



Management of Overtime Budgets Policy (Surrey and Sussex) (1209/2026)

Abstract

This policy sets out how Surrey Police and Sussex Police will manage overtime budgets. It is designed to ensure overtime is necessary, affordable, properly approved, accurately recorded and regularly monitored.

Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy sets out how Surrey Police and Sussex Police will manage overtime budgets. It is designed to ensure overtime is necessary, affordable, properly approved, accurately recorded and regularly monitored.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all areas that use or manage overtime budgets.

2.2 Pay entitlement, rates and working-time requirements are covered by the relevant regulations, contracts and employment policies.

3. Statement

3.1 The Forces will ensure proper management of public money by enforcing stringent operating procedures to manage overtime and achieve value for public money.

Procedure

1. Key Principles

1.1

- Overtime will be charged to the budget area requesting the resources (“requester pays”)
- Overtime budgets are maximum allocations, not spending targets
- Budget holders remain accountable for expenditure charged to their budgets
- Planned overtime should be approved before it is worked wherever practicable

- Overtime must be recorded and coded accurately
- Forecasts must reflect the most likely year-end position and be based on the expected pattern of demand and activity throughout the year, including any known peaks and quieter period
- Financial pressures must be identified, managed and escalated promptly
- Overtime should provide value for money

1.2 Approving overtime

Before overtime is approved, the manager should confirm that:

- There is a clear operational or organisational need
- Reasonable alternatives have been considered
- The likely cost is understood
- The expenditure is affordable, or the resulting pressure is understood
- The approver has the appropriate delegated authority

For urgent or emergency policing requirements, operational necessity takes priority. Where prior financial approval is not practical, the expenditure should be recorded promptly and the budget holder informed of significant financial implications.

1.3 Budget Setting and Forecasting

Overtime budgets will be set through the annual Force budget setting process.

Budget holders must maintain a realistic full-year forecast that includes expenditure already incurred, unpaid overtime, known commitments and expected future demand. Forecasts must not be adjusted simply to appear within budget.

1.4 Overtime Budget Monitoring

Overtime should be reviewed as part of routine budget monitoring.

Where an overtime budget is forecast to overspend, the budget holder should:

- Understand the cause, value and likely duration of the pressure
- Challenge whether future overtime can be reduced without creating unacceptable operational risk
- Identify reasonable mitigating action
- Update the forecast to the most likely outcome
- Present options to the appropriate force governance board for managing the pressure

2. Accountability

2.1 Budget holders are responsible for controlling overtime costs. Although they can delegate some responsibilities, they remain accountable for the budget.

Before approving overtime, the budget holder or responsible officer should check that it is needed, cannot be done during normal working hours, and there is sufficient budget.

2.2 Budget holders must ensure that overtime is submitted promptly, checked and approved by a supervisor, and processed electronically in time to meet payroll deadlines. Sussex budget holders must also ensure that SAP errors are resolved promptly to prevent payment delays and ensure overtime is charged in the correct financial year.

2.3 Budget holders are responsible for devolving their Division or Department's budget where appropriate. Overtime costs may be managed at Divisional or Departmental level, depending on the type of overtime. Budget holders must ensure all overtime is correctly coded to avoid errors and unnecessary administration.

2.4 The Finance Business Partnering and Support Team will provide monthly overtime reports to Senior Management Teams (SMTs). Deputy Chief Constables (DCCs) will review overtime as part of the monthly budget monitoring process. Budget holders must account for overtime expenditure in their area and provide accurate forecasts of future costs, including known events. Accurate forecasting is essential to ensure overtime expenditure remains within budget.

3. Supporting Documents

3.1

Sussex only: Unsocial Hours Policy: Remuneration for working Unsocial Hours (Shifts and Weekends), Overtime, Temporary Duty and Public (Bank) Holidays - Police Staff (426)

Surrey only: Overtime, Public (Bank) Holidays, Rest day working / Unsocial Hours and Temporary Duty Allowance and Overnight (Away from home) Guidance - Police Staff

Guide to Police Regulations & Police Staff Terms & Conditions

Overtime Necessity Checklist

Overtime Calculator 2026-27

Indicative Overtime Costs

Overtime Playbook

Team: Finance Service