



Inspecting policing  
in the **public interest**

## **Anti-social behaviour inspection report**

**Cheshire Constabulary  
June 2012**

## About this review

In Spring 2010, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) carried out a review to find out how the police can best tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB). We committed to repeating this inspection in 2012 to check on progress. This report tells you what we found in Cheshire; the 2010 review is available on the HMIC website ([www.hmic.gov.uk](http://www.hmic.gov.uk)).

### What works in tackling ASB?

In 2010 HMIC found that forces have the best chance to give ASB victims a good service if they:

- **Identify if a caller is a vulnerable** (for instance, elderly or disabled) **or repeat victim** as soon as they call the police, so they can get extra support;
- **Brief all relevant officers and staff** regularly and thoroughly about local ASB issues;
- Regularly **gather and analyse data and information** about ASB places, offenders and victims, and allocate resources to tackle specific problems; and
- **Provide their neighbourhood policing teams with the right tools and resources** to tackle ASB.

This is how Cheshire Constabulary is performing in these key areas.

# Findings for Cheshire Constabulary

## Overview

There is a relatively low level of ASB recorded by police in Cheshire in comparison with the rest of England and Wales.

HMIC found that the force has made some progress since 2010 in tackling ASB in Cheshire. It has strengthened its commitment to an approach to policing that focuses on the needs of the citizens, by investing in neighbourhood policing teams. ASB is looked at in its many forms and the needs of the victim are at the centre of force plans to tackle the problem.

The chief officer team is committed to tackling ASB, and as such it is a force priority. As outlined in the police authority plan, the focus is on improving the quality of the professional service delivered in dealing with the problem, and to get to the root causes of issues which matter most to communities.

However, there was little evidence of sharing best practice across the force, and no system in place to consistently flag up to staff who are responding to a call if it relates to a local priority. HMIC is also concerned that definitions of who should be categorised as a repeat or vulnerable victim (so that more support can be offered) are not clear and public contact staff use information concerning repeat victims to inform their own assessment of vulnerability.

## **Are repeat and vulnerable victims effectively identified at the point of report?**

Cheshire Constabulary's IT system does not consistently flag up if a caller has rung them before, although it does identify if a call has been made from the location in the last 90 days. After this period, the call taker needs to link and physically bookmark the information manually, as they need to do with names or vehicles. There is no standard set of questions to help the call taker identify if a caller is a repeat victim; if the call taker establishes this is the case, they need to manually add this information to the record. In the 100 calls from the public which were reviewed during the inspection, only 44 involved the call handler asking questions to establish if the victim had been subject to repeated ASB, and questions to establish vulnerability were only asked in 21 cases. However there is the opportunity to add an additional marker within the IT system linking it to a particular location or individual.

## **Are officers and staff regularly and thoroughly briefed about local ASB issues?**

Since our last inspection in 2010, neighbourhood, investigative and response officers work more closely together in a neighbourhood policing unit which has resulted in a greater understanding and ownership of issues within the neighbourhoods. Good use is made of the intranet to brief staff and to highlight the importance of dealing with ASB effectively. At neighbourhood level the 'Beat Manager' is used to identify repeat incidents and vulnerability, and notice boards are used to highlight beat priorities, repeat callers, targets, addresses requiring extra patrol attention and a hotspot map to staff.

Neighbourhood supervisors proactively manage ASB by going through incident logs to understand what has occurred since they were last on duty and to monitor what action had been taken by staff. CID officers are not briefed unless specific incidents are escalated and brought to their attention

There is an acknowledgement that briefings can be strengthened further.

## **Does the force regularly gather and analyse data and information about ASB?**

Analytical work is carried out at force, area command and local levels to understand what data partners (such as the fire, ambulance services and the local councils) have to assist in tackling ASB and to inform what actions to reduce it are required. Partnership working is strong and continues to develop. The co-location and sharing of premises is seen as a positive move in delivering integrated services by the partners involved. The current IT systems combine ASB and criminal damage data from the police and numerous partners; the roll-out of the new system will see this information displayed on a map, making it easier to spot hotspots and trends and put in place work to tackle them.

With the new police operating model, local hubs are being introduced across the force to gather neighbourhood intelligence and manage crime enquiries, through public contact. The force IT system downloads all incidents every day, and this data is analysed by neighbourhood supervisors to identify repeat incidents, vulnerable persons, hotspot locations and crimes which have an ASB element.

## **Do neighbourhood policing teams have the right tools and resources to tackle ASB?**

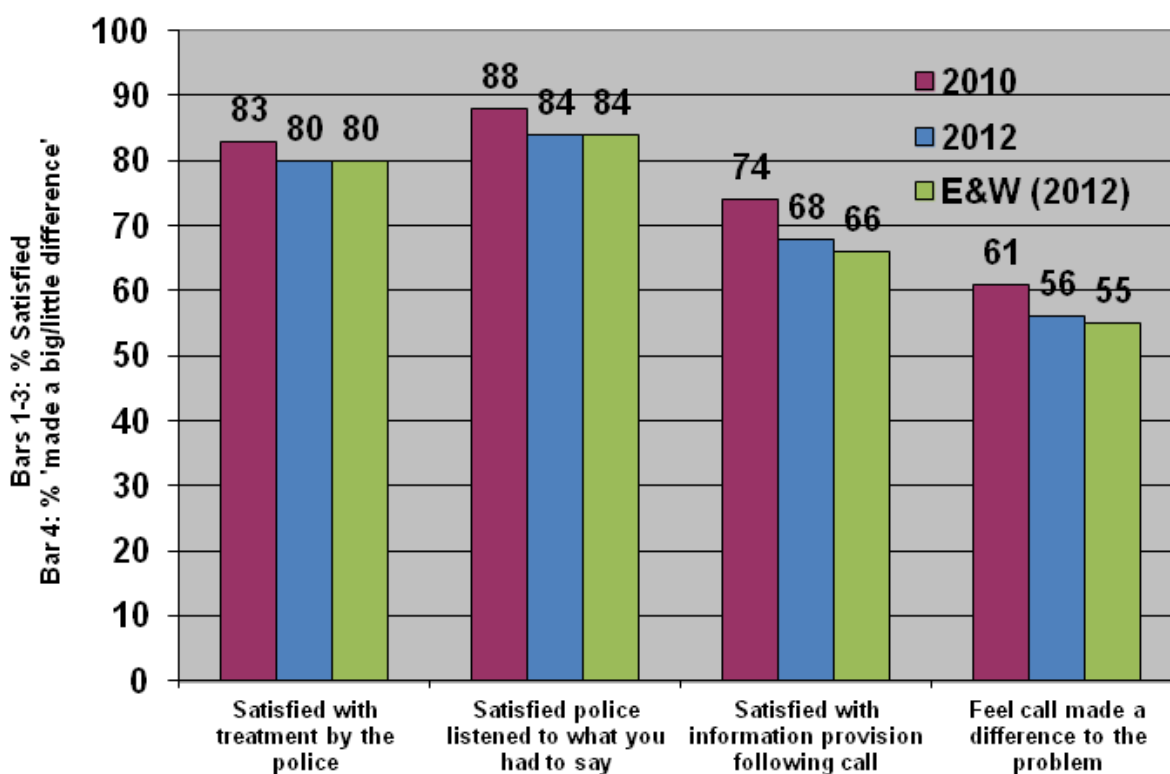
Neighbourhood policing teams (NPTs) are equipped and resourced to tackle ASB. In April 2011 the force changed its policing structure to integrate response teams into NPTs, forming part of the existing neighbourhood policing units (NPU): this has strengthened the force's capacity to tackle ASB and provides a structured model and more ownership. A range of police and partnership tactics are available to address issues, dependent on the individual circumstances. Plans based on intelligence and information are used to tackle particular ASB issues, including those relating to geographical areas, perpetrators, events, tactical assessment and victims. The Force Communities Unit supports staff by providing technical support (advice, guidance or signposting) and by engaging other partners to deliver services that assist front line officers in solving these issues. 'Place' based interventions (such as improving street lighting, or clearing fields of view to provide natural surveillance) are very much the core business of the local authorities that work alongside NPUs.

However, staff have received little training specifically relating to ASB. The NPU structure should in future allow for best options and solutions to be shared among staff.

## Results of a survey of ASB victims

We surveyed 200 people who reported ASB to Cheshire Constabulary during 2011. They were asked a range of questions about their perceptions of ASB generally and their experience in reporting ASB to the police.

### Experience of reporting ASB



These results show that the force is performing broadly in line with the national average in these areas. This is a positive result for the force.