



Northamptonshire Police has made improvements to how they identify, monitor and manage integrity issues

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".

While the resulting report, *Without Fear or Favour*, found no evidence that corruption was endemic in police service relationships, it did not issue a clean bill of health. In particular, HMIC was concerned that few forces provided any policy or guidance in relation to key integrity issues, such as how to interact with the media, use of social media, and what second jobs are suitable for officers and staff. The report made several recommendations to help the service address these issues.

In 2012 HMIC revisited all forces to track progress against these recommendations.

In Northamptonshire, HMIC found:

- Since 2011 Northamptonshire Police has conducted an integrity 'health check', using the Self- Assessment Checklist provided in HMIC's 2011 report, *Without Fear or Favour*. Several policies covering relationships with the media, acceptance of gifts and hospitality, social media use, and police staff and officers second jobs have been reviewed and updated. Staff generally have a good understanding of these policies and what they need to do to comply with them.
- The force has updated its media policy. This outlines how relationships with the press should work and where contact with journalists should be recorded. Since September 2011 the force has not investigated any instances of inappropriate disclosure to the media.
- The force has recently updated their policy on how police officers and staff should behave on social networking sites. HMIC's independently commissioned research identified ten cases of potentially inappropriate behaviour on Facebook or Twitter by officers and staff in Northamptonshire Police, which have been referred back to the force.
- The force has reviewed and updated its policy on second jobs and publicised this to staff. This has resulted in more staff seeking permission for second jobs. Since September 2011 there have been 129 applications for second jobs, 123 of which have been approved.
- Data provided by the force to HMIC shows that there has been an increase in the number of staff working in the anti-corruption unit since our 2011 inspection.

HM Inspector of Constabulary for the Eastern Region, Zoë Billingham, said:

“Northamptonshire Police has made some improvements to how it identifies, monitors and manages integrity issues since HMIC last reviewed this in 2011. Integrity policies have been reviewed and updated, then publicised across the organisation.

However, while the force has made progress it needs to continue to monitor and develop how it responds to issues of integrity, such as cross checking information to secure the integrity of the procurement process.

Across the whole of England and Wales we found that the police service is making progress in how it safeguards relationships with the media, contractors and others. However, we are concerned that nationally changes have not been implemented at a quicker pace.

HMIC will continue to monitor all forces and inspect progress in order to provide the public with assurance that they are gripping these vital issues.”

The full report for Northamptonshire Police, along with the national thematic review ‘Revisiting police relationships’, can be found at www.hmic.gov.uk

Notes to editors

1. A copy of the national report, *Revisiting Police Relationships*, and individual force reports can be found on the HMIC website www.hmic.gov.uk
2. 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*, was based on an inspection of all 43 forces in England and Wales, as well as the British Transport Police (BTP), the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) and, at its request, the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). We also ran telephone surveys to find out if the public thought corruption was a problem for the Service, and looked at police use of social media. The 2011 report can be found on the HMIC website www.hmic.gov.uk
3. The revisit used the 2011 criteria and was based on self assessments by 44 forces (including the British Transport Police), supported by inspection work in July and August 2012. HMIC also repeated and extended the surveys of public opinion on the range and type of corruption issues in the police service, and of police use of social media.
4. Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) is an independent inspectorate, inspecting policing in the public interest, and rigorously examines the efficiency and effectiveness of police forces and authorities to tackle crime and terrorism, improve criminal justice and raise confidence. HMIC inspects and regulates all 43 police forces in England and Wales together with other major policing bodies such as the Serious Organised Crime Agency, the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the British Transport Police.
5. For further information, HMIC’s press office can be contacted during office hours from 8:30am – 5:30pm Monday – Friday on 0203 513 0600.
6. HMIC’s out-of-hours press office line for urgent media enquiries is 07836 217 729.
7. HMIC has monitored the progress of the widely reported investigation into chief officers, which is not included in these figures since the issues being investigated do not fall within the scope of this inspection.