



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

**Revisiting police
relationships:
progress report**

**Lincolnshire 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 Lincolnshire.

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 Lincolnshire

Since 2011 Lincolnshire Police has reviewed a number of its policies to address recommendations set out in HMIC's 2011 report, *Without Fear or Favour*. It has also considered the implications of recent guidance provided by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). Most policies, such as those covering relationships with the media and others, social media use, and procurement have been updated with gifts and hospitality, notifiable associations and anti corruption policies in the process of being reviewed.

The deputy chief constable (DCC) has introduced a monthly meeting with the head of the force's Professional Standards Department (PSD) during which integrity and anti-corruption issues are discussed. The PSD has also developed a counter corruption strategy which it intended to present to staff during a number of road shows to be held across the county during Autumn 2012. These are intended to aid staff in understanding the policy and to reinforce the standards that are expected.

How are press relations handled, and information leaks investigated?

The force has a clear policy for contact with the media which sets expectations for how officers' and staff relationships with the press should work. We found that officers and staff knew about the requirements of the policy. Media skills training is also provided as required.

Between September 2011 and May 2012, the force has investigated two instances of inappropriate disclosures to the media.

The force has a policy on how police officers and staff should behave on social networking sites (such as Facebook and Twitter). This covers the standards of behaviour expected when staff are both at work and off duty. The force also monitors whether these rules are being adhered to, or if information is being leaked online. HMIC's independently commissioned research identified two cases of potentially inappropriate behaviour on Facebook or Twitter by officers and staff in Lincolnshire Police, which have been referred back to the force.

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

Lincolnshire Police maintains a central register of **gifts and hospitality** received by staff and officers. This is well managed and includes a number of gifts which were refused and others which, while accepted, were not appropriate to retain and were instead given to charity. A separate register is maintained for chief officers. The force PSD oversees these registers to ensure compliance with the policy. Officers and staff spoken to were fully aware of the policy requirements.

The use of corporate credit cards is tightly controlled with all expenditure subject to management approval. A new IT system to track purchase orders and **procurement** to the point of payment has been introduced; this has improved the efficiency of procurement management within the force. However, there is 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. by looking out for any instances of a company providing hospitality, and then receiving a contract).

Lincolnshire Police's policy for seeking approval to have a **second job** requires that all applications are considered for approval by line managers; these are then forwarded to PSD before final approval is given by the DCC. 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 53 applications for second jobs, all but one of which have been approved.

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

The newly developed counter-corruption policy covers nine themes including all of those raised within HMIC's 2011 report *Without Fear or Favour*. The policy describes the approach to the oversight and governance of each of these themes as well as how concerns will be investigated.

The deputy chief constable's monthly meeting with the head of PSD discusses potential integrity issues including operations, hearings, appeals and anti-corruption activity. We found that the police authority had arrangements in place to monitor and govern integrity issues. The force and authority had held discussions in respect of transitional arrangements relating to the introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners (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 continued governance and reporting mechanisms for these issues.

In developing the contractual arrangements with their business partner G4S, the police authority and force required that staff working for them through G4S are contractually required to maintain the same integrity standards as those directly employed.

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 instigated 19 investigations between September 2011 and May 2012 into the conduct of its officers and staff in relation to the areas covered by this report.

Next steps

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

