



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

Durham Constabulary's response to the funding challenge

July 2013

Contents

Durham Constabulary: Executive summary	3
The challenge	5
Progress in making savings: Years 1–2	5
Plans for Year 3–4	5
Looking beyond the current spending review	5
The scale of the challenge in Durham	5
Demand	6
Response to the challenge	7
Changes to workforce numbers	7
Changes to the proportion of workforce on the front line	8
Collaboration	9
Managing change	10
How is the force engaging police officers, PCSOs and staff in the change programme?	10
How effective has the response been?	11
Impact of the changes on the public	12
Visibility	12
Calls for service	13
Crime	13
Victim satisfaction surveys	15
Changes to how the public can access services	15
Conclusion	16

Durham Constabulary: Executive summary

Durham Constabulary has made a good start in its challenge to cut spending by £22.2m by 2015. It has already found nearly 80% of the savings it needs.

Because of its good track record in managing change so far, HMIC is confident that the force will achieve its savings target. The force has stayed focused on making sure that the cuts do not damage the service they provide to local people. We have seen crime falling more quickly in Durham than elsewhere in England and Wales, and victim satisfaction with policing is higher than the average.

The response to the spending review has been well led and the force has a comprehensive and effective approach to engaging staff and equipping them at all levels to manage change and deliver an improved service.

Financial challenge

Durham Constabulary has identified that it needs to save £22.2m over the four years of the spending review (i.e. between March 2011 and March 2015).

While as a proportion of its overall budget (16%) this savings requirement is broadly in line with most other forces, HMIC considers that Durham Constabulary faces a moderate challenge. This is because the amount of money it spends on policing is lower than most other forces, but it has a higher number of police officers and the amount it spends on each officer is higher than most other forces. However, it spends less on its police staff employees compared to most other forces.

Progress in making savings

Durham Constabulary has planned how it will save £21.7m of the £22.2m required by March 2015. It therefore still has £0.5m¹ to find. We would expect the force to close this gap given its track record, and the force anticipates that it will deliver the remaining savings.

Changes to the workforce

All forces spend most of their money on staff costs (such as wages and overtime), and so have focused on reducing this expenditure in order to cut costs.² Durham Constabulary is no exception.

¹ The amount to save may not add up to the total due to rounding.

² See *Adapting to Austerity*, HMIC, London, July 2011, p.13. Available from www.hmic.gov.uk.

It is reducing police officer numbers by limiting recruitment and holding vacancies and as a result, by the end of the spending review period, it is planned that there will be 206 fewer police officers in the force. This means the number of police officers is planned to reduce by 14% between March 2010³ and March 2015. This is a greater reduction than in most other forces.

There is evidence that Durham Constabulary is successfully protecting frontline posts as it makes these cuts: between March 2010 and March 2015, the proportion of police officers in frontline, crime-fighting roles is planned to increase from 88% to 90%. This compares to an overall increase across England and Wales from 89% to 93%.

The force has also made some police staff redundant and not replaced others as they have left (e.g. through retirements and resignations), as a result, by the end of the spending review period, it is planned that there will be 95 fewer police staff in the force. This means the number of police staff is planned to reduce by 10% between March 2010 and March 2015; this is less than in most other forces. The force plans to reduce the number of police community support officers (PCSOs) by two officers only, or 1%; this is a smaller reduction than in most other forces.

Impact on the public

HMIC expects forces to make savings without damaging the service provided to the public. We monitor whether they are achieving this by examining recorded crime rates and the results of the victim satisfaction surveys which all forces conduct.

Over the first two years of the spending review, recorded crime⁴ (excluding fraud) fell by 17%, which is more than the figure for England and Wales (13%). Victim satisfaction remains high at 89%⁵ which is higher than other forces.

Future challenges

Durham Constabulary has responded well to the challenge in this spending review period, it has already found 79% of the savings it needs, and has plans in place to deliver all but £0.5m of the remainder by 2015. It also has detailed plans in place to deliver more savings each year to March 2017 in line with the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC's) Police and Crime Plan for Durham.

HMIC is confident that the force can deliver the savings in the remaining years of the spending review and this is supported by a good track record of delivery. The force is well placed to face future challenges.

3 We use 2010 as our baseline as many forces started to make staff reductions in anticipation of the spending review.

4 Crime excluding fraud, as per the new crime classifications released in July 2013 by the Office for National Statistics.

5 ± 1.6%.

The challenge

Over the four years of the spending review (March 2011 to March 2015), Durham Constabulary identified that it needed to find savings of £22.2m, which equates to 16% of its total expenditure⁶ (which in 2012/13 was £124.8m). Across England and Wales a 17% reduction in total expenditure is required.

Progress in making savings: Years 1–2

The force successfully made 79% (£17.4m) of the total savings required by March 2015 in the first two years of the spending review period. It achieved this by reducing the number of police officers and police staff it employs and restructuring how the force delivers elements of its policing e.g. by moving from a geographical to a functional policing model in 2011; and increased efficiency by making better use of new technology; and improved management of performance, sickness and other absence.

Plans for Year 3–4

The force has plans in place to achieve further savings of £1.3m in 2013/14, and another £2.9m in 2014/15. This leaves a funding gap of £0.5m⁷ at the end of the spending review period. The force is continuing to develop plans to fill this gap and anticipate that they will close it.

Looking beyond the current spending review

The force has started to consider what savings it might need to make after March 2015, and the force's medium-term financial plan looks further forward, to 2016/17. Future savings plans are high level and include further changes relating to workforce modernisation and the force's buildings and estate. For example, savings in running costs will be delivered from the building of a new headquarters, due to be finished in the summer of 2014.

The scale of the challenge in Durham

Durham Constabulary faces a moderate challenge because the force's savings requirement is broadly in line with other forces and, while its costs are relatively low overall, it has flexibility to make savings:

- it spends less per head of population than most other forces in England and Wales;
- it has a higher number of police officers per head of population than most other forces in England and Wales;

⁶ Based on a gross expenditure baseline in 2010/11.

⁷ The figures may not add up to the total due to rounding.

- the cost of police officers per head of population is higher than most other forces in England and Wales; but
- the cost of police staff per head of population is lower than most other forces in England and Wales.

Demand

Forces face different levels of demand for the service they provide to the public. This section looks at three of the key indicators of demand to provide an overall impression of the challenges each force faces:

- the number of calls the force receives from the public;
- the number of crimes the force deals with; and
- the number of prosecutions (suspects charged with offences) the force brings.

12 months to March 2013	Durham Constabulary	England and Wales
Emergency and priority calls per 1,000 population	151	134
Victim-based crime per 1,000 population	43.0	54.5
Prosecutions (charges) per 1,000 population	10.4	10.2

In 2012/13 Durham Constabulary received more emergency and priority calls from the public than other forces. It dealt with fewer crimes per head of population than other forces, and supported slightly more prosecutions than elsewhere.

Response to the challenge

Forces deliver their response to the savings requirement through a change programme. Over 80% of a police budget (on average) is spent on staff costs,⁸ it is not surprising that the change programmes of forces across England and Wales, plan to achieve most of their savings by reducing the number of police officers, police community support officers (PCSOs) and police staff employed.

Durham Constabulary is no exception. It made an early start on this in 2010, when it slowed its recruitment of new police officers and police staff, and reduced the number of police staff. The force plans to make 80% of its spending review savings requirement from its pay budget. This is higher than most other forces and indicates that there may be an opportunity to reduce expenditure on non-pay costs.

Changes to workforce numbers

The following table shows the force's planned changes to workforce numbers over the spending review period, and compares these to the change for England and Wales.⁹

	31 March 2010 (baseline)	31 March 2015¹	Change	Durham change %	Change for England and Wales %
Police Officers	1,507	1,301	-206	-14%	-11%
Police Staff	920	824	-95	-10%	-16%
PCSOs	175	173	-2	-1%	-17%
Total	2,602	2,298	-303	-12%	-13%
Specials	131	200	+69	+53%	+60%

Overall, the table shows that Durham Constabulary plans to lose more officers and fewer police staff than in other forces and will broadly maintain the same number of PCSOs throughout the spending review period.

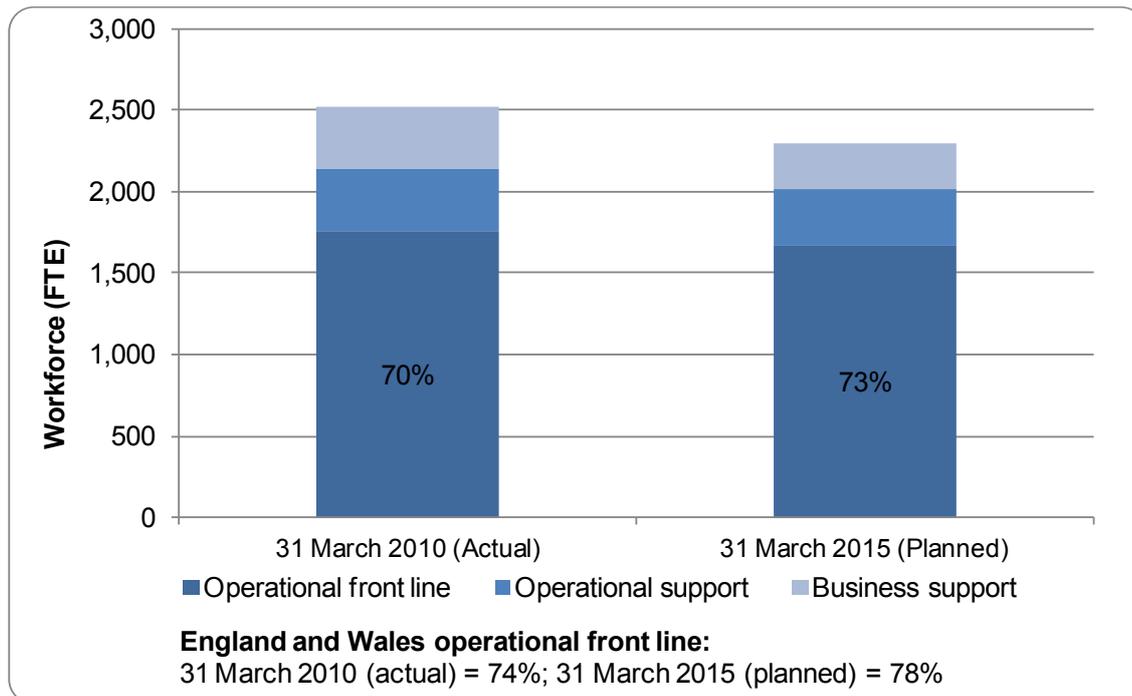
⁸ See *Adapting to Austerity*, HMIC, London, July 2011, p.13. Available from www.hmic.gov.uk.

⁹ Workforce figures for March 2010 show the actual number of people working for the force in permanent posts on the 31 March in that year. People on long-term absences (such as maternity leave) are included in these 'actual' figures, but vacant posts are not. Workforce projections for March 2015 are for budgeted posts, so the actual number of people who will be working for the force at that point in reality may be different, because some posts will be vacant or filled by temporary staff. Forces' projections may also exclude people who will be on long-term absences. The difference between actual workforce numbers and projected numbers should therefore be taken as an approximate expected change.

Changes to the proportion of workforce on the front line

HMIC defines the people who work on the police front line as: “those who are in everyday contact with the public and who directly intervene to keep people safe and enforce the law”. It is important that as forces reconfigure their structures and reduce workforce **numbers**, they focus on maintaining (or if possible increasing) the **proportion** of people in these crime-fighting roles.

The following chart shows the change in the workforce frontline profile in Durham Constabulary.¹⁰

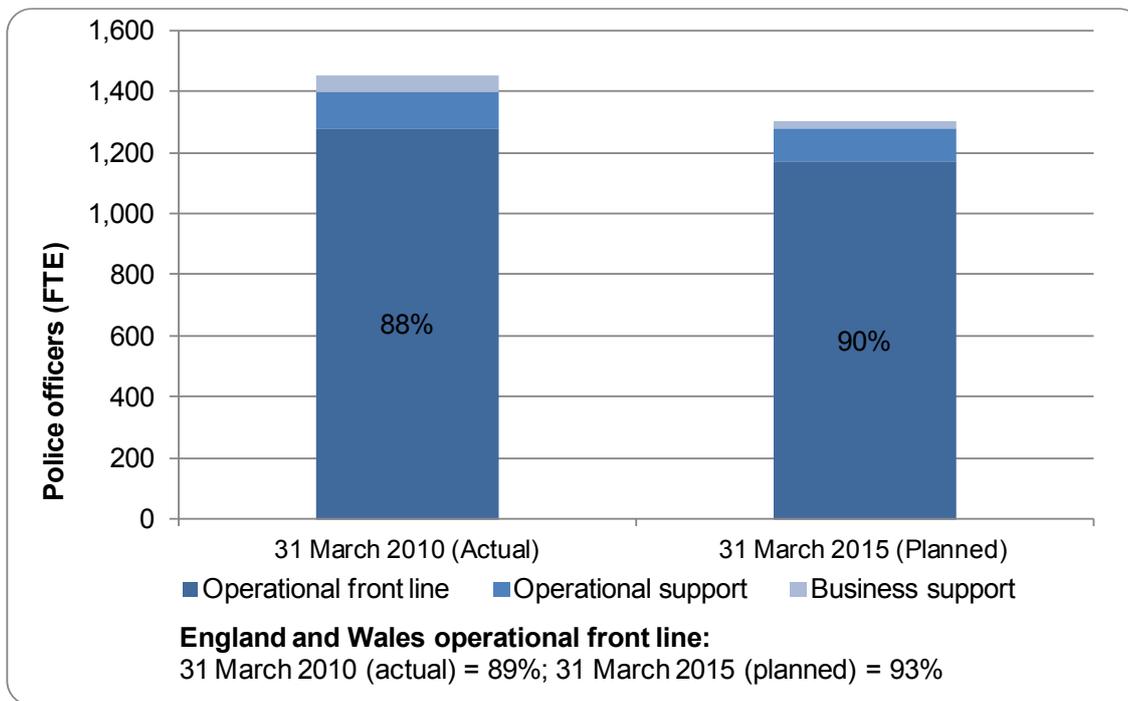


The **number** of officers, PCSOs and staff (i.e. of the force’s total workforce) working on Durham’s front line is planned to reduce by 5% between March 2010 and March 2015 (from 1,756 to 1,673).

Over the same period, the **proportion** of Durham Constabulary’s total workforce allocated to frontline roles is planned to increase from 70% to 73%. This compares with an overall increase across England and Wales from 74% to 78%.

The **number** of Durham’s police officers is planned to reduce by 8% from 1,280 in March 2010 to 1,172 in March 2015, as the chart on the next page shows. The **proportion** of those remaining on the front line is planned to increase from 88% to 90%. This compares to an overall increase across England and Wales from 89% to 93%.

¹⁰ From 2010, Gwent, the Metropolitan Police Service, Wiltshire and North Wales police forces chose to code those officers and staff who are on long-term absence from duty due to maternity/paternity leave, career break, full-time education or suspension, and those on long-term leave, to their normal working role. This has the effect of inflating their workforce and frontline figures by up to 1% compared to other forces.



Collaboration

HMIC monitors a force’s progress on collaboration¹¹ because it offers the opportunity to deliver efficient, effective policing and help achieve savings.

HMIC found that the force has actively pursued collaborative opportunities at a local, regional and national level which has resulted in a number of policing services being delivered in collaboration with other forces or organisations. Examples of joint teams include firearms; roads policing; and IT provision.

The force is currently an active partner in more than 80 separate initiatives for collaborative working. While the joint operational and support arrangements have added resilience and enabled a more efficient approach they have not resulted in significant cost savings for the force. The PCC’s Police and Crime Plan identifies that the force needs to look for future collaboration and partnering opportunities.

Currently, the force expects to spend only 6% of its total expenditure on collaboration by 2014/15, which is lower than the 11% figure for England and Wales. Overall, collaboration is expected to contribute to 2% of the force’s savings requirement, which is lower than the 7% figure for England and Wales.

¹¹ HMIC defines collaboration as “all activity where two or more parties work together to achieve a common goal, which includes inter force activity and collaboration with the public and private sectors, including outsourcing and business partnering”.

Managing change

Reductions in police budgets have inevitably led to a shrinking workforce. HMIC expects forces also to have an eye within their change programmes on the longer term transformation¹² which can help maintain or improve the service they offer to the public and prepare for future funding reductions.

The force responded early to the challenge of cutting its spending. It reorganised the way the force operated in 2011 when it moved from geographically based command units to a functional policing model in order to provide a modern, cost-effective, neighbourhood policing service. Some advantages of the new operating model include:

- flexible incident response and demand management;
- opportunities for workforce modernisation;
- rationalised 'back office' support; and
- greater corporate identity.

The operating model's performance, financial and workforce management are integrated through the overall force management arrangements. Savings plans are being managed as 'business as usual' rather than through the force's change programme which currently focuses on delivering service improvements through a number of programme boards:

- Futures board;
- Efficient Use of Resources board;
- Citizens Journey board.

How is the force engaging police officers, PCSOs and staff in the change programme?

HMIC found that the force recognises the importance of engaging staff in the changes; it has been keen to understand and manage the impact on staff. Training has been provided in the management of change, and support has been provided via the staff associations and human resources. Staff we spoke to understood the need for change and felt fully engaged in the process. They told us that this training was pivotal in delivering change by empowering staff to use problem-solving techniques to address specific issues.

The force also has a deliberate open dialogue and engagement with staff associations and the staff union. They reported good working relationships with the force, giving examples where they had been able to add value to the planned changes.

The force is ensuring that cultural change is integrated within plans and structural change. Over recent years the force has conducted annual staff surveys and the findings have been used by the force to inform plans and ensure change is managed appropriately.

¹² Transformation is a process of radical change that orientates an organisation in a new direction and takes it to an entirely different level of effectiveness. It implies a fundamental change of character, with little or no resemblance to the past configuration or structure.

How effective has the response been?

In HMIC's assessment, Durham Constabulary faces a moderate challenge to save money: it spends less on policing; has more officers; and expenditure on pay costs is higher than in most other forces. The force has made good progress in meeting their financial challenge and has made a good start on reducing its costs while staying focused on providing high quality local policing. It has developed a detailed change programme which will allow it to reduce costs while continuing to fight crime. Significant savings have already been made and it would appear that the service to the public has not been allowed to suffer as a result of the cuts. Crime in Durham has fallen by more than the average in England and Wales and satisfaction with the police in Durham is higher than the average.

Impact of the changes on the public

The challenge for forces is not just to save money and reduce their workforce numbers, but to ensure the choices they make in deciding how to achieve this do not have a negative impact on the service they provide to their communities. HMIC therefore looked for evidence that the force had kept a consideration of the effect on the public at the heart of their choices.

Visibility

The work done by police officers and staff in visible roles (such as officers who respond to 999 calls, deal with serious road traffic collisions or patrol in neighbourhoods) represents only a part of the policing picture. Chief Constables need to allocate resources to many other functions in order to protect the public, such as counter terrorism, serious and organised crime, and child protection (to name just three).

That being said, research shows that the public value seeing visible police officers on patrol in the streets, and that those who see police in uniform at least once a week are more likely to have confidence in their local force.¹³ HMIC therefore examined how far the changes being implemented by the force had affected the visibility of the police on the streets of Durham.

In March 2013, Durham Constabulary allocated 53% of its police officers to visible roles. This is 7 percentage points lower than it allocated in 2010, and is broadly in line with the figure for most other forces (which was 54% across England and Wales).

Police visibility is further enhanced by PCSOs who principally support community policing. Looking at the proportion of police officers and PCSOs, Durham Constabulary allocated 57% to visible roles. This is 6 percentage points lower than it allocated in 2010 and lower than the 59% figure for England and Wales.

HMIC conducted a survey¹⁴ of the public across England and Wales to assess whether the public had noticed any difference in the way their area is being policed. Of those people surveyed in Durham, 16%¹⁵ said that they have seen a police officer more often than they had 12 months ago; this is broadly in line with the 13% average across all survey respondents in England and Wales.

Of those people surveyed, 80%¹⁶ said they felt either as safe or safer in the areas where they live compared with two years ago. This is broadly in line with the figure for most other forces which is 75%.

¹³ See *Demanding Times*, HMIC, London, 2011. Available from www.hmic.gov.uk.

¹⁴ A YouGov survey was carried out during a four-week period during March 2013. Satisfaction and confidence surveys are also carried out at a national level by the Crime Survey of England and Wales. These use larger sample sizes and are carried out quarterly over a rolling-year period. Some forces also carry out their own surveys of the general public. More information can be found at www.crimesurvey.co.uk, www.hmic.gov.uk or from force websites.

¹⁵ $\pm 5\%$.

¹⁶ $\pm 5\%$.

Calls for service

HMIC examined whether Durham Constabulary was taking longer to respond to calls for help, as a result of its workforce reductions and other changes designed to save money. Forces are not required to set response times or targets and are free to determine their own arrangements for monitoring attendance to calls so information between forces is not comparable.

In the three years from 2010,¹⁷ Durham Constabulary had maintained the same target response time of within 15 minutes for calls classed as 'emergency' (also known as grade 1) in an urban setting and within 20 minutes for calls classed as 'emergency' in a rural setting. Over the same period, calls classed as a 'priority' (also known as grade 2) had a target response time of within 60 minutes.

The force met its target response time for urban 'emergency' calls 90% of the time in 2010/11, 88% of the time in 2011/12, and 86% of the time in 2012/13. The force also met its target response time for rural 'emergency' calls 91% of the time in 2010/11 and 2011/12 and 89% of the time in 2012/13.

For 'priority' calls, the force met its target 83% of the time in 2010/2011, 80% of the time in 2011/12 and 75% of the time in 2012/13.

This shows a declining trend in both emergency and priority call attendance times. Since the implementation of the functional model in 2011, the force has carried out significant work to understand its demand profile and identify key demand times and response requirements. The data shows that the force arrives within its target time less often and that this has deteriorated more rapidly for priority calls (by 8% over 3 years). The force is addressing this through borderless deployment and a better assessment of risk, threat and harm to the individual or of the incident and by deploying timely, appropriate resources. Since introducing these measures the force report it has started to see an improvement in emergency and priority call response times.

Crime

In 2010 the Home Secretary, Theresa May, set a clear priority for the police service to reduce crime.

Between 2010/11 and 2012/13 (the first two years of the spending review), the force reduced recorded crime (excluding fraud) by 17% compared to 13% in England and Wales. Over this period, victim-based crime (that is, crimes where there is a direct victim – an individual, a group, or an organisation) reduced by 17% compared with 12% in England and Wales.

By looking at how many crimes occur per head of population, we can see how safe it is for the public in that police area. The table below shows crime and anti-social behaviour rates in Durham (per head of population) compared with the rest of England and Wales.

¹⁷ We use 2010/11 as a baseline to show response times prior to the spending review period.

12 months to March 2013	Rate per 1,000 population in Durham	England and Wales rate per 1,000 population
Crimes (excluding fraud)	47.9	61.4
Victim-based crime	43.0	54.5
Burglary	6.6	8.2
Violence against the person	7.1	10.6
Anti-social behaviour incidents	49.3	40.7

It is important that crimes are effectively investigated and the perpetrator identified and brought to justice. When sufficient evidence is available to say who has committed a crime, it can be described as detected.

The force's sanction detection¹⁸ rate (for crimes excluding fraud) for the 12 months to March 2013 is 37.0%. This is higher than the England and Wales sanction detection rate of 27.0% (excluding fraud).

We have chosen these types of crime to give an indication of offending levels in Durham. For information on the frequency of other kinds of crimes in your area, go to www.hmic.gov.uk/crime-and-policing-comparator.

¹⁸ A sanction detection is a 'solved crime' where a suspect has been identified and notified as being responsible for committing that crime and what the full implications of this are, and has received an official sanction. Official sanctions include charges, cautions, penalty notices, offences taken into consideration (TICs) and cannabis warnings.

Victim satisfaction surveys

An important measure on 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 March 2013, 89.0%¹⁹ of victims were satisfied with the overall service provided by Durham Constabulary. This is higher than the England and Wales figure of 84.6%.²⁰

Changes to how the public can access services

Forces are exploring different ways in which the public can access policing services. Durham Constabulary is not planning to close any front counters²¹ or police stations between 2010 and 2015.

The force is making more use of the internet and social media to communicate with the public and developing different mechanisms for the public to contact the police. Durham Constabulary:

- launched a new website in January 2013: improvements include greater integration with social media sites and improved facilities for online chats.
- improved access to services, through staff having the ability to access force IT systems via laptops in public places such as supermarkets.

19 $\pm 1.6\%$.

20 $\pm 0.2\%$.

21 A police building open to the general public to obtain face-to-face access to police services.

Conclusion

Durham Constabulary has responded well to the challenge in this spending review period, it has already found 79% of the savings it needs, and has plans in place to deliver all but £0.5m by 2015. It also has detailed plans in place to deliver more savings each year to March 2017.

It has developed a detailed change programme which will allow it to reduce costs while continuing to fight crime. The force has invested significant effort in engaging the workforce and ensuring that staff at all levels are well equipped to manage change. Significant savings have already been made and it would appear that the service to the public has not been allowed to suffer as a result of the cuts. Crime in Durham has fallen by more than the average in England and Wales and satisfaction with the police in Durham is higher than the average.

Attendance to emergency and priority calls is showing a declining trend over the last 3 years. The force implemented a new policing model in 2011, and there has been a continuing increase in the time taken to attend a call or incident. The force is addressing this through the new 'borderless' approach of directing police officers to where and when they are most needed, rather than, as previously, being governed by geographic boundaries. We will continue to monitor the performance in this area.

HMIC is confident that the force can deliver the savings in the remaining years of the spending review and this is supported by a good track record of delivery. It is well placed to face future challenges.

In October 2010, the Government announced that central funding to the Police Service in England and Wales would reduce by 20% in the four years between March 2011 and March 2015.

HMIC's Valuing the Police Programme has tracked how forces are planning to make savings to meet this budget demand each year since summer 2011. This report identifies what we found in this third year.

Our inspection focused on three questions:

1. How is the force responding to the budget reduction?
2. What is the impact for the workforce and the public?
3. How is the force managing current and future risks?

To answer these questions, we collected data and plans from forces, surveyed the public to see if they had noticed any changes in the service they receive from the police as a result of the cuts, and conducted in-force inspections. We also interviewed the Chief Constable, Police and Crime Commissioner and the chief officer leads for finance, change, human resources and performance in each force, and held focus groups with staff and other officers.

National findings and patterns across all 43 forces are given in our thematic report, *Policing in Austerity: Rising to the Challenge*, which is available from www.hmic.gov.uk.

This report provides the findings for Durham Constabulary.