

Cheshire PCCs Response to His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Police and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Inspections

Title of Inspection	An inspection into impartiality and activism in policing.	
Date Inspection Published	10 th September 2024	
Type of Inspection	Annual Assessment	
Recommendations	National	x
	Local	

Report Summary:

The report found a ‘near-total absence’ of any ‘definition, guidance or judicial consideration of impartiality in respect of policing’. It also noted the police have a very difficult role: to meet the needs of individuals and groups who have opposing views about contentious and emotive issues while simultaneously upholding everyone’s rights.

The report identified three systemic problems:

- No definition, guidance or judicial consideration of impartiality as it relates to policing.
- Interpretation of the Equality Act is now too complicated.
- The legislation doesn’t clearly define the boundary between police operational independence and external influence or accountability.

The report makes other findings:

- that ‘most’ chief officers told the inspectors that they experienced ‘improper pressure or interference from significant political figures’.
- there is no updated guidance on how external advisory groups should be formed or operate and no consistent approach from the different forces.
- forces record and attend more non-crime hate Incidents than they need to and are not consistently following guidance.

Recommendations and Constabulary Response:

Recommendation 16 By 31 March 2025, forces should update and implement their policies and guidance for non-crime hate incidents to provide clear direction to officers and staff for the assessment and recording of, and response to, these incidents.	Policies will be reviewed and updated accordingly.
Recommendation 18 By 31 March 2025, chief constables should make sure their force has an effective and efficient process for assessing and reviewing hate incidents.	Established a network of hate crime SPOCS to assess and review hate incidents. Appointed a Chief Inspector to act as operational lead for Hate Crime who will oversee the process and ensure compliance with this recommendation.
Recommendation 20 By 31 March 2025, forces should make sure they clearly define in policies the requirements for recording personal data for non-crime hate incidents. If the force approach differs from 'Non-Crime Hate Incidents: Code of Practice on the Recording and Retention of Personal Data', the force should record the rationale for this.	The operational lead for hate crime will review policies and ensure compliance.
Recommendation 13 By 31 March 2025, all chief constables should audit their policies that include or relate to the Equality Act 2010. They should make sure there is an effective process for regularly reviewing and updating policies and have appropriate governance arrangements in place.	The Constabulary have a rigorous process in place for reviewing and updating of policies and procedures, implemented and overseen by the Deputy Chief Constable. Policies are 100% up to date and monitored through performance management frameworks.
Recommendation 12 By 31 July 2025, chief constables should make sure that those personnel responsible for completing equality impact assessments are appropriately trained to do so. Chief constables should also make sure there are effective governance measures in place to improve the quality of these	The personnel responsible for completing equality impact assessments are assisted by a trained subject matter expert within our People Services Department. All policies include a EIA as part of their submission and sign off.

<p>assessments and make sure they are completed when required.</p>	
<p>Recommendation 17 By 31 March 2025, forces should make sure their recording processes for hate related incidents allow them to analyse data relating to hate crimes and non-crime hate incidents.</p>	<p>The operational lead has reviewed recording processes and will ensure compliance.</p>
<p>Recommendation 10 By 31 March 2025, chief constables should give clear direction to their workforce about wearing and displaying visible representations. They should make sure that they clearly communicate such policies to the workforce and that they enforce the policy. Chief constables should regularly review these policies to respond to new causes that arise. The National Police Chiefs' Council should support chief constables in achieving a consistent approach.</p>	<p>Clear direction on the displaying of visible representations has been provided to the workforce. Regular updates are provided through weekly orders and targeted team / departmental briefings.</p>
<p>Recommendation 22 By 31 March 2025, all forces should make sure they have a robust assessment process for allocating funding and giving support to their networks. They should prioritise funding and support based on local need.</p>	<p>There is continually review of process for allocating funding and support for networks. This is done on at least an annual basis. Networks meet regularly with the Chief Constable and work with a command team champion. Funding requests are reviewed by the Chief People Officer.</p>
<p>Recommendation 9 Within six months of the College of Policing updating its engagement and communication authorised professional practice, forces should update their policies to reflect the College of Policing advice on communicating about politicised and contentious issues.</p>	<p>Awaiting guidance. Once received will review policies accordingly as soon as received.</p>

Commissioner's Response:

The principle of police impartiality is essential and must be upheld without improper political interference. The report finds that, overall, police officers and staff adhere to these principles.

PCCs have a crucial statutory duty to hold Chief Constables accountable for their efficiency and effectiveness on behalf of the public. They oversee the performance of the force's officers and staff, acting as the public's voice in policing and an essential part of governance. The report recognises the distinct roles that Chief Constables and PCCs play in serving and protecting the public.

I have been reassured by the Constabulary that the recommendations are being progressed, and I will continue to monitor how these are progressing through my scrutiny process.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Dan Price', is positioned above the printed name.

Dan Price

Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire