



Inspecting policing  
in the public interest

**Revisiting police  
relationships:  
progress report**

**Cumbria 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](http://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 Cumbria.

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 Cumbria

Since 2011 Cumbria Constabulary has conducted a force-wide integrity 'healthcheck', using the Self-Assessment Checklist provided in HMIC's 2011 report, *Without Fear or Favour*. The constabulary has updated or is currently reviewing several of its policies, including those covering relationships with the media, acceptance of gifts and hospitality, social media use, and police officers having second jobs.

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

The constabulary has updated its media policy. This outlines how relationships with the press should work, and stipulates that staff and officers must make a written record of all their contact with the media. They must also inform the Marketing and Communications Department of all pre-arranged meetings or visits to media establishments. These changes have taken account of the national guidance on relationships with the media produced by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). HMIC found that staff knew about these rules.

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

The constabulary has produced a policy and provided guidance on how police officers and staff should behave on social networking sites (such as Twitter and Facebook). This covers the standards of behaviour expected when staff are both at work and off duty. The constabulary monitors whether these rules are being stuck to, or if information is being leaked online. HMIC's independently commissioned research identified four cases of potentially inappropriate behaviour on Facebook or Twitter by members of staff at Cumbria Constabulary. These have been referred back to the constabulary.

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

In 2011 we found that Cumbria Constabulary was keeping a record of the **gifts and hospitality** received by officers and staff – but this was on multiple registers, held in different locations, which made it more difficult to monitor and identify any problems. The constabulary has now created a single electronic register, which is overseen by the head of the Professional Standards Department (PSD).

However, the constabulary needs to do more to check the register against other areas covered by this inspection to ensure that these relationships are not open to corruption. For instance, there is currently no monitoring in place to cross-reference 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).

Cumbria Constabulary's policy for **second jobs** has recently been changed to ensure all staff requests will be scrutinised and managed by PSD. Since September 2011 there have been 18 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 had arrangements in place to monitor and govern integrity issues, and planned to maintain these up to November 2012. The recently elected PCC will need to be satisfied with the governance and reporting mechanisms for these issues.

Data provided by the constabulary to HMIC shows that there has been no change in the number of staff working in the anti-corruption unit since our 2011 inspection. Between September 2011 and May 2012 the constabulary instigated 17 investigations into the conduct of its officers and staff in relation to the areas covered by this report. HMIC has monitored the progress of the widely reported investigations into the temporary chief constable – although because these started after May 2012 they are not included in these figures.

Staff have received training on integrity issues since our last inspection in 2011. Changes to policy and procedures are communicated via email, the intranet, newsletters, and staff from PSD attending shift briefings.

## Next steps

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

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