

**POL/21/2009**

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To: Police Staff Branches  
(Scotland – for information)  
Police Staff Regional Contacts  
Police Staff Service Group Executive  
Secretaries of Regional Police Committees

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### **HMIC Inspection of Police Authorities: 2009/10**

**This circular introduces the proposed HMIC inspection of police authorities, advises branches on issues to raise in the inspection and asks branches to fax back information to allow UNISON to brief HMIC nationally on the key issues for UNISON in each force in England and Wales.**

#### **1 Background**

In last year's Police Green Paper, the Government signalled its intention to improve the accountability of police authorities to the communities they serve. Although the Government eventually withdrew its proposals to introduce directly elected Crime and Policing Representatives onto police authorities, it remains concerned over the ability of police authorities to hold chief constables to account and properly reflect the views of local communities in so doing. The forthcoming police authority inspection by HMIC will provide the Government with the data it needs to assess whether its concerns over accountability are founded.

In our response to the Green Paper, UNISON agreed with the Government that the accountability of police authorities needed to be examined and improved, both in respect of citizens (external accountability) and staff (internal accountability). The forthcoming HMIC inspection therefore gives us an opportunity to explore with the inspectors how well police authorities are performing as employers of police staff. Over the years UNISON has had concerns that many police authorities, in delegating HR management to the chief constable, effectively washed their hands of any role as employer. In less than half the branches which responded to a recent survey did the police authority hear final appeals against dismissal.

## **2 What will the inspection cover?**

The HMIC inspection of police authorities will cover the following themes:

- Setting strategic direction and priorities
- Scrutinising performance outcomes
- Achieving results through community engagement
- Ensuring value for money and productivity

UNISON believes that the effective discharge of the role of police authority as employer is crucial to the delivery of proper scrutiny and ensuring value for money and productivity.

## **3 Inspection Timetable**

Inspections will be delivered on a phased basis of four blocks of 10 or 11 inspections each. The first phase, to take place between September and November 2009, will cover:

Met Police  
Avon & Somerset  
Hampshire  
Wiltshire  
Leicestershire  
Northamptonshire  
Cheshire  
GMP  
Lancashire  
Gwent

The remaining three tranches will be announced in July 2009.

## **4 What should branches do?**

HMIC has confirmed that it intends to interview a senior UNISON representative during each authority inspection. This is a real opportunity for branches to comment in detail on the role of their police authority as an employer in delivering an effective scrutiny function and effective monitoring of productivity.

UNISON has long argued that effective scrutiny of the HR function devolved to chief constables requires the police authority to hear final appeals against dismissal and provide the final stage in grievance procedures. Scrutiny should also involve meeting regularly with UNISON representatives. UNISON believes that some police authorities have taken the power to delegate the HR function to the chief constable too literally. The forthcoming HMIC inspection of police authorities provides the opportunity for branches to challenge this, as appropriate, locally via the HMIC inspection team.

## 5 Information for HMIC

HMIC has invited UNISON to provide key intelligence to the inspection teams prior to the inspections, to help equip the inspection teams. Please complete and fax back the attached intelligence report as soon as possible.

Please let me know if you have any queries.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ben Priestley', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ben Priestley  
National Officer  
Police Staff Service Group

**FAX BACK TO: 0207 551 1195**



**HMIC PRE-INSPECTION INTELLIGENCE**

**1 Force:** .....

**2 Branch Officer for HMIC Contact:** .....

**3 Contact details: Tel no:** .....

**e-mail:** .....

**4 Does your Police Authority hear final appeals against dismissal?**

**Yes**

**No**

**5 Does your Police Authority act as final referral on grievances?**

**Yes**

**No**

**6 Please list the main issues or concerns that UNISON is currently dealing with in your Force.**

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