



**Home Office**

BUILDING A SAFE, JUST  
AND TOLERANT SOCIETY

# Police Corruption in England and Wales: An assessment of current evidence

Joel Miller

Home Office Online Report 11/03

The views expressed in this report are those of the authors, not necessarily those of the Home Office (nor do they reflect Government policy).

**MOD200008578**

## Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the professional standards staff from the eight forces and the National Crime Squad who assisted with this research. Thanks also to members of the ACPO Counter Corruption Advisory Group and ACPO Professional Standards Committee for their support and assistance in the conduct of the project.

Nick Bland, formerly of RDS, also deserves acknowledgement for his input during the early stages of this project.

### The author

Joel Miller is a former member of the Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate (RDS).

RDS would like to thank Professor Tim Newburn of Goldsmiths College, University of London, and Professor Maurice Punch of the London School of Economics who have acted as independent academic assessors for this study.

# Summary

## Background

This research assesses current evidence on police corruption in England and Wales and considers approaches for forces to tackle the problem. Specifically, it was aimed at providing some answers to the following questions:

- what is the nature of contemporary police corruption?
- what are its causes and origins?
- what good practice can be learned from forces' experiences of investigating corruption?
- what should forces be doing to prevent corruption?

It was carried out through visits to professional standards units (PSUs) in eight forces and the National Crime Squad. PSUs proactively cultivate and analyse information or 'intelligence' on unethical police activity from a range of sources (e.g. police colleagues, informants, the public, other agencies, audits, and surveillance) and mount formal investigations into suspects identified. The research principally involved interviews with PSU staff and some supplementary statistics.

## Contemporary police corruption

### General features

It is difficult to assess the extent of corruption using PSU intelligence. This is partly because intelligence is unlikely to provide a full picture of the problem. It is also because some people will be identified as potential corruption 'suspects' as a result of misleading information. A direct measure of police corruption is not therefore possible. However, intelligence over a one year period from some forces involved in the study indicated that between about half and one per cent of police staff (both officers and civilians) were potentially (though not necessarily) corrupt.

The intelligence picture of corruption across forces covers a range of other activities, for example, police staff:

- leaking information to those outside the force (an activity dominating the intelligence picture);
- using their power to obtain money or sexual favours from members of the public (e.g. from prostitutes);
- conspiring with criminals in the committing of crimes;
- carrying out thefts during raids; and
- using their position within the organisation to undermine proceedings against criminals.

It is notable that other police criminality and misconduct is also identified by PSU intelligence across forces including, for example:

- dealing and using drugs;
- fraud;
- theft;
- domestic violence; and
- spurious claims of illness to get sick-leave.

Those involved in corruption include support staff as well as police officers, and they can be found across ranks.

### Organisation

Contemporary corruption can be divided into two main forms on the basis of PSU intelligence:

- **Individual corruption** – This apparently more common form of corruption involves members of police staff engaged in corrupt activities in isolation from colleagues. It is found across a range of forces types, whether large or small, urban or rural. It is found across staff types (whether detectives, uniformed officers or support staff). This form of corruption is dominated by the leaking of police information, with corrupt contacts often originating in social networks outside of work.
- **Internally-networked corruption** – This appears to be less common. While there are occasional examples from across a range of policing environments, current intelligence suggests it is relatively rare outside of London. It is closest to a traditional image of corruption and typically involves detectives in CID departments or specialist squads operating together. It often involves corrupt relationships between detectives and their informants, and has been associated with a range of different corrupt activities.

## Information compromise

Information compromise, the single most common type of corrupt activity according to PSU intelligence, can involve information from a range of police sources, including databases, files or documents, and word-of-mouth. Forms of compromise include obtaining information for personal purposes, passing information to friends and associates, leaks to the media, and deliberate leaks to criminals.

Leaked information can find its way to criminals even where this is not deliberately intended. In some cases, it is passed to associates, such as relatives, friends, social acquaintances or even ex-police colleagues, who, in turn, pass this information on to criminals. These types of arrangements apparently allow some criminals to network their way indirectly into police circles to obtain police information.

PSU staff gave examples of where information compromise had apparently had adverse implications for the police and public. They included the failure of police operations and ability of criminals to evade detection. In some instances, this appeared to involve the waste of significant resources.

## Origins of corruption

The research finds strong evidence that corruption has its roots in both work and non-work contexts.

Work factors include:

- **Professional attitudes/behaviour** – While no factors reliably predicted corruption, there were examples of staff with complaints histories, police staff who appeared demoralised with the job, and, by contrast, officers who displayed apparently high-levels of performance.
- **Opportunities for corruption** – These included: easy access to information, inadequate supervision, relationships with informants, other relationships formed with criminals, and the specific targeting of police staff by organised crime.
- **Organisational culture/values** – These included: poor security awareness, an emphasis on high performance, and protection of corrupt staff by police colleagues.

Non-work factors include:

- **Domestic/personal problems** – Problems with relationships, alcohol or drugs, or finance could provide a backdrop to their involvement in corruption. However, this was not always the case.
- **Social networks with criminals** – Whether connections with criminals were direct or indirect, these networks are an important basis for corruption. This could involve longstanding relationships (e.g. old friends or relatives) or acquaintances made in leisure environments, such as gyms, pubs and clubs. Again, these can provide a basis for the targeting of police staff by organised crime.

## Investigation

The investigation of corruption was seen by PSU staff as different from conventional investigations. In part, this was because achieving convictions of police officers appeared particularly difficult. Further challenges include the demoralisation of forces and bad publicity as a result of investigations, hostility towards PSU staff by force colleagues, and the resource-intensive nature of PSU investigations.

Ideas for good practice in investigations were identified, including:

- The successful use of discipline procedures or 'disruption' tactics can, in some cases, be achieved more realistically and with fewer resources than convictions. These approaches might be used where the corruption is less serious, or where it may be difficult to achieve convictions. Efficient investigations might also involve focusing resources primarily on those most seriously involved in corruption.
- Decision-making around investigations should ideally be strategic, taking into account organisational risks, public risks, requirements for justice, prospects of success, and resource implications.
- Media strategies accompanying investigations might be used to minimise negative publicity.

The research was also able to identify some broader lessons for the management of PSUs, including:

- Positive marketing of PSUs within forces should be carried out to create a genuine deterrent while fostering co-operation and confidence within the force.
- PSUs need to consider ways of attracting the best investigators, and of looking after staff when they return to more conventional policing roles.
- Lessons learned from PSU investigations should, ideally, be fed back into force prevention efforts.
- Forces would benefit from the development of larger professional standards structures at a regional or national level, though such structures might best complement, rather than replace, force-level PSUs.
- It will be important, over the longer-term, to evaluate the impact of PSUs on corruption.

## Prevention

Drawing on existing literature and the findings of this research, recommendations for all forces include the following:

- Forces need to promote an ethical culture in the organisation, through leadership, encompassing all police staff roles (e.g. detective, uniform, support staff). This should involve educating staff about the risks that they face both inside and outside work.
- Management and supervision should be strengthened across police organisations and should be directed at both low and high performers. High-risk roles, which should be subject to particularly strong supervision, should be taken to include administrative and support roles as well as police officers at the 'sharp-end'.
- Policies for vetting staff at the recruitment stage and for high-risk posts should be implemented. In doing so, it is important to consider that a range of roles, including administrative and support staff posts, may be high-risk.
- Policies should be implemented to ensure a fair, transparent system of postings and regular turnover of staff within posts.

- Information security should be placed at the centre of prevention efforts. This should involve IT and physical security policies and the promotion of a 'need-to-know' culture.
- A wide range of data should be collected to monitor the 'ethical health' of police forces. Ideally, this process could be carried out at a central point, and could then be used to identify risks and problems within the organisation.
- Policies to ensure accountability in a range of areas, including expenses, crime recording and staff business interests, should be fully implemented.
- Forces should establish or continue to resource existing PSUs to combat existing corruption and to provide a deterrent for the development of future corruption. The work of PSUs should be evaluated to ensure their efficient and effective operation.

# Contents

	<b>Page</b>
Acknowledgements	i
Summary	ii
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
Aims of the research	1
Defining police corruption	1
Methodology	2
The report	5
<b>2. Contemporary police corruption</b>	<b>6</b>
Traditional images of corruption	6
General features of contemporary corruption	6
The organisation of contemporary corruption	9
Information compromise	13
Summary	16
<b>3. Origins of corruption</b>	<b>18</b>
General observations	18
Work factors	19
Non-work factors	22
Summary	24
<b>4. Investigation</b>	<b>25</b>
The impact of proactive investigation on police corruption	25
Challenges for corruption investigation	26
Lessons for corruption investigation	28
Lessons for the management of PSUs	32
Summary	33
<b>5. Prevention</b>	<b>35</b>
Existing interventions	35
Targeting prevention strategies at contemporary corruption	37
Summary	39
<b>6. Conclusions and recommendations</b>	<b>41</b>
Recommendations	41
References	44
Appendix: A typology of police corruption	46

## List of boxes

<b>Box No.</b>	<b>Caption</b>	<b>Page</b>
1.	Examples of individual corruption	10
2.	Internally-networked corruption within the South East Regional Crime Squad in the early 1990s	12
3.	Examples of domestic problems in the lives of corrupt police staff	22
4.	'Policing by Example' – West Midlands Police's strategy for tackling corruption	35



## List of figures

<b>Figure No.</b>	<b>Caption</b>	<b>Page</b>
1.	Organisation of intelligence cell and operational teams in PSUs	3
2.	Information links between individual police staff and criminals through intermediaries	14
3.	Proposed information networks that can exist around criminals	15
4.	Corrupting influences on members of police staff	18

## List of tables

<b>Table No.</b>	<b>Caption</b>	<b>Page</b>
1.	Descriptions of unethical behaviour in the police service used in this research	2
2.	Types of information used in the research and their limitations	4
3.	Staff interviewed within PSUs	5
4.	Breakdown of reports of unethical police activity received by intelligence cell in one force PSU during 2000	7
5.	Staff implicated in reports received by intelligence cell in one force PSU during 2000	9
6.	Key factors which are, in some cases, associated with contemporary police corruption	19
7.	Individuals convicted, charged, or suspended pending investigation for corruption-related offences, MPS January 1998 to June 2001	26
8.	Strategic decision-making in proactive internal investigations	31
9.	Existing corruption prevention measures and the emphasis given by this research	40
10.	Types and dimensions of police corruption	46

# 1. Introduction

In the late 1990s, a number of scandals placed the issue of police corruption in the spotlight. Yet, in historical terms such scandals are far from unique. The history of British policing has included many high profile examples of serious malpractice, including the concealment of serious crimes, bribery and the fabrication and planting of evidence (Newburn, 1999). In 1970s London, scandals revolved around police involvement with and payments from organised crime, notably involving the Obscene Publications Squad and the Drugs Squad (Punch, 2000). Other scandals dating back to the 1970s and 1980s have focused on miscarriages of justice involving the Birmingham Six, the Guildford Four, the Carl Bridgewater affair, and the activities of the West Midlands Serious Crime Squad which involved the beating of suspects, tampering with confessional evidence and perjury (Newburn, 1999). With recent cases investigated by the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and other forces, attention has been drawn again to officers, often in specialist squads, profiting from their position, for example, through the theft of money, the resale of seized drugs and the protection of criminals.

An increasing recognition by the police service of the endemic nature of police corruption has led to important developments in England and Wales in recent years. The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) established a Presidential Task Force on Corruption which first met in September 1998 to develop good practice guidance on preventing police corruption.<sup>1</sup> An inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) exploring issues of integrity, including corruption, was published in June 1999 which made a number of recommendations to improve integrity within police forces (HMIC, 1999). And at a force level, concerns about corruption and other professional standards issues have led to the establishment of 'professional standards units' within a substantial number of police forces across England and Wales<sup>2</sup>, which are dedicated to identifying and investigating corruption, criminality or misconduct among police staff.

## Aims of the research

This research aims to assess current evidence on police corruption within England and Wales and to provide lessons to forces in their efforts to address it. Specifically, it seeks some answers to the following questions:

- what is the nature of contemporary police corruption?
- what are its causes and origins?
- what good practice can be learned from forces' experiences of investigating corruption?
- what should forces be doing to prevent corruption?

## Defining police corruption

In practice, police corruption is difficult to define (Punch, 2000; Newburn, 1999). Roebuck and Barker (1974), who provide one of the most well-known typologies of corruption (see Appendix for details), employ a very broad definition which covers the range of 'deviant, dishonest, improper, unethical or criminal behaviour by a police officer'. By contrast, James Q. Wilson (1963) distinguishes between, on the one hand, corrupt activities (such as accepting bribes) and, on the other, criminal activities which are not seen as corrupt (such as burglary on duty). Newburn, in his review of the research evidence, concludes it is largely impossible to define the essential characteristics of corruption. Importantly, he points out that an act may be seen as corrupt depending variously on the means, ends or motivation associated with the conduct.

This research takes a narrower rather than wider view of corruption that is concerned with activities by police officers and support staff that involves a 'corrupter' and/or an abuse of position. It is seen as being within a spectrum of unethical behaviour, along with criminality and misconduct which may or may not be corrupt (see Punch, 2000). In practice, there is likely to be some overlap between these

---

<sup>1</sup> More recently, this portfolio has passed to the ACPO Professional Standards Committee.

<sup>2</sup> An ACPO survey in January 2001 found that, of 37 forces who responded to a questionnaire, 17 had a professional standards unit as part of their complaints and discipline structure.

categories. Table 1 sets out this typology, providing descriptions of corruption and other forms of unethical behaviour.

*Table 1: Descriptions of unethical behaviour in the police service used in this research*

<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>
<i>Corruption</i>	This involves a direct abuse of position in a relationship of implicit or explicit exchange with others, inside or outside the police organisation. It follows the common idea of corrupt police staff doing, or not doing, something for an external or internal 'corrupter' for some kind of gain (though not necessarily financial). It will also be taken to include the breaking of rules and laws by police staff in order to achieve results.
<i>Other forms of police criminality</i>	This involves breaking the law, but does not involve an exchange with a 'corrupter' or abuse of position as described above. This might include drug use, drug dealing, theft, or burglary. It also tends to involve the activities of police officers off duty.
<i>Misconduct/ disciplinary offences</i>	Where police staff break their own internal rules and procedures (e.g. report sick when they are healthy or misrepresent their expenses or overtime claims).

## Methodology

Obtaining direct information on police corruption is, in practice, difficult. Many standard research methods, such as the use of surveys or interviews with those directly involved in an activity, are simply not applicable. Corruption tends to be a secretive activity which participants typically hide. Indeed, the experience of forces involved in this study suggest that even those who had been exposed as corrupt have very often continued to deny their activities.

### Use of professional standards units

The recent establishment of professional standards units (PSUs)<sup>3</sup> within a number of police forces provided a different kind of opportunity to explore corruption. In identifying and investigating corruption, criminality or misconduct, PSUs use a different (and complementary) approach to traditional complaints and discipline departments. While the latter reactively investigate formal complaints made against police officers, PSUs proactively cultivate and analyse information or 'intelligence' on unethical police activity from a range of sources, and mount formal investigations into suspects thereby identified. Typically, this will happen in the absence of any formal complaint.

PSUs are divided, crudely, into an intelligence cell, and one or more operational teams. The intelligence cell is staffed by one or more analysts who manage a central database where information is gathered and cross-referenced, and problems and suspects identified through analysis. PSUs then mount formal investigations into specific individuals using operational teams of investigators. The organisation of a PSU around these two elements is illustrated in Figure 1.

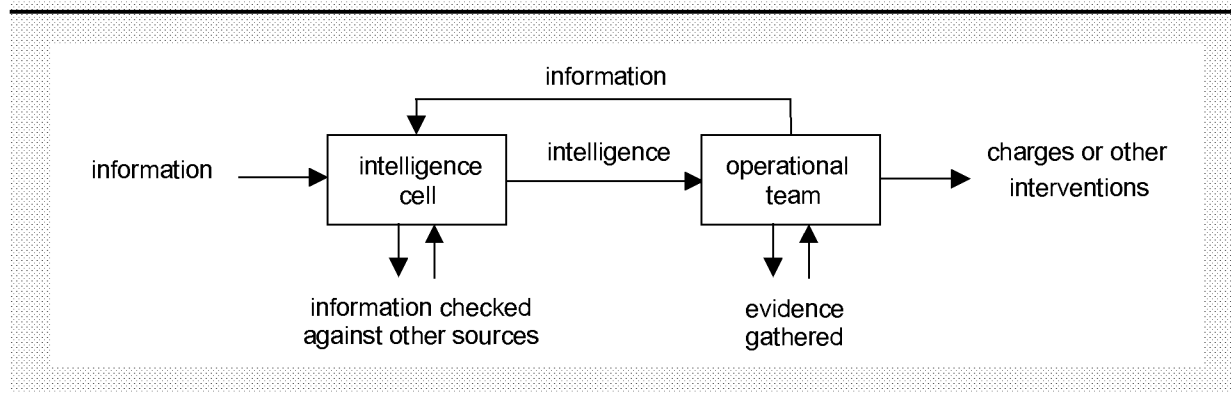
In order to generate intelligence, and to gather more formal and legally admissible evidence as part of an investigation, PSUs make use of information from a range of sources. Sometimes information is referred to the police by these sources; in other cases it may be requested or collected by PSUs. Key sources include:

- police colleagues;
- criminal informants;

<sup>3</sup> Some forces had other names for equivalent units. For convenience, however, all are referred to here as PSUs.

- members of the public;
- other agencies;
- audits or checks on internal information systems;
- surveillance and intercepts; and
- by-products of other criminal or PSU investigations.

Figure 1: Organisation of intelligence cell and operational teams in PSUs



To utilise the knowledge generated within PSUs, research visits were made to PSUs within eight forces and the National Crime Squad (NCS) between November 2000 and May 2001.

### Information sources for the research

The main research information obtained from PSU visits arose from interviews with the following types of PSU staff:

- **Investigators** – Discussions with investigators provided detailed descriptions of examples of corruption and unethical activity that had been examined or investigated, a perspective on the general intelligence picture generated within PSUs, and important insights into the investigation and prevention of corruption.
- **Intelligence analysts** – This involved a detailed discussion of the intelligence on corruption and unethical activity, important in building up a general picture of the problem.
- **Other professional standards staff** – Certain other staff within or associated with PSUs who had some involvement in professional standards work added further to the information obtained from analysts and investigators.

Additionally, a limited amount of statistical data, and some case papers were made available to supplement the information provided within interviews. However, because of the sensitive and confidential nature of the work of PSUs, researchers were not granted direct access to intelligence databases or live case files (which were, in practice, most of the cases).

The range of information used in the research is summarised in Table 2. This table also outlines some factors to be considered when interpreting the data. A key consideration is that the current intelligence picture of corruption is likely to be only a partial one, and one which is still emerging given that PSUs are still in their early stages of development. It is important, too, to note some limitations in relying primarily on the observations and reflections of PSU staff. First of all, they will have a less direct knowledge of corruption than those directly involved in the activity who, in an ideal world, might directly inform the research. Secondly, PSU staff involved in investigating corruption and unethical behaviour will not necessarily be fully critical of their approaches to investigation. Finally, because of confidentiality issues, some limits were set on the information that was revealed to researchers and that which the research was able to report on in detail.

Table 2: Types of information used in the research and their limitations

Information type	Description	Considerations
<i>General intelligence picture</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Primarily involved verbal descriptions by PSU staff.</li> <li>Some supplementary statistics available.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intelligence probably provides, at best, a partial picture of corruption.</li> <li>PSUs in early stages of development, so picture is still an emerging one.</li> </ul>
<i>Specific cases of unethical police activity*</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Primarily involved verbal descriptions by PSU staff.</li> <li>Some limited case notes available</li> <li>Information-based on range of intelligence/evidence sources already outlined (e.g. police colleagues, informants, public, audits, surveillance).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intelligence/evidence sources may provide only a partial picture of a particular case.</li> <li>Some informed speculation required to fill gaps in picture portrayed by intelligence/evidence sources.</li> <li>For reasons of confidentiality, some details were withheld by PSU staff.</li> <li>Some cases for which more information was more readily available dated back several years, sometimes to the early or mid-90s.</li> </ul>
<i>General observations about unethical police activity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Verbal accounts by PSU staff based on direct experiences of monitoring and investigating unethical activity.</li> <li>Reflections on the nature, origins, and prevention of unethical police activity.</li> <li>Draws on experiences of PSU staff working within police forces outside of PSUs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indirect view of corrupt activity.</li> <li>Limited by what PSU staff actually come across in the course of their work.</li> </ul>
<i>Observations about PSU investigations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Verbal accounts by PSU staff based on direct experience of investigating unethical activity.</li> <li>Describes specific investigation strategies.</li> <li>Reflections on dilemmas in investigations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PSU staff will not necessarily be critical of their own approaches to investigation.</li> </ul>

Note: \* Usually, specific cases involved confidential information (given that the cases were live and had not been taken through to the end of the court or discipline processes). For this reason, particular cases are not usually discussed in depth in this report.

### Sample details

Initially, extended research visits were carried out in four large urban forces (typically lasting a total of two or three days) that usually had more experience of investigating corruption: their PSUs had been established for periods ranging between about one and three years, and the forces often had prior experience of investigating corruption before the establishment of these units, which they could draw on for the research. In order to assess whether smaller or more rural forces suffered from similar or different problems of corruption, shorter (one day) visits were therefore made to four non-metropolitan forces, which had also established PSUs, ranging from 6 months to three years. Again, however, some of these forces had prior experience of investigating corruption issues.

Table 3 provides a breakdown of research interviews carried out across force sites.

*Table 3: Staff interviewed within PSUs*

<b>Force</b>	<b>Investigators</b>	<b>Analysts</b>	<b>Others</b>	<b>All</b>
<i>Large urban forces</i>				
Metropolitan Police Service	7	2	1	10
Merseyside Police	8	1	1	10
West Midlands Police	3	1	1	5
Greater Manchester Police	6	2	-	8
<i>Smaller and/or more rural forces</i>				
Dyfed-Powys Police (small/rural)	2	1	-	3
Kent County Constabulary (large/mixed)	2	1	1	4
Cleveland Police (small/urban)	3	1	-	4
Devon and Cornwall Constabulary (large/rural)	3	1	-	4
<i>Other</i>				
National Crime Squad	1	-	-	1
<b>All sites</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>49</b>

## The report

Following this introduction, the report is divided into five key chapters:

- Chapter 2 sketches the nature of contemporary police corruption suggested by current evidence.
- Chapter 3 looks more directly at the causes and origins of corruption.
- Chapter 4 explores the investigation of corruption, and identifies some lessons from existing experience.
- Chapter 5 draws out the implications of the research findings for the prevention of corruption.
- Finally, Chapter 6 provides general conclusions and states the key recommendations of the research.

## 2. Contemporary police corruption

This chapter will assess current evidence of the nature of police corruption. In doing so, it will examine its general characteristics, and some of its specific features.

### Traditional images of corruption

Before directly examining the current image of police corruption, it is useful to provide some context to this picture by looking at historical images of the problem.

Based on the findings of international literature and official inquiries, Newburn (1999) made a number of important observations about the way corruption is patterned within police organisations. He notes, on the one hand, that it is 'pervasive, continuing and not bounded by rank' and is not simply attributable to a few 'bad apples'. On the other hand, however, he points out that there are certain policing environments at the 'invitational edge of corruption' where temptations are particularly acute, including parts of the policing organisation that deal with prostitution, alcohol, gambling and drugs.

In the England and Wales context, previous corruption scandals have similarities to the international picture painted by Newburn. For example, a review by Morton (1993) paints a picture of police corruption which has a number of recurrent themes in the post-war period: CID departments and specialist squads (such as drugs, robbery or vice squads) have featured significantly, they have typically involved groups of officers operating together, and again have been seen to involve officers from higher as well as lower ranks. And based on their recent experiences of investigating corruption, the MPS initially found themselves confronting a similar pattern of corruption, with suspect officers being respected career detectives with experience in specialist squads.<sup>4</sup> Corrupt activities from across these examples have included the protection of criminals for financial payments, the theft and recycling of drugs to criminals, the stealing of money from crime scenes, and the fabrication of evidence to obtain convictions.

The picture of corruption that emerges from this research, however, while showing some similarities with this traditional image, also displays some important differences. This may, in part, reflect the fact that it follows from proactively gathered intelligence on unethical police activity, rather than the periodic scandals which have historically shaped the image of the problem. It is also possible, too, that it may reflect some changes in the nature of corruption through time.

### General features of contemporary corruption

In looking at contemporary corruption, it is first of all useful to sketch out some of its general features revealed in the research.

#### **The extent of the problem**

It is difficult to assess the extent of corruption using PSU intelligence. This is partly because intelligence is unlikely to provide a full picture of the problem. It is also because some people will be identified as potential corruption 'suspects' as a result of misleading information. However, all the forces, by establishing PSUs, had been able to identify a small minority of potentially corrupt individuals within their force. While this suggests that corruption is a feature of policing within England and Wales, its scale appears far smaller than the more widespread police corruption that has, in the past, been found in some other jurisdictions, such as in New York (Knapp, 1972; Mollen Commission, 1994), Chicago (Webb Commission, 1998), Los Angeles (Bostic Commission, 2000), New South Wales (Wood, 1997) or Queensland (Fitzgerald Commission, 1987).

Figures provided by some of the forces involved in the research indicated that, for the forces concerned, the minority of staff identified by at least some PSU intelligence as potentially corrupt amounted to between about half and one per cent of police staff (including both officers and civilians),

---

<sup>4</sup> Early presentational material from the Metropolitan Police Service describing their anti-corruption work clearly reflects this perception.



based on intelligence received in a one year period.<sup>5</sup> For reasons already outlined, this should not be viewed as a direct measure of police corruption in these forces. Nor should it be seen as representative of all of the forces in the study or, for that matter, the police service generally.

### Types of corrupt activity

As already noted, some PSUs provided some statistics describing the intelligence picture of corruption. Table 4 provides data from one of the forces studied and looks at the types of unethical activity suggested by information coming into the PSU intelligence cell. Within the table, items of information have been crudely classified (for the purposes of the research) according to whether they are likely to relate to corruption, or whether they seem to relate to criminality or misconduct, though these categories should not be seen as hard and fast.

*Table 4: Breakdown of reports of unethical police activity received by intelligence cell in one force PSU during 2000*

Type of activity	% of all reports (n=122)
<i>Actual/potential corruption</i>	<b>52</b>
Disclosure of information	10
Disclosure of information to criminals	15
Disclosure of information for reward	8
Inappropriate association with criminals	11
Inappropriate association with prostitutes	1
Obtaining sexual favours by exploitation	4
Using position to obtain favour/payment	4
<i>Actual/potential criminality or misconduct</i>	<b>38</b>
Inappropriate use of intelligence system	2
Inappropriate use of Police National Computer	8
Drug dealing	11
Drug possession	2
Obtaining pecuniary advantage by deception	2
Obtaining property by deception	2
Theft of police property	2
Other theft	1
Miscellaneous crime allegations	5
Using position to run a business	2
<i>Miscellaneous (potential corruption, criminality or misconduct)</i>	<b>11</b>
<b>All activity</b>	<b>100</b>

*Notes:*

1. This information should not be treated as if it corresponded with individuals: a number of separate allegations may relate to the same officer; conversely, a single allegation may relate to a number of officers. However, the breakdown of allegations provides a crude indication of the breakdown of suspected activity.
2. Classification of intelligence into actual/potential corruption or criminality/misconduct involves some arbitrariness. This partly follows from problems defining corruption (see Chapter 1). It also follows from the fact that single pieces of information are likely to only partially describe alleged unethical activity.
3. Some activity categories used on the intelligence database of this force were not replicated in this table because in the year 2000 they contained no allegations. Categories that had involved allegations in other years include: 'receiving payment for favours', 'blackmail', 'criminal damage', 'perjury', and 'theft from a special property'.
4. Percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding.

While this data should not be seen as formally 'representative' of the range of forces studied, it does helpfully illustrate some general themes that were found across the forces involved in the research. These were revealed in the verbal accounts given by PSU staff, and in the limited statistical material that was made available. These issues are discussed below.

<sup>5</sup> The figure does not include police staff potentially involved in criminality or misconduct suggested by police intelligence.

Table 4 illustrates a key claim that was made by PSU staff: that the picture of corruption is dominated by the leaking of information to those outside the organisation. Thus, it can be seen that a third of PSU intelligence in this example suggests information is being 'disclosed' or leaked. A further ten per cent of information suggests that the intelligence system or Police National Computer is being used inappropriately; this might also be a sign of corrupt leaking of information even if, on the face of it, it may simply amount to misuse. A further 11 per cent of intelligence suggests inappropriate patterns of association with criminals. According to PSU staff, where these examples occur they too might indicate the passing of information. The nature and implications of information leaking will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

Other types of corrupt activity identified in PSUs, in part reflected in Table 4, cover a range of activities, for example, police staff:

- using their power to obtain money or sexual favours from members of the public (e.g. from prostitutes);
- conspiring with criminals in the committing of crimes;
- carrying out thefts during raids; or
- using their position within the organisation to undermine proceedings against criminals.

### **Other forms of criminality and misconduct**

It is important to note, also that the work of PSUs reveals a significant amount of criminality and misconduct that does not amount to corruption, as defined here. Table 4 indicates that at least 38 per cent of the intelligence in the force is apparently concerned with unethical behaviour of this type. It is important, furthermore, to bear in mind that there is likely to be a far wider range of unethical behaviour within the police service that is not picked up as part of PSU intelligence. This may be because such activities are more hidden. However, it may be because they are seen as less serious, and do not find their way on to the PSU intelligence database. Certainly, in those forces where comparisons could be made, the numbers of potential suspects identified by PSU intelligence were notably smaller than the numbers of formal complaints made against officers within those forces (probably for less serious, or at least different, types of alleged unethical behaviour).

Probably the most common forms of unethical behaviour falling short of corruption, which come to the attention of PSUs, involve drugs. Table 4 indicates that drug dealing was an issue of some note in the force concerned, with over ten per cent of intelligence suggesting the existence of such a problem among police staff. Recreational drug use was also a problem flagged-up by PSU staff. While this amounted to just two per cent of intelligence in Table 4, there was an indication in some of the other forces that this type of intelligence was more common. In describing this problem, PSU staff gave examples of intelligence that pointed to the use of a range of drugs, including steroids, cannabis, ecstasy, and even crack cocaine.

Other types of unethical activity described by PSU staff are reflected, in part, by other categories in Table 4. PSU staff across sites described examples of:

- fraud;
- theft;
- domestic violence;
- spurious claims of illness to get sick leave; as well as
- sexist, racist or homophobic behaviour.

Some police staff also had separate and undeclared business interests and, in some cases, may have used their position in the service to pursue these interests (e.g. by exploiting their connections on the job or by using PNC information for their business).

### **Police staff involved in corruption**

Table 5 provides further statistical information on PSU intelligence. This table reflects the types of police staff implicated by intelligence for the same force covered by Table 4.

*Table 5: Staff implicated in reports received by intelligence cell in one force PSU during 2000*

<b>Unethical activity (%)</b>	<b>Officers</b>	<b>Support staff</b>	<b>Special constables</b>	<b>Unknown</b>	<b>Total</b>
Actual/potential corruption	73	10	5	13	100 (n=64)
Actual/potential criminality or misconduct	76	7	9	9	100 (n=46)
Miscellaneous	[69]	[15]	[0]	[15]	[100] (n=13)
<b>All activity</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100 (n=122)</b>

*Notes:*

1. This information should not be treated as if it corresponded with individuals: a number of separate allegations may relate to the same officer; conversely, a single allegation may relate to a number of officers.
2. The categories of activity in this table are made up of the subcategories already elaborated in Table 4.
3. Numbers of 'miscellaneous' reports are small, and percentages should be treated accordingly.
4. Percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding.

The table illustrates a key point made by PSU staff in all the forces involved in the research: that police corruption is not limited just to police officers. It also involves those in support roles. (Table 5 indicates that one person in ten implicated by intelligence is a member of support staff, both for corruption, and for unethical behaviour in general.) This is a finding that is not evident in traditional images of police corruption. Table 5 also implicates special constables in corruption, a concern raised by staff in some of the other force PSUs.

It was evident from examples given by PSU staff across forces, that corruption and other unethical activity involved both detectives and uniformed officers (the latter perhaps less commonly associated with traditional images of corruption). There was also a range of ranks of officer involved in corruption, primarily ranging between constable level and inspector level, though there were some examples of higher-ranking officers implicated in corruption or other unethical behaviour. A piece of research by Caless (1999), based at Kent County Constabulary, looked over 120 cases of corruption identified by a range of anonymous forces and came to similar conclusions. While these cases should not be taken as properly representative of the current picture of corruption, they support some of the findings of this study. The cases of corruption included substantial numbers of officers with both detective and uniform backgrounds; over half were constables, about a quarter were sergeants or inspectors, and less than one in 20 were higher ranks (ranging from chief inspectors to chief superintendents). It is important to bear in mind that the relative infrequency of higher-ranking officers in examples of corruption may simply reflect the smaller number of officers of these ranks within the police service. It should not be assumed that they are necessarily less often corrupt or unethical.

### The organisation of contemporary corruption

A significant finding of this research is the existence of two broadly distinct organisational forms of corruption. The evidence for this distinction draws primarily on the interviews with PSU staff and involves both descriptions of the intelligence picture and specific examples of corruption. On the one hand, there is corruption activity which involves individual members of staff operating alone within the organisation, which will be described as 'individual corruption' and which appears to be by far the most common. On the other hand, there is corruption activity which involves more than one member of police staff, operating together, described here as 'internally-networked corruption' which appears, overall, to be less common.

A number of important characteristics appear to be associated with the distinction between individual and internally-networked corruption. These two forms of corruption are therefore discussed in more detail below. It should be emphasised that this discussion is not concerned with the organisation of other forms of police criminality or misconduct.

## Individual corruption

As noted, individual corruption involves members of police staff engaged in corrupt activities more or less in isolation from colleagues. This type of corruption tends to have the following features:

- **Affects the range of forces** – Examples of this type of corruption were found across the board within the police forces involved in the research; that is, they were found in urban and rural areas, and in both large and small forces. Indeed, with the exception of the MPS, PSU intelligence suggests corruption is, for the most part, ‘individual’, in that it does not point to any direct conspiracy between different staff involved in corruption. It was notable, however, that in some cases, separate staff were involved with the same outside corrupters. It is important, also, to remember that this image may, in part, reflect incomplete knowledge of corruption within PSUs.
- **Involves a range of police staff** – Examples of individual corruption commonly include detectives, uniformed officers, and, significantly, those involved in support roles; “all shapes and sizes” as one interviewee remarked. As noted, some forces also drew attention to special constables involved in corruption. One force also had some evidence that subcontractors could pose a corruption risk.
- **Leaking of information plays a central role** – While there is some variation in the types of activities in which members of staff were involved, this type of corruption appears to be dominated by the passing of sensitive information from police sources to those outside the service.
- **Often involves contacts between police staff and criminals formed outside work** – Although it was by no means a universal feature, for the majority of cases of individual corruption described by PSU staff, corrupt contacts between police staff and criminals involved social networks outside of work. These contacts involved, for example, friends or relatives of police staff, people using the same gyms as members of police staff, or people frequenting the same pubs or clubs. This shifts our focus beyond corrupt relationships formed with people through the work of police staff, which characterise the more traditional image of corruption.

Box 1 provides some examples of individual corruption. This focuses first on the far more common type of information-based corruption, but also provides some other examples.

### *Box 1: Examples of individual corruption*

#### **Information-based corruption (most common)**

A young male uniformed police constable regularly visits a gymnasium that is also frequented by a number of local criminals. During his time there he becomes friendly with some of these criminals and starts to socialise with them. As part of the relationship that develops between them, he is asked for information from the Police National Computer and the force intelligence system. Perhaps in return for certain favours, such as being bought meals or drinks, he passes this information on to them. This information is useful to the criminals who are able to build up a picture of the knowledge and activities of the police.

A female member of support staff within a police force lives with her partner who works as a doorman for clubs within the city. The member of staff has access to criminal case papers, and her partner has several criminal associates. She uses her position within the organisation to pass information through her partner to his associates about witnesses involved in criminal cases against them. This allows them to approach and intimidate witnesses in these criminal cases.

A male detective chief inspector, approaching retirement, socialises closely with a person who has direct links with organised crime. The officer is fully aware of these links, and is able to profit from them. Through his professional networks within the police service, he is able to access some quite sensitive information, at the request of his criminal contacts. This he passes on to the criminals. In return, he is paid several thousand pounds for his efforts.

A male uniformed police constable develops a friendship with a local garage owner, who is also

*Box 1: Examples of individual corruption*

involved in crime and has criminal associates. This involves him spending a significant amount of time at the garage fixing-up his car and making use of the garage facilities. The officer was involved in passing intelligence through the garage owner to associates involved in drug dealing. This intelligence covered information on rival drug dealers to the associates, as well as information on police operations relating to drugs.

**Non information-based corruption (less common)**

After being stopped in his car, the male partner of a female police constable is issued with a police document (known as a 'producer' or HORT1) requiring him to come to the police station with his driving documents including his licence and insurance details. However, he is not insured for the vehicle he drives, which is a criminal offence. In order to avoid her partner facing criminal prosecution, the police officer makes an entry in the police station records, falsely indicating that the relevant documents have been produced at a police station. A male uniformed sergeant works in an area that covers a red light district. He develops a relationship with a number of local prostitutes. As part of this relationship, he receives money and, in return, he makes it clear they will not receive police attention.

A male uniformed constable with responsibility for overseeing alcohol licensing within a police division uses his position to promote a particular alcohol supplier to licensees. There is a suggestion he receives benefit from the supplier for his efforts.

*Notes:*

1. These examples draw primarily on intelligence and evidence gathered during investigations.
2. Any of these examples may draw on more than one actual case. They should not, therefore, be seen as describing a particular instance, but should be seen instead as representing examples of the kinds of corrupt activities that can occur.

**Internally-networked corruption**

Internally-networked corruption corresponds more closely to the traditional image of corruption as already outlined. Some of the detail of this form of corruption reported here is based on investigations carried out on corruption relating to the early and mid-1990s. It tends to have the following features:

- **Focused on detectives and squads** – Where examples of this were identified, they most typically involved detectives in CID departments or specialist squads operating together in groups or networks in the perpetration of their corruption. There was definitely a perception among those interviewed, particularly those who had had long careers as detectives, that corruption, in some form, was a feature of traditional detective culture.
- **Often involves corrupt relationships with informants** – A common thread to much of this type of activity is the development of corrupt relationships between detectives and their informants who are involved in crime and well-connected with other criminals.
- **Often involves a range of corrupt activities** – Investigations into corruption often identify a range of corrupt activities associated with examples of internally-networked corruption. These have included, for example: taking drugs from criminals, recycling drugs through criminal contacts, protection from investigation or prosecution, fabrication of evidence, or passing sensitive information to criminals.
- **Most common in London?** While occasional examples of internally-networked corruption were identified across a range of policing environments, both currently and in recent years, the MPS stands apart from the other forces for the concentration of this type of corruption within its force intelligence picture. In part, the concentration of this type of activity within the MPS may reflect the concentration of crime within London, and associated risks of corruption. It may also reflect the fact that the MPS has a longstanding commitment to identifying and dealing with corruption proactively, which may have led to them having uncovered more cases of it. It is possible, therefore, that more internally-networked corruption exists across the rest of the country than we

are yet aware of. It is important to note, however, that MPS interviewees claimed that proactive anti-corruption work has reduced this type of corruption, according to their intelligence.

One of the most notorious examples of this type of corruption in recent years has involved the now defunct South East Regional Crime Squad (SERCS) dating back to the early 1990s. Details of the corrupt arrangements within this squad are provided in Box 2.

*Box 2: Internally-networked corruption within the South East Regional Crime Squad in the early 1990s<sup>6</sup>*

The corrupt activities of members of a particular team within SERCS, based at Dulwich in south London, were exposed by the evidence of witnesses to MPS anti-corruption investigators, including the confession of a detective constable who had previously worked on the team.

The corrupt activities of members of the team, who called themselves the 'Groovy Gang', were organised around a detective constable called Bob Clark who wielded considerable influence. Significantly, Clark's close relationship with a female informant, Evelyn Fleckney, was pivotal in facilitating the corrupt activities of members of the team. Senior officers, who should have ensured that meetings between informants were properly logged and regulated, did not properly enforce policies for the regulation of informants. Not only did Fleckney regularly socialise with the team, for example, by joining them for nights out, but she was also romantically involved with Clark and even took several holidays with him.

It was Fleckney's role as a drug dealer with connections with other criminals that proved crucial to much of the corruption. For example, in return for protection from investigation and prosecution by the team, and benefiting from reward money, she would pass on information about rival drug dealers, which allowed the team to achieve successes in arresting and prosecuting her competitors. Drugs that were seized in searches by the team could be recycled back on to the streets through Fleckney's connections. Members of the team would also steal cash discovered during raids. In one case, a cannabis dealer had cash and drugs taken from his home by members of the team in return for not being arrested.

There were clear benefits to the team from their involvement in the corruption. Not only were there financial proceeds from their corrupt activities which were distributed to team members, but the arrests which followed from the close relationship with Fleckney also reflected well on the team's professional performance. It was also clear that in pursuing these objectives, more senior officers were tolerating, or at least not closely supervising, the team's activities and this protected them from exposure.

*Note:* This case study draws on case files, accounts of investigators and, significantly, the recorded confessions of a detective constable serving in the SERCS at the time, who became a resident informant in the MPS case against officers involved.

It is important to note that there is not just a single type of internally-networked corruption, conforming to the features so far outlined. For example, there were some cases mentioned by PSU staff where groups of uniformed officers appeared to have been involved in corrupt activities. Again, this appeared most concentrated in the MPS, though not limited to this area. Examples of this appeared to exist among groups of uniformed officers working together in a particular area or sector.

A final, but significant, point to note is that some forms of corrupt networks could be identified across agencies, whether involving different police forces, more central police agencies, such as NCS, or partner agencies, such as the Crown Prosecution Service or Customs and Excise. It was common to find that the leaking of information was a feature of these networks.

<sup>6</sup> Details of corrupt activities within this squad were documented on Panorama, 3 December 2000.

## Information compromise

As already discussed, the leaking of information from police sources to people outside the organisation appears to be the most common form of contemporary corruption, according to PSU intelligence. This activity may reflect an evolution in the nature of corruption in recent years. Certainly, it does not feature so significantly in traditional characterisations of the problem. It seems possible, too, that it may be underpinned by broader developments in the police service involving increased access to and use of information. Such changes might include, for example, an increased use of information technology in forces, and a greater focus on intelligence-led policing methods (see Maguire and John, 1995). In light of these issues, the nature of information compromise in contemporary police corruption warrants a closer look.

### Types of compromise

Intelligence and particular cases suggest that there is a wide range of information sources that feature in the unethical behaviour of police officers. These include:

- intelligence databases;
- Police National Computer (PNC);
- other force databases, such as personnel records;
- paper files and documents; and
- word-of-mouth.

While it is not possible to quantify the extent of different kinds of information compromise, it was possible to identify a spectrum of 'types' of compromise based on the examples given by PSU staff. These include:

- **'Domestic' use of information** – PSU staff suggested there is a significant amount of inappropriate use of police databases that is carried out for personal interest purposes. For example, there were examples of police staff running PNC checks on friends and neighbours, or cars they were thinking of buying. Certainly, abuse of the PNC is a common feature of misconduct cases, according to PSU staff.<sup>7</sup>
- **'Low-level' leaks** – Intelligence also suggests that 'low-level' leaking of information to a friend or associate is common. There were examples of police staff carrying out checks on behalf of friends running businesses, for example, garage owners who apparently wanted to check on cars they were thinking of buying, or ex-police officers working in the private investigation industry who requested information from the PNC to assist with their work.
- **Leaks to the media** – Some PSU staff reported problems with officers leaking information to journalists, particularly in relation to high profile cases. In a number of examples discussed, sensitive operational police information emerged in the media, which directly implicated police sources. In this regard, one investigator remarked that his force was "like the Titanic, it's got so many holes". PSU staff suggested that this tended to involve payment of police staff by journalists.
- **Deliberate leaks to criminals** – Finally, there are also those leaks where information is given knowingly to criminals, maybe through an intermediary or directly. There was evidence that this was done for favours or in return for cash.

### Links with criminals

It has been noted that there were examples of corruption where information was deliberately leaked to criminals. Additionally, other types of information compromise have been observed where the leaking

---

<sup>7</sup> According to a sample of disciplinary case files collected for a study on changes to police misconduct procedures (Quinton, 2003) PNC abuse made up about one in 20 disciplinary cases.

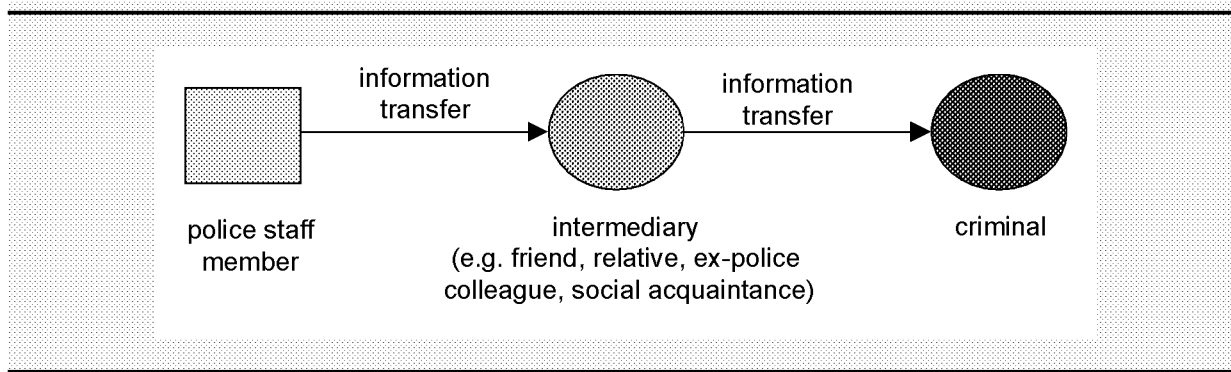
of information was apparently not the objective. This being said, there was clear evidence that on some of these occasions information had still found its way to criminals.

Certainly, where information is leaked to journalists it is likely to end up in the public domain, which will inevitably include criminals. Perhaps more significantly, however, there was a range of cases recounted by PSU staff where information was passed to associates (for example, as 'low-level' leaks) who, in turn, passed this information on to criminals. Very often, these intermediary figures were relatives, friends, social acquaintances or even ex-police colleagues. As one analyst pointed out:

*You've got low-level checks and enquiries and snippets for intermediary people, who may be ex-policemen or just mates... instances where: "I'll buy you a meal"... I would suggest that some [staff] are doing this naively without knowledge of where it's going.*

The principle of such information transfer is illustrated in Figure 2.

*Figure 2: Information links between individual police staff and criminals through intermediaries*



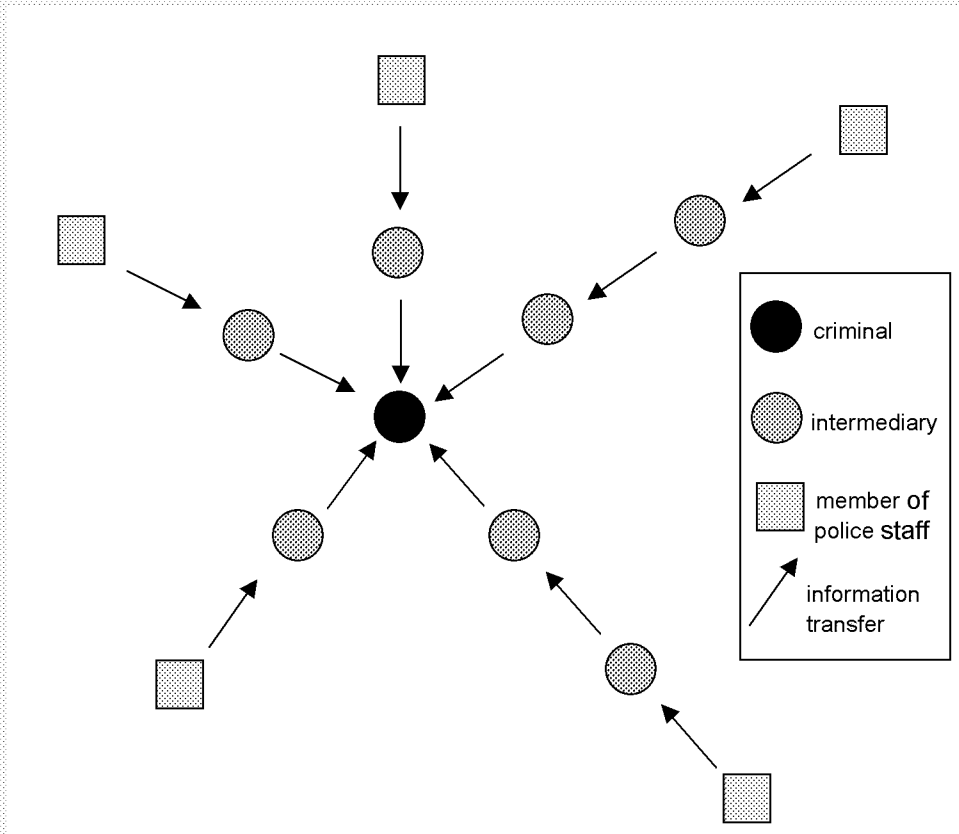
These types of arrangements apparently allowed some criminals to network their way indirectly into police circles to obtain police information, perhaps even without the staff concerned knowing where this information is going. Certainly, analysis of intelligence in some PSUs suggested that some criminals appeared to have a number of links of this kind with different members of police staff. One intelligence analyst described his interpretation of the intelligence pattern in the following way:

*Rather than the scenario of Mr Big with one policeman at his beck and call, you've got Mickey Mouse inquiries by several employees.*

This could lead to an image of a criminal at the centre of a 'spider's web' of contacts, ultimately leading to a range of police employees at the periphery. Figure 3, below, illustrates this principle. It is based in part on descriptions given by some PSU staff, and in part on an intelligence chart showing patterns of association around a major criminal that was produced as part of an investigation in one PSU.



Figure 3: Proposed information networks that can exist around criminals



Note: The figure illustrates the kinds of information links that can exist around criminals. It does not reflect any specific 'real-life' example.

### Consequences of information compromise

It is difficult to assess the consequences of information compromise. However, PSU staff regularly gave examples of where information compromise had apparently had adverse implications for the work of their force generally and, in turn, for the public.

Perhaps the most commonly cited problem involved the failure of particular police operations. For example, PSU staff often cited examples they knew about within the force of police raids of suspects' addresses where the suspect was apparently expecting the raid, and had no incriminating evidence at the address:

*There are the cases where they've already got the kettle on when the police arrive.*

There were other examples of where information passed on to criminals appeared to protect them from detection. In one case, a prolific burglar responsible for a spate of burglaries in a rural area consistently evaded detection. The evidence accumulated during the investigation suggested that he was receiving information from police sources. The investigator who had been involved in the investigation remarked:

*We would set up operations... extra staff would be drawn in... but it was just a nightmare to catch this bloke.*

In other examples, there was evidence of information being passed from police sources in order to undermine prosecutions, for example, allowing the intimidation of witnesses or the exposure of informants.

As well as potentially compromising police forces' ability to act against criminals, such compromises could also have significant cost implications. Sometimes, they would involve large teams, or expensive surveillance, or operations that had been running for a long time. As one investigator remarked:

*I've known jobs that have lasted a long time... a couple of years... and they have been compromised... and everything points towards the compromise coming from within the organisation.*

There may be other ways in which information compromise may impact on the police and the public but which are less obvious to PSU staff.

## Summary

- PSU intelligence suggests that corruption is limited to a small minority of staff within the police forces researched. This picture is dominated by the leaking of information to those outside the force, though examples of police corruption from across forces have included a range of other activities, such as:
  - police staff using their power to obtain money or sexual favours from members of the public (e.g. prostitutes);
  - conspiring with criminals in the committing of crimes;
  - carrying out thefts during raids; and
  - using their position within the organisation to undermine proceedings against criminals.
- Those involved in corruption include support staff as well as police officers, and they can be found across ranks.
- The work of PSUs also reveals a range of other criminality and misconduct in all the forces. This commonly involves the dealing or recreational use of drugs. Other examples include:
  - fraud;
  - theft;
  - domestic violence;
  - spurious claims of illness to get sick-leave; as well as
  - sexist, racist or homophobic behaviour.
- Contemporary police corruption can be crudely divided into two organisational forms. Most common, according to PSU intelligence is 'individual' corruption. Far less common is that which is 'internally-networked'. A number of important characteristics tend to be associated with this distinction.
- Individual corruption involves members of police staff engaged in corrupt activities more or less in isolation from colleagues. It can be found across all types of forces, whether large or small, urban or rural. It can also be found across staff types, (whether detectives, uniformed officers or support staff). This form of corruption is dominated by the leaking of police information, with corrupt contacts often originating in social networks outside of work.
- Internally-networked corruption, closest to the more traditional image of corruption, typically involves detectives in CID departments or specialist squads, operating together. This type of corruption often involves corrupt relationships between detectives and their informants, and has been associated with a range of different corrupt activities. Internally-networked corruption, according to existing intelligence, is relatively rare within the national context, but appears more common in the London area.

- A closer look at information compromise suggests it can involve a range of sources, such as databases, files or documents, and word-of-mouth. Forms of compromise include:
  - obtaining information for personal purposes;
  - passing information to friends and associates;
  - leaks to the media; and
  - deliberate leaks to criminals.
- Leaked information can find its way to criminals even where this is not deliberately intended. In some cases, it is passed to associates, such as relatives, friends, social acquaintances or even ex-police colleagues, who, in turn, pass this information on to criminals. These types of arrangements apparently allow some criminals to network their way indirectly into police circles to obtain police information. Analysis of intelligence in some PSUs suggested that some criminals appeared to have a number of links of this kind with different members of police staff.
- It is difficult to assess the consequences of information compromise. However, PSU staff gave examples of where it had apparently had adverse implications for the police and public. They included the failure of police operations and ability of criminals to evade detection. In some instances, this appeared to involve the waste of significant resources.

### 3. Origins of corruption

This chapter examines evidence that helps explain why members of police staff become corrupt. In doing so, it draws on specific examples of corruption as well as general reflections offered by PSU staff.

#### General observations

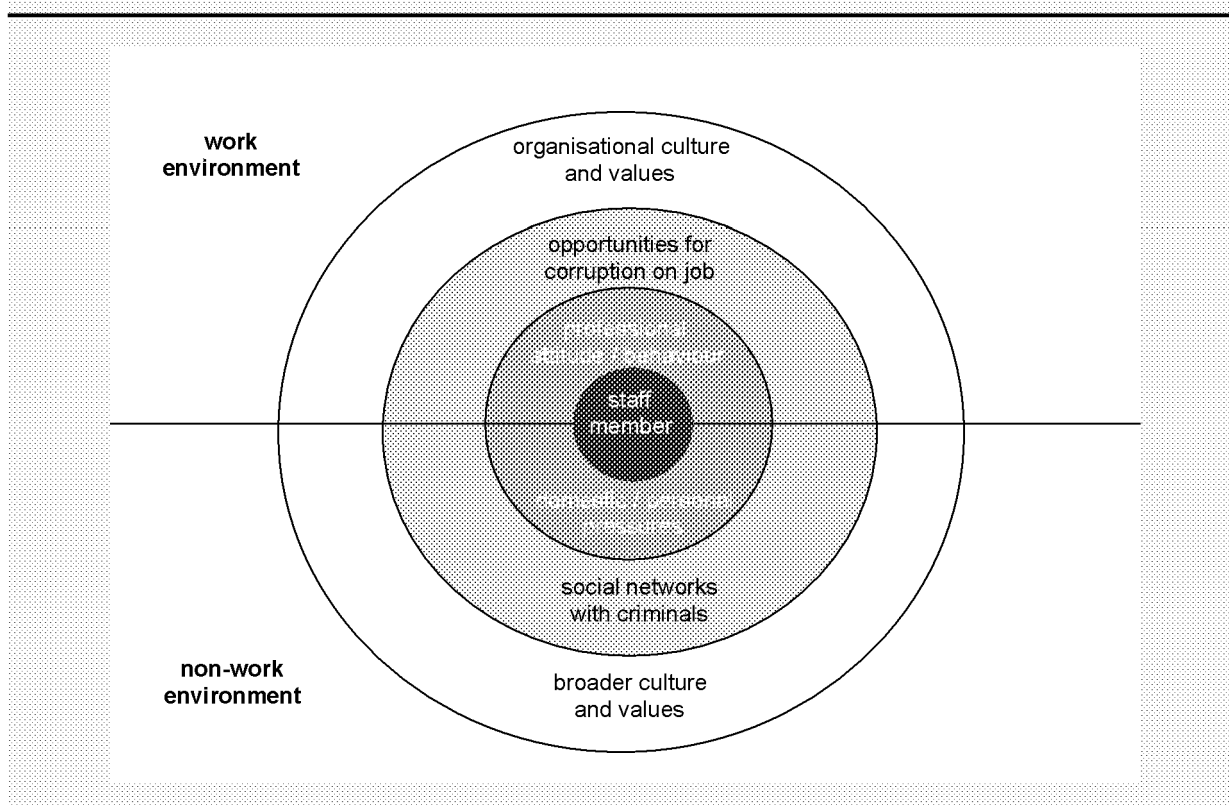
Not only was corruption identified across all of the forces involved in the study, but it also showed some similar patterns and was apparently linked to some similar underlying factors. This suggests that corruption arises in a systematic and predictable way from the nature and context of policing. Such an observation is in line with previous literature (e.g. Newburn, 1999; Sherman, 1978) which dismisses the idea that police corruption involves a few 'rotten apples' in an otherwise healthy barrel.

Previous research has already identified a number of causes of corruption. According to Sherman (1974), these involve 'constant' factors within policing, including discretion, low visibility, peer group and managerial secrecy, status problems and association with lawbreakers. He also identifies a number of 'variable' factors, including the community environment, the police organisation, legal opportunities for corruption, corruption controls, the social organisation of corruption, and 'moral cynicism'. While this research is reasonably consistent with such earlier work, it does identify a number of factors which previous research has not necessarily highlighted.

Figure 4 illustrates the different areas of influence that this research suggests underlie contemporary corruption. In broad terms, these include:

- personal circumstances;
- opportunities for corruption; and
- broader culture and values.

*Figure 4: Corrupting influences on members of police staff*



Significantly, and in a way that is different from previous literature, this research finds strong evidence that corruption has its roots in both work and non-work contexts. This observation, too, is reflected in Figure 4.

Associated with the dimensions presented in Figure 4 is a range of more specific factors which are, in some cases at least, associated with corruption. These are summarised in Table 6, and discussed in more detail in the remainder of the chapter.

*Table 6: Key factors which are, in some cases, associated with contemporary police corruption*

<b>Levels of influence</b>	<b>Work-based</b>	<b>Non-work-based</b>
<i>Individual circumstances</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previous unethical behaviour (suggested by a history of complaints)</li> <li>• Demoralisation with the job</li> <li>• Apparently high performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationship problems</li> <li>• Drug/alcohol problems</li> <li>• Financial difficulties</li> </ul>
<i>Opportunities for corruption</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to information</li> <li>• Inadequate supervision</li> <li>• Informant relationships</li> <li>• Other relationships with criminals</li> <li>• Targeting by organised crime</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Criminal contacts through longstanding relationships (e.g. friends, relatives, ex-police officers)</li> <li>• Criminal contacts formed through leisure environments (e.g. gyms, sports clubs, pubs, night-clubs, garages)</li> <li>• Targeting by organised crime</li> </ul>
<i>Culture and values</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor security awareness</li> <li>• High performance culture</li> <li>• Protection by police colleagues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broader social factors?</li> </ul>

## Work factors

First of all, issues within the work context associated with corruption are reviewed.

### Professional attitudes and behaviour

The research suggests that, it would be difficult (at least from the evidence reviewed in this research) to arrive at any very reliable factors in the attitude or behaviour of officers that would predict their becoming involved in corruption. However, there are some characteristics that were mentioned by PSU staff that appeared, in some cases, to be linked with corruption.

There were some corrupt officers who had a history of complaints, or had shown signs of poor performance. There were also examples of officers who appeared frustrated, disillusioned or distracted in relation to their job. This occurred, for example, in cases where they had been passed over for promotion, or perhaps quite simply because they appeared bored and de-motivated with their work.

In contrast to these examples, there were those who were apparently high performers. In fact, PSU staff suggested that it was, in some cases, a desire to perform well which led them into corruption. Perhaps in the first instance they had bent the rules to achieve results, but subsequently had become more fully involved in corrupt activities. As one investigator remarked about a corrupt detective:

*He was flying in the job... respected by colleagues... a good thief-taker.*

It appears, therefore, that there is no single type of police staff member who is likely to become corrupt. Rather, there may be a range of different types of circumstances which, in some cases, might provide a marker for potential corruption.

### Opportunities for corruption

Manning and Redlinger (1977) have drawn attention to the 'invitational edges' of corruption experienced within policing. For example, this might include the policing of drug crime because of clear opportunities and temptations to become corrupt, given the large amounts of money involved and the difficulty of enforcing drug laws. This study identified a number of areas of opportunity for corruption among police staff.

- **Access to information** – As discussed in Chapter 2, corruption very often involved leaking of information. It follows from this that access to information will be a significant factor underlying some types of corruption. In their discussion of this issue, many interviewees noted that access to information was very open within their force, far exceeding that necessary. Attention was drawn, for example, to support staff who may have access to a wide range of information systems and databases, but without any clear reason for this access. Some noted that information placed on intelligence systems on general access was potentially sensitive and unnecessary, as one analyst noted:

*We run a very open intelligence system... which probably lends itself to abuse, in fairness.*

Some noted that personal computer accounts could be accessed by others, for example, if the systems did not 'lock-out' when they were left unused. Attention was also drawn to the fact that, to varying degrees, IT systems are not adequately audited or, in some cases, not fully auditable. In this context, staff who chose to use systems for unethical purposes might not fear any adverse consequences of their activity.

- **Inadequate supervision** – Previous research (e.g. Newburn, 1999; Punch, 2000) has identified poor supervision as a basis for corruption, and this perception was also reflected among a number of those interviewed, particularly where they were talking about internally-networked corruption. As one interviewee commented:

*If a chief inspector has got his finger on it and is doing his job, this would preclude an awful lot of what's going on.*

A potential problem identified by some PSU staff, was the failure of supervisors or managers to look closely at officers who appeared to be performing well. This was particularly important where corrupt officers were seen as good performers, for example, where they were exploiting their corrupt relationships with informants to get arrests. As one interviewee said:

*Supervisors' attention goes to those who aren't performing, not those who are.*

- **Relationships with informants** – Problems with the relationships between police officers and criminal informants feature significantly within the types of internally-networked corruption outlined in the last chapter. One interviewee identified how problems could emerge from relationships with informants:

*A bobby becomes the bosom pal of the informant... when the informant steps over the line the bobby covers for them.*

PSU staff acknowledged that strides had been made to improve the management and supervision of relationships with informants,<sup>8</sup> and problems with informants did not feature very frequently within the examples of contemporary corruption reviewed within this research. However, there

---

<sup>8</sup> A key development in forces has been the establishment of centralised 'source handling units' which take responsibility for coordinating, monitoring, and regulating the relationships between police officers and informants within the force.

were clearly examples where these problems did occur and, where they did, they were often associated with more serious instances of corruption. Given the inherent risk that comes from police officers associating with those connected with crime, these relationships are likely to remain an important corruption risk.<sup>9</sup>

- **Other relationships with criminals** – Additionally, there were examples where officers, typically those in uniform, had built up relationships with people through their work, who were not registered as informants, but could provide a basis for a corrupt relationship. In one example, a police officer responsible for building relationships with the community in a difficult neighbourhood had developed corrupt relationships with local criminals. In another example, a police officer who had duties for overseeing licensing issues had developed corrupt relationships with those in the licensing trade.
- **Targeting by organised crime** – It was widely believed by those interviewed that those involved in organised crime made it their business to target those within the police service. This was seen as essential to their criminal activities, as one investigator remarked:

*A good villain can't operate without having a bent officer... it's impossible.*

In this context, the range of potentially corrupt contacts already discussed (informants and other criminals) might provide a potential basis for organised crime to target staff. One investigator noted:

*However they do it... people who work in organised crime in this city have a way of tapping into this organisation.*

## Organisational culture and values

Newburn (2000) emphasises the importance of morale, professional standards and respect for authority within policing organisations as essential protective factors against corruption. The evidence encountered in this research was consistent with this broad message. However, there are certain key features of the organisational culture that were strongly implicated as underlying corruption:

- **Poor security awareness** – PSU staff drew attention to a tendency among police staff to be far too open with one another, or with others, about sensitive professional information. This is at odds with a 'need-to-know' principle, in which information is only communicated where it is necessary in the course of work. As one officer remarked, in relation to his force:

*Our culture in relation to security is non-existent, really.*

For example, in one force, where access to computer accounts was facilitated by officers' inserting their warrant card, it was apparent that warrant cards were left in machines allowing others to access them, as one interviewee remarked:

*You could walk around a station unchallenged and you could walk away with half-a-dozen warrant cards*

- **Performance-driven culture** – Some interviewees suggested that a culture focused on performance within the police service could encourage officers to cut corners in order to achieve apparently successful outcomes. While this culture persists, its negative consequences are perhaps illustrated best by reference to the rule-bending culture that had historically existed among some detectives. As one interviewee remarked:

*I've worked in that environment. I've seen it. The 70s' perspective: you've got to bend the rules to get the job done.*

---

<sup>9</sup> It is notable, for example, that recent police research carried out involving direct interviews with informants and their police handlers within England (Billingsley, 1999) showed that substantial minorities of informant handlers involved in the research admitted to being selective in the information they relayed, did not act on information against their informants, and had some involvement in facilitating the crime of their informants.

There was a perception, however, that this culture had changed significantly in recent years, with the importance of professional standards and working by the rules being given far more emphasis within the organisation. However, the drive for high performance was still seen as placing a pressure on officers who had the potential to cause corruption.

- **Protection by police colleagues** – PSU staff drew attention to a solidarity among police staff, notably police officers, that stands in the way of colleagues reporting on one another where corruption is evident. As one investigator said:

*There is a cultural resistance to tell on your own.*

It was suggested that this could be a particular problem where officers who are aware of corruption had themselves been involved in some unethical activity; this placed a personal risk on them of prosecution or discipline if they were to come forward. A 'protective layer' of tainted officers of this kind was seen by some investigators as providing significant protection to the activities of core corrupt officers in examples of internally-networked corruption in squads.

## Non-work factors

A key finding of this study is that corruption within the police service is rooted, to a significant extent, in factors that are found outside the working environments of police staff.

### Domestic and personal problems

Difficulties in the personal lives of police staff appeared, in some cases at least, to provide a backdrop to their involvement in corruption. Certainly, in specific examples of corruption where some background information was known, there were examples of domestic problems. As one investigator remarked:

*Divorce, finance, drink seem to be a basis for a lot of these things... they are more subject to being a victim of prey.*

Though there were no factors which were reliably associated with corruption, some common characteristics included the following:

- **Relationship problems** – It was common to find police staff had recently separated from wives or partners or had started new relationships. Sometimes this involved extra-marital affairs. In some cases, existing relationships were going through difficulties.
- **Problems with alcohol or drugs** – There were examples of heavy drinking, and to a lesser extent use of drugs, in the backgrounds of some corrupt staff.
- **Financial difficulties** – Financial problems, in turn often related to relationship difficulties, or alcohol or drug problems, were also found in the backgrounds of some corrupt police staff.

Box 3 provides some examples of these kinds of problems in the lives of corrupt police staff.

It should be noted, however, that there were examples of police staff becoming corrupt where these kinds of problems were not evident.

#### *Box 3: Examples of domestic problems in the lives of corrupt police staff*

A uniformed constable of 20 years' service is going through a divorce. Around the same time, he starts drinking heavily. His drinking takes him regularly to pubs where there are criminals with whom he socialises. This provides the basis for a corrupt relationship in which information is obtained from within the service, and passed on to the criminals.

A uniformed constable in his mid-30s is estranged from his wife and two children. He is known to have



*Box 3: Examples of domestic problems in the lives of corrupt police staff*

been violent towards his current girlfriend. He is a regular taker of ecstasy and has an active social life involving clubs and parties, where he is known to be have been present when drug deals have taken place. He is also known to have been associating with a major criminal, and there is some suggestion that a corrupt relationship may have developed.

An established detective constable on a specialist squad has become heavily involved in drinking, and has significant credit card debts. He has been arguing with his wife, with whom he has children, and on some occasions has been violent towards her. Engagement in corruption within the squad provides him with money, some of which he uses to pay off his debts.

*Note:* These examples draw primarily on intelligence and evidence gathered during investigations.

### Social networks with criminals

It was very clear from many of the examples of corruption identified by intelligence, and from those subsequently investigated, that social networks outside the job served as a key basis for corruption. Specifically, these networks could bring police staff into contact with criminals, whether directly or indirectly. The development of corrupt contacts with criminals through social networks appeared more common, and perhaps follow more logically, where police staff lived and worked within the same force areas. There were a number of types of relationship which could provide the basis for networking with criminals:

- **Longstanding relationships** – In many cases longstanding relationships between police staff and those outside the force formed the basis for corruption, either because these were direct relationships with criminals, or because relationships were formed with associates of criminals, who acted as intermediaries. Such relationships included:
  - relatives – this might include, for example, a son or brother-in-law;
  - partners – police staff had sometimes become involved in corrupt activity because of a romantic involvement with somebody involved in crime or who had criminal contacts;
  - old friends – sometimes, corrupt relationships had their roots in friendships that extended back a long time, even to school or childhood; and
  - ex-police colleagues – the close working relationships that had developed among colleagues on the job could be exploited by an officer who has left the job, and may work, for example, for a private investigation or private security firm.
- **Acquaintances made in leisure environments** – It was common to find that members of police staff had become friendly with those involved in criminality by spending leisure time in similar environments. Such environments included:
  - gyms and sports clubs – these types of environments, and gyms in particular, could be frequented both by police staff and criminals;
  - pubs and clubs – similarly, off-duty socialising in social environments could bring police staff into contact with criminals; and
  - garages – an interest in cars among police staff often involved spending time at garages where relationships were made with garage staff who could be involved in crime or have criminal contacts.
- **Targeting by organised crime** – It has already been noted that criminals appear to deliberately target police staff in an attempt to access police information. The networks formed around criminals, as identified by intelligence, encompass the social networks of police staff outside the job.

## Broader social and cultural context

The propensity for police staff to become involved in corruption is probably rooted, to some extent at least, in their broader social and cultural context. While this issue was not explored in any detail in the current study, some of the interviewees emphasised that the make-up of the police service was a 'reflection of society'. As such, it was suggested that the police service will have its fair share of those involved in crime.

## Summary

- The research suggests that issues underlying contemporary corruption include:
  - personal circumstances;
  - opportunities for corruption; and
  - broader culture and values.

Significantly, the research finds strong evidence that corruption has its roots in both work and non-work contexts.

- The research does not arrive at any reliable factors relating to the attitude or behaviour of officers at work that would predict involvement in corruption. However, there were examples of where police staff had records of previous unethical behaviour (as suggested by complaints histories), police staff who appeared demoralised with the job, and, by contrast, officers who displayed apparently high-levels of performance.
- There is a range of potential opportunities within the work context for police staff to become corrupt. These include: easy access to information, inadequate supervision, relationships with informants, other relationships formed with criminals, and the specific targeting of police staff by organised crime.
- Certain aspects of work culture were also highlighted as providing an important basis for corruption. These included: poor security awareness, an emphasis on high performance, and protection of corrupt staff by police colleagues.
- Difficulties in the personal lives of police staff appeared, in some cases at least, to provide a backdrop to their involvement in corruption. These included relationship problems, problems with alcohol or drugs, and financial difficulties. However, these kinds of problems were not always evident.
- Social networks outside the job can serve as an important basis for police staff to become involved in corruption. This can happen through longstanding relationships, for example, involving relatives, partners, old friends and ex-police colleagues. It can also happen through acquaintances made in leisure environments, such as gyms, pubs and clubs, or garages.

## 4. Investigation

The investigation of corrupt police staff by police detectives represents an important approach that forces can use to tackle corruption. This chapter will make some observations and highlight some early lessons from forces' efforts to do this. In particular, it will focus on strategic 'higher-level' issues associated with internal investigations. In doing so, it will rely primarily on the verbal accounts offered by PSU investigators of specific investigations and their reflections of the investigation process.

It is important to note here that there are some important operational matters not addressed in this chapter.<sup>10</sup> This reflects, in significant part, the fact that many PSU investigators were keen that details of operational methods should be kept confidential, for fear that by publicising their methods, their effectiveness would be reduced.<sup>11</sup>

### The impact of proactive investigation on police corruption

PSUs, as described in Chapter 1, proactively gather intelligence on police staff, and deploy operational officers to investigate and, ultimately, to intervene against corrupt or unethical staff. At this point in time, it is difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of dealing with corruption. This is, in part, because efforts to tackle such problems are in their early phases. It is also because it is hard to measure reliably the levels of corruption within a force and to assess change over time. It is also difficult to separate the effects of investigations from other forms of prevention which forces may have established.

Those forces with more established anti-corruption efforts had managed to achieve a number of convictions of police staff, and managed to intervene against suspect staff through misconduct procedures or other forms of disruption.<sup>12</sup> Even these forces, however, may be seen perhaps as in their 'early days', given that there is very often a significant time-lag, often lasting years, between the beginning of investigations and their final outcome.

Figures relating to successful or unresolved outcomes within the MPS are presented in Table 7. These show that a total of 41 convictions have so far been achieved. Including ex-police officers, about half of these are police staff. The other half are non-police officers (including criminals, lawyers, CPS staff, and Customs and Excise Staff, though not support staff). However, a further 60 individuals, including 39 current police officers and 15 ex-police officers, still await the outcome of either criminal or discipline procedures in relation to alleged corruption activity.

Interventions against police staff are likely to have some direct effect on the levels of corruption in a force, given that corrupt individuals are removed from forces or their risk within the force reduced. The existence of corruption investigations within forces may also have a deterrent effect on those potentially involved in corruption. One investigator suggested that the pattern of corruption in his force, based on the intelligence picture, had changed significantly as a response to high profile efforts at investigation. Certainly, existing research (Von Hirsch et al., 1999) suggests that where conventional offenders are aware of a real risk of being punished, many will cease to offend.

Ultimately, however, the effectiveness of PSUs at dealing with corruption within police forces cannot yet be properly measured.

---

<sup>10</sup> The investigation of police corruption and criminality often involves some distinctive operational approaches. For example, they often call on sophisticated techniques of surveillance; sometimes they use 'integrity tests', in which police staff are exposed to artificially constructed situations to test their response; and some investigations have, unusually, relied on criminals providing evidence against police officers.

<sup>11</sup> Guidance for corruption investigators has been provided in a confidential ACPO document: ACPO Presidential Task Force on Corruption, *Guidance for Investigators: Corruption Enquiries*, ACPO Corruption Prevention Strategy Paper.

<sup>12</sup> It should be noted that some PSUs had yet to see through a full investigation to the end-point at the time of the research. One force, despite having previous investigations into corruption within the force, had yet to commence with a full criminal investigation within the PSU structure.

*Table 7: Individuals convicted, charged, or suspended pending investigation for corruption-related offences, MPS January 1998 to June 2001*

<b>Status</b>	<b>Police officers</b>	<b>Ex-police officers</b>	<b>Non-police</b>	<b>Total</b>
Convicted of one or more corruption-related offence	12	7	22	41
Charged with corruption-related offence, awaiting trial (suspended)	11	3	18	32
Awaiting discipline, acquitted of criminal charges or charges discontinued (suspended)	5	-	-	5
Criminal investigation in progress (suspended)	7	-	-	7
Awaiting consideration for discipline (suspended)	16	-	-	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>101</b>

*Notes:*

1. These figures are likely to exclude some less serious corruption dealt with proactively by the MPS, because they are based on the work of a unit (formerly known as CIB3) focusing on more serious types of corruption.
2. These figures do not cover support staff.

## Challenges for corruption investigation

The investigation of corruption differs in important ways from other, more conventional, types of police investigations. As one investigator noted:

*I've investigated every type of crime there is... but this is unique.*

Specific challenges described by PSU staff are described below, while approaches that address some of these issues are detailed later in the chapter.

### The investigative process

One of the key challenges to corruption investigations, noted by PSU staff in forces with more experience, was the difficulty of using standard criminal investigative techniques against police officers. For one thing, officers were very often aware of such methods, and were in a good position to evade detection. As one investigator noted:

*No methodology is available that mainstream policing does not have available to them... unlike a criminal, a corrupt officer knows exactly what can be deployed against him... they know how to cover their tracks.*

Coupled with these problems is the significant risk of compromise that accompanies an internal investigation. Information or suspicions about investigations have the potential to circulate within a force if details become known by staff outside of PSUs or, for example, if surveillance teams are recognised. It was noted that risks of compromise were likely to be more significant for smaller forces where there are fewer people, and force staff are better known to one another.

### Achieving convictions

Following on from this, some PSU staff felt there were particular difficulties in achieving convictions of police staff, at least with respect to police officers. As one investigator noted:

*It's definitely harder getting a conviction of a police officer.*

There were a number of reasons offered for this. In some cases, police officers, in conjunction with their legal defence teams, were described as particularly effective at exploiting disclosure rules,

thereby requiring the prosecution to disclose a wide range of information relating to the investigation to the court. Where there was a risk of compromise to confidential sources used in the prosecution case, this could present problems in taking the case forward.

A number of investigators also felt that juries were reluctant to convict officers; they could have apparently good career histories, dedication to the job, and they knew how to present themselves well in court. More generally, there was a perception by PSU investigators of sympathy among jurors for the 'Dirty Harry' variety of officers, who may have to bend the rules a bit to get the job done. These kinds of issues have been flagged up by others (e.g. Waddington, 1999).

### **'Collateral damage'**

Some PSU staff gave examples of investigations where particular squads, shifts or, to some extent, forces as a whole had suffered some demoralisation as a result of particular investigations. Specific examples included investigations that had been perceived as unfair in their targeting of certain individuals. Other examples included investigations that had been carried out in an insensitive way, including cases where staff had been arrested in front of their colleagues. While these types of problems are probably, to some extent, inevitable, it does point to the need for the careful targeting and management of investigations.

### **Public scrutiny**

Investigations into corruption have the potential to create bad publicity and criticism for police forces. There was a perception among some PSU staff that this had happened in forces where they had been successful in exposing corruption, for example, in the form of media coverage that had highlighted corruption problems within a force. Conversely, there were examples of investigations that had been criticised by the media or by public figures, for example, if they had not produced convictions. This means, potentially, that force PSUs are in a 'lose-lose' situation through their investigation work.

### **Welfare issues**

Those working within PSUs described particular stresses associated with the work they did, following from the negative perception others within the organisation often had of them. There were some examples described where PSU staff had been treated with overt hostility by former colleagues. As one investigator observed:

*I feel vulnerable in this force as a consequence of doing this job.*

This raises important issues about how staff are managed during their time in PSUs, and how they are subsequently re-integrated into the force.

### **Resource issues**

A final, but very significant, point to make here is that establishing and running PSUs is typically very resource-intensive. They draw not only on resources that would be required for a more conventional squad, such as teams of investigators; many interviewees noted the importance of staffing PSUs with some of the best force investigators, given the specific challenges of internal investigations. PSUs also require separate, dedicated intelligence databases and analysts. And, any requirement for general and technical surveillance teams, which are very often necessary for corruption investigations, can also present particular resource problems: in order to maintain confidentiality, sometimes it can be necessary to resource separate teams, or to hire these teams from a different force. It is notable, too, that investigations can run over a long period, often years, particularly if they involve both criminal and discipline procedures.

Collectively, these resource issues can be significant for forces, particularly the smaller ones; a point that was regularly acknowledged by participants in the research. Such issues point to the need to evaluate, in the longer-term, the impact of PSUs on corruption problems within forces, with a view to establishing how they might be operated most efficiently and effectively.

## Lessons for corruption investigation

This research was not able to carry out any formal evaluation of corruption investigations. It was, however, able to identify some lessons and pointers for their effective and efficient operation. In significant part, these follow from the insights of PSU staff. However, they also represent a critical response to some of the challenges already highlighted.

### **Alternatives to conviction**

Set against the difficulties described by PSU staff in obtaining convictions for police corruption, there was a range of alternative outcomes that have been used by force PSUs. In some cases these were more realistically achievable, and could require fewer resources. Using such approaches in addition to convictions, where appropriate, has the potential to allow PSUs to deal with more corruption (or other crime or misconduct) problems.

An important alternative to conviction is use of police discipline procedures. These had been used following unsuccessful attempts at criminal proceedings, or as a less resource-intensive alternative to criminal proceedings. An ideal objective of these procedures is typically to achieve 'fatal discipline', whereby an officer is ejected from the force. However, these did come with some of their own problems. For example, some officers, by claiming ill-health, were able to evade investigation under misconduct procedures.

An even more pragmatic approach to dealing with corruption problems, which was pursued by some investigators, involved the disruption of a corruption problem. This might still draw on criminal or discipline procedures, but for far lesser charges, perhaps even charges unrelated to the suspected corruption. However, there were other possibilities. The use of a 'service confidence' procedure was sometimes used where there was insufficient evidence for charges of any kind. This process involves reviewing the risks posed by a member of staff, confronting them with evidence of their activities, and moving them to a role where they face less risk to the organisation or the public. In other cases, low-level intelligence was passed to divisional commanders for action. PSUs sometimes also used ethical interviews, in which suspect members of staff are confronted with intelligence which suggests that they are involved in unethical behaviour. This allows for some clarification of the nature of the suspect's conduct by PSU staff. It is also a way of warning staff engaged in unethical activity that PSU staff are aware of their activities.

### **Efficient and effective targeting of operations**

The efficient targeting of corruption investigations will inevitably involve those seriously involved in corruption. Some investigators also highlighted the importance of targeting individuals outside the police service who actively sought to corrupt police officers. However, the efficient targeting of corruption investigations might involve not subjecting staff whose activities were less serious, or who were on the periphery of corrupt relationships, to a full, potentially expensive, criminal investigation (though they might be dealt with in other ways e.g. discipline). As well as being less resource-intensive, this might be less damaging to the morale of the organisation. In this regard, one investigator pointed to the importance of carrying out investigations that amounted to "surgical strikes", directed effectively and efficiently to take out the main players and deal with the problem.

### **Strategic decision-making**

Some of the issues already highlighted point to the potential value of an approach to investigations which takes into account, and weighs up, a wide range of considerations. Such an approach has the potential, if applied systematically, to provide a strategic and transparent way of managing risks and resources around investigations.<sup>13</sup> This should be seen as contrasting with a narrow 'enforcement' approach in which the strict application of law or regulations is the key basis for decision-making. While there was clear evidence of strategic thinking in the investigations described by interviewees, there were also examples where the strict application of the law had been the main driver behind

---

<sup>13</sup> These are important factors underpinning the National Intelligence Model (NCIS, 2000).

investigations, perhaps more common in some forces' early experiences of dealing with corruption issues.

Table 8 describes some of the considerations that might, ideally, come to bear on decision-making around corruption (and other internal) investigations. In doing so, it provides the beginnings of a template for strategic and transparent decision-making.<sup>14</sup> Specifically, the table raises a number of key questions for consideration, though these should be seen as illustrative, rather than as a definitive list. The table distinguishes between different decision-making points around the investigation process, namely:

- **Prioritisation of intelligence for research** – When intelligence suggests a range of suspects may be involved in corruption, limited resources may mean there is a need to be selective in deciding which intelligence is further 'developed' or researched by gathering and analysing further information.
- **Prioritisation of cases for investigation** – Similarly where, in the context of limited resources, a range of suspects might potentially warrant investigation, it can be important to prioritise which of these cases should be taken forward immediately, and which are held back.
- **Operational objectives** – As already noted, there is a range of outcomes that an investigation might achieve in relation to an individual (e.g. conviction, discipline, disruption). Similarly, there may be a range of potential targets within an identified corruption problem. The goals of an investigation need to be considered at the outset, though they may change in the life of an investigation, for example, as the evidential picture changes, or as the realistic prospects for different outcomes are re-evaluated.
- **Process decisions** – During the course of investigations, there are many decisions to be made about the avenues to pursue and the tactics to use. These might involve, for example, whether to deploy surveillance, whether and how to arrest or interview certain witnesses or suspects, or whether and how to brief the media.

Furthermore, when considering these decisions, Table 8 highlights a number of areas of risk, constraint and obligation which ideally should be taken into account in the decision-making process. These include:

- **Organisational risks** – Unethical, criminal or corrupt activities will pose risks to a force. These might include, for example, risks of compromise to other criminal investigations, or might involve the negative publicity that a force may attract if a problem is not addressed. Risks may also arise from the conduct of an organisation, for example, if the investigation is carried out in a way that impacts negatively on morale, or if it is seen as unsuccessful or unfair.
- **Public risks** – There have been examples where corrupt or unethical staff have posed risks to the safety or rights of members of the public. Unethical police behaviour may also have an impact on the community more generally, for example, if it prevents a force dealing effectively with crime problems. Risks to the public may also arise as a consequence of carrying out an investigation.
- **Requirement for justice** – It is important that identified unethical behaviour is dealt with in a manner consistent with principles of justice. However, there are different ways this might be done (e.g. through criminal proceedings, discipline proceedings, or other interventions). The level and type of intervention should ideally be proportionate to the seriousness of the unethical behaviour.

---

<sup>14</sup> This draws some of its insights from a Metropolitan Police Service document looking at risk management in internal investigations (Outram, 2001).





Table 8: Strategic decision-making in proactive internal investigations

Factors to consider	Decisions		
	What priority should be given to: developing intelligence/carrying out an investigation?	What are the objectives of an investigation?	Process decisions
<i>Organisational risks</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are potential risks to operational policing posed by the unethical police behaviour?</li> <li>• What are potential risks to police resources?</li> <li>• What are potential risks to public confidence?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What individuals should be targeted in order to address the problem?</li> <li>• Are high profile convictions important for public or organisational confidence?</li> <li>• Will problem re-occur if it is not dealt with by achieving high-level outcomes (e.g. full criminal convictions)?</li> <li>• Will disruption tactics alone protect the organisation sufficiently?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there ways of minimising organisational damage during investigations?</li> <li>• Are there ways of minimising organisational damage after an investigation?</li> </ul>
<i>Public risks</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there any risks to public safety posed by the unethical police behaviour?</li> <li>• Does the problem have an impact on the forces' ability to tackle crime problems of public concern?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What individuals should be targeted to ensure public safety?</li> <li>• Is a high-level conviction necessary to minimise public risks?</li> <li>• Will disruption tactics alone minimise public risks?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can public safety be maximised during an investigation?</li> </ul>
<i>Requirement for justice</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How serious is the unethical behaviour?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is it important to have 'full' justice for all individuals on moral grounds?</li> <li>• Will a lower-level outcome deliver effective justice?</li> <li>• Should all individuals implicated be tackled by an investigation?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the investigation being carried out in a thorough and legal way?</li> </ul>
<i>Prospect of success</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is an investigation likely to succeed?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What outcomes are most likely to be achievable?</li> <li>• What outcomes are most likely to stop problems from re-occurring?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the investigation being carried out competently?</li> <li>• What are the threats to the success of the investigation?</li> <li>• Is the methodology legal?</li> </ul>
<i>Resource implications</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are resources available?</li> <li>• Is an investigation likely to be expensive?</li> <li>• Are there other more pressing cases that should benefit from available resources?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are lower-level convictions or discipline outcomes less resource-intensive than convictions for full unethical activity?</li> <li>• Is it more cost-effective to disrupt the behaviour than to achieve convictions or disciplinary action?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are resources being used efficiently?</li> <li>• Are there more efficient methodologies?</li> </ul>

- **Prospects of success** – In deciding whether and how to take forward an investigation, it is important to consider whether, for particular outcomes, investigations are likely to be successful.
- **Resource implications** – Given limited resources within any PSU, it is important to consider how pursuing one line of inquiry may impact on taking forward others.

To sum up, the strategic approach described here is one which involves investigations being targeted and managed in an efficient and effective way, to maximise impact on problems, to minimise negative consequences for the force and the community, and to deliver justice. Additionally, it provides a basis for transparency and accountability in decision-making around an investigation.

### **Media strategies**

In view of the bad publicity that can accompany a corruption investigation, it is likely that forces would benefit from clear policies on managing the media when an investigation goes public. In practice, it may be difficult to influence the editorial line taken by the media to an investigation or a scandal. However, Feist (1999) observes that, by providing the media with as much information as possible, they are less likely to develop their own distinctive story on a particular investigation. He notes, too, that thought should be given to a media-handling strategy at early stage in an investigation.

### **Lessons for the management of PSUs**

This research was also able to identify some broader lessons and pointers for the management of PSUs. Again, in significant part, these follow from the insights of PSU staff, though they also represent a response to some of the challenges highlighted earlier in the chapter.

### **Positive marketing of PSUs**

In discussing the impact of PSUs on staff within forces, participants in this research highlighted the importance of creating a genuine deterrent for potentially corrupt police staff. However, there was also a concern that the PSU should be seen positively within the organisation. It was felt that PSUs could create a climate of paranoia. Furthermore, there was a view that the suspicion with which PSUs were often perceived was associated with a reluctance of police staff to come forward and report wrongdoing within the organisation, which could actually stand in the way of PSUs doing their work. This would suggest there is a role for a positive marketing of PSUs. Indeed, in this spirit, some of the PSUs had carried out talks within their forces to reassure staff.

### **Personnel issues**

Given the particular challenges of internal investigation work already outlined, this can place particular demands on the investigators involved. It has been noted that PSUs apparently required recruitment of some of the best investigators within the force. Ensuring that involvement in this area of work is valued in career terms may be an important part of attracting such people.

The particular vulnerability of PSU staff, given the hostility sometimes experienced by force colleagues, has also been noted, particularly when they return to more conventional policing duties. Managing this process with particular sensitivity is likely to be important. Returning officers, initially, to a more sympathetic policing environments should perhaps, ideally, be considered, along with following-up on any welfare needs of former PSU staff within their new posts.

### **Drawing lessons for prevention from PSU activity**

An area of good practice evident from the activities of some PSUs involved using insights from investigations about force vulnerabilities as a basis for developing force policies for corruption prevention. For example, the identification of sub-contractors as a source of risk, following investigations in one force, led to a new force policy of vetting subcontractors for future contracts.

## Inter-agency co-operation

It was not uncommon to find examples of co-operation between forces within the investigation process. This was particularly useful when internal surveillance teams ran the risk of attracting attention and compromising the operation, or where resource levels do not permit the separate financing of dedicated resources for PSUs. It is clear that for smaller forces, where resources are less, and where the risk of compromise may be greater using internal staff, this was a particularly valuable approach.

In the longer-term, however, more formal structures to deal with corruption and professional standards issues, perhaps at a regional or national level, may be an important way of dealing with these issues in a more systematic and cost-effective way. However, as many PSU staff pointed out, local force knowledge is still important to investigations, and if larger professional standards structures are to evolve, these may best complement rather than replace force-level PSUs.

## Evaluation of PSUs

In the longer-term, it will be important to evaluate the impact of PSUs on corruption problems within the police service. Specifically, it will be important to assess their effectiveness, and the ways in which they are most efficient and effective.

## Summary

- At this point in time, it is difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of PSUs at addressing the problem of corruption within their force. Those forces with more established anti-corruption efforts had managed to achieve a number of convictions of police staff, and managed to intervene against suspect staff through misconduct procedures or other forms of disruption. Even these forces, however, are in relatively early stages of their operation.
- The investigation of corruption was seen by PSU staff as different in important ways from other, more conventional, types of police investigations. Police officers under investigation were aware of standard investigative techniques, and there were significant risks of operational compromise within the force. In court, police officers were described as being particularly effective at exploiting disclosure rules to prevent the case being taken forward, and juries were described as reluctant to convict police officers.
- There were further challenges to the investigation of corruption. Some PSU staff gave examples of investigations where forces had been demoralised as a result of investigations. Investigations into corruption have the potential to create bad publicity and criticism for police forces, both when they were successful and when they were unsuccessful. Those working within PSUs were often perceived negatively by others in the organisation. And, importantly, the running of PSU investigations is typically resource-intensive.
- It was possible to identify some early lessons for corruption investigations. A range of alternative outcomes to conviction could be more realistically achievable and could involve fewer resources; these include the use of discipline procedures, and 'disruption' tactics. Efficient investigations might involve focusing resources primarily on those most seriously involved in corruption. Investigations could be carried out in a way which was strategic by taking into account a number of issues at key decision-making points, including: organisational risks from corruption, public risks, requirements for justice, prospects of success of an investigation, and the resource implications associated with it. Media strategies accompanying investigations might be used to minimise negative publicity.
- The research was also able to identify some broader lessons for the management of PSUs. These included the positive marketing of PSUs within forces to create a genuine deterrent while fostering co-operation and confidence within the force. PSUs need to consider ways of recruiting some of the best investigators, and of looking after staff when they return to more conventional policing roles. Lessons learned from PSU investigations should, ideally, be fed back into force prevention efforts. Forces would benefit from the development of larger professional standards

structures at a regional or national level, though such structures might best complement, rather than replace, force-level PSUs. Finally, it will be important over the longer-term to evaluate the impact of PSUs on corruption.

## 5. Prevention

This chapter reviews the opportunities for corruption prevention in light of the findings of this study. In doing so, it draws on a significant body of existing literature and good practice in relation to corruption prevention.

### Existing interventions

A wide range of good practice and recommendations for reducing levels of corruption have already been identified and discussed in detail in previous literature (e.g. Newburn, 1999; HMIC, 1999; Punch, 2000; McCaughan, 1999; ACPO guidance<sup>15</sup>). These interventions have provided the basis for some corruption strategies within forces involved in this research. For example, Box 4 details the approach to prevention taken by West Midlands Police in the form of their strategy for 'Policing by Example'.

While full details of the existing interventions are best provided directly from the publications already outlined, it is possible here to summarise briefly the main themes of these approaches.

#### *Box 4: 'Policing by Example' – West Midlands Police's strategy for tackling corruption*

##### **Promoting an ethical culture**

The corporate message of 'policing by example' involves a number of themes. It is concerned with setting high standards of conduct in dealings with the public and in professional practices. It emphasises the importance of leadership and setting standards in the workplace. It also involves an intolerant stance to harassment and other forms of victimisation, including the protection of those who report unethical behaviour among colleagues. These ideas have been promoted through:

- a short glossy document distributed across the force; and
- training aimed at raising awareness and providing guidance on challenging unacceptable behaviour.

##### **Management and supervision**

Policies improving the regulation and oversight of 'high-risk' areas of policing (e.g. informants and covert policing methods) have been established. These include effective audit mechanisms to test compliance. Training and publicity have emphasised the importance of leadership and setting standards in the workplace.

##### **Information security**

Policies and procedures have been established to ensure that sensitive information and data systems have appropriate access levels. Audit trails of these systems have also been established to identify irregularities and potential abuse.

##### **Monitoring and auditing**

Procedures for monitoring and auditing information security, informant management and covert policing methods have already been described. Analysis of patterns of complaints is carried out to assist managers in identifying and remedying unethical behaviour. Specific pieces of information on unethical behaviour are collected and analysed within PSUs. Finally, reviews of existing policies and audits of their implementation have been established.

<sup>15</sup> Guidance from the ACPO Presidential Task Force on Corruption, *A Document to Assist Chief Officers Assess the Vulnerability of their Force to Corruption*; ACPO Corruption Prevention Strategy Paper (confidential document) also provides details of prevention strategies.

*Box 4: 'Policing by Example' – West Midlands Police's strategy for tackling corruption***Vetting**

The force has introduced new procedures to check the suitability of new applicants by looking into their backgrounds. It has also introduced more developed vetting procedures for applicants to 'high-risk' posts, where corruption risks are seen as greater.

**Reporting wrong-doing policy**

The force has established a confidential help-line for staff to report the unethical conduct of colleagues. This is backed-up by a commitment to ensuring those reporting such behaviour receive appropriate support throughout any investigative process and in the longer-term.

**Proactive investigation**

The force has established a PSU that takes an intelligence-led proactive approach to investigating corruption and other criminality and misconduct.

*Note: This information is based on interviews and a strategy document. Its implementation was not researched.*

**Cultural change**

Previous literature (e.g. Punch, 2000; Newburn, 1999; HMIC, 1999) has attached importance to changing the culture of policing organisations in order to reduce corruption. Promoting an ethical culture is likely to involve strong leadership throughout the organisation, a clear statement of ethical principles, and clear attention to integrity within education and training.

**Management and supervision**

A repeated lesson arising from examples of corruption is that weaknesses in supervision and management typically accompany the development of problems. Improving management and supervision might include on the one hand greater formal processes for accounting for police activity, coupled with greater supervisory presence (Newburn, 1999). It is the recommendation of HMIC (1999) that all supervisory staff should be more active in raising standards of behaviour. Those in sensitive posts, such as those handling informants, have been flagged-up for particular attention. HMIC, for example, details good practice for recruiting, handling and overseeing relationships with informants. Supervision and scrutiny should be given to staff with all levels of performance, and should not just be directed at those seen to be performing badly (Punch, 2000).

**Recruitment and posting**

HMIC has identified a number of approaches relating to the recruitment and posting issues that provide protection against corruption. These include effective vetting of staff at the recruitment stage, as well as more advanced vetting for high-risk posts. Selection of staff for posts is also an important area of concern, with previous examples of groups of corrupt officers recruiting one another for particular squads or areas of work, thereby facilitating corrupt activities. HMIC has therefore advocated a fair and transparent system of postings for jobs, and a regular turnover of staff within these jobs.

**Information security**

The importance of security around information both in general terms and in specific relation to IT systems has been highlighted by HMIC. Kent County Constabulary (McCaughan, 1999) has developed key strategies for protecting information. This places emphasis on formal security policies, staff vetting for information access, physical security measures to protect information, and the

promotion of a culture which is conscious of the risks to information, and which operates on information being accessed on a 'need-to-know' basis only.

### **Monitoring and auditing**

The monitoring of data with implications for integrity, such as patterns of complaints and civil actions, crime recording, and informant handling has also been recommended by HMIC, along with regular audits of information systems to identify any irregularities. Monitoring might also involve the use of 'quality assurance tests', which have been used in the MPS, where artificial situations are constructed with a view to checking ethical and professional performance.

### **Policies for improving accountability**

Other ways of promoting integrity include more transparent and accountable systems of paying for expenses, crime recording, and registering business interests of police staff (HMIC, 1999).

### **Proactive investigation of corruption**

Clearly, the proactive investigation of corruption, as discussed in detail in the last chapter, represents a key element of a prevention strategy. Feeding into this, HMIC and ACPO<sup>16</sup> have also recommended the use of 'professional standards reporting' systems within forces, whereby staff are able to report wrongdoing using a confidential line.

### **Targeting prevention strategies at contemporary corruption**

The key challenge that follows from this research is to apply and develop the existing range of interventions to effectively target contemporary corruption.

### **Strategies should address all types of staff**

Corruption strategies need to target the full range of police staff implicated in corruption by this research: detectives, uniformed officers, and support staff, as well as staff in different ranks. In some cases, this will require a range of different interventions for different staff rather than simply a 'one size fits all' approach or a primary focus on police officers at the 'sharp end'. For example, it may be important to strengthen supervision of support staff or officers primarily with administrative responsibilities. This is particularly important when their potential role in the leaking of information is considered.

In line with this, it is important to look again at police roles which may be considered 'high-risk' and thereby worthy of particular attention in efforts to prevent corruption. While traditionally, forces have been concerned with officers in squads, and those handling informants, this research suggests that it may be necessary to widen our thinking. High-risk roles might also include officers with administrative roles or support staff, for example, where they have access to particularly sensitive information.

### **Information security should be a central focus of prevention efforts**

The significant role played by the leaking of information in the image of corruption presented here, means that information security needs to be a cornerstone of corruption prevention strategies. While policies such as those developed in Kent County Constabulary, described above, are an important starting point for these kinds of measures, there is no doubt that information security techniques could be developed further.

For example, the Police Information Technology Organisation (PITO) and force contractors should be recommending and designing systems with explicit consideration of risks to information within their design, and with full audit capabilities of all types of use and access as standard. In the design and

---

<sup>16</sup> ACPO Presidential Task Force on Corruption, *Policy for Professional Standards Reporting 'Doing the Right Thing'*, ACPO Corruption Prevention Strategy Paper.

auditing of systems, consideration might also be given to the possibility of automatic ‘flagging’ of patterns of irregular and potentially unethical use, which might provide a basis for further investigation.

It probably remains a significant challenge for police forces to reform their systems and culture to fully adhere to a ‘need-to-know’ principle.

### **Strategies need to target both work and non-work factors**

One of the key findings of this research is that factors outside of the workplace can be very important in giving rise to corruption. This may involve domestic problems, and it certainly involves social networks among police staff that connect them with criminals. Strategies therefore need to target these kinds of risks.

Vetting processes at the recruitment stage (for both officers and support staff) and for more sensitive posts clearly need to take account of this. There may even be a case for giving priority to recruiting staff who originate or live outside a police force area, given the evidence in this research that risks of corrupt social networks within a force may be higher for those living in the force area. Training, too, needs to give emphasis to the risks that police staff may face outside the job so that they are equipped to manage these risks, and to avoid potential compromise.

There may be other measures worthy of consideration. These might include proactive welfare interventions, to provide assistance to staff with domestic problems. For example, this could entail some kind of regular (perhaps annual) welfare session with a force counsellor, during which police staff are given an opportunity to discuss any personal or domestic issues. In a similar way, forces might consider providing financial management services to their staff.

It may also be that forces, through PSU intelligence, could develop risk profiles of certain leisure environments, which are communicated to staff, perhaps even with the recommendation that certain places or environments are avoided by staff outside of work.

### **Forces should centrally monitor their ‘ethical health’**

In describing the nature of corrupt activity, and identifying some of its causes, this research points to a wide range of information sources that might provide indications of corruption or unethical behaviour within the organisation. These include information arising from:

- complaints;
- failed operations;
- irregular patterns of IT access identified by monitoring or audits;
- audits of systems, such as informant handling, expenses, crime recording;
- performance measures (such as crime or clear-up statistics);
- information from vetting processes;
- other welfare information; and
- PSU intelligence.

A centralised monitoring function within forces, perhaps based with PSUs, could usefully draw together this type of information in order to monitor the ‘ethical health’ of the organisation. Such an approach might help identify, for example:

- ‘problem’ officers;
- ‘problem’ teams;
- vulnerabilities to corruption;
- failures in management or supervision;
- weakness in accountability; and
- trends in ‘ethical health’ over time.

Clearly, interventions could follow the identification of problems, whether this amounts to improving practices, intervening with teams or individuals, or carrying out formal investigations. This work might



build, in part, on the role of Operational Security Officers (OPSYs) that can be found in the NCS and in Kent County Constabulary. These staff are employed to independently review operations with a view to identifying potential compromise, as well as examining integrity issues more generally.

### **Inter-agency co-operation around prevention**

Finally, the finding that police corruption could, in some cases, involve partner agencies, suggests it is important that corruption prevention strategies encompass more than just police forces. This might be particularly important where information is shared with other organisations. Agencies which would also benefit from anti-corruption strategies would include, but not be limited to:

- Customs and Excise;
- NCS;
- NCIS;
- Crown Prosecution Service; and
- courts.

### **Evaluation**

As discussed in relation to PSUs in the last chapter, it will be important to evaluate the impact of these measures on corruption when implemented in forces, and to identify the most effective way of applying them.

Table 9, below, summarises these messages by highlighting how existing prevention measures might be developed on the basis of the research findings.

### **Summary**

- Existing literature looking at the prevention of corruption already provides a range of specific interventions. These have been taken up by some forces involved in this research.
- These approaches include:
  - promoting an ethical police culture within the organisation;
  - strengthening management and supervision, particularly in high-risk areas;
  - improvements in recruitment and postings, including vetting;
  - monitoring and auditing of data on integrity issues;
  - improving information security;
  - a range of policies for improving accountability; and
  - the proactive investigation of corruption.
- The key challenge that follows from this research is to apply and develop the existing range of interventions to effectively target contemporary corruption.
- Specifically, strategies should:
  - target all types of staff;
  - give particular priority to information security;
  - target both work and non-work factors;
  - ideally involve forces centrally monitoring their 'ethical health' using a variety of indicators; and
  - include arrangements for inter-agency co-operation around corruption prevention.

Table 9: Existing corruption prevention measures and the emphasis given by this research

<b>Area of intervention</b>	<b>Key elements</b>	<b>Emphasis given by this research</b>
<i>Promoting ethical culture</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong leadership</li> <li>• Statement of ethical principles</li> <li>• Policies on gifts/discounts</li> <li>• Ethical training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethical training should teach staff to manage the risks to which they are exposed, including domestic and social risks that exist outside of work.</li> <li>• Should encompass all staff types.</li> <li>• Should be supported by proactive welfare interventions (e.g. counselling, financial advice).</li> </ul>
<i>Management and supervision</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong/intrusive supervision</li> <li>• Particular attention to 'high-risk' posts (e.g. informant handlers)</li> <li>• Attention to high and low performers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management and supervision should be tailored to fit the range of roles and staff types.</li> <li>• 'High-risk' label should potentially cover a range of roles and staff types, including administrative and support staff posts.</li> </ul>
<i>Recruitment and posting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vetting at recruitment stage</li> <li>• Vetting for 'high-risk' posts</li> <li>• Transparent and fair posting of staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Important to ensure that these measures cover all staff types.</li> <li>• 'High-risk' posts should cover range of roles.</li> <li>• Recruiting staff who live outside a force area may help reduce risks.</li> </ul>
<i>Information security</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Security policies</li> <li>• Staff vetting for information access</li> <li>• Physical security measures</li> <li>• Promotion of 'need-to-know' culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This should be a cornerstone of prevention efforts.</li> <li>• Important that staff are aware of risks to information security from social networks outside work.</li> <li>• Important to continue work to develop techniques for information security.</li> </ul>
<i>Monitoring and auditing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring of data on integrity issues (e.g. complaints)</li> <li>• Audits of information systems</li> <li>• Quality assurance testing?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Centralised monitoring of 'ethical health' would help identify risks and problems within forces.</li> <li>• Important to profile and understand high-risk leisure environments outside of work place (e.g. through intelligence).</li> </ul>
<i>Policies for improving accountability</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expenses</li> <li>• Crime recording</li> <li>• Registering business interests</li> <li>• Other areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Important to cover all staff types in accountability systems.</li> </ul>
<i>Proactive investigation of corruption</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of a PSU</li> <li>• Professional standards reporting system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Important for investigations to be carried out strategically, with regard for the risks and opportunities.</li> <li>• Important to deter potentially corrupt staff while avoiding creating a climate of paranoia within the organisation.</li> </ul>

## 6. Conclusions and recommendations

This research has assessed evidence of police corruption within England and Wales. In doing so, it has looked beyond the historical scandals, which may have shaped images of police corruption in the past, and focused on current police intelligence. It has looked not only at the large urban forces that have dominated the historical images of corruption, but also at the experiences of smaller and more rural forces that have not had such a profile. As such, the findings are likely to have a relevance to all police forces in England and Wales.

The research has shown that, while limited to a small minority of police staff, corruption can be found across a range of forces. These include both large and small forces, and those covering both urban and rural environments. It also found corruption across a range of police roles including detective, uniform and support staff, and in both lower and higher ranks of officers. The research has also highlighted some distinctive forms of corruption that were found consistently across the forces studied. These include the leaking of sensitive information, and the existence of corrupt police staff operating alone within the organisation. This image stands in contrast to the more traditional and stereotypical forms of corruption, involving groups of detectives collaborating in an often diverse range of corrupt activities. While this more stereotypical corruption is still in evidence, notably in the London area, current evidence suggests it is somewhat less common.

Finally, the research has drawn our attention to a wide range of factors that appear to underlie corruption. Of particular note are the risks faced by police outside the job, an area perhaps neglected in previous thinking. Relationships with friends or relatives or those formed in leisure environments can provide an important basis for the development of corruption among police staff. Similarly, personal issues such as relationship difficulties, debt, or problems with alcohol or drugs may also be associated with an involvement in corruption.

### Recommendations

Details of how the corruption should be tackled, both in terms of investigation and prevention, have been explored in some detail in this report. The key recommendations that emerge from this discussion are provided below.

#### Force managers

- All forces should develop strategies to prevent corruption, which are comprehensive in addressing the wide range of factors that can give rise to corruption. Elements of such a strategy include the points listed below. These strategies should be properly evaluated to ensure their effectiveness.
- Forces need to promote an ethical culture in the organisation, through leadership, statements of ethical principles and training. This culture should emphasise the importance of ethical conduct, even where staff are under pressure to perform. The culture should encompass all police staff roles, should involve educating staff about the risks that they face both inside and outside work, and might be supported by proactive welfare interventions, such as the provision of counselling and financial advice to staff.
- Management and supervision should be strengthened across police organisations. This should apply to all staff types and should be directed at both low and high performers. High-risk roles, which should be subject to particularly strong supervision, should be taken to include administrative and support roles as well as police officers at the 'sharp end'.
- Policies for vetting staff at the recruitment stage and for high-risk posts should be implemented. In doing so, it is important to consider that a range of roles, including administrative and support staff posts, may be high-risk. Forces may also wish to consider recruiting staff from outside a force area to reduce their risks of corruption.
- Policies for a fair, transparent system of postings for jobs, and for ensuring a regular turnover of staff within these jobs should also be established.

- Information security should be placed at the centre of prevention efforts. This should draw on existing strategies (such as that developed at Kent County Constabulary by McCaughan, 1999) including security policies around IT, physical security of information assets, and the promotion of a 'need-to-know' culture. However, it will be important to continue the development of techniques for information security.
- A wide range of data should be collected to monitor the 'ethical health' of police forces, including, but not limited to: complaints, failed operations, irregular patterns of IT use, performance measures and PSU intelligence. Ideally, this process should be carried out at a central point, and could then be used to identify risks and problems within the organisation, which could provide a basis for subsequent interventions.
- Policies to ensure accountability in a range of areas, including expenses, crime recording and staff business interests should be fully implemented.
- Forces should establish or continue to resource existing PSUs to combat existing corruption and to provide a deterrent for the development of future corruption. The work of PSUs should be evaluated to ensure their efficient and effective operation.

### Professional Standards Units

- In carrying out investigations, consideration should be given to pursuing a range of possible outcomes. While convictions are desirable, these can be difficult and resource-intensive to achieve. Alternatives which can involve fewer resources, or which may be more easily achieved, include the use of discipline procedures, and 'disruption' tactics. Similarly, focusing resources primarily on those most seriously involved in corruption will help make investigations more efficient.
- In carrying out investigations to deal with corruption, it is important that decisions are taken strategically and transparently to allow for the effective management of risks and resources. Specifically, in deciding whether to develop intelligence or start an investigation, in setting the objectives of an investigation, and in making day-to-day operational decisions, attention should be given to: risks to the organisation, risks to the public, the requirement for justice, the prospects of success, and resource implications.
- Media strategies should accompany investigations to minimise negative publicity. Thought should be given to these at the outset, and they should aim to provide the media with as much as information as possible to influence positively the media treatment of an investigation.
- In order to maximise the deterrence value of PSUs and to ensure co-operation from police staff with investigations, PSU should be positively marketed within forces, raising the profile of PSU work but reassuring staff about their activities.
- High quality investigators should be recruited to work in PSUs, given a number of specific difficulties associated with internal investigations. Re-integration of PSU staff into the policing organisation also needs to be carefully managed, given the hostilities such staff may face on their return to more conventional policing. This might include giving careful consideration to the policing environment to which they are initially returned, and following up any welfare issues with staff.
- The identification of problems and vulnerabilities within forces through PSU investigations should be used to inform force prevention strategies.

### ACPO

- ACPO should look to developing formal regional or national professional standards structures to assist anti-corruption and professional standards work. These should complement and support, rather than replace, PSUs within forces.

**Police authorities and HMIC**

- Inspections and monitoring of integrity within forces should be carried out. These should pay specific attention to the nature and implementation of prevention policies, monitoring data on 'ethical health', and the transparency and strategic conduct of investigations.
- The effectiveness of PSUs and other prevention measures should be reviewed over the longer-term, with a view to identifying best practice.

## References

Billingsley, R. (1999) *Research into the Relationship between Informers and Handlers in England: Some findings*. Presentation to National Informant Working Group, National Crime Squad Headquarters, 11 November 1999.

Bostic Commission (2000) *Board of Inquiry into the Rampart Area Corruption Incident*. Los Angeles: LAPD.

Caless, B. W. (1999) *Police Corruption: Vulnerability profiling*. A paper examining incidence, causes and possible remedies. Kent: Kent County Constabulary.

Feist, A. (1999) *The Effective Use of Media in Serious Crime Investigations*. Police Research Series paper 120. London: Home Office.

Fitzgerald Commission (1987) *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Possible Illegal Activities and Associated Police Misconduct*. Brisbane: Queensland Commission of Inquiry.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) (1999) *Police Integrity: Securing and maintaining public confidence*. London: Home Office.

Knapp, W. (1972) *Report of the Commission to Investigate Alleged Police Corruption*. New York: George Braziller.

McCaughan, R. (1999) *Police Security Management Programme: Minerva*. Kent: Kent County Constabulary.

Manning, P. K. and Redlinger, L. J. (1977) 'Invitational edges' in Klockars, C. B. (ed.) *Thinking About Police*. New York: McGraw Hill.

Maguire, M. and John, T. (1995) *Intelligence, Surveillance and Informants: Integrated approaches*. Crime Detection and Prevention Series paper 64. London: Home Office.

Mollen Commission (1994) *Report of the Commission to Investigate Allegations of Police Corruption and the Anti-Corruption Procedures of the Police Department*. New York: Mollen Commission.

Morton, J. (1993) *Bent Coppers: A survey of police corruption*. London: Little, Brown and Co.

National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS) (2000) *The National Intelligence Model*. London: NCIS.

Newburn, T. (1999) *Understanding and Preventing Police Corruption: Lessons from the literature*. Police Research Series paper 110. London: Home Office.

Outram, M. (2001) *Smart Guide to Internal Investigations*. Metropolitan Police Service and New South Wales Police Service.

Punch, M. (2000) 'Police corruption and its prevention'. *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research* 8 (3).

Punch, M. (1985) *Conduct Unbecoming*. London: Tavistock.

Quinton, P. (2003) *An Evaluation of the New Police Misconduct Procedures*. Home Office Online Report 04/03. London: Home Office.

Roebuck, J. B. and Barker, T. (1974) 'A typology of police corruption'. *Social Problems* 21.

Sherman, L. W. (1978) *Scandal and Reform: Controlling police corruption*. Berkeley; University of California Press.

Sherman, L. W. (1974) 'Introduction: Toward a sociological theory of police corruption' in Sherman, L. W. (ed.) *Police Corruption: A sociological perspective*. New York: Doubleday.

Von Hirsch, A., Bottoms, A. E., Burney, E. and Wikström, P.-O. (1999) *Criminal Deterrence and Sentence Severity: An analysis of recent research*. London: Hart.

Waddington, P. A. J. (1999) *Policing Citizens*. London: UCL Press.

Webb Commission (1998) *Report of the Commission on Police Integrity*. Chicago: Webb Commission.

Wilson, J. Q. (1968) *Varieties of Police Behaviour*. Massachusetts: Harvard.

Wood, J. R. T. (1997) *Final Report of the Royal Commission into the New South Wales Police Service: Volume 1: Corruption*.

## Appendix: A typology of police corruption

This table is reproduced from Newburn (1999). It is based on a typology offered by Roebuck and Barker (1974) and amended by Punch (1985).

*Table 10: Types and dimensions of police corruption*

<b>Type</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>
<i>Corruption of authority</i>	When an officer receives some form of material gain by virtue of their position as a police officer without violating the law <i>per se</i> (e.g. free drinks, meals, services).
<i>'Kickbacks'</i>	Receipt of goods, service or money for referring business to particular individuals or companies.
<i>Opportunistic theft</i>	Stealing from arrestees (sometimes referred to as 'rolling'), from traffic accident victims, crime victims and the bodies or property of dead citizens.
<i>'Shakedowns'</i>	Acceptance of a bribe for not following through a criminal violation i.e. not making an arrest, filing a complaint or impounding property.
<i>Protection of illegal activities</i>	Police protection of those engaged in illegal activities (prostitution, drugs, pornography) enabling the business to continue operating.
<i>'The fix'</i>	Undermining of criminal investigations or proceedings, or the 'loss' of traffic tickets.
<i>Direct criminal activities</i>	A police officer commits a crime against person or property for personal gain 'in clear violation of both departmental and criminal norms'.
<i>Internal payoffs</i>	Prerogatives available to police officers (holidays, shift allocations, promotion) are bought, bartered and sold.
<i>'Flaking' or 'padding'</i>	Planting of or adding to evidence (argued by Punch to be particularly evident in drugs cases).



Produced by the Research Development and Statistics Directorate, Home Office

This document is available only in Adobe Portable Document Format (**PDF**)  
through the RDS website

Home Office  
Research, Development and Statistics Directorate  
Communication Development Unit  
Room 275  
50 Queen Anne's Gate  
London SW1H 9AT

Tel: 020 7273 2084 (answerphone outside of office hours)

Fax: 020 7222 0211

Email: [publications.rds@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:publications.rds@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk)

ISBN 1 84082 731 9

© Crown copyright 2003