

Professional Standards and Integrity Report Nov 2023

Committee(s): Professional Standards and Integrity	Dated: 07112023
Subject: Action Fraud Statistics – Quarter 2 – 1 st July 2023 – 30 th Sept 2023	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1- People are safe and feel safe
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N/A
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
Report of: Commissioner of Police	For Discussion
Report author: Det Supt Claire Cresswell / PC Ann Roberts Analyst - Professional Standards Department	

Please refer to Glossary provided (Appendixes)**Executive Overview**

This document contains the statistics prepared by the Professional Standards Directorate and Action Fraud for the second quarter of 2023/24 (July - Sept).

Data	<p>Following changes to the Misconduct Regulations there are four full data set years for comparative data. All logged complaints include all dissatisfaction.</p> <p>Action Fraud data is referred to in the overall figures reported in the main PSI report to provide an overview of the Professional Standards Directorate workload, however the details have been removed and reported separately within this document.</p>
Action Fraud complaints	<p>Action Fraud – a National Service – continues to generate a greater volume of complaints than the City of London Police. This is a very small proportion against the volume of Action Fraud incident reports recorded.</p> <p>Complaint data has seen the number of complaint cases logged to a total of 110 in Q2. This is an increase against the previous quarter (15%) and below average against the previous 5 quarters.</p> <p>The complaints are broken down as 1 logged under Schedule 3, and 109 not within Schedule 3.</p>

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	<p>Changes to the Police Complaint & Conduct regulations in 2020 placed a greater emphasis on handling complaints in a <i>reasonable and proportionate</i> way and in a more customer focused manner.</p> <p>Reports of dissatisfaction are logged and assessed in line with Schedule 3 of the Police Reform Act 2002 and IOPC Statutory Guidance 2020 and this assessment can result in one of a number of outcomes;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-Schedule 3 or early service recovery. PSD will make early contact with the complainant to understand their concerns and their dissatisfaction and, where the nature of their dissatisfaction allows, will try to resolve it to their satisfaction. This avoids a more lengthy process of investigation and can provide a complainant with an early resolution, explanation or other satisfactory outcome. If at the end of this process, it cannot be resolved it may be dealt with as a formal complaint within Schedule 3. • Schedule 3 Recorded – IOPC Statutory Guidance stipulates where complaints must be recorded and those that must be investigated; these include the more serious matters. Complaints which do not require an investigation will be handled in a <i>reasonable and proportionate</i> manner to try to achieve an earlier resolution to the complainant’s satisfaction, while others will be investigated formally. At the end of this process if the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint they have a right of review by either the Local Policing Body or the IOPC, depending on the seriousness of the allegation. • Referral to Independent Office for Police Conduct – some complaints may be referred to the IOPC and they may decide to independently investigate or oversee a police investigation. The IOPC also monitor our complaints system. <p>The volume of logged complaints is extremely low compared to the number of fraud reports to Action Fraud. In Q2 of the 2023/24 Financial Year Action Fraud recorded 147,955 reports on the National Fraud Database (98,427 crime reports and 49,528 Information reports). The complaint figures (total) represent 0.07% of the total number of Action Fraud reports recorded in Q2.</p>
<p>Nature of Allegations</p>	<p>Of the 42 allegations recorded during Q2 2023/24 the highest number was in the category of, A1 – Police action following contact (35) followed by A3 – Information (5) and A4 - General level of Service (2). Reasons for complaint mostly relate to customer expectation of Action Fraud, with either the lack of contact or investigation cited.</p>

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Finalised Allegations	<p>The total number of allegations finalised during Q2 is 46 compared to 47 in the previous quarter.</p> <p>Cases often contain more than one allegation; the number of cases finalised in Q2 is 39. 34 outside of Schedule 3 and 5 within Schedule 3. Some of these cases will have allegations finalised in a previous quarter.</p>
IOPC Reports	<p>The IOPC quarterly bulletin has been published, Q1 2023/24 data is the most recent publication¹ The IOPC are producing separate complaint bulletins to reflect AF and CoLP data to be used internally. A combined statistical bulletin will be published externally on their website. A CoLP commentary sheet has been published alongside the IOPC bulletin with an explanation regarding the combined statistics.</p>
Appeals	None received.
IOPC investigations	There are currently no live IOPC investigations.

¹ At the time of this document being written in advance of the PSIC meeting.

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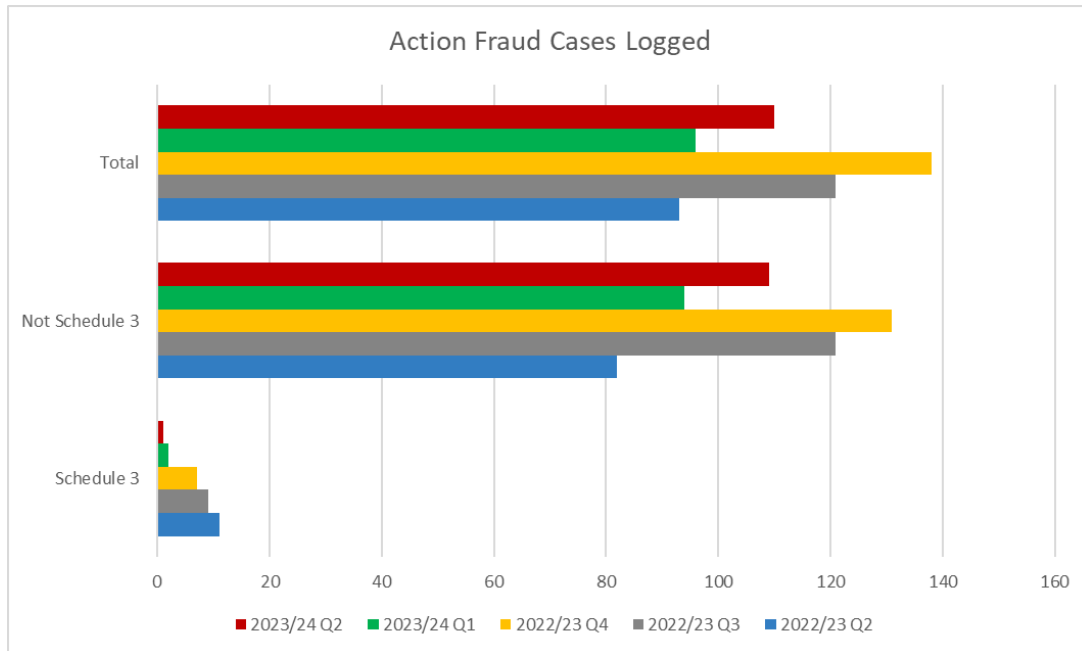
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Part A – Complaints & Allegations

Table 1 - Quarterly Comparisons for Action Fraud Complaint Cases



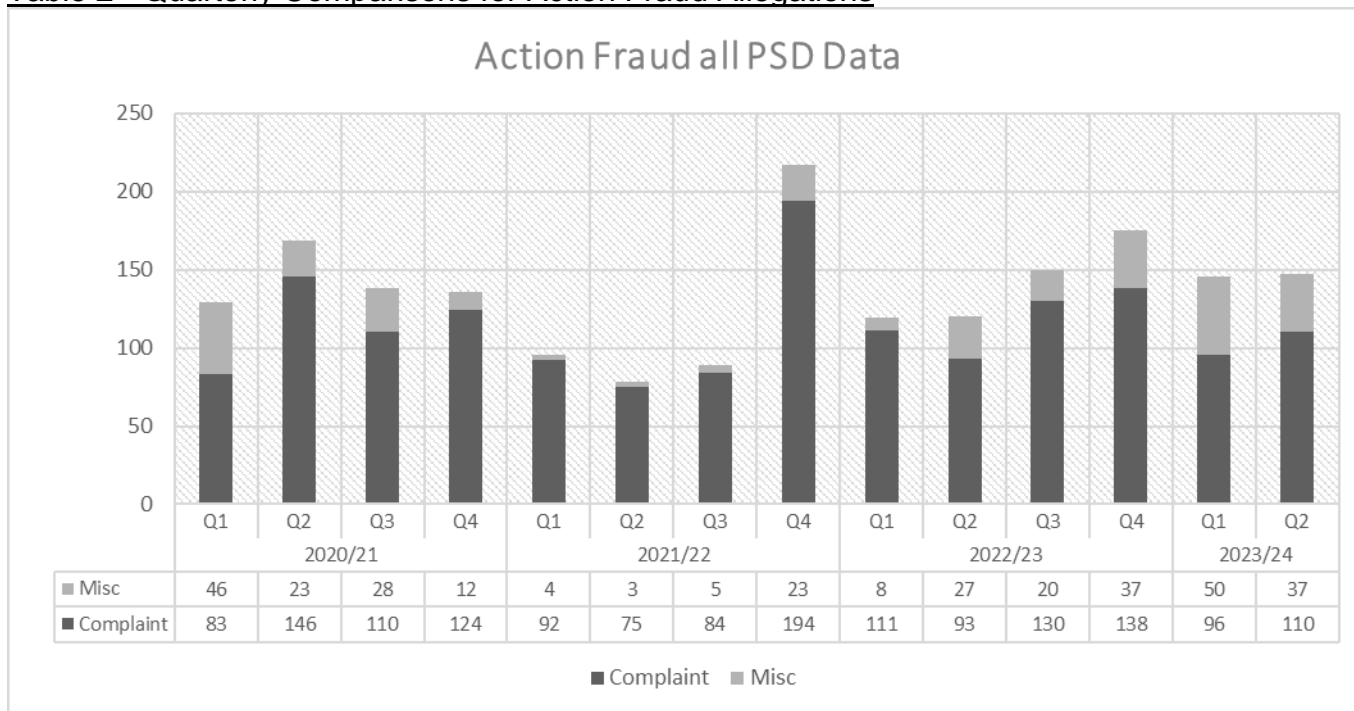
In Q2 of the 2023/24 Financial Year Action Fraud recorded **147,955** reports on the National Fraud Database (**98,427** crime reports and **49,528** Information reports).

The complaint figures (total) represent 0.07% of the total number of Action Fraud reports recorded in Q2.

- The number of Action Fraud complaints logged in Q2 2023/24 is 110 which is an increase of 14 (15%) from the previous quarter.
- 109 of these complaints fell outside of Schedule 3, 1 was within Schedule 3.
- Recording standards require all customer dissatisfaction to be logged and the volume of reporting. At the beginning of 2022 a decision was taken to record all Action Fraud complaints received by PSD and those received directly by the Action Fraud team. This is to ensure an accurate record is kept of the demand being dealt with and also enables relevant cases to be escalated to be dealt with under Schedule 3 timely.
- Since Q1 2022/23 PSD have been trying to obtain access to AF's system in order to extract complaint data directly but there are ongoing issues with this. Due to the external demand placed on the AF team and PSD access to data issues, PSD aren't being provided with the data, therefore some complaint data is not logged. Once the issues have been resolved PSD can recommence logging these AF complaints again.
- Additional information has been added to the AF website, which answers identified key complainants' frustrations. This informs potential complainants that the complaints process is not a mechanism to overturn the decision of NFIB, not to review and forward to a force for their consideration.

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Table 2 - Quarterly Comparisons for Action Fraud Allegations



The vast majority of Action Fraud complaints cite a lack of response or investigation. Prior to changes to the Police Regulations these were usually resolved informally through service recovery by providing an update/explanation to the complainant and a swift resolution. ALL expressions of dissatisfaction are now formally logged, therefore as anticipated there is an overall rise in complaint numbers (majority of which fall within the AF service). All forces are likely to see an increase in complaint numbers, which are reflected in the IOPC bulletins now published. The City of London bulletin contains all data including AF data. A separate AF IOPC bulletin is published for internal use only.

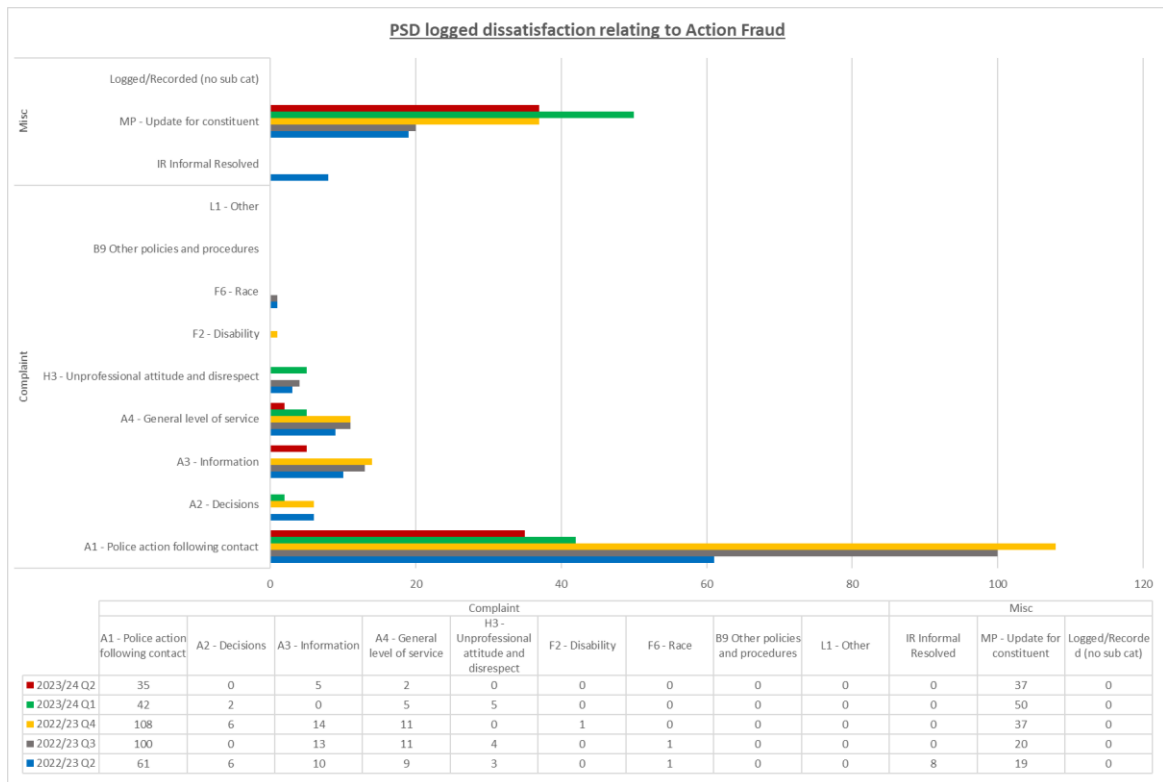
Due to these changes to recording standards, at the beginning of 2022 a decision was taken to record all Action Fraud complaints received by both PSD and those received directly by the Action Fraud team. This is to ensure an accurate record is kept of the demand being dealt with and also enables relevant cases to be escalated to be dealt with under Schedule 3 in a timely manner. This increase in complaints is reflected in the data (Q4 2022/23). The upward trend in AF complaints is likely to continue or to show a plateauing over the forthcoming quarters. Positive changes to the AF website and overall communication strategy surrounding the AF service will assist in maintaining low complaints (compared to the volume of crime reports) of this national service. Q2 2023/24 compared against previous quarters is just below average against the previous 5 quarters. This quarter has received a further 37 reports from M.P's on behalf of constituents relating to AF.

Action Fraud call centres are working with CoLP to manage customer expectations. PSD is working with the NFIB to resolve simple dissatisfaction with early intervention especially around perceived lack of response. Action Fraud is recruiting staff to assist in raising the expectations of the service.

PSD complaint managers who deal with the Action Fraud complaints are involved in the new FCCRAS project as 'Change Agents', meeting with PwC on a regular basis to ensure that customer expectations are met. The overarching goal is to improve information and communication with AF victims.

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Table 2 - Quarterly Comparisons for Action Fraud Allegations Recorded – Q2



- Of the 42 allegations recorded during Q2 2023/24, Police action following contact was the highest category with 35, followed by Information (5) and General level of service (2). The graph visualises the trend of 'Police action following contact' over the rolling yearly data being the constantly highest category.
- Miscellaneous cases are being logged where members of parliament are making contact on behalf of constituents or if not clear if a complaint is being made. This number had dropped since letters explaining the AF system have been written to all Members of Parliament, and the changes to the recording standards in the regulations. However Q2 continues to see further reporting by MP's which may have been influenced by some AF media attention.

Themes of complaints received

An analysis of complaints and dissatisfaction reports received over the previous 12 months, has been undertaken, detailed below. The highlighted ones are the top 3, most commonly received.

- AF has not investigated a report made
- NFIB has not investigated a report made
- Complainant advised that there are no viable lines of enquiry to investigate their report, when viable lines of enquiries have been provided
- No update was provided, following report made to AF
- Report disseminated by NFIB has not been investigated by the relevant force
- A report made direct to a local force has not been investigated
- A reported crime is recorded as an Information Report

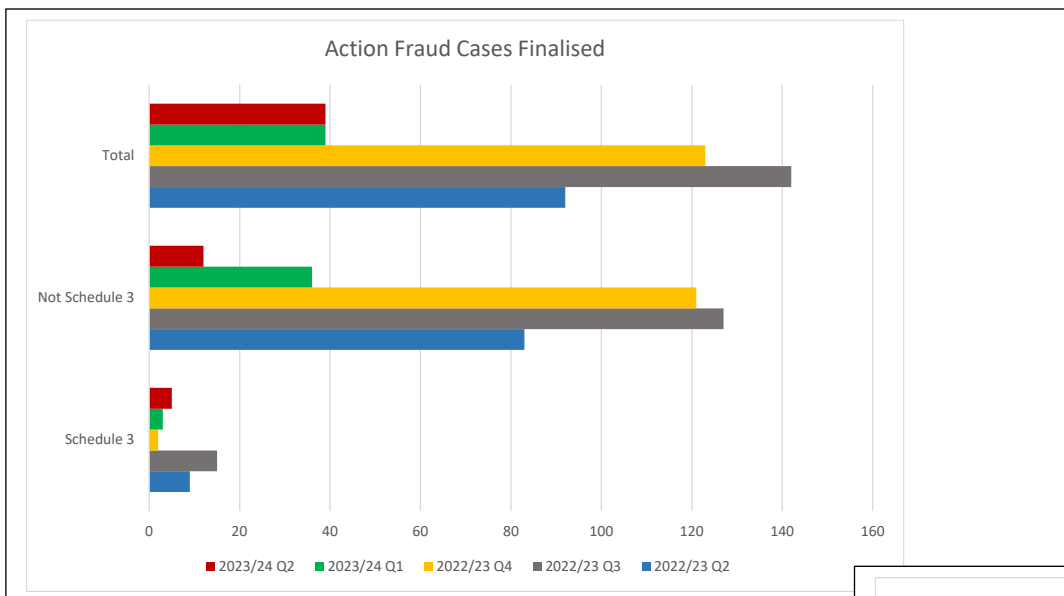
Within any given complaint, often several of the above are quoted. Circa 95% of complaints are made up of the 3 highlighted areas above, with the remaining 5% across all others.

- The IOPC now publish new quarterly bulletins, most recent being Q1 data*, where AF data is displayed in a separate bulletin for internal use only. This cannot be compared against any other National data, as being a unique service. However this is helpful to separate CoLP data from the AF data. The IOPC will continue to publish the amalgamated data quarterly on their website.

*at time of writing

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Table 3 – Finalised – Cases and Allegations – Q2

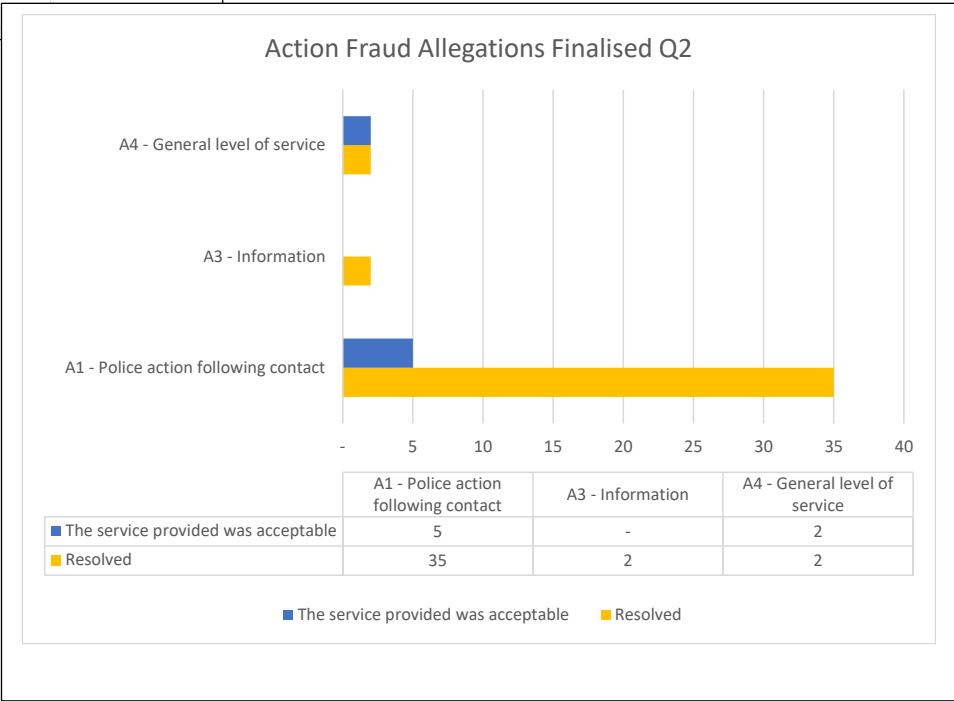


AF Finalised Cases: -

- 39 Action Fraud cases have been finalised during the Q2 2023/24.
- 34 fell outside of Schedule 3. 5 fell within Schedule 3.
- The number of finalisations of cases in Q2 are exactly the same number as the previous quarter.
- Quarters three and four 2022/23 were logging a backlog from the Action Fraud sugar service.
- Q1 2023/24 has seen staff changes within PSD managing AF complaint data.

AF Finalised Allegations: -

- 46 allegations have been finalised in Q2 2023/24.
- No outcomes were found that the Service provided was not acceptable.
- 39 (85%) allegations were Resolved. 7 allegations Service was found to be acceptable.
- Some allegations have been finalised from cases outside of this quarterly period.
- All allegations were finalised within 30 days.



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Part B –Appeals

None

Part C - IOPC

No cases been brought to the attention of IOPC

Part D –Learning

Action Fraud Complaints

- PSD complaint managers who deal with the Action Fraud complaints are involved in the new FCCRAS project as 'Change Agents', meeting with PwC (who are implementing the new system) on a regular basis to ensure that customer expectations are met. The overarching goal is to improve information and wording on the AF website, plus any correspondence that is sent to victims, in order to increase awareness and understanding, and consequently reduce complaints. For example, one of the standard generated AF letters currently sent to victims, refers to 'no viable lines of enquiry', which receives a lot of complaints, as the victims believe they have provided numerous lines of enquiry for investigation. Better wording and explanations should improve communication as to why their AF report was not sent to a police force for investigation.
- Additional information has been added to the AF website, which answers identified key complainants' frustrations. This informs potential complainants that the complaints process is not a mechanism to overturn the decision of NFIB not to review or forward to a force for their consideration.
- To increase service delivery/service recovery, more complainants are being telephoned to discuss their complaint. This is well received and alleviates the need for written communication.
- Within conversations, and included in written communication, crime prevention advice is now provided with details of other agencies that maybe best placed to deal with their dissatisfaction. This has increased the number of complaints dealt with outside of schedule 3, therefore reducing demand and resource required and ensuring that complainants receive the most appropriate advice and response.
- MP's and Home office have been provided with Q&A's, that fully explain the role of AF and NFIB, and the remit of the complaints process. This has reduced the amount of MP letters being received as MP's and Home Office are able to engage with their constituents, without the need to forward their issues to PSD.