

## Response from the Police & Crime Commissioner of Devon and Cornwall to [An inspection into activism and impartiality in policing](#)

Impartiality is fundamental in policing, and public perception of impartiality in policing is an essential part of building public trust and confidence in the police. This Home Secretary commissioned HMICFRS inspection examined how the police deal with politicised or contested matters and whether the police allow politics or activism to unduly influence them.

The inspection uncovered a number of issues including the lack of a proper definition of impartiality in policing, the complexity of relevant legislation and unclear boundaries around operational independence and appropriate external influence or accountability. The report makes a number of recommendations for improvement, nine of which are directed at police forces. The action already taken and planned by Devon and Cornwall Police is outlined below.

### **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.

**Action planned/taken:** This recommendation is accepted and Devon and Cornwall Police has committed to reviewing and updating the relevant policies when the College of Policing have updated the authorised professional practice.

### **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.

**Action planned/taken:** The force's 'Standards of appearance and uniform' policy states: "Consideration must be given to the appropriateness of lanyards worn; these should not have any political bias." This policy was reviewed and refreshed on 30th March 2023 and is available on the force intranet for reference.

Depending upon the role being undertaken, there may be occasions to request a badge to be removed in the interest of health and safety. Devon and Cornwall Police therefore consider that this recommendation has already been met.

### **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 assessments and make sure they are completed when required.

**Action planned/taken:** Equality impact assessments (EIAs) are completed on all policies and procedures as relevant and refreshed on a regular basis within force. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) team are trained and involved in all EIAs and are responsible for their approval and sign off to ensure the quality of the assessment in line with the Public Sector Duty. The EDI team regularly coach and develop a wider understanding of the completion of EIAs across teams in Devon and Cornwall Police to improve awareness. Therefore Devon and Cornwall Police consider that this recommendation is already met.

### **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.

#### **Action planned/taken:**

Devon and Cornwall Police have recently reviewed the process and governance arrangements for force policy documents. As a result, clear executive ownership and regular reporting to relevant boards ensures that that all force policy documents are subject to appropriate executive oversight at key stages in the cycle of creation and review.

All policies are subject to a regular review cycle, which is recorded and tracked centrally by the Force Policy Unit. The review of policies routinely involves consultation with relevant stakeholders, which includes representatives from the Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Team who provide specialist insight into matters relating to the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. Long terms plans are in place to continue to strengthen consultation processes by exploring opportunities to routinely reach a broader range of stakeholders (for example, members of the public, policy users and partners).

### **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.

**Action planned/taken:** Devon and Cornwall Police force policy on hate crime already refers to the College of Policing Approved Professional Practice (APP) which covers the 'recording of non-crime hate incidents'. This APP guidance provides clear direction to officers and staff for the assessment and recording of, and response to, these incidents. An annual review of force hate crime policy is underway and will ensure that recommendations from this report are reflected.

### **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.

**Action planned/taken:** Devon and Cornwall Police already has processes in place to identify all hate crimes and hate incidents at the point of recording, allowing data relating to hate crimes and non-crime hate incidents to be analysed.

### **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.

**Action planned/taken:** Devon and Cornwall Police already has an effective and efficient process for assessing and reviewing hate incidents. All incidents are currently reviewed by Diverse Communities Team Sergeants and an assessment made as to whether the non-crime hate incident code of practice has been complied with. This process of review may in future be undertaken by a wider cohort of crime management investigation team Sergeants but this has yet to be confirmed. Devon and Cornwall Police therefore consider that this recommendation is already met.

### **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.

**Action planned/taken:** Devon and Cornwall Police force policy on hate crime already refers to the College of Policing Approved Professional Practice (APP) which covers the 'recording of non-crime hate incidents'. This APP clearly refers to the requirements for recording personal data, as outlined in the Code of Practice. Devon and Cornwall Police's approach is consistent with what is outlined in the APP. An annual review of our hate crime policy is underway and will ensure that recommendations from this report are reflected.

### **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.

**Action planned/taken:** Staff groups and networks are overseen by a member of the force executive who act as sponsors. An annual plan for funding is made to the Head of Diversity, Equality and Inclusion each April and is linked to the forces Equality Objectives. Funding decisions are made based on local need and is agreed with the relevant executive member. The Head of Performance and Analysis acts as an independent decision maker. Devon and Cornwall Police therefore consider that this recommendation is already met.