



# Maintaining professional distance policy

Avoiding conflicts of interest by carefully managing our relationships.

## Executive summary

The key things to note in this policy are that employees are expected to:

- be aware of the need to maintain a professional distance from those we deal with in our work
- appropriately manage any personal relationship where a [conflict of interest](#) or imbalance of power arises, by declaring it to their supervisor, and
- avoid any such relationships that are unethical or inappropriate.

If you are unsure of your relationship, you should speak to your supervisor.

## Policy statement and principles

This policy document outlines our approach to managing professional distance, and provides links to procedural guidelines. This policy is in place to provide an overview of what we mean by professional distance, why it is important, and how we approach this as an organisation.

### What?

We must all be mindful of whether relationships developed through our Police roles may lead to a conflict of interest or a power imbalance. A Police employee is expected to take steps to manage any personal relationship where a conflict of interest or imbalance of power arises, including where necessary, declaring any such relationship, or potential relationship, to Police.

This policy relates to the formation of consensual personal relationships (sexual or otherwise) and applies to all Police employees.

A personal relationship may include family members, friends, partners or others where the relationship contact or conduct is personal or intimate as opposed to professional.

A professional relationship occurs when the relationship has arisen out of the employee's work duties. This includes a relationship between two Police employees, a Police employee and a member of the public, a Police employee and an associate (eg a staff member of an external agency), a Police employee and a contractor, and others.

### Why?

The nature of policing means conflicts of interest and power imbalances may occur in our relationships with colleagues, victims, offenders and members of the public. As your employer, we are legitimately interested in relationships you develop through your Police role where there is a real or perceived conflict of interest or a power imbalance. Such conflicts of interest or power imbalances may compromise our professional boundaries and those relationships may therefore be inappropriate.

### How?

We are clear about what type of relationships are not ethical or are inappropriate, and we provide guidance on managing and limiting risks to individuals and to Police when these relationships may occur. We report any relationship we are unsure of to our supervisor.

We work together to take all reasonably practicable steps to manage any reported relationship so that the relationship may continue, however we accept that in some circumstances it not possible for the risks to be appropriately managed.



## Maintaining professional distance policy, Continued...

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We respect and maintain the privacy of our people, and do not interfere unduly in their relationships.

We use the [Professional distance guidelines](#) to help us inform us regarding our approach to relationships.

### **Further information**

For further information see:

- the [Professional distance guidelines](#)
- [Managing conflicts of interest](#)
- [Our Values](#)
- [Our Code](#)