



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

**Revisiting police
relationships:
progress report**

**Derbyshire 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 Derbyshire.

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 Derbyshire

Since 2011 Derbyshire Constabulary has carried out an integrity “healthcheck”, using the Self-Assessment Checklist provided in HMIC’s 2011 report, *Without Fear or Favour*. This resulted in the production of an action plan to address areas for further development. Several policies covering relationships with the media and others, acceptance of gifts and hospitality, and social media use have been updated or are in the process of being reviewed. The force is also working to finalise an updated policy on standards around keeping information secure.

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

The force has updated its media policy in line with guidance issued by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). This outlines how relationships with the press should work and the records which must be retained by officers and staff when media contact occurs. Any media contact must be recorded and this is audited. Staff interviewed by HMIC were aware of the requirements of the policy.

Between September 2011 and May 2012, the force has investigated one instance of inappropriate disclosure to the media. The investigation was continuing at the time of the inspection.

The force has produced a policy on how police officers and staff should behave on social networking sites (such as Facebook and Twitter). This covers the behaviour expected when staff are both at work and off duty, and the force monitors sites to check compliance with these standards. This monitoring is to be enhanced in the near future with the introduction of an IT-based system which will allow for broader monitoring of the use of all force IT systems. HMIC’s independently commissioned research did not identify any cases of potentially inappropriate behaviour on Facebook or Twitter by staff or officers in Derbyshire.

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

Derbyshire Constabulary has updated its policy on accepting **gifts and hospitality** in line with ACPO guidance. Staff interviewed were aware of the policy requirements. Local managers are responsible for deciding whether to accept or decline offers, with the details recorded in local registers. The Professional Standards Department (PSD) oversees these registers to ensure compliance with the policy.

The use of corporate credit and **procurement** cards is tightly controlled through internal audit procedures, and expenditure on them is low. To ensure the integrity of the procurement process the force has also introduced a monitoring process to cross-reference contract and procurement registers with the gifts and hospitality register (e.g. to look out for instances where a company provides hospitality, and then is awarded a contract).

Derbyshire Constabulary's policy for seeking approval to have a **second job** requires all applications to be reviewed by line managers and the head of Human Resources who can each comment on the suitability of the request. Before final approval is given PSD reviews the application against complaints and intelligence records. This helps ensure there is consistency and scrutiny in respect of the application process. All registered second jobs are subject to an annual review. Since September 2011 there have been 62 applications for second jobs, 59 of which have been approved.

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

The force and police authority had held discussions on arrangements for the introduction of PCCs; these included the future arrangements for the oversight of professional standards within the force. The recently elected PCC will need to be satisfied with the governance and reporting mechanisms for these issues.

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 has instigated 55 investigations between September 2011 and May 2012 into the conduct of its officers and staff in relation to the areas covered by this report.

The force has a set of values which includes the expectation that officers and staff will work with integrity. These values are well understood by staff throughout the organisation. Clear messages about the importance of integrity are promoted to staff through chief officer presentations at inspector and sergeant briefing days and to other officers and staff at annual briefings given at a local level by the Chief Constable. All new officers and staff and newly promoted sergeants receive information from PSD on anti-corruption, drug trends and integrity matters.

Next steps

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

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