



Peter McCall

POLICE, FIRE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER

Ethics & Integrity Panel

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Cumbria Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner

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Contents

Foreword from the Panel Chair	Page 3
The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer	Page 4
About the Ethics and Integrity Panel	Page 5
Work of the Panel	Pages 6-13
Thematic Sessions	Page 13
Panel Recruitment	Page 14
Conclusion	Page 14



Foreword from the Panel Chair

Welcome to the 2023 Ethics and Integrity Panel Annual Report.

I have had the pleasure of being Chair of the Ethics and Integrity Panel since 2016. This will be my last annual report as I step down from the role in February 2024. The Panel's purpose has always been to promote and influence high standards of ethical performance in all aspects of policing in Cumbria and the work carried out by the Police and Crime Commissioner's office (OPCC). It achieves this by investigating, dip sampling, constructively challenging and reviewing a broad range of aspects of policy, process and performance, through the lens of ethics and integrity. We are entirely independent of the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and Cumbria Constabulary. From 1 April 2023 the remit of the Panel expanded to include Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service and we are now developing a work programme to include this area of business.

Over the last 12 months we have continued to see challenge and change for the people of Cumbria. This can be attributed to many reasons, not least us still dealing with legacy issues from the pandemic; the increasing challenges of the cost-of-living crisis, and of course societal issues and political instability that affect us all in both the UK and abroad. The Panel have been hugely impressed by the resilience, commitment, focus and determination to serve our county; constantly striving to offer the fire and the policing service that the public require. This is a great credit to the organisations and their officers and staff.

I am delighted that during 2023 we have recruited additional members to the panel, and along with more members who will join in 2024, this has broadened and deepened our capability, insight and importantly, our diversity. Whilst the Panel membership is from a diverse range of backgrounds and experience, we have two things in common. We and our families live in the county and are committed to seeing the area thrive and we all share the strong desire to ensure that Cumbria Constabulary and Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service continues to deliver high quality services to the public, while maintaining Cumbria as the safe and secure place to live that it currently is.

The Chief Constable, Chief Fire Officer, Commissioner and their teams fully support us in our work and are open to challenge, feedback and suggestions for improvement. In itself, this is an indicator of a strong, open, transparent and ethical culture.

While 2023 has been an incredibly challenging year, we have enhanced our work programme, and have adapted to look at a number of thematic areas. The information in this, and our other quarterly reports, helps to promote a wider understanding and awareness of performance and ethical approach of both Fire and the Constabulary.

We hope that you find the report useful and informative and on a personal level I would like to thank all colleagues I have worked with over the last 9 years in developing, evolving and growing the role of the panel, and our work.

Alan Rankin

Ethics and Integrity Panel Chair



The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, Peter McCall

2023 has been a year of change for not only my office but for the Ethics and Integrity Panel. From 1 April 2023 I took on Fire Governance and the Panel are now encompassing this area of business into their annual work programme.

I am incredibly grateful for the

commitment, professionalism, independent and pragmatic approach taken by the Ethics and Integrity panel in their work. They provide effective and sensible challenge which enables my office, the police and fire to take stock and indeed to change practice where necessary in order to improve the service we are all here to deliver to the public of Cumbria.

The ability of the panel to evolve and undertake in-depth scrutiny of specific areas provides not only myself but also the communities of Cumbria with additional assurance. It seeks to achieve this by acting as a critical friend in the work it oversees.

Whilst we are blessed with highly professional, dedicated and committed police officers, staff, firefighters and fire staff we must always be ready to examine performance to ensure that each organisation maintains the highest possible standards, when often faced with difficult and challenging circumstances.

I look forward to working with the Panel in 2024.

Peter McCall

Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Cumbria

Chief Constable, Rob Carden



As a Constabulary we consistently strive to provide members of the public with an outstanding police service to keep Cumbria safe.

The ongoing transformation of the force has delivered

significant improvements in performance and service delivery to communities across Cumbria over the last 12 months; the breadth of these improvements covers a range of areas including call handling, response to calls, crime data integrity, standards of investigation, outcome rates, proactivity and crime prevention. However, in order to build public confidence in policing, it is imperative that our police officers and staff continue to demonstrate the highest ethical and moral standards.

The important work of the Panel provides us with the independent scrutiny to ensure that we demonstrate the highest standards of ethical performance and continue to respect a national model of policing based on the principle of 'policing by consent'.

Rob Carden

Chief Constable, Cumbria Constabulary

Chief Fire Officer, Rick Ogden



The Vision of Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service is to be a community focussed, professional and trusted Fire and Rescue Service that makes Cumbria a safer

place for all.

Over the last twelve months the Service has gone through a significant change process and moved from the governance of Cumbria County Council to the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC). This has involved a significant amount of work, that has included the creation of new departments, a large number of policies and procedures to be rewritten and the introduction of new IT systems. Despite this front-line performance to the people of Cumbria continues to be excellent.

The scrutiny work of the panel provides us and the public with the reassurance that we are delivering within a framework based on the National Fire Chief Councils Core Code of Ethics and enables us to continue to embed within the PFCCs governance structure with confidence.

Rick Ogden

Chief Fire Officer, Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service

About the Ethics and Integrity Panel

The Ethics and Integrity Panel challenge, encourage, support and promote and influence high standards of professional work and ethics within Cumbria Constabulary, Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPFCC); ensuring that these are effective in all organisations. This report provides an overview of the work that the Panel has carried out during 2023.

The Panel meets privately on a quarterly basis to enable open and frank discussions. The agenda and reports are published on the Commissioner's website following each meeting, with only sensitive or confidential information being excluded. Reports are provided by the Panel to the Commissioner's public meeting to provide information about the Constabulary, Fire Service and OPFCC's performance in areas that relate to ethics and integrity. The purpose of this is to promote openness, transparency and public confidence.

A programme of work is developed and agreed on an annual basis enabling the Panel to fulfill its terms of reference and scrutiny role. Where necessary the Panel will also provide scrutiny for areas identified during HMICFRS inspections to enable the implementation of recommendations to be monitored. In addition, they have critical and important thematic issues referred to them by both Cumbria Constabulary, Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service and the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. This enabled the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Officers to be provided with independent reassurance.

Further information regarding the Panel, its membership, and the work it carries out can be found on the Commissioner's website:

<https://cumbria-pcc.gov.uk/what-we-do/ethics-integrity-panel/>

The membership of the Panel in 2023 was:

Andrew Dodd	Mike Duff
Alan Rankin	Alex Rocke
Megan Masters	Ben Phillips
Jane Scattergood	Shaun Thomson

Work of the Panel During 2023

Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct

The Panel's role is to ensure that both the Constabulary, Fire Service and the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner have embedded within their organisations the respective **Code of Ethics** and **Code of Conduct**.

The Panel have been provided with assurance whilst carrying out their role that all organisations take the ethos of the Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct seriously and this has been evident in the reviews and dip samples they have undertaken in other areas of business. During their various dip sample sessions, the Panel saw first-hand that policies and procedures within the Constabulary had the ethos of the Code of Ethics embedded within them.



Similarly, the Commissioner upon re-election in May 2021 swore an oath to act with integrity and signed a Code of Conduct and Ethics. It sets out how the Commissioner has agreed to abide by the seven standards of conduct recognised as the Nolan Principles. This Ethical Framework allows transparency in all areas of the work of the Police and Crime Commissioner. These principles encompass the Commissioner's work locally and whilst representing Cumbria in regional and national forums.

Equally importantly, all the OPFCC members of staff adhere to a **Staff Code of Conduct** which is based upon the model Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees and incorporates the principles arising from the Nolan Report, providing a framework for all employees in terms of official conduct

During 2023 the Panel did not identify any complaints received from either members of staff or the Commissioner regarding conduct or integrity. During 2024 the panel will also ensure that the Code of Ethics is embedded within Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service.

Public Complaints



At their quarterly meetings the Panel received performance data from the Constabulary on the number of complaints received, how these have been managed and whether they were within the required timescales. From these reports there were areas which had again seen an increase in complaints being received, these being impolite language, unprofessional attitude, lack of impartiality, overbearing or harassing behaviours. The Panel undertook to specifically review some of these complaints to see if there were any trends or concerns.

During 2023 the Panel carried out two dip sample sessions within the Constabulary's Professional Standards Department (PSD) in which they reviewed a total of 62 files. They carried out the dip samples directly via the Centurion system enabling members to view all information, actions and outcomes on the live system. Panel members spoke directly with case workers regarding any issues or concerns.

Following the sessions any recommendations or comments were collated within an action sheet to ensure that they are completed and where appropriate implemented in a timely manner. Some of these include:

- The importance of linking intelligence reports and information received within the Professional Standards Department to the Comms Centre to inform any future incidents.
- Ensuring that complaint handling is clear and understood by both the complainant and the complaint handler; and information is sent to the correct identified correspondence address.
- Having robust property procedures in place to reduce the number of lost or damaged property claims.
- Some excellent case work was identified, with good work carried out by local policing teams to deal with complaints and social issues. Responses were often clear and explained fully the issues and outcome to the complaint.
- Officers not using body worn video when dealing with incidents or members of the public continued to be an issue, or the footage is not marked and retained. Although the situation has improved significantly over recent years. Some complaints could have been dealt with quicker and more effectively if this independent evidence had been available.

During the year it was noted the significant increase in the number of complaint and misconduct cases which staff and officers were dealing with. A Review of PSD has been commissioned and will be carried out during the early part of 2024, which the Panel welcomed.

Quality of Service Issues



The Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner received 675 letters, emails and telephone calls from members of the public who wished to raise issues or dissatisfaction with the Commissioner, highlighting issues that were concerning local communities. Many of these related to operational policing and the OPFCC liaised with the Chief Constable's Staff office to provide information or a solution for the individual. The types of issues raised are varied and detailed below are some of the categories:

- The Police Service Dissatisfaction in relation to the standard of service provided or received.
- Fox Hunting
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Crime – drug dealing, rural crime and ongoing 'in progress' ASB neighbour issues.
- Miscellaneous – how crime figures are recorded, DBS check process and CCTV cameras.

Many of the solutions were provided by the Constabulary in conjunction with local policing teams, local focus hubs and partner agencies, including local educational establishments, to see to identify the underlying causes of crime or behaviours and seek to support and deter individuals from going on to make further adverse life choices. The information gathered is used to look at how assistance or changes can be provided not only locally but throughout Cumbria. The Commissioner also uses the information to implement local initiatives to make a difference to local communities. Some of these included Safety of Women at Night (SWAN), Safer Streets Projects in Whitehaven and Workington, and funding for local projects through the 'Property Fund'.

After the 1st April 2023 when the Commissioner took on the responsibility for Fire governance, the OPFCC received eight contacts from the public which related to:

- Fire Resources (buildings and fire fighters)
- Miscellaneous/general issues
- Fire Consultation

The OPCC also received a number of compliments thanking the Commissioner, Constabulary or Fire for the service they provide.

Complaint Reviews



From 1 February 2020 the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (OPFCC) has carried out **Public Complaint Review** outcomes of when requested by the complainant. During 2023 the OPFCC received 41 review requests, which 11 (32%) of those carried out were upheld. The Panel dip sampled a number of reviews and felt that they had been dealt with appropriately and within a timely manner. Where a review had been upheld and recommendations made, the Constabulary had carried out further work providing the complainant and OPFCC with their findings and outcome. Identified learning from the upheld reviews was collated and disseminated within local teams and more widely across the force.

The OPFCC does not carry out this function in relation to complaints made to Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service. During 2024 the Panel will be looking at complaints received by Fire as part of their annual work programme.

Misconduct Police Officer & Police Staff



The Panel received information on a quarterly basis relating to **Police Officer and Police Staff Misconduct** from the Constabulary's Professional Standards Department. This enables the Panel to monitor performance in relation to these areas of business and consider any patterns or trends across the whole organisation.

As part of their work programme the Panel have reviewed 20 misconduct files during two dip sample sessions in 2023. During the session the Panel reviewed all completed files, providing views and recommendations for any improvement in the way information was provided, how cases were handled or

the public perception of the handling of such cases. Nearly half of the cases related to officers' conduct when they were 'off-duty'. The Panel were pleased to note that the quality of the files was being maintained and that actions were being fully recorded within each case.

Misconduct – Fire Employees



The Panel carried out their first dip sample session of **Fire Employee Misconduct** cases in October, reviewing 10 cases which had been dealt with during previous 12 months. Prior to the Commissioner undertaking Fire governance, conduct cases had been dealt with by the County Council's HR department. These were now being dealt with by dedicated HR staff within Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service. Improvements could be seen in how files were dealt with and details of actions or sanctions being imposed and followed up. The Panel were particularly pleased to see that following the conclusion of each misconduct case it was internally reviewed to ascertain where improvements could be made in future cases or within the service.

Grievances



On a six-monthly basis the Panel have reviewed **Grievances** being processed by the Constabulary. Although the Constabulary's HR Department dealt with all grievances, they link in with the Anti-Corruption Unit to ensure matters were cross referenced. In April and October 2023, the Panel reviewed a total of 6 finalised cases and discussed each one in turn with the HR Manager. Generally, the grievances were regarding policies and procedures or action taken against an individual. For any officer or member of staff leaving the organisation the Panel were keen that detailed conversations were held with individuals to help understand the issues and make improvements to officer and staff employment. The Panel had assisted the Constabulary in reviewing the draft management of change process. The Panel's 2024 work programme will include reporting by Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service of their grievance cases and dip sample sessions.

Civil Claims



On behalf of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner the Panel also monitor **Civil Claims** being processed by the Constabulary's Legal Department. They received information about the types of claims being made, the stage the proceedings had reached and about the claims that had been resolved. As part of this oversight the Panel seek assurance that any trends are being identified and how the organisation has learnt from particular cases; disseminating such information throughout the organisation to avoid future risks and claims. There had been an increase in the number of Employment Tribunals some of which had been upheld; and in the number of public liability cases being lodged. Learning had been identified and implemented across the force and the Panel will monitor this as part of their dip sample and report process.

Young in Service Officers



The Panel continued to monitor **Young in Service Officers** following their recruitment process as part of Operation Uplift from 2020 to 2023. Due to the large proportion of officers with less than 3-6 years' service being on front line duties the Panel sought assurance that these officers were being supported, had a designated tutor constable and a reasonable workload. The summary findings were:

- Officers' young in service carry around 10% more workload than officers from other groups. However, the average workload by officer number was higher for the group with 3-6 years-service (this is due to the fact there are less officers in the 3-6-year group than the young-in-service group).
- Complaints - Male officers received more complaints (allegations) than female officers mostly in the 3-6 years' service group.
- Officers with more than 3 years-service are more likely to be assaulted than those who are young-in-service

Recruitment – Fire Fighters



In November 2023 the Panel had reviewed the **'On-Call' Recruitment** process being carried out by Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service. It was important that the campaigns were tailored to the different communities across Cumbria. The Fire Service were offering open days and developing virtual sessions to enable potential candidates to speak with firefighters, particularly female firefighters to attract more females into the role. Members provided feedback on the recruitment packs particularly in relation to potential candidates having to provide availability and offered suggestions on different groups to approach. This area of work will continue to be reviewed during their 2024 work programme.

Police Officer & Staff Wellbeing



During 2023 the Panel monitored **Officer and Staff Wellbeing and Sickness**. During the second half of the year force absence rates had reduced from 4% at the same point in 2022 to 2.8% at the end of September 2023. Tutor constables were recruited to support the new officers when they were working within the policing teams and more were being recruited with the aim of having 2 tutor constables per policing team. In November 2023 the total headcount for the Constabulary was 1,393 with additional funding for a further 29 officers being realised in 2024-25. Further recruitment of Police Community Support Officers (PCSO) was planned in March 2024 to increase numbers as at the end of 2023 there were only 48 across the county. The Panel would be monitoring this process as part of the 2024 work programme.

Information Management



During 2023 the Panel received six monthly reports on how the Constabulary and Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner were complying with their statutory duties in relation processing and managing data. This included Freedom of Information Requests, Subject Access Requests and data processing. Both organisations continued to see a year-on-year increase in the number of requests being received. The reports also identified whether any data breaches had occurred and how these were dealt with, including whether or not they had been reported to the Information Commissioner's Office and the subsequent outcomes. In November 2023 the Panel were updated on a data breach which had occurred, the actions taken and that processes and procedures had been updated and strengthened following the breach.

Violence Against Women and Girls



In February and August, the Panel were provided with updates on the work being carried out by the Constabulary to deliver an array of services in response to offences such as domestic abuse, sexual crime and patterns of behaviour. Increased reporting had been realised during the year and was attributed to the work and training of officers to better understand victims needs. A Street Safe tool had provided the public with the opportunity to engage with the police on issues which affected them; and the 'Call it Out' Survey had received 3,000 responses identifying hotspots where police patrols needed to be diverted to. The Panel had been keen to learn of the work being done to encourage ethnic or sectarian religious communities to report incidents, being advised that leaflets had been translated into different languages and a multi-cultural conference had been held on 3 October.

Race Action Plan



Following the National Police Chief's Council (NPCC) identifying five key areas to change internal cultures and inclusivity towards communities the Constabulary had carried out an internal and external consultation process. HMICFRS as part of their cultural audit process had found the force to have an inclusive culture. The Panel were briefed twice during the year on how the Constabulary were progressing this work and how this work would be benchmarked to enable performance and success to be measured. There was a requirement to produce evidence on what the force were doing and why a decision had been made not to do some elements. The actions were included with the live force improvement plan enabling audits of work to be carried out. The force had taken a decision to look at BAME and work with those groups rather than simply focussing on just black communities. The Constabulary were looking at stakeholder and community mapping to identify opportunities to reach wider audiences. A full update and monitoring of the implementation plan would be carried out by the Panel in February 2024.

Property Store



In 2022 the Panel had raised concerns about the number of civil claims being received in relation to lost or damaged property which had been held by the police. A review of all property stores had been carried out with a number of new storage and working practices being implemented. A significant step forward of inventory management had been realised with bar coding of all property locations to enable accurate accounting and auditing of property. The Panel would continue to monitor this work through reports and any reduction in civil claims being made.

Right Care, Right Person



From January 2024, the Constabulary were looking to take a new approach when dealing with vulnerable people who had health or social care needs to ensure that the right person with the right skills, training and expertise met their needs; and where the force did not have a legal responsibility to deal with the matter. This approach would include signposting callers to contact the appropriate agency especially if the responsibility for a duty of care lay with another organisation. Collaborative work with partner organisations had been developed with testing of the designed toolkit taking place at the end of 2023 in preparation for the launch.

Digital Policing



In August 2023 the Panel had been briefed about a project to develop digital policing skills within the workforce using an evidence-based approach. Funding had been secured from the NPCC Science Technology and Research (STAR) fund which was being used to training officers in what digital information could be retrieved from different technology such as doorbell cameras and home routers. Over 500 Domestic Abuse cases had been reviewed to understand what improvements could be made for future investigations. To assist officers a number of guides, short videos and crib sheets were being developed. The members had been keen to ensure that ongoing digital care for victims and witnesses was provided. As part of the toolkit officers would be advised of 'digital hygiene' procedures which could be provided to help with online security and safety. Making victims more resilient, protected and potentially reduce future crimes.

Thematic Sessions

Since its inception, the Panel has delivered a significant programme of work on a planned, dynamic and responsive basis. Detailed below and overleaf are some of the areas the Panel reviewed during 2023:



In early 2023 the Panel sought assurance that the Constabulary were carrying out rigorous **vetting of new officers and staff** being employed, particularly with the pressures of meeting the Operation Uplift target by the end of March 2023. Two vetting dip sample sessions took place during the year the first in February and then a following up session in August 2023, where the Panel reviewed a total of 20 cases. The Panel had found that robust checks had been carried out and where necessary applicants had not been progressed where they did not meet the strict criteria.



The Panel were provided with a demonstration on a new **CCTV System** which the Constabulary were considering. The new system would replace an aging system and provide significantly enhanced capabilities to assist officers and staff in the detention and solving of criminal offences. Further work and training programmes were to be developed during the year to enable the system to be purchased and implemented. The Panel stressed the importance of ensuring the public were aware of the advancements and that it did not have facial recognition capabilities to address and allay any fears or speculation.



Following the findings from the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities (CRED) report the government undertook to develop a new framework to monitor the use of police powers including **Custody Detention Scrutiny**. As the Panel already carried out monitoring of Stop and Search and Use of Force it was felt appropriate that the Panel should provide the review function for custody detention. The Panel carried out dip samples of custody detention, reviewing 12 cases and received performance reports. They raised concerns on the average time of detention disparity between white males and Asian males. It was understood that this was due to time taken for interpreters to attend police stations particularly for police interviews.



During 2023 the Panel undertook quarterly reviews of **Stop and Search** and **Use of Force**, enabling the implementation of HMICFRS recommendations to be monitored. The Panel carry out reviews of incidents via body worn video and completed forms, reviewing 48 separate incidents, which included incidents where the use of **TASER** had also been a factor. In early 2023 the Panel found that although the incidents themselves were being carried out well the completion of the required forms was not. This had also been recognised by the Constabulary had introducing annual refresher training as part of the 3-day personal safety training package and include communication and de-escalation training. The Constabulary were using Stop and Search as a key tool by the proactive policing teams to help prevent and detect crimes.



The use of **Body Worn Video** continued to feature within the monitoring work of the Panel. Noticeably when reviewing Stop and Search or Use of Force incidents the first 30 seconds of footage had no sound when activated by the officer. The Panel felt that this timeframe was often when an officer was introducing themselves and provided a good context of the interaction. The matter had been raised at a national level and in September 2023 the Panel were notified that National Police Chief's Council (NPCC) had agreed a standardised national approach to pre-vent buffering on all Cumbria BWV recordings which would rectify the issue raised by the Panel.

Panel Member Recruitment

During 2023 three separate recruitment campaigns were carried out to allow for succession planning as some of the Panel members retired at the end of 2023 and into the first six months of 2024. It will also allow the Panel to increase their workload as the OPFCC expands its remit in relation to Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service.

As a result of these campaigns four new members were appointed in 2023 with a further three being appointed to commence their roles in early 2024. A programme of Induction training and support from existing Panel members has enabled the newly appointed members to understand their roles and the work of the Panel.

The Panel Chair retired from the Panel in February 2024 and a process to appoint a new Panel Chair was carried out in January 2024.

Conclusion

The Panel continues to develop their role, expanding into other areas of business to assist not only the Constabulary and Fire but enable the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner to have further and more detailed oversight. They have shown their ability to respond to emerging and changing situations; adapt to understand the issues; work with the Constabulary, Fire and OPFCC to carry out work in addition to that scheduled within their work programme; and provide reassurance to these organisations and the public.

Recommendations and guidance given by the Panel continues to be welcomed; resulting in a number of positive changes and developments to processes and procedures. The Panel's 2024 work programme will continue to ensure that the Panel remain an independent body in their oversight of Cumbria Constabulary, Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service and the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner.