



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

West Yorkshire Police's response to the funding challenge

July 2013

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West Yorkshire Police: Executive summary

West Yorkshire Police has a more difficult financial challenge than many other forces, but with higher spending on policing, higher workforce numbers and costs, there are opportunities to deliver savings.

In HMIC's assessment, the force has not grasped the same opportunities to transform and to deliver savings as other forces, and has left large elements of its business untouched.

It now has less time in which to implement the changes it needs to close the gap and be in a strong position to respond to further funding reductions. It is imperative that detailed plans are rapidly developed and implemented.

Given the short time frame, strong and effective leadership will be essential if this is to be achieved alongside delivering improved performance. The new Chief Constable recognises the challenge the force faces and is rapidly working towards developing such plans.

Financial challenge

West Yorkshire Police has identified that it needs to save £112.6m over the four years of the spending review (i.e. between March 2011 and March 2015).

As a proportion of its overall budget (22%), this savings requirement is considerably higher than most other forces. HMIC considers that West Yorkshire Police faces a particularly difficult challenge.

Progress in making savings

West Yorkshire Police has planned how it will save £103.1m. It therefore still has to find £9.4m¹. Most other forces have developed plans working out how they will make all the required savings; West Yorkshire Police's funding gap is therefore a concern.

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 West Yorkshire Police is no exception.

It is reducing police officer numbers by limiting recruitment and holding vacancies; as a result, by the end of the spending review period, it plans to have 988 fewer police officers in the West Yorkshire Police. This means the number of police officers is planned to

¹ The amounts 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.

reduce by 17% between March 2010³ and March 2015; this is a greater reduction than in most other forces.

West Yorkshire Police will be broadly protecting frontline posts as it makes these cuts: between March 2010 and March 2015, the proportion of police officers in frontline crime-fighting is planned to increase from 92% 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 (e.g. through retirements and resignations); and as a result, by the end of the spending review period, it plans to have 892 fewer police staff in the West Yorkshire Police. This means the number of police staff will reduce by 25% between March 2010 and March 2015; this is greater than in most other forces. West Yorkshire Police plans to maintain its number of PCSOs over the spending review period.

With an outstanding funding gap the force may need to make more workforce reductions than it is currently planning.

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 crime⁴ (excluding fraud) fell by 14%, which is broadly in line with the figure for England and Wales (13%). Victim satisfaction remains high at 87.3%⁵ which is greater than in other forces.

Future challenges

HMIC is concerned that West Yorkshire has not embraced the level of change or achieved the savings seen elsewhere. With an outstanding financial gap to close West Yorkshire Police will find it much more difficult to make any further savings required in the future.

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 $\pm 0.8\%$.

The challenge

West Yorkshire Police identified that it needs to find savings of £112.6m over the four years of the spending review (March 2011 to March 2015). This equates to 22% of its total expenditure⁶ (which in 2012/13 was £485.6m). Across England and Wales a 17% reduction in total expenditure is required.

Progress in making savings: Years 1–2

The force successfully made 57% (£64.5m) of the total savings required by March 2015 in the first two years of the spending review period. It achieved this by: not recruiting any new police officers: reducing the number of police staff it employs (which it started to do in 2010); reducing costs in non frontline services: under spending and using its reserves⁷.

Plans for Year 3–4

The force has plans in place to achieve further savings of £10.5m in 2013/14, and another £28.1m in 2014/15. This leaves a funding gap of £9.4m at the end of the spending review period. This differs to most other forces in England and Wales which have now developed detailed plans for how they will make all the necessary savings.

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 2017.

The challenge for West Yorkshire Police in preparing for future funding pressures will be much greater if the outstanding funding gap in 2014/15 is not closed.

The scale of the challenge in West Yorkshire Police

As a proportion of its overall budget (22%), this savings requirement is considerably higher than most other forces and West Yorkshire Police faces a particular challenge:

- it has a higher spend 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;
- the cost of police officers and police staff per head is higher than most other forces in England and Wales; and
- the force has a greater reliance on central government grant than other funding sources, which means a much larger proportion of its budget is affected.

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

⁷ Reserves are funds often used to pay for unforeseen events and balance liabilities.

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	West Yorkshire Police	England and Wales
Emergency and priority calls per 1,000 population	107	134
Victim-based crime per 1,000 population	65.1	54.5
Prosecutions (charges) per 1,000 population	10.4	10.2

This table shows that, in 2012/13, West Yorkshire Police received fewer emergency and priority calls from the public than in other forces. However, it had more crimes per head of population to deal with than other forces and a greater number of these resulted in prosecutions than elsewhere.

It is HMIC's assessment that West Yorkshire Police faces a more difficult challenge than other forces; but as a large force with high numbers of police officers and staff, there are opportunities to reduce its cost base in line with other forces.

Response to the challenge

Over 80% of a police budget (on average) is spent on staff costs,⁸ so it is not surprising that 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.

West Yorkshire 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 76% of its spending review savings requirement from its pay budget. This is higher than other forces indicating that West Yorkshire Police is not bearing down as much on expenditure on goods and services compared to other forces. This figure may change as the force identifies how it will close its outstanding savings gap.

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 201515	Change	West Yorkshire change %	Change for England and Wales %
Police Officers	5,758	4,770	-988	-17%	-11%
Police Staff	3,539	2,647	-892	-25%	-16%
PCSOs	763	723	-40*	-5%	-17%
Total	10,060	8,140	-1,920	-19%	-13%
Specials	421	821	+400	+95%	+60%

* For 2015 the force anticipate having 40 PCSO vacancies and therefore have shown a budgeted figure for 2015. The actual establishment is 763 and the change programme does not envisage reducing numbers at this time.

Overall, the table shows that West Yorkshire Police plans to lose more officers and police staff than in other forces; but fewer PCSOs. However, the outstanding funding gap means that the force will need to make more workforce reductions than it is currently planning.

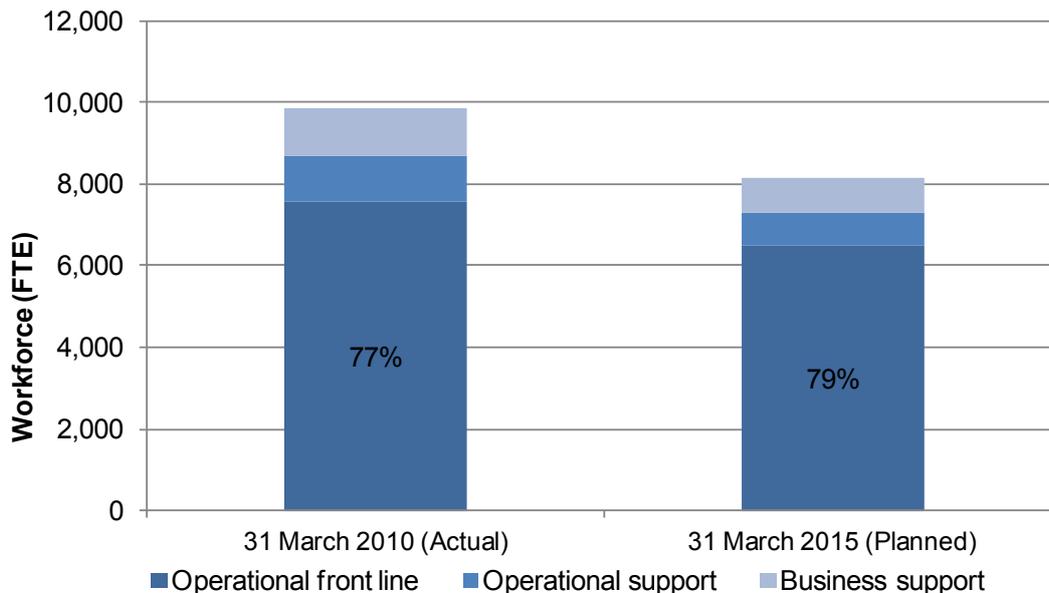
⁸ See *Adapting to Austerity*, HMIC, London, July 2011, p.13. Available from www.hmic.gov.uk.

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 West Yorkshire Police.¹⁰



England and Wales operational front line:

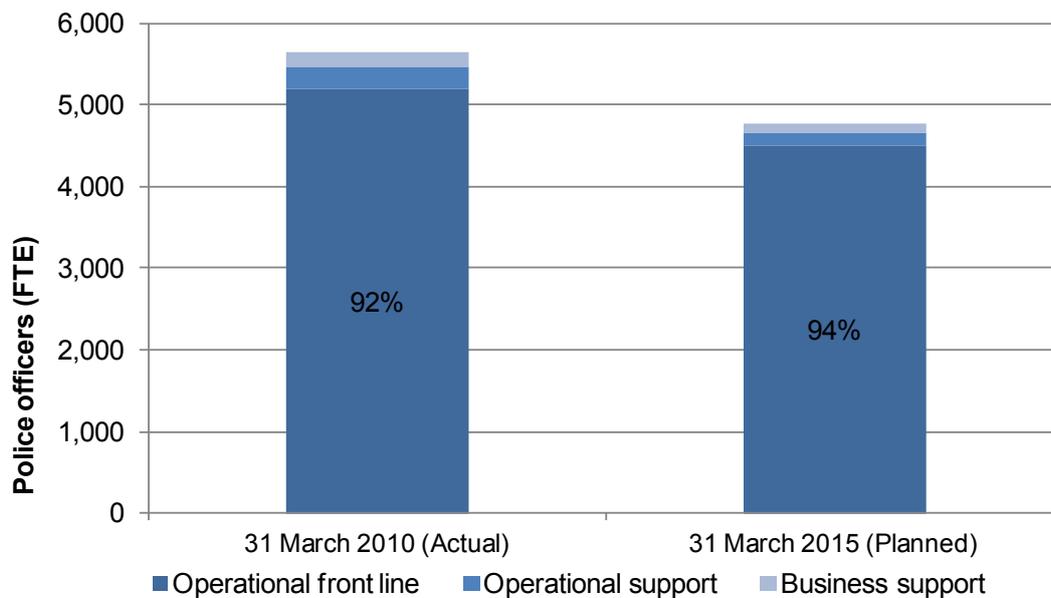
31 March 2010 (actual) = 74%; 31 March 2015 (Planned) = 78%

The **number** of officers, PCSOs and staff (i.e. of the force’s total workforce) working on West Yorkshire’s front line is planned to reduce by 14% between March 2010 and March 2015 (from 7,552 to 6,471).

Over the same period, the **proportion** of West Yorkshire Police’s total workforce allocated to frontline roles is planned to increase from 77% to 79%. This compares with an overall planned increase across England and Wales from 74% to 78%.

The **number** of West Yorkshire’s police officers in frontline roles is planned to reduce by 13% from 5,193 in March 2010 to 4,493 in March 2015, as the chart on the next page shows. The **proportion** of those remaining on the frontline is planned to increase from 92% to 94%. 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.



England and Wales operational front line:
 31 March 2010 (actual) = 89%; 31 March 2015 (Planned) = 93%

Collaboration

HMIC monitors forces' progress on collaboration¹¹ because it offers the opportunity to deliver efficient, effective policing and help achieve savings.

West Yorkshire Police is a member of the four-force Yorkshire and Humber region which currently collaborates on services such as procurement and forensic support services. However, the level of savings generated by regional collaboration has not been as great as expected by West Yorkshire.

Following the election of four police and crime commissioners (PCCs) and new Chief Constables in three of the four forces, collaboration arrangements are to be reviewed. Stronger links with the local authorities are to be explored and assessments made of what other forces are doing.

The force is actively looking at the creation of a secure data control centre which could provide services other forces (and the wider public sector) as well income generation opportunities.

In 2014/15, the force expects to spend 3% of its total expenditure on collaboration, which is considerably lower than the 11% figure for England and Wales. Overall, collaboration will contribute to 6% of the force's savings requirement, which is below 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 developed Operation Transform to deliver its savings and change programme. At the direction of the former Chief Constable, the force primarily focused on achieving year on year cost reduction through staff reductions, holding vacancies, limiting recruitment and robust control of budgets. This approach has proven successful to the extent it has enabled the force to achieve significant savings, under spends and to build reserves.

The new Chief Constable and the force recognise that a more strategic approach to change is now required that enables West Yorkshire to develop ways of working and structures which are affordable and deliver the requirements of the PCC's Police and Crime Plan and the ambitions of the force.

The Chief Constable has indicated his vision for the organisation which is built on collaboration, partnering and neighbourhood management. In addition, the force envisages being a provider of services e.g. to other forces.

The challenge for the force is to develop the new structure and associated change in 2013/14 so that it can be implemented in 2014/15 ahead of the financial year 2015. This means that it will then have in place a future operating model that both aligns to the funds available and enables service delivery to be improved.

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

Staff and officers know the scale of the financial challenge and they are aware of Operation Transform. The workforce receives generic messages through the force intranet and by email. Specific groups of staff who are going through a review are given targeted and tailored communications and updates as well as away days and one-to-ones with line managers. Video and podcast updates from senior managers had been well received but these have now stopped.

Consultation with unions and staff associations has improved in recent times. However, the degree to which alternative views are incorporated in cost reduction plans is less clear to those representative bodies.

As the force develops and moves to significantly different ways of working, the change programme should consider how it will engage, communicate with and involve staff as well as bringing about any required cultural change. These elements, while easily underplayed, are essential in achieving sustainable long term change.

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?

While the force's cost reduction approach has delivered substantial savings, and we have seen some examples of innovation and limited restructuring, West Yorkshire has not grasped the same opportunities to transform as other forces, and left large elements of its business untouched.

The inspection found that the force did not have an overarching change programme that effectively links finance, workforce, change and service delivery in a coherent and integrated way. It now has less time in which to implement the changes it needs to close the gap and be in a strong position to respond to further funding reductions.

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 West Yorkshire.

In March 2013, West Yorkshire Police allocated 66% of its police officers to visible roles. This is one percentage point lower than it allocated in 2010, and is higher than 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, West Yorkshire Police allocated 69% to visible roles. This is one percentage point lower than it allocated in 2010 but remains much greater 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 West Yorkshire, 18%¹⁵ said that they have seen a police officer more often than they had 12 months ago; this is considerably higher than the 13% average across all survey respondents in England and Wales.

Of those people surveyed, 77%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 ± 5%.

¹⁶ ± 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.

Over the three years from 2010 to 2013 West Yorkshire Police has maintained the same target response time of attendance within 15 minutes for calls classed as 'emergency' and within 60 minutes for calls classed as 'priority' (also known as Grade 2).

Over that period, the force met its target response time for 'emergency' calls 91% of the time in 2010/11, and 93% of the time in both 2011/12 and 2012/2013.

For 'priority' calls, the force met its target 89% of the time in 2010/11, 93% of the time in 2011/12 and 94% of the time in 2012/13.

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), West Yorkshire Police reduced recorded crime (excluding fraud) by 14% 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 14% 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 West Yorkshire (per head of population) compared with the rest of England and Wales.

12 months to March 2013	Rate per 1,000 population in West Yorkshire Police	England and Wales rate per 1,000 population
Crimes (excluding fraud)	71.6	61.4
Victim-based crime	65.1	54.5
Burglary	12.1	8.2
Violence against the person	9.5	10.6
Anti-social behaviour incidents	33.3	40.7

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

West Yorkshire Police's sanction detection¹⁷ rate (for crimes excluding fraud) for the 12

¹⁷ 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

months to March 2013 is 24.7%. This is lower than the England and Wales sanction detection rate of 27.0% (excluding fraud).

The force has achieved notable reductions in many crime categories but in comparison to its most similar forces¹⁸ it is still some way from achieving their levels of performance. The appointment of the new Deputy Chief Constable is critical for the force. It will be the responsibility of this post to manage the force day to day and deliver a significant improvement in performance.

We have chosen these types of crime to give an indication of offending levels in West Yorkshire. 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%¹⁹ of victims were satisfied with the overall service provided by West Yorkshire Police. 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. West Yorkshire Police is planning to close five front counters²¹ and open one police station between 2010 and 2015.

West Yorkshire Police 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. West Yorkshire Police is:

- improving its website so that people can now report some crimes, anti-social behaviour and lost property online;
- allowing victims to look at sanitised versions of crime reports and submit additional information;
- investigating the use of instant messaging and language line;
- using Facebook and Twitter in neighbourhood teams; and
- creating 'safe havens' in stations where counters are closed, so that the public can access the station and contact officers.

consideration (TICs) and cannabis warnings.

18 Forces are grouped with other forces that are considered to be most similar, sharing similar demographic characteristics. This assists in making better comparisons with other forces.

19 $\pm 0.8\%$.

20 $\pm 0.2\%$.

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

Conclusion

HMIC considers that West Yorkshire Police faces a larger financial challenge than most other forces, with the added complexity of policing major cities with highly diverse communities. However, given its higher expenditure on pay and other costs, there are opportunities to deliver cost savings.

While the financial challenge has been clear to the force, the strategic approach adopted during the first two years of the spending review was to deliver cost reduction; to this end the force has been able to achieve significant savings and make contributions to reserves. However, HMIC considers the force has missed the opportunity to grasp the challenge and restructure the way it operates so that it is both affordable and delivers improved levels of performance.

Given the short time frame, strong and effective leadership will be essential if this is to be achieved alongside delivering improved performance. The new Chief Constable recognises the challenge the force faces and is rapidly working towards developing such plans. We will closely monitor progress made in closing the gap and responding to future funding pressure, in particular how the force is addressing its performance. A further inspection will be undertaken later this year to review the force's progress.

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 West Yorkshire Police.