

SCHEDULE

CODE OF ETHICS FOR THE POLICE SERVICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND

PREAMBLE

- (a) Policing is an honourable profession that plays an important part in the maintenance of a just and fair society. The people of Northern Ireland have the right to expect the Police Service to protect their human rights by safeguarding the rule of law and providing a professional Police Service.
- (b) Police officers are required to respect and obey the law at all times and will be held personally responsible and accountable for their own acts or omissions.
- (c) Effective policing requires the co-operation of the public. Police officers, when carrying out their duties in accordance with the provisions of this Code, have the right to expect the respect and support of the public and elected representatives.
- (d) Public confidence in the Police Service is closely related to the attitude and behaviour of officers towards members of the public, in particular their respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of individuals as enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights.
- (e) Police officers have the same right to respect for their human rights and fundamental freedoms and to work in an environment free of harassment or discrimination in any form.
- (f) This Code of Ethics is intended:
 - (i) to lay down standards of conduct and practice for police officers, and
 - (ii) to make police officers aware of their rights and obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998 and the European Convention on Human Rights.
- (g) The standards in this Code are to be applied to:
 - (i) relationships between police officers and the general public, sections of the public and particular individuals;
 - (ii) relationships between police officers and other professionals in the criminal justice system;
 - (iii) relationships between individual police officers and their colleagues; and
 - (iv) relationships between individual police officers and the Police Service.
- (h) The statutory authority for the Code of Ethics can be found in section 52 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000⁽¹⁾. The contents of the Code are drawn from a number of sources, including:
 - (i) the Police Service attestation set out in section 38(1) of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000;
 - (ii) the European Convention on Human Rights;
 - (iii) other relevant human rights instruments, including:
 - (aa) the United Nations Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials;
 - (bb) the United Nations Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials; and
 - (cc) the European Police Code of Ethics.

(1) 2000 c.32.

Status: This is the original version (as it was originally made). This item of legislation is currently only available in its original format.

- (i) Police officers are required, at all times, to carry out their duties in accordance with the provisions of the Code of Ethics. In the event that a Police Service instruction, policy or procedure conflicts with the provisions of the Code of Ethics, officers are required to comply with provisions of this Code.
- (j) Any conduct, whether on or off duty, which brings or is likely to bring discredit on the Police Service may be investigated in order to establish whether or not a breach of the Code has occurred. A breach of the Code may result, in appropriate circumstances, in a criminal or disciplinary investigation, either by the Office of the Police Ombudsman or the Police Service.
- (k) Where police officers are investigated for a breach of this Code, whether by the Office of the Police Ombudsman or the Police Service, they have the right to expect that the investigation will be conducted in a prompt, thorough, impartial and careful manner.
- (l) This Code shall be applied in any investigation, hearing or decision relating to misconduct in a reasonable and objective manner. Due regard shall be given to the degree of negligence or deliberate fault of an officer and to the nature and circumstances of the officer's misconduct.