| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 25-2009  Responded to: 31 July 2025 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

## Q1. In relation to Grievances, what progress has been made in relation to each of the recommendations made in the attached document SCOTTISH POLICE AUTHORITY & POLICE SCOTLAND GRIEVANCE PROCESS - FINAL APRIL 2024 and where has this progress been published?

As of July 2025, one recommendation remains ongoing (R1.1) with the following progress update:

“Work is progressing well in seeking to implement a PowerBi process that pulls out key data within the Case Management System. The new Case Management System has been logging new cases since March 2025. As part of the development of the PowerBI Dashboard we have ensured that this will allow for tracking of the key elements referenced within the Grievance recommendation including:

* Ongoing, completed, appeals
* Actual timescales versus procedure timescales
* Grievances upheld or dismissed
* Lessons Learned and improvement actions

Testing of our data is ongoing to ensure sufficient data quality/accuracy through the Power Bi System. There will also be a maturity in the process related to Lessons Learned etc where this will initially be a free-text box but a future assessment will take place based on inputs to identify potential categories that can be used to support future reporting. This will also be supported by the creation of an Employee Relations Organisational Learning Forum. The Terms of Reference (ToR) for this forum is in draft and currently awaiting executive approval however the working assumption is that this will be implemented alongside the implementation of the new HR Structure and new Centralised Case Team. Our aim is to develop a comprehensive report for progression through internal governance in February 2026 which will allow us to undertake a more meaningful analysis of our data on the new system and identify organisational learning / improvement activity through the new organisational learning forum.”

The Grievance Process Internal Audit report was presented to SPA Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee on 9 May 2024, with subsequent Internal Audit updates on progress reported on 15 August 2024; 20 November 2024 and 6 February 2025.

All Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee Meeting papers are published on the SPA website.

The latest is available here - [Internal Audit Update - 6 February 2025 | Scottish Police Authority.](https://www.spa.police.uk/publication-library/internal-audit-update-6-february-2025/)

## Q2 In relation to Grievances, what progress has been made in relation to HMICS Recommendation 7 of their Assurance Review into Organisational Culture (2023) and where has this progress been published?  Police Scotland should rename and refocus its grievance process to resolution/mediation, providing mandatory initial steps (in line with contractual and regulatory entitlement) and clear training on the management of the process.

Police Scotland’s Improvement Plan in response to the findings of the HMICS Inspection of Organisational Culture was presented to the SPA People Committee on 29 August 2024 (Appendix A Improvement Plan).

Bi-annual HMICS Culture Review Action Plan Progress Reports are provided to the SPA People Committee and the latest version is available online - [Biannual HMICS Culture Review Action Plan Progress Report - 25 February 2025 | Scottish Police Authority](https://www.spa.police.uk/publication-library/biannual-hmics-culture-review-action-plan-progress-report-25-february-2025/).

**Q3. In relation to this report, HMICS Thematic Inspection of Organisational Culture in Police Scotland - Improvement Plan, which was presented by Police Scotland to the SPA People Committee 24th August 2024, what progress has been made in respect of Recommendation 7 and the associated key actions, namely AFD14 and AFD15.**

As reported to the August 2024 People Committee, the Areas for Development were aligned alongside recommendations, recognising that the Improvement Plan would evolve and that would include more detailed consideration of the areas for development, we advised that we would explore, in partnership with SPA, what action is needed going forward.

This approach is in line with our Governance arrangements as outlined in our response to Recommendation 11 from HMICS Thematic Inspection of Organisational Culture in Police Scotland:

***“The Scottish Police Authority and Police Scotland should put in place measures to monitor progress against the areas for development outlined in this thematic inspection, ensuring regular public reporting to allow assessment of progress”***

Recommendation 11 was closed in March 2025.

The latest progress updates were reported to SPA People Committee on 28 February 2025 - [Biannual HMICS Culture Review Action Plan Progress Report - 25 February 2025 | Scottish Police Authority](https://www.spa.police.uk/publication-library/biannual-hmics-culture-review-action-plan-progress-report-25-february-2025/).

The update for Recommendation 7 and specific updates on AFDs 14 & 15 are replicated below to be of assistance:

“Grievance and Resolving Workplace Issues

The revised grievance and resolving workplace issues procedure was published on 22 July 2024. It introduces several changes which adhere to the ACAS code of practice and addresses key issues identified by users / stakeholders through consultation such as:

* There has been a review of language to create a better balance between informal and formal resolution.
* Opportunities to raise concerns early have been created such as the offer of our mediation service. This is supported by guidance on workplace mediation which has been introduced alongside guidance for witnesses and subjects of grievances.
* Language such as ‘investigate’ and ‘evidence’ have been removed due to their meaning in a policing context.
* A new appendix to the procedure that highlights the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the process - there is a new checklist for Resolution Managers.

To support the launch of the procedure, an implementation group was established to enable the roll out and promote the key changes and messaging in relation to the new procedure and the mediation service.  With representation from across business areas including Local Policing, P&D, PSD, SCD, OSD, C3, CJSD and attendance from TUs and Staff Associations, the group’s focus is to support and influence behavioural change across the organisation through using supporting products while identifying and implementing additional improvement activities. The group meets fortnightly (subject to ongoing review) and is supporting delivery of a multi-faceted implementation plan, focused on best supporting our people, and positively influencing behavioural change and practice across the organisation in respect of the revised procedure. A key area of focus has been briefings and support across all business areas, with a particular focus on line managers.

To support increased focus on early resolution, the mediation service was formally launched on 22 July 2024 alongside the new procedure. A mediation intranet page is available where our people can find more information about the service, what to expect from mediation, how to access support and make a referral. While still in its infancy, this service ensures mediation can be used as part of our work towards creating a positive workplace. Since 01 April 2024:

* There have been 16 referrals for mediation (compared to five in total the previous year).
* 71% of mediations were required due to either communication issues or breakdown of relationships.
* So far 21.4% of these have led to successful outcomes, with a further 35.7% of grievances either in progress or paused due to absence.
* 35.7% of mediations were deemed to be no longer be required  due to one or all involved parties moving roles. (Mediators encouraged participants to continue but this was unsupported)
* Only one (7.1%) mediation has been deemed unresolved.

Through consultation, stakeholders have recognised that one of the main issues in relation to poor grievance handling relate to application of the procedure rather than the procedure itself. As such, training through the People Management Development Programme (PMDP) is a fundamental aspect in ensuring the resolution of workplace issues at an early stage. The programme contains a specific module on creating a positive workplace and focuses on how people managers can foster a more inclusive and positive working environment and how they can resolve workplace issues proactively.  It also supports managers to develop a better understanding of the terms and conditions of their people along with the Equality Act and our obligations as an employer.

At present the largest phase of the programme (Phase 1 of 3) is running which focuses on training sergeants and staff grades 4-7 (totalling 2,959 individuals) To date, 997 of the 2,959 individuals in Phase 1 have been trained (34%) with this initial phase expected to conclude May 2026. Subsequent phases will focus on Inspectors, Chief Inspectors, and staff grades 8-10 (Phase 2 – totalling c1,540 individuals) followed by the final phase which will focus on Superintendents, Force Exec and staff grades 11-14 (Phase 3 – totalling c240 individuals)

Policing Together at Local Level

The Policing Together Strategy provides specific focus on EDI, culture and human rights however the actions are mainstreamed across relevant business areas and divisions and are built into People Plans. In addition, a refreshed People Plan has been developed to support the delivery of local actions to deliver the People Strategy.”

*“AFD14 - Police Scotland should focus analysis of misconduct, grievance and associated HR processes on identifying causal factors and underlying cross-cutting themes for wider organisational learning*

Professional Standards Department (PSD) and People and Development continue to work together through formalised processes to improve information sharing.

PSD National Conduct and Support and Service Delivery continue to develop a Preventions and Support Intervention Programme. The purpose being to identify those who are at risk of misconducting themselves and by ultising early and effective engagement, prevention and education, reduce the likelihood of matters occurring and/or escalating. This programme will ensure PSD are continuing to tackle root causes in addition to a reactive response.

To ensure PSD continue to operate in a fair, transparent, impartial, and accountable manner the force Fair Play Advisor is now incorporated in decision making. This assists with identifying and tackling cross cutting and wider cultural issues.”

## *“AFD15 - Police Scotland should improve throughcare and aftercare for misconduct and grievances cases, taking into account both the individuals and the teams involved*

An additional guidance document has been compiled and now in use to support Welfare Officers. This was created by PSD Support Service and Delivery, Divisional representation, and Scottish Police Federation in response to officers’ requests who are required to perform this vital role.

Additional guidance documents are under construction to assist those involved in PSD Conduct investigations with understanding the process and regulations. These will be relevant to complainers, witnesses, both police personnel and members of the public and subject officers.

A CPD event is currently planned for Support and Service Delivery Superintendents and CIs across the organisation aimed at enhancing understanding of PSD business areas, this will include management and support of officers by divisions during PSD investigations.”

If you require any further assistance, please contact us quoting the reference above.

You can request a review of this response within the next 40 working days by [email](mailto:foi@scotland.police.uk) or by letter (Information Management - FOI, Police Scotland, Clyde Gateway, 2 French Street, Dalmarnock, G40 4EH). Requests must include the reason for your dissatisfaction.

If you remain dissatisfied following our review response, you can appeal to the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner (OSIC) within 6 months - [online](http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal), by [email](mailto:enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info) or by letter (OSIC, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, KY16 9DS).

Following an OSIC appeal, you can appeal to the Court of Session on a point of law only.

This response will be added to our [Disclosure Log](http://www.scotland.police.uk/access-to-information/freedom-of-information/disclosure-log) in seven days' time.

Every effort has been taken to ensure our response is as accessible as possible. If you require this response to be provided in an alternative format, please let us know.