



Confidential Reporting Policy (Breaches of Professional Standards)

Policy owners	Head Joint of Professional Standards
Policy holder	Head Joint of Professional Standards
Author	D/Insp Professional Standards (ACU)
Policy No.	154

Approved by

Legal Services	
Policy owner	
JJNCC	

Note: By signing the above you are authorising the policy for publication and are accepting accountability for the policy on behalf of the Chief Constables.

Publication date	
Review date	
APP Checked	

Index

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Policy Aims.....	3
3. Challenging and Reporting Improper Conduct - Code of Ethics	3
4. Methods of Reporting	5
5. Confidentiality and Anonymity	6
6. Action upon Receipt of a Report.....	6
7. Support, Advice & Guidance	6

Legal Basis

Legislation specific to the subject of this policy document

Section	Act (title and year)
	Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
	Criminal Justice & Public Order Act 1994
	Employment Rights Act 1996
	Police (Efficiency) Regulations 1999
	Police (Conduct) Regulations 2012
	Protection from Harassment Act 1997
	Police Reform Act 2002

Other legislation which you must check this document against (required by law)

Act (title and year)
Human Rights Act 1998 (in particular A.14 – Prohibition of discrimination)
Equality Act 2010
Diversity Race Relations Amendment Act 2000
Crime and Disorder Act
H&S legislation
Data Protection Act 1998
Freedom Of Information Act 2000

Other Related Documents

- Fairness at Work Policy
- College of Policing Code of Ethics
- Standards of Professional Behaviour for Officers and Staff

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies are committed to high standards of openness, transparency and integrity. Therefore it is important that Officers and Staff feel obligated and are able to report any breaches of Professional Standards that they become aware of, or suspect.
- 1.2 Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies are committed to ensuring the College of Policing 'Code of Ethics' is adopted in full and becomes instilled as the ethical standard required from every Officer / Staff member.
- 1.3 The Standards of Professional Behaviour and equivalent for police staff reflect the expectations that the police service and the public have of how those serving with the police should behave.
- 1.4 The Professional Standards Department for Norfolk and Suffolk have collaborated and a single joint department now exists. Whilst the department is based in Wymondham there are staff deployed in both counties daily.
- 1.5 The department has a Business Continuity Plan in accordance with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 which ensures the departments' critical functions can and will be maintained in the event of loss of staff, premises or equipment.

2. Policy Aims

- 2.1 This policy aims to:
 - Ensure Officers and Staff feel obligated and able to report breaches (actual or suspected) of **The Standards of Professional Behaviour**;
 - Provide advice on how and where any concerns of breaches can be raised and receive feedback on any action taken;
 - Outline the process of how reports will be responded to and what to do if not satisfied with how a report has been / is being dealt with.
- 2.2 This policy does not cover reporting grievances relating to individuals' employment. The Fairness at Work policy should be referred to in these instances. (Available from both Forces' intranet sites).

3. Challenging and Reporting Improper Conduct

- 3.1 The **Standards of Professional Behaviour for Officers** includes the standard: *Police Officers report, challenge or take action against the conduct of colleagues which has fallen below the standards of professional behaviour expected.*

- 3.2 The **Standards of Professional Behaviour for Police Staff** includes the standard: *Police staff whilst at work report, challenge or take action against the conduct of colleagues which have fallen below the standards of professional behaviour expected.*
- 3.3 The **Code of Ethics** contains nine principles including: *Honesty – You are truthful and trustworthy; Integrity – You always do the right thing, even when no one is looking, and even when the choice isn't easy.*
- 3.4 According to these standards and principles you must never ignore unethical or unprofessional behaviour by a policing colleague, irrespective of the person's rank, grade or role.
- 3.5 You have a positive obligation to question the conduct of colleagues that you believe falls below the expected standards and, if necessary, challenge, report or take action against such conduct.
- 3.6 If you feel you cannot question or challenge a colleague directly, you should report your concerns through a line manager, a Force reporting mechanism or other appropriate channel.
- 3.7 The policing profession will protect whistleblowers according to the law. (Part IV A of Employment Rights Act 1996 details what a 'protected disclosure' is and the protection that a whistleblower can expect)
- 3.8 Nothing in this standard prevents the proper disclosure of information to a relevant authority in accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.
- 3.9 You will be supported if you report any valid concern over the behaviour of someone working in policing which you believe has fallen below the standards expected. You will not be supported, and may be subject to disciplinary procedures, if your report is found to be malicious or otherwise made in bad faith.
- 3.10 The police service will not tolerate discrimination or victimisation or any disadvantageous treatment against anyone who makes a valid report of unprofessional behaviour or wrongdoing.
- 3.11 Given the overriding duty to report wrongdoing, genuine concerns in this respect can never be deemed to bring the policing profession into disrepute.

Supervisors

- 3.12 According to these standards and principles you must:

- Ensure that your staff carry out their professional duties correctly;

- Challenge and address any behaviour that falls below the standards in this Code, and report it where appropriate;
- Assess, take positive action, or otherwise escalate appropriately any report of unprofessional behaviour or wrongdoing made by someone for whom you are responsible.

4. Methods of Reporting

4.1 It is important that concerns are reported as soon as practicable.

4.2 A report can be made:

- **Openly** – This is where the identity of the individual making the report and the details of the report can be made known to their colleagues;
- **In Confidence** – This is where the identity of the individual making the report and the details of the report is kept confidential from their colleagues;
- **Anonymously** – This is where the identity of the individual making the report is not known.

4.3 Reports can be made openly or in confidence directly to:

- The individual's line manager or another manager / supervisor if the concern relates to the individual's direct line manager;
- The Professional Standards Department via e-mail to PSD-ACIU;
- The Confidential Telephone Line*. (Norfolk 01953 423639 or Suffolk 0845 456 8989) ;
- The Police Federation;
- UNISON;
- The Superintendent's Association;
- The Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner;
- The Independent Police Complaints Commission. (Phone: 08458 770061. E-mail: enquiries@ipccreportline.gsi.gov.uk).

* Calls made to the confidential telephone line are received within the secure office of the Anti-Corruption & Integrity Unit (ACIU) and will only be answered by ACIU staff.

4.4 Or alternatively, a report can be made anonymously via the Confidential E-mail Facility. This facility is encrypted and can only be read by members of the ACIU who are nominated key-holders and the E-mails cannot be traced. When submitting a confidential E-mail it does not have

to be anonymous. Should the sender identify themselves this allows the ACIU to make discreet contact with the person reporting if necessary.

5. Confidentiality and Anonymity

- 5.1 Where a concern is raised in confidence but is not able to be resolved without revealing the identity of the person who reported it, this will be discussed with the individual and appropriate action agreed.

6. Action upon Receipt of a Report

- 6.1 When PSD receive a report either openly or in confidence an assessment on the action required will be taken.
- 6.2 Where a report is made openly or in confidence, contact with the individual reporting will be made (in a way that protects their identity if appropriate) as soon as possible in order to:
- Acknowledge that the concern has been received;
 - Confirm how it is to be dealt with;
 - How the individual is to be kept informed.

7. Support, Advice & Guidance

- 7.1 Individuals who report a concern are entitled to seek advice and representation from their Trade-Union representative and / or Staff Association.
- 7.2 Trade-Union representatives / Staff Associations can play a key role in acting as an agent through which members can express their concerns in an informal environment and receive advice on the options available.
- 7.3 Support is also available from both Constabularies' staff support networks, details of which can be obtained from the Professional Standards Department or from each Force's intranets.
- 7.4 Where necessary, when an Officer or member of staff reports inappropriate behaviour or misconduct, they will be provided with a senior officer (Inspector or above) as a single point of contact to provide relevant support.
- 7.5 PSD will work with all parties to ensure an appropriate level of support and guidance is available throughout the process.
- 7.6 The individual who reported the concern may experience increased stress or anxiety as a result, therefore it is important that this is monitored and appropriate support mechanisms are put in place to minimise the problem.

Other individuals who may also be affected by the report should be monitored and offered appropriate support as well.

- 7.7 Where individuals are absent from work as a result of the stress / anxiety caused by the reporting of a concern, an Occupational Health Advisor should facilitate the return to work in line with the joint Sickness Management policy.

DRAFT