



Inspecting policing  
in the public interest

## **Anti-social behaviour inspection report**

**Cumbria 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 Cumbria; the 2010 review is available on the HMIC website ([www.hmic.gov.uk](http://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 Cumbria Constabulary is performing in these key areas.

# Findings for Cumbria Constabulary

## Overview

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

HMIC was pleased to find that the force has continued to make progress since 2010, with a refreshed ASB strategy and a clear improvement plan (both of which are overseen and led by the chief officer). Good engagement and clear communication with the public in Cumbria reinforces the fact that tackling ASB is a priority for the force.

However, Cumbria Constabulary still needs to do more to ensure that all vulnerable ASB victims are identified as soon as they contact the police (so they can receive extra support), and that supervisors actively track all ASB victims. HMIC listened to a number of calls about ASB made to the force in order to gauge the response provided, and found call handlers were not consistently complying with force processes to help identify repeat or vulnerable victims (although we acknowledge that major changes are planned for the communication rooms, which should address these concerns).

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

Cumbria Constabulary can identify if a caller has rung them before through their IT call-handling system. Staff are required to question callers to confirm or establish if they are repeat or vulnerable victims of ASB.

HMIC listened to 100 calls received by the force about ASB, and found that call handlers did not always check the vulnerability status of the victim: they only asked about this on 29 occasions. However, they checked whether the caller was a repeat victim in 69 cases.

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

The force ensures that neighbourhood policing teams and officers who respond to 999 calls are briefed regularly by supervisors about general ASB issues and emerging problems.

However, HMIC found evidence that CID staff were provided with less detailed information as part of daily business than neighbourhood or response staff.

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

A comprehensive briefing document is produced each month, containing analysis of ASB hotspots and vulnerable victims. Staff have access to an IT system which allows them to brief themselves on ASB victims, locations and offenders in their area.

HMIC found that staff have personal knowledge of ASB hotspots in their patch, but that these are not flagged automatically by the force's IT systems. At a neighbourhood level, there is good evidence of working with partners to find joint solutions to ASB problems, and to share information.

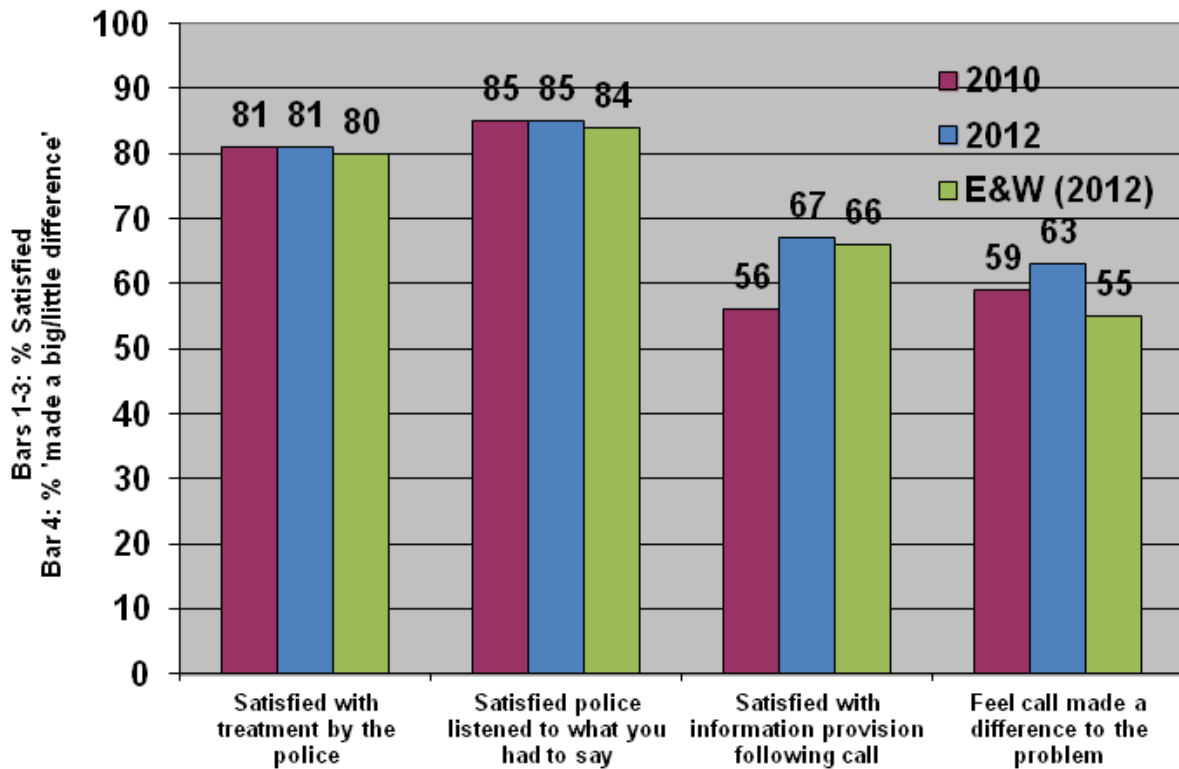
## **Do neighbourhood policing teams have the right tools and resources to tackle ASB?**

Neighbourhood policing teams receive good support from the wider force in making sure they have sufficient training and resources to tackle ASB. Although the level of ASB per 1,000 population is high compared to the England and Wales rate, the actual volume is low. Frontline staff know about community issues and have time to dedicate to resolving the issues. There were several excellent examples of police community support officers (PCSOs) engaging with the community around youth work, and diverting young people from ASB.

## Results of a survey of ASB victims

We surveyed 200 people who reported ASB to Cumbria 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



These results show a significant increase in the percentage of people who are satisfied with the information provided by the police following their call. Respondents in Cumbria were also more likely than the national average to feel their call had made a difference to the problem.

