

West Midlands 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 Midlands 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 Midlands Police:

- treats the people it serves with fairness and respect;
- in general ensures its workforce behaves ethically and lawfully, however should review the capacity and capability of its counter-corruption unit; and
- doesn't have effective processes in place to ensure performance is being managed fairly and consistently.

HM Inspector of Constabulary Wendy Williams said:

"I have judged West Midlands Police to be good at legitimately keeping people safe and reducing crime. In general the force treats the people it serves with fairness and respect. It has adopted a new set of values, which focus on compassion for the vulnerable and helping those in need.

"I was pleased to find that officers and staff were aware of the required standards of ethical and lawful behaviour. The force's counter corruption unit gathers and acts on information which identifies potential corruption and the force is reviewing resource levels for this unit as part of its change programme. However the force needs to review the capacity and capability of its counter-corruption unit so it can manage its work more effectively. The force recognises officers and staff abusing their authority for sexual gain as serious corruption.

"The force has some improvements to make to ensure it treats its workforce with fairness and respect. It seeks feedback from staff, and addresses issues that this identifies, however the force doesn't have effective processes in place to ensure performance is being managed fairly and consistently.

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.