

TITLE : NIPB POLICY ON HANDLING LEAKED INFORMATION	
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POLICY AUTHOR : Policy Branch	Board Approval :December 2005
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Aim of Policy

It is the aim of this policy to provide a framework for the handling of leaked information, received by Board Members / Officers in relation to PSNI. The Policy is designed to compliment the Board's overarching objective of securing an efficient, effective, impartial and accountable police service.

Equality Screening

This policy has been developed to ensure that leaked information from whatever source is handled in an appropriate and consistent manner and it is not believed that the policy will have a disproportionately negative impact on any one of the Section 75 categories.

FRAMEWORK FOR HANDLING LEAKED INFORMATION

1. The following course of action should be followed when a Member/officer of the Board receives a PSNI generated document, or other leaked information, from either a named individual or an anonymous source. The Member/officer should
 - immediately advise the Chief Executive;
 - the Chief Executive should immediately advise the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Board and the Chair of the relevant Board Committee;
 - the Chief Executive should ensure that the matter is brought to the next available Corporate Policy, Planning & Performance Committee;
 - Should immediate action be required, the Chairman will take delegated authority and report back to the Board; and
 - Corporate Policy, Planning & Performance Committee Members should consider the leaked information and should determine how it should be handled.
2. In considering the appropriate course of action to take, Corporate Policy, Planning & Performance Committee Members may, in the first instance, consider advising the source of the leaked information to raise the matter internally within PSNI.

3. In deciding on the best course of action Members may wish to seek legal advice on the human rights or other considerations that the case poses including the implications of the UK Public Interest Disclosure Act and the NICS guidance on the Public Interest Disclosure (NI) Order 1998.
4. Corporate Policy, Planning & Performance Committee should on an annual basis, consider information on the number of instances in the previous 12 months when this policy has been applied and should consider the need for changes to the policy every 3 years.
5. Policy Branch should be advised of each instance when this policy is applied and should retain on a registered file:
 - (a) a copy of the paper considered by Corporate Policy, Planning & Performance Committee including any relevant legal advice; and
 - (b) a copy of any relevant correspondence.