

Project Connect – wellbeing support for officers and staff involved in misconduct investigations

Project Connect was established to provide enhanced wellbeing support for officers and staff involved in criminal or gross misconduct investigations.

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Key details

Stage of practice	Untested
Purpose	Organisational
Topic	Investigation Ethics and values Wellbeing
Organisation	Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary
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Region	South West
Partners	Police Criminal justice (includes prisons, probation services) Education Government department Health services Private sector

Key details

Stage of implementation	The practice is implemented.
Start date	September 2025
Scale of initiative	Local
Target group	General public Workforce

Aim

The aims of Project Connect are to:

- provide clarity and transparency regarding the processes of the professional standards department (PSD)
- balance the regulatory requirements of complaints and misconduct investigations with the impact on individuals, ensuring procedural justice and timely investigations
- deliver effective, proportionate, and compassionate investigations

Intended outcome

The intended outcomes of the Project Connect are to:

- improve the wellbeing support available to those under investigation, victims, complainants, and line managers
- increase the use of wellbeing support officers
- build an effective PSD to improve public trust and confidence in Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary

Description

Over a six-month period in 2025, two officers died while under investigation for criminal and gross misconduct matters. In response, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary's Gold Group

established Project Connect to enhance the wellbeing support available to officers and staff who are subject to investigation.

Planning process

Under Project Connect, the PSD created an improvement plan, commissioning a detective superintendent to review existing culture and practices and provide recommendations. In parallel, the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Police and Crime Commissioner commissioned an independent review, conducted by a law firm, to examine PSD processes, gather the experiences of officers and staff, and make recommendations.

Following these two reviews, the force developed a delivery plan focused on six key areas:

- systems and processes
- performance and data
- initial training and continued professional development (CPD)
- timeliness and standard of investigation
- culture and proportionality
- trust and confidence of PSD

Implementation

Centurion

The PSD has worked with Force Information Systems (FIS), the national provider of the force's records management system Centurion. This was to ensure the software is better equipped to record events, improve the timeliness of regulatory updates, and enhance the design and usability of data entry processes. To support the effective use of Centurion, FIS provided online training as well as video and visual guidance materials.

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary also conducted a data-cleansing exercise, closing historic cases that had remained open due to administrative errors or housekeeping issues. By utilising the training and guidance provided, PSD now ensures that cases are reviewed every 28 days and that individuals under investigation, along with those supporting them, receive timely updates.

PSD has also enhanced the use of coding within Centurion to facilitate the extraction of management information. This has enabled the force to gain a better understanding of performance, caseloads, and the status of investigations.

PSD information pack

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary has created a PSD information pack for individuals under investigation for criminal and gross misconduct matters. The pack is provided to officers and staff at the same time as the Regulation 17 notice, which formally notifies them that they are under investigation.

The pack is available in both digital and paper formats and includes the following information:

- regulation information
- what happens at a hearing or meeting and who is required to attend
- expectations of those involved
- information about accelerated misconduct hearings
- frequently asked questions page

Roles and teams

Project Connect has been developed to consider the needs of everyone involved in an investigation and to clarify what is expected of them. This includes PSD investigators, line managers, and senior leaders through to the deputy chief constable.

Every officer and member of staff who is under investigation is provided with mandatory support from the wellbeing team. The team consists of one wellbeing manager, who oversees 22 wellbeing support officers. The role of the wellbeing support officers is to maintain regular contact with the individual under investigation, attend court proceedings or misconduct hearings where appropriate, and signpost individuals to relevant wellbeing services.

For each investigation, the wellbeing manager establishes a dedicated Microsoft Teams channel involving the following individuals and teams:

- welfare support officer
- PSD investigating officer and their detective superintendent

- Police Federation or union representative
- line manager
- head of command (chief inspector or operations manager)

The channel provides a forum for sharing relevant information about the individual and storing any associated risk assessments. A 'red team' has also been established within PSD to ensure that staff feel connected to and involved in the initiative. The team is used to share communications from the senior leadership team (SLT) with colleagues and to represent staff views at PSD meetings.

Overall impact

Project Connect has been well received by officers and staff. Since its introduction, it has resulted in:

- improved transparency of PSD processes
- an embedded culture of continuous improvement
- increased trust and confidence in PSD
- enhanced wellbeing support for those involved in criminal and gross misconduct investigations

An internal review is currently underway to further enhance psychological resilience within PSD. In addition, quarterly pulse surveys are being conducted to assess, monitor, and forecast morale and wellbeing across the department.

Learning

- It is important to collaborate with internal stakeholders. Securing approval and support from the senior leadership team (SLT) was essential in building momentum and driving the successful implementation of the improvement plan.
- Initial negative perception of PSD were mitigated through increased transparency and clearer communication about PSD processes.
- It is essential to have a dedicated business manager or project inspector to oversee, monitor, and coordinate the planning and implementation of the improvement plan.

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