

Business Plan 2026-27

Role of the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner

Our purpose is to fulfil our statutory duties to provide independent oversight of policing in Scotland. In doing so, we investigate serious incidents involving the police and we review the way the police handle complaints from the public.

Our mission is to promote and support public confidence in all policing bodies operating in Scotland through evidence-based outcomes to our investigations and complaint handling reviews. We can recommend improvements and learning to the way policing bodies operate and deliver services, and direct policing bodies to reconsider their response to complaints from members of the public.

Our values – impartiality, respect and integrity – underpin all our work.

By achieving our purpose and our mission, and by living our values, we play a central role in the Scottish justice system. As an independent investigation and review authority, our work is pivotal to safeguarding the human rights of those who come into contact with the police.

Strategic Objectives

Our 2025/26 Strategic Review has enabled us to update our strategic objectives for the next three years. Our strategic objectives are:

- **We will deliver independent oversight of policing in Scotland, pursuing continuous improvement in the policing service provided to the public.**
- **We will build public confidence in PIRC and invest in our own continuous improvement by engaging with service users and stakeholders.**
- **We will develop our organisational capacity, capability and resilience.**
- **We will promote a safe, supportive and high-performing workforce.**
- **We will enhance our organisational foresight, readiness and adaptability.**

Delivery of our strategic objectives will improve our ability to provide impartial oversight and our responsiveness to public expectation. Furthermore, the objectives ensure that the organisation is best placed to anticipate and meet future challenges with a dedicated, skilled and well-supported workforce.

Delivery of these objectives will help us contribute to Scotland's national outcomes, which are determined by Scottish Ministers. Our strategic objectives are also aligned to the Scottish Government's Vision for Justice in Scotland with its focus on person-centred, trauma-informed justice, as well as the Public Service Reform Strategy.

Delivering our objectives

Our strategic objectives will be delivered through implementation of specific and measurable actions over the next three years. Progress against these actions and each objective will be monitored by our Senior Leadership Team and reported to the PIRC Statutory Advisory Board on a quarterly basis. Progress will also be reported in our Annual Reports.

The following sets out the actions we are committed to undertaking in 2026/27:

Strategic Objective 1

We will deliver independent oversight of policing in Scotland, pursuing continuous improvement in the policing service provided to the public.

In 2026/27, we will:

- ✓ Conduct thorough, independent investigations.
- ✓ Undertake independent, evidence-based reviews of complaint handling by policing bodies.
- ✓ Commence a review of our statutory guidance on the handling of complaints about the police in Scotland.
- ✓ Review our existing performance management framework and Key Performance Indicators.
- ✓ Develop and commence implementation of CHART, our framework for the audit of the effectiveness of police complaint handling arrangements.

Strategic Objective 2

We will build public confidence in PIRC and invest in our own continuous improvement by engaging with service users and stakeholders.

In 2026/27, we will:

- ✓ Explore how we embed a trauma-informed approach, including by reviewing current policies, procedures and training.
- ✓ Establish an internal Human Rights Group to further embed rights-based approaches in our work.
- ✓ Explore how developing stakeholder engagement, such as establishment of an Advisory Reference Group, can improve PIRC policies, procedures and emerging areas of business
- ✓ Develop a Communications Strategy to support our purpose, mission and values in all of our activities, interactions and platforms.
- ✓ Explore best mechanisms for gathering service user feedback, and effective data collection and analysis, to support continuous service delivery improvements.
- ✓ Explore process for wider publication of more information about PIRC's work, including investigations and reviews outcomes and the professional backgrounds of our staff, with a view to building confidence in our independence and capabilities.
- ✓ Ensure active Senior Leadership Team oversight of strategic risks and progress against strategic objectives.

Strategic Objective 3

We will develop our organisational capacity, capability and resilience.

In 2026/27, we will:

- ✓ Conduct an organisational review of governance meeting structures and internal working groups to establish efficiency, effectiveness and ensure resilience.

- ✓ Scope and deliver pilot project to establish resource footprint in the North and inform long term resource and capability structure.
- ✓ Maximise the benefits and use of existing software for financial and workforce reporting.
- ✓ Work closely with the PIRC Statutory Advisory Board in support of their ongoing independent oversight.
- ✓ Contribute to new national outcomes, National Performance Framework and other reform agendas relevant to our work.
- ✓ Review our Financial Strategy to support a fiscally sustainable organisation.
- ✓ Ensure PIRC's participation in partnership engagement opportunities, and develop and maintain Memoranda of Understanding where appropriate.

Strategic Objective 4

We will promote a safe, supportive and high-performing workforce.

In 2026/27, we will:

- ✓ Deliver and analyse results of our 2026/27 staff survey.
- ✓ Expand the remit of the Staff Representative Group to lead on liaising with departments to deliver required actions arising from staff feedback.
- ✓ Develop our Equalities Strategy by embedding fair and transparent policies that support staff and align with PIRC values, and assess progress using an independent diversity, equality and inclusion benchmarking tool.
- ✓ Deliver improved access to staff wellbeing support channels.
- ✓ Review staff training plans to promote a culture of staff development.
- ✓ Develop our skills-based recruitment process to ensure a high-quality experience for all candidates and recruiting managers.
- ✓ Review our current approach to health and safety.

Strategic Objective 5

We will enhance our organisational foresight, readiness and adaptability.

In 2026/27, we will:

- ✓ Work with the Scottish Government to implement the PECSS Act, including developing procedures for reviewing whistleblowing arrangements, calling in complaints and investigation of officer misconduct allegations.
- ✓ Establish and implement data analytics capability to monitor demand and identify trends in our investigations and reviews, in order to inform workforce planning.
- ✓ Develop horizon scanning plan to monitor impact on our work of Scottish Government's Programme for Government and other policy/legislative developments, and ensure PIRC policies and procedures are revised accordingly.
- ✓ Establish a process to identify, assess, prioritise and respond to consultations and calls for evidence, to ensure PIRC makes relevant and evidence-based contributions to policy development.
- ✓ Respond to and take into account the findings of public inquiries and other reviews.
- ✓ Embed PIRC's role in relation to the process for domestic homicide and suicide reviews.
- ✓ Explore opportunities for safe use of AI.

Our resources explained

The Commissioner is appointed by and accountable to Scottish Ministers and is entirely independent of the police. PIRC is fully funded by the Scottish Government. We have no self-generating funding streams.

In 2026/27, PIRC has been allocated a budget of £8.336 million. As of 1 April 2026, we had 98 staff, including the Commissioner, working at PIRC. Current staff costs equate to just under 85% of our allocated budget.

We are committed to managing our budget in line with the principles of Public Sector Reform through efficient resource use, high-quality service delivery and transparent evidence of value for money.