



HM INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY

Police Integrity

England, Wales and
Northern Ireland

*securing and maintaining
public confidence*

June 1999

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Preface

There can be no more important qualities for members of the Police Service than that they are honest and act with integrity. Without these basic attributes the public can never be expected to trust the police and have the confidence in them that is necessary for a system of 'policing by consent'.

This report examines the level of integrity in the Police Service in England, Wales and Northern Ireland today, and highlights many ways in which integrity could be monitored and enhanced where necessary. It is not about corruption in a narrow sense but encompasses issues such as fairness, probity, behaviour and equal treatment. It should be seen as complementing the work being done by the Metropolitan Police and the ACPO Presidential Task Force, to introduce anti-corruption strategies. The report highlights good practice as well as pointing out questionable practices, procedures and attitudes.

The key messages are that the police must not be complacent and that to secure and maintain public confidence, a very high level of general integrity within the Service is essential. The behaviour and attitude of some police officers gives the public greatest concern. Generally speaking though, the Inspection confirmed the vast majority of men and women working in the 44 police forces are honest, industrious and dedicated.

This was one of the widest ranging inspections that HMIC has done, and certainly one of the most important. Twenty police forces were visited, and discussions were held with many community groups, agencies and individuals. I am grateful to all the chief constables for the open and frank responses to the questionnaire sent to them at the outset of the Inspection, and to all those interviewed by the Inspection Team who gave such a valuable contribution to the debate.

By accepting and welcoming this Report the Police Service will demonstrate that it is not defensive but rather that it is open to justified criticism and willing to change. I am confident that the Service will use the report to help secure and maintain public confidence, and I commend it to you.

David J O'Dowd, CBE, QPM, BA, Msc, CIMgt
HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary



Executive Summary

- 1.** This Inspection examines integrity within the Police Service today and advises on the actions required to improve the standard of the minority who currently fall short and the procedures which will discourage or detect unacceptable conduct in the future.
- 2.** The approach was to examine 'integrity' in its broadest sense, encompassing subjects such as fairness, behaviour, probity, equal treatment and a range of operational and management issues. It is not about corruption in a narrow sense, rather how public confidence is secured and maintained.
- 3.** The public has a right to expect a high standard of behaviour from its Police Service, and generally speaking the Inspection confirmed the vast majority of men and women – police officers, civilian support staff and special constables – working within the 44 police forces in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, are honest, industrious and dedicated. Policing by consent relies on the overwhelming majority of the public, particularly minority groups and the disadvantaged, trusting and respecting individual officers and staff; the reality is this reputation can be seriously harmed if only a few fail. Regrettably, the Inspection found failings in the Service, some minor and others quite serious, all of which need to be addressed so public confidence can be re-established and the good reputation of the Service restored.
- 4.** Community support is an essential part of providing an effective Police Service, and the powers and responsibilities vested in police officers demand the highest degree of integrity. Numerous examples were found in all forces visited of poor behaviour towards members of the public and colleagues alike, including rudeness, arrogance and discriminatory comment. Every time an officer abuses the trust placed in him or her by the public, the collective image of the Police Service is damaged. This was definitely the single major issue arising from the Inspection and the negative aspect of policing causing the public most concern. Crucially, every supervisor needs to be significantly more active in raising the standard of behaviour of all staff, ensuring everyone is treated with dignity and respect, regardless of the circumstances.
- 5.** All forces are trying hard to consult their communities and to understand their needs and concerns but each is failing to a greater or lesser extent in providing a better service to the disadvantaged groups in society, as well as ethnic minority groups. The seriousness of the present situation requires the police to find out, through public attitude surveys, how the public, and in particular the 'hard to reach' groups, feel they are being served and what improvements need to be made.
- 6.** One of the core activities of policing is to enforce the law, which often entails the investigation and prosecution of offenders. The pressure on forces to perform well, and demonstrate through high detection rates that they are doing so, has resulted in pressure on 'front line' service deliverers to 'trawl the margins' for elusive detections and generally find any way to improve the figures. Evidence was found of the boundaries sometimes being pushed too far and unethical practices operating, sometimes with the emphasis on solving minor, easier to

detect, 'volume crime' at the expense of serious crimes. There is a requirement for more effective monitoring of ethical recording and crime investigation.

7. The public rightly expects the most thorough and professional investigation of those grave cases which cause widespread concern. Murder, terrorist incidents, rape, armed robbery and racialism are all examples of major crime requiring the skills and experience of a dedicated team to solve, with the senior investigating officer playing a key role. Much work is being done by National Police Training to improve their competence but succession planning and career development are essential in ensuring the availability of high quality senior investigators. The Macpherson Report on the tragic death of Stephen Lawrence highlighted the initial investigation was 'marred by professional incompetence'. The Service has to ensure such an accusation is never again valid; this will only occur if such investigations are carried out with a high degree of expertise, dedication, proper support from chief officers, and complete integrity in every aspect.

8. A high-risk area in terms of a potential for lack of integrity is in the use of informants. Despite the existence of guidelines in all forces visited, the Inspection found in some cases they were either inadequate or circumvented, often for practical reasons. Informants are considered necessary and useful but they should be properly targeted and controlled, including such areas as risk assessment, registration, payment and supervision. A particular concern highlighted is of controllers being asked to supervise more informants than can realistically be expected. Training for handlers and controllers, often found to be woefully inadequate, is essential. Informants should be seen as a corporate asset, with handlers changed regularly and the number a controller is expected to supervise limited.

9. Ethical personnel strategies are essential in maintaining high levels of integrity; these should start at the initial recruiting stage where, in many cases, the Inspection discovered a lack of robust systems. Much more could be done, such as more rigorous vetting, drug testing, etc. The quality of tutor constables is the vital element in setting probationers off along the right road and if their selection and training is found wanting, there is a greater risk that a lack of integrity will develop in the new recruits.

10. As in so much of policing, integrity has been taken for granted in training and as a consequence has received far too little emphasis. This is particularly so on certain key courses such as those for new sergeants, CID foundation and custody officers, but also applies for the more experienced constables who decide not to put themselves forward for specialism or promotion. Those in the 15 to 30 year service bracket need continuous professional development, with a large element of integrity awareness built in.

11. Those within the Service who apply for certain 'high risk' posts, such as drug squad or crime squad, should be subject to enhanced vetting, including lifestyle and financial. The Kent model of 'management vetting' is considered good practice and offers an efficient and cost effective way of improving the integrity of some posts.

12. In many aspects of police management, civilian support staff are given secondary consideration. They are increasingly undertaking sensitive operational tasks and exposed to similar risks as their police officer colleagues, yet integrity issues, either in terms of rigorous

vetting or support and training, are frequently over looked. Training support staff and police officers together would send a powerful message that they are all of equal importance and the same high standards are expected from all staff.

13. The Inspection revealed a significant proportion of police staff still do not have confidence in grievance procedures, and supervisors are not comfortable dealing with a grievance when it occurs. Appraisal systems are also important in maintaining integrity if they are completed with honesty and objectivity, and those supervisors who have the courage to challenge bad behaviour should be supported further up the command line as, once undermined by senior management, they are unlikely to put themselves in such a position again.

14. Information and intelligence is the lifeblood of policing, and therefore requires protection. This will only occur if there is a constant presumption its security is at risk. Whilst maintaining an open and trusting relationship with community organisations, other agencies and the media, unauthorised leaks by police staff should be recognised as harmful to the Service and potentially corrupt. Far greater emphasis should be placed on a 'need to know' culture and every effort made to protect intelligence, both by electronic means and by rigorous auditing, integrity testing and dip sampling; this is not in conflict with, nor should it be used as an excuse to avoid, freely sharing information with partnership agencies.

15. The issue of police officers accepting 'perks' is an area of concern all over the world. The Inspection revealed widespread, low level receiving of various gratuities, such as entry to nightclubs or food from take away restaurants. A major part of the problem appears to be staff have never been told precisely what practices are unacceptable. It is clearly insufficient to assume common sense will prevail because the evidence shows that has not worked. Forces should review what is available in terms of group discounts and free travel arrangements, to ensure there is no confusion as to why they are acceptable yet private arrangements may not be, and should spell out very clearly and precisely the policy regarding gratuities and privileges.

16. Any efforts to raise the level of integrity of junior staff will not succeed unless chief officers and other senior managers set the right example. Accepting free invitations to major sporting occasions, civic entertainment and even perceived lavish official facilities, is seen by junior staff as 'double standards'.

17. Greater attention could usefully be given to the administration of finance, particularly checking *the justification for* expenses claims, in addition to whether they conform with the procedure. Those administrative staff who process claims should be encouraged to challenge any with which they are not comfortable and they should be provided with training on what to look for in terms of potential failings in integrity.

18. The Inspection found many chief officers have no personal systems to inform them directly on the health of integrity within their functional responsibilities. Too often, reliance is placed on the fact that authority has been delegated, forgetting responsibility remains theirs. Many admitted they only became aware of problems after they had occurred. Professional Standards Committees or other monitoring groups, chaired by a chief officer, are encouraged, and membership should be drawn from a wide range of disciplines. But the most important

point is every supervisor, at every level, should have their own systems to become aware of issues before they progress to being serious.

19. Robust, proactive investigation into suspected corruption and the proactive maintaining of integrity by auditing, random or non-targeted integrity testing, as well as quality of service checking, is being developed in several forces and is very much encouraged. A confidential reporting line, together with a caring support system for internal witnesses, is essential and staff should be given every encouragement to use them.

20. The most important factor in bringing about the necessary improvements in all aspects of integrity is the quality of leadership provided by all police managers. The chief officer team should demonstrate commitment and firm leadership in the drive to create and maintain integrity within their force, and they should at all times give out a consistent message to their staff, in other words 'practice what they preach'.

21. This leadership will make it easier then to ensure all junior supervisors and managers – sergeants, inspectors and their equivalent civilian grades – are far more involved in day-to-day 'hands on' intrusive supervision of their staff. There is evidence this level of management has become too remote, devoting too much time to administration or perceived strategic thinking, yet their greatest value is in working closely with service deliverers and ensuring high standards are upheld.

22. For leadership to be effective, greater efforts are required to close the communication gap between all levels of management, and chief officers should take every opportunity to ensure they are visible and accessible, such as through regular visits to the workplace. Some do this already but too many have neglected it for too long.

23. Police authorities have a vitally important role in assisting forces to act with integrity and in the way the community would wish. Members need much more information if they are to understand how a force works and be able to advise on the overall integrity. This information should be shared wherever possible and forces should rarely use the excuse, 'these are operational matters and as such cannot be disclosed'. In short, a professional and mutually respectful partnership should exist between the authority and their chief constable.

24. This Inspection was initiated by HMIC because it was recognised public confidence was becoming seriously affected by the bad behaviour of a small minority of police staff, and the sensational and disproportionate publicity arising from their actions was overshadowing the huge amount of good work carried out every day, often in extremely dangerous and difficult circumstances, by the vast majority of officers and support staff. The recommendations in this Report are intended to assist the police in improving the conduct of the minority and the Good Practice Guide offers detailed advice.

1 Introduction

1.1 This Inspection was carried out between July 1998 and January 1999 by Colin Smith, CVO, CBE, QPM, BSocSc, Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary, supported by a team of police officers, Home Office civil servants and civilian support staff. This Report benefits from their collective professional experience to supplement the detailed and broad inspection research. The background, terms of reference, methodology, and forces or agencies visited are set out in appendix A.

1.2 The Inspection was initiated because of evidence that the public were becoming increasingly concerned about a suggested decline in the integrity of the police. Whether or not the Police Service is now healthier than at any time in its short history, it is a fact that the public's confidence in it has been declining in recent years. The high profile miscarriage of justice cases arising from earlier police activity were followed in 1998 by concern over the actions of a handful of chief constables, and by the emerging consequences of the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police seeking to root out corruption in the Capital's police – addressing issues with greater effectiveness than previously, ironically, exposes them to public attention. There has also been understandable concern about the apparent inability of the police on occasions to deal impartially with different sections of society, with ethnic minority issues predominating.

1.3 This Inspection has confirmed the truth of the general public's belief that the overwhelming majority of individual police officers, civilian support staff and members of the Special Constabulary are dedicated, hardworking and compassionate, and deliver policing services with a high degree of integrity. It has, however, also revealed that the Service could do more to raise the general level of integrity by putting in place policies and procedures that will discourage the weak from falling below acceptable standards, and detect at an earlier stage bad behaviour or a decline in integrity.

1.4 Cases of corruption are thankfully rare. This is illustrated by the data in appendix C which shows that, as at 31 December 1998, 153 officers were suspended for alleged corruption and similar matters. Whilst regrettable, this figure represents only 0.1 per cent of the 136,285 police officers serving in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. There were 28 officers convicted of corruption related offences during 1998, which represents 0.02 per cent of serving officers. However, if these low numbers are to be reduced, the general high level of conduct has to be sustained by positive action.

1.5 The approach in the Inspection was to examine integrity in its broadest sense, avoiding the diversion of a lengthy semantic analysis of definition. The Report encompasses fairness, behaviour, probity and equal treatment, as well as a range of operational and management issues. It is not about corruption in a narrow sense but how public confidence is secured and maintained.

1.6 In policing, integrity means exercising powers and using discretion to the highest standards of competence, fairness and honesty. This is set out in legal language in Police Regulations and in the Declaration of Attestation, but in practical terms integrity can be described as the minimum standards the public has a right to expect. This is crucially different from perception, although that is also important.

1.7 Examples of the minimum standards the public have a right to expect to underpin policing are:

- As a citizen you have a right to expect the police to deal with you in a civil manner, without fear or favour for any reason, including your background, race, religion, gender or sexual orientation.
- As a victim of crime you have a right to expect the police to treat you fairly and courteously, and to conduct a professional and impartial investigation into your crime.
- As a suspected perpetrator of crime you have a right to expect the police to respect your statutory rights and dignity, and to deal with your case professionally, impartially and in accordance with the law.
- As a member of the public you should be able to assume members of the Police Service are not financially corrupt or unduly influenced by favours or gifts.
- As a member of the Police Service, you have a right to expect leadership and support in carrying out your duties to a high standard, together with a working environment free of bullying, harassment and discrimination of any kind.

1.8 Inspecting some of the less tangible issues of integrity means it is often only possible to form impressions and perceptions from the responses of the many people interviewed; more quantitative evidence for some of the findings would have been desirable but almost impossible to achieve. The public's confidence is, however, largely influenced by perceptions created from their own contact with the police, and what they hear or read about things the police do. The Inspection Team is very experienced in both breadth and depth (see appendix A) and their professional judgement was used to help validate the comments of the interviewees, as well as the tangible evidence revealed.

1.9 The modern Police Service does not consist only of regular police officers and a few civilians. Forces have introduced civilian support staff and specialists into many functions, including sensitive operational areas, and they are an integral part of providing a high quality service to the public. Of equal importance is the Special Constabulary, who are in many areas fully involved in operational policing. For this reason, the content of this Report is directed at all the men and women who work in all 44 police forces in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

2

The Effect of Behaviour on Public Confidence

2.1 In a system of policing by consent, it is vital to have regular confirmation from all sections of the community that the traditional trust in the police is sustained. Trust depends on the strength of mutual understanding and respect between the police and the community they serve, and every time an individual officer behaves badly, public trust and confidence in the whole Service is affected. During this comprehensive Inspection, it quickly became clear to Her Majesty's Inspector and his team that in the day-to-day policing of their communities, the behaviour exhibited by police officers was of fundamental importance in maintaining public confidence. Poor behaviour was considered tantamount to any other breach of integrity.

2.2 It is self evident that every police officer and member of support staff should behave professionally, courteously and impartially to members of the public and colleagues alike. It is a sad fact, however, that during 1997 well over 6,000 complaints of alleged rudeness and incivility were recorded. How police officers behave is very much a matter of personal integrity, and in an environment where bullying, arrogance, rudeness, racist or sexist behaviour is tolerated, corruption and other wrongdoing will flourish, and is more likely to remain unreported.

2.3 The following three examples, quoted during the Inspection, span the spectrum in terms of arrogance and serve to highlight the sort of attitude and behaviour the Service urgently needs to eradicate.

A detective superintendent was conducting an investigation in some office premises. He made a perfectly justifiable request to a supervisor, not himself under suspicion, to look at the overtime records. He was told to 'Fuck off.' Nothing unusual in that, one may think, as the police have to accept a certain amount of abuse and nonco-operation from those with whom they deal. Nothing unusual, apart from the fact that this was an internal discipline enquiry at the offices of a specialist squad, and the supervisor was a police sergeant.

If this sort of loutish, insolent behaviour can be directed towards a senior police officer, what chance is there that a member of the public will be treated by that particular sergeant with politeness and fairness?

Two constables claimed that, whilst driving an unmarked car, they were stopped and confronted by a youth who was drunk, abusive and threatening. When the officers advised him regarding his behaviour, he allegedly became violent and they had to use their batons to restrain him. By good fortune, the defence discovered a nearby video camera, the tape from which showed the youth had in fact been innocently walking home when the officers had called him over to their vehicle. When he bent down to speak, one of the officers squirted him in the face with a toy water pistol. The youth, not surprisingly, complained and the constables assaulted him with their batons.

Whether this started as a childish prank or something more sinister, it shows complete arrogance and a lack of professionalism. Such behaviour is totally out of place in a civilised society, let alone a Police Service.

Outside a large Magistrates' Court is a paved forecourt. A sign on the wall clearly forbids anyone parking on that forecourt. On a particular day, two police traffic motorcycles were observed parked on the paved area, immediately under the sign.

This is an example of thoughtless indifference. Whether or not there was a good reason to park there, the impression left with members of the public is likely to be one of the police feeling they are above the law.

2.4 In discussions with community representatives, agencies and members of police authorities in every force visited by the Inspection Team, overwhelmingly the greatest public concern about police integrity related to the behaviour of a minority of staff – uniform, CID, traffic, civilian support and specials – especially towards the disadvantaged. Most complaints could be summed up as an abuse of office, or arrogance. Whilst repeating only a minority of officers are subject to complaint, the impact on respect for the Police Service is out of all proportion to the numbers involved. Too often there were comments about a superior air, a dismissive gesture, a lack of consideration for the public and sometimes the apparent harassing of the socially disadvantaged for its own sake. Of even greater disappointment, as highlighted by the first example above, supervisory officers are sometimes equally guilty of such behaviour. To protect its reputation, the Service should act firmly to stamp out such activity and improve behaviour of those staff who fail to meet the expected standard.

2.5 Her Majesty's Inspector finds it necessary to remind police officers that they are not above the law; they are citizens with a more compelling reason than many always to act within the law. Every day, the thousands of police officers and members of support staff on duty in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are individually creating an impression in the minds of the people they meet. It is vital that in every contact they have with the public they behave courteously and professionally, respecting the dignity and integrity of the individual, thereby ensuring the impression is a good one. Often it comes down to displaying simple good manners and treating people as one would wish to be treated. Before parking on a double yellow line, or shouting from a patrol car at someone walking on the opposite pavement, officers should ask themselves, *'How will this action be viewed by ordinary people?'* This equally applies to communications operators, front counter staff, patrol officers and investigators. The small things really matter and together members of staff should grasp the thousands of opportunities available each day to improve public respect for their Service.

2.6 Whilst behaviour towards the public is the highest priority, how staff act towards their colleagues is a good indication of the health of integrity within a force. Put simply, if an officer's behaviour towards colleagues is unacceptable, it is highly likely to be unacceptable to the public. Despite all the emphasis on the need to eradicate inappropriate behaviour, and whilst there have undoubtedly been improvements, the Inspection found evidence that significantly more effort is required. There were views expressed that a low level of sexist or racist banter went with the

job and that, for a variety of reasons, people are picked on and bullied or isolated from their shift or workgroup. A view emerged at an industrial tribunal in one force less than 18 months ago that, *'If you are not prepared to be groped and called a tart you should not have joined the police.'*

2.7 The Director of National Police Training was interviewed during the Inspection and observed,

'As a police manager you've no right to tell people what they should think, but you've every right in the world to expect a certain standard of behaviour. Managers must have courage and consistency in telling staff what they expect.'

This is a view firmly endorsed by Her Majesty's Inspector.

2.8 The issue of appraisal reporting is dealt with elsewhere in this Report, but Her Majesty's Inspector considers any instance of bad behaviour such as that described above should not only be challenged at once, but also be reflected in the staff appraisal, and put alongside other evidence such as complaints or grievances to determine whether further training or disciplinary action is required.

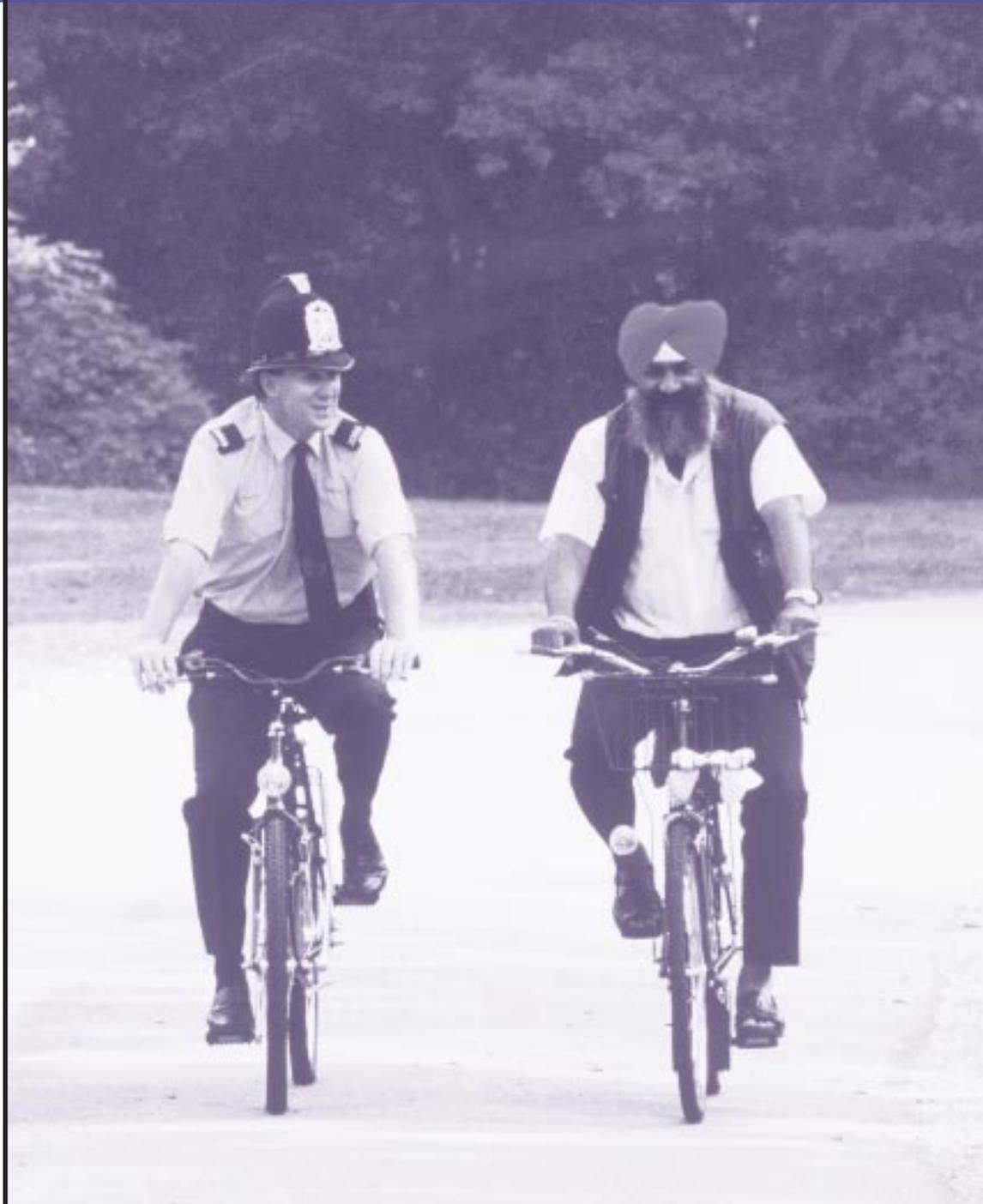
2.9 The Police (Conduct) Regulations, which came into effect on 1 April 1999, introduces a code of conduct for police officers, and honesty and integrity, fairness and impartiality, and politeness and tolerance are specifically highlighted. Supervisory officers will need to become fully aware of the code and should aim to apply it rigorously but fairly and evenly.



Recommendation 1



Her Majesty's Inspector recommends all supervisory officers should be significantly more active in raising the standard of behaviour of all staff, in all ranks, ensuring everyone is treated with dignity and respect, regardless of the circumstances.



3

Perceptions of the Public

Overall Views

3.1 Successful policing depends on understanding the perspective of those being policed. To continue to deserve public trust and confidence, which is so important to the concept of policing by consent, forces should be vigilant in ensuring their staff understand the varied social needs and expectations of different sectors of our society.

3.2 The challenge to the Police Service is to compensate for losing the everyday view of community life previously obtained by the ‘bobby’ whose house was in the community. The following comment, made when the Inspection Team visited a church group in an inner city area, illustrates a widely expressed public concern: *‘Few officers live here. They come here to work then go home. There is no real ownership or affinity with residents’ problems. The police are an occupying force.’*

3.3 The Inspection Team consulted, and gathered opinions from, individuals and groups across a broad cross-section of the community. This included residents’ groups, members of the ethnic and other minorities, youth groups, victims of crime, and those in trouble with the law, as well as crown prosecutors and other practitioners in the criminal justice system. Many gave a strikingly similar view that all too often the police were not as approachable, sympathetic and understanding as they had expected; other common concerns evidenced to the Inspection Team were police arrogance and incivility. There was generally little concern outside London about corruption.

3.4 The Inspection Team asked forces whether they analysed their incivility complaints to see what lessons might be learned. Many did not, although some mentioned the need to address the apparent racial imbalance in their stop and search statistics; this, however, often amounted only to an attempted justification of the imbalance as not being evidence of racial prejudice. One community liaison officer in a busy inner-city division admitted people from ethnic minorities accounted for one-third of all the people targeted for attention on his division, out of all proportion to their percentage of the population, and without intelligence to justify them being targeted in this way. Interestingly, many people spoken to during the Inspection, who had been stopped, even repeatedly stopped, did not object in principle; they only objected when the officer was unable or reluctant to explain adequately why the stop had taken place, or was overbearing or uncivil.

How the Police Consult the Public

3.5 The police use a variety of consultative processes to assess public views. Most forces carry out public satisfaction surveys in some form but the Inspection Team were made aware of a lack of confidence in several of them because they were insufficiently frequent or probing to gauge accurately how the public felt about the service they were receiving. Her Majesty’s Inspector welcomes the better research methodologies some forces are now developing. Hampshire Police Authority, for example, dissatisfied with routine public satisfaction surveys, plan to target particular groups each year for an in-depth analysis of their views on policing, starting with

young people and ethnic minorities; and Nottinghamshire Constabulary have increased the number of public surveys to six per year covering road traffic, accidents, violent crime, burglary, 999 calls, victims and community relations. These developments were too new for their worth to have been evaluated but the recognition that the onus is on forces to develop effective methods to ensure they understand the views of the community they serve is welcome.

3.6 Other consultative mechanisms, such as Police Consultative Groups under the Police Act 1996, can be useful barometers of public opinion but in some places they have not been very imaginatively developed. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 is driving many forces and other public agencies to establish the policing and safety needs of local communities with a systematic approach and breadth not previously attempted. Her Majesty's Inspector is confident these crime audits, if done well, will help to ensure more local and neighbourhood problems will be identified and can therefore be addressed. It is important that 'hard to reach groups', perhaps more accurately described as sections of the public without an adequate representative voice, for example the young or the homeless, do not 'fall through the net'. He urges the guidance on satisfaction surveys issued by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) in January 1998 should be applied by all forces.

3.7 Her Majesty's Inspector found some forces had made great efforts to become more aware of community needs. The Royal Ulster Constabulary, for example, has for many years run a community awareness programme for its staff, and over 46 members of the community have contributed to the courses. Another example of good practice can be found in Cambridgeshire, where officers log on a central computer system details of any encounters with local groups, however small or informal, any concerns that were raised and details of any action to be taken to tackle them. This allows trends to be picked up and fed back into local and force plans.

Residents in Areas of Social Deprivation

3.8 Those living in poorer areas felt they received a worse response from the police than in more 'respectable' neighbourhoods.

In one inner city estate residents, tired of 'out of control' local youngsters causing damage and stealing vehicles, tried to organise a local Neighbourhood Watch scheme, but their enthusiasm soon disappeared when calls to the police to report that vehicles were being broken into before their eyes were met with no response for several hours.

A group of elderly people living in a block of flats in another inner-city area, frightened by a group of youths attacking the building one night, rang the police only to be told that it was only criminal damage and the police had more important things to attend to.

Police communication room staff told the Inspection Team they had started to doubt their own integrity when advising callers that a response would follow when they knew it was unlikely to be in time to be useful.

Young People

3.9 The Inspection Team found the majority of young people spoken to were critical of their treatment by the police. Examples given of oppressive treatment included excessive use of force and abusive language, both reflecting a general lack of respect for youth by the police. These views were reinforced by interviews in schools and with Church representatives and youth leaders.

In one city, it was alleged a group of boys aged between 8 and 13 on a trip organised by their youth group to the local swimming baths had been attacked by another group of older youths and the manager, having first closed the baths, called the police. Although one boy had clearly been quite badly injured and a number of witnesses were prepared to give statements, the police attending the scene were reluctant to take any action but suggested the victim attend the police station. When the boy and accompanying youth worker arrived at the station they were advised not to complain as this type of incident often led to counter allegations by the other party and could result in the arrest of the boy.

Such accounts were not isolated.

3.10 Police officers interviewed highlighted their dilemma between responding to the concerns of a complainant, perhaps an elderly citizen feeling genuinely intimidated by a group of youths gathering on a street corner, and meeting the needs of the youths themselves. It is absolutely right the police should do everything possible to enhance the quality of life for the vulnerable in society, such as the elderly, but this is no excuse for aggressive behaviour towards, or a lack of respect for, young people. It may be appropriate to 'move the youths on' but the police need to act professionally at all times and carefully manage these issues if they are not further to alienate the young.

3.11 The Inspection Team encountered many examples of imaginative schemes where the police had led or joined with other agencies to address some of the root causes of anti-social or self-destructive behaviour by young people, or to give them a sense of self-worth and citizenship. The Police Service has a long and distinguished record of collectively and individually organising, supporting and even funding community projects and social institutions. A current imaginative example is the Humberside Lifestyle Project, driven by the police with the help of businesses, local authorities, voluntary organisations and young people themselves. The scheme engages young people in community projects during the summer holidays to encourage good citizenship and acceptance of social responsibility; since 1989, more than 74,000 young people have taken part, raising over £347,000 for charity. Other police forces are taking up this scheme and many have run similar projects in the past.

3.12 Likewise, the Global Rock Challenge is a drug and crime prevention initiative in the form of a performing arts competition for secondary schools; it has been adopted in Hampshire, Humberside and a growing number of other forces. The Inspection revealed many other smaller scale projects being undertaken in a number of forces, such as running local football teams and helping out with local youth groups; these were widely appreciated and valued.

3.13 Her Majesty's Inspector applauds such approaches and would like to see the imagination and commitment to help young people develop a sense of social responsibility, as displayed in these schemes, reflected more widely in police officers' day-to-day contacts with the young.

Community Policing

3.14 A consistent message throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland is that the public want and value community beat officers (CBOs). The deployment of officers with an affinity and responsibility for their 'patch' develops community trust and confidence in the police. Equally, most police managers acknowledge many successful solutions to long-term problems stem from the use of CBOs. Her Majesty's Inspector found, in areas where community policing is working well, it has inspired a greater degree of trust in the Police Service.

3.15 Despite the acknowledged benefits of CBOs and statements by forces that they are valued, they are widely seen by the Service as having a lower status than response teams or specialists; this is invariably denied but any examination of their equipment, facilities, prioritised duties or career progression shows the reality. Her Majesty's Inspector found little evidence of supervisory officers protecting CBOs from being regularly abstracted from their beats for other work, including public order and response car cover. He supports the practice in Scunthorpe, where all requests to use CBOs for other work has to be approved by their own inspector who, of course, is motivated to keep abstractions to a minimum. Such applications have dropped significantly as a result.

3.16 Many of the findings by the Inspection Team were also highlighted in the HMIC thematic inspection report, 'Winning The Race Revisited – Policing Plural Communities' (1999), and Her Majesty's Inspector re-emphasises its recommendations, particularly in relation to community policing.

Policing Minority Ethnic Communities

3.17 The vast majority of minority ethnic groups spoken to during the Inspection were critical of the police. Her Majesty's Inspector is therefore concerned nearly all the forces visited by the Inspection Team appeared complacent about any problem. Some overstated the strength or value of their links with people they saw as community leaders, and in one case, because the local ethnic minority population is perceived to be so small, did not appreciate there could be any problem.

3.18 Predominantly, the public's perception is the police do not trouble to understand the diverse nature of the communities they are serving. A superintendent made the important observation,

'People need to be treated equally but that does not mean being treated the same.'

Some examples of the insensitive policing of minority ethnic groups included:

A law-abiding pair of young black men were stopped and searched 32 times while driving the same vehicle and mainly by the same officers.

One young Asian employed as a fireman was repeatedly stopped and searched by police, most recently in daylight while he had a mobile 'phone in his pocket, the reason given being that the officers thought it might be a weapon.

Two young Asian boys were playing football in the park when a white girl whom they knew rode off on one of their cycles. When she failed to return the boys went to the local police station to report the theft, they were told they could not report crimes at the front counter and should telephone the crime desk the following morning. This they did but, despite informing the police of the identity of the girl, the boy's family heard nothing. As the weeks went by they grew increasingly concerned the cycle had still not been recovered. They sought the assistance of the local multi-cultural services officer and, together, went to the police station. When they questioned the delay they were informed the matter would be dealt with the following day. The bike was never recovered and, as far as the victims know, there was no investigation into the theft. The victims perceive this to be because of their race, rather than the only other explanation – complete unprofessionalism.

3.19 In the face of this sort of experience, Her Majesty's Inspector fully understands why a large percentage of young people in ethnic minority groups regard the police as racist.

3.20 Clearly a gulf exists between the police and some ethnic minority communities, so Her Majesty's Inspector welcomes the evidence found of considerable and imaginative efforts by many forces to bridge this gap. For example, Humberside Police are introducing a young peoples forum entitled 'Multi-Cultural Voice', designed to allow young people from ethnic minorities to air their grievances. In Hampshire, 12 trainers have recently undergone a six-week training programme and over the next 18 months all 5,000 police and support staff will attend a compulsory three-day course run by those trainers, who will be assisted by members of minority ethnic groups; this huge programme, planned over a year ago, involves the use of over 15,000 staff days at a cost well in excess of a million pounds. Her Majesty's Inspector is aware many forces have undertaken similar training programmes in recent years.

Gay and Lesbian Groups

3.21 Gay and lesbian groups are often suspicious of police actions and motives and are critical of what they perceive to be police entrapment operations. Her Majesty's Inspector, however, found evidence of much good work by the police in attempting to develop links with these groups – indeed, the majority of forces visited had officers specially trained for that role, and some good policy documents to guide their work were also encountered. In Nottinghamshire, for example, a group of officers has been specially trained and is responsible for monitoring homophobic crimes and taking clear and positive action to ensure a thorough investigation. Reporting procedures, similar to those used in racial incidents, have been introduced to protect the identity of the complainant.

Victims of Crime

3.22 It is vitally important to public confidence that the police treat victims of crime with compassion and understanding. The most consistent criticisms are that, except in the most

serious cases, the police make assumptions about whether or not victims want the help of Victim Support and, where an offender is being proceeded against, the victims' need for information about the progress of their case is not being met. Her Majesty's Inspector is concerned that in one large city, Victim Support volunteers complained of having been banned from police stations, the reasons for which were unclear. He is pleased to note, however, in Nottinghamshire the Victims Support Serious Crime Team and the Witness Support Co-ordinator regularly contribute to training for new entrants to the CID, as well as training for probationers, to heighten police awareness of victims' needs.

3.23 Her Majesty's Inspector welcomes the fact that the police are often widely commended by witness support schemes for their care of vulnerable witnesses in the most serious cases, and he urges all forces to forge close links with their local Victim Support scheme.

Press and Media Relations

3.24 The press and other media play an enormous part in influencing public perceptions. The police, rightly, want fair and accurate reporting, yet Her Majesty's Inspector noticed a marked variation in the relationships some forces have with the press and media. In one instance, the editor of a local newspaper had direct access to the chief constable's office, whereas in another, relationships had broken down with a key local newspaper to such an extent that all contact had been forbidden. From the editor's point of view, his paper's hostile reporting was because the police had lied about the existence of a particular operation. There may be sound operational

reasons for not wishing something to be publicised but how it is achieved without instigating long-term damage is the challenge that has to be overcome.



3.25 Cambridgeshire Police were particularly praised for their openness by local media, and in another force the Chief Constable and all his managers down to superintendent level host regular 'Editors Evenings', when all the local editors and crime reporters can discuss points of concern in a semi-social environment. Her Majesty's Inspector welcomes these approaches and considers there should be no conflict between building an open, professional relationship with the media yet ensuring unauthorised leaks, as described later in chapter 6, do not occur. Those staff who speak to the press normally know very well whether to divulge specific information, and a simple

test is, *'Would they be happy for their manager to know they were giving it?'* Because openness is so important to integrity, genuine mistakes will sometimes occur. This should be accepted and advice given where appropriate.

3.26 Whilst editors understandably reserve the right to criticise the police when they feel it is deserved, Her Majesty's Inspector was consistently assured by them that where an open and trusting relationship exists, even adverse media coverage of the police will tend to be fair and responsible. They were also sympathetic to the need to help provide a balanced view of policing and felt good media relations staff in police forces, particularly those with journalistic experience, would not find it difficult to place 'good news' stories.

4

Investigation and Prosecution of Offenders

4.1 One of the core activities of the Police Service is to investigate breaches of the law. Within this chapter, the issue of ensuring integrity from the report of an offence through to the production of evidence to the court will be discussed.

Pressure to Perform

4.2 The increasingly aggressive and demonstrable performance culture has emerged as a major factor affecting integrity, not least because for some years there has been an apparent tendency for some forces to ‘trawl the margins’ for detections and generally use every means to portray their performance in a good light. The questionnaire replies from chief constables (appendix B, table B-5) highlighted the performance culture as a cause for lapses in integrity. A CID trainer offered the view, *‘The performance culture forces you to operate at the edge of the ethical envelope.’*

4.3 As well as crime recording, Her Majesty’s Inspector found such practices in random breath testing and stop and search activities. There was also evidence of soft-targeting to drive up the figures, for example, night-time reporting of illegally parked vehicles on deprived and disadvantaged estates where complaints from the public were much less likely. In some areas, there appears to be a particularly unhealthy performance culture around probationer training, where it is widely believed that, unless monthly performance targets are met, probationers will not ‘gain their spurs’; in one force, divisions identified their under performer of the month, thereby relying on a shame culture to bolster performance. There were also examples of charging drug offenders with possession with intent to supply, or having a ‘class A’ drug, despite the fact that ultimately the evidence was only likely to allow a conviction for a lesser offence.

4.4 Perhaps the major area of malpractice connected with the performance culture is crime recording, and, in particular, efforts to achieve a high detection rate. Traditionally, performance indicators have placed considerable emphasis around detection rates, and there have been many examples where officers have used unethical means to ‘improve’ their figures. There are three main ways that have in the past been used to make the detection rate look better:

- not recording reports of crime that are unlikely to result in detection – for example, a stone through a shop window ‘blamed’ on a passing lorry;
- inaccurate classification of crimes – for example, recording an attempted burglary as damage to the door lock;
- encouraging a convicted criminal to admit crimes which he did not commit – usually a secondary detection through a prison visit.

4.5 Her Majesty’s Inspector has conducted many detailed scrutinies of crime recording systems and is satisfied in general there is little evidence that, today, these practices are in any way widespread. There are, though, still pockets of unethical crime recording which need to be eradicated to ensure the public has confidence in the police performance figures.

4.6 The drive for continuing improvements in detections should, however, be controlled to ensure high volume crimes are not unnecessarily pursued at the expense of proper investigation of more serious crime. There was evidence in one force that a divisional commander refused to allow his detectives to put more than minimal resources into a serious sexual crime investigation, preferring instead they concentrate their efforts on less serious crime such as car theft. This occurred because whether they solved a rape or the theft of a car radio, the division would only be credited with one detection. Her Majesty's Inspector urges each force to ensure crime managers are setting high and consistent standards, and chief officers and divisional commanders do not subject them to an atmosphere of *'increase the detection rate at all costs'*.

4.7 Central senior detectives can usefully assist local crime managers and their divisional commanders by monitoring the quality of crime recording and investigation and advising the commanders and the chief officer team of any inconsistencies or bad practice within the force. Thames Valley Police has recently reintroduced detective superintendents to this role, each with an overview of a group of divisions, and found it very successful in ensuring integrity and a corporate approach to crime investigation.

4.8 Concern was expressed by several people interviewed by the Inspection Team about post sentence interviews of those convicted of crime. Several forces have either stopped this practice altogether, whilst others are setting out much more stringent rules. In one force, an assistant chief constable (ACC) said,

'We focus on primaries. I would be delighted if secondaries went. The emphasis in crime terms is on reduction rather than detections.'

4.9 In the same force, however, a different ACC said,

'An area of concern is under-recording. I can't rule out people wanting to generate good figures.'

In that force, a separate method of recording those 'difficult to detect' crimes, was discovered. This was known as a 'Miscellaneous Book' and anything recorded therein did not show up in the performance figures, thereby giving the appearance the detection rate was higher. Upon examination, clear examples were found of crimes, some serious, which should have been recorded in the official way.

4.10 It is proposed that as from 1st April 1999, most detections achieved by post sentence interviews of offender will no longer be counted by the Home Office towards the detected crime figures of police forces. If this is the case, chief officers may still wish the interviews to take place to gather crime intelligence and to reassure victims of crime that the perpetrator has been discovered and is serving a sentence. If the rules set out in letters to chief officers by successive HM Chief Inspectors of Constabulary are adhered to, there is no reason why they should not be undertaken with complete integrity. The key is if a crime is to be attributed to a particular person, it must be provable by evidence which, if given in court would be likely to result in a conviction. Commonly, this should at least include an unprompted admission containing accurate features of the crime only the perpetrator would have known. Her Majesty's Inspector urges those senior police officers authorising such detections to tolerate nothing less than that standard.

4.11 Her Majesty's Inspector, whilst overwhelmingly supporting increasing effectiveness, stresses the importance of public confidence. He regards how results are obtained as important as what is achieved. He considers crime recording systems should be formalised and monitored, avoiding any unethical under-recording designed to boost a flagging detection rate.

4.12 As the concept of 'Best Value' becomes more widely accepted within the Service, the challenge will be to temper the need for greater efficiency with the requirement to ensure the service side of policing, which is not measured and may be immeasurable, is not lost in the drive to improve performance. Work such as child protection and community and schools liaison could be casualties in a force concentrating entirely on its performance indicators. HM Inspectors of Constabulary will consider the resources allocated to such vital areas in their role as 'Best Value Inspectors'.



Recommendation 2



Her Majesty's Inspector recommends all chief officers should ensure there is in place an adequate monitoring process to maintain a corporate approach to ethical crime recording and investigation.



Bending The Rules

4.13 Her Majesty's Inspector sought to determine whether there is a tendency for officers to bend the rules in order to circumvent perceived obstacles in the criminal justice system. Despite there being a general feeling the rules are weighted too heavily in favour of the criminal rather than the victim of crime, this was not raised as an issue as frequently as might have been the case in earlier times, although some strong views to that effect were expressed. Whilst the Inspection Team concluded any bending of the rules is largely an activity of the past, broadly, it is seen by those still guilty of it as not being for personal gain but to protect society, and therefore not at the worst end of corruption. This is sometimes referred to as 'noble cause corruption', which, like the term 'joyriding', somehow seems to lend a sense of legitimacy to unlawful activity. Her Majesty's Inspector totally rejects this view and repeats the

requirement for investigations to be carried out entirely within the rules, otherwise the credibility of the whole Service is devalued – the police do not administer justice but enforce the law with justice.

4.14 Why some staff feel they have to bend the rules should, however, be considered and addressed. The police officer is very often the person within the criminal justice system who is closest to the victim. Not surprisingly, constant exposure to their suffering, coupled with a sense of inadequacy to relieve it, can lead to a feeling of injustice and frustration. Her Majesty's Inspector encourages chief officers and the ACPO to pay close attention to this phenomenon, continue to expose areas within the criminal justice system which investigating officers and victims feel should be improved and pursue any necessary changes in the law with vigour. Her Majesty's Inspector is aware good work is being done by the ACPO in this respect, as evidenced by the ACPO Crime Committee paper 'In Search Of Criminal Justice' and its sequel, '... Five Years On'. However, he is concerned many junior operational officers are often unaware of the leadership being given by senior colleagues. Policing is a difficult and complex duty and those in the 'front line' need to know their senior leaders acknowledge those areas which create the most difficulty and are seen to be taking steps to support them. A simple improvement in marketing by chief officers and the ACPO may help in this respect. A feeling should be generated that the whole Service is pulling in the same direction.

Informant Handling

4.15 In the context of a potential lack of integrity, the use of informants is possibly the highest-risk area in the work of the modern Police Service. Since the publication of the report 'Helping with Enquiries: Tackling Crime Effectively' (1993) by the Audit Commission, there has been an increasing reliance on intelligence led policing, which necessarily involves the use of informants. There is nothing new about using informants but it was suggested to the Inspection Team that their use caused so much controversy and difficulty for the Service and individual handlers with limited benefit, it should be stopped altogether. It is, however, a fact many people involved in law enforcement believe informants are valuable and necessary. Her Majesty's Inspector agrees providing informants are properly targeted and controlled.

4.16 Some other law enforcement agencies believe the main reason their staff are less susceptible to corruption is because police officers are exposed to criminals far more frequently and in a less controlled environment. It is vital, therefore, to have good controlling mechanisms in informant handling. Her Majesty's Inspector is extremely concerned to discover that effective systems for ensuring informants are used with integrity either do not exist at all, or are ignored.

4.17 Her Majesty's Inspector recognises the enormously hard work of many officers to ensure a steady flow of high-grade intelligence. The Service should fully support and value those who recruit and handle informants, often in difficult and time consuming circumstances. Whilst every effort should be made to ensure integrity, a siege mentality should not be allowed to develop among the overwhelming number of honest officers working in this difficult field. They are not the enemy – the corrupt officers and treacherous informants are. The following paragraphs are intended to support officers who handle or control informants with integrity, and not to hinder them.

Considering the Risk

4.18 The Inspection found in one force many of the major criminals had recruited themselves as informants. They were giving low-grade information, often about minor crime, in exchange for perhaps a letter of mitigation to a judge or bail when they would otherwise be kept in custody. Money is rarely an incentive for these people. They simply see being a registered informant as an insurance policy for when they are arrested or in some cases a means of removing their competition, particularly perhaps in the case of drug dealers. Her Majesty's Inspector is concerned there is a risk inexperienced handlers of such major criminals will find themselves out of their depth and being led by the informant rather than doing the leading. The question of risk assessment should be considered, in that if the police, by using such informants, are facilitating them in committing more serious crime than they are helping to detect, their use clearly lacks integrity and is counterproductive. In order to go some way to controlling 'hidden' rewards, such as the cancellation of a parking ticket or the granting of bail when custody would normally be sought, the same methods of authorisation and auditing as would be applied to a cash payment should apply to *every* benefit received by an informant.

Registration

4.19 There is a general lack of clarity about when a person giving information comes within the definition of being an informant. Some people who give information to the police do not want to be registered and some may not seem worthy of registration. Should an officer, for example, register an elderly lady who, on a regular basis, passes details of car registration numbers leaving a suspect's address opposite her own? In one force a 'Confidential Source' system is in place, which allows for the recording of specified people without registering them as informants; practices like this should be carefully controlled to ensure they are not used as a backdoor method of avoiding stringent control systems.

Supervision

4.20 The Inspection looked at the quality of supervision given to informant handlers and in the main found it to be seriously inadequate. Senior managers from a different law enforcement agency believe police informant controllers are too remote from the handlers, untrained and generally trying to control too many informants. Her Majesty's Inspector agrees and is concerned many informants have never even been seen by the controller, making it impossible for their identity to be verified, or for there to have been a first hand assessment of their value or the risk they may pose.

4.21 Unless it is their sole task, it is unrealistic to expect a controller to manage more than 20 to 25 informants. Currently, detective inspectors are often expected to control 100 or more informants, of whom perhaps only 20 are active and of good quality. Forces should question the value of having large numbers of unproductive informants, which prevents the adequate supervision of officers handling those of higher utility; this may necessitate dispensing with the services of those informants who do not produce a regular, valuable product. One of the unfortunate by-products of the intelligence led approach is that in some areas officers are being urged to recruit informants with little regard for their quality. In one force, staff were told that to get onto and remain on the CID they would need to have at least five registered informants.

Inevitably, this produced a glut of low grade informants, the supervision of whom deflected controllers' efforts away from those who required most attention. To ensure a valuable product is being obtained and to dispense with those where it is not, one force assesses the activity of their informants at six, rather than twelve monthly intervals.

4.22 Many forces are using IT systems, such as the police informant management system (PIMS), to produce management data and assist with the monitoring of informant handling activity, thus enabling managers to maintain a strategic view of informant use and to improve the general integrity of the whole procedure. Her Majesty's Inspector considers this provides a very useful mechanism and urges all forces to ensure their controllers are assisted by a supportive IT system.

Rewards

4.23 The Inspection Team found a great deal of dissatisfaction amongst handlers with the speed with which applications for informant rewards are processed. In one case, officers could wait two months while the paperwork was going through a laborious finance system. Where informants demand payment, they usually expect it quickly and Her Majesty's Inspector is of the view it is an unacceptable burden on handlers for them to have to explain to informants the vagaries of their force accounting systems. A consequence of this is some officers feel the need to pay the informant out of their own pocket and then reimburse themselves later from the reward. The fact that this can occur demonstrates control systems are not working, but also it is unacceptable and a streamlined system to expedite payments should be in place to eliminate this irregularity.

4.24 Consideration needs to be given to methods of rewarding informants other than by cash payments. Ideas could include electronic transfer of money into an account, or some other reward which does not allow the possibility of misappropriation.

4.25 Verification of the fact the informant received the reward is essential to discount any suggestion of impropriety. A signature, particularly if a pseudonym is used, is almost useless. It should be possible to devise a receipt with a space thereon so an impression of a rolled forefinger can be obtained at the time of payment. Assuming the control fingerprint was obtained at the time of registration, a subsequent audit can at least confirm the correct person signed the receipt.

Training for Handlers and Controllers

4.26 Her Majesty's Inspector is concerned that in many forces there is insufficient or no training for informant handlers and controllers. Currently, 11 forces run informant handling courses and with only limited consistency of approach. The National Crime Faculty at National Police Training, Bramshill, is developing accredited courses based on the new national standards for covert policing, drawn up by the ACPO and HM Customs and Excise and due to be published in the summer of 1999. Her Majesty's Inspector fully endorses the new Manuals of Guidance, together with their accompanying Codes of Practice, and considers they will go some way to reassuring the public the police are doing all they can to ensure integrity in their very necessary covert operations. One facet of the new guidance is likely to be that all officers who handle informants must be properly trained. Her Majesty's Inspector supports this approach and urges National Police Training to devise these courses as a matter of urgency and introduce them widely within the Service.

Maintaining Integrity in Informant Use

4.27 Her Majesty's Inspector suggests consideration should be given to the adoption of the use of 'overseers', whereby an officer, independent of the investigation or department to which the informant relates, will randomly inspect the integrity of the case and the use of the informant. The essential aspect is they have unfettered access to all files relating to the force's informants and, if necessary, the informants themselves. In one force, active informants and their handlers are the subject of intense scrutiny. This includes examination of contact reports, pagers, mobile telephones and payments, to determine any significant or untoward trends. However, it is done openly and officers are aware of the checks. The head of CID remarked, *'Let's be open about our vigorous auditing.'* Her Majesty's Inspector considers a two pronged approach is required, with open random dip checks being conducted alongside discreet enquiries when suspicions are aroused in individual cases.

4.28 Her Majesty's Inspector endorses the view by one chief constable, as a result of his investigation into the use of informants in a large force, that dedicated 'Source Units' to handle all informants should be evaluated by the Service. The National Crime Squad is introducing the concept that, once an informant is recruited, he or she is passed over to a dedicated unit of hand picked detectives of proven ability and integrity; Kent Constabulary already has a well proven system such as this in operation and there are pilot projects taking place in other parts of the country to assess the value of such units.

4.29 Her Majesty's Inspector is pleased to note this also challenges the long held myth that an informant *'will only respond to me'*; it is not true, and if, in individual instances, it is the case, the use of that informant is unacceptable and he/she should be de-registered. A culture should exist whereby informants are truly considered to be a corporate asset. Many of the problems in the past have been because an unhealthy, close relationship has built up between informant and handler. This has been likened to the 'Stockholm Syndrome', when, as sometimes happens, a bonding occurs between hostages and hijackers. The Inspection Team found many examples where officers had run informants for seven or more years, and in one case 13 years, with the two people moving up through the criminal and police hierarchy simultaneously. Clearly, over that period, there is the risk the boundary with impropriety can be blurred, the police officer can become very protective of his or her source and in some cases this can result in the handler being used by the informant. In one agency, a strict tenure policy applies, whereby an agent can only be handled by the same individual for a maximum of two years. Her Majesty's Inspector endorses this approach and sees no reason why the concept should not be applied equally to police informants. Under this model, the selection of the new handler should be done by managers and not by the informant or outgoing handler.



Recommendation 3



Her Majesty's Inspector recommends informants should be regarded as a corporate asset, controllers responsible only for the number of informants they can properly supervise and handlers changed at set intervals.

Major Crime Investigation

4.30 The process of investigating major crime professionally and with integrity has received urgent and thorough re-consideration and policy changes by the Police Service, due in part to the questions raised by the enquiry concerning the investigation into the tragic death of Stephen Lawrence, a very sad chapter in police history. The Macpherson Report highlighted the initial investigation was *'marred by professional incompetence'*. No one doubts the police require professional and highly trained senior investigating officers (SIOs) and it is also important this expertise should be represented at the highest levels of the Service. The chairman of one police authority interviewed, bemoaned the fact that,

'There is a complete lack of good quality applicants for ACPO ranks with operational CID experience.'

Her Majesty's Inspector is of the view any deficiency is due to poor career and succession management policies rather than individual failings.

4.31 The current work being done by the ACPO Crime Committee to set high competency requirements for SIOs will help to ensure integrity in major crime investigation, and the new range of modular courses designed by the National Crime Faculty should improve their ability and professionalism. This work is endorsed by Her Majesty's Inspector and he urges forces to make full use of this training, together with succession planning, to ensure they have at all times a pool of senior investigators who are of proven integrity and are well trained and experienced in major crime investigation.

4.32 Encouragingly, a number of examples were seen where an open and objective investigation into serious crime had resulted in a positive outcome in circumstances where it would have been defensible to conclude the investigation at a much earlier stage and with a very different outcome. Kent Constabulary, for example, have, through training, placed a clear emphasis on developing professional skills in investigation and interviewing. The focus is on how best to use all the legitimate tools to get the best results, and very much about exhausting all lines of enquiry. This discourages a tunnel vision approach to crime investigation and illustrates a wider point of fundamental importance – if officers are trained to acquire the necessary skills, there is much less temptation to cut corners.

Forensic Science and Disclosure

4.33 The importance of a force having a clear position on the subject of forensic examinations cannot be overstated. Impartiality is vital in the area of forensic science. Those called to account in court proceedings need to be able to demonstrate work done was undertaken equally to confirm or disprove the suspect's involvement. The Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996 requires all relevant lines of enquiry to be pursued in an investigation. Her Majesty's Inspector was interested to determine what criteria forces are using for deciding whether or not to submit forensic exhibits to the laboratory. In one force, there was little knowledge from constable to superintendent level concerning any such criteria. On the other hand, one force targets and scrutinises particular procedures and policies to test for integrity, for example dip sampling of forensic submissions; this force takes the view that *'We are only as strong as our weakest link.'*

4.34 The scientific support manager has an important role in ensuring integrity in terms of forensic submissions and needs to have systems in place for monitoring and ensuring high quality. Crime scene managers should be prepared to challenge, and be supported in, decisions by SIOs which could lead to a lack of integrity, for example if a policy decision is made not to follow relevant lines of enquiry. In exceptional circumstances, Her Majesty's Inspector considers they should, through the scientific support manager, have a direct operational reporting line to a chief officer.

4.35 In the past, the failure of the prosecution to disclose certain material which may have been of use to the defence has fatally flawed many criminal trials, and in high profile cases has done the Service immeasurable harm. These instances have led to the current rules under which the Police Service operates. Her Majesty's Inspector is pleased to note nearly all forces have a training package for disclosure issues, and they realise the importance that needs to be attached to it.

Covert Policing Techniques

4.36 Some covert policing techniques can be so time consuming, the temptation after a while can be to rely too much on the people involved with them to make sure the work is undertaken with integrity and forget the original safeguards that have been put in place. Part 3 of the Police Act 1997, ensures independent oversight by the Commissioners of many intrusive surveillance techniques, but it is important those operations, which do not fall within the Commissioners' sphere of influence, are carried out with careful thought and integrity.



4.37 The new Codes of Practice and their accompanying Manuals of Guidance on covert policing techniques referred to at paragraph 4.26 should be adopted by every force at the earliest opportunity, and strictly adhered to. Her Majesty's Inspector reminds forces the use of technical equipment should be properly authorised and the reasons for allowing use, together with any conditions, should be recorded. To protect the Police Service and reassure the public it is being properly used, there should be random dip-checking to ensure those carrying out operations have not exceeded the limits of the authority.

The Integrity of Evidence

4.38 Integrity is particularly important during the interview stage of an investigation. Normally it is tape recorded, giving supervisors the opportunity to dip sample for quality and integrity. And finally, having ensured the investigative process is

conducted with integrity, the Service needs to sustain this culture through the preparation of a file of evidence and into the courtroom.

4.39 Despite many people being asked, the Inspection Team did not find any managers who, either personally or through a colleague, regularly monitored the evidence given by officers in court. As one of the main products of the Police Service is the evidence offered to the court, Her Majesty's Inspector finds it surprising senior managers have no systems in place for randomly monitoring the quality of that product. In addition, he urges forces to create mechanisms to become aware of the assessment of judges, magistrates and the Crown Prosecution Service of the general level of integrity of its officers and the quality of the evidence they give.

5

Personnel and Training

Recruiting

5.1 The first line of defence in preventing, or at least lessening, the chance of corruption and a lack of integrity is the recruiting process. Whereas it seems generally the standard of recruit is high, the Inspection revealed robust and adequate vetting procedures at that stage would have saved many problems later. It is difficult for any organisation to guarantee those with weaknesses or failings will always be discovered, but Her Majesty's Inspector stresses the need for many forces to improve their initial recruitment vetting and refereeing procedure.

5.2 Greater use could be made during recruitment of assessment centres, with integrity being tested through the dynamics of group discussions and scenario testing. It is important then to feed in information from such testing, together with whatever knowledge has been gained of the applicant's actual previous conduct, to a rigorous but fairly conducted final interview. A potential weak spot, therefore, is in using staff without proven interview skills; there is a mistaken belief that the skills required for interviewing offenders are the same. One chief constable aptly describes his recruiting department as *'the bouncers for my ballroom'*. An ethos should be generated within those departments that they are of immense importance to the maintenance of integrity within the Service.

Probationers

5.3 When speaking to probationers at different stages of their training programme, the Inspection Team found a clear mismatch between the virtues extolled during their training and the views and attitudes of tutor constables and other experienced colleagues. A view was expressed that, *'new starters go with the flow, it's part of the police culture'*, and it is clear new staff are heavily influenced by events going on around them.

5.4 Her Majesty's Inspector supports the view of the Police Federation that integrity should feature as a major theme in the training of tutor constables. The Service should recognise tutor constables are an essential element in starting police officers off along the right road, and the importance of choosing the right officers to take on the task of guiding and mentoring them cannot be overstated. There is a need for more guidance on the skills required to be a successful tutor constable, and a move away from the tendency for ad hoc selection at divisional level. The content of tutor constable courses varies across the country and the Inspection Team discovered courses did not always reflect fully the range of pressures, the new working environment, or equal opportunities issues. In many cases, probationers are more up to date than their tutors!

5.5 Her Majesty's Inspector welcomes the fact that some forces, for example Avon and Somerset Constabulary, are reviewing the content of tutor constable courses and bringing them up to date, but he considers National Police Training should design a standard course for tutor constables, which could then be available for adoption by all forces.



Recommendation 4



Her Majesty's Inspector recommends forces should review selection, training and methods of deployment of tutor constables, with the specific aim of enhancing the integrity of the probationer constable.

5.6 There is a surprising and grossly unreasonable expectation by some senior managers that probationers should be the main change agents in improving practice in the Service at large. Those who hope for this should recall their time as constables and remember peer pressure is all-pervasive and probationers sometimes feel a sense of isolation and are entirely unable to achieve this goal.

Promoting Integrity Through Training

5.7 Her Majesty's Inspector was dismayed to find 'integrity', as a specific topic, rarely explicitly featured in training courses, although training staff stated it was often 'woven in' as a 'golden thread' through the course content. In many courses, such as Investigative Interviewing, it is absolutely right that running behind the main content of the syllabus should be integrity, but since the most basic attribute a member of the Police Service has to possess is honesty, the subject of integrity should stand in its own right, be discussed, and indeed taught. There are certain key stages, such as new sergeants, CID foundation and custody officer, where an integrity element to the course is vital.

5.8 Concern was expressed by several sources that the Police Service has overlooked the needs of those with 15 to 30 years service, in that their knowledge levels, training needs and values systems have not been properly updated. If staff do not apply for promotion or selection for specialist posts, they can be left unsupported and their attitudes unchallenged for 15 or 20 years. Some forces, such as South Yorkshire, are now aiming to provide refresher training to all staff on a five-year cycle, linked to needs identified in personal appraisals. This approach is commended by Her Majesty's Inspector because he considers, as officers become out of touch with current standards and practice, there is a greater tendency for ingrained resistance to change to develop.

5.9 One head of CID noted this de-skilling process had affected the supervisory ranks. There were, he felt, a large number of supervisors who lacked essential knowledge of law, equal opportunities and procedural issues, thereby affecting their ability to supervise effectively. Her Majesty's Inspector recognises the resource pressures of delivering comprehensive training programmes but, if staff are not equipped with the skills and knowledge to undertake tasks with a high level of professionalism, it leads to an environment where there is a greater tendency to cut corners and cover up mistakes.

5.10 Thus a lack of ability can lead to a culture which in the longer term facilitates malpractice. He considers there is a strong case for much more regular intervention and support, to ensure integrity principles are reinforced and staff are brought up to date with the latest legislation, and management and technical issues, as well as integrity issues and expectations in terms of

professional standards. Continuous professional development is now a requirement for most professions, and the Police Service cannot afford to be different.

5.11 By the nature of training, force trainers come into regular contact with a large number of staff from throughout the organisation and visit many different parts of the force. Of necessity, trainers tend to be up to date on good practice across a wide field and are generally highly motivated. Her Majesty's Inspector is of the view that trainers regularly need to be exposed to operational policing so they can gauge first hand any failings within the force. This can be achieved by a tenure policy if one exists. In South Yorkshire, trainers are encouraged to confront inappropriate behaviour or malpractice wherever they encounter it and, if they remain concerned, report to the head of training, who takes independent action. This provides a valuable and additional health check for forces, clearly identifying a role for trainers as agents of change.

Vetting

5.12 There is a wide divergence of views as to the usefulness of vetting. Her Majesty's Inspector is conscious an in depth enquiry into the background and lifestyle of an individual alone will not prevent dishonest people joining the Service, nor always expose those within who lack integrity. However, he firmly endorses vetting as a valuable tool in the armoury of the chief officer who wishes to sustain an honest force because the Inspection revealed many of those who showed a lack of integrity during their police career displayed warning signs earlier in their lives that could have been discovered. The depth to which people should be vetted depends on the risk to the organisation if something untoward is missed. Her Majesty's Inspector is of the view that background enquiries generally need to be carried out in a more rigorous way.

5.13 At the recruiting stage, the traditional checking of previous convictions, for example, is not sufficiently robust and should be extended to any occasion when the applicant was proceeded against or even investigated, as opposed to convicted. Recruit selection could also include financial and lifestyle vetting of the applicant and their spouses or partners and drugs testing at initial application. There is a strong feeling in some forces about the value of home visits, in terms of judging an applicant's external environment and lifestyle, but it is essential to recognise the potential equal opportunities implications and ensure they are done using clear guidelines with structured, objective assessments.

5.14 The thorough checking of an individual's work record may reveal areas of concern, in particular the reasons for leaving previous employment and what happened during any gaps in employment. Similarly, a thorough check of educational qualifications should be carried out, including production of the actual hard evidence, such as certificates.

5.15 A proper check on the veracity of referees is an important area often overlooked. One support staff member with ten years experience in a recruiting department felt traditional references were not worth the paper they were written on because applicants would only nominate referees who would make positive comments. Forces should examine how the use of references could be made more meaningful. An idea being considered by the National Crime Squad (NCS) in respect of applicants is to ask each referee to verify their own bona fides; it is planning to require each of three referees to themselves produce referees, and will not allow an

officer nominated for selection by an existing NCS member to be posted to the same branch office as the nominating officer.

5.16 The Inspection Team found overwhelming support within the Service for improved vetting and for other measures such as random drug testing and telephone monitoring. Her Majesty's Inspector accepts any changes in that direction will cause an extra burden but considers forces should take an imaginative approach and look for ways to improve their current procedures. A good example can be found in Kent, where they have introduced a layer of vetting between 'Counterterrorist' and 'Security Clearance' level, which they call 'Management Vetting'; this includes an annual declaration of any changes, such as a new partner or large debt incurred. Currently, about 450 staff have undergone this process.

5.17 This raises the issue of who should be vetted? Her Majesty's Inspector is of the view that, whereas everyone in the Police Service should be honest and trustworthy, there are certain specialist posts such as drugs squad officers, or intelligence co-ordinators, where an individual's vulnerability may be greater than elsewhere and the consequences for the Service of their lacking the highest level of integrity particularly grave. For these posts, in depth vetting is essential.



Recommendation 5



Her Majesty's Inspector recommends forces should exercise greater robustness in assessing individual integrity, and identify those high risk posts where a higher level is required.

5.18 The problem of what to do with staff who fail the vetting process, or refuse to undergo more robust checking, is something forces need to confront and resolve. In the longer term a condition of employment in the Service or a particular post could be the acceptance of the level of vetting required, but for existing staff there is a potential problem. It may be sufficient to move them to a lower risk post, but their personal motivation and the likely effect on their colleagues will make the management of the situation difficult. Her Majesty's Inspector strongly advises causes for any concern should be rigorously pursued in an effort to determine the truth; only after that can a decision be made whether to discount them, redirect the member of staff to other duties, or dispense with their services.

Freemasonry

5.19 One continuing sensitive subject is membership of specific organisations, the most obvious being freemasonry in Britain or the Orange Order in Northern Ireland. The Home Affairs Select Committee report in March 1997 recommended all personnel in the criminal justice system should be required to register their membership of any such society. The Government accepted this recommendation and in July 1998 the Home Office set up a working party to consider how it should be taken forward. Her Majesty's Inspector understands the Police Service's reluctance to be singled out for separate treatment within the judicial system, and the feeling that intrusions into the private lives of individuals should be minimal. He is, however, of

the view that the perceived impartiality of the Police Service is fundamental to public confidence and therefore its effectiveness, and no person within the Police Service – regular, civilian or special – should belong to an organisation which may cause the public to mistrust his or her impartiality. As a first step, he suggests forces should establish internal registers and registration should be obligatory, but the registers should only be open to examination by specified bodies, for example the Police Complaints Authority, the Crown Prosecution Service and HM Inspectorate of Constabulary.

Support Staff

5.20 Civilian support staff are an integral part of the Police Service and the need for them to act with integrity is as high as it is for their police officer colleagues. Her Majesty's Inspector was disturbed to find evidence in a few forces that civilian and police staffing matters were dealt with entirely separately, and many support staff still felt like second class citizens. One of the consequences of such a separation is almost invariably integrity issues are considered much less frequently for support staff and, at a time when they increasingly undertake sensitive operational tasks and can be exposed to similar risks and pressure points as uniformed officers, this is unacceptable. Support staff often receive only very limited induction training and, as for probationers, the need for integrity is often stressed but less frequently or thoroughly. The Inspection Team found much evidence that civilians had not heard of the Statement of Common Purpose and Values (see appendix B), or felt it did not apply to them. Forces should recognise risk factors apply equally to civilian support staff and the same degree of guidance, training and wider support should be made available to all. Civilian staff on short-term contracts may present a particular difficulty, as their full integration as far as training and value indoctrination is concerned may not be possible.

5.21 A similar rationale to that of civilian posts applies to the Special Constabulary. Specials often enjoy the same access to information and intelligence as their regular colleagues but frequently there does not appear to be the same degree of rigour in checking their background.

5.22 There is an increasing and laudable tendency for forces to make use of volunteers, for example, as front counter staff. The same considerations should be applied to such staff if they could be used in roles where a lack of integrity might be damaging.

5.23 Her Majesty's Inspector commends those forces which, where possible and appropriate, train police and civilian staff together. He considers this sends a



powerful message that they are not only of equal importance but are expected to behave with equal integrity. It is up to each force to ensure any weakness in the chain of maintaining high levels of integrity is identified and strengthened.

The Appraisal System

5.24 One of the most challenging areas faced by forces over many years has been to devise a meaningful appraisal system. There is little evidence that appraisals are conducted with complete honesty and objectivity, most supervisors preferring to be charitable, either to avoid upsetting a member of their staff or because they lack the skills to produce a balanced and evidenced assessment. This is particularly unfortunate because appraisals are an essential tool in the maintenance of integrity. The Inspection found few examples where force procedures require an individual's integrity to be evidenced, either on annual appraisal or promotion selection. Supervisory officers should be less afraid to manage and take action, with the emphasis being put on honest and transparent appraisal. The Chairman of the Police Federation offered to the Inspection Team the bleak view,

'The appraisal system is in complete disarray. Nobody tells the truth on appraisals, people are always written up too well. For the sake of the Service, we have got to get honesty into the system.'

5.25 The Inspection found widely varying practice between forces. All too frequently appraisal is patchy and subjective and rarely feeds into the selection or promotion processes. Appraisal of civilian staff, in some forces, is the exception rather than the norm. Her Majesty's Inspector is of the view staff appraisal represents the single and greatest missed opportunity to bring some form of regular assessment of integrity or honesty to the forefront of managers' minds. It is primarily the responsibility of line supervisors to monitor their staff and identify concerns. Some officers feel the increasingly administrative role of sergeants and inspectors prevents them from regularly observing their staff in operational situations and, as a result, their evidence within appraisals is at best anecdotal.

5.26 As a first step, Her Majesty's Inspector urges, where they have not already done so, forces develop structured, objective annual staff appraisals, supported by agreed job profiles and core competencies against which to assess all staff. Too often, however, the deficiencies have less to do with forms and procedures and are more about honesty in their completion. He also considers staff appraisals should include some form of integrity assessment; managers need to ask the question, *'What has the person done to demonstrate integrity, does his/her behaviour demonstrate the values of the organisation?'* Staff who fail that element should be subject to more active and detailed investigation.

5.27 Her Majesty's Inspector notes a number of forces are now taking positive action to develop along these lines; for example, new staff assessment models in South Yorkshire and Lincolnshire include factors around integrity, as does the system in Kent. There was evidence of a cynicism and in-built resistance by some managers to the introduction of new staff appraisals, and such schemes rely for their success on achieving greater ownership at middle management level.

5.28 The Inspection found a heightened fear amongst managers that firm action will leave them exposed to grievance procedures. That is to miss the point that appraisal comments should be evidenced, with staff being made fully aware as to why any action is being taken. Weak assessment allows a culture of inappropriate behaviour and malpractice to develop, but those trying to practice firm management need to be supported further up the command line.

5.29 In one agency where integrity is paramount, as part of the appraisal system, an annual security check on staff by line managers takes place. The question is asked, *'Is the person's behaviour giving any cause for concern; have there been any security breaches?'* Managers are encouraged to make subjective judgements and report exclusively to a security section on any member of staff with whom they are less than comfortable. This may lead to some further investigation and if necessary to an interview with the member of staff. Her Majesty's Inspector found many people within the Police Service have reservations about such a concept because of the possibility of unsubstantiated claims affecting an individual's career. The same people generally accept, however, that many managers do not appraise their staff honestly and do not feel able to comment on anything that cannot be irrefutably evidenced.

Selection Processes

5.30 There is no doubt at times dishonest officers have managed to slip through the normal safeguards and achieve promotion, or position themselves in posts within which they present a real danger to the Service – posts where there is the potential for officers to be exploited by criminals, or where corrupt officers enjoy the freedom and lack of supervision necessary to carry out their dishonest activities. The Inspection revealed many examples where, once a corrupt officer has been exposed, former colleagues have spoken out saying,

'Well, we always knew he was like that. Can't understand how he got the job!'

5.31 It is clear there is a necessity for a higher standard of selection for specialist posts than is presently the case. In some forces, managers have succumbed to the understandable temptation to base a decision not to promote an officer, or appoint to a high risk post, partly on unconfirmed and unsubstantiated suggestions about an applicant's unacceptable behaviour. This is done because it is felt maintaining the integrity of the organisation is paramount and should override the normal considerations around equal opportunities in selection. Not only would this be an unethical process, but also it creates all the risks of bias and nepotism of which the Service has for years been ridding itself. In short, by compromising the integrity of the selection process, the integrity of the organisation is undermined as well. It is entirely right suspicions about an applicant should be acknowledged but these should then either be evidenced or discounted, and if proven valid, the applicant must be confronted with them.

5.32 Her Majesty's Inspector is of the view the Service needs a greater number of courageous leaders who will guide and mentor their staff within a culture of integrity. It is vital in selecting the right officers for promotion or a high risk post that any who are dishonest are weeded out by the process. He is of the view a combination of more honestly completed appraisals, more use of checking and a greater effort properly to establish the veracity of suspicions about applicants is the correct way to prevent the wrong people being appointed, whilst maintaining the integrity of the selection process and therefore the organisation.

Tenure Policy

5.33 Tenure has been one of the most controversial, and at times unpopular, policies to be introduced into the Police Service in recent times. Many chief officers feel, some strongly, tenure has no impact on corruption and does not prevent a lack of integrity. There is a perception amongst federated ranks that managers regularly ignore the rules on tenure to accommodate favoured individuals; many junior officers interviewed by the Inspection Team feel it is expensive and harmful to both service delivery and morale. Others argue a tenure policy results in managers neglecting other crucial issues. Any justification in these views is most likely to be the fault of how it was implemented as opposed to failures in the system, because apart from giving more people the chance to work in a variety of interesting jobs, tenure lessens the chance of specialist units becoming incestuous, insulated and isolated.

5.34 Her Majesty's Inspector is of the view it is not healthy, for the Service or individual officers, for staff to remain in certain specialist environments, such as drugs squad, force crime squad, or the National Crime Squad, for excessive periods. There have been occasions when groups of corrupt officers have managed to engineer their way into positions where they protect each other within a close working environment. A regular turnover of officers in some of these high risk posts, together with a fair and transparent selection procedure, will lessen the opportunities for such cliques to develop, and increase the chance of corrupt activity being reported by colleagues.

Grievance Procedures

5.35 The Inspection found grievance procedures were widely held to be ineffective, with a misunderstanding of what they might achieve. In one force, a staff survey revealed the unacceptable situation that 64% of all supervisors either did not know or were unsure about how to deal with a grievance. Although some good examples were given where grievance procedures achieved satisfactory outcomes, in most forces, for a variety of reasons, there was little or no confidence in the system; for example, some staff are wary of a process whereby a complaint against a manager is ultimately decided by another manager, others are sceptical of the system's alleged confidentiality. One force recently carried out an equality audit and, with a response rate of 53%, it revealed 75% of police officers, 69% of support staff and 49% of special constables believed it was either true or partly true that making a complaint or formal grievance would be held against them.

5.36 When an individual officer or member of the civilian staff feels any sense of grievance, there is a range of routes available:

- straightforward confrontation of an issue between individuals or at immediate line management level;
- recourse to a formalised grievance procedure;
- formal complaint for disciplinary investigation;
- recourse to civil law, especially to industrial tribunals.

5.37 For an aggrieved individual there will be tensions and concern as to which route to follow. That is why sound advice through first contact officers, staff associations, line managers and personnel departments has to be fair, compassionate, consistent and straightforward. The sooner grievances are 'nipped in the bud' and just resolutions achieved, the better the outcome for both the force and the individual. Of particular importance is the choice to be made between following a grievance route or a disciplinary route. Strict guidelines are difficult, but Her Majesty's Inspector suggests the following questions can help in deciding which route to follow:

- What outcome is the aggrieved person seeking?
- Just how serious is the behaviour in question?
- Is there a criminal allegation?
- What resolutions are available?
- Is there evidence of systematic wrongdoing?
- Is there evidence of failures of policy or process?
- Are a person's employment rights being protected (especially in relation to their ability to proceed to an industrial tribunal)?

5.38 Grievances will invariably have more than one aspect and it is therefore important to recognise resolution can be achieved without any one party appearing to win over the other; the object is resolution not outright victory. That is why in some of the more serious cases, ACAS can provide helpful interventions.

5.39 Her Majesty's Inspector endorses the approach of several forces, including Cambridgeshire and South Yorkshire, which have sought to improve their grievance procedure by introducing 'first contact officers' of various ranks and grades, who are trained to provide initial advice and support. These schemes allow for a formal network of nominated people in each area across most ranks, and staff are encouraged to seek advice from them on a wide range of problems. They appear to work well, with early and informal intervention often serving to defuse issues to the satisfaction of all parties.

5.40 Her Majesty's Inspector is of the view the number of grievances can be an indicator of the health of the force. It is unrealistic to expect that with several thousand people working in an organisation there will not be some conflict, and a reasonable number of grievances suggests confidence in this very important resolution system. A force that has very few grievances reported might be an idyllic workplace or, much more likely, it may simply not have created a sufficiently healthy and safe environment for those wishing to report wrongdoing to speak out. Her Majesty's Inspector urges chief officers regularly to 'dip sample' personally the confidence their service deliverers – police, civilians and specials – have in the grievance procedure, recognising these staff will judge procedures by outcomes not intentions.



6

The Integrity of Information

6.1 Information and intelligence is the lifeblood of policing – the most valuable commodity the Police Service needs to protect. It is what criminals most want to obtain, and is the currency corrupt officers have used when betraying their colleagues and their profession. In one of the intelligence agencies, there is a constant presumption that the security of their information is under attack. Why should the Police Service feel it is any more immune?

Need to Know Culture

6.2 The Inspection confirmed the thoughts of many people inside and outside the Service that police officers and support staff lack a robust ‘need to know’ and ‘don’t ask’ culture. Other agencies coming into contact with the police put this as a main area of concern over joint working. It is important to understand the balance between allowing officers unrestricted access to intelligence and operating a security system at a much higher access level than is presently the case. Seeking to change the culture necessarily challenges the presumption all police officers are honest, and may hamper the officer who simply wants to keep updated about the criminality in the area. To ensure no loss in morale, it will be essential to explain the benefits to police of developing a stricter ‘need to know’ culture.

6.3 As the Service moves closer to multi agency and partnership working, managing confidentiality becomes more complex and will require clear and unambiguous guidance. Clarity about what needs to be kept confidential and what does not is an important starting point. Any grading system will lose credibility if the security classification of information is arbitrarily set too high. In one force visited, for example, every piece of intelligence emanating from a registered informant was classified ‘secret’. This included low level information such as a suspicion that ‘X’ was involved in the illegal distribution of fireworks. Her Majesty’s Inspector urges chief officers to move towards a greater acceptance of a ‘need to know’ culture, and that supervisors who become aware of staff gossiping about sensitive matters vigorously challenge them and ensure they are aware of the potential damage that can be done.

6.4 A ‘clear desk’ policy is almost non-existent within the Police Service. It is, however, practised in other agencies, and is an important step in preventing the unauthorised leakage of information. The senior managers of the National Crime Squad are enforcing a culture whereby staff are told, *‘If you’re going out, lock it away’* and supervisors regularly do spot checks on desks and filing baskets. Her Majesty’s Inspector endorses such a policy, but reminds forces it is necessary to provide staff with secure storage with easy access.

6.5 Vetting is mentioned throughout this Report and it is important officers and support staff in positions where they have access to high-grade intelligence should be acknowledged as being in high risk posts, as discussed in chapter 4.

Auditing Systems

6.6 Most police intelligence is now stored on computers and, with many members of staff being able to access it through their own terminal, it is a daunting task to try and protect it. To

illustrate the potential problem, the Inspection Team is aware a spot audit in one force revealed that within 24 hours of the arrest of a high profile criminal for alleged murder, 67 officers accessed his intelligence record. When interviewed, most acknowledged they did it purely out of curiosity but it would have been equally possible for an unscrupulous member of staff to leak the information unlawfully to other criminals or the press.

6.7 The security of printouts from the Police National Computer, crime intelligence and crime recording systems is vulnerable and easily compromised. The majority of data protection officers interviewed by the Inspection Team agreed their force intelligence systems would allow a screen-print to be obtained without this being recorded in the audit trail. In three forces visited, computer terminals with access to criminal intelligence were found logged on and unattended, allowing un-auditable use by an unauthorised person. Automatic timeout locking of workstations not in use is a simple but effective method of controlling this risk.

6.8 There is a need to create an environment where officers and support staff expect, and understand the reasons for, integrity checks and data auditing on a regular basis. The checking systems should make life very uncomfortable for anyone seeking to disseminate information illegitimately and they should feel there is a good chance they will be detected. This will have resource implications but should act as a strong deterrent for the casual, corrupt officer, perhaps supplying intelligence to an ex-colleague working for a solicitor or security company.

6.9 Information technology departments within forces could build into their systems imaginative ways to audit transactions, and forces should provide staff to do this. It was unacceptable to find in one large force, with several thousand people able to access the criminal intelligence database, the data protection officer, together with her other duties, was expected to carry out all auditing with only one member of staff to assist. The practice of sending out pro formas to randomly selected staff is carried out in some forces but the Inspection Team found little evidence the returned forms were followed up with interviews. In Kent, however, a dedicated team of three people conducts data transaction auditing and they frequently ask divisional commanders to interview staff to check the veracity of a transaction. Her Majesty's Inspector commends this robust policy.

6.10 In one of the agencies visited during the Inspection, staff need to use a swipe card to enter or leave the building. A central computer is automatically updated when this happens, and if their account details are used to carry out a transaction on the intelligence database when they are apparently away from the premises, auditors are automatically alerted. Apart from the main building itself, there is no reason why a swipe card entry system should not apply to individual offices, for example the local intelligence office in a police station. Balance is of course needed to ensure those who need to access buildings or offices are not dissuaded from doing so or seriously inconvenienced.

6.11 Another example of the use of technology to protect information is a system that automatically looks for unusual patterns, such as a beat officer frequently checking criminals in another division or regularly printing out records. Her Majesty's Inspector is of the view random checking by a dedicated audit team is important and should be employed conscientiously, but any form of electronic support would be a useful addition. Technology should be used to help point the auditors to the stone, so that they can look under it.

6.12 Her Majesty's Inspector is anxious that individual forces do not each have to 'reinvent the wheel' in terms of electronic auditing, and he suggests the ACPO, together with the Police Information Technology Organisation (PITO), should regularly update forces as to what state of the art systems are available.

6.13 Forces should adopt the recommendations of the HMIC thematic inspection report 'Policing With Intelligence' (1997), by appointing a chief officer as Director of Intelligence. In each force, that officer will then be responsible for putting in place rigorous security and auditing systems. As with all systems to maintain integrity, the driving power should be the chief officer team.

6.14 Her Majesty's Inspector encourages each force also to establish who else has access to their databases and to include them in any audit trail research. If a private company is employed to maintain the computer systems, they may have full administrators' privileges, and therefore access to all the intelligence. There is a huge turnover of staff in these companies and forces will wish to be satisfied vetting is as robust as it would be for police staff with access to the same information.



Recommendation 6



Her Majesty's Inspector recommends forces should rigorously audit intelligence database transactions, and use technology to assist.

Press and Media Leaks

6.15 A culture should be created within the Police Service, whereby unauthorised leakage to the press is immediately challenged by staff at all levels and dealt with firmly under the discipline procedures. The Inspection was given an example of the press having been tipped off by police staff about the arrest of a suspect for murder, thereby alerting other suspects for whom police were still seeking. This, together with irresponsible leaks to the press, possibly by police staff, about the housing of paedophiles in particular areas, causing massive public anxiety and huge resource implications, illustrates why a more professional culture is needed.

6.16 Her Majesty's Inspector acknowledges the importance for the Police Service to demonstrate openness and be fully accountable to the public, and to that end he is pleased many forces have a very open press policy, allowing an officer of any rank to brief the press. Whilst this openness is welcomed, and the comments in chapter 3 highlight why, it has unfortunately led in some cases to unhealthy relationships developing, particularly at a local level, allowing the possibility of unauthorised information being passed. In one force, after a briefing on a sensitive enquiry, officers were required to sign a declaration that they understood they would be disciplined if they disclosed any information to unauthorised persons. The fact this was felt to be necessary for that particular enquiry may be indicative officers do not appreciate the seriousness of unauthorised disclosure at any time.

6.17 Officers who do this should be left in no doubt they are corrupt and their actions are indefensible, as they could be compromising police operations or putting the safety of colleagues at risk in the same way that passing information to a criminal would do.



Recommendation 7



Her Majesty's Inspector recommends the Service should embrace more closely a culture of confidentiality, whilst at the same time freely sharing information with partnership agencies.

Lawful Sharing of Information

6.18 The Crime and Disorder Act has highlighted the importance of sharing information with community safety partners in an atmosphere of openness and trust. The willingness of outside agencies to share information with the police may depend, in part, on a perception the Police Service can be trusted to deal properly and fairly with the information it is given. Some police officers are so concerned about releasing information which may be outside what the law or their force procedure allows, they are erring excessively on the side of caution and releasing little or nothing. The issue of sharing information to protect children from abuse by dangerous offenders is one that causes frequent difficulties. This subject is covered in some depth in the HMIC thematic inspection report on Child Protection (1998), and Her Majesty's Inspector urges forces to consider the suggested solutions therein and give clear guidance to their staff about the disclosure of information.

7

Gifts, Gratuities and Discounts

7.1 An area of concern in police forces the world over is that of being offered gifts in exchange for favours. The Inspection sought to find out whether or not this practice is widespread in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and, if it is, what effect it has on the integrity of the Service.

7.2 There is a wide variation in the quality of policies on acceptance of hospitality and handling gratuities. Examination revealed attempts had been made by some forces to put a value on gratuities which could be accepted. In one case it was deemed to be £25 and in another £100, although the type of gift or circumstances allowing its acceptance were left open to wide interpretation. In most forces, however, there is no guidance at all.

7.3 The Inspection revealed that, as a rule, it is not spelled out to staff what sort of activity should *not* be engaged in. Consequently, in several forces, officers stated as acceptable:

- gifts such as a brace of pheasants, a sack of potatoes, a bottle of whisky and in one case even a £100 watch from a grateful victim of crime;
- informal discounts in holiday camps, cinemas, and clubs;
- free or heavily discounted meals from restaurants and fast food outlets;
- free admission whilst off duty, to nightclubs or sporting events using a police warrant card. (In one force, the chief constable felt the staff used warrant cards so commonly for such purposes, that they wouldn't think the question of whether or not they should do so worthy of discussion.)

7.4 The views of chief constables varied (see appendix B) but most spoken to during the Inspection did not believe such behaviour occurred today, yet the Inspection revealed it is still commonplace in many forces. Their staff were unaware of the views of their chief officers, who had not set out common standards and were not keen to be the first to do so. If such behaviour is allowed to continue, the effect on public confidence is not difficult to imagine. If, for example, a queue of young people waiting to pay £5 to enter a night-club, see police officers show their warrant cards to get in free and then witness them drinking and dancing inside, or see officers not paying for their food at a take-away, it is inevitable that the Service's reputation for honesty will be tarnished. Many officers, who would not dream of stealing or of manufacturing evidence, appear to regard it as acceptable to receive perks.

7.5 It is important therefore to examine some of the views for and against such practice, which have been clearly articulated by Kleinig (1996) – included in the Home Office commissioned literature review (appendix A, paragraph 7 refers):

In support of acceptance

- It is both natural and reasonable for people to want to show their appreciation of those providing public services. It would be churlish, even rude, to refuse such well meant gifts.
- Gratuities are not significant enough to buy or cultivate favour. No officer is going to be corrupted by such minor considerations.
- In those cases where the gratuity is provided officially by a company or corporation there is no possibility of a personal sense of obligation developing.
- One of the fundamentals of 'good policing' is fostering close links with the community, including business people. The acceptance of minor gratuities is part and parcel of this process.
- The 'free cup of tea' is an entrenched part of police culture and the consequence of attempting to end it will be displeasure and cynicism within the Service.
- Administrative rules that attempt to prohibit the acceptance of such minor gratuities imply that officers cannot be trusted to exercise discretion. They treat police officers as if they were 'one step' from being corrupt and were incapable of making sensible moral judgements with which to guide their own behaviour.

In opposition to acceptance

- Even the smallest gift inevitably creates a sense of obligation if it becomes regularised.
- Those who accept gratuities find themselves on a 'slippery slope' where the temptations often become imperceptibly greater and where refusal is increasingly difficult.
- Although many officers may be able to exercise proper judgement about what it is reasonable to accept, not all can. It is more sensible for a police agency, therefore, to remove temptation altogether.
- Businesses which offer gratuities to police officers, do so because they wish either to encourage a greater police presence in the vicinity of their business, or they wish to maximise the chance that they will receive a positive response should they require a police presence. They are, in essence, purchasing preferential treatment.

7.6 In Sherman's (1985) paper 'Becoming Bent', he argues there is a continuum between accepting minor perks and becoming corrupt. He believes the beginning of the process is the acceptance of, '*... Police Perks, the free cup of coffee and meals from restaurants on the beat. The moral experience about accepting these perks usually occurs in the recruit's first days of duty, and the peer pressure to accept them is great. If he does accept minor perks, he then has a different image of himself to contend with when a bar owner operating after hours offers him a drink.*'

Setting an Example

7.7 Apart from peer pressure, Her Majesty's Inspector is increasingly concerned about the example set to junior officers by their managers. Some chief officers refer to a 'zero tolerance' in terms of breaches of integrity but this is viewed with some cynicism by their junior officers who feel the acceptance by senior officers of free business lunches and their drinking of alcohol whilst on duty at public functions is a double standard. What is the impact on an officer patrolling inside a football ground who knows the divisional commander is being entertained free in the executive box, or the officers performing traffic duty who see chief officers leave a civic reception with gift-wrapped parcels tucked under their arms?

7.8 Junior staff see nothing wrong with a few perks if they perceive their leaders benefiting from their office, for example with seats at sporting events, generous hospitality, attending concerts and shows, or even over-lavish 'official' functions. There is a genuine concern amongst many junior officers that there is one rule for them and another for the 'bosses'. This should not be the case, even perceptually, if integrity is to be maintained; all managers, from chief officers down, should set a clear and unequivocally good example, they should not practice double standards.

7.9 Many forces, for example Avon and Somerset, now maintain a hospitality register and Her Majesty's Inspector endorses this approach as good practice. He is concerned, however, that there is little evidence these registers are normally transparent to the organisation, so staff are still unaware about the reasons for acceptance of the hospitality recorded therein. In some public sector services, the hospitality book is laid on the table at committee meetings so members are able to examine it if they wish. If a force hospitality register was made available at police authority meetings and staff joint consultative meetings, it would significantly improve the transparency of the process.

7.10 As partnership working under the Crime and Disorder Act becomes more established, there may be many more occasions when senior officers will need to decide whether or not to accept invitations to civic events or some other form of hospitality. Her Majesty's Inspector recognises this and considers there is a need to distinguish between the following when making the decision:

- Is it a duty participation, e.g. speaking?
- Is it a duty attendance? This could include furthering community relations, but only if the 'work' element is significant.
- Is it for charity? If so, attendance should not be free unless the recipient is invited as a valued dignitary (part of the 'attraction').
- Is it mainly for pleasure? If so, attendance should never be free.

7.11 In every case, the question should be asked, ‘Would I be prepared to justify my decision to the public?’ One of the seven principles set out in the report of the committee chaired by Lord Nolan into standards in public life (1995) is that holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties; this clearly should apply to police officers.

A New Set of Rules?

7.12 There is a difficulty in changing any culture and, in the context of integrity, it has been suggested on many occasions a new ‘line in the sand’ needs to be drawn. Her Majesty’s Inspector considers there is a pressing need to redefine the boundary and make more explicit what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Then, the Service requires all managers to bring in and maintain the new standards. Inevitably, some may themselves have been tainted by the type of activity they will now have to condemn, so the Service needs to support those who demonstrate moral courage and seek to drive up standards to the redefined boundary. Sir Paul Condon’s view is,

‘To enable middle managers to manage, the Service must face up to this challenge. Over time I hope it gets better rather than worse. Historically, the Commissioner has enjoyed a lot of hospitality, which is no longer acceptable. The Commissioner has to give a lead now, from the top to the bottom.’

Her Majesty’s Inspector is pleased to note this message is already spreading throughout the Service. For example, one chief officer who inherited from his predecessors free invitations to various major sporting occasions and ex-officio membership of county organisations, now only attends if he pays the full price.

7.13 Her Majesty’s Inspector considers change has to start from the highest level and, most importantly, staff are left in no doubt, often by the use of examples, what sort of behaviour is unacceptable. Any assumption they somehow find out naturally, over the course of time, is clearly misguided.

7.14 Her Majesty’s Inspector recognises it can be difficult for staff to know whether a gift or gratuity being offered should be accepted. Police staff – regular, civilian and special – are therefore encouraged to consider carefully the following checklist of questions whenever they are presented with this dilemma:

- Why is the offer being made?
- What are the background circumstances to it?
- Does the donor feel obliged to make the offer?
- What does the donor expect in return?

- What could be the outcome for the Service or me if I accept or decline?
- What advice would my manager give if he/she were with me?
- Would I be pleased to justify its acceptance to the public?

Organised Discounts

7.15 The question of organised discounts, arranged for example by the Police Federation, and whether comparisons can be made with informal gratuities, needs to be carefully considered. The view of most chief officers is they have no objection in principle to staff association discounts, so long as they are transparent, properly negotiated through a recognised body (such as the Federation), and the discount is offered on the basis of the large customer base and not because the beneficiaries are police officers. Some, however, are opposed to such schemes, and raised such questions as, *'If after a warrant card, the next thing you give a recruit is a Federation Platinum Discount Card, do they not think that being a police officer gives them a licence to obtain discounts and gratuities?'*

7.16 Whilst not suggesting these group discounts are unacceptable, Her Majesty's Inspector advises forces to audit carefully what is currently being offered and be prepared to explain to staff the difference between such schemes and private, less transparent, personal arrangements. One simple test in respect of organised discounts would be to find out if the same benefit is offered to other organisations with a large customer base.

7.17 In some towns, nightclubs host '999' or 'Emergency Services' nights. Often advertising posters are found on police station notice boards and tickets are left lying around for staff to use. At the club, guests are offered a range of benefits including free entry (on production of a warrant card) and cheap drinks. Sometimes these same nightclubs are premises which, because of the nature of their normal clientele, cause some problem to the local police in terms of public order and drug offences. It is stressed that normally *all* emergency services are able to take advantage of these events, not just the police, but the police have a unique position in society and may not always be able to enjoy some of the benefits afforded to other occupations. Her Majesty's Inspector suggests forces become aware which clubs arrange these '999' nights, and consider any implications either concerning the effect on integrity of their staff attending, or the potential compromising of officers who have to police the area around the nightclub at other times.

7.18 The Inspection found several forces, including the Metropolitan Police and Northumbria Police, have arrangements which allow their officers to travel free on public transport. Her Majesty's Inspector considers this practice should be reviewed to ensure, in so doing, officers are not creating an impression with the paying travellers that they are being given a benefit. When paying travellers on the London Underground see someone in plain clothes show a warrant card to get through the barrier, what impression are they left with? Clearly, the transport companies feel to have police officers on their buses or trains is an advantage in terms of public safety. Not surprisingly, the Inspection was given evidence that officers from other forces, perhaps whilst attached to specialist squads in London, were taking advantage of the Metropolitan Police arrangement with London Transport. If the scheme is to encourage the presence of police



officers, does it matter what force they are from? Police officers have a duty to act anywhere within their jurisdiction if they see a crime being committed, so in order to allow officers from other forces to understand why they may lack integrity if they took advantage of it, the reasons for making the arrangement specifically for officers from the Metropolitan Police needs to be explained. Hampshire Constabulary has recently reminded officers it is a disciplinary offence to seek to travel without paying unless it is in pursuance of active duty in uniform.

7.19 It is vitally important to ensure policing is seen to be open to all members of society and all organisations, not just those who encourage an officer's presence by free travel or other 'perk'. The provision of policing is deemed to be a 'public good' (Jones and Newburn, 1998); it is therefore presumed individuals and groups should not be prevented from using the police and, moreover, policing is indivisible: it cannot meaningfully be divided amongst individuals and groups (Johnston, 1992). The acceptance of gratuities, at least on a regular or systematic basis may, therefore, detract from the democratic ethos of policing (Kleinig, 1996). As Feldman (1985) put it,

'Gratuities are simply an inducement to a police officer to distribute the benefit of his presence disproportionately to some taxpayers and not others.'

7.20 It would be impossible to give guidance covering all eventualities but the acceptance by police officers of various gratuities, some sanctioned or condoned by their force and some not, appears commonplace and is potentially very damaging to public respect. Her Majesty's Inspector considers the ACPO, as a professional association, has a responsibility to agree and publish guidelines in respect of gifts and gratuities, within which chief constables can frame their own policies. Ideally the Service should act in unison but the differing attitudes of society in various parts of the country may require slight variations, to ensure each force is in harmony with its community.

7.21 Finally, some people expressed the view to the Inspection Team that the Service should be concentrating on combating hard-edged corruption, and not be concerned about minor perks. The Director General of The National Criminal Intelligence Service, however, expressed his belief that,

'Corruption results from a failure to maintain integrity.'

Her Majesty's Inspector firmly shares this view and considers it will be far more difficult for corruption to flourish if gifts, gratuities and perks are seen as totally unacceptable within the Police Service.



Recommendation 8



Her Majesty's Inspector recommends chief constables should state clearly and regularly what is, and is not, acceptable practice in respect of gratuities.

8

The Administration of Finance

8.1 The Police Service is undergoing a huge change in the way finance is managed through greater devolvement of budgets. The standard of probity in the public sector generally is of concern; an annual survey by the Audit Commission shows an upward trend in recorded fraud and corruption, although there is little evidence of it in police forces. Her Majesty's Inspector is concerned many forces do not have in place sufficiently rigorous checking and auditing systems to detect breaches of integrity in this important area. In addition, he considers some of the regulations regarding expenses to be ambiguous and almost an invitation for staff to make lawful but unjustified claims.

8.2 To improve control systems, it is necessary to have an understanding of the respective roles of the professionals involved in the financial administration process:

- **External Auditors** fulfil a statutory role in relation to final accounts. Their primary concern is to ensure items in the accounts present a 'fair view'. In order to form this opinion, they need to ensure systems and controls are in place to provide an appropriate framework to produce financial figures. Their role is set out in legislation and in the Code of Audit Practice, which is issued by the Audit Commission and approved by Parliament. The audit certificate on each set of accounts states that examinations of records have been undertaken on a test basis. It is on this basis that external auditors do not accept a responsibility to detect fraud.
- **The Treasurer** has a statutory role to ensure the financial affairs of the authority and the force are properly administered. The treasurer is assisted in this role by internal audit.
- **Internal Audit.** The Financial Management Code of Practice notes that statute requires the treasurer to maintain an effective internal audit function, which operates in accordance with the Audit Practices Broad Guidelines. The responsibility of internal audit is to evaluate and report upon the effectiveness of internal controls within an organisation. Internal audit priorities will be set on the basis of a risk assessment and determined in consultation with the Audit Committee. Internal auditors in police authorities, since separation in 1995, spend a considerable amount of time on the overall control environment on financial transactions. It should be noted that internal auditors would normally test a sample of transactions to determine that they comply with the systems controls (e.g. an authorised officer signs claims). Unless there is evidence of a control problem, it would be unusual (and very expensive) to undertake a significant level of checking all individual transactions.

8.3 The roles have been set out at some length because there is often a confusion between 'checking' (i.e. the operation of controls by management) and a separate evaluation of the controls (by auditors). The checking process, which is part of a manager's responsibility, is often described as an 'audit'; from a professional perspective this is not the case. In simple terms, it is not the responsibility of auditors to do a manager's job.

8.4 Her Majesty's Inspector is of the view, to maintain integrity, the key issue for financial systems is the adequacy of the checks carried out. This will take two forms: the actual checking processes and evidence that a check has been completed – usually a signature. Financial procedures should define responsibilities (i.e. who needs to check what). What they cannot do is actually undertake the checking process. This can only take place at supervision level and any subsequent check can only ensure the person who undertook the check was authorised so to do.

8.5 The link, which is often missing, is the clear instruction to an individual on what precisely their responsibilities are and what role they are expected to perform in checking documents. For example, an inspector signing an overtime claim form needs to be aware his or her signature is effectively a signature on a cheque, and appropriate enquiries should be carried out to be satisfied the claim is correct. They also need to know what to do if they are not happy with the claim. In other words, the supervisor who authorises a payment is confirming it is justified and accepts responsibility for its accuracy.

8.6 The issue of authorising and processing claims is rarely the subject of training. Some authorising officers (sergeants and inspectors) interviewed by the Inspection Team had never been advised on best practice. Her Majesty's Inspector is of the view they should be given far greater guidance. Examples of good practice would include:

- Satisfy yourself the claim is not only correct but justified.
- Once a form is signed it should not be given back to the individual.
- Empty spaces should be crossed through.
- Signatures, including your own, should always be accompanied by a printed name.

Expenses Claims

8.7 Her Majesty's Inspector was pleased to find there is evidence some forces have good systems within their finance department to guard against deception, fraud and theft. Generally though, there appears to be much room for improvement, and there have been recent cases where staff were able to exploit a weak checking system for their own financial benefit.

8.8 Even in forces with a good system for checking the veracity of claims, the regulations are still being interpreted differently by staff and even divisional finance officers. In one case, representatives from the Police Federation told the Inspection Team the finance regulations were complex and not understood, and consequently were interpreted in different ways. A number of examples were given, including one where a supervisor had refused to authorise claims for officers who were away from their duty station for lunch but whom the supervisor knew had all brought sandwiches from home; other supervisors, in similar cases, authorised the claims.

8.9 The regulations as they stand permit staff to claim the maximum possible so, despite the fact that someone away from their place of duty buys only a bar of chocolate at lunchtime, they could claim several pounds in subsistence. This is of course lawful, and some would argue the

full subsistence is an entitlement whether one spends that much or not, but the morality of such practice has to be questioned. When looking at causes for a failure of integrity, and a culture that allows it, regulations encouraging this sort of claiming should be examined.

8.10 Her Majesty's Inspector is concerned that in many cases, artificial thresholds are created by various regulations, for example, subsistence (over 12 hours, etc), and lease cars (number of miles to reduce tax burden). The incentive to reach these thresholds creates an area where a lack of integrity could develop. Better training of administration staff on what to be aware of could significantly reduce this. Over and above that, Her Majesty's Inspector considers there is justification for a complete review of the regulations concerning expense claims to discourage a lack of integrity and bring clarity to the situation. He urges the Police Service, together with the Home Office, to undertake a review of the regulations concerning expenses.

Checking for Integrity

8.11 Her Majesty's Inspector is of the view robust checking, not only of the system but of the actual reasons for claims, is essential. Occasionally, a random sample should be dip checked by multi-disciplinary teams comprising force finance and human resources staff, together with police officers who have knowledge of operational practices. He is concerned claims are often only checked by line managers within, for example, the specialist unit, shift or squad. In some forces, the Inspection revealed highly specialised units do not even have their claims examined by any checkers or auditors. No department or system should be closed to the checking team and any suggestion, as described in one force, that auditors were not allowed to examine operational areas should be rejected. In another force, headquarters and other units are scrutinised on a rolling programme of visits. Overtime claims, expense claims, mileage and use of police vehicles, use of pagers and mobile telephones are all examined to determine if integrity is assured.

8.12 Signatures on expenses claim forms and overtime sheets are generally illegible, and junior clerks rarely possess the confidence to challenge or confirm what appears to be a supervisor's counter signature. The Inspection found some examples where divisional administration staff had a record of specimen signatures but only in the case of senior management who could authorise cash expenditure. Many support staff responsible for processing the claims had no idea whether the authorising signature on most claim forms was that of a supervisor. No examples were found where there is a process for notifying the finance department of changes in authorising officers and also what the individual is authorised to approve.

8.13 Her Majesty's Inspector urges forces to encourage support staff to challenge claims with which they are not comfortable, and divisions to provide specimen signature lists of those supervisors and managers who can authorise expense claims. Whether they work locally or at headquarters, support staff processing claims should recognise they are important players in maintaining integrity and force finance officers should ensure they are trained to look out for common areas of concern.

8.14 Auditors, meanwhile, should conduct meaningful dip sampling of expenses claims, authenticating not only the signatures, but the reason and justification for the claim. This should include interviews with the individual officers concerned, and checking of their pocket book or duty sheets.

Sponsorship

8.15 Government and the Audit Commission have for some years now been encouraging the Police Service to attract sponsorship. From the point of view of integrity, some officers see this as sending entirely the wrong message to the Service and the public. The Inspection interviewed many police officers and members of support staff who felt sponsorship for the police is unhealthy because it creates a perception the force is favouring some traders or organisations at the expense of others. In effect, the same principles and questions are applied when setting the standard for sponsorship as for an individual accepting gifts – what does the sponsor expect in return for their investment? A number of examples were given to the Inspection Team where it subsequently became apparent that donors expected preferential treatment of one sort or another. Sponsorship could be considered the corporate equivalent of the raffle prize or hospitality, and in some respects could be seen by other traders as more insidious, due to the potential to exert influence at the higher organisational level.

8.16 If the Service is continually encouraged to make more use of sponsorship, forces should be aware of any impact on public perception and the integrity of their staff. With the increase now in community safety partnerships, it may be possible for the partnerships, rather than the police alone, to apply for and accept sponsorship. If the police are to benefit from such sponsorship, however, because a ‘partnership’ does not have a corporate identity of its own, the force sponsorship policy and guidance should be rigidly adhered to.

8.17 Best practice should be to have a clear vetting process within a procedural guide. Given the opportunities that exist from sponsorship, income generation, partnership opportunities such as single regeneration budget, challenge-funding, etc, there is a strong case for the use of a professional finance officer to support the force in this area.

Ensuring Integrity in Contracts, Procurement and Stores

8.18 The letting of contracts at all levels is an area for potential concern. Local government as a whole is aware of abuses that can occur, ranging from multi million pound fraud to the offering of apparently innocent gifts as an inducement to order from particular suppliers.

8.19 With the increasing emphasis on recruiting procurement professionals from the private sector, forces will need to be alive to whether some bring with them practices such as the acceptance of gifts, which although above board and common place in industry, are unacceptable in the Police Service.

8.20 Statute requires all local authorities to have standing orders for contracts. Her Majesty’s Inspector urges forces to ensure that, in consultation with their police authority treasurer and monitoring officer, they have up-to-date standing orders and procurement manuals. These should reflect good practice and comply with United Kingdom and European law. Procurement and stores are areas of risk, which need to be reflected in the police authority annual audit plan. In particular, attention should be paid to rigorous stocktaking of both official stores, i.e. those recorded in the accounts, and those unofficial stores, such as excess stationery, which can exist in any office. A nominated chief officer will have the responsibility for each specific procuring department and should therefore regularly satisfy him/herself of the integrity of the process and dip sample the reality in specific contracts.

9

Monitoring and Maintaining Integrity

9.1 The Inspection found chief officers often have no mechanism directly to inform them specifically on the health of integrity within their force, and often only become aware once failure has been exposed. Senior managers stated an acceptance of responsibility for the integrity of their staff in respect of, for example, crime recording or expenses claims, but there was little evidence they had systems in place to be able to monitor or check it. It appears to be common simply to leave it to junior supervisors and believe they will carry the blame when things go awry. As some senior officers have found to their cost, the buck does not stop there!

Monitoring Groups

9.2 The Lincolnshire and South Yorkshire forces have what they call Professional Standards Committees. Both are embryonic but the aim is they will review particular issues that go to the heart of integrity, professional standards and working practices. They will review new policy development to ensure standards of integrity have been considered and not compromised. Her Majesty's Inspector urges all forces to consider such a forum, chaired by a chief officer, with members drawn from a wide range of disciplines within the force, including welfare/psychologist, complaints and discipline, and staff associations.

9.3 Welfare officers and psychologists in a force may have significant knowledge about the general level of integrity. There are understandable difficulties about discussing individual cases but Her Majesty's Inspector is of the view they hold a piece of the jigsaw and should be provided with a conduit, or be part of a small group, through which they can report trends such as bullying, excessive debt, or reliance upon alcohol. Such people can contribute a great deal to the debate about maintaining integrity within a force, and despite the limitations imposed by client confidentiality, they should be invited to participate wherever possible.

9.4 The Inspection Team found a worrying tendency in the non-metropolitan forces of relying on unfounded anecdotal evidence that low professional standards, corruption or malpractice is a 'big city' problem; this borders on complacency. Whilst many of the high profile corruption cases have involved some of the largest forces, there have been some notable instances in medium and small forces as well. Whilst stressing the Service is overwhelmingly honest, as evidenced in appendix C, Her Majesty's Inspector urges all chief constables to consider carefully the damage that is done to public confidence as well as the reputation of their force, and the Service as a whole, when their staff are able to engage in poor professional behaviour because there are no checking or auditing systems to detect or deter them.

Complaints and Discipline

9.5 Many forces are not using complaint and civil claims data effectively as a management tool. One complaints and discipline investigating officer remarked,

'Complaints are seen as a threat to the organisation, rather than as a way to learn how to provide a better service.'

Analysis of complaint allegations by officer, team, shift, station or command unit can indicate not only the officers who may have problems with attitude, temperament or behaviour, but also those whose supervision and leadership are in need of attention. Analysis of pairings of officers complained of could indicate where officers can have a negative influence on each other, and that also can raise issues of supervision.

9.6 One head of a large complaints and discipline department told the Inspection Team, *'I run a discipline department. We are not quality of service ensurers.'* This is a view deplored by Her Majesty's Inspector, who urges forces to use such departments in as broad a way as possible to maintain integrity and high standards. Complaints against individual officers or systems and procedures (occasionally euphemistically termed 'miscellaneous') and civil actions should all be analysed and emerging lessons passed to policy makers, first and second line supervisors and service deliverers, remembering each requires the information presented differently. Managers not only have the duty to improve the quality of the service delivered, but also to care for their staff by assisting them in avoiding unnecessary complaints. One good idea is the Hampshire newsletter entitled 'Pear-shaped', produced by the complaints and discipline department for all staff. In this light-hearted publication with a serious message, staff are alerted to common causes of complaint and are given good practical tips on how to avoid them. Durham have a similar publication called 'Blue Peril'. The simple fact is, an organisation cannot learn by its mistakes if its members are not made aware of them and told how they could be avoided.

9.7 No force visited had any formal policy or guidance on how to decide the level of seriousness that merited a formal discipline hearing. Officers in the same force could be 'advised' or 'fined' for apparently the same behaviour depending on where they were serving at the time. Many forces rely on the advice of investigating officers and the views of the divisional commander, which could allow issues not directly relevant to the case to influence the outcome. In the magistrates' courts for many years, a tariff system has operated for punishments, with the flexibility of seriousness and mitigation affecting the outcome. Her Majesty's Inspector is of the view the Service as a whole, or at least individual forces, would benefit from introducing such a system. Were it to be introduced, it should be declared and transparent to the whole organisation. Her Majesty's Inspector suggests the ACPO through its Complaints and Discipline Sub Committee examines this concept.

9.8 It is normal practice to publish in force weekly orders that an officer has been dismissed, but in some forces, they also detail the brief circumstances leading to the outcome. In at least one force, the brief circumstances and punishment awarded for every formal discipline hearing is published in weekly orders. Her Majesty's Inspector welcomes this practice because if standards are to be maintained there needs to be clarity as to what is serious and what is not, and it may help guide staff in their actions.

9.9 A practice was found in Derbyshire of using private detectives to expose officers who have unauthorised second jobs or are pursuing ill health retirement by feigning disability or claiming falsely to be too ill to attend a discipline hearing. That force feels the use of private detectives avoids officers being witnesses against colleagues, prevents any 'leakage' of the enquiry to those under suspicion and often is more cost effective than police surveillance. In another force, however, inept surveillance carried out by private investigators to detect suspected malingerers engendered staff hostility and failed in its objective.

Confidential Reporting and Supporting Internal Witnesses

9.10 A vital line of defence against a lack of integrity is for staff to ‘police’ their own workplace, by challenging and, where appropriate, reporting wrongdoing wherever they see it. There is often a close bond between police officers, perhaps caused by perceived excessive external challenge or the hierarchical discipline ethos within much of the Service. This creates greater difficulties than in some other professions for staff to expose wrongdoing. The following examples, related to the Inspection Team, give an indication of these difficulties:

A detective constable attached to a drugs squad was increasingly so concerned about the illicit activities of his new colleagues that he decided to report it. Far from his report remaining confidential, senior managers allowed it to leak back through the line management. The detective spent the following weeks in a very difficult atmosphere, coming into the office to find blades of grass on his desk and rude graffiti scrawled on the whiteboard behind his chair, while a half hearted investigation was carried out. Subsequently, a full investigation revealed widespread corrupt activity in that squad and staff from the detective inspector downwards were disciplined.

Two officers were suspended from working in a CID office for accepting bribes. The evidence was overwhelming and few, if any, people believed they were innocent. Out of misguided loyalty to ‘colleagues in trouble’ and despite the strong feeling of disapproval for their behaviour, the rest of the work group were pressured by friends of the two into holding a weekly collection to make up for the suspended officers’ loss in overtime payments.

An officer, who had complained about his tutor constable’s over-aggressive handling of prisoners, claimed he had since been ‘cold shouldered’ by some of his peers and as a result would be unwilling to report such matters in the future.

9.11 Her Majesty’s Inspector was keen to discover what arrangements existed throughout the Service to encourage and support staff who were prepared to report wrongdoing by colleagues – so-called ‘Whistleblowing’ schemes. Less than half the forces have any form of confidential line, and the evidence is most of those are only used sporadically. There is a strong feeling amongst officers and support staff that retribution, subtle or direct, would result from making complaints against colleagues. There is a perception no one commends such officers for demonstrating moral courage. As Edmund Burke once said,

‘The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.’

9.12 Her Majesty’s Inspector urges forces to introduce a confidential reporting system, with support for those who use it. It should be a well-publicised and trusted process, with easy communication to an unimpeachable point of contact. The trust element has to be earned by actions, not just words.

9.13 In at least two forces, Avon and Somerset and Cumbria, staff are encouraged to use the internal E-Mail system as a direct route to express concerns and this is welcomed as good practice, providing the system is secure.

9.14 One force psychologist interviewed felt it would make it easier for staff to report wrongdoing if their point of contact was an independent person, outside the chain of command in a force. This was because many staff in her experience felt taking the risk of reporting something to a senior police officer would backfire on them, and they would end up disadvantaged. She was anxious to make the point though, that if an independent person was used, the top team should not feel threatened but must wholeheartedly support such a scheme, and treat the recipient of the concerns with respect and credibility. Her Majesty's Inspector once again stresses the importance of a genuine desire by chief officers to find out what is really going on in their force, however uncomfortable it may make them feel. The Inspection repeatedly revealed senior officers had little idea of the reality in their forces. The fact is, a confidential reporting system does not create the problem but it may begin its eradication, or at least alleviation, before serious damage is done.

9.15 Above all, it is most important to foster a culture that internal witnesses are not people 'snitching' on colleagues but are those with real moral courage, who care about the integrity of the Service and wish to protect it. Kent Constabulary strongly feels it is better not to stigmatise people by making them feel like 'whistleblowers', but rather to instil in their staff a sense that *'I am a member of X Constabulary, I care about its reputation, and it is my duty to report wrongdoing wherever I see it.'*

9.16 The subject of 'Whistleblowing' has been discussed by the ACPO Joint Working Group on Organisational Health and Welfare, and in March 1998 a paper prepared by the Police Welfare Officers Association was circulated to all chief constables. This is a useful discussion document which Her Majesty's Inspector urges forces to consider. The ACPO Presidential Task Force on Corruption is also discussing the issue and in due course will give guidance on a 'Professional Standards Reporting Procedure'.

9.17 Her Majesty's Inspector is pleased to note there are many instances when staff associations provide immediate advice and support for those who have witnessed malpractice. Staff association representatives are frequently willing to approach line management and can play a valuable role. A productive relationship between senior management and staff associations is an essential prerequisite to combating a lack of integrity. Her Majesty's Inspector welcomes the existence of joint consultative committees, whereby formal links are maintained to discuss a wide range of issues.

9.18 Systems for mentoring or protecting internal witnesses were the exception rather than the rule. In one force, when asked how they would support an internal witness, Her Majesty's Inspector was told that he or she would be moved *'wherever they wanted to go.'* This was said with genuine concern, yet the initial consideration should not be to remove the witness, who may be working where they want to be, but rather the cause of the problem; this is a good example of not considering the problem from the perspective of the injured party.

Bringing About Change

9.19 It is, of course, a disciplinary offence not to report wrongdoing by a colleague, and this is underlined by the new code of conduct referred to at paragraph 2.9. Her Majesty's Inspector supports a 'carrot and stick' approach, with as much encouragement and instilling of a moral duty as possible, but with firm use of discipline in blatant cases of failure to report. One senior police officer had an optimistic view, saying, *'There are a lot more people speaking out now: you'd be surprised how much integrity there is out there.'* The problem is the Service only needs a few to let down its good name for public confidence to be seriously harmed.

9.20 Understandable concern is sometimes raised about false and malicious complaints being encouraged by a confidential or anonymous process, with perhaps the spectre of a career being blighted by an unsubstantiated comment. This is not, in the view of Her Majesty's Inspector, justification for not having such a system, but rather a reminder that all matters reported should be properly substantiated before any detrimental action is taken against the alleged wrongdoer.



Recommendation 9



Her Majesty's Inspector recommends chief constables should create and sustain a regime that is seen by all staff to support them if they have a concern about integrity as it affects them, their colleagues or the public.

Proactivity

9.21 The Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Service has taken the professional and enormously courageous step, with skill and tenacity, of using many of his finest detectives and sophisticated methods for a proactive anti-corruption team. This is at considerable cost, but as a deputy assistant commissioner said,

'Business cases go out of the window here. What price do you put on your reputation, being sued for wrongful arrest, the security of your intelligence, your ability to present solid cases to court without having them overturned later, and the knowledge that the public has confidence in you. How do you cost all of that? The Met cannot afford to have 200 detectives fully committed to dealing with elements of corruption, but at the moment it can't afford not to have them. You would never do it if you waited for a business case.'

9.22 Sir Paul Condon himself was candid in his comment,

'It would have been easier to have gone through my commissionership without opening this can of worms. I felt I owed it to the public and to the majority of good men and women in the Service to confront the problem. Police chiefs and politicians must continue to face up to the challenge. The battle against corruption needs to be constant and enduring, otherwise it will lose ground again.'

9.23 Those senior police officers managing the anti-corruption team in the Metropolitan Police would have been unable to operate effectively unless the Commissioner and his top team were firmly supporting them. Any force which commits resources to a proactive team charged with maintaining integrity without its chief officers' full and committed support is unlikely to succeed.

9.24 If a force decides to form such a team, the size and makeup could vary enormously. As a guide, Her Majesty's Inspector suggests in a force of around 5,000 police and support staff, as a starting point to scope the problem, it would not be unreasonable for a team to consist of six to eight officers, led by a senior detective. This number could then be increased or reduced depending on what was found when they had 'looked under the stone'. Small neighbouring forces may find it beneficial to help each other on a 'mutual aid' basis.

9.25 It may be worthy of consideration that, officers who have previously worked in special branch may have some of the qualities required for this type of work, including:

- vetting to a high standard;
- experience in working on sensitive enquiries with the need for a high degree of confidentiality;
- skilled at covert work, including the use of technical equipment;
- often having an investigative background.

9.26 Apart from the robust investigation of suspected corrupt staff, Her Majesty's Inspector is of the view a proactive team could look into areas such as:

- non-targeted or random integrity testing;
- intelligence data and informant auditing;
- crime recording practices;
- financial claims dip-sampling;
- quality of service checks.

9.27 Some people interviewed by the Inspection Team expressed concerns about the possible proliferation of integrity testing, feeling it would create a 'climate of mistrust'. In many parts of the world and in other organisations, this activity is now considered to be a legitimate tool for helping to maintain a healthy culture. Clearly, when a specific member of staff is suspected of dishonesty or corruption, an integrity test may well form part of the overall investigation, but Her Majesty's Inspector also endorses the use of non-targeted or random testing, such as the handing-in of controlled drugs or found property, or the offering of a reward to carry out PNC checks on people or vehicles. By conducting integrity tests, not only are the particular members of staff concerned examined, but a credible deterrent is put in place for those who may otherwise succumb to weakness and temptation.

9.28 As for quality of service, Her Majesty's Inspector notes many organisations, such as building societies, employ inspectors to undertake random checks of service at branches by posing as customers. He is of the view this could usefully be done in a police environment by visits to a station enquiry counter, or reporting a crime to a crime desk; he does not see it as 'spying', rather quality assurance.

9.29 Any anti-corruption team would benefit from a mixture of disciplines and, although it should be firmly based on investigative experience, specialists such as analysts and financial auditors could be usefully employed on a full or part time basis as the need arises.



Recommendation 10



Her Majesty's Inspector recommends all forces should secure the proactive capacity to maintain integrity and high professional standards.

9.30 In December 1998, the Metropolitan Police Service published 'Integrity is Non-Negotiable'. It is a very useful strategy for tackling corruption and lapses in integrity. All forces will want to consider both the concept and its content.

A Pool of Intelligence

9.31 Whatever forces decide in terms of a proactive team, Her Majesty's Inspector considers it good practice to maintain a central repository for suspicions – internally or externally generated – to allow collation, analysis and appropriate action to be taken. Currently, there could be information or intelligence held about potentially dishonest officers in different locations within a force, such as the complaints and discipline department, informant contact reports, divisional discipline books or grievance procedure reports. The Inspection Team found little evidence these threads were being pulled together to provide a comprehensive picture of suspected staff.

9.32 When the Metropolitan Police (CIB3) Team was formed, it spent the first two to three years purely on intelligence gathering, which is now bearing fruit. Experienced officers on that unit firmly believe good intelligence and information is the cornerstone of any proactive work. Clearly any database should be separate from any other within the force, with access carefully controlled. It should be stressed that, in the war against corruption, the enemy knows the methods which will be employed and will use every means to defeat them.

The Danger of Complacency

9.33 Her Majesty's Inspector is concerned that in some forces visited an air of complacency prevailed, with a feeling that because corruption is perceived to be a 'big city' problem they did not need anyone fulfilling the functions described above. The Kent Constabulary has employed a full-time security manager, who has not only devised imaginative vetting procedures, but acts as a catalyst for all systems designed to detect a lack of integrity. This is not a 'big city' force, yet by taking such a step they have uncovered some serious issues, including the deliberate leakage of police intelligence to criminals which put an undercover officer at grave risk. Her Majesty's

Inspector urges all forces to heed this warning. As one detective superintendent in a smaller force said,

'We don't really know if we've got a problem because we've never really looked that hard.'

9.34 The Inspection Team became aware that, as well as the Metropolitan Police, some other forces, for example West Midlands Police, have gained much valuable experience in proactively tackling corruption and lapses of integrity. This experience needs to be pooled for the benefit of all forces. Her Majesty's Inspector is aware the ACPO Task Force on anti-corruption is developing ways of combatting the problem and is examining the operational practicalities of forming a proactive capacity designed to maintain integrity. He welcomes the work of this Task Force and urges chief officers to examine closely its findings.

The Need for Balance

9.35 The effect on morale of honest staff should be carefully considered. As one detective told the Inspection Team,

'I think it's quite right to make people frightened to be corrupt, but we shouldn't be frightened to come to work.'

Her Majesty's Inspector therefore urges forces to manage implementation sensitively and carefully, to ensure the vigorous action he hopes they will take to maintain integrity is properly focussed on the areas of real need. The vast majority of good police staff need reassurance that measures put in place to root out wrongdoers from their midst will help provide them with a better working environment and, importantly, a much improved relationship with the public.

10

Leadership and Management

10.1 Of all the factors which might lead to a lack of integrity in the Service put forward by those visited by the Inspection Team, an absence of good supervision, management and leadership was by far the most prominent. It is difficult to understand why this should be the case, as in the last two decades the Police Service has embraced a more professional management culture with open arms.

Hands on Management

10.2 Perhaps some light is thrown on the subject by a comment made by one chief constable,

'Junior managers do not perceive themselves to be involved in day-to-day policing. Everyone wants to be a strategist, liaising with local authorities. No-one is 'hands on' anymore, managing the day-to-day business.'

Such a statement may be a generalisation, but there was considerable evidence found during the Inspection that front line service deliverers, particularly in divisions and sectorised policing areas, had little contact with their managers at inspector or chief inspector level. In many cases, this also applies to the first tier of management, the sergeant. One sergeant told the Inspection Team, *'Of a 40-hour working week, I spend 35 hours of it behind a desk, not out there supervising. I have no idea whether the behaviour of my staff is of an acceptable standard.'* An inspector in the same force said, *'Inspectors can't be role models, setting standards and leading by example, as we're always behind a desk. We have no operational involvement.'*

10.3 There is perhaps a misunderstanding over what constitutes good management. There are many plans and policies, much chasing of targets and publishing of statistics, but the leadership of staff and management of day-to-day operations seems increasingly to be neglected. There is evidence of a strong desire amongst service deliverers for clearer guidelines and more positive leadership. As a constable succinctly expressed, *'It's all very well telling me what you want me to do but it's no use unless you tell me how to do it.'*

10.4 It appears from the evidence during the Inspection that chief officers want their junior managers to be more involved in everyday policing and closer supervision, but this view tended to be expressed by chief officers who themselves had no personal monitoring systems and did little or no personal sampling. Many junior managers spoken to during the Inspection actually wanted to supervise their staff more closely, and an examination within forces as to why this is not happening is required. Her Majesty's Inspector is NOT persuaded the reduction in 'outside' supervision is the result of the downsizing of management structures, in his view it is due to an avoidance of conflict management in favour of the more comfortable administrative and liaison duties. He urges the development of a much closer leadership style, perhaps best described as 'intrusive supervision', at all levels throughout the Police Service.



Management Resilience and Quality

10.5 The Inspection Team found evidence that the drive to slim down management structures to produce more efficient operation is being used as an excuse for inadequate supervision of staff. The Service needs an effective management structure and procedures to maintain a firm oversight, not least on integrity issues, but this does not mean greater numbers, which will only take the Service back to the time when divided responsibilities resulted in little accountability. Slimmer management structures permit greater clarity of duties and offer the opportunities to demonstrate leadership. From his experience, Her Majesty's Inspector is firmly convinced supervisory officers of EVERY rank have the time to provide support and guidance to their service deliverers outside the stations IF they have the inclination.

10.6 There are, however, two conflicting practices which are equally harmful to effective supervision. In some squads and sections, first line managers are sometimes too close to their team to provide that objective assurance; such close working enhances team effectiveness but can preclude the independence of mind necessary for firm management. On the other hand, peripatetic intermediate line managers, for which there is an increasing tendency, cannot provide the quality of supervision required to ensure high professional standards are maintained.

10.7 A concern emerged strongly during the Inspection that officers who are more senior will not support those junior managers who challenge on an integrity issue. Once a manager, who has tried to challenge and rectify bad behaviour, has been undermined by those in more senior positions, perhaps because of weakness or nepotism, they are understandably far less likely ever to make a second challenge. Her Majesty's Inspector regards this to be an extremely important issue and considers any fine words by chief officers about 'firm leadership' should be translated into support for their middle managers.

Role Definition

10.8 The quality of some police managers was often criticised by those speaking to the Inspection Team, both from within and outside the Service. It was too often found to be the case that sergeants were in effect acting as 'senior constables', thereby compromising their ability to challenge unacceptable practice amongst their staff. Her Majesty's Inspector is very firmly of the view there needs to be a clear definition of responsibility, and promotion within the Service should be seen as a 'stride', not a 'glide'. In other words, each promotion should move the officer into a significantly different band of authority, where a significantly different relationship with subordinates is expected. To take firm or unpopular action when it is required, the managers should be able to distance themselves from the lower rank.

10.9 In some forces, the lack of role clarity is demonstrated by an over reliance on officers 'acting up'. One trainer told the Inspection Team he knew of constables who had performed the duty of acting sergeant for several years. Occasionally on a station visit, almost all the supervisory officers met were 'acting', sometimes only for a day. There is often no training given to acting ranks and no formal selection process, yet the Service relies on them to ensure the professionalism and integrity of a large number of staff. Her Majesty's Inspector advises forces to take stock of the number of acting supervisors of any rank they are using at any one time, but particularly sergeants. In his view, it is often far better for officers to remain in their substantive posts and to cover absences below them, than have a series of staff acting up in unfamiliar roles.

In his experience, in the short term, constables are very able to perform their duties without direct intervention by supervisory officers – they do it most of the time on the streets anyway. It is self evident that wherever possible supervisors should all be of substantive rank, but if a force *has* to use officers in an acting capacity over any length of time, they should be selected formally and be given some form of training, which includes the recognition of failings in integrity and what to do about it.

Acceptance of Responsibility

10.10 Some managers told the Inspection Team they felt they ‘were responsible’ for all the events occurring within their sphere of authority. Some clearly enjoyed the status and financial reward which goes with higher rank, but many were not prepared to accept they should take responsibility when things within their sphere of influence went wrong, preferring instead to blame those lower down the command chain – power without responsibility. Her Majesty’s Inspector considers the solution lies in a greater holding to account of EVERY rank for the discharge of their functional responsibilities.

10.11 Her Majesty’s Inspector urges forces to re-examine their criteria for selection for promotion, to ensure greater emphasis is given to the ability to demonstrate robust leadership and the motivation to challenge unprofessional behaviour. He suggests police authorities, when selecting chief officers, ensure applicants clearly demonstrate they understand they will be held to account, and expected to take responsibility, for problems occurring within their remit.

10.12 The criticism of poor leadership is interpreted by many to mean poor chief officers. Her Majesty’s Inspector stresses every supervisory tier is charged with the duty to provide leadership, and in his view any leadership vacuum is as great at sergeant to superintendent level as it is at chief officer. A chief officer will be unable to maintain high levels of integrity if he or she is not wholeheartedly supported by committed and strong middle managers. The Chairman of the Police Federation expressed the view,

‘Senior command know what they want, but the middle managers are not delivering.’

Clearly there is an issue about ensuring only those who can deliver are promoted, but the Chairman’s comments serve to underline the problems with leadership in the Police Service are the responsibility of all tiers of management and not just chief officers.

Ethical Statements

10.13 All forces have, for several years, operated under the umbrella of an ethical statement. Most are based around the Statement of Common Purpose and Values (SCPV) published by the ACPO in 1991 (see appendix B, annex 1). All chief officers stated in their response to the questionnaire (see appendix B) that they saw integrity as a key issue and ensured its inclusion in some form within their strategic plans. Merseyside Police, for instance, lists integrity as a guiding principle within its strategy document for 1998-2003. Similarly, the Royal Ulster Constabulary charter assures the public, *‘We will do our duty with integrity.’*

10.14 The ethical vision demanded by a chief constable requires a checking mechanism to ensure it is delivered throughout the organisation. Rarely was evidence found to suggest this had

happened. As one ACC acknowledged, *'putting integrity into a policy document is not enough.'* It is a sad fact that all too often fine words are not translated into positive action by service deliverers in the front line; Her Majesty's Inspector is of the view this is the fault of their leaders at all levels.

10.15 The SCPV was rarely seen as the basis for understanding integrity, and many police staff had either forgotten about it or never even heard of it, even when it was on the wall of the office when the remark was made. There is confusion between force aims, objectives, mission statements, styles and the SCPV, and in many cases junior officers question the relevance of all of these. Some forces have reinforced the SCPV, a good example being South Yorkshire with their Six Hill Horizon statement which gives a clearer exposition of the standards expected. That document is now being updated, and a number of other forces are also reviewing their advice. This is welcomed by Her Majesty's Inspector, who considers such statements need to be regularly updated and actively re-enforced.

10.16 Though very few operational officers were able to quote in any detail the contents of the SCPV, most had a fairly common sense notion of integrity and used such terms as 'honesty' and 'fairness'. Her Majesty's Inspector advises chief officers to ascertain exactly what understanding their staff have of their force statement, and how they relate it to their day-to-day policing duties. He reminds forces it is the responsibility of managers constantly to drive, monitor and re-enforce the SCPV.

10.17 All constables take the Declaration of Attestation (see appendix B, annex 2) on entering the Police Service. This solemn moment should be an opportunity to reinforce the need for integrity, yet Her Majesty's Inspector is of the view the old fashioned, legalistic terminology used may go over the head of many recruits, thereby losing the importance of the message. He urges the Home Office to re-examine the wording of this oath as set out in Schedule 4 of the Police Act 1996, and consider bringing it up to date with modern language and a greater emphasis on policing with integrity.

The Communication Gap

10.18 The Inspection found there is often a very significant gap in understanding between the very top of the organisation and those who deliver the service. Whilst interviewing those at the lower end of the hierarchical chain, the Inspection Team was given these views:

- A probationer will be sworn in and given an early lecture by a chief officer, but the next time he or she is likely to meet one is at a discipline hearing.
- A constable with 21 years service said, *'I have spoken to a chief constable once.'*
- Another constable said, *'Of three divisional superintendents I have had in the last three years, not one has come to introduce themselves to the PCs.'*

10.19 Her Majesty's Inspector considers meaningful and effective communication between the ranks, both up and down, could be very considerably improved in most forces. Chief officers are too frequently seen as being remote from the realities of street level policing, yet the Inspection found evidence that when they make the time to meet and listen to officers at ground level, the

effect is highly motivational. A good example of this was given by a group of constables when the Inspection Team visited Merseyside; the constables were very complimentary about the fact that their Chief Constable had arrived, unannounced, in Toxteth, and carried out a period of foot patrol with local officers. They felt it gave him a much greater understanding of the problems in what has been a difficult area to police, and they assured the Inspection Team that, from their point of view, it was time well spent.

10.20 In Durham, the vision statement 'Aiming for Excellence' has been well received and is spoken about enthusiastically by all ranks because it is 'lived' by the chief officers. In the experience of the Inspection Team, this is a rarely found attitude and is worthy of examination: the top team demonstrate they are clearly committed to their staff, the area and its people; by frequent visits to police stations and other workplaces, they have created an open, almost family atmosphere where high standards and professionalism flourish. In Hampshire, the Chief Constable often uses informal opportunities such as sharing a table in the canteen with junior staff, or chatting in the bar at the training centre, to reinforce the standards of integrity he requires from them and to get a feel for the standards by which his staff are working. Good practice was also found in Avon and Somerset and Lincolnshire, where the Chief Constables hold regular focus groups for all staff. Her Majesty's Inspector is personally aware of several other chief constables who regularly make time to meet with, listen to and action concerns from their staff at all levels, but sadly they are very definitely in the minority.

10.21 In some forces visited, the chief officer command suite is a remote set of offices on the top floor of headquarters. When entering one such suite, it is necessary to pass a sign saying '**Private, Command Suite, No Access Without Permission**'. This hardly helps to bridge the communication gap but if it is felt necessary to have such an arrangement, Her Majesty's Inspector urges chief officers to ensure they are visible and accessible in other ways, such as through regular visits to the workplace.

Demonstrating Commitment

10.22 The so called 'butterfly syndrome' was raised from time to time by staff, including some chief officers. This is said to occur, in leadership terms, when senior officers do not stay long enough in one position to stamp their personal values, experience the outcome of their policies, and take responsibility and be held to account for the results of work on which they lead. Additionally, self-aggrandisement is seen by many constables as the senior officers' first priority. Senior officers should be seen to demonstrate their commitment to their command by a close association; to draw an analogy with Members of Parliament, the question can be asked of them, 'Do they have their main residence in the constituency?'

10.23 There is clearly going to be a difficulty in building the trust needed to sustain strong partnerships and new community links if there are too frequent changes of key personnel. Officer advancement is important but so is maintaining trust, which is not always transferable. Her Majesty's Inspector is of the view the Service should introduce a 'minimum tenure' system for senior officers and make it clear in job advertisements that there is an expectation of a minimum period of posting.

A Consistent Message

10.24 What was abundantly clear to the Inspection Team was that a good example set by the chief constable is vital in maintaining high standards. In one instance, a force wished to ensure officers were smart and always wore a tie when in uniform. When the chief constable subsequently appeared on television wearing a NATO style pullover and an open necked shirt, this policy was severely undermined, and the apparent lack of consistency was raised several times in that force with the Inspection Team. One chief officer told the Inspection Team,

'The service has got itself into a position where chief officers would have found it difficult to stamp down heavily on a lack of integrity as it would have caused them some embarrassment because of their own behaviour.'

10.25 Whilst it would be unfair and incorrect to place the major part of any blame for a lack of integrity on the chief officer team, the Inspection emphasised the importance of them not only clearly setting the standards, but also being seen to practice what they preach. Too often the Inspection Team found persuasive evidence that chief officers had little idea how they were perceived by their own staff, and would not have liked to have heard the truth. In a hierarchical and disciplined organisation, senior ranks carry great respect and the perception of them, even if unfair or misunderstood, has a significant influence on how their staff behave.



Recommendation 11:



Her Majesty's Inspector recommends chief officers should more actively set the right example, and continually reinforce it through deeds rather than words.

11

The Role of Police Authorities and HMIC

Police Authorities

11.1 The police authority has a vitally important role in ensuring a force acts with integrity and in the way the community would wish. Her Majesty's Inspector recognises the statutory duty of a police authority to secure an efficient and effective force, and is firmly of the view a high degree of integrity is fundamental to achieving such effectiveness. To enable it to discharge its duty to monitor integrity, a police authority has to be allowed the means to become informed about the state of health of its force.

11.2 Many police authority members met during the Inspection felt very frustrated they were not able to play their full part in ensuring the integrity of their force, only being able to react after the event. Their statutory powers to call for reports on matters affecting their role – subject to the chief constable referring any to the Home Secretary if he or she considers it affects their operational responsibilities – and to oversee the complaints procedure, in effect means they have to rely heavily on what the chief constable tells them.

11.3 An essential element in ensuring the public can have confidence in the complaints system is the existence of some form of independent oversight. While the Police Complaints Authority considers the report of every complaints investigation, police authority complaints and discipline committees also have an important role to play at the local level. There is good practice in Thames Valley where the police authority complaints and discipline committee sees all complaint files, every internal discipline panel file, and details of complaints made against support staff, and special constables. Her Majesty's Inspector encourages such openness and views it as indicative of a healthy relationship.

11.4 It should, however, be recognised a dissatisfied member of the public is unaware of the detailed legal provisions regarding complaints: it is only a complaint against a specific officer that is required to be recorded, referred to the Police Complaints Authority and the process overseen by the police authority. Civil actions or complaints against policies or procedures are not subject to any national guidance or external supervision, and the practices in forces vary greatly. Although most police authorities are usually involved in the financial aspect of a civil claim, very few are advised of the issues raised and remedial action taken following non-statutory complaints.

11.5 One theme of this Inspection has been the need for chief constables to have systems and procedures that enable them to be informed of the health of all aspects of integrity in their force. Her Majesty's Inspector is of the view this should equally apply to the police authority. Members, as part of the local community, become aware of public concerns about policing, but often have insufficient understanding of the work of the force to know what questions to ask, or at least the supplementary if they are uneasy about the fullness of the report they receive. It is in the interests both of forces and police authorities to foster good relations and mutual trust. In most cases, the relationship is very professional and responsible, and works well, but not always.

11.6 Her Majesty's Inspector regards the development of a professional and mutually respectful partnership between the authority and the chief constable as more productive than increased explicit legislative powers. But if progress is to be made in drawing on the support of a police authority to enhance further the integrity of the police, a chief constable has to provide it with the opportunities and information to understand better what is going on in the force. Her Majesty's Inspector is encouraged by the approach in the Royal Ulster Constabulary, whereby the Northern Ireland Police Authority has recently been involved in internal auditing and reviews within that force.

11.7 Her Majesty's Inspector suggests a police authority and its chief constable may wish to consider together the following:

- The chief constable offering to provide his/her police authority with regular reports on the systems and arrangements in place to promote integrity and deter and detect corruption.
- The police authority and its chief constable agreeing a set of policies on behaviour and integrity.
- The police authority overseeing all complaints relating to quality of service delivery, including against individual officers, unsatisfactory systems and procedures, and civil actions. This can only be effectively discharged if the authority is provided with usable management information (not merely statistics), and the ability to dip sample completed files. Allowing the authority oversight of complaints against support staff, and special constables should also be considered.
- The police authority being able to monitor management information relating to the grievance procedure.
- The police authority having access to the results of internal surveys, especially those relating to any form of discrimination or harassment.
- Responsibility of the police authority for financial management including control over an auditing process that looks at the *content* and not merely the *system* for accounting.
- The police authority giving particular regard to issues of integrity within its responsibility for the selection and conduct of chief officers.
- The police authority, whilst not wanting to duplicate the delegated responsibilities of the chief officer, being facilitated in occasionally sampling the culture of the force by encouraging and supporting unescorted personal visits to police stations and other establishments.
- Whilst a police authority has the power to ask for reports on issues of concern, providing it with sufficient information about events and procedures to know what questions to ask, for example, by offering regular training and briefing days and advising the authority on operational issues.

11.8 The Association of Police Authorities (APA) was established in 1997 and represents all police authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Her Majesty's Inspector welcomes the interest the APA has shown in this Inspection and its clear desire to take a more active role in maintaining integrity within the Police Service. To that end, he urges chief constables and individual police authorities to build an ever closer relationship based upon trust, and to put in place systems that will sustain this close co-operation through the inevitable times of stresses and strains.

HMIC

11.9 The core business of HM Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) is to encourage and monitor continuous improvement by police forces, and the issue of integrity is very much part of that process. Through inspection and day-to-day contact, Her Majesty's Inspector is confident HMIC will increasingly monitor integrity, the systems and the investigative and corrective measures for maintaining it, and Inspectors will become aware at an early stage of any failings. In the same way forces are urged to keep in view the human side of policing, HMIC, in its new role as 'best value inspectors', will not lose sight of this important responsibility.

11.10 Having encouraged forces to ensure there are adequate means for staff to report concerns, Her Majesty's Inspector recognises there are occasions when, despite the best efforts, a satisfactory outcome is not achieved. Whilst HMIC would not seek to usurp the authority of the chief constable to be singularly accountable for the behaviour of his/her staff, there should be available a separate line to register a complaint for occasions when the aggrieved has lost confidence in their chief officers. If HMIC receives a complaint and recognises it may impugn a chief officer, it has to be referred to the police authority; otherwise, HMIC's duty is to ensure the chief constable resolves it with due integrity.

11.11 Forces should ensure their staff are continually aware that if they consider a grievance or complaint is not being progressed correctly within their force they can contact their regional HMI direct, either during a force inspection or at any other time. A perception was shared with the Inspection Team that some officers may be reluctant to raise issues with Her Majesty's Inspectors, believing *'There's no point in me telling them because they're all friends of the chief constable anyway.'* This myth has to be dispelled by HMIC through actions, and seen to be so by police officers, support staff and special constables.

11.12 Staff need to be aware though that HMIC is not an appellate or investigative authority and cannot become involved in the detail of an individual grievance, but rather it will thoroughly monitor how it is dealt with by the force. It is important staff, particularly those junior within the Service, have an understanding of the role, and especially the independence, of HMIC, and are thereby given the confidence to report concerns when appropriate.

The Way Forward

11.13 This Inspection was initiated by HMIC because it was recognised public confidence was becoming seriously harmed by the bad behaviour of a minority of police staff. The dramatic publicity arising from their actions is disproportionate to the huge amount of good work carried out every day, often in extremely dangerous and difficult circumstances, by the vast majority of officers, support staff and special constables.

11.14 It is clear from the findings of the Inspection Team there are many areas where improvements could be made to lessen the likelihood that lapses in integrity will occur and to allow early detection when they do. Her Majesty's Inspector's recommendations (chapter 12) are designed to assist the Police Service in its endeavours to make these improvements. Likewise, the Good Practice Guide (appendix D) will help forces and other police organisations to check their own practices and procedures in all areas which may have a bearing on the integrity of their staff, and to make adjustments where necessary.



12

Recommendations

12.1 Her Majesty's Inspector recommends:

1. all supervisory officers should be significantly more active in raising the standard of behaviour of all staff, in all ranks, ensuring everyone is treated with dignity and respect, regardless of the circumstances (2.9 refers);
2. all chief officers should ensure there is in place an adequate monitoring process to maintain a corporate approach to ethical crime recording and investigation (4.12 refers);
3. informants should be regarded as a corporate asset, controllers responsible only for the number of informants they can properly supervise and handlers changed at set intervals (4.29 refers);
4. forces should review selection, training and methods of deployment of tutor constables, with the specific aim of enhancing the integrity of the probationer constable (5.5 refers);
5. forces should exercise greater robustness in assessing individual integrity, and identify those high risk posts where a higher level is required (5.17 refers);
6. forces should rigorously audit intelligence database transactions, and use technology to assist (6.14 refers);
7. the Service should embrace more closely a culture of confidentiality, whilst at the same time freely sharing information with partnership agencies (6.17 refers);
8. chief constables should state clearly and regularly what is, and is not, acceptable practice in respect of gratuities (7.21 refers);
9. chief constables should create and sustain a regime that is seen by all staff to support them if they have a concern about integrity as it affects them, their colleagues or the public (9.20 refers);
10. all forces should secure the proactive capacity to maintain integrity and high professional standards (9.29 refers); and,
11. chief officers should more actively set the right example, and continually reinforce it through deeds rather than words (10.26 refers).