



Independent Panel Members of Police Misconduct Hearings

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is an Independent Panel Member?

An Independent Panel Member (IPM) is a voluntary paid role participating in police misconduct hearings alongside the Chief Constable (or other nominated senior police officer).

Being independent is a fundamental requirement for these panels so that the decisions made are fair and objective.

2. Why is there a need for new IPMs?

Following a government review in 2023, it was decided that the composition of misconduct panels needed to change in order to strengthen the way police disciplinary hearings were carried out.

The changes that were introduced from May 2024, mean that a Chief Constable or a nominated senior police officer or staff member (where appropriate), will chair misconduct hearings supported by two IPMs. Previously, only one IPM was required.

A legally qualified person (LQP) will also be in attendance to advise the panel on matters of process and legal duties as required.

3. What happens in a misconduct hearing?

Misconduct hearings are held so that the facts of a case can be presented and to allow the police officer an opportunity to explain their conduct and the circumstances surrounding an allegation. Witnesses may also be called to give evidence.

The role of the three-person panel will then be to determine whether the officer's conduct amounts to misconduct or gross misconduct. They will also consider what, if any, disciplinary action should be taken – for example, the officer may be subject to management advice, a written warning, or in some cases, dismissal without notice.

A finding of gross misconduct will automatically result in a police officer's dismissal unless exceptional circumstances apply.

4. Why are police misconduct hearings held in this way?

It is vital that misconduct hearings are robust in their process and decision making especially where police misconduct has resulted in harm to the public and jeopardised trust and confidence in the police.

The role of a police officer is very important to our communities and the majority of officers are committed to their jobs and to upholding the high standards that the public expects of them in keeping us all safe. However, where someone does not meet those standards or represent the values of the police, there is a disciplinary process in place. Part of this process includes misconduct hearings, which review and decide how to handle the most serious allegations.

The objectives of police misconduct hearings are to:

- ensure public confidence in and the reputation of the police
- uphold high standards in policing and to be a deterrence of misconduct
- protect the public

5. What skills and experience does an IPM need?

IPMs do not require legal qualifications or experience.

We are looking to recruit a number of IPMs with skills and experience in one or more of the following fields:

- Senior leadership
- HR and people management
- Standards, compliance or discipline

In addition to relevant experience, it is vital that IPMs can be decisive, work in a team, challenge and question in an objective manner while always maintaining an attitude which promotes fairness and equality in dealing with people.

IPMs will need to review detailed and confidential files ahead of misconduct hearings so should feel comfortable reviewing, assessing, and analysing substantial documents and information.

6. Will I receive training?

Yes. As an IPM you will receive a full induction arranged by the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office. This will involve specific training relating to the role of being an IPM. Support will always be available throughout your term.

7. How long do the roles last for?

The standard term for this role is 5 years.

8. Will I get paid?

Although this role is offered on a voluntary basis, you will be remunerated. A copy of the current Scheme of Allowances is included within the application pack. Please note that a national review is being conducted into the terms and conditions of IPMs, and this may result in a change to the allowances payable.

9. What is the time commitment?

IPMs will be required to sit on several hearings throughout the course of a year. The likely expectation is that you will sit on three per year. The duration of hearings may vary but the usual length is approximately five days each taking place on weekdays (i.e. excluding weekends).