



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

Anti-social behaviour inspection report

**Northamptonshire 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 Northamptonshire; 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 Northamptonshire Police is performing in these key areas.

Findings for Northamptonshire Police

Overview

There is a relatively high level of ASB recorded by police in Northamptonshire in comparison with the rest of England and Wales, although there have been significant reductions over the last year.

HMIC found that the force has made some progress since 2010 in how it understands and tackles anti-social behaviour (ASB) problems in Northamptonshire. Our survey of ASB victims in Northamptonshire shows satisfaction levels that are generally in line with the rest of England and Wales. However, victims of ASB have particularly high levels of satisfaction in the way they are treated by the police, which is a positive result for the force.

Neighbourhood teams have a clear sense of ownership and a desire to solve ASB incidents in their area. The incident recording system used by the force is able to identify repeat callers automatically through telephone numbers, which means that victims receive the support they need from an early stage. There is good partnership working, particularly with local councils, to deal effectively with ASB.

Despite this, the force is still unable to identify vulnerable victims when they call. This means that there can be delays in providing some of these victims with the extra support they may need.

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

The force is able to automatically identify a repeat caller if they have called before from the same telephone number. Staff can also search other IT systems to see if a caller has contacted the police by other means, but do not always do so. These searches should also take place to see if someone has previously been identified as vulnerable; again this does not always happen.

HMIC reviewed 104 calls from people reporting ASB to the force. This showed that in just over half the cases the call taker asked questions to establish if the caller had contacted the police previously, and in a third asked questions to establish vulnerability. The need for more training in dealing with ASB has been recognised by the force and it is about to address this. We did find that the call takers dealt with victims in a professional manner.

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

Neighbourhood teams and response officers are regularly briefed about ASB affecting their area. They work closely together and so have a good understanding of ASB hotspots, recognising where extra patrols are needed. Analytical work is carried out to help identify where staff should focus their resources.

While investigators assist neighbourhood staff in dealing with ASB, they are not as aware of hotspots and repeat callers.

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

Although Northamptonshire Police does not have an IT system that can be used by all public agencies in the county, there is a good level of information sharing between police and partners. This helps the neighbourhood teams and dedicated ASB unit tackle problems more effectively. The ASB unit has a good working relationship with the district councils; information is shared between the two and is used to ensure that ASB issues are well understood.

There is sound analysis of ASB incidents, which is then used to ensure that patrols are carried out when and where they are most needed.

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

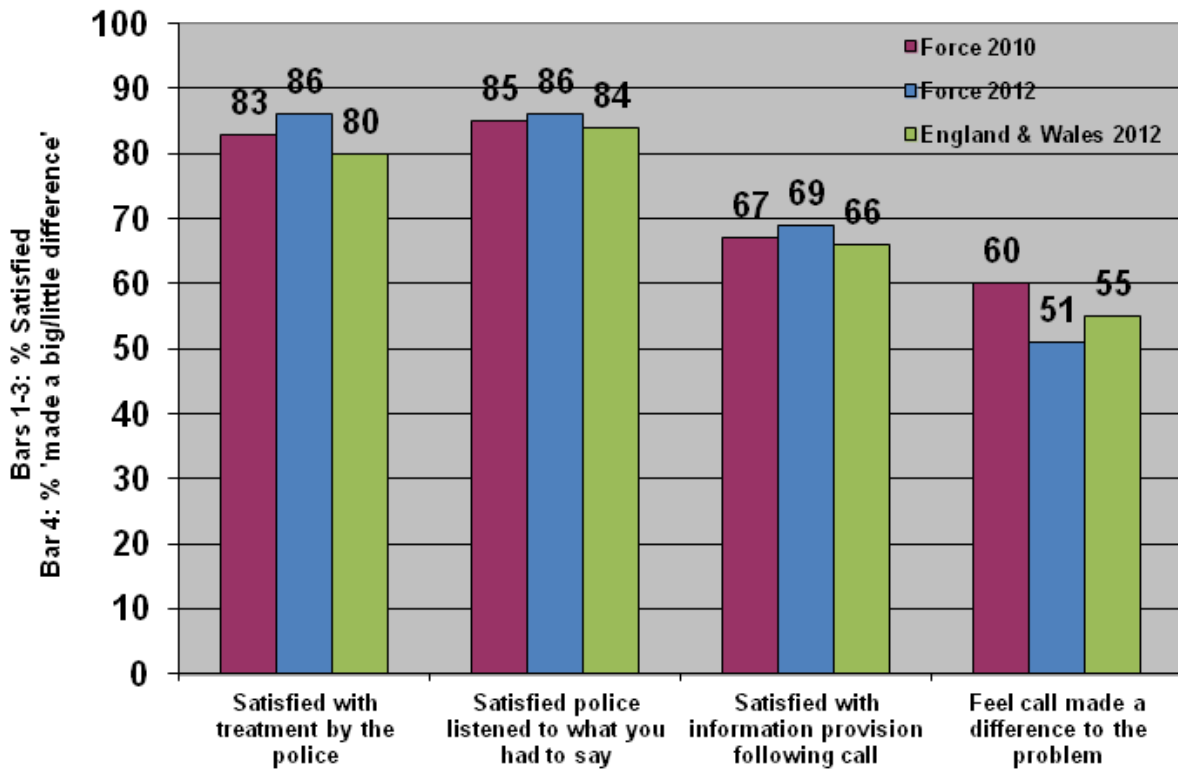
Neighbourhood teams have good levels of knowledge about how to deal with ASB. Some areas have a dedicated ASB officer who is very experienced and gives advice and guidance to staff who require assistance in dealing with specific incidents. Successful resolutions to ASB are shared on the force intranet so that others can use the methods in the future.

Long-term plans to tackle ASB are monitored and regularly supervised to ensure that progress is made and the issues resolved.

Results of a survey of ASB victims

We surveyed 200 people who reported ASB to Northamptonshire 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 broadly in line with the national average in three areas. However, victims' satisfaction with their treatment by the police is significantly above the national average. This is a positive result for the force.

