

Building connections that last

The councillor advocate scheme

Induction guide



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Updated by Andrew Kirchin, communications and engagement officer

Email: councilloradvocateopcc@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk

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If you need this information in a different format please contact us at the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner by email councilloradvocateopcc@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk or telephone 01392 225555 and we will do our best to help you.

What is a councillor advocate?

A councillor advocate is an elected member from any council in Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly who has volunteered to help improve communication between the police, councils, and the police and crime commissioner (PCC).

Introducing councillor advocates

As a local councillor you know and understand your communities. You are a recognised and influential local leader who is well connected with the communities you represent. Because of this, you are in a unique position of being able to help improve the connection between your communities and the police.

The PCC's Councillor Advocate Scheme (the scheme) aims to ensure that:

- you feel more informed about crime and policing in your local area;
- a practical and positive route exists to enable you to bring the overall views of your communities to the police;
- the PCC is kept informed of community views across Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, so that she can effectively hold the chief Constable to account for policing;
- consistent, accurate and honest information relating to crime and community safety is cascaded to the public;
- you feel more equipped to inform the public about crime and policing, educate your communities about crime and support/encourage greater reporting of issues to the police and other appropriate partner organisations; and
- police officers time is used to its optimum by enabling the cascade of information to be efficient and without duplication.

How the scheme works

The scheme works by improving the consistency and frequency of communication, and offers advocates:

Face to face discussions:

1. Access to a quarterly meeting with the police at a local level
2. Access to councillor advocate themed seminars each year
3. Access to a named contact within the PCC's office

Written materials:

4. A bespoke advocate information directory
5. Quarterly key topic briefing documents specifically for advocates
6. Quarterly newsletter from the PCC
7. Monthly Citizens in Policing newsletter
8. Notification of press releases issued by the PCC

Campaigns and events:

9. Access to police campaign materials (e.g. posters and leaflets)
10. Prior notification of and invitation to police arranged community engagement activities

In each policing area councillors are invited to volunteer themselves as a councillor advocate. Whilst councils may choose to select an individual as a councillor advocate for the scheme using their own internal processes, the scheme is open to any councillors (or in some cases parish/town clerks) who wish to take part

and is not restricted to those selected by councils. Advocates are welcome from unitary, county, district, town and parish councils. It is each councillor advocate's responsibility to ensure that they have informed their council and community safety partnership (CSP) that they have signed up to the scheme.

Every quarter the councillor advocates for each policing area will meet with a representative from Devon and Cornwall Police (the Force). A representative from the relevant CSP will also be invited to attend, as will a community engagement worker from the OPCC (if there is one allocated to the area), along with any police engagement volunteers in the area.

This discussion will enable each councillor advocate to raise issues on behalf of their council's communities, and allow the police the opportunity to update all councillor advocates on relevant information and/or request support with a specific issue. After the meeting the police representative will send a brief written summary of the meeting to the office of the police and crime commissioner (OPCC) by email to councilloradvocateopcc@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk.

Each quarter advocates will also be invited to attend a 'councillor advocate seminar' which will focus on one key issue, for example:

1. Neighbourhood Policing
2. The police telephone 101 service
3. Antisocial behaviour
4. Road safety

Attendance at seminars will be exclusively for councillor advocates and will provide opportunities to receive information and updates from professionals, and enable councillors to ask questions, raise queries and feedback the views of their communities to the police and the police and crime commissioner.

The role of a councillor advocate

The role of a councillor advocate is to:

- improve the connection between communities, the Force, and the PCC;
- connect with their local CSP;
- identify opportunities where councillors may be able to proactively support the police with specific campaigns or activities;
- regularly engage with all councillors from their council and their communities to explore what crime and community safety issues they may be experiencing, and cascade that information back to the police;
- encourage all councillors from their council and their communities to register for the free neighbourhood alert system at <https://devonandcornwallpcc.neighbourhoodalert.co.uk/>;
- ensure that accurate information from the police is cascaded throughout their council and communities;
- cascade crime prevention information to encourage all communities to take proactive steps to reduce the risk of crime and encourage reporting;
- raise awareness and clarify the most appropriate methods of reporting antisocial behaviour, nuisance issues and crimes within their communities;
- raise awareness within their council of the Victim Care Unit and encourage all councillors to promote it within their areas;

- ensure that specific police campaigns are widely communicated within their council and cascaded throughout communities; and
- tell the police about community concerns, but also about positive experiences so that good practice can be captured and feedback used by the police.

In return a councillor advocate can expect:

- regular and consistent access to their local policing team;
- regular information from the PCC;
- to receive exclusive access to councillor advocate seminars;
- access to a named contact within the OPCC;
- for the views of their communities to be heard by the PCC; and
- recognition for their advocate efforts within the PCC's publicity.

What the councillor scheme is not:

- the scheme is about improving the cascade of information between groups, and is not designed to tackle issues relating to individual and specific cases within a locality as existing structures and forums already exist for that purpose;
- the scheme does not replace existing crime reporting or provide an alternative for reporting crime;
- the scheme is not intended to impinge on the local expertise of existing groups and forums (such as statutory CSPs);
- councillor advocates are not 'single points of contact' between the police and a council

The role of the police

The police will:

- arrange quarterly discussions with councillor advocates (to also include a representative from the local community safety partnership) where councillors will receive:
 - up to date, accurate information about recorded crime, along with contextual information;
 - an outline of what specific work the police have been focusing on in the last quarter;
 - an outline of where the police will be focusing their efforts in the next quarter and if/how councillors can support that;
 - information about any planned police arranged community events and engagement activities
- councillor advocates will also receive a copy of the monthly Citizens in Policing¹ newsletter

¹ Devon and Cornwall Police has a Citizens in Policing Strategy which aims to: deliver an innovative and transformational approach to engaging volunteers to support policing; expand the police's imagination as to how volunteers can benefit from and contribute to the aims of Devon & Cornwall Police; develop new approaches to maximise the use of volunteers' time, skills, energy and commitment, while integrating them into the wider police family; enhance the policing service through connecting our communities to policing and connecting policing to our communities; draw together the activity of citizens operating within policing; and create collaborations and partnerships with existing third-sector organisations who can add value to policing.

The role of the OPCC

The OPCC will ensure that councillor advocates receive:

- an induction pack and specially designed information directory
- use of a specific email address councilloradvocateopcc@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk to enable efficient correspondence with the office of the police and crime commissioner
- press releases issued from the office as soon as at the point of release
- regular newsletters from the PCC
- key briefing documents on specific issues that are of interest to councillor advocates
- an invitation to exclusive councillor advocate thematic seminars each year

The community link contacts from the OPCC will:

- ensure that advocates are provided with police campaign materials upon request;
- field any enquiries that councillor advocates may have and signpost advocates as appropriate; and
- review the summary of discussions from the quarterly councillor advocate meetings and ensure that any relevant specific issues are raised with the PCC and the chief constable in an appropriate and consistent format.

Find out more

To discuss the scheme or to apply please contact the OPCC by email councilloradvocateopcc@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk or telephone 07914 536733 and ask to speak with Mick Harrison.

ROLE PROFILE

Role:	Councillor Advocate
Team:	Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
Duration:	Ongoing subject to 12 monthly review

About the police and crime commissioner

The police and crime commissioner (PCC) is responsible by law for holding the chief constable to account on behalf of the residents of Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly for delivering a police force that works well and meets the needs of its communities. The police and crime commissioner also has to make sure that Devon and Cornwall Police is helping to deliver our area's 'police and crime plan'. The PCC's plan has five priorities:

1. Connecting communities and policing – the local policing promise
2. Preventing and deterring crime
3. Protecting people at risk of abuse and those who are most vulnerable
4. Supporting victims and witnesses and helping them to get justice
5. Getting the best out of the police

The police and crime commissioner's key priority is the 'Local Policing Promise'. This promise means that she will work to ensure that policing in Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly is accessible, responsive, informative and supportive. To assist in delivering that promise, the police and crime commissioner has created a Councillor Advocate Scheme, to harness the power and connectivity of locally elected councillors throughout Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

The chief constable and the police and crime commissioner have many different responsibilities but in short their roles are to:

Chief Constable	Police and Crime Commissioner
Must deliver an effective police force.	Makes sure that the views and needs of Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly residents inform how our police service operates.
Leads and makes decisions on all aspects of operational policing.	Sets the police's priorities (i.e. the issues that are the most important) and decides how much money the police force will be given each year to operate.
Is the most senior police officer in Devon and Cornwall Police	Acts on behalf of the electorate to ensure that the chief constable is delivering effective policing in Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly by holding him to account.

Chief Constable	Police and Crime Commissioner
Is responsible for the delivery of operational policing and overall performance of the police.	Decides what the council tax contribution towards policing (the precept) is, and then decides how much money the chief constable will have to run the police force, as well as then commissioning other services to reduce crime and/or improve community safety.
Is politically independent.	Is elected into office.
Accountable to the police and crime commissioner.	Accountable to the public.

About the role

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- councillors feel more informed about crime and policing in their local area;
- a practical and positive route exists to enable councillors to bring overall views from their communities to the police;
- the Police and Crime Commissioner is kept informed of community views across Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, so that she can effectively hold the Chief Constable to account for policing;
- consistent, accurate and honest information relating to crime and community safety is cascaded to the public;
- councillors feel equipped to inform the public about crime and policing, educate their communities about crime and support/encourage greater reporting of issues to the police and other appropriate partner organisations; and
- the time of police officers is used to its optimum by enabling the cascade of information to be efficient and without duplication.

The role of a councillor advocate is to:

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- connect with their local CSP;
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- regularly engage with all councillors from their council and their communities to explore what crime and community safety issues they may be experiencing, and cascade that information back to the police;
- encourage all councillors from their council and their communities to register for the free neighbourhood alert system at <https://alerts.dc.police.uk>;
- ensure that accurate information from the police is cascaded throughout their council and communities;
- cascade crime prevention information to encourage all communities to take proactive steps to reduce the risk of crime and encourage reporting;
- raise awareness and clarify the most appropriate methods of reporting antisocial behaviour and other nuisance issues within their communities;

- raise awareness within their council of the Victim Care Unit and encourage all councillors to promote it within their areas;
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In return a councillor advocate can expect:

- regular and consistent access to their local policing team;
- regular information from the Police and Crime Commissioner;
- to receive exclusive access to councillor advocate seminars;
- access to a named contact within the office of the police and crime commissioner;
- for the views of their communities to be heard by the police and crime commissioner; and
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- the scheme does not replace existing crime reporting or provide an alternative for reporting crime;
- the scheme is not intended to impinge on the local expertise of existing groups and forums (such as statutory Community Safety Partnerships);
- councillor advocates are not ‘single points of contact’ between the police and a council.

Community Safety Partnerships

Community Safety Partnerships are structured groups who deliver activity based on data driven priorities. Councillor advocates are expected to engage with the relevant Community Safety Partnership for their area.

Community Safety Partnerships are made up of representatives from the police, local council, fire service, health service, probation as well as many others.

Their purpose is to make the community safer, reduce crime and the fear of crime, reduce anti-social behaviour and work with business and residents on the issues of most concern.

CSP Area	Web link to further information
Cornwall	https://safercornwall.co.uk/
Plymouth	https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/antisocialbehaviourandcrime/communitysafetypartnership
Torbay	http://www.torbay.gov.uk/emergencies/sct/
Devon	https://new.devon.gov.uk/emergencies/safer-devon-partnership/
East and Mid Devon	http://eastdevon.gov.uk/community-safety/east-and-mid-devon-community-safety-partnership/
Exeter	https://exeter.gov.uk/clean-safe-city/community-safety/exeter-community-safety-partnership/about-the-partnership/
North Devon and Torridge	http://www.northdevon.gov.uk/community-safety-and-emergencies/north-devon-and-torridge-community-safety-partnership/

CSP Area	Web link to further information
South Devon and Dartmoor	http://saferdevon.co.uk/south-devon-dartmoor-csp/
Isles of Scilly	http://www.scilly.gov.uk/community-safety/community-safety-partnership

Commitment

Councillor advocates will be requested to attend quarterly meetings and to proactively bring information to those discussions, as well as cascade the results of the meeting throughout their council and communities. In addition, councillor advocates will be invited to attend any relevant police and crime commissioner consultation and engagement events which are scheduled to take place within their council's area. Councillor advocates will also be invited to attend seminars each year. The police and crime commissioner recognises that councillor advocates are volunteers and as such their attendance at any event is in a voluntary capacity.

Expenses

The police and crime commissioner is unable to make any financial reimbursement to councillor advocates as part of the scheme. Refreshments will be provided at councillor advocate seminars.

Police vetting and the Disclosure and Barring Service

Councillor advocates will not be expected to provide, nor be provided with personal, confidential or sensitive information as part of the scheme. As such advocates will not be subject to police vetting or Disclosure and Barring Service processes.

Information security and data protection

Councillor advocate meetings are not forums where specific cases or individuals will be discussed.

Councillor advocates will not be expected to provide, nor be provided with personal, confidential or sensitive information as part of the scheme.

Should a councillor advocate be made aware of a specific issue relating to any individual(s) that they wish to discuss with the police, this activity must be considered as being outside of the councillor advocate scheme process and the councillor should adhere to their council's own policies and practices for the appropriate, proportionate and legal disclosure of information.

Should an incident occur where a councillor advocate does share any information with the police or the office of the police and crime commissioner that is deemed to relate to the safety and/or safeguarding of a person(s), that information may be shared with other organisations for the purposes of preventing crime and/or safeguarding in accordance with statutory duties.

Information exchanged via the councillor scheme should be stored and communicated using appropriate and secure methods, with due regard to relevant data protection and human rights legislation.

The following information about councillor advocates will be collected and stored by the office of the police and crime commissioner:

Type of information	Reason for use/storing/retaining
Councillor name	To enable registration to the scheme.
Name of council	To ensure that the office of the police and crime commissioner can identify which councils are represented on the scheme.
Telephone number	To enable staff from the office of the police and crime commissioner to contact councillors with specific enquiries or notifications (for example a seminar cancellation).
Email address	To enable councillors to receive regular information as part of the scheme.
Any special requirements	This will be asked for individual events and communications to ensure that staff from the office of the police and crime commissioner take any specific requirements into consideration.

Information sharing

Elected members understand that by registering to become a councillor advocate that they are consenting to their information (i.e. name and contact details) being shared with Devon and Cornwall Police, relevant Community Safety Partnerships, Democratic Services Teams/Town Clerks and other councillor advocates.

Councillors may request to be removed from the scheme at any time by emailing councilloradvocateopcc@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk.

Access to police buildings

Quarterly meetings of advocates may take place on police premises but advocates will not be provided with specific police authorised identification or access cards for any police premises as part of the scheme.

Training

Councillor advocates will be invited to attend seminars each year where specific inputs and/or training will be provided. Four seminars will take place throughout the year in Devon and Cornwall. The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner will be guided by councillor advocates when choosing topics for each seminar (for example crime prevention, modern slavery and human trafficking, domestic abuse and sexual violence, scams, county lines etc).

Person specification

Councillor advocates should demonstrate:

- commitment to working positively and in partnership to solve problems;
- excellent and professional communication skills;
- ability to proactively gather and cascade information;
- demonstrable integrity and commitment to promoting equality, diversity and human rights; and

- diplomacy.

Equality, diversity and human rights

It is important that the police and the police and crime commissioner can demonstrate that they promote and respect equality, diversity and human rights at all times. The police and police and crime commissioner must ensure that those they interact with are treated fairly and without discrimination. It is also important that the police and police and crime commissioner respects and understands the diversity of the individuals and communities they serve.

The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on all public authorities (including police and crime commissioners) which requires them to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The police and crime commissioner's councillor advocate scheme must fully reflect the commissioner's legal duties and all councillor advocates will be expected to behave in accordance with these duties and principles at all times online and offline and both professionally and privately. Failure to do so may result in a formal investigation by the office of the police and crime commissioner and possible removal from the scheme.

Councillor advocate conduct

Councillor advocates are expected to act in accordance with the seven Nolan principles that apply to the conduct of people in public life, which are:

1. Selflessness: you should act in the public interest.
2. Integrity: you should not put yourself under any obligations to others, allow them improperly to influence you or seek benefit for yourself, family, friends or close associates.
3. Objectivity: you should act impartially, fairly and on merit.
4. Accountability: you should be prepared to submit to public scrutiny necessary to ensure accountability.
5. Openness: you should be open and transparent in your actions and decisions unless there are clear and lawful reasons for non-disclosure.
6. Honesty: you should always be truthful.
7. Leadership: you should promote, support and exhibit high standards of conduct and be willing to challenge poor behaviour.

How to apply

To apply to the scheme please email councilloradvocateopcc@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk.

COMMUNITY LINK CONTACTS

What are community link contacts?

A number of members of staff who work for the office of the police and crime commissioner are assigned a 'community link contact' role, in addition to their standard duties. Each member of staff can allocate up to 10 hours per month to their community link function (dependent on other priorities).

What is the aim of the community link contacts?

The main aim of the role is to develop communication links between the office of the police and crime commissioner and specific groups within individual geographical areas.

Community link contacts aim to:

- develop communication channels with groups throughout Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly by offering a named point of contact for enquiries within the commissioner's office
- raise awareness of the role of the police and crime commissioner
- feedback issues from geographical areas to the police and crime commissioner to assist her in her role to a) hold the chief constable to account for policing and b) commission services throughout Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

Community link contacts assist greater communication and are not a resource for local areas to use for solving specific problems, although they may signpost groups and the public to other useful stakeholders and resources and are unable to become involved with any activity that relates to operational policing.

Community link contacts may:

- attend some local events as appropriate (e.g. a councillor advocate seminar, a police neighbourhood surgery, community engagement group meetings, drop-in and other partnership events)
- raise awareness about the role of the police and crime commissioner, her remit and relationship with policing and how she can help groups and communities
- record community concerns, listen to the public, feedback to the police and crime commissioner and her team and refer issues (as appropriate) or signpost to a partner agency

Find your community link contact

You can find your community link contact online at www.devonandcornwall-pcc.gov.uk/about-us/the-opcc-team/community-link-officer or by telephone 01392 225555.

COUNCILLOR ADVOCATE SCHEME

Date:
Time:
Venue:
Contact:

Sample quarterly meeting agenda

1. Welcome and introductions.

General introductions.

2. Crime update.

Police to provide an overall crime update for the sector, along with relevant contextual information, drawing out any particular issues of concern and also positive changes to crime.

3. Police/partnership activity update.

Police to provide an update on what specific activity they have been focusing on in the last quarter and why, along with reference to any partnership work. Police to then provide councillors with an update on where their focus will be for the next quarter and why, in order to explore if/how councillors/communities could assist with any specific activities.

4. Councillor views and questions.

Opportunity for councillors to express their views and ask questions. Councillors may wish to submit questions in advance to enable the police to research/prepare a more comprehensive response.

5. Campaign updates.

Where the crime picture has identified a particular issue(s) the police may wish to carry out targeted campaign work with a specific community. This will provide an opportunity for advocates to explore if/how their council could support the police with any particular campaigns.

6. News and engagement events.

Councillors, police and office of the police and crime commissioner to advise each other of any relevant news and events, to maximise any opportunities to work in partnership.

7. Specific issues that require a response from the commissioner.

Councillors and police to advise the community link contact at the office of the police and crime commissioner of any issues they wish to bring to the commissioner's attention.

8. Details of next meeting