



People for Proper Policing in North Wales

The IPCC, is it a toothless watchdog ?

MPs have criticised the effectiveness of the police complaints watchdog in monitoring its own recommendations, claiming systems for checking the quality of its work were "conspicuously absent".

The Commons Public Accounts Committee (PAC) said the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) had "limited" evidence of the impact of its own work as responsibility for monitoring was unclear. It said there was a **"lack of clarity"** over the issue and called on the Home Office to ensure there was a "clear and well-established line of accountability."

The IPCC probes complaints about police officers and staff in England and Wales and has statutory duty to investigate cases involving death or serious injury at the hands of the police.

In its latest report, the PAC called on the IPCC to tighten up procedures and introduce a "robust" quality framework. It should also bring in external scrutiny of a sample of its cases to give the public assurance about how it handles investigations and appeals. The committee said the IPCC did not routinely seek the views of complainants or police officers about its investigations or the appeals process. It also had no mechanism in place for monitoring whether its recommendations had been implemented by the police.

And the MPs warned that transferring the responsibility for how a complaint should be handled from commissioners to regional directors could increase the risk that scarce resources could have "an undue influence over decisions about how a complaint should be investigated."

Tory chairman of the committee, Edward Leigh, said the workload of the IPCC had sharply increased since it had been set up in 2004 and staff were "hard pressed". He said: *"Public confidence in the police complaints system looks to have improved. But when it comes to how effective the IPCC actually is, that's where the questions start to be asked. Systems for checking the quality of its work are conspicuously absent. There is **no external independent scrutiny** and the IPCC has no formal internal processes to monitor its work, exposing it to potential allegations of incompetence or bias... Our committee would like this matter to be clarified by the Home Office."* **Leigh and his PAC are responding to the National Audit Offices report on the value for money of the IPCC! The full report is at <http://www.nao.org.uk/> enter IPCC into the sites' search facility**

The PPP comments ... we have researched their structure, membership and performance and conclude that we have little confidence in the IPCC being independent, (A commissioner specialising in Police Vehicle issues, some fatal, happens to be an honorary member of the black police Association!.) making the right decision or judgement or following up on it's recommendations. It is another expensive Quango. In 2008 the overall cost was £32.2 million for a case load of 100. The eagerness with which the police now hand over problems to the IPCC also concerns us.

In North Wales the IPCC report on Brunstrom's behaviour in the headless biker fiasco was very weak. We are currently awaiting a response from the IPCC on their investigations into the stray bullet in Mold in 2007 and the tasering of a sick and scared elderly man in Llandudno.