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City of
Stoke-on-Trent

Stoke-on-Trent Prevent

Referrals and Channel Process

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Introduction

Stoke-on-Trent's *Prevent* Board co-ordinates work in the city in support of the national *Prevent* strategy aimed at stopping people becoming or supporting terrorists or violent extremists. A specific part of its role is to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that those at risk of this are given appropriate advice and support. This document sets out the corporate arrangements which Stoke-on-Trent City Council has put in place to comply with the [Prevent Duty](#) relating to the Channel Panel.

Background

On 1 July 2015 the Prevent Duty came into effect. The requirements of this duty are set out in the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (sections 36 to 41). This document provides a clear framework with which to respond to safeguarding concerns for those individuals who are vulnerable to radicalisation.

The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 requires the following:

- local authorities to ensure that a multi-agency panel exists in their area;
- the local authority to chair the panel;
- the panel to develop a support plan for individuals accepted as Channel cases;
- the panel to consider alternative forms of support, including health and social services, where Channel is not appropriate; and
- all partners of a panel (as specified in Schedule 7 of the statutory Channel Duty guidance), so far as appropriate and reasonably practicable, to cooperate with the police and the panel in the carrying out of their functions.

The statutory [Channel Duty](#) guidance outlines the requirements relating to Channel Panels, Channel Panel member roles and processes, the support plan, obtaining consent prior to support, support to address identified vulnerabilities, funding support plans, monitoring Channel support, referral to alternative forms of support, reviewing Channel cases and sharing good practice.

Channel

Channel is an early intervention, multi-agency process designed to safeguard vulnerable people from being drawn into violent extremist or terrorist behaviour. Channel works in a similar way to existing safeguarding partnerships aimed at protecting vulnerable people. Channel is designed to work with individuals of any age who are at risk of being exploited by extremists or terrorist ideologues. The process is shaped around the circumstances of each person and can provide support for any form of radicalisation or personal vulnerabilities

The Channel panel meets monthly and standing members of the Channel panel are:

- Children and Adult Social Care
- Health Sector

- Youth Offending
- West Midlands CTU
- Prisons
- Early Help Services
- Safer City and Communities
- Probation

Other membership of the Channel panel will depend on the individuals being considered, but would regularly include

- Single Point of Contact making referral.
- Identified individual service providers.

Referrals to Channel will be considered by the Channel panel standing members. The standing members will review available information and decide whether to adopt the case based on whether there is vulnerability to being drawn into terrorism that may be reduced through Channel support.

A referral will not progress to the full Channel panel if:

- it is malicious or misguided
- it is clear the person is not vulnerable to violent extremism.

Individuals can only be dealt with through the Channel process with their agreement, and they have to agree to participation in this process. If the individual is under 18 their guardian's permission is also required.

The Channel panel considers individual cases and will develop a support package based on the risk assessment, the needs of the individual and any risks posed to potential support providers.

This is clearly laid out in the form of a Support Plan which highlights identified behaviours and risks that need to be addressed. This assists in case reviews and evaluating the effectiveness of the support package.

The Channel panel reviews all available information in light of:

- the risk the individual faces of being drawn into violent extremism
- the risk the individual poses to society.

And concludes whether the subject of the referral:

- is vulnerable to violent extremism and should be supported using the Channel process
- is not believed to be at risk of being drawn into violent extremism but is vulnerable and should be referred to other support mechanisms such as safeguarding

or

should exit the process.

If it is decided to proceed through the Channel panel, engagement with the individual will need to be sought at an early stage in order for any intervention to be successful.

If individuals are involved in a different statutory support mechanism, such as Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) or child protection arrangements, Channel would not normally replace those referral systems. In such cases, ownership of the case will rest with the relevant statutory support mechanism.

The Channel panel monitors Support Plan delivery on a monthly basis. A formal review is held after 6 and 12 months to reconsider adopted cases that have exited the Channel Panel or have been referred to other safeguarding mechanisms.

If the Channel panel is satisfied that the risk has been successfully reduced or managed, they should recommend that the case exit the process. A closing report will be completed as soon as possible setting out the evidence for the panel's decision.

If the Channel panel is not satisfied that the risk has been reduced or managed, the case will be reconsidered. A new support plan will be developed and alternative support put in place.

Progress reports are presented to the Prevent Board at each meeting by the Chair of the Panel.

Channel Panel Members should raise their concern about the form of function of the Channel Panel to the Chair of the Panel and then to the Chair of Stoke-on-Trent's Prevent Board if they are not satisfied that the concern has been adequately addressed.

The Referral Process

The referral process is illustrated in the flow chart at Appendix 1.

Initial concerns may be explored first with your safeguarding leads if there is time and you wish to do this.

If you are concerned that someone is being radicalised and want to access support for them then contact <mailto:sarah.dyer@stoke.gov.uk> or <mailto:shahzad.tahir@stoke.gov.uk> for a Referral Form. A direct referral should be made to West Midlands CTU North Hub by using the National Prevent Referral Form and emailing it to ctu_gateway@westmidlands.police.uk.

All referrals to the police will initially be checked against other information to see if the individual referred is considered to pose a risk which would require immediate action. If this is not the case, a decision will be made as to which of the following routes to follow:

- that no action needs to be taken
- that the individual is at risk of harm, but not at risk of being drawn into terrorism, in which case they may be referred for consideration under safeguarding arrangements.
- that the individual is at risk of being drawn into terrorism, in which case they may be referred for consideration under the Channel process and provided with support.

Support Packages

Providers of support for individuals/groups deemed as at risk of being drawn into terrorism can include statutory and community partners. The Channel panel will determine how to connect the referred individual with the support provider.

The level of information shared with and about the individual to enable effective assessment and, if appropriate, delivery of any support package, will be determined on a case by case basis. All decision making will be clearly documented and in line with the guidance on the sharing of information.

The type of activities included in a support package will depend on risk, vulnerability and local resources. To illustrate, a diversionary activity may be sufficient for someone who is in the early stages of radicalisation to violence, whereas a more focussed and structured one-on-one mentoring programme may be required for those who are already radicalised.

Appropriate support programmes include:

- **counselling:** providing advice and support in dealing with a range of personal issues that could create vulnerability, though it may not always be the best option, particularly in light of any emerging mental health issues
- **guidance:** helping an individual to develop their knowledge of religion, politics, history to better challenge the claims of some violent extremist ideologies
- **civic engagement:** exploring political engagement, civil challenge, human rights, social justice and citizenship
- **working with support networks:** engaging family and peers to provide help for the person concerned; and
- **mainstream services:** education, employment, health and housing.

Those providing support to vulnerable people need to be credible to the referred individuals and to understand the local community. They have an important role and their reliability, trustworthiness and commitment to the shared values which underpin the Prevent Board's approach need to be established. The Counter Terrorism Case Officer will make necessary checks to be assured of the suitability of support providers, including Disclosure and Barring checks for those seeking to work with young people and vulnerable adults.

Sharing of Information

Effective information sharing is key to the implementation and delivery of the Prevent Duty, so that partners are able to take appropriately informed action. This will sometimes require the sharing of personal information between partners; this is particularly the case when protecting vulnerable people, where sharing of information will be central to providing the best support to vulnerable individuals.

The multi-agency involvement within the Channel process is essential to ensure that vulnerable individuals have access to a wide range of support, from access to specific services provided by local authorities to diversionary activities and interventions provided by external partner agencies. Information sharing is therefore an essential part of the

process to determine whether an individual requires support, and if so, what that should consist of.

The Prevent programme does not involve any covert activity against people or communities. But as part of the Channel Program, personal information may need to be shared to ensure, that a person at risk of radicalisation is given appropriate support. Information sharing is assessed on a case-by-case basis and is governed by legislation. When considering sharing personal information, the Channel Panel members take account of the following:

- **Necessity and proportionality:** Personal information is only to be shared where it is strictly necessary to the intended outcome and proportionate to it. The key to determining the necessity and proportionality of sharing information will be the professional judgement of the risks to an individual or the public;

- **Consent:** A person who is referred to Channel will always be informed first if it is felt that they would benefit from Channel support. The process is voluntary and their consent would be needed before taking part in the process. This process is managed carefully by the Channel Panel.

- **Power to share:** The sharing of data by public sector bodies requires the existence of a power to do so, in addition to satisfying the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Data Protection Act 2018 and the Human Rights Act 1998;

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 introduce new elements to the data protection regime, superseding the Data Protection Act 1998. Practitioners must have due regard to the relevant data protection principles which allow them to share personal information,

The GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 place greater significance on organisations being transparent and accountable in relation to their use of data. All organisations handling personal data need to have comprehensive and proportionate arrangements for collecting, storing, and sharing information.

The GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping vulnerable adults, children and young people safe.

There is a statutory duty for workers to share information where there are concerns about the safety or well-being of a child or vulnerable adult. Numerous pieces of legislation place a power or duty on local authorities and partners to share information safely and actively in specific circumstances including:

- The Data Protection Act 2018;
- The Human Rights Act 1998;
- The Common Law Duty of Confidence;
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998;
- The Children Act 2004 Sections 10 and 11;
- The Caldicott Principles.

All information sharing must be conducted in accordance with a relevant legal power of duty, and be proportionate and relevant to the circumstances presented.

Appendix 1: Stoke-on-Trent Prevent Referral Flowchart

Referrals to be e-mailed to West Midlands CTU North Hub Team:
Email:
ctu_gateway@westmidlands.police.uk

*Discussion with your Prevent lead (if applicable)

*In organisations where a Prevent lead has been identified, practitioners may wish to discuss the person with the Prevent lead prior to making a referral.

Referral to WMCTU North Hub Team

When an individual is identified as a potential cause for concern in relation to Prevent, a referral will be made to the Prevent Team using the Prevent Referral Form.

WMCTU North Hub Team: Gateway Assessment

Channel threshold not met

Channel threshold met

Alternative Response

Channel Panel

Signposting to alternative support / engagement

Child or Adult Safeguarding Enquiry

Known to Adult or Children's Social Care

MAPPA Process

The Channel Panel will agree how the person will be supported i.e. through existing statutory processes or through a Channel intervention.

Even if the threshold for Channel is not initially met, if the subsequent response (either statutory or non-statutory) discovers additional information which raises further concerns regarding radicalisation or extremism, the case should be referred back to the Prevent Team for reassessment.

The Channel Panel is responsible for monitoring the Channel intervention and regularly reviewing progress.

Channel Intervention

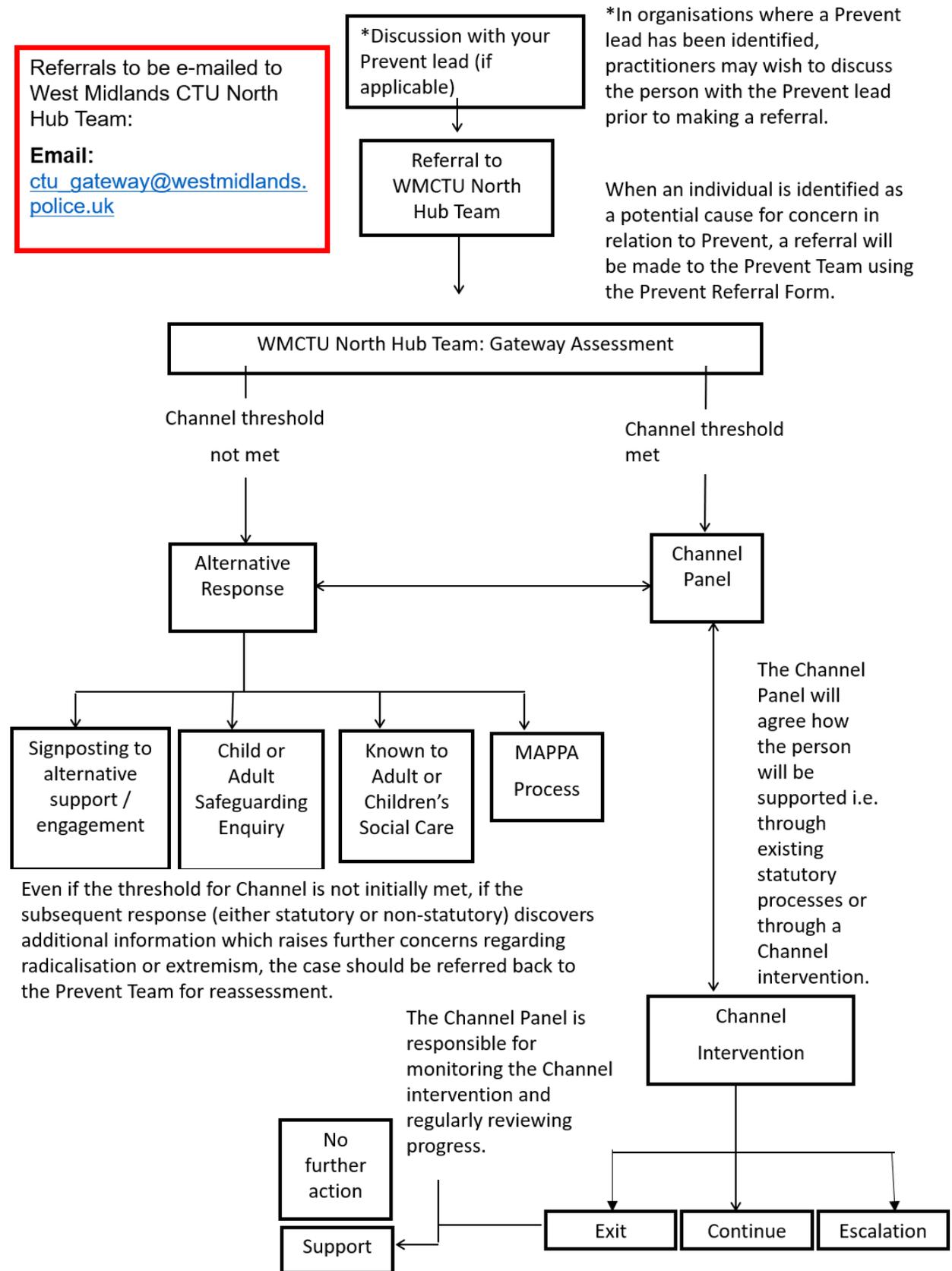
No further action

Support

Exit

Continue

Escalation



Appendix 2: Channel Panel Terms of Reference

1. Strategic Objectives

- 1.2 Reduce the risk of an individual being drawn into terrorism through Channel Support.
- 1.3 Establish an effective process which will allow for the identification, assessment and support of individuals who have been identified as being at risk from radicalisation.
- 1.4 Ensure appropriate representation of partner agencies, and other organisations as required, on the Channel Panel in order for it to meet all its objectives.

2. Operational Objectives

- 2.1.1 Risk assess referrals by utilising the Channel Vulnerability Assessment Framework (VAF) and agree the most appropriate response. Channel assesses vulnerability using a consistently applied VAF built around three criteria.
 - a. Engagement with a group, cause or ideology;
 - b. Intent to cause harm; and
 - c. Capability to cause harm.
- 2.2 Identify a suitable intervention provider to offer support in order to reduce the level of threat/vulnerability/risk.
- 2.3 Decide strategy, priorities and objectives in line with the requirements of the Channel process.
- 2.4 Set targets.
- 2.5 Accurately record decisions on an agreed proforma and ensure progress reports at each meeting.
- 2.6 Conduct full reviews at 6 months and 12 months of all cases that are adopted.
- 2.7 Review structures as necessary.
- 2.8 Review Term of Reference every 2 years.

3. Panel Membership

- 3.1 Panel to be chaired by a senior local authority representative; the vice-chair will also be a senior officer from the local authority who are not holding Home Office funded Prevent roles. Both roles to be approved by the Local Authority Chief Officer
- 3.2 The panel requires senior representation from organisations listed in Schedule 7 of the CTSA – those with the ability to make executive decisions, direct resources and who have knowledge of Prevent objectives.
- 3.3 Disclosure of panel members' names is not required however the organisation the panel member is representing will need to be identified.
- 3.4 Core members:

- Service Lead Children Social Care
- Safer City and Communities
- Service Lead Adults Social Care
- Counter Terrorism Case Officer (CTCO)
- Probation Service representatives (CRC and Probation)
- Youth Offending Team
- Family Support Team
- Health Sector
- Prisons

3.5 Bespoke members (after agreement by the core membership) will supplement the panel once the initial assessment on vulnerabilities has been completed in order to arrive at an informed decision.

4. The Local Authority Chair

4.1 The Channel Panel Chair is responsible for:

- a. having oversight of all Channel cases in their area;
- b. ensuring that the appropriate representatives are invited to each meeting as panel members;
- c. establishing effective relationships across statutory agencies to ensure effective co-operation over information sharing and attendance at panel meetings and delivery of support;
- d. establishing the appropriate support plan for identified individuals, which takes account of wider family context and needs, by using the expertise of the panel
- e. ensuring that vulnerabilities of persons at risk of being drawn into terrorism are assessed by the panel and accurately reflected in Channel minutes
- f. ensuring an effective support plan is put in place and that consent is sought from the individual (or their representative) before support is accessed
- g. ensuring the most appropriate panel member is tasked to update individuals/families on progress where appropriate
- h. ensuring individuals and/or organisations on the panel carry out their elements of the support plan, holding partners to account where necessary through proactive management of actions, enquiries and interventions
- i. ensuring all decisions and the rationale for decisions are reflected within the Channel panel minutes
- j. ensuring appropriate information exchange occurs where individuals transfer between services
- k. ensuring the panel functions effectively to address identified vulnerabilities

- l.** actively addressing or escalating issues of non-engagement within partner organisations or concerns relating to local Channel form or function through local governance arrangements where needed
- m.** applying professional judgement and providing the casting vote on the adoption of cases where there is no consensus among panel members
- n.** highlighting and requesting that identified gaps in local service provisions are considered by commissioners
- o.** ensuring information sharing arrangements are in place for the panel in compliance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018), in partnership with local information governance and legal teams
- p.** liaising with other local authority teams (such as child and adult protection) if appropriate, to ensure that Channel support is aligned and coordinated with other safeguarding processes
- q.** ensuring that all Panel members have signed the Information Sharing Confidentiality Agreement.

5. Panel Members

Multi-agency involvement in Channel is essential to ensure the full range of information is accessible to the panel, so that vulnerabilities, risk and support needs can be fully assessed.

Panel members have a responsibility to work collaboratively with the chair and panel partners to aid the mitigation of identified risk and vulnerabilities. This will include attending all panel meetings, contributing towards the support plan, and sharing information necessary and proportionate to the effective working of the panel (in line with the panel's locally agreed information sharing agreement).

Alongside sector-specific training, panel members and partners should complete the Home Office Prevent eLearning training and attend any relevant training or development opportunities to ensure they understand Prevent, Channel, the radicalisation process and how to intervene to prevent someone from being drawn into terrorism.

6. Panel Proceedings

6.1 Panel to meet monthly – (emergency meetings may be called at short notice and panel members should try to give such meetings precedence over other diary commitments). Monthly dates will be arranged at the start of each calendar year. If a meeting is not required it will be cancelled. Agendas will be circulated five working days before each meeting.

6.2 Chair and Vice Chair of the panel to be vetted to SC level.

6.3 Quoracy – the CTCO and either the Chair or Vice Chair would be required to attend for a panel to be considered as quorate. The Chair should ensure sufficient representation of other statutory agencies at meetings to reflect the multi-agency partnership. If both the chair and vice-chair are unable to attend, the panel will not meet unless for reasons of urgency with a chair to be agreed by the local authority.

- 6.4** The Vulnerability Assessment will be sent to the Panel Chair before the meeting. CTCO to deliver verbal briefings on the subject(s) at the beginning of each meeting. Disclosure of personal details at meetings to be re-considered when the panel is supplemented with bespoke members.
- 6.5** Panel to undertake risk mitigation and to come to a collective view on the level of risk and consequent action in terms of timing, magnitude and nature.
- 6.6** All documentation relating to referrals must be numbered and collected at the end of each meeting. Attendees can make notes on the referrals under discussion but these are to be handed to the Chair once the meeting concludes. This documentation will then be destroyed.
- 6.7** Minutes will be taken by the administrator identified by the Panel Chair.
- 6.8** A member shall make the panel aware of any matter in which he/she has a direct interest which conflicts or may conflict with the interests of the panel.
- 6.9** Members or prospective members may be removed from the panel where issues of integrity arise, which may be detrimental to the aims of the Channel project.
- 6.10** The Channel Panel has delegated authority from Stoke on Trent's Prevent Board in respect of the functions and powers set out in these Terms of Reference. The Channel Panel are accountable to the Chair of Stoke-on-Trent's Prevent Board.

7. Confidentiality

- 7.1** Panel meetings are held in private and Panel Members must sign or agree to abide by the Confidentiality Agreement that will be read out before each meeting.
- 7.2** Panel members are required to sign an Information Sharing Agreement.
- 7.3** The disclosure of information outside the multi-agency panel meeting will be considered a breach of confidentiality unless agreed by other panel members.
- 7.4** Case discussion should be treated as 'Restricted' in nature and documents relating to each case will be marked accordingly
- 7.5** Channel members will ensure that documents are handled safely and disposed of in a secure manner in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Human Rights Act 1998
- 7.6** Information sharing with other partner agencies for the purposes of managing risk, should be in accordance with the Stoke-on-Trent Channel Panel Information Sharing Agreement
- 7.7** If panel members are unable to attend a meeting it is not appropriate for a colleague to deputise for them due to the sensitive nature of the cases under discussion unless in case of urgency to be agreed by the chair.
- 7.8** Panel members' personal information contained within minutes, agendas and reports will be protected from public disclosure within the terms of the Freedom of Information Act and General Data Protection Regulation.
- 7.9** The confidential documentation provided at panel meetings must be returned to the CTCO and cannot be taken away.

7.10 Channel information will be stored electronically in a folder with restricted access and hard copies will be kept in the CTCO secure cabinet which complies with Government Protective Marking Scheme regulations. The office will also be locked at the end of each day. Stoke-on-City Council held information will similarly be kept in a secure manner.

7.11 The panel will decide locally how much to disclose if at all to the subject of the referral, dependant on the individual circumstances of the case. It is considered good practise to disclose as much information as possible.

7.12 In cases where disclosure is not feasible the reasons for this decision must be documented.

7.13 Channel information can be retained for a maximum period of 10 years which is in line with Management of Police Information guidelines.