



Op Hampshire

Initial Investigation

Investigation skills and knowledge vary and good evidence takes time. It's always worth taking a step back, going back to basics.

By looking at cases that have not gone the distance and sharing best practice, we've identified small steps you can take that put together, make a big difference in getting a case to court and getting the best outcome. And it will also help us provide the right support to the victim, our colleague, every step of the way.

Some top tips and links to guidance to bear in mind:

- Ensure the victim impact element is covered off in the victim's statement. For first hearing including overnight to court cases, if the defendant pleads guilty at the first opportunity, you won't get another chance to complete a VPS which can and does affect sentencing powers. A follow up VPS should be completed prior to trial.
- Take a moment to assess whether this incident actually amounts to an assault and not an injury on duty. This can be sensitive but there can be some grey areas that need to be considered. (see Assault versus Injury on Duty guidance)
- Identify the victim's Body Worn Video (BWV), view it, categorise it, clip it as necessary to meet the required file size for the CPS.
- Identify all other BWV or request it from other attending officers/staff. View it and correctly categorise it. Often, it's the BWV footage of other attending officers/staff that captures the offence due to the victim's proximity to the suspect.
- Ensure you have medical evidence to support the charge being sought. The initial evidence doesn't have to be a full medical statement from the doctor or consultant but can be triage or Forensic Medical Examiner (FME) notes, however it does need to clearly state the confirmed injury.
- Do not 'No further action' (NFA) just because the suspect suffers from mental ill health or has been sectioned. We are not medically trained to NFA on this basis alone. See our guidance around investigations involving mental health.
- If there is a hate crime element to the investigation make sure both the electronic and paper case file are clearly flagged as 'Hate Crime' so the CPS know to uplift the offence.
- Include the force organisational impact statement in your case file (usually signed off by a senior officer). This won't always be available for overnight cases court but they should be requested.
- Ensure the Streamlined Disclosure Certificate (SDC) is completed and fit for purpose. A correctly completed SDC will help reduce CPS memos and actions and progress the case more swiftly. Knowing what sensitive, non-sensitive, used and unused material can be daunting. Seek advice if you are unclear on the disclosure rules. (see link for an example of a completed SDC)
- Answer COPA memos and action plans expediently to avoid unnecessary discontinuances.

- VCOP – Contact the victim and update them regularly throughout every stage of the investigation. This includes arrest of suspect, suspect bailed to return and BTR alterations, suspect charged and any bail conditions, case closed undetected or suspect NFA, other case disposals – cautions, Police National Database (PND) etc, regular monthly updates until disposal. Just because they are a police officer or member of staff does not mean they are not victims and being out of the loop can be a real cause of frustration.

Some of this may sound like basic advice but with competing demands and varying degrees of investigation experience its worth double checking so we have the best opportunity to see cases through. These early checks can reduce delays and strengthen our chance of success as for some, justice delayed is justice denied.

There is lots more information and documentation around Operation Hampshire available
our website: oscarkilo.org.uk/OpHampshire



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