Independent Office for Police Conduct

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Our refs: 07/24/220, 07/24/221 & 07/24/224

Kate Barker
LGB Alliance
via email: kate.barker@lgballiance.org.uk

14 August 2024

Dear Kate Barker,

Thank you for your recent correspondence (IOPC complaint refs: 07/24/220, 07/24/221 & 07/24/224). I appreciate you taking the time to share your feedback and concerns and will address them below.

IOPC participation in Pride and use of the Progress Pride flag

The IOPC has a statutory duty to build trust and confidence in the police complaints system. Throughout the year, our colleagues attend a variety of stakeholder and community events to raise awareness of the IOPC and the police complaints system. This engagement activity is particularly focused on those communities who have lower levels of trust in the police. Participation in Pride helps us to raise awareness of the IOPC and to engage with the LGBTQIA+ community, who have historically had lower levels of confidence in policing.

We believe in fair and impartial treatment of all individuals - an inclusive culture for both our staff and our service users is one of the IOPC's core values and underpins all our work. Our service standards also set out a commitment to providing services that are accessible and to treating everyone with respect and courtesy.

In our day-to-day work, it's important that we hear the voices of as many groups in society as possible. Our stakeholders often have opposing views, and we welcome this challenge, and use it to inform our work. We engage with a wide range of groups, individuals and organisations and value all feedback we receive from stakeholders – this doesn't mean we agree with everything they say.

IOPC's association and accreditation with Stonewall

The IOPC is keen to ensure that the services we provide are accessible and inclusive of people of differing communities, backgrounds, ways of being and lived experiences. In an effort to do this, we opted to gain feedback on our delivery to LGBTQIA+ communities using the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index, where we are assessed and graded against set criteria. We have found this process useful when considering provision of services to LGBTQIA+ communities, service users, and stakeholders.

We are signed up to a variety of different schemes such as the Disability Confident Scheme (run by the Department for Work and Pensions), the Race at Work Charter (run by Business In The Community) and the Customer Service Excellence accreditation scheme (Assessment Services Ltd).

The IOPC is entirely independent of the organisations who provide these accreditations and assessments, we use their expertise to gain feedback and improve our services. Our engagement with these or any other group or organisation does not mean that the IOPC endorses their strategic or political views.

We review our membership of these accreditations regularly to ensure they remain aligned with our objectives and present value for money. A review of the IOPC's inclusion in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index is due to take place in 2025.

Complaints in relation to social media posts by an IOPC employee

An investigation into the complaints relating to social media posts was commissioned in line with IOPC policies and procedures. As the employee has now left the IOPC, the investigation cannot be completed and no further action will be taken.

IOPC EDI strategy

Thank you for highlighting that sex was not mentioned in the IOPC ED&I Strategy. We agree that this was incorrect and have now updated this document to include sex along with the other eight protected characteristics.

Women's confidence in IOPC and the complaints system

As part of our work to ensure that everyone can have confidence in the police complaints system, we have prioritised a range of work in response to lower levels of confidence among women. The IOPC's work on violence against women and girls was prioritised in response to public concern about the police response to these crimes, as well as cultural attitudes in policing towards women and girls.

We are working with the police service to improve their handling of complaints and conduct matters, helping to drive improvements in policing practice and build trust and confidence in those who have reason to make a complaint. We are working collaboratively with a range of stakeholders and engaging with women to raise awareness and to ensure their voice is heard and at the centre of our work.
To date our work includes:

- Publishing guidance for the police service and IOPC staff on challenging victim blaming language, attitudes and behaviours.
- Publishing a review of police force handling of complaint and misconduct cases involving violence against women and girls.
- Helping the police service to improve the way complaints and misconduct involving police perpetrated domestic abuse are recorded to enable more effective tracking and reporting.

- Designing a campaign to raise awareness of the police complaints system amongst victim survivors and the organisations supporting them. We envisage launching the campaign after the summer break.

Thank you for raising these issues with the IOPC. I hope this response helps to assure you that we remain focused on providing an inclusive service and improving the confidence of all groups. We will continue to engage widely and listen to the views of all our stakeholders while conducting all our work independently of the police and all other groups and organisations.

Yours sincerely,

Kathie Cashell
Acting Deputy Director General, Strategy and Corporate Services
Independent Office for Police Conduct