

3,000 to face questioning in week-long police poll

By Laura Beck

HONGKONG police launched their first ever public opinion poll yesterday to find out what local people think of them.

A team of constables will be taken off the beat to carry out the week-long random telephone survey of 3,000 households.

Police chiefs are known to be concerned about the public image of the force of 25,000. The results would be used to enhance the quality of service and the deployment of resources, a spokesman said.

She refused to reveal what questions would be asked or whether the survey had been prompted by an increase in official complaints against police. The results will be for police eyes only.

The poll was necessary "to find out public opinion and where there is room for improvement in the force".

Force staff would carry out the poll in order to keep costs low.

"We need public opinion first and then we will find out what areas to improve. What happens then depends on the results," the spokesman said.

A total of 2,572 official complaints against police were filed in the first three quarters of this year.

Police said yesterday that there had been 889 complaints in the third quarter, an increase on the 777 cases received in the second quarter.

In 1992 there was a three per cent increase in the number of official complaints over 1991, with 3,250 official complaints in 1992 and 3,158 in 1991.

Many of the complaints concerned allegations of assault by the police and the use of offensive language.

Two months ago, the Complaints Against Police Office (Capo) said there were "too many" officers using obscene language.

An earlier report this year by Capo said 75 people had complained about foul-mouthed police officers in three months.