

POLICE

Police Magazine Update

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PCCs could damage police relationship with public

Clear national standards are needed to keep corruption out of policing as Police and Crime Commissioners could 'endanger' the trust relationship between the police and the public.

The comments have been made by Paul McKeever, chair of the Police Federation, following the report by HMIC, *Without fear or favour: A review of police relationships*, published today and highlighting that most people do not think corruption is commonplace within policing.

Mr McKeever said that PCCs, being introduced by the government to develop a direct relationship between the public and police, could actually threaten the 'open and transparent nature of police governance'.

He added: "The report recognises the importance of clear national standards. This is hugely important for the future integrity of the police service as we face an unprecedented level of structural changes in 2012 including the introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners, whose priorities could be based upon populism and seeking re-election."

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary was tasked by Home Secretary Theresa May to look into issues around corruption in the wake of the phone hacking scandal, which prompted concerns over the relationship between the police and media. Although it found corruption was not endemic in the service it points to a lack of national standards.

Mr McKeever raised concerns over the impact of PCCs after a number of accusations of corruption in areas such as New York which has a similar style of governance. In one case the police were accused of recording serious offences as minor in order to keep crime figures low and the elected commissioner failed to properly investigate the allegations.

Mike Cunningham, chief constable and ACPO lead on professional standards, said: "The police service is a highly accountable organisation which must be responsive and trusted by the public. With a dedicated team to investigate allegations of corruption in each force, we have one of the least corrupt police services in the world."

Chief superintendent Derek Barnett, president of the Police Superintendents' Association, said the service should 're-double' efforts to tackle issues around integrity and honesty in a robust fashion.