**Complaints Scrutiny Panel - Scrutiny Outcomes and Assurance Report**
**16 July 2026**

The Complaints Scrutiny Panel is an independent forum established to enhance transparency, accountability and public confidence in policing. It reviews how the Force handles police complaint cases to ensure they are investigated and resolved fairly, proportionately and in accordance with statutory requirements, as well as OPCC and Force policies and procedures.

The Panel does not have the authority to change the outcome of any case, nor can its feedback overturn original decisions. Only the Force may revisit a decision where it considers the original outcome to be unlawful or unsafe. The Panel's observations may, however, highlight issues requiring further consideration, organisational learning or remedial action. Its role is advisory rather than determinative, providing independent insight that supports continuous improvement in policing practice.

This Outcomes and Assurance Report provides a clear and structured overview of the Panel's considerations and conclusions. It sets out:

- **Key Questions** - The primary lines of enquiry examined by the Panel
- **RAG Rating** - The Panel's assessment of the response to each question, using the Red/Amber/Green framework
- **Panel Feedback** - Collective observations, concerns and positive practice identified by panel members
- **Force Response** - The formal response from the Force, outlining actions to strengthen practice, improve accountability and enhance public confidence
- **Overall RAG Rating** - A traffic-light judgement summarising the Panel's level of assurance regarding how the case was handled overall
- **Panel Conclusion Summary** - A concise explanation of the rationale behind the rating, highlighting key strengths, areas of concern and required improvements

| CASE 1 | | | |
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| **Key Questions** | **RAG Rating** | **Panel Feedback** | **Force Response** |
| 1. Did the complaint handler deal with the complaint within a reasonable timeframe, keeping the complainant updated when delays occurred and explaining why they happened? | **Green** | The complaint related to methadone that was allegedly lost while the complainant was in police custody. The complaint was handled within an appropriate timeframe. | The Force was in agreement with the Panel's comments. |
| 2. Did the complaint handler make genuine efforts to understand what the complainant | **Green** | The complainant received regular updates throughout the process, which were clear, timely and delivered in a respectful manner. The | The Force was in agreement with the Panel's comments. |

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| needed from the process, and did they communicate with them in a way that felt clear, respectful, and responsive? Was the response easy to follow? Did you identify any bias or discriminatory behaviour? | | complaint handler demonstrated a genuine commitment to understanding the complainant's concerns and expectations. | |
| 3. Was the action taken by the complaint handler proportionate to the seriousness and circumstances of the complaint, and does the outcome feel fair and reasonably justified? Does the response help restore public trust? Was there a thorough evidence gathering process and fair evaluation of the evidence? Was Body Worn Video (BWV) used? Was there any learning identified and if not, should there have been? | **Green** | The actions taken were fair, reasonable and proportionate to the issues raised. The complaint outcome was supported by the available evidence.<br><br>Following discussion, the Panel identified two areas where procedures and responses to future complaints could be strengthened. Firstly, the Panel commented that consideration should be given to reminding relevant staff of the procedures for the destruction of medication to ensure consistency in practice and record-keeping. Secondly, the Panel suggested reviewing the standardised wording used in outcome letters to adopt a more positive and empathetic opening, helping to improve engagement and the overall experience for complainants. | The Force was in agreement with the Panel's comments.<br><br>**Action: That custody and detention staff be reminded of the Force's procedures for the recording and destruction of medication, ensuring that all actions are accurately documented in the appropriate medical records.**<br><br>**Action: That the standardised wording used in complaint outcome letters be reviewed and amended to ensure correspondence opens in a more positive and empathetic manner, helping to improve engagement and the complainant experience.** |

| Overall RAG Rating | Panel Conclusion Summary |
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| **Green** | This complaint reflects professional and proportionate complaint handling. The actions taken were well-reasoned and aligned with expected policing standards and values. The Panel |

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| | was satisfied that the complaint was dealt with in a timely, respectful and proportionate manner, with decisions supported by the available evidence and communicated clearly to the complainant. While no concerns were identified, the Panel highlighted two opportunities for organisational learning: reinforcing staff awareness of medication destruction procedures to support consistent record-keeping and reviewing the standardised wording used in outcome letters to promote a more positive and empathetic tone at the outset of correspondence. |

| CASE 2 |
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| Key Questions | RAG Rating | Panel Feedback | Force Response |
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| 1. Did the complaint handler deal with the complaint within a reasonable timeframe, keeping the complainant updated when delays occurred and explaining why they happened? | **Green** | The complaint related to the complainant's alleged treatment while being transported by ambulance, including concerns regarding the use of force. The complaint was progressed within an appropriate timeframe, and any delays were explained clearly and appropriately throughout the process.<br><br>The Panel highlighted the positive use of the phrase “true reflection” within the outcome letter, particularly the invitation for the complainant to contact Professional Standards within seven days if they felt the account provided did not accurately reflect their concerns. The Panel considered this a constructive and transparent approach, demonstrating a willingness to ensure the complainant’s views had been accurately understood and represented. | The Force was in agreement with the Panel’s comments. |
| 2. Did the complaint handler make genuine efforts to understand what the complainant needed from the process, and did they communicate | **Green** | The complainant received regular updates throughout the process, which were clear and timely. The complaint handler demonstrated a genuine commitment to understanding the complainant’s concerns and | The Force was in agreement with the Panel’s comments. |

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| with them in a way that felt clear, respectful, and responsive? Was the response easy to follow? Did you identify any bias or discriminatory behaviour? | | managing their expectations, responding appropriately to their needs and maintaining effective communication throughout the handling of the complaint. | |
| 3. Was the action taken by the complaint handler proportionate to the seriousness and circumstances of the complaint, and does the outcome feel fair and reasonably justified? Does the response help restore public trust? Was there a thorough evidence gathering process and fair evaluation of the evidence? Was Body Worn Video (BWV) used? Was there any learning identified and if not, should there have been? | **Green** | The Panel considered the police response to be excellent, reflecting a thorough, proportionate, and well-managed handling of the issues raised. | The Force was in agreement with the Panel's comments. |

| Overall RAG Rating | Panel Conclusion Summary |
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| **Green** | The Panel found that the complaint was handled in a timely, professional and proportionate manner, with clear communication, regular updates and decisions that were evidence-based and well justified. The complaint handler demonstrated a genuine commitment to understanding the complainant's concerns and managing expectations throughout the process. The Panel also highlighted the positive and transparent use of the phrase "true reflection" within the outcome letter, noting that it encouraged further |

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| | engagement where necessary and helped ensure the complainant's views were accurately represented. Overall, the Panel identified strong complaint handling and clear evidence of good practice. |

| CASE 3 | | | |
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| **Key Questions** | **RAG Rating** | **Panel Feedback** | **Force Response** |
| 1. Did the complaint handler deal with the complaint within a reasonable timeframe, keeping the complainant updated when delays occurred and explaining why they happened? | **Green** | The complaint related to the cost of damage allegedly caused during police attendance at an incident. The process moved at an appropriate pace, with clear explanations for any unavoidable delays. | The Force was in agreement with the Panel's comments. |
| 2. Did the complaint handler make genuine efforts to understand what the complainant needed from the process, and did they communicate with them in a way that felt clear, respectful, and responsive? Was the response easy to follow? Did you identify any bias or discriminatory behaviour? | **Green** | The complainant received regular, clear and respectful updates.<br><br>The complaint handler made a genuine effort to understand and respond to the complainant's needs and expectations. | The Force was in agreement with the Panel's comments. |
| 3. Was the action taken by the complaint handler proportionate to the seriousness and circumstances of the complaint, and does the outcome feel fair and reasonably justified? Does the response help restore public trust? Was there a thorough | **Green** | The actions taken were fair, reasonable, and proportionate to the issues raised. The complaint was reviewed appropriately, and the outcome reached was balanced, evidence-based, and justified in the circumstances. | The Force was in agreement with the Panel's comments. |

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| evidence gathering process and fair evaluation of the evidence? Was Body Worn Video (BWV) used? Was there any learning identified and if not, should there have been? | | | |

| Overall RAG Rating | Panel Conclusion Summary |
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| **Green** | The Panel was satisfied that the complaint was handled professionally and within a reasonable timeframe, with any delays clearly explained. The complaint handler maintained respectful communication throughout and made genuine efforts to understand and address the complainant's concerns. The Panel found the actions taken to be fair, proportionate and effective, with the outcome appropriately supported by the circumstances. |

**CASE 4**

| Key Questions | RAG Rating | Panel Feedback | Force Response |
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| 1. Did the complaint handler deal with the complaint within a reasonable timeframe, keeping the complainant updated when delays occurred and explaining why they happened? | **Green** | The complaint related to an alleged lack of police contact and a perceived failure to investigate an incident after a third party had left the scene of a road traffic collision. The complaint was handled within an appropriate timeframe, with regular updates provided throughout the process. | The Force was in agreement with the Panel's comments. |
| 2. Did the complaint handler make genuine efforts to understand what the complainant needed from the process, and did they communicate with them in a way that felt clear, respectful, and responsive? Was the response easy to follow? Did you identify any bias | **Green** | The complainant received regular and clear updates throughout the process. The complaint handler made genuine efforts to understand and respond to the complainant's concerns, maintaining effective communication throughout. | The Force was in agreement with the Panel's comments. |

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| or discriminatory behaviour? | | | |
| 3. Was the action taken by the complaint handler proportionate to the seriousness and circumstances of the complaint, and does the outcome feel fair and reasonably justified? Does the response help restore public trust? Was there a thorough evidence gathering process and fair evaluation of the evidence? Was Body Worn Video (BWV) used? Was there any learning identified and if not, should there have been? | **Green** | The actions taken were fair, reasonable and proportionate to the issues raised, with the outcome appropriately reflecting the circumstances of the complaint. | The Force was in agreement with the Panel's comments. |

| Overall RAG Rating | Panel Conclusion Summary |
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| **Green** | The Panel found that the complaint was handled in a timely, professional and proportionate manner. Communication with the complainant was clear, respectful and consistent throughout, with appropriate efforts made to understand and address their concerns. The actions taken were considered fair, well-reasoned and aligned with policing values, with the outcome appropriately reflecting the circumstances of the complaint. |

**CASE 5**

| Key Questions | RAG Rating | Panel Feedback | Force Response |
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| 1. Did the complaint handler deal with the complaint within a reasonable timeframe, keeping the complainant updated when delays occurred and explaining why they happened? | **Green** | The complaint related to the investigation of incidents relating to historical trauma. The process moved at an appropriate pace, with clear explanations for any unavoidable delays. | The Force was in agreement with the Panel's comments. |

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| 2. Did the complaint handler make genuine efforts to understand what the complainant needed from the process, and did they communicate with them in a way that felt clear, respectful, and responsive? Was the response easy to follow? Did you identify any bias or discriminatory behaviour? | **Amber** | Contact was established with the complainant, however, communication lacked clarity and responsiveness in some areas. While efforts were made to understand and address the complainant's needs and expectations, these were not consistently demonstrated throughout the handling of the complaint.<br><br>The Panel also identified a gap in the response, noting that no clear timescales had been provided for implementing the proposed measures to address the concerns raised and support future improvement.<br><br>The Panel suggested that the ethical considerations arising from the case may warrant further review by the Independent Ethics Committee to provide additional scrutiny and inform future learning and practice. | The Force was in agreement with the Panel's comments.<br><br>**Action: That the ethical considerations identified within this case be referred to the Independent Ethics Committee for consideration, to provide additional scrutiny and identify any learning opportunities.** |
| 3. Was the action taken by the complaint handler proportionate to the seriousness and circumstances of the complaint, and does the outcome feel fair and reasonably justified? Does the response help restore public trust? Was there a thorough evidence gathering process and fair evaluation of the evidence? Was Body Worn Video (BWV) used? Was there any | **Green** | The actions taken were fair, reasonable, and proportionate to the issues raised. | The Force was in agreement with the Panel's comments. |

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| learning identified and if not, should there have been? | | | |

| Overall RAG Rating | Panel Conclusion Summary |
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| **Green** | The Panel found that the complaint was handled within an appropriate timeframe and that the actions taken were fair, reasonable and proportionate to the issues raised. While contact was maintained with the complainant throughout the process, the Panel identified areas where communication could have been clearer and more responsive to the complainant's needs and expectations. The Panel also noted the absence of clear timescales for implementing identified improvements and suggested that the ethical considerations arising from the case be referred to the Independent Ethics Committee for further review and learning. |

**CASE 6**

| Key Questions | RAG Rating | Panel Feedback | Force Response |
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| 1. Did the complaint handler deal with the complaint within a reasonable timeframe, keeping the complainant updated when delays occurred and explaining why they happened? | **Green** | The complaint related to an alleged lack of police contact regarding a violent offender with previous convictions. The process moved at an appropriate pace, with clear explanations for any unavoidable delays. | The Force was in agreement with the Panel's comments. |
| 2. Did the complaint handler make genuine efforts to understand what the complainant needed from the process, and did they communicate with them in a way that felt clear, respectful, and responsive? Was the response easy to follow? Did you identify any bias or discriminatory behaviour? | **Red** | The Panel acknowledged that attempts were made to contact the complainant and recognised the efforts taken to progress the complaint. However, as meaningful contact was not established, there was limited opportunity to fully understand the complainant's needs, expectations or desired outcomes from the complaints process. Given the sensitive nature of the concerns raised and the complainant's expressed fears for their welfare, the Panel felt there may have been opportunities to take | The Force was in agreement with the Panel's comments.<br><br>**Action: That the Resolution Team be provided with feedback highlighting the importance of adopting a more proactive approach when dealing with complaints that raise welfare, vulnerability or safeguarding concerns.** |

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| | | additional steps to establish contact before the matter was closed.<br><br>The Panel considered that a more proactive approach, such as exploring alternative methods of contact or making enquiries with relevant district officers, may have assisted in better understanding and responding to the complainant's circumstances. | |
| 3. Was the action taken by the complaint handler proportionate to the seriousness and circumstances of the complaint, and does the outcome feel fair and reasonably justified? Does the response help restore public trust? Was there a thorough evidence gathering process and fair evaluation of the evidence? Was Body Worn Video (BWV) used? Was there any learning identified and if not, should there have been? | **Red** | The Panel acknowledged that attempts were made to contact the complainant and recognised the efforts taken to progress the matter. However, given the sensitive nature of the concerns raised and the complainant's expressed fears, the Panel felt that additional efforts to establish contact may have been beneficial before the complaint was closed.<br><br>A more proactive approach, such as exploring alternative methods of contact or making enquiries with relevant district officers, could have provided further reassurance that all reasonable opportunities had been explored. While the outcome reached was understandable in the absence of engagement from the complainant, the Panel felt these additional steps may have better reflected the seriousness of the concerns raised.<br><br>The Panel identified learning in relation to complainant engagement and cases involving welfare concerns. Feedback should be provided to the Resolution Team to reinforce the importance of considering a range of | The Force was in agreement with the Panel's comments. |

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| | | contact methods and ensuring all reasonable avenues of engagement are explored before a complaint is closed. | |

| Overall RAG Rating | Panel Conclusion Summary |
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| **Red** | The Panel acknowledged that the complaint was progressed appropriately and that reasonable attempts were made to contact the complainant regarding concerns about a violent offender with previous convictions. However, due to the lack of meaningful engagement, there was limited opportunity to fully understand the complainant's concerns, welfare needs and desired outcomes. Given the sensitive nature of the issues raised and the complainant's expressed fears, the Panel considered that a more proactive approach to establishing contact, including exploring alternative communication methods and liaison with relevant district officers, may have been beneficial before the complaint was closed. The Panel identified learning for the Resolution Team around complainant engagement, particularly in cases involving welfare concerns, to ensure all reasonable avenues of contact are explored prior to closure. |

| CASE 7 |
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| Key Questions | RAG Rating | Panel Feedback | Force Response |
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| 1. Did the complaint handler deal with the complaint within a reasonable timeframe, keeping the complainant updated when delays occurred and explaining why they happened? | **Amber** | The complaint related to an allegation that an officer recorded the incorrect offence code following a traffic stop. The Panel noted delays in the handling of the complaint, particularly that eight days elapsed before initial contact was made with the complainant. It also found that explanations for delays were limited and not always provided in a timely manner. | The Force was in agreement with the Panel's comments. |
| 2. Did the complaint handler make genuine efforts to understand what the complainant needed from the process, and did they communicate with them in a | **Amber** | Contact was established with the complainant; however, the Panel considered that communication may have lacked clarity and consistency. While efforts were made to understand the complainant's concerns and expectations, these were not fully explored. The Panel highlighted the | The Force was in agreement with the Panel's comments.<br><br>**Action: That feedback be provided to the Resolution Team on the importance of timely communication, fully** |

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| way that felt clear, respectful, and responsive? Was the response easy to follow? Did you identify any bias or discriminatory behaviour? | | importance of obtaining a clear understanding of the complaint from the outset and ensuring that consent is actively sought, appropriately recorded, and accurately documented throughout the complaints process. | **understanding complaints, and ensuring consent is obtained and accurately recorded.** |
| 3. Was the action taken by the complaint handler proportionate to the seriousness and circumstances of the complaint, and does the outcome feel fair and reasonably justified? Does the response help restore public trust? Was there a thorough evidence gathering process and fair evaluation of the evidence? Was Body Worn Video (BWV) used? Was there any learning identified and if not, should there have been? | **Green** | The Panel was satisfied that the actions taken were fair, reasonable and proportionate to the issues raised. | The Force was in agreement with the Panel's comments. |

| Overall RAG Rating | Panel Conclusion Summary |
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| **Amber** | The Panel considered that while the complaint was ultimately handled in a fair, reasonable and proportionate manner, there were areas for improvement in both timeliness and complainant engagement. The Panel noted that initial contact with the complainant was delayed, with eight days elapsing before contact was made, and that subsequent communication may have lacked clarity. Although some effort was made to understand the complainant's concerns regarding |

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| | the recording of the offence code following the traffic stop, this was not fully explored. The Panel highlighted the importance of ensuring a clear understanding of the complaint from the outset and emphasised the need to obtain, record and retain appropriate consent as part of the complaints process. Learning was identified around effective communication and the consistent recording of consent to support robust complaint handling. |

| CASE 8 |
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| Key Questions | RAG Rating | Panel Feedback | Force Response |
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| 1. Did the complaint handler deal with the complaint within a reasonable timeframe, keeping the complainant updated when delays occurred and explaining why they happened? | **Green** | The complaint related to dissatisfaction with the way police had allegedly responded to a reported incident. The Panel found that the complaint was progressed within appropriate timescales and that any unavoidable delays were communicated clearly, with suitable explanations provided throughout the process. | The Force was in agreement with the Panel's comments. |
| 2. Did the complaint handler make genuine efforts to understand what the complainant needed from the process, and did they communicate with them in a way that felt clear, respectful, and responsive? Was the response easy to follow? Did you identify any bias or discriminatory behaviour? | **Green** | The Panel found that the complainant received regular and clear communication throughout the complaints process. The Panel was satisfied that the complaint handler made a genuine effort to understand the complainant's concerns, needs and expectations, and took appropriate steps to address them where possible. | The Force was in agreement with the Panel's comments. |
| 3. Was the action taken by the complaint handler proportionate to the seriousness and circumstances of the complaint, and does the outcome feel fair and reasonably | **Green** | The Panel was satisfied that the actions taken were fair, reasonable and proportionate to the issues raised, and that the response provided appropriately addressed the matters identified within the complaint. | The Force was in agreement with the Panel's comments. |

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| justified? Does the response help restore public trust? Was there a thorough evidence gathering process and fair evaluation of the evidence? Was Body Worn Video (BWV) used? Was there any learning identified and if not, should there have been? | | | |

| Overall RAG Rating | Panel Conclusion Summary |
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| **Green** | The Panel found that the complaint was handled to a high standard. The matter was progressed within appropriate timescales, with clear explanations provided for any unavoidable delays. The complainant received regular, respectful communication, and the complaint handler made a genuine effort to understand and respond to their concerns and expectations. The Panel was satisfied that the actions taken were fair, reasonable and proportionate, with the response appropriately addressing the issues raised and demonstrating positive complaints-handling practice. |

**CASE 9**

| Key Questions | RAG Rating | Panel Feedback | Force Response |
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| 1. Did the complaint handler deal with the complaint within a reasonable timeframe, keeping the complainant updated when delays occurred and explaining why they happened? | **Green** | The complaint related to alleged damage to a property during police activity. The Panel found that the complaint was handled within appropriate timescales and that, where delays occurred, clear and timely explanations were provided to keep the complainant informed throughout the process. | The Force was in agreement with the Panel's comments. |
| 2. Did the complaint handler make genuine efforts to understand what the complainant needed from | **Amber** | Contact was made with the complainant, however, the Panel felt that communication could have been clearer in addressing all aspects of the concerns raised. | The Force was in agreement with the Panel's comments.<br><br>**Action: That feedback be provided to the Resolution Team** |

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| | the process, and did they communicate with them in a way that felt clear, respectful, and responsive? Was the response easy to follow? Did you identify any bias or discriminatory behaviour? | | While some effort was made to understand the complainant's concerns and expectations, the Panel considered that further enquiries, detail and clarification were required before it could be satisfied that all elements of the complaint had been fully explored and appropriately addressed. | **on the importance of clearly addressing all aspects of a complaint, undertaking sufficient enquiries where information remains unclear, and ensuring complainants' concerns are fully explored and evidenced before a complaint is concluded.** |
| 3. | Was the action taken by the complaint handler proportionate to the seriousness and circumstances of the complaint, and does the outcome feel fair and reasonably justified? Does the response help restore public trust? Was there a thorough evidence gathering process and fair evaluation of the evidence? Was Body Worn Video (BWV) used? Was there any learning identified and if not, should there have been? | **Amber** | The Panel was satisfied that the actions taken were fair, reasonable and proportionate to the issues raised. However, the Panel considered that further detail and clarification were needed in relation to certain aspects of the complaint before it could be fully assured that all concerns had been thoroughly explored and satisfactorily resolved. | The Force was in agreement with the Panel's comments. |

| Overall RAG Rating | Panel Conclusion Summary |
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| **Amber** | The Panel concluded that the complaint was handled within appropriate timescales and that the actions taken were generally fair, reasonable and proportionate to the issues raised. However, while |

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| | contact was made with the complainant, the Panel felt that communication could have been clearer and that further enquiries and clarification were needed to ensure all aspects of the complaint had been fully explored and addressed. As a result, the Panel identified an opportunity to strengthen engagement and information-gathering to provide greater assurance that all concerns have been thoroughly considered and satisfactorily resolved |

| CASE 10 |
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| Key Questions | RAG Rating | Panel Feedback | Force Response |
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| 1. Did the complaint handler deal with the complaint within a reasonable timeframe, keeping the complainant updated when delays occurred and explaining why they happened? | **Green** | The complaint related to an alleged lack of police action. The complaint and was handled and progressed within an appropriate timeframe. | The Force was in agreement with the Panel's comments. |
| 2. Did the complaint handler make genuine efforts to understand what the complainant needed from the process, and did they communicate with them in a way that felt clear, respectful, and responsive? Was the response easy to follow? Did you identify any bias or discriminatory behaviour? | **Green** | The complainant received regular updates throughout the process. The complaint handler demonstrated a genuine commitment to understanding the complainant's concerns and expectations, responding appropriately and maintaining effective communication throughout the handling of the complaint. | The Force was in agreement with the Panel's comments. |
| 3. Was the action taken by the complaint handler proportionate to the seriousness and circumstances of the complaint, and does the outcome feel fair and reasonably | **Green** | The actions taken were fair, reasonable and proportionate to the issues raised. | The Force was in agreement with the Panel's comments. |

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| justified? Does the response help restore public trust? Was there a thorough evidence gathering process and fair evaluation of the evidence? Was Body Worn Video (BWV) used? Was there any learning identified and if not, should there have been? | | | |

| Overall RAG Rating | Panel Conclusion Summary |
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| **Green** | The Panel concluded that the complaint, which related to an alleged lack of police action, was handled appropriately and within a suitable timeframe. Throughout the process, the complainant was kept informed through regular, clear and timely updates, demonstrating a strong commitment to effective communication.<br><br>The Panel noted that the complaint handler took care to understand the complainant's concerns and expectations, responding professionally and appropriately at each stage of the complaint process. Overall, the Panel was satisfied that the actions taken were fair, reasonable, and proportionate to the issues raised and that the complaint was managed to a good standard. |