

**CPS North East Joint Community Involvement Panels**

**Terms of Reference**

CPS North East has three Community Involvement Panels (CIPs), being Cleveland CIP, Durham CIP and Northumbria CIP. These three Panels (the Area CIPs) together form the CPS North East Joint Community Involvement Panels (Joint CIPs).

The overarching aims of the Joint CIPs are to:

* Assist CPS North East to ensure effective delivery of its Community Engagement Strategy and its Equality and Diversity Strategy
* Ensure that CPS North East involves and considers the views of all communities to identify local concerns
* Undertake consultation with local communities on strategies, plans and policies to inform and improve policy, casework, employment and training

In addition a subgroup of the Joint CIPs will scrutinise Disability Hate Crime cases to improve local performance and support to victims and witnesses

**Membership**

All members of the Area CIPs are members of the Joint CIPs. New members will be recruited to the Area CIPs as and when agreed by the Joint CIPs, ensuring balance between the three Areas. Recruitment will be conducted by the Area Business Manager (ABM) and the Area Equality, Diversity and Community Engagement Manager (EDCEM), as against a Role Description and Person Specification agreed by the Panel members, by inviting applications on an agreed application form.

Community contacts and the ability to disseminate messages about the work of the Joint CIPs and the work of the CPS are important considerations in the recruitment of new members, and the membership of the Joint CIPs should be reflective of the variety of communities in the North East. However, membership is individual: no member represents any group; members are expected to attend meetings personally, and may not send a deputy. (The exception being that Victim Support is invited to nominate a representative for each of the Area CIPs, but membership is then personal to the individual representative).

Membership will be offered for an initial period of 2 years, subject to review after 12 months.

All members will be required to undergo CPS Security Clearance.

**CPS Representation and Roles**

1. The Joint CIPs will be chaired by the **Area Business Manager**. Once a year, usually in February/March, the meeting will be chaired by the **Chief Crown Prosecutor** (CCP). The ABM and CCP when present will chair Area CIP meetings.
2. The **Business Change and Delivery Manager** (BCDM) will attend meetings where possible to inform the Panel of developments in relation to his work, and to ensure that his work is informed by the views of Panel members. The BCDM when present will chair Area CIP meetings.
3. **The EDCEM** co-ordinates meetings, liaises with Panel members between meetings, and ensures that recommendations from the Panel meetings are disseminated across the Area as necessary. The EDCEM prepares the agenda for Panel meetings, in consultation with the ABM and taking into account any agenda items suggested by the Panel members. The EDCEM will chair Area CIP meetings when required. The EDCEM selects the file for scrutiny by the Disability Hate Crime Scrutiny Group.
4. **The Panels Administrator** is responsible for the administration of Panel meetings, including booking the venue and catering for meetings; copying papers for the Panel; liaising with Panel members as to their availability and any specific needs they may have in relation to attendance at meetings; taking minutes of the meetings and processing Panel member expenses claims
5. **The Deputy Chief Crown Prosecutor** (DCCP) or CCP when present chairs the Disability Hate Crime Group and ensures that recommendations from the group are implemented as appropriate
6. **The Area Hate Crime Co-ordinator** attends the Disability Hate Crime Group to answer questions and to ensure that the views of the Group inform the improvement of Disability Hate Crime prosecutions.

The North East Liaison Manager for **CPS Direct** attends meetings of the Disability Hate Crime Group when available, to answer questions and to ensure that learning from the group is disseminated across CPS Direct as appropriate.

Other members of CPS North East staff attend meetings on an ad hoc basis as and when required

**Meetings**

The Joint CIPs will meet three times per year, normally in or around February, June and October in each year. Meetings are held in County Durham, and usually start at 10.00 a.m. and finish at 4.00 p.m.

Each meeting of the Joint CIPs will include:

* An update on actions taken to implement recommendations from the last meeting, and consideration of any matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting
* An Area Update – updating Panel members on developments within the Area since the last meeting and inviting comment
* Consideration of Area performance data for the last complete quarter
* Separate meetings of the Area CIPs to consider local issues and local implications of Area-wide issues
* A session of the Disability Hate Crime Group

Panel members are invited to raise with the EDCEM any items of concern or interest relevant to CPS business for inclusion in the agenda for a future meeting

At the meeting in or around February each year, the Panels will be consulted as to priorities for the Area Business Plan for the following year

The Panels will be consulted on relevant Area policies and strategies, and Area implementation of national policies and strategies.

**Code of Conduct for Panel members**

1. All members must declare to the EDCEM or ABM any paid work they provide to any Criminal Justice or other relevant agencies if it is likely to have relevance to their role on the Panels
2. Members should not use their membership of the Panel for financial gain or other personal advantage. This will not, however, prevent members from referring to their membership in CVs, job applications etc. If there is any doubt, members should refer to the ABM or EDCEM.
3. Information provided to members in confidence must not be disclosed outside the Panels. Panel members are expected to pass on information to their communities about the Panels and their work, and the role of the CPS, but information about individuals should not be disclosed. At Panel meetings key messages for communities will be agreed. If Panel members are in any doubt as to what should be kept confidential, they should seek advice from the ABM or EDCEM. Panel members undertake not to disclose any information expressly given to them in confidence (including information disclosed by other Panel members).
4. Any engagement with the media about the business of the Panels should be conducted by the ABM or the Area Communications Manager. Panel members should consult with the EDCEM before discussing any issues relating to the business of the Panels with the media, or releasing any information through community newsletters.
5. Members will treat all Panel members, all CPS and police staff and all guest speakers with respect
6. Members will value diversity and avoid any comments, statements or actions which may be offensive to other Panel members
7. Members commit to attendance at meetings unless there is good reason why they are unable to attend.
8. Members will notify the EDCEM immediately if they become aware of any matters which may affect their Security Clearance

**CPS Commitments**

CPS North East will:

1. Arrange three meetings of the Joint CIPs each year, dates to be agreed in advance in accordance with the availability of the majority of Panel members
2. Provide Minutes of each meeting to the Panel members
3. Meet Panel members’ reasonable travel expenses and endeavour to meet other reasonable expenses incurred as a result of attendance at Joint CIPs meetings, upon production of a completed expenses claim form and all required receipts
4. Provide training to Panel members as requested
5. Note all recommendations agreed by the Panels, act upon them whenever possible, and report back to the Panels on actions taken to implement Panel recommendations

**De-selection**

A member may be de-selected from the Panel if they are reasonably believed to be in breach of the Code of Conduct set out above. A Panel member who fails to attend three consecutive meetings will automatically be liable for de-selection, unless there are extenuating circumstances. The following procedure will be followed in any instance where there is cause for concern in relation to a Panel member’s conduct. It is the intention that any complaints should be resolved as quickly as possible, and within a reasonable time.

1. Any complaint about a Panel member’s conduct should be addressed to the ABM as Chair of the Panels. Complaints may be made by another Panel member, by any member of CPS staff, or by any member of the community who is concerned about the conduct of a Panel member. The ABM may also instigate this process if they have concerns of their own. The complaint need not be in writing nor in any specific format.
2. On receiving a complaint, the ABM and the EDCEM will consider how best to ensure that the complainant and the Panel member concerned may be supported throughout the process.
3. The EDCEM will speak to the complainant to ensure that the nature of the complaint is fully understood and that the complainant is aware that the complaint is receiving full consideration.
4. The ABM and EDCEM will then meet with the Panel member who is the subject of the complaint, to explain the nature of the complaint and invite the Panel member to respond.
5. The ABM and EDCEM will then discuss how to resolve the matter. If it is their view that the Panel member concerned has breached the commitments set out above, and that their continued membership of the Panel will be damaging to the effective working of the Panels or to the Panels’ reputation in the community, they may require the Panel member to leave the Panel. Any such decision will be explained to the Panel member, and confirmed in writing.
6. Any Panel member required to leave the Panel under this process who is dissatisfied with that decision, may contact the Chief Crown Prosecutor to request a review of the decision.

**Panel member concerns**

Any Panel member who has concerns about the running of the Panel should raise these with either the ABM or the EDCEM. The ABM and EDCEM will then meet to discuss how best to address the concerns raised, and will provide a full response. If the Panel member remains dissatisfied, then he or she should follow the CPS complaints procedure, a copy of which will be supplied on request.

**Disability Hate Crime Group**

Panel members who volunteer to join the Disability Hate Crime Group (the Group) will always attend Group sessions of meetings which they attend. The Group will be a closed group, and new members will be admitted only when new members are recruited to the Panels.

The Group will work with CPS North East to improve performance in the prosecution of disability hate crimes and to improve the services offered by the CPS to victims of disability hate crimes. The Group will achieve this by scrutinising finalised disability hate crime cases.

Meetings of the Group will be chaired by the DCCP or CCP. At each meeting the Group will scrutinise one disability hate crime file, selected by the EDCEM, and rotating between the three police force areas covered by CPS North East. A representative of the relevant police force will be invited to attend meetings of the Group.

New members of the Group will receive training on prosecution processes to assist them in understanding the files and the issues arising from scrutiny of the files.

Group members are expected to scrutinise cases objectively. The following applies whenever a victim, witness or defendant in a case to be scrutinised is known to a Group member:

* The member must notify the Chair as soon as they realise that an individual involved in the case is known to them, and must not then read the rest of the file until a decision has been made
* The Group will then consider whether there is a conflict of interest for that member in discussing that case, and whether the member’s ability to take an objective view of the case has been compromised. If deemed appropriate by the Group, the member will leave the meeting
* If a Group member takes the view that there is a conflict of interest or their objectivity is compromised, then they should immediately stop reading the case and leave the meeting
* If a Group member finds discussion of a case too distressing, then they may leave the meeting

Group members must not discuss with anyone outside of the Group the personal details of any victim, witness or defendant in any of the cases scrutinised. At the end of each Group meeting key messages will be agreed by the Group for dissemination amongst communities. At this point any doubts as to information to be disseminated can be discussed and resolved. If Group members are in any doubt as to what information they should and should not disclose, they should seek advice from either the DCCP or the EDCEM.

I agree the above Terms of Reference and accept the Panel Member commitments set out therein.

I am/am not a member of the Disability Hate Crime Group.

Signed:………………………………………………………

Name (please print) ………………………………………

Date:………………………………………………………..