

West Mercia 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 West Mercia 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 West Mercia Police:

- is good at treating all of the people it serves with fairness and respect;
- is good at ensuring its workforce behaves ethically and lawfully; and
- is good at treating its workforce with fairness and respect.

HM Inspector of Constabulary Wendy Williams said:

"In 2015, HMIC judged West Mercia Police as 'requires improvement' in how it legitimately keeps people safe and reduces crime. I am pleased to report that

the force has improved and for our 2016 inspection it has been judged as 'good'.

"The force has entered into an alliance with Warwickshire Police, and they share a single vision and values. These values are well understood across both organisations. The forces also work well to identify those who may have less confidence and trust in the police, and understand the reasons for this.

"The forces offer a range of options for staff to report wrongdoing, which encourages ethical and lawful behaviour. The forces also recognise abuse of authority for sexual gain as one of the most serious forms of corruption."

"I was pleased to find that the forces are good at treating their workforces with fairness and respect. We found a clear commitment to health and wellbeing that is recognised by both workforces. The forces have also made significant progress in reducing absence levels and time off accrued."

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.