

A message from the Chief Executive, Richard Thompson:

I would like to wish you all a Happy New Year and a successful 2025.

For this IPCO update, I am writing the message because Sir Brian is away on official business in Japan. And while I cannot say too much about that just yet, I thought I would use this opportunity to introduce myself and say a bit about IPCO's international work.

I joined IPCO at the end of 2023 and have really enjoyed my first year as Chief Executive. I am regularly asked what I like about the role so I have had some time to refine my answer around three things: I like working in an Arm's Length Body for a Commissioner, after 20 years in central government working for ministers; I like the relative legal certainty and closeness to operations working as part of the Pursue system, having focused in previous roles on analysis, strategy and prevention; and I really like working with such a committed and expert community across many organisations, supporting multiple national security and public safety missions. Roll on 2025 and several years ahead at IPCO!



International work is an important part of IPCO's oversight function. Many of our international partners also have investigatory powers regimes, for which effective oversight is a crucial element of gaining public trust and providing intelligence and law enforcement organisations with a "license to operate". The oversight bodies among our European and FIVE EYES partners in particular work together bilaterally and multilaterally to learn from each other, support each other, and provide collective assurance to our governments. Sir Brian and I attended the 2024 Five Eyes Intelligence Oversight and Review Conference (FIORC) in Australia in November, and we will host the 2025 FIORC meeting in London in October. Each year we also meet like-minded European partners in the Intelligence Oversight Working Group.

A key theme of our international discussions is working out how public authorities will use artificial intelligence in their work relating to investigatory powers, what the use cases are, and what the implications are for our oversight of compliance. That has been helpful in framing the approach we will take in IPCO, in line with HMG's white paper and recent action plan. We are in the initial stages of this work and will provide an update in the next couple of months.

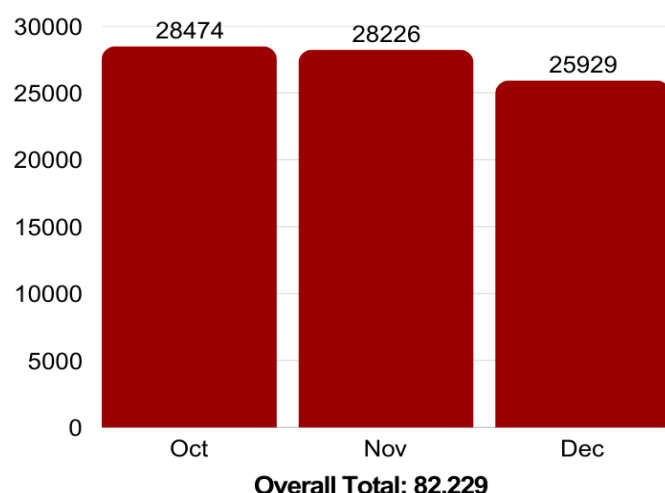
Updates from IPCO

- IPCO have invested in licences that will enable the CD inspectors to access the GSA Cloud Based workflow system remotely through their Home Office laptops. Training is planned for early February and subsequent access will enable around 50% of the 2025/26 CD inspections to be undertaken remotely. This will result in reduced travel and accommodation costs, increase the time available to conduct our inspections, and will remove the significant burden currently placed on public authorities needing to provide IT facilities and system access to visiting inspectors. There will still be a need to conduct some on site work for the more complex inspections and the finer details will be discussed with each public authority when the reviewing inspector contacts you to discuss the arrangements.
- We have launched our official LinkedIn page, putting into practice a new approach to external communications to increase transparency. People should expect to see regular updates on our work, engagement activity, and important announcements. Follow our page to stay informed. [LinkedIn](#)
- Our 2023 Annual Report is being finalised and we expect the report to be published in early 2025.
- Thank you to all those who have provided us with your 2024 stats return which feeds into our Annual Report. If you have received an email asking for these and have not yet submitted them then please do by 31 January. If you have any questions about this, please contact: statistics@ipco.org.uk

Quarter Four Statistics

COMMUNICATIONS DATA (CD)

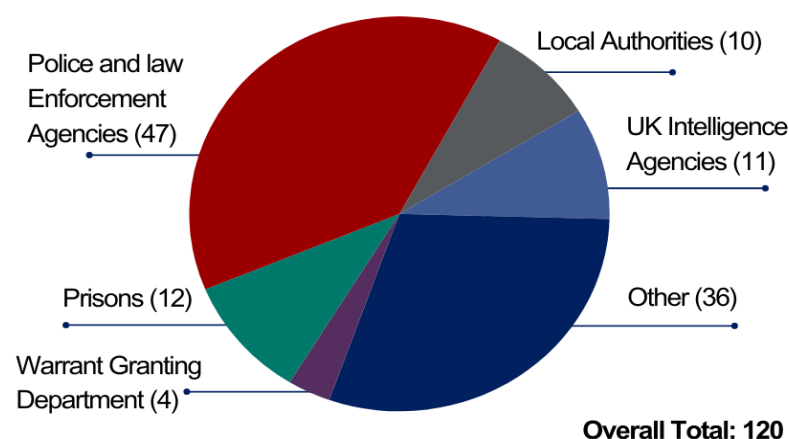
The below table shows the number of applications that our CD authorisations team have independently reviewed in the previous quarter



Our Authorisations team independently consider applications to access communications data (CD) from law enforcement and public authorities, to ensure it is only authorised, and CD subsequently obtained, where this is lawful, necessary, and proportionate and meets the IPA thresholds.

INSPECTION STATISTICS

Below is a breakdown of our inspection statistics showing how we inspect the organisations we oversee.



As part of our oversight, we have a statutory obligation to inspect the use of investigatory powers. We have a dedicated Inspectorate divided into three teams focusing on different areas of oversight. Each team is led by a Chief Inspector, and together they ensure that we are adopting similar practices and applying consistent standards of scrutiny across all our oversight work.

