

# Using APP

Information about APP, where it applies and the legal status.

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Authorised professional practice (APP) is developed and owned by the College of Policing (the professional body for policing) and can be accessed online. It is the official and most up-to-date source of policing practice.

APP streamlines existing knowledge products and guidance into a consolidated online format. The benefits of an integrated approach include:

- instant access to authorised knowledge and the ability to link seamlessly to other APP areas
- the ability to search content
- a reduction in the volume of material
- a consistent and compatible approach

## How guidance becomes APP

APP is authorised by the College of Policing as the official source of professional practice on policing.

The development of APP is based on identified threshold criteria. APP must support interoperability at a national level, contribute to the mitigation of 'high risk' activity or reinforce the Strategic Policing Requirement. APP is being developed and released incrementally.

Not all guidance will meet the criteria determined by the Gateway Group to become APP. It is at the discretion of the relevant National Policing Business Area to identify any additional guidance to be developed and they are responsible for ensuring that such guidance is accurate and kept up to date.

Existing guidance products are still valid during the development of APP. Once APP has been developed, National Policing Business Areas review their pool of products to ascertain which have been superseded by APP and can be decommissioned, which need to be retained as reference material and which can be archived.

APP will be subject to review (either scheduled or triggered) in consultation with the relevant National Policing Business Area. Updates will be flagged to users and details on changes will be provided as necessary.

The content of APP is subject to scrutiny by the College's Legal Services Unit to ensure that the product is legally accurate and compliant with diversity good practice. For further information on the steps taken in the development of APP, see our [equality impact statement](#).

## Guideline committee

The College of Policing also develops guidance using guideline committees. The key elements of this approach include:

- working collaboratively with the service using independent, unbiased committees of specialist and generalist practitioners, subject matter experts from academia and partner agencies and the third sector
- ensuring APP is based on the best available evidence by carrying out systematic reviews of the evidence required to underpin the scope
- supplementing these reviews with unbiased consensus of expert opinion (systematically elicited)
- producing APP that is formed of a series of recommendations for practice underpinned by supporting evidence

The guideline committee (GC) group is an independent advisory group that considers the evidence and develops the guideline recommendations, taking into account the views of stakeholders. The GC is made up of a number of standing members including a chair, frontline practitioners and subject matter experts. Specifically, the guideline committee:

- develops review questions from primary issues in the scope
- supports the College with identifying best practice in areas where research evidence is absent, weak or equivocal
- outlines opportunities and challenges that may be faced in implementing College guidelines
- identifies recommendations that might require additional implementation efforts at a local level

This approach was adopted by the College in 2016. [Find the guidelines produced using this approach](#).

## Deviating from APP

Police officers and staff are expected to have regard to APP in discharging their responsibilities. There may be circumstances, however, where there is a legitimate operational reason for a force to deviate from APP, providing there is a clear rationale for doing so.

It would be for the force to bear the responsibility of any local and national risk of operating outside nationally agreed guidelines, and if an incident or investigation occurs as a consequence (such as through the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC)) the force is liable for any risk. Any processes associated with such a course of action would be a matter for the force.

## Accessing APP

APP can be accessed on mobile, desktop and tablet and each page can be printed. Please be aware that APP may be updated at any time to reflect changes in legislation or practice. Any print copy of an APP web page is only valid at the time of printing.

Official-sensitive APP is accessible to police forces through [College Learn](#). Confidential and sensitive APP content, released to specialist communities via standalone discs, remains current.

[Contact us for more information.](#)

APP website titles and subtitles can be hyperlinked to force policies. Go to 'Contents' and find the title or subtitle required. Right click on the title or subtitle and select 'copy link address'. This is a unique URL which can be embedded in force policies as required.

## Changes to APP

See the [list of changes](#) for details. All amendments are subject to a review process and further information is available from [contactcentre@college.police.uk](mailto:contactcentre@college.police.uk)

Email [contactcentre@college.police.uk](mailto:contactcentre@college.police.uk) for:

- information on decommissioned guidance superseded by APP, or decommissioned documents for official-sensitive and specialist community APP
- a copy of APP on a particular date (for example, for an inquiry)

All requests for copies of APP on a particular date must be approved by the relevant policing standards manager.

## APP in Scotland

APP is not currently a Police Scotland product. Discussions are ongoing to determine whether Scotland adopts APP fully.

There are areas of guidance within APP that have been developed in conjunction with Scottish partners and where content is applicable in Scotland this will be clearly signposted.

## Tags

APP