



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

Responding to austerity

South Wales Police

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How well does the force provide value for money?

Overall judgment

South Wales Police has made excellent progress as it responds to the spending review challenge, approaching it with rigour and innovation. This means the force is well placed to face future challenges.

Good

Summary

The force has plans in place to achieve all the necessary savings over the spending review. It is also developing plans to achieve further anticipated savings beyond 2016.

It has reorganised the way it is structured and has managed to make the savings with one of the smallest reductions in the workforce in England and Wales. Having taken some early steps to move to new structures for the provision of policing it has now moved to a period of consolidation and refinement through a comprehensive programme of continuous improvement.

Despite the challenges of the spending review the force has been able to improve performance, in particular for increased victim satisfaction. The force is also taking opportunities to collaborate with others; and is progressive and innovative in a number of areas, creating an environment that will yield additional opportunities.

HMIC considers that South Wales Police has met the requirements of the spending review, while protecting the front line, maintaining a focus on effective policing and keeping its communities safe.

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

Good

South Wales Police already had a strong track record of achieving the savings it had planned to make and indeed has made extra savings each year.

Plans are in place to achieve all of the savings needed this year and are well developed for 2015/16.

Financial management is a strength in South Wales Police.

The force has made good use of external income, for example, in partnership with the police and crime commissioner, has gained £4.5m in grants from the police innovation fund. This includes £3.3m for 'Project Fusion'.

South Wales continues to plan for 2016 and beyond through its continuous improvement programme and is well placed to meet future challenges.

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

Outstanding

The force restructured early in the spending review process and has made most of the savings it needed to make with one of the smallest reductions in the workforce of all forces in England and Wales.

It developed an effective approach to managing change and has a mature and well-led process of continuous improvement.

It works well in collaboration with other Welsh forces but has not collaborated as extensively, or saved as much through collaboration, as other forces.

The proportion of workforce reductions planned is considerably smaller than the figure for England and Wales.

The force is now developing a plan to focus on identifying savings from non-pay costs.

To what extent is the force efficient?

Good

The force has a good understanding of the scale and nature of the demands for policing in South Wales.

It has reviewed in detail the main areas of demand, has reduced wasted effort and allocated resources to respond most effectively to demand.

It has made particular progress in the way it deals with calls from the public and improved how it manages the police response. It makes good use of IT to improve the efficiency of policing.

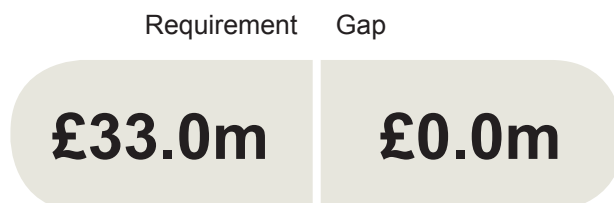
Recorded crime has reduced over the spending review period. Victim satisfaction has also increased over the last 12 months and is higher than the figure for England and Wales.

The force in numbers



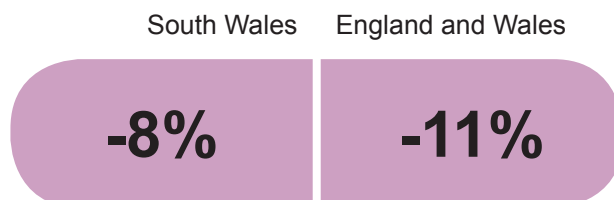
Financial position

The force's savings requirement

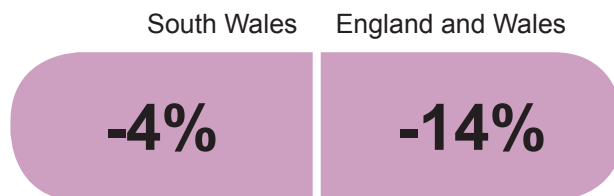


Providing policing

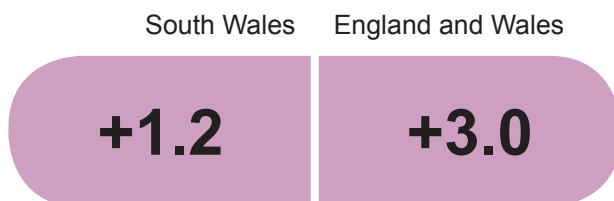
Planned change in police officer numbers 2010/11 – 2014/15



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

South Wales

England and Wales

£117.5

£117.7

Workforce cost per head of population
2013/14

South Wales

England and Wales

£172.4

£168.1

Change in recorded crime
2010/11 – 2013/14

South Wales

England and Wales

-12%

-14%

Victim satisfaction 2013/14*

South Wales

England and Wales

89.7%

85.2%

*Confidence intervals: $\pm 0.9\%$ for South 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 providing 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 South 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 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

South Wales Police has identified that it needs to save £33.0m over the four years of the spending review (between March 2011 and March 2015).

As a proportion of its overall budget, this savings requirement of 11 percent is lower than the 18 percent figure for England and Wales, HMIC considers that South Wales Police faces a moderate challenge.

The scale of the challenge

Although it faces a smaller savings requirement than the figure for England and Wales, South Wales Police face a number of challenges. As the force for the capital city of Wales it faces a high level of demand for its services, has to deal with complex metropolitan crime issues and is the focus for national events. South Wales does not receive any additional funding for these functions. In addition, central government funding for the force is adjusted through a mechanism called 'damping'¹ that means that the force receives less than the police funding formula would otherwise provide. (The force estimates this equates to a £9m annual loss of grant compared to that which the force would have received if the funding formula allocation alone were applied.)

The reserves held by the police and crime commissioner (PCC) are comparatively low and so savings must come from efficiencies and reducing the cost base. However, there are opportunities for the force to reduce its costs in line with other forces as:

- it has a higher number of police officers per head of population than most other forces in England and Wales;
- the cost of workforce (police officers, police staff and PCSOs) per head of population is higher than for most other forces in England and Wales.

¹ 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'.

Savings plans for 2014/15 and 2015/16

The force needs to make savings of £5.3m in 2014/15 and has firm plans to do so. In 2015/16 it has a savings requirement of a further £14.9m. It currently has plans in place that will achieve £12.1m of these savings and has ongoing work to identify the remainder. From our inspection, HMIC is confident the force will meet its saving requirement in 2015/16 without the use of reserves, although this is an option if necessary.

Outlook for 2016 and beyond

The force has already started to predict the savings it will need for 2016 and beyond, and has started to develop plans to make further savings. The force is clear on the future financial risks it faces, including any changes to the funding formula, and lower than predicted precept increases. The force has clear and robust financial management fully integrated into operational policing and this strength gives confidence that the force is well placed to meet any further funding cuts.

The plans are embryonic and lack detail at the present time and there is a potential deficit of over £8m still to be found. However, the force is developing work to close this gap and has identified a number of areas where further savings can be achieved. Examples include potential savings of £3m from a review of local policing and £2m from additional collaboration opportunities.

The force has also tried wherever possible to secure additional income. The force has made good use of external income, for example, in partnership with the PCC, has gained £4.5m in grants from the police innovation fund. This includes £3.3m for Project Fusion. This is to be used to implement a variety of new initiatives, which, when combined with the partnership funding provided by the PCC, provides a significant fund to work with partners to improve services and meet the PCC's priorities in the police and crime reduction plan.

Summary



Good

- South Wales Police already has a strong track record of achieving the savings it has planned to make and, indeed, has made extra savings each year.
- Plans are in place to achieve all of the savings needed in 2014/15 and most of the savings necessary for 2015/16.
- The force is progressing plans for 2016 and beyond with a number of areas already identified for achieving further savings,
- Financial management is a strength in South Wales Police.
- The force has made good use of external income, including £3.3m in grants from the police innovation fund for Project Fusion.

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 through its change programme.

How the force provides policing

South Wales Police faces some key challenges. Although the force area covers only ten percent of the landmass of Wales, it provides policing services to 42 percent of the population – around 1.3 million people. The area is diverse, combining urban and rural areas, covering seven county boroughs that include 63 of the 100 most deprived communities in Wales. It is also home to Wales' two largest cities, Swansea and Cardiff – the Welsh capital.

The scale and complexity of incidents routinely dealt with by the force and the additional issues involved in policing a capital city make it unique within Wales.

Early on in the process of dealing with grant reductions, the force restructured in order to operate with fewer police officers. Local policing is now provided through four basic command units (BCUs) each covering a quarter of the force area. There are a total of 19 local policing units, which is a significant reduction from the previous 30. The force has also centralised all of its call handling and control room functions from seven separate control rooms into one single public service centre.

This model is both affordable and sustainable for the foreseeable future. For this model to work effectively the force has estimated it needs at least 2,800 officers and the savings plans enable it to afford this number. The chief constable and PCC share the view that this is an absolute minimum and they plan to find additional savings elsewhere to move back towards an establishment of 3,000 officers to provide more resilience.

Collaboration

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

Collaboration is a key part of the change programme in South Wales Police. Each work stream will consider how it might use collaboration to effect change. The force was an early adopter of collaboration with other Welsh forces and is engaged in a number of effective collaborations, some with all four forces in Wales but the majority with Gwent Police and Dyfed-Powys Police.

The joint firearms alliance with Gwent and Dyfed-Powys Police has been recently evaluated and early indications are that the alliance has brought both an improved service and cost savings for South Wales Police. The force is now looking actively to local authorities and other partners for further opportunities to join up and operate more efficiently. For example, the force is working on a plan that will enable the two fire services that cover South Wales to operate from the force's public service centre. It is also exploring a number of smaller areas for collaboration with other police forces, including: firearms licensing, serious road collisions investigation, and central ticket office functions.

In 2014/15 the force will spend 8 percent of its net revenue expenditure on collaboration, which is lower than the 11 percent figure for England and Wales. Collaboration contributed to 4 percent of the force's savings requirement, which is again less 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 that can help maintain or improve the service they offer to the public and help prepare for future funding reductions.

The force is effective in how it manages change. It has a clear and well-led programme of change and continuous improvement. This has become a mature and established approach where change is seen as a continuous process, not an event. The force has a four-year rolling work programme through which it has systematically reviewed most areas of work and uses 'lean' methodology.

The work programmes are based on focusing on the areas that can bring the greatest benefits. The reviews follow a consistent process that provides a full understanding of the area being examined, how it can be changed to make savings as well as providing policing more effectively. Recent reviews include, for example, prisoner processing, which has led to the new prisoner handling strategy, with the provision of new custody suites effectively located across the force area. It is now working on a number of change programme workstreams to identify where further gains can be made through continuous improvement, concentrating on streamlining the way it works to drive out any unnecessary waste.

Changes to the police operating model were made early in the spending review period and have been consolidated. The force reduced the size of the workforce through creating fewer and larger borough command units. The plans to continue to reduce the staffing numbers to the required levels are achievable through targeted voluntary redundancy, redeployment and managing recruitment. The force has compared itself to other forces in terms of costs and are developing plans to reduce costs in line with other forces. The ratio of managers to police staff is high compared to the management ratio for police officers. To deal with

this, the force is looking to join up support departments to reduce the number of managers needed, for example, it plans to consolidate the separate helpdesks for human resources, IT and estates into one single unit.

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

- better alignment of resources to demand;
- changing the way business support such as human resources and finance are provided;
- improving call management;
- improving procurement and contract re-negotiation; and
- changing the way local policing is provided.

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 business support such as human resources and finance are provided;
- estate rationalisation;
- collaboration with other forces; and
- improving procurement and re-negotiating contracts.

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

HMIC found that morale within the force is generally good, with staff concerns about change being concentrated on national rather than local issues. There remains a considerable amount of goodwill towards the force and its leadership, and a desire to provide effective policing to the communities of South Wales.

The force has moved away from set piece chief officer briefings to staff. These were widely undertaken in the earlier stages of implementing change when there was more uncertainty and large-scale change. The force sees itself as in a period of consolidation, and communication is being pared back to cascade briefings through senior managers. We found that staff valued this approach much less. Chief officers are aware that there is a need to provide better communications to keep staff informed and involved in the changes that are happening and a new initiative to improve communications is planned throughout 2014.

Unions and staff associations are engaged well in the change process with effective and regular lines of communication with chief officers.

The force operates a health management, attendance and wellbeing board that meets quarterly with staff associations and other representatives. This analyses attendance issues as well as any wellbeing issues identified through staff groups.

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 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 for services for example cleaning. The force plans to make 15 percent of its savings from non-pay, which is lower than the 29 percent figure for England and Wales.

South Wales Police recognises there are more opportunities to focus on its non-pay costs to drive further savings. For example, the force owns and occupies a large number of sites and buildings (in excess of 100 sites), which have suffered from a lack of investment. Decisions are now being made about property and the current five-year property improvement programme is being stretched to take place over ten years instead, to try to achieve savings.

A large part of non-pay costs come from purchasing. South Wales Police has joined forces with Gwent Police and Dyfed-Powys Police to form a three-force procurement arrangement so that by buying the same goods and services together they can save money. The force has also achieved savings by reducing the size its vehicle fleet by 20 percent.

As with other forces most of the savings comes from reducing the workforce. South Wales Police made an early start on this in 2010 when it slowed its recruitment of new police officers and reduced the number of police staff. The force plans to make 85 percent of its spending review savings requirement from its pay budget. This is a higher proportion than the figure for England and Wales.

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.

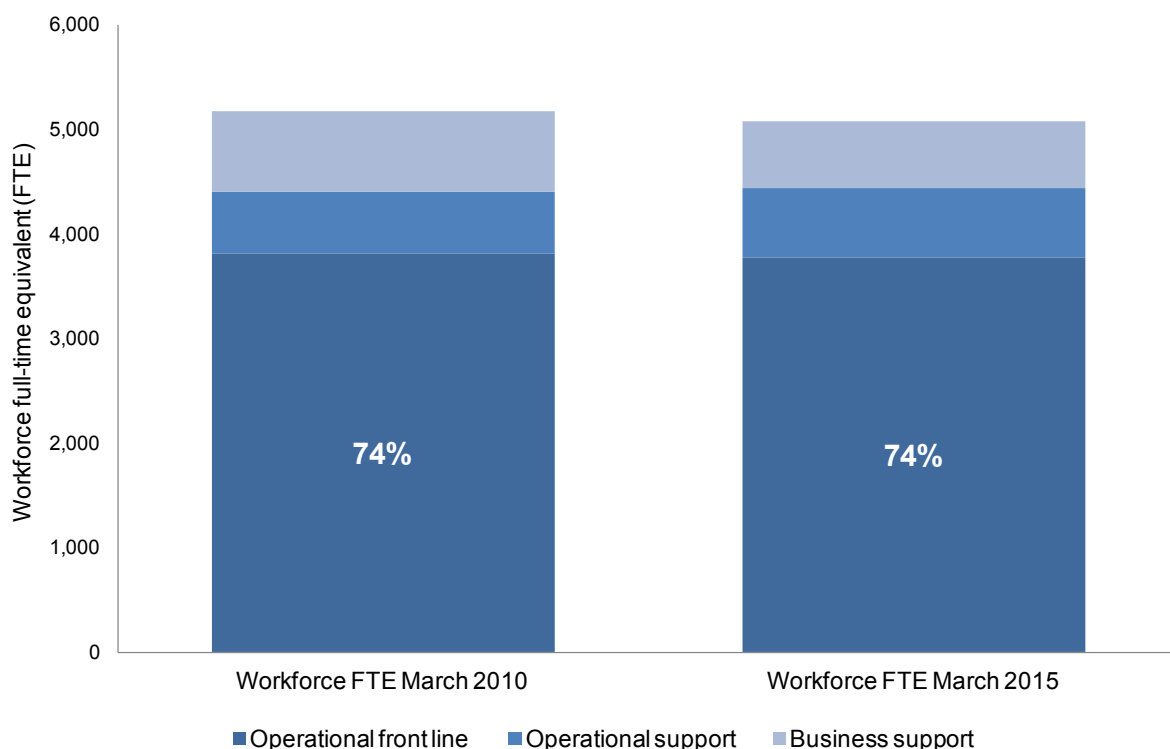
	31 March 2010 (baseline)	31 March 2015	Change	Force change %	Change for England and Wales %
Police officers	3,148	2,900	-248	-8%	-11%
Police staff	1,810	1,771	-39	-2%	-17%
PCSOs	335	406	71	21%	-22%
Total	5,293	5,077	-216	-4%	-14%
Specials	248	129	-119	-48%	44%

Over the spending review South Wales plans to lose a considerably lower proportion of its staff than the figure for England and Wales. While a smaller proportion of police officers are planned to be lost, with the benefit of additional funding from the Welsh Government, the number of PCSOs will increase.

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 South Wales Police.



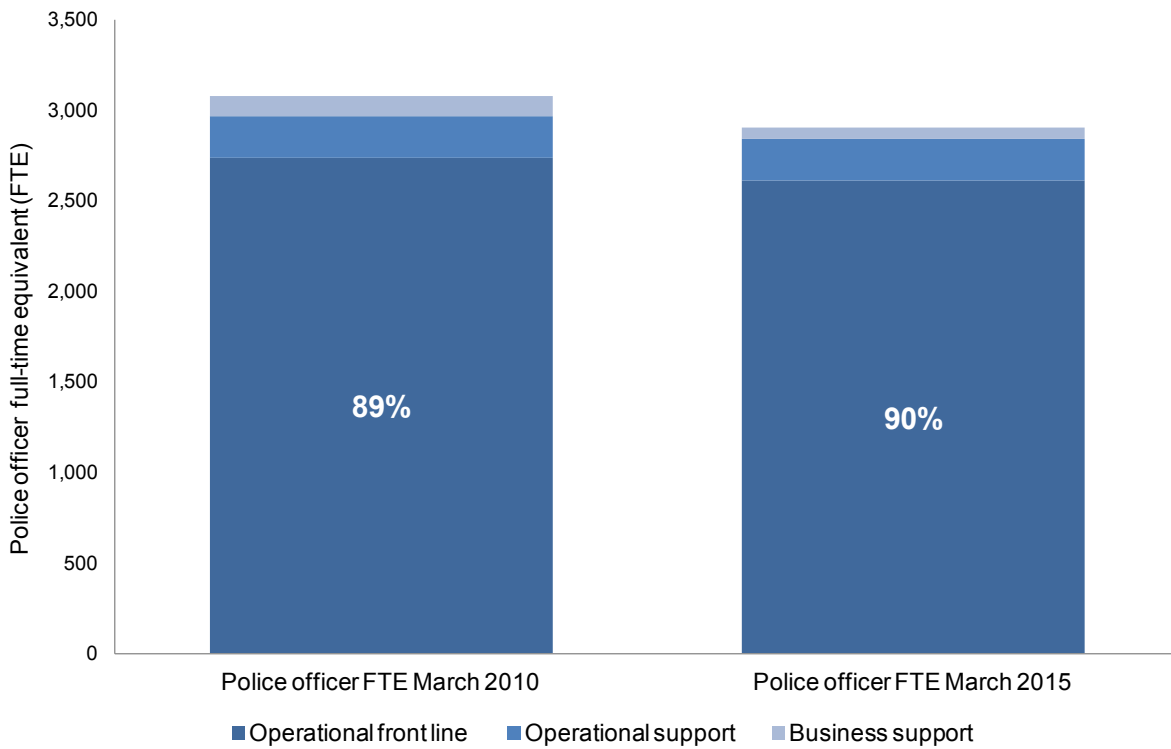
Note: England and Wales reports an increase in the proportion of workforce on the front line from 74 percent in March 2010 to 78 percent in March 2015.

The number of officers, PCSOs and staff (i.e. of the total workforce on the operational frontline) working on South Wales front line is projected to decrease by 32 between March 2010 and March 2015 (from 3,812 to 3,780).

Over the same period, the proportion of South Wales’s total workforce allocated to frontline roles is projected to remain at 74 percent between March 2010 and March 2015. This compares with an overall increase across England and Wales from 74 percent to 78 percent.

The number of South Wales’ police officers in frontline roles is planned to reduce by five percent from 2,735 in March 2010 to 2,610 by March 2015, as the following chart shows. Although reducing in overall numbers, the proportion of those remaining on the front line is projected to increase from 89 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 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



Outstanding

- The force restructured early on in the spending review process and has successfully made most of the savings it needed to make with one of the smallest reductions in its workforce of all forces in England and Wales.
- The force has developed an effective approach to managing change and there is a mature and well-led process of continuous improvement.
- The force works well in collaboration with other Welsh forces but has not collaborated as extensively, nor saved as much through collaboration, as other forces.
- The force is now developing plans to focus on identifying savings from non-pay costs.
- Over the spending review South Wales plans to lose a considerably lower proportion of its staff than the figure for England and Wales.

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?

South Wales Police has a good understanding of its demand. It has been regularly reviewing demand and resource planning for a number of years. Over that time its understanding of demand has improved and functional reviews, such as, of the public service centre, have improved the efficiency of response, and reduced resource requirements.

Three years ago the force assessed that it needed 3,000 officers to enable it to function effectively. However, because of the work the force has done to improve efficiency and effectiveness, it has been able to lower this baseline number of officers to 2,800. While the force has managed to reduce its officer numbers to 2,800, the force recognises that these numbers will need to rise to deal with new and emerging threats, such as cyber-crime. The force requires a two percent resilience to cope with peaks in demand to support its national functions and specific large-scale events such as policing premiership football matches. The force must also play its part in the forthcoming NATO conference in September 2014.

How efficiently does the force allocate its resources?

The force's continuous improvement programme provides a focus to inform resourcing decisions, ensuring staffing levels and ways of working are aligned to demand and are able to make savings as well as improve service provision.

During the previous reform programme the force reviewed resources and shift patterns for response, neighbourhood and divisional CID functions. Crime volume, call data, demands related to the night time economy and prisoner flows were analysed and resources aligned to meet that demand. This led to the decision to reduce the number of local policing units from 30 to 19. Each local policing unit has its own response and neighbourhood resources, commanded by a local policing inspector. The resourcing models for response, neighbourhoods and divisional CID are due to be reviewed again to ensure that they are still appropriate.

In some areas, for example, the all Wales counter terrorism unit (WECTU) and the southern Wales response to Serious and Organised Crime (Tarian); the same level of scrutiny has not necessarily been applied in understanding demand and resource allocation. The force

recognises this, and it is clear there is now greater rigour being applied across collaborative functions. Several examples were provided, including a review of the approach to targeting serious and organised crime groups and a recent review of the joint firearms collaboration between South Wales Police, Gwent and Dyfed-Powys. This new focus will provide additional efficiency and savings while maintaining effectiveness.

In 2010, a review of the demand through telephone calls into the control rooms led to the creation of a single centralised public service centre (PSC) to improve call handling from the public and to organise the police response more effectively to calls. The centralisation of the PSC also led to revised shift patterns and a reduction in the number of call handlers and dispatchers. At the time of our inspection another review was being done to explore whether further efficiencies could be made in the way the PSC operates.

Further work is being carried out to understand and reduce the number of repeat callers to the PSC. This will also look at how to encourage callers to switch to different channels of communication with the police that may be more appropriate; including social media, Web Chat (where the public will be able to interact with a call handler over the internet) and any other potential online solutions.

As a result of a review of prisoner processing, the force identified opportunities to reduce the time officers were spending taking detainees across the force area to custody facilities. The strategy is to provide four strategically placed new custody centres across the force, each combined with a prisoner investigation hub. Cardiff and Swansea centres are operational and Bridgend and Merthyr are due to be operational by July 2014. A review of the investigative hubs was being done at the time of the HMIC inspection.

The force has several other initiatives to manage and reduce demand. These include work on reducing the impact of incidents involving individuals who are suffering from mental health conditions. Dealing effectively with people with mental health problems can be very time consuming. Detaining people with mental health problems can have a deleterious effect on their well-being. Getting the best service for the individuals concerned requires all of the relevant agencies to work effectively together.

The force is at the forefront of making effective use of new technology. It has been providing officers out in the area with mobile access to police databases for a number of years. Having already issued officers with handheld mobile data devices, the force monitors usage of the devices to understand what functions are being performed remotely and by whom. The data are discussed at monthly management meetings. However, there has been a reduction in usage by staff, and the current mobile device provision may be starting to become outdated. This has helped drive forward work on new mobile data provision within the FUSION project, which will see the replacement of the current devices within the next 12 months. It is anticipated that the increased functionality of the new devices will reduce

demand on the PSC. It will also increase visible patrol time by enabling officers to carry out more administrative functions from their vehicles or from a shared office base out in the local areas. This facility allows police officers to remain on duty in communities by removing the need to return to police stations as often.

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.

Calls for service

HMIC examined whether South Wales Police 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, South Wales had maintained the same target response times of 15 minutes for calls classed as ‘emergency’ (also known as grade 1) 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 force’s performance in 2010/11 to 2013/14.

Calls for service	2010/11	2013/14
Percentage of emergency calls on target	78.4	72.1
Percentage of priority calls on target	50.3	66.9

Over the spending review the force’s performance for attendance at emergency calls within target has declined and for priority calls improved.

Visibility

The work done by police officers and staff in visible roles (such as officers who respond to 999 calls, deal with serious road traffic collisions or patrol in neighbourhoods) represents only a part of the policing picture. Chief constables need to allocate resources to many other functions in order to protect the public, such as counter terrorism, serious and organised crime, and child protection (to name just three).

That being said, research shows that the public value seeing visible police officers on patrol in the streets, and that those who see police in uniform at least once a week are more likely to have confidence in their local force. HMIC therefore examined how far the changes being implemented by the force had affected the visibility of the police in the South Wales area.

In 2014, South Wales Police allocated 55 percent of its police officers to visible roles. This is 5.8 percentage points lower than the number allocated in 2010 and is broadly in line with the figure of 56 percent for England and Wales.

Police visibility is further enhanced by PCSOs, who principally support community policing. Looking at the proportion of police officers and PCSOs, South Wales allocated 61 percent of these staff to visible roles. This is 3.5 percentage points lower than it allocated in 2010, but is 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 South Wales, 20 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, 78 percent of respondents in South Wales said they felt safe from crime where they lived, compared to 84 percent of respondents in England and Wales. Finally, 10 percent said they felt safer from crime than they did two years ago, compared to 9 percent of respondents in England and Wales.

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.

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), South Wales force reduced recorded crime (excluding fraud) by 12 percent, compared with 14 percent in England and Wales. Over this period, victim-based crime (that is, crimes where there is a direct victim – an individual, a group, or an organisation) reduced by 10 percent, compared with 14 percent in England and Wales.

Looking just at the last 12 months, recorded crime (excluding fraud) fell by 2 percent in South Wales compared with a reduction of 1 percent across England and Wales.

By looking at how many crimes occur per head of population, we can get 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 South 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)	63.7	61.1
Victim-based crime	55.7	54.3
Sexual offences	1.1	1.1
Burglary	6.6	7.8
Violence against the person	11.8	11.1
ASB incidents	32.7	37.2

It is important that crimes are effectively investigated and the perpetrator brought to justice. When sufficient evidence is available to identify who has committed a crime, it can be described as detected. South Wales Police’s detection rate (for crimes excluding fraud) for the 12 months to March 2014 was 33 percent. This is higher than the detection rate for England and Wales of 26 percent.

We have chosen these types of crime to give an indication of offending levels in the South 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.

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, 89.7 percent (± 0.9 percent) of victims were satisfied with the overall service provided by the South Wales force. This is higher than the 85.2 percent (± 0.2 percent) figure for England and Wales.

Changes to how the public can access services

Over the spending review period the force plans to reduce the number of police stations from 77 to 62 and front counters from 42 to 8. At the same time the force continues to explore different ways in which the public can access policing services, including online, through the use of social media and by maintaining its strong presence in the heart of its communities.

Summary



Good

- The force has a good understanding of the scale and nature of the demands for policing in South Wales.
- It has reviewed in detail the main areas of demand and has reduced wasted effort and allocated resources to respond effectively to demand.
- It has made particular progress in the way it deals with calls from the public and improved how it manages the police response.
- It makes good use of IT to improve the efficiency of policing.
- This force has made one of the smallest planned reductions in the number of workforce over the spending review period
- Recorded crime has reduced over the spending review period. Victim satisfaction has also increased over the last 12 months and is higher than the figure for England and Wales in the 12 months to March 2014.

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.