OFFICIAL: POLICE AND PARTNERS

HMICS Assurance review of conduct and discipline

The following table presents a summary of the factual accuracy feedback from stakeholders. Draft copies of the report were issued on 11th February 2026 and a response is requested by 25th February 2026

Stakeholder	Page numb	Paragraph number	Factual inaccuracies identified	Proposed rewording	HMICS Comment	HMICS Decision
Gateway Assessment Unit	9 and 23	Recommendation 2 and Point 38	Comment on recommendation.	The matter of formal policy, to govern the creation, retention and delection of records is being explored to apply appropriate process. A DPIA will be conducted as part of this.	**For noting only as this is what they propose to do in light of the recommendation.**	**No Change**
PSD National Gateway Assessment Unit and NCU	9 and 24	Recommendation 3 and Point 40	Comment on wording and description:Conduct disproportionately used and performance issues escalated unnecessarily :The performance of officers and staff in Police Scotland is primarily managed by line managers, supported by HR. Conduct matters are the responsibility of line managers and PSD. We found evidence that line managers frequently refer low-level performance issues to NGAU for consideration as potential conduct matters. This approach has resulted in a disproportionate use of the conduct framework and formal improvement action.	NGAU carry out a daily review of referrals to PSD, with senior management input. If any referral is assessed as a low level performance issue, which does not meet the threshold for conduct or formal improvement action, it is referred back to the originating division for action under the performance and capability framework. It is the divisions trying to utilise the conduct regs for matters that would competently be dealt with by divisions under performance regs, but there has been a developed reliance and expectation on the conduct regs. Would this better reflect the current position with including that not all that is brought to the attention of NCU from GWU (about 50%) weekly meeting is not further considered by conduct and is referred back to division for local intervention, which may include performance. NCU efforts to educate the workforce include in person inputs and publications such as The Standard issue 8 and GMCO's issue 9. NCU continue to work with HR and Scottish Government in relation to performance regulations and management.	Whilst we noted that a significant proportion of cases referred to the National Conduct Unit (NCU) are referred to divisions for local intervention, this approach continues to result in a disproportionate use of the conduct framework and formal improvement action, which are not reflected within performance and development reviews (PDRs).	Text Changed - to include the line Whislt we noted that a significant proporton of cases referred to the NCU are referred to divisions for local intervention.
PSD National Gateway Assessment Unit	10 and 26	Recommendation 5 and Point 48	Comment on progress in this area: We found that knowledge and understanding of whistleblowing processes among officers and staff remains limited. Many individuals interviewed expressed uncertainty about how to make a disclosure and how reports are assessed. Police Scotland has committed to improving awareness through renewed communication and a relaunch of the e-learning module; however, further work is needed to embed understanding across the organisation.	Police Scotland Professional Standards Training Department are positively promoting the Reporting Wrongdoing (Whistleblowing) Moodle training package across Police Scotland and across PSD Departments, to ensure a sound knowledge level across all officers and staff. A review will be undertaken to ensure all officers and staff are completing the training with plans to advertise the process through intranet and comms moving forward.	For noting only as this is what they propose to do in light of the recommendation.	For noting only no change
PSD National Gateway Assessment Unit	10 and 27	Recommendation 5 and Point 49	Query re accuracy - NGAU is responsible for assessing whether reports received meet the criteria for protected disclosures under PIDA. Police Scotland reported that NGAU staff have received training from Protect (the whistleblowing advice organisation). However, we identified inconsistencies; some NGAU staff had not received any formal training and others reported that the training they had received was insufficient for the responsibilities they were expected to undertake.	NGAU staff are not assessing reports for meeting criteria or not, they are responsible for flagging potential reports of wrong doing meaning all instances of potential protected disclosure are highlighted through management with careful and considered assessment undertaken by Detective Chief Inspector. If deemed protected disclosure, then further assessed by Superintendent and Chief Superintendent for suitability in line with SOP and guidance. Training needs will be assessed and addressed as required to ensure all involved had clarity of role, responsibility and training for this.	NGAU along with PSD Senior management have the responsibility for assessing whether reports received meet the criteria for protected disclosures under PIDA.	Text changed - to reflect concern raised. The recommendation asks for appropriate training.
PSD National Gateway Assessment Unit	10 and 28	Recommendation 7 and Point 51	Request for review of development of practice: We reviewed records of reports considered by NGAU as potential protected disclosures. In some cases, reports initially assessed by NGAU as potential protected disclosures were not ultimately treated as such, with the decision made by senior officers. Records did not consistently document the rationale for such decisions or identify the decision maker. This lack of transparency undermines confidence in the integrity of the process.	Current process is for briefing paper to be created for assessment in relation to protected disclosure matters and rationale provided by Superintendent which is either endorsed or not by Chief Supt All instances of potential protected disclosure are highlighted through management with careful and considered assessment undertaken by Detective Chief Inspector. If deemed protected disclosure, then further assessed by Superintendent and Chief Superintendent. PSD NGAU will actively seek to improve record keeping and documenting rationale.	Whilst accepting the comment we spoke about a potential PIDA where the ACC stated they had made the decicsion not to treat it as such.	No change to text
PSD National Gateway Assessment Unit	12 and 42	Recommendation 19 and Point 99	Request for review: Our ability to fully assess the exact scale of missing referrals was constrained by the fact that Police Scotland insisted on redacting personal details from the senior officer related records provided. This level of redaction did not apply to records concerning non-senior officers, where unredacted documentation was supplied.	Request for this to be reworded. The rationale for redacted matters for senior officers related to the limited number of senior/executive officers and as such the ability to easily identify then, which is not relevant for non-senior officers. In addition, members of the PSD SMT sat with HMICS whilst they reviewed and would happily have offered context to try to assist with aligning matters. Happy to revisit this if required.	HMICS were allowed unredacted personal data of all officers appart from senior officer which identified them. This is equally relevant for both Senior and non senior officers. This included details of sexual assualts and domestics which are sensitive and these cases were not redacted.	No change to text
PSD National Gateway Assessment Unit	12 and 43	Recommendation 20 and Point 100	Interviews with senior officers within Police Scotland further indicated that not all reports of potential wrongdoing relating to senior officers were being shared with the SPA, as required. This practice is inconsistent with the statutory framework and undermines the principles of independent oversight and accountability that the senior officer conduct process is intended to uphold.	For each referral relating to a senior officer received at NGAU, a briefing paper is completed by NGAU Detective Inspector, which is forwarded through line management to PSD Chief Superintendent. All relevant briefing papers are shared with SPA for consideration of further action, in line with their framework. This is logged on the relevant Police Scotland system file with the corresponding email chain. Clarity needed with regards to expectation for criteria for report of wrongdoing.		Recommendation reworded as follows.Police Scotland must share all reports of alleged wrongdoing involving senior officers with the SPA, without exception, including those made anonymously.
PSD National Gateway Assessment Unit	12 and 43	Recommendation 20 and Point 101	Further to this, we heard evidence that NGAU staff had been instructed to create 'blank' records on iBase for certain reports of alleged wrongdoing received involving senior officers. When reports against senior officers are received, staff bring these to the attention of NGAU management and, on some occasions, are directed to create a blank file containing no record of the allegation - solely to generate a unique iBase reference number. A separate report outlining the alleged wrongdoing is prepared using a Word document, which is then escalated to senior management.	This process is not limited to senior officers. Is. The creation of blank I-Base files relates to working practice to ensure matters remains confidential and is limited in visibility. This would also apply not only to senior officers but to sensitive matters to most appropriately handle the circumstances. The details are later entered once the report is no longer visible on the front screen. Whilst it is recognised that there could be improvements in this process, it is also important in order to recognise the sensitivity of some of these matters. Content to review to ensure updates are recorded accurately but would question this being an integrity and transparency issue as the report implies. Reports may lack detail at times because in the main, there is no feedback from SPA with regards to any matters referred, again this approach needs to be developed in working practices.	Recommendation 21 Police Scotland should cease the practice of generating 'blank' iBase records and adopt a single, auditable process for recording, retaining and escalating all allegations, irrespective of rank, so that there is a complete, consistent auditable trail. Whist this maybe as a workaround due to sensitive matters there is not a complete consistent auditable trail of records	No change to recommendation as it is not rank specific. 101 reworded to Further to this, we heard evidence that NGAU staff had been instructed to create 'blank' records on iBase for certain reports of alleged wrongdoing received including those involving senior officers.
PSD National Gateway Assessment Unit	12 and 43	Recommendation 21 and point 102	In some instances, NGAU staff are subsequently instructed to transfer the content of the original report into the blank record, which is then linked to the relevant senior officer's iBase record; however, in other cases, the records remain blank. We were also concerned to learn that some records relating to alleged wrongdoing by senior officers had later appeared to have been deleted. This approach contrasts sharply with the procedures applied to non-senior officers, for whom records are retained indefinitely, even after the individual has left or retired from the service. We consider that this process undermines transparency, auditability and overall confidence in Police Scotland's approach to allegations of wrongdoing concerning senior officers.	Query with regards to the accuracy statement of records being deleted. The creation of blank i-Base records will be reviewed with relevant stakeholders to identify a more effective means of recording sensitive data. There is not currently a function to 'lock' or 'restrict' sensitive records. Blank i-Base files are only created to protect the integrity of the information recorded, if it is indeed sensitive and recorded at a later date, when the i-Base file is no longer visible on the home screen. At any given time, up to 250 i-Base files can be observed by all users on the home screen. It can take 2-3 weeks for these files to drop from the home screen. Further context can be provided. Question in relation to the deletion of records - there has not been any records deleted with regards to senior officers - can we have further discussion in relation to this please.	No corroboration for the information of records being deleted. Whilst there is a reason given for the creation of blank records. Staff accessing records should be suitably vetted negating the need for blank records.	Amended to remove the deletion of records from iBase. Following checks made by [redacted]
PSD	20	point 26	Query in relation to "senior leadership team" and evidence of the perceptions voiced, was this supported by factual points, over what time frame was this perception formed.	Reconsider to provide clarity as to meaning and context in relation to perceptions, and time frame, also reflecting on the improvements from recent staff survey. More clarity, context and evidence on the meaning of this would assist in understanding and ensuring accurate meaning of this statement and an indication of the time scale given some of the recent reflections and date from the recent Your Voice Matters Survey, which would contradict this perception, so the validity of the statement is questioned.	Evidence provided to Police Scotland highlighting the numerous comments made by those interviewed. Decision made not to include the detail of these in the report. No evidence provided by Police Scotland in realtion to the staff survey.	Key finding changed to ; Feedback from officers and staff stated that there were occasions where Police Scotland senior leaders did not consistently exemplify the expected standards of professional behaviour.

PSD	21	point 31	Probationary training input - any evidence of development over last few years?	Request to recognise that significant work has been undertaken to develop and enhance the training provided (evidenced with recent cases of probationers identifying and reporting wrongdoing at early stages). In addition new code of ethics training moodle package launch January 2026, feedback to date is 89% positive with roughly 25% of organisation completed.	HMICS sat in on training provided on 4 occassions and also sought feedback via slido from those receiving the trainingwhich showed that those new to the organisation did not find it consistent.	No change to the document.		
PSD	22	point 35	inclusion of Crimestoppers Integrity Line?	ADD in : "....Reported through the Integrity Matters Line, an internal confidential mechanism that allows anonymous disclosures, or an externally provided Crimestoppers Integrity line." This is specific to officers and staff and in a direct response to YVM 2024, distrust of Integrity Matters. This compliments the others listed, but demonstrates you said we did approach and willingness to improve.	Changed as requested	Crimestoppers integrity line. Officers and staff can also use the externally provided Crimestoppers Integrity Line which was introduced in response to concerns raised		
PSD	22	Point 36	Reports of potential on-duty criminality by police officers must be referred to COFPS etc	Reword to "When a report is received where there is an inference of on-duty criminality by a police officer it must be referred to COPFS etc"	Changed as requested	Changed as requested		
NCU SMT	11 and 34	Rec 13 and point 75	Lack of investigative objectives, rationale and recorded supervisory oversight of conduct investigations	As per the shared NCU review log, this is something the management team are conscious of and have implemented training and processes to improve governance. This has been reviewed again in January 2026, and mandatory training is arranged for 23/24 February 2026 which is being QA by LTD and HMICS have been invited to attend. This training specifically addresses investigative setting, rationale recording and supervisory governance.	This is a comment in support of the recommendation	No change to the document.		
NCU SMT	11 and 33	Rec 12 and point 71	Restructure and workloads	A demand analysis review has taken place throughout 2024, 2025 and refreshed in February 2026, resources continued to be reviewed in line with wider organisational priorities and demands in order to align resources to best meet demands, with difficult decisions requiring to be made and requests for additionality within conduct continue to be reviewed.	This is a comment in support of the recommendation	No change to the document.		
NCU SMT	13	Areas for improvement	Org Learning - NCU Org Learning	NCU Learning Log documents all significant debriefs at an individual, departmental and force level. This learning log was shared as part of self-evaluation. It has been discussed with force planners who recognised the processes in place and further improvement suggestions are awaited.	This is a comment in support of the recommendation	No change to the document.		
NCU SMT	5		Welfare and wellbeing support	In relation to NCU in 2025 bespoke documents were created and shared with the workforce following feedback from associations and those with lived experience. The documents were designed to explain the process and wellbeing/welfare support available, and were directed at subject officers, police officer witnesses and civilian witnesses. NCU continue to be part of a working group to support led by SSD.	This is a working group and this is a comment showing work being undertaken to improve	No change to the document.		
NCU SMT	23	point 42	Your Career Matters	Is this My Career or Your Voice Matters? The current PDR process is known as 'MyCareer'	This is MyCareer	Changed in report		
PSD	27	point 50	SPA whistleblowing policy - query if this is accurate in respect of the reference to the report	It is unclear if whistleblowing for senior officers relates to SPA policy or Police Scotland policy and there have been matters re senior officers reviewed under Police Scotland policy as the officer reporting the wrong doing is not an executive officer. Full agreement that this requires clarity through the SPA and Police Scotland process, but both policies need to make sure they align and are clear.		Para 50 changed [redacted] can you pay particular attention to this para for proof reading and to ensure that it makes sense.		
PSD	47	point 113	Reference to the standard, no reference to the gross misconduct outcomes of reflection on this approach	request for consideration of including the gross misconduct outcomes given this is a key part of the engagement, awareness raising and prevention activity.		No change to report these are mentioned		
PSD and HR	12	rec 22,23,24	Comment on action	A Short Life Working Group to discuss Investigation Wellbeing Guidance and the provisions within has been set up. Chaired by [redacted] (Support and Service Delivery, PSD), the first meeting took place on the 12th February and it is expected that the work of this group will support delivery of the above recommendations.	This is a comment on what is being done to consider the finding.	No change to the document		
PSD	46	111	Comment re Training products	This is informed through the Preventions and Professionalism tactical group to help inform awareness raising and training products. This will be reviewed to ensure awareness and understanding of this process.	Comment	No change to the document		
HR	**4**	**2**	References: ...personal performance management...timelines. Performance is a capability issue in meeting standards, while conduct is a chosen set of behaviours that are inappropriate. While there is a fine line between capability and conduct they are distinct and different and have different considerations and component parts. If performance was to be a key part of the audit then that should be emphasised in the TOR and a wider range of data should have been provided in response to the audit. Timelines are a function of complexity of matters raised and the ability to get resources to progress a proportionate investigation - so inconsistency would be anticipated in such processes for this reason. In terms of leadership behaviours again, behaviour is in part style - so behaviour will vary - the observation surely must therefore not be about behavioural inconsistency but what preferred behaviours should be.	Police Scotland maintains a clear organisational purpose and well-defined CoE and SoPB and must continue to focus improvement on the identification and proportionate and streamlined response to when behaviours do not meet these standards. Including supporting mechanisms related to whistleblowing.	Performance was raised time and again by those we spoke to. The lack of performance process to identify and nip issues in the bud and the complex legislative framework was given as a reason for the overuse of conduct.	No change to document		
HR	**4**	**3**	current performance appraisal processes are viewed as ineffective and very poorly utilised'. I have no issue with the accuracy of the statement but then again revert to whether the report seeks to deal with conduct or capability. There are distinct and separate both in regulations for Officer and contractual procedures for staff. If it as the intention to review performance processes as oppose to focus on conduct then the audit should be clear that this is a conduct and capability review and not a conduct audit.	Either confirm the audit is not just conduct and make it clear it seeks to have reviewed conduct and capability or refine references to conduct through the document to a minimum.	As above	No change to document		
HR	**5**	**2**	Since Service inception (13 years) 4 staff and 17 PO have committed suicide and yet the statistic is that 20% of Officers and Staff. I do not think that statistically the numbers are such that there should be a reference - even if it was a total workforce one - and I am not sure what the inference is re causation or correlation. While I understand that this is a matter CJ Committee has an interest in I think further and different evidence would have been collated in	REMOVE - the metric can be questioned so it is potentially better to make any reference about a wellbeing consideration rather than focusing on suicide. Also query with regards to sensitivity in respect of family etc impacted by suicide as discussed in face to face meeting.	The following paragraph has been added Suicide is a deeply complex issue and each individuals circumstances are unique. Rather than stemming from a single event, it often develops from an accumulation of factors that overwhelm a person's ability to cope	Report changed to address concerns		
HR	**5**	**3**	There are anonymous routes to report whistleblowing and across Scotland e.g. NHS Lothian there is internal assessment of whistleblowing it being a common practice within the Public Sector without a separate agency to do this. Therefore, while this may be a gap - not sure that it can be 'critical' when it is normal practice elsewhere to not have the suggested provisions.	As a minimum surely this has to be removed as critical and should there be a good practice consideration then this should be evidenced either through policing references or other complex Pub Body analysis.	.	No change to the report		

HR	5	4	There is a conflict for the CC in the respect that Grievance is a matter for the CC while conduct a matter for the SPA. Until sufficiency of investigation is carried out the reality is that there is reporting to the SPA that may very well not constitute conduct matters so arguably the converse point of Chief Officers under more scrutiny can be argued. I feel that the point may be more one of establishing a clarity of system as oppose to suggesting something to be more or less harsh?	Would suggest that this is not about treatment but about process and wording should be accordingly considered.		No change to the report		
HR	6	1	highlights again the potential for simplified performance - which again, would support - but would point out that the line between capability and conduct is being crossed and the purpose of the audit was to review conduct.	I think if the purpose of the report have changed into an assessment of conduct and capability that the report title and tone has to be accordingly reconsidered.	There is a link between performance and conduct and the lack of ability to deal with performance due to current legislation and lack of a performance framework was evidence in our interviews with managers.	no change to report		
HR	7	2	The policing Workforce has not been asked about inconsistencies in expectations related to professional behaviours - it has been asked about Senior Leadership visibility etc - so not sure where the observations can be evidenced that they perceive inconsistency in demonstrating behaviours, other than through personal perception through the audit which therefore does represent PO and Staff, but isolated individuals. Therefore either this is a groups perception e.g. SPF etc or something else - and we need to be clear where that position is coming from.	Suggest that we are clear where perception emanates from if this is a key finding.	As above we did ask specifically about whether officers and staff felt that senior officers consistently displayed the professional standards of behaviour and the reponse was strong. We chose not to include the quotes that would provide ample evidence of this statment.	Wording has been changed as described above.		
HR	7	6	While there is no disagreement with the conclusion the question is whether this is a recommendation for an audit on conduct as oppose to capability - as per previous points.	Consider whether audit context is revisited or statements on performance along revised?	There is a link between performance and conduct and the lack of ability to deal with performance due to current legislation and lack of a performance framework was evidence in our interviews with managers.	No change to report		
HR	7	6	Essentially same observation re the performance regs.	As above.	There is a link between performance and conduct and the lack of ability to deal with performance due to current legislation and lack of a performance framework was evidence in our interviews with managers.	No change to report		
HR	7	12	This is a statement of fact - but see note on other PBs in Scotland re the relevance to this.			No Change to document		
HR	7	13	There is no objection to the observation per se - however, ACAS look for proportionate responses to investigation and hearing this suggests a one size approach that on all occasions that involves a Chair would require training etc - instead of a proportionate response to severity of matter. I think there has to be a more balanced position on proportionate response to matter arising to truly reflect good practice.	The statement should acknowledge that training and timelines must be considered, along with proportionate investigation, hearing and education based on roles undertaken.		No change to the document		
	8		Points on suicide repeat as above.					
HR	9	3	This action is being progressed in response to the organisations consideration of performance management - but again note point that performance is a capability matter and not a conduct one - and therefore while there is no objection to the wording etc as this is agreed with the audit is a conduct audit.			No change to the document		
HR	9	4	As above			No change to the document		
HR	10	5,6	would suggest that the action is to look at reviewing to ensure that a proportionate response is always taken to investigation to mitigate timelines - and that those involved have appropriate education based on the role they play.					
HR	12	4	The provision is well documented is the issue compliance with the guidance? It is not clear from the statement.		We spoke to a number of people charged with specifically providing wellbeing support who felt that they were inadequately trained and lacked the resources needed to provide the support.	No change to the document		
HR	12	5	Wellbeing support is the role of all managers etc - so what separately is the 'comprehensive' training that is being suggested that we are providing? This is not clear to me; as managers should already have the relevant skills and knowledge to manage support? This feels more of a compliance with guidance issue that we are trying to get around through training - but it isn't clear what the skills gap is? How do we design and deliver training when there is no prescribed gap - I think adherence to guidance would fill the gap? There is no mention of the guidance - so wonder if this is a timing issues?		We spoke to those charged with providing the support who felt that they were inadequately trained or supported in providing wellebing support. We also spoke to those with lived exeprience of receiving the support who were highly critical of it. it is not our role to solutionise by suggested what type of training shoud be provided.	No change to the document		
HR	17	3	There is reference to grievance - but if misconduct is found during that process it moves from that process into the disciplinary/conduct - and is appropriately managed. I think reference to grievance therefore is straying into the wider workplace relationships and not solely conduct - so note comments on whether this is a performance/ culture or conduct audit.		This is a relevant quote to a previous publication.	No change to the document		
HR	24	1, 2, 3, 4,5,6,7,8.	Again - no issues with the observation - merely question if this audit was designed to look at performance or conduct. If the observation was that performance could be used - then what of the cases reviewed demonstrated the opportunity lost - as a general comment around performance will not address the concerns that seems to have risen around the grey areas between both requirements.		The link between performance and conduct is intrinstic. We reflect the issues highlighted to us by those we spoke to and the concerns that were consistently rasied. We make comment on performance in the same way dame Angolini did in her Inderpended review of Compaints Handlin, Investigations and Misconduct Issues.	No change to the document		
HR	56	3	There is a suggestion that being appointed in division lacks independence in an investigation - when some divisions are extensive and mangers and indeed teams will have not interactions. There is a lack of acknowledging here that often understanding of processes, demands etc can also contribute to the fairness and proportionate respond to a matter. Independent can be achieved both in and outside - and this has to be considered in any proportionate investigation. Don't disagree with the wider recommendation - but feel we have to be clear on what we mean by 'independence'.		We raise the point that those chairing the meeting have already been part of the process for the case under examination and could risk perception of their independence being comprimised.	No change to the document		
HR	31	3	I think the recommendation is below the para on significant issues - but the recommendation on it's own doesn't talk abut any education being proportionate to the role?	See note on independent and proportionality.	We use the term appropriately trained and do not define what the training should be. It should of course be dependent of the role they are undertaking.	No change to the document		

HR	18 (and throughout)	15	Refers to **'People and Development (P&D)'**	**Human Resources (HR)**	Noted	Changed throughout the Document [redacted] please pick through the document to make sure that these have all been addressed.		
HR	11	11	Comment on recommendation	Please note that as part of the People Committee Reporting Reset, the workplan for People Committee already includes a Case Management report which is scheduled for presentation to SPA PC in August 2026	Noted this is a comment on the recommendation	No change to the document		
PSD	-	Conduct section	We welcome the positive comments about the conduct investigations being "thorough and proportionate" and the recommendations for Scottish Government on changes to regulations. However, given this inspection relates to conduct, it is felt that that there could be more focus on conduct and ways to enhance and strengthen policies, practices and approach. There is little reference to proceedings and whilst the two case studies included are evidence of lengthy timescales, both apply to circumstances in which the majority of time relates to court proceedings as such they add little value in wider evidence about conduct. More value could be added through the inclusion of more case studies to support the detail and positive findings	Inclusion of case study evidencing positively re conduct approach		No change		
PSD		Intro	Wording	Query regarding use of language - "We provide a clear pathway to '**restore confidence** in conduct and disciplinary arrangements'. Would appear to be sensationalist language which suggests confidence has been lost. Would suggest amended to 'enhance' or 'improve' but not 'restore'.	We qoute the findings of our Culture Inspection which concluded that standards of processional behaviour and ethics were integral to the aspirational culture of Police Scotland. It found that misconduct and grievance processes were widley perveived as lacking openess, transparency and fairness and pace of fresolution. A general lack of trust in these processes was found to have a direct (and at times, damaging) impact on individuals and teams.	No change to the report		
SPA	5	1	Ambiguous as to which organisation is referred to here. Whilst recognising aspects relevant to both organisations, other aspects of paragraph are specific to PS only	Propose paragraph is amended to reflect high level record keeping findings unique to SPA or PS, or common to both		No change to the report		
SPA	5	2	See comment at para 107 below. Samaritans Guidance would be equally applicable in respect of any public reporting to Committee on suicides of individuals subject to conduct/disciplinary procedures. Without evidence of a direct causal link, it is inappropriate to refer to MH of individuals subject to such procedures as a consequence of ineffective wellbeing support. Arguably, even with good wellbeing support in place, the fact that someone is subject to such procedures is still highly likely to impact their MH. To then make reference thereafter to suicide levels, again linking back to wellbeing support is inappropriate.	See suggestions at para 107. Propose separate out point around inadequate wellbeing support and point around individuals under investigation reporting severe mental health impacts. Propose otherwise remove reference to suicide or ensure reference is informed by relevant professional advice. Importance of improved assurance reporting to SPA Committee in relation to wellbeing support can be retained, and perhaps bolstered to ensure that learning from post-case reviews is included in reports.	The Samaratins reporting guidance is in relation to press reporting and is not relevant to the information contained within the report.	Extra paragraph added at 107 to the report.		
SPA	5	9	As with para 1, there is some ambiguity as to which organisation is referred to here. Whilst most specific to SPA, some elements (e.g. referrals) are specific to PS. Additionally, this paragraph makes broad statements implying poor practice across all cases, which is incorrect and irresponsible. The text fails to account for a context of a small overall number of matters in initial scope, a small number of which (as we understand) HMICS have concerns, with the nature of those concerns differing across each and with commentary outlined further below questioning legitimacy of some of these concerns. To suggest insufficient progress since the Angiolini Review is to be dismissive of cases which have otherwise been handled appropropriately.	Propose that this is fully reworded to provide a more objective and nuanced assessment, taking into account the context in respect of cases in scope and avoiding overt or implied generalisation of individual findings.				
SPA	7	11th bullet	Please see comments below under paragraphs 46 and 50.	Propose amended to: "Current whistleblowing policies do not clearly outline processes for officers and police staff to raise protected disclosures in respect of senior officers"		Changed to Current Whistleblowing Policies do not clearly outline processes for officers and staff to raise matters which may be protected disclosures concerning senior officers.		
SPA	8	6th bullet	Please see comments below under paragraph 107 and above re page 5	Propose end bullet after "…perceived as inadequate", which is the substantive point here		Changed as suggested.		
SPA	8	7th bullet	As above	Propose bullet removed or professional advice sought around wording		See other comments this paragraph added.		
SPA	8	9th bullet	Please see comment above in relation to page 5 re use of broad statements	Propose reworded to take accout of comments				
SPA	8	11th bullet	As above & comments on para 96 below	Propose this bullet is removed on basis of comment at para 96				
SPA	10	R5	See comments at para 48 below in relation to existing SPA training	Propose recommendation is limited to Police Scotland		Agreed and amended.		
SPA	10	R6	See comments below under paragraphs 46 and 50.	Proposed amend to: "Police Scotland should revised its Whistleblowing Guidance to clearly outline processes for reporting protected disclosures concerning senior officers".				
SPA	11	R18	As above & comments on para 96 below	Propose this recommendation is removed		No change to report		
SPA	12	R24	Please see comments below under paragraph 107 and above re page 5	Propose professional advice sought around wording where recommendation included in a public report		See other comments about suicide		
SPA	16	6	Standards of Professional Behaviour are only applicable to officers (not staff)	"…Code of Ethics based on the principles of integrity, fairness and respect, which set clear expectations for officers and staff, along with Standards of Professional Behaviour (reproduced at appendix A), specific to officers."				
SPA	18	15	The SPA complaints team are not responsible for oversight of conduct and discipline matters, this responsibility resting with SPA Members.	"…and members of SPA staff (responsible, in the context of this review, for supporting specific Authority decision making functions in relation conduct and discpline matters, as well as supporting broader Authority oversight of such matters within policing in Scotland)…"		Text removed to reflect concern raised.		
SPA	22	32	This paragraph is ambiguous in its reference to 'reports of potential wrongdoing'. There are 4 distinct categories here - namely public complaints, grievances, whistleblowing disclosures and other complaints of misconduct. Propose that sentence referring to SPA here is removed, and instead subsequent paragraphs are amended to reflect role of SPA as appropriate.	Remove sentence "Complaints concerning senior officers…" (and see below)				
SPA	22	33	See above	Add sentence prior to sentence in brackets: "The public are also able to make complaints relating to senior officers directly to the SPA. Where the SPA receives such a complaint (directly or via Police Scotland), and in line with its accompanying Guidance on the Senior Officer Conduct Regulations, it will generally consider any conduct implications arising only after its complaint handling process has been concluded."		paragraph changed with a comment around compants being made directly to SPA.		
SPA	22	34	See above. This paragraph touches on both protected disclosures, grievances and other matters not covered above (but which don't entail potential on-duty criminality). It is also slightly confusing in relation to reference to PS structures which don't apply in the case of SPA staff. It is also incorrect in excluding senior officers. It is important to note that current procedures whereby internal complaints of potential wrongdoing by senior officers can be directly reported to the SPA are limited to grievances about the Chief Constable. In all other instances, procedures involve matters being reported internally within PS in the first instance, with expectation of referral to the SPA thereafter as appropriate	Whole paragraph should be reworded as follows: "Internal complaints of potential wrongdoing by officers and staff within Police Scotland may be reported and assessed by line managers, PSD or P & D, with equivalent arrangements in place for staff working for the SPA. Some of these reports may be protected disclosures under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, with separate procedures in place for those working in Police Scotland and those within the SPA. Other reports are classified as grievances and managed under grievance procedures; such cases fell outside the scope of this review. Where matters raised concern the alleged misconduct of senior officers, these should be transferred to the SPA."		paragraph changed with within Police Scotland added		
SPA	22	35	Integrity Line is a PS-specific provision	Amend to: "Internal complaints of wrongdoing can also be reported by officers and staff within Police Scotland through the Integrity Line…"		Amended to reflect comment		
SPA	22	36	Referral to CAAPD can also be made by the SPA	Amend to: "This referral can be made directly by a member of the public or through Police Scotland (or through the SPA in the case of reports relating to senior officers…"		Amended to reflect comment		

SPA	24	42	PDR process is called 'MyCareer' and is also utilised by SPA staff (albeit it is supplemented with e.g. use of personal objective setting and review)	Amend to: "The current PDR process, MyCareer, is widely regarded…"		Amended to reflect comment		
SPA	26	46	Whilst this paragraph is correct, it would benefit from expansion, as follows: Under PIDA, a worker is able to make a qualifying disclosure with their employer. In the case of police officers, this is the Chief Constable. In the case of civilian staff, whilst the SPA as an entity are formally the 'legal employer' (and therefore will be legally liable for any breach), in practice the functions of receipt, assessment & management are typically the responsibility of management, in this case either SPA management (in the case of staff working within the SPA) or Police Scotland management (in the case of staff under the direction and control of the Chief Constable). Specifically in the context of protected disclosures about senior officers being raised by officers or police staff, under current procedures, the route to raise these is under the Police Scotland Whistleblowing Guidance, with expectation that matters are referred to the SPA for consideration where applicable (in line with its senior officer misconduct responsibilities). PIDA does not automatically enable officers to raise protected disclosures about senior officers directly with the SPA, however, although under section 43C(2) such a mechanism could be introduced by agreement of the employer (the Chief Constable). In terms of matters raised by police staff, legislation is less clear, although such an arrangement could provide for same.	Propose amend, either here, or later, to reflect commentary provided				
SPA	26	47	See comments at para 46 and 50. With separate procedures in place covering SPA staff and officers & staff within PS, it is the latter which provides the vehicle for disclosures about senior officers to be made (not the former), with expectation that PS refer matters to the SPA for consideration accordingly.	Propose amend as follows: "...encourages officers and staff to speak up about wrongdoing. Guidance covers disclosures raised by any officer or member of staff working within Police Scotland, including those concerning senior officers, although no specific reference within the Guidance is made in this regard. It is expected that, where such a matter is raised, it is referred by Police Scotland to the SPA for consideraton accordingly."				
SPA	26	48	First sentence should specifically refer to Police Scotland. An e-learning package for staff working in the SPA is in place, targetted at both those who may raise concerns, as well as those who may receive or investigate same. As at Jan 26, there was a completion rate of 100% for SPA Corporate staff and 72% for Forensics.	Amend to: "We found that knowledge and understanding of Police Scotland whistleblowing processes among officers and police staff remains limited…"	It think it is clear that there is a general understanding of whistleblowing processes . The para goes on to stat the Police Scotland has committed to improving awareness ..... to embed understaning across the organisation.. This refelects that the comment is made in realtion to Police Scotland.	Change made		
SPA	27	49	NGAU function is specific to PS only. Also, see above in respect of SPA training	Amend to: "NGAU is responsible for assessing whether reports received within Police Scotland meet the criteria for…."		Agreed and change made to report		
SPA	27	50	See comments at para 46 above. When whistleblowing procedures first introduced in 2017, it was determined that there would be separate arrangements covering SPA staff and officers and staff working within PS. As a result, an officer or member of staff working within PS seeking to raise a protected disclosure concerning a senior officer requires to be do so via the PS procedure, with PS then referring matters to the SPA accordingly (as they would in the case of misconduct allegations generally). This is why no provision in the SPA policy and why most recent annual whilstleblowing report confirmed no notifications (i.e. from amongst SPA staff). It is now acknowledged that reference is made within the Senior Officer Conduct Guidance for matters to be raised directly with the SPA which is not in alignment with existing arrangements. Subject to changes being made in line with section 43C(2) of PIDA, this could be reconciled.	Amend to: "The SPA introduced its first formal whilstleblowing policy and procedure in 2017 (subsequently updated in 2022). Its policy covers all staff working within SPA Corporate and Forensic Services functions"				
SPA	40	90	Whilst appreciating last sentence quotes from the Senior Officer Conduct Guidance, its placement here (out of context) is unhelpful, not accounting for different procedures in place depending on the nature of the concern, and which the Guidance goes on to cover (see comments at para 32-34). Given that public complaints and grievances are out of scope of the review, and the focus of this section (and the review) specifically on conduct, proposed last sentence be removed.	Either remove last sentence, or amend to: "The SPA is responsible for responding to and dealing promptly and effectively with misconduct allegations relating to senior officers"		No change to the report		
SPA	41	95	The placement of this paragraph after preceding paragraph reference to the 2020 Angiolini Review implies that the SPA has done nothing in the intervening period. It fails to take into account actions progressed by the SPA during this time, which include a formal review of its Senior Officer Conduct Guidance (in consultation with PIRC, HMICS & SCPOSA) and the effective handling by the SPA of a senior officer misconduct case (through initial assessment, referral to PIRC and resulting hearing)	Propose consideration of rewording to take account of comment provided		Removed the word meanwhile		
SPA	41	96	Inaccurate reference to complaints team and conduct facilitators as being 2 different groups. The complaints team currently comprises 2 'complaints & conduct coordinators' who were appointed in late 2024/early 2025. It is further understood that reference here to the team being 'bypassed' singularly relates to a matter raised by PS in May 2025 with the SPA Chief Executive for consideration, where it would ordinarily have been expected that this would be raised internally within PS via the grievance procedure in the first instance (noting that grievance is not within scope of this review). The complaints team would not ordinarily be involved in grievance cases (see earlier in respect of Authority role and see specifically reference to grievance under the Conduct Guidance), with professional support and advice to the Authority's consideration on this matter being correctly provided outwith the team.	This paragraph and the corresponding recommendation should be removed.		No change to the report		

SPA	42	97	It is unclear to what reference to 'reports received directly by senior SPA official' (which lacked any record of action) refers [redacted] it should be noted that, in context of ACAS Statutory Guidance covering all civilian employees in the UK, employers are expected to deal with matters informally except where recourse to formal procedures are required, based on the nature and severity of the matter at hand. [redacted] Language used in last 2 sentences wrongly implies collusion with Police Scotland on matters. Senior Officer Conduct Guidance (on which PIRC, HMICS & SCPOSA were consulted) makes specific reference to the facility for SPA (on receipt of a matter concerning a senior officer) to make contact with PS Head of Professional Standards "to determine whether there is further reporting or further information that may be relevant, or to support consistency in decision making processes..." [redacted] Given above, last 2 sentences should be removed.	Last 3 sentences should be removed.		No change to the report		
SPA	45	107	Care needs to be given within this report to content (if it is to be included at all) which refers to suicide. Samaritans Media Guidance for Reporting Suicide emphasises the need to avoid dramatic headlines and to avoid speculating about the 'trigger' or cause of suicides (noting that this can oversimplify the issue, suicide being extremely complex, with no single event or factor that leads someone to take their own life in most instances). Whilst there may be ineffective wellbeing support or issues with the design/implementation of conduct procedures, unless there is evidence of a causal link with resulting suicides, then any overt or implied link within the report should be avoided.	Given Samaritans Media Guidance, it is respectfully requested that reference is either removed from the 'public' version of the report or that further expert advice is sought in this regard on content to be included.				
SG			At Para 6 on p16, the Code of Ethics is now statutory and in place under the Police (Ethics, Conduct and Scrutiny) (Scotland) Act 2025.			Changed as per comment. [redacted] please ensure the footnote links to the new code of ethics.		
SG			And on pg48, the code of ethics replicated, doesn't fully match the one that's been updated on the Police Scotland website which is here: Code of Ethics for policing in Scotland - Police Scotland.			[redacted] to check and amend the replicated version to ensure it matches.		