

**Response to HMICFRS Report on an inspection into activism and impartiality in policing**

[An inspection into activism and impartiality in policing - His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services](https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/publication-html/activism-and-impartiality-in-policing/)

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PCC Response: 1.11.24

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**Executive Summary**

The Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) response to the HMICFRS report on "Activism and Impartiality in Policing" addresses key recommendations aimed at ensuring impartiality within policing. This response outlines measures to strengthen transparency, accountability, and operational independence, aligning with the Police and Crime Plan 2024-2029. Through coordinated efforts with the Chief Constable and targeted PCC actions, these steps support role clarity, reinforce equality standards, and enhance public engagement to maintain public trust and uphold the principles of impartiality across all policing functions.

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| **Context and Overview**The HMICFRS report on "Activism and Impartiality in Policing" reflects public concerns about how the police maintain impartiality in their actions and decisions amid complex social issues. The report provides recommendations to reinforce neutrality, support operational independence, and uphold public trust in policing. This framework is intended to help police forces across the country balance community expectations with the essential role of impartial law enforcement.**Key Points for PCC Response**We appreciate the HMICFRS’s insightful examination of activism and impartiality in policing, along with the recommendations presented. Thames Valley OPCC is committed to embedding these recommendations within our approach, ensuring the highest levels of transparency, accountability, and impartiality. This is aligned with both our new Police and Crime Plan 2024-2029, Thames Valley Police Strategic Plan 2024-25, and additional insights from key governance reviews and public sentiment reports.**Joint PCC/Chief Constable Recommendations:**1. **Operational Independence and Role Clarity (Recommendation 7)**HMICFRS’s recommendation on operational independence aligns directly with findings from our 2024 Governance Review, which identified the need for clear role definitions between the PCC and Chief Constable. Strengthening these boundaries, alongside the updated Policing Protocol Order 2023, will enhance operational efficiency and transparency in decision-making. This is critical for achieving shared goals across key areas like tackling serious violence, improving victim support, and upholding public trust.
2. **Equality and Training (Recommendations 12, 13)**Our governance structures already emphasise the importance of equality and diversity in policing. Based on the Governance Review Report (March 2024), we have begun auditing our equality impact assessments and training staff accordingly. I will continue to hold the Force to account to ensure that policies and training are in line with the Equality Act 2010 and bolstering public confidence in policing outcomes.
3. **Staff Networks (Recommendations 21, 22)**As highlighted in our Governance Review, ensuring that staff networks operate with robust governance structures is essential for promoting impartiality and inclusivity. Thames Valley Police and OPCC are working together to align network activities with local community needs, while ensuring clear, impartial leadership within these groups. This approach supports Thames Valley Police’s commitment to Valuing Our People and helps build a cohesive, professional environment within the force.

**PCC-Specific Recommendations:**1. **Political Influence and Impartiality**Maintaining strict boundaries between political influence and policing operations is a key priority for me as the Police and Crime Commissioner. Through initiatives such as the Trust and Confidence Programme, launched in 2024, I am working to reinforce transparency and impartiality in all engagements. This includes ensuring that my oversight role does not interfere with operational policing but remains focused on accountability. The findings of the 2024 Sentiment Survey underscore the public's demand for fairness and impartiality in policing, and my regular Performance and Accountability Meetings with the Chief Constable will continue to ensure these principles are upheld. By maintaining clear oversight mechanisms, I will help safeguard public trust while respecting the operational independence of Thames Valley Police.
2. **Public Engagement and Communication (Recommendations 5, 8, 9)**The 2024 Sentiment Survey Report provided valuable insights into how the public perceives Thames Valley Police’s communication efforts. With over half of residents reporting a need for clearer information on policing activities, I will work to refine our public engagement strategy. In line with HMICFRS’s recommendations, I will ensure that communication, particularly around politically sensitive or contested issues, remains transparent and impartial. This is part of my broader commitment to building public trust and improving relationships with communities across the region. I will ensure regular monitoring and adjustments to engagement strategies to address public concerns and improve understanding of Thames Valley Police’s actions.
3. **Non-Crime Hate Incidents (Recommendations 16-20)**I acknowledge the complex nature of non-crime hate incidents (NCHI), whilst recognising the core role of the police in dealing with crime and preventing criminality. I will hold the Force to account to ensure that training and that policies are regularly reviewed and I will continue to monitor how these policies are being implemented to ensure they reflect the public’s expectations.
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