



Devon & Cornwall  
Police Authority

# Officer Code of Conduct

Approved by the Chairs' Committee 3 July 2008

## Officer Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct is applicable to Police Authority employees and for the purposes of this Code of Conduct a Police Authority employee is an individual who is under the management of the Chief Executive.

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Code of Conduct sets out, in general terms, the standards that are expected of Police Authority employees; it is complemented by legislation and other Authority policies and procedures such as financial regulations, the anti fraud and corruption strategy, sickness reporting, whistleblowing, health and safety and use of email and the internet.
- 1.2 Police Authority employees are expected to give the highest possible standard of service to the public, and where it is part of their duties, to provide appropriate advice to Members and fellow officers with impartiality.
- 1.3 A Police Authority employee must perform their duties with honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity and must at all times act in accordance with the trust that the public is entitled to place in them.
- 1.4 A Police Authority employee is accountable to the Authority for his actions.
- 1.5 Police Authority employees are expected, through agreed procedures and without fear of recrimination, to bring to the attention of the appropriate manager any deficiency in the provision of service.

### 2. Openness, & Disclosure of Information

- 2.1 This Authority believes that open administration is best and that it will be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions it takes. The Authority welcomes opportunities to share information with the community that it serves.
- 2.2 The law requires that certain types of information must be available to members, auditors, government department, service users and the public. Police Authority employees will not prevent another person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled by law
- 2.3 Police Authority employees should not use any information obtained in the course of their employment for personal gain or benefit, nor should they knowingly pass it on to others who might use it in such a way.
- 2.4 Information concerning an officer's or member's private affairs shall not be supplied to any person except where such disclosure is required or sanctioned by the law.
- 2.5 Police Authority employees will not knowingly disclose information given to them in confidence by anyone, or information which they believe to be of a confidential nature, without the consent of a person authorised to give it, unless required by the law to do so.
- 2.6 No Police Authority employee may take part in any broadcast (sound or vision) or publish an article or otherwise disclose information to the media which relates to the Authority without first obtaining the permission of the Chief Executive.

### 3. Political Neutrality

- 3.1 Police Authority employees serve the Authority as a whole. And must ensure that the individual rights of Members are respected.
- 3.2 Where Police Authority employees are required to provide advice to Members (either individuals or groups) the advice must be given in such a way that the political neutrality of the advice giver is not compromised.
- 3.3 Police Authority employees must follow every lawful expressed policy of the Authority and must not allow their own personal or political opinions to interfere with their work.

#### **4. Relationships and Respect for Others**

- 4.1 The Authority is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all local people and communities, irrespective of gender, ethnic origin, disability, religious belief, sexual orientation, age, or any other relevant factor.
- 4.2 A Police Authority employee must treat others with respect and not knowingly discriminate unlawfully against any person.
- 4.3 All Police Authority employees should ensure that policies relating to equality and diversity issues as agreed by the Authority are complied with, in addition to the requirement of the law. All members of the community, Members and Officers of the Authority have a right to be treated with fairness and equity.
- 4.4 Police Authority employees should always remember their responsibilities to the community they serve and ensure courteous, efficient and impartial service delivery to all groups and individuals.
- 4.5 Mutual respect between officers and members is essential. Close personal familiarity between Police Authority employees, with individual members, Police Officers and Police Staff, can damage the relationship and prove embarrassing to other employees and members and should therefore be avoided.
- 4.6 All relationships of a business or private nature with external contractors or potential contractors, should be made known to the Chief Executive. Orders and contracts should be awarded on merit, by fair competition against other tenders, and no special favour should be shown to businesses run by, for example, friends, partners or relatives, in the tendering process. No part of the local community should be discriminated against.
- 4.7 Police Authority employees who engage or supervise contractors or have any other official relationship in a private or domestic capacity with contractors, should declare that relationship to the Chief Executive.

#### **5. Appointment and other Employment Matters**

- 5.1 Police Authority employees involved in appointments should ensure that these are made on the basis of merit. It would be unlawful for an employee to make an appointment which was based on anything other than the ability of the candidate to undertake the duties of the post. In order to avoid any possible accusation of bias, employees should not be involved in an appointment where they are related to an applicant, or have a close personal relationship either within the workplace or outside work with him or her
- 5.2 Similarly, employees should not be involved in decision relating to discipline, promotion or pay adjustments of any other employee who is a relative, partner etc.  
In the context of this section of the Code "relative" means a spouse, partner, parent-in law, son, daughter, step son, step-daughter, child of a partner, brother, sister, grandparent, grandchild, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece or the spouse or partner of any of the preceding persons; and "partner" means a member of a couple who live together.

#### **6. Outside Commitments**

- 6.1 All Police Authority employees have contractual obligations and should not take outside employment which conflict's with the Authority's interests.
- 6.2 A Police Authority employee must not have any secondary employment without first obtaining the permission of the Chief Executive.

#### **7. Personal Interests (including gifts and hospitality)**

- 7.1 A Police Authority employee will not use their position improperly to confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.

- 7.2 Police Authority employees should inform the Chief Executive any non-financial interests that they consider could bring about conflict with the Authority's interests.
- 7.3 Police Authority employees must inform the Chief Executive of any financial interests which could conflict with the Authority's interests.
- 7.4 Police Authority employees shall not accept any payment, fee, reward or benefit, either direct or indirect, of any kind, in connection with their employment from any person or body other than the Authority itself except as provided for in 7.4 and 7.5 below.
- 7.5 All gifts and / or hospitality must be approved by the Chief Executive, or if the Chief Executive is to be the recipient the approval must be sought from the Authority Chairman
- 7.6 offers to attend purely social or sporting functions should be accepted only when these are part of the life of the community or where the Authority should be seen to be represented.
- 7.7 All offers of gifts and hospitality, whether accepted or declined, must be recorded in the Register of Gifts and Hospitality (Officers).
- 7.8 Police Authority employees should declare to the Chief Executive membership of any organisation not open to the public without formal membership and commitment of allegiance, and which has secrecy about rules, membership or conduct.

## **8. Tender and Contract Processes**

- 8.1 Police Authority employees must exercise fairness and impartiality when dealing with contractors and suppliers.
- 8.2 Police Authority employees who are privy to confidential information on tenders or costs should not knowingly disclose that information to any unauthorised party or organisation.
- 8.3 Police Authority employees should ensure that no special favour is shown to current or former employees or their partners, close relatives or associates in awarding contracts to businesses run by them or employing them in a senior or relevant managerial capacity.

## **9. Corruption**

- 9.1 It is a serious criminal offence for Police Authority employees corruptly to receive or give any gift, loan, fee, reward or advantage for doing or not doing, anything or showing favour or disfavour, to any person in their official capacity.

## **10. Resources**

- 10.1 Police Authority employees must ensure any public funds entrusted to or handled by them are dealt with in a responsible and lawful manner. They should strive to ensure value for money to the local community and avoid legal challenge to the Authority and in accordance with Financial Regulations.
- 10.2 Police Authority employees must not make personal use of property or facilities of the Authority unless properly authorised to do so.

## **11. Standards of Dress and Appearance**

- 11.1 The Police Authority expects employees to observe a standard of personal appearance which is appropriate to the nature of the work undertaken and which portrays a professional approach which the public will have confidence in.

## **12. Alcohol, Drugs and Other Substance Misuse**

- 12.1 All Police Authority employees are expected to attend work without being under the influence of alcohol, drugs or other substance or have their work performance adversely impaired by alcohol, drugs or other substance.

12.2 Police Authority employees whose performance or behaviour falls below the acceptable standard or who cause danger or inconvenience as a result of alcohol, drugs or other substance misuse may be the subject of the Authority's disciplinary and /or capability procedures.

12.3 Police Authority employees taking prescribed drugs which may have an impact upon their performance or ability to undertake their duties are required to inform the Chief Executive.

### **13. Criminal Charges**

A Police Authority employee must inform the Chief Executive if they are charged or convicted of a criminal offence (other than a minor driving offence).

### **14. Intellectual Property**

13.1 Intellectual property is a generic legal term which refers to the rights and obligations received and granted (including copyright) in relation to, for example, inventions, patents, creative writings.

13.2 All intellectual property created by a Police Authority during the course of their employment belongs to the Authority.

### **15 Breach of the Code**

14.1 Breach of this Code of Conduct will be regarded as a disciplinary matter and will be dealt with in accordance with the Authority's disciplinary procedure.