

# Have you got what it takes?

Working with other PCCs and forces



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### Important facts

Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) have a legal duty to collaborate (work together) where it is in the interests of the efficiency or effectiveness of their own or another police force.

Working together in this way is an important tool, allowing police forces to achieve savings and to deal more effectively with crimes that go beyond a single force's borders.

Collaboration agreements between police forces can also include other public sector organisations as well as the private sector.

PCCs need to collaborate to meet their responsibilities under the strategic policing requirement.

The Police (Collaboration: Specified Function) Order 2012 requires PCCs and their forces to collaborate in providing air support.

Collaborative working has increased over the last few years and all police forces now collaborate to tackle terrorism (through regional counter terrorism units and counter terrorism intelligence units) and organised crime (through regional organised crime units). But there are still opportunities to use collaboration to bring about further improvements.

### Background

Collaboration is an important tool for the police service to achieve cost savings while maintaining or improving services, and for making specialist services more effective by bringing them together. Collaboration is also necessary for the police to be able to deal effectively with the areas of crime that go beyond a single force's borders or are better served by specialist teams, for example, counter-terrorism and organised crime.

The structure of policing in England and Wales is based on independently run police forces with a clear set of local responsibilities. When there are unusual demands, police force boundaries do not stand in the way. But if forces want to set up longer-term joint working arrangements with each other, those arrangements need to be agreed and recorded properly in terms of:

- the business arrangements;
- how forces will be held to account; and
- any necessary changes to responsibilities that arise.

This is where collaboration agreements come in.

### Legal context

The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 placed duties on PCCs and chief

constables to keep opportunities to collaborate under review and to collaborate if it is in the interests of the efficiency or effectiveness of their own or another police force.

The 2011 Act also introduced measures to simplify the process for making collaboration agreements and to remove obstacles to effective collaboration. It did this by:

- replacing the requirement for two different sorts of collaboration agreement with a single agreement which both the PCC and the chief constable can make, and which can include others such as local authorities;
- removing the requirement to tell the Home Secretary about plans to set up large-scale collaborations;
- allowing specially designated police staff, such as custody officers and investigating officers to work in another force area under a collaboration agreement, and removing inconsistencies relating to the health and safety responsibilities of chief constables; and
- introducing a power for the Home Secretary to specify, by order, particular policing functions on which all forces must collaborate.

This allows a more planned approach to collaboration on functions which support important national priorities and on which a more consistent approach is needed.

# More information

## Types of collaboration

Collaboration can be about one or more of the following:

- Carrying out policing functions (force collaboration) which focuses on operational services (e.g., firearms or investigations) or operational support (e.g., dog training or forensics).
- The support by one policing body for another policing body (policing body collaboration).
- The support by a policing body for a police force maintained by another policing body (policing body and force collaboration).

These last two types of collaboration focus on support functions such as premises and equipment.

Collaborations can include non-police organisations. This allows forces to take advantage of the opportunities available for collaborating with others in the public and private sector.

There is no single 'one size fits all' model of collaboration that can be applied to every policing function in every part of the country. PCCs and chief officers will need to consider all possible models and decide on the most effective and most suitable for their circumstances.

## Governance

PCCs must hold their chief officers to account for the collaborations their force is involved in. They must also make arrangements for doing so jointly with the PCCs for the other forces involved.

## Collaboration with emergency services

There are many good examples of local joint working between the emergency services that are delivering efficiencies and service improvements. The Government has invested over £80 million since 2013 in local projects and the Emergency Services Working Group's 2014 report, 'National Overview of Collaboration', highlighted many examples of good practice.

The Government's expectation is that collaboration between emergency services should become the norm, and much more can be done to improve taxpayer value for money and the service to communities. That includes through shared back office services, combined buildings or vehicles, and joint response to incidents.

In September 2015, the Government consulted on a series of measures to transform the delivery of local fire and police services and drive greater collaboration between the police, fire and rescue and NHS ambulance services. Through the Policing and Crime Bill it will now bring forward legislation to:

- introduce a duty to collaborate on all three emergency services, to improve efficiency or effectiveness;
- enable PCCs to take on the functions of fire and rescue authorities (FRAs), where a local case is made;
- where a PCC takes on the responsibilities of their local FRA, further enabling him or her to create a single employer for police and fire staff;
- in areas where a PCC has not become responsible for fire and rescue services, enabling them to have representation on their local FRA with voting rights; and
- abolish the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority and give the Mayor of London direct responsibility for the fire and rescue service in London.

There are opportunities for emergency services collaboration to go further and faster and for PCCs to drive joint working that improves outcomes for communities and to provide more direct local accountability to the public. This legislation will help PCCs to overcome local barriers to collaboration and enable them to pursue ambitious reforms that improve local services.

## How does the duty to collaborate fit with local priorities?

Decisions around collaboration are mainly local decisions. However, the duty to collaborate is set out with the needs of all the potential participants in mind. If collaboration would provide the best outcome for a group of forces, an individual force should still pursue it, even if they do not expect to benefit directly. This makes sure that collaboration takes place wherever it is in the wider public's best interest.

## What if a PCC does not want to take part in collaboration?

PCCs have a duty to collaborate if it will bring about improvements to the service or will save money. Wherever possible, decisions about collaboration should be made locally. But if there is a strong case that forces are failing to make the best use of their resources and should be collaborating in particular ways, or where there is a need for greater consistency and co-ordination in delivering particular functions at the national level, the Home Secretary can direct them to do so.

## Further help

We have published guidance to help police forces and policing bodies to collaborate more easily and effectively. Further support is available through the Policing OnLine Knowledge Area (POLKA), which allows practitioners (specialists) to share experiences and learning on all kinds of organisational change.

