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 30th April 2024 HMICFRS published a report on 'Vetting and Anti-corruption Part 2: 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 2 of this inspection, HMICFRS examined how well the NCA:

▪ helps police forces and other law enforcement bodies to identify corruption; and

▪ works with them to tackle it.

HMICFRS found that the NCA's anti-corruption unit (ACU) investigates to a good standard and uses covert tactics when necessary. The inspection also found the NCA works well with police forces and other law enforcement agencies to help them identify and investigate corruption. When the NCA implements the outstanding recommendations from part 1 of this inspection, demand on the ACU will increase. This may mean that the NCA won't be able to give forces the same level of support in future, without an increase in its resources and an improvement in prioritising or allocating of demand on ACU. The NCA accepts the following recommendations as a means to continue to provide the level of support we currently undertake:

- Recommendation 1 With immediate effect, the National Crime Agency should develop and implement an effective process for prioritising and allocating work for the cases its anti-corruption unit adopts.
- Recommendation 2 By 30 June 2024, the National Crime Agency should review resource levels in the anti-corruption and professional standards units, to make sure that they can meet the projected increase in demand for their services.
- Recommendation 3 With immediate effect, the National Crime Agency should make sure that its national and internal strategic threat assessments are used to allocate resources within its anti-corruption unit.
- Recommendation 4 By 30 June 2024, chief constables should make sure they tell the National Crime Agency the outcome of investigations into suspicious activity reports

relating to their force's personnel. The National Crime Agency should include a summary of this information in its annual national strategic threat assessment, The Threat to UK Law Enforcement from Corruption.

- Recommendation 5 By 30 September 2024, the Home Office, working with the National Crime Agency, the National Police Chiefs' Council and the Independent Office for Police Conduct, should examine the feasibility of establishing a national co-ordination centre for intelligence relating to corruption in police forces and other law enforcement agencies.

NCA Director General Response:

In response NCA Director General, Graeme Biggar said:

"Part two of the HMICFRS report highlights positive findings in the agency's Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU) and intelligence command. It also outlines positive feedback from police forces and other law enforcement agencies on how effectively the NCA supports them to identify and deal with corruption.

I acknowledge that the report identified some areas of improvement and although we have accepted the five recommendations made, two recommendations will require the co-operation of UK law enforcement to discharge these successfully. I also recognise that the recommendations would need the consent and co-operation of NPCC forces and implementation of decisions made would require considerable growth in the NCA anti-corruption capability.

Following the implementation of some of the recommendations made to the agency during the first part of this inspection, demand on the ACU has increased and an effective process for prioritising the workload within the ACU is necessary. This will allow the ACU to prioritise workload based on risk, effectively record unmet demand and assess the future resourcing needs within the department for future business planning purposes. Work is underway to implement a process to score intelligence in line with the national strategic threat assessment and NCA priorities to prioritise work by assessing the threat, harm and risk. This prioritisation will assess both NCA and partner agency corruption matters to ensure we have capacity to respond to partner requests.

The agency agrees that an improved process for gathering investigative outcomes from suspicious activity reports (SAR's) would assist in developing a better understanding of the scale of corruption, whilst establishing a national coordination centre would assist in dealing with corruption. In order to gather the results of disseminated SARS we would require the assistance of UK LEA.

Whilst establishing a national coordination centre would assist in dealing with corruption within police forces and other law enforcement agencies, it is recognised that this would require considerable investment from key stakeholders in a time of significant financial

pressure. We are however committed to engaging with the relevant partner agencies in order to explore how we can assist in improving the national approach to corruption in police forces and other law enforcement agencies.

In conclusion, I welcome the very positive assessment of our anti-corruption capability, and accept the recommendations. The NCA is working to address the points raised in the report and is currently implementing action plans to address the recommendations whilst continuing to implement the outstanding actions from the initial HMICFRS report into our vetting and anti-corruption capabilities.