



Policy and Procedure Manual: CoS/03

PROPERTY PROCEDURES – SUPPORT.

All members of the public and communities we serve, all police officers, special constables and police staff members shall receive equal and fair treatment regardless of, age, disability, gender, race, religion, belief or sexual orientation. If you consider this policy could be improved for any of these groups please raise with the author of the policy without delay.

Any enquiries in relation to this policy should be directed to the Force Property Officer, Central Secure Stores, on extension 7800 2330.

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APPENDIX A

Hierarchy of Property Responsibilities

1. VISITOR HANDLERS / CALL HANDLERS.

1.1 Initial Receipt of Found Property

1.1.1 Property found on private premises / Public Service Vehicles should not normally be accepted for retention by the police (see *Operational - Property Procedure P17: section B2*).

1.1.2 Retention by Finder

Wherever possible, the finder should be encouraged to retain the property. Finders should always be encouraged to retain property unless:

- (a) The finder is under 18 years of age.
- (b) The finder has no fixed abode.
- (c) The value of the property exceeds £100.
- (d) The property is identifiable, and can be returned to its owner.
- (e) The property is suspected to be proceeds of crime.
- (f) The finder is a Police Officer, Police Community Support Officer, Special Constable, or a member of Police Staff.
- (g) The property has some security value.
- (h) The property is dangerous.
- (i) The property is cash, cheque, postal order, premium savings bond, savings certificate, key, pawn ticket, gambling instrument, document, hypodermic syringe, drug, medicine or tablet, mobile 'phone, laptop computer, pedal cycle.
- (j) The check on the computer reveals that the property has already been reported lost/stolen.
- (k) The property is of an obscene nature (e.g. books, magazines and other publications) or films, videocassettes, DVDs or CD ROMs, the subject matter of which is unknown.
- (l) The property is a service uniform or piece of equipment which is unlawful for the finder to retain.
- (m) The finder wishes to retain only part of the property. The property can only be wholly retained or deposited.
- (n) Any part of the property is unsuitable for retention by the finder. In any of the above circumstances, the finder will not be allowed to retain any property.

1.1.3 *Actions should be as follows:*

- (a) If the property is retained by the finder then the property record will be endorsed accordingly and a property receipt will be handed to the finder. Consideration should be given to taking digital photographs of the property.
- (b) The Visitor Handler (VH) entering the details of the property will explain the mandatory retention period of 4 weeks to the finder and the procedure to follow if the loser of the property is traced. The finder should be advised that they will be contacted should any person wish to claim the property.

1.1.4 Binning system

If a finder does not wish to retain or claim the property, it is unidentifiable and of low value, it will be dealt with under the binning system. Examples of property that can be binned are keys, purses, worn items of clothing and other small items.

- (a) The property will be examined thoroughly by the VH to ensure that only unidentifiable property is binned.
- (b) It is important that before dealing with the property, the system is explained to the finder and the finder is made aware that no records will be completed i.e. will not

be recorded. A receipt will not be issued. If the finder wishes to be issued with a receipt, the property will be dealt with in accordance with Paragraph 1.2.

- (c) The property will be deposited into the bin, where possible in the presence of the finder, which will be retained in the Enquiry Office behind the counter.
- (d) Knives and other sharp implements must not be put in the binning system. They will be dealt with as at Paragraph 1.2 below.

1.2 Initial Action with Found Property

1.2.1 Details of all found property items will be entered onto the property system by the VH receiving the property. Hazardous substances and suspected hazardous substances, cash and jewellery will be treated separately from other property, as follows:

- (a) Hazardous Substances and suspected Hazardous Substances handed in with or without other found property will be treated as harmful. The substance should not be moved. The VH will notify a supervisor immediately and contact will be made with a Haz-Chem Consultative Officer and / or the Fire Service with regards to the identification and storage of the substance. The OCU Property Officer will be advised at the earliest opportunity. Details of Haz-Chem Consultative Officers are held on Command and Control and by the FCC.

For Further information see Policy and Procedure Manual item D-2.

- (b) Money and /or jewellery handed in with other found property will in the presence of the finder, be separated from other property and entered as a separate item on the system (*see P17, paragraph 6.3 for dealing with money*).
- (c) The VH, together with the finder, will check the total value of the money/ jewellery. Details will be entered onto the system. The money/jewellery will be sealed separately in a Cash-in-Transit bag and the seal number recorded on the system and an entry made in the station safe register. The sealed bag will be placed in the safe. After agreeing the seal number, the finder must sign as the lodging officer. The standard property receipt that shows the found property number will be issued to the finder. The finder will not be provided with a copy of the computer print out.

1.2.2 In the event of the computer system not working, Form MK58 Books will be temporarily used to record property details. When the computer system is restored, a new record will be created accordingly.

1.2.3 A property receipt will be issued to the finder and the time limits for claiming the property explained.

- (a) After the property has been in police possession for four weeks and the owner has not been traced, it may be claimed by the finder.
- (b) If after a subsequent two weeks it has not been claimed by either the owner or the finder, it will be disposed of in accordance with paragraph 2.8.

1.2.4 Once entered onto the system, the VH will take the following action:

- (a) Examine the property to discover any clue as to the owner. If a clue is found, the potential loser will be notified either in writing using Form WG 517 or by telephone, requested to collect the property and advised that some proof of identification will be required in order to release the property.
- (b) Use the property system search facility to check the database to determine whether the property has been reported lost or stolen.

- (c) Any information obtained / action taken as a result of these checks will be entered onto the property record, this can be recorded in the Comments box.

At the conclusion of these checks, property will be packaged as per paragraph 1.3.

1.3 Packing of Found Property

1.3.1 Procedures to be followed for the packing of found property are the same as for seized property as set out in Procedure P-17(A).

- general items of property – *paragraph 5*
- fuel - *paragraph 9*
- hazardous substances - *paragraph 10*

1.4 Found Cheque Cards, Credit Cards etc

1.4.1 Every attempt will be made to return such cards to the owner. If this cannot be done, contact will be made with the nearest branch of the appropriate bank or building society to inform them that the cards have been handed to the police and to establish what action the bank / building society wants taken with regard to their disposal.

1.4.2 Cards which are to be returned should be cut in half, and if sent through the post, should be accompanied by letter WG 517 requesting return of the receipt.

1.4.3 If the card is not to be returned, it should be cut up and the record endorsed with the name of the contact at the bank or building society that authorised the destruction.

1.5 Initial Storage of Property

1.5.1 If property is to be placed in the Holding Store, the VH will be responsible for checking the seal number on the bag with the seal number on the property record.

1.5.2 Where cash or valuable items are handed over, the designated safe key holder will be responsible for ensuring they have been separated from other property, and sealed in Cash-in-Transit bags prior to being lodged in the Enquiry Office safe.

1.5.3 Any movement of property into and out of the Holding Store/Enquiry Office safe must be recorded on the system using the booking out function.

1.5.4 Keys to the Holding Store will be the responsibility of the VH.

1.6 Items of High Value

1.6.1 Items of high value are considered to be:

- (a) Cash over £5,000
- (b) Consignments of jewellery or similarly valuable property considered to be over £5,000 in value.
- (c) Single items over £1,000 in value.

- 1.6.2 The VH will ensure any such items are brought to the attention of the Business Manager, who, if necessary, will liaise with the Force Insurance Officer to confirm appropriate insurance cover.
- 1.6.3 Items of high value will be transferred to OCU Finance or the Central Secure Store for safekeeping using the cash in transit system.

1.7 Money – Transfer from Enquiry Office to OCU Finance

- 1.7.1 It will be the responsibility of the Business Manager to ensure that all money lodged in the Enquiry Office safe is forwarded at the earliest opportunity to OCU Finance via the cash in transit system.
- 1.7.2 The only exceptions to this will be where the money has only been seized for a short period of time i.e. retention pending identification by serial numbers or other markings etc., or where the owner of found property has been contacted and an arrangement made to collect. In all cases, where this exceeds 48 hours, the money will be forwarded to OCU Finance.

1.8 Return of Property

- 1.8.1 The VH will return property in the following cases:
- (a) Seized property will only be returned where the written authority of the OIC/OCU Property Officer has been given in respect of property in the Holding Store.
 - (b) Where the owner of found property has been identified.
- 1.8.2 The VH must be satisfied that the person to whom the property is being returned is the rightful owner. Upon handing the property to the owner, Form WG586 must be signed by the recipient to indicate receipt of that property. The property record will be updated and the receipt forwarded to the OCU Property Officer.
- 1.8.3 Return of property dealt with under the binning system:
- (a) A claimant should describe the property before having access to the bin.
 - (b) The bin will only be searched by a loser in the presence of a VH.
 - (c) Property claimed will be returned without any paperwork if the VH is satisfied as to the claim.
 - (d) A supervisor will resolve any dispute regarding ownership.

The contents of the bin should be reviewed regularly, and items should be disposed of as necessary.

1.9 Lost Property

- 1.9.1 When a person reports the loss of property at a police station, a check will first be made of all appropriate records to see whether it has been handed in to the police. A detailed description will be recorded on the system. The lost property number will be given to the loser for insurance purposes, for example. The person reporting the loss should be informed that further contact will only be made if the property is traced.

- 1.9.2 If a loser states that the property has been lost in a shop, theatre or other private premises or on a 'Public Service Vehicle', they should be advised to make enquiries at the premises or with the operator. An entry on the system will still be made.
- 1.9.3 Where the search appears to match an item recorded as being 'found' and retained by the finder, the VH will contact the finder and arrange for the property to be returned to the police station for verification of ownership. Should the property subsequently be returned to the loser, the property record can be closed.
- 1.9.4 If a loser subsequently finds property previously reported as lost, they should be advised to contact the OCU Property Officer in order that the record can be closed.
- 1.9.5 In the event of the system not working, MK57 Books will be temporarily used to record the details. When the computer system is restored, a new record will be created accordingly.

2. OCU PROPERTY STORE – PROPERTY OFFICER.

2.1. Movement of Property

2.1.1 Transfer to OCU Property Store

- (a) On a daily basis, the Property Officer will produce a printout of the property for transfer from the Holding Store(s) to the Property Store(s).
- (b) The property seal numbers will be checked against the computer printout. Any discrepancies will be brought to the attention of the OIC.
- (c) Only when the Property Officer is satisfied that the WG586 receipts and property are correct will they take responsibility for the property.
- (e) Due to storage limitations, it may not be viable to transfer bulky property to the Property Store, and local arrangements for secure storage should be made.
- (f) The Property Officer will update the record on the system with the location and bin/bay number where the property will be stored.
- (g) All property that is transferred will be secured in the Property Store. The Property Officer will be the only key-holder.

2.1.2 Seized Money

Such money will be passed from the Enquiry Office to OCU Finance. The OCU Finance will be responsible for informing the Property Officer as to the action taken.

- (a) Retained in its original form - The cash will have been taken to the Finance Office Safe for medium term (up to 7 days) retention. The OCU Finance Officer will be responsible for notifying the Property Officer the date that the money is transferred to the Finance Safe. The Property Officer will then update the computer record showing the transfer to the Finance Safe by using the 'Remain in Store' function, which is found via 'Partial Seal Transfer'. If the seal is broken to count the cash, a new seal number should be entered. The actual date of the banking should be entered in the NOTES box.

The OCU Finance will forward the Crime Manager's authority to retain the money to the Property Officer, who will update the computer accordingly. The authority to retain will be reviewed on a monthly basis by the Property Officer.

- (b) Should the Property Officer find that the cash is not in the Enquiry Office safe, the computer record should be updated and marked as 'missing'. This will automatically generate an Email to the OIC requesting details of the whereabouts of the property (cash). Any failure to respond should be reported to the Business Manager.
- (c) Banked - The Property Officer, upon receipt of the WA72 from the OCU Finance Officer will transfer the property (the cash) to the Store identified as 'BANK'. The 'Remain in Store' function will be used as above. The NOTES box will be updated with all relevant details copied from the WA72.

The WA72 will then be held in a register in the Property Office with a new seal number written on it. **The chosen seal must then be broken locally to avoid inadvertent re-use.** This keeps the record open, so that reminders are issued to the OIC and allows further action to be taken. Reminders will be issued as in Para 2.5 below.

- (d) Proceeds of Crime – Property recorded by an officer as 'CASH POCA UNCOUNTED' will have its own record. Property Officers will contact the Force Property Officer at Central Secure Store via E-MAIL to arrange for the record to be totally transferred to the Financial Investigation Team of the ECU, who will then take sole responsibility for it.

2.1.3 Property Missing on Transfer

Property missing on transfer will be dealt with as follows:

- (a) The Property Officer will set the property seal as "missing" and a system generated e-mail will be sent to the OIC requesting an explanation of the situation.
- (b) If no response is received within 7 days or the response is unsatisfactory, the matter will be referred to the supervisor of the OIC.

2.2 **Initial Action in the Store**

2.2.1 If the property is required to be examined by Forensic Services Unit.

Where an item of property has been marked for testing but this has not been undertaken by the time it is transferred to the main store, the OIC should create a Command and Control log for the Forensic Scene Investigator (FSI) to arrange collection. If the property does not have an exhibit label(s) attached, the FSI will contact the OIC and request that these be supplied, prior to examination.

2.2.2 Counterfeit Currency

Unless required as an exhibit or for testing, all counterfeit currency will be disposed of to SOCA and the record finalised. The Property Computer will produce the appropriate documentation to accompany the counterfeit currency.

2.2.3 Found Cheque Cards, Credit Cards

The Property Officer will establish that the checks at Paragraph 1.4 have been undertaken. If not, the matter will be returned to the OIC/VH for the necessary actions to be undertaken.

2.3 Storage of Property

2.3.1 All property will be placed in a bay in the store and the location recorded on the property record.

- (a) Drugs - The Property Officer will transfer drugs to the secure drugs cabinet located in the Property Store as soon as possible. The drugs will be entered into the safe register maintained for the cabinet.
- (b) Jewellery - Items of jewellery will be held in a secure cabinet located in the Property Store. The jewellery will be entered into the safe register maintained for the cabinet.
Note - If the jewellery is of high value it will be dealt with as per paragraph 1.2 above.
- (c) Fireworks and items containing explosive charges (e.g. Car airbags):-
Such property will be held in a safe and secure area of the OCU store. At the earliest opportunity the Property Officer will contact the Force Property Officer, Central Secure Store to arrange transfer to the Explosive Store.

Bulk seizures of fireworks should if possible be left in situation. Contact should then be made with the Force property Officer, Central Secure Stores for advice.

2.4 Movement of property from the Property Store

2.4.1 When an officer needs to remove property from the store for enquiries, testing, court, return to owner etc. the following action will be taken:

- (a) The Property Officer will enter on the property record, using the booking out function, details of the officer to whom the property is booked to and the reason for removal.
- (b) The officer and the Property Officer will jointly check the seal numbers; a signature will also be obtained from the officer.

2.4.2 When property is returned to the store, the Property Officer will update the property record as appropriate.

2.5 Reminders for Outstanding Seized Property.

N.B: Officers must respond via the property system and not by e-mail.

2.5.1 Initial Reminders.

- (a) After 28 days there will be a computer system generated reminder to the OIC requesting an update as to the current status of the investigation. There will also be an advisory e-mail sent to the OICs own account.
- (b) If the property is to be retained, details will be entered on the record.
- (c) If no response is received within 14 days, the Property Officer will refer the matter to the Supervisor of the OIC via the system. If the response is unsatisfactory (e.g. a request to retain without a supporting explanation), the Property Officer will reject the request and return to the OIC for further information.

2.5.2 Subsequent Reminders.

- (a) Subsequent reminders will be generated to the OIC based on the response to the previous reminder.

2.6 **Return of Property.**

2.6.1 Found Property

Found property can either be returned where the owner has been identified, as in paragraph 1.8 above or to the finder if property has not been claimed within six weeks. It is up to the finder to contact the Property Officer to claim the property and arrange to collect it.

2.6.2 Seized Property

- (a) Property can either be booked out to a police officer for return to the owner, or by the Property Officer on the written or electronic authority of the OIC.
- (b) Notification to the owner:
 - (i) The Property Officer will send a letter to the owner of the property advising them to make contact to arrange for collection of their property within 28 days.
 - (ii) If no response is received to the initial letter, a second class recorded delivery letter will be sent to the owner advising them to collect their property within 28 days, and that failure to do so will result in the disposal of the property in accordance with the Police (Property) Act 1897.
 - (iii) If no reply is received, property will be disposed of by the Property Officer one month after the initial 28 days in accordance with Paragraph 2.7 below.

2.6.3 Documenting return of property

- (a) Property that is to be returned to its owner must be booked out on the system as 'Returned to Owner'.
- (b) All items for return must be individually listed on Form WG586.
- (c) Upon handing the property back to the owner, Form WG586 must be signed by the recipient to evidence the handover.
- (d) The return of jewellery will be arranged and **witnessed** by the Property Officer, in conjunction with one other police employee.
- (e) The property record will then be finalised accordingly.

Under no circumstances will a record be finalised until Form WG586 is received.

2.7 **Disposal of Property**

2.7.1 Property can be disposed of in the following circumstances:

(a) Seized Property

- (i) Where written or electronic authority has been given by the OIC to return detained property but the owner fails to collect as in paragraph 2.6.2 above.

- (ii) Where a case has been finalised and having exhausted all reasonable courses of action to establish ownership, no owner has been traced.
- (iii) Where the owner has disclaimed property and the OIC has endorsed its disposal.

(b) Found Property

- (i) Where found property is more than 6 weeks old and has not been claimed by either the owner or finder.

If there is any doubt concerning disposal, advice should be sought from the Force Property Officer.

2.7.2 Disposal of property placed in the binning system

- (a) The bin will be emptied by the OCU Property Officer on a regular basis, and the items will be disposed of locally.

2.7.3 Methods of Disposal

- (a) Drugs - Once drugs are authorised for destruction as per Procedure D7, they should be transported to the Central Secure Store with a completed Form WG519. In all cases the Force Property Officer must be contacted to ensure the drugs can be accommodated. This is particularly important if the seizure involves large quantities of cannabis plant, for which bulk storage can, at times be limited.
- (b) Jewellery - All Jewellery will be forwarded to the Central Secure Store for disposal with forms WG518.
- (c) Other Items - All other items will be disposed of by way of auction (see paragraph 2.9 below) unless they are deemed to be of no value in which case they will be disposed of locally.

2.7.4 Transfer to Police Use or Charitable Purposes

In certain circumstances, where property for which an owner cannot be traced and has been in police possession for at least 12 months, or has been disclaimed, arrangements can be made for transfer to police use or donation for charitable purposes. In all cases advice should be sought from the Force Property Officer at the Central Secure Store. All property records will be updated with the method of disposal.

2.8 Finalisation and Disposal of Seized Money

Note - It is the responsibility of the Property Officer to ensure that all money retained in the Miscellaneous Holding Account is eventually disposed of. No record should be closed until instructions to dispose have been received and actioned, and the receipt reference has been recorded on the system.

2.8.1 Money retained in original format

The return of any money that has been retained in its original form will be at the direction of the Crime Manager and returned in accordance with paragraph 3.2 below.

2.8.2 Banked Money

On receipt of written or electronic authority from the OIC in respect of seized money, following the identification of an owner of found money, or where a finder claims found money which has been banked:

- (a) The Property Officer will check the property record to verify that a refund has not already been made.
- (b) Amounts up to £200 - The Property Officer will complete a WA1 Expenses Form, entering the payment details in the 'Other Expenses' Section, including details of when the money was banked. The completed form together with a property print out will be sent to OCU Finance.
- (c) Amounts over £200 - The Property Officer will complete a cheque request form number FIN AP 11.2. The cheque request form together with a property print out will be forwarded to OCU Finance. The Property Officer will take and retain a copy of the FIN AP 11.2 as a receipt, and close the record.
The one exception to this is where a payment is made to a third party for example a relative or a solicitor. In such cases a receipt should still be obtained. The record should not be closed until the receipt is received.
- (d) In all cases, where seized money is to be paid out, a copy of the written authority of the OIC to return it will be forwarded with the paperwork.
- (e) The computer record must be updated accordingly.
- (f) In all cases, the OCU Finance in conjunction with the Property Officer will make payment to the owner. Following a cash payment, a receipt will be obtained and forwarded to the Property Officer to enable the record to be finalised. Where payment is made by cheque through the post, a receipt will not be required.
- (g) In the case of a cash payment, if no receipt is received within 28 days of the initial papers being forwarded to OCU Finance, the Property Officer should inform the Business Manager for further investigation.

Under no circumstances will the computer record be finalised until authority for disposal has been received.

2.8.3 [Money to be transferred into the Police Property Act Fund or other Fund](#)

When the OIC has given written or electronic authority that seized money is to be transferred into other funds the following procedure will apply:

- (a) The OCU Property Officer will complete Form WG 401 to include:
 - (i) Property record and crime reference numbers.
 - (ii) Amount banked/amount to be transferred (if different).
 - (iii) Date banked.
 - (iv) To which Fund to be transferred.
 - (v) Copy of any Forfeiture Order.
- (b) The completed Form WG401 should be forwarded to the OCU Finance, and a copy of the paperwork will be retained and filed as the receipt.
- (c) The OCU Property Officer will update the computer and close the record.

2.9 Auctions

- (a) Property Officers will be responsible for disposing of property to Auction.
- (b) Property that is authorised for disposal, for which there is no known owner and is of saleable quality can be disposed of through the Auction.

- (c) Property being sent to Auction must be removed from bags and the seals destroyed, sorted according to value and listed on Form WG518 using the Property Computer.
- (d) The Auctioneers collect all property on a prearranged day every month. Details are circulated to Business Managers. In the event of OCUs being unable to supply property, the Auctioneers should be notified as soon as possible.
- (e) The Auctioneers will check and agree the property against the prepared lists on Forms WG518. The Auctioneers will sign the forms, and take the top copy with the property. The Property Officer will retain a second copy of Forms WG518, and send a third copy to the Force Property Officer at the Central Secure Store.
- (f) Adequate records must be kept of all property disposed of at auction, so that the proceeds of the sale of detained property are not disposed of until they have remained in police possession for twelve months.

3. OCU FINANCE.

3.1 Seized Money

- 3.1.1 If there is no authority to retain the cash in its original format beyond 7 days, it will be banked by the Finance Officer. The seal will be broken, and in the presence of a 2nd person the cash will be counted, and all details entered onto a WA72. A copy will be forwarded immediately to the Property Officer to update the record.

Cash can only be retained in its original format if so authorised by the Crime Manager (or an officer of Chief Inspector rank or higher). The OIC, when creating the record, should print the authority to retain the cash via the 'PRINT MEMORANDUM' box on the computer system. This should then be signed by the Crime Manager and forwarded to the Property Officer for retention. Renewal of the authorisation should be monthly (see below).

- 3.1.2 Retained in original form

- (a) The OCU Finance will verify that the written authority of the Crime Manager has been given for the money to be retained in its original form.
- (b) Where money is to be retained, it should be lodged in the Finance Office safe.
- (c) The authority to retain should be forwarded promptly to the OCU Property Officer.
- (d) The authority to retain such monies will be reviewed on a monthly basis by the OCU Property Officer.

3.2 Found Money.

- 3.2.1 All found money received in OCU Finance will be banked within a week.

3.3 Banking.

- 3.3.1 Where the OIC has given authority for seized money to be banked, or where found money has been received, it will be lodged in the Finance Office safe until the next banking is undertaken.

- 3.3.2 When banking is prepared, two people, who should open the bag together and agree the contents to the amount shown on the property print out, should sign for the sealed bag from the safe.
- 3.3.3 The money will be paid into the Police Receipt Suspense Account. A separate bank paying-in slip should be used for banking this money. The paying-in slip should clearly indicate that this money is to be coded as follows:
- (a) Seized money - 1XXB Y24 B3130 S0000 VP791.
 - (b) Seized drug money – 1XXB Y23 B3130 S0000
 - (c) Found money - 1B18 224 93112 00000
- 3.3.4 The property print out should be retained and attached to the office copy of the WA72 Banking Analysis form.
- 3.3.5 A copy of the WA72 should be forwarded to the OCU Property Officer to update the computer record.

3.4 Finalisation and Disposal of Money.

- 3.4.1 For banked seized money, (except drug money), which has been authorised in writing/electronic means by the OIC either for return to the owner or for transfer to another Fund, and found money where the owner or finder wishes to claim it, disposal will be as follows:

3.4.2 Amounts up to £200

On receipt of form WA1 with a copy of the property record attached and in respect of seized money, a copy of the written instructions from the OIC, the OCU Finance will check the details and arrange for the payment to be authorised.

- (a) Amounts of up to £100 can, if required, be paid out in cash through the Disbursement Account. The OCU Finance in consultation with the OCU Property Officer will arrange subsequent payment to the owner. Where payment is to be made in cash, the owner shall be advised to attend the OCU and produce suitable identification e.g. either a passport, driving licence, accompanied by a recent bill showing their name and address.

Form WG 586 must be endorsed with details of the identification produced, signed by the owner and witnessed by either the OCU Finance or OCU Property Officer, and one other police employee. The completed WG586 will be passed to the OCU Property Officer.

- (b) Amounts over £100 and up to £200 can be paid by cheque drawn on the OCU Disbursement Account. The OCU Finance in consultation with the OCU Property Officer will arrange subsequent payment to the owner.
- (c) At the end of each month the OCU Finance must forward to the Accountancy Section, Finance Department a schedule detailing all crime/found money paid out during that month.

3.4.3 Amounts over £200

On receipt of a cheque request form number FIN AP 11.2, a copy of the property print out, and, in respect of seized money, a copy of the instructions of the OIC, the OCU Finance will check the details and arrange for the payment to be authorised.

- (a) After authorisation, the cheque request form only will be forwarded to the Accountancy Division of the Finance Department. The supporting documentation will be retained pending return of the cheque.
- (b) The Finance Department will raise the cheque and forward it to the OCU Finance. The payment will be made as per Paragraph 3.4.2. In all cases where the cheque is of high value i.e. in excess of £5,000 then the owner will be required to collect the cheque in person from the OCU and produce suitable identification.

3.4.4 Only in exceptional circumstances, i.e. where the owner has no bank account, or where it would create insurmountable difficulties/hardship for the payee, will amounts over £100 be paid out in cash.

3.5 Finalisation and Disposal of Drug Monies

All drug monies will be finalised in accordance with Procedure D07.

4. CENTRAL SECURE STORE.

4.1. The Central Secure Store (CSS) will only accept the following items for secure storage:-

- (a) Items of high value i.e.
 - (i) Cash over £5,000 where the Crime Manager has authorised retention in its original form.
 - (ii) Consignments of jewellery or other valuable property considered to be worth over £5,000.
 - (iii) Single items worth over £1,000.

In exceptional circumstances the CSS will accept valuable items below these levels. This should only arise where safe keeping facilities on OCUs are temporarily full or the total value of items held on an OCU exceeds the insured limits for the safe.

- (b) Drugs
 - (i) drugs that have been tested at the Forensic Services Unit (FSU) laboratory and endorsed with a laboratory reference number.
 - (ii) 'high value' drugs
 - (iii) drugs that have been authorised for destruction
- (c) Jewellery that has been authorised for disposal by way of Auction.

4.2 Receiving Property

4.2.1 Items of cash, jewellery or drugs received for secure storage will be entered into the appropriate safe register. The depositing officer will sign the safe register to evidence the handover of the property. The CSS will assume responsibility for the property, i.e. sending out reminders, finalising records etc.

4.2.2 Movement of Drugs

Drugs will only be moved between locations using the cash in transit system, after advice has been given by the OIC as to the extent of the security arrangements necessary.

4.2.3 Drugs from Forensic Services Unit (FSU)

Drugs will be collected from the FSU by the Force Property Officer and taken to the CSS where they will be stored for court purposes, or until their disposal. Drugs in respect of the G to M OCUs will be returned for local storage and ease of access for Court.

2.4 Storage of Drugs

Drugs are stored at the CSS under the reference number allocated by the FSU. It is important that this reference is recorded on the property record and quoted when requesting drugs from the store or when notifying the Force Property Officer that the drugs can be destroyed.

4.2.5 Jewellery

Form WG518 will be completed using the property system detailing all the items contained in the sealed bag which must be forwarded with the property. The Force Property Officer will retain this list in order to check the contents of the bag in the event that the bag has to be opened for valuation or disposal.

If jewellery is received at the CSS without the WG518, the OIC will be requested to provide this immediately. Failure to do this will result in the OIC having to attend the CSS and open the sealed bag in the presence of the Force Property Officer. Together they will agree the contents of the bag and prepare the necessary documentation. The bag will then be resealed and the new seal number recorded as appropriate.

4.3 Movement of Property

4.3.1 Required by police officers for enquiries/court

Officers requiring property from the CSS for court or for return to the owner, will where possible give advance notice to the Force Property Officer. The Force Property Officer will verify the identity of the officer receiving the property. The receiving officer will sign the safe register to evidence the handover of the property and complete the Property Record Book with the reasons for its removal.

4.3.2 Return to Owner

The CSS has no facilities for returning property to an owner. When the OIC has given written authority for the property to be returned, it will either be collected by an officer or returned to the appropriate OCU Property Store via the cash in transit system.

4.4 Destruction of Drugs

4.4.1 Once drugs are authorised for destruction as per Procedure D07, they will be transported to the CSS with Form WG519. The Force Property Officer will arrange for the disposal of drugs as per Procedure D7.

4.5 Auction of Jewellery

4.5.1 All Jewellery will be forwarded to the CSS for disposal along with forms WG518. On receipt of these instructions the Force Property Officer will deal with the property as follows:-

- (a) The jewellery will be delivered to the Auctioneers who will sign for receipt of all of the items individually.

- (b) Where jewellery, which has not previously been valued is considered by the Auctioneer to be of some value, the Auctioneer will record the value against the item on the accompanying list. A copy of the list of jewellery for disposal will be left with the Auctioneers and the Force Property Officer will retain a copy for audit purposes.

4.6 Auctions.

- 4.6.1 The Force Property Officer will be responsible for monitoring income received from sales. The Force Property Officer will attend Auctions and record sale prices against lot numbers. On receipt of income from the Auctioneers, checks will be undertaken to agree sale records to prices recorded at the auction.
- 4.6.2 Each month, the Force Property Officer will select a minimum of one OCU plus the CSS and obtain the relevant WG518 forms and reconcile them to the items appearing on the auction sale listing sheets. This will ensure that all items submitted by the OCU are either sold at auction, or returned as unsold.

5. SECURE RESTRICTED GROUPS.

- 5.1 Description - The Property Computer System has the facility to accommodate departments who wish to retain records in such a way that access to those records is restricted to nominated persons. Departmental Heads wishing to adopt this facility should, in the first instance, contact the Force Property Officer, at the Central Secure Store for advice.
- 5.2 Procedures - Having become a Secure Restricted Group, in order to maintain the security of the group, it will be the responsibility of a named person from the Department to manage details of the personnel so nominated. This will include maintaining details of:
 - (a) The name and personal (collar) number of nominated officers
 - (b) The date an officer will be joining/leaving the Department. This information to be advised at least 1 week before the transfer date. Any live records that have been created by an officer transferring out of the group should have a new OIC from the department attached to that record to ensure it remains secure.
- 5.3 This information must be supplied by e-mail to the ICT Helpdesk to allow the appropriate action to be taken. Failure to make this notification will result in restricted records being accessible Force wide.



CHIEF CONSTABLE

Version	Date	Reason for Change	Amended/Agreed by.
1.0	19/11/2009	New policy.	New Force policy approved by CC Sims
1.1	24/04/2012	<p>Policy amended as follows with included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > policy reference, > signature of Chief Constable, > version control. <p>N.B. policy is currently subject to review and all enquiries should be conducted with the author/contact as indicated on the front page should further clarification be required as to the information held.</p>	Martin Keating – Force Policy Coordinator

APPENDIX A.

Hierarchy of Property Responsibilities

Officer in the Case (OIC)

- Familiarise with Policies P17 and P18 – Property Procedures
- Create initial record (usually seized property)
- Ensure integrity of procedures regarding booking in/out of property from overnight secure storage
- Manage progress of the case
- Timely response to property reminders via the property system
- Authorise/obtain authority for disposal of property

Operations Centre Staff

- Familiarise with Policies P17 and P18 – Property Procedures
- Create initial record (usually lost or found property)
- Check if the property is identifiable
- Identifiable property notify the owner
- Update the 'comments box' in the record with the action taken

Property Officer

- Familiarise with Policies P17 and P18 – Property Procedures
- Maintain security of Property Store at all times
- Day-to-day management of the property system on their OCU/Dept
- Update property system with property movements in and out of store
- Transfer property from holding store(s) to Property Store
- Identify 'missing' property in the holding store(s) and set seals as missing
- Send supervisors property reminder for oic's who have failed to respond to their reminders
- Authorise/decline request for a change of oic.
- Authorise/decline requests for further report dates requested by officers for property and seal numbers.
- Arrange/manage transfer of property from the property store to other locations. E.g. WMP Central Secure Store
- Manage disposal of property that has been authorised by the oic, for return, destruction or sale inline with force policy.
- Manage disposal of found property that has not been claimed.
- Return found bank cards etc to issuer to trace owner if contact could not be made by Ops Centre Staff.
- Maintain liaison with OCU Business Manager in order to identify problems with non-compliance with property management procedures
- Assistance in training property users on using the property system.

Supervisory Officer

- Familiarise with Policies P17 and P18 – Property Procedures
- Manage/deal with system generated e-mails relating to non-response by OIC to property reminders
- Monitor OIC property records

Business Manager

- Familiarise with Policies P17 and P18 – Property Procedures
- Manage and support Property Officer
- Conduct/manage regular audit of Property Store and storage facilities
- Maintain liaison with OCU Property Officer, in order to identify problems with non-compliance with property management procedures
- Produce and action management reports, utilising 'Data-viewer' system

Operations Manager (Superintendent)

- Familiarise with Policies P17 and P18 – Property Procedures
- Maintain overall responsibility for property management at OCU/Department level
- Ensure compliance with Force policy, by all members of staff
- Create/manage 'discretionary' local policy for property management; in line with Force policy. E.g. Number of requests/days allowed for property retention