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# POLICE PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT IN ENGLAND, WALES AND NORTHERN IRELAND: INTEGRATING TRUST, LEGITIMACY AND PROCEDURAL JUSTICE

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**Abstract**

This article reviews international scholarship on police performance measurement, emphasising the increasing centrality of public trust and police legitimacy in defining and operationalising effectiveness and efficiency. The authors contend that traditional output indicators, such as clearance rates, response times, and arrest or detention counts are insufficient to capture the full social value and should be supplemented by perceptual, process-quality, and procedural indicators. Drawing on empirical research regarding macro- and micro-level drivers of trust—including violent crime rates, democratic institutional context, and socio-demographic and attitudinal variables—the article demonstrates the practical significance of procedural justice for public acceptance of police decisions, even when outcomes are unfavourable for citizens. The analysis uses UK examples to illustrate institutional embedding of these concepts, focusing on the PEEL assessment framework in England and Wales and the accountability functions of Police and Crime Commissioners, while also incorporating Northern Ireland as a salient case where legitimacy- and confidence-oriented measurement has particular strategic importance for policing governance. The authors conclude that sustainable performance improvement depends on an integrated indicator system that renders both outcomes and the socially consequential side effects of policing visible through transparency, feedback mechanisms, and measurable legitimacy safeguards.

**Key words**: police performance measurement, trust in policing, police legitimacy, procedural justice, democratic accountability.

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# МЕРЕЊЕ УЧИНКА ПОЛИЦИЈЕ У ЕНГЛЕСКОЈ, ВЕЛСУ И СЕВЕРНОЈ ИРСКОЈ: ИНТЕГРАЦИЈА ПОВЕРЕЊА, ЛЕГИТИМИТЕТА И ПРОЦЕДУРАЛНЕ ПРАВДЕ

**Апстракт**

Овај чланак анализира међународна истраживања о мерењу учинка полиције, при чему се наглашава све већа централна улога јавног поверења и легитимитета полиције у дефинисању и операционализацији ефикасности и ефективности. Аутори тврде да традиционални показатељи учинка, као што су стопе расветљености, време одзива и број хапшења или притварања, нису довољни да обухвате пуну друштвену вредност и да би требало да буду допуњени перцептивним, процесним и процедуралним индикаторима. Ослањајући се на емпиријска истраживања у вези са макро и микро нивоом детерминанти поверења, укључујући стопе насилног криминала, демократски институционални контекст и социодемографске варијабле и варијабле по питању ставова, чланак показује практични значај процедуралне правде за јавно прихватање полицијских одлука, чак и кад су исходи неповољни за грађане. Анализа користи примере из Велике Британије да илуструје институционалну укорењеност ових концепата, фокусирајући се на оквир за процену PEEL у Енглеској и Велсу и функције одговорности полицијских и криминалистичких комесара, а истовремено укључује Северну Ирску као истакнут случај где мерење усмерено на легитимитет и поверење има посебан стратешки значај за управљање полицијом. Аутори закључују да одрживо побољшање учинка зависи од интегрисаног система индикатора који чини видљивим и резултате и друштвене последице рада полиције кроз транспарентност, механизме повратних информација и мерљиве мере заштите легитимности.

**Кључне речи**: мерење учинка полиције, поверење у полицију, легитимност полиције, процедурална правда, демократска одговорност.

## *INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW*

Contemporary approaches to police performance measurement extend above technical or managerial considerations, recognising that the social value and acceptance of police operations are essentially tied to community confidence and police legitimacy. In this context, the concept of 'performance' encompasses more than quantitative indicators such as detection metrics, response times, or the number of enforcement actions. It includes the quality of police conduct, the fairness of decision-making procedures, and the responsible management of the social consequences and side effects of policing interventions. International literature increasingly asserts that output-oriented indicators, which focus solely on improving statistical results, are insufficient to capture the comprehensive 'social value' of policing. (Shane, 2010) To manage these limitations, indicator systems must also incorporate dimensions that reflect social perceptions and procedural quality (Wolfe, 2011).

Empirical research indicates that citizen trust in the police is affected by both macro-level community elements and micro-level individual characteristics. In an international comparative context, Jang, Joo, and Zhao

(2010) demonstrate that trust levels are considerably influenced by indicators of violent crime and features of the democratic institutional environment, while individual sociodemographic and attitudinal variables systematically correlate with perceptions of the police (Jang et al., 2010). The relationship between crime and trust in the police has been examined in numerous empirical studies across a range of social and institutional settings (Hurst & Frank, 2000; Reisig & Parks, 2000; Van Dijk, 2001; Weitzer & Tuch, 2002, 2005; Payne & Gainey, 2007). General trust, however, is not a one-dimensional construct. Stanko and Bradford (2009) identify multiple components of trust, including effectiveness and visible presence, fair treatment and proportionality, community commitment, and responsiveness to local issues. These components directly inform which aspects of police performance should be measured and the methods for doing so. Bradford and Jackson (2010) similarly contend that empirical research on trust in the police can only produce valid and comparable results if clear distinctions are made between measuring general trust, institutional legitimacy, or willingness to cooperate with the police.

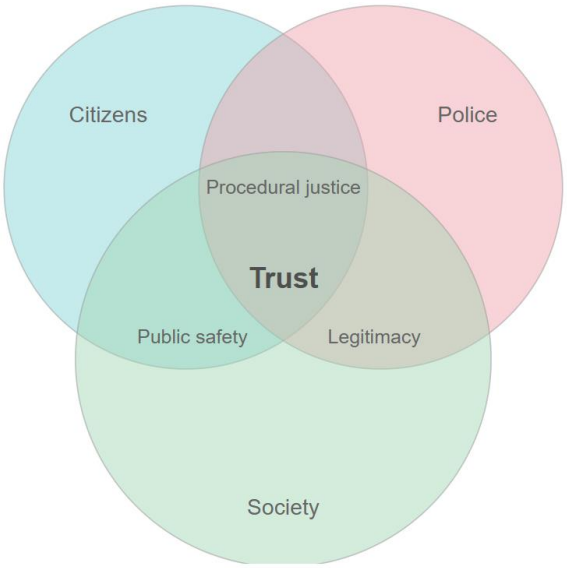



*Figure 1. Circle model of trust in the police*
*(Own compilation based on the trust-based policing model of Jackson & Bradford (2010) and Tyler & Huo (2002)).*

In explaining the relationship between legitimacy and citizen trust, the approach of procedural justice has become dominant in recent decades, linking social acceptance of police decisions not only to their outcomes and also to the perceived fairness of decision-making and treatment. (Hanway,

2023) According to this view, the legitimacy of police actions stems primarily from the extent to which those affected perceive the procedure as fair, impartial, and understandable. The literature reviewed consistently suggests that deferential treatment, impartiality, transparent justification of decisions, and transparent procedural frameworks are able to increase the acceptance of police action even in cases of unfavourable results (Murphy et al., 2008; Mazerolle et al., 2013, 2014; Li et al., 2024; Dobson et al., 2025; Yesberg, 2024; Lee, Kwak & Yoo (2025); Perez-Vincent, 2024). All this also highlights that performance measurement cannot be limited to a descriptive function: through its feedback and governance roles, it can reveal the social impacts of police practices, as well as the risks and 'side effects' that may lead to the erosion of legitimacy in the longer term. (Worden & McLean, 2018).

This broadening of the concept of performance is closely linked to the 'public value' approach, which interprets the value of police services as a multidimensional construct from the outset and does not reduce it to a single output indicator or short-term result. (Hartley et al., 2019) Moore and Braga (2003a, 2003b) discuss the assessment of police performance in this scheme along value dimensions that include not only the maintenance of public safety, but also the reduction of crime-related fears, community involvement, and the social costs of law enforcement interventions (Moore & Braga, 2003a, 2003b). Several authors draw attention to the normative limitations of measurement: unduly rigid, quantitative target systems can distort corporate priorities, while efforts to improve efficiency and effectiveness can conflict with constitutional-democratic values and fairness (Grizzle, 2002; Hatry, 2006; Charbonneau & Riccucci, 2008; Brunet, 2006). These debates are based on classic empirical approaches to measuring legitimacy (e.g., Pachon & Lovrich, 1977; Shin, 1977; Gianakis, 1994; Chandek, 1999; Cheurprakobkit, 2000; Wang, 2002; Orr & West, 2007), as well as research considering the context in England and Wales (Collier, 2006; Feilzer, 2009), point to the fact that the evaluation of police performance is inseparable from the issues of fair procedure and accountability (Tyler, 2014). The question is what impact the police's use of artificial intelligence will have on the evaluation of police performance, given that it can enhance the effectiveness of investigations. (Nyitrai, 2025).

Based on the above theoretical and empirical framework, the concept of law enforcement performance cannot be separated from the dimension of legitimacy: the social interpretation of 'measurable effectiveness' largely depends on how much the community perceives police operations as fair, transparent, and accountable (Jackson & Bradford, 2022). In line with this, the following chapters aim to show what institutional and evaluation solutions serve to enforce both efficiency together with legitimate operation in England and Wales, and how trust appears as an independent performance dimension in management and accountability mechanisms.

Accountability as a "comprehensive political, legal, and social concept implies the responsibility of public administration bodies and organisations for the (non)achievement of strategic work goals and the responsibility of appointed and employed persons for personal actions" (Anđelković, Vučetić & Vukašinović-Radojićič, 2024, p. 790). The chapter thus undertakes not only to describe 'good practices,' but also to make the logic of legitimacy-oriented performance measurement understandable in particular organisational and governance contexts. In connection with this, the following sections also examine the specific characteristics of Northern Ireland, where, when assessed in the context of its history and social background, the issues of trust and legitimacy are of particular strategic importance.

The procedural justice approach has become the dominant framework for explaining the relationship between legitimacy and public trust in recent decades. This perspective links social acceptance of police decisions not only to their outcomes but also to the perceived fairness of decision-making and treatment (Čvorović, 2022). The legitimacy of police actions is understood to derive primarily from the extent to which affected individuals perceive the procedures as fair, impartial, and understandable. The reviewed literature consistently indicates that respectful treatment, impartiality, clear justification of decisions, and transparent procedural frameworks can enhance acceptance of police actions, even when outcomes are unfavourable (Murphy et al., 2008; Mazerolle et al., 2013, 2014; Li et al., 2024; Dobson et al., 2025; Yesberg, 2024; Lee, Kwak & Yoo (2025); Perez-Vincent, 2024). This evidence underscores that performance measurement should not be confined to a descriptive function; rather, through its feedback and governance roles, it can reveal the social impacts of police practices and the risks and unintended consequences that may erode legitimacy over time.

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Based on the above theoretical and empirical framework, the concept of law enforcement performance cannot be separated from the dimension of legitimacy: the social interpretation of 'measurable effectiveness' largely depends on how much the community perceives police operations as fair, transparent, and accountable. In line with this, the following chapters aim to show which institutional and evaluation solutions enforce both efficiency and legitimate operation in England and Wales, and how trust emerges as an independent performance dimension within management and accountability mechanisms. The chapter thus undertakes not only to describe 'good practices,' but also to make the logic of legitimacy-oriented performance measurement understandable in specific organisational and governance contexts. In this connection, the subsequent sections also analyse the specific characteristics of Northern Ireland, where, when assessed in the context of its historical and social background, the issues of trust and legitimacy are of particular strategic importance.

## *MATERIAL AND METHODOLOGY*

The study is based on empirical and theoretical literature on trust in the police, legitimacy, and procedural justice, which examines the macro- and micro-level determinants of public trust and the effects of police treatment on social acceptance (e.g., Jang et al., 2010; Stanko & Bradford, 2009; Murphy et al., 2008; Mazerolle et al., 2013, 2014; Li et al., 2024). On the other hand, the paper draws on international, governmental, and policy sources related to police performance evaluation, as well as analyses based on these sources that provide an authorial synthesis and framing. These include, in particular, works on the taxonomy of performance indicators (Public Safety Canada, 2015; Vári, 2016), as well as analyses of British social surveys and accountability frameworks (e.g., Feilzer, 2009). The analysis of Anglo-Saxon examples is based on institutional and policy documents, frameworks, and materials from key players referenced in the study (e.g., Home Office, 2011; National Audit Office, 2015; HMICFRS, 2018, 2022, 2023; APCC, n.d.).

The methodological approach is therefore qualitative and synthesising. Building on international research findings, the study develops a conceptual framework for interpreting the relationships between trust, legitimacy, and police performance measurement, and then shows how classic output-oriented indicators can be supplemented with perception and procedural quality indicators. The practical significance of procedural justice in the literature is reflected in the systematisation of criteria for interpreting police-citizen interactions and their outcomes, in particular, information, dignified treatment, impartiality, and neutrality, which the study links to

the logic of transparency, feedback, and accountability in measurement systems. The institutional analyses in the subsequent chapters are based on this theoretical and conceptual framework: the British (English-Welsh and Northern Irish) solutions are presented not as independent case studies, but as illustrations and attempts to interpret the institutional embeddedness of trust- and legitimacy-oriented performance measurement.

## *MEASURING POLICE ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVNESS IN ENGLAND AND WALES*

The specific features of organisational efficiency measurement in the English police cannot be reduced to technocratic performance measurement reforms. The development and current functioning of the British model is deeply embedded in Anglo-Saxon constitutional traditions, the logic of local government control, and the moral and political crises that have repeatedly shaken the social legitimacy of the police in recent decades (Loader & Mulcahy, 2003; Lister & Rowe, 2015; Lippai, 2024a). In England, the police did not historically develop as a unified, centralised state body, but as a network of local constabularies, where the central government's primary means of influence were not operational instructions, but financing, indicator systems, and control mechanisms (Home Office, 2011). This structural feature alone established the central role of performance measurement in police management.

At the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, English police governance underwent another significant change, induced not primarily by budgetary rationalisation but by a series of serious moral crises. The failure of the investigation into the murder of Stephen Lawrence and the 'institutional racism' identified by the Macpherson Report, the state-level acknowledgment of police responsibility for the Hillsborough disaster, and the debates surrounding discrimination in stop and search practices collectively led to the concept of police performance being transformed from a professional-technical category into an assessment with moral and constitutional implications (Macpherson, 1999; Hillsborough Independent Panel, 2012; Bradford et al., 2009). From then on, the interpretation of effectiveness could no longer be limited to criminal outcomes but was measurable in terms of fair procedure, institutional integrity, and public trust.

Following 2010, these developments were reinforced by austerity measures and the adoption of the value for money approach, which increased police accountability for the efficient use of public resources (National Audit Office, 2015; HMICFRS, 2018). The introduction of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) system in 2012 institutionalised this shift by assigning responsibility for police strategy, budget priorities, and performance accountability to elected officials, while operational control remained with professional police leadership (Home Office, 2011; APCC,

n.d.). In contrast to continental policing systems, this dual model introduced a distinctive democratic and political dimension to the measurement of police effectiveness.

Another defining feature of the English performance measurement system is its particular emphasis on empirical, quantitative measurement of public trust and police legitimacy. These dimensions are not merely for research or background analysis, but have become an integral part of the official rating systems of police organisations (Jackson et al., 2012; HMICFRS, 2022; Lippai, 2024b). The operationalisation of trust and procedural justice, following the model of Bradford, Jackson, and their colleagues, has brought about one of the most significant paradigm shifts in policing thinking: the social acceptance of the police has become an independent performance indicator that has a direct impact on strategic planning, budgetary decisions, and managerial accountability (Bradford et al., 2009; Jackson et al., 2012).

As a result, the measurement of organisational efficiency in the English police force functions not only as a management tool but also as a complex mechanism of political, legal, and social legitimacy. It can be interpreted as a system that responds to both the need to rationalise the use of public funds (i.e., fiscal requirements) and the strengthening of the rule of law and the need to maintain social trust. The English model is therefore unique in Europe, not only in terms of its techniques, but also in terms of its normative and philosophical foundations, and for this reason, it is particularly instructive for continental law enforcement professionals (Loader & Mulcahy, 2003; Lister & Rowe, 2015; Jackson et al., 2012).

A performance measurement method that integrates the dimensions of effectiveness, efficiency, and legitimacy is currently operating in the most comprehensive and transparent manner in England and Wales, as confirmed by regulatory and policy developments in recent years. The central pillar of this system is the PEEL assessment, an independent performance evaluation mechanism for police forces in England and Wales, operated and continuously developed by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) (HMICFRS, 2023). The name PEEL refers to the three dimensions of Police Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Legitimacy, while 'assessment' refers to a comprehensive, standardised evaluation of police operations. The purpose of the framework is to measure and compare, in a transparent manner, the extent to which police organisations can prevent and detect crime, how they manage their resources, and how they ensure lawful, fair, and public trust-building operations. The PEEL assessment thus serves both to strengthen accountability and to lay the foundation for targeted organisational development.

As part of the PEEL assessment, HMICFRS evaluates the performance of individual police forces on a uniform rating scale, with categories ranging from Outstanding to Inadequate. The ratings are supplemented by

detailed, publicly available findings and recommendations for improvement, on the basis of which the police organisations concerned develop action plans, while the public also gains a comprehensive picture of police performance. Since 2014, the PEEL assessment has formed the backbone of the HMICFRS's national police assessment program, which covers all 43 local police organisations in England and Wales. The surveys are conducted using a framework that is updated each cycle, ensuring consistent measurement logic while allowing incorporation of new policy and governance expectations.

The PEEL system is dynamic rather than static, having undergone a significant methodological transformation in the 2021/2022 cycle. The revised approach emphasises intelligence-driven, continuous evaluation and introduces a five-level rating system, enabling more nuanced differentiation in police performance assessment. Consequently, results from previous cycles are not fully comparable with those generated under the new system, underscoring the normative and methodological sensitivity inherent in performance measurement. Despite these changes, the PEEL assessment remains the most advanced and transparent European model for the integrated measurement of police legitimacy, efficiency, and effectiveness.

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) is a central actor in measuring public trust, legitimacy, and satisfaction with the police in England and Wales. The PCC operates independently of the police organisation and is an elected official responsible for the local strategic management of public safety and for ensuring democratic accountability. The PCC's legal mandate includes setting the strategic objectives for the police through the Police and Crime Plan and appointing and holding the Chief Constable accountable. Within this framework, measuring public confidence and satisfaction is a core element of the oversight function (APCC, n.d.; Home Office, 2011).

This institutional arrangement is designed to ensure the objectivity and credibility of data collection by preventing the police from conducting self-assessments of their own performance. Research findings are submitted directly to the PCC office, where they inform strategic decision-making and support the police's political and financial accountability (APCC, n.d.).

The results of the surveys commissioned by the PCCs are also included in the HMICFRS national assessment system, particularly in the examination of the legitimacy dimension of the police. As part of its audit-type inspections, the HMICFRS uniformly assesses police forces along the effectiveness, efficiency, and legitimacy axes. One of the bases for assessing legitimacy is the independent public trust and satisfaction surveys commissioned by the PCCs, which are thus directly incorporated into the official police performance assessment system (HMICFRS, 2023).

The evaluation system utilises a uniform, standardised set of indicators (HMICFRS, 2023; College of Policing, 2022), presenting operational

and crime metrics in a comparable format. Key indicators encompass the number of emergency calls, the rate of recorded crimes (excluding fraud) per 1,000 people and per 12 months, annual and five-year changes, conviction rates, the proportion of investigations closed with unknown perpetrators, the incidence of antisocial incidents, trends in domestic violence, identification of organised criminal groups per million inhabitants, and victim satisfaction metrics.

*Table 1. International performance measurement practices (indicator categories and objectives)*

| Country | Indicator category | Specific indicators | Result/Target |
|---|---|---|---|
| England-Wales | Effectiveness | Decrease in crime rate, victimisation, public safety | Measurement of complex social security |
| | Effectiveness | Cost per case, resource use, response time | Ensuring cost-effective operation |
| | Legitimacy | Social trust, fair procedures, transparency | Establishing democratic policing |
| Northern Ireland | Quality of service | Victim satisfaction >75%, increasing public satisfaction | 80% victim satisfaction achieved |
| | Action against serious crime | Elimination of organised crime, violent crimes -5% | Significant reduction in crime |
| | Local needs | Vandalism -15%, reduction in burglaries, improvement in detection | Meeting local community needs |
| New Zealand | Trust and safety | Satisfaction with services, sense of security | Strengthening social trust |
| | Reducing crime | Reducing crime, road accidents and the number of victims | Prevention-oriented policing |
| Belgium | Citizen satisfaction | 91.94% average satisfaction, functional assessment | High public support |
| | Local police evaluation | Endogenous weighting, multidimensional scores | Consideration of local characteristics |
| Hungary | Statistical indicators | Detection rate, investigation success rate, case duration, arrests, etc. Based on data obtained from a follow-up system with its own recordings and recordings (ENYÜBS). | Documentation of numerical performance |
| | Organisational performance | 30 index numbers: 20 crimes, 2 misdemeanours, 4 public order offenses, 3 traffic offenses | Objective evaluation system |

*Source: author's own compilation using the following works: RAND Europe (2023); Public Safety Canada (2015)*

These basic indicators are organised inside thematic blocks within the framework, which serves both to facilitate comparison and to define strategic priority. Crime prevention and community visibility (e.g., coverage of the neighbourhood policing model, use of social media, number of community police officers, and repeat victimisation) constitute a separate evaluation unit. investigative performance (such as the number of investigators per 1,000 inhabitants, case referral practices, case complexity and value of damages, digital and forensic capabilities, management file control, the proportion of cases not supported by the victim and arrests), vulnerability and victim protection (in particular identified vulnerable victims, arrests related to domestic violence and victim satisfaction), and action against organised crime (e.g., number of identified criminal circles and street gangs).

A distinctive feature of the system is the merger of performance, management, and transparency criteria. Cost-effectiveness is assessed annually using metrics such as total budget, personnel costs, per capita costs, police staffing levels, and victimisation indicators. Data are disaggregated by unit, day, and capita, and are made publicly available at both national and local levels. This high level of data accessibility is fundamental for maintaining citizen trust (UK Statistics Authority, 2025).

The framework treats legitimacy as an independent performance dimension, which is reflected in the selected indicators. Legitimacy is measured through regular surveys of public confidence and contentment, the number and proportion of complaints, analysis of workplace grievances and discrimination complaints, assessment of ethnic diversity and organisational culture, and monitoring of complaints regarding unfair or biased procedures, corruption, aggression, sexual harassment, unlawful detention, and evidence handling abuses. These indicators, combined with civil oversight institutions and independent complaint operation mechanisms, constitute the legitimacy pillar of the system (Office for National Statistics, 2024).

The empirical measurement of legitimacy is based on large-scale, representative population surveys, primarily the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), which is conducted by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) using continuous sampling (Office for National Statistics, 2023). The survey uses multidimensional psychometric scales to measure general trust in the police, perceptions of procedural justice, perceived police effectiveness, and assessments of integrity. (Peacock, 2022) Its theoretical background is provided by Tyler's procedural justice model, and its empirical operationalisation is based on British law enforcement research (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Bradford et al., 2009; Jackson et al., 2012). Responses are typically given on a five-point Likert scale; during data processing, latent constructs are assessed using confirmatory factor analysis, and standardised confidence indices between 0 and 100 are computed from the factor results. (Reynolds et. al, 2018) According to previous empirical findings, the impact of police contact is primarily mediated by its quality,

particularly respectful and impartial treatment (Bradford, Jackson & Stanko, 2009; ONS, 2023).

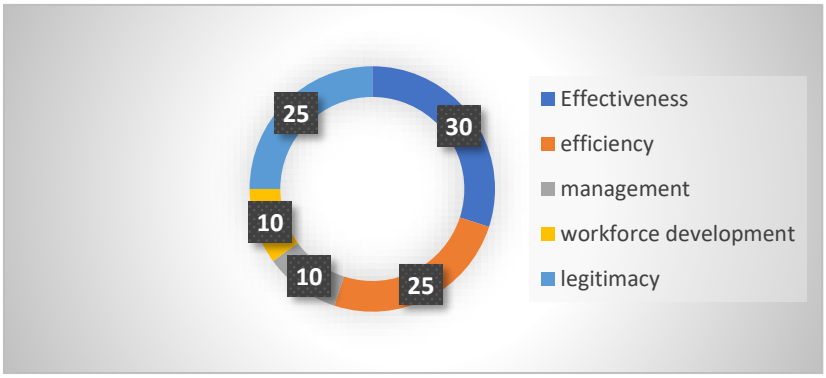



*Figure 2. Weighting of areas in the PEEL assessment framework*
*Source: Own compilation based on HMICFRS (2023) PEEL Assessment Framework 2023-2025*

Trust and legitimacy indicators are not confined to research but are integrated directly in the organisational rating and accountability mechanisms. HMICFRS assessments are conducted along three dimensions: effectiveness, efficiency, and legitimacy. The legitimacy pillar is grounded in the results of trust indices and satisfaction surveys (HMICFRS, 2022). Consequently, trust in the police in England and Wales has become an independent, statistically robust, and practical performance indicator. This approach is likewise supported by the development of the PEEL framework, which includes a standardised and public indicator system, a five-level rating scale, an accountable Code of Ethics, IOPC-related complaint handling, civilian oversight, and the direct integration of trust, victim satisfaction, and diversity. Collectively, these items frame police performance in terms of transparency, ethics, and public faith (College of Policing, 2022; HMICFRS, 2023; Independent Office for Police Conduct, 2024).

The HMICFRS national inspection and development program for 2025–2029 is guided by the principle that police operations supervision should incorporate both retrospective and forward-thinking approaches (HMICFRS, 2025–2029). Accordingly, the supervisory body uses a comprehensive array of quantitative and qualitative data, along with professional assessments such as trend evaluations, prognostic tools, and community feedback, to promptly identify risks and service deficiencies. The objective goes beyond problem identification to include early intervention using targeted actions and development proposals, thereby preventing escalation of operational issues (HMICFRS, 2025–2029). The quality of forensic digital documentation corresponds to this approach. Notably, pro-

gress in 3D reconstruction facilitates substantiation of professional conclusions by enabling standardised, verifiable recording of on-site information and supporting subsequent analysis (Horváth, 2025).

The emphasis of the HMICFRS program—referring back to the above—goes beyond examining internal operational compliance and focuses on results meaningful to the public, such as building citizen trust, enforcing the law and ensuring fair procedures, service quality, and community satisfaction. This approach is reinforced by a 'whole system approach,' which interprets police performance through partnerships and systemic relationships and ensures the periodic refinement of priorities and indicators through ongoing professional and social consultation (HMICFRS, 2025–2029).

This approach aligns with the broader direction of British law enforcement policy, which increasingly integrates traditional measures of effectiveness with the social conditions needed for legitimate operation (HMICFRS, 2023a; HMICFRS, 2023b). The institutional framework includes the PEEL framework, the code of ethics, IOPC-related complaint handling and supervisory mechanisms, the Safe Streets Mission, and local and regional Police and Crime Plans. Collectively, these initiatives aim to reduce violent crime, strengthen public confidence, increase local police presence, and provide a fairer, more transparent, and more accountable police service (College of Policing, 2022; Independent Office for Police Conduct, 2024; HMICFRS, 2025–2029).

According to Greater Manchester Police, the HMICFRS national inspection and development program for 2025–2029 evaluates police performance by examining both ongoing investigations and past cases to ensure accountability, using peer reviews and independent assessments to support effective and legitimate law enforcement methods. By integrating the PEEL framework, ethical and complaint management mechanisms, and local Police and Crime Plans, the British model frames police performance as a public policy issue that focuses not only on crime rates but also on citizen confidence, fair procedures, and democratic accountability. In England and Wales, this approach affirms that the ultimate measure of law enforcement effectiveness is social acceptance and the sustainable legitimacy of police operations.

## *DISTINCTIVE ASPECTS OF THE POLICE SERVICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND (PSNI) EFFECTIVENESS MEASUREMENT*

The peculiarities of measuring police effectiveness in Northern Ireland are closely linked to the legacy of decades of sectarian, ethnic, and political conflict ('The Troubles') and to the process of institutional reconstruction following the Belfast Agreement (Good Friday Agreement, 1998) (Good Friday Agreement, 1998; Mulcahy, 2006). The police in Northern

Ireland functioned not only as a public security actor but also as a symbolic institution of power in the conflict, leading to a continual legitimacy deficit. As a result, the concept of 'performance' was inherently political and legal from the outset and could not be interpreted purely as a professional-technical category.

This legitimacy-cantered approach was also institutionally reinforced through the reform process. The establishment of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) following the Patten Report (1999) prioritised restoring social acceptance, guaranteeing impartiality, and reinforcing the rule of law (Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland, 1999; Mulcahy, 2006). The Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 mandates the Policing Board to issue and frequently review the Code of Ethics and requires police operations to comply with human rights standards (Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000, s.52). Outcome-based accountability is central to performance evaluation, supported by the use of report cards and the red-amber-green (RAG) rating system in the Policing Board's annual reports. The Independent Custody Visiting Scheme, which enables civilian visitors to conduct unannounced inspections, provides an additional safeguard for legitimate operation cannot be described solely on the basis of 'good' or 'bad' crime statistics. An independent performance criterion is whether police actions are lawful, proportionate, and confidence-building in accordance with the standards set out in the Code of Ethics and human rights expectations. Illustrated by the example of a sensitive, divided neighbourhood: if the number of police checks in the increases significantly in a short period of time, while public feedback deteriorates—because those affected feel that the measures are disproportionate or 'targeted'—then 'good performance' does not mean maintaining activity alone. It also becomes a question of performance whether the PSNI can justify the legal basis and proportionality of the measures, correct the practice (e.g., through management control, training, communication, or community consultation), and measurably improve trust indicators. In such cases, the Policing Board provides feedback on the achievement of objectives (e.g., 'partially achieved') based on the assessment sheet and RAG logic, and then, in the next cycle, requests the results of corrective measures in the same transparent manner. Civilian, unannounced inspections of detention practices complement this and reinforce the fact that lawful and fair treatment is not simply an internal organisational statement, but an approach supported by external controls.

Overall, the distinctive feature of the Northern Irish (PSNI–Policing Board) performance measurement system is that it does not narrow down police 'efficiency' to crime outputs, but rather places the social conditions for legitimate operation—such as trust, victim satisfaction, service quality, and acceptance—into the core of the concept of performance. The framework organises accountability around a few clearly defined strategic outcomes, which are measured using quantitative and qualitative indicators,

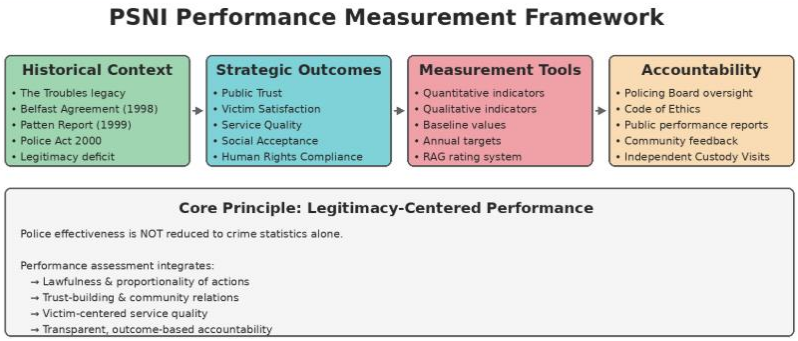



*Figure 3. PSNI effectiveness measurement: legitimacy-centred performance framework*

*Source: Author's compilation based on Mulcahy (2006), Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland (1999), and Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 (s.52).*

baseline values, and interim targets set out in annual performance plans. In practice, outcome-based accountability is made transparent through evaluation sheets and status reports, which are linked to mid-year monitoring, formal reporting, and public performance reports. All this is reinforced by meaningful community feedback (surveys, consultations, partnership indicators) and external control mechanisms, ensuring the system promotes transparency, continuous improvement, and social legitimacy (Office, 2023).

## *CONCLUSIONS*

Both the English-Welsh PEEL model and the Northern Irish PSNI-Policing Board system share the principle that police performance should not be assessed solely by crime outcomes, but must also incorporate social legitimacy and trust, though each places distinct emphasis and uses distinct administrative frameworks. The PEEL (Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy) framework provides standardised, public national ratings through the HMICFRS independent evaluation system, with legitimacy as a separate pillar and trust indicators embedded in organisational performance measures. Conversely, the Northern Irish model, formed by the legacy of conflict and post-Good Friday Agreement reconstruction, places greater emphasis on restoring and preserving social acceptance. According to the Home Office, effective police performance measurement goes beyond statistical results and management indicators, as community confidence and trust are also key to understanding public perceptions of policing. The use of Outcome-Based Accountability, report cards, and RAG logic by the Policing Board, therefore, acts not only as tools for performance measurement but also as mechanisms for ongoing verification and

external supervision, guaranteeing that aspects such as legality, proportionality, and community trust remain central alongside crime statistics.

Consequently, traditional, output-oriented performance measurement alone cannot reflect the full social value of law enforcement. International literature and empirical research unanimously point out that procedural justice (respectful treatment, impartiality, comprehensible decisions, and transparent procedural frameworks) plays a key role in the acceptance of police measures, even in cases with negative outcomes (Tyler & Lind, 1992), so, it is therefore of particular importance to be familiar with the way police officers perceive the importance of public trust and the extent to which they attach significance to the views of the local community in carrying out their duties (Mijalković & Popović Mančević, 2017).

The international experiences can give valuable insights for domestic police performance evaluation. According to the OECD, in Hungary, for example, there is a particular risk that police performance evaluation may become excessively focused on quantitative indicators such as identification rates or case volumes, which can improve statistics in the short term but may mask core issues with the quality of police interactions, complaint processes, and procedural fairness. (Assessment of the Hungarian, n.d.) As a result, the role of performance measurement is being reconsidered not simply as a descriptive tool but as a feedback and governance mechanism to better understand the wider social impacts of policing. (Home Office, 2026) Although the study does not detail how organisational efficiency is measured in the Hungarian police, *Table 1* clearly presents domestic practice and compares it with international models. The Hungarian example thus helps illustrate the emphases, limitations, and possible distortions of measurement logics, not as a stand-alone case study but as part of a comparative framework (Mawby, 1996). The examples from England and Wales and Northern Ireland show that the integrated management of effectiveness, effectiveness, and legitimacy can be managed in an integrated manner at the institutional level, and that through frameworks such as the PEEL evaluation or the Policing Board's accountability practices, trust and procedural justice can become central dimensions of police performance. Consequently, sustainable improvement in police performance can only be achieved by transparent, complex measurement systems that, in addition to quantifiable results, also enforce measurable guarantees of legitimate operation, consequently strengthening the social embeddedness and democratic accountability of law enforcement.

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# МЕРЕЊЕ УЧИНКА ПОЛИЦИЈЕ У ЕНГЛЕСКОЈ, ВЕЛСУ И СЕВЕРНОЈ ИРСКОЈ: ИНТЕГРАЦИЈА ПОВЕРЕЊА, ЛЕГИТИМИТЕТА И ПРОЦЕДУРАЛНЕ ПРАВДЕ

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**Резиме**

Овај рад обједињује међународна истраживања о мерењу учинка полиције и показује да поверење јавности у полицију и легитимност полицијског деловања представљају мерљиве друштвене варијабле које суштински обликују разумевање и процену 'ефикасности' и 'делотворности'. Традиционални показатељи усмерени на резултате, попут стопе разрешених случајева, времена одзива и броја хапшења или притвора, сматрају се недовољним, јер занемарују квалитет процеса доношења одлука и шире друштвене последице полицијског деловања. Анализа испитује макро- и микро- детерминанте поверења, укључујући стопе насилног криминала, демократски институционални контекст, као и социодемографске и личне факторе који обликују перцепције различитих група и локалних заједница. Процедурална правда се идентификује као централни теоријски фокус, наглашавајући да транспарентне процедуре, непристрасност, поштовање и уверљива објашњења повећавају прихватање полицијских одлука, чак и када исходи нису повољни за грађане. Из ове пер-

спективе, легитимност и поверење се позиционирају као кључне димензије учинка које захтевају систематско мерење уз оперативне резултате. Рад заговара интеграцију перцептивних и квалитативних индикатора процеса, као што су истраживања поверења јавности, мере задовољства жртава, процене квалитета интеракције и индикатори одговорности и транспарентности, у свеобухватне оквире евалуације. Пракса у Уједињеном Краљевству, посебно PEEL оквир у Енглеској и Велсу, приказана је ради илустрације институционализације овог приступа, јер формално оцењује полицијске снаге у погледу ефикасности, делотворности и легитимности, а информације о евалуацији чини јавно доступним. Дискусија истиче улогу Комесара за полицију и криминал у наручивању и коришћењу независних истраживања јавног мњења и задовољства ради подршке демократском надзору и стратешкој одговорности за учинак. Рад такође идентификује ограничења шире имплементације, укључујући фрагментиране или недовољне националне инфраструктуре за евидентирање жалби, употребе силе, ризика од недоличног понашања и повезаних исхода интегритета. Аутори упозоравају да режими учинка којима доминирају крути квантитативни циљеви могу створити погрешне подстицаје, повећати ризик од манипулације и поткопати стандарде засноване на људским правима и владавини права. Закључак истиче да одрживо унапређење учинка захтева интегрисане системе индикатора који заједнички обухватају исходе, трошкове и легитимност, уз подршку доследне транспарентности, механизама повратних информација и организационог развоја усмереног ка процедуралној правди.