



College of  
Policing

# Brief

Islam prayer guidance →

Romance fraud →

New SCC director →

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Updates in police law, operational policing practice and criminal justice, produced by the **Legal Services Department** at the College of Policing



**World Autism  
Awareness Day**



**PCSC Bill  
factsheet**



**End-to-end  
encryption  
support**



**Police praised  
in pandemic**



The College of Policing Brief is a scanning publication intended to capture and consolidate key criminal justice issues, both current and future, impacting on all areas of policing.

During the production of the Brief, information is included from governmental bodies, criminal justice organisations and research bodies. As such, the Brief should prove an invaluable guide to those responsible for strategic decision making, operational planning and police training.

The College of Policing is also responsible for Authorised Professional Practice (APP). APP is the official and most up-to-date source of policing practice and covers a range of policing activities such as: police use of firearms, treatment of people in custody, investigation of child abuse and management of intelligence. APP is available online at [app.college.police.uk](http://app.college.police.uk)

Any enquiries regarding this publication or to request copies in accessible formats please contact us at [brief@college.pnn.police.uk](mailto:brief@college.pnn.police.uk)

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# Editorial

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Dear readers,

Welcome to the May edition of College Brief, your monthly update of what's new in the policing and criminal justice field, produced by the Legal Services team at the College of Policing.

Within this month's edition:

- Romance fraud: five things to know
- Domestic Abuse Bill receives Royal Assent
- Policing praised for keeping people safe.

To find out more about the College and what we do, including information on the Policing Education Qualifications Framework (PEQF) training, please visit the [College of Policing website](#).

We hope that our publication supports police officers and staff in their work. We are always looking for ways to get better at what we do, so please [get in touch](#) if you have any feedback or ideas for future content.

Thank you for reading,

**The Legal Services Team**

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For subscription requests, further information or to send us ideas about what you would like to see in upcoming editions, please email us at:

[brief@college.pnn.police.uk](mailto:brief@college.pnn.police.uk)

# College news

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## **New strategic command course director**

Assistant Commissioner Neil Basu, the Metropolitan Police Service's head of specialist operations, will be responsible for leading the 2021 strategic command course (SCC), preparing officers and staff for promotion.

Neil, who is taking up the role to ensure the course matches the needs of the service, will be seconded to the College in the weeks leading up to the start of the course to ensure all final preparations are completed. Following that, he will lead the delivery of the SCC from 20 September to 17 December 2021.

The SCC will contain some online work, which must be completed by the candidates, but will be mainly run with face-to face modules at the College of Policing site in Ryton.

Neil, who was awarded the Queen's Police Medal for distinguished service in 2016, said: 'It is an honour to have been chosen to lead the 2021 SCC as director.'

Read more: [Neil Basu announced as new strategic command course director](#)

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## **Online police recruitment support**

As part of the policing response to the COVID-19 restrictions, the College designed and delivered an online assessment process to ensure new officers could continue to be recruited throughout the pandemic. This online assessment process will remain in place until 31 March 2022. Prior to that, it will undergo an evaluation and independent peer review, as well as additional analysis of national and force-level results and stakeholder feedback.

The online process is being used by all 43 Home Office forces in England and Wales, with more than 24,000 candidates already receiving their results.

To support police forces in further improving their recruitment processes, the College is working with policing on:

- updating the national police constable application form to better support recruitment, ensuring it is current and inclusive by design
- providing practical guidance, tools and workshops to all forces that focus on identifying and removing any disparity between candidate groups within locally managed selection processes. This includes any local assessment of applicants before they are invited to take the online assessment and local interview processes
- developing consistent standards for local selection processes used by police forces

Read more: [\*\*Police recruitment supported online into 2022\*\*](#)

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### **Islam prayer guidance released**

The College, in collaboration with the National Association of Muslim Police, has developed [\*\*guidance on prayer provisions\*\*](#). The guidance provides information on prayer in Islam, effective practice for police forces supporting and facilitating provisions for Muslim officers and staff, and recommendations that can help create an inclusive environment.

Read more: [\*\*Guidance on Islam prayer provision released\*\*](#)

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## **The Victims' Commissioner on the new Victims' Code**

The Victims' Code is a set of rights for victims, setting out the support they are entitled to receive from all areas of the criminal justice system. The revised Code has now been published by the Ministry of Justice, based on responses to a government consultation carried out in March 2020.

Dame Vera Baird, the Victims' Commissioner, has urged people to 'put yourself in their shoes' when it comes to victims of crime. To watch a video of Dame Vera Baird discussing how the police play a huge part in supporting victims of crime, please click the link below.

Read more: [\*\*Putting victims at the heart of policing\*\*](#)

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# Legal updates

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## Bills

### **Domestic Abuse Bill**

On 29 April 2021, the Domestic Abuse Bill passed both Houses of Parliament and received Royal Assent. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021, as it is now known, will provide improved protection for victims of domestic abuse and strengthened measures to tackle perpetrators.

Key measures include:

- A new, wide-ranging statutory definition of domestic abuse, which includes emotional abuse, coercive or controlling behaviour and economic abuse.
- Recognising that an abuser can exert controlling or coercive behaviour on a victim, even if the parties do not live together. The specific offence of controlling or coercive behaviour will be extended to cover non-separation abuse.
- Extending the existing 'revenge porn' offence to cover the threat to disclose intimate images.
- Increasing access to special measures in courts to help prevent intimidation, for example screens and giving evidence via video link.
- Ensuring abusers can no longer directly cross-examine victims in family and civil courts.

Read more: [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#)

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## **Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill**

A Bill to make provision about:

- the police and other emergency workers
- collaboration between authorities to prevent and reduce serious violence
- offensive weapons homicide reviews
- new offences and for the modification of existing offences
- the powers of the police and other authorities for the purposes of preventing, detecting, investigating or prosecuting crime or investigating other matters
- the maintenance of public order
- bail, remand, sentencing, detention, release, management and rehabilitation of offenders

For an updated factsheet on the bill, click [here](#).

Read more: [Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill 2021](#)

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## **Prisons (Substance Testing) Bill**

A Bill to make provision about substance testing in prisons and similar institutions. It is currently in the House of Lords undergoing committee stage.

Report stage is due next, however, no date has been set.

Read more: [Prisons \(Substance Testing\) Bill](#)

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# Policing

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## News

### **Policing praised for keeping people safe during pandemic**

The independent inspectorate of policing has praised officers, staff and volunteers for their ‘exceptional dedication and commitment’ to keeping people safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. In a recent [\*\*report\*\*](#), Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) commended policing for its ability to respond to emergencies and adapt quickly in exceptional circumstances.

Chair of the National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC), Martin Hewitt, has responded to the report, stating that he is ‘immensely proud of the way forces across England and Wales have responded to the pandemic. Officers, staff and volunteers have worked very long hours, frequently going above and beyond the call of duty.’

Read more: [\*\*Police credited for ‘immediate and decisive action to keep people safe’ during pandemic\*\*](#)

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### **HMICFRS’s proposed 2021/22 policing inspection programme and framework**

HMICFRS have launched a consultation welcoming views on their proposed policing inspection programme over the coming year.

Full details of the consultation, which is open until Tuesday 18 May 2021, can be found by clicking the link below.

Read more: [\*\*HMICFRS’s proposed 2021/22 policing inspection programme and framework\*\*](#)

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## **Pol Fed: World Autism Awareness Day**

To mark World Autism Awareness Day, which took place on 2 April 2021, the Police Federation produced two videos, which featured officers who have autism, talking about their unique journeys. The videos can be accessed by clicking the link below.

The first features Andy Buchan, a retired sergeant from Staffordshire Police, who is the author of 'Autism and the Police: Practical Advice for Officers and Other First Responders'. The second video features Avon & Somerset Police Inspector, Adam O'Loughlin, who has used his diagnosis to help people, such as through his social media platform.

Read more: [\*\*Fed marks World Autism Awareness Day through the eyes of members\*\*](#)

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# Criminal justice news

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## **White supremacist group to be banned in the UK**

Home Secretary, Priti Patel, has asked Parliament to proscribe white supremacist group, Atomwaffen Division, and list National Socialist Order as its alias. Atomwaffen Division is a predominantly US-based white supremacist group that celebrates and promotes the use of violence to bring about a fascist, white ethno-state, by means of a 'race war'.

Proscribing the group will result in it being a criminal offence to be a member of, or invite support for the group. Atomwaffen Division appeared to have disbanded in March 2020, following pressure from US law enforcement agencies, but in July 2020, National Socialist Order announced itself online as its 'successor'. The government deems this to be the same group operating under a different name.

The decision to proscribe the group comes after a meeting of the Proscription Review Group, which is made up of representatives from operational partners, the intelligence community and other governmental experts.

Read more: [\*\*Government to ban white supremacist group in the UK\*\*](#)

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## Support for end-to-end encryption increases

An NSPCC/YouGov survey has found that 33% of UK adults support using end-to-end encryption on social media and messaging services. But support increases to 62%, if end-to-end encryption was introduced when technology firms could ensure children's safety would be protected.

End-to-end encryption means that only the devices communicating have the ability to decrypt and read the messages. This is useful for privacy purposes, but also presents risks for child safety and means online abuse can go unnoticed.

Read more: [Support for end-to-end encryption increases if child safety can be protected](#)

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## Reports

### Romance fraud: five things you need to know

1. Romance fraud is one of eight high-priority crime types assessed by the City of London Police's National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) as having a significant impact on UK citizens. Reports to Action Fraud have increased by 26% in the last year.
2. Fake online profiles are created by criminals to 'form a relationship' with a victim in order to gain money or personal information. This can occur on dating sites and other platforms that have a messaging function, such as Facebook, Instagram, and gaming sites and apps.
3. Warning signs include the person making excuses as to why they cannot meet or video chat, and claiming to work overseas in a respectable profession. Individuals committing romance fraud may talk to the victim for weeks, or months, to build up trust before creating a time-critical emergency, such as the need to pay an urgent medical bill.
4. A large proportion of romance fraudsters appear to be based abroad, which can make investigations into suspects difficult. The City of London Police has set up a number of ways for police forces to disrupt romance fraud activity, such as alerting money transfer services to suspect customer accounts.

5. Romance fraud does not always involve a direct transfer of money. An individual may ask: for access to a victim's bank account, loans to be taken out, copies of the victim's personal documents, gift card codes, or the victim to receive or send parcels.

Read more: [Romance fraud](#)

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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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