



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

Anti-social behaviour inspection report

**City of London Police
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 the City of London Police area; the 2010 review is available on the HMIC website (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 the City of London Police is performing in these key areas.

Findings for the City of London Police

Overview

There is a relatively low level of ASB reported to police in the City of London in comparison with the rest of England and Wales.

In 2010, HMIC found that the force was performing well overall in understanding and tackling ASB problems. The inspection in 2012 indicates that the force continues to provide a good service.

The City of London Police records about 120 incidents of ASB each month – a much lower number than in other police forces in England and Wales. The majority of incidents relate either to begging, or to nuisance, rowdy or inconsiderate behaviour. The force assesses that fewer than one a month of the incidents they log is a high risk case.

Senior officers are well informed about ASB and ensure that appropriate action is taken to tackle it, particularly if cases present a medium to high risk. The force has established definitions for ASB and for what constitutes a repeat or vulnerable victim. It also has regular and effective meetings with partners (for example in housing) to discuss ASB and share information, and has introduced a written plan to ensure improvements in how it tackles the issue take place.

The force is improving the way it records incidents by introducing a dedicated ASB IT system, together with a new practice which sees all reports entered onto an electronic incident management system. This means the force has a better understanding of what ASB is occurring in the City, and can manage cases more effectively. It has also introduced a dedicated ASB officer to coordinate record keeping, conduct risk assessments and manage low-risk incidents.

The overall experience for ASB victims is good, with regular and frequent contact from the police. Unlike in many other forces, people who report ASB receive telephone calls and a personal visit from the police to establish what the problem is and to assess their individual needs; and a new scheme allows members of the public to register themselves as vulnerable, to help the police decide how best to respond if they call. In our survey, 77 percent of respondents were satisfied with how the police deal with ASB in their area, which is significantly above levels seen across England and Wales as a whole.

However, more could be done to tell the public what the police are doing to tackle ASB, and how well this is going. The force could also improve how they identify crimes which could be connected to ASB, in order to ensure they have a complete picture of victims, locations and offenders. The Police Committee, which oversees governance of the police, does not currently have a person dedicated to maintaining oversight of ASB.

The force should ensure that all control room staff adopt a consistent approach to the identification of repeat and vulnerable victims, and conduct adequate risk assessments when people first contact the police. They should also make sure that officers and staff are aware of the options they can consider in planning long-term solutions to ASB. Supervisors should consistently manage plans to tackle particular ASB problems, and check the quality of all areas of ASB work to make sure that the needs of victims remain the focus and are delivered.

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

Since our 2010 inspection, HMIC's expectations around the automatic identification of vulnerable victims have increased: but the force has not kept pace.

All emergency and 101 calls within the City of London are answered by the Metropolitan Police Service. They create a record and transfer it to the City of London Police. Repeat callers, locations and telephone numbers can be automatically identified from these electronic records, and some enhancements to the IT make it more likely that the police will identify whether a caller has previously been the victim of ASB or been classified as particularly vulnerable to ASB before. However, call takers do not always use these facilities.

In addition, staff do not all ask questions to help identify if the caller is vulnerable (although they have received training in this, and can access published guidance). However, the low number of incidents, combined with the fact that the police consistently call and personally visit people who report ASB, provides some confidence that repeat and vulnerable victims will be identified.

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

Since HMIC's 2010 inspection, the force has made some progress in making ASB information available to CID and emergency response officers.

Reports are regularly prepared by staff in an intelligence unit and used to inform neighbourhood teams about all ASB that has occurred within their area. This includes details about who is causing the ASB, the locations where it is happening and the people who are affected. Officers who attend emergencies are briefed at the start of their shift about any relevant and ongoing ASB.

Information is also made available through an electronic briefing, which CID officers can access – but due to the relatively low number of ASB incidents reported within the City of London, investigators are not involved in many such cases.

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

The City of London Police has carried out work at force and neighbourhood levels to understand what information held by other organisations might help them to use jointly to tackle ASB. This information is shared at regular meetings and by allowing controlled access to each other's electronic databases. Analysts examine the information and provide assessments about ASB at daily, fortnightly and monthly meetings, at which senior officers consider what resources are required to address particular problems. They focus upon people who may be suffering repeated ASB and those who are particularly vulnerable. Records are kept of what action they take so that they can identify what is most successful in solving the problem.

The force could do more to see if there are any crime reports which are linked to ASB incidents, in order to be more effective at solving both together and so providing a better service to victims.

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

The force has made progress in how it monitors and completes high risk ASB cases: but knowledge of the different options available to tackle particular problems has declined, and supervision of lower risk cases (to make sure they are on track) is not being recorded as often.

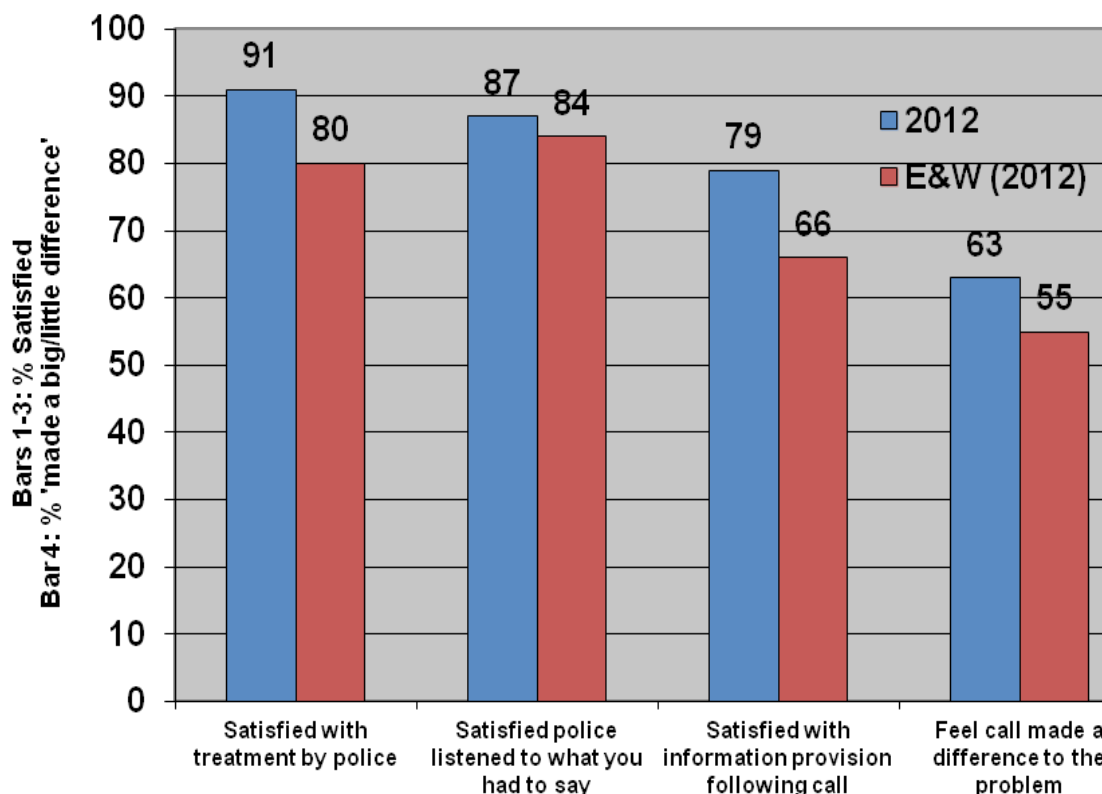
Unlike in some other forces, City of London police officers and police community support officers visit everyone who reports ASB. The force has prepared guidance on how to deal with ongoing ASB, and most neighbourhood staff have received compulsory training in this. When questioned, they were knowledgeable about definitions around ASB and about force procedures.

All ASB reports are recorded on an IT system and are risk assessed. High and medium risk ASB cases are regularly monitored by supervisors and senior managers (although only about 10 long-term, high risk ASB incidents are reported within the City of London each year). Lower risk ASB cases are well coordinated, but there is little oversight by supervisors. Details of the action taken to address ASB are not always fully recorded. However, some records did show that partners are being included in plans to address particular ASB problems. These records suggest that the police are using some of the options to solve ASB, although we found that not all staff were aware of guidance available to assist them.

Results of a survey of ASB victims

We surveyed 104 people who reported ASB to the City of London Police 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 significantly above the national average in two of these areas ('satisfied with treatment by police' and 'satisfied with information provision following the call'). This is a good result for the force.