

PEEL: Police legitimacy 2015

An inspection of North Wales Police



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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 North Wales 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.

HMIC found that North Wales Police took seriously the need to establish an ethical and inclusive workforce, and was committed to supporting staff wellbeing. Local policing teams have a good understanding of their communities and are committed to the service they provide to victims of crime.

North Wales Police is compliant with most aspects of the Best Use of Stop and Search scheme, however, HMIC is concerned that reasonable grounds for stops and searches are not being properly recorded, or being properly supervised. We are satisfied that Taser is used fairly and appropriately.

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

Summary

The chief constable had clearly set out a vision for staff to 'do the right thing', and the force was working towards a position where an ethical culture formed part of everyday policing. North Wales Police was fully committed to the wellbeing of staff and had a broad range of services in place. The force had set out to integrate the Code of Ethics,² and more work was planned for it to be fully established. There was a consistent and fair complaints process and misconduct policy and staff told us they felt they would be treated fairly. There were issues reported in relation to timeliness and staff training for managing complaints.

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 evidence of effective local connections with local agencies and some communities; however, relevant and up-to-date information about policing actions dealing with local problems is not always provided in a consistent way. There is good evidence that the public of North Wales are being treated fairly and with respect by their local police.

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. North Wales Police is compliant with most aspects of the Best Use of Stop and Search scheme, with the exception of a 'ride along' scheme. HMIC is concerned that reasonable grounds are not being properly recorded for stops and searches, or being properly supervised. We are satisfied that Taser is used fairly and appropriately.

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



Good

The chief constable and chief officer team had sent clear messages of their commitment to operating ethically and with appropriate standards of behaviour. These were understood by most staff. The force was working towards a position where an ethical culture formed part of everyday policing.

North Wales Police was fully committed to the wellbeing of staff. The force was in the process of developing a fully integrated programme of health and wellbeing, with evidence of good practice. This process was not yet complete and more needed to be done to ensure that all staff were made aware of the wellbeing policy.

The force had set out to integrate 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

North Wales Police is committed to engaging with the public. The force promotes and emphasises the values and ethical principles that it expects its staff to maintain. Staff understand and are supportive of these principles.

The force is beginning to use modern social media tools effectively, but there is still a reliance on face-to-face contact through meetings and local community engagement events. Such contact needs to be sustained, but it is necessarily limited in scope. The force does not consistently provide information by which people can judge how local issues are being addressed.

HMIC found that the force has improved the way it

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



Good

North Wales Police is compliant with most aspects of the Best Use of Stop and Search scheme, with the exception of a ride-along scheme. For some reason, the force has restricted the ride along scheme to members of its independent advisory group and some local councillors, but not members of the public.

HMIC is concerned that reasonable grounds are not being properly recorded for stop and search, or being properly supervised. This is something that the force needs to address.

The force has put in place arrangements for external scrutiny of stop and search encounters, involving review by an independent panel, which includes young people and

Ethics in support of its people strategy and its policy on values and behaviours. While there was some understanding of the Code of Ethics, it was not yet fully established at every level nor was it routinely used in everyday decision-making.

The force had a robust, consistent and fair complaints process and misconduct policy. Staff felt that they would be treated fairly and had confidence in both the process and the management investigations, although there were issues reported in relation to timeliness and staff training for complaint management.

engages with victims of crime, and has developed ways to make sure they are kept updated. Call-backs to victims and externally provided surveys are used to check how effectively this is being done. Recent data indicates high levels of satisfaction among people who have reported crime.

There is good evidence that the public of North Wales are being treated fairly and with respect by their local police. The results of local surveys would also suggest this is being recognised by the public.

representation from minority communities. The review also includes examination of body-worn video recordings, where these are available.

HMIC is satisfied that Taser is used fairly and appropriately. However, some officers are not completing the Taser form correctly and this is an area the force should address.

Force in numbers



Ethnic diversity

Percentage of BAME in workforce 31 March 2015

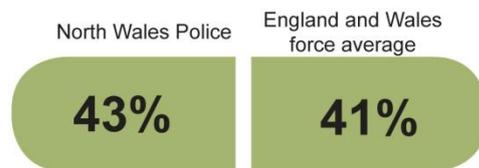


Percentage of BAME in local population, 2011 Census



Gender diversity

Percentage of females in overall workforce 31 March 2015



Percentage of females by role, North Wales Police



Percentage of females by role, England and Wales force average

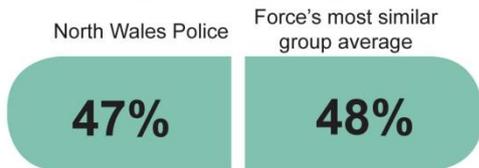


Public complaints

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



Proportion of finalised allegations investigated 12 months to 31 March 2015



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

North Wales Police Force's most similar group average

16%

14%



Stop and search

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

3,553

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

North Wales Police

Force's most similar group average

5.1

6.7

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

North Wales Police

Force's most similar group average

-33%

-32%



Tasers

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

71

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

North Wales Police

Force's most similar group average

1.0

1.6

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

North Wales Police

Force's most similar group average

17%*

20%

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 North Wales 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: www.college.police.uk

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 North Wales Police

A breakdown of the full-time equivalent (FTE) workforce⁶ in North Wales 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 North Wales Police, 31 March 2015

FTE	Total	Of which	
		Female	BAME*
Total workforce	2,615	1,118 (43%)	24 (1%)
Total officers	1,487	454 (31%)	13 (1%)
Constables	1,137	387 (34%)	10 (1%)
Sergeants	241	49 (20%)	2 (1%)
Inspecting ranks	88	15 (17%)**	1 (1%)**
Superintendents and above	21	3 **	0 **
Staff	885	543 (61%)	8 (1%)
PCSOs	243	121 (50%)	4 (2%)

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

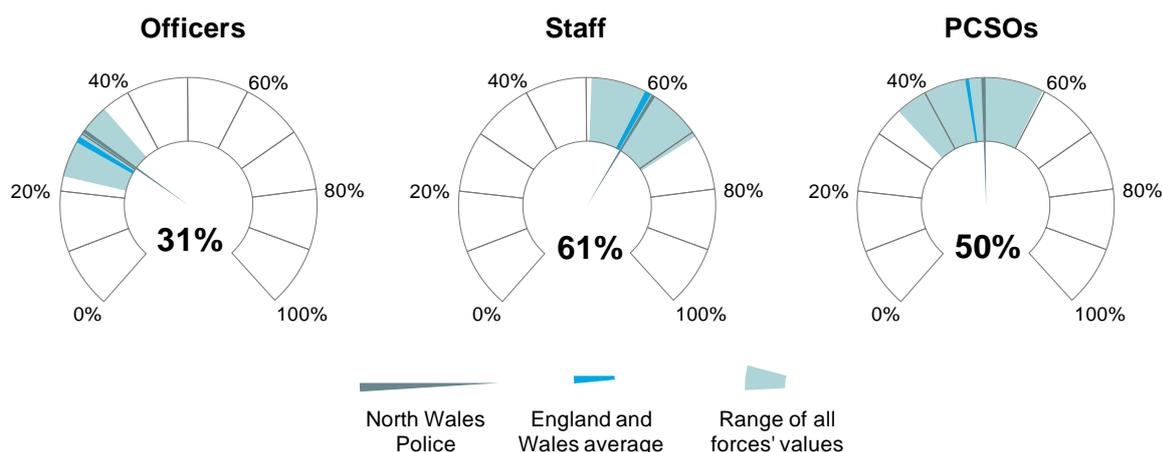
* Individuals are not required to record their ethnicity. As a result, BAME totals and percentages exclude officers/staff/PCSOs where the ethnicity is not stated.

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

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

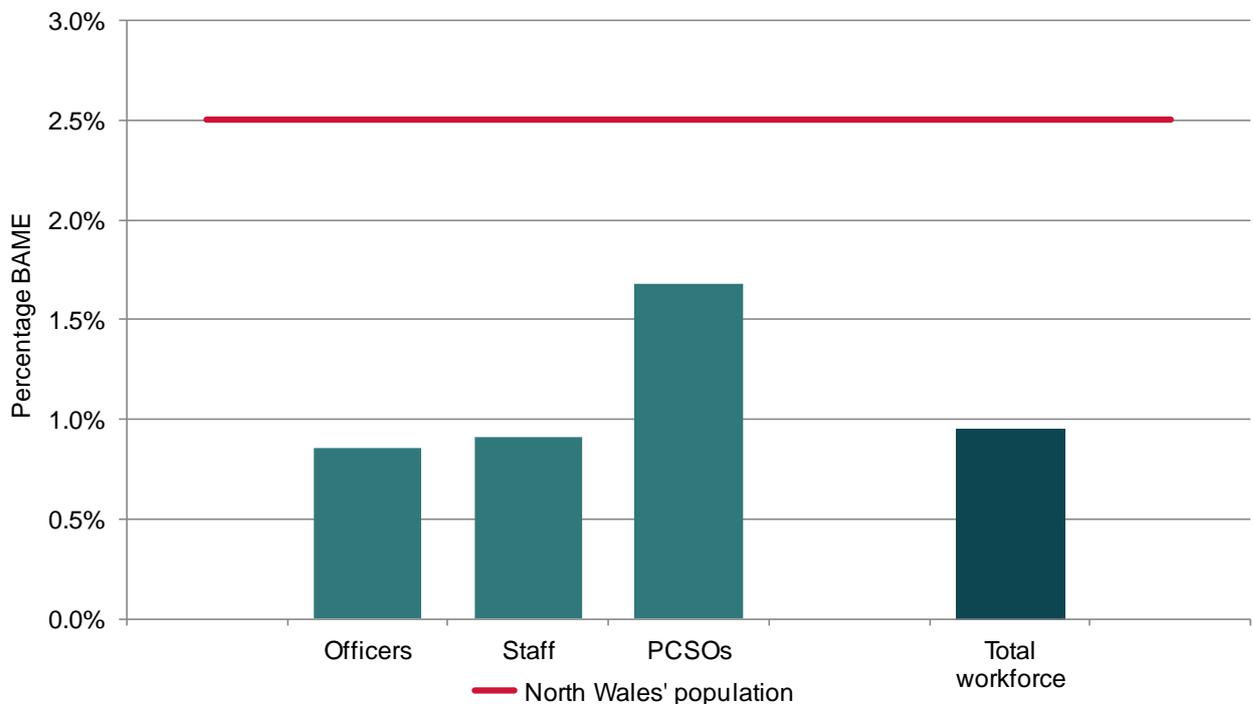


Source: Home Office Police Workforce statistics

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 North Wales, around 3 percent of the local population were BAME. The figure below shows these comparisons.

There was a statistically significant under-representation of BAME people in North Wales Police's overall police workforce, as well as separately for officers and staff.

Figure 3: Percentage of BAME people within North Wales 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 North Wales 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 North Wales 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	-52	(-2%)	+2 ●	0
Officers	-103	(-6%)	+4 ●	0
Staff	-36	(-4%)	-2	0
PCSOs	+87	(+55%)	-2	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 was a statistically significant increase in the proportion of females in North Wales Police's overall workforce between 31 March 2010 and 31 March 2015. Specifically, there was a statistically significant change in the percentage of female officers – around a 4 percentage point increase.

Overall, compared with other forces, as at 31 March 2015, the percentage of females within North Wales Police's workforce was broadly similar for both staff and PCSOs yet higher for officers. 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.

HMIC found that the chief constable of North Wales Police, with the support of his chief officer team, had sent clear messages to staff about the standards of ethics and behaviour that were expected of them. These had been a key theme of roadshows delivered around the force during 2014, and there had been good publicity around them. A number of internal campaigns had been undertaken to reinforce the importance of the standards; these included ‘Being Better’ and ‘It

Matters'. These were regarded as being important motivating factors in developing the ethical culture of the force and they had had a positive impact. Evidence of success had been identified from professional standards department's quality of service data and staff survey data. In addition, information relating to the national Code of Ethics had been widely distributed within the force.

The force's approach to ethics and professional standards was included within a people strategy which focussed on the workforce. Governance and oversight of the strategy was being maintained in a number of ways; these included an ethics, leadership and culture committee, and a committee which looked at the quality of the service that is provided. The force leadership academy, in which leadership training was provided, also had a role in promoting and reinforcing high standards of ethical behaviour.

HMIC found evidence of the force's commitment to the high standards, with an example of the use of misconduct proceedings to dismiss two members of staff who had breached the standards in relation to honesty and integrity. There was also evidence of the ethical culture being accepted and incorporated in recruitment and promotion processes. Staff reported that this had formed an important part of a recent sergeant's promotion board, with some officers being denied an interview on the basis of previous unsatisfactory behaviour. This had sent a strong message that recent conduct was a clear factor in the selection process.

A weekly e-bulletin entitled 'Need to Know' was published by the professional standards department to highlight lessons learned, both from internal matters of concern and national issues circulated by the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC). This information was welcomed by the staff we had spoken to, who had found it very useful.

Staff felt able to challenge senior managers and colleagues in respect of conduct.

It was also clear from discussion with staff that the professional standards department was held in high regard. Staff felt able to approach them directly and openly, and not necessarily resort to the use of anonymous routes; although the force did operate a confidential reporting line, called 'SafeCall', which staff reported they had confidence in.

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 strong support for the view that North Wales Police was actively promoting staff wellbeing, and a healthy lifestyle, to better deliver the personal, professional and protective policing service that the public expects. The force was considered to be a caring organisation, with more focus placed on looking after staff than just focusing on performance levels. It was clear from discussions with staff that some felt well looked after and they commented that North Wales Police was a 'great place to work'. Those who had experience from other occupations felt that the services provided by the force compared favourably to the treatment they had previously received when working in the private sector.

Wellbeing was a central theme within the force's current people strategy and was being driven by the human resources department through its health and wellbeing policy and internal publicity campaign entitled 'Lifestyle Matters'. However, despite this publicity, some members of the workforce were not aware of the wellbeing policy, and felt that the level of care and support offered depended upon the individual's line manager. HMIC found strong evidence that managers were offering a broad range of support to staff following periods of sickness absence. At senior management level, work had also been undertaken to ensure that police superintendents did not work excessive hours.

Staff were able to access a range of wellbeing services through either self referral or manager referral. The services included occupational health advice, counselling, and physiotherapy. There was also a staff benevolent fund to provide support in cases of financial hardship. Staff reported that there was genuine interest shown by the force in providing support following adverse personal and/or professional events. Staff associations were also engaged, and assisted the force in its efforts to care for staff.

Good practice was highlighted in relation to attendance management, and in supporting new members of staff.

Staff associations had worked with managers to improve the recruitment process, for example, by highlighting issues around dyslexia. This had resulted in improvements in selection processes, to ensure that reasonable adjustments and other non-discriminatory interview methods were employed.

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.

HMIC found that the Code of Ethics was not fully understood by all members of staff within North Wales Police. Some staff reported that there had been no formal direction or training regarding the code, and that they had only a generic awareness of what it meant in practice. We found that there was little evidence of how this awareness impacted on day-to-day policing. However, the workforce was able to demonstrate a basic understanding of the principles that underpin the code.

HMIC were told that, at the time of launching the Code of Ethics, all staff were sent information in an email and were required by the force to complete the relevant national police on-line training package. Most staff had also been able to attend the chief constable's roadshows, where the importance of the code had been explained. An audit trail showed that the on-line package had been completed by 80 percent of the workforce – although, given the variable levels of understanding, HMIC questions the effectiveness of the training.

Senior managers stated that the Code of Ethics was now a key focus for the force, and progress was being assessed against an ethics implementation plan. The chief constable chaired the ethics, leadership and culture committee, which met monthly to consider moral and ethical dilemmas. A case study had been provided illustrating a dilemma around the use of free public transport by the workforce; this was being actively considered by the committee. This issue was perceived as having been well communicated to officers and staff, although there was recognition that some aspects of anti-corruption were not fully understood.

HMIC were told that the code was not yet driving policy and practice, but might have occasionally been used in decision-making. Progress was being made to integrate the code but as yet it was not being used in every day decision-making nor were outcomes being consistently recorded. North Wales Police had developed a specific training package in ethical dilemmas and the use of the Code of Ethics. This had

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, 2014. Available from: www.college.police.uk

been piloted with superintendents and there were plans to make the training mandatory for all supervisory staff.

Despite all the efforts already undertaken by the senior command team, it was clear that more needed to be done to ensure that the Code of Ethics was understood by all staff and fully integrated into policing practice.

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

In the 12 months to 31 March 2015, North Wales Police finalised 853 allegations from public complaints that were made against its officers and staff. Of these, 47 percent had been investigated and 34 percent had been locally resolved. These proportions were broadly in line with the average of North Wales Police's most similar group of forces.¹⁰

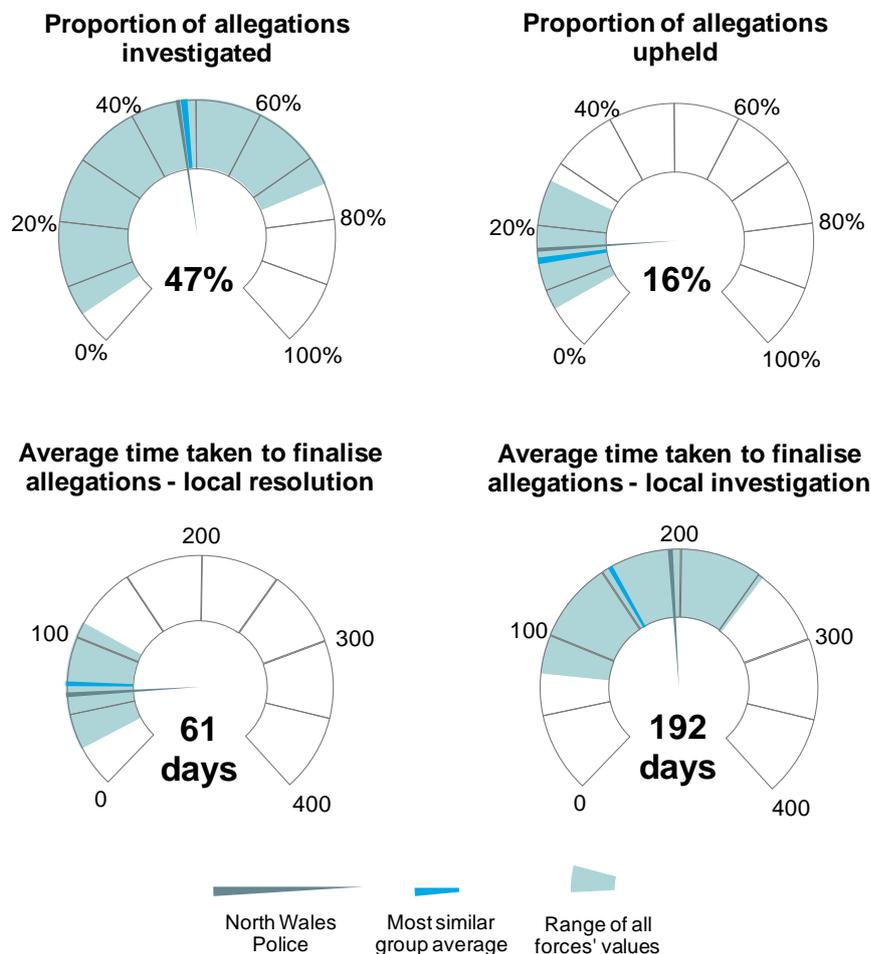
⁹ For a more complete outline of the definitions and potential outcomes resulting from public complaints, please see the Independent Police Complaints Commission's website: www.ipcc.gov.uk

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.

In the 12 months to 31 March 2015, the average time North Wales Police took to complete a local resolution was 61 days, broadly in line with the average of its most similar group of forces (68 days). Over the same period, the average time a local investigation took to complete was 192 days, greater than the average of its most similar group of forces (154 days).

After local investigation, North Wales Police closed 400 allegations in the 12 months to 31 March 2015. Of these, 16 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 greater than the average of North Wales' most similar group of forces of 14 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 North Wales Police, 12 months to 31 March 2015



Source: Independent Police Complaints Commission

Overall, in the 12 months to 31 March 2015, North Wales Police finalised 47 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, North Wales took a similar amount of time to complete local resolutions and longer 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 the HMIC 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 61 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 that North Wales Police had a well established and effective governance structure for dealing consistently and fairly with public complaints and allegations of misconduct. The professional standards department and human resources department were focused on prevention and education, not just reactive enforcement and compliance. Officers and staff had confidence in the system and in the people carrying out the investigations.

The officer responsible for assessing public complaints and misconduct was a detective chief inspector of the professional standards department, the correct rank required by the regulations. HMIC were pleased to see that this officer undertook all

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.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic

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'.

initial assessments of both public complaints and misconduct matters, for police officers and police staff. This ensured fairness and consistency in decision-making. Appeals were heard by the superintendent responsible for the same department. The human resources department provided further advice in respect of misconduct.

There were nominated officers, of chief inspector rank, who acted as local points of contact for the professional standards department. These officers had responsibility for the allocation of cases assessed as suitable for local resolution. They monitored the progress of such cases and provided updates on a centrally held record system. The officers met monthly with the head of the professional standards department to discuss trends in complaints, issues of concern and the quality and timeliness of investigations. There was a good working relationship between the police federation and the professional standards department.

Gross misconduct, misconduct, and sensitive investigations were managed by a small team of staff from within the professional standards department. The deputy chief constable maintained oversight of gross misconduct investigations and cases where exceptional circumstances required senior management involvement. He also dip-sampled professional standards department files on a regular basis. The professional standards department had also been audited by the Independent Police Complaints Commission. The head of the professional standards department met with the deputy chief constable on a fortnightly basis, to consider threats and issues within the covert anti-corruption unit.

Some staff felt that they had not received enough training in respect of complaints and misconduct and, as a result, felt vulnerable. HMIC was told that the five-day leadership training course had not included any information on managing complaint and misconduct investigations. This issue was being addressed by increasing training opportunities, such as anti-corruption courses run by the College of Policing, and for the investigation of low-level misconduct.

Lessons learned were being fed back to staff through a quarterly bulletin and the 'Top Tips Tuesday' initiative. These publications were seen as simple and effective, and popular with the workforce. However, during our file review we did not find that lessons learned were being routinely identified; these are missed opportunities. Best practice from the Independent Police Complaints Commission and other police forces was being shared.

Staff felt that the force dealt with complaints and misconduct fairly and consistently, although on some occasions investigations took too long, and that they were not regularly updated. The force acknowledged that timeliness was sometimes an issue, and attributed this to a lack of appropriately trained staff and the demands of local policing.

Summary of findings



Good

The chief constable and chief officer team had sent clear messages of their commitment to operating ethically and with appropriate standards of behaviour. These were understood by most staff. The force was working towards a position where an ethical culture formed part of everyday policing.

North Wales Police was fully committed to the wellbeing of staff. The force was in the process of developing a fully integrated programme of health and wellbeing, with evidence of good practice. This process was not yet complete and more needed to be done to ensure that all staff were made aware of the wellbeing policy.

The force had set out to integrate the Code of Ethics in support of its people strategy and its policy on values and behaviours. While there was some understanding of the Code of Ethics, it was not yet fully established at every level nor was it routinely used in everyday decision-making.

The force had a robust, consistent and fair complaints process and misconduct policy. Staff felt that they would be treated fairly and had confidence in both the process and the management investigations, although there were issues reported in relation to timeliness and staff training for complaint management.

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/

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.

Police community support officers within local policing teams provide the main focus for engagement, and it was clear that these individuals understand the communities in which they operate. For example, we found they are involved with school visits or other contact activities, and attend different local meetings. HMIC found evidence that commitments relating to meetings set up within local policing areas were being documented in an engagement plan. This plan provided a schedule of engagement, which a number of PCSOs were then expected to fulfil. Social media tools, including Twitter, are increasingly being used by local officers to understand issues, and exchange information with their local communities. We were pleased to note that the force has also provided some local teams with access to Facebook accounts which are used to share information. The headquarters' communications department oversees content and monitors the issues being raised. There is also widespread use of a messaging and community email system, known as Owl, to which people subscribe in order to receive crime prevention information and alerts from the police.

This is positive, but HMIC found limited evidence to confirm whether the commitments that had been set out in the engagement plans were being overseen, and we were disappointed to find that, in the daily management meeting we observed, there was no reference to these activities to engage their local community. We also noted that many community beat constables are occupied in dealing with crime investigations and other matters, and that this is preventing opportunities for them to engage and work closely with the community.

Local teams are regularly provided with updated information describing patterns of crime and anti-social behaviour, as well as other intelligence. There was little evidence of staff being provided with up-to-date and detailed information about their communities, and we were told that local profile information about each area was no longer maintained. HMIC notes that the force is in a process of reviewing its model for neighbourhood policing. This will re-distribute police officers, but will also reduce the numbers of PCSOs available. The force must ensure that its new arrangements provide all the community teams with sufficient information and opportunity, to ensure they are able to engage effectively with the people they serve.

We found officers were familiar with community impact assessments which are carried out to identify and deal with events that have potential for concern within the community.

Although some officers felt these assessments were occasionally carried out for less serious matters, several positive examples, including an arson attack and a street assault, were provided. These had been properly used to focus the action necessary to address real local concerns.

Of the 416 survey responses from the area covered by North Wales Police, 51 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.

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. HMIC found that the force has improved the way it engages with victims of crime, and has developed processes to ensure they are kept up-dated. Call-backs to victims, and externally provided surveys, are used to check how effectively this is being done. Recent data indicates high levels of satisfaction among people who have reported crime.

The force is developing its use of social media to identify current issues that are causing concern in a particular area, for example, a road closure. With such a system the local policing team can provide live updates or advice using social media. While encouraging, internet access is not universal, and there is still a reliance on individual officers to seek views from the public in their area.

Telephone interviews, local surveys and consultation with partner agencies are used to canvass public opinions. These efforts are positive, but it is not clear whether the findings are consistently translated into locally published priorities, and then used to set local policing objectives.

The value that local volunteers can add, by extending the force's reach into communities, is recognised, and the force has appointed a member of staff to coordinate their recruitment, training and development. There are now 65 accredited volunteers who are performing a variety of roles; these include support for cyber-crime investigation, managing mountain search and rescue volunteers and coordinating a 'horse watch' scheme which currently has 3,000 members. This is encouraging, but there is evidence of some frustrating administrative delays in the recruitment process, particularly where posts require vetting. The force is also investigating funding opportunities to establish a 'speed watch' scheme, and other initiatives which support and engage communities in a response to particular local concerns.

Currently the force has 131 special constables, 47 of whom are qualified for independent patrol and six who have driving authority. A target has been set to recruit a total of 300 special constables, and a chief inspector has been given responsibility for developing the special constabulary. There is collaboration with a local college in providing a foundation degree in policing which is linked to special constabulary membership. We were told that 18 special constables will join the force next month, with more expected before the end of the year.

A cadet corps has recently been established, with three policing districts each having 20 cadets. There are plans to expand this number, and it is anticipated that the cadets will be deployed to support community engagement schemes. Around 25 percent of the cadets are young people drawn from challenging backgrounds.

From the survey, 33 percent of the respondents from the area covered by North Wales Police 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.

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 North Wales Police, from the 40 calls assessed, HMIC was very satisfied that the call handlers were polite, respectful and effective. Call-handlers were courteous and demonstrated a good standard of customer service to callers.

During our fieldwork we also observed front counter staff in their interaction with visitors at police stations. The staff were found to be smartly presented, and dealt professionally with people making enquiries. Members of the public, who were spoken to, confirmed that their business had been handled effectively. We were also told that the force's own survey data indicates most people who live in the area have positive views about North Wales Police.

We found consistent evidence that police staff and officers had been trained in the use of the National Decision Model (NDM). Those we spoke to were able to demonstrate an effective level of understanding in how the model should be used.

When we visited the force control room, the approach used by the control room inspector to decide firearms or Taser deployments clearly evidenced use of the NDM; similarly officers were able to describe how they would use the model in deciding how they would handle incidents. We were pleased to note that knowledge and understanding of the NDM is tested in applications for different roles, including Taser training, and it is a component in all promotion assessments. Use of NDM is also reinforced during the protective training refresher course attended by all officers.

We found that the force uses its 'It Matters' campaign to emphasise the need for its officers and staff to treat people fairly and with respect; this has been effective.

¹⁴ *College of Policing: Authorised Professional Practice on National Decision Model*. Available from: www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/

The corporate communications department provides technical training and guidance in the use of social media; currently 103 officers are active in using force Twitter accounts and five policing districts use Facebook pages.

We also found that mandatory/required training is provided, but there is no regular training day or similar 'protected time' available for officers to improve their skills in other areas. Such training was largely available through computer-based learning packages, which are not well received.

From the survey, 57 percent of respondents from the area covered by North Wales 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

North Wales Police is committed to engaging with the public. The force promotes and emphasises the values and ethical principles that it expects its staff to maintain. Staff understand and are supportive of these principles.

The force is beginning to use modern social media tools effectively, but there is still a reliance on face-to-face contact through meetings and local community engagement events. Such contact needs to be sustained, but it is necessarily limited in scope. The force does not consistently provide information by which people can judge how local issues are being addressed.

HMIC found that the force has improved the way it engages with victims of crime, and has developed ways to make sure they are kept updated. Call-backs to victims and externally provided surveys are used to check how effectively this is being done. Recent data indicates high levels of satisfaction among people who have reported crime.

There is good evidence that the public of North Wales are being treated fairly and with respect by their local police. The results of local surveys would also suggest this is being recognised by the public.

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.¹⁵

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/

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 North Wales Police – Stop and search by volume

In the 12 months to 31 March 2015, North Wales Police carried out 3,553 stops and searches. The table below shows this number per 1,000 population for North Wales 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 less 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 North Wales 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
North Wales	5.1	-33%
North Wales' MSG average	6.7	-32%

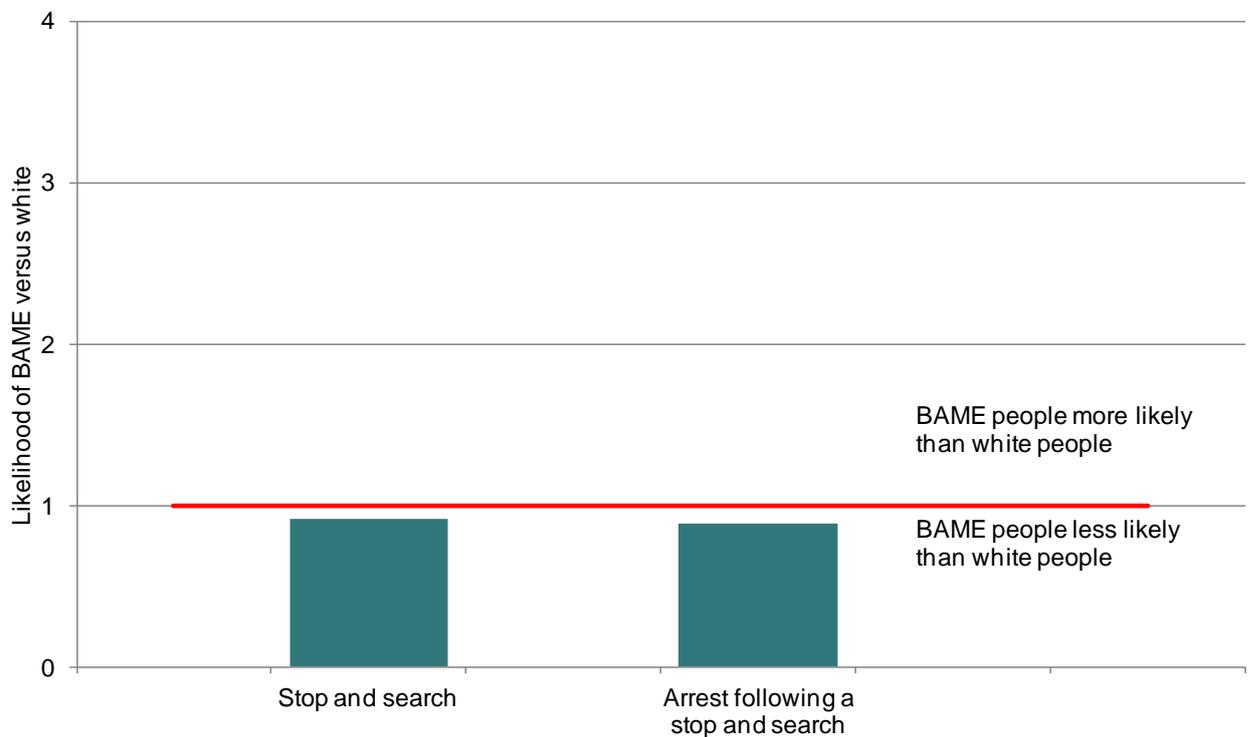
Sources: Home Office Stop and Search data, Police Powers and Procedures 2014/15 and Office for National Statistics mid-2014 population estimates

Use of stop and search in North Wales 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 there was no statistical difference in the likelihood of BAME people being stopped and searched by North Wales Police than white people.¹⁸

¹⁸ HMIC was unable to compare to a statistically significant degree the ethnicity of those arrested following a stop and search by North Wales Police, due to the small number of arrests following a stop and search

Figure 7: A comparison between the likelihood of BAME and white people being stopped and searched and, separately, arrested following stop and search by North Wales 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 North Wales Police, the 2013 inspection showed that 21 of 200 records reviewed (11 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. All of the records we reviewed had been endorsed by a supervisor. We found that 18 of the 100 records (18 percent) did not have reasonable grounds recorded. 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.

The item searched for was recorded as having been found in 36 of the 98 records reviewed.

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.

We found that, following our 2013 inspection, the force conducted a programme of training for operational officers. Though the officers we spoke to were unfamiliar with the details of the Best Use of Stop and Search scheme, we were satisfied that they understand its objectives, and it was clear that they recognise that searches need to be proportionate and justifiable.

Officers use a paper form to record searches, and completed records are examined by a supervisor before details are entered onto a database. Monthly quality assurance checks of a sample of 50 search records are carried out by a nominated inspector in each policing district.

A public encounters board maintains internal oversight of the range of searches being conducted. This board includes representatives from the office of the police and crime commissioner, professional standards department, senior managers and independent members. The board examines trends, and considers proportionality in the use of search powers. The force has identified the disproportionate numbers of young males being searched in North Wales, and has started work with the College of Policing to examine this trend. A significant proportion of the searches carried out by the force are related to the possession of drugs. While this is not a force priority, the force receives a number of calls and intelligence about persons using drugs, and this may relate to high numbers of visitors to the area.

A total of 110 body-worn video kits are available for use by patrol officers. When equipped with the video, officers are required to record any stops and searches they undertake.

External scrutiny of stop and search encounters is provided by an independent panel; this includes youth members and representatives of minority communities. The panel meets quarterly to examine a sample of 30 search records. Their review includes the viewing of body-worn video recordings. The panel give their views about compliance with procedure and this is fed back to the officer concerned. This level of scrutiny demonstrates legitimacy and provides an accessible process through which officers can be held accountable for the use of their powers.

North Wales Police is compliant with most aspects of the Best Use of Stop and Search scheme, with the exception of a ride-along scheme. For some reason, the force has restricted the ride along scheme to members of its independent advisory group and some local councillors, but not members of the public.

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 complies with this feature of the scheme.
Providing opportunities for the public to observe officers using the power	<p>The force does not comply with this feature of the scheme.</p> <p>The force has a 'ride along' scheme, but to date this has been restricted to members of its independent advisory group and some local councillors but not members of the public. Widening of the scheme to include other members of the community is delayed while some aspects are still being resolved.</p>

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 ¹⁹ 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, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups	The force complies with this feature of the scheme.

¹⁹ ‘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.²⁰

²⁰ *College of Policing: Authorised Professional Practice on armed policing – legal framework and Taser*. Available from: www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/

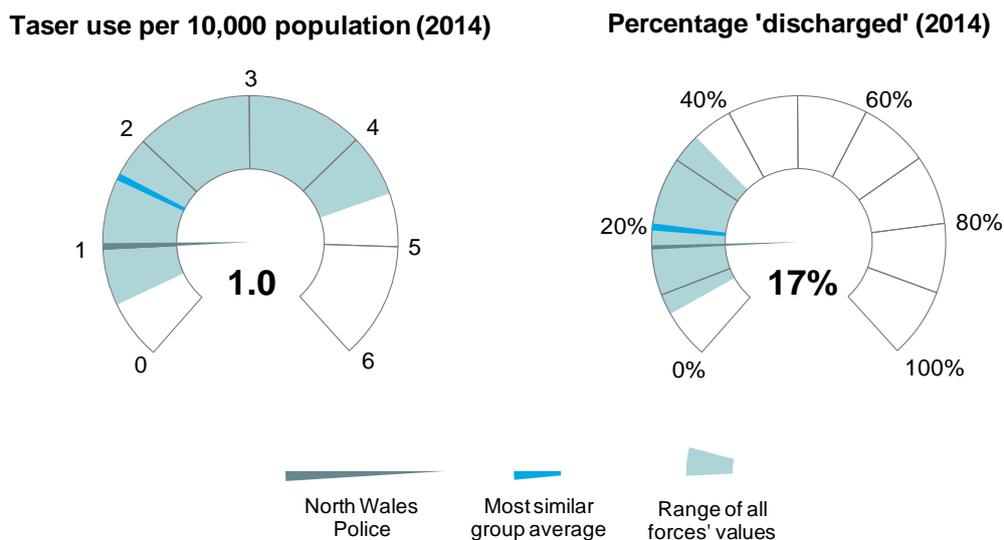
Use of Taser in North Wales Police.

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 71 times by North Wales Police, representing 1.0 times for every 10,000 people in the force's area. This was less than the average for North Wales Police's most similar group of forces, which was 1.6 times per 10,000 population.

During the same time period, Taser was 'discharged' on 12 occasions (out of the 71 times it was used in some capacity). This equated to 17 percent of overall use, less than the force's most similar group average of 20 percent. However, because of the low number of times Taser was used in North Wales 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 North Wales Police, 12 months to 31 December 2014²¹



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.

²¹ 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.

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 19 Taser deployment forms provided by North Wales 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 three times, drive-stunned two times, red-dotted 10 times, aimed three times, and drawn once. On all five occasions that Taser was fired or drive-stunned and the NDM completed, we found evidence that consideration of other tactics had been recorded.

Overall officers used Taser to protect themselves or others from a range of weapons, including knives, a fence pole, a crow bar, and a vehicle which was being used to drive off while an officer was reaching inside it.

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 cases reviewed.

Where officers had been required to complete the NDM section of the form, we found that one was somewhat muddled, but that all were able to record their use of the NDM. We found two examples where officers had incorrectly recorded the Taser mode they had used. We found one example where an officer had used Taser outside the College of Policing training by deploying it in drive-stun mode which is less effective, rather than angled drive-stun mode which produces neuromuscular incapacitation. It is important that officers understand how to correctly complete the Taser form.

None of the forms contained any mention of the national Code of Ethics for the police service which is at the heart of the National Decision Model 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.

HMIC found that the Taser-trained officers we spoke to during our fieldwork were confident in their application of NDM when they deal with incidents which may involve violent people. We also visited the control room to examine how deployment of Taser-equipped officers is decided. We were satisfied that the NDM is used to ensure Taser is only approved for deployment where it is necessary.

The force applies strict criteria to the selection of Taser-trained officers and candidates must be approved by a superintendent before they are trained. During training, officers are tested on their understanding in the use of force and handling the device and a proportion do not pass the course.

The force has examined the distribution of violent incidents around the force and has placed Taser-trained officers accordingly to improve its response times. Each incident where Taser is used is reviewed, and where the device is 'discharged', a trained supervisor attends the scene to carry out an investigation. The report by the officer is examined by a specialist trainer who considers the appropriateness of the deployment and the circumstances in which the device was used. Lessons learned are identified for inclusion in the next quarterly refresher training session.

The recording, monitoring and evaluation of Taser use is reviewed through the joint force (North Wales and Cheshire forces) arrangements which are in place for firearms, and by the North Wales Police conflict management board. This includes the number of occasions where Taser is 'discharged' and any incidents which may indicate mishandling of a Taser device. HMIC is satisfied that the force uses appropriate methods to check Taser is used fairly and identifies opportunities for improved practice.

The force does not routinely publish information about the use of Taser.

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 North Wales Police.

Summary of findings



Good

North Wales Police is compliant with most aspects of the Best Use of Stop and Search scheme, with the exception of a ride-along scheme. For some reason, the force has restricted the ride along scheme to members of its independent advisory group and some local councillors, but not members of the public.

HMIC is concerned that reasonable grounds are not being properly recorded for stop and search, or being properly supervised. This is something that the force needs to address.

The force has put in place arrangements for external scrutiny of stop and search encounters, involving review by an independent panel, which includes young people and representation from minority communities. The review also includes examination of body-worn video recordings, where these are available.

HMIC is satisfied that Taser is used fairly and appropriately. However, some officers are not completing the Taser form correctly and this is an area the force should address.

Areas for improvement

- The force should ensure that stop and search records include sufficient reasonable grounds to justify the lawful use of the power, and that officers and supervisors fully understand the grounds required to stop and search.
- The force must ensure that (i) Taser-trained officers properly record their decisions, in accordance with the College of Policing training, and (ii) these forms are properly supervised.

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 North Wales Police's MSG: Suffolk, Norfolk, Devon and Cornwall, Wiltshire, West Mercia, Warwickshire and North Yorkshire.
- 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 Definition²²

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.

²² *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.