

Investigations guidance updates

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We've published new investigations guidelines and updated authorised professional practice (APP), following our public consultation

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We've improved our investigations guidance for police officers and staff, to support consistent and effective investigating.

It instructs police to follow all reasonable lines of enquiry when investigating an offence and explains what the public can expect from police when they report a crime.

The improvements include:

- new guidelines on [Conducting effective investigations](#)
- updated APP on [Managing effective investigations](#) and [Investigation process](#) to complement the new guidelines

Guidelines on conducting effective investigations

The new [Conducting effective investigations guidelines](#) outline the core behaviours and principles of an effective investigation. They draw on an approach to gathering and assessing materials known as the investigative mindset.

They describe how:

- investigators – including frontline officers (for example, response officers) and police staff (for example, call handlers) – can conduct and contribute to effective investigations
- first-line leaders and supervisors can support and develop their investigators, so they can conduct effective investigations

- chief officers can drive and embed a culture, structures and processes that support effective investigations within their force

The guidelines have been developed using evidence-based research and by listening to the experiences of police officers, staff and volunteers, at all stages of an investigation.

APP on investigations

APP is the official source of professional guidance for policing. We've published updates to the:

- [Managing investigations APP](#)
- [Investigation process APP](#)

The APP explains what officers and staff need to do in practice when investigating crimes and incidents. It instructs officers to follow all reasonable lines of enquiry when investigating an offence, meaning all material and potential evidence should be considered when there's information to suggest the offender could be identified. For example:

- where there is clear recorded CCTV (or other) footage, police will recover that and seek to present it as evidence
- when there is clear eyewitness evidence, that person will be interviewed
- where there is strong evidence and forensic opportunities, police will seek to present these
- where property is stolen with unique features, such as a serial number, police will seek to recover it and obtain evidence

How we're supporting police to gather evidence and conduct investigations

This is the latest in a series of improvements to address persistent problems faced by policing in gathering evidence and conducting investigations.

Other developments from this year include:

- the launch of a [National operating model for rape and serious sexual offences \(RASSO\) investigations](#), using a victim-centred, suspect-focused and context-led approach. The [Investigator's journey](#) shows how policing can use this approach throughout an investigation
- adding a 'Digital spotlight on violence against women and girls (VAWG)' module to the [Operation Modify boxset](#) – our interactive resource that gives officers the chance to put their digital investigative skills to the test
- our [practice bank](#) of interventions that have been used by crime reduction and community safety organisations to address specific crime problems or organisational change

Importance of investigative skills

When the public report something to police, they rightly expect their concerns to be taken seriously and for them to be investigated in a consistent, fair and impartial way, where police carefully explore all reasonable lines of inquiry.

Investigation is a core element of policing and many of policing's objectives would not be achievable without investigative skills. It's vital that we equip our police officers and staff with the right knowledge, skills and tools that allow them to deliver consistent, fair and high-quality investigations that will offer the best chance of securing a positive outcome.

It is critically important the public know that when a crime has happened the police will consider all reasonable lines of enquiry and, where appropriate, arrest the person responsible.

Police officers want to give the best possible service to everyone but they are trying to do this in a time pressured and increasingly complex environment. Today's guidance will support them to make effective decisions on what is a reasonable line of enquiry as they investigate crimes.

It means all forces are working to the same standard as we come down hard on criminals and deliver what the public want from their police service.

We know the public would not want us to spend significant amounts of time on an investigation where there is no a reasonable chance of identifying a suspect or making an arrest so our focus will be on where there is information we can act on.

The service will have to be pragmatic which means vast public resources cannot be dedicated to every crime. Officers will consider whether they can realistically identify the person responsible or if their time should be spent on preventing other crimes from happening.

Our aim is to deliver the best possible service to the public to keep them safe and protect them from criminals.

Chief Constable Andy Marsh, College of Policing CEO

Read the guidance

- [Conducting effective investigations guidelines](#)
- [Managing effective investigations APP](#)
- [Investigation process APP](#)

Tags

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