



Family Support Guidance 2026

Foreword

Supporting our workforce to balance policing with family life is fundamental to retaining skilled people, improving wellbeing and fostering an inclusive policing culture. The NPCC Family Support Guidance published in 2021 provided an important foundation for this work, setting out national expectations for how forces can better support parents, prospective parents and carers across all roles and ranks.

Since that publication, the policing landscape has continued to evolve and so too have the needs of our workforce. Officers and staff now navigate increasingly complex caring responsibilities, broader routes to parenthood, and new research and legal developments affecting family life.

The Angiolini Inquiry Part 1 (Recommendation 16) has also highlighted how much further we must go to properly support our people.

To ensure our guidance remains current, accessible and reflective of lived experience, the NPCC Family Support Portfolio has undertaken a significant modernisation and expansion of the original guidance. The refreshed programme—**NPCC Family Support Guidance 2026**—adopts a broader perspective on family support and introduces a greater number of thematic chapters to better capture the diverse realities of balancing policing with family life.

Rather than issuing a single, extensive document, we are releasing **a series of updated thematic chapters**, each concentrating on a specific area of need. This modular approach enables us to keep pace with emerging best practice, incorporate expert input quickly and offer forces practical material that can be adopted immediately. Each chapter has been shaped by the contributions of many dedicated and passionate colleagues from forces

nationwide. Their lived experiences, professional insight, and drive for improvement have helped ensure that the guidance is both compassionate and practical along with extensive consultation with the Police Federation, UNISON, the Police Superintendents' Association, HR colleagues and a variety of staff networks.

The first chapter in this refreshed series focuses on **Breastfeeding**, reflecting updated legislation, health guidance and the importance of supporting a confident and supported return to work for new parents. This will be followed by chapters including **New Parents, Children with Disabilities and Complex Needs, Single Parents, Fertility, Caring for Adults** and further topics such as **perinatal mental health, loss, surrogacy and flexible working**. These chapters draw heavily on lived experience, national research and examples of effective practice already established in forces across the UK.

Across all chapters, our aim is clear: to ensure every force can access practical, evidence-based guidance that helps create compassionate, consistent and family-friendly workplaces.

To be truly inclusive and an employer of choice, we must take a bold approach to supporting caring responsibilities in all forms. Supporting our people to balance professional and personal commitments is key to retention, wellbeing and inclusion, and NPCC Family Support 2026 ensures our approach reflects modern challenges and lived experience.

All forces are required to review each chapter independently on publication, consider how its recommendations align with internal policy, and adopt the guidance as best practice wherever possible.

Our people are our greatest asset. Supporting their wellbeing, at home as well as at work, is critical to sustaining an effective, inclusive, and compassionate police service.

We look forward to sharing further chapters in the months ahead.

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