

Chief Constables' Council

Please select intended audience: Chief Constables Council

Title: Operational Coordination Framework

Agenda Item: Session 1 - Regional

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When completing the Chief Constables' Council submission template the below 3D model agreed at the December 23 meeting should be reviewed and the paper written against for completion and final submission to the respective Coordination Committee and then onward to the NPCC Business Support team managing Chiefs' Council via CCC ccc@npcc.police.uk

Decision	Discussion	Dissemination
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the item is for decision, what is/are the decision(s) that are sought from council? • Has it been through the relevant Committee first? Is the decision appropriate for delegation? • Has it been through the Regional process? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the item is for discussion, is it for discussion with Chief Constables, all Chief Officers, Heads of Departments, a particular Committee? • If it is for a group other than Chief Constables, use the relevant forum. If it is for Chief Constables, be clear on the points for discussion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the item is for information only, who is it for? Can it be disseminated via another route than CCC, such as ChiefsNet, email, or an All Chief Officers Day? • If it is purely for Chief Constables, be clear on why it needs to come to CCC for dissemination.

Please indicate what the paper is requesting:

Recommendation:

1. To approve a 4-tier national coordination framework, and for the College of Policing to update the relevant Authorised Professional Practice (APP) to reflect these arrangements.
2. In adopting the described arrangements, policing ceases use of labels such as 'diamond' or 'platinum' groups (instead moving to 'Force Executive Oversight') and 'national gold' or 'coordinating gold' (instead moving to 'National Coordinator').

Background and scope:

- 1.1 In February 2025, Chief Constables' Council commissioned a review of Authorised Professional Practice (APP) in respect of multi-force and national coordination arrangements to take account of, and reflect, learning from a range of national events and operations and established practice, expanding beyond public order operations. Having been defined as out of scope, no changes are proposed to Gold/Silver/Bronze (GSB) structures within forces, nor arrangements within ROCU/ ****S23(1)**** /CTP. Similarly, no changes or impacts are identified for the operational independence of forces, confirmed in a legal review of the documents.

Summary:

- 2.1 The current Authorised Professional Practice document for 'operations' contains no reference to approaches beyond GSB at force level, with the APP's for 'public order' and 'mobilisation' referencing a 'coordinating gold' role but only within the limited scope of resourcing.
- 2.2 A clear distinction is required between '*coordination*' and '*command*,' with Forces' retaining operational independence, command, and accountability. In addition, key principles underpinned the review, namely:
 - The APP will remain the approved and primary guidance for command doctrine.

- Operational independence and inter-agency arrangements are out of scope.
- Proposals are to be - scalable to impact, complexity, scrutiny, operational context, and reflect good practice – and sustainable, both in operational response, and in the context of police reform.

2.3 A working group of NPoCC, NPCC Operations, NPOPS, Civil Contingencies, and the College of Policing have undertaken national and international research in developing a framework to document the coordination arrangements outside of (but not changing) established Gold/Silver/Bronze command structures.

Learning has been captured from a wide range of national operations over the last 3yrs, those who have undertaken executive oversight roles, NPoCC senior leadership, and from recently appointed national coordinators. In addition, alignment has been considered with both the previously approved 'NPCC national policing response plan' for civil emergencies, and the recently refreshed Cabinet Office 'Amber Book' which outlines central government crisis response structures.

Engagement have taken place with a wide range of commanders, NPOPS and NOCC.

2.4 A 4-tier framework has been developed which reflects, and for the first time defines, evolved practices in place at force and national level. Beyond Force GSB command, the tiered approach to coordination is proposed as follows:

- 1) Force Executive Oversight - supporting the gold commander.**
- 2) Multi-force coordination - to coordinate support to multiple-impacted Forces.**
- 3) National coordination - to coordinate the national response on behalf of policing.**
- 4) NPCC coordination - to consider consequences and contingencies for the wider service.**

2.5 Appendix A outlines a single-page summary of the 4-tiers, and Appendix B provides a separate operational guidance document to assist its implementation.

For each tier, a scope, tipping points for activation, roles and responsibilities, and parameters are outlined, and should be applied in a bespoke manner to the relevant operation.

The guidance also provides a term of reference template to assist force executive oversight and specifically provides clarity of the roles and responsibilities of an appointed national coordinator.

Legal review:

3.1 Legal advice has been obtained from MPS DLS on behalf of NPCC, specifically in respect of Chief Constables' operational independence. Section 2 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 provides Chief Constables with the responsibility for direction and control of their respective police forces, who must exercise their power in such a way as is reasonable to assist the relevant PCC to exercise their functions.

In the case of R v Metropolitan Police Commissioner (ex parte Blackburn [1968] 2 QB 118) the Court of Appeal found that the Commissioner was not an entirely free agent and had a legal duty

to the public to enforce the law, but that the court would not question his discretion when reasonably exercised.

The court said: *‘No minister of the Crown can tell [the Commissioner] that he must, or must not, keep observation on this place or that; or that he must, or must not, prosecute this man or that one. Nor can any police authority tell him so. The responsibility for law enforcement lies on him. He is answerable to the law and to the law alone.’*

The proposed framework is aligned to this principle, as it makes clear that operational independence is retained even whilst operating in conjunction with other forces for a collective/consistent response, and that forces may choose to transparently derogate from any national operational policy set by a national coordinator should they need to. No legal barriers to this proposal have therefore been identified.

Implementation:

- 4.1 No financial or structural changes are required, and the adoption of this framework will provide clarity and enables greater consistency in approach. In particular, the current ad hoc use of terminology such as to ‘platinum’ or ‘diamond’ groups, or ‘national gold’ or ‘coordinating gold’ can now be aligned to ‘force executive oversight’ and ‘national coordinator’ – with the terms of reference and command protocols for each made clear in the appendices. Use of the term ‘national coordinator’ is already in use across current national operations (Op Leste, Op Ordo, Op Vertu) demonstrating the utility of this approach beyond public order operations (as already adopted in Op Navette and updated national mobilisation plan).
- 4.2 Changes to the APP for ‘Operations’ are currently under consultation, and whilst timing is not ideal in terms of that process, the College have confirmed that this framework can be included, accepting that immediate operational adoption can be achieved through NPCC/NPoCC/Force application of the framework and guide, with APP being updated thereafter. Alongside inclusion within the APP for ‘Operations,’ adjustments/redactions will be required in the APP for ‘mobilisation’ and ‘public order,’ a process managed by the College.

Conclusion:

- 5.1 The proposed 4-tier framework provides clarity for practices at force, regional, and national operational coordination. The guidance document supports consistent implementation and enables relevant APP to be updated. The proposal has been subject of research and consultation and is aligned with legal advice on forces’ operational independence.

Authored by	Ch. Supt **S31(1)**
Sponsored by	CC BJ Harrington
Committee	NPCC Operations Committee

Appendix A: 4-tier operational coordination framework

Tier	Structure	Function	Considerations/threshold	Out of scope
<p>Forces retain operational independence, command, and accountability for the operational response. Responses at all levels will be guided by risk; reflect ethical, legal, and equality responsibilities; and delivered using JESIP principles.</p>				
<p align="center">1 Force Exec Oversight / Coordination Group (FCG)</p>	<p>Force Executive lead in support of operational gold commander</p>	<p>To provide Force executive oversight, supporting the Gold through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Supporting command resilience, financial contingencies, and media and internal and external stakeholder management. ○ Consideration of Force consequences, contingencies, concurrency, and recovery ○ Coordinate concurrent force golds. ○ Consider any regional or longer-term force impacts/opportunities/learning. ○ Likely to be a force exec member, who may form a group if required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Significant potential force impact (short or long term) – operational, resource, financial, wellbeing, or public confidence ○ Exec lead may also chair or represent the force at the local SCG if appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gold strategy or policy ○ Tactical direction, control, or decision making.
<p align="center">2 Multi-Force Coordination Group (MCG)</p>	<p>Single region – Exec member of lead force. Cross regional or national – chaired by NPoCC or relevant NPCC portfolio</p>	<p>To coordinate support to multiple-impacted Forces through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improving common recognised intelligence picture ○ Support the alignment, where possible, of forces, regional/national functions, including any required cross-border protocols ○ Facilitate national legal and/or policy advice. ○ Facilitate mutual aid through NPoCC and clarify any central finance support. ○ Engage NPCC press team, government, and industry stakeholders. ○ Engage national JESIP representation as required. ○ Consider national consequences, contingencies, concurrency, and data cell requirements. ○ Proactively consider recovery and transition to business-as-usual structures ○ Consider longer term impacts/opportunities/learning post the operational phase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Impact across multiple forces, which would benefit from coordination in either planning and/or response phases. ○ Potential impact to public confidence regionally or nationally. ○ Likely requirement for regular briefing and engagement with national bodies and/or government. ○ May be coordinated by a ‘lead force,’ NPCC portfolio lead, or NPoCC on a regional or national basis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Force Gold strategy or policy. ○ Tactical direction, control, and decision making.
<p align="center">3 National Coordination Group (NCG)</p>	<p>Chaired by NPoCC or the relevant NPCC portfolio - or - in cases of significant national impact, an appointed NPCC national coordinator</p>	<p>To coordinate the national response on behalf of policing, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Developing common recognised intelligence picture, including establishing national intelligence requirements, briefing, and/or data cell functions, as necessary. ○ Support the alignment, where possible, of forces, national functions, and portfolios, including policy or legal advice ○ Set bespoke national policing strategy and policy. ○ Establish an efficient and effective national structure – including media, finance, FOI, data functions – and engage national JESIP representation and national partners as required. ○ Oversee mutual aid, invoking the national mobilisation plan, if necessary ○ Activate any national contingency plans, as necessary. ○ Ensure public, government and strategic industry engagement; brief Chief Constables Council; and engage other national stakeholders as required. ○ Consider consequences, contingencies, concurrency, and data call requirements. ○ Proactively consider recovery and transition to business-as-usual structures ○ Consider longer term impacts/opportunities/learning post the operational phase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Where coordination would benefit from being chaired by a CC/NPCC lead or likely COBR – then presumption to appoint an NPCC lead as national coordinator. ○ Where considered short term or focussed on impact/response then NPoCC chaired of relevant NPCC portfolio lead. ○ National impacts – operational, resource, financial, wellbeing, and/or public confidence. ○ National policy requirements or implications ○ National government structures invoked, including potential for cross-government response. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Force retains independence and accountability for local response. ○ Force may derogate from national policy or strategy as deemed locally necessary.
<p align="center">4 NPCC Coordination Group</p>	<p>Chaired by Chair of CCC</p>	<p>To consider consequences and contingencies for the wider service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support the national response with resilience, financial contingencies, and national media/stakeholder management as required. ○ Consider consequences, contingencies, concurrency for the whole service. ○ Proactively consider recovery and transition to business-as-usual structures ○ Coordinate any concurrent multiple national responses. ○ Consider longer term impacts/opportunities/learning for the service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Impact across the service ○ Potential CCC policy implications ○ COBR ○ Significant learning, recovery, or long-term implications for policing ○ Concurrent national challenges resulting in cumulative impact on the service. 	

Appendix B – Operational coordination framework – guidance document



Operational coordination framework

Guidance document

This document provides guidance on the application of scalable forms of coordination arrangements through force oversight, multi-force, or national coordination.

This 4-tier framework will support operationally independent forces in their management of events, operations, or responses that require enhanced arrangements beyond established Gold/Silver/Bronze (GSB) structures.

Purpose:	To provide an overview of the scalable coordination arrangements that support operational force responses, beyond gold/silver/bronze command structures.
Relevant to:	Force Golds, Executive leads, NPCC portfolio leads, and NPoCC.
Governance:	Following approval by Chiefs Council, this document will be kept updated by the strategic lead for NPoCC.
Date Approved:	Agenda - CCC Dec 2025
Enquiries:	**S31(1)**

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1. Principles and purpose
2. Summary on a page
3. Force executive oversight.
4. Multi-force coordination
5. National coordination incl. national coordinator role
6. Service-wide coordination.
7. Example terms of reference

Principles and purpose:

- This document provides guidance on the operational application of scalable forms of planned or spontaneous coordination structures that support gold commanders in their management of events, operations, or responses that require enhanced arrangements beyond established Gold/Silver/Bronze (GSB) structures within individual Forces.
- This document does not replace those established GSB approaches, nor existing national contingency plans, nor national/regional structures provided by ROCUs and/or CT Policing for which separate practices exist.
- As a matter of principle, Forces retain operational independence, command, and accountability for their operational responses.
- Arrangements at all levels will continue to be guided by risk; reflect ethical, legal, and equality responsibilities; and be delivered using JESIP principles.
- None of the functions outlined in this document seek to impact upon the primacy of the gold commander to set an operation specific gold strategy or policy, and lead operational direction, control, and decision making.
- This adds to the APP for command and control and aligns to the Cabinet Office arrangements for crisis response as outlined in 'The Amber Book' and compliments the NPCC National Response Plan, the NPCC national mobilisation plan, and identified good practice.
- Forces may derogate from national policy or strategy as deemed locally necessary.
- For each operation, a specific term of reference will be documented to ensure clarity and separation from the role of operational gold command, and forces and national functions as applicable. An example is provided as an appendix.

4-tier framework

In addition to established gold, silver, bronze command doctrine (as laid out in APP), 4 tiers of scalable coordination are outlined to support force GSB responses.

- 1. Force Executive oversight.**
- 2. Multi-force coordination**
- 3. National coordination**
- 4. Service-wide coordination.**

For each tier, the roles and responsibilities, tipping points for considering activation, and scope are outlined in this document.

Force Executive oversight.

Function: **To provide force executive oversight in supporting the gold command.**

Most operations would not require an executive oversight function and will continue to be managed by established GSB arrangements.

Consideration should be given to additional supportive oversight where there is the potential for significant force impact in either the short or long term. Such impacts may include.

- Operational
- Resourcing
- Financial
- Wellbeing, or
- Public confidence

A member of the force executive may provide this oversight function, through their executive role, or if necessary, may establish a formal force coordination group (FCG) - the purpose being to support individual gold commanders/operations or coordinate multiple concurrent GSB structures and their impact on the wider forces delivery to the public.

The operation-specific terms of reference for the role of executive oversight will be documented to ensure clarity and separation from the role of operational gold command and should include.

- Supporting command resilience, financial contingencies, and media and internal and external stakeholder management.
- Consideration of Force consequences, contingencies, concurrency, and recovery.
- Coordinate the force impact of potentially concurrent force GSB structures.
- Consider any regional or longer-term force impacts, opportunities, and learning.
- Executive oversight would not interfere with a gold command strategy or policy, nor tactical direction, control, or decision making.

Dependent on the scale and complexity of the operation, the police gold commander may also attend or chair a partnership strategic coordination group (SCG). Where these roles are separated, the executive oversight role should either take responsibility for SCG representation or ensure effective join-up between the police Gold and the SCG representative.

Logistical arrangements and support functions will be provided by the relevant force.

Multi-force coordination group (MCG)

Function: **To coordinate support to multiple-impacted Forces**

Where an operation, event, or policing response either directly crosses multiple force boundaries, or is likely to impact on multiple forces concurrently, then considered should be given to whether a coordination function would add value or mitigate risk. Factors impacting this consideration will include:

- Impact across multiple forces, which would benefit from coordination in either planning and/or response phases.
- Potential impact to public confidence regionally or nationally.
- Likely requirement for regular briefing and engagement with national bodies and/or government.

This function may be provided through either.

- A lead force model – where there is expertise, and sufficient resilience.
- The relevant NPCC portfolio – where subject matter expertise is most relevant.
- The National Police Coordination Centre (NPoCC) – particularly if there are large numbers of impacted forces or potential for escalation of impacts.

The responsibility may pass during different phases of response – for example in a planning phase the relevant NPCC portfolio may be best placed as the subject matter experts and with, links to partners and awareness of contingency plans - but during a more reactive/operational phase, NPoCC may have greater capacity or capability to coordinate, or a lead force model may be more suitable if the impacted forces are within a single region. In such cases, responsibility will be agreed between NPoCC and the relevant NPCC lead, engaging forces as required.

The purpose of a multi-force coordination function will be documented in an operation-specific terms of reference, to ensure clarity and separation from the role of operationally independent forces and should include.

- Improving common recognised intelligence picture
- Support the alignment, where possible, of forces, regional/national functions, including any required cross-border protocols.
- Facilitate national legal and/or policy advice.
- Facilitate mutual aid through NPoCC and clarify any central finance support.
- Engage NPCC press team, government, and industry stakeholders.
- Engage national JESIP representation as required.
- Consider national consequences, contingencies, concurrency, and data cell requirements.
- Proactively consider recovery and transition to business-as-usual structures
- Consider longer term impacts, opportunities, and learning.

In cases of a 'lead force' model, logistical arrangements and support functions will be provided by the relevant force. In all other cases, NPoCC will provide the support function and logistical arrangements for an initial two-week period of activation of an MCG. During that period, assistance will be transitioned to the NPCC hub, or alternative arrangements developed.

National coordination group (NCG)

Function: **To coordinate the national response on behalf of policing.**

Where an operation, event, or policing response impacts or is likely to impact on multiple forces and/or NPCC portfolios, then considered should be given to whether a national coordination function would add value or mitigate risk. Factors impacting this consideration will include:

- Impact across multiple forces, which would benefit from coordination in either planning and/or response phases.
- Potential impact to public confidence regionally or nationally.
- Likely requirement for regular briefing and engagement with national bodies and/or government.
- National impacts – operational, resource, financial, wellbeing, and/or public confidence.
- National policy requirements or implications

The purpose of a national coordination function will be documented in an operation-specific terms of reference, to ensure clarity and separation from the role of operationally independent forces and should include.

- Developing common recognised intelligence picture, including establishing national intelligence requirements, briefing, and/or data cell functions, as necessary.
- Support the alignment, where possible, of forces, national functions, and portfolios, including policy or legal advice
- Set bespoke national policing strategy and policy.
- Establish an efficient and effective national structure – including media, finance, FOI, data function – and engage national JESIP representation and national partners as required.
- Oversee mutual aid, invoking the national mobilisation plan, if necessary
- Activate any national contingency plans, as necessary.
- Ensure public, government and strategic industry engagement; brief Chief Constables Council; and engage other national stakeholders as required.
- National government structures invoked, including potential for cross-government response.
- Consider consequences, contingencies, concurrency, and data cell requirements.
- Proactively consider recovery and transition to business-as-usual structures
- Consider longer term impacts/opportunities/learning post the operational phase.

This function may be provided through either.

- The relevant NPCC portfolio – where subject matter expertise is most relevant.
- The National Police Coordination Centre (NPoCC)
- An appointed national coordinator, specific to the operation – this should be a presumption where a COBR is activated or anticipated.

The responsibility may pass during different phases of response – for example in a planning phase the relevant NPCC portfolio may be best placed as the subject matter experts and with, links to partners and awareness of contingency plans - but during a more reactive/operational phase, NPoCC may have greater capacity or capability to coordinate. Where a COBR is

activated or anticipate, or leadership at DCC or CC (or equivalent rank) is necessary, then the appointment of a national coordinator to act on behalf of Chiefs Council will be a presumption. In all cases, responsibility will be agreed between NPoCC and the relevant NPCC lead, or Chair of Chiefs Council as required.

NPoCC will provide the support function and logistical arrangements for an initial two-week period of activation of an NCG. During that period, assistance will be transitioned to the NPCC hub, or alternative arrangements developed.

The NPCC SP&P function will establish a national data cell function, subject to requirements.

National coordinator: key roles and responsibilities

Empowered by the Chief Constables Council to coordinate the national response on behalf of policing, an appointed national coordinator will be responsible for:

1. Set the national policing strategy.
2. Establish an efficient and effective national structure – including media, finance, and data cell functions.
3. Ensuring national situational awareness through scalable national intelligence functions, briefing, and/or data functions, as necessary.
4. Briefing Chief Constables Council, central government, and other national internal and external stakeholders as required.
5. Support where operationally possible, improved alignment of forces, national functions, and portfolios in a collective national response.
6. Oversee mutual aid managed by NPoCC, invoking the national mobilisation plan as considered necessary.
7. Oversee public, government and any strategic industry engagement.
8. Consider consequences and contingencies for the national response, and the impact on the service, including activating any national contingency plans as considered necessary.
9. Consider longer term impacts/opportunities/learning after the operational phase.

NPCC service-wide coordination

Function: To consider consequences and contingencies for the wider service

Where an operation, event, or policing response impacts or is likely to impact on multiple forces and/or NPCC portfolios, then considered should be given to whether a national coordination function would add value or mitigate risk. Factors impacting this consideration will include:

- Impact across the service
- Potential CCC policy implications
- COBR
- Significant learning, recovery, or long-term implications for policing
- Concurrent national challenges resulting in cumulative impact on the service.

The purpose of a national coordination function will be documented in an operation-specific terms of reference, to ensure clarity and separation from the role of operationally independent forces and should include.

- Support the national response with resilience, financial contingencies, and national media/stakeholder management as required.
- Consider consequences, contingencies, concurrency for the service as a whole.
- Proactively consider recovery and transition to business-as-usual structures
- Coordinate any concurrent multiple national responses.
- Consider longer term impacts/opportunities/learning for the service.

This function may be provided through either.

- The relevant NPCC portfolio – where subject matter expertise is most relevant.
- The National Police Coordination Centre (NPoCC)
- An appointed national coordinator, specific to the operation – this should be a presumption where a COBR is activated or anticipated.

NPoCC will provide the support function and logistical arrangements for an initial two-week period of activation of an NCG. During that period, assistance will be transitioned to the NPCC hub, or alternative arrangements developed.

Example terms of reference

For each operation, a specific term of reference will be documented to ensure clarity and separation from the role of operational gold command, and forces and national functions as applicable. An example is provided as an appendix.

Purpose:

- To support the delivery of policing responsibilities by the appointed independent gold commander.
- To provide an efficient and effective coordination function for the planning and response to the impacts of the operation.
- To enable effective engagement, communication, and coordination of roles and responsibilities across the areas impacted by the operation.

Strategic aims:

1. To maintain clarity and consistency of police role and responsibilities, and their alignment with other key partners.
2. To identify rising or critical threats - supporting the development, assessment and sharing of intelligence for policing and wider partners.
3. To provide a force/regional/national structure that proactively supports operational responses and contingency planning.
4. To support the effective resourcing, including, if necessary, the activation of the mobilisation plans or mutual aid.
5. To support the consistency and coordination of both proactive and reactive investigation.
6. To enhance communication across policing and partners including HMG - providing consistent, messaging and advice, and supporting communications in the management of dis/misinformation.
7. To enable consistent data, briefing, and influence into government and other key partners on behalf of policing/force.
8. To support the wellbeing of all staff impacted by the operation.
9. To support organisational and community recovery.
10. To capture and share learning.

Principles:

- Policing will take ownership for matters within its core role and responsibilities and will work in a supportive way with key partners as part of a multi-agency response, both locally and nationally.
- National functions and structures will support the management of strategic threats, whilst Forces will continue to hold operational independence for the delivery of operational responses.
- NPCC portfolios will continue to lead on relevant areas of policy, government and stakeholder management and engagement, and will come together under the national structure to ensure improved alignment, reduced duplication, and improved efficiency.