



STAFFORDSHIRE
POLICE

Staffordshire Police Independent Advisory Group (IAG)

Member Handbook

INDEPENDENT ADVISORS – AN INTRODUCTION

The primary role of an Independent Advisory Group (IAG) is to provide 'critical appraisal' to the Police. IAGs were created to challenge conventional thinking to give an independent perspective on issues and to work as genuine partners with the Police to inform improvements in service delivery.

The role of IAG members is not to provide 'specialist advice' on policing issues. Rather, they are designed to provide advice on how policing services may be, or are being, perceived by communities.

IAG members are not independent scrutinisers, as this function is carried out via existing established mechanisms. Specific tasks might involve a critical assessment of an operation, policy or incident. The aim should always be to identify ways to add value to policing services for all communities.

IAGs are not the voice of the community, instead a collection of individual community voices. IAGs are only one part of the jigsaw of wide community consultation engagement.

As critical appraisers, IAG members constructively advise and Challenge Staffordshire Police on their policies, procedures and practices and advise the Force on how to enhance these key areas, so that policing performance is improved. By becoming Independent Advisors, members are involved in constantly improving service delivery to all Staffordshire's communities.

This handbook is intended to provide practical advice and guidance on the operation of the Independent Advisory Group, clarifying roles and expectations.

Community input into the activities of the Police enables policing at both a strategic and tactical level to be more effective, focusing on community engagement and therefore responding to community needs.

To address these needs and ensure above all that communities play a major role in shaping and monitoring their policing, Staffordshire Police consult with a range of individuals. These people represent the diverse community demographics within Staffordshire

WHAT IS MEANT BY INDEPENDENCE?

The use of the adjective "independent" has prompted much debate since the inception of IAGs, both locally and nationally. This explanation provides a definitive explanation for use within Staffordshire IAG.

The IAG are convened by Staffordshire Police, in partnership with communities. They are supported and funded by Staffordshire Police, rather than existing as an external, self-sustaining entity. The term "independent" refers to the nature of the advisors and the advice provided, rather than the relationship with the Police. As such, they can never be independent bodies from the police since it is a group sponsored, co-sustained and co-organised by both the police and IAG members. Members bring along independent thoughts and views to meetings, which Staffordshire Police uses to benefit service delivery from community perspective.

WHAT IS ADVICE?

In this context, independent advice is defined as guidance, advice or constructive appraisal feedback given by non-police persons as members of a recognised advisory group, reflecting a perspective from the point of view of a member of a community. IAG member advice is independent of the police service and carries no responsibility or liability for the outcome of decisions based upon it. Advisors, although partners in a beneficial and positive relationship with the police service are not answerable to the police and neither are the police responsible for members actions, nor obliged to follow any of the advice they give.

IAG members represent themselves and not necessarily the view of any particular group within the community, although this may be the case on occasions. They do not bear responsibility for the consequences of the decisions based upon their advice. The autonomy of the police decision-maker is not affected. The police force may or may not follow any advice offered.

HISTORY OF IAGS LOCALLY AND NATIONALLY

Initially, as a response to the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report, Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs) were based on the perspective of race. More recent national developments have embraced the challenge of diversity in the widest of contexts.

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary (HMIC) acknowledges that to have Independent Advisory Groups is good practice.

"Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary (HMIC)...commends them (advisory groups) as a positive step in improving accountability through a transparent approach" Paragraph 3.28, winning the Race – Embracing Diversity

Perhaps the greatest contribution of the Independent Advisor is their ability to prevent events developing into critical incidents... Where a critical incident has happened independent advisors are able to explain how it is being perceived within the broader community. Once again, police responses can be adjusted to ensure that these feelings are addressed.

When communities are involved in defining the problem being addressed and are able to inform the policing solution, Staffordshire Police is more likely to have the consent, support and trust of those being policed.

ROLES

The role of the IAG member is to:

- Critically appraise police actions from the perspective of a receiver of police services and a member of the community.
- Have access to decision makers.
- Have an appreciation of resources within communities that may assist to resolve particular incidents.
- Have the ability and willingness to give constructive criticism to police and offer solutions.
- Give individual perception/advice on policy (including policy development), and practices, which impact on diverse communities.
- Provide a view on how particular police activities are likely to be perceived by communities, for example, Stop & Search.
- Give a personal perspective as someone who is connected to specific community – IAG members do not speak on behalf of that community.
- Advise the police on cultural and other issues, specifically relevant to the community involved.
- Give post incident advice in regard to critical incidents, noting how the incident advice may differ in different communities and cultures.

These strengths can be used to resolve policing matters at both strategic and tactical levels. A more sympathetic policing response can be the result.

IAG Chair and Vice Chair

All IAG's should have an elected Chair and Vice Chair.

IAG members elect **ONE** Chair and **ONE** Vice Chair. These positions should be reviewed annually and are open to any other IAG member who have completed vetting.

The role of the Chair is likely to entail some or all of the following:

- Meeting management: Setting the agenda, time management, handling conflict.
- Ensuring the IAG forms a genuine partnership with the Constabulary.
- Encouraging the active involvement of members from diverse groups to provide independent personal views and perceptions.
- Ensuring that all voices, including minority opinions, are heard by the Constabulary.
- Being consulted during the selection process of new members.
- Supporting the IAG's goals at all times.
- Ensuring that all members adhere to the Force Code of Conduct and other relevant policies.

- Liaising with the force SPOC if they become aware of any welfare issues of its IAG members.

Management Responsibilities

The C/Supt for Neighbourhood and Partnerships has strategic responsibility for the I.A.G supported by the Force SPOC (Neighbourhood Policing community engagement lead) having responsibility for the management of IAGs.

In addition, there will be a SPOC (volunteers lead) who will remain responsible for maintaining regular contact with IAGs and providing them with information about relevant policing issues. The volunteers SPOC will also be responsible for the following:

- Recruitment and selection of Independent Advisors.
- Ensuring that Independent Advisors are representative of local and diverse communities.
- Ensuring the IAG Chair and Vice Chair are aware of their responsibilities.
- Ensuring that meeting dates are set in advance and that agendas are agreed by the Chair prior to meetings. Also to ensure admin support is given in the managing and recording of these meetings.
- Continuously monitoring that IAGs provide the skills and expertise the Constabulary is seeking.
- Maintaining up to date contact details for IAG members.
- Ensuring that members of the critical incident cadre is available to relevant departments within the Constabulary
- Ensuring that IAG members have ample opportunity to experience policing by offering, exposure to other aspects of policing via workshops and site visits if appropriate.

INDEPENDENT ADVISORY GROUP MEMBER:

KEY KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

In consideration of the effectiveness and capacity to carry out the role of an Independent Police Advisory Group member there are some key knowledge and skill areas considered desirable:

The Member will:

- Have knowledge of particular communities, or marginalised groups.
- Consider other people's views allowing them space to have their say.
- Question and challenge the views of others in a constructive way.
- Consider and understand their own biases and prejudices.
- Work as part of a team and contribute to the success of group initiatives.
- Work with people from all areas of the locality.
- Work with people from different diverse backgrounds.
- Make a contribution to influence policing strategy, policy and training.
- Contribute the time, energy and commitment to attend regular meetings.
- Live in Staffordshire and have knowledge of, and commitment to, issues of equality and diversity.
- Have a good understanding of the meaning of "independent" as it pertains to the role/work of the IAG.

The Member should have experience of:

- Working with other people on issues of mutual interest over a period of time (e.g. voluntary work).
- Sharing their views and understanding of issues with others (e.g. in a family, community or work setting)
- Situations where they needed compromise.
- Balancing commitments and time in an effective manner.
- Interacting or working with people of all ages.
- Interacting or working with people who have a different view e.g. political or religious/faith beliefs.
- Attending meetings and making positive and constructive contribution.

The Member should have an interest in:

- Policing issues and current affairs, specifically in respect of the ways in which they affect the people in the locality they live or work.
- Understanding the concept of institutional discrimination and challenging/combating it.
- The issues associated with recruiting, promoting and retaining staff from under represented and diverse groups.
- Developing sensitive and effective policing.
- Challenging assumptions and mind-sets.
- Demonstrating openness and accountability
- Providing an independent, community perspective.

- Building trust & confidence with families, individuals and communities who may experience disadvantage or feel marginalised.

Produced by Staffordshire Police FOI 22954

TERMS OF REFERENCE

To advise Staffordshire Police constabulary on their policies, practices and procedures in the areas of:

Reducing the fear of crime and disorder in all sections of the community and improving the trust and confidence of Staffordshire's communities in their police service.

The IAG Terms of Reference will be reviewed every two years and any additions or amendments will be agreed by the Force Strategic Lead in consultation with the IAG.

AIMS

The aims of the IAG is to work as partners with the police service to:

- Increase trust and confidence in policing amongst all communities.
- Provide constructive suggestions and advice to the Constabulary on the ways to improve.

CODE OF ETHICS/CONDUCT

Members of the IAG are expected to conform to the Code of Ethics produced by the College of Policing as this covers not only Police Officers but also Police Staff and any volunteers that do any form of work with the Police. This document is widely available and can be downloaded off the College of Policing website.

DESELECTION OF MEMBERS

Members of the IAG may be de-selected by Staffordshire Constabulary in conjunction with the respective IAG Chair in the following circumstances:

- The member has failed to attend the AGM/Training Day and has not given an apology and acceptable reason.
- The member has failed to attend two consecutive meetings of the IAG without giving an apology and acceptable reason.
- Failure to fulfil designated actions such as participation in consultation and feedback or prepare for meetings.
- The representative's membership would undermine the credibility and legitimacy of the group or fundamentally weaken aspects of its work.
- Any breach of the operating protocols set out within this policy.
- The member has broken the IAG Code of Conduct or breached the Code of Ethics.
- Staffordshire Police reserve the right to dissolve the Group, at any point.

VETTING PROCESS

All Independent Police Advisory Group (IAG) members will be vetted to level 2 National Guidance for **Non-Police Personnel Vetting (NPPV)** due to the nature of the work and the involvement in the Critical Incident process.

Level 2 when supported by authentication, applies to those persons having access to police premises on an "ad hoc" and irregular basis and/or only limited access to police material up to CONFIDENTIAL. Any clearance may be reviewed at any stage, and prior to the renewal/review date, if adverse information comes to light relating to the subject, or there is a material change in an individual's personal circumstances.

Changes in the personal circumstances of individuals holding NPPV clearance may impact upon their continued suitability to hold that clearance. They must, therefore, report any relevant changes, including spouses or partners, changes of address, criminal associations, or other matters relating to the risk factors outlined above in writing, to the Force Volunteering Coordinator, Early Intervention and Prevention Unit, Block 9, Staffordshire Police Headquarters, Weston Road, Stafford ST18 0YY.

The Force Volunteers Coordinator should remind individuals of this requirement periodically and ensure this is done. They are responsible for informing the Vetting Team when individuals leave etc. in order that their files can be closed.

Individuals should be informed that adverse changes in circumstances, or failure to notify such changes, could result in the withdrawal of their vetting clearance.

AGENDAS

Agenda Items for IAG

- Welcome, apologies and declarations of interest.
- Minutes and actions from previous meeting.
- Constabulary Input (request for info from the IAG or update on National Picture)
- Policy Review
- Member updates
- Critical Incident review (if appropriate)
- Any other business

Workshops

Summary notes will be recorded if deemed necessary

CONFIDENTIALITY

At the start of all IAG meetings, all members will sign a confidentiality agreement as part of the signing in process. The Chair should also request any Disclosures of Interest. At meetings minutes and actions are recorded. Minutes will be circulated as soon as possible to all members following the meeting.

As a member of an IAG, you will potentially learn of and acquire information that has not yet been made public and is still confidential. It will be regarded as a betrayal of

trust to breach such confidences. You should never disclose or use confidential information arising from the work of the Group or personal advantage of you or of anyone known to you or to the disadvantage or discredit of the Group, Police Services or anyone else.

Apart from the breach of trust there may be cause for prosecution under the Data Protection Act for the breach of confidential information.

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

If you have a potentially conflicting interest in a matter arising at a meeting of the IAG or through its work you should always disclose it. Having declared a potentially conflicting interest you may be asked to withdraw from the meeting during discussion. Consider whether the public would regard your interest as too closely connected with the matter in question that you could not be expected to put it out of your mind.

The opportunity to make a declaration of interest will be given at the start of each meeting. However members can at any point during a meeting declare an interest when it becomes apparent they have one.

You should at all times avoid any occasion for suspicion and any appearance of improper conduct. You should not allow the impression to be created that you are, or may be, using your position to promote a private or personal interest, rather than forwarding the general public interest. You should ask yourself whether members of the public, knowing all the facts of the situation, would reasonably think that you might be influenced by it.

IAG Members should declare any interest, membership, or subscription to any political party, organisation or group that may have inappropriate views on religion, race, sexual orientation, gender, disability or age.

Having made a declaration it will be open to the IAG to decide if the work of the Group requires you to continue to take part in a meeting that is discussing a matter in which you have an interest. If opinion is divided and there is equality of votes the decision of the Chair shall be final.

If in doubt about the need to disclose an interest, disclose it anyway and take the advice of the Group on whether you should continue to take part in the business under consideration.

IDENTIFICATION

If an IAG member is provided with a name badge identification it remains the property of the Force. The badge must be returned when the IAG membership terminates. The identification should be worn and prominently displayed whenever you are attending police premises. IAG members participating in critical incidents must wear identification badges provided.

GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

You will need to treat with caution any offer of gift, favour or hospitality that is made to you personally, knowing you to be a member of the IAG. The person or organisation making the offer may be doing so to obtain information or trying to influence a decision. Our advice would be not to accept any gifts of hospitality for your role within the IAG.

You are personally responsible for all decisions connected to the acceptance or offer of gifts or hospitality and for avoiding the risk of damage to public confidence in the IAG.

EXPENSES

Any reasonable expenses incurred by IAG members will be reimbursed e.g. travel, out of pocket expenses. An expense claim form needs to be completed to arrange for reimbursement of expenses. The procedure for payment is audited so that all costs paid to IAG members are accountable and open to monitoring.

If members use their own transport to and from IAG meetings it is the responsibility of the member to ensure their personal motor car insurance policy covers them for this purpose.

The Constabulary will continue to provide for the running costs of the IAGs specifically to cover:

- Travel expenses

Clarity is given to members regarding which meetings and events outside the usual IAG meetings attract expenses payment. This will be managed via the volunteer's coordinator.

CONTACT WITH PRESS AND MEDIA

Any IAG member has the right to comment as an individual on any issue that he/she feels appropriate.

If an IAG member holds strong views about a particular issue and wishes to make a comment as an IAG member to the press/media, he/she must firstly speak with the Chair of their IAG to seek agreement. He/she may also speak with a member of the Senior Management Team and/or the Corporate Communications Department at Force Headquarters.

Occasionally, negative media coverage may result from an ongoing court case or during a current Independent Office for Police Complaints (IOPC) investigation and it would be inappropriate for an Independent Advisor to comment at his stage. IAG members should be aware of this should they be approached by a reporter and invited to comment.

There are other occasions for example Purdah when it would be inappropriate for IAG members to comment to the media, for example at times when such comment may jeopardise operational activity. Again, members should consider this if approached by a

reporter and invited to comment. The Corporate Communications Department is always available to assist IAG members and is on hand at all times.

STAFFORDSHIRE COMMISSIONERS OFFICE

On 15 November 2012, the public across England and Wales have elected Police and Crime Commissioners who will be accountable for how crime is tackled in their Police Force areas. These Commissioners have replaced the Police Authorities.

What they do:

- Aim to cut crime and deliver an effective and efficient police service within their Force area.
- Provide stronger and more transparent accountability of the police.
- Hold the Chief Constables and the Force to account.
- Make the police answerable to the communities they serve.
- Ensure community needs are met as effectively as possible.
- Improve local relationships through building confidence and restoring trust.
- Work in partnership across a range of agencies at local and national level to ensure there is a unified approach to preventing and reducing crime.

The role of the PCC is to be the voice of the people and hold the police to account, they do not have responsibility for the operational element of policing – that remains the Chief Constable for the respective force.

A member of the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (OPFCC) may attend IAG meetings and they may wish to engage with the IAG. The IAG may also wish to request specific input from the OPFCC.

COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Diversity recognises that every individual is unique. People are different in many ways including social background, personal need, values, personality, and family circumstances and so on. There are a number of personal characteristics which are protected by discrimination law.

The term equality relates to eliminating discrimination and providing the same opportunities for everyone. In order to achieve equality, we must recognise the differences in people and acknowledge their different needs.

Promoting equality and respecting diversity are the foundations to creating greater community confidence in the police. IAGs have a pivotal role to play in the delivery of the Equality and Diversity Strategy for the police service, providing senior police officers with the opportunity to have open dialogue with members of the community, from a range of backgrounds.

Staffordshire Constabulary is subject to the public sector equality duty which is set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. Those subject to the duty must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups.
- Foster good relations between people between different groups.

The new duty protects a number of personal characteristics; the "protected" characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex (gender)
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnership

The main purpose of the equality duty is to integrate consideration of equality and diversity into the day to day activities of the public sector organisations. The duty requires Staffordshire Constabulary to reflect equality considerations into the design of policies and service delivery, including internal policies, and for these issues to be kept under review.

This strategy applies to everyone in the constabulary, regardless of rank or position, including volunteers and contractors who deliver services on our behalf. We all have a part to play in ensuring that the service we provide to our community is fair and professional regardless of an individual's protected characteristics. We are all responsible for promoting equality and diversity by our behaviour and actions, and for co-operating with measures introduced to ensure equality of opportunity and non-discrimination.

Staffordshire Constabulary has a number of structures in place to monitor and ensure our commitment to equality, diversity and human rights. Whilst specific responsibilities are given to certain people, all our staff are personally responsible for observing and conforming to the aims of the Equality Act 2010 and the Equality and Diversity Strategy.

Diversity and Inclusion board

It is vital that there is robust governance in place to ensure that equality is mainstreamed into the Constabulary's day-to-day business. This is provided internally by the diversity and inclusion board chaired by [REDACTED]. The Chair of the IAG should be a standing member of this board.

Staff Network Forum

This group is chaired by the Equality & Inclusion Officer and is made up of staff support network representatives, staff association representatives, and Human Resources. It exists as a vehicle to identify strategic issues that the constabulary needs to address internally whilst also assisting in the identification of solutions for communities across Staffordshire.

Equality Unit.

The Equality and Inclusions Officer feeds into the diversity and inclusion board and oversees and directs all aspects of work in areas of equality diversity and human rights and ensures that the general and specific duties are met. Progress on our equality objectives are incorporated into an action plan and monitored by the Board.

THE EQUALITY DUTY AND THE ROLE OF THE IAG

The two main impact areas where the IAG can help Staffordshire Constabulary comply with the equality duty are Consultation and Critical Incidents

Consultation.

All IAG members are invited to participate in consultation processes on force policies, procedures etc. Consultation is the process by which the public input on matters affecting them is sought. It is a two way flow of information and exchange of opinion as well as participation of interested parties in the drafting of policies and or decision making. Consultation and engagement with the IAG in the context of the equality duty will inform the assessment of the impact of policies and functions on the communities of Staffordshire.

More can be achieved for Staffordshire by involving the IAG in day-to-day policing activities, policies and performance. However it is acknowledged that lack of time, resources and flexibility may affect involvement. Together we will:

- Provide a framework that enables people to get involved in decision-making early enough to make a real difference.
- Recognise that service providers, service users, carers and campaigning organisations each have different needs.
- Encourage quality in how consultation is designed, carried out and used.
- Remind everyone of their responsibility to encourage wider involvement in decision making, particularly in relation to policies and performance.
- Remind IAG members of their responsibility to remain independent and objective.

Membership of the IAG is reflective of the community rather than representative and where more detailed consultation is required with specific protected groups this will be facilitated by the Equality Unit.

Critical Incident.

The definition of a critical incident is:

Any incident where the effectiveness of the police response is likely to have a significant impact on the confidence of the victim, their family and/or the community.

The definition is deliberately broad and should ensure that potential critical incidents are not missed. It recognises the fundamental significance of community confidence and trust in the police response to critical incidents. It applies equally to potential internal critical incidents.

The IAG acts as a valuable resource for Staffordshire Constabulary and policing in Staffordshire. Ongoing independent advice and well-formed community relations should seek to prevent avoidable critical incidents, but where such incidents have occurred, advisors can perform a valuable role. As well as advising on issues such as community relations, and the sensitivities of proposed actions, they can also provide insight into public perceptions and possibly even act as a conduit to avoid damaging rumour and misinformation.

THE CODE OF ETHICS SUMMARY

The College of Policing developed the Code of Ethics on behalf of every member of the policing profession of England and Wales.

The work was carried out by the College's Integrity Programme in association with the national policing lead for Ethics and the national policing lead of Professional Standards and a range of key stakeholders.

The main components of the Code are sets of principles and standards of professional behaviour.

Policing principles	Standards of professional behaviour
Accountability	Honesty and integrity
Fairness	Authority, respect and courtesy
Honesty	Equality and diversity
Integrity	Use of force
Leadership	Orders and instructions
Objectivity	Duties and responsibilities
Openness	Confidentiality
Respect	Fitness for work
Selflessness	Conduct
	Challenging and reporting improper conduct

The nine policing principles originate from the "Principles of Public Life" published by the Committee on Standards in Public Life in 1995, as these continue to reflect public expectations.

The ten standards of professional behaviour (Code of Ethics) originate from the Police (Conduct) Regulations 2012 and from the Police Staff Council Joint Circular 54. In the Code the wording of the standards has been adapted so that it applies to everyone. Where something applies solely to police officers, this is made clear.

The combination of policing principles and standards of professional behaviour encourages consistency between what people aspire to and what they do.

The Code provides supplementary information on how to use it to guide ethical decision making (using the National Decision Model) and how breaches of the Code will be dealt with. Specific advice is given on (a) the types of possible actions for managing unprofessional behaviour, and (b) relevant considerations in determining whether behaviour reflects the principles and standards in the Code.

It is made clear that the breaches of the Code of Ethics will not always involve misconduct or require disciplinary proceedings. Breaches will range from relatively minor shortcomings in conduct, performance of attendance, through to gross misconduct. Different procedures exist according to the type of unprofessional behaviour or misconduct alleged. For example, relatively minor breaches of the Code will normally be dealt with locally (eg, by a line manager) whereas any breaches that are sufficiently

serious to require formal action will be dealt with under exiting disciplinary regimes for police officers and staff.

The Code is different from anything that has been available before. For example having a Code of Ethics brings the police service in line with other professions.

- It combines policing principles and standards of behaviour in a single document, thereby replacing a plethora of existing material.
- is inclusive, applying to everyone in policing, whereas previous documents tended to relate to police officers only (eg the Oath of Attestation and the conduct and performance regulations)
- is a guide for a day-to-day ethical behaviour and decision making, unlike the current misconduct regimes, which have a disciplinary focus.

Appendix 1

STAFFORDSHIRE IAG

TERMS OF REFERENCE AGREEMENT FORM

NAME:- _____

- I confirm that I have read and understand the contents of the Staffordshire Independent Advisory Group Handbook and Terms of Reference.
- I understand and agree I am required to be security vetted to Level 2 to be a critical Incident Advisor.
- I understand and agree I am required to be security vetted to Level 2 to be the Chair or Vice Chair of the Staffordshire Independent Advisory group.
- I understand and accept that should I breach these items of reference I will be deselected as a member of the Staffordshire Independent Advisory Group.

If you agree to the above statements, please sign this form and return it to:

_____, Stafford police station, Eastgate Street,
Stafford ST16 2DQ

Signed:-

.....

Print

Name:-

.....

Date:-

.....

You will be provided with a copy of this form acknowledging receipt and the original will be kept on file within the Equality Unit.

.....
For office use only:-

I confirm that I have received the signed Terms of Reference Form and the original document has been filed within the office and a copy has been sent to the member stated above for his/her records.

Signed:-

.....

Name:-

.....

Date:-

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