

## Northamptonshire Police is 'good' at legitimately keeping people safe and reducing crime - HMIC

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) has assessed how legitimate Northamptonshire Police 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 Northamptonshire Police:

- understands clearly the importance of treating people with fairness and respect as a core part of the vision and values of the organisation;
- has an effective vetting process in place. It has a dedicated vetting unit, which works closely with the human resources team and the counter-corruption unit; and
- is taking steps to improve the personal development review process so that all staff receive better supervision.

**HM Inspector of Constabulary Zoë Billingham said:**

"I am pleased to report that Northamptonshire Police has performed well in all areas of how legitimately it reduces crime and keeps people safe. The force has built on its good performance in 2015, which we also graded the force as 'good'.

"I'd like to draw particular attention to how the force clearly understands the importance of treating the people of Northamptonshire with fairness and respect. This is critical in ensuring the public have trust in confidence in the police, and can in turn help identify areas for the force to further improve. The force should look to go that extra step in communicating with the public the changes it has made, based on the feedback it has received. This would help to improve trust further.

"The force also has a good approach to ensuring that its workforce operates ethically and lawfully. We found effective channels for staff to report instances of corruption, and it is encouraging to find that the force sees the abuse of power for sexual gain (taking advantage of a position of power to exploit vulnerable victims of crime) as serious corruption and a priority for its counter-corruption unit. It would however benefit from a specific counter-corruption strategy to help protect against the areas of greatest threat to the organisation.

"The force is committed to improving the wellbeing of its workforce. This is done in a number of ways, from regular staff surveys to understand any issues it needs to address to conducting exit interviews for those leaving the force. It realises it needs to improve the support available to its workforce, and has started to work to address this. It is also working to improve its performance assessment process."

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.