

This report presents information on complaints about Northern Constabulary for the financial year 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011.

1. ALL COMPLAINTS: KEY FINDINGS 2010-11

- The total number of complaint cases received by Northern Constabulary in 2010-11 is down (-5.9%) on last year (2009-10), compared with an overall reduction for Scotland of -8.0%.
- The number of complaint allegations received by the force in 2010-11 is up +9.0% on last year (2009-10), compared with an overall reduction for Scotland of -8.8%.
- The majority of allegations received concerned on-duty conduct (78.6%), followed by 19.7% for quality of service and 1.7% for off-duty conduct.
- The majority of on- and off-duty allegations received were directed at police officers (95.4%), compared with 3.4% at police staff and 3.1% at special constables¹.
- The number of all allegations disposed of was up very slightly (+0.8%) on last year, compared with a fall of -5.8% for Scotland as a whole.

TABLE 1: SUMMARY STATISTICS – NORTHERN CONSTABULARY, 2005-06 to 2010-11²

Fiscal year	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11
Complaint cases recorded	193	171	185	176	272	256
Complaint allegations received: on duty	181	220	214	284	417	408
Complaint allegations received: quality of service	n/a	n/a	22	16	48	102
Complaint allegations received: off duty	n/a	n/a	18	11	11	9
Complaint allegations: total received	181	220	254	311	476	519
Complaint allegations disposed of: on duty	229	206	191	257	469	419
Complaint allegations disposed of: quality of service	n/a	n/a	25	15	41	91
Complaint allegations disposed of: off duty	n/a	n/a	8	15	11	15
Complaint allegations: total disposed of	229	206	224	287	521	525
Complaint cases recorded per 10k population: Northern	6.9	6.0	6.5	6.1	9.4	8.8
Complaint cases recorded per 10k population: Scotland	5.4	6.1	8.3	9.4	8.8	8.1
Complaint allegations received per 10k population: Northern ³	6.4	7.8	8.9	10.8	16.5	17.9
Complaint allegations received per 10k population: Scotland ⁴	8.2	9.3	13.3	16.6	14.8	13.4

There can be various reasons for the differences seen in these statistics, including poor or better conduct of members of a force, new procedures adopted or varying public confidence in reporting dissatisfaction:

- The rate of complaint cases per 10k population received by Northern Constabulary in 2010-11 was down on the previous year but remains above the Scottish average.
- The force continues to experience year-on-year increases in the rate of complaint allegations received and as a result has one of the highest rates in Scotland.

¹ A single allegation may be directed at more than one member of a police force - hence percentages may not add up to 100%.

² Complaints prior to April 2007 were recorded under an earlier definition that did not include off-duty and quality of service complaints.

³ Following recalculation, revised figures are presented for allegations prior to 2009/10 from those in the 2008/09 version of this report.

⁴ Following recalculation, revised figures are presented for allegations prior to 2009/10 from those in the 2008/09 version of this report.

Fig 1: Complaint cases received by 10k population, 2005-06 to 2010-11

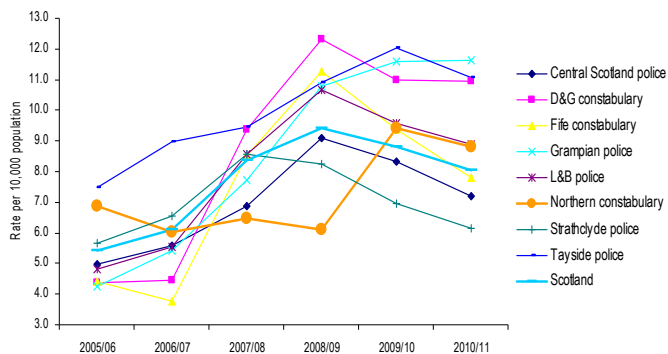


Fig 1b: Complaint allegations received per 10k population, 2007-08 to 2010-11



2. ON-DUTY COMPLAINTS: KEY FINDINGS 2010-11

- A total of 78.6% of all allegations received by Northern in 2010-11 were allegations concerning on-duty conduct – lower than that for Scotland as a whole (81.6%).
- The number of on-duty allegations received by the force in 2010-11 is down -2.2% on last year (2009-10), compared with an overall reduction for Scotland of -10.3%.
- The number of on-duty allegations disposed of is down -10.7% on last year, compared with a reduction of -6.5% for Scotland as a whole.
- The majority of on-duty allegations received were directed at *police officers* (96.3% compared with 94.9% for Scotland as a whole), followed by 3.4% at *police staff* (6.2% for Scotland) and 2.2% at *special constables* (0.7% for Scotland)⁵.
- The most common types of allegation against on-duty members of the force disposed of were allegations of *irregular procedure* (27.0%), *neglect of duty* (15.8%) and *incivility* (14.8%)
- The most common outcomes of these allegations were *unsubstantiated by available evidence* (42.0%), *resolved by explanation to the complainer* (30.5%) and *resulting in advice* (11.2%).

TABLE 2: TOP THREE ALLEGATION TYPES CLOSED BY NORTHERN CONSTABULARY, 2005-06 TO 2010-11

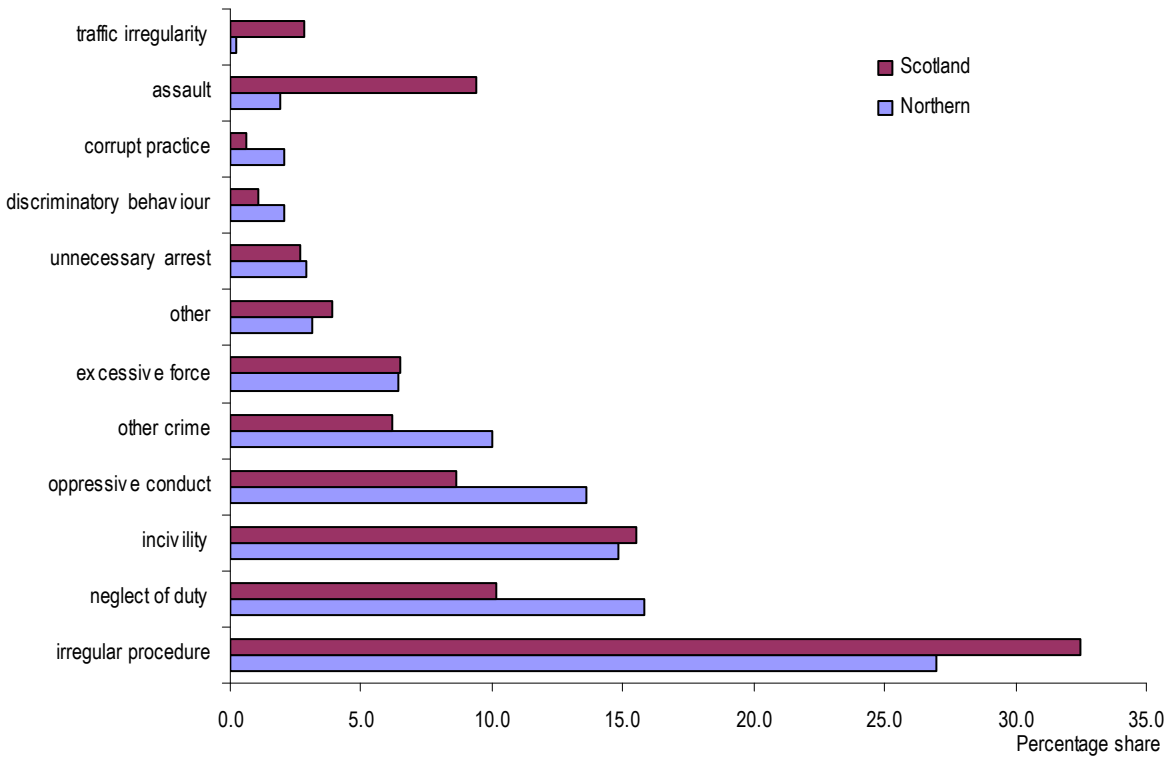
Fiscal year ⁵	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11
Irregular procedure – number disposed of	34	28	30	45	113	113
Percentage change on previous year (%)	161.5	-17.6	7.1	50.0	151.1	0.0
Neglect of duty – number disposed of	39	44	29	40	86	66
Percentage change on previous year (%)	21.9	12.8	-34.1	37.9	115.0	-23.3
Incivility – number disposed of	42	37	21	33	43	62
Percentage change on previous year (%)	61.5	-11.9	-43.2	57.1	30.3	44.2

- Disposals of allegations of incivility have risen in the force for the third successive year, while those of neglect of duty have fallen by just under a quarter and the previously upward trend for irregular procedure has been halted this year,
- Most categories have seen year-on-year falls, except for the use of excessive force and other crime.
- The force has a lower than (Scottish) average share of a number of allegation types, including irregular procedure, assault and traffic irregularities.
- The force has a higher than (Scottish) average share of allegations of various types of allegation including neglect of duty, oppressive conduct, other crime and corrupt practice.

⁵ A single allegation may be directed at more than one member of a police force - hence percentages may not add up to 100%.

⁶ NB: Large percentage changes can be a consequence of small raw numbers.

Fig 2: % share of allegations - Northern v Scotland, 2010-11



- Over the last couple of years the force has experienced year-on-year rises in the proportion of allegations disposed of that have been unsubstantiated by available evidence.
- At 3.3%, the proportion of on duty allegations disposed of by Northern Constabulary in 2010-11 leading to a “no proceedings” decision by the procurator fiscal is one of the lowest in Scotland.

Fig 3a: Outcomes for Northern, 2010-11

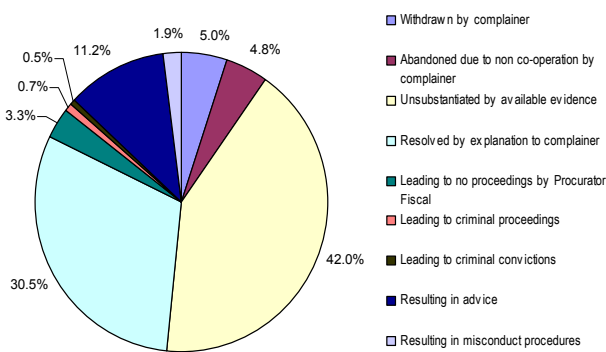
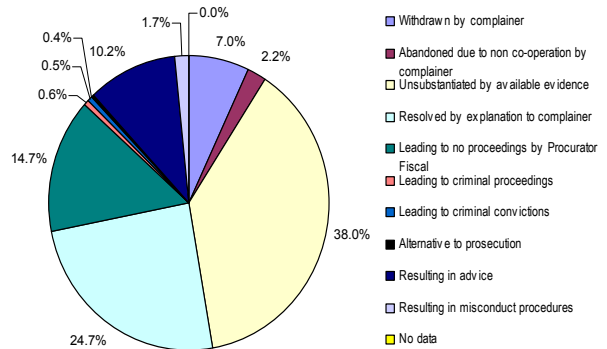


Fig 3b: Outcomes for Scotland, 2010-11



3. OFF-DUTY COMPLAINTS: KEY FINDINGS 2010-11

- Just 1.7% of all allegations received by Northern in 2010-11 were allegations concerning off-duty conduct, compared with 5.4% for Scotland.
- The number of these allegations received by the force in 2010-11 is down -18.2% on last year (2009-10), compared with an overall rise for Scotland of +3.3%. However, the number disposed of was up +36.4% on last year, compared with a rise of 21.2% for Scotland.
- The majority of allegations received were directed at *police officers* (55.6%) while 44.4% were directed at special constables (NB: low numbers involved).
- Of those allegations disposed of, a total of 45.5% were of a criminal nature, compared with 77.0% nationally, and the majority resulted in action being taken (60.0%) compared with 51.3% nationally.

TABLE 3: OUTCOMES OF OFF-DUTY ALLEGATIONS – NORTHERN CONSTABULARY AND SCOTLAND, 2007-08 TO 2010-11

Fiscal year ⁷	Northern				Scotland			
	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11
% Action taken	62.5	13.3	36.4	60.0	54.9	48.0	52.9	51.3
% Unsubstantiated	12.5	46.7	36.4	26.7	25.3	29.1	30.1	37.6
% Resolved	25.0	40.0	18.2	13.3	17.9	19.7	11.1	7.4
% Withdrawn	0.0	0.0	9.1	0.0	1.9	1.4	5.3	3.6
% Abandoned	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.8	0.6	0.0
TOTAL - number	8	15	11	15	257	488	342	417

4. QUALITY OF SERVICE COMPLAINTS: KEY FINDINGS 2010-11

- A total of 19.7% of all allegations received by Northern Constabulary in 2010-11 concerned quality of service. The proportion for Scotland is 12.9%.
- The number of quality of service allegations received by the force in 2010-11 is up 112.5% on last year (2009-10), compared with a reduction for Scotland of -3.5%.
- The number of quality of service allegations disposed of by the force rose +122.0% on last year, compared with a fall of -10.1% for Scotland as a whole.
- The majority of allegations received were directed at aspects of *service delivery* (40.2%), *policy and procedure* (34.3%) and *service outcomes* (25.5%) .

Fig 4a: % share of quality of service allegations - Northern

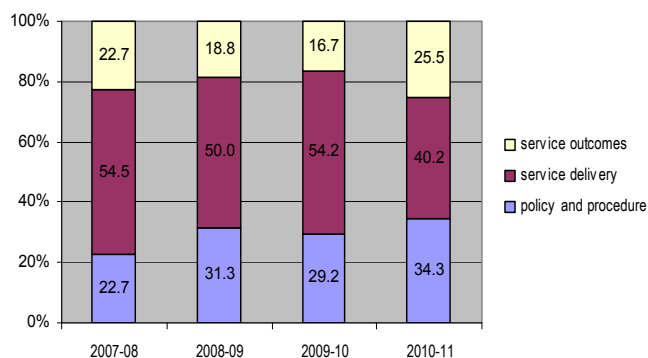
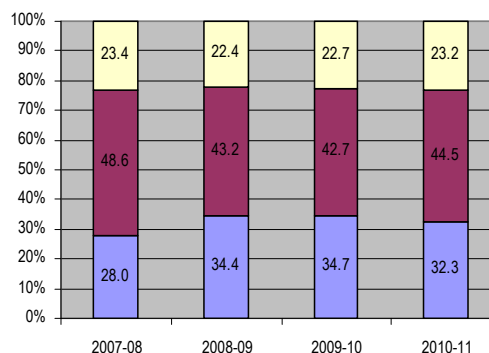


Fig 4b: % share of quality of service allegations - Scotland



⁷ NB: Large percentage changes can be a consequence of small raw numbers.