

Committee minutes

Meeting 4 for the Review of Guidance for Professional Behaviour

Date	5 April 2022
Time	13:00 – 16:00
Location	Microsoft Teams
Chair	Richard Bennett

Organisations present
Association of Special Constabulary Officers (ASCO)
Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS)
Home Office
National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC)
Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW)
Police Firearms Officers Association (PFOA)
Police Scotland
Police Superintendents' Association (PSA)
UNISON

Welcome

The committee were welcomed to the meeting. The committee members and the College development team introduced themselves. The aims for the meeting were outlined: to review the drafts for the guidance for professional behaviour and Code of Practice that were produced for the top three priority areas identified at the previous committee meeting.

Smaller group discussion

Attendees were divided into two groups and presented with the work packages for the following top three priorities:

1. upstanding and challenging unacceptable behaviour
2. candour and owning up
3. higher expectations of policing

The committee members were asked to provide feedback on the content.

Upstanding and challenging unacceptable behaviour

Committee members raised a number of points about specific wording of draft text, as well as the following general points.

- If applicants provide access to social media accounts, this raises concern that there could be potential for inappropriate access.
- The consequences of failing to challenge and routes for reporting should be outlined. People's ability and confidence to challenge differs. A proportionate approach should be taken to challenging and reporting unacceptable behaviour.
- References to conduct regulations should be removed to ensure that the text is inclusive of all, and applies to officers and staff.
- Understanding and interpretation of the term 'vocation' varies. The term 'protecting professionalism' was suggested as a more suitable alternative.
- The extent to which malicious allegations and reporting is a significant issue in forces is debatable.

- Whistleblowing may be better placed in the Code of Practice. There could be a requirement for forces to ensure there are processes and policies in place for whistleblowing.
- The text should include an expectation of staff to know what acceptable and unacceptable behaviour is.
- The text should have greater emphasis on reversing the accepted culture of silence and should highlight that challenging inappropriate behaviour is the norm.

Candour and owning up

Committee members suggested the following.

- 'A positive duty to tell the truth' should also be covered in the Code of Practice, as it is the responsibility of the force as a whole and not just the individual.
- The meaning of 'expectation that ownership of candour is non-negotiable, viewed as the norm' is unclear. It could be changed to 'culture should be open rather than secretive'.
- 'Forces should not ignore the consequences of their actions or try to shift failures' could be incorporated within another point. The organisational element should be covered in the Code of Practice.
- Any reference to conduct regulations should be removed.
- Language and wording should be carefully considered – for example, the word 'prevent' should be avoided.
- Candour and learning should be considered separately, as candour can be interpreted differently.
- There is limited confidence and support to be open and to report.
- Learning should not be put on the individual, it should be force-wide organisational learning.
- In the current policing landscape, with negative news and media attention, it is a challenging time to emphasise reflection and learning.

Higher expectations of policing

Committee members suggested the following.

- All interactions should count, not just first impressions.
- There is an expectation of leaders and managers to lead by example.
- The example provided for professionalism is officer-focused and should be changed. It should be about service provision and the public's view of the role of the police.
- It should be clear about the extent of restrictions on peoples' private lives and the level of disclosure required. It can vary depending on role and there should be proportionality around it.
- It should be clear as to what change of circumstances need to be reported and whether this is dependent on a person's vetting level. The Code of Practice could include a requirement that change of circumstances should be discussed as part of performance development review (PDR) processes.
- Associations with family members are beyond an individual's control, which should be considered in the wording. The Code of Practice could include that every force should have a policy for notifying associations.
- Training on conflicts of interest should be provided to all.

The committee members were thanked for their feedback. The College development team will consider the points raised.

The committee representative for the NPCC presented a document that the organisation had produced on duty of candour. The committee members were asked to provide feedback on the document via email.

Prioritising key issues

The College development team recapped the key behavioural issues that the guidance for professional behaviour should address, which were identified at the previous meeting. The College development team advised that one of the next topics selected was sub-optimal behaviour and reflective practice.

The committee members were asked to rank their top two priorities from the remaining themes presented. The key priorities were identified as:

1. abuse of position for a sexual purpose
2. on-duty and off-duty expectations

Group discussion – Code of Practice

The College development team presented the draft Code of Practice. The committee members were asked to review the organisational and chief officer requirements section and share any issues or concerns.

The committee members raised the following points:

- Chief officers should take action to encourage and ensure ethical behaviour within their force.
- The Code of Practice should have a strong emphasis on reflective practice. The Home Office, in particular, is keen on a learning-based approach.
- Where police officers and police officer conduct regulations are referenced, the Code of Practice should also reference police staff and regulations for police staff.
- In relation to organisational learning, the Code of Practice should include a requirement to ensure a culture where individuals feel supported.
- The Code of Practice should include a requirement for appropriate timely investigations for professional standards departments.
- The Code of Practice could include a requirement for chief officers to report to police and crime commissioners (PCCs) how their force is adhering to the Code of Practice and related guidance. This could give confidence to PCCs and the public that forces are taking action to ensure ethical behaviour from all.
- The Code of Practice could include a requirement that force systems are kept up to date with protected characteristics. However, it does need to focus on the key ethical behaviours and not overlap too much with other guidance.
- There needs to be consideration as to what has not been included in the Code of Practice.

The committee members were asked to provide any further feedback to the College Development team via email.

Terms of reference

The terms of reference were amended, to reflect that the committee will help develop the content for the guidance for professional behaviour and the Code of Practice. The committee members were asked to provide any feedback on the terms of reference to the College development team.

Close

The College development team will begin developing the draft guidance for professional behaviour and Code of Practice for the next three topics identified and will ask the committee members for feedback.

The dates for the next meetings were shared. The draft agenda for the meeting in May was outlined.

The committee members were thanked for their attendance and contributions.

Appendix 1: Presentation



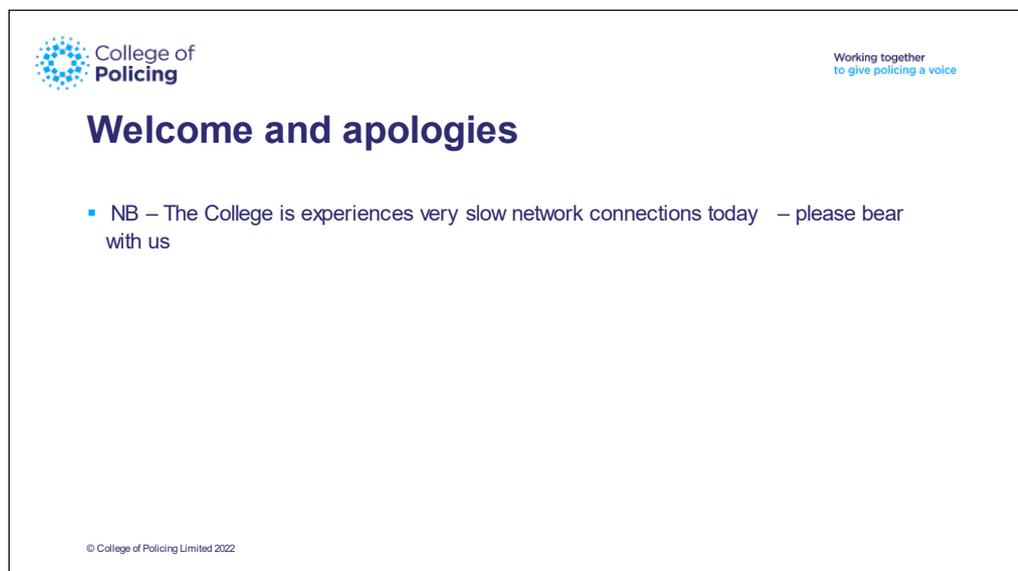
College of Policing logo and tagline: Working together to give policing a voice.

Code of Ethics Review

Professional Behaviour Committee Meeting 4
5th April 2022

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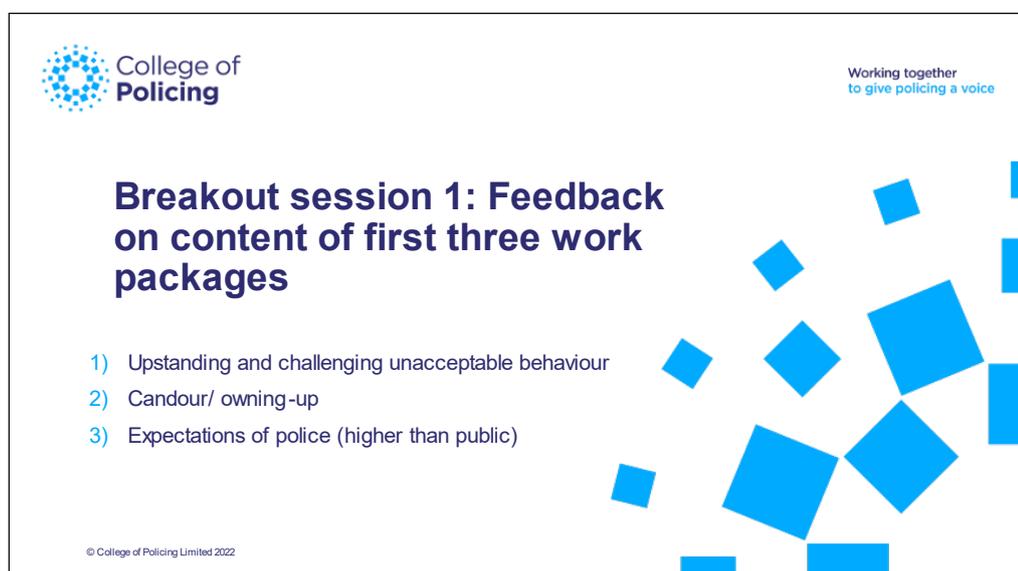
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Welcome and apologies

- NB – The College is experiences very slow network connections today – please bear with us

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Breakout session 1: Feedback on content of first three work packages

- 1) Upstanding and challenging unacceptable behaviour
- 2) Candour/ owning-up
- 3) Expectations of police (higher than public)

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Recap of key issues identified

- Whistleblowing
- Business interests/ notifiable interests
- Inappropriate associations
- Legal highs
- Performance culture
- Social media use
- Abuse of position for a sexual purpose
- Confidentiality
- ~~Expectations of officers (higher than public)~~
- Impartiality (politically charged statements)
- ~~Upstanding + challenging inappropriate behaviour~~
- Misogyny and sexism
- **Sub-optimal behaviour/ reflective practice**
- Abuse of authority
- Traits of leadership
- Setting standards of support/ welfare
- Diversity and inclusion/ discrimination*
- On/off duty expectations
- Expectations of leaders
- Role modelling standards
- Digital ethics
- ~~Candour / owning up and opportunity to learn~~
- Legitimate use of powers
- Right of public to be treated respectfully
- Ambassadorialship
- Culture – how society moves, what was ok then isn't now

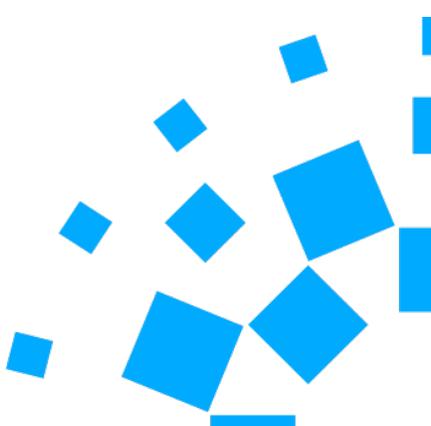
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Voting Results

1. Sub-optimal behaviour/ reflective practice
2. Abuse of position for sexual purpose
3. On/off duty expectations



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Content of the Code of Practice

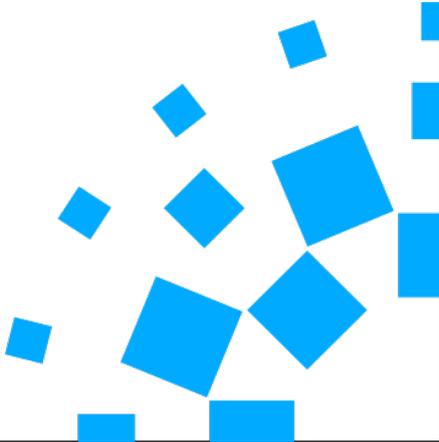


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Terms of Reference



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Dates for next meetings

- **Meeting 5:** May 11th 2022 – Clermont Hotel, Charing Cross, London (10:30-15:30)
- **Meeting 6:** June 14th 2022 – virtual event (13:00-16:00)
- **Meeting 7:** July 13th 2022 – virtual event (13:00-16:00) calendar appointment to follow
- **Meeting 8:** August 10th 2022 – virtual event (13:00-16:00) calendar appointment to follow
- **Meeting 9:** September 13th – TBC

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