

Cleveland Police judged as 'requires improvement' in how legitimately it keeps people safe and reduces crime – HMIC

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) has assessed how legitimate Cleveland Police 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 Cleveland Police:

- needs to improve how it seeks feedback from the public, however has started to address this;
- staff had a good understanding of the standards expected of them, however the force needs to increase the capacity of its counter-corruption units; and
- recognises the importance of wellbeing, and has identified that those who work to protect vulnerable people require extra monitoring and support.

HM Inspector of Constabulary Mike Cunningham said:

“Overall Cleveland Police has responded well to our previous inspection in 2015; however there are still areas which the force needs to look at in order to make further improvements. For instance, although the force offers a number

of ways for the public to provide feedback on its performance, it was not able to demonstrate how it encourages feedback from those specifically with less trust and confidence in the police. This needs to be addressed so the force can get a fuller picture of how the public it serves feels, and where it might need to improve. I am encouraged that the force has started to address this with its 'Everyone Matters' project.

"We found that the workforce had a good understanding of the standards expected of it, however in general the force needs to improve how it ensures ethical and lawful behaviour. The limited resources within counter-corruption units means there is little capacity for proactive intelligence gathering on corruption. This means that despite the force dealing with corruption it knows about well, there is potential for issues to go uncovered. The workforce is aware of the seriousness of abuse of authority for sexual gain and reports of suspicious behaviour are investigated. However, the force could do more to raise awareness of warning signs among the workforce.

"In general, the force treats its workforce fairly and respectfully, however again there are areas it needs to address. The force recognises the importance of wellbeing, and has identified that those who work to protect vulnerable people require extra monitoring and support. We did however find inconsistencies in individual performance monitoring, which could lead to unfair and ineffective assessments. I would like to see this improved.

"For these reasons I have judged Cleveland Police as 'requires improvement' in how it legitimately keeps people safe and reduces crime. I am encouraged that there are improvements being made however, and will monitor how these improvements progress."

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.