northern Ireland Office.

The Police (NI) Act 1998 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 Secretary of State, 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 Secretary of State annually.

The Police (NI) Act 2000 directs the Police Ombudsman to:

- Carry out inquiries as directed by the Secretary of State;
- 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, and
 - 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

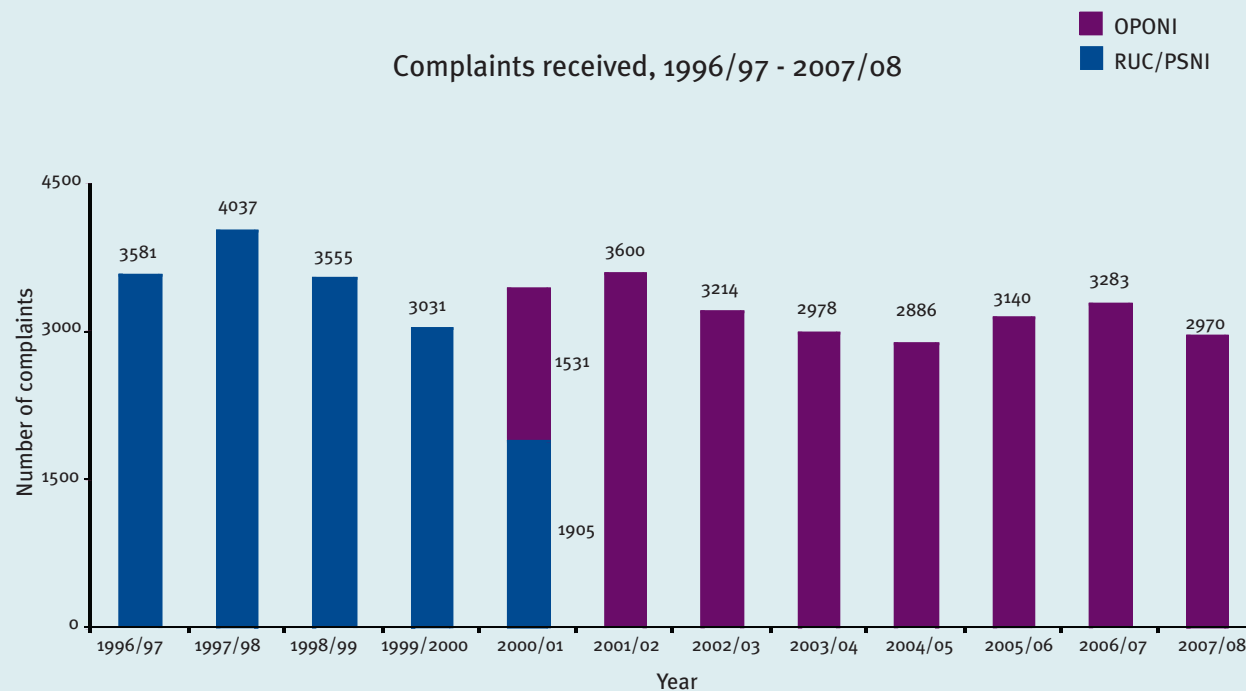
The Police Ombudsman is accountable to Parliament, to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and to the Courts. An Annual Report and Accounts to the Secretary of State must be laid before Parliament. This principle of accountability will be maintained through the process of devolution of policing and justice powers to the Northern Ireland Assembly, when that occurs.

Our Vision

Excellence in the independent and impartial investigation of police complaints.

Our 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.



Adapting to Changing Circumstances

Goal 1

To establish or adapt the processes of the Police Ombudsman's Office to take account of changes in statutory requirements, developments in policing and changing community needs.

Over the next three years we aim to: -

- Respond, as appropriate, to the devolution of policing and justice in Northern Ireland and to the needs of the Northern Ireland Assembly and its Committees.
- Adapt the workings of the Office to facilitate any statutory change arising from the Police Ombudsman's Five Year Legislative Review.
- Report on trends and patterns in police complaints within communities linking these to Section 75 (Northern Ireland Act 1998) groupings.
- Provide enhanced statistical information to local police areas and communities.
- Contribute to and respond to outcomes of Government enquires on dealing with the past, for example the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee Report and the Consultative Group on the Past co-chaired by Lord Robin Eames and Denis Bradley.

Improving Quality

Goal 2

To deliver effective and timely complaint handling and investigation processes which are centred on quality and continuous improvement.

Over the next three years we aim to: -

- Streamline the complaint registration and handling process.
- Develop a rigorous programme of Quality Assurance of investigation processes achieving the highest standards.
- Ensure investigation and use of forensic science techniques are underpinned by best practice.
- Introduce effective mediation processes.
- Work closely with the local Police District Managers in resolving complaints of a less serious nature, such as incivility, quickly and locally.
- Continue to train and externally accredit investigators and managers with professionally recognised qualifications.
- Contribute to the overall improvement in policing policy and practice through recommendations arising from investigations.
- Work closely with other police complaints and oversight bodies for the purpose of benchmarking and shared learning.

Better Resource Management

Goal 3

Restructure and realign resources in the Office to fulfil the duties of the Police Ombudsman in relation to current and historic investigations

Over the next three years we aim to: -

- Acquire additional resources dedicated to investigation of historic matters.
- Optimise allocation of existing resources to the investigation of current complaints.
- Increase the resilience in dealing more effectively with grave or exceptional matters, Police Ombudsman call-ins and Chief Constable referrals.
- Liaise with Government bodies and the Department regarding any Policy change in relation to dealing with the past dependant on the recommendations of the Consultative Group on the Past, and the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee.

Developing The Organisation

Goal 4

Implement a three-year organisational development programme to improve internal structures, functioning and performance of the Office.

Over the next three years we aim to: -

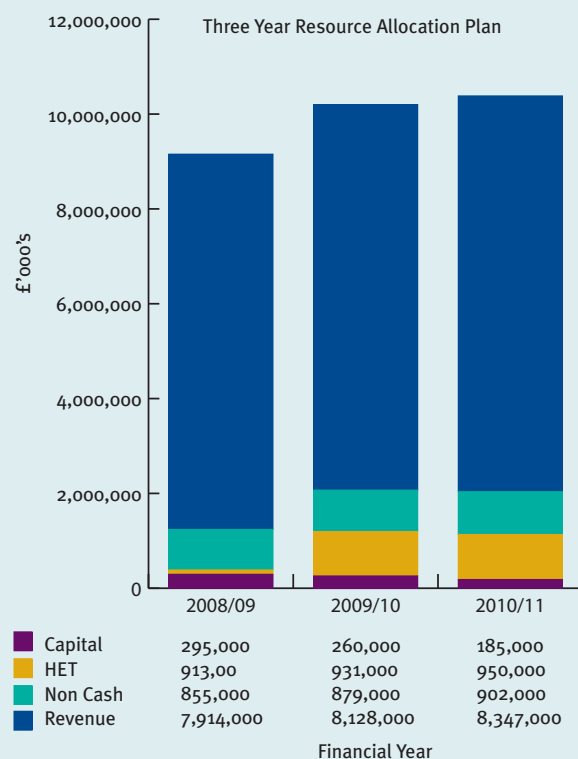
- Implement a three-year Organisational Development Strategy designed to bring about improvements in organisational effectiveness.
- Review and adjust Office roles, structures, processes and resources to cater for workload demands.
- Align structures to support the delivery of policy developments and performance in core business operations.
- Promote cross-functional working in support of business improvement.
- Engage the Office in European Foundation of Quality Management assessment and accreditation programme.

OBJECTIVE 1

Provide statistical information and reports including trends and patterns in complaints to the Policing Board, the PSNI, District Policing Partnerships, Policing Districts and the public and other relevant bodies.

Targets

1. To make available all reports on trends and patterns in complaints reports within timescales.
2. To publish a report on the PSNI response to recommendations arising from reports on matters referred under Section 55 of the Police Act 1998 (June 2008)
3. To publish a report on issues arising from complaints on police use of handcuffs. (June 2008)
4. To report on police officer views and attitudes to the Police Ombudsman's Office as measured by independent research. (July 2008)
5. To report on complainant satisfaction. (September 2008)
6. To report on public awareness and confidence in the police complaints system, across Northern Ireland. (August 2008)
7. To report on satisfaction levels of Police Officers subject of investigation. (September 2008)
8. To research and report on patterns and trends of Section 75 Groupings in respect of police complaints within Policing Districts. (February 2009)
9. To publish Complainant Equality Monitoring Report. (December 2008).
10. To report on pilot mediation project. (March 2009)
11. To produce statistical information for the Police Ombudsman's website. (June 2008)



Annual Business Plan 2008 - 2009

OBJECTIVE 2

To promote and support an ethos of continuous improvement through effective supervision and development of staff ensuring quality underpins all aspects of the complaint handling and Investigation process.

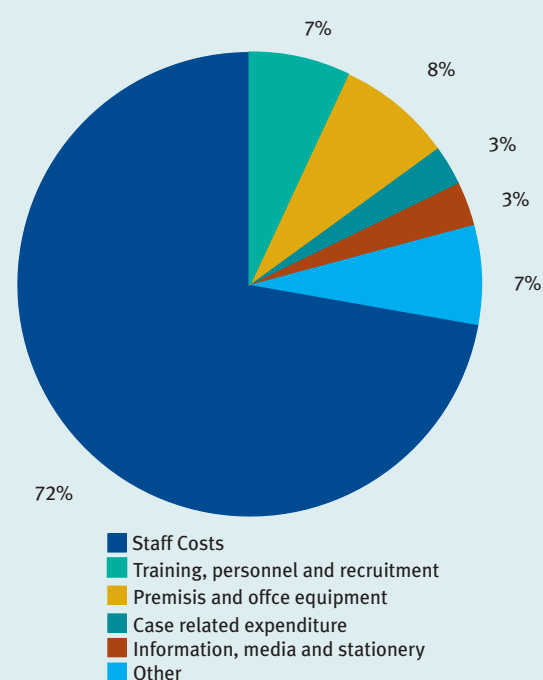
Targets

1. To conduct Performance Reviews and agree Personal Development Plans for all staff. (May 2008)
2. To establish a cross function unit to quality control and inspect processing of criminal and disciplinary investigation files. (June 2008)
3. To develop a system whereby all live investigations, dated more than 120-days, are reviewed and reasons for delays identified. (October 2008)
4. To develop workload programme ensuring that investigators do not carry a caseload disproportionate to their experience and competence. (December 2008)
5. To introduce an appropriate staff recognition scheme. (September 2008)

OBJECTIVE 3

To achieve an efficient and effective management of resources in all functions of the Office.

Resource Expenditure by Category



Targets

1. To keep expenditure within 2% of approved budget planning.
2. To publish Corporate Plan. (May 2008)
3. To produce monthly corporate financial management information.
4. To produce Performance Management Business Report on 3-monthly basis for Senior Management Team, Northern Ireland Office and Audit Committee.
5. To produce an Annual Report for the Secretary of State. (June 2008)
6. To implement changes in complaints registration and handling including effective transfer of appropriate staff to Investigations. (January 2009)
7. To implement new Case Handling System. (October 2008)
8. To carry out a post implementation review of the new Case Handling System. (March 2009)
9. To achieve Investors in People re-accreditation. (February 2009)

OBJECTIVE 4

To present Business Case to NIO for additional resources to meet current demands created by HET referrals and other related investigations into historic matters.

Targets

1. To present Business Case to NIO. (May 2008)
2. To re-align and combine resources engaged in investigation of historic matters. (June 2008)
3. To present a review of outstanding HET and Historic cases and proposed action plan to the Secretary of State. (September 2008)
4. To dedicate and restructure resources to respond to Chief Constable referrals, critical incidents and other matters arising under Section 55 of the 1998 Act.

OBJECTIVE 5

To initiate the Organisational Development Strategy designed to support business improvement.

Targets

1. To commission and establish a three-year Organisational Development and Policy Group comprising the Police Ombudsman, Chief Executive and Senior Director of Investigations. (May 2008)
2. To appoint a Project Manager to champion the three-year improvement programme. (June 2008)
3. To establish a cross-functional Project Team to support all aspects of the change programme. (July 2008)
4. To re-assess organisational communication needs and devise an effective Internal Communications Strategy, which has the support of staff. (November 2008)
5. To complete a strategic European Foundation of Quality Management assessment with external assessors to identify the strengths and development opportunities for the organisation. (March 2009)

Key Performance Indicators 2008-2009

Key Performance Indicators	Targets (2008-09)
Level of complaints registered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resource and action all complaints and related allegations registered.
Responsiveness, prompt service and timely processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Register all appropriate matters reported to the Police Ombudsman within 3 working days of receipt. - 90% of all complaints to be actioned within 5 working days of being registered. - All telephone calls to the Office to be responded to within 10 seconds. - 95% of complainants calling to the Office to be seen within 5 minutes. - 85% of complainants to be updated every 6 weeks. - 85% of police officers to be updated every 6 weeks. - 90% of complaints, not subject of investigation or Informal Resolution, to be dealt with within 40 working days. - 90% of complaints suitable for Informal Resolution to be referred within 3 working days of complainant consent being obtained. - 90% of complainants to be contacted by the Investigating Officer within 3 working days (of the complaint being allocated to that officer). - 90% of new complaint investigations to be completed within 120 working days, apart from grave and exceptional matters. - Respond (24/7) within 1.5 hours to serious incidents referred in Belfast and 3 hours outside Belfast. - To investigate 90% of serious matters referred by Chief Constable within 200 working days.
Quality and effective investigations, levels of satisfaction and confidence in police complaints system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 60% of complainants being satisfied or very satisfied with service received. - 75% of complainants willing to use the service again. - 75% of police officers subject of investigation to be satisfied with the service provided by the Police Ombudsman. - Maintain over 80% public awareness and confidence in the police complaints system. - On a 60-day basis all on-going investigations will be subject to a quality review by supervisory staff. - Results of Complainant Satisfaction Survey to be issued September 2008. - Results of Public Attitudes Survey to be issued August 2008. - Results of Police Officer Satisfaction Survey to be issued September 2008. - Results of Police Officer Survey to be issued July 2008. - Results of Equality Monitoring of Complainants to be issued December 2008.

Key Performance Indicators	Targets (2008-09)
Informing the public and police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make available all agreed reports or trends and patterns within timescales. - To research and report on patterns and trends of Section 75 Groupings in respect of police complaints within Policing Districts (February 2009) - Report on the PSNI response to recommendations arising from matters referred under Section 55 of the Police Act 1998 - June 2008. - Publish a report on Police use of handcuffs – June 2008. - Initiate a new Policy and Practice Investigation during course of reporting year. - Produce and distribute to police officers an information bulletin on cases dealt with by the Police Ombudsman – April 2008. - Provide a targeted programme of information to 40 schools and community organisations – March 2009. - Maintain a programme to inform the public and the police of the outcomes of complaints and investigations. - Maintain a pro-active programme of responding to questions from the public, their representatives and the media about the work of the Office. - Corporate Business Plan to be available - June 2008. - Annual Report to be available to the Secretary of State - June 2008.
Management of resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain expenditure within 2% of allocated resource funding. - Maintain less than 5% staff absence per annum. - Maintain 70% of investigating officers with achievement of accredited investigator status. - Replace existing Case Management System with new Case Handling System – October 2008. - Ensure all identified training in support of CHS is carried out - September 2008. - Conduct review of new Case Handling System – March 2009. - Complete annual fair employment monitoring return - May 2008. - Complete annual equality scheme progress report - August 2008.

Making a Complaint

If you have a complaint about a police officer, you should contact us. You can;

- Write to us at the address given below;
- Call in at the Office between 9 am and 5 pm Monday to Friday;
- Phone the Office at any time on 0845 601 2931 or 028 9082 8600; telephone calls to this Office may be monitored for training, quality assurance and other lawful purposes;
- Send us a fax at any time on 028 9082 8659; E-mail us at info@policeombudsman.org; or
- Visit our website at www.policeombudsman.org

You do not have to pay to make a complaint

Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland
New Cathedral Buildings
St Anne's Square
11 Church Street
BELFAST BT1 1PG

Tel: 028 9082 8600

Fax: 028 9082 8615

Minicom: 028 9082 8756

Web: www.policeombudsman.org

If you have a complaint about the Office of the Police Ombudsman

If you are not satisfied with any aspect of the Police Ombudsman's services or actions, you have a right to complain. You can make a complaint verbally (by telephone or by calling at our Office) or in writing (by letter, fax or e-mail).

Your complaint will be registered and acknowledged within three days and a response given to you within 20 working days.

The Office of the Police Ombudsman is independent and its decisions are final. Any complaints about its service should be referred to the Police Ombudsman. If, having raised a complaint of maladministration (e.g. delay, discourtesy, failure to apologise) with the Ombudsman's office you are unhappy with the written explanation you receive, you can forward it to the Secretary of State with a letter specifying the particulars of why you are unhappy with the Ombudsman's reply of explanation. The Secretary of State cannot consider the decisions of the Ombudsman on the investigation of a complaint, or the outcome of an investigation, or comment on matters which would properly fall to the courts.

The address is:

The Secretary of State
Northern Ireland Office
Castle Buildings
Stormont
Belfast BT4 3SG



Era Silk
Printed on Era Silk, comprising of 50% genuine de-inked post consumer waste, the balance being FSC certified, chlorine free pulp from well-managed forests.