

Committee(s): Professional Standards and Integrity Committee Police Authority Board	Dated: 27 February 2024 6 March 2024
Subject: College of Policing's Code of Practice for ethical Policing – 'The Code of Ethics' Implementation at City of London Police.	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1- People are safe and feel safe
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N/A
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Commissioner of Police Pol_29-24	For Information
Report author: Rob Atkin MBE, T/Commander	

Summary

This report outlines the changes to the new Code of Ethics (CoE) for policing which was launched on 24th January 2024. The report outlines the opportunities that this presents for the City of London Police (CoLP) in furtherance of its work already being undertaken in relation to supporting equality, diversity & inclusion, officer & staff wellbeing, conduct and professional practice improvements and importantly to support all our staff and volunteers to do the right thing. A well embedded CoE also has significant benefits in improving policing encounters (e.g., stop & search) with members of the public and overall service provision. This builds on the previous CoE which was developed in 2014 and was the first statutory Code of Practice issued by the College, following its establishment as the first professional body for policing. The development of the Code was considered to be an important step in aligning the College to other professional organisations, most of which have codes of ethics. Since 2014 the CoLP has been working to the previous CoE and is well established within Force underpinning policy, process, and ways of working.

The new CoE presents an opportunity for the Force to build on existing work undertaken in relation to ethical policing and decision making and embed across the working practices and culture of the CoLP which will include the development of an Ethics Board.

Appendix 4 details a high-level draft plan on a page of work to embed the code with CoLP Officers, Staff & Volunteers and across the full range of our policies, processes, meeting structures & external scrutiny. There is now an internal CoE Delivery Group which is overseeing the embedding of the new CoE in CoLP.

This work is being led by Rob Atkin, T/Commander.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

1. Note the content of this report and the new code of ethics launched by the College of Policing on 24th January 2024.
2. Note the three supporting web links to relevant documents (Appendices 1-3) **The Code of Practice for Ethical Policing; Ethical Policing Principles; Guidance for Ethical Behaviour in Policing;** and
3. Note the Code of Practice for Ethical Policing will place the requirement to implement and embed ethical policing onto a statutory footing for Chief officers and will form part of HMICFRS inspections from 2025.

Main Report

Background

1. The current code of ethics (CoE) was introduced by the College of Policing in 2014 and was laid before parliament as a code of practice and has a legal status and applies to all police areas of England & Wales as defined by section 1 of the Police act 1996 and relates specifically to all chief officers in the discharge of their functions.
2. The 2014 codes enabled policing to clearly lay out the expectations of every member of the profession and the expectation was that 'every person working in policing would adopt the code as their personal guide to the principles they are expected to uphold and the standards of behaviour they are required to meet'. It was also an important step in aligning policing with other professions, many of which had established codes of ethics. The 2014 codes used the Nolan Principles (the seven principles of public life) as the framework for the code with the additions of fairness and respect also being added, resulting in a CoE with nine policing principles (accountability, fairness, honesty, integrity, leadership, objectivity, openness, respect & selflessness) which were overlaid with the standards of professional behaviour.
3. The previous CoE is well embedded across the City of London Police and is evident in our policies, procedures, and processes. The previous CoE for example is utilised by officers and staff as part of the application of the National Decision-Making Model¹, it also forms part of assessments for promotion, recruitment and as part of organisational debriefs. The launch of the new CoE presents an opportunity for the CoLP to further build on that work and to further embed ethical decision making and behaviours across the Force.

Current Position

4. A review of the current CoE was commenced by the College of Policing in 2021 with a series of public consultation events, evidence reviews, best practice in other organisations and arguably most importantly consultation with a wide spectrum of officers, police staff, volunteers, stakeholders & third

¹ [National decision model | College of Policing](#)

parties. This has resulted in a CoE being launched on 24th January 2024 which has been truly shaped by the service and seeks to address issues that were identified with the previous CoE namely:

- i) Previous code consisted of 10 chapters under the headings of professional behaviour which came from Police Conduct Regulations. An outcome of this was that the previous CoE was seen as a conduct document and not a document that helps people do the right thing or focus on ethical decision making. There have been cases where Police Officers have wrongly been 'charged' with breaching the Code of Ethics. This has further cemented the view the previous CoE was a conduct document and not one used to guide ethical decisions and help people do the right thing.
- ii) Policing found it difficult to identify with how the seven Nolan principles of public life plus fairness & respect were articulated so there was a disconnect between how staff viewed the CoE and how they made their daily decisions.
- iii) The current CoE was viewed as punitive and reached for when something has gone wrong rather than using the code to guide decision making going forwards. It was not seen as encouraging openness, reflective behaviour and creating a culture of continuous learning.
- iv) Nationally, the CoE was viewed as being applicable to Police Officers rather than Police Staff; many police staff did not view the CoE as relevant to their work even though it was promoted to all.
- v) Chief Officers perceived the previous CoE as being unclear on the specifics of what was required to run an ethical organisation.
- vi) The aim of the new code is to help officers and staff to do the right thing rather than holding them accountable when things go wrong.

5. The new CoE is in three component parts.

- i) **A Code of Practice for Ethical Policing** (Link at Appendix 1) which sets out for Chief Officers "the actions they should carry out to ensure how they should lead an ethical culture and where staff are supported and directed to use the ethical principles in decision making and demonstrate professional behaviour". It is a statutory document, meaning that police Chief Officers have a legal duty to 'have regard' to it when discharging their functions. However, it does not alter the existing legal powers and responsibilities of Chief Officers or alter existing regulations about police (mis)conduct. Instead, it is intended to set out general and specific expectations, as well as information and guidance, on how Chief Officers should work within these frameworks to safeguard and proactively promote ethical policing. While Chief Officers are ultimately accountable, the Code covers the work of 'everyone in policing' – i.e. officers, permanent staff, PCSOs, Special Constables, volunteers, and contractors and contracted service providers.

- It also describes what proactive action is required in response to misconduct and corruption. The code has statutory standing and covers requirement in relation to:
- How to ensure internal and external ethical behaviours
- Public service expectations
- Creating a culture where unprofessional behaviour is challenged.
- Staff welfare is well managed.
- Ensuring openness and candour
- continuing professional development for staff and recognising and responding to misconduct.

ii) **Ethical Policing Principles** (Link at Appendix 2) – this document sets out the new CoE principles namely **Courage, Respect and Empathy and Public Service** and under each principle clearly sets out how officers and staff demonstrate each principle with key behaviours detailed in clearly defined language. A summary is detailed below: The aim of the document is to help Police Officers and Staff to make the right decisions and actions.

Doing the Right Thing

In the Right Way

For the Right Reason

Courage

- Taking responsibility
- Setting an example
- Challenging unprofessional behaviour and practice
- Being honest, open, and accountable
- Encouraging feedback and scrutiny

Respect and empathy

- Listening with care and respect
- Listening to and understanding different perspectives
- Understanding the impact of emotions and welfare
- Responding to individual needs
- Being fair and impartial

Public service

- Delivering a service to be proud of
- Acting lawfully
- Understanding and responding to community needs
- Reflecting on and applying knowledge and experience
- Improving our self, our peers and profession

iii) **Guidance for Ethical and Professional Behaviour in Policing** (Link at Appendix 3) This document brings the ethical policing principles alive for staff with practical examples and considerations and covers areas such as relationships, social media and wellness and wellbeing in the workplace. The document sets out the expectations for ethical & professional behaviour. The document seeks to promote a positive workplace culture and importantly it uses inclusive and positive language to give clarity about:

- Being a member of the policing profession
- Being open, honest & candid
- Fairness & respect
- Decision making
- Recognising the opportunity to learn

- Challenging unprofessional behaviour
 - When behaviour does not meet expectations
6. **Relevance of the new CoE to misconduct proceedings** It is important to note that the CoE is **not** the standard, it is guidance with the same status as other guidance produced by the College of Policing. The guidance describes how policing professionals should behave, in a way that makes it easy for them to understand those expectations and avoid unprofessional behaviour. Where the CoE is not followed, it **may** provide evidence towards an assessment of misconduct in the same way as other policy or guidance. There are references of CoE in both Home Office Guidance and Police Conduct Regulations- the Home Office will be updating these to ensure clarity on how CoE is used going forward. CoLP Professional Standards Unit should still have 'regard to', 'inform assessments', be 'partly guided by' the CoE in misconduct assessments.
 7. Nationally work has also being undertaken to enhance the understanding of Digital and Data Ethics including biometrics, digital forensics, surveillance & investigatory powers, artificial intelligence, digital public contact development, robotic automation, the use of numerous algorithms, and the ethical procurement of technology. These are currently across a range of national workstreams. To look at ethical issues and dilemmas in these areas it has been agreed that nationally the Biometric Forensics Ethics Group (BFEG) will undertake this function. Work is currently underway to agree how such dilemmas will be referred to this committee from Forces via the National Police Ethics Committee.
 8. There is currently no formulated Ethics Board in CoLP, however, CoLP was previously part of an arrangement with the MPS Ethics Panel which is no longer running. Ethics Boards are a tested method of testing organisational leadership, decision making, policy & practice. Members may wish to note the work which is being commenced to look at best practice nationally and commence a City of London Police Ethics Board which will further embed the new Code of Ethics across the work of the CoLP
 9. A new framework will be provided by the National Portfolio to forces utilising the new Code of Practice to assist us in considering our own ethical structures and how we as a force best enhance the delivery of an ethical organisation. It is likely that in future ethical structures and how the Code of Practice has been implemented in forces will be considered as part of PEEL Inspections from 2025 onwards.

Embedding the new Code of Ethics in the City of London Police

10. There is a significant opportunity for the CoLP to use the new CoE to enhance and inform significant work that is taking place in force already. Importantly the new code helps our people do the **right thing, in the right way, for the right reason** and promotes openness, accountability, learning & improvement. It underpins our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy currently being refreshed, in that the CoE promotes a respectful and supportive culture in which everyone can thrive. It is our opportunity to engage our people to think about ethical decision making, actions and behaviours but also to further enhance the service we provide the public. For example, the link between

Organisational Justice and Procedural Justice and how ethical decision making can enhance encounters such as stop search, use of force and services to victims and suspects alike. There is also strong evidence to suggest that there are clear links between wellbeing of staff and the making of good ethical decisions so linking this work to our wellbeing work will also have potential benefits for the CoLP.

11. The key here in considering our delivery plan is how we connect the new CoE to all our staff so that ethics become an integral part of their thinking, actions, and behaviours daily. It simply cannot be a document which is launched and only referred to for promotion processes or in our staff's view a misconduct document.
12. The College of Policing are producing a range of material to assist forces in communicating and engaging staff and the public and partners. Internal communications will be using this material to ensure the new CoE is bought to life in CoLP but tailored to our local environment to compliment the work already going on and to link to our own force values (Appendix 5). The College of Policing view this as an 18-month programme of work to embed the new codes. The launch is also being supported by an online learning program for all staff to complete.
13. Appendix 4 details a high-level draft internal plan of work to embed the code both with all our Police Officers, Staff & Volunteers but also across the full range of our policies, processes, meeting structures & external scrutiny. There is now an internal CoE delivery group, chaired by T/Cdr Rob Atkin, which is overseeing the embedding of the new CoE in CoLP. Delivery of the plan will also be monitored on a quarterly basis at the CoLP Performance Management Group.
14. The launch on 24th January has been supported by a series of force communications and staff briefings to introduce the new codes, including a video from the T/Commissioner discussing the new CoE and the importance to individual officers and the force in helping our staff 'do the right thing'. The plan then required Directorate Heads over the coming weeks, having been briefed & equipped with materials leading conversations across their teams on the new CoE and having open conversation in respect of what they mean and practical application. The importance here will be how the CoE becomes part of daily conversations and considerations across the CoLP for example in debriefing and PDR conversations. This is supported by work that Professionalism and Trust are delivering in relation to 'ethical conversations' – an opportunity where staff can discuss ethical issues and their response.
15. During our launch, we have referenced our current force values and how they align to the new CoE for example empathy naturally aligns with compassion, integrity requires courage and professionalism has a direct link to public service. This will form part of the discussions across the CoLP with staff in providing practical examples of how the new codes can be demonstrated on and off duty.
16. The delivery plan will also see the new CoE being integrated into all our in-force training and importantly how the changes affect for example National Decision-Making model considerations. This will be a specific workstream to

map all our training, to refresh and review content to ensure the new CoE runs throughout. Likewise, our HR processes will be updated to reflect the new code whether that is recruitment, assessment, promotions framework or PDR. HR processes such as PDR reflections and promotion processes ensure our staff have a practical opportunity to demonstrate how they are using the CoE in their daily work.

17. Other key areas of policy and practice that will need to ensure the CoE is reflected in decision making is Professional Standards. Staff training and policy changes will need to embed the new codes to ensure that PSD have regard to', 'inform assessments', and be 'partly guided by' the CoE in misconduct assessments.
18. An external communications plan has also been created to compliment the national media that will be completed by the College of Policing on launch date. Going forward examples of CoE good practice offer an opportunity to inform both our internal and external good news content.
19. In many forces Ethics Boards are now a tried and tested method of testing organisational leadership, decision-making, policy, and practice. Owing to the varied nature of how ethics boards are run in forces, the NPCC portfolio has instigated work, led by ACC Osman Khan, to review national practice, research and academic findings to formalise some good practice guidance for forces to consider.
20. Recognising that cultural change and the improvements that we would want to see both internally and indeed externally on public encounters and service delivery will not be solely delivered by a new code of ethics. However, if the new code is viewed as the foundation of all that we do in force and intertwined with current and future change, policy, leadership & continual professional development the evidence suggests that we can achieve a significant positive shift in both internal feeling of fairness and belonging but also improvements in service provision and interactions with the public.
21. From 2025 HMICFRS inspections will examine how the CoE has been embedded in force and will form an integral part of the force inspection process.

Conclusion

22. The launch of a new CoE presents a significant opportunity for the CoLP to further enhance our workplace culture, leadership, and well-being for all staff. The new CoE compliments work already underway under our refreshed equality, diversity, and inclusion strategy. It presents an opportunity for staff conversations in respect of ethical decision making and a forward-looking set of principles and practical guidance to assist our staff in doing the right things. It is an opportunity to reaffirm the ethical behaviours that all staff are expected to consider as part of their daily duties. The importance of leadership across all areas of the force in embedding the new CoE and having ongoing conversations with staff will be essential in embedding behavioural and cultural change in the long term. Members will be updated in respect of our progress as we work to fully embed the CoE.

Rob Atkin
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City of London Police

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Codes of Practice for ethical policing

[Code of Practice for Ethical Policing | College of Policing](#)

Appendix 2 – Ethical policing principles

[Ethical policing principles | College of Policing](#)

Appendix 3- Guidance on ethical and professional behaviour in policing

[Guidance for ethical and professional behaviour in policing | College of Policing](#)

Appendix 4 – Overview of delivery plan

Appendix 5 – example of internal posters x2