

# PCCS

Police Complaints Commissioner  
for Scotland

## Improving complaints handling

Robin Johnston  
6 October 2009

## Meeting the standards

- **The need for proper investigation**
  - obtain a statement from the complainer
  - proportionate further enquiries
- **Communicating with the complainer**
  - manage expectations at the start of the process
  - regular updates on progress
  - unreasonable complainers



## Meeting the standards

- **Conflicts of interest**
- **The final response**
  - proper evaluation of the IO's findings
  - address all complaints
  - give adequate reasons
  - specify any service improvements
  - apologise, but only if justified
- **The aftermath**
  - further contact from the complainer
  - ensure measures promised are implemented



## Specific improvements

- **Signposting the PCCS**
  - **the difficulties posed by previous cases**
  - **section 42: efficient and effective complaint handling**
  - **standard passage in all final responses**



## Specific improvements

- **“Criminal” allegations/misconduct**
  - **section 34(3)(b): “an allegation of an act or omission which constitutes a crime”**
  - **regulation 7(1)(a): referral of eg assault allegation to PF**
  - **regulation 6(2): consideration of misconduct proceedings eg oppressive/improper conduct**
  - **the role of the Commissioner**
  - **the need to inform the complainer of the decision not to pursue proceedings**
  - **the need to give sufficient reasons for the decision**
  - **NOT an opinion on whether proceedings should take place**



## A useful resource for the future

### **PCCS Bulletins**

- **issued at least twice yearly**
- **summarise key CHR recommendations**
- **provide guidance**
- **a source of precedent**
- **improve complaint handling and policing in general**



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