



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

**Revisiting police
relationships:
progress report**

**Wiltshire 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 Wiltshire.

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 Wiltshire

Since 2011 Wiltshire Police has conducted an integrity 'healthcheck', using the Self-Assessment Checklist provided in HMIC's 2011 report, *Without Fear or Favour*. Several 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. This has been communicated to staff.

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

The force has updated its media policy and guidance. This outlines how relationships with the press should work, and includes a requirement for staff and officers to record contact with journalists. 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 investigated three instances of inappropriate disclosure to the media, two of which were continuing at the time of inspection.

The force has policy and guidance on how police officers and staff should behave on social networking sites (such as Twitter and Facebook). This covers the standards of behaviour expected when staff are both at work and off duty, although the force is currently in the process of developing a revised policy to provide further up-to-date guidance. HMIC's independently commissioned research identified three cases of potentially inappropriate behaviour on Facebook or Twitter by members of staff at Wiltshire Police. These 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 Wiltshire was keeping a record of **gifts and hospitality** received by officers and staff, but not in a consistent way, which made it more difficult to monitor and identify any problems. The force has now introduced one central register, and staff are required to electronically submit details for both accepted and declined gifts and hospitality. This is overseen by the head of the Professional Standards Department (PSD).

PSD carries out a quarterly integrity inspection to assess potential vulnerability and corruption. This includes cross-referencing gifts and hospitality with contract and **procurement** arrangements (e.g. to look out for instances where a company provides hospitality, and then is awarded a contract). This is led by PSD with the support of the head of finance. Findings are reported to chief officers.

Wiltshire Police's policy for **second jobs** and business interests has recently been developed and outlines a clear application process, which requires a member of staff to submit an application for checking by a supervisor. It is then forwarded to the head of PSD for review before a chief officer makes a final decision on whether it should be approved. Since September 2011 there have been 36 applications for second jobs, 25 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, such as regular meetings of the Professional Standards Committee, and intended to continue doing so until the election of the PCC in November 2012. The recently elected PCC will need to be satisfied with the governance and reporting mechanisms for integrity 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 Chief Constable has recently written to every member of staff to publicise the force values and behaviours, which include integrity. A senior leadership program (for chief inspectors and above) is being implemented and integrity is now a fundamental element in all courses, with all staff either having received or planning to undertake such training in the future. PSD produces regular internal force briefings which highlight lessons learned from PSD investigations, in order to remind staff of the expected standards of professional behaviour, the force's values and changes to policy.

Next steps

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

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