



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

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**Revisiting police
relationships:
progress report**

**Leicestershire 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.

In summer 2012 we reinspected all 44 forces in England and Wales in the same areas as the 2011 inspection. This time, we found:

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 Leicestershire.

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 Leicestershire

Since 2011 Leicestershire Police has conducted an evaluation of its integrity issues, using the Self-Assessment Checklist provided in HMIC's 2011 report, *Without Fear or Favour*. A comprehensive development plan has been produced and progress against the plan has been overseen by a group chaired by the deputy chief constable with representation from key individuals from the force. Several policies covering relationships with the media, gifts and hospitality, social media use, and second jobs are in the process of being reviewed. The force is seeking to ensure that these changes are communicated effectively to staff.

How are press relations handled, and information leaks investigated?

The force was updating its media policy at the time of the inspection. The new policy will reflect the national guidance on relationships with the media produced by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). We found that staff generally knew how they should deal with contact from the media, although they were not always clear about how they should record this.

Between September 2011 and May 2012, the force has investigated two instances of inappropriate disclosures to the media, one of which was continuing at the time of the inspection.

The force has re-emphasised its guidance to staff on how they 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. However the force does not routinely monitor personal accounts of officers and staff to check if these standards are being followed. HMIC's independently commissioned research identified seven cases of potentially inappropriate behaviour on Facebook or Twitter by officers and staff in Leicestershire 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 Leicestershire Police was recording the **gifts and hospitality** received by officers and staff. However, this was on a manual gift and hospitality register, held at force headquarters. The force plans to introduce an electronic register, overseen by the head of the Professional Standards Department (PSD). This will make it much easier to monitor and identify any potential problems at an early stage.

Those bidding for contracts with the force are required to declare any potential conflicts of interest. Monitoring to cross-reference contract and **procurement** registers with the gifts and hospitality register to help 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) is currently limited to those cases where specific concerns have been identified.

Leicestershire Police's policy for **second jobs** requires all requests to be assessed by PSD. This helps ensure consistency and scrutiny of the process. In 2011, we found that Leicestershire Police did not routinely review applications for second jobs once they had been approved. The force's updated policy will require these to be reviewed annually. Since September 2011 there have been 84 applications for second jobs, all but one of which have been approved.

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

We found that the former police authority had arrangements in place to monitor and govern integrity issues. The recently elected PCC will need to be satisfied with the continued 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. The force has instigated 38 investigations between September 2011 and May 2012 into the conduct of its officers and staff in relation to the areas covered by this report. The previous inquiry into a member of the chief officer team that was ongoing at the time of the inspection is not included in these figures because it began before September 2011.

The force has introduced a programme of computer-based training for all staff on information disclosure. This has allowed the force to check that officers and staff understand the policies and guidance. Guidance on use of social media has been widely communicated through the force intranet. The force is developing plans to ensure that staff are made aware of the other changes to policy that will be introduced in the near future.

Next steps

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

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