Guidance note for applicants

ASSISTANT CHIEF CONSTABLE

The completed application form and short covering letter should be e-mailed to:

ExecRecruitment@spa.pnn.police.uk

Closing date: 12 noon, 24 May 2026

GUIDANCE FOR APPLICATION FORM

The application form has been designed to provide us with sufficient information to carry out an assessment of your suitability for the post of Assistant Chief Constable of Police Scotland.

Before completing the application form, you are advised to read this guidance carefully.

- You are required to complete all sections of the application form.
- In addition to the application form, you are required to submit a short covering letter explaining why you are the right candidate for this role.
- It is imperative that you are open and honest with your answers. Evidence needs to be specific and focused on **your personal involvement/experience and actions.** The appropriateness of your application will be determined by the extent to which your evidence relates to the role and personal qualities.
- Please study the **Role Profile** and **Person Specification** within the information pack before completing the application form.
- You will be asked to provide a statement, in a maximum of 1,000 words that describes how you meet the essential requirements of the role (as detailed in the Role Profile and Person Specification).
- You will be asked to provide a statement, in a maximum of 500 words, about what **Police Scotland Values** mean to you and how you apply them in your daily work.
- You will also be asked to provide evidence which demonstrates your readiness for this role in a maximum of 500 words. You are required to demonstrate a high level of competence and effectiveness in line with **level 3** of the **6 key competencies** which are detailed in the **Police Scotland Competency and Values Framework.** These are included as an appendix to this guidance for your ease of reference.
- You can draw on examples of evidence from your working life, through your participation with a private, public, voluntary or community organisation, and/or other areas of your personal life.
- You must disclose within your application any outstanding complaints, criminal convictions, investigations or disciplinary proceedings being carried out in relation to your conduct. In addition, you are required to disclose previous disciplinary offences that have not been expunged.
- You are required to provide two referees who will be contacted in the event that you are shortlisted for interview.

APPENDIX A

COMPETENCY & VALUES FRAMEWORK FOR POLICE SCOTLAND

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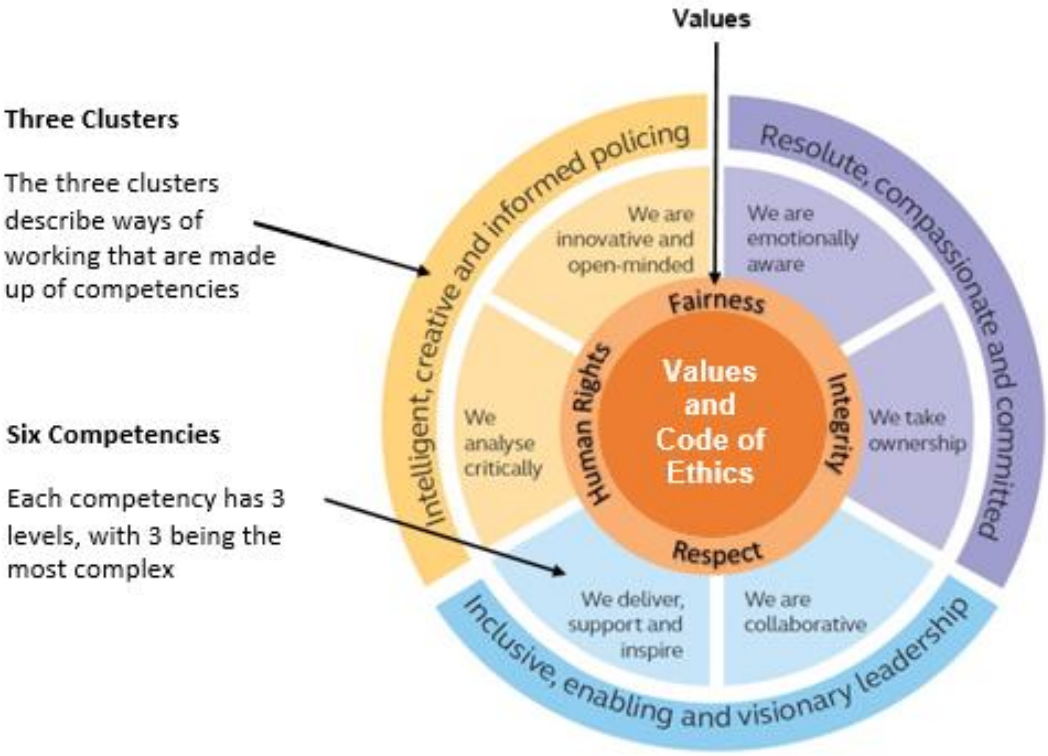
Introduction

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 local and national processes. This framework will ensure that 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 framework has six competencies that are clustered into three groups. Under each competency are three levels that show what behaviours will look like in practice. All of the competencies are underpinned by our values that should support everything we do as a police service.

Each cluster has a heading and a description of why that area is important. Each competency includes a description and a list of behaviours which indicate that 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 policing roles rather than ranks or work levels. The levels 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

A number of national role profiles show how the competency levels align to common roles within policing. These can be used as a basis for developing further role profiles within Police Scotland.

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

Police Scotland Values and Code of Ethics

This Code of Ethics for Policing in Scotland sets out the standards we expect of all individuals who contribute to policing in Scotland. This is neither a discipline code nor an unattainable aspirational tool. Rather this Code is a practical set of measures, which reflect the values of the Police Scotland.

We are all responsible for delivering a professional policing service to all people across the country. This Code sets out both what the public can expect from you and what you should expect from one another.

Integrity

Integrity in Policing is defined as:
"The consistent ability to balance competing principles and thereafter deliver a service that is relevant both to the citizen and policing, which builds trust and is worthy of support from both those who are affected by the particular decision and those who are not".

This requires you to think about your options before acting, ensuring any decisions that you make will withstand scrutiny and reflect the values of the organisation.

Behaviours

- I recognise my role in policing as being a symbol of public faith and trust and the obligation this places upon me to act with integrity, fairness and respect.
- I shall behave in a way which reflects the values of policing in Scotland.
- I understand I am personally responsible for my own actions and will appropriately exercise my discretion.
- I shall act as a positive role model in delivering a professional, impartial service, placing service to communities before my personal aims.
- I will not accept any gift or gratuity that could, or could be perceived to, compromise my impartiality.
- I shall avoid all behaviour, which is or may be reasonably considered as abusive, bullying, harassing or victimising.
- I will demonstrate and promote good conduct and I will challenge the conduct of colleagues where I reasonably believe they have fallen below the standards set out in this Code.

Fairness

Within a policing context, Fairness can be defined as:
"Possessing an understanding of the cultural and social needs of the individual and community, coupled with a calm and tolerant approach to any situation."
From dealing with that initial phone call, to managing staff needs, to speaking with our communities, it is essential to approach each situation in a fair manner; dealing with people or groups according to their needs and in context of the circumstances surrounding particular interactions.

Behaviours

- I will act with courage and composure and shall face all challenges with self-control, tolerance and impartiality.
- I will promote a positive wellbeing within the community and service and ensure that all people have fair and equal access to police services according to their needs.
- I shall maintain an open attitude and continue to improve my understanding and awareness of cultural, social and community issues.
- I will carry out my duties in a fair manner, guided by the principles of impartiality and non-discrimination.

Respect

Respect in policing is defined as:
“Taking pride in delivering policing; consistently demonstrating the ability to be considerate and appreciate the needs of others while acting politely and professionally.”
Respect is a key feature of policing and our actions, both internally and externally, should have respect at their foundation.
This respect should be based on the pride we have for the jobs we do – being proud of the organisation we represent.

Behaviours

- I take pride in working as part of a team dedicated to protecting people.
- I will show respect for all people and their beliefs, values, cultures and individual needs.
- I will have respect for all human dignity as I understand my attitude and the way I behave contribute to the consent communities have for policing.
- I will respect and uphold the law in order to maintain public confidence and, by enhancing my personal knowledge and experience, contribute to the professional development of policing.
- I shall treat all people, including detained people, in a humane and dignified manner.
- I shall ensure that my relationships with colleagues is based on mutual respect and understanding and shall, therefore, conduct all communications on that basis.

Human Rights

As a rights based organisation it is essential to include upholding Human Rights in our values.
Human rights in policing is explained as follows:
'Policing means protecting human rights'; and "the first duty of the police is to uphold human rights and afford respect to all people."
The guiding principles of Human Rights are equality, non-discrimination and human dignity, which can be directly related to the values of PSOS.
If we afford human rights to all people we will be upholding the values of the service, similarly if we treat everyone we encounter with integrity, fairness and respect it is likely we will be meeting their fundamental human rights (Human Rights Act 1998)

Behaviours

- I shall ensure my actions and policing operations respect the human rights of all people and officers whilst understanding that I will also enjoy these same human rights.
- I will not undertake high-risk activities or use force other than where strictly necessary in order to attain a legitimate objective and only after I have balanced all the competing priorities I am aware of. (Article 2)
- I will not encourage, instigate or tolerate any act of torture or inhuman or degrading treatment under any circumstance nor will I stand by and allow others to do the same. I understand that the humane treatment of prisoners is an essential element of policing and that the dignity of all those I am trusted to care for remains my responsibility. (Article 3)
- I understand that people have an equal right to liberty and security. Accordingly, I will not deprive any person of that liberty, except in accordance with the law. (Article 5)
- I will investigate crimes objectively and be sensitive to the particular needs of affected individuals whilst following the principle that everyone who is the subject of criminal investigation is innocent until found guilty by a court. (Article 6)
- In carrying out my duties I shall respect everyone's fundamental rights. I will only interfere with privacy or family life when I am legally authorized to do so. (Article 8)
- I will respect individual freedoms of thought, conscience or religion, expression, peaceful assembly, movement and the peaceful enjoyment of possessions. (Articles 9,10,11)

Cluster

Resolute, compassionate and committed

How we conduct ourselves in our service and the values that underpin our behaviour are a key part of our thought processes and relationships. Empathy means listening to the public, colleagues and partners, responding directly and quickly, 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'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. We genuinely engage with and listen to others, making efforts to understand needs, perspectives and concerns. We use these insights to inform our actions and decisions.
We are able to control our emotions in stressful situations, understanding our own motivations and the underlying reasons for our behaviour. This is all underpinned by our ability to anticipate and understand how other people may feel. We look after our own wellbeing and that of others.
Adopting emotionally intelligent behaviours also means valuing diversity and difference in approaches to work, in thinking, and in people's backgrounds.
We are culturally sensitive and seek to understand different perspectives, acting with sensitivity, compassion and warmth. We always try to understand the thoughts, feelings and concerns of those we meet.

Why is it important? The way in which we conduct ourselves is just as important as what we do. Communicating and acting politely, respectfully and with compassion helps to drive and maintain public trust.

Empathy is particularly important, especially if we are to engage and involve some of the most vulnerable individuals we encounter who may not be able to fully express or articulate their thoughts or feelings.

Understanding ourselves means that we are able to improve our own resilience and therefore cope effectively during challenging and emotionally charged situations.

We are emotionally aware

Level 1

- I treat others with respect, tolerance and compassion.
- I acknowledge and respect a range of different perspectives, values and beliefs within the remit of the law.
- I remain calm and think about how to best manage the situation when faced with provocation.
- I understand my own emotions and I know which situations might affect my ability to deal with stress and pressure.
- I ask for help and support when I need it.
- I understand the value that diversity offers.
- I communicate in clear and simple language so that I can be easily understood by others.
- I seek to understand the thoughts and concerns of others even when they are unable to express themselves clearly.

Level 2

- I consider the perspectives of people from a wide range of backgrounds before taking action.
- I adapt my style and approach according to the needs of the people I am working with, using my own behaviour to achieve the best outcome.
- I promote a culture that values diversity and encourages challenge.
- I encourage reflective practice among others and take the time to support others to understand reactions and behaviours.
- I take responsibility for helping to ensure the emotional wellbeing of those in my teams.
- I take the responsibility to deal with any inappropriate behaviours.

Level 3

- I seek to understand the longer-term reasons for organisational behaviour. This enables me to adapt and change organisational cultures when appropriate.
- I actively ensure a supportive organisational culture that recognises and values diversity and wellbeing and challenges intolerance.

- I understand internal and external politics and I am able to wield influence effectively, tailoring my actions to achieve the impact needed.
- I am able to see things from a variety of perspectives and I use this knowledge to challenge my own thinking, values and assumptions.
- I ensure that all perspectives inform decision making and communicate the reasons behind decisions in a way that is clear and compelling.

Competency

We take ownership

We take personal responsibility for our roles and accountabilities but we do not let this hold us back from being effective or taking appropriate risks.

We make decisions at appropriate levels and in appropriate areas, having a clear rationale (for example, use of decision-making models) and accepting responsibility for our decisions. We seek feedback, learn from our mistakes and reflect to improve and amend our future practice.

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. We take responsibility for ensuring that support or development is sought to minimise any risks.

Why is it important? Not all decisions need senior leader approval, meaning that, where necessary, we can respond more swiftly to challenges while still ensuring we provide a full rationale for our response. Because we all face different kinds of challenges that are not always within our comfort zone, every one of us needs to feel confident and able to take responsibility.

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

We take ownership

Level 1

- ☐ I actively identify and respond to problems.
- ☐ I approach tasks with enthusiasm, focusing on public service excellence.
- ☐ I regularly seek feedback to understand the quality of my work and the impact of my behaviour.
- ☐ I recognise where I can help others and willingly take on additional tasks to support them, where appropriate.
- ☐ I give feedback to others that I make sure is understandable and constructive.
- ☐ I take responsibility for my own actions, I fulfil my promises and do what I say I will.
- ☐ I will admit if I have made a mistake and take action to rectify this.
- ☐ I demonstrate pride in representing the police service.
- ☐ I understand my own strengths and areas for development and take responsibility for my own learning to address gaps.

Level 2

- ☐ I proactively create a culture of ownership within my areas of work and support others to display personal responsibility.
- ☐ I take responsibility for making improvements to policies, processes and procedures, actively encouraging others to contribute their ideas.
- ☐ I am accountable for the decisions my team make and the activities within our teams.
- ☐ I take personal responsibility for seeing events through to a satisfactory conclusion and for correcting any problems both promptly and openly.
- ☐ I actively encourage and support learning within my teams and colleagues.

Level 3

- ☐ I act as a role model, and enable the organisation to use instances when things go wrong as an opportunity to learn rather than blame.
- ☐ I foster a culture of personal responsibility, encouraging and supporting others to make their own decisions and take ownership of their activities.
- ☐ I define and enforce the standards and processes that will help this to happen.

- I put in place measures that will allow others to take responsibility effectively when I delegate decision making, and at the same time I help them to improve their performance.
- I create the circumstances (culture and process) that will enable people to undertake development opportunities and improve their performance.
- I take an organisation-wide view, acknowledging where improvements can be made and taking responsibility for making these happen.

Cluster

Inclusive, enabling and visionary leadership

We are all able to work together independently and recognise the need to act as leaders, whether in a formal line management capacity or when engaging and motivating colleagues and the public to get involved or have their voices heard.

Whether we are setting a vision, planning ahead to optimise resources for the best possible outcomes or leading a cross-sector partnership, we work across organisations and sectors to achieve excellence in public service.

Competency

We are collaborative

Ensuring and improving the safety and wellbeing of the public underpins all of our work. To achieve this most effectively, we need to look beyond our traditional boundaries to think about how to create the best possible outcomes.
We build genuine and long-lasting partnerships that focus on collective aims and not just on our own organisation. This goes beyond just working in teams and with colleagues we see daily. It includes building good relationships with other public and third sector providers, reaching out to private organisations and working with our communities and customers.
We aim to work effectively with colleagues and external partners, mutually sharing our skills, knowledge and insights with each other to achieve the best possible results for all and to reduce silo working. Our engagement seeks to not only deliver joint solutions but also to share appropriate information and negotiate new ways of providing services together. In all of our dealings with our partners, we make sure that they feel respected and valued.

Why is it important? Demands on the police come from an increasingly diverse set of sources and the need for services is not defined by organisational and geographical boundaries. We must work together regardless of differing cultures, priorities and needs.
This means that we need to influence and negotiate in order to achieve outcomes for everyone and not just focus efforts on our own immediate environment. Working to solve problems without help from our partners ignores the strengths that we can utilise together, but working jointly requires the ability to build relationships and break down barriers.
It is critical for us to build and retain our partners' trust and confidence in us and a key part of achieving this is through the way in which we work with others.

We are collaborative

Level 1

- I work cooperatively with others to get things done, willingly giving help and support to colleagues.
- I am approachable, and explain things well so that I generate a common understanding.
- I take the time to get to know others and their perspective in order to build rapport.
- I treat people with respect as individuals and address their specific needs and concerns.
- I am open and transparent in my relationships with others.
- I ensure I am clear and appropriate in my communications.

Level 2

- I manage relationships and partnerships for the long term, sharing information and building trust to find the best solutions.
- I help create joined-up solutions across organisational and geographical boundaries, partner organisations and those the police serve.
- I understand the local partnership context, helping me to use a range of tailored steps to build support.
- I work with our partners to decide who is best placed to take the lead on initiatives.
- I try to anticipate our partners' needs and take action to address these.
- I do not make assumptions. I check that our partners are getting what they need from the police service.
- I build commitment from others (including the public) to work together to deliver agreed outcomes.

Level 3

- I am politically aware and I understand formal and informal politics at the national level and what this means for our partners. This allows me to create long-term links and work effectively within decision-making structures.
- I remove practical barriers to collaboration to enable others to take practical steps in building relationships outside the organisation and in other sectors (public, not for profit, and private).

- I take the lead in partnerships when appropriate and set the way in which partner organisations from all sectors interact with the police. This allows the police to play a major role in the delivery of services to communities.
- I create an environment where partnership working flourishes and creates tangible benefits for all.

Competency

We deliver, support and inspire

We understand the vision for the organisation. We use our organisation's values in our day-to-day activities as a role model to provide inspiration and clarity to our colleagues and stakeholders. 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 are dedicated to working in the public's best interests. We understand how we have an impact on the wider organisation and those around us 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 helping 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 and individually. We can all help to support and motivate each other to ensure that we are working as effectively as we can, enabling us and those around us to perform at our best. We should all act as organisational role models.

We deliver, support and inspire

Level 1

- I take on challenging tasks to help to improve the service continuously and support my colleagues.
- I understand how my work contributes to the wider police service.
- I understand it is part of my collective responsibility to deliver efficient services. I take personal responsibility for making sure that I am working effectively to deliver the best service, both individually and with others.
- I am conscientious in my approach, working hard to provide the best service and to overcome any obstacles that could prevent or hinder delivery.
- I support the efficient use of resources to create the most value and to deliver the right impact.
- I keep up to date with changes in internal and external environments.
- I am a role model for the behaviours I expect to see in others and I act in the best interests of the public and the police service.

Level 2

- I give clear directions and have explicit expectations, helping others to understand how their work operates in the wider context.
- I identify barriers that inhibit performance in my teams and take steps to resolve these thereby enabling others to perform.
- I lead the public and/or my colleagues, where appropriate, during incidents or through the provision of advice and support.
- I ensure the efficient use of resources to create the most value and to deliver the right impact within my areas.
- I keep track of changes in the external environment, anticipating both the short- and long-term implications for the police service.
- I motivate and inspire others to achieve their best.

Level 3

- I challenge myself and others to bear in mind the police service's vision to provide the best possible service in every decision made.
- I communicate how the overall vision links to specific plans and objectives so that people are motivated and clearly understand our goals.

- ☐ I ensure that everyone understands their role in helping the police service to achieve this vision.
- ☐ I anticipate and identify organisational barriers that stop the police service from meeting its goals, by putting in place contingencies or removing these.
- ☐ I monitor changes in the external environment, taking actions to influence where possible to ensure positive outcomes.
- ☐ 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 ensure that my decisions balance the needs of my own force/unit with those of the wider police service and external partners.
- ☐ I motivate and inspire others to deliver challenging goals.

Cluster

Intelligent, creative and informed policing

We are open to new sources of information, continuously developing our own knowledge to help the police service to grow and change in line with new challenges and stay at the forefront of public service.
Informed analysis and creativity are critical to what we do. They sit at the heart of our thinking and our decisions, meaning that effective and critical problem solving is second nature to us. Balancing our decisiveness with consideration and evidence-based approaches, we are able to challenge our thinking and draw on multiple diverse sources of information for new ways of thinking and working.

Competency

We analyse critically

We analyse information, data, viewpoints and combine the best available evidence to understand the root causes of issues that arise in complex situations.
We draw on our experience, knowledge and wide sources of evidence to give us a greater view of what is happening underneath the surface. We combine insight and evidence-based approaches to help make decisions, accepting that we will not have all the answers but 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 that we all need to be able 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 are able to 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

- I recognise the need to think critically about issues. I value the use of analysis and testing in policing.
- I take in information quickly and accurately.
- I am able to separate information and decide whether it is irrelevant or relevant and its importance.
- I solve problems proactively by understanding the reasons behind them, using learning from evidence and my experiences to take action.
- I refer to procedures and precedents as necessary before making decisions.
- I weigh up the pros and cons of possible actions, thinking about potential risks and using this thinking to inform our decisions.
- I recognise gaps and inconsistencies in information and think about the potential implications.
- I make decisions in alignment with our mission, values and the Code of Ethics.

Level 2

- I ensure that the best available evidence from a wide range of sources is taken into account when making decisions.
- I think about different perspectives and motivations when reviewing information and how this may influence key points.
- I ask incisive questions to test out facts and assumptions, questioning and challenging the information provided when necessary.
- I understand when to balance decisive action with due consideration.
- I recognise patterns, themes and connections between several and diverse sources of information and best available evidence.
- I identify when I need to take action on the basis of limited information and think about how to mitigate the risks in so doing.
- I challenge others to ensure that decisions are made in alignment with our mission, values and the Code of Ethics.

Level 3

- I balance risks, costs and benefits associated with decisions, thinking about the wider impact and how actions are seen in that context. I think through 'what if' scenarios.
- I use discretion wisely in making decisions, knowing when the 'tried and tested' is not always the most appropriate and being willing to challenge the status quo when beneficial.
- I seek to identify the key reasons or incidents behind issues, even in ambiguous or unclear situations.
- I use my knowledge of the wider external environment and long-term situations 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 win 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 flexible in our approach as required to ensure the best outcomes.
We seek to understand how well we are performing, both as individuals and as teams, and we seek to continuously improve. 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.

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, 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 demand.

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

We are innovative and open-minded

Level 1

- I demonstrate an openness to changing ideas, perceptions and ways of working.
- I share suggestions with colleagues, speaking up to help improve existing working methods and practices.
- I constantly reflect on my own way of working and periodically review processes and procedures to make continuous improvements.
- I adapt to change and am flexible as the need arises while encouraging others to do the same.
- I learn from my experiences and do not let myself be unduly influenced by preconceptions.

Level 2

- I explore a number of different sources of information and use a variety of tools when faced with a problem and look for good practice that is not always from policing.
- I am able to spot opportunities or threats which may influence how I go about my job in the future by using knowledge of trends, new thinking about policing and changing demographics in the population.
- I am flexible in my approach, changing my plans to make sure that I have the best impact.
- I encourage others to be creative and take appropriate risks.
- I share my explorations and understanding of the wider internal and external environment.

Level 3

- I implement, test and communicate new and far-reaching ways of working that can radically change our organisational cultures, attitudes and performance.
- I provide space and encouragement to help others stand back from day-to-day activities, in order to review their direction, approach and how they fundamentally see their role in policing. This helps them to adopt fresh perspectives and identify improvements.
- I work to create an innovative learning culture, recognising and promoting innovative activities.

- I lead, test and implement new, complex and creative initiatives that involve multiple stakeholders, create significant impact 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.