

POLICE (NORTHERN IRELAND) ACT 2000

EXPLANATORY NOTES

COMMENTARY

Part Iii: District and Community Policing Arrangements

Section 14: Establishment of District Policing Partnerships

29. This section places each district council in Northern Ireland under a duty to establish a district policing partnership for its council area and gives effect to Schedule 3 which governs how partnerships should be established, including size and composition, and sets out certain procedural issues.
30. The effect is to provide for the establishment of up to 26 district policing partnerships. Under paragraph 16 of Schedule 3 the Secretary of State may, by order, provide, with the agreement of the Board and any council affected by the order, that 2 or more district councils can form a joint partnership.

Section 15: Default of Council

31. This section sets out the Secretary of State's powers to direct a district council to establish a district policing partnership where it has not done so, or to remedy a defect in the appointment or procedures of a partnership. If the council fails to comply the Secretary of State may, by order, empower the Policing Board to establish a partnership.

Section 16: General Functions

32. This section sets out the functions of a district policing partnership and requires the partnerships to have regard to a code of practice, made by the Board under section 19, in carrying out these functions.
33. The role of a district policing partnership is primarily a consultative one. The functions set out in this section include expressing views to the police; monitoring police performance against the policing plan and the local policing plan; making arrangements to obtain the views of the public on policing and the co-operation of the public with the police; and acting as a general forum for discussion and consultation on the policing of the district.

Section 17: Annual Report to Council

34. This section requires each partnership to submit an annual report on the exercise of its functions to its district council, after consultation with the district commander. At the same time each partnership must send a copy of the report to the Board. The councils must publish the reports.

Section 18: Reports to Board

35. This section requires a partnership to submit a report to the Policing Board on any matter connected with the exercise of the partnership's functions when asked to do so by the Board. The Board may arrange for such reports to be published.

Section 19: Code of Practice

36. This section provides for the Policing Board to issue, with the Secretary of State's consent and after consulting the district councils and the Chief Constable, a code of practice on the exercise of the functions of the district policing partnerships.
37. The section sets out areas which the code may cover, including arranging meetings with the police, arrangements for enabling questions to be put to the police, monitoring police performance, and obtaining the views and co-operation of the public. The code must be published.

Section 20: Police Districts

38. This section makes the area of each district council, other than Belfast, a police district and requires the Chief Constable to appoint for each of these a district commander of at least chief inspector rank. For Belfast, given its size, there may be up to 4 police districts.

Section 21: District policing partnership sub-groups for Belfast

39. This section requires the Belfast district council to establish a sub-group for each of its police districts. Each sub-group will consist of at least 6 members of the partnership and the function of each will be to provide views to the district commander of their district and to the partnership on any matter concerning policing of that district.

Section 22: Local Policing Plan

40. This section requires each district commander to publish, after consultation with the district policing partnership, a local policing plan. This will set out arrangements for the policing of the district. These must be consistent with the policing plan published by the Board.

Section 23: Other Community Policing Arrangements

41. This section enables either the district policing partnerships with the approval of the Board or, in the case of default by a partnership, the Board, to make arrangements to facilitate consultation between the police and any local community. The Chief Constable must be consulted before such arrangements are made. The section provides for consultation at a level below district policing partnerships and recognises the role of the current community and police liaison committees.