

GWENT POLICE

INDEPENDENT ADVISORY GROUP POLICY



1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 The Gwent Police Independent Advisory Group (IAG) has been formed as a result of the Macpherson Inquiry that was undertaken to examine policing issues arising from the murder of Stephen Lawrence. The Macpherson Report criticised several aspects of policing in relation to the investigation of 'major or critical incidents', in particular where these may have an impact upon public confidence.

1.1.2 Gwent Police's IAG will take on the role of a 'critical friend' in relation to both the development of policing policy and services and when a critical incident occurs within the force area that has the potential to have a significant impact on local communities.

1.2 Aims of Policy

1.2.1 The aim of this policy is to establish a formative basis by which Gwent Police can work in partnership with the Independent Advisory Group (IAG).

1.2.2 The policy will include detail on the formal structure of the IAG, recruitment and resignation process, the IAG's purpose, security and confidentiality, as well as financial reimbursement.

PRINTED VERSIONS SHOULD NOT BE RELIED UPON. THE MOST UP TO DATE VERSION CAN BE FOUND ON THE INTRANET POLICIES SITE.

2.0 The Legal Basis

Welsh Language Act 1993
The Amsterdam Treaty Against Discrimination
The Human Rights Act 1998
Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984
Equality Act 2010

3.0 Human Rights Certificate of Compliance

The policy has been checked for compliance with the Human Rights Act; with particular reference to the legal basis of its precepts: the legitimacy of its aims; the justification and proportionality of the actions intended by it; that it is the least intrusive and damaging option necessary to achieve the aims; and that it defines the need to document the relevant decision making process's and outcomes of actions.

4.0 Compliance with The Welsh Language Scheme

This policy should aims to comply with the organisation's Welsh language Scheme in terms of dealing with the Welsh speaking public, impact upon the public image of the organisation and the implementation of the language scheme.

5.0 Risk Assessment and health and safety Considerations

The Gwent Police Service Dynamic Assessment should be applied as necessary. A training package in the use of risk assessment will be provided to all police personnel or IAG members if requested or required.

6.0 Identification Section

Policy Title: Independent Advisory Group

Reference: 148/4 a Issue 4

Underlying Documents: ACPO Hate Crime Manual, MacPherson Enquiry Report - Death of Stephen Lawrence, Gwent Police and Gwent Police Authority Force Equality Schemes, HMIC 2003 'Diversity Matters', Single Equality Bill 2009, NPIA Equality Standard 2009, Association of Chief Police Officer of England Guidance on Independent Advisory Groups, 2011

Policy Ownership: Head of Neighbourhood Policing

Portfolio/Business Area Owner: ACC

Policy Written By: Community Cohesion Co-ordinator

Department Responsible: Community Safety

Policy Lead: Head of Community Safety

Links to other Policies: IAG Policy issue 1, IAG Policy issue 2, Single Equality Scheme, Critical Incidents, Community Impact Assessments, Hate Crime Policy, Stops Policy, Direction and Control (Organisational Complaints), Lay Observers, Employment of Transgender People, Data Protection, Information Security, Victim Support, Press and Public Relations, Interpreters.

Policy Implementation Date: Dec 2011

Policy Review Date: Dec 2013 or before if required

APPENDIX A

Terms of Reference for Gwent Police Independent Advisory Group

1. Aims

Since the Metropolitan Police Service first introduced the concept of an IAG following the recommendation of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, more and more police forces and authorities have realised the benefits that IAGs can bring to the business of local policing, either independently or in partnership.

The formation of an IAG is not mandatory; however Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) sees it as an important part of a wider consultative mechanism for the service. Advisors can, and do, see things from a different perspective and they are often able to anticipate how police responses to policing problems may be interpreted by communities, and this is one of their real values. IAGs offer one method of community engagement and consultation by involving community members that traditionally may be excluded or hard to reach, and can demonstrate, if effectively utilised as part of a wider strategy, a police force's willingness to consult and listen to diverse views and opinions.

Originally with a focus on inclusion and consultation with ethnic minority groups, Independent Advisory Groups are now a constituent part of the tool-kit of options for consultation with a wide range of people who are not usually in dialogue with police, because they:

- Are isolated (e.g. members of a small or remote population, acute socio-economically deprivation, language differentials, cultural / ideological barriers, social invisibility)
- Are difficult to positively engage with (e.g. suspicious of the police)
- Are challenging to listen to (e.g. critical of the police)
- Have different communication needs

Aims of the IAG:

1. To act as a 'critical friend' in the case of a serious or critical incident that occurs which has the potential to have a significant impact on local communities and public confidence
2. To increase trust and confidence in policing amongst communities
3. To provide constructive advice to the organisation on ways to improve service delivery to all communities

4. To examine and provide advice on the implementation of organisational policies, practices and national agendas in a community context
5. To advise Gwent Police on how we can best engage with our communities on an ongoing basis
6. To encourage just and fair relations between Gwent Police and the communities of Gwent
7. To offer a link with communities that are traditionally considered 'hard to reach', for example, Gypsy/Travellers, disabled people, LGB&T communities
8. To promote the role of the IAG within Gwent Police and provide feedback on working practices

Gwent Police will seek to ensure that its IAG is reflective of as many different communities as possible, but it must be remembered that it will never be representative of every viewpoint, nor necessarily have the expertise to offer advice in every situation. An IAG is one method of community engagement, and it will often be necessary for Gwent Police to seek alternative methods of consultation, particularly where a policing activity will impact on a particular community that is not reflected by IAG membership.

2. Membership of the IAG

Members will be appointed for their specialist knowledge, experience, and/or links with particular minority groups, or other special interests. This does not imply that members represent or speak on behalf of those communities. IAG membership within Gwent will seek to reflect our diverse communities, with members that have an understanding of a wide range of issues pertinent to all geographic areas (for example, community issues in rural areas as well as those in city centres).

Membership will be as follows:

Police

Assistant Chief Constable
Head of Community Safety
Community Cohesion Co-ordinator

Admin Resource (Community Safety)

Police Authority

The Police Authority will have a nominated representative attend IAG meetings and involve themselves in other activities (for example, recruitment of new members) where necessary.

Community

Up to 20 members

Members are able to serve indefinitely, although membership will be subject to ongoing review by the Chair and members. If it is felt that membership is no longer reflective of Gwent's diverse communities, consideration will be given to de-selecting members that have served over 3 years. De-selection will occur should over half of serving members agree a member should step down during a quarterly meeting.

Any member that wishes to resign should provide confirmation in writing to the Chair and Community Cohesion Co-ordinator, along with their identification badge.

Consideration will be given to removal of a member should they repeatedly miss scheduled meetings without reasonable explanation (more than 3 consecutive meetings).

Community members of the IAG will not have the right to remove police representatives from the IAG.

3. The Chair

One member of the group will act as Chair. They will be elected by secret ballot by those members who have full voting rights (i.e. non-police members). Elections will take place two months before the end of the retiring Chair's term of office, which is 3 years. In some circumstances, it may be necessary for the 3 year term to be extended (for example, to oversee a period of change for the IAG). The Chair may be re-elected for a further 3 year period if members agree. The Chair can also remain an IAG member at the end of their term, if this is agreed.

The Chair can be removed if half the actual membership who are physically present agree at a quarterly meeting vote for this to happen.

The Chair can be voted off without the support of the police representatives.

The Chair, after consultation with IAG members, will appoint a Vice-Chair to act in their absence. If, for any reason, the elected Chair cannot attend a meeting, then the Vice-Chair will chair the meeting.

In addition to chairing meetings, the IAG Chair will assist in the planning of meetings, review minutes, prepare reports/papers, and act as a point of contact between meetings.

IAG members may ask the Chair to act on their behalf at meetings, or in other agreed situations. The Chair is accountable to the IAG, and will report to the IAG any activities undertaken on their behalf.

4. Recruitment

A targeted recruitment drive for multiple members may be considered when membership falls below 15. Consideration should be given to the means by which new members are recruited, as desired members may not be reached through mainstream means. At any other time, new members may be sourced during the ongoing work of the Community Cohesion Team and their contact with diverse communities. As IAG membership should be reflective of the communities of Gwent, and in particular, those communities that may be impacted upon by policing activities or critical incidents, monitoring of the Protected Characteristics of IAG members will be conducted frequently, and where under representation of any particular group is identified, positive action taken (in line with provisions set out in the Equality Act 2010) to recruit members from relevant backgrounds.

Any person wishing to become a member of the IAG must successfully take part in the following recruitment process:

1. Applicant is sent an information pack containing an application form, person specification and guidance document
2. Applicant completes and returns the application form, evidencing their ability to meet the person specification and detailing the value they can add as an IAG member
3. Application form is received by the Community Cohesion Team and a word-processed, sanitised version (without personal details) is forwarded to all members for consideration prior to next scheduled IAG meeting. Confirmation of receipt is sent to the applicant
4. The applicant will be invited to attend an informal interview with the Chair and Head of Community Safety/Community Cohesion Co-ordinator
5. The applicant's form and interview are discussed at the next IAG meeting. Members will vote on acceptance/denial of membership. The majority vote will stand. In addition to the evidence provided via the application form and initial meeting, members should consider the following:
 - Whether evidence provided answers the questions in the application form
 - Whether the applicant will add value through bringing new experience or expertise to the IAG
 - Whether the applicant displays characteristics suited to an IAG member
 - Whether the applicant cites appropriate reasons for wanting to be part of the IAG
6. If the applicant is unsuccessful they will be contacted by letter. Gwent Police do not have to give specific reasons for not accepting the application, but the applicant will be provided an opportunity to discuss the result in more detail with the Head of Community Safety.
7. If the applicant is successful, they will be informed via writing and asked to complete a standard and counter-terrorism check

8. Providing that checks are completed satisfactorily, the applicant will be invited to attend the next IAG meeting

Provision will be made for any applicant to receive information in a format suited to their individual needs (for example, via a BSL interpreter, in Braille or Welsh), and for members to access application information in a different format if required.

5. Vetting

As IAG members may have access to sensitive or restricted information, non-police members of the group will be vetted by Standards Unit (local and national checks) to ensure compatibility with the aims of the group. Recent or past inappropriate or criminal behaviour will not necessarily be a bar to membership but will be subject to a risk assessment against potential compromise of the group's aims.

Should a potential member's checks result in a negative indicator, a decision on their membership will be made by the ACC in partnership with the Standards Unit who will discuss their findings with the potential member in a face to face meeting.

Where a member becomes personally involved in a policing investigation they must declare this immediately, either to the Chair or the Community Cohesion Co-ordinator. Dependant on the circumstances it may be necessary to suspend membership whilst the investigation is conducted. This will be dealt with sensitively and confidentially, and any final decision regarding the member's ongoing involvement with the IAG will involve both the Professional Standards Department and the individual involved.

6. IAG Meetings

The IAG will meet quarterly, although sub-groups of appropriate members may be required to meet more often should a piece of work require this. Wherever possible, meetings shall not be arranged where they conflict with the faith observances or particular personal circumstances of members, and the maximum notice possible will be given. However it is recognised that should members be required to assist or advise in the event of a critical incident, this may not always be possible. Meeting venues will be accessible and provision of language support or information in alternative formats will be ensured wherever time and resources allow.

Minutes will be taken at all quarterly and sub-group meetings. Where a topic is particularly sensitive, for example a critical incident involving a member's own community, that member may request that their name is omitted or that no minutes are taken.

Quarterly meetings will have an agenda set by the Chair with support from the Community Cohesion Co-ordinator, and members may request items to be added or raise any urgent topics for discussion at the end of the meeting.

Members are expected to allow and encourage all colleagues to fully participate in discussions in an open, free, constructive and respectful manner.

Meetings will normally be limited to two hours duration unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Chair will be responsible for ensuring that meetings begin and end on time.

Gwent Police will provide appropriate support to any members that have specific needs (for example, interpreters, transport).

7. Force Visits

A key part of an IAG member's role is to provide suggestions for improvement in the way that Gwent Police considers the needs of our communities in policing practice. IAG members will be invited to complete regular force visits to departments that are of particular interest. These could include:

- Custody
- Public Protection Unit
- Crewing with Response Teams
- Control Room
- Training
- Recruitment Centres
- Interviews

All members will be provided with a point of contact for their visit (usually a Senior Officer) who should be given plenty of notice to arrange a purposeful, structured visit. Each member will be expected to complete and return a feedback form as soon as possible after their visit. One copy will be kept by the Community Cohesion Co-ordinator, and one copy will be sent to the visited department. Any suggestions for improvement or queries that arise from a members' visit will be captured within this questionnaire, and visited departments will be required to respond to any points raised, or evidence any implementation of change before the next quarterly meeting. Similarly, visiting members will also be expected to feed back to the rest of the IAG at the next quarterly meeting.

8. Confidentiality and Conduct

The proceedings of all IAG meetings are sensitive but it is understood that, from time to time, members will need to consult with others outside of the group in order to seek the views and opinions of the minority communities that they are connected to. Members must not reveal information that could identify any individual, whether a member of the group, or third party.

To operate effectively, the group may, on occasion, have sight of restricted material that must be treated as strictly private and confidential. Members must declare an interest when matters are raised in which they are connected.

The Chair will ask Gwent Police representatives to clarify the status of any information/report in order to determine its sensitivity.

Members will be expected to observe guidance and sign relevant agreements around confidentiality and code of conduct. Any breaches of these confidentiality arrangements will lead to a Standards Unit investigation of, and the possible expulsion of, a member where a clear breach has occurred. This will be done in person during a private meeting between the member in question, the Chair, a representative from the Standards Unit and the ACC. At all times, members will be expected to respect the views of others and conduct themselves in a manner that ensures all members of the group are free from discrimination, harassment or victimisation, that all members have opportunity to participate and that all members are able to develop positive working relationships with each other and Gwent Police. Any discriminatory attitudes or behaviours will be addressed in line with Force procedure and may lead to expulsion of a member.

9. Financial Reimbursement

Membership of the IAG is voluntary, however Gwent Police will refund any travel or out of pocket expenses.

Members will be expected to submit an expenses claim form on every occasion that they wish to claim back any travel or other costs. The mileage rate set out by Gwent Police for volunteer claims will apply, and public transport costs will be reimbursed providing valid receipts are attached.

Members should claim travel expenses from their place of work or home address.

Occasionally, members may be required to attend meetings during work time. Where this causes an actual loss of earnings, Gwent Police may reimburse the member at their usual hourly rate. Where a member wishes to claim loss of earnings, they should complete the appropriate part of the expense form and provide a letter from their employer confirming the hourly rate and amount of time lost.

10. The Use of the IAG during Critical Incidents

A critical incident is defined as:

'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'.

The Gwent Police Independent Advisory Group will act as a 'critical friend' to Gwent Police in relation to 'major or critical incidents'. In such circumstances, the IAG will follow the procedure identified in the 'Police IAG Call Out Process' document. In the event that the IAG becomes concerned about events affecting a minority community, the IAG can instigate the procedures as identified in the 'IAG Police Call Out Process' document.

IAG members should form part of the Gold (strategic decision-making) Group at critical and major incidents and during major investigations to offer a community perspective on policing activities and possible impact.

It may prove impossible to assemble an IAG during the live phase of a critical incident due to timeframe, in this case consideration should be given to enlisting IAG assistance in reviewing policy or training issues after the incident as part of the de-briefing process.

In the event of a critical incident, the Senior Officer in charge should establish clear terms of reference for the IAG member at an early stage. It is also important that they establish rules about confidentiality and keep accurate records of decisions made and advice given. IAG members should not be involved as mediators and/or advocates. There is a clear distinction between an advisor and a mediator or advocate. Mediation and advocacy can involve interaction with victims, families and/or witnesses. Involvement with these people may lead to the mediator or advocate taking on personal liability for their actions and becoming witnesses themselves. The rules of evidence may then apply to them. Similarly, it is recommended that members are not tasked with visiting a crime scene during the active phase of the investigation.

Where an IAG member knows the witness/suspect/victim, or community involved, careful consideration should be given to whether that member can be truly independent. This relationship may not necessarily preclude the member from becoming involved, and indeed may even add value, but it will affect how independent their advice will be.

In exceptional circumstances, it may be considered necessary to bring an IAG member to a Forward Command Position, e.g. Silver command vehicle at a firearms incident. Members may be able to pass information to the community or advise on how the assistance of the community can best be enlisted to by being close to the scene. It is important that detachment from the incident itself is maintained. The member must be consulted about any decision to

request their presence at Silver Command or any forward control point and this should be done at an early stage. The safety of the member must be considered at all times, through documented risk assessments. They must not be placed, nor encouraged to place themselves, in any position where their personal safety may be compromised.

Again, it should be remembered that community advice during a critical incident should not be confined to IAG members, and ACPO National Guidance suggests that involvement of other relevant community members, partner agencies and voluntary groups as well as IAG members, is essential.

11. The Use of IAG Members in Proposed Policing Operations

Where a pre-planned operation is proposed, IAG members can help to ensure that these activities have the support of the community and any community resources can be identified. Members may also be able to alert the police to any negative effects of proposed actions, and thereby prevent tension between the police and communities. Pre-planned policing operations may include:

- The policing of community events
- The policing of sporting events
- Intelligence led operations (for example, execution of drugs warrants)
- Planned protests or marches

It is important that IAG members are involved at the early stages of planning an operation. By doing so, the decision maker can have a full range of options and can consider all aspects before making a decision. IAG members should form part of the Gold (strategic decision-making) group, as with critical incidents, and the same guidance set out in section 10 will apply to their involvement in policing operations.

In all instances of IAG involvement, members who have provided input should be provided with a 'de-brief' session, involving the senior officer in charge and any other relevant personnel, in order to address any concerns and update IAG members on the outcome of the incident/operation

12. Emotional Support

IAG members may become involved in traumatic incidents through their work with the police. By keeping members' work restricted to that of giving advice, the possibilities of psychological effects are limited. However, officers in charge of investigations should be aware that members may suffer ill effects. If there is concern about any member, the Head of Community Safety should

contact the Occupational Health Unit who should consider putting them in touch with appropriate support services. Members should also be self-aware, particularly of the possibility of suffering ill effects from involvement in critical incidents.

13. Training

As the role of IAG members is to offer independent, community advice, required training should be minimal. However, members should receive regular inputs at their quarterly meetings keeping them updated on Gwent Police developments and familiarise members with the structure and function of different departments within the force. Specific awareness sessions may be necessary, either during meetings, or if more time is needed, at a separate time. Awareness session topics may include:

- Critical Incidents
- Confidentiality and Data Protection
- Operation Briefings
- National Policing Agendas

Should any member wish to complete any additional training, a request should be made via the Chair and this will be submitted in the usual manner via Learning and Development.

14. IAG Advice

IAG advice is independent of the police service and carries no responsibility or liability for the outcome of decisions based upon it. Members, although partners in a beneficial and positive relationship with the police service, are not answerable to the police and neither are the police responsible for members' actions, nor obliged to follow any of the advice they give.

It must also be remembered that IAG members represent themselves and not necessarily the view of any particular group within the community, although this may be the case on occasions. They do not bear responsibility for the consequences of decisions based upon their advice. The autonomy of the police decision-maker is not affected. A police officer may or may not follow advice. However, the dismissal of advice without careful consideration can be problematic, cause frustration and be perceived as disrespectful, leaving the individual feeling undervalued. If IAG advice is not followed, justification of this decision should be explained clearly to the member(s) involved.

15. Budget

The IAG will be allocated an annual budget which is managed by Gwent Police, using the standard financial procedures in place within force. Monies will be used to reimburse any travel and meeting costs, purchase goods or equipment necessary for IAG members to fulfil their role, and to support

members in attending relevant events and conferences where deemed appropriate. The budget signatory is the Head of Community Safety, and decisions around allocation of funds will be made in partnership with the Chair.

16. Identification

All IAG members will be issued with an identification badge. The badge will include a recent photograph of the member, a statement of their role as an IAG member, and the signature of the Chief Constable.

IAG badges will not give access to buildings. IAG members should be met and escorted whilst on police premises by appropriate police personnel. Whilst on police premises, IAG members must ensure their badges are visible at all times.

Identification badges should only be used whilst carrying out IAG duties (for example, attending a regular meeting or a Critical Incident Command Meeting). IAG identification badges do not mean that the holder is working for or representing Gwent Police, and do not provide any authority. Members should not be use or display their identification in any other context or situation.

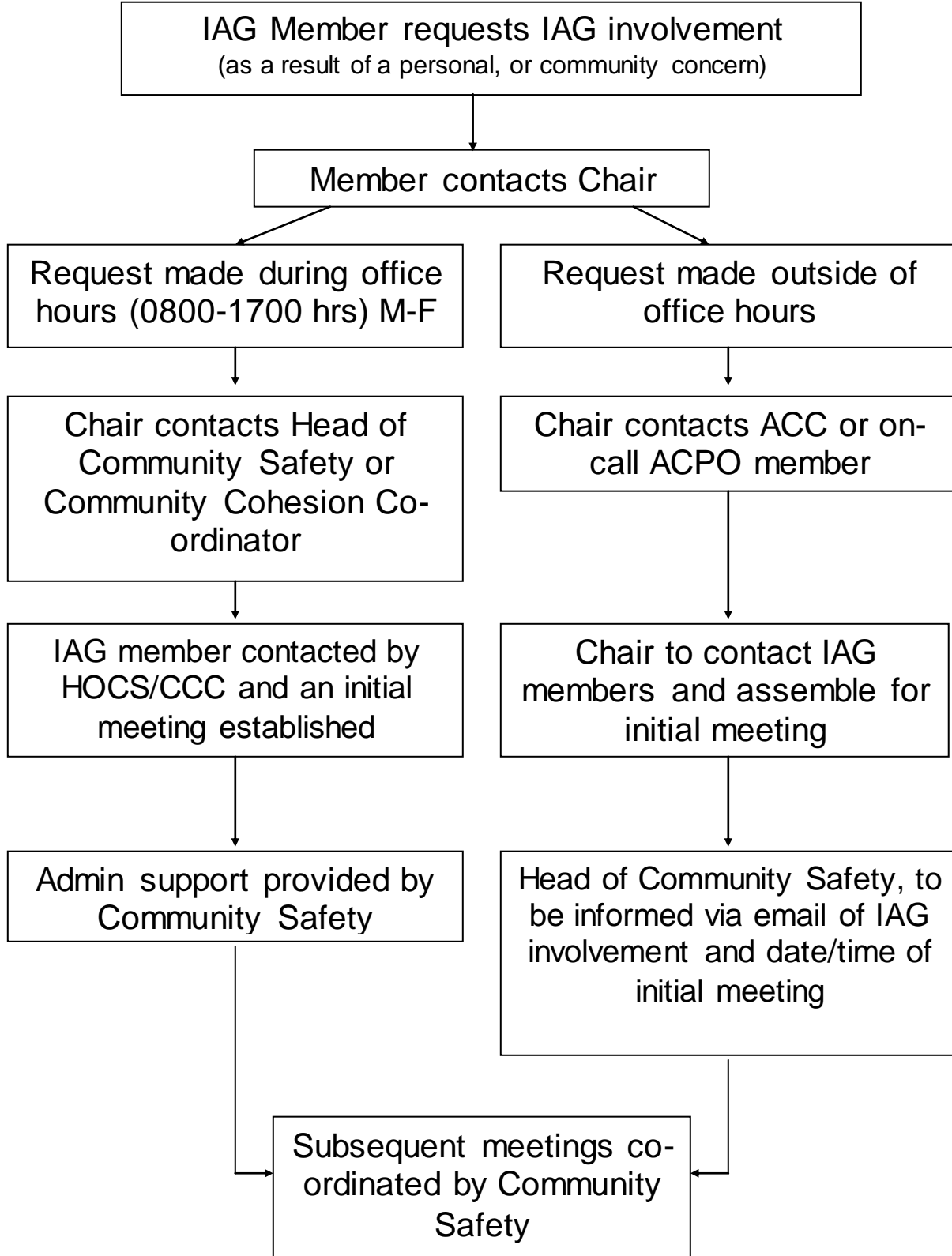
On leaving the IAG, members should return their ID badge to the Community Cohesion Team, Maindee Police Station.

As members may be asked to provide advice around operations or policing activities that are sensitive, or that have implications for particular communities, Gwent Police will not publicise the identity of IAG members, and members should disclose their IAG membership status, and the status of others, only in situations that they consider safe and appropriate.

IAG member will be asked to provide a short personal profile available to Senior Officers to assist them contacting an appropriate member in the event of a critical incident. This should include areas of expertise, interest, or personal information that may be relevant. Members of the IAG may have particular characteristics that they do not wish to disclose to other members or have made available for this purpose, for example, their sexual orientation or disability, but that they are happy to provide advice around. This information should always be treated sensitively and in line with the individual's wishes.

APPENDIX B

IAG CALL OUT PROCESS (IAG Led)



APPENDIX C

IAG CALL OUT PROCESS (Police Led)

