

Cumbria Constabulary judged as 'good' at legitimately keeping people safe and reducing crime – HMIC

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

- has a good approach to treating the people it serves with fairness and respect;
- has a good in approach to ensuring its workforce behaves ethically and lawfully; and
- needs to improve how it assesses individual staff performance.

HM Inspector of Constabulary Mike Cunningham said:

"Following our inspection, I have judged Cumbria Constabulary as 'good' at how legitimately it keeps people safe and reduces crime. The constabulary investigates complaints from the public thoroughly. There is a system in place

to analyse trends and to promptly address problems concerning individual officers who are the subject of repeated complaints.

"I am pleased to find that all staff have a good awareness of the high standards of behaviour and integrity required of them, and regularly receive updates and reminders on what is expected. There are good arrangements in place in the professional standards department to receive, assess and manage intelligence in relation to potential wrongdoing and corruption from across the constabulary. The constabulary also recognises the abuse of authority for sexual gain as serious corruption.

"I am pleased that the force has implemented a new workforce wellbeing strategy, however it is too early to tell what impact this will have on staff. The force also needs to improve its approach to staff performance appraisal."

HMIC has also published individual assessments of the leadership within each police force in England and Wales. This, along with the reports, is available on HMIC's website.