

PEEL: Police legitimacy 2015

An inspection of Dorset Police



February 2016

© HMIC 2016

ISBN: 978-1-78655-025-5

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic

Contents

Overview – How legitimate is the force at keeping people safe and reducing crime?	4
Overall judgment.....	4
Summary	4
Force in numbers	8
Introduction	10
Methodology	10
To what extent does practice and behaviour reinforce the wellbeing of staff and an ethical culture?	12
Introduction.....	12
How well does the force develop and maintain an ethical culture?.....	15
How well does the force provide for the wellbeing of staff?	16
How well has the Code of Ethics been used to inform policy and practice?	17
How fairly and consistently does the force deal with complaints and misconduct?	18
Summary of findings	22
How well does the force understand, engage with and treat fairly the people it serves to maintain and improve its legitimacy?	23
Introduction.....	23
How well does the force understand the people it serves and the benefits of engaging with them?.....	24
How well does the force engage with all the people it serves?	25
To what extent are people treated fairly and with respect when they come into contact with police officers and staff?	26
Summary of findings	28
To what extent are decisions taken on the use of stop and search and Taser fair and appropriate?	29

Introduction.....	29
To what extent does the force ensure that it complies with the Best Use of Stop and Search scheme?.....	29
To what extent does the force ensure that Tasers are used fairly and appropriately?.....	35
Summary of findings.....	38
Annex A – HMIC judgments	39
Annex B – Data methodology	40
Annex C – The Best Use of Stop and Search scheme	42
Annex D – Types of use of Taser	44

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

Overall judgment¹



Good

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

We are satisfied that the chief officer team takes seriously the need for an ethical and inclusive workforce, and considers that allegations against officers and staff are generally dealt with fairly and consistently.

It is clear that Dorset Police had invested a significant amount of effort in ensuring that officers understood the need for engaging with communities and treating them fairly and without bias.

The force is complying with almost all of the features of the Best Use of Stop and Search scheme, although there is more to do on recording and publishing outcomes.

Taser is being used fairly and appropriately by Dorset Police.

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

Summary

HMIC found there was a recognised ethical culture within the force and the chief constable and her team had put a great deal of effort into publicising the force's vision, values and the need for ethical behaviour. The force provided for the wellbeing of staff, and also invested in a range of effective occupational health services. The force publicised and promoted the Code of Ethics,² and we found evidence that it was well understood. The force used a range of activities to ensure that complaints and misconduct allegations were managed fairly and proportionately.

¹ Outstanding, Good, Requires improvement or Inadequate – see Annex A.

² *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

When HMIC looked at how well the force understands and successfully engages with all the people it serves, we found Dorset Police had dedicated a significant amount of effort in ensuring that officers understood the need to work closely with communities and treat them fairly and without bias. This has included personal presentations from senior officers, and training on the Code of Ethics and the National Decision Model.

The force runs a successful volunteers' scheme to get the public involved in a wide range of policing activities. Overall the force engages well with the public, listens to public concerns and ensures that officers are appropriately trained.

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 the force is complying with almost all of the features in the Best Use of Stop and Search scheme, although there is more to do on recording and publishing outcomes.

The force should ensure that stop and search records include sufficient reasonable grounds to justify the lawful use of the power, and that officers fully understand the grounds required to conduct stops and searches.

Overall we were satisfied that Taser is being used fairly and appropriately by Dorset Police.

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



Good

HMIC found there was a recognised ethical culture within Dorset Police and the chief constable and her team had put a lot of effort into publicising the force's vision, values and the need for ethical behaviour. These were well understood and widely supported across the organisation.

The force provided for the wellbeing of staff, and also invested in a range of effective occupational health services. While those we spoke to were generally positive about the wellbeing arrangements in place, there were concerns raised about the support available to those involved in a potentially traumatic event.

The force publicised and promoted the Code of

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



Good

HMIC found the chief constable and her senior team in Dorset Police had invested a significant amount of effort in ensuring that officers understood the need for engaging with communities and treating them fairly and without bias. This has included personal presentations from senior officers, and training on the Code of Ethics and the National Decision Model.

Although we found evidence of some inconsistency in relation to public engagement and maintenance of neighbourhood profiles, we were satisfied these issues had already been identified by the force and are being addressed through 'Project Genesis', an academic evidence-

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



Good

HMIC found that Dorset Police is complying with almost all of the features in the Best Use of Stop and Search scheme, although there is more to do on recording and publishing outcomes.

The force should ensure that stop and search records include sufficient reasonable grounds to justify the lawful use of the power, and that officers fully understand the grounds required to stop and search. In addition, the force should ensure that adequate supervision takes place to ensure that stop and search records are accurate and contain the required information in respect of reasonable grounds.

Officers are appropriately trained in the use of Taser and in completing the

Ethics, and we found evidence that it was well understood and widely supported across the organisation.

The force used a range of initiatives to make sure that complaints and misconduct allegations were managed fairly and proportionately.

based strategic review of neighbourhood policing in Dorset Police.

The force runs a successful volunteers' scheme to get the public involved in a wide range of policing activities.

Overall the force engages well with the public, listens to public concerns and ensures that officers are appropriately trained.

national reporting form. Officers use the National Decision Model to justify any use of Taser. Taser use is scrutinised for appropriateness and issues brought to the attention of senior officers. The force publishes limited information regarding Taser usage. HMIC suggest that the force should be more transparent about how it uses Taser in order to enhance public confidence in the use of this tactic.

Overall we were satisfied that Taser is being used fairly and appropriately by Dorset Police.

Force in numbers



Ethnic diversity

Percentage of BAME in workforce 31 March 2015

overall workforce

1%

officers

1%

staff

1%

PCSOs

1%

Percentage of BAME in local population, 2011 Census

4%



Gender diversity

Percentage of females in overall workforce 31 March 2015

Dorset Police

40%

England and Wales force average

41%

Percentage of females by role, Dorset Police

officers

26%

staff

59%

PCSOs

39%

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

Dorset Police

635

Proportion of finalised allegations investigated 12 months to 31 March 2015

Dorset Police

40%

Force's most similar group average

41%

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

Dorset Police

Force's most similar group average

15%

15%



Stop and search

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

7,197

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

Dorset Police

Force's most similar group average

9.5

7.4

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

Dorset Police

Force's most similar group average

-15%

-32%



Tasers

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

74

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

Dorset Police

Force's most similar group average

1.0

1.4

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

Dorset Police

Force's most similar group average

16%*

17%

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 Dorset Police.

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, 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 justice³

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

Research⁴ 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 become more active in policing activities (such as Neighbourhood Watch or other voluntary activity), the less the financial burden on police forces.

³ *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/150317_Fair_cop%20FINAL_REPORT.pdf

⁴ *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 2015,⁵ 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.

Gender and black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) breakdown in Dorset Police

A breakdown of the full-time equivalent (FTE) workforce⁶ in Dorset Police as at 31 March 2015 is shown below.

⁵ The inspection took place between March and June 2015.

⁶ Workforce comprises officers, staff and police community support officers (PCSOs).

Figure 1: Breakdown of full-time equivalent (FTE) workforce in Dorset Police, 31 March 2015

FTE	Total	Of which	
		Female	BAME*
Total workforce	2,347	934 (40%)	28 (1%)
Total officers	1,272	334 (26%)	17 (1%)
Constables	963	273 (28%)	12 (1%)
Sergeants	210	43 (20%)	2 (1%)
Inspecting ranks	84	14 (16%)**	3 (4%)**
Superintendents and above	16	5 **	0 **
Staff	912	536 (59%)	10 (1%)
PCSOs	163	63 (39%)	1 (1%)

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

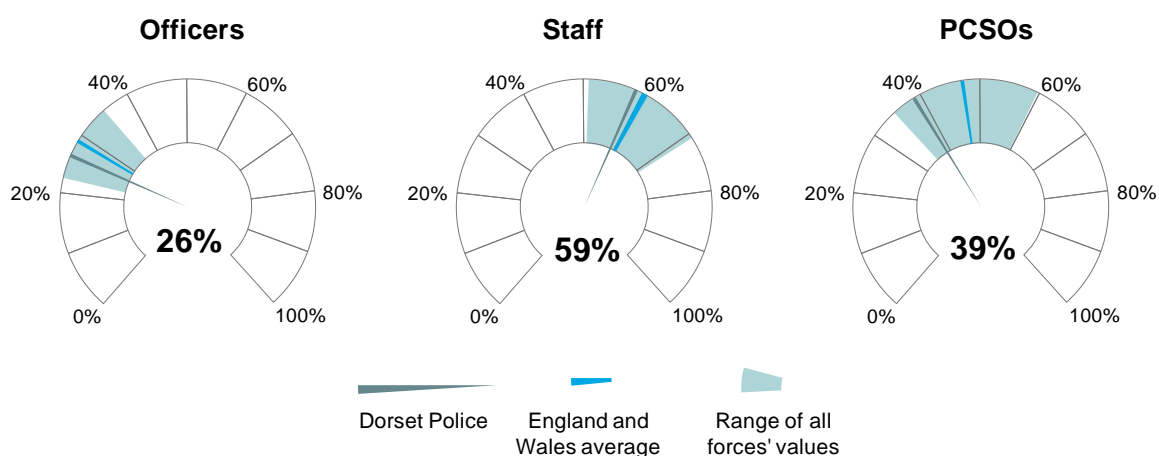
* Individuals are not required to record their ethnicity. As a result, BAME totals and percentages exclude officers/staff/PCSOs where the ethnicity is not stated.

** 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 Dorset Police compared with the averages of all forces in England and Wales. It shows they were broadly similar for staff yet lower for both officers and PCSOs.

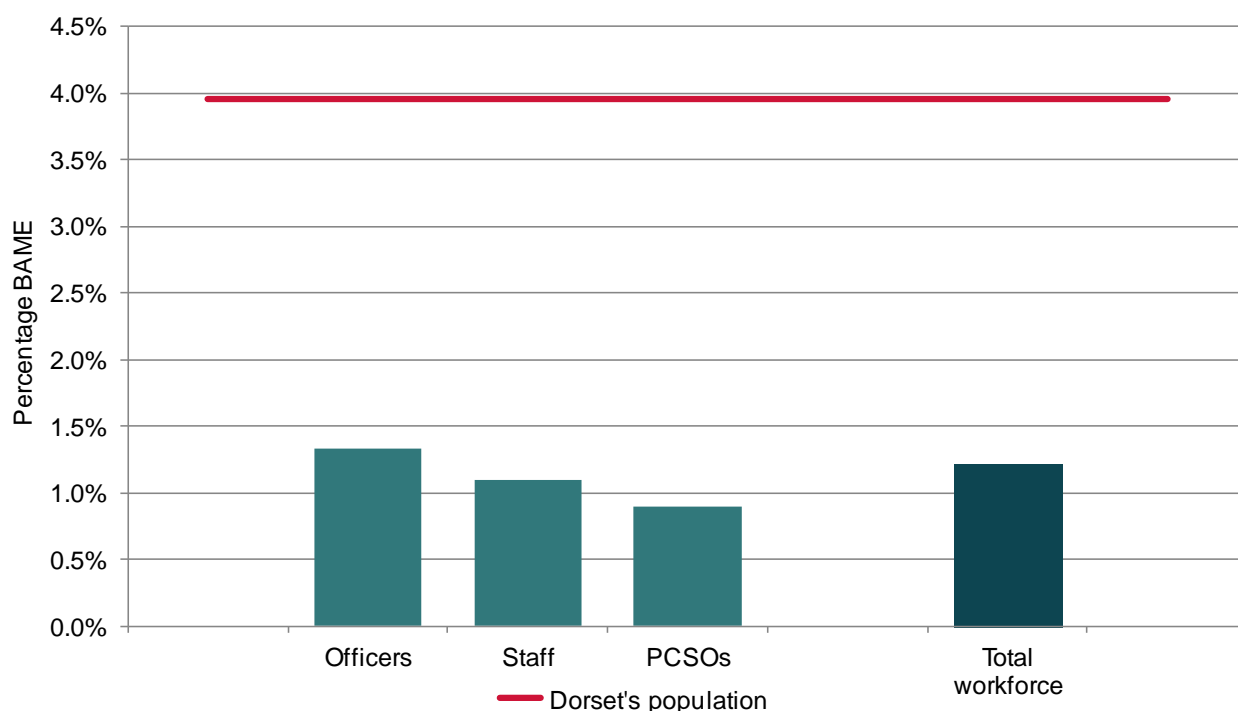
Figure 2: The percentage of female officers, staff and PCSOs in Dorset Police compared with the force average for England and Wales, 31 March 2015



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 Dorset, around 4 percent of the local population were BAME. The figure below shows these comparisons. There was a statistically significant under-representation of BAME people in Dorset Police's overall police workforce, as well as separately for officers, staff and PCSOs.

Figure 3: Percentage of BAME people within Dorset Police’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.⁷ 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 Dorset Police over the spending review period.

⁷ Spending Review 2010, HM Government, October 2013. Available from: www.gov.uk/government/publications/spending-review-2010

Figure 4: Change in Dorset Police’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
Total workforce	-380	(-14%)	+1	0
Officers	-215	(-14%)	+3 ●	0
Staff	-165	(-15%)	-1	0
PCSOs	-1	(-1%)	-3	0 *

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).

* Due to small workforce figures, percentage point changes should be treated with caution.

Source: Home Office Police Workforce statistics

There were no statistically significant changes in the percentages of either females or BAME people within Dorset Police'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 Dorset Police's workforce was broadly similar for staff yet lower for both officers and PCSOs. By ethnicity, there was an under-representation in BAME officers, staff and PCSOs and there was no statistically significant change in the proportion between 31 March 2010 and 31 March 2015 for any of these groups.

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.

HMIC found the chief constable had firmly laid out her vision, values and behaviours for the force as well as communicated widely the Code of Ethics. Messages were delivered effectively through a programme of chief constable meetings with all members of staff, and chief officer roadshows across the force. HMIC found evidence that the force’s vision and values were widely supported across the organisation.

We were told that the force had conducted a series of force-wide surveys designed to capture the experiences of staff through the recent change process. They also used a number of smaller but more focused 'pulse' surveys to gauge the workforce's feelings and understanding of a variety of issues.

HMIC found that the force identified lessons learned from complaints, misconduct investigations, civil litigation, IPCC reports and operational incidents. The professional standards department published lessons learned through the 'hindsight' document which was available to all staff.

We found evidence that staff were empowered and encouraged to challenge unethical and unprofessional behaviour. The staff we spoke to during the inspection stated that they felt confident to challenge colleagues and managers, and felt that they would be fully supported by the organisation if they did so.

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.

HMIC found during a recent force survey that overall wellbeing was identified as a key issue of concern for staff. To help provide for the wellbeing of staff, the force had a welfare and counselling unit responsible for developing policy, advising managers, delivering associated training, and managing the force psychological health monitoring programme. The unit was also responsible for the Employee Assistance Programme, which provided help to police officers and staff who had concerns which affected their wellbeing. The service offered included advice on legal, financial, and personal issues, as well as debt and psychological counselling.

The force invested in a range of occupational health services, which were sourced through a contract with a local medical centre, and in partnership with the Police Mutual Foundation. These services provided staff with access to a free online wellbeing tool. The tool was designed to help staff understand their responsibilities to take control of their health and wellbeing, and provided information for them to manage stress and to lead a healthy lifestyle through diet and exercise.

Staff spoken to during the inspection commented favourably on the force's approach to flexible working and reported that requests for flexible working were typically well-received and considered. Staff reported that a good understanding existed across the force regarding the need to balance individual and organisational needs.

The force used the trauma risk incident management (TRiM) process to provide screening to officers involved in potentially traumatic incidents. Officers were identified through referral by supervisors or through the duty force incident commander. HMIC was disappointed that some staff we spoke to during the inspection raised concerns regarding the effectiveness of the TRiM process. Officers stated that personal support is often not provided, with text messages and email being used as an alternative to an informal interview to establish how they were coping. We were informed of one incident where an officer was not provided with any contact or support following attendance at a particularly distressing incident.

The force had recorded an improvement in sickness absence over the past year, and a reduction in the number of long-term absentees from 66 to 23 which they believed was the result of the welfare initiatives they introduced.

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.⁸ 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 make the code part of day-to-day practice.

After the launch of the Code of Ethics in 2014, the force held a series of chief officer roadshows involving all staff in order to make the code understood and incorporated across the organisation. The chief constable also met all new officers and staff members to clearly outline her values and expectations.

The force produced a booklet called 'bringing our values to life' which summarised feedback from the public following contact with the police. The booklet was issued to staff in order to promote positive and ethical behaviour when dealing with the public.

The Code of Ethics and the use of the National Decision Model were integrated into all training. For example, custody detention officer and leadership courses for newly promoted sergeants incorporated a scenario which led to a misconduct investigation. The Code of Ethics was also a major strand within force promotion assessments and was written into all force policies.

⁸ *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

The force introduced a network of Code of Ethics champions. Members of staff with appropriate skills were identified across all force departments. The champions regularly carried out assessments, in line with a model developed by the College of Policing, and identified risks within their area of business.

We found evidence that the Code of Ethics was well understood and widely supported across the organisation. The latest force survey sought to understand how well the force had delivered and integrated the Code of Ethics. The results of the survey indicated that 98 percent of those who responded were aware of the code and of those, 85 percent claimed to fully understand it. However, frontline staff we spoke to showed an element of complacency, expressing a view that the Code of Ethics was nothing new, and that they did not need a poster to tell them to be ethical. One senior member of staff did not understand how the Code of Ethics and the standards of professional behaviour were connected.

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.⁹

⁹ 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.

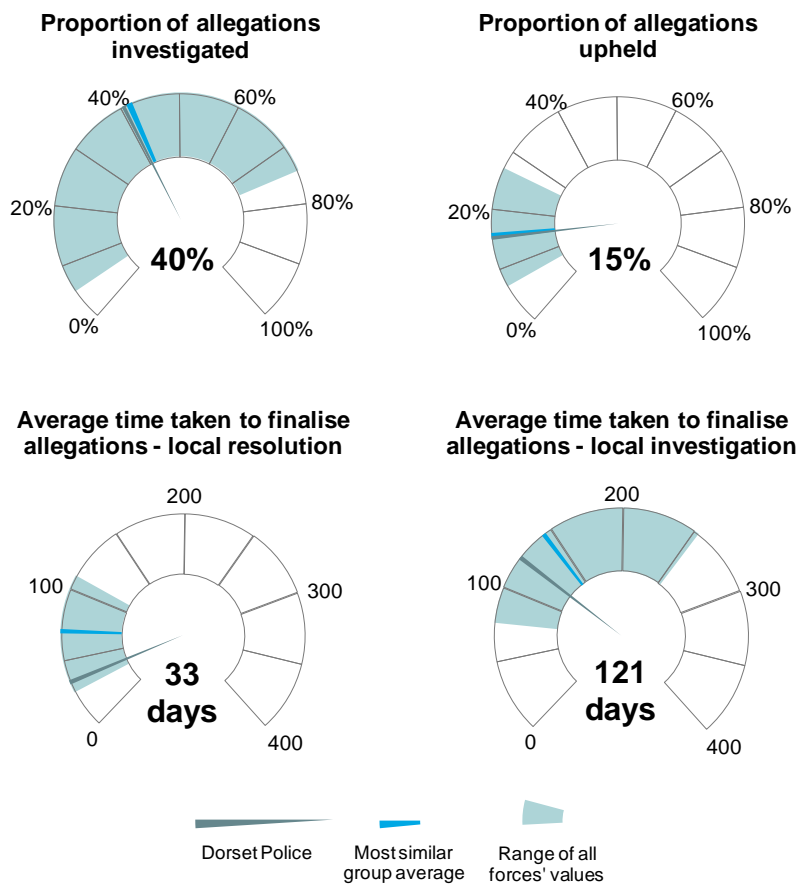
In the 12 months to 31 March 2015, Dorset Police finalised 635 allegations from public complaints that were made against its officers and staff. Of these, 40 percent had been investigated and 43 percent had been locally resolved. These proportions were broadly in line with the average of Dorset's most similar group of forces.¹⁰

In the 12 months to 31 March 2015, the average time Dorset Police took to complete a local resolution was 33 days, less than the average of its most similar group of forces (69 days). Over the same period, the average time a local investigation took to complete was 121 days, less than the average of its most similar group of forces (143 days).

After local investigation, Dorset Police closed 255 allegations in the 12 months to 31 March 2015. Of these, 15 percent were upheld, where it was concluded that the service provided by the police officer or police staff or the service as a whole did not reach the standard a reasonable person could expect. This was in line with the average of Dorset's most similar group of forces of 15 percent. The following figure shows how these values compare.

¹⁰ 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.

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



Source: Independent Police Complaints Commission

Overall, in the 12 months to 31 March 2015, Dorset Police finalised 40 percent of allegations by investigation. The proportion of allegations it upheld after local investigation was in line with the average of its most similar group of forces. Compared to its most similar group of forces, Dorset took less time to complete both local resolutions and 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,¹¹ 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,¹² 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 65 public complaints and internal misconduct allegations, to assess whether they had been considered fairly and consistently. The outcomes of the review were further examined 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 complaints and internal misconduct allegations were dealt with, in respect of gender, ethnicity or rank.

HMIC found evidence that the force dealt with complaints and misconduct in a fair and appropriate way. The force demonstrated good case management standards in complaints and misconduct files and a high level of compliance with statutory guidance and legislation. There was some evidence of inconsistency in file structure, use of a variety of formats for recording decisions, and some absent documentation.

We were pleased to see that the force recorded public complaints and resolved those cases that would not result in formal discipline for the police officer or staff member promptly. This reflected well on the force as it quickly and effectively resolved public issues of concern, and helped reduce periods of anxiety for staff who were the subject of these complaints.

HMIC found that the two senior members of the professional standards department responsible for assessing public complaints and internal misconduct were of the seniority required by the regulations.

The professional standards department also carried out assessments for police staff cases where allegations were of a more serious nature. This provided opportunities to ensure consistency in decision-making between officers and staff, and was bolstered by weekly meetings between the two assessors to ensure fairness around decision-making. However, decisions on police staff internal misconduct cases that would not have resulted in dismissal were carried out by a member of the human

¹¹ 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/

¹² 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'.

resources department. In order to help ensure consistency and fairness with these cases, further meetings took place between the professional standards and human resources departments.

HMIC found evidence of further activity to ensure fair and proportionate ways of working. Examples included: regular communication between the chairs of the police officer and police staff misconduct boards to make sure end results were consistent; dip-sampling by an ethics and appeals panel; a monthly assistant chief officer serious case review; and a quarterly assessment of officers who have attracted the highest level of complaints. Regular meetings also took place between representatives from the professional standards department and the police federation.

Summary of findings



Good

HMIC found there was a recognised ethical culture within Dorset Police and the chief constable and her team had put a lot of effort into publicising the force's vision, values and the need for ethical behaviour. These were well understood and widely supported across the organisation.

The force provided for the wellbeing of staff, and also invested in a range of effective occupational health services. While those we spoke to were generally positive about the wellbeing arrangements in place, there were concerns raised about the support available to those involved in a potentially traumatic event.

The force publicised and promoted the Code of Ethics, and we found evidence that it was well understood and widely supported across the organisation.

The force used a range of initiatives to make sure that complaints and misconduct allegations were managed fairly and proportionately.

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,¹³ 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.

¹³ *College of Policing: Authorised Professional Practice on engagement and communication*. Available from: 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.

HMIC found that at both the strategic and local level Dorset Police clearly understands the importance of public engagement to enable effective policing. The force conducts numerous surveys to assist in this understanding. It does not yet however have a comprehensive community engagement plan. As a result there was no consistent method of engaging with communities at the local level across the force.

Engagement took place through a variety of methods such as community meetings, local surveys, partnership meetings and local 'cop shops' where members of the public could call in to see officers. There was, however, no central point where this information was collated to inform other officers of the issues that had been raised.

There was also no consistent approach to the maintenance of neighbourhood profiles, with some areas using them and others not. These factors were recognised by the force and 'Project Genesis' was commissioned. This was an academic evidenced-based strategic review of neighbourhood policing in Dorset Police, including engagement and communication. It has set minimum standards for engagement at a local level and recommends the introduction of four new engagement officers. Interviews for these posts were due to take place shortly after the conclusion of our inspection. The project was completed in March 2015 and the other recommendations are currently being implemented by the force.

Engagement at the strategic level is also subject to a review as part of the strategic alliance with Devon and Cornwall Police. Joint meetings are now taking place between departmental managers to establish a co-ordinated community consultation processes by the two forces.

The force completes community impact assessments in response to critical or significant incidents that could impact on community confidence. A number of these were reviewed and they were found to be of a good standard, taking into account community concerns.

Of the 440 survey responses from the area covered by Dorset Police, 58 percent agree that the police understand the crime and anti-social behaviour issues within their force area and 11 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.

Overall we found the force understands that community engagement is vital to achieve effective policing.

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. Our inspection looked at the different ways that forces engage their communities.

HMIC found the force has embarked on an initiative called “Your Dorset, your police, your view” which is aimed at understanding the challenges the police face. This 6-month project asks the community’s views on a different subject every month and captures responses. This project, which will be concluded at the end of the year, will be used to determine policing priorities and to inform prospective police and crime commissioner candidates of the issues.

The force has undertaken a number of public surveys. These include an annual community safety survey, which is a postal questionnaire sent out to randomly selected households, and a contact management survey, which comprised telephone interviews with 618 members of the public who had contacted Dorset Police via various methods.

The force also conducts victim satisfaction surveys. In addition to the statutory questions asked, the force also seeks the views of victims of anti-social behaviour and uses the survey to pose other questions to better understand issues.

The force has also tailored its engagement to reflect its diverse community. The farming community has historically been a difficult group for the force to communicate with. To address this, and issues such as farm thefts and the badger cull, the force has done significant work through rural neighbourhood teams to successfully engage with farmers with the assistance of the National Farmers Union and local Members of Parliament.

We found evidence of staff using social media to communicate with the public and there is evidence of an increasing acceptance that the use of social media can reach groups which are not as easily accessible through traditional methods.

The use of social media was, however, found to be inconsistent across the force and relied on the skills and understanding of individual staff. The new engagement officer posts, one for each geographical area, will work with staff and look for more opportunities to improve engagement with the public.

The force has a number of ways to inform the community of significant issues as they are happening, for example, a system known as 'voicebank', where the local media can access important messages regarding police matters of interest throughout the county.

The force has a dedicated volunteer team; they recruit new members of the public to be volunteers and co-ordinate the work of the over 150 people already registered. Volunteers have been used in the victim bureau to ensure victims receive updates and information. This scheme has helped the force to significantly increase the satisfaction rates of victims surveyed. The force also used students with computer skills from Bournemouth University to assist them in planning its response to potential cyber crimes. Volunteers' roles range from those involved in car maintenance and community speed watch events, to one individual with particular skills who was able to assist officers in the investigation of paedophile offences.

From the survey, 38 percent of the respondents from the area covered by Dorset Police speak highly of the police in their local area while 11 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.

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.

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 and other public authorities) 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 be able to show evidence of this in their decision-making.

This inspection looked at whether all members of the public (including those with protected characteristics) were treated (and perceived that they were treated) fairly

and with respect by the police. We also assessed the extent to which officers understood the National Decision Model,¹⁴ 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. In order to determine the overall quality of the call, we considered a number of criteria including 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 Dorset Police, from the 40 calls assessed, HMIC was satisfied that the call-handlers were polite, respectful and effective. They gave a good first impression to the caller and appropriately assessed the risk and urgency of the call.

During our fieldwork we also observed front-counter staff in their interaction with visitors at police stations, and found staff were polite and respectful appearing to do their best to assist customers. Most people who attend the front office will be dealt with in the communal area. However, if people request to speak to an officer in confidence, that is arranged.

HMIC found the force has introduced the National Decision Model (NDM) into many of its practices and procedures. All staff have been trained in the NDM and this is further reinforced during additional training for specific activities such as firearms and public order. The force has an expectation that staff will use the NDM in relevant policing scenarios and policies have been changed to incorporate it within them. When reporting incidents such as domestic abuse and Taser usage, officers must record how they used the model.

During our fieldwork we were told by officers that the message they had received from their senior officers was that if you properly use the NDM you will be supported, even if the decision made is subsequently found to be wrong. This is an important statement that will positively encourage use of the model. The chief constable takes personal responsibility for promoting the national Code of Ethics, which is at the

¹⁴ *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

centre of the NDM. She held meetings with staff across the force where she gave examples of ethical dilemmas she had dealt with during her career. Staff found this a very effective way to deliver this subject.

In addition to the work being undertaken in the 'Your Dorset, your police, your view' initiative, the force conducts a number of surveys that seek the public's perception as to their performance. The results of surveys go to a performance board, chaired by the deputy chief constable, which considers longer-term aims and threats.

The 'making a difference' board, headed by an assistant chief constable, is responsible for developing the necessary operational responses to the concerns raised by the public.

From the survey, 62 percent of respondents from the area covered by Dorset Police agree that the police in their local area treat people fairly and with respect versus 4 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.

Summary of findings



Good

HMIC found the chief constable and her senior team in Dorset Police had invested a significant amount of effort in ensuring that officers understood the need for engaging with communities and treating them fairly and without bias. This has included personal presentations from senior officers, and training on the Code of Ethics and the National Decision Model.

Although we found evidence of some inconsistency in relation to public engagement and maintenance of neighbourhood profiles, we were satisfied these issues had already been identified by the force and are being addressed through 'Project Genesis', an academic evidence-based strategic review of neighbourhood policing in Dorset Police.

The force runs a successful volunteers' scheme to get the public involved in a wide range of policing activities.

Overall the force engages well with the public, listens to public concerns and ensures that officers are appropriately trained.

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 Taser¹⁵.

In autumn 2015, HMIC assessed the use of Taser and stop and search powers (specifically, compliance with the Best Use of Stop and Search scheme¹⁶ 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?

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 is 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.

¹⁵ *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/

¹⁶ *Best Use of Stop and Search Scheme*, Home Office, 2014. Available from: www.gov.uk/government/publications/best-use-of-stop-and-search-scheme

In our 2013 inspection on stop and search,¹⁷ 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 to 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.

Use of stop and search in Dorset Police – Stop and search by volume

In the 12 months to 31 March 2015, Dorset Police carried out 7,197 stops and searches. The table below shows this number per 1,000 population for Dorset Police 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 force's use of stop and search powers is currently greater than the average of its most similar group of forces.

¹⁷ *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

Figure 6: Number of stops and searches per 1,000 population carried out by Dorset Police 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

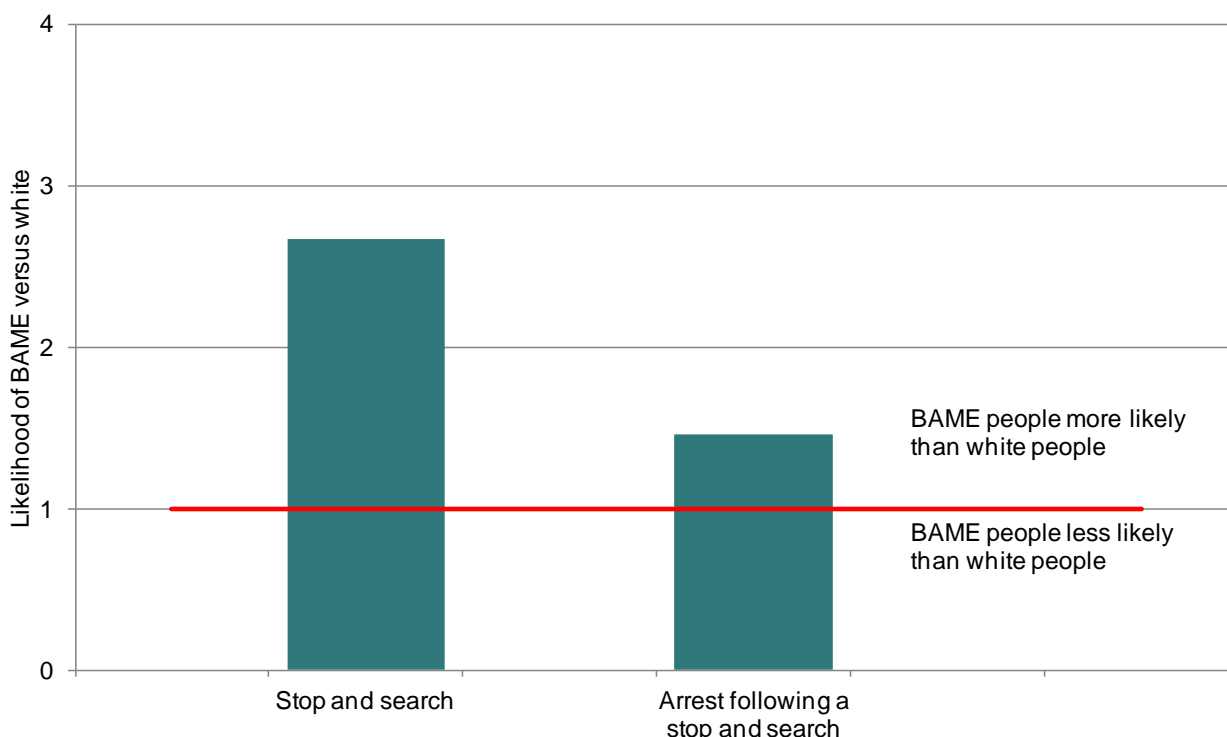
	Stops and searches per 1,000	Change from previous year
Dorset	9.5	-15%
Dorset's MSG average	7.4	-32%

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 Dorset Police – 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 Dorset Police than white people. Also, of the individuals who had been stopped and searched, BAME people were statistically more likely to be arrested by the force than 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 Dorset Police, 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 Dorset Police, the 2013 inspection showed that 38 of 200 records reviewed (19 percent) did not have sufficient reasonable grounds recorded.

For this inspection we reviewed 100 stop and search records provided by the force. As in the 2013 inspection, we reviewed the records to determine if reasonable grounds were recorded. Eleven of the records we reviewed had not been endorsed by a supervisor. We found that 13 of the 100 records (13 percent) did not have reasonable grounds recorded. Of those, eight had not been endorsed by a supervisor.

This suggests that some officers, and some supervisors given the task of reviewing records, do not understand fully what constitutes reasonable grounds.

While the forms we reviewed may not be representative of all stop and search records completed by the force, the result indicates that still too many records do not have reasonable grounds recorded.

Of the records we reviewed, 43 involved the finding of an item, 21 of which involved finding the item searched for.

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.

HMIC found all officers are trained in the use of the National Decision Model (NDM) and this was confirmed during our fieldwork where we found that there was a clear understanding of this at all levels. The force has communicated to officers and staff the expectation that the NDM will be used in all aspects of work. This includes when considering as to whether to conduct a search or not. The NDM is included in the force's stop and search policy. In addition the force has delivered face-to-face training in the Best Use of Stop and Search (BUSS) scheme. This resulted in officers being able to articulate a good knowledge of the requirements of the BUSS scheme.

The force established a stop and search scrutiny group under the chair of a chief inspector, who is also the lead officer for stop and search in the force. This group comprises a wide range of members of the public and meets regularly to discuss the force's use of stop and search powers. This group can also be called together to consider specific incidents, should there be an activation of the community trigger. The force has set the community trigger as any complaint that was made as a result of a stop and search. To date this has only been activated once.

In addition the force operates a scheme that allows the public to go on patrol with officers. There is the possibility that one of the things they observe will be officers conducting stops and searches. At the end of the patrol members of the public are asked for their feedback as to what occurred while out with the officers.

The force has published figures on its internet site that give a breakdown of stop and search activity. Although this includes information on when an item is found during the search that results in police action, it does not detail if the article was what the officer expected to find. For example an officer could look for drugs but find an offensive weapon instead. The force is planning to include this information in the near future.

Overall we found the force had a good understanding the Best Use of Stop and Search scheme, and had implemented measures to ensure that the impact of stop and search was monitored and incidents of concern addressed.

Feature of the Best Use of Stop and Search scheme	HMIC assessment of compliance
Recording and publishing the outcomes following a stop and search	The force does not comply with this feature of the scheme. The force records the full range of outcomes required by the scheme, but until recently it did not record whether or not the item searched for was found. The force does not publish data in respect of the full range of outcomes or show any connection between the item searched for and the outcome. While there are some data related to outcomes published on the police.uk website, there are no data published in respect of the connection between the outcomes and the item searched for. Furthermore, there is no link on the force's website directing people to the police.uk website; people are therefore unlikely to find them.
Providing opportunities for the public to observe officers using the power	The force complies with this feature of the scheme.
Explaining to communities how the powers are being used following a "community complaint"	The force complies with this feature of the scheme.
Reducing the number of people stopped and searched without suspicion under section 60 ¹⁸ of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994	The force complies with this feature of the scheme.
Monitoring the impact of stop and search – particularly on young people and Black and minority ethnic groups	The force complies with this feature of the scheme.

¹⁸ '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

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.

It 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.

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.¹⁹

¹⁹ *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/

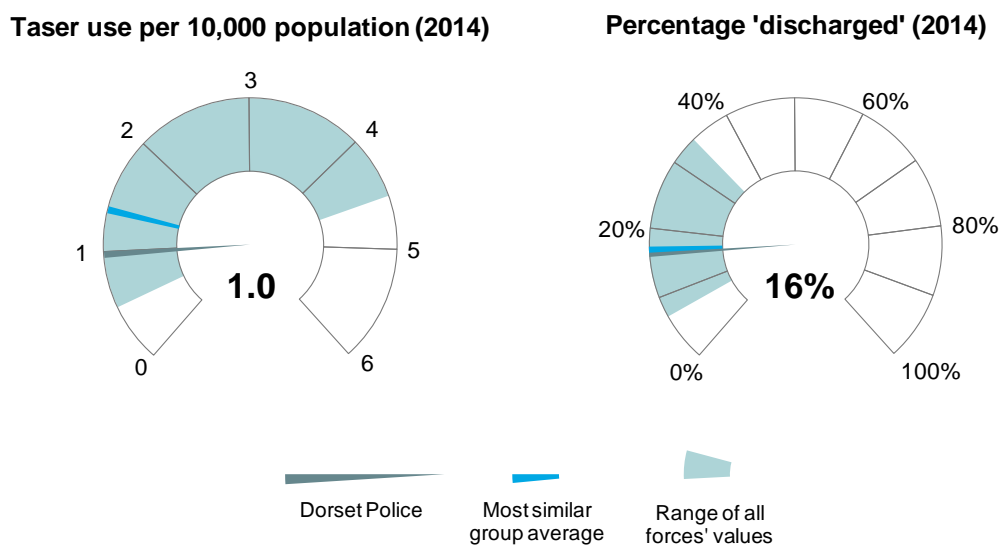
Use of Taser in Dorset Police

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 74 times by Dorset Police, representing 1.0 times for every 10,000 people in the force's area. This was less than the average for Dorset Police's most similar group of forces, which was 1.4 times per 10,000 population.

During the same time period, Taser was 'discharged' on 12 occasions (out of the 74 times it was used in some capacity). This equates to 16 percent of overall use, broadly in line with the force's most similar group average of 17 percent. However, because of the low number of times Taser was used in Dorset Police, comparisons with other forces should be treated with caution. The following figure shows these comparisons.

Figure 8: Use of Taser per 10,000 population and the proportion 'discharged' by Dorset Police, 12 months to 31 December 2014²⁰



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.

²⁰ 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.

The National Decision Model (NDM) 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 Dorset Police. Although the findings of this review are not necessarily representative of all Taser forms completed by the force, they do provide an indication of the force's Taser activity. The forms showed that Taser had been fired twice, red-dotted 14 times, aimed three times, and drawn once.

Overall officers used Taser to protect themselves or others from a range of weapons, including several knives, a machete, a syringe, a baseball bat, and broken glass.

The 'brief details' and the NDM sections of the forms provided us with evidence to suggest that the use of Taser was fair, lawful, and appropriate in all of the 20 cases reviewed.

Where officers had been required to complete the NDM section of the form, only two of them 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 the 'Powers and Policy' section. This appears to be a national issue and is considered in our national Legitimacy report.

In addition to standard force training in the National Decision Model, officers who are authorised to use Taser undergo additional training on use of the model. It is also covered in the compulsory annual refresher training. The NDM is used to plan operations where the potential use of Taser can be predicted in advance. At the conclusion of each incident, where Taser is deployed, the national form is fully completed and officers include their rationale for action using the NDM.

Every use of Taser is reviewed by a single point of contact in the force who considers if the use adhered to national guidelines. Minor issues identified are referred to the chief firearms instructor who will identify what action should be taken. More serious issues are raised with the assistant chief constable and placed as an agenda item on the force firearms board. An officer's authorisation to carry a Taser can be removed by any supervisor. The decision to reinstate an authority, however, can only be made by someone of the rank of superintendent or higher, reflecting the seriousness that the force attaches to such decisions. Taser usage is checked to ensure there is no disproportionate use involving particular groups of people. We were told no disproportionate use had been identified, although this finding had not been formally considered at any force meetings.

If Taser is deployed the senior officer in the control room is informed. They then review deployment and decide if there are likely to be any community concerns. If they believe there are, the senior operational officer is sent to the scene to review the issues and consider any community reassurance.

Although the use of Taser is relatively rare within the county, the force is conscious of the impact this emotive subject can have. Following the use of Taser in the custody environment against a vulnerable person, the police and crime commissioner, in conjunction with the force, commissioned an independent review of their use of force. This found Dorset's use of force to be generally appropriate, although some changes were made to force standard operating procedure. The contents of this report were made available to the public. Senior staff give media interviews in response to the bi-annual publication of national figures regarding Taser use.

The only published information that the force provides to on Taser use is limited to responding to questions posed by the public.

Based on our assessment of the Taser forms and our fieldwork findings, HMIC is satisfied that on the whole Taser is being used fairly and appropriately by Dorset Police.

Summary of findings



Good

HMIC found that Dorset Police is complying with almost all of the features in the Best Use of Stop and Search scheme, although there is more to do on recording and publishing outcomes.

The force should ensure that stop and search records include sufficient reasonable grounds to justify the lawful use of the power, and that officers fully understand the grounds required to stop and search. In addition, the force should ensure that adequate supervision takes place to ensure that stop and search records are accurate and contain the required information in respect of reasonable grounds.

Officers are appropriately trained in the use of Taser and in completing the national reporting form. Officers use the National Decision Model to justify any use of Taser. Taser use is scrutinised for appropriateness and issues brought to the attention of senior officers. The force publishes limited information regarding Taser usage. HMIC suggest that the force should be more transparent about how it uses Taser in order to enhance public confidence in the use of this tactic.

Overall we were satisfied that Taser is being used fairly and appropriately by Dorset Police.

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 Dorset Police's MSG: Surrey, Cambridgeshire, Gloucestershire, Thames Valley, Warwickshire, Sussex and West Mercia.
- 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 Definition²¹

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.

²¹ *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.