

# Roundtable meetings

An overview of the police leadership commission roundtables.

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Roundtables provide a forum for the commission to hear evidence which will inform its final report and recommendations.

Roundtables will usually consist of an opening presentation to introduce the topic, followed by panel discussions involving invited experts and practitioners.

Six roundtables are scheduled throughout the duration of the commission.

## Wednesday 25 February 2026

The fourth roundtable meeting will involve two panel discussions.

- The first panel will explore police constable entry routes with invited experts and practitioners. The role of entry routes in attracting and developing officers with the necessary leadership skills, behaviours and knowledge into foundational police leadership roles will be explored.
- The second panel will involve invited policy experts. It will allow the commission to explore emerging themes from its work and consider potential areas for recommendations.

## Wednesday 11 February 2026

### Theme

Police leadership in a reformed landscape.

### Summary

The third roundtable explored:

- what leadership development, training and assessment should be mandated or delivered nationally and what should remain locally designed or delivered
- how the future National Police Service (NPS) could drive consistency, excellence, and innovation in police leadership

Two panel discussions took place involving experts from a range of organisations. Discussions focused on:

- the role of the centre in ensuring high standards of leadership and development
- local delivery of leadership and development

## Mandating national standards

The panel debated what role the new NPS, introduced in the government's white paper, '[From local to national: a new model for policing](#)', will play in leading national standards.

The panel broadly supported how the proposed licence to practise could potentially ensure professional standards in policing and promote professional development. There was recognition by some members of the need to retain some local flexibility.

## Strategic workforce planning

Many panel members were supportive of the NPS playing a central role in workforce planning in the future, identifying future workforce requirements and supporting and developing future talent.

## Quality assurance

There was an acknowledgement that, currently, there is little quality assurance of local or national delivery of leadership training and development. The panel discussed different ways to ensure the quality of learning, including the involvement of academia.

## Talent management

Some panel members were supportive of replicating the military model where individual career development is carefully managed at an organisational level using standard review processes.

There was an acknowledgement that the inconsistent use of professional development reviews (PDRs) across policing makes this approach challenging. There was some caution around the implications of pre-selecting individuals for senior roles early in their careers.

The commission highlighted the value of diversity of experience in developing senior careers, including the use of secondments and career breaks.

## Cross-sector local or regional delivery and peer review

The benefits of local policing working alongside other public services to deliver leadership development were discussed. There was support for policing being involved in multi-disciplinary peer support and peer review with other public services.

The panel and the commission also discussed the merits of policing taking part in formal multidisciplinary training and how that could be achieved through a regional delivery model.

There was also support for a regional delivery model for leadership training. This was felt to be compatible with the direction of police reform with fewer forces.

## Wednesday 14 January 2026

### Theme

Defining effective police leadership at every level: internal and external perspectives.

### Summary

The second roundtable explored how effective police leadership should be defined.

Two panel discussions took place involving the commission and invited panel members. These were:

- examining effective police leadership
- comparing leadership concepts in policing with those in other sectors

Discussions focused on:

- the qualities and styles of police leadership
- challenges and systemic barriers
- the role of academia in policing
- areas for further exploration

## Core qualities of effective police leadership

Panel members identified key qualities of effective police leadership, including the importance of vision, ethics, competence, and leadership at all levels. The panel explored how these qualities compare with those of leaders in other sectors, both public and private.

## **Public trust and organisational performance**

There was clear agreement that leadership must align with public expectations while running an effective and motivated organisation. Police leaders have a responsibility to build both public trust and internal trust within their force.

## **Leadership standards and talent investment**

Panel members suggested that fragmentation across forces may have weakened consistency in applying leadership standards. Members discussed the practical experience of implementing national leadership standards.

Many felt that investment in talent starts with first-line leadership and represents an investment in future senior leadership and a way to identify talent. The importance of developing senior and executive leadership was also acknowledged.

## **Cultural and systemic barriers**

The panel explored the culture surrounding police leadership and possible barriers to a consistent approach. Members referenced historical in-person leadership training delivered in a centralised location.

A key insight was the need to distinguish between developing individual leaders and cultivating leadership development as a broader organisational system. Leadership is inseparable from the culture and context in which it is exercised.

The commissioners explored leadership concepts in other sectors, what is transferable, and identified some of the systemic barriers within other organisations.

## **Academia and evidence-based practice**

There was recognition that policing needs strong integration with academic research, applied evidence and external expertise.

Discussion focused on understanding current barriers and resistance within forces to introducing a more consistent approach.

## Areas for further exploration

The commissioners and panel members identified areas for future exploration, including:

- how to introduce consistency across the system
- the distribution of resources
- how leadership development could be funded

## Thursday 11 December 2025

### Theme

Setting the scene for the commission by examining police leadership and its current challenges.

### What's working well?

Participants acknowledged several successes including:

- increased numbers of women in policing at senior levels
- improved training for newly promoted sergeants and inspectors
- stronger national strategic collaboration on workforce reform between the College and the NPCC

### What needs to improve?

Panel members discussed if there is currently a strong enough collective understanding of what good leadership looks like, with some feeling it should be focussed on what leaders deliver in terms of outcomes and performance.

There was recognition that police leaders at all levels must balance multiple operational, performance and team demand and do not always have adequate support to do so.

The scrutiny senior officers in particular face was considered to contribute to the lack of attractiveness for promotion and progression.

Survey data showing low confidence in senior leadership amongst frontline officers was highlighted as requiring further consideration.

Discussion also focussed on the potential for inconsistencies in the provision and delivery of leadership programmes, and the lack of a national promotion process for certain ranks.

## What barriers exist?

Systemic and structural barriers were debated, including valuing operational experience versus enabling talented officers to progress quickly through the ranks.

The slow pace of achieving national consensus was also recognised as a challenge to reform, as well as a lack of funding nationally and locally.

## Suggested solutions

The panel explored solutions including:

- diversifying entry routes
- expanding the use of professional registration

Discussions on how to vary experience at senior levels prompted ideas around:

- leaders gaining experience in different organisations
- bringing in external expertise at senior levels
- using police staff effectively

The commission identified key areas for further exploration, with particular focus on strengthening the support and development for front line leaders, given the key role they have.

Key national workforce statistics were also presented and suggestions made for what further data the commission needed for its review.

## Tags

Leadership development