



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

Anti-social behaviour inspection report

**West Yorkshire 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 West Yorkshire; 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 West Yorkshire Police is performing in these key areas.

Findings for West Yorkshire Police

Overview

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

HMIC found that some progress has been made since our 2010 inspection. The ASBAT (anti social behaviour analysis tool) is now readily available to all staff which has led to more consistent analysis of the nature and extent of the problem in West Yorkshire. The pilot work in Leeds has developed and is having an impact, with data sharing and co-locating of staff having the positive impact that was envisaged in 2010. It appears that all partner agencies now regard ASB as part of their core business and work effectively together to resolve issues.

However, there are areas where little has changed since 2010. There remains the perception that ASB is an issue for Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) staff, rather than for response and investigative staff; and understanding of the definition of vulnerable victims has apparently declined. The force does not have a plan for how it will tackle ASB, or a framework that would allow it to monitor how it responds to and manages incidents.

The National Intelligence Model (NIM) is not being used systematically to support the force work on ASB by the collection of information and subsequent analysis. While the force's IT system can automatically flag up if a call relates to someone previously assessed to be a repeat or vulnerable victim, staff do not always exploit this functionality. ASBAT has developed into a useful tool for keeping NPT staff up to date on local issues: but this will only be effective if calls have been recorded and classified correctly, and HMIC found this did not always happen.

While neighbourhood staff develop and deliver plans to tackle particular ASB problems, it is difficult to get an overview of how successful and widespread this is, as there is no obvious force lead on the issue. The force has a database where it stores completed action plans; but because this is not integrated with the current incidents system, staff cannot cross reference what has worked (or not) in the past.

HMIC found that there are still inconsistencies across the force in how plans are recorded and monitored (to ensure they are progressing as they should be). This means that force managers do not have a clear overview of all the actions being taken, and cannot monitor that they are all at the required standard.

Our survey of 400 ASB victims in West Yorkshire showed that 53% were satisfied with the overall way the police dealt with ASB in the local area, and 65% with how the police dealt with their incident. Both these percentages are in line with the national average. In addition, 86% of those surveyed were satisfied with the way the force handled their call, which is significantly higher than the national average. There has also been a significant improvement on the position in 2010 with regards to satisfaction with information provision following their call.

However, 57% had contacted the force on three or more occasions to report ASB. This is significantly above the national average. We also found that 66% of those surveyed thought that ASB was a problem in their area: this is significantly higher than the national average.

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

Repeat victims are identified by the incident system STORM, which flags up if a location, name or telephone number has been used in a previous incident. However, HMIC found little evidence that the call handler used this as a prompt to question the caller further about the nature of their previous calls. During the inspection we reviewed 100 calls about ASB and found that call handlers only asked targeted questions to help establish if a caller was a repeat victim on 29 occasions.

Vulnerable victims should be identified via a manual trawl of IT systems; but this is not consistently being done. There is a lack of clarity about the definition of 'vulnerable', and so call handlers apply their own judgment about the vulnerability of a caller. There is a process to allow the NPT to have a marker placed onto the incident system identifying an individual as vulnerable: but there is not such a system to enable a call handler to do the same. There is evidence that Divisional Control Room (DCR) operators and supervisors did not see it as their role to identify vulnerable victims of ASB. Of the 100 calls reviewed during the inspection, it was found that call handlers only asked targeted questions to help establish if a caller was a vulnerable victim on 19 occasions.

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

NPT officers are regularly briefed, understand their local issues and work well with partners to resolve them. However, HMIC found little or no evidence that response and investigative officers understand local ASB issues. They are not briefed on these problems, nor expected to be involved in creating plans to address them, and their only involvement in ASB is responding to emergency or priority incidents.

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

The force has carried out work at force, divisional, and neighbourhood level to understand what data partners (such as the local authority) hold that can help them to help tackle ASB; and unlike in the 2010 inspection, we found no evidence of any reluctance to share data. The Leeds Anti-Social Behaviour Team demonstrates the benefits of partner agencies sharing data and taking joint action to reduce the number of repeat and vulnerable victims.

Analytical work has been carried out to help determine priorities and where to put resources, but not in all divisions or neighbourhoods. There is some evidence that NPTs are identifying ASB hotspots (so more patrols can be sent there); but this was not consistent across the whole force.

Where ASB has been identified as a force or divisional priority (or a neighbourhood problem) some, but not all, have a tasking process to monitor and address it. The daily management meetings consider ASB issues and decide on actions to be taken and monitored. The Tasking and Co-ordination Group (TCG) process does not appear to be used to address ASB issues.

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

NPT staff are equipped and resourced to deal with ASB; but response officers are not all trained in managing the problem, nor briefed regularly about local issues. The force limits the amount of time officers are taken off their usual local duties to do other policing jobs, and training is provided to NPT staff on the powers and tools available to help them tackle ASB. Supervisors promote the use of these options, and chief officers underline the importance of the neighbourhood role. ASBAT has been introduced across the force and is regularly used by NPT staff to assist in the identification of repeat and vulnerable victims.

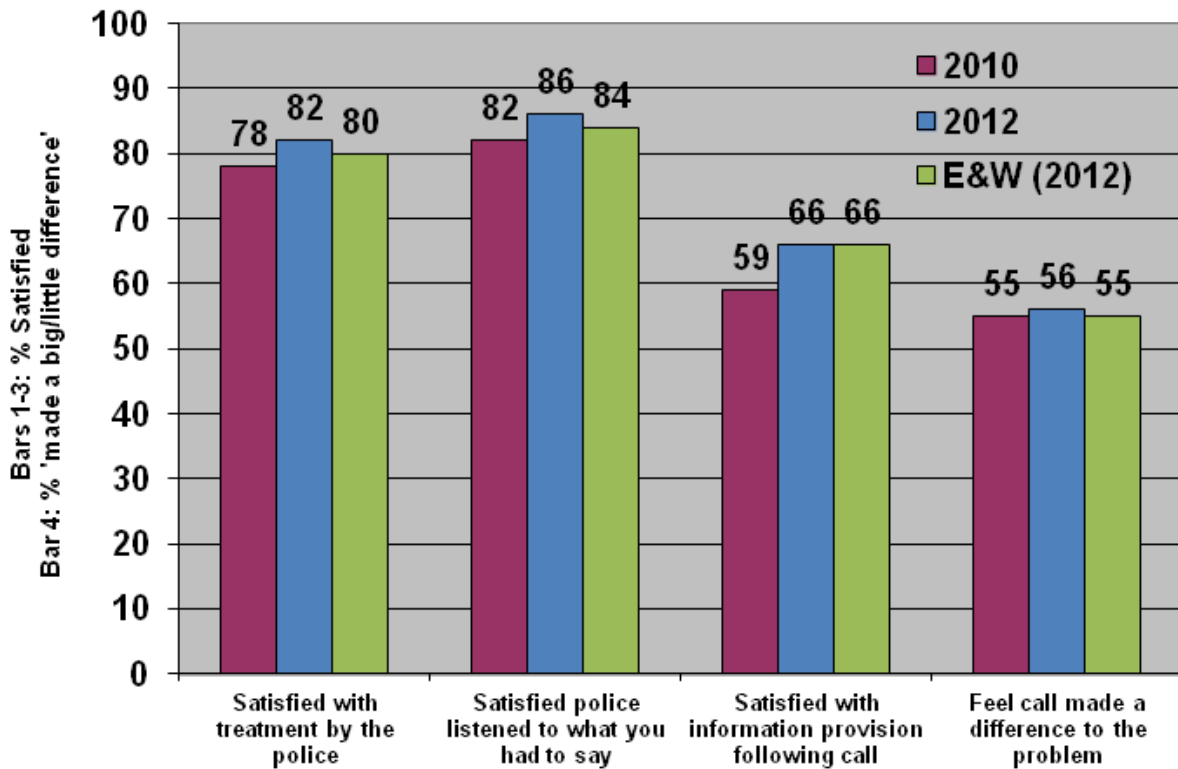
A toolkit of police tactical options is available in the force's ASB policy guidance, and is used (albeit not regularly) by NPT staff. NPTs have procedures for developing and delivering plans to deal with particular ASB issues, which are recorded on the force database. Supervisors track and monitor the progress of long-term plans consistently, and appropriately escalate issues to line managers (with the assistance of the local ASB co-ordinator). The risk assessment matrix is used to determine green, amber or red response to an issue, with the highest risk (red) plans monitored at the daily management meetings.

Some completed plans are signed off, but this does not occur consistently: while the 'red' plans were signed off by the force ASB co-ordinator, the picture for amber and green plans was less clear.

Results of a survey of ASB victims

We surveyed 400 people who reported ASB to West Yorkshire 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, and that the percentage of respondents who felt satisfied with the information provided by the police after they rang has significantly increased since we last asked this (in 2010). This is a good result for the force.

