

PEEL

Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy 2018/19

An inspection of Dorset Police



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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 Dorset Police against.

IPA area	Inspected in 2018/19?
Preventing crime and anti-social behaviour	No
Investigating crime	Yes
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	Yes

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

Force in context











	Dorset rate	England and Wales rate
999 calls per 1,000 population 12 months ending 31 March 2019	135	175
	Dorset rate	Most Similar Forces rate
Recorded crime per 1,000 population 12 months ending 30 September 2018	67	66

Dorset workforce

	FTE in post on 31 March 2019	FTE in post on 31 March 2014	Percentage change
Police Officer	1,223	1,217	0%
Police Community Support Officer	108	154	-30%
Police Staff	1,037	839	24%

	Dorset spend	England and Wales spend
Spend per head of population 2018/19 projection	£168	£192

Overall summary

	Effectiveness		Last inspected
Preventing crime and tackling anti-social behaviour	Good		2016
Investigating crime	Good		2018/19
Protecting vulnerable people	Good		2018/19
Tackling serious and organised crime	Good		2016
Armed response capability	Ungraded		2018/19
	Efficiency		Last inspected
Meeting current demands and using resources	Good		2017
Planning for the future	Good		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	2018/19	

How does the force compare with similar forces?

We compare Dorset Police'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.](#)

Dorset Police's MSG forces are Surrey Police, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, Gloucestershire Constabulary, Thames Valley Police, Warwickshire Police, Sussex Police and West Mercia Police. We haven't yet inspected Cambridgeshire Constabulary and Sussex Police as part of IPA 2018/19, so use their graded judgments from our previous PEEL assessment for comparison.

Figure 1: Pillar judgments for Dorset Police, compared with forces in its MSG



HM Inspector's observations

I am pleased with Dorset Police's performance in keeping people safe and reducing crime.

The force understands its communities. It is good at preventing crime and [anti-social behaviour](#). It investigates crime well and works well with partner organisations to identify and protect [vulnerable people](#).

The force has a good understanding of current demands for its services. It is using this knowledge to develop sustainable financial and workforce plans. These include a programme to share support functions like IT operating systems with a neighbouring force. The force plans to use technology to improve public contact in the control room, and mobile technology to help frontline staff.

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

Overall, I commend Dorset Police for sustaining its positive performance over the past year. I am confident that it is well equipped for this to continue.



Wendy Williams

HM Inspector of Constabulary

Effectiveness



Force in context

	Dorset proportion	England and Wales proportion
Proportion of officers in a neighbourhood or response function in post on 31 March 2019	45%	40%

Victim-based crime per 1,000 population

12 months ending 30 September 2018

	Dorset rate	Most Similar Forces rate
Violence against the person	22	20
Sexual offences	2	2
Theft Offences / Robbery	27	28
Criminal damage and arson	9	8

Crime Outcomes

12 months ending 30 September 2018

	Dorset proportion	England and Wales proportion
Proportion of crimes where action was taken	18%	13%
Proportion of crimes where suspect was identified	49%	46%
Proportion of crimes where victim did not support police action	24%	23%

Outcomes for crimes flagged as domestic abuse

12 months ending 31 March 2018

	Dorset proportion	England and Wales proportion
Charge/summonsed	20%	16%
Evidential difficulties: suspect identified; victim does not support	37%	49%

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



Good

Summary

We judge Dorset Police to be good in terms of its effectiveness at keeping people safe.

The force is good at investigating crime. Its investigators are well trained and, in general, cases are allocated to officers with appropriate skills. Most of the case files we saw were of a high standard.

However, investigations are not always supervised thoroughly enough. The force also needs to conduct more regular reviews into cases in which suspects have not been apprehended, or have been [released under investigation](#).

Dorset Police is good at protecting [vulnerable people](#). Staff across the force know how to recognise vulnerability, and officers attend incidents involving vulnerable victims promptly.

However, the safeguarding referral unit is operating with significant backlogs, and may need more resources. The force should do more to seek feedback from victims of domestic abuse, and shape its services accordingly.

In 2017, we judged the force to be good at preventing crime and tackling [anti-social behaviour](#). We also judged it to be good at tackling serious and organised crime.

Preventing crime and tackling anti-social behaviour



Good

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

Investigating crime



Good

The overall standard of investigations conducted by Dorset Police is good. The force has trained investigators working in frontline roles and specialist investigation teams. Staff trained in the use of intelligence systems are present in the control room, so they can support investigations when a crime is first reported.

Officers and staff in Dorset Police understand the importance of gathering evidence during the 'golden hour' after a crime is committed. Frontline officers know how to preserve forensic evidence, and they told us that they were given enough time to do this when attending crime scenes.

However, many of the files we reviewed showed ineffective supervision of investigations. The force is aware of this problem and has posted supervisors with detective experience into teams with high demand.

The force effectively monitors people who are wanted on warrant or circulated on the [Police National Computer](#) (PNC). However, the force is less effective at supervising these cases once they have been circulated. It is important to review investigations involving outstanding offenders regularly.

The force is good at managing arrested foreign nationals and criminal records checks. It has processes in place to make sure custody sergeants complete all the relevant checks when foreign nationals are arrested.

The force generally uses protective powers, such as [domestic violence protection orders](#) (DVPOs), appropriately. However, there are far fewer DVPOs issued than there are released under investigation (RUI) cases. This could mean that some victims of domestic violence may be at risk while their cases are being investigated.

In response to national concerns, the force has made good progress on training staff in [disclosure](#), which is providing the defence with copies or access to all material that is capable of undermining the prosecution case or assisting the defence.

Areas for improvement

- The force should improve the scrutiny and governance of outstanding suspects and persons released under investigation to ensure that investigations are pursued effectively.
- The force should ensure regular and active supervision of the quality and progress of investigations. This supervision should be properly recorded.

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

Investigation quality

The overall standard of investigations conducted by Dorset Police is good. The force has trained investigators working in frontline roles and specialist investigation teams. However, there are unfilled roles in some of these specialist teams, and they sometimes struggle to meet demand. The force is aware of this problem and a review was taking place at the time of our inspection.

The force monitors the training of its investigators to make sure that it has enough capacity. However, it makes little provision for continued professional development, which is important for maintaining staff competence. Staff trained in the use of intelligence systems are present in the control room, so they can support investigations when a crime is first reported.

Like many forces, Dorset Police holds a daily management meeting to review demand from calls for service and assess it against available resources. We observed a daily meeting chaired by a [senior officer](#), aimed at reviewing crimes reported over the last 24 hours. This took a coherent approach to allocating appropriate resources to high-risk investigations, and considering how best to protect vulnerable victims.

The control room allocates the most serious and complex crimes to investigators after initial attendance. We found that in most cases investigators have appropriate training. Demand for service remains high, particularly in the summer months, and this puts pressure on the teams that manage violent and sexual offenders. An investigation resolutions team deals with some cases over the phone, and we found that the force generally allocated these cases appropriately.

The 'golden hour' is a critical period in any criminal investigation, during which effective early action by attending officers can help to secure and preserve evidence. Officers and staff in Dorset Police understand the importance of gathering evidence at this early stage. Frontline officers know how to preserve forensic evidence, and they told us that they were given enough time to do this when attending crime scenes.

Prior to our inspection we reviewed 60 files from recent investigations. In one third of the files reviewed, supervision was either ineffective or had not been carried out in line with force policy. This was particularly noticeable with low-level crimes, and we found that in these cases initial reviews, investigation plans, and ongoing supervision were often lacking.

We will continue to monitor the standard of the force's investigation plans and supervision. In this inspection we found that the direction and scrutiny of investigations was inconsistent, although it was generally better in specialist departments than it was in the incident resolution team. The force is aware of this problem. It has posted supervisors with detective experience into teams with high demand, and has improved supervision in the incident resolution team.

Dorset Police is good at supporting vulnerable victims. Investigators with special training interview vulnerable people, and we saw evidence that victims are well cared for. Officers and staff understand the importance of evidence-led prosecutions, which are cases that the force pursues without the co-operation of a victim. The force has certain core actions that it expects officers to take during investigations, for

example, house-to-house enquiries and checking for CCTV at crime scenes. We found they were meeting these.

In our 2016 inspection, we suggested as an area for improvement that the force improve its initial investigation of cases involving vulnerable victims, by ensuring officers capture evidence of injuries and crime scenes using [body-worn video](#). Most frontline officers and staff now have this equipment and use it effectively, and the force will complete its implementation in July 2019. We are satisfied that the force has made sufficient progress in this area.

Earlier this year, an inspection by HMICFRS reviewed the effectiveness of Dorset Police and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) when investigating and prosecuting crimes committed against older people. This inspection found inconsistencies in investigation standards. The force is aware of this and should ensure that a consistent standard is applied to all investigations, particularly those involving vulnerable older people.

Catching criminals

An important part of investigations is managing suspects who are avoiding prosecution, or have been identified as suspects but not yet arrested or interviewed. The force is effective at monitoring people who are wanted on warrant or circulated on the PNC, and has recently completed a comprehensive audit.

Most officers and staff told us that they understood how to circulate the details of a suspect on the PNC, and they were aware that they needed to complete all investigative enquiries before doing so. However, the force is less effective at scrutinising and supervising these cases once they have been circulated. It is important to review investigations involving outstanding offenders regularly.

The force co-ordinates its efforts to locate outstanding high-risk offenders through daily management meetings which are chaired by senior officers. There are also weekly reviews and fortnightly tasking meetings which are aimed at pursuing these cases. Since January 2019 there has also been a specialist fugitive management team. At the time of our inspection, this team was conducting a review of all outstanding suspects.

The force is good at identifying and managing arrested foreign nationals, and manages criminal records checks, referred to as [ACRO](#) checks, well. It has introduced safeguards and additional processes to its IT systems, to make sure that custody sergeants complete all relevant checks when foreign nationals are arrested. The force holds quarterly meetings with a range of bodies, including immigration enforcement, to co-ordinate work to pursue and prosecute foreign nationals who have committed serious crimes.

As a result of changes to police [bail](#) under the Policing and Crime Act 2017, many suspects are now RUI from police custody. We were pleased to find that the workforce was generally aware of the [National Police Chiefs' Council](#) (NPCC) guidance on use of bail and RUI. The force regularly gives comprehensive RUI data to all department managers, so they can manage cases and safeguard victims. But although the force has local processes in place to scrutinise investigations in which suspects are RUI, we found that some officers and staff did not know what they were.

The force generally uses protective powers, such as DVPOs, appropriately. However, there are far fewer DVPOs issued than there are RUI cases. This could mean that some victims of domestic violence may be at risk while their cases are being investigated.

Disclosure is the process by which the defence is provided with copies or access to all material that is capable of undermining the prosecution case or assisting the defence. The force has made good progress on disclosure in response to a series of recommendations in our Making it Fair report published in 2017. A [chief officer](#) leads on disclosure and the force has a disclosure working group, which dip-samples investigations to learn from mistakes and identify good practice. The force has also provided staff training on disclosure, and ten members of staff have received further training as disclosure champions.

The force is also working with the CPS to develop guidance on the best ways of working together. In future, it plans to implement a performance framework, to set up a regional disclosure conference with other forces, and to recruit a disclosure lead. The force is clearly committed to getting this difficult area of policing right.

The force has a good charge rate, in line with, or above, other forces in England and Wales. For the 12 months to 30 September 2018 the proportion of recorded offences given a charge or summons outcome was 9.6 percent, compared with an England and Wales rate of 8.3 percent. A performance team analyses outcome data monthly and quarterly, in force performance meetings, and conducts thematic reviews.

At the time of our inspection, the team was reviewing the force's response to domestic abuse. This is evidence of a culture of continuous improvement.

Protecting vulnerable people



Good

Staff across Dorset police understand how to identify vulnerability. The chief constable makes this a priority, and spreads this message through station visits, internal communications, leadership and training events. The force also understands the nature and scale of vulnerability in its area. Officers and staff have uncovered 'hidden' forms of harm, such as vulnerable people being trafficked or subjected to forced labour.

Control room processes are generally effective at identifying vulnerable people, including repeat victims, when they contact the police. The IT system is ineffective, but a replacement system is planned this year. The [THRIVE](#) model of risk assessment is the primary tool used in the force communication centre, and we found that staff were applying it correctly.

In general, the incidents that we reviewed during our inspection were well managed and attended promptly. The force closely monitors its response to emergency incidents against set response times, but is not as rigorous about monitoring the response to non-emergency incidents.

Dorset Police works well with other organisations, including Dorset Healthcare University NHS Foundation Trust, Dorset County Council, and Bournemouth and Poole local authorities, to protect vulnerable people. However, there are significant backlogs of unprocessed public protection notices in the safeguarding referral unit. The force has responded swiftly to our concerns, implementing short, medium and long-term plans, but it will need to prevent a similar situation arising again.

The force uses a wide range of measures to protect domestic abuse victims. It could do more, however, to seek feedback from them, and use this to improve its services.

Areas for improvement

- The force should ensure that the capability and capacity of the safeguarding referral unit enables it to process referrals promptly and effectively. Within this, it should ensure that its approach and model is sustainable for the long term.
- The force should improve how it seeks feedback from victims of domestic abuse and use that feedback to improve services.

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

Staff across Dorset police understand how to identify vulnerability, risk and harm. The chief constable makes this a priority, and spreads this message through station visits, internal communications, leadership and training events. Most officers and staff that we spoke to were able to describe what vulnerability meant and how to identify it, including hidden vulnerability. They identified many factors that could indicate vulnerability such as age, poor mental health, addiction, domestic abuse and isolation.

The force also understands the nature and scale of vulnerability in its area. It regularly commissions thematic reviews, audits and processes to identify good practice and pick up on mistakes. For example, reviews of the effectiveness of the force response to domestic abuse and missing people were ongoing at the time of our inspection.

Officers and staff have uncovered 'hidden' forms of harm, such as vulnerable people being trafficked or subjected to forced labour. In one case, an officer identified so-called honour-based violence through questioning the family while attending a domestic incident. Investigations where there may be hidden harm, including missing people enquiries or where child exploitation is suspected, receive additional resources and intelligence support.

The force has created a [county lines](#) neighbourhood policing team to target organised crime groups and safeguard vulnerable people who may be at risk of exploitation. Frontline officers have received vulnerability training, and they spoke highly of it.

Control room processes are generally effective at identifying vulnerable people, including repeat victims, when they contact the police. The IT system is ineffective, but a replacement system is planned this year. Staff working in the force communication centre have a good understanding of vulnerability, and many have attended recent

training on the issue. We listened to calls that demonstrated a good use of questioning skills to assess threat, risk, harm and vulnerability.

The triage team is the first point of contact with the force for non-emergency calls and, as such, it must identify vulnerable people and prioritise calls for service accordingly. However, we found that members of this team had an inconsistent understanding of vulnerability, which could put vulnerable people at risk.

The THRIVE model of risk assessment is the primary tool used in the force communication centre, and we found that staff were applying it correctly. We sampled a small number of incidents relating to mental health and domestic abuse during our inspection. Call handlers had identified risk promptly, and the policing response had been appropriate to the reported circumstances. However, it was less clear that they had done further risk assessments for incidents where circumstances had changed.

A detective sergeant is based in the communication centre to provide immediate access to intelligence systems and oversee research to inform risk assessments. Staff working in the centre told us that they valued this support.

Responding to incidents

In general, the incidents that we reviewed during our inspection were managed professionally by staff in the force communication centre and attended promptly. The IT system in the control room is ineffective, however, and necessitates multiple checking processes. Staff are working hard to overcome these difficulties and, as noted above, the force plans to replace it this year.

The force closely monitors its response to emergency incidents against set response times. However, it is not as rigorous about monitoring the response to non-emergency incidents, and we found that response times in these cases can vary. There could be many reasons for this, such as the caller not being home at the time of police attendance but, even so, the force could do more to understand its performance in this area and to make improvements.

In our 2017 inspection, we said that the force should improve its response to non-emergency incidents, particularly those involving vulnerable victims. It has made some progress, by improving desktop investigation and adopting a scheduled appointment system for non-emergency calls requiring police attendance. However, we will continue to monitor performance in this area as the force moves to the new IT system.

Frontline staff follow a clear process in assessing risk and vulnerability, identifying [safeguarding](#) issues and categorising them using a public protection notice (PPN). The PPN form incorporates the [domestic abuse, stalking and harassment \(DASH\) risk assessment](#) for all domestic abuse incidents. The force processes a large number of PPN forms, but when we reviewed a small sample of them during our inspection, we found the quality was variable. There is also an inconsistent approach to the supervision of PPNs. The force is aware of this and has implemented a review.

Officers know that they need to record the details of all potentially vulnerable people at a location, whether present or not. In incidents where domestic abuse is suspected or reported, they complete all risk assessments in person with the victim. Dorset hosts considerable numbers of tourists, so we were pleased to note that the force had a

good process for sharing information with the home forces of vulnerable people who visit the area.

The force makes good use of arrest and [voluntary attendance](#) at police stations to protect victims, including victims of domestic abuse. In the 12 months to 30 September 2018, the force made an arrest in about 40 of every 100 domestic abuse-related crimes, and used voluntary attendance in about 9 in every 100 domestic abuse-related crimes. Both these rates are above the England and Wales rates of 33 arrests and 5 voluntary attendances per 100 domestic abuse-related offences.

Dorset Police has had a mental health [street triage](#) facility in place since 2014. Police officers patrol with mental health practitioners on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights from 7pm to 8.30am, providing access to medical records and advice when responding to people with mental ill-health. A telephone triage service supports officers responding to incidents, and staff in the force communication centre. The triage services are staffed by NHS clinicians who have access to NHS and police IT systems.

A year ago, Bournemouth University evaluated Dorset's street triage services, and drew up a new model, which was implemented in April 2019. The force has a retreat facility where officers can direct people with mental ill-health for advice and support from medical professionals. Officers told us that the facility provided invaluable early access to appropriate mental health care.

We found excellent partnership working between Dorset Police and other organisations, including Dorset Healthcare University NHS Foundation Trust, Dorset County Council and Bournemouth and Poole local authorities, to protect vulnerable people. Representatives gave positive feedback on the force, praising the knowledge and empathy of frontline officers and staff.

Supporting vulnerable victims

Neighbourhood teams are involved in the ongoing safeguarding of vulnerable victims, including elderly people and those with mental ill-health. The force has created a neighbourhood policing team in Weymouth that is dedicated to tackling county lines and dangerous drugs networks. The team has a dual purpose: it tackles criminal networks, and protects people who are at risk of being exploited by them. This often involves working with other agencies and partners, including housing associations, local authorities and charities, who spoke highly of the force's contribution.

Officers and staff in the safeguarding referral unit process [domestic violence disclosure scheme](#) (DVDS) applications. The scheme enables the police to disclose information to an applicant about previous violent offending by a new or existing partner where this may help to protect them from abuse. The detective sergeant based in the force communication centre reviews applications where there is an urgent need for disclosure. The number of 'right to know' and 'right to ask' (Clare's Law) applications is broadly in line with other forces in England and Wales, but the numbers of disclosures are low in comparison to the volume of applications. We raised this with the force, and it is now reviewing its recording processes.

The force is considering whether its use of pre-charge bail is appropriate. We were pleased to find that it had circulated recent guidance, in line with national

recommendations, to all supervisors. This advised that they should use bail for domestic abuse and other investigations where there is a high risk of harm to the victim. Supervisors told us that they were aware of the guidelines.

Dorset Police helped to create the [multi-agency safeguarding hub](#) (MASH) in 2017. Police and other agencies including health and children's services, and local authorities work together in an office in Poole, and we found excellent information-sharing and joint working.

Officers submit PPNs, the forms with which they assess risk and vulnerability, to the safeguarding referral unit (SRU). We reviewed the referral process during our inspection and found significant backlogs of unprocessed forms in the SRU. The force has responded swiftly to our concerns, implementing short, medium and long-term plans to tackle the backlogs, but it will need to prevent a similar situation arising again. This is an area for improvement for the force.

The force works with a number of partner organisations to protect domestic abuse victims through the [multi-agency risk assessment conference](#) (MARAC) process. These include adult and children's social care, health, education, housing associations, midwifery and drug and alcohol services. There are three MARACs within the force area, and each meets on a regular basis to exchange information, and to plan and review joint responses to high-risk domestic abuse cases. Both police and partner agencies refer cases into the MARAC, and at the time of our inspection the level of referrals was within guidelines.

The victims' bureau seeks feedback, and shares this information with officers. But the force could do more to act on this information, particularly when designing future services. We did not find much evidence of feedback from vulnerable victims, including victims of domestic abuse. The force is considering how to improve this as part of its review into domestic abuse processes.

Dorset Police is good at managing the risks presented by offenders who pose a threat to vulnerable people. The [management of sexual offenders and violent offenders](#) team is well run, and the caseloads for offender managers are achievable. We did not find evidence of any backlogs of risk assessments or outstanding visits during our inspection.

The force is good at identifying people who share indecent images of children online, and it has been proactive in tackling them. However, frontline staff have an inconsistent level of knowledge about dangerous offenders living in their patrol area. This information is available to staff and we found some using it effectively in briefings, but this was not the case in all frontline teams.

Tackling serious and organised crime



Good

This question was not subject to detailed inspection in 2018/19, and our judgment from the 2016 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 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

The force has an adequate understanding of the potential harm facing the public. 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](#) reviews the register frequently to maintain the right levels of armed capability and capacity.

There are two areas where the APSTRA could be improved:

- it could improve procedures to identify the locations most likely to be at risk of terrorist attack; and
- it would benefit from an analysis of how quickly [armed response vehicles](#) (ARVs) respond to armed incidents.

These are matters that we identified to the force last year. It is important to put them right. This will ensure that ARV patrol areas can be identified and help to determine whether the force has sufficient armed officers to meet operational demands. We will re-examine these shortcomings in future inspections.

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 Dorset Police are attended by officers trained to an ARV standard. However, incidents sometimes occur that require the skills and specialist capabilities of more highly trained officers.

We found that Dorset Police has good arrangements in place to mobilise specialist officers should their specialist skills be required. On these occasions, agreements are in place for the capabilities to be provided in conjunction with Devon and Cornwall Police.

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.

Dorset Police has effective arrangements with Devon and Cornwall Police to provide armed policing. This means that the standards of training, armed deployments and command of armed operations are assured in both forces. It also means that ARVs can deploy rapidly and effectively in both force areas.

We also examined how well prepared forces are to respond to threats and risks. Armed officers in Dorset Police are trained in tactics that take account of the types of recent terrorist attacks. Dorset Police also 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 learning points are identified, and improvements are made for the future.

Efficiency



Force in context

	Dorset spend	England and Wales spend
Spend per head of population 2018/19 projection	£168	£192

Spend per head of population by category

2018/19 projection

	Dorset spend	England and Wales spend
Visible frontline	£58	£65
Non-visible frontline	£47	£62
Frontline Support	£16	£17
Business support	£33	£41
Other	£13	£8

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



Good

Summary

We judge Dorset Police to be good in terms of its efficiency and sustainability.

The force has detailed plans for the future, based on its analysis of a range of data. There is a culture of continuous improvement in Dorset Police, which is supported by the right leadership and governance.

It could do more, however, to find out what the public's priorities are in terms of policing, and use that information to shape its services.

Dorset Police has a balanced budget for the 2019/20 financial year. Its financial plans are realistic and have been scrutinised by external experts. The force has a strong record of making financial savings.

In 2017, we judged the force to be good at meeting current demands and using resources.

Meeting current demands and using resources



Good

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



Good

Dorset Police designs future services to meet its priorities, and these plans are built on a firm evidence base. It has invested in technology to understand patterns and predict trends. These indicate a potential 8 percent increase in demand over the next 12 months. The force has modelled the impact if this prediction is greater or less than anticipated.

It needs to do more, however, to understand hidden demand. It also needs to give more weight to public consultation, such as that led by the office of the police and crime commissioner (OPCC), which gives the force an insight into what the public expects. We found limited evidence that the force had used the consultation to inform its plans for future policing.

The priorities in the force's police and crime plan 2017–21 are clear, and resources have been allocated appropriately. They include protecting people at risk of harm, working with communities, supporting victims and witnesses, reducing reoffending, and internal restructuring.

The force has a good knowledge of the skills and experience of its workforce. It has done a skills audit, which identified some gaps in leadership and digital skills, and it is addressing these through tailored training programmes planned for this year.

Dorset Police has a balanced budget for the 2019/20 financial year. Both the budget and the force's [medium-term financial plan](#) are based on realistic assumptions and they have been subject to expert scrutiny. The force has a strong record of achieving financial savings.

Areas for improvement

- The force should ensure that public expectation is sought and considered in the planning and design of future policing services.
- The force's understanding of current demand is good. However, more needs to be done to understand future pressures and to work effectively with other organisations to address them.

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

Predicting likely future demand

The force analyses the demands upon its services on a daily, weekly and annual basis. It is investing in technology to understand patterns and predict trends. The [force management statement](#) (FMS) is a self-assessment that is required of every police force to be submitted to HMICFRS annually. It helps forces to identify current and predict future demand and plan accordingly. In the case of Dorset Police, the FMS makes a clear link between demand and how the force allocates its resources.

The force has an established joint restructuring programme with Devon and Cornwall Police. This aims to improve services across nine core areas of business, including:

- bringing together the IT operating systems used by both forces;
- using technology to improve public contact in the force control room; and
- increasing use of mobile technology by frontline staff.

These will be important developments in maintaining services to the public.

Assessing future demand for services

The force uses statistical trend projections to predict future demand for service. These indicate a potential 8 percent increase in demand over the next 12 months. The force has modelled the impact if this prediction is greater or less than anticipated. This assessment identifies geographical areas where there is a projected increase, together with the times of day that the force's resources are most likely to be needed.

For example, the force expects that there will be more:

- calls concerning the welfare of people who leave hospital emergency departments prior to treatment;
- reports of missing people; and
- cyber-related crime.

It intends to increase staff training, develop specialist skills, realign shift patterns and work with partners, to manage this predicted change.

The force uses information held by other organisations – including ambulance and mental health services – to inform its current and predicted demand. A [chief officer](#) leads a demand management programme that co-ordinates a number of projects, led by [senior officers](#), to improve the force understanding and management of demand.

The force has not yet formed a thorough understanding of hidden demand. This refers to incidents or crimes, such as human trafficking and modern slavery, that are less likely to be reported because victims are so vulnerable.

The force could also do more to share information with other organisations to develop its understanding of hidden demand. We saw examples of the force working with social care providers on cases of children who frequently go missing – these cases now have their own dedicated case officers. But more could be done to share information with other service providers, such as health and social care services, to understand and manage demand collectively.

Dorset Police is planning to use technology to manage some aspects of future demand. The force is exploring opportunities to use automation in some areas of its work, such as non-emergency call handling, and we will watch with interest as this work develops.

Understanding public expectations

Public consultation, led by the OPCC, gives the force an insight into what the public expects from its police force. OPCC consultation exercises form the basis of the police and crime plan, which sets the priorities for Dorset Police. However, we found limited evidence that the force has used the consultation to inform its plans for future policing.

Dorset Police's communications team, which works jointly with Devon and Cornwall Police, is using a new customer insight programme to improve services. This includes interviews and focus groups with people who have needed help from the force, including those who have less confidence in the police. The team produces videos of these conversations and plays them back to the frontline workforce. But while the insight programme is encouraging, its reach is still limited. We will watch its progress with interest.

Making best use of resources to meet likely future demand

The priorities in the police and crime plan 2017–21 are clear, and they reflect the force's understanding of its future demand and public expectations. They include protecting people at risk of harm, working with communities, supporting victims and witnesses, reducing reoffending, and internal restructuring. The plan sets out how resources will be allocated to support these priorities, for example by funding education and prevention programmes to keep young people away from knife or gang-related crime.

The force has a clear plan for collaborative working, co-ordinated through a programme with Devon and Cornwall Police called PRISM. The plans are comprehensive and subject to external scrutiny. They support the priorities in the police and crime plan.

The chief constable and the [police and crime commissioner](#) (PCC) have made an innovation fund available as part of the 2019/20 budget. The workforce has been encouraged to submit ideas and innovations that support force priorities. Successful bids have included a 'Bobby Van' to provide crime prevention services to [vulnerable people](#), and schemes to support the homeless.

Technology has the potential to make the workforce more agile. The force plans to upgrade devices issued to the frontline workforce, and trials of new laptops will take place during 2019. The force's IT strategy aims to modernise systems and procedures. It plans to automate its demand analysis by using a business intelligence software application called Qlik Sense.

Prioritising

The force has a good understanding of future demand, and prioritises its activities accordingly. As outlined above, predicted areas of increase include reports of missing people, calls concerning the welfare of vulnerable people, and cybercrime, and the force's plans take these increases into account. This is particularly the case for local policing – the force has just finished a consultation on new shift patterns for frontline officers.

More could be done, however, to take public expectations into account when deciding on priorities.

Future workforce

The force has a good knowledge of the skills and experience of its workforce. It has done a skills audit, which identified some gaps in leadership and digital skills, and it is addressing these through tailored training programmes planned for this year. It also supports workforce development; for example, it has appointed digital champions, who provide support and guidance to colleagues who are less confident in using new technology. Digital champions have supported the rollout of Skype video conferencing across the force. There are plans for them to do the same for other software changes, including Office 365 and Microsoft Teams.

Dorset Police works hard to recruit experienced officers from other forces. It has been innovative in bringing new skills and talent into the organisation; for example, skilled interns from Bournemouth University have been seconded to the [regional organised crime unit](#) (ROCU) and undergraduates have worked with the force's communications department to produce a domestic abuse video called #CutYourStrings. The force participates in the [Police Now](#) graduate entry scheme, and the [College of Policing's](#) national programmes that recruit officers into senior positions.

Finance plans

Dorset Police has a balanced budget for the 2019/20 financial year. Both the budget and the force's medium-term financial plan are based on realistic assumptions and they have been subject to expert scrutiny.

The force has a strong record of achieving financial savings. The 2019/20 budget includes anticipated savings of £0.25m from service area reviews and a further £0.4m of efficiencies from improved procurement procedures. In common with other forces, Dorset Police anticipates a shortfall in funding in the medium term; it estimates the gap to be £4.44m by 2023. The force is developing a plan to achieve these savings, focusing on economies associated with more efficient rostering, digital working and reviewing the use of police buildings.

By March 2023, the force forecasts that its [reserves](#) will have decreased from £10m in March 2018 to £5.5m. This predominantly reflects funds allocated to transformation and innovation to help the force meet its ambition for the future. It plans to maintain its general reserves at sufficient levels to meet unforeseen expenditure caused by major incidents or other operational pressures.

In 2016, following its 2010 consultation about revaluing public sector pensions, the government announced reductions in the discount rate it uses to set contribution rates for unfunded public service pension schemes. These include the police service pension scheme. A lower discount rate will require higher contribution rates from employers. The official notification of a lower rate in September 2018 did not allow PCCs and mayors time to include the impact in their financial planning.

In December 2018, the government announced a pension grant for 2019/20 for each PCC and mayor. It allocated funding to help forces pay for these increased costs in the 2019/20 financial year. In the case of Dorset Police, the extra annual cost is £3.1m, which is offset, in 2019/20, by a grant of £1.4m. PCCs and mayors must now plan for how they will finance the increased costs in the following years, assessing the impact on their officer numbers and their ability to provide effective and efficient services. The PCC for Dorset increased council tax precept funding to maintain the current level of service.

Leadership and workforce development

In our 2017 inspection, we found that the force needed to improve its understanding of leadership capacity and capability. We were pleased to find that it assessed all leadership skills in 2018. Staff were involved in designing the audit process and helped to shape how the force defined its leadership requirements. As a consequence, the force now has a good understanding of the leadership qualities it expects of its individuals and teams at all levels of the organisation.

This has provided a good baseline from which to introduce leadership programmes in the force. These are linked to the College of Policing [fast track](#) programmes and the Police Now graduate entry scheme. The leadership programmes include development opportunities, which makes sure that the key positions in the organisation are filled by talented staff.

Dorset Police is committed to the development of its officers and staff. It has a broad range of resources to help staff to progress, including toolkits, guidance and support. However, many that we spoke with were not aware of them. The force may wish to review this area to ensure that its resources are used effectively.

Ambition to improve

There is a culture of continuous improvement in Dorset Police, supported by appropriate leadership, governance and scrutiny. In addition to its close relationship with Devon and Cornwall Police, the force has good links with other police and other organisations, including health and social care, across the region. It has a clear understanding of the benefits of joint working and is open to new ideas and innovation to improve the way in which it operates. There are comprehensive arrangements in place to track the benefits of working with Devon and Cornwall police.

The PRISM change programme is comprehensive, ambitious and subject to independent scrutiny and challenge. The force designs future services to meet its priorities, and these plans are built on a firm evidence base. For example, Devon and Cornwall Police is setting up integrated resolution centres to deal with appropriate calls for service over the telephone. In doing so, it has learned from Dorset Police's experience of implementing the incident resolution team.

Legitimacy



Force in context

Comparison of Dorset workforce ethnicity with local population

as of 31 March 2019

	Dorset proportion	Local population proportion
Black, Asian and minority ethnic as % of those with stated ethnicity	1.7%	4.0%
White as % of those with stated ethnicity	98.3%	96.0%
Not Stated as % of total	7.8%	

	Dorset proportion	England and Wales proportion
Proportion of female officers in post as of 31st March 2019	28%	30%

Proportion of workforce without up-to-date security clearance

as of 1 April 2019

Dorset
proportion

4%

Stop and search by ethnicity

12 months ending 31 March 2018

Dorset
disproportionality

Stop and Search likelihood of BAME individuals compared to white individuals

3.0

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

16.5

Number of stops and searches per 1,000 population

12 months ending 31 March 2018

Dorset
rate

3.1

England and Wales
rate

4.7

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



Good

Summary

We judge Dorset Police to be good in terms of its legitimacy, and how it treats the public and its workforce.

The force is good at treating the public fairly. Officers and staff make fair and ethical decisions, and the leadership monitors all incidents in which force is used and gives feedback to the officers involved.

Dorset Police stops and searches a disproportionately high number of people from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, when compared with other forces in England and Wales. It has improved its internal monitoring of stop and search, but it should make sure that all officers and staff recognise [unconscious bias](#).

The force's approach to tackling corruption is mostly reactive. Its [counter-corruption unit](#) (CCU) does not have the capacity to do much proactive work, and it is held back by its outdated IT systems.

It also needs to make sure that all staff, particularly those in specialist teams, understand the [abuse of position for a sexual purpose](#).

Dorset Police is good at treating its workforce fairly. Staff told us that they saw the leadership as open and approachable. There can be some delay in handling grievances, but the force is trying to address this.

The force could take a more focused approach to increasing workforce diversity.

Treating the public fairly



Good

Leaders in Dorset Police create a positive working environment by acting as role models. The force bases its training and policies on the [Code of Ethics](#), which defines the exemplary standards of behaviour for everyone who works in policing, and the national decision model, which helps forces make fair decisions.

Neighbourhood policing teams engage well with the public through social media, street-corner meetings and regular visits to places of worship, food banks and refuges. Dorset Police works with several local organisations to improve relations with communities that have less confidence in the police.

Supervisors give officers feedback and guidance on their use of force, to make sure it is fair, and any incidents in which force is used are scrutinised by a panel. Officers and staff are obliged to attend one day of personal safety refresher training every year.

During 2017, the force trained all frontline officers in the use of [stop and search powers](#). However, many of the officers and staff that we spoke to during our inspection had limited knowledge of unconscious bias. Dorset Police stops and searches a disproportionately high number of people from BAME backgrounds when compared with other forces in England and Wales. The force has adopted a range of measures to try and improve its performance in this area.

In 2017, we recommended that the force should evaluate how its stop and search activity helped it to meet its policing priorities. We are now satisfied that the force thoroughly monitors stop and search. We also recommended that the force should improve its external monitoring and this, too, has been implemented.

Areas for improvement

- The force should ensure that all members of the workforce have a sufficient understanding of unconscious bias.

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

Leaders in Dorset Police create a positive working environment by acting as role models. The force uses the Code of Ethics, which defines the exemplary standards of behaviour for everyone who works in policing. It also uses the national decision model, which helps forces make fair decisions, as the basis for its training, policies and operational policing. During our inspection, we saw officers and staff routinely using the model when they made decisions. The force also completes equality impact assessments¹ to make sure that its policies and procedures are fair.

Neighbourhood policing teams engage well with the public through social media, street-corner meetings and regular visits to places of worship, food banks and refuges. We were also encouraged to find neighbourhood teams using social media to hold virtual public meetings. Neighbourhood engagement officers let the public know how the force has responded to any concerns.

Dorset Police works with several local organisations to improve relations with communities that have less confidence in the police. For example, one project with Access Dorset, a disability group, focused on finding out how to better engage with deaf people. The force has also worked with Dorset Race Equality Council on its use of stop and search powers. We also found examples of work with Prejudice Free Dorset and representatives from Muslim, Jewish and BAME communities aimed at improving engagement with the police.

The force encourages the public to get involved in crime prevention. Police support volunteers work with neighbourhood policing teams, and we saw them helping to monitor CCTV and co-ordinate neighbourhood, horse and pub-watch schemes. The force also has an established Special Constabulary, who regularly patrol with neighbourhood policing teams.

During 2017, the force trained all frontline officers in the use of stop and search powers. This included raising their awareness of unconscious bias, which is the concept that social stereotypes about certain groups of people can unknowingly prejudice a person's behaviour. Staff in some specialist areas received further training, including those in the human resources department and staff trained to negotiate with people in crisis. Despite this training, however, many of the officers and staff that we spoke to during our inspection had limited knowledge of unconscious bias. This was a previous area for improvement for the force and it remains so.

All frontline officers attend annual restraint and conflict resolution training, referred to as personal safety training. This teaches them to use [tactical communication](#) to resolve conflict. Good communication is a theme throughout the force's initial police training, specialist interview courses and specialist training. However, the force could do more to train all staff – rather than just specialist staff – in everyday communication skills such as empathy, listening and explaining actions and decisions.

¹ An equality impact assessment (EIA) is a process designed to ensure that a policy, project or scheme does not discriminate against any disadvantaged or vulnerable people.

Using force

Officers and staff are obliged to attend one day of personal safety refresher training every year, and their attendance is monitored. Officers have to record the details of any incident during which they have used force. We saw examples of supervisors giving officers feedback, challenge and guidance on their use of force, to make sure it was fair.

A use of force working group meets regularly to review the incidents during which force has been used. Personal safety trainers give officers feedback on the incidents reviewed by the group. The use of force programme board meets quarterly to examine the data. It includes members from operational training, armed response, corporate development, health and safety, the confidence and equality group, staff associations and custody.

In each meeting, the board examines a report containing comprehensive information on the use of force during the reporting period. This includes detailed information on the circumstances, the people involved and their ethnicity, the location, medical factors, environmental factors, tactics used and the outcome. The aim is to identify trends and patterns, and to learn from any mistakes. We found evidence of these reviews informing changes to personal safety training.

In addition to this internal scrutiny, the force has a quarterly external use of force scrutiny panel established by the Dorset PCC. The panel consists of members of the public and considers individual cases and a range of force data and information. We observed meetings of this panel ahead of our inspection and found that members effectively probed and questioned cases in which force had been used. The panel is currently chaired by the PCC, but there are plans to move to an independent chair in 2019.

The force will complete its policy of providing [body-worn video](#) equipment to frontline officers and staff by July 2019. We were pleased to hear of plans to review footage in future scrutiny meetings, both internal and external.

The force publishes a range of information regarding use of force on its website, including explanations of the equipment issued to police officers and how information is used and recorded. It publishes an infographic on the use of force, and quarterly summaries that provide an overview of how and why force was used during the reporting period.

Dorset is one of four forces that does not yet fully comply with NPCC use of force recording requirements. The force can produce a report against most, but not all, of the recording requirements. It is making changes to the force records management system later this year to record all required information. The force does comply with the Home Office Annual Data Return on use of force.

Using stop and search powers

Dorset Police stops and searches a disproportionately high number of people from BAME backgrounds when compared with other forces in England and Wales. The force has adopted a range of measures to try and improve its performance in this area. The external scrutiny panel reviews all searches of BAME people, and any BAME person who is stopped and searched is asked for feedback. The force continues to work with Dorset Race and Equality Council to improve its understanding of the use and effect of these powers on BAME communities.

In November 2018, the PCC commissioned an independent review of the use of stop and search, and presented the findings to both Dorset Race and Equality Council and the independent scrutiny panel. The force is in the process of adopting the recommendations from this review; for example, through improved governance processes.

The force provides a wide range of information, guidance and support to the workforce on the use of stop and search powers. During our inspection, we found that staff generally understood how to use these powers fairly and respectfully. All frontline officers received training in 2017, and some officers received additional training to become stop and search champions. These champions provide advice, guidance and one-to-one support to colleagues.

There are stop and search information boards at police stations, and internal communication campaigns and toolkits on the force intranet site aimed at helping supervisors to monitor the use of these powers. Line managers check stop and search records and give feedback to officers where necessary. The force introduced a toolkit for supervisors, called Searchlight, in February 2019. This allows them to scrutinise individual officers' records and identify individuals who have been the subject of repeat searches.

We reviewed a representative sample of 208 stop and search records to assess whether the recorded grounds were reasonable. In 81 percent of cases, the records contained reasonable grounds (our assessment is based on the grounds recorded by the searching officer and not the grounds that existed at the time of the search).

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 force has complied with some of this recommendation, but it doesn't look at the extent to which [find rates](#) differ between people from different ethnicities and across different types of searches, and does not separately identify find rates for drug possession and supply-type offences. The force does compare drug searches for cannabis with those for other types of drug, but it isn't clear that it 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. We reviewed the force's website

and found no obvious mention of analysis it had carried out to understand and explain reasons for disparities or any subsequent action taken.

In 2017, we recommended that the force should evaluate how its stop and search activity helped it to meet its policing priorities. We are now satisfied that the force thoroughly monitors stop and search. It has effective internal governance in place to monitor the use of stop and search powers, including internal reviews, quality assurance processes and supervisory scrutiny. The force lead chairs a quarterly working group to review stop and search information and data to identify patterns, trends and notable practice. The working group reports its findings to a strategic legitimacy board which is a quarterly meeting chaired by the chief constable.

We also recommended that the force should improve its external monitoring of stop and search and this, too, has been implemented. The force has an external stop and search scrutiny panel, administered by the OPCC, that meets quarterly. The panel is made up of members of the public, including young and BAME people. A recent recruitment campaign has brought more people on to the panel, and they are given sufficient training and information to enable them to perform their roles effectively.

In the period leading up to this inspection, we observed both stop and search, and use of force scrutiny panels. We saw panel members posing challenging and probing questions regarding use of these powers. Both panels scrutinise a comprehensive range of force data and information, and the stop and search panel reviews a sample of stop and search records. Minutes of their meetings are published on the PCC website.

The force is also working with students from Bournemouth University to get feedback on stop and search from young people. This is a new initiative for the force and we will watch its progress with interest.

Ethical and lawful workforce behaviour



Good

Dorset Police maintains an ethical culture. Its leaders promote the force's values and the Code of Ethics. Staff told us that they saw the leadership team as accessible and receptive to ideas and challenge.

There is an established [ethics committee](#), shared with Devon and Cornwall Police. We saw good examples of ethical decision-making in relation to critical cases, the allocation of time off, conflicts of interest, and gifts made by bereaved families. We also saw compelling examples of officers reporting inappropriate behaviour.

The force's approach to tackling corruption is mostly reactive. Once a concern has been raised, the force investigates it to an acceptable standard. But its CCU does not have the capacity to do much proactive work, and it is held back by its outdated IT systems.

Previously, the force has worked with agencies who support [vulnerable people](#), to make sure that officers and staff are behaving appropriately. This is no longer happening, which presents a corruption risk.

The force could do more to tackle the abuse of position for sexual purpose. The CCU does not currently have the capacity to handle intelligence on this type of corruption. Not all staff in specialist investigation teams are aware of it, including those that deal with serious and sexual offenders and their victims.

Areas for improvement

- The force should ensure that its counter-corruption unit:
 - has enough capability and capacity to counter corruption effectively and proactively;
 - can fully monitor all of its computer systems, including mobile data, to proactively identify data breaches, protect the force's data and identify computer misuse; and
 - builds effective relationships with individuals and organisations that support and work with vulnerable people.
- The force should improve the knowledge and understanding of the abuse of position for a sexual purpose within its specialist teams.

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

Leaders in Dorset Police promote the force's values and the Code of Ethics. The chief constable and other members of the leadership team reinforce high standards of behaviour at training events and through internal communications. The force has run a campaign to raise awareness of the issue called 'The Only Way Is Ethics'. During interviews, staff told us that they saw the leadership team as accessible and receptive to ideas and challenge.

The force has an established ethics committee, shared with Devon and Cornwall Police. We observed one of the committee's meetings, which was well attended by officers and staff from both forces and members of the public. The workforce can read feedback from its meetings on the force intranet.

We examined the extent to which supervisors and staff understood the Code of Ethics and the force's values. We saw good examples of ethical decision making in relation to critical cases, the allocation of time off, conflicts of interest, and gifts made by bereaved families. We also saw compelling examples of officers reporting inappropriate behaviour. Those involved told us that the [professional standards department](#) (PSD) had supported them well during the investigation of misconduct cases.

During our previous inspection of Dorset Police, we found that the force was complying with national vetting standards. This time, we were pleased to find that it

had maintained its performance in this area by making sure that all staff had received at least the lowest level of vetting clearance for their roles.

The force makes some effort to ensure that candidates from BAME backgrounds are not disproportionately affected by the vetting process. The vetting unit makes decisions without seeing information on race, gender or disability, to reduce the influence of unconscious bias. The human resources department monitors vetting information, and cases involving BAME candidates are forwarded to the chief constable, who makes a personal assessment. This process is adequate for it to ensure that decision-making is fair throughout its recruitment process. However, it plans to introduce new vetting software, which will enable it to identify disparities more easily.

The force complies with its obligation to share details of its barred and advisory lists with the [College of Policing](#). This prevents people who have left the service under investigation, or who have been dismissed, from re-joining a law enforcement agency.

Dorset Police circulates the results and lessons learned from local and national cases, using both general orders and the intranet. The PSD publishes information in Blue Print, the force's newsletter. Information about risks to integrity, including the reporting requirements relating to gifts and hospitality, is readily available on the force's intranet site. The PSD also tells all new officers, staff and transferees about the expected standards of professional behaviour, and reinforces these standards on promotion courses.

The force publishes the outcomes of misconduct hearings internally and externally. [Chief officers](#) and the PSD reinforce any lessons learned in the messages they send to the workforce. During our inspection, we tested whether the workforce knew about risks to integrity, including gifts and hospitality, and the abuse of position for a sexual purpose, and found a generally good understanding of this issue.

Tackling corruption

The force draws on different sources of information to assess corruption risks; for example, it looks at data held on its registers of business interests and notifiable associations, and compares this with financial information and other forms of intelligence to identify staff who might be at risk of corruption. Its approach is mostly reactive; it does not regularly bring together representatives from different departments to review information and identify potential causes for concern.

We reviewed 60 cases and found that once a concern had been raised, the force had investigated it to an acceptable standard. The CCU has an ability to audit some of its force IT systems; however this is limited. The force is in the process of procuring new software that will improve capability, but we will continue to monitor this area during future inspections.

Previously, the force has worked with other agencies who support vulnerable people, such as those dealing with domestic abuse, to raise awareness of the abuse of position for sexual gain. However, this is no longer happening, which could mean that it misses opportunities to identify officers and staff who are behaving inappropriately. The force recognises this and is trying to re-establish its connections. It promotes whistleblowing policies and anonymous reporting systems. Officers and staff are

aware of the force's 'Confide in Us' confidential reporting system and know how to use it.

The force has adopted the NPCC strategy to tackle police officers and staff who abuse their position for a sexual purpose. It recognises this behaviour as serious corruption and it refers cases to the [Independent Office for Police Conduct](#) (IOPC). In our 2017 inspection, an area for improvement was for all cases meeting the mandatory referral criteria to be referred to the Independent Police Complaints Commission (now IOPC). We are now satisfied that this is happening.

Dorset Police has been a national leader in identifying and classifying intelligence about predatory behaviour and continues to develop work in this area. However, limitations in monitoring of IT systems means that it has not yet achieved our 2016 national recommendation that required all forces to implement a plan to achieve the capability and capacity required to address abuses of position. Neither is it clear that the CCU has the capacity to handle intelligence relating to abuse of position for sexual purpose. The force recognises this and is addressing resource levels in the department.

The force takes robust action against individuals who abuse their position. During reality testing, we found that supervisors understood the warning signs. However, the level of understanding varied in specialist investigation teams, including those that deal with serious and sexual offenders and their victims. The force should make sure that staff across the force understand this issue.

We were pleased to find that frontline officers and staff understood the serious consequences of developing inappropriate relationships with members of the public. The force publicises cases to demonstrate how it deals with this type of corruption.

Dorset Police has recently completed a counter-corruption strategic assessment and control strategy. These documents are used to inform counter-corruption policies, procedures and activity, but it was too early at the time of our inspection to know how effective these will be.

Treating the workforce fairly



Good

Leaders in Dorset Police are focused on providing fairness at work. They promote an open and approachable culture, and there are direct lines of communication between the chief officer's team and the workforce.

The force has not been dealing with grievance cases within the target timescales, but it has revised its procedures to deal with this. Most of the officers and staff that we spoke to were aware of the new procedure. The PSD reviews misconduct investigations to make sure they are not unfairly targeting staff from BAME groups.

Although Dorset Police does some good work to encourage workforce diversity, its strategic plans lack clarity. The force should make sure that it has adequate structures in place to promote diversity.

Workforce wellbeing is a priority for Dorset Police, and it places equal importance on both physical and mental wellbeing. There is a caring culture in the force, and staff told us that they felt their welfare was a priority for the leadership. However, morale is low in some teams with high workloads or long-term vacancies.

In our 2017 inspection, we found that the force needed to improve the management of its performance development review (PDR) process. The force has made progress in this area. Newly-promoted sergeants demonstrated a good understanding of performance management. The workforce generally has a positive view of management in the force.

Even though the force reviews its promotion processes regularly, some people still felt promotion was dependent on professional relationships.

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

Improving fairness at work

Leaders in Dorset Police are good at seeking feedback and challenge from the workforce. Chief officers promote an open and approachable culture, and there are direct lines of communication between the chief officer's team and the workforce. We saw comprehensive evidence of staff consultation through focus groups, meetings and surveys. Staff can also ask direct questions of chief officers through the force intranet site.

Soon after his appointment, the chief constable made a commitment to address issues that were preventing officers and staff from doing their jobs effectively. He visited teams and departments across the force and asked for feedback and suggestions for improvement. This was called the '100 Little Things' initiative. Staff can see how he has acted on their feedback through the force intranet site. Most of the issues that were raised have been addressed and staff told us this had made a positive difference to their workplace environment and wellbeing.

There are two ways for staff to raise grievances in Dorset Police; informally or formally, both of which are dealt with by line managers. Prior to our inspection, we examined ten grievance case files and found that six had not been handled within recommended timescales. The force responded promptly to our concerns by implementing a revised grievance procedure in December 2018. It now uses a computerised system to track the progress of grievance investigations.

Most of the officers and staff that we spoke to were aware of the new procedure and how to access it, and we were encouraged to find newly-promoted supervisors receiving guidance on how to investigate grievances. This is likely to bring much-needed improvement to how such cases are dealt with; however, it was too early to assess progress at the time of our inspection.

The people department monitors a range of information and data to identify workforce concerns. The legitimacy board, which is chaired by the chief constable, also reviews this. The force monitors information on people joining and leaving, diversity data, absence and flexible working, across all ranks and roles.

We were pleased to find that the PSD reviews complaint and misconduct investigations to identify any disparities in investigation procedures involving staff from BAME groups. It reports its findings to the quarterly force legitimacy board chaired by the chief constable.

Forces inspire greater confidence if they reflect the communities in their area. Dorset Police proactively encourages workforce diversity. It has a positive action strategy that outlines how it aims to achieve this, and a positive action team to progress this work. It has trained staff to be positive action ambassadors, mentoring employees and potential candidates from under-represented groups.

The force has held public engagement events aimed at encouraging interest and applicants from diverse communities. These events attracted large numbers, but there is no clear evidence to show whether they made a significant difference to recruitment. It has also held internal events to promote the progression of women in policing, including confidence-building and coaching and mentoring workshops.

However, the strategic leadership, governance and plans to improve workforce diversity lacked clarity. The force should make sure that it has adequate structures in place to promote diversity in the workplace.

Supporting workforce wellbeing

Workforce wellbeing is a priority for Dorset Police. The force analyses management information, such as absence data, staff survey results, demand data and use of [occupational health services](#), to find out why staff suffer ill-health and to put support in place. The chief officer team has set three priority areas following review of workforce information: resources, demand and wellbeing. Improvement plans to support these priorities are developed and led by [senior officers](#).

The PCC has provided funding to invest in the wellbeing of officers and staff. The [Blue Light Framework](#) addresses the unique challenges that affect the wellbeing of emergency service personnel. The framework enables forces to audit themselves against an independent set of standards that have been tailored to meet the specialist needs of emergency service staff. The force has completed the self-assessment framework and is in the process of improving its services.

The force places equal importance on both physical and mental wellbeing. It has many initiatives aimed at breaking the stigma of mental ill-health in the workplace. For example, it has commissioned short videos of officers and staff who have experienced mental ill-health, which will be published on the force intranet site. It has developed a mental health wellbeing plan with Devon and Cornwall Police, in response to feedback from online surveys and delegates who attended a mental health conference. Progress against the plan is assessed through use of a fast survey system, called a pulse survey, and was last evaluated in March 2019 with the findings published on the force intranet.

Officers and staff can attend one-day resilience workshops, which are run by mental health professionals and provide advice, guidance and support on dealing with stress. The feedback from those who have attended the workshops was overwhelmingly positive.

The force provides regular psychological health screening for people working in high-risk areas and biannual health screening through the occupational health unit (OHU). It regularly reviews its wellbeing provision. Recently, one of these reviews identified a gap in the support available to officers and staff affected by the menopause. As a result, the force appointed 20 menopause champions, to promote awareness and understanding of how this can affect people.

Five local groups representative of officers and staff across the force co-ordinate health and wellbeing activities. The groups are chaired by senior leaders and have access to funding. They have improved facilities in refreshment areas, developed a wellbeing library and provided water bottles for officers and staff. The groups report into a strategic wellbeing group which is chaired by the director of people services. Force policies and procedures comply with the equality duty and are regularly quality-assured by the equality and diversity lead.

There is a caring culture in Dorset Police, and the officers and staff we spoke to told us that they felt their welfare was a priority for the leadership. They also spoke positively of the support they received from their line managers. Line managers review staff welfare during one-to-one meetings, and they know how to access wellbeing services. We saw evidence of their support making a significant difference.

However, there are some areas of the force in which morale is low. This is generally in teams with high workloads or long-term vacancies. Officers and staff in some teams told us that they were operating at the boundaries of wellbeing due to the high demand. The force is aware of these issues and several reviews to bring improvement were ongoing at the time of our inspection. The force should make sure it considers the wellbeing needs of officers and staff working in high-demand areas.

Being the subject of a public complaint or an internal misconduct allegation, or a witness to it, can be very stressful for members of the workforce. In our 2017 inspection, one of our areas for improvement was that force should improve levels of support provided to officers and staff in this situation. We were pleased to find improvement in this area through the introduction of monthly review meetings. Officers and staff who had been subject of investigation or suspension spoke positively of the support provided by the force. We are satisfied that it has improved in this area.

Managing performance and development of officers and staff

In our 2017 inspection, we found that the force needed to improve the management of its PDR process. Our inspection this year found that considerable improvement had been made. The force has sent useful guidance and information to staff on how to “make your PDR count”. Most areas of the force now engage in the PDR process, with an 80 percent completion rate for the 2018 performance year. This a considerable improvement on the previous year.

The force is introducing a new performance management system, called EPDR, in September 2019, and we were pleased to find this had been developed through focus groups held with officers and staff. The new system has been the subject of internal marketing, but some staff told us that they were not aware of it, nor why it was being introduced. The force should consider how it communicates the benefits of the new process.

Newly-promoted sergeants demonstrated a good understanding of performance management. The force continues to monitor and evaluate the needs of managers. For example, focus groups held with line managers identified the need for training to help them have difficult conversations. This is now scheduled for 2019.

The workforce generally has a positive view of management in the force. A recent survey of officers and staff regarding line manager support found that four out of five respondents felt they were given sufficient time to speak to their line manager and four out of five managers demonstrated an interest in them. A further 83 percent agreed that their manager listened to what they had to say.

The [competency values framework](#) (CVF) sets out nationally-recognised behaviours and values that help with recruitment and professional development. The force is currently progressing CVF for police officer selection, initial police officer recruitment (subject to national developments) and the recruitment of all [police staff](#). The force's talent management and promotion processes also use the CVF for assessment and to identify areas for professional development.

Following our inspection in 2017, we advised that the force should conduct a leadership and skills audit to understand its capacity and capability better. We are pleased that it has made progress in this area. In 2018, it developed and conducted an audit for all sergeant and police staff supervisor equivalents and above, using a self-assessment questionnaire. This mapped individual skills against organisational needs and priorities, and the results are informing current and future training plans.

Dorset Police is committed to supporting the development of its officers and staff. It does so through coaching and mentoring, 360-degree feedback processes, models and toolkits to support development, development workshops, and talent panels involving meetings with chief officers and senior HR advisers. However, not all the staff we spoke to knew about these resources.

Dorset Police has an open and accessible promotion process that is modelled on the College of Policing framework. It has aligned its processes with those of Devon and Cornwall Police, to guarantee fairness across the two-force alliance. HR staff have received unconscious bias training, and the workforce understands and supports the CVF.

We spoke to officers and staff with varying degrees of experience of the force promotion processes. The majority told us that the CVF had made the process fairer, and that there was now better support available to those seeking promotion. Managers are supposed to provide feedback to support the continuing development of officers and staff, but not everyone seemed to have received this. Even though the force reviews its promotion processes regularly, some people still felt promotion was dependent on professional relationships.

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 920. 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 May and 31 July 2018 and assessed them against several criteria. We reviewed 60 case files in each force, except for the Metropolitan Police Service 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 July 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 30 September 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.
- 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 2018/19 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 2018](#). Stop and search totals exclude vehicle only searches and searches where the subject's ethnicity was not stated.

Vetting data (workforce without up-to-date security clearance)

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

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