

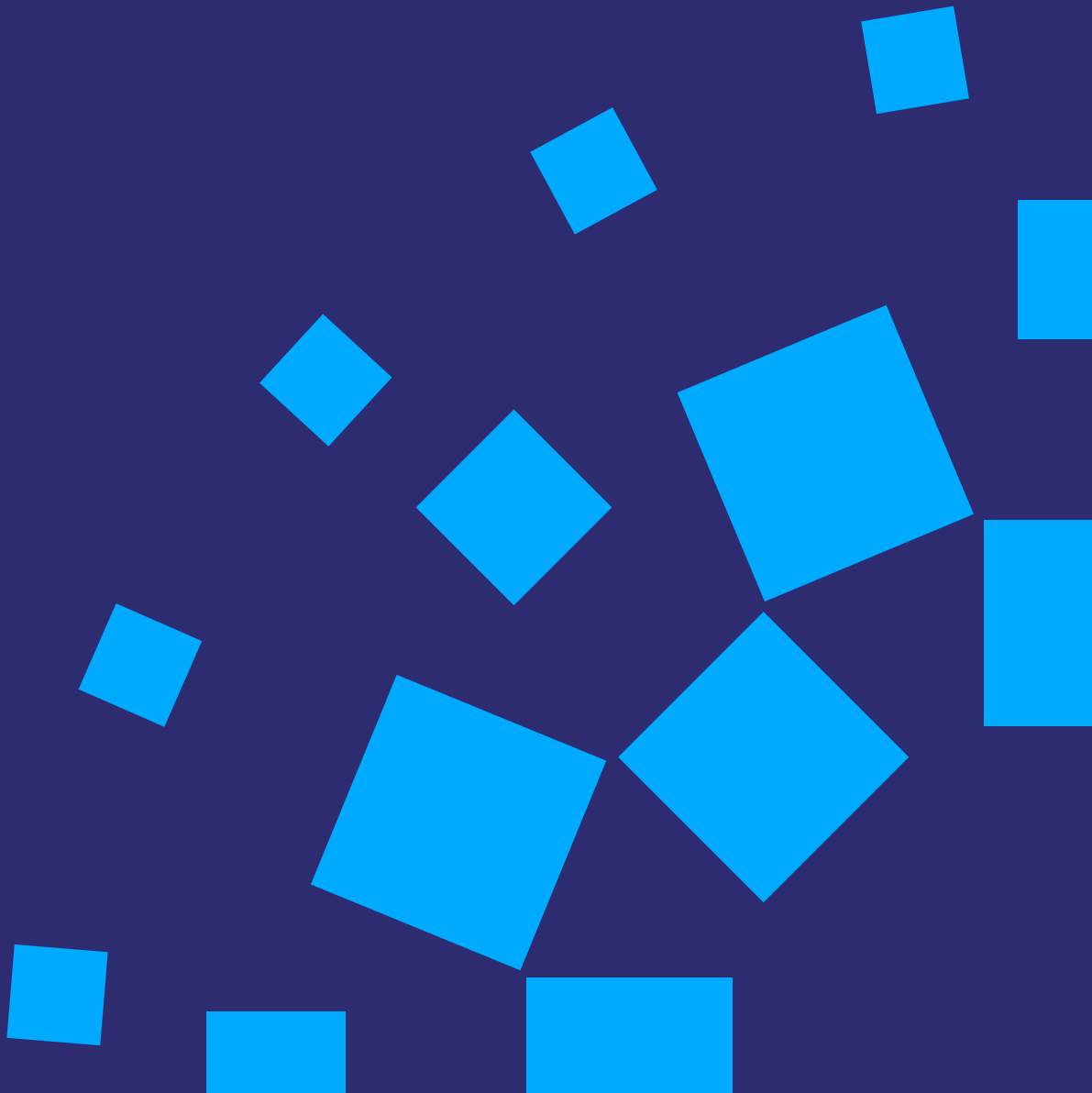


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# Continuous Improvement Self-Assessment Matrix (CI SAM)

A standard approach to support police leaders in  
service-led improvement and cultural change



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# Introducing CI SAM

The Continuous Improvement Self-Assessment Matrix (CI SAM) has been developed to help make the concept of continuous improvement more accessible to the police service and to promote service-led continuous improvement and culture change.

Nobody can improve policing better and more sustainably than the people who work in it. That is the powerful premise on which CI SAM is based. It is a future-oriented maturity model that recognises organisational development as a long-term cultural philosophy. The approach values the energy of an engaged workforce in designing and delivering systematic change as a massive and potentially transformative resource. It helps equip the police workforce to stay focused and concentrated on delivering the policing vision and face the constantly changing and increasingly complex challenges that confront policing.

CI SAM identifies four key enablers for continuous improvement and describes what a force would look like in terms of its attitudes and behaviours towards change as its continuous improvement culture matures. The four key enablers were identified by carrying out an evidence review of what works in organisational change and business improvement<sup>1</sup> across all types of organisation. To ensure its relevance to the police service, College of Policing researchers held regional workshops with continuous improvement practitioners to develop key features and behaviours for each of the enablers. The results of these workshops were consolidated through peer review to create CI SAM. The completed matrix builds on extensive work already taking place to embed organisational change in police forces and we will use feedback from force practitioners to refine the model over time.

CI SAM is purely for self-assessment and should not be used as an audit or inspection tool. However, forces may find it helpful to use the evidence generated through the self-assessment process to inform their planning to such things as responding to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL) findings or

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1 Wheller L, Dunne D and Morris J. (2012). 'What works in organisational change and business improvement? A Rapid Evidence Assessment', National Policing Improvement Agency, London. Available from: [whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Documents/What\\_works\\_organisational\\_change\\_business\\_improvement\\_-\\_full\\_report.pdf](https://www.whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Documents/What_works_organisational_change_business_improvement_-_full_report.pdf) [Accessed 22 February 2021]

developing force management statements. The College's Organisational Development and Peer Support team can support forces with facilitation methods for the self-assessment process and introduce other complementary products and services to support improvement planning, such as the College's Transformation Framework. Developed in conjunction with our academic partners, this framework provides professionals with a robust and consistent approach to developing more innovative solutions and new ways of working in delivering service transformation. It adds a critical layer of value through objective but supportive peer-challenge approaches. For further details on this or for any other queries, please contact the team at [ODfaculty@college.pnn.police.uk](mailto:ODfaculty@college.pnn.police.uk)

## What is continuous improvement?

Continuous improvement is concerned with the end-to-end review of service delivery processes. It focuses on understanding business demand, system workflows and removing non-value-adding activity to provide a high-quality, cost-effective service that is valued by the customer.

Sustainable continuous improvement is achieved by creating a positive organisational environment where every individual understands the end-to-end organisational processes within which they operate. They also understand the value of their individual contribution to those processes, and are encouraged and supported in identifying and influencing change as a key part of their day-to-day activity.

A useful litmus test of an organisation's level of maturity in having embedded a continuous improvement culture is to ask people in the organisation: 'who makes sure services are being improved for the public?' What would their answer be?

- A response such as, 'Improving services? You're joking - we're just trying to meet budget reductions,' would indicate an organisation at the beginning of its continuous improvement change cycle.
- A response such as, 'It's the project team, they're working on XXX,' would indicate at least some level of continuous improvement maturity.
- A response such as, 'I do,' would indicate an organisation that has integrated continuous improvement into its day-to-day work.

# The Continuous Improvement Self-Assessment Matrix

The aims of CI SAM are to:

- clearly show what is accepted by practitioners as good practice to achieve a sustainable continuous improvement culture
- help forces identify their own areas of strength, as well as areas for improvement
- allow forces to benchmark their current continuous improvement capability and plan which areas they will develop as part of their business change planning
- encourage peer support, matching those forces with something to share with those with something to learn

The CI SAM matrix is available in [Annex A](#). It is a way of describing improvement activity or processes as four key enablers of successful and sustainable organisational change, set against graded levels of continuous improvement culture.

## The four enablers explained

The four enablers were identified by carrying out an evidence review of what works in organisational change and business improvement across all types of organisation. They represent a condensed form of the seven original continuous improvement programme principles and are:

### Leadership

Including the continuous improvement principles of:

- **Leadership**

Top-level engagement, openness and active participation. Removing blame and encouraging staff to identify issues to be rectified in accordance with the organisation's strategic imperative/objectives.

- **Governance and interoperability**

Identifying a senior responsible owner at chief officer level to lead the programme with ongoing responsibility for delivery.

This is essential to link continuous improvement with ongoing/new force programmes.

## Engagement

Including the continuous improvement principles of:

- **Focus on the customer**

Insightfully using a comprehensive understanding of what customers need and value to drive transformational change in organisational culture, to focus on the customer and resolve problems that undermine their quality of life and drive demand for service.

- **Engagement with the business**

Ensuring that all areas of the force are engaged, with significant focus on frontline staff, the office of the police and crime commissioner and staff associations.

## Resourcing and sustainability

Including the continuous improvement principle of:

- **Resourcing and sustainability**

Identifying and selecting the right people with the right skills to understand and deliver the desired outcomes. Developing a core team to remain in place to embed methodology and lessons learnt.

## Methodology and rigour

Including the continuous improvement principles of:

- **Outcomes and benefits**

Clearly identifying and communicating desired goals and outcomes. Explaining performance, financial and efficiency targets to improve public confidence.

- **Methodology and rigour**

Adhering to the principles of the 'top-down, bottom-up' approach. Evidencing use of data to support developments, problem solving and outcomes.

## The levels of continuous improvement culture explained

Generally, models of this kind run from level 1 (basic level or, in this case, 'marginal') to level 5 (top level or 'integral'). Organisations often use such models to improve performance and introduce common understanding of terms and standardisation of an activity.

Level	Descriptor	Characterised in practice as...
1	<b>Marginal</b>	Forces where improvement efforts are one-off, with continuous improvement perceived as a fad that hasn't worked or wouldn't work in practice.
2	<b>Reactive</b>	Forces that tend to think about improvement in response to a crisis or external stimulus.
3	<b>Process-focused</b>	Forces where projects are the main focus. Delivery is likely to be cost or process rather than quality-focused – how many or how much, rather than how well.
4	<b>Proactive</b>	Forces that place a high value on improvement, actively invest in continuous improvement projects and programmes and are always on the lookout for areas to improve.
5	<b>Integral</b>	Forces where continuous improvement is a way of life and embedded in everything staff do, from the front line to senior managers.

## Language used in CI SAM

**Staff** refers to all of the workforce, including police officers, police staff and volunteers regardless of role, rank or grade.

**Stakeholders** can refer to key groups that include staff, the public and partner organisations.



# Using the Continuous Improvement Self-Assessment Matrix

## What can CI SAM be used for?

There are many flexible ways that CI SAM can be used, including to:

- facilitate reflection on the service improvement culture of an organisation and/or team
- help a team recognise that continuous improvement and organisational change are complex, multidimensional concepts
- stimulate discussion about the strengths and weaknesses of how a team and/or organisation approaches organisational change
- reveal any differences in perception between different staff/officer/rank groups
- help understand how an organisation and/or team with a more (or less) developed approach to continuous improvement might look
- help evaluate specific interventions needed to improve services provided by an organisation and/or team

CI SAM is not designed to be used:

- for performance management or external assessment purposes
- to create league tables from assessment ratings
- to apportion blame
- to be an end in itself

## Who can use CI SAM?

CI SAM is a flexible, multi-purpose tool for everyone. It can be used by boards, senior management teams, organisational development teams, operational teams and others who would like to consider approaches to service improvement in their organisation, team or business area.

## When should CI SAM be used?

CI SAM can be used to raise awareness among police officers and staff about continuous improvement in general terms. It is not specifically designed to be applied after a problem has been identified, although this is one of its potential uses. Rather, the scope of the framework is broader, as it aims to promote consideration about service improvement among police staff and officers and identify opportunities for development.

## How often should CI SAM be used?

Using CI SAM annually will give sufficient time to develop and implement any improvements. By revisiting it at regular intervals, it is possible to chart progress in developing a strong improvement culture. Overuse may lead to staff becoming disengaged and disillusioned. It takes time to develop a strong continuous improvement culture – it doesn't happen overnight.

## Conducting the self-assessment

CI SAM is designed to be used in a self-reflection and development context, involving different teams across the organisation. For a force, this should include chief officer teams. All team members should use it and teams can be selected at various organisational levels to gain an understanding of how different departments, ranks and grades perceive the organisation's continuous improvement culture.

### Individual assessment

Using the CI SAM matrix in [Annex A](#), individuals privately, without discussion, evaluate either their team or organisation depending on what has been agreed. If it has been agreed to evaluate the organisation and team, then it is recommended to carry out a separate assessment for each.

For each of the four enablers, each individual should select the description that they think best fits the organisation or team. Individuals should indicate their chosen level for each enabler on the evaluation sheet, using [Annex B](#), and provide evidence to support their conclusion. This will give an indication of the current continuous improvement

culture profile for the organisation or team from that individual's perspective.

The descriptions in each of the levels are not designed to be a precise measure of the organisation's culture and should not be used as a checklist, but as examples of the type of behaviours expected at that level. Individuals may recognise some features at one level and some at another. In this instance, it is helpful to think about the 'best fit' or dominant level, along with recognition that they may have elements from another level.

For example, an organisation might display all the features of level 4 leadership, with one or two specifics from level 5. In this instance, they could be described as 'level 4 with level 5 features'. This could then stimulate a discussion about what might need to happen to move the organisation towards level 5.

## Reaching consensus

Individuals can be brought together in appropriate groups for a facilitated discussion to moderate the results and see if they can reach a consensus.

Consider the overall picture of the force and/or team. The emerging profile is unlikely to be uniform and this will enable leaders to gain a greater understanding of the continuous improvement culture across the organisation, where there are strengths and where there are areas for improvement. CI SAM can support ongoing development through reference to the descriptors at each level so that leaders can reflect on why the organisation is where it is and how it can progress to a higher level.

The College's Organisational Development and Peer Support team can support forces with facilitation methods for the self-assessment process. For further details on this or for any other queries, please contact the team at [ODfaculty@college.pnn.police.uk](mailto:ODfaculty@college.pnn.police.uk)

# Annex A: Continuous Improvement Self-Assessment Matrix

## Level 1: Marginal

### Leadership

- The force's improvement vision is not formally articulated.
- Improvement activity is typically reactive and dictated by external demands (eg, national policy).
- There is high turnover in the senior management team.
- Leaders drive improvement from the top, tending to impose solutions that have a track record in other contexts.
- Evidence is rarely used in decision making and leaders tend to rely solely on experience to make decisions.
- Improvement work is largely project-based and silo working goes unchallenged.
- A tendency towards risk aversion means opportunities for staff to innovate are limited.
- A blame culture exists.

### Engagement

- Communication about improvement is top-down and ad hoc.
- Staff tend to hear about key changes informally before information is available through official channels.
- Little information about improvement is communicated to the workforce, partners and the public.
- Opinions of the public, staff, critical friends and external partners are rarely sought and tend to have little or no impact on how improvement is managed.
- Customer engagement is minimal and only focuses on pre-existing priorities (rather than identifying issues).
- Stakeholders may perceive that change is something done to them, rather than with them.

### Resourcing and sustainability

- Improvement practitioners are expected to fit improvement activity around the 'day job'.
- Little investment is made in training or resources and turnover is high.
- The lack of adequate support by senior management weakens the reputation of the staff and the work, making it difficult to mount robust challenges to accepted practice.
- CI work tends to be task-focused, with no alignment to a longer-term CI strategy.
- Analytical skills are not recognised as integral to the success of CI, undermining the team's capability to adopt a rigorous approach.
- No formal mechanisms for capturing lessons and sharing knowledge exist. Learning is sporadic at best.

### Methodology and rigour

- There is pressure to rush problem diagnosis and move to developing solutions to be seen to be 'getting on with it'.
- There is little or no resource available to collect new data to identify issues.
- Analysts are limited to using existing force data, resulting in frequent use of proxy measures.
- Evaluation is rarely carried out.
- Senior officers have limited interest or understanding of approaches to measuring benefits and how to challenge data.

## Level 2: Reactive

### Leadership

- The improvement vision has started to be developed.
- Leaders communicate a need for CI to the organisation and provide some information about the approach.
- Staff are occasionally asked to submit ideas for change, but are reluctant to express challenging views.
- Leaders aim to support change proposals with evidence, but data gathering and analysis is limited.
- New workforce practices are applied without analysis of their impact.
- Silo working persists, but collaboration is starting to be explored with some awareness of interdependencies between business units.
- Leaders stress the importance of developing staff and a fairer workplace, but practice is inconsistent.

### Engagement

- The force is overly reliant on a limited pool of communication methods (eg, force website, newsletters).
- Workforce engagement is sporadic and often takes place when change programmes are already under way, potentially leaving staff feeling powerless to suggest changes.
- There is modest recognition of the value of involving the public, partners and critical friends in service design and the force is starting to engage stakeholders in CI projects.
- Engagement on CI activity tends to be reactive and inconsistent across the CI process, for example partnership work may only focus on issues or consulting on possible solutions.

### Resourcing and sustainability

- A central CI team has been established but has insufficient time, resources and senior support to effectively plan and undertake activities across the force.
- CI is targeted at isolated priority areas and the role of the CI team is not widely understood.
- The CI team is starting to build its methods and project skills but has limited support, experience or formal training.
- There is a tendency to overlook the benefits of engaging with practitioners from business areas when undertaking CI activities.
- Limited attempts are made to gain early support from HR, Unison and the Police Federation to develop sustainable solutions.

### Methodology and rigour

- Little attempt is made to diagnose problems specific to the force - there is a tendency to apply a generic template that has worked for other forces and push to solution design quite rapidly.
- Strong claims are made about potential savings. Working assumptions and estimates are not always presented clearly.
- There is pressure to assess impact very soon after implementation and limited attention to sustainability of changes.
- There are few formal reinvestment strategies.

### Level 3: Process-focused

#### Leadership

- The leadership team has articulated a clear ambition for improvement but there is no long-term strategy.
- There is a commitment to evidence-based decision making, but it is inhibited by lack of resources, commitment or understanding.
- Across the organisation, there is awareness of CI as part of normal business.
- There is general cooperation between units/departments and examples of joint working.
- Leaders are generally supportive. They engage with staff but this is mainly limited to direct reports.
- Leaders shield staff from blame, often by avoiding exposure to risk.
- Leaders are modestly successful in working to improve development opportunities for all staff and create a fairer workplace.

#### Engagement

- There is a clear commitment to workforce engagement.
- Staff are informed of the rationale of CI and frequently consulted on their views, although they tend not to have responsibility for leading change.
- Staff are engaged with throughout the project and their feedback is listened to and acted on in a structured and formal manner.
- Stakeholder networks are in place but focus on the most involved partners rather than hard-to-reach groups.
- A range of engagement tools and media are used to engage with key stakeholders.
- Benefits achieved through CI are occasionally communicated to stakeholders.

#### Resourcing and sustainability

- An established central CI team develops agreed and consistent ways of working but is potentially under-resourced (often using short secondments).
- CI is localised to particular teams or areas in force.
- CI projects are structured, planned, realistic, and have the general support of senior officers.
- Formal communications exist between the team, HR, finance and estates.
- Staff understand the role of the CI team and engage with projects.
- Knowledge gained in CI projects is often passed on to others.
- The CI team reviews its effectiveness and makes required changes to strategy.
- Clarity exists about confidentiality and managing sensitive data.

#### Methodology and rigour

- There is recognition that multiple sources should be used to identify issues specific to the force where this is proportionate to the issue being explored.
- The impact of any change is usually assessed, but practicalities mean that follow-up measures are not always consistent with those used at baseline.
- Reasonable time periods are allowed before assessment of impact is made – three or six-month reviews are standard.
- Assessments tend to focus on cost savings – the impact on service delivery is not always robustly assessed.

## Level 4: Proactive

### Leadership

- A clear, long-term strategy is evident, visibly supported by senior management – they ‘walk the talk’, being visible and engaged.
- Evidence-based decision making is considered essential, but there is variation in how effectively it is practised.
- Coordinated cross-force projects are common and leaders encourage a CI approach to daily work.
- Staff regularly see and communicate with leaders.
- Staff are encouraged to share views, but inhibitors to honest and open dialogue with more senior management remain.
- Individuals’ suggestions are routinely acknowledged.
- Staff are trusted to experiment and are not blamed for honest mistakes or unintended outcomes.

### Resourcing and sustainability

- CI teams are multidisciplinary, drawing together those with a strong analytical background and/or experience of change together with police officers with relevant operational experience.
- There are strong, formal links to HR, finance and estates. Senior leaders act as champions for CI work and ensure the importance of CI roles is understood across the force.
- The team is establishing a positive reputation, which gives it a stronger mandate to challenge accepted practice.
- CI approaches are becoming normal practice in some areas.
- Knowledge management and sharing of lessons learnt is starting to become more formalised when time allows.

### Engagement

- Stakeholder engagement is a routine part of CI.
- The accessibility, costs and benefits of different engagement approaches are considered for each project.
- Consultation with the workforce and external partners, including the public, is evidenced in all business cases.
- Staff participate in shaping the work.
- The relative merits of different engagement tools and media are considered in planning future strategies.
- The force proactively recruits critical friends to provide insight throughout the process.
- Stakeholders are actively involved in identifying priorities and developing solutions, fostering a sense that they have a real say.

### Methodology and rigour

- Issues specific to the force are identified using multiple sources proportionate to the issue being explored.
- Managers understand that changes need time to embed before impact can be assessed – final assessments might take place 12 months later.
- Analysing the impact of changes immediately after they are made will lead to questions about sustainability.
- Solutions tend to be rolled out only after some analysis of outcomes and benefits.
- The impact of CI on non-financial outcomes (eg, victim satisfaction) is routinely assessed.



## Level 5: Integral

### Leadership

- There is stable leadership with a clear improvement vision.
- Leaders are passionate about CI and show commitment by being highly visible, regularly floor-walking and listening to staff.
- Suggestions from staff are routinely sought and acted on.
- Evidence is routinely used in decision making and leaders challenge weak analysis.
- Leaders are prepared to make radical change or defend the status quo if required.
- Improvement activity is continuous (as opposed to project-based), silo thinking is not tolerated. Consistent mechanisms exist to highlight interdependencies.
- Leaders motivate staff with many/varied development opportunities.
- Fair treatment is embedded.

### Resourcing and sustainability

- There is a questioning culture throughout the organisation, with all staff seeing CI as their responsibility.
- CI skills are embedded in learning and development at every level, with all staff encouraged to apply those skills.
- The core team is highly regarded in the force.
- CI expertise is seen as positive evidence for staff seeking promotion – the strongest candidates compete to be part of the core team.
- The CI team is seen as a centre of excellence, with lessons/knowledge being captured and shared across the force as a matter of course.

### Engagement

- Engagement with stakeholders is integral to successful change and occurs through each phase of CI.
- The force uses multiple channels to communicate with a diverse audience.
- A wide network of critical friends is consulted on force plans and projects.
- There is a willingness to act on priority areas identified by the public and key partners.
- Approaches to engagement are monitored, with feedback sought and used.
- A participatory culture prevails. Senior managers adopt a two-way approach to communication, actively encouraging innovative ideas and empowering staff to implement them wherever possible.

### Methodology and rigour

- A proportionate number of data sources (and engagement strategies) are used to identify specific force issues.
- Changes are given enough time to embed before impact is tested.
- In some cases, comparison sites are used to allow stronger causal links.
- Assessment includes costs and potential impact on other areas.
- Clear distinctions are made between types of savings.
- Reinvestment strategies are explicit and followed up to ensure delivery.

## Annex B: Evidence and evaluation sheet

Enabler	1	2	3	4	5	Evidence
<b>Leadership</b>						
<b>Engagement</b>						
<b>Resourcing and sustainability</b>						
<b>Methodology and rigour</b>						

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## About the College

We're the professional body for the police service in England and Wales.

Working together with everyone in policing, we share the skills and knowledge officers and staff need to prevent crime and keep people safe.

We set the standards in policing to build and preserve public trust and we help those in policing develop the expertise needed to meet the demands of today and prepare for the challenges of the future.

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