

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 in 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 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.

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 deterrence of misconduct
- protect the public.

What skills and experience does an IPM need?

Independent Panel Members do not need to have legal experience.

We welcome all applications however we are looking to recruit a number of IPMs with skills and experience in:

- a senior leadership role in an organisation or business.
- HR and management of teams of people.
- any experience which has involved decision making involving 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.

Will I receive training?

Yes. As an IPM you will receive a full induction 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 5-year term.

How long do the roles last for?

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

Will I get paid?

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

The current recommended 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).

These rates are payable for days when IPMs are sitting on misconduct panels or on Police Appeal Tribunals.

Preparation work, such as reading prehearing information, is paid at a different rate of £15 per hour.

What is the time commitment?

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

What is the appointment process?

Applications are completed directly online by visiting Independent Panel Member Vacancy.

Applications can be made between 2nd and 21st February 2024.

After the closing date all applications will undergo a shortlisting process and selected applicants will be invited to attend an interview panel.

Interviews will take place during weeks commencing 11th & 18th March.

Successful applicants will be appointed by April 2024 and will then be taken through the vetting process to ensure their suitability to do this work. Information on the vetting process can be found on the application form.

Newly appointed IPMs will start their terms from May 2024.

How do I apply?

Please apply online via this link: [Independent Panel Member - Misconduct Hearings \(talosats careers.com\)](https://www.avonandsomersetpcc.gov.uk/careers.com)

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 Avon and Somerset.

You must be over 18 to apply. It's desirable, but not essential, to be resident Avon and Somerset, UK.

There are some reasons why you might not be able to apply and the disqualification criteria can be found on the vacancy page as a PDF document.

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:

<https://www.avonandsomersetpcc.gov.uk/>

What is the role of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner?

The role of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) is to be the voice of local people in policing and to hold the Chief Constable to account. The aim of the PCC is to ensure the delivery of an effective and efficient police service for Avon and Somerset.

A vital part of the work of the PCC is to scrutinise every aspect of policing and in doing this, members of the public are involved who have an interest in ensuring policing is delivered in a way that serves all communities.