



## Harm's Way

### Policy

#### 1. Introduction

The aim of this policy and associated guidance is not to be prescriptive or define the Harm's Way threshold, as the decision to intervene in high risk situations must rely upon the judgment and integrity of the individual officer, taking account of all the variables in circumstances, the facts available to them at the time and the perceived risk.

#### 2. Policy Statement

##### 2.1. Harm's Way Principle

- 2.1.1. There is an overarching principle that the primary role of a police officer is to safeguard life. The Code of Ethics and public expectation define the personal obligations upon officers to put themselves at risk of harm and to take meaningful action where possible to protect the public.
- 2.1.2. It may also include a decision to deploy officers to an incident where they are not ideally equipped, based on assessment of threat, harm and risk using the National Decision Model with the priority to protect the public.

##### 2.2. Policy

- 2.2.1. This principle places a fundamental duty upon Police Officers to protect life. They are expected to shoulder reasonable risk and do all they can to mitigate that risk.
- 2.2.2. Sustainable public safety will be at the heart of any successful resolution.

### Procedure

#### Introduction

There is an overarching principle that the primary role of a police officer is to safeguard life. The Code of Ethics and public expectation define the personal obligations upon officers to put themselves at risk of harm and to take meaningful action where possible to protect the public.

##### 1.1 Statement

- 1.1 'Harm's Way' places a personal responsibility on all Police Officers to intervene in a prompt and decisive manner, in order to keep the public and Surrey Police staff from 'Harm's Way'.
- 1.2 It may also include deployment of officers who are not ideally equipped or trained to deal with a specific threat.
- 1.3 As police officers, it should be remembered that, whilst putting ourselves at risk to protect the public, our training and personal protective equipment mean that we will almost always be less vulnerable than members of the public in the same situation.

1.4 Officers should approach each incident with caution and assess the situation by carrying out a dynamic risk assessment (DRA) using principles set out in the National Decision Model (NDM) to assess immediate threat, harm and risk.

1.5 Officers should consider the STAY SAFE principles where appropriate and intervene only when absolutely necessary.

#### STAY SAFE - THINK ABOUT YOUR OWN AND THE SAFETY OF THE PUBLIC

- SEE – what is happening and where
- TELL – communicate, describe incident/type of weapon
- ACT – stay safe (where possible), update, observe, contain

1.6 During such incidents supervisors are required to take control; to identify and balance risk and to make clear and confident decisions. Balancing risk with the duty to protect requires skill and judgment and is a fundamental leadership criterion when deciding what action is appropriate.

1.7 It is accepted by the Chief Constable that, in acute operational situations, mistakes will sometimes happen. As a learning organisation, operational debriefs will help in identifying where we can improve upon our performance. In addition, debriefs will assist supervisors in assessing what further actions are necessary to reduce the risk of being put in harm's way in future and to ensure sustainable public safety, i.e. "future-proofing" to avoid the same risks recurring in repeat or similar cases.

## **2. Police Staff (PCSO)**

PCSO's are trained in 'conflict avoidance'. A PCSO faced with a situation in which 'life is in danger' will be expected to report and request police support but there is no expectation that PCSO's will put themselves in Harm's Way.

Note: The Force will fully support PCSOs who have made decisions to act or not act in a particular manner, where they have based their decision on an assessment of the situation and the activity undertaken is lawful and appropriate.

**Team: Force Control Room Management**