



Endorsement Policy (Surrey and Sussex) (1203/2025)

Abstract

This policy and procedure applies to police officers, police staff, Special Constables and volunteers and outlines the Surrey Police and Sussex Police approach to endorsement activity.

Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy outlines the Surrey Police and Sussex Police (hereafter referred to as the Forces) approach to endorsement activity and the governance surrounding this activity put in place by the Surrey Corporate Communications Department and the Sussex Media and Communications Department.

Commercial endorsement is when the Forces, or representatives of, give an intentional or perceived approval and/or support to another organisation, individual, product, service or activity that will or could result in commercial gain or advantage.

For example, liking a business, service, or product such as Apple using a Force social media account.

Non-commercial endorsement occurs when an event, service, product, or activity organised is publicly supported by the Forces or representatives of, and the benefit from doing so does not involve a commercial benefit.

For example, supporting The Children's Society during the County Lines Intensification Week by liking and sharing social media posts.

1.2 In line with the Code of Ethics this policy ensures activity is carried out consistently and for a legitimate purpose adhering to national best practice and demonstrating openness and integrity.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy and linked guidance cover all aspects of endorsement activity including commercial and non-commercial endorsement.

3. Policy Statement

3.1 This policy applies to all police officers, police staff, Special Constables and volunteers and is to ensure that our actions are in keeping with the Code of Ethics and that we do the right things, in the right way for the right reasons, communicating and

being accountable for decisions, and standing against anything that could bring our profession into disrepute.

Procedure

1. Overview

1.1 As a police service, we challenge all activity which could undermine the impartiality of policing as defined in the Code of Ethics values and ethical standards.

Commercial endorsements have the potential to harm the reputation and reduce public confidence in the Forces and in policing. Endorsement decisions must be made in accordance with the National Decision Model (NDM).

The College of Policing states: “We do not favour one person or group over another, acknowledging that discrimination increases feelings of unfairness and makes our jobs harder to do. We must not allow personal feelings, beliefs, or opinions to unfairly influence our actions in any situation.”

All members of Surrey Police and Sussex Police, therefore, as ambassadors, have a role to play in ensuring we represent the Forces with professionalism and without bias.

2. Commercial Endorsement

2.1 Forms of commercial endorsement could include:

- Use of the Forces’ logo.
- Use of any element of the Force’s brand which is visual or audio that can imply, or be perceived as, endorsement.
- Any written or quoted text by an individual employed by the Forces.
- An organisation directly or perceived to be trading on the name, image or in association with the Forces.
- An organisation receiving a commercial benefit through association with the Forces.
- A monetary value being placed on the benefit resulting from association with the Forces.

2.2 Examples of commercial endorsement activity include, but are not limited to:

- Commenting about general policing or the Forces use of a product and/or service or providing written text or verbal quote to a vendor.
- Representing the Forces at an event without a policing purpose where the organisation’s objective is to generate sales.
- Liking a business, service or product using a Force social media account.
- Agreeing use of the Force’s crests or any elements of the brand on external materials and/or channels without prior agreement from the respective Force Corporate Communications or Media and Communications Department.

3. Commercial Endorsement – Must Nots

3.1 Commercial endorsement is high risk, as it can provide little control over product or service quality, or the manner in which a commercial organisation or individual may use the association with the Forces.

3.2 Commercial endorsement in any form is therefore prohibited, unless with a caveat outlined in this policy and with the express permission of the respective Force.

3.3 The Forces must not endorse organisations, individuals, products, services, or activities including, but not limited to, the following channels

- Through the Forces' website.
- Taking part in adverts, media, social media of external organisations as a representative of the Forces.
- Video, radio, audio advertising.
- Force wide social media accounts.
- Force district social media accounts.
- Individual police officer or police staff corporate social media accounts.
- Personal social media account or other channel where you state you are employed by the Forces.
- Providing testimonials on a product or service.

These channels must not be used for any commercial purpose or to endorse or recommend products or services, unless specifically agreed with the respective Corporate Communications or Media and Communications Department in advance.

If you wish to endorse a product through a specific channel not listed above, you must speak with your Corporate Communications or Media and Communications Department before proceeding although it should be noted that very few requests will meet the criteria to agree any form of commercial endorsement.

Content on these channels must only contain information which is consistent with our core policing purpose and in keeping with the values of honesty and integrity.

As stipulated in the Standards of Professional Behaviour, you must:

- Act with honesty and integrity at all times.
- Use your position, police identification, or warrant card for policing purposes only, and not to gain a personal advantage that could give the impression you are abusing your position.
- Demonstrate integrity and understand the need to be truthful in accounting for your decisions and actions.
- Challenge all prejudice, discriminatory behaviour and any activity that undermines the impartiality of policing.

- Be open and transparent, clearly communicating our rationale for the decisions and actions you take.

3.4 In all cases, clarification must be sought on a proposed endorsement. If individuals are unsure whether they should declare, or whether an activity constitutes endorsement, clarification must be sought from respective Corporate Communications or Media and Communications Department.

4. Providing References for a Vendor and/or Supplier

4.1 Police officers, police staff, Special Constables and/or volunteers may occasionally speak at a conference or provide comment on experiences using a particular product.

Comment must be limited to factual experience only regarding how the Forces uses that product and the policing environment and be impartial. Any subjective comments must be excluded as can be perceived as endorsement.

The comments must not be a statement of support or provide a personal opinion about a product.

Any agreed statement must only be for the purpose for which it has been stated, for example for use on a press release. Any other use of the agreed statement must be submitted as a separate request.

4.2 The comments must be approved by the respective Force Corporate Communications or Media and Communications Department.

5. Endorsements for Film and Television

5.1 If individuals receive a direct request from a production company to participate in a film or television production, you must contact the respective Force Corporate Communications or Media and Communications Department in the first instance where the request will be allocated to a member of the team to consider.

5.2 It is the responsibility of the media teams to progress requests from television and film production companies. If you are approached by a production company, ask the contact to send the request to the media team in Surrey or the media team in Sussex who will assess the request before confirming and liaise with relevant stakeholders prior to coming to a decision about participating.

6. Non-commercial Endorsement

6.1 The Forces regularly support community activities, charities, and local events.

These activities can enhance public confidence and improve engagement with local communities.

Non-commercial endorsement must be consistent with the policing principles of doing the right thing in the right way for the right reasons. Every person working for the police service must work honestly and ethically.

The Forces can provide non-commercial endorsement if:

1. the endorsement is for an activity, service, or event, and

2. the activity or event is organised by a government agency, not for profit community organisation / charity, and

3. the activity, service, or event:

- works in line with Forces' priorities and is not in direct conflict
- does not create an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest between the organisation and the Forces
- does not bring the Forces reputation or public image into disrepute, and
- does not conflict with our priorities.

The above list is not exhaustive, it is not possible to provide a definitive list of specific examples of non-commercial endorsement. Therefore, applications will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

The test will be whether the endorsement is compatible with the police Force and does not conflict with the Standards of Professional Behaviour as stated in the Code of Ethics.

6.2 There must be no commercial benefit or profit to the Forces, nor must the commercial benefit be attributed to our presence. Attendance must be in good faith. This means that any money raised by the event or activity must directly benefit the charity or community organisation.

7. The Forces use of Products and Services

7.1 Suppliers must request permission from the respective Force Corporate Communications or Communications and Media Department before advertising that they are a supplier of products or services to the Forces.

7.2 Suppliers must not claim endorsement from the Forces by using the police corporate logo, images of staff, or police equipment in advertising or promotions where there is a commercial gain or which puts, or has the potential to put, the Force's reputation into disrepute.

As a public body, the police service has a duty to be factual and transparent. The Forces are not able to endorse a company, its product or service due to ethical and equality purposes in terms of competitive supplier relationships but also in terms of potential reputational risk and liability.

7.3 The exception to Forces providing a commercial endorsement to a product, or service is when that product or service is used for a policing purpose, has no personal gain or benefit, and has prior authorisation from the respective Corporate Communications or Media and Communications Department.

Examples of things that are acceptable in line with this policy include:

Promotion of a product or service.

Example: Secured by Design, which is a national police initiative to support reductions in crime through design, approved products and other approaches to safeguard homes. This in turn reduces the demand on police Forces and help people live in a safer society.

Endorsement through branding with the Force's logo.

Example: Police logo on a hate crime poster on local buses to support local organisations with initiatives to reduce the fear of crime on public transport and encourage victims and witnesses to report.

Promoting the use of a digital app which meets the Forces priorities.

Example: An app called what3words is recommended by police Forces nationally which generates three random words which can then be used to pinpoint a location if someone gets lost.

Providing a factual statement to a supplier of a product used by the Forces.

Example: Motorola issued a press release stating that Surrey Police and Sussex Police are using them as a supplier for body-worn video cameras including the following quote from the Forces:

"Our new body-worn cameras will be fully integrated into our Pronto digital policing software and are an essential tool for our front-line officers, offering them added protection as well as increasing their efficiency whilst carrying out complex operational duties."

7.4 Any requests for promotional opportunities must go to the respective Corporate Communications or Media and Communications Department in the first instance.

8. Use of a Force Logo

8.1 Requests for the use of a Force logo must go to the Corporate Communications team in Surrey or the Digital Creative Services team in Sussex in the first instance. No agreement is to be made for any organisation or person to use a Force logo without prior consent from these teams first.

9. Applications for Endorsement

9.1 Requests for endorsement from Surrey Police or Sussex Police must be via email to the respective Force Corporate Communications or Media and Communications Department and include:

- Details on the event, service, product, or activity to be endorsed.
- The organisation, person or charity organising the event or activity.
- Details of any other organisations involved in the event.
- Details on the type of police endorsement sought the below list is not exhaustive:
- Use of the Forces' crest on posters and/or other printed material.
- Any element of the Forces' branding – visual or audio.
- Displaying promotional material to the public and/or staff in police stations.
- Allowing staff to be photographed in uniform as part of the event promotions.
- Participation of uniformed police in the event.

- Commentary from police staff / officers.
- Prior approval from any other relevant business areas (e.g. Professional Standards Departments / Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT)).

9.2 Corporate Communications or the Media and Communications Department will seek to provide a decision within five working days. This may be delayed if liaison with other business areas and/or legal advice is required.

9.3 Corporate Communications or the Media and Communications Department will record and provide a clear audit trail for all such requests.

10. Discreditable Conduct

10.1 It is the responsibility of all police officers, police staff, Special Constables, and volunteers to report any concerns about an endorsement through their line manager.

Intentional and deliberate commercial endorsement which has not been approved and which has the potential to bring either Force into disrepute may be considered as misconduct and investigated by the respective Force Professional Standards Department.

11. Supporting Documents

11.1 The following policies and guidelines are of relevance:

Donations and Sponsorship Received from Members of the Public, Companies and other Bodies Policy (Surrey and Sussex) (489)

Media Relations and Integrity Policy (1125)

Media Engagement (Surrey)

Corporate Identity and Branding Policy (1123)

Police Staff Disciplinary Policy (Surrey and Sussex) (797)

Business Interests and Additional Work Policy (Surrey and Sussex) (965)

Code of Practice for Ethical Policing including Duty of Candour (College of Policing)

Team: Media & Communications Dept & Corporate Comms