



External event participation

Position statement 2026

Introduction

The IOPC has a statutory duty to secure public confidence in the police complaints system. Staff participation at external events — any event for which we are not the organiser — is a potential means of achieving this objective, to make our work more accessible, understood, and trusted by everyone. Staff participation at external events may also carry operational and reputational risks for the IOPC, so it is important that such participation is carefully managed and overseen.

This position statement sets out the purpose and expectations for staff participation in external events, and how such engagement supports our statutory duties, values and responsibilities.

Legal and policy context

Under [section 10](#) of the *Police Reform Act 2002*, we have a statutory duty to secure public confidence in the police complaints system. Our attendance and engagement at any external events will be determined by whether it is the most appropriate way of delivering this statutory duty.

Attendance is also informed by our strategic objectives, [organisational values](#) and Code of Conduct. Our [service standards](#) set out a commitment to ensuring our services are accessible to all, and that everyone we deal with is treated with respect and courtesy. We believe in fair and impartial treatment of all individuals; inclusivity is one of the IOPC's [core values](#), which underpin all our work. It is also important that our work is evidence-led, proportionate, and equitable. Our Conflicts of Interest Policy makes clear that independence is fundamental to the IOPC's credibility, and recognises that the IOPC must deliver, and be seen to deliver, our public duties free from any bias.

The IOPC owes obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED, [section 149 of the Equality Act 2010](#)). The PSED requires us, in the exercise of our functions, to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity between those who

share a protected characteristic¹ and those who do not share it, and to foster good working relations between different groups. One of the ways we demonstrate compliance with the PSED is through the completion of equality impact assessments (EIAs), which help us identify and mitigate — where possible — potential adverse impacts on people with protected characteristics. In addition to the Equality Act duties, the [Welsh Language \(Wales\) Measure 2011](#) created a duty for public sector organisations operating within Wales to treat the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language. To ensure that we can fulfil the [Welsh Language Standards](#), the IOPC includes Welsh Language as an additional consideration in our EIAs.

Our position

Staff participation in public, community, and stakeholder events can help ensure our work delivers our statutory duty by enabling us to understand and meet the needs of the communities we serve. It also demonstrates our commitment to fairness and transparency for all involved in the complaints process.

To enable the delivery of our statutory duty, it is important that we engage with a wide range of groups, individuals and organisations, and we value all feedback we receive from stakeholders. Our presence at events does not mean we endorse the views or positions of organisers or participants. It is important that we always remain independent and impartial. We recognise that some events bring together people or perspectives with which others may disagree. Our stakeholders can hold differing and sometimes opposing views. This does not mean we agree with everything they say, but by engaging with them, we are able to use their feedback to inform our work, where relevant.

The IOPC may decide to authorise staff participation at an external event when, in the view of the IOPC, such participation would:

- further the aim of securing public confidence on the police complaints system.
- further the aim of ensuring that IOPC services are accessible to all; and/or
- further the aim of promoting an inclusive and supportive work culture for IOPC staff.

The IOPC will not authorise staff participation at an external event when, in the view of the IOPC, such participation would:

- undermine the independence of the IOPC, or compromise the IOPC's ability to deliver, and be seen to deliver, our public duties free from any bias; and/or
- compromise the IOPC's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, and the fair and impartial treatment of all individuals.

¹ As outlined in the Equality Act 2010: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief sex, and sexual orientation.

In deciding whether to authorise staff participation at an external event, the IOPC will have regard to all the circumstances of the event in question, and the extent to which the attendance of IOPC staff at the event will serve the purposes set out above. In that regard, relevant factors include (but are not limited to):

- the nature of the event in question (including its intended audience, the size of the event, the location of the event, etc).
- the nature of the participation of IOPC staff in the event (what they would be doing, the extent of their opportunity to engage with the community, etc).
- the cost associated with the IOPC's participation in the event.
- any operational and reputational risks associated with participation in the event by IOPC staff.
- whether the event serves a community with historically low engagement with, or trust and confidence in, the police complaints process.

In deciding whether to authorise staff participation at an external event, it is important that the IOPC has regard to the equalities implications of participation. This includes areas such as the following:

- Equality considerations are always fully integrated into our planning and decision-making.
- A full EIA will not be required to be completed for IOPC staff's participation at every external event. However, where, having regard to the nature of the activity, its potential impact and associated risks, the IOPC considers that a full EIA is required, the IOPC will record its consideration of the equalities implications of participation in that event.

Further detail is set out in the FAQs, which should be read together with this position statement.

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