



Thames Valley Police has made good progress in the way it identifies, monitors and manages integrity issues

In 2011, the Home Secretary asked Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) to look at "instances of undue influence, inappropriate contractual arrangements and other abuses of power in police relationships with the media and other parties".

While the resulting report, *Without Fear or Favour*, found no evidence that corruption was endemic in police service relationships, it did not issue a clean bill of health. In particular, HMIC was concerned that few forces provided any policy or guidance in relation to key integrity issues, such as how to interact with the media, use of social media, and what second jobs are suitable for officers and staff. The report made several recommendations to help the service address these issues.

In 2012 HMIC revisited all forces to track progress against these recommendations.

In Thames Valley, HMIC found:

- Since 2011 Thames Valley Police has conducted a self evaluation against the Self Assessment Checklist provided in HMIC's 2011 report, *Without Fear or Favour*.
- HMIC found that there have been clear improvements in the way the force manages integrity issues and how different departments communicate with each other to reduce risks, in particular through the integrity subgroup.
- The force has updated most of its policies on relationships with the media, acceptance of gifts and hospitality, use of social media and police officers and staff having second jobs.
- Officers and staff are clearer on what is expected of them in these areas, and are declaring and recording more information about second jobs and offers of gifts.
- The force has reviewed how it can be more proactive in monitoring and investigating inappropriate disclosure of information, including leaks to the media.
- Since September 2011, the force has investigated three instances of inappropriate disclosures to the media. One of these was continuing at the time of our inspection.

- The force has introduced new social media guidance which sets out the boundaries for staff, stating what is and is not acceptable in their personal use of networks such as Facebook and Twitter.
- HMIC's independently commissioned research identified seven cases of inappropriate behaviour on Facebook or Twitter by Thames Valley Police officers or members of staff. These have been referred back to the force.
- Thames Valley Police's policy for second jobs and business interests applies to police staff as well as police officers. There are strong links between HR and PSD to ensure that every decision to approve or refuse an application to take up a second job is based on assessments of the risks to the force and the suitability of the applicant.
- Since September 2011 there have been 129 applications for second jobs, with all but one being approved.
- Data provided by the force to HMIC shows that there has been a reduction in the number of staff working in the anti-corruption unit since our 2011 inspection.

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

"Thames Valley Police has made good progress in how it manages integrity issues since HMIC last reviewed this in 2011. There have been improvements in the way the force identifies and monitors integrity, and in the approach it takes to highlighting issues such as the inappropriate behaviour of staff using social media.

Across the whole of England and Wales we found that the police service is making progress in how it monitors and safeguards relationships with the media, contractors and others; but we are concerned that changes nationally have not been implemented at a quicker pace.

HMIC will continue to monitor and inspect progress in order to provide the public with assurance that all forces are gripping these vital issues."

The full report for Thames Valley Police, along with the national thematic review 'Revisiting police relationships', can be found at www.hmic.gov.uk

Notes to editors

1. A copy of the national report, *Revisiting Police Relationships*, and individual force reports can be found on the HMIC website www.hmic.gov.uk
2. In 2011, the Home Secretary asked Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) to look at "instances of undue influence, inappropriate contractual arrangements and other abuses of power in police relationships with the media and other parties". The resulting report, *Without Fear or Favour*, was based on an inspection of all 43 forces in England and Wales, as well as the British Transport Police (BTP), the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) and, at its request, the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). We also ran telephone surveys to find out if the public thought corruption was a problem for the Service, and looked at

police use of social media. The 2011 report can be found on the HMIC website www.hmic.gov.uk

3. The revisit used the 2011 criteria and was based on self assessments by 44 forces (including the British Transport Police), supported by inspection work in July and August 2012. HMIC also repeated and extended the surveys of public opinion on the range and type of corruption issues in the police service, and of police use of social media.
4. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) is an independent inspectorate, inspecting policing in the public interest, and rigorously examines the efficiency and effectiveness of police forces and authorities to tackle crime and terrorism, improve criminal justice and raise confidence. HMIC inspects and regulates all 43 police forces in England and Wales together with other major policing bodies such as the Serious Organised Crime Agency, the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the British Transport Police.
5. For further information, HMIC's press office can be contacted during office hours from 8:30am – 5:30pm Monday – Friday on 0203 513 0600.
6. HMIC's out-of-hours press office line for urgent media enquiries is 07836 217 729.