



The Code of Ethics – Changes between consultation version (October 2013) and draft version to forces (April 2014)

Structure

1. The basic structure of the draft version sent to forces on 23 April remains close to that of the consultation version. This is because of the widespread support for basing the Code of Ethics on:
 - i. the 'Principles of Public Life' with the added principles of 'fairness' and 'respect'; and
 - ii. the existing Conduct and Performance Regulations (for police officers) and Police Staff Council Joint Circular 54 (for police staff).
2. The differences between the basic structure of each version are outlined below.

Consultation Version (October 2013)	Draft Version to Forces (April 2014)
	Contents
	Foreword
	Introduction
Contents	The Code
1. Overview	1. Preamble
Introduction	1.1 Introduction
Who the Code applies to	1.2 Who the Code applies to
Responsibilities	1.3 Responsibilities
2. Standards of Professional Behaviour	1.4 Status of the Code
Introduction	2. Policing principles
1. Honesty and integrity	2.1 Doing the right thing in the right way
2. Authority, respect and courtesy	3. Standards of Professional Behaviour
3. Equality and diversity	3.1 Introduction
4. Use of force	1. Honesty and integrity
5. Orders and instructions	2. Authority, respect and courtesy
6. Work and responsibilities	3. Equality and diversity
7. Confidentiality	4. Use of force
8. Fitness for work	5. Orders and instructions
9. Conduct	6. Duties and responsibilities

10. Challenging and reporting improper conduct	7. Confidentiality
3. Policing principles	8. Fitness for work
Doing the right thing in the right way	9. Conduct
Policing principles	10. Challenging and reporting improper conduct
4. National Decision Model	Supplementary Notes
	4. National Decision Model
	4.1 Making ethical decisions
	5. When behaviour does not meet expectations
	5.1 Breaches of the Code
	5.2 Guidance to members of the public

Significant Changes

3. Changes between the consultation version (October 2013) of the Code and the draft version released to forces (April 2014) were made as a result of feedback on specific points and in response to requests for greater clarity in the structure and wording.
4. The most significant changes are as follows.

Summary

- The Code of Ethics as a whole has undergone extensive wordsmithing, as well as improvements to the numbering system.
- It is now more obvious which parts of the document constitute 'The Code' and which parts are supplementary to the Code. For example, 'The Code' consists of a preamble, the policing principles and the standards of professional behaviour. Information on the National Decision Model and dealing with breaches of the code are provided to support the Code.
- The new section on 'Breaches of the Code' was created in response to numerous requests for clarity in the Code over how 'breaches' will be handled. Respondents acknowledged that talking about 'breaches of the code' could have negative associations with 'breaches of the regulations' and formal disciplinary action. The Code overcomes this by emphasising that breaches (ie, behaviour that doesn't meet expectations) can range from relatively minor shortcomings in conduct, performance or attendance through to instances of gross misconduct and corruption, and that different procedures exist to deal with them.

Policing Principles

- The Policing Principles have been repositioned so that they come before the Standards. Respondents to the consultation version had argued that principles should always come

before standards of behaviour because they reflect an individual's personal beliefs and aspirations that in turn serve to guide behaviour.

- In consultation with the Committee on Standards for Public Life, the wording of the policing principles has been made as short and simple as possible.
- The wording in the consultation version of the principle of 'selflessness' had proved to be controversial. Many respondents (particularly police officers) took exception to the idea of putting policing before their family. Others accepted that this was not the intention of the wording, but nevertheless encouraged the rewriting of the principle. In line with the other principles, the wording of this one has been kept simple (ie, 'You act in the public interest').

Standards of Professional Behaviour

- The 'Introduction' has been amended to make it clear that whilst the standards originate from the Police (Conduct) Regulations 2012 (for police officers) and Police Staff Council Joint Circular 54 (for police staff), they are not identical. This was necessary to make the standards applicable to everyone, and takes account of the widespread support for using the "I will ..." format.
- Whilst there was a positive response to having examples included in relation to each standard, it was felt that the consultation version was sometimes unclear as to what were examples only and what elements of the standard were compulsory. Thus, the examples have been put in boxes to keep them separate, whereas the fixed components are normally prefaced by the words: 'According to this standard you must ...'.
- Statements in the April 2014 version are more strongly worded than in the consultation version (eg, 'The use of illegal drugs will not be condoned' has become 'you must not use illegal drugs').
- Statements in the April 2014 version are often shorter or sharper than in the consultation version (eg, 'You must not disclose information to unauthorised recipients – this includes requests from family or friends and approaches by private investigators' has become 'You must not disclose information, on or off duty, to unauthorised recipients').
- To avoid confusion and ambiguity, some standards now differentiate between the elements that apply to police officers only and those that apply to everyone.
- The Code now includes a number of new subsections. For example, the Standard of Professional Behaviour 6 Duties and Responsibilities now includes subsections on 'Associations' and 'Political activity – police officers only'.
- The Standard of Professional Behaviour 10 Challenging and Reporting Improper Conduct was considered so important to policing that two new, specific and strongly worded statements have been added at paragraphs 10.6 and 10.7

- The police service will not tolerate discrimination or victimisation or any disadvantageous treatment against anyone who makes a valid report of unprofessional behaviour or wrongdoing.
- Given the overriding duty to report wrongdoing, genuine concerns in this respect can never be deemed to bring the police service into disrepute.

General Changes

5. More general information relating to changes in the Code is described in the table below.

Draft Version to Forces (April 2014)	Main Changes
Foreword	By the Chair of the College of Policing.
Introduction	By the Chief Executive of the College of Policing.
The Code	
1. Preamble	Change of title to avoid confusion (ie, that 'overview' may have meant 'executive summary').
1.1 Introduction	Minor changes only.
1.2 Who the Code applies to	Minor changes only.
1.3 Responsibilities	Greater focus on chief officers and other leaders.
1.4 Status of the Code	New section. (Note that this will change to final wording once the Code is issued as a code of practice.)
2. Policing principles	The Policing Principles have been repositioned so that they come before the Standards.
2.1 Doing the right thing in the right way	Minor changes only. Plus simplified wording of individual principles.
3. Standards of Professional Behaviour	
3.1 Introduction	Amended wording. The wording of the table setting out the standards has minor changes only.
1. Honesty and integrity	Clearer structure and wording; new paragraph (1.3) directed towards senior officers/managers; greater clarity around 'covert policing'.
2. Authority, respect and courtesy	Clearer structure and wording; new subsection on 'relationships' to give emphasis to the particular risks posed to the police service by inappropriate behaviour.

Code of Ethics: Supporting Documents

3. Equality and diversity	Clearer structure and wording; increased number of examples. The section on 'Use of Discretion' has been moved to SPB5 (more suitable).
4. Use of force	Clearer structure and wording.
5. Orders and instructions	Clearer structure and wording to differentiate between the elements of the standard that apply to police officers only (ie, lawful orders and police regulations) and those that apply to everyone (ie, instructions).
6. Duties and responsibilities	Clearer structure and wording; introduction of 3 new subsections – business interests, associations and political activity.
7. Confidentiality	Clearer structure and wording; clearer section on social media.
8. Fitness for work	Clearer structure and wording.
9. Conduct	Clearer structure and wording; differentiation between the elements of the standard that apply to police officers only and those that apply to everyone else.
10. Challenging and reporting improper conduct	Clearer structure and wording.
Supplementary Notes	New heading.
4. National Decision Model	
4.1 Making ethical decisions	While many respondents felt the NDM belonged in the Code, they asked that the wording be clearer to show how it worked alongside the principles and SPB, hence the final version has a clearer structure and wording.
5. When behaviour does not meet expectations	New section inserted as a response to a significant number of requests.
5.1 Breaches of the Code	Specific advice is given on (1) the types of possible actions for managing unprofessional behaviour, and (2) relevant considerations in determining whether behaviour reflects the principles and standards in the Code.
5.2 Guidance to members of the public	A new section that provides brief guidance to members of the public who may wish to report unprofessional behaviour by someone in policing.

© **College of Policing Limited (2014)**

Publication date: July 2014

You may re-use this information (excluding logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Non-Commercial Government Licence. To view this licence visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/non-commercial-government-licence/version/2/ or email psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

Where third party material has been identified, permission from the respective copyright holder must be sought.

This publication is available at <http://www.college.police.uk/en/21705.htm>

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at:
College of Policing Limited, Leamington Road, Ryton-on-Dunsmore, Coventry, CV8 3EN

All other enquiries about this publication should be sent to contactus@college.pnn.police.uk

College of Policing Limited is a company registered in England and Wales, with registered number 8235199 and VAT registered number 152023949. Our registered office is at College of Policing Limited, Leamington Road, Ryton-on-Dunsmore, COVENTRY CV8 3EN.



Follow us
[@CollegeofPolice](https://twitter.com/CollegeofPolice)