



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

**Revisiting police
relationships:
progress report**

**Warwickshire Police
December 2012**

About this review

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

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

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

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

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

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 Warwickshire

Since 2011 Warwickshire Police has conducted a self-assessment of its position on integrity issues, using the recommendations in HMIC's 2011 report, *Without Fear or Favour*. This exercise identified actions to address potential issues, and the force has monitored its progress in completing these actions (which include a review of all force policies relating to integrity risks).

Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police are moving towards a strategic alliance. A joint review has been conducted and compared against national guidance, with the intention of adopting shared policies for this alliance. This approach will allow staff to work to agreed national processes and guidance. In the interim, policies covering relationships with the media, acceptance of gifts and hospitality, social media use and police officers having second jobs have been updated, or are in the process of being reviewed. We found that the force was communicating these changes to staff.

How are press relations handled, and information leaks investigated?

The force has reviewed its media policy. This outlines how relationships with the press should work, and stipulates that staff and officers should consult with the Press Office on all contacts with the media, which should also be recorded. This 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 new rules.

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

A new draft alliance social media policy is being developed. This will support the development of police-related networks on sites such as Facebook and Twitter, as well as outlining the behaviour expected when staff are off duty (with interim guidance on this in place in the meantime).

The Corporate Communications Department (CCD) monitors local and national media for force-related stories and indications of inappropriate leaks of information. The department has access to all force social networking accounts, which it monitors regularly for any instances of potential misuse. The alliance with West Mercia Police is intended to provide the IT capability to monitor social networking sites more widely. HMIC's independently commissioned research identified one case of potentially inappropriate behaviour on Facebook or Twitter by a member of staff in Warwickshire Police, which has 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 Warwickshire Police was already keeping a record of the **gifts and hospitality** received by officers and staff on one central electronic register, which made it easy to monitor and identify any problems. The register is overseen by the head of the Professional Standards Department (PSD).

There is currently 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. to look out for instances where a company provides hospitality, and then is awarded a contract). This is being planned for within the new alliance structure.

Warwickshire Police's policy for **second jobs** and business interests routes police staff and police officer requests through the applicant's line manager/head of department to PSD for review, before the deputy chief constable makes a final decision on whether it should be approved. Since September 2011 there have been 35 applications for second jobs, 33 of which have been approved.

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

The police authority has continued to exercise oversight and governance over integrity issues. The recently elected PCC will need to be satisfied with the governance and reporting mechanisms for these issues, both within their force and within the alliance with West Mercia.

The alliance between Warwickshire and West Mercia Police has been formally agreed and is now moving into the implementation phase. A decision has been made that there will be one PSD with a single anti-corruption unit, vetting team and case management. The target start date for the single PSD business area is March 2013.

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 42 investigations into the conduct of its officers and staff in relation to the areas covered by this report.

The chief officer team regularly promotes the values of the organisation, and since 2011 has provided leadership around integrity issues through various communication channels. Staff have received training and guidance around integrity issues and in particular, in the areas of greater risk, such as inappropriate information disclosure and unprofessional relationships with the media.

Next steps

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

