



West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner and Violence Reduction Unit

STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

1. This staff code of conduct provides clear guiding principles to ensure we achieve the highest possible professional standards. The code sets out the standards of behaviour expected of every individual working for the Police and Crime Commissioner, in the OPCC and the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU).
2. The annex at the end of this policy provides supplementary details and examples.

STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR

3. We behave with **INTEGRITY** and **HONESTY** in all we do. We work **OBJECTIVELY** and with **IMPARTIALITY** to support the Police and Crime Commissioner and each other to achieve the objectives of the Police and Crime Plan. We support each other by driving **INCLUSIVITY** within our interaction with each other and the public.

INTEGRITY

Putting the obligations of public service above your own personal interests.

HONESTY

Being truthful and open.

OBJECTIVITY

Basing your advice and decisions on rigorous analysis of the evidence.

IMPARTIALITY

Acting solely according to the merits of the case and serving elected individuals of different political persuasions equally.

INCLUSIVITY

Provide everyone with equal access to opportunities and resources.

INTEGRITY

4. You must:

- ✓ Fulfil your duties and obligations responsibly.
- ✓ Always act in a way that is professional and that deserves and retains the confidence of all those with whom you have dealings.
- ✓ Carry out your fiduciary obligations responsibly (that is make sure public money and other resources are used properly and efficiently).
- ✓ Deal with the public and their affairs ethically, fairly, promptly, efficiently, effectively and sensitively, to the best of your ability.
- ✓ Ensure you have authorisation from the Head of Communications for any contact with the media.
- ✓ Keep accurate official records and handle information as openly as possible within the legal framework.
- ✓ Comply with the law and uphold the administration of justice.

5. You must not:

- ✗ Misuse your position, for example by using information acquired in the course of your official duties to further your private interests or those of others.
- ✗ Accept gifts or hospitality or receive other benefits from anyone which might reasonably be seen to compromise your personal judgement or integrity.
- ✗ Disclose official information without authority (this duty continues to apply after you leave the Organisation).

HONESTY

6. You must:

- ✓ Set out the facts and relevant issues truthfully and correct any errors as soon as possible.
- ✓ Use resources only for authorised public purposes for which they are provided.

7. You must not:

- ✗ Deceive or knowingly mislead colleagues or members of the public.
- ✗ Be influenced by improper pressures from others or the prospect of personal gain.

OBJECTIVITY

8. You must:

- ✓ Provide information and advice on the basis of the evidence and accurately present the options and facts.
- ✓ Take decisions on the merits of the case.
- ✓ Take due account of expert and professional advice.

9. You must not:

- ✗ Ignore inconvenient facts or relevant considerations when providing advice or making decisions.
- ✗ Frustrate the implementation of policies once decisions are taken by declining to take, or abstaining from, action which flows from those decisions.

IMPARTIALITY

10. You must:

- ✓ Perform your duties to the Police and Crime Commissioner, whatever its political persuasion, to the best of your ability in a way which maintains political impartiality and is in line with the requirements of this code, no matter what your own political beliefs are.
- ✓ Act in a way which deserves and retains the confidence of the Police and Crime Commissioner while at the same time ensuring that you will be able to establish the same relationship with those whom you may be required to work for in the future.
- ✓ Comply with any restrictions that have been laid down on your political activities.

11. You must not:

- ✗ Act in a way that is determined by party political considerations or use official resources for party political purposes.
- ✗ Allow your personal political views to determine any advice you give or your actions.

INCLUSIVITY

12. You must:

- ✓ Carry out your responsibilities in a way that is fair and just manner so everyone feels safe and respected.
- ✓ Recognise the rights of all individuals to mutual respect; acceptance of others without biases based on differences of any kind.
- ✓ Show commitment to equal treatment and the elimination of discrimination.
- ✓ Make time to listen to people carefully.
- ✓ Speak up when an individual is treated unfairly or disrespectfully.

13. You must not:

- ✗ Act in a way that unjustifiably favours or discriminates against particular individuals or interests.
- ✗ Ignore any situation where an individual is being treated unfairly or disrespectfully.

14. All staff have a duty to be aware of this code and its values. If you believe that you are being required to act in a way which conflicts with this Code, or become aware of actions by others which you believe conflict with this code, you should raise this with your line manager or someone else in your line management chain.

Annex – Working Guide to the Code of Conduct

Detailed explanation and examples of the Code of Conduct. This annex is applicable to all staff within the Violence Reduction Unit and across the wider OPCC.

Introduction to the Violence Reduction Unit

The West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) is a partnership organisation that aims to reduce violence and exploitation across the West Midlands Metropolitan Region. It benefits from the expertise of partners in Public Health, Local Authorities, Criminal Justice, Sports, Education and Policing.

The VRU directly deliver and commission a range of interventions across the region. Our intention is to influence and improve whole system responses across organisations, understanding the way in which processes and approaches to serious violence can be improved and risks reduced. The 5 strands to the VRU's work include, supporting:

- * Communities and professionals to work together
- * Interventions to prevent violence
- * The use of evidence to inform decisions
- * Leaders to connect around a shared long-term ambition
- * Production of guidance, advice and toolkits

Purpose of this document

This annex to the Staff Code of Conduct sets out guidance on the code of conduct and defines the behaviour required of anyone directly and indirectly involved in delivering VRU or OPCC activities. The Code applies equally to all staff employed, seconded and commissioned by the VRU and OPCC. The VRU and OPCC expect all staff, contractors and volunteers to co-operate fully with this policy as well as their own/host organisational policies and procedures. All commissioned services will be required to have a clear and well understood code of conduct, in line with the principles set out in this policy.

You must ensure your actions and behaviours are consistent with the high standards and values required to maintain confidence in the VRU and its work. You must familiarise yourself with the contents of the code and act in accordance with its principles and provisions. Failure to comply with the code may be a legal, employment or disciplinary matter.

Main Principles

General Responsibilities: you must fulfil your duties and obligations responsibly, acting always in good faith and in the best interests of the VRU or/and OPCC, the VRU Partnership and the residents of the West Midlands. You must not bring the OPCC or VRU's name into disrepute or affect its integrity by your actions or words, either within the VRU, OPCC or outside. This includes the use of, or entries on, social networking sites.

Conflicts of Interest: you must take all reasonable steps to ensure that no undeclared conflict arises, or could reasonably be perceived to arise, between your duties and your personal interests, financial or otherwise.

You must not be involved in the appointment of staff where you are related or are closely connected to an applicant. Similarly, you must not be involved in the appointment of a contractor or supplier or tendering for a contract and should declare any such relationships.

You must not use, or attempt to use, your position to promote your personal interests or those of any connected person, business or other organisation.

Bribery, Gifts and Hospitality: you must not offer, seek or accept gifts, hospitality or other benefits from individuals or organisations that might reasonably be seen to compromise your judgement or integrity or place you under an obligation to those individuals or organisations.

If you are offered gifts or hospitality, they should either be declined, or prior approval sought for their acceptance. The only exceptions are gifts of token value or modest hospitality given in connection with normal work meetings.

Funds and Resources: you must not misuse VRU or OPCC funds or resources.

You must claim reimbursement only for expenditure that was properly and reasonably incurred in carrying out VRU or OPCC business.

Confidentiality: you must handle data and information in accordance with the law, regulations and VRU and OPCC policies and procedures.

You must comply with the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 (GDPR) which regulate the protection of personal data. All personal data held about individuals, whether on paper or electronically, is subject to the regulations.

You must not disclose without authority any confidential business information. This duty continues to apply after you have left the VRU/OPCC.

You must not, without permission, pass or distribute to the press or media or any other external recipient information or materials relating to the VRU/OPCC.

Respect for Others: you must treat others with respect always.

You must comply with the OPCC Equality and Diversity Policy. Equality laws prohibit discrimination on grounds including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation and impose duties to eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote equality.

You must not harass, bully or attempt to intimidate any person.

Relationship with Partner Agencies, Commissioned/Funded Services: You must maintain constructive and professional relationships based on a sound understanding of respective roles and responsibilities.

You must set an example by demonstrating the highest standards of integrity and ethics and your alignment with the Police and Crime Commissioner's and the VRU's vision, aims and objectives.

Relationship with Service Users, Residents, etc: You must maintain high standards of professionalism, fairness and courtesy in all your dealings with residents and other service users.

You must treat all service users, communities, etc with courtesy and respect. You must not allow any personal relationship with a resident or service user to conflict with your role and responsibilities.

Health, Safety and Security: your conduct must not endanger the health, safety or security of yourself or others, and you must comply at all times with the requirements of the Health and Safety Policy.

Conduct at Meetings: your conduct at meetings must meet a high standard of integrity, commitment and courtesy.

You must be courteous to all other attendees and respect the position of the meeting chair. You must not use threatening or aggressive behaviour, or act in a disruptive way.

Representing the Police and Crime Commissioner and/or the VRU at external events and with outside agencies/bodies: you must uphold and promote the Police and Crime Commissioner's and the VRU's values, aims and objectives.

You must not become involved in, or be seen to endorse, any activity that may bring the OPCC or VRU into disrepute. This includes but is not limited to illegal, immoral, racist or other discriminatory activity.

In engaging in external activities which promote the work of the Police and Crime Commissioner or the VRU, you must demonstrate a commitment to the VRU and support for its values, aims and objectives.

In representing the Police and Crime Commissioner or VRU at formal or informal events, you must be appropriately dressed for the occasion.

Learning and Development: you must take responsibility for your own learning and development, regularly updating and refreshing your skills and knowledge, with the support of the OPCC and VRU where appropriate.

You must play an active part in the OPCC's and VRU's supervision and performance appraisal processes and welcome constructive feedback.

Reporting Concerns: you must report any genuine suspicion you may have about possible wrongdoing, in line with the Safeguarding Policy and Whistleblowing Policy.

Equalities and Diversity

You must comply with the OPCC Equality and Diversity Policy. Equality laws prohibit discrimination on grounds including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation and impose duties to eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote equality. You must not act in a way that unjustifiably favours or discriminates against individuals, groups or interests.

Responsibilities

The Deputy Chief Executive, the VRU Director and the Senior Management Team (SMT) are responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented, monitored and consistently reviewed.

OPCC and VRU SMT have responsibilities to:

- * Ensure the policy is in place and appropriate and accessible
- * Ensure the policy is implemented, monitored and reviewed
- * Ensure sufficient resources (time and money) are allocated to ensure that the policy can be effectively implemented
- * Ensure staff have access to appropriate training and information

Individuals representing the OPCC and VRU are responsible for:

- * Reading and understanding the policy
- * Contributing to regular review and improvement of the policy
- * Ensuring a sound understanding and application of the policy

Individuals/Organisations working on behalf of the OPCC or VRU via contracts or grants will:

- * Provide evidence of code of conduct policies and procedures
- * Alert the OPCC or VRU if any code of conduct investigations have an impact on the reputation or associated work being delivered on behalf of the OPCC and/or VRU

Process for Review

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years to ensure it is up to date with good practice and relevant guidance and legislation.