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# Crime inspection 2014

Merseyside Police

November 2014

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ISBN: 978-1-78246-637-6

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# How effective is the force at cutting crime?

## Overall summary

Merseyside Police has clear priorities to prevent and reduce crime. The force can clearly demonstrate how these priorities are reflected in resource allocation and activity. Its assessment of threat, risk and harm to communities enables the force to make appropriate decisions about how best to use its resources.

The ability of Merseyside Police to disrupt organised crime groups using a range of tactics is a clear strength, and the force also deals particularly well with serious sexual offending. However, there is some inconsistency in the quality of victim contact.

Most investigations are conducted thoroughly, with good levels of supervision by trained detectives. The force understands vulnerability, and is becoming increasingly victim-centred in its approach to investigation. There is scope for Merseyside Police to enhance its ability to capture evidence of 'what works' in investigation, and use this knowledge to further improve the services it provides to victims of crime.

Anti-social behaviour is a priority for the force. There are clear governance and oversight arrangements in place, allowing senior officers to drive activity in tackling this issue. At a local level partnership working arrangements are effective, although these are not consistent across the force area with good practice not always being shared.

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 found there have been notable improvements in the Merseyside Police's approach to crime recording. Individual force reports are available at <http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/>

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

#### Good

Merseyside Police has a clear set of priorities, and takes a systematic approach to identifying and tackling risks to communities.

Merseyside Police is placing a growing emphasis on improving the service provided to victims, especially the quality of victim contact.

The force uses a broad range of tactics to prevent and reduce crime. The force's response to organised crime is particularly well co-ordinated.

There are examples of effective partnership working at a neighbourhood level although consistency across the force is lacking.

### How effective is the force at investigating offending?

#### Good

The quality of investigation in Merseyside is generally good, with good standards of supervision. The levels of training among detectives are appropriate, but there are few opportunities offered to non-detectives to develop their investigative skills.

The force understands vulnerability, and is able to reliably identify vulnerable and repeat victims of crime. However vulnerability risk assessments are not always completed at the scene of a crime, creating a potential delay in assessing risk and taking appropriate action.

Merseyside Police has a good analytical capability, with mechanisms in place to review and learn from investigations. Its ability to capture evidence of 'what works' in investigation and to use this to continually enhance the service it provides to the public is limited but improving.

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

#### Good

Anti-social behaviour is a clear priority for Merseyside Police, with good arrangements in place for understanding victim vulnerability and monitoring performance.

Partnership work is actively driven by the force at a neighbourhood level, although it is not consistently co-ordinated which means that some opportunities for sharing good practice are being missed.

# 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 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.

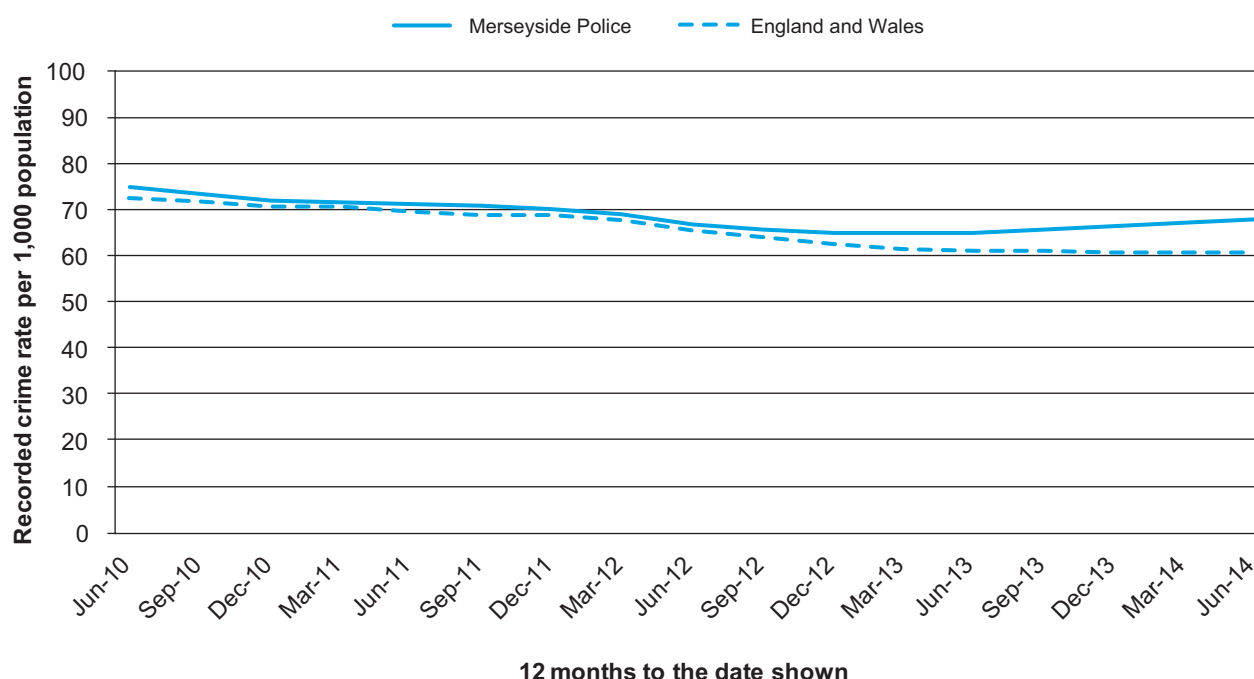
## Crime

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 9 percent in Merseyside 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 2 percent in Merseyside, compared with a reduction of 16 percent across England and Wales.

Looking at the 12 months prior to the end of June 2014; recorded crime (excluding fraud) in Merseyside increased by 4 percent. This is 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 Merseyside (per 1,000 population) compared with the rest of England and Wales.

12 months to June 2014	Merseyside Police rate (per 1,000 population)	England and Wales total rate (per 1,000 population)
Crime excluding fraud	67.9	60.7
Victim-based crime	56.9	53.9
Sexual offences	1.1	1.2
Violence with injury	5.5	5.9
Burglary in a dwelling*	10.7	8.9
Anti-social behaviour incidents*	42.1	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](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/crime-and-policing-comparator)

Merseyside's detection rate (for crimes excluding fraud) for the 12 months to the end of March 2014 was 29 percent which was higher the figure of 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

Merseyside Police has worked constructively with the police and crime commissioner, its communities and partner agencies to develop the priorities within the police and crime commissioner's four year police and crime plan. The engagement with partner agencies included hosting conferences with representatives from the five local authorities, the Merseyside community rehabilitation company, HMP Liverpool, Merseyside registered social landlords and the fire and rescue service. Community engagement events and feedback questionnaires have also helped to identify what matters to the people of Merseyside. The priorities for 2014 include reducing crime and anti-social behaviour, reducing repeat victimisation, maintaining public safety (with a specific focus on domestic abuse and child sexual exploitation (CSE)) and tackling serious and organised crime.

The force has aligned much of its operational activity to the priorities set out in the police and crime plan and senior officers communicate these priorities to staff with clarity and consistency. Merseyside Police has strong and effective processes for managing and disrupting the most harmful criminals, through a variety of strategic and tactical meetings. At a local level the force ensures that there are sufficient resources to deal with community issues alongside more serious crimes.

## Quality of victim contact

Merseyside Police is placing greater emphasis on improving the services it provides to victims of crime and anti-social behaviour. In addition to the surveys that all forces undertake, the force commissions an external company to survey victims of burglary, violence, vehicle crime and racist incidents to gain a better insight into the causes of dissatisfaction with the service they have received from the police. The survey work has identified that like many forces, victims are most dissatisfied when the police fail to keep them informed on the progress of investigations. In order to gain a greater understanding of the causes of dissatisfaction for violent crime victims, the force's corporate services department reviews ten violent crime reports for each local policing area (BCU) per month. The reviews establish if victims have been regularly contacted and if victim contracts have been put in place. A contract is given to every victim when a police officer attends a crime. They set out how often and by what means the victim wishes to be contacted as the investigation progresses.

There are strong governance arrangements in place to identify causes of dissatisfaction and improve the service provided to victims of crime. For example chief officers hold regular meetings with BCU leaders to review findings from the victim surveys and the violent crime file reviews. These meetings are used to hold leaders to account for victim satisfaction, identify areas for improvement and best practice. Individual cases of dissatisfaction are addressed by local staff that will make contact with the victim and address their concerns.

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, Merseyside had a victim satisfaction rate of 85.3 percent ( $\pm 0.1$  percent) which is higher than the satisfaction rate in England and Wales of 85.0 percent ( $\pm 0.2$  percent). Its current rate is lower than 89.2 percent ( $\pm 0.1$  percent) recorded for Merseyside in the previous year.

## Use of police tactics

Merseyside Police uses a broad range of police tactics to reduce crime and prevent offending. It is particularly active in its approach to disrupting organised crime groups (OCGs). Activity to dismantle these groups is well co-ordinated across the force, with clear oversight from senior officers. The force has a manual of tactics for OCG disruption which officers use to select appropriate methods to tackle the threats that these groups pose. Police officers working within neighbourhood teams have responsibility for researching OCGs and for providing assistance to disrupt the activities of those operating in their area. Local crime prevention initiatives include officers working in schools to raise awareness of the dangers of guns and gangs. The force also runs a 'Youths at Risk Group' to identify and work with those who are most likely to become involved in gang-related crime. Social services and landlords are part of this initiative.

Police tactics to address burglary and violent crimes are discussed at force level meetings, but it is the responsibility of local teams to determine the best options to address crime in their area. The force is becoming increasingly focused on preventative measures to tackle these types of crime; for example, focusing patrol activity in known high crime locations to prevent crimes occurring.

## Partnership working and information sharing

The force works with a number of partner organisations to help it to reduce crime, including local authorities and the fire and rescue service. Community Safety Partnerships are in place in every force district. They are used to identify emerging issues and develop problem solving approaches. The force also uses its links with probation providers and housing associations to identify and take action against those individuals posing a particular threat to communities. Specialist teams have also developed good partnership working arrangements, for example, the 'Unity' team, which deals with rape and other serious sexual offending. The team has close and effective links with partners, in particular the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) with whom it is co-located. However, partnership activity is not well co-ordinated or consistent across the force, leading to some examples of good practice occurring in isolation. Partners are not always involved in management level meetings, such as those convened to oversee burglary and violence, which limits their ability to shape longer term approaches to dealing with these crime types.

Prolific offenders are identified and there are reliable processes in place for ensuring that they are brought to the attention of partner agencies where appropriate. A multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) process is used for cases of domestic abuse and hate crime. All victims categorised as being at high risk of harm are referred to this forum so that partners can consider interventions. Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is subject to specific partnership arrangements via multi-agency CSE meetings (MACSE). These are attended by all relevant partner agencies and provide an opportunity to highlight concerns regarding children at risk. These meetings are still being embedded and will be subject to a joint review by the force and children's services to assess their effectiveness. To support these arrangements there is a force CSE co-ordinator working in every force district. There are examples of good practice at local MARACs, for instance in the Wirral a monitoring form is completed with a dynamic risk assessment of each victim. This is emailed automatically to 32 different agencies, alerting them to the case and seeking their assistance in managing and reducing the risks to the victim. However, different MARAC risk assessment methods are used in different parts of the force, which could mean that a victim would be categorised as high risk in one area, but not in another.

## 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 action plan submitted by Merseyside Police. We found that the plan is a detailed one that incorporates the recommendations made by HMIC for the force. The plan outlines activity that is in line with the agreed national priorities for forces to improve their 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.

HMIC found evidence that in cases of domestic abuse, officers have to manually check a different IT system in order to retrieve information about victim vulnerability. The staff working in the force contact centre do not have access to this system, so are unable to enter information on it. This has been commented on by HMIC in a recent report, and the force is working to automate a link between the two systems.

## Summary



Good

- Merseyside Police has a clear set of priorities, and takes a systematic approach to identifying and tackling risks to communities.
- Merseyside Police is placing a growing emphasis on improving the service provided to victims, especially the quality of victim contact.
- The force uses a broad range of tactics to prevent and reduce crime. The force's response to organised crime is particularly well co-ordinated.
- There are examples of effective partnership working at a neighbourhood level although consistency across the force is lacking.

# 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

To ensure incidents are prioritised and receive the appropriate response at the first point of contact, the force has trained staff in their communication centres to provide a response based on individual needs, ensuring those most at risk are given the support and service they need. Call handlers are assisted in deciding the most appropriate response to incidents by using an automated checking mechanism which searches the force's IT systems. These checks will highlight if a victim has already been identified as a vulnerable or repeat victim and will assist in determining the appropriate initial response and risk assessment.

The force requires officers attending incidents of crime or anti-social behaviour to complete a risk assessment form for every victim whom they judge may be vulnerable. The purpose of completing the risk assessment form is to assist officers in identifying and mitigating risk at the time of attendance. When completed, the form contains sufficient information to enable specialists to subsequently carry out more comprehensive risk assessments, share information with partner agencies and take action to mitigate risks. The force mandates that officers must complete the risk assessment with the victim while at the scene of the incident. However, this does not always happen, for example if an officer is deployed to another incident or their mobile IT equipment is not working, they may obtain some personal details at the time and complete the remainder of the form at the end of their shift. This creates a potential delay in assessing risk and taking appropriate action at the time, may lead to the omission of important facts of the case and subsequent delays in carrying out detailed risk assessments.

A grading system is used for victims, with those at highest risk of harm categorised as 'Gold' victims. This grading dictates the type of service that they subsequently receive as well as the level of supervision from senior officers. Cases involving 'Gold' victims are dealt with by specialist detectives, and inspectors assume a management role, giving a high level of oversight. The force's Witness Care Unit offers some support to witnesses throughout the court process. There is consultation with victims on how they wish their case to be finalised, but relatively little use of restorative justice or other out-of-court disposals.



The force has provided e-learning on the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime to the workforce. Supervisors carry out regular checks to ensure that victims are being kept up to date at the agreed intervals. Partner agencies told HMIC they think the force is victim focused and there were many positive comments about the victim-centred approach of many individual officers, in particular those working within specialist teams such as those responsible for investigating rape.

## Investigation

The quality of investigations in Merseyside is generally good. However, the review of 20 crime investigations showed that some opportunities to pursue lines of enquiry were missed. The majority of investigations are supervised well, by accredited detectives. Officers use a standard checklist to ensure that evidence gathering opportunities are pursued, such as forensic clues or eyewitnesses. The quality of investigation plans for burglary and violent crime is monitored centrally by the force. Standards vary across teams, but investigation plans are generally of a satisfactory standard.

Merseyside detectives are trained and accredited to a national level, or are in the process of going through this training. However, there is very little investigative training provided to officers who are not detectives but who nonetheless need to maintain their skills as investigators, for example, if they are first to arrive at a crime scene and are required to preserve evidence. Continuous Professional Development is not consistently provided, and the in-house 'Crime Academy' which the force used to have has been closed for financial reasons.

There are dedicated teams to investigate burglaries in each of the five force districts, as well as a more generic investigative capability. Most violence resulting in injury (and any more serious crime) are investigated by detectives rather than neighbourhood officers. This means that many of those investigating crimes in Merseyside are more highly trained and experienced than those in most other forces. When crime is linked with anti-social behaviour, detectives work closely with neighbourhood teams and ensure that there is an effective response to both the crime and the associated anti-social behaviour. This demonstrates the ability of Merseyside Police to find links between offenders and their activities, and respond in a co-ordinated way. The force is also developing its ability to investigate emerging crime types. A dedicated team has been assembled specifically to tackle cyber-crime, and a team that tackles child sexual exploitation (CSE) works closely with the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP).



## Tackling repeat and prolific offenders

The force has strong partnership arrangements in place for managing the most prolific offenders who pose a risk to the public. According to the force's definition,<sup>1</sup> Merseyside Police had 270 prolific offenders as of 31 July 2014. Integrated offender management (IOM)<sup>2</sup> arrangements are in place across each of the five force districts. As of 31 July 2014, the force had 497 offenders under the IOM programme.

In April 2014 the force introduced an electronic IOM system (CORVUS) which provides a consistent means of identifying individuals who are dealt with through the integrated offender management arrangements. The CORVUS system is also accessed by partner agencies working with the police to prevent reoffending. The system shows relevant information about the individual, the support they have received so far and whether they have previously been dealt with as part of these arrangements. The force is in the process of developing performance data for reoffending rates and the effectiveness of pathways.

## Learning from experience

Merseyside Police has a strong analytical capability, and day-to-day policing business is routinely analysed. For example, burglary has been identified as a force priority for a period of three months. A force lead has been nominated to co-ordinate activity, and holds each of the force districts to account for their plans. Analysis is conducted to show trends, hotspots and offender profiles. This shows an understanding of both the problems the force faces and the effectiveness of its interventions. Tackling violent crime is also a force priority, with similar analysis carried out on trends for both 28 day periods and rolling 12 month periods.

<sup>1</sup> Merseyside Police define a prolific offender as: "Prolific and Priority Offenders" (PPO) – There are three strands; Deter Young Offenders, Catch and Convict and Rehabilitate and Resettle. While traditionally a PPO would predominantly be an acquisitive crime offender this is not exclusively the case and inclusion can be for a variety of offending types including violence.

<sup>2</sup> Merseyside Police uses the following criteria to decide if an offender should be part of the IOM programme: "CORVUS IOM highlights those individuals within a geographic area that should be reviewed for potential inclusion in IOM schemes. Initial consideration for inclusion is based upon a nominal scoring at a sufficient level against an agreed scoring matrix that has been developed in line with Community Safety Partnership Priorities. Not all nominals highlighted by the system will be included in the IOM cohort but will be considered for inclusion.

The force runs an internal quarterly inspection process which looks at specific issues such as resourcing and performance. This is one of a number of processes used regularly by the force to plan and prioritise activity. During the course of the quarterly inspections, investigative activity is reviewed and any best practice that is identified is fed back to local teams. The force has a library of 'what works' although use of this resource among the workforce does not appear to be widespread or consistent. The force is developing an electronic database to store learning and successful plans. This should provide the force with the ability to capture and disseminate learning.

## Recommendations

- Merseyside Police should immediately take steps to ensure officers who have assessed a victim as vulnerable, complete a risk assessment with the victim while at the scene. The force should ensure roles and responsibilities in relation to this process are clarified and communicated with relevant staff.
- Within three months Merseyside Police should develop and commence the implementation of a plan to ensure non-detective officers and police staff have the necessary professional skills and knowledge to fulfil their investigative duties.

## Summary

Good

- The quality of investigation in Merseyside is generally good, with good standards of supervision. The levels of training among detectives are appropriate, but there are few opportunities offered to non-detectives to develop their investigative skills.
- The force understands vulnerability, and is able to reliably identify vulnerable and repeat victims of crime. However vulnerability risk assessments are not always completed at the scene of a crime, creating a potential delay in assessing risk and taking appropriate action.
- Merseyside Police has a good analytical capability, with mechanisms in place to review and learn from investigations. Its ability to capture evidence of 'what works' in investigation and to use this to continually enhance the service it provides to the public is limited but improving.

# 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

In the 12 months to March 2014, Merseyside Police recorded 58,424 incidents of anti-social behaviour. This is a reduction of 4 percent against the previous 12 months.

Anti-social behaviour is a priority for Merseyside Police. Clear governance and reporting arrangements are in place, which allow the force to identify problems and monitor the effectiveness of interventions. The police and crime commissioner chairs a board at which all five local authorities are represented. All five local authorities also have active Community Safety Partnerships, for whom anti-social behaviour is a priority. Force performance at tackling anti-social behaviour is discussed regularly at senior officer and local levels, helping to generate and sustain focus on this area.

Regular public meetings covering anti-social behaviour are held in Merseyside, but the value of these is limited by the fact that they are not well attended. Social media is used to communicate with communities, and at least one neighbourhood team in each of the force districts has a Twitter account. The force also regularly uses Twitter hashtags for various campaigns, to enable it to reach different online communities. A recent example of this is #saferstudents, which offers crime prevention advice aimed at the city's student population. This more tailored kind of communication, with content adapted for a particular audience, enhances the force's ability to understand the needs of the public. An online 'Community Messaging' system is used in the Wirral to communicate with the public. Around 9,000 people have signed up for this service.

The force does not have a consistent approach to engaging with harder to reach communities, although pockets of good practice do exist. For example the force Community Engagement Unit has undertaken positive work with disabled people, inviting feedback on their needs and priorities. This activity followed the identification of an increase in hate crime targeted at disabled people. In St Helens, officers carry out patrols with counsellors from Addaction, a drug and alcohol treatment charity, and together they identify repeat offenders involved in acquisitive crime. Where appropriate some of the offenders are referred directly to the charity for specialist intervention.

Vulnerability is assessed thoroughly at the point of first contact with victims of anti-social behaviour by call handlers in the force control room, using dialogue with the caller and research of their location history, which helps to identify repeat victims. Officers attending reported incidents of anti-social behaviour complete a second stage risk assessment matrix, which encourages a dynamic approach to risk assessment that is responsive to changing and developing victim needs.

## Partnership working

Merseyside Police is influential in bringing partners together to tackle anti-social behaviour at a local level, and there are strong examples of effective problem solving activity in neighbourhoods. In the Wirral and St Helens for example, a joint risk assessment tool is in use by police and partners such as housing providers. Partnership data is also used by the force to identify threat harm and risk in relation to anti-social behaviour. However, partnership activity around anti-social behaviour is not consistent across the force area, resulting in good practice not being shared between areas in order to maximise its effectiveness.

HMIC found evidence of some consideration being given to using restorative justice and other out of court disposals as a means of addressing anti-social behaviour. It is not used as routinely or as early as it could be. The force uses mediation services from the local authority to undertake community mediation in relation to anti-social behaviour. The force also invests in initiatives to divert those who are vulnerable to becoming perpetrators of anti-social behaviour. In Knowsley for example, officers identify young people at risk of getting involved in anti-social behaviour, and refer them to youth offending teams for specialist support. The force also undertakes diversionary activity with Liverpool and Everton football clubs, engaging with young people through football, working alongside the fire service and housing services.

## Improving services to the public

Anti-social behaviour is reviewed as part of the force's quarterly internal inspection process, and those responsible for tackling it meet regularly and exchange good practice. Anti-social behaviour problem solving plans are currently stored on the 'NICHE' <sup>1</sup> IT system, which means that they are not easily accessible to officers and PCSOs as a longer term learning resource. The force intends to store this type of material on an electronic database it is currently developing. This will give officers the ability to continually learn from successful interventions, and improve upon the services that they provide to Merseyside's communities.

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1 NICHE is the IT system used by the force to record and manage crime reports and investigations"

## Recommendations

- Within six months, Merseyside Police should ensure that there are methods in place to systematically capture and share learning and good practice in relation to crime prevention, anti-social behaviour, local problem solving and investigation across the force and with partners.

## Summary

Good

- Anti-social behaviour is a clear priority for Merseyside Police, with good arrangements in place for understanding victim vulnerability and monitoring performance.
- Partnership work is actively driven by the force at a neighbourhood level, although it is not consistently co-ordinated which means that some opportunities for sharing good practice are being missed.

# 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.