

Cheshire Constabulary judged as 'good' at legitimately keeping people safe and reducing crime – HMIC

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) has assessed how legitimate Cheshire Constabulary is at keeping people safe and reducing crime. This is the second year running HMIC has carried out inspections of this kind, which makes up part of HMIC's annual PEEL inspections.

HMIC considers a police force to be legitimate if it has the consent of the public, and if those working in the force consistently behave in a way that is fair, ethical, and within the law.

To assess this, HMIC has inspected how well forces treat the people they serve; ensure their workforce acts ethically and lawfully; and treat their workforces with fairness and respect. The findings of this inspection are included in a report, published today.

This inspection also included, for the first time, an assessment of how well forces tackle the problem of abuse of authority for sexual gain by members of its workforce. This serious form of corruption betrays the trust of the public and, while we identified some examples of good practice, there remain significant areas where forces must improve. The service needs to be more proactive in seeking out and preventing this form of corruption, and referring cases of abuse of authority to the IPCC.

HMIC found that Cheshire Constabulary:

- has a clear vision and clear values which are consistent with the Code of Ethics;
- generally ensures that its workforce behaves ethically and lawfully, however there are some areas it can improve upon; and
- is developing a comprehensive approach to understanding staff well-being.

HM Inspector of Constabulary Mike Cunningham said:

"Following our inspection, I have judged Cheshire Constabulary as 'good' at how legitimately it keeps people safe and reduces crime.

"I was pleased to find that the constabulary treats the people it serves with fairness and respect. It understands the importance of seeking feedback from

the public it serves, in particular those who might have less trust and confidence in the police.

"Although the constabulary generally ensures that its workforce behaves ethically and lawfully, there are some areas it can improve upon. There is awareness around the abuse of authority by officers and staff for sexual gain, but the constabulary needs to provide further training for officers and staff in this area. The constabulary could also consider including lessons learned in its communications with the workforce, to demonstrate and emphasise expected standards and the consequences of not adhering to them.

"Cheshire Constabulary in general also has a good approach to treating its workforce with fairness and respect. There are several examples where the constabulary has changed its approach to an issue in response to staff feedback. It could do more to communicate these changes, however."

HMIC has also published individual assessments of the leadership within each police force in England and Wales. These, along with individual reports on the legitimacy of all forces in England and Wales, are available on HMIC's website.