

SI0119

Official Issue Paper Pocket Notebooks, Digital Notebooks, Journals and Daybooks

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Official Issue Notebooks and Journals – Issue and Accounting Procedures

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Table of Contents

1. Objective.....	4
2. Legislation	4
3. Exceptions and Reasonable Adjustments	5
4. Control of Notebooks / Journals	6
5. Issue of Notebooks / Journals.....	7
6. Maintenance of Notebooks	8
7. Maintenance of Journals.....	9
8. Lost Stolen or Damaged Notebooks / Journals / Daybooks.....	10
9. Line Manager Notebook / Journal check.....	10
10. Return of Notebooks / Journals / Daybooks	11
11. Arrangements on Transfer	12
12. Reissue of Notebooks.....	12
13. Suspension, Dismissal, Retirement or Resignation from Duty.....	13
14. Death of a Member	14
15. Access by Former Members to Notebooks / Journals / Daybooks.....	14

Table of Appendices

Appendix A Notebook / Journal Register	22
Appendix B Notebook / Reissue Register	23
Appendix C Individual Record of Notebooks / Journals.....	24
Appendix D Definitions.....	25
Appendix E Management of Police Information (MoPI) Gradings.....	26
Appendix F Contact Us.....	28

1. Objective

This Service Instruction details the issue, accounting and retention procedures in the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) for official issue Paper Pocket Notebooks (PNB), Digital Notebooks (DNB), Journals, and Daybooks.

This Service Instruction has been revised to include contingencies for the transitional roll out of the new Digital Notebook (when both Digital & Paper Pocket Notebooks will be in use) and it will be updated as soon as the Digital Notebooks are approved for use as the primary Notebook across the Service.

To maintain their records, it is anticipated that in the future all Police Officers and relevant Police Staff in operational roles (as defined in [Section 5](#)) will either use a:

- Handheld Mobile Device; or
- Common Terminal (CT) Desktop,

as the primary means to maintain their records. This Digital Notebook entry:

- Will be considered the service record for all legal and disclosure purposes; and

- Is the property of the Chief Constable and may be viewed where there is a legitimate business and/or operational need.

Online training material should be consulted when encountering technical difficulties when using the Digital Notebook. If the issue still persists, users should immediately report all details to ICS for support and prompt investigation.

In addition, a Paper Pocket Notebook will continue to be issued to cover major system failures. In such an event the records recorded in the Paper Pocket Notebook must be added to the DNB (as the primary Notebook) at the earliest opportunity to ensure continuity and integrity of Service record keeping.

2. Legislation

The legal basis for entries made in Notebooks is derived from the [Police and Criminal Evidence \(PACE\) Order 1989](#).

Records and their retention within the PSNI are governed by:

- [The Public Records Act \(NI\) 1923](#);

- [The Disposal of Documents Order 1925](#);
- The principles set out in the [Data Protection Act 2018](#); and
- [The General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\)](#).

Notebooks (Paper Pocket / Digital), Journals and Daybooks that are or have been used for business purposes remain in the charge of the Chief Constable, including when the Police Officer / Police Staff has left the PSNI.

The Data Protection Act (DPA 2018) obligates all data controllers, such as the PSNI to protect the confidentiality and rights of data subjects whose personal information they process and to implement appropriate technical and organisational measures in order to meet the requirements of the Regulation / Act and protect the rights of data subjects.

Prescribed records such as police Notebooks (Paper Pocket / Digital) or Journals, which contain personal data and are being held outside the control of the data controller cannot be assured of being processed in a manner compliant with the Regulation and Act, and are therefore deemed to be held in breach of the

controllers obligations to secure and protect.

Police Officers are reminded of the obligation placed upon them by the [Code of Ethics](#) Article 1.9 (false, misleading or inaccurate written statements – see Code of Ethics for full explanation).

Notebooks (Paper Pocket / Digital) issued to Student Officers are part of their training tools and are not considered 'Notebooks' for the purpose of this Service Instruction. They are treated separately under the PSNI Review Retention & Disposal Schedule (RRD). The Paper Pocket Notebooks, Journals and Daybooks of all other Officers and Staff, in all circumstances will be receipted, stored securely and retained for a period compliant with the Service RRD Schedule.

3. Exceptions and Reasonable Adjustments

There is no requirement to carry a mobile device with the DNB feature if the individual's Supervisory Officer has agreed that it is inappropriate to do so while

undertaking special operational duties; or if the Officer has never been issued with a mobile device.

However, individuals must make an entry if they become involved in any occurrence requiring the recording of evidence or facts. For example, operational incidents, discipline or welfare issues, and criminal or civil proceedings. This can be done through their mobile device or a common terminal, which will also have DNB feature.

Where an Officer is experiencing a particular challenge to using their mobile device, for example a disability or a neurodiverse condition, they must raise this with their Line Manager who must explore and discuss any reasonable adjustments available to them.

4. Control of Notebooks / Journals

The responsibility for the issue, reissue and accounting of Paper Pocket Notebooks and Journals may be designated to a suitable competent person (designated person). In relation to Digital Notebook entries they shall be retained for periods compliant with

the PSNI Review, Retention and Disposal Schedule.

Role	Responsibility / Accountability
District Commanders Head of Department Heads of Branch	1. Procedures surrounding the issue and control of Paper Pocket Notebooks and Journals. 2. Examination of: (i) Paper Pocket Notebook registers; and (ii) Paper Pocket Notebook reissue registers.
Information and Communication Services	Procedures surrounding making the Digital Notebook available to Officers/Staff.

5. Issue of Notebooks / Journals

Official Notebooks (Paper Pocket / Digital) will be issued to all:

- Police Constables;
- Police Sergeants;
- Police Officers above the rank of Sergeant in investigative roles;
- Police Staff in Investigative Roles, (issued Notebooks for evidential purposes).
- Other - Where there is a need outside of these circumstances, Notebooks (Paper Pocket / Digital) may be issued to Police Officers / Police Staff up to and including the Chief Constable.

Official Journals will be issued to:

- Police Officers from ranks of Inspector to Chief Constable; and
- Police Staff from grades of Staff Officer to Grade 3.

From the date of receipt of a Journal the practice of using unofficial Daybooks will cease. Daybooks will remain in the personal possession of the Police Officer /

Staff member until they exit the organisation, at which point they will be surrendered with their Notebooks / Journals (where appropriate) to their respective designated authority.

The issue of Paper Pocket Notebooks and Journals should be recorded electronically using the register at [Appendix A](#), and saved on the corporate Electronic Data Records Management System (EDRMS) (with appropriate security and access controls).

Officers / Staff requiring a replacement Paper Pocket Notebook must produce the completed old Notebook for retention by the issuing Officer. Only one Notebook must be in use at any time. Officers must not maintain more than one Notebook. The issuing of a Notebook will only be undertaken by the designated person. They must confirm that the previous book is the most recent and is complete before issuing a new book.

Under no circumstances are unauthorised or duplicate Notebooks to be used, there must be no dual entries in both Digital and Paper Pocket Notebooks

- The entry in the Digital Notebook will be taken as the record.

All unused Paper Pocket Notebooks must be securely stored by the designated authority and are subject to audit.

On completion of a Journal the Police Officer / Staff member must ensure that the person delegated to issue Journals inserts an entry in to the Journal Register.

The Officer / Staff member will retain all completed Journals for the duration of their Service and upon leaving the Service return all Journals following procedure as per [Section 10](#).

6. Maintenance of Notebooks

Subject to [Section 5](#) above, Police Officers (of all ranks) / Police Staff in investigative roles shall maintain Notebooks for evidential purposes. They should carry their Notebooks (Paper Pocket / Digital) at all times when on duty or on call unless their duties preclude them from doing so. They must record all relevant matters in a contemporaneous form in their Notebook at the time, or as soon as possible afterwards where safety concerns or practicality

prevents this. The reason for any delay must be noted.

The entry must:

- Include the details of all incidents they are evidentially involved in;
- Where appropriate it should be complementary to existing scene examination, and sketch recording documentation;
- Show clear rationale for any decision making;
- Be in sufficient detail to recall the full facts during any subsequent court proceedings (Notebooks (Paper Pocket or Digital) are subject to the scrutiny of the Court);
- Not be the subject of unauthorised or dishonest alteration(s);

Further to this Paper Pocket Notebooks entries should also:

- Be recorded in pen;
- Be clearly legible
- Be made in the lines of the pages;
- Include the time entered in the margin;

- Have no additional notes in the margins or between the lines after the initial entry has been made;
- Have no gaps between entries. (The only exception is the DNB where the DNB permits the use of a return line allowing entries to be more readable rather than a continuous flow of text with small gaps scored out. The entry will lock afterwards so no editing is permitted. All dates should be recorded, including rest days, annual leave and course attendance);
- Have no loose paper inserted within the Notebook;
- When not in use, the Notebook must be stored in a secure pocket, subject to uniform type; and only when complete;
- A new Notebook should be sought in a timely manner to avoid the risk of original notes not being made.

Where a Paper Pocket Notebook or Journal contains an entry relating to serious crime (MOPI graded 1 or 2 offence, see [Appendix E](#)) the member must indicate this on the front cover of the Notebook or Journal and complete; the case name,

page number and date on the inside index sheet.

7. Maintenance of Journals

All Officers and Staff members required to maintain a Journal (for non-evidential matters) will keep a record of:

- Work performed each day;
- Important occurrences or matters which arise or are brought to their notice; and
- Particulars of leave, sickness, travel etc.

This is not an exhaustive list, but indicative of what would constitute an entry.

The Chief Constable, Deputy Chief Constable, Assistant Chief Constables or Heads of Departments may, at their discretion, direct any Police Officer / Staff member to maintain a Journal. In addition, an individual may self-elect to keep a Journal, but such will be issued as per [Section 5](#), and becomes an official record. The latter does not negate the responsibility of maintaining an official issue Notebook (Paper Pocket / Digital) if the individual concerned is obliged to maintain a Notebook for evidential purposes.

8. Lost Stolen or Damaged Notebooks / Journals / Daybooks

Immediately on becoming aware that a loss of a Paper Pocket Notebook/ Journal / Daybook has occurred, the appropriate steps should be taken as laid out in the table below. This is necessary in order to minimise negative effects, protect the public and the Service, ensure that the PSNI does not breach any legal or regulatory requirements and identify areas of weakness in order that these can be addressed.

Notebooks Journals and Daybooks			
Action to be Taken	Lost	Stolen	Damaged
Inform Line Manager immediately	✓	✓	✓
Follow IS Standard 1.05 – Information Incident Identification and Reporting (Phone or email the Incident Coordination Centre ICC with relevant details)	✓	✓	

The Line Manager must immediately inform the locally designated authority. (**For Journals the Line Manager will also notify the Departmental Head, Regional Assistant Chief Constable or District Command Unit Commander**). All such occurrences must be investigated and a report furnished to the District Commander or Head of Branch / Department for consideration of disciplinary action.

Loss of a Paper Pocket Notebook or Journal may also involve a loss of personal data. There are specific legal obligations regarding external reporting to the Information Commissioner’s Office and in some cases, to data subjects. External reporting is the responsibility of the PSNI Data Protection Officer.

Please seek advice from Professional Standards Department, as required.

9. Line Manager Notebook / Journal check

Each Officer / Staff member’s Notebook (Paper Pocket / Digital) will be inspected on a monthly basis by their Line Manager, ensuring that the record has been completed and including a qualitative check

on content. Journals will be inspected on a quarterly basis by a Supervisory Officer / Line Manager.

As part of the inspection process Line Managers must ensure that only official issue Notebooks (Paper Pocket / Digital / Journals are being used for the purposes of PSNI business.

When inspecting Paper Pocket or Digital Notebooks, the Line Manager will annotate this inspection with their service number / Staff number, date and signature. This inspection should not only check and ensure that the record has been completed, but must also include a qualitative check of the content.

Countersigning managers (those members' one rank or grade above the Line Manager) must undertake a regular, random dip sample inspection of Notebooks/Journals. The check should ensure that:

- The record has been completed;
- The Line Manager has performed the inspection; and
- A qualitative check of the content has been carried out.

The countersigning manager's signature, service number / Staff number and date must be recorded at the top of the last page containing an entry.

It is the personal responsibility of each Officer/Staff member to ensure that their Line Manager examines their Notebook (Paper Pocket / Digital) / Journal as per the arrangements outlined above.

10. Return of Notebooks / Journals / Daybooks

Completed Paper Pocket Notebooks must be returned to the designated person and the return recorded using the register [Appendix A](#).

Only where a Notebook has been lost/stolen/damaged and the process at [Section 8](#) has been completed, will a new Notebook be issued without one being returned.

Completed Journals / Daybooks must be retained by the individual until termination of service. At this time all Journals / Daybooks must be returned to their Line

Manager before being submitted to Records Management Unit (RMU).

Access to Journals or Daybooks which have been returned to the Records Management store must be approved by a District Commander / Head of Branch / Department.

11. Arrangements on Transfer

On transfer the Officer/Staff member will have personal responsibility for the transfer of their Paper Pocket Notebooks to their new location. The Paper Pocket Notebooks will be accompanied with the individual record of Notebooks ([Appendix C](#)), which must be checked by the individual for accuracy. **Notebooks must not be placed in the internal mail system.**

On arrival at the new location the designated Officer will receive and receipt the Paper Pocket Notebooks. While the current Notebook will remain in the Officer / Staff member's possession, no other Paper Pocket Notebooks must be retained in personal lockers, desk drawers, or at home.

In respect of Officers transferring from Professional Standards Department:

- All Paper Pocket Notebooks / Digital Notebooks / Journals and Daybooks that were maintained in connection with these duties will be retained within that Department;
- All Digital Notebooks will be protected and accessible to Officers / Staff within that Department and approved by the Information Asset Owner.

All other Paper Pocket Notebooks / Journals / Daybooks shall transfer in the normal way.

12. Reissue of Notebooks

Where an individual is reissued with their Paper Pocket Notebook for the purposes of completing files, court attendance, or any other legitimate business purpose, this shall be for the minimum period required and should not exceed 1 month. The Paper Pocket Notebook reissue will be recorded in the register at [Appendix B](#) and the individual must ensure prompt return once the requirement has ended. If a copy Paper Pocket Notebook entry is required for submission to a file or for court

purposes an electronic Form 38/67 should be completed, certified and signed by the person who makes the copy.

To monitor the reissue of Paper Pocket Notebooks the following guidelines will be employed:

- Reissued Paper Pocket Notebooks must be recalled on a monthly basis;
- A call-up system must be in place, which will identify dates when Paper Pocket Notebooks are due to be returned;
- Expedites for unreturned Paper Pocket Notebooks must be forwarded to the

individual's Line Manager asking for the immediate return of the Paper Pocket Notebook and explanation for the delay;

- On returning the Paper Pocket Notebook the reissue register must be updated accordingly by the designated person (see [Appendix B](#)); and
- Failure to return Paper Pocket Notebooks after reasonable requests will be considered a disciplinary offence and reported as such by the Line Manager to the respective Information Asset Owner.

13. Suspension, Dismissal, Retirement or Resignation from Duty

Action to be taken	Suspension	Dismissal	Retirement or Resignation
Supervisor collects all Paper Pocket Notebooks/ Journals or Daybooks issued to that person.	✓	✓	
Supervisor forwards items to Designated Authority for secure storage and retention.	✓	✓	

<p>Individual forwards items to Designated Authority for secure storage and retention (<i>Prior to end of service</i>).</p> <p>Designated Authority forwards Paper Pocket Notebooks/Journals/Daybooks to Records Management Unit for transfer to Seapark.</p>			✓
<p>Designated Authority forwards items to Records Management Unit for storage and retention (Insert entry in Notebook/Journal register).</p>		✓	
<p>Information and Communication Services will ensure the Officer’s access to their Digital Notebooks is delimited.</p>	✓	✓	✓

14. Death of a Member

In the event of the death of an Officer / Staff member, the District / Branch / Department shall make arrangements with Records Management Unit for the collection of all Notebooks / Journals / Daybooks and ensure records are perfected.

15. Access by Former

Members to Notebooks / Journals / Daybooks

Former members requiring access to Notebooks (Paper Pocket or Digital) / Journals / Daybooks for third party actions, including Judicial Reviews, will be directed to obtain a Judicial direction / Court Order via their legal representative and forward to PSNI Legal Services, where it will be assessed, taking cognisance of the PSNI’s

statutory and common law obligations (see [process flowchart](#)).

Where former members are acting as a witness on behalf of the Chief Constable who is a party to proceedings, or are requested by:

- The Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland (PONI);
- Major Investigation Teams (MIT);
- Legacy Investigation Branch (LIB); or
- Legal Services Branch;

to act as a witness on their behalf for matters relevant to the former member's role in the police, then access to Notebooks (Paper Pocket or Digital) / Journals / Daybooks for such investigative purposes will continue to be serviced via the current process for each (see [process flowchart](#)).

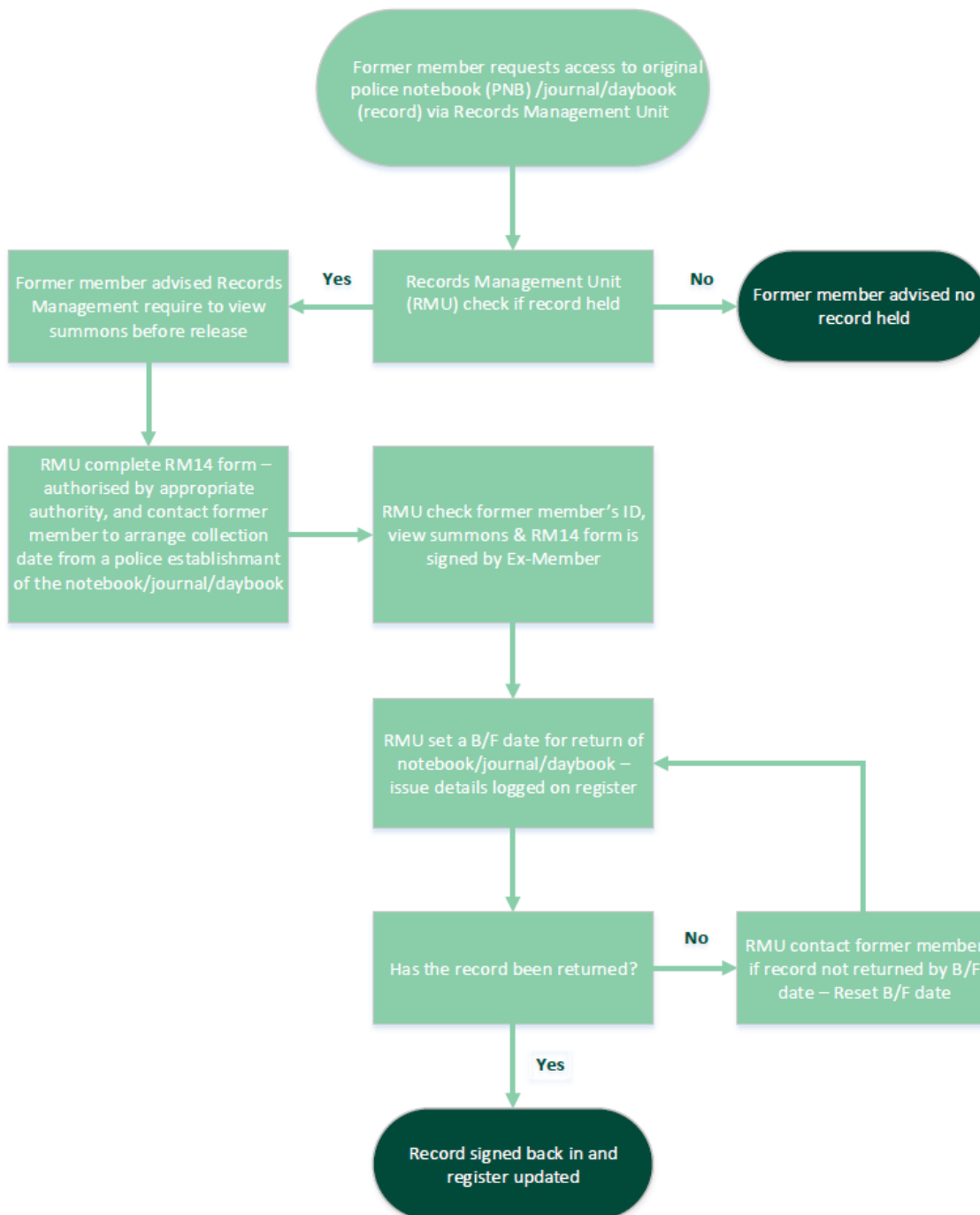
Where former members are required to be interviewed as suspects in respect of their former role in the police, it will be for the investigative authority / unit, acting under their statutory / legal remit, to determine and document their rationale for the most appropriate level of access and disclosure

to the Notebooks (Paper Pocket or Digital) / Journals / Daybooks (see [process flowchart](#)).

Police Officers/ Staff must ensure when reproducing material from Notebooks, (paper or Digital)/Journals/Daybooks in court that it is relevant to the matter in question, and is appropriately risk assessed, securely transmitted and assessed against any [Human Rights Act 1998](#) Article 2 and Article 8 considerations. Legal Services can advise in this regard.

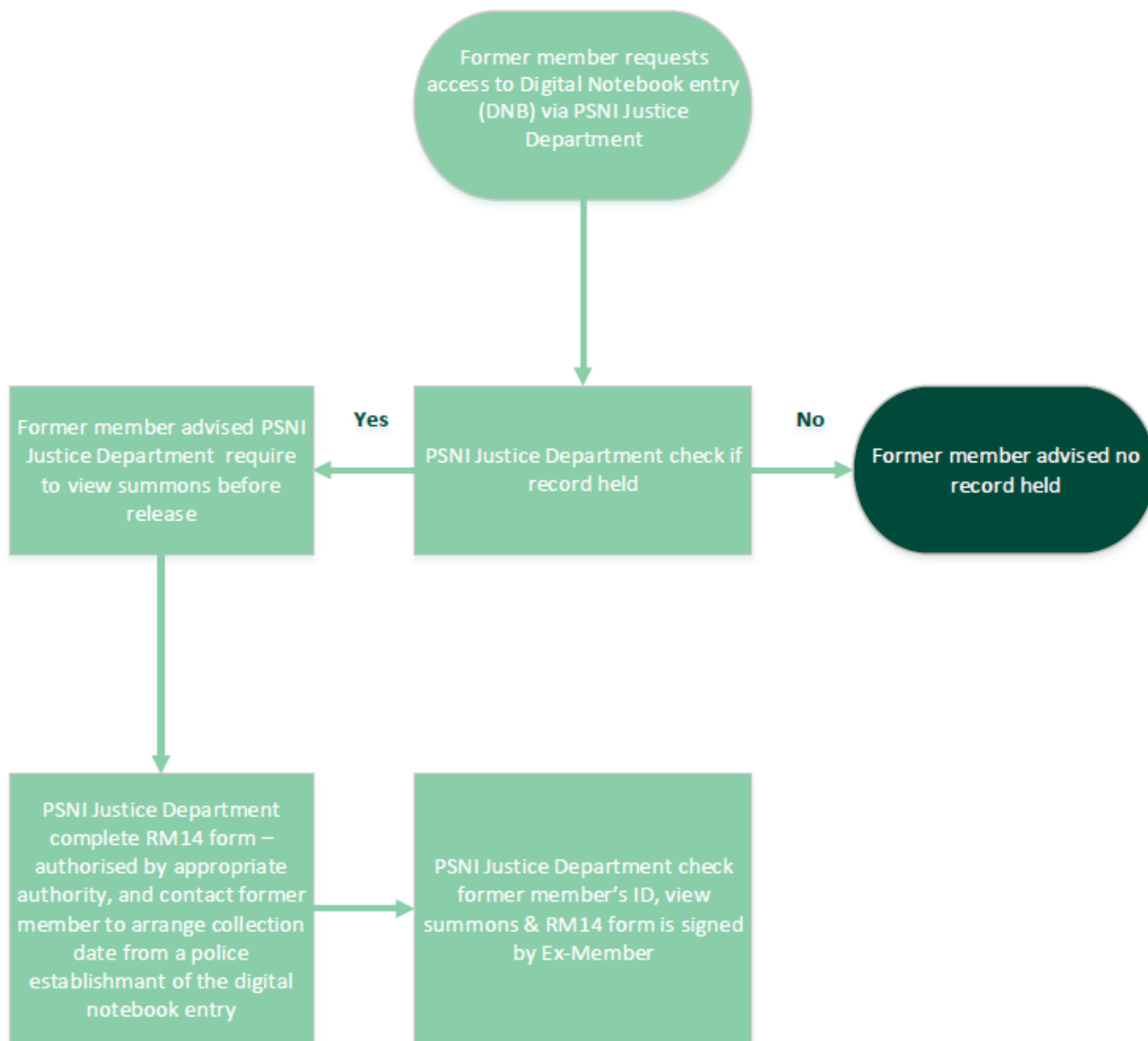
Paper Pocket Notebook Request

Former Member – Witness on behalf of the Chief Constable



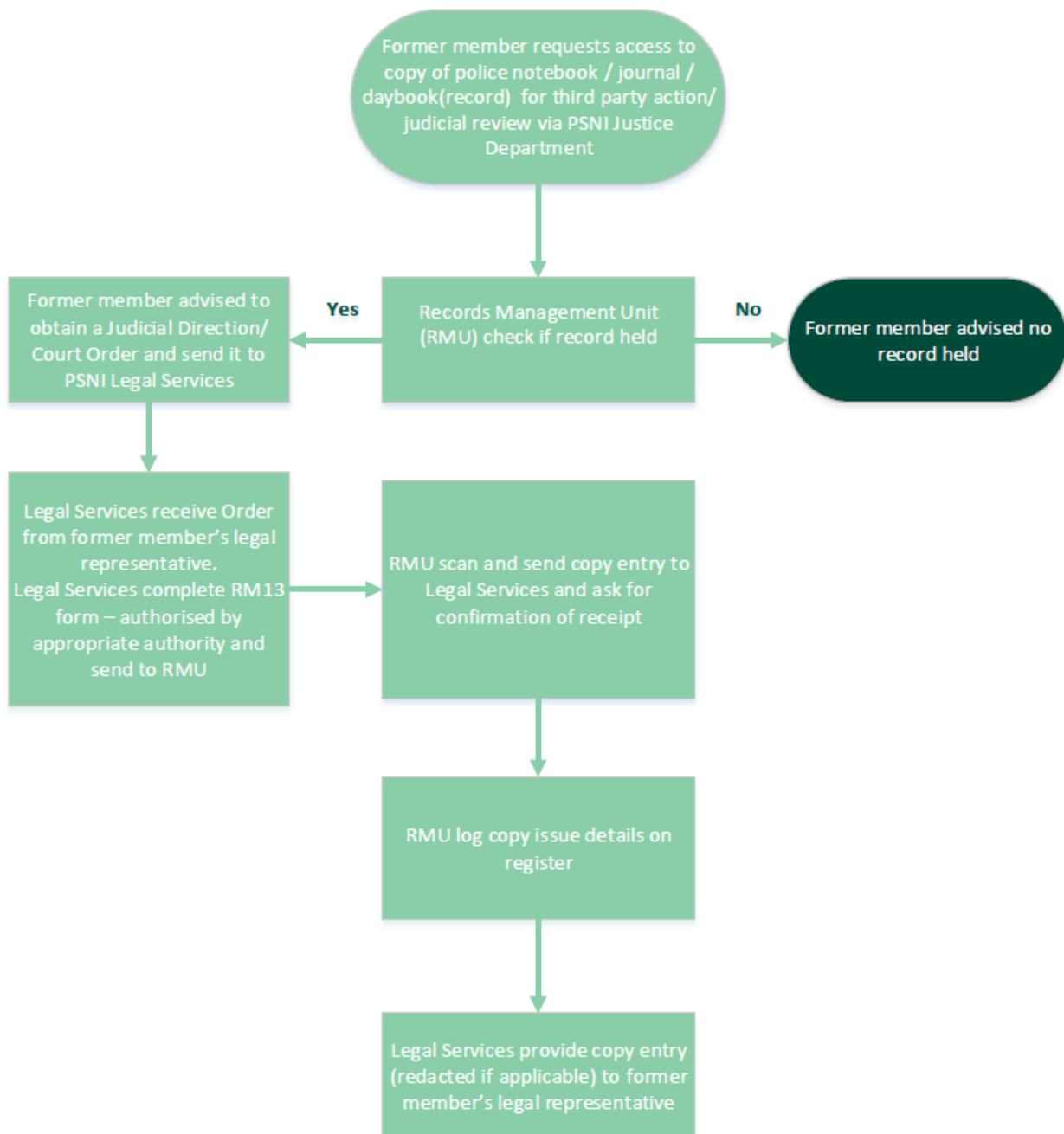
Digital Notebook Request

Former Member – Witness on behalf of the Chief Constable



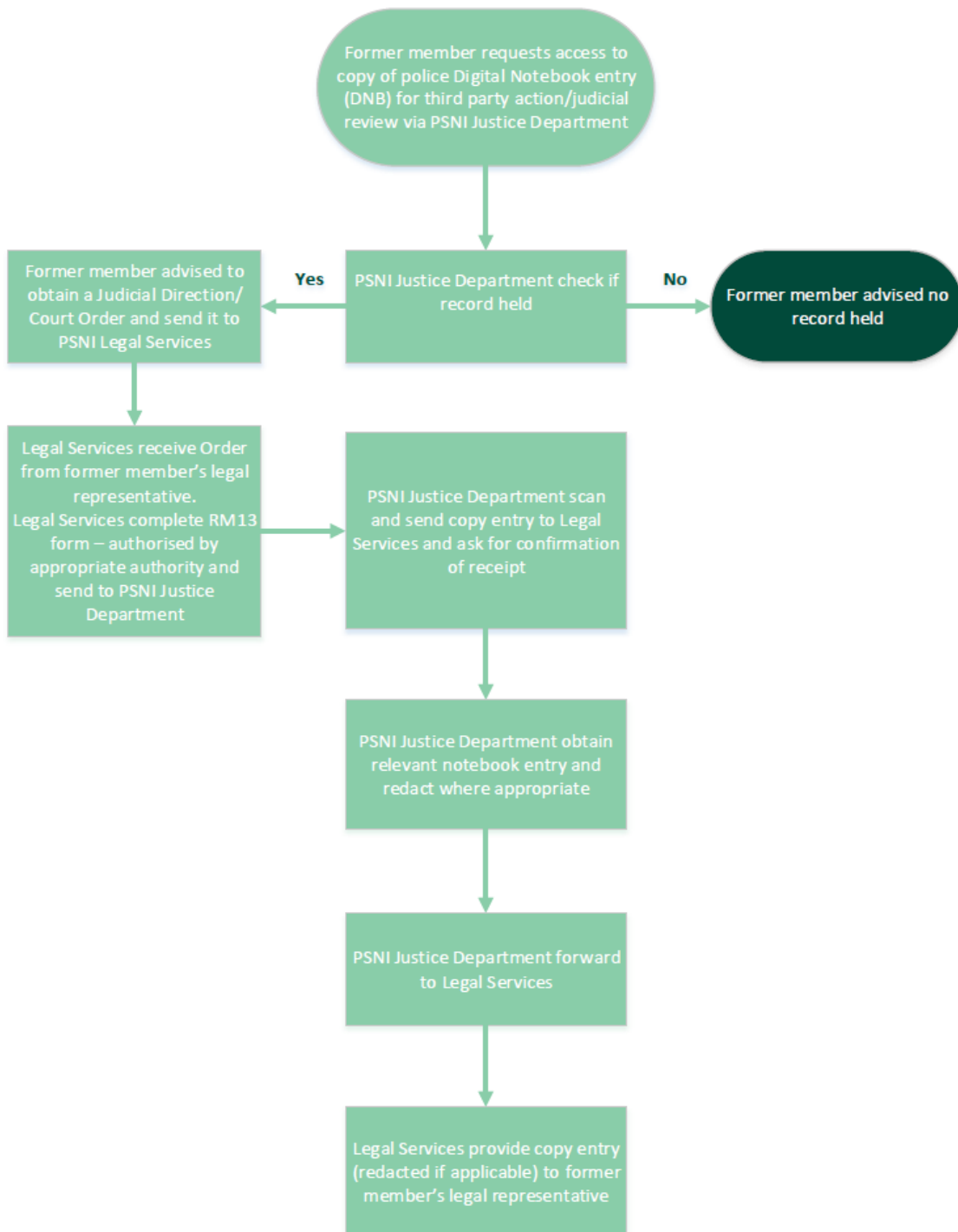
Paper Pocket Notebook Request

Third Party Action on Judicial Review



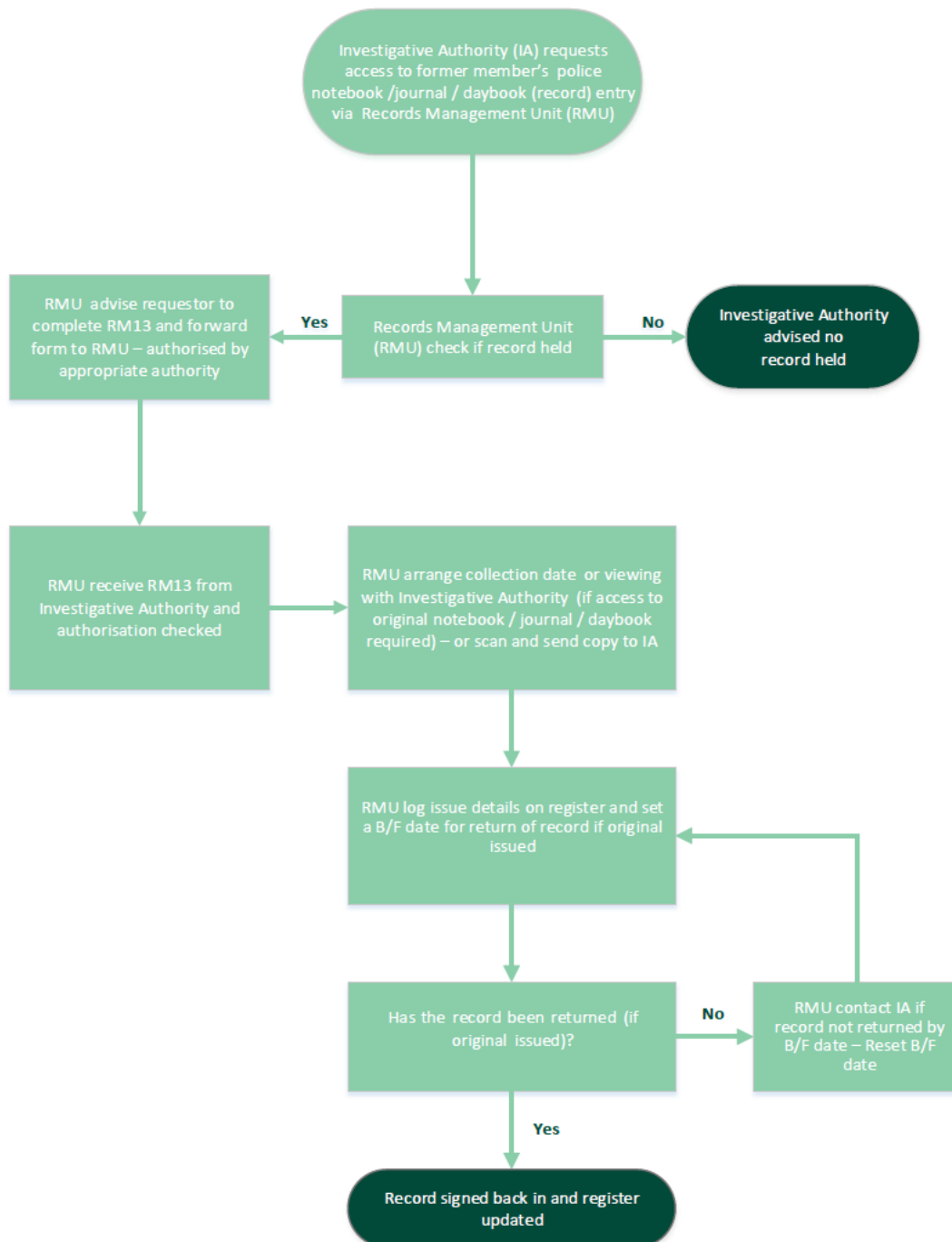
Digital Notebook Request

Third Party Action on Judicial Review



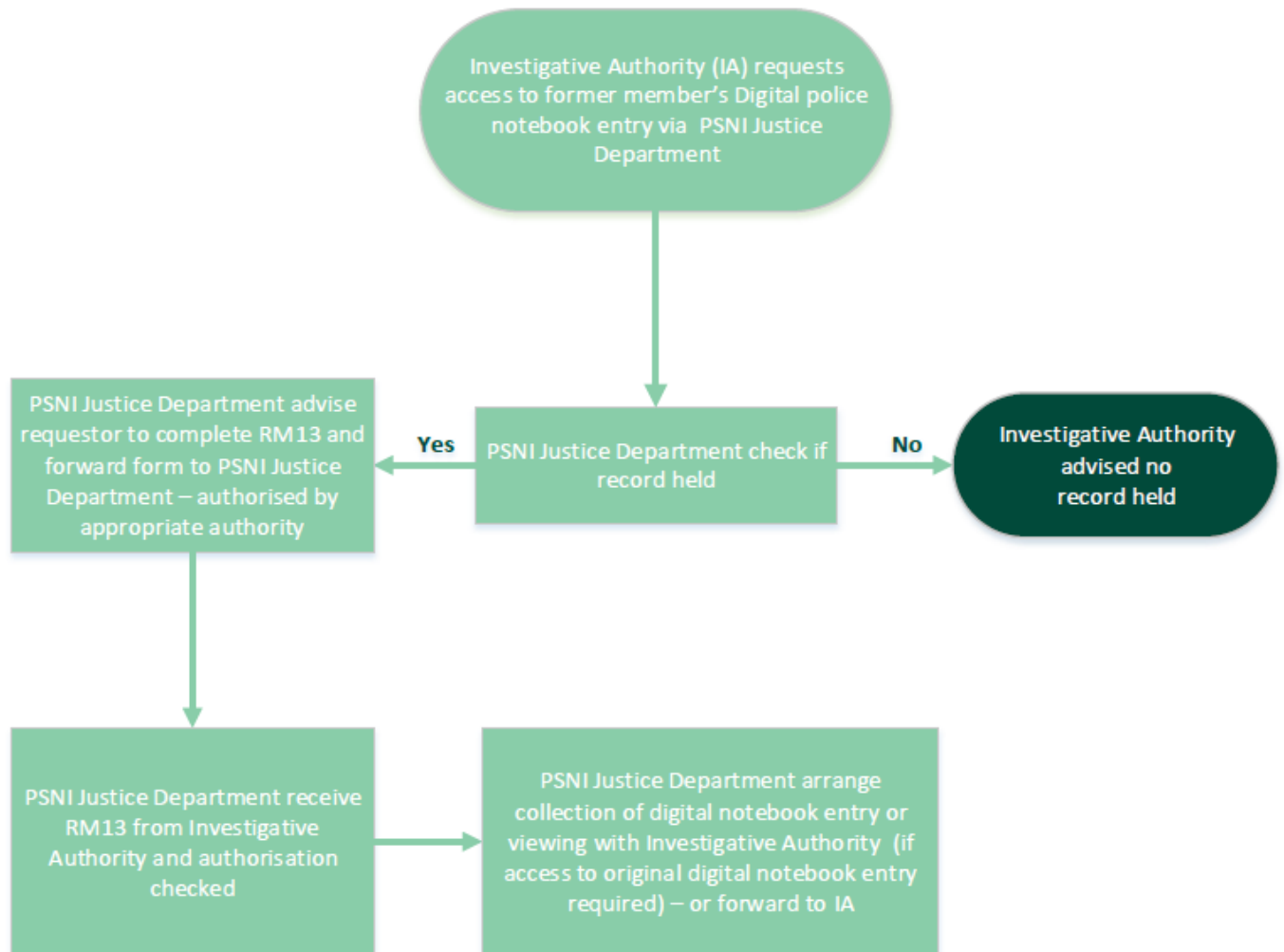
Paper Pocket Notebook Request

Investigative Authority Access Request



Digital Notebook Request

Investigative Authority Access Request



Appendix C Individual Record of Notebooks / Journals

Notebooks/ Journals listed below have been issued to the following member during their service.

PRINT NAME	RANK/GRADE	SERVICE/STAFF NUMBER	LOCATION
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The police Officer/Police Staff shall assume responsibility for the transfer of their Notebooks/Journals to their new location **(It is incumbent upon the police Officer/ Police Staff to check accuracy of list below).**

Signature
(Police Officer/ Police Staff)

Notebook/ Journal Number(s) (This is the Notebook's serial number as per Appendix 'A')

(1) _____	(11) _____
(2) _____	(12) _____
(3) _____	(13) _____
(4) _____	(14) _____
(5) _____	(15) _____
(6) _____	(16) _____
(7) _____	(17) _____
(8) _____	(18) _____
(9) _____	(19) _____
(10) _____	(20) _____

LOCATION: _____ **DATE:** _____

Please find *attached/ enclosed (i.e. 1, 8, 20) _____ Notebooks/ Journals for the above named member forwarded on the time of their *transfer/ _____ to your location.

Number(s) (ie 1, 6 and 15, 2-5) _____ are not *attached/ enclosed as they have been reissued (give number of Notebook/ Journal and date of reissue for each) _____ to the member as per instructions.

You should request return or obtain information as to *its/ their whereabouts.
*delete as necessary

ISSUING POLICE OFFICER/ POLICE STAFF

PRINT NAME	RANK/ GRADE,	SERVICE/STAFF NUMBER	LOCATION
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RECEIPTING POLICE OFFICER/ POLICE STAFF

PRINT NAME	RANK/ GRADE,	SERVICE/STAFF NUMBER	LOCATION
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Appendix D Definitions

Notebook

A Notebook (Paper Pocket or Digital) is the book / application issued to Officers / Staff by the Service and used for the purposes of recording evidential material as derived by the [Police and Criminal Evidence Order 1989](#).

Journal

A Journal is a formal record of duty as used by Inspector or above and Police Staff from grades of Staff Officer to Grade 3, formerly known as a C7.

Daybook

A Daybook is any book, other than a Notebook or Journal as defined above, used by an Officer of Staff member to record any details of official PSNI business.

Appendix E Management of Police Information (MoPI) Gradings

Group 1			
<p>Serious offences and public protection matters</p>	<p>Multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) managed offenders.</p> <p>Offences specified in the Sentencing Act 2020 Schedule 18 which carry a maximum sentence of 10 years or more.</p> <p>Potentially dangerous people.</p>	<p>Retain until subject has reached 100 years of age then manual review.</p> <p>Review every 10 years to ensure adequacy and necessity.</p>	<p>This category poses the highest possible risk of harm to the public.</p>
Group 2			
<p>Other sexual and violent offences</p>	<p>Sexual offences listed in Schedule 3 Sexual Offences Act 2003.</p> <p>Violent offences specified in the Home Office counting rules for recorded crime/National Crime Recording Standard.</p> <p>This group also includes offences specified in Schedule 18 of the Sentencing Act 2020 which are not Group 1 offences, ie, carry a maximum</p>	<p>Review after an initial 10 year clear period.</p> <p>If subject is deemed to pose a high risk of harm, retain and review after a further 10 year clear period.</p>	<p>National Retention Assessment Criteria.</p>

	<p>sentence of less than 10 years.</p> <p>Other serious offences are recorded as such on the PNLD.</p>		
Group 3			
All other offences	All other offences	<p>Retain for initial 6 year clear period followed by subsequent 5 year clear period reviews.</p> <p>Either review and risk assess after 6 years clear period or carry out time based disposal depending on force policy.</p>	<p>Lower risk of harm.</p> <p>Forces must balance the risk posed by this group with the burden of reviewing.</p>

Appendix F Contact Us

Service Instruction Author

Records Management Unit

Branch Email

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