Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC)

Visitor, Partner and Third-Party

Code of Conduct

Effective Date: October 2026
Applies to: Visitors, members of the public, contractors, suppliers, consultants, volunteers, partner organisations, service users, stakeholders, and any other third party interacting with OPCC employees, workers, agency staff or volunteers.

1. Purpose

The OPCC is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and respectful working environment for everyone. This includes protecting employees from harassment, discrimination, bullying, intimidation, abuse and inappropriate conduct by third parties. From October 2026, employers are subject to strengthened legal obligations to take all reasonable steps to prevent harassment, including harassment by third parties. This includes harassment by visitors, contractors, suppliers, service users, members of the public and partner organisations.

This Code of Conduct sets out the standards of behaviour expected from anyone engaging with the OPCC, whether in person, online, by telephone, by email or through social media.

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2. Our Commitment

The OPCC values dignity, respect, professionalism and inclusion. Everyone interacting with our organisation has the right to be treated with courtesy and respect and to work in an environment free from harassment and abusive behaviour.

The OPCC will take appropriate action where any third party engages in unacceptable conduct towards an employee, worker, volunteer or representative of the organisation.

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3. Zero Tolerance Statement

The OPCC operates a **zero-tolerance approach** to harassment, discrimination, bullying, intimidation, threatening behaviour and abuse directed at employees, workers, volunteers or representatives.

No individual will be expected to tolerate behaviour that:

- Creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.
- Violates their dignity.
- Is discriminatory or linked to a protected characteristic.
- Involves sexual harassment or unwanted conduct of a sexual nature.
- Includes abusive, aggressive, threatening or offensive language.
- Constitutes bullying, victimisation or intimidation.
- Is conducted in person, by telephone, email, correspondence, social media or any other online platform.

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4. Expected Standards of Behaviour

All visitors and third parties are expected to:

- Treat OPCC employees and representatives with dignity, courtesy and respect.
- Communicate professionally and appropriately at all times.
- Listen to differing views respectfully.
- Follow reasonable instructions from OPCC staff.
- Respect meeting protocols and behavioural expectations.
- Raise concerns, complaints or disagreements in a constructive manner.
- Maintain professional boundaries during all interactions.
- Respect confidentiality requirements where applicable.

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5. Unacceptable Behaviour

The following behaviours will not be tolerated:

Harassment and Discrimination

Including conduct related to:

- Age
- Disability

- Race or ethnicity
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity

Sexual Harassment

Examples include:

- Unwanted sexual comments, jokes or remarks.
- Sexualised language or gestures.
- Inappropriate personal comments.
- Unwanted physical contact.
- Sending inappropriate messages, images or content.

Bullying and Abuse

Examples include:

- Shouting, swearing or verbal abuse.
- Personal insults or derogatory comments.
- Intimidation or attempts to undermine staff.
- Persistent unreasonable behaviour.
- Threatening language or actions.

Online Misconduct

Examples include:

- Abusive emails or messages.
- Harassing social media comments or direct messages.
- Publication of offensive or derogatory content about staff.
- Online stalking, intimidation or targeting of employees.

6. OPCC-Specific Risk Areas

The OPCC recognises that some activities involve increased contact with third parties and therefore present heightened risks.

Public Engagement Events

This includes:

- Community meetings
- Public consultations
- Roadshows
- Victim and community forums
- Youth engagement events

Attendees must engage respectfully with OPCC employees and representatives. Disruptive, intimidating or abusive conduct may result in immediate removal.

Victim Contact and Public-Facing Roles

The OPCC recognises that employees supporting victims, vulnerable individuals and members of the public may encounter emotionally charged situations. While understandable frustration may be expressed, abusive, threatening or discriminatory behaviour towards staff will not be accepted.

Partnership Meetings

Representatives from partner agencies, local authorities, criminal justice organisations and community groups are expected to maintain professional standards throughout meetings, workshops and collaborative activities.

Contractors, Consultants and Suppliers

All contractors, consultants and suppliers acting on behalf of or working with the OPCC are required to comply with this Code of Conduct as a condition of engagement.

Social Media and Online Contact

Anyone interacting with the OPCC through social media platforms, websites, online events or digital communication channels must act respectfully. The OPCC may report, block or restrict accounts where abusive or harassing behaviour occurs.

7. Responding to Breaches

Where unacceptable behaviour occurs, the OPCC may take action proportionate to the circumstances.

Actions may include:

Informal Intervention

- Requesting that behaviour stops immediately.
- Reminding individuals of expected standards.
- Issuing verbal warnings.

Removal from Meetings or Events

The OPCC reserves the right to:

- Ask an individual to leave a meeting.
- Remove attendees from virtual meetings.
- End telephone conversations.
- Terminate engagement at events where behaviour becomes inappropriate, disruptive, intimidating or harassing.

Restriction of Future Attendance

The OPCC may:

- Refuse attendance at future events or meetings.
- Restrict participation in public engagement activities.
- Require future contact to occur through designated channels.
- Limit face-to-face contact where necessary to protect staff.

Contractor, Provider, Supplier and Partner Consequences

Where a contractor, provider, supplier or partner representative breaches this Code, the OPCC may:

- Raise concerns formally with their organisation.
- Require replacement of personnel.
- Suspend or review working arrangements.
- Consider contract management actions where appropriate.
- Terminate engagements where serious misconduct occurs.

Reporting to Authorities

The OPCC may report behaviour to the police or other relevant authorities where conduct may constitute a criminal offence, including threats, hate incidents, harassment or violence.

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8. Reporting Concerns

Any employee who experiences or witnesses inappropriate conduct by a third party should report the matter to their manager as soon as possible.

The OPCC will:

- Take reports seriously.
- Investigate concerns appropriately.
- Consider immediate protective measures.
- Maintain records of incidents and actions taken.
- Take reasonable steps to prevent recurrence.

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9. Review

This Code of Conduct will be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains aligned with legal requirements and supports the OPCC's commitment to providing a safe and respectful environment for employees, volunteers and all those engaging with the organisation.

Statement of Commitment

"The OPCC is committed to protecting employees from harassment, discrimination, abuse and intimidation by any third party. We expect all visitors, partners, contractors, suppliers, service users and members of the public to interact with our staff respectfully and professionally. Behaviour that falls below these standards will not be tolerated and may result in removal, restrictions on future engagement, contractual consequences, or referral to relevant authorities."