



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

Anti-social behaviour inspection report

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

Findings for Wiltshire Police

Overview

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

HMIC found that Wiltshire Police has made some progress since 2010 in the way it understands and tackles ASB problems. Action plan activity has mainly taken place over the last five months as the force has been predominantly focused on crime reductions. Tackling ASB is a clearly stated priority for the force. Neighbourhood policing teams (NPTs) are well supported, and seldom taken off their local duties to do other policing jobs. They are enthusiastic about tackling ASB in their communities, and galvanised by strong and improving work with partners (such as local councils) to deal with particular problems, with good relationships and sharing of information. There are processes in place to make sure that resources are targeted where they can make the most difference, and these are reported to be steadily improving.

However, the force does not consistently identify if a caller is particularly vulnerable (for instance, because they are disabled or elderly) or has been an ASB victim before. This means some people may not be getting the extra support they need. HMIC also found that Wiltshire Police has made little progress in implementing either coherent and corporate minimum standards and policies around how ASB should be tackled, or frontline training: this presents a risk. Force analysis of ASB at all levels is limited and teams are briefed separately. There is evidence that plans to tackle specific ASB problems are allocated to assigned officers, but this is inconsistent, with limited focus around follow up and action plan management.

When we surveyed ASB victims in Wiltshire, 58% were satisfied with the way that the problem is dealt with by police in their local area. When asked about the last time they made a call to report ASB, 63% were satisfied with the way that the police dealt with them. Both these results are broadly in line with England and Wales as a whole. When asked about how they were treated during their last contact with police, 88% were satisfied, which is above the England and Wales figure and a good result for the force.

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

Current IT systems do not automatically identify repeat ASB victims when they phone in, but do 'flag' repeat calls to the same address. However, we found that repeat and vulnerable victims are not always identified when they report ASB.

Repeat victims should be identified by questioning the caller about any previous incidents: but based on the 120 calls HMIC listened to as part of this inspection, Wiltshire Police call takers are not consistently asking the right questions. Only 55 calls out of 120 showed evidence of checking for repeat issues, and just 27 included relevant questioning to check if the caller was vulnerable. This exercise also produced little evidence of operators identifying disability or long-term illness.

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

Response officers (who mainly respond to 999 calls) and NPT staff are briefed about some ASB issues. There was good use of mobile remote working (using portable handheld units) to monitor and update the actions neighbourhood teams are taking to tackle local priorities, including ASB. However, staff do not have user-friendly IT systems to help them easily identify and map hotspots in their neighbourhoods, and have to manually check incident records instead.

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

The force does not identify ASB hotspots in any detail, although they are starting to flag up if a caller is vulnerable or has been a victim before, so they can receive extra support if necessary.

When ASB trends and repeat victims are identified, the allocation of incidents and action taken as a result improves. This is helped by healthy co-operation and information sharing with Swindon and Wiltshire County Council's dedicated ASB staff. However, there are only limited links with local authority analysts, which makes it difficult for the force to build up a complete picture of the extent or nature of ASB in Wiltshire.

Staff are now allocated ASB incidents via more streamlined meetings using the 'risk management portal'. This is continually updated 24 hours a day with the priorities that need to be tackled.

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

NPT staff are enthusiastically tackling problems in their neighbourhoods, including ASB, although their main focus has been on reducing crime. They are not regularly taken away from their local duties and put on other policing jobs.

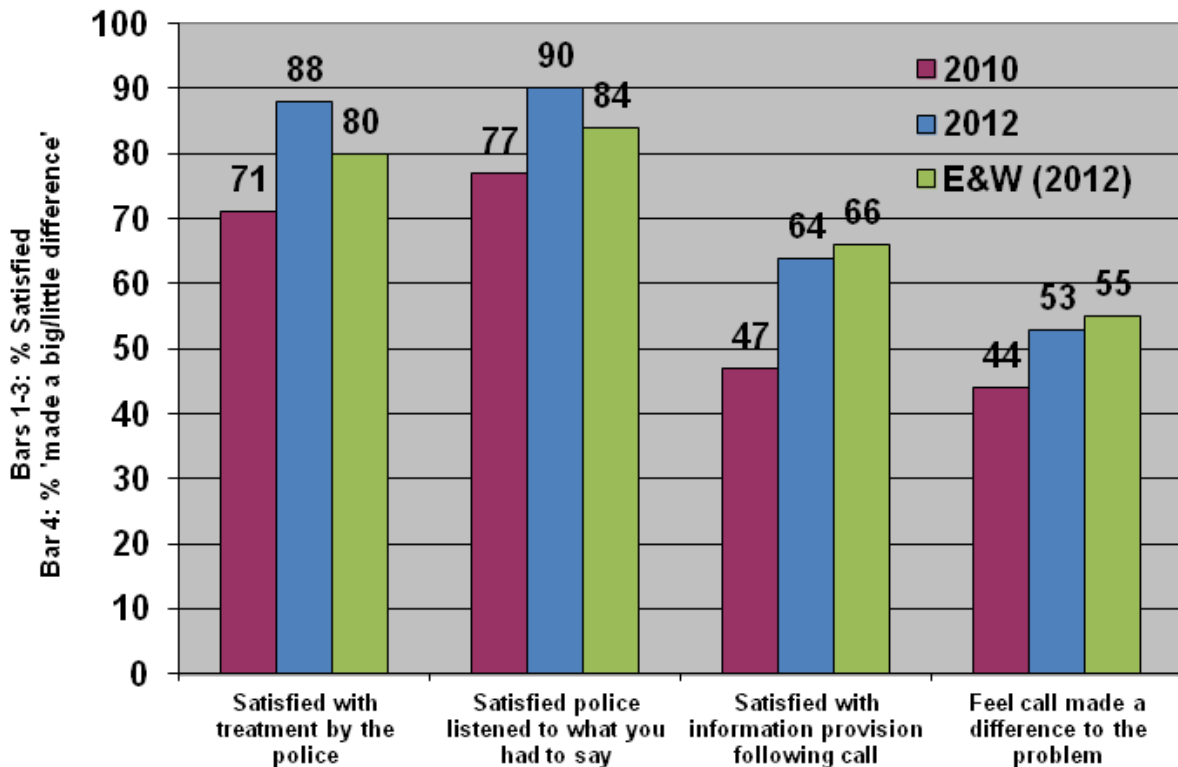
Neighbourhood tasking team meetings with partner agencies (where they jointly decide where resources should be allocated) work well in most areas. HMIC found many examples of effective partnership working to address local ASB issues (such as tackling repeat underage drinking in Salisbury, using new legislation). There was also good use of restorative justice, where offenders typically apologise and/or make good their wrongdoing (for example in Porton Down, where elderly residents were being pestered).

However, staff need more training on the tactics and powers available to help them tackle ASB, and could share effective practice more readily among themselves. In addition, the management of local action plans to tackle ASB, including recording what activity is taking place, is inconsistent.

Results of a survey of ASB victims

We surveyed 200 people who reported ASB to Wiltshire 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 ASB victims in Wiltshire are significantly more likely than those across England and Wales as a whole to say they felt satisfied with how well the police listened to what they had to say when they rang about ASB, and with the way they were treated (with the percentage also significantly up from when we last asked this in 2010). There has also been an increase in the proportion of respondents who were satisfied with the information provided by the police after they rang: the Wiltshire figures are therefore now in line with the national average.