



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

Anti-social behaviour inspection report

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

Findings for Suffolk Constabulary

Overview

There is a medium level of ASB recorded by police in Suffolk in comparison with the rest of England and Wales.

HMIC found that the force has made progress since 2010 in the way it understands and tackles ASB incidents. Our survey of ASB victims in Suffolk shows generally high levels of satisfaction (as it also did in 2010). In particular, the proportion reporting that they are satisfied with how they were treated by the police is significantly higher than the national average.

The force has introduced a new IT system for police to work jointly with partners (including local councils) to manage long-term ASB issues. The force has also developed a mapping system to identify ASB 'hotspots' across the county, allowing resources to be better targeted. However, the force is still unable to consistently identify callers who are most at risk of harm from ASB, such as repeat and vulnerable victims. This means some of these victims may not be getting the extra support they need.

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

Suffolk Constabulary has recently introduced a new process to help identify if an ASB victim is particularly vulnerable (for example, disabled or elderly). This includes an assessment of the risk faced by the victim at the time of the initial call, and subsequently by the officer attending the incident. This process was not assessed by HMIC (as it had only very recently been implemented): but it is a positive step, which once fully embedded should provide the force with a much better basis to manage and respond to ASB.

While the force has a system in place that should automatically identify if a victim is vulnerable or has called before, it recognises that its current IT system has limitations. The force has invested in a new command and control system, which will be introduced later in 2012. This will increase its ability to identify repeat and vulnerable victims.

We reviewed 100 calls about ASB. The call taker only asked targeted questions to establish if the caller was a vulnerable victim in about a third of cases. Questions to establish whether the caller was a repeat victim were asked in less than half of the cases reviewed. However, we did find that the call taker generally dealt with the victim in a professional manner.

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

Neighbourhood policing teams are regularly briefed by supervisors about local ASB issues. However Investigators and response officers frequently have to brief themselves to ensure they are kept up to date about ASB.

The force has recently invested in an IT system which allows staff to map incidents of ASB across the county. This provides up-to-date information and allows the force to prioritise resources where they are most needed.

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

The force and its partners (including local councils) now use the same IT system to manage long-term ASB problems, and this has improved the sharing of information between police and partners.

The local policing areas hold regular meetings to analyse information about ASB victims, offenders and locations in order to help direct resources to where they are most needed. These meetings are attended by partners (including local councils and housing providers), and provide a further opportunity for the force to share information.

The force has introduced specialist ASB teams, made up of local authority and police employees. These teams work to a set of standards that is focused on the needs of the victim, and are responsible for assessing all ASB incidents every day to ensure victims receive the appropriate response.

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

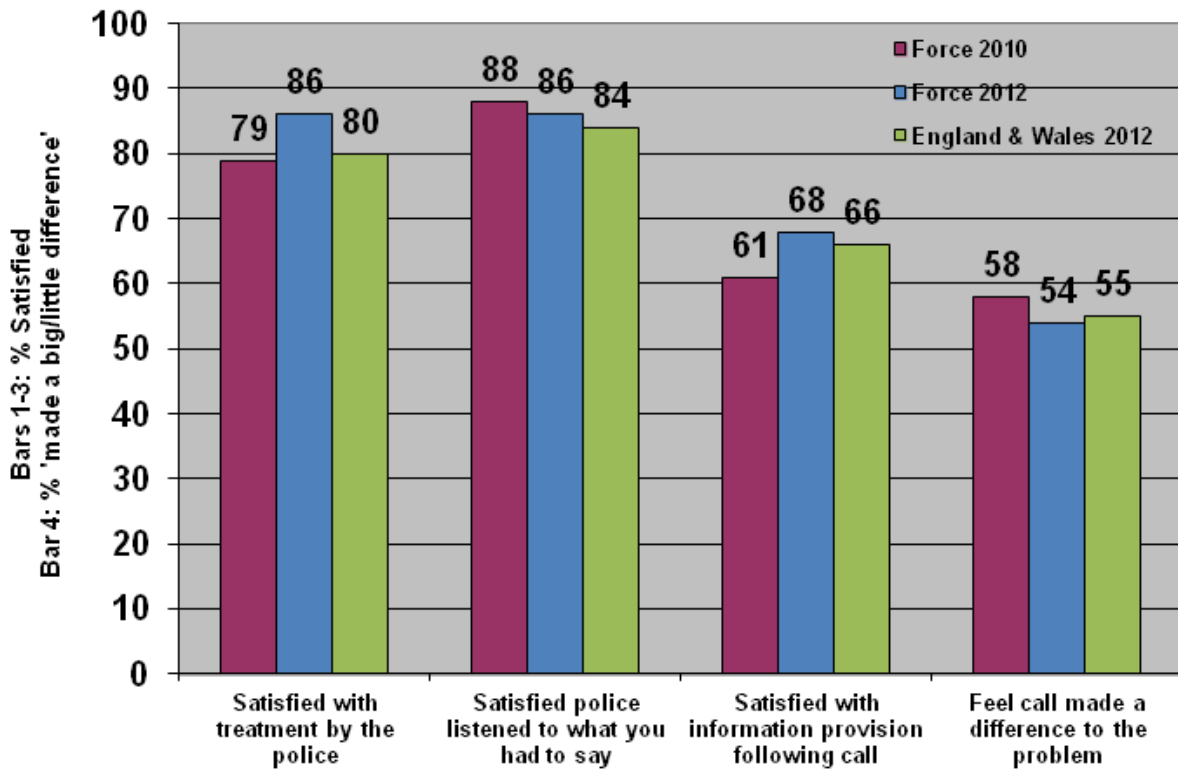
The force has recently undertaken an intensive training programme for staff to ensure they understand and are able to respond appropriately to ASB incidents. This programme is part of a change in process designed to better identify vulnerable victims.

All staff have access to ASB reference material on the force intranet, which includes legislation, examples of good practice, and guidance on tackling ASB. However this resource is not extensive, and staff tend to refer to supervisors or the specialist teams for more detailed information or methods to resolve ASB.

Results of a survey of ASB victims

We surveyed 200 people who reported ASB to Suffolk 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



The proportion of victims reporting that they are satisfied with how the police treated them is significantly above the national average. This is a positive result for the force.

