National Crime Agency

# NCA Response to His Majesty's Inspectorate of Policing and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Inspections

The DG NCA must respond to reports published by His Majesty's Inspectors of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) relating to their organisation. This instruction is set out in Section 55 of the 1996 Police Act.

## NCA Response

On the 20th June 2023 HMICFRS published a report on 'Vetting and Anti-corruption Part 1: How effective is the National Crime Agency at dealing with corruption?'

This inspection was carried out in two parts, which were to consider how well the NCA tackles the threat of corruption it faces and how well it supports police forces and other law enforcement bodies to tackle the threats of corruption they face. HMICFRS sought to answer the question: how effective is the NCA at dealing with corruption?

In part one of this inspection, HMICFRS examined how well the NCA:

▪ vets its officers (including candidates wishing to become officers);

▪ identifies and prevents potential corruption, and how well it investigates corruption among its officers; and

▪ identifies and prevents improper behaviour by its officers, including gender-based prejudice

HMICFRS found the NCA has a vetting process that completes security clearances beyond the standards set out for government departments by the cabinet office. With sufficient staff in place to manage demand and prevent a backlog of vetting checks. HMICFRS also found that the NCA's Anti-corruption unit investigated to a good standard, using covert tactics when necessary.

We welcome the scrutiny and assessment of our performance as it allows us to focus on areas of improvement. The NCA accepts the following recommendations set out in this report:

- Recommendation 1 By 31 March 2023, the National Crime Agency should include reminders of vetting and anti-corruption policies in the annual appraisal process of all staff.
- Recommendation 2 By 31 December 2022, the National Crime Agency should review the people risk meetings between the integrated protective security department and HR to make sure all relevant information about individuals of concern is shared regularly.
- Recommendation 3 By 31 March 2023, the National Crime Agency should have a process for sharing relevant integrated protective security information with line managers to help manage and mitigate risk.

- Recommendation 4 By 31 December 2022, the National Crime Agency should re-publish its policy to state that all voluntary work, business interests and political activity must be reported to, and approved by, the professional standards unit.
- Recommendation 5 By 31 March 2023, the National Crime Agency should seek legal advice and, if lawful, change its policy to restrict political activity by its staff consistently across all grades and in line with policing.
- Recommendation 6 By 31 December 2022, the National Crime Agency should publicise its potentially compromising individuals policy to all staff to make sure everybody understands their responsibilities for notifying line managers.
- Recommendation 7 By 30 September 2023, the National Crime Agency should make sure that it has IT monitoring capability for all its systems, to effectively protect the information contained within its systems and help it to identify potentially corrupt officers and staff. In the meantime, by 31 December 2022, the National Crime Agency should have IT monitoring for its core systems.
- Recommendation 8 By 31 March 2023, the National Crime Agency should make sure that it has an effective confidential reporting system that is accessible to all staff.
- Recommendation 9 By 31 March 2023, the National Crime Agency should make sure that the option of integrity interventions is available to the anti-corruption unit to use as a tactic.
- Recommendation 10 By 31 December 2022, the National Crime Agency should introduce a peer review process for misconduct panels and use the outcomes of these reviews as continual professional development for the panel chairs.
- Recommendation 11 By 31 March 2023, the National Crime Agency should make sure that the professional standards unit is notified of grievance outcomes and all misconduct matters informally resolved by managers.
- Recommendation 12 By 31 March 2023, the Home Office should work with the National Crime Agency and the College of Policing to amend the Police Barred List and Police Advisory List Regulations 2017 to include the National Crime Agency.
- Recommendation 13 By 31 March 2023, the National Crime Agency should produce accurate data dashboards of the breakdown of its workforce by age, gender, ethnicity, role and location.
- Recommendation 14 By 31 March 2023, the National Crime Agency should define standards of expected behaviour and include a definition of discreditable conduct and the obligation to report, challenge, and act against, improper behaviour.
- Recommendation 15 By 31 March 2023, the National Crime Agency should produce a policy providing clear guidance on acceptable behaviour in the use of encrypted applications such as WhatsApp on mobile phones, for operational and non-operational purposes.

- Recommendation 16 By 31 December 2022, the National Crime Agency should publish anonymised details of misconduct case findings.
- Recommendation 17 By 30 June 2023, the training given to panel chairs should include the director general (or delegate) setting out their expectations of the misconduct process. This input must be provided retrospectively to those panel chairs who have already attended the training course.
- Recommendation 18 By 30 September 2023, the National Crime Agency must provide training for all officers and staff, clearly setting out standards of behaviour expected from them. This should include:
    - guidance for leaders on their role in applying those standards;
    - the grievance procedure; and
    - the process for reporting misconduct or suspected corruption.
- Recommendation 19 By 31 December 2022, the National Crime Agency should adopt our definition of prejudicial and improper behaviour or an alternative of its own

NCA Director General Response:

In response NCA Director General, Graeme Biggar said:

*"The NCA understands the importance of personnel security and has changed its structure to better meet the threat of infiltration or external penetration. We have plans and funding approved to improve its proactive investigation of corruption threats.*

*I welcome the findings contained in this report and I am particularly encouraged by the review of the work conducted within the IPS department, highlighting the strong sense of purpose in the team and a commitment to tackle corruption and improper behaviour. We support the recommendations made and have already taken action to set consistent standards both in the agency's policies and strategies but also in the decisions and the signals they send to the agency's officers and staff.*

*The NCA has increased the diversity of its workforce and has committed to increasing it further. It understands the importance of diversity in decision-making and a positive culture. We have set clear and ambitious targets to make each grade and role representative and eliminate places where women and people from minority backgrounds don't feel comfortable working.*

*I look forward to continuing to engage closely with HMICFRS as we assess the impact of the changes made in relation to Culture and Diversity and how effectively the National Crime Agency dealing with corruption.*

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