



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

Police Integrity and Corruption

Norfolk Constabulary

November 2014

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ISBN: 978-1-78246-596-6

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To what extent has the force put in place arrangements to ensure its workforce acts with integrity?

There is clear leadership from the chief constable to create a climate of ethical behaviour, and staff and officers are familiar with 'what you need to know', a booklet issued by the chief constable, together with his counterpart in Suffolk Constabulary. This sets out what is expected in terms of standards and integrity. Staff are prepared to challenge inappropriate behaviour and feel the organisation will support them when doing so. There is insufficient rigour of the initial assessments of misconduct cases and a lack of visible supervision of subsequent investigations. There is currently insufficient capacity to prevent, reduce and investigate corruption matters effectively.

Summary

There is clear leadership from the chief constable to create a climate of ethical behaviour, and staff and officers are familiar with 'what you need to know', a booklet issued by the chief constable, together with his counterpart in Suffolk Constabulary. This sets out what is expected in terms of standards and integrity. Supervisors and line managers are positive role models, encouraging professional behaviour. Staff are prepared to challenge inappropriate behaviour and feel the organisation will support them when doing so.

An integrity working group has been established which is chaired jointly by the deputy chief constables (DCC) of Norfolk and Suffolk and the force has good plans in place to manage the introduction of the Code of Ethics. Joint policies have been developed with Suffolk Constabulary around business interests and gifts and hospitality, and staff have a knowledge of these policies.

Police staff feel that they are not treated as fairly and equally as police officers in terms of how investigations into conduct and public complaints are assessed, recorded, investigated and sanctions imposed. The rigour of initial assessments of misconduct cases where there is a potential of criminal offences is unsatisfactory, and where criminal interviews are conducted with staff, there is little evidence of supervisory oversight or guidance prior to any misconduct determinations being made.

There is limited analytical, research and intelligence development capacity within the anti-corruption unit (ACU) and what does exist is being used to react to and support ongoing investigations. Limited proactive work is therefore undertaken to identify trends, risks or vulnerabilities in respect of corruption. The force does not use random or with cause (intelligence-led) drug testing, or intelligence-led integrity testing to identify corruption.

Suffolk and Norfolk Constabularies have a joint vetting unit that complies with the national vetting policy and identifies corruption risks at the recruitment stage for officers and staff.

What progress has the force made on managing professional and personal relationships with integrity and transparency, since HMIC’s December 2012 report?

HMIC highlighted one area for improvement in the December 2012 report.

1. The monitoring and review of the procurement register against the gifts and hospitality register.

The force now audits the registers regularly and inappropriate entries are challenged or investigated, up to and including chief officers.

What progress has the force made in communicating and making sure staff knew about ethical and professional behaviour to all staff, including the new Code of Ethics?

There is clear leadership from the chief officer team, delivering key messages using a variety of means.

Staff are able to challenge poor behaviour and feel they will be supported if they do so.

Some staff feel they are not treated fairly and equally in terms of how investigations into conduct and public complaints are assessed, recorded, investigated and sanctions imposed.

The force has good plans in place to ensure the Code of Ethics is fully understood and applied.

How well does the force proactively look for, and effectively challenge and investigate misconduct and unprofessional behaviour?

The force’s capacity to identify and investigate misconduct could be enhanced.

The force responds to reports of wrongdoing by staff and does so in as timely and effective manner as other similar forces.

Staff in the professional standards department (PSD) and the ACU receive training for their role. Two days a year are allocated for team training.

How well does the force prevent, identify and investigate corruption?

The force maintains effective security of systems, exhibits and case papers

There is limited analytical, research and intelligence development capacity within the ACU.

Limited proactive work is undertaken to identify trends, risks or vulnerabilities to the force.

The force has taken steps to ensure that organised crime investigations are not compromised by corruption risks and ensures that forthcoming operations are mitigated from the risk of corruption.

What progress has the force made on managing professional and personal relationships with integrity and transparency, since HMIC's December 2012 report?

What progress has the force made in communicating and making sure staff knew about ethical and professional behaviour to all staff, including the new Code of Ethics?

There is a joint vetting unit that complies with the national vetting policy.

How well does the force proactively look for, and effectively challenge and investigate misconduct and unprofessional behaviour?

The rigour of initial assessment of misconduct cases where there is a potential of criminal offences being disclosed is unsatisfactory.

How well does the force prevent, identify and investigate corruption?

The force/constabulary in numbers



Complaints

Total public complaints against officers and staff,
12 months to March 2014

475

Total public complaints against officers and staff,
12 months to March 2014, per 100 workforce

17.6

Total public complaints against officers and staff,
per 100 workforce – **England and Wales**

15.7



Conduct

Total conduct cases against officers and staff,
12 months to March 2014

42

Total conduct cases against officers and staff,
12 months to March 2014, per 100 workforce

1.6

Total conduct cases against officers and staff,
per 100 workforce – **England and Wales**

2.6



Business interests

Applications in 12 months
to March 2014

172

Approvals in 12 months
to March 2014

169



Resources

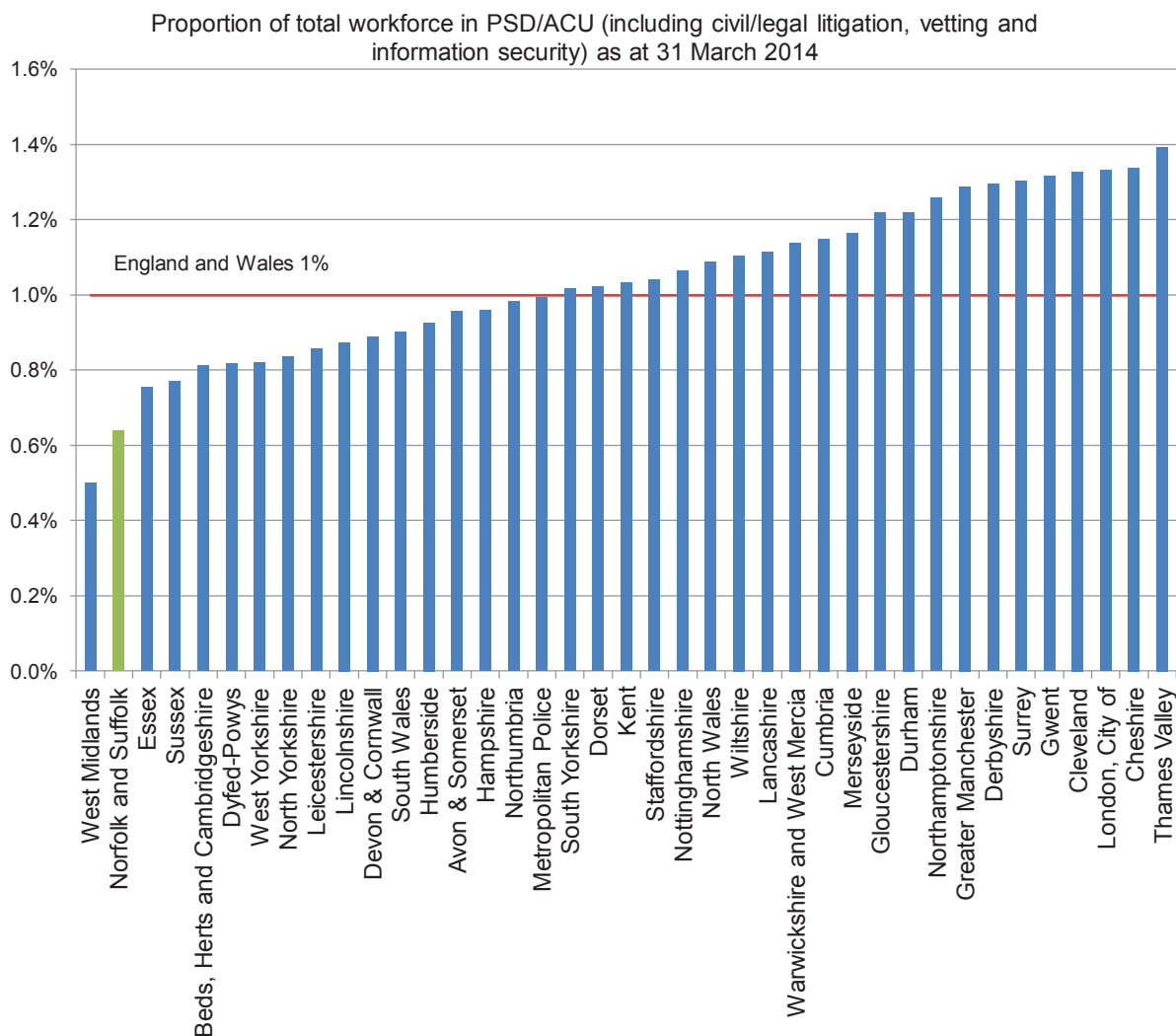
Proportion of workforce in
PSD/ACU

0.6%

Proportion of workforce in
PSD/ACU
– England and Wales

1.0%

Information above is sourced from data collections returned by forces, and therefore may not fully reconcile with inspection findings as detailed in the body of the report.



The chart above is only indicative of the proportion of force’s workforce that worked in professional standards or anti-corruption roles as at the 31 March 2014. The proportion includes civil/legal litigation, vetting and information security. Some forces share these roles with staff being employed in one force to undertake the work of another force. For these forces it can give the appearance of a large proportion in the force conducting the work and a small proportion in the force having the work conducted for them.

Introduction

During HMIC's review of police relationships, published in 2011 as *Without fear or favour*¹, we did not find evidence to support previous concerns that inappropriate police relationships represented endemic failings in police integrity. However, HMIC did not give the police service a clean bill of health. We found that few forces were actively aware of, or were managing, issues of police integrity. We also found a wide variation across the service in the levels of understanding of the boundaries in police relationships with others, including the media. Similarly, we found wide variation across the service in the use of checking mechanisms, and governance and oversight of police relationships.

During HMIC's 2012 progress report, *Revisiting police relationships*² we found that, while forces had made some progress, particularly with regard to the implementation of processes and policies to manage threats to integrity, more needed to be done. The pace of change also needed to increase, not least to demonstrate to the public that the police service was serious about managing integrity issues.

This inspection focuses on the arrangements in place to ensure those working in police forces act with integrity. Specifically, we looked at four principal areas:

- (1) What progress has been made on managing professional and personal relationships since our revisit in 2012?
- (2) What progress has the force made in communicating and embedding ethical and professional behaviour to all staff?
- (3) How well does the force proactively look for and effectively challenge and investigate misconduct and unprofessional behaviour?
- (4) How well does the force prevent, identify and investigate corruption?

In May 2014, the College of Policing published a Code of Ethics for the police service.³ As our inspections in forces started in early June 2014, it is unrealistic to expect that, at the time of the inspection, forces would have developed a full, comprehensive plan to embed the code into policies and procedures. We acknowledge that this is work in progress for forces and our inspection examined whether they had started to develop those plans.

A national report on police integrity and corruption will be available at www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/ in early 2015.

1 *Without fear or favour: A review of police relationships*, HMIC, 13 December 2011. Available at www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/media/a-review-of-police-relationships-20111213.pdf

2 *Revisiting police relationships: A progress report* HMIC, published 18 December 2012. Available at <http://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/media/revisiting-police-relationships.pdf>

3 *Code of Ethics - A Code of Practice for the Principles and Standards of Professional Behaviour for the Policing Profession of England and Wales*, College of Policing, July 2014. Available at <http://www.college.police.uk>.

What progress has the force made on managing professional and personal relationships with integrity and transparency since HMIC's December 2012 report?

HMIC highlighted one area for improvement for Norfolk Constabulary from the 2012 inspection report:

- The force was required to introduce a process for cross-checking contract and procurement registers with gifts and hospitality register in order to ensure the integrity of the procurement process.

With respect to this issue, the force developed a process whereby the anti-corruption unit (ACU) monitor and review the procurement and the gifts and hospitality register to ensure the integrity of the procurement process.

The force has made good progress with this area for improvement.

What progress has the force made in communicating and embedding ethical and professional behaviour to all staff, including the new Code of Ethics?

Leadership and governance

The chief constable has demonstrated clear leadership in his determination to ensure that police officers and staff act ethically and professionally at all times. He has led a comprehensive programme of roadshows promoting strong messages about the importance of ethical policing. A large number of police officers and police staff have met the chief constable personally, either as part of the roadshow programme or through his regular station visits. This accessibility and visibility is highly appreciated by staff. The chief constable wrote a joint letter with his counterpart in Suffolk Constabulary to introduce the 'what you need to know' guide. This sets out advice and guidance on integrity and professional conduct.

The messages given by the chief constable are reinforced by the Suffolk deputy chief constable (DCC) who chairs the joint Norfolk and Suffolk integrity working group.

Officers and staff in Norfolk Constabulary are fully aware of the boundaries between unprofessional and professional behaviour and understand how poor standards affect both the public and their colleagues. The DCC has produced a video podcast that has been delivered to staff within a team environment to encourage discussion and improve understanding. The distribution of the 'what you need to know' guide gives clear guidance personally to staff in the form of a booklet that they can keep, and represents good practice.

Senior leaders recognise the critical importance of supervisors and middle managers in creating the right climate. A local policing area commander delivered a two-hour presentation on ethics and integrity to inspectors as well as a substantial number of other supervisors.

Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies collaborate across a range of support services. As services are joined up and policies and guidance are updated, the opportunity is taken to update references to ethical and professional behaviour. Policies in respect of business interests, information security and social media use have all been updated recently.

Most managers and first-line supervisors in Norfolk Constabulary lead by example and demonstrate their personal commitment to ethical behaviour. Some officers who are newly or temporarily promoted to the rank of sergeant find it difficult to challenge inappropriate behaviours. The force has a performance improvement unit that could support less-confident supervisors to challenge performance, but officers are not always making use of it.

Unethical and unprofessional behaviour is appropriately challenged across the force and staff feel confident in doing so thanks to a supportive culture and environment in this regard. Staff report to both supervisors and anonymously, and they are confident that when they report wrongdoing they themselves will be supported.

The force has clear plans to ensure the new Code of Ethics is understood and applied. The two chief constables and their respective police and crime commissioners (PCC) have signed up to the Code of Ethics. An integrity working group has been established which is chaired jointly by the DCCs of Norfolk and Suffolk. The group is overseeing the implementation of a comprehensive action plan.

There is a notifiable associations policy outlining the obligation on officers and staff to declare personal associations and relationships, and any changes in circumstances. Notifications are reviewed and acted on appropriately. New staff and supervisors are briefed on notifiable associations and over 80 percent of staff have been trained on the matter through a computer-based learning package.

The national decision-making model (NDM) is in use to varying degrees in the force but not all staff are trained on it and understand its application. There is little evidence that the NDM is being used to support effective decision-making within the PSD.

All staff receive training on ethical and professional behaviour but not always on a regular basis. Staff are expected to undertake the computer-based learning package 'Integrity Matters' and the completion rate is monitored by the force. New recruits, supervisors and some detectives have been trained by the PSD. The force does not have a way of testing how effective its training has been, although the new head of training has plans for this.

Chief officers provide sufficient information to the PCC to enable him to understand any integrity issues (including misconduct and unprofessional behaviour).

Chief officers routinely monitor integrity issues (including misconduct and unprofessional behaviour) although the detail is not sufficient to enable them to understand the issues fully and identify the need for action. We conducted a review of a small number of PSD cases. This included reviewing up to ten randomly selected cases involving serious misconduct or criminal conduct. The aim was to check on timeliness, supervision and appropriateness of decision-making. In Norfolk, HMIC judged that the decisions in six of the investigations were not sufficiently supported by evidence that was readily available in the case file. However, some further evidence to support the decision-making process was subsequently provided. A number of these case files – the most serious ones – were drawn to the attention of the chief officer team during the inspection.

Understanding integrity

Details of occasions where officers and staff were offered gifts or hospitality are recorded in a centrally held register. Entries are made where the gift or hospitality is not accepted. The register is audited regularly and inappropriate entries are challenged or investigated, up to and including chief officers. All acceptances of hospitality must be signed off by the head of the PSD and submitted to the DCC for approval every quarter. There is a good understanding across the force about the issue of accepting or declining hospitality and its implications.

Information regarding applications for authorisation of a business interest are recorded fully in a register held by the ACU. Entries are also made where the application was not authorised. The record is audited regularly. Authorised applications are reviewed at regular intervals for renewal. All applications are signed off by the head of department of the applicant and then forwarded to the ACU where they are risk assessed. The force publishes information on business interests of its staff on its website and this is updated annually.

The force publishes data and information in relation to gifts and hospitality registers for chief officers, gifts to officers and staff (including accepted and rejected offers), expenses of chief officers, senior officers, and police staff equivalent and the register of business interests. This information is found under the freedom of information section of the force website. Some of the information could be better presented, for example, the details relating to chief officer expenses are not clearly titled. Some of the documents could not be accessed and others appeared to be incomplete.

How well does the force proactively look for, and effectively challenge and investigate misconduct and unprofessional behaviour?

Misconduct and unprofessional behaviour

Misconduct and unprofessional behaviour records are generally considered when staff apply for promotion or for transfer to specialist roles, but on occasions this does not happen.

HMIC dip-sampled 25 misconduct files. From this it appears that the force does not routinely review how investigations are assessed, recorded and investigated, or how sanctions are imposed to ensure that all staff, irrespective of rank or role, are treated fairly and equally.

The force has confidential mechanisms in place to enable staff to report wrongdoing. There is a confidential phone line, an encrypted email system and the force is considering introducing an additional confidential reporting mechanism called Bad Apple that other forces use successfully. Not all staff are entirely convinced that the reporting mechanisms are truly anonymous. Norfolk and Suffolk are currently working together to introduce an improved wrongdoing policy which should bolster staff confidence in the confidential reporting mechanisms.

The force responds to reports of wrongdoing by staff and does so in as timely and effective manner as other similar forces. The Police (Conduct) Regulations 2012 are applied consistently with cover from the PSD officer on-call who is able to provide out-of-hours expertise. Evidence from the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) on the timeliness of complaints handling show that in the 12 months ending in March 2014, it took an average of 82 days to resolve cases in Norfolk, compared to the most similar force average of 91 days. This is an improvement on the 110 days recorded for Norfolk for the previous year.

Cases are appropriately referred to the IPCC. All cases are reviewed and the experienced staff within the PSD raise issues where they consider that a referral is required. The force works closely with the IPCC through the joint PSD unit.

Professional standards training and resourcing

Staff in the PSD and the ACU receive training for their role. Two days a year are allocated for team training. Anti-corruption unit staff follow the College of Policing corruption development programme. The detective inspector within the ACU recently attended the detective inspector development programme, which assists the department in its management and direction of investigations.

Succession planning takes place to ensure consistency in the PSD and the ACU. This is a standing item on the senior management team meeting within the PSD, and where necessary, targeted recruitment takes place to identify and attract staff with the right skills and qualifications.

The force acknowledges that the PSD is not currently sufficiently resourced to enable it to take a fully proactive and preventive approach. The force has done some proactive work in respect of sex offences, but this would benefit from being extended. The PSD has good analytical and research support, which could be deployed to more proactive work.

Recommendation

Within six months, the force should ensure the capacity and capability of the PSD and ACU are reviewed so as to meet the level of demand from misconduct and corruption investigations.

Misconduct meetings do not fully comply with police regulations. HMIC informed the force of this and it took immediate action, putting in place a temporary process improvement measure to ensure legal compliance.

The force makes good use of fast-track dismissal where appropriate.

Quality assurance

The force does not audit decisions made at misconduct or unprofessional behaviour hearings. HMIC's dip-sample of files highlighted some elements of poor record-keeping and insufficient information on the rationale for decisions. These files were drawn to the attention of the chief officer team during the inspection.

Of particular concern was the inadequacy of the original assessment of misconduct cases for potential criminal offences. In addition, where criminal interviews were conducted there was little evidence of the criminal matters being reported to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) or of any recorded supervision prior to any misconduct determinations being made.

There appears to be a number of decisions taken to resolve an allegation by using management intervention rather than a proper investigation that could have led to gross misconduct proceedings. HMIC found little evidence of effective record-keeping of the planning of investigations or rationale for the decision-making process. Evidence of an initial severity assessment was rare. There is no audit process in place to provide assurance to chief officers of the integrity of systems and processes and to ensure consistency.

Recommendation

With immediate effect, the force should ensure it has an effective process to monitor and audit the decision-making process and record-keeping for investigations.

The force does not ensure the timeliness and quality of all investigations conducted, in relation to officers and staff, whether they are carried out by the PSD or another department or locally on policing areas. Timescales are sometimes missed and some investigations are delegated to sergeants, which is inappropriate.

The force publishes The Professional Standard, a quarterly bulletin produced and circulated by the PSD, which details various integrity-related issues including lessons learned. However, it is left to officers to read and absorb these lessons and there is currently no mechanism to check that this is being done. The force has developed a complaints reduction strategy using learning derived from the IPCC bulletins.

How well does the force prevent, identify and investigate corruption?

Corruption investigation

Neither the PSD or ACU hold a daily tasking meeting to assess new intelligence or ongoing enquiries, however the ACU holds a two-weekly meeting where new intelligence and ongoing enquiries are assessed.

Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies have a joint vetting unit that complies with the national vetting policy, and identifies corruption risks at the recruitment stage for officers and staff. Vetting is revisited on promotion to senior ranks or postings to sensitive and vulnerable roles.

The force has the capability to monitor force systems and takes proportionate action when appropriate. However, HMIC found little evidence of proactive system monitoring. Only when intelligence reports are received is a decision made on whether they need to be followed up. The force does not carry out monitoring of its social network sites as it does not have the technical means to do so.

The force does not use random or with cause (intelligence-led) drug testing, or intelligence-led integrity testing to identify corruption. HMIC found that no drugs tests, either random or with cause, have been carried out in the last two years and there is no infrastructure to support testing. Chief officers acknowledge that drug testing has been discontinued due to the lack of positive tests and the view that it is an inefficient use of resources.

Recommendation

Within six months, the force should ensure it has a policy on substance misuse and drug testing to identify and deter substance misuse. The force should communicate this to all staff.

The force maintains effective security of systems, exhibits and case papers. There is a standalone computer within the ACU with restricted access to those working within the unit. Good building security with effective audit, property and exhibit management is in place within the PSD.

The force has taken steps to ensure that organised crime investigations are not compromised by corruption risks and ensures that forthcoming operations are mitigated from the risk of corruption.

Intelligence

There is limited analytical, research and intelligence development capacity within the ACU and what does exist is being used to react to and support ongoing investigations. Limited proactive work is therefore undertaken to identify trends, risks or vulnerabilities to the force. Intelligence that is received is assessed by the ACU, and further developed as appropriate and action taken to mitigate the identified risks.

Recommendation

Within six months, the force should ensure that it has the proactive capability to effectively gather, respond and act on information which identifies patterns of unprofessional behaviour and corruption.

Capability

The PSD and ACU have access to the force's specialist team assets, such as the surveillance teams and they have access to additional specialist resources from the region.

Within the PSD and ACU there is limited capacity. The force acknowledges that it mainly reacts to information regarding corruption and takes very few steps to undertake proactive and preventive work. The majority of preventive work is aimed at educating staff rather than uncovering wrongdoing. HMIC is concerned by this acknowledged lack of proactivity in identifying corruption.

Recommendations

- **Within six months, the force should ensure the capacity and capability of the PSD and ACU are reviewed so as to meet the level of demand from misconduct and corruption investigations.**
- **With immediate effect, the force should ensure it has an effective process to monitor and audit the decision-making process and record-keeping for investigations.**
- **Within six months, the force should ensure it has a policy on substance misuse and drug testing to identify and deter substance misuse. The force should communicate this to all staff.**
- **Within six months, the force should ensure that it has the proactive capability to effectively gather, respond and act on information which identifies patterns of unprofessional behaviour and corruption.**