

PEEL 2021/22

Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy

An inspection of South Wales Police

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Overall summary

Our judgments

Our inspection assessed how good South Wales Police is in nine areas of policing. We make graded judgments in eight of these nine as follows:

Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires improvement	Inadequate
	Investigating crime	Treatment of the public	Protecting vulnerable people	
	Preventing crime	Managing offenders		
	Responding to the public	Developing a positive workplace		
	Good use of resources			

We also inspected how effective a service South Wales Police gives to victims of crime. We don't make a graded judgment in this overall area.

We set out our detailed findings about things the force is doing well and where the force should improve in the rest of this report.

Data in this report

For more information, please [view this report on our website](#) and select the 'About the data' section.

Important changes to PEEL

In 2014, we introduced our police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL) inspections, which assess the performance of all 43 police forces in England and Wales. Since then, we have been continuously adapting our approach and this year has seen the most significant changes yet.

We are moving to a more intelligence-led, continual assessment approach, rather than the annual [PEEL inspections](#) we used in previous years. For instance, we have integrated our rolling crime data integrity inspections into these PEEL assessments. Our PEEL victim service assessment will now include a crime data integrity element in at least every other assessment. We have also changed our approach to graded

judgments. We now assess forces against the characteristics of good performance, set out in the [PEEL Assessment Framework 2021/22](#), and we more clearly link our judgments to causes of concern and areas for improvement. We have also expanded our previous four-tier system of judgments to five tiers. As a result, we can state more precisely where we consider improvement is needed and highlight more effectively the best ways of doing things.

However, these changes mean that it isn't possible to make direct comparisons between the grades awarded this year with those from previous PEEL inspections. A reduction in grade, particularly from good to adequate, doesn't necessarily mean that there has been a reduction in performance, unless we say so in the report.

The operating context for Welsh forces

It is important to recognise that forces in Wales operate in a different context to those in England. Although policing and justice aren't devolved to Wales, essential services such as healthcare, accommodation, education and social services are. This means that Welsh police and justice activity take place in unique performance and legislative contexts. In Wales, devolved and non-devolved organisations work in partnership in to provide the best level of service possible to local people.

Sometimes this means that forces in Wales will have to comply with both English and Welsh regulatory requirements.

HM Inspector's observations

I am pleased with the performance of South Wales Police in keeping people safe and reducing crime, although it needs to improve in some areas to provide a consistently good service.

These are the findings I consider most important from our assessments of the force over the past year.

The force needs to improve how it records its stop and searches and its external scrutiny arrangements

The force's performance in recording reasonable grounds for its searches of members of the public has fallen. This needs to improve to show the public that its use of police powers is fair and effective. South Wales Police has recently formed external scrutiny panels and I look forward to seeing its progress in the coming months.

South Wales Police needs to improve its approach to protecting children from the risk of harm and exploitation

The force doesn't yet have appropriately skilled staff dedicated to safeguarding children. The way the force assesses and manages the risk of harm to children who are reported [missing](#) also needs to be more effective.

The force prioritises the prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour and works with partners to solve problems

The force is investing in a new neighbourhood policing structure that prioritises and responds to what matters to local people. [Neighbourhood policing teams](#) work well with partners to solve problems and improve the quality of life for communities.

The force conducts most investigations on behalf of victims well, providing the appropriate level of advice and support, but the response to initial calls from the public needs to improve

Investigations are effective and well supervised, and South Wales Police succeeds in charging or issuing summons to relatively high numbers of suspected offenders on behalf of victims. Most victims are kept updated throughout investigations. However, the force needs to improve its response to initial contact from the public. It also needs to continue to improve the time it takes to answer emergency and non-emergency calls to make sure the public receive a prompt answer to their calls for service.

The force works with partners to divert people away from reoffending and takes effective action against people who pose a risk to children

Offender managers co-ordinate their work with partners to encourage people away from further or more serious offending. Dedicated staff work with domestic abuse perpetrators. The force is innovative in how it acts to protect children from people suspected of committing crimes involving indecent images.

The force provides the public with value for money, manages demand well and has achievable plans for the future

The force systematically plans to manage threats and risks to its communities, and how it aims to meet the public's expectations. Sophisticated budgeting is informed by operational objectives. South Wales Police is committed to improving its services by working effectively with other forces.



Wendy Williams

HM Inspector of Constabulary

Reducing crime assessment

We have identified seven themes underpinning a force's ability to reduce crime effectively which, taken together, allow an assessment of the extent to which the force is doing all it can to reduce crime. This is a narrative assessment, as police recorded crime figures can be affected by variations and changes in recording policy and practice, making it difficult to make comparisons over time.

South Wales Police analyses the day-to-day demands on its services from the point of receiving calls for service so it can flexibly use its staff to respond to and investigate crime. The force is improving its understanding of where it needs to focus the work of its neighbourhood policing resources. It is also adopting a new management structure to prioritise the prevention and deterrence of crime and disorder.

The force aims to bolster its ability to reduce crime by:

- contributing to multi-agency work to protect children at risk of being a victim of sex-offending, neglect and ill-treatment, and preventing the repeated victimisation of domestic abuse victims;
- adopting short and longer-term problem-solving methods and, with partner agencies, offering early support for [vulnerable people](#) to avoid them becoming victims or perpetrators of crime;
- managing the risk that persistent offenders pose and adopting new ways of working to reduce reoffending;
- conducting thorough and effective investigations on behalf of the public and showing its commitment to victims. There are governance arrangements to make sure good performance is sustained and standards continue to improve; and
- investing in new, more effective ways to investigate rape and serious sexual offences, and making sure victims can access justice faster.

I am pleased the force is addressing the right areas of policing to reduce crime.

But the following areas may negatively affect the force's ability to do this:

- The force doesn't yet consistently identify or manage the risk to children who are reported missing, or who may be at risk of exploitation or abuse.
- It doesn't yet consistently answer calls for service quickly enough, meaning some victims of crime may not benefit from prompt police attendance.
- The force doesn't always research and assess the risk posed to the public of some of the highest-risk offenders, which it needs to do to reduce their risk of offending.

Providing a service to the victims of crime

Victim service assessment

This section describes our assessment of the service victims receive from South Wales Police, from the point of reporting a crime through to its end result. As part of this assessment, we reviewed 130 case files as well as 20 cautions, [community resolutions](#) and cases where a suspect was identified but the victim didn't support, or withdrew their support for, police action. While this assessment is ungraded, it influences graded judgments in the other areas we have inspected.

The force needs to improve the time it takes to answer emergency and non-emergency calls

When a victim contacts the police, it is important that their call is answered quickly and that the right information is recorded accurately on police systems. The caller should be spoken to in a professional manner. The information should be assessed, taking into consideration threat, harm, risk and vulnerability. And the victim should be given appropriate safeguarding advice.

The force isn't currently meeting national standards in answering emergency and non-emergency calls. However, it is improving its performance in this area. When calls are answered, the victim's vulnerability is assessed using a structured process, and repeat victims are identified. Officers use this information to decide what response is needed. Victims are usually given advice about crime prevention and how to preserve evidence.

The force responds promptly to calls for service in most cases

A force should aim to respond to calls for service within its published time frames, based on the prioritisation given to the call. It should change call priority only if the original prioritisation is deemed inappropriate, or if further information suggests a change is needed. The response should consider risk and victim vulnerability, including information obtained after the call.

On most occasions, the force responds to calls appropriately. However, attendance is sometimes outside of recognised force timescales, meaning the victim's expectations aren't met. This may cause victims to lose confidence and disengage. Victims aren't always updated if there is going to be a delay in attendance. The force uses a call-back system effectively for non-emergency calls. Appropriate staff are allocated to respond to incidents.

The force allocates crimes to appropriate staff, and victims are promptly informed if their crime isn't going to be investigated further

Police forces should have a policy to make sure crimes are allocated to appropriately trained officers or [staff](#) for investigation or, if appropriate, not investigated further. This policy should be applied consistently. The victim of the crime should be kept informed of the allocation and whether the crime is to be investigated further.

The force's arrangements for allocating recorded crimes for investigation are in line with its policy and, in most cases, the crime is allocated to the most appropriate department for further investigation. Victims are usually updated promptly to inform them their crime report won't be investigated further. This is important to provide victims with an appropriate level of service and to manage expectations.

Most investigations are effective, and victims are provided with the appropriate level of advice and support for the crime

Police forces should investigate reported crimes quickly, proportionately and thoroughly. Victims should be kept updated about the investigation. The force should also have effective governance arrangements to make sure investigation standards are high.

Investigations are carried out promptly and are relevant, and proportionate lines of inquiry are completed in most cases. Investigations are well supervised and most victims are kept updated throughout. Victims are more likely to have confidence in a police investigation when they are updated regularly. A thorough investigation increases the likelihood of perpetrators being identified and a positive outcome for the victim.

Victim personal statements allow victims to describe the impact the crime has had on their lives. These are taken in most cases. When victims withdraw their support for an investigation, the force considers continuing to progress the case. This is an important method of [safeguarding](#) the victim and preventing further offences from being committed. However, the force doesn't always consider the use of orders designed to protect victims, such as a [domestic violence protection notice \(DVPN\)](#) or [order \(DVPO\)](#).

The [Code of Practice for Victims of Crime \(VCOP\)](#) requires that a needs assessment is made at an early stage to decide whether victims need additional support. The force usually carries this out and records the request for additional support.

The force assigns the right outcome type in most cases, but an auditable record of victims' wishes isn't always held. The force should make sure it follows national guidance and rules for deciding the outcome of each crime report. It should consider the nature of the crime, the offender and the victim. And it should show the necessary leadership and culture to make sure the use of outcomes is appropriate.

In appropriate cases, those offenders who are brought to justice can be given a caution or community resolution. To be correctly applied and recorded, it must be appropriate for the offender, and the victim's views must be considered. In most of the cases we reviewed, the offender met the national criteria for the use of these outcomes but the victim's views weren't always sought and therefore considered.

Where a suspect is identified but the victim doesn't support, or withdraws their support, for police action, the force should have an auditable record to confirm the victim's decision so it can close the investigation. This evidence was absent in most of the cases we reviewed. This means the victim's wishes may not be fully represented and considered.

Engaging with and treating the public with fairness and respect

Adequate

South Wales Police is adequate at treating people fairly and with respect.

Areas for improvement

The force should improve how its recording of stop and search shows that there were reasonable grounds for doing so, in compliance with force policy and the [Authorised Professional Practice](#)

During our inspection, we reviewed a sample of 239 stop and search records from 1 December 2020 to 30 November 2021. Based on this sample, we estimate that only 71.1 percent (with a confidence interval of +/- 5.7 percent) of all stop and searches by South Wales Police during this period were reasonable.

This is a statistically significant decrease since our last review of records from 2019, when we estimated that 87.3 percent (with a confidence interval of +/- 3.7 percent) of stop and searches had reasonable grounds.

This doesn't necessarily mean there weren't reasonable grounds to justify the search. But if the officer hasn't recorded the grounds they relied on when making the decision, there won't be enough information to make the need clear. And if the person who has been searched asks for a copy of the record, they won't be able to interpret it or understand it. To maintain the trust and confidence of the public, every police force should be able to show that its officers use [stop and search powers](#) fairly and effectively.

The force should develop how its external scrutiny panels of stop and search and use of force work, and how learning is shared with the workforce

The force has recently formed external scrutiny panels comprised of [independent advisory group \(IAG\)](#) members for stop and search and use of force. The panels review [body-worn video](#) and give feedback about how fairly and effectively officers use force or their stop and search powers.

Although this is a positive step towards maintaining public confidence, we found the processes aren't yet fully developed.

There isn't yet an independent chairperson. And panel members haven't received training to help them make better sense of, and comment on, the video footage they view.

There was no representation on either panel from younger people, who may be able to offer a 'lived experience' perspective on the interactions. Although there is some discussion about stop and search data during meetings, the panels aren't given, or asked for their views about, data on use of force or stop and search.

Officers and staff are largely unaware of learning which has been identified by the scrutiny panels, meaning that opportunities to improve practice aren't always taken.

Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to treating people fairly and with respect.

The force is improving how it engages with all its diverse communities to understand and respond to what matters to them

The force knows that much of its population data is based on 2011 census results, and that race disparity audits haven't been held in South Wales or in England. The force uses software to put neighbourhoods into groups of 140 households. This helps it better understand the make-up of its communities and the effect its policing activity may have. In Cardiff, the force uses Operation Perception to communicate with communities who are affected by knife crime and the related policing. The equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) board meets to consider how united and confident communities feel.

A community and tensions meeting discusses matters of community interest, such as changes in the population mix, or how the force response to large-scale public disorder events affects public confidence. Each [basic command unit \(BCU\)](#) uses community impact assessments to make sure the neighbourhood policing teams communicate with local people, and to agree what policing and partnership activity is needed to manage tensions.

A dedicated inspector and the community safety partnership manage independently chaired community cohesion groups (CCGs). For example, in Cardiff, the CCG has

worked and communicated with communities after protests and deaths of members of the public following police contact. CCGs help to explain to communities how the police use stop and search powers. Organised activities, such as football and cricket matches and a 'bake off', help to break down perceived barriers between the force and the public.

South Wales Police and the [police and crime commissioner](#) have recently introduced the 'Young Voices Conversation'. This joint initiative invites young people to talk about what affects them and to comment on what is being done. Engagement with young people has changed how the force communicates its anti-knife crime message. For example, feedback from young people led to the force using its logos and personnel far less prominently on visual media.

South Wales Police encourages its citizens to become involved in policing, although it could better promote opportunities to do so

A newly formed independent advisory group helps the force understand how its work affects communities. The group gives the force feedback about aspects of its work (for example, its recently published strategy on violence against women and girls), prompting it to consider public and victim perception.

The force has 250 student volunteers from the four universities within the force area. The students help the neighbourhood policing teams in city centres with alcohol support buses. These provide support to intoxicated young people who may need help and a place of safety.

Special constables volunteer thousands of hours each year and are integrated members of local policing teams. The force is encouraging young people to become involved in policing. The police youth-volunteers scheme, based at 14 local hubs, gets young people involved in public surveys, helping licensing teams and gaining experience of policing through attachments to departments. Applications are monitored to make sure that the force encourages and provides opportunities for young people from minority ethnic and disadvantaged backgrounds.

There are several community initiatives, such as Neighbourhood Watch, Speed Watch and Paws on Patrol, but finding them on the website is difficult. This could discourage potential volunteers.

South Wales Police has developed good practice to help it understand how its officers use force or stop and search powers

South Wales Police has created a data dashboard to monitor stop and search and use of force. It comprehensively shows how often officers use these powers, the people they are used with and the results. It can't yet break down whether people have been searched because they were suspected of possessing drugs for personal use, or of possessing drugs intending to supply them to someone else. But the force is working to achieve this. In the meantime, officers can search for this information manually. The police accountability and legitimacy group, which oversees how fairly and effectively officers use their powers, uses the dashboard data to identify areas to improve.

Preventing crime and anti-social behaviour

Good

South Wales Police is good at prevention and deterrence.

Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to prevention and deterrence.

South Wales Police prioritises and co-ordinates how it prevents crime, anti-social behaviour and vulnerability

The force has a clear governance structure. Leaders can oversee how well it is working to prevent, tackle and deter crime and disorder and, where necessary, decide how to improve performance. The local policing strategic board uses a performance framework to understand how the objectives of targeted engagement with communities, problem solving and visibility of staff are being met. This means the force can judge how well its contact with the public improves people's quality of life.

The force has analysed how often neighbourhood police constables and police community support officers (PCSOs) have been needed to respond to emergency calls or staff crime scene cordons, instead of working in their own sectors. This shows that neighbourhood teams have had less time to work on preventing crime and solving problems in their local area. The force is launching a new neighbourhood policing structure, with its own leadership team, to make sure that focus is maintained on community priorities.

Neighbourhood policing teams have a good understanding of what matters to local people

The force acknowledges that traditional police and communities together (PACT) meetings aren't well attended and aren't an effective way of communicating with people who don't tend to support formal meetings. Neighbourhood policing teams use doorstep surveys and, with local councillors, hold street briefings for residents. This helps the force engage with all of the community, including those who don't use social media. Neighbourhood teams listen to what people have to say and communicate what the police are doing about their concerns.

PCSOs make sure that ward profiles contain details of key individuals and networks who can be contacted when the force needs help with explaining their actions to, and maintaining the confidence of, communities after serious or traumatic incidents. Ward profiles also contain details of dangerous offenders and vulnerable people who might not normally engage with the force.

Neighbourhood policing teams work with council local area co-ordinators to support vulnerable people. For example, we were told about a social club for deaf residents that was identified through this work. This led to better police engagement and PCSOs learning sign language to help them communicate more effectively.

This activity helps the force understand what it needs to focus on to better meet the needs of local people.

South Wales Police involves other organisations in problem solving. The work is evaluated and good examples are shared

We found that plan on a page (POP) and objective, scanning, analysis, review and assess ([OSARA](#)) plans for less complex problems were generally well thought out and regularly reviewed by inspectors. In some cases, there was less consideration about whether the cause of problems had been addressed or merely moved to another location. Crime reduction tactical advisers evaluate successful plans and store them on the force intranet as examples of good practice. This means they can be used or adapted to solve similar problems. Basic command unit (BCU) problem-solving meetings discuss plans that aren't achieving successful results. This allows the force to make additional police resources available to help, or to co-ordinate action with local authorities, voluntary organisations and businesses to solve longer-standing or more complex crime and disorder problems.

We were given examples of neighbourhood policing teams working with local authorities to help homeless people living on the street find safe accommodation, and make it less likely that they might commit crime or be vulnerable to exploitation.

The force is improving its understanding of neighbourhood policing demand although it could make better use of its own and partners' data

We found that some, but not all, neighbourhood staff know how to use self-service tools to access information from the force crime and incident recording system. There are no local analysts to produce information about threats and risks for neighbourhood teams. There are also no dedicated analysts to support the work of the community safety partnerships, so force analysts do this work. The force needs to make sure its staff know how to use self-service tools and it has enough analytical capacity to help neighbourhood teams understand and act on local crime and disorder problems.

A new engagement portal records how often officers and staff meet or speak with the public, and the action taken to respond to concerns. Neighbourhood policing teams have used the portal to record the details of more than 11,300 interactions with members of the public. Staff can use a map function that shows the locations where members of the public have spoken to staff about problems, and where POP or OSARA plans are already in use. In this way, the force is improving how it matches its problem-solving work to the concerns of local people.

However, in some areas where staff had less understanding of or enthusiasm for using the portal, there was less evidence that POP or OSARA plans had been created. This means the portal isn't yet as effective as it could be.

The force's crime and incident recording system can't yet automatically show how trends of hate crime reflect the strands of race or ethnicity, religion or beliefs, sexual orientation, disability or gender identity. To compensate for a lack of analytical support, the force uses a self-service data dashboard to make sure local policing staff are aware of rising tensions within communities.

The force is working with partner agencies to take early action to protect the public from harmful drugs

The force is working with other agencies, including the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, to follow a joint public health and enforcement approach to drug use. The force is taking part in the pilot of Project ADDER, aimed at the early identification of, and sharing of information about, harmful drugs in circulation.

In one area of the force, there is a process for fast tracking the drug testing of substances found during cases of fatal and non-fatal poisonings. This information is then shared with Dyfodol, a substance misuse agency, to make sure that correct information about the circulation of harmful drugs is shared. It is too early to judge how successful the initiative may prove to be.

Responding to the public

Good

South Wales Police is good at responding to the public.

Area for improvement

The force should improve its capability to answer emergency and non-emergency calls from the public, reduce wait times and overall abandonment rate

On 31 May 2022, the Home Office published data on 999 call answering times. Call answering time is the time taken for a call to be transferred to a force, and the time taken by that force to answer it. In England and Wales, forces should aim to answer 90 percent of these calls within 10 seconds.

Since the Home Office hadn't published this data at the time we made our judgment, we have used data provided by forces to assess how quickly they answer 999 calls. In the future, we will use the Home Office data.

South Wales Police's data shows that in March 2022 the force answered 69.6 percent of emergency 999 calls for service within 10 seconds. For the same month (March 2022) the force answered 75.3 percent of non-emergency ([101](#)) calls made to the force in English. Callers using the 101 service waited on average 8 minutes and 35 seconds for their call to be answered. This means the force is failing to answer at least 90 percent of emergency (999) calls within national standards, or to ensure that fewer than 10 percent of 101 calls are abandoned by callers.

The force's call handling data shows that despite the force improving to meet its own service level agreement target for answering 999 calls between July and November 2021, performance then declined to below its target in February 2022. Overall, the force met its service level agreement targets for 999 calls in only 3 of the previous 11 months to February 2022. If calls for service aren't answered promptly, police officers may not be sent to protect victims of crime quickly enough. If callers can't get a prompt answer they may decide to hang up and might not receive the service they deserve. The force may not then understand the true volume of crime and disorder in South Wales.

Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to how well the force responds to the public.

Control room staff check for, and accurately identify, risks and vulnerability when members of the public report crime and incidents

Our victim services assessment found that the standard of call handling was high. The [THRIVE](#) risk identification and assessment process was used for most of the reported incidents we reviewed. Call handlers were polite, professional and empathic to callers, giving advice about crime prevention in most cases. We found that vulnerability was checked for and, where identified, recorded on almost all occasions we reviewed. For all calls we audited, incidents were allocated to an appropriate team. These results are positive. However, the force should continue to develop its processes to make sure call handlers identify and record all repeat victims.

The force is good at making sure the public can contact it in a variety of ways and makes sure officers attend calls for service when needed

The desk-based public service centre (PSC) incident resolution team triages and deals with many non-emergency incidents that can be investigated without an officer needing to physically attend. This means the force can prioritise its resources for high-risk calls.

The force has responded to a rise in the number of people preferring to contact it online by creating a digital desk. This desk deals with enquiries through Single Online Home – a platform that police services use to create a nationally consistent, but locally branded, online presence. It then monitors and responds to contact through social media. In this way, the force makes it easier for the public to make contact in the ways they prefer.

South Wales Police attends incidents appropriately and promptly

In most incidents we audited, officers attended within the force's published timescales. Where there were delays, supervisors intervened in most cases. Callers had generally been updated about any delay in attendance. We found that call handlers researched and recorded relevant information about people and places involved in incidents. Daily tasking and management meetings make sure that officers are allocated to deal with incidents where there is still a need to collect evidence, visit and protect victims, and arrest suspected offenders. This means that, overall, officers arrive more quickly to help victims and have enough information to provide a good service.

Our inspection found that staff were positive about the mental health triage service that the force funds. This is based in the [control room](#). Triage workers access the health records of people who are reported to be in distress owing to their mental state, give advice to officers attending incidents and, in many cases, prevent unnecessary arrests or detentions using powers under the Mental Health Act 1983. This means that encounters with people experiencing a mental health crisis are likely to result in better outcomes.

The force needs to improve how well its officers gather evidence when they attend crimes

Our inspection learned of many examples where officers responding to calls for service hadn't made the most of early opportunities to gather evidence. For example, speaking to witnesses, doing door-to-door enquiries or seizing exhibits. This means suspected offenders wait longer than they should to be interviewed while evidence is collected. This places greater demand on investigation teams. The force has training planned for supervisors of response teams to help improve the quality of initial investigations, although this has yet to start.

South Wales Police plans and manages its day-to-day need to respond to calls for service well, although it needs to make sure it has sufficient resources to do so

The force uses its information about demand to plan for enough response officers on duty each day, and for peak demand periods, such as annual festive events and major sporting fixtures. When some response teams have too few officers on duty, daily management meetings allocate neighbourhood officers or specialist teams to help attend emergency calls. This means that although the public see a police officer when they urgently need to, other priorities (such as neighbourhood policing) don't receive the same service.

The force's activity analysis for October 2021 shows that response teams in most areas were dealing with incidents for more than 90 percent of their time. It recognises this is too high. Many teams don't have enough officers or emergency response trained drivers on duty each day. There also aren't enough sexual offences first responders, whose role it is to gather forensic evidence from victims and contribute to successful prosecutions. Staff told us that they were often too busy responding to emergency calls to make the most of '[golden hour](#)' opportunities to collect evidence from victims and crime scenes.

The force needs to make sure that its response teams have enough suitably trained officers on duty.

Investigating crime

Good

South Wales Police is good at investigating crime.

Area for improvement

The force should make sure an auditable record of the victim's decision and their reasons for withdrawal of support, or wishes for an out of court disposal or caution, are fully documented. The force should make sure it documents whether evidence-led prosecutions have been considered in all such cases

Where a decision was made that the offender should receive a caution, we found that the victim had been updated with the result in only 13 out of the 18 cases we reviewed.

In 10 out of 20 cases in which less serious offences were concluded using community resolutions (such as an apology or a promise to clear up graffiti or criminal damage), we found no auditable record of consultation with the victim. Where victims either didn't support an investigation from the outset, or later withdrew their support, only 3 of the 17 cases we reviewed contained an auditable record of their views.

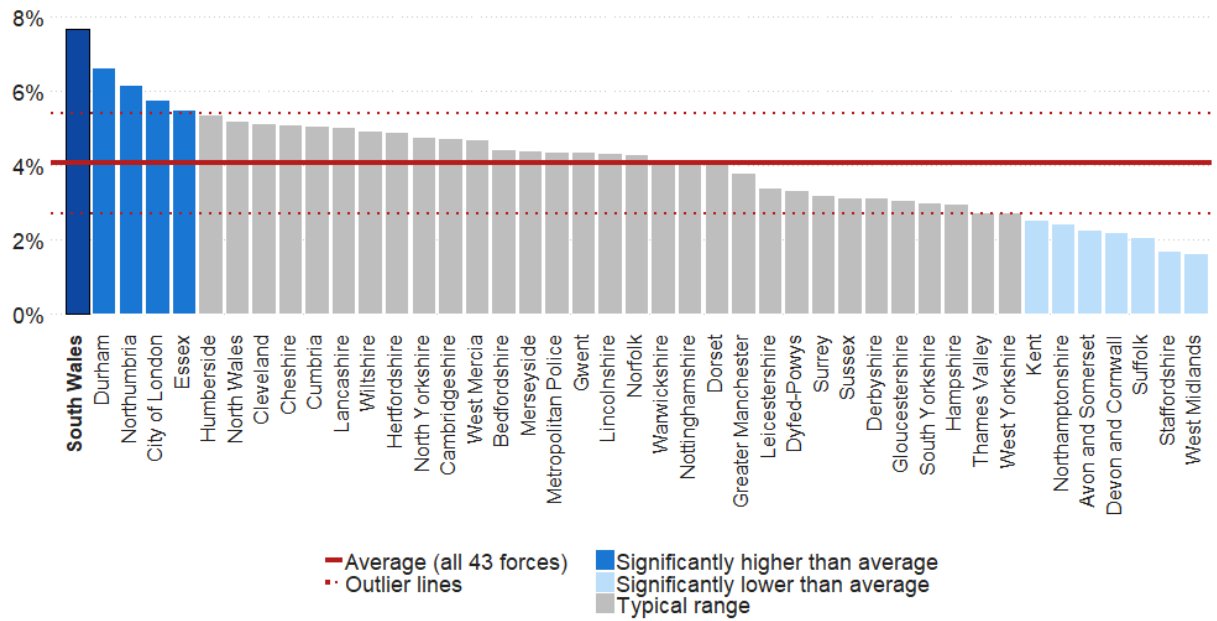
It is important that the consultation with and views of the victim are understood and recorded.

Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to how well the force investigates crime.

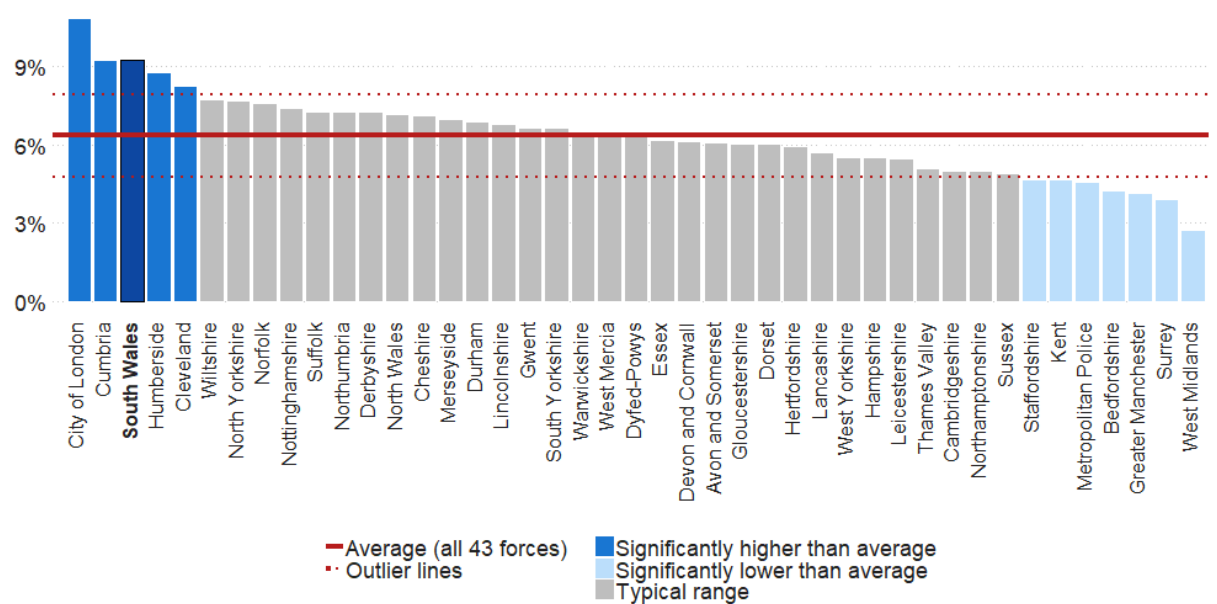
In the year ending 30 June 2021, 7.6 percent of sexual offences in South Wales had an outcome of charged or summonsed. Although this was lower than the average across all crime types, it was the highest charged or summonsed rate for sexual offences across all police forces in England and Wales.

Proportion of sexual offences recorded in the year ending 30 June 2021 with an outcome of 'charged/summonsed' (outcome 1)



In the year ending 30 June 2021, 9.2 percent of all victims-based crime in South Wales had an outcome of charged or summonsed. This is statistically significantly higher than the average across all forces, which was 6.4 percent.

Proportion of all victim based crime recorded in the year ending 30 June 2021 with an outcome of 'charged/summonsed' (outcome 1)



South Wales Police conducts thorough and effective investigations on behalf of the public, and demonstrates its commitment to victims

Our victim services assessment found that staff had completed an effective investigation in 68 of the 70 cases we audited. Nearly every case was concluded after reasonable opportunities to gather evidence were taken. Few investigations were delayed, and almost all were allocated to appropriately skilled investigators.

In 63 out of 64 cases, we found the victim received an appropriate level of service. Investigators complied with the [Code of Practice for Victims of Crime \(VCOP\)](#), contacted victims as they had promised to in all cases and recorded this appropriately. Although our findings were generally positive, victim personal statements were taken in only four out of every five cases. This means that most, but not all, victims had the opportunity to describe the impact that crime has had on their lives.

Our inspection found that investigators and supervisors relied on templates when reviewing investigations. While templates can provide consistency and structure, an over-reliance on them can result in generic investigation reviews, potentially missing specific lines of inquiry. The force needs to make sure that all reviews are tailored to specific investigations.

South Wales Police makes sure serious crime is investigated by appropriately skilled staff, although some teams have heavy workloads

The force has reorganised its investigation teams, using specialised software to understand how many staff it needs to be trained to investigate serious and complex crime.

South Wales Police is a pilot force for Operation Soteria. This is a new approach to investigating rape, which aims to make investigations into rape and serious sexual offending more thorough and effective, and reduce the likelihood of reoffending. The force has created specialist rape investigation teams and is working with criminal justice partners to expand court capacity and allow victims swifter access to justice.

Major crime, rape, serious sexual offences, child abuse and criminal investigation departments (CID) have allocation policies to make sure their workloads are appropriate for their training and skills. Although investigation hubs should investigate mainly high volume, less serious crimes, CID and hub supervisors together agree which department should deal with borderline cases that may be more complex. In this way, the force makes sure that it achieves the best standards of investigation for victims.

However, hubs, other investigation teams and supervisors reported heavy caseloads and high sickness absence levels, which in turn increased demands on staff. Some staff we spoke to expressed a lack of confidence in how well the force understands its investigative demand.

The force needs to make sure it fulfils its plans to train, develop and retain staff who investigate crime

South Wales Police has a detective resilience plan and a fast-track police constable to detective constable pathway. As of 31 March 2021, 90 percent of detectives were either qualified or working toward being qualified to [PIP](#) level 2. This is the minimum level of competence for investigators of serious and complex crime recommended by the [College of Policing](#). The force is also publishing a toolkit as a guidance manual for staff who investigate crime. However, it struggles to encourage detectives to stay within non-specialist CID roles or to attract officers to work within the investigation hubs.

Hubs investigate most domestic abuse related crime and, in some cases, serious assaults. They achieve good standards of investigation on behalf of victims.

The force recognises that the volume of investigations by hubs is high. Hub supervisors are PIP level 2 trained. The force has worked to train and accredit hub investigators and response officers to PIP level 1, which is the minimum level of competence for investigators of volume and priority crime recommended by the College of Policing. However, many cases are of a serious and complex nature. Hub investigators and response officers we spoke to told us that they weren't trained to PIP 1 standard, or had only received training when they were student officers.

The force plans to train response supervisors to PIP level 1 and to improve the standard of training for tutors. However, at the time of inspection, these plans had been delayed until at least April 2022.

Until investigators and supervisors are trained and developed appropriately, they will probably need to work harder than fully trained colleagues to achieve the same good results for victims. They will also need to rely more heavily on the support of supervisors and will be less likely to stay in their roles.

Protecting vulnerable people

Requires
improvement

South Wales Police requires improvement at protecting vulnerable people.

Areas for improvement

The force needs to improve how effectively it meets national standards in relation to the use of the domestic violence disclosure scheme (DVDS)

We found many examples of [DVDS](#) applications where a decision hadn't yet been made about whether information should be given to potential victims of domestic abuse. In one area, data supplied by the force showed that 79 of 115 applications where disclosure decisions hadn't yet been made were older than the nationally recommended 42 days completion period. Of these, 16 had been open for longer than six months. If potential victims of domestic abuse aren't given information promptly, they can't make an informed decision about their safety and may unknowingly remain in a dangerous situation.

Within six months, the force should ensure that it has sufficient capability and capacity to investigate and disrupt child criminal exploitation, and safeguard victims

We found that the force hasn't yet created dedicated teams to protect children from being criminally exploited, or given existing teams the skills and knowledge to investigate or disrupt perpetrators. Processes exist to describe how risks are assessed and communicated. But, in many cases, staff don't know who is responsible for putting plans into action. Without a clearly established and understood capability, the force is unlikely to be as effective as it could be at protecting vulnerable children.

Within six months, South Wales Police should improve its missing persons practices so that its response is consistent with risks to children who are missing, and that the supervision of these enquiries is effective

The force has created the No Apparent Immediate Risk, Absent (NAIRA) process to categorise children who are reported as missing. We found many examples of staff interpreting some potential child exploitation and abuse risk factors as being mitigating or protective. The force's missing persons policy wasn't always followed. In some cases, supervisors didn't make effective or consistent decisions when reviewing risks to children. There were several examples of significant delays in allocating staff to make missing persons enquiries and children not being seen after they had returned home. This is against force policy.

The force policy definition of NAIRA is slightly different from the College of Policing terminology of NAR (No Apparent Risk, Absent). However, in the six months ending 30 September 2021, 63.8 percent of missing children incidents were categorised as NAIRA. This is much higher than the rate across England and Wales of 5.2 percent. In addition, the force wasn't able to easily provide the risk assessment categorisation for a number of missing children incidents. For [looked after children](#), the percentage of missing children incidents initially categorised as NAIRA in the six months ending 30 September 2021 was 74.0 percent.

The public can't yet be confident that the force has a consistent and risk appropriate response to reports of missing children.

Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to how well the force protects vulnerable people.

The force has clear strategy, governance and arrangements with partners to protect vulnerable adults and children

The force's work to improve how it protects vulnerable people is linked to the National Vulnerability Action Plan. This means its problems can be judged against nationally agreed priorities. Strategies and policies for tackling domestic abuse, serious sexual offending, child exploitation, and violence against women and girls set out how the force and partners are expected to protect victims and potential victims.

The force developed its violence against women and girls strategy 2021-2024 with partner organisations. This makes sure the force and partners have a shared approach for tackling violence and abuse.

South Wales Police takes an innovative approach to preventing harm by offering early support for vulnerable people

We were encouraged to learn that the force has created a pilot early help referral process, in partnership with children's social care. The pilot aims to offer support to children and families who wouldn't normally meet social services' formal thresholds for help. This also reduces the unnecessary completion of public protection notices (PPN) for mainly information purposes instead of identifying real risk.

The force could be more effective at understanding its own and partners' data to better manage risk and demand

The force is carrying out work to understand the rising numbers of child protection conferences and child exploitation and abuse reports, and whether partner organisations have different perceptions of risk. This will help the force to judge how many staff it needs to protect children effectively. For example, dedicated staff from the [public protection department](#) attend almost all multi-agency [initial child protection conferences](#). They also take part in decision-making about whether a protection plan is needed for children who are discussed. However, although police reports are still shared with other agencies, there aren't enough staff to go to child protection plan review meetings. This means the force doesn't always play an active role in making decisions about risks to children.

Our inspection found that when staff place warning markers for [county lines](#) and criminal exploitation of children on the force crime and incident recording system and [Police National Computer](#), they don't consistently explain the nature of risks to children. This means officers may not have enough information about children at risk of exploitation, or about suspected perpetrators, to take appropriate action. The force needs to ensure staff follow its guidance on creating and explaining markers.

South Wales Police works well with partner agencies to protect victims of domestic abuse, although high-risk case numbers are too high

We found that, on the whole, police officers chairing [multi-agency risk assessment conferences \(MARACs\)](#) were knowledgeable about how the police and partner agencies can protect domestic abuse victims. They identified risks well and agreed safety plans with these partners. Partners told us that public protection and local policing teams share information about vulnerable people well, and invite them to training events.

The force is also represented at the MARAC steering group. This makes sure procedures and information-sharing agreements are consistently followed and that funding is available for the [independent domestic violence adviser](#) service to continue to support victims.

People who have been repeatedly referred to MARACs are flagged on force systems, so staff attending incidents know about any history of high-risk domestic abuse. Daily safety-planning discussions take place with partner agencies about high-risk domestic abuse incidents reported overnight. These make sure victims are protected without delay, rather than waiting for cases to be discussed at the next MARAC, which could be held a week or more later. Daily discussions are also intended to keep MARAC case numbers manageable, so that better quality safety-planning decisions are made for victims and their children.

However, in the year ending September 2021, South Wales Police chaired 4,404 MARACs. This equated to 82 per 10,000 women in the force area, roughly twice the [SafeLives](#) recommended rate of 40 cases per 10,000 women. In one area, the force has responded to rising demand by ending the practice of daily discussions and increasing the frequency of MARAC meetings. The force needs to understand why there are so many high-risk victims so that it can either take action to prevent escalating risk or allocate resources to meet demand.

Managing offenders and suspects

Adequate

South Wales Police is adequate at managing offenders and suspects.

Area for improvement

The force should ensure the quality of supervisory oversight is robust so that overdue work is addressed quickly. Action should be taken to reduce risk and comprehensive intelligence checks should be completed to effectively manage the risk posed by registered sex offenders

Our inspection found that [management of sexual offenders and violent offenders \(MOSOVO\)](#) teams use [active risk management \(ARMS\)](#) to assess and manage an offender's risk to the public. However, a significant number of ARMS assessments needed updating, with the oldest dating back to May 2020. As a result, it is likely that risk-management plans are no longer fully effective. Officers don't routinely add address, telephone or history markers, or record breaches of violent and sexual offenders' registration requirements, to the force command and control system. Nor do they routinely research the Police National Database (PND) to understand potential offending behaviour by people they manage in other areas of England and Wales. This means South Wales Police may not have a complete understanding of the risks their offenders pose to the public.

Innovative practice

South Wales Police has created an information pack to give to the families of people who have been arrested on suspicion of criminal offences relating to indecent images of children. The pack, which is consistent with College of Policing advice, has been shared with other forces in Wales and with the [National Police Chiefs' Council](#)

People suspected of such offences are likely to be vulnerable and at greater risk of harming themselves. As well as being able to recognise and potentially prevent such harm, the family and friends of suspects are likely to need support and advice.

Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to how well the force manages offenders and suspects.

South Wales Police has established processes to prioritise the arrest of suspected offenders

Representatives from all departments concerned with day-to-day operational policing are present at local daily management meetings. These meetings review and prioritise the arrest of suspected offenders and make sure that officers are allocated to do so. Staff we spoke to said they knew which suspected offenders needed to be arrested every time they were on duty.

South Wales Police has clear processes to make sure its management of suspects through the use of bail, released under investigation and voluntary attendance is appropriate and manageable

All the custody staff and investigators we spoke to could explain the force's policies and procedures to ensure the appropriate use of [bail](#) and [released under investigation \(RUI\)](#). When required, inspectors from the custody department authorise the release of suspects on bail or RUI. They also help to maintain standards by reviewing the quality of colleagues' decision-making. This means that the most knowledgeable supervisors decide how to manage the likelihood of suspected offenders reoffending and presenting a risk to victims when they leave the police station.

The force has created an app to notify the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) that a suspect is on bail or RUI. This allows the CPS to take bail deadlines into account when providing advice or asking for further evidence to be obtained so it can make a charging decision. All the investigators we spoke to knew to use this.

However, the force needs to reduce and keep down the number of cases involving suspects who are RUI, or who have [voluntarily attended](#) a police station for interview, and which remain open for long periods. According to the force's own analysis, on 1 November 2021 there were 1,039 suspects who had been RUI for more than 180 days. This is greater than in August 2020, when the force estimated that 834 suspects had been RUI for more than 180 days. The force examined a random selection of 1,561 open voluntary attendance records on its crime and incident recording system and found that 60 of 100 were still shown as live investigations. If investigations take longer than necessary to resolve, victims of crime don't receive the prompt service they deserve.

The force is improving the way it uses criminal justice options to divert people away from reoffending

Conditional cautions and community resolutions can be used, where appropriate, as an alternative to sending offenders to court. The force has recently trained its staff on this and improved how it uses the crime and incident recording system. This means it can make more effective use of measures to deter people from future offending, such as alcohol, drugs and victim awareness interventions, and gambling education courses.

The force takes effective action against people who pose a risk to children

The police online investigations team (POLIT) consults with social services before taking action against people suspected of committing crimes involving indecent images. This enables a joint approach to safeguard any children who may be at risk of harm.

[Intelligence](#) officers assess and triage all cases referred to POLIT, prioritising enforcement actions, such as search warrants. However, we found 70 to 80 cases awaiting action. Although none of these presented the highest risk, as these had been prioritised, the backlog is still a concern. The force plans to expand the POLIT team so that action is taken promptly against people posing a risk to children.

Neighbourhood teams know about the dangerous offenders in their area, but the force needs to improve how it records breaches of sex offender registration requirements

MOSOVO teams brief other departments about offenders who pose higher risks. However, offender managers don't consistently record breaches of registered sex offenders' registration requirements on the force crime and incident recording system. This means that not all safer neighbourhood teams have up-to-date knowledge about potentially dangerous offenders in their local area.

The force works well with partner organisations to manage those offenders likely to reoffend and has created some promising initiatives

South Wales Police uses the current version of the national [integrated offender management \(IOM\)](#) strategy. Selection and management of IOM candidates who are most likely to benefit from support is carried out with partner agencies, such as probation. We found that IOM staff have the capacity to work with all the offenders they manage to reduce the risk of reoffending. The force uses analysis to track the impact on reoffending rates so it can judge whether IOM management helps to reduce crime.

The force has recently created domestic abuse offender managers (DAOMs), who are part of IOM. DAOMs aim to identify perpetrators who could be referred to programmes such as DRIVE and Clear, and who therefore might be diverted from more frequent or serious offending against victims. They use the recency, frequency, gravity and domestic abuse (RFG+) matrix to identify which offenders to offer diversions to, based on the potential risk they pose. We found opportunities for DAOMs to work more closely with public protection department staff who support domestic abuse victims. This would allow even better co-ordination of support.

Although promising, the initiative is in its early stages and it is too early to judge its impact on reoffending.

Disrupting serious organised crime

We now inspect [serious and organised crime \(SOC\)](#) on a regional basis, rather than inspecting each force individually in this area. This is so we can be more effective and efficient in how we inspect the whole SOC system, as set out in HM Government's SOC strategy.

SOC is tackled by each force working with [regional organised crime units \(ROCU\)](#). These units lead the regional response to SOC by providing access to specialist resources and assets to disrupt organised crime groups (OCGs) that pose the highest harm.

Through our new inspections we seek to understand how well forces and ROCUs work in partnership. As a result, we now inspect ROCUs and their forces together and report on regional performance. Forces and ROCUs are now graded and reported on in regional SOC reports.

Our SOC inspection of South Wales Police hasn't yet been completed. We will update our website with our findings (including the force's grade) and a link to the regional report once the inspection is complete.

Building, supporting and protecting the workforce

Adequate

South Wales Police is adequate at building and developing its workforce.

Area for improvement

The force should make sure it has sufficient training provision to support the effective delivery of its learning and development plans

For some time, South Wales Police has been planning training for supervisors, to improve the quality of how evidence is obtained and maintain workforce wellbeing. However, this has yet to start. Response teams need to be able to deploy trained sexual offences first responders, whose role it is to gather evidence from victims quickly, but there are too few available.

Improved training and development for tutors of investigators is also planned but has not yet started. Many staff told us that tutors find managing their own workloads and maintaining their skills difficult. This is owing to a shortage of tutors and the need to guide new recruits.

Some coaching and mentoring courses have been postponed. Investigators told us there is no dedicated continuing development training structure to help them maintain and update their skills and knowledge. Some response supervisors told us training for their role was available but they couldn't be released to do it because of work pressures. There are too few trainers to teach new and serving staff to use the force crime and incident recording system. The force is also finding it difficult to recruit enough driving instructors to make sure officers are qualified to respond quickly to emergency calls.

Training capacity underpins the force's plans to develop the expertise of investigators and supervisors and its need to maintain its capability to respond quickly to emergency calls.

Without sufficient training provision, the force will continue to rely on unsuitably trained staff to provide a service to the public. This not only has a potential negative effect on performance but also risks staff wellbeing.

Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to how well the force builds and develops its workforce.

South Wales Police promotes an ethical culture, with clear leadership that supports improvement through learning

Staff in all areas of the force told us that the chief constable and senior leaders demonstrate clear leadership on ethical issues. However, we found some staff weren't aware of the work of the [ethics committee](#). Therefore, the force should make sure it better promotes this.

South Wales Police encourages its staff to reflect on their practice and performance to improve how they work. Through Operation Ninian workshops, the head of the [professional standards department](#) works with supervisors to encourage this approach. The force has produced a guidance toolkit to promote understanding of reflective practice. We saw several documented examples of how reflective practice has been applied so that staff can review, learn from and improve as a result of incidents they dealt with.

Staff told us they would feel confident and supported if they needed to challenge or report unprofessional behaviour.

South Wales Police is committed to being an inclusive and supportive organisation

The force has adopted the National Equality Standard Framework to guide how well it improves equality of treatment and opportunity, diversity and inclusion for all its staff. The equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) programme board, chaired by the deputy chief constable, oversees work to improve how representative the workforce is of the communities it serves, and how well supported staff feel.

There is a positive and strong working relationship between the chief constable and the Black Police Association. This led to the creation of 'Let's Talk About Race' sessions, which raise awareness and promote open discussion about equality and diversity. More than 4,000 staff took part in the sessions, which were facilitated by several charities dedicated to eliminating race inequality. The force sent out workforce surveys before and after the sessions. These measured how staff view activities to encourage under-represented groups to join and progress within the force, and wider themes about race and equality.

The recently started Atlas programme gives police officers and staff from black and minority ethnic backgrounds access to networking and mentoring. Staff told us that their involvement in Atlas has contributed to their belief that South Wales Police is committed to being a safe and supportive employer for all its employees.

The force understands the wellbeing of its workforce and is working to improve how it supports this, although sickness levels are too high

The force's wellbeing strategy explains how it aims to improve its working environment and leadership skills, and to help staff stay healthy at work or return from illness. Staff were generally knowledgeable and positive about the wellbeing support the force offers, and their access to it.

The force has introduced Care First, an online service to help officers and staff cope with stress, anxiety and depression. This complements the work of its in-house counsellors. Staff told us that, generally, access to counselling was prompt after referral, with few examples of delays. Officers talked positively about the supportive seven-point plan the force uses following assaults on staff. They were also appreciative of follow-up contact from senior managers.

The force knows that, despite its wellbeing initiatives, its overall sickness rates are too high and are rising. Mental ill-health is at particularly concerning levels. Sickness levels are highest where demand is greatest, for example investigation hubs. In addition, the force struggles to attract staff to fill vacancies. It analyses sickness information to understand how many, how often and for how long employees are unwell.

The force's appraisal processes are linked to development and accreditation and are trusted by the workforce

In our 2018/2019 report, we said the force needed to ensure it has effective systems, processes and guidance in place to manage individual performance in a way that is valued by the workforce.

The force's appraisal system is called Perform, and its own data suggests that end-of-year reviews have a very high completion rate. However, supervisors' completion of interim reviews throughout the year needs to improve. Perform appraisals contribute up to 25 percent credit for well-performing officers towards promotion and development, including the talent identification scheme. A moderation process makes sure supervisors are consistent in their judgments of individual staff members' performance so that credit is fairly awarded.

Perform is also used to check PIP accreditation for staff who investigate crime. Most staff told us Perform meetings happen regularly, are recorded, and cover their wellbeing and development, and the system is useful for staff who need support or want to develop.

The force is improving its governance arrangements for ensuring its workforce is more representative of communities

The force has recognised that it needs to improve its governance structure to achieve better representation levels and is working to do this. We look forward to seeing the results.

The force has a large representative workforce team and engages in outreach at community centres, temples, colleges and youth clubs. Team members give presentations, promoting policing as a career. The team gets back in touch with people who have expressed an interest in applying, runs catch-up sessions to keep them engaged and hosts mock interviews for potential applicants. The force plans to provide bursaries to applicants from black and minority ethnic communities.

The force's Gender Equality Network contacts female members of staff to understand why they don't apply for some promotion opportunities and to encourage them to do so. It isn't yet clear how the force acts on this information.

An uplift diversity dashboard helps the force understand how many people with [protected characteristics](#) apply and work for, seek and gain promotion, and how many leave the organisation. The dashboard also helps the force predict how successful its positive action activity is likely to be in helping to improve the diversity of the workforce, and therefore to try new approaches if it needs to.

The EDI board monitors how the force is achieving its objectives of making the workforce as representative of the communities it serves as possible. The EDI governance structure needs to make sure that senior officers responsible for the plan have enough support to enable the force to fulfil its aims of improving the diversity of its workforce.

South Wales Police needs to make sure it can take effective steps to retain its younger in-service officers

The force is working to understand why police officers leave within their first few years of service. This includes those undertaking the Police Degree Apprenticeship and female officers. The force also offers exit interviews to all staff who leave.

Student officers told us they were frustrated by difficulties in balancing degree coursework, cancelled rest days and overtime requirements. The force needs to address these issues and better understand how it can avoid losing student officers to make sure it can continue meet its commitment to providing an effective policing service to the public.

Vetting and counter corruption

We now inspect how forces deal with vetting and counter corruption differently. This is so we can be more effective and efficient in how we inspect this high-risk area of police business.

Corruption in forces is tackled by specialist units, designed to proactively target corruption threats. Police corruption is corrosive and poses a significant risk to public trust and confidence. There is a national expectation of standards and how they should use specialist resources and assets to target and arrest those that pose the highest threat.

Through our new inspections, we seek to understand how well forces apply these standards. As a result, we now inspect forces and report on national risks and performance in this area. We now grade and report on forces' performance separately.

South Wales Police's vetting and counter corruption inspection hasn't yet been completed. We will update our website with our findings and the separate report once the inspection is complete.

Strategic planning, organisational management and value for money

Good

South Wales Police is good at operating efficiently.

Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to how well the force operates efficiently.

The force has an effective strategic planning framework to make sure it addresses issues that are important locally and nationally

The force has a robust approach to strategic planning. It uses systematic processes to better understand threats and risks to the community and the public's expectations.

The force has a strong governance structure. It circulates documents and uses internal channels, such as the force intranet, to make sure priorities are communicated to staff. The force is developing its performance framework to make sure it continues to drive improvement. It is developing its data tools and has structured operational meetings aligning operational decisions with its priorities to make sure the force is focusing on what is important.

The force manages its current demand well

The force has an established and rigorous approach to understanding and managing demand.

The force's demand and performance groups are responsible for making sure each area understands priorities and these are mapped against demand and resource. Information includes ownership and demand data. The force performance meeting, chaired by the deputy chief constable, focuses on national, force and local demand and performance matters. Updates from local demand and performance meetings are an integral part of this meeting.

The force recognises that it needs to improve its understanding of wider demand. Plans are in place to develop its analytical tool, PowerBI, which will improve the force's ability to match resource to demand.

The force makes the best use of the money it has available, and its plans are both ambitious and sustainable

The force is rigorous in managing its finances and it has developed sophisticated approaches to budgeting. The force makes sure operational objectives and performance inform the way it allocates money and resources.

The general [reserve](#) is £1.2m below the force's reserve strategy. The general reserve should be maintained at 3 percent of gross expenditure. This is approximately £11.1m for South Wales Police, but it is currently £9.9m. The force has identified this and plans to replenish reserves through the financial year.

The force has a balanced [medium-term financial plan](#) based on realistic assumptions about future costs. There is further investment in making sure finance is understood in leadership, including participation in the Achieving Finance Excellence in Policing programme.

The force actively seeks opportunities to improve services through collaboration and makes the most of the benefits

The force is committed to improving services through effective collaboration and seeks opportunities to work with others.

There are good processes and strong governance in place with structured reviews and audits, and a commitment to understanding benefits. For example, the force has Collaborative Strategic Resource Planning arrangements with Gwent Police and North Wales Police, which cover the planned increase in police numbers. Arrangements for strong decision-making are in place in each force. These are supported by comprehensive data and management information. The force has also developed strong collaborative links at a strategic level.

The force should make sure it uses its police officers to the best effect and decisions on managing demand are providing value for money

A high number of officers are in support functions. Although performance is good, the force should keep this under review to make sure this investment is improving services. A high placement of officers in support roles may not be the best use of resource to support operational policing and public service or to manage the demand the force faces.

The force is working to better understand its capability and improve how it uses its resources to manage demand.

In partnership with Gwent Police, it has developed a human resources tool that will effectively match its resource to demand. This will place both forces at the forefront in how police forces understand and use resources effectively and efficiently.

The force has presented the approach to national colleagues and, if implemented successfully, the tool may represent a positive change in this area of work.

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