



Inspecting policing
in the **public interest**

Crime inspection 2014

Cleveland Police

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How effective is the force at cutting crime?

Overall summary

Cleveland Police provides an effective service in preventing crime and reoffending. Overall crime has fallen in Cleveland at a similar rate to across England and Wales as a whole, over the last four years, although crime rates remain higher than those of England and Wales. HMIC found that the force works well in targeting resources to tackle crimes, although sometimes short-term problems divert the focus away from tackling force and community priorities.

HMIC found that the force has a strong victim focus and there is a clear commitment to improving the quality of victim care. The force works well with local organisations to make the best use of resources by planning and delivering joint responses to fighting crime.

However, the incidence of anti-social behaviour in Cleveland is very high. It is by far the highest rate per 1,000 population in the country and more than twice the England and Wales rate. The area also saw one of the biggest increases in reported incidents in England and Wales last year. HMIC is concerned that the force does not have a clear understanding of the reasons behind this very high incidence or why it is continuing; nor was the force able to demonstrate what it is doing to tackle the situation at a strategic level. This is an area that requires improvement.

This year, HMIC undertook an inspection into the crime data integrity of all 43 police forces, to determine the extent to which police-recorded crime information can be trusted at a national level. HMIC has serious concerns about Cleveland Police's approach to crime recording, which is not as accurate as it should be. Individual force reports are available at <http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk>

How effective is the force at reducing crime and preventing offending?

Good

Although overall crime has fallen in Cleveland at a similar rate to the rest of the country over the last four years, crime rates remain higher than those of England and Wales.

Reducing crime and providing a better service to victims are clear priorities in Cleveland. The force has an effective process for understanding and assessing the most important risks and threats to the communities which includes working with local organisations to share information and plan responses jointly.

The force works well to ensure that resources are targeted at tackling current and emerging risks; although HMIC found that sometimes short-term problems are driving operational activity and diverting the focus away from force and community priorities.

How effective is the force at investigating offending?

Good

There is a clear victim focus within the force. We found a strong commitment to improving the service to victims, and in particular, to the identification and management of vulnerable victims and safeguarding for both adults and children.

The quality of investigations is satisfactory. We found some impressive examples of proactive work in specialist areas, for instance in the investigation of child sexual exploitation. However, the force acknowledges that there is a need for greater consistency in the management of investigations.

Cleveland Police works effectively with other organisations through an integrated offender management approach to preventing reoffending among those prolific offenders posing greatest risk to the public.

How effective is the force at tackling anti-social behaviour?

Requires improvement

The incidence of anti-social behaviour in Cleveland is very high. It is by far the highest rate per 1,000 population in the country and more than twice the England and Wales rate. The area also saw one of the biggest increases in reported incidents in England and Wales last year. HMIC is concerned to find that the force does not have a clear understanding of the reasons behind this very high incidence or why it is continuing to increase nor was the force able to demonstrate what it is doing to tackle the situation.

There is limited capacity within the neighbourhood teams to engage meaningfully with local communities, and to understand their concerns and work with them to find long-term solutions to anti-social behaviour problems.

How effective is the force at reducing crime and preventing offending?

Good

The force has strong and effective partnerships in place which are enabling information sharing to understand crime better and reduce it. We found examples of effective approaches leading to successful outcomes. Restorative justice is used effectively to divert young people from becoming criminalised. There is good joint working with other organisations to identify and manage the offenders causing the most harm in communities, as is the work the force is doing with local organisations to help troubled families.

How effective is the force at investigating offending?

Good

How effective is the force at tackling anti-social behaviour?

Requires improvement

There is some evidence of good work with other organisations to divert young offenders and prevent anti-social behaviour problems from escalating.

Introduction

This inspection looks at how effective police forces are at cutting crime. The public expects the police to reduce, prevent and investigate crime, bring suspects to justice and, in conjunction with other services and agencies, care for victims. To assess each force's effectiveness, we looked at three specific areas:

- How effective is the force at reducing crime and preventing offending?
- How effective is the force at investigating offending?
- How effective is the force at tackling anti-social behaviour?

Methodology

During our inspection we analysed data and documents from forces, and conducted in-force inspections. We interviewed the senior officers responsible for crime, neighbourhood policing and victim care in each force. We held focus groups with frontline police officers, investigators and police staff, and observed their activities first hand. We also reviewed 20 crime investigations in each force and interviewed heads of partner organisations such as local authorities. We focused on anti-social behaviour and the offences of: burglary dwelling; serious sexual offences; and violence with injury on this inspection. We chose to focus on these offences because they cover the areas of acquisitive and violent crime and the protection of vulnerable people. This has allowed us to make an assessment of how well the force treated the victim throughout the investigation – examining in particular how well officers gathered evidence and how well they were supervised.

Victims are at the heart of this inspection. Victims are entitled to a service from the police; this includes regular information about their case, an opportunity to provide an impact statement where relevant and to be consulted on potential criminal justice outcomes. When the police provide this service to victims, it increases victim satisfaction and builds trust and confidence in the police.

As part of this inspection, we considered how well forces deal with domestic abuse, alongside other offence types. HMIC published a report in March 2014 on how well forces tackled domestic abuse and provided support to victims. As a result of that inspection all forces were asked to provide an action plan setting out how they were improving services to victims of domestic abuse and we have reviewed the action plans developed by forces. The action plans have not informed the judgments made in these reports.

The crime inspection provides HMIC with the first opportunity to test whether the force's approach to improving how it tackles domestic abuse is beginning to have an effect and this forms part of our overall assessment of the force.

How effective is the force at reducing crime and preventing offending?

HMIC looked at the how the leadership of the force deploys its resources to reduce the volume of crimes being committed, maximise the quality of victim contact, and ensure that the force focuses on community priorities while mitigating national threats.

We looked at how the force prevents crime, how it uses police tactics such as stop and search powers to prevent and detect crime and reduce offending. We also looked at how the police work with other agencies such as social services to reduce crime.

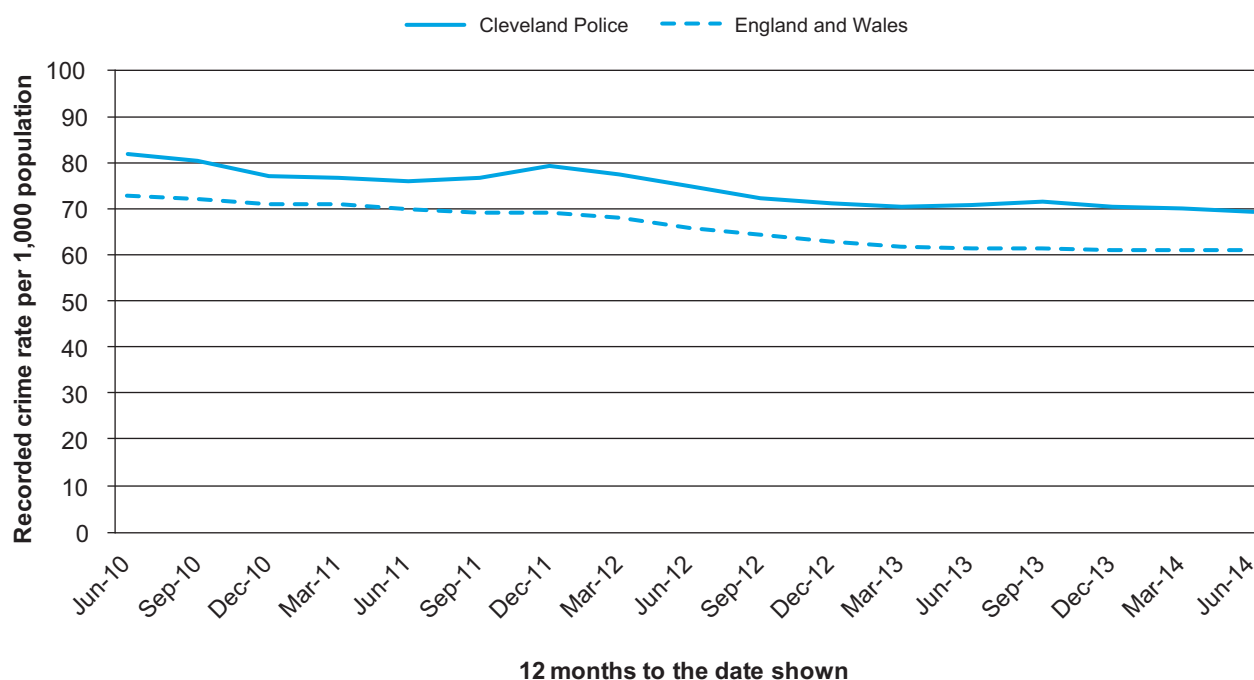
Crime

In 2010 the Home Secretary set a clear priority for the police service to cut crime. When compared with the 12 months to June 2010, recorded crime (excluding fraud) in the 12 months to June 2014 reduced by 16 percent in Cleveland compared with a reduction of 16 percent across all forces in England and Wales.

Over this period, victim-based crime (i.e., crimes where there is a direct victim such as an individual, a group or an organisation) decreased by 12 percent in Cleveland, compared with a reduction of 16 percent across England and Wales.

Looking at the 12 months to the end of June 2014, recorded crime (excluding fraud) in Cleveland reduced by 2 percent, compared with a 1 percent reduction across England and Wales.

Figure: Recorded crime rate (per 1,000 population) between June 2010 and June 2014.



By looking at how many recorded crimes and incidents of anti-social behaviour occur per 1,000 population, we 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 Cleveland (per 1,000 population) compared with the rest of England and Wales.

12 months to June 2014	Cleveland Police rate (per 1,000 population)	England and Wales total rate (per 1,000 population)
Crime excluding fraud	68.9	60.7
Victim-based crime	62.0	53.9
Sexual offences	1.1	1.2
Violence with injury	6.5	5.9
Burglary in a dwelling*	8.1	8.9
Anti-social behaviour incidents*	76.5	36.8

***Note that anti-social behaviour data is for the 12 months to March 2014 and the rate for burglary in a dwelling is the rate per 1,000 households, not population.**

We have chosen these types of crime to give an indication of offending levels in the force area. We are not judging the effectiveness of the force on recorded crime rates only. For information on the frequency of other kinds of crimes in your area, go to www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/crime-and-policing-comparator

Cleveland's detection rate (for crimes excluding fraud) for the 12 months to the end of March 2014 was 35 percent which was higher than the 26 percent for England and Wales.

The new crime outcomes framework was introduced in April 2014. It replaces a previous framework for recording how the police finalise investigations through what was known as 'sanction detections' (e.g. charges and/or summons). The new crime outcomes framework is designed to support police officers to use their professional judgment to ensure a just and timely outcome which reflects the harm to the victim, the seriousness of the offending behaviour, the impact on the community, and which deters future offending. Data on the full range of outcomes achieved as a result of investigations (not just detections but also, for example, community resolutions such as mediation known as restorative justice) will be available from July 2015 and used in future HMIC inspections.

Meeting the needs of the community

Cleveland Police has an effective process for understanding and assessing the strategic threats and risks faced by its communities. This annual strategic assessment is used to inform the policing priorities set out in the police and crime commissioner's police and crime plan. These priorities include; delivering a better deal for victims and witnesses, and diverting people from offending. The priorities are also informed by information from other local organisations. The force works well with these organisations to share information and plan a joint response.

The annual strategic assessment is supported by a continuing assessment of current and emerging risks for which the police need to plan and to which they must respond. There is a twice-daily briefing and tasking process in place known as the Pacesetter meeting. As part of this meeting, decisions will be made regarding the deployment of resources predominantly to detect and prevent crimes. However, we found the meetings to be of variable quality with limited evidence that operational activity was being targeted at priorities.

HMIC found that the police and crime commissioner's commitment to crime reduction is widely understood by staff. However, we also found that there remains a culture of focusing on crime figures rather than risks to communities and victims. This means that there is a tendency to tackle short-term spikes in crimes at the expense of sustaining a focus on other priority areas.

Quality of victim contact

Cleveland Police recognises that it needs better understanding of how its services are perceived by victims so that it can make improvements. It uses a variety of methods to engage with victims and the wider community, including regular surveys and call-backs to people who have requested police services. Information from call-backs is picked up by supervisors and used to identify good practice and areas for improvement.

At a local level, community feedback is sought by senior officers through public web chats known as Community Click. Each neighbourhood policing team also has an engagement plan that includes the use of Twitter and Facebook.

An important measure of the impact of changes to service delivery for the public is how satisfied victims are with the overall service they receive when they seek police assistance. In the 12 months to the end of June 2014, Cleveland had a victim satisfaction rate of 84.3 percent (± 1.6 percent) which is broadly in line with the satisfaction rate in England and Wales of 85.0 percent (± 0.2 percent). Its current rate is broadly in line with the 83.3 percent (± 1.6 percent) recorded for Cleveland in the previous year.

Use of police tactics

Cleveland Police uses a broad range of tactics and initiatives with other organisations to prevent crime and reduce reoffending. The force analyses trends and identifies crime hotspots; this information is used at the daily Pacesetter meetings to direct local activity. There are a number of well-established force operations which target preventative activity towards known and predicted crime trends. On the force intranet there is an events calendar which sets out the plan for crime prevention activities throughout the year. These activities are supported by analysis of intelligence and include a range of preventative tactics such as the involvement of local authority and other agency resources where appropriate.

Cleveland Police has a well-established and appropriate approach to the use of restorative justice; this provides victims of crime with a choice of outcomes disposals which offer alternatives to a lengthy court case and prosecution. Officers see the benefits of restorative justice and are confident in using this where appropriate. They are also well supported in this by their supervisors.

We saw examples of the force working effectively to divert young people from crime through the youth triage scheme which is funded by the police and crime commissioner. The force provided evidence to show how this has resulted in a sharp reduction in young people being dealt with by the criminal justice system. We saw active and effective work to tackle youth offending and an integrated offender management (IOM) programme which considers the needs and vulnerabilities of offenders as well as victims.

The force uses police powers appropriately to disrupt crime, such as stop and search and sex offender prevention orders. The force also has an effective process in place for identifying, monitoring and disrupting organised crime groups (OCGs). Neighbourhood teams are involved in managing and disrupting the criminal activity of low-level crime groups in their areas.

There is room for improvement in the way that the force evaluates the impact of its various tactics and approaches. There were some limited examples of learning and sharing good practice such as the monthly crime forum which provides an opportunity to learn from good practice in Cleveland as well as elsewhere. However, there is no systematic approach to understanding what works across the force and identifying good practice that can be effectively shared. While there is a central database to record successful problem-solving techniques in neighbourhood teams, we did not see evidence that this is being analysed and shared across the force.

Partnership working and information sharing

The force works well both strategically and operationally with other local organisations. There are well-established and effective partnerships in place which are enabling information sharing to allow better understanding and reduction of crime through joint working. Cleveland Police has extensive and strong integrated offender management (IOM) arrangements in place which bring the police and all principal organisations together, working from the same location, to deal with prolific and priority offenders at high risk of causing serious harm and reoffending. The arrangements are well embedded in the force with IOM teams based in each of the four local policing areas.

The force also has strong arrangements in place with other organisations to support the troubled families initiative, a specific police and crime commissioner commitment within the police and crime plan. It works with those families which have problems themselves and cause problems to the communities around them.

The force works with statutory partners through the multi agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA). Plans for a force-wide multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) are well developed, and police and partners are working constructively towards more effective information sharing and an improved service to support and safeguard victims.

Domestic abuse

In March 2014 HMIC published the results of its inspection of 43 forces on the effectiveness of the police approach to domestic violence, with a focus on outcomes for victims and whether risks to victims are adequately managed. This included clear recommendations for each force about improvements it should make. As a result of this inspection all forces were required to produce and publish an action plan setting out the steps they were taking to improve the services to victims of domestic abuse. This plan should demonstrate that HMIC recommendations are being addressed and also explain how:

- the leadership will ensure the changes necessary and hold the right people to account;
- the police response when a victim first contacts them (by a 999 call or by visiting a police station) and when they first attend the scene of the incident is improved;
- the force will ensure there is a high quality investigation of all domestic abuse crime;
- victims will be properly supported and offenders properly managed; and
- the training and learning provided to officers ensures they can give the best available response to the victim.

HMIC has made an initial consideration of the plan produced by Cleveland Police. We found its action plan to be comprehensive, following the national approach and evidencing activity in line with the agreed national priorities outlined above. The action plan includes direct reference to the HMIC recommendations and there is clear evidence in the plan of the activity to improve the force response to domestic abuse.

The crime inspection provided us with our first opportunity to test whether changes in the force's approach to domestic abuse were beginning to have a positive effect.

During the crime inspection, we found evidence that Cleveland Police is focusing resources on providing support to victims of domestic abuse and pursuing domestic abuse perpetrators, including through the use of domestic violence protection notices.


Recommendations

- Cleveland Police should immediately take steps to ensure operational activities reflect the force priorities, especially in relation to the daily briefing and tasking process.
- Within six months Cleveland Police should ensure that there are methods in place to:
 - (a) review and evaluate the benefits systematically from both current tactics and new crime fighting and anti-social behaviour initiatives;
 - (b) capture learning and good practice systematically in crime prevention and local problem solving; and
 - (c) share learning and good practice across the force and with other organisations.

Summary

Good

- Although overall crime has fallen in Cleveland at a similar rate to the rest of the country over the last four years, crime rates remain higher than those of England and Wales.
- Reducing crime and providing a better service to victims are clear priorities in Cleveland. The force has an effective process for understanding and assessing the most important risks and threats to the communities which includes working with local organisations to share information and plan responses jointly.
- The force works well to ensure that resources are targeted at tackling current and emerging risks; although HMIC found that sometimes short-term problems are driving operational activity and diverting the focus away from force and community priorities.

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- The force has strong and effective relationships with other organisations in place which are enabling information sharing to understand crime better and reduce it. We found examples of effective approaches leading to successful outcomes. Restorative justice is used effectively to divert young people from becoming criminalised. There is good joint working with other organisations to identify and manage the offenders causing the most harm in communities, as is the work the force is doing with local organisations to help troubled families.

How effective is the force at investigating offending?

HMIC looked at the range of police tactics and powers used by the force to investigate offending, including how investigations are conducted, whether persistent offenders are diverted from crime and how people vulnerable to repeat crime are supported. We looked at how the force learns from experience in order to improve professionalism in operational practice and leadership.

Vulnerability, risk and victims

The force has effective systems in place to identify risks to victims at the first point of contact and assess whether the victim may be particularly vulnerable in order to provide an appropriate response. Unlike many forces, Cleveland Police still attends every call for service. How quickly the force sends an officer and the nature of the response is decided in the force control room where every call for police help is assessed on the individual needs of each victim. Professional judgment is used based on an approach known as THRIVE (threat, harm, risk, investigation, vulnerability, engagement) to decide on the most appropriate police response.

There is a clear victim focus within the force. We found a strong commitment to the identification and management of vulnerability and safeguarding for both adults and children. There are problem solving co-ordinators in the control room, and in each policing area, who review repeat callers and assess what further action is required. However, not all co-ordinators have been trained for the role. We found that only the most serious or long-running problems are escalated to the co-ordinators. The problem-solving coordinators are therefore not as fully utilised as they could be.

We found a clear commitment to improving the quality of victim care. The force has provided effective training for staff in the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime. Compliance with the code is monitored. Staff have good awareness of the support that is available to vulnerable or intimidated victims and witnesses. We found good examples of the referral to independent advisors to support victims, the use of video interviews to achieve best evidence, the provision of victim personal statements and the use of special measures to make court appearances less intimidating for victims.

As part of this inspection we reviewed a sample of recent investigation files and found that there is a strong focus on supervisors checking that victims' needs are met throughout the investigation. Force systems provide supervisors with information about how frequently officers are providing victims with updates. Supervisors provide feedback to officers who fail to update victims. Supervisors are also required to finalise crime reports and part of that process is an assessment of the victim contact.

Investigation

In general, we found that the quality of investigations in Cleveland is satisfactory although there are areas for improvement. The force uses police and partner intelligence effectively to understand crime types and hotspots. We found good examples of specialist investigations being well managed and achieving successful outcomes. In particular, we were impressed by the proactive child sexual exploitation work which identified potential victims through intelligence and used specialist support from other agencies to make contact with them and gather evidence to bring the offenders to justice. This has resulted in several successful prosecutions for child sexual exploitation.

Detectives in the crime investigation department (CID) and uniformed officers work together in neighbourhood areas and share the responsibility for investigating most types of crime such as burglary, less-serious violent crime, less-serious sexual assaults and theft. More serious crimes such as murder and rape are investigated by specialist units. However, we heard examples of serious crimes being passed back to neighbourhood CID officers to investigate and as a result, neighbourhood officers are spending much of their time responding to, and investigating volume crime. This suggests that the right people are not always doing what they are best equipped to do.

In our review of investigation files, we found that some cases did not include investigation plans. Of those investigation plans we looked at, not all of them were of good quality. There were also some inconsistencies in the quality of supervision, particularly a lack of clear direction for investigating officers. In some cases, delays in the initial attendance have had an adverse impact on the quality of investigations. All of this means that the force cannot be confident that investigations are carried out in an effective and consistent way, for example, opportunities to secure evidence for a successful case and catch offenders promptly may be lost. The force recognises that there is more to do to improve the quality of supervision and is about to embark on an extensive training programme for sergeants that includes effective supervision of investigations.

Tackling repeat and prolific offenders

Cleveland Police has good processes in place to tackle repeat and prolific offenders. As of 31 July 2014, the force has 142 prolific offenders. The force works effectively through well-established integrated offender management¹ programmes which bring together the police and the probation service, local authorities, drug and alcohol teams, mental health services, housing providers and prisons.

¹ There is no standard national definition of who should be considered for Integrated Offender Management arrangements. Cleveland Police decides who needs to be managed under these arrangements using its own scoring system.

Repeat offenders causing some of the most serious harm and risk to the community are selected for the IOM programme, and a plan is developed with the other agencies to work together to tackle the underlying reasons behind the offending behaviour with the aim of turning these individuals away from crime. There are four IOM teams across Cleveland, one for each local authority area. There is evidence of a robust process to ensure the most appropriate offenders are managed by the scheme with any risks to the public identified and managed.

In May 2013 the force commissioned the College of Policing to carry out a review of its arrangements for IOM. The force, together with other agencies, was keen to understand how they could improve its approach and how well partnerships were operating across the four IOM schemes. The review found partnership working to be strong in all four schemes. A number of recommendations for improvement were made, including the need for greater consistency of approach. This work has been started, supported by the police and crime commissioner, with the force co-ordinating the implementation of the recommendations.

Learning from experience

We found an inconsistent approach to learning from experience. In some cases, analysis is used to drive activity and service improvement. For example, some Pacesetter meetings are well informed by the results of analysis and this is used to good effect to focus activity and direct resources for greater impact. However this is not happening consistently across the force.

While at a corporate level there is evidence of the force learning from serious case reviews, critical incidents and external reviews such as that by the College of Policing, there is more that could be done to evaluate the impact of police tactics and of local problem-solving activities so that good practice can be shared more widely.

Where specific investigative skills are required, Cleveland Police has generally trained people appropriately through accredited courses. The force does acknowledge that, as a relatively small force, there are many people performing more than one specialised role and that the requirement to ensure that everyone has had all the necessary training for all the roles they undertake can be difficult to achieve.

Recommendations

- Within three months Cleveland Police should develop and begin the implementation of an action plan to improve the quality of investigations which will ensure that:
 - (a) investigating officers and police staff are aware of the standard required, especially in relation to investigation plans, and have the professional skills and expertise to fulfil their duties;
 - (b) supervisors know what is expected of them in driving up standards;
 - (c) the right resources are targeted in the right areas; and
 - (d) there is appropriate monitoring and oversight of investigative quality.

Summary



Good

- There is a clear victim focus within the force. We found a strong commitment to improving the service to victims, and in particular, to the identification and management of vulnerable victims and safeguarding for both adults and children.
- The quality of investigations is satisfactory. We found some impressive examples of proactive work in specialist areas, for instance in the investigation of child sexual exploitation. However, the force acknowledges that there is a need for greater consistency in the management of investigations.
- Cleveland Police works effectively with other organisations through an integrated offender management approach to preventing reoffending among those prolific offenders posing greatest risk to the public.

How effective is the force at tackling anti-social behaviour?

HMIC looked at how the force prevents and tackles anti-social behaviour; in particular the way victims are treated. We looked at the quality and consistency of victim contact across the force and whether victims of anti-social behaviour were dealt with in a comparable way to victims of other crimes.

Community contact and victim care

One of the police and crime commissioner's priorities in Cleveland is to 'retain and develop neighbourhood policing'. In addition, the police and crime commissioner has given a commitment that the police will respond to all calls about anti-social behaviour within 24 hours. HMIC found that in practice, there is limited capacity within the neighbourhood teams, as a result of other workload pressures, to be able to deliver a consistently good response to preventing and tackling anti-social behaviour. Staff spoke of the abstractions from their communities having a significant impact upon the levels of service they were able to provide.

As a result of the abstraction of integrated neighbourhood team police officers to other tasks, each day the majority of community policing duties are carried out by PCSOs. The neighbourhood police officers mainly provide emergency response and investigation support rather than engaging with local people and problem solving. Officers described themselves as being neighbourhood officers in name only. We also found that PCSOs are regularly taken away from their core neighbourhood role to support policing operations such as tackling shoplifting. This limits their capacity to carry out community engagement and is at odds with the police and crime plan priorities to retain and develop neighbourhood policing and to provide a strong and swift response to anti-social behaviour.

PCSOs are the main point of contact for communities and engage with them through a range of mechanisms. For example, each neighbourhood team has a Twitter account which is used to update the community. The force also uses Twitter and Facebook to communicate with local people but does not target specific audiences. However, there is little evidence that feedback from the community is captured or of how it is used.

Neighbourhood teams also attend community meetings. However, officers and PCSOs report that they are not able to attend as many groups as they used to and have to limit their attendance to formal or statutory meetings. This means some special interest groups, such as youth groups and groups for the elderly, no longer have consistent regular contact with their local police.

Partnership working

There are some good partnership approaches to tackling anti-social behaviour in Cleveland. We found some good examples where the force is working well with other organisations to identify people involved in anti-social behaviour at an early stage, and provide diversionary activities to prevent the behaviour escalating to more serious crimes. Where anti-social behaviour is identified and persists, there is good evidence that a full range of tactics is used, from acceptable behaviour contracts (ABCs) through to applications for anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs). There are monthly anti-social behaviour action groups with all relevant local partners represented where anti-social behaviour incidents are reviewed, and a joint plan agreed for preventative activity.

Improving services to the public

The incidence of anti-social behaviour in Cleveland is very high. It is by far the highest rate 1,000 population in the country and more than twice the England and Wales rate. The area also saw one of the biggest increases in reported incidents in England and Wales last year. In the 12 months to March 2014, Cleveland Police recorded 42,826 incidents of anti-social behaviour. This is an increase of 8 percent against the previous 12 months.

HMIC is concerned to find that the force does not have a clear understanding of the reasons behind this very high incidence of anti-social behaviour, or why it is continuing to increase. Nor was the force able to demonstrate what it is doing to tackle the situation. We found that there is a perception within the force that recent increases in anti-social behaviour incidents may be attributable to reductions in partner services. This view was not borne out by any evidence, and also not shared by partners who spoke highly of the continuing joint work. HMIC also found evidence of effective working with other organisations.

Reducing anti-social behaviour is an explicit priority in the force's policing plan. We found that although some officers are aware that tackling anti-social behaviour is a priority, the need to respond to and investigate crime means that neighbourhood officers are not able to engage with their communities to prevent and resolve anti-social behaviour problems in the way they would like.

Community engagement, understanding and solving local problems is increasingly done by PCSOs with limited day-to-day leadership and direction about what is expected of them in this role. PCSOs reported that they are unable to engage with as many groups as they used to. The engagement that takes place is mainly limited to traditional community meetings; there is limited activity to engage with harder-to-reach groups who may find it more difficult to report incidents and access police services. We found that engagement is largely a one-way process outwards from the force and this limits its ability to understand community needs and concerns. However, we did note that the force has identified some 'Key Individual Networks', where local residents have committed to spreading information within their community.

Recommendations

- Within three months, Cleveland Police should take steps to ensure it has effective engagement with local people to understand their priorities and to take action to resolve them.
- Within three months, Cleveland Police should review the abstraction of neighbourhood officers to assure itself that officer abstractions are not having a negative impact on its ability to deliver effective neighbourhood policing, engagement with the community and tackle anti-social behaviour.
- Cleveland Police should immediately conduct analysis to understand the reasons for the high incidence of reported anti-social behaviour and the increased reports of anti-social behaviour over the last 12 months. By March 2015 the force should have begun implementation of an action plan to tackle this.

Summary

Requires improvement

- The incidence of anti-social behaviour in Cleveland is very high. It is by far the highest rate per 1,000 population in the country and more than twice the England and Wales rate. The area also saw one of the biggest increases in reported incidents in the country last year. HMIC is concerned to find that the force does not have a clear understanding of the reasons behind this very high incidence or why it is continuing to increase; nor was the force able to demonstrate what it is doing to tackle the situation.
- There is limited capacity within the neighbourhood teams to engage meaningfully with local communities and to understand their concerns and work with them to find long-term solutions to anti-social behaviour problems.
- There is some evidence of good work with other organisations to divert young offenders and prevent anti-social behaviour problems from escalating.

What each judgment means

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 cuts crime. In applying the categories HMIC considers whether:

- the way the force is cutting crime and reducing offending is good, or exceeds this standard sufficiently to be judged as outstanding;
- the force requires improvement in the way it cuts crime, and/or there are some weaknesses; or
- the force's effectiveness at cutting crime is inadequate because it is significantly lower than is expected.