



A guide
to being an
**independent
member**
of a police
authority
in England
and Wales



*Association
of **Police
Authorities***

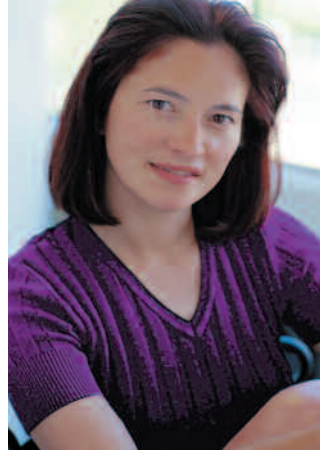


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Equal Opportunities

All police authorities are firmly committed to a policy of equal opportunities. They welcome applications from all eligible persons irrespective of ethnic origin, religious belief, gender, sexual orientation, disability or any other irrelevant factor. Police authorities want their independent members to represent as wide a range of people as possible.



Do you want to have your say about local policing issues? Do you want to see people from all backgrounds treated equally and fairly by the police? Do you want to help improve the performance of your local police? Have you got the time and commitment to make a real difference to your community? Then you should consider becoming an independent member of a police authority...



1 What is a police authority?

There are 43 police authorities in England and Wales, each of which oversees the work of its local police force. Police authorities are independent bodies made up of local people. Together with the Home Secretary and chief police officers, they are responsible for the management of policing in England and Wales.

Police authorities make sure the local police force is efficient and effective and seek to improve policing performance and standards. It is their job to make sure local people have a say in how they are policed and to hold the chief police officer to account for the services delivered to local people. Police authorities also set the force budget and decide how much money to raise towards the cost of policing through the local council tax.

2 What is an independent member?

Police authorities have two types of member:

- **local councillors** – chosen by local councils or joint committees of local councils; and
- **independent members** – local people who are not councillors, chosen through an open recruitment process. At least one independent member must be a lay justice (also known as a magistrate).

3 Why must one independent member be a lay justice?

At least one of a police authority's independent members must be a lay justice. This is to make sure that the police authority is effectively joined up with the rest of the criminal justice system. A police authority may have more than one independent member who is also a lay justice.





4 How many members do police authorities have?

Most police authorities have 17 members, made up of:

- 9 councillors; and
- 8 independent members.

However, some authorities have a greater number of members. For example, **Devon & Cornwall, Thames Valley, Greater Manchester, Dyfed-Powys** and **South Wales** have 19 members, made up of:

- 10 councillors; and
- 9 independent members.

Whereas the **Metropolitan Police Authority** has 23 members, made up of:

- 12 Greater London Assembly members; and
- 11 independent members.

But whatever the size of the authority, at least one independent member must be a lay justice.

5 Why be a police authority member?

As a police authority member you can play a key part in improving police performance and raising the standards of policing in your area. And you can help ensure that people from all local communities receive fair and non-discriminatory police services.

It is an important and challenging role which offers you the chance to have a crucial input into the strategic direction of your local police force. Not only will you develop strong links with your local communities, you will also gain a critical insight into policing both locally and nationally.

This is your opportunity to help reduce crime and the fear of crime in your area and ensure that local people get the policing they expect and deserve.





6 What do police authorities do?

The police authority's job is to:

- ensure that there is an efficient and effective local police force;
- hold the chief officer of the force to account for the policing service delivered to local communities;
- make sure that the local police force keeps improving its service and delivers the highest standards of policing;
- consult local people and those who come into contact with the service to ensure their views are reflected in the nature and style of policing; and
- work in partnership with others – such as the chief police officer and local authorities – to reduce crime and disorder and fear of crime.

This involves:

- talking with and listening to local people to find out what they want from their police force;
- setting local policing priorities and challenging targets to improve police performance after consultation with local communities and the chief police officer;
- providing information to local people on whether the priorities and targets have been met;
- agreeing the police budget and deciding how much council tax local people should pay towards local policing;
- publishing an annual plan which sets out the local policing priorities, tells people what they can expect from their police service in the year ahead, and explains the strategic direction set for the force over the coming three years;
- ensuring that the police force works with others to deliver specialist services where this is in the interests of efficiency and/or effectiveness;



- reporting back to communities on the extent to which the plan has been met;
- appointing, and if necessary dismissing, the chief police officer and other senior police officers;
- monitoring the process and outcomes of complaints made against police officers and other staff; and
- engaging in constructive partnerships with the police force, local authorities, fire and rescue services, local criminal justice agencies and other key organisations to secure delivery of the right police service for the area.

7 What is the Association of Police Authorities?

All police authorities are members of the Association of Police Authorities (APA), the national body which speaks on behalf of all police authorities. The APA seeks to influence the policing agenda nationally as well as supporting police authorities to do their job locally.

The APA produces advice and guidance to police authorities, organises training days, conferences and events, and produces other information for authorities, including a weekly e-bulletin to keep authorities up to date on what is happening nationally in policing.



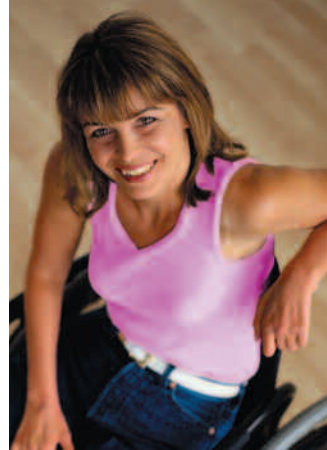
8 How do police authorities work?

Police authorities meet regularly to take key decisions affecting policing in their area and question the chief officer and other senior police staff about all aspects of the force and its performance. These meetings are usually held in public.

Police authorities also carry out a lot of their work in committees, panels, project boards and other working groups set up to focus on particular aspects of authority business. These might include for example:

- Police Performance Management
- Community Consultation and Engagement
- Professional Standards and Complaints
- Finance
- Human Resources and Training
- Planning
- Equalities and Diversity
- Audit

All police authorities have a chief executive and treasurer and a small number of staff who provide administrative, personnel, legal, and policy support.





9 What will I be expected to do?

As a police authority member, you must represent the views of people who live in, work in, or visit the police authority area. You will need to build partnerships between the police force and local communities through consulting a wide and diverse range of people about policing in your area. You should bring your own judgment to bear on police authority business and, over time, build up the skills and knowledge necessary to contribute to the work of a police authority.

You will be expected to attend all meetings of the police authority and participate effectively as a member of any committee, panel or other forum which you are asked to join. In addition, you may develop links to a particular unit in the force or become a lead member within the authority on a specific issue, such as human resources, police performance, community involvement or IT matters.

You may also be asked to represent the authority on other bodies, such as crime and disorder reduction partnerships, or local criminal justice boards. You will also be expected to attend regular meetings and other events to consult local people about policing.

You will need to be prepared to read papers, reports and background information in advance of meetings and other events. You will also need to keep up-to-date with national and local policing issues and maintain a good working knowledge of force policies and practices.





10 Are there any rules about conduct or standards?

At all times, police authority members must maintain the highest standards of conduct and ethics. On joining the authority, you will be required to sign up to a code of conduct committing yourself to these standards. For example:

When carrying out police authority work you must not:

- bring the authority into disrepute;
- use your position improperly to advantage yourself, your family or friends; or
- disclose confidential information.

If appointed, you will also be required to give details of any personal interests (including financial interests) in a register which is open to the public.

If you are found to be in breach of the code you may be suspended or removed from the authority.

To be a police authority member, you must also be committed to:

- treating everyone with respect;
- upholding human rights;
- promoting equal opportunities;
- promoting good race relations; and
- eliminating unlawful discrimination.

All police authority members must ensure that policing services are provided fairly across the police area and in a way which is sensitive and responsive to diverse needs.





11 How much time is involved?

On average, you will need to be able to commit about 7 to 10 hours each week to police authority business, although this is currently being reviewed by the Independent Panel on Members' Allowances. Most work will be on weekdays, but evening and weekend commitments are also likely.

By law, you are entitled to reasonable time off work to carry out your police authority duties.

The typical diary overleaf should help give you an idea of what you might be expected to do as a police authority member.

12 Will I receive any payment?

Police authority members receive an annual allowance. This varies across the country – your local police authority will be able to tell you how much this is in your area. Those members who take on extra responsibilities, such as chairman of the police authority or of a committee, usually receive a special responsibility allowance which reflects this extra role and responsibilities.

You will also be able to claim for the costs of travel or other expenses involved in carrying out police authority work. If you have young children or care for a dependant, the police authority will also help towards the cost of paying someone (other than a family member) to look after them during the time that you spend on police authority business.

13 How long will I be a member of the authority?

You will normally be appointed for four years. However, in some cases, the authority may appoint you for a shorter period. If you wish, you can apply to serve a second term as an independent member, although you will have to go through the normal appointment process. Independent members wishing to serve more than two terms can only do so if they have approval from the Home Secretary.





Monday **4 February**

Tuesday **5 February**

Wednesday **6 February**

- 10am-1pm – Full Police Authority Meeting (Agenda items: approve 3 year policing plan; agree targets on Violent Crime; set budget and agree to increase police element of Council Tax by 5%)

Thursday **7 February**

- 4-5.30pm · Meeting with Superintendent Price, Newtown Police Station (Issues to discuss: Violent Crime target; possible implementation of Alcohol Disorder Zone; progress of the local Preventing Violent Extremism Pathfinder project)

Friday **8 February**

Saturday **9 February**

Sunday **10 February**

Monday **11 February**

Tuesday **12 February**

- Read papers and prepare for APA Neighbourhood Policing Policy Group tomorrow (check local progress on 'Stop and Search' agenda item)

Wednesday **13 February**

- Represent Authority at APA Neighbourhood Policing Policy Group meeting, London

Thursday **14 February**

Friday **15 February**

Saturday **16 February**

Sunday **17 February**

Diary of an independent member

Monday 18 February

Tuesday 19 February

- 3-5pm · Attend Regional Police Authority Collaboration Meeting on oversight of Regional Protective Services

Wednesday 20 February

Thursday 21 February

- Phone Police Authority Partnerships Co-ordinator to discuss agenda for Local Criminal Justice Board meeting

Friday 22 February

Saturday 23 February

Sunday 24 February

Monday 25 February

- 11am-12pm · Visit to Police HQ to view new custody suite

Tuesday 26 February

- 7-8pm · Meeting of local community consultative group to discuss police use of stop and search, Youth Advice Centre and anti-social behavior (must take supplies of stop and search publicity material)

Wednesday 27 February

Thursday 28 February

Friday 1 March

- 11am · Meeting of Authority's Appointment Committee to shortlist candidates for chief officer post

Saturday 2 March

Sunday 3 March



14 What qualities do I need?

As well as being of good character, you need to possess most, if not all, of the following competencies:

- **The ability to think strategically** To have breadth of vision – to rise above detail, and to see problems and issues from a wider, forward-looking perspective – and to make appropriate linkages.
- **The ability to make good judgements** To take a balanced, open-minded and objective approach – for example, in evaluating policing priorities, assessing candidates for top level appointments or considering complaints against officers – and to develop an understanding of the challenges that officers face in their day-to-day work.
- **The ability to be open to change** To be able to challenge accepted views constructively without becoming confrontational, and to recognise and respond positively to the need for change, identifying ways in which the organisation in question could be developed.
- **The ability to scrutinise and challenge** To be able to rigorously scrutinise and challenge constructively, and to exercise effective oversight of all aspects of force performance, using appropriate data, evidence and resources.
- **The ability to be analytical** To interpret and question complex written material – including financial and statistical information and other data such as performance measures – and identify the salient points.
- **The ability to communicate effectively** To be able to explain policing issues clearly – often in public meetings with the media present – and to engage in constructive dialogue with local communities, the police (including representatives of their staff associations) and other key partners and agencies.
- **The ability to engage with local communities** To understand the importance of community views in shaping local policing style and be



prepared to represent their views in an impartial way, and to participate in policy-making aimed at engaging local communities.

- **The ability to manage time effectively** To be able to identify priorities and make the most productive use of both your time and the time of others.

The following personal skills and qualities are also very important:

- **Team working** The ability to play an effective role in meetings, committees and other partnerships through listening, persuading and showing respect for the views of others.
- **Self-confidence** The skill to challenge accepted views constructively without becoming confrontational.
- **Enthusiasm and drive** The ability to be proactive in seeking out learning and developmental opportunities to enhance your knowledge and understanding (for example, on financial matters and statutory requirements).
- **Respect for others** The capacity to treat all people fairly and with respect, to value diversity and respond sensitively to difference.
- **Integrity** The necessity to embrace high standards of conduct and ethics and be committed to upholding human rights and equality of opportunity for all.
- **Leadership** The confidence to lead by example, establish clear goals and objectives and build support and commitment within the authority and force, as well as the wider community and with partner agencies.
- **Decisiveness** The ability to show resilience even in challenging circumstances, remaining calm and confident and able to make difficult decisions.



15 Who can be an independent member?

Age

You must be at least 18 years old.

Local base

You must live or work in the police authority area. If you have more than one job or more than one home, then your main residence or place of work must be in the police authority area. If you move house or jobs and no longer live or work in the police area, you will no longer be able to serve on the authority.

Other rules

There are some strict rules about who can be an independent member. For example, you cannot be an independent member if:

- you work for a police authority;
- you are a member, officer or employee of a council (except for teachers or lecturers) which appoints councillor members to that police authority;
- you are a police officer;
- you have been sentenced to three or more months imprisonment in the last five years; or
- you are an undischarged bankrupt.

Full details of the reasons which could disqualify you from being a member of a police authority are set out in the Annex at the end of this booklet.

16 How do I apply?

Complete the application form, available from your local police authority, explaining fully why you wish to become an independent member, what you would bring to the authority and your relevant skills and experience. Please then post or fax your completed application form to the chief executive at the address given on the form.





17 What happens next?

All applications are considered by an independent selection panel. The panel is made up of five people, and in most police authorities these are:

- three people appointed by the police authority;
- a person appointed by the Home Secretary; and
- an 'independent assessor' chosen by the other four members of the panel, from a list which is compiled by the Home Office.

However, the makeup is slightly different in the Metropolitan Police Authority, where the panel members are:

- two people appointed by the police authority;
- a person appointed by the Home Secretary;
- a person appointed by the Mayor of London; and
- an 'independent assessor' chosen by the other four members of the panel, from a list which is compiled by the Home Office.

The job of the panel is to produce a shortlist of suitable applicants, which is normally twice the number of people needed. At least one independent member on the authority must be a lay justice, and when this appointment is being made, the selection panel must ensure that at least two lay justices are included on the shortlist. The members of the police authority (except those who are applying to be appointed again) will then make the final selection of new independent members from the applicants on the shortlist. You may be called for an interview at one or both of these stages.



18 Can I get feedback on my application?

If you would like feedback on your application or would like to see all the records made during the appointment process you should contact the police authority chief executive.

19 How can I find out more?

If you have any questions or would like further information please contact your local police authority chief executive at the address shown on the application form or visit www.apa.police.uk/independent



Annex: **Disqualifications**

There are strict rules about who can be a police authority member. The main grounds which disqualify you from being a member are set out below.

You are disqualified from being or remaining a member of a police authority if:

Age

- You are under eighteen years old.

Local base

You do not:

- live or have your main home in the police authority area; or
- work or have your main place of work in the police authority area

You must have lived or worked or had your main home or main place of work in the authority area for a full twelve months before the date of your appointment to the police authority.

Employment

- You hold any paid office or employment, appointments to which are or may be made or confirmed by the police authority or any committee or sub-committee of the authority, or by a joint committee on which the authority is represented, or by any person holding any such office or employment; or
- you are a paid employee of a police authority who is employed under the direction of a joint board, joint authority or joint committee on which the authority is represented and any member of which is appointed on the nomination of some other police authority – you are disqualified from serving on that other police authority.

Financial solvency

- You have had a bankruptcy order made against you and the bankruptcy order has not been previously annulled or you have not obtained a discharge; or
- your estate has been sequestered and the sequestration has not been recalled or reduced or you have not obtained a discharge; or
- you have made a composition or arrangement with, or granted a trust deed for, your creditors and you have not paid off the debts in full or five years have not yet

passed since you fulfilled the terms of the deed of composition or arrangements or trust deed; or

- you are subject to a disqualification order under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986, to a disqualification under Part II of the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1989, to a disqualification undertaking accepted under the Company Directors Disqualification (Northern Ireland) Order 2002, or to an order made under Section 429(2)(b) of the Insolvency Act 1986 (failure to pay under county court administration order).

Convictions

- In the five years before the date of your appointment to the authority or since your appointment, you have been convicted of an offence in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man, and had passed on you a sentence of imprisonment (including a suspended sentence) of three or more months.

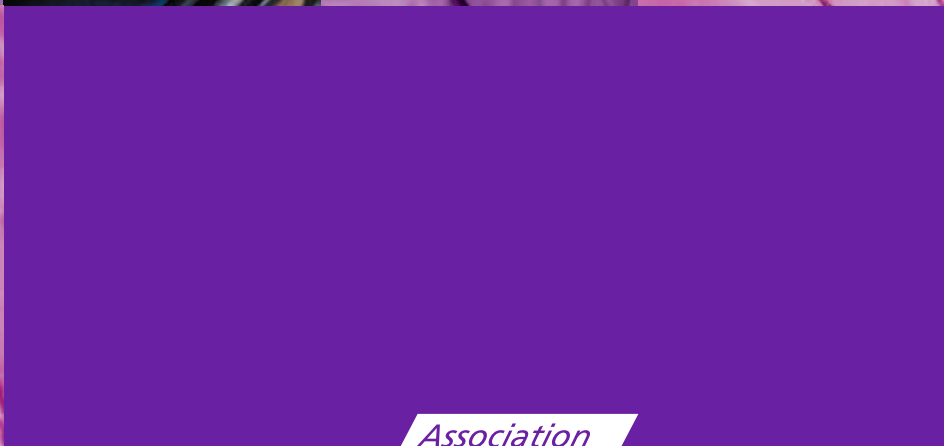
For this purpose the date of a conviction shall be taken to be the ordinary date on which the period allowed for making an appeal or application expires or if an appeal or application is made, the date on which the appeal or application is finally disposed of or abandoned or fails by reason of its non-prosecution.

There are some additional rules which apply just to independent members.

You cannot be an independent member of a police authority if:

- you are a member of the council for a county, district or London borough which is wholly or partly within the area of the police authority;
- you are a member of a police force;
- you are an officer or employee of a police authority; or
- you are an officer or employee of a council which appoints members to a police authority – unless you are a head teacher or principal of a school, college or other educational institution or establishment which is maintained or assisted by a local education authority; or a teacher or lecturer in any such school, college institution or establishment.

To read the exact rules about all of the disqualifications set out above you need to look at the **Police Authority Regulations 2008 (SI 630 2008) or, in the case of the **Metropolitan Police Authority, the Metropolitan Police Authority Regulations 2008 (SI 631 2008)**, which can be accessed at www.apa.police.gov.uk**



Association of Police Authorities
 15 Greycoat Place
 London SW1P 1BN
 Tel 020 7664 3096
 Fax 020 7664 3191
www.apa.police.uk

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