



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

Anti-social behaviour inspection report

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

Findings for Cambridgeshire Constabulary

Overview

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

HMIC found that the force has made progress since 2010 on understanding and tackling ASB problems. However, our survey of ASB victims in Cambridgeshire shows a reduction in satisfaction levels compared with the high standards of 2010.

The chief officer team has made it clear that tackling ASB is a priority for the force, with an emphasis on dealing with the 'harm caused' from an incident. This approach provides a positive focus in the way the force tackles ASB within its communities. The force has an IT system that can help to identify repeat and vulnerable victims, as well as if a call relates to local ASB priorities. This in turn will enable the force to ensure that the correct resource and response are provided.

However, despite the IT system the force does not 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.

The force introduced a new policing model in April 2012. This integrates emergency response and neighbourhood policing teams into one local policing team. The force will need to ensure that these teams have the range of skills necessary to provide a cohesive response when dealing with local ASB issues.

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

The force has progressed in the way it uses its command and control IT system and has established a formal process to improve its identification of repeat or vulnerable victims when they first contact the police. However, call takers do not consistently check the force's computer systems to see if the caller has telephoned before. Furthermore, they do not consistently ask questions to determine if the caller may be vulnerable.

HMIC reviewed 107 calls about ASB. We found that call takers checked on only half the occasions to see if a caller was a repeat victim, and asked questions about vulnerability in only a third of cases. However, the call takers generally dealt with the victim in a professional manner.

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

All staff have access to briefing information about ASB on the force intranet. Neighbourhood policing teams carry out their own searches of force computer systems and brief themselves effectively on the nature and location of ASB issues in their area. We found that response teams and investigators undertook analysis of crime in their neighbourhood but rarely researched local ASB issues.

The force has recognised the need to improve the current briefing system and intends to introduce a more consistent and effective way of making all relevant staff aware of ASB issues in their area.

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

There are good local arrangements for sharing information with partners about ASB issues. The force conducts daily analysis of ASB information to help prioritise where resources should be deployed. However, the fact that repeat and vulnerable victims are not always identified means that the analysis of ASB information is not as effective as it could be.

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

All frontline officers have received training about ASB, and neighbourhood policing teams (NPTs) have access to advice and information to help them to deal with ASB issues. They also have access to professional advice and support from supervisors and locally-based staff who specialise in dealing with ASB.

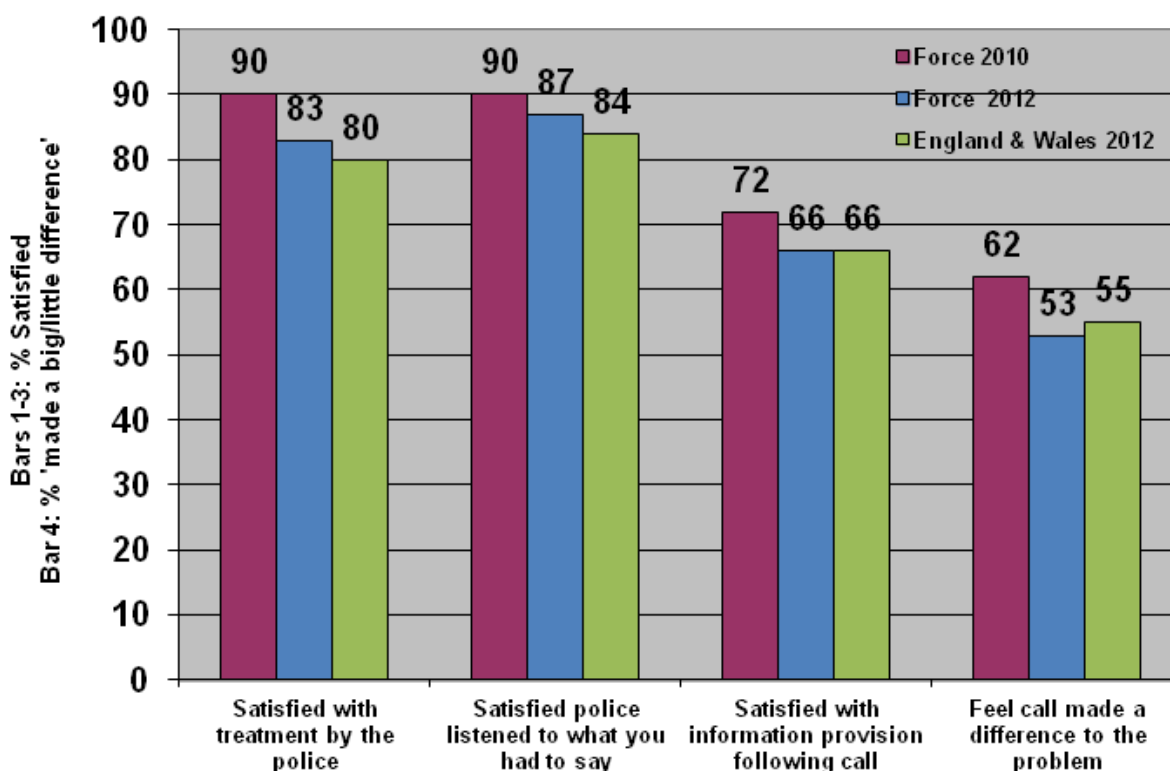
The force has a computer system for managing plans to deal with long-term ASB problems. These plans are effectively supervised to ensure that progress is being made and that any risks identified are addressed.

The force makes sure that NPTs are not normally taken off their neighbourhood, which helps them to understand their communities and build up good local knowledge. This principle will be carried forward within the new model for delivering policing in Cambridgeshire.

Results of a survey of ASB victims

We surveyed 200 people who reported ASB to Cambridgeshire 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 results show a reduction in the proportion of positive responses, compared to the high levels of satisfaction in 2010. However, because of the small sample size, these reductions were not statistically significant. The force is performing broadly in line with the national average.