



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

Anti-social behaviour inspection report

**North Wales Police
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 North Wales; 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 North Wales Police is performing in these key areas.

Findings for North Wales Police

Overview

There is a relatively medium level of ASB reported to police in North Wales (in comparison with the rest of England and Wales).

HMIC found that North Wales Police has made some progress since 2010 in the way it understands and tackles ASB problems. The force has invested in an IT system called 'Beat Maps' which helps it to identify and send extra patrols to hotspots (where incidents occur most regularly), and the chief officer team has made it clear that tackling ASB is a priority for the force.

However, the force still cannot regularly identify callers who are most at risk of harm from ASB. This means some of these victims may not be getting the extra support they need.

In addition, HMIC reality testing found that call handlers and neighbourhood teams are not trained in the most up-to-date options available to help them identify, record and then deal with ASB. In addition, their plans to deal with specific local problems are not well recorded or monitored (to make sure that they are progressing as they should be).

When we surveyed ASB victims in the North Wales Police area, 47% were satisfied with the way that the problem is dealt with by police in their local area; and 55% were satisfied with the way that the police dealt with their most recent report of ASB. These are both significantly below the national figures for England and Wales as a whole.

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

Although North Wales Police's IT systems do not automatically identify vulnerable callers or those who have previously called about ASB, call takers use a new risk assessment process to identify victims who need further support.

We reviewed 100 calls about ASB and found that the call handlers only asked specific questions to establish if a caller had been a victim on a previous occasion 58 times. Call handlers verbally checked the vulnerability of the caller on 43 occasions. However, call handlers were assessed as being victim focused in 95 of these calls, indicating high levels of care taken when speaking to victims of ASB. This is supported by survey results that showed 81% of victims were satisfied in the way North Wales Police handled their call. This is broadly in line with the national average.

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

The force has invested in an IT system which allows it to identify emerging ASB hotspots and issues, so that they can send extra patrols to these areas.

Neighbourhood policing teams, investigators and officers who respond to emergencies are briefed at the start of their shift on recent ASB problems and trends – but this is not the case for control room staff. This means that they might not recognise that new calls relate to incident hotspots, or are from victims who either are known to be vulnerable or who have rung about a problem before. All staff are expected to brief themselves, and the recent introduction of ‘Beat Maps’ IT system allows officers to review ASB hotspots, emerging trends and crimes.

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

The force, together with its partners, employ specialist analysts, based in police stations, who work to identify ASB hotspots, so they can direct extra police patrols to these areas. This means they may be able to identify a caller who has previously reported ASB or is vulnerable even if they have not directly contacted the police before. Currently, partners are not able to access the new ‘Beat Maps’ IT system to share valuable information. Agreement of a new information sharing protocol with local authorities could make this possible in the future.

Regular police and partnership meetings are held to analyse information about victims, offenders and locations in order to decide where best to allocate resources to tackle local ASB problems. Good use of academic research from Bangor University, together with trials of reassurance patrols in Abergele and Conwy, are beginning to help the force understand factors that may cause ASB, so they can put in place targeted intervention measures.

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

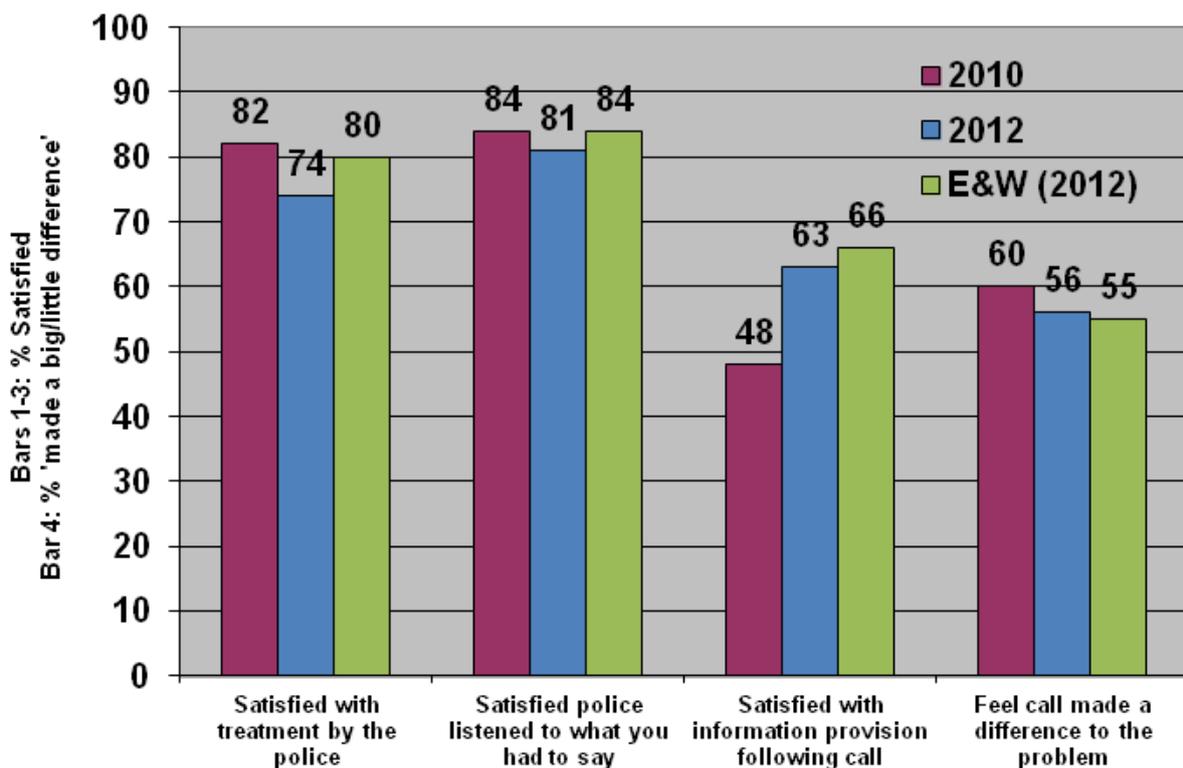
As well as tackling ASB, neighbourhood policing teams are required to perform other duties, which include responding to emergencies. However, the Welsh Government’s commitment to providing funding to pay for an additional 109 full-time police community support officers (PCSOs) will further boost the ability of teams to tackle ASB. While restructuring means that in the future there will be fewer neighbourhood beat managers (with those remaining responsible for larger areas and supervision of PCSOs), these extra PCSOs will be protected against abstraction.

Neighbourhood policing teams make good use of targeted planning to tackle specific ASB problems with partners and communities, and regularly monitor these plans at a local partnership level, to make sure they are progressing as they should. However, we found that not all staff are aware of the full range of options available to them to tackle ASB, and that some training material was out of date.

Results of a survey of ASB victims

We surveyed 200 people who reported ASB to North Wales Police 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 that the force is performing broadly in line with the national average in these areas. There has been a significant increase since 2010 in the percentage of respondents who were satisfied with the information the police provided after they called.

