OPCC Behavioural Expectations for Meeting and Event Attendees

Our Commitment

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) is committed to creating a safe, inclusive and respectful environment for everyone attending our meetings, events and engagement activities.

We expect all participants, whether attending in person or virtually, to contribute to a professional and constructive environment where people feel able to participate without fear of harassment, discrimination, intimidation or abuse.

These expectations apply to:

- Public meetings
- Police and Crime Commissioner events
- Community engagement events
- Community group meetings
- Partnership meetings
- Provider meetings
- Stakeholder forums
- Victim and public engagement sessions
- Consultation events
- Online meetings and webinars
- Any interaction with OPCC employees, volunteers, contractors or representatives

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Expected Standards of Behaviour

By attending an OPCC meeting or event, you agree to:

- Treat all attendees, staff and representatives with dignity, courtesy and respect.
- Engage in discussion in a professional and constructive manner.

- Respect differing opinions, experiences and viewpoints.
- Allow others to speak without interruption.
- Follow instructions given by the Chair, meeting organiser or OPCC representative.
- Raise challenges, concerns and disagreements respectfully.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries.
- Respect confidentiality where applicable.
- Contribute to an inclusive environment free from discrimination and harassment.

Unacceptable Behaviour

The following behaviour will not be tolerated:

- Harassment, discrimination or victimisation.
- Bullying, intimidation or threatening behaviour.
- Aggressive or abusive language.
- Shouting, swearing or personal insults.
- Offensive, derogatory or inflammatory comments.
- Sexual comments, jokes, gestures or unwanted conduct of a sexual nature.
- Racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist or otherwise discriminatory behaviour.
- Persistent disruptive behaviour that prevents others from participating.
- Recording or sharing information without permission where prohibited.
- Harassing or targeting individuals through social media, email, messaging platforms or other online channels before, during or after an event.

Respect for OPCC Employees and Representatives

OPCC employees, volunteers and representatives have the right to carry out their duties without experiencing harassment, abuse or intimidation.

Attendees must not direct inappropriate behaviour towards:

- OPCC employees
- Police and Crime Commissioner staff
- Volunteers
- Contractors
- Consultants
- Guest speakers
- Partner agency representatives
- Event facilitators

The OPCC recognises that discussions may involve sensitive topics and strongly held views. However, disagreement must never become personal, abusive or discriminatory.

Action for Breaches

Where behaviour falls below these standards, the OPCC may take immediate action, including:

- Issuing a reminder of expected behaviour.
- Giving a verbal warning.
- Ending a discussion or contribution.
- Removing an individual from a meeting or event.
- Removing an individual from an online meeting platform.
- Ending telephone or online engagement.
- Requiring future communications to be made through specified channels only.
- Restricting or refusing attendance at future OPCC meetings, events or engagement activities.
- Referring serious incidents to the individual's employer or organisation where appropriate.
- Reporting behaviour to the police where criminal offences are suspected.

Reporting Concerns

If you experience or witness inappropriate behaviour during an OPCC meeting or event, please notify the Chair, event organiser or an OPCC representative as soon as possible so that appropriate action can be taken.

The OPCC will take all reports seriously and will take reasonable steps to support those affected and prevent further incidents.

Examples of Unacceptable Behaviour

The OPCC recognises that discussions at public meetings, community events, victim-focused engagement sessions and partnership forums may involve challenging or sensitive issues. However, the following behaviours are unacceptable and may result in action being taken.

Verbal Abuse and Intimidation

- Shouting at, berating or speaking aggressively to attendees or OPCC staff.
- Swearing at individuals.
- Making personal insults about a person's character, appearance, competence or background.
- Repeatedly challenging or confronting an individual in a manner that is intimidating or hostile.
- Making threats, whether explicit or implied.
- Using a raised voice or aggressive body language intended to intimidate others.

Harassment and Discrimination

- Making offensive comments about someone's age, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or other protected characteristic.
- Mocking, ridiculing or stereotyping individuals or groups.
- Deliberately excluding, undermining or humiliating a person because of a protected characteristic.
- Displaying or sharing discriminatory, offensive or hateful material.

Sexual Harassment

- Unwanted sexual comments, jokes or innuendo.
- Commenting on a person's appearance in a way that causes discomfort or offence.
- Unwanted physical contact.
- Repeated requests for personal contact or meetings after being declined.
- Sending inappropriate messages, images or content of a sexual nature.

Bullying and Undermining Behaviour

- Repeatedly interrupting or talking over others.
- Singling out individuals for criticism, ridicule or humiliation.
- Deliberately attempting to embarrass, undermine or discredit a participant.
- Persistent behaviour intended to make another person feel uncomfortable or unwelcome.

Disruptive Behaviour During Meetings and Events

- Refusing to comply with reasonable instructions from the Chair or organiser.
- Persistently interrupting proceedings.
- Preventing others from speaking or participating.
- Deliberately disrupting discussions, presentations or activities.
- Continuing unacceptable behaviour after being asked to stop.

Online and Social Media Misconduct

- Posting abusive or offensive comments about OPCC employees or event participants.
- Sending hostile, threatening or harassing emails, messages or social media communications.
- Targeting OPCC staff through personal social media accounts.
- Sharing misleading, defamatory or malicious content about individuals involved in OPCC activities.

- Encouraging others to target, harass or intimidate OPCC staff or attendees online.

Victim and Community Engagement Settings

The OPCC recognises that individuals attending victim-focused or community meetings may be discussing distressing experiences. However, this does not justify:

- Directing anger or frustration at staff, volunteers or facilitators.
- Threatening behaviour towards attendees or representatives.
- Personal attacks against those expressing different views.
- Intimidating vulnerable participants.
- Conduct that prevents others from participating safely and respectfully.

Reminder

Robust debate, challenge and disagreement are welcome; **harassment, abuse, intimidation, discrimination and personal attacks are not.** Attendees are expected to focus on issues and viewpoints rather than individuals.

The following note should be included in meeting invitations and Joining Instructions.

OPCC Behavioural Expectations

The OPCC is committed to ensuring all meetings and events are conducted in a respectful, safe and inclusive environment. All attendees are expected to treat others with dignity and respect, engage constructively, and refrain from any form of harassment, discrimination, intimidation, bullying or abusive behaviour.

The Chair or organiser may take action where behaviour falls below these standards, including issuing warnings, removing attendees from meetings, ending participation, or restricting attendance at future events.

If you experience or witness inappropriate behaviour, please report it to the meeting organiser or OPCC representative at the earliest opportunity.