Code of Ethics implementation plan

Durham Constabulary has an internal working group and implementation plan in place to ensure timely and controlled deadlines are met following the update on the Code of Ethics.

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Key details

Stage of practice	Untested
Purpose	Organisational
Topic	Ethics and values Leadership, development and learning
Organisation	Durham Constabulary
Contact	Julia McCormick
Email address	julia.mccormick@durham.police.uk
Region	North East
Partners	Police
Stage of implementation	The practice is implemented.
Start date	January 2024
Scale of initiative	Local

Key details

Target group	General public Workforce

Aim

The aim is to develop clear plans for implementing and embedding the College of Policing's Code of Ethics and the Code of Practice for Ethical Policing in the workforce.

Intended outcome

The main intended outcomes are to empower people to have the confidence to speak out and report matters to supervision or direct to Professional Standards.

Description

In 2024, the College of Policing revised the national Code of Ethics as a result of public consultation and input from serving police officers, police staff, academics, staff associations and representatives from partner organisations. The 2014 Code of Ethics is now replaced by the 2024 Code of Ethics (non-statutory) and the 2023 Code of Practice for Ethical Policing (statutory).

Durham Constabulary is reviewing and updating relevant force policies and procedures to ensure they reflect the revised Code of Ethics. The force has created a working group to oversee all updates. The working group consists of the Prevent officer, the head of Professional Standards Department (PSD), as well as representation from the Media, Learning and Development (L&D), and Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion Departments (DEI), ensuring that DEI is considered throughout the process.

One of the first actions taken to embed the new Code of Ethics was to widely advertise these changes within the force. This has been done in various ways, such as through the intranet and social media. This included a recording of the Deputy Chief Constable explaining the changes to the Code of Ethics.

Officers and staff have also received training around the new Code of Ethics. This has consisted of:

- national e-learning modules that have been developed on the new Code of Ethics, these explain the new Code of Ethics and how it underpins the standards of professional behaviour
- training on challenging unacceptable behaviour, aimed at encouraging culture change to increase reporting of improper behaviour, this has been branded in the force as 'If you see something, say something' training
- upstander/bystander training

The Learning and Development team are recording and monitoring completion of the e-learn Code of Ethics module. Completion rates are shared with commanders and discussed by the senior leadership team.

The embedding of the new Code of Ethics is complemented by the continuous work of the Prevent officer, aimed at increasing knowledge around what to do when witnessing inappropriate behaviour and how to report. Officers and staff can report inappropriate behaviour directly to PSD or through the confidential reporting mechanism, Integrity Link. This has been done through lessons learned documents, which outline to the force what has been improved in this area, as well as campaigns to increase knowledge in the force around what to do if you witness inappropriate behaviour and how to report.

The force introduced an independent ethics committee, where issues around ethics in the force are discussed. As part of this work, the force has also introduced ethical champions. These are officers and staff that promote the Code of Ethics and identify ethical problems within the force. They are part of the Independent Ethics Committee and provide feedback on issues or concerns the force may have.

There is ongoing analytical work conducted by a PSD analytical researcher, looking at whether embedding the new Code of Ethics results in change over time. This includes assessing how comfortable officers and staff feel to report inappropriate conduct. This assists in identifying the threat and risks in terms of behaviour or conduct issues on the rise.

The researcher uses data from various sources in their analysis. These include complaints made by the public, reports by officers and staff made to PDS, and anonymous reports and from the internal workforce survey 'Call it out'. This survey asks officers and staff whether they feel safe at work and asks about their experiences in the workplace.

Continuous professional development (CPD) days have been adapted to be more interactive, including the introduction of scenarios around witnessing inappropriate behaviour at work. Data from the CPD days has been used to identify whether officers and staff have any gaps in knowledge regarding reporting. Data from the national Anti-Corruption and Abuse Reporting Service led by Crimestoppers, which allows the public to report corruption or serious abuse by police officers and staff, will also be used in the analysis.

The analyst reports their findings quarterly. The data is also used:

- to produce a Strategic threat Assessment, which outlines whether there are any areas that have been identified as vulnerabilities in the force
- in 'Predict to Prevent' work, where the analyst will identify areas that may become hotspots of inappropriate behaviour within the force.

Overall impact

The force is currently in the early stages of implementation of initiatives relating to the new Code of Ethics. Currently, it is too early to say what the impact has been.

Since implementation, there has been an increase in cases of inappropriate conduct reported to PDS, but currently there is no way to tell if the implementation of the new Code of Ethics has impacted this or whether this is due to wider cultural changes.

Learning

- The Prevent officer has simplified the Code of Ethics documentation for all new recruits and continues to deliver this as part of initial officer and staff training.
- The force has used SMART objectives (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound) throughout while updating the Code of Ethics. Having a business timeline and giving tasks and deadlines to those involved will help to achieve the ongoing plan.
- Having officers and staff from different departments as ethical champions has helped, as they are able to bring their own unique perspectives.
- A barrier in embedding the new Code of Ethics has been that the Learning and Development team does not currently have the capacity or resource to deliver the mandatory training on the new Code of Ethics themselves. To manage this risk, the team are currently recruiting volunteers to assist with the training.

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