



April 27, 2022

TO: Dale McFee
Chief of Police

FROM: Inspector Sean Anderson
Professional Standards Branch

RE: Requested Report from the Edmonton Police Commission

At the March 15, 2022, Edmonton Police Commission Professional Standards Committee meeting, committee members made a motion for a report from Professional Standards Branch showing a longer-term analysis of the trends in file types. Specifically, the motion was for trends over a five-year period, rather than the 6-month trend shown in the Monthly Statistical Reports. Further to that motion, Committee members asked for the following additional information to be included in the report for the same five-year period:

- Total number of complaints received each year
- Total number of calls for service each year
- Total number of EPS sworn members each year

The requested report is attached and is being submitted to the Public Complaints Director at the Edmonton Police Commission for information.

Inspector Sean Anderson
Professional Standards Branch

cc: John McDougall/Chair,
Edmonton Police Commission

PSB Complaint Trends Over Between 2017 and 2022

At the March 15, 2022, Edmonton Police Commission Professional Standards Committee meeting, committee members made a motion for a report from Professional Standards Branch showing a longer-term analysis of the trends in file types. Specifically, the motion was for trends over a five-year period, rather than the 6-month trend shown in the Monthly Statistical Reports. Further to that motion, Committee members asked for the following additional information to be included in the report for the same five-year period:

- Total number of complaints received each year
- Total number of calls for service each year
- Total number of EPS sworn members each year

Over the past 5 years, PSB has seen a general increasing trend in the number of complaints received, with exceptionally high volumes of complaints in 2020 and 2021. This increase in complaints has occurred, despite decreasing amounts of dispatched calls. However, it is important to remember that many more contacts occur between police members and the community than are captured as calls for service. Examples such as contact with a beat officer in a community, traffic stops, or an investigative follow-up will often not be captured as dispatched calls.

The table below shows the number of total and public complaints investigated by PSB each year, including all contacts to PSB (i.e., both complaints investigated under the *Police Service Regulations* and those resolved outside of the *Police Act*). The number of dispatched calls per year and number of sworn officers are also noted.

Table 1. Yearly Breakdown of Complaints, Dispatched Calls, and Sworn Officers

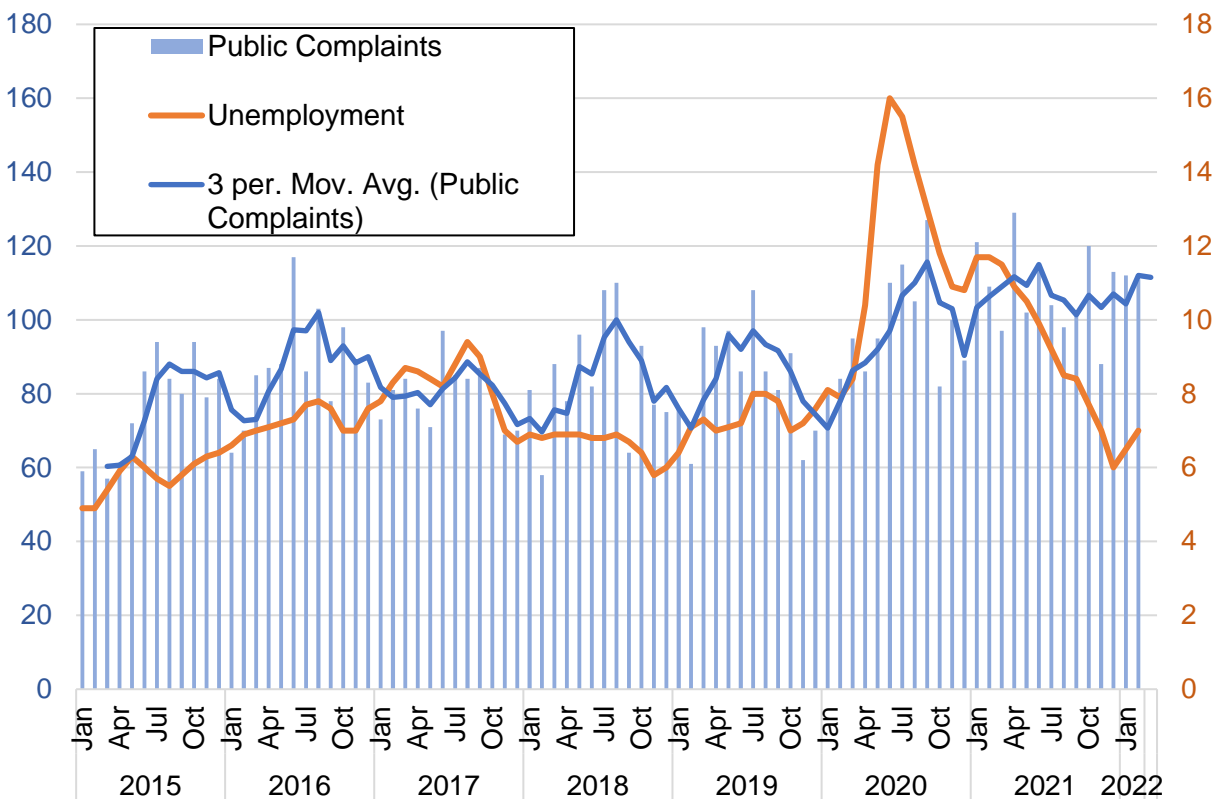
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>Total Complaints</i>	1164	1234	1151	1279	1462	394
<i>Public Complaints</i>	953	1010	1009	1168	1297	345
<i>Dispatched Calls</i>	193,564	190,416	192,645	185,006	176,520	
<i>Sworn Officers</i>	1831.34	1822.825	1874	1839.17	1843.63	

An analysis of PSB complaints and the Edmonton unemployment rate between 2015 and 2022 was conducted; this is *not* to suggest that complaints come from unemployed

citizens, but rather using the unemployment rate as a broad measure of social unrest.¹ There is a moderate correlation² between public complaints to PSB and the unemployment rate, as seen in the graph below, suggesting that overall social unrest may be correlated with complaints about police.

In Figure 1 below, Blue bars represent the total number of public complaints to PSB received each month, the blue line shows a rolling average of PSB complaints (3-month average), and the orange line represents the monthly unemployment rate.

Figure 1. Public Complaints to PSB and Edmonton Unemployment Rate



Classifications of Complaints between 2017 and 2022

For each complaint received, PSB classifies it in order to capture data about the specific causes of concern. Between 2017 and 2022, the top five complaint classifications were professionalism, duties and/or services provided, investigations, legal, and use of force. As seen in Figure 2 below, these five classifications account for 71% of public complaints

¹ Studies have shown that in times of financial crisis, there is a decline in trust of governments and political institutions (Kroknes, Jakobsen & Gronning, 2016; Roth, Nowak-Lehmann & Otter, 2011). Additionally, unemployment and perceptions of economic inequality have been shown to be correlated with social or civic unrest (Badimon, 2013; Power, 2018).

² r=0.50

received between 2017 and 2022. Approximately 23% of complaints were either: (1) inquiry based, (2) in the “other” category, which includes contacts to PSB that are comments/opinion based (with no further action required), for information tracking only, and contacts where PSB is unable to contact the complainant to determine their concern, or (3) pending classification. The remaining 6% of complaints related to complaints about driving, theft or fraud, or supervision or workplace issues.

A more detailed analysis was conducted on the five most common classifications.

Figure 2. Classification of Public Complaints Received by PSB Between 2017 and 2022

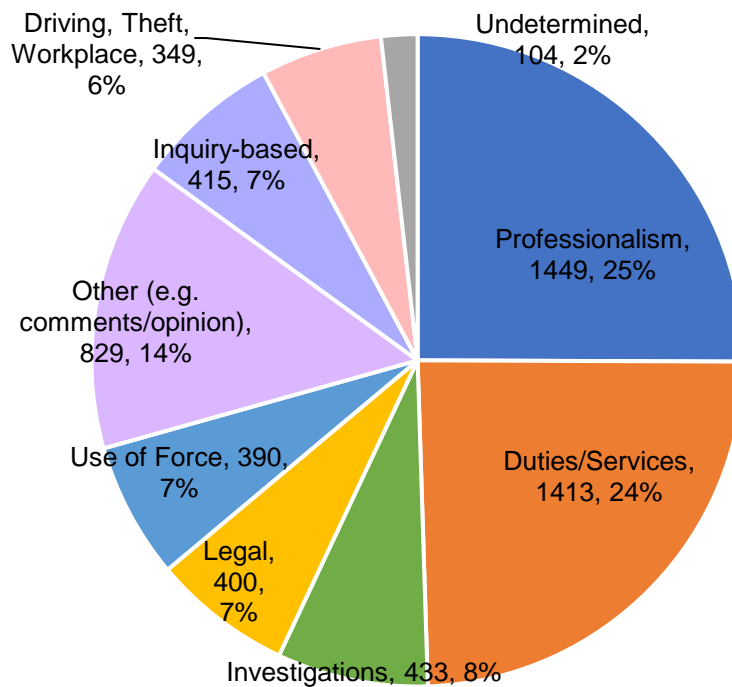
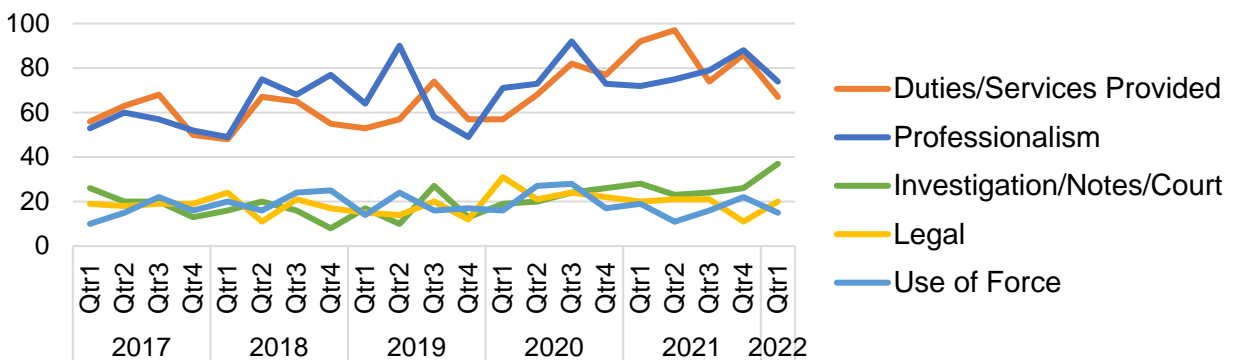


Figure 3, below, shows the five-year trends of each of the five most common complaint types received by PSB. A more detailed analysis of each complaint type is included below.

Figure 3. Five Year Trend of Common Complaint Types



Professionalism

The classification of professionalism relates to how officers are doing their job, such as complaints of rudeness, lack of empathy, tone of voice or general manner, allegations of bias, etc.

Public complaints related to professionalism typically account for approximately 25% of PSB complaints per year. There has been a slight increasing trend in the total number of complaints regarding professionalism over the past 5 years (see Figure 5, below). However, PSB received proportionally fewer complaints of professionalism in 2021 than in previous years (i.e. only 24% of complaints, as compared to 26% in 2019 and 27% in 2020).

Figure 4. Percentage of Professionalism Complaints Between 2019 and 2021

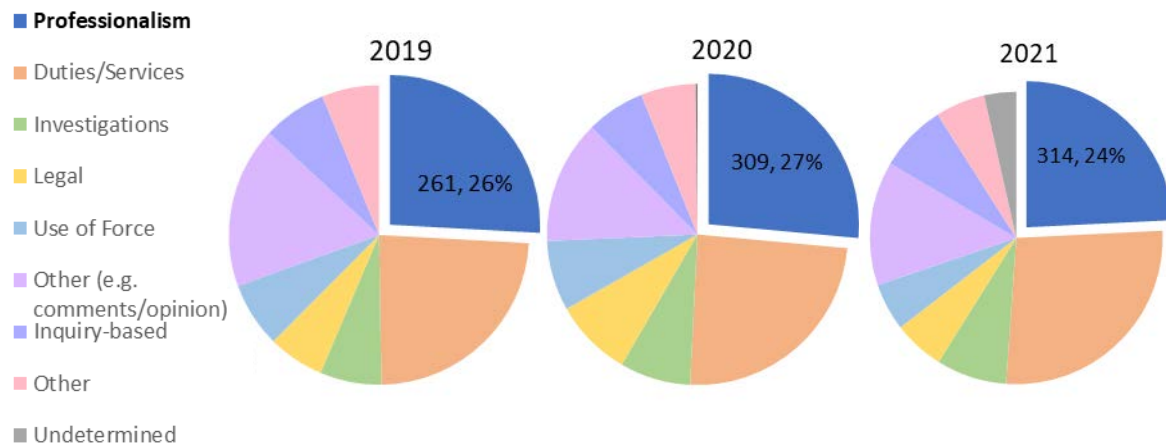
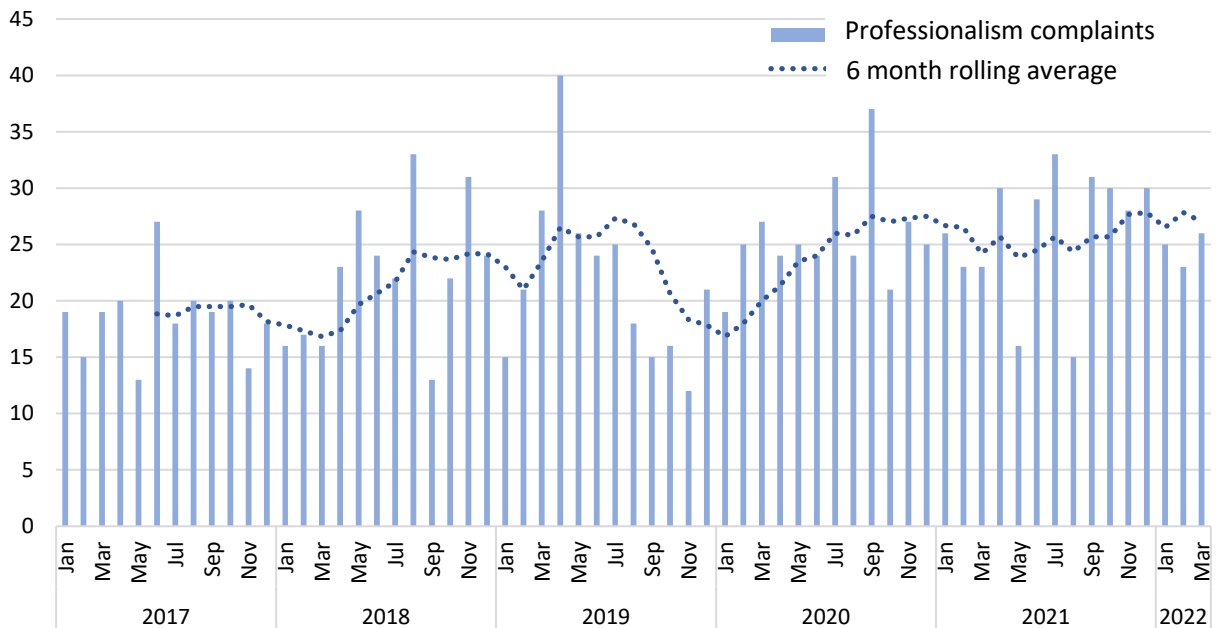


Figure 5. Public Complaints of Professional per Month between 2017 and 2022



Duties and/or Services Provided

The classification of duties and/or services provided relates to what officers are doing as part of their job, such as complaints regarding the issuance of tickets, laying or not laying charges, responding in ways that the complainant feels was inappropriate, lack of communication, etc.

Public complaints related to duties and services typically account for approximately 25% of PSB complaints per year. There has been an increase in the total number of complaints and the proportion of complaints regarding duties and services since 2020.

Figure 6. Percentage of Professionalism Complaints Between 2019 and 2021

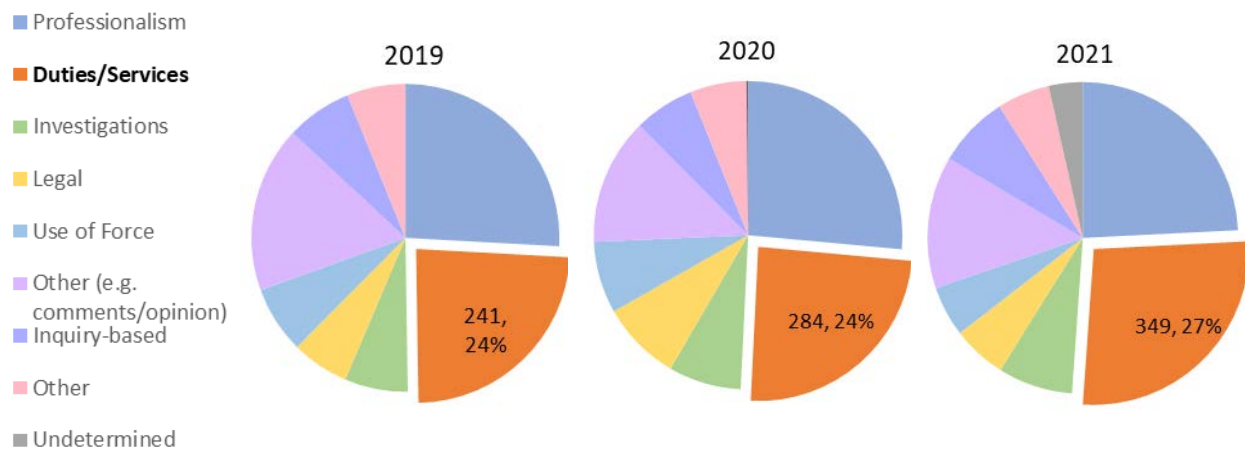
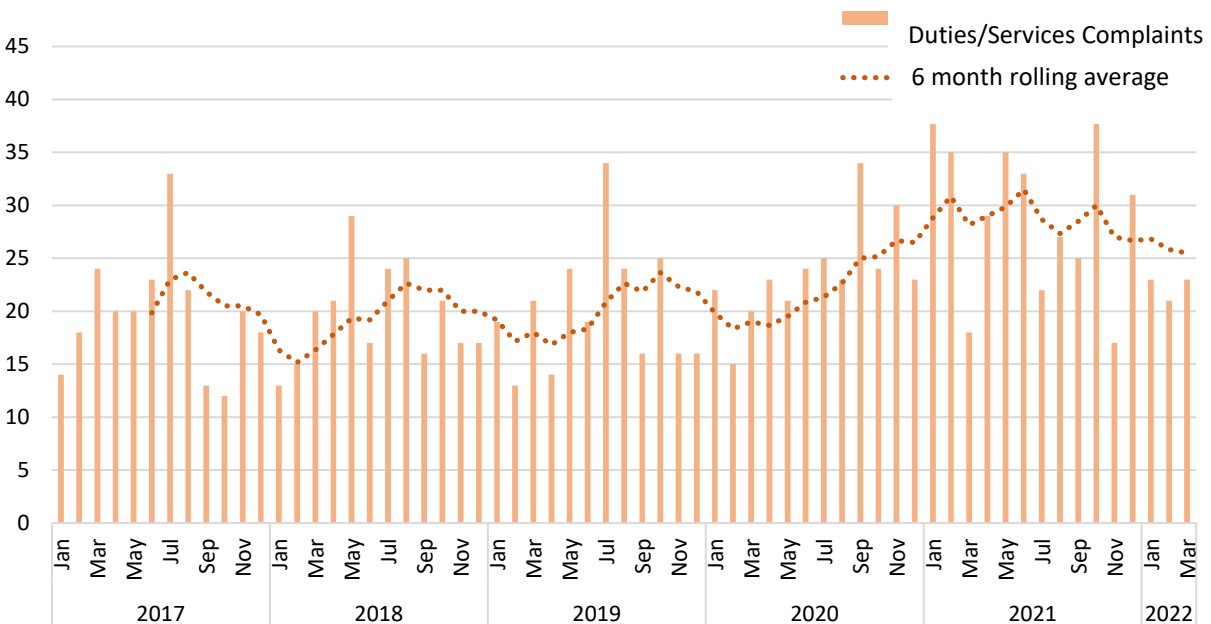


Figure 7. Public Complaints of Professional per Month between 2017 and 2022



Investigations, Notes and Court

The classification of investigations, notes and court relates to complaints regarding police investigations, such as complaints alleging negligent or incomplete investigations, inaccurate reporting, negligent searches, etc.

Public complaints related to investigations account for a little less than 10% of PSB complaints per year. There has been an increase in the total number of complaints about investigations since 2020; however, the proportion of complaints regarding investigations has remained steady.

Figure 8. Percentage of Investigation Complaints Between 2019 and 2021

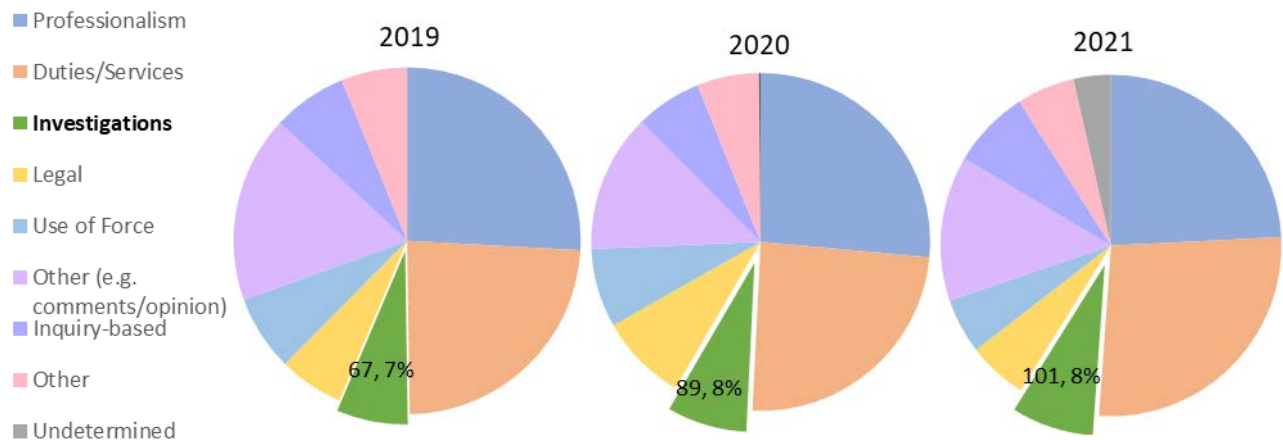
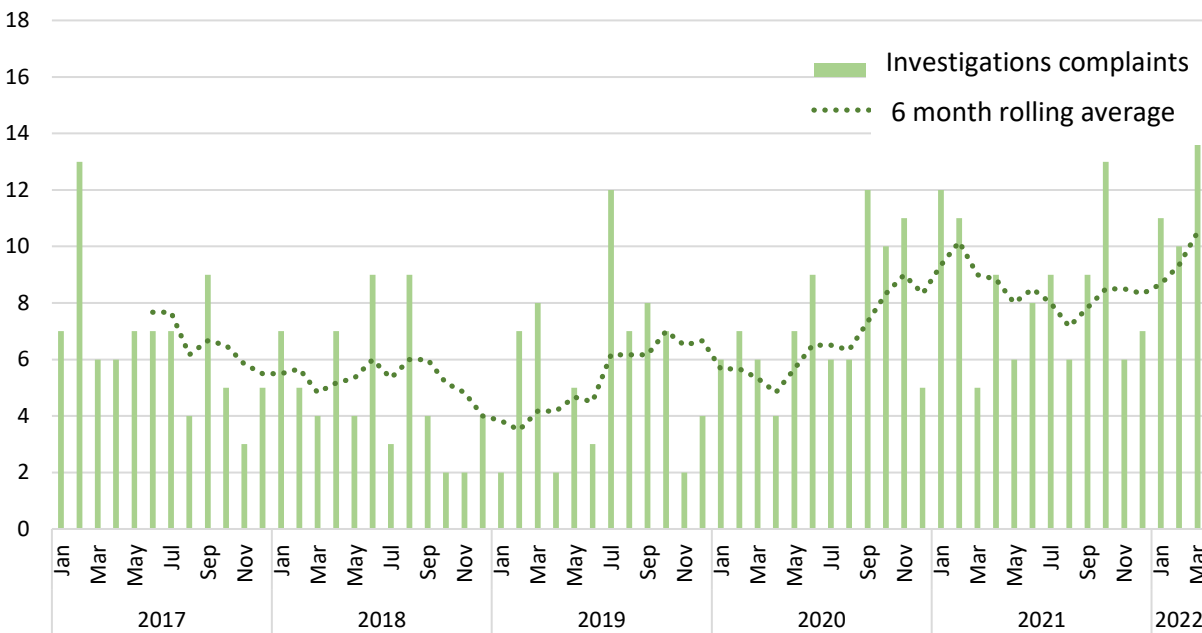


Figure 9. Public Complaints of Investigations per Month Between 2017 and 2022



Legal

The classification of legal complaints relates to complaints of legal issues, such as allegations that officers did not have lawful presence, unlawful arrests or searches, damaged or destroyed property, seizure of vehicles or property, Charter of Rights, etc.

Public complaints related to legal issues accounts for a little over 5% of PSB complaints per year. The total number of complaints related to legal issues has remained fairly steady over the past five years, with a slight decrease in the total proportion of legal complaints in 2021.

Figure 10. Percentage of Legal Complaints Between 2019 and 2021

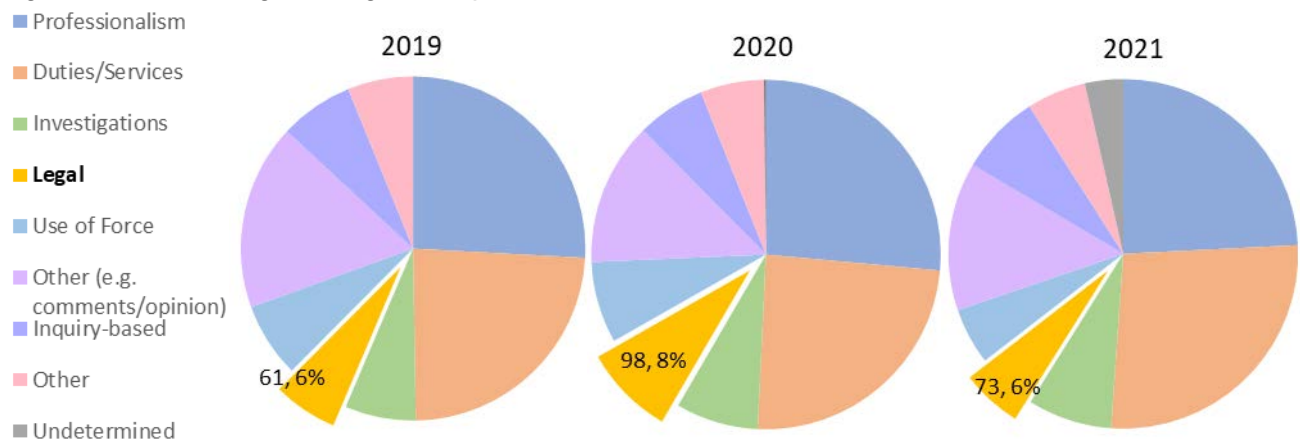
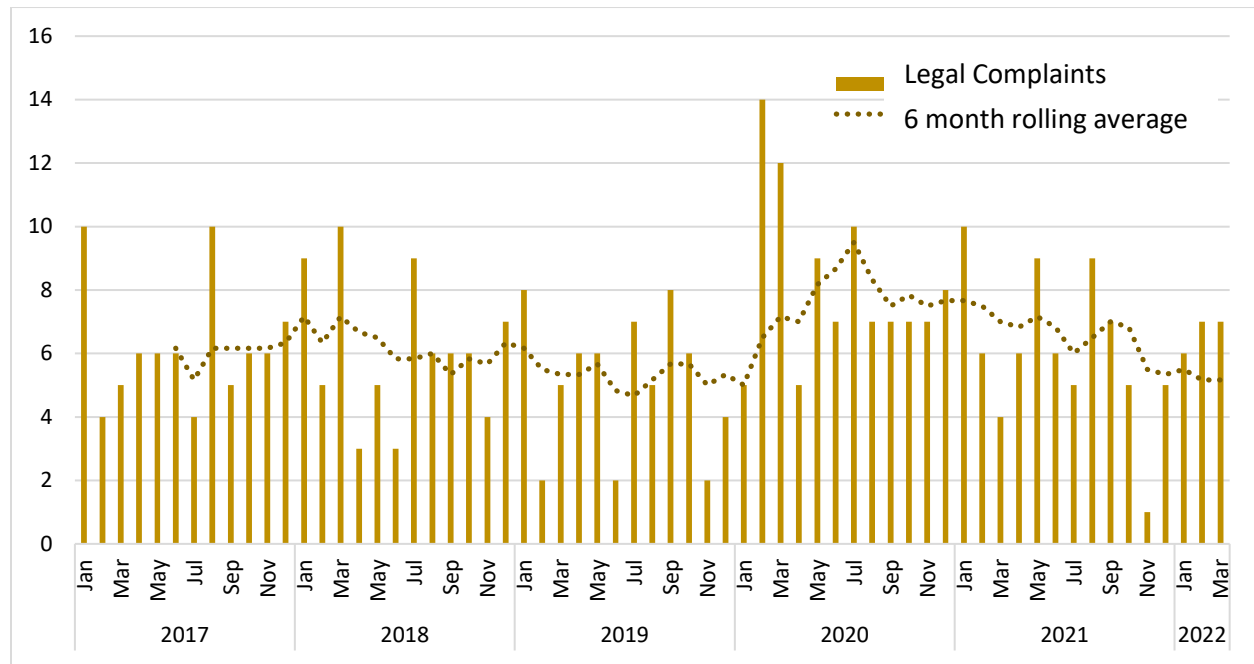


Figure 11. Public Complaints of Legal Issues per Month Between 2017 and 2022



Use of Force

The use of force classification relates to complaints regarding police use of force, including physical contact, handcuffing, CEWs, firearms, canine, etc.

Public complaints related to use of force accounts for between 5-10% of PSB complaints per year. There was a high volume of use of force complaints in the summer of 2020 as there was increased attention on police actions in general, related to the murder of George Floyd and calls to defund the police. In contrast, complaints regarding use of force were exceptionally low in 2021, perhaps due to COVID restrictions regarding gatherings and limits on late night alcohol sales.

Figure 12. Percentage of Use of Force Complaints Between 2019 and 2021

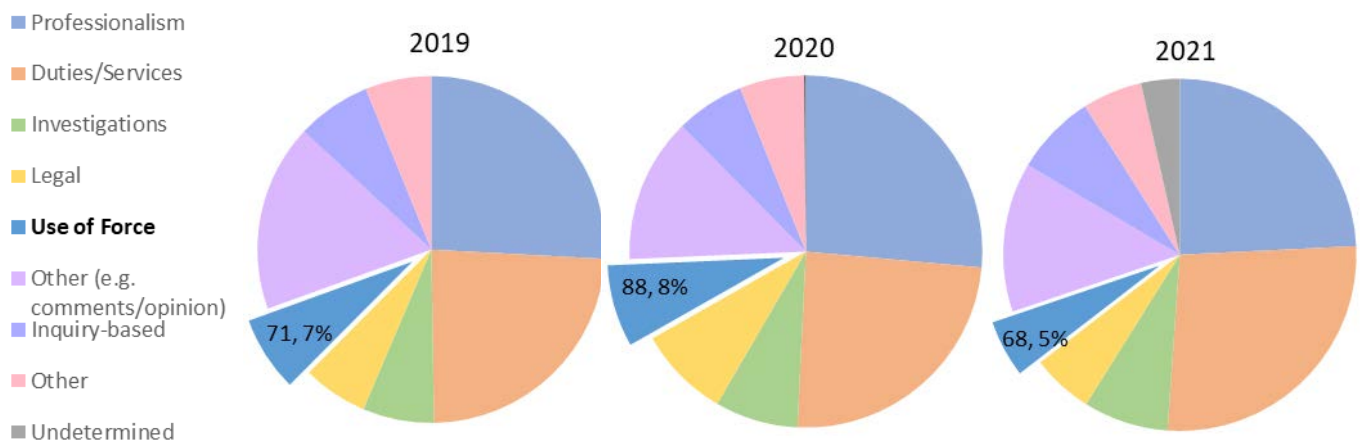
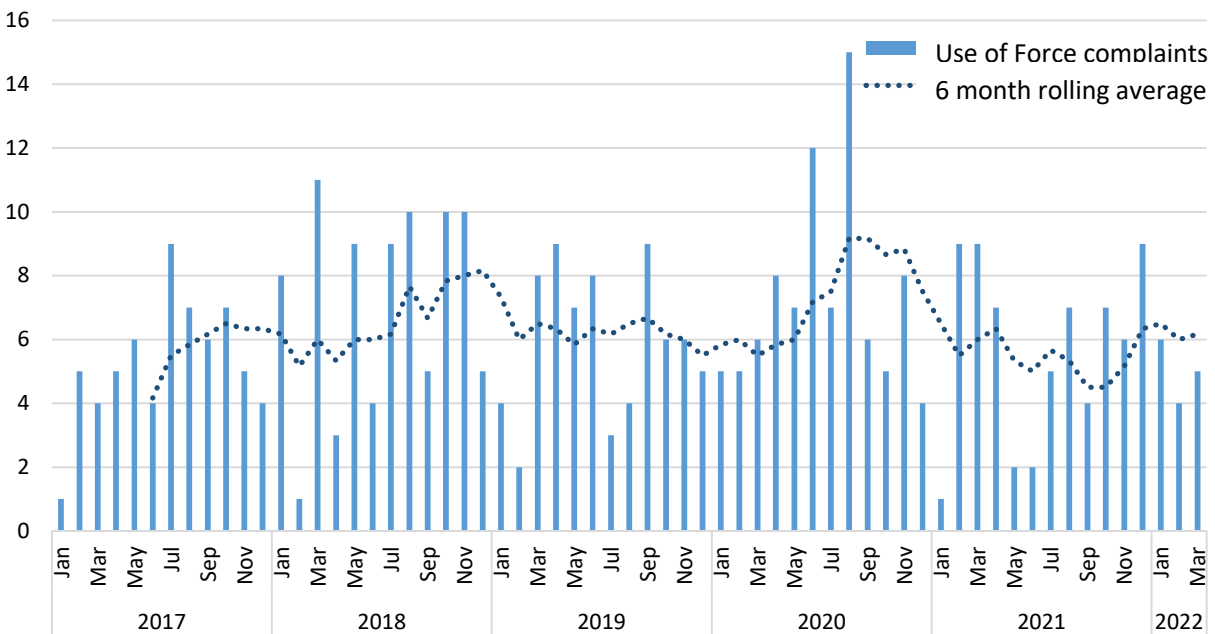


Figure 13. Public Complaints of Use of Force per Month Between 2017 and 2022



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Roth, F., Nowak-Lehmann, F., & Otter, T. (2011). Has the financial crisis shattered citizens' trust in national and European governmental institutions? *Evidence from the EU member states, 1999–2010*, *Economic Policy, CEPS Working Documents*. No. 343, June.