

# Have you got what it takes?

**Working with Her Majesty's Inspectorate  
of Constabulary (HMIC)**

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### Important facts

HMIC is charged in law with inspecting the police service in England and Wales, including the British Transport Police; the Serious Organised Crime Agency; Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs; the Police Service of Northern Ireland; the Civil Nuclear Constabulary; and the Ministry of Defence Police and Guarding Agency. The inspectorate ensures forces and other enforcement agencies achieve certain standards, share good practice, continuously improve their performance, and engage and reassure the public.

HMIC's specific remit includes:

- **inspecting issues of national interest, such as police integrity and public order, and communicating the findings;**
- **reporting on the efficiency of the police, and making the findings available to the public and, in time, police and crime commissioners;**
- **escalating serious performance concerns to police and crime commissioners (PCCs) and Ministers, and advising the Home Secretary on the performance of individual forces and thematic issues;**
- **providing a check and balance in the system of policing and public accountability;**
- **undertaking thematic inspections and commissions;**
- **developing a programme of joint inspections with other bodies – in particular the Criminal Justice Inspectorates – focusing on cross-cutting issues such as protecting vulnerable people;**
- **inspecting, by invitation, the police forces in Jersey, Guernsey, the Isle of Man and Gibraltar; and**
- **providing their professional judgement on a PCC's decision to dismiss a chief constable, if requested by a police and crime panel to do so.**

### Background

#### Risk-based Inspection

A large proportion of HMIC's work will continue to involve inspecting and reporting on the forces in England and Wales. However, HMIC will now adopt a risk-based approach in that they will monitor forces, but will only inspect if:

- **commissioned to do so by the Home Secretary, either specifically or through approval of an HMIC inspection programme; or**
- **commissioned to do so by a PCC (from November 2012).**

#### Reporting directly to Parliament

The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 introduced two specific requirements for HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary (HMCIC) to report directly to Parliament:

- **the Chief Inspector must submit a 'state of the nation' report to Parliament, which includes the HMCIC's assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of policing in England and Wales. HMIC designated their Adapting to Austerity report as their 'state of the nation' report for 2011/12;**

- **the Chief Inspector must lay before Parliament a copy of each inspection programme or inspection framework.**

The clear message of these new requirements is that HMIC now reports directly to Parliament and the public, making HMIC more accountable to the public.

#### Monitoring force performance

The inspectorate will play a critical role in the new landscape as an independent regulator of the service.

All HMIC work will be made public (subject to national security and personal safety considerations), providing an independent view of the effectiveness of the local police force. HMIC will be subject to the Freedom of Information Act.

HMIC is moving towards a risk-based model of inspection activity that entails

- **scrutinising the actual performance of a police force;**
- **evaluating the leadership of a given police force;**
- **evaluating how well a force sets a strategic direction, as well as clear priorities; and**

- **ensuring that a force considers value for money and its related impact on productivity.**

Further detail can be found in the inspectorate's 2012–13 Business Plan.

HMIC produces a number of thematic reports highlighting national issues and making recommendations, such as [Without fear or favour: A review of police relationships](#) (December 2011), which the Home Secretary commissioned following the phone hacking allegations.

HMIC also produces annual value for money profiles based on data collected by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountants, together with workforce and output data. These profiles enable comparisons between forces and may be used as a basis for discussion between Inspectors and forces. The underlying data for value for money profiles is published by HMIC on their [Police and Crime Comparator](#), which is accessed via [police.uk](http://police.uk) or by visiting HMIC's website.

HMIC has worked with the Home Office and National Policing Improvement Agency to make their comparative force information publicly available via the [police.uk](http://police.uk) website. The website integrates local and force-level information and force-level crime data with data on cutting crime, which is the Home Secretary's single objective for the service. Transparency of all policing information – opening up decision making, the process through which policing is delivered, and the resulting outcomes – is the linchpin to ensuring success in the new policing accountability framework

### **What if local accountability fails?**

HMIC will continue to monitor forces and will escalate serious concerns about force performance to Ministers. The Home Secretary retains backstop powers to direct a PCC to take action if the PCC or the force is failing to carry out their functions. These powers will only be used under extreme circumstances, where not doing so would endanger national security or public safety in the police area. This will be on a case-by-case basis, as a last resort.

### **Reform of the Inspectorate**

Key to our wide reform objective of making the police service more accountable to the public and less answerable to Whitehall is ensuring that Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary is more robustly independent both of central government and the police service. In the new world of PCCs, it is essential that HMIC's role is increasingly focused on informing the public. By shining a light on a broad range of strategic and national policing outcomes, HMIC will help the public make informed judgments on how well their force is performing in relation to local priorities and national obligations .

The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 strengthened the inspectorate as a policing body independent of both the government, and the police and now accountable to the public and to Parliament. New powers in the Act mean that HMIC is more robustly independent and acts in the public interest. These powers include:

- **powers of entry;**
- **powers of direct access to information; and**
- **powers to be commissioned by the PCC to look into specific areas.**