

This report presents information on complaints about **Strathclyde Police** for the year 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013.

1 All complaints

- At 1,585 the total number of complaint cases received by Strathclyde Police in 2012-13 is up 16.0 per cent on last year. Conversely, Scotland as whole experienced a decrease of -1.7 per cent.
- At 2,832, the number of complaint allegations received by the force in 2012-13 is up 17.6 per cent on last year - the highest individual rise just, of all eight forces. Nationally, numbers have fallen by just -0.5 per cent.
- The majority of allegations received concerned on-duty conduct (84.5 per cent), followed by 10.5 per cent for quality of service and 5.0 per cent for off-duty conduct.
- A total of 95.7 per cent of on- and off-duty allegations received were directed at police officers, followed by 4.9 per cent at police staff, 0.6 per cent at special constables and three (0.1) per cent at unspecified individuals¹.
- At 2,298, the total number of allegations disposed of is down -1.1 per cent on last year, compared with a rise of just 0.9 per cent nationally.

Table 1: Summary statistics: Strathclyde Police, 2007-08 to 2012-13⁴

Fiscal year	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13
Complaint cases recorded	1,889	1,826	1,545	1,363	1,366	1,585
Complaint allegations received: on duty	3,143	3,683	2,432	2,028	2,001	2,393
Complaint allegations received: quality of service	227	216	208	242	224	298
Complaint allegations received: off duty	246	200	193	227	183	141
Complaint allegations received: total	3,616	4,099	2,833	2,497	2,408	2,832
Complaint allegations disposed of: on duty	2,704	3,595	2,740	2,414	1,906	1,940
Complaint allegations disposed of: quality of service	197	254	228	244	228	220
Complaint allegations disposed of: off duty	148	209	170	242	189	138
Complaint allegations disposed of: total	3,049	4,058	3,138	2,900	2,323	2,298
Complaint cases recorded per 10k population: Central Scotland	8.6	8.3	7.0	6.1	6.1	7.1
Complaint cases recorded per 10k population: Scotland	8.3	9.4	8.8	8.1	8.4	8.2
Complaint allegations received per 10k population: Central Scotland ³	16.4	18.5	12.8	11.2	10.8	12.7
Complaint allegations received per 10k population: Scotland ⁴	13.3	16.6	14.8	13.4	15.2	15.0

Reasons for differences in these statistics vary and may include the nature and extent of training undertaken by staff, new procedures becoming established or fluctuating public confidence in reporting dissatisfaction:

- The rate per 10,000 population of complaint cases received by Strathclyde Police remains one of the lowest in Scotland, despite the force experiencing its first rise in at least five years.
- The same is true of its rate of allegations received: despite experiencing its the first rise in four years the force continues to enjoy the lowest rate in Scotland.

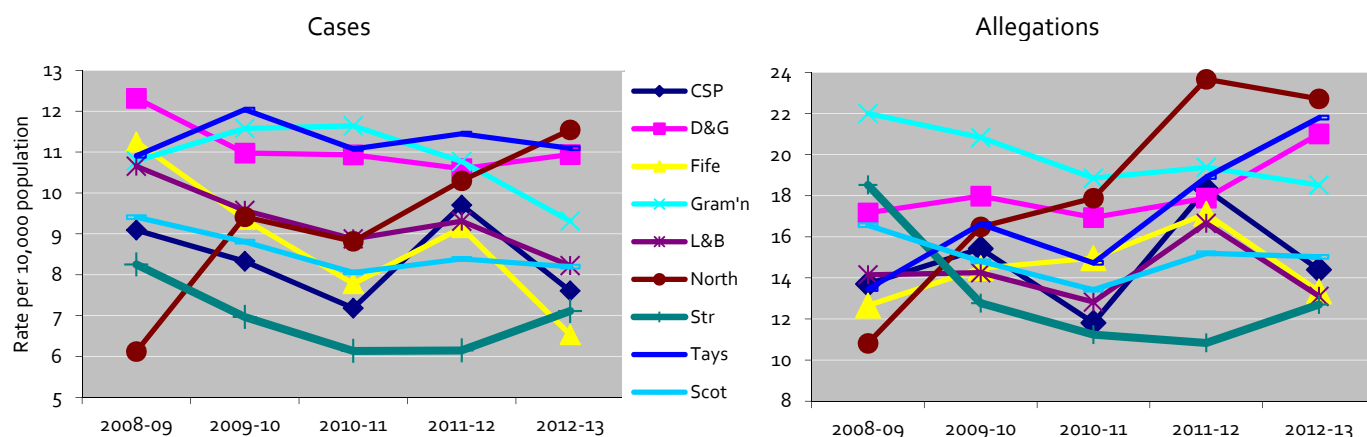
^[1] A single allegation may be directed at more than one member of a police force – hence percentages may not add up to 100%.

^[2] Complaints prior to April 2007 were recorded under an earlier definition that did not include off-duty and quality of service complaints.

^[3] Following recalculation, revised figures are presented for allegations prior to 2009/10 from those in the 2008/09 version of this report.

^[4] Following recalculation, revised figures are presented for allegations prior to 2009/10 from those in the 2008/09 version of this report.

Figure 1: Complaints received per 10k population for all forces and Scotland overall, 2007-08 to 2012-13



2 On-duty complaints

- A total of 84.5 per cent of all allegations received by Strathclyde Police in 2012-13 were allegations concerning on-duty conduct – exactly the same as that for Scotland as a whole (84.5 per cent).
- At 2,393, the number of on-duty allegations received by the force in 2012-13 is up 19.6 per cent on last year, compared with an overall rise for Scotland over the same period of 2.8 per cent.
- The majority of on-duty allegations received were directed at *police officers* (96.4 per cent compared with 95.7 per cent for Scotland), followed by 4.6 per cent at *police staff* (5.1 per cent for Scotland), 0.2 per cent at *special constables* (0.7 per cent for Scotland) and two or 0.1 per cent at unspecified individuals⁵.
- At 1,940, the number of on-duty allegations disposed of is up 1.8 per cent on last year compared with a 3.5 per cent rise nationally.
- The most common types of allegation against on-duty members of the force disposed of were allegations of *irregular procedure* (28.5 per cent), *incivility* (16.3 per cent) and *assault* (16.1 per cent).
- The most common outcomes of these allegations were *concluded by explanation* to the complainer⁶ (31.8 per cent), *unsubstantiated/not upheld due to insufficient evidence*⁷ (29.8 per cent) and *leading to "no proceedings"* decision by the procurator fiscal (20.5 per cent).

Table 2⁷: Top three allegations types closed by Strathclyde Police, 2007-08 to 2012-13

Fiscal year	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13
Irregular procedure - number disposed of	312	574	584	628	522	553
Percentage change on previous year (%)	-3.1	84	1.7	7.5	-16.9	5.9
Incivility - number disposed of	495	531	450	382	309	317
Percentage change on previous year (%)	15.7	7.3	-15.3	-15.1	-19.1	2.6
Assault - number disposed of	801	1009	592	415	286	312
Percentage change on previous year (%)	9.0	26.0	-41.3	-29.9	-31.1	9.1

- Prior to this year disposals of all allegations combined had been falling annually in Strathclyde, with most types of allegation having contributed to this downward trend.
- Indeed most have continued to fall, with only unnecessary arrest and other non-criminal allegations in addition to the three above showing a year-on-year rise.

^[5] A single allegation may be directed at more than one member of a police force – hence percentages may not add up to 100%.

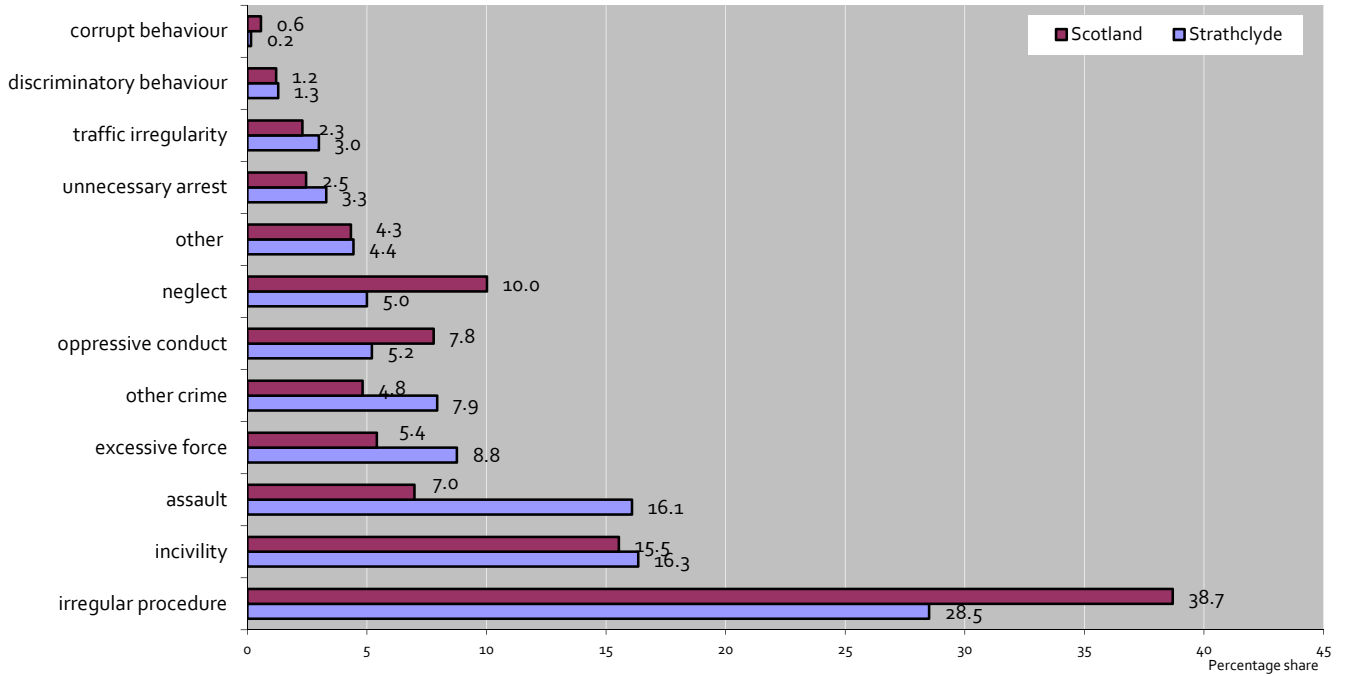
^[6] Resolved by explanation may now include allegations concluded by explanation, regardless of whether or not they were upheld.

^[6] NB: Large percentage changes can be a consequence of small raw numbers.

^[7] "Unsubstantiated" is in the process of being replaced by new closure code 'not upheld due to insufficient evidence'.

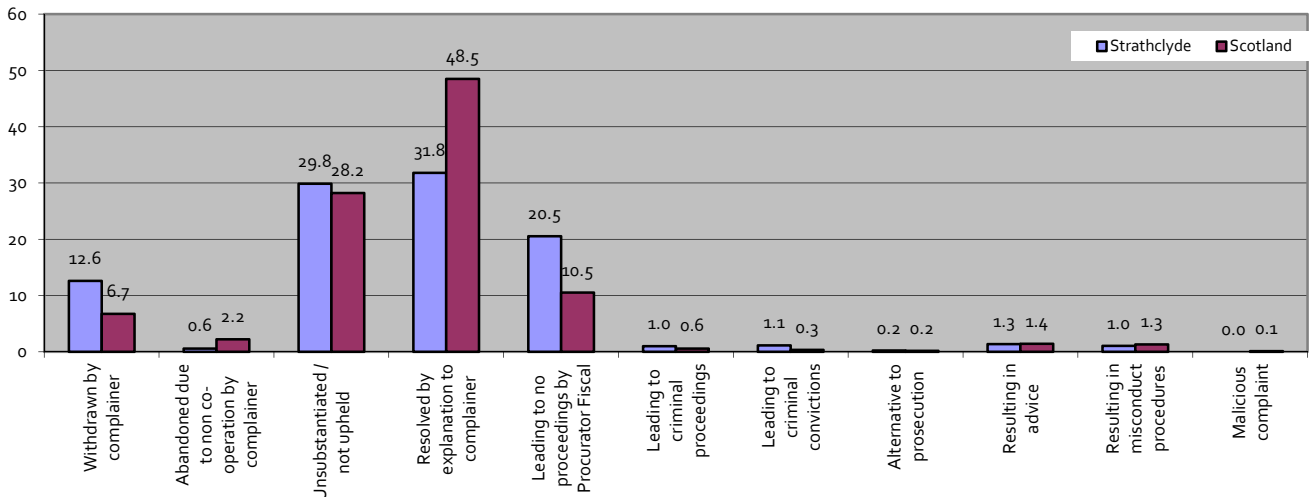
- The force has a higher than (Scottish) average share for a number of allegation types disposed of, including in particular assault (highest in Scotland), excessive force and other crime (highest in Scotland).
- It has a lower than (Scottish) average share of allegations of some, including irregular procedure, neglect of duty, (lowest in Scotland), oppressive conduct and corrupt practice.

Figure 2: Percentage share of on-duty allegations disposed of - Strathclyde and Scotland 2012-13



- The largest proportion of allegations disposed of by Strathclyde Police in 2012-13 is no longer those that are *unsubstantiated/not upheld due to insufficient evidence*⁷ but those *concluded by explanation* to complainers (31.8 per cent). Most Scottish forces have experienced similar changes - a reduction in *unsubstantiated/not upheld* and a rise in *resolved/concluded*. As a result the national average for *resolved/concluded* disposals has risen from 20.6 last year to 48.5 per cent and that for *unsubstantiated/not upheld* disposals has fallen from 43.8 to 28.2 per cent.
- Also falling is the force's proportion of disposals *resulting in advice* being given to a member of the force, which had been rising annually but this year fell over seven percentage points. The same picture - of past annual increases followed by a sharp drop in 2012-13 - can be seen for Scotland as a whole.
- Where the force differs most from others in Scotland is in its high proportions - the highest in Scotland - of allegations *withdrawn* or *leading to a "no proceedings" decision* by the area procurator fiscal.

Figure 3: Outcomes of on-duty allegations - Strathclyde and Scotland, 2012-13



3 Off-duty complaints

- The proportion of allegations received by Strathclyde in 2012-13 concerning off-duty conduct fell for a second consecutive year to reach 5.0 per cent. The proportion for Scotland as a whole fell to 3.1 per cent.
- At 141, the number of off-duty allegations received by the force in 2012-13 is down -23.0 per cent on last year, compared with national decline of -31.9 per cent. Similarly the number disposed of is also down, by -27.0 per cent on last year, compared with a fall of -19.2 per cent for Scotland as a whole.
- The majority of allegations received were directed at *police officers* (83.7 per cent), followed by *police staff* (8.5 per cent) then *special constables* (7.1 per cent). One additional subject of a complaint was unknown. The equivalent proportions for Scotland as a whole were 80.5, 14.2 and 5.7 per cent respectively.
- At 84.8 per cent Strathclyde has the highest proportion of criminal off-duty allegations – compared with 73.4 per cent nationally. The most common disposal was *action taken*, followed closely by *unsubstantiated/not upheld*.

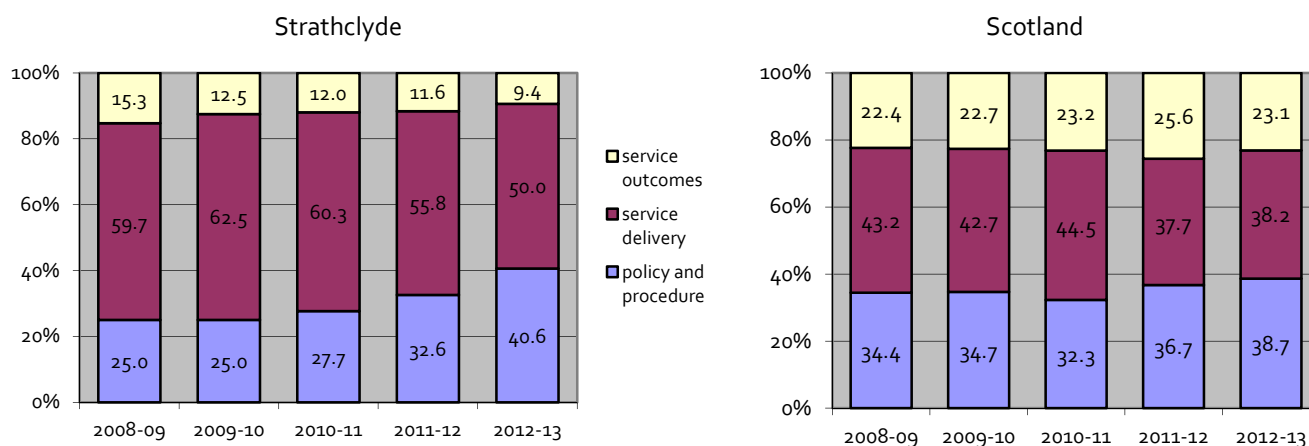
Table 3: Outcomes of all off-duty allegations - Strathclyde and Scotland, 2009-10 to 2012-13

Fiscal year/	Strathclyde				Scotland			
	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13
% Action taken	57.6	63.2	63.0	47.8	52.9	51.3	50.7	39.3
% Unsubstantiated / Not upheld	26.5	30.2	34.9	44.2	30.1	37.6	38.2	47.6
% Resolved	10.6	5.4	0.0	8.0	11.1	7.4	3.1	12.1
% Withdrawn	4.1	1.2	1.6	0.0	5.3	3.6	7.2	0.3
% Abandoned	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.8	0.7
TOTAL - number	170	242	189	138	342	417	359	290

4 Quality of service complaints

- Just over one in ten (10.5 per cent) of all allegations received by Strathclyde Police in 2012-13 concerned quality of service. This is slightly below the 12.4 per cent recorded for Scotland as a whole.
- At 298, the number of quality of service allegations received by the force in 2012-13 is up 33.0 per cent on last year - the highest individual rise in Scotland - compared with a decline nationally of -9.9 per cent.
- Exactly half of all allegations received (50.0 per cent) were directed at aspects of *service delivery*, followed by rising *policy and procedure* (40.6 per cent) and shrinking *service outcomes* (9.4 per cent).
- At 220 the number of quality of service allegations disposed of by the force fell -3.5 per cent on last year, compared with an overall national decrease of -8.2 per cent.

Figure 4: Percentage share of type of quality of service allegations received, 2012-13



5 Complainer characteristics

- Nearly all complainers (98.7 per cent) made their complaint to the force as opposed to having someone else do so on their behalf. This is similar to the 97.7 per cent recorded nationally. Where someone else did so on their behalf, it was most likely to be someone acting as an agent for the complainer (1.2 per cent).
- The majority of complainers were male (62.2 per cent), very similar to the Scottish average of 62.4 per cent. That said, the gender of the complainer was unknown in 7.9 per cent of cases.
- In 34.7 per cent of cases the age of the complainer was unknown; in a higher proportion still (45.5 per cent), the occupational status of the complainer was unknown; and in an even higher proportion (49.0 per cent), the ethnicity of the complainer was unknown or not stated. These high proportions mean that we cannot make further comment about complainer characteristics.

Figure 5a: Age of complainer - Strathclyde and Scotland, 2012-13

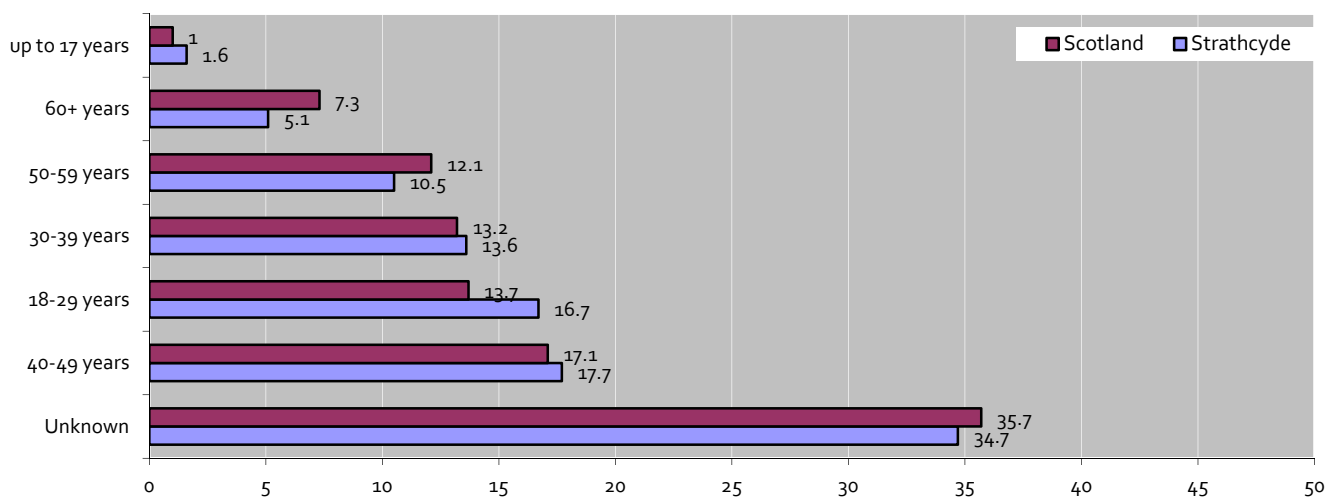
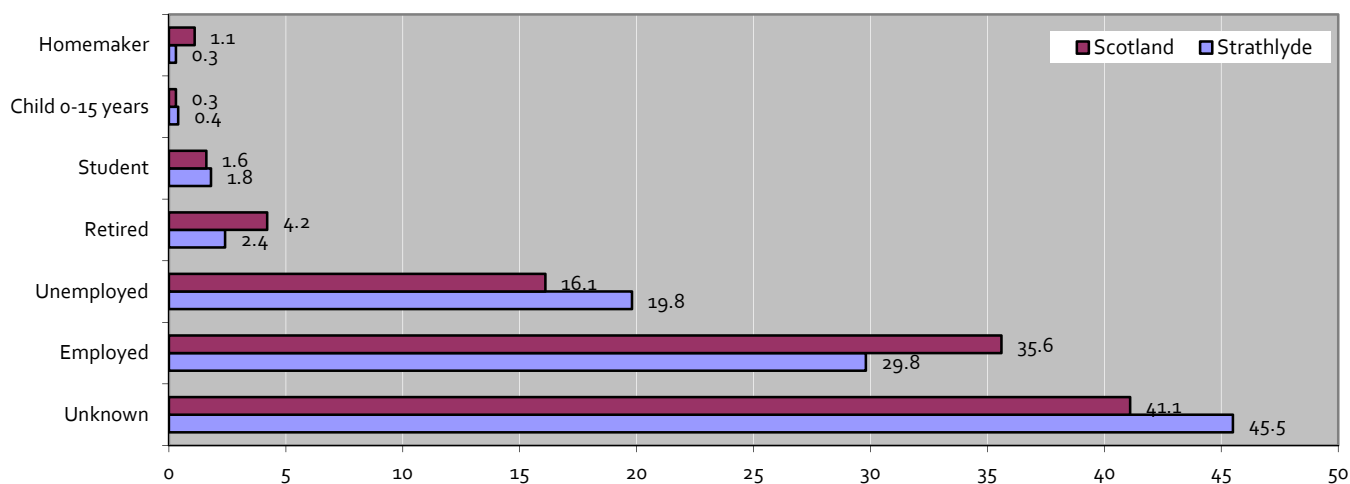


Figure 5b: Occupation of complainer - Strathclyde and Scotland, 2012-13



6 Subject of complaint characteristics

- We have said elsewhere that the majority of subjects of allegations were police officers. Over seven in every ten of all those complained about in the force were male (71.3 per cent), 18.0 per cent were female and 10.7 per cent were unknown. The equivalent figures for Scotland are 72.5 per cent, 20.7 per cent and 6.8 per cent respectively.
- The peak ages for being complained about in the force are 30-39 (32.3 per cent, compared with 27.2 per cent nationally) and 40-49 (28.5 per cent, compared with 28.2 per cent nationally). This is only indicative, however, given that in 11.3 per cent of cases the age of the subject was unknown.
- In 30.6 per cent of cases the ethnicity of the subject of the complaint was also unknown.