



Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel
Hosted by Somerset Council Democratic Services



Independent Member Vacancy Information Pack

Contents:

Letter to potential applicants

Background to the position

Eligibility criteria for Independent Co-opted Members

Person specification

Roles and responsibilities of Independent Co-opted Members

Code of Conduct and Nolan Principles

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the vacant Independent Member position on the Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel.

In 2012, the Panel became part of the governance and accountability arrangements for Policing in Avon and Somerset. The Panel's role is to both support and challenge the Police and Crime Commissioner for Avon and Somerset (PCC) and maintain regular checks and balances on her decisions, activities and related performance. Changes are planned to the PCC role and Police governance with effect from May 2028. However, it is essential that the Panel continues its work and contributes to a smooth transition to the new arrangements.

The Panel is looking for a committed person to work alongside elected members from the 5 local authorities in the force area for a 2-year term commencing June 2026. It is an opportunity to bring an independent voice to the table and ensure the PCC serves the public's best interest as she holds the Chief Constable to account.

The role of a Panel Member is important and can be a demanding one. A typical commitment required from a Panel member will average one/two days a month preparing for and attending meetings, which will generally be held during normal office hours at The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton, TA1 1HE.

This is an unpaid voluntary post and there will be an induction and other training when appropriate. Expenses are paid in the form of an annual allowance amounting to £920.

Further information is attached as follows:

- background to the post
- eligibility criteria
- person specification
- roles and responsibilities
- application form.

The closing date for applications is midnight 19th of May 2026

It is expected that short-listed candidates will be invited for interview **on the 5th of June 2026** and the Selection Panel will consist of 3 current Panel Members and the Panel's Lead Officer.

We intend to take up references for short-listed candidates prior to interview. If you do not want us to contact your referees at that stage, then please let us know when you submit your application.

The Panel wishes to reflect the breadth of communities in Avon and Somerset Police area and welcomes applications from all eligible people (on the electoral roll) – irrespective of age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, marriage or civil partnership.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of the role in more detail, please contact the Panel's Lead Officer Patricia Jones at patricia.jones@somerset.gov.uk

Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel

Background Information

Police and Crime Panels are part of the police governance arrangements brought about by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. This act abolished the former Police Authority and in its place put in each Police area:-

An elected Police and Crime Commissioner – this is currently Clare Moody whose term of office will end in 2028 when the role of PCC is abolished. In its place, policing governance will be undertaken by mayors in strategic authorities where they exist, or by newly created policing boards, made up of local authority representatives in the main.

A Police and Crime Panel - which holds the PCC to account.

The Police and Crime Commissioner

The PCC is responsible for setting the strategic objectives of the Police force and deciding how funding for local policing and crime reduction is allocated. In doing so, the PCC is required to be the voice of the public and to hold the Chief Constable to account, effectively making the Police answerable to the communities they serve and ensuring community needs are met as effectively as possible. The PCC works in partnership across a range of agencies at local and national level to ensure there is a unified approach to preventing and reducing crime.

Under the terms of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, a PCC must:-

- Secure an efficient and effective Police for their area
- Appoint the Chief Constable and hold them to account for the running of the force. The PCC has power to dismiss the Chief Constable if necessary
- Set the police and crime objectives for their area through a Police and Crime Plan
- Set the force budget and determine the Policing Precept
- Contribute to the national and international policing capabilities set out by the Home Secretary
- Bring together community safety and criminal justice partners, to make sure local priorities are joined up; and
- Commission and fund services for victims

For more information, please go to www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk and www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/News-and-Events/Events-Calendar.aspx

<http://www.local.gov.uk/pcc> (Local Government Association)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/police-and-crime-commissioners-publications>
(Home Office)

The Police and Crime Panel

The Panel was also established in 2012, and its purpose is to both support and scrutinise the PCC's activities and decisions. The Panel is made up of councillors from the 5 authorities in the Force area and 3 Independent Members who bring a variety of skills and experience to the role. Somerset Council currently acts as the Host Authority for the Panel and is responsible for its administrative and officer support arrangements.

The Commissioner is required by law to consult the Panel on:

- the plans and objectives set out in the Police and Crime Plan
- the Policing budget
- the council tax Precept (the money collected from council tax for policing)
- the appointment of key officers in the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

The Panel also handles complaints relating to the PCC's personal conduct.

Who makes up the Panel?

There are 5 Local Authorities in the Force area, each of which must be represented on the Panel by an elected member. It is the responsibility of each authority to ensure that the member appointed has the appropriate skills, knowledge and experience for their role on the Panel. The overall composition of all Police and Crime Panels should form a "balanced appointment" objective which takes account of, as far as is practical, both political and geographical proportionality. Reaching the balanced appointment objective is a collective responsibility of the component authorities and the Panel itself.

Somerset Council has 5 seats. The former Avon Unitary Councils Bristol, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire and Bath and NorthEast Somerset were each allocated 2 seats. Bristol was subsequently allocated an additional third seat based on the city's population size and comparatively high crime levels.

They are joined by the three Independent Members, recruited through a competitive selection process, who have the same voting rights as the Local Authority Panel Members. In total there are 17 Panel Members:-

<http://www.avonandsomersetpoliceandcrimePanel.org.uk/>

<https://www.local.gov.uk/police-and-crime-Panels-1> (Local Government Association)

Eligibility Criteria for Independent Panel Members

The legislation is prescriptive and the following people cannot be considered for a position on the Panel:

Anyone under 18 years old

The Commissioner or a member of staff in the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

MPs

Members of the National Assembly for Wales the Scottish Parliament

A Member of staff at Avon and Somerset Police

Persons who do not live or work in the Police force area

Civil servants engaged in political activity.

A Local Authority Councillor.

A serving Police officer – see note below:

Police officers are not covered by the restrictions on membership of the Panel in Section 22 in Schedule 6 of the Act. Also, Police officers do not fall within Section 22 (a) as members of staff of the PCC as this category covers people appointed under Section 6 of Schedule 1. However, under section 1(2)(a) of Schedule 1 to the Police Regulations 2003 (S.I. 2003/527) a member of a police force may not "take any active part in politics". The Home Office would regard co-option to the Panel, for the purpose of scrutinising an elected PCC, as taking an active part in politics, and accordingly as being prohibited for police officers.

Person Specification

The assessors will consider applicants against the following criteria when shortlisting/ interviewing:-

Abilities/skills

In addition to being of good character, candidates will need to possess most, if not all, of the following competencies:

The ability to think strategically	To have breadth of vision, to rise above detail, and to see problems and issues from an area-wide, forward-looking perspective and to make appropriate linkages
The ability to make good judgements:	To take a balanced, open-minded and objective approach, for example, in evaluating the priorities of the Police and Crime Commissioner, assessing candidates for top-level appointments or considering complaints against the Police and Crime Commissioner
The ability to be supportive	To be able to build and maintain a supportive and co-operative working relationship the PCC and the other members of the Panel in delivering their duties
The ability to scrutinise and challenge	To be able to rigorously scrutinise and challenge constructively without becoming confrontational, using appropriate data, evidence and resources
The ability to be analytical	To interpret and question complex written material, including financial and statistical information and other data such as performance measures and identify the salient points
The ability to communicate effectively	To be able to communicate effectively both verbally and in writing – and to interact positively with other members of the Panel, the PCC and the public

Personal skills and qualities

Team working	The ability to play an effective role in meetings through listening, persuading and showing respect for the views of others
Self-confidence	The skill to challenge accepted views constructively without becoming confrontational
Enthusiasm and drive	The ability to be proactive in seeking out learning and developmental opportunities to enhance knowledge and understanding (for example, on financial matters and statutory requirements).

Respect for others	The capacity to treat all people fairly and with respect, to value diversity and respond sensitively to difference
Integrity	The necessity to embrace high standards of conduct and ethics and be committed to upholding human rights and equality of opportunity for all
Decisiveness	The ability to show resilience even in challenging circumstances, remaining calm and confident and able to make difficult decisions

It is also important that candidates are able to commit to good practice in equalities and diversity:

To have knowledge and demonstrate an understanding of equality and diversity issues (across the areas covered in the Equality Act 2010 i.e. sex, gender reassignment, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion/belief, pregnancy and maternity and marriage/civil partnership).

- Equipped to consider and assess the impact of the Police Commissioner's policies, decisions and budgets on equalities groups and diverse communities.
- Able to contribute to policy making and scrutiny activity that takes account of equalities issues and is in line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.
- Equipped to engage with and understand the perspectives and experiences of people from diverse communities, particularly those disproportionately affected by crime and policing.

It would be desirable for candidates to have an interest in or experience of:-

- Policing issues and current affairs, and they affect people locally
- Challenging and combating institutional discrimination
- Engaging with and representing local people or work in a neighbourhood or community context
- Engaging with specialists within their field of expertise
- Working with other people on issues of mutual interest over a period of time (for example voluntary work)
- Situations requiring collaboration and compromise to achieve positive shared outcomes

Other requirements and considerations

Candidates must be able to attend weekday daytime meetings (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm) at least six times a year, as well as attend any appropriate training sessions.

Candidates should have the time, energy and commitment to prepare for and attend regular meetings. We suggest that they would need to allocate a minimum of one/two day per month to devote to this role.

Candidates should have a willingness to learn and to proactively inform themselves about issues under discussion.

Note: Candidates must be eligible for the role (see eligibility criteria separately listed in this job information pack).

Any of the following may provide the skills and experience Panel members will need:

Voluntary or paid work and experience with **victim support groups**

Experience in **Health** - local Health and Wellbeing Boards or clinical commissioning groups

Involvement in and experience of **restorative justice**

Work with the Police and resultant awareness of policing issues from both a strategic and delivery perspective

Community involvement - neighbourhood watch, parish and town council involvement

Work with the **criminal justice system**

Youth work & youth justice work

Work as a **magistrate**

Managing a **business**

Community leadership or activism in the area of **community safety**

Experience with the **voluntary and community sector** generally

Fire and rescue services

Experience in the **education** sector

Experience of **drug and alcohol** issues

Experience of **domestic violence and abuse** work

Relevant **academic experience** in policing and crime and anti social behaviour issues

Work with the **probation service** and links to the Probation Association, or other relevant knowledge or experience in this area

Personal experience of the criminal justice system, ex-offenders

Experience of **challenge and scrutiny** including participation in local authority scrutiny

Roles and Responsibilities

Independent Members are full voting members of the Panel and have the same responsibilities and duties as the elected members. They also have access to the same level of support and information.

The core role of both elected and Independent Members is to:-

- scrutinise the work of the PCC to ensure that she is discharging her functions effectively
- ensure that there is an effective independent challenge to the PCC and that this challenge is constructive to support the PCC in carrying out her role
- act as a non-party-political voice for those who live and/or work in the Avon and Somerset area
- contribute any specialist knowledge, skills, experience and expertise they may have to the scrutiny work of the Panel

Responsibilities

An Independent Member of the Panel is expected to:-

- attend all formal meetings of the Panel (approximately 6 per year)
- observe confidentiality
- attend any necessary training and development sessions
- establish good relations with other Panel members and officers supporting or attending the Panel
- attend sub-groups or evidence gathering sessions, as required
- prepare for each meeting by reading the agenda, papers and additional information to familiarise yourself with the issues to be covered during the meeting.
- prior to the meeting consider the questions you may wish to put to the PCC and her staff
- listen carefully at the meetings, ask questions in a way which is non-judgmental, and help the Panel to make practical suggestions for improvements in services
- assist in the preparation of reports and the formulation of recommendations; this may involve volunteering to participate in a task group to conduct a scrutiny review
- abide by the Panel's Operating arrangements and rules of procedure which set out how the Panel will operate in the Avon and Somerset Police area

- keep abreast of the key issues in relation to the responsibilities of the police and crime commissioner and the priorities within the Police and Crime Plan
- contribute to achieving an open, accountable and transparent decision-making process in relation to policing and community safety issues in the Avon and Somerset Police Area.

Code of Conduct and Nolan principles ^{*}

Independent Co-opted Members are subject to the Code of Conduct of the Host Authority [Officer Code of Conduct](#) and are also expected to adhere to the 'seven principles of public life' which are listed below:

Selflessness: Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

Integrity: Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity: In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability: Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness: Holders of public office 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.

Honesty: Holders of public office 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.

Leadership: Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.