

Independent Advisory Groups



Terms and Conditions

Owners - Executive IAG group
Last Review – October 2009
Next Review – October 2010

policing
west mercia

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1 Introduction

West Mercia Police has set up three Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs) since 2003.

Independent Advisory Groups have been established in the majority of police services throughout the United Kingdom as a result of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report conducted by Lord William McPherson.

2 Role of the IAG

In its broadest sense, an IAG is a group of people who are drawn from the community with the aim of providing independent advice to the police.

The aims of the IAGs and their members are to:

- Consider, provide advice to and monitor strategies, policies and practice within West Mercia Police.
- Provide relevant advice to West Mercia Police on the way in which it delivers policing services and its effects upon communities.
- IAGs may be called upon to provide advice in “major or critical incidents”.

A critical incident is defined as:

“Any incident where the effectiveness of the police response is likely to have significant impact on the confidence of the victim, their family and/or the community.”

The police are responsible for deciding what action to take after receiving IAG advice. Neither the Independent Advisor nor the IAG are responsible for, or liable for, any actions taken by the police.

IAG members should not act as witnesses.

3 Membership of the IAG

There are three strategic IAGs within West Mercia providing independent advice on issues affecting people:

- from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds (BME IAG).
- who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT IAG).
- with Disabilities (DIAG)

Each individual group has a maximum membership of twelve and is supported by a nominated Tactical Equality & Diversity Advisor from West Mercia Police.

In addition, the DIAG has a further three places since the nature of some impairments may either limit the extent of their involvement or prevent participation for periods of time. This will be managed by the Chair/Vice-Chair and nominated tactical Equality and Diversity Advisor.

Members are drawn from the geographical policing areas of West Mercia, namely Worcestershire, Herefordshire and Shropshire.

Members are appointed as individuals who represent themselves (not groups or organisations).

Each IAG will elect a Chair and Vice-Chair every year in March. The Chair and Vice-Chair may be re-elected, but ideally should not serve more than five consecutive years.

4 Recruitment, Selection & Appointment of Members

New members will be recruited by the IAG Chair/Vice-Chair with the nominated Tactical Equality and Diversity Advisor whenever the need arises.

Advertisements will be in a wide range of media formats to attract applicants from all communities within the Constabulary area.

Applicants must reside and/or work within the area covered by the force and not be employed by the police service.

New members will be recruited for a probationary period of six months. The Chair and Vice-Chair, in consultation with the nominated Tactical Equality and Diversity Advisor, will then review and decide whether to extend full membership to that individual.

Full membership will be for an initial period of two years from the date of appointment and will be reviewed by the Chair and Vice-Chair every two years thereafter.

5 Vetting (Security Checks)

Each IAG member's details, those of their partner and any co-resident(s) will be checked against the Police National Computer and West Mercia's local crime and intelligence recording system. It is the member's responsibility to inform their partner and co-resident(s) that these checks will be carried out.

There is also a counter terrorist check which is a requirement of individuals with access to police premises and information.

These enquiries will be conducted by the Force Vetting Unit and the results held securely within the unit.

The results in respect of partners or co-resident(s) cannot be disclosed to the members. Similarly personal details about members will not be disclosed to IAG Chairs or other members.

Criminal convictions/cautions held by individuals will not automatically preclude them from membership of the IAG. There are circumstances where a previous conviction may prevent membership of the IAG, for example where the safety of other IAG members or staff could be placed at risk. This applies equally to any subsequent convictions received during appointment.

In adherence to the Data Protection Act details of individual checks will not be disclosed to the IAG Chairs or other IAG members.

6 Operating Protocols

Each group will meet six times per year. Occasionally over the year there will be additional meetings of all three IAGs together.

Individual IAGs will agree locations and timings of meetings.

The numbers of full voting members required to be present to make decisions at regular meetings (quorum) will be half of the individual

group's total membership, of which one must be the Chair or Vice-Chair.

In the event of a tie, the Chair (or Vice-Chair) conducting the meeting will have the casting vote.

Police representatives will not have voting rights.

Where possible the Chair will set the agenda in consultation with the members of the group and the nominated Tactical Equality and Diversity Advisor. Items for the agenda must be given to the Chair no later than 14 days before a meeting to allow for timely circulation of the agenda.

If a member is unable to attend a meeting they should ensure their apologies are passed to the Chair, Vice-Chair or nominated Tactical Equality and Diversity Advisor.

Members should remain aware of the significance of their role as an IAG member and at no time use this position inappropriately.

All members must sign the Terms and Conditions and Code of Conduct Agreement.

If the group review a subject that is of direct relevance to a member's personal or financial interest, the member shall make this known immediately and this fact shall be recorded in the Minutes. The Chair will determine the extent of participation on discussions regarding the matter.

Members wishing to resign are asked to provide written notification to the Chair, who will forward a copy to the Head of Diversity.

Deployment of members to major or critical incidents or other specific meetings will be undertaken via liaison with the nominated Tactical Equality and Diversity Advisor (or Head of Diversity) and Chair.

If IAG members are approached directly by officers they must ensure the nominated Tactical Equality and Diversity Advisor or Head of Diversity has agreed this.

Each IAG member will be supplied with an identification badge that must be displayed at all times whilst on police premises. On leaving an IAG, members must ensure their identification badges are immediately returned to the Diversity Team.

Meetings of the IAG are closed meetings. Invitations for any guests to attend must be agreed in advance by both the IAG Chair and the nominated Tactical Equality and Diversity Advisor.

7 Financial Compensation

An hourly attendance fee will be paid to those members who wish to claim it.

Reasonable travel expenses will also be reimbursed. Claims for mileage should be accompanied by a VAT fuel receipt.

Claims will be submitted to the nominated Tactical Equality and Diversity Advisor on an IAG Expenses Form. Members should ensure that when submitting claims forms are fully completed and proof provided in respect of the claim made.

IAG members are **not** employees of West Mercia Police Authority or of West Mercia Police.

The Inland Revenue has deemed IAG members to be 'Office Holders' but has requested payments are made via the payroll so individuals will be asked to complete an IAG Payment Details form.

All claim forms will be submitted to the Diversity Team then passed to the Finance department for further checks. Payments will be made on the last working day of the month, with the 13th of the month being the deadline for receipt of claims in the Payments Office.

Guidance has been produced for individuals in receipt of state benefits and is available from the Diversity Team.

Members wishing to claim for personal assistants or to bring in carers (for the person for whom they care) to enable them to attend meetings should contact their Tactical Equality and Diversity Advisor. Generally costs will only be covered if that member does not already have that arrangement in place and could not reasonably be expected to attend meetings without that assistance.

All claims for personal assistance or care arrangements must be agreed in advance of the meeting.

West Mercia Police will always endeavour to make adjustments and provide support to members to enable them to participate as far as can be reasonably expected.

8 Critical and Major Incidents

IAG members may be asked to provide independent advice as part of a critical or major incident.

In these circumstances, the Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) will be responsible for contacting the Diversity Team to arrange such involvement. Members of the Diversity Team will nominate IAG members following liaison with the IAG Chair (or Vice-Chair if the Chair is unavailable).

It will be the responsibility of the SIO to ensure both the police and IAG members have a clear understanding of the role that each is performing.

IAG members have the same access to welfare support as West Mercia Police employees should they require it.

9 Feedback

West Mercia will provide feedback to IAG members on completion of any consultation or involvement. An IAG Feedback Form will be completed by police representatives and submitted to the Diversity Team. The Diversity Team will circulate copies of the form to the Chair and, as appropriate, individual IAG members.

10 De-Selection of IAG Members

Members may be de-selected by the IAG in the following circumstances:

- Failure to attend three consecutive meetings without providing advance apology and reasonable justification.

- Failure to prepare for or carry out agreed actions or non-contribution at meetings.
- Breach of these Terms and Conditions or Code of Conduct.

De-selection of IAG members will be decided by the IAG Chair and Vice-Chair. The nominated Tactical Equality and Diversity Advisor and Head of Diversity will also be consulted.

In the event of the Chair being de-selected from the group, the Vice-Chair must have a majority vote from members of his/her IAG. The nominated Tactical Equality and Diversity Advisor and Head of Diversity will also be consulted.

The decision to de-select a member will usually lie with the Chair/Vice-Chair of the IAG, **except** when the continuing membership of an individual is shown to compromise IAG integrity or affects security or police operations (see also Section 5 – Police National Computer Check on page 5).

In these instances only the Head of Diversity can override the decision of the Chair/Vice-Chair, with explanation.

The member will be sent a letter explaining the reasons behind the reason to de-select.

The decision to de-select a member will be final.