



College of Policing

The Code of Ethics – Summary

1. The College of Policing developed the Code of Ethics on behalf of every member of the policing profession of England and Wales.
2. The work was carried out by the College's Integrity Programme in association with the national policing lead for Ethics and the national policing lead for Professional Standards and a range of key stakeholders.
3. The main components of the Code are sets of principles and standards of professional behaviour.

Policing principles

- Accountability
- Fairness
- Honesty
- Integrity
- Leadership
- Objectivity
- Openness
- Respect
- Selflessness

Standards of professional behaviour

- Honesty and integrity
- Authority, respect and courtesy
- Equality and diversity
- Use of force
- Orders and instructions
- Duties and responsibilities
- Confidentiality
- Fitness for work
- Conduct
- Challenging and reporting improper conduct

4. The nine policing principles originate from the 'Principles of Public Life' published by the Committee on Standards in Public Life in 1995, as these continue to reflect public expectations.
5. The ten standards of professional behaviour originate from the Police (Conduct) Regulations 2012 and from the Police Staff Council Joint Circular 54. In the Code the wording of the standards has been adapted so that it applies to everyone. Where something applies solely to police officers, this is made clear.
6. The combination of policing principles and standards of professional behaviour encourages consistency between what people aspire to and what they do.
7. The Code provides supplementary information on how to use it to guide ethical decision making (using the National Decision Model) and how breaches of the Code will be dealt with. Specific advice is given on (a) the types of possible actions for managing unprofessional behaviour, and (b) relevant considerations in determining whether behaviour reflects the principles and standards in the Code.

Code of Ethics: Supporting Documents

8. It is made clear that breaches of the Code of Ethics will not always involve misconduct or require disciplinary proceedings. Breaches will range from relatively minor shortcomings in conduct, performance or attendance, through to gross misconduct. Different procedures exist according to the type of unprofessional behaviour or misconduct alleged. For example, relatively minor breaches of the Code will normally be dealt with locally (eg, by a line manager) whereas any breaches that are sufficiently serious to require formal action will be dealt with under the existing disciplinary regimes for police officers and staff.
9. The Code is different from anything that has been available before. For example having a Code of Ethics brings the police service in line with other professions. It also
 - combines policing principles and standards of behaviour in a single document, thereby replacing a plethora of existing material
 - is inclusive, applying to everyone in policing, whereas previous documents tended to relate to police officers only (eg, the Oath of Attestation and the conduct and performance regulations)
 - is a guide for day-to-day ethical behaviour and decision making, unlike the current misconduct regimes, which have a disciplinary focus.

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