

# The Threat to UK Law Enforcement from Corruption

## ***Executive Summary***

### **Purpose**

This section provides a summary of the findings of the SOCA Strategic Intelligence Assessment of the Threat to UK Law Enforcement from Corruption (the assessment). It provides a clear description of the threats in order of their relative severity. It does not contain the full details of intelligence supporting the findings, nor does it fully describe the methodologies and vulnerabilities exploited by corruption.

*(This sensitive information included in the full CONFIDENTIAL assessment available to Chief Officers and Anti-Corruption Units)*

### **Background**

For the purpose of the assessment corruption was defined as

*“any activity carried out by an individual for gain, favour, advancement or reward that is inconsistent with the proper practice of their office, employment or responsibility”.*

The assessment is based upon reporting from across UK Law Enforcement with the full cooperation of members of the ACPO Counter Corruption Advisory Group.

### **Key Findings**

#### ***Corruptors***

Corruptors tend to fall into the following categories:

##### **Partner, Family Member or Friend**

*When the corruptor is an associate of the employee (term used to include officer, staff member contractor or other employee) this provides a higher risk of corrupt activity and links to corruptors often stem from well established relationships. This becomes an aggravating factor when the associate is a member of one of the other threat groups.*

##### **Criminals (National Intelligence Model (NIM) Levels 1,2&3)**

*Criminals want law enforcement information for a variety of reasons, but principally in order to avoid detection, compromise prosecutions, identify 'leaks' in their organisation, build their understanding of law enforcement tactics and to increase their credibility amongst criminal peers. NIM levels 2&3 present the greater threat.*

##### **Private Investigators (PIs)**

*Whether seeking corrupt access to information to support investigations or working to directly assist criminals PIs are an increasing threat. They may include people with law enforcement or similar backgrounds with knowledge of investigative tactics and methodologies.*

##### **Journalists and Commercial Interests**

*Rarely seeking to undermine law enforcement activity but may seek to gain professional or financial advantage from corrupt access to information.*

In most cases the corruptor is a third party seeking access to law enforcement information. The corruptor may also employ intermediaries to act on their behalf although this is less common with lower NIM level criminality.

## **Corrupt Employees**

Corrupt employees tend to fall into four categories according to how they originally became involved in corruption:

### **Tasked by a 3<sup>rd</sup> Party**

*While bribes, coercion and blackmail all take place the most common motive is misplaced loyalty exploited by the corruptor.*

### **Self Tasked**

*Where an employee seeks personal gain who identifies a corrupt opportunity to commit crime or aid criminals. This may lead to subsequent 3<sup>rd</sup> party tasking. This also includes the (rare) cases of networked corruption where employees collude to commit corrupt acts.*

### **Infiltration**

*The deliberate attempt to gain employment in order to abuse the access this affords. Identified cases are rare and require a relatively advanced approach.*

### **Unwitting Corruption**

*Generally involving exploitation by a manipulative or opportunistic 3<sup>rd</sup> party and may arise from poor operational or personal security practice .but makes the employee more vulnerable to subsequent, more aggressive, coercive tactics.*

## **Common Factors**

A number of factors appear common regardless of the type of corruption:

- Personal vulnerabilities, eg. suspected drug use or undeclared debt
- Disaffection or poor performance
- Lower levels of vetting
- Pre-existing corruption concerns
- Lack of adequate supervision
- Employees living and working in the same area
- Social and/or family links to criminals outside of the workplace

## **Corrupt Actions**

A range of corrupt and criminal behaviours are commonly reported

- Unauthorised disclosure of information
- Abuse of authority
- Theft and fraud
- Misuse of systems (often but not always linked to unauthorised disclosure)
- Perverting the course of justice
- Supplying controlled drugs

## Vulnerabilities

A number of personal and organisational vulnerabilities are exploited for the purpose of corruption.

- The most significant personal factor is the inappropriate association of employees with 'potentially compromising individuals' who may seek to exploit their position.
- Associations with criminals and the exposure to steroid abuse arising from some gyms is a concern.  
*These associations are exacerbated where employees live and work in the same area.*
- The increased prevalence of social networking may assist the corruptor in identifying employees and give valuable information making them more vulnerable to pressure.
- Lifestyle choices that conflict with a law enforcement role eg drug or alcohol misuse, unmanageable debt, excessive gambling or involvement in the sex industry, may also provide opportunities for exploitation.
- Partnership working that involves increased access to law enforcement information, often coupled with varied employment and vetting standards as well as relatively low levels of supervision, creates vulnerabilities.
- Pressure to meet demanding targets in the absence of active, ethical supervision still leads to corrupt actions.
- Increased access to information held on IT systems with varying audit and monitoring regimes can also present corrupt opportunities and reduce the likelihood of detection.