

4 Use of force

I will only use force as part of my role and responsibilities, and only to the extent that it is necessary, proportionate and reasonable in all the circumstances.

4.1

This standard is primarily intended for police officers who, on occasion, may need to use force in carrying out their duties.

4.2

Police staff, volunteers and contractors in particular operational roles (for example, custody-related) may also be required to use force in the course of their duties.

4.3

According to this standard you must use only the minimum amount of force necessary to achieve the required result.

4.4

You will have to account for any use of force, in other words justify it based upon your honestly held belief at the time that you used the force.

National Decision Model

The National Decision Model is the primary decision-making model for police in England and Wales. Individuals, supervisors and others use it to assess potential decisions or decisions that have already been made.

4.1 Making ethical decisions

4.1.1

The Code of Ethics promotes the use of the National Decision Model (NDM) to help embed ethical reasoning in accordance with policing principles and expected standards of behaviour. The model allows people to be more questioning of the situations confronting them, more challenging of themselves and better able to make ethical and effective decisions.

4.1.2

The model places the Code of Ethics at the centre of all decision making. This reminds those in the policing profession that they should consider the principles and expected standards of behaviour set out in the Code at every stage of making decisions.

4.1.3

The NDM is inherently flexible. It can be applied to spontaneous incidents or planned operations, by an individual or teams of people, and to operational and non-operational situations. It can also be expanded as appropriate for specialist and other areas of policing. The NDM also works well for reviewing and debriefing decisions and actions.

4.1.4

In every case the elements of the NDM stay the same, but users decide for themselves which questions and considerations they apply at each stage.

4.1.5

Understanding, practising and using the NDM helps people develop the knowledge and skills necessary to make ethical, proportionate and defensible decisions in all policing situations.

4.1.6

In a fast-moving incident, the main priority of decision makers is to keep in mind the principles and standards set out in the Code of Ethics.

4.1.7

You are not expected to know the Code of Ethics word for word. What is expected is that you apply the intent of the Code to your decisions and ask yourself questions such as:

- Is my decision in line with the principles and expected behaviours outlined in the Code of Ethics?
- Will this action or decision reflect well on my professionalism and policing generally?
- Would I be comfortable explaining this action or decision to my supervisor?
- Would I be prepared to defend this action or decision in public?