



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

Anti-social behaviour inspection report

**South Yorkshire 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 South Yorkshire; 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 South Yorkshire Police is performing in these key areas.

Findings for South Yorkshire Police

Overview

There is a relatively high level of ASB recorded by police in South Yorkshire in comparison with the rest of England and Wales.

HMIC found that the force has made some progress since 2010 in the way it understands and tackles ASB. It has enhanced how it works with partners (such as local councils) to tackle the problem, and uses social media to promote ASB successes, together with formal recognition for ASB successes.

However, HMIC is concerned that the current IT system does not consistently support the identification of callers who are most at risk of harm from ASB, such as repeat and vulnerable victims. Similarly, it does not facilitate the gathering of data about ASB held by partners. The force would benefit from a system that allowed it both to track and progress plans to deal with ASB, and to share best practice across the four policing districts.

In our survey of ASB victims in South Yorkshire, 54% were satisfied overall with the way the police dealt with the problem in the local area, and 62% with the way the police dealt with their specific incident the last time they called. Both these percentages are in line with the national average.

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

The force's incident system should automatically flag up if a victim has called about ASB before as soon as they contact the police. However this is limited due to the functionality of the IT system. The call handlers should regularly question the caller about any previous incidents of ASB (whether these were reported to the police or to other agencies).

However, when HMIC reviewed 100 calls as part of the inspection, the call handler did not verbally check for repeat victimisation on 30 occasions. Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs) can add markers to records involving particular victims or locations to ensure they get a priority response if a related ASB incident is reported, which they submit to the force communications department, who ensure that an entry is made onto the IT system.

Call handlers regularly identify if a victim has previously been assessed as vulnerable (for instance, because they are disabled or elderly) at the point of report, by carrying out a manual trawl of IT systems. There is also a standard set of questions which should be used to help identify vulnerability; but HMIC found that these were only asked in 40 out of the 100 calls we reviewed.

Consideration of harm and assessment of risk are ongoing and consistently applied to all victims of ASB. There is clear awareness of risk assessment for victims. Some districts adopt this within their assessment of problem locations and require this consideration in their completion. All SNTs have their own version of a risk assessment matrix (which is filled in by the attending officer with the victim) to supplement the initial assessment from the call centre.

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

Investigators, response officers (who respond to emergency calls), and SNT staff are briefed about ASB issues to varying degrees. This is more effective when these different teams share the same base. In one district a detective is assigned to the Safer Neighbourhood Area (SNA) with priority crime teams aligned to SNAs, while in other areas there are less formal arrangements for briefing staff other than SNT officers on ASB issues. In some parts of the force, investigators' involvement in ASB is minimal.

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

The force has carried out work at force, district, and local level to understand and collect data held by partners that may help to tackle ASB. A process and protocols exist for sharing data, with programmes set up to achieve this across all four districts; where SNTs are co-located with partners they tend to have better data exchange protocols.

Analytical work has been carried out at force, district and neighbourhood levels to identify where ASB problems are and how to best deal with them. This information is used at a number of regular meetings (including some with partners) to decide where resources can best be targeted to help deal with these problems.

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

SNT staff and (to a lesser extent) response staff are equipped and resourced to deal with ASB. The force monitors and limits the amount of time neighbourhood staff are moved from their usual local duties to other areas, and SNTs are provided with training on the powers and tools available to help them tackle ASB. Supervisors promote the use of these options, and chief officers underline the importance of the SNT role.

There is no minimum, force-wide standard for how to deal with ASB; some districts have developed local versions (although this is predominantly known or used by SNTs within the district, who take the lead for dealing with ASB issues and repeat and vulnerable victims of ASB). There was evidence found amongst the SNTs that each case was managed on an individual basis using the most appropriate options.

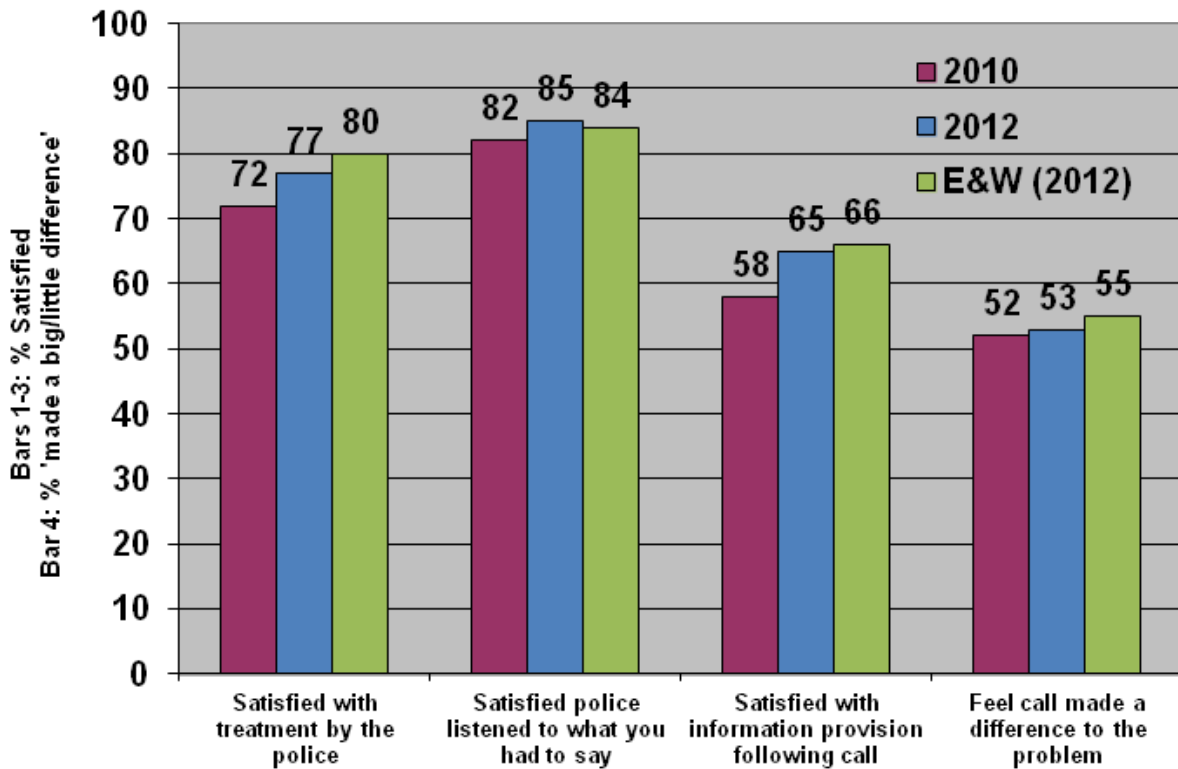
Each district has a locally devised system (usually using Excel spreadsheets) to track and monitor the progress of long term problem solving plans. These are monitored at daily management meetings as well as at senior management level. Completed plans are signed off, usually at district level by inspectors. There is good evidence of working with other agencies to solve particular problems, particularly when the police and their partners are located in the same building.

Minutes of Community Safety Partnership (CSP) meetings (which are chaired by district commanders) show evidence of progress against plans, and clear ownership of actions.

Results of a survey of ASB victims

We surveyed 200 people who reported ASB to South Yorkshire 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. This is a positive result for the force.