

Agenda item:

Warwickshire Joint Audit and Standards Committee Report Summary

Meeting Date: 22nd January 2025

Subject: Workforce culture & behaviour

Contact details: Tania Coppola – Director of Enabling Services

Purpose of the Report:

Following national media attention and adverse publicity regarding police conduct, an input is required into the Joint Audit and Standards Committee to outline what steps are being taken to ensure culture and behaviours are appropriately managed within Warwickshire Police.

Recommendation:

That the Joint Audit and Standards Committee note the contents of the report.

Background:

A key strand of our People Plan is Culture, Ethics and Behaviours to enable a safe and positive environment. This includes the following 4 key areas:

1. Creating Trust and Confidence from the public and our workforce
2. Providing a psychologically safe and inclusive environment
3. Valuing and supporting our staff
4. Creating a culture of togetherness

An initial review of this strand is currently taking place, led by Chief Superintendent Emma Bastone. The review is looking at the range of interventions and initiatives that are in place, assessing the join up between the activities and our communication and engagement with the workforce and as result the level of workforce understanding and confidence.

This will identify a gap analysis in order for a cultural framework to be developed to ensure evaluation and ongoing continuous improvement. This high level framework will ultimately feed into a briefing to the newly appointed Chief Constable, as one element to inform a broader cultural change programme to support creating a new force vision, policing plan and force values.



Governance

ACC Ben Smith chairs the Legitimacy and Equality Steering Group which has 3 key feeds:

1. Organisational Diversity & Inclusion Board (Chair: Dir Enabling Services)
2. Use of Powers Board (Chair: Supt Comms & Response)
3. Public Consultation & Engagement (Chair: C/Supt Local Policing)

Each strand has a suite of strategic objectives which are monitored through this board and are reviewed annually.

The HMICFRCS national report into misogyny, vetting and misconduct highlighted that “without an established process, forces are missing opportunities to identify officers and staff of concern”.

We therefore reviewed our governance structure and in October 2023 responded to this gap by setting up an additional meeting entitled “Behaviours and Standards Board”.

The aim of this meeting is to bring together representatives from different parts of the force to exchange information on those officers and members of staff whose behaviour may give cause for concern, and who may present a corruption risk.

This People Intelligence Meeting is working well, however it has been predominantly focussed on individuals identified by professional standards and therefore Chief Supt Bastone is reviewing how this can be expanded to also focus on broader people intelligence where standards and attitude have been identified as falling below the expected standard.

Op Amethyst

As a force we expect the highest professional standards of our workforce. We expect everyone to act with integrity and transparency. This means being inclusive, anti-discriminatory and treating everyone with dignity and respect at all times. This is integral to our organisational vision and values.

Everyone who joins Warwickshire Police as an officer, member of staff, volunteer or contractor, goes through checks before taking up your role to reflect the level of responsibility and trust that come with working in policing.

We do not allow individuals to join who do not meet our expected standards of behaviour. Our standards of behaviour reflect the national Code of Ethics for policing.

Maintaining standards of behaviour

Continuous vetting - We use a range of ways to continuously assure ourselves that everyone in the force maintains our expected standards of behaviour.

We look for any changes in circumstance or concerning information for every clearance holder at least once a year.

In addition to encouraging self-disclosure, vetting reviews, randomised re-vetting, and immediate reviews triggered whenever we have information of concern about someone, we also use force-wide annual integrity checks (AHIC). This further opportunity touches every member of our workforce. It is designed to protect officers, staff and the force from corruption and committing misconduct, either accidentally or deliberately, the AHIC is a yearly mandatory reminder of relevant guidance and key policies for everyone in the force. When we ran this recently, as at November, we had over 2000 completed with just a handful outstanding to reach 100%.

Education and Reporting

Through Op Amethyst we encourage all members of the organisation to challenge and report inappropriate behaviour, and give support if people have been affected by inappropriate behaviour.

We want every member of the force to feel confident to challenge inappropriate behaviour, and that they will be supported to do so.

We utilise a number of opportunities to reinforce the current force expectation around conduct, standards and behaviours as well as on challenging behaviours. This starts right from our recruitment and induction processes which involve inputs from Vetting and Professional Standards. It is reinforced continually through all levels of our leadership training, with detailed face to face sessions within our curriculum on areas such as First Line Leaders and above.

The workforce are required to complete training such as an upstander training package provided by the College of Policing together with sexual harassment in the workplace.

We have also created a Virtual Reality Project: "Education on Misogyny and Inappropriate Behaviours" which the graphic below highlights. The project seeks to educate young men (aged 16-23) on the impact of misogyny and inappropriate behaviours towards women and girls. Shifting the focus from women's safety precautions to addressing male behaviours, the project adopts immersive VR films to highlight women's lived experiences and encourage safer, more respectful actions.



Employee engagement

One challenge is assessing the workforce understanding around the different routes to reporting inappropriate behaviour and as well and their trust and confidence to do so.

Therefore assessing the current workforce understanding around the different levels and ways of reporting is being sought via the bi-annual culture, behaviour and ethics survey which goes live in February 2025. This will also cover workforce views on inclusive and ethical culture, unfair treatment, incivility, cultural competence, inappropriate behaviour and organisational support.

We ran this survey in 2022 so we have a good baseline to work from.

Executive summary

In summary, there is a wealth of good practice and checks taking place within Warwickshire Police to ensure we maintain the highest professional standards that the public would expect of our workforce.

In line with an upcoming new force vision, it is timely for us to review what more we can be doing to maintain our high standards and continue to strive for excellence.

Our staff survey and the culture review will be a good start to feeding this wider cultural change programme.