



West Midlands Police and Crime Panel

Invitation to join the West Midlands Police and Crime Panel

We are looking for TWO members of the public to serve as Independent Members on the West Midlands Police and Crime Panel.

The role of the Police and Crime Panel is to both support and scrutinise the work of the directly elected Police and Crime Commissioner.

On 7 May 2020 the West Midlands will elect a new Police and Crime Commissioner, who is responsible for setting the priorities and resources for West Midlands Police, as well as supporting broader community safety activities across the region.

We are looking for two committed and energetic people to join the West Midlands Police and Crime Panel who:

- **have a genuine interest in policing, community safety and victims and the delivery of high quality services in the West Midlands;**
- **can be an independent voice alongside elected councillors, to provide constructive challenge to the Police and Crime Commissioner; and**
- **are willing to listen to the views of all sections of our local communities.**

Working alongside 12 elected councillors from the 7 local councils in the West Midlands, independent members act as a non-party-political voice for those who live and/or work in the West Midlands area.

This is an important and challenging role offering a chance to review the strategic actions and decisions taken by the Police and Crime Commissioner and to contribute to achieving an open, accountable and transparent decision making process in relation to policing and community safety issues in the West Midlands.

Terms of appointment

Appointments are for a four-year period, starting in May 2020.

This is a voluntary role, but Panel members can claim reasonable travelling and carers expenses incurred during the course of duties. You will receive induction and other appropriate training.

Applicants must be at least 18 years old and live or work within the West Midlands force area. Please see full eligibility criteria in the application pack.

The typical commitment required for this role is attendance at approximately 6 meetings a year. Meetings are generally held on Mondays 1pm-5pm, across the West Midlands. We estimate attendance at these meetings and preparation will involve half a day a month.

More information

For more information about the West Midlands Police and Crime Panel please visit www.westmidlandspcp.co.uk

For any informal enquiries about the role please contact Sarah Fradgley on telephone 0121 303 1727 or via email wmpcp@birmingham.gov.uk

To get a taster of Panel meetings watch our meeting webcasts at www.westmidlandspcp.co.uk/meeting-dates

How to apply

Application packs can be downloaded from www.westmidlandspcp.co.uk

Closing date for applications: Midnight Friday 6th March 2020

Interviews are due to be held during the week beginning: 30 March 2020

Completed forms should be emailed to: wmpcp@birmingham.gov.uk

Or posted to:

WMPCP/ Scrutiny Office
Room 331
Council House
Victoria Square
Birmingham
B1 1BB

The Panel wishes to reflect the breadth of communities in the West Midlands and welcomes applications from all sections of the community irrespective of gender, race, disability, colour, ethnic or national origin, sexuality, gender identity, marital status, responsibility for dependents, religion or trade union activity.

Background to the post

The Police and Crime Panel was established in 2012 under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. The Act introduced significant changes in governance and accountability arrangements for policing, including the introduction of directly elected Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs).

Police and Crime Panels were established in each force area to maintain a regular check and balance on the performance of their PCC.

The Police and Crime Commissioner works with the police force, local authorities, community safety partnerships and local criminal justice boards. Their responsibilities include:

- Setting the policing priorities for the West Midlands.
- Setting the budget for policing in the West Midlands and the amount of council tax local people will pay for policing.
- Appointing/ dismissing the Chief Constable and holding them to account for the performance of the force.
- Providing the local link between the police and communities and working to translate the needs of the public into action.
- Preparing a Police and Crime Plan.
- Publishing an Annual Report on performance against the objectives contained within the Police and Crime Plan.
- Monitoring all complaints made against officers and staff and having responsibility for complaints against the Chief Constable.

The Chief Constable works closely with the PCC but retains responsibility for the day to day control of operational policing.

The Police and Crime Panel scrutinises the PCC, promotes openness in the transaction of police business and supports the PCC in the effective exercise of their functions. The Panel's responsibilities include:

- Reviewing the Police and Crime Plan issued by the PCC ensuring it reflects the priorities of residents.
- Reviewing the PCC's Annual report.
- Reviewing senior appointments made by the PCC.
- Reviewing the PCC's proposal for the level of council tax to be paid for policing.
- It can suspend the Commissioner in some circumstances of illegal activity.
- It must appoint an Acting Commissioner if there is a vacancy.
- Handling complaints about the conduct of the PCC.

The West Midlands Police and Crime Panel consists of 12 councillors from the 7 local authorities within the West Midlands Force area, together with two independent co-opted members.

The local authorities represented are:

- Birmingham City Council
- Coventry City Council
- Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
- Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
- Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
- Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
- Wolverhampton City Council

Roles and Responsibilities

All independent members have full voting rights and will have access to the same level of support and information as elected members on the Panel. The core role of both elected members and independent members on the panel is to:

- Scrutinise the work of the PCC to ensure the PCC is discharging their functions effectively.
- Bring any specialist knowledge, skills, experience and expertise they may have to the scrutiny work of the Panel.
- Ensure that there is an effective independent challenge to the PCC and that this challenge is constructive to support the PCC in carrying out their role.

Independent co-optees will also act as a non-party-political voice for those who live and/or work in the West Midlands area.

As a co-opted member of the Police and Crime Panel you would be expected to:

- Attend and constructively participate in all meetings of the Panel (approximately 6 per year).
- Establish good relations with other members and officers.
- Attend additional meetings e.g. working groups or evidence gathering sessions as required.
- Prepare for each meeting by reading the agenda, papers and additional information to familiarise yourself with the issues to be covered during the meeting.
- Prepare suitable questions to put to the PCC and other expert witnesses.
- At the meetings you will need to listen carefully, ask questions in a way which is non-judgmental, respects confidentiality and helps the Panel to make practical suggestions.
- Assist in the preparation of reports and the formulation of recommendations. This may involve volunteering to participate in a Task Group to conduct an in-depth scrutiny into a topic.
- Attend training and development events as needed.
- Abide by the Panel Arrangements and Rules of Procedure (See www.westmidlandspcp.co.uk which set out how the Police and Crime Panel operates.

- Keep abreast of the key issues in relation to the responsibilities of the PCC and the priorities within the Police and Crime Plan.
- Contribute to achieving an open, accountable and transparent decision-making process in relation to policing and community safety issues in the West Midlands area.

Eligibility Criteria for Independent Panel Members

To be eligible to be co-opted as an independent panel member:

- You must be at least 18 years old.
- You must live or work in the West Midlands Police Force 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 force area. If you move house or job and no longer live or work in the force area, you will no longer be able to serve on the Panel.

The following people cannot be considered for a position as an independent panel member:

- The Police and Crime Commissioner or a member of their staff.
- A member of the civilian staff of the West Midlands Police Force
- A Member of Parliament.
- A Member of the National Assembly for Wales, the Scottish Parliament or the European Parliament.
- A police officer.¹
- Persons who do not live or work in the area of the police force area.
- Civil Servants engaged in political activity.
- An elected Member of Birmingham City Council, Coventry City Council, Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council and Wolverhampton City Council.

¹ Police officers are not covered by the restrictions on membership of the panel in Section 22 in Schedule 6. Also police officers do not fall within Section 22 (a) as members of staff of the PCC as this category covers people appointed under Section 6 of Schedule 1. However, under section 1(2)(a) of Schedule 1 to the Police Regulations 2003 (S.I. 2003/527) a member of a police force may not "take any active part in politics". The Home Office would regard co-option to a panel, for the purpose of scrutinising an elected PCC, as taking an active part in politics, and accordingly as being prohibited for police officers.

Nolan Principles of Public Life

Panel Members are also be expected to adhere to the Nolan Seven Principles of Public Life listed below:

You would also be expected to sign up to Birmingham City Council's code of conduct.

Nolan Principles²

Selflessness: Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

Integrity: Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity: In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability: Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness: Holders of public office 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.

Honesty: Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership: Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

² Nolan Committee's First Report on Standards in Public Life from the First Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life (1995).

Person Specification for Independent Panel Members

Candidates will need to demonstrate the following competencies and personal qualities through application form and interview:

Experience:

- An interest in policing/community safety issues and current affairs, specifically in respect of the ways in which they affect the people of your area is expected.
- This is a voluntary role and no specific professional knowledge or experience is required. Applicants may draw on their background and experience gained in their working life, their involvement in the community, voluntary work or other experiences.

Availability:

- Able to attend meetings in the daytime at various locations throughout the West Midlands at least six times a year.
- A willingness to attend any appropriate training sessions.

Preparation:

- Candidates should have the time energy and commitment to prepare for and participate constructively at Panel meetings. We suggest around half a day a month would be required to be devoted to this role.

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 the priorities of the Police and Crime Commissioner, assessing candidates for top level appointments or considering complaints against the Police and Crime Commissioner.
- **The ability to be supportive:** To be able to support the PCC and the other members of the Panel in delivering their duties.
- **The ability to scrutinise and challenge:** To be able to rigorously scrutinise and challenge constructively without becoming confrontational, 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 communicate effectively both verbally and in writing – and to interact positively with other members of the Panel, the PCC and the public.

Personal Qualities:

- **Team working:** The ability to play an effective role in meetings through listening, persuading and showing respect for the views of others.
- **Self-confidence:** The skill to challenge accepted views constructively without becoming confrontational and show resilience even in challenging circumstances, remaining calm and confident and able to make difficult decisions.
- **Enthusiasm and drive:** The ability to be proactive in seeking out learning and developmental opportunities to enhance 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.