

Abstraction

Policy & Procedure

OFFICIAL

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Department of Origin	Sefton BCU
Policy Holder	Chief Superintendent Baldwin (BCU)
Policy Author	Chief Inspector Trubshaw (NPG SPOC)
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Policy

National Context

Authorised Professional Practice (APP) is produced by the College of Policing as the official source of professional practice on policing. All officers and staff are expected to have regard to APP in discharging their responsibilities. Essentially, our “policy” is to comply with APP as it develops to cover all areas of policing.

Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee & Pledge:

The policy supports the national Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee, which emphasises the importance of visible, accessible, and locally accountable policing. Neighbourhood Officers must be enabled to operate within their communities, focusing on prevention, early intervention, and partnership-based problem solving. This pledge is reinforced by HMICFRS assessments and the Beating Crime Plan, which highlight the need to protect neighbourhood policing from undue abstraction.

Rationale

Merseyside Police is committed to delivering visible and accessible Neighbourhood Policing to all communities across Merseyside. Central to this is the availability of Neighbourhood Officers within their respective hubs at times when communities need them most. While abstractions to other areas of business may occasionally occur, these should be exceptional for Neighbourhood Officers. Neighbourhood Officers for the purpose of this policy will relate to both Police Officers and Police and Community Support Officers (PCSO's) aligned to Neighbourhood Policing.

Neighbourhood Officers must be enabled to maximise their time operating within their Basic Command Unit (BCU), focusing on prevention, early intervention, and reducing demand through partnership-based problem solving.

This policy aligns with national guidance to ensure Neighbourhood Policing is protected from undue disruption and abstraction (HMIC 2022; HMIC 2023; Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee performance framework - GOV.UK). It also supports the Resource Management Policy 2016 as per the below:

Neighbourhood Abstractions:

1.6.1 - A key aim of the Force's Neighbourhood Policing Model is to maximise the availability of Neighbourhood Officers. A fundamental principle of that model is to ensure that Neighbourhood Officers are not routinely abstracted from their primary role. Neighbourhood Officers should not be subject to any abstraction unless all other available options have been exhausted.

Aims

This policy ensures the effective management of abstractions from Neighbourhood Policing teams. It aims to maintain the visibility and activity of these teams within their designated Hub areas, supporting the delivery of local priorities and the Force Strategy.

Neighbourhood Policing Guidelines supported:

- Community engagement
- Problem solving
- Targeted activity

It is acknowledged that, due to operational demands, Neighbourhood Officers may occasionally be abstracted from their core duties to fulfil necessary planned or unplanned responsibilities. This policy sets out the principles to be followed in such cases and applies to both Police Officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) aligned to Neighbourhood Policing.

Objectives

- Provide visible and accessible Neighbourhood Policing
- Prevent crime and anti-social behaviour
- Support victims and vulnerable individuals
- Tackle serious and organised crime

Application and Scope

All police officers and police staff, including the extended police family and those working voluntarily or under contract to Merseyside Police must be aware of, and are required to comply with, all relevant policy and associated procedures.

This is a non-statutory policy that sets out the principles to help guide decision making. It provides guidance that, on occasions, officers and staff may depart from based on the particular circumstances they encounter. On such occasions, officers and staff will be supported provided they can demonstrate a clear rationale which can be objectively justified for why they have departed from the policy.

This policy defines what will be classified as an abstraction for Police Officers and PCSOs working within Neighbourhood Policing teams in Merseyside.

Outcome Evaluation

Outcomes should reflect specific objectives and be measured against these objectives on a routine basis. There have been significant national developments around Neighbourhood Policing and governance should ensure that Neighbourhood Officers are free to perform their Neighbourhood duties wherever possible.

Ch. Insp. Trubshaw will remain responsible for the monitoring of this plan. In line with the One Team ethos accountability also sits with all strands and departments including Response and the Force Resource Unit.

This policy recognises that Neighbourhood Officers will sometimes be abstracted from their roles but provides guidance around when this should and should not occur. As with any policy there may be occasion to act outside of it, however, this should be done in consultation with the BCU Command Team when abstractions are known of in advance.

Procedure

Version History

Version Number	Date	Detailed rational behind amending/updating policy or procedure.	Policy Owner Details	Policy Author Details
1.0	10/09/25	Requirement to clarify abstractions-spontaneous v planned.	Ch Supt Perischine	T/Supt Rotherham
1.01	26/01/26	Correction of para numbers in section 5 – content and dates unchanged	Ch Supt Perischine	T/Supt Rotherham
1.2	08/06/26	Updated to new naming conventions following force restructure; formatting refresh (no change to review date)	Ch Supt Baldwin	Ch Insp Trubshaw

1. Procedure Guidance

1.1 What is an abstraction?

1.1.1 An abstraction is defined as the removal of officers from their core neighbourhood role to undertake other duties. This does not include:-

- Court attendance
- Attendance at emergency incidents where there are no patrols available
- Activities arising from their role as a Neighbourhood Officer

Spontaneous v. Planned Abstractions

1.1.2 A **planned** abstraction will be any rostered or part-rostered tour of duty during which an officer is performing duties otherwise than in their Neighbourhood Role. This will most likely be completed by the Force Resourcing Unit or the Officer's Supervision.

1.1.3 A **spontaneous** abstraction will be any abstraction whereby an officer commences their Neighbourhood Role and is then requested to perform other duties during the shift. This could be by the Force Control Room, Command Team, FIM etc.

1.2 Examples of Planned Abstractions

- Liverpool Hub 1 Officers deployed to police a protest on the Wirral
- An Officer assigned to the Academy as an associate trainer
- Officers covering scene management outside of their BCU on an FRU plan.

1.3 Examples where planned activity is NOT an abstraction

- Leave of any kind including sickness/family/special
- Attendance on mandatory training courses
- Attendance on training courses to support their role as a Neighbourhood Officer
- Support to another Hub within your BCU

1.4 Examples of Spontaneous Abstractions

- St Helens BCU Neighbourhood Officer deployed to calls for service in Knowsley Area.
- Neighbourhood officer deployed to a priority or circulation graded log that is not in their hub area or is a priority incident not linked to a Neighbourhood issue.
- Deployment to custody enquiries

1.5 Examples of spontaneous activity which is NOT an abstraction

- Deployment to an emergency incident within your hub where there are no Response patrols available
- Scene management within your own BCU
- Response to Neighbourhood issues such as but not limited to threat assessments, ASB Risk Investigations, partnership operations or hotspot patrolling

2. Abstraction Principles - Planned

- 2.1.1 As per the Resource Management Policy 2016 (1.6.1) A key aim of the Force's Neighbourhood Policing Model is to maximise the availability of Neighbourhood Officers. A fundamental principle of that model is to ensure that Neighbourhood Officers are not routinely abstracted from their primary role. Neighbourhood Officers should not be subject to any abstraction unless ALL other available options have been exhausted.
- 2.1.2 As per the Neighbourhood Policing Model and the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee individual officers are forging relationships and problem solving in their ward areas; therefore, no individual officer should spend less than 80% of their time in their Neighbourhood Role.
- 2.1.3 Abstractions must not significantly impair a team's ability to serve its community therefore no Neighbourhood Team should spend less than 90% of their time in their respective Neighbourhood.
- 2.1.4 Supervisors should not be abstracted if it would leave a BCU without supervision at each rank.

- 2.1.5 Any planned abstractions will be recorded on DMS and in an abstraction database maintained by the FRU with a rationale for use of Neighbourhood Officers.
- 2.1.6 Any planned abstractions should be done in consultation with BCU Command Team.
- 2.1.7 In the event that a Neighbourhood Officer is stood down early from a planned abstraction they will resume their Neighbourhood duties.
- 2.1.8 BCU Command Team will have the autonomy to approve any abstractions which fall outside of this policy if they see fit in line with a One Team ethos.

3. Abstraction Principles - Spontaneous

- 3.1.1 To support the delivery of Community First and a One Team ethos, Neighbourhood Officers will attend Emergency Incidents in their BCU where there are no other patrols available.
- 3.1.2 No other patrols available means there is no resource who could reach the emergency within the 10-minute arrival window. This includes looking across the BCU at other functions where available.
- 3.1.3 Efforts should be made to clear patrols from other incidents prior to deploying Neighbourhood Officers. As per the Response guidelines it will be the responsibility of Response Sergeants to ensure Response patrols make themselves available in a reasonable amount of time.
- 3.1.4 Where no patrol is available authorisation should be sought from the Control Room Supervisor to deploy Neighbourhood Officers, and the FCC should add a status update for the dispatch group on to the log and a rationale for deploying Neighbourhood Officers.
- 3.1.5 Neighbourhood Officers should not be deployed to priority, circulation or resolution graded incidents unless it relates to an ongoing Neighbourhood Priority for which their expertise as a Neighbourhood Officer is required, for example if problem solving is required for a long-standing community issue. A neighbourhood dispute is not necessarily a Neighbourhood officers role to resolve, however if there is clearly a history of Neighbourhood and partner agency involvement, Neighbourhood officers may be best placed to attend the incident.
- 3.1.6 Any deployment in contradiction with point 3.1.5 above should be rationalised on the storm log by the Response Inspector.
- 3.1.7 Spontaneous abstractions to support other Neighbourhood teams in another Hub or BCU should be done so in discussion with the relevant Command Team where possible.
- 3.1.8 Any abstractions as above point 3.1.7 should be recorded on the relevant 24hr Debrief Report with a rationale.

4. Governance

- 4.1.1 Pre-planned abstractions: The BCU Command Team will have access to the FRU abstraction database as per 2.1.5 for monitoring and dip sampling.
- 4.1.2 Spontaneous abstractions: May be authorised by a Control Room Sergeant or Supervisor in adherence with the principles set out above, specifically 3.1.2, 3.1.3, 3.1.4. If the abstraction is likely to be prolonged, the Neighbourhood Inspector for the area should be consulted with resourcing reviewed and roll calls for availability of Response officers conducted. Outside of office hours, the Response Inspector should be consulted. On all occasions where Neighbourhood Officers are deployed to storm logs a rationale should be entered onto the storm log.
- 4.1.3 All Neighbourhood Officers are required to test call at the start of their shift to support the delivery of Community First and a One Team ethos.

5. Monitoring Process

- 5.1.1 Abstractions will be monitored through:-
- 5.1.2 ARLS data tracking of officers radio. An abstraction will be recorded on the abstraction dashboard once the officer has been outside of their Hub for an hour.
- 5.1.3 Officers self-reporting via the Neighbourhood Policing Application. This will be overlayed with the ARLS abstraction data to provide context to any recorded abstraction. Any unnecessary abstractions should be raised in the Daily Morning Meeting (DMM).
- 5.1.4 Dip sampling of abstractions will be conducted by the BCU Management Support Team on a quarterly basis to ensure the policy is being adhered to.
- 5.1.5 Any issues will be raised to BCU Command for discussion internally or with other strands if necessary.
- 5.1.6 Performance will be reviewed by the Trust and Confidence Board.

6. Limitations

- 6.1.1 This policy relates to Neighbourhood Police Officers and PCSOs. It is not a Local Policing abstraction policy. The including of Targeted Policing will be reviewed in due course.