

FAQs – Recruitment of Independent Panel Members

What is an Independent Panel Member?

An Independent Panel Member (IPM) is a voluntary paid role working with the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office participating in Police misconduct hearings alongside the Chief Constable (or other senior police officer) and one other IPM alongside a legally qualified adviser (LQA) who is there to advise on matters of process and legal duties as required.

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

Why is there a need for new members?

Following a Government review in 2023, it has been decided that the composition of panels needs to change in order to strengthen the way police disciplinary hearings are carried out.

The changes mean that Chief Constables, or a nominated senior police officer or staff member (where appropriate), will now chair the misconduct hearings.

The new structure means that misconduct panels now need to include two IPMs where before, only one was required.

What happens in a misconduct hearing?

Misconduct hearings and misconduct meetings 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 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.

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 jeopardising public trust and confidence.

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 these 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 deterrent of misconduct
- protect the public.

Will I receive training?

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

How long do the roles last for?

The standard term for these roles is 5 years. Appointment is likely to start from June 2024.

Will I get paid?

Although these roles are offered on a voluntary basis, they are paid roles as follows:

The current rate of pay for an IPM is £211.50 per day for a full day (4+ hours, excluding meals breaks) and £104.50 per half day (under 4 hours). However, it is likely that a decision will be taken to increase the fee to £357 per day in the coming months.

Preparation work, such as reading prehearing information, is paid at a different rate of £15 per hour. Again, it is likely that a decision will be taken to increase the fee to £25 per hour with a cap for reading time to be determined later.

Travel expenses via public transport (excluding first class train travel) will be reimbursed in full providing relevant receipts.

Mileage expenses will be reimbursed for mileage incurred travelling to and from any venue at the HMRC vehicle rate (currently 45p per mile).

There is no provision for payment of travelling time.

Insurance

IPMs making use of their own private vehicles whilst undertaking their duties are strongly advised to check with their own insurers that they are covered for this purpose. The Police and Crime Commissioners will not be liable for individuals' insufficient level of motor insurance.

Indemnity

As a Region, PCCs have agreed to give IPMs the following indemnity in the carrying out of their role in police misconduct hearings:

In respect of the case of which is to be held on I (in my role as Police and Crime Commissioner or equivalent) agree to indemnify you as the Legally Qualified Chair ("LQC")/Independent Panel Member ("IPM") in respect of any liabilities arising (including reasonable costs as agreed with you in connection with responding to or engaging with any legal proceedings or matters arising from the discharge of your functions as an LQC/IPM) for anything done or omitted to be done by you in the discharge of those functions unless, having received representations or submissions by or on your behalf, you are proved in a court of law or other tribunal with appropriate jurisdiction to have acted in bad faith. Furthermore, in the event of your being held to have any

liability for anything done or omitted to be done by another member of the Panel of which you are part, I agree to indemnify you in full in respect of any such liability.

In addition, and/or for the avoidance of doubt, it is confirmed that this indemnity includes, but is not limited to, any costs you may incur:

- *In seeking legal advice in relation to the receipt of a witness summons/order or an application therefore;*
- *In relation to the preparation of any representations and/or witness statements in relation to an application for a witness summons/order and/or in relation to an application to set aside the issuing of a witness summons/order;*
- *In relation to securing legal representation at any hearing of an application for a witness summons/order and/or the hearing of any application to set aside the issuing of a witness summons/order; 3*
- *In relation to the costs (including costs of legal representation) of participating in any appeal and/or application for judicial review (and any appeal therefrom) arising as a consequence of your being in receipt of an application for a witness summons/order or an application therefor; and*
- *In relation to attending a hearing or hearings, including the time spent thereat.*

However, save where the issue/matter needs to be addressed by you immediately, no costs to which this indemnity applies should be incurred by you before you have notified the Chief Executive of my Office of the nature and extent of the issue/matter giving rise to a claim under it.

Accommodation & Subsistence

Where possible hearings will be timed to avoid the necessity for overnight stays. If a hearing runs 2 or more days, then overnight accommodation may be required and paid at the standard rate.

What is the time commitment?

IPMs will be required to sit on at least one hearing in the course of a year. The duration of hearings may vary but the usual length is approximately between two to five days each taking place on weekdays.

Can anyone apply?

The PCC's office is encouraging people from all walks of life and experience and backgrounds to apply to these roles. It is vital that the panels are representative of the diverse communities across the North West Region, i.e., Lancashire, Cheshire, Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cumbria.

You must be over 18 to apply. It's desirable, but not essential, to be resident in the North West Region. A list of exclusions from eligibility can be found in the job description.

Would I be working for the police?

No, you would be undertaking the role of Independent Panel Member as part of the scrutiny requirement of the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office.