



Inspecting policing  
in the public interest

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

**Gloucestershire 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 Gloucestershire; 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 Gloucestershire Constabulary is performing in these key areas.

# Findings for Gloucestershire Constabulary

## Overview

There is a relatively medium level of ASB reported to police in Gloucestershire (in comparison with the rest of England and Wales).

HMIC found that the constabulary has made some progress since 2010 in the way it understands and tackles ASB problems in Gloucestershire. It commissioned a comprehensive review of the systems it had in place to deal with ASB. This identified a number of themes, and resulted in actions being taken forward in each of the local police areas (LPAs) as part of a new police operating model. To support these changes, the constabulary has also invested in additional training for control room staff and provided extra guidance on ASB to all LPA staff.

Working with their partners, Gloucestershire Constabulary has introduced innovative projects to tackle ASB in their communities. The chief officer team has made it clear that tackling ASB is a priority for the constabulary.

However, the constabulary cannot always identify callers who are most at risk of harm from ASB. This means some victims may not be getting the extra support they need. The absence of a force-wide strategy to tackle ASB made it difficult for HMIC to measure the effectiveness of local responses.

When we surveyed ASB victims in Gloucestershire, 51% were satisfied with the way that ASB was dealt with by the police in their local area. When asked about the last time they made a call to report ASB, 59% were satisfied with the way that the police dealt with the problem. Both these results are broadly in line with national averages.

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

Gloucestershire Constabulary can automatically flag up vulnerable victims or those who have called previously at the point of report, but does not always do this, instead relying on call handlers searching through different IT systems to see if the victim has rung before.

Control room staff rely on their own experience in determining whether a caller needs extra support. Additional training has recently been provided, but we found that call handlers are still not consistently checking the vulnerability of the caller, or finding out if they have called before.

We reviewed 113 calls about ASB and found that the call handlers only asked specific questions to establish if a caller had been a victim on a previous occasion 50 times. Call handlers verbally checked the vulnerability of the caller on 18 occasions.

To help improve this, Gloucestershire Constabulary intends to introduce a structured set of questions for call handlers. This approach, together with clear guidance, will bring a more cohesive approach across LPAs to identifying victims at risk.

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

Since our 2010 inspection, the constabulary has restructured to six local policing areas. The size of local policing teams has been increased and their role widened to include investigating crimes.

Local neighbourhood teams and the officers who respond to emergencies share intelligence through briefings. This approach could be strengthened to include specific information about vulnerable victims or those who have previously called about ASB. Control room staff are not consistently passing on relevant history regarding the call to officers attending ASB incidents. As a result, attending officers might not recognise that new calls relate to incident hotspots, or are from victims who either are known to be vulnerable or have telephoned about a problem before.

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

Every LPA has arrangements in place with their partners (including council and housing associations) to share data. Each neighbourhood team inspector is also a member of the Community Safety Partnership, where ASB information is exchanged. At a force level, a jointly funded initiative (which gathers data from the police, fire, county council and health providers) is helping to draw together information on ASB hotspots.

LPAs conduct their own analysis of local ASB issues and have been provided with data to assist them in this task. They are able to call upon force analytical support if they identify emerging trends. Regular meetings are held to analyse information about victims, offenders and locations in order to decide where best to allocate resources to tackle local ASB problems. However, repeat and vulnerable victims may not always be recognised, as there are inconsistent approaches across the LPAs as to how ASB is recorded.

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

Neighbourhood policing teams receive good support from the chief officer team. NPTs are not normally taken away from their areas to perform other jobs, and they have access to a range of options to help them tackle ASB.

There are a number of innovative partnership initiatives taking place across the constabulary. These include Operation Solace in Gloucestershire LPA, a multi-agency team set up to tackle and reduce incidents of ASB in private tenant and owner-occupier premises, and public places; and the Aston Project in Cheltenham LPA, which is a youth diversionary project. However, we found that the learning from successful operations to tackle ASB was not routinely shared across the constabulary.

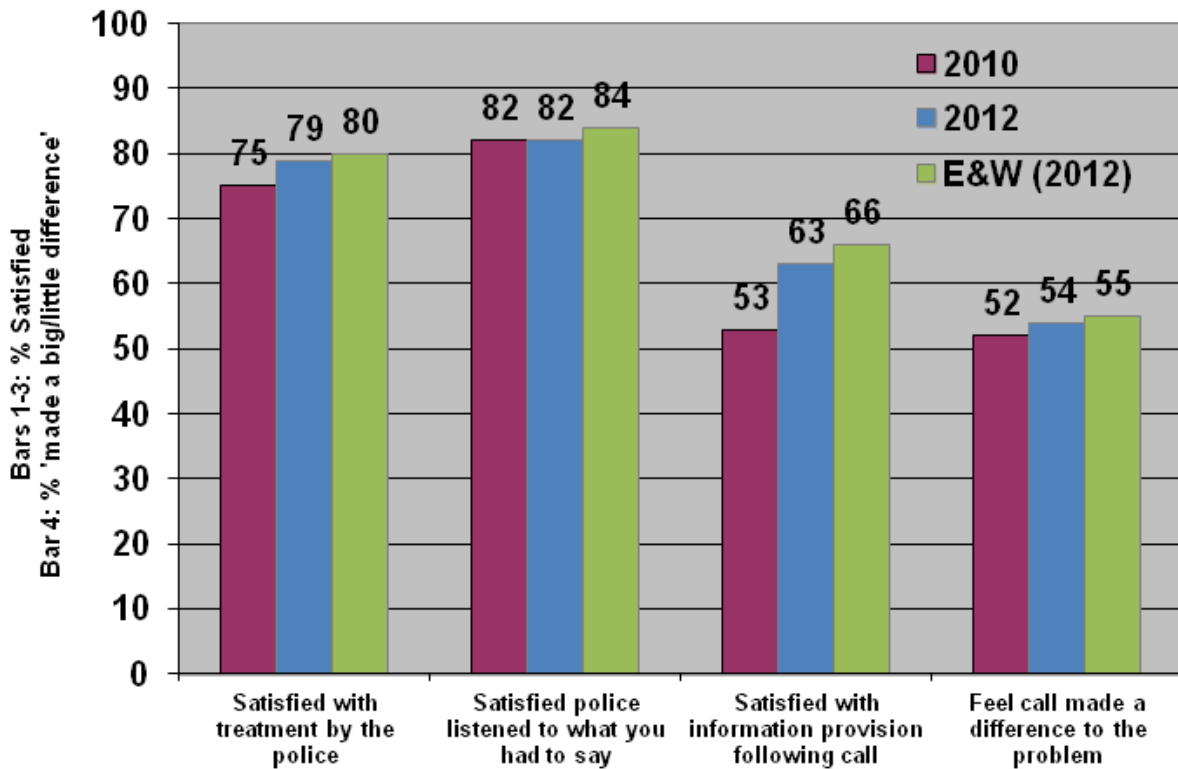
We found a strong level of community engagement to assist the police in tackling ASB, and that staff are taking an approach which is focused on the needs of the public. Information supplied by the community has enabled the constabulary to obtain its first gang injunction.

Supervisors track progress on action plans to tackle ASB, but the constabulary would benefit from a standardised process across each of the LPAs to provide greater consistency in recording plans, updates to victims and completion of risk assessments.

## Results of a survey of ASB victims

We surveyed 200 people who reported ASB to Gloucestershire 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



From the results it can be seen that the force is performing broadly in line with the national average.