

Code of Ethics launched

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Our new Code of Ethics sets out how we will work together in policing and with the public to keep people safe

News 5 mins read

A new Code of Ethics for policing has been launched to outline the professional behaviours that the public can expect to see from officers, staff and volunteers.

The Code of Ethics supports everyone in policing to deliver a service that is fair, ethical and can be trusted to make decisions in the interest of keeping people safe.

Following the new Code of Ethics will help police professionals ensure they are doing the right things, in the right way for the right reasons.

The Code of Ethics will work alongside a separate [statutory Code of Practice for Ethical Policing](#), which was launched in December and sets out the actions that chief officers should take to support people in their force to use the ethical policing principles and to demonstrate professional behaviour.

[Read the new Code of Ethics](#)

Ethical policing principles

These provide support for police professionals in making ethical decisions and explaining them with openness and transparency. The principles are:

- Courage – demonstrating integrity and transparency in our decisions, leading by example and challenging anything that could bring our profession into disrepute.
- Respect and empathy – listening to and understanding the needs of the public, and trying to recognise and respond to the physical, mental and emotional challenges that both colleagues and members of the public face.

- Public service – the commitment to work in the public interest, communicate clearly and openly, and take pride in providing an excellent service to the public.

[Read the ethical policing principles](#)

Guidance for ethical and professional behaviour in policing

This describes how policing professionals should behave and helps everyone in policing apply the ethical policing principles in their role. The guidance provides practical advice on areas of policing that are important to maintaining public trust and legitimacy, such as:

- being open, honest and candid
- treating all people and their property with fairness, dignity and respect
- challenging or reporting behaviour that is unprofessional

[Read the guidance](#)

What's changed from the 2014 Code of Ethics, and why?

We worked with people from across policing and the wider criminal justice system, including serving police officers, police staff, academics, staff associations and representatives from partner organisations. The 2024 Code of Ethics is based on evidence and first-hand experience, so it supports everyone working in policing.

The nine principles from the 2014 Code of Ethics have been mapped into three principles:

- courage
- respect and empathy
- public service

These are supported by guidance that sets out what ethical and professional behaviour looks like on a day-to-day basis.

What else is changing?

The [national decision model \(NDM\)](#) has been revised to reflect the changes to the Code of Ethics. Police officers, police staff, special constables and police volunteers make important decisions every day. These decisions can raise complex ethical issues because they affect other people, often at difficult times in their lives. We make these decisions because, in serving the public, it is our duty to preserve life, uphold the law, prevent crime and disorder, protect and reassure communities, investigate crime, use police resources wisely and bring offenders to justice.

The Code of Ethics and NDM will help you make these decisions and act in a fair and ethical way.

How will we support you to understand the Code of Ethics?

We're working with senior leaders, ethics leads, learning and development teams and force communications teams to help everyone in policing understand and apply the new Code of Ethics.

We'll be holding briefing events face-to-face, online and in-force over the coming months to provide an opportunity to find out more and ask questions. We have created explainer animations, posters and resources to help leaders talk to your teams about the new ethical policing principles and guidance.

We know that everyone working in policing can face complex ethical decisions. We're developing a new Code of Ethics e-learning package that will bring some of these scenarios to life to help you apply the Code of Ethics in a safe environment.

Resources

- [Cod Moeseg poster A4 \(pdf\) 127.96 KB](#)
- [Code of Ethics A4 posters \(pdf\) 132.91 KB](#)
- Code of Ethics social image 1080x1080 (png) 105.83 KB

- Code of Ethics intranet image 345x103 (png) 46.98 KB
- Code of Ethics square 500x500 (png) 47.89 KB

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