



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

Responding to austerity

Devon and Cornwall Police

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How well does the force provide value for money?

Overall judgment

Devon and Cornwall has continued to make good progress in achieving savings despite facing a very difficult challenge.

Good

Summary

Devon and Cornwall Police is on track to make all of the savings it needs over the period of the spending review. The force has faced a particularly difficult challenge, not only because of the scale of the spending cuts but because it was already spending less on policing than most other forces and had less scope to find the savings.

The force has assessed the further savings it needs to make for the following financial year of 2015/16 and has plans in place to make these savings. The force is also looking beyond this period and is developing plans for an ambitious alliance with its neighbouring force Dorset Police. Although there is some risk to savings plans beyond 2016, HMIC is reassured that the force is working hard to find ways of cutting spending while protecting neighbourhood policing and fighting crime.

To what extent is the force taking the necessary steps to ensure a secure financial position for the short and long term?

Good

Devon and Cornwall Police faces a significant challenge in cutting its spending at the scale required. It already spends less on policing than most forces in England and Wales and has less scope to make the savings.

The force has made good progress and is on track to achieve the £53.3m savings it needs over the spending review period.

It has plans in place that will achieve the £5.3m savings needed in 2015/16.

Beyond 2016 the savings plans currently in place will not match the expected cuts needed. HMIC is reassured that the force is working hard to find ways to find further savings without having an impact on its ability to fight crime.

To what extent has the force an affordable way of providing policing?

Good

Devon and Cornwall Police began its change programme in 2010 and has continued to evolve the way it provides policing to make best use of the resources available.

The force has improved its processes and services to increase productivity and reduce waste.

The force has made 30 percent of its savings from non-pay areas, with plans in place for more savings. However, the proportion of police officers that it will lose is higher than the figure for other forces.

Collaboration with other organisations has so far made a limited contribution to Devon and Cornwall's savings but the force is developing plans for an ambitious alliance with Dorset Police.

To what extent is the force efficient?

Good

The force understands the demand on its services and is developing a sophisticated approach to ensure resources are used efficiently.

The force works with local partners to provide a better joined-up service from neighbourhood policing and has put staff and other resources into tackling local problems.

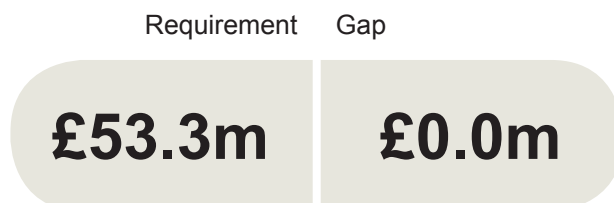
The force is improving the way it deals with calls from the public and is resolving more calls at first contact, enabling it to use police officer time to best effect.

There are fewer crimes per head of population in Devon and Cornwall than in England and Wales as a whole, but overall crime has not reduced over the spending review period as it has over England and Wales as a whole.

The force in numbers

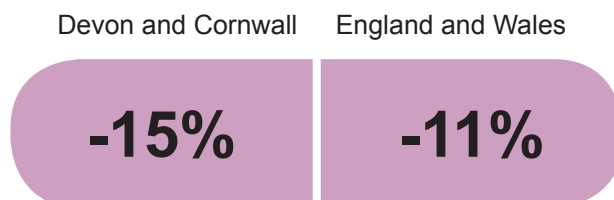
Financial position

The force's savings requirement

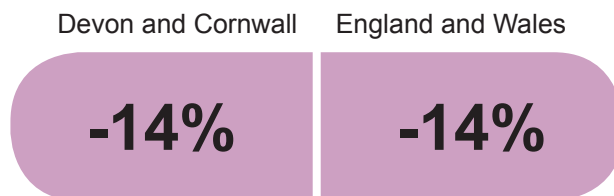


Providing policing

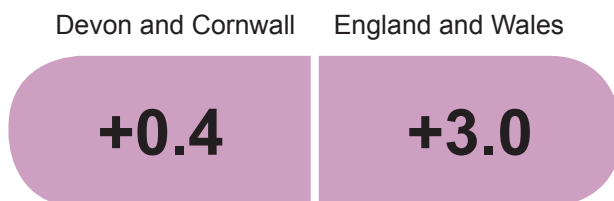
Planned change in police officer numbers 2010/11 – 2014/15



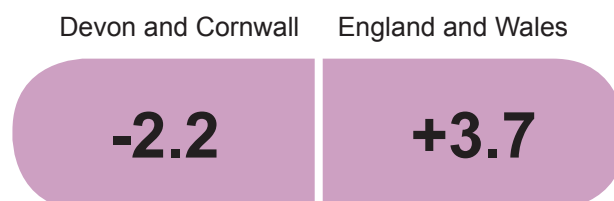
Planned change in total workforce numbers 2010/11 – 2014/15



Planned proportion of police officers on the front line 2014/15 vs 2010/11 (percentage points)



Planned proportion of total workforce on the front line 2014/15 vs 2010/11 (percentage points)





Efficiency

Police officer cost per head of population
2013/14

Devon and Cornwall

England and Wales

£95.5

£117.7

Workforce cost per head of population
2013/14

Devon and Cornwall

England and Wales

£136.6

£168.1

Change in recorded crime
2010/11 – 2013/14

Devon and Cornwall

England and Wales

0%

-14%

Victim satisfaction 2013/14*

Devon and Cornwall

England and Wales

84.6%

85.2%

*Confidence intervals: $\pm 1.5\%$ for Devon and Cornwall; $\pm 0.2\%$ for England and Wales.

Introduction

In October 2010, the Government announced that central funding to the police service in England and Wales would reduce by 20 percent 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, our fourth year.

Our inspection focused on how well the force is achieving value for money. To answer this question we looked at three areas:

- To what extent is the force taking the necessary steps to ensure a secure financial position in the short and long term?
- To what extent has the force an affordable way of providing policing?
- To what extent is the force efficient?

During our inspection we collected data and plans from forces, surveyed the public to see if it 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, where possible, 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.

This information provides the findings for Devon and Cornwall Police.

To what extent is the force taking the necessary steps to ensure a secure financial position for the short and long term?

HMIC looked at the savings plans that forces have developed in order to meet the financial challenge of the spending review, and for the year after 2015/16. It is also important that forces look to the future beyond 2016 in their planning, so we also explored how they are starting to prepare for further financial challenges.

Financial challenge

Devon and Cornwall Police has identified a savings requirement of £53.3m over the four years of the spending review (i.e., between March 2011 and March 2015).

As a proportion of its overall budget, this savings requirement of 17 percent is broadly in line with the 18 percent figure for England and Wales; but HMIC considers that Devon and Cornwall Police faces a particularly difficult challenge. It already receives comparatively lower levels of funding compared to other forces in England and Wales.

The scale of the challenge

Devon and Cornwall faces a particularly difficult challenge because of the scale of the financial savings that must be made for what is already a low-spending force. It had made significant cuts before the spending review began and has less scope to find savings:

- it spends less per head of population on policing than most other forces in England and Wales;
- it has fewer police officers, PCSOs and police staff per head of population than most other forces in England and Wales; and
- the cost of police officers, police staff and PCSOs per head of population is lower than most other forces in England and Wales.

Savings plans for 2014/15 and 2015/16

The force has clear plans in place to achieve the £7.4m savings needed in 2014/15. In 2015/16 the force is facing a further £5.3m savings target and has plans in place to achieve these savings. For 2013/14 it is projecting that it will achieve all of the £10.3m savings required.

Outlook for 2016 and beyond

While future reductions to central funding beyond 2016 have not been confirmed at this time, should the current approach continue, forces are likely to experience reductions of between three and five percent to their central funding year-on-year.

Devon and Cornwall Police has made some predictions about savings that will be required through to 2017/18, based on prudent assumptions about likely grant reductions, cost increases and precept increases. In spite of the significant challenge, the force has made good progress with its savings plans. It also has plans in place that mean it will continue to achieve savings through to 2018; although at this stage the savings will not be sufficient to match the expected reductions in funding. The force has some reserves to fall back on to implement further efficiencies and cost savings, for example through collaboration.

The police and crime commissioner (PCC) and the force have agreed a 'financial road map' which sets out the route to be taken by the force when dealing with reductions in funding. It is based on four approaches:

- continuing with cost savings from improved productivity, greater business efficiency, savings from operational support functions and all other non-pay costs;
- making rapid progress through collaboration and partnerships;
- considering private sector partnership options; and
- assessing options for increasing the income received by the force for service.

HMIC is reassured that despite significant challenges, the force has continued to make good progress with savings and is working hard to put in place realistic plans for future savings that will not compromise its ability to provide effective policing. For example, the force is now working purposefully with Dorset Police to develop a two-force alliance aimed at enabling them both to reduce costs by extending the existing collaboration arrangements across a range of policing operations and functions.

Summary

Good

- Devon and Cornwall Police faces a significant challenge in achieving the required savings as it already spends less on policing than most forces in England and Wales and therefore has less scope to make the savings.
- The force has made good progress and is on track to achieve the £53.3m savings it needs over the spending review period.
- It has plans in place that will also achieve the £5.3m savings needed in 2015/16.
- Beyond 2016, the savings plans currently in place will not match the expected funding reductions. HMIC is reassured to find that the force is working hard to find ways to find further savings without affecting its ability to fight crime.

To what extent has the force an affordable way of providing policing?

HMIC looks at how the force is structured to provide policing. We ask if this is affordable as the force responds to their financial challenge. We look at what the force is doing to reduce its costs, how it is protecting officers and staff engaged in fighting crime and keeping communities safe, and how it is making the required changes through its change programme.

How the force provides policing

In 2010, the force began an extensive programme of change as it faced significant reductions in its funding. The force was already operating with a smaller workforce per head of population than most forces in England and Wales. As it started to lose more staff to make the savings, it moved from a geographically-based policing structure to a centralised structure to enable it to operate more consistently with fewer staff and less overheads. Cost savings have been made and new ways of working are now in place, such as 'self-service' arrangements for many routine back office functions; and a number of HR functions have now transferred to line managers.

The policing structure is now evolving to incorporate geographically based policing. This approach supports the PCC's police and crime plan, revised in April 2014, working to six priority areas. It is also a logical operating model for the force given the very large geographic area and different character of local areas policed by the force.

The force remains concerned that the scale of the cuts it is facing makes sustaining an effective police force very difficult. The PCC and chief constable are clear that they need to maintain force strength at just over 3,000 police officers (broadly the current level) as the minimum necessary to provide an effective and efficient service to the communities of Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

Collaboration

HMIC monitors forces' progress on collaboration with other organisations because it offers the opportunity to provide efficient, effective policing and helps to achieve savings.

Devon and Cornwall Police, has made some use of collaboration to achieve efficiencies and provide a better service. Regional collaboration with other forces in the South West is well established and includes the western area surveillance unit, special branch, forensic services, prison intelligence, witness and protection of high-risk vulnerable people, fraud and asset recovery, and serious and organised crime.

Extending collaboration is seen as a key element of the force's future savings plans. Devon and Cornwall Police and Dorset Police are working together to explore the potential for a

strategic alliance between the two forces. They have set up a joint project team to examine every aspect of their business to identify further opportunities for collaboration. Some 13 work streams incorporating 60 potential areas for progression are being explored, led by chief officers. Initial findings from this work will be reported in June 2014. Both forces have much to gain from an alliance of this nature. They both have good savings plans in place for the next two years but things will become much more difficult after that. An alliance between forces offers the opportunity for future savings and enhanced services through better joint investment opportunities and realisation of economies of scale.

The programme team has taken considerable time to 'learn the lessons' from other forces' collaborations and academic research. The PCC is supportive of the work completed so far which has already shown clear opportunities for development. Local neighbourhood policing is to remain the preserve of each force respectively and is the foundation from which business and operational support collaboration would develop. The work has had independent assessment, a review of the force's culture and a joint approach to identifying risks, for example, the potential loss of skilled and experienced staff.

Existing collaboration agreements are reviewed to ensure productivity benefits and costs savings are sustainable and the force's commitment to the South West England regional collaboration forum continues. The force and PCC are exploring the potential to work with private sector organisations but will await the outcome of the work on the Dorset collaboration with Dorset Police.

In 2014/15, the force expects to spend 2 percent of its net revenue expenditure on collaboration, which is lower than the 11 percent figure for England and Wales. Collaboration is expected to contribute only 1 percent of the force's savings requirement, which is lower than the 10 percent figure for England and Wales.

Managing change

Reductions in police budgets have led to a shrinking workforce. HMIC expects forces to look at longer-term transformation plans that can help to maintain or improve the service they offer to the public, and to prepare for future funding reductions.

The force has used the principles applied to cutting costs and service improvement to examine processes and services since it first began the comprehensive change programme in 2010. The force has conducted two extensive reviews: safeguarding vulnerable people and investigating crime; which have all led to significant process changes and service improvements. Each one has made good use of joint work with local partners towards better outcomes and reduced waste.

The Home Office was invited to assess the force's change programme in 2012 and following recommendations, the force rationalised the number of projects. The change programme has tight governance structures and is overseen by the chief constable and PCC.

The force identified that the main elements of its change programme during the current spending review are:

- changes to local policing;
- better alignment of resource to demand;
- changing the way business support is provided such as HR and finance;
- improved procurement and contract renegotiation; and
- estate rationalisation.

The force identifies that the main elements of its change programme as it responds to future financial pressures will include:

- collaboration with other forces;
- better alignment of resource to demand;
- creating further efficiencies on the front line by improving the use of mobile data;
- improved IT; and
- changing the way that operational support is provided.

How is the force supporting its workforce to manage change and effective service provision?

HMIC found that the force focuses on staff engagement in the change programme and involves them in plans to improve services. The force has a strong cultural identity and this is important to the leadership team.

The force conducts frequent and regular staff surveys – which show its willingness to keep in touch with the views of staff – about a range of subjects from leadership to communication. Results are published and a table of actions is regularly monitored. More messages about how progress is being made, however, should be provided to the workforce through a variety of media and communications. Despite survey results to the effect that the force is a good place to work, managers could do more to understand fully the pressures caused by current workloads. The force undertakes work to improve productivity. For example, the personal development review procedure has been reviewed to focus on continuous personal development rather than the tailoring of objectives, a change that was led by staff. Since the beginning of 2013, inspectors, sergeants and police staff of

similar rank and grade have all attended a week-long course on leadership and managing change. Sickness absence is managed effectively with a small number of staff dismissed for unsatisfactory attendance. The force is also taking steps to deal appropriately with members of staff who are not performing as required. All supervisors are monitored centrally to ensure maintaining the right balance in supporting staff and tackling poor performance.

The chief constable frequently meets staff in groups across the force to explain the purpose, progress and aims of the change programme. Messages are reinforced through the staff intranet and by local managers who cascade information throughout the workforce. Trades unions and staff associations have a positive relationship with the force leadership and are supportive of the change programme.

How is the force achieving the savings?

Because around 80 percent of a police budget (on average) is spent on staff costs, 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.

However, we also expect forces to bear down on other costs (non-pay) such as equipment, accommodation, vehicles and the contracts they enter for services such as cleaning. The force plans to make 30 percent of its savings from non-pay costs which is broadly in line with other forces.

HMIC found that the force has carried out a significant amount of work to reduce non-pay costs including a review of force contracts and other spending. Since 2011, the force has made major savings in non-pay areas which has enabled it to limit as far as possible the impact of the cuts on frontline policing.

Over the spending review period the force has reduced its vehicle fleet by 20 percent but due to the large geographical and rural nature of the force, this has caused some strain on the ability to deploy staff. The force has invested in vehicle-tracking technology to improve how it matches resources to demand to reduce this impact. A renegotiation of the IT contract saved the force £4m and allowed the acquisition of three major new ICT systems to improve police operations.

The force has also saved £1.3m from making better use of its estate and selling off the land and buildings it could manage without, providing money to invest in new facilities where necessary.

For example, the force is moving the Exeter custody facility to the headquarters site, funded by the sale of surplus land; and in April 2014 the force agreed to trial a new tri-service post from a location in Hayle, Cornwall, in an innovative approach to public services provision in which a PCSO will be trained to carry out some fire service and ambulance duties as well as community policing.

Devon and Cornwall Police is also a member of the South West procurement collaboration, getting better value for money by purchasing collectively.

Even though the force has made significant savings in non-pay, like other forces most of the savings comes from reducing the workforce. Devon and Cornwall Police made an early start on this in 2010 when it slowed down recruitment of new police officers and police staff, and reduced the number of police staff. The force plans to make 70 percent of its spending review savings requirement from its pay budget. This is broadly in line with that of other forces.

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

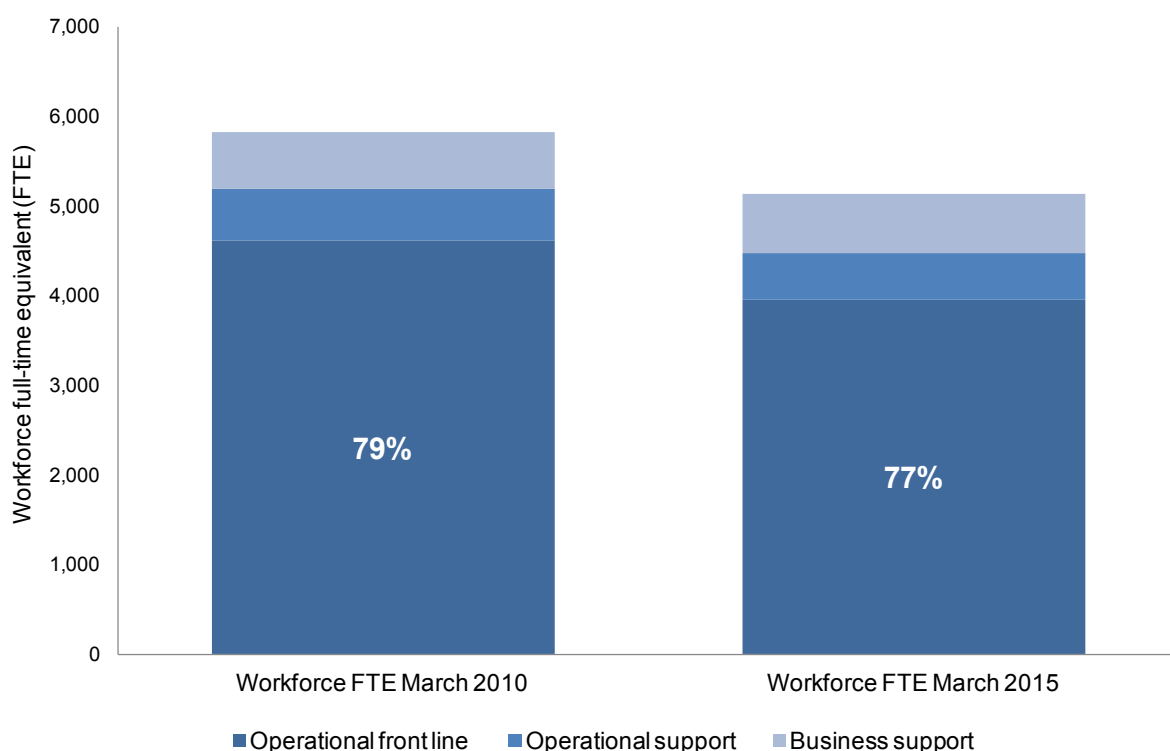
Please note, these figures are rounded.

	31 March 2010 (baseline)	31 March 2015	Change	Force change %	Change for England and Wales %
Police officers	3,556	3,040	-516	-15%	-11%
Police staff	2,071	1,737	-334	-16%	-17%
PCSOs	363	360	-3	-1%	-22%
Total	5,990	5,137	-853	-14%	-14%
Specials	592	700	108	18%	44%

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 frontline crime-fighting roles.

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.

The following chart shows the planned change in the workforce frontline profile in Devon and Cornwall Police.



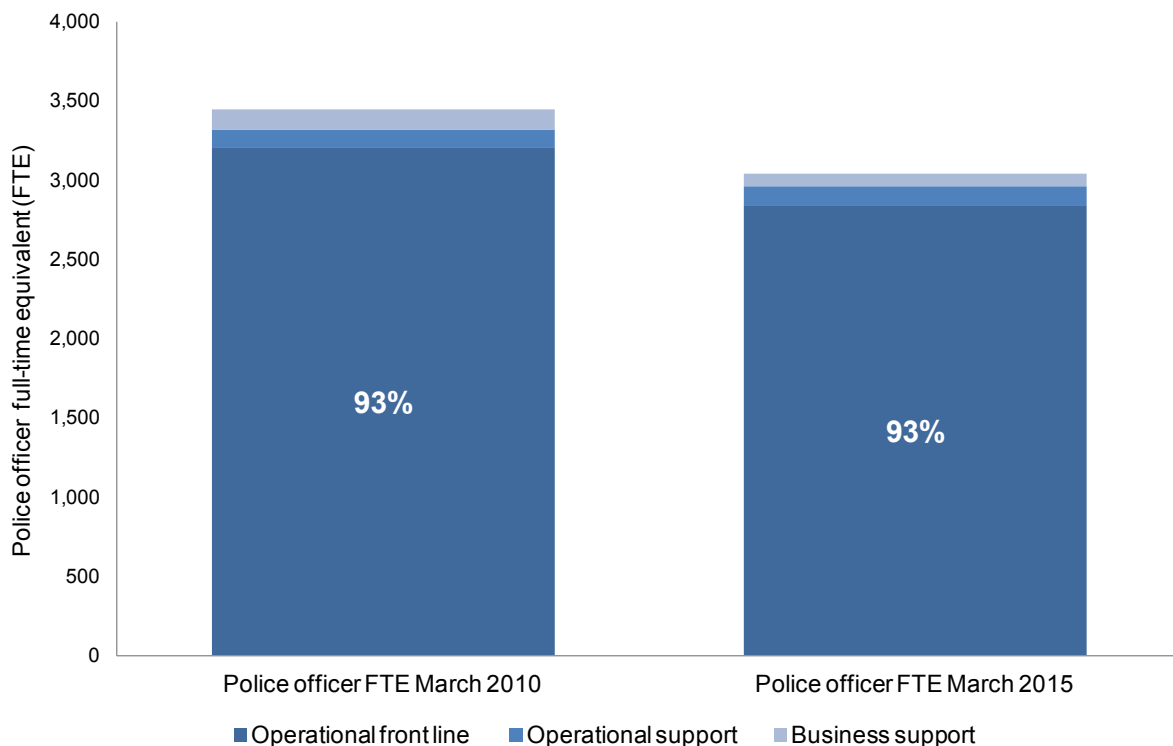
Note: England and Wales reports an increase in the proportion of workforce on the front line from 74 percent in March 2010 to 78 percent in March 2015.

The number of officers, PCSOs and staff (i.e., of the force’s total workforce) working on the front line is projected to reduce by 662 between March 2010 and March 2015 (from 4,621 to 3,959).

Over the same period, the proportion of Devon and Cornwall’s total workforce allocated to frontline roles is projected to reduce from 79 percent to 77 percent. This compares with an overall increase across England and Wales from 74 percent to 78 percent.

The number of Devon and Cornwall’s police officers working in frontline roles is planned to reduce by 365 between March 2010 and March 2015 (from 3,207 to 2,842), as the following chart shows. The proportion of those remaining on the front line is projected to remain at 93 percent. This compares to an overall increase across England and Wales from 89 percent to 92 percent and shows Devon and Cornwall Police is protecting successfully front-line crime-fighting roles as it makes these cuts.

The following chart shows the planned change in police officers' frontline profile.



Note: England and Wales reports an increase in the proportion of police officers on the front line from 89 percent in March 2010 to 92 percent in March 2015.

Summary

Good

- Devon and Cornwall Police began its change programme in 2010 and have continued to develop the way it provides a policing service to make best use of the resources available.
- The force has improved processes and services to increase productivity and reduce waste. It has strived to provide effective policing in spite of cuts in workforce numbers.
- The force has worked hard to reduce non-pay costs to limit the impact on staffing cuts and is planning for 30 percent of its savings to come from non-pay areas, with plans in place for more savings. However, it has still had to reduce police officer numbers by more than other forces (15 percent). Working in collaboration with others has so far made a limited contribution to Devon and Cornwall's savings but the force is developing plans for an ambitious alliance with neighbouring Dorset Police.

To what extent is the force efficient?

HMIC looks at how the force understands the demands that it faces and how it allocates both financial resources and staff to meet these demands. We look at how these decisions are leading to effective results for the public; in particular, that police are visible and that they attend promptly when called, that they are fighting crime and keeping communities safe, and that victims are satisfied with the service they receive.

How well does the force understand and manage demand?

The force has conducted a comprehensive assessment of the demand for police services and a detailed assessment of the organisational and operational risks it faces, and the threats, harm and risks faced by the public. These assessments inform the annual force strategic assessment and enable them to clearly assess the resources they need to meet the demand and to develop the workforce plan.

National risks and the Strategic Policing Requirement are evaluated and a strategic risk assessment for firearms and public order services are conducted regularly throughout the year. The PCC and the force have a joint risk register to manage existing and emerging risks.

The full demand assessment is conducted every summer but bespoke demand profiles, including those for specific neighbourhoods can be completed at any time to help decision-making as local and force priorities alter. The force assessed the added demand during last winter's storms to enable resources to be moved temporarily to areas of greatest need.

Partner organisation data is used to help understand the totality of demand placed on police and other public services, for example in safeguarding vulnerable people. This has led to the evidence-based 'peninsula strategic assessment' which improves joint working within Devon and Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly's services in developing safeguarding policies. The force obtained national funding for a 12-month trial of mental health nurses based in the two control rooms, which has improved the care for people suffering from mental health conditions and reduced the time spent by officers dealing with vulnerable people.

There are specific challenges for the force in policing the rural isolation of some communities, and in policing the tourist industry, particularly during the summer months when the force experiences eight million visitors. Well-established plans together with support from volunteers and partner organisations, and a flexible workforce meets the challenge, but with partner funding reducing and staff numbers falling, the force is having to look at innovative ways in which to respond to the demand.

How efficiently does the force allocate its resources?

The force has taken a forensic approach to where and how it uses its staff, using a range of resource to demand models to update the resource management plan. Expected events and seasonal changes in demand are profiled along with performance information to give managers an understanding of resourcing needs and staff productivity, with a strong focus on aligning resource to the PCCs six priorities. A sophisticated approach to resource modelling has helped define times, locations and skills needed by staff to complete tasks according to the demand.

To improve the approach to resource modelling, the force is examining a range of functions, to identify the optimum time required to complete standard investigations. In addition, a new shift system is currently being introduced, in phases, for all frontline staff. This offers variable shift patterns, adjustable to meet seasonal and local demand.

How does the force respond and keep its communities safe?

The challenge for forces is not just to save money and reduce their workforce numbers, but also to ensure the choices they make do not have a negative impact on the service they provide to their communities. HMIC looked for evidence that keeping the communities safe is at the heart of the force's decision.

Close monitoring of threat, harm and risk has identified the potential for increases in internet crime, harassment and exploitation and the force is developing a different method of engaging with the public. The force has started to align resources to meet this demand. This approach includes reviewing the workforce mix, to identify the options for skilled investigators to deal with complex computer technology. Prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour is one of the four cornerstones of the force's strategy. There are a number of specialist staff dedicated to crime prevention; harm reduction and tackling anti-social behaviour. HMIC found strong commitment at all levels to engagement with the public and partners, with police community support officers (PCSO) a prominent feature of policing particularly in rural areas. Neighbourhood teams, together with partners are providing effective solutions to local problems.

Calls for service

HMIC examined whether Devon and Cornwall 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.

We found that over the four years since 2010, Devon and Cornwall had maintained the same service standards for response times; 20 minutes for calls classed as ‘immediate’ (also known as Grade 1). Over the same period, calls classed as a ‘prompt’ (also known as Grade 2) had a service standard response time of within 60 minutes.

The following table compares the force’s performance in 2010/11 to 2013/14.

Calls for service	2010/11	2013/14
Percentage of immediate calls meeting service standard	87.0	75.0
Percentage of prompt calls meeting service standard	88.0	83.0

Over the spending review, attendance for both immediate calls and prompt calls has declined.

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 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 said, research shows that the public value seeing 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. HMIC therefore examined how far the changes being implemented by the force had affected the visibility of the police in the Devon and Cornwall area.

In 2014, Devon and Cornwall Police allocated 55 percent of its police officers to visible roles. This is 5.9 percentage points lower than the number allocated in 2010, and broadly in line with the figure for England and Wales which was 56 percent.

Police visibility is further enhanced by PCSOs, who principally support community policing. Looking at the proportion of police officers and PCSOs, Devon and Cornwall Police allocated 60 percent to visible roles. This is 4.6 percentage points lower than it allocated in 2010, and in line with the 60 percent figure for England and Wales.

HMIC conducted a survey¹ 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 Devon and Cornwall, 10 percent said that they have seen a police officer more often than they had 12 months ago; this compares to 12 percent of respondents in England and Wales.

Furthermore, 90 percent of respondents in Devon and Cornwall said they felt safe from crime where they lived, compared to 84 percent of respondents in England and Wales. Finally, 5 percent said they felt safer from crime than they did two years ago, compared to 9 percent of respondents in England and Wales.

Crime

In 2010, the Home Secretary set a clear priority for the police service to reduce crime. Between 2010/11 and 2013/14 (which includes the first three years of the spending review), levels of recorded crime (excluding fraud) remained at the same level in Devon and Cornwall, compared with a reduction of 14 percent in England and Wales. Over this period, victim-based crime (that is, crimes where there is a direct victim, such as an individual, a group, or an organisation) reduced by one percent, compared with a reduction of 14 percent in England and Wales.

Looking just at the last 12 months recorded crime (excluding fraud) rose by 1 percent, compared to the figure for England and Wales (a reduction of 1 percent).

By looking at how many crimes occur per head of population, we get an indication of how safe it is for the public in that police area.

¹ Sample sizes for each force were chosen to produce a confidence interval of no more than ± 6 percent and for England and Wales, no more than ± 1 percent. Forces' differences to the England and Wales value may not be statistically significant.

The table below shows crime and anti-social behaviour rates in Devon and Cornwall (per head of population), compared with the rest of England and Wales.

12 months to March 2014	Rate per 1,000 population	England and Wales rate per 1,000 population
Crimes (excluding fraud)	50.6	61.1
Victim-based crime	43.5	54.3
Sexual offences	1.3	1.1
Burglary	4.5	7.8
Violence against the person	12.4	11.1
ASB incidents	27.4	37.2

It is important that crimes are investigated effectively and that the perpetrator is identified and brought to justice. When sufficient evidence is available to identify who has committed a crime, it can be described as a detection. Devon and Cornwall Police's detection rate (for crimes excluding fraud) for the 12 months to March 2014 was 25 percent. This is broadly in line with the England and Wales detection rate of 26 percent.

We have chosen these types of crime to give an indication of offending levels in the Devon and Cornwall force area. 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 provision 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 2014, 84.6 percent (± 1.5 percent) of victims were satisfied with the overall service provided by Devon and Cornwall Police. This is broadly in line with the England and Wales figure of 85.2 percent (± 0.2 percent).

Changes to how the public can access services

Forces are exploring different ways in which the public can access policing services. The force is temporarily employing additional call handlers in its control room. This helps ensure that there is a culture of dealing with calls effectively and resolving issues at the first point of contact, both in terms of customer satisfaction and reduced deployment of police officers. Over a million contacts are received each year by the control room, with more than 40 percent of all calls now resolved by the call-taker.

The force offers a wide variety of ways in which the public and partners can contact the force or individual staff, ranging from traditional emergency and non-emergency telephone contact, to email and social networking sites. All neighbourhood staff actively provide and receive information via one or more forms of social media.

The force is projecting that over the period from the start of the spending review, until the end of 2014/15, it will have closed 14 police stations (a 22 percent reduction) and 36 front counters (a 63 percent reduction).

Summary

Good

- The force has a comprehensive understanding of its demand and is developing a sophisticated and effective approach to ensuring that its resources are used efficiently.
- From this work, the force has been able to work with local partners to provide a better joined-up service of neighbourhood policing and has been able to put staff and other resources into tackling local problems.
- The force is improving the way it deals with calls from the public and is resolving more calls at the first contact, enabling it to avoid wasted effort and use police officer time to best effect.
- Although there continue to be fewer crimes per head of population in Devon and Cornwall than in England and Wales as a whole, overall crime has not reduced in Devon and Cornwall at the same rate as the figure for England and Wales. The force's detection rate and victim satisfaction is broadly in line with other forces across England and Wales.

Our judgments

HMIC uses four categories for making judgments, two are positive and two are negative. The categories are:

- outstanding;
- good;
- requires improvement; and
- inadequate.

Judgment is made against how well the force achieves value for money, it is not an assessment of the overall effectiveness of policing. In applying the categories HMIC considers whether:

- the way the force is achieving value for money is good, or exceeds this standard sufficiently to be judged as outstanding;
- the force requires improvement in the way it achieves value for money, and/or there are some weaknesses; or
- the force's provision of value for money is inadequate because it is considerably lower than is expected.