



**Policy Title:** Independent Advisory Group  
**CCMT Sponsor:** ACC Local Policing  
**Department/Area:** Diversity Unit  
**Section/Sector:** Local Policing

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### **1.0 Rationale**

- 1.1 Thames Valley Police is committed to providing a policing service that recognises and meets the needs of all communities within the Thames Valley.
- 1.2 The Force is able to provide a more effective and responsive service by involving individuals, organisations and communities at both a tactical and strategic level. Independent advice is especially valuable in relation to critical incidents, major incidents and developing policies and procedures.
- 1.3 The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry recommended the involvement of local people in policing (recommendation 2 (iv), 28, 30 and 50). One of the policing responses to recommendations made in the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry was the establishment of the Independent Advisory Group (IAG).
- 1.4 Independent Advisory Groups have been acknowledged as good practice by Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary (HMIC) in their report *Policing London-Winning Consent* and the series comprising *'Winning the Race.'* ACPO guidelines recognise that IAGs have the ability to prevent events developing into critical incidents.

### **2.0 Intention**

- 2.1 This policy aims to provide Basic Command Units (BCUs) / Local Police Areas (LPAs) within the Thames Valley with guidance on the setting up, administering and maintaining of IAGs by clarifying the remit and role of independent advisors as set out in the ACPO guidelines, whilst recognising that each BCU within the Thames Valley differs and that some of the points to consider will be for the IAG to decide.

#### **Within Thames Valley Police:**

- 2.2 Every Local Policing Area will establish an Independent Advisory Group.
- 2.3 A Force Strategic IAG will be established and managed by the Diversity Unit, Local Policing.

### **3.0 General Principles**

- 3.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all IAGs are structured and managed in a manner which is compliant with ACPO guidelines. To ensure corporate consistency, definitions have been taken from the ACPO guidelines.
- 3.2 When the community is involved in defining the problem being addressed and is able to inform the policing solution, we are more

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likely to have the consent of those being policed. The unique strengths of independent advice are:

- Ability to critically appraise police actions from the perspective of a receiver of police services and a member of the community.
- Immediate access to decision makers.
- Appreciation of resources within communities that may assist to resolve particular incidents
- Ability and willingness to give constructive criticism to police
- Ability to identify options for resolutions of policing problems

**3.3** These strengths can be used to resolve policing problems at both a strategic and tactical level. This can result in a more sympathetic policing response.

**3.4** Independent advice has the ability to prevent events developing into critical incidents. Advisors are able to anticipate how police responses to policing problems may be interpreted in communities. By so doing, the police response can be adjusted. Where a critical incident has happened independent advisors are able to explain how it is being perceived within the broader community. Once again, police responses can be adjusted to ensure that these perceptions are addressed.

**ACPO defines advice as follows:**

*'Advice given by non-police persons either on an ad-hoc basis or as members of a recognised advisory group. Their advice is independent of police and carries no responsibility or liability for their outcomes. Such advisors are not answerable to police and police are neither responsible for advisors actions nor obliged to follow any of the advice they give. Accordingly they are truly independent.'*

**3.5** This definition clarifies that:

- Independent advisors are representing themselves and not the view of a particular community, although this may be the case on occasions.
- They do not bear responsibility for the consequences of the decisions based on their advice.
- The autonomy of the police decision maker is not affected.
- The police may or may not follow the advice. However, dismissal of advice without reasonable explanation can cause frustration and be perceived as disrespectful. Therefore feedback to advisors is essential to explain why advice was not followed and if it was followed, how this was done.

**4.0 Guidance, Procedures & Tactics****4.1 IAG Terms of Reference**

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When an IAG is formed, the first task will be to outline what the IAG aims to address, this should include the following:

- Policy
- Training
- Critical incidents
- Policing operations

**4.1.1** Full terms of reference should then be written by, or in consultation with, the IAG. The remit of the IAG must be decided at a local level; however there are a number of themes that should be followed by all IAGs. A full Terms of Reference template for a Thames Valley IAG has been provided in [Appendix A](#).

## **4.2 Membership & Recruitment**

**4.2.1** Ideally the IAG will consist of a cross representation of the BCU/LPA's diverse communities. This does not however, imply that they represent or speak on behalf of those communities.

The IAG will have the right to appoint or second additional members when considered appropriate. This will be decided by the (LPA) Commander in consultation with the IAG and should be reviewed every two years.

**4.2.2** It is essential that Commanders understand the diverse make up of their relevant communities to ensure proper reflection of them on the IAG; consideration should be given to the following:

- Race
- Religion or belief
- Age
- Economic position
- Geography
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender
- Disability
- Isolated Communities i.e. rural farmers

**4.2.3** Consideration needs to be given to the skills an advisor will bring to the group. Advisors need to be capable of articulating constructive criticism.

**4.2.4** Prior to full membership, members must agree to a PNC check and declare any conflicts of interest that could cause issues of disrepute to the IAG. Previous convictions are not necessarily a bar to becoming an IAG member.

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**4.2.5** It is important that the process of recruitment is open and transparent to ensure the community have confidence in the group. An independent advisor reflects the make up of the community but does not necessarily represent it; advisors are individuals who have an interest in the effects of policing on the community.

**4.2.6** The method of recruitment is a matter for the LPA Commander and/or the IAG; however ACPO guidelines recognise the following methods:

- Area commanders to identify & invite individuals to apply to become members.
- The advisory group identifies gaps in representation then find people to fill these gaps.
- The group selects its own members.

Recruitment is done in consultation with HR.

**4.2.7** A Personal Details Contact Form ([Appendix E](#)) will need to be completed for all potential members.

**4.2.8 Thames Valley Police Authority and IAG Membership**

The roles and responsibilities of IAG members are set out above. Thames Valley Police Authority is an independent body made up of local people who help oversee the work of the police. Its prime responsibility is to secure and maintain an efficient and effective police service. It does not have a role in the management of operational policing matters which are for the Chief Constable. Accordingly, and to ensure that there is no confusion of roles and responsibilities, it is not appropriate for people who serve on the Police Authority also to be members of an IAG.

**4.3 Administration of the IAG**

When involving independent advisors in police decision making, it is important to consider how their meetings will be structured and what administrative support will be required. Each advisory group will be structured in a different way, reflecting local needs. Meetings will generally be minuted and members will need to send and receive correspondence. The responsibility to ensure that a member of staff is available to take minutes and subsequently distribute them lies with the LPA Commander.

**4.4 Location of IAG Meetings**

It is recommended that IAG meetings are held away from police buildings in order to make the process of advice open to public scrutiny and allow transparency; however the final decision on this rests with the IAG.

**NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED****4.5 Accessibility**

The responsibility for making meetings accessible to all sections of the community lies with the LPA Commander. The LPA Commander must give consideration to the time and the location of the meeting e.g. disabled members may need assistance with written and aural materials or with physical features of a building.

**4.6 Frequency of meetings and police attendance at meetings**

**4.6.1** The frequency of meetings should be **not less** than quarterly.

**4.6.2** The LPA Commander or their nominated deputy will normally attend the IAG meeting

**4.6.3** Early consideration needs to be given as to how advisory groups can most effectively work within the LPA so that each party derives the most benefit from the relationship.

**4.7 Monitoring the IAG**

The IAG provides a cost-effective way of gathering information. However, it is important to ensure that resources are being used to their best effect. Therefore, there must be a system in place to:

- Monitor resources being used to support the advisory process examining both financial costs and staff costs.
- Monitor the outcomes.

Force monitoring of LPA IAGs will fall within the Local Policing inspection arrangements conducted by Assistant Chief Constable, Local Policing.

**4.8 Roles of groups and their members**

The work of independent advisors is demanding. Depending on how a group is set up, advisors may attend meetings of the whole group, subgroups and gold groups. They may also be called in to assist with critical incidents.

Independent advice should be sought about an issue as soon as possible. There is a danger of seeking advice after key decisions have been made. For independent advice to be most effective, it must inform every stage of the decision making process. Once independent advisors have been involved in a decision making process, they should be involved throughout.

Their continuing contribution ensures that police do not lose sight of community concerns.

#### **4.9 Advice for policy and strategy**

Advisory groups can give advice on a range of issues. They can assist by offering a community based perspective on policing plans and crime and disorder strategies. Decisions about policy and strategy at all levels of the organisation will have an effect on the community. Advisory groups allow the community to be involved wherever possible, allowing the process of policy making to be open and transparent.

#### **4.10 Future development and organisational learning**

The HQ Diversity Unit will ensure that matters of best practice and organisational learning are shared with all IAGs, where appropriate.

#### **4.11 Critical Incidents and Major Investigations**

A critical incident is defined as *'any incident where the effectiveness of the police response is likely to have a significant impact on the confidence of the victim, their family and/or the community in Thames Valley Police or the police service'*.

When seeking independent advice for critical incident resolution and major investigations, it is important that the officer seeking advice considers the role of the advisor.

Advisors should not be involved as mediators and/or advocates. There is a clear distinction between an advisor and a mediator or advocate. Mediation and advocacy can involve interaction with victims, families and/or witnesses. Involvement with these people may lead to the mediator or advocate taking on personal liability for their actions and becoming witnesses themselves. The rules of evidence may then apply to them.

Advisors will not ordinarily be allowed access to a crime scene during the active phase of the investigation.

Where an independent advisor knows the witness/suspect/victim, consider carefully if the advisor can be truly independent. This relationship may not necessarily preclude the advisor from becoming involved but will affect how 'independent' they are.

Independent advisors may form part of the Gold Group at critical incidents and major investigations. The advisor's role is to give a community perspective. Advice is normally gathered by forming meetings at which interested parties are represented.

As part of the Gold Group, advisors need not meet victims/witnesses, or visit crime scenes. It is easier to keep their role to that of advice. Decisions whether or not to seek independent advice must be recorded on the policy log.

#### 4.12 Proposed Police Operations

Where a pre-planned operation is proposed, independent advisors can help to ensure that these activities have the support of the community and any community resources can be identified. Advisors may also be able to alert the police to any negative effects of proposed actions, thereby preventing tension between the police and communities.

It is important that independent advisers are involved at the early stages of planning an operation. By doing so, the decision maker can have a full range of options and can consider all aspects before making a decision.

#### 4.13 Feedback

Ensure when advice is given there is a 'feedback loop'. When advice is given and there is no feedback, this can create resentment and suspicion.

#### 4.14 Press and other Media

Ensure that the independence of the advisors is retained by considering the way their involvement is portrayed in the media. The public perception of their independence may change if their role/involvement is not described appropriately. Before disclosing the involvement/personal details of advisors in any capacity, their permission must be sought.

Advisors should be involved in formulating any relevant press releases and media strategies.

If it is decided to publicise the creation of the group, the role must be clearly stated. It is important to establish that the group is independent of the police and is intended to give advice.

At critical incidents/investigations/policing operations, it may be appropriate to publicise the involvement of advisors at the outset of the event. When doing so, follow the steps outlined above.

#### 4.15 Press releases

The following words have been agreed as appropriate by the Metropolitan Police Service's advisory group when publicising the involvement of independent advisors:

*"Independent Advisors have been involved in advising police officers at a strategic level in the investigation (Policing operation). They have not been responsible for decisions made in this case. The advice has assisted the police officers involved to make fully informed decisions."*

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It is important that each IAG decide on their own press release statement, the above statement from MPS can be used as a template. It is important the role of an advisor is described as being 'strategic'. By doing so, the police avoid the danger of portraying advisors in a way that might compromise their independence.

**4.16 Credibility**

There is a danger of independent advisers becoming too closely involved with the police. Such closeness is likely to undermine the credibility of advisors. The relationship between advisors and police should be one of mutual respect.

**4.17 Ownership of the process**

The police jointly own the process with the advisors. The balance must enable both sets of participants to express views and raise issues in a safe environment. Some disagreement is both inevitable and necessary. The process must be able to withstand this tension and resolve it constructively.

**4.18 Welfare & other issues**

As independent advisors are exposed to more aspects of police work, officers and advisors need to consider what support is required from the Police. An induction process may be necessary for new members of an IAG and will be arranged appropriate to the needs of the member.

**4.19 Emotional Support**

Independent advisors may become involved in traumatic incidents through their work with the police. By keeping the advisors work restricted to that of giving advice the possibility of psychological effects are limited. However, officers in charge of investigations should be aware that advisors may suffer ill effects. Officers who are concerned about their advisors should contact the Occupational Health Unit who will put them in touch with an appropriate counsellor. Advisors should also be made aware of the possibility of suffering ill effects from involvement in critical incidents.

**4.20 Confidentiality Issues & Conflict Of Interest**

Both of these issues have been addressed by way of a **Code of Conduct and Declaration of Interests** document [Appendix F](#) which should be considered by the group at the initial IAG meeting.

Consideration should be given to any conflict of interest that may affect the independence of advisors. Such conflicts are for the independent advisor and the LPA Commander or their representative to consider

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and decide whether it is so great as to preclude their suitability as an independent advisor.

In appropriate and or necessary circumstances members of the IAG may be required to sign a confidentiality agreement.

**5.0 Challenges & Representations**

Please submit any comments to:  
The Chief Superintendent  
Local Policing  
Headquarters  
Thames Valley Police Force  
Kidlington  
Oxfordshire  
OX5 2NX

**6.0 Communication****6.1 Links to Police National Legal Database Other****6.2 Implementation Strategy**

This policy will be provided to Local Police Commanders for implementation and will be made available to all police officers and police staff via the intranet and will be available to the public via the Thames Valley Police website.

**7.0 Compliance and Certification****7.1 Human Rights Certification****(i) Legal Basis**

The following Acts of Parliament are likely to affect the administration of this policy:

- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- The Race Relations Act 1975 as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- The Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- The Data protection Act 1998 (as amended)
- The Freedom of Information Act 2000
- The regulation of investigatory powers 2000
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2006

**(ii) Human Rights Articles Engaged**

This policy has the potential to engage the following articles:

**Article 8: privacy and related matters**

Whilst the overall policy should be considered as a public document, an IAG register is a different matter. Section 40 of the **Freedom of Information Act 2000** (FOIA) records such information would be considered as 'sensitive personal information' and therefore provides an exemption from public access.

Any such application for disclosure could only be approached via **The Data Protection Act 1998** ('DPA'), the interface between both pieces of legislation provides both protection of individuals (IAG members) from unnecessary disclosure to third parties and the Police in retaining such a register of sensitive personal information.

**Article 9: Religion and belief**

A formal register ('IAG register') of Independent Advisors will be kept at Area and Force level. Their faith, ethnicity (using the Census' 16+1 classification system) and gender *etc.* and the date on which they began their role will be recorded. (Human Resources forms to record such information may be utilised).

**Article 10: Freedom of expression**

Independent Advisors are prohibited from:

- Speaking to the media on behalf of the police; Acting as a mediator or facilitator.

**(iii) Prohibition of Discrimination**

Discrimination in the administration of this policy is prohibited by the legislation listed below:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Race Relations Act 1976 as amended by the Race Relations Amendments Act 2000
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended by The Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- Sex Discrimination Act

**7.2 Diversity Impact Assessment**

A Diversity Impact Assessment has been carried out and this policy has been rated as **LOW**. It is available from Thames Valley Police Policy Management Unit, the Thames Valley Police intranet and internet sites

### **7.3 Diversity (Human Resources)**

In the application of this policy, the Force will not discriminate against any persons regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, race or ethnic origin, religion, age or disability.

### **7.4 Management of Police Information (MoPI) Compliance**

Information deemed 'for a policing purpose' that is circulated or received by e-mail; or published/downloaded via the intranet or internet must comply with [MoPI guidelines](#).

### **7.5 Community Engagement Strategy and Standards**

This policy contributes to the Force Level Community Engagement Standards.

For more information please use the following links:

[Community Engagement Strategy](#)

[Standards](#)

### **7.6 Data Protection**

Personal data held in connection with this policy will be processed in accordance with the provision of the Data Provision Act 1998.

It is recognised that much of the information processed in accordance with this policy will entail 'sensitive personal data' as defined by the Act and this information will be subject to additional security measures to ensure it is not inappropriately recorded, processed or disclosed.

### **7.7 Freedom of Information Act**

This policy is suitable to be made available to the public.

### **7.8 Protective Markings**

This policy has been assessed as '**NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED**'

### **7.9 Health & Safety at Work**

The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and associated legislation requires all Force personnel and Independent Advisors to be mindful of health and safety when visiting Force premises. All visitors (Force personnel and Independent Advisors) to premises controlled by Thames Valley Police should be made aware of the local arrangements for managing relevant aspects of the TVP H&S manual for:

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- Fire
- First Aid
- Reporting of accidents (including incidents or near misses)

The health and safety risks are minimal-this is an administrative policy rather than operational.

**8.0 Monitoring and Review**

This Policy contributes to the following Strategic Objectives:

- To provide an effective and timely response focused on the needs of the citizen
- To conduct our policing in a neighbourhood policing style
- To improve our performance – get better at what we do
- To be ready and equipped to deal with major crime and critical incidents

A full review will be carried out by the policy author and will examine:

- Changes in legislation
- Court rulings – Domestic, European and Human Rights
- Examples of good practice from other Forces or other organisations
- Changes in Home Office Circulars
- Developments with ACPO Policy Unit
- Representations made by individuals and relevant organisations
- Relevant Race Equality data

**For use by the Policy Management Unit Only****Chief Officer Policy Authorisation**

**Policy signed off by:**

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**ACC Local Policing:**

**Date:**

## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A**Thames Valley Police  
Independent Advisory Group  
Terms of Reference**

*[Insert LPA]*

Independent involvement and advice is the process which takes place when people independent of the police service, monitor, observe or advise on aspects of policing, both in terms of the functions and policies of the service and the way in which the police interact with the broader community.

**1.0 Article 1 – Name**

- 1.1 *The group's official name will be "[insert LPA] Independent Advisory Group'.*

**2.0 Article 2 – Address**

- 2.1 *[Insert Correspondence Address]*

**3.0 Article 3 – Aims**

- 3.1 To increase the trust and confidence in policing amongst the communities within the LPA through the extension of communication and accountability of policing to the diverse communities.

**3.2 Objectives**

- 3.2.1 To critically appraise organisational policies, practices and procedures.
- 3.2.2 To make significant contributions to both strategic and tactical considerations, particularly with reference to critical incidents.
- 3.2.3 To make observations both within the police service and the role it plays in the wider community.
- 3.2.4 To instil just and fair relations between the police and the communities they serve, as well as between communities.

**4.0 Article 4 – Membership**

- 4.1 The membership of the IAG will be open to individuals who reside in the LPA or have a close affinity with the local area.
- 4.2 Recruitment to the IAG can be done in two ways: a) By personal recommendation b) Advertisement of the position.

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- 4.3 Appointment to the IAG will be the shared decision and responsibility of the IAG and Thames Valley Police.
- 4.4 The IAG will have the right to appoint or second additional members when considered appropriate.
- 4.5 Prior to membership, members must agree to a PNC check and declare any conflicts of interests that could cause issues of disrepute to the IAG.
- 4.6 Members of the IAG **may** be de-selected by the IAG in the following circumstances:
- The member has failed to attend three consecutive meetings of the IAG without giving an apology or reason that is acceptable to the IAG, other than special or urgent meetings.
  - Failure to fulfil designated actions or prepare for meetings.
  - The representative's membership would undermine the credibility and legitimacy of the group or fundamentally weaken aspects of its work.
  - Any breach of the operating protocols set out within this policy.
  - The member has broken the Code of Conduct as set out in [Appendix F](#) to this policy.
- 4.7 The final decision to de-select a member of the IAG will rest with the LPA Commander in consultation with the Independent Chair of the IAG.
- 4.8 Where there is a disagreement in relation to the de-selection of a member of the IAG and the independent Chair of the IAG and the LPA Commander are unable to resolve the issue, arbitration will be managed by the Head of Diversity.

**Article 5.0 – Meetings**

- 5.1 The IAG will meet as often as required but should meet at least 4 times a year, dates will be set as far ahead as members find convenient.
- 5.7 Members are expected to allow and encourage all colleagues to fully participate in discussions in an open, free and constructive manner.
- 5.8 It is a fundamental principle of the group that it is opposed to discrimination on the grounds of political opinion, religion, race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or age and that it shall not practice such discrimination. The group shall not give a platform to extremist political or religious groups. If the beliefs of any member will or is likely to incite racial hatred or advocate discrimination on the grounds outlined above they can be required to resign if a simple majority of the group vote in favour.
- 5.9 In order to fulfil its primary purpose of providing independent advice to Police forces, IAGs must have access to relevant, up-to-date information.

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- 5.10 Access to some information may be prohibited by law e.g. Official Secrets Act, Data Protection Act.
- 5.11 Additionally some information may be so sensitive that its divulgence would be inappropriate. This might include confidential matters relating specifically to individuals, specific intelligence in relation to a proposed sensitive policing operation, or intelligence which might compromise the safety of individuals or the police or the public at large.



## Thames Valley Police

### Force Level Strategic Independent Advisory Group

#### Terms of Reference

##### Article 1.0: Aims

The Force Level Strategic Independent Advisory Group will seek to:

- 1.1 Help us better understand the differing effects that our policies and practices might have on various communities and in so doing help us develop and operate policies and practices that do not exclude, discriminate or have an unjustifiable adverse impact on any particular community.
- 1.2 To provide advice to enable Thames Valley Police to deliver a professional and responsive service to diverse, vulnerable, socially excluded and hard to reach/hear groups in the community.
- 1.3 Increase the trust and confidence in policing amongst communities across the Force through the extension of communication and accountability of policing to diverse communities within the Thames Valley Area.

##### Article 2.0: Objectives

- 2.1 To critically appraise Force policies, practices and procedures.
- 2.2 To provide advice to both strategic and tactical considerations particularly with reference to critical incidents.
- 2.3.1 To make observations and critically appraise the police service and its role within the wider community.
- 2.4 To instil just and fair relations between the police and the communities they serve, as well as between different communities within the Thames Valley area.

##### Article 3.0: Force IAG Structure

- 3.1 The Force IAG will consist of a Force wide IAG and an IAG core group.

###### 3.1.1 **Forcewide IAG**

Membership of the Forcewide IAG will be made through expressions of interest and submission of personal details. These details will be held on a database and will enable TVP to call upon members as and when required for specific operational advice. Members of the Forcewide IAG will be invited to a annual conference. At the initial conference

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members will be asked to select between 12-20 members to form a core IAG.

**3.1.2 The core IAG**

All those who apply to become members will be invited to an initial conference. The core IAG will consist of between 12-20 members. The core IAG will be chaired by an independent person identified by the core group membership.

**Article 4.0: Roles & Responsibilities****4.1 Force Wide IAG**

The Force IAG will meet annually and will be provided with current information in relation to policing in the Thames Valley. Members of this group will also be called upon from time to time to provide specific operational advice.

**4.1.2 Core IAG**

The core IAG will strive to fulfil the aims and objectives of the IAG as set out in [Article 1](#) & [Article 2](#) of these Terms of Reference.

**Article 5.0: Membership**

- 5.1 Membership of the Force Level IAG will be open to people who reside within the Thames Valley Area including existing BCU/LPA IAG members.
- 5.2 Members of the Force IAG will be recruited through Force wide advertisement in local newspapers, bulletins etc.
- 5.3 Applications for membership will be welcomed from all members of the community that reside within the Force Area.
- 5.4 It is expected that the core Force IAG will consist of no less than 12 members and no more than 20 core members.
- 5.5 Appointment to the Force Level IAG will be the shared decision and responsibility of the IAG and Thames Valley Police.
- 5.6 Prior to membership of the core group members must agree to a PNC check and declare any conflicts of interest that could cause issues of disrepute to the IAG.
- 5.7 Members of the Force Level IAG may be deselected in the same circumstances as BCU/LPA IAG members (refer to [Appendix A](#), [Article 4.6](#))

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- 5.8 Membership of the core IAG will be reviewed every two years.
- 5.9 It is expected that members will maintain the position of core IAG membership for between 18-24 months.

**5.10 Thames Valley Police Authority and IAG Membership**

The roles and responsibilities of IAG members are set out above. TVPA is an independent body made up of local people who help oversee the work of the police. Its prime responsibility is to secure and maintain an efficient and effective police service. It does not have a role in the management of operational policing matters which are for the Chief Constable. Accordingly, and to ensure that there is no confusion of roles and responsibilities, it is not appropriate for people who serve on the Police Authority also to be members of an IAG.

**Article 6.0 : Recruitment**

- 6.1 Thames Valley Police will be seeking to recruit a broadly representative group which will include representatives of all strands of diversity (Race, Faith; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender; elderly and disabled people; Youth and also Gypsy Traveller groups and asylum/refugee agencies) from across the Force Area.
- 6.2 All those who apply to become members will be invited to an initial conference where they will be given the opportunity to work together to select suitable candidates from amongst themselves to form the core group of between 12 and 20 IAG members. A database of all applicants who applied will be held by Thames Valley Police with a view to calling upon members with specialist skills as and when required.
- 6.3 Members should be selected for what they can bring to the process and its relevance to the task.
- Demonstrable links into the diverse communities within Thames Valley and existing networks or groups concerned with issues of diversity will be valuable.
- 6.4 Members are not selected with an expectation that they would somehow represent a community in a democratic way but that the advice a member gives is founded on an understanding of a shared or common experience within a particular community or group.
- 6.5 An independent Chair will be selected from amongst the core group. The Chair will be expected to maintain the appointment for a minimum of 12 months and a maximum of 24 months

**Article 7.0: Meetings**

- 7.1 The core group of the IAG will meet as often as required but should meet at least four times a year, dates will be set as far ahead as members should find convenient.
- 7.2 A conference will be held on an annual basis which the wider group will be invited to attend. This conference will be facilitated by the core group.
- 7.3 Members are expected to allow and encourage all colleagues to duly participate in discussions in an open, free and constructive manner.
- 7.4 It is a fundamental principle of the group that it is opposed to discrimination on the grounds of political opinion, religion, race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or age and that it shall not practice such discrimination.
- 7.5 The group shall not give a platform to extremist political or religious groups. If the beliefs of any member will or is likely to, incite racial hatred or advocate discrimination on the grounds outlined above they can be required to resign if a simple majority of the group vote in favour.

**Article 8.0: Administration**

- 8.1 Administration and minute taking for Force IAG meetings will be coordinated by the Force Diversity Unit.



## Thames Valley Police

### *Independent Advisory Group Information*

#### Frequently Asked Questions

##### **What is an Independent Advisory Group?**

It is, quite simply, a group of members of the community who provide independent advice to the police.

##### **Why Independent Advice?**

We are keen to make sure that we deliver the highest quality police services to all of the communities within the LPA. However, we need the advice from members of the community to make sure that our services match the communities' needs as closely as possible.

##### **What is an Independent Advisor?**

Independent Advisors may be any members of the community. They need to have an interest in policing and its effects upon their community. We want the members to point out any criticisms they may have but also to be able to offer suggestions about how things might be done better. Members' own experiences, and those of friends and family may put them in a position to advise from experience.

##### **On whose behalf will Independent Advisors provide advice?**

We are asking for people who reflect the composition of our communities, not necessarily to represent it. Consultation through representation takes place in other ways. However, we may also ask Advisors to speak with family and friends to seek their opinion, too. Ultimately, the only person an Advisor represents is *themselves*. However, people from a community may have a better understanding of the issues affecting its members than someone who is not part of the community.

##### **What qualifications are needed?**

No formal qualifications, though we may ask for advice on formal documents. An ability to read English is desirable, but may not be essential. If the member needs to have the document in a specific format, e.g. on audio-tape or written in a specific language, we will endeavour to arrange for that to be done.

##### **What will the police do with the advice?**

The police will carefully consider the advice and will be responsible for any actions they take. **IAG members will not be responsible for the actions of the police.** There may be occasions when the police do not take any action

**NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED**

after members have advised them. This doesn't mean that we don't value the advice. However, if we do not respond to the advice, we will be responsible if anything goes wrong. We will also be expected to explain this to IAG members.

**How often will the groups meet?**

We anticipate that all of the members of each group **will meet 4 times a year**. As well as this, there may be times when a few members of the group will come together to provide advice on a specific issue. This could be, for example, to advise on the impact that a critical incident could have on a community. This could mean the police calling for independent advice at short notice, but we would try to make sure that this was done only when necessary.

**Will there be any training?**

To ensure independence, we don't generally provide any structured training. However, we believe that it may be helpful for members to have an understanding of the police organisation. We will discuss what information is needed with the individual members and arrange for it to be provided as required.



## Key Knowledge and Skills

These are the key knowledge and skills that you will need to enable you to carry out the role of Independent Advisory Group member.

### It is important for you to:

#### Be able to:

- Express and explain your own views to others
- Listen and consider other people's views
- Question and challenge the views of others in a constructive way
- Consider your own biases and prejudices
- Speak on your own behalf, rather than as a group representative
- Work as part of a team and contribute to the success of a group initiative
- Work with people from all areas of the LPA
- Work with people from **diverse** backgrounds
- Work as part of a team
- Make a contribution to influence policing strategy, policy and training.
- Contribute the time, energy and commitment to attend regular meetings.

### It would also be useful if you:

#### Have experience of:

- Working with other people on issues of mutual interest over a period of time (e.g. voluntary work)
- Sharing your views and understanding of issues with others (e.g. in a family, community or work setting)
- Situations where you needed to compromise
- Balancing commitments and time in an effective manner (e.g. managing a home, childcare and domestic responsibilities)
- Interacting with people from diverse communities.
- Attending meetings
- Working and taking decisions as part of a team or group.

#### Have an interest in:

- Policing issues and current affairs, specifically in respect of the ways in which they affect the people of your LPA.
- Challenging and combating institutional discrimination
- How Hate Crime incidents should be handled
- The issues associated with recruiting, promoting and retaining staff from under represented groups.
- How police officers and police staff should be trained.



APPENDIX E

**Independent Advisor Personal Details Form**

The information you provide will be treated in the strictest confidence.

<b>PERSONAL DETAILS</b>
<i>Title and full name:</i>
<i>Surname at birth:</i>
<i>Any other previous surnames:</i>
<i>Date of birth:</i>
<i>Place of birth:</i>
<i>Address:</i>
<i>Postcode:</i>

<p><b>Declaration</b></p> <p>I agree for Thames Valley Police to hold my details in a central, secure database. Thames Valley Police will not release my details to any third parties.</p> <p>Signed..... Print Name .....</p> <p>Date .....</p>
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## CODE OF CONDUCT & DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The Code of Conduct shall be that every member shall discharge their duty with integrity, fairness, politeness, tolerance, courtesy, respect, openness and truthfulness and without fear or favour. In particular, every member shall:

Avoid all form of harassment, victimisation, unreasonable discrimination, abusive or derisive attitudes or behaviour towards other individuals and groups;

Behave in a manner that does not bring discredit to the group;

Avoid favouritism to any particular individual or group;

Treat any information that comes into their possession during the course of their duties as confidential, and shall not use it for personal benefit, nor shall they divulge that information to other parties except in the proper course of the IAG business.

### Guiding Principles

Members of an IAG will abide by the seven Nolan Principles of Public Life:

1. **Selflessness**  
Members of an IAG should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.
2. **Integrity**  
Members of an IAG should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.
3. **Objectivity**  
In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, members of an IAG should make choices on merit.
4. **Accountability**  
Members of an IAG are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.
5. **Openness**  
Members of an IAG should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.
6. **Honesty**  
Members of an IAG have a duty to declare any private interests relating

**NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED**

to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

**7. Leadership**

Members of an IAG should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

**Confidentiality**

1. As a member of an Independent Advisory Group, you will necessarily learn of and acquire information that has not yet been made public and is still confidential. It will be regarded as a betrayal of trust to breach such confidences. You should never disclose or use confidential information arising from the work of the Group for personal advantage of yourself or of anyone known to you or to the disadvantage or discredit of the Group, Police Service or anyone else.
2. Apart from the breach of trust there may be cause for prosecution under the Data Protection Act for the breach of confidential information.

**Disclosure of Interests**

1. If you have an interest in a matter arising at a meeting of the IAG or through its work you should always disclose it. Having declared an interest you may be asked to withdraw from the meeting during discussion. It is open to you to declare an interest in any work of the IAG. Consider whether the public would regard your interest as so closely connected with the matter in question that you could not be expected to put it out of your mind.
2. The opportunity to make a declaration of interest will be given at the start of each meeting. However, members can at any point during a meeting declare an interest when it becomes apparent they have one.
3. IAG Members should declare any interest, membership, or subscription to any political party, organisation or group that may express views which inhibit community cohesion.

Signed.....Date.....



THAMES VALLEY POLICE  
FORCE DIVERSITY STRUCTURE

