



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

Anti-social behaviour inspection report

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

Findings for Surrey Police

Overview

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

HMIC found that the force has made progress since 2010 in the way ASB is understood and tackled. Our survey of ASB victims in Surrey shows high levels of satisfaction, and an improvement in the way victims are treated by the police and in how satisfied they are with the information provided by the police.

There is a clear focus on the victim from the moment they first contact the police. Neighbourhood staff work in the same buildings as local councils, meaning that information is regularly shared and ways of dealing with ASB are agreed using resources from all teams. The force has invested in an IT system which is being used to share information with partners (such as local councils) to risk assess incidents and to manage how ASB is being tackled.

However, the force does not consistently identify repeat and vulnerable victims when they first call, meaning there may sometimes be a delay in ensuring they receive the support they need.

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

The force recognised the need to improve how repeat and vulnerable victims are identified at the point of report. A series of questions which call takers should ask when someone reports an incident of ASB were introduced in January 2012 over a number of weeks. These will help to establish if the person has called before or if they are vulnerable; but it is a new process and is not yet being used consistently.

HMIC reviewed 99 calls about ASB made before these new question sets were introduced. In about half of these cases reviewed, callers were asked questions to establish if they had been a victim before. Vulnerability was identified in only a small number of cases, and this was when the caller described themselves as such, rather than the result of operator questioning. We did find that the call taker generally dealt with the victim in a professional manner.

Repeat callers may also be identified by searching the command and control IT system, using the caller's telephone number or the location they are calling from to see if they have reported ASB before. In some cases a marker may be placed on the system so that the next time someone calls they will automatically be recognised as a repeat or vulnerable victim. However, this does not always happen.

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

The force has made a significant effort to ensure that all operational officers and staff understand what incidents of ASB have taken place in their area, and where they should focus their work. This means that investigators, response and neighbourhood teams (i.e. frontline staff) generally have a good understanding of local ASB issues.

Frontline officers and staff, including investigators, brief themselves on local ASB issues using information on the force intranet. This includes details of ASB hotspots and informs all staff where they should concentrate their patrols.

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

The force works with some partner agencies (such as local councils and social care) to understand the ASB data each other holds. As the neighbourhood teams work from the same premises as colleagues from other agencies, they share a great deal of information and work closely to tackle ASB. There has been investment in a joint IT system which allows all agencies to access and share information. The force has ensured that data is analysed to help staff in all agencies gain an accurate picture of ASB across the county.

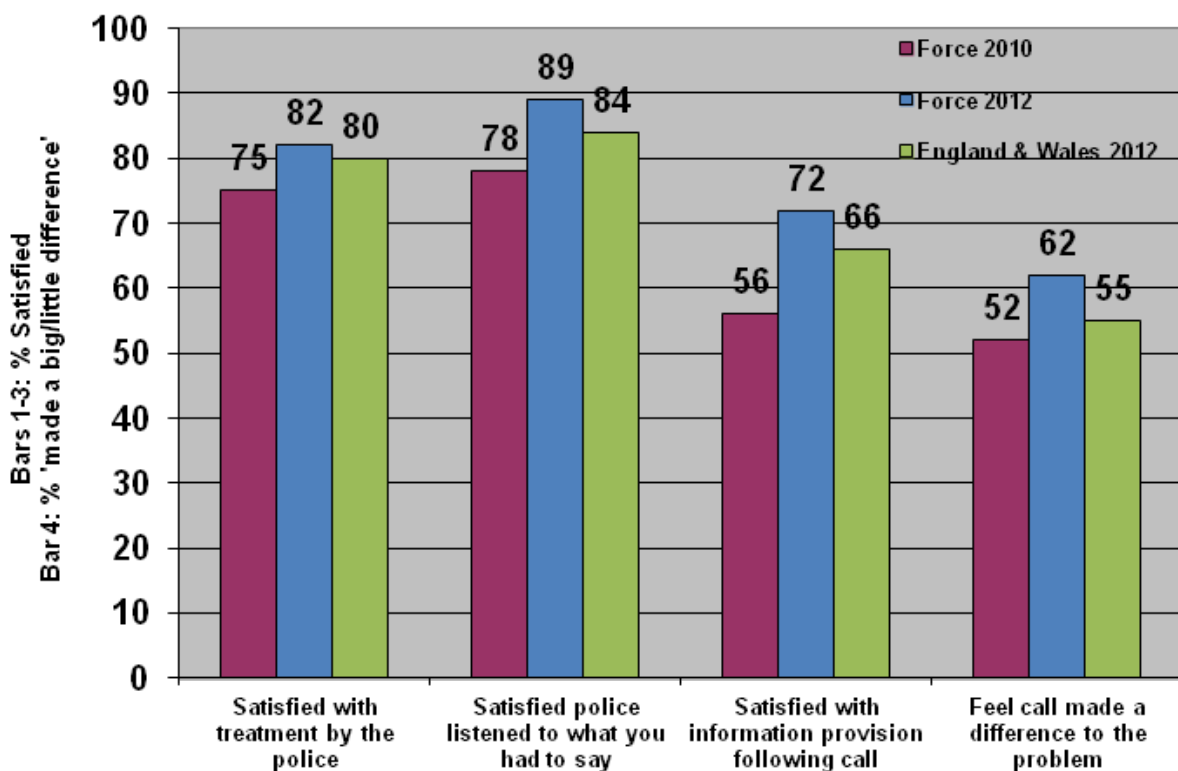
Do neighbourhood policing teams have the right tools and resources to tackle ASB?

Neighbourhood policing teams receive good support from staff in other parts of the force. Advice and guidance is available to assist the teams with ideas for how to tackle particular incidents of ASB. Most staff have received some training and understand the importance of ASB and how to deal with it. The action plans which are used to manage longer term ASB cases are regularly reviewed by supervisors, who make sure that they are progressing as they should be.

Results of a survey of ASB victims

We surveyed 200 people who reported ASB to Surrey 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 proportion of victims who feel satisfied that the police listened to what they had to say is significantly higher than the England and Wales average. There has also been a clear increase in satisfaction with the information provided by the police. This is a very good result for the force.

