



Inspecting policing  
in the public interest

## Responding to austerity

Durham Constabulary

July 2014

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ISBN: 978-1-78246-426-6

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# How well does the constabulary provide value for money?

## Overall judgment

Durham Constabulary has made good progress and is well placed to manage further austerity in the future. It has achieved its savings ahead of schedule and is in a good position to face future challenges.

**Good**

## Summary

Durham Constabulary has already achieved the savings it needed to make by March 2015 – twelve months in advance of the end of the spending review timetable.

At this time the constabulary has clear plans in place to achieve all of the savings needed in 2014/15 and most of those in 2015/16. The plans for 2016/17 and beyond are less well developed, but there is an agreed timeline for developing and refining these plans and it is likely that the savings needed can be achieved.

The constabulary is now looking ahead and beginning to develop how it can make further savings, while investing to save in its estate and its use of technology, and also securing the future efficiency and effectiveness of the constabulary.

Overall, the constabulary understands the issues facing it. Its problem-solving approach is used in all areas of its policing. HMIC was reassured by leaders' ability and determination to make changes while fighting crime and keeping communities safe.

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

**Good**

Durham Constabulary has clear plans in place to achieve all of the savings needed in 2014/15. It is likely that the savings needed for 2016/17 and beyond can be achieved, although plans are less well developed.

It has a strong track record of achieving planned savings. In May 2014, it had already achieved the savings it needed to make by March 2015.

It is now looking ahead and beginning to develop ways to make further savings, while investing to save in its estate and its use of technology, and securing the future efficiency and effectiveness of the constabulary.

The constabulary has the capability, capacity and governance structures to achieve the required savings and organisational change.

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

**Good**

The way the constabulary has reorganised policing to the County Durham and Darlington areas has successfully supported the achievement of savings for the spending review, with a considerable reduction in its police officer numbers. However, it has protected frontline policing and increased the proportion of officers working on the front line.

During the course of its change programme, the constabulary reviewed demand across local policing. The way it allocates its resources as a result of that review means they are now used more effectively for neighbourhood policing.

So far, it has achieved the bulk of the required savings through reducing pay costs. It has also reduced non-pay costs effectively.

**To what extent is the constabulary efficient?**

**Good**

The constabulary carries out regular and comprehensive assessments of demand, threat, risk and harm.

The constabulary has a strong focus on preventing crime through a problem-solving approach.

A wide range of contact methods is available to the public; Durham has also retained all public enquiry counters.

The constabulary's performance is mixed. Crime has fallen over the spending review period, but not by as much as elsewhere. In the last 12 months, there has been an increase in crime compared to a small decrease in England and Wales. However, the rate of detecting crimes is high, as is victim satisfaction with the constabulary.

# The constabulary in numbers



## Financial position

The constabulary's savings requirement

Requirement    Gap

**£20.8m**

**£0.0m**



## Providing policing

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

Durham    England and Wales

**-17%**

**-11%**

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

Durham    England and Wales

**-13%**

**-14%**

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

Durham    England and Wales

**+2.3**

**+3.0**

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

Durham    England and Wales

**+2.4**

**+3.7**



## Efficiency

Police officer cost per head of population  
2013/14

Durham

England and Wales

**£111.1**

**£117.7**

Workforce cost per head of population  
2013/14

Durham

England and Wales

**£156.8**

**£168.1**

Change in recorded crime  
2010/11 – 2013/14

Durham

England and Wales

**-9%**

**-14%**

Victim satisfaction 2013/14\*

Durham

England and Wales

**88.3%**

**85.2%**

\*Confidence intervals:  $\pm 1.8\%$  for Durham;  $\pm 0.2\%$  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 constabulary is achieving value for money. To answer this question we looked at three areas:

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

During our inspection 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, 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 provides the findings for Durham Constabulary.



# To what extent is the constabulary 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

Durham Constabulary has identified that it needs to save £20.8m 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 15 percent is lower than the value for England and Wales.

The constabulary receives more funding from central government, but lower local funding, than most forces. This means that central funding cuts will have more of an impact.

The constabulary has a good track record of meeting financial challenges while providing high-quality community policing to those working and living in County Durham and Darlington.

## The scale of the challenge

In May 2014, we found that the constabulary had already achieved the savings it needed to make by March 2015 – twelve months in advance of the end of the spending review timetable. It is now looking ahead and beginning to develop ways to find further savings, while investing to save in its estate (assets such as property and land) and its use of technology, and securing the future efficiency and effectiveness of the constabulary.

## Savings plans for 2014/15 and 2015/16

In 2013/14, the constabulary underspent by £0.9m, largely through workforce vacancies. This will be put into reserves and used to fund further reduction in the estate. In addition to the underspend, the savings planned for the year were also achieved. The constabulary has clear plans in place to achieve all of the savings needed in 2014/15 (£2.0m) and most of the savings for 2015/16 (£7.5m).

## Outlook for 2016 and beyond

A comprehensive assessment of organisational threats and risks, along with workforce changes and savings plans, is in place and is regularly reviewed. The constabulary acknowledges the risks associated with the plans for the years following the end of this current spending review. In addition, it recognises other areas of concern, such as dependency on an additional grant that was introduced to minimise the impact of changes to the police funding formula, which equates to 9 percent of the total central funding, with no certainty as to how long this will continue. Reductions in funding to other public sector organisations have a considerable impact on the constabulary, placing even greater demands on the police as the service of last resort.

The constabulary has made some predictions about future savings that will be required through to 2017/18. The predictions are based on prudent assumptions about likely grant reductions, cost increases and council tax (precept) increases.

The constabulary has begun to develop its savings plans for 2016/17 and 2017/18. It will continue to review and refine them over the next two years. These plans are based on scenario planning for what might happen next. The constabulary has already begun to explore saving opportunities with the expectation that austerity will continue for the foreseeable future. The plans for 2016/17 and beyond are less well developed, but it is likely that the savings needed can be achieved.

### Summary



Good

- Durham Constabulary has clear plans in place to achieve all of the savings needed in 2014/15 and, although plans for 2016/17 and beyond are less well developed, it is likely that the savings needed can be achieved.
- The constabulary has a strong track record of achieving planned savings. In May 2014 the constabulary had already achieved the savings it needed to make by March 2015 – twelve months in advance of the end of the spending review timetable.
- It is now looking ahead and beginning to develop ways to make further savings, while investing to save in its estate and its use of technology, and securing the future efficiency and effectiveness of the constabulary.
- The constabulary has the capability, capacity and governance structures to achieve the required savings and organisational change.

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

HMIC looks at how the constabulary is structured to provide policing. We ask if this is affordable as the constabulary responds to its financial challenge. We look at what the constabulary 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 constabulary provides policing

In 2011, the constabulary changed from a geographical way of working to a new operational model. This means that the majority of its day-to-day business is provided through five functional units:

- tasking and coordination;
- neighbourhood and partnerships;
- crime and criminal justice;
- response; and
- support services.

As a result of the changed way of working in 2011/12, the constabulary cut the workforce numbers earlier than many other forces and moved quickly to adopt a way of providing policing appropriate for this reduced level of staffing. The increase in the constabulary's saving requirement since this model was initially developed means that further changes have had to be made to the model to find the additional savings. Durham has now achieved a structure that is affordable. The constabulary has no plans to alter substantially this operating model in the short term, preferring to adapt what it has to suit the new size of the constabulary.

Specific reviews are under way, which are designed to allow minor reductions in staffing in some teams, for example, within driver maintenance, intelligence and freedom of information teams. However, there is a recognition that the constabulary will need to restructure to make it fit for purpose in the long term.

A review of neighbourhood policing was carried out in 2013, which included comparing Durham with other forces and consulting with staff. This identified the numbers of neighbourhood officers and supervisors required for each team. It is intended that the same approach will be used for the full review of the operating model.

## Collaboration

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

The constabulary collaborates in a wide range of partnerships and agreements covering all areas of support and operational policing. The constabulary favours two-party collaborative arrangements over those involving a greater number of partners, due to the increase in complexity this can bring.

The constabulary is considering collaboration with Darlington Borough Council for business support staff. It already has collaborative arrangements with children's and social services. The constabulary has begun collaboration with the Fire Service in a merged station at Newton Aycliffe, using money from the innovation fund, working towards a further three shared stations. Durham collaborates with a wide variety of partners to tackle serious and organised crime.

Durham is clear that it will not collaborate just for the sake of it; there must be a benefit to Durham. Conversations are active in a number of areas with a range of opportunities being explored. Each opportunity is reviewed and assessed to check its added value and costs.

In 2014/15 the constabulary plans to spend 8 percent of its net revenue expenditure on collaboration, which is the lower than the 11 percent figure for England and Wales. Collaboration is expected to contribute to 13 percent of the constabulary's savings requirement, which is higher than the eight 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, which can help to maintain or improve the service they offer to the public and prepare for future funding reductions.

Change is a well-established process within the constabulary. It is continuous and not a single event. The use of the problem-solving approach continues to be effective and used throughout the organisation. The constabulary is using simple business improvement methods to develop a culture of continuous improvement. Many staff teams have an objective to identify continuous improvements. For example, staff members are regularly rotated on tasks within their team to bring a fresh pair of eyes to a problem to identify improvements. Staff are also put in other business areas to identify common-sense process improvements.

A bright ideas scheme is in place to encourage individuals to submit ideas for improvements. However, HMIC found that not all staff are aware of the scheme, and where staff are aware, some do not believe their ideas will be used.

IT provision has considerably improved in recent years with an ambitious in-house programme to replace the current crime and intelligence system. This aims to offer fully integrated systems that share information. The result of this is that unnecessary bureaucracy should be reduced and staff will be able to access the information they need more efficiently. The constabulary makes extensive use of its integrated offender management software. This system enables the police, health, probation, social services and national offender management service to look at the same people and to share data with partner agencies.

The constabulary is introducing more flexible working, which is seen as a modernisation of its approach to working styles; it is also vital to its approach to the reduced accommodation it needs at its new headquarters.

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

- releasing unnecessary roles via early retirement of staff and voluntary severance for police officers;
- structural changes in both business and operational support;
- challenging poor performance;
- better alignment of resource to demand;
- making processes more efficient and reducing bureaucracy;
- borderless deployment; and
- collaboration with other forces.

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

- releasing unnecessary roles;
- further workforce modernisation;
- improved IT and mobile data;
- structural changes in both business and operational support;

- structural changes in protective services;
- estates reduction;
- better alignment of resource to demand; and
- income generation.

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

The constabulary makes a great effort to support its staff during change. This was well represented by the layered approach taken to prepare staff for the move to new assets such as the warehouse and headquarters as well as a refurbished police station. Staff appreciate the efforts made by the constabulary to find a variety of methods to communicate with them. Opportunities are made available for staff to be involved in the development and implementation of change through working groups. The Police Federation, Unison and Superintendents Association all have a good relationship with the constabulary leadership team.

Individuals have the opportunity to get as involved as they want to be in shaping change. While people may not feel they have the ability to have much influence as an individual, officers and staff are encouraged to join working groups on issues that interest them, and opportunities are available through an aiming for excellence programme.

Communications with staff have improved in recent years. For example, following the constabulary leadership group meetings, reduction issues and messages are relayed to staff by webcast. The chief constable produces webcasts as required on particular issues. The constabulary also use emails to communicate with all staff on a daily basis; however, this approach has drawn criticism as there are often too many new messages and reduction information risks getting lost.

The constabulary takes health and wellbeing seriously. Training, education, support, and personal development are all well organised. The organisation has some reliance on computer based self-training packages, especially for operational staff, which not all employees find effective. A new approach to the annual staff survey is being well received after initial concerns, and the results of staff surveys are made available to staff.

## How is the constabulary 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 employed.

However, we also expect forces to bear down on their other costs (non-pay) such as the equipment they buy, the accommodation and vehicles they use and the contracts they enter into for services (e.g., for cleaning). The constabulary is driving down non-pay costs effectively. It plans to make 19 percent of its savings over the spending review period from non-pay; this is lower than for other forces.

The constabulary has made a real effort to review all business areas and not just cut officers and staff numbers. It has adopted an approach over recent years of keeping costs constantly under review, for example, overtime, different ways of working, the time of working, and having more or less equipment. Making savings and working more efficiently has become ingrained into the way the constabulary works.

Personal development reviews for some teams (for example, human resources and estates) include personal objectives to achieve savings. This involves thinking about how to reduce costs, implementing those plans, then calculating the savings and keeping a running total of what has been achieved.

As with other forces, most of the savings come from reducing the workforce. The constabulary plans to make 81 percent of its spending review savings requirement from its pay budget. This is higher than in 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.

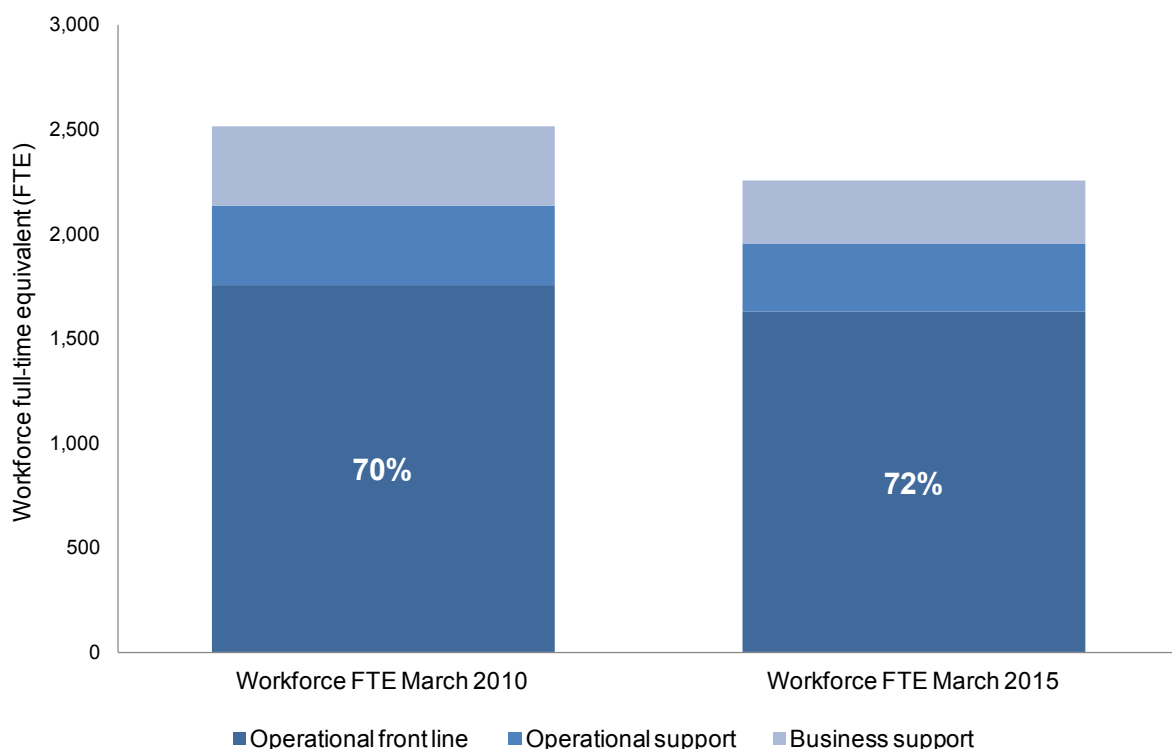
|                 | <b>31 March<br/>2010<br/>(baseline)</b> | <b>31 March<br/>2015</b> | <b>Change</b> | <b>Constabulary<br/>change %</b> | <b>Change for<br/>England<br/>and Wales<br/>%</b> |
|-----------------|---|--------------------------|---------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Police officers | 1,507                                   | 1,255                    | -252          | -17%                             | -11%  |
| Police staff    | 920                                     | 841                      | -79           | -9%                              | -17%  |
| PCSOs           | 175                                     | 158                      | -17           | -10%                             | -22%  |
| Total           | 2,602                                   | 2,254                    | -348          | -13%                             | -14%  |
| Specials        | 131                                     | 140                      | 9             | 7%                               | 44%   |

Although the overall planned workforce reductions in Durham are broadly in line with the national picture, the constabulary is set to lose a higher proportion of its police officers than most other forces in England and Wales. It is expected 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 Durham Constabulary.



**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.**

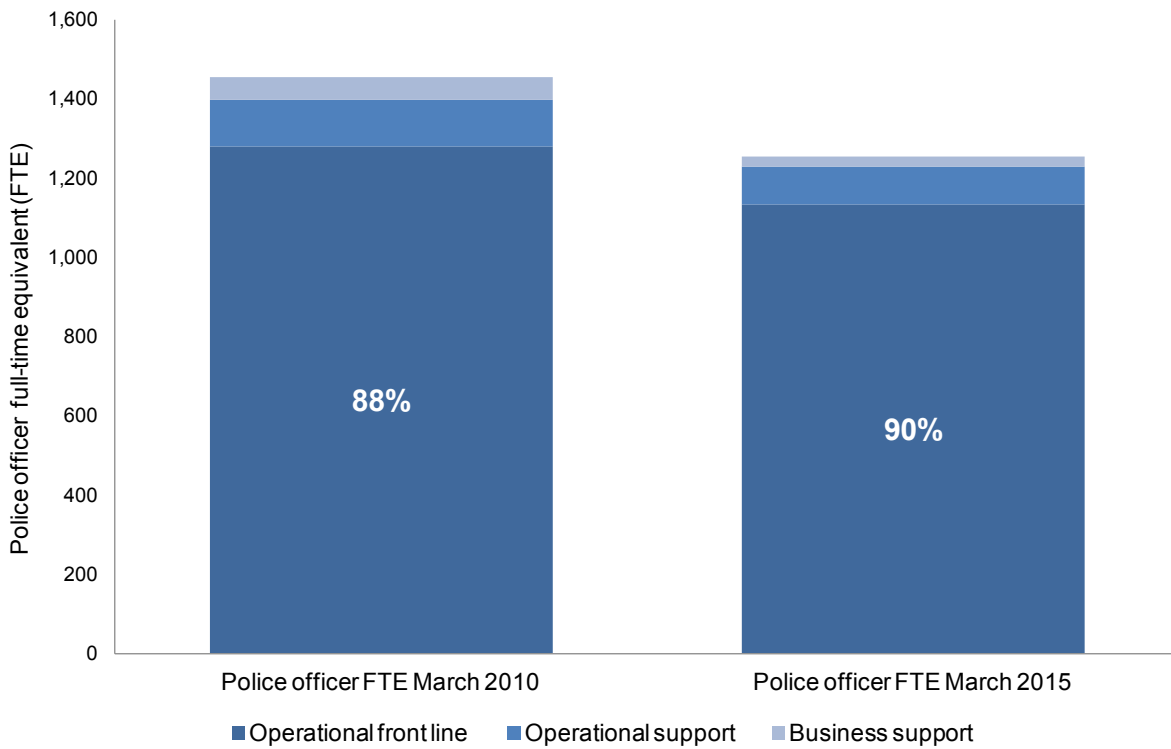
The number of officers, PCSOs and staff working on the front line is projected to reduce by 130 between March 2010 and March 2015 (from 1,756 to 1,626).

Over the same period, the proportion of Durham’s total workforce allocated to frontline roles is projected to increase from 70 percent to 72 percent. This compares with an overall increase across England and Wales from 74 percent to 78 percent.

The number of Durham’s police officers in frontline roles is planned to reduce by 146 from 1,280 in March 2010 to 1,134 by March 2015, as the following chart shows.

The proportion of those remaining on the front line is projected to increase from 88 percent to 90 percent. This compares to an overall increase across England and Wales from 89 percent to 92 percent.

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

- The way that the constabulary has reorganised policing to the County Durham and Darlington areas at the start of this period has successfully supported the achievement of savings for the spending review, with a considerable reduction in its police officer numbers. However, Durham has protected frontline policing and increased the proportion of officers working on the front line.
- During the course of its change programme, the constabulary has reviewed demand across local policing. The way it allocates its resources as a result of that review means they are now used more effectively for neighbourhood policing.
- So far, the constabulary has achieved the bulk of the required savings through reducing pay costs. It has also reduced non-pay costs effectively.

# To what extent is the constabulary efficient?

HMIC looks at how the constabulary 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 constabulary understand and manage demand?

The constabulary undertook a comprehensive analysis of how resources could be used best while developing the current model. This was predominantly based on data around crime numbers, incidents and travelling distances. Although it has been adjusted since then, a considerable review is planned in 2014/15.

The constabulary carries out regular and comprehensive assessments of demand, threat, risk and harm. This process also takes account of information from partner agencies, which includes what their priorities are and any risks they have identified. These assessments are refreshed and reviewed at the constabulary's monthly strategic threat and risk meetings, and also at the constabulary leadership group meetings chaired by the chief constable and attended by the police and crime commissioner. The assessments are used to make decisions about the deployment of resources to deal with issues such as emerging threats and changes in demand. During these processes, the constabulary gives appropriate consideration to both regional and national requirements to assist in tackling issues such as serious and organised crime.

Through these assessments, the constabulary is able to identify any unforeseen increases in demand. For example, increases in the demand on police time have been identified due to a lack of ambulance provision and reductions in mental health services. In one specific month, there were 37 occasions when officers had to transport people in need of medical treatment to hospital as no ambulance was available. The constabulary is working with the respective organisations to reduce this demand and resolve the issues as soon as possible.

## How efficiently does the constabulary allocate its resources?

At the start of the spending review period, the constabulary undertook an extensive review to enable it to provide a modern and cost-effective neighbourhood policing service. This review led to the introduction of a new operating model that changed the provision of policing from a geographic model to a functional one. While this model has served the constabulary well through the current spending review, it is looking to make changes to meet the requirements of future financial challenges.

The constabulary has identified its critical posts, such as staff working in neighbourhood policing teams, and regular meetings take place between senior managers and human resources to ensure these posts are adequately resourced.

## How does the constabulary 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 constabulary's decision.

The constabulary principle is that all staff have a responsibility for preventing crime through a problem-solving approach. This is supported by a strong commitment from the chief constable and the police and crime commissioner, and by the allocation of considerable levels of resources. The components of visibility, engagement and problem solving are evident at a neighbourhood level to address issues of concern to local communities, and at a constabulary level to tackle organised crime groups. These components are enhanced by the constabulary working in partnership with other agencies such as local authorities. The constabulary also has some of the most active community watch schemes in the country, especially neighbourhood watch, which works in partnership with neighbourhood teams on community engagement and problem solving.

The constabulary has used this problem-solving approach to reduce and manage demand. For example, it regularly identifies the top ten calls for service, including missing persons, anti-social behaviour, victims, offenders and locations. These are then addressed at a local level by a problem-solving plan.

### **Calls for service**

HMIC examined whether Durham 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, Durham had maintained the same target response times of 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.

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

| <b>Calls for service</b>                      | <b>2010/11</b> | <b>2013/14</b> |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| Percentage of urban emergency calls on target | 91.0           | 92.0           |
| Percentage of rural emergency calls on target | 93.0           | 93.0           |
| Percentage of priority calls on target        | 78.0           | 78.0           |

Over the spending review Durham has maintained the number of emergency and priority calls attended in target. Despite fewer numbers in the workforce, the constabulary continues its focus on meeting the needs of the public at times of need.

### 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 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. HMIC therefore examined how far the changes being implemented by the constabulary had affected the visibility of the police in the County Durham and Darlington areas.

In 2014, Durham Constabulary allocated 54 percent of its police officers to visible roles. This is 5.4 percentage points lower than the number allocated in 2010, and slightly lower than the figure for most other forces (which was 56 percent 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, Durham Constabulary allocated 58 percent of these staff to visible roles. This is 4.7 percentage points lower than it allocated in 2010, and lower than the 60 percent figure for England and Wales.

HMIC conducted a survey<sup>1</sup> 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 Durham, 13 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.

<sup>1</sup> Sample sizes for each force were chosen to produce a confidence interval of no more than  $\pm 6$  percent and for England and Wales, no more than  $\pm 1$  percent. Forces’ differences to the England and Wales value may not be statistically significant.

Furthermore, 90 percent of respondents in Durham said they felt safe from crime where they lived, compared to 84 percent of respondents in England and Wales. Finally, 8 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), Durham Constabulary reduced recorded crime (excluding fraud) by 9 percent, 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 9 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 10 percent, compared with a 1 percent reduction across England and Wales.

By looking at how many crimes occur per head of population, we can see an indication of how safe it is for the public in that police area. The table below shows crime and anti-social behaviour rates in Durham (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)    | 52.9                      | 61.1  |
| Victim-based crime          | 47.3                      | 54.3  |
| Sexual offences             | 1.4                       | 1.1   |
| Burglary                    | 6.9                       | 7.8   |
| Violence against the person | 8.3                       | 11.1  |
| ASB incidents               | 47.5                      | 37.2  |

It is expected 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 detected. Durham Constabulary's detection rate (for crimes excluding fraud) for the 12 months to March 2014 was 36 percent, this is higher than 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 Durham constabulary area. For information on the frequency of other kinds of crimes in your area,

go to [www.hmic.gov.uk/crime-and-policing-comparator](http://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, 88.3 percent ( $\pm$  1.8 percent) of victims were satisfied with the overall service provided by Durham Constabulary. This is higher than the England and Wales figure of 85.2 percent ( $\pm$  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 constabulary does not plan to close front counter services; however, it is clear that it has changed the definition of what providing a front counter service means. All stations in the constabulary area are open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week and enable interaction with the public, either through a front counter, or through an intercom that allows a police officer to talk to a member of the public. The constabulary has maintained its numbers of 29 front counters since 2010/11 and six access points shared with local authority and other partners.

The constabulary sees it as critical that stations should enable interaction between the police and the public, even where there is no actual front counter. Volunteers are being considered as a way to provide front-counter assistance to maintain this across the constabulary.

Like other forces, Durham has a wide range of contact methods available for the public, which includes social media such as Facebook and Twitter. Publication of suspect images on Facebook has resulted in identifications and arrests within hours. The constabulary does not have an online reporting capability for crime but this is under consideration. Staff are encouraged, through every contact they have with members of the public, to raise the awareness of the dates and locations of community meetings such as police and community together (PACT) meetings. To support this engagement at a local level, the constabulary undertakes over 170 PACT meetings monthly.



## Summary



Good

- The constabulary carries out regular and comprehensive assessments of demand, threat, risk and harm.
- The constabulary has a strong focus on preventing crime through a problem-solving approach.
- A wide range of contact methods is available to the public, and the constabulary has retained all public enquiry counters.
- Performance in the constabulary is mixed. Crime has fallen over the spending review period, although not by as much as elsewhere. In the last 12 months, there has been an increase in crime compared to a small decrease in England and Wales. However, the rate of detecting crimes is high, as is victim satisfaction with the police.

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