



Protected Learning Time Policy

2021
Version 1

Policy Refresh
Policy Department, PFEW

The PFEW Policy Department has embarked on a concerted effort to formulate and/or revise policy documents, titled "Policy Refresh", on key topics concerning its members.

These strategic documents are evidence-based, aligned with PFEW's Business Areas, as well as championed by National Board members.

It is aimed for PFEW to maintain clear policy positions on key topics, that allows members to have clarity on PFEW's official position statements that are backed by evidence.

This project was initiated in the first quarter of 2021 and we welcome your comments or questions. Please direct your email to:
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PROTECTED LEARNING TIME POLICY

Version 1

Policy Rationale

Representing the wishes of the membership, the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) is issuing a policy statement to ensure that the need to prioritize Protected Learning Time (PLT) for officers during their initial learning programme is recognised and addressed. This is an area of increasing concern to PFEW due to the negative impact on wellbeing and work/life balance for those officers who are required to undertake learning and professional development in their own time.

Policy Statement

PFEW believes that Protected Learning Time must be made accessible and available for all officers during their initial learning programme. We believe that it must cover all learning outcomes, including completion of the Operational Competence Portfolio, irrespective of whether this forms a credit-bearing element of the individual force's learning programme. Protected Learning Time must also be made available for other mandated learning, such as role-specific and mandatory learning and assessments.

PFEW believes that Protected Learning Time must also be made available to support all required learning and professional development, whether within rank or in preparation for promotion. There should be no requirement or expectation for officers to undertake required learning outside of working hours. Officers must have parity in terms of Protected Learning Time irrespective of the force in which they happen to serve. Managers should also be provided with protected supervision time to support their officers' development.

Provision of time and resources for learning and professional development should not be regarded by forces solely as an abstraction challenge to be accommodated. PFEW would like to see that Protected Learning Time is encouraged across ranks as an investment in developing and motivating competent and professional officers.

PFEW recognizes that investment in Protected Learning Time represents a significant cultural change in some forces. This is an issue which needs to be openly addressed, and PFEW will take every opportunity to do so.

Background

There appear to be significant differences between and within forces in the way in which Protected Learning Time is provided and managed. These are particularly apparent but not limited to officers undertaking the Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA) initial learning programme.

Professional learning, development and management is not currently recognised as a priority across all forces. Within some forces there is a perception that officers are expected to undertake required learning and professional development in their own time. This includes lateral development, additional learning and training requirements for specialist roles such as detectives, learning in preparation for promotion as well as initial learning programmes.

In some forces, officers, particularly PCDA students, are expected to rely on their manager's discretion to request the learning time that they are entitled to. Additionally, some line managers are allowing or requiring operational duties to take priority over Protected Learning Time. By definition, Protected Learning Time should be protected, and not influenced by operational priorities.

These practices are clearly at odds with the principles set out in College of Policing's Effective Supervision Guidelines and policies currently being developed to encourage Continuous Professional Development (CPD).

Protected Learning Time is a requirement for officers undertaking Policing Education Qualifications Framework (PEQF) initial entry routes:

- The PCDA apprenticeship funding provisions require that those undertaking the PCDA in England must receive at least 20% Protected Learning Time across the whole three-year programme.
- Welsh PCDA arrangements are governed by different funding provisions, but College of Policing guidance confirms that they are not expected to be allocated less than 20% Protected Learning Time.
- The College of Policing expect that Degree Holder Entry Programme (DHEP) officers will receive similar Protected Learning Time provisions to PCDA officers during their initial learning programme.

PFEW is concerned about the negative impact on wellbeing and work/life balance for those officers who are required to undertake learning and professional development in their own time.

Scope of the Policy

The policy applies to all required learning or professional development undertaken by officers, including but not limited to:

- initial learning programmes, including PCDA and DHEP,
- training and learning for particular roles such as Detectives,
- Continuous Professional Development, including any learning required as part of Professional Development Review (PDR) process, bearing in mind that the Pay Progression Standard (PPS) is to be introduced early 2022,
- completion of Step 4 (temporary promotion and work-based assessment) of the National Police Promotion Framework,
- learning to support compliance and implementation of the College Supervision Guidelines,
- learning required as part of the Leadership Centre curriculum.

Policy Review

Recommend to review along with a broader College Of Policing policy.

Policy Document – Versions

Version 1	Drafted by: Policy Department	Policy Approved on 7/12/2021	Policy to be revised in 2023
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Approved by National Board on 7/12/2021