

PEEL

Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy 2018/19

An inspection of North Wales Police



Contents

What this report contains	1
Force in context	3
Overall summary	4
Effectiveness	8
Force in context	9
How effectively does the force reduce crime and keep people safe?	11
Summary	11
Preventing crime and tackling anti-social behaviour	12
Investigating crime	12
Protecting vulnerable people	12
Tackling serious and organised crime	17
Armed policing	18
Efficiency	20
Force in context	21
How efficiently does the force operate and how sustainable are its services?	22
Summary	22
Meeting current demands and using resources	22
Planning for the future	23
Legitimacy	29
Force in context	30
How legitimately does the force treat the public and its workforce?	32
Summary	32
Treating the public fairly	33
Ethical and lawful workforce behaviour	37
Treating the workforce fairly	40
Annex A – About the data	45

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 North Wales Police against.

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

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

Force in context

	North Wales rate	England and Wales rate
999 calls per 1,000 population 12 months ending 31 March 2019	133	175





	North Wales rate	Most Similar Forces rate
Recorded crime per 1,000 population 12 months ending 31 March 2019	86	66





North Wales workforce

	FTE in post on 31 March 2019	FTE in post on 31 March 2014	Percentage change
Police Officer	1458	1464	-0%
Police Community Support Officer	211	267	-21%
Police Staff	915	844	8%

	North Wales spend	England and Wales spend
Spend per head of population 2019/20 projection	£226	£203

Overall summary

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

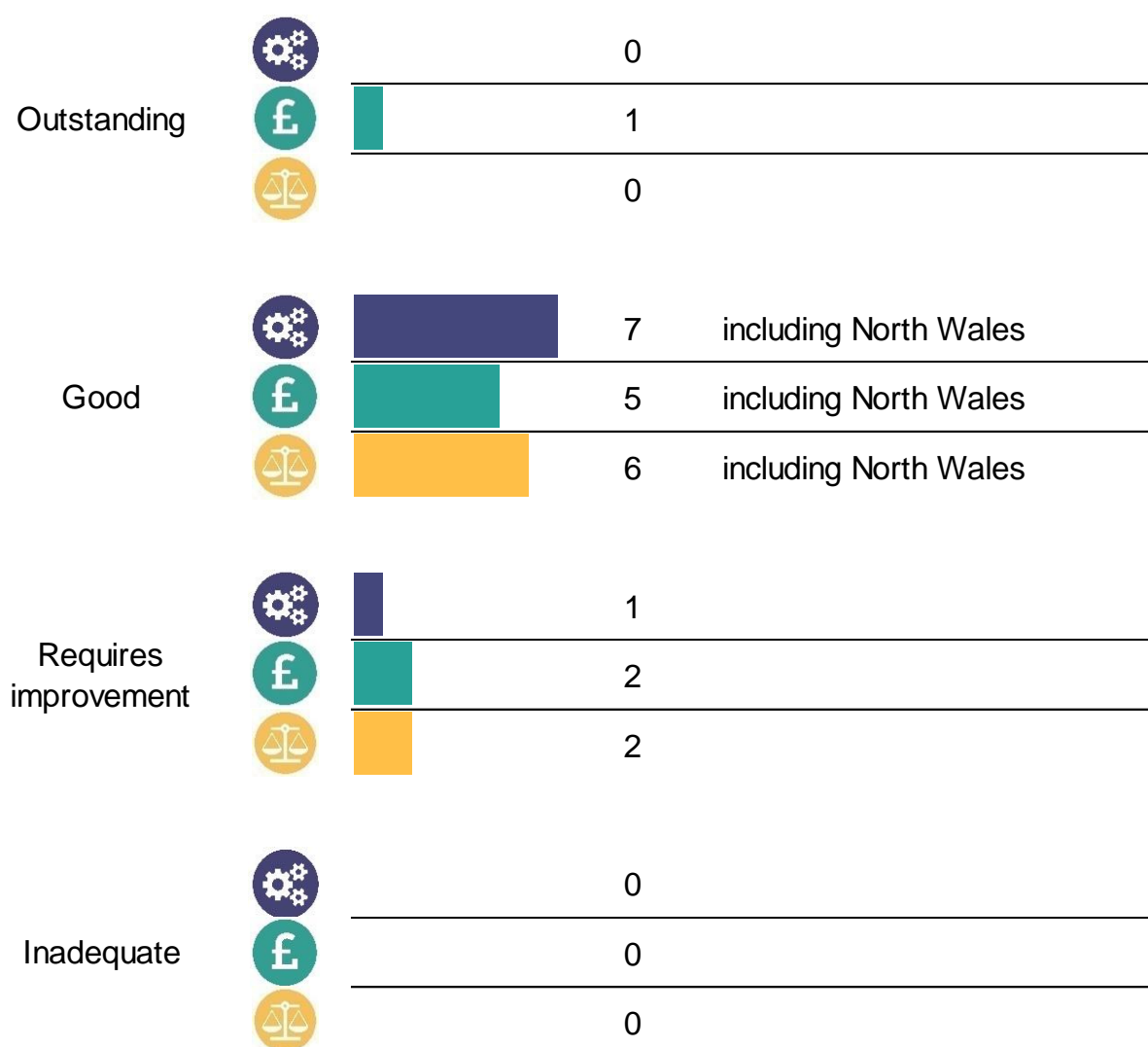
 Legitimacy	 Good	Last inspected
Fair treatment of the public	 Requires improvement	2018/19
Ethical and lawful workforce behaviour	 Good	2018/19
Fair treatment of the workforce	 Good	2018/19

How does the force compare with similar forces?

We compare North Wales 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.](#)

North Wales Police's MSG forces are Suffolk Constabulary, Norfolk Constabulary, Devon and Cornwall Police, Wiltshire Police, West Mercia Police, Warwickshire Police and North Yorkshire Police.

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



HM Inspector's observations

I am very pleased with North Wales Police's performance in keeping people safe and reducing crime. In particular, I note the improvements the force has made since 2017 in its efficiency.

The force is good at preventing crime and [anti-social behaviour](#). It is also good at investigating crime and tackling [serious and organised crime](#). Keeping [vulnerable people](#) safe is a priority for the force and it works well with other agencies to identify and protect them.

North Wales Police understands the complexity and scale of the current demand for its services. It now needs to gain a better understanding of the skills its workforce currently has and those it is likely to need. This will enable it to develop strong, sustainable financial and workforce plans for the future.

The force continues to uphold an ethical culture and promote the standards of professional behaviour it expects. However, it should make sure that the necessary systems are in place to reassure the public that its use of powers, such as stop and search and the use of force, are conducted legitimately.

Overall, I commend North Wales Police for the progress it has made over the past year. This provides a strong foundation for continuing improvement in the year ahead.



Wendy Williams

HM Inspector of Constabulary

Effectiveness



Force in context

	North Wales proportion	England and Wales proportion
Proportion of officers in a neighbourhood or response function in post on 31 March 2019	49%	40%
Victim-based crime per 1,000 population 12 months ending 31 March 2019		
	North Wales rate	Most Similar Forces rate
Violence against the person	36	24
Sexual offences	4	3
Theft Offences / Robbery	23	23
Criminal damage and arson	11	8

Crime Outcomes

12 months ending 31 March 2019

	North Wales proportion	England and Wales proportion
Proportion of crimes where action was taken	14%	12%
Proportion of crimes where suspect was identified	63%	46%
Proportion of crimes where victim did not support police action	31%	24%

Outcomes for crimes flagged as domestic abuse

12 months ending 31 March 2018

	North Wales proportion	England and Wales proportion
Charge/summonsed	15%	16%
Evidential difficulties: suspect identified; victim does not support	55%	49%

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



Good

Summary

Overall, North Wales Police is good at reducing crime and keeping people safe. This includes the way that it protects [vulnerable people](#).

The force understands the scale and nature of vulnerability in its area. Officers and [staff](#) know how to spot the causes and signs of vulnerability. This is rooted in their training and the lessons learnt by the force from experience of incidents on the front line. When dealing with the public the force works to priorities in the police and crime plan that focus on vulnerability.

The force is good at responding to incidents involving vulnerable people. Officers generally reach the incident within their target time, although this does not always happen when the force is really busy. Officers then work through a clear process to assess what has happened, keeping full records of the action they have taken.

Teams generally support vulnerable victims of crime well. But in some areas, the workforce is busy and needs more help.

The force will be able to do more to help vulnerable victims once mental health professionals start working regularly in the force control room later this year alongside officers and staff.

A [multi-agency safeguarding hub](#) (MASH) has not so far been set up in North Wales. A MASH would enable the police to work more closely, and in a more co-ordinated way, with other organisations that help vulnerable people, including local authorities, the emergency services and the NHS. Setting up a MASH would result in a better service for the public.

In 2016, we judged the force's effectiveness at preventing and tackling [anti-social behaviour](#) to be good. We also judged the force's effectiveness at tackling [serious and organised crime](#) to be good. In 2017, we judged as good the force's effectiveness at investigating crime. These judgments from previous years remain valid.

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

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

Protecting vulnerable people



Good

North Wales Police and the people who work for it are good at protecting people who are vulnerable.

Officers and staff recognise the signs and causes of vulnerability. They put into practice the training they have been given to protect vulnerable people. This begins with the first contact when vulnerable victims of crime contact the control room. Daily meetings for making decisions about policing have vulnerability as a priority. In particular, officers attach importance to dealing with cases involving domestic abuse. When cases reach the courts, the force makes regular use of the legal powers and orders available to protect victims of domestic abuse.

The force generally responds well to incidents involving vulnerable people. Officers on the front line make appropriate decisions that protect people and record the action they have taken. In the control room the ability to respond to vulnerable victims should improve later this year when mental health professionals start working regularly alongside police officers and staff.

We found that both generalist and specialist police teams are mostly giving good support to vulnerable victims of crime. There are some areas, however, where more support is needed for teams with high workloads. Improvements are also needed in the way the force manages sex offenders.

Joint working with partner agencies to protect vulnerable people is in place, but there is no MASH to co-ordinate the protection of vulnerable people by different agencies. In the absence of a MASH, the force has created effective joint working arrangements. The introduction of a MASH would improve services to the public.

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

North Wales Police is good at identifying people who are vulnerable, whether through age, background or circumstances, or because of other factors that place them at greater risk of being abused or exploited. The force defines vulnerable people as those who, as a result of their situation or circumstances, are unable to protect themselves from harm. The workforce has a good understanding of the signs and causes of what makes people vulnerable. This knowledge comes from training, internal communications and operational experience. Police and crime plan priorities are primarily focused on protecting vulnerable people and provide the operational framework that guides officers and staff. In particular, the focus on tackling domestic and sexual abuse, less visible offences such as modern slavery, and the harm caused by organised crime is evident throughout the force.

Protecting vulnerable people is a main element of both force and local daily tasking meetings. There are clear structures for agreeing priorities, plans and decisions. Officers and staff are held to account for managing the response to different types of vulnerability. Strategic and tactical governance supports the force objective of protecting people from harm. The force is conducting research to improve its understanding of hidden types of vulnerability like honour-based violence, forced marriage and abuse against elderly persons. Analysis is undertaken to produce reports and profiles that inform and direct operational policing. For example, neighbourhood and patrol officers are alert to the signs of child sexual exploitation and criminals who target vulnerable people. The force exchanges information and works with local partner agencies to improve the collective public sector response to vulnerability. Overall, the force has a good understanding of the nature and scale of vulnerability in its area.

The force control centre is good at identifying vulnerability at the first point of contact. There is a good system of warnings and markers available to alert call handlers when they are dealing with a repeat victim or a vulnerable person. New information is added to what is already held on force systems and the nature of the call is evaluated using a structured risk assessment. Control centre staff have a good understanding of the different types of vulnerability that callers may represent. These include people living with poor mental health and those reporting domestic abuse. Fire service and NHS personnel support control centre staff and give advice and guidance either in person or by phone. This service was due to be enhanced shortly after our inspection with the co-location of mental health professionals in the force control centre for 18 hours each day. Recent improvements to technical systems and operating procedures work well alongside an effective system of supervisor checks and reviews. Risk assessments and despatch decisions are effective based on the incident logs we assessed and our observations in the force control centre. The control centre identifies vulnerability and manages risk well, supporting the work of other parts of the force and providing a good service to the public.

Responding to incidents

The initial response by North Wales Police to incidents involving vulnerable people is good. The force generally meets its target attendance times for high-priority incidents, although this is not always the case at times of peak demand. Priority is given to incidents assessed as high risk. If no response officer is available to attend, officers from neighbourhood teams or other departments will often be deployed. The need for prompt attendance at incidents involving vulnerable people is well understood.

When dealing with incidents, officers use a structured process to record information and assess risk. A combined assessment and referral form (CID16) is completed whenever vulnerable people are involved in an incident and submission is mandatory for all reports of domestic abuse. This helps officers to gather relevant information and offers guidance about their options for immediate [safeguarding](#) interventions. Specialist officers and partner agencies often use the information obtained to give additional support and assistance to victims and their families. We reviewed a sample of CID16 forms from a range of incidents. They contained sufficient detail, including whether children or other vulnerable persons were present. Officers recognise the importance of the CID16 form in helping to give longer-term support to vulnerable people. To ensure that assessments are submitted when required, force systems prevent the closure of an incident log without confirmation of completion of the CID16 form.

There is a clear presumption, underpinned by force policy, that positive action must be taken by officers and staff to protect victims when dealing with domestic abuse offenders. In the 12 months to the end of March 2019, officers in North Wales made arrests at 26.7 percent of domestic abuse incidents they attended. This is in line with other forces in England and Wales. Officers and staff generally have time to make enquiries and investigate incidents involving vulnerable people. They know the safeguarding options available to them. Supervisors are often involved in agreeing the most appropriate actions and interventions to be taken. A consistent level of information is given to domestic abuse victims on the services and support available to them. Daily meetings review domestic abuse incidents to co-ordinate follow-up activity and allocate investigations to the most appropriate department. Safeguarding for high-risk incidents is normally managed by specialist domestic abuse officers. There is a coherent system in place to manage the response to domestic abuse.

North Wales does not have a joint police/NHS [mental health triage](#) service that attends incidents. The absence of such a service places extra demands on the force. Telephone advice from NHS professionals is usually available to officers attending incidents involving people with mental health needs. The planned co-location of mental health professionals in the force control centre in the second half of 2019 will improve police access to timely information and advice.

Police officers sometimes have to transport over long distances people who need mental health assessments. This can be because no NHS transport is available or the nearest NHS mental health assessment facility is not able to conduct assessments. After arrival, officers are sometimes required to stay with them for long periods to give supervision or security, or to wait for medical professionals to attend. The force knows

that this is inefficient and unsatisfactory. It is working with NHS partners to improve service levels for people with mental health needs. The current position is not in the best interests of these people, the force or the public.

Supporting vulnerable victims

North Wales Police is clearly committed to supporting vulnerable victims. In general, officers and staff give good levels of support. The initial safeguarding and continuing support arrangements available for domestic abuse victims are clear and well used. Domestic abuse officers co-ordinate activity for high-risk victims, supported by local response teams who conduct follow-up safety checks and investigative enquiries in other cases. The number of [domestic violence protection notices](#) (DVPNs) used in 2018/19 by the force to prevent domestic abuse offenders from committing further offences was the highest per head of population across all forces in England and Wales. The importance of using DVPNs to protect victims is embedded at all levels in the force.

Similarly, the [domestic violence disclosure scheme](#) (DVDS, also known as Clare's Law) is widely and effectively used. The DVDS enables the police, in certain circumstances, to disclose information about an offender's history to increase public safety. The force has run a campaign to make the public aware of their rights under the scheme. Surveys of domestic abuse victims began in early 2019 to ask how they were treated by the police. Early feedback is positive. It is too soon to identify themes, but individual comments are shared with officers and supervisors to improve services.

The value of using [bail](#) for domestic abuse suspects to give added protection to victims is widely understood. The use of pre-charge bail (along with using DVPNs and other legal powers) is considered as part of the standard custody decision-making process when dealing with suspects. Neighbourhood teams contribute to the work of safeguarding vulnerable victims. Although police community support officers (PCSOs) are not directly involved in domestic abuse safeguarding, they give support to other vulnerable people and victims. We found several good examples where elderly victims of fraud had been provided with advice and practical help. The force is making changes to its neighbourhood policing model, including reductions in PCSO numbers. It will want to assure itself that there is sufficient clarity and capacity about the role of neighbourhood teams in future risk management and safeguarding work, and that those teams are clear what is expected of them.

There are further steps the force could take to strengthen the support given to vulnerable victims of crime. Our review of a sample of crime investigation files established that most showed appropriate levels of victim care. However, some investigators and teams have high workloads. The officers and staff of the Amethyst team investigate all reported rapes and give support to victims. They carry heavy workloads, meaning their capacity is limited and some important work is delayed. The force has previously given this team extra help and acknowledges that more support is needed to maintain appropriate service levels.

Separately, the system for supporting missing children who have returned home needs improving. In previous years specialist staff from outside the force conducted return home interviews under a joint initiative with partner agencies. Funding changes, and the complexity of each local authority in the North Wales area setting its own guidelines about when a return home interview is necessary, mean that currently the task is often undertaken by officers who do not have special training in this area. This has reduced support for vulnerable children and reduces the opportunities to prevent them coming to further harm. When we raised these problems with senior leaders, we were reassured by their commitment to review both matters as a priority.

The force works well with partner agencies in several ways, but it has been unable to establish a force-wide MASH. This would produce the best results by bringing together staff from different agencies to work under one roof. Joint working and data-sharing arrangements are in place with local authorities, emergency services and NHS partners, but more co-ordination would increase public protection. A pilot MASH was established in one part of the force, but some partners were reluctant to commit to extending the project throughout the whole force area. MASH arrangements have worked well in most parts of England. The public would benefit from a MASH serving North Wales.

In the absence of full MASH arrangements, the force has created and funded the central referral unit (CRU) which receives police and partner referral information electronically. The CRU is an effective stand-alone information sharing, risk assessment and referral hub. But without co-located staff, standardised practices and streamlined business processes it is not as efficient or effective as a full MASH.

We found other examples of effective joint working. The force makes a meaningful contribution to the [multi-agency risk assessment conference](#) (MARAC) process. At these meetings, police and partner agencies review high-risk domestic abuse cases and agree joint safeguarding action plans to protect victims. Of all referrals to MARAC, 76 percent come from the police. The force is an important partner in the multi-agency approach to keeping victims safe.

More resources are needed as the volume of referrals to MARAC has risen. At our last inspection in 2017 we identified that the force was not referring all high-risk domestic abuse cases to MARAC. This is no longer the case. All high-risk cases are now correctly referred. However, the force has changed the threshold for the referral of medium-risk cases to try to manage demand better. The force is reviewing the MARAC process to maintain its effectiveness, with protection remaining at appropriate levels.

The vulnerable adult referral meeting (VARM) project began as a pilot in the western area of the force and is now being introduced to all areas. Police and partners review individual cases of vulnerable adults who repeatedly call for assistance or who have clear needs. Tailored support plans are now put in place by agencies such as the police, fire service, ambulance and housing to address problems like anti-social behaviour, medical needs and fire risks. The pilot scheme found that people who received this bespoke support no longer needed to call for help as frequently.

The management of registered sex offenders (RSOs) who pose a risk to vulnerable people is an area that requires improvement. Offender managers are generally able to conduct both announced and unannounced visits to RSOs. However, high workloads are commonplace with each offender manager responsible for between 75 and 80 RSOs. This ratio is high, and although we found no material backlog in visits to offenders, there is a backlog of risk assessments awaiting completion.

At the time of our inspection there were 923 risk assessments for sex offenders that should have been completed as part of the [active risk management system](#) (ARMS). We found that only 72 percent had been completed, with varying completion rates in different parts of the force. The timely completion of ARMS assessments is an important part of the overall risk management system. The force is working to clear the ARMS assessments backlog and has plans to increase the number of offender managers.

The force makes good use of preventative legal powers such as [sexual harm prevention orders](#). It monitors offenders appropriately to check if they have breached these orders. However, there is a need for stronger links between offender managers and officers working on response and neighbourhood teams. We found these links were fairly poor. The information shared with frontline officers is generally restricted to high-risk prison releases rather than seeking to exploit local intelligence to monitor changes in offender behaviour.

The specialist team that investigates offenders who share indecent images of children online manages its workloads well, with no backlogs. The team is able to keep pace with new referrals and regularly executes search warrants as part of its investigations into new offences.

The force has begun to review its management of RSOs. It has liaised with the [College of Policing](#) and responded positively to our feedback when we identified that some of its procedures were not compliant with national guidance. Any changes the force makes to working practices must be robust, consistent and in line with approved professional practice. We will continue to monitor the progress and changes the force makes in this important area.

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

Understanding the threat and responding to it

North Wales Police 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.

At the time of our inspection the force had not published its own APSTRA and was reliant on an assessment of threats and risks affecting other forces in the region. Although this remains the case, the force plans to rectify this in 2020. We will monitor this development closely.

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 North Wales Police are attended by officers trained to an [armed response vehicle](#) (ARV) standard. However, incidents sometimes occur that require the skills and specialist capabilities of more highly trained officers.

We found North Wales Police has good arrangements in place to mobilise officers with specialist skills should these skills be required. On these occasions, agreements are in place for the capabilities to be provided by Merseyside 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.

North Wales Police has effective arrangements with Cheshire Police to provide armed policing. This means that the standards of training, armed deployments and command of armed operations are assured in both forces.

We also examined how well prepared forces are to respond to threats and risks. Armed officers in North Wales Police are trained in tactics that take account of the types of recent terrorist attacks. Also North Wales Police 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.

In addition to debriefing training exercises, we also found that North Wales Police reviews the outcome of all firearms incidents that officers attend. This helps ensure that best practice or areas for improvement are identified. We also found that this knowledge is used to improve training and operational procedures.

ARV officers can have a positive effect in disrupting the activity of organised crime groups and other armed criminals. It is important that, at the start of each shift, they are provided with up-to-date information that is relevant to their role. In North Wales Police, we found that opportunities are being missed to provide this information to ARV officers and use their patrols to good effect.

Efficiency



Force in context

	North Wales spend	England and Wales spend
Spend per head of population 2019/20 projection	£226	£203

Spend per head of population by category

2019/20 projection

	North Wales spend	England and Wales spend
Visible frontline	£85	£68
Non-visible frontline	£62	£66
Frontline Support	£18	£17
Business support	£48	£45
Other	£13	£8

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



Good

Summary

North Wales Police is good at operating efficiently and sustainably.

The force is good at planning for the future. It realises that more spending will be needed in some areas. When demand increases, for example in organised crime drug dealing, the force has shown it can be flexible to meet the challenge.

The force's new approach to budgeting aims to match the available money to the priorities that have been set for policing. As this work continues, the force should seek to improve the data that it uses when analysing demand.

North Wales Police has ambitious plans to create better services while also cutting costs. It is important that the public's views are heard in planning for the future. The force should consult widely with the public and take on board the messages it receives as it designs services.

In 2017, we judged the force's approach to meeting current demand and using resources as good.

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

North Wales Police is good at planning for the future. The force understands the demands it will face. It has ambitious plans for change that it believes will produce both savings and better services.

In planning its strategy to meet future demand, the force is using a new budgeting approach that seeks to match the available money to the priorities set for policing. There is a good grasp of the areas of crime that will need extra spending. The force has shown that it can be flexible by moving resources to address problems, for example in dealing with [county lines](#) drug offences.

In order to plan effectively, the force needs to understand how the public sector agencies it works alongside, such as local councils and health authorities, are preparing for the future. Accurate and comprehensive data shared by partner organisations can help with this task. This should be part of a bigger project for the force to use a wider range of data to analyse demand.

The force uses a variety of ways to engage with the public about its work. However, we would like to see a clearer link between the views that the public expresses and the services the force plans to provide to them.

The force appears to be stable financially, with good financial planning in place. Its bold plans for change will need strong governance if they are to produce the improvements and cost savings envisaged. There is limited time to introduce these plans, but they are achievable.

Areas for improvement

- The force needs to broaden the range of data sets it uses to inform its future demand analysis. Information from local partners and national sources should form part of this work.
- The force needs a co-ordinated, strategic approach to public consultation about its future change plans. The views of the public should inform the force view of the future and influence its design where appropriate.

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

Assessing future demand for services

North Wales Police has the capability to assess future demand, but needs to expand its range of information sources to get the most from this work.

Accurate forecasting of future demand is essential for effective planning of services and allocation of resources.

The force is restructuring many operational policing departments. This organisational improvement programme (OIP) will reshape most frontline policing functions, representing about half of the North Wales Police workforce. In planning for the OIP, the force increased the resources and skills it needs for future demand planning. The new demand and capability unit has enabled the force to better understand likely future demand trends. However, the analysis was largely based on the force's internal data, with little information from local partners or publicly available sources. The opportunity exists for future analysis to use wider information sources as not all of the operational (and none of the supporting functions) were included as part of the OIP and have not yet been reviewed.

The force is already planning the next round of organisational change. It will use a new methodology called [priority-based budgeting](#) that seeks to align the allocation of resources to the agreed priorities of the force. It will begin its work with the operational and support functions that have not been included in the OIP. It will then revisit the work of the OIP as part of a continuous improvement approach to change.

A more strategic approach is needed for the next stage of priority-based budgeting future demand analysis. Consensus is needed both on what will make the biggest difference to demand and on the information sources that will be required. An accurate assessment of future demand must include an understanding of what is likely to influence the behaviour of local authority partners. Similarly, an understanding of data from health commissioners and providers is essential in the context of growing concerns about increased demand from people with mental health problems who cannot access the right support, and the effect of this on policing. Agreements about how to assess and validate shared data are crucial to effective future planning and need to be built into partnership working arrangements. This is an area for improvement.

Other elements of the development of future demand analysis are promising. There is good analysis of crime trajectories. National intelligence is mapped against specific local projects, such as the (now paused) construction of Wylfa nuclear power station. Predictive forecasting tools are in use. These will be enhanced by the addition of partner information and evaluation processes.

There is a good understanding of hidden demand – crimes that need resourcing but are rarely reported directly to the police, such as child sexual exploitation and modern slavery. Planning takes into account the likely scale, cost and effect of changes to technology. The force has also invested in project management support, employing business change professionals within a well-structured governance process. Many of the necessary elements for an effective change programme are in place.

Understanding public expectations

The force engages with the public in different ways, but, to date, public feedback has had limited influence on the design of future policing services. Neighbourhood policing teams engage through personal contacts and using social media. The force website has opportunities for online chat, reporting of [anti-social behaviour](#) and general feedback. More broadly, the [police and crime commissioner](#) has consulted about the council tax precept and held some public workshops focusing on domestic abuse and substance misuse. However, the OIP was designed with no significant public input. There has been little engagement with the public on a strategic level to understand what they expect from their police force. This is an area for improvement.

The force has an ambitious ICT programme which includes the digital capture and exchange of information. It is the lead force in Wales for implementing single online home, a national programme for digital transformation of policing services for the public. To date, the force has relied on national single online home consultation work. It intends to do more local consultation on future digital services. This is welcome, given the scale of its plans. Public surveys show the force's services are well regarded. The force, not unreasonably, assumes that having more digital options will provide the public with a better service. But it still needs to test this assumption through a more strategic and co-ordinated approach to engagement. The force needs to be sure that its detailed plans for change, and the services it will provide in future, align with public expectations and meet their needs.

Prioritising

The police and crime plan contains North Wales Police's overall priorities. They were set in consultation with the public, alongside analysis of crime and demand trends. They focus mainly on protecting [vulnerable people](#) and providing neighbourhood policing. The priorities are visible through internal monitoring and governance arrangements by senior leaders, through to the police and crime panel. The reallocation of resources to address an increase in county lines drug dealing that was harming communities shows that the force can respond quickly to changes in priorities.

Resources have been transferred to priority areas. The OIP has led to more investigators being appointed as the number and complexity of crimes reported by vulnerable people rises. Investment has been made in mobile working to improve the visibility and efficiency of frontline policing. Priorities for future investment include vulnerability, change management, investigative capacity, digital improvements and workforce capability. The introduction of priority-based budgeting will ensure that the resources allocated to force priorities are regularly reviewed. The OIP has helped the force to make savings and priority-based budgeting is being designed to continue the process of increasing efficiency.

Future workforce

The workforce plan is aligned with both the [medium-term financial plan](#) and the operational structures within the OIP. The force has a good understanding of the future numbers of people and the roles it will need. This will expand once the next round of change begins to shape the future design of the force in areas that weren't included within the OIP. However, the understanding of the skills and abilities of the current workforce is mixed. Work is now in progress to assess the extent of the future skills gap. Some gaps, such as the shortfall in detective numbers, are already being addressed. In other areas, plans to address shortages such as IT skills are still being developed.

Engagement between senior leaders and the workforce is good. Online tools such as Fy Llais/My Voice, the engagement hub and the chief constable's blog are informative and well used. Within the OIP, development workshops for officers and [staff](#) identified inefficient business processes and considered options for improvement. An extensive workforce survey in spring 2019 produced positive results in important indicators such as supportive leadership, public service motivation and job satisfaction. Senior leaders have committed to sharing the full findings and creating a joint plan with the workforce to provide any improvements needed.

The force's plans to bring new people and skills into the workforce are clearer in some areas than in others. The relative lack of workforce diversity is well understood, with positive action recruitment and development work in progress to attract people from different communities into policing. Measures to improve the diversity of the existing workforce include confidence-building in under-represented groups for promotion, recruiting more women into specialist policing roles and the targeting of foreign language skills.

External recruitment is now the established standard into police staff posts and is becoming more usual for police officer posts. The force does not use the national [Police Now](#) programme, but is embarking on the Detective Now initiative to meet an increasing need for investigators. [Direct Entry](#) inspectors are being recruited and there is a [Fast Track](#) scheme for existing officers. The people and training functions have sufficient resources to meet known challenges and activity is subject to appropriate scrutiny and governance.

Finance plans

Financial planning is good. In common with many forces, the medium-term financial plan identifies significant risks and uncertainties about future funding. The plan contains 13 areas for investment that are broadly linked to force priorities. Financial plans are closely aligned to both the OIP and workforce plans. They are realistic, based on reasonable assumptions and subject to appropriate scrutiny. There are good working relationships between the finance and people functions, supporting a synchronised approach to change management. Projects already completed have achieved significant savings and improved services.

Financial planning does not consider the potential benefits from increased partnership working. As already identified, there is limited information sharing with some partners which the force acknowledges and is seeking to address.

The police and crime commissioner increased the council tax precept for 2019/20 by an average of just under £20 per household. This has enabled the force to invest in priority areas such as specialist operations (proactive CID, fugitive team, [serious and organised crime](#)) and vulnerability (domestic abuse, violent and sex offenders). There are detailed strategies for estates, vehicles and ICT provision with investment decisions appropriately researched and approved.

The strategies are reflected in the capital programme which is funded by a combination of [reserves](#), grants, revenue contributions and borrowing. Increases in police pension contributions have been accounted for and adequate provision has been made for changes in price bases. In March 2019 reserves were £21m. They are expected to reduce to £17m by the 2021/22 financial year, mainly due to the capital and change programmes. The overall financial position of the force appears stable.

Leadership and workforce development

The people and organisation department has a new leadership team with a clearly expressed and fresh vision for the future. The enabling role of the department to manage the people elements of the change programme is well understood. There is good communication with other parts of the force. The workforce transformation plan is in place, with flexibility to adapt as the force change programme develops. The plans are clear where change is needed and the scale of the task is acknowledged.

Succession planning is at present limited to some hard-to-fill roles, such as force incident managers and custody sergeants. In part, this is due to the limited understanding of the workforce skills base. Much-needed planning has now begun on a review of officer and staff roles. The force maintains large amounts of relevant workforce information, but not all of it is in easy-to-use formats. Work is in progress to make better use of data to improve the performance and development of the force.

Recruitment and selection processes are seen to be fair. A final interview is now included alongside workplace assessment in the promotion process to sergeant and inspector ranks. External representatives from agencies such as the [College of Policing](#) and a local authority were included on selection panels for recent senior appointments. The force is considering a similar change at more junior levels, possibly using community representatives. The gender balance at senior levels is still unequal, but the force recently appointed its first female member of the [chief officer](#) team. Promotion support, such as help with interview techniques, is given to women, but was expanded to include all candidates at the request of workforce networks. The force is working to change its culture and diversity.

Ambition to improve

North Wales Police is moving from a change programme driven by the need to make savings to one more focused on service improvement. The OIP will be fully implemented by autumn 2019. It is a well-structured and well-resourced programme of reviews, informed by demand trend analysis and supported by specialists in finance, communications and human resources. Substantial savings have emerged from the review, which has involved about 50 percent of the force. There is clear reporting against the priorities of the police and crime plan. The focus on domestic abuse has identified positive recent trends, such as an increase in male victims reporting abuse and a decrease in repeat offenders.

The force is strengthening and realigning the change programme to focus on priority-based budgeting. There is confidence that this new approach will produce both savings and service improvements. The plan is ambitious given that the methodology is new and the timescales relatively tight. External consultancy support has been commissioned. Strong governance will be needed to achieve the desired outcomes.

Plans for the development of the workforce, ICT, fleet, estate and finance functions are realistic, funded and subject to appropriate scrutiny and challenge. The plans are linked to the police and crime commissioner's priorities and supported by a good governance process. The force has identified the scale of savings needed over the next few years. Many of these are already in place. Savings to date have mainly come from neighbourhood policing. Some reductions in this area of the service have been reinvested, for example reductions in PCSO costs being used to pay for an increase in investigators. Future savings are largely expected to come from digital transformation, an area which is prioritised in force plans and the capital programme.

The force is an active partner in many joint working arrangements. For reasons of geography, the force tends to collaborate with counterparts in north-west England for operational matters and with Welsh forces for organisational concerns. Links with Cheshire and Merseyside Police are extensive and include sharing intelligence and computer systems that provide operational benefit for all parties. Automatic number plate recognition collaboration is both all-Wales and cross-border. Joint recruitment and training plans are being developed with the other Welsh forces.

Collaboration with other emergency service providers is good. North Wales Police and the local fire and rescue service manage their estates together with several shared premises across the force, including a co-located control room. Ambulance staff provide co-ordination and support to the force in either the control room or remotely. Increased NHS support to deal with mental health demand is due in the control room in the second half of 2019. Further opportunities exist for closer working relationships with NHS and local authority partners.

Legitimacy



Force in context

Comparison of North Wales workforce ethnicity with local population

as of 31 March 2019

	North Wales proportion	Local population proportion
Black, Asian and minority ethnic as % of those with stated ethnicity	0.8%	2.5%
White as % of those with stated ethnicity	99.2%	97.5%
Not Stated as % of total	3.8%	

	North Wales proportion	England and Wales proportion
Proportion of female officers in post as of 31st March 2019	35%	30%

Stop and search by ethnicity

12 months ending 31 March 2019

North Wales
disproportionality

**Stop and Search likelihood of
BAME individuals compared to
white individuals**

1.3

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

3.7

North Wales
rate

**Number of stops and searches
per 1,000 population**

2.6

12 months ending 31 March 2019

England and Wales
rate

6.4

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



Good

Summary

North Wales Police needs to improve some elements of how it works to ensure that the public is treated fairly. It is good at ensuring the ethical and lawful behaviour of its workforce, and at treating its workforce fairly.

[Senior officers](#) demonstrate a clear desire to lead a force that treats all communities fairly and with respect. This would be enhanced by more structured conversations with the public, listening and responding to their views and reporting back on the effect of changes made when concerns are raised. This happens in some parts of the force but needs to be more widespread and consistent.

North Wales Police needs to have a full picture of how its officers are using force in the course of their duties. Officers are given appropriate training, but there are problems with how the use of force is recorded and checked. Scrutiny processes for both the use of force and of [stop and search powers](#) need to be reviewed and improved.

Ethical behaviour is valued in the force. The workforce understands the standards expected of them as the leadership works to move away from past perceptions of a blame culture. The risk of corruption is managed effectively, but could be better still if more proactive work was undertaken in this area. The force has no backlog of vetting checks, but it should monitor the effect of vetting decisions across the full diversity of the workforce.

The force supports and engages well with its own workforce. Conversations between senior leaders and the workforce are regular and productive. The wellbeing of officers and [staff](#) is a priority and an area where the force continues to make good progress. There is more work to do before the diversity of the workforce reflects the community it serves, but the necessary commitment to make this happen is in place. The force needs to better understand any disproportionality in how members of the workforce are treated. It also needs to improve how it monitors the performance of individual officers and staff and has advanced plans in place to achieve this.

Treating the public fairly



Requires improvement

North Wales Police needs to make changes in how it operates to improve its treatment of the public.

Officers and staff throughout the force speak to local people every day and public confidence levels are good. The workforce understands the importance of fair treatment. However, the effect of local engagement work is inconsistent with no clear framework for officers and staff to follow. The force should be applying consistent methods to its engagement work and creating a two-way conversation with the public, both directly and through social media. This would allow the public to see that the problems they raise are being addressed through local policing activity.

North Wales Police gives officers appropriate training in how to use force in the course of their duties and stop and search powers fairly. Officers we spoke to understood and applied the rules on the use of force. However, more needs to be done to check that all officers are keeping records correctly after they have used force. Supervisors should be checking that forms submitted by officers are accurate. Without reliable data, the force cannot have a clear picture of how often force is being used. There should also be a forum where questions on the use of force can be debated with the wider community.

Officers understand the procedures on the use of stop and search powers. However they need to be more confident as to how best to use these powers. The quality of the grounds recorded by officers to justify conducting a search needs to be better. The force needs to build a full set of data for the use of stop and search. It also needs to make sure that external scrutiny of this power is effective.

Areas for improvement

- The force should review its approach to community engagement, ensuring engagement influences local priorities and communities are informed about the action taken in response to the concerns raised.
- The force should ensure that, in relation to its use of force:
 - all relevant officers and staff are recording when force is used and there is effective supervisory oversight;
 - it monitors a comprehensive set of data so that effective internal scrutiny and learning can take place; and
 - effective external scrutiny takes place.
- The force should ensure that, in relation to stop and search:
 - it monitors a comprehensive set of data to enhance its understanding of fair and effective use of the power; and
 - regular external scrutiny takes place.

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

North Wales Police is committed to treating the communities it serves with fairness and respect. Its leaders are clear about the importance of maintaining community support and engaging positively with local people. The police and crime plan priorities were agreed in consultation with the public. There is a strong focus on the Welsh language and culture in internal and external communications. Training for officers and staff includes the need to use police powers fairly and to consider the effect of the decisions they make on individuals and the wider public. Two recent public surveys show good levels of support for the force, with high levels of public confidence and a view that people are treated fairly by officers and staff.

Officers and staff show a good level of understanding of [unconscious bias](#). A combination of formal learning sessions, team discussions and annual operational safety training has increased understanding of the importance of treating the public fairly. Some officers and staff were able to explain how a greater awareness of unconscious bias, which can negatively affect fair treatment, has made them think and act differently when doing their jobs. This can be seen, for example, through showing greater understanding of the addiction problems experienced by some repeat offenders or by making a conscious effort to learn more about cultural sensitivities in a minority community. The force has made good progress in addressing workforce understanding of unconscious bias, which was an area for improvement in our last inspection.

Officers and staff understand the need for effective community engagement, however the force would benefit from a more co-ordinated approach. Engagement plans in each of the ten policing districts are tailored to local community needs. Much of the current engagement work is undertaken by neighbourhood teams, often in person or through social media. Police officers and PCSOs are active every day in local communities but the approach is too often unstructured and the effectiveness of local activity is unclear. We found little evidence of a connection between the views of communities, local policing priorities and reductions in crime and disorder. This is an area for improvement.

Much of the social media contact with local people appears one-way. There is no consistent feedback telling communities what police work is achieving in their area. The results were better where it was clear what was needed, such as in the work of the diversity team and its engagement with minority communities. The force is reshaping its neighbourhood policing teams, increasing the emphasis it places on problem solving, and expanding its work with local partners through the VARM project. A better approach, introduced at the same time, to community engagement will enhance this work.

The Citizens in Policing project shows the positive difference that a structured approach can make in local communities. A small group of police staff co-ordinates the work of trained volunteers, local cadet schemes and special constabulary officers. Volunteers lead on initiatives such as community speed watch and the bike safe scheme. Cadet groups focus on involving less advantaged young people in

policing in different parts of the force area. The special constabulary is growing. Some special constables receive specialist training, allowing them to support the force where extra resources are needed, such as in rural roads policing, trouble spotting at football matches and sex offender management. The breadth of projects, and the way in which they are concentrated to achieve the biggest positive effect, is encouraging.

Using force

North Wales Police needs to improve how it records and reviews the use of force by its officers and staff. The force provides appropriate training and guidance to its officers and staff about how to use force fairly. Annual training includes the practical use of tactics and how to apply them using the national decision-making model and force policy. Officers we spoke to understood how to use force correctly, their obligations about when to do so and how to record their actions.

The force complies with the national recording requirement in terms of the categories of force used. However, levels of recording are substantially lower than in other forces, suggesting a large degree of under-recording. Officers and staff admitted to us that a record is not always made when force is used. The reasons for this include the time it takes to complete the form, lack of effective supervision and insufficient audit processes. Supervisors do not review submitted forms for quality and accuracy. The force does not have an accurate picture of how its officers and staff use force in the course of their duties.

Because reporting is inconsistent, the force is not able to effectively monitor and scrutinise the use of force. The conflict management board reviews use of force information and data every three months to identify trends and address problems. The data sets it uses are incomplete and not broad enough to be effective. For example, it does not have good information about the officers and teams who use force most frequently or which tactics are most effective. Data on the use of [body-worn video](#), complaints information and public feedback is not consistent enough to help inform the meeting. Internal scrutiny processes are not effective.

There are no external scrutiny meetings where the public can examine use of force data or hold North Wales Police to account. Neither members of local communities nor interested parties from outside the force attend the conflict management board. Use of force information is published on the force website, but the under-recording problem means that the data does not represent the full picture. There is no meaningful external scrutiny.

Our inspection found no evidence that officers and staff were using force inappropriately. The clear gaps in recording and scrutiny seem to be due mainly to failure to follow recording requirements and lack of supervision. Use of force training is adequate, well managed and incorporates some learning from operational incidents. Attendance rates at initial training courses and annual refresher training are high, with 85 percent of officers correctly certified (legitimate exceptions were in place for most of the remainder).

Senior leaders acknowledge the need to improve how the force records, understands and scrutinises its use of force. The work to address the gaps highlighted here began during our inspection. The force knows the problems raised must be tackled to improve performance in this area and maintain public confidence. We will continue to monitor the speed and quality of changes made.

Using stop and search powers

Procedures for stop and search are generally more established than those for use of force, although improvement is required in some areas. Officers are given stop and search training that includes the need for fair treatment. We found that officers understand how to conduct stop and search procedures correctly, but some are not confident in using the power for fear of complaints. Supervisors monitor search forms and provide guidance to officers in how to perform stop and search procedures correctly. Some supervisors proactively review body-worn video of searches conducted by their officers, but the frequency or consistency of this practice is unclear.

The quality of the grounds recorded by officers to justify conducting a search needs to be better. We reviewed a representative sample of 254 completed search records to assess the reasonableness of the recorded grounds. Of these, 79 percent had reasonable grounds recorded. Our assessment is based on the grounds recorded by the searching officer and not the grounds that existed at the time of the search.

The reasons for the relatively high proportion of searches that were identified as not having reasonable grounds are unclear. One factor is likely to be the paper form used to record searches. There is limited space to record reasonable grounds, meaning that minimal information is sometimes included. There can also be a delay between the search being completed and information from the paper form being inputted on to a searchable database. The force acknowledges the limitations of a lack of electronic recording facilities. Alternatives to the existing paper-based system are being explored.

The scrutiny of stop and search is generally good, but with some exceptions. 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.

We found that the force has complied with some of this recommendation. But it doesn't identify the extent to which [find rates](#) – the rate at which officers find what they were searching for – differ between people from different ethnicities and across different types of searches (including separate identification of find rates for drug possession and supply-type offences). It is also not clear that the force 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. A report setting out data on disproportionality was published, but it was hard to find and didn't include analysis to understand and explain reasons for disparities or any subsequent action taken.

The police and public encounters board (PPEB) meets every six months to review a wide set of stop and search data. It doubles as an internal and external scrutiny group. The PPEB is chaired by a senior officer and police attendees include the [professional standards department](#), diversity team, training staff and the Black and Asian Police Association. External attendees are from [independent advisory groups](#), academia, the Office of the [Police and Crime Commissioner](#), the Crown Prosecution Service, other partner agencies and college students. In our last inspection we identified that young people needed to be part of the scrutiny process and the force has responded to this feedback.

In May 2019, we attended a meeting of the PPEB. It was constructive, with community members confident to challenge the force. In particular, there were discussions about the number of searches of 16 to 24-year-olds and the high rate of searches that ended with no further action. Public scrutiny of stop and search also takes place when members of the diversity team provide stop and search information at various public meetings, such as independent advisory groups. At the body-worn video external scrutiny group, where stop and search footage and records are reviewed, a question about the handling of search forms led the force lead officer for stop and search to review existing procedures. An independent chair for the stop and search section of PPEB meetings would enhance the quality of public scrutiny.

We reviewed how the force conducts internal and external scrutiny of stop and search. It is satisfactory in many respects, but scrutiny should happen more frequently. More in-depth work in places and greater emphasis on independent scrutiny would add value for the public. The force is clear in its commitment to conducting stop and search fairly, but improvements are needed in both internal review and public scrutiny. We recommend that the force reviews its stop and search scrutiny processes to ensure that they provide appropriate confidence for both the force and the community.

Ethical and lawful workforce behaviour



Good

North Wales Police has a clear focus on ethical and lawful behaviour in its workforce.

With strong leadership from senior officers, the force values high standards of ethical behaviour. New recruits are told what is expected in their roles. In-house training videos give the workforce practical advice that reflects on lessons learnt from real incidents. There is a clear drive to move away from past perceptions of a blame culture. Officers and staff are willing to challenge inappropriate behaviour. A new [ethics committee](#) offers a place to talk about issues affecting the force with people from the community.

Vetting checks on members of the workforce are handled well. There is a low overall backlog of checks to be carried out. More work is needed though to check whether diverse communities are being adversely affected by the vetting process.

The force understands the danger that corruption can pose to the work of policing. Officers and staff are told about the risks they can face carrying out their work. There are enough people to carry out routine anti-corruption work effectively, but there is limited capacity for proactive work in this field. The force is using the resources it has effectively to manage the risks of corruption that it faces.

Areas for improvement

- The force should monitor its vetting decisions to identify disparities and disproportionality for people with protected characteristics and act to reduce them where appropriate.
- The force should ensure it has enough capability and capacity to counter corruption effectively and proactively.

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

Officers and staff have a good understanding of the need for ethical conduct. The [College of Policing Code of Ethics](#) is incorporated into training, policy development and operational activity at all levels throughout the force. The chief constable and other senior leaders provide clear and consistent messages about the importance of acting ethically and to high standards. There is a stated ambition to move the force away from existing perceptions of a blame culture. The intention is to create a working environment to learn from things that go wrong, sharing positively with others to prevent mistakes being repeated. This will take time but the required leadership is in place to make this happen.

A new ethics committee is considering operational and organisational questions referred to it by the workforce. At the first meeting in April 2019 subjects for discussion included how best to deal with money handed in to the force and the appropriate use of police vehicles. Membership is broad and evenly split between members of the force and community representatives. This committee is still becoming established but will in time provide an increasingly valuable ethical reference point.

Officers and staff throughout the force demonstrate good standards of conduct. They are willing to challenge and report inappropriate behaviour. Some sergeants review body-worn video footage of operational incidents to assess with the officers involved how well they handled situations. The public can have confidence in the ethical approach taken by North Wales Police.

Vetting of the workforce to make sure they are suitably checked for the posts they hold is generally good. National guidance is followed and the force has a very low backlog for renewal vetting (required every ten years for each member of the workforce).

The planning and resources applied to this work by the force should be noted. They have a vetting backlog, as at 1 April 2019, of less than 1 percent.

Separately, the force has recently increased the number of designated (higher risk) posts such as cyber-crime and domestic abuse investigators. These designated posts need a different level of vetting, meaning that some of the post holders now need to be re-vetted. The force estimates that this self-generated increase will be cleared within six months. This is a reasonable timeframe in the circumstances.

An area where the force needs to improve is monitoring for disparities in the vetting applications from people with [protected characteristics](#). Presently, the force does not conduct disparity monitoring, but it should begin doing so to understand whether there are any variations from the general population. Understanding whether diverse communities are adversely affected by the vetting process is an important indicator of the force's public legitimacy. This is an area for improvement.

The professional standards department promotes the importance of demonstrating high standards of behaviour. Using regular internal communications about 'lessons learned' and 'top tips', case studies of both good and poor conduct are shared widely. Many officers and staff have viewed the series of in-house 60-second videos that provide guidance on important subjects such as alcohol and substance misuse and the acceptance of gifts and hospitality. All new members of the workforce receive a detailed briefing about the standards of behaviour expected of them. The outcomes of misconduct hearings are published both internally and to the public, along with registers of business interests and gifts and hospitality. The workforce know both what is expected from them and the consequences of failing to maintain high standards of behaviour and conduct.

Tackling corruption

North Wales Police uses an up-to-date threat assessment and control strategy to counter the corruption risks it faces. The threat assessment is prepared using intelligence gathered locally and nationally about the types of corruption that the workforce may be vulnerable to. It is an evolving document that is reviewed when new information is received, including in response to our feedback. The threat assessment informs the control strategy which in turn identifies the priorities for action. These include [abuse of authority for a sexual purpose](#), inappropriate personal associations and computer misuse. The control measures for each priority are outlined under the headings of prevention, intelligence and enforcement. Both documents meet the needs of the force and are reviewed regularly to ensure the full range of corruption threats are being assessed and addressed.

The force generally manages internal risk well. It deals with corruption-related intelligence consistently and effectively in most cases. A single comprehensive policy provides clarity on subjects including gifts and hospitality, business interests and notifiable associations. Officers and staff are clear about their obligations. They understand both the processes themselves and the need to comply with them. A programme of annual workforce integrity checks supports this work, alongside a people intelligence meeting that reviews information and trends to spot risks. The force recognises that these measures are important. It is developing them to

make sure it identifies potential corruption threats correctly and that interventions are pursued when necessary.

The force has enough people and resources managing its routine anti-corruption work, but its capacity for proactive action is limited. To manage this, new working practices have been introduced. A clear tasking process allocates resources to higher risk work. Members of the [anti-corruption unit](#) participate in meetings where organised crime is discussed to identify and flag possible corruption risks. The force is able to fully review and monitor how its computer systems are used. This makes it easier to identify officers and staff who are at risk of corruption. The force can, and does, call on neighbouring forces for additional specialist support when extra resources are needed to help with corruption investigations. Much of the force's anti-corruption work is reactive and intelligence-led, with proactive targeting in place where the risk is greatest. More could be done with extra people, but the force is using its limited resources effectively to manage the potential corruption risks it faces.

North Wales Police rightly identifies the abuse of position by officers and staff for a sexual purpose as serious corruption. The force recognises the potential that this type of abuse has to harm victims and undermine public trust and confidence. A focused campaign, Operation Shield, has achieved high levels of awareness within the workforce. Officers and staff have the confidence to report any internal wrongdoing directly to their supervisors or by using the dedicated reporting line, Safecall. The force has also engaged extensively with other agencies and charities that support [vulnerable](#) victims, both to highlight awareness and encourage reporting of any possible corrupt activity. Significant cases leading to misconduct hearings are publicised both internally and externally. The force makes appropriate referrals about abuse of authority to the [Independent Office for Police Conduct](#) and is compliant with the recommendation on this subject that we made in our 2016 legitimacy report.

Treating the workforce fairly



Good

North Wales Police is good at giving fair treatment to its workforce.

Senior officers are making changes to promote an open and approachable culture where officers and staff can talk to their leaders about their work. Face-to-face and online communication from senior leaders is positive and is producing results. The force is making wellbeing for officers and staff a priority, but in some areas high workloads remain a problem.

When complaints arise, the workforce feels the grievance procedure treats them fairly. There is a welcome focus to resolve more concerns early in the process, although the force should improve its analysis of complaints data. It should also make sure that its procedures are working fairly when dealing with complaints involving officers and staff with protected characteristics.

North Wales Police has further work to do before its workforce fully reflects the community it serves. There are signs of increasing diversity, for example the

appointment of a female assistant chief constable. But in some areas, for example black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) recruitment, more progress needs to be made. The force has positive schemes for spotting and developing future leaders among the workforce.

The existing system for professional development review is seen as too complex. It is positive that a new system in this area has been designed after consulting with the people who work for the force.

Areas for improvement

- The force should ensure that it has effective processes in place to identify and understand the causes of potential disproportionality and to take effective action to address these causes in the treatment of officers and staff with protected characteristics, who are subjected to complaint and misconduct investigations.

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

North Wales Police continues to make good progress in the way leaders seek feedback and challenge from the workforce. Meaningful workforce conversations are a priority. Officers and staff are encouraged to give their views to senior leaders in several different ways. Levels of engagement are high, with online initiatives seen by the workforce as good ways to make suggestions and get involved. These include the Get It Sorted scheme, the Fy Llais/My Voice discussion site and the chief constable's blog. These are complemented by personal contact at events such as local area consultation groups, senior leader engagement events and regular personal visits by chief officers to different departments and police stations. Workforce surveys are also used, both at departmental and force level.

Feedback from officers and staff has improved working practices. Examples include:

- a better and more consistent response when a member of the workforce is injured on duty;
- more scrutiny and consultation on the effects of changes to shift patterns on officers and staff;
- replacing worn-out furniture and equipment to improve the working environment; and
- agreed changes and an action plan to introduce changes to the force control centre following a workforce survey.

Senior leaders are promoting a growing culture of openness and approachability, with two-way dialogue evident at multiple levels. The force engages positively and productively with the people who work for it.

The force generally handles workforce concerns well. A more supportive and less bureaucratic approach is being developed. The workforce sees the formal grievance

procedure used to resolve disputes as fair, but there is a feeling that it sometimes takes too long to reach a conclusion. We conducted an independent review of ten grievance files and found they had been generally managed well and in accordance with policy. A review and triage stage has been introduced to increase the number of early resolutions of grievances. More trained officers are now available to offer welfare support to those involved in grievance and misconduct processes. The force intends that these changes will resolve concerns more quickly and appropriately. However, the force does not undertake any analysis to monitor for potential disparities against different groups with protected characteristics in its complaints and misconduct processes and this is an area for improvement.

The force needs to better use the information it has to understand and respond to workforce trends and themes. It collects a wide range of people data covering areas such as attendance and grievances, but does not use it consistently to identify problems and potential solutions. For example, without sufficient understanding of the reasons behind complaints from officers and staff about how they are treated, it is harder to resolve any underlying problems. In recognition of this gap, an automated suite of data sets is being developed. Managers at different levels will have prompt access to relevant information. This will help them to deal with problems more quickly and appropriately, meaning that performance and service levels are likely to improve.

North Wales Police recognises its workforce is not representative of the communities it serves and is working to make changes. While approximately 2.5 percent of the resident population is from a BAME background, as at 31 March 2019 only 0.9 percent of officers were BAME. Under-representation of BAME and female officers is more acute in the senior ranks. It is a strategic objective of the force to become more representative in every respect, including gender, BAME and other protected characteristics. The workforce representation group and positive action officer are working to a force plan that has public backing from senior leaders. A recent conference organised by the BAME staff network and attended by senior officers and managers saw several high-profile speakers highlight the benefits of wider workforce diversity. Some successes have been achieved, with 15 percent of officers on the specialist firearms unit now being female and the recent appointment of a female assistant chief constable. The force can only have confidence that its efforts are effective when there are clear and definite results.

Supporting workforce wellbeing

North Wales Police continues to develop and improve its management of workforce wellbeing. The health of the workforce is a priority for chief officers and is considered in force plans and policies. We found that officers and staff recognise and value the importance the force attaches to having provision for good wellbeing. The analysis of force data (such as sickness and assault information), self-assessment and workforce surveys is improving the force wellbeing response, alongside dedicated investment in both people and facilities. The wellbeing approach has four themes – healthy mind, body, work-life and finances – in acknowledgement of the main wellbeing problems that officers and staff are most likely to face. There are regular health checks for those in more stressful roles. [Occupational health service](#) provision generally meets workforce requirements, with officers and staff able to access help when they need it within reasonable timescales. The force has a coherent approach to managing the wellbeing of its employees.

The force is moving towards a more preventative approach to wellbeing. Supervisors and leaders receive guidance to identify and address problems such as stress and mental health concerns in their teams. Workforce health screening is being broadened to cover more roles, such as call handlers and despatchers in the force control centre. Force messaging systems are proactively used to alert officers and staff to the help available from internal and external support networks. We found that most officers and staff have regular one-to-one discussions with their supervisors that include welfare matters, or participate in more formal debriefing after attending distressing incidents. The long-term sickness rate as at 31 March 2019 was slightly below the level seen across all forces in England and Wales and general sickness management is good.

However, wellbeing problems persist in different parts of the force. Some investigators carry high and stressful workloads. Rises in seasonal demand can increase the pressure on officers and staff working in popular tourist areas. The force is committed to maintaining a focus on wellbeing so that its workforce remains healthy and work to high standards. It is too early to assess the effectiveness of this more preventative approach, but the intent is clear and the overall direction of travel is positive.

Managing performance and development of officers and staff

The current [performance development review](#) process is used inconsistently because it is seen as complex and bureaucratic. These limited levels of engagement mean that the force cannot be confident it is tackling poor performance effectively. There are advanced plans to introduce a new process that has been created in consultation with the workforce. The new system is computer based and designed to be easier to use for both supervisors and individuals. By linking continuous professional development to wellbeing and promotion opportunities, the new process is intended to become a mainstream activity. Training will be given to support the introduction of the new process which was due to be launched in May 2019, shortly after our inspection. We will monitor its implementation to assess whether workforce performance is managed more effectively and the needs of individuals and the force are supported.

In contrast, the force has well-established talent management schemes that support officers and staff who have been identified as potential future leaders. In addition to participating in national programmes for police officers, such as [Fast Track](#) and [Direct Entry](#) to inspector rank, there are internal opportunities open to the whole workforce.

The talent support scheme recruited its first cohort of 21 members (12 officers and nine staff) in 2018. It offers training, coaching and mentoring support. Participants undertake projects designed to improve both force performance and their own understanding of how the organisation works. A second cohort will be appointed in 2019. There are also development programmes for senior leaders and apprentices. There is a layered approach to talent management that combines investment by the force with an expectation that individuals take responsibility for their own professional development. The workforce is generally positive about the opportunities available, although levels of awareness vary. Force performance should continue to improve as the reach of these programmes expands.

North Wales Police is benefitting from a more co-ordinated and strategic approach to the different aspects of workforce development. Its own assessment of strengths and weaknesses in its performance is realistic and is complemented by planning to identify future workforce needs. A recent review of the police promotion process highlighted that improvements are needed, especially in the method by which candidates are assessed and interviewed. While the current process meets national guidance and the workforce believes it to be fair, the addition of a formal interview is a positive development. Extra personal development support for female candidates to address the gender imbalance at higher ranks is also welcomed. Senior leaders have responded well to internal criticism of this positive action, explaining the benefits of increased diversity at all levels. The public will be better served by a police service that develops talent effectively, is diverse and is representative of local communities.

Annex A – About the data

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

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

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

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

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

Methodology

Data in the report

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

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

Most similar groups

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

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

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

Population

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

Survey of police workforce

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

BMG survey of public attitudes towards policing (2018)

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

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

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

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

Review of crime files

We reviewed police case files for these crime types:

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

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

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

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

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

Force in context

999 calls

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

Recorded crime and crime outcomes

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

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

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

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

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

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

Domestic abuse outcomes

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

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

Workforce figures (including ethnicity and gender)

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

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

Spend per head of population

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

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

Stop and search

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

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