

Have you got what it takes?

Working with the College of Policing

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Important facts

A new police professional body, the College of Policing, representing officers at all ranks and police staff, will be in place by December 2012, as the National Policing Improvement Agency is phased out.

The College of Policing's mission will be to safeguard the public and support the fight against crime by promoting professionalism in policing. It will work in the interest of the public by setting and improving the standards for excellence in policing, including recruitment, promotion, training and assessment. It will also help officers and staff to bring greater professional discretion and judgement to their duties.

Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) will have an important role to play on the College of Policing board. The board will have an equal balance of policing representatives and others, including PCCs from non-policing backgrounds. It will have an independent chair. The College of Policing's governance will be based on principles of openness, accountability and transparency. PCC representatives on the board will participate in setting the strategic direction and tone for the college, monitoring performance, and ensuring proper financial management.

Background

The College of Policing is a key element in the wider police reform programme, which includes the introduction of PCCs and greater local accountability. The Home Secretary announced the creation of a professional body for policing in December 2011, saying,

'The police service must be radically reformed in order to meet growing challenges and deliver the most effective service possible.'

At the core of this reform will be a new College of Policing, which will be representative of all officer and staff ranks and led by the service itself, to ensure that officers have the right training and skills for the future.

Together with directly elected Police and Crime Commissioners and the new National Crime Agency our reform agenda will improve policing, delivering better value for the taxpayer, and give the public a stronger voice.'

While crime has fallen consistently over a considerable period of time, crime levels remain too high. The challenge for the service is to continue to reduce crime to make communities feel safe, and to achieve this through a more efficient use of resources and budgets. PCCs will have to work collaboratively with forces to deal with these challenges.

The training that officers and staff receive, the standards they uphold, and the skills and qualifications they develop will all be central to the service's ability to protect the public and fight crime. The College of Policing will be responsible for developing the professional model for policing in the 21st century. PCCs will have a key role in shaping that model through their representation on the College's board.

The ambition is to create a body that will operate independently of government. During the interim, while the necessary legislation is prepared, the aim is to establish a company with the intention of creating a statutory body. We expect the company to be operational before the NPIA closes (in December 2012), so functions and staff can transfer.

More Information

What is the timetable for closing down the National Policing Improvement Agency and setting up the College of Policing?

The wind-down of the agency is well under way, and a number of its responsibilities are in the process of transferring to successor organisations. This involves staff consultation and engagement with trade unions. We are aiming to start the transfer of staff to the College of Policing in November 2012, allowing the NPIA to close operationally by the end of 2012.

What will the College of Policing actually do?

It will protect the public interest by setting and maintaining first-class national standards in policing and using them to support the education and professional development of police officers and staff. It will provide and share evidence of best practice, and it will set and maintain the ethics and values that need to be embedded in a professional culture.

How can you be sure the new body won't duplicate existing roles, such as those of the IPCC, HMIC or Chief Constables?

The College of Policing's role will be to protect the public interest in policing through setting standards, supporting leadership and upholding accountability. It won't be inspecting anybody, and it won't handle complaints. Conduct issues will continue to be the responsibility of chief constables. Neither will the College of Policing duplicate the functions of staff associations, which will continue to represent the interests of their members.

How will the new body be funded?

Services transferring from the NPIA will move with their remaining spending allocations. This will mean that the service can continue to train and develop staff and officers until 2015, while the College of Policing becomes fully operational. It will be for the College to negotiate future funding with the Home Office as part of the Government's next Spending Review, depending on its business model.

The College of Policing and its partners

From the start the College of Policing will rely on constructive working relations with some key partners, which are likely to include Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC), police staff associations and unions, and PCCs.

As PCCs will be responsible for holding chief constables to account for their use of resources and how they meet development and training requirements, the relationship between the College of Policing and PCCs will be an important one, conducted through the PCC representatives on the College of Policing board.