

Lincolnshire Police Independent Advisory Groups

Background

Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs) were introduced in 2001 following the McPherson Inquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence. It was identified as a way to help build a 'genuine partnership' between the police and all sections of the community.

What Independent Advisors are and do

The role of independent advisors is best described as “a critical friend in time of need”. Advisors are drawn from volunteers who feel able to represent all sections of society irrespective of their own background but are not linked to the judiciary, employed or substantially connected to the police family. Ideally, IAG advisors should have expertise and experience across a range of social issues and links with the community to enable them to understand and empathise with the challenges, lifestyles and perspective of divergent groups and be able to articulate their viewpoint coherently. As a Group it is people who can:

- Provide advice¹ and guidance to the police to help prevent critical incidents² escalating;
- Provide a sounding board for the police to understand the potential impact on communities of police practices and operations;
- Ask probing and thought provoking questions on behalf of communities as this will allow them to provide the most insightful advice.

Where it is appropriate and necessary the police will look to an advisor to:

- Provide constructive assessment and advice on police actions and policies from the perspective of a receiver of police services and a member of the community;
- Identify options for resolving policing problems;
- Assist in securing and maintaining community confidence;
- Act as a confidential sounding board and advisor in respect of the police response to any critical incident through active participation in one or more Groups as required.

The police will also look to the Gold IAG, when requested to:

- Provide constructive assessment and advice on specific policies and procedures, including regular review of Stop & Search paperwork and complaints against the police to consider the appropriateness of actions and resolutions achieved.

¹ Advice is given by non-police persons either on an ad-hoc basis or as members of a recognised advisory Group. Their advice is independent of police and carries no responsibility or liability for outcomes. Such advisors are not answerable to police and police are neither responsible for advisor' actions nor obliged to follow any of the advice they give. Accordingly, advisors are independent.

² Any incident where the effectiveness of the police response is likely to have a significant impact on the confidence of the victim, their family and/or the community. This definition is deliberately broad, which should ensure that seemingly straightforward incidents with potential to escalate to a critical incident are not missed. It recognises the fundamental importance of community confidence and trust in the police response to critical incidents.

What Independent Advisors do not do – and what the Police will not ask them to do

IAG members do not have an audit role as this function is undertaken by other bodies, nor are the police 'answerable' to an IAG. IAG members do NOT, and will not be asked to:

- Act as mediators or advocates as such action could involve interaction with victims, families or witnesses, which may lead to them taking personal responsibility for their action and becoming witnesses themselves. As such they may be asked to provide evidence in court;
- Trace witnesses or act as intermediaries between a victim of crime and the investigation team. In such circumstances advisors may be seen as agents of the police whereupon rules of evidence may be found to apply;
- Participate in cases where they know the victim(s), suspect(s) or witness(es) of a crime as there is a danger that they could become a mediator or intermediary.
- Self-task any issue they believe exists without first raising this at a formal gold group meeting for approval

What Lincolnshire Police will do to support the IAG

As volunteers who freely give up their time, we recognise the commitment of IAG members and the effort and energy they provide to help the police and local communities. In order to help our Independent Advisors to operate as effectively as possible, Lincolnshire Police will:

- Ensure an effective Strategic plan for the IAG is in place for the county
- Provide clear operating guidance and Terms of Reference that outlines the role Independent Advisors perform;
- The ACC chairs the meeting of the IAG executive committee and is the lead for local policing in the force
- Define a process where advice that is provided by the IAG can be logged, to clarify decision making and help us evaluate effectiveness;
- Provide briefing and development inputs for all IAG members at least once a year in line with the strategic plan for the group;
- Support the IAG Executive Committee, in the development and, where appropriate, implementation of an induction programme for members and help identify to the committee specific training which may be of benefit;
- Communicate the role of IAGs to its workforce and partners;
- Expand the system/online space to facilitate the sharing of good practice between Groups (local and strategic), to provide a question and answer forum for IAG members, increase accessibility and transparency of work, through publishing minutes of meetings etc.

IAG Construct

Fundamental to the effectiveness of the IAG is access to valid information to enable the best advice to be offered. At certain levels the available information may be highly classified or confidential and could, therefore only be released on a selective basis. Accordingly, membership of the IAG is graded as follows:

Level	Primary Police Interface	Vetting Requirement
Gold IAG	FHQ	Full
Virtual IAG	Lincs Alert	Nil

IAG Communications Links

To be able to reflect the views of the community IAG members should actively establish a network of links with a broad section of both formal and informal representative groups, including but not limited to:

Community Police Panels	Lincolnshire County Council	District & Parish Councils
Neighbourhood policing teams	Community and minority groups	Neighbourhood Watch
Neighbouring IAGs	Religious groups	Associations

Role Description for Independent Advisors

Purpose of the Role

Within Independent Advisory Groups, each member will:

- Work constructively as a team member to advise the Local Policing Lead on community police matters;
- Listen to, reflect and advocate for the often diverse experiences of communities.

Main Duties

- To attend regular meetings of the IAG and any sub-Groups to which they are appointed;
- To actively participate in the work of the IAG, including proactively bringing issues of concern to meetings, questioning and challenging where appropriate;
- To participate with the IAG in assessing and prioritising the work it undertakes;
- To provide advice on specific issues which could include (but will not be limited to):
 - Critical incidents (murder, serious assault, repeat victimisation, domestic violence etc.);
 - Improving trust and confidence of the community in Lincolnshire Police;
 - Providing support to Police training;
 - Contributing to the production of written reports when necessary;
 - To undertake and contribute to research when necessary
 - To keep up to date with the concerns of the wider communities relating to the police;
 - To keep up to date with the external context for example political changes, that may affect the work of the IAG.

IAG Membership Criteria

The criteria for membership of the Lincolnshire IAG include those who:

- Can effectively and consistently contribute to the development of quality advice;
- Can confidently articulate the views of communities in their area;
- Are willing and able to devote time and personal commitment;
- Have a clear understanding of the importance of the role;
- Will take part to further the interests of the community;
- Are willing for their involvement to be made known to the wider public;
- Are able to maintain effective, consistent and constructive advice to Lincolnshire Police;
- Have and continue to demonstrate commitment to eliminating all forms of discriminatory practice;
- Have no serious convictions or serious allegations against them for criminal offences. Evidence of a criminal record will not necessarily bar the member from being selected but may bar involvement in particular matters, such as crime inquiries;
- Are willing to undergo security checks as per Force policy;
- May become subject to the Official Secrets Act;

- Are willing to serve a minimum of a four year term – extending membership beyond if they so choose.

Process for the selection of IAG members

The process for those wishing to join the IAG is:

- Make contact directly with an existing member of the IAG or online through the link on <https://www.police.uk/lincolnshire/> or Lincs Alert <https://www.lincolnshirealert.co.uk/>
- Some people may be contacted by the IAG group or the police and invited to apply.
- Provide a written CV paying particular attention to how you believe you can assist the IAG in representing the community and fulfil the Terms of Reference.
- Attend a selection interview with two members of the Executive who will assess the evidence you supply in support of your application.
- Character references may be sought.
- Successful candidates at interview will be invited to complete the Lincolnshire Police vetting procedure.
- Those that achieve the necessary security clearance will be invited to join the panel.
- Applicants are advised that the process may take many weeks to complete.
- Once accepted onto the Group the new member will receive a police identity card, Force HQ entry pass and business cards.

Code of Conduct

Guiding Principles

Members of an IAG will abide by the seven Nolan Principles of Public Life:

1. Selflessness- Members should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.
2. Integrity – Members should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.
3. Objectivity – Members should make choices on merit when conducting public business, including recommending individuals for rewards and benefits.
4. Accountability – Members are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.
5. Openness – Members should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.
6. Honesty – Members have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
7. Leadership – Members should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

Operating Protocol

The basis of policing by Lincolnshire Police is one of consent. In order to ensure that the good relationship currently enjoyed between the Force and the Communities not only continues but also develops, the Force must continue to embrace the challenges and changes that confront it. The involvement of independent, community advisors underpins these aspirations. The guiding protocols for IAG and Police interaction require:

- Any disclosures of a personal nature at any IAG meeting or an operational incident to be dealt with in the strictest confidence. In addition all IAGs will work within the parameters of the Data Protection Act;
- IAGs to meet with the Police at least four times per year and hold special or emergency meetings as and when required;
- IAG meetings with the Police to be documented. The minutes will contain only brief summaries, decisions, actions, formal advice or recommendations;
- Police Officers with relevant responsibilities e.g. recruitment, training, investigation to attend meetings as necessary;
- Any statement to the Press, or other news media, about generic matters on the subject of the activities of the Lincolnshire IAGs is to be agreed and documented in the IAG communication strategy. This communication strategy should be devised in close consultation with the head of media services for Lincolnshire police. The communication strategy should be approved by the IAG Executive Committee. No information should be given to the media or any other party by an IAG member about any specific operational or critical incident. The IAG process must be ethical and be seen to be so. The following ethics protocol should ensure that IAG members meet the rigorous standards expected in public roles:

- A register of interests will be maintained;
- All relevant financial interests will be made known to meetings and this fact recorded in the minutes - if such a declaration is made the meeting will determine to what extent that member continues to participate;
- Under no circumstances are members to use their position as IAG members to further or advantage their own financial or personal interests;
- Each member must respect the diverse backgrounds and views of the membership and operate in a prejudice free manner;
- A member must declare if she/he has a personal interest in a particular case

Disclosure of Information to the IAG

The following information will routinely be made available to panel members to assist in meeting their aims and objectives:

- Equality information on operational service delivery and work force data;
- Details of specific incidents. There may be occasions where it is necessary for the police to share information about individuals for the furtherance of the agreed aims and objectives. This information is subject to the Data Protection Act 1988 and other legal obligations, such as a duty of confidence, may also apply.

Disclosure of Information by the IAG

IAG members may publicise their activities in line with the approved communication strategy but not the specifics, or confidential aspects of incidents and cases in which they have been involved. Media outlets including the Lincolnshire Police website, LincsAlert, Parish magazines and village newsletters, local papers and social media may be used to inform the public.

Executive Committee

Members of the Gold IAG automatically join the Executive Committee. However, the existing IAG members have decided that formal appointments of Chair and Vice Chair will not be made as the Group operates a flat rather than hierarchical structure. The Group will collectively:

- Manage the IAG;
- Ensure meetings are planned, reviews are undertaken of the minutes;
- Communicate with other IAG members routinely between meetings.

Process for the removal of IAG members

- Criteria for supporting the removal of members from the IAG may include:
- The member constantly fails to fulfil the IAG's agreed actions or prepare for meetings;
- The member fails to give good reason for failing to attend meetings;
- The member offers their resignation;
- The member is under investigation for, or convicted of, a serious criminal offence (Suspension could be considered here);
- The member's conduct is such that the Group feel that it is harmful to the working relationship of the Group.

Terms of Reference

Independent involvement and advice is the process which takes place when people independent of Lincolnshire Police monitor, observe or advise on aspects of policing, both in terms of the functions and policies of the service and the way in which Lincolnshire Police interact with the broader community.

Article 1 – Name

The Group's official name will be Lincolnshire Independent Advisory Group.

Article 2 – Address

Lincolnshire Police Headquarters, Nettleham, Lincoln LN2 2LT

Article 3 – Aims & Objectives

Aims:

To work as partners with Lincolnshire Police to:

- Increase trust and confidence in policing amongst all communities;
- Provide constructive advice to Lincolnshire Police on ways to improve the quality of service delivery to all communities.

Objectives:

- To critically appraise organisational policies, practices and procedures;
- To make significant contributions to both strategic and tactical considerations, particularly with reference to critical incidents;
- To make observations both within Lincolnshire Police and the role it plays in the wider community;
- To instil just and fair relations between Lincolnshire Police and the communities they serve, as well as between communities.

Article 4 – Membership

- Membership of the IAG will be open to individuals who reside or work, either permanently or temporarily, in Lincolnshire.
- Appointment to the IAG will be the decision and responsibility of Lincolnshire Police, in consultation with the IAG. Appointment to the IAG will be transparent to public scrutiny.
- Wherever possible the IAG will consist of a cross representation of the area's diverse communities.
- It is expected that members will serve a minimum of 4 years.
- Members of the IAG may be de-selected in the following circumstances:

- The member has failed to attend three consecutive meetings of the IAG without giving an apology or acceptable reason, other than special or urgent meetings;
- Failure to fulfil designated actions or prepare for meetings without acceptable reason;
- The representative's membership would undermine the credibility and legitimacy of the Group or fundamentally weaken aspects of its work;
- Any breach of the operating protocols set out within the guidance document;
- The member has broken the Code of Conduct as set out in the guidance document.

Article 5 – Meetings

- The IAG will meet as often as required but should meet with the Police at least four times a year, dates will be set as far ahead as members find convenient.
- Members are expected to allow and encourage all colleagues to fully participate in discussions in an open, free and constructive manner.
- It is a fundamental principle of the Group that it is opposed to discrimination on the grounds of political opinion, age, disability, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation and that it shall not practice such discrimination. Failure to adhere to these principles will result in de-selection.
- In order to fulfil its primary purpose of providing independent advice to Lincolnshire Police, IAGs must have access to relevant, up to date information.
- Access to some information may be prohibited by law, e.g. Official Secrets Act, Data Protection Act. Additionally some information may be so sensitive that its divulgence would be inappropriate. This might include confidential matters relating specifically to individuals, specific intelligence in relation to a proposed sensitive policing operation, or intelligence which might compromise the safety of individuals or the Police or the Public at large.

Article 6 – Quorum

The numbers of full voting members required to be physically present to make decisions at all Meetings will be a minimum of 3 people. Where it is necessary to make decisions regarding the IAG working methods, IAG membership or rules of the Group then a simple majority of full voting members must be physically present to vote.

Article 7 – Finance

- Lincolnshire Police will reimburse all members for reasonable out of pocket expenses.
- Claims for reimbursement of incurred expenses will be in line with normal Lincolnshire Police procedure.
- The control for the funding of the IAG will be done by Lincolnshire Police in line with standard operating procedures, and must be fully auditable.

Article 8 – Dissolution Procedure

If the Executive Committee (Gold IAG), by a simple majority, decides at anytime that it is necessary or advisable to dissolve the Network or Group, it shall call an Extraordinary General Meeting of all members of the IAG(s) who have the power to vote.

Article 9 – Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct shall be that every member shall discharge their duty with integrity, fairness, politeness, tolerance, courtesy, respect, openness and truthfulness and without fear or favour. In particular, every member shall:

- Avoid all form of harassment, victimisation, unreasonable discrimination, abusive or derisive attitudes or behaviour towards other individuals and groups;
- Behave in a manner that does not bring discredit to the Group;
- Avoid favouritism to any particular individual or group;
- Treat any information that comes in to their possession during the course of their duties as confidential, and shall not use it for personal benefit, nor shall they divulge that information to other parties except in the proper course of the IAG business.

Any member of the IAG who knowingly breaches the aims of the Group (Article 3), or commits any act (by word or deed), which may be deemed by the Executive Committee, as being detrimental to the Group, shall have his or her membership, revoked upon consultation with the Executive Committee. Where there is a disagreement in relation to de-selection of a member of the IAG, arbitration will be managed by Lincolnshire Police.

Article 10 – Miscellaneous

- Members who advise Lincolnshire Police are not liable for the outcomes of Lincolnshire Police decision making Lincolnshire Police are not obliged to follow advice given by members, although appropriate explanations should be given where advice is not taken.