

**Office of the Thames Valley
Police and Crime
Commissioner**



Complaints Procedure

We want people to be safe and feel safe in the Thames Valley and for the police to provide you with the best service possible. Everyone has a right to fair and honest treatment by the police. Sometimes, something goes wrong in the Force's day-to-day dealings with the public. When this happens, we want to ensure that the appropriate person or body responsible for putting it right hears about it and this document has been produced to make it easier for you to make a formal complaint.

We'd also like to hear if you believe any of our staff or officers have exceeded your expectations and gone further to help resolve your query, question or crime.

Do you wish to make a Complaint against the Office of the Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner?

Whenever you come into contact with the Office of the Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner you have the right to expect a professional service that meets your needs. Should the level of service fall below expectations you have the right to complain about:

- The Commissioner's Office itself, our policies or practice;
- The Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner (more details below);
- A Member of Staff of the Commissioner's Office, including contractors; and
- A Volunteer working on behalf of the Commissioner's Office.

If you wish to make a complaint you must do so in writing to:

The Chief Executive
Office of the Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner
Police Headquarters
Oxford Road
Kidlington
OX5 2NX

If you wish to make a complaint against the Chief Executive you may write directly to the Police and Crime Commissioner at the above address.

Complaints against the Commissioner should be made in writing to the Chief Executive of the Commissioner's Office as detailed above. Once a complaint is received it will be forwarded to the Police and Crime Panel to consider.

Do you wish to make a Complaint against the Thames Valley Police Force, including its officers and staff?

Complaints against Thames Valley Police are handled in two ways.

Complaints against the Chief Constable

The Commissioner's Office has a statutory duty to consider complaints against the Chief Constable. If you wish to make a complaint against the Chief Constable please write to:

The Chief Executive
Office of the Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner
Police Headquarters
Oxford Road
Kidlington
OX5 2NX

Please note that the Commissioner's Office cannot investigate complaints made anonymously.

Other Complaints against Thames Valley Police

While the Commissioner's Office has a role in monitoring how the police respond to complaints, it does not become involved in complaint investigations. If you are dissatisfied with the service you have received from Thames Valley Police we would recommend that in the first instance you try and take up any issue with the officer concerned and/or their line manager. Often this is the most straightforward way of resolving a matter. However, if this is not possible or appropriate, the Force's Professional Standards Department is responsible for handling all complaints against Officers and Staff below Chief Constable as well as general complaints regarding the provision of the policing service in Thames Valley.

If you wish to make a complaint against Thames Valley Police please contact its Professional Standards Department:

By letter:
Head of Professional Standards
Professional Standards Department
Police Headquarters
Oxford Road
Kidlington
OX5 2NX

By telephone:
101 (when dialling from within Thames Valley)
01865 846030 (when dialling from outside of Thames Valley)

By email:
professional.standards@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

You also have the right to make a complaint against Thames Valley Police direct to the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC). Information on the work of the IPCC and the complaints process can be found on the IPCC website (www.ipcc.gov.uk).

How to make a complaint against Thames Valley Police

Complaints about the police will either be about police policies and procedures or about the conduct of a specific officer or member of police staff. The two types of complaints are dealt with differently and this document explains how to make either type of complaint against the police in Thames Valley.

Making a complaint about a Thames Valley Police officer or member of police staff

You should complain if you have been treated badly by the police or if you have witnessed the police treating someone in an unacceptable manner. There are many ways to make your complaint and you can choose the one that suits you best:

- Contact the police directly (by going to a police station or by telephoning, emailing, faxing or writing);
- Contact one of the following:
 - The Police and Crime Commissioner
 - A solicitor
 - Your local MP
 - Your local councillor
 - A “Gateway” organisation (such as the Citizen’s Advice Bureau)
- Ask a friend or relative to make the complaint on your behalf (they will require your written permission); or
- Contact the national Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC).

Making a complaint about a Thames Valley Police policy or procedure

For complaints about the overall policies or procedures of the police, you should contact the Force’s Professional Standards Department.

What happens next

Whatever type of complaint you make, the police will need to know as much as possible about the circumstances so that they can deal with it as quickly and efficiently as possible. They may ask you to fill in a form or make a written account of the issues involved, and someone will be on hand to provide any help you may need to do this. An official record will be made and you will be told how the complaint is going to be dealt with, what action may be taken as a result and how the decision will be made.

Most complaints will be dealt with by Thames Valley Police, but the more serious complaints are likely to involve the IPCC. The Force will agree with you how often – and by which method – you would like to be kept updated of progress.

The Commissioner's Office monitors closely how complaints are handled by the Force, and receives monthly updates on the Force's performance. Random dip-checks of PSD files will also be carried out to ensure that procedures are followed properly.

The Force and the Commissioner's Office welcome your comments and use the information to improve the service offered to all our communities.