

27.06.19

Police and Crime Commissioner West Midlands response to the publication of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary's and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) reports

PEEL: Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy 2018/19 – West Midlands Police

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|---------------------------|-------------|
| Effectiveness | Good |
| Efficiency | Good |
| Legitimacy | Good |
| Number of recommendations | 1 |

On 2 May 2019 HMICFRS published its PEEL 2018/19 report for West Midlands Police. In 2018/19, HMICFRS adopted an integrated approach to PEEL inspections. Integrated PEEL Assessment (IPA) combines into a single inspection the effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy areas of PEEL. These areas had previously been inspected separately each year.

Under the risk-based approach to inspection West Midlands Police were inspected against the following areas in 2018/19:

- Treating the public fairly
- Treating the workforce fairly

Further, all force were inspected in the following areas:

- Protecting vulnerable people
- Firearms capability
- Planning for the future
- Ethical and lawful workforce behaviour.

For all other areas previous judgements remain in place.

Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson said:

"Despite a huge rise in demand on West Midlands Police and a continued squeeze on our resources the independent inspectorate have rated the force as 'good.'

"There are still clear improvements to be made, especially how the police deals with people with vulnerabilities. I will continue to hold the force to account to make sure those improvements are delivered on.

"This report commends West Midlands Police for the efficiencies we have driven and new technology we have introduced. Despite that I am doing all I can to ensure we are as efficient as possible.

"The efficiencies we have driven have enabled me to announce an increase in officer numbers by 200 over the next two years."

Under the Policing and Crime Act 2017 PCCs must publish a response to HMICFRS reports, together with any comments submitted by the Chief Constable, with 56 days of the report being published. Where reports include recommendations the response must include an explanation of the action the PCC proposes to take in response.

The recommendation from the HMIC PEEL 2018/19 report and the response from the WMP and the PCC are set out below.

The PCCs Police and Crime Plan is available at:

www.westmidlands-pcc.gov.uk/your-commissioner/police-and-crime-plan

Protecting vulnerable people

Requires improvement

HMICFRS's report states that WMP:

- has a good understanding of vulnerability
- responds to incidents involving vulnerable people adequately and prioritises incidents involving vulnerable people
- is committed to supporting vulnerable victims
- provide good levels of support, in spite of high workloads
- has effective joint working arrangements with partner agencies.

HMICFRS's report highlighted that WMP:

- needs to improve how it assesses risk and manage the respond to vulnerable people when the contact the police
- officers are still not completing DASH assessment at every domestic abuse incident and some assessments lack important information
- control room's initial recording and risk assessment of missing people still needs improvement.

Firearms capability

No rating

HMICFRS's report states that WMP:

- has a good understanding of the potential harm facing the public
- has good arrangements in place to mobilise specialist officers
- has sufficient specialist capability
- has fulfilled its commitment of the Home Office programme to enhance armed policing
- performs well in terms of effective joint working with neighbouring forces
- carefully review training exercises so that learning points are recorded and improvements made for the future.

Planning for the future

Outstanding

HMICFRS's report states that WMP:

- has a well-developed understanding of demand, including emerging and hidden demand, which it continues to improve
- is making significant investments in new technology to streamline processes, improve public contact and increase workforce capacity
- uses a variety of ways to engage with the public
- has a good record of allocating resources to meet demand.

Treating the public fairly

Good

HMICFRS's report states that WMP:

- is good at treating the public fairly
- has a better understanding of unconscious bias
- makes sure officers receive appropriate training and guidance about how to use force and stop and search fairly
- has improved scrutiny of the use of force
- is working to understand disproportionality.

HMICFRS's report highlighted that WMP:

- first-line supervisors need easier access to information and alerts when members of their team have used force
- needs to make sure it carries out its plans for further improvements to use of force scrutiny.

Ethical and lawful workforce behaviour

Requires improvement

HMICFRS's report states that WMP:

- has a strong focus on ethical and lawful workforce behaviour
- seeks to learn from complaints and shares learning
- include ethical consideration in training plans for student officers
- has set up a new ethics committee with the OPCC.

HMICFRS's report highlighted that WMP:

- has more than half of officers and staff who do not have up-to-date police vetting for their role
- needs up-to-date assessments and policies to support its anti-corruption work
- cannot fully monitor the use of all its IT systems although it is buying new software to enhance its monitoring capability.

Cause of concern

The size of the vetting backlog within West Midlands Police is a cause of concern.

Recommendation

- The force should ensure all staff have received at least the lowest level of vetting clearance for their roles as quickly as possible, working to clear both the vetting backlog and new vetting renewals when they become due so that it complies fully with the national vetting guidelines.

WMP response:

The force has satisfied itself that all existing officers and staff have received a minimum of recruit vetting upon joining WMP, however the backlog of aftercare remains significant. At the time of inspection the anticipated clearance of such a backlog was scheduled to take three years which is not acceptable. Whilst reductions in the backlog continue, a wholesale review of the vetting unit, processes and systems has also been initiated. This includes peer review from the National lead for vetting's own department, the provision of business analysis support to the review in order to ensure independent and objective scrutiny, the engagement in a procurement process to replace the existing vetting system with a view to digitisation and the scoping of more innovative means of funding additional vetting staff.

PCC response

The review of vetting processes is timely and the backlog in aftercare vetting needs to be addressed.

Following a minimal assurance opinion given in 2017/18, vetting will be review by the joint internal audit team in 2019/20. The review will establish progress in addressing the aftercare vetting backlog, and review of the action plan to address backlog and manage existing vetting demand.<https://www.westmidlands-pcc.gov.uk/media/512529/09-March-19-Internal-Audit-Strategy-and-Draft-Work-Plan-2019-20.pdf>

Treating the workforce fairly

Good

HMICFRS's report states that WMP:

- is working hard to create a fairer and more supportive working environment for its workforce
- is dealing with internal complaints and grievances more quickly and effectively
- is increasing its investment to supporting workforce wellbeing
- is gathering workforce data to help it understand levels of fairness
- has a new individual performance management systems.

HMICFRS's report highlighted that WMP:

- has many officers and staff who still do not have regular meetings with their line managers. As a result, the force cannot make sure it is tackling poor performance effectively or identifying talent consistently.