

# Police Service of Northern Ireland

Policy for Public Disclosure.

HQ Ref: TRIM 515~08

PD 02/08

## POLICY DIRECTIVE

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### THE PROFESSIONALISING INVESTIGATION PROGRAMME

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#### 1. POLICY IDENTIFICATION

**POLICY TITLE:** The Professionalising Investigation Programme

**POLICY OWNERSHIP:**

**DEPARTMENT  
BRANCH**

**Crime Operations  
Policy Performance and Planning**

**POLICY APPROVED BY:**

**CCF REF/OTHER  
DATE OF APPROVAL**

**Chief Constable's Forum – Ref: 79/07  
19 October 2007**

**IMPLEMENTATION DATE:** 19 October 2007

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## **2. POLICY STATEMENTS**

- (1) The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) is committed to making Northern Ireland safer for everyone through professional, progressive policing. To that end, all investigators within the organisation will be trained, assessed and accredited as being competent to perform the duties required of them. This will be measured against the standards set out by the Professionalising Investigation Programme (PIP).
- (2) The Police Service of Northern Ireland envisages a service everyone can be proud of because it provides policing at its best. To achieve this, all investigators will be required to undertake Continuous Professional Development (CPD) to maintain their registration and will be encouraged to develop their investigative skills.

## **3. INTRODUCTION**

### **(1) Executive Summary**

This Policy outlines the role of the PIP within the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

### **(2) Origin**

- (a) The Police Reform Act 2002 and the Police Reform White Paper (2001) highlighted the need for the Police Service to professionalise all aspects of police investigations, to address issues such as inconsistent standards of investigation, failing community confidence in the police, high attrition rates and the lack of benchmarked standards in Policing (Home Office, 2003).
- (b) The PIP is a national project being led by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and was developed in accordance with the Home Office, the National Centre for Policing Excellence (NCPE), now known as the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) and the Police Skills and Standards Organisation (PSSO), now known as Skills for Justice.
- (c) The December 2006 Report from the Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland, entitled "Handling Volume Crime and the use of Police Bail" identified significant shortcomings in the PSNI's practice, policy and procedures in the investigation of volume crime. The Report recommended that "the PIP to train officers to an agreed common standard of investigation is implemented as soon as practicable."

### **(3) Aims/Objectives**

PIP aims to improve the investigative process by examining existing investigation procedures and developing ways to make the Police Service more professional, ethical and effective for both officers and police staff involved in investigations.

### **(4) Contribution**

- (a) The comprehensive implementation of PIP within the organisation will support the Chief Constable's vision for the Service by promoting a more professional approach to investigating reported incidents at all levels.
- (b) The aims of PIP will contribute to achieving the goals set out in the Policing Board's Policing Objectives 2007 - 2010, namely Objective 4, which aims to improve crime investigation.
- (c) PIP will also support the requirements of Article 2 of the Code of Ethics, entitled "Police Investigations."
- (d) The Baseline Assessment by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), dated October 2006, identified the implementation of PIP as a crucial factor in the development of the effective investigation of Volume Crime and Serious Crime.

(5) **Application**

- (a) This Policy is aimed at all officers who fulfil an investigative role within the organisation.
- (b) PIP recognises four levels of investigator within the organisation:
  - (i) The Level 1 Investigator, who will be an investigator at a level equivalent to Constable or Sergeant involved in the initial investigation of serious crime and/or in completing investigations of volume crime;
  - (ii) The Level 2 Investigator, who will be a dedicated investigator, at a level equivalent to Constable or Sergeant rank in a CID Office, attached to an investigative role within Crime Operations Department or involved in the investigation of fatal Road Traffic Collisions;
  - (iii) The Level 3 Investigator, who will be a Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) (as defined within the ACPO Murder Investigation Manual) managing major investigations into serious crime, such as murder and other complex matters;
  - (iv) The Level 4 Investigator, who will be a SIO, managing Linked Serious Crime.

(6) **Legal Basis**

Whilst there is no legal requirement to introduce PIP, the aims of the PIP support officers in meeting the requirements of Section 32, paragraph (1) of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000, which states that "it shall be the general duty of police officers... where an offence has been committed to take measures to bring the offender to justice."

**4. IMPLICATIONS OF THE POLICY**

(1) **Financial Implications**

- (a) The provision of training to all investigators will have medium to long-term financial implications for the organisation, ranging from the design and delivery of the training, to the costs arising from attendance at courses.
- (b) The establishment of an assessment, Internal Verification and registration structure within the organisation will lead to financial costs linked to the creation or re-allocation of staff posts to support these structures.
- (c) The improvement in investigative standards may also have non-quantifiable benefits, such as a reduction in the number of claims for negligence regarding criminal investigations and will ensure that incidents are investigated professionally on the first occasion.

(2) **Efficiency**

The comprehensive implementation of the PIP in Great Britain has led to an increase in sanctioned detections, more offenders being brought to justice and a reduction in ineffective Crown Court trials (NCPE, July 2006). It is anticipated that the introduction of PIP in PSNI will similarly improve the effectiveness and efficiency of investigators within the organisation.

(3) **Training**

The development and delivery of training products required to support PIP will require the allocation of resources. However, this investment will lead to the production of strong training resources that can be regularly and repeatedly used to substantially improve the quality of investigations within the PSNI.

(4) **Human Resources**

The comprehensive implementation of PIP will result in additional responsibilities for the Human Resources Department in the establishment and maintenance of registration and assessment structures within the organisation. However, it will result in the establishment of a system that will allow the clear and objective measurement of the performance of investigators and development of their skills, where necessary.

(5) **Bureaucracy**

The PIP assessment and registration process will unavoidably result in increased but limited administration for investigators and their Assessors. This will be built around existing duties of assessment and quality assurance of investigations. Steps have been taken to minimise the bureaucratic impact of this Policy by using the existing Annual Performance Review (APR) system to support the registration and re-registration of existing investigators.

(6) **Risks**

- (a) Failure to comply with this policy and the procedural guidance in relation to the training, assessment and registration of investigators, could affect both the Police Service's ability to investigate reported incidents professionally, ethically and effectively, in particular those classified as serious or critical incidents.
- (b) Similarly, failure by the organisation to adopt the standards set out in PIP could lead to a loss of public confidence in the ability of the PSNI to carry out investigations. This could also lead to criticism by HMIC.
- (c) There is a risk that some investigators will fail to achieve the required standards under PIP. This risk will be controlled through the development of a strong training and development programme. Mechanisms to address the development need of candidates will also be implemented.

(7) **Consultation**

Internal and external consultation has taken place with the following:

- (i) ACC, Crime Operations;
- (ii) Head of Policy and Performance, Crime Operations;
- (iii) Head of Operational Development Programmes;
- (iv) Head of Leadership Development Programmes;
- (v) Deputy Head of Human Resources;
- (vi) Head of Foundation Programmes;
- (vii) Head of People Development;
- (viii) Occupational Psychologist, Human Resources;
- (ix) CORE Project Team;
- (x) Head of Crime Training;
- (xi) Training Development Unit;
- (xii) Head of Branch, Serious Crime Branch;
- (xiii) Policing Skills Unit;
- (xiv) NPIA;

- (xv) District Commanders;
- (xvi) Equality and Diversity Unit;
- (xvii) Legal Services Unit (Human Rights);
- (xviii) The Police Federation for Northern Ireland;
- (xix) The Superintendents Association of Northern Ireland.

**(8) Internal Policy Links**

- (a) The Policy Directive entitled "Internal Verification" will govern references to Internal Verification within this Policy Directive.
- (b) The forthcoming Policy Directives relating to the Promotion Process and the APR should be read in conjunction with this Policy Directive.

**5. HUMAN RIGHTS/EQUALITY/INTEGRITY/FREEDOM OF INFORMATION**

This Policy is deemed to be Human Rights compliant; it has been screened for Section 75 considerations and meets integrity standards. The Policy is suitable for disclosure in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 as part of the Police Service's Publication Scheme.

**(1) Human Rights**

- (a) This Policy on the PIP supports Articles 2 (The Right to Life) and 3 (The Prohibition of Torture or Inhuman Treatment) of the ECHR by professionalising the investigation of serious crime.
- (b) This Policy also supports Article 6 of the ECHR (Right to a Fair Trial) by encouraging and enabling investigators to conduct objective and thorough investigations and keep comprehensive records of all action taken.

**(2) Equality**

- (a) Special Assessment Needs. Consideration will need to be given by Assessors for candidates who may have special assessment requirements including issues of culture, diversity, language, religious requirements, learning style/ability and physical ability.
- (b) Candidates with any kind of disability will be assessed ONLY on their ability to do the job. It will be very rare that the disability will affect the judgement of the Assessor; however it may affect the way in which the Assessor carries out an assessment, eg if a candidate has dyslexia the Assessor may decide to ask verbal questions rather than written ones.

**6. REVIEW**

- (1) The owner of the Policy will review this document in 12 months time and will consider, by way of consultation, whether there is still a requirement for the policy and what the impact of the policy has been, as well as other relevant matters.
- (2) Interim reviews may also be prompted by feedback, challenge or change in legislation.
- (3) Feedback or queries relating to this Policy should be addressed to Policy Planning and Performance, Crime Operations, Brooklyn.