



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

Anti-social behaviour inspection report

**South Wales 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; 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 South Wales Police is performing in these key areas.

Findings for South Wales Police

Overview

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

HMIC found that South Wales Police has made some progress since 2010 in the way it understands and tackles ASB problems. It has invested in an IT system that helps it identify and send extra patrols to hotspots, and the chief officer team has made it clear that tackling ASB is a priority for the force. Good use of new technology means that the force can respond more quickly to calls about ASB, by identifying and dispatching the nearest unit to the incident. This allows resources to be targeted towards helping repeat callers and vulnerable victims.

However, the force is still unable to regularly identify callers who are most at risk of harm from ASB. This means some of these victims may not be getting the extra support they need.

HMIC also found that neighbourhood policing teams are not trained in the most up-to-date options available to help them deal with ASB, and that their plans to deal with specific local problems are not well monitored to make sure that they are progressing as they should be.

When we surveyed ASB victims in South Wales, 54% were satisfied with the way that the problem is dealt with by police in their local area. This is in line with the national average of 55%. When asked about the last time they made a call to report ASB, 58% were satisfied with the way that the police dealt with the ASB, again in line with the average.

However, only 66% of victims felt that South Wales Police are doing a good job in their local area, which is lower than the national average of 74%. In addition, 68% of victims felt that ASB was a problem in their area, against the national average of 59%.

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

South Wales Police has invested in new software to improve its ability to identify vulnerable victims or those who have previously called about ASB. However, the force is not always able to recognise these callers as soon as they contact the police. This is because the force relies on the staff who take the call searching through different IT systems to see if the victim has rung before, and asking specific questions to determine if they need extra support.

We reviewed 100 calls about ASB and found that the call handlers only asked specific questions to establish if a caller had been a victim before 25 times. Call handlers verbally checked the vulnerability of the caller on 10 occasions.

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

Neighbourhood policing teams are regularly briefed about local ASB issues, but this is not the case for investigators or officers who respond to emergencies. Similarly, control room staff (who decide where officers should be sent, and when) are not routinely briefed at the start of their shift on recent ASB problems and trends. This means that they might not recognise that new calls relate to incident hotspots, or are from victims who either are known to be vulnerable or have called about a problem before.

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

The force regularly and consistently uses its new IT system to identify ASB hotspots so they can direct extra police patrols to these areas. In addition, specialised anti-social behaviour units (which are based in some police stations in South Wales) are able to access some information held by other agencies (such as local authorities); this means they may be able to identify if a caller is vulnerable or has experienced ASB previously even if they have not directly contacted the police before.

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.

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

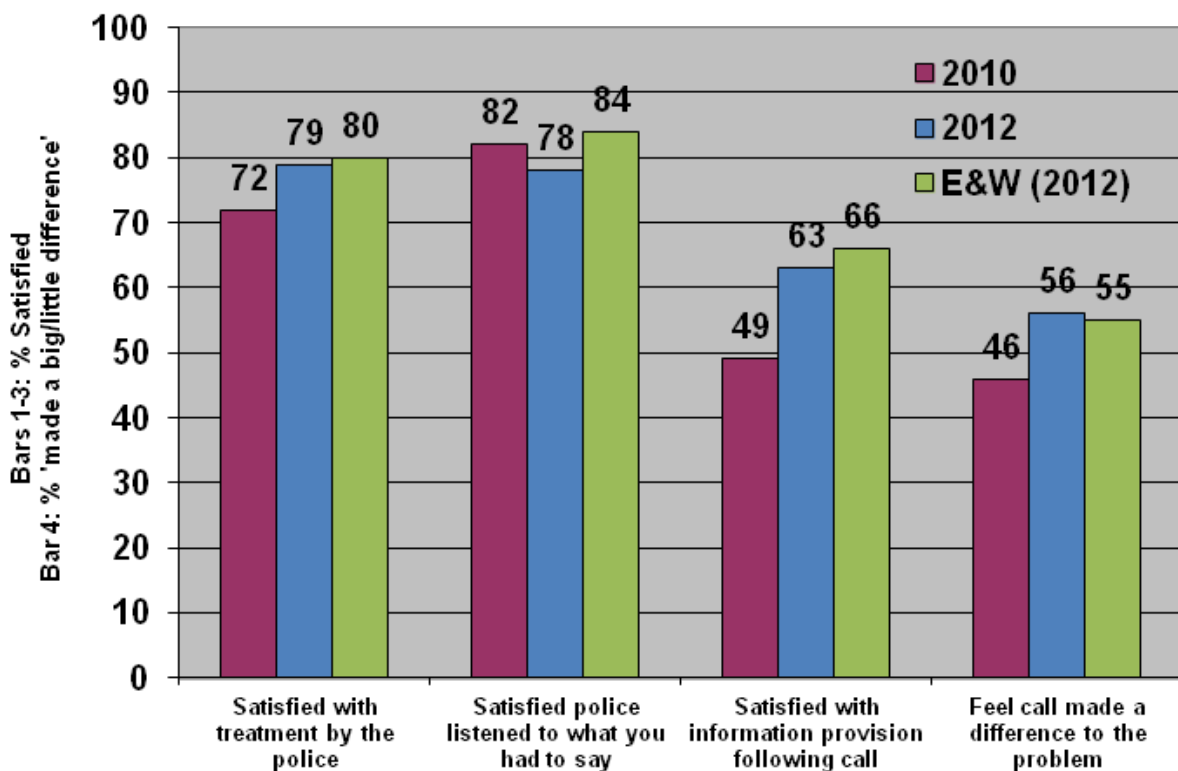
Neighbourhood policing teams receive good support from the wider force. The Welsh Government has also provided extra funding to pay for an additional 209 police community support officers (PCSOs). This will further boost the ability of teams to tackle ASB.

However, we found that not all neighbourhood staff are aware of the full range of options available to help them tackle ASB, and training material is out of date. They also do not make the best use of targeted planning to tackle specific ASB problems; and those plans that are in place are not regularly monitored to make sure they are progressing as they should.

Results of a survey of ASB victims

We surveyed 200 people who reported ASB to South Wales 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 these areas. In addition, the percentage of respondents who were satisfied with the information provided by the force after their call has increased significantly since 2010.

