

Durham Constabulary has continued to improve how it tackles anti-social behaviour, but is not consistently identifying vulnerable ASB victims

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). The national findings were published alongside individual reports that outlined how successfully each force was dealing with the problem.

The results of a follow-up inspection published today found that Durham Constabulary has continued to improve the way it deals with ASB since our 2010 inspection and has put in place new systems and processes to help tackle the problem. The constabulary also works well with partners (such as local councils), and has put in place effective joint plans to tackle specific ASB problems.

However, staff responding to calls about ASB are not consistently provided with relevant background information on the caller and incident, especially at busy times. Based on the sample of calls reviewed for this inspection, HMIC is also concerned that call takers are not consistently checking with the caller if he or she is vulnerable, or if the ASB has happened before, and updating the incident log accordingly. This means some victims may not be getting the extra support they need.

HM Inspector of Constabulary for the Northern Region, Roger Baker, said:

“Anti-social behaviour is a blight that can wreck lives and communities. Our review shows that Durham Constabulary has continued to improve how it tackles anti-social behaviour, and victim satisfaction is in line with the national figures for England and Wales. The force should be commended for this – especially as it comes against the backdrop of significant budget cuts across the Service.”

“However, there is no room for complacency. In particular, Durham Constabulary should ensure staff are consistently provided with relevant information about a caller’s background, and continue to work on ensuring repeat and vulnerable callers are identified at the first point of contact. This progress is therefore only the first step in delivering a much better service to victims.”

The full report for Durham Constabulary, along with the national thematic review ‘A Step in the Right Direction’, can be found at www.hmic.gov.uk

Notes to editors

1. The full thematic report 'A Step in the Right Direction' and supporting material can be found at www.hmic.gov.uk
2. The review 'Stop the Rot' published in September 2010 and the accompanying force reports can be found at www.hmic.gov.uk
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. HMIC's out-of-hours press office line for urgent media enquiries is 07836 217 729.