

Avon and Somerset Constabulary judged as 'good' at how legitimately it keeps people safe and reduces crime - HMIC

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) has assessed how legitimate Avon and Somerset Constabulary is at keeping people safe and reducing crime. This is the second year running HMIC has carried out inspections of this kind, which makes up part of HMIC's annual PEEL inspections.

HMIC considers a police force to be legitimate if it has the consent of the public, and if those working in the force consistently behave in a way that is fair, ethical, and within the law.

To assess this, HMIC has inspected how well forces treat the people they serve; ensure their workforce acts ethically and lawfully; and treat their workforces with fairness and respect. The findings of this inspection are included in a report, published today.

This inspection also included, for the first time, an assessment of how well forces tackle the problem of abuse of authority for sexual gain by members of its workforce. This serious form of corruption betrays the trust of the public and, while we identified some examples of good practice, there remain significant areas where forces must improve. The service needs to be more proactive in seeking out and preventing this form of corruption, and referring cases of abuse of authority to the IPCC.

HMIC found that Avon and Somerset Constabulary:

- is good at treating the people it serves with fairness and respect;
- is good at identifying, understanding and managing risks to the integrity of the organisation; and
- treats its workforce with fairness and respect.

HM Inspector of Constabulary Wendy Williams said:

"I have judged Avon and Somerset Constabulary as 'good' following our inspection into its legitimacy. Last year we also judged it as 'good'.

"The force is good at treating the people it serves with fairness and respect. We found that it had consulted with the communities it serves to understand

their expectations of the service they receive from the police, and has used this feedback to improve its service.

"We found that the force is good at identifying, understanding and managing risks to the integrity of the organisation. However, preventative work around identifying the risk of officers and staff abusing their authority for sexual gain is less developed. It could also do more to publicise the outcomes of misconduct cases. This could help further improve public confidence. The force has plans to address how it communicates these outcomes internally.

"I was pleased to find that the force is working hard to ensure that it treats its workforce fairly, and with respect. We identified a number of good initiatives to encourage feedback from the workforce."

HMIC has also published individual assessments of the leadership within each police force in England and Wales. These, along with individual reports on the legitimacy of all forces in England and Wales, are available on HMIC's website.