



Promoting improvements
in policing to make
everyone safer

PEEL: Police legitimacy 2016

An inspection of Thames Valley 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 Thames Valley Police.

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

Force in numbers



Workforce

Total workforce as of 31 March 2016

7,343

Total workforce breakdown as of 31 March 2016

officers

4,244

staff

2,632

PCSOs

466



Ethnic diversity

Percentage of BAME in workforce 31 March 2016

overall workforce

5.0%

officers

4.9%

staff

4.7%

PCSOs

6.9%

Percentage of BAME in local population, 2011 Census

15.4%



Gender diversity

Percentage of females in overall workforce 31 March 2016

42%

England and Wales population, 2011 Census

51%

Percentage of females by role 31 March 2016

officers

31%

staff

58%

PCSOs

48%



Public complaints

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

Officers

Thames Valley Police

258

England and Wales force average

268

Staff (including PCSOs)

37

61



Grievances

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

Officers

Thames Valley Police

1.9

England and Wales force average

4.8

Staff (including PCSOs)

2.3

6.8



Victim satisfaction

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

Thames Valley Police

95.2%

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

Thames Valley Police has been assessed as good in respect of the legitimacy with which it keeps people safe and reduces crime. Our findings this year are consistent with last year's findings, in which we judged the force to be good in respect of the legitimacy.

The force understands the importance of treating people with fairness and respect and it seeks and responds to feedback about the service it provides. Although it has good processes to ensure ethical behaviour, it could be more proactive in how it gathers information about potential corruption. The force supports workforce wellbeing and has an effective individual performance assessment process.

Overall summary

Thames Valley Police is good at treating the people it serves with fairness and respect. It actively seeks feedback and challenge; for example, through its website, independent advisory groups and a complaints integrity and ethics panel that includes members of the public. It also monitors trending issues on social and traditional media and has an analyst within the professional standards department (PSD) who is responsible for identifying and analysing complaints data. The force acts on the feedback it receives and uses lessons learnt to improve the way it treats the public.

The force is improving its engagement with the communities it serves. Good examples include its work with the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and awareness training for staff.

Thames Valley Police is committed to the highest standards of behaviour; the workforce is generally aware of acceptable standards of behaviour and reports suspected wrongdoing to the PSD.

Although the force has effective initial vetting processes in place for new staff joining the organisation, it has decided not to complete routine re-vetting and therefore is not complying with current national vetting guidelines.

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

We have identified that the force needs to improve in some areas this is largely because its systems need to improve; this is not a comment about the force's overall approach and commitment to tackling corruption or its ethos.

All staff have received specific training in the Code of Ethics,⁴ and a professional decision-making course is being run that includes discussion about ethical dilemmas. The workforce are generally aware of acceptable standards of behaviour and report suspected wrongdoing. Gross misconduct hearings are held in public and the results are published, but the force could do more to communicate more regularly with its workforce about actions taken.

The force and its workforce clearly recognise abuse of authority for sexual gain (taking advantage of a position of power to exploit vulnerable victims of crime) as serious corruption. However, the force could be more proactive in identifying potential corruption by monitoring its IT systems and seeking intelligence from outside the organisation.

Thames Valley Police is good at treating its workforce with fairness and respect. It understands and values the benefits of workforce wellbeing and provides support for both mental and physical wellbeing through its occupational health team. The force makes good use of a staff survey and analyses its data on sickness absence and rest days in lieu outstanding to understand areas of wellbeing concern. The force also takes a preventative approach to workforce wellbeing. For example, firearms officers and those in teams concerned with protecting vulnerable people have regular occupational health, welfare and psychological screening. Officers and staff feel that the force is aware of wellbeing needs and tackles them effectively.

The force has a good process in place for individual performance assessment, although it needs to do more to convince officers and staff of the value of the process.

Recommendations

Thames Valley Police is a good force. HMIC has not identified any causes of concern and has therefore made no specific recommendations.

⁴ *Promoting ethical behaviour and preventing wrongdoing in organisations*, College of Policing, 2015. Available at: www.whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Documents/150317_Integrity_REA_FINAL_REPORT.pdf and *The role of leadership in promoting ethical police behaviour*, College of Policing, 2015. Available at: www.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/

Areas for improvement

- The force should improve how it seeks feedback from the people it serves about their experiences (or perceptions) of how the police have treated them.
- The force should improve how its workforce understands the issues identified from lessons learned.
- The force should ensure that it has the capability and capacity to monitor all its computer systems to identify risks to the force's integrity.
- The force should improve how it identifies and understands its workforce's wellbeing needs.

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.⁵

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.⁶ 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.

Organisational values

Thames Valley Police is to be commended for the comprehensive and innovative approach it has taken to embedding the Code of Ethics across the organisation at all levels, and for emphasising the importance of treating people fairly and with respect. It is clearly an integral part of how the force carries out its work.

⁵ *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

⁶ *Op. cit*

All staff have received specific training in the code. Over the past year, this has been reinforced with a professional decision-making course that includes discussion about ethical dilemmas. So far, around 7,000 members of staff have attended the course. The force has a well-publicised set of values that complements the code and emphasises the importance of treating everyone fairly and with respect. In our reality testing, we saw examples of the practical application of the code demonstrated in the way staff behave and a good level of knowledge of the code was apparent in everyone we spoke to about it.

The chief constable recently completed a wide-ranging launch of the new force commitment known as 'our commitment – working together to make our communities safer'. This commitment has been implemented in a way that emphasises the importance of ethical behaviour and culture and is underpinned with activity to engage and motivate the communities across the police force area. This means that the workforce has a clear sense of the importance of treating the public with respect and fairness in order to provide a policing service that meets the needs of the community.

A survey of local people about their perceptions of the police carried out for HMIC revealed that more respondents in the Thames Valley area stated that police in the local area treated people fairly and with respect than the national average (57 percent compared with 54 percent). Additionally, 95 percent of victims of crime in the 12 months to March 2016 were satisfied with the overall treatment they received from the force.

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.

Seeking feedback and challenge

The force actively seeks feedback and challenge about its service from the community it serves. Part of the force's new policing commitment is a plan designed to increase its engagement with those who have less trust and confidence in the police.

Thames Valley Police has a complaints integrity and ethics panel, comprising members of the public and chaired by the deputy police and crime commissioner. This panel meets quarterly and reviews the force actions in areas that affect public

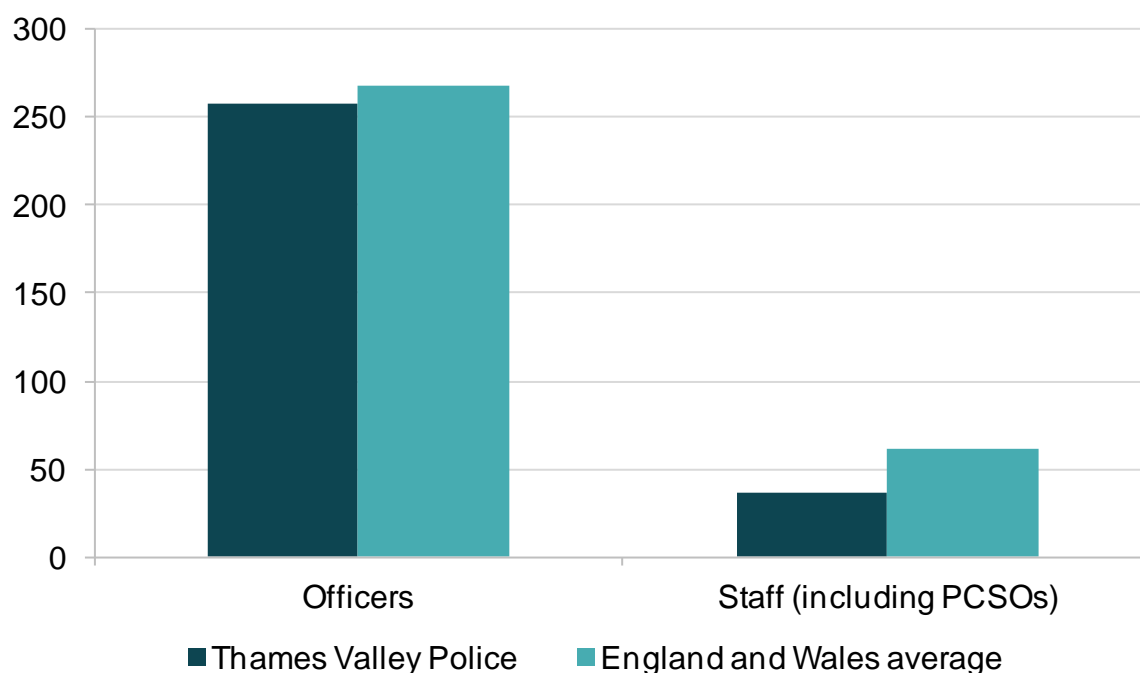
perceptions of fair and respectful treatment. In addition, there are independent advisory groups at both local and force levels which are used (among other things) to seek the views of the community on issues of fair and respectful treatment. The force uses an independent advisory group to scrutinise its use of stop and search powers and takes members of the public on patrol to observe how powers of stop and search are used by the force.

The force takes an innovative approach to using other methods to seek feedback from the public. It has recently used its internet site to invite feedback from the public about the service it provides in respect of racially aggravated crimes. It has provided opportunities for the public to comment on significant changes such as closure of enquiry offices, merging of police areas and the content of its new commitment. The force is using its experience of what works to put in place some programmes of intensive engagement to engage with communities who are less likely to complain or take part in traditional forms of engagement. While these are not focused specifically on ensuring fair and respectful treatment, by creating links where none had previously existed they are allowing the force to start a dialogue where one did not previously exist.

Identifying and understanding the issues

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 Thames Valley 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, Thames Valley Police recorded 258 public complaint cases per 1,000 officers, which was broadly in line with the England and Wales average of 268 cases per 1,000 officers. During this period, the force recorded 37 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).

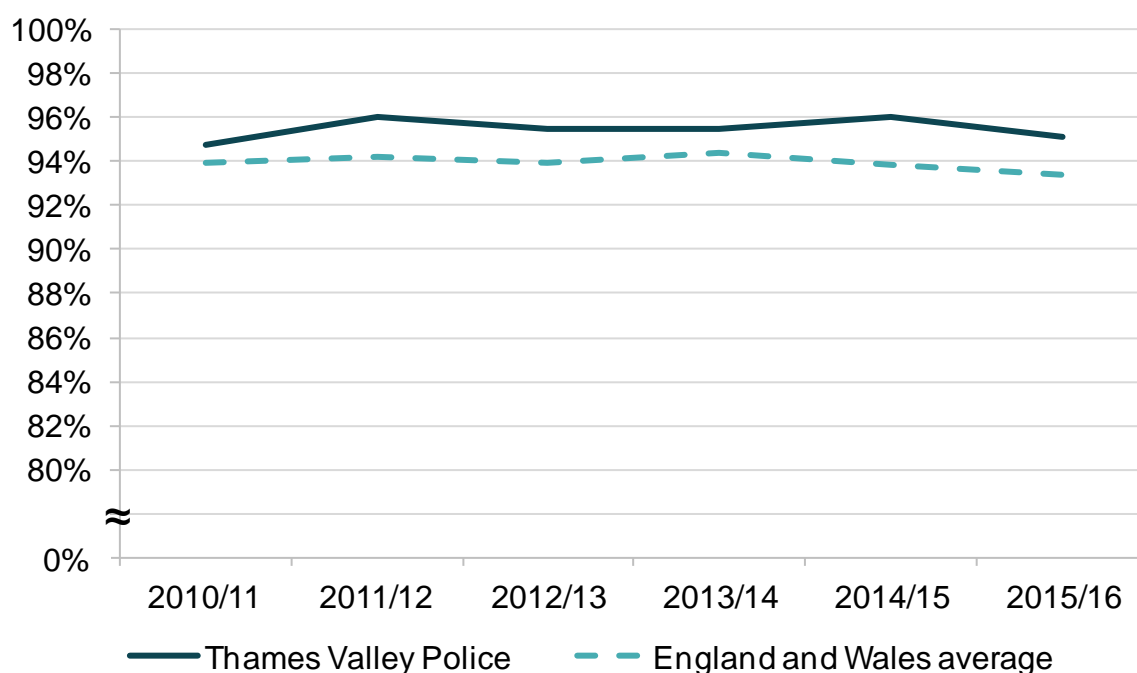
The most recent Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) data from forces show that, for April, May and June 2016, the types of complaint most frequently recorded by Thames Valley Police are 'other neglect or failure in duty', 'incivility, impoliteness and intolerance', 'other allegations' and 'other assault'.⁷ It is important to note, however, an issue identified during our 2014 police integrity and corruption inspection;⁸ 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.

⁷ Independent Police Complaints Commission data is available at:
www.ipcc.gov.uk/reports/statistics/police-complaints/police-performance-data

⁸ *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 Thames Valley 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, 95.2 percent of all victims of crime (excluding hate crime) who responded to the victim satisfaction survey were satisfied with the overall treatment provided by Thames Valley Police, which was higher than the England and Wales average of 93.4 percent; and lower than the 96.0 percent who were satisfied with the overall treatment that the force provided in the 12 months to 31 March 2015, this is not a statistically significant difference.

The force takes steps to gather information from a variety of sources and to understand the impact of actions it has taken, it monitors trending issues on social and traditional media. Through this, it has been able to identify specific occasions where the force has been receiving criticism, such as its use of powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000, and has been able to address the issues raised.

It reviews and acts on feedback from the independent custody visitor scheme (independent custody visitors conduct unannounced visits to custody suites) and has employed an analyst within the professional standards department (PSD) who is

responsible for identifying and analysing complaints data. The findings from this work, together with a description of the action the force plans to take in order to address each problem, are taken to the complaints, integrity and ethics panel, which comprises of independent members of the public, for advice. Issues considered by the panel have included the force's approach to the use of stop search powers, use of force, vetting and its counter-corruption strategy. The force has also engaged positively with findings of previous HMIC reports and has put processes in place to improve the recording of the grounds for stopping someone and searching them and to identify lessons learned from misconduct hearings, which were identified as areas for improvement during previous inspections.

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

The force acts on lessons learned and feedback it receives to improve the way it treats the public. We were encouraged to hear how the force had identified a problem with complaints of incivility and as a consequence had incorporated specific content on this issue into annual refresher training on the use of force. In addition, in response to feedback through the independent advisory group, the force amended the style of the standard letters it sent out. Operationally, it was good to see how the force involved members of the independent advisory group in the planning of sensitive policing operations to reduce adverse impacts on the community.

We found further evidence of this proactive approach for a local policing area identified as having a large number of complaint /conduct issues. A gold group, consisting of key senior officers, was convened, supported by the PSD, and an action plan was created to change the culture of the policing area. The PSD provided short training sessions on the Code of Ethics to all officers and staff through shift briefings, and gave a 'managing complaints' presentation to all inspectors. In addition, it provided leadership coaching to all inspectors to help them understand their leadership style and how to communicate more effectively with the workforce and supervisors. It also provided regular management information and, where possible, investigations of complaint/conduct issues linked to the local policing area are prioritised for a quicker resolution. This has led to a reduction in complaints and more effective complaint management within the area.

The workforce has access to a repository of examples of good practice and lessons learned on the 'knowzone' on the force's intranet. The PSD has introduced its own Yammer⁹ page and this is used to convey messages to all staff as well as to provide a repository of guidance. The PSD also publishes a newsletter through which such matters can be shared. However, not all people in the organisation view the Yammer page and the newsletter has not been published for over a year. This means that the force could do more to reinforce messages and learning about fair and respectful treatment on a more frequent basis.

Demonstrating effectiveness

We found that, overall, the force is working hard to improve practice in response to feedback from individuals or groups and takes action where it identifies wrongdoing. It has held 21 misconduct hearings since May 2015, or 4.8 misconduct hearings per 1000 officers, which is above the England and Wales average. Of these 21 misconduct hearings, 17 were held in public. It has a proactive approach to publicising the results of these hearings to the public through its own internet site. It also makes effective use of the media to emphasise the importance that the force places on ethical behaviour.

The force has responded well to issues identified in previous HMIC reports and is making progress in deepening its engagement with the communities it serves. There are good examples of work, particularly with the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. The force is improving how it treats Gypsy and Roma people through improved links with the community and awareness training for staff. Furthermore, we found that the force treats those coming into its custody facilities fairly and respectfully. It takes account of the specific needs of those from communities with less trust and confidence in the police, including dietary and religious requirements. On an individual note, independent custody visitors reported that the workforce treats those detained with great dignity and make as much effort as they could to make the experience as easy as possible.

⁹ Yammer is a social networking service used for private communication within organisations.

Summary of findings



Good

Thames Valley Police's approach to the Code of Ethics is excellent. The workforce is very well aware of the code and its content and it is included in training courses. The force has a proactive approach to dealing with problems such as incivility, and we saw good examples of action taken to tackle the high number of complaints in a specific local policing area.

The force has an independent panel that holds it to account in respect of complaints, ethics and integrity. It has acted on feedback from this group and external reviews to improve the fair and respectful treatment of the public, including people who have been detained by the force and those from groups with less trust and confidence in the police. Misconduct hearings are held in public and the results are published, but the force could do more to communicate more regularly with its workforce about actions taken.

Areas for improvement

- The force should improve how it seeks feedback from the people it serves about their experiences (or perceptions) of how the police have treated them.

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.¹⁰ 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.¹¹

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.¹² 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.

¹⁰ *Integrity matters*, HMIC, January 2015. Available from:
www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/integrity-matters/

¹¹ *Promoting ethical behaviour and preventing wrongdoing in organisations*, College of Policing, 2015. Available at:
www.whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Documents/150317_Integrity_REA_FINAL_REPORT.pdf

¹² *Promoting ethical behaviour and preventing wrongdoing in organisations*, College of Policing, 2015. Available at:
www.whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Documents/150317_Integrity_REA_FINAL_REPORT.pdf
and *The role of leadership in promoting ethical police behaviour*, College of Policing, 2015. Available at:
www.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

Overall, Thames Valley Police is effective in its initial vetting of new people coming into the organisation. It has recently reviewed its arrangements with the recruitment agencies which supply staff to work on behalf of the force, to ensure that these staff are vetted to the same level as full-time employees.

Generally, the force has robust arrangements for the vetting of all officers, staff and volunteers on recruitment, officers and staff on promotion, officers and staff moving to a more sensitive area of work, and contractors. An appeals process is in place, and the operation of the force vetting arrangements is scrutinised by the ethics, integrity and complaints panel.

The force has concentrated its resources on vetting individuals who join the organisation. It has taken a conscious decision not to complete routine re-vetting after ten years for its workforce, on the basis that the risk is so low as not to warrant the additional expense that this would require. The force should review this position with a view to complying fully with the national vetting guidelines to minimise further any risk to its integrity through corruption.

Through its human resources processes, the force is able to monitor the number of candidates with protected characteristics¹³ who fail the vetting process, but only does this after an offer of employment has been made. This means that it has some understanding of the extent to which the vetting process may affect recruitment of a diverse workforce.

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

The force's overall approach to clarifying and reinforcing what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour is implemented in a highly effective way through its comprehensive approach to the Code of Ethics.

The PSD has organised a number of training courses to raise awareness of standards of behaviour. The force informed us that these include: Code of Ethics professional behaviour for all new starters and 89 percent of existing staff; local police area command visits; focus groups for inspectors on how to manage staff; and general focus groups based on themes. Tactical conferences are arranged quarterly

¹³ For more information about protected characteristics, see: www.gov.uk/discrimination-your-rights/types-of-discrimination

for different audiences (for instance a conference for inspectors to superintendents) covering threat, risk, harm, change in legislation, behavioural signs that might indicate that an officer is at risk of becoming involved in misconduct and links to performance. The PSD also uses the force Yammer account to send out messages about acceptable behaviour, although its reach is limited.

The complaints, integrity and ethics panel is attended by a representative from human resources, and any trends around unacceptable behaviour are identified so that awareness of these issues can be raised through emails to managers and incorporation into the relevant training plans. We found that staff demonstrated a good level of awareness about acceptable standards of behaviour, but in general they were unaware of the details of misconduct hearings unless these had occurred within their own area.

Details of police officer (but not police staff) misconduct are published on the PSD's intranet site and Yammer account. Lessons learned are included within the PSD newsletter. However, this is not shared effectively around the force in a systematic way as not all staff visit the PSD site or use its Yammer account, and the newsletter has not been published for over a year.

This is disappointing as the HMIC's 2014 police integrity and corruption report recommended that within six months, the force should ensure that it has an effective process to audit misconduct hearings in order to identify trends and learn any lessons. The force should also ensure that it acts on local and national lessons learned, including communicating them to staff. While it is apparent that the force has taken steps to address this recommendation, it is clear that it could do more to raise staff awareness of misconduct hearings through more frequent and accessible communication.

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.¹⁴ 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.

¹⁴ *Integrity matters*, HMIC, January 2015. Available from: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/integrity-matters/

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

The force has a counter-corruption strategy, and it uses the National Crime Agency strategic threat assessment to inform its priorities. This then feeds into the work of the counter-corruption unit (CCU) whose priorities are aligned to focus on these areas. However, during our inspection HMIC found that the work of the CCU, while focused on these priorities, was predominantly reactive; any intelligence received is assessed and a decision made on the appropriate level of research or investigation.

The force has responded well to the recommendation from HMIC's 2014 police integrity and corruption report. This stated that: 'The force should ensure that it has communicated to all staff the requirements to comply with policies relating to notifiable associations, secondary employment, business interests, and gifts and hospitality'. (A notifiable association is association with an individual who could pose a risk to the integrity of an individual member of the workforce or of the force itself. It requires the officer of staff member to report such associations, which then allows for a full evaluation of the risks.) We found that most staff had a good knowledge of what was required in these areas. We also found that the force had adequate oversight with well-understood procedures in place. Details of refused business applications are reviewed by PSD based on intelligence.

The force has a dedicated CCU which sits within the PSD; its members provide specific training on corruption indicators to all newly promoted sergeants and inspectors. CCU staff are well trained and its investigators are all accredited to level 2 of the 'professionalising investigation' programme. The unit has a manually based audit capability across systems, which it plans to enhance through an automated ICT PSD-related search capability. However, this is not yet in place, meaning that the force, while making some progress, has not yet been able to comply fully with the recommendation from HMIC's 2014 police integrity and corruption report that: 'The force should ensure that it has the proactive capability to effectively gather, respond to and act on information that identifies patterns of unprofessional behaviour and corruption'.

Generally, the force has robust arrangements for the vetting of all officers, staff and volunteers on recruitment, officers and staff on promotion, officers and staff moving to a more sensitive area of work and contractors. An appeals process is in place and the operation of the force vetting arrangements is scrutinised by the ethics, integrity and complaints panel.

Intervening early to manage risks to integrity

Thames Valley Police is effective at intervening to manage identified risks. The CCU has the appropriate level of resources and expertise to deal with its investigative workload, which it manages through a fortnightly PSD tasking meeting. This meeting is an effective way of agreeing the tactics and resources required to develop intelligence or to progress investigations and review progress against existing cases.

The force has employed an analyst within the PSD who is responsible for monitoring trends concerning individuals or those affecting the wider organisation. Officers who have complaints or conduct issues three times in a twelve-month period are identified and referred to their local policing area for additional support and intervention. At an organisational level, issues from the IPCC's Learning the Lessons publication and the force's own annual analysis are taken to the force complaints, ethics and integrity panel.

Looking for, reporting and assessing intelligence on potential corruption

The force's CCU is headed by a detective chief inspector, who has access to all relevant resources required to investigate corruption. The force responds promptly and effectively to such allegations. At the fortnightly PSD meeting, investigations are discussed in detail, a range of tactics, including integrity testing and drug testing, is considered and the required resources are agreed.

The force has dedicated and confidential corruption reporting lines which officers and staff use and have confidence in. We heard from the force that, over the previous two years, through these and referrals from other sources, the CCU received about 134 pieces of information. Of these 18 were in connection with suspected sexual misconduct.

These facilities are well known across the force, although we found that some police staff were less familiar with them than the rest of the workforce. The force supports those who report corruption and includes consideration of the use of special measures where appropriate.

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 Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) published *The abuse of police powers to perpetrate sexual violence*.¹⁵ This report states that "the abuse of police powers for purposes of sexual exploitation, or even violence, is something that fundamentally betrays the

¹⁵ *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

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 should to the IPCC for its consideration of how it should be investigated.

The *Code of Ethics*¹⁶ – 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.¹⁷ HMIC's 2015 report *Integrity matters*¹⁸ 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.

Recognising abuse of authority for sexual gain as serious corruption

The force clearly recognises abuse of authority for sexual gain as serious corruption. It has included this sort of behaviour within its own counter-corruption plan and always refers such matters to the IPCC.

We found that there is a good level of understanding of the expected standards of behaviour among the workforce, who recognise abuse of authority for sexual gain as serious corruption. We were reassured to hear that, through its confidential reporting line, in the last two years the PSD received 18 reports from members of the workforce who were concerned about sexual misconduct of colleagues. This indicates that some members of the workforce recognise the signs connected with

¹⁶ 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

¹⁷ 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.

¹⁸ *Integrity matters*, HMIC, January 2015. Available from: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/integrity-matters/

this sort of behaviour. This is encouraging, but this level of awareness was not consistent across the whole workforce, and the force should consider providing more general information about the signs of which to be aware.

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

The force is effective in dealing with staff who abuse their authority for sexual gain once concerns come to light, and we were pleased to see the positive action being taken in the cases we looked at. However, the force has not yet developed a broad-based and proactive approach to intelligence gathering around this type of corruption. In addition, its ability to monitor its IT systems to identify staff looking for vulnerable victims is limited.

The force currently relies on the information it has provided to its workforce about this type of corruption and the confidential reporting lines it has in place to generate intelligence about this sort of behaviour. However, to give itself the best chance of identifying this behaviour at an early stage, we would encourage the force to incorporate this within a more wide-ranging approach to gathering counter-corruption intelligence.

The force has invested in raising its workforce's awareness of this area as it sees this as the main way to prevent inappropriate relationships being formed. The Code of Ethics training for the workforce contains an ethical dilemma scenario involving an officer and a domestic abuse victim. In addition, signs to look for are communicated to supervisors as part of the core leadership course for all newly promoted sergeants and inspectors. This includes raising awareness of corruption indicators drawn from the National Crime Agency's national threat assessment. Corruption indicators are also on the PSD Yammer page, and they are discussed when PSD staff visit local policing areas.

This activity is encouraging, although we found that the force could do more to publicise more widely the results of investigations into sexually predatory behaviour. The force could also raise awareness of the signs of corruption to look for by extending the training given to newly promoted sergeants and inspectors to supervisors across the whole force.

Taking action to prevent abuse of authority for sexual gain

The force's approach to preventing this type of behaviour has been to raise awareness of its unacceptability through the Code of Ethics training that all members of the workforce have attended. This includes a scenario in which an officer develops a relationship with a domestic abuse victim. In addition, it is covered as part of the core leadership programme attended by all newly promoted sergeants and inspectors and by the PSD who attend the programme and raise awareness of the National Crime Agency corruption indicators.

The force's current understanding of the extent of such abuse is heavily dependent on referrals from its workforce. A broader approach to gathering intelligence about this, and other sorts of corruption would provide the force with a more sophisticated picture.

Building public trust

During our inspection, we found that the force takes a positive and proactive approach to publicising the results of gross misconduct hearings, with notifications made to the media and posted on the force internet site. It has publicised its policy that any statement issued as a result of such hearings should be specifically tailored to take into account the nature of the offence and its impact on the victim and wider public confidence. This is aimed at providing reassurance about the high ethical standards expected by the force. In reality testing, we found evidence of examples of this approach, although none of these involved the abuse of authority for sexual gain.

We understand that some cases involving the abuse of authority for sexual gain had been dealt with as 'fast track' matters and officers had been dismissed for other gross misconduct offences. Others, such as those seen by HMIC during the fieldwork stage of our inspection, were yet to be finalised.

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.¹⁹ 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 publishes comprehensive details of senior officer gifts and hospitality on its website, in an easily accessible format.

The force works well to make sure that the public are informed about the result of complaints and misconduct cases. It has held 17 misconduct cases in public since

¹⁹ *Literature review – Police integrity and corruption*, HMIC, January 2015. Available at: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/integrity-matters/

May 2015; it provides details of these on the force's website and through its digital channels and includes details of the standard which has been breached, basic details of the breach and the misconduct outcome. The force issues statements to go with the details that are tailored to take into account the nature of the offence and its impact on the victim and wider public confidence, providing reassurance that the force requires the highest ethical standards of its officers and staff.

The force recognises that misconduct can have an effect on public confidence. Where it judges that this may be the case, a gold group will consider the potential effects and put in place actions designed to rebuild public confidence. In addition, the force provides details of officers to the College of Policing for its 'disapproved register'.

Working with the workforce

The force has some processes in place to publicise the results of misconduct investigations, but these could be more systematic. Police officer misconduct meetings are anonymised before being published internally on the PSD intranet site, on the PSD Yammer site and also in the PSD newsletter. Local managers are made aware of the results of misconduct meetings and we saw evidence that this is then communicated to more junior staff.

For police staff, the force takes the view that publishing results of misconduct for this category of its workforce is contrary to Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service guidance. As a result, it does not publish this information.

We found, from speaking to police officers and police staff, that there was some knowledge of the results of misconduct hearings, but often it was confined to events that had occurred in the local area only. The PSD does not send out all-force communications providing details of misconduct matters and, while information about misconduct can be found on the intranet site, it can only be accessed if members of staff actively search for it. A more direct and frequent means is required to provide consistent organisation-wide communication about such matters.

Summary of findings



Requires improvement

During our inspection we found that Thames Valley Police is committed to the highest standards of behaviour; the workforce is generally aware of acceptable standards of behaviour and reports suspected wrongdoing to the PSD. While we have identified that the force needs to improve in this area, this is because of its systems that need to improve, as opposed to being a comment about the force's overall approach, its commitment to tackling corruption or its ethos.

The force has effective initial vetting processes in place for new staff joining the organisation; however, it has taken a conscious decision not to complete routine re-vetting. The force thus does not comply with current national vetting guidelines. The force makes very good use of the opportunities presented by training to reinforce the Code of Ethics and the required standards of acceptable behaviour. Officers and staff are aware of the processes for declaring business interests and notifiable associations and the force intervenes appropriately when corruption is identified. However, the force needs to improve how it gathers information about potential police corruption from external agencies and from its IT systems. It also needs to do more to ensure that its workforce fully understands the lessons identified by the force as results of misconduct cases. The force should also reassure itself that all officers and staff understand the signs that indicate sexually predatory behaviour among their colleagues.

Areas for improvement

- The force should improve how its workforce understands the issues identified from lessons learned.
- The force should ensure that it has the capability and capacity to monitor all its computer systems to identify risks to the force's integrity.

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.²⁰ 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.²¹ 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.

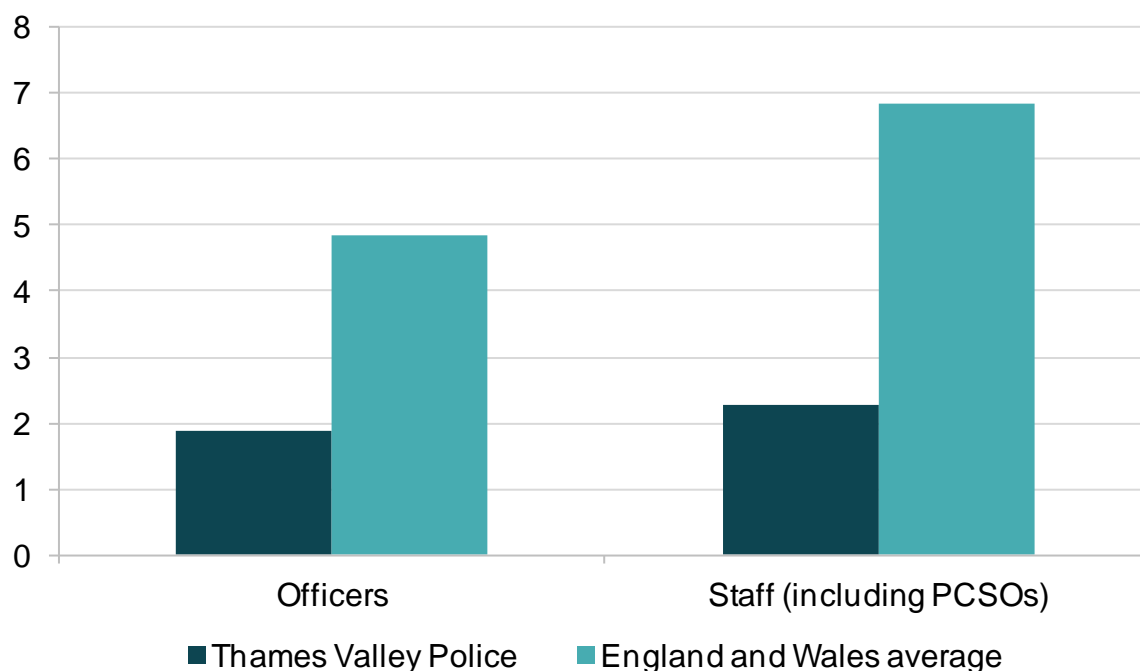
Identifying and understanding the issues

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.

²⁰ *Fair cop 2: Organisational justice, behaviour and ethical policing*, College of Policing, 2015. Available at: www.whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Documents/150317_Fair_cop_percent202_FINAL_REPORT.pdf *Organisational justice: Implications for police and emergency service leadership*, C. Herrington and K. Roberts, AIPM Research Focus, Issue 2, 2013. Available at: www.aipm.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Org-Justice-Final.pdf

²¹ *Fair cop 2: Organisational justice, behaviour and ethical policing*, College of Policing, 2015, page 11. Available at: www.whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Documents/150317_Fair_cop_percent202_FINAL_REPORT.pdf

Figure 4: Number of grievances raised by officers (per 1,000 officers) or staff (per 1,000 staff, including police community support officers) that Thames Valley 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 4 please see annex A

In the 12 months to 31 March 2016, Thames Valley Police finalised 1.9 formal grievances raised by officers per 1,000 officers, which was broadly in line with the England and Wales average of 4.8 per 1,000 officers. During this period, the force finalised 2.3 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).

The force has approached the development of its understanding of issues that affect perceptions of fair and respectful treatment in a well-thought-out and sustained manner, using the University of Durham to complete a survey of the workforce. It has now run this survey twice, with a gap of just over a year, using the results to gauge the workforce's perception of a range of issues, including some touching upon fair and respectful treatment.

In addition, staff associations we spoke to were positive about the access they had to the force leadership, who were seen to be responsive. As part of our fieldwork, we observed one of the regular consultative meetings between the force leadership and the staff associations. We found this to be an effective forum for staff associations to raise concerns, and there were clearly good relationships between the associations and the force's management.

The force also makes active use of exit interviews, analysis of sickness patterns and complaints to identify local trends.

We found that the workforce was aware of the grievance system and the majority would feel confident using it.

Making improvements and demonstrating effectiveness

The force is generally responsive to feedback from its workforce. It has changed policies and practice as a result, such as the performance and development review process and the grievance procedure.

Local policing area commanders were provided with the results of the Durham University surveys down to local level and were each responsible for putting in place local plans to improve those issues that affected morale. We were encouraged to see the variety of ideas in the plans. We were also pleased to see how many of them had included involving the workforce in decisions about how to improve the working environment or practices. The force has tracked the success of these actions by commissioning a second survey, which has shown increased positive responses from the workforce on how they feel they are treated and led.

We found that all members of the workforce we spoke to were aware of the staff survey, but they were unclear about what changes had been made as a result of its findings. Some expressed the view that, as the survey did not change anything, they would not contribute to it. Given that the force told us that the completion rate had decreased from 38 to 21 percent over the two surveys, this would suggest that the force should explore how it can raise awareness of the steps taken in response to the surveys.

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 workforces. This year we looked at the progress forces had made since the last inspection, with a particular focus on preventative activity to encourage wellbeing.

Understanding and valuing the benefits

The force understands and values the benefits of workforce wellbeing and is in the process of refining its approach. The responsibility for health and wellbeing and occupational health belongs to the force's human resources department. The force's occupational health function is supported by a psychologist, a mental health nurse, dedicated welfare officers, a dedicated chaplain and 16 other chaplains, force-wide mental health champions and a range of external support through its employee assistance programme.

The force has signed up to the blue-light programme run by the mental health charity MIND. The force reports that it has nearly 70 champions, more than 150 officers and staff have been on the resilience courses and more than 260 line managers have been trained in the master class. The force tracks the effectiveness of these actions and can demonstrate reductions in anxiety and stress in sections within the protecting vulnerable people (PVP) teams as well as improvements in reducing long-term sickness over the past two years.

The force has a health and wellbeing strategy which it has assessed against the wellbeing charter,²² and this will be used to develop a more detailed action plan.

Questions on wellbeing issues featured as part of the force promotion process, and supervisors receive training to help them to recognise wellbeing issues.

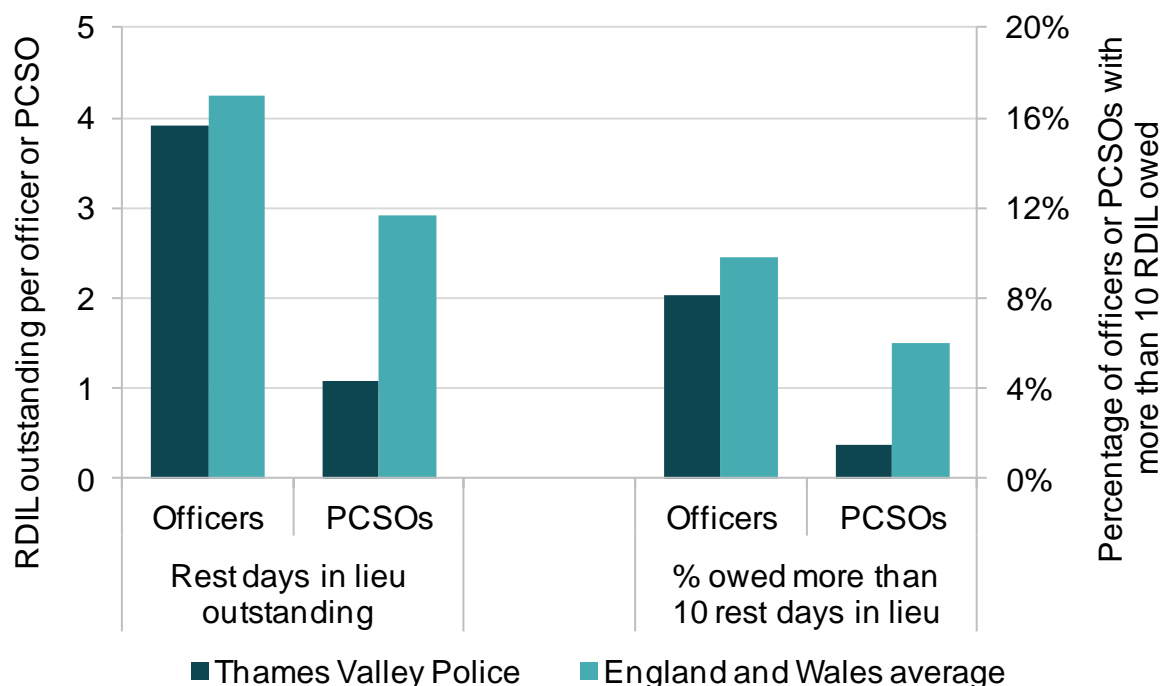
Identifying and understanding the workforce's wellbeing needs

The force takes good steps to identify and understand the wellbeing needs of its workforce and is developing this further. The force analyses its data and uses survey and other data from high-risk areas to identify areas of wellbeing concern. Its wellbeing strategy covers a range of potential issues that could affect the wellbeing of officers and staff.

Rest days in lieu (RDIL) are leave days owed to officers or PCSOs when they have been required to work on their scheduled rest day for 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 a useful tool for forces to identify and understand potential wellbeing concerns for individuals and teams.

²² The wellbeing charter is a national systematic method of improving health at work.

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 Thames Valley Police compared with England and Wales, as at 31 March 2016



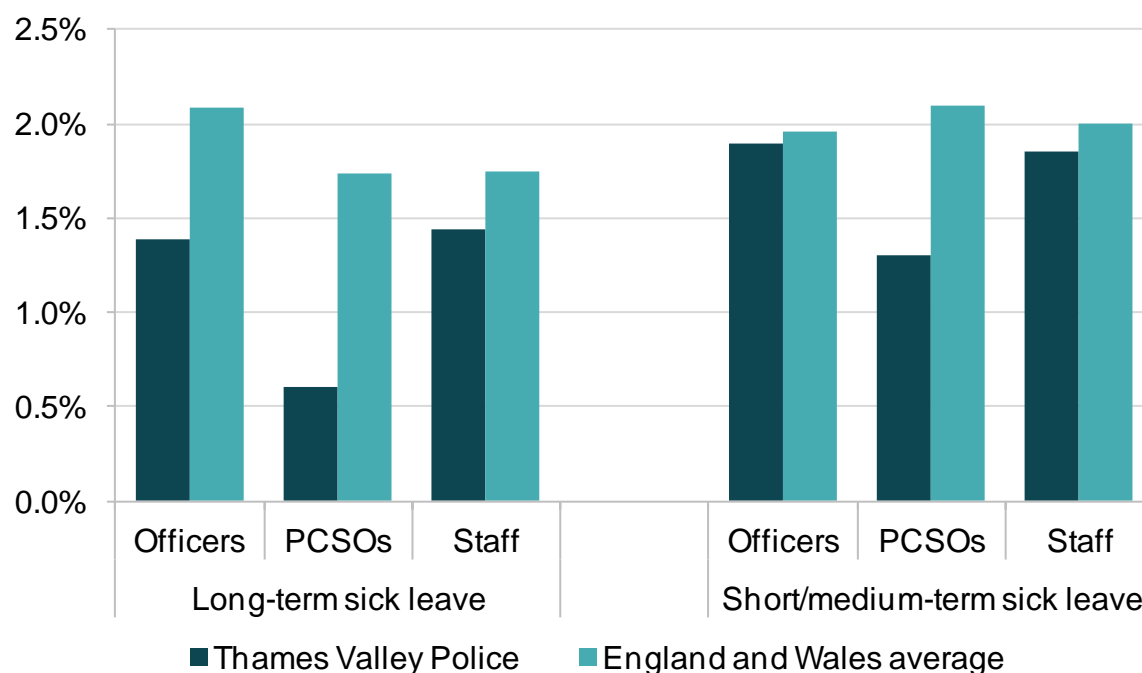
Source: HMIC Legitimacy data collection

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.

As at 31 March 2016, there were 3.9 rest days in lieu outstanding per officer in Thames Valley Police, which was broadly in line with the England and Wales average of 4.2 days per officer. On the same date, there were 1.1 rest days in lieu outstanding per PCSO in the force, which was broadly in line with the England and Wales average of 2.9 days per PCSO. As at 31 March 2016, 8.2 percent of officers in Thames Valley Police had more than 10 rest days in lieu owed to them, which was broadly in line with the England and Wales average of 9.8 percent. As at 31 March 2016, 1.5 percent of PCSOs in the force 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.

Sickness data can provide a useful point of comparison for assessing the wellbeing of police workforces. Analysis of this data can also 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 Thames Valley 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.

- 1.4 percent of officers were on long-term sick leave, which is lower than 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.
- 0.6 percent of PCSOs were on long-term sick leave, which is lower 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.
- 1.4 percent of staff were on long-term sick leave, which is broadly in line with the England and Wales average of 1.7 percent.
- 1.9 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.

Absence management data shows improvement over the past two years. The force's occupational health team has worked with managers over return-to-work arrangements, and there are clear expectations about returns and trigger points.

Taking preventative and early action to improve workforce wellbeing

The force uses preventative measures well. For example, all CID officers are pre-screened. Firearms officers and those in teams concerned with protecting vulnerable people (PVP) have regular occupational health, welfare and psychological screening. Screening is carried out face-to-face each year for officers in PVP teams and for firearms officers. If this leads to a conclusion that someone is no longer suitable to remain in such a high-risk role, then it will be proposed that they are moved from it. Instead of using the TRiM²³ method of preventing post-traumatic stress disorder, the force uses three dedicated welfare officers, a dedicated chaplain and 16 other chaplains, as it believes that this is more effective.

We found that there was a general perception among officers and staff that the force is aware of wellbeing needs and tackles them effectively. There have been welfare roadshows on several topics. Individuals were fully aware of how to seek assistance, which includes seeking help from the force champions and the various wellbeing initiatives. This includes for example the Blue Loo, in which mental health messages are displayed within toilet cubicles. The force long-term and short-term sickness levels are both lower than the national averages, and the force can show evidence of how it has reduced absence through ill health over the past two years.

Despite this, we found that some members of the workforce felt under pressure. The force has been through a particularly busy period, and staff reported having days off cancelled. Some officers working in the public protection department felt that more needed to be done to relieve the pressure of work. We recognise the demand placed upon the force, but we urge it to monitor these situations closely and communicate its actions to staff, who may be unclear of the steps it is taking to relieve these pressures.

²³ Trauma risk management (TRiM) is a method of preventing traumatic stress-related mental health disorders. The TRiM process enables non-healthcare staff to monitor and manage colleagues.

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.²⁴ 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.²⁵

The performance assessment process

The force has an individual performance assessment process (referred to as PDR) that provides an effective tool for supervisors to conduct performance appraisals and we heard that regular one-to-one meetings take place. The PDR can be completed online and rates of completion are monitored.

A PDR user group has been set up to give operational feedback on the PDR system and to suggest improvements to software and processes. As a result of feedback from this group, the process was amended last year to be more user friendly and to include fewer objectives than before.

Fairness in the PDR process is provided at a senior level by a senior PDR moderation panel to maintain consistency of ratings across all areas of the organisation. At other levels in the organisation, the force expects that the counter-signing second line manager will provide a degree of moderation.

The results of performance assessment

The PDR process is based around the policing professional framework personal qualities for the relevant role. The system is designed to incorporate other human resources processes, such as the national police promotion framework selection, recruitment and assessment processes, continuing professional development and the assessment and recognition of competence that forms part of the PDR process for relevant officers.

The completion rate for PDRs reported by the force is very high – in the region of 99 percent. This means that the force has developed a system of professional development that incorporates and captures the skills and development needs of almost its entire workforce.

²⁴ *Fair cop 2: Organisational justice, behaviour and ethical policing*, College of Policing, 2015. Available at: www.whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Documents/150317_Fair_cop_percent202_FINAL_REPORT.pdf

²⁵ College of Policing guidance on the police individual performance assessment process is available at: www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Support/Reviewing-performance/Pages/PDR.aspx

In support of this, some staff we spoke to were able to point to development opportunities that had been provided as a result of a need being identified through the PDR system. However, many of the staff we spoke to did not appear to value this system. While there was no suggestion that it was not fair, almost all of the staff we spoke to viewed it as an administrative exercise which they did not feel had significant value for them. This perception may be as a result of IT problems that made completion of the PDR particularly difficult last year. We would encourage the force to develop deeper workforce commitment to this process, as there is a danger that the investment it has made in this area will be undermined if it is seen to be of limited value.

Summary of findings



Good

The force is to be commended for the investment it has made in understanding the workforce perceptions of fair and respectful treatment in a number of ways. The main way is through the staff survey that it has carried out twice in conjunction with the University of Durham to identify issues about fair and respectful treatment of its workforce, and to track the success of subsequent improvements it has made. However the force needs to encourage more of its workforce to value participating in the survey and to publicise its benefits.

The force monitors other data around fair treatment and has an excellent focus on workforce wellbeing, particularly around mental health, with supervisors who are trained to recognise warning signs of potential mental health problems. It responds well to issues raised by its workforce, although HMIC found some people working in high-demand areas who would benefit from more regular communication about how the force was responding to issues related to pressure of work.

The force has made a significant investment in its PDR system, which it links to other human resources processes such as transfers, promotion and work-based assessments. The rate of completion of PDRs is very high, but the force needs to do more to convince officers and staff of the value of the process.

Areas for improvement

- The force should improve how it identifies and understands its workforce's wellbeing needs.

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 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.²⁶

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

²⁶ *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