

**Mrs Nuala O'Loan**  
***Police Ombudsman***  
***for Northern Ireland***

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**CACOLE**  
**Annual Conference**  
**June 2004**

# The new complaints system

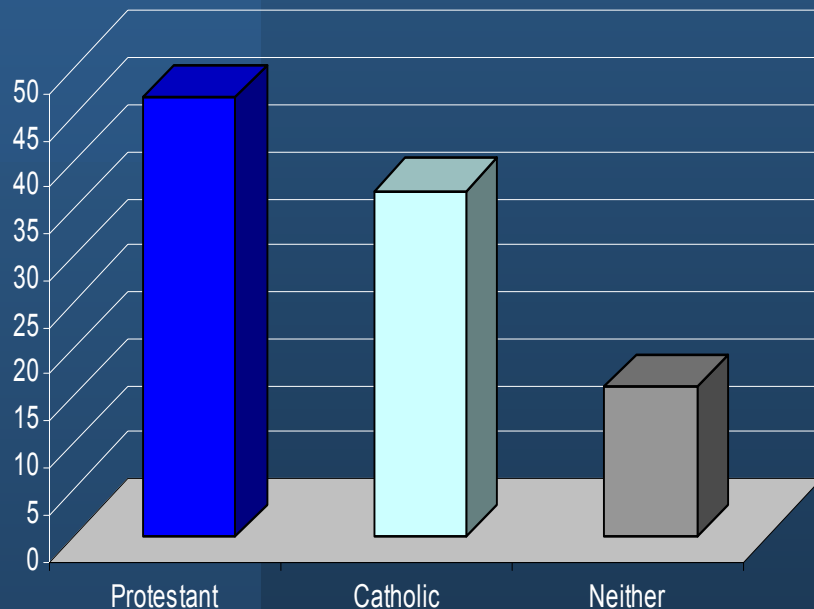
- All complaints recorded and dealt with by the Police Ombudsman
- No police involvement in investigation

# The Office

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- The Office currently has 125 staff
- The population of Northern Ireland is currently about 1.7 million
- The strength of the PSNI is currently about 9,500 officers

# Community Background of Employees in post (31/12/03)



- 47% Protestant
- 37% Catholic
- 16% Neither

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# **Changes in England, Ireland and Wales**

# The statutory duties

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- To register and classify complaints
- To investigate, informally resolve or seek mediation of complaints
- To recommend necessary criminal or disciplinary action against police officers
- To provide management information to the Secretary of State, the Policing Board and the Chief Constable
- To secure the confidence of the public and of the police in the complaints system

# **New Complaints Received**

**(incoming work)**

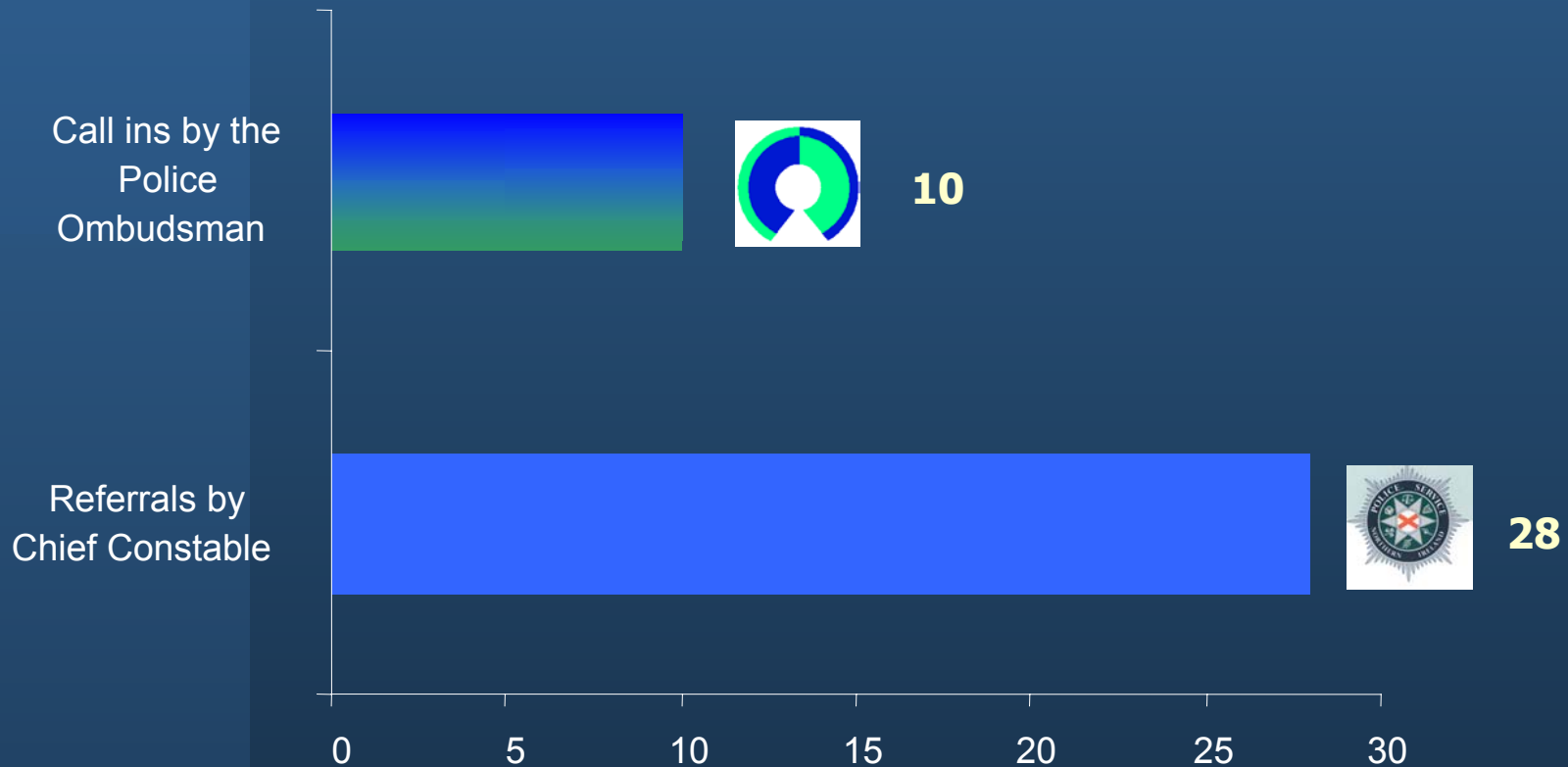
**2003 - 2004**

**2976 Complaints**

**4196 Allegations**

**630 Other Matters Received**

# Section 55 Investigations FY2003/04



# What Kind of Allegations Do We Investigate?

- Incivility
- Intimidation
- Harassment
- Assault
- Death – murder/manslaughter
- Perverting course of justice
- Theft
- Failure of duty

# **Review and Oversight Mechanisms include:**

- 1. Complaint to the SoS**
- 2. Judicial Review**
- 3. Annual Report to SoS for Parliament**
- 4. Audit Process**
- 5. Criminal Justice Inspectorate**
- 6. Police investigation of any criminal allegation against the Police Ombudsman and her staff**
- 7. Justice Commissioner**
- 8. Oversight Commissioner**
- 9. Children's Commissioner**
- 10. Surveillance Commissioner**

# The options

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- Complaint is informally resolved
- Complaint is investigated

# Formal investigation

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- By Ombudsman's staff
- Who have all the powers and privileges of a constable for the purposes of the investigation, e.g.
  - Powers of arrest, search and seizure (PACE)
  - Powers to access and seize documentation or property
  - Powers to secure incident scene
- Using all necessary ancillary support e.g. Forensic Science

# **Access to Information, etc.**

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- **The Police Ombudsman's Office has unfettered right of access to all police documentation, information and materials**

# **Direction for Prosecution 2003 – 2004**

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**15 Offences involving 12  
Officers**

# Disciplinary Issues

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Discipline

Recommendations made  
to the Chief Constable

# Parallel investigations

PSNI & Police Ombudsman

# Firearms Investigation

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2001	-	21
2002	-	11
2003	-	5

# Baton Investigation

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2001	-	419
2002	-	240
2003	-	148

# Recommendations to Develop Policing

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- Custody Officers Receive First Aid Training
- Use of 'stingers' to stop vehicles.
- Procedures for 'vulnerable' people
- Handcuff settings
- Firearm procedures.

# Management information

- To the PSNI
- To the Policing Board for Northern Ireland

# Community views of Police Ombudsman's Office

- **Awareness** 85%
- **Independence** 85%
- **Impartiality** 76%
- **Fairness** 82%
- **Improving Policing** 79%

# Training Needs

- Baton Round investigation – Training needs/authority
- Baton Report – Head strikes/over use
- Lawyer Report – Respect for Human Rights
- Youth Report – Community Relationships
- Informal Resolution – Civility/Failure in duty
- Informant Handling – National Guidelines
- Dissemination of information - Intelligence

# New Challenges

- New legislative function
- Retrospective cases

*Thank you*