

# Policy



## Protected Disclosure (Whistleblowing) and Support to People Reporting/Witnessing Suspected Wrongdoing

URN: J-P-016

**Version:** 1.3  
**Effective Date:** 28/01/2021  
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**Host Force:** Dorset Police (DP)  
**Host Policy Unit:** Dorset Police Legitimacy Team  
**Policy Owner:** Head of Professional Standards  
**Policy Author:** Head of Professional Standards

**Associated Procedure:** J-Pr-008

### 1. Policy Summary

The intention of this policy is to provide guidance in relation to the reporting of wrongdoing (commonly known as Whistleblowing) within the organisation and the protection of and support given to persons who make such disclosures.

All records created as a result of this document will be retained in full accordance with the Joint Records Management Policy (J-P-011).

This policy applies to all police officers, police staff and employees, including the extended police family and those working voluntarily or under contract to the Dorset, Devon and Cornwall Police.

Please note that this policy and its associated procedure replaces Dorset document P09:2000 – Support for Persons Reporting Wrongdoing and Devon and Cornwall document D111 – Making Protected Disclosure (Whistleblowing).

## 2. Purpose, Standards and Legal Basis

Both Forces are obliged to abide by all relevant legislation and other guidance as appropriate:

- Authorised Professional Practice (APP)
- Code of Ethics
- Equality Act (2010)
- Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)
- Home Office Statutory Guidance on Professional Standards, Performance and Integrity in Policing
- Human Rights Act (1998)
- Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC)
- National Decision Model
- Public Sector Equality Duty
- Standards of Professional Behaviour
- The Data Protection Act (2018) and UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act (1974)
- Visions, Purpose & Priorities
- [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

The Code of Ethics are a series of guiding statements that should be used to help people in policing do the right things, in the right way, for the right reasons.

Everyone in policing routinely makes important decisions. We make these decisions because it is our duty to uphold the law, prevent crime and disorder, protect and reassure communities, investigate crime and bring offenders to justice.

The principle of policing by consent relies on the trust and confidence that the public has in the police service and the wider law enforcement community. The standards of professional behaviour provide a lawful framework and clear instruction on how to maintain the trust that communities hold in us.

Every member of the policing profession in Dorset and Devon & Cornwall are required to challenge and report suspected improper conduct. We all have a positive obligation to question the conduct of colleagues that we believe falls below the expected standards and, if necessary, challenge, report or take action against such conduct.

The College of Policing (CoP) offers an online service that provides access to a consolidated body of guidance for policing called Authorised Professional Practice (APP). This enables officers, police staff and employees to access and search for the most up to date approved guidance, replacing a number of previously published NPIA and NPCC documents. Albeit there is no specific APP that relates to 'Whistleblowing' or reporting wrongdoing. Additional guidance can be found within the Home Office Statutory Guidance on Professional Standards, Performance and Integrity in Policing or at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) (link above).

## 2.1 Legal Basis

‘Whistleblowing’ (also known as ‘making a protected disclosure’) – All persons serving with the police are under a duty to report any improper conduct and to not remain silent if they witness or become aware of an area of concern about the behaviour or actions of another person serving in policing. Taking action in these circumstances is an important part of the responsibilities of a professional in policing and is critical in upholding public trust and confidence. This duty extends to both reporting the improper conduct of colleagues as well as organisational impropriety, where it is found.

There is specific legislation that provides details on what statutory protection is available, and further details can be found here:

Home Office Statutory Guidance on Professional Standards, Performance and Integrity in Policing or at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk).

This policy will be applied to all reports of wrongdoing, improper conduct and whistleblowing, irrespective of whether the statutory protection is applicable.

A breach of the standards of professional behaviour for police officers as defined in the Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020 as amended by the Police (Conduct) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 or the Code of Conduct for Police Staff as defined in the Police Staff Handbook would amount to wrongdoing or improper conduct.

Where an individual has genuine concerns over the behaviour or practices of a colleague that may not immediately appear to amount to wrongdoing or improper conduct they are still encouraged to raise these concerns. The reporting methods detailed in the associated procedure can also be utilised for raising such concerns.

Where someone’s concern generally relates to an individual’s own employment position or personal circumstances then they should consider how it can be resolved through the force Grievance Policy (J-P-178).

Police officers are under a specific duty as set out in the Standards of Professional Behaviour contained within the Conduct Regulations to challenge and report improper conduct. This responsibility is set out and applied in the Code of Ethics and as such applies to all persons who serve in policing, irrespective of their role or status.

The associated procedure sets out the ways in which members of the force can report wrongdoing to the force. However they may also make a report to a prescribed person, which in respect of the conduct of those serving in the police is the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC).

Any individual raising a concern, which they reasonably believe to be true and in the public interest, must not suffer any detriment as a result of doing so, this includes disciplinary action being taken against them. However, there is no immunity from disciplinary action in respect of any other aspect of the reporter’s behaviour, for example if they were involved in the misconduct they reported (or any other

misconduct) or if their behaviour can properly be treated as separable from the making of the disclosure.

If an individual believes they have suffered a detriment as a result of reporting wrongdoing they should make contact with their force Counter Corruption Unit (CCU) immediately.

No officer, police staff member or employee must threaten or victimise an individual who has raised a concern in good faith. Any person involved in such conduct may be subject to disciplinary action.

## **2.2 Assessment Compliance**

This document has been drafted and audited to comply with the principles of the Human Rights Act. Internal and external equality and diversity issues have also been considered to ensure compliance with equality legislation and policies. In addition Data Protection, Freedom of Information, Management of Police Information and health and safety issues have been considered. Adherence to this document will therefore ensure compliance with all relevant legislation and internal policies.

## **3. Roles and Responsibilities**

The following have specific responsibilities with regards to reporting wrongdoing:

- All Commanders and Senior Management Teams
- Professional Standards Department
- All line managers
- Investigating officers
- Legal Services Department
- HR Operations and the People Services Centre
- Occupational Health Support Unit Staff

This list is not exhaustive and specific roles and responsibilities can be found throughout this policy and its associated procedure.

## **4. Policy Information**

This policy and its associated procedure provides comprehensive guidance and outlines a protection of disclosure protocol for reports of wrongdoing.

Any whistleblowing matters will be promptly and effectively investigated whilst taking appropriate measures to ensure the reporting person suffers no detriment or threat of dismissal as a result of making what they reasonably believe to be a genuine disclosure and that anonymity is ensured in appropriate circumstances. Both forces are fully committed to creating a culture where individuals are empowered, supported and actively encouraged to report possible wrongdoing.

## 5. Monitoring and Review

Review and amendments will be coordinated by the Policy Unit.

The policy owner has overall responsibility for ensuring the content of the policy is appropriate and up to date.

This policy will be reviewed annually subject to legislation/process changes in accordance with the Equality Impact Assessment.

This policy will be monitored by the Alliance Professional Standards Department.

Feedback relating to this policy can be made in writing or by e-mail.

## 6. Associated Documents

### Policy and Procedure

- J-Pr-008 – Protected Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Procedure
- J-P-011 – Joint Records Management Policy

### SharePoint

- Code of Ethics (DCP)
- Code of Ethics (DP)
- Records Management (DCP)
- Records Management (DP)
- UK General Data Protection Regulation / Data Protection Act (2018)
- Vision, Purpose & Priorities (DP)
- Vision, Purpose & Priorities (DP)

### College of Policing

- Authorised Professional Practice (APP)
- National Decision Model

### Other

- Equality Act (2010) (as amended)
- Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)
- Home Office Statutory Guidance on Professional Standards, Performance and Integrity in Policing
- Human Rights Legislation
- Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC)
- Standards of Professional Behaviour (DCP)
- Standards of Professional Behaviour (DP)
- www.gov.uk

## 7. Document History

**Present Portfolio Holder:** Deputy Chief Constable

**Present Document Owner:** Head of Professional Standards

**Present Owning Department:** Professional Standards

## 8. Version History

**Version:** 1.0  
**Date:** 13/11/2020  
**Reason for Amendments:** Initial document. Content transferred to new template. Document renumbered. Replaces P09:2000 & D111  
**Amended by:** Head of Professional Standards & Legitimacy Team (7101)

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**Version:** 1.1  
**Date:** 20/10/2023  
**Reason for Amendments:** Annual review completed, no changes required.  
**Amended by:** Vetting & Counter Corruption Corruption Unit (CCU) Teams  
**Quality Assured:** Legitimacy Team (7101)

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**Version:** 1.2  
**Date:** 01/11/2024  
**Reason for Amendments:** Annual review completed whereby minor wording changes made to ensure clarity. Links also updated throughout the policy.  
**Amended by:** Head of Professional Standards  
**Quality Assured:** Legitimacy Team (7101)

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**Version:** 1.3  
**Date:** 17/09/2025  
**Reason for Amendments:** FOIA amended to open as requested by D&C PSD.  
**Quality Assured:** Legitimacy Team

We welcome any comments or suggestions you wish to share about the content or implementation of this procedure. If you would like to make contact to discuss further, please email [.Policies@dorset.PNN.police.uk](mailto:Policies@dorset.PNN.police.uk) or [Forcepolicyandprocedures@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk](mailto:Forcepolicyandprocedures@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk)