



Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP
Home Secretary
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

Cc: HMICFRS

Our Ref: JC/jpi

20 February 2018

Dear *Home Secretary*

HMICFRS PEEL Inspection Reports: *PEEL: Police Legitimacy (including leadership) 2017*

I am writing to you in response to the HMICFRS PEEL Legitimacy inspection report for West Mercia published in December 2017.

The overall judgement of HMICFRS is that the force requires improvement in how legitimately it keeps people safe and reduces crime. This is a lesser judgement than in 2016 when the force was assessed as good, however there are many positives identified in each of the three areas of focus within the 2017 inspection along with eight areas for improvement. I have addressed each of the three inspection areas in more detail below.

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

The report identifies that West Mercia Police has a good understanding of the importance of treating people with fairness and respect, which is consistent with the previous year's findings. There is however more to be done to ensure officers are using their powers of arrest appropriately and following a learning needs assessment from February 2018 officer safety training has been revised to provide an additional Code G refresher element.

I am pleased that the report recognises the considerable improvements the force has made in its use of stop and search powers, however it also identifies that the force needs to evaluate how stop and search activity reflects its priorities. An IT solution is being developed to address this, enabling officers to link their stop search record to appropriate operations or the control strategy.

The introduction of body worn video (BWV) has been part of my commitment to reform and modernise West Mercia Police. The effective scrutiny of BWV provides opportunities to reduce complaints against police officers, help prevent crimes occurring and provide clear evidence of incidents. In a pilot exercise BWV footage has been used by IAGs to scrutinise the use of stop and search powers. Scrutiny mechanisms for assessing use of force data are being developed and I shall be seeking assurances that any opportunities to use BWV footage for this purpose are fully explored.

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

Three areas for improvement (AFIs) were identified here. Improving the accuracy and timeliness of website information regarding chief officer pay, rewards & business interests has been addressed; the force publication scheme has been reviewed and named individuals are now responsible for different sections on the website.

The remaining two AFIs relate to the Professional Standards Department (PSD). I am aware that the complaints pages on the force website now provides a link to the IOPC website where alternative formats and additional assistance is available, which is an improvement, however the IT system used by PSD does not allow for managers to ensure consistent and timely updates are provided when complaints are being dealt with locally. I understand that PSD are working with the IT provider to develop a solution and I will continue to monitor this closely.

The third AFI was that the forces should improve its referral of matters to the IOPC and its standards of investigation into allegations of discrimination. A review of processes has taken place, along with work to identify national best practice. Quality assurance processes are being implemented and PSD have met with the IOPC to discuss training for staff which will include referrals as result of potential discrimination.

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

Many positives around talent management, employee support and initiatives to prevent staff sickness were highlighted in the report so I will ensure West Mercia Police builds on these successes, whilst continuing to address the three areas for improvement identified in this part of the inspection report.

One of these AFIs was that the force should ensure that it has the capability and capacity to monitor all its computer systems to identify risks to the force's integrity. I am aware that this was initially raised as an issue by HMICFRS in 2014 but that anticipated whole system changes meant that no solution was progressed at that time. The force has recently migrated onto the Athena system, however securing a cost effective monitoring solution which will not adversely impact other IT systems needs careful consideration. Work has begun to progress this and I shall continue to monitor progress.

In summary, West Mercia's communities deserve the best from their police service, and this report has raised a number of issues, where the service provided has been far from acceptable. It is paramount that significant improvements are made, and whilst I am reassured to see that swift and thorough action is already been taken to address the concerns, there is still much more which must be done.

I will hold the Chief Constable to account to ensure that all of the issues are fully addressed so the public have a completely fair and ethical service which they can trust and be confident in.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'John Campion', with a stylized flourish at the end.

John Campion
Police & Crime Commissioner
West Mercia

