

Election Guidance - 60 Second Briefing

For Police Officers and Police Staff

This Briefing summarises the main features of the Guidance (dated November 2019) from the Chief Constable and Chief Executive upon engagement with Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) candidates.

The full Guidance is available on the Force Intranet and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner's website.

General

- On 2 May 2024 elections will take place to elect PCCs – one for each police area.
- The actions of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), Constabulary, police officers and staff towards candidates should be completely impartial.
- Activity and contact with candidates should not favour nor have the appearance of favouring one candidate over another.
- Activity should not affect or influence, nor have the appearance of affecting nor influencing the outcome of the election.
- There should be even-handedness in meeting information requests from candidates.

Requests for Information

- Written requests for information from candidates should be passed to the Deputy Chief Constable for response by the Chief Executive.

Requests for Visits

- Requests by candidates to visit police premises for fact finding and briefings are regarded as reasonable.

- Visits to police premises to generate publicity for a candidate are not reasonable and must be refused.
- Officers and police staff should maintain a record of any meetings that are held with candidates.

Use of Police Images and Livery

- The use of OPCC/Constabulary imagery and livery must not be used in any political material.

Communications and Media

- Any factual inaccuracies or misunderstandings in candidate communications that could undermine confidence in policing should be referred to the Chief Constable and Chief Executive for consideration of action.
- Caution should be exercised by police officers and staff in being photographed or filmed with candidates to ensure it is not for party political purposes.

Police Officers

- Must remind themselves of the statutory provisions relating to their office and elections and political activity.
- These provisions mean that in the lead up to 2 May 2024 no police officer should make any statement or take any action that could:
 - be seen as encouraging anyone to vote or not to vote;
 - be seen as supporting one candidate over another;
 - be seen as supporting or attacking any point of view that may form the basis of a candidate's campaign;
 - be seen as attacking a candidate.

Police Staff

- Must remind themselves of the provisions of the Constabulary policy upon "Politically Restricted Posts".

Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity

In general, no publicity should be issued by the Constabulary/OPCC that seeks to influence voters in the pre-election period (likely to be six weeks before the election).

If in doubt queries should be referred to the Chief Constable and/or Chief Executive. The full Election Guidance can be viewed on the Election page of the OPCC's website.

14 February 2024