



Inspecting policing  
in the public interest

## **Avon and Somerset Constabulary's response to the funding challenge**

**July 2013**

# Contents

<b>Avon and Somerset Constabulary: Executive summary</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The challenge</b>	<b>6</b>
Progress in making savings: Years 1–2	6
Plans for Year 3–4	6
Looking beyond the current spending review	6
The scale of the challenge in Avon and Somerset	7
Reserves	7
Demand	7
How difficult is the challenge?	7
<b>Response to the challenge</b>	<b>8</b>
Changes to workforce numbers	8
Changes to the proportion of workforce on the front line	9
Collaboration	10
Managing change	11
How is the Constabulary engaging police officers, PCSOs and staff in the change programme?	12
How effective has the response been?	13
<b>Impact of the changes on the public</b>	<b>14</b>
Visibility	14
Calls for service	15
Crime	15
Victim satisfaction surveys	16
Changes to how the public can access services	16
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>17</b>

# Avon and Somerset Constabulary: Executive summary

Avon and Somerset Constabulary has made good progress, having saved over half the total it needs and at the same time has improved performance.

While the Constabulary has £8.1m of savings to find by the end of the spending review period, it has a number of detailed savings plans in place, which could achieve this amount. The Chief Constable has initiated a fundamental review of Avon and Somerset Constabulary's structures and the way staff work, to identify how the Constabulary can best provide policing in the future and deliver the remaining savings required.

Developing and implementing these new plans to close the gap by March 2015 is a challenge, but the Constabulary recognises this. HMIC saw committed leadership, vision and determination within the chief officer team to achieve the necessary savings. The Constabulary has a good track record and has other options in place should there be any slippage. Avon and Somerset Constabulary is fully expected to meet its savings requirements while continuing to fight crime and deliver victim satisfaction.

## Financial challenge

Avon and Somerset Constabulary has identified that it needs to save £47.6m over the four years of the spending review (i.e. between March 2011 and March 2015).

While as a proportion of its overall budget (15%) this savings requirement is less than most other forces, HMIC considers that Avon and Somerset Constabulary still faces a challenge in achieving this target. This is because the amount of money it receives<sup>1</sup> is comparatively low, given the size of the population in Avon and Somerset, and it has fewer officers and staff than most other forces, and so a comparatively lower pay bill. The amount it spends on each officer and staff member is also already less than most other forces.

## Progress in making savings

Avon and Somerset Constabulary has planned how it will save £39.5m of the £47.6m required by March 2015. It therefore still has £8.1m<sup>2</sup> to find. Avon and Somerset Constabulary is planning to find the remaining savings by a fundamental organisational restructure. Should there be any delay in developing or implementing these proposals, there are specific savings plans the Constabulary could put in place to close the gap including using money held in reserve<sup>3</sup>. With these options available the Constabulary is expected to meet its savings requirement.

---

1 From the central police funding grant, and from other sources such as council tax.

2 The amounts to save may not add up to the total due to rounding.

3 Reserves are funds often used to pay for unforeseen events and balance liabilities.

## Changes to the workforce

All forces spend most of their money on staff costs (such as wages and overtime), and so have focused on reducing this expenditure in order to cut costs.<sup>4</sup> Avon and Somerset Constabulary is no exception.

It is reducing police officer numbers by slowing recruitment (although the Constabulary is now recruiting) and holding vacancies; as a result, by the end of the spending review period, it is planned that there will be 384 fewer police officers in Avon and Somerset Constabulary. This means the number of police officers is planned to reduce by 12% between March 2010<sup>5</sup> and March 2015; this is a similar reduction to most other forces.

There is evidence that Avon and Somerset Constabulary is successfully protecting frontline posts as it makes these cuts: between March 2010 and March 2015, the proportion of police officers in frontline crime-fighting roles is planned to increase from 90% to 96%. This compares to an overall projected increase across England and Wales from 89% to 93%.

The Constabulary has also made some police staff redundant and not replaced others as they have left (e.g. through retirements and resignations); as a result, by the end of the spending review period, it is planned that there will be 131 fewer police staff in Avon and Somerset Constabulary. This means the number of police staff is planned to reduce by 7% between March 2010 and March 2015; this is a smaller reduction than in most other forces. Avon and Somerset Constabulary plans to decrease the number of police community support officers (PCSO) by 17%; which is broadly in line with most other forces.

However, a future restructuring of the Constabulary's operating model is likely, in order to find the further savings needed by March 2015. The decision on the final model has not yet been taken; there could potentially be further reductions in both police officer and police staff numbers.

## Impact on the public

HMIC expects forces to make savings without damaging the service provided to the public. HMIC monitor's whether they are achieving this by examining crime rates and the results of the user satisfaction surveys which all forces conduct.

Over the first two years of the spending review, recorded crime<sup>6</sup> (excluding fraud) fell by 17%, which is greater than the figure for England and Wales (13%). Victim satisfaction remains high at 86.7%<sup>7</sup> – this is higher than most other forces.

This strong performance indicates that Avon and Somerset Constabulary has been able to make savings without having a detrimental effect on the service it provides to the public and indeed it has continued to improve its performance faster than other forces over this period.

---

4 See *Adapting to Austerity*, HMIC, London, July 2011, p.13. Available from [www.hmic.gov.uk](http://www.hmic.gov.uk).

5 We use 2010 as our baseline as many forces started to make staff reductions in anticipation of the spending review.

6 Crime excluding fraud, as per the new crime classifications released in July 2013 by the Office for National Statistics.

7 ± 1.1%.

## **Future challenges**

HMIC was reassured that Avon and Somerset Constabulary is actively developing plans and will shortly make a decision as to how to find the remaining £8.1m savings needed by March 2015. Implementing these proposals in the short time available in the current spending review will not be without its challenge. However, HMIC saw clear vision set by the Chief Constable and supported by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), and the leadership and drive to deliver new ways of working and structures, which will allow the Constabulary to further reduce costs while continuing to fight crime and deliver victim satisfaction.

# The challenge

Over the four years of the spending review (March 2011 to March 2015), Avon and Somerset Constabulary identified that it needed to find savings of £47.6m, which equates to 15% of its total expenditure<sup>8</sup> (which in 2012/13 was £295.6m). Across England and Wales a 17% reduction in total expenditure is required.

## **Progress in making savings: Years 1–2**

The Constabulary successfully made 52% (£24.9m) of the total savings required by March 2015 in the first two years of the spending review period. A key element in achieving reduced costs is through its 'Southwest One' partnership with IBM, Somerset County Council, and Taunton Deane Borough Council. This is a ten year joint venture company offering strategic expertise, transformational development and service delivery in business support functions, e.g. human resources, finance, information technology and purchasing. It also reduced expenditure on non pay costs, better procurement, streamlining business support processes, and better use of police officer time.

## **Plans for Year 3–4**

The Constabulary has plans in place to achieve further savings of £9.5m in 2013/14, and another £5.1m in 2014/15. This leaves a funding gap of £8.1m at the end of the spending review period. The Constabulary intends to fill this gap by adopting one of a number of options. These options include the potential for savings of £4.4m from restructuring to reduce the number of basic command units (BCUs) from six to three.

This is phase 4 of the planned change programme. The decision about this and other structural changes (at the time of our inspection) was to be made by the new Chief Constable and the Police and Crime Commissioner in May 2013.

Should it be necessary, and to close any gap, Avon and Somerset have a number of other savings plans which can be used to meet any outstanding requirement. In addition, if needed, the Constabulary has money in reserve which could be used to ease the transition between the current and new structures.

## **Looking beyond the current spending review**

The Constabulary has started to consider what savings it might need to make after March 2015. The Constabulary's medium term financial plan extends further than this, looking at the longer term financial picture to 2016/17. The challenge for Avon and Somerset Constabulary in preparing for future funding pressures will be much greater if the savings gap in 2014/15 is not closed.

---

<sup>8</sup> Based on a gross expenditure baseline in 2010/11.

## The scale of the challenge in Avon and Somerset

Although Avon and Somerset Constabulary's savings requirement is lower than other forces, as a low cost Constabulary, it faces a challenge in finding further savings. This is because:

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

## Reserves

The Constabulary will use reserves to close the gap in 2014/15 and beyond if necessary. It has also set aside £23.4m of reserves to bridge any gap in 2015/16.

## Demand

Forces face different levels of demand for the service they provide to the public. This section looks at three of the key indicators of demand to provide an overall impression of the challenges each force faces:

- the number of calls the force receives from the public;
- the number of crimes the force deals with, and
- the number of prosecutions (suspects charged with offences) the force brings.

<b>12 months to March 2013</b>	<b>Avon and Somerset</b>	<b>England and Wales</b>
Emergency and priority calls per 1,000 population	141	134
Victim-based crime per 1,000 population	52.1	54.5
Prosecutions (charges) per 1,000 population	11.4	10.2

This table shows that, in 2012/13, Avon and Somerset Constabulary received slightly more emergency and priority calls from the public than other forces. It had a similar number of crimes and supported slightly more prosecutions.

## How difficult is the challenge?

Avon and Somerset's savings requirement is less than many other forces (as a proportion of its spending). However, it faces a difficult challenge as its income is lower and its expenditure on pay costs is already lower than most other forces and therefore there is less scope to cut spending.

## Response to the challenge

Because over 80% of a police budget (on average) is spent on staff costs,<sup>9</sup> 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.

Avon and Somerset Constabulary is no exception. It made an early start on this in 2010, when it slowed its recruitment of new police officers and police staff, and reduced the number of police staff. The Constabulary plans to make 85% of its spending review savings requirement from its pay budget. This is a higher proportion than in other forces but as many functions and staff are provided through the South West One partnership this figure is not directly comparable.

### Changes to workforce numbers

The following table shows the Constabulary's planned changes to workforce numbers over the spending review period, and compares these to the change for England and Wales.<sup>10</sup>

	<b>31 March 2010 (baseline)</b>	<b>31 March 2015</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>Avon and Somerset change %</b>	<b>Change for England and Wales %</b>
Police Officers	3,302	2,918	-384	-12%	-11%
Police Staff	1,872	1,741	-131	-7%	-16%
PCSOs	430	358	-72	-17%	-17%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,603</b>	<b>5,017</b>	<b>-586</b>	<b>-10%</b>	<b>-13%</b>
Specials	449	660	+211	+47%	+60%

Overall, the table shows that Avon and Somerset Constabulary plans to lose a similar number of police officers and PCSOs to other forces. Police Staff numbers are also projected to decrease, but by a smaller percentage than most other forces.

HMIC considers, however, that the Constabulary's outstanding funding gap means that it may need to make more workforce reductions than are currently planned (and shown in the table).

<sup>9</sup> See *Adapting to Austerity*, HMIC, London, July 2011, p.13. Available from [www.hmic.gov.uk](http://www.hmic.gov.uk).

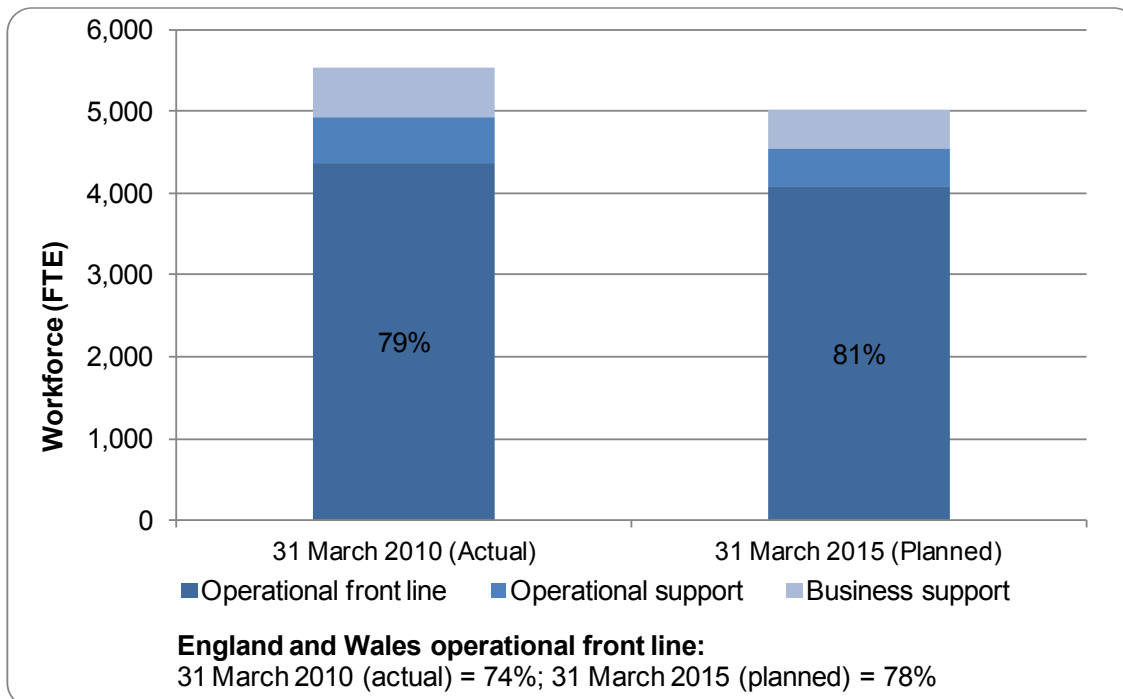
<sup>10</sup> Workforce figures for March 2010 show the actual number of people working for the force in permanent posts on the 31 March in that year. People on long-term absences (such as maternity leave) are included in these 'actual' figures, but vacant posts are not. Workforce projections for March 2015 are for budgeted posts, so the actual number of people who will be working for the force at that point in reality may be different, because some posts will be vacant or filled by temporary staff. Forces' projections may also exclude people who will be on long-term absences. The difference between actual workforce numbers and projected numbers should therefore be taken as an approximate expected change.



## Changes to the proportion of workforce on the front line

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”. 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 these crime-fighting roles.

The following chart shows the change in the workforce frontline profile in Avon and Somerset.<sup>11</sup>

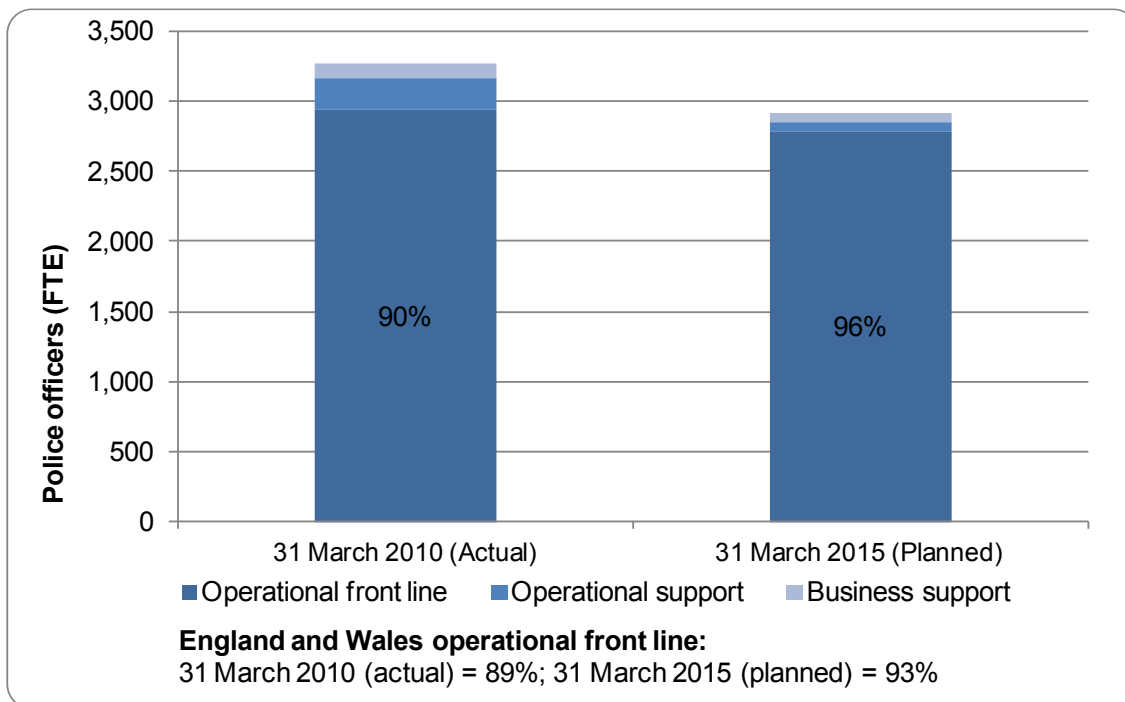


The **number** of officers, PCSOs and staff (i.e. of the constabulary’s total workforce) working on Avon and Somerset’s front line is projected to reduce by 7% between March 2010 and March 2015 (from 4,366 to 4,076).

Over the same period, the **proportion** of Avon and Somerset Constabulary's total workforce allocated to frontline roles is projected to increase from 79% to 81%. This compares with an overall increase across England and Wales from 74% to 78%.

<sup>11</sup> From 2010 Gwent, the Metropolitan Police Service, Wiltshire and North Wales police forces chose to code those officers and staff who are on long-term absence from duty due to maternity/paternity leave, career break, full-time education or suspension, and those on long-term leave, to their normal working role. This has the effect of inflating their workforce and frontline figures by up to 1% compared to other forces.

The **number** of Avon and Somerset’s police officers in frontline roles is planned to reduce by 5% from 2,937 in March 2010 to 2,788 by March 2015, as the following chart shows. The proportion of those remaining on the front line is projected to increase from 90% to 96%. This compares to an overall increase across England and Wales from 89% to 93%.



## Collaboration

HMIC monitors force’s progress on collaboration<sup>12</sup> because it offers the opportunity to deliver efficient, effective policing and help achieve savings.

We found that Avon and Somerset Constabulary has a strong and demonstrable commitment to working in collaboration. The approach is well-embedded and delivering clear benefits.

It is creatively exploring all opportunities for collaboration, shared services and strategic partnering with the primary aim of ensuring that the service to the public is improved before any potential savings and benefits. The force views collaboration as *‘working together to deliver improved services for the citizens of Avon and Somerset Constabulary’*.

The Southwest One collaboration was the first of its kind for policing in England and Wales. To date, no other force has delivered this level of partnership with local authorities. This collaboration has contributed to reducing Avon and Somerset Constabulary’s cost base.

<sup>12</sup> HMIC defines collaboration as “all activity where two or more parties work together to achieve a common goal, which includes inter force activity and collaboration with the public and private sectors, including outsourcing and business partnering”.

In addition the Constabulary has achieved savings through sharing facilities and support services. It has achieved greater capacity and capability to respond to serious and major crimes, by the formation of regional units working across force boundaries. Furthermore, it collaborates with other forces across the south west region, in, for example, a casualty bureau (disaster victim identification); counter terrorism intelligence unit; procurement and training.

In 2014/15 the Constabulary expects to spend 11% of its total expenditure on collaboration, which is in line with the 11% figure for England and Wales. However, collaboration is expected to contribute only 2% of the Constabulary's savings requirement. While this is lower than the 7% figure for England and Wales, it does not reflect the savings delivered through Southwest One prior to the spending review and contributed to a reduction in Constabulary's cost base. .

Avon and Somerset Constabulary is currently exploring options for further collaboration which, when implemented, should provide opportunities to deliver future savings. These include:

- sharing of facilities with local authorities to co-locate/integrate business processes to improve accessibility and functionality of enquiry offices and improve quality, consistency and corporate nature of the services delivered by enquiry offices;
- a private finance initiative, working in partnership to construct and manage a tri-force firearms training facility and three new custody and crime investigation units, one of which incorporates an administration and operations unit. The Constabulary is also considering the extent to which it may partner with other organisations for detention and prisoner handling services.

## **Managing change**

Reductions in police budgets have inevitably led to a shrinking workforce. HMIC expects forces also to have an eye within their change programmes on the longer term transformation which can help maintain or improve the service they offer to the public and prepare for future funding reductions.

Avon and Somerset Constabulary started to reduce its cost base ahead of the spending review period through its strategic transformation agenda. This included in 2007 the innovative ten-year joint venture company South West One: with Somerset County Council, Taunton Deane Borough Council and IBM, to bring significant financial savings and transformation projects in areas such as accommodation and procurement.

In 2010, in preparation for the spending review, the transformation agenda evolved into the change programme. Its intention was for the constabulary to thrive and improve while making the savings needed to meet the budget reductions. It began by removing some of the administrative burden on the frontline and cutting out unnecessary waste.

The change programme has four phases:

Phase 1: tightening up, cutting out unnecessary waste, better control of spending;

Phase 2: 10% savings from Southwest One, procurement savings from contracts;

Phase 3: process reviews: included public protection and contact management. A number of phase 3 reviews are still to report, each one with potential savings; and

Phase 4: includes consideration of new BCU structure which is in development.

Phases one and two are completed, phase three is near completion and phase four is still in development.

This change programme has become the basis for the Constabulary's savings plans, it is designed to be responsive to decisions to make more savings if necessary, or maintain the course of action taken within the plan.

In November 2012, the Constabulary commissioned a review of the change programme to take stock and assist in the planning for the new operating model. It concluded that the principles of the new operating model should be that:

- the style of neighbourhood policing would not alter but potentially the management structure could be reduced;
- a further reduction in demand management could be achieved;
- the rationalisation of estate should continue; and
- there should be a 'mobile' frontline supported by new technology and improved services.

The Constabulary is now working to develop and bring forward proposals for savings to close the gap for 2014/15. The plans will deliver new policing structures and ways of working to deliver savings and put in place an organisation that is capable of delivering the priorities and objectives of the PCC's Police and Crime Plan.

## **How is the Constabulary engaging police officers, PCSOs and staff in the change programme?**

The Constabulary recognises that cultural change must be integrated with its financial challenges. As a result it has focused its efforts on improving the approach to change and leadership.

The results of the 2012 staff survey (in which 47% of the workforce participated) were published in March 2013. The results showed 54% of staff are 'fully engaged' and 83% 'fully or almost engaged'. The surveys are conducted annually and results have shown consecutive increases in levels of engagement since 2010.

Changes are planned by the new chief constable to ensure that the workforce is engaged. The methods, style and frequency of communication messages will be different for phase 4 of the change programme, so that officers and staff are aware of changes, both before, and as they progress.

The new Chief Constable has introduced a series of internal communications and staff engagement initiatives, such as weekly blogs, web chats, senior leadership forums, district visits and focus groups with the PCC all with the aim of encouraging staff to share their views and participate in shaping the change programme.

## **How effective has the response been?**

The Constabulary understands the scale of the challenge it faces, and has successfully reduced its spending by £25m in the first two years of the spending review period. Avon and Somerset Constabulary started to reduce its cost base ahead of the spending review period through its strategic transformation agenda and have been working on an evolving change programme for a number of years.

In assessing the response to the financial challenge, HMIC considers that Avon and Somerset Constabulary can undoubtedly close the gap by implementing its proposed new structures, using existing savings plans and through the use of reserves as a transition towards a new operating model. Its well established savings programme is flexible and can be scaled up to release savings as needed with the final reviews in the third phase of the change programme.

# Impact of the changes on the public

The challenge for forces is not just to save money and reduce their workforce numbers, but to ensure the choices they make in deciding how to achieve this do not have a negative impact on the service they provide to their communities. HMIC therefore looked for evidence that the force had kept a consideration of the effect on the public at the heart of their choices.

## 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.<sup>13</sup> HMIC therefore examined how far the changes being implemented by the force had affected the visibility of the police on the streets of Avon and Somerset.

In March 2013, Avon and Somerset Constabulary allocated 62% of its police officers to visible roles. This is four percentage points less than it allocated in 2010, but still higher than the figure for most other forces (which was 54% 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, Avon and Somerset Constabulary allocated 66% to visible roles. This is three percentage points lower than it allocated in 2010 and greater than the 59% figure for England and Wales.

HMIC conducted a survey<sup>14</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 Avon and Somerset, 11%<sup>15</sup> said that they have seen a police officer more often than they had 12 months ago; this is broadly in line with the 13% average across all survey respondents in England and Wales.

Of those people surveyed, 80%<sup>16</sup> said they felt either as safe or safer in the areas where they live compared with two years ago. This is higher than the figure for most other forces which is 75%.

---

<sup>13</sup> See *Demanding Times*, HMIC, London, 2011. Available from [www.hmic.gov.uk](http://www.hmic.gov.uk).

<sup>14</sup> A YouGov survey was carried out during a four-week period during March 2013. Satisfaction and confidence surveys are also carried out at a national level by the Crime Survey of England and Wales. These use larger sample sizes and are carried out quarterly over a rolling-year period. Some forces also carry out their own surveys of the general public. More information can be found at [www.crimesurvey.co.uk](http://www.crimesurvey.co.uk), [www.hmic.gov.uk](http://www.hmic.gov.uk) or from force websites.

<sup>15</sup> ± 5%.

<sup>16</sup> ± 5%.

## Calls for service

HMIC examined whether Avon and Somerset Constabulary 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 three years from 2010<sup>17</sup> to present, Avon and Somerset Constabulary had maintained the same target response times of: within 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.

Over that period, the Constabulary met its target response time for urban 'emergency' calls 93% of the time in 2010/11, and 88% of the time in 2011/12 and 2012/13. The Constabulary also met its target response time for rural 'emergency' calls 88% of the time in 2010/2011, and 83% of the time in 2011/12 and 2012/13. In respect of 'priority' calls, the Constabulary met its target 77% of the time across 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13.

Over the spending review, attendance for emergency has marginally declined and has been maintained for priority calls.

## Crime

In 2010 the Home Secretary, Theresa May, set a clear priority for the police service to reduce crime.

Between 2010/11 and 2012/13 (the first two years of the spending review) Avon and Somerset Constabulary reduced recorded crime (excluding fraud) by 17% compared 13% 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 17% compared with 12% in England and Wales.

By looking at how many crimes occur per head of population, we can see how safe it is for the public in that police area. The table below shows crime and anti-social behaviour rates in Avon and Somerset (per head of population) compared with the rest of England and Wales.

<b>12 months to March 2013</b>	<b>Rate per 1,000 population in Avon and Somerset</b>	<b>England and Wales rate per 1,000 population</b>
Crimes (excluding fraud)	60.5	61.4
Victim-based crime	52.1	54.5
Burglary	7.3	8.2
Violence against the person	10.1	10.6
Anti-social behaviour incidents	41.4	40.7

<sup>17</sup> We use 2010/11 as a baseline to show response times prior to the spending review period.

It is important that crimes are effectively investigated and the perpetrator identified and brought to justice. When sufficient evidence is available to say who has committed a crime, it can be described as detected.

Avon and Somerset Constabulary's sanction detection<sup>18</sup> rate (for crimes excluding fraud) for the 12 months to March 2013 was 32.1%. This is above the England and Wales sanction detection rate of 27.0%

We have chosen these types of crime to give an indication of offending levels in Avon and Somerset. 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 on the impact of changes to service delivery for the public is how satisfied the public are with the overall service they receive when they seek police assistance.

In the 12 months to March 2013, 86.7%<sup>19</sup> of victims were satisfied with the overall service provided by Avon and Somerset Constabulary. This is higher than the England and Wales figure of 84.6%<sup>20</sup>

## Changes to how the public can access services

Forces are exploring different ways in which the public can access policing services. Avon and Somerset Constabulary is planning to shut eight front counters<sup>21</sup> and two police stations between 2010 and 2015, but will open four new shared access points<sup>22</sup>.

However, it are making more use of the internet and social media to communicate with the public and developing different mechanisms for the public to contact the police. Avon and Somerset Constabulary is:

- continuing to improve its online services and investing in social media;
- trying to build a better awareness of online services such as the ability to report a crime online;
- developing a new website with a greater provision of self service options such as firearms licensing renewal; and
- developing a community messaging service.

---

18 A sanction detection is a 'solved crime' where a suspect has been identified and notified as being responsible for committing that crime and what the full implications of this are, and has received an official sanction. Official sanctions include: charges, cautions, penalty notices, offences taken into consideration (TICs) and cannabis warnings.

19 ± 1.1%.

20 ± 0.2%..

21 A police building open to the general public to obtain face-to-face access to police services.

22 A non-police building open to the general public to obtain face-to-face access to police services. For example, shared facilities with council services (e.g. libraries or offices), the fire service or other partners.



## Conclusion

Avon and Somerset Constabulary faces a smaller financial requirement than other forces but has the challenge of relatively low income, and it already spends a less money on pay costs (compared with other forces in England and Wales).

The Constabulary understands the scale of the challenge it faces, and has successfully reduced its spending by £25m in the first two years of the spending review period, through a well-governed comprehensive change programme. Avon and Somerset Constabulary started to reduce its cost base ahead of the spending review period through its strategic transformation agenda and has been working on an evolving change programme for a number of years.

In spite of reducing police officer numbers, the Constabulary has maintained strong improvements in performance. Although attendance at emergency and priority calls is declining, crime reduction, crime detection, tackling anti-social behaviour and the public's confidence in the Constabulary are all above average and have continued to improve since 2010.

HMIC was reassured that Avon and Somerset Constabulary is actively developing plans and will shortly make a decision as to how to find the remaining £8.1m savings needed by March 2015. With other options in place to meet any shortfall or slippage the Constabulary is on track to meet its spending review savings requirement while continuing to maintain a focus on crime and service delivery.

In October 2010, the Government announced that central funding to the Police Service in England and Wales would reduce by 20% 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 third year.

Our inspection focused on three questions:

1. How is the force responding to the budget reduction?
2. What is the impact for the workforce and the public?
3. How is the force managing current and future risks?

To answer these questions, 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 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.

National findings and patterns across all 43 forces are given in our thematic report, *Policing in Austerity: Rising to the Challenge*, which is available from [www.hmic.gov.uk](http://www.hmic.gov.uk).

This report provides the findings for Avon and Somerset Constabulary.