



Political Restrictions for Police Staff (Surrey and Sussex) (1217/2025)

Abstract

The aim of this document is to outline the legislation in relation to the political restriction of posts and to determine which posts the political restriction applies to, the nature of the restrictions themselves and the means by which certain post holders can seek exemption from any political restrictions.

This policy only applies to police staff. Information in relation to police officer restrictions can be found in Regulation 6 (schedule 1) of the Police Regulations 2003.

Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 In 1989, the [Local Government and Housing Act 1989 \(LGHA 1989\)](#) introduced the principle of 'politically restricted posts' and of restricting the political activities of local authority employees.

The [Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#) made amendments to the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 in respect of the approach to identifying posts which are politically restricted by removing the duty to maintain a list of posts earning above a nominated salary. This took effect from 12 January 2010 with the result that authorities needed to review the posts previously considered to be politically restricted by virtue of salary level to assess whether they should be genuinely politically restricted by virtue of the duties they perform.

The 1989 Act was further amended by the [Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#), to require that every member of the staff of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), except the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, holds a politically restricted 'specified' post. Political restriction does not apply to the Police and Crime Commissioner.

All these post holders are politically restricted without rights of appeal for exemption, unless they were identified as being 'sensitive' posts, where appeals against the designation could be made.

The effect of occupying a politically restricted post is to prevent that individual from having any active political role either in or outside of the workplace. Politically restricted employees will automatically be disqualified from standing for or holding elected office. They are also restricted from canvassing on behalf of a political party or a person who is or seeks to be a candidate and speaking to the public at large or publishing any written or artistic work that could give the impression that they are advocating support for a political party.

The cumulative effect of these restrictions is to limit the holders of politically restricted posts to bare membership of political parties, with no active participation within the party permitted.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to police staff under the direction and control of the Chief Constable and staff of the OPCC.

Police officers are not covered by the provisions of the Local Government Housing Act 1989. However, [Regulation 6 \(schedule 1\) of the Police Regulations 2003](#) sets out specific restrictions on the private lives of officers.

These restrictions should be read in conjunction with the Code of Ethics which outline the expect standards of professional behaviour which applies to all staff and officers.

3. Policy Statement

3.1 Policies and associated guidance should inform decision making which should consider organisational values, professional judgement (on the context and circumstances of each situation) and 'policing principles'. Decisions and subsequent action taken should be proportionate, legitimate and ethical as informed by the National Decision Model.

Procedure

1. Forward

1.1 The public expects the highest standards of integrity and behaviour from the police service. It is vital that members of Surrey Police and Sussex Police and the OPCC secure and maintain the confidence of communities in line with the standards of professional behaviour.

1.2 The Forces need to protect the interests and integrity of all police officers and certain members of police staff in relation to possible allegations of political bias or favour that could arise through any political affiliations or activity. This applies equally to the OPCC.

1.3 This procedure clearly sets out the position for all members of the Forces in relation to political activity.

2. Restrictions

2.1 Where a post is politically restricted the holder shall not:

- Stand as a member of:
- The House of Commons; or
- Any local authority.

- Act as an election agent or sub-agent for a candidate for Parliament, or any local authority.
- Be an officer of any political party or of any branch of such a party or a member of any committee or sub-committee of such a party or branch if their duties as such an officer or member would be likely to require them:
- To participate in the general management of the party or the branch; or
- To act on behalf of the party or branch in dealings with persons other than members of the party or members of another political party associated with the party.
- Canvass on behalf of any political party or on behalf of any person who is, or proposes to be, a candidate for election to Parliament or any local authority.

2.2 Police staff can take part in the following political activities:

- Be a member of a Parish Council
- Act as a presiding officer - A person who ensures that the voting is fair and legal at a polling station.

In order to carry out these roles the individual member of staff must complete and submit a Business Interest Form to Joint Force Vetting Unit for approval.

2.3 Newly appointed members of police staff or postholders of newly designated posts who are already members of a County, City or District Council may remain in post until their period of office expires but will not be able to stand for re-election unless they resign from their employment.

3. Temporary political restrictions – all staff

3.1 From time to time the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) will impose political restrictions on all staff members. This is known as 'pre-election period' 'previously called purdah'. These restrictions are put in place to ensure that the Forces and those that work within them are protected from any assertions of political bias. These temporary restrictions are communicated directly with the organisation in the form of guidance which details the scope, duration, and timing of the restrictions.

4. Specified and sensitive posts

4.1 In accordance with the Local Government Housing Act 1989, as amended, politically restricted posts fall into two main categories. These are those which are 'specified' due to being included in legislation or regulations, and those which are deemed to be 'sensitive' due to the requirements of the role.

4.2 Specified posts.

Specified posts are automatically subject to restrictions on public political activity and as such, there is no right of appeal or exemption. These posts are listed as follows.

- All posts of the Office of the Surrey Police and Sussex Police Crime Commissioner, other than the Police and Crime Commissioner.
- Chief Financial Officer.

- Director of People Services.
- Chief Digital and Information Officer.
- Service Director, Estates and Facilities.

4.3 Sensitive posts.

A sensitive post is one which meets one or both of the following duties-related criteria:

- Giving advice on a regular basis to the organisation, to any committee or sub-committee of the organisation or to any joint committee on which the organisation is represented.
- Speaking on behalf of the authority on a regular basis to journalists or broadcasters.

These posts are listed as follows:

- All staff working within the Corporate Communications Department with the exception of the Media Relations Assistant and the Communications Assistant.
- Attraction and Recruitment Manager (People Services).
- Case Work Manager (People Services).
- Change Manager (People Services).
- Chief Security Officer (Digital Data and Technology (DDaT)).
- Civil Claims Manager.
- Diversity and Inclusion Manager (Sussex).
- Employee Cost and Budget Accountant.
- Equality and Diversity Officer.
- Head of Accountability and Performance (DDaT).
- Head of Applications and Devices (DDaT).
- Head of Business Partnering and Support (Finance).
- Head of Centre of Excellence.
- Head of Change Delivery (People Services).
- Head of Criminal Justice and Custody.
- Head of Contact Centre.
- Head of Corporate Development.
- Head of DDaT Technology & Data Services.
- Head of DDaT Transformation.
- Head of Diversity (Sussex).
- Head of Estates Strategy.

- Head of Facilities Services.
- Fingerprint Services Manager.
- Head of Forensic Investigations.
- Head of Strategic Forensic Services.
- Head of Human Resources (HR) Projects and Strategy.
- Head of Inclusion (Surrey).
- Head of Information Management.
- Head of Integration and Planning.
- Head of Intelligence Analysis and Research.
- Head of Intelligence Management.
- Head of Joint Health and Safety.
- Head of Learning & Professional Development (People Services).
- Head of Occupational Health and Wellbeing (People Services).
- Head of Operational Forensic Services.
- Head of People Operations (People Services).
- Head of Performance.
- Head of Procurement.
- Head of Programme Management and Assurance.
- Head of Resourcing Talent and People Performance (People Services).
- Head of Technical Architecture.
- Head of Victim and Witness Care.
- Head of Volunteering and Special Constables.
- Inclusion Advisor.
- Head of Insurance Services.
- Operations Manager (People Services).
- Policy & Engagement Manager (People Services).
- Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs).
- Procurement Officers.
- Reward & Recognition Manager.
- Senior Procurement Officers.
- Service Director, Estates and Facilities.

- Service Director, Finance and Regional Services.
- Service Director Joint Transport.
- Strategy Implementation Lead (DDaT).
- Joint Force Vetting Manager.
- Workforce and Development Manager (People Services).

5. Responsibilities

5.1 All police staff are responsible for complying with the requirements set out in this policy if occupying a politically restricted post.

5.2 Line managers are responsible for:

- Identifying, in conjunction with support from People Services, whether any new or amended post meets the definition of a specified or sensitive post.
- Informing staff recruited to politically restricted posts and staff already occupying posts that become politically restricted how this policy affects them before appointment or any change in classification.

5.3 People Services are responsible for:

- Identifying, in conjunction with line managers, whether any new or amended post meets the definition of a specified or sensitive post.
- Ensuring that job descriptions, recruitment adverts and offers of employment state if a post is politically restricted.
- Informing the Attraction and Recruitment Manager that a role is to be included in the policy.

6. Appeals in relation to designating a post as 'sensitive'

6.1 Employees identified as occupying 'sensitive' posts, have the right of appeal against that decision.

Appeals can be submitted on the basis that the post holder feels that:

- They cannot influence policy; or
- The duties-related criteria have been applied incorrectly.

Any individual who wishes to appeal should do so in writing to the Director of People Services.

7. Resulting Action

7.1 Failure to comply with the terms of this policy may lead to disciplinary action which may result in the termination of your employment.

8. Employment Data

8.1 Surrey Police and Sussex Police collect and process personal data relating to police officers and police staff to manage the employment relationship. It is important that

individuals understand how that data is collected and used in order to meet the force's data protection obligations. Further details can be located on intranet by searching for 'Privacy Notice'.

Team: People Services