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in the public interest

# Crime inspection 2014

Northamptonshire Police

November 2014

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ISBN: 978-1-78246-642-0

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# Contents

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How effective is the force at cutting crime?	4
Introduction	7
Methodology	8
How effective is the force at reducing crime and preventing offending?	9
How effective is the force at investigating offending?	15
How effective is the force at tackling anti-social behaviour?	19
What each judgment means	21

# How effective is the force at cutting crime?

## Overall summary

There are ambitious targets to cut crime and anti-social behaviour in Northamptonshire. There has been a relatively high reduction in crime over the last year, as well as a small reduction in anti-social behaviour incidents.

The force has a strong focus on preventing crime and the police work well with partners in understanding local priorities and delivering joined-up activities to reduce crime and offending. The force is improving the way it cares for victims of crime but more work is needed to ensure that everyone in the organisation understands the importance of putting the victim first.

HMIC found weaknesses in the quality of some investigations and Northamptonshire Police needs to improve the way it manages investigations to ensure that it is consistently getting the best results.

Anti-social behaviour is a key priority for the force and there is some good work going on across the county to reduce anti-social behaviour and support and protect victims.

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 Northamptonshire 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/hmic/>

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

#### Good

There are ambitious targets to cut crime in Northamptonshire, and to make it the safest place in England. Over the last four years crime has fallen at a greater rate than that seen across England and Wales and in the last year there has been a relatively large reduction in crime when compared against the England and Wales rate although HMIC identified concerns regarding the accuracy of the force's crime recording practices earlier this year.

There is a clear and explicit drive to improve the quality of victim care in Northamptonshire and we found a strong focus from the force leadership on the importance of recognising and meeting the needs of victims.

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

#### Requires improvement

There is clear strategic leadership and some improved processes to promote a victim-centred approach to investigations. However there is more work needed to ensure that an understanding of this is shared throughout the force at all levels.

There are some key weaknesses in the quality of investigations. There is a lack of effective supervision for investigations and a lack of clarity as to which team is responsible for investigations in some cases. This means that the force cannot be confident that all investigations are being undertaken to the required standard and that delays and confusion do not adversely impact on the outcome for victims.

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

#### Good

There is a greater incidence of anti-social behaviour in Northamptonshire than that seen in England and Wales. There has been a small decrease in the last year. Reducing anti-social behaviour is a clear priority for the force and it continues to invest in dedicated resources and training to enable local neighbourhood teams to better tackle it.

Partnership working is strong and constructive both at strategic and operational levels. The force works well with partners in understanding local anti-social behaviour concerns and finding creative solutions.

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

**Good**

Northamptonshire Police has a strong focus on crime prevention and we found good evidence of a wide range of tactics and initiatives to cut crime and protect victims being used effectively. Frontline staff work well with partners to find ways to divert offenders and prevent crime.

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

**Requires improvement**

Specialist teams dealing with domestic abuse and sexual offences are carrying out high quality investigations and staff are motivated and committed to providing a good, victim-centred service.

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

**Good**

There is a good awareness and understanding of the importance of identifying repeat and vulnerable victims of anti-social behaviour, with effective systems in place so that the force can ensure appropriate levels of service are provided to victims.

# Introduction

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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. On this inspection we focused on anti-social behaviour and the offences of burglary dwelling, serious sexual offences; and violence with injury. 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 and 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.

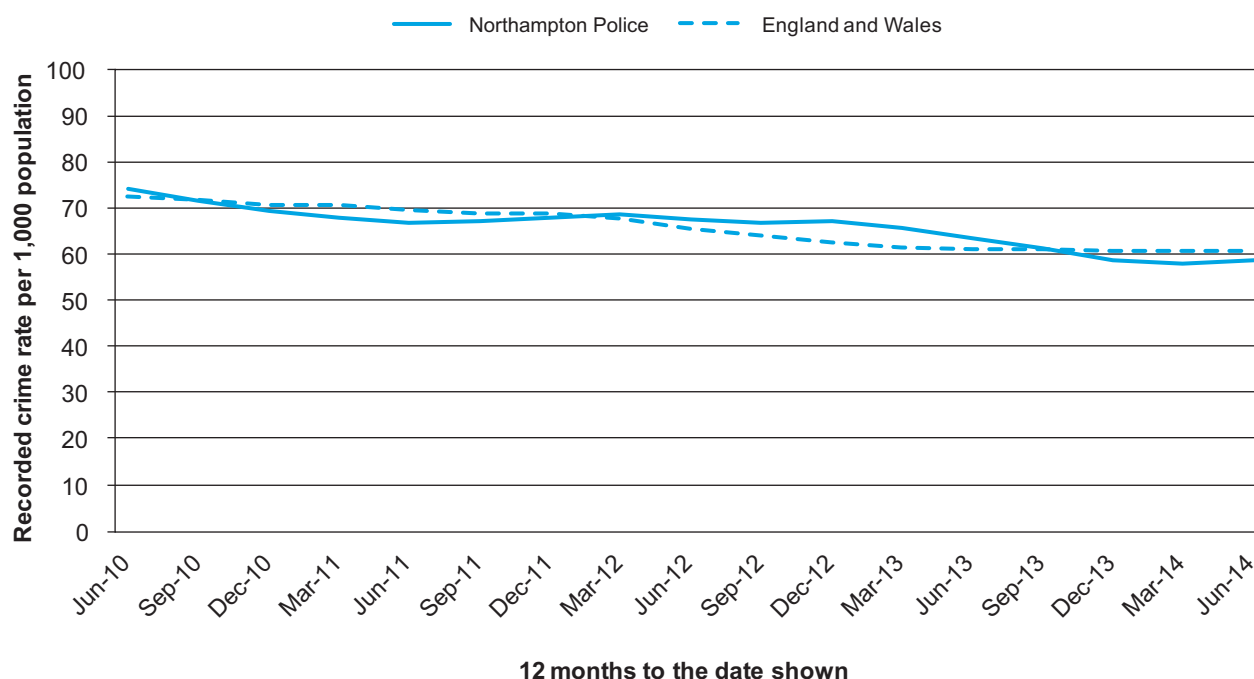
## Crime

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 21 percent in Northamptonshire 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 22 percent in Northamptonshire, 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 Northamptonshire reduced by 8 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 Northamptonshire (per 1,000 population) compared with the rest of England and Wales.

12 months to June 2014	Northamptonshire Police rate (per 1,000 population)	England and Wales total rate (per 1,000 population)
Crime excluding fraud	58.8	60.7
Victim-based crime	53.5	53.9
Sexual offences	1.2	1.2
Violence with injury	5.6	5.9
Burglary in a dwelling*	9.1	8.9
Anti-social behaviour incidents*	47.9	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).

Northamptonshire's detection rate (for crimes excluding fraud) for the 12 months to the end of March 2014 was 25 percent which is broadly in line with 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

The police and crime commissioner (PCC) has set out his ambition for Northamptonshire to be the safest place in England. To achieve this, the police and crime plan aims for Northamptonshire to have the lowest level of crimes in the country, with an explicit target to cut violent crime by 40 percent. It also aims to achieve a more visible police force making people feel more secure.

Northamptonshire Police uses these priorities and targets as a framework to develop its annual plans for policing. In addition, the force carries out a detailed annual assessment of the specific current and future threats and risks to local communities. It involves local partners in this assessment to ensure that all available information can be used in the analysis. 'Northamptonshire analysis' is an effective collaboration between a wide range of partners sharing information and data about the local community and the area. The police and crime plan priorities and the results of the force's annual assessment are also reflected in the local community safety partnerships strategic plans. This has improved collaborative working resulting in co-ordinated and informed decision-making, a good understanding of local concerns and priorities and more efficient use of resources.

The force has recently revised the way it manages its performance and introduced a framework known as 'From strategy to street', which aligns resources to threat and risk and monitors outcomes. On a daily basis the force holds a briefing meeting at which it is able to move resources around the force to where they are needed, in line with risks and priorities.

Northamptonshire Police has a strong tradition of working with academic institutions to assist them in understanding operational policing issues with a view to improving key areas of policing. The Institute for Public Safety, Crime and Justice at the University of Northampton undertakes both qualitative and quantitative research, consultation and engagement with victims, witnesses and the wider community to continuously develop understanding of community issues and victims' needs.

## Quality of victim contact

The police and crime plan also has a strong focus on putting victims first. The police and crime commissioner commissioned a comprehensive study of victims and their experiences in Northamptonshire which led to a report in 2013, 'Victims' Voice'.<sup>1</sup> The report contained nearly 80 recommendations for action by the police and other criminal justice agencies within the county. The recommendations have been developed into a comprehensive action plan.

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<sup>1</sup> *Victims' Voice – Report of the Northamptonshire Victims' Commissioner*, September 2013, <http://www.northants.police.uk/images/mediapool/news/24-09-13-Victims-Voice-Report.pdf>

HMIC found that Northamptonshire Police has a strong strategic focus on meeting the needs of victims. A year on, many of the recommendations have been implemented and it is evident that the actions taken by the force have led to a clearer victim focus among staff. During October 2014, the PCC launched a dedicated victim and witness service, to be known as 'Voice'. It will provide a single point of contact for victims and witnesses and it will work with key partners to provide a significantly improved service to all, especially those with specialist needs such as victims of domestic abuse, sexual offences, road accidents and violent crime. 'Voice' will also act as the local victims' regulator, ensuring that the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime is adopted locally and holding to account those who fail to meet the requirements of the Code.

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, Northamptonshire had a victim satisfaction rate of 85.9 percent ( $\pm 2.3$  percent) which is broadly in line with the satisfaction rate in England and Wales of 85.0 percent ( $\pm 0.2$  percent). Its current rate is broadly in line with the 84.2 percent ( $\pm 1.7$  percent) recorded for Northamptonshire in the previous year.

## Use of police tactics

There is a strong focus on crime prevention throughout the force at all levels, with some innovative approaches to finding new ways of working, for example, the joint Prevention and Community Protection Department which is a partnership with Northamptonshire fire and rescue service.

The force uses a range of proactive and reactive tactics to reduce crime and prevent offending. For example with high risk victims of domestic abuse, there was evidence of a range of tactics used to prevent offending and protect victims such as the use of the new police power to issue domestic violence protection notices, which prevent the offender from having contact with the victim for a period of time. There is also clear guidance for when cautions and other out-of-court disposals can be used as an alternative to prosecution. We found the force to be using a variety of problem-solving approaches to prevent the crimes that matter most for local people such as violent crime and burglary. The Operation Guardian team in Northampton, for example, is aiming to reduce burglary and vehicle crime in the area. HMIC is impressed with the way the force has looked to good practice in other parts of the country in adopting this initiative.

Northamptonshire Police has established processes for identifying and managing organised crime groups. (OCG's) All identified groups are subject to management plans and force level scrutiny to ensure there is appropriate policing activity. The most serious crime groups, those who pose the greatest threat to the community are dealt with by specialist units but

there is involvement in tackling organised crime at all levels; for example, the force report that in response to drink related violence officers from a newly formed proactive licensing team have been involved in the closure of two clubs. This action also disrupted identified OCG activity. The force has also recognised that there has been insufficient focus on the activities of crime groups who sexually exploit children and an investigative review is underway to better identify and tackle this under-reported area of organised criminality.

## Partnership working and information sharing

Northamptonshire Police engages a wide range of effective partnership and multi-agency activity at both a strategic and an operational level. There is a culture of sharing of information at a strategic level to enable a coherent response that makes the best use of all resources. These include the identification of partner priority areas used in both Northampton and the county allowing better targeting of resource to areas of greatest need, and a bespoke response to finding long term solutions to problems.

Northamptonshire Police has led on the development of a joined-up response to dealing with child sexual exploitation which has secured partnership resourcing to develop a multi-agency team to support child victims and bring offenders to justice.

At a neighbourhood level, systems are in place for local teams to share information with partners using E-CINS (Empowering-Communities Inclusion and Neighbourhood management System). This system enables the sharing of partnership information to improve the collective understanding and assessment of risk faced by the most vulnerable victims. The full potential of this system is yet to be realised in Northamptonshire.

## 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 Northamptonshire Police. We found the plan to be in line with the agreed national priorities for forces outlined above. However, the detail of the activity the force has carried out to support these actions is limited

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

During the crime inspection, we found evidence that Northamptonshire Police continues to make good progress to improve its response to domestic abuse.

## Summary

Good

- There are ambitious targets to cut crime in Northamptonshire, and to make it the safest place in England. Over the last four years crime has fallen at a greater rate than that seen across England and Wales and in the last year there has been a relatively large reduction in crime when compared against the England and Wales rate although HMIC identified concerns regarding the accuracy of the force's crime recording practices earlier this year.
- There is a clear and explicit drive to improve the quality of victim care in Northamptonshire and we found a strong strategic focus from the force leadership on the importance of recognising and meeting the needs of victims.
- Northamptonshire Police has a strong focus on crime prevention and we found good evidence of a wide range of tactics and initiatives to cut crime and protect victims being used effectively. Frontline staff work well with partners to find ways to divert offenders and prevent crime.

# 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

There are improved systems in place throughout the investigation process to ensure that victims' needs are identified and addressed appropriately. The action plan developed from the 'Victims' Voice' work has driven a range of operational activity and improvements in the force's approach to victims and victim care. The force has provided clear leadership on the importance of officers understanding their responsibilities to victims and ensuring that they carry out the requirements of the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime. Each investigation file contains an explicit section detailing the victim contract and the entitlements under the Code so that it is clear to officers what is expected of them.

Although we found evidence of a strategic focus and clear leadership on victim care in the force, we also found evidence of attitudes among some staff which is a cause for concern and indicate that not everyone in the organisation has grasped the culture shift. This is further supported by feedback from partners who indicated that attitudes and cultures would need to change before the force could achieve its ambitions in becoming truly victim focused.

HMIC reviewed 20 investigation files as part of the inspection which also highlighted some concerns that the victim was not consistently the centre of the investigation process. The opportunity to provide victim personal statements and the use of special measures to make court attendance less intimidating are not being routinely offered to victims.

## Investigation

HMIC found areas for improvement in the quality of investigations. In particular we found evidence of inadequate supervision for investigations. High workloads within crime investigation units were blamed for the lack of proper supervision, particularly supervision by detective sergeants. This is of concern because without effective oversight, the force cannot be certain that investigations are being completed to the required standard. Opportunities to advise on tactics or to ensure that the best evidence is gathered may be missed. Our reviews of investigation files showed that there is limited supervisor input into investigation plans and a lack of awareness of appropriate tactics available. The file review also highlighted that high workloads are impacting on the capacity of the investigating officers; we found lengthy delays in completing investigations. This is of concern as it can impact on



victim care and witness co-operation. There are also significant delays in the time taken to extract evidence in relation to digital evidence from mobile phones which are holding up the course of investigations. HMIC found confusion amongst staff in relation to the responsibility for some crime investigations. There are a number of specialist teams and staff who expressed confusion over which team has responsibility for which crime investigation.

The exception to this is the quality of investigations undertaken by the specialist teams in the public protection unit. The public protection team is well led and well supported. Staff are committed and highly motivated to deliver a victim-centred service. HMIC found that specialist investigations into domestic abuse and serious sexual offences are conducted well. There have been significant improvements made in the quality of domestic abuse investigations. The file review completed as part of the inspection process highlighted some good understanding and recording of vulnerability issues, and showed that victim safety plans are being documented and followed.

The force has invested in ‘protecting vulnerable people’ training for staff to improve their skills and knowledge in dealing effectively with vulnerable victims. The training highlighted the importance of identifying children who may be affected by domestic abuse in their family, and referring them on to social services for follow-up. After the training, referral of children by the police increased substantially. However, following more recent feedback to HMIC from partners during the inspection, the force is re-examining its processes to ensure it continues to capture all cases.

HMIC acknowledges the force is aware of the need to improve the quality of investigative supervision and plans are in place to do this through a number of mechanisms including: the introduction of the ‘Crime Handbook’ providing comprehensive guidance for investigators; the protecting vulnerable victims training; the introduction of a serious crime review policy and work initiated through the Risk and Vulnerability Group, including the improvement in the quality of risk assessment of domestic abuse victims. The force is moving in the right direction to build investigation skills and capacity but this will take time to come to fruition. HMIC will continue to monitor progress.

## Tackling repeat and prolific offenders

The force recognises that preventing re-offending requires a joined-up approach for all partners locally. The multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) and the multi-agency public protection assessment (MAPPA) structure (which deal with the management of registered sex offenders, violent and other types of sexual offenders, and offenders who pose a serious risk of harm to the public) are both well established and have full partner engagement.



The integrated offender management (IOM)<sup>2</sup> structure is in need of improvement. It has just been reviewed by the force and further work has been commissioned to identify and divert adult prolific offenders. Work is also being undertaken to identify intervention opportunities for young people who are likely to move into prolific offending with a view to stemming offending behaviour and diverting them from the criminal justice system.

According to the force's definition, as of 31 July 2014, Northamptonshire Police had 119 prolific offenders and 78 offenders under the IOM programme.

## Learning from experience

There is a strong focus within the organisation on external verification and the use of academic research and analysis. HMIC is encouraged to see the new approach with the University of Northampton and the establishment of the Institute for Public Safety, Crime and Justice.

HMIC is impressed by the capacity and capability in the force's analytical unit. The force may want to consider exploring the use of more in-house solutions and tapping into the knowledge and skill base within the organisation.

However, there was limited evidence that the force systematically evaluates learning from its own activities and disseminates good practice. There is no corporate mechanism to capture organisational learning centrally and to ensure that lessons learned are fed back in a structured way.

## Recommendations

- Within three months Northamptonshire Police should develop and commence the implementation of an action plan to improve the quality of victim service and contact which will ensure that:
  - (a) investigating officers and police staff are aware of the standards required within the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime and have the professional skills and knowledge to fulfil their duties;
  - (b) supervisors know what is expected of them in driving up standards;
  - (c) there is appropriate monitoring and oversight of quality of victim service and contact; and
  - (d) feedback from victims is used to improve the service provided.

<sup>2</sup> There is no standard national definition of who should be considered for integrated offender management arrangements. Northamptonshire Police decide who needs to be managed under these arrangements using its own scoring system.

- Within three months Northamptonshire Police should develop and commence 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 and have the professional skills and expertise to fulfil their duties;
  - (b) supervisors know what is expected of them in driving up standards; and
  - (c) there is appropriate monitoring and oversight of investigative quality and timeliness.
- Within three months Northamptonshire Police should review the resourcing and process for prioritising the examination of telecommunication equipment seized as part of criminal investigations. By March 2015 the force should commence the implementation of a plan to improve the prioritisation and timeliness of these examinations.
- Within six months, Northamptonshire Police should ensure that there are methods in place to:
  - (a) systematically capture learning and good practice in crime prevention and local problem solving; and
  - (b) share learning and good practice across the force.

## Summary

Requires improvement

- There is clear strategic leadership and some improved processes to promote a victim-centred approach to investigations. However there is more work needed to ensure that an understanding of this is shared throughout the force at all levels.
- There are some key weaknesses in the quality of investigations. HMIC found a lack of effective supervision for investigations and a lack of clarity as to which team are responsible for investigations in some cases. This means that the force cannot be confident that all investigations are being undertaken to the required standard and that delays and confusion do not adversely impact on the outcome for victims.
- Specialist teams dealing with domestic abuse and sexual offences are carrying out high quality investigations and staff are motivated and committed to providing a good, victim-centred service.

# 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

There is a strong commitment to neighbourhood policing within Northamptonshire. Each policing area conducts regular community events to engage with local people. The force is also making effective use of social media such as Twitter to engage with a wider section of the community. It is also trialling a new initiative called 'intensive engagement' which is a technique aimed at engaging the community and generating a local community response to understand and find solutions for underlying problems. The force has invested in this approach and has trained all police community support officers (PCSOs) in how to use it. There are two dedicated community engagement officers whose remit covers community liaison, work with minority communities and faith groups, and profiling of new communities within the county.

The force recognises the importance of identifying victims of anti-social behaviour who have been victims previously and who are in some way vulnerable. The force IT systems are able to flag up that a caller is a repeat victim and the call handlers will identify if the caller is vulnerable. This information is passed on to officers so that these victims can be provided with an appropriate response from the neighbourhood staff. HMIC is impressed by the attitude and approach of officers and staff, especially from neighbourhood policing teams in dealing effectively with vulnerability and repeat victims.

## Partnership working

HMIC found good evidence of strong partnerships, information sharing and joint working to tackle anti-social behaviour. Community safety partnerships across the county are strong - this results in good working relationships and effective joint operational activity. Partners value the police involvement and commitment to prevention and offender management throughout the organisation. There was evidence of constructive and effective joint activity aimed at diverting offenders and preventing crime and anti-social behaviour. For example, 'Jam in the Hood' is an initiative between Groundwork North Northamptonshire and the police in partnership with Corby Borough Council aimed at reducing levels of anti-social behaviour and preventing young people from entering the criminal justice system, through diversionary activities.

The neighbourhood teams are able to share information and jointly manage the risk to victims of anti-social behaviour using the E-CINS system. As discussed earlier the potential of this system is yet to be fully realised and more work is needed to encourage staff to use

the system fully. Partners are showing a clear commitment to jointly managing anti-social behaviour cases through the system and in particular, it could make a greater contribution to jointly risk assessing and supporting those victims who are most vulnerable and ensuring they receive an enhanced service to meet their needs.

## Improving services to the public

Tackling anti-social behaviour is a clear and explicit priority for the force. The incidence of anti-social behaviour in Northamptonshire is relatively high when compared to the rate for England and Wales. In the 12 months to March 2014, Northamptonshire Police recorded 33,841 incidents of anti-social behaviour. This is a reduction of 1 percent against the previous 12 months.

The force's commitment to tackling anti-social behaviour is clear. The force has worked hard to encourage reports of anti-social behaviour incidents. Neighbourhood policing staff and officers are trained in problem solving and 'intensive engagement' supported by the University of Northampton. Each police area has a process to identify local problems which can trigger partner involvement. The force's anti-social behaviour unit uses a wide range of tactics in conjunction with partners, to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour.

## Recommendations

- Within 3 months, Northamptonshire Police should review the use of E-CINS and by March 2015 should have developed and commenced the implementation of an action plan to ensure relevant officers and police staff are using the system to assess and record risks and protect vulnerable people.

## Summary

Good

- There is a greater incidence of anti-social behaviour in Northamptonshire than that seen in England and Wales. There has been a small decrease in the last year. Reducing anti-social behaviour is a clear priority for the force and it continues to invest in dedicated resources and training to enable local neighbourhood teams to better tackle it.
- Partnership working is strong and constructive both at strategic and operational levels. The force works well with partners in understanding local anti-social behaviour concerns and finding creative solutions.
- There is a good awareness and understanding of the importance of identifying repeat and vulnerable victims of anti-social behaviour, with effective systems in place so that the force can ensure appropriate levels of service are provided to victims.

# 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.