



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

Crime inspection 2014

Northumbria Police

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How effective is the force at cutting crime?

Overall summary

Northumbria has seen bigger reductions in crime over the last four years than across England and Wales as a whole. The police force works well with partners to prevent crime and reduce reoffending.

Neighbourhood policing remains the bedrock of policing in Northumbria. Neighbourhood policing teams use a range of effective tactics to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour, while ensuring that the most vulnerable are protected. Victim satisfaction with policing services in Northumbria is among the highest in England and Wales.

Tackling anti-social behaviour is a clear priority for the force, recognised by staff and partners alike, with good work taking place in the neighbourhood teams to deal with anti-social behaviour. However, the force could do more to learn from best practice in what works in crime fighting and crime prevention.

This year, HMIC undertook an inspection into the crime data integrity of all 43 police forces, to determine the extent to which police-recorded crime information can be trusted at a national level. HMIC has serious concerns about Northumbria Police's approach to crime recording, which is not as accurate as it should be. Individual force reports are available at <http://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/>

How effective is the force at reducing crime and preventing offending?

Good

Northumbria Police has an effective strategic threat and risk assessment that aims to improve the service to victims, supported by a force priority to put victims first.

The force has a strong focus on protecting vulnerable members of the community and works effectively with partners to ensure that the most vulnerable victims receive a joined-up service from all agencies. HMIC found good evidence of front line staff working with partners to find ways to divert offenders and prevent crime.

There has been a 20 percent reduction in crime in Northumbria over the last four years, which is a greater reduction than the figure for England and Wales; the force has one of the highest victim satisfaction rates in England and Wales.

How effective is the force at investigating offending?

Good

Northumbria Police places a strong emphasis on improving the service to victims of crime and anti-social behaviour and works closely with partners to protect the vulnerable within communities.

The force commitment to attend all calls received in relation to crime and anti-social behaviour provides significant support to victims and provides clarity for all staff within the force.

The standard of investigations reviewed by HMIC was good and the force has effective arrangements in place to deliver further improvement. However the force needs to do more to learn from best practice in what works in crime fighting and crime prevention tactics.

How effective is the force at tackling anti-social behaviour?

Outstanding

Northumbria Police has a very strong commitment to neighbourhood policing and the neighbourhood policing teams have a good understanding of local concerns and priorities. Neighbourhood policing officers work well with local people in tackling anti-social behaviour and are committed to ensuring the most vulnerable in their communities are protected.

Senior leaders place a strong emphasis on the importance of tackling anti-social behaviour, which is clearly recognised by staff and partners alike.

Partnership working for tackling anti-social behaviour is strong and effective. The force works well with local authority partners in understanding local anti-social behaviour concerns and finding solutions.

How effective is the force at reducing crime and preventing offending?

Good

The force is changing the way in which repeat and prolific offenders are identified and tackled, however key partners and staff have not been engaged in the process for change and are unclear what the future arrangements will be.

How effective is the force at investigating offending?

Good

How effective is the force at tackling anti-social behaviour?

Outstanding

Introduction

This inspection looks at how effective police forces are at cutting crime. The public expects the police to reduce, prevent and investigate crime, bring suspects to justice and, in conjunction with other services and agencies, care for victims. To assess each force's effectiveness, we looked at three specific areas:

- How effective is the force at reducing crime and preventing offending?
- How effective is the force at investigating offending?
- How effective is the force at tackling anti-social behaviour?

Methodology

During our inspection we analysed data and documents from forces, and conducted in-force inspections. We interviewed the senior officers responsible for crime, neighbourhood policing and victim care in each force. We held focus groups with frontline police officers, investigators and police staff, and observed their activities first hand. We also reviewed 20 crime investigations in each force and interviewed heads of partner organisations such as local authorities. We focussed on anti-social behaviour and the offences of: burglary dwelling; serious sexual offences; and violence with injury on this inspection. We chose to focus on these offences because they cover the areas of acquisitive and violent crime and the protection of vulnerable people. This has allowed us to make an assessment of how well the force treated the victim throughout the investigation – examining in particular how well officers gathered evidence and how well they were supervised.

Victims are at the heart of this inspection. Victims are entitled to a service from the police; this includes regular information about their case, an opportunity to provide an impact statement where relevant and to be consulted on potential criminal justice outcomes. When the police provide this service to victims, it increases victim satisfaction and builds trust and confidence in the police.

As part of this inspection, we considered how well forces deal with domestic abuse, alongside other offence types. HMIC published a report in March 2014 on how well forces tackled domestic abuse and provided support to victims. As a result of that inspection all forces were asked to provide an action plan setting out how they were improving services to victims of domestic abuse and we have reviewed the action plans developed by forces. The action plans have not informed the judgments made in these reports.

The crime inspection provides HMIC with the first opportunity to test whether the force's approach to improving how it tackles domestic abuse is beginning to have an effect and this forms part of our overall assessment of the force.

How effective is the force at reducing crime and preventing offending?

HMIC looked at how the leadership of the force deploys its resources to reduce the volume of crimes being committed, maximises the quality of victim contact, and ensures that the force focuses on community priorities while mitigating national threats.

We looked at how the force prevents crime, how it uses police tactics such as stop and search powers to prevent and detect crime and reduce offending. We also looked at how the police work with other agencies such as social services to reduce crime.

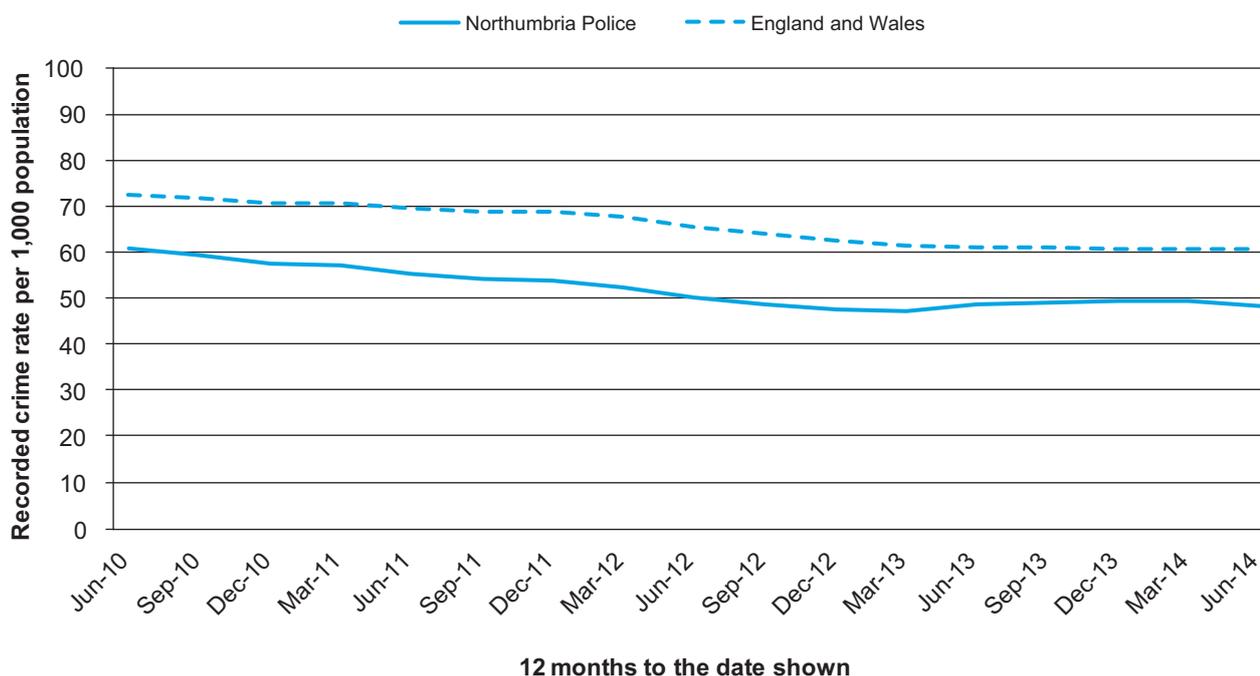
Crime

In 2010 the Home Secretary set a clear priority for the police service to cut crime. When compared with the 12 months to June 2010, recorded crime (excluding fraud) in the 12 months to June 2014 reduced by 20 percent in Northumbria compared with a reduction of 16 percent across all forces in England and Wales.

Over this period, victim-based crime (i.e., crimes where there is a direct victim such as an individual, a group, or an organisation) decreased by 21 percent in Northumbria, compared with a reduction of 16 percent across England and Wales.

Looking at the 12 months to the end of June 2014, recorded crime (excluding fraud) in Northumbria remained broadly the same as the previous 12 month period, compared with a 1 percent reduction across England and Wales.

Figure: Recorded crime rate (per 1,000 population) between June 2010 and June 2014.



By looking at how many recorded crimes and incidents of anti-social behaviour occur per 1,000 population, we get an indication of how safe it is for the public in that police area. The table below shows crime and anti-social behaviour rates in Northumbria (per 1,000 population) compared with the rest of England and Wales.

12 months to June 2014	Northumbria Police rate (per 1,000 population)	England and Wales total rate (per 1,000 population)
Crime excluding fraud	48.1	60.7
Victim-based crime	41.9	53.9
Sexual offences	0.9	1.2
Violence with injury	4.9	5.9
Burglary in a dwelling*	4.6	8.9
Anti-social behaviour incidents*	53.4	36.8

***Note that anti-social behaviour data is for the 12 months to March 2014 and the rate for burglary in a dwelling is the rate per 1,000 households, not population.**

We have chosen these types of crime to give an indication of offending levels in the force area. We are not judging the effectiveness of the force on recorded crime rates only. For information on the frequency of other kinds of crimes in your area, go to www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/crime-and-policing-comparator

Northumbria’s detection rate (for crimes excluding fraud) for the 12 months to the end of March 2014 was 42 percent. This was higher than the 26 percent for England and Wales.

The new crime outcomes framework was introduced in April 2014. It replaces a previous framework for recording how the police finalise investigations through what was known as ‘sanction detections’ (e.g. charges and/or summons). The new crime outcomes framework is designed to support police officers to use their professional judgment to ensure a just and timely outcome which reflects the harm to the victim, the seriousness of the offending behaviour, the impact on the community, and which deters future offending. Data on the full range of outcomes achieved as a result of investigations (not just detections but also, for example, community resolutions such as mediation known as restorative justice) will be available from July 2015 and used in future HMIC inspections.

Meeting the needs of the community

Northumbria Police has a well established and effective process of working with partner agencies and communities to identify the priorities for the police and crime commissioner's four-year police and crime plan and the specific annual priorities for the police. Each year the force holds a series of strategic threat and risk assessment workshops across the six local policing areas, which bring together representatives from over 100 organisations and groups. This includes the office of the police and crime commissioner, local authorities, probation service, the fire service, the voluntary sector, advisory groups and community groups. The outcome of these workshops is a collective agreement on the crime and community safety priorities for the year ahead.

The force has strong oversight of activity to achieve the priorities. These range from monthly management boards led by the forces senior leaders through to daily management meetings that are held by local leaders across the force area. These arrangements assess progress and hold managers to account for performance against the priorities. The five priorities agreed for 2014 are: putting victims first, dealing with anti-social behaviour, domestic and sexual abuse, reducing crime, and community confidence.

Northumbria Police can demonstrate that resources and operational activity are applied to tackling the priorities in the police and crime plan. Each of the local policing areas also conducts meetings about crime every two weeks to review crime trends and identify emerging threats. The current focus of these meetings across the force is burglary of dwellings and violence against the person. The meetings enable local policing areas to target their resources towards emerging threats and to request additional or specialist resources from the force when required. One example was using specialist surveillance officers who were working in a local policing area to assist local officers with tackling burglary. Daily management meetings are flexible enough to respond quickly to threats emerging outside the fortnightly meeting timetable.

Quality of victim contact

Northumbria Police has a strong focus on improving the service to victims, with a clear force priority to put victims first, supported by a 'quality of service commitment' introduced in April 2014 to improve the service provided by the force to victims of crime and anti-social behaviour. In addition to the victim surveys that all forces undertake, the force carries out a range of consultation exercises with the public in order to improve the service. Examples include specific surveys for victims of anti-social behaviour, a service satisfaction system which involves managers contacting dissatisfied victims to identify areas for improvement and exit surveys for victims of serious sexual assault, completed by independent sexual

violence advisers (ISVA). In addition, the police and crime commissioner is in the process of introducing a rape scrutiny panel with independent membership which will review rape cases from the point at which they are first reported through the entire judicial process, from the perspective of the victim.

The results of public consultation are included within quarterly performance reviews on each of the local policing areas, conducted by an assistant chief constable (ACC). Local area commanders are held to account to improve performance in relation to victim satisfaction and where performance does improve the force seeks to understand if this is driven by cultural change in the force or compliance with policy and procedure. Levels of victim satisfaction with the police in Northumbria are one of the highest across England and Wales.

There has been a particular effort to improve satisfaction follow-up contact with victims. The force has introduced a 'Victim's Contact Contract' which is agreed with every victim when a police officer attends a crime. The contract ensures that victim contact is determined by the victim in terms of how often and by what means they are kept informed regarding progress of the investigation. Victim contracts are reviewed by supervisors and are also subject to peer review and quality assurance by managers from other local policing areas. The results of the peer reviews are reported directly to the force strategic management board, chaired by the chief constable, which clearly demonstrates the importance placed on improving public confidence and satisfaction.

An important measure of the impact of changes to service delivery for the public is how satisfied victims are with the overall service they receive when they seek police assistance. In the 12 months to the end of June 2014, Northumbria had a victim satisfaction rate of 90.5 percent (± 1.2 percent) which is higher than the satisfaction rate in England and Wales of 85.0 percent (± 0.2 percent). Its current rate is broadly in line with the 91.5 percent (± 1.1 percent) recorded for Northumbria Police in the previous year.

Use of police tactics

Northumbria Police uses a broad range of effective tactics to prevent crime and reduce reoffending. There is a clear focus on crime prevention with the use of disruption, alternatives to prosecution and, where considered necessary, targeting offenders to prevent crime. For example, neighbourhood policing staff work closely with probation staff on the 'turning point' initiative which focuses on the perpetrators of retail crime (shoplifting) who are drug and alcohol users, using a supportive problem-solving approach to divert them from committing further offences. The force also makes appropriate use, confirmed by partners, of the new police power to issue domestic violence protection notices (DVPNs) to prevent domestic abuse offenders from having contact with their victims for a period of time. At a recent multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC), four of the 27 cases involving victims of domestic abuse assessed as high risk, involved the use of DVPNs.

The force has a strong focus on protecting vulnerable members of the community. Detailed analysis was carried out 12 months ago in consultation with partner and voluntary agencies in order to produce a problem profile for child sexual exploitation. A series of incidents across the force also prompted the wider development of intelligence. This resulted in the introduction of Operation Sanctuary, a wide-ranging investigation into allegations of sexual exploitation against vulnerable adults and children, which has resulted in 118 arrests to date. As a result of Operation Sanctuary, the force has increased the knowledge of and improved the response for those adults and children vulnerable to sexual exploitation. The force is due to carry out further detailed analysis in the future.

Responsibility for tackling organised crime in Northumbria is a force-wide responsibility, with clear oversight and coordination by senior managers as part of Operation Magnet. Action to dismantle organised crime groups is predominantly carried out by the force's priority and organised crime team, with support from officers in road policing teams, the dog section and armed response. Neighbourhood policing teams also carry out activities to disrupt organised crime groups in their areas.

The force is changing the way in which it identifies and tackles the most prolific offenders¹ who pose a risk to the public. Previously the force had committed a small number of officers to work within dedicated integrated offender management (IOM)² teams but this is now changing. In future neighbourhood policing teams will have responsibility for IOM, with the intention that this will provide opportunities for joint working with partner agencies at a more local level. However, key partners and front line staff have not been engaged in the process for change and are unclear what the future arrangements will be.

Partnership working and information sharing

There are good and effective partnership working arrangements in place to prevent crime and offending at both a strategic level with the community safety partnerships and at a tactical level with local multi-agency problem-solving meetings (LMAPs). Neighbourhood policing is the bedrock of Northumbria's approach to policing and neighbourhood policing teams work closely with partners at LMAPs, reviewing all available partner data and identifying

1 Northumbria Police define a prolific offender as: "There is local flexibility and subjectivity in line with local/Community Safety partnership priorities when identifying an offender as a prolific or priority offender (PPO). Typically, prolific offenders are selected based on 6 convictions of acquisitive crimes within 12 months, alternatively priority offenders are selected based on an Area Command priorities. All offenders are subject to an assessment based on severity of their offending, volume of offences, offence type and the impact on the local community."

2 Northumbria Police use the following criteria to decide if an offender should be part of the IOM programme: "1) If they have already been identified as a prolific offender 2) If they are subject to a Drugs Rehabilitation Requirement 3) If they are subject to an alcohol treatment requirement 4) Non statutory offenders on a voluntary basis 5) Highlighted by probation or NPT"

opportunities to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour. Through the force initiative, Operation Sanctuary (to address sexual exploitation) the force has worked successfully with a number of partner agencies including health, local authorities, adult and children's services, sexual assault referral centres (SARC), independent sexual violence advisers (ISVA) and independent domestic violence advisers (IDVA) to raise awareness and improve the reporting of child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation and human trafficking.

Domestic abuse

In March 2014 HMIC published the results of its inspection of 43 forces on the effectiveness of the police approach to domestic violence, with a focus on outcomes for victims and whether risks to victims are adequately managed. This included clear recommendations for each force about improvements it should make. As a result of this inspection all forces were required to produce and publish an action plan setting out the steps they were taking to improve the services to victims of domestic abuse. This plan should demonstrate that HMIC recommendations are being addressed and also explain how:

- the leadership will ensure the changes necessary and hold the right people to account;
- the police response when a victim first contacts them (by a 999 call or by visiting a police station) and when they first attend the scene of the incident is improved;
- the force will ensure there is a high quality investigation of all domestic abuse crime;
- victims will be properly supported and offenders properly managed; and
- the training and learning provided to officers ensures they can give the best available response to the victim.

HMIC has made an initial consideration of the action plan submitted by Northumbria Police. We found the plan details activity that is in line with the agreed national priorities for forces outlined above. The plan includes the HMIC force-specific recommendations. Evidence is recorded to reflect those areas of activity where the force has met the requirements and those still under development

The crime inspection provided us with our first opportunity to test whether changes in the force's approach to domestic abuse were beginning to have a positive effect.

HMIC found evidence that Northumbria Police had made good progress to further improve its response to domestic abuse.

The case file review carried out by HMIC provided strong evidence that safeguarding measures are being put in place for victims of domestic abuse, in the form of safety plans. The safety plans are carried out in conjunction with partner agencies including independent domestic abuse advisers (IDVA), multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARAC), children and adult services and sometimes by finding a placement for a victim in a women's refuge. There was evidence of mobile phones being given to victims to contact police and panic alarms being installed at the homes of victims. A domestic abuse stalking and harassment (DASH) form had been completed in all cases to assess the threats, harm and risk to the victim and any children in the family or household. In all cases there was evidence of victim personal statements being offered and special measures, for example providing evidence at court by video link, being considered and documented. There was clear evidence of the risk to victims being considered and managed by suspects being remanded in custody, given bail conditions not to approach victims or the vicinity of the house and applications to courts for non-molestation orders.

Recommendations

- Northumbria Police should implement immediately a plan to increase engagement with partners regarding the restructuring process and future operating model of the integrated offender management scheme so they can consider feedback prior to implementation.

Summary



Good

- Northumbria Police has an effective strategic threat and risk assessment that aims to improve the service to victims, supported by a force priority to put victims first.
- The force has a strong focus on protecting the most vulnerable members of the community and works effectively with partners to ensure that the most vulnerable victims receive a joined-up service from all agencies. HMIC found good evidence of frontline staff working with partners to find ways to divert offenders and prevent crime.
- There has been a 20 percent reduction in crime in Northumbria over the last four years, which is a greater reduction than the figure for England and Wales; the force has one of the highest victim satisfaction rates in England and Wales.
- The force is changing the way in which repeat and prolific offenders are identified and tackled, however key partners and staff have not been engaged in the process for change and are unclear what the future arrangements will be.

How effective is the force at investigating offending?

HMIC looked at the range of police tactics and powers used by the force to investigate offending, including how investigations are conducted, whether persistent offenders are diverted from crime and how people vulnerable to repeat crime are supported. We looked at how the force learns from experience in order to improve professionalism in operational practice and leadership.

Vulnerability, risk and victims

Leaders at all levels within Northumbria Police place a strong emphasis on improving the service to victims of crime and anti-social behaviour and protecting those at greatest risk. Between September 2013 and January 2014, all staff in the force received specific training to assist them in identifying and dealing with vulnerability. Officers now agree contracts with victims on when and by what means they will receive information about their case. The case file review carried out by HMIC provided further evidence of a victim-centred approach; crime reports included details of victim contracts, had a high level of compliance for officers updating victims as well as scrutiny by supervisors. In all cases the victim had been contacted before the cases were finalised. Some cases involved vulnerable victims' alcohol, drugs or mental health issues. In these cases there was clear evidence of the investigating officer making contact with mental health case workers and drug and alcohol support workers to make sure that any special needs of the victim were met.

The force works closely with partners to protect the vulnerable within communities. There are two multi-agency safeguarding hubs (MASH) in place where staff from the force work alongside staff from children and adult services, share information and agree joint action which safeguards vulnerable individuals. A MASH for the victims of domestic abuse is due to be opened in Gateshead in the near future. Further examples include a triage response for domestic abuse which entails officers working alongside domestic abuse specialists to ensure support is provided to victims at the earliest opportunity, and missing from home coordinators working within children's care homes to identify the issues that cause children to go missing from care.

Investigation

Northumbria Police has a very strong focus on improving the quality of its investigations. The quality of service commitment to victims of crime and anti-social behaviour introduced by the force in April 2014 includes a commitment to improve the quality of investigations and a number of activities have been introduced to achieve this. Sergeants are required to prepare an investigation plan for every crime report and to review each crime report after seven days to ensure that the investigation is being progressed and that it complies with the victim code. All sergeants within the force have received specific crime file

training that included identifying investigative opportunities and evidential requirements. The files reviewed by HMIC contained clear evidence of sergeants approving appropriate investigation plans and monitoring the progress of investigations.

Inspectors are required to carry out peer reviews of crime files from local policing areas other than their own to determine the quality of investigations and compliance with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime. The results from these peer reviews are reported directly to the force strategic management board, chaired by the chief constable, at which local commanders are held to account for performance and priorities are identified with remedial action agreed. This clearly demonstrates the importance placed on improving the quality of investigations. Inspectors have not received face-to-face crime file training; however, they are expected to self brief using an electronic training package, produced by the Crown Prosecution Service, on file preparation and quality assurance.

The force has a commitment to attend all calls received in relation to crime and anti-social behaviour. Victims of anti-social behaviour also receive follow-up contact from their local neighbourhood policing team. This approach provides significant support to victims of crime and anti-social behaviour and provides clarity for all staff within the force, particularly those working within the police communication centres and those responding to calls. HMIC spoke to staff who expressed strong support for this approach. Particular categories of crime are allocated to specific investigators within the force. For example, serious assaults and burglaries are dealt with by neighbourhood CID staff, and serious sexual assaults and domestic abuse cases assessed as high risk are investigated by staff within the force's protecting vulnerable people (PVP) department. Investigators in these teams have received nationally accredited investigative training. The force also uses specialist officers to assist in the investigation of crime, for example surveillance officers deployed to assist with the investigation of retail crime (shoplifting).

Tackling repeat and prolific offenders

According to the force's definition, Northumbria Police had 269 prolific offenders as of 31 July 2014.

Northumbria Police was unable to provide data for offenders under the IOM programme.

The force uses a variety of methods to resolve investigations including prosecution, cautions and fixed penalty notices. However, the use of restorative justice is still developing with the force only recently setting up a dedicated restorative justice team. The lack of suitable alternatives to prosecution restricts opportunities to divert offenders out of the criminal justice system and may lead to decisions that are not in the best interests of either the victim or the perpetrator.

Learning from experience

Northumbria Police has a variable approach to learning. There is some good work being undertaken through the peer reviews of investigation quality and compliance with the code of practice for victims, together with scrutiny by the force strategic management board which is driving improvements in service for victims and investigations. The force also holds a critical incident review board (CIRB) which reviews every critical incident, police operations involving firearms, serious crime reviews and domestic homicide reviews. The CIRB identifies key issues and trends and implements remedial action where required, for example by addressing any additional training needs. However, there is limited activity to evaluate the success of crime reduction and prevention activities. The force does not undertake any analysis of these results to determine what tactics have worked. A specific electronic mail box for staff to submit good practice and innovative ideas is in place but there is no force level process to make this information or CIRB findings available to a wider audience, including its partners.

Recommendations

- Within six months Northumbria Police should ensure that there are methods in place to:
 - (a) systematically review and evaluate the benefits from both current tactics and new crime fighting and anti-social behaviour initiatives;
 - (b) systematically capture learning and good practice in crime prevention and local problem solving; and
 - (c) share learning and good practice across the force.

Summary



Good

- Northumbria Police places a strong emphasis on improving the service to victims of crime and anti-social behaviour and works closely with partners to protect the vulnerable within communities.
- The force commitment to attend all calls received in relation to crime and anti-social behaviour provides significant support to victims and provides clarity for all staff within the force.
- The standard of investigations reviewed by HMIC is good and the force has effective arrangements in place to deliver further improvement. However the force needs to do more to learn from what works in crime fighting and crime prevention tactics.

How effective is the force at tackling anti-social behaviour?

HMIC looked at how the force prevents and tackles anti-social behaviour; in particular the way victims are treated. We looked at the quality and consistency of victim contact across the force and whether victims of anti-social behaviour were dealt with in a comparable way to victims of other crimes.

Community contact and victim care

Northumbria Police is fully committed to the value of neighbourhood policing teams (NPTs) and despite severe financial constraints over recent years it has maintained the number of staff working within these teams. This commitment was reinforced recently by the chief constable and deputy chief constable when they addressed all neighbourhood inspectors on the importance of understanding and delivering on neighbourhood priorities.

The NPTs have a good understanding of their local community concerns and priorities. A range of methods are used, which ensure that NPTs have a good level of engagement with local people and an understanding of issues such as anti-social behaviour. This includes partners and communities together (PACT) meetings, surgeries, media articles, newsletters, the use of social media such as Twitter and safer community surveys carried out with local authorities. The force has used these methods to increase the reporting of anti-social behaviour supported by campaigns such as 'report it to sort it' which was launched to help people understand what anti-social behaviour is and give details of the service they can expect to receive from Northumbria Police.

Anti-social behaviour is a clear priority for the force and this is recognised by staff and partners alike. To ensure incidents of anti-social behaviour are prioritised and receive the appropriate response at the first point of contact the force has trained staff in their two communication centres to provide a response based on individual needs, ensuring those most at risk are given the support and service they need. Contact handlers are assisted in deciding the most appropriate response to incidents by using an automated checking mechanism which searches the Northumbria Police integrated computer and communications system (NPICCS). It uses the address where the incident is happening and a combination of the caller's surname, date of birth and telephone number. Any previous anti-social behaviour incidents or warnings about the address or people involved are automatically updated in the incident log. These checks will highlight if a victim has already been identified as a vulnerable or repeat victim and will assist in determining the appropriate initial response and risk assessment. The force has made a commitment to attend calls from repeat or vulnerable victims within 60 minutes.

Performance data and analysis relating to anti-social behaviour, including findings from surveys with victims of anti-social behaviour is monitored and managed by the police and crime commissioner and the chief constable at the force's strategic management board. This ensures continuous improvement in the service provided by the force to address anti-social behaviour.

HMIC found that all neighbourhood policing staff it had spoken to had a good knowledge of repeat and vulnerable victims of anti-social behaviour within their communities and were clearly committed to supporting victims and providing a high quality service. Effective plans are put in place to reduce harm and are managed by NPT supervisors, who also re-contact victims of anti-social behaviour to assess satisfaction with the service provided, including the frequency with which the victim has been updated. Senior managers hold a strong view that the commitment to neighbourhood policing is a significant contributory factor in the high victim satisfaction rates and crime reduction rates that the force has achieved.

Partnership working

Northumbria Police has strong relationships with partners at all levels, ranging from active engagement with anti-social behaviour strategic groups which are in place in each local authority, to working in partnership through the local multi-agency problem solving meetings (LMAPS). LMAPS involve NPT staff working with local partners to focus on tackling anti-social behaviour involving repeat and vulnerable victims, locations or offenders. For example in North Tyneside police and partners focus on early intervention, using meetings about safer estates and engagement with troubled families to support and divert individuals from offending behaviour.

In addition to this, each of the six local policing areas have arrangements in place with senior representatives from partner agencies to ensure activities to tackle anti-social behaviour are co-ordinated and focused on the areas of greatest need. For example in Sunderland there is a partnership meeting to ensure youth provision is prioritised to address repeat and vulnerable victims, locations or offenders.

Improving services to the public

In the 12 months to March 2014, Northumbria Police recorded 76,276 incidents of anti-social behaviour. This is a reduction of 13 percent against the previous 12 months.

There are a wide range of tactics used by the force, many in conjunction with partners, to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour. We found some good examples of neighbourhood teams involved in restorative interventions for victims of anti-social behaviour, for example the clean up and painting of community buildings by those committing anti-social behaviour.

We also found good evidence of action to divert people away from anti-social behaviour, for example letters to families regarding the abuse of alcohol by young people and the use of mediation services to address issues of anti-social behaviour involving families and neighbours.

Neighbourhood policing staff have a good awareness of the range of powers available to them. In the 12 months to the end of July 2014, Northumbria Police issued 2024 anti-social behaviour warning notices and nine anti-social behaviour orders. The force is in the process of rolling out face-to-face training to over 3,000 frontline staff including all neighbourhood policing staff in the new anti-social behaviour powers.

Summary



Outstanding

- Northumbria Police has a very strong commitment to neighbourhood policing and the neighbourhood policing teams have a good understanding of local concerns and priorities. Neighbourhood policing officers work well with local people in tackling anti-social behaviour and are committed to ensuring the most vulnerable in their communities are protected.
- Senior leaders place a strong emphasis on the importance of tackling anti-social behaviour, which is clearly recognised by staff and partners alike.
- Partnership working for tackling anti-social behaviour is strong and effective. The force works well with local authority partners in understanding local anti-social behaviour concerns and finding solutions.

What each judgment means

HMIC uses four categories for making judgments, two are positive and two are negative. The categories are:

- outstanding;
- good;
- requires improvement; and
- inadequate.

Judgment is made against how well the force cuts crime. In applying the categories HMIC considers whether:

- the way the force is cutting crime and reducing offending is good, or exceeds this standard sufficiently to be judged as outstanding;
- the force requires improvement in the way it cuts crime, and/or there are some weaknesses; or
- the force's effectiveness at cutting crime is inadequate because it is significantly lower than is expected.