



Attendees:

- **Professional Standards Department**
- **Problem Solving Operational Manager**
- **PCC Compliance Officer**
- **Detective Constable**
- **Knowledge Hub Head of Service Delivery**
- **Data Quality Review Team**
- **Neighbourhood Sergeant**
- **Crime Review Team**

Meeting Minutes (not verbatim, overview of discussion)

Welcome/Introductions

Thank you for attending and giving up an hour of your day, I know what demand is like and appreciate it is isn't easy to tear yourselves away at times.

Apologies for the delay since the last panel in June. I did intend to hold a meeting in August however with school holidays and competing demand it proved difficult.

For those who have not attended previously, we aim to discuss topics and issues we may not have previously encountered in Staffordshire Police or issues that are new to policing as a whole. Topics such as inappropriate websites (there are officers and staff on only fans up and down the country), smart technology leading to data protection issues, WhatsApp groups. I am sure you are aware of the impact of some WhatsApp groups from recent reports in regards to the Sarah Everard case.

The issues discussed are very much 2022 and beyond issues and not necessarily covered by any policy or procedure.

Since the last meeting I have virtually attended 2 regional meetings and an Internal Ethics Panel Meeting held by Nottinghamshire Police

to get a broader understanding and implement any best practice identified.

I will be taking minutes, these minutes will be anonymised and placed on our intranet, with the final aim to have all minutes published on our external internet as recommended by the NPCC.

Feedback

December Discussion

Removal of Body Worn Video 30 second buffer.

Recommendations provided to Chief Inspector Foster.

February Discussion

Use of Social Media.

The recent example of the 'Charing Cross WhatsApp' which was in the national media.

The 'Scottish WhatsApp' case highlighted officers are not afforded the same protection under Article 8 of the Human Rights act as a 'regular' member of the public.

The internal communication boards were updated highlighting recent publicised cases around inappropriate use of WhatsApp. Completed in liaison with both Unison and the Federation.

April Discussion

Standards of Uniform

A recent issue was raised by the Project Operating Model of the current standards of dress being raised to them by members of Staffordshire Police, a review of the current policy is overdue and an opportunity to modernise and remind staff of their obligations. Recommendations have been provided to Chief Superintendent Sharrard-Williams as the policy owner as it is due for renewal.

June Discussion

Smart Technology

Do Staffordshire Police employees have a personal responsibility to ensure that whilst working from home the data which they are privileged to is protected.

Do we need to consider data protection whilst 'Working from Home' around smart technology (I.E TEAMS meetings)

Do we need to consider the personal SMART devices we wear and use on a day to day basis in the workplace?

Following the discussion being raised to the Information Security Team, the attached guidance was issued.

As discussed the HMICFRS report also noted;

Ethical standards are clearly promoted throughout the force Chief officers are working to promote an ethical culture and environment where the workforce understands what is expected of it.

Ethical behaviour is part of staff training and there is a strong focus on the 'Know the Line' campaign, which examines the use of social media and its link to sexual harassment in the workplace and beyond. We found that officers understood the standards of behaviour expected. And they felt confident to report any incidents to their supervisor or professional standards department or through the 'Bad Apple' report system.

We found that the professional standards department promotes standards of ethical behaviours through a variety of means including communal television screens that display key messages about conduct and the force's expectations. The department also circulates an internal bulletin each month which includes a section discussing ethical dilemmas. This shows that the force is developing a learning culture that is supported by the professional standards department.

The force has recently introduced an ethics committee, and the chair is independent of the force. This is a positive step; however, we are unable to make comment on the effectiveness of this group as it is newly formed.

Ethical Dilemma Discussion

CBD OIL

I have sent the NPCC Guidance relating to CBD Oil.

CBD Oil is legal and can be brought at reputable places.

We are aware that some staff/officers have or do use CBD oil for medicinal purposes.

The guidance issued raises concerns around the impact on drug test results given the use of CBD Oil.

Given the guidance around CBD Oil, are there any ethical considerations around advising staff to cease using CBD Oil due to

risk of impact on drug testing when they have been using it for medical reasons.

The panel raised the following, the guidance document states *All of the products contained CBD and 15 of the products were also found to contain THC at levels ranging from 18-2500 ug/g. None of the product information made any reference to THC being present in the products.*

*A panel member commented 'If its legal to use then it is exactly that. If the suppliers use non-legal components then that cannot be the blame of those who believe they are using it legally. We cannot consider changes to policy based on such risk. I think this is more about educating our staff as to the risk.'

*Ultimately it was considered we have a positive ethical duty as a force to promote/educate people on the possibility that they may be illegally over the limit, we owe that duty of integrity to the public.

*Consideration for Occupational Health to ask about whether staff have/are taking CBD oil when doing screenings (like they do with poppy seeds). Further suggestion that the underlying reasons a person might take CBD oil could be something that Occupational Health could perhaps offer support with – anxiety or pain management for example.

*Is there a risk staff could use 'CBD OIL' to mask cannabis use.

*A panel member raised 'I don't think they could defend themselves by being wilfully blind to a known risk. Basically, I think once you know of the risk you have a duty to mitigate it – ethically and in law. I suspect any defence would need to be based on honestly held ignorance: I still think we need to educate people about the possibility that lawful CBD products may have unexpected THC levels in it.'

Gift and Gratuities

The Gifts and Gratuities policy is due to be updated and this provides an opportunity to modernise the policy.

Does the panel believe we now need to consider 'modern' ways of receiving gifts and gratuities.

'Influencers'

We have officers with a high social media presence.

Should officers/staff receive items as a result of their online reach due to their position within Staffordshire Police is this required to be declared as a gift and gratuity

Should a dog handler from Staffordshire Police be invited to an event as a VIP guest due to their presence on social media.

Is this representing Staffordshire Police or is this something to be declared as it is an 'above and beyond reward' due to social media.

*The panel first highlighted the immense difficulty in submitting the information in declaring gifts and gratuities.

*The panel considered there must be a clear distinction between receiving (or attending an event) whether it is on behalf of Staffordshire Police, a media commitment or a personal invitation.

*Panel members considered the current guidance was sufficient and did not need to be too prescriptive to avoid 'over complication'.

*The panel considered this policy not as a standalone but as part of a "suite" of policies which overlap – including the Secondary Employment policy, existing force governance of official social media accounts, etc. There was also strong agreement that where a gift was offered by a party to an ongoing investigation or disputed proceeding then that needed to be treated with special caution and engaged the Disclosure framework.

*Some of the panel commented surprise that refused offers of gifts were also supposed to be declared and recorded.

Examples considered;

Should a member of staff receive 'gym gear' due to their presence on social media where they are identified as a Police Officer, the panel would expect that to be declared as a gift.

Should a police dog be invited to 'CRUFTS' on behalf of Staffordshire Police the panel would believe that is acceptable.

There should be considerations that any event/invite should be sent via Staffordshire Police and approaches not made directly to staff.

Ancillary Matter –

The system used to input gifts and gratuities, known as (Lotus Notes) is ending with the 'Go Live' Date for the replacement due in January 2023.

Tenure

Currently recruitment is a significant challenge across many civilian based roles in policing. Some departments work extremely hard at recruitment and training to then see staff move in a short space of time to other departments in the organisation.

We are effectively competing against ourselves in a variety of ways which at times is creating a negative, competitive culture that does not support a one team ethos.

Tenure is used across many public and private sectors. Does the panel have a view that tenure could be considered for some specific roles? A consideration that there cannot be any internal movement before a year or maybe 18 months would help see some continuity retained and prevent excessive spending on recruitment that currently is proving costly and at times in-effective due to the ease of internal moves.

*The panel considered it be unethical for any tenure to affect promotion

*The panel raised that a change in personal circumstances would need to be considered in every case.

*Certain panel members felt strongly that specialist posts should be given a tenure of 2/3 years whilst non-specialist post could be considered for 12 months.

*It was raised if there may be employment rights which would need to be considered through HR.

Actions

To disseminate thoughts of panel to DI Clews as part of the Gifts and gratuities policy renewal – W.Jones

To disseminate to Occupational Health in relation to NPCC recommendations around CBD Oil – W.Jones