

**February 2015**

# **Views on PEEL Assessments**

**Consulting with the public and frontline police**

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# Introduction

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) is consulting on a new approach to inspecting police forces, called the PEEL Assessments. The assessments will see all 43 forces in England and Wales receive two to three systematic inspections a year. PEEL stands for Police Efficiency, Effectiveness, and Legitimacy and it is these aspects of each force that HMIC seeks to inspect. In order to ensure that a wide range of stakeholders is consulted, HMIC commissioned Ipsos MORI to conduct research with frontline police officers and police staff and the public.

Ipsos MORI interviewed a nationally representative sample of 1,804 members of the general public in England and Wales using a face-to-face general public omnibus survey, and these findings provide an overview of the public's immediate response to the proposal for the PEEL Assessments. To allow HMIC's proposed approach to be presented and discussed in more detail; five evening workshop events were held with members of the general public.

Victims of certain types of crime were also interviewed separately to gain their views on the service they received from the police. Findings from this particular element of the study are included in Chapter 8 of this report.

Interviews with police officers and staff were also conducted across five police forces in order to hear the views of those working on the frontline. Frontline officers included constables, police community support officers and sergeants. Frontline staff included control room staff, crime scene investigators, call operators and detention officers, among others. Where this report describes the views of 'the police' this should be understood to be referring to an aggregation of the views of both these frontline officers *and* staff.

It should be noted that most of this report is based on the findings from qualitative research amongst relatively small numbers of interviews with the public, victims and police officers. Like all qualitative research, findings are intended to promise insight but cannot be claimed to be representative of the wider population.

Full details of the research methodology used are provided at the end of the report.

# Key findings

## Key findings

- There was **broad approval for the proposed approach to PEEL assessments** from both the public and police.
- The **public** wanted HMIC to assess whether officers' time was being used efficiently, and if there was too much 'red tape' impacting on their ability to do their jobs properly. HMIC was also asked to ensure that there is adequate community policing.
- Frontline **officers and staff** felt inspections should highlight any resource constraints the force might be working under, as these were felt to be the primary cause of poor service to the public. HMIC should also examine whether a force is staffed efficiently, as there were concerns that there were too few frontline officers and staff and too many senior and support staff.
- Both the public and police were **in favour of HMIC's proposed approach to gathering evidence**, and often spontaneously suggested similar measures.
- Both police officers and staff felt that all **inspections should be unannounced** to avoid improper preparation, and that the officers and staff HMIC speak to should not be hand-picked by management within the force. They should instead be selected at random by HMIC.
- Police welcomed the idea of having an anonymous forum open alongside inspections, to allow for comment on the inspection and recommendations.
- Both the public and police were sceptical about the quality of forces' own monitoring and performance statistics, and instead advocated speaking with a broad range of staff in order to achieve a more honest assessment.
- Police welcomed the inspection of **partnering and collaboration** arrangements. In particular they were keen to bring to light where resources have to be shared too thinly between forces and where partners, such as social services and the NHS, may be 'overburdening' the police.
- The public and police felt that inspection teams should not be comprised only of seconded and ex-police officers, as it was felt that there is a danger of a conflict of interest.

- Both the public and the police would like to see individual senior staff being held accountable by HMIC if this would more directly address issues that had been identified in the assessment.
- Both police and the public raised concerns about who would actually read the **reports** on HMIC's website, and so disseminating report summaries via social media, and also offline, was suggested.
- The police and public felt that reports should include action plans, agreed with the force, to keep the focus on improvement.
- The views and experiences of those victims of crime interviewed as part of this study are mixed and in some cases are influenced by their expectations. Some report very positive experiences with the police which include regular, prompt and attentive engagement in the first instance, and regular updates on case progress. Others, however, have had less than satisfactory experiences, and felt that the police could show more interest, be more empathetic and **treat their case more seriously**.

# **Impressions of the police and HMIC**



## Impressions of the police and HMIC

Before examining responses to the research in detail, it is important to set the context within which the police and public were responding to the questions posed. Police staff and officers tended to emphasise the resource constraints they were working under, whereas the public tended to either be broadly sympathetic or broadly critical towards the police. Not all of those taking part in the research shared these views, but some general themes did emerge.

### Views of the general public

When discussing perceptions of the police the public tended to draw upon both their own experiences, including those of friends, colleagues, neighbours and family, as well as media reports. Opinion tended to be split between the broadly sympathetic, who felt that the police were overworked and under-resourced, and those more critical who felt that the police were lacking in integrity and competence. These two broad groups accordingly tended to place particular emphases on what they felt HMIC should inspect. Those who were more critical tended to want HMIC's inspections to uncover malpractice, whereas those who were more sympathetic prioritised the same issues that the police themselves did; how current staffing and resource limitations are affecting the service the public receive.

The sympathetic and critical views tended to be based on two broadly opposing clusters of opinions, shown below,

'Sympathetic' views	'Critical' views
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Police are trying their best but are overstretched, dealing with cutbacks and have to deal with too much red tape</li> <li>• Police <i>cannot</i> deal with anti-social behaviour (ASB), as their powers and the laws are too limited</li> <li>• Police do not have the time to take statements, or follow up on calls</li> <li>• The police are demoralised</li> <li>• There is no money to train police to work with people with mental health problems</li> <li>• The police do not have time to deal with small issues, they have to prioritise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The police cannot be trusted</li> <li>• Police <i>will not</i> deal with ASB or minor crimes</li> <li>• Police have a bullying attitude towards young, working class people, and tend to pre-judge them. Officers kill time by harassing young people between jobs</li> <li>• Police do too much revenue generation through fines</li> <li>• Police do not stop to ask questions, and are too confrontational, aggressive, and use excessive force, including with those with mental health problems</li> <li>• Police lack empathy, and are insensitive and 'hard'</li> </ul>

## Views of the police

The image of the current police set-up portrayed by frontline officers and staff was often of an undemocratic hierarchy, headed by disconnected management, who will seek to put a gloss over the realities of policing. Under these conditions, HMIC was often urged to seek the views of frontline officers and staff and to avoid official statistics, which it was felt were often misleading.

Officers in particular felt themselves to be overworked, with several complaining of long hours and rest days being cancelled for several months, impacting upon time with families.

Frontline officers and staff had different levels of awareness and understanding of HMIC, and did not all share the same attitudes towards the inspectorate. Some had never heard of the organisation, and among those that had, their attitudes ranged from deep mistrust to, at the other extreme, perceptions of HMIC as 'saviours'. Those who were mistrustful tended to feel that inspections would be used 'as a stick to beat the police with', when, it was felt, morale was already 'on the floor'.

Those more positive towards HMIC tended to see failings in their own force which they themselves felt powerless to address, and so looked to HMIC and other inspecting bodies for help. For example, one police officer had for months asked for more resources from senior management, but it was only after he got to speak with an HMIC inspector, where he explained the lack of resources, that he was provided with everything he needed to effectively carry out his duties. Compared to what is often seen as a very politicised culture within police forces, HMIC was felt by some officers and staff to offer genuine independence.

With these contextual factors highlighted, this report now explores the public and police responses to the proposed approach for the PEEL Assessments. Each of the ten consultation questions are addressed in turn.

# Views on PEEL Assessments

# 1 What do you think of the proposed approach? How could it be improved?

## Key findings

- Across the public and police there is broad approval of the proposed PEEL Assessment approach.
- The nationally representative survey of the general public reveals that three quarters (74%) of the public agree with the core principles of regular force inspections, with one in ten (9%) disagreeing.
- Methodological challenges were raised by both the police and the public, for example it would be difficult to measure the value of some police activities, such as community policing, the effects of which may be subtle yet important in bringing the community closer to the police.

## Public priorities

- The public's priorities for assessment included establishing whether frontline officers' time was being used efficiently, and whether there is adequate community policing - which is felt to contribute to both effectiveness and legitimacy.
- Whether police are sufficiently trained to work with people with mental health problems was also highlighted, with some members of the public having witnessed inappropriate treatment in the past.

## Police priorities

- The police tended to see the inspections as an opportunity for problems within their own force to be brought to light and addressed, in particular they wanted inspections to address:
  - frontline staffing and resource constraints;
  - excessive staffing and pay of senior management; and
  - lack of meritocracy within forces

## 1.1 Public views

A survey was conducted with a nationally representative sample of the public. Before asking for people's views, it described the PEEL inspections as follows:

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) is introducing a new way in which they are going to inspect police forces. This proposed programme of inspections, known as the PEEL assessments; which stands for Police Efficiency, Effectiveness and Legitimacy, will report on how well each force in England and Wales performs in the following areas:

- Providing value for money (efficiency);
- Reducing levels of crime (effectiveness); and
- Providing a service that is legitimate in the eyes of the public (legitimacy), where each force provides a service that is fair and treats people properly

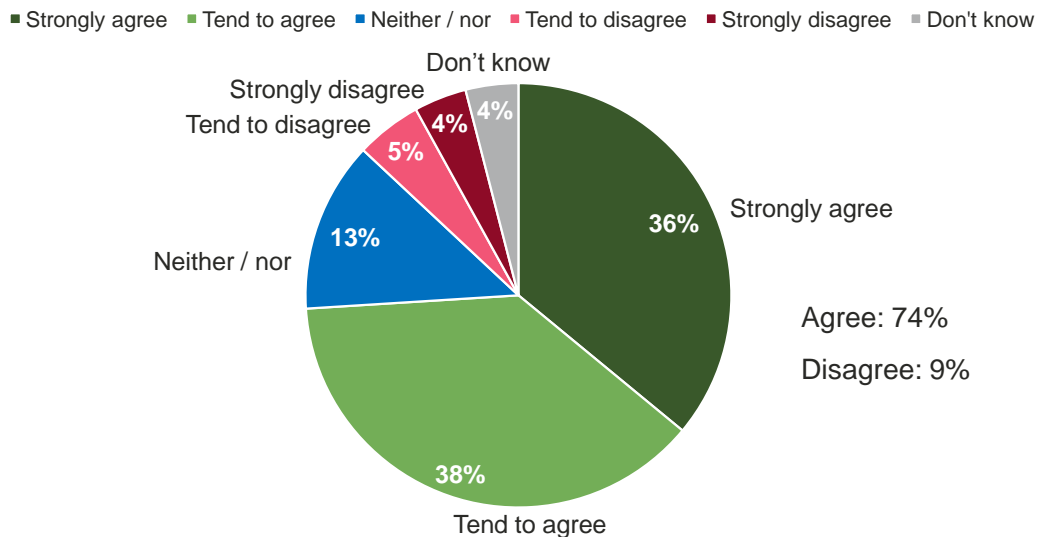
There will be two to three inspections of each police force annually. Each inspection will be followed by a published written report. These will then feed into an integrated written report published at the end of the year which assesses each force in the three inspection areas and judges whether a force is 'outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement' or is 'inadequate'.

Members of the public were then asked for their views on these 'core principles' of inspection. Overall, there was a great deal of support for the core principles of the PEEL Assessments among the general public. Three quarters (74%) of those surveyed agreed with the core principles of regular force inspections, with just one in ten (9%) disagreeing. Throughout this report 'agree' is the combination of 'tend to agree' and 'strongly agree', and 'disagree' is the combination of 'tend to disagree' and 'strongly disagree'.

It should be noted however that neither the general public taking part in the survey nor those attending the workshops were provided with a full list of all of the other scrutiny measures that the police are already under. If this information had been provided it may have been more likely that PEEL Inspections would be perceived as excessive or as adding a layer of bureaucracy. It may also be the case that positive associations with Ofsted inspections, which the public are familiar with, were a driving factor behind some reactions to the proposed approach to PEEL Assessments, although this hypothesis was not tested.

Figure 1.1 – Extent to which the public agree with the core principles of the PEEL inspection process

**Q1. To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with these core principles in the inspection of police forces in England and Wales?**



Base: 1804 members of the general public aged 15 and over in England and Wales

Source: Ipsos MORI

### 1.1.1 Efficiency

In the public workshops, questions around 'value for money in policing' led participants to centre their discussions on whether police forces were wasting money or resources. For instance, the issue of police over-attending calls with too many officers and vehicles was often highlighted as inefficient, and was suggested as an aspect of policing HMIC could examine.<sup>1</sup>

*"We had four police vans for a drunk ... If you call a plumber, you don't get four turning up!"*

Another example of inefficiency highlighted was the police being perceived to rush in, and be too keen to 'shove someone in the van' or otherwise forcefully resolve an issue, when it was thought that a short conversation would have resolved things quickly. These views stemmed from some of the public's own experiences, where their attempts to explain situations had apparently been ignored, and so situations had become much more protracted.

*"I'd had an argument with my neighbour, and the police were called. When they got there they asked me to show them which side I'd had an argument with and when I pointed, they put the cuffs on me ... they never asked me what happened."*

<sup>1</sup> Interviews with the police revealed one possible explanation for this: that the officer in charge of allocation has themselves had to go out on duty due to short staffing, meaning that attendance becomes disorganised.

*“The police like action, they don’t investigate things.”*

Some of the public felt, however, that an exploration of the financial and time pressures under which police operate would be important in order to put frontline police work into context. If police are understaffed and working under considerable stress, it was felt that their actions may well become less calm and measured and more erratic. The number of officers and staff taking time off for stress was a suggested measure of this, along amongst interviews with a sample of police officers and staff themselves.

The public were also interested in how the police raise revenue, and urged HMIC to look into this area. It was felt that the police could do more to raise revenue from policing events, such as football matches for example.

Various other suggestions of possible measures of efficiency were made, including:

- How much time in an officer’s day is spent on ‘policing’? Is the amount of frontline officers’ time spent on paperwork being minimised?
- What is the percentage of staff compared with officers? What is the proportion of frontline officers compared to all other roles?

### 1.1.2 Effectiveness

The public typically related the idea of effective policing to mean ‘doing what needs to be done’;

*“It’s about the police responding to a problem, resolving it, and then moving on to the next.”*

It was felt that the effectiveness of policing could be gauged by the proportion of crimes or Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) cases resolved out of those reported. This could include statistics on whether an officer attended, and what outcome – such as an arrest or the recovery of stolen goods – was achieved. Asking victims whether they perceive their crime to have been resolved was also suggested, to reveal whether police are meeting public expectations.

It was emphasised that effective policing requires community policing, which was seen to be vital to identify and address issues early on.

*“That way they can be pre-emptive, and prevention is better than cure.”*

Effective policing was also felt to require good relations; for example with the local Neighbourhood Watch network, who can act as ‘the eyes on the ground’. Accordingly, interviews with Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators were suggested as an aspect of assessments. The public did however raise a concern, as did the police, that actually measuring the preventative and deterrent powers of policing is

difficult, as one cannot know what would have happened in the absence of such preventative measures.

The public also wanted an explanation of why police are, as they saw it, unable or unwilling to deal effectively with ASB. ASB was a particular concern in the public workshops, as it tended to be very visible in their neighbourhoods and was sometimes very distressing. It was felt that examining whether police feel that they have the support of the courts might be revealing on this issue, as it was suspected that police have no effective legal recourse when attempting to address ASB.

Other suggested measures of police effectiveness included:

- Are police officers physically and psychologically fit to do the job?
- What are the outcomes of ASB calls? How many are attended? How many result in a sanction or arrest?

### 1.1.3 Legitimacy

Community policing was again highlighted as an important factor in policing with legitimacy.

*“Knowing the community is key; you can’t treat people properly if you don’t know what’s going on.”*

Community policing was also felt to include the police playing a part in redirecting children and young people away from crime. This emphasis on community policing should be understood in a context that the public tended to feel that police were not part of their communities, and that the police were generally distant from the public.

*“When I was younger, I was always told to find a police officer if there was trouble. I told this to my son, but now my son doesn’t know what to tell his children.”*

This lack of everyday police engagement with the community and perceived lack of ‘togetherness’ with the public was a thread of concern throughout all workshops, as was a sense that policing was more effective in the past because of a strong sense of community engagement (a view also shared by some police officers and staff).

There was, in one workshop, a strikingly negative reaction to the idea of policing with legitimacy in a way which ‘is fair and treats people properly’. This group had already lamented the police’s powerlessness to deal with ASB, and felt that the burdens placed on them to be polite and respectful had lessened their effectiveness.

*“The police have lost respect. They get spat on, but they can’t do anything, their hands are tied.”*

When combined with staffing reductions, a decline in the public's respect for the police was felt to leave the police increasingly powerless.



The word 'legitimacy' was felt to be unclear to some members of the public, who preferred words like 'fairness' or 'integrity'. As 'legitimacy' was actually presented as 'how well each force provides a service that is fair and treats people properly', members of the public naturally included an emphasis on victims and whether they are receiving the support they need and deserve. Statistics on complaints would, it was felt, also be important to examine.

There were also discussions on inappropriate police treatment of people with mental health problems. Members of the public urged HMIC to examine this, starting with ascertaining how many police officers have received training on working with people with mental health problems. Tests on whether the police know the laws around the rights of citizens were also urged by some young people who felt that they had been mistreated by police who had over-extended their powers.

Discussing fairness also led the public to request that HMIC uncover whether there is any discrimination present in the force. It was suggested that HMIC could, for example, report on the ethnicity profiles of people subject to stop and search. The ethnic and gender composition of forces was also felt to be an important indicator of whether a force is representative of the local community, an issue which, it was felt, would affect its legitimacy.

## 1.2 Police views

### 1.2.1 Efficiency

When asked about their spontaneous priorities for inspection, officers and staff often cited what they felt to be efficiency-related issues, such as whether there are too few frontline officers and staff, and too many support staff and senior staff. Another issue was whether frontline officers had to do too many administrative tasks, which was seen as inefficient practice, as their time could be better spent on traditional policing duties.

Some frontline officers felt that there are too many support staff, meaning that the force overall is inefficiently staffed. It was, however, cautioned that a reactive, over-reduction of backroom staff could in turn lead to increased inefficiency; if for example, the cutting of administrative staff results in officers spending more time doing administration.

Many officers and staff also felt that there are too many people in senior management positions and that they are being paid too much.

*"[HMIC need to] understand their role and the exact benefit they bring to the police."*

Officers and staff also spontaneously mentioned value for money (VFM) and suggested that HMIC's inspections could play a useful role in explaining what processes or initiatives had been put in place in other forces to provide VFM, as it was felt that there are always more efficient ways of doing things.

Some officers and staff felt that the current approved supplier list for equipment was needlessly expensive and wanted questions to be asked around whether prescribed

tender arrangements are providing VFM. Looking at funds tied up in underused property was also suggested, as it was felt that there are sometimes whole buildings with only one or two staff working in them. Some officers and staff also felt that there was excessive leafleting which was likely not providing VFM.

Finally, there were felt to be difficulties in trying to measure the value of community policing and the huge range of different kinds of contact police have with the public. This contact, it was felt, often led to subtle but important results, such as reassuring those who are vulnerable;

*“At what point in time can you put a figure on the police officer which goes round and says ‘I am terribly sorry to tell you that your son has died in a crash’, because that’s what we do every day or we hold someone’s hand and told them their mum has passed away...that is something you can’t put a value on.”*

### 1.2.2 Effectiveness

Officers and staff often spontaneously mentioned the issue of effectiveness when asked about their priorities for inspection. 'Effectiveness' was felt to be simply whether the public are being provided with a high quality service which is meeting their needs. On this topic, one officer highlighted ASB as an area where police do not give enough priority given how seriously it impacts on those affected. It was also thought that dealing with online crimes, such as threats made on Facebook, should also be given attention within inspections, as this was felt to be a significant and growing area of policing.

Recruitment processes, which some believed had become far less thorough and demanding in their assessment of candidates, could also be examined, as it was felt that this increased risk of employing individuals who are not sufficiently effective in their role.

### 1.2.3 Legitimacy

Officers and staff tended to associate 'legitimacy' with police acting in accordance with professional standards. It was understood to be a very important aspect of policing, although one which, it was felt by some, already receives considerable scrutiny from professional standards departments and the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC).

It was felt by some officers and staff that there was scope to assess the perceived lack of meritocracy within police forces due to 'old-boys networks'. Such networks were felt to be self-serving, rather than aimed at the public good. It was also felt that the effectiveness and efficiency of a force is damaged because if people are selected for their willingness to 'toe the party line' then reform and improvement is slowed, as the status quo is maintained.

Additionally, one suggested measure of assessing legitimacy was examining the resignations or early retirements due to misdemeanours as this could be revealing of wider cultural issues within a force.

## 2 Are there any other aspects of police work you would like to see covered by PEEL Assessments? If so, what are these?

### Key findings

- The PEEL Assessments were generally felt to adequately cover the most important aspects of policing.
- Additional suggestions from both the police and the public included:
  - staffing levels and resource constraints, as it was felt these would explain the most serious deficiencies identified within forces; and
  - police wellbeing (including physical and mental health), as this may reveal issues within the police force that would otherwise not come to light

### 2.1 Public views

As described in Chapter 1, suggestions from the public workshops all fell within the proposed assessment areas of efficiency, effectiveness and legitimacy. Chapter 2 findings therefore, reflect views from the police.

### 2.2 Police views

#### 2.2.1 Financial and staffing challenges

It was strongly felt by officers and staff that an accurate assessment of how a force is performing must acknowledge areas where cost constraints have left departments understaffed or under-resourced.

*“We’re giving the public hardly anything because we’re so under-resourced.”*

Officers and staff tended to believe that under-resourcing explained the most serious deficiencies found across police forces.

*“People can’t get through on 999 calls. A girl was bottled at a wedding and someone was calling for 40 minutes trying to get through. It’s obscene.”*

*“On Friday and Saturday we have all staff on and then a skeleton service for the rest of the week.”*

Officers and staff were clear that the staffing and resourcing constraints they are working with should be made explicit, and urged HMIC to take these into account when making a judgment.

### 2.2.2 Pressures on police

The police also felt that the public should better understand the pressures on police forces in order to bring their expectations into alignment with the realities of policing in austerity. For example, the public should know how few officers are available for a given geographical area as police officers and staff tended to feel that the public had unrealistic expectations of police numbers.

*“Sometimes we have three officers covering a population of 40,000.”*

*“We’re short staffed, but the demand doesn’t go away. We can’t provide golden service any more ... We’re patrolling with ten officers in a whole city. It takes two hours to get to a member of the public. They need the truth explained.”*

Some officers, however, cautioned against publicising this information, as criminals could make use of it.

A breakdown of the quality of 999 calls would also be informative for the public: it would also reveal the high proportion of non-emergencies and verbal abuse that contact centre staff deal with.

It was felt that surveying officers and staff on their job-related wellbeing, and on the pressures that they are facing, would be a valuable measure. Officers and staff felt that this would also allow a measure of the increased pressure police are under due to budgetary constraints, the results of which may be otherwise sometimes difficult to measure. The idea of a 'death by a thousand cuts' was sometimes behind this emphasis - there may be situations in which no single reduction or limitation impacting on an officer could be said to be severe, although the combined effect of multiple reductions or limitations is.

Another issue which was consistently felt to be impacting upon staff wellbeing was that senior management are distant and disconnected, sometimes leaving frontline staff unsure of the future of the force and the stability of their role.

*“All PCs are ignored. We’re the lowest in the pond, but we’re the ones who police.”*

*“I don’t think senior managers want to know the truth about the police....they want to make it look good, when they are not listening to their officers at all.”*

This important issue could be also included in attitudinal surveys or interviews, as it was again felt to be impacting upon the wellbeing, and ultimately the effectiveness, of the frontline.

### 3 Do you agree with the proposal to use four categories for making judgments? If not, how could it be improved?

#### Key findings

- The four-point scale of *Outstanding*, *Good*, *Requires Improvement* and *Inadequate* proposed by HMIC was met with approval from the public and the police for its simplicity and familiarity from its use by Ofsted.
- Seven in ten (70%) in the general public survey stated that they agreed with the proposed rating scale whilst one in eight (12%) disagreed.
- Concerns were, however, raised by both the police and public that labelling a force as 'inadequate' may undermine confidence in the force. Some officers felt that 'inadequate' was perfectly appropriate to use though, and would use the term to describe some current aspects of policing within their own force.

#### 3.1 Public views

Across the wider general public there is broad agreement with the proposal of using the four proposed assessment categories.<sup>2</sup> Seven in ten (70%) stated that they agreed with the proposal whilst one in eight (12%) disagreed.

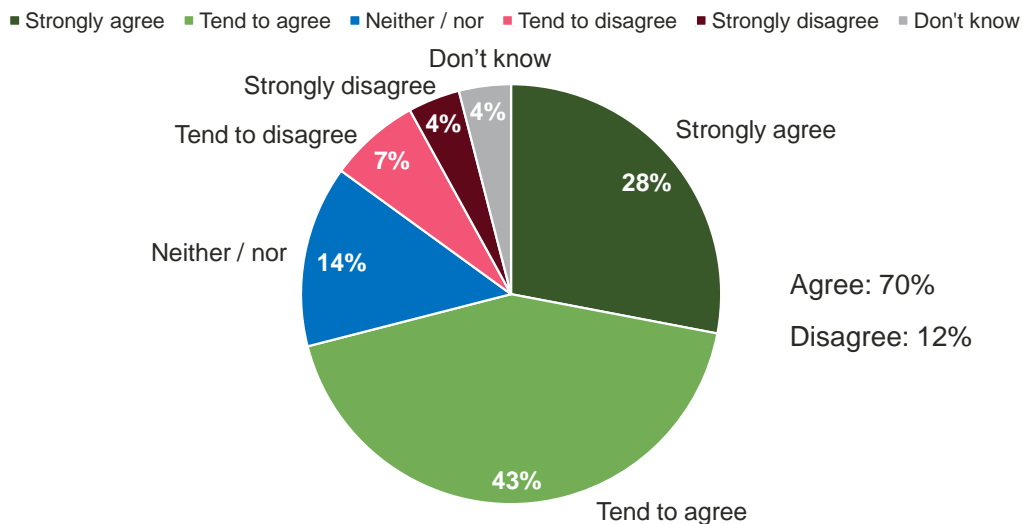
Comparing people's previous answers, those who had already agreed with the core principles of the inspections were more likely to agree with the use of the four categories (82% vs 37% of those who had disagreed with the core principles).

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<sup>2</sup> Based on a nationally representative survey of 1804 members of the public aged 15 and over.

Figure 3.1 – Public views on the proposed four categories of judgment of their local police force

**Q3. To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the proposal to use these four categories for making judgments about your local police force?**



Base: 1804 members of the general public aged 15 and over in England and Wales

Source: Ipsos MORI

Within the public workshops there was broad approval of the simple, Ofsted-style judgments. It was emphasised that judgments should have clear descriptors associated with them, so that the public know exactly why a force is 'good'. 'Inadequate' was, however, felt to be quite a static term, compared to something like 'requires urgent attention', and it was believed that being termed as such would be damaging for a force's reputation.

It was also thought to be potentially unfair to label a whole force if the judgment is due to the actions of a few individuals, a notion which reflected the public's overall desire for individuals to be held to account rather than deficiencies being blamed on vague 'organisational failures' which gloss over individual accountability.

### 3.2 Police views

Officers tended to agree with the four-category approach to judgments, finding them clear and to the point. It was commented that improvements can be made even to 'outstanding' forces, and it should be important that they do not feel that they can 'rest on their laurels'.

Some felt that the proposed scale was too polarising and instead suggested that a star rating would be preferable as it would function as a sliding scale. It was also urged that each judgment should have specific standards attached to it, and subjectivity in making judgments should be minimised to ensure that judgments are transparent and intelligible.

Concerns were raised that where a force receives a judgment of 'inadequate', this could lead to a loss of trust by the public, further worsening policing conditions – a concern also raised by the public. There was also a concern that partner organisations would also lose confidence in the force, leading to weaker partnership working. Others felt however that if an aspect of policing is inadequate, it is good to recognise this in order that improvements can be targeted in this area. Some officers reflected that areas within their own force were inadequate, and this should not be 'brushed under the carpet'.

## 4 Do you agree with the proposed approach to those forces that receive a judgment of inadequate? How could it be improved?

### Key findings

- HMIC's proposed approach to forces that have received a judgment of inadequate was typically felt to be appropriate by both the public and the police, and it largely met expectations.
- Across the general public survey, two thirds (67%) of the public agree with the proposed approach to those forces that receive a judgment of inadequate, whilst one in ten disagree (11%).
- There was some concern noted from both the police and the public participating in the workshops that the approach should remain focused on improvement, and should seek to avoid 'politicising' practical issues, as was felt may be the case if matters are subsequently raised with the PCC or the Home Secretary.

Participants were shown the following information when asked to what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the proposed approach to those forces that receive a judgment of inadequate? *"HMIC is an independent organisation made up of inspectors who hold warrants from the Queen. It can make recommendations to police forces about how to improve the service they deliver to the public, but it is not able to force them to follow these.*

*If a force is judged as inadequate against one or more of the themes, it will automatically be placed under formal review and progress on resolving the problems will be monitored closely by the relevant inspector.*

*Follow-up inspection work (and publication of the findings) might follow, even before the force is visited again as part of the next round of routine inspections.*

*Failure to make the necessary improvements would lead to escalation to the local Police and Crime Commissioner (they oversee your local police force and you elect them every four years) and, ultimately, referral to the Home Secretary."*

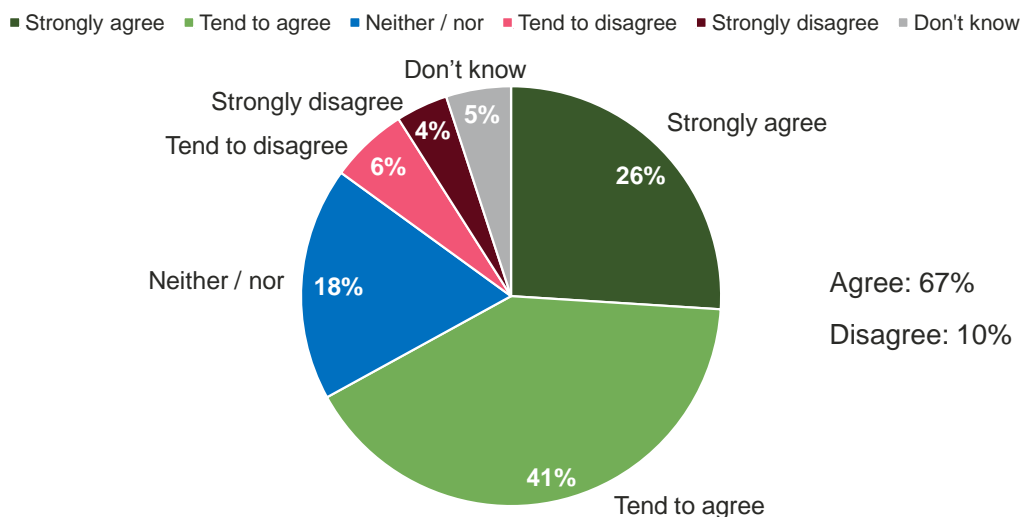


#### 4.1 Public views

Two thirds (67%) of the public agree with the proposed approach to those forces that receive a judgment of 'inadequate' and one in ten disagree (11%).<sup>3</sup> A larger percentage selected 'neither agree nor disagree' than for previous questions (18%). This may reflect views expressed in the workshops with the general public, where there were some doubts about whether the process would lead to changes in policing standards locally.

Figure 4.1 – Public views on the proposed approach to those forces that receive a judgment of inadequate

**Q4. To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the proposed approach to those forces that receive a judgment of inadequate?**



Base: 1804 members of the general public aged 15 and over in England and Wales

Source: Ipsos MORI

HMIC's proposed approach was generally approved of by the public participating in the workshops. Some groups were, however, disappointed that HMIC was not able to have more power over enforcing the recommendations.

There was a concern - also raised by the police - that what had previously been a rigorous, improvement-orientated process on HMIC's side, would become diluted and politicised as it was moved up to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) or Home Secretary. The public preferred that power should be in the hands of an independent body, as there was distrust of the PCCs (who, it was felt, were probably aligned with the police). The Home Secretary was also felt to be primarily motivated by political concerns, and likely too close to individual PCCs and/or chief constables. There was often low awareness that PCCs were elected; participants at the workshops had generally not taken part in voting for their local PCC and did not feel that PCCs represented their communities.

<sup>3</sup> Based on a nationally representative survey of 1804 members of the public aged 15 and over.

## 4.2 Police views

There was broad agreement with HMIC's proposed approach to underperforming forces. Officers and staff sought a 'supportive action plan' from HMIC, whereby problems are discussed with the force and workable solutions are found. Recommendations are requested to be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely), and timescales should be agreed upon, and then strictly kept to.

## 5 Is there anything else that we should include in our recommendations to ensure that they lead to improvement?

### Key findings

- Both the public and the police would like to see individual senior staff being held accountable if this would more directly address issues that had come up in the assessment.

### 5.1 Public views

The public felt that firing ineffective staff would reassure the public that clear steps are being taken to improve policing. Pay cuts for underperforming managers was also suggested. These suggestions reflect the public's often jaded view of the establishment; in which it appears that those culpable are rarely held responsible, and if they are, they then receive a large pay off.

### 5.2 Police views

Similarly to the public, staff and officers were interested in whether HMIC will seek to identify weak management or even weak individual managers, which, if present, would be the most effective target of recommendations. There was also a perception that senior management tend not to stay in their role for long. This raised the concern that recommendations would not be implemented after the person responsible leaves their post.

Additionally, respondents enquired whether any further funding would be made available for recommendations to be implemented, because, as mentioned, officers and staff often predicted that deficiencies may well be due to budgetary constraints.

## 6 Do you have any comments on our proposed approach to inspecting partnership and collaboration arrangements?

### Key findings

- The police welcomed HMIC's proposed approach to the inspection of partnering and collaboration arrangements.
- The police suggested that HMIC inspect whether:
  - resources are having to be shared too thinly between forces; and
  - other partners, such as social services and the NHS, are 'overburdening' the police.

### 6.1 Public views

This question was not asked of the public, as it was felt important to prioritise more familiar issues, given the time constraints within the workshops.

### 6.2 Police views

There was general approval of HMIC's proposed approach to inspecting a force's partnerships with other organisations and collaboration with other police forces.

Some concerns around partnership and collaboration were mentioned as possible areas for HMIC to examine:

- One perceived issue is that when police forces collaborate by sharing resources, there is the danger of spreading resources too thinly, which ultimately harms the service the public receive. This is particularly the case if one force tends to have a much greater incidence of crime, and so resources become effectively unavailable to other collaborating forces.

*"It can look good on paper, but the practicalities of sharing can actually be less efficient."*

- It was also felt that partnership arrangements can be unbalanced, for example hospitals, social services and other partners often, it was felt, prefer to - or need to - delegate to the police rather than deal with issues themselves.

*“Partners are being cut, but it’s the police who have to pick up all the pieces.”*

*“Where does the boundary of police officers stop, and pass over to social services? For example, we deal with vulnerable children, but we’re not appropriately skilled to do that. Social workers will manipulate the systems, by passing things over at 5pm to us, and we can’t ignore it because of our duty of care ... NHS staff also know different trigger words to ensure attendance.”*

- There are clear concerns around officers’ time being taken away from traditional, or ‘genuine’, policing. Working with people with mental health problems and acting as building security were cited as examples of time-consuming work which was not felt to be primarily a police task.

*“I come into work, and end up spending a lot of time dealing with mental health, but joined the police to fight crime. It should be more set in stone what we should be doing.”*

*“We’ve had to sit with someone at a hospital for 6 hours, just acting as security. It was a waste of time.”*

*“I think the general public don’t know that we sit with mental health patients for up to 12 hours at a time...that cannot be a good use of our resources...I think the general public need to know that.”*

It was felt that HMIC should bring out these issues where present, again by attitudinal surveys, group discussions and interviews. It was also emphasised that reporting and recommendations should take into account deficiencies by partners, if present, where this is ultimately impacting on the quality of policing provided to the public.

## 7 Do you have any comments on our proposed approach to gathering evidence?

### Key findings

- Both the police and the public were in favour of HMIC's proposed approach to gathering evidence, and often spontaneously suggested similar measures.
- Unannounced visits and even 'mystery shopping' were advocated by both the public and the police.
- It was felt by the police that the presence of an HMIC inspector at briefings would change how they are conducted, and so would not provide a realistic picture.
- Both the police and public were sceptical about the quality of the force's own statistics, and instead advocated speaking with a broad range of staff, with a preference for the frontline, as they are most in touch with the day-to-day realities of policing.

### 7.1 Public views

The public questioned the value of any announced visits and went so far as to advocate undercover inspecting. 'Mystery shopping' was suggested by both the public and the police; this would involve acting as a victim, say, in order to see what kind of service they receive. Using what was seen as more objective sources such as police camera footage from body cameras and CCTV, and tapes of police interviews was also preferred. The police too suggested this on the grounds that it is a reliable source, which, if selected randomly, would provide an objective and transparent source of information.

Going out with police on 999 calls was felt to be essential as this is perceived to be where policing is most challenging, and it was imagined that inspectors could watch from the vehicle to avoid getting in the way of officers.

Speaking with partners, local councillors and Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators were also mentioned as people who would likely have important views on local force effectiveness.

The validity of statistics was questioned, and issues such as the reclassification of crimes were brought up, although there was not the strength of scepticism found within the police (discussed below). There was an alternative view that performance

measurement targets are useful for encouraging targeted working, on the basis that ‘what gets measured gets done’, a view which presents a different kind of scepticism regarding how performance management affects policing.

## 7.2 Police views

### 7.2.1 Proposed approach

There was broad agreement with HMIC’s proposed approach to gathering evidence. The emphasis on talking with frontline officers and staff was strongly approved of on the grounds that those on the frontline see the day-to-day reality of policing.

*“It’s about spending time with people who are doing the job, and getting their full and frank views.”*

Checking how incidents and crimes are investigated through looking at records and case files was felt to be valuable, but talking to the officer involved would add further insight, as it may reveal the wider context or particular issues which are not detailed in the records.

It was noted that it was not clear if the opinions of those going through the criminal justice system, including detainees, would have their opinion heard. Some officers and staff emphasised that missing out their experiences will only provide a partial perspective of policing.

### 7.2.2 Observation and talking to officers and staff

Observing officers and staff at work whilst asking questions was felt to be a good way for inspectors to get an honest reflection of what happens on a day-to-day basis. There was consensus, however, that a random selection of staff should be made, otherwise it was feared that management would hand-pick individuals who (uncritically) ‘toe the party line’. Alternatively, management may select those who work in well-resourced and well-staffed departments, who do not face the resource constraints which affect, it was believed, the majority of frontline officers and staff.

Visiting at only peak times, when the force is at its most stretched, is also essential to understand the challenges being faced. It was proposed that this need not take away from police time as it could be done on breaks or before or after officers go out on a night shift.

To observe 999 calls, officers felt it would be appropriate for HMIC to drive around with a police radio to hear and observe officers’ work from a distance. Others felt that it would be worth inspectors actually attending 999 calls with them in order to understand the conditions police are working in:

*“I am disappointed they won’t come to 999 calls....we had TV crews with us and they didn’t get in the way..... I think it would be good for them to see what it is like attending a grade one incident with comms talking at you, with them giving you all this information with just one police officer going to a job.”*

Others however cautioned that this should be at the officer's discretion, in case they felt that it was too risky.

Qualitative and observational methods were generally preferred over statistics as, even if the statistics are accurate, they are not felt to genuinely show 'how the police are policing', as they are too abstract and the causal relationships are too hard to establish.

### 7.2.3 Unannounced inspections

That inspections be unannounced was consistently and strongly felt to be key to their validity. It was thought that any foreknowledge would lead to preparation for the inspection in the intervening time. This preparation would not only take time away from policing duties, it would likely present an artificially positive picture, particularly of staffing levels and resources.

*"We'll spend our life preparing for the next inspection."*

*"If HMIC give us notice, everything will be in place when you come, all the pictures will be straightened."*

Generally it was noted that the presence of an inspector will affect the behaviour of police, and it will be altered in a way which may not reflect normal day-to-day behaviour. Thus any opportunity to inspect without it being known about, perhaps by looking at past records, or covertly listening to calls or police radios, was recommended.

### 7.2.4 Mystery shopping

Some police and members of the public spontaneously suggested 'mystery shopping' as a way of inspecting without the subject knowing they are being inspected. As long as the process is effective in ultimately improving the service, it was argued that it would not be a waste of police time. Individual staff could also receive feedback on what the mystery shopping had revealed, and given the opportunity to make improvements.

Some officers and staff also felt that inspectors acting as a colleague would be a revealing exercise. These suggestions were not, however, tested with all interviewees, nor were the ethical arguments for and against mystery shopping examined in detail.

### 7.2.5 Criticism of internally recorded statistics

It was consistently felt by officers and staff that where performance is judged on data, that data will be altered to suggest better performance. Altering or otherwise mis-recording data was often perceived to be standard practice, with pressure to do so coming from higher up the force. This manipulation of data was felt to prevent a police force from responding to the needs of citizens as it hides the true picture of local crime and policing.



*“The books are cooked. If we have two months with a lot of burglaries, they stop recording them.”*

*“Don’t look at our statistics. They’re a load of rubbish.”*

The alternative view, voiced by some, was that all efforts are being made to record crimes accurately, and that the culture of mis-recording had ended.

*“Police get pilloried in the press for how we record statistics, but in [the field I work in] I see good work.”*

*“We’re meticulous in recording crime. The other day we had someone walk along a street and they scratched 13 cars, well we recorded that as 13 crimes.”*

One approach may be for HMIC to conduct a preliminary assessment of the validity of internal crime statistics. This could be done in part via interviews with the frontline, who, it was felt, are less likely than more senior staff to have a vested interest in maintaining a system of manipulated statistics. If these interviews suggest that the data is valid, it can be used to help assess a force’s effectiveness and efficiency. If, however, there are doubts about the validity of recorded data, any judgment of the force based on its statistics should be publically put on hold, pending improvements in data recording.

One suggested way of revealing if records are being adjusted to meet targets would be to compare what people have been arrested for, what they were charged with, and what this was recorded as. Other suggestions mention examination of historical data;

*“Historical data is harder to fiddle with. And the audit trail is set in stone, already inputted in the system. Audits will also show when something was last amended; if it was done the day before an inspection you’ve got an issue.”*

There is also the problem of procedure being manipulated to produce favourable data; one member of communications room staff explained that as all calls had to be answered within 30 seconds, they would sometimes drop a call - without getting enough information to provide to officers on the ground - in order to answer another in time.

Finally, some advocated moving away altogether from measuring performance on self-recorded statistics on the grounds that if data is used to measure performance, it quickly becomes manipulated to suggest improved performance. Qualitative and observational methods of assessing forces were accordingly given preference.

*“[Our force is] moving away from a focus on figures, which is good. We don’t want them to return to that, because they’ll just cook the books.”*

*“We work in a target-driven culture, where we re-classify crimes.  
There is no ethical recording of crimes.”*

It was predicted that once data is no longer tied to performance targets it would be of more use in determining where resources should be targeted.

## 8 Do you have any comments on our proposed approach to gathering information from victims?

### Key findings

- There was strong agreement amongst both the public and the police with HMIC's emphasis upon gathering the views of victims, as their experiences were seen as central to understanding the quality of local policing.
- Around nine in ten of the general public surveyed (88%) say it is important for the views of victims of crime be included in the inspection of their local police force.
- Within the police interviews various methodological suggestions were made regarding how HMIC should ensure a representative sample of victims.
- Both the public and the police suggested that the views and experiences of offenders and accused persons should be included within HMIC's assessments, with the public often drawing upon their own experiences of what they saw as poor treatment by the police.
- Victims of crime have mixed experiences of engaging with the police about their crime. Whilst the many were happy with the overall service they received from the police, some did feel that the police could have put more effort into resolving the incident.

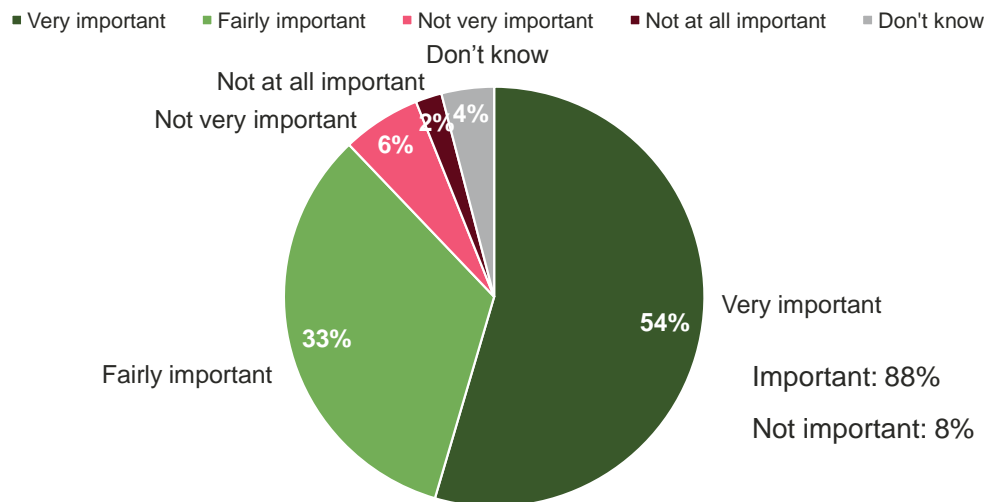
### 8.1 Public views

Around nine in ten of the public (88%) say it is 'very' or 'fairly' important for the views of victims of crime be included in the inspection of their local police force, with over half saying it is 'very important' (54%).<sup>4</sup> This reflects the similarly strong opinions found in the public workshops. Just one in twelve (8%) say that it is 'not very' or 'not at all' important.

<sup>4</sup> Based on a nationally representative survey of 1,804 members of the public aged 15 and over.

Figure 8.1 – Importance of the views of victims of crime being included as a part of the inspection of their own local force

**Q5. How important, if at all, do you feel it is that the views of victims of crime are included as part of the inspection of your local police force?**



Base: 1804 members of the general public aged 15 and over in England and Wales

Source: Ipsos MORI

Within the public workshops there was broad approval with HMIC's emphasis on victims. Some methodological concerns were however raised about ensuring a range of victims are included, rather than those with particularly positive or negative feelings, who would be most likely to self-select for research. It was also felt by some that interviews, rather than surveys, would be most revealing and would capture the detail required to understand the victim experience, and would also allow victims to fully explain their story.

Capturing the views of offenders and suspects was also felt to be essential by some members of the public, as these people were felt to be 'on the receiving end' of policing in an importantly different way from victims. Several members of the public attending the workshops had themselves suffered what they felt was police maltreatment or brutality, and were clear that their stories should be heard.

## 8.2 Police views

Officers and staff felt that the views of victims were vital to include, as the experience of the victim was felt to have rightfully become a priority in modern policing.

*"The victim's got to be the most important....and most reliable is probably the victim; the person who has the contact."*

*"At end of the day that is all that matters; that victim, that person who has phoned up and said I have been burgled, we want to look after them to the best of our ability."*

Like the public, the police did, however, highlight the methodological challenge of participants self-selecting for research. It was also suggested that victims' stories should be linked to a crime reference number, so that officers have the chance to explain their perspective.

There was also a challenge, particular to victims, highlighted by officers and staff, which was the possibility that the victim will have negative associations with the police because almost *all* of their associations are negative regarding the particular incident they went through. Similarly it was suggested that some victims may have negative views of the police because the courts did not decide in the victim's favour, even though this is not directly related to how the police dealt with their case. Likewise, victims' views of the police may be swayed by their treatment by the Crown Prosecution Service or even Victim Support.

Other issues included victim confidentiality, and the difficulty of ensuring that the victim understands that they are talking to HMIC as opposed to one of any number of other agencies they may have been contacted by. Finally, the ethical issue and risk of potentially re-traumatising victims by asking them to re-live their experience was highlighted.

### 8.2.1 Gathering public opinion

On the matter of gathering public opinion on the police, one interviewee suggested that HMIC could consider adopting an approach used by companies who conduct market research via email or text surveys, after a member of the public has had contact with a company representative.

There are also large numbers of the public who have interacted with the police but are not victims of crime.

*“The majority of policing is looking after vulnerable people....it might be someone calling up and saying I woke up next to my husband and he's dead.”*

It was felt that these kinds of interactions were missed out on in the current proposed approach to gathering evidence.

Finally, there is also the issue of people living chaotic lives, or suffering from mental illness, who will have had a high number of interactions with the police. Whilst these people's experiences should be included, it was felt important that HMIC recognise that they will likely not be representative of the public's experiences of the police more generally.

## 8.3 Victims' views

### 8.3.1 Communication

Victims had mixed views about how the police communicated with them. For many this was an area where the police could improve the way they deal with victims of

crime. In particular this centred on showing greater interest, care and empathy towards the victim. Many victims were disappointed overall by the service they received from the police. Victims often felt that the police gave the impression that they did not take the incident very seriously. This became apparent to victims who felt that the police officers were 'going through the motions' and did not show enough empathy towards the victim. Other officers were seen to be dismissive of the incident and gave the impression that the victim should not have reported the crime to the police.

*In my eyes they just looked at it as another complaint. They just dealt with it in their own way. I was really let down - I expected them to come back to say they had spoken to the person and it wouldn't happen again and that I could call them if anything did happen - but they never came back to me at all.*

Some, however, did report more positive experiences. These victims often had lower expectations about what the police could deliver, mentioning that the police did all they could. Some highlighted that the personal conduct of the police was good. This came across by the police taking the time to show interest, having clear and consistent lines of communication and keeping them informed throughout the process of the case.

*Very good. I felt that they listened to what I had to say. The man who came was good and was interested - it wasn't just routine thing for him, he was interested in what I was saying. He kept me informed and told off the people who needed it.*

### 8.3.2 Crime prevention advice

Victims of crime did not typically report that the police gave them advice about becoming less likely to be a victim of crime. Those who did noted that the advice tended to be practical, including suggestions such as securing premises, fitting alarms and being more vigilant in certain situations. While some said that they were simple and occasionally obvious things, most felt that it was useful to have the advice reaffirmed.

Victims of anti-social behaviour had mixed views about the service they were given. Some felt that the police could have been more proactive and responsive in tackling re-offending, while others felt secure that the police had done all they could and were on hand if they experienced anti-social behaviour again.

### 8.3.3 Victims' perspectives on Police effectiveness

Victims tended to feel that the police did not show sufficient levels of interest in their case, partly due to the way they engaged with the police when they first reported the crime. This was also reflected by a perception that the police were not proactive or efficient enough at dealing with their incident.

It should be noted that some of these perceptions reflect an unresolved outcome to the case.

## 9 What else should we consider doing to make the PEEL Assessments as fair as they can be?

### Key findings

- Across the general public surveyed three quarters (77%) thought that the proposed approach to local police forces is fair.
- The public workshops did reveal some scepticism from the public about:
  - whether the inspection process would actually lead to any improvements; and
  - HMIC's inspection teams being comprised of ex-police officers.
- To ensure fair inspections, the police emphasised that:
  - talking to a wide range of officers and staff was vital to capturing the diversity of experiences and views within a force;
  - the inspection process should also be based on openly known criteria so that judgments are transparent; and
  - reports should be balanced, and should not merely list the deficiencies of a force.
- Officers and staff also emphasised that HMIC needs to make judgments based on a consistent set of criteria across forces. However, in tension with this, issues were raised about trying to compare and rank disparate kinds of forces, such as rural and inner-city forces.
- HMIC's suggestion of offering a forum for staff as inspections are ongoing was keenly welcomed, although officers and staff emphasised that they would only use it if their anonymity was guaranteed.

### 9.1 Public views

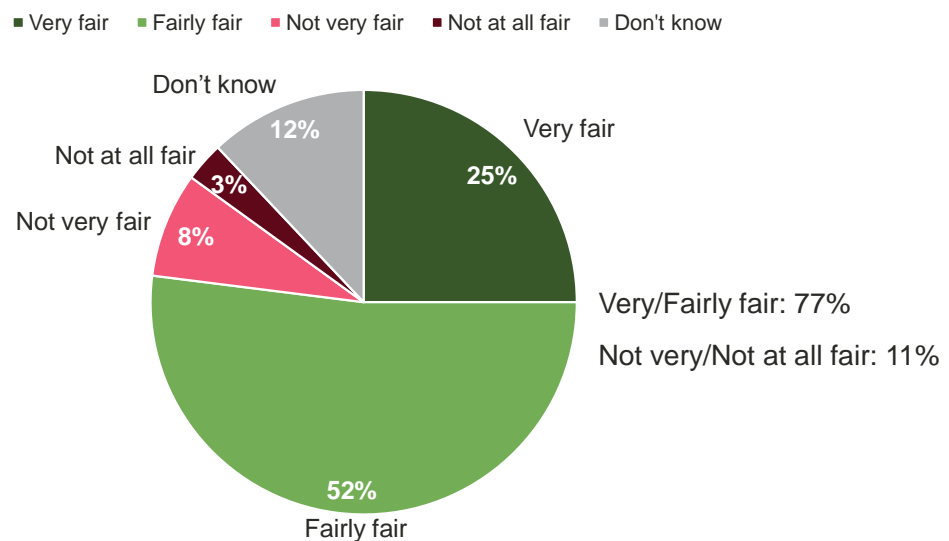
Three quarters of the general public (77%) considered the proposed approach to local police forces as fair, whilst, one in ten (11%) felt it either not very or not at all fair.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Based on a nationally representative survey of 1804 members of the public aged 15 and over.

Those who had already agreed with the core principles of the inspection of police forces in England and Wales were more likely to think that the proposed approach was very or fairly fair than those who had disagreed with the core principles (86% vs 56%).

Figure 9.1 – Perceptions of fairness towards the proposed approach.

**Q2. How fair, it at all, do you feel that the proposed approach to local police force inspections is going to be?**



Base: 1804 members of the general public aged 15 and over in England and Wales

Source: Ipsos MORI

### 9.1.1 Trust in HMIC

Among the public in the workshops, there was scepticism around certain aspects of the PEEL Assessments. In particular the public were sceptical about the police being inspected by ex-police officers, as it was felt that this would give rise to inevitable conflicts of interest. It was, however, thought that ex-police officers would at least know what to look for. A solution, from both the police and the public, was that the HMIC inspection team be comprised of a mixture of backgrounds, and that care is taken to ensure that any ex-police officers are not inspecting ex-colleagues, or have any other conflicts of interest.

The issue of ensuring 'buy-in' from staff by inspectors avoiding targeting individuals was also mentioned in the workshops;

*"It's important that the police know it's not a witch hunt, otherwise they won't embrace it, and they won't open up."*

This approach is again in tension with the public's emphasis on holding individuals to account for their failings, although these comments tended to be largely, although not exclusively, aimed at senior staff rather than the frontline.

It was felt that inspection teams should include representatives of the public, for example local Neighbourhood Watch teams, who understand local concerns and who



would play an analogous role to school governors in holding the police force to account.

Ultimately it was felt that the public need to see that the PEEL Assessment process is working to improve policing before they can put their trust in it. More visible policing and less ASB and crime in the local area were felt to be obvious measures which would indicate improvements in local policing.

## 9.2 Police views

### 9.2.1 Inspecting fairly

To be seen as fair, the inspection process should be open and inclusive;

- To be open, HMIC should inspect to set criteria which are publically available; and
- To be inclusive, the inspections should seek to engage staff at all levels, not just during the inspection process, but also at the recommendations stage.

This will ensure that recommendations have ‘buy-in’ from all levels, particularly the frontline who, it was felt, often are the ones having to implement new policy and practice.

Speaking to a full range of officers and staff, selected randomly so that no-one feels they are being singled out, will help inspections to be seen as fair. Also talking to officers and staff in groups rather than one-on-one would also relieve the potential stress of being singled out. This said, one-to-one interviews were valued for the opportunity for full individual candour. Finally, it was suggested, inspectors should be personable, and not give the impression that they are trying to ‘catch people out’.

### 9.2.2 Acknowledging the differences between forces

Officers and staff urged that only similar forces be compared. Some pointed out the risks inherent in attempting to compare forces with very different policing priorities, demands and resources, such as those operating in rural areas compared with large cities. Attempting to import ‘best practice’ would also require taking into account the differences between forces. Concerns were also raised about forces being ranked, which, it was felt, would lead to unnecessary competitiveness and may even harm cooperation between forces.

It will be important that a positive judgment from HMIC is aligned with local policing priorities. If, for example, a priority policing area is theft of livestock, HMIC’s judgment should reflect the extent to which that force is meeting this priority. This will avoid placing forces in the dilemma of having to either address the real priorities or to focus on other areas in order to receive an ‘outstanding’ judgment from HMIC.

These concerns are in apparent tension with the emphasis on a consistent judgment criteria and reconciling these issues presents another methodological challenge for HMIC.

### 9.2.3 A forum for comment

Police officers and staff were asked if they would like the opportunity to give their opinion on the force or their thoughts on the inspection process during an inspection, even if their own work was not being inspected. This was a popular, inclusive idea which it was felt would give all officers and staff the opportunity to take part in the PEEL Assessment, and would allow them to raise important issues.

Officers and staff emphasised that any way of commenting must have the option to be anonymous. Several officers and staff emphasised that they would need a lot of reassurance that their anonymity would be maintained before they would use such a forum or survey. It was suggested that the survey not be administered internally or connected to the force's internal intranets, although officers and staff did not object to the forum or survey being administered by HMIC.

### 9.2.4 Balanced reporting

Reporting both the good and the bad was felt to be key to ensuring that HMIC reports are perceived as fair. On this issue, officers singled out a particular part of the consultation document which suggests that reporting will be focused on negative aspects:

*“Our reports will be presented in various formats in order to meet the range of needs of these different audiences. These will include:*

- a report summarising the principal deficiencies across all forces”*

Furthermore, additional reporting on the good aspects of the force should not merely be used to ‘bookend’ what is largely a critical report; if there is in reality an equal mix of good and bad practice.

### 9.2.5 Inclusive reporting

At the reporting stage, it was felt to be important that the police force gets to hear the criticisms against them, and be given the opportunity to explain what they will do to address these, or to assent to an agreed plan with HMIC. Without the inclusion of a plan for improvement, the reports may be disparaging not just for the police but also, as was pointed out in workshops, for the public. At the same time, it should be ensured that there is no question of forces skewing or censoring HMIC’s reports. For HMIC to reconcile its independence from the police with the request for close working with the force presents another challenge for the inspectorate.

Police officers and staff were also concerned that the PEEL Assessments would be conducted and reported in such a way that ‘went over the heads’ of frontline officers and staff. For example, it was feared that HMIC will report to senior staff, who will then pass down diktats to frontline staff,

*“It’ll come down to all the chief constables wanting [their force to be ranked highest], and then it’ll be pressure, all the way down. Unnecessary pressure, because we’re already doing our job to the best of ability, and it will only focus on appearances.”*

It would be preferable it was felt, for officers and staff to be included in the reporting and judgment process. This could be done through briefings aimed to address issues that have been identified.

*“We’re sick of reading reports, dialogue is more efficient ... Bobbies are always having brainwaves on how to improve things.”*

This ‘buy-in’ from frontline staff and officers will ensure that action plans are realistic and are implemented effectively.

#### 9.2.6 Will inspections be valid?

There was scepticism around whether HMIC’s inspections could ever provide more than a ‘snapshot’ of a force, and so, given this, the expense of holding two to three inspections a year was flagged up as a concern.

The issue of ex-police officers inspecting police officers was also scrutinised. This was partly because of the issue of conflicts of interest, but also because it was felt that perspectives from outside of the police are important to include. This would bring in other relevant expertise, and would avoid the possible issue of institutionalised viewpoints and assumptions.

*“I’d like to see fewer ex-senior officers in HMIC and more ex-businessmen, who understand about saving money. You need to avoid the police bubble, where there’s always enough money for overtime.”*

## 10 Do you have any comments on our proposed approach to reporting to the public?

### Key findings

- There was a positive response from the public, who were shown mock-up reports, which were felt to be clear, and the possibility of 'drilling down' for more explanation was felt to be potentially very interesting.
- Both police and public raised concerns about who would read the reports on HMIC's website, and so disseminating report summaries via social media, among other channels, was suggested.
- It was also highlighted that not everyone is online, and so reports should also be provided in other, accessible formats.
- Both police and public urged that action plans should be included in reports, with specific actions, to keep the focus on improvement.

### 10.1 Public views

The public were positive about HMIC's proposed approach to reporting. They were shown a mock-up of the report which they found clear and easy to understand. They thought it was particularly important to be able to access the more detailed information on particular issues they were interested in.

The public also felt that HMIC's recommendations should be included in reports;

*"Another box should include recommendations, not 'This is a problem, but let's just leave it there'."*

There was, however, some disappointment as it dawned on participants at the workshops that it was unlikely that people would go onto HMIC's website to find such a report. In terms of disseminating the report, linking the report to property websites, such as Zoopla, was suggested so that people can be informed about local policing in the area they plan to move to. Using Facebook and Twitter, from HMIC, but also from each force publicising its own results, was also suggested. Members of the public in North Wales stated that the reporting should also be available in a Welsh translation.

Officers, staff, and the public emphasised that not everyone has internet access and that efforts should be made to report offline, such as by:

- Pages or pull-outs in local newspapers;
- In the Neighbourhood Watch newsletter;
- Police forces explaining the HMIC report on their force through local Police and Communities Together (PACT) meetings; and
- Reports placed in local police stations, libraries, and community centres.

Overall, discussions with the public suggested that there was appetite for hearing about results of PEEL Assessments, as long as this was presented in an engaging, accessible, and forward-looking way.

## 10.2 Police views

Officers and staff emphasised that where reports highlight problems, the action plan for improvements should also be presented alongside. This will communicate that specific improvements are being implemented, and will avoid conveying a platitudinous 'lessons have been learnt' attitude.

Serious doubts were however raised about who in the public would read HMIC's reports, although officers were keen that efforts be made to publicise the material among a wider readership, including the public but also frontline officers and staff.

One idea to disseminate the report was for officers and staff to be emailed a three-minute video summary from one of HMIC's inspectors – this was felt to be effective for communicating with frontline staff who may receive hundreds of emails a day, and may be disinclined to read through blocks of text.

# Methodology

# Ipsos MORI Methodology

The following research methodologies were used with each audience.

## Police interviews

Interviews, lasting between 30 and 60 minutes, were conducted with individual frontline police officers and staff across five different police forces. Interviews were conducted between 26 August and 3 September 2014. Frontline officers included constables, police community support officers and sergeants. Frontline staff included control room staff, crime scene investigators, call operators and detention officers, among others.

Interviews were arranged by police forces and were held in police stations and headquarters. Overall, 67 individuals were interviewed, comprised of 38 officers, 14 PCSOs and 15 staff, reflecting approximately the relative staffing numbers on the frontline. The participating forces were selected for their geographical spread and diversity of policing priorities.

Interviewees were asked about their overall views on inspections and for their spontaneous priorities for inspection. These were then shown descriptions of the PEEL Assessments and were asked to feed back their thoughts.

## Public workshops

Five public workshops, each lasting two and half hours, were held over the evenings between 19 and 27 August 2014. Participants were recruited to reflect the local demographics of each area, and included a mix by gender, ethnicity, age, and socio-economic group. Participants were also recruited on the basis of having an interest in local police performance, and small businesses and sole traders were also represented. At least five people who had been victims of crime<sup>6</sup> within the last two years were also recruited to take part in each workshop.

Workshops were held in the areas policed by each force that we consulted on – a total of 88 members of the public took part in the workshops.

Workshop participants were first asked about their thoughts on local policing, and then an overview of the PEEL Assessment approach was presented. Participants were then asked to provide their spontaneous priorities for inspection. The rest of the workshop involved examining aspects of HMIC's proposed approach allowing the public the opportunity for critical engagement with the PEEL Assessment process.

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<sup>6</sup> Specifically anti-social behaviour, burglary of the home or dwelling, or assault in a public place.

### Nationally representative public omnibus survey

Ipsos MORI interviewed 1,804 members of the general public aged 15 and over in England and Wales using a face-to-face omnibus survey, called 'Capibus', about their perceptions of the proposed PEEL Assessments. Data were weighted to reflect the general public population of England and Wales.

Capibus uses a unique and rigorous sampling method - a form of random location sampling, using a control method applied to field region and sub-region over a robust number of sample points (typically 170-190) to ensure we get a good geographical spread. We then set our interviewer quotas for sex, age, working status and tenure to ensure our sample is nationally representative - we use the CACI ACORN geo-demographic system in the selection process.

The use of ACORN ensures all types of area are fully represented and that selection of respondents is largely taken out of the hands of the interviewers, helping to eliminate any possible bias in the sample caused by interviewing people all with the same background.

On the Ipsos MORI Face-to-Face Omnibus the interviewer is required to achieve interviews with respondents from a small set of homogenous streets, selected with probability proportional to population after stratification by ACORN characteristics and region.

All data collected on Capibus is weighted to correct for any minor deficiencies or bias in the sample – because of our robust sampling strategy the unweighted data profile closely matches the nationally representative profile, and so the effect of weighting is minor. Capibus uses a 'rim weighting' system which weights to the latest set of census data or mid-year estimates and NRS defined profiles for age, social grade, region and working status - within gender and additional profiles on tenure and ethnicity.

### Interviews with victims of crime

Ipsos MORI conducted 40 semi-structured telephone interviews with victims of crime across England and Wales between 4-8 September 2014. The interviews focussed on victims of three crime types;

- Anti-social behaviour;
- Burglary of your home or outbuildings (for example a shed or garage); and
- Assault in a public place

Victims were identified through a national general public face-to-face survey. Members of the public were asked whether they had been a victim of any of the three crimes mentioned above and whether they had reported the crime to the police. Those who had been victims of these crimes were then invited to take part in a follow-up interview about their experiences.

The interviews focussed on a mixture of closed quantitative questions, and a series of open-ended qualitative questions. Quantitative survey questions guided the discussions, giving structure to the interviews, whilst open-ended qualitative questions gave victims the opportunity to describe their experiences in more detail, in their own words.



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