

# Using APP and guidelines

Information about APP, where it applies and the legal status.

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Authorised Professional Practice (APP) and guidelines provide guidance to everyone in policing. Both are developed and owned by the College of Policing and are subject to public consultations and quality assurance processes.

## What is APP?

APP outlines the actions everyone in policing need to take to ensure a consistent level of service is provided to the public. APP is usually focused on providing guidance on a specific crime type or police business area, for example mental health, roads policing or civil emergencies.

APP is developed by a working group of College staff and subject matter experts from policing. APP allows policing professionals to:

- instantly access authorised guidance
- easily link from one area of APP to another
- quickly obtain the required information
- be confident their approach is consistent within and across forces

In APP we use wording to reflect the strength of the guidance given, using:

- 'must' where there is relevant legislation
- 'should' if we have strong research evidence and/or experts agree that a particular approach is most effective

APP is developed and released continuously. It is reviewed and updated to reflect current legislation, recommended practice and changes within policing.

## What are guidelines?

Guidelines focus on the actions required to improve police capabilities and skills, for example responding to risk, problem-oriented policing and effective supervision.

Our guidelines are based on a review of the research evidence about what works which is supplemented by insights from policing.

Guidelines are developed by college staff working with a committee. The committee is made up of subject matter experts from policing, academia and partner organisations. This committee reviews the evidence and helps to develop this into practical guidelines for policing.

## Do police have to follow APP and guidelines?

APP and guidelines are created with and for policing and are the strongest guidance that the College issues. They are often used by official inspection and complaint organisations, public inquiries and in judicial proceedings as a basis for their reviews.

We expect everyone in policing to take into account the relevant guidance when carrying out their duties. APP and guidelines are, however, not mandated and officers and staff should use professional discretion when applying them. There could be valid operational, ethical or situational reasons for doing something differently. It is this clear rationale that is required to justify not complying with standards. A force or individual would bear the liability for the risk and consequences of that decision.

## How to access current and previous APP and guidelines

You can browse our full list of APP and guidelines online.

- [Go to APP](#)
- [Go to guidelines](#)

APP can be updated at any time, so checking regularly is recommended. We record all changes to APP in our [change log](#).

If you would like to request a copy of decommissioned APP or guidelines that are no longer available online, please email the What Works Standards team at [whatworksstandards@college.police.uk](mailto:whatworksstandards@college.police.uk). Any queries you have related to APP or guidelines, can be sent to this email.

## Have your say

If you would like to receive updates on APP and guidelines or help to shape new guidance, email the What Works Standards team to join our stakeholder contact list at

[whatworksstandards@college.police.uk](mailto:whatworksstandards@college.police.uk)

## Tags

APP