

South Wales Police judged as 'good' at how legitimately it keeps people safe and reduces crime - HMIC

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

- is good at treating the people it serves with fairness and respect;
- is good at ensuring that its workforce behaves ethically and lawfully, however has limited capacity to seek out and assess intelligence about potential corruption; and
- has a desire to treat its workforce with fairness and respect, but needs to improve its performance development review process.

HM Inspector of Constabulary Wendy Williams said:

"I have judged South Wales Police as 'good' at legitimately keeping people safe and reducing crime. In 2015, when we last reported on the legitimacy of the force, it was also judged to be 'good'.

"I am pleased that the force seeks feedback and challenge well from those who have less trust and confidence in the police. This includes those who are less likely to complain and take part in traditional forms of engagement. It is also good at acting on this feedback to improve the way it treats the people it serves.

"South Wales Police is good at ensuring that its workforce behaves ethically and lawfully. It is pleasing that the force communicates clearly to its staff about what behaviours are acceptable and unacceptable; in turn staff understand the values and behaviours that are expected of them. There is some particularly positive work being undertaken in relation to tackling abuse of authority for sexual gain.

"Reflecting our findings in 2015, the force's current staff performance assessment process is ineffective. However the force has signalled an intention to implement a new performance development review system in the very near future. We shall review the force's commitment to developing a system for managing individual performance that is trusted and valued by staff."

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.