New Code of Ethics to bring ethical decision-making to the forefront of policing

The new Code of Ethics reflects the challenges of modern-day policing and supports all officers and staff to do the right things, in the right way and for the right reasons.

The Code of Ethics, which launches on Wednesday 24 January, sets out the sense of public service, respect and empathy and courage that everyone in policing uses to protect the public.

It outlines how policing will work with the public and is designed to support officers and staff who want to do a brilliant job for their community.

The code replaces the previous version, which was published more than a decade ago, and reduces the previous nine policing principles into three which are easier to use and understand:

- Public service
- Courage
- Respect and empathy

This new Code of Ethics works alongside a separate Code of Practice for ethical policing which sets out the responsibility for chief officers to make sure the code of ethics is being upheld and a professional culture maintained within forces.
The new Code of Ethics highlights the importance of learning from the outcome of past behaviours and situations whilst setting out what good policing looks like, including:

- Being open, honest, and candid
- Fairness and respect
- Decision making
- Recognising the opportunity to learn
- Challenging unprofessional behaviour
- When behaviour does not meet expectations

Assistant Chief Constable Tom Harding, College of Policing's Director of Operational Standards, said: "Police officers and staff join the service to keep the public safe and protect them from criminals. The new Code of Ethics is about supporting everyone in policing to deliver this with courage, respect, and empathy and with public service at the heart of all decisions"

The Code is hosted on the College of Policing website and has been developed by serving police officers, police staff, academics, and representatives from partner organisations. It's based on evidence and first-hand experience to make sure everyone working in policing, including staff and volunteers, feels fully supported within their roles.

Assistant Chief Constable Tom Harding - We've now got three simple and easy to use principles that will help us all to do the right thing, in the right way, for the right reasons. The Code of Ethics will support officers and staff operating in a fast-paced environment, making split-second decisions which can have an enormous effect on people's lives. Using the new code will support officers through their decision-making process, to ensure they are applying professional judgement and reflecting on past experiences.

You can read the full Code of Ethics and Code of Practice for ethical policing on the College of Policing website.