

## **A report into the effectiveness of integrity arrangements in Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary. May 2025**

Report: [A report into the effectiveness of integrity arrangements in HIOWC](#)

### **Response from: Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Hampshire and Isle of Wight**

As the elected Police and Crime Commissioner, I have a statutory responsibility to ensure the Chief Constable delivers an efficient and effective police service. This includes overseeing how well the Constabulary prevents, detects, and responds to internal misconduct, and whether robust safeguards are in place to protect the public from harm, including abuse of position by officers or staff. The findings in this HMICFRS report are fair. They validate issues I have raised consistently regarding the effectiveness of Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary's vetting and professional standards systems.

### **Key Observations and Concerns**

The report clearly highlights that:

- Vetting delays and backlogs pose a risk to recruitment integrity and undermine public confidence.
- The Professional Standards Department (PSD) has struggled with timeliness and the quality of investigative decision-making.
- There is insufficient oversight of officers who may pose a risk to the organisation's culture and standards.
- Counter-corruption arrangements require urgent strengthening, particularly in relation to proactive intelligence gathering, staff culture, and safeguarding against abuse of position.

I have long believed that the public expects and deserves better, particularly when it comes to the integrity of those entrusted with upholding the law.

### **Recommendations for Improvement**

I fully support HMICFRS's areas for improvement and will work closely with my Chief Constable to ensure their delivery. In particular, I will be monitoring the Constabulary's progress against key areas, including:

- Reducing the vetting backlog and ensuring all officers and staff are vetted in line with national standards.
- Improving timeliness and decision-making in PSD investigations.
- Enhancing the force's counter-corruption strategy, with greater focus on preventing abuse of power, protecting vulnerable people, and identifying early warning signs within the workforce.
- Strengthening leadership accountability and cultural change, so the highest professional standards are embedded throughout the organisation.

### **Our Commitment**

As Police and Crime Commissioner, I take the findings of this report extremely seriously. Public trust in policing depends on robust internal standards, timely accountability, and transparency at every level.

In recent months, I have already taken action to address some of the issues highlighted:

- Additional funding has been allocated to increase staffing in the vetting unit to reduce waiting times, and clear existing backlogs.
- I have challenged the force leadership to accelerate improvements in PSD case handling and to improve transparency in misconduct outcomes.
- I will continue to hold the Chief Constable to account through regular performance reviews and formal scrutiny, with a strong focus on vetting, integrity, and public protection.

One of my core strategic priorities is to maintain the public's trust and confidence in their local police force, this can only be achieved when the systems designed to ensure integrity are functioning effectively. I will not accept anything less than full delivery of these reforms. Our local residents, our communities of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight deserve to be served by a police force they can trust, one that leads by example in fairness, professionalism, and accountability.

**Donna Jones**  
**Police and Crime Commissioner, Hampshire and Isle of Wight**

### **Response from: Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary**

Police integrity and standards of behaviour are essential elements of a successful force and critical to enable a high level of service to the communities of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. Having an effective approach to the recruitment of suitable police staff and officers, managing complaints and misconduct and to identify and respond to potential corruption is vitally important to be able deliver our force priorities; the relentless pursuit of criminals, putting victims first and exceptional local policing.

For Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary (HIOWC) the code of ethics is the cornerstone of our service and our means to create a culture of integrity and honesty. As the HMICFRS inspection report highlights, when serving police officers and police staff are involved in misconduct or carry out criminal acts, it seriously reduces public trust and confidence. On this basis, having independent scrutiny of the HIOWC effectiveness of integrity arrangements is welcome, alongside the opportunity to continuously improve.

### **Vetting**

Within this inspection HIOWC received a "Requires Improvement" grading for the way in which vetting is managed. The Constabulary had already implemented improvements and, at the time of the inspection, introduction of a range of measures to specifically address this matter.

The issues identified were threefold; high demand causing a backlog of some areas of vetting renewals and applications, expired recruitment vetting (RV) and the ability to progress vetting for new recruits (mainly police staff) in a timely manner to meet our ambitious recruitment targets.

To support mitigation of this issue there has been an uplift to the team with an additional 12 staff recruited since September 2024 and a further three being recruited.

A detailed performance framework has been created to test and review performance data and drive activity and outputs. This remains closely scrutinised on a weekly and monthly basis by the Deputy Chief Constable and will remain an ongoing priority piece of work with further improvements directed at productivity and the effectiveness of the force process and systems to optimise performance.

The inspection also identified that there were some designated posts where the management vetting (MV) had expired. The HIOWC management system, Corevet, now proactively reminds officers of their requirement to be re-vetted, this is also built into the PDR app launched force wide in March 2025. As of June 2025, all designated posts within the force have been identified with any outstanding vetting requirement risk being closely managed.

As a part of the vetting process, vetting analysts carry out interviews to clarify written responses in vetting applications to help explore and assess potential risk. The Constabulary is awaiting a nationally agreed vetting questionnaire which will provide standardised questions to allow for more meaningful national and regional analysis, however, interviews for those individuals with identified adverse information continues to occur in a measured and proportionate way.

In addition, there will automatically be an interview when a vetting application is to be refused and where the person has a protected characteristic, unless the rationale is a refusal as per APP (i.e. conviction). The Constabulary also now has a clearer process for the team for levels of decision making and what is expected in terms of a recorded rationale for each decision, including refusals, clearances and appeals. Further training was undertaken by the team in June 2025 to continue to enhance the Constabulary's approach in this area.

One of the key areas to develop is the Constabulary's understanding of disproportionality in vetting arrangements. Due to the limitations of older systems and the fact that it is not mandated for applicants to complete, the Constabulary has been unable to effectively capture protected characteristic data. This gap had been identified prior to the integrity inspection and the Constabulary implemented a new system called Corevet in March 2024, which will enable more detailed insight. Further analysis is ongoing to ensure that the data is both accurate and meaningful.

With the new system now established, the team are working with corporate analysis colleagues to take a more intrusive look into the data to provide greater clarity and understanding of any potential disproportionality within decision making.

### **Upholding the Standards of Professional Behaviour**

Upholding the standards of professional behaviour. The second area of the inspection for upholding the standards of professional behaviour received an "Adequate" grading. This part of the inspection focused on how the force maintains standards, challenges poor behaviour and develops a culture of organisational learning to continuously improve standards of behaviour across the force.

As recognised within the inspection report, the Constabulary has a range of mechanisms it uses to continue to raise standards of behaviour. These include the successful Inclusion Matters training, with over 5,000 completing part 1 and to date over 1,000 completing part 2 and the Code of Ethics e-learning modules, which have been widely completed across all areas of the force.

The Constabulary has recently completed an internal questionnaire which is enabling greater insight into how well staff understand the CoE and how well they think the organisation is implementing it. This is broken down into core thematic areas which are informing the next stages. This all-forms part of a continuous drive on the Code of Ethics to ensure it permeates all parts of the Constabulary.

The Constabulary is also linking into the cultural survey and will be using a self-assessment tool to understand how it is progressing in terms of embedding the actual code of practice. Moving forward this will be informed by good practice from round the country.

More broadly the Constabulary has already initiated a force wide assessment of its approach to organisational learning, recognising a more centralised, cohesive approach is required, with stronger governance and oversight. The proposed organisational learning board mentioned in the report is now close to implementation within the intended timeframe of Summer 2025. This is alongside a range of activities to ensure more effective dissemination of learning and evaluation of how learning is embedded. This work should enable a formal process to check the workforce understands the learning, including when it relates to standards of behaviour.

In addition to this, within the Professional Standards Department there is already a well-established publication called Reputation Matters (with nearly 4,000 views of the April 2025 edition). This is delivered by a specialist PSD Learning Officer and complements a force wide bulletin called Learning Matters with regular information circulated through the Constabulary communications team.

The Constabulary also tracks learning themes from public complaints and through misconduct meetings and gross misconduct hearings. Further work towards ensuring the learning becomes embedded will also form part of the wider organisational learning project.

Whilst the inspection found HIOWC provided a good service to most complainants, the way in which complaints and conduct allegations are managed has been subject to an internal review. The aim is to improve the way in which contact is tracked and to ensure consistency of investigation management.

Overall, the HMICFRS inspection report found the handling and investigation of complaints and conduct matters 'proportionate, consistent and fair.' With 'good standards' of investigation. Disproportionality is also considered thoroughly in this area of business with monthly analysis of areas such as Use of Force and Stop Search and conduct cases to understand if there are any specific learning themes or trends.

### **Tackling Potential Corruption**

The final area of the inspection was regarding the tackling of potential corruption. This area of business was graded as "Adequate". HMICFRS recognised that the Constabulary has many aspects of "Good" in this area and found the standard of investigation to be good in all cases that they examined. However, when reviewing three years of data, they found a small number of examples where concerns of sexual misconduct had not been fully explored.

This had already been addressed prior to the inspection with the implementation of a risk matrix and a Prevent officer role which has had early success and brought improvements to how potential sexual perpetrators are managed. The Constabulary is also reviewing how systems such as Centurion can be utilised to more effectively track and manage these cases.

Since the inspection, the Constabulary has conducted additional scrutiny work and the findings, alongside the integrity inspection report, will be built into an implementation plan with tracked delivery points.

Alongside the improvements identified within this inspection and response, the constabulary has been embedding a range of initiatives following the Angiolini Inquiry recommendations. These work streams will provide future assurance that officers and staff have an improved understanding of offences against women and children, understand the risks and impact of non-contact sexual offences and internally have systems in place to robustly address sexual offences recorded against serving officers and staff. The force has in place a specialist Police Perpetrated Domestic Abuse Team

(PPDA) and more broadly has introduced regular integrity checks through our newly launched PDR App.

Overarching this essential work is the Culture and Legitimacy Strategy published in force in March 2025, this has an ongoing implementation plan and the oversight is provided by an Assistant Chief Constable with a governance framework to ensure this work continues at pace.

**Rob France**  
**Acting Deputy Chief Constable, Hampshire and Isle of Wight**

**Recommendations:**

No recommendations were made in this report, 7 areas for improvement were identified.