

North Wales Police judged as 'requires improvement' at how legitimately it keeps people safe and reduces crime - HMIC

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

- is good at treating the people it serves with fairness and respect;
- has limited capacity to seek out and assess intelligence about potential corruption; and
- could do more to recognise the signs of ill health involving mental health issues, including stress at work.

HM Inspector of Constabulary Wendy Williams said:

"I have judged North Wales Police as 'requires improvement' at how it legitimately keeps people safe and reduces crime. This is a disappointment, as in 2015 I judged it to be 'good'. Unfortunately, this signifies a drop in performance in some areas.

“There is good news; I am pleased that North Wales Police can demonstrate that it seeks feedback and challenge from the people it serves, using social media and a variety of data collection opportunities. It has also taken some action to engage with members of the public, including those who have less trust and confidence in the police.

“While the force is good at ensuring that its workforce behaves ethically and lawfully, it has limited capacity to seek out and assess intelligence about potential corruption. The force should ensure all corruption intelligence is properly assessed and graded in a timely manner. It is, however, working closely with the public and its workforce in order to keep them informed about cases of misconduct and corruption. North Wales Police has a zero-tolerance approach to sexually motivated misconduct and takes action where it suspects the abuse of authority for sexual gain is taking place.

“I am disappointed to find that, although the force has some good processes in place to identify wellbeing issues and concerns, it could do more to recognise the signs of ill health involving mental health issues, including stress at work.”

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.