

UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 00:01 ON THURSDAY 8 DECEMBER 2016



Promoting improvements
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PEEL: Police leadership 2016

An inspection of Nottinghamshire Police

Introduction

As part of our annual inspections of police effectiveness, efficiency, legitimacy and leadership (PEEL), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) assesses the leadership of police forces across England and Wales.

Police leadership is crucial in enabling a force to be effective, efficient and legitimate.

The inspection is focused on how a force understands, develops and displays leadership through its organisational development and is based on the recent 'Guiding Principles' developed by the National Police Chiefs' Council, the College of Policing and HMIC.

Overview

Nottinghamshire Police's chief officer team understands the importance of having strong, ethical leaders and the force is trying to ensure that everyone understands what the force expects from its leaders. However, more could be done. We found there is only a limited understanding throughout the force of what is expected of effective leaders.

No systematic approach is in place to identify leadership capacity and capabilities across the organisation. The force is led by a chief constable and an assistant chief constable whose ranks are temporary. A decision made not to advertise immediately for a new chief constable means the arrangement will continue until the new postholder takes up the role by 1 April 2017 – ten months after the previous chief constable left. This could lead to a period of significant uncertainty and lack of direction for the force at a time when it faces some significant performance challenges. The lack of a settled leadership team is of considerable concern to HMIC. The interim arrangement is also causing uncertainty among the workforce; this, together with the potential for the new chief constable to review the force structure, may have an impact on the force's effectiveness.

The force recognises that identifying and responding to the gaps in leadership capability will be important to implement new ways of working. A future workforce plan aims to identify the forces' leadership requirements. The force uses a broad range of approaches and techniques to understand the relative strengths of its leadership. This understanding could be made more effective by ensuring the leadership development programmes address the gaps identified in leadership capability.

The force seeks out new ideas, approaches and working practices from across the police service and further afield. It has forged good links with local academic institutions and learns from and regularly evaluates new innovations and working practices in other forces. The force has a good understanding of diversity, including

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how diverse leadership styles can help build effective and complementary teams. It evaluates the diversity, background and skills of its senior management teams and works positively to encourage those from under-represented groups to develop and progress.

How well does the force understand leadership?

A good understanding of leadership capabilities and expectations is critical to the effective functioning of forces. How forces engage with their workforces when setting leadership expectations is vital in ensuring that police staff and officers feel enabled to lead in an ethical way and to challenge the expectations appropriately.

A forces' understanding of leadership should also extend to the leadership strengths and weaknesses across every rank and grade. This includes an understanding of leadership styles and personality types of individuals, and how these affect wider team dynamics. Forces should be able to take this knowledge and use it to adapt quickly to identify any gaps or issues in leadership

Throughout Nottinghamshire Police, there is only a limited understanding of what is expected of effective leaders, and this understanding is mainly at chief officer level. Conversations about leadership expectations occur only in some parts of the force and in only limited ways across the organisation. In general, we found that the workforce are able to challenge decisions made by the force's leaders, but there is limited activity to communicate what the force expects from its leaders across all ranks and grades. As a result, the wider workforce are unable to articulate the force's leadership expectations.

The force holds quarterly conferences for its senior leadership team to discuss topics such as the staff survey, organisational change, organisational culture and staff behaviour. Those who attend gain a clearer sense of leadership expectations and priorities, but we found that this has not filtered down to more junior officers and staff.

A force-wide training needs analysis is being undertaken to understand and prioritise future training needs, in line with the force's strategic threat and risk assessment. However, this analysis does not include an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of leadership skills across all ranks and grades; this means the force will continue to have a limited understanding of leadership ability across its whole workforce.

Areas for improvement

Nottinghamshire Police should ensure that its expectations for leadership are clearly understood across the force (including frontline staff and officers).

Nottinghamshire Police should develop a comprehensive leadership skills analysis that clearly links to the force's training needs.

How well does the force develop leadership?

The way in which a force identifies and develops leadership skills is crucial in making sure it performs well now and in the future. To develop leadership, forces should identify leadership development programmes, containing a broad range of approaches, beyond just formal training.

Forces' knowledge of their current leadership capability should also mean that they are aware of the leadership skills and experience they do not currently possess, and that they are seeking to recruit to address this.

Nottinghamshire Police uses leadership development programmes to support and improve the leadership capability of its individuals and teams. The breadth of the programmes allows the force to tailor what is available for developing leaders, including mentoring and coaching. The programmes are accessible, well publicised and in general the workforce have a good awareness of them. The force also has a talent programme that seeks to identify and develop potential leaders. It is a three-month virtual programme, well advertised and open to all.

As well as developing talent through its own scheme, the force fully supports the national [High Potential Development Scheme](#) and [Fast Track](#) promotion schemes. A number of people have taken up the national schemes and they are supported in the force through the provision of professional development opportunities. There are no plans to use [Direct Entry](#) to fill any leadership gaps.

The positions of chief constable and assistant chief constable, are filled temporarily awaiting permanent appointments to be made. A decision not to advertise immediately for a new chief constable means the arrangement will continue well into 2017. This could lead to a period of significant uncertainty and lack of direction for the force at a time when the force faces some significant performance challenges. The lack of a settled leadership team is of considerable concern to HMIC. The interim arrangement is also causing uncertainty among the workforce; this, together with the potential for the new chief constable to review the force structure, may have an impact on the force's effectiveness.

A considerable number of officers in lower ranks are also in temporary posts. The force has a plan to address this, but until this is completed, it cannot be confident that it is assembling the most effective teams.

The force lacks the formal systems to identify leadership problems quickly. For a long period, the force failed to identify the impact that a high turnover of senior posts in the finance team was having on the quality of financial controls. Consequently, financial management was weak and required more scrutiny and control. There is now a temporary head of finance in post, but ensuring financial stability continues to

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be a high-risk area for the force. However, we found some operational examples of action being taken to address specific leadership problems elsewhere in the force.

How well does the force display leadership?

Good leadership encourages and develops a wide range of people, embraces change and actively supports the development of new ideas. While it is important for forces to ensure that they are representative of the communities they serve, truly diverse leadership teams are built around the wider experience, background and skills of individuals.

Senior officers within the force are approachable and supportive of new ideas. Officers and staff in local teams regularly make suggestions and we identified at least one example of a suggestion from a police officer being trialled, assessed and then replicated swiftly and flexibly. The force's 'people board' also supports innovation and new ideas, publicising and reporting of any progress on the force intranet. However, some police staff and officers told us that they did not always receive feedback about ideas that had been suggested, which would have helped the whole workforce to feel that new ideas are welcomed.

The force has developed good links with local academic institutions, and projects have included the commissioning of research. It evaluates innovations and working practices in other police forces, identifying and adopting best practice. For example, visits to other forces have led the force to start developing new community engagement profiles for each neighbourhood team.

The force has a good understanding of diversity, including how diverse leadership styles can help build effective teams and complementary skills. It evaluates the diversity, background and skills of its senior management teams and works positively to encourage those from under-represented groups to develop and progress. The force has also evaluated its leadership development programmes to identify potential or perceived barriers and help ensure that the whole workforce has access to leadership development, and has actively promoted them to under-represented groups. The force uses networks such as the British Association for Women in Policing to support leadership and improve diversity. Also, it holds positive action recruitment seminars for candidates with [protected characteristics](#) and a senior officer acts as a positive role model.