



Promoting improvements
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PEEL: Police legitimacy 2016

An inspection of Merseyside Police



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Introduction

As part of our annual inspections of police effectiveness, efficiency, legitimacy and leadership (PEEL), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) assesses the legitimacy of police forces across England and Wales.

Police legitimacy – a concept that is well established in the UK as 'policing by consent' – is crucial in a democratic society. The police have powers to act in ways that would be considered illegal by any other member of the public (for example, by using force or depriving people of their liberty). It is therefore vital that they use these powers fairly, and that they treat people with respect in the course of their duties.

Police legitimacy is also required for the police to be effective and efficient: as well as motivating the public to co-operate with the police and respect the law, it encourages them to become more socially responsible. The more the public supports the police by providing information or becoming more involved in policing activities (such as via Neighbourhood Watch or other voluntary activity), the greater the reduction in demand on police forces.

To achieve this support – or 'consent' – the public needs to believe that the police will treat them with respect and make fair decisions (while taking the time to explain those decisions), as well as being friendly and approachable.¹ This is often referred to as 'procedural justice'. Police actions that are perceived to be unfair or disrespectful can have extremely negative results for police legitimacy in the eyes of the public.

Police officers and staff are more likely to treat the public with fairness and respect if they feel that they themselves are being treated fairly and respectfully, particularly by their own police force. It is therefore important that the decisions made by their force about the things that affect them are perceived to be fair.² This principle is described as 'organisational justice', and HMIC considers that, alongside the principle of procedural justice, it makes up a vital aspect of any assessment of police legitimacy.

¹ *It's a fair cop? Police legitimacy, public cooperation, and crime reduction*, National Policing Improvement Agency, September 2011. Available at:
http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Documents/Fair_cop_Full_Report.pdf

² *Fair cop 2: Organisational justice, behaviour and ethical policing*, College of Policing, 2015. Available at:
http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Documents/150317_Fair_cop%202_FINAL_REPORT.pdf

One of the most important areas in which internal organisational justice and external procedural justice principles come together is the way in which police forces tackle corruption. How this is done needs to be seen to be fair and legitimate in the eyes of both the police workforce and the general public.

HMIC's legitimacy inspection assessed all of these areas during 2016. More information on how we inspect and grade forces as part of this wide-ranging inspection is available on the HMIC website (www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/peel-assessments/how-we-inspect/). This report sets out our findings for Merseyside Police.

Reports on Merseyside Police's efficiency and leadership inspections are available on the HMIC website (www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/peel-assessments/peel-2016/merseyside/). Our reports on police effectiveness will be published in early 2017.

Force in numbers



Workforce

Total workforce as of 31 March 2016

5,600

Total workforce breakdown as of 31 March 2016

officers

3,554

staff

1,753

PCSOs

292



Ethnic diversity

Percentage of BAME in workforce 31 March 2016

overall workforce

2.8%

officers

3.4%

staff

1.5%

PCSOs

2.9%

Percentage of BAME in local population, 2011 Census

5.5%



Gender diversity

Percentage of females in overall workforce 31 March 2016

Merseyside Police

39%

England and Wales population, 2011 Census

51%

Percentage of females by role 31 March 2016

Merseyside Police

officers

28%

staff

61%

PCSOs

45%



Public complaints

Number of public complaints per 1,000 workforce 12 months to 31 March 2016

Officers

Merseyside Police

118

England and Wales force average

268

Staff (including PCSOs)

32

61



Grievances

Number of grievances per 1,000 workforce raised and finalised 12 months to 31 March 2016

Officers

Merseyside Police

0.8

England and Wales force average

4.8

Staff (including PCSOs)

1.0

6.8



Victim satisfaction

Victim satisfaction with their overall treatment by the police 12 months to 31 March 2016

Merseyside Police

91.6 %

England and Wales force average

93.4%

For further information about the data in this graphic please see annex A

Overview – How legitimate is the force at keeping people safe and reducing crime?

Overall judgment³



Good

Merseyside Police has been assessed as good in respect of the legitimacy with which it keeps people safe and reduces crime.

Merseyside Police is good in the way it deals with the public, treats its workforce and how it promotes ethical and lawful behaviour among its workforce. It treats the people that it serves and its officers and staff with fairness and respect. The culture of the organisation reflects this through its fair and respectful treatment of people, and ethical, lawful approaches to integrity. The organisation's fair and respectful treatment of its workforce and its concern for welfare and wellbeing of officers and staff also demonstrate this. Senior leaders actively promote the force's values.

Overall summary

Merseyside Police continues successfully to reinforce messages to its workforce about how important it is to treat people with fairness and respect. The force regularly seeks feedback about how the public perceives that they are treated by its officers and staff and whether this is fair and respectful treatment. To do this, it has formal and well-established arrangements in place for independent advice and challenge. The force's governance structure oversees and monitors whether officers and staff treat the public in a fair and respectful way. However, it could do more to understand how the wider public, particularly those of the public who do not come into contact with the police, perceives whether Merseyside Police officers and staff are treating people fairly and respectfully.

The force continues to ensure that its workforce behaves ethically and lawfully.

The workforce understands what serious corruption is and how to report it. The force has effective methods to deal with potential corruption and continues to make sure that its IT systems are secure. The force monitors risks to the integrity of the organisation well through its comprehensive vetting of officers and staff. It identifies the early warning signs of corruption by sharing information appropriately, both internally and with other forces. The force deals robustly with cases of abuse of authority for sexual gain.

³ HMIC judgments are: outstanding, good, requires improvement and inadequate.

Merseyside Police understands well the importance of wellbeing for its workforce. It analyses its management information and has a good understanding of the wellbeing risks to the organisation. It uses this analysis to provide wellbeing services for its workforce and is making further investment in this area.

Merseyside Police is not able to demonstrate whether its individual performance assessment process is effective. Its process is based on the assumption that an officer or member of staff is competent, with the performance development process used mainly in the context of poor performance or when an officer or staff member is applying for promotion. We found some examples of good informal performance assessment, but we also found officers who had not had an assessment of their performance for three to four years.

Recommendations

HMIC has not identified any causes of concern and has therefore made no specific recommendations.

Areas for improvement

- The force should ensure that its supervisors can recognise and provide support with wellbeing issues.
- The force should improve how it manages individual performance.

To what extent does the force treat all of the people it serves with fairness and respect?

College of Policing research suggests that, in the eyes of the public, police legitimacy stems primarily from the concept of ‘procedural justice’: the expectation that officers will treat the public respectfully and make fair decisions (explaining them openly and clearly), while being consistently friendly and approachable.⁴

While HMIC recognises that police legitimacy stems from much broader experiences of the police than direct contact alone, our 2016 inspection focused specifically on public perceptions of fair treatment. Our inspection aims to assess how far the force can demonstrate the importance it places on maintaining procedural justice; and the extent to which it is seeking feedback to enable it to prioritise and act on those areas that have the greatest negative impact on public perceptions of fair and respectful treatment

(e.g. stop and search, surveillance powers or use of force). This should include how the force is approaching those groups that have the least trust and confidence in the police.

To what extent does the force understand the importance of treating the people it serves with fairness and respect?

It is important for the police to understand that it is procedural justice – making fair decisions and treating people with respect – that drives police legitimacy in the eyes of the public, over and above police effectiveness at preventing and detecting crime.⁵ HMIC assessed the extent to which the importance of procedural justice was reflected in the force’s vision and values, and the extent to which it was understood by the workforce.

⁴ *It’s a Fair Cop? Police legitimacy, public co-operation, and crime reduction*, National Policing Improvement Agency, September 2011. Available at: http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Documents/Fair_cop_Full_Report.pdf

⁵ *Ibid.*

Organisational values

In our 2015 legitimacy inspection 2015,⁶ we found that the force's 'Just Trilogy' (Just Talk, Just Think, Just Lead) covered all aspects of the Code of Ethics⁷ and was integrated into force policy, practice and the majority of its training. Its emphasis on professional standards and values was clearly understood by officers and staff.

During our inspection in spring 2016, we found that the force continues to reinforce the importance of treating people with fairness and respect, through 'Just Trilogy' presentations by the professional standards department. Also, it publicises the results of misconduct cases, which makes clear to the workforce what happens if they do not keep to the standards and values expected of them.

Every member of the workforce we spoke to during the inspection told us that they understand the importance of treating people fairly and with respect, and the link this has with public confidence. The force's recent people survey found that the workforce identifies strongly with the values expressed in the Code of Ethics; officers and staff are highly motivated to serve the public, they are prepared to make sacrifices and they want to have a positive impact on society. The principles of the force's new operating model⁸ and performance framework reflect its 'community first' ethos, which is about putting the community at the heart of what the force does. This includes: 'get it right first time', 'do the right thing', 'use common sense and discretion', 'innovate' and 'understand your business'.

How well does the force seek feedback and identify those issues and areas that have the greatest impact on people's perceptions of fair and respectful treatment?

HMIC's 2015 legitimacy inspection found a positive picture of how forces were engaging with communities. This year HMIC's assessment focused specifically on the extent to which forces are working to identify and understand the issues that have the greatest impact on people's perceptions of fair and respectful treatment, including how well they seek feedback and challenge from the people they serve.

⁶ *PEEL: Police legitimacy 2015 – An inspection of Merseyside Police*, HMIC, 2016. Available at: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/police-legitimacy-2015-merseyside/

⁷ Code of Ethics – A Code of Practice for the Principles and Standards of Professional Behaviour for the Policing Profession of England and Wales, College of Policing, London, July 2014. Available at: www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Ethics/Documents/Code_of_Ethics.pdf

⁸ A force's operating model is how the force is structured and the processes it uses in order to achieve its objectives.

Seeking feedback and challenge

Merseyside Police regularly seeks feedback on the public's perceptions of fair and respectful treatment by the force. It uses well-established, formal arrangements to do this and gives independent advice to anyone giving feedback. This allows the public to challenge any of the force's decisions or policing practices. In our 2015 legitimacy inspection,⁹ we recognised that the force fully understood the relationship between good community involvement and legitimacy of policing but we found that there was room for improvement in how well the force understood how the public perceive whether it is fair and respectful in its treatment of people. Since then, the force has introduced an engagement strategy to increase public confidence in Merseyside Police. The force is working to identify and understand the issues that have the greatest impact on people's perceptions of fair and respectful treatment.

Merseyside Police seeks independent advice and challenge through a range of formally established groups that meet on a regular basis. These include Merseyside's independent advisory group (MIAG) and youth independent advisory group (YIAG), as well as the independent custody visitor scheme, which makes on average 20 unannounced visits to custody suites each month to monitor the treatment of people in custody. The force encourages positive and negative feedback through its website, social media, and 'call backs' to victims. Its recently launched MerseyNow messaging service encourages those who sign up for the service to provide feedback.

The force works closely with people who have less confidence in the police to ensure that they understand how the force defines fair and respectful treatment. An inter-faith group in the force encourages religious communities to report crime and also promotes an understanding of how the force should respect the religion and culture of those communities. The force has worked with an asylum seekers' charity that represents people who are fearful of the police because of the actions of police in their own country. It has produced a welcome pack for asylum seekers to give information about the work of the UK police service and to set out how they should be treated by the police, for example, if they are stopped and searched.

The force has identified local communities who have less trust in the police and worked closely with them to build trust. The relationship with two Gypsy, Roma and Traveller sites has improved as a result of positive policing at a local level. The office of the police and crime commissioner has staff working in different geographical areas of the force. They encourage these communities to come forward and provide informal feedback on the communities' level of trust and confidence in the police.

⁹ *PEEL: Police legitimacy 2015 – An inspection of Merseyside Police*, HMIC, 2015. Available at: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/police-legitimacy-2015-merseyside/

The force makes good use of local radio stations, both to reassure different communities and to gain an understanding of crimes that are less likely to be reported. Broadcasts from Radio Merseyside and Radio City allow the force to make contact with a wide audience, to encourage the public to report crimes that are currently under-reported and to reassure the public that the force will deal with people appropriately.

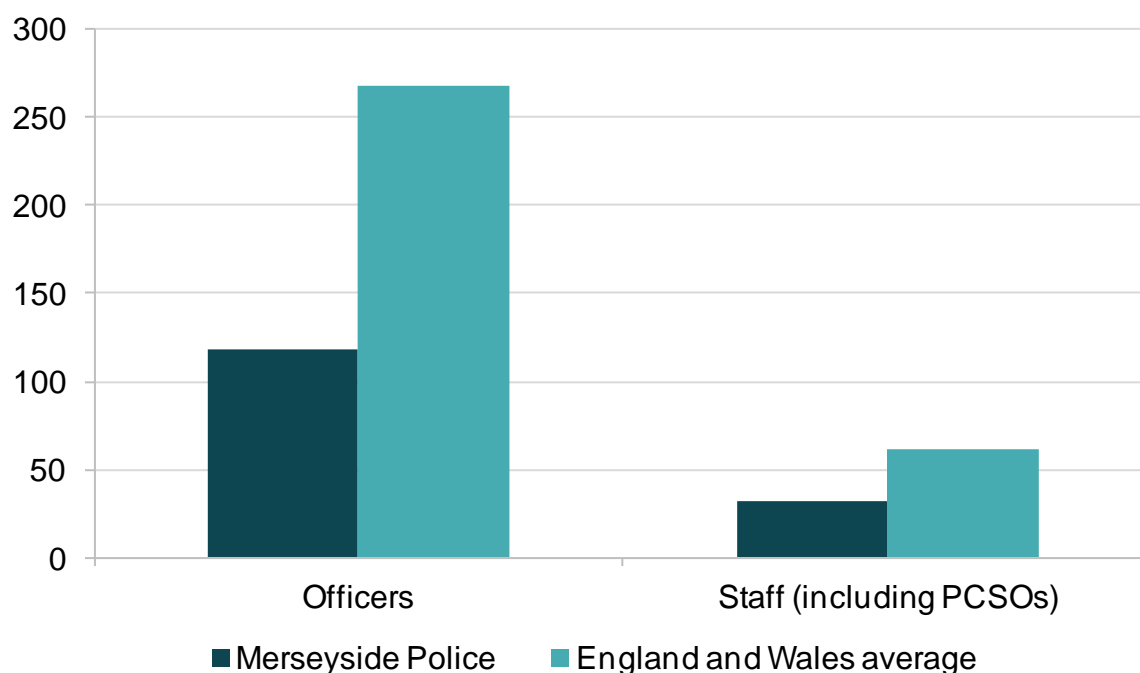
Identifying and understanding the issues

One way the force finds out if it treats the public fairly and respectfully is from the feedback it obtains from its independent advisory groups. The force has analysed feedback from the observations of the youth IAG into stop and search encounters and provided feedback to individual officers. The IAG has also contributed feedback to a review of custody suites across the force.

Merseyside Police analyses a wide range of information that it holds, which includes complaints, compliments, lay observation of body-worn camera footage of stops and searches, feedback from the independent custody visitor scheme, and data on the use of force.

Each force in England and Wales is required to record the nature of complaint cases and allegations and be able to produce complaints data annually. The numbers and types of complaints are valuable sources of information for forces and can be used to help them identify areas of dissatisfaction with their service provision and take steps to improve how they treat the public.

Figure 1: Number of public complaint cases recorded against officers (per 1,000 officers) or staff (per 1,000 staff, including police community support officers) in Merseyside Police compared with England and Wales, in the 12 months to 31 March 2016



Source: HMIC Legitimacy data collection

For further information about the data in figure 1 please see annex A

In the 12 months to 31 March 2016, Merseyside Police recorded 118 public complaint cases per 1,000 officers, which was lower than the England and Wales average of 268 cases per 1,000 officers. During this period, the force recorded 32 public complaint cases per 1,000 staff (including PCSOs), which was broadly in line with the England and Wales average of 61 cases per 1,000 staff (including PCSOs).

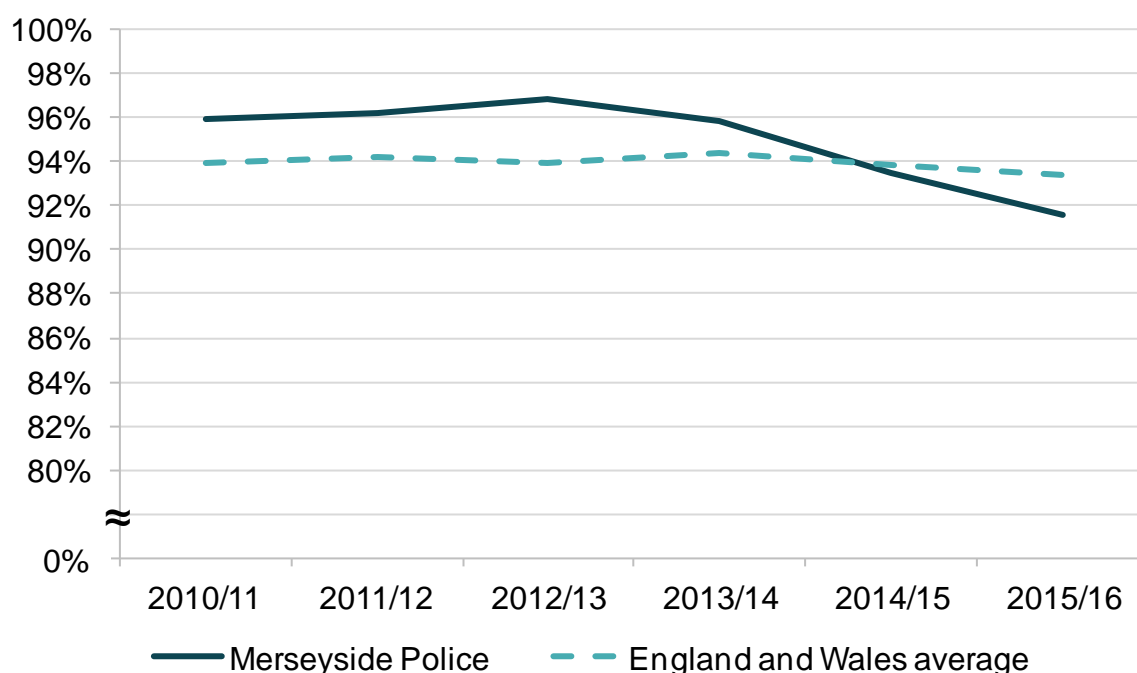
The most recent Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) data from forces show that, for April, May and June 2016, the types of complaint most frequently recorded by Merseyside Police are 'other neglect or failure in duty' and 'incivility, impoliteness and intolerance'.¹⁰ It is important to note, however, an issue identified during our 2014 inspection on police integrity and corruption;¹¹ complaint allegation categories used by different forces may overlap with each other. For instance, similar allegations might be recorded by one force as 'other neglect or failure in duty', and by another force as 'other irregularity in procedure' or 'lack of fairness and impartiality'. This means there is no definitive way of establishing accurately the number of public complaints about certain behaviours.

¹⁰ Independent Police Complaints Commission data are available at: www.ipcc.gov.uk/reports/statistics/police-complaints/police-performance-data

¹¹ *Integrity matters*, HMIC, January 2015. Available from: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/integrity-matters/

All forces are required to conduct victim satisfaction surveys with specified victims of crime groups and provide data on a quarterly basis. The surveys take account of victims' experience of the service provided to them by the police and inform forces' improvements to their service provision, including examining how well victims feel they are treated.

Figure 2: Percentage of victims satisfied with overall treatment by Merseyside Police compared with England and Wales, from the 12 months to 31 March 2011 to the 12 months to 31 March 2016



Source: Home Office Annual Data Requirement
For further information about the data in figure 2 please see annex A

In the 12 months to 31 March 2016, 91.6 percent of all victims of crime (excluding hate crime) who responded to the victim satisfaction survey were satisfied with the overall treatment provided by Merseyside Police, which was lower than the England and Wales average of 93.4 percent; and lower than the 93.5 percent who were satisfied with the overall treatment that the force provided in the 12 months to 31 March 2015, this is a statistically significant difference.

All this helps the force to identify whether the public believes that its treatment from the police is fair and respectful and to highlight the issues that it thinks are most important for it to address. The force also analyses its statistics on levels of public satisfaction with the force to understand what causes dissatisfaction and reviews its processes in response to the findings. Further analysis of these data sets would provide the force with a more rounded view.

The force maintains oversight of fair and respectful treatment of the public through a governance structure that has been set up to oversee this feedback. This includes meetings about use of force and stop and search, scrutiny from the independent

advisory groups and scrutiny from a force-wide equality, diversity and human rights group. However, the force needs to analyse the full dataset more thoroughly to get a better understanding of the way it treats people.

In August 2014, following HMIC's 2013 inspection on the effective and fair use of stop and search powers,¹² the Home Office published guidance to police forces on how to implement the Best Use of Stop and Search (BUSS) scheme.¹³ The scheme aims to increase transparency and community involvement, and to support a more intelligence-led use of the powers leading to better outcomes. All police forces in England and Wales signed up to participate in the scheme. In 2015, HMIC's legitimacy inspection¹⁴ considered the extent to which the force was complying with the scheme and found that it did not comply with all features of the scheme because it did not publish the connection between the outcome and the object of searches. In autumn 2016, HMIC will re-assess the force's compliance with those features of the scheme that it was not complying with in 2015. We will report our findings in early 2017.

How well does the force act on feedback and learning to improve the way it treats all the people it serves, and demonstrate that it is doing so?

It is important that as well as actively seeking feedback from the public, the force also responds to that feedback. HMIC assessed the extent to which this response includes changes to the way the force operates to reduce the likelihood of similar incidents occurring in future, as well as resolving individual incidents or concerns, and how well the force communicates to the public the effectiveness of this action.

Making improvements

Victims' satisfaction with their overall treatment has decreased since the previous year. The force recognises that overall victim satisfaction with overall treatment has decreased, and is taking steps to address this by changing its policy for dealing with victims.

The force informed us that one cause for dissatisfaction among the victims of crime was how long the force was retaining vehicles for forensic checks. The force has

¹² *Stop and Search Powers – are the police using them effectively and fairly?* HMIC, July 2013. Available from: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/stop-and-search-powers-20130709/

¹³ Best Use of Stop and Search Scheme, Home Office, August 2014 www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/346922/Best_Use_of_Stop_and_Search_Scheme_v3.0_v2.pdf

¹⁴ *PEEL: Police legitimacy 2015 – A national overview*, HMIC, February 2016. Available at: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/police-legitimacy-2015/

assessed the limited amount of forensic evidence gained from holding the vehicle for an extended time against the inconvenience caused to victims. It now no longer keeps cars for long periods of time.

The force has worked with victims to understand their experiences when reporting certain crime types, so that it can improve how it treats them. For example, one victim reporting a historic sexual assault felt that the force had not treated her well because it responded immediately to the complaint, in line with its procedure for keeping victims safe. The victim wanted to protect her new family and did not want officers to turn up immediately she had reported the historic abuse. Force policy has now been changed to allow officers to use discretion in the level of response that is required.

The force has drawn on the advice of the Merseyside independent advisory group (MIAG) and the youth independent advisory group (YIAG) on how it should approach communities who have little trust in the police. It has acted on this advice by forming local advisory groups to give feedback to the force. MIAG and YIAG also provide independent scrutiny of stop and search, by observing body-worn video camera footage. Their comments on the treatment of the person who is stopped and searched are fed back to the officers in question.

The force responds immediately, where possible, to the issues raised by the independent custody visitors (ICVs), such as where someone needs food because they were asleep at a mealtime. The ICVs gain assurance about longer-term problems through an audit process that checks to see what action the force has taken. In between the quarterly meetings with the force, the chair of the ICVs highlights any problems to the liaison officer in the force. The chair of the ICVs also contributes to the training for detention officers, emphasising the need to treat detainees with dignity and pointing out that how they are treated will be reflected in how they behave.

The feedback from these groups influences training and changes in policy. For example, the inter-faith group has worked with custody officers on how to treat respectfully a detainee who wears a turban and is asked to remove it. Members of this group and of the MIAG have role-played potential scenarios, so officers can practise different situations when working in custody suites.

Demonstrating effectiveness

The force demonstrates to the public that it has taken action on how it treats people. It posts the results of gross misconduct proceedings on the Merseyside Police website and publishes them in the local media, reinforcing the message that Merseyside Police will seek out and prosecute officers involved in wrongdoing. The police and crime commissioner holds a public performance and scrutiny meeting on victim satisfaction to reassure the public that the force takes victims seriously and to encourage them to report any complaints.

Summary of findings



Good

The force maintains oversight of fair and respectful treatment through an effective governance structure. This includes meetings about the use of force and stop and search, scrutiny from its independent advisory groups and independent custody visitor scheme and scrutiny from a force-wide equality, diversity and human rights group.

Merseyside Police regularly seeks feedback on the public's perceptions of fair and respectful treatment through formal and well-established arrangements that allows the force to get a fuller understanding of the people it serves using this feedback to improve services.

The force works closely with people who have less confidence in the police to ensure that they know what the force understands by fair and respectful treatment. However, it could do more to understand how the wider public perceives that police treatment is fair and respectful, particularly those of the public who rarely come into contact with the police.

How well does the force ensure that its workforce behaves ethically and lawfully?

In 2014, HMIC inspected the extent to which the police were acting with integrity and guarding against corruption.¹⁵ Given the continued importance of this topic, we are returning in this question to those national recommendations emerging from the 2014 report from that inspection that our 2015 legitimacy inspection did not cover. Our inspection focus this year also reflects research showing that prevention is better than cure: the best way to ensure that police workforces behave ethically is for the forces to develop an ethical culture and to have systems in place to identify potential risks to the integrity of the organisations, so that forces can intervene early to reduce the likelihood of corruption.¹⁶

How well does the force develop and maintain an ethical culture?

One of the first things forces can do to develop an ethical culture is to use effective vetting procedures to recruit applicants who are more likely to have a high standard of ethical behaviour and to reject those who may have demonstrated questionable standards of behaviour in the past, or whose identities cannot be confirmed.

Once recruited, one of the best ways to prevent corruption from occurring among the workforce is by establishing an ethical working environment or culture. To achieve this, forces need to clarify and continue to reinforce and exemplify acceptable and unacceptable standards of behaviour, including the Code of Ethics.¹⁷ This year, HMIC focused on assessing progress in those areas highlighted for improvement in our 2015 legitimacy inspection and our 2014 integrity and corruption inspection.

¹⁵ *Integrity Matters*, HMIC, January 2015. Available from:
www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/integrity-matters/

¹⁶ *Promoting Ethical Behaviour and Preventing Wrongdoing in Organisations*, College of Policing, 2015. Available at:
http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Documents/150317_Integrity_REA_FINAL_REPORT.pdf

¹⁷ *Promoting Ethical Behaviour and Preventing Wrongdoing in Organisations*, College of Policing, 2015. Available at:
http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Documents/150317_Integrity_REA_FINAL_REPORT.pdf
The Role of Leadership in Promoting Ethical Police Behaviour, College of Policing, 2015.

Available at:
http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Documents/150317_Ethical_leadership_FINAL_REPORT.pdf and
Literature Review – Police Integrity and Corruption, HMIC, January 2015. Available at:
www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/integrity-matters/

Initial vetting

HMIC's 2014 police integrity and corruption inspection¹⁸ found that the vetting arrangements in Merseyside Police complied with national police vetting policy.¹⁹ During this inspection, we found that Merseyside Police continues to comply with national policy, and re-vets officers and staff on promotion and transfer to specialist posts. Vetting includes the whole workforce: contractors, temporary staff and volunteers. In line with the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006, the force ensures that all employees have lawful residence for work (three years' residency, or five if the post is a designated one).

The force also uses biometric vetting and a DNA swab test. The force does not distinguish between black, Asian and minority ethnic applicants and white applicants failing vetting and is not able to demonstrate an understanding of how vetting practices may affect the recruitment of a more diverse workforce by monitoring consistently the reasons why applicants are rejected. There is a route of appeal for those who fail vetting through section seven of the Data Protection Act 1998. Further work is needed for the force to understand fully the vetting outcomes for people with protected characteristics, such as age, gender or race, to enable the force to take positive action where appropriate in cases where people with protected characteristics fail the vetting process.

The College of Policing's 'disapproved register' contains details of those officers who have been dismissed from the service or who either resigned or retired while subject to a gross misconduct investigation where it had been determined there would have been a case to answer. The force complies with its obligations to provide the College of Policing with details of those officers and staff who have been dismissed from the service for inclusion on the current disapproved register.

Clarifying and reinforcing standards of behaviour

HMIC's 2014 police integrity and corruption inspection²⁰ found that the chief constable demonstrated strong leadership and a clear determination to create a climate of ethical behaviour and challenge, with his personal endorsement of the force's 'Just Trilogy' policy on ethical behaviour, called 'Just Talk, Just Think, Just Lead'.

¹⁸ *Police Integrity and Corruption – Merseyside Police*, HMIC, 2014. Available at: www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/publications/police-integrity-corruption-force/

¹⁹ ACPO / ACPOS National Vetting Policy for the Police Community, Association of Chief Police Officers, 2012. Available from: www.northants.police.uk/files/documents/Freedom Of Information/ac^ACPO National Vetting Policy.pdf
ACPO is now the National Police Chiefs' Council.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

In this inspection, we found Merseyside Police was exemplary in the way it defines unacceptable behaviour continuously and emphasises through its 'Just Trilogy' policy that it will not tolerate this type of behaviour. The force's integrity and anti-corruption strategy sets out clearly the responsibilities of both the organisation and the individuals employed in it. These include responsibilities on financial security, professional dissatisfaction or welfare, and substance misuse. The strategy also covers vetting, management and supervision, and access to information. The quarterly integrity and anti-corruption board meeting holds the force to account for its professional standards.

How well does the force identify, understand and manage risks to the integrity of the organisation?

HMIC's 2014 police integrity and corruption inspection emphasised the need for forces to make arrangements for continuous monitoring of their ethical health, through active monitoring of force systems and processes to spot risks to their integrity, including – but not limited to – business interests, gifts and hospitality, and public complaints.²¹ These findings reflect the research commissioned by the College of Policing, which highlights the importance of taking a problem-solving approach to preventing wrongdoing, by scanning and analysing police data to identify particular officers or hotspots for targeting prevention activity.

This year HMIC was particularly interested in how well forces – from dedicated anti-corruption units to individual supervisors – are identifying and intervening early to reduce individual and organisational vulnerabilities (i.e. those individuals, groups or locations that may be susceptible to corruption). We also assessed how well forces are seeking and assessing intelligence on potential corruption, with a focus on those areas for improvement identified in our previous inspections.

Identifying and understanding risks to integrity

In HMIC's police integrity and corruption inspection in 2014,²² we found that the force actively and effectively identified and managed threats, risks and potential harm from corruption as part of its governance structure. During this inspection, we found that the force continues to do so, prioritising the areas of greatest risk through its integrity and anti-corruption board. The force has a 'control strategy' which sets out its operational priorities so it can tackle any of the gaps it has identified in its intelligence and information. It identifies early warning signs of potential corruption by sharing information between internal departments and with other forces. Force

²¹ *Integrity Matters*, HMIC, January 2015. Available from:
www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/integrity-matters/

²² *Police Integrity and Corruption – Merseyside Police*, HMIC, 2014. Available at:
www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/police-integrity-corruption-force/

representatives sit on the regional counter-corruption action group, and it receives the tri-annual National Crime Agency national strategic threat assessment.

The professional standards department and human resources department (HR) share information in order to identify and manage potential risks to the integrity of staff and the force. The two departments hold a monthly meeting.

Merseyside Police identifies the risks associated with business interests and notifiable associations.²³ The individual performance assessment process (referred to as PDR) covers business interests and notifiable associations and contains specific prompts for line managers to ask the relevant questions. The force communicated this approach clearly to its workforce when it was introduced. We are content that the workforce is familiar with the policy and knows how to report a change in circumstances to his or her supervisor, even though the force does not govern the PDR process robustly.

The force has implemented the recommendation in HMIC's police integrity inspection 2014²⁴ that it should inform staff of the gifts and hospitality that they may accept and why. The policy has been sent to all members of staff and published in the force's newsletter. Each of the basic command units and departments records its own gifts and hospitality and passes the details to the professional standards department for corporate oversight on a bi-monthly basis.

The force rejects relatively few business interest applications from officers and staff. We were told that applicants are more likely to seek informal advice first and, once the difficulties of a particular business interest are explained, do not progress with an application. We were provided with examples where business interest applications have been refused where the work would present a conflict of interest with roles within the force.

The force actively monitors both its own systems and social networking sites to ensure appropriate use. It continues to make sure that its IT systems are secure, which includes preventing unauthorised digital storage. It undertakes comprehensive monitoring and has a dedicated member of staff to provide assurance that the systems are secure and to audit those systems. The force uses encryption software and password protection for information downloaded to an external hard drive. The

²³ Notifiable associations for staff and officers are associations with individuals who could pose a risk to the integrity of an individual employee or the force itself. An officer or staff member should report such associations to allow a full evaluation of the risk posed both to the individual and to the force to be undertaken.

²⁴ *Police Integrity and Corruption – Merseyside Police*, HMIC, 2014. Available at: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/police-integrity-corruption-force/

force also provides regular advice to officers about the consequences of misuse of police computer systems. Pop-up messages on its IT systems remind officers and staff of their responsibility to use IT systems lawfully.

Intervening early to manage risks to integrity

The force has effective prevention, early intervention and review systems in place to manage risks to integrity. It encourages staff to admit their mistakes through an undertaking to give them support when they are open and honest. This enables the force to intervene early before the member of staff reaches a serious level of misconduct or corruption. It strengthens its messages about corruption by basing them on identified current risks and cites genuine examples to make the issues real for staff. The chief constable's road shows reiterate these messages and the head of professional standards reinforces them through presentations to staff.

Looking for, reporting and assessing intelligence on potential corruption

In HMIC's police integrity and corruption inspection 2014,²⁵ we found that the force's anti-corruption unit had sufficient capacity and capability to analyse existing and potential threats. During this inspection, we found that this continues: staff have the capacity and the capability to use a full range of covert investigation and intelligence-gathering techniques and they have accreditation in counter-corruption and surveillance specialisms. The force has effective independent channels for submitting information about corruption and other areas of concern: Safe Call and Crimestoppers.²⁶ The force receives information from both, but not as frequently as from open methods of reporting. We were told that this is because staff feel supported when they report wrongdoing.

The force has well-established methods for collecting intelligence from staff and officers. Data received from the force during inspection fieldwork indicates that the confidential reporting line receives only 12 to 25 reports per annum, but the anti-corruption unit receives regular telephone calls from officers and staff seeking advice or wishing to report wrongdoing. The 600 intelligence reports the force receives about staff every year are evidence of this. The force receives intelligence from a wide range of sources and assesses it on a daily basis in line with the National Crime Agency counter-corruption strategic assessment codes. The head of the anti-corruption unit conducts a fortnightly intelligence review.

²⁵ *Police Integrity and Corruption – Merseyside Police*, HMIC, 2014. Available at: www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/publications/police-integrity-corruption-force/

²⁶ Crimestoppers is an independent charity helping law enforcement to locate criminals and help solve crimes. It operates an anonymous phone number that people can always call to pass on information about crime; alternatively people can send information anonymously via the Crimestoppers website.

How well is the force tackling the problem of officers and staff abusing their authority for sexual gain?

In 2012 the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) published *The abuse of police powers to perpetrate sexual violence*.²⁷ This report states that “the abuse of police powers for purposes of sexual exploitation, or even violence, is something that fundamentally betrays the trust that communities and individuals place in the police. It therefore has a serious impact on the public’s confidence in individual officers and the service in general.” The report identified this behaviour as a form of serious corruption that forces should refer to the IPCC for its consideration of how it should be investigated.

The *Code of Ethics*²⁸ – which sets out the standards of professional behaviour expected of all policing professionals – explicitly states that they must “not establish or pursue an improper sexual or emotional relationship with a person with whom [they] come into contact in the course of [their] work who may be vulnerable to an abuse of trust or power”.

The most recent national counter-corruption assessment, in 2013, highlighted corruption for the purposes of sexual gratification as a major threat to law enforcement.²⁹ HMIC’s 2015 report *Integrity matters*³⁰ identified police sexual misconduct as an area of great concern to the public. We share the public’s disquiet and so we looked at this issue specifically as part of our 2016 inspection. Our work was given additional emphasis in May 2016 by a request from the Home Secretary that we inspect forces’ response to the issue of officers and staff developing inappropriate relationships with victims of domestic abuse and abusing their position of power to exploit victims.

²⁷ *The abuse of police powers to perpetrate sexual violence*, jointly published by IPCC and ACPO (now the National Police Chiefs’ Council), September 2012. Available at: www.ipcc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Documents/research_stats/abuse_of_police_powers_to_perpetrate_sexual_violence.PDF

²⁸ Code of Ethics – A Code of Practice for the Principles and Standards of Professional Behaviour for the Policing Profession of England and Wales, College of Policing, London, July 2014. Available at: www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Ethics/Documents/Code_of_Ethics.pdf

²⁹ Every three years, the National Counter Corruption Advisory Group commissions a strategic assessment of the threat to law enforcement from corruption. The most recent assessment was completed in June 2013 by the Serious Organised Crime Agency. The assessment was based upon three years of intelligence reports on possible corruption gathered by forces in England and Wales, supplemented by information from other forces and national agencies.

³⁰ *Integrity matters*, HMIC, January 2015. Available from: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/integrity-matters/

Recognising abuse of authority for sexual gain as serious corruption

Merseyside Police recognises the abuse of authority for sexual gain as serious corruption and has communicated this to the workforce. Its workforce, including its volunteers, understood the seriousness of the abuse of authority for sexual gain, and staff were confident that they knew how to raise it immediately as an issue. Staff told us that they had “no sympathy for colleagues who abuse their position”.

The force communicates with its workforce to make officers aware that abuse of authority for sexual gain is inappropriate and sets out the risks involved. It does this through its ‘In Touch’ briefings and presentations from staff who work in the professional standards department. The outcomes of cases are communicated to the workforce through its people and policy matters publication. A recent publication highlighted that an officer had received 30 months’ imprisonment for having sex on duty with a sex worker. The workforce repeated the clear messages that the force had sent out that this is unacceptable behaviour and will not be tolerated.

The force considers all cases of serious misconduct for both mandatory and voluntary referral to the IPCC. It treats every instance of a police officer abusing his or her authority for sexual gain as a mandatory referral to the IPCC.

Looking for and receiving intelligence on potential abuse of authority for sexual gain

Merseyside Police actively looks for and receives intelligence on the potential abuse of authority for sexual gain. It has the capability and capacity proactively to identify intelligence and is prepared to invest resources in managing the risk. The force conducts routine audits to find officers who trawl their IT systems for the purpose of identifying vulnerable victims.

The force encourages victims to report suspicious behaviour. It does so through proactive marketing campaigns and through those organisations who work closely with sex workers and victims of domestic abuse. The force takes every opportunity to reinforce the message publicly that it will not tolerate this behaviour and to encourage victims to report this type of offence. An example of a case earlier in 2016 is where an officer was convicted of committing sexual offences with a victim of domestic violence. He was found guilty and imprisoned for six years. The force used the media to publicise the message that the force takes this behaviour extremely seriously and treats it as a criminal investigation.

Where the force’s anti-corruption unit has received information about officers or staff who may be abusing their authority for sexual gain, it has acted on this using various investigative methods, including intelligence-led integrity testing (ILITs) in response to the identified risks.

Merseyside Police takes positive action to prevent the abuse of authority for sexual gain. It has a good understanding of the scale and source of the problem. The force understands the importance of early intervention and has reinforced messages through presentations to supervisors and officers, asking them to be aware of the behaviour of their colleagues. These messages have been reinforced through presentations and podcasts. Specific messaging about awareness of officer behaviour with those who are considered vulnerable, including victims of domestic abuse, takes place through the multi-agency safeguarding hubs and the force's basic command units.

Although staff told us there was no specific training in identifying the early signs of someone abusing their authority for sexual gain, supervisors were confident they could spot such behaviour. They would then speak to the member of staff, basing their advice on specific examples of their behaviour and pointing out where misunderstandings might lead to an abuse of authority. Officers were happy to report matters to the professional standards department and confident that it would take action.

In our 2014 police integrity and corruption inspection,³¹ we recommended that the force ensures it has an effective method of communicating to all staff both locally and nationally the lessons to be learned on integrity and corruption, including abuse of authority for sexual gain. The head of professional standards makes an assessment of national lessons learned to target the communication where needed within the force. Particular areas of concern are highlighted to the workforce through presentations and the force's internal publications. The force's integrity and corruption board has a lessons learned discussion as a regular agenda item, to ensure that the force is learning from its own experience and that of other forces.

Building public trust

The force puts the public first when considering abuse of authority and sexual offence misconduct and criminality. The force deals with cases of abuse of authority for sexual gain robustly by taking officers or staff to court, rather than dismissing them immediately from the force and releasing them directly into the community. This ensures that the activity of the individual can be monitored and any further intelligence gained to support a conviction. It is commendable that the force is prepared to risk negative publicity through this approach rather than expose the public to risk.

³¹ *Police Integrity and Corruption – Merseyside Police*, HMIC, 2014. Available at: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/police-integrity-corruption-force/

The force publicises the outcomes of public hearings in the media, including those where officers have been found guilty of abusing their authority for sexual gain. It sends a media officer to all public hearings and ensures that it is proactive in reporting the results, emphasising that the force does not sit back and wait for intelligence or corrupt behaviour, but is proactively looking for it.

How well does the force engage with the public and its workforce about the outcomes of misconduct and corruption cases?

HMIC's 2014 literature review on police integrity and corruption emphasised the importance of collection and dissemination of information about misconduct to the public, on the basis that it shows police forces are taking the problem seriously, and detecting and punishing wrongdoing.³² This information also forms the basis for deterring misconduct and enhancing integrity within police forces themselves. This year, HMIC looked at how well forces engage with the public online and through police officer misconduct hearings in public, and also more widely following high profile incidents with the potential to undermine public perceptions of police integrity. We also looked at how aware the workforce is of these outcomes.

Working with the public

The force publicises misconduct hearings on its website, including information about attending open hearings. The force's media department is proactive in ensuring that the force is ready to publish the outcome immediately. It attaches a media officer to each public hearing and in its press release the force provides reassurance to the public that it is always on the look-out for misconduct and corruption.

Merseyside professional standards department provides the College of Policing with notifications of every police officer (including special constables) and police staff if they leave the organisation as a result of misconduct proceedings or retire or resign while under investigation for gross misconduct (when there is the potential for them to be dismissed).

Recent audit checks with the College of Policing have shown these records are consistent with the data that the force has provided to HMIC. The force has been proactive in this approach, making referrals to the College of Policing if there is any doubt about the misconduct of an officer or member of staff. For example, several prospective Special Constabulary officers who were under investigation and left the organisation immediately prior to being sworn in were referred to the College of Policing.

³² *Literature Review – Police Integrity and Corruption*, HMIC, January 2015. Available at: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/integrity-matters/

Working with the workforce

The force has taken action on the recommendation from our police integrity and corruption inspection 2014³³ that the force needed to communicate to all staff the lessons learned both locally and nationally about integrity and corruption. The force publishes the quarterly IPCC summary of lessons learned on its intranet site, and reports of internal misconduct in its People and Policy Matters publication. All staff know how to report a colleague that they suspect of inappropriate behaviour or corruption. One said: “I would be absolutely confident in doing that and it would definitely be dealt with appropriately.”

Every member of the workforce we spoke to, including volunteers, knows about the outcome of misconduct cases. The force regularly uses internal publications, presentations and the chief constable’s road shows, among other activities, to communicate expected behaviour and the consequences of not complying with it. People who work on behalf of the force, such as contractors and temporary staff, also have a code of conduct and behaviour.

Summary of findings



Good

Merseyside Police continues to ensure that its workforce behaves ethically and lawfully. It has a strong ethical culture and its workforce understands what serious corruption is and how to report it when they see it.

The force monitors the risks to the integrity of the organisation well through its comprehensive vetting of officers and staff. It identifies early warning signs of potential corruption by sharing information internally and with other forces.

Merseyside Police provides public reassurance that the force ensures that its workforce behaves ethically and lawfully by publicising misconduct hearings on its website, including information about attending open hearings, and releases the outcome immediately. It takes officers or staff to court in cases of abuse for sexual gain, rather than dismissing them and allowing them to avoid punishment and be able to apply for other work, even though this could compromise the force’s reputation. It uses internal publications, presentations and the chief constable’s road shows as well as other activities to communicate to its workforce the behaviour it expects and the consequences of not complying with these standards.

³³ *Police Integrity and Corruption – Merseyside Police*, HMIC, 2014. Available at: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/police-integrity-corruption-force/

The force has made progress on the two recommendations that HMIC made in 2014: communicating to its workforce lessons learned on integrity and corruption across the service: and publicising and monitoring its policy for accepting gifts and hospitality.

To what extent does the force treat its workforce with fairness and respect?

A workforce that feels it is treated fairly and with respect by its employers is more likely to identify with the organisation, and treat the public in a similarly fair and respectful way. Conversely, perceived unfairness within police organisations can have a detrimental effect on officer and staff attitudes and behaviours.³⁴ As such, this concept of ‘organisational justice’ and its potential impact on ‘procedural justice’ forms an important part of HMIC’s assessment of police legitimacy. As there is no comparative data on how fairly officers and staff perceive forces to have treated them, we focused our assessment on how well forces identify these perceptions within their workforces and act on these findings. In particular, we looked at the extent to which organisational ‘fairness’ is reflected through the way individual performance is managed, and how ‘organisational respect’ is reflected through how forces provide for the wellbeing of their workforces, particularly through preventative and early action.

How well does the force identify and act to improve the workforce’s perceptions of fair and respectful treatment?

Research suggests that forces that involve officers and staff in decision-making processes, listen to their concerns, act on them, and are open about how and why decisions were reached, may improve workforce perceptions of fair and respectful treatment.³⁵ On this basis, HMIC assessed how well the force engages with its staff to identify and understand the issues that affect them, and how well it acts on these issues and demonstrates it has done so.

The force has a formal grievance procedure and an effective governance structure to oversee and monitor these complaints. HR monitors the grievance processes, and a dedicated member of the management team is responsible for quality assessing every grievance outcome.

³⁴ *Fair Cop 2: Organisational justice, behaviour and ethical policing*, College of Policing, 2015.

Available at:

http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Documents/150317_Fair_cop%202_FINAL_REPORT.pdf

Organisational Justice: Implications for police and emergency service leadership, Herrington C and Roberts K, AIPM Research Focus, Issue 2, 2013. Available at: www.aipm.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Org-Justice-Final.pdf

³⁵ *Fair Cop 2: Organisational justice, behaviour and ethical policing*, College of Policing, 2015, page 11. Available at:

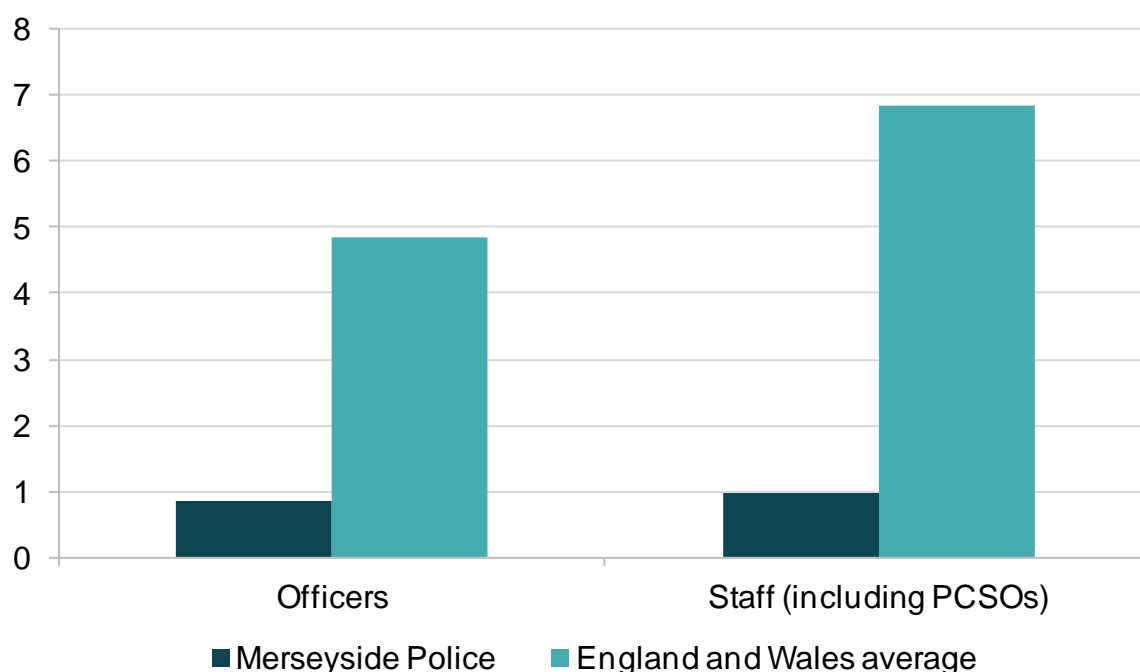
http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Documents/150317_Fair_cop%202_FINAL_REPORT.pdf

The force analyses grievances that it receives from officers and staff to identify any lessons to learn or to implement policy changes that may be required.

Identifying and understanding the issues

Grievances are concerns, problems or complaints raised formally to employers by officers or staff. Data on numbers and types of grievances provide forces with a useful source of information about the sorts of issues that staff and officers are concerned about.

Figure 3: Number of grievances raised by officers (per 1,000 officers) or staff (per 1,000 staff, including police community support officers) that Merseyside Police finalised compared with England and Wales, in the 12 months to 31 March 2016



Source: HMIC Legitimacy data collection

For further information about the data in figure 3 please see annex A

In the 12 months to 31 March 2016, Merseyside Police finalised 0.8 formal grievances raised by officers per 1,000 officers, which was lower than the England and Wales average of 4.8 per 1,000 officers. During this period, the force finalised 1.0 formal grievances raised by staff per 1,000 staff (including PCSOs), which was lower than the England and Wales average of 6.8 per 1,000 staff (including PCSOs).

Merseyside Police has created a culture which means that all are open to receiving feedback from the workforce. The force gains a good understanding of workforce perceptions through a range of channels. These include a recent people survey (conducted in association with Durham University) in which the force reported it had a 28 percent response rate. The force recognises from the survey that it needs to improve in some areas and to involve those who did not complete the survey. Other ways of exploring workforce perceptions include the chief officer road shows, a staff challenge panel, exit interviews for staff that are retiring and the police federation,

superintendents association, Unison and staff associations. More recently the force has introduced successful webinars – a digital solution for communicating with more staff, particularly those located remotely. The extent of staff take-up has provided much more feedback than previously, and staff are taking the opportunity to raise issues of fair and respectful treatment during the webinars. Staff told us that “engagement is an improvement on the past – it is good now”.

Making improvements and demonstrating effectiveness

The force plans to respond to its people survey with a ‘you said, we did’ approach to gain the confidence of the workforce. An assistant chief constable is leading this work, to provide governance and demonstrate the force’s commitment. It will start with the ‘100 little things’ that staff are concerned about – the so-called ‘quick wins’. The force is also consulting with the staff associations. Some staff doubt whether the force will take any action on the findings, though Merseyside Police has taken effective action in response to the review of its shift pattern by listening to staff and negotiating a better position for them. The staff have been kept informed through webinars and the police federation representatives who have been involved in the negotiations for its members.

How well does the force support the wellbeing of its workforce?

Police forces need to understand the benefits of having a healthier workforce – a happy and healthy workforce is likely to be a more productive one, as a result of people taking fewer sick days and being more invested in what they do. Last year our inspection was concerned with what efforts forces were making to consider and provide for, the wellbeing needs of their workforce. This year we looked at the progress the force had made since the last inspection, with a particular focus on preventative activity to encourage wellbeing.

Understanding and valuing the benefits

In HMIC’s 2015 legitimacy inspection,³⁶ we found that the force had established a comprehensive range of practices to support the wellbeing of staff. It has recently included wellbeing in the issues considered by its governance structure, through its strategic health and wellbeing board. The force has also invested further in its in-house occupational health unit to provide more appointments for its staff.

Supervisors understand their responsibilities for staff wellbeing but show little awareness of how to identify the early warning signs as part of prevention. The majority of staff we spoke to feel supported during periods of illness or when, for example, they need to care for a family member. The force has recently completed

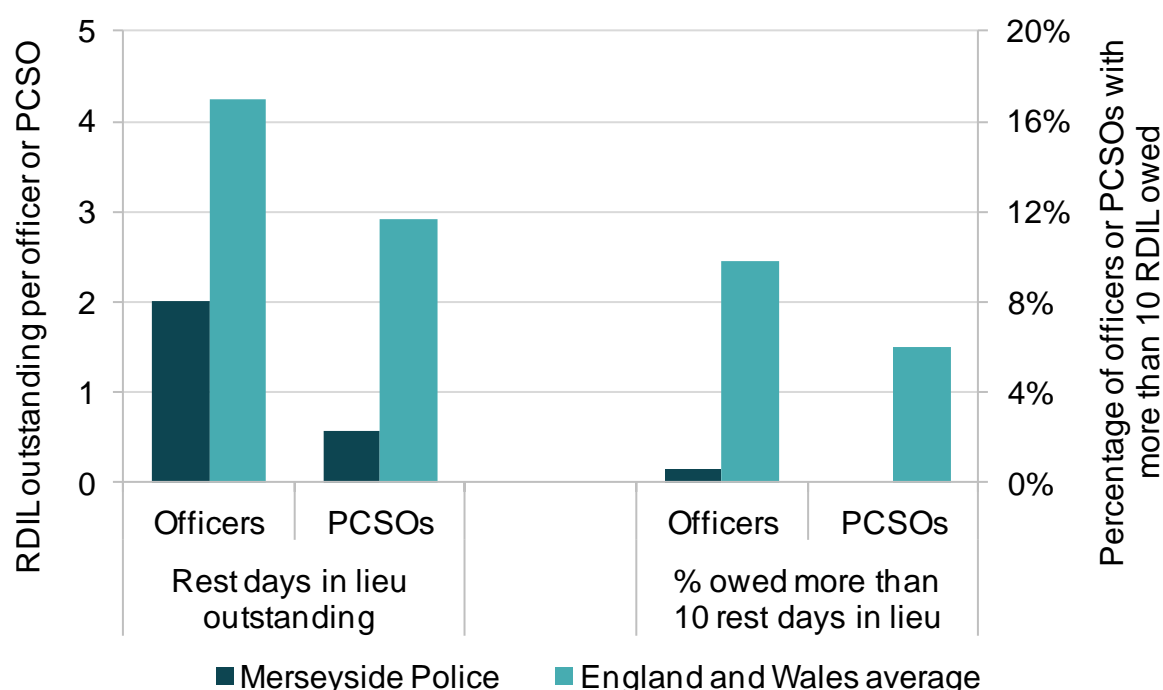
³⁶ *PEEL: Police legitimacy 2015 – An inspection of Merseyside Police*, HMIC, 2016. Available at: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/police-legitimacy-2015-merseyside/

its assessment for the Wellbeing Charter and has received the Navajo Charter Mark³⁷ for the third year running for the support it gives to lesbian, gay, bi-sexual or transgender staff. The force also supports the welfare of Special Constabulary staff and other volunteers, and of ‘whistleblowers’ or those they are investigating for misconduct. One volunteer spoken to during the inspection described the force as “a caring organisation”.

Identifying and understanding the workforce’s wellbeing needs

Rest days in lieu (RDIL) are leave days owed to officers or police community support officers when they have been required to work on their scheduled rest day due to operational reasons. Long working hours can have a detrimental impact on the health and wellbeing of the workforce, so it serves as a useful point of comparison for assessing the extent to which the force is managing the wellbeing of its workforce. Analysis of the numbers of RDIL accrued, but not yet taken, can be useful tools for forces to identify and understand potential wellbeing concerns for individuals and teams.

Figure 4: Number of rest days in lieu outstanding per officer or police community support officer (PCSO) and the percentage of officers or PCSOs with more than 10 rest days in lieu owed to them in Merseyside Police compared with England and Wales, as at 31 March 2016



Source: HMIC Legitimacy data collection

Note: For some police forces data about the number of rest days in lieu outstanding are estimated from data on hours owed. For further information about the data in figure 4 please see annex A

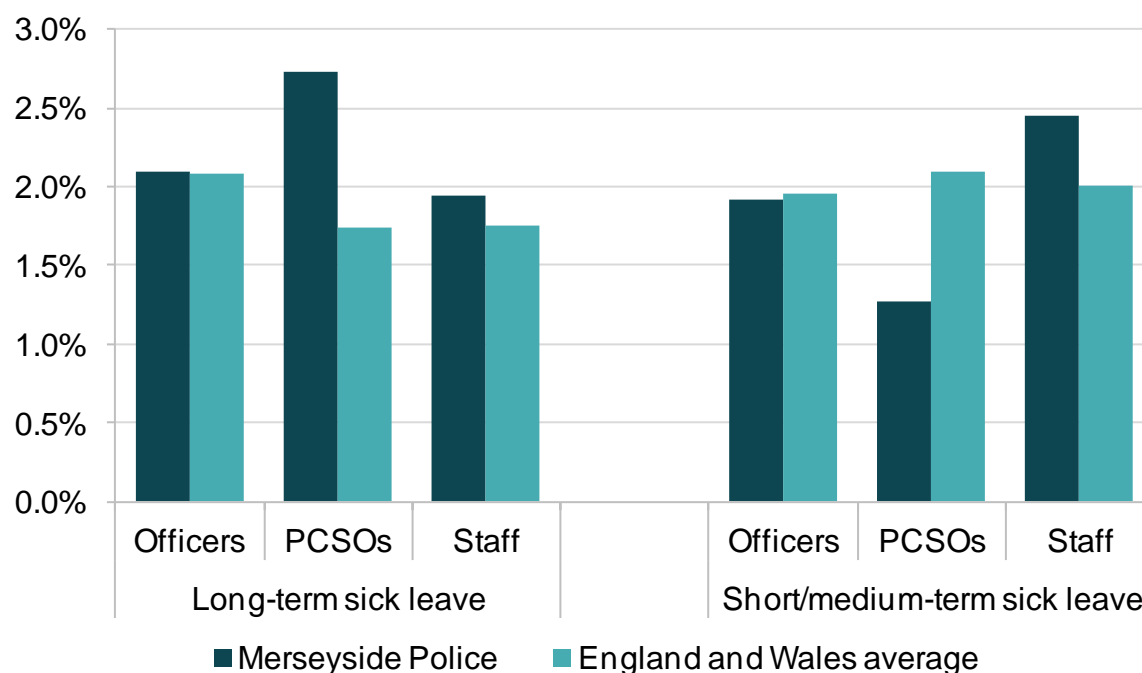
³⁷ The Navajo Merseyside and Cheshire LGBT Charter Mark is an equality mark sponsored by In-Trust Merseyside and Sefton Embrace and supported by LGBT community networks across Merseyside.

As at 31 March 2016, there were 2.0 rest days in lieu outstanding per officer in Merseyside Police, which was lower than the England and Wales average of 4.2 days per officer. On the same date, there were 0.6 rest days in lieu outstanding per PCSO in the force, which was lower than the England and Wales average of 2.9 days per PCSO. As at 31 March 2016, 0.6 percent of officers in Merseyside Police had more than 10 rest days in lieu owed to them, which was lower than the England and Wales average of 9.8 percent. As at 31 March 2016, no PCSOs in Merseyside Police had more than 10 rest days in lieu owed to them. The England and Wales average was 6.0 percent of PCSOs. The data on PCSOs did not allow a comparison with the average.

The force has a good understanding of both the wellbeing needs of its workforce and how to identify early any wellbeing risks and threats to the organisation. It analyses management information to identify the action it needs to take and monitors workforce perceptions of wellbeing through the people survey. In the force contact centre (FCC), one of the most pressurised working environments, staff told us that wellbeing was considered on an informal basis and that it was generally good. FCC supervisors told us they had received training in how to identify mental health problems and had a clear understanding of the wellbeing options available to staff. The chief officer in the special constabulary is responsible for the welfare of special constables and is able to use the same wellbeing resources available to the rest of the force. The force assesses volunteers' welfare on an informal basis, and this approach has not attracted any complaints.

Sickness data can provide a useful point of comparison for assessing the wellbeing of police workforces. Analysis of this data can help forces to identify and understand the nature and causes of sickness at individual and organisational levels and inform targeted activity to prevent and manage sickness.

Figure 5: Percentage of officers, police community support officers and staff on long-term and short/medium-term sick leave in Merseyside Police compared with England and Wales, as at 31 March 2016



Source: Home Office Annual Data Requirement

Note: Long-term sickness is defined as an absence due to sickness that has lasted for more than 28 days as at 31 March 2016. For further information about the data in figure 5 please see annex A

Figure 5 provides data on the proportion of officers, PCSOs and staff who were absent due to sickness on 31 March 2016.

- 2.1 percent of officers were on long-term sick leave, which is in line with the England and Wales average of 2.1 percent.
- 1.9 percent of officers were on short or medium-term sick leave, which is broadly in line with the England and Wales average of 2.0 percent.
- 2.7 percent of PCSOs were on long-term sick leave, which is higher than the England and Wales average of 1.7 percent.
- 1.3 percent of PCSOs were on short or medium-term sick leave, which is lower than the England and Wales average of 2.1 percent.
- 1.9 percent of staff were on long-term sick leave, which is broadly in line with the England and Wales average of 1.7 percent.
- 2.5 percent of staff were on short or medium-term sick leave, which is broadly in line with the England and Wales average of 2.0 percent.

Taking preventative and early action to improve workforce wellbeing

The force has taken some steps to raise awareness among staff of the greatest risks to workforce wellbeing. These steps include a pledge with MIND (the mental health charity) to embrace its blue light programme of support,³⁸ a mental health week and a four-hour conference explaining the background to mental health issues for staff and how to avoid getting ill. The force is also improving a way of intervening early if someone has problems and has plans to train staff to recognise the signs that someone is struggling. In some basic command units, staff support one another informally outside working hours through activities such as workouts, giving fitness advice and team yoga. The experience of wellbeing was not consistent across the force, though, and much depended on how well supervisors managed their staff. We found staff at local level who felt well supported, but equally we found staff who were not sure where they could formally raise wellbeing issues and who pointed to a reduction in staff responsible for welfare.

How fairly and effectively does the force manage the individual performance of its officers and staff?

College of Policing research on organisational justice suggests that lack of promotion opportunities and not dealing with poor performance may adversely affect workforce perceptions of fairness, which in turn may lead to negative attitudes and behaviours in the workplace.³⁹ HMIC assessed how fairly and effectively the force manages the individual performance of its officers and staff, including the extent to which the process aligns with guidance produced by the College of Policing.⁴⁰

The performance assessment process

HMIC's inspection showed that the force is not able to demonstrate whether its performance assessment process is effective. An annual performance development review (PDR) is supposed to take place on the anniversary of the member of staff joining the force, but there is no management oversight to ensure that this is happening.

³⁸ The Blue Light Time to Change pledge action plan: the force is working with other emergency services (fire and rescue, search and rescue, ambulance) in their capacity as employers to tackle mental stigma within the workplace. All the services have signed up to a pledge and the action they will take.

³⁹ *Fair Cop 2: Organisational justice, behaviour and ethical policing*, College of Policing, 2015. Available at: http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Documents/150317_Fair_cop%202_FINAL_REPORT.pdf

⁴⁰ College of Policing guidance on the police performance development review process is available at: www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Support/Reviewing-performance/Pages/PDR.aspx

We were given some good examples of supervisors regularly sitting down with staff to discuss performance and complete an annual PDR, but other staff told us that they had not had an annual review for three to four years. The force's performance assessment is based on an assumption of competence unless performance suggests otherwise, at which point the member of staff would have to have a PDR for development purposes. All staff going for promotion have a PDR, because this is a requirement of the process. Lack of compliance with an annual PDR may affect the monitoring of business interests and notifiable associations which staff must report at the time of their PDR. Although all staff told us they know they must report these to their supervisors, the professional standards department cannot be sure that they have complete oversight through this ad hoc process. The force uses the 'unsatisfactory performance' procedures to address poor performance, and both formal and ad hoc methods to recognise and reward good individual performance, such as chief constable or commander commendations.

The results of performance assessment

This lack of consistency in the use of PDRs across the force means that the force cannot assess the results of its performance assessments across its workforce. It can only follow up effectively those referred to the force's performance improvement unit, as the force provides support in cases of poor performance, offering development to the individual. Members of staff told us that they had no concerns about not having a PDR and did not consider it to be unfair. They recognised that, if their performance were poor or if they wanted to go for promotion, supervisors would undertake a PDR.

Summary of findings



Good

Merseyside Police is good at ensuring it treats its workforce with fairness and respect. Evidence for this comes from its culture of inviting feedback, listening to staff and taking action on their comments.

The force has a good understanding of the wellbeing needs of its workforce. It has analysed its management information thoroughly to identify wellbeing risks and threats to the organisation. As a result it provides good services to support the wellbeing of officers and staff and is investing more in this area. The force is also raising awareness of the greatest threats to workforce wellbeing, such as pressure on people's mental health, and it has started to train supervisors to spot early warning signs. However, across the force staff do not feel consistently supported and attribute this to the variable quality of their supervisors.

Merseyside Police is not able to demonstrate whether its performance assessment process is effective, as it is based on an assumption of competence; only where staff need development or are going for promotion do they receive a PDR. We found some good examples of informal performance assessment, but we also found officers who had not an assessment of performance for three to four years.

Areas for improvement

- The force should ensure that its supervisors can recognise and provide support with wellbeing issues.
- The force should improve how it manages individual performance.

Next steps

HMIC assesses progress on causes of concern and areas for improvement identified within its reports in a number of ways. We receive updates through our regular conversations with forces, re-assess as part of our annual PEEL programme and, in the most serious cases, revisit forces.

HMIC highlights recurring themes emerging from our PEEL inspections of police forces within our national reports on police effectiveness, efficiency, legitimacy and also leadership. These reports identify those issues that are reflected across England and Wales and may contain additional recommendations directed at national policing organisations, including the Home Office, where we believe improvements can be made at a national level.

Findings and judgments from this year's PEEL legitimacy inspection will be used to direct the design of the next cycle of PEEL legitimacy assessments. The specific areas for assessment are yet to be confirmed, based on further consultation, but we will continue to assess procedural and organisational justice aspects of police legitimacy to ensure that our findings are comparable year on year.

Annex A – About the data

Please note the following for the data presented throughout the report.

The source of the data is presented with each figure in the report, and is listed in more detail in this annex. For the source of force in numbers data, please see the relevant section below.

Methodology

Please note the following for the methodology applied to the data.

Comparisons with England and Wales average figures

For some data sets, the report states whether the force's value is 'lower', 'higher' or 'broadly in line with' the England and Wales average. To calculate this, the difference to the mean average, as a proportion, is calculated for all forces. After standardising this distribution, forces that are more than 0.675 standard deviations from the mean average are determined to be above or below the average, with all other forces being broadly in line.

In practice this means that approximately a quarter of forces are lower, a quarter are higher, and the remaining half are in line with the England and Wales average for each measure. For this reason, the distance from the average required to make a force's value above or below the average is different for each measure so may not appear to be consistent.

Statistical significance

When commenting on statistical differences, a significance level of 5 percent is used.

For some forces, numbers described in the text may be identical to the England and Wales average due to decimal place rounding, but the bars in the chart will appear different as they use the full unrounded value.

Where we have referred to the England and Wales average, this is the rate or proportion calculated from the England and Wales totals.

Population

For all uses of population as a denominator, unless otherwise noted, we use the ONS mid-2015 population estimates.

Force in numbers

Workforce figures (based on full-time equivalents) for 31 March 2016

These data are obtained from the Home Office annual data return 502. The data are available from the Home Office's published Police workforce England and Wales statistics, www.gov.uk/government/collections/police-workforce-england-and-wales, or the Home Office police workforce open data tables, www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-workforce-open-data-tables. Figures may have been updated since the publication.

Projections for March 2020 are budget-based projections and therefore are likely to take into account a vacancy rate depending on a force's planning strategy. In some instances an increase in budgeted posts may not actually indicate the force is planning to increase its workforce. In other cases, forces may be planning to reduce their workforce but have a current high vacancy rate which masks this change.

Police staff includes section 38 designated officers (investigation, detention and escort).

Data from the Office for National Statistics 2011 Census were used for the number and proportion of black, Asian and minority ethnic people within each force area. While the numbers may have since changed, more recent figures are based only on estimates from surveys or projections.

Figures throughout the report

Figure 1: Number of public complaint cases recorded against officers (per 1,000 officers) or staff (per 1,000 staff, including police community support officers) compared with England and Wales, in the 12 months to 31 March 2016

The Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) defines a complaint for the purposes of recording as "an expression of dissatisfaction by a member of the public with the service they have received from a police force. It may be about the conduct of one or more persons serving with the police and/or about the direction and control of a police force". A police complaint can be about more than one officer or member of staff and can refer to one or more allegations.⁴¹

Data used in figure 1 are data extracted from the Centurion case recording and management system for Police Professional Standards data. We were able to collect the majority of this data through an automated database query, written for us by the creators of the software, Centurion (FIS Ltd). Forces ran this query on their systems

⁴¹ *Guidance on the recording of complaints under the Police Reform Act 2002*, Independent Police Complaints Commission. Available at: www.ipcc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Documents/statutoryguidance/guidance_on_recording_of_complaints_under_PRA_2002.pdf

and returned the outputs to us. This system is used in 41 of the 43 forces inspected. In order to collect the appropriate data from the two forces not using Centurion (Greater Manchester Police and Lancashire Constabulary), they were provided with a bespoke data collection template designed to correspond to information extracted from the Centurion database.

Although the IPCC categories used to record the type of public complaint and the accompanying guidance are the same in all police forces, differences in the way they are used still may occur. For example, one force may classify a case in one category while another force would classify the same case in a different category. This means that data on the types of public complaint should be treated with caution.

Figure 2: Percentage of victims satisfied with overall treatment compared with England and Wales, from the 12 months to 31 March 2011 to the 12 months to 31 March 2016

Forces are required by the Home Office to conduct satisfaction surveys with specific victim groups. Victim satisfaction surveys are structured around core questions exploring satisfaction with police responses across four stages of interactions: initial contact, actions, follow up, treatment plus the whole experience. The data in figure 2 use the results to the question on treatment, which specifically asks "Are you satisfied, dissatisfied or neither, with the way you were treated by the police officer and staff who dealt with you?"

When comparing with the England and Wales average, the standard methodology described above has been used. When testing whether the change in percentage of respondents who were satisfied between the 12 months to 31 March 2015 and the 12 months to 31 March 2016 is statistically significant, a chi square hypothesis test for independence has been applied.

Figure 3: Number of grievances raised by officers (per 1,000 officers) or staff (per 1,000 staff, including police community support officers) finalised compared with England and Wales, in the 12 months to 31 March 2016

The data refer to those grievances that were subject to a formal process (not including issues informally resolved with a line manager). Some of the grievances finalised in this period may have been raised in a previous year. Finalised refers to grievances where a resolution has been reached, after any appeals have been completed. Differences between forces in the number of finalised grievances may be due to different handling and recording policies. Data used in figure 3 were provided to HMIC by individual forces via a bespoke data collection in April 2016 prior to inspection.

Figure 4: Number of rest days in lieu outstanding per officer or police community support officer (PCSO) and the percentage of officers or PCSOs with more than 10 rest days in lieu owed to them compared with England and Wales, as at 31 March 2016

Rest days in lieu are leave days owed to officers or police community support officers when they have been required to work on their scheduled rest day due to operational reasons. Data used in figure 4 were provided to HMIC by individual forces via a bespoke data collection in April 2016 prior to inspection.

Figure 5: Percentage of officers, police community support officers and staff on long-term and short/medium-term sick leave compared with England and Wales, as at 31 March 2016

Long-term sickness is defined as an absence due to sickness that has lasted for more than 28 days as at 31 March 2016. Data used in figure 5 were obtained from Home Office annual data returns 501 and 551. Data on long-term absences can be found in the Home Office police workforce open data tables:

www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-workforce-open-data-tables