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## **Revisiting police relationships: progress report**

**Surrey Police  
December 2012**

## About this review

In 2011, the Home Secretary asked Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) to look at "instances of undue influence, inappropriate contractual arrangements and other abuses of power in police relationships with the media and other parties". The resulting report, *Without Fear or Favour*, published in December 2011, found no evidence of endemic corruption in the Police Service. However, we did not issue a clean bill of health:

- Few forces provided any policy or guidance around appropriate relationships between the police and the media and others;
- There was a general lack of clarity around acceptance of gifts and hospitality; use of corporate credit cards; and second jobs for officers and staff, which could leave forces vulnerable to (at least the perception of) corruption; and
- Few forces and authorities had proactive and effective systems in place to identify, monitor and manage these issues.

We made several recommendations to help the service address these issues, and committed to revisiting forces in 2012 to track progress.

The revisit found that while forces have made some progress, particularly around putting in place processes and policies to manage threats to integrity, more needs to be done. The pace of change also needs to increase, not least to demonstrate to the public that the service is serious about managing integrity issues, which have retained a high media profile over the last year.

A thematic report, *Revisiting Police Relationships: A progress report* is available from [www.hmic.gov.uk](http://www.hmic.gov.uk), and gives more information about what we found across England and Wales. The rest of this report focuses on what we found in Surrey.

This time HMIC is publishing force-level reports. This is so the public and the new Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) can see how their force has progressed since 2011.

A note on the scope of our review: Since our 2011 inspection, questions around police integrity and corruption have continued to be asked. For instance, the Leveson Inquiry has looked at relationships between officers and journalists (among other things), while investigations into senior officers and into the handling of historic investigations (such as the Hillsborough disaster) have received widespread media coverage. The findings in this report relate only to police relationships with the media and others, rather than broader issues of police integrity.

# Findings for Surrey

Since 2011 Surrey Police has conducted an integrity “healthcheck”, using the Self-Assessment Checklist provided in HMIC’s 2011 report, *Without Fear or Favour*. As a result the force has changed some of the ways it manages and records integrity issues. Several policies covering relationships with the media, acceptance of gifts and hospitality, social media use, and second jobs have been updated. Officers and staff now have a better understanding of the rules, and more second jobs and offers of gifts are declared and recorded.

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

The force has produced a new media policy. This outlines how relationships with the press should work and how staff should record contact with journalists. The policy is in line with the national guidance on relationships with the media produced by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). We found that staff were aware of these rules.

Between September 2011 and May 2012, the force has investigated four instances of inappropriate disclosures to the media, two of which were ongoing at the time of the inspection.

The force has updated its guidance handbook on how police officers and staff should behave on social networking sites (such as Facebook and Twitter). This covers the standards of behaviour expected when staff are both at work and off duty. It has been reinforced by a poster and intranet campaign to highlight what is and is not acceptable. The force uses specialist software to monitor how staff are using social media sites to engage with the public. Where individuals have been disciplined for inappropriate use of social networking sites, the cases are publicised inside the organisation to help others understand how seriously the force views the matter. HMIC’s independently commissioned research identified four cases of potentially inappropriate behaviour on Facebook or Twitter by officers and staff in Surrey Police, which have been referred back to the force.

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

In 2011 we found that Surrey Police was recording **gifts and hospitality** received by officers and staff. This electronic register is now held by the Professional Standards Department (PSD), which has meant that the entries receive greater scrutiny. An increase in entries on the register and interviews with staff indicates an improved understanding of what should be recorded.

Currently there is no monitoring in place to cross-reference contract and **procurement** registers with the gifts and hospitality register to ensure the integrity of the procurement process (e.g. by looking out for any instances of a company providing hospitality, and then receiving a contract).

Surrey Police's policy for **second jobs** has been extended to include police staff as well as police officers. The head of PSD reviews each application and ensures the electronic register is updated. This helps to maintain consistency in making decisions about what second jobs should be allowed. Applications are currently reviewed every two years, although this is to be increased to an annual review. Since September 2011 there have been 61 applications for second jobs, all of which have been approved.

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

We found that the police authority had arrangements in place to monitor and govern integrity issues. The recently elected PCC will need to be satisfied with the future governance and reporting mechanisms for these issues.

Data provided by the force to HMIC shows that there has been no change in the number of staff working in the anti-corruption unit since our 2011 inspection. Between September 2011 and May 2012 the force instigated 57 investigations into the conduct of its officers and staff in relation to the areas covered by this report . The widely reported investigation of a chief officer is included in these figures.

There has been training on integrity issues since our last inspection in 2011. Some of this has been specifically targeted at staff who may have needed to speak with the media as a result of the force's role in policing the London 2012 Olympics. Changes to policy are communicated by email and the intranet but there is no mechanism to check that officers and staff have understood them.

## Next steps

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