

Essex 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 Essex Police, HMIC found:

- Since 2011 Essex Police has carried out an integrity 'health check' using the Self-Assessment Checklist provided in HMIC's 2011 report, *Without Fear or Favour* and progress has been overseen by a group, chaired by the deputy chief constable.
- Several policies covering relationships with the media, gifts and hospitality, social media use and second jobs have been updated or are in the process of being reviewed.
- Since September 2011 the force has investigated two instances of inappropriate disclosure to the media, which were ongoing at the time of the inspection.
- The force has reinforced its guidance to staff on how they should behave on social networking sites (such as Facebook and Twitter).
- HMIC's independently commissioned research identified nine cases of potentially inappropriate behaviour on Facebook or Twitter by officers and staff in Essex Police, which have been referred back to the force.
- Essex Police's policy for second jobs requires all requests to be assessed by the PSD.
- Since September 2011 there have been 71 applications for second jobs, all of which have been approved.
- Monitoring to cross-reference contract and procurement registers with the gifts and hospitality register to help ensure the integrity of the procurement process is currently limited to those cases where specific concerns have been identified.
- 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 116 investigations between September 2011 and May 2012 into the conduct of its officers and staff in relation to the areas covered by this report.

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

“Essex 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. A number of key policies have been brought up-to-date and we found that staff were clear about their responsibilities in these areas.

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 Essex 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.