



Police & Crime Commissioner for Cleveland  
Cleveland Community Safety Hub  
1 Cliffland Way  
Middlesbrough  
TS8 9GL

Email: [pcc.office@cleveland.police.uk](mailto:pcc.office@cleveland.police.uk)  
Website: <http://www.cleveland.pcc.police.uk>

## Cleveland Independent External Ethics Committee Minutes

**Date:** Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2025

**Time:** 16:00 – 18:30

**Venue:** Cleveland Police Central HQ / MS Teams

### Attendees:

Name	Role
Dave Smith	Chair
Craig Marshall	Vice Chair
Neal Gillson	Cleveland Police
Elise Pout	OPCC
Georgina Moore	OPCC
Jess Seaman	OPCC
Shirley Johnston	Independent Member
Tresor Bukasa	Independent Member
Tony Jester	Independent Member
Sean Craggs	Cleveland Police
Charlie Rumins	Independent Member
Grace Winter	OPCC

### Apologies:

Name	Role
Sarah Johnston	Independent Member
Gerard Wraith	Cleveland Police
Khan Hanif	Independent Member

### Apologies not received:

Name	Role
Nadia Wager	Independent Member
Tony Traynor	Independent Member

No.	Discussed	
1	<p><b>Welcome &amp; Introduction</b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. It was explained that the meeting was being recorded to facilitate the minute taking.</p>	
2	<p><b>Apologies for Absence</b></p> <p>It was noted that independent member N.W will be removed from the committee.</p>	
3	<p><b>Declarations of Conflicts of Interest</b></p> <p>No conflicts of interest declared.</p>	
4	<p><b>Minutes from meeting 7<sup>th</sup> October 2025</b></p> <p>Panel agreed previous minutes from the 7<sup>th</sup> October were accurate.</p>	
5	<p><b>Ethical Dilemma 1 - Declaring relations at work</b></p> <p>An overview of the draft policy created by Cleveland Police was discussed with the committee, along with the guidance from the NPCC which has supported the production of the policy. The force is keen to get the view of the Committee around the content of the policy and if this is sufficient.</p> <p>The initial discussion focused on the responsibility of supervisors and whether they need to take more proactive action on questioning staff when information arises that may involve inappropriate relations with a colleague.</p> <p>The committee felt the need for more reassurance that any relationship taking place within the organisation, that may impact the effectiveness of that organisation, will be addressed and that the consequences of not disclosing that relationship should be spelled out more clearly.</p> <p>The point was raised around policy focus on intimate/sexual relationships. It was felt that friendships also need to be considered as this can have an effect just as much as any other relationship.</p> <p>The committee were in agreement that the principal approach is the most appropriate.</p> <p>Another point was raised around fear of disclosing relationships due to potential consequences What are the consequences, are these in the guidance?</p>	

	<p>Consequences are dealt with on a case-by-case basis depending on circumstances. For example, if there is an element of corruption or financial benefit, this would be the highest end of the spectrum for misconduct. Some FAQs would offer some clarity to staff and officers. The committee agree this is a good idea.</p> <p>Committee recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep a principle-based approach rather than overly prescriptive rules.</li> <li>• Add manager responsibilities when they become aware of relationships.</li> <li>• Clearly state consequences for non-disclosure.</li> <li>• Include FAQs and practical scenarios to address grey areas.</li> <li>• Ensure sensitive and inclusive language to encourage disclosure without fear.</li> <li>• Consider other relationships (friendships, family ties) that may affect impartiality.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b>Matters Arising/Updates</b></p> <p><u>Vetting Decisions</u></p> <p>The force is seeking assurance from the committee that vetting decision making is clear, transparent and unbiased. The committee received 2 redacted examples of applications to join the force which failed vetting to review and feedback to the Force.</p> <p>The committee discussed the cases, explaining they were impressed by the level of detail in the decisions and agreeing that the decision in both cases was absolutely justified.</p> <p>A question was raised by a committee member around the time frame of disclosing a caution/criminal offence, including those from many years ago. The force had explained that it depends on the circumstances and nature of the contact with the police. Vetting officers will always go back to the applicant to ensure they have nothing to declare. Essentially, they are looking for honesty and integrity.</p> <p>Political views were discussed, having referenced one of the applications had a political view, however this application was failed due to the language used. In some cases, special branch may provide an assessment on an individual who reference certain political views, for example when an applicant might be linked to an extremist element.</p>	

	<p>The committee were assured that these vetting decisions are thoroughly detailed and are clear, transparent and unbiased in the decision-making process.</p> <p>SC would like to continue bringing vetting decisions to the committee, picking out core issues, this would ensure vetting decisions are unbiased in all aspects of decisions.</p> <p>The committee agreed that they would be happy to continue looking at decisions, however, it was requested that they are randomly selected and include successful applications to be able to compare decisions.</p> <p><u>Views and Recommendation Feedback</u></p> <p>The views from the last meeting are yet to be fed back to the Standards and Ethics Board, feedback will be provided at the next meeting.</p>	
7	<p><b>Ethical Dilemma 2 - Use of Stop and Search - Section 60</b></p> <p>The use of stop and search – section 60 is the power to stop and search without needing ‘reasonable grounds’ to suspect someone is carrying a weapon. An example of this being used could be when there is intelligence that rival football gangs are going to meet and cause violence with weapons. A Section 60 authorization is time-limited, typically lasting up to 24 hours, and can be extended for another 24 hours.</p> <p>Multiple questions raised by the committee including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are section 60 searches ethical and what is the process by which they are agreed?</li> </ul> <p>The stop searches are looked at by the stop and search scrutiny panel, and any section 60’s are reported nationally. An inspector needs to be able to justify why a section 60 is required and this is then taken to a superintendent who will ratify that.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should the force be using section 60 more given the rise in knife crime and what justifies targeting certain areas?</li> </ul> <p>There must be a balance between being proactive and targeting criminals versus being intrusive within communities. There must be an evidence-based approach when applying these stop and searches.</p> <p>Committee recommendations included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining intelligence-led approach; do not expand Section 60 use without clear justification.</li> <li>• Strengthen documentation and oversight of authorisations.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve body-worn video compliance to 100%.</li> <li>• Explore community engagement strategies before deploying Section 60 in hotspot areas.</li> <li>• Monitor and report on disproportionality and effectiveness regularly</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Ethical Dilemma 3 - Prioritising demands for Resolution Team</b></p> <p>The Resolution Team handles initial police complaints, aiming for swift, customer-focused resolutions. Their role includes logging, acknowledging, and resolving complaints within a standard timeframe of 28 days.</p> <p>The committee spent time considering the challenges faced by the Resolution Team in managing a significant backlog of complaints. At its peak, the backlog had reached around 150 cases. By the time of the meeting, this had been reduced to approximately 40 cases, which was acknowledged as a positive improvement, but still a concern given the team's usual turnaround target of 28 days.</p> <p>The recent backlog was attributed primarily to staff sickness which meant that the team was temporarily unable to keep pace with incoming complaints. While complaints were still being acknowledged within one working day, some cases were taking up to 40 days to resolve. Complainants were informed of these delays, but the committee recognised that this situation created additional pressures: staff were under stress managing high caseloads, and complainants were understandably frustrated, sometimes leading to secondary complaints about the delay itself.</p> <p>One suggestion from the committee was to introduce an extra layer of triage to prioritise complaints from victims, particularly where delays might impact their recovery or wellbeing. However, members raised concerns about fairness and practicality. It would be difficult to verify who was a genuine victim, and prioritising one group could lead to longer delays for others, potentially worsening dissatisfaction.</p> <p>Another idea was to prioritise based on complexity or seriousness, such as cases involving physical harm or corruption. It was noted that this was already part of the existing triage process, so it would not significantly change the current approach.</p> <p>Extending the official timeframe beyond 28 days was also considered, but most agreed this would undermine the principle of swift service recovery and could damage public confidence.</p>	

	<p>Temporary staffing was mentioned as a possible option, but the challenges of finding and training additional staff quickly made this difficult to implement.</p> <p>Committee recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The fairest approach is to maintain the current system, supported by clear communication and regular updates to complainants to manage expectations.</li> <li>• explore longer-term resilience measures, such as cross-training staff to provide surge capacity during periods of sickness or high demand.</li> <li>• Keep complainants informed to maintain consistency in the process.</li> </ul>	
9	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>The committee discussed the recent government announcement made on 13 November 2025 regarding the abolition of the Police and Crime Commissioner role. It was explained that while the PCC position will be removed at the end of the current term in 2028, the exact structure that will replace it has not yet been confirmed. Members were reassured that scrutiny of the force will remain a requirement under any new governance model, and the Office of the PCC will continue to focus on delivering the existing Police and Crime Plan until 2028. The committee noted that further updates will be provided as more details emerge about the transition and future arrangements.</p> <p>The committee noted that Dave Smith, Chair of the Independent Ethics Committee, had recently been shortlisted for a Lord Ferrers Award, which recognises outstanding contributions by volunteers in policing. It was announced that Dave not only made the shortlist but went on to win the award. Members congratulated Dave on this achievement, acknowledging that the award reflects the valuable work and commitment of the committee as a whole.</p> <p>The committee discussed the idea of having a group photo which was agreed to take place at the next meeting, a note to all members to attend in person.</p>	
11	<p><b>Date for next meeting: Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March 16:00 – 18:30</b>  <b>Cleveland Police HQ / Teams</b></p>	