



Vetting Policy

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) is committed to the principles of equality and diversity. No member of the public, member of staff, volunteer or job applicant shall be discriminated against on the grounds of age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; or sexual orientation.

Introduction

1. The OPCC abides by the ten principles of public life as set out in the Annex to this document. OPCC believes that in conducting its activities it should be as open as possible and should only restrict information, both to members of the OPCC and to the public, when wider public interest or the law demands. OPCC recognises it has a public interest duty to ensure the security of police and government assets and information which, if disclosed, could further criminal activities. To this end the OPCC has agreed this vetting policy.
2. The aim of this policy is to allow the OPCC to:
 - exercise robust and effective governance of policing
 - ensure that the OPCC meets its statutory duties, which include:
 - ✓ Holding the chief constable to account; and
 - ✓ Ensuring the delivery of an effective and efficient police service
 - secure continuous improvement in the delivery of policing services
 - maintain trust and community confidence; and
 - ensure the security of police and government assets and prevent operational compromise
3. This policy applies to
 - all staff engaged by the OPCC
 - persons working with the OPCC who require access to police premises without constant supervision; and
 - persons working with the OPCC to assist it in the meeting of its statutory duties

4. The following principles will be applied:

- Need to know

The dissemination of sensitive information and assets should be no wider than is necessary for the efficient and effective conduct of the OPCC's business and, by implication, should be limited to those individuals who are appropriately authorised to have access to it.

- Ownership of intelligence

Intelligence remains the 'property' of the originator who may impose conditions on the way in which it is handled, actioned and to whom it is disclosed. Only the originator of a 'protectively marked' asset may authorise a change in protective marking.

- Specificity

The detail and origin of the intelligence will determine the protective marking, the required vetting status of recipients and the extent of disclosure.

- Proportionate

The application of this policy will be proportionate to the nature of the work being undertaken and the level of access required, whether to premises or information.

5. The OPCC will apply the three levels of national security vetting. These are:

- Counter terrorism check – for those individuals who are appointed to posts which involve proximity to public figures assessed to be at risk from terrorist attack, given access to information or material assessed to be of value to terrorists or involves unescorted access to certain military, civil, industrial or commercial establishments assessed to be at risk from terrorist attack
- Security check –required for those individuals who require long term, frequent and uncontrolled access to government assets marked SECRET and occasional, supervised access to government assets marked TOP SECRET
- Developed vetting –required for those who require frequent, uncontrolled access to government assets marked TOP SECRET, or require access to TOP SECRET STRAP, ATOMIC or other codeword material

6. All persons subject to this policy will be vetted to counter terrorism check level. All staff employed by the OPCC who are not under the direction and control of the Chief Constable, will be vetted to counter terrorism check level plus checks against UK criminal and security records and a credit check. Vetting at security check and developed vetting level will be applied to those staff whose governance responsibilities require it. The level of vetting required will be determined by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chief Constable.

7. In addition to the above, staff employed by the OPCC who are not under the direction and control of the Chief Constable, will be subject to the process of recruitment vetting

and management vetting as determined by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Force Corporate Head of Security.

8. All persons subject to vetting requirements will be notified that vetting clearance has been granted. Where vetting clearance has not been granted or limitations are placed on a clearance the person will receive written notification and, where possible, provided with an explanation. A person can ask for a decision to be reviewed within 14 days of receipt of the written notification. The Chief Executive, with appropriate advice, will review the decision and provide a written statement outlining the result of the decision. The decision reached will be final.
9. Documents used during the vetting process will be retained in confidence. Information contained in any questionnaires is confidential and will not be disclosed other than for the purpose of the vetting process. Information will be retained in accordance with the retention and disposal policy.

The Ten General Principles of Public Life

Selflessness – members should serve only the public interest and should never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.

Honesty and integrity – members should not place themselves in situations where their honesty and integrity may be questioned, should not behave improperly, and should on all occasions avoid the appearance of such behaviour.

Objectivity – members should make decisions on merit, including when making appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits.

Accountability – members should be accountable to the public for their actions and the manner in which they carry out their responsibilities, and should co-operate fully and honestly with any scrutiny appropriate to their particular office.

Openness – members should be as open as possible about their actions and those of their authority, and should be prepared to give reasons for those actions.

Personal judgement – members may take account of the views of others, including their political groups, but should reach their own conclusions on the issues before them and act in accordance with those conclusions.

Respect for others – members should promote equality by not discriminating unlawfully against any person, and by treating people with respect, regardless of their race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability. They should respect the impartiality and integrity of the authority's statutory officers and its other employees.

Duty to uphold the law – members should uphold the law and, on all occasions, act in accordance with the trust that the public is entitled to place in them.

Stewardship – members should do whatever they are able to do to ensure that their authorities use their resources prudently, and in accordance with the law.

Leadership – members should promote and support these principles by leadership, and by example, and should act in a way that secures or preserves public confidence.