



Protected Learning Time

Executive Summary

At West Midlands Police (WMP), we recognise that undertaking learning and professional development for many roles is essential to enable officers and staff to work in partnership, making communities safer. We also recognise the importance of this learning being supported by the organisation so that it does not negatively impact upon your ability to carry out your role or your time away from work for rest and to ensure your wellbeing. This policy will also enable your line manager to provide this support for you whilst also ensuring there is sufficient resources available to provide an effective policing service.

We have set out this policy to:

- Explain what protected learning time is and when it is available
- Provide the framework for managing your requests for protected learning time

Authorised Professional Practice (APP):

- This policy has been checked against APP and there is none in relation to the subject matter of this policy.

Policy Statements:

- This policy applies to all WMP police officers and staff, regardless of seniority, including those on temporary and fixed-term contracts with our Force.
- This policy does not apply to:
- People working with our Force in any third-party capacity, including consultants, contractors and third-party agency staff.

Protected Learning Time Definition & Use

Protected Learning Time Definition

- Protected learning time at WMP is defined as “A period of time allocated specifically for learning and development which is not meant to be interrupted by operational duties”.

Use of Protected Learning Time

- This policy is not intended to list every learning and development intervention but to provide guidance on when protected learning time would be applicable.
- There are a number of learning interventions we provide through WMP to ensure organisational objectives are met and that are deemed to be core to being able to carry out your role. Protected learning time is available for these core learning and development interventions.
- We define core learning and development as training and professional development that is essential to role. It involves you learning to be able to perform effectively and competently in your current role to meet force objectives and mission.

- Categories of learning and development where we do and do not provide protected learning time are listed below including examples of Force managed programmes that have prescribed levels of protected learning time to ensure fairness and consistency across the organisation:

Police Constable Entry Routes (PCER)	Probationary Constables To support Probationary Constables, we provide you with 40 hours protected learning time per year. The protected learning time leave runs from the start of your cohort year to the end and you are not able to carry leave over into the next year. This protected learning time is given to you in addition to any protected learning that you are given from your higher educational institution (HEI) if you are undertaking an academic PCER in partnership with a HEI. Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA) In addition to the above, if you are a probationary constable undertaking the PCDA you will also be given a day of protected learning towards the end of Year 3 of the PCDA programme in order to be able to complete your End Point Assessment (EPA) Detective Constable entry route In addition to the above, if you are on a DC entry route, you will also be enrolled onto a 2-day crammer course in duty time to assist your study for the National Investigators Exam (NIE). This will be arranged for you and so you do not need to apply for protected learning time. You will also be eligible for protected learning time to prepare for the NIE which is detailed below within the Examinations section of this policy.
Academic Studies for Staff & Substantive Police Officers	Personal development through academic study is at your discretion and is not core learning and development so therefore we do not afford protected learning time to this development. This includes the College of Policing Bursary Scheme which provides a Force managed process for you to apply for funds but which is not core learning and development and so we do not afford protected learning time. The exceptions to this are the Leadership and Management Masters which is managed through WMP Training department but provided by an external Higher Educational Institution (HEI) provider Programme and Finance & Accounting Professional Qualifications which are supported by the Finance Department. The Leadership and Management Masters provides you with a self-funded qualification opportunity that is considered core learning as it is a Force managed talent pathway that enhances key leadership and management skills within the organisation. The protected learning time



	provided is 50% of the time you attend face to face teaching up to a maximum of 6 days per academic year. Finance & Accounting Professional Qualifications Supported by the Finance Department. If supported by the Finance Department to undertake a professional qualification in finance or accounting you will be provided with the requisite number of study sessions (either contact hours or viewing on-line resources) including standard revision days required for each module of a qualification plus a day for each examination. You must undertake all other study time in your own time or through annual/flexi leave and this should be agreed in discussion with your line manager.
Work Based Assessment (WBA)	At WMP we define WBA as the requirement for you to demonstrate competency to the rank or role that you aspire to be for the purpose of you being assessed against relevant assessment criteria which is governed by College of Policing or an external awarding body. National Police Promotions Framework (NPPF) Step 4 As part of the National Police Promotion Framework you are required to achieve a Level 4 Certificate in Police First Line Management qualification if you are a temporary Sergeant and a Level 5 Certificate in Police Management if you are a temporary Inspector. We recognise undertaking a qualification as well as learning and carrying out a new rank requires significant time and effort and needs to be managed and supported whilst also ensuring that your LPA/department is sufficiently resourced to provide its operational service. As this is core learning and development you are provided with up to 40 hours of protected learning time during your qualification which should be taken at regular intervals to help you manage these demands, meet the milestones set throughout your qualification journey and undertake continuous development. When and how you take your protected learning time is subject to line management agreement depending on your circumstances and responsibilities.
Pre-learning and post activities aligned to learning and development courses	At WMP we are implementing a blended approach to much of our learning and development as we recognise the effectiveness of the learning is reliant upon you implementing the learning. By taking a blended approach we ensure: • You can learn efficiently and effectively by learning at a pace and time convenient to you • We align pre-learning activities so that learners have the required basic knowledge before attendance on a relevant course. This also supports the effective use of resources • You are able to embed your learning and apply it to your own circumstances by aligning post learning activities



	When attending a learning and development intervention that is managed by the organisation you will liaise with your manager to agree what protected learning time you need and how this will be afforded to you. Take 10 is a line manager tool that can support meaningful conversations to help maximise the impact of any learning experience and the return of the investment. The template contains some sample questions to help facilitate these conversations.
Apprenticeships	If you are undertaking an apprenticeship, you require 20% off the job learning. This relates to the amount of time that a learner on an apprenticeship programme needs to have protected, within their working hours, to be focused and working on learning relating to their apprenticeship programme. There are no set rules on how the 20% is delivered. This could be day release, online learning, a training session, some mentoring, in house training that they receive or research. This 20% off the job learning will be protected learning time and more information on individual apprenticeship and their requirements can be found at: Apprenticeships
Examinations	National Investigators Exam (NIE) If you are preparing to undertake the NIE you are afforded up to 40 hours protected learning time over a 5 month period prior to the exam as this is a core requirement to ensure we have sufficient individuals eligible to undertake training to become investigators. You will need to agree how to take this protected learning time with your line manager however this time will be taken in 2-4 hour blocks each week and not as whole days. Further information about the NIE, including eligibility and support available, can be found here. National Police Promotion Framework Step 2 If you are sitting the NPPF Step 2 examination you will be afforded 4 hours of protected learning time to sit the NPPF Step 2 exam. As the exam is taken online, you will not be provided travel time as it is not needed. The date of the exam must be booked onto the duty management system as soon as it is known. If you are on a rest day then this will become a working day and you will receive a re-rostered rest day (8 hours standard rate). The re-rostered rest day should be used within 2 weeks if possible, as per force guidance. Any study time taken in preparation for the exam needs to be taken in your own time including attendance at a crammer course if you wish to attend one. Other Examinations



	If you are studying towards other exams to support your own professional development and progression that is not essential to your role; study toward these should occur in your own time.

Agreeing & Recording of Protected Learning for all Police Staff & Substantive Police Officers

Agreement of Protected Learning Time

- Whilst we want to support the development of you through protected learning time, we need to balance this with the need to have sufficient resources available to provide an effective police service.
- You must inform your line manager at the earliest opportunity that you are eligible for protected learning time so that there is sufficient time to plan how the protected learning time will be provided.
- You and your line manager will agree how this can be provided in accordance with this policy, your needs and the needs of the organisation so that the protected learning time does not negatively impact operational delivery. To ensure operational service your line manager may direct where you carry out your protected learning time, for example you may need to complete this at your usual parade station so that you are available if needed for operational policing.
- Your line manager will also need to consider your protected learning time in conjunction with the protected learning time and annual leave needs of other colleagues in your LPA/department to ensure there is no negative impact on operational delivery. This may result in your line manager directing how your protected learning time can be taken, such as the duration of each occurrence of protected learning time or the frequency.
- Line managers must do all they can to provide you with the protected learning time as agreed however they have the right to postpone or alter how the protected learning time is provided due to unexpected operational reasons. If your protected learning time needs to be re-arranged you and your line manager must agree on how this will be re-arranged.

Recording of Protected Learning Time

- Once you have agreed your protected learning time with your line manager you must complete the [protected learning time form](#) unless your line manager wishes to do this themselves.
- This [form](#) will be automatically updated and viewable online by your line manager and will be sent to the Training Department so that it can be recorded on My Time.
- If you need to alter or cancel your protected learning time, agree this with your line manager and then use the [form](#) to make the alterations.

**Definitions/Acronyms:**

DC DHEP – Detective Constable Degree Holder Entry Programme

FOC - Full Operational Competency

HEI – Higher Educational Institution

NIE – National Investigators Exam

NPPF – National Police Promotion Framework

PCDA - Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship

PCER – Police Constable Entry Routes

WBA – Work based assessment

WMP – West Midlands Police

Procedural Guidance Documents List:

N/A

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- Suitable for publication to public

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Policy Author: [REDACTED]

Any enquiries in relation to this policy should be made directly with the policy author shown above.

Force Executive Approval:

Approved by Mr Gillett at FET 15.05.2025



Monitoring and Review

Version	Date Reviewed	No change / Minor Changes / Major Changes (<i>detail</i>)	Amended / Agreed by
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