

PEEL

Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy 2018/19

An inspection of Avon and Somerset Constabulary



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What this report contains

This report is structured in four parts:

1. Our overall assessment of the force's 2018/19 performance.
2. Our judgments and summaries of how effectively, efficiently and legitimately the force keeps people safe and reduces crime.
3. Our judgments and any areas for improvement and causes of concern for each component of our inspection.
4. Our detailed findings for each component.

Our inspection approach

In 2018/19, we adopted an [integrated PEEL assessment](#) (IPA) approach to our existing PEEL (police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy) inspections. IPA combines into a single inspection the effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy areas of PEEL. These areas had previously been inspected separately each year.

As well as our inspection findings, our assessment is informed by our analysis of:

- force data and management statements;
- risks to the public;
- progress since previous inspections;
- findings from our non-PEEL inspections;
- how forces tackle serious and organised crime locally and regionally; and
- our regular monitoring work.

We inspected all forces in four areas:

- protecting vulnerable people;
- firearms capability;
- planning for the future; and
- ethical and lawful workforce behaviour.

We consider the risk to the public in these areas important enough to inspect all forces every year.

We extended the risk-based approach that we used in our 2017 effectiveness inspection to the efficiency and legitimacy parts of our IPA inspections. This means that in 2018/19 we didn't inspect all forces against all areas. The table below shows the areas we inspected Avon and Somerset Constabulary against.

IPA area	Inspected in 2018/19?
Preventing crime and anti-social behaviour	No
Investigating crime	No
Protecting vulnerable people	Yes
Tackling serious and organised crime	No
Firearms capability	Yes
Meeting current demands	No
Planning for the future	Yes
Treating the public fairly	Yes
Ethical and lawful workforce behaviour	Yes
Treating the workforce fairly	No

Our 2017 judgments are still in place for the areas we didn't inspect in 2018/19.

Force in context

	Avon and Somerset rate	England and Wales rate	
999 calls per 1,000 population 12 months ending 31 March 2019	146	175	
	Avon and Somerset rate	Most Similar Forces rate	
Recorded crime per 1,000 population 12 months ending 31 March 2019	80	81	
Avon and Somerset workforce			
	FTE in post on 31 March 2019	FTE in post on 31 March 2014	Percentage change
Police Officer	2676	2800	-4%
Police Community Support Officer	306	334	-8%
Police Staff	2294	1849	24%
	Avon and Somerset spend	England and Wales spend	
Spend per head of population 2019/20 projection	£178	£203	

Overall summary

	Effectiveness		Last inspected
Preventing crime and tackling anti-social behaviour	 Good	2017/18	
Investigating crime	 Good	2017/18	
Protecting vulnerable people	 Good	2018/19	
Tackling serious and organised crime	 Good	2017/18	
Armed response capability	Ungraded	2018/19	
	Efficiency		Last inspected
Meeting current demands and using resources	 Outstanding	2017/18	
Planning for the future	 Outstanding	2018/19	

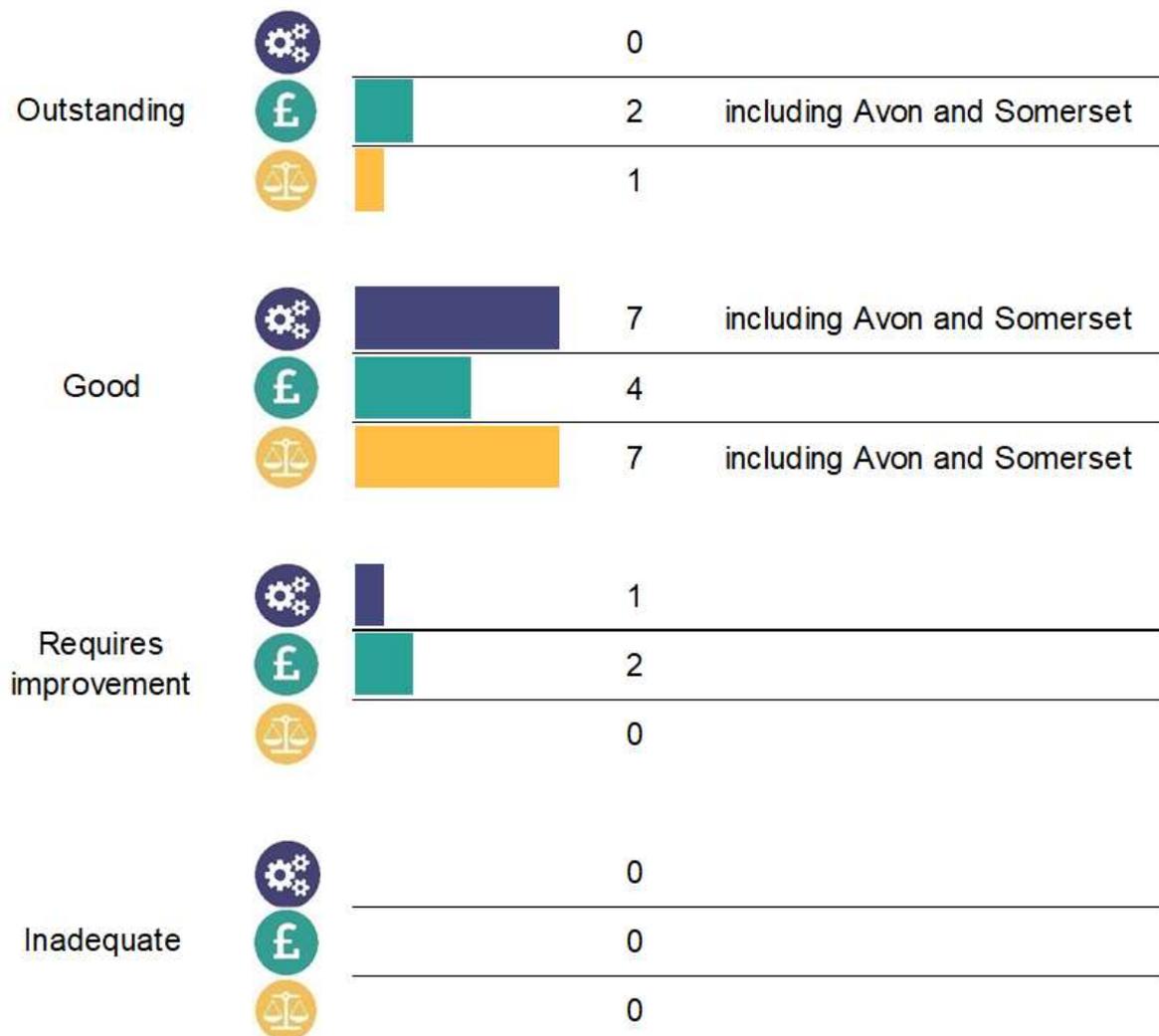
	Legitimacy	 Good	Last inspected
Fair treatment of the public	 Good	2018/19	
Ethical and lawful workforce behaviour	 Good	2018/19	
Fair treatment of the workforce	 Good	2017/18	

How does the force compare with similar forces?

We compare Avon and Somerset Constabulary's performance with the forces in its most similar group (MSG). MSGs are groups of similar police forces, based on analysis of demographic, social and economic factors. [For more information about MSGs, see our website.](#)

Avon and Somerset Constabulary's MSG forces are Staffordshire Police, Derbyshire Constabulary, Essex Police, Hampshire Constabulary, Hertfordshire Constabulary, Kent Police and Sussex Police.

Figure 1: Pillar judgments for Avon and Somerset Constabulary, compared with forces in its MSG



HM Inspector's observations

I am very pleased with the performance of Avon and Somerset Constabulary.

The constabulary is good at preventing crime and [anti-social behaviour](#). It is also good at investigating crime and tackling [serious and organised crime](#). It identifies and responds well to incidents involving [vulnerable people](#) and works effectively with other agencies to protect them.

The constabulary is ambitious in its planning for the future and wants to be at the forefront of innovative practice. I am very impressed with its use of technology to understand changing demand. It uses this information very well to influence its development of finance and workforce plans for the future.

Senior leaders ensure that the workforce understands the importance of treating the public and each other with fairness and respect. The constabulary continues to uphold an ethical culture and promote the standards of professional behaviour it expects.

Overall, I congratulate Avon and Somerset Constabulary for its excellent performance over the past year. I am confident that it is well equipped for this to continue.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Wendy Williams". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Wendy Williams

HM Inspector of Constabulary

Effectiveness



Force in context

	Avon and Somerset proportion	England and Wales proportion
Proportion of officers in a neighbourhood or response function in post on 31 March 2019	48%	40%

Victim-based crime per 1,000 population

12 months ending 31 March 2019

	Avon and Somerset rate	Most Similar Forces rate
Violence against the person	25	28
Sexual offences	2	3
Theft Offences / Robbery	30	29
Criminal damage and arson	9	9

Crime Outcomes

12 months ending 31 March 2019

	Avon and Somerset proportion	England and Wales proportion
Proportion of crimes where action was taken	11%	12%
Proportion of crimes where suspect was identified	46%	46%
Proportion of crimes where victim did not support police action	26%	24%

Outcomes for crimes flagged as domestic abuse

12 months ending 31 March 2018

	Avon and Somerset proportion	England and Wales proportion
Charge/summonsed	13%	16%
Evidential difficulties: suspect identified; victim does not support	48%	49%

How effectively does the force reduce crime and keep people safe?



Good

Summary

Avon and Somerset Constabulary is good at reducing crime and keeping people safe.

The constabulary is good at protecting [vulnerable people](#). Officers and [staff](#) have a good understanding of what makes a person vulnerable and they are good at identifying vulnerable people at first contact. They also know how important it is to prioritise the needs of vulnerable people.

As well as focusing on criminal justice outcomes, the workforce understands the need to offer a wraparound service when they encounter vulnerability.

Call handlers communicate well and express empathy. We note the presence of mental health nurses in the constabulary's control room, to review incidents and offer advice.

The constabulary is committed to building relationships with teachers and children so that any warning signs of abuse, exploitation or neglect are more likely to be spotted early on. It is also working to improve its understanding of potential threats to vulnerable people in cases other than domestic abuse.

The constabulary has trained its staff so that they feel confident in dealing with incidents involving people with mental health conditions. The constabulary also plans to train a number of officers as mental health tactical advisers.

The constabulary is effective at protecting victims of domestic abuse. It is monitoring a slight fall in the number of its arrest rates and [bail](#) for suspects of domestic abuse.

As part of the constabulary's neighbourhood strategy, neighbourhood teams work to [safeguard](#) vulnerable victims. And the constabulary makes good use of protective powers where prosecutions haven't been possible.

The constabulary manages well the risk posed by registered sex offenders. It actively seeks to reduce their risk to the public.

In 2017/18, we judged Avon and Somerset Constabulary to be good at preventing crime and tackling [anti-social behaviour](#). We also judged it to be good at investigating crime, and good at tackling [serious and organised crime](#).

Preventing crime and tackling anti-social behaviour



Good

This question was not subject to inspection in 2018/19, and our judgment from the 2016 effectiveness inspection has been carried over.

Investigating crime



Good

This question was not subject to inspection in 2018/19, and our judgment from the 2017 effectiveness inspection has been carried over.

Protecting vulnerable people



Good

The constabulary has a clear definition and an effective strategy for vulnerability. At board level, the deputy chief constable monitors progress.

Senior leaders have communicated the constabulary's definition of vulnerability well. The constabulary has also trained the workforce in relation to vulnerability.

The constabulary uses a combination of [problem profiles](#), strategic assessment and information technology (IT) analysis to identify, understand and tackle problems that are of concern to vulnerable people. It is also skilled at identifying patterns of offending against vulnerable people. The constabulary complements this knowledge and understanding with good working relationships with partner organisations.

The constabulary works proactively with other organisations to uncover hidden harm. It works to protect vulnerable children through Operation Topaz. It offers a robust response to burglary, knife crime and [county lines](#) criminality through Operation Remedy. And [Operation Encompass](#) involves the sharing of information with schools where domestic abuse has been identified.

The constabulary responds to incidents involving vulnerable people quickly. The workforce shows a good understanding of the need to act straightaway where necessary. The constabulary could give examples where immediate safeguarding has taken place.

The constabulary prioritises attendance at incidents of domestic abuse. Officers and staff know how important it is to protect these victims and make efforts to arrest where appropriate. Officers and staff also understand the legal powers that are available to them.

The constabulary routinely uses civil and criminal orders to protect the public from dangerous and sexual offenders.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the force's performance in this area.

Understanding and identifying vulnerability

Avon and Somerset Constabulary has a clear definition for vulnerability. It also has an effective strategy. Senior leaders support a vulnerability lead for the different strands of the strategy (for example, child abuse, domestic abuse and female genital mutilation). Leaders are accountable for the force-level plan that covers their area of responsibility. The deputy chief constable monitors progress at the management board. The constabulary has communicated its definition of vulnerability well to all officers and staff. It has done this through senior leader messaging and training. Commendably, the workforce showed a good understanding of what makes a person vulnerable, and the importance of prioritising the needs of vulnerable people.

Having clear strategic accountability helps officers and staff to understand the nature and scale of vulnerability that they may encounter. Problem profiles and a strategic assessment cover areas such as mental health and domestic abuse. This means that staff can tackle the problems that are of most concern to vulnerable people.

The constabulary uses analysis to understand patterns of offending against vulnerable people. A sophisticated IT dashboard (Qlik Sense) gives officers and staff up-to-date information (including graphs, charts, maps and apps) regardless of their physical location. This information includes crime types and where prolific offenders might commit these crimes. Crucially, the information also includes who (and where) their most vulnerable people are. This means that the constabulary can identify patterns of offending, and it can implement safeguarding measures to protect those who are at risk of harm. This understanding of the nature and scale of vulnerabilities is enhanced by the constabulary's positive relationships and well-developed information sharing with partners (such as local authorities).

Staff who deal with the public reported that the constabulary had trained them in vulnerability. Call handlers, frontline officers, detectives, and police and community support officers (PCSOs) reported the same. This training helps them to understand and address the needs of vulnerable people. Recently, the constabulary adopted the [College of Policing](#) training package. It has adapted this to suit the specific needs of its staff. Officers and staff told us about the diverse range of [continuous professional development](#) that the constabulary gives, to support them in their work.

Officers and staff work well with partner organisations (such as the children's charity Barnardo's) to take proactive steps to uncover hidden harm. The constabulary has a well-developed understanding of sexual exploitation through Operation Topaz. (This is a joint operation with partner agencies to protect vulnerable children.) Also, it effectively shares information about victims and offenders with partner organisations

to identify potential risk and to safeguard those who are at risk of exploitation. In Bristol, officers and staff tackle under-reported crime such as female genital mutilation.

The constabulary considers the views of the community. And it uses a risk-assessment tool to identify threats and to share information with partners. Operation Remedy is a robust response to escalating burglary, knife crime and county lines drug dealing.

While deliberately focused on criminal justice outcomes, staff also understand the importance of offering a wraparound service to address vulnerability when they meet it. By liaising with safeguarding specialists in advance of any enforcement activity, the constabulary can put measures in place to protect vulnerable children and occupants of addresses where [cuckooing](#) is taking place. (Cuckooing is where drug dealers take over the home of a vulnerable person to use it as a base for drug dealing).

The constabulary is good at identifying vulnerable people at the point of first contact. This includes identifying repeat victims, victims of domestic abuse and those who have mental health conditions. The constabulary trains and mentors call handlers. It gives additional training to vulnerability single points of contact. The constabulary's IT systems help it to identify cases involving vulnerable people. Users of the systems can apply a range of warning markers for different vulnerabilities (and for the addresses of repeat victims). In this way, the constabulary can flag vulnerable people from the outset.

However, call handlers aren't applying these flags consistently. This means that officers may not always have all the available information. Dedicated intelligence officers give additional information to help attending officers. And search software enables call handlers to pass on detailed information about incidents that officers attend. We spoke to response officers who said that control room staff give them regular updates. This improves officers' awareness of the vulnerabilities and risks that might be present when they arrive at an incident.

Call handlers respond to calls quickly. They can use drop-down menus on their systems to help them gather and communicate all relevant information effectively. The constabulary has trained call handlers to use a national risk-assessment tool known as [THRIVE](#). By using this tool, they can prioritise incidents consistently.

In the samples of calls that we listened to, operators generally used the drop-down menu. Sometimes, though, they hadn't properly considered the risk factors for vulnerable or potentially exploited offenders. Reassuringly, for those few occasions where an initial assessment hasn't been correct, the constabulary has further review processes in place to make sure that an officer is deployed if needed. The constabulary could lessen any risk by increasing its call monitoring, and by training staff to recognise all types of vulnerability.

Staff generally apply their training and show a good understanding of the importance of acting immediately, when necessary, to protect people who have mental health conditions. That said, sometimes staff only add tags on the system to identify these incidents when they have ended. Mental health nurses support control room staff. They review incidents, give advice and occasionally deploy to incidents.

Officers told us that extra training had increased their own confidence. And the partner organisations and agencies that we spoke to were complimentary about the knowledge and understanding of officers who they dealt with regularly.

Responding to incidents

The constabulary responds to incidents involving vulnerable people quickly, to keep them safe. Sophisticated IT systems give current and future demand modelling. They also state officers' availability and location. Invariably, this live feed to supervisors, combined with well-understood contingency plans, means that the constabulary gives an immediate response to people who need one.

During our visits to the constabulary's control room, call handlers answered calls promptly. Officers attend appropriate incidents and they reassess risks when they get more information. Call handlers showed empathy. They communicated well and offered initial safeguarding advice to callers. By responding in this way, call handlers give reassurance and help reduce the likelihood of further harm.

When attending incidents, officers use a structured process to assess the threat that is presented to victims of domestic abuse, stalking and harassment. Officers clearly understand their responsibilities. In most cases, they complete [domestic abuse, stalking and harassment risk assessments](#). They record the presence of other vulnerable people (such as children) in these households. Also, the constabulary participates in Operation Encompass. This initiative advocates sharing information with schools for all domestic abuse incidents where a child is mentioned. Staff from the Lighthouse safeguarding unit complete referrals to health and education providers via children's social care. All schools in the constabulary's area have a dedicated beat officer.

However, the constabulary has recognised that it could improve its understanding of potential threats to vulnerable adults and children in cases other than domestic abuse. It has introduced a vulnerability identification tool which supports officers to understand vulnerability. It encourages immediate safeguarding interventions at a neighbourhood level, or where risks are higher, appropriate referrals to the Lighthouse safeguarding unit and specialist support services. Leaders encourage staff to make well-considered risk-based assessments, and to understand the lived experience of victims. However, some officers aren't certain when to complete and submit a referral. Dedicated staff within the Lighthouse safeguarding unit do reduce any risks by completing daily checks on all incidents, and by making appropriate referrals. However, they may not have the same level of understanding of a victim's circumstances as the attending officer if this information is missed from the referral form.

Senior leaders are right to insist that officers always make thorough assessments at the scene. The Lighthouse safeguarding unit has an important role in raising awareness. Staff within the unit give regular training inputs and they liaise closely with those members of the neighbourhood teams who also have safeguarding responsibilities. Additional training and messaging (such as the 'look beyond the obvious' campaign) have also prompted better identification of vulnerable victims and exploited offenders. This makes sure that everyone who needs support has tailored safeguarding plans and receives the services they are entitled to.

Reassuringly, the officers we spoke with had a well-developed understanding of the importance of identifying and protecting vulnerable people. They could show examples of immediate safeguarding and information-sharing interventions that they had completed. Officers confirmed that they received regular messaging about themes relating to vulnerability (such as domestic abuse, child exploitation and mental health conditions). An example of the force's innovation is that they can also receive automatic alerts to their mobile devices as the constabulary adds new content to the vulnerability pages of the intranet.

Across the constabulary's area, there are five [multi-agency safeguarding hubs](#) (MASHs). They cover all local authorities. The constabulary makes an effective contribution in each MASH. It has also forged strong partnerships with a range of co-located partner agencies, including education, probation, health and children's services. These partner agencies make sure that safeguarding arrangements are in place for vulnerable people. The constabulary acknowledges the unequal representation of agencies in the different MASHs. But following recent government reforms, the constabulary now has shared statutory responsibility for children's safeguarding. This presents opportunities for the constabulary to better influence and shape MASH processes. And it encourages partners to work together, to offer seamless information sharing and safeguarding.

It has been challenging for police forces to give a consistent response to those who suffer with mental health conditions. Increasingly, forces find themselves responsible for the safety and welfare of people that professionals in other agencies would be better placed to deal with. Avon and Somerset Constabulary has responded well. It recognises the importance of working closely with more specialist partners.

The constabulary now has effective, well-developed relationships with partners that can offer expert support. Recently, the constabulary completed a police-led review. It has mapped and evaluated what partners are doing, and what they should be doing. This has resulted in a better understanding of the available services. It has also reduced the demands on officers.

Commissioning services are strong. The NHS-chaired Crisis Care Concordat is well attended and gives clear strategic oversight. It sets out how organisations will work together to make sure that people get the help that they need. Forces and partners identified issues that they all needed to improve on. Some of the issues crossed over. These have been identified, with the appropriate response led by police or partners.

For example, the constabulary is trialling a 'high intensity user group' scheme. This brings relevant partners together to agree on early intervention strategies to reduce demand on services. In addition, the constabulary has developed a problem profile for mental health. The profile is informed by internal and external databases. It has identified where services are most needed, and how they can be offered. Partners complimented officers on their local knowledge and their involvement in multi-agency community meetings. For instance, from daily tasking meetings, it was clear that local beat managers, who are allocated to work within a university, were supporting the response to mental health vulnerability where students were self-harming.

In the past, there were some instances where officers felt less confident in dealing with incidents involving people with mental health conditions. Partners suggested that joint training could be beneficial. The constabulary has now trained specific police units and given a procedural guidance handbook to all frontline staff. It gives tailored training to frontline supervisors; all sergeants and inspectors take a one-day workshop. Regular communications should reinforce understanding. The constabulary has also submitted plans to train up to 60 officers as mental health tactical advisers.

The constabulary works closely with mental health nurses. These nurses are based in the control room, offering advice and assistance, between 8.00am and 10.00pm, seven days a week. However, staffing shortages have meant that deployments to incidents don't happen in the way that partners and police intended. The constabulary carried out an evaluation of this [triage](#) service and identified improvements. It is now implementing them. Officers said that the triage facility helped, and that the training they were receiving has given them more confidence when attending incidents. This is important given that 1,298 people were detained under [section 136 of the Mental Health Act](#) in the 12 months to 31 March 2019.

The constabulary is effective at protecting victims of domestic abuse. And it prioritises attendance at these incidents. Officers attend 86 percent of domestic abuse incidents as an emergency or priority call. This is higher than the England and Wales rate of 75 percent. During our inspection, it was rare for the constabulary to deal with victims of domestic abuse by telephone. Arrest rates and bail for suspects of domestic abuse have fallen slightly. The constabulary has put measures in place to monitor this situation more closely. Officers and staff understood the importance of protecting victims. And they were making efforts to make arrests where appropriate, with the intention of improving outcomes. The constabulary made 28 arrests and six [voluntary attendances](#) for every 100 recorded domestic abuse offences in the 12 months to end of March 2019. Both of these rates are slightly above those for England and Wales as a whole.

Supporting vulnerable victims

Neighbourhood teams are involved in the safeguarding of vulnerable victims. This is a key strand within the constabulary's neighbourhood strategy. Officers and staff that we spoke to had a good awareness of vulnerable victims and suspects. Well-managed taskings included children who are at risk of sexual exploitation, as well as people with mental health conditions and repeat victims of domestic abuse. Qlik Sense helped staff to identify the greatest threats, and to focus their activity on locations where vulnerable people may be targeted. These locations include care homes, bail hostels and hospitals.

The constabulary makes good use of the protective powers and measures that are available to help in the safeguarding of vulnerable victims when prosecutions haven't been immediately viable. These include [domestic violence protection notices \(DVPNs\)](#) and [domestic violence protection orders \(DVPOs\)](#). In the 12 months to the end of March 2019, the constabulary applied for 248 DVPOs. The courts approved 232 of these. Offenders breached 28 of the DVPOs. In the same period, a superintendent approved 253 applications for DVPNs, and 14 were breached.

Officers and staff have a good understanding of the legal powers that are available to them. They also have a good understanding of how they can use these and other orders to protect vulnerable victims. Importantly, the constabulary responds appropriately to breaches of civil and criminal orders effectively. It uses its offender management and neighbourhood teams to reduce risks of re-offending.

The numbers of 'right to know' and 'right to ask' ([Clare's Law](#)) applications are steadily increasing. In the 12 months to the end of March 2019, there were 84 applications to use 'right to know'. The constabulary made 40 disclosures. There were also 39 applications to use 'right to ask', with the constabulary making 19 disclosures. The Lighthouse safeguarding unit oversees all domestic violence disclosure scheme applications.

Since changes to the Bail Act in 2017, officers and staff haven't been using pre-charge bail as often as expected. This is a national problem. The constabulary has implemented recent national guidance to make sure that bail is applied in these and other high-harm cases. There was good awareness among investigators, who understood the need for managerial approval before deviating from the guidance. Encouragingly, the investigators we spoke to understand the importance of protecting victims. They were making sustained efforts to improve outcomes. And they were using pre-charge bail more often.

The Lighthouse safeguarding unit manages all safeguarding of high-risk domestic abuse victims. [Multi-agency risk assessment conference](#) (MARAC) processes are effective. Specialist staff make thorough assessments of those cases with complex safeguarding issues that would benefit from joint problem solving, information sharing, and ongoing risk-management plans. The police and partners refer cases. These partners include health and education services, doctor's surgeries and independent domestic violence advisers (IDVAs).

The constabulary and other agencies work together to produce plans that will support victims, and which are specific to victims' needs. Daily discussions take place within MASHs and MARACs take place regularly. IDVA services complete pre-MARAC assessments to review the status of cases that are initially assessed as high risk. This makes sure that the highest priority cases are promptly addressed. Analysis indicates that referrals are made in the recommended number of cases. Cases that aren't referred to the MARAC will still result in referral to other strategy meetings or regular safeguarding checks by neighbourhood officers, so that appropriate support is in place.

The constabulary improves its services by using the comprehensive feedback that it gets from vulnerable victims and other users. At the end of cases, staff in the Lighthouse safeguarding unit ask victims about their experiences. The constabulary also seeks feedback from partner services that support victims of sexual assault and domestic abuse. And Barnardo's has been commissioned to report the views of children who have been involved with the criminal justice system. The constabulary shares survey information with vulnerability leads and practitioners and uses it to inform 'lessons learned' bulletins.

The constabulary also uses feedback to influence the decisions that are made at the local safeguarding board. For example, a scrutiny panel for users of mental health

services gathers the views of this vulnerable group. Also, a victim's reference group meets quarterly. These forums act as critical friends to the constabulary, as well as giving people the chance to share their experiences. Gathering this information isn't always straightforward, but it allows the constabulary to gauge how it can improve services for vulnerable people.

The constabulary effectively manages the risk posed by registered sex offenders (RSOs). It has minimal backlogs of visits to low and medium-risk RSOs. It has no backlogs for high-risk offenders. The constabulary completes risk assessments using the nationally recognised [Active Risk Management Model](#). And it works closely with partners in the probation service in their completion. Sometimes, digital forensics officers accompany staff on visits to scrutinise digital devices. This may identify further offending. It may also act as a deterrent and inform more accurate risk assessments. In addition, the constabulary is effective in its approach to identifying those who share indecent images of children online. It shows a proactive approach to reducing this threat. A specialist unit is trained to investigate these offences. As more cases are being identified, mainstream investigators are tackling those cases that the constabulary deems to be less serious.

The constabulary routinely uses preventative and ancillary orders to protect the public from dangerous and sexual offenders. The constabulary reports that it issued 167 [sexual harm prevention orders](#) in the year to the end of March 2019. During that time, 72 orders were breached. Dedicated offender management teams ensure a swift and effective response when breaches of orders occur. During our visits to local stations, neighbourhood policing teams were fully aware of the location of registered sex offenders in their areas. They were actively monitoring them and were submitting relevant intelligence to reduce the risks to the public. There was a good relationship between offender managers and neighbourhood staff, with evidence of supervisors giving additional training. This may help officers to recognise concerning associations or behaviour, and to respond appropriately.

Tackling serious and organised crime



Good

This question was not subject to inspection in 2018/19, and our judgment from the 2017 effectiveness inspection has been carried over.

Armed policing

We have previously inspected how well forces provide armed policing. This formed part of our 2016 and 2017 effectiveness inspections. Subsequent terrorist attacks in the UK and Europe have meant that the police service maintains a focus on armed capability in England and Wales.

It is not just terrorist attacks that place operational demands on armed officers. The threat can include the activity of organised crime groups or armed street gangs and all other crime involving guns. The [Code of Practice on the Police Use of Firearms](#)

[and Less Lethal Weapons](#) makes forces responsible for implementing national standards of armed policing. The code stipulates that a [chief officer](#) be designated to oversee these standards. This requires the chief officer to set out the firearms threat in an [armed policing strategic threat and risk assessment](#) (APSTRA). The chief officer must also set out clear rationales for the number of armed officers (armed capacity) and the level to which they are trained (armed capability).

Understanding the threat and responding to it

Until the 31 March 2019, Avon and Somerset Constabulary had joint arrangements in place with Wiltshire Police and Gloucestershire Constabulary to provide armed policing. However, a decision by the three forces to return some armed policing services back to individual forces now means that there are transitional arrangements in place.

The constabulary's understanding of the potential harm facing the public is adequate. Its APSTRA conforms to the requirements of the code and the [College of Policing guidance](#). The APSTRA is published annually and is accompanied by a register of risks and other observations. The [designated chief officer](#) should however review the register more frequently to check that the right levels of armed capability and capacity are available.

Additionally, there are three areas where the APSTRA could be improved:

- the force had not published its own APSTRA and remained reliant on an assessment of threats and risks affecting both Wiltshire Police and Gloucestershire Constabulary; the constabulary should now develop its own APSTRA to reflect the transitional arrangements and the future of armed policing in the region;
- it would benefit from stronger analysis and intelligence of armed criminals who present risks in Avon and Somerset Constabulary; and
- it includes details of how rapidly [armed response vehicles](#) (ARVs) respond to incidents. This is important to determine whether the force has sufficient armed officers to meet operational demands.

All armed officers in England and Wales are trained to national standards. There are different standards for each role that armed officers perform. The majority of armed incidents in Avon and Somerset Constabulary are attended by officers trained to an ARV standard. As part of the transitional arrangements, Avon and Somerset Police, Gloucestershire Constabulary and Wiltshire Police will provide their own ARVs instead of this being a shared service. However, the joint working relations between the three forces are well established and mutually supportive. ARV officers will still be able to respond to wherever they are needed in the three force areas.

Incidents sometimes occur that require the skills and specialist capabilities of more highly trained officers. Under the new arrangements, Avon and Somerset Constabulary will remain responsible for training and deployment of such officers in its own force area as well as Gloucestershire and Wiltshire. There are enough officers with these specialist capabilities available to respond to threats and protect the public in the region.

Working with others

It is important that effective joint working arrangements are in place between neighbouring forces. Armed criminals and terrorists have no respect for county boundaries. As a consequence, armed officers must be prepared to deploy flexibly in the knowledge that they can work seamlessly with officers in other forces. It is also important that any one force can call on support from surrounding forces in times of heightened threat.

Avon and Somerset Constabulary, Wiltshire Police and Gloucestershire Constabulary will continue to share training facilities as part of the new arrangements. This helps to standardise procedures and maintain standards as well as reduce costs. The training facility is hosted by Avon and Somerset Constabulary on behalf of three forces.

The decision to terminate a shared ARV service and take responsibility for it on a force-by-force basis has a number of consequences. One of these involves management overheads. Whereas previously ARV supervisors could be responsible for all three forces, additional supervisory posts are now needed. In the force, additional supervisors are now in position. The chief officers' initial focus on transitional arrangements meant that regular direct governance oversight of armed policing to ensure clear and robust lines of accountability was not in place at the time of our inspection.

We also examined how well-prepared forces are to respond to threats and risks. Armed officers in Avon and Somerset Constabulary are trained in tactics that take account of the types of recent terrorist attacks. Also, the constabulary has an important role in designing training exercises with other organisations that simulate these types of attack. We found that these training exercises are reviewed carefully so that it can identify learning points and make improvements for the future.

We found that the constabulary regularly debriefs incidents attended by armed officers. However, it does not identify best practice and areas for improvement on every occasion. We recommend that the force reviews operational debriefing procedures. This will help ensure that opportunities to improve are not overlooked.

Efficiency



Force in context

	Avon and Somerset spend	England and Wales spend
Spend per head of population 2019/20 projection	£178	£203

Spend per head of population by category

2019/20 projection

	Avon and Somerset spend	England and Wales spend
Visible frontline	£62	£68
Non-visible frontline	£54	£66
Frontline Support	£14	£17
Business support	£33	£45
Other	£15	£8

How efficiently does the force operate and how sustainable are its services?



Outstanding

Summary

Avon and Somerset Constabulary operates efficiently, and its services are sustainable.

The constabulary is outstanding at planning for the future. Its understanding of demand is becoming increasingly sophisticated.

A hallmark of this constabulary is its impressive use of technology. It has a strong track record of accurately assessing future demand for its services. Now, new modelling programming allows it to accurately predict demand from anywhere between 24 hours and up to 12 months.

The constabulary is also innovative in communicating with the public; we note its use of Facebook community groups and online forums to reach people, and its tailoring of online messaging to reach different communities.

The constabulary's priorities are clear, and it is making sure that it focuses all change and transformation activity on policing priorities.

The constabulary has a very good track record of making savings. It has discontinued joint ventures that were no longer proving to be beneficial. It is seeking to make efficiency savings through a series of service reviews. It is also working to address the savings that it has yet to identify for its [medium-term financial plan](#).

As well as making savings, the constabulary is committed to investing in a way that supports its priorities. Recently, it was successful in gaining funding for tackling escalating knife crime when initially it had been excluded from this funding.

The constabulary is ambitious in its plans to transform the ways in which it uses its estate. It uses co-locating to good financial effect.

In 2017/18, we judged the constabulary to be outstanding at meeting current demands and using resources.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the force's performance in this area.

Meeting current demands and using resources



Outstanding

This question was not subject to detailed inspection in 2018/19, and our judgment from the 2017 efficiency inspection has been carried over.

Planning for the future



Outstanding

The constabulary is outstanding at planning for the future.

In past reports, we have complimented the constabulary for its use of technology. It has a strong record of accurately assessing future demand for its services. It performs better than many other forces in its appreciation of the complexity of demand.

The constabulary works effectively with organisations to learn about crime and harm that are likely to be hidden within its communities. For instance, it works closely with charities that support victims of female genital mutilation.

The constabulary takes the views and priorities of local communities into account when policing the region. And it is innovative in communicating online with the public; among other things, the public can now report [anti-social behaviour](#) and submit evidence, including video recordings, online.

The constabulary works well to develop its workforce. It moved quickly to establish an 18-month recruitment programme. PCSOs and a Citizens' Academy have worked to encourage people from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds to join the constabulary.

The constabulary's current financial plans include prudent assumptions about the future. As well as making savings, the constabulary has a strong commitment to investing in support of its priorities. Operation Remedy is bringing together more than 100 officers to tackle burglary, knife crime and [county lines](#) criminality.

The constabulary is committed to identifying and nurturing talented staff. Its 'recruiting for difference' campaign seeks to improve workforce diversity and leadership.

The constabulary is ambitious and innovative, and it continues to explore opportunities for joint working and collaboration.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the force's performance in this area.

Assessing future demand for services

Avon and Somerset Constabulary has a strong track record of accurately assessing future demand for its services. In previous inspection reports, we have complimented the constabulary for its use of technology. It has developed analytical models that can predict and project future demand. A small team of data scientists drives this demand analysis. The team uses a range of evidence-based predictive modelling software. Information is available to all members of staff through Qlik Sense. The modelling programming allows the constabulary to accurately predict demand from anywhere between 24 hours and up to 12 months.

The constabulary uses this information effectively both for strategic and operational planning. For example, the information has led to the constabulary introducing its demand status plan, which has both short and longer-term benefits. Firstly, the demand status plan gives an accurate snapshot of live-time demand across the constabulary's area. Secondly, planners can assess 12-month demand trends and adjust resourcing levels accordingly. Thirdly, the plan calculates four tiers of demand levels. These take account of resource availability and predicted calls for service. These demand levels range from level 1 (business as usual) to level 4 (exceptional demand). Police commanders refer to protocols for each demand level. These set out the procedures for mobilising resources to address operational pressures when necessary.

In successive inspections, the constabulary's understanding of demand is becoming ever more sophisticated. An area where the constabulary performs better than many others is in its appreciation of the complexity of demand.

Many levels of police activity are relatively easy to quantify. For example, officers who are called to anti-social behaviour or other instances of nuisance can often resolve these incidents quickly, and then be available for further deployments. As such, it is relatively easy to calculate the resourcing needs for this type of incident. Other incidents, such as domestic abuse enquiries, can be protracted. For example, a considerable amount of police time can be spent on working with other organisations to [safeguard](#) victims. This activity is far more difficult to quantify.

To overcome this issue, the constabulary has devised a complexity score for each area of police activity. The score is calculated partly from data analytics, but it also includes inputs from subject matter experts. Their expertise gives the constabulary an insight into areas of activity that might otherwise be obscured. Experts can also assess other factors that will impact the constabulary, such as the need to investigate more crime because of new legislation.

The constabulary used this strategic modelling in part to present arguments to the Home Office for increased police funding, in a publication called [The Tipping Point](#). The strategic modelling illustrates how complexity scoring allocates additional weighting factors to hidden crime such as modern slavery, female genital mutilation and cyber-enabled crime. This helps the constabulary to calculate the additional investigation capacity that it will need (for example, to track phone or computer usage

to establish an offender's digital footprint, or to scrutinise systems that criminals have used to commit crime, or to safeguard [vulnerable](#) victims on a much greater scale). The constabulary is using this sophisticated understanding of complex demand well.

The constabulary works effectively with other organisations to learn more about the crime and harm that are likely to remain hidden in communities. It has a close association with charities that support victims of female genital mutilation. The constabulary supports staff to work alongside UK-based charities that operate in countries where this form of abuse is prevalent. This has helped it to develop profiles of local communities where young girls may be at risk. In turn, this has led to improved awareness among officers and childcare professionals, who are more capable of protecting those who are vulnerable.

Understanding public expectations

Both the chief constable and the [police and crime commissioner](#) (PCC) have effective measures in place to talk to and work with the public. This ensures that the views and priorities of local communities are reflected in how the force area is policed.

The constabulary has an extensive satisfaction and confidence framework. The framework draws on a range of indicators to gauge public opinion and the views of those who use the constabulary's services. The Lighthouse safeguarding unit is at the forefront of this framework, together with a range of [independent advisory groups](#) (IAGs). The police and partner organisations carry out several surveys regularly. These set out how well victims of crime are being supported. (They include victims of sexual assault, domestic abuse and victims who have mental health conditions). The surveys record the opinions of victims in relation to the quality of the service they receive when officers first respond, the support they receive from specialist officers, and the service that investigators give. This information is used to improve operational procedures. The constabulary also includes it in the training of frontline members of staff.

Community engagement is also one of the priorities of the constabulary's neighbourhood policing model. It is one of six pillars of local policing. The other five are: responding to calls; investigation; problem solving; offender management and safeguarding. The [chief officer](#)'s team sets out how staff at all levels of the organisation should play their part in community engagement. This information is outlined in the constabulary's Citizens and Communities Engagement Strategy 2018–20.

The constabulary uses traditional ways of consulting with the public (for example, holding meetings in local community halls). But it also has a well-considered online strategy. It uses a range of social media channels to maximise opportunities to communicate and work with the public. According to surveys carried out by the communications team, online approaches that are tailored towards different community needs give the best reach.

For example, the team has recognised that many communities share matters of local interest on online community groups and forums. These give the constabulary opportunities to promote crime prevention initiatives, appeals for information and more general information about crime trends. Other consultative work has led to innovative

developments in digital information and evidence capture. The public can now report traffic hotspots, anti-social behaviour (including anti-social driving), and give evidence (such as video recordings) through various online portals.

According to post-implementation surveys, the public is entirely happy with these services, which can save time and money for them and for the constabulary.

Prioritising

The constabulary's policing and crime plan (2016–2020) sets out clear priorities. The plan includes a preface from both the PCC and the chief constable, together with a description of their respective roles and responsibilities. The priorities include: strengthening communities; making sure the constabulary has the right people; working effectively with others; and protecting the most vulnerable from harm. Each priority includes a summary of the supporting achievements or success factors. The plan is available in a range of languages and in an easy-to-read format, making it accessible to all communities.

An established protocol exists between the chief constable and the PCC. This sets out how policing plan priorities are resourced. The PCC gives strategic direction, while the constabulary is responsible for design and delivery. The constabulary has streamlined and consolidated its change programme into a strategic framework. It has done this to make sure that it focuses all transformation and change activity on policing priorities.

The constabulary now channels all activity into four corporate strategies: service, people, digital and infrastructure. The constabulary supports these strategies with a single delivery plan (SDP). The constabulary's transformation and improvement directorate is responsible for the SDP. The SDP brings all change and improvement activity into one visible and auditable place. Software technology helps to address the interdependencies between the programmes. It also makes sure that all organisational development is controlled and focused on priorities. Some of the programmes we reviewed included new operational arrangements to offer support services, and the development of a network of digital experts ('digispocs') to promote digitalised working.

Future workforce

As well as having a thorough understanding of the future demands it is likely to face, the constabulary works well to develop its workforce in response to these challenges. As a result of increased council tax revenue, the constabulary has acted quickly to establish an 18-month recruitment programme to increase resources for the first time in many years. The constabulary established the programme in consultation with the office of the police and crime commissioner (OPCC).

The constabulary is confident that its approach to financial planning can support this expansion intelligently, rather than just covering budget deficits. The senior leadership team directs the development of the workforce. The constabulary assigns human resources (HR) practitioners to departmental heads of service. This is to ensure a consistent approach to HR policy throughout the constabulary.

The constabulary can extract data from its HR database to help project anticipated vacancies. We were shown how the database can be used to predict vacancies until the end of the year. The constabulary plans to automate this analysis by introducing a new HR operating system that we have seen working well in some other forces. The constabulary also plans to incorporate workforce planning into its data visualisation predictive analysis.

In all forces, we look carefully at the number of detectives. Recently, increasingly complex demand and workloads have made working as a detective a less popular career choice for officers. As a result, some complex investigations may not be progressed as effectively as they should. Avon and Somerset Constabulary has a shortage of 60 investigators. However, it has a robust plan in place to address the shortfall, which includes: recruitment of [police staff](#) investigators; adoption of a [direct entry scheme](#) for graduates; and the development of a career pathway called 'job families' to introduce prospective candidates to the detective role. Officers and staff can rotate in to familiarise themselves with this type of work. Applicants also have access to incentivised bonuses if they pass the national investigator's exam and become accredited as detectives. Senior leaders were supportive of their staff and encouraged development.

Importantly, the constabulary uses Qlik Sense to identify the number and complexity of crimes that an officer is investigating. This enables it to have an agile approach to allocation. Investigator workloads were manageable. This fact was confirmed by the staff we spoke with.

The constabulary has used workforce surveys to identify stressors in different roles. The findings have helped the constabulary to make sure that it offers wellbeing support. The constabulary works closely with the [College of Policing](#) to make sure that it follows best practice. It is keen to pilot national programmes that are being developed to improve its wellbeing provision.

The constabulary uses volunteer recruitment to boost the skills and experience of its workforce. A Citizens' Academy has encouraged people from BAME backgrounds to join the workforce, as have the efforts of PCSOs. The constabulary also takes opportunities to recruit officers from other forces, and to use civilians in a wide variety of roles. The recent introduction of civilian supervisor roles within investigative departments has significantly enhanced development opportunities. The constabulary also uses other, more established, routes into the constabulary to attract talent and future leaders. These include [Police Now](#), direct entry and [fast-track](#) schemes.

However, the constabulary needs to complete the ongoing project, which has been designed to give it a comprehensive understanding of skills gaps across all departments. This work is in progress. The constabulary's intention is to transfer the activity into a new IT system, using Qlik Sense for easy access and visualisation. Some leaders expressed frustration at a perceived lack of support with the task of mapping the skills of their staff.

Finance plans

The constabulary has a very good track record of making savings. Since 2010/11, it has reduced expenditure by £78m (26 percent of its budget). Its current financial plans include cautious assumptions about future settlements. For example, they include the recognition that a revision of public sector employers' pension contributions may require a recurring £2.8m allocation from the revenue budget. The plans also reveal a good balance between investment into priority areas and continued efficiencies to sustain services within budgetary requirements.

As part of its medium-term financial plan for 2019/20 to 2023/24, the constabulary plans to make an additional £35m of efficiency savings over its lifetime. Of these savings, it hasn't yet identified £5m. Most of the efficiencies are focused on support (that is, non-operational) services. Previously, the constabulary has been proactive in finding the most economic model of offering support services. Ambitious joint ventures between the constabulary, Taunton Deane Council and Somerset County Council were discontinued when a commercial partner's profit was becoming excessive. The constabulary has explored a more recent blueprint to share services (known as a multi-force shared service). However, the constabulary recently withdrew its interest because it didn't think that cost benefits would be enough. As an interim measure, support services are being given in-house; the constabulary has extended the IT operating system to support this measure. In the meantime, the constabulary will explore other possibilities in line with public sector best practice. Another significant source of savings involves the provision of information and communications technology (ICT) services. Again, this is a service that the constabulary will provide in-house, to make recurring savings of £2m.

The constabulary will make other efficiency savings through a series of service reviews. This will involve the constabulary assessing the ways in which services are offered in comparison with other forces. Savings are scheduled through staff reductions in the constabulary's intelligence directorate, as well as through a review of the provision of custody facilities and the vehicle fleet. At the time of our inspection, the constabulary was also drawing up plans to address the residual savings in the medium-term financial plan that it has yet to identify. These include reducing the number of occasions on which the constabulary asks for the help of the National Police Air Service (that is, access to police helicopters to help with aerial surveillance, identifying offenders, etc). The constabulary has reduced the number of occasions that helicopters have supported its operations from an average of 1,400 times per year to fewer than 400.

Alongside these savings, we were encouraged to find a strong commitment to investment in support of the constabulary's priorities. For example, Operation Remedy is bringing together more than 100 officers to tackle burglary, knife crime and the increasing and ongoing threat that communities face from county lines drug supply. The operation was set up in response to consultation. It will be evaluated after 12 months to inform future Home Office funding. In addition to confronting criminals, Operation Remedy also aims to strengthen communities by dissuading young people from becoming involved in this sort of crime.

The constabulary has reacted quickly to budget increases, which are the first for many years, by recruiting officers. This means that the projected phased increase of 116 officers, from 2,650 to 2,766 by March 2020, will quickly offset any vacancies that are created by Operation Remedy.

In addition, the constabulary is robust in taking other opportunities to gain funding, such as that made available to tackle knife crime after a significant rise in deaths and serious injuries. Although initially excluded from this funding, a well-evidenced challenge to the Home Secretary has seen the scheme extended to Avon and Somerset, and several other forces.

Until recently, the constabulary offered several services, including armed policing and motorway patrols, as part of a joint venture with Wiltshire Police and Gloucestershire Constabulary. These services have now transferred back to become the local responsibility of those individual forces. However, firearms training will continue to be offered under a tri-force agreement. We have reported positively about the benefits of these collaborative arrangements. The recent developments, together with the status of other collaborations in forces in England and Wales, will be subject to our further inspection and reporting.

Leadership and workforce development

The constabulary makes a firm commitment to identify, nurture and offer opportunities to its most gifted and talented members of staff. It makes no distinction between officers or staff in this respect; opportunities are available to frontline workers as well as senior managers. All first-line managers join a programme that develops their skills beyond the standard accreditation that is needed for competence in role. This introduces them to techniques for managing their own wellbeing and managing other people. More senior managers have access to a 'coaching for leaders' programme. As part of this scheme, they are assigned a coach and undergo training in the constabulary's interactive training suite.

At the executive level, a personal development programme supports up to 20 people each year who are interested in becoming senior leaders. The constabulary runs this programme in conjunction with the University of the West of England. The programme can lead to candidates gaining a qualification from the Institute of Leadership Management at level 7.

The workforce has a good understanding of the availability of leadership opportunities. The relevant programme is called 'Aspire Leadership'. At the senior level, there is a core leadership group, as well as 'Aspire champions' who have benefited from the programme and are now promoting opportunities to their peers. There is easy access to Aspire Leadership opportunities on the constabulary's website.

The constabulary is challenging itself to improve its workforce diversity and leadership. This is a core theme in its people strategy. The constabulary has developed a 'recruiting for difference' programme. Leadership programmes include cultural development.

Ambition to improve

The constabulary is ambitious and innovative. It continues to explore opportunities for joint working and collaboration to complement its existing arrangements. However, it has withdrawn from some arrangements, such as shared services projects. This is because the constabulary wasn't getting enough benefit from them, and the public wasn't getting value for money. The constabulary hasn't reduced its service provision. Its plans now focus on how best to use a technologically-enabled workforce.

Over several years, the constabulary has developed a reputation for using technology well to understand and manage demand for its services. Within the workforce, an ethos of digital working is established as routine. This means that frontline officers and staff work flexibly and efficiently by making best use of mobile technology. Many of the constabulary's operating systems are dependent on apps. These are familiar systems for the workforce, because they replicate the technology of everyday devices. As a result, frontline workers use them widely. Data entry and retrieval is fast and efficient.

As well as being routine for the workforce, technology is a driving feature of future change and improvement. In 2013, the constabulary first examined the ways in which it projected and predicted demand. Back then, it carried out an exercise to identify and analyse every demand on its services over a 24-hour period. This involved painstaking work, rationalising thousands of lines of data. The data ranged from the constabulary receiving 999 and 101 calls, and emails, to officers taking part in community events, and detectives supporting victims and pursuing criminals. Recently, the constabulary re-ran this exercise. New technology enabled the constabulary to gain (and process) an overview of a day in its life within 24 hours. This exercise not only shows how demand is changing over time; it also illustrates the advances that the constabulary has made in efficient data analysis. The constabulary will continue to repeat this analysis often to gain insight into how it distributes its resources, and to make sure that it understands activity in all areas of its operations.

Equally as ambitious is the constabulary's capital programme. The constabulary has allocated more than half of the planned £84m of expenditure over the lifetime of the medium-term financial plan to projects that support future ways of working. These include transforming the ways in which the constabulary uses its estate to sustain services. This transformation will involve moving away from the traditional use of inefficient, unsuitable police stations in favour of economical and efficient ways of offering services. Examples include patrol bases that have low overheads and large garaging facilities at Kenneth Steele House in Bristol, and a large under-used site in Yeovil.

The constabulary is finding alternative premises to reduce costs, so that it can keep its presence in communities. Often, it does this by co-locating with other organisations. Examples include new bases for neighbourhood policing teams, which are shared with the NHS in Southmead Hospital Bristol. The constabulary is also sharing premises with local fire and rescue services at Williton, Nailsea and Minehead, as at its headquarters.

Legitimacy



Force in context

Comparison of Avon and Somerset workforce ethnicity with local population

as of 31 March 2019

	Avon and Somerset proportion	Local population proportion
Black, Asian and minority ethnic as % of those with stated ethnicity	3.2%	6.7%
White as % of those with stated ethnicity	96.8%	93.3%
Not Stated as % of total	8.6%	

	Avon and Somerset proportion	England and Wales proportion
Proportion of female officers in post as of 31st March 2019	31%	30%

Stop and search by ethnicity

12 months ending 31 March 2019

Avon and Somerset
disproportionality

Stop and Search likelihood of
BAME individuals compared to
white individuals

3.3

Stop and Search likelihood of
Black or Black British individuals
compared to white individuals

7.2

Avon and Somerset
rate

Number of stops and searches
per 1,000 population

3.6

12 months ending 31 March 2019

England and Wales
rate

6.4

How legitimately does the force treat the public and its workforce?



Good

Summary

The constabulary is good at treating the public fairly. Its leaders understand the value of policing by consent, and of treating the public with fairness and respect. The workforce knows about these values and understands them.

The constabulary consults with the public before setting priorities. Crucially, the public can let the constabulary know about their concerns, which it then considers for action. This approach has led to improvements in practice.

The constabulary uses its communications team well to reach communities that might not otherwise make contact. We note its positive outreach efforts with members of the Muslim community.

Avon and Somerset Constabulary's supervision of use of force could be more challenging. Currently, it can't always be sure that force is being used fairly and appropriately.

The constabulary has more of an understanding of its use of [stop and search powers](#). Nonetheless, it should carry out a rigorous review to understand the high levels of disproportionality relating to stop and search that are continuing to occur in Somerset.

The constabulary is good at maintaining an ethical culture. And it is working towards a comprehensive assessment of its corruption risks. The workforce has a good appreciation of the harm caused by those who abuse their position within the constabulary.

In 2017, we judged Avon and Somerset Constabulary to be good at treating its workforce fairly.

Treating the public fairly



Good

The constabulary is good at treating the public fairly. Its [chief officers](#) communicate the importance of fairness and inclusivity regularly. Importantly, the constabulary seeks to strengthen relationships with those who may be mistrustful of the police.

The constabulary works with a refreshing range of [IAGs](#). Neighbourhood teams have well-developed plans for working with communities.

The constabulary uses its communications team well to reach communities that might not otherwise make contact, with tangible results. We note its outreach efforts with members of the Muslim community, for example.

The constabulary gives training and guidance on the lawful use of force. But supervision of the use of force could be more challenging. Currently, officers don't routinely receive feedback about their use of force. And the constabulary doesn't have a dedicated meeting to monitor data on this subject. As a result, Avon and Somerset Constabulary can't always be sure that force is being used fairly and appropriately. It can, however, give comprehensive information on how force is used.

The constabulary has more of an understanding of the workforce's use of stop and search powers. But supervisors and staff don't necessarily know if they are using their powers (or recording grounds) correctly. As with use of force, there is no regular meeting to monitor stop and search-related data. Recent publications lack information about the constabulary's [find rates](#). The constabulary needs to carry out another review to understand the high levels of disproportionality relating to stop and search that are continuing to occur in Somerset.

Areas for improvement

- The constabulary should continue with its plans to ensure effective monitoring of a comprehensive dataset on the use of force.
- The constabulary should continue with its plans to ensure effective monitoring of a comprehensive dataset on stop and search.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the force's performance in this area.

Treating people fairly and respectfully

The constabulary's leaders understand the value of working with communities and treating them with fairness and respect. The chief constable has introduced a statement of purpose, called 'the mission, vision and values'. Clear themes advocate respect for the community by fostering a caring, inclusive and learning culture in the workplace. Chief officers communicate the importance of fairness and inclusivity at internal roadshows and through regular blogs. These consistently explore and reinforce themes of legitimacy and embracing difference. The constabulary emphasises strengthening relationships with those who may be less trusting of the police, as it seeks to overcome the legacy of previous encounters that may have adversely affected the public's confidence. Importantly, staff were aware of these values and understood them. They translate them into effective engagement with the public, and fair treatment of them.

The constabulary's policies, procedures and training reflect this commitment. For example, the constabulary has an independently chaired, well-established [ethics committee](#). The constabulary refers new policies to the committee before approval. Staff and external stakeholders consider ethical issues before the committee documents and shares conclusions with the workforce.

The deputy chief constable chairs a quarterly diversity and inclusion board. This gives structured oversight and scrutiny of fair treatment. It is complemented by a financially-backed project called 'five big initiatives'. These projects intend to drive improvements in workforce diversity and provide more inclusive services to the public, underpinning the constabulary's appetite for continuous improvement and inclusivity.

The constabulary has commissioned workshops on leading with cultural intelligence and inclusive leadership skills. It has done this to encourage community involvement, and to further develop leaders and staff. The training encourages leaders to work with communities, as well as to challenge their own personal behaviours and biases, and to better educate their staff.

Support and challenge through a different lens come from a refreshing range of IAGs, which work closely with the constabulary. These include groups representing Muslim communities, mosques, women and young people. For example, when the constabulary was considering introducing spit and bite guards, it consulted with its strategic IAG and ethics committee to assess the likely impact of this measure.

The constabulary has a citizens and communities engagement strategy. This focuses on the importance of treating the public with fairness and respect, under its service promise. To support this strategy, a key strand of the constabulary's neighbourhood policing model is community engagement. This joined-up approach encourages innovation.

Staff actively work with their communities in a traditional sense, such as through regular neighbourhood consultation meetings. But the constabulary is also committed to extend its reach through an increasingly digitalised approach. For instance, it is reaching more people through Facebook community groups. It gives communications training to identify Twitter super users. And it encourages neighbourhood officers to digitally signpost where they are and what they are doing at all times.

Neighbourhood teams have well-developed engagement plans. The constabulary sets priorities after consulting with the public. The constabulary records the priorities on accessible internet pages. Importantly, the public can feed back their concerns, which the constabulary then considers for action. This has led to improvements in practice. By improving staff visibility, and tackling problems that matter, the public is likely to have more confidence in the constabulary.

The scope of the constabulary's work with communities is extensive. Programmes of work include volunteering schemes, such as Community SpeedWatch and Neighbourhood Watch. A Citizens' Academy offers masterclasses to explain to the public how the police operate and to encourage discussion. The constabulary also runs an innovative Mini Police programme. This is active in an increasing number of schools as part of a wider schools' engagement strategy.

At an interactive youth and policing website, teachers and other educators can access lesson plans that the constabulary's staff have devised. The lesson plans are aligned to policing priorities such as hate crime, knife crime and sexual exploitation. Teachers can download the lesson plans or ask for support from the local schools officer. This approach increases opportunities to interact with children and [safeguard](#) them from cyber-related threats.

The communications team promotes positive interactions between the constabulary and the public. It does this to offer reassurance to those who may have less confidence in the police. For example, the team offered resources and help to Muslim leadership groups, with a view to improving confidence in the recording of hate crime. The team also made a video to illustrate the lived experience of the Muslim community. The team showed the video concurrently with a campaign to encourage people from the Muslim community to become involved in initiatives to assess and progress the constabulary's legitimacy (for example, through custody visits or advisory groups).

The constabulary told us that 70 people from the Muslim community were now involved in initiatives to assess and progress its legitimacy. This work led to a female victim of hate crime agreeing to being filmed to tell her positive experience of the criminal justice process. The video has been shared widely. Similarly, male victims of sexual assault, and a local broadcaster who was subject to a prolonged campaign of stalking and harassment, have also worked with the communications team to share their experiences and give reassurance that their cases were taken seriously.

The workforce is well equipped to understand the importance of treating people with fairness and respect. Over the past two years, the constabulary has trained all operational officers and [staff in unconscious bias](#). It did this as part of an initiative called 'taking the hurt out of hate'. This package also forms part of initial recruit training. Most of the people we spoke to could explain what unconscious bias is, and how it influences their behaviour. The constabulary also gives specific communication training to staff such as control room operators and neighbourhood officers. The introduction of cultural intelligence workshops reflects the constabulary's inclusive approach. It also illustrates the emphasis that the constabulary's leaders place on policing by consent.

Using force

The constabulary gives training and guidance on the lawful use of force to all relevant staff. It assesses the extent to which officers and staff need to use force and it tailors its approach accordingly. The constabulary gives police officers instruction in all personal protective equipment. And it gives training that is specific to the needs of some police staff (such as PCSOs and detention officers). The staff we spoke to understood how to use force fairly and appropriately.

Police and staff record the occasions when they use force on a form that they submit electronically. This complies with national recording standards and is done in a timely way. The constabulary carries out monthly dip-checks of custody records and reviews of [body-worn video](#) to check recording compliance. But, like other forces, it can't be certain that officers are submitting all forms on every occasion. There is an expectation that supervisors review how force is used. The constabulary has effective processes to check that forms are completed appropriately.

However, supervision is not as intrusive as it sometimes needs to be. For example, the constabulary encourages supervisors to review body-worn video footage, but generally, they only do so if injury occurs or a complaint is made. This means that officers don't routinely receive feedback about their use of force. Also, trends within teams may not be identified, and some uses of force may go unrecorded.

Records show that administrators manually manage the completion of training courses. Some inputting isn't completed as accurately as it could be. This means that the constabulary may not always know when refresher training is due. The agreed implementation of a new IT system should improve this situation and reduce associated risks.

Currently, Avon and Somerset Constabulary doesn't have an internal, force-level meeting where it can monitor a comprehensive set of data relating to its use of force. In part, this is because Qlik Sense, with its graphs, charts, maps and apps, offers granular detail on how, when, where, and by whom force is being used. However, it is incumbent on managers to understand and act on this data, despite their competing priorities. This doesn't happen consistently, which means that Avon and Somerset Constabulary can't always be sure that force is being used fairly and appropriately.

The use of force is subject to some scrutiny. For example, there are well-developed external scrutiny processes, and some managers monitor the activity of their staff. Also, thematic areas are presented at senior leader forums and use of force by staff who work in custody centres is closely monitored, as are the monthly reviews of a sample of custody records.

The constabulary has increased its focus on the ways in which its officers use [Taser](#). It has a heightened awareness of this; this type of use of force has been subject to closer monitoring and enhanced training. Leaders also review force data, such as complaints, to identify areas for improvement. As an additional safeguard, if potential concerns are identified about the way force is used, the [professional standards department](#) (PSD) can complete directed monitoring activities to offer reassurance to senior leaders.

Reassuringly, Avon and Somerset Constabulary can present comprehensive information on how force is used. It acknowledges the benefits of using this data to improve organisational understanding and to encourage learning. It is now introducing structured internal monitoring processes. At this meeting, the constabulary will also consider the use of stop and search powers and inform a regular agenda item at the inclusivity and diversity board.

Using stop and search powers

By contrast, the constabulary has a better understanding of the use of stop and search powers by the workforce. It gives training when officers and staff join the constabulary. And there is a two-year refresher training cycle. This is complemented by some additional training in areas of greater sensitivity. Supervisors check stop and search forms. But some advised us that they don't review body-worn video footage. Supervisors have access to detailed information about their officers' use of stop and search via Qlik Sense. However, they don't access this information regularly. This means that supervisors and staff won't necessarily know if they are using their powers, or recording their grounds, correctly.

Prior to our fieldwork, we reviewed a representative sample of 648 stop and search records to assess the reasonableness of the recorded grounds. Of these, 81 percent had reasonable grounds recorded. Our assessment is based on the grounds recorded by the searching officer, and not the grounds that existed at the time of the search.

The constabulary has responded positively; it has completed specific refresher training aimed at all response officers. And it intends to train neighbourhood and other officers in September 2019. This training offers guidance on identifying and recording reasonable grounds. A member of the external scrutiny panel of police powers has given presentations.

As with use of force, Avon and Somerset Constabulary doesn't currently have an internal force-level meeting where it regularly monitors a comprehensive set of data. Nonetheless, Qlik Sense does allow it to retrieve information on all elements of stop and search. For example, it is evident that senior leaders use this to scan geographical disparities that may lead to increased community tension. In addition, a quarterly bulletin published on the constabulary's website gives a breakdown of stop and search statistics. This is being developed to better present and include all data that accords with national recommendations. Some managers weren't aware of trends in the use of stop and search. And they weren't consistently accessing data that could help their understanding and encourage improvements.

In our [2017 legitimacy report](#), we recommended that all forces should:

- monitor and analyse comprehensive stop and search data to understand reasons for disparities;
- take action on those; and
- publish the analysis and the action by July 2018.

The constabulary has complied with some of this recommendation. It identifies the extent to which find rates differ between people from different ethnicities. (Find rates are the rate at which officers find what they were searching for). But it doesn't identify the extent to which find rates differ across different types of searches (including separate identification of find rates for drug possession and supply-type offences).

However, the most recent publications of the constabulary's quarterly report don't include information on find rates. Also, it isn't clear that the constabulary monitors enough data to identify the prevalence of possession-only drug searches, or the extent to which these align with local or force-level priorities.

The constabulary carried out a review to understand the high levels of disproportionality that are continuing across Somerset, in sharp contrast to Avon where levels of disproportionality are much lower. It published this review on its website. But it now needs to repeat this review with more rigour and analysis, and at a force level. This is necessary so that the constabulary can understand and explain the reasons for disparities, tailor activity to address this issue, and share learning.

A university research paper that offers detailed analysis of the use of stop and search is nearing completion and publication. This is important because recently published force data shows that black people are still nine times more likely to be stopped than white people.

The constabulary acknowledges the benefits of using comprehensive data to improve organisational understanding and to encourage learning. It is instigating structured internal monitoring processes. The inclusion and diversity board will give oversight. This should lead to a more sophisticated understanding of heightened disparities in some locations. It could also inform action to reduce inconsistencies in the way that the constabulary records reasonable grounds.

Throughout our inspection fieldwork, it was evident that senior leaders and staff have proper regard for the fair and respectful treatment of their communities. The breadth of the constabulary's engagement activity and additional training are testament to this. For example, the constabulary has given additional one-to-one training to officers who were identified as using stop and search the most. The constabulary's ongoing monitoring has identified sustained improvement. This is supplemented by the constabulary's regular monthly dip-sampling of stop and search records. Reassuringly, the constabulary gave extra training from the outset to officers on Operation Remedy who tackle knife and drug crime. Chief officers consistently advocate the use of body-worn video. Due to close monitoring, this is now used in 87 percent of all stop and search encounters.

Helpfully, supervisors now have a link to their officers' body-worn video footage when search forms are submitted for supervising. And an innovative application on Qlik Sense can indicate how effectively (or not) officers use their powers; it overlays crime hotspots with areas where stop and search is used. Senior managers and analysts review this information. The constabulary has made sure that this will form part of its recently instigated force-level internal monitoring process.

The constabulary has a transparent approach to the external scrutiny of stop and search and use of force. It collaborates with the OPCC on its regular Scrutiny of

Police Powers panel. This well-attended forum has a diverse membership, offering a broad range of views. A comprehensive pack is given in advance of each meeting. This includes documents and data on use of force, and statistics on the use of body-worn video. At the meetings, the panel considers relevant issues within a varied agenda.

For example, members of the panel view randomly selected incidents that have been captured on body worn-video. They then split into groups to consider them and report any concerns. An independent chair and vice-chair channel the exchanges of views, which are sometimes robust but respectful. They share learning with relevant officers, supervisors and the organisational learning team. Chief officers and thematic leads attend the meetings. Their presence reinforces the importance of the meetings. The well-informed panel members have received training and have seen different types of use of force and stop and search activity.

We spoke to some members of the panel at a meeting we observed. They told us that the constabulary took their concerns seriously and acted on them. Actions have included a change in policy for Taser use (where body-worn video is now mandatory), and a request to vary the language that is used in unconscious bias training. The panel shows its intent by insisting on regular updates that verify whether the constabulary has acted on requests for changes.

The minutes of panel meetings, including recommendations, are published on the OPCC website and members share their considerations with the communities that they represent. A recent and welcome initiative involved panel members on the police apprentice curriculum. This unique view into the use of police powers shows the constabulary's willingness to work and build relationships with those harder to reach or less trusting members of the community. It could be further enhanced with representation from some younger people.

The constabulary takes other opportunities to seek views and build on fair treatment. It does this through bespoke IAGs, and by running regular community meetings with neighbourhood staff. The constabulary has also introduced a problem-solving forum called 'the engine room'. The constabulary's aim is to make sure that it captures and understands the views of all communities. Recently, participants have mapped existing engagement channels to identify whether more opportunities exist to offer support. This inclusive approach improves the likelihood of the constabulary securing the public's ongoing co-operation and approval.

Ethical and lawful workforce behaviour



Good

The constabulary's vision is to offer outstanding policing for everyone. The constabulary's leaders consistently promote its values and [Code of Ethics](#). As a result, the workforce understands the values and Code of Ethics well. The chief constable and other chief officers reinforce the importance of high standards of ethical behaviour. Senior leaders serve as positive role models.

Supervisors and staff gave us good examples of ethical decision making. They also knew how to report inappropriate behaviour. And they told us that the constabulary has improved the support it gives to those who are subject to misconduct allegations.

The workforce can refer challenging ethical issues to the constabulary. To date, the ethics committee has debated some 90 different dilemmas. The constabulary responds well to feedback from the ethics committee. And it routinely shares the committee's feedback with the workforce.

Learning is one of the constabulary's core values, and leaders encourage the workforce to learn through experiences. Supervisors have daily discussions to support ethical decision making.

The constabulary identifies and manages its corruption risks sufficiently well. However, it should ensure that its counter-corruption strategy is current and that all staff are vetted to the correct levels to better understand and manage the risks posed. It is acting to improve its response, for example, exploring ways to monitor all ICT systems, and improve vetting processes through additional staffing and updated IT systems.

The constabulary promotes its whistleblowing policies and anonymous reporting systems. It has also adopted the strategy of the [National Police Chiefs' Council](#) to respond to the problem of [abuse of a position for a sexual purpose](#). The constabulary acts robustly on this matter. Officers and staff understand the severe consequences of such behaviour, and the chief constable reinforces the high standards of behaviour that are expected of the workforce.

Areas for improvement

- The force should ensure all staff have received at least the lowest level of vetting clearance for their roles and clear any backlogs, ensuring it is fully compliant with the national vetting guidelines.
- The force should monitor vetting decisions to identify disparities and disproportionality (e.g. BAME groups) and act to reduce them where appropriate.
- The force should ensure it has a counter-corruption strategic threat assessment and control strategy that meets the force's needs to help it understand and manage the risk corruption poses to the organisation.
- The force should ensure it has enough capability and capacity in its counter-corruption unit to be effective in its proactive approach to counter corruption; has full information technology (IT) monitoring to effectively protect the information contained within its systems; and build effective relationships with the individuals and organisations that support and work with vulnerable persons.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the force's performance in this area.

Maintaining an ethical culture

The constabulary's leaders consistently promote the values of the organisation and the Code of Ethics. The workforce understands them well. The constabulary's vision is to provide outstanding policing for everyone. Its values are 'caring, courageous, inclusive and learning'. The chief constable and other chief officers reinforce the importance of high standards of ethical behaviour when they meet the workforce at roadshows and training events, and in blogs that are published regularly on the constabulary's intranet. The workforce told us that the chief constable and other senior leaders act as positive role models who promote ethical decision making and are receptive to ideas and challenge.

The constabulary's policies refer to the Code of Ethics. Prior to their publication, the constabulary's ethics committee reviews the policies to give further assurance about the suitability of content.

During our inspection, we examined the extent to which supervisors and staff understand the Code of Ethics and the constabulary's values. They gave good examples of ethical decision making relating to the handling of sensitive evidence, the disclosure of information and the scope of enquiries in criminal cases. Officers and staff understand how they can report inappropriate behaviour. They also told us that the constabulary has improved the support it gives to those who are subject to allegations of misconduct. These measures include the allocation of trained welfare officers, who help to make sure that people's wellbeing needs are met.

The constabulary has a well-established process that gives the workforce opportunities to refer challenging ethical issues for consideration. The ethics committee meets monthly. It is independently chaired. Representatives include the staff associations and independent members of the public. We were told that some 90 different ethical dilemmas have been debated at the panel since it was formed. These include the content of recruitment adverts, the application of surveillance tactics against young people, and the dilemma of showing graphic body-worn video footage to a victim's mother.

The constabulary responds positively to feedback from the committee. For example, it has considered feedback as to how it should communicate effectively with the public about locations where children are vulnerable to sexual exploitation. The constabulary routinely shares these dilemmas, and the feedback of the ethics committee, with the workforce. It does this on its 'pocket book' intranet site and through a 'team members' room. But the constabulary could do more to inform the committee about the outcome of deliberations.

Officers we spoke to knew about the committee. Some could give examples of ethical dilemmas they had submitted and their attendance at the meeting. If the constabulary promoted the outcomes of the ethics board's discussions more widely, this could stimulate the submission of more ethical dilemmas. In turn, this would support organisational learning and continuous improvement.

The constabulary's leaders actively encourage learning through experiences, rather than merely apportioning blame in a punitive way. Learning is one of the constabulary's core values. Recently, it has promoted this well. However, the extent to

which the workforce has absorbed these messages varies. Most staff acknowledged that leaders promoted a culture of learning, and they felt supported. However, some were apprehensive about the consequences of making mistakes. This is because, historically, the constabulary tended to use formal disciplinary measures to deal with officers who fell short of expected standards. Reassuringly, we identified that the PSD works to support complainants, and the workforce, by endorsing learning and a proportionate approach to the handling of complaints. This means that minor matters of underperformance can be resolved more quickly, through personal reflection and development.

Supervisors told us about the day-to-day discussions they hold to support ethical decision making. Officers and staff apply the national decision model to make sure that their decisions are well thought through. And they understand the expectations of professional behaviour. The constabulary's values and policies have regard to the Code of Ethics. And the workforce generally had a well-developed understanding, which was reinforced through training and briefings. This shows that the constabulary is committed to keeping its ethical culture, and to further making it routine. In turn, this will support the extent to which communities can be confident in the constabulary's legitimacy.

During our previous inspection of the constabulary, we assessed how well it was developing and maintaining an ethical culture through effective initial vetting. The constabulary has made good progress in reducing its vetting backlog. However, when we revisited this area, we identified that the constabulary isn't keeping accurate information on its vetting system. This means that the vetting status of different groups of employees is sometimes difficult to determine. Also, not all members of the workforce hold current vetting clearance for their roles.

In response to these challenges, the constabulary commissioned a peer review of its vetting unit. And it has acted to improve the timeliness of its vetting processes by temporarily doubling staff numbers, as well as reviewing the status of all personnel, and prioritising its work to reduce backlogs based on risk assessment. Positively, the constabulary does comply with national standards when performing vetting for different posts. It reports that only two members of the workforce who joined Avon and Somerset Constabulary prior to 2006 haven't been vetted. In total, five percent of the workforce doesn't hold up-to-date security clearance.

A manager quality-assures vetting decisions that are made within the unit. These decisions don't take account of available information relating to [protected characteristics](#). This may reduce the likelihood of unconscious bias influencing the decision maker. But the constabulary doesn't routinely monitor decisions to make sure there are no disparities evident for those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. Unsuccessful applicants have a right to appeal vetting decisions. In the case of external applicants, a panel that includes an IAG member reviews these decisions. The constabulary maintains that this process is good enough to make sure that decision making is fair throughout its recruitment processes. However, the constabulary should have additional safeguards to make sure that applicants from under-represented groups aren't being adversely affected. Recently, the constabulary identified a preferred supplier for new vetting software. Among other improvements, this will enable it to identify disparities relating to a broader range of protected characteristics more easily.

The constabulary complies with its obligations to give details to the [College of Policing](#) for the barred and advisory lists. (These prevent people who have left the service under investigation, or who have been dismissed, from re-joining or working in law enforcement.)

The constabulary clarifies and reinforces standards of behaviour by publishing the results of local cases of serious misconduct both internally and externally. Lessons are learned through review and post-investigation contact with staff and the PSD lead. The constabulary has trained a small team of officers to support those who are involved in misconduct investigations. Learning is shared through regular contact with staff associations. Importantly, the constabulary recognises and rewards positive standards of behaviour.

The PSD offers further information about risks to integrity on dedicated intranet pages. This subject matter has included a video on standards, and a communication on 'landing the lessons'. The department head and colleagues also give regular inputs to the workforce about the expected standards of professional behaviour.

During our inspection, we tested the extent of workforce knowledge of, and compliance with, integrity policies. In general, the workforce had a good level of appreciation of responsibilities. These included understanding the requirement to report business interests, as well as associations that may increase the opportunities for corruption, and what to do when gratuities are offered. This strongly suggests that the constabulary's approach to reinforcing the standards of behaviour is effective.

However, once a business interest or reportable association has been declared, the constabulary doesn't monitor further. Annual [integrity checks](#) could help to identify those officers or staff who may be at risk of corruption, through personal circumstances or wellbeing-related factors that can increase vulnerability.

Tackling corruption

The constabulary identifies and manages internal corruption risks sufficiently well. But it is addressing areas that will strengthen its response. Currently, it is reviewing its counter-corruption strategic assessment and control strategy. It completed its current tri-annual strategic assessment in 2016, using data from 2015. The constabulary told us the seven types of corruption that it views as priorities. These include infiltration and extremism, and the abuse of position for a sexual purpose. But these priorities aren't based on a comprehensive assessment of current threats. There is an expectation that the constabulary submits this assessment to better inform a regional and national understanding. The constabulary is addressing this situation. By September 2019, it aims to have completed a comprehensive strategic assessment of its corruption risks.

The constabulary's ability to look for the indicators of corrupt behaviour is limited by the capacity of its [counter-corruption unit](#) (CCU). It does draw together different sources of information – such as data held on its registers of business interests and notifiable associations – to assess corruption risks. It compares this with financial information and other forms of intelligence to identify members of its workforce who are at risk of corruption. However, the CCU's approach is mostly reactive. There is no

regular forum that brings together representatives from different departments to review information and identify and track intervention measures in a structured way.

We reviewed 60 counter-corruption investigation cases. It was clear that once a potential issue is identified, the assessment and development of intelligence and investigation was of an acceptable standard. Most, but not all, of the constabulary's ICT systems can be monitored. But the fact that not all of them can be censored inhibits the constabulary's ability to identify and respond to corruption risks. The constabulary is exploring ways to monitor all ICT systems in their entirety. The CCU does possess the useful capability to monitor open source and social media.

The constabulary enjoys good working relationships with agencies that offer support for [vulnerable people](#), including those who are victims of crime. The CCU has taken steps to raise awareness of the signs of corrupt behaviour with these agencies. But it could maintain and develop better communications with these partners.

Reassuringly, when we spoke to staff in the partner agencies during our fieldwork, they indicated that they would be confident to report any concerning behaviour by officers. When this had been done in the past, the constabulary took such reports seriously and gave appropriate updates.

The constabulary promotes its whistleblowing policies and anonymous reporting systems. Officers and staff were aware of the confidential reporting systems available to them. And they were confident that their anonymity would be assured, if sought. They were also assured that their concerns would be taken seriously.

The constabulary has adopted the strategy of the National Police Chiefs' Council to respond to the problem of police officers and staff who abuse their position for a sexual purpose. The constabulary recognises this behaviour as serious corruption and refers cases to the [Independent Office for Police Conduct](#).

We reviewed the extent to which the constabulary has responded to our 2016 national recommendation relating to the abuse of position. The constabulary has made progress. But its partial ability to monitor all its ICT systems effectively, and the limited capacity of the CCU to develop intelligence, remain areas of obvious risk.

However, it was evident from our inspection activity, and shown by the effective handling of misconduct cases, that the constabulary does act robustly in tackling individuals who abuse their position. The constabulary has given 'where's the line?' workshop training to supervisors. This training includes a video that highlights the threats. The training has raised awareness and shown supervisors how to identify warning signs.

The workforce has a strong appreciation of the harm caused by those who abuse their position, which was particularly demonstrated by officers and staff who work in investigation teams, including those who deal with serious and sexual offenders and their victims. They also understand the severe consequences of developing inappropriate relationships with vulnerable members of the public who they encounter in a professional capacity. The chief constable reinforces the high standards that are expected of the workforce in the regular messages he communicates after cases of serious misconduct have concluded. The constabulary actively publicises cases to show how it deals effectively with this type of corrupt behaviour.

Treating the workforce fairly



Good

This question was not subject to detailed inspection in 2018/19, and our judgment from the 2017 legitimacy inspection has been carried over.

Annex A – About the data

Data in this report is from a range of sources, including:

- Home Office;
- Office for National Statistics (ONS);
- our inspection fieldwork; and
- data we collected directly from all 43 police forces in England and Wales.

When we collected data directly from police forces, we took reasonable steps to agree the design of the data collection with forces and with other interested parties such as the Home Office. We gave forces several opportunities to quality assure and validate the data they gave us, to make sure it was accurate. For instance:

- We shared the submitted data with forces, so they could review their own and other forces' data. This allowed them to analyse where data was notably different from other forces or internally inconsistent.
- We asked all forces to check the final data used in the report and correct any errors.

We set out the source of this report's data below.

Methodology

Data in the report

British Transport Police was outside the scope of inspection. Any aggregated totals for England and Wales exclude British Transport Police data, so will differ from those published by the Home Office.

When other forces were unable to supply data, we mention this under the relevant sections below.

Most similar groups

We compare each force's crime rate with the average rate for forces in its most similar group (MSG). MSGs are groups of similar police forces, based on analysis of demographic, social and economic factors which relate to crime. We could not identify any forces similar to City of London Police. Every other force has its own group of up to seven other forces which it is most similar to.

An MSG's crime rate is the sum of the recorded crimes in all the group's forces divided by its total population. All of the most similar forces (including the force being compared) are included in calculating the MSG average.

[More information about MSGs can be found on our website.](#)

Population

For all uses of population as a denominator in our calculations, unless otherwise noted, we use ONS mid-2018 population estimates.

Survey of police workforce

We surveyed the police workforce across England and Wales, to understand their views on workloads, redeployment and how suitable their assigned tasks were. This survey was a non-statistical, voluntary sample so the results may not be representative of the workforce population. The number of responses per force varied between 0 and 372. So we treated results with caution and didn't use them to assess individual force performance. Instead, we identified themes that we could explore further during fieldwork.

BMG survey of public attitudes towards policing (2018)

We commissioned BMG to survey public attitudes towards policing in 2018. Ipsos MORI conducted a similar version of the survey in 2015–2017.

The survey consisted of about 400 respondents for each of the 43 forces. Most surveys were completed online, by members of online research panels. However, a minority of the surveys (around 750) were conducted face-to-face. These face-to-face surveys were specifically targeted to groups that are traditionally under-represented on online panels. This aimed to make sure the survey respondents were as representative as possible of the total adult population of England and Wales. A small number of respondents were also surveyed online via postal invites to the survey.

Results were weighted by age, gender, ethnicity and indices of multiple deprivation to match population profiles. The sampling method used is not a statistical random sample and the sample size was small, which may be more problematic for larger force areas compared to small ones. So any results provided are only an indication of satisfaction rather than an absolute.

[The findings of this survey, and previous surveys, are available on our website.](#)

Review of crime files

We reviewed police case files for these crime types:

- theft from person;
- rape (including attempts);
- stalking;
- harassment;
- common assault;
- grievous bodily harm (wounding); and
- actual bodily harm.

Our file review was designed to provide a broad overview of how well the police:

- identify vulnerability;
- conduct investigations; and
- treat victims.

We randomly selected files from crimes recorded between 1 June and 31 August 2019 and assessed them against several criteria. We reviewed 60 case files in each force, except for West Yorkshire Police where we reviewed 90.

For our file review, we only selected a small sample size of cases per force. So we didn't use results from as the only basis for assessing individual force performance, but alongside other evidence.

Force in context

999 calls

We collected this data directly from all 43 police forces in England and Wales.

Recorded crime and crime outcomes

We took this data from the October 2019 release of the Home Office [police recorded crime and outcomes data tables](#).

Total police-recorded crime includes all crime (except fraud) recorded by all forces in England and Wales (except BTP). Home Office publications on the overall volumes and rates of recorded crime and outcomes include British Transport Police, which is outside the scope of this HMICFRS inspection. Therefore, England and Wales rates in this report will differ from those published by the Home Office.

Police-recorded crime data should be treated with care. Recent increases may be due to forces' renewed focus on accurate crime recording since our 2014 national crime data inspection.

Other notable points to consider when interpreting outcomes data are listed below.

- Crime outcome proportions show the percentage of crimes recorded in the 12 months ending 31 March 2019 that have been assigned each outcome. This means that each crime is tracked or linked to its outcome. So this data is subject to change, as more crimes are assigned outcomes over time.
- Under the new framework, 37 police forces in England and Wales provide outcomes data through the HODH every month. All other forces provide this data via a monthly manual return.
- Leicestershire, Staffordshire and West Yorkshire forces participated in the Ministry of Justice's out of court disposals pilot. As part of the pilot, they stopped issuing simple cautions or cannabis/khat warnings and restricted their use of penalty notices for disorder for adult offenders. These three forces continued to follow these procedures since the pilot ended in November 2015. Later, other forces also limited their use of some out of court disposals. So the outcomes data should be viewed with this in mind.

For a full commentary and explanation of outcome types please see the Home Office statistics, [Crime outcomes in England and Wales: year ending March 2019](#).

Domestic abuse outcomes

In England and Wales, 29 police forces provide domestic abuse outcomes data through the Home Office data hub (HODH) every month. We collected this data directly from the remaining 14 forces.

Domestic abuse outcome proportions show the percentage of crimes recorded in the 12 months ending 31 March 2018 that have been assigned each outcome. This means that each crime is tracked or linked to its outcome. So this data is subject to change, as more crimes are assigned outcomes over time.

Workforce figures (including ethnicity and gender)

This data was obtained from the Home Office annual data return 502. The data is available from the Home Office's published [police workforce England and Wales statistics](#) or the [police workforce open data tables](#). The Home Office may have updated these figures since we obtained them for this report.

The data gives the full-time equivalent workforce figures as at 31 March. The figures include section 38-designated investigation, detention or escort officers, but not section 39-designated detention or escort staff. They include officers on career breaks and other types of long-term absence but exclude those seconded to other forces.

Spend per head of population

We took this data from the [HMICFRS value for money profiles](#).

These profiles are based on data collected by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, through the Police Objective Analysis. The spend over time figures are adjusted for inflation. The population figures are ONS mid-year estimates, with the 2019/20 value calculated by assessing the trend for the last five years. [More details on this data can be found on our website](#).

Stop and search

We took this data from the Home Office publication, [Police powers and procedures, England and Wales year ending 31 March 2019](#). Stop and search totals exclude vehicle only searches and searches where the subject's ethnicity was not stated.

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