

# Have you got what it takes?

To work in partnership



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### Important facts

The police cannot cut crime on their own – effective partnership working is essential. Police and crime commissioners (PCCs) need to work with other local leaders to improve outcomes for communities and make sure that local resources are used efficiently and effectively.

There are a range of partnerships, from those which deliver multi-agency case work to area-wide strategic boards. Where partnerships work well, they prevent duplication, reduce costs and tackle issues in a joined-up problem-solving approach.

PCCs and their community safety and criminal justice partners are under two duties to work together. These are broad and flexible but set a clear intention for strong partnership working.

PCCs are able to commission (contract) activities that contribute to preventing and reducing crime. They have flexibility to decide how to use their resources and may want to pool funding with local partners to get the most out of their funding.

Beyond some limited legal requirements on how certain partnerships should be organised, there is a great deal of local flexibility and space for new ideas and streamlining.

### More information

As well as their central policing role, PCCs have a role in cutting crime. They also have commissioning powers and funding to help support this. PCCs need to work with other local leaders in community safety and criminal justice across their force area, and balance differing needs in local areas and take advantage of joint working.

#### Working in partnership

The way in which partnerships fit together can often be complicated. Some areas have many overlapping partnerships that contribute towards community safety. These range from partnerships which deliver multi-agency case work to area-wide strategic boards.

There are existing arrangements that apply to community safety partnership working at district or unitary authority level, where five 'responsible authorities' are bound together under a legal duty to work together to prevent and cut crime. Although not statutory, local criminal justice boards (LCJBs) bring together criminal justice organisations at police force area level, in most areas, to support joint working.

Exactly how organisations work together is decided locally. Some areas have tried to root out duplication by agreeing to merge community safety partnerships (CSPs) (for example, Norfolk, Dorset and Nottinghamshire) or combine CSPs and the LCJB (for example, Gloucestershire and Cumbria) to form larger or single-force level partnerships that have links out to local partnership structures.

#### Duties to co-operate

The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 puts in place a flexible framework for working in partnership. This includes two related, reciprocal duties to co-operate which will support partnership working across community safety and criminal justice. Though the two duties are worded slightly differently, their aim is the same – to make sure that local leaders work together to achieve the most effective outcomes.

Although the duties do not apply to devolved functions in Wales, PCCs need to work with partners to consider how they can get the best results for their communities.

## Working in partnership with mainstream services

Many mainstream local services (such as local authority children's services) are tied into the existing partnership structures (often as responsible authorities on CSPs). However, PCCs and their teams will need to develop strong relationships and methods for collaboration (working together) with the full range of services that can help to cut crime.

## Local government

As well as a focused role in scrutinising (examining) the work of the PCC through police and crime panels, local authorities need to work closely with PCCs as partners. PCCs and their teams need to work with local government in the fight against crime. They will share an interest in improving a range of areas from community safety and youth justice to health and safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

## Health

There are a number of overlaps between policing and health issues. In some cases, health indicators can be indicative of local crime issues (for example violent crime, domestic or child abuse), while improving the health of a local population can achieve positive outcomes on crime. Heroin and crack users are, for example, responsible for around 45% of acquisitive crime (burglaries, robberies, shoplifting and theft), while 53% of all violent incidents are linked to alcohol. The police are also frequently involved in dealing with vulnerable people, including those experiencing mental ill health, who have committed no crime but who are in need of protection and appropriate care.

Developing strong local partnerships between PCCs and health and local authority services is therefore intrinsic to improving community safety. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 introduced significant changes to local and national health structures, including commissioning arrangements relating to offender health. A range of mechanisms, including Health and Wellbeing Boards and Crisis Care Concordat Groups, exist to facilitate local partnership working in this area. PCCs will need to develop a shared cause with health partners on a range of crime and health issues and to explore the best ways to assess the experiences of local communities and service users.

## Working in partnership with the public

PCCs are under a duty to consult victims of crime and antisocial behaviour and the wider community, and have their own approaches to understanding local needs. PCCs may use established methods for involving the public and understanding community concerns as well as more innovative digital approaches like social media.

# Duties to co-operate

The duties set out in the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 are deliberately broad and flexible to allow working arrangements to develop in a way that is most meaningful locally. This leaves room for new ideas. They aim to make sure that the investment and prioritisation decisions taken by PCCs and partners are made with a full understanding of the effects they have on their partners.

The community safety duty says that a PCC and the responsible authorities on a CSP must act in co-operation and, in carrying out their functions, 'have regard to' each others' priorities.

The legal 'responsible authorities' that make up community-safety partnerships are the police, local authority, fire and rescue authority, probation providers (including the National Probation Service) and health (Clinical Commissioning Groups in England and local health boards in Wales).

The criminal justice duty states that the PCC and criminal justice organisations must work together, 'so far as is appropriate', to 'provide an efficient and effective criminal justice system for the police area'.

The central group of criminal justice services represented on local criminal justice boards are the police, the Crown Prosecution Service, the probation and prison providers, youth justice services and the courts.