

Report of the Complaints Sub-Committee

The Panel met on Thursday, 13 March to consider the complaint lodged by Mr HR alleging that the North Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) failed to read and respond to emails that he had submitted, and that her actions in this regard were evidence of a breach of the expectations of her oath of office.

Present: Cllr Helen Flynn, Cllr Mick Griffiths (Chair), Santokh Sidhu, Community Co-opted Member.

In attendance Ray Busby, Officer

The Panel considered the evidence submitted by Mr HR and the PCC. The Panel firmly believes that correspondence should always be properly responded to. It is appreciated that this is not always possible on every occasion, especially when an individual writes repeatedly and/or in an abusive manner. The Panel supports the PCC entirely when she makes the point that it is inappropriate to engage with abusive correspondence. Such correspondence cannot be condoned.

The Panel looked for evidence that the PCC responded to the complainant on every occasion in a manner commensurate to the nature of the correspondence received.

The Panel supports the PCC's assessment that the totality of issues raised by Mr HR regarding his family circumstances is not a matter on which the PCC has authority or responsibility to take action.

The Panel supports the PCC completely when she suggests that there are good grounds for not engaging with any complainant when their correspondence is abusive.

The Panel is not persuaded by a view that some correspondence might go unanswered solely on the grounds that it has been sent by a particular individual. Such a "blanket" rule applied is not the kind of approach, the Panel believes, a public sector organisation is in a position to adopt.

In the light of the above, given the evidence before it, and bearing in mind the Panel's limited powers of investigation, the Panel **CONCLUDED** that:

1. the failure to answer particular correspondences, although at times regrettable as far as the complainant is concerned, is not in itself an evidence of a breach of her oath of office.
2. The options for informal resolution of this case have been exhausted.

The Panel therefore **RESOLVED** to take no further action in relation to this complaint.

COUNCILLOR MICK GRIFFITHS

13 March 2014