

‘Upholding our values’ – an e-learning module to support the implementation of the Code of Ethics

An e-learning module to improve the workforce of Police Scotland’s understanding of values and the Code of Ethics, to ensure a positive working environment.

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Key details

Stage of practice	Evaluated locally
Purpose	Organisational
Topic	Ethics and values Training and professional development
Organisation	Police Scotland
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Region	Scotland
Partners	Police
Stage of Implementation	The practice is implemented.
Start date	July 2024
Completion date	January 2025

Key details

Scale of initiative	National
Target group	Workforce

Aim

The aim of the module is to improve understanding of Police Scotland's values and the Code of Ethics.

Intended outcome

The intended outcomes of the 'upholding our values' module are to:

- improve the working environment
- improve the delivery of services
- reduce the number of grievances and complaints related to conduct

To increase knowledge and awareness of:

- obligations towards diversity, equality, and inclusion policies
- applying the Code of Ethics principles in day to day practice
- obligations towards standards of professional behaviour and consequences

Description

Police Scotland identified a need for the workforce to improve their understanding of the Code of Ethics. In response, the force developed the e-learning module 'upholding our values'.

Police Scotland approached Marshalls, now known as CipHR, to support the development of the module. The professional development team and CipHR used a storyboard process to agree on a proposed structure, themes, and content for the module. The team liaised with a working group to ensure the proposed content was fit for purpose.

The working group included representation from:

- human resources (HR)
- continuous professional development team
- staff associations
- unions
- quality assurance team
- end users

Contents of the module includes the following themes:

- Police Scotland values
- the wider context for ethics in policing
- institutional discrimination, institutional racism, sexism and misogyny
- integrity in policing (with two scenario-based exercises)
- fairness (definitions, links to equity, equality and discrimination, and two scenario-based exercises)
- respect (definitions, behaviours, the community and a scenario-based exercise)
- human rights (links to policing and two scenario-based exercises)

Participant knowledge is tested through a series of quizzes.

Once completed, officers and staff are expected to be able to:

- recall Police Scotland's shared values of integrity, fairness, respect and a commitment to upholding human rights
- describe key terms associated with EDI and key types of unlawful discrimination
- define and describe institutional discrimination and its relevance to Police Scotland
- list the current initiatives linked to ethics in policing
- explain how each of these values translates into everyday actions, behaviours, and their practical application

The module has been launched to the whole workforce of Police Scotland and has been promoted via:

- the corporate communication team
- force intranet articles
- line managers

- commanders
- deputy chief constable communications

A training dashboard has been created to monitor completion rates. This dashboard can be accessed by all line managers in the force.

Cost and governance

The development and implementation of the module was approved by the quality assurance team for training standards and the force’s senior leadership team. Approximately £40,000 of funding was allocated from the continued professional development (CPD) budget.

Evaluation

An evaluation began in 2025 and is being led by Police Scotland’s continuous professional development team. The evaluation is reviewing questionnaire feedback, provided by officers and staff at the end of the module.

The questionnaire asks how strongly respondents agree or disagree to the following statements:

- knowledge and skills – I am confident that I will be able to apply the knowledge and skills gained on the course, into the workplace
- overall satisfaction – overall, I was satisfied with this learning event
- learning outcomes – overall, the stated learning outcomes for this programme have been met
- learning content – the package was easy to navigate
- the content was clear and relevant
- the duration of the programme was appropriate
- administration – the administration for this event was effective
- diversity – the programme displayed an appropriate and positive approach to diversity

Overall impact

As of January 2026, 16,521 officers and staff have completed the module, with 5,126 survey responses in total.

Initial findings from the survey:

- 94% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they were confident to apply the knowledge and skills gained on the course, into the workplace
- 88% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they were satisfied with this learning event
- 93% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the learning outcomes had been met
- 92% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the package was easy to navigate
- 92% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the content was clear and relevant
- 85% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the duration of the programme was appropriate
- 91% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that there was effective course instructions
- 93% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the module had an appropriate and positive approach to diversity

The 'upholding our values' module is now included in all inductions for officers and members of police staff. The workforce have welcomed the module, with feedback reporting how they have an improved understanding of why the force's values are important and how this links to the delivery of services.

Learning

- It is important to involve the supplier and stakeholders throughout the design process to ensure the best learning experience possible for the workforce.
- There is currently no allocated protected time for officers and members of staff to complete 'upholding our values', therefore there is a risk that some individuals may rush through the e-learning content due to competing operational demands.
- It is essential to take time to plan the implementation of the module and align it with other force activities to ensure a connected learning experience with practical take aways for the workforce.

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