



Inspecting policing  
in the public interest

# Crime inspection 2014

Nottinghamshire Police

November 2014

© HMIC 2014

ISBN: 978-1-78246-644-4

[www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic)





# Contents

---

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?	16
How effective is the force at tackling anti-social behaviour?	21
What each judgment means	24

# How effective is the force at cutting crime?

## Overall summary

Crime in Nottinghamshire has reduced over the last four years, with rates now much closer to those seen in England and Wales as a whole. Nottinghamshire Police has a strong focus on reducing offending and supporting victims.

The force has excellent partnership arrangements in place. These bring together local organisations to work jointly to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and to reduce the types of offending that cause most harm within communities.

However HMIC is concerned that there are some important weaknesses in the way the force investigates offending. This means that the force cannot be confident that investigations are consistently carried out to the required standard. We found a lack of proper supervision. Some staff do not have an adequate level of professional training. Of particular concern is the current lack of capacity in the public protection team which deals with child protection and domestic abuse. Staff are moved around on a daily basis to meet demand and manage risk, however, as officers are sometimes having to prioritise dealing with the offender this makes it harder to manage victim care and safeguarding. The force needs to address this with some urgency.

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 concerns about Nottinghamshire 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

People in Nottinghamshire have experienced very high levels of crime for many years, and rates were previously much higher here than in England and Wales as a whole. Since 2010 there has been a large reduction in crime in the county and levels are now closer to that seen across England and Wales.

The force has an effective process to assess systematically the extent of current and emerging threats and risks to its communities. This ensures that police resources are targeted at dealing with the areas of greatest risk and preventing crimes that matter most for local people.

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

#### Requires improvement

HMIC found that Nottinghamshire Police has a strong focus on the victim. The force places the victim at the heart of how it delivers policing. Every call for police help is assessed on the individual needs of each victim. However the force needs to ensure that it is consistently carrying out its responsibilities under the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime.

HMIC is concerned that there are some weaknesses in the management of investigations. There is room for improvement in the quality of evidence gathering; supervision of investigations is also inconsistent, and some staff conducting criminal investigations do not have an adequate level of professional training and skills. Of particular concern is the current lack of capacity within public protection which is

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

#### Good

Fewer incidents of anti-social behaviour occur per 1,000 population in Nottinghamshire than across England and Wales and although there has been a slight increase in the last 12 months, rates remain lower. Tackling anti-social behaviour is a most important and long term priority aim for the force and its partners. The force works well with partners at both a strategic and a local level to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour.

The force has a clear direction and works positively to identify risk and vulnerability in victims of anti-social behaviour. The effective assessment and management of risk to the victim continues from the first point of contacting the police.

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

**Good**

The force has excellent partnership arrangements which bring together all principal organisations to work jointly to prevent crime and reduce the types of offending that cause most harm within communities.

HMIC found some excellent examples of constructive partnership initiatives focused on burglary and violence and working with schools to prevent young people from becoming involved in criminal gang membership, drugs and violence.

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

**Requires improvement**

undermining the force's ability to carry out effective investigations. The force needs to address this issue urgently as the public protection staff are responsible for dealing with high risk and vulnerable adults and children.

The force works well with partners to identify and work with serious repeat offenders to prevent them from continuing to commit crime and cause harm to their communities.

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

**Good**

Mature and effective partnership structures have led to some productive projects and initiatives. Neighbourhood action teams, where police and partners work together to identify anti-social behaviour at an early stage, take joint action to prevent it increasing and developing. The force needs to do more to ensure that it reviews and evaluates its activities systematically so that it can understand better what works and share good practice widely.

# 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 whilst 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.

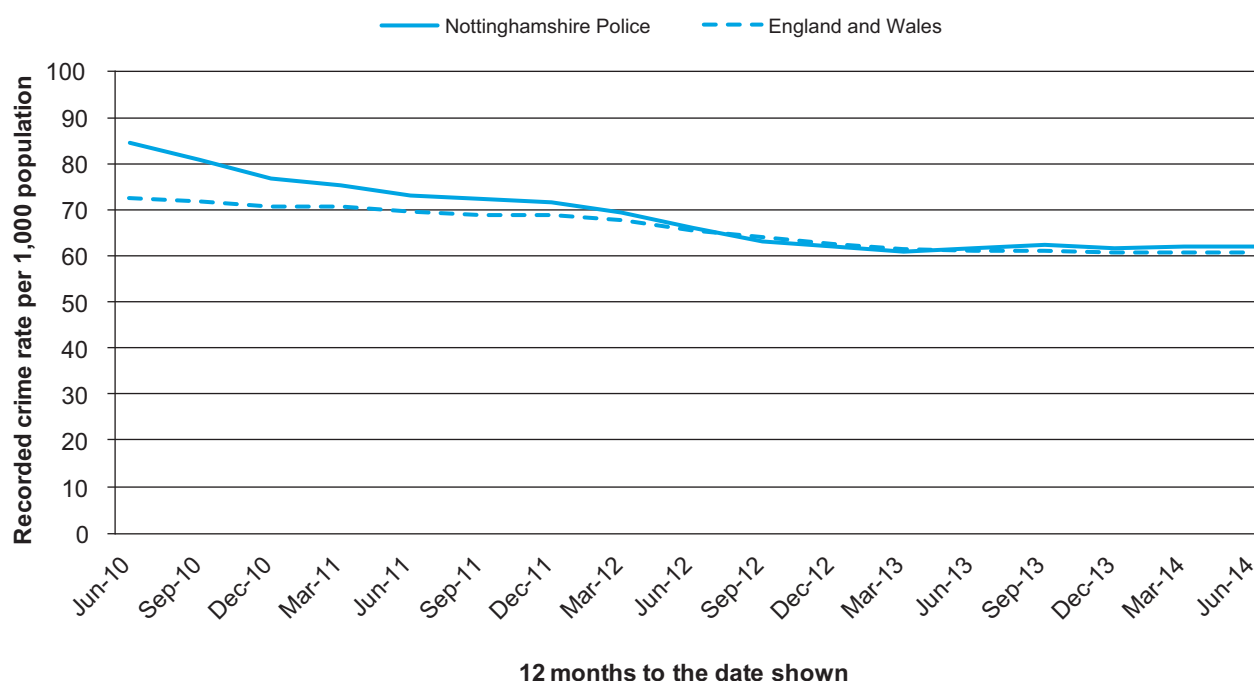
## Crime

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 27 percent in Nottinghamshire 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 27 percent in Nottinghamshire, compared with a reduction of 16 percent across England and Wales.

During the 12 months prior to the end of June 2014, recorded crime (excluding fraud) in Nottinghamshire was broadly in line with the previous year, 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 Nottinghamshire (per 1,000 population) compared with the rest of England and Wales

12 months to June 2014	Nottinghamshire Police rate (per 1,000 population)	England and Wales total rate (per 1,000 population)
Crime excluding fraud	61.9	60.7
Victim-based crime	55.5	53.9
Sexual offences	1.1	1.2
Violence with injury	7.5	5.9
Burglary in a dwelling*	9.3	8.9
Anti-social behaviour incidents*	34.2	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)

Nottinghamshire's detection rate (for crimes excluding fraud), for the 12 months to the end of March 2014, was 28 percent which was higher than the 26 percent for England and Wales.

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

## Meeting the needs of the community

People in Nottinghamshire have experienced very high levels of crime for many years, and rates were previously much higher here than elsewhere in England and Wales. Since 2010 there has been a large reduction in crime in the county and levels are now closer to that seen across England and Wales. There is a strong focus on reducing offending and supporting victims in Nottinghamshire. These are clear priorities in the police and crime commissioner's (PCC) police and crime plan which are in turn reflected in the force's operational policing plan. The force carries out a high level comprehensive assessment of the threats and risks facing communities across the force area each year, and this understanding of current and future risk helps to ensure that police and partner activities can be directed at the areas of greatest risk and need.

There is an effective process within the force to review threats and risks on a daily basis through a well-structured force-wide briefing arrangement. The daily briefing meetings allow senior leaders to be aware of what is happening across the force and identify any emerging issues. This enables them to provide clear direction and move resources around to meet needs.

## Quality of victim contact

The force recognises the importance of understanding community concerns. In addition to the surveys that all police forces carry out to test the levels of satisfaction with police services, Nottinghamshire Police also carries out beat surveys at a local level to engage with the community and listen to their feedback. The force regularly hosts force-wide public engagement meetings and held 120 between 1 August 2013 and 31 July 2014. Nottinghamshire Police uses many different methods to contact the public and to seek their feedback including Twitter, Facebook, web forums, email and text messages.

One of the most frequent causes of victim dissatisfaction with police services nationally is the failure to communicate regularly and keep victims updated during the course of the investigation of their case. We found that partners have a concern in Nottinghamshire that the force's witness care unit is not keeping victims sufficiently updated on case progression and final decisions. Overall we found that there is some inconsistency in the way the staff in the witness care unit keep victims updated.

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, Nottinghamshire had a victim satisfaction rate of 87.1 percent ( $\pm 0.9$  percent) which is higher than the satisfaction rate in England and Wales of 85.0 percent ( $\pm 0.2$  percent). Its current rate is broadly in line with the 87.1 percent ( $\pm 0.8$  percent) recorded for Nottinghamshire in the previous year.

## Use of police tactics

Nottinghamshire Police uses a broad range of tactics to prevent crime and reduce reoffending. We found that the force is good at gathering and using intelligence from a wide variety of sources to spot crime trends and patterns. There are good examples of effective crime prevention work and specific operations designed to deal with long term problems. The force works well in partnership with other local bodies, recognising that solving some of the most complex problems affecting communities in Nottinghamshire requires joined-up efforts from all relevant public services and community organisations working together. We found examples of constructive joint operations which also benefited from good analysis and evaluation. These include Operation Graduate, which aims to reduce burglary of student accommodation; and Operation Promote, an early intervention approach to disrupt low level violence through tackling recreational drug use. The force also works well with partners in projects and activities to divert offenders away from criminality.

We found effective work in problem solving in many areas; Operation Vanguard Plus is a very good multi-agency initiative involving police officers, police community support officers (PCSOs), probation, housing services and local authority partners within the city of Nottingham. This partnership work is positive and highly regarded with a range of effective results, for example, within schools towards reducing gang and youth violence, as well as spotting the early signs of organised crime group activity and identifying vulnerable offenders who may themselves become victims of crime.

Organised crime groups are subject to scrutiny at regular force reviews with the response to their activities prioritised on the threat, risk and harm they pose. There has also been a drive to involve partners to provide a fuller picture of emerging groups in order to tackle them at an early stage. For example the force discuss any emerging intelligence on child sexual exploitation to encourage identification of these groups, with meetings held with taxi firms and fast food outlets to educate the community on vulnerable groups and the role of gangs in sexual exploitation.

## Partnership working and information sharing

HMIC found that there are excellent partnership arrangements where police staff and partners are working in joint teams, or with staff seconded to work with partners. Examples include the community protection directorate, Operation Vanguard Plus, and in the youth offending team. These mature and constructive relationships are a real strength for the force. Information sharing is good between the force and its partners and this is used to develop and support crime prevention and reduction activity.

The force recognises the value of working jointly with partners to make the best use of collective resources and to improve the service for the community. For example there is a good use of street pastors to prevent crime and disorder and to protect vulnerable victims. The force is also working with health partners through the introduction of a mental health triage car. This is a patrol car, staffed by a police officer and a mental health professional, which can be sent to deal with any incident where there is a concern that either the victim or the offender may be suffering from mental health problems. Both of these initiatives have reduced the demand on police time and, importantly, provide vulnerable individuals with a better and more appropriate response.

At both a strategic and tactical level, good partnership arrangements exist, for example, the multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA), the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) and the multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) process. The MARAC process brings all principal partners together to share information and jointly agree on plans to protect and safeguard the highest risk victims of domestic abuse and their families.

## 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 Nottinghamshire Police. The force has assessed its approach to all the areas described above and provided evidence to support its own assessment. It has also set out how it is responding to HMIC recommendations and has published a version of this plan.

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.

HMIC found evidence that Nottinghamshire Police has made domestic abuse a priority with some evidence of an improvement in its performance. There is now a shared risk assessment with partners which has improved the sharing of information. However, officers spoke of a lack of training and this is compounded by vacancies and a lack of accredited specialist domestic abuse staff. HMIC found good use of domestic violence protection orders but there is limited use of victim personal statements in prosecutions.

## Recommendations

- Nottinghamshire Police should review immediately the operation of the witness care unit in relation to the updating of victims. If required, by January 2015 the force should implement an action plan to ensure service improvement.

## Summary

Good

- People in Nottinghamshire have experienced very high levels of crime for many years, and rates were previously much higher here than elsewhere in England and Wales. Since 2010 there has been a fall in crime in the county and levels are now closer to that seen across England and Wales.
- Within the force there is an effective process to assess systematically the extent of current and emerging threats and risks to its communities. This ensures that police resources are targeted at dealing with the areas of greatest risk and preventing crimes that matter most for local people.
- The force has excellent partnership arrangements to bring together all principal organisations to work jointly to prevent crime and reduce the types of offending that cause most harm within communities.
- HMIC found some excellent examples of constructive partnership initiatives focused on burglary and violence and engagement with schools to prevent young people from becoming involved in criminal gang membership, drugs and violence.



# 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

HMIC found that Nottinghamshire Police has a strong focus on the victim. The force places the victim at the heart of how it delivers policing. Every call for police help is assessed on the individual needs of each victim. Professional judgments using risk and vulnerability tests are used to decide on the most appropriate police response. There is a strong commitment to the identification and management of vulnerability and safeguarding both for adults and children. We found that staff working in the local policing areas understand the importance of assessing if a person is vulnerable and needs an enhanced level of service, and they know what is expected of them. Repeat victims are routinely identified in the force control room using a definition that call handlers understand, and by the application of a risk assessment.

However we found that there is room for improvement in the way the force implements its requirements under the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime. There are inconsistencies in the use of victim personal statements. As part of this inspection we carried out a review of a small sample of investigation files and found limited evidence to show that the victim had been given an opportunity to make a personal statement. This is particularly concerning as the file review involved some domestic abuse cases, where victim personal statements could have provided useful evidence for court cases. A number of supervisors told us that victim personal statements are used, whereas investigating officers indicated they were not routinely taken despite this being a frequent point of feedback from the Crown Prosecution Service in its consideration of police evidence put forward for prosecution cases.

## Investigation

It is evident in Nottinghamshire that the assessment of vulnerability is a process that continues throughout the investigation of a crime. However, we found that there are some weaknesses in the management of investigations. There is room for improvement in the quality of evidence gathering. The file review indicates that a tactic that is very often neglected is house-to-house investigation activity. This is often a source of additional evidence and intelligence which may assist in either solving the crime or catching the offenders; by neglecting this area of investigation opportunities are potentially being missed. Supervision of investigations is also inconsistent, and around half of the files we reviewed



showed no supervisory review. This means that line managers are not providing either appropriate oversight or giving expert direction to the investigation process. The force cannot be confident that all investigations are being carried out to the required standard.

HMIC found that there are some continuing problems with staff shortages in the public protection team and these are undermining the force's ability to carry out effective investigations. This is of concern as the public protection team is responsible for dealing with some of the most high risk and vulnerable victims. We found that the specialist units dealing with public protection and domestic abuse have a high number of vacancies and other significant gaps, for example, through sickness, with no cover provided. This is now having an impact on the quality of service the force is able to provide. We found that due to a lack of capacity in the team dealing with domestic abuse, officers sometimes have to prioritise dealing with the offender in custody and this makes it harder to manage victim care and safeguarding. This potentially places the victim at continued risk if the offender is released on bail.

The force is aware of the need to provide additional capacity in public protection and has a plan to increase it. However, this will take time to fully implement, which means there will be a delay in increasing the numbers of experienced staff within the public protection teams. In the meantime, officers in public protection are moved, sometimes daily, to meet demand and manage risk.

There are also some weaknesses in the training and development being provided to specialist investigators. Officers with an inadequate level of professional investigative training and accreditation are sometimes being used in teams dealing with cases that require a higher level of training to meet national standards. Whilst HMIC recognises that investigation teams may need to accommodate staff who are being developed or seconded to gain experience, this is different from relying on untrained staff to make up a significant proportion of a team required to deliver a specialist role effectively. This is a concern where evidential standards and experience may be tested during the investigation of serious crime and weakens the force's ability to maintain effective investigation standards.

A number of supervisors confirmed that PCSOs are attending crimes as the nominated investigating officer and investigating low level offences. We were told that PCSOs have not been formally trained for this role, and do not have sufficient expertise or skills to ensure investigations are completed satisfactorily. This may mean that any potential prosecution case is weakened and offenders may not be brought to justice. This issue has been previously identified as a potential concern with the force during our recent Core Business inspection.

## Tackling repeat and prolific offenders

The force has good partnership arrangements in place for managing the most prolific offenders who pose a risk to the public. The force recognises that preventing reoffending requires a joined-up approach from all partners locally. It operates an integrated offender management<sup>1</sup> (IOM) approach which brings together the police and the probation service, working with local authorities, mental health services, housing providers and prisons together with experts working in the field of domestic abuse, violence reduction and safeguarding.

Repeat offenders causing some of the most serious harm and risk to the community are selected for the IOM programme. A plan is developed by the partner organisations to work together to tackle the underlying reasons behind the offending behaviour and turn these individuals away from crime. The force works effectively with the offenders on the IOM programme and intelligence updates relating to these individuals are provided at the appropriate local daily briefings to ensure the local team is involved in the management of the individual.

Operation Vanguard Plus provides the force with another opportunity to focus activity on emerging offenders who are at risk of becoming repeat offenders. Discussions take place between IOM leads and the Operation Vanguard team to ensure offenders involved in drugs and gangs are proactively managed to reduce their offending.

## Learning from experience

The force has adopted national professionalising investigative practice (PIP) level 2 accreditation for its officers. It has increased the number of accredited detectives and additional tutors have been recruited. However HMIC still found significant shortfalls in the numbers of accredited detectives. The force is reviewing its investigators' skill levels in order to assess its current and future needs and decisions about where to place detectives are made so as to ensure that no area is left vulnerable.

HMIC found evidence of Nottinghamshire Police attempting to learn lessons from previous investigations. The force has a joint performance board to review investigations at a strategic level. Within public protection there is now a forum to review the recommendations of serious case reviews and domestic homicide reviews, and staff have four investigative learning days each year to update and refresh their skills. There is a senior detective forum to develop senior investigators (detective inspector and above) and there is a

---

<sup>1</sup> There is no standard national definition of who should be considered for Integrated Offender Management arrangements. Nottinghamshire Police decide who needs to be managed under these arrangements using its own scoring system.

regional review panel, which meets quarterly, where learning is discussed with senior investigating officers.

HMIC found limited evidence that these methods of organisational learning have been assimilated into improvements in operational procedure and practice for all officers, and found no central repository for sharing the learning across the force.

## Recommendations

- Nottinghamshire Police should take action immediately to ensure the investigation of public protection cases, specifically those relating to child abuse and domestic abuse, and associated safeguarding processes are conducted in a timely manner by officers and police staff who have the appropriate accredited skills or who have the necessary learning and development to fulfil their investigative duties.
- Within three months Nottinghamshire 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, especially in relation to victim personal statements, 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 and timeliness of victim service and contact; and
  - (d) feedback from victims is used to improve the service provided.
- Within three months Nottinghamshire 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 standards required, especially in relation to initial enquiries, and have the professional skills and expertise to fulfil their duties;
  - (b) supervisors know what is expected of them in driving up standards;
  - (c) the right resources are targeted in the right areas; and
  - (d) there is appropriate monitoring and oversight of investigative quality.

## Summary



Requires improvement

- HMIC found that Nottinghamshire Police has a strong focus on the victim. The force places the victim at the heart of how it delivers policing. Every call for police help is assessed on the individual needs of each victim. However the force needs to ensure that it is consistently carrying out its responsibilities under the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime.
- HMIC is concerned that there are some weaknesses in the management of investigations. There is room for improvement in the quality of evidence gathering; supervision of investigations is also inconsistent, and some staff conducting criminal investigations do not have an adequate level of professional training and skills. Of particular concern is the current lack of capacity within public protection which is undermining the force's ability to carry out effective investigations. The force needs to address this issue urgently as public protection staff are responsible for dealing with high risk and vulnerable adults and children.
- The force works well with partners to identify and work with serious repeat offenders to prevent them from continuing to commit crime and cause harm to their communities.

# 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

Tackling anti-social behaviour is a clear long term priority for the force and its partners. The force works well with partners at both a strategic and a local level. There is clear direction and positive work to identify risk and vulnerability in victims of anti-social behaviour. Anti-social behaviour incidents receive a positive and effective response from the force and there is good sharing of information with local partners and joint management of both anti-social behaviour problems and victims. There is an effective process to identify repeat or vulnerable victims of anti-social behaviour as soon as they contact the force for police help and this effective assessment and management of risk to the victim continues throughout the process. The force has a well-established process for follow-up visits to all anti-social behaviour victims after the initial incident has been investigated.

The force and its partners use a range of ways to communicate with communities to understand local people's concerns. These include social networking, neighbourhood networks and ward meetings. Nominated police staff within neighbourhood teams ensure that their communities are given regular updates about police and partner activities to tackle anti-social behaviour and other criminality, to provide reassurance and give community safety advice.

## Partnership working

The neighbourhood policing teams provide an effective structure which helps officers to maintain close and regular communication with their communities and partners. HMIC found some good examples of constructive joint work and information sharing with principal partners through neighbourhood action team meetings. These meetings, chaired by an individual from the police or the local council, agree actions to resolve incidents of anti-social behaviour. Good examples of partnership initiatives include the use of an anti-social behaviour car, staffed by a PCSO and community protection officer. This results in a better referral service to other partner organisations. In addition, the partners conduct joint visits to provide additional support to vulnerable victims.

HMIC found that there was good communication between partners, with officers co-located and working closely with partners, for example taxi officials, trading standards officers and licensing teams. Partners and police benefit from daily intelligence briefings and from shared use of a radio channel. Intelligence from these briefings is also circulated to other partners with a vested interest in the reduction of crime and anti-social behaviour, such as security staff in shopping precincts. Some partners were provided with access to the force intranet but there is currently no shared database to manage problem solving activities. The force recognises the benefits of doing this and is currently trying out a new system.

The force's commitment to joint working is further illustrated by shared training with partners in readiness for new anti- social behaviour legislation. There are clear benefits to this approach as police and partners will be required to act together to improve services for their communities.

## Improving services to the public

Fewer incidents of anti-social behaviour occur per 1,000 population in Nottinghamshire than in England and Wales as a whole, and although there has been a slight increase in the last 12 months, rates remain lower than elsewhere. In the 12 months to March 2014, Nottinghamshire Police recorded 37,915 incidents of anti-social behaviour. This is an increase of 1 percent against the previous 12 months.

HMIC found that the force use a range of tactics and initiatives to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour. The mature and effective partnership structures operating in local teams have led to some effective services. Neighbourhood action teams, which consist of police and partners, work to identify anti-social behaviour at an early stage and take joint action to prevent its increase. Plans are developed jointly to solve local problems and the most appropriate partner agency takes responsibility for leading the implementation of the plan. High risk victims are quickly identified and can be referred to the complex person's panel, which is a multi-agency forum that supports vulnerable people with complex needs. The process for referring into this panel is well understood and effective. There are good examples of positive outcomes from the work of neighbourhood teams in delivering projects and initiatives through, for example, their involvement with troubled families and youth diversion activities.

However, we found that the evaluation of initiatives and operations to target anti-social behaviour is not always properly undertaken. There is no systematic mechanism for reviewing tactics and identifying and capturing 'what works'. This means that the force may be losing opportunities to learn, share good practice and improve services across the force and with partners.

HMIC found that neighbourhood teams have limited knowledge of relevant problem solving models and the databases where this information is stored to allow for sharing good practice.

When used appropriately, restorative justice and other alternative sanctions to formal court prosecution can be a useful and effective tactic in diverting offenders away from crime and anti-social behaviour. We found, during reality testing, that partners and some staff raised concerns about the appropriateness of some restorative interventions. In particular it was reported that some police officers are using restorative interventions as a means of avoiding the paperwork associated with arrest and a more appropriate course of action. The force is aware of the need to monitor closely the use of out of court disposals and has set up mechanisms in conjunction with the office of the PCC to monitor and scrutinise this issue.

## Recommendations

- Within three months Nottinghamshire Police should ensure that there are methods in place systematically to:
  - (a) review and evaluate the benefits from both current tactics and new crime fighting and anti-social behaviour initiatives;
  - (b) capture learning and good practice in crime prevention and local problem solving; and
  - (c) share learning and good practice across the force.

## Summary

**Good**

- Fewer incidents of anti-social behaviour occur per 1,000 population in Nottinghamshire than across England and Wales and although there has been a slight increase in the last 12 months, rates remain lower. Tackling anti-social behaviour is a most important and long term priority aim for the force and its partners. The force works well with partners at both a strategic and a local level to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour.
- The force has a clear direction and works positively to identify risk and vulnerability in victims of anti-social behaviour. The effective assessment and management of risk to the victim continues from the first point of contacting the police.
- Mature and effective partnership structures have led to some productive projects and initiatives. Neighbourhood action teams, where police and partners work together to identify anti-social behaviour at an early stage take joint action to prevent increase and development. The force needs to do more to ensure that it reviews and evaluates its activities systematically so that it can understand better what works and share good practice widely.

## 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.