

College of Policing: an introduction

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For a considerable period of time, crime has been falling and public confidence and satisfaction in policing have been rising. These successes are, to a large extent, a result of increased professionalism in the police service. Over the past 30 years, policing has come to see itself as a profession: a specialist and expert group of crime fighters who protect the public.

The police service is currently facing a series of challenges. These challenges range from the transformational change that forces need to make to deliver savings and reduce crime, to the increasing complexity of the threats to national security, public safety and public order.

These challenges cannot be met by relying on the existing structures at a national level in policing. That is why, in December, the Home Secretary announced that a new professional body would be created this year. The College of Policing will have a powerful mandate to enable the service to implement the standards it sets for training, development, skills and qualifications. This will ensure that the body, through the work it takes forward to develop professionalism, is able to provide maximum support to the service to meet the challenges it faces.

Representatives from the police service, including the Association of Chief Police Officers and the Superintendents' Association are working with the Home Office to create the College of Policing. This joint work is crucial: it is essential that the body represents the desires and aspirations of the police service. To reflect this, the Chief Executive of the professional body will be an experienced senior police officer.

It is expected that the College of Policing will operate independently of government. While the necessary legislation is prepared, it is expected that a company will be established in December with the intention of replacing it with a statutory body at a later stage. This arrangement will allow many of the necessary functions of the National Policing Improvement Agency to be continued until the statutory body is created.

During the interim, the College of Policing will focus on ensuring that police officers and police staff continue to develop the skills and abilities to fight crime and protect the public. It will do this by enhancing professional practice across the police service. It will be the means by which all those working in policing can have a stronger say in charting the future of the policing profession driven by evidence based practice. It will raise the professional status of police officers and police staff, allowing them to gain greater recognition and reward for accredited levels of expertise and allowing them to contribute to the development of policy in the various areas of specialism.

Specifically, the College of Policing will:

Protect the public interest: by promoting the values of effective policing; learning from and supporting improvement in policing; and maintaining ethics and values.

Set and enhance first-class national standards of professionalism to ensure excellence in operational policing: by developing a set of nationally agreed standards for officers and staff to attain; providing frameworks for standards to be tested and achievement rewarded; and by supporting national business areas.

Identify evidence of what works in policing and share best practice: by providing access to a body of knowledge that is informed by evidence-based research and best practice; continuing to develop an understanding of the evolving threats to public safety, the challenges of leading complex organisations and enable the service to develop the capabilities needed.

Support the education and professional development of police officers and staff: by developing and maintaining the national policing curriculum, assessment and accreditation frameworks; delivery of leadership and specialist training; accrediting and quality-assuring training providers; developing future leaders and expertise through effective talent management

Enable and motivate staff and partners to work together to achieve a shared purpose: by working with partners to make the best use of specialist knowledge; supporting desired behaviours and actions that embody the service's values; and by ensuring interoperability with partners and other sectors.

To deliver these objectives, the College of Policing will strengthen the links between the police service and other organisations. It will work with universities to share and develop the underlying evidence base for policing practice. It will work with other organisations, including with the private sector to ensure that, where appropriate, the police service is able to access the very best training from outside the police service. It will work closely with international partners, to ensure the police service is able to share and access the very best thinking from across the world.

The body will reflect a shift towards greater public accountability across a reformed national policing landscape. It will be chaired by someone independent of the police service and its board will have an equal balance of police and non-police representatives. Democratically elected police and crime commissioners will be represented on the board and the non-police service representatives will ensure the body serves the public interest. Operating in this way, the College of Policing will serve the public interest, enhancing the British model of policing by consent. This is a model for which the police service in England and Wales is admired right across the world. The College of Policing will help to create the best conditions to sustain that model.

There is no plan to require individual officers and staff to pay to be members of the College of Policing, for their training or to sit exams. These are issues which the statutory college may consider in the future.

The College of Policing will not:

- Issue any licence to practice policing;
- duplicate the roles other bodies play, like HMIC or the IPCC;
- be a rebranded National Policing Improvement Agency;
- investigate complaints or allegations of misconduct against police officers and staff. This will remain within the remit of the relevant police force;
- create a raft of bureaucratic guidance for the police service.

It will, however, play a vital role in the training and development of police officers and police staff in the future ensuring that they continue to retain the skills they need in order to fight crime and protect the public.

For more information about the College of Policing, go to the [Home Office website](#) or call the NPIA Transition Team on 020 7035 8448 or [send us an email](#).