

## **INDEPENDENT POLICE COMPLAINTS COMMISSION**

### **COMMISSIONERS' CODE OF CONDUCT**

**Unless indicated otherwise, Deputy Chairs are referred to as Commissioners.**

#### **1. Public service values**

1.1. The Commissioners of the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC), will at all times:

- remain unbiased and honest when making decisions and exercising governance of the Commission;
- be accountable to Parliament, its staff, and the general public for its activities, its stewardship of public funds and ensuring value for money, and for the standard of service the IPCC provides; and
- adhere to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act.

1.2. The respective roles of the Home Office and the IPCC are set out in the Management Statement and Financial Memorandum. Commissioners should make sure that they understand their responsibilities as set out in both of these documents.

1.3. The Home Secretary is answerable to Parliament for IPCC policies and performance, including the policy framework within which we work.

#### **2. Standards in Public Life**

All Commissioners must do the following:

2.1. Follow the Seven Principles of Public Life shown at the end of this code as set out by the Committee on Standards in Public Life;

2.2. Keep to and promote the values and beliefs of IPCC when carrying out their duties:

- act justly and respect human rights;
- be independent;
- value diversity;
- show integrity; and
- be open.

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- 2.3. Keep to this Code, and the detailed procedures and guidance developed to provide a shared understanding of the matters in it. Make sure you understand your duties, rights and responsibilities, and are familiar with the IPCC's function and role and any relevant Government policy.
- 2.4. Attend relevant training or induction courses.
- 2.5. Ensure your actions do not damage your or the IPCC's reputation.
- 2.6. Respect and value IPCC staff.
- 2.7. Actively promote IPCC policies on diversity and equal opportunities and value the creativity, insights and experience of the people and organisations with whom we work.
- 2.8. Make sure you do not use any information you receive in the course of your public service for your own personal gain or for political purpose.
- 2.9. Make sure you do not use the opportunity of public service to promote your private interests or those of people, firms, businesses or other organisations connected with you.

### **3. The role of the Commissioners**

All Commissioners are collectively responsible for the work of the IPCC and accountable for their own work. This means that you must do the following.

- 3.1. Fully consider all relevant issues, taking account of the particular circumstance and any guidance issued by the Home Office or the responsible minister.
- 3.2. Produce an annual report and, where reasonably possible and appropriate, hold at least one public meeting a year.
- 3.3. Respond to complaints in an appropriate way.
- 3.4. Make sure IPCC does not act outside its powers, authority or duty.
- 3.5. Ensure that any statutory or administrative requirements for the use of public funds are complied with.
- 3.6. Let the responsible minister know about any matter you believe raises important issues about your duties as a board member. In such cases the agreement of the Chair should normally be sought.

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- 3.7. The Home Secretary can remove a person from their role as a Commissioner if they do not act in line with the standards expected in public office [set out in schedule 2 - 2(6) of the Police Reform Act 2002]. Please also see the procedure for handling complaints made against Commissioners.

### **4. The role of the Chair**

The Chair is responsible for providing effective leadership of the Commission, and together with the Deputy Chair, support and supervise Commissioners in the exercise of their responsibilities. The Chair must also do the following:

- 4.1. Make sure the Commission meets at appropriate intervals, and that the minutes of those meetings and any reports to the Home Secretary accurately record the decisions taken by and, where appropriate, the views of individual board members.
- 4.2. Represent the views of the IPCC to the general public.
- 4.3. Make sure that when new Commissioners are appointed, they are properly briefed and their training needs are considered.
- 4.4. Assess Commissioners' performance when they are being considered for appointment (or re-appointment) to the board or the board of some other public body.
- 4.5. Allocate work to the Commissioners, including the Deputy Chair, and support Commissioners in their guardianship and governance functions.

### **5. The role of the Deputy Chairs**

- 5.1. The Deputy Chairs support and deputise for the Chair in all his functions, including external relations. This role includes leading the work of the Commission in the exercise of its casework and investigation functions; providing support to, allocating cases to, and advising the Chair on the performance of, individual Commissioners; and leading the development of policy in agreed areas.

### **6. Obligations on all Commissioners, including the Chair and Deputy Chairs**

You have the following obligations:

- 6.1. You must be fully committed to IPCC work and devote all your contracted working hours to the IPCC.

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- 6.2. If you have permission from the Chair, you can carry on other duties, which may be paid or unpaid, in your own time. These duties must not cause a conflict of interest with IPCC's role or beliefs. The time you commit to any other duty must not have a negative effect on your duties as a Commissioner, and the duty must not damage the reputation of the IPCC.
- 6.3. If you have permission to carry on other duties, you can take up to 24 days a year 'in lieu', to carry on those duties. You can earn this 'time in lieu' by working on IPCC duties during weekends or at other times outside your normal working hours.
- 6.4. If you are paid for your other duties, those duties and the times spent on them must be clearly recorded to show that public funds are not being used.
- 6.5. Your other duties, including details of any payments you receive and where from, must be recorded in the register of interests.
- 6.6. You must not put yourself in a position where your private interests conflict with those of the IPCC.
- 6.7. You must respect the confidentiality of any sensitive information held by the IPCC and keep to the Data Protection Act.
- 6.8. If you have concerns about staff performance you should raise these with the relevant Director or Chief Executive.
- 6.9. If you have concerns about the way the IPCC is being run, you should raise these concerns with the Chair, the Deputy Chair, the Chief Executive or the Home Office, through the Sponsor Unit.

## **7. Writing and speaking to the public and responding to the media**

- 7.1. You are encouraged to promote the work of the IPCC. Your speeches or articles that relate to the work of the IPCC must reflect IPCC policies and objectives. You should take appropriate advice, normally co-ordinated by the Commission Secretary, before deciding to accept an invitation to speak in public or write an article. Wherever possible you should consult the Director of Communications (or his or her representative) before you speak to the media.
- 7.2. When writing for or speaking to the public (formally or informally) you are likely to be seen as representing the IPCC's position on an issue, even if you think you are writing or speaking as an individual citizen, academic or professional.

**8. Declaring your interests and possible areas of conflict**

- 8.1. You must avoid any risk of you being influenced, or appearing to be influenced, by your personal interests when carrying out your duties. So you should declare any personal or business interest that may influence your judgement, or appear to influence your judgement. This includes declaring interests in companies who may be involved in tendering for work with the IPCC.
- 8.2. This includes financial and non-financial interests. It also includes known interests of relatives and close friends.
- 8.3. The register of interests should be kept up to date, be open to the public and be published on the IPCC website. We will make arrangements to protect the privacy of close family members and friends you make declarations in relation to. At any IPCC meeting you must declare any interest if that relates specifically to a particular issue being considered, so this can be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
- 8.4. You should not take part in discussions or decisions relating to matters you have an interest in. You should normally withdraw from the meeting if:
  - 8.4.1. your interest is direct and financial; or
  - 8.4.2. your interest is one which specific guidance issued by the IPCC or the Home Office covers and which requires you not to take part in or to withdraw from the meeting.

**9. Political activities**

- 9.1. You must not undertake any paid political posts or particularly sensitive or high-profile unpaid roles in a political party. You should also avoid any controversial political activities that could appear to influence your work for the IPCC.
- 9.2. These restrictions do not apply to peers in relation to their conduct in the House of Lords. If you are a peer, you are expected not to take a party whip.
- 9.3. You may be involved in political activities as long as you bear in mind your responsibilities as a public appointee and show discretion. You should not make political speeches, or be involved in other political activities, relating to matters directly affecting the IPCC.

**10. Delegating responsibilities**

- 10.1. The IPCC Scheme of Delegation sets out how responsibilities are delegated to staff and individual Commissioners. You must carry out your own duties and responsibilities, and respect those of others, in line with the Scheme of Delegation.
- 10.2. The Commission may decide to delegate responsibility for certain matters to individual Commissioners or committees. Any decisions Commissioners or committees make under such delegated responsibilities should be recorded and made available to the Commission as a whole.

## **THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE**

### **Selflessness**

Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

### **Integrity**

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisation that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

### **Objectivity**

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

### **Accountability**

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

### **Openness**

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

### **Honesty**

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interests.

### **Leadership**

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

## **Extract from the first report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life**