



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

Responding to austerity

Staffordshire Police

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How well does the force provide value for money?

Overall judgment

HMIC commends Staffordshire Police on providing outstanding value for money. The force has reduced its spending considerably and at the same time continued to do an excellent job in fighting crime and keeping its communities safe. It is developing ambitious and innovative plans to become even more efficient and effective.

Outstanding

Summary

Staffordshire Police has made excellent progress. It has a secure financial position for the short and medium term. It has already made all of the savings it needs for the whole spending review a year ahead of schedule, and it has also found all of the savings it needs for 2015/16.

The force demonstrates a clear focus on value for money through low workforce costs and a continual drive for improving satisfaction even further despite having the highest level of satisfaction in England and Wales. Officers and staff are developed to achieve excellence and are motivated to provide the best service they can, taking opportunities to make it even more efficient. While finance is an important factor, this is clearly not the only driver in the way the force serves communities.

Through strong financial management and good leadership the force is now in a position to start developing the detail around its longer-term plans through to 2020 to achieve even more savings. This includes the police and crime commissioner's innovative and ambitious plans for wider public sector reform in Staffordshire.

HMIC is impressed that, despite the force having reduced its police officer strength by 23 percent since 2010, it has worked creatively and tirelessly to maintain a strong focus on improving service quality and putting the victim at the centre of policing. Crime has reduced, and victim satisfaction is one of the highest in England and Wales. The force makes good use of local partnerships to improve services and protect its communities. Plans for greater joint working in the future demonstrate that this work is set to improve even more.

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

Outstanding

Staffordshire Police is in a strong financial position to meet both its short and medium-term challenges.

It has overachieved on savings and as a result has balanced its budget for 2014/15 and 2015/16. It has detailed financial plans until 2019/20.

The force has maintained a strong focus on effective service provision while making these considerable savings.

Future plans have been identified and are in the process of being explored in further detail. These include continued efficiency savings internally and innovative and ambitious plans for wider public sector reform for providing community safety across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

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

Outstanding

The force changed the way it provides policing early in the spending review.

The force is developing plans for collaboration with the local public sector and the private sector to achieve a considerable proportion of future savings.

The management of change is intelligent and well led. Staff have a good understanding of the rationale for the changes and are engaged in developing the future plans.

Despite one of the biggest reductions in police officer numbers, the force has increased the proportion of officers at the front line. It has also successfully increased the size of its special constabulary by 70 percent and is making effective use of volunteers.

To what extent is the force efficient?

Good

The force has a sophisticated understanding of demand which is reviewed regularly and used to inform decisions on how resources are allocated.

The force has identified that technology needs to improve and is developing plans to use IT to increase productivity.

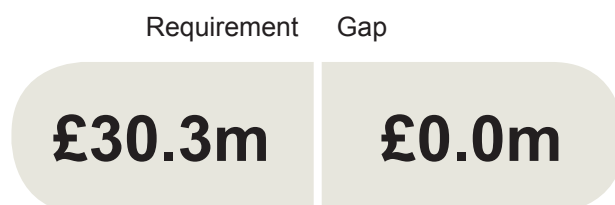
Partnerships and joint working are used to improve the service to the public and make best use of officer time.

Crime has fallen over the spending review period at a greater rate than elsewhere, although there has been a slight increase in the last 12 months. The force has continued to maintain a high level of victim satisfaction across England and Wales and is working to improve it further.

The force in numbers

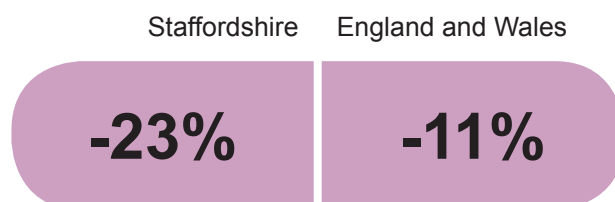
Financial position

The force's savings requirement

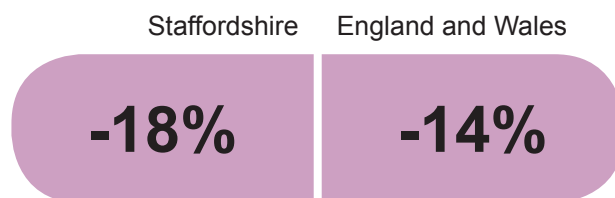


Providing policing

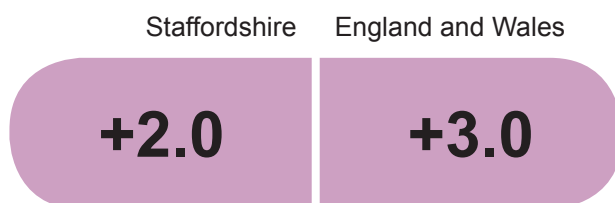
Planned change in police officer numbers 2010/11 – 2014/15



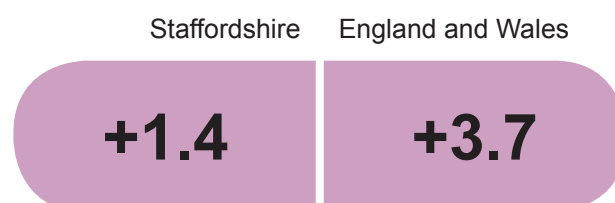
Planned change in total workforce numbers 2010/11 – 2014/15



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

Staffordshire

England and Wales

£89.3**£117.7**

Workforce cost per head of population
2013/14

Staffordshire

England and Wales

£130.8**£168.1**

Change in recorded crime
2010/11 – 2013/14

Staffordshire

England and Wales

-15%**-14%**

Victim satisfaction 2013/14*

Staffordshire

England and Wales

89.9%**85.2%**

*Confidence intervals: $\pm 1.6\%$ for Staffordshire; $\pm 0.2\%$ 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 2014, 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 Staffordshire 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

Staffordshire Police has identified that it needs to save £30.3m 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 15 percent is lower than the 18 percent figure for England and Wales. Additional funding has recently been provided by the police and crime commissioner to enable the force to support projects in the community, and this has reduced the level of savings required.

The scale of the challenge

HMIC considers that Staffordshire faces a moderate challenge. However, as it is already a low-spending force that receives comparatively less central funding, it must work harder to find further savings. This is because it:

- has fewer police officers per head of population than most forces;
- spends less on police officers and staff when compared to most other forces; and
- has fewer PCSOs per head of population than most forces.

Savings plans for 2014/15 and 2015/16

The force is in a strong financial position. It has overachieved on savings in previous years, which has resulted in a balanced budget for 2014/15 (£3.2m savings originally required) and all of the savings it needs for 2015/16 (£4.8m savings originally required). This is a considerable achievement, and financial planning and management are strengths in Staffordshire Police.

Finances are well managed, with regular reporting being provided both internally and to the police and crime commissioner. There is clear and strong alignment between finance, people and change planning, and all are aligned to address the priorities in the police and crime plan. HMIC is particularly impressed that throughout the spending review period and in its plans for future austerity, Staffordshire Police has maintained a strong focus on maintaining and improving policing services, rather than just matching the operational plans with the funding available.

Outlook for 2016 and beyond

The force plans for the short and medium term; it also looks to the longer term and has calculated future funding gaps up until 2019/20. Staffordshire has estimated that around £18m of further savings will need to be found between 2016 and 2020; it has mapped out the workforce reductions that might be necessary to work within these reduced budgets. To achieve the savings required to close the gap, the force has identified ten areas for detailed exploration. It has undertaken high-level detailed and rigorous analysis to determine possible savings and how these might be achieved for each of the areas, and it has identified the consequences and benefits of each.

The detail behind these plans is now being developed, and the force estimates that these plans will achieve over £18m of savings, with the earlier years providing greater savings than needed. The force is bringing in external challenge to review critically both the areas identified and the achievability of the savings.

This longer-term planning has demonstrated to the force and the police and crime commissioner that if the demands on the police remain unchanged, the levels of staffing reductions needed to work within the anticipated budgets would impact on the level of policing that could be provided.

To address this issue and to improve the way public services work together in Staffordshire, the police and crime commissioner has developed a public sector reform approach. This has a strong focus on working with partners to reduce demands for policing and public services as a whole. The approach is ambitious and innovative, attempting to use money differently across local agencies to remove the blockages that currently prevent them from working efficiently, improving how the vulnerable are supported and the public protected. The police and crime commissioner has provided funding for organisations to bid for to help change how public services are provided, and has established a safer Staffordshire partnership, to lead and manage the change. The plans are being developed in an open and collaborative way. Keele and Durham Universities are both involved in providing support in gathering a strong evidence base to support the call for change, and measures are being developed to demonstrate the benefits that can be achieved.

Summary

Outstanding

- Staffordshire Police is in a strong financial position to meet both its short and medium-term challenges.
- It has overachieved on savings and as a result has balanced its budget for 2014/15 and 2015/16.
- It has long-term detailed financial plans until 2019/20 and plans to continue to overachieve on savings.
- The force has maintained a strong focus on effective service provision while making these considerable savings.
- Financial management and planning are key strengths.
- Planning for the future has started; the police and crime commissioner has ambitious plans for wider public sector reform for providing community safety across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

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

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

How the force provides policing

Early in the spending review period under the force's change programme, it reorganised the way it provides policing, moving from a geographically managed force to one with centrally run functional departments. Neighbourhood policing is still at the heart of the force but staff and other resources are centrally managed and can be moved according to where the demand and need is. This structure is now well-established and working effectively. It has allowed the force to continue to provide policing with fewer police officers and staff and to meet the savings required over the spending review.

The public sector reform plans will see future policing in Staffordshire being much more integrated with other organisations.

Collaboration

HMIC monitors forces' progress on collaboration because it offers the opportunity to provide efficient, effective policing and helps to achieve savings. Staffordshire Police has demonstrated that it actively seeks out and progresses opportunities to collaborate. It recognises that working together with others is a necessity in supporting how the force operates now and in the future.

For policing there are arrangements in place with other forces for serious and organised crime, firearms licensing and roads policing. These collaborations have enabled the force to save money and also to provide better equipped and more resilient specialist services to the public.

A project that focuses on improving the way in which the police and other criminal justice organisations share information at the earliest opportunity is promising. Early signs suggest that the co-located team has resulted in a faster and more effective process for bringing offenders to justice.

A multi-agency safeguarding hub is a well-developed and effective collaborative effort in Staffordshire, providing enhanced support and protection to vulnerable people.

The force is also open to working with private companies where benefits can be achieved. For example, custody is currently provided by a private sector organisation with options for

future expansion. However, the main focus for future collaboration is with local public sector organisations across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

Areas of future collaboration have been planned in both operational and support areas. These include:

- transport and vehicles provided with Stoke-on-Trent City Council and the fire service;
- private sector partner to provide estates and facilities management for the police and local authority; and
- integrated offender management teams including police, probation and local authorities to be located in the same office to work together to tackle prolific offenders and reduce the risk of re-offending.

In 2014/15 the force expects to spend 9 percent of its net revenue expenditure on collaboration, which is lower than the 11 percent figure for England and Wales. Collaboration is expected to contribute to 8 percent of the force's savings requirement, which is lower than the 10 percent figure for England and Wales.

Managing change

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

The overarching programme for change within Staffordshire Police has been in place since 2010 and has been through a number of phases. HMIC found a professional, well-structured and well-managed approach to change. The force has made good use of external consultants to support change projects and to provide the force's staff with the skills and expertise to develop the approach for themselves. The approach is enabling and provides rigour, but most importantly, it introduces challenge. The force's professional approach to project and programme management links change to finance and workforce plans.

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

- better alignment of resources to demand;
- improved call management;
- using IT to make processes more efficient and reduce bureaucracy;
- using business improvement methods; and

- priority-based budgeting.

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

- partnership working;
- collaboration with another part of the public sector;
- development of mobile data applications;
- outsourcing or working with the private sector; and
- improved IT.

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

The force has recognised that the changes that have already taken place and those still planned present a major change for staff in the way they are used to working. In order that the service to the public is maintained and improved, it is necessary for staff at all levels and in all areas of work to embrace the change and be willing to work in different ways. The force has developed an ongoing programme of support and communication to involve and develop the workforce.

Senior leaders are active and visible in involving the workforce through mechanisms such as the force's intranet forum, which is also used by the chief constable and police and crime commissioner to answer staff concerns and explain the thinking behind change. In addition, chief officers have spent days working alongside teams across the force to get a better understanding of the day-to-day challenges facing staff. We found staff are involved with the change programme and have a range of opportunities to present their ideas. Staff both recognised and valued the efforts made by chief officers to listen to their views and make sure that important messages are communicated across the force.

Staff welfare and occupational health services are effective and use their resources creatively. The force has one of the lowest sickness levels in England and Wales and has a professional and supportive approach to achieving high attendance. The wellbeing of the workforce is clearly very important to the force. It gives a strong message that improving staff wellbeing is not just about occupational health but also about supporting staff in being motivated, feeling that they make a difference and wanting to come to work every day.

To reinforce this approach, a number of initiatives are in place:

- innovation days for officers and staff to provide ideas on how to improve wellbeing;
- open days for the public, providing an opportunity for officers/staff to show what the police do and to feel proud of the services they provide;
- a running club that seeks to encourage non-runners;
- a rewrite of the staff survey to link this with the code of ethics;
- access to a gym at some police stations; and
- welfare champions (35 in total) with the role of involving staff in ideas and agreeing which of these to explore.

Officers and staff understood the rationale behind changes that were taking place and what was expected from them. They also recognised that the force was concerned with their wellbeing, enabling them to provide the best service possible. They clearly understood that the changes were about improving service to the public, as well as about saving money.

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 (e.g., for cleaning). The force plans to make 16 percent of its savings from non-pay, which is lower than for other forces.

The force has made savings from non-pay (e.g., from better procurement) and much more ambitious plans to find savings in non-pay areas are being developed to limit the impact of future savings on further reductions in staffing. The force's approach to how it manages and uses its buildings in the future is particularly innovative and is a clear example of the types of collaboration possible with local authorities that will achieve considerable savings. The force intends to pool its estate with Staffordshire County Council (£50m of land and buildings is police-owned and £400m is council-owned). The management of the total estate will then be offered to the private sector to find a partner to assist in making best use of the total estate across both organisations. This will build on tactical co-location and savings that already exist under the change programme. It is estimated that this approach could save £4m between 2015/16 and 2019/20 on an annual revenue cost of £6m.

As with other forces, most savings come from reducing the workforce. The force plans to make 84 percent of its spending review savings requirement from its pay budget. This is higher than for other forces.

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.

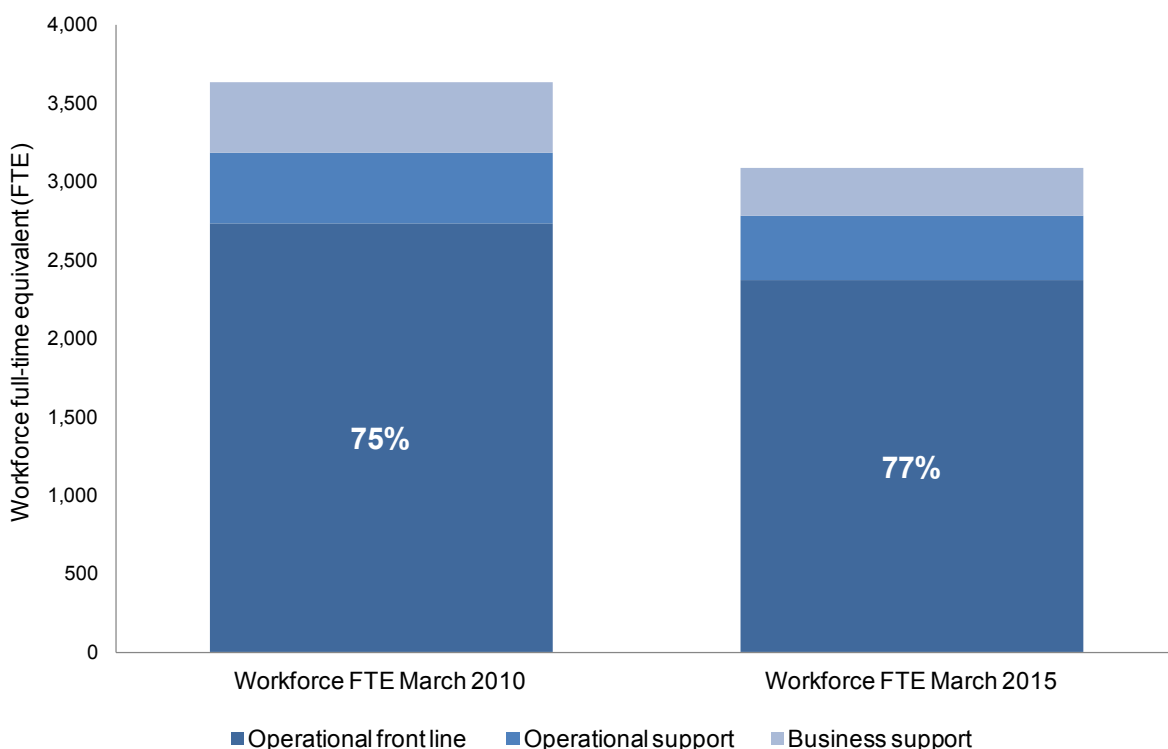
	31 March 2010 (baseline)	31 March 2015	Change	Force change %	Change for England and Wales %
Police officers	2,161	1,669	-492	-23%	-11%
Police staff	1,373	1,211	-162	-12%	-17%
PCSOs	237	209	-28	-12%	-22%
Total	3,772	3,089	-683	-18%	-14%
Specials	334	569	235	70%	44%

The force is set to lose one of the largest proportions of police officers in England and Wales over this period, although it is losing fewer PCSOs and it has increased the size of its special constabulary by 70 percent. The use of specials has been developed to use the skills of volunteers and apply these within the force. This has resulted in special detectives, wildlife officers and community officers. This initiative provides the opportunity to demonstrate the value placed on the abilities of volunteers and use them as part of a team. The results have been positive.

It is important that as forces reconfigure their structures and reduce workforce numbers, that 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 Staffordshire Police.



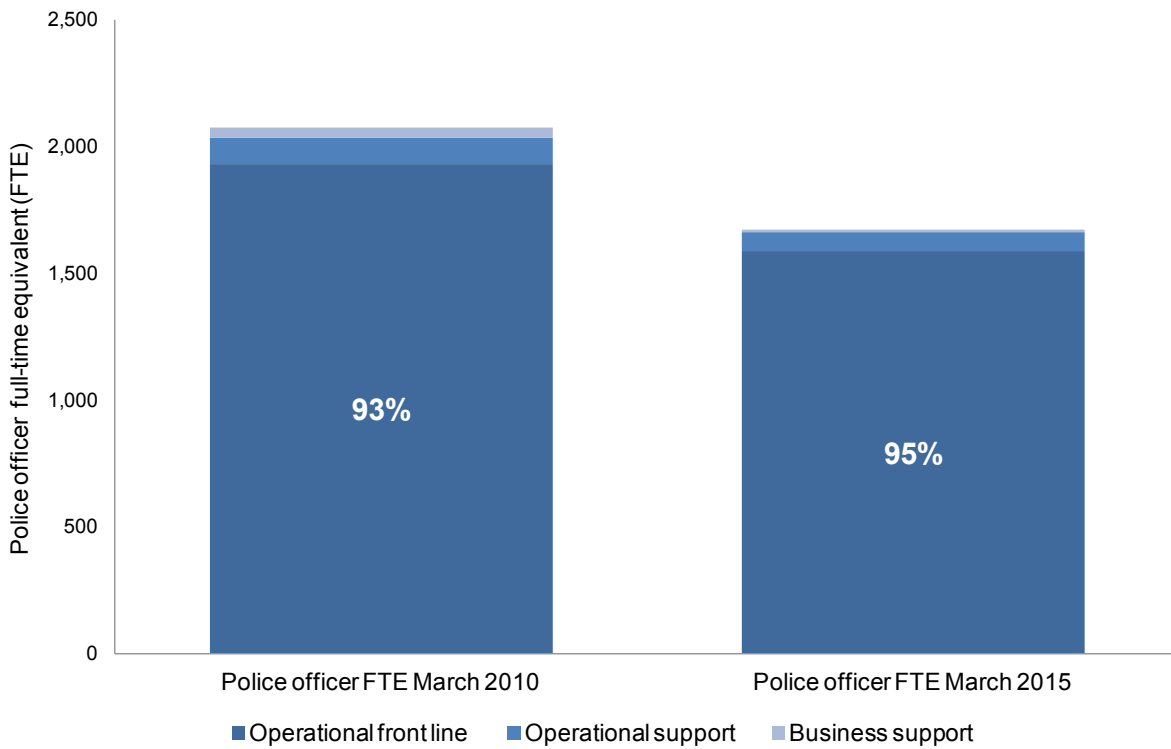
Note: England and Wales reports an increase in the proportion of workforce on the front line from 74 percent in March 2010 to 78 percent in March 2015.

The number of officers, PCSOs and staff working on Staffordshire’s front line is projected to reduce by 366 between March 2010 and March 2015 (from 2,734 to 2,368).

Over the same period, the proportion of Staffordshire’s total workforce allocated to frontline roles is projected to increase from 75 percent to 77 percent. This compares with an overall increase across England and Wales from 74 percent to 78 percent.

The number of Staffordshire’s police officers in frontline roles is planned to decrease by 345 from 1,930 in March 2010 to 1,585 by March 2015, as the following chart shows. The proportion of those remaining on the front line is projected to increase from 93 percent to 95 percent. This compares to an overall increase across England and Wales from 89 percent to 92 percent and shows Staffordshire 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

Outstanding

- The force changed the way it provides policing early in the spending review, which has enabled it to continue to police effectively with 23 percent fewer police officers.
- The force is developing innovative and ambitious plans for collaboration with local public sector and private sector organisations to achieve a considerable proportion of future savings.
- The management of change is intelligent and well led. There is strong alignment between financial and workforce planning.
- The force supports its workforce well and places a high value on their wellbeing. Staff have a good understanding of the rationale for the changes and are involved in developing the future plans.
- Despite one of the biggest reductions in police officer numbers in England and Wales, the force has protected the front line and has increased the proportion of officers at the front line. It has also successfully increased the size of its special constabulary by 70 percent and is making effective use of volunteers' skills across the spectrum of police work.

To what extent is the force efficient?

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

How well does the force understand and manage demand?

The force has a comprehensive and detailed understanding of both demand and the way police time is used. This understanding has been used to decide on the most cost-effective staffing levels in each area of work and resource is clearly and regularly aligned to meet demand and need. The force has used a variety of tools to identify demand, including a detailed understanding of calls coming into the force, a comprehensive and systematic review of the tasks that officers undertake (including how long each activity takes). Using these data, the force has developed computer software that shows how resources match demand, including where there is surplus and shortages for all operational areas of the force. This demand profiler also includes the ability to simulate changes to identify what might happen if, for example, officer numbers are reduced, or there is an increase in crime.

The force has used the information from the demand profiler to inform all resource decisions for each team. The profiler has helped to identify the minimum number of officers required to police Staffordshire and to identify the critical posts and skills required to manage demand. This information has informed the workforce plan as to when recruitment and training will be needed to make sure that when critical skills are lost they are replaced without risk to the public.

The force has also carried out a comprehensive analysis of the demand and need in each neighbourhood, taking into account factors such as the level of deprivation, average income of households and internet usage. This has helped to allocate staff appropriately to neighbourhood policing, giving greater resources to deal with vulnerability. It has also identified the type of community involvement methods that are most suited to each community.

How efficiently does the force allocate its resources?

At the core of policing in Staffordshire is the assessment of threat, harm and risk. The individual assessment of each incident or activity determines the way resources are allocated, and this means moving away from an approach that looks at crime types to one that focuses on the needs of victims. This provides a fluid and tailored response to immediate threats as well as managing longer-term risk.

The next phase of the change programme aims to manage demand better to reduce unnecessary calls on police time and focus resource where it can have most impact. The force is planning to prevent demand from the outset, and to redesign processes so that officers can become more efficient in completing their everyday tasks.

Developing improved IT solutions is seen by the force as vital to improving efficiency and productivity, helping the workforce to become more mobile, automating tasks and reducing the time required to exchange information across organisations. To assist in getting the right solutions, the force commissioned an external review by the Police ICT Company and is using its recommendations to develop an action plan. The resulting solution is an example of where IT is being used to improve efficiency. A system is fitted into police vehicles, which enables the control room to identify automatically the closest officer with the right skills to send to attend an incident.

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.

Prevention, engagement and partnership working is very much part of the policing approach in Staffordshire, and the force has very strong ambitions to build on partnership working, to prevent crime and protect people through working better across agencies. The force is committed to neighbourhood policing and working with partners and local communities to solve problems and improve community safety. For example, PCSOs are integrated with family intervention teams, and the council's community safety team is located with the police in Tamworth. The existing multi-agency safeguarding hub and integrated offender management teams are effective examples of this approach; while they are not unique to Staffordshire, they are particularly mature and well-established joint working arrangements. More considerable is the force's desire to break down organisational barriers to provide better services and achieve efficiency savings.

The force has moved away from traditional targets to an approach that focuses on quality and the victim, allowing officers to use their professional judgment in taking the most appropriate action to keep the victim supported and satisfied. Success in this approach has been demonstrated through an increase in the use of restorative justice and community resolutions as an alternative to criminal prosecutions for young offenders. The traditional measures are still monitored but are not used to drive levels of performance; rather they are used to develop an understanding of trends.

Calls for service

HMIC examined whether Staffordshire 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, Staffordshire 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 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	87.0
Percentage of rural emergency calls on target	88.0	85.3
Percentage of priority calls on target	77.0	78.5

Over the spending review period the number of calls emergency calls dealt with within target has reduced and for priority calls increased.

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 force had affected the visibility of the police in the Staffordshire area.

In 2014, Staffordshire Police allocated 63 percent of its police officers to visible roles. This is 0.7 of a percentage point higher than the number allocated in 2010, and higher than the figure for England and Wales (which was 56 percent).

Police visibility is further enhanced by PCSOs, who principally support community policing. Looking at the proportion of police officers and PCSOs, Staffordshire police allocated 66 percent of these staff to visible roles. This is 0.7 of a percentage point higher than it allocated in 2010, and higher than 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 Staffordshire, 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, 84 percent of respondents in Staffordshire 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), Staffordshire reduced recorded crime (excluding fraud) by 15 percent, compared with a 14 percent reduction 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 16 percent, compared with a 14 percent reduction in England and Wales.

Looking just at the last 12 months, recorded crime (excluding fraud) rose by 2 percent compared to the 1 percent reduction for 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 recorded crime and anti-social behaviour rates in Staffordshire (per head of population) compared with the rest of 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.

12 months to March 2014	Rate per 1,000 population	England and Wales rate per 1,000 population
Crimes (excluding fraud)	53.9	61.1
Victim-based crime	48.0	54.3
Sexual offences	1.4	1.1
Burglary	5.5	7.8
Violence against the person	13.7	11.1
ASB incidents	29.3	37.2

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

We have chosen these types of crime to give an indication of offending levels in the Staffordshire 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, 89.9 percent (± 1.6 percent) of victims were satisfied with the overall service provided by Staffordshire Police. This is higher than the England and Wales figure of 85.2 percent (± 0.2 percent).

Changes to how the public can access services

The force is increasing the range of options available to access information and support from the police through its customer access plan. This aims to reduce calls into the force by providing alternative channels. The force website is being redesigned to make it more customer friendly, with self-service options such as tracking crimes or incidents.

Use of social media will be increased, with more Twitter and Facebook accounts, and video communication similar to Skype or Facetime will also be available. To support this approach, there is an investment of staff.

The force intends to decrease the number of police stations from 17 to 14 and to reduce the number of front counters from 18 to 16. The number of shared access points has increased through use of partner buildings, which will be reviewed further as the joint estates strategy progresses with Staffordshire County Council.

Summary



Good

- The force has a sophisticated understanding of demand and how officer time is used, which is reviewed regularly and used to inform decisions on how resources are allocated.
- The force has identified that technology needs to improve and is developing plans to use IT to increase productivity.
- Partnerships and joint working are used to improve the service to the public and to make best use of officer time. There are ambitious and innovative plans to reduce demand and provide even more efficient and effective services across the whole public sector in Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent.
- Crime has fallen over the spending review period at a faster rate than elsewhere, although there has been a slight increase in overall crime in the last 12 months. The force has continued to maintain one of the highest level of victim satisfaction across England and Wales, and it now has a performance process to improve it further

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.