



# Pocket Notebook (Policy & Procedure)

**OFFICIAL**

<b>Publication Scheme Y/N</b>	Can be published on Force Website
<b>Department of Origin</b>	Professional Standards Department (PSD)
<b>Policy Holder</b>	Chief Superintendent Head of PSD
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<b>Related Documents</b>	<a href="#">Government Security Classification Scheme</a> <a href="#">NPCC - National Guidance on the minimum standards for the Retention and Disposal of Police Records</a>
<b>Date First Approved at BMG</b>	21/07/2004
<b>This Version</b>	Version 4 – Created 03/07/2020
<b>Date of next Review</b>	03/07/2023



**July 2020**

# Policy

## Statement

The proper use, maintenance and supervision of police pocket notebooks is a key factor in the operational effectiveness of all Police Officers, Community Support Officers and relevant Police Staff (Support Staff) carrying out their daily duty. It is imperative that staff record timely and accurate information in their pocket notebooks and day books allowing them to recall details of incidents as and when needed and specifically during the course of criminal, civil or disciplinary proceedings.

## Aims

This policy seeks to re-enforce the general principles covering the use of pocket books and day books by staff during the course of their duty. This will include issuing of notebooks, security, retention and supervision of their use by line managers and loss reporting procedure. This policy also supersedes all previous policies, orders or instructions covering the use, maintenance and supervision of pocket notebooks and day books at either Force or Area / Departmental level.

## Objectives

The main objectives of this policy are to:

- a) Ensure that all staff who are required to keep pocket notebooks and day books during the normal course of their duties, irrespective of the role, rank or position they may occupy, are aware of their responsibilities in respect of the use and security of pocket notebooks and day books.
- b) Lay out the procedural requirements for the issuing, collection, storage and retention of pocket notebooks and day books.
- c) Identify the role of supervisors in monitoring of the use of pocketbooks by staff under their command.

## **Application and Scope**

All police officers and police staff, including the extended police family and those working voluntarily or under contract to Merseyside Police must be aware of, and are required to comply with, all relevant policy and associated procedures. Those to whom this policy is relevant are:

- Police Officers, including Special Constables
- PCSOs
- Police Staff with evidential responsibilities
- Supervisors of the above

The Chief Officer Lead for this policy is the Deputy Chief Constable.

## **Outcome Evaluation**

In general terms, adherence to this policy should:

- Ensure notebooks contain timely and accurate information of sufficient detail to assist in the recall of facts of incidents and events when required in the future, e.g. for court proceedings
- Ensure the accurate recording of duty times
- Ensure, by active supervision, compliance with the correct procedural use of notebooks

# Procedure

## Version History

29.05.2012	V 2.1 – Minor amendments made to provide more clarity overall but particularly around storage.
29.07.2015	V 3.0 – New guidance authorising the use of Force day books instead of pocket notebooks. Minor amendments made to Line Managers Responsibilities and Storage guidance following completion of PNB/day books. New Loss Reporting procedure has been included. Approved COG/SMT 29 <sup>th</sup> July.
29.03.2016	V 3.1 – Amendments made to cover the use of Laptops and Electronic Pocket Note Books. Main changes are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 1.1. of the policy now includes the use of Electronic Pocket Note Books (EPNB)</li> <li>• Detailed guide now included to cover use of laptops – Appendix A – Section 2.4</li> <li>• Detailed guide included to cover the use of EPNB – Appendix B – Section 2.5.</li> <li>• Correction made to Section 8 – Strategic Assessment Unit has been amended to say Support and assessment unit.</li> </ul>
15.02.2019	V 3.2 – Slight amendments to grammar. Main changes are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GCMS changed to Official</li> <li>• Related doc's changed to GCMS link</li> </ul>
03.07.2020	V 4 – Amendment to retention period from 7 to 6 years in line with NPCC guidance. Also slight amendments to grammar.

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## 1. Use of Pocket Notebooks

1.1 All relevant staff, being police officers including Special Constables, irrespective of their rank or role, PCSO's, Police Staff with evidential responsibilities and supervisors of those members of staff should keep a paper Pocket Note Book or Electronic Pocket Note Book (EPNB) or Day Book (See Section 2) in accordance with this policy.

1.2 Staff should carry their notebooks at all times unless their duties prevent them from doing so e.g. covert operations. They must record all relevant matters as soon as possible in a contemporaneous form in their pocket book or day book. The entry should be recorded by black ink pen in English so it is clearly legible and include the following:

- a) The day and date must be written across each page and underlined at the start of each day.
- b) The times of coming on and going off duty as well as the times of refreshment periods.
- c) The times of each entry made in the book must be written in the margin. The time of the incident must also be written.
- d) Details of annual leave, rest days, sickness, tour of duty, time of on and off duty and details of overtime must be entered.
- e) Records required by PACE legislation or the Codes of Practice must be included e.g. First descriptions in identification procedures, contemporaneous interviews etc.
- f) The details of all incidents they are evidentially involved with and clear rationale for any decision making, in sufficient detail that a Police Officer or Police Staff member will be able to recall the full facts during any subsequent court proceedings.

1.3 The above list is by no means definitive and is only intended to indicate the basic information that should be recorded.

- 1.4 Facts entered into a pocket notebook or day book may be used for many purposes and so entries should be clear, precise and readable by supervisors and any person who may be required to examine it at a subsequent date. A comprehensive pocket notebook or day book entry can also provide valuable protection for a member of staff when tasked with recalling an event or incident some weeks or months later.

## 2. Use of Force Issue Day Books / Laptops/ EPNB

- 2.1 Force standardised Day Books can now be used **instead** of Pocket Notebooks and will now replace all previously used day books with immediate effect.
- 2.2 The use of Force issue Day Books will be permitted for non-operational staff and those not engaged on patrol duties.
- 2.3. Day Books will be issued, utilised, returned and stored in line with the current Pocket Notebook guidance. Therefore the above and below directions (e.g. 1.1 – 1.4) will now also apply to the use of Day Books.
- 2.4 Senior Officers (Chief Inspector and above) now have the option to utilise Force issue Laptops to record their duties, decision making and associated rationale. They must comply with the directions as outlined in Appendix A.
- 2.5 Staff who are issued with the Samsung handheld device or similar, will use the EPNB function as outlined in Appendix B

## 3. Specific Guidance for Stop Forms and MG11 Statements

- 3.1 With effect from the 9 June 2008 there is no longer a requirement for officers to make a full Pocket Notebook or Day Book entry when completing **Stop Forms** and **MG11 Statements** provided that the form or statement is contemporaneous and that there is an abbreviated entry in the PNB referring to it. However the guidelines listed in the following paragraphs **must** be followed.

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- 3.2 Officers are advised that if a MG11 statement is not completed after an incident in which they are present then a full Pocket Notebook or Day Book entry must be made detailing the events. For example officers involved on the periphery of an incident who do not complete an MG11 Statement must make a full pocket notebook entry of the events. The events may need to be recalled for both criminal and civil proceedings at some time in the future.
- 3.3 Officers who do complete a MG11 statement or Stop Form after an incident will need to be mindful to **complete a Pocket Notebook or Day Book entry of those details not contained in the statement or Stop Form, for continuity of events.**
- 3.4 Copies of Pocket Notebook or Day Book entries should be scanned onto Niche whenever an occurrence has been generated. The document should be saved as a Pdf file and entitled appropriately, e.g. 'PNB Collar Number / Surname / Corroborating' – thereby enabling the Police/CPS to identify the nature of the document '*prior*' to opening the file. Officers should import and link the document within Niche using the "*Pocket Note Book (Scanned)*" template located within the '*Person*' record of the officer, ensuring it is also linked to the associated Niche Case File; this allows the MCJU to submit it electronically to CPS.  
(NB: The officers Person record must be accessed via the relevant occurrence).
- 3.5 Supervisory Officers, when monitoring, checking and signing notebooks must ensure that where an abbreviated PNB or Day Book entry is made there is a contemporaneous form or statement in existence (i.e. they will need to dip sample to ensure compliance).

#### **4. Line Manager's Responsibilities**

- 4.1 All staff should ensure that their line manager examines their pocket notebook or day book at least once every calendar month. If a staff member's normal line manager is not available, for example due to annual leave or sickness, then staff



- should seek out another supervisor who will undertake the below responsibilities in line with this policy.
- 4.2 Line Managers must ensure that staff to whom this policy applies adhere to this policy.
- 4.3 A detailed examination of pocket Notebooks or day books will be undertaken by line managers at least every calendar month and individual pocket books or day books must be endorsed by the line manager to that effect. In particular, when examining a pocketbook or day books they should look for:
- a) Chronological order of events and up to date entries
  - b) Obligatory entries are satisfactory
  - c) Superfluous material is excluded and the text is concise
  - d) Readability and clarity
- 4.4 Line manager's endorsements should include the time and date of examination, any comments he or she wishes to bring to the users attention and the name and signature of the manager. This entry should be made within the main body of the book and not in the margin.
- 4.5 Line managers / supervisors who are aware that any member of staff who does not have ready access to a manager, should undertake the responsibilities of this section.
- 5. Safe storage and issue procedures**
- 5.1 It is essential that the integrity of the date of issue of pocket notebooks and day books is maintained. Therefore Area and Departmental Commanders must ensure that suitable procedures are put in place for the booking out of new pocket notebooks and day books. Unused pocket notebooks and day books should be securely stored and subject to audit.

- 5.2 Staff requiring a replacement pocket notebook or day book should produce the completed old book for examination by the issuing officer. Only one notebook or day book should be in use at any time. The issuing of a pocket notebook or day book will only be undertaken by an authorised member of the Administration Team or an officer of at least the rank of Sergeant. The issuer will confirm that the previous book is current and complete before issuing a new book. They will then endorse the completed book with the date and serial number of the newly issued book. Any apparent irregularities should be highlighted to a supervisor. Records will be kept and these must include who has been issued with a pocketbook or day book against a serial number, a date of issue, and the signature of the user and the issuing staff member. It is recommended that one person is designated as being responsible for this function, but Area or Departmental Commanders may adopt procedures to suit local conditions.
- 5.3 Staff must keep their current pocket notebook or day book in their possession at all times whilst on duty and should store it in a safe place, in police premises, between tours of duty. The safe storage of pocket notebooks and day books, which have been completed, will now be the responsibility of hub / departmental administration Units. Completed pocket notebooks and day books must be stored in police premises, to ensure their security and confidentiality.
- 5.4 Completed pocket notebooks and day books will be stored within hub / departmental Administration Units for a period of two years from the date of completion. This will enable staff to gain easy access to completed books, for example, when required to attend court at short notice or for the examination of the pocket notebook by managers or supervision. Notebooks and day books between two and six years from date of completion will be stored by the Records Management Unit at Edge Lane.
- 5.5 All previously held notebooks and day books up to six years from date of completion MUST be returned to hub / departmental administration Units for retention and storage purposes.

## 6. Retention of Notebooks and Day Books

- 6.1 Pocket notebooks and day books should be retained for a period of 6 years in accordance with the requirements of the Government Security Classification Scheme. Claimants can institute civil proceedings within 6 years of an incident in most cases and evidence from pocket notebooks and day books is invaluable in defending such claims and protecting the reputation of the Force. After this period pocket notebooks and day books **should be reviewed** to determine if they should be destroyed under the Force destruction Policy or retained. Ensuring that any information relevant to crime or intelligence is transferred into the relevant file or intelligence system.
- 6.2 Where a member of staff, who has been issued with a pocket notebook or day book, leaves the Force due to retirement, resignation or for any other purpose, then any pocket notebooks and day books in their possession must be identified and returned to that individual's line manager for storage and disposal.

## 7. Procedure for Reporting Loss of Pocket Notebook and Day Book

- 7.1 Staff are reminded that pocket notebooks and day books are police property and can contain sensitive information, which in unauthorised hands can pose significant security risks. Staff should therefore take all appropriate steps to ensure their safekeeping and must report any loss at the earliest opportunity. A failure to do so may be a breach of the Standards of Professional Behaviour and could result in a misconduct investigation.
- 7.2 If the pocket notebook or day book cannot be located, the officer/staff member will need to formally report the matter to their line manager at the earliest opportunity and obtain a replacement pocket notebook, as detailed in Section 5.
- 7.3 Line Manager's will confirm with the staff member the steps that have been taken to locate the pocket notebook or day book. Once the line manager is satisfied that all reasonable steps have been taken to locate the missing book they will ensure the officer/staff member submits a Breach of Information Security form.

- 7.4 Staff are not permitted to take pocket notebooks or day books home with them, unless there is a clear operational requirement. If such an operational requirement is satisfied then staff should ensure the safe storage of the pocket notebook or day book whilst outside of the work environment. The loss of a pocket book or day book under these circumstances will result in an examination of the rationale regarding the operational requirement.

## **8. Further Advice**

- 8.1 Further information regarding this policy can be obtained from Merseyside Police Support and Assessment Unit, Professional Standards Department, HQ, Email: [PSD SandA Unit](#).

## Appendix A

### Senior Officer Daybooks

As you are aware, all senior officers (CI and above) maintain daybooks in which they record activity, actions, decisions and notes throughout their shift. Some Senior Officers have now started recording their daybook information on their laptops, however these daybooks are not being backed up and are not being stored in a central repository to be viewed by other relevant parties e.g. PSD.

For those of you who may have started recording their day books electronically, please see the below information; A project was initiated by PSD to address the issues outlined above and a solution using a tool called Sharepoint has been implemented. Three senior officers were involved with this project and trialled the use of Sharepoint. If you are currently using your laptop with One Note for your daybook then please phone the ICT Helpdesk on 0151 777 5555 and request for your One Note to be synchronised with SharePoint.

The ICT dept. will set you up a basic site and will send instructions to enable you to replicate your work to a secure environment.

#### **What is OneNote?**

OneNote is a computer programme for information gathering. You can use it to gather Notes, Handwritten or typed, drawings, screen clippings, emails and audio. OneNote organises into pages/sections with an electronic version of a tabbed ring binder.

#### **How does this work?**

The laptop / handheld device must be connected to the network at least weekly to ensure that the daybooks are kept in sync.

The daybook in OneNote must be sent weekly to the central secure repository, [daybooks@sharepoint.merseyside.pnn.police.uk](mailto:daybooks@sharepoint.merseyside.pnn.police.uk) , using File > Send > Send as PDF.

The officer will not be able to see their weekly PDF entries within the secure Sharepoint library so will be unable to make any changes to it.

From time to time you or PSD may require access to historic entries, to gain access you would raise a call to the ICT Helpdesk (75555) and they will send a copy of the requested information.

The daybooks will remain on the laptops however the version used for providing evidence must come from the Sharepoint repository.

This facility will enable back-ups of your Day Book and a secure site for storage.

Please contact the ICT Helpdesk if this is something you are interested in setting up?

## Appendix B

### **Guide for officers using Electronic Pocket Note Book**

Staff should ensure that they read this addendum in conjunction with the full PNB Policy. When using the Electronic Pocket Note Book (EPNB), staff must adhere to the instructions around the recording and storage of evidence as outlined in the full PNB policy.

#### **Information to record**

If issued to a staff member, the staff member should use their EPNB as their primary pocket notebook. This should be used for the recording of evidence and details of any other significant occurrence. The 'paper type' pocket notebook will be used when the EPNB has failed and the device does not allow an entry to be made or the operational situation is not appropriate for accessing the device.

Staff may record other work related information at their discretion. However, this should only be done when necessary (i.e. operational reasons) or when instructed to do so by a line manager.

When appropriate, staff should make specific reference to other official documents which are related to the incident, such as incident logs or crime logs.

#### **Contemporaneous**

Where possible, staff must make their notes/statement contemporaneously, i.e. at the time of the incident, rather than working from memory. However, officer's safety is of paramount importance over the contemporaneous nature of the record. If notes are recorded on any other document, officers must consider retaining and producing these as exhibits.

Staff should be mindful that the EPNB creates a timed date stamp at the point of making an entry and that it is the first note of evidence. This will log the key details that may help

to recall the facts of the incident at a later date, which may be useful for court proceedings.

**Inspection**

Staff must produce their pocket notebook when requested to by a supervisory officer.

Although EPNBs are remotely accessible, supervisors are expected to conduct routine checks to ensure that their staff are carrying their EPNBs when on operational duties.

It is the Supervisors responsibility to check both PNB and EPNB as outlined in Section 4 of the PNB policy. Remote Checks of EPNBs are automatically logged on Pronto Manager. Physical checks must be recorded using a digital signature.

**Student officers**

Student officers are to keep pocket notebooks in a 'diary' fashion until the end of their probationary period, unless your supervisor allows otherwise.

For example, you must record your own evidence in full. Other data recorded on force systems can be referred to by reference number. In particular intelligence data should not be reproduced in your PNB, but referred to by occurrence number.