

Cleveland Independent Police Ethics Committee

Terms of Reference

Purpose

The Cleveland Independent Police Ethics Committee is a forum for discussing ethical dilemmas and providing advice to Cleveland Police. Members of the Committee act as 'critical friends' to the Force and through this role the Committee seeks to enhance the trust and confidence of the public in the ethical governance and actions of the Force. In fulfilling these responsibilities, the Committee will:

- Monitor the Force's alignment against its values and the National Police Code of Ethics
- Analyse issues and provide advice on ethical dilemmas raised by the Force, by the OPCC, members of the public and members of the Committee.
- Raise and analyse issues of local and national public interest.
- Promote the highest standards of ethical conduct.
- Provide a focus for training in ethical issues.
- Provide a source of support to Senior Leaders and others.
- Interact with other groups and committees when appropriate (e.g. Independent Complaints Scrutiny Panel, Joint Audit Committee).
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Core activities

Objectives

In providing challenge and support to the Force, the Committee will provide advice and guidance in the following ways:

1). Policy and Procedure

- Articulate and promote the importance of ethics in all aspects of policing.
- Provide advice and support as the 'ethical conscience' and critical friend of the Force on the development of strategic direction.
- Provide ethical advice to those engaged in the development or review of Force policy and procedure.
- Provide a view as to whether policy and procedure reflects the stated values of the Force and police service and is in the best public interest.
- Influence ethical changes to organisational policies.

2). Decision Making

- Assist Cleveland Police when considering the ethical implications of their work.
- Consider the ethical basis of organisational decision-making and provide guidance.
- Review the decision making of others and provide advice on the ethical nature of both the decision and the process taken to reach it.
- Provide support to senior leaders on:
 - Ethical decision making.
 - Ethical considerations.
 - Defining ethical outcomes.
 - Quality testing of decisions.

3). Leadership

- Anticipate ethical challenges facing the Police service and proffering opinion as to an appropriate way forward.
- Promote the influence of ethics in delivering an excellent quality of service.
- Support and challenge the ethical conduct of leaders.

4). Culture

- Provide advice on whether Force values support the diverse nature of the policing environment.
- Support the development of the ethical culture of the Force.
- Influence police culture.

5). Conduct

- Consider potential and actual ethical conflicts in relation to matters such as procurement, hospitality, allowances/expenses and personal association.

This is not a prescriptive list of objectives and the Committee is able to adopt a flexible approach to the level of support and challenge undertaken and the breadth of responsibility to meet the fluid policing environment.

Governance

The framework for delivery is structured to ensure that support and challenge to senior leaders on ethical issues is provided in an impartial and unimpeded manner. Whilst the Committee does not have the power to direct or regulate, the Committee is expected to provide independent advice and to act as an advocate for the public. The Force is committed to considering the views of the Committee through their decision-making forums and reporting back to the Committee on what, if any, action has been taken.

Members should declare any interest they have in any matter for discussion at a committee meeting where the interest is one which any member of public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard the interest as so significant that it is likely to prejudice that Members' judgment of the public interest. The member should leave the meeting room and take no part in the debate and resolution of that matter though, at the discretion of the Chairman, the Member may explain their views on the matter to the meeting prior to leaving the room.

In addition, the Chair should declare his/her attendance on the Ethics and Standards Board, and this should be minuted.

Members will receive appropriate and unbiased information prior to the meeting, and where appropriate, have access to expert knowledge at the meeting.

Training

Training will be made available to all members of the Committee and will be repeated on an ad-hoc basis to ensure all members receive the same degree of training. All members of the Committee will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement. New members will be given induction into the role.

Confidentiality and Code of Conduct

All members of the committee will be required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement in order to participate in the operation of the Committee. Any breach of the Confidentiality Agreement would lead to a termination of the individual's membership of the Committee.

Members of the Committee have a role as ‘critical friends’ to the Force and have a responsibility to maintain the trust of the Force through their conduct. Inevitably, and rightly so, members of the Committee will have differing views and opinions and the Committee meeting provides a safe space for these views to be expressed. Where members have concerns over ethical behaviour within the Force, they are encouraged to raise these within the Committee. If a member is unhappy with the response or feels they need to make their views more public, through for example, social media, they should inform the Chair and step down from the Committee so that it is clear those opinions do not reflect the views of the Committee as a whole.

Meeting Arrangements

Meetings of the Committee will be held bi-monthly, Meetings will be administered by a representative from the OPCC and will report to the PCC. A quorum for each meeting will be 50% of the panel members.

Referrals of ethical dilemmas will be sought from within the Force, the OPCC, from members of the Committee and members of the public. Two weeks prior to the substantive Committee meeting, a triage meeting will be held in which all referrals will be considered to determine the agenda for the meeting. Anyone making a referral which is filtered out through this process will receive feedback on the reasons why and alternative routes for their submission to be considered will be provided.

Issues that arise between meetings may be referred directly to the Chair. Where a response is required within 24 hours the Chair will consult with the Vice-Chair before submitting a response. The response will be circulated to all members of the Committee. Where the need for a response is less pressing the Chair will seek comments from all lay members with a response deadline. The Chair will then provide a response and circulate that to all members of the Committee. Alternatively, where time is not a significant issue, extraordinary meetings may be convened.

An advice and action log will be maintained by Cleveland Police to ensure feedback can be provided to the Committee on the resolution of the dilemmas they have provided advice on.

The Action Log will provide information to support the six-monthly review of impact as well as the Annual Review of the Committee’s working.

Expenses

Members of the Committee are entitled to seek reimbursement for any legitimate cost associated with their attendance. This may include, but is not restricted to, travel and child-care costs.

Membership	
Members	<p>The Committee will consist of independent lay members. Representatives from the OPCC, the Cleveland Police Force will attend as appropriate.</p> <p>The membership of each lay member will be reviewed every three years. Factors which will be considered when reviewing continuation of membership will include, but are not limited to, frequency of attendance, and members’ wishes to continue as a member of the Committee.</p> <p>Members who are unable to attend in person, or online, for a good reason but who wish to contribute their views to the meeting can do so by contacting the Chair or Vice-chair prior to the meeting.</p>

	The position of any lay member of the Committee who does not attend for three consecutive meetings without good cause will be considered by the Committee.
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Frequency

Bi - monthly

Practicalities

Agenda compilation	OPCC to compile agenda. Cleveland Police Papers to be circulated one week in advance of the meeting taking place
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Chaired by	Dave Smith
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Notes taken by	OPCC – record details of discussions, decisions made and actions
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Actions/Report to	Standards and Ethics Board
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Annual Review due	March 2024
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