

# PEEL: Police legitimacy 2015

An inspection of Cambridgeshire Constabulary



February 2016

© HMIC 2016

ISBN: 978-1-78655-018-7

[www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic)

# Contents

<b>How legitimate is the force at keeping people safe and reducing crime? .....</b>	<b>4</b>
Overall judgment.....	4
Summary .....	4
<b>Force in numbers .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>10</b>
Methodology .....	10
<b>To what extent does practice and behaviour reinforce the wellbeing of staff and an ethical culture? .....</b>	<b>12</b>
Introduction.....	12
How well does the force develop and maintain an ethical culture?.....	16
How well does the force provide for the wellbeing of staff? .....	17
How well has the Code of Ethics been used to inform policy and practice? .....	19
How fairly and consistently does the force deal with complaints and misconduct? .....	20
Summary of findings .....	23
<b>How well does the force understand, engage with and treat fairly the people it serves to maintain and improve its legitimacy?.....</b>	<b>25</b>
Introduction.....	25
How well does the force understand the people it serves and the benefits of engaging with them?.....	26
How well does the force engage with all the people it serves? .....	27
To what extent are people treated fairly and with respect when they come into contact with police officers and staff? .....	29
Summary of findings .....	30
<b>To what extent are decisions taken on the use of stop and search and Taser fair and appropriate? .....</b>	<b>32</b>
Introduction.....	32

To what extent does the force ensure that it complies with the Best Use of Stop and Search scheme? .....	33
To what extent does the force ensure that Tasers are used fairly and appropriately? .....	38
Summary of findings .....	42
<b>Annex A – HMIC judgments .....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Annex B – Data methodology .....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Annex C – The Best Use of Stop and Search scheme .....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Annex D – Types of use of Taser .....</b>	<b>49</b>

# How legitimate is the force at keeping people safe and reducing crime?

## Overall judgment<sup>1</sup>



**Good**

Throughout 2015, HMIC's PEEL legitimacy inspection programme has assessed the culture within Cambridgeshire Constabulary and how this is reflected in the constabulary's public engagement, use of Taser and compliance with the Best Use of Stop and Search scheme.

The chief officer team takes seriously the need for an ethical and inclusive workforce and there was an effective approach to improving the wellbeing of its staff. Local teams have a good understanding of their neighbourhoods and engage positively with the public and decision-making by Taser-trained officers is fair and appropriate. The constabulary has more to do in order to comply with the Best Use of Stop and Search scheme.

This is the first time HMIC has graded forces on their legitimacy, so no year-on-year comparison is possible.

## Summary

In Cambridgeshire Constabulary, chief officers had set a clear vision and values for the organisation and staff supported these and felt that they were trusted to do the right things. The constabulary has made sufficient effort to establish the Code of Ethics,<sup>2</sup> and has incorporated it into its own statement of vision and values. The Code of Ethics was launched in April 2014, and set out nine policing principles that should be applied by all officers and staff: Accountability; Integrity; Openness; Fairness; Leadership; Respect; Honesty; Objectivity; and Selflessness. These principles should be used to underpin the decisions and actions taken by officers and staff.

When HMIC looked at how well the force understands and engages with all the people it serves, we found that the constabulary understands the importance of engagement with its communities and uses a broad range of methods to

---

<sup>1</sup> Outstanding, Good, Requires improvement or Inadequate – see Annex A.

<sup>2</sup> Code of Ethics – A Code of Practice for the Principles and Standards of Professional Behaviour for the Policing Profession of England and Wales, College of Policing, London, July 2014. Available from: [www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Ethics/Documents/Code\\_of\\_Ethics.pdf](http://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Ethics/Documents/Code_of_Ethics.pdf)

communicate with the public. There are good examples of officers listening to and understanding local concerns and responding to them appropriately. Officers and staff generally treat people fairly and with respect. Also, the constabulary had supported the wellbeing of the workforce effectively.

Stop and search and Taser are two ways that the police can prevent crime and protect the public. However, they can be intrusive and forceful methods, and it is therefore vital the police use them fairly and appropriately. HMIC found that Taser use is generally appropriate and scrutiny of its use is good. However, the constabulary needs to satisfy itself that it has the right number of Taser-trained officers in the right places.

The constabulary does not comply with the Best Use of Stop and Search scheme, and has more to do to ensure officers and supervisors understand the grounds by which people can be stopped and searched.

## To what extent does practice and behaviour reinforce the wellbeing of staff and an ethical culture?



**Good**

Cambridgeshire Constabulary had set out its vision and values, and there were a wide range of ways for officers and staff to engage in discussion about them. Most staff supported these values and felt they were trusted to do the right thing.

The constabulary had also set out the 'RISK' priorities (Responding to local concerns; Investigate crime and protect the most vulnerable; Staff professionalism; and Keep people safe). We found staff understood the priorities and they felt supported and trusted by senior officers.

We were encouraged to find that staff were confident to challenge inappropriate behaviour at all levels and arrangements are in place

## How well does the force understand, engage with and treat fairly the people it serves to maintain and improve its legitimacy?



**Good**

In Cambridgeshire Constabulary, neighbourhood policing teams have a good understanding of their communities and work closely with them using a range of methods to engage them. There are good examples of the constabulary engaging Eastern European communities and finding solutions to overcome language and cultural barriers.

The constabulary values local people participating in policing activities and there is a wide range of neighbourhood watch schemes in place. The refreshed recruitment process for volunteers and the new structure to manage their contributions is positive.

Neighbourhood policing

## To what extent are decisions taken on the use of stop and search and Taser fair and appropriate?



**Requires Improvement**

Cambridgeshire Constabulary is not compliant with the Best Use of Stop and Search scheme, and more work is needed to ensure that officers understand the features of the Best Use of Stop and Search scheme and apply the National Decision Model, including the Code of Ethics, when using the power.

The new Stop and Search Community Scrutiny Group is a positive step. However, more needs to be done to ensure that the views of young people are captured, including those from within black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities.

In Cambridgeshire, Taser is used by officers trained to the right standard with a good understanding of the National Decision Model.

to support staff who report misconduct.

The constabulary worked effectively to support the wellbeing of the workforce. Officers and staff had a wide range of services available to them including counselling and general health checkups.

There were different approaches to the initial assessment of how serious a misconduct allegation may be dealt with for police officers and police staff. This could lead to police staff being dealt with more harshly than police officers. However, the constabulary's professional standards department planned to standardise approaches for police staff and police officers.

teams demonstrate a positive attitude to working with their communities to gain an understanding of their concerns, the causes of these and the most effective way for them to be resolved. This is viewed as a key responsibility and a core activity for local staff. More could be done to make better use of local community profiles to further improve this engagement work.

Call-handlers and front desk staff are polite, friendly and helpful. A priority for the constabulary about 'Changing Behaviours and Habits' is contained within the constabulary's communications plan and this details the areas of leadership, pride and standards of behaviour expected when officers engage with the public.

Officers and staff in Cambridgeshire Constabulary treat people with whom they come into contact with fairness and respect. There is a good understanding of the National Decision Model and how to apply it in daily policing duties.

However, it has comparatively low numbers of Taser-trained officers compared to other similar forces. The constabulary should consider whether the current number of Taser officers and their deployment pattern reflects current demand, to ensure this tactic is available to improve the safety of the public and officers.

Taser deployment and use in the constabulary is the subject of effective oversight and its use is fair and appropriate.

## Force in numbers



### Ethnic diversity

Percentage of BAME in workforce 31 March 2015

overall workforce

**3%**

officers

**2%**

staff

**3%**

PCSOs

**10%**

Percentage of BAME in local population, 2011 Census

**10%**



### Gender diversity

Percentage of females in overall workforce 31 March 2015

Cambridgeshire Constabulary

**41%**

England and Wales force average

**41%**

Percentage of females by role, Cambridgeshire Constabulary

officers

**28%**

staff

**60%**

PCSOs

**52%**

Percentage of females by role, England and Wales force average

officers

**29%**

staff

**60%**

PCSOs

**47%**



### Public complaints

Number of allegations made by the public that have been finalised 12 months to 31 March 2015

Cambridgeshire Constabulary

**936**

Proportion of finalised allegations investigated 12 months to 31 March 2015

Cambridgeshire Constabulary

**35%**

Force's most similar group average

**43%**



Proportion of finalised allegations upheld after investigation 12 months to 31 March 2015

Cambridgeshire Constabulary

Force's most similar group average

18%

15%



## Stop and search

Number of stops and searches carried out 12 months to 31 March 2015

6,086

Stops and searches per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2015

Cambridgeshire Constabulary

Force's most similar group average

7.3

5.8

Change in number of stops and searches 12 months to 31 March 2014 to 12 months to 31 March 2015

Cambridgeshire Constabulary

Force's most similar group average

-53%

-44%



## Tasers

Number of times a Taser was used 12 months to 31 December 2014

87

Number of times a Taser was used per 10,000 population 12 months to 31 December 2014

Cambridgeshire Constabulary

Force's most similar group average

1.0

1.8

Tasers 'discharged' (as proportion of overall use) 12 months to 31 December 2014

Cambridgeshire Constabulary

Force's most similar group average

22%\*

21%

**Data:** for further information about the data used in this graphic see annexes B and D in this report and annex B in the national legitimacy report.

\* These data are based on small numbers and so comparisons with the average should be treated with caution.

## Introduction

Throughout 2015, HMIC has assessed the extent to which police forces are legitimate in how they keep people safe and reduce crime. This is one strand of the PEEL (police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy) all-force inspection programme.

A police force is considered 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, reasonable, effective and lawful. The force must also generate the trust and co-operation of the public.

To reach a judgment on each force's legitimacy, HMIC examined three areas:

### Spring 2015 inspection

- To what extent does practice and behaviour reinforce the wellbeing of staff and an ethical culture?

### Autumn 2015 inspection

- How well does the force understand, engage with and treat fairly the people it serves to maintain and improve its legitimacy?
- To what extent are decisions taken on the use of stop and search and Taser fair and appropriate?

This report provides the main findings for Cambridgeshire Constabulary.

## Methodology

During our inspection we interviewed relevant senior leaders, collected data and documentation from forces, surveyed the public to seek their views of the force, held focus groups for those at different grades and ranks, and undertook unannounced visits to individual police stations to gather evidence and speak with officers and staff.

Prior to inspection fieldwork we also reviewed a small number of Taser deployment forms and stop and search forms; and listened to calls for service from members of the public.

This work was informed by research on the two principal characteristics of a legitimate organisation – organisational justice and procedural justice.

### **Organisational justice<sup>3</sup>**

Every day, people respond to the actions and decisions made by their organisation that affect them or their work. Research shows that an individual's perceptions of these decisions (and the processes that led to them) as fair or unfair can influence their subsequent attitudes and behaviours.

In a policing context, staff who feel they are treated fairly and with respect by their force, are more likely to go on to treat the public with whom they come into contact fairly and with respect. This will increase the public's view that the police act legitimately.

### **Procedural justice**

Research<sup>4</sup> has shown that for the police to be considered legitimate in the eyes of the public, people need to believe that the police will treat them with respect, make fair decisions (and take the time to explain these decisions), and be friendly and approachable. It also indicates that the way officers behave is central to policing as it can encourage greater respect for the law and foster social responsibility.

There is also an economic benefit for a force which is seen as legitimate by the communities it serves. The more the public provides support to the police through information or intelligence, or becomes more active in policing activities (such as Neighbourhood Watch or other voluntary activity), the less the financial burden on police forces.

---

<sup>3</sup> *It's a fair cop? Police legitimacy, public cooperation, and crime reduction*, Andy Myhill and Paul Quinton, National Policing Improvement Agency, London, 2011. Available from: [http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Documents/Fair\\_Cop\\_Briefing\\_Note.pdf](http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Documents/Fair_Cop_Briefing_Note.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

# To what extent does practice and behaviour reinforce the wellbeing of staff and an ethical culture?

## Introduction

As organisational justice has a direct relationship to procedural justice (we treat others as we are treated), it is critical that the culture inside police forces is an ethical one, where challenge and continual improvement are encouraged. It is also crucial that all officers and staff feel that they and others are treated fairly and consistently (for example, when an allegation is made against them by a member of the public or a colleague). Even if a system or process is fair, if people do not believe that it is, then organisational justice will not have been achieved.

Officers and staff who feel they are treated fairly and with respect by their force, are more likely to go on to treat the public with whom they come into contact fairly and with respect. This will increase the public's view that the police act legitimately.

In spring 2015,<sup>5</sup> HMIC made an assessment of police force culture. The inspection asked:

1. How well does the force develop and maintain an ethical culture?
2. How well does the force provide for the wellbeing of staff?
3. How well has the Code of Ethics been used to inform policy and practice?
4. How fairly and consistently does the force deal with complaints and misconduct?

In addition, HMIC also considered the number of females and black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) people at different ranks and grades, to determine the extent to which the diversity of the force reflects that of the communities it serves.

---

<sup>5</sup> The inspection took place between March and June 2015.

## Gender and black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) breakdown in Cambridgeshire Constabulary

A breakdown of the full-time equivalent (FTE) workforce<sup>6</sup> in Cambridgeshire Constabulary as at 31 March 2015 is shown below.

**Figure 1: Breakdown of full-time equivalent (FTE) workforce in Cambridgeshire Constabulary, 31 March 2015**

FTE	Total	Of which	
		Female	BAME*
<b>Total workforce</b>	<b>2,294</b>	<b>931 (41%)</b>	<b>66 (3%)</b>
<b>Total officers</b>	<b>1,362</b>	<b>388 (28%)</b>	<b>29 (2%)</b>
Constables	1,026	314 (31%)	21 (2%)
Sergeants	230	56 (24%)	5 (2%)
Inspecting ranks	88	16 (18%)**	2 (2%)**
Superintendents and above	18	2 **	1 **
<b>Staff</b>	<b>783</b>	<b>467 (60%)</b>	<b>23 (3%)</b>
<b>PCSOs</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>76 (52%)</b>	<b>15 (10%)</b>

Note that numbers may not add up to totals because of rounding.

\* Individuals are not required to record their ethnicity. As a result, BAME totals and percentages exclude officers/staff/PCSOs where the ethnicity is not stated.

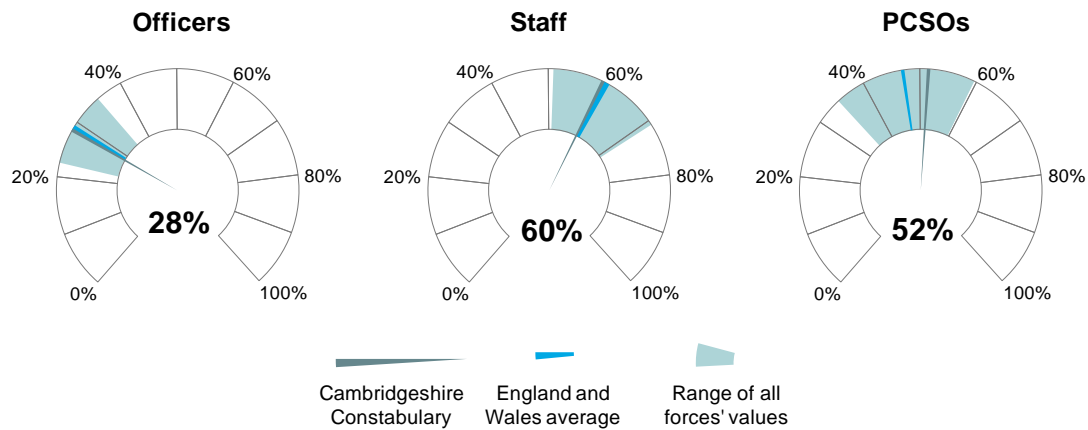
\*\* Due to the figures being small, percentages should be treated with caution. In particular, percentages have not been included where totals are very small.

**Source: Home Office Police Workforce statistics**

The figure below shows how the percentages of female officers, staff and PCSOs in Cambridgeshire Constabulary compared with the averages of all forces in England and Wales. It shows they were broadly similar for both officers and staff yet higher for PCSOs.

<sup>6</sup> Workforce comprises officers, staff and police community support officers (PCSOs).

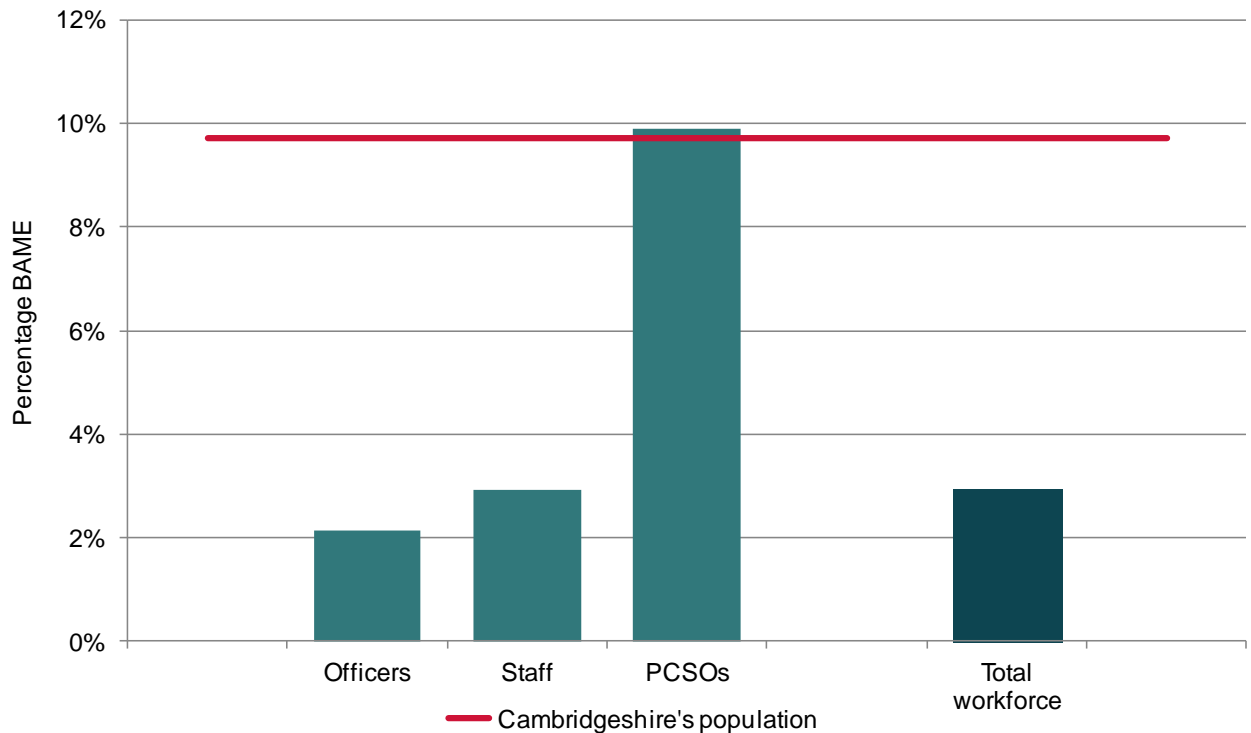
**Figure 2: The percentage of female officers, staff and PCSOs in Cambridgeshire Constabulary compared with the force average for England and Wales, 31 March 2015**



**Source: Home Office Police Workforce statistics**

We compared the percentages of (i) BAME officers, (ii) BAME police staff and (iii) BAME PCSOs in each force with the proportion of BAME people living in the force area. In Cambridgeshire, around 10 percent of the local population were BAME. The figure below shows these comparisons. There was a statistically significant under-representation of BAME people in Cambridgeshire Constabulary's overall police workforce, as well as separately for officers and staff.

**Figure 3: Percentage of BAME people within Cambridgeshire Constabulary's workforce (as at 31 March 2015) compared with its local population**



**Sources: Home Office Police Workforce statistics and Office for National Statistics 2011 Census**

Police forces in England and Wales have experienced large reductions in their total workforce since the government's October 2010 spending review.<sup>7</sup> HMIC also examined how the percentages of BAME officers and staff, and females within the workforce had changed over this period.

Across all police forces in England and Wales, total workforce numbers decreased by 15 percent between 31 March 2010 and 31 March 2015. However, the percentages of BAME people and females within the overall workforce increased during the five year period. Most notably, the proportion of female officers increased over 2 percentage points to 28 percent, and the proportion of BAME officers increased by nearly 1 percentage point to just under 6 percent. In contrast, the proportion of BAME PCSOs decreased by nearly 2 percentage points to just over 9 percent.

The figure below shows how these volumes and proportions have changed in Cambridgeshire Constabulary over the spending review period.

<sup>7</sup> Spending Review 2010, HM Government, October 2013. Available from: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/spending-review-2010](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/spending-review-2010)

**Figure 4: Change in Cambridgeshire Constabulary’s workforce (overall volume and the percentage of female and BAME people), 31 March 2010 to 31 March 2015**

	Total change		Percentage point change	
			% female	% BAME
<b>Total workforce</b>	<b>-459</b>	<b>(-17%)</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>0</b>
Officers	-109	(-7%)	+3 ●	0
Staff	-289	(-27%)	-2	+1
PCSOs	-60	(-29%)	0	-1

Note that numbers may not add up to totals because of rounding.

● Denotes there has been a statistically significant change in the proportion (see Annex B for details).

**Source: Home Office Police Workforce statistics**

There were no statistically significant changes in the percentages of either females or BAME people within Cambridgeshire Constabulary's overall workforce between 31 March 2010 and 31 March 2015. However, there was a statistically significant change in the percentage of female officers – around a 3 percentage point increase.

Overall, compared with other forces, as at 31 March 2015, the percentage of females within Cambridgeshire Constabulary's workforce was broadly similar for both officers and staff yet higher for PCSOs. By ethnicity, there was an under-representation in BAME officers and staff and there was no statistically significant change in the proportion between 31 March 2010 and 31 March 2015 for either group.

## **How well does the force develop and maintain an ethical culture?**

It is critical that the culture inside police forces is an ethical one, where challenge and continual improvement are encouraged and where staff feel that they and others are treated fairly and consistently. If it is not, the service provided to the public may be equally unfair and inconsistent. HMIC therefore considered the extent to which people at all levels and all ranks (or equivalent) were creating and maintaining an ethical culture.

The constabulary held seminars every six months for all supervisors and managers, in which it promoted the values of the organisation. Staff were encouraged to e-mail the chief officer team with any concerns, and a positive open approach was commented on by many staff we met.

The constabulary had also set out the force ‘RISK’ priorities, which are: Responding to local concerns; Investigate crime and protect the most vulnerable; Staff professionalism; and Keep people safe. Staff understood the priorities and they felt supported and trusted by senior officers.



There is an Equality Board, which included staff associations, unions, and staff support networks. The board played a constructive role in addressing concerns raised by members of the constabulary.

In 2013, a staff survey was conducted and analysis of the results was followed by a range of changes, particularly to training, including new leadership and management training. Ideas had also been used to inform collaboration discussions between the chief constables and police and crime commissioners of Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire. A three-force all-staff survey, with the collaborated forces of Bedfordshire Police and Hertfordshire Constabulary, was being planned.

Staff consistently reported that they were confident to challenge poor behaviour. There was a confidential telephone reporting line for officers to call, and examples of its use were examined. The information provided by Cambridgeshire officers and staff about the poor behaviour of colleagues ranged from criminality to inappropriate use of social media. To prevent poor conduct, the name of every officer and staff member charged with an offence or summonsed to court was circulated and lessons learned from gross misconduct cases used to support ethical behaviour.

The constabulary recognised the need to become more representative of its communities. It was taking action to eliminate bias in its selection processes, as well as working with Bedfordshire Police and Hertfordshire Constabulary, to gain a greater understanding of how other forces were encouraging black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) applicants to join the service.

The proportion of senior women in the constabulary was low. Although there was a review process after every promotion board; the deputy chief constable had formed a working group with the women's network to research why numbers were low and to identify how women candidates could be supported and developed for future promotion.

Staff associations were confident that if there were concerns regarding the fairness of promotion processes, then staff would be confident to raise them and HMIC did not encounter any perceptions of bias or unfairness.

## **How well does the force provide for the wellbeing of staff?**

Police forces need to understand the benefits of having a healthier workforce – a happy and healthy workforce is likely to be a more productive one, as a result of people taking fewer sick days and having a greater investment in what they do. This inspection was concerned with what efforts were being made in forces to consider, and provide for, the wellbeing needs of their workforce.

Cambridgeshire Constabulary provided effective services supporting the wellbeing of its staff. Staff from a very wide range of roles and levels in the constabulary had an overwhelming view that the constabulary was caring, flexible to their needs and

had introduced a number of successful welfare initiatives. These included welfare checks, workshops to improve health, access to physiotherapy treatment, and a sickness support network. The constabulary planned to pair up staff who were diagnosed with a medical condition with someone who already had that condition and was living with it, to help support them.

To support staff in roles where they were regularly exposed to traumatic incidents or material, the constabulary sent out questionnaires to assess their wellbeing, and provide them with occupational health service support. To identify any staff who had witnessed or dealt with traumatic incidents or crimes and were in need of support, there was the Trauma Risk Incident Management (TRIM) assessment process. A wide mix of police officers and staff of differing ranks and roles were trained to carry out the assessments, and the process was overseen by a welfare officer. Good examples of staff being successfully referred for counselling after such assessments were provided. In addition to this, there were examples of the successful use of the Post Incident Process (PIP) to manage serious police incidents, which were likely to be the subject of investigations, such as after the discharge of a firearm. Overall, staff believed that the constabulary cared about them.

The constabulary made it clear, through its intranet publications and other messages to staff, that confidentiality would be respected. To support staff members who reported wrongdoing the organisation looked for opportunities to gain the same information or evidence through other means. For example, such as using covert techniques to record evidence and viewing CCTV, to support the staff member's allegation and minimise the fear of reprisals. They are then assisted as a witness and an example was given of an investigation into allegations of bullying by a senior manager where this help was provided.

To support the mental wellbeing of staff, the constabulary had been working with the mental health charity MIND, and with the University of Oxford, to design the 'Blue light' programme. Under this programme, MIND provided free training sessions for staff to increase their resilience by giving them techniques to help them manage stress or anxiety. These welfare measures have contributed to reducing sickness to fewer than six days per officer per year.

There were appropriate arrangements in place to support the wellbeing of officers and staff and the workforce were positive about this provision.

## How well has the Code of Ethics been used to inform policy and practice?

In April 2014, the College of Policing launched the Code of Ethics.<sup>8</sup> This sets out nine policing principles that should be applied by all officers and staff: Accountability; Integrity; Openness; Fairness; Leadership; Respect; Honesty; Objectivity; and Selflessness. These principles should be used to underpin the decisions and actions taken by officers and staff.

This inspection considered the extent to which officers and staff were aware of the Code of Ethics, and how the force was working to embed the code into policy and practice.

The chief officer team in Cambridgeshire Constabulary talked through the Code of Ethics in seminars and senior staff from the professional standards department led local presentations to staff. There was a link to the Code of Ethics on the constabulary's intranet system and an online learning package was available to staff. However, this was not mandatory. The constabulary's learning and development team was reviewing all training lesson plans to ensure that all staff learned about the code.

The constabulary's policies were not consistently compliant with the Code of Ethics. We were informed that the constabulary had plans to review all existing policies against the code. An agreement had been reached between Cambridgeshire Constabulary, Bedfordshire Police and Hertfordshire Constabulary, to ensure that all new policies, including those due for review, were assessed against the Code of Ethics to ensure compliance.

Most of the staff we spoke to during the inspection were aware of the Code of Ethics, and that it is central to the National Decision Model (NDM).<sup>9</sup> Mostly staff were able to relate their knowledge of the constabulary's priorities to it.

However, when publishing the Code of Ethics, the constabulary retained its own values, and added the policing principles from the code to them. We found officers and staff working in collaborated units with staff from Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire were working to the same set of standards of professional behaviour and Code of Ethics. The collaboration programme team was addressing this difference in values by developing a set of shared values across the three forces.

---

<sup>8</sup> Code of Ethics – A Code of Practice for the Principles and Standards of Professional Behaviour for the Policing Profession of England and Wales, College of Policing, London, July 2014. Available from: [www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Ethics/Documents/Code\\_of\\_Ethics.pdf](http://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Ethics/Documents/Code_of_Ethics.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> *College of Policing - Authorised Professional Practice on National Decision Model*, College of Policing, December 2014. Available from: [www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/national-decision-model/?s](http://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/national-decision-model/?s)

## How fairly and consistently does the force deal with complaints and misconduct?

Complaints made by the public against police officers, police staff, contracted police staff, and force procedures are recorded by individual police forces. Each complaint may have one or more allegations attached to it. For example, one complaint that an officer was rude and that they pushed an individual would be recorded as two separate allegations.

Each allegation can be dealt with, or resolved, in a number of ways. Some complaints, such as rudeness or incivility, may be dealt with through the local resolution process. The way these complaints are resolved should be adapted to the needs of the complainant – for example, they may involve an apology or an explanation of the circumstances in writing or in person. If the complaint is more serious, and assessed as not suitable for local resolution, it must be investigated by an appointed investigating officer who will produce a report detailing findings against each allegation. Under certain circumstances, some complaints do not proceed. These use processes known as disapplication or dispensation (for example, if the matter is already the subject of a complaint or if the complaint is repetitious or vexatious), discontinuance (for example, if the complainant refuses to co-operate or it is not reasonably practicable to investigate the complaint) or if they are withdrawn by the complainant.<sup>10</sup>

In the 12 months to 31 March 2015, Cambridgeshire Constabulary finalised 936 allegations from public complaints that were made against its officers and staff. Of these, 35 percent had been investigated and 58 percent had been locally resolved. A similar proportion of allegations were investigated and a greater proportion were locally resolved in Cambridgeshire compared with the average of its most similar group of forces.<sup>11</sup>

In the 12 months to 31 March 2015, the average time Cambridgeshire Constabulary took to complete a local resolution was 73 days, broadly in line with the average of its most similar group of forces (66 days). Over the same period, the average time a local investigation took to complete was 113 days, less than the average of its most similar group of forces (144 days).

After local investigation, Cambridgeshire Constabulary closed 329 allegations in the 12 months to 31 March 2015. Of these, 18 percent were upheld, where it was concluded that the service provided by the police officer or police staff or the service

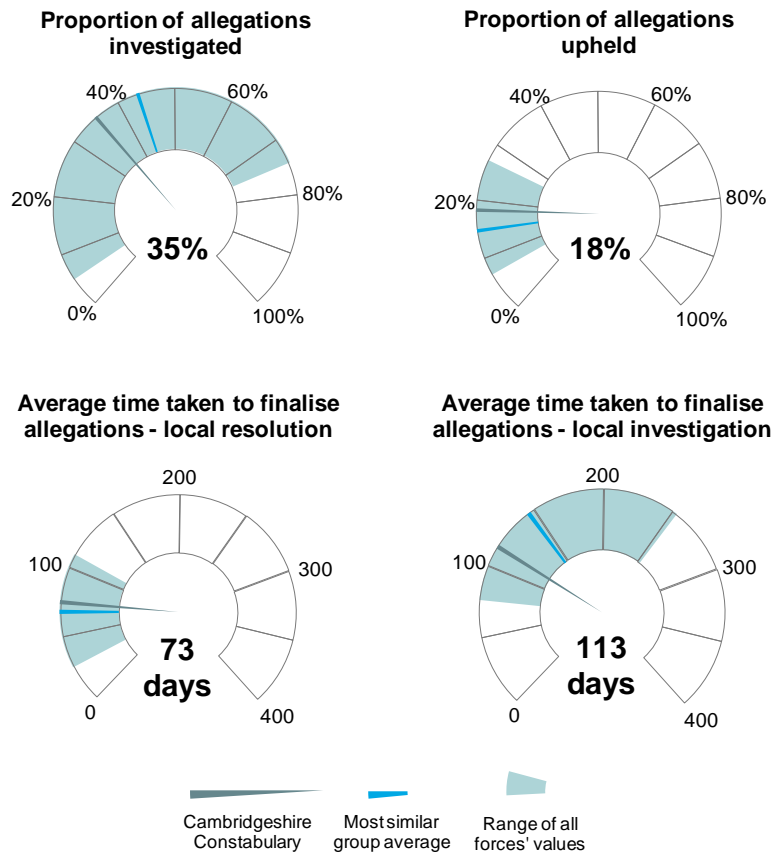
---

<sup>10</sup> For a more complete outline of the definitions and potential outcomes resulting from public complaints, please see the Independent Police Complaints Commission's website [www.ipcc.gov.uk](http://www.ipcc.gov.uk).

<sup>11</sup> Most similar groups are groups of local areas that have been found to be most similar to each other using statistical methods, based on demographic, economic and social characteristics which relate to crime. See Annex B for more information.

as a whole did not reach the standard a reasonable person could expect. This was greater than the average of Cambridgeshire's most similar group of forces of 15 percent. The following figure shows how these values compare.

**Figure 5: Proportion of allegations investigated, proportion upheld, time taken to finalise allegations by local resolutions and investigations by Cambridgeshire Constabulary, 12 months to 31 March 2015**



**Source: Independent Police Complaints Commission**

Overall, in the 12 months to 31 March 2015, Cambridgeshire Constabulary finalised 35 percent of allegations by investigation. The proportion of allegations it upheld after local investigation was greater than the average of its most similar group of forces. Compared to its most similar group of forces, Cambridgeshire took a similar amount of time to complete local resolutions and less time to complete local investigations.

## **Are officers and staff, particularly those with protected characteristics, treated fairly following a complaint or allegation against them?**

While it is very important that public complaints and allegations of misconduct or corruption are taken seriously, it is also important that those subject to these allegations or complaints are treated fairly and consistently, and that there is no bias or discrimination involved in any aspect of the decision-making process.

Building on the findings of HMIC's Police Integrity and Corruption inspection,<sup>12</sup> this inspection considered if public complaints and misconduct investigations were dealt with in a timely and consistent manner. The inspection also considered whether investigations were conducted fairly and whether officers and staff, particularly those with protected characteristics,<sup>13</sup> felt that they would be treated fairly following a complaint or allegation against them.

Before the fieldwork stage began, HMIC conducted a file review of 78 public complaints and internal misconduct allegations, to assess whether they had been considered fairly and consistently. We examined further the outcomes of the review during our fieldwork.

While not necessarily representative of all cases, in the small number of files we looked at we did not find any evidence of any bias in how the force dealt with complaints and internal misconduct allegations, in respect of gender, ethnicity or rank.

Cambridgeshire Constabulary shared a professional standards department with Bedfordshire Police and Hertfordshire Constabulary, this provided consistency in the initial assessment of public complaints. These assessments determined the decisions about the level at which the complaint should be dealt with by the constabulary. However, the grade of the police staff member who made the initial assessment was not of the required level of seniority; which the legislation specifies to be of at least chief inspector rank or police staff equivalent.

The constabulary was consistent in assessing police officer internal misconduct allegations, as these allegations were also assessed by the professional standards department. However, internal misconduct allegations against members of police staff were assessed by members of human resources departments in each of the three separate forces in the collaboration, and this appeared to have led to

---

<sup>12</sup> Integrity Matters – An inspection of arrangements to ensure integrity and to provide the capability to tackle corruption in policing, HMIC, London, 2015. Available from: [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/integrity-matters/](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/integrity-matters/)

<sup>13</sup> Under the Equality Act 2010, it is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of: age; being or becoming a transsexual person; being married or in a civil partnership; being pregnant or having a child; disability; race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin; religion, belief or lack of religion/belief; sex; or sexual orientation. These are called 'protected characteristics'.

inconsistent decision-making. Staff told us that there was not an issue with gross misconduct allegations, where the individual was at risk of dismissal, as they appeared to be consistent across the three forces. However, our interviews and workplace checks showed that staff perceived inconsistency and unfairness with the misconduct cases that would not result in dismissal for police staff.

The constabulary was seeking to achieve greater consistency in this respect by standardising paperwork to support the assessment process. The three forces plan to collaborate on human resources, and will reduce the number of human resources decision makers from three to one. This may support fairer decision-making.

The constabulary oversaw complaints and misconduct matters through the Tri-Force Governance Board, which was attended by the three deputy chief constables, and representatives of the three police and crime commissioners. This meeting provided oversight of professional standards issues at a senior level and provided a mechanism to help understand patterns of behaviour and trends in public complaints.

There was also a fortnightly meeting between the tri-force head of professional standards and the deputy chief constable, who also had regular contact with his counterparts in the other two forces to discuss any ongoing issues of relevance.

There were different approaches to the initial assessment of how a serious misconduct allegation could be dealt with for police officers and police staff. This meant there was an inconsistency in how officers and police staff were being dealt with, however, the collaborated forces professional standards department planned to standardise approaches for police staff and police officers.

## Summary of findings



**Good**

Cambridgeshire Constabulary had set out its vision and values, and there were a wide range of ways for officers and staff to engage in discussion about them. Most staff supported these values and felt they were trusted to do the right thing.

The constabulary had also set out the 'RISK' priorities (Responding to local concerns; Investigate crime and protect the most vulnerable; Staff professionalism; and Keep people safe). We found staff understood the priorities and they felt supported and trusted by senior officers.

We were encouraged to find that staff were confident to challenge inappropriate behaviour at all levels and arrangements are in place to support staff who report misconduct.

The constabulary worked effectively to support the wellbeing of the workforce. Officers and staff had a wide range of services available to them including counselling and general health checkups.

There were different approaches to the initial assessment of how serious a misconduct allegation may be dealt with for police officers and police staff. This could lead to police staff being dealt with more harshly than police officers. However, the constabulary's professional standards department planned to standardise approaches for police staff and police officers.



# How well does the force understand, engage with and treat fairly the people it serves to maintain and improve its legitimacy?

## Introduction

The negative effect of poor police and community relations on public perceptions should not be underestimated. People who already have a poor opinion of the police are more likely to perceive their contact with the police as a negative experience. On the other hand, perceptions of fair decision-making and positive public interaction and engagement can improve perceptions and increase trust, leading to improved or enhanced police legitimacy. This, in turn, helps efforts to reduce crime by encouraging greater respect for the law and fostering social responsibility, by making people more likely to help the police and not break the law.

Community engagement should influence every aspect of policing. For engagement to be effective, the organisation should focus on the needs of citizens and be committed to ensuring that the results from engagement work are integrated into service design and provision, and that communities participate in that provision.

In autumn 2015, HMIC made an assessment of the extent to which police forces understand and engage with the people they are there to serve. Based on the College of Policing's Authorised Professional Practice on Engagement and Communication,<sup>14</sup> the inspection asked:

1. How well does the force understand the people it serves and the benefits of engaging with them?
2. How well does the force engage with all the people it serves?
3. To what extent are people treated fairly and with respect when they come into contact with police officers and staff?

Before the fieldwork stage of the inspection, HMIC commissioned Ipsos MORI to survey the public in each force area, specifically seeking their views about their force. While the findings of the survey may not represent the views of everyone living in the force area, they are indicative of what the public in that police force area think.

---

<sup>14</sup> *Authorised Professional Practice on Engagement and Communication*, College of Policing, 2015. Available from: [www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/engagement-and-communication/?s](http://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/engagement-and-communication/?s)

## **How well does the force understand the people it serves and the benefits of engaging with them?**

HMIC's inspection considered the extent to which forces understand the relationship between positive public engagement and increased public confidence in the police. We also assessed the extent to which, at local and force levels, the force understands the needs and concerns of the people it serves.

Cambridgeshire Constabulary is consistent in its reinforcement of the importance of engaging with the public. Plans emphasise the need for effective communication to ensure that local communities are listened to, and that the information provided by them is valued, recognised and leads to a response that is sensitive to their different needs and expectations. In addition there is a commitment to explain the extent and nature of the services provided by the constabulary, and encourage members of the community to actively participate in support of policing activities. The aim is to provide a better understanding of how the constabulary works, to inspire confidence in it and to reinforce its legitimacy. The constabulary fully recognises that its activities have a significant impact on public trust and confidence.

Neighbourhood policing teams demonstrate a positive attitude to working with their communities to gain an understanding of their concerns, the causes of them and the most effective way for them to be resolved. This is viewed as a key responsibility and a core activity for local staff. Engagement is through a broad range of methods that includes providing a visible and accessible police presence, and also making full use of the opportunities provided by technology such as social media and messaging systems. Staff throughout the constabulary actively use Facebook and Twitter as a way to provide a timely and direct response to issues of concern, and also to explain successes that have been achieved.

More could be done to develop the constabulary website and to ensure that the information available is relevant to communities across Cambridgeshire and that it is up to date. The website needs to be developed to be of greater value to both the public and the constabulary.

The local policing teams are supported by a corporate performance department that undertakes surveys and collates data from a wide range of sources to provide an insight into the communities, and their confidence or satisfaction in the service they receive.

The contributions of partners and volunteers, such as various neighbourhood watch schemes, are valued and there are examples of innovative and creative solutions to local problems being successfully delivered through the sharing of information and joint working. For example, in Wisbech there are good joint arrangements with the local authority, and volunteers help to engage with Eastern European communities and understand their concerns and needs.

Local officers mainly demonstrate sensitivity and an ability to identify and manage tensions. This is evident in the use of community impact assessments which are used following incidents where confidence in the police might be compromised. Those examined are of a good standard and contain information to enable an effective assessment of any tensions or issues in the communities affected.

Although neighbourhood profiles have been created to inform local policing teams about their communities, we found no evidence of these being used to assist with planning and informing staff about their communities. This is a missed opportunity and more could be done to ensure local officers and staffs understand how they can use the profiles to further improve engagement with communities.

There is evidence of a wide range of policing activity undertaken locally that provides responsive and effective solutions to specific problems within communities.

Of the 503 survey responses from the area covered by Cambridgeshire Constabulary, 50 percent agree that the police understand the crime and anti-social behaviour issues within their force area and 14 percent disagree. The remainder neither agree nor disagree or do not know. Although not directly comparable because of the small force sample size, of the responses from all forces across England and Wales, 49 percent agree versus 14 percent who disagree.

Cambridgeshire Constabulary recognises that positive engagement with communities has a direct relationship with improving the legitimacy of the constabulary and developing trust.

## **How well does the force engage with all the people it serves?**

For the police to find the most cost effective and efficient ways of communicating with the public, they should tailor their methods of engagement in a way that meets the needs and preferences of those they serve. The police should ensure they overcome any barriers to successful engagement (for example, social exclusion, location, low confidence in the police) to seek the views of all the people they serve and keep them informed.

From the survey, fewer than 10 percent of respondents report that they have, within the previous 12 months, been asked about their views on crime and anti-social behaviour issues that matter most to them where they live. Similarly, in most forces, fewer than 20 percent of respondents have been told, within the previous 12 months, how their force is tackling these issues.

Our inspection looked at the different ways that forces engage their communities. Cambridgeshire Constabulary has an engagement strategy and police and crime plan, which provides guidance for local policing teams when they undertake a wide and diverse range of activities to communicate with those they serve. This is a two

way process. The first objective is to gain an understanding of that specific community, its needs and concerns and any relevant information that the police require to fulfil its role. A second objective is to explain and inform the policing service that is provided, and also to establish the level of satisfaction and confidence. This flow of information is recognised as being of critical importance and dependent on the use of effective engagement and communication.

With specialist support and guidance from the corporate communications team, neighbourhood staff use both traditional and innovative ways to engage successfully. Police community support officers hand out questionnaires to members of the public, so that they can provide feedback on policing in the county. They also undertake routine visits to vulnerable people to provide reassurance. In Wisbech we found some good examples of engaging with Eastern European communities and solutions to overcome language barriers. At the same time, the constabulary is seeking to replace some traditional community meetings with more effective technological solutions. An example is a recent local meeting where 250 community members 'met' on the internet to take part in a discussion about local policing issues.

The constabulary has worked closely with neighbourhood and countryside watch schemes for many years. This close relationship is a continuing one, but there is now additional capability provided by an automated messaging system that both passes out information and receives feedback in a timely way.

The constabulary recognises and values the participation in policing activities by members of its communities. The role of the Neighbourhood Watch volunteers and Community Speed watch, with active schemes throughout the county, are examples of good partnership working. An innovative approach is the assistance of volunteers with specialist knowledge to assist in the identification and recovery of stolen property. The recruitment process for volunteers and the newly created structure to manage their contributions is a positive reinforcement of the commitment to increase capability and to strengthen relationships through engagement.

From the survey, 31 percent of the respondents from the area covered by Cambridgeshire Constabulary speak highly of the police in their local area while 14 percent speak critically. The remainder have mixed views or do not know. Although not directly comparable because of the small force sample size, of the responses from across all forces in England and Wales, 32 percent speak highly and 16 percent speak critically.

Cambridgeshire Constabulary engages and communicates well with communities it serves and there is positive involvement of local people in policing activities. However the constabulary could do more to use the local profile information to further improve its engagement.

## **To what extent are people treated fairly and with respect when they come into contact with police officers and staff?**

Public bodies (including the police) are required to consider all individuals when carrying out their work, and understand how different people will be affected by their activities. The duty requires the police to show evidence of this in their decision-making.

This inspection looked at whether all members of the public (including those with protected characteristics) are treated (and perceive that they are treated) fairly and with respect by the police. We also assessed the extent to which officers understand the National Decision Model,<sup>15</sup> the framework by which all policing decisions should be made, examined and challenged. The Code of Ethics is a central component of the National Decision Model.

The police have thousands of interactions with the public on a daily basis. Research indicates that the quality of the treatment received during encounters with the police is more important to individuals than the objective outcome of the interaction. Before we began our fieldwork activity, we listened to around 40 calls made from members of the public to the 101 (non-emergency) and 999 (emergency) numbers to assess the quality of the treatment received. To determine the overall quality of the call, we considered criteria such as whether the call-handler remained polite, professional and respectful throughout the call, whether he or she took the caller's concerns seriously, appropriately assessing the risk and urgency of the call, and how well he or she established the caller's needs, managed the caller's expectations and explained what would happen next.

Although not necessarily representative of all calls responded to by Cambridgeshire Constabulary, from the 40 calls assessed, call handlers are polite, respectful and effective.

HMIC also observed the way that staff at front counters dealt with the public, and noted that they are courteous, friendly and helpful.

Cambridgeshire Constabulary staff have a good understanding of the national decision model (NDM), and understand that the Code of Ethics forms the central values by which they make judgments. This knowledge is not purely theoretical, as there are numerous practical examples of how staff, in a wide range of roles, make use of the National Decision Model during their daily work. The model is part of the organisation's culture and is further reinforced when staff receive information about the NDM on officer safety training.

---

<sup>15</sup> *College of Policing – Authorised Professional Practice on National Decision Model*, College of Policing, December 2014. Available from: [www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/national-decision-model/?s](http://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/national-decision-model/?s)

Chief officers demonstrated strong leadership within the constabulary by expressing support for those members of staff who have made difficult decisions based on their use of the model and maintaining ethical behaviour.

The constabulary is strongly committed to ensuring that members of the public are treated fairly and with respect. A priority for the constabulary about 'Changing Behaviours and Habits' is contained within the communication plan and this explains the areas of leadership, pride and standards of behaviour. It emphasises that staff are no longer driven by performance targets but are expected to 'do the right thing' when making judgments about the service that they provide to individuals and particularly to those who are vulnerable.

From the survey, 57 percent of respondents from the area covered by Cambridgeshire Constabulary agree that the police in their local area treat people fairly and with respect versus 7 percent who disagree. The remainder neither agree nor disagree or do not know. Although not directly comparable because of the small force sample size, across all forces in England and Wales, the figures are 54 percent and 7 percent respectively.

Officers and staff in Cambridgeshire Constabulary treat people with whom they come into contact with fairness and respect. There is a good understanding of the National Decision Model and how to apply it in daily policing duties.

## Summary of findings



**Good**

In Cambridgeshire Constabulary, neighbourhood policing teams have a good understanding of their communities and work closely with them using a range of methods to engage them. There are good examples of the constabulary engaging Eastern European communities and finding solutions to overcome language and cultural barriers.

The constabulary values local people participating in policing activities and there is a wide range of neighbourhood watch schemes in place. The refreshed recruitment process for volunteers and the new structure to manage their contributions is positive.

Neighbourhood policing teams demonstrate a positive attitude to working with their communities to gain an understanding of their concerns, the causes of these and the most effective way for them to be resolved. This is viewed as a key responsibility and a core activity for local staff. More could be done to make better use of local community profiles to further improve this engagement work.

Call-handlers and front desk staff are polite, friendly and helpful. A priority for the constabulary about 'Changing Behaviours and Habits' is contained within the constabulary's communications plan and this details the areas of leadership, pride and standards of behaviour expected when officers engage with the public.

Officers and staff in Cambridgeshire Constabulary treat people with whom they come into contact with fairness and respect. There is a good understanding of the National Decision Model and how to apply it in daily policing duties.

# To what extent are decisions taken on the use of stop and search and Taser fair and appropriate?

## Introduction

Fairness, and the perception of fairness, is crucial to police legitimacy. It is therefore important that fairness is demonstrated in all aspects of policing, including the use of police powers. Some of the most intrusive powers available to the police are those involving stopping and searching people and the use of Taser.<sup>16</sup>

In early 2015, Cambridgeshire Constabulary was one of nine forces inspected as part of our follow-up to the 2013 inspection,<sup>17</sup> which examined progress on the ten 2013 recommendations.<sup>18</sup> We also assessed the recording of stop and search encounters involving the removal of more than outer clothing and the recording of vehicle stops under the Road Traffic Act 1988.

In autumn 2015, HMIC assessed the use of Taser and stop and search powers (specifically compliance with the Best Use of Stop and Search scheme<sup>19</sup> and how well reasonable grounds were recorded), to determine whether officers were using their powers fairly and in accordance with legal requirements and Authorised Professional Practice.

The inspection asked:

1. To what extent does the force ensure that it complies with the Best Use of Stop and Search scheme?
2. To what extent does the force ensure that Tasers are used fairly and appropriately?

---

<sup>16</sup> *College of Policing: Authorised Professional Practice on armed policing – legal framework and Taser*. Available from: [www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/armed-policing/conducted-energy-devices-taser/](http://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/armed-policing/conducted-energy-devices-taser/)

<sup>17</sup> *Stop and Search Powers: Are the police using them effectively and fairly?* HMIC, 2015. Available from [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/media/stop-and-search-powers-20130709.pdf](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/media/stop-and-search-powers-20130709.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> *Stop and Search Powers 2: Are the police using them effectively and fairly?* HMIC, 2013. Available from [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/cambridgeshire-stop-and-search.pdf](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/cambridgeshire-stop-and-search.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> *Best Use of Stop and Search scheme*, Home Office, 2014. Available from [www.gov.uk/government/publications/best-use-of-stop-and-search-scheme](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/best-use-of-stop-and-search-scheme)



# **To what extent does the force ensure that it complies with the Best Use of Stop and Search scheme?**

## **Background**

The primary role of the police is to uphold the law and maintain the peace. Unfair, unlawful or unnecessary use of stop and search powers make this task harder, with one of the direct consequences being a reduction in public trust and police legitimacy, and people being more likely to break the law and less willing to co-operate with the police. The purpose of stop and search powers are to enable officers to dismiss or confirm suspicions about individuals carrying unlawful items without exercising their power of arrest. The officer must have reasonable grounds for carrying out a search.

In our 2013 inspection on stop and search,<sup>20</sup> HMIC concluded that few forces could demonstrate that use of stop and search powers was based on an understanding of what works best to cut crime and rarely was it targeted at priority crimes in their areas. Forces had reduced the amount of data collected, to reduce bureaucracy, but this had diminished their capability to understand the impact of the use of stop and search powers on crime levels and community confidence.

The report was clear that, for a stop and search encounter to be effective and lawful, a police officer must have reasonable grounds for suspicion (based on specific and objective information) that a person is in possession of a stolen or prohibited item. Those grounds should be fully explained to the person being stopped and searched, and the person should be treated with fairness, courtesy and respect. In such circumstances, finding the item and arresting the offender or, alternatively, eliminating the suspicion and avoiding an unnecessary arrest are both valid and successful outcomes.

Following HMIC's 2013 inspection, on 26 August 2014 the Home Office published guidance to police forces on implementing the Best Use of Stop and Search scheme.

The principal aims of the scheme are for the police to establish greater transparency and community involvement in the use of stop and search powers and make sure that the powers are used in an intelligence-led way to achieve better outcomes for the public.

All police forces in England and Wales have signed up to the Home Office's Best Use of Stop and Search scheme. This inspection considered the extent to which forces are complying with the scheme.

---

<sup>20</sup> *Stop and Search Powers – are the police using them effectively and fairly?*, HMIC, July 2013.

Available from: [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/media/stop-and-search-powers-20130709.pdf](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/media/stop-and-search-powers-20130709.pdf)

## Use of stop and search in Cambridgeshire Constabulary – Stop and search by volume

In the 12 months to 31 March 2015, Cambridgeshire Constabulary carried out 6,086 stops and searches. The table below shows this number per 1,000 population for Cambridgeshire Constabulary and the average of its most similar group of forces, as well as the change from the 12 months to 31 March 2014. The figures indicate that the constabulary's use of stop and search powers is currently greater than the average of its most similar group of forces.

**Figure 6: Number of stops and searches per 1,000 population carried out by Cambridgeshire Constabulary compared to the average of its most similar group (MSG) of forces, 12 months to 31 March 2015, and the percentage change from the 12 months to 31 March 2014**

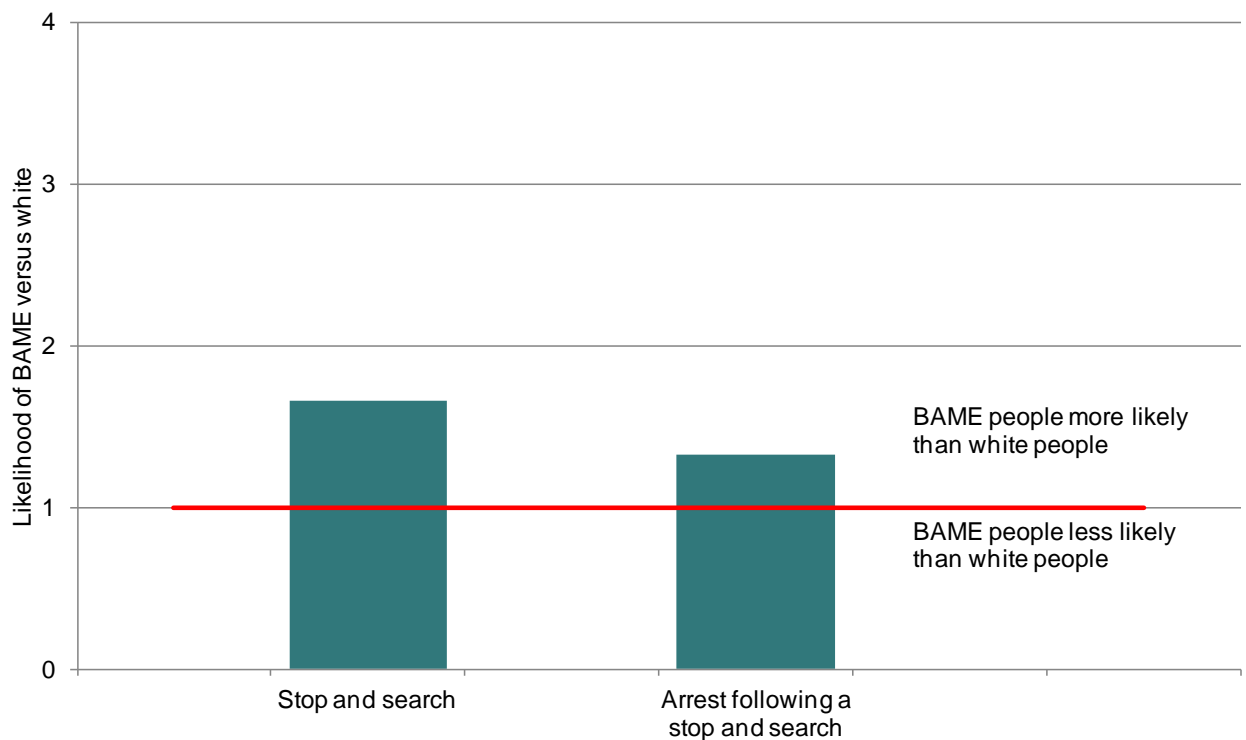
	<b>Stops and searches per 1,000</b>	<b>Change from previous year</b>
Cambridgeshire	7.3	-53%
Cambridgeshire's MSG average	5.8	-44%

Sources: Home Office Stop and Search data, Police Powers and Procedures 2014/15 and Office for National Statistics mid-2014 population estimates

## Use of stop and search in Cambridgeshire Constabulary – Stop and search by ethnicity

HMIC looked at the published data on stops and searches by ethnicity and compared them with the most recent local population data by ethnicity (the 2011 Census). The data suggested that BAME people were statistically more likely to be stopped and searched by Cambridgeshire Constabulary than white people. However, of the individuals who had been stopped and searched, there was no statistical difference in the likelihood of arrest by the constabulary between BAME people and white people.

**Figure 7: A comparison between the likelihood of BAME and white people being stopped and searched and, separately, arrested following stop and search by Cambridgeshire Constabulary, 12 months to 31 March 2015**



**Sources: Home Office Stop and Search data, Police Powers and Procedures 2014/15 and Office for National Statistics 2011 Census**

Caution needs to be taken before drawing assumptions from these data, especially where they might appear to suggest that forces are unfairly targeting particular ethnicities in their use of stop and search powers. Although that is one possible explanation, there are a number of other factors which could result in any disparity, including:

- the 2011 ethnicity figures no longer being representative of the force's local population;
- the difference between the ethnicity of the street population available to be stopped and searched at any given time with the general force population;
- stops and searches being carried out on people who are not resident in the area (and so are not counted as part of the population);
- disparity in the crime rates between different ethnicities;
- disparity in the number of repeat stops and searches carried out on individuals by ethnicity; or

- difficulties with the recorded data by ethnicity (while forces always record ethnicity when arresting a person as a result of being stopped and searched, they do not always record it when the encounter does not involve an arrest).

It is important that forces understand their data along with reasons for any apparent disparity to ensure that their use of the powers is fair.

### **Recording reasonable grounds for suspicion**

In our 2013 inspection, we were concerned to see that, of the 8,783 stop and search records we examined across all forces in England and Wales, 27 percent did not include sufficient reasonable grounds to justify the lawful use of the power. For Cambridgeshire Constabulary, the 2013 inspection showed that 117 of 200 records reviewed (59 percent) did not have sufficient reasonable grounds recorded.

For this inspection we reviewed 100 stop and search records provided by the constabulary. As in the 2013 inspection, we reviewed the records to determine if reasonable grounds were recorded. All but one of the records we reviewed had been endorsed by a supervisor. In Cambridgeshire only six of the 100 records (six percent) did not have reasonable grounds recorded all of which had been endorsed by a supervisor. While the records reviewed may not be representative of all stop and search records completed by the constabulary, the result indicates that some records still do not have reasonable grounds recorded.

While the forms we reviewed may not be representative of all stop and search records completed by the constabulary, the result indicates that generally the constabulary is recording reasonable grounds well.

### **Compliance with the Best Use of Stop and Search scheme**

There are several aspects to the Best Use of Stop and Search scheme. As part of this inspection, HMIC considered the extent to which the force complied with each aspect of the scheme. Our analysis is set out in the table below.

Cambridgeshire Constabulary is not complying sufficiently with the scheme, and stop and search training packages do not cover the National Decision Model (NDM), Code of Ethics, or the Best Use of Stop and Search scheme.

Most officers understand the need for a more intelligence-led approach to achieve positive outcomes and improved community relations. However, they have an inconsistent understanding of how to use the NDM or Code of Ethics to make decisions on stop and search. The constabulary should ensure that officers understand how they should apply the model to decisions on stop and search.

The rates of stop and search have dropped significantly, but there are still proportionately more stops and searches in Cambridgeshire Constabulary than in its most similar forces. A high proportion of the searches have been for drugs possession and this activity does not reflect constabulary priorities.

The constabulary has created a Stop Search Community Scrutiny Group (SSCSG), and the first meeting has been held and the minutes published. While this is a positive step, the membership and proposed working arrangements of this group are insufficient for it to perform an intrusive and robust oversight function including activating the complaint trigger. More needs to be done to ensure that the views of young people are captured, including those from within BAME communities. There are opportunities for the public to accompany officers on patrol. However, there could be more direction for the public to observe stop and search, for example during specific operations or viewing footage from body-worn video.

<b>Feature of Best Use of Stop and Search scheme</b>	<b>HMIC assessment of compliance</b>
Recording and publishing the outcomes following a stop and search	<p>The constabulary does not comply with this feature of the scheme.</p> <p>Cambridgeshire Constabulary does not record the full range of outcomes as set out in the scheme. Due to this the constabulary is not able to publish the full range of outcomes. While the constabulary does record details of any property found, and so is able to determine if the item searched for is found, it does not publish this information. The police.uk website does not contain data in respect of the constabulary's stop and search encounters.</p>
Providing opportunities for the public to observe officers using the power	<p>The constabulary complies with this feature of the scheme.</p> <p>Cambridgeshire Constabulary is compliant with this element of the scheme, and uses an existing ride-along scheme for members of the public to observe officers and to provide feedback on witnessed stops and searches. Although we found no evidence of any stop and search having been observed.</p>
Explaining to communities how the powers are being used following a 'community complaint'	<p>The constabulary does not comply with this feature of the scheme.</p> <p>A new independent community scrutiny group for stop and search has met and the minutes have been published. This is positive; however a review of the membership and proposed working arrangements of this group suggests that it currently lacks the ability to perform a robust oversight function, including in respect of the community complaint trigger.</p>

<p>Reducing the number of people stopped and searched without suspicion under Section 60<sup>21</sup> of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994</p>	<p>The constabulary complies with this feature of the scheme.</p>
<p>Monitoring the impact of stop and search – particularly on young people and black, Asian and minority ethnic groups</p>	<p>The constabulary does not comply with this feature of the scheme.</p> <p>While the constabulary monitors the proportionality of use, it does not specifically monitor the impact on young people and black, Asian and minority ethnic people. The new independent community scrutiny group for stop and search may be able to give advice about the impact of stop and search on young people and BAME people in the future.</p>

## **To what extent does the force ensure that Tasers are used fairly and appropriately?**

### **Background**

Taser is a device designed to temporarily incapacitate a person through use of an electrical current which temporarily interferes with the body's neuromuscular system. This usually causes the person to freeze or fall over, giving officers time to restrain them.

It projects a pair of barbs or darts attached to insulated wires which attach to the subject's skin or clothing. The device has a maximum range of 21 feet and delivers its electrical charge in a five-second cycle which can be stopped, extended or repeated.

Taser is one of a number of tactical options available to police officers when dealing with an incident where there is the potential for harm – to potential victims and/or the public, the police officers themselves, or the subject.

The way a Taser is used by police officers is categorised into a range of escalating actions from drawing the device, through to it being 'discharged' (that is, fired, drive-stunned or angled drive-stunned). A table in Annex D outlines the definitions of the different levels of use.

---

<sup>21</sup> 'No suspicion' searches are provided for under section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994. Available from: [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1994/33/section/60](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1994/33/section/60)

When police are required to use force to achieve a lawful objective, such as making a lawful arrest, acting in self-defence or protecting others, that force must be reasonable in the circumstances. If it is not, the officer is open to criminal or misconduct proceedings. It may also constitute a violation of the human rights of the person against whom the force was used.

HMIC has not previously inspected how Taser is used either in, or between, forces. This inspection considered whether chief officers understand how Taser is being used across the force area, to satisfy themselves that it is being used fairly and appropriately, and whether Taser-trained officers are acting in accordance with the College of Policing's Authorised Professional Practice and the legal framework each time it is used.<sup>22</sup>

### **Use of Taser in Cambridgeshire Constabulary**

Every time a Taser is used in some capacity (this includes a full range of use from being drawn to being 'discharged') a police officer makes a record of its 'highest use' on a Taser deployment form.

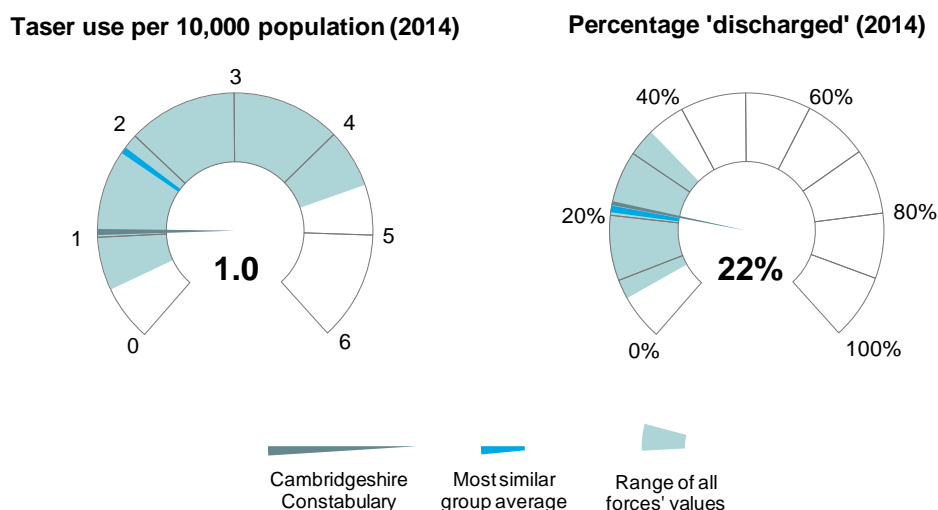
Between 1 January and 31 December 2014, Taser was used in some capacity 87 times by Cambridgeshire Constabulary, representing 1.0 times for every 10,000 people in the force's area. This was less than the average for Cambridgeshire Constabulary's most similar group of forces, which was 1.8 times per 10,000 population.

During the same time period, Taser was 'discharged' on 19 occasions (out of the 87 times it was used in some capacity). This equated to 22 percent of overall use, broadly in line with the force's most similar group average of 21 percent. However, because of the low number of times Taser was used in Cambridgeshire Constabulary, comparisons with other forces should be treated with caution. The following figure shows these comparisons.

---

<sup>22</sup> *College of Policing: Authorised Professional Practice on armed policing – legal framework and Taser*. Available from: [www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/armed-policing/conducted-energy-devices-taser/](http://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/armed-policing/conducted-energy-devices-taser/)

**Figure 8: Use of Taser per 10,000 population and the proportion 'discharged' by Cambridgeshire Constabulary, 12 months to 31 December 2014<sup>23</sup>**



**Sources: Office for National Statistics mid-2014 population estimates and Home Office Police use of Taser statistics**

The Taser deployment form is a national document for gathering research information about the operational effectiveness of the Taser device, and any medical implications of its use. If officers fire the Taser, or if they use it in drive-stun or angled drive-stun mode, they are required to complete the full form, including a detailed description of the incident from commencement to resolution. The National Decision Model is used on the form as a structure for officers to record this description. For any other use, such as 'drawn', 'aimed', 'red-dotted' or 'arced', officers are only required to provide brief details of the incident. A detailed description, structured around the National Decision Model, is not required.

Before the fieldwork stage of the inspection, HMIC conducted a review of 20 Taser deployment forms provided by Cambridgeshire Constabulary. Although the findings of this review are not necessarily representative of all Taser forms completed by the constabulary, they do provide an indication of the constabulary's Taser activity. The forms showed that Taser had been red dotted 16 times and drawn four times. See Annex D for an explanation of the types of Taser usage.

As Taser had not been fired or drive-stunned, there was no need for the officers to record their rationale using the NDM. HMIC was therefore unable to assess whether other tactics had been considered, or whether officers had properly applied the NDM when making their decision to use Taser. However, from the corresponding control room incident logs it is clear that the control room supervisors are making good use of the NDM.

<sup>23</sup> City of London Police data was removed from figure 8 because of the very low number of times Taser was used by the City of London Police in 2014.



None of the control room incident logs that recorded the NDM contained any mention of the national Code of Ethics for the police service which is at the heart of the NDM and should be considered at each stage, particularly under 'Powers and Policy'. One log did however refer to the constabulary's Statement of Missions, Vision, and Values.

Overall officers used Taser to protect themselves or others from a range of weapons, including several kitchen knives, a lock knife, scissors and a meat cleaver.

The 'brief details' and the NDM sections of the forms provides us with evidence to suggest that the use of Taser is fair, lawful, and appropriate in 18 of the 20 cases reviewed. The other two forms do not contain enough information in the 'brief details' section for us to make an assessment.

Taser officers generally have a good understanding of the NDM and apply it when making decisions about use, or non-use, of Taser. Taser officers are trained to national standards and have a good understanding of the relevant legislation and Authorised Professional Practice. This supports good decision-making and fair and appropriate use of Taser.

The constabulary has made a positive change by recently requiring Taser officers to complete the full national Taser recording form if a Taser is deployed in any way. This exceeds the required national standard and has the benefit of ensuring that the National Decision Model section of the form is completed on all occasions and this allows the officer's decision-making to be properly reviewed.

Officers who discharge a Taser are subject to post-incident procedures and are required to notify the control room immediately. They are then the subject of a supervisory debrief. In addition to completing the national Taser form, officers are also required to complete a use of force form. The Taser form is reviewed by a trained Taser supervisor and the use of force form is also the subject of review and oversight. Any issues of concern from the review process are reported appropriately. This promotes effective learning about the use of Taser and helps ensure fair and proportionate use of this tactic.

Bedfordshire Police, Cambridgeshire Constabulary and Hertfordshire Constabulary collaborate on Joint Protective Services (JPS) which includes tri-force roads policing, firearms and dog handlers. These officers provide additional Taser capability across the three forces.

Recording, monitoring and evaluation of Taser-use is effectively reviewed through the three-force arrangements for police use of firearms and by chief officers. This includes the numbers of occasions where Taser is 'discharged'. To further improve its understanding about the deployment and use of Taser the constabulary is also examining incidents where use of Taser is authorised and officers deployed, but the

device is not used. The constabulary uses appropriate methods to check Taser is used fairly and identifies opportunities for improved practice.

It also records all its Taser deployments and publishes this information for public access and scrutiny. This assists in enhancing public confidence in the use of this tactic.

In determining the number of officers required for Taser authorisation and deployment, the constabulary makes use of a strategic threat, harm and risk assessment. The percentage of frontline officers authorised for Taser use, and also the number of Taser deployments that occur, both indicate that the constabulary has less capability than other forces. This is supported by the views of a number of officers interviewed who state that numbers are not sufficient. The constabulary should consider refreshing its assessment to ensure that it has the correct number of Taser-equipped officers to reflect demand.

Taser is being used fairly and appropriately by Cambridgeshire Constabulary.

## Summary of findings



**Requires improvement**

Cambridgeshire Constabulary is not compliant with the Best Use of Stop and Search scheme, and more work is needed to ensure that officers understand the features of the Best Use of Stop and Search scheme and apply the National Decision Model, including the Code of Ethics, when using the power.

The new Stop and Search Community Scrutiny Group is a positive step. However, more needs to be done to ensure that the views of young people are captured, including those from within black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities.

In Cambridgeshire, Taser is used by officers trained to the right standard with a good understanding of the National Decision Model. However, it has comparatively low numbers of Taser-trained officers compared to other similar forces. The constabulary should consider whether the current number of Taser officers and their deployment pattern reflects current demand, to ensure this tactic is available to improve the safety of the public and officers.

Taser deployment and use in the constabulary is the subject of effective oversight and its use is fair and appropriate.

### **Areas for improvement**

- The constabulary should ensure that officers understand the features of the Best Use of Stop and Search scheme and how to apply the NDM (including the Code of Ethics) when using the power.
- Of the records reviewed that did not have reasonable grounds recorded, all had been endorsed by a supervisor. The constabulary should ensure the processes for recording reasonable grounds are understood by both officers and those supervising them.
- The constabulary should put in place an action plan setting out how it will comply with all the features of Best Use of Stop and Search scheme. HMIC will revisit the constabulary within six months to determine what improvements have been made.

## Annex A – HMIC judgments

The categories are:

- outstanding;
- good;
- requires improvement; and
- inadequate.

Judgment is made against how legitimate the force is at keeping people safe and reducing crime, it is not an assessment of the overall legitimacy of policing. In applying the categories HMIC considers whether:

- the legitimacy of the force is achieving is good, or exceeds this standard sufficiently to be judged as outstanding;
- the legitimacy of the force requires improvement, and/or there are some weaknesses; or
- the legitimacy of the force is inadequate because it is considerably lower than is expected.

## Annex B – Data methodology

Please note the following for the data.

- The sources of the data are provided in each section. For the force in numbers data, please see the relevant section.
- Workforce figures (based on full-time equivalents) were obtained from the Home Office annual data return 502. Most of these are available from the Home Office's published *Police workforce England and Wales statistics*, although figures may have been updated since the publication.
- Police staff includes section 38 designated officers (investigation, detention and escort).
- Data from the Office for National Statistics 2011 Census were used for the number and proportion of black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) people within each force area. While the numbers may have since changed, more recent figures are based only on estimates from surveys or projections.
- HMIC has been made aware of updates from particular forces on their Taser and stop and search data. However, for fairness and consistency, we have presented the data as published by the relevant sources.

Please note the following for the methodology applied to the data.

- Comparisons with most similar group of forces – In most cases, comparisons are made with the average of the force's most similar group (MSG) of forces. These are forces that have been found to be the most similar to the force in question, based on an analysis of demographic, social and economic characteristics which relate to crime. The following forces are in Cambridgeshire Constabulary's MSG: Warwickshire, Thames Valley, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Avon and Somerset, Staffordshire and Devon and Cornwall.
- Comparisons with averages – For some data sets, we state whether the force's value is 'below', 'above' or 'broadly in line with' the average. To calculate this, the difference to the mean average, as a proportion, is calculated for all forces. After standardising this distribution, forces that are more than half a standard deviation from the mean average are determined to be above or below the average, with all other forces being broadly in line.

In practice this means that, very approximately, a third of forces are above, a third are below, and the remaining third are in line with the average for each measure. For this reason, the distance from the average required to make a

force's value above or below the average is different for each measure so may not appear to be consistent.

- Statistical significance – When commenting on statistical differences, we use a significance level of 5 percent.

## **Ipsos MORI survey**

The national survey was conducted with a sample of 26,057 people aged 16 plus across England and Wales, between 15 July and 6 August 2015. All interviews were conducted online through Ipsos MORI's online panel.

The Ipsos MORI online panel consists of a pre-recruited group of individuals or multiple individuals within households who have agreed to take part in online market and social research surveys. The panel is refreshed continually using a variety of sources and methods.

Respondents to this survey were recruited using an email invitation including a link to the online questionnaire. The survey invitations were managed to achieve robust numbers of interviews in each force area in order to provide indicative results at a force level. Final numbers of responses per force area ranged from 353 to 1,278.

Responses are based on all participants completing the relevant survey question. Results are weighted within the force area to the local age, gender and work status profile of the area, and an additional weight has been applied to the overall total to reflect the population breakdown by force area.

## **Annex C – The Best Use of Stop and Search scheme**

The scheme includes a number of features with the aim of achieving greater transparency, community involvement in the use of stop and search powers and supporting a more intelligence-led approach, leading to better outcomes.

### **Recording and publishing outcomes**

The Best Use of Stop and Search scheme requires forces to record and publish the following outcomes from the use of stop and search powers:

- Arrest;
- Summons/charged by post;
- Caution (simple or conditional);
- Khat or cannabis warning;
- Penalty notice for disorder;
- Community resolution; and
- No further action.

Forces adopting the scheme should therefore be providing the public with a much richer picture of how their use of stop and search powers are enabling them to reduce crime rates. The scheme also requires forces to show the link, or lack of one, between the object of the search (what the officer was looking for) and the outcome. This link helps to show how accurate officers' reasonable grounds for suspicion are by showing the rate at which they find what they were searching for during the stop and search.

### **Providing opportunities for the public to observe stop and search encounters**

A core element of the scheme is the requirement that participating forces will provide opportunities for members of the public to accompany police officers on patrol when they might use stop and search powers.

It is important for the public, particularly young people and people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, to be able to see the police conducting their work in a professional way. Equally, it is also important for the police to understand the communities they serve – as this enables more effective policing through community co-operation and exemplifies 'policing by consent'.

By introducing 'lay observation', a process of two-way learning can take place, bringing the police closer to the public.

## **Implementing a community trigger for complaints**

The scheme requires forces to implement a community complaints trigger to signpost the appropriate mechanism for members of the community to raise any concerns or complaints that they have with the way that a stop and search has been carried out by their police force. When the trigger is activated, the scheme requires forces to explain the use of the powers to community scrutiny groups.

## **Authorising searches under section 60 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994**

Section 60 stop and search powers are among the most controversial of all such powers by virtue of the fact that individual police officers can stop and search a person without the need to have reasonable grounds for suspicion.

Once a section 60 authorisation is in place, officers do not need to have suspicions about a particular individual prior to stopping them; though an officer must explain to an individual who has been stopped that a section 60 authorisation is in place. This can lead to a large number of searches which result in community and police tensions. The scheme introduces a set of requirements that, when combined, will ensure that participating forces improve their use of this type of stop and search power. These include raising the authorisation level from inspector to senior officer (assistant chief constable or above), restricting the time a section 60 authorisation can be in force to 15 hours and communicating the purpose and outcomes of each section 60 authorisation in advance (where possible) and afterwards.

## **Monitoring the use of stop and search powers**

The scheme requires forces to monitor the use of stop and search powers, in particular to determine their impact on black, Asian and minority ethnic people and young people.



## Annex D – Types of use of Taser

### Type of use Definition<sup>24</sup>

Fired	The Taser is fired with a live cartridge installed. When the trigger is pulled, the probes are fired towards the subject with the intention of completing an electrical circuit and delivering an incapacitating effect.
Angled drive-stun	The officer fires the weapon with a live cartridge installed. One or both probes may attach to the subject. The officer then holds the Taser against the subject's body in a different area to the probe(s), in order to complete the electrical circuit and deliver an incapacitating effect.
Drive-stun	The Taser is held against the subject's body without a live cartridge installed, and the trigger is pulled with no probes being fired. Contact with the subject completes the electrical circuit which causes pain but does not deliver an incapacitating effect.
Red dot	The weapon is not fired. Instead, the Taser is deliberately aimed and then partially activated so that a laser red dot is placed onto the subject.
Arcing	Sparking of the Taser as a visible deterrent without aiming it or firing it.
Aimed	Deliberate aiming of the Taser at a targeted subject.
Drawn	Drawing of Taser in circumstances where any person could reasonably perceive the action as a use of force.

Tasers that have been 'discharged' are those that have been fired, angled drive-stunned or drive-stunned.

---

<sup>24</sup> *Police use of Taser statistics, England and Wales: 1 January to 31 December 2014*, Home Office, 2015. Available from [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-use-of-taser-statistics-england-and-wales-1-january-to-31-december-2014](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-use-of-taser-statistics-england-and-wales-1-january-to-31-december-2014).