

User-focused Assessment of the Accessibility of Police Complaints Handling undertaken recently in relation to all Scottish Police Forces.

Functionality and Accessibility

We looked at how easy it was for users of all abilities to access the website and find out how to make a complaint about the police.

- All police forces have a page dedicated to complaints about the police;
- Some forces complaints pages are harder to locate than others;
- We noted key features such as ability to resize text, information available in languages other than English and 'listen to page' facilities.

It is clear that progress is continuing to be made in this area, however PCCS will make observations for each police force individually.

Process

We considered the way in which police forces explained what would happen when a member of the public makes a complaint and how this process is managed.

- The majority of police forces described the complaints process with some helpful suggestions on details that people might provide when making a complaint
- Although the early stages of the process are clear, there is less information of what happens when conciliation is unsuccessful, if the complaint is non criminal. There was limited reference to the Scottish Government leaflet-*Complaints about the Police*
- There was limited information on the alternative arrangements for senior officer complaints, or service standards in complaints handling.
- There is no information on the outcomes or lessons learned.

It is clear that some improvement would be helpful in this area and recommendations for improvement will be made to all each police forces.

Links to other Organisations

We considered if information and advice was provided to help people who might need support with their complaint?

- Some forces mentioned Citizens Advice Bureau but did not provide a link to this or any other support organisation within their locality.
- Half mentioned PCCS, but one still referred to the previous complaints handling arrangements through HMICS.
- Half made a link to the PCCS website

It is clear that some improvement would be helpful in this area and recommendations for improvement will be made to most police forces

Contact Options

We looked at options available to contact the force that best suits the users needs.

- Two forces had on-line forms and one further force had this facility but it didn't appear to work at the time of the assessment.
- None of the remaining forces offered a complaint form that could be printed and emailed/posted as an alternative to on-line.

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- Other forms of contact including Professional Standards Units address or texting were not widely available.

It is clear that some improvement would be helpful in this area and recommendations for improvement will be made to most police forces.

Feedback Options

We looked at options for people to provide feedback and express satisfaction. This was cited as an example of Good Practice in the HMICS Thematic Inspection- Quality of Service in 2004

- Half of forces have now adopted this approach
- Sometimes the information is contained on the Complaints webpage which may not strike the appropriate balance when taking into consideration the impact of the message on both satisfied and dissatisfied people alike.

PCCS will make observations for each police force individually in this area.