



Devon and Cornwall Police has made good progress in achieving their savings for the comprehensive spending review but crime levels are some cause for concern

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) has today published a report on Devon and Cornwall Police's progress in meeting the challenges of the 2010 comprehensive spending review.

A thematic report, *Policing in Austerity: One Year On*, found that police forces across England and Wales have risen to the financial challenge of the spending review, cutting their spending while largely maintaining the service they provide to the public; but HMIC has some concerns about whether all forces have transformed their efficiency to the extent that this can be sustained through the next three years (and into future spending reviews).

Based on the data provided by the force, HMIC found that:

- Devon and Cornwall Police needs to save £51 million between March 2011 and March 2015. By spring 2012 they had planned how to save 97% of this amount.
- The force is planning to cut its total workforce number (i.e. police officers, police staff and police community support officers) by 990 between March 2010 and March 2015.
- 620 of these will be police officer posts; this means there will be 17% fewer officers in Devon and Cornwall (compared with a 10% average officer reduction across England and Wales).
- By 2015 76% of its workforce will be in frontline roles. This is a higher proportion than the England and Wales national figure.
- However, the proportion of police officers on the front line over this period remains at 85% – a lower proportion than in other forces.
- Unlike many other forces in England and Wales, Devon and Cornwall saw an increase in crime between 2010 and 2011. However, the volumes are relatively small: over the same period the force recorded the fourth lowest crime rate out of 42 forces.
- 85% of victims in Devon and Cornwall were satisfied with the service provided by the force. This is in line with the national figure.

HM Inspector of Constabulary for the Western Region, Dru Sharpling, said:

“Because Devon and Cornwall Police had cut costs before 2010, they found it more difficult than some other forces to find the extra savings required by the spending review. As a result, their plans to balance their books rely to a significant extent on making savings quickly by cutting police officer and staff numbers. While this approach should allow them to fully meet their funding gap by March 2015, the force also needs to continue to restructure and transform the way it delivers policing. This will ensure the reduction in staff doesn’t result in a corresponding reduction in the service provided to the public.

“As the force develops its plans it should look to increasing the proportion of its total workforce – and in particular its police officers – in frontline roles. This will enable a focus on crime fighting so that Devon and Cornwall can continue to record low crime rates and make their communities feel safe.”

The full report for Devon and Cornwall Police, along with the national thematic review ‘Policing in austerity: One year on’, can be found at www.hmic.gov.uk

Notes to editors

1. The full thematic report ‘Policing in austerity: One year on’ and supporting material can be found at www.hmic.gov.uk
2. The review ‘Adapting to Austerity’ published in July 2011 and the accompanying force reports can be found at www.hmic.gov.uk
3. In October 2010, the government announced that the central funding provided to the police service would reduce by 20% in the four years between March 2011 and March 2015.
4. Figures are rounded (financial figures to the nearest million and workforce figures to the nearest 10) and financial figures are in cash prices.
5. For further information, or to request an interview, HMIC’s press office can be contacted during office hours from 8:30am – 5:30pm Monday – Friday on 0203 513 0600.
6. Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) is an independent inspectorate, inspecting policing in the public interest, and rigorously examines the effectiveness of police forces and authorities to tackle crime and terrorism, improve criminal justice and raise confidence. HMIC inspects and regulates all 43 police forces in England and Wales together with other major policing bodies such as the Serious Organised Crime Agency, the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the British Transport Police and HMRC.
7. HMIC’s out-of-hours press office line for urgent media enquiries is 07836 217 729.
8. Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) carried out an inspection of all 43 police forces in England and Wales in spring 2011, to see how they were planning to meet this financial challenge. When the results were published in July 2011 (search for ‘Valuing the Police’ on www.hmic.gov.uk), we committed to returning one year later to report on progress, and to assess whether there had been any impact on the service provided to the public.