



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

**Revisiting police
relationships:
progress report**

**British Transport Police
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 the British Transport Police.

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 British Transport Police

Since 2011 British Transport Police (BTP) has established an Integrity and Compliance Board, chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) and with representation from the heads of Professional Standards, Finance, Procurement and Human Resources. This board is charged with ensuring that issues of integrity are thoroughly investigated. It also manages the actions put in place to ensure that the force meets the recommendations in HMIC's report, *Without Fear or Favour*.

The force has completed a review of all its policies and prioritised those that relate to integrity issues. Standard operating procedures have been re-issued as position statements, and revised policies on social media use and acceptance of gifts and hospitality have been issued.

■ How are press relations handled, and information leaks investigated?

BTP has refreshed its media policy, and we found that staff knew about this and about the guidance that has been issued. The policy and guidance outline how relationships with the press should work, and stipulate that staff and officers must notify the Press Office of all contact with journalists. This is in line with the national guidance on relationships with the media produced by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO).

Between September 2011 and May 2012, the force investigated one instance of inappropriate disclosure to the media.

BTP has issued new guidance on the use of social media, clarifying acceptable use when at work and off duty. The force has developed the ability to scan traditional and social media for information on crime, and could use this more proactively to check for information leaks. HMIC's independently commissioned research did not identify any cases of potentially inappropriate behaviour on Facebook or Twitter by members of BTP staff.

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

BTP has issued a position statement that, in general, **gifts and hospitality** will not be accepted. Any exceptions require pre-authorisation. The force has also informed suppliers that it does not accept gifts or hospitality, and the internet procurement portal reiterates this message.

Since 2011 the Professional Standards Department (PSD) and Procurement Team have cross-referenced contract and **procurement** registers with the gifts and hospitality register to ensure the integrity of the procurement process (e.g. to look out for instances where a company provides hospitality, and then is awarded a contract).

The force has not updated its **second jobs** policy since 2011, and this remains a point of confusion for staff. There has, however, been a review of the second jobs register, and new guidance is now being drafted. Since September 2011 there have been 95 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 the police authority (which has not been replaced by a Police and Crime Commissioner in the case of BTP) has arrangements to monitor and govern integrity issues. BTP has adopted a new meeting structure which comprises five boards, including the Integrity and Compliance Board. These boards compile report issues up to the Executive Board for action. This allows risk to be evaluated through the board structure, while the DCC oversees all department reports to ensure consistency.

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. Between September 2011 and May 2012, the force instigated 17 investigations into the conduct of its officers and staff in relation to the areas covered by this report.

The force's PSD has made significant progress since 2011 and is now more proactive in identifying, monitoring and managing issues of integrity. It has also improved how it allocates and prioritises work, using a risk scoring process.

There has been little formal training for staff on integrity issues since our last inspection in 2011, although occasionally PSD provides an input at training days and attends briefings for large operations. Changes to policy and procedures are communicated mainly via email and the force 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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