College of Policing

The Code of Ethics – Assessment Guide

Introduction

The Assessment Guide is intended to support police organisations in embedding the Code of Ethics. It details considerations and lists questions to enable the Code to be interpreted and nationally embedded in a consistent way.

The Assessment Guide allows organisations to:

- benchmark their current ethics and integrity related activity
- identify their areas of strength as well as areas for improvement
- consider essential roles, responsibilities and processes.

The Assessment Guide also:

- highlights the applicability of the Code to everyone in policing
- clearly identifies the enablers to achieving continuous improvement
- allows organisations to ensure the Code is a key consideration throughout their business change programme.

Background

The College of Policing took an evidence-based approach to developing this Assessment Guide. This included liaison with subject matter experts and consultation with the National Policing Lead for Professional Ethics, Cleveland Chief Constable Jacqui Cheer. Further details are listed at **Appendix 1**.

Format

The Assessment Guide is structured as follows:

1. Leadership and engagement
2. Resourcing and sustainability
3. Methodology and rigour.

When producing this Assessment Guide the following principles were taken into consideration:

- proportionate scrutiny
- independence and impartiality
- competence
- efficiency

- flexibility
- inclusivity
- innovation.

1. Leadership and engagement

- Leaders promote, support and reinforce ethical behaviour at all times.
- Leaders ensure that regular reference to the Code is included in day-to-day work and training.
- Everyone is aware of and has access to the Code.
- Everyone is encouraged to question and challenge, and report if necessary, any unprofessional behaviour on the part of colleagues.
- Fair treatment is embedded throughout the organisation and an environment is maintained where challenge and feedback are encouraged.
- Training should be based on current evidence of 'what works', for example, participatory scenario training.
- Systems are in place to monitor areas of strength as well as areas for improvement.
- Police staff association and trade union representatives promote, support and reinforce ethical behaviour at all times.

Considerations

Q1. To what extent does everyone in policing perceive leaders to be setting a personal example of the principles and standards in the Code?

Q2. What do you do to actively encourage everyone to use the Code in everyday policing?

Q3. How confident are you that everyone applies the principles and standards in the Code to their everyday decision making?

Q4. Do you have systems in place to recognise areas of strength as well as to highlight areas for improvement?

Q5. To what extent does the Code underpin all training and development activities?

Q6. What proactive steps have you taken to ensure that the Code applies to everyone in policing?

Q7. To what extent can everyone explain the Code, its importance and practical application?

Q8. What steps have you taken to identify, improve and monitor areas that promote and support the Code?

Q9. How does your communications strategy raise awareness of the Code with everyone?

Q10. To what extent does your communications strategy focus on outcomes?

2. Resourcing and sustainability

- Policies, procedures and practices reflect the individual's ability to use discretion and the need to do the right thing.

- Ethics are embedded in retention, progression and promotion processes, and continuous professional development (CPD).

- Everyone is empowered to exercise discretion and do the right thing.

- All staff have the confidence to challenge and/or report unprofessional behaviour.

Considerations

Q1. How have you ensured that all policies, procedures and practices reflect the Code?

Q2. How do you ensure that your response to the Code is proportionate and not overly bureaucratic?

Q3. What steps have you taken to ensure that everyone considers, discusses and resolves ethical dilemmas?

Q4. How do you ensure that everyone is able to use their professional judgement ethically?

Q5. How do you know the National Decision Model (NDM) is used by decision makers in everyday policing to assist them in doing the right thing, in the right way, for the right reasons?

Q6. What steps have you taken to enable everyone to challenge or report unacceptable behaviour without fear of repercussion?

Q7. How do you ensure that everyone is confident that they will be treated fairly if they report a colleague's unprofessional behaviour or misconduct?

Q8. How do you ensure CPD includes exploration of ethical awareness, behaviours and leadership?

Q9. How do your promotion and selection processes assess ethical behaviour by candidates and assessors?

3. Methodology and rigour

- High standards of professional behaviour are demonstrated in every business area and at every level of the organisation.

- Risks to organisational and personal integrity are identified and appropriate action is taken.

- The organisation is perceived to be fair by those who work for or within it in any capacity.

- The assessment and response to integrity issues must be based on current evidence of 'what works' (for example, by considering ethics committees and Transparency International UK's report *Benchmarking Police Integrity Programmes*.)

Considerations

Q1.   What are your greatest risks to organisational and personal integrity and what mitigations have been put in place to manage those risks?

Q2.   To what extent do your organisational goals and performance measures encourage everyone to use their professional judgement to do the right thing?

Q3.   How do you know everyone perceives your organisation to be fair?

Q4.   To what extent do you encourage and apply organisational learning relating to integrity?

Q5.   Have you included external scrutiny in your response to your integrity risks?

Q6.   Are you able to demonstrate that your activities to embed the Code have positively changed behaviour?

Q7.   What steps have you taken to consider and build the evidence base in relation to ethical policing?

Q8.   How inclusive is your definition of 'everyone'?

Appendix 1

Development of the Assessment Guide has involved:

Consultation

- national policing lead for Professional Ethics and the national policing lead for Professional Standards (both portfolios are now held by a single person)

- internal and external subject matter experts

- a wide range of police practitioners.

Key reading

- Successive versions of the Code of Ethics for the policing profession of England and Wales (as produced by the Integrity Programme, College of Policing)

- Committee on Standards in Public Life (2013) *Standards matter: A review of best practice in promoting good behaviour in public life*

- Transparency International UK (2011) *Benchmarking Police Integrity Programmes*

- ACPO (2011) *Integrity Model*

- NPIA (2012) *Supporting integrity in the police service* (unpublished discussion paper for HMIC)

- HMIC (2011) *Without fear or favour*

- College of Policing *The Equality Standard for the Police Service*

- Recommendations from ACPO/IPCC (2012) *The abuse of police powers to perpetrate sexual violence*

- NPIA (2012) *Integrity within the police service – implementing change* (unpublished discussion paper for HMIC)

Input from senior leadership programmes

The 2013 Strategic Command Course resulted in 36 assignments on the following topic:

Using the Code of Ethics as your starting point, please devise a plan to promote higher levels of ethics and integrity in your force/organisation.

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