

## **Bedfordshire 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 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 Bedfordshire Police, HMIC found:

- Since 2011 Bedfordshire Police has conducted a self evaluation against the HMIC Self Assessment Checklist provided in the 2011 *Without Fear or Favour* report, and reports regularly to the police authority on actions it has subsequently taken.
- Several policies (covering relationships with the media, gifts and hospitality, social media use and second jobs) have been reviewed and where necessary updated.
- In general there was good awareness and staff understood their responsibilities in relation to these policies.
- Since 2011 the force has completed a review of its media policy and is satisfied that it clearly outlines how relationships with the press should work. It also stipulates that staff and officers must notify the Media Office of all contact with journalists.
- Since September 2011 the force has not investigated any instances of inappropriate disclosure to the media.
- The force has reinforced its guidance to staff on how they should behave on social networking sites, which covers the standards of behaviour expected when staff are both at work and off duty.
- The Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire anti corruption units have been brought together to work collaboratively as one.
- HMIC's independently commissioned research identified five cases of potentially inappropriate behaviour on Facebook or Twitter by officers and staff in Bedfordshire Police, which has been referred back to the force.
- Since September 2011 there have been 54 applications for second jobs, 51 of which have been approved.

- Changes to policies and guidance are communicated to staff via email and intranet systems but there is no mechanism to check that officers and staff have read and understood them.

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

*“Bedfordshire Police has made progress in how it manages integrity issues since HMIC last reviewed this in 2011. There have been improvements in how the force identifies, monitors and manages integrity issues, there was good awareness and staff understand their responsibilities in relation to these policies.*

*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 changes nationally 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 Bedfordshire Police, along with the national thematic review ‘Revisiting police relationships’, can be found at [www.hmic.gov.uk](http://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](http://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](http://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.