



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

Nottinghamshire Police's response to the funding challenge

July 2013

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Nottinghamshire Police: Executive summary

Nottinghamshire Police has a more difficult financial challenge than many other forces. It has developed a change programme which should allow it to reduce costs while continuing to fight crime.

The force has made sound progress in responding to the funding challenge, and redesigned the way it delivers policing services to the people of Nottinghamshire. This has enabled it to deliver the savings required to date. The force is now planning a more comprehensive redesign, which should place it in a better position to meet future funding challenges.

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and the force are committed to increasing police officer and police community support officer (PCSO) numbers, which may have an impact on the future design of the force.

Financial challenge

Nottinghamshire Police has identified that it needs to save £43.6m over the four years of the spending review (i.e. between March 2011 and March 2015).

This savings requirement is 19% of its overall budget, above most other forces. HMIC considers that Nottinghamshire Police faces a difficult challenge because its spend on policing is below the average spend for forces in England and Wales. It also has a lower number of staff, and so a comparatively lower pay bill; the amount it spends on each officer and staff member is similarly below the figure for England and Wales. This means it may have fewer opportunities to cut costs.

Progress in making savings

Nottinghamshire Police has planned how it will save the whole £43.6m, and therefore has no outstanding funding gap.

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.¹ Nottinghamshire Police is no exception.

The force has reduced police officer numbers by limiting recruitment and holding vacancies. As a result, by the end of the spending review period it plans to have 180 fewer police officers. This would mean the number of police officers would reduce by 7% between March 2010² and March 2015, a smaller reduction than in most other forces.

¹ See *Adapting to Austerity*, HMIC, London, July 2011, p.13. Available from www.hmic.gov.uk.

² 2010 is yjr baseline as many forces started to make reductions in anticipation of the spending review.

Nottinghamshire Police will be protecting frontline posts as it makes these cuts. This is commendable. Between March 2010 and March 2015, the proportion of police officers in frontline, crime-fighting roles is planned to increase from 91% to 94%. 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. By 2015 it is planned that there will be 322 fewer police staff in Nottinghamshire Police. The number of police staff will reduce by 19% between March 2010 and March 2015. This is a much higher reduction than that planned by most other forces.

Nottinghamshire Police plans to increase the number of PCSOs by 108 (40%). This is commendable, as many forces are reducing the number of PCSOs.

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 crime rates, and the results of the victim satisfaction surveys which all forces conduct.

Over the first two years of the spending review, recorded crime³ (excluding fraud) fell by 19%, which is more than the figure for England and Wales (13%). Victim satisfaction remains high at 87.3%⁴, which is higher than the figure for England and Wales.

This strong performance indicates that Nottinghamshire Police has been able to make savings without having a detrimental effect on the service it provides to the public.

Future challenges

Nottinghamshire Police has made sound progress in meeting its financial challenge. Its savings programme has allowed it to reduce costs while continuing to fight crime.

A commitment by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and the force to increase the number of police officers and PCSOs may potentially reduce the options available for the force to make the further savings required after March 2015. HMIC believes this is an important consideration for how the next phase of the change programme and the operating model for the force is developed.

³ Crime excluding fraud, as per the new crime classifications released in July 2013 by the Office for National Statistics.

⁴ ± 0.8%.

The challenge

Over the four years of the spending review, Nottinghamshire Police has identified that it needs to find savings of £43.6m. This is 19% of its total expenditure⁵ (which in 2012/13 was £215.9m). The average figure across England and Wales is 17%.

Progress in making savings: Years 1–2

The force successfully made 59% (£25.7m) of the total savings required by March 2015 in the first two years of the spending review period. It achieved this by:

- limiting recruitment of new police officers;
- reducing the number of police staff it employs (which it started to do in 2010);
- reducing the number of policing areas; and
- restructuring how it delivers some of its services, such as by reducing the number of control rooms to one.

Plans for Year 3–4

The force has plans in place to achieve further savings of £8.6m in 2013/14, and another £9.3m in 2014/15. This means the force will balance its budget for this spending review period.

Looking beyond the current spending review

The force has started to consider what savings it might need to make in the next spending review period (after March 2015). In fact, the force's medium-term financial plan looks forward to 2015/16.

The challenge for Nottinghamshire Police in preparing for future funding pressures will be much greater if the existing savings plans are not achieved, or take longer to deliver.

The scale of the challenge in Nottinghamshire Police

Although Nottinghamshire Police faces a savings requirement broadly in line with other forces, it nonetheless faces a particular challenge because:

- it spends less per head of population than the average of other forces in England and Wales;
- it has a lower number of police officers per head of population than the average of other forces in England and Wales; and
- the cost of police officers and staff per head of population is also lower.

⁵ Based on a gross expenditure baseline in 2010/11.

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	Nottinghamshire Police	England and Wales
Emergency and priority calls per 1,000 population	134	134
Victim-based crime per 1,000 population	55.2	54.5
Prosecutions (charges) per 1,000 population	10.4	10.2

This table shows that in 2012/13 Nottinghamshire Police received a comparable number of emergency and priority calls from the public to most other forces. In addition, it dealt with a slightly more crimes than other forces, and supported more prosecutions.

Response to the challenge

Over 80% of a police budget (on average) is spent on staff costs.⁶ It is therefore not surprising that forces across England and Wales plan to achieve most of their savings by reducing the number of police officers, PCSOs and police staff employed.

Nottinghamshire Police 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 75% of its savings from its pay budget, which is slightly higher than other forces.

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 Wales⁷.

	31 March 2010 (baseline)	31 March 2015	Change	Nottinghamshire change %	Change for England and Wales %
Police Officers	2,409	2,229	-180	-7%	-11%
Police Staff	1,658	1,336	-322	-19%	-16%
PCSOs	268	376	+108	+40%	-17%
Total	4,335	3,941	-394	-9%	-13%
Specials	298	500	+202	+68%	+60%

Overall, the table shows that Nottinghamshire Police plans to lose fewer police officers than other forces, but more police staff. While nationally the number of PCSOs is decreasing, Nottinghamshire intends to increase its PCSO numbers considerably.

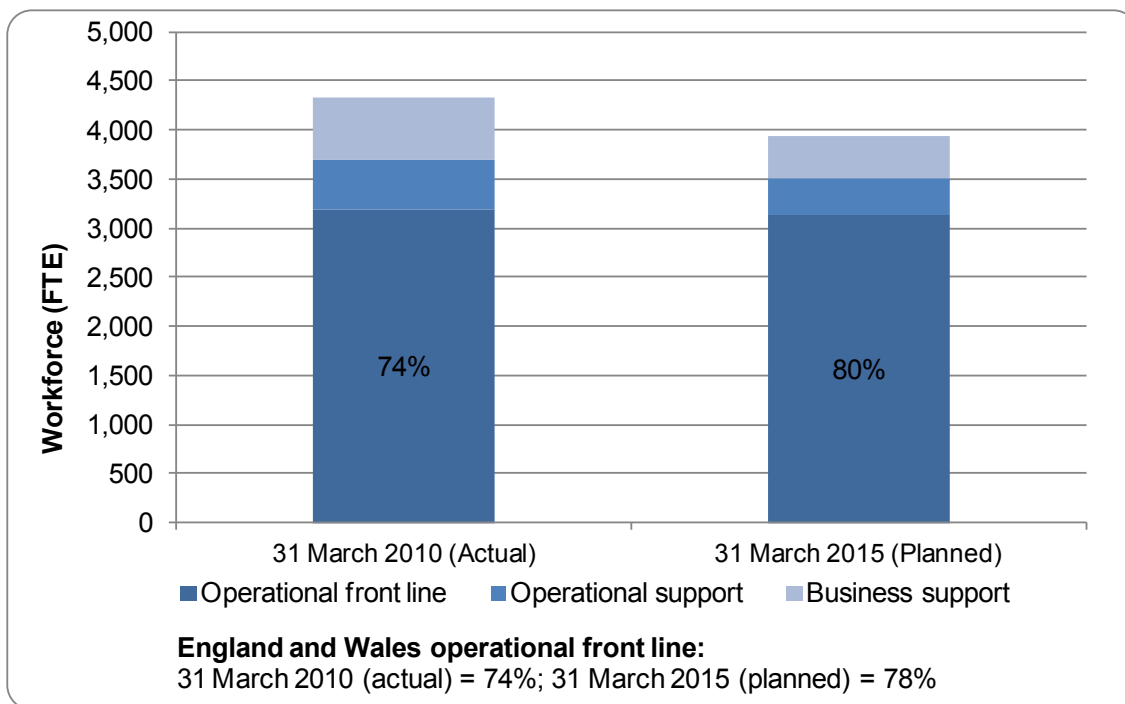
Changes to the proportion of workforce on the front line

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.

⁶ See *Adapting to Austerity*, HMIC, London, July 2011, p.13. Available from www.hmic.gov.uk.

⁷ 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.

The following chart shows the change in the workforce frontline profile in Nottinghamshire Police.⁸

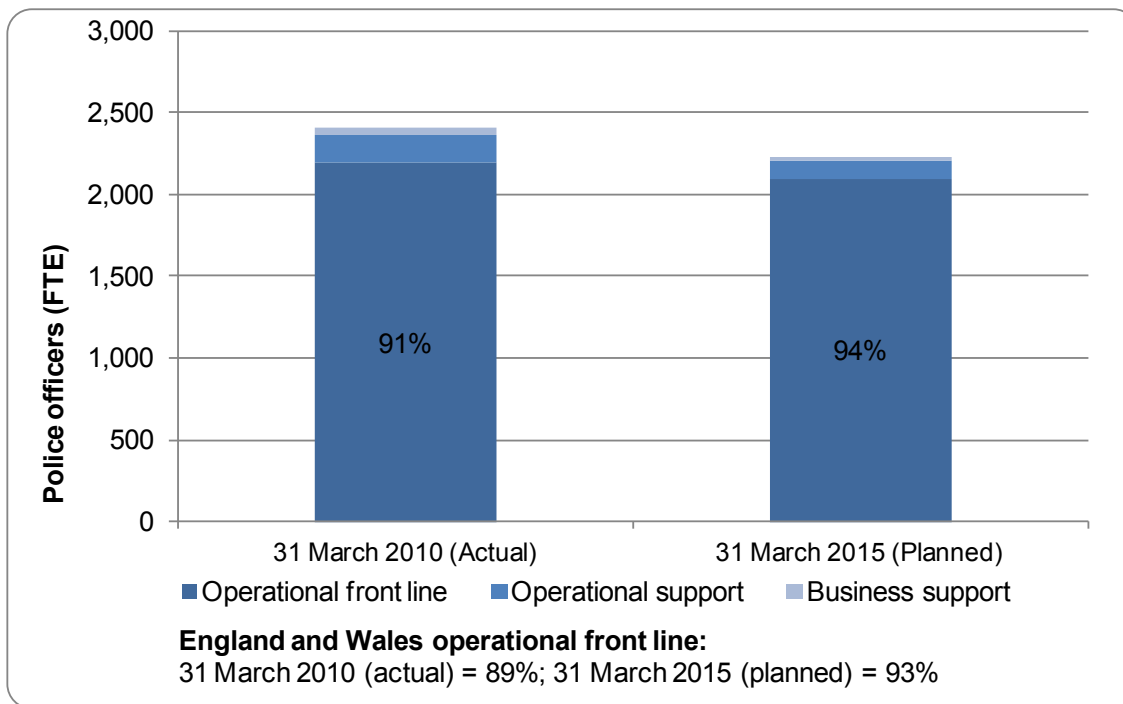


The **number** of officers, PCSOs and staff (i.e. of the force’s total workforce) working on Nottinghamshire Police’s front line is planned to reduce by 2% between March 2010 and March 2015 (from 3,194 to 3,140).

Over the same period, the **proportion** of Nottinghamshire’s total workforce allocated to frontline roles is planned to increase from 74% to 80%. This compares with an overall increase across England and Wales from 74% to 78%.

The **number** of Nottinghamshire’s police officers in frontline roles is planned to decrease by 4%, from 2,191 in March 2010 to 2,096 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 91% to 94%. This is a strong indicator that the force is taking steps to protect vital frontline officers, and is broadly comparable to the increase (from 89% to 93%) that we see across England and Wales.

8 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 force's progress on collaboration⁹ because it offers the opportunity to deliver efficient, effective policing and help achieve savings.

Nottinghamshire Police has shown a strong commitment to working with other forces in the East Midlands region. It is currently engaged in a mix of collaborations (with two, three and four other forces), and has well-established structures and processes in place to manage these arrangements.

The force has made savings by sharing back office services (such as occupational health and learning and development), and has increased its capacity and capability to respond to serious and major crimes by forming specialist regional units, which work across force boundaries.

Despite these benefits in 2014/15, the force expects to spend 5% of its total expenditure on collaboration, which is lower than the 11% figure for England and Wales. Overall, collaboration is expected to contribute to 8% of the forces savings requirement, which is above the 7% figure for England and Wales.

The election of PCCs in November 2012 provided an opportunity for a fresh look at the approach to regional collaborations, their effectiveness, and how further savings may be achieved. The PCCs in the East Midlands (which includes Nottinghamshire) have asked HMIC to review collaborations in their region.

⁹ 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 also expects forces to have an eye within their change programmes on the longer term transformation,¹⁰ which can help maintain or improve the service they offer to the public and prepare for future funding reductions.

The Nottinghamshire Police change programme includes a number of structural changes to how policing is delivered in the county, for example a reduction in the number of policing areas, as well as the pursuit of further collaboration with regional forces. The force is also pursuing a longer term IT strategy, aimed at reducing the amount of bureaucracy that its officers and staff have to deal with, so as to keep them on the front line and visible to the public.

Staff are expected to play their part in making savings; this has included staff involvement in developing the future operating model for the force. This is intended to identify proposals to meet anticipated further savings beyond March 2015.

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

The chief officer team is aware of the need to keep officers and staff informed of developments in respect of the change programme, and has developed a range of approaches to achieve this.

A change team is in place, and engages with staff in areas affected by the force change programme. The Chief Constable meets regularly with the staff associations and unions to discuss the programme. They are also invited to be involved in the work to develop the force's new operating model.

The wider workforce is also fully engaged through internal meetings, intranet messages and briefings from chief officers. This communication includes an opportunity for staff to feed back their own views and concerns, including making suggestions for change. Staff describe the chief officer team as being very keen to listen to ideas.

This level of engagement with staff will assist the force in making progress as it moves toward its new operating model.

How effective has the response been?

The force has made a strong response to meeting its financial challenge.

¹⁰ 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.

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 services 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.¹¹ HMIC therefore examined how far the changes being implemented by the force had affected the visibility of the police on the streets of Nottinghamshire.

In March 2013, Nottinghamshire Police allocated 54% of its police officers to visible roles. This is six percentage points lower than it allocated in 2010, and is 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, Nottinghamshire Police allocated 60% to visible roles. This is four percentage points lower than it allocated in 2010, and is broadly in line with the 59% figure for England and Wales.

HMIC conducted a survey¹² 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 Nottinghamshire, 12%¹³ 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, 74%¹⁴ 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%.

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

12 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.

13 ± 5%.

14 ± 5%.

Calls for service

HMIC examined whether police forces were 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. This analysis relies on force-collected data.

In the three years from 2010 to present, Nottinghamshire Police 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.

Over that period, the force met its target response time for urban 'emergency' calls 84% of the time in 2010/11, 85% 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 81% of the time in 2010/11, 82% of the time in 2011/12, and 84% of the time in 2012/13.

For 'priority' calls, on average the force met its target 75% of the time in 2010/11, 69% of the time in 2011/12 and 67% of the time in 2012/13.

While there has been a decline in the number of priority calls dealt with within target times, emergency response times have been maintained.

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, Nottinghamshire Police reduced recorded crime (excluding fraud) by 19%, compared to 13% in England and Wales. This was amongst the highest reductions seen over the period. Over the same period, victim-based crime (that is, crimes where there is a direct victim – an individual, a group, or an organisation) has 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 shows crime and anti-social behaviour rates in Nottinghamshire (per head of population) compared with the rest of England and Wales.

12 months to March 2013	Rate per 1,000 population in Nottinghamshire	England and Wales rate per 1,000 population
All crime (excluding fraud)	61.4	61.4
Victim based crime	55.2	54.5
Burglary	7.8	8.2
Violence against the person	11.9	10.6
Anti-social behaviour incidents	34.5	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.

Nottinghamshire Police's sanction detection¹⁵ rate (for crimes excluding fraud) for the 12 months to March 2013 is 30.0%. This is above the England and Wales sanction detection rate of 27.0%.

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

Victim satisfaction surveys

An important measure of 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, 87.3%¹⁶ of victims were satisfied with the overall service provided by Nottinghamshire Police. This is higher than the England and Wales figure of 84.6%.¹⁷

Changes to how the public can access services

Forces are exploring different ways in which the public can access policing services. Nottinghamshire Police is planning to close 17 front counters¹⁸ and six police stations between 2010 and 2015. However, it is also planning to open four shared access points¹⁹ during the same period.

The force is making greater use of the internet and social media to communicate with the public. As more and more people become accustomed to engaging with large commercial and public organisations in different ways, the force is planning to offer the public different ways to contact them. For example, Nottinghamshire Police is:

- continuing to improve its use of social media channels, such as Twitter and Facebook;
- making use of information videos on YouTube and audio books; and
- has introduced an e-mail based neighbourhood alert system, which provides information on local crime, community safety and crime prevention.

15 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 included charges, cautions, penalty notices, offences taken into consideration (TICs) and cannabis warnings.

16 $\pm 0.8\%$.

17 $\pm 0.2\%$.

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

19 A non-police building open to the general public to obtain face-to-face access to police services. For example, shared facilities with council services (e.g. libraries or offices), the fire service or other partners.

Conclusion

Nottinghamshire Police is on target to deliver the savings required of it over the spending review period. The force started to deliver savings early, by freezing recruitment and reducing workforce numbers while making some changes to the local policing model. This, alongside the force's established and comprehensive collaboration with other forces in the East Midlands has enabled it to deliver the savings required.

Nottinghamshire Police acknowledges that there is further potential for redesigning the force, and has started work to do so. Although this got off to a slow, start recent progress is promising, and the force has involved the workforce well in the process. This should provide a good foundation for the force being able to meet future funding challenges, while continuing to improve the policing service to the people of Nottinghamshire.

The force has achieved higher levels of crime reduction over the spending review period than in previous years. Detection rates and victim satisfaction are now higher than most other forces, which is commendable.

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 Nottinghamshire Police.