



Inspecting policing
in the public interest



Anti-social Behaviour Inspection Report

Durham Constabulary

Durham experiences a relatively moderate level of crime, per head of population, and a higher level of anti-social behaviour (ASB).

Our ASB review

In Spring 2010, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) carried out a review of anti-social behaviour in England and Wales. This included asking victims about their experience of reporting ASB to the police, and inspecting the quality of the processes that forces use in tackling and responding to the problem.

Working with the Police Science Institute at Cardiff University, we then used these results to answer the question of how the police can best tackle ASB.

What works?

Forces have the best chance to give victims a good service if they do three key things:

- Brief all relevant officers and staff (including neighbourhood policing teams, officers who respond to emergencies and CID officers) regularly and thoroughly about local ASB issues;
- Regularly gather and analyse data and information about ASB places, offenders and victims in their area, and use this information to allocate resources to tackle the problems; and
- Provide their neighbourhood policing teams with the right tools and resources to tackle ASB, and then monitor the plans the teams put in place to resolve local ASB issues.

This is how Durham Constabulary is performing in these areas.

Are all relevant officers and staff regularly and thoroughly briefed about local ASB issues?

Staff are kept up to date about ASB issues and emerging problems at daily morning meetings, shift briefings and weekly meetings. They can also access an IT system, which highlights ASB problems and links these to local policing priorities, and so provides constantly updated information at all times.

Staff interviewed during the inspection were very positive about the benefits this system has provided since its introduction earlier in 2010. They also acknowledged that while response officers and neighbourhood policing team (NPT) staff received separate briefings, NPT staff regularly attended response team briefings to give updates on ongoing ASB issues and on plans put in place to solve long-term ASB problems. Staff did, however, feel that CID were less involved in tackling ASB, and seldom attended NPT or response staff briefings.

Is the force using ASB information to target its work in tackling ASB?

The force, at all levels, uses a standard method of managing data and information to monitor ASB. To support these methods, ASB hotspots are identified monthly on lists which are used by NPTs to target their effort. All available data is also analysed to better help repeat or vulnerable ASB victims. However, this is not done consistently across the whole force; some staff felt that they were individually responsible for the identification and management of repeat and vulnerable ASB victims.

Do neighbourhood policing teams have the right tools and resources to tackle ASB, and are the plans they put in place to resolve local ASB issues monitored?

NPTs can choose from a wide range of options to help solve long-term ASB issues. These include diversionary schemes, education and engagement in local schools, high visibility

patrols and working alongside youth workers. They record their plans to address these issues (and subsequent actions) on an IT system. Co-ordinated partnership interventions take place at a local level through groups such as Local Multi Agency Partnerships, and each one has its own ASB panel. Each panel handles issues relating to specific individuals and develops plans to address patterns of ASB.

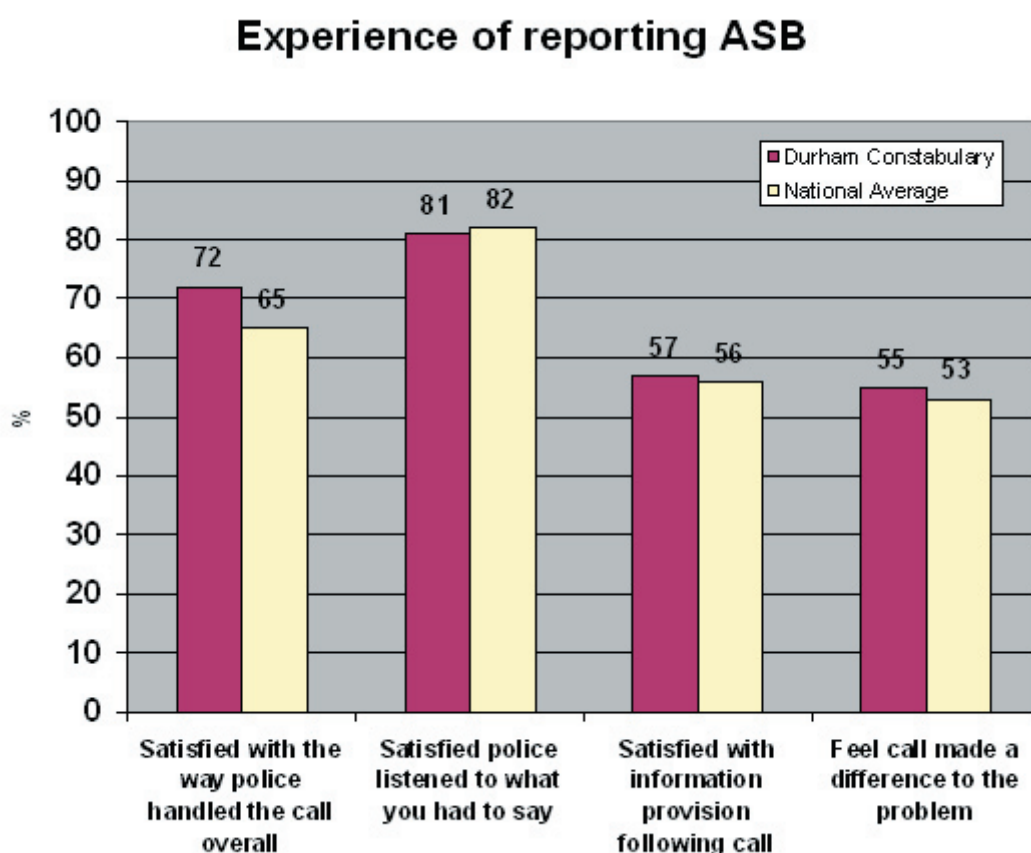
HMIC were provided with working examples that indicated relationships with partner agencies were strong (such as in Chester-le-Street, where police and partner agencies work in the same location). This approach was, however, inconsistent. For instance, in some neighbourhoods, plans to tackle ASB are implemented only if the issue is a local policing priority, and this sometimes excludes ASB incidents involving repeat victims, locations or offenders.

Is ASB a priority for the force?

ASB features in the key policing and partnership plans, but the level of resources devoted Tackling ASB is a priority for the force, as detailed in their priorities for 2010/2011. The use of posters outlining key messages including ASB issues, presentations from the Chief Constable reinforcing the force's priorities, and the good level of understanding from the staff interviewed, all demonstrate the force's strong commitment to tackling ASB.

Results of the victim satisfaction survey

We surveyed 100 people who reported ASB in Durham during September 2009. They were asked a range of questions about their perceptions of ASB generally and their experience in reporting ASB to the police.



From the results, it can be seen that the force is performing broadly in line with the national average for the areas considered in the survey.

