

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO 2026-27-011

Your request has now been considered under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act), and we provide our response below.

You stated you are researching workplace drug and alcohol testing practices across public sector organisations in England and Wales, with a particular focus on the safeguards in place to prevent unfair dismissals resulting from false positive drug test results. In line with this research, you asked:

1. Is the PCC aware of the drug and alcohol testing policy used by Dorset Police for its officers, police staff, and contractors? If so, does the PCC hold a copy of that policy, and has the PCC reviewed or approved it?
2. Does the Dorset Police drug testing policy include the following safeguards:
 - (a) Confirmatory laboratory testing (e.g. LC-MS/MS or GC-MS) before any adverse action is taken on the basis of an immunoassay screening result.
 - (b) Review by an independent Medical Review Officer (MRO) or equivalent qualified professional.
 - (c) Consideration of lawful explanations for a positive result, including the use of commercially available CBD products, prescribed cannabinoid-based medicines (e.g. Sativex, Epidiolex), or dietary sources.
 - (d) Referral to Occupational Health before disciplinary proceedings?
3. In the last three years, has the PCC received any complaints, representations, or correspondence from officers, staff, or members of the public regarding Dorset Police's drug testing procedures or outcomes?
4. Has the PCC commissioned, funded, or overseen any substance misuse or drug testing services in the Dorset area? If so, do the commissioning contracts or service specifications require the safeguards listed in Question 2?
5. Is the PCC aware of any officer or staff member of Dorset Police who has been dismissed or subjected to disciplinary action based solely on an unconfirmed immunoassay drug screening result (i.e. without confirmatory laboratory testing)?

Your request for information has been considered under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act), and our response is as follows:

1. Is the PCC aware of the drug and alcohol testing policy used by Dorset Police for its officers, police staff, and contractors? If so, does the PCC hold a copy of that policy, and has the PCC reviewed or approved it?

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), acting on behalf of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), is aware that Dorset Police has a policy relating to the support of officers, staff and contractors with alcohol and drug misuse issues.

Under Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the OPCC can confirm that it does not hold a copy of the policy requested. This is a Dorset Police policy and is held by Dorset Police.

Responsibility for the development, approval, and implementation of Dorset Police policies rests with Dorset Police. The PCC does not approve Force policies. Accordingly, under Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the OPCC can confirm that it does not hold information relating to any approval of this policy by the PCC.

2. Does the Dorset Police drug testing policy include the following safeguards:
(a) Confirmatory laboratory testing (e.g. LC-MS/MS or GC-MS) before any adverse action is taken on the basis of an immunoassay screening result.
(b) Review by an independent Medical Review Officer (MRO) or equivalent qualified professional.
(c) Consideration of lawful explanations for a positive result, including the use of commercially available CBD products, prescribed cannabinoid-based medicines (e.g. Sativex, Epidiolex), or dietary sources.
(d) Referral to Occupational Health before disciplinary proceedings?

The OPCC does not hold information regarding the contents of Dorset Police's drug and alcohol testing policy. Under Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the OPCC can confirm that the requested information is not held.

As the information relates to Dorset Police operational policies and procedures, you may wish to submit your request directly to Dorset Police.

3. In the last three years, has the PCC received any complaints, representations, or correspondence from officers, staff, or members of the public regarding Dorset Police's drug testing procedures or outcomes?

The OPCC, responding on behalf of the PCC, has searched its records covering the last three years for complaints, representations, or correspondence relating to Dorset Police's workplace drug and alcohol testing arrangements for officers, police staff and contractors.

Under Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the OPCC can confirm that it does not hold any recorded information falling within the scope of this request. No complaints, representations, or correspondence concerning Dorset Police's workplace drug and alcohol testing arrangements for officers, police staff and contractors have been identified.

As information relating to Dorset Police's policies, procedures and employment practices may be held by Dorset Police, you may wish to contact Dorset Police directly if you require further information.

4. Has the PCC commissioned, funded, or overseen any substance misuse or drug testing services in the Dorset area? If so, do the commissioning contracts or service specifications require the safeguards listed in Question 2?

The OPCC, responding on behalf of the PCC, has interpreted this question as relating to workplace drug and alcohol testing services for Dorset Police officers, police staff and contractors, having regard to the scope of your request and your stated research into workplace drug and alcohol testing practices.

The PCC has not commissioned or funded any substance misuse testing services or drug testing services in Dorset that fall within the scope of this request.

Accordingly, under Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the OPCC can confirm that it does not hold information in relation to the second part of the request concerning whether any commissioning contracts or service specifications require the safeguards referred to in Question 2, as no such services have been commissioned or funded by the PCC within the scope of this request.

5. Is the PCC aware of any officer or staff member of Dorset Police who has been dismissed or subjected to disciplinary action based solely on an unconfirmed immunoassay drug screening result (i.e. without confirmatory laboratory testing)?

The OPCC does not hold information in relation to individual Dorset Police disciplinary matters. Under Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the OPCC can confirm that the requested information is not held.

As disciplinary matters are the responsibility of Dorset Police, you may wish to submit your requested directly to Dorset Police.