



Inspecting policing  
in the public interest

## Responding to austerity

North Wales Police

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# Contents

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How well does the force provide value for money?	4
The force in numbers	6
Introduction	8
To what extent is the force taking the necessary steps to ensure a secure financial position for the short and long term?	9
To what extent has the force an affordable way of providing policing?	11
To what extent is the force efficient?	19
Our judgments	25

# How well does the force provide value for money?

## Overall judgment

North Wales Police is on track to meet its spending review challenge and is financially well-placed to face further austerity, but there are funding uncertainties that may increase future financial pressures.

**Good**

## Summary

North Wales is not only on track to meet its financial challenge for the spending review period but also for the following financial year, 2015/16. It has made the savings it needed with one of the smallest planned reductions in police officer numbers in England and Wales and with no overall reduction in its total workforce. This has enabled it to increase the numbers of staff on the front line.

HMIC found that the force has a good understanding of the demand it faces and is working to manage the demand better, and to change the way it provides policing so that police time is used to best effect.

Crime has continued to fall in North Wales, although victim satisfaction with the police is well below the figure for other forces in England and Wales.

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

**Good**

North Wales Police has faced a comparatively less difficult challenge than most forces from the spending cuts.

It has clear plans in place to achieve all of the savings it needs to make through to 2016 and is starting to develop plans for further austerity beyond that.

The force already has a strong track record of achieving the savings it has planned to make.

The force is in a good financial position now, but there are potential risks and uncertainty that may impact on its future funding.

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

**Good**

The force is developing a new way of working to make best use of its resources, which it is trialling in one area, with a view to extending it across the whole force if successful.

North Wales Police has seen one of the smallest reductions in police officer numbers in England and Wales.

The force has made 40 percent of its savings from non-pay costs, which has further limited the need to reduce the size of the workforce.

There has been no overall reduction in workforce, which has enabled North Wales to increase both the number and the proportion of staff on the front line.

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

**Good**

The force has carried out a comprehensive analysis of demand based on calls into the control room. Calls on police time could be significantly reduced if demand was better managed.

It is now working to make better use of resources by reducing unnecessary demand.

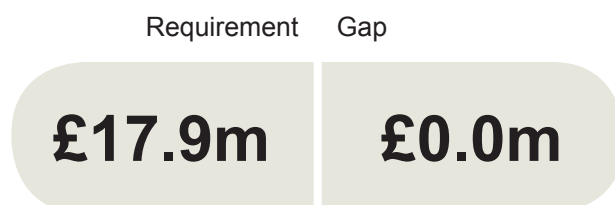
The force has a good grasp of its resourcing levels and is working to align these in a better way to demand, so it can provide an effective response at all times.

Crime has fallen in North Wales and there are fewer crimes per head of population than for England and Wales. However, victim satisfaction has declined, and is below that for England and Wales.

# The force in numbers

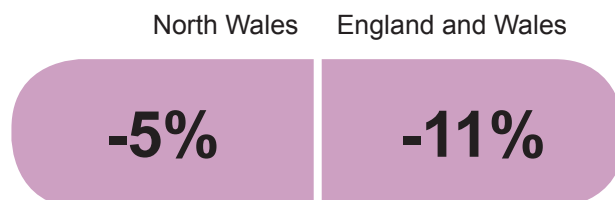
## Financial position

The force's savings requirement

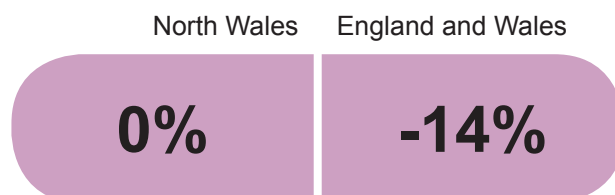


## Providing policing

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

North Wales

England and Wales

**£106.7****£117.7**

Workforce cost per head of population  
2013/14

North Wales

England and Wales

**£163.1****£168.1**

Change in recorded crime  
2010/11 – 2013/14

North Wales

England and Wales

**-12%****-14%**

Victim satisfaction 2013/14\*

North Wales

England and Wales

**80.1%****85.2%**

\*Confidence intervals:  $\pm 1.9\%$  for North Wales;  $\pm 0.2\%$  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 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 North Wales 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

North Wales Police has identified that it needs to save £17.9m 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 11 percent is considerably lower than the figure for England and Wales. HMIC considers that North Wales Police faces a moderate challenge as it attracts a higher level of local funding than many other forces, which means that central funding cuts have less impact on them, compared to other forces.

## The scale of the challenge

Along with the smaller savings requirement, North Wales has benefited from increases each year in the police element of local council tax, known as the precept. To some extent, this has offset the cuts in police grants from central government. In addition, the force has been holding comparatively high levels of both capital and revenue funding in its reserves. The force also has had greater scope to make savings than other forces because:

- it spends more per head of population than most other forces in England and Wales;
- it has a higher number of police officers and police staff per head of population than most other forces in England and Wales; and
- the cost of police officers and police staff per head of population is higher than most other forces in England and Wales.

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

For 2013/14 it has achieved its savings target of £2.9m. The force has clear plans in place to achieve all of the savings needed in 2014/15 of £4.3m and in 2015/16 of £3.5m.

## Outlook for 2016 and beyond

North Wales Police has made some predictions about future savings that will be required through to 2016/17, based on prudent assumptions about likely grant reductions, cost increases and precept increases. It has plans in place to make all expected savings required through to March 2016. The force's plans for 2016/17 and beyond are less well

developed, but there is an agreed timeline for developing and refining these plans and the force is anticipating that it will achieve slightly more savings than needed in 2016/17. However, there remain some uncertainties inherent in the financial planning assumptions, which may make the savings gap more difficult to bridge.

The force identifies that a key future risk would be changes to the funding formula through which the central government police grant is allocated among forces in England and Wales. The central funding allocation is adjusted through a procedure called ‘damping’<sup>1</sup> that means North Wales receives less than the police funding formula would otherwise provide. (The force estimates this equates to a £10m annual loss of grant, or 10 percent of the force’s overall funding, compared to the amount that which the force would have received if the funding formula allocation alone were applied). If there are moves to reduce this grant over time, to more closely fund forces according to the formula, this will have a significant impact on the force.

The force is taking a measured approach to future change, it recognises that it needs to look again at the current structure for policing in order to achieve future savings by making best use of its staff and managing demand. Having made the savings it needs so far with minimal staff reductions, the force has been able to take stock of how well the new operating model is working and reflect on how it can be improved in the future to achieve more savings. It is trialling a new structure in one area to assess whether it can improve the service and make better use of police time and resources before rolling it out across the whole force area.

## Summary

**Good**

- North Wales Police has faced a comparatively less difficult challenge than most forces from the spending cuts.
- It has clear plans in place to achieve all of the savings it needs to make through to 2016 and is starting to develop plans for further austerity beyond that.
- The force already has a strong track record of achieving the savings it has planned to make.
- The force is in a good financial position now but there are potential risks and uncertainty which may have an impact on its future funding.

<sup>1</sup> When the funding formula is allocated, each police force is assured a minimum percentage increase in grant each year. This is known as ‘the floor’. Those forces that get less than the minimum percentage based purely on the formula are topped up to the minimum percentage. In order to pay for this, any force receiving an increase based purely on the formula that is greater than the minimum percentage has its grant scaled back by a standard proportion. This process is commonly referred to as ‘floor damping’ or ‘damping’.

# 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 its 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.

## How the force provides policing

North Wales is a geographically large force area with a comparatively small population but has some unique characteristics as a coastal area and tourist destination, with dispersed rural communities, which make policing the area challenging. Its location means that it has natural links with Wales and the North West of England. It looks to other forces in both Wales and the North West for joint working.

Early in the spending review period the force changed the way it organised local policing, in response to the financial challenge. In 2011, North Wales Police moved from an area-based operating model to provide policing on a force-wide basis and realigned resources accordingly. However, it quickly recognised that this new structure was having an adverse impact on both performance and the workforce. The chief constable commissioned a review, which led to a redesigned localised policing model being introduced in order to resolve these issues. There are now three local policing areas supported by force-wide specialist staff.

This model was introduced in 2012 and improved efficiency and achieved savings. Police officer and staff reductions have been comparatively small and have enabled the force to increase the proportion of officers in frontline roles.

Following extensive work to analyse demand, the force recognises that there is now a requirement to review the model again in order to meet those demands. A new way of working is currently being developed in Flintshire, which it is anticipated will be rolled out across the force in a phased approach, where demand is being examined systematically and the police response designed as part of an end-to-end process; from the first point of call to the completion of the police involvement.

The force has not yet made any decisions about future structures or resourcing; the trial in one area is enabling the force to involve staff in designing the most effective way of working. The next phase will be to introduce the model in Wrexham where it will also draw in public protection and business support functions. Staff are extremely positive about this approach, which is giving the force a much clearer view on the structure it will need to respond to future demands.

## Collaboration

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

The force works across a complex landscape of partnerships, alliances and collaborations. Because of its location, North Wales Police finds that there are frequently more benefits from collaborating with other forces in the North West of England than there are with other Welsh forces or other public sector partners in North Wales. The force collaborates on firearms with Cheshire Constabulary: this has achieved savings as well as providing greater resilience and a better equipped service than North Wales could have afforded on its own.

The force is part of the all-Wales counter terrorism unit known as WECTU, this is a mature and well-established collaboration.

The force is part of the 'Minerva Niche' collaboration with the other forces across England and Wales. This means a common system for key force IT systems, for example intelligence and crime using Niche software. It provides operational benefits and further development of this should enable the force to develop greater efficiencies.

Collaboration working with local authority partners is limited to operational partnerships. A recent review of how local government should be organised in Wales has recommended that there should be fewer, larger local authorities across Wales. It is likely that this reorganisation will present opportunities for the force to achieve better joint working; however, it may delay the pace of progress in the short term.

In 2014/15 the force expects to spend 13 percent of its net revenue expenditure on collaboration, which is higher than the 11 percent figure for England and Wales. Collaboration is expected to contribute to 8 percent of the force's savings requirement, which is lower than the 10 percent figure for England and Wales. The force is planning to increase savings through collaboration in 2015/16 and beyond.

## Managing change

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

The force is continuing to undergo a comprehensive review process to identify further savings and improve efficiency. The force has adopted business improvement techniques to understand how individuals and functions work so that duplication can be removed and new more effective ways of working introduced. This work informs the force's cultural change

and service improvement. Its overall aims are to manage demand better, drive down costs and improve service provision. In total there are 22 work streams within the change programme.

The chief constable has commissioned a review of local policing services to consider options for change. This includes the number of districts required, the supervisory structure and ratios, and how the force uses its PCSOs. This review will take into consideration the outcomes of the new ways of working in Flintshire, including what can be achieved efficiently and effectively with fewer resources. This reinforces the priority the force places on ensuring that its operating model is not only affordable but fit for purpose.

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

- strategic alliances that are broader than collaboration;
- improved call management;
- changing the way local policing is provided;
- estate rationalisation; and
- improved procurement and contract re-negotiation.

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

- better alignment of resources to demand;
- changing the way local policing is provided;
- changing the way business support such as human resources and finance are provided;
- improving the way operational support is undertaken; and
- the use of predictive technology.

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

Communication processes are well established across the force. There are a wide variety of ways to find out what is happening including the information on the force intranet, live chats, managers' seminars, the chief constable's road show and the force newsletter.

As part of the 'Being Better' work stream of the force's change programme, the force has introduced a 'Strategy Mat' as a way of communicating the vision and involving staff at all levels in carrying out the strategic objectives. The Strategy Mat lists the force's six key

priorities; these have been given to every management team for discussion through its own chain of command. Each team is expected to consider and identify what it needs to do to contribute to achieving the six priorities. It provides a clear link between day-to-day work and the PCC's objectives. Strategy Mat has been viewed very positively by staff. They commented that it was one of the most effective tools they have been given. It is designed to ensure that everyone gets the same message.

North Wales Police is the current holder of the Welsh Corporate Health Award, and welfare support for staff is good. Staff are signposted to occupational health and other organisations and are able to access support as they need it. The force is undertaking a health and wellbeing review. Previously, there had been concern that managers were not dealing with absence issues effectively but this has been addressed. Absence through sickness is now being managed better.

The force carries out annual surveys of staff and the results are published on the force intranet. The force produces a 'you said, we did' response so that people can see how feedback has been used.

HMIC found that staff associations and staff themselves are broadly supportive of the changes taking place and are positive about the future for the force. Staff and officers spoke positively about the organisation and although they are mostly aware that further cuts are required, they recognise that the leadership team is committed to staff being actively engaged in designing the change rather than having change imposed on them.

## How is the force achieving the savings?

Because around 80 percent of a police budget (on average) is spent on staff costs, forces across England and Wales plan to achieve most of their savings by reducing the number of police officers, community support officers (PCSOs) and police staff employed. However, we do 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 for services such as cleaning. The force plans to make 40 percent of its savings from non-pay, which is higher than the 29 percent figure for England and Wales.

North Wales has been a very strong focus on non-pay costs and driving efficiencies to protect frontline policing. A significant saving has been made from the IT contract and support services reviews together with savings from estates.

The force plans to make 60 percent of its spending review savings requirement from its pay budget. This is a much smaller proportion than the figure for England and Wales.

North Wales Police has been able to maintain the overall size of its workforce. Although it plans to lose some police officer numbers and police staff numbers, the proportion is one of the lowest in England and Wales, with 5 percent and 1 percent reductions respectively from March 2010 to March 2015. Police officer numbers have been maintained at a higher level than originally anticipated because of an increase last year in the funding it received from local council tax. This enabled the force to create an extra 51 police officer posts. In addition the force has benefited from a Welsh Assembly Government grant, which has enabled it to recruit an extra 101 PCSOs to work on community activities. The force is currently considering a reduction in the total number of PCSOs as part of the operational policing review.

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.

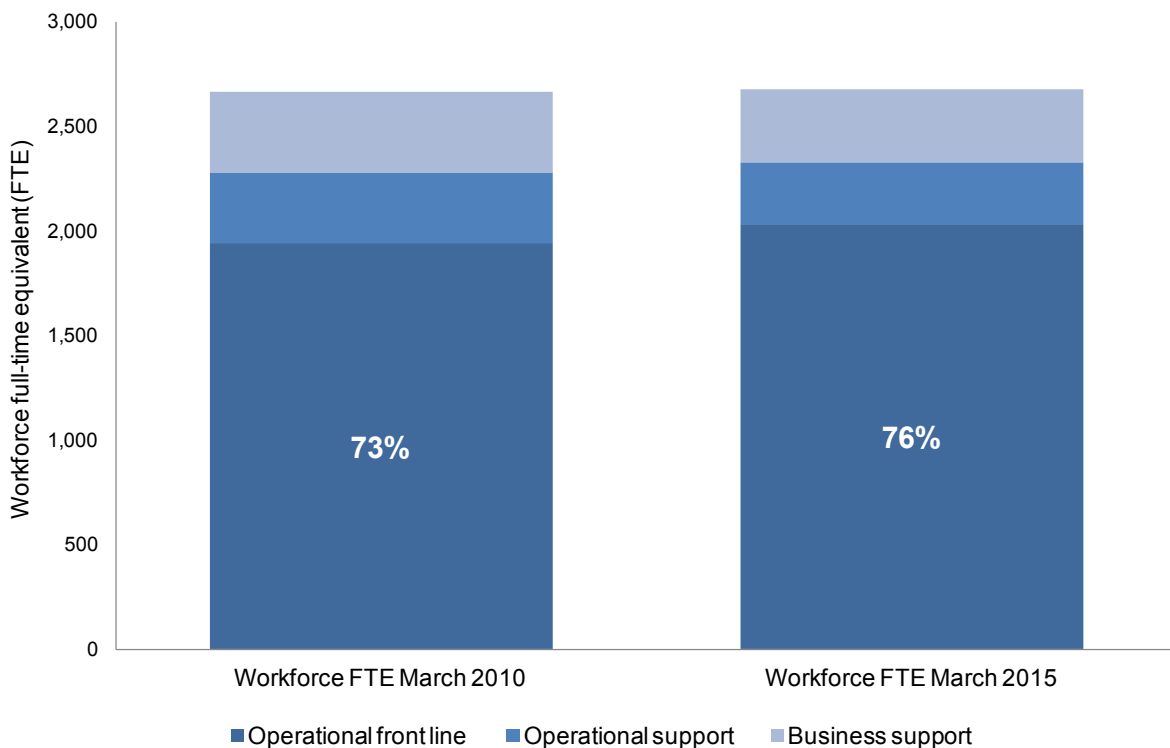
Please note, these figures are rounded.

	<b>31 March 2010 (baseline)</b>	<b>31 March 2015</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>Force change %</b>	<b>Change for England and Wales %</b>
Police officers	1,590	1,510	-80	-5%	-11%
Police staff	921	909	-12	-1%	-17%
PCSOs	157	261	105	67%	-22%
Total	2,667	2,680	13	0%	-14%
Specials	193	183	-10	-5%	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 North Wales 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.**

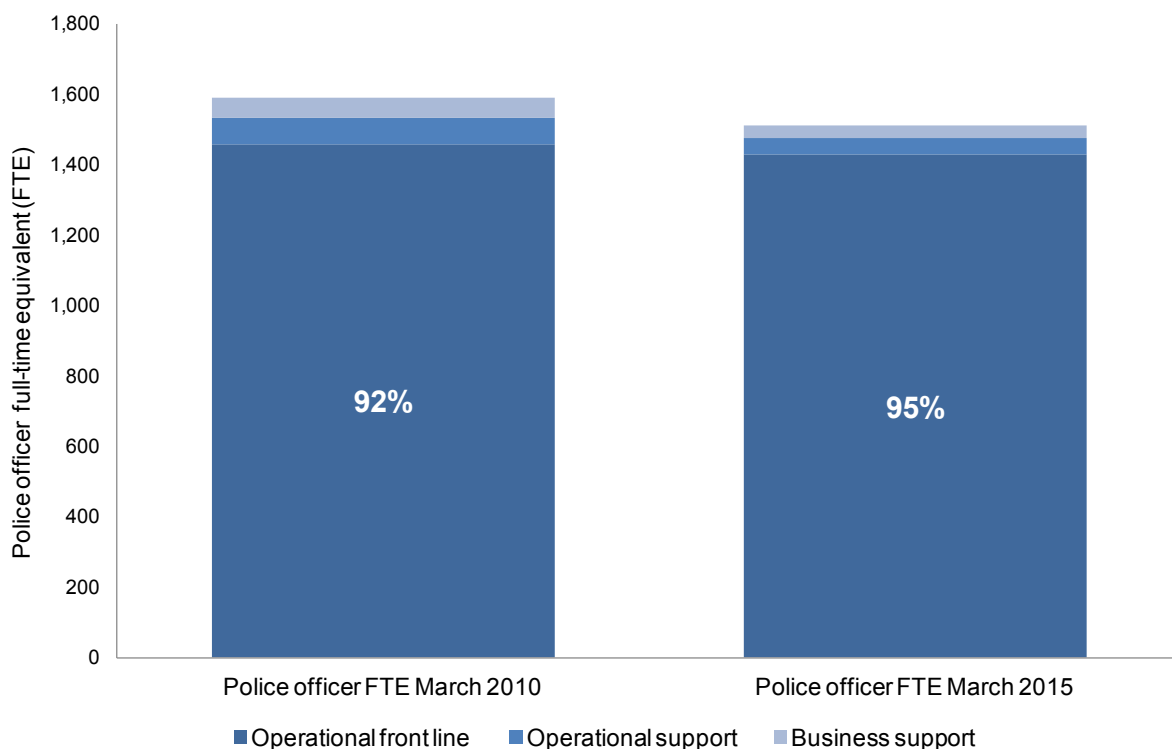
Unlike most other forces in England and Wales, North Wales Police has been able to put more staff on the front line. The number of officers, PCSOs and staff (i.e. of the force’s total workforce) working on the front line is projected to increase by 93 between March 2010 and March 2015 (from 1939 to 2032). This is mainly as a result of the additional PCSOs that the force has recruited using the grant from the Welsh Assembly Government.

Over the same period, the proportion of North Wales’s total workforce allocated to frontline roles is projected to increase from 73 percent to 76 percent. This compares with an overall increase across England and Wales from 74 percent to 78 percent.



The number of North Wales’s police officers in frontline roles is planned to reduce by 30 from 1,458 in March 2010 to 1,428 by March 2015, as the following chart shows. The proportion of officers remaining on the front line is projected to increase from 92 percent to 95 percent. This compares to an overall increase across England and Wales from 89 percent to 92 percent and shows North Wales Police is successfully protecting frontline 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**

- The force is developing a new way of working to make best use of its resources, which it is trialling in one area with a view to extending across the whole force if successful.
- North Wales Police is planning one of the smallest reductions in police officer numbers in England and Wales and has an increase in the number of PCSOs.
- The force has made 40 percent of its savings from non-pay costs, which has limited further the need to reduce the size of the workforce.
- There has been no overall reduction in staff, which has enabled North Wales to increase both the numbers and the proportion of staff on the front line.

# 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?

North Wales Police has carried out extensive work to gain a better understanding of the demand for its services. The force has undertaken detailed demand analysis, which involved a review of all 2,500 calls to the control room received in a 24-hour period. This analysis has revealed that only 50 percent of current calls received required some form of police response; 47 percent of all calls were categorised as either 'failure demand' or 'waste demand' that was created through either failure to resolve the issue at the earliest opportunity or where calls would be better directed to other agencies. The force is now working to find ways to reduce this waste and failure demand so that it can provide a better and quicker response to those calls needing a police response.

The force undertakes an annual assessment of demand as part of its annual planning process. The force risk management process sits alongside this and has been praised by external auditors for being a sound approach. There is a dedicated risk manager who owns the force risk register and scans for emerging risks, which are then discussed with relevant managers so actions are agreed to mitigate the risks.

The force recognised that it needed to better understand the totality of its demand in order to develop new ways of working, and structures that can respond and achieve the services within likely future budgets.

## How efficiently does the force allocate its resources?

Historically, North Wales Police had set a desired staffing level and also a critical staffing level, with the critical level being intended as the absolute minimum that could provide business continuity. However, the force found that this led to a tendency for managers and supervisors to work with staffing levels that too often approached critical level.

A centralised resource management unit (RMU) was established 18 months ago to deal with long-term planning and resourcing for critical incidents. This unit works closely with the senior management teams within each local policing area to ensure the efficient and effective use of resources. The force now ensures, on a daily basis, that the required staffing levels are in place to provide operational resilience.

The force has a good understanding of its resource levels and is able to see at a glance where and when resources are likely to be stretched too thinly. This has enabled it to accurately predict, for example, the impact of providing resources to Gwent Police to support the policing of the forthcoming NATO summit in Wales in September 2014.

The force daily tasking process maintains oversight of these resources across the force area, making decisions for the redeployment of resources, where necessary. On a dynamic basis, the force incident manager (FIM) can deploy resources across the force area to meet daily policing requirements.

A new way of working in Flintshire is providing an opportunity to examine specific areas of policing in some detail and identify the most effective allocation of resources needed to respond. The learning from this will inform future resourcing across the force.

The force has identified that providing a response out of office hours to issues that would normally be dealt with by local council social services or health services adds a significant pressure on demand for police resources. The force is working with other organisations at a strategic level to resolve matters, but concerns remain that there is a possibility that the situation will worsen as those organisations start to feel the impact of financial and resource constraints.

North Wales Police is working closely with Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board and the Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust (WAST) in finding ways to manage demand better. This has already resulted in a reduction in the number of individuals suffering from mental health issues being detained in custody by police.

## 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.

Preventing crime is core business for the force; putting prevention first in all activity is included on the Strategy Mat as a key priority for all teams to address. The emphasis placed on prevention is well understood by staff and reflected in staff cultural surveys. Good examples of prevention activity were provided by staff, including: school liaison officers; thematic crime reduction teams, including Arson and Anti-Social Behaviour; community safety officers; neighbourhood policing team investment; partnership work with high-demand families; and regional Community Safety Partnership (CSP) activity.

## Calls for service

HMIC examined whether North Wales 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, North Wales had maintained the same target response times of 20 minutes for calls classed as ‘emergency’ (also known as Grade 1). The force does not keep information on attendance at calls classed as ‘priority’ (also known as grade 2).

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

Calls for service	2010/11	2013/14
Percentage of urban emergency calls on target	93.0	93.6

Over the spending review, attendance for emergency calls has broadly remained the same.

## 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 uniform 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 North Wales area.

In 2014, North Wales Police allocated 66 percent of its police officers to visible roles. This is 3.1 percentage points higher than the number allocated in 2010, and is higher 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, North Wales Police force allocated 71 percent to visible roles. This is 5.0 percentage points higher than it allocated in 2010, and again considerably higher 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 North Wales, 12 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 North Wales said they felt safe from crime where they lived, compared to 84 percent of respondents in England and Wales. Finally, 6 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), North Wales Police reduced recorded crime (excluding fraud) by 12 percent, compared with 14 percent in England and Wales. Over this period, victim-based crime (crimes where there is a direct victim – an individual, a group, or an organisation) reduced by 9 percent, compared with 14 percent in England and Wales.

Looking just at the last 12 months, recorded crime (excluding fraud) fell by 3 percent, which is a greater reduction than the 1 percent for England and Wales.

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.

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<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.

The table below shows crime and anti-social behaviour rates in North Wales (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	47.2	54.3
Sexual offences	1.3	1.1
Burglary	6.6	7.8
Violence against the person	12.0	11.1
ASB incidents	35.9	37.2

It is important that crimes are investigated effectively and the perpetrator brought to justice. When sufficient evidence is available to identify who has committed a crime, it can be described as detected. North Wales Police's detection rate (for crimes excluding fraud) for the 12 months to March 2014 was 30 percent. This is higher than the England and Wales's sanction detection rate of 26 percent.

We have chosen these types of crime to give an indication of offending levels in the North Wales 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](http://www.hmic.gov.uk/crime-and-policing-comparator).

### Victim satisfaction surveys

An important measure of the impact of changes is how satisfied victims are with the overall service they receive when they seek police assistance.

In the 12 months to March 2014, 80.1 ( $\pm$  1.9 percent) percent of victims were satisfied with the overall service provided by North Wales Police. This is lower than the England and Wales figure of 85.2 ( $\pm$  0.2 percent).

## Changes to how the public can access services

Forces are exploring different ways in which the public can access policing services. Like other forces, North Wales Police is making use of the internet and social media to communicate with the public and developing different methods for the public to contact the police including, for example, online crime reporting.

Over the spending review the force plans to reduce the number of police stations from 34 to 28. The number of front counters are planned to reduce from 17 to eight, however it will open six shared service points with local authority partners where the public can access police services.

The force also plans to hold 'Have your say' meetings in each neighbourhood to provide an opportunity for communities to raise issues of concern.

### Summary

**Good**

- The force has carried out a comprehensive analysis of demand for policing based on calls into the control room. This has shown that calls on police time could be significantly reduced if demand was managed better.
- It is now working to identify ways in which it can make better use of resources by reducing unnecessary demand.
- The force has a good grasp of its resourcing levels and is working to better align this to demand to ensure that it can provide an effective response at all times.
- Crime has continued to fall in North Wales and there are fewer crimes per head of population than the rate for England and Wales. However, victim satisfaction with the police has declined.



# 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 achievement of value for money is inadequate because it is considerably lower than is expected.