

The OPCC Staff Code

As an Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) member of staff, you are appointed on merit based on fair and open competition and are expected to carry out your role with dedication and a commitment to the OPCC and its core values: integrity, trust, independence, and public voice. In this code:

Integrity means that we honour the commitments to those we serve. We don't take our commitment lightly. We will do everything in our power to do the right thing in an honest, truthful, and straightforward way and put the obligations of public service above our own personal interests.

Trust means that we will build trust and confidence in those we serve through the actions we take. We accept feedback and are comfortable responding to criticism and finding ways to improve. We will strive to be the best at what we do.

Independence means that we are independent of the police and political affiliations and will be transparent in our actions, decisions, and communications with both the people we work with and those we serve.

Public voice. We will put the public voice at the heart of what we do. We will listen to the needs and concerns of the public to inform our decision making and policy development and improve the service user and staff experience.

These core values support good governance and ensure the achievement of the highest possible standards in all that the OPCC does. This in turn helps the OPCC to gain and retain the respect of the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Chief Constable, the public of Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly and our partners and customers.

This code sets out the standards of behaviour required by all OPCC staff members.

Standards of behaviour - Core Values

Integrity

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 to make sure public money and other resources are used properly and efficiently)
- Deal with the public and their affairs fairly, efficiently, promptly, effectively, and sensitively, to the best of your ability
- Ensure you have Executive authorisation 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
- Use any public funds entrusted to you or handled by you in a responsible and lawful manner
- Not make any personal use of property, vehicles or other facilities of the PCC unless authorised to do so

You must not:

- Misuse your official 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 be reasonably be seen to compromise your personal judgement or integrity
- Disclose official information without authority (this duty continues to apply after you leave the OPCC)

Trust

You must:

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

You must not:

- Deceive or knowingly mislead the PCC, OPCC Chief Executive, Executive Team, OPCC colleagues
- Chief Constable or the public of Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly and our partners and customers
- Be influenced by improper pressures from others of the prospect of personal gain

Independence

You must:

- Provide information and advice, including advice to the PCC, based on 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

You must not:

- Ignore inconvenient facts or relevant 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 the decisions

All members of OPCC staff hold politically restricted positions¹. To achieve this political impartiality, you must:

- Serve the Police and Crime Commissioner, whatever their 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 at the same time ensuring that you will be able to establish the same relationship with those whom you may be required to serve in any future governance construct

This restriction prohibits a person from:

- a. Standing as a member of:
 - The House of Commons
 - The European Parliament
 - A local authority
- b. Acting as an election agent, or sub-agent, for a candidate in elections for any of the above
- c. Be an officer of a political party or of any branch of such a party or a member of any committee or sub-committee of such a party if their duties as such an officer or member would be likely to require them to:
 - Participate in the general management of the party or branch
 - Act on behalf of the party or branch in dealings with persons other than member of the party or members of another political party associated with the party
 - Canvass on behalf of a political party or on behalf of a person who is, or proposes to be, a candidate for election to Parliament, the European Parliament, or a local authority. Should you have any queries about political restriction or activity you should speak with the Chief Executive before engaging in any activity. 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 determine any advice you give or your actions

General Standards of Conduct

RESPECT FOR OTHERS

Staff must always:

- i) treat others with dignity and respect; and
- ii) not discriminate unlawfully against any person; and
- iii) conduct their working relationships with the Police and Crime Commissioner and all staff in a professional manner

¹ Deputy Police & Crime Commissioner position is exempt from political restrictions

APPOINTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT MATTERS

Any member of staff involved in appointments or decisions relating to recruitment, discipline, promotion, or grading should not be involved in that process where it relates to an applicant/employee to whom they are related or with whom they have a close personal relationship outside of work.

ADDITIONAL EMPLOYMENT

The OPCC will not attempt to prevent staff from undertaking additional employment or voluntary work provided it does not conflict with the interests of, or in any way weaken public confidence in, the office of the Commissioner, and does not in any way affect performance of their duties and responsibilities. Staff must inform and obtain the permission of the Chief Executive before accepting additional employment. A record of approval will be maintained. This relates to any employment or voluntary work. It is the member of staff's responsibility to ensure that any income received from additional employment is declared to the relevant authorities.

CONDUCT AWAY FROM WORK

The personal lives of members of staff are their own concern. However, staff should not conduct themselves in a manner which, because of the nature of their employment, would undermine the Commissioner's confidence or trust in them or would affect their integrity in a way which is prejudicial to their carrying out of their duties or bring the OPCC into disrepute. In particular, behaviour which could result in criminal charges being brought, is unacceptable and would be likely to undermine public confidence. Should a member of staff (or any close family member) find themselves subject to any criminal charges they should notify the Chief Executive (or in the case of the Chief Executive, the Commissioner) at the earliest possible opportunity.

CONFIDENTIALITY/USE OF INFORMATION

During the course of their employment staff will come across confidential information. The privacy and confidentiality of such information must be maintained at all times unless express authorisation is given to divulge it, or there is a legal requirement to do so.

Information concerning an employee's private affairs must not be supplied to any person not employed by the OPCC without the consent of the employee, nor to anyone within the Commissioner's office unless that person has authority or responsibility for such information.

OPCC contracts or purchasing arrangements must not be used for personal benefit or to benefit any person or organisation other than the Commissioner unless approval is obtained. Business information should not be divulged to any third party or used other than for the purpose of discharging the functions of the Commissioner.

Staff should not disclose the proceedings of any meeting from which the press and public have been excluded unless they are required to do so by law or have been authorised to do so. Care should be taken to ensure that any information that is disclosed is accurate. If staff have any reservations about any request to supply information, they should immediately refer the matter to the Chief Executive.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

These provisions apply where the interests of a member of OPCC staff or those of any member of their family or other person with whom the member of staff has a close personal association, conflict or potentially conflict with the interests of the Commissioner. If a conflict of interest arises during the course of business, staff should declare the interest immediately. The Chief Executive will then need to consider whether it is appropriate for the individual to take any further part in the matter. Staff having any concerns about actual or potential conflicts of interest should discuss them with the Chief Executive in the first instance.

The responsibility to declare an interest lies with the member of staff. Failure to disclose an interest could result in disciplinary action. Staff should consider whether others would consider that an interest exists. Interests must be recorded via the Executive Office.

REGISTER OF INTERESTS

Staff must comply with the requirements of the OPCC to:

- i) register and declare any interests; and
- ii) declare any hospitality, benefits or gifts offered and/or received as a consequence of their employment. Staff should not accept any hospitality, benefit or gift which could reasonably be seen as likely to influence or as intended to influence their judgement.

Articles of low intrinsic value, such as diaries and calendars, may be accepted if used at work. All offers of hospitality and gifts should be recorded (whether or not accepted) via the Executive Office.

Rights and Responsibilities

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) has developed this Code, alongside its vision and values. If you believe that you are being required to act in a way which conflicts with this Code, you must raise your concern to the OPCC Monitoring Officer.

If you become aware of actions by others which you believe conflict with this Code, you should report this to your line manager or someone else in your line management chain; alternatively you may wish to seek advice direct from your Monitoring Officer. You should report evidence of criminal or unlawful activity to the police or other appropriate regulatory authorities. This code does not cover HR management issues.

If the matter cannot be resolved using the procedures set out above and you feel you cannot carry out the instructions you have been given, you should consider whether it is incumbent on you to resign from the OPCC.

This Code is part of the contractual relationship between you and the OPCC as your employer. It sets out the high standards of behaviour expected of you which follow from your position in public and national life. The OPCC's values of integrity, trust, independence and public voice were selected with pride by the staff to reflect the standards which the OPCC sets itself.

1. This Code has been developed by the OPCC for Devon, Cornwall, and the Isles of Scilly.
2. As an OPCC member of staff you are accountable to the office holder in charge of their organisation, namely the Chief Executive (who is also the Monitoring Officer and Head of Paid Service). This is made clear in terms and conditions of employment.
3. All staff advising the PCC should be aware of the constitutional conventions governing the relationship between the PCC, OPCC, Chief Constable and Police and Crime Panel.
4. Responsibilities include taking to account the ethical standards governing particular professions.
5. The duties and protections provided by the whistleblowing legislation ([Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/24)) apply.