

Continuing professional development (CPD)

Understanding and applying the principles of CPD

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Definition

Continuing professional development (CPD) is ongoing. It enables the individual, in collaboration with their organisation, to maintain, develop and gain recognition for existing and new professional skills, knowledge and competence.

We do this to ensure that we:

- continue to provide high quality policing
- keep the public safe
- help to drive career aspirations

Principles

There are five principles to CPD that all police officers and staff should consider.

1. It is a collective responsibility, with the individual, forces and the College of Policing working together to support the individual's development.
2. It balances the needs and aspirations of the individual with the requirements of the organisation and the service as a whole.
3. It supports the individual to remain professionally competent in their role through a continuing process that recognises and builds upon existing competence.
4. It is recorded to show the effect that it is having on the individual's professional practice.
5. It provides a benefit to the public through contributing towards improving the quality of service provided by policing.

If you do CPD well, you will:

- get the most out of your professional development review (PDR)
- be better prepared for assessments and promotion opportunities

- continue to be able to do your job well, and enjoy it more

Doing your CPD

Plan and assess

When considering your professional development needs it can be useful to use a template.

You can download the [**personal development plan**](#) template to support you when you're planning your CPD.

Learn

Learning can take many different forms but it all offers opportunities to help you develop your professional practice. It might be:

- talking to an experienced colleague and reflecting on what happened in a workplace situation
- performing your regular duties or encountering new situations
- watching a recording of a webinar
- reading some research about a topic that maintains your knowledge on an area
- attending a course that enhances your skills or knowledge

Whatever form the learning takes, it is important to reflect and think about how you can apply it to your professional practice.

Reflect

Everyone already thinks about what they've done to varying extents.

Reflective practice is doing this regularly and doing this well. It means taking the time to critically analyse how you thought, acted and felt in a situation.

The more you do this, the more you are able to:

- learn from your experiences
- apply what you've learnt to other situations
- share what you've learnt with other people

You can find out more information in our [reflective practice resources for policing](#).

Record, apply and share

Recording your learning experiences helps you to reflect on them and to consider how you can apply them to your professional practice.

You should look for opportunities to apply what you have learnt to your professional practice and share what you have learnt with your colleagues. This helps your team and promotes a learning culture.

The [CPD activity log](#) helps you to record your learning experiences.

Professional development review (PDR)

Regularly doing the above steps will help you in the PDR process. You will be better prepared to speak to colleagues and your line manager about career options and to make a plan to support your development.

Find out more about your [professional development review \(PDR\)](#).

Using CPD to develop in your role

Not all continuing professional development is about doing courses and formal training. There are many other ways you can develop in your role.

Example

This example shows how CPD can help make career decisions.

Stage of CPD	Example

Plan and assess	A police constable (PC) wanted to develop their career in policing, hoping to become an intelligence analyst as they have an interest in this area and role. However they were not sure what they needed to make this a reality. Their sergeant suggested a few options during a chat about career goals.
Learn	They then spent time shadowing a colleague in the force intelligence unit to get a better understanding of the role and found out about the intelligence professionalisation program (IPP) and the route into that role.
Reflect	After this the PC reflected and thought about their experience and found the process had allowed them to enhance their understanding of intelligence and that role as well as their career options and how they can develop into a new role in policing.
Record, apply and share	With a better understanding of how important their current role was in gathering intelligence and sharing it with their colleagues, they applied for a secondment to the intelligence unit. They were successful.

Useful links and resources

To decide on the next steps in your development you can:

- [**find more resources on our career and learning page**](#)
- [**explore the career pathways other people have taken**](#)

- [**find out more about CPD in focus via the Knowledge Hub**](#) (you will need to log in)
- [**choose a professional profile to see role-specific development**](#)
- [**discover CPD events for foundation, first-line and mid-level leaders**](#)
- [**discover CPD events for senior and executive leaders**](#)
- [**discover CPD opportunities for senior and executive leaders**](#)
- [**go to the leadership learning platform**](#) (you will need to log in)
- [**download resources for reflective practice**](#)

Tags

CPD Career pathways Leadership development