

# PEEL: Police legitimacy (including leadership) 2017

An inspection of Northumbria Police



December 2017

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ISBN: 978-1-78655-510-6

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# Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Force in numbers</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Overview – How legitimate is the force at keeping people safe and reducing crime?</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>To what extent does the force treat all of the people it serves with fairness and respect?</b> .....	<b>9</b>
To what extent does the force understand the importance of treating people with fairness and respect? .....	9
How well does the force understand the extent to which its workforce treats people with fairness and respect? .....	12
How fairly does the force use stop and search powers?.....	14
Summary of findings .....	19
<b>How well does the force ensure that its workforce behaves ethically and lawfully?</b> .....	<b>20</b>
How well does the force develop and maintain an ethical culture?.....	20
How accessible is the complaints system to all members of the public? .....	24
How well does the force identify and investigate potential discrimination by officers and staff? .....	26
Summary of findings .....	28
<b>To what extent does the force treat its workforce with fairness and respect?</b> .....	<b>29</b>
How well does the force identify and act to improve fairness at work? .....	29
How well does the force support the wellbeing of its workforce? .....	37
How fairly and effectively does the force manage and develop both the performance of its individual officers and staff and its selection processes? .....	41
Summary of findings .....	43
<b>Next steps</b> .....	<b>44</b>
<b>Annex A – About the data</b> .....	<b>45</b>

# Introduction

As part of its annual inspections into police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL), HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS)<sup>1</sup> assesses the legitimacy and leadership of police forces across England and Wales.

Police legitimacy – a concept that is well established in the UK as ‘policing by consent’ – is crucial in a democratic society. The police have powers to act in ways that would be considered illegal by any other member of the public (for example, by using force or depriving people of their liberty). Therefore, it is vital that they use these powers fairly, and that they treat people with respect in the course of their duties.

Police legitimacy is also required for the police to be effective and efficient: as well as motivating the public to co-operate with the police and respect the law, it encourages them to become more socially responsible. The more the public supports the police by providing information or by becoming more involved in policing activities (such as via Neighbourhood Watch or other voluntary activity), the greater the reduction in demand on police forces.

To achieve this support – or ‘consent’ – the public needs to believe that the police will treat them with respect and make fair decisions (while taking the time to explain why they are making those decisions), as well as being friendly and approachable.<sup>2</sup> This is often referred to as ‘procedural justice’. Police actions that are perceived to be unfair or disrespectful can have an extremely negative effect on police legitimacy in the eyes of the public.

Police officers and staff are more likely to treat the public with fairness and respect if they feel that they are being treated fairly and respectfully, particularly by their own police force. Therefore, it is important that the decisions made by their force about matters that affect them are perceived to be fair.<sup>3</sup> This principle is described as

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<sup>1</sup> This inspection was carried out before 19 July 2017, when HMIC also took on responsibility for fire & rescue service inspections and was renamed HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services. The methodology underpinning our inspection findings is unaffected by this change. References to HMICFRS in this report may relate to an event that happened before 19 July 2017 when HMICFRS was HMIC. Citations of documents which HMIC published before 19 July 2017 will still cite HMIC as the publisher.

<sup>2</sup> *It's a fair cop? Police legitimacy, public cooperation, and crime reduction*, National Policing Improvement Agency, September 2011. Available at:  
[http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Documents/Fair\\_cop\\_Full\\_Report.pdf](http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Documents/Fair_cop_Full_Report.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> *Fair cop 2: Organisational justice, behaviour and ethical policing*, College of Policing, 2015. Available at:  
[http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Documents/150317\\_Fair\\_cop%20FINAL\\_REPORT.pdf](http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Documents/150317_Fair_cop%20FINAL_REPORT.pdf)

'organisational justice', and HMICFRS considers that, alongside the principle of procedural justice, it makes up a vital aspect of any assessment of police legitimacy.

One of the most important areas in which internal organisational justice and external procedural justice principles come together is the way in which police forces ensure that their workforce behaves ethically and lawfully. In HMICFRS' 2017 legitimacy inspection, we continued our assessment of how well forces develop and maintain an ethical culture and we re-examined how forces deal with public complaints against the police. How this is done needs to be seen to be fair and legitimate in the eyes of both the police workforce and the general public.

As part of this year's inspection, we also integrated aspects of leadership into our assessment of legitimacy, as the two areas are closely linked. We assessed the role that leadership plays in shaping force culture, the extent to which leadership teams act as role models, and looked at how the force identifies and selects its leaders.

While our overarching legitimacy principles and core questions remain the same as last year, our areas of specific focus continue to change to ensure we are able to assess a full range of police legitimacy topics, including emerging concerns or Home Office commissions. As such, it is not always possible to provide a direct comparison with last year's grades. Where it is possible to highlight emerging trends in our inspection findings between years, we do so in this report.

A separate report on the force's efficiency inspection findings is available on our website ([www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/peel-assessments/peel-2017/northumbria/efficiency/](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/peel-assessments/peel-2017/northumbria/efficiency/)). Our reports on police effectiveness will be published in early 2018. Our 2016 reports on forces' effectiveness, efficiency, and legitimacy are available on our website: [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/peel-assessments/peel-2016/northumbria/](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/peel-assessments/peel-2016/northumbria/).

More information on how we inspect and grade forces as part of this wide-ranging inspection is available on our website ([www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/peel-assessments/how-we-inspect/](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/peel-assessments/how-we-inspect/)).

## Force in numbers



### Workforce

Total workforce (full time equivalents) as of 31 March 2017

**4,901**

Total workforce breakdown (full time equivalents) as of 31 March 2017

officers

**3,289**

staff (including section 38)

**1,449**

PCSOs

**163**



### Ethnic diversity

Percentage of BAME in workforce 31 March 2017

overall workforce

**1.6%**

officers

**1.7%**

staff

**0.9%**

PCSOs

**3.0%**

Percentage of BAME in local population, 2011 Census

**5.4%**



### Gender diversity

Percentage of females in overall workforce 31 March 2017

**39%**

England and Wales population, 2015 estimate

**51%**

Percentage of females by role 31 March 2017

**29%**

Northumbria Police

officers

**62%**

staff

PCSOs

**38%**



## Grievances

Number of grievances per 1,000 workforce raised and finalised 10 months to 31 March 2017

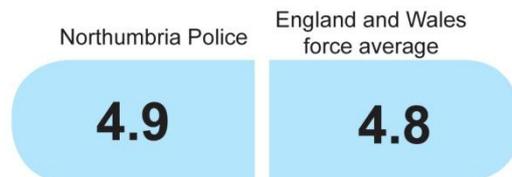


## Stop and search

Number of stops and searches carried out in 2015/16 (excluding 'vehicle only' searches)

7,096

Number of stop and searches per 1,000 population in 2015/16



**Note: All figures exclude section 38 staff unless stated otherwise. For further information about the data used, including information about section 38 staff, please see annex A.**

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

## Overall judgment<sup>4</sup>



**Good**

Northumbria Police is judged to be good at how legitimately it keeps people safe and reduces crime. For the areas of legitimacy we looked at this year, our overall judgment is the same as last year. The force is judged to be good at treating all of the people it serves with fairness and respect. It is also judged to be good at ensuring its workforce behaves ethically and lawfully and good at treating its workforce with fairness and respect.

## Overall summary

To what extent does the force treat all of the people it serves with fairness and respect?



**Good**

How well does the force ensure that its workforce behaves ethically and lawfully?



**Good**

To what extent does the force treat its workforce with fairness and respect?



**Good**

Northumbria Police is good in respect of the legitimacy with which it keeps people safe and reduces crime, with elements that are outstanding. Our overall grade this year is consistent with last year's however, it should be noted that the force has made many significant improvements since last year.

There is strong leadership around treating people fairly, and the workforce has a clear understanding of how to do so. There are good arrangements for external scrutiny in place. The force has scrutiny processes that monitor and review the use of stop and search and the wider use of force, but more needs to be done to ensure all officers and supervisors understand what constitutes reasonable grounds for the use of these powers.

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<sup>4</sup> HMICFRS judgments are outstanding, good, requires improvement and inadequate.

Northumbria Police ensures that its workforce behaves ethically and lawfully, with clear leadership from the chief officer team on the force's values – the Proud principles. The team outlines and models high behavioural expectations and the workforce follows these. Decision making is devolved to officers and staff at all levels, who trust the organisation to support them should a decision turn out be the wrong one.

Northumbria Police has a good complaints process for the public that is clear and easy to use. However, the information about complaints on the force's website could be improved. Complainants receive a consistently high level of service from the force. Allegations of discrimination are investigated thoroughly and professionally. We noted that gifts, hospitality, declarations of business interests and details of pay and rewards have not been updated since 2015.

Northumbria Police treats its workforce with fairness and respect. The force is very keen to seek feedback from its workforce and actively encourages members to submit new ideas and become involved in change and improvement. The force consistently considers the wellbeing of its workforce. Numerous initiatives identify early signs of problems such as mental health, and there are champions to support anyone who may show signs of suffering from these or other medical problems. The force has recently introduced a new professional development system, but the take-up is poor. The force needs to do more to make this process feel relevant to the entire workforce.

#### **Areas for improvement**

- The force should ensure that it publishes up-to-date information on gifts, hospitality, business interests and pay for all senior staff.
- The force should ensure it has effective systems, processes and guidance in place, in which all staff and officers are engaged, to manage individual performance and development.

## To what extent does the force treat all of the people it serves with fairness and respect?

College of Policing research suggests that, in the eyes of the public, police legitimacy stems primarily from the concept of ‘procedural justice’: the expectation that officers will treat the public respectfully and make fair decisions (explaining their reasons openly and clearly), while being consistently friendly and approachable.<sup>5</sup>

While HMICFRS recognises that police legitimacy stems from broader experiences of the police than by direct contact alone, our inspection focuses specifically on assessing the extent to which forces make fair decisions and treat people with respect during their interactions with the public. To do this, we looked at how well leaders can demonstrate the importance they place on procedural justice and how well the workforce understands these principles and applies them. Also, we assessed how well the force scrutinises the extent to which procedural justice takes place, particularly with regard to coercive powers, including the use of force and stop and search.

## To what extent does the force understand the importance of treating people with fairness and respect?

HMICFRS assessed the extent to which leaders of the force understand the importance of procedural justice, and the arrangements they have made to provide the workforce with the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to treat all the people they serve fairly and with respect. We examined the workforce’s understanding of the principles of procedural justice (being friendly and approachable, treating people with respect, making fair decisions, and taking time to explain these decisions). We did this by checking their understanding of the concept of unconscious bias,<sup>6</sup> their awareness of effective communication skills<sup>7</sup> in all

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<sup>5</sup> *It’s a fair cop? Police legitimacy, public cooperation, and crime reduction*, National Policing Improvement Agency, September 2011. Available at: [http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Documents/Fair\\_cop\\_Full\\_Report.pdf](http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Documents/Fair_cop_Full_Report.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Personal biases are influenced by factors including people’s background, personal experiences and occupational culture, and they can affect our decision making. When we make quick decisions, these biases can, without us realising, disadvantage particular groups of people. It is vital that police officers understand their own biases and how to overcome them, to ensure the decisions they make are fair.

<sup>7</sup> Research into the effect of communication skills training in Greater Manchester Police (e.g. showing empathy, building rapport, signposting and using positive and supportive language) showed this improved officer attitudes and behaviours and had a “significant positive effect” on the quality of interactions between police officers and victims. See: <http://library.college.police.uk/docs/college-of-policing/Technical-Report.pdf>

interactions with the public and their appropriate use of coercive powers (with a specific focus on stop and search and use of force).<sup>8</sup>

### **Understanding the importance of treating people with fairness and respect**

HMICFRS found Northumbria Police to be good at treating people with fairness and respect. We found that there was clear leadership from all of the chief officer team when promoting the values of the organisation. These values are visible, branded consistently throughout the organisation and a major theme in all communications within the force.

The force has a clear vision of the values it expects from its officers and staff. The Proud programme is extensively known around the force and has been heavily promoted by the chief constable. The 'proud to protect' campaign continues to evolve, and the force has four values: proud to serve; proud to lead; proud to improve; and proud of our people. The workforce is making the link between this campaign and the Code of Ethics<sup>9</sup> and the standard of service the force expects of them. Through the consistent use of the Proud brand, the force has been able to instil elements of the Code of Ethics within a campaign that is tailored to the force.

Officers and staff members reported to us that the standards and values messages cascade from the chief officer group to grass-roots level through the line management structure and, as a result, members of the workforce understand the values and behaviour required of them.

Officers and staff that we spoke to during the inspection believe decisions are made in a fair and open manner and that they are also proportionate. The force has an open and honest dialogue with the workforce, setting out a clear rationale on decisions that are made across the whole range of departments and functions. These decisions are communicated through a variety of means, so that the workforce is kept informed on major points.

### **Understanding unconscious bias**

Most officers and staff have received recent training, guidance or some other support on unconscious bias. Those officers who have not received training (21 percent) are booked on courses. Unconscious bias training has been provided to all those who assess people for promotion and all professional standards officers and staff are

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<sup>8</sup> *Authorised Professional Practice on Stop and Search*, College of Policing, February 2017. Available from: [www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/stop-and-search/](http://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/stop-and-search/); *Authorised Professional Practice on Use of Force*, College of Policing, October 2013. Available from: [www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/public-order/core-principles-and-legislation/police-use-of-force](http://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/public-order/core-principles-and-legislation/police-use-of-force); and *College of Policing and National Police Chiefs' Council, Personal safety manual*, 2016. Available from: <http://library.college.police.uk/docs/college-of-policing/PSM/PSM-MOD-01-INTRODUCTION.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> *Code of Ethics: A Code of Practice for the Principles and Standards of Professional Behaviour for the Policing Profession of England and Wales*, College of Policing, 2014. Available from: [www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Ethics/Pages/Code-of-Ethics.aspx](http://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Ethics/Pages/Code-of-Ethics.aspx)

currently undertaking the same training. Unconscious bias training has been included in all relevant detective training. 'Learning heroes', (an interactive, online training package which covers situational judgment on prejudice and addressing incivility, with an underlying theme of unconscious bias throughout), is currently being provided to all officers and staff. This is still new and only 15 percent of the workforce have so far undertaken this training.

Officers we spoke to stated that they had received a lot of information about unconscious bias during stop and search training. All officers and staff we spoke to had a full and comprehensive understanding of how they should be treating people fairly and with respect in their interactions with the public and each other.

### **Communication skills**

The force provides training in communication skills to all frontline officers and staff through a variety of training programmes. This includes stop and search and personal safety training. During the training, softer communication skills are covered, such as listening skills and explaining the rationale around actions and decisions. A more detailed communications package is offered to staff in certain roles such as the communications centre and neighbourhood policing. This is specific to the needs of those staff.

During our inspection, officers and staff showed an excellent understanding of what good communication skills were and the effect they had during interactions with the public. Members of the workforce spoken to were able to provide examples of when these additional skills had been used in practical situations, citing stop and search interactions and public order situations. Staff in the communications centre gave examples of their enhanced communications skills being helpful in dealing with both irate and distressed callers.

The force is providing alternative communication skills training programmes, including neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) training. This training raises awareness of how people's thought processes combine with their spoken and body language to affect communications with others. At the time of our inspection, 30 police officers and 15 police staff had undertaken this training and as a result qualified with an NLP foundation diploma. All qualified NLP advocates use this knowledge within their own working area to spread the learning to their colleagues. The purpose of the training is to engage the workforce in a new approach to both verbal and non-verbal communication and provide new or enhanced skills and attitudes so that the workforce is able to engage with the public more effectively.

### **Use of coercive powers**

During the inspection, HMICFRS found that the correct use of coercive powers features prominently in communications from the chief officer team. The force provides training on coercive powers, as this is regarded as a priority area. The

training includes College of Policing guidance on stop and search and the use of force and ensures that officers have a good awareness of the national decision model (NDM)<sup>10</sup>, Code of Ethics and approved professional practice around the use of force and stop and search.

The officers and staff we spoke to understood the fair and respectful use of coercive powers as a result of training on stop and search, personal safety and the Code of Ethics. Staff also showed that they understood the need to use powers of arrest only when justified and necessary.

## **How well does the force understand the extent to which its workforce treats people with fairness and respect?**

HMICFRS continues to examine the extent to which forces work to identify and understand what affects people's perceptions of fair and respectful treatment. This year we re-assessed a specific aspect of fair and respectful treatment that we examined in PEEL 2015: the use of force<sup>11</sup> and stop and search powers. Specifically, we inspected the extent to which forces record data and how well they scrutinise data and other information, including through external scrutiny,<sup>12</sup> to understand and improve the use of these powers. In the case of stop and search, the next section sets out our findings. It includes our assessment of the reasonableness of recorded grounds for stop and search.

### **Scrutiny of use of force to improve treatment**

The force continues to scrutinise, regularly and frequently, comprehensive data on all types of use of force, including the use of firearms, baton, handcuffs, leg restraints, arrest, incapacitant spray and all control and restraint techniques. These data sets are reviewed at the force equality board and the data are also considered

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<sup>10</sup> The police service has adopted a single, national decision model (NDM). This helps everyone in policing make decisions and provides a framework in which decisions can be examined and challenged, both at the time and afterwards. The code of ethics is at the centre of this model. Information available from: [www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/national-decision-model/](http://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/national-decision-model/)

<sup>11</sup> In 2015 HMICFRS found a generally positive picture of force oversight arrangements for use of Taser. However, in 2016, we found that many forces did not have similar levels of oversight for other types of use of force. As a result of a review undertaken by the National Police Chiefs' Council, all forces have been required to collect a minimum data set in respect of use of force since April 2017. The review is available at: [www.npcc.police.uk/documents/uniformed/2016/Use%20of%20Force%20Data%20Report%20to%20Home%20Sec.pdf](http://www.npcc.police.uk/documents/uniformed/2016/Use%20of%20Force%20Data%20Report%20to%20Home%20Sec.pdf). Also see *Authorised Professional Practice on Use of Force*, College of Policing, October 2013. Available from: [www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/public-order/core-principles-and-legislation/police-use-of-force/](http://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/public-order/core-principles-and-legislation/police-use-of-force/)

<sup>12</sup> *Independent Advisory Groups: considerations and advice for the police service on the recruitment, role and value of IAGs*, College of Policing, 2015. Available at: [www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Support/Equality/Documents/Independent\\_advisory\\_groups\\_advice\\_2015.pdf](http://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Support/Equality/Documents/Independent_advisory_groups_advice_2015.pdf)

at a local level by commanders and team supervision. To assess fairness in the use of force, the data are formatted to include details by age, ethnicity, gender and the officer using the force. The force also uses body-worn video cameras, and scrutiny of the footage is randomly undertaken to establish whether the use of force was appropriate. These cameras are not yet personal issue, and officers have to book them out on a daily basis. Currently, the force has 405 cameras that frontline officers use 24-hours a day. The force wants to move to a position where all officers are issued with their own cameras.

The force can consider the profile of people who have had force used against them to identify potential discrimination, as well as to identify the officers using force to ensure that individuals are not using these powers excessively. The force has also just introduced a new use-of-force recording form to record the full scale of the use of coercive powers. Problems regarding the misuse of these powers by a member of staff, are addressed by the force through training or misconduct procedures.

### **External scrutiny to improve treatment**

The force has outstanding external scrutiny arrangements for a range of policing matters. The force has a strategic independent advisory group (SIAG). The role of the group is to offer an independent outlook on a range of areas. Minutes are taken and actions recorded so that the force is committed to addressing any matters raised and responding to the group about what action has been taken. The SIAG is independently chaired and has wide representation from the community so is able to raise difficult matters for the force from a broad perspective. The group has a good mix of age, including young people (one of whom is the deputy chair), gender, sexuality and ethnicity. The terms of reference dictate that the membership is refreshed on a rolling basis every two years, so the group remains independent and relevant.

The force provides information to the SIAG to enable scrutiny and the raising of difficult policing matters. Data used by the force are provided on a variety of matters, including the use of stop and search, use of force, crime data and also various policies and processes that are new or being updated. The group is also consulted on critical incidents, major investigations, community tensions and planned operations, so that they can offer advice to the force on any negative effects of proposed actions. The SIAG receives extensive training on legislation and policy and is also involved in the training of officers so that members can observe and provide feedback. Stop and search training is one such example, where members attended the training and fed back that the officers' communication skills could be improved. This was acted upon by the people and development department.

The SIAG structure is replicated at local level, which provides local communities with an opportunity to engage with the force on any problems. These meetings are supported by neighbourhood officers and the area commander. Two local meetings were observed as part of the inspection. The chair and membership were all

independent of the police and the meetings were well attended. A senior officer was present at both meetings and engaged effectively with the members. Local officers also attend when there is a relevant point for that area. During the meeting, the groups questioned the stops and searches being reviewed. Actions were recorded and the force is committed to acting on these and providing an update at the next meeting.

In addition to the range of external scrutiny groups that the public can join, the force also seeks feedback from the public using surveys. These surveys measure public confidence in the force, based on factors affecting confidence, one of which is fair treatment. The force uses the results to inform its engagement activities and to improve its service provision.

## **How fairly does the force use stop and search powers?**

The purpose of stop and search powers is to enable officers to eliminate or confirm suspicions that individuals may be in possession of stolen or prohibited items, without exercising their power of arrest. Except in exceptional circumstances, an officer must have reasonable grounds for carrying out such a search. While this can be valuable in the fight against crime when based on genuinely objective reasonable grounds, the powers to stop and search people are some of the most intrusive available to the police. Their disproportionate use in respect of black, Asian and minority ethnic communities threatens to undermine police legitimacy. As such, it is crucial that all forces use these powers fairly, and demonstrate to the public that they are doing this.<sup>13</sup>

HMICFRS has assessed the police's use of its stop and search powers on a number of occasions.<sup>14</sup> Our 2015 legitimacy inspection<sup>15</sup> found that too many forces were not always recording reasonable grounds on their stop and search records. In 2017, we reviewed the reasonableness of the grounds again to assess how fairly forces are using stop and search in line with national guidance.<sup>16</sup> Also, we assessed how the forces scrutinise use of these powers.

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<sup>13</sup> *Authorised Professional Practice on Stop and Search*, College of Policing, February 2017. Available from: [www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/stop-and-search/](http://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/stop-and-search/)

<sup>14</sup> *Stop and Search Powers – are the police using them effectively and fairly?* HMIC, July 2013. Available at: [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/stop-and-search-powers-20130709/](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/stop-and-search-powers-20130709/) and *Best Use of Stop and Search revisits*, HMIC, September 2016. Available from: [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/best-use-of-stop-and-search-revisits/](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/best-use-of-stop-and-search-revisits/)

<sup>15</sup> *Police legitimacy 2015 – a national overview*, HMIC, February 2016. Available from: [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/police-legitimacy-2015/](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/police-legitimacy-2015/)

<sup>16</sup> See annex A for more information about the methodology for our review of stop and search records.

## **Understanding national guidance**

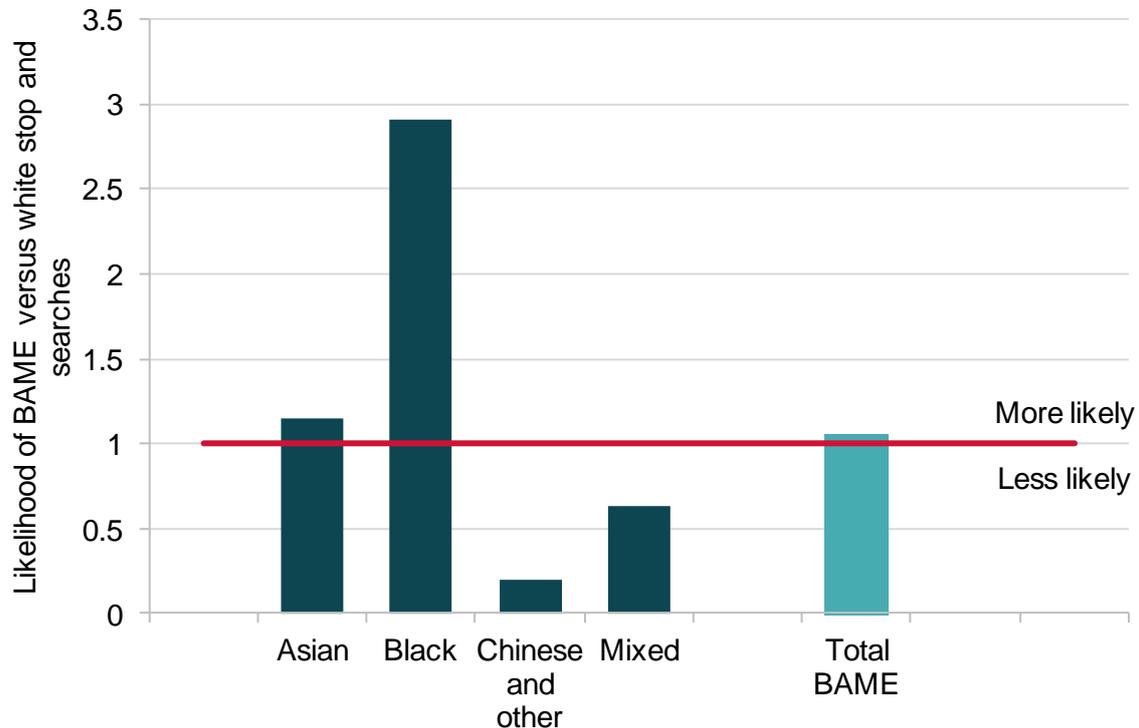
The force provides training to all officers in the appropriate use of stop and search to ensure that it is used fairly and respectfully. The training is based on the College of Policing's authorised professional practice. The Code of Ethics and NDM are also included in this training. All operational officers, including special constables, neighbourhood officers and police community support officers (PCSOs), have received updated stop and search training within the last 18 months. This training has been provided face to face and is complemented by an online package that officers also have to complete. The training is detailed and addresses the fair use of stop and search powers. Stop and search training includes role play and is observed by the SIAG and a young people's group consisting of people who are more likely to be affected by stop and search. Feedback is provided to the force from these observations so that improvements can be made if needed. To support the training, information and guidance on the use of stop and search is readily available on the force intranet.

During our inspection, we spoke to several officers. All of them had an excellent understanding of the legislation, how to use the powers correctly and how the Code of Ethics had an effect on their use of the powers. The officers were also aware of how the incorrect use of the powers could have a negative effect on people's perception of the force. However, the result of our review of 200 stop and search records suggests that some officers and supervisors still do not understand what constitutes reasonable grounds for a stop and search.

## **Monitoring of use of stop and search powers to improve treatment**

In order to monitor the use of stop and search powers effectively, forces should use a range of data to help them understand how the powers are being used and the subsequent effect on crime, disorder and perceptions in the community. In particular, forces should consider whether the use of stop and search powers is disproportionately affecting one group compared with another. In 2015/16 in the local population of Northumbria Police, black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) people were as likely to be stopped and searched as white people. Black people were 2.9 times more likely to be stopped and searched than white people, which is the greatest difference in any ethnic group in the force area when looking at the likelihood of being stopped and searched compared with white people.

**Figure 1: Likelihood of black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) people being stopped and searched (under section 1, PACE)<sup>17</sup> compared with white people, in the local population of Northumbria Police in the 12 months to 31 March 2016**



**Source: Home Office 2016**

The force has a process for monitoring compliance with the use of stop and search powers. The force understands the number of stops and searches conducted against particular ethnic groups, males and females, as well as the age of people stopped and searched, so that it can identify any unfairness.

The force is aware that statistically black people in Northumbria are more likely to be stopped and searched than white people. A small team has been commissioned by the stop and search lead to examine the searches relating to black people in more detail. In the interim, all searches carried out against people from the BAME community are independently scrutinised at the well-established SIAG scrutiny group.

The force considers the above data, and also the use of the power, by:

- subjects searched;
- officer searching;
- item found rate;

<sup>17</sup> Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. Available at: [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1984/60/section/1](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1984/60/section/1)

- arrest rate and reason (to establish whether this was linked to the reason for the search); and
- location of the stop and search.

The force also reviews all body-worn camera footage to analyse the fair use of stop and search powers. In addition, supervisors review every stop and search record to ensure compliance with the legislation and codes of practice and feedback is provided to officers if required. However, the results of our review of 200 stop and search records suggest that this needs to be strengthened (see reasonable grounds for stop and search section below) and that some officers and supervisors still do not fully grasp the legislation in respect of reasonable grounds for stop and search.

The force has a dedicated superintendent as lead for stop and search, whose role is to improve the use of stop and search across the force through a governance process that identifies whether there have been any failings in compliance. If there are any problems, a notification is sent to the officer and their supervisor so that immediate remedial action may be taken. The force lead also reports to several different forums. One is the weekly force executive team meeting at which current performance figures on stop and search are reviewed. Another is the force equality board, which sits monthly and provides detailed scrutiny of the entire stop and search data that the force gathers. The equality board receives a monthly report on stop and search, highlighting the number per officer or subject. If four stops and searches have been carried out on the same person within a year, this will trigger further scrutiny<sup>18</sup> to evaluate the reasons why. The equality board also considers all trends in stop and search based on age, ethnicity, gender, location, individual being searched and officer carrying out the search.

Analysis is also conducted on stop and search complaints to highlight any trends, which are fed back for future learning. When a stop and search complaint is made, the force assessor makes an assessment and an investigation is conducted. Findings are sent to the force lead on stop and search and a meeting with the neighbourhood inspector and the local community is arranged to manage the effect and rebuild relationships that may have been affected. The force does not consider the effectiveness of the use of stop and search in terms of crime rates. Nor does the force review whether stops and searches are taking place in high-risk crime areas. Further to this, the evaluation of data does not extend to assessing whether stop and search is being used in an intelligence-led way to tackle force priorities or against people who may be causing most harm to communities.

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<sup>18</sup> This is a process whereby the force lead on stop and search together with the relevant neighbourhood inspector meet with local community groups to discuss any concerns about perceived failings in service provision that may result in heightened community tensions.

## **External scrutiny of stop and search to improve treatment**

The force's well-established SIAG provides excellent scrutiny on the use of stop and search (see external scrutiny to improve treatment section, above). Additionally, the force includes specific questions in relation to fairness and respect in its public insight surveys. The force is engaged in innovative work specifically in relation to fairness and respect perceptions linked to the use of stop and search, and of coercive powers. Neighbourhood teams work with groups of young people, in particular young people from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities. The groups are provided with training on legislation and process. They are then shown stop and search training videos and live footage from body-worn video and asked to debate the content. The outcomes of these debates are evaluated by the Code of Ethics committee and additional awareness training for officers has been one outcome. The majority of the feedback from young people engaged in this process was described as positive.

All professional standards investigations of stop and search and use of force complaints receive additional scrutiny from the police and crime commissioner's (PCC's) office. Findings are then made public through community engagement groups.

## **Reasonable grounds for use of stop and search**

The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 requires that, to stop and search a person, the grounds to suspect that person of being in possession of a stolen or prohibited article must be reasonable and the grounds must be recorded on the stop and search record.<sup>19</sup>

In our 2013 inspection into the police use of stop and search powers,<sup>20</sup> 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 Northumbria Police, the 2013 inspection showed that 112 of 200 records reviewed did not have grounds recorded that were considered reasonable. In 2015, as part of our PEEL legitimacy inspection,<sup>21</sup> we carried out a further review of the recorded grounds in a sample of stop and search records. In that inspection, our review of 99 records found that 12 did not have reasonable grounds recorded.

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<sup>19</sup> Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 Available from: [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1984/60/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1984/60/contents)

<sup>20</sup> *Stop and Search Powers: Are the police using them effectively and fairly?* HMIC, 2013. Available from: [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/stop-and-search-powers-20130709/](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/stop-and-search-powers-20130709/)

<sup>21</sup> *PEEL: Police legitimacy 2015*. HMIC, 2016. Available from: [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/police-legitimacy-2015/](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/police-legitimacy-2015/)

During our 2017 inspection, we reviewed 200 stop and search records; 11 records did not have grounds recorded that we considered reasonable. While the records we reviewed may not be representative of all stop and search records completed by the force, our findings indicate improvement but also that some officers and supervisors either still do not understand fully what constitutes reasonable grounds, or do not know how to record them properly.

It is important to note that a lack of reasonable grounds on the stop and search record does not necessarily mean that reasonable grounds did not exist in reality at the time of the stop and search. In 41 of the 200 records we reviewed, the item searched for was found. This is an important measure: confirming or allaying an officer’s suspicions is the primary purpose of the powers. Finding the item searched for is one of the best indications that the grounds for the suspicions are likely to have been strong.

**Table 1: Results of HMICFRS stop and search records review 2013-17**

	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2017</b>
Records not containing reasonable grounds	112 of 200	12 of 99	11 of 200
Item searched for found	-	-	41 of 200

## Summary of findings



**Good**

Northumbria Police is good at treating all the people it serves with fairness and respect, with elements that are outstanding. Fairness and respect constitute the cornerstone of what the force believes in, and this is constantly communicated and understood by the entire workforce. There is good leadership around values and expected standards of behaviour, and this is reflected in workplace activity.

The force has clear processes in place to monitor the legal and proportionate use of stop and search and the wider use of force. However, the understanding of what constitutes reasonable grounds to stop and search among some officers and supervisors requires strengthening. The force has outstanding processes in place for external scrutiny of a range of policing activities, including stop and search and the use of force.

## How well does the force ensure that its workforce behaves ethically and lawfully?

In HMICFRS' 2017 legitimacy inspection, we continued to focus on the extent to which forces develop and maintain an ethical culture to reduce unacceptable types of behaviour among their workforces. We also returned to look at how well forces are handling complaints and misconduct cases,<sup>22</sup> as opposed to last year's focus on how well forces are guarding against corruption.<sup>23</sup>

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

Research tells us that the best way to prevent wrongdoing is to promote an ethical working environment or culture.<sup>24</sup> Police leaders need to promote ethical principles and behaviour and act as role models, in line with the Code of Ethics.<sup>25</sup> Officers and staff should feel confident that they can apply these principles to their decision-making. This year, we focused on the way that the leaders of forces demonstrate ethical behaviour and the way that forces approach ethical decision-making across the entire workforce. In addition, where forces had failed to comply with all aspects of the national vetting standards in 2016, we assessed whether their plans are credible and are likely to be compliant by December 2018.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> *Police legitimacy 2015 – a national overview*, HMIC, February 2016. Available from: [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/police-legitimacy-2015/](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/police-legitimacy-2015/)

<sup>23</sup> We did, however, undertake a review of forces' plans in response to our PEEL legitimacy 2016 national report recommendation. The report of our findings is available here: [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/peel-police-legitimacy-2016/](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/peel-police-legitimacy-2016/)

<sup>24</sup> *Promoting ethical behaviour and preventing wrongdoing in organisations*, College of Policing, 2015. Available at: [http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Documents/150317\\_Integrity\\_REA\\_FINAL\\_REPORT.pdf](http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Documents/150317_Integrity_REA_FINAL_REPORT.pdf)  
*The role of leadership in promoting ethical police behaviour*, College of Policing, 2015. Available at: [http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Documents/150317\\_Ethical\\_leadership\\_FINAL\\_REPORT.pdf](http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Documents/150317_Ethical_leadership_FINAL_REPORT.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> *Code of Ethics: A Code of Practice for the Principles and Standards of Professional Behaviour for the Policing Profession of England and Wales*, College of Policing, 2014. Available from: [www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Ethics/Pages/Code-of-Ethics.aspx](http://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Ethics/Pages/Code-of-Ethics.aspx); *Literature review – Police integrity and corruption*, HMIC, January 2015. Available from: [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/integrity-matters/](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/integrity-matters/)

<sup>26</sup> HMICFRS' recommendation in December 2016 was that (i) Within six months, all forces not already complying with current national vetting policy should have started to implement a sufficient plan to do so and (ii) Within two years, all members of the police workforce should have received at least the lowest level of vetting clearance for their roles. The ACPO/ACPOS National Vetting Policy was

## **Leaders as ethical role models**

The force's ethics advisory group, powers and policy group and organisational learning board all aim to ensure that they create an environment in which consideration of the implications of decisions is encouraged in a non-punitive way. The culture of the organisation is one in which people are confident to make decisions knowing that, if they make a mistake, the force will take a sensible and proportionate approach to dealing with it.

The ethical implications of decisions are covered specifically in the leadership training for silver and bronze commanders, who are responsible for commanding major events, firearms and other critical incidents and are required to record all decisions, including the rationale for making them. Leaders also give 'proud to protect' briefings, during which they talk about the importance of ethical decision making and the Code of Ethics. Leaders consider the ethical implications of decisions and understand the importance of role modelling. Staff and officers stated that senior officers in the force frequently talk about and raise awareness of the Code of Ethics; there are posters around police buildings and there has been information on the intranet. Officers spoken to during the inspection had all viewed the DVD which discussed ethical dilemmas. Also, as part of the promotion process, staff and officers are encouraged to have an in-depth knowledge of the Code of Ethics and are told that they would be questioned on it.

The monthly powers and policy group, considers practice such as stop and search, and publicises any lessons learned to the rest of the workforce through the senior management teams. There is also a system to ensure that every force policy has to undergo an equality impact assessment before it is approved.

The force previously had a Code of Ethics committee, established to address and resolve problems relating to how officers display the attributes of the Code of Ethics. The committee was made up of officers from all ranks, roles and departments to ensure that a wide range of people and opinions are heard. The group assessed good and bad practice and devised new methods of working to ensure that officers adhered to the Code of Ethics. Examples included use of body-worn camera footage to assess good and bad practice during stop and search. Major messages were then promoted by the programme of change team. This approach allowed officers to be engaged in major messages and decisions about how the force provided its service to members of the public. The work of the committee has now been incorporated into the responsibilities of the ethics advisory group.

The website review conducted by HMICFRS as part of this inspection highlighted a few areas that could be improved in order to create greater openness and trust. The review found that there were no minutes of external scrutiny panels on the website. Minutes of panels that may consider ethical matters, stop and search or complaints were also not accessible via the webpage. There are no details of pay and rewards information on the force webpage and declarations of business interests are only published up to the rank of chief superintendent. Information on gifts and hospitality offered to officers and staff is published, but this is difficult to find and out of date: the last entry was in 2015.

### **Ethical decision making**

The inspection found that the force has accessible policies and procedures available to staff on its intranet site. There is also a clear process for new policies or policy changes to incorporate equality impact assessments and the Code of Ethics as part of the policy development process. The force also uses the strategic independent advisory group (SIAG) as a form of external consultation on policies before they are approved.

The ethics advisory group meets quarterly and has a wide variety of problems and ethical dilemmas referred to it. The group is attended by a mixture of police staff and police officers of differing ranks and grades from a wide variety of functional areas. In addition, staff association representatives and the professional standards department (PSD) are represented and independent scrutiny is provided from SIAG and the force chaplain. Problems and dilemmas are referred to the group in various ways. There is an anonymous facility for staff to use by messaging a generic email address, and also the force intranet site. In addition, there is third-party reporting and the option for a person to attend in person if they so wish. The group provides advice on the problems and dilemmas submitted for consideration and publishes this advice on the Code of Ethics section of the force intranet.

All staff have received Code of Ethics training. The code is also consistently reinforced through other training, such as stop and search and personal safety training. The PSD provides updates on current dilemmas that the force has acted on, and the outcomes of decisions are published so that staff can keep themselves continually up to date.

## Vetting

During our 2016 legitimacy inspection, we considered the extent to which the force was ensuring that it was developing and maintaining an ethical culture through effective initial vetting. We found that Northumbria Police was not complying with all aspects of the national vetting standards, as it was not able to tell whether people with protected characteristics<sup>27</sup> had failed the vetting process. There was also a backlog of vetting applications in the system. HMICFRS felt that these problems, together with the requirements to re-vet staff that had joined before 2006, might test the resilience of the department. During this year's inspection, we assessed the force's plan for addressing these problems, and found that the vetting unit processes have been streamlined and revised service level agreements are now in place to manage vetting timescales more efficiently. The backlog identified by HMICFRS in 2016 has been cleared, however since then, many of the workforce who were vetted ten years ago in 2006 have lost their vetting as it has expired. The force has therefore built up a new backlog of renewals to clear but HMICFRS is reassured that there is a realistic and achievable plan to address this issue.

Renewal and retrospective vetting workloads have been assessed, together with additional resource requirements associated with meeting all the vetting demands, including the recruitment programme. Additional staff have been recruited for the main workload (1.5 full-time-equivalent posts). Four full-time-equivalent, but temporary, posts were also identified to allow for the completion of all retrospective checks within the 12-month period since we last inspected the force.

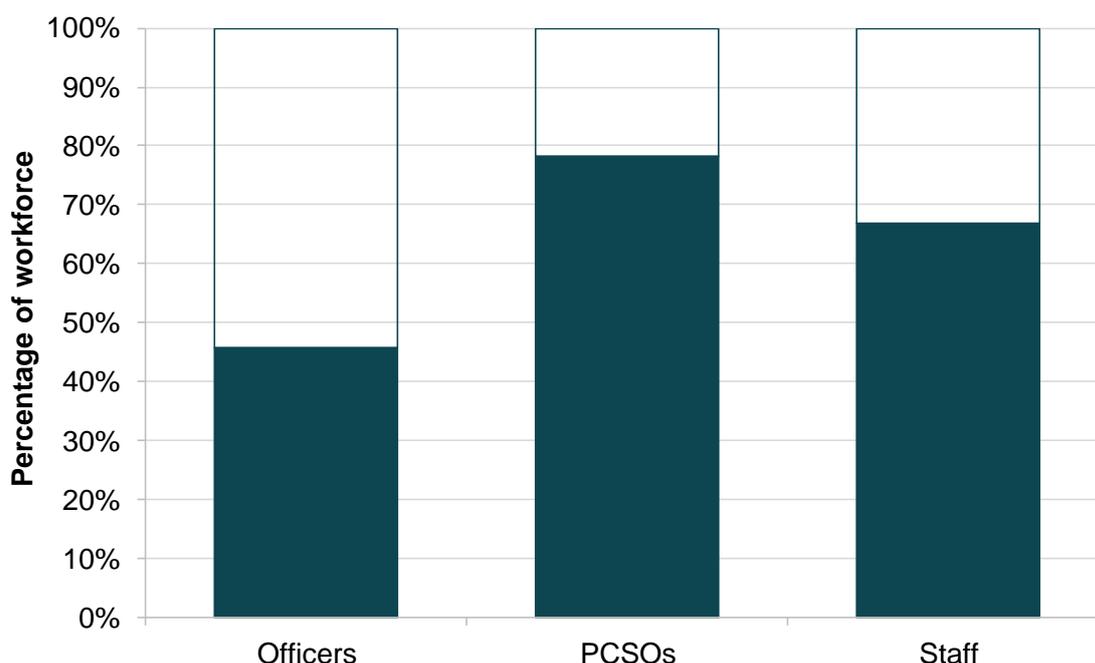
While data have always been available in the past, the introduction of a new electronic recruitment system in 2016 significantly improved the force's ability to examine and understand the makeup of all candidates going through the recruitment process, which includes vetting for new staff and officers.

It is important that re-vetting takes place regularly and before an individual is promoted or posted to a high-risk unit. During this year's inspection we asked Northumbria Police to provide us with data on the percentage of its workforce who had up-to-date security clearance. The data we received showed that on 31 January 2017, 46 percent of officers, 78 percent of PCSOs, and 67 percent of staff had up-to-date security clearance, as illustrated in figure 2.

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<sup>27</sup> The Equality Act 2010 defines the following characteristics as protected characteristics: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation. Available from: [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/4](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/4)

**Figure 2: Percentage of officers, PCSOs, and staff with up-to-date vetting checks, in Northumbria Police as at 31 January 2017**



Source: HMICFRS Legitimacy data collection

## How accessible is the complaints system to all members of the public?

An accessible complaints system is crucial to building public confidence in the police and to a force's ability to improve the extent to which its workforce acts ethically and lawfully. As such, we assessed how easy it is for the public to make a complaint – including how well forces support those people that may require additional help to gain access to the complaints process.<sup>28</sup> Also, we used a review of case files to assess the level of information provided to complainants and looked at how well forces keep complainants updated about the progress of their complaints.

### Ease of making a complaint

The force has completed a review of its complaints handling model and has developed an effective service recovery and complaints management approach to increase customer satisfaction and identify hidden demand. The force actively encourages complaints and sees them as an opportunity to improve service. Staff

<sup>28</sup> These could include people with learning difficulties, mental health issues, young people or people whose first language is not English. *IPCC Statutory Guidance to the police service on the handling of complaints*, IPCC, May 2015. Available at: [www.ipcc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Documents/statutoryguidance/2015\\_statutory\\_guidance\\_english.pdf](http://www.ipcc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Documents/statutoryguidance/2015_statutory_guidance_english.pdf) and *Access to the police complaints system*, IPCC, September 2015. Available at: [www.ipcc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Documents/research\\_stats/Access\\_to\\_the\\_police\\_complaints\\_system.pdf](http://www.ipcc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Documents/research_stats/Access_to_the_police_complaints_system.pdf)

and officers spoken to during reality testing were all aware of how to record a complaint and how to pass on information to members of the public about the complaints system. Complaints go to the PCC's office for initial assessment through a triage process. Professional standards staff working within the PCC's office are experienced in dealing with complaints and manage the system.

HMICFRS conducted a review of the complaints system, including a review of the force website. We found accessible information about making a complaint that is easy to find and available in different languages. Despite this, we were unable to find any frequently asked questions section that might assist the public in understanding the process. The website did not contain any data about complaints. However, there was a link to the IPCC website. The online reporting system allows the reporting form to be translated into a variety of languages. Hearing loop facilities are available online and in front offices should this be required.

The public can make a complaint through various methods: online, via the force website; in person at a station; and as a result of a stop and search encounter. Through the new stop and search application, individuals are emailed a copy of their record and how to make a complaint. They can also make complaints via local MPs, via the office of the PCC, and via IAG members and local community safety partnerships. LGBT liaison officers in force and community engagement teams engage with a wide range of community groups to encourage the reporting of complaints. The force realises it is important to seek complaints from groups less likely to engage with the police and is making some efforts to encourage this. However, there is still scope for this to be developed further, as it is still not engaging with sections of the community from certain geographic locations and some ethnic groups.

Front counters at stations have literature on how to make a complaint, and the workforce were aware of the process should they need to advise anyone. The force does not provide this literature at places other than at police stations. We also found that the force had no system to engage with sections of the community with less confidence in the police, to encourage or assist them in making complaints.

### **Keeping complainants updated**

The force is good at keeping complainants updated on the progress of cases, and electronic systems allow supervisors to track the progress of all cases, including all action taken. When forces record public complaints, the Police Reform Act 2002 and Police (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2012 require them to provide the complainant with a copy of the complaint record. The IPCC statutory guidance extends this by stating that complainants should receive an explanation of the possible ways the complaint may be dealt with, and that they should be advised of who will be dealing with their complaint (including contact details).

As part of this inspection, we considered 25 complaint cases from Northumbria Police. All the files reviewed had complied with the main legal requirements, such as providing the complainant with a copy of the complaint record, the terms of reference for local investigations, the findings of the investigator's investigation report, the force's determinations and the complainant's right of appeal. In most cases, the complainant had received regular updates on the progress of their case, and all this information was recorded on the database.

The force update process has a maximum 28-day default mechanism; however, the force insists that every investigator agrees a method and frequency of contact with the complainant similar to that used in the victim's code of practice. The workflow system automatically flags to show when contact has not been made within the required timescales.

Each investigation is bespoke, so the force communicates according to the needs of each individual. The force also conducts a needs analysis to consider any particular support a party to the complaint may need, such as additional support to a witness in providing evidence or welfare support for an individual subject of a complaint. This support could be provided by the occupational health department or an external agency. The triage system in the office of the PCC also contacts the complainant and confirms the level and type of contact required. A recent satisfaction survey was undertaken within the triage team and found public confidence in the complaints process to be at 83 percent.

## **How well does the force identify and investigate potential discrimination by officers and staff?**

For the public to have confidence in the police and the police complaints system, it is vital that allegations of discrimination arising from police complaints, conduct matters, and death and serious injury investigations are handled fairly and appropriately. We reviewed complaint, misconduct and grievance files to assess the extent to which forces identify and respond to discrimination appropriately and at the earliest opportunity (including referrals to the IPCC), and the extent to which these allegations are investigated in accordance with the IPCC guidelines for handling allegations of discrimination.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> See annex A for more information about our case file review. *IPCC guidelines for handling allegations of discrimination*, IPCC, September 2015. Available at: [www.ipcc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Documents/statutoryguidance/Guidelines\\_for\\_handling\\_allegations\\_of\\_discrimination.pdf](http://www.ipcc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Documents/statutoryguidance/Guidelines_for_handling_allegations_of_discrimination.pdf)

## **Identifying and responding to potential discrimination**

The force has a dignity in action policy that outlines the force's stance on fairness in the workplace and highlights what it regards as unfair or discriminatory behaviour. Through this document, staff and officers are made aware of how to report incidents and how the grievance and complaints process will work. All those spoken to during the inspection were aware of this policy, had received the training and showed a good understanding of what discrimination was. Various training measures have been provided to the workforce on discrimination. All new recruits get initial diversity and decision-making training, and training has also been developed for newly promoted line managers.

During our case file review, we considered ten complaints that the force had identified as containing an allegation of discrimination. There were no internal misconduct discrimination cases within the two-year timescale we requested. We also considered an additional 15 complaints and 10 misconduct cases which we considered might contain unidentified allegations of discrimination. We were pleased that we did not find any additional cases that the force had failed to identify. The quality of the files provided for review by HMICFRS was of a very high standard, each containing a comprehensive tracking document setting out the actions taken and the outcome achieved. In each case, the originator of the allegation was properly supported and there was good evidence of organisational learning being taken from individual cases.

The Police (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2012 requires forces to refer more serious matters to the IPCC if they are aggravated because it is alleged that discrimination was a reason for the behaviour. We identified that one of the force's complaints we reviewed met the referral criteria and that it had been correctly referred.

## **Investigating allegations of discrimination**

We spoke to members of staff within the PSD to establish their level of training and awareness of dealing with discrimination complaints. All had received training on identifying and dealing with discrimination and had also received training on unconscious bias. Other training addresses the IPCC guidance and everyone we spoke to displayed a good level of knowledge and understanding of what was required regarding managing and referring such a case.

The PSD has a very thorough approach to the identification and recording of a complaint that involves discrimination. This assures a victim-focused approach, whereby each complainant receives a bespoke assessment to address their specific needs. The inspection found no problems with the identification of discrimination, and investigations were well managed. There was regular supervisory oversight, and no problems were identified with the quality and timeliness of the handling of discrimination allegations. All of the discrimination cases reviewed appropriately

identified discrimination allegations and recorded decisions. Of the ten files reviewed, six related to race, with the remaining four relating to disability. The file review found that complaints containing allegations of discriminatory behaviour are quickly identified and thoroughly investigated, and outcomes are generally consistent, appropriate and proportionate, which means that the public can be reassured that the force takes such matters seriously.

## Summary of findings



**Good**

Northumbria Police is good at ensuring that its staff behave fairly and ethically. All staff have had training in discrimination awareness and understand the importance of it. The workforce knows how they should behave and understands the reporting processes for any problems of fairness or discrimination. Staff and officers had a high level of confidence that the organisation would act positively should a report be submitted.

The force has excellent systems for recording complaints and it conducts high-quality investigations. The internal systems allow tight governance of the entire complaints process, and as a result, all complaints that were reviewed were found to have been well managed. The inspection team found good evidence of quality investigations by the force across the range of complaint, misconduct and grievance matters. Investigating officers have a good understanding of discrimination and how to investigate it.

Performance in respect of grievance and service recovery matters was particularly impressive. The associated processes provide examples of good practice which other forces may benefit from exposure to, in order potentially to bring about improvements in their own organisations. The inspection found evidence of a well-run and well-led professional standards department, that carries out and manages high-quality investigations treat people fairly and with dignity.

Our review of the force website highlighted that there were areas that could be improved. The site was not the easiest to use either to make a complaint or to obtain information about complaints. Gifts, hospitality, declarations of business interests and details of pay and rewards had not been updated since 2015.

### **Area for improvement**

- The force should ensure that it publishes up-to-date information on gifts, hospitality, business interests and pay for all senior staff.

## To what extent does the force treat its workforce with fairness and respect?

A workforce that feels it is treated fairly and with respect by its employers is more likely to identify with the organisation, and treat the public in a similarly fair and respectful way. Conversely, perceived unfairness within police organisations can have a detrimental effect on officer and staff attitudes and types of behaviour.<sup>30</sup> As such, this concept of ‘organisational justice’, and its potential effect on ‘procedural justice’ forms an important part of HMICFRS’ assessment of police legitimacy and leadership. As no comparative data exist on how fairly officers and staff perceive forces have treated them, we continue to focus our assessment on how well forces identify individual and organisational concerns within their workforces and act on these findings.

In our 2017 inspection, we focused specifically on how well forces identify and act to improve fairness at work, including what action they are taking to make their workforces more representative of the communities they serve. We continued to look at how well forces provide for the wellbeing of their workforces, particularly through preventative and early action, and at the way individual performance is managed and developed.

## How well does the force identify and act to improve fairness at work?

Research suggests that forces that involve officers and staff in decision-making processes, listen to their concerns, act on them, and are open about how and why decisions were reached, may improve workforce perceptions of fair and respectful treatment.<sup>31</sup> HMICFRS assessed how well force leaders seek feedback from their workforces and use this, alongside other data and information – including that on grievances<sup>32</sup> – to identify, understand, prioritise and resolve their workforces’

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<sup>30</sup> *Fair cop 2: Organisational justice, behaviour and ethical policing*, College of Policing, 2015.

Available at:

[http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Documents/150317\\_Fair\\_cop%202\\_FINAL\\_REPORT.pdf](http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Documents/150317_Fair_cop%202_FINAL_REPORT.pdf) and *Organisational justice: Implications for police and emergency service leadership*, Herrington, C. and Roberts, K. <sup>AIPM</sup> Research Focus, Issue 2, 2013. Available at: [www.aipm.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Org-Justice-Final.pdf](http://www.aipm.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Org-Justice-Final.pdf)

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Grievances are concerns, problems or complaints that a member of staff raises formally with an employer, so data on numbers and types of grievances can provide forces with useful information about matters of concern to their workforces.

concerns. Part of our assessment involved reviewing a small number of grievance cases to assess if these adhere to Acas guidance and the Code of Practice.<sup>33</sup>

Unfairness, or perceived unfairness in recruitment processes, opportunities and limited career progression can lead to good officers and staff leaving the service prematurely and fewer women and people from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities wanting to join the police in the first place. As such, we re-examined how well forces address disproportional workforce representation in a variety of areas – including recruitment, retention and progression for those people with protected characteristics.<sup>34</sup> We looked at the treatment of BAME officers and staff subject to allegations of misconduct – to improve fairness at work and to make forces more representative of the communities they serve.<sup>35</sup>

### **Leaders seeking feedback and challenge from the workforce**

HMICFRS found that since our 2016 inspection, Northumbria Police has increased the range of ways in which leaders seek feedback from the workforce and encourage staff to raise difficult matters. Leaders in Northumbria Police now operate a culture of openness that encourages feedback from all staff within the organisation. As a result of these processes, the workforce is confident they will be listened to and believes that the leaders within the organisation are genuine about wanting to empower staff to make a difference.

The force uses many methods to obtain feedback and ideas from staff, one of which is the force-wide staff survey which was completed during the latter part of 2016. This received a 67.9 percent response rate from the workforce, which was one of the highest return rates of forces in England and Wales. The force uses other methods of engaging its staff, including online forums (have your say) and change in a day events, as part of the force improvement programme. These events give staff the opportunity to say how the force is doing in a variety of areas. Staff attending these days have the opportunity to influence what the force does and how it is done. Once staff submit an idea, the force improvement team will consider it and, if it is approved, the individual is then allowed to work on its development.

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<sup>33</sup> *Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures*. Acas 2015. Available from [www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/f/m/Acas-Code-of-Practice-1-on-disciplinary-and-grievance-procedures.pdf](http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/f/m/Acas-Code-of-Practice-1-on-disciplinary-and-grievance-procedures.pdf). Also *Discipline and grievances at work: The Acas guide*, Acas, August 2017. Available from: [www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/9/g/Discipline-and-grievances-Acas-guide.pdf](http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/9/g/Discipline-and-grievances-Acas-guide.pdf)

<sup>34</sup> The Equality Act 2010 defines the following characteristics as protected characteristics: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation. Available from: [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/4](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/4)

<sup>35</sup> We last examined these issues as part of our 2015 PEEL legitimacy inspection. See *Police legitimacy 2015 – a national overview*, HMIC, February 2016. Available from: [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/police-legitimacy-2015/](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/police-legitimacy-2015/)

The chief officer team also attend local stations for focus groups with frontline staff. Local senior managers are excluded from these sessions, to allow for complete openness from frontline staff. The relevant chief officer then produces a written report for consideration by the local area commander and they are required to report back to the chief officer regarding action taken. The local senior management teams also have a rota to attend frontline shift briefings to seek views of staff. The chief constable also carries out briefings to the entire workforce. All these face-to-face interactions provide many opportunities for staff to engage with and offer feedback to leaders within the organisation and these are complemented by the more confidential and formal processes that are also in place.

### **Identifying and resolving workforce concerns**

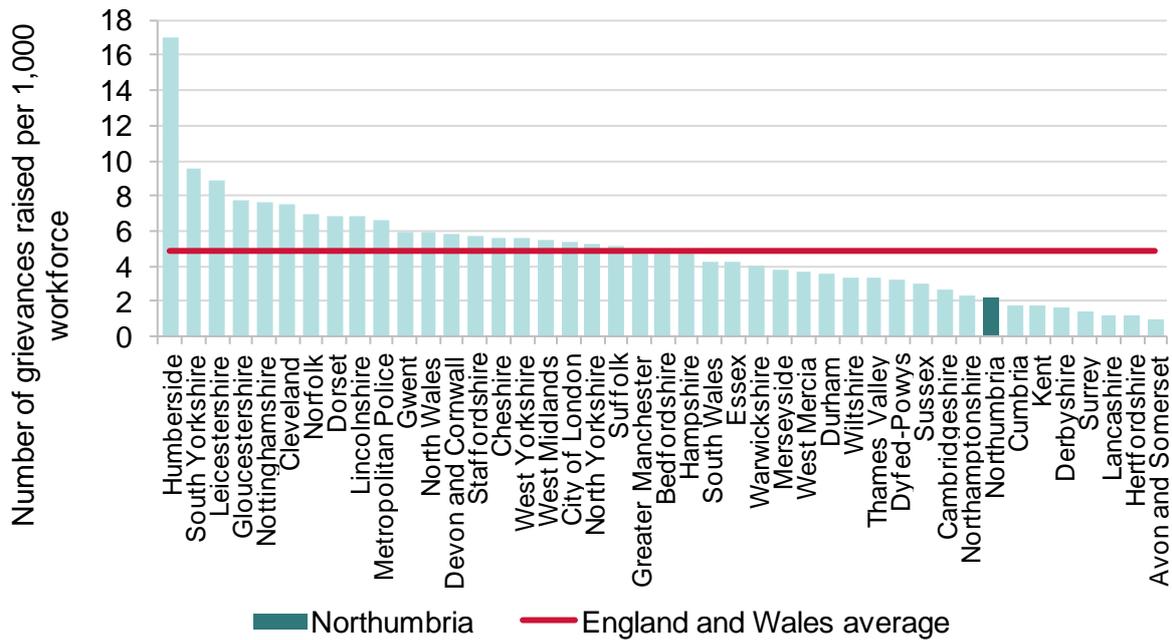
The force carries out analysis of a range of data and feedback from the workforce to identify what influences workforce perceptions, from sources including staff surveys, grievances, exit interviews, complaints and disciplinary action. This information is collated and monitored to identify trends and allow the force to take positive action to rectify any problems.

Staff and officers spoken to stated that they now feel that the chief officers want to listen to them and hear their ideas. The results of the survey were provided to the whole workforce via the intranet, and functional areas and area commands have been addressing the points that affect them. An example of where the workforce believe that they are listened to and involved in decision making is in the design of the new promotion process. Staff associations were involved directly from the start and asked to examine the new process from a fairness perspective and offer ideas. These ideas were adopted in the main by the force and the feedback has been very positive.

Staff and officers we spoke to believe that the misconduct process is fair and open; all the necessary information is provided and nothing is hidden. Data on the numbers and types of concerns, problems or complaints (collectively known as grievances) that have been raised by officers or staff can provide forces with useful information about matters of concern to their workforces.

All forces have grievance procedures but the number of grievances in each force differs widely across England and Wales. We requested data for the ten months from 1 April 2016 to 31 January 2017 on the number of grievances raised by the workforce. Figure 3 below shows that Northumbria Police had 2.3 grievances raised per 1,000 workforce. This is lower than the England and Wales average of 4.9 grievances raised per 1,000 workforce.

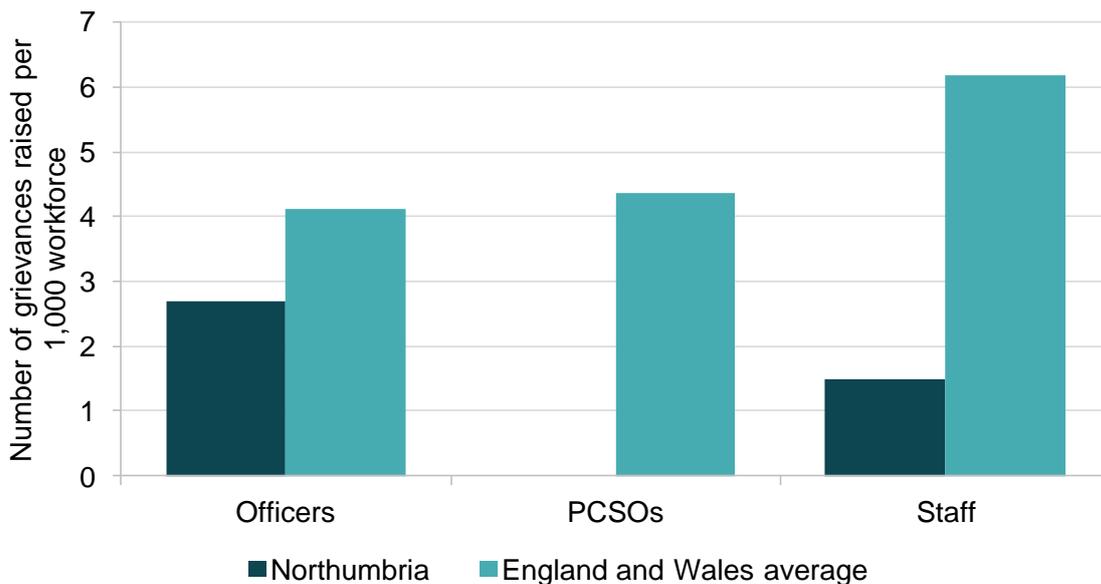
**Figure 3: Grievances raised per 1,000 workforce, in Northumbria Police in the ten months from 1 April 2016 to 31 January 2017**



Source: HMICFRS Legitimacy data collection

Figure 4 shows that the number of grievances raised by officers in Northumbria Police was 2.7 grievances per 1,000 officers, and the England and Wales average of 4.1 grievances per 1,000 officers. In the same period PCSOs raised no grievances, and the England and Wales average was 4.4 grievances per 1,000 PCSOs. Police staff raised 1.5 grievances per 1,000 staff in the same period; and the England and Wales average was 6.2 grievances per 1,000 staff.

**Figure 4: Grievances raised by officers, PCSOs and staff (per 1,000 officers, PCSOs and staff), in Northumbria Police in the ten months from 1 April 2016 to 31 January 2017**



Source: HMICFRS Legitimacy data collection

The force has an effective grievance procedure. Officers and staff we spoke to stated that their perception was that this was a fair and open process, and this was supported by the staff associations we spoke to during the inspection. During the file review of grievances, HMICFRS found the quality of the files provided was of a very high standard, each containing a comprehensive tracking document setting out the actions taken and the outcome achieved. In all of the files reviewed, the person instigating the grievance received good organisational support, and there was clear evidence of organisational learning being taken from individual cases. We were of the view that the way the force deals with grievances is among the best of those visited and not only provides an effective way for staff to register dissatisfaction but also establishes a clear audit trail for the force should that be needed for an employment tribunal or other judicial process.

### **Creating a more representative workforce**

The force is very keen to address any problems over proportionate representation in recruitment and retention and the management of misconduct allegations. The force recently conducted detailed analysis of its recruitment processes to ensure that these are not disproportionately affecting under-represented groups. This work has identified points in the process at which under-represented groups, including female and BAME candidates were failing. The force has now developed an engagement process to reach communities with which they have historically not had effective engagement. This includes focus groups with under-represented groups. This allows officers to communicate with BAME members of the community and then to be able to offer support to people from a BAME background who are thinking of applying for the service. The force has an action plan to improve representation from various community groups, which has been endorsed by the College of Policing. Northumbria Police has also been asked to take the engagement lead for the North East region.

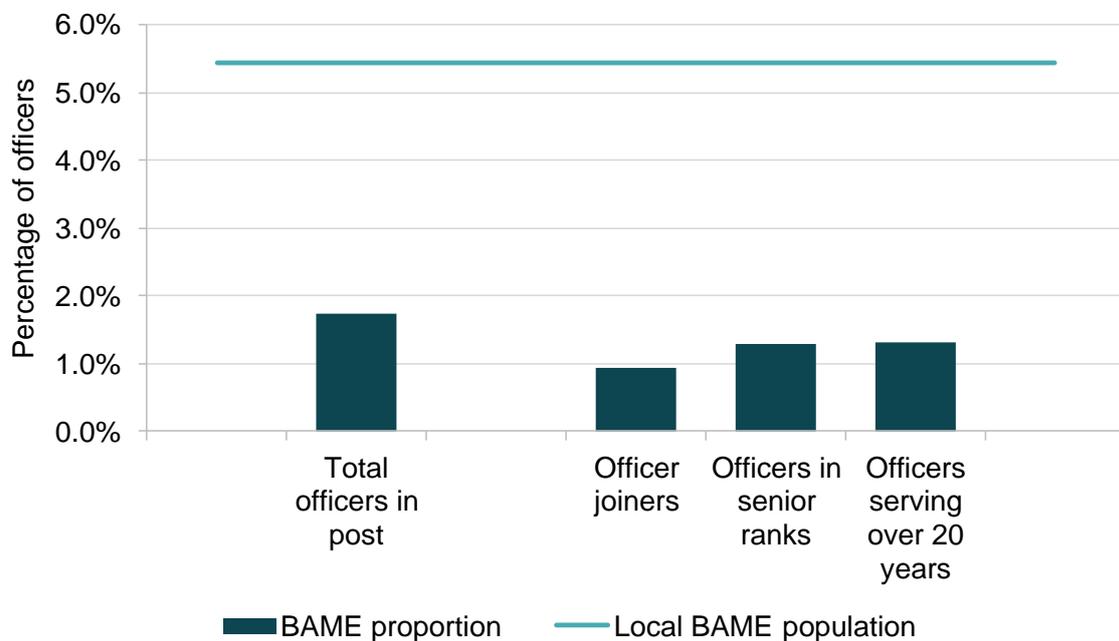
The force has now invested in a new e-recruitment system and online screening tool. In addition, it has developed a careers micro-site and focused on positive action to attract talent from diverse communities. It has introduced recruitment ambassadors (86 posts) to assist with recruitment efforts, including offering mentoring, coaching and shadowing opportunities to under-represented groups. The force recognises that retention of a diverse workforce, and progression opportunities within that, are very important. It has put in place many schemes to assist staff to progress, such as a women's network, coaching and mentoring, and self-development opportunities. The force has also redesigned the promotion system, after consultation with staff and staff associations. The staff association representatives and members of the workforce spoken to all indicated that they had confidence in the process, although many felt it should be an anonymised process to make it even fairer.

No evidence was found to suggest that staff from under-represented groups are disproportionately represented in discipline proceedings.

To assess how well the force reflects the local population, we considered data on the number of women and people from BAME communities recruited to the force, the number at senior officer level and the number who have served for over 20 years. We used these data to compare the make-up of the force with the make-up of the community it serves

In the geographical areas served by Northumbria Police, the 2011 census indicates that BAME people made up 5.4 percent of the local population. In 2016/17, in Northumbria Police 1.7 percent of officers were BAME (see figure 5). In relation to officers, 0.9 percent of those joining the force, 1.3 percent of those in senior ranks and 1.3 percent of those who had served over 20 years were BAME.

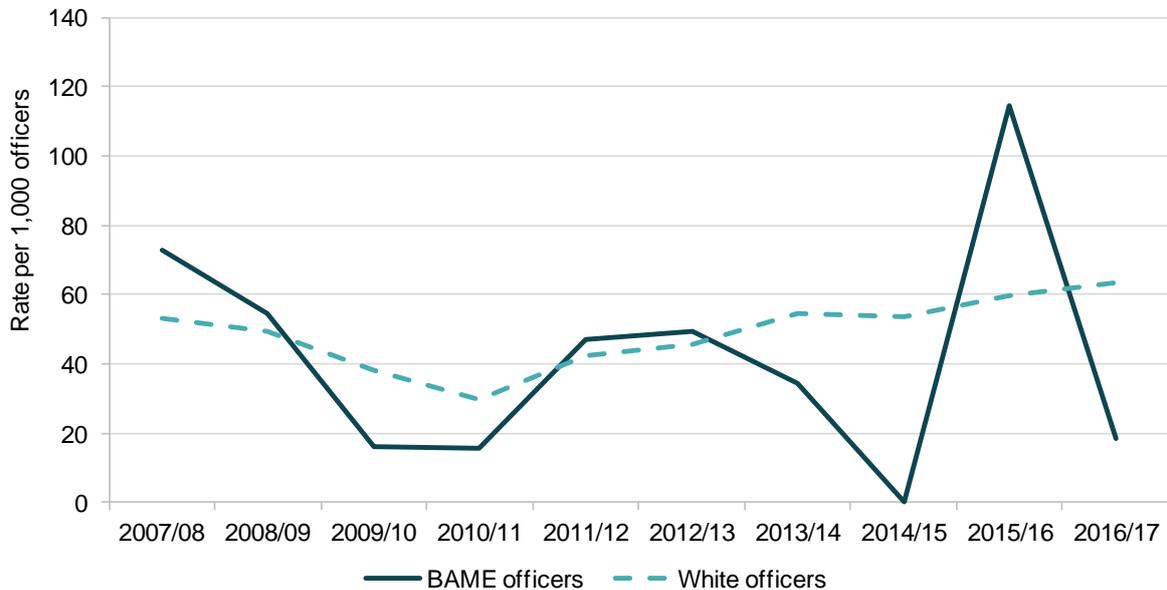
**Figure 5: Percentage of officer joiners, officers in post, officers in senior roles and officers serving over 20 years who are black, Asian or minority ethnic (BAME), in Northumbria Police in 2016/17, compared with the percentage of BAME people in the local population**



**Source: Home Office Annual Data Requirement**

**Note: High percentages may be due to low overall numbers. The figure above represents officers where an ethnicity was stated.**

**Figure 6: Comparison of officer leaving rates between white and black, Asian or minority ethnic (BAME) officers (per 1,000 white or BAME officers), in Northumbria Police from 2007/08 to 2016/17**

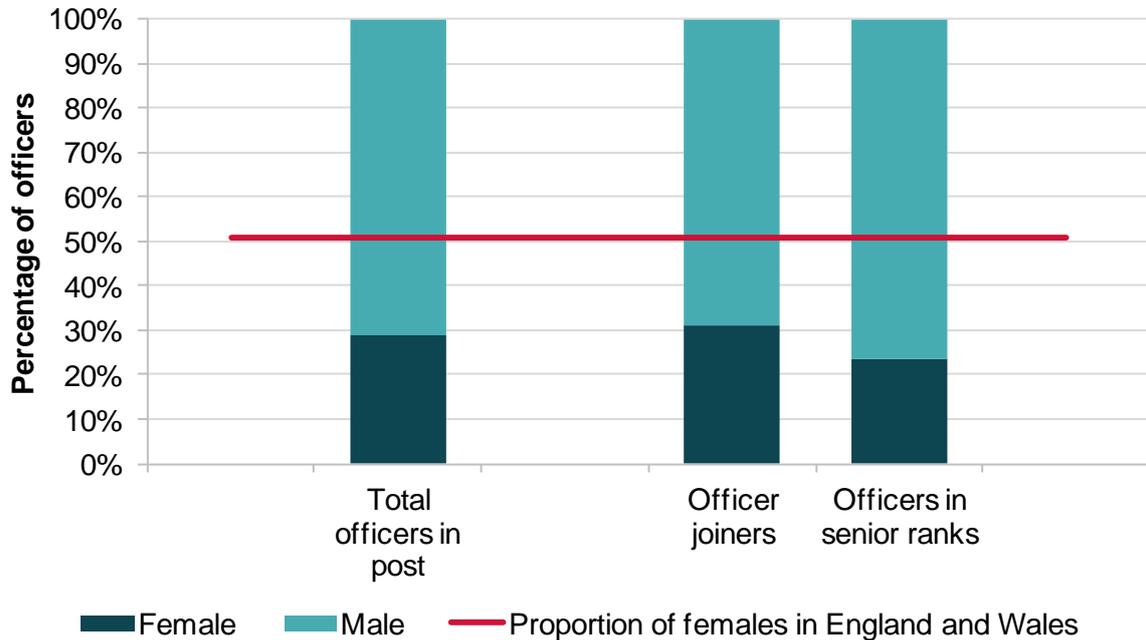


**Source: Home Office Annual Data Requirement**

In 2016/17 in Northumbria Police for the equivalent of every 1,000 BAME officers, 18 left the force (see figure 6), while for every 1,000 white officers 63 left. Fluctuations in the BAME officer leaver rate may be due to low numbers of BAME officers in the force.

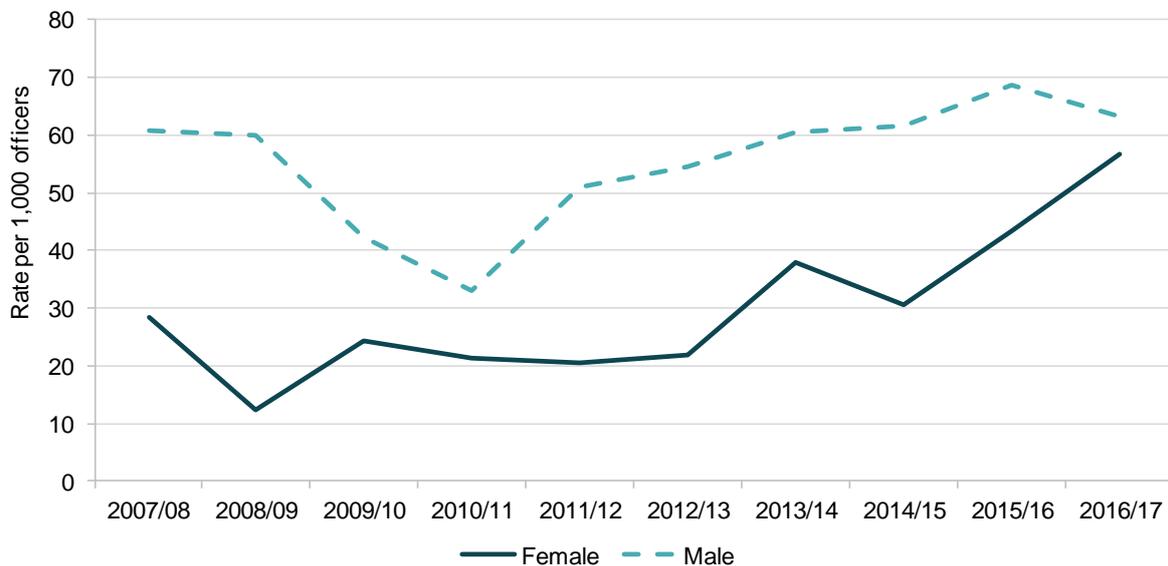
The proportion of female officers is lower than the proportion of females in the general population (51 percent) at 29 percent. In the 12 months to 31 March 2017 in Northumbria Police, 31 percent of those joining the force and 24 percent of those in senior ranks were female (see figure 7).

**Figure 7: Percentage of officer joiners, officers in post and officers in senior ranks, by gender, in Northumbria Police in 2016/17 compared with the percentage of women in the England and Wales population**



Source: Home Office Annual Data Requirement

**Figure 8: Comparison of officer leaving rates between male and female officers (per 1,000 male or female officers), in Northumbria Police from 2007/08 to 2016/17**



Source: Home Office Annual Data Requirement

In 2016/17 in Northumbria Police 57 female officers per 1,000 officers left the force, compared with 63 male officers per 1,000 officers.

## How well does the force support the wellbeing of its workforce?

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 being more invested in what they do.<sup>36</sup> HMICFRS assessed how well force leaders understand and promote these benefits by developing a culture that fosters workforce wellbeing, and how well forces use data and information – including feedback from the workforce – to identify and understand their wellbeing. Also, we assessed how well forces use this information to take preventative and early action to support workforce wellbeing at both an individual and organisational level.

### Understanding and promoting wellbeing

The force prioritises wellbeing and this focus is understood and trusted by the workforce. Leaders have a comprehensive understanding of their wellbeing responsibilities and are well supported in these by the force. The force has appointed a dedicated wellbeing officer. The superintendents' association has a wellbeing lead and there has been some resilience training for senior officers. This is being evaluated and, if considered effective, will be rolled out across the force.

The force has a clear focus on wellbeing that is perceived as authentic by the workforce. The force has a positive commitment to supporting mental health and has signed up to the 'workplace wellbeing charter'. The force has also introduced the Mind Blue Light programme and has recruited Blue Light champions, who are officers or staff committed to raising awareness of the need for mental wellbeing and to question the stigma of mental health. The force has made a pledge to end the stigma of mental health, and this was supported by the chief constable and the PCC. In support of the pledge, mental health in the workplace training was provided to 600 frontline supervisors and police staff team leaders last year.

The superintendent lead for the safeguarding teams has introduced sessions where the teams meet out of the work environment to chat informally. The intention is that this will allow staff and officers to identify and talk about problems which trouble them, from their work in a high-stress environment. The safeguarding unit also has a detective chief inspector lead for wellbeing. The workforce have access to counselling and the employee support programme (telephone counselling service), and all officers receive an annual mandatory assessment. If they do not attend, the wellbeing champion is notified.

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<sup>36</sup> *Well-being and engagement in policing: the key to unlocking discretionary effort*, Ian Hesketh, Cary Cooper and Jonathan Ivy, 2016, Policing. pp. 1–12. Available from: <https://oscarkilo.org.uk/wellbeing-and-engagement-in-policing-the-key-to-unlocking-discretionary-effort/> Also see <https://fitforwork.org/employer/benefits-of-a-healthy-workforce/>

The communications centre has four TRiM<sup>37</sup> (trauma risk incident management) practitioners and four Blue Light champions for mental health. Staff are well aware of the external support that can be provided. The unit also has internal domestic violence champions for staff to speak to. Workspace assessments are routinely completed and reviewed, addressing the working environment to ensure that this is not contributing to any unnecessary adverse working conditions.

During our inspection, all staff and officers spoke highly of the force investment and the advances being made in wellbeing within the force. They reported that physical health and mental health are now seen as being of equal importance and significance across the workforce. Wellbeing is now a cornerstone of one-to-one discussions between individuals and their supervisors.

### **Identifying and understanding workforce wellbeing needs**

The force uses data to help it identify risks to the health of the workforce. This includes sickness and absence data, how many extra hours people are working and injuries while at work. The force also gathers information from exit interviews, grievance data and feedback from staff surveys. The data are collated and reviewed to identify whether there are any risks to individuals; if required, an appropriate intervention is put in place to support that person. The data have provided the force with a comprehensive understanding of the risks and threats to the wellbeing of the workforce and their underlying causes. The data are also used to inform the wellbeing plan, which outlines how the force intends continually to improve its wellbeing provision.

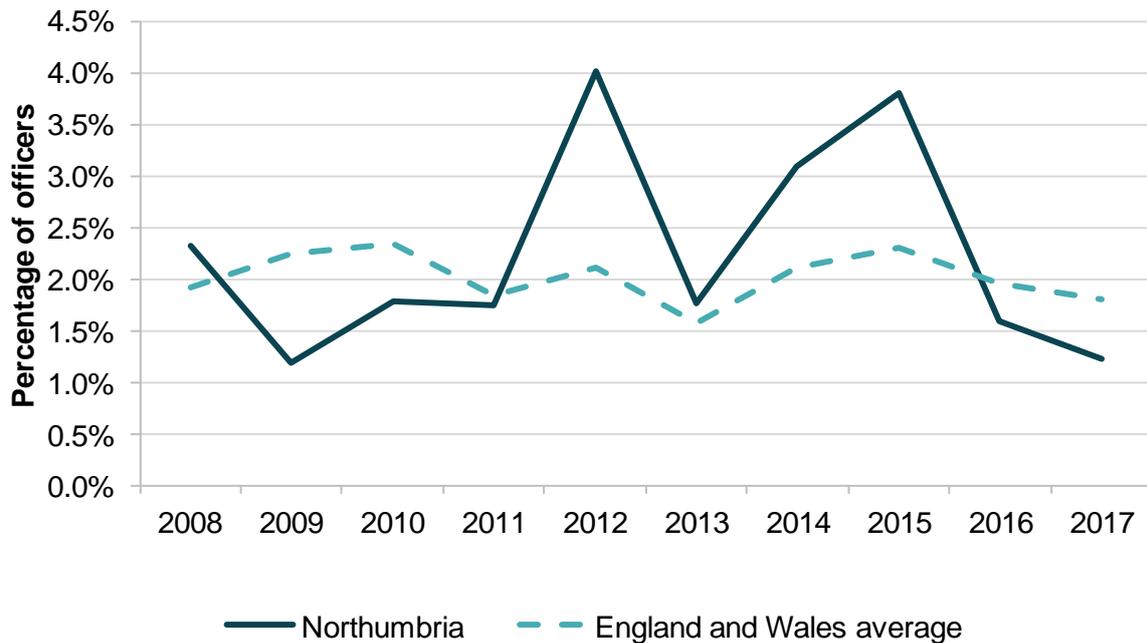
Analysis of sickness data can give an indication of whether there are problems relating to wellbeing within a police force. It provides a useful point of comparison between forces who can also use sickness data to help them understand the nature and causes of sickness across the organisation to help them prevent sickness and manage it when it occurs.

We compared force data on the percentage of police officers, PCSOs and police staff on long-term and short/medium-term sickness absence. On 31 March 2017 in Northumbria Police, 1.2 percent of officers were on short or medium-term sick leave. The England and Wales average was 1.8 percent. The latest year for which data is available was 2017 which saw a decrease of 0.4 percentage points from the previous year, which is in line with changes in the last ten-year period (see figure 9).

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<sup>37</sup> TRiM is a trauma risk management process during which a structured risk assessment is conducted in relation to officers or staff who may have been exposed to a traumatic incident. Individuals who may be at risk of developing psychological illness as a result of that incident are provided additional support and, where necessary, directed to the occupational health unit.

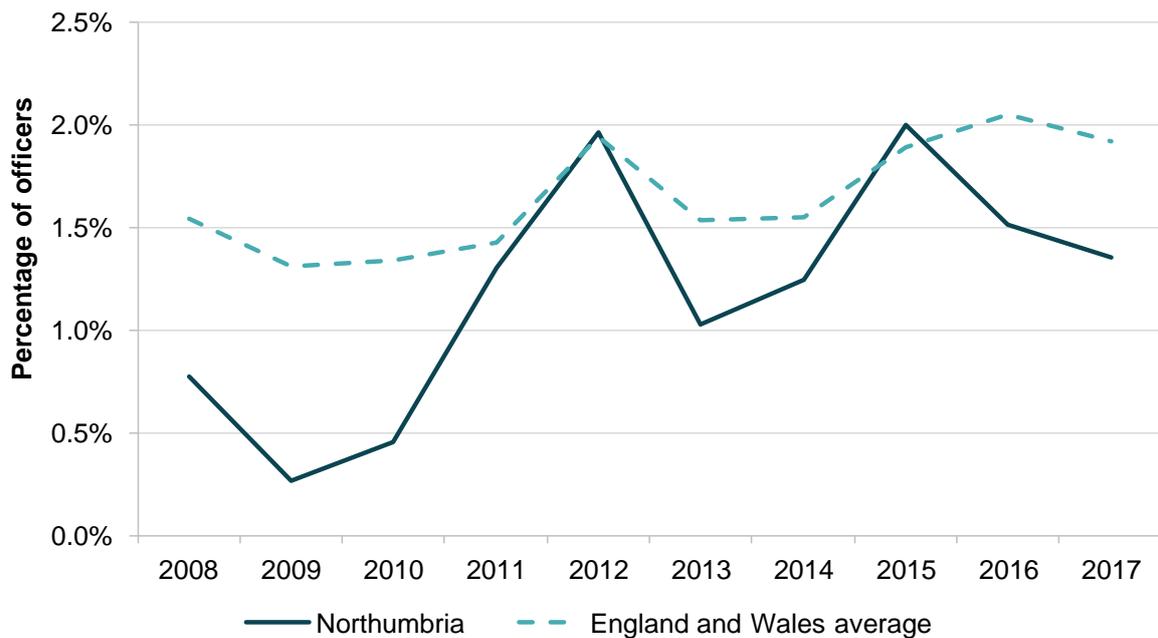
**Figure 9: Percentage of officers on short or medium-term sick leave, in Northumbria Police compared with the England and Wales average, on the 31 March from 2008 to 2017**



Source: Home Office Annual Data Requirement

On 31 March 2017 the proportion of officers in Northumbria Police on long-term sick leave was 1.4 percent and the England and Wales average was 1.9 percent. The latest year for which data were available is 2017 which saw a decrease of 0.2 percentage points from the previous year, which is in line with changes in the last ten-year period.

**Figure 10: Percentage of officers on long-term sick leave, in Northumbria Police compared to the England and Wales average, as at 31 March from 2008 to 2017**



Source: Home Office Annual Data Requirement

## **Taking preventative and early action to improve workforce wellbeing**

The force has a wellbeing plan and progress against this plan is governed at a strategic level. The force recognises that prevention and early intervention is vital and that investment is needed at the point of entry to the organisation, through selecting applicants with appropriate levels of physical and psychological capability and resilience. The plan outlines the risks facing the organisation, including an ever-changing workplace and an ageing workforce.

To address mental health at the earliest stage, the force has recruited volunteer blue light champions, who receive training on how to recognise stress levels in colleagues. External training is also provided from the mental health charity Mind, on how to recognise signs. Staff and officers stated that they have regular one-to-one discussions with team leaders who ask about wellbeing. They stated that everyone is really getting behind this and there is always someone available to talk to.

The force is reshaping its occupational health services. It has a revised operating model to reflect changing workforce priorities, including further investment in psychological wellbeing. There are also workplace risk assessments undertaken on starting a new role as well as periodic assessments for high-risk roles and following trauma exposure. The objective is to engender a culture of personal responsibility, while ensuring a supportive framework that takes into account wellbeing problems at the various stages of someone's career.

Those working in the PSD link with health services and provide early contact with occupational health about counselling and support available to members of the workforce who are subject of a complaint or investigation. Welfare liaison officers provide support and conduct home visits if a person has been suspended from duty. The force has excellent relationships with all the staff associations and is considering the services provided to the workforce throughout careers.

The force has undertaken sickness absence profiling, which has identified the work needed on the resilience of the workforce and making sure that it recruits the right people to the right role. This has meant a change in practices. The force uses the SIFT tool, which is a psychometric online test tailored to policing which tests values and behaviours and examines why people want to work for the police.

The force has invested in training for supervisors on attendance support, performance management, coaching and mentoring to improve their skills. Recent immersive training sessions have been conducted, focusing on supporting their teams.

The force has recently undertaking collaborative work with the University of Surrey to research support currently available to police officers, staff, PCSOs and special constables on physical and psychological injuries at work. The findings will be used to identify gaps in provision, and inform new ways of providing support for the

workforce. This shows that the force considers the wider picture on wellbeing and wants to be ahead of the game when it comes to addressing the causes of workplace stress and health problems.

## **How fairly and effectively does the force manage and develop both the performance of its individual officers and staff and its selection processes?**

College of Policing research on organisational justice suggests that the process for promoting people and failure to deal with poor performance may have an adverse affect on workforce perceptions of fairness, and this in turn may lead to negative attitudes and types of behaviour in the workplace.<sup>38</sup> In addition, effective performance management and development mitigate risks to the force and ensure continuous improvement. HMICFRS assessed how fairly and effectively forces manage the performance of individual officers and staff, including the value that forces place on continuing professional development (CPD), in line with guidance from the College of Policing.<sup>39</sup> Also, we looked at how fairly forces identify and select their leaders, and the extent to which these decisions result in leaders who represent a range of styles, approaches and backgrounds.

### **Managing and developing individual performance**

Last year, we reported that the force needed to improve the way it managed individual performance, and this was highlighted as a specific area for improvement. Since the last inspection, the force personal development system (PDS) has been redeveloped and relaunched as the workforce had lost confidence in the previous one and thus were not participating. The system has changed to make it more specific to personal development objectives rather than those of the organisation

The PDS is primarily being used by those individuals wanting to develop, having indicated to their line managers that they wish to progress via promotion processes or other avenues of development. The PDS is also used to identify high potential officers. Many do not regard the process as relevant to them as they are happy within their current role. The governance of the process is not effective, and the system is therefore not being used to manage unsatisfactory performance within the

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<sup>38</sup> *Fair cop 2: Organisational justice, behaviour and ethical policing*, College of Policing, 2015.

Available at:

[http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Documents/150317\\_Fair\\_cop%202\\_FINAL\\_REPORT.pdf](http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Documents/150317_Fair_cop%202_FINAL_REPORT.pdf).

<sup>39</sup> College of Policing guidance on the police performance development review (PDR) process is available from [www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Support/Reviewing-performance/Pages/PDR.aspx](http://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Support/Reviewing-performance/Pages/PDR.aspx)

See also the College of Policing's competency and values framework. Available from:

[www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Development/competency-and-values-framework/Pages/Competency-and-Values-framework.aspx](http://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Development/competency-and-values-framework/Pages/Competency-and-Values-framework.aspx)

workforce. The force needs to do much more work to convince the workforce of its relevance, to motivate them to complete the documentation and to ensure that supervisors understand their responsibilities for using the system.

Despite the relaunch, take up for the system is still very poor and the current completion rate is about 25 percent, compared to the England and Wales force average of 56 percent. This is further indication that the force is not using its PDS as well as it could to develop individuals and manage under-performance.

### **Identifying potential senior leaders**

The force has many processes to select high potential officers and staff. It participates in several talent schemes, such as the College of Policing's direct entry (although it has not actually recruited anyone on this scheme yet) and is part of the Police Now<sup>40</sup> initiative that offers opportunities to graduates who have the potential to progress to chief officer ranks. The force also runs internal fast-track schemes for officers within the organisation.

The force runs the LEAD scheme, which is a professional accredited talent programme. The programme exposes participants to master classes, leadership modules, project work, 360-degree feedback, mentoring and other tools. Participants undertake a level 6 accredited qualification in leadership and management and attend interactive master classes that encourage reflective practice on subjects such as decision making under stress, wellbeing, organisational procedural justice, evidence-based policing and systems thinking. The LEAD scheme is advertised annually and it is open to the entire workforce to apply.

Officers spoken to during the inspection believed that access to schemes was fair and they were positive about the development opportunities within the organisation.

### **Selecting leaders**

The force has undertaken a full review of its promotion process and has redesigned it as a result. The workforce were consulted and many suggestions that were put forward, that people believed would make the process more open and fair, were adopted. The process is now heavily linked to the PDS process, so that workplace assessment from a line manager is part of selection for promotion. There is now an emphasis on openness within the promotion process; every stage of the process is observed by the Police Federation, and candidates can have a friend attend the interview with them for support. Feedback is available for candidates to allow them to consider their ongoing development.

When developing the new system, the force took the opportunity to review all its role profiles and ensure that they reflected the leadership competencies that the force

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<sup>40</sup> Police Now is a two-year programme that offers graduates the opportunity to become a police officer, often in deprived communities and communities with problems.

requires. These role profiles are now used in selection processes to ensure that candidates with the requisite skills are selected.

During the inspection, we spoke to staff associations and individuals who had been through an assessment process, and the feedback was positive as people in the main believed it to be fair and open. Staff associations representing support staff and the support staff themselves also indicated that they believed promotion and selection processes were fair.

## Summary of findings



**Good**

Northumbria Police is good at treating its workforce with fairness and respect. The force is very good at encouraging feedback, and supporting its workforce to raise difficult matters through a variety of means. The force has a range of ways for the workforce to feedback and submit ideas and to alert leaders to problems. Leaders within the force listen and respond to these problems and, where possible and appropriate, make changes and implement the ideas put forward. Staff and officers were very positive about the leadership of the force and its commitment to seeking feedback and taking it seriously enough to make changes.

The force is outstanding in the wellbeing provision for its officers and staff. There is a clear commitment from the chief constable that is mirrored by leaders throughout the force. Wellbeing awareness is very high among the workforce, and this has led to an increase in prevention activity and early intervention from supervisors and trained staff who have the skills to be able to spot potential health problems and provide support at an early stage. Staff and officers were extremely positive about the force's approach to wellbeing and believe that the force is totally committed to improving the health of its workforce.

The force has developed its personal development system, but the take-up is poor and not everyone has completed the process. The force needs to do more to make the process feel relevant to the whole workforce and to manage individual performance through this system.

### **Area for improvement**

- The force should ensure it has effective systems, processes and guidance in place, in which all staff and officers are engaged, to manage individual performance and development.

## Next steps

HMICFRS will assess progress on any recommendations and areas for improvement identified within its reports in a number of ways. We either re-visit those forces where we have identified a serious cause of concern, go back to assess them as part of our annual PEEL inspection programme or receive updates on their progress through regular conversations with forces.

HMICFRS highlights recurring themes emerging from our PEEL inspections of police forces within our national reports on police effectiveness, efficiency, legitimacy and leadership. These reports identify problems that are reflected across England and Wales and may contain additional recommendations directed at national policing organisations, including the Home Office, where we believe improvements need to be made at a national level.

## **Annex A – About the data**

### **Data used in this report**

The source of the data is presented with each figure in the report, and is set out in more detail in this annex. The source of Force in numbers data is also set out below.

### **Methodology**

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

#### **Comparisons with England and Wales averages**

For some datasets, the report states whether the force's value is 'lower', 'higher' or 'broadly in line with' the England and Wales average. This is calculated by using the difference from the mean average, as a proportion, for all forces. After standardising this distribution, forces that are more than 0.675 standard deviations 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 approximately a quarter of forces are lower, a quarter are higher, and the remaining half are in line with the England and Wales 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.

The England and Wales averages will differ slightly from the Value for Money Profiles because we have included City of London Police and the Metropolitan Police Service within the average in this publication.

#### **Statistical significance**

When commenting on statistical differences, a significance level of 5 percent is used.

For some forces, numbers described in the text may be identical to the England and Wales average due to decimal place rounding, but the bars in the chart will appear different as they use the full unrounded value.

#### **Population**

For all uses of population as a denominator, unless otherwise noted, we use the Office for National Statistics (ONS) mid-2015 population estimates.

## **Note on workforce figures**

All workforce figures are from the Home Office Annual Data Return (ADR) published in the Home Office's published police workforce England and Wales statistics (available from [www.gov.uk/government/collections/police-workforce-england-and-wales](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/police-workforce-england-and-wales)), or the Home Office police workforce open data tables (available from [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-workforce-open-data-tables](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-workforce-open-data-tables)).

This year we have tried to align our workforce categories with those in the Home Office workforce Statistics publication.

This means data presented on the gender and ethnic diversity of the workforce we have not included Section 38-designated officers within the 'Police Staff' category so that these figure will read across to the workforce publication more easily. However we have included Section 38-designated officers within descriptions of the total workforce to be consistent with HMICFRS Efficiency reports.

Please note that all workforce figures are in full-time equivalent (FTE) unless otherwise stated and exclude traffic wardens and special constables.

## **Force in numbers**

### **Workforce (FTE) for 2016/17**

Data may have been updated since the publication. Workforce includes Section 38-designated investigation, detention or escort officers, but does not include Section 39-designated detention or escort staff<sup>41</sup>. The data are the actual full-time equivalent (FTE) and data for 2016/17 are as at 31 March 2017.

For FTE, these data include officers on career breaks and other types of long-term absence, and excludes those seconded to other forces.

### **Ethnic diversity and gender diversity**

Data may have been updated since the publication. As noted above to align categories with Home Office publication the Police Staff category does not include Section 38-designated officers. Staff ethnicity data are derived from headcount rather than FTE.

### **Grievances**

Data are derived from the HMICFRS data collection conducted prior to inspection. The data refer to those grievances that were raised and subject to a formal process (not including issues informally resolved with a line manager).

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<sup>41</sup> See sections 38 and 39 of the Police Reform Act 2002. Available at: [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/30/section/38](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/30/section/38)

## Stop and search

Data are derived from the Home Office Police Powers and Procedures England and Wales year ending 31 March 2016 publication (available at [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-powers-and-procedures-england-and-wales-year-ending-31-march-2016](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-powers-and-procedures-england-and-wales-year-ending-31-march-2016)). Stop and search totals used exclude vehicle only searches and those searches where the ethnicity of the subject was 'not stated'. The population data used is usual residents by ethnicity from the 2011 census.

## Figures throughout the report

### **Figure 1: Likelihood of black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) people being stopped and searched (under section 1, PACE) compared with white people, in the local population of Northumbria Police in the 12 months to 31 March 2016**

Data are derived from the Home Office Police Powers and Procedures England and Wales year ending 31 March 2016 (available at [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-powers-and-procedures-england-and-wales-year-ending-31-march-2016](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-powers-and-procedures-england-and-wales-year-ending-31-march-2016)). Stop search totals used exclude vehicle only searches and those searches where the ethnicity of the subject was 'not stated'. Data may have been updated since publication. The likelihood of a stop and search is based on the number of stop searches per 1,000 population for each ethnic group. The population data used is usual residents by ethnicity from the 2011 census. These are the most robust and up-to-date population breakdowns by ethnicity.

### **Figure 2: Percentage of officers, PCSOs, and staff with up-to-date vetting checks, in Northumbria Police as at 31 January 2017**

Data are derived from the HMICFRS data collection conducted prior to inspection. HMICFRS asked forces to provide the number and percentage of officers, staff and PCSOs who did not hold up-to-date security clearances in accordance with the ACPO Vetting Policy 2012.

### **Figure 3: Grievances raised per 1,000 workforce, in Northumbria Police in the ten months from 1 April 2016 to 31 January 2017**

### **Figure 4: Grievances raised by officers, PCSOs and staff (per 1,000 officers, PCSOs and staff), in Northumbria Police in the ten months from 1 April 2016 to 31 January 2017**

Data are derived from the HMICFRS data collection conducted prior to inspection. The data refer to those grievances that were raised and subject to a formal process (not including issues informally resolved with a line manager). Differences between forces in the number of raised grievances may be due to different handling and recording policies.

**Figure 5: Percentage of officer joiners, officers in post, officers in senior roles and officers serving over 20 years who are black, Asian or minority ethnic (BAME), in Northumbria Police in 2016/17, compared with the percentage of BAME people in the local population**

These data are derived from ADR 511, 512 and 521. Data may have been updated since the publication. Officer ethnicity totals are based on numbers of people (referred to in the Home Office data as headcount) rather than FTE.

**Figure 6: Comparison of officer leaving rates between white and black, Asian or minority ethnic (BAME) officers (per 1,000 white or BAME officers), in Northumbria Police from 2007/08 to 2016/17**

These data are derived from ADR 511 and 531. Data may have been updated since the publication. Officer ethnicity totals are headcount rather than FTE.

**Figure 7: Percentage of officer joiners, officers in post and officers in senior ranks, by gender, in Northumbria Police in 2016/17 compared with the percentage of women in the England and Wales population**

These data are derived from ADR 502 and 521. Data may have been updated since the publication.

**Figure 8: Comparison of officer leaving rates between male and female officers (per 1,000 male or female officers), in Northumbria Police from 2007/08 to 2016/17**

These data are derived from ADR 502 and 531. Data may have been updated since the publication.

**Figure 9: Percentage of officers on short or medium-term sick leave, in Northumbria Police compared with the England and Wales average, on 31 March from 2008 to 2017**

Data used in the above data were obtained from Home Office annual data returns 501 and 552 and published in the Home Office police workforce open data tables (available from [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-workforce-open-data-tables](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-workforce-open-data-tables)).

**Figure 10: Percentage of officers on long-term sick leave, in Northumbria Police compared with the England and Wales average, as at 31 March from 2008 to 2017**

Data used in the above data were obtained from Home Office annual data returns 501 and 552. (available from [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-workforce-open-data-tables](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-workforce-open-data-tables)). Long-term sick leave is defined as an absence due to sickness that has lasted for more than 28 days as at 31 March 2017. Data may have been updated since the publication.

## **Stop and search record review methodology**

HMICFRS was commissioned by the Home Office to conduct a further assessment of reasonable grounds, building on the assessments we carried out in 2013 and 2015 so that we could demonstrate any changes over time. We used a similar methodology to do this: forces provided details of stop and search records by working back in time from 7 January 2017 until a total of 200 was reached.<sup>42</sup> This amounted to a total of 8,574 records – some records provided were not actually records of stop and search encounters, and these were excluded. As part of our assessment, we gave forces the opportunity to review our findings and make representations.

As in 2013 and 2015, HMICFRS reviewed each record to assess the reasonableness of the recorded grounds. However, this year we also identified how many of the records reviewed were carried out to search for drugs and whether stop and search was carried out for drugs, whether the suspicion involved possession only or the more serious supply-type offence. Currently forces are not required to differentiate between the two. We did this so that we could ascertain how many in our sample were for possession of drugs, rather than supply, as high rates of possession-only searches are unlikely to fit with force priorities.

This year, for the first time, we assessed whether or not the use of stop and search powers prevented an unnecessary arrest. We did this to ascertain how many of the records reviewed involved allaying the officer's suspicion in circumstances where the person would otherwise have been arrested, thereby representing a positive use of the powers. Allaying suspicion and preventing an unnecessary arrest is as valuable as confirming suspicion by finding the item searched for.

## **Professional standards case file review methodology**

During February and March 2017, inspection teams from HMICFRS visited the individual or professional standards departments working collaboratively of each force to conduct a case file review. We asked forces to provide us with the last case files they had finalised up to 31 December 2016; but going back no further than two years. We asked to see:

- 10 complaints the force had recorded as containing an allegation of discrimination
- 15 complaints the force had recorded in categories we felt may contain unidentified allegations of discrimination

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<sup>42</sup> City of London Police was unable to provide records up to 7 January 2017 but instead provided 200 records from 4 October 2016 to 26 November 2016.

- 10 service recovery complaints (if the force operated a separate service recovery scheme)
- 10 internal misconduct allegations the force had recorded as containing an allegation of discrimination
- 10 other internal misconduct allegations (so that we could ascertain if they contained unidentified allegations of discrimination)
- 10 grievances (and 10 workplace concerns if the force recorded these separately)

We assessed these case files against the relevant legislation, guidance and code of practice<sup>43</sup> to answer the following questions:

- Access to the system – Has the force identified those cases where the complainant requires additional support to make their complaint, and has that support been provided?
- Initial information – When the complaint was recorded, did the force provide the complainant with a copy of the complaint record, an explanation of the possible ways the complaint may be dealt with, and advised who will be dealing (including contact details)?
- Keeping complainants updated – Has the force provided complainants, witnesses, and those who are the subject of the complaints with regular, meaningful updates?
- Final outcome – Did the force provide the complainant with the findings of the report, its own determinations and the complainant’s right of appeal?
- Handling discrimination – Has the force failed to identify any allegations of discrimination? Have any discrimination cases that meet the IPCC mandatory referral criteria been so referred? Has the force investigated the complaints alleging discrimination satisfactorily? Overall, has the complainant making an allegation of discrimination received a good service from the force?
- Grievances/workplace concerns – Has the force identified, investigated and resolved the grievance satisfactorily? Has the force put arrangements in place to support the employees or witnesses throughout the process? Did the witness and those who are subject to the allegations receive a satisfactory service from the force?

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<sup>43</sup> Relevant police complaints and misconduct legislation, IPCC statutory guidance, IPCC guidelines for handling allegations of discrimination, Acas code of practice on disciplinary and grievance procedures and Acas discipline and grievance guide.