

Devon and Cornwall Police 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 Devon and Cornwall 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 Devon and Cornwall Police:

- is committed to treating people fairly and with respect;
- has some improvements to make to ensure its workforce operates ethically and lawfully; and
- demonstrated that it takes workforce wellbeing seriously, with mental health and personal resilience being of particular importance.

HM Inspector of Constabulary Wendy Williams said:

"I have judged Devon and Cornwall Police as 'good' following our inspection into its legitimacy. Last year we also judged it as 'good'. It is clear to me that Devon and Cornwall Police is committed to treating people fairly and with

respect, and it makes changes to how it operates based on feedback from the public.

"Whilst the force is also committed to clarifying and reinforcing acceptable and unacceptable standards of behaviour, it has some improvements to make in how it operates to ensure its workforce operates ethically and lawfully. In particular the force has identified that it has over 300 individuals who are not vetted to the existing national police vetting policy standards. Although these staff do have vetting in place, the force didn't have a clear plan for ensuring their vetting was up-to-date. It has also not responded to all the recommendations we made in our 2014 integrity and corruption report. I was pleased to find that the force sees the abuse of authority for sexual gain as serious corruption.

"The force uses a range of methods to determine what is important to workforce in relation to its treatment. Although it uses this information to make positive changes, it knows it needs to do more to communicate the changes it is making as a result. I was impressed by the extent to which Devon and Cornwall Police was able to demonstrate that it takes workforce wellbeing seriously, with mental health and personal resilience being a particular focus."

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.