

Our role in investigating criminal allegations against the police

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COPFS independently investigates criminal allegations (including anti-corruption cases) made against Police Officers in Scotland acting in the course of their duty.

Making a complaint about a police officer

Directly to Police Scotland

Complaints or allegations against police officers should be made directly to Police Scotland. The process for making a complaint can be found on the [Police Service of Scotland website](#).

Police Scotland is best placed to receive, record, assess and allocate complaints, as well as track the outcomes. Reporting directly to Police Scotland remains the most effective manner of reporting the criminal allegation.

Reporting to COPFS

We recognise that on some occasions a complainer's relationship with the Police Service of Scotland will have deteriorated to the extent that there is a fundamental lack of trust or confidence that the complaint will be properly advanced. In these circumstances a criminal allegation against an on-duty police officer can be made directly to COPFS.

Only reports of criminal allegations against on-duty police officers directly to COPFS. This means where you believe a police officer has committed a criminal offence while at work.

Only new criminal allegations that have not previously been reported to the Police Service of Scotland should be reported to us in this way.

How we investigate complaints

The Criminal Allegations Against the Police Division (CAAPD) is a specialist division within COPFS that investigate allegations against on-duty police officers. All allegations reported to COPFS will be thoroughly investigated.

We will refer the complaint to Professional Standards Department (PSD) of the Police Service of Scotland for further consideration and, where appropriate, investigation.

We may also instruct further investigation by the Professional Standards Department (PSD) of the Police Service of Scotland (Police Scotland) or by the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner (PIRC).

Complainers' involvement

Where a complaint results in the submission of a report to CAAPD the person making the allegation will also participate in the investigation, either by being given the opportunity to review and amend their statement about the incident or by being interviewed by a member of CAAPD.

The investigation will always remain under the control of COPFS.

Outcome of the investigation

Sufficient evidence

Where there is sufficient evidence, a report will be submitted by COPFS to the Crown Counsel.

Crown Counsel will then decide if there is sufficient credible, reliable and admissible evidence, and if proceedings are in the public interest, before deciding whether or not to bring a criminal case against the police officer.

Make a complaint

More information about making a complaint to COPFS about a police officer can be found on our page, [criminal allegations against the police](#).