

Sussex Community Search Team
Code of Ethics and Standards
Adopted 16th March 2015

The primary aims and objectives of the Sussex Community Search Team (SCST) are broadly:

1. To help the police, when requested, to search for missing vulnerable persons and property which may be crucial to a police enquiry.
2. To assist with public and community safety and other tasks when requested, subject to the prior agreement of the Committee and Sussex Police.

In furtherance of these aims and objectives, to maximise efficiency, effectiveness and confidence in SCST and the safety of all concerned, it is appropriate that all members should adhere to a Code of Ethics and Standards, as described herein.

In the event of operations or events taking place outside Sussex, all references herein to Sussex Police shall apply equally to any other police force concerned.

1. Matters specific to SCST members

Members agree:

- 1.1. To promptly notify the Committee of any significant health related conditions which could impact their ability to respond to call outs, searches or training, or pose a threat to themselves, other members, police or the public. In such circumstances the Committee shall use their best endeavours to make such reasonable adjustments as may be practical to respond to the situation. The Committee, a Controller, Team Leader or police officer may require that any such member withdraw from call outs, searches or training until the issue has been satisfactorily resolved.
- 1.2. That they are 18 years of age or over, and will not receive a call out until they have completed the required training.
- 1.3. To make themselves available, whenever possible, to attend every call out of SCST, as well as training sessions and other meetings called by the Committee.
- 1.4. That they will attend at least one search or SCST approved exercise every 12 months.
- 1.5. That when called out they will not be accompanied by any person not registered as a member of SCST or Sussex Police without express prior permission from the Committee.
- 1.6. To make themselves aware of all Risk Assessment and Health & Safety information available to members, and take all necessary steps to comply with all relevant Health & Safety measures.
- 1.7. That they themselves are primarily responsible for their own health and safety, and not to expose themselves or others to any danger or avoidable risks, especially in relation to health and safety matters.
- 1.8. To follow all reasonable safe instructions given by Controllers, Team Leaders, police and others in authority.
- 1.9. To provide their own suitable clothing, footwear and personal equipment recommended to be included within a member's kit.
- 1.10. To be responsible for making their own way to the call out assembly point at the date and time notified, and report to the named person in charge.

- 1.11. That if he/she drives or intends to drive any vehicle, other than a police vehicle, to, from or in connection with any SCST related activity, they will ensure that their Motor insurers have given their prior consent to insure such usage, and that effective compulsory insurance is in place.
- 1.12. Not to discuss any details of a call out with any member of the Press, other media or any person not connected with the call out before, during or after a call out, as required by the restrictions and implications of the Official Secrets Act, and to refer all such enquiries to the Police Officer in charge.
- 1.13. Not to post any electronic or paper messages in publicly viewable places unless such messages have been approved in advance by the Committee, and where relevant by the police. This includes but is not limited to social networking media. These restrictions do not apply to messages properly placed within the secure members' area of the SCST website.
- 1.14. That social networking media may not be used at any time during the course of a search, or whilst actively being trained.
- 1.15. That if they sustain an injury or illness during the course of a call out or training they will report it to the Controller or Police Officer in charge before leaving the area.
- 1.16. That SCST will provide an approved and marked high visibility waistcoat, and Sussex Police will provide an Identity Card, which shall both be worn during official SCST or police-led activities and at no other time.
- 1.17. That the high visibility waistcoat, Identity Card and any other equipment issued by SCST will remain SCST/Sussex Police property, and to return it immediately to the Committee or their designated representative should the member cease to be a member of SCST.
- 1.18. To report the loss of the high visibility waistcoat, Identity Card or other SCST equipment to the Committee immediately. Members acknowledge that they may be responsible for the cost of replacing any lost equipment.
- 1.19. That personal details will be made available to Sussex Police who will carry out such checks as they deem necessary and as often as required, to ensure that individuals are and remain suitable persons to be members of SCST.
- 1.20. To give Sussex Police and the SCST Committee authority to place personal details on file and use the data for call outs, exercises, training, messaging and to provide enhanced access to the SCST website. Members shall notify any changes in personal details to Sussex Police and the Committee. Members' rights are protected and this information will only be used for SCST purposes.
- 1.21. That personal details may be removed from SCST systems at any time by contacting any member of the Committee.
- 1.22. To receive electronic messages via e-mail and/or text, and/or telephone, which are generated by a SCST or Sussex Police messaging system, the SCST website, or an authorised police officer or Committee member. For this purpose it is required that each member shall maintain a working and switched on mobile phone, to be available and accessible at all times, and an internet connection with a regularly accessed working E-mail account.
- 1.23. To relinquish their membership or any role in SCST should circumstances arise or information come to the attention of SCST or Sussex Police that would be inconsistent with a member holding that position.

2. Members overall responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- 2.1. Dealing with other members, the public and other organisations in an honest, open, clear, fair, reasonable and co-operative manner.
- 2.2. Ensuring that all matters are dealt with promptly and courteously, and not in a vexatious, inappropriate or frivolous manner.
- 2.3. Operating not only within the law but also within the spirit of the law.
- 2.4. Where relevant, making sure that areas of SCST for which you may be responsible, and you, where required, are suitably authorised, licensed, regulated and have effective arrangements to comply with all relevant laws, rules and regulations.
- 2.5. In the event that a member is a driver authorised by SCST and/or Sussex Police to operate a vehicle owned or used by SCST and/or Sussex Police, the member must promptly declare any medical condition which may affect their ability to operate vehicles properly and safely, any accidents and any traffic convictions. In such event authority to drive such vehicles may be restricted or withdrawn.
- 2.6. Ensuring that all internal SCST rules, regulations and requirements are complied with to the best of your knowledge and belief.
- 2.7. Reporting any breaches or reasonable suspicions of breaches of this Code to a Committee member.

3. You must act with the highest ethical standards and integrity. This includes but is not limited to:

- 3.1. Being honest, trustworthy, open, reliable, dependable and respectful.
- 3.2. Being tactful and treating with dignity any person alive or deceased, including their family and friends.
- 3.3. Promoting and demonstrating high professional, moral and ethical standards.
- 3.4. Making sure that any promises you make are true.
- 3.5. Not taking unfair advantage of anybody.
- 3.6. Not bringing SCST, Sussex Police or any other person or organisation into disrepute, or conducting yourself or allowing other members to conduct themselves in a manner which might lead to such a situation.
- 3.7. Not offering or accepting gifts, hospitality or services which could or might appear to imply an improper obligation.
- 3.8. Being open and transparent about any expenses, fees and costs.
- 3.9. Operating in a financially responsible and prudent manner.
- 3.10. Ensuring that adequate and correct records are kept.
- 3.11. Respecting other people's privacy, and treating all confidential information as such, including but not limited to compliance with the Official Secrets Act and Data Protection legislation.

4. You must act in the best interests of each member and the public. This includes but is not limited to:

- 4.1. Encouraging members to put proper and fair treatment and overall public and community safety at the centre of our culture.
- 4.2. Basing your decisions on a clear understanding of needs, priorities, concerns and circumstances.

- 4.3. Giving people all the information, of which you are aware, needed to allow such people to make informed decisions, provided that information is not confidential.
- 4.4. Ensuring that you do not use information from SCST, any Authorities or other organisation improperly, or to your personal or business advantage.
- 4.5. Avoiding any situation where a conflict of professional or personal interests may exist between you, your employer, your business and other parties including SCST and any Authorities.

5. You must provide a high standard of service. This includes but is not limited to:

- 5.1. Communicating in a way that is accurate and straightforward, and expressed in a way that people can readily understand.
- 5.2. Making sure reasonable steps are taken to ensure that all advice given is accurate and suitable.
- 5.3. Not providing advice where you are not competent or qualified to do so.
- 5.4. Acting with skill, care and diligence.
- 5.5. Acting only within your ability and authorisation, and seeking help where necessary.
- 5.6. Ensuring that your relevant knowledge and expertise is kept up-to-date, and undertake any training recommended by the Committee.
- 5.7. Ensuring as far as possible that those who work or operate with you have appropriate training and supervision, and you are contributing to their learning and development.

6. You must treat people fairly and with equal opportunities regardless of:

- 6.1. Race or racial group including ethnic or national origin, colour and nationality, sex or sexual orientation including marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy, maternity, paternity and gender reassignment, religion or belief including philosophical beliefs similar to a religion, age, disability or any political opinions.

7. Treat people fairly and with equal opportunities includes but is not limited to:

- 7.1. Obeying equality and diversity laws, treating each person as an individual, challenging and reporting unlawful or otherwise unfair discriminatory behaviour and practice, always acting openly and fairly, and treating everybody with equal respect and opportunity, making reasonable adjustments to assist children and young people, the elderly, the vulnerable, people with disabilities or particular needs, and encouraging others to do so.

8. Sanctions for non-compliance with this Code

- 8.1. In the event that a member fails to honour the provisions of this Code, or is otherwise considered to be unsuitable to continue to be a member, then irrespective of any legal or other proceedings, SCST may impose appropriate and reasonable sanctions upon any member. This may include but is not limited to:
 - 8.1.1. Withdrawal of recognition as a member of SCST.
 - 8.1.2. Suspension or withdrawal of recognition as a holder of any position within SCST.
 - 8.1.3. Reference to any lawful Authority.