

Have you got what it takes?

Working with the private sector

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Important facts

The private sector can help to deliver police support services better and at lower cost. Every pound saved means more money for the frontline, putting officers on the streets. Police forces are already using the private sector to provide staff for control rooms, custody centres and investigations – releasing officers for frontline duties.

Police forces can transform the way they deliver services and improve outcomes for the public by using the innovation and specialist skills found in the private sector, and taking advantage of, for example, the discounts available through bulk purchasing.

Business partnering arrangements do not change the status of policing as a public service. The police will still be answerable to the people through elected police and crime commissioners (PCCs). Chief constables keep operational control under business partnering arrangements. It is only the way services are delivered that changes.

We do not plan to let private companies carry out police activities which need warranted powers (such as searching premises or seizing property). However, some privately-employed detection and escort officers are able to do so under laws passed by the previous Government.

Private sector staff might be involved in supporting police operations and patrols, but it will still be police officers themselves and police community support officers patrolling neighbourhoods.

Background

Strategic partnerships between the police and the private sector

The police already use the private sector in areas such as human resources, finance, procurement, custody, and call handling. Setting up partnering arrangements with business helps forces to streamline existing and new contracts, and to improve support services so that the communities the police serve will feel the benefits.

A number of forces have already set up significant business partnering arrangements.

- **Cleveland Police and Police Authority put a range of office functions out to tender in 2009. Steria were the successful bidder and the contract was signed in June 2010. Reliance is the strategic partner of Cleveland Police Authority, responsible for managing custody, forensic medical examination services, managing the identity suite, managing bail, and private finance initiative services, including managing services and property in four Cleveland Police district offices. These services have been provided by Reliance since July 2007.**

- **Avon and Somerset Police and Police Authority are part of a joint venture with IBM, Taunton and Deane Council and Somerset Council for providing a range of office functions. The joint venture was originally tendered for in December 2005 and the contract was signed in December 2007.**
- **Cheshire Police and Police Authority have a contract for shared services support with Capgemini. Cheshire and Northamptonshire Police and their police authorities are now working together to develop this shared service. The procurement notice was published in October 2009 and the contract let in December 2010.**
- **Lincolnshire Police and Police Authority launched a procurement process on 30 March 2011 to find a partner for transforming their business and delivering services. The contract was signed on 22 February 2012.**
- **Surrey and West Midlands Police and Police Authorities launched a procurement process for a business partner on 24 January. The procurement process will finish in spring 2013. You can find more information about this work on each police authority's website.**

More information

Isn't this just policing on the cheap?

No. This work does not cover activities which need warranted powers, such as seizing property. This is about making the parts of the police service that support frontline officers more effective.

Will the Government make business partnering through national frameworks compulsory?

Chief constables take the decision to involve the private sector, with approval from the police authorities or, from November 2012, elected PCCs. We do not plan to privatise policing in England and Wales. Policing will still be a public service, which answers to the people through elected PCCs.

What is the role of the Home Office in business partnering for police?

We are supporting forces that ask for help to boost their commercial activity (through, for example, entering into strategic partnerships such as the ones described earlier) and set up arrangements that represent value for money for the taxpayer. We will continue to work with West Midlands Police and Surrey Police to support their efforts to improve their service while reducing costs. This support will include technical and commercial support for procurement and a financial contribution. We will also work with the forces to share the learning from this process with the wider service.

From the latest HMIC report, *Policing in Austerity*:

- Many support services (such as finance, HR, fleet management, procurement and estates management) involve processes and approaches which are not locally specific, or specific to policing at all. Therefore adopting industry best practice, and driving economies through collaboration and/or partnering with the private sector are all approaches which forces can pursue to minimise the cost of these functions...
- Partnering and transformational approaches are allowing forces to access a range of assets held by private sector partners: from ICT and potential capital investment to skills, business processes and innovative approaches which could be applied to policing.

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