



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

Cumbria Constabulary's response to the funding challenge

July 2013

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Cumbria Constabulary: Executive summary

Cumbria Constabulary has made good progress in delivering savings so far. There are plans in place to deliver all of the savings needed by the end of this period.

It has been able to achieve savings without reducing the service to the public of Cumbria. Recorded crime in the county is falling in line with other forces; and satisfaction with policing is higher than average.

The force has already started to develop plans to deliver the further savings that will be required after 2015.

Financial challenge

Cumbria Constabulary has identified that it needs to save £17m 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 lower than that of most other forces, HMIC considers that Cumbria Constabulary still faces a challenge. This Constabulary covers a large geographic and often remote area, with communities dispersed throughout. Additional demand on policing comes from a large influx of tourists all year but especially during the summer months. However, as Cumbria Constabulary spends more on policing than most other forces and has higher pay costs, there are opportunities to deliver savings and bring its costs in to line with other forces.

Progress in making savings

Cumbria Constabulary has planned how it will save the total £17m required, as have most other forces in England and Wales.

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.¹ Cumbria Constabulary is no exception.

It is reducing police officer numbers by stopping recruitment and holding vacancies; as a result, by the end of the spending review period, it is planned that there will be 104 fewer police officers in Cumbria Constabulary. This means the number of police officers is planned to reduce by 8% between March 2010² and March 2015; this is a smaller reduction than in most other forces.

1 See *Adapting to Austerity*, HMIC, London, July 2011, p.13. Available from www.hmic.gov.uk.

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

There is strong evidence that Cumbria 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 95%. This compares to an overall increase across England and Wales from 89% to 93%.

The force 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 197 fewer police staff in the Cumbria Constabulary. This means the number of police staff is planned to reduce by 24% between March 2010 and March 2015; this is considerably higher than in most other forces. Cumbria plans to reduce the number of police community support officers (PCSOs) by 16 or 15%; which is a smaller reduction than in most other forces.

Impact on the public

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

Over the first two years of the spending review, recorded crime³ (excluding fraud) in Cumbria fell by 14%, which is broadly in line with the figure for England and Wales (13%). Victim satisfaction remains high at 89.6%⁴ which is higher than in other forces.

Future challenges

HMIC is satisfied that Cumbria Constabulary has made good progress in reducing its spending and has continued to maintain strong performance. The force is in a good position with well-managed plans in place to continue to deliver its entire savings while at the same time continuing to improve performance.

Cumbria Constabulary benefits from additional Government funding above its police formula allocation. This is an important part of Cumbria's funding and should it be removed, phased out or reduced this would have a significant impact on the constabulary's ability to continue to deliver policing at current levels and to deliver future savings.

³ Crime excluding fraud, as per the new crime classifications released in July 2013 by the Office for National Statistics..

⁴ ± 2.7%.

The challenge

Over the four years of the spending review (March 2011 to March 2015), Cumbria Constabulary identified that it needs to find savings of £17m, which equates to 15% of its total expenditure⁵ (which in 2012/13 was £109.2m). Across England and Wales a 17% reduction in total expenditure is required.

Progress in making savings: Years 1–2

The force successfully made 68% (£11.5m) of the total savings required by March 2015 in the first two years of the spending review period. It achieved this through a major force reorganisation, by not recruiting any new police officers and by reducing the number of police staff it employs. It also made some savings from non-pay budgets to limit the impact on police officer numbers.

Plans for Year 3–4

The force has plans in place to achieve further savings of £3.8m in 2013/14, and another £1.7m in 2014/15. This will leave no outstanding gap and a balanced budget at the end of this period.

Looking beyond the current spending review

The force has started to consider what savings it might need to make after March 2015. Its medium-term financial plan looks forward to 2016/17, and there are outline plans already in place for further savings through to March 2017.

The scale of the challenge in Cumbria

Although Cumbria Constabulary has a challenge in policing a large rural and remote area it does have opportunities to reduce its cost base in line with other forces, because:

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

⁵ Based on a gross expenditure baseline in 2010/11.

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.

12 months to March 2013	Cumbria Constabulary	England and Wales
Emergency and priority calls per 1,000 population	168	134
Victim-based crime per 1,000 population	39.5	54.5
Prosecutions (charges) per 1,000 population	11.6	10.2

This table shows that, in 2012/13, Cumbria Constabulary received more emergency and priority calls from the public. It had fewer crimes to deal with per head of population but had to support more prosecutions than other forces.

How difficult is the challenge?

Cumbria Constabulary has a smaller financial savings requirement and a less difficult challenge than other forces. However, it will need to work hard to find efficiencies and savings. As a small force it cannot benefit from the economies of scale of larger forces and must deliver policing across a large geographic area with diverse demands.

Response to the challenge

Because over 80% of a police budget (on average) is spent on staff costs,⁶ 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.

Cumbria Constabulary is no exception. It carried out a major restructuring of the force; froze recruitment of new police officers; and reduced the number of police staff. The force plans to make 78% of its spending review savings requirement from its pay budget. This is higher than most other forces and indicates that Cumbria Constabulary could have made more of the opportunity to cut spending in non-pay areas such as the costs of goods and services.

Changes to workforce numbers

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.⁷

	31 March 2010 (baseline)	31 March 2015	Change	Cumbria change %	Change for England and Wales %
Police Officers	1,238	1,134	-104	-8%	-11%
Police Staff	826	629	-197	-24%	-16%
PCSOs	111	95	-16	-15%	-17%
Total	2,175	1,858	-317	-15%	-13%
Specials	115	150	+35	+30%	+60%

Overall, the table shows that Cumbria Constabulary plans to lose fewer police officers than most other forces. It is however cutting police staff considerably more than in other forces and will also reduce the number of PCSOs.

⁶ See *Adapting to Austerity*, HMIC, London, July 2011, p.13. Available from www.hmic.gov.uk.

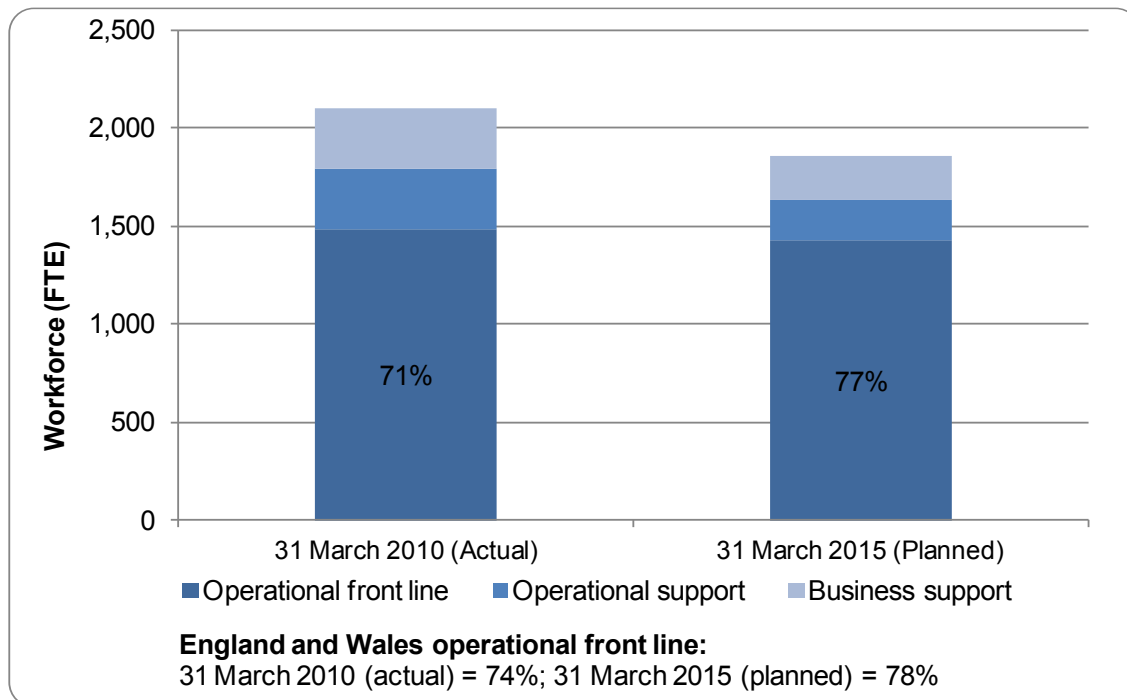
⁷ Workforce figures for March 2010 show the actual number of people working for the force in permanent posts on the 31 March in that year. People on long-term absences (such as maternity leave) are included in these 'actual' figures, but vacant posts are not. Workforce projections for March 2015 are 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 Cumbria Constabulary.⁸

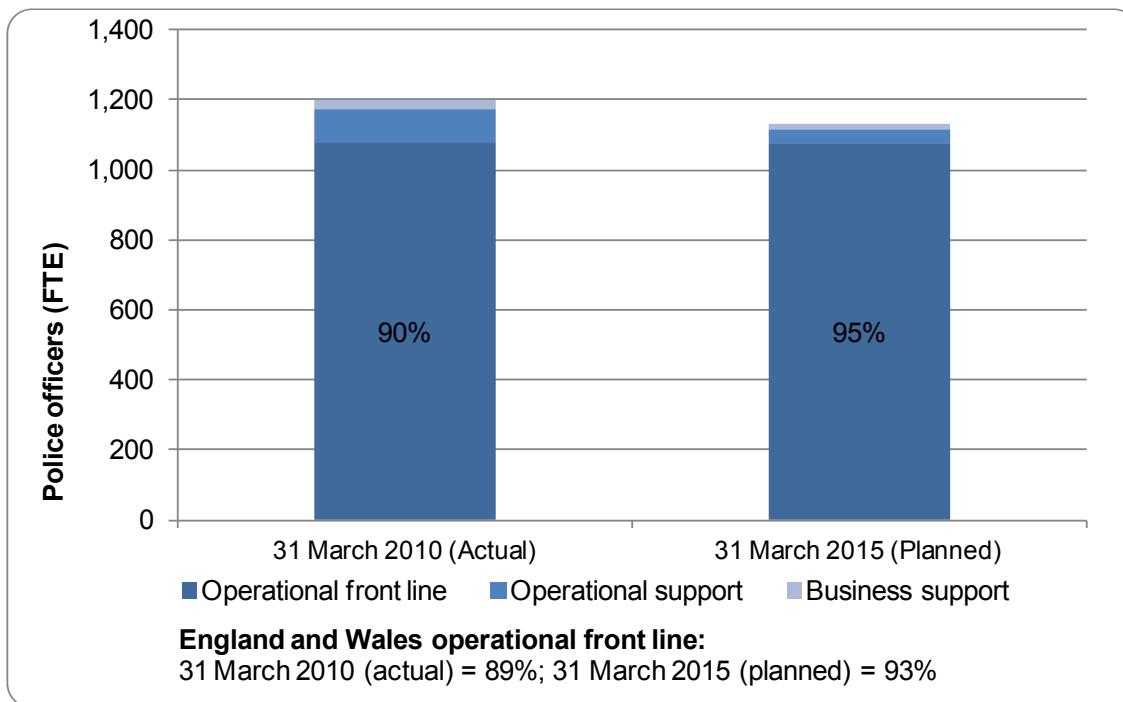


The **number** of officers, PCSOs and staff (i.e. of the force’s total workforce) working on Cumbria’s front line is planned to reduce by 4% between March 2010 and March 2015 (from 1,486 to 1,424).

Over the same period, the **proportion** of Cumbria’s total workforce allocated to frontline roles is planned to increase from 71% to 77%. This compares with an overall increase across England and Wales from 74% to 78%.

The **number** of police officers in frontline roles is planned to reduce marginally from 1,077 in March 2010 to 1,075 in March 2015, as the chart on the next page shows. The **proportion** of those remaining on the front line is planned to increase from 90% to 95%. This compares to an overall increase across England and Wales from 89% to 93%.

⁸ 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.



Collaboration

HMIC monitors the force's progress on collaboration⁹ because it offers the opportunity to deliver efficient, effective policing and help achieve savings.

We found that Cumbria Constabulary has shown a commitment to working with other forces in the North West Region and North Wales which has resulted in a number of policing services being delivered in collaboration, for example in areas such as intelligence; serious and organised crime; counter terrorism; and firearms. In addition the force collaborates with Durham Constabulary and Lancashire Constabulary in IT provision.

New collaborative arrangements or those currently under development include:

- shared training and development support with Lancashire Constabulary;
- provision of front counter services with district councils;
- provision of media and communications with Cumbria County Council; and
- introduction of a triage process with Social Services in relation to child protection issues.

However in spite of this activity, the force's progress in collaborating has been relatively limited and has not led to significant efficiency savings. HMIC is concerned that it found no evidence of other plans or future strategy for collaboration. In 2014/15 the force expects to spend only 1% of its total expenditure on collaboration, which is lower than the 11% figure for England and Wales.

⁹ 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".

Overall, collaboration is expected to contribute to 3% of the forces savings requirement, which is lower than the 7% figure for England and Wales.

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 transformation¹⁰ which can help maintain or improve the service they offer to the public and prepare for future funding reductions.

HMIC assesses that the force has shown it has the leadership, capacity and capability to carry out major restructuring to reduce costs while achieving the force's priority of delivering high quality community policing to those working and living in Cumbria. The force understands the financial challenges ahead; has detailed plans in place; and has a good track record in delivering savings.

The change programme, which has an overarching delivery plan spanning the years 2013–17, is made up of detailed savings plans. The delivery plan includes details such as: areas for review; year-on-year savings; staff reductions; and timescales for delivery. The force is achieving the required savings by:

- a restructuring process that now delivers policing services through two operational commands – crime and territorial policing;
- streamlining the business support structure;
- further reductions to police staff numbers;
- a reduction in the number of communication centres from two to one; and
- a review of custody provision.

During 2013/14 the change programme will focus on implementing the findings of the crime command review. In 2014/15 it will focus on a review of staff terms and conditions, prior to a move to a single communications centre, as well as implementing changes to Uniform Operational Support.

The force has assessed future savings requirements and has high level plans in place to deliver savings to 2016/17 in line with the Police and Crime Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan.

¹⁰ Transformation is a process of radical change that orientates an organisation in a new direction and takes it to an entirely different level of effectiveness. It implies a fundamental change of character, with little or no resemblance to the past configuration or structure.

How is the force engaging police officers, PCSOs and staff in the change programme?

The force recognised that good engagement with staff is a priority in successfully delivering change. Various methods have been used to communicate changes such as: the intranet; chief officer weekly emails and online chats; and a police staff news bulletin. Chief officers have also engaged with staff face-to-face through road shows and 'Strategy Days'. HMIC found that staff understood the need for change and felt engaged in the change programme.

The force also has deliberate open dialogue and engagement with staff associations and the Police Federation. The staff associations and the Federation reported good working relationships with the force, stating examples where they had been able to positively add value to the planned changes.

The force has been keen to also understand and manage the impact of change on staff. Training has been provided to staff in the management of change, and support has been provided via the staff associations and human resources. The force is ensuring that cultural change is integrated with savings plans and structural change.

How effective has the response been?

Cumbria Constabulary has developed a comprehensive and well-managed change programme which contains detailed plans to deliver savings over this period and looks forward to 2017 with high level plans for future savings.

HMIC found a strong focus from the chief officer team on delivering savings and staying focused on their priorities of delivering high quality community policing.

In HMIC's assessment, the force understands the financial challenges ahead, has made good progress and has the leadership, capacity and capability to deliver the future plans.

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.¹¹ HMIC therefore examined how far the changes being implemented by the force had affected the visibility of the police on the streets of Cumbria.

In March 2013, Cumbria Constabulary allocated 68% of its police officers to visible roles. This is the same proportion as it allocated in 2010, and is 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, the Cumbria Constabulary allocated 70% to visible roles. This is one percentage point lower than it allocated in 2010 but is higher than the 59% figure for England and Wales.

HMIC conducted a survey¹² 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 Cumbria, 11%¹³ 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, 84%¹⁴ said they felt either as safe or safer in the areas where they live compared with two years ago. This is considerably higher than for most other forces which is 75%.

11 See *Demanding Times*, HMIC, London, 2011. Available from www.hmic.gov.uk.

12 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, www.hmic.gov.uk or from force websites.

13 ± 5%.

14 ± 5%.

Calls for service

HMIC examined whether Cumbria 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.

In the three years from 2010 to present, Cumbria Constabulary maintained the same target response time 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 force met its target response time for urban 'emergency' calls 97% of the time in 2010/11, 96% of the time in 2011/12, and 94% of the time in 2012/13.

The force also met its target response time for rural 'emergency' calls 90% of the time in 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 and 86% of the time in 2012/2013.

In respect of 'priority' calls, the force met its target 89.5% of the time in 2010/11, 88% of the time in 2011/12 and 83% of the time in 2012/13.

Over the spending review Cumbria Constabulary has broadly maintained its response to emergency calls, although the number of priority calls dealt with within target has declined slightly.

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). Cumbria Constabulary reduced recorded crime (excluding fraud) by 14% compared to 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) also reduced by 12%, the same rate as for 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 recorded crime and anti-social behaviour rates in Cumbria (per head of population) compared with the rest of England and Wales.

12 months to March 2013	Rate per 1,000 population in Cumbria	England and Wales rate per 1,000 population
Crimes (excluding fraud)	45.6	61.4
Victim-based crime	39.5	54.5
Burglary	4.3	8.2
Violence against the person	8.9	10.6
Anti-social behaviour incidents	51.6	40.7

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.

Cumbria Constabulary's sanction detection¹⁵ rate (for crimes excluding fraud) for the 12 months to March 2013 is 37.4%. 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 Cumbria. 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 on 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 March 2013, 89.6%¹⁶ of victims were satisfied with the overall service provided by Cumbria Constabulary. This is higher than the England and Wales figure of 84.6%¹⁷

Changes to how the public can access services

Forces are exploring different ways in which the public can access policing services. Cumbria Constabulary is planning to close eight front counters¹⁸ and three police stations between 2010 and 2015. This is being done in consultation with the public to assess demand, with findings determining the location and opening times of public access points such as front counters.

HMIC looked for evidence that the force is opening up different channels for the public to contact the police. We found that the force is:

- improving other public access points, such as via the force website. For example, there is an ongoing project to look at the feasibility of online reporting for crimes;
- improving its use of social media; and
- pursuing opportunities to increase public access points through shared services with partner agencies such as district councils.

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ ± 2.7%.

¹⁷ ± 0.2%.

¹⁸ A police building open to the general public to obtain face-to-face access to police services.

Conclusion

Cumbria Constabulary has a moderately difficult challenge compared to other forces. Their savings requirement is slightly less than most forces as a proportion of their total spending, and they start from a position of comparatively higher spending, but they are a small force covering a wide geographic area with diverse demands.

HMIC assesses that Cumbria Constabulary has responded well. It has made good progress in delivering savings so far and has robust plans in place to deliver all of the savings needed by the end of this period. The force is committed to maintaining visible policing mainly through its neighbourhood teams. There are plans to increase the proportion of police officers working on the front line to 95% in March 2015; this is higher than most other forces in England and Wales.

Satisfaction levels of those who have come into contact with the force are also higher than average for England and Wales, and recorded crime continues to fall in the county at a faster rate than in most other forces. This suggests that so far Cumbria Constabulary is managing to make cuts while maintaining the service it provides to the public.

The force has shown it has the leadership, capacity and capability to carry out a major restructuring to reduce costs. It understands the financial challenges ahead, and has already started to develop plans to deliver the further savings that will be required after 2015.

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.

This report provides the findings for Cumbria Constabulary.