

APRIL 2026

EXECUTIVE & PRESENTING OFFICER:

STATUS: FOR INFORMATION

PURPOSE

This report covers the period of 1 October 2025 to 31 March 2026 (6 months) and its purpose is to advise members of the number and types of civil and employment claims against the Force received during the period and the amount paid out for those claims finalised during the period. The report also includes the current legal activity for Cleveland, Evolve Legal Services and the continued development of the collaborated Legal Service.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 It is recommended that Members note the content of the report.

SUMMARY OF LEGAL SERVICES COLLABORATION

1.2 Evolve Legal Services (ELS) is a policing collaboration that delivers legal services on behalf of 6 corporations sole (the YNYCA/Police and Crime Commissioners, and The Chief Constables of North Yorkshire Police, Durham Constabulary and Cleveland Police).

1.3 The service provides in-house legal services across a core specification that covers a broad range of subject areas and has maintained a depth of expertise in civil litigation, employment police and staff misconduct, corporate, commercial and operational law.

1.4 The service has 56 permanent and temporary staff comprising barristers, solicitors, legal executives, paralegals and apprentices. The service currently has four vacancies. The service is delivered out of three hubs located at Peterlee, Middlesbrough and Northallerton but legal staff are expected to work across all clients. All staff are equipped to work remotely.

1.5 The service records legal activity using the case management system, IKENCloud. Given the transition to a single case management system across all three forces, we are able to consistently record activity. The focus is now on improving accuracy. Time recording and case management data inform governance reporting and are used to support continuous improvement and efficiencies across the teams.

1.6 As of April 2026:

1.6.1 The teams are led by a Head of Portfolio, each reporting to the Deputy Director of Evolve Legal Services. Each Head of Portfolio has responsibility for the quality, costs and efficiency of the service delivery in their portfolio areas. Risk management is undertaken by each Head of Portfolio with the Director of Evolve Legal Services reporting to each executive on high-risk cases.

- 1.7 Each Chief Constable of Local Policing Body is responsible for its own costs. This allows for financial reporting and oversight of that spend to each of the respective Chief Finance Officers.
- 1.8 Legal Services procures external legal services using the National Legal Services Framework (NLSF) and CLEP Framework. The NLSF and CLEP Framework are nationally agreed fee structures for external law firms and Chambers services. The NLSF has been re-negotiated, and this has been adopted as of 31 May 2024. External legal fees are managed by individual lawyers who use the National Legal Services Framework and CLEP Framework to achieve the best value for money across a range of external legal providers. Monitoring of legal services expenditure is managed through monthly meetings with finance colleagues. The CLEP framework is subject to periodic review with a 20% increase in hourly rates as from 1 January 2025.
- 1.9 Financial, risk and corporate management of legal services are the responsibility of the Director and relevant statutory officers within the relevant Offices of the Police and Crime Commissioners and police forces. This is managed internally in compliance with the ELS governance and performance management arrangements. These arrangements preserve local, trusted relationships, specifically legal services provided direct to the Police and Crime Commissioners and Chief Constables.
- 1.10 Legal work continues to be delivered across force boundaries. There continues to be a sustained increase in demand in all teams, notably corporate work, conduct and civil orders.
- 1.11 Single processes have been designed by practitioners and are in place. ELS is working to Lexcel accreditation standards and the introduction of the new case management system has enabled a key step forward in aligning practice across teams and process improvements.

EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNAL STATISTICS

- 1.12 The summary below sets out the number of employment tribunal claims received and finalised within Cleveland including total spend on cases finalised.
- 1.13 During the period 01/10/2025 to 31/03/2026 two ACAS early conciliation matters and two Employment Tribunal claims were received for Cleveland.
- 1.13.1 One Employment Appeal Tribunal claim was finalised 01/10/2025 to 31/03/2026.
- 1.13.2 Learning from employment matters is shared with HR colleagues and fed in to appropriate organisational learning and policy, where appropriate.

Ongoing Employment Tribunals

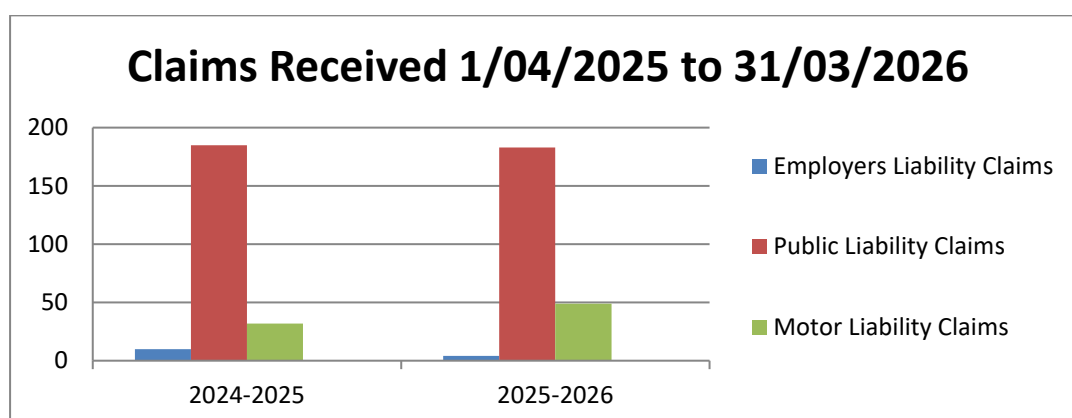
- 1.13.3 The Employment Team are as whole dealing with 14 on-going Employment Tribunal Claims (claims that have progressed beyond early conciliation period) and one Employment Appeal Tribunal Claim across the three forces (4 within Cleveland as of 31 March 2026). This is in

comparison to the last reporting period for October 2025, with 9 on-going Employment Tribunal Claims across the three forces (4 within Cleveland).

CIVIL CLAIM STATISTICS

Number & Types of Claims Received

1.14 There were 116 claims received during the period 1 October 2025 to 31 March 2026. During the financial year 2025/26 236 claims were received compared with 227 claims during 2024/25.



1.14.1 Please note that the public liability figures now include small claims, which were previously handled by Finance and relate to claims for damage to property following a forced entry, and low level property claims for damages to/loss of/destruction of property.

1.14.2 Evolve Legal Services have dealt with these claims since April 2023. These were not previously included in these reports or provided to insurers historically. However, to provide full claims experience they are now included.

1.14.3 Employers Liability claims are those made by Force employees and police officers following injuries sustained at work.

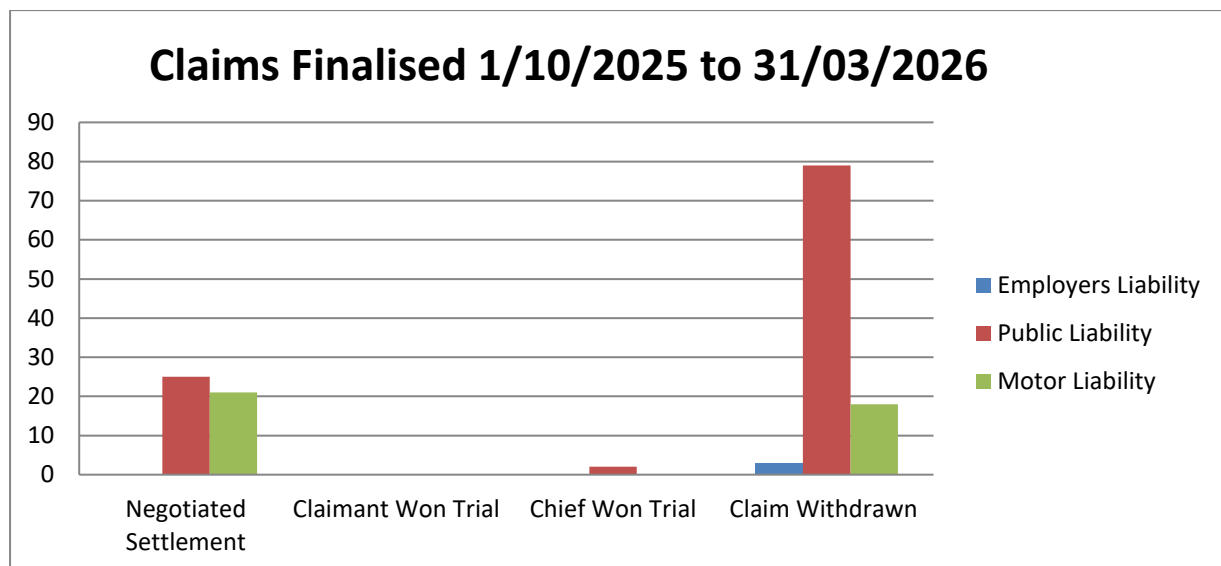
1.14.4 Public Liability claims include those made by members of the public who are accidentally injured or whose property is accidentally damaged / lost as a result of police activities. They also include those made by arrested persons alleging false imprisonment, assault, malicious prosecution, misfeasance and trespass to property. (This is not an exhaustive list.)

1.14.5 Motor Liability claims are those made by members of the public and police officers following damage and injuries sustained in road accidents involving a police vehicle.

1.14.6 The time limit for bringing claims involving injury is three years and, for those not involving injury, it is six years. The Court can sometimes extend the time limit.

Numbers of Claims Finalised & Results

1.15 During the period 1 October 2025 to 31 March 2026 of the 148 cases finalised, 102 were successfully defended/withdrawn (69%).



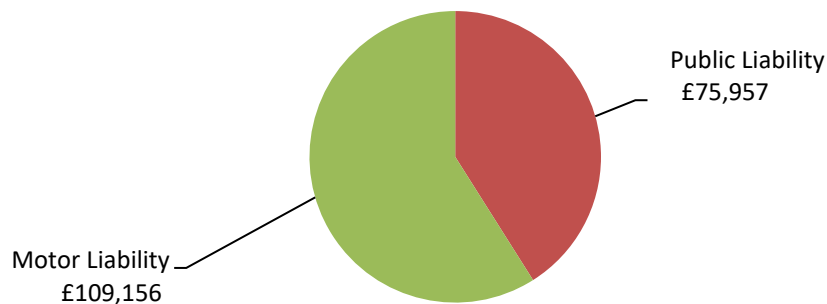
1.15.1 During the period, 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, 255 cases were finalised, and 167 were successfully defended/withdrawn (65%).

1.15.2 Feedback is provided on a case-by-case basis to ensure assistance is given in managing risks. For example, lessons learnt from motor claims can be referred to the Driver Standards Group and any claims arising from Custody are taken to Custody Management to cascade. Lessons learned are also provided to individual officers/staff; individual Departments or force wide through Executive leads, and Organisational Learning Boards.

Sums paid out on Finalised Cases

1.16 The Chart below summarises the payments made on claims finalised during the period 1 October 2025 to 31 March 2026.

Sums Paid out on Finalised Cases



Exception Reports

1.17 The Chief Constable previously agreed to provide the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) with an exception report following the settlement of a civil claim case which meets either of the following criteria:

- The case has been defended by the Force but has been lost at trial
- The amount payable in finalising the case is above the insurance 'excess' for that claim.

1.17.1 In addition, it was agreed that the exception reports submitted to the PCC would be appended to the Civil Claims report presented to the Audit Committee for their information. There are no exception reports for claims during this period.

Implications

Finance

1.18 In relation to insured risks, none of the claims finalised exceeded the 'excess.'

1.18.1 Although the sums paid out for insured risks outweigh the sums recovered, savings (in terms of potential damages) have been made in those cases successfully defended and savings (in terms of solicitor's costs) have been made by dealing with claims in-house.

Diversity & Equal Opportunities

1.19 There are no diversity or equal opportunities implications arising from the content of this report.

Human Rights Act

1.20 There are no Human Rights Act implications arising from the content of this report.

Sustainability

1.21 There are no sustainability implications arising from the content of this report.

Risk

- 1.22 There are reputational and financial risk implications arising from this report as clearly enforcing the law, i.e. exercising statutory powers to arrest, search, detain and prosecute, has inherent risks that should be mitigated against through effective training, review, risk management, 'lessons learned' activities and peer review/inspection.
- 1.22.1 The Force has detailed policy and procedures that govern and direct the activities of individuals in areas of risk i.e. police use of motor vehicles, detention in custody, the police use of force and our operational firearms response. In all these areas the regular review of litigation cases and other high-profile operations takes place within policy forums to improve professional practice, led by respective chief officers.
- 1.22.2 Finally, our responsibility as an employer is also an area of litigation and cost where we seek to minimise risk and discharge our duties as a lawful, responsible and diligent employer.

Conclusions

- 1.23 Whilst Legal Services have no control over the number of claims received, feedback is provided on a case-by-case basis to ensure assistance is given to Service Units in managing risks. At the strategic level, the Force takes its 'risk' around civil litigation very seriously and works to ensure that 'liability' is reduced wherever possible and 'lessons learned' from finalised cases are integrated into operational and strategic organisational planning and delivery.

Originator of report

Julie Shuttleworth and Michelle Phillips