



Provision of Employment References to Prospective Employers Policy (Surrey and Sussex) (1175/2026)

Abstract

This policy and procedure details the information given to prospective employers when individuals who are intending to leave or have left the organisation ask them to obtain an employment reference from the relevant Police Force. Any queries regarding this policy should be directed to the People Resolution Centre (PRC).

Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy and procedure details the information given to prospective employers when individuals who are intending to leave or have left Surrey Police or Sussex Police (hereafter referred to as the Forces) and the organisation they are joining ask them to obtain an employment reference from the relevant Police Force. It will ensure that employment references are factually accurate, provided in a fair and consistent manner and to an agreed format.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy details the Forces' approach to the provision of employment references to prospective employers when a member of the workforce is intending to leave the organisation and clearly defines the different procedures that apply depending on the nature of the reference request.

3. Policy Statement

3.1 The Forces provide limited factual information to prospective employers upon receipt of a request from an individual. Personal data is not disclosable under the UK General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018. However, individuals can provide consent for the Forces to share personal data with the prospective employer.

3.2 Individuals may at any time withdraw that consent and instruct the Forces not to provide the information requested to the prospective employer and may also ask for a copy of the reference to be given to them.

3.3 Enhanced employment references are provided if the requesting organisation is involved in the provision of policing services or if the individual's new role will involve contact with children or vulnerable adults. This is to comply with the Forces legal obligations.

3.4 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 \(NDM\)](#).

Procedure

1. Overview of Responsibilities

1.1 It is the responsibility of the individual to provide the correct contact information to prospective employers. To do this, individuals should provide their prospective employers with contact details of the People Resolution Centre (PRC).

1.2 If the individual has transitioned since leaving the organisation and their prospective employer requires references, they would need to notify the PRC in advance, providing their new details, which will enable the organisation to provide references in their new name without disclosing previous details.

1.3 It is the responsibility of the PRC to provide the employment reference when a request is received from a prospective employer. This will not be provided to the individual although they may receive a copy on request.

1.4 A standard template will be used in the majority of cases although an enhanced reference will be supplied if:

- The officer or member of police / Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) staff is transferring permanently or temporarily to another organisation involved in the provision of policing services. This includes other Home Office or non-Home Office police forces, the National Crime Agency (NCA), the National Police Air Service (NPAS), the Home Office, the College of Policing, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) etc. (this is not an exhaustive list). Data is shared in the interests of the public and to comply with contractual requirements if there is continuity of service.
- It should be noted that the provision of an enhanced employment reference does not take the place of prospective employers undertaking appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks or checking on the Police Barred and Advisory List.
- The police officer or member of police / OPCC staff will be working for another organisation in contact with vulnerable children or adults. An individual's data may be shared to comply with the Common Law Police Disclosure (CLPD) scheme. The CLPD scheme ensures that where there is a public risk, the police will pass information, including personal information, to the employer or regulatory body.

1.5 We do not provide references for Special Constables and Police Support Volunteers. If requested, we will only confirm dates of service from records held.

1.6 Line managers and second line managers **MUST NOT** provide employment or character references for their staff or officers on behalf of the Forces, for the purpose of

employment. Employment references must be provided by the PRC due to the complexity of employment and data protection law that surrounds this process.

2. Information Included in a Standard Employment Reference

2.1 The following information on the individual **will** be included:

- Name.
- Current job title.
- The date they started working for the organisation.
- The leaving date (if they have already left the organisation).

2.2 The following information on the individual is **not** included as standard:

- Job history within the organisation.
- Conduct or performance record.
- Attendance, sickness, or health information.
- The reason(s) for leaving.
- Commendations or awards.
- Training records.

3. Consent to Share Information

3.1 By sharing the Forces details with a prospective employer and asking them to obtain an employment reference from us under UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018, the individual consents to the sharing of the information provided in either a standard or enhanced reference, whichever is appropriate. Individuals may withdraw this consent at any time but please note that the Forces will not try to retrieve information that has already been provided at the individual's request.

3.2 The receipt of an employment reference from a potential employer and the provision of that information is confidential and will not be shared outside People Services other than by the provision of analytic information which will not identify the individual.

4. When a Request is Received - Standard References

4.1 The PRC will check to see if the request is from an organisation involved in the provision of law enforcement services. If this is the case, an enhanced reference will be provided to serve the public interest and comply with the Forces obligations. (Please see section 5 below).

4.2 If the prospective new role involves working with children or vulnerable adults, then the new employer has an obligation to request an enhanced reference under the CLPD Scheme. If this type of reference request is received, then the procedure will be as per section 5 below.

4.3 If the prospective new role involves the provision of security services, then the new employer may request an enhanced reference. If this type of reference request is received, then the procedures will be as per section 5 below.

For all other organisations, a standard reference template will be provided as soon as is practicable given demand.

5. When a Request is received - Enhanced References

5.1 This procedure will apply when either:

- The prospective new employer is an organisation involved in the provision of law enforcement or security services either in the United Kingdom or in any other part of the world.
- The prospective new employer tells us that the individual's new role will involve working with children or vulnerable adults. If this is the case, they have a responsibility to provide the Forces with full details of the role that the individual is to be involved in.

5.2 The Forces **will** provide the following information on the individual in an enhanced reference:

- Name;
- Current job title;
- Job titles held during the last 6 years of employment with the organisation;
- The date the individual started working for the organisation;
- The leaving date (if already left);
- Proven complaints over the last 6 years of employment;
- Proven conduct over the last 6 years of employment;
- Any outstanding investigations / allegations over the last 6 years of employment;
- Any conduct cases which were under investigation when the individual resigned, and the investigation was not concluded;
- The reason(s) for leaving (as reported on our system).

5.3 The disclosure of information for a policing purpose is governed by UKGDPR, Data Protection Act 2018 and the Code of Practice on the Management of Police Information

(MoPI). This balances the need to protect an individual's privacy against the proportionate need to protect the public. As such there is a governance process in place managing the process of disclosure of sensitive information for a law enforcement purpose. Final decisions relating to such disclosures will be made by a manager within the respective Force Professional Standards Department (PSD).

5.4 The Forces will **not** include the following:

- Unproven allegations following conclusion of proceedings.
- Awards and commendations.
- A character reference.
- Focus forms or content.
- Sickness or health information.
- Educational or professional qualifications.

5.5 There is a need to exchange information with the respective Force PSD to fulfil the requirements of the enhanced reference. For this reason, please allow a reasonable period of time to elapse to provide the enhanced reference. Each Force aims to complete enquiries within 28 days.

6. The Right to be Forgotten

6.1 The Forces will only provide employment references (standard or enhanced) for a period of 6 years after an individual has left the organisation.

6.2 Each Force will also only share data from the last 6 years the individual worked in the organisation. This period is consistent with the National Retention Assessment Criteria (NRAC).

Please note that checks under the DBS scheme or the Police Barred and Advisory List may have different data retention periods, and this section only applies to the provision of employment references. Please also refer to 5.3 regarding the sharing of information for a policing purpose.

7. Adoption References

7.1 If a request for a reference for adoption purposes is received, the Forces will provide the same information as detailed in section 5 for an enhanced employment reference.

8. Officers Transferring to another Force

8.1 The Forces will only share personal data with another force within the transferee process, once the officer has accepted an offer from the force they have applied to. That force will then contact People Services requesting further personal data including pension, salary, service, training and unpaid leave.

9. Employment Data

9.1 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 to meet the Force's data protection obligations. Further details can be located on the intranet by searching for 'Privacy Notice'.

Team: People Services Department. People Resolution Centre