



Police Service
of Northern Ireland

Competency and Values Framework

An Overview



College of
Policing

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Foreword

Foreword by Robert Singleton, Deputy Chief Constable and
Clare Duffield, Assistant Chief Officer of People & Organisational Development



We, as the Police Service of Northern Ireland, are Victim Focused, Community Focused and Workforce Focused.

We are committed to developing our people throughout their careers so they are equipped to do their jobs.

The Competency and Values Framework (CVF) describes the behaviours and values our staff and officers display every day in discharging their responsibilities to keep people safe. The CVF, in addition to our Code of Ethics, provides an essential tool against which we can continuously improve our performance as well as support individuals to learn, develop and progress.

Competencies describe our ways of working, the skills, knowledge and behaviours needed for us to carry out our jobs, and the framework outlines the different levels of proficiency which are needed for different roles, grades or ranks. Competencies describe **what** the job needs as well as **how** it should be done - the skills and behaviours to perform in the role, and the outcomes expected.

We use the CVF in how we recruit and promote our staff and officers

and to assist conversations about performance, wellbeing and how we deliver our services to the public. The CVF also shapes the practical content of our training courses and learning opportunities provided through the Police College.

The framework will ensure there are clear expectations of everyone working in policing which in turn will lead to standards being raised for the benefit and safety of the public. The culture, standards and behaviours outlined within the CVF apply equally to everyone in the organisation. Our profession is committed to the highest standards of behaviour.

The CVF, alongside our Duty of Candour, provides guidance for the ethical and professional behaviour for everyone in policing. This is intrinsic to community confidence and legitimacy. This guidance, in conjunction with the Code of Ethics, will assist in building a positive workplace culture by promoting professional conduct and decision making.

We are very proud of the professional service being delivered daily and we are committed to a culture of learning. The CVF should be recognisable in our day to day

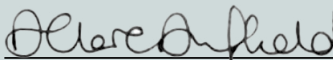
interactions with one another and used to drive performance and excellence. It will also be recognisable in how we support victims and work with, and for, the communities we serve. The CVF outlines the key values and provides the building blocks to ensure our service delivery is of a consistently excellent standard.

The CVF aims to support all policing professionals now and into the future. It is closely aligned to College of Policing nationally recognised behaviours and values. These underpin everything we do at PSNI.



Robert Singleton

Deputy Chief Constable



Clare Duffield

*Assistant Chief Officer, People
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Introduction

The Competency and Values Framework (CVF) aims to support all policing professionals, now and into the future. It sets out nationally recognised behaviours and values, which will provide a consistent foundation for a range of Police Service of Northern Ireland and national processes. This framework highlights the importance of ethical and values-driven behaviours in police officers and staff.

The design of the CVF makes general application of the Code of Ethics a reality. It helps to embed the Code of Ethics into all of our workforce, and that we fully consider the principles underlying it in all recruitment, selection and professional development decisions. This will ensure officers and staff develop and demonstrate behaviours that lead to ethical and effective performance, which in turn will lead to standards being raised for the benefit and safety of the public.

The 2024 CVF largely follows the structure of the previous version. It consists of:

- a refreshed set of six relevant and forward facing competencies
- competencies in three levels to reflect various levels of responsibility and role complexity
- three defined and measurable core values
- defining each value by behavioural indicators

What are values and competencies?

Values are beliefs which are important to an individual and which guide and motivate particular behaviours and actions. Competencies are behaviours (knowledge, skills or abilities) related to effective job performance.

Figure 1: CVF diagram

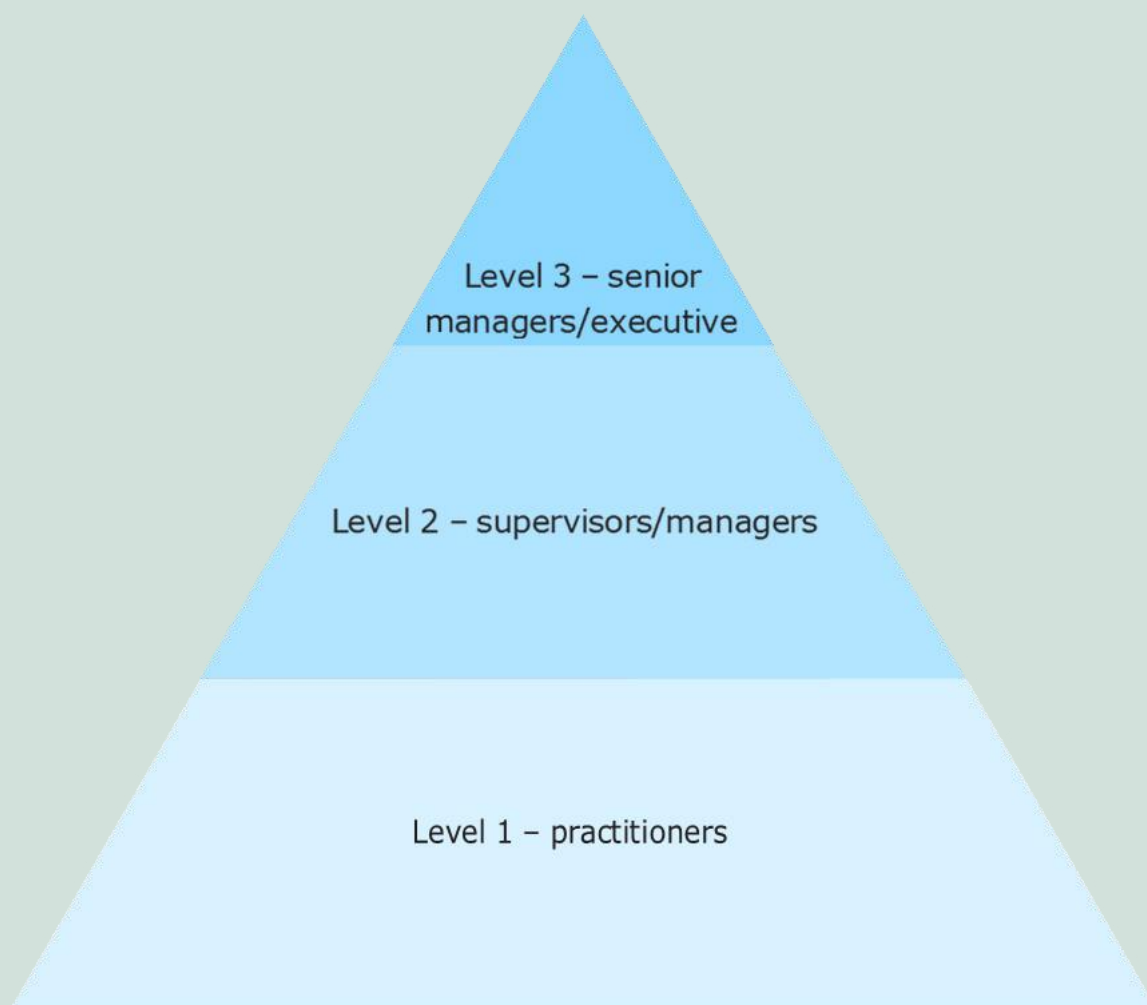
The components of the framework are competencies and values. The framework has six competencies. Each competency includes a description and a list of example behaviours which indicate if a person is displaying that particular competence.

Each competency is split into three levels which are intended to be used flexibly to allow for a better fit with frontline and non-frontline roles rather than ranks and grades, or work levels. The levels apply only to

competencies, not values, and are designed to be cumulative, so those working at higher levels should also demonstrate each preceding level's behaviours. The competency levels can broadly be matched to work levels as:

- level 1 – practitioner
- level 2 – supervisor/
middle manager
- level 3 – senior manager/
executive.

Figure 2: Competency levels



Example behavioural indicators

A number of national role profiles show how the competency levels align to common roles within policing. These will be used as a basis for developing Police Service of Northern Ireland specific role profiles.

The following sections of this document explain each value and competency and show the example behaviours for each.

It would be impossible to list every possible expression of the competency or value. The example behavioural indicators are just that – indicators of the sorts of behaviours which could demonstrate the competency.

In reality, there are many ways in which a person could demonstrate the competency, and not all of them will be included in the examples.

Those who are assessing or rating others against the CVF should retain flexibility and be open to diverse ways of demonstrating the behaviours, as long as they are in line with the overall definition of the competency.

The list of behavioural indicators is not the totality of the competency. Therefore the CVF itself should not be used as a simple checklist, whether as part of selection or assessment, or any professional development review. Instead, it should be used as a guide to what the competency or value is and how it may be expressed in the workplace.

Values

The values all link to principles as set out in the Police Service of Northern Ireland Code of Ethics and Police Staff Handbook.

Courage and Integrity

This means making, communicating and being accountable for decisions, and standing against anything that could bring our profession into disrepute.

When we are motivated by courage, we actively uphold the ethical standards of the police service so that we do the right thing even when the circumstances are difficult. We set good examples, challenge unprofessional behaviour and all forms of prejudice and discriminatory behaviour, and any activity which undermines the impartiality of policing.

We build and maintain the confidence of the public, our colleagues and partners through the way we conduct ourselves. We maintain professional boundaries with those we serve and work with to help protect ourselves and those around us.

We are open about what we have done and why, and keep our promises so we can be relied on when needed. We support an environment where ethical issues or unprofessional actions can be raised, questioned, challenged, reported and addressed.

We are honest and open in our interactions and decision making. We have the courage to respond to criticism with professionalism.

We uphold the ethical standards of the police service.

Example Behaviours

We act with courage when we:

- do the right thing, even when it feels difficult
- act as role models to encourage professional and ethical behaviour in others
- challenge behaviours, language and attitudes that undermine our profession and support others to do the same
- stand up against discrimination, prejudice and hate in all its forms
- engage in difficult conversations when we hear or see unprofessional behaviour
- address incidents of unprofessional conduct and take appropriate action
- are open and responsive to scrutiny and challenge
- are honest and truthful, giving accurate representations of our actions and records
- always act in line with the Code of Ethics or Police Staff Handbook
- enhance the reputation of the Police Service of Northern Ireland through my actions and behaviours
- understand doing the right thing is about becoming a role model and upholding public trust

Respect and Empathy

This means encouraging, listening to and understanding the views of others, and seeking to recognise and respond to the physical, mental and emotional challenges that we and other people may face.

When we are motivated by respect and empathy, we ensure people feel valued and listened to. We treat them with patience and courtesy where possible, recognising that sometimes we may need to prioritise safety and security. We give them opportunities to share their views and take these views into account. We seek to understand other people's perspectives and recognise they can differ from our own.

We engage with people who have a wide range of experiences and needs and provide a service that takes into account each individual's unique circumstances. We ensure everyone, regardless of background or circumstance, is treated equally and fairly, recognising the need to tailor our responses to individual needs to ensure we are being fair and respectful.

We understand and recognise people may respond differently to the same situation.

We are careful to recognise and manage our biases, so they do not stop us from engaging with people with different needs and experiences equally and fairly.

Example Behaviours

We show respect and empathy when we:

- treat everyone with dignity and respect, even in challenging circumstances
- give people an equal opportunity to share their views and take these into account
- recognise and manage our biases to ensure we make fair and objective decisions
- take action to understand and appreciate other people's experiences, values and beliefs and how they differ from our own
- promote equality and celebrate difference
- respond fairly, impartially and with sensitivity to people's needs

Public Service

When we are motivated by public service, we respect the authority and influence afforded to us by our role in society and the responsibility we have in using our policing powers. We apply those powers lawfully, proportionately and when necessary.

As we strive to help deliver good outcomes for the public we serve, we seek to find opportunities to learn and improve ourselves as professionals. We reflect on our actions and decisions to see what could be changed to improve the service we offer the public.

We have a responsibility to ensure we act in the best interest of society as a whole. Improving the safety and wellbeing of the public underpins all that we do. We respond to different communities, taking into account their history and experiences including trauma and adversity.

Example Behaviours

We provide public service when we:

- act in the interests of the public, first and foremost
- are open and honest about our knowledge and experience with those we serve, even when it can be uncomfortable
- act in ways that give others the confidence to share experiences and ideas that can improve outcomes for the public
- seek to understand and address the needs and concerns of all our different communities
- seek constructive feedback from a wide variety of people, avoiding being defensive
- reflect on and understand our own strengths and areas for development and take responsibility for our own learning to address gaps and improve our service to the public

How we conduct ourselves in our service and the values that underpin our behaviour are a key part of our thought processes and relationships. This means listening to the public, colleagues and partners and responding directly and quickly to them, and having a genuine interest in ourselves and others. We are always focused on doing our best for the public and our customers.

By understanding our thoughts and the values behind our behaviour, we can maintain a professional and resolute stance, demonstrate accountability and stand by the Police Service of Northern Ireland's established values to maintain the service's professional legitimacy.

Competency

We are emotionally aware

We make the effort to understand ourselves, our colleagues, and all those we serve so we can manage our own emotions and understand the emotions of those around us.

We can manage our emotions in stressful situations, understanding the underlying reasons for our behaviour as well as understanding how other people may feel in a given situation.

Working in policing can be tough, so we seek out the appropriate support and care we need for ourselves and others so that we do not just cope but thrive at work.

Being emotionally aware also means being sensitive to the cultural and individual differences between people. We seek to understand the thoughts, feelings and concerns of those we meet and ensure that this is considered in the response we provide.

Why is it important?

Being emotionally aware makes us all more effective at understanding others and addressing their needs as well as our own.

The way in which we conduct ourselves is just as important as what we do. Communicating and acting politely and with compassion helps to maintain public trust and promotes better policing outcomes.

We all experience the world differently and can be individually affected by it, so it is important that we consider how and why those around us may feel the way they do. Understanding this helps us to appreciate when others may not be able to fully express or articulate their own thoughts and feelings.

Understanding ourselves means that we can improve our own resilience and therefore cope more effectively during challenging and emotionally charged situations. It also allows us to recognise others who may be struggling and support them wherever we can.

We are emotionally aware

Level 1 – Emotional awareness

- I communicate effectively and compassionately, tailoring my communication so I can be easily understood by others.
- I seek to understand and manage my own emotions to remain effective, even under pressure.
- I seek out support to help me perform effectively.
- I recognise some situations might affect my ability to deal with stress and pressure.
- I adapt my style and approach by understanding the emotional needs of the people I am working with and the public.
- I seek to understand the concerns of others even when they are unable to express themselves clearly.

Level 2 – Emotional awareness

- I help other people learn from their experiences and emotional responses to support and improve their performance.
- I monitor the wellbeing of others, taking responsibility to ensure appropriate support is provided to help colleagues stay at their best, without stigma or judgement.
- I provide others with confidence by staying focused and composed in stressful situations.
- I recognise when my colleagues are affected by the demands, stresses and traumas that can exist in policing, and support them however I can.
- I role model reflecting on my own emotions to promote an open environment to discuss concerns.
- I role model effective communication, taking into account the needs of others.
- I promote a culture that values understanding difference and encourages speaking up.

Level 3 – Emotional awareness

- I recognise my own emotions and the way they might impact on others and regulate this to provide and role model consistent leadership.
- I seek to understand influences on organisational culture, and work to improve it where appropriate by role-modelling policing values.
- I champion behaviours and ways of working that promote wellbeing throughout my organisation.
- I understand how my style of leadership affects other people and use this insight to promote organisational effectiveness, inclusivity and ethical behaviour.
- I create a supportive and compassionate organisational culture that recognises and values all people.

Competency

We take ownership

We take personal responsibility for what we do ourselves, and for making policing better and our force more effective.

Through our actions, we deliver tasks in a way that is timely and effective, and help others do the same.

We make decisions appropriate to our level and area of work, being clear why we do so (for example, by using decision-making models) and accepting responsibility for our judgements. We seek feedback without being defensive so that we can learn from our mistakes and reflect on opportunities to build on our strengths.

Demonstrating pride in our work is important to us. Our selflessness means that we also seek to help solve issues or problems, which may be internal or external to our own teams. We recognise where limitations in our own knowledge and experience may have an impact on our decision-making and try to address this. We take responsibility for ensuring that support or development is sought to minimise any risks.

Why is it important?

Our work is safety-critical and of huge public interest – so delivering it effectively and efficiently is of the highest priority to ourselves and to the public. We all face different kinds of challenges not always in our comfort zone, so every one of us needs to feel confident and able to take appropriate responsibility.

Not all decisions need senior leader approval: where necessary, we can respond more swiftly to challenges using our professional judgement, always ensuring we have a clear rationale for our decision making.

These behaviours mean we are empowered, effective and able to learn from our experiences and mistakes. Doing so allows us to own and see successes through our delivery of results, and not just by whether a particular process has been followed.

We take ownership

Level 1 – Taking ownership

- I approach tasks with enthusiasm and a positive attitude, adapting quickly from one situation to the next.
- I take responsibility for my own actions and decisions.
- I respond to demanding and tough situations, demonstrating commitment to tackling the issue.
- I seek appropriate advice and guidance on tasks and decisions when necessary.
- I take responsibility to regularly update people who are relying on me.
- I seek feedback to understand the quality of my work and the impact of my actions.

Level 2 – Taking ownership

- I delegate appropriately by giving clear direction that recognises people's strengths and potential to achieve more.
- I monitor progress of my team and work to ensure deadlines are met and my team are clear on their objectives.
- I take ownership of individual and team performance, not leaving it to others to address problems.
- I take personal responsibility for seeing events through to a satisfactory conclusion and dealing with any problems both promptly and openly.
- I am proactive in supporting actions that tackle the bias or prejudice that may be experienced by some groups of people.

Level 3 – Taking ownership

- I promote a culture of personal accountability in teams so that people strive for high standards of sustainable and ethical performance.
- I put in place measures that will allow others to take responsibility effectively and support them to improve their performance.
- I take an organisation-wide view, acknowledging where improvements can be made and take responsibility for making these happen.
- I promote a culture that responds to mistakes with learning rather than with blame.

Competency

We collaborate

We can only deliver effective policing by working with others – not just with the colleagues we see daily, but across our whole force, with other organisations and with the public.

We take time to know our stakeholders and build sustainable and strong partnerships with them so we can make the most appropriate contribution to shared objectives. Often, our job means we need to establish effective ways of working with new people beyond our usual teams, including sometimes at great speed and under pressure.

We aim to work effectively with colleagues, communities and external partners by sharing our skills, knowledge and insights to achieve the best results and reduce 'silo working'. Our engagement seeks to not only deliver joint solutions but to also share appropriate information and develop new ways of providing services together. In all our dealings with our partners, we make sure that they feel valued.

Why is it important?

Demands on the police come from diverse sources and are not defined by organisational and geographical boundaries. We work together regardless of differing cultures, backgrounds, priorities and needs. We do this proactively to establish the networks needed to tackle the complex demands and operational needs we face, and to make us more effective in urgent situations.

This means that we need to influence and negotiate to achieve positive outcomes for everyone. Working collaboratively allows us to harness strengths and resources for the good of all – but this requires us to build relationships and break down barriers.

It is critical for us to build and retain trust and confidence with communities and partners. A key part of achieving this is through the way in which we work with others.

We collaborate

Level 1 – Collaboration

- I learn about stakeholders in other teams, organisations, and the community so I can work with them effectively.
- I work to get to know others and build rapport so that we can achieve shared goals.
- I work flexibly with people across different levels, teams and backgrounds.
- I work cooperatively with others to get things done, willingly giving help and support to colleagues.
- I actively seek to engage with and learn from a diverse group to improve the work I do.

Level 2 – Collaboration

- I create a work environment that combines diverse styles, backgrounds and experiences to get better results.
- I build strong relationships across a broad range of stakeholders, including colleagues, partners and communities, and use these connections to accomplish goals.
- I work with partners to decide clear roles appropriate to each partner's remit.
- I include others in my thinking and understand their priorities to make collaboration more effective.
- I help create joined-up solutions across organisational and geographical boundaries, partner organisations and the people we serve.
- I manage long-term partnerships sharing information and building trust to find the best solutions.

Level 3 – Collaboration

- I build strong partnerships by finding common ground with others, acknowledging their different priorities and negotiating effectively with them.
- I am politically astute and understand how national policy and politics affects our partners. This allows me to work effectively within decision-making structures.
- I use my knowledge of our partners' and stakeholders' interests and concerns to anticipate conflict before it happens.
- I support stakeholder relationships to enable things to get done by the most appropriate partners.
- I create a culture and environment in which partnership working flourishes and creates tangible benefits for all.

Competency

We support and inspire

We understand the vision for the organisation. We apply our organisation's values in our day-to-day activities to provide inspiration and clarity to others. We work to create the right climate for people to get the job done to the best of their abilities, ensuring a culture of mutual respect and support.

We understand how we have an impact on the success of our organisation and we help others to deliver their objectives effectively.

This behaviour is not restricted to those who are in formal or senior management positions. We all have a positive contribution to make by operating at our best, adapting how we work to take account of pressures and demands, and to help others. We are focused on helping our colleagues to improve and learn and are active in supporting them through activities such as coaching and mentoring.

Why is it important?

To deliver the most effective service, we need to be clear on our goals and priorities, both for the police service as a whole and individually.

We can all help to support and motivate each other to ensure that we are working as effectively as possible, enabling us and those around us to perform at our best. We should all act as organisational role models.

We support and inspire

Level 1 – Support and inspiration

- I take opportunities to share my positive commitment to policing and its values with others.
- I take steps to understand how my work contributes to the purpose of policing and the priorities of my force.
- I am conscientious in my approach, working hard to provide the best service and remove obstacles that could prevent or hinder delivery.
- I take on challenging tasks to help to improve the service continuously and support my colleagues.
- I support the efficient use of resources to create the most value and to deliver the right impact.

Level 2 – Support and inspiration

- I support others to understand their aims and wider organisational goals so they can work more effectively.
- I help others understand organisational changes and help them adapt to and adopt these to deliver better results.
- I manage resources efficiently to create the most value and to deliver the right impact in my areas.
- I take time to understand and provide the support people need to work at their best.
- I show support that helps people feel safe and valued in raising concerns.
- I create opportunities to support the professional development of others through knowledge sharing, coaching, mentoring and feedback.

Level 3 – Support and inspiration

- I communicate clear goals that give a compelling direction to people from a range of different backgrounds, to inspire them to work towards those goals.
- I anticipate issues that will hinder delivery and remove barriers to getting things done.
- I demonstrate long-term strategic thinking, going beyond personal goals and considering how the police service operates in the broader societal and economic environment.
- I communicate how the overall vision links to specific plans and objectives, making it relevant to the work people are doing to provide the best possible service.
- I monitor changes in the external environment, taking action to influence where possible to adapt and ensure organisational goals are met.

Competency

We analyse critically

We analyse diverse information and the best available evidence to make decisions and understand the root causes of issues that arise in complex situations.

We draw on our experience, knowledge and wide-ranging sources of other evidence to give ourselves a greater view of what is happening underneath the surface.

We combine insight and evidence-based approaches to help make decisions, accepting we will not have all the answers. But we will always try to gather facts and robust information to be able to think tactically and strategically.

Why is it important?

Critical thinking drives effective policing as we are faced with a wide variety of complex issues on a day-to-day basis. This means we all need to make sense of a complex environment, accept that ambiguity is part of contemporary working life and, therefore, be able to identify interrelationships between different factors.

If we can analyse the best available evidence and see what is happening underneath the surface, we will be better able to make confident and effective decisions and implement preventative solutions that deal with root causes.

We analyse critically

Level 1 – Analysing critically

- I recognise the need to think critically about issues and challenge my assumptions, ensuring I find information and data that can help me make better decisions.
- I absorb and interpret information accurately and in an appropriate timeframe, separating what is relevant and not relevant.
- I solve problems proactively by understanding the reasons behind them, using learning from evidence and from my experiences to take action.
- I apply professional knowledge and decision-making frameworks, in addition to drawing on my personal experience and judgement, to make better decisions.
- I recognise where there may be gaps and inconsistencies in data and information and think about the potential implications of this.
- I keep clear and accurate records of information and data to support evidence-based decision making.

Level 2 – Analysing critically

- I help people be more effective by sharing the best available information and professional knowledge from diverse sources.
- I ask incisive questions to test assumptions and separate opinion from fact.
- I recognise when to take decisive action with incomplete information and plan for contingencies.
- I draw effective conclusions from diverse sources of information and evidence and apply these to deliver results.
- I assess options to make the best use of resources available, applying business and financial acumen to deliver best results.

Level 3 – Analysing critically

- I create a work environment that values the effective use of high-quality analysis and decision-making.
- I identify root causes, even in ambiguous or unclear situations, and ensure my organisation goes beyond treating only the symptoms.
- I use my knowledge of the strategic context, external environment and long-term trends to inform effective decision making.
- I acknowledge that some decisions may represent a significant change. I think about the best way to introduce such decisions and earn support.

Competency

We are innovative and open-minded

We have an inquisitive and outward-looking nature, searching for new information to understand alternative sources of good practice and implement creative working methods. We are committed to reflecting on how we go about our roles, being as flexible in our approach as required to ensure the best outcomes.

We seek to ensure we are open to new and different ways of working. To do this we look at relevant standards outside policing in other organisations and sectors.

Constantly changing and adapting is part of our role. We maintain an open mind to allow us to identify opportunities and to create innovative solutions. As leaders we create environments where innovation can thrive and support people in finding new ways of tackling the issues policing faces.

Why is it important?

New and emerging threats mean that our required response will not always be obvious. We will need to adopt new thinking and assumptions and be continually inquisitive and committed to continual improvement. The perpetual need to adapt, innovate and question our assumptions is at the heart of being able to serve and protect the public. It includes taking innovative, preventative action to reduce pressure later.

Being open-minded and reflective also allows us to tailor our approach to specific contexts and the public we serve.

We are innovative and open-minded

Level 1 – Innovative and open-minded

- I seek to learn from new ideas and experiences, including the diverse experiences of others.
- I share suggestions with colleagues, speaking up to help improve existing working methods and practices.
- I reflect on my experience of different situations and act on the learning this provides.
- I show that I am open to new ideas and ways of working.
- I adapt flexibly to change as the need arises, encouraging others to do the same.

Level 2 – Innovative and open-minded

- I am flexible in my approach, changing my plans to make sure that I have the best impact.
- I look for good practice that is not always from policing and consider how I can apply it in my role.
- I provide space and encouragement to help others stand back and review their objectives and approach. This helps them to adopt fresh perspectives and identify improvements.
- I anticipate future challenges and changes by using my knowledge of trends within and outside policing.
- I generate creative ways to harness opportunities or meet challenges that arise from changing trends in policing.

Level 3 – Innovative and open-minded

- I implement, test, and communicate new ways of working that can radically change our organisational cultures, attitudes and performance.
- I create a work environment where innovative learning and recognising and promoting innovative activities is embedded and valued.
- I lead, implement and evaluate new, complex, and creative initiatives from inception to impact.
- I develop and support initiatives that involve multiple stakeholders, create significant improvements and drive innovation outside of my immediate sphere.
- I carry accountability for ensuring that the police service remains up to date and at the forefront of global policing.

Advice

For using the CVF for self-development

You can use the CVF to undertake a self-assessment of how you demonstrate the competencies and values within your role. Where you identify strengths or gaps, these can feed into your development plan and help set goals in relation to your career pathway.

The CVF may also be used by line managers to discuss and record individual's current and future development as part of their performance review. Your line manager will support you by discussing a range of development options with you, and/or opportunities that may be available to you, in support of your personal development. This will assist in starting an honest conversation around where your development skills and knowledge gaps currently are in respect of competency level, your future career pathway and subsequent developmental requirements.

The Leadership & Organisational Development (L&OD) Faculty provide a range of developmental tools and learning programmes at all levels to assist with your personal development; to view the range of L&OD courses available, please view at:

[L&ODProspectus2025](#)

About the College of Policing

The College of Policing is a professional body for everyone working across policing. It is an operationally independent non-department public body.

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

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

college.police.uk

