

Publication Strategy

Introduction

The Police Ombudsman is required by law to provide an independent and impartial, efficient and effective police complaints system and one in which the public and the police can have confidence. One of the main ways in which the Police Ombudsman can measure their performance in meeting those requirements is through statistical analysis of their work.

The gathering and analysis of this information is carried out by staff seconded to the Office of the Police Ombudsman (OPONI) from the independent Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) and in line with the Code of Practice for Statistics.

This information is then published in line with OPONI's commitment to openness and accessibility and to inform public understanding of the work of the police complaints system. It is based on the following key principles:

Understanding user needs

The content of the Police Ombudsman's statistical outputs and the supporting information provided will be informed by an understanding of stakeholder needs, including those of the public, the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB), the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and the Community and Voluntary Sector. Such needs are generally assessed through a combination of formal consultation exercises, analysis of demand for ad-hoc information, networking and discussion with stakeholders.

Informing and listening to our users

We will help customers and users to understand and make the best possible use of our products by publishing supporting background or methodological information and material.

We provide details where we can be contacted if users want further information or analysis or simply want to give us their views on the material which has been published.

We will publish timely, relevant, high quality statistics in line with the Code of Practice for Statistics and will:

- publish our statistics on the time and date pre-announced;
- be transparent when we are unable to meet any of these commitments and publish an explanation on our website;
- provide open and easy-to-use routes to allow users to supply us with their views and opinions;

- respond quickly and accurately to questions and enquiries;
- respond in a timely manner to any complaints about our statistics.

Making the information as accessible as possible

The information is published in such a way as to make it accessible to the widest possible audience and to maximise its re-use, subject to the need to comply with legal, ethical and confidentiality constraints.

In order to promote widespread accessibility and dissemination, thus enabling informed public debate, we will use OPONI's website as our main channel for publication of statistics and research; in a printable accessible format. However, if you do not have access to a printer and require a paper copy of a publication, you should contact us and one will be provided for you.

We will make it easy for users to find and understand our published data by using adequate signposting, standard documentation procedures and following accessibility guidance.

All of the information that we publish on-line will be free at the point of use.

Publication Strategy and Timetable

The Police (NI) Act 1998 directs the Police Ombudsman to exercise their powers in the way they think best calculated to secure both the efficiency, effectiveness and independence of the complaints system and the confidence of the public and of members of the police force in that system. It also directs him to report to the Secretary of State annually. The Police (NI) Act 2000 stipulates that the Police Ombudsman shall supply the Northern Ireland Policing Board with such statistical information as is required to enable the Board to carry out its functions.

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998) requires public authorities in carrying out their functions to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between the nine equality categories listed in the Act. In support of its commitment to fulfilling these obligations the Office publishes research and statistical reports including:

- Equality Monitoring Report: Results of the Survey of Complainants to the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland.

The timetable sets out the target publication dates for each of the reports we plan to publish. This schedule will be updated regularly and we will inform users of any planned changes to the publication schedule, via our website.

Resources

The Strategy will be delivered by the Information and Communications Unit of OPONI. The Unit includes NISRA statisticians, of whom one performs the role of Lead Official for Statistics (for Official Statistics purposes) and Police Ombudsman research support staff. It is led by the Head of Communications who has overall responsibility for delivering the Statistics and Research Publication Strategy. The Lead Official for Statistics has responsibility for ensuring that all outputs meet the standards required by the Code of Practice for Statistics.