



Inspecting policing
in the **public interest**

**Revisiting police
relationships:
progress report**

**Hampshire Constabulary
December 2012**

About this review

In 2011, the Home Secretary asked Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) to look at "instances of undue influence, inappropriate contractual arrangements and other abuses of power in police relationships with the media and other parties". The resulting report, *Without Fear or Favour*, published in December 2011, found no evidence of endemic corruption in the Police Service. However, we did not issue a clean bill of health:

- Few forces provided any policy or guidance around appropriate relationships between the police and the media and others;
- There was a general lack of clarity around acceptance of gifts and hospitality; use of corporate credit cards; and second jobs for officers and staff, which could leave forces vulnerable to (at least the perception of) corruption; and
- Few forces and authorities had proactive and effective systems in place to identify, monitor and manage these issues.

We made several recommendations to help the service address these issues, and committed to revisiting forces in 2012 to track progress.

The revisit found that while forces have made some progress, particularly around putting in place processes and policies to manage threats to integrity, more needs to be done. The pace of change also needs to increase, not least to demonstrate to the public that the service is serious about managing integrity issues, which have retained a high media profile over the last year.

A thematic report, *Revisiting Police Relationships: A progress report* is available from www.hmic.gov.uk, and gives more information about what we found across England and Wales. The rest of this report focuses on what we found in Hampshire.

This time HMIC is publishing force-level reports. This is so the public and the new Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) can see how their force has progressed since 2011.

A note on the scope of our review: Since our 2011 inspection, questions around police integrity and corruption have continued to be asked. For instance, the Leveson Inquiry has looked at relationships between officers and journalists (among other things), while investigations into senior officers and into the handling of historic investigations (such as the Hillsborough disaster) have received widespread media coverage. The findings in this report relate only to police relationships with the media and others, rather than broader issues of police integrity.

Findings for Hampshire

Since 2011 Hampshire Constabulary has carried out a force-wide integrity self-assessment and developed an action plan to address recommendations in HMIC's 2011 *Without Fear or Favour* report. One of these actions was to update its policies around relationships with the media and receiving gifts and hospitality, so that they incorporated recent national guidance. The force has taken steps to improve staff understanding of this revised guidance and of what is considered acceptable.

How are press relations handled, and information leaks investigated?

The force has revised its guidance to staff on how they should engage with the media. This document outlines how personal and professional relationships with the press should be managed and how contact with journalists should be recorded. The force is planning to raise staff awareness of this guidance through face-to-face and intranet briefings.

Between September 2011 and May 2012, the force has not investigated any instances of inappropriate disclosure to the media.

Social media guidance was already in place before HMIC's 2011 visit; over the last year, the force has reiterated the expectations and boundaries around staff use of sites such as Facebook and Twitter. Staff interviewed during the inspection understood the guidance and the risks associated with using social network sites. HMIC's independently commissioned research identified seven cases of potentially inappropriate behaviour on Facebook or Twitter by officers and staff in Hampshire, which have been referred back to the force.

Is there more clarity around acceptance of gifts and hospitality, procurement, and second jobs?

Hampshire Constabulary has revised its policy around acceptance of **gifts and hospitality** to ensure it reflects national guidance. While the new policy has not been widely circulated, staff were aware of the need to record all offers of gifts or hospitality, whether accepted or declined. The force is in the process of combining the multiple registers currently used for this into a single register, owned and managed by the Professional Standards Department.

The force has recently carried out a review of how credit and **procurement** cards are used. The Finance Team also dip samples card payments, to check that they are in line with its policies, and conducts more targeted sampling of higher risk areas. However, the force recognises that it does not currently identify staff who may be at risk of being influenced by contractors or suppliers.

Hampshire Constabulary's policy for **second jobs** and business interests has recently been changed to incorporate new national guidance. The policy now includes the requirement for police staff, as well as police officers, to inform the force when they are thinking of taking on a second job or business interest. The force is running an awareness-raising campaign to ensure everyone understands the changes and what they need to do. Both approved and refused applications are recorded on a register (which is overseen by HR), and this is reviewed on an annual basis. Since September 2011 there have been 71 applications for second jobs, all but one of which have been approved.

How does the force identify, monitor and manage potential integrity issues?

We found that further improvements were needed to police authority arrangements to monitor and govern integrity issues. The recently elected Police and Crime Commissioner will need to ensure they are satisfied with the governance and reporting mechanisms for these issues.

Since the 2011 inspection visit, the force has updated its anti-corruption strategy. This covers four specific risk areas: reportable or potentially compromising associations; lifestyle issues and addictions; inappropriate use of IT; and risks to the reputation of Hampshire Constabulary.

Data provided by the force to HMIC shows that there has been no change in the number of staff working in the anti-corruption unit since our 2011 inspection. The force instigated 86 investigations between September 2011 and May 2012 into the conduct of its officers and staff in relation to the areas covered by this report.

Since 2011 Hampshire Constabulary has provided some training on integrity issues, including sessions specifically targeted at staff who may need to speak with the media. Changes to policies and new integrity-related guidance are communicated through face-to-face briefings, email and the intranet but there is no mechanism to check that officers and staff have understood them.

Next steps

HMIC will continue to inspect on integrity issues as part of our existing programme of force inspections.

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