



Inspecting policing
in the public interest



Anti-social Behaviour Inspection Report

Thames Valley Police

The area covered by Thames Valley Police experiences relatively higher levels of crime, per head of population, but moderate levels of anti-social behaviour (ASB).

Our ASB review

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

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

What works?

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

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

This is how Thames Valley Police is performing in these areas.

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

The force has recently held a campaign to improve knowledge of ASB throughout the force. Daily briefings on ASB issues are available for all staff to see, although often officers have to rely on keeping themselves up to date. Detailed local ASB information is shared at joint partnership meetings which are attended by neighbourhood policing teams, but not response and CID officers.

The involvement of CID and response staff in local ASB issues is not as consistent as it could be. There are strong levels of involvement of these staff in Oxford (particularly by CID), but in other areas CID staff see ASB as a neighbourhood policing responsibility. Record keeping in cases that are transferred to neighbourhood policing teams after being initially attended by response officers is not always as good as it could be. As a result, neighbourhood officers may not always have a full understanding of the background to a particular case.

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

The force has developed systems for allocating resources to tackling ASB. One system covers the allocation of police resources alone and includes all tasks, not just ASB. The other system is run by neighbourhood policing teams and external partners in a local police area. Through these, neighbourhood policing teams and local partners, such as council staff, can be given actions to tackle a specific problem. There are risks when using these systems together that work can be duplicated, or issues missed on the assumption that they are being addressed by someone else.

While some ASB problems are identified based on information about victims, there is little analysis to identify repeat and vulnerable victims of ASB. Actions tend to be aimed at addressing ASB hotspots and known offenders. Performance against these actions is well monitored to ensure they are carried out. The impact of police response is also assessed.

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

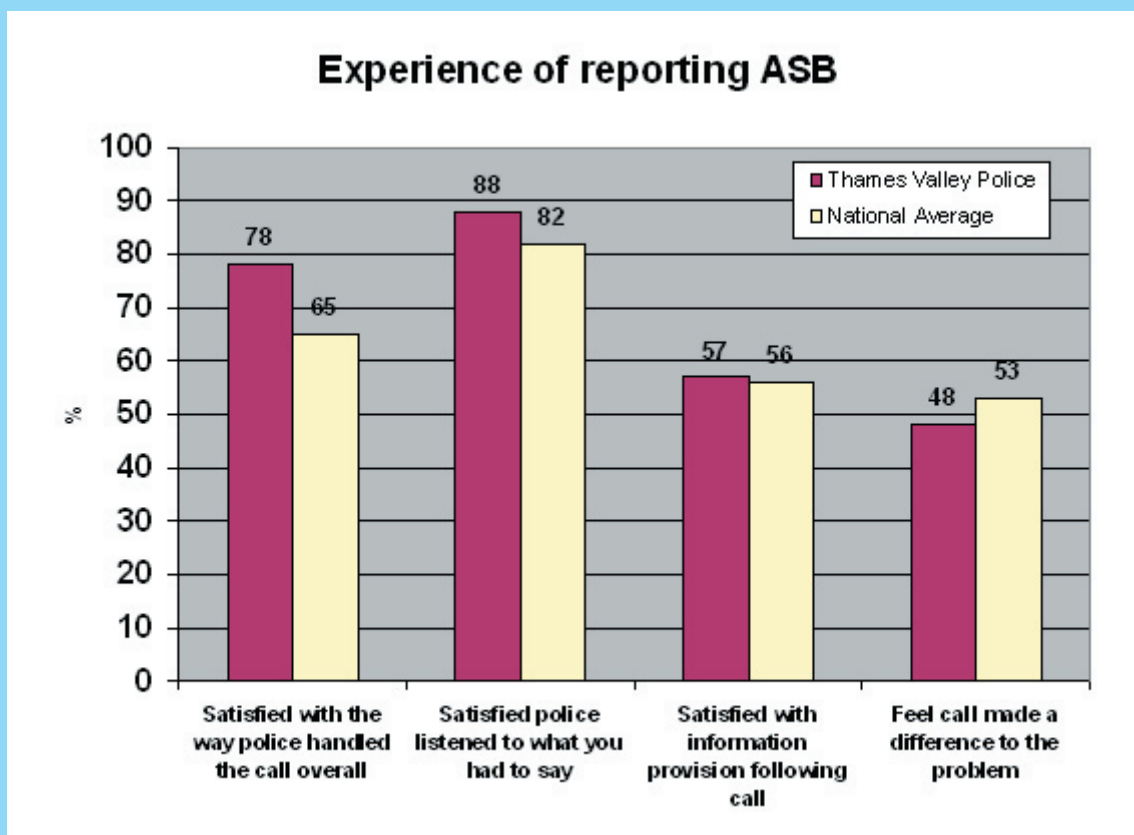
Each local policing area has a dedicated ASB officer who works alongside key partners. This close working relationship means that information can be shared and joint plans developed to address long-term ASB issues. Some approaches to tackling ASB, such as the use of anti-social behaviour orders, are generally well managed across the force. However, there is no single system to help staff manage the response to long-term ASB problems which makes it harder to track progress.

Is ASB a priority for the force?

ASB is a force priority and features in the local policing plan. The level of police resources devoted to tackling ASB matches the force's commitment to treat ASB as a priority. The force ensures that information and intelligence on ASB is gathered, analysed and shared across the force. This is important as it enables the force to respond to areas of local concern and to take steps to prevent ASB in the first place.

Results of the victim satisfaction survey

We surveyed 103 people who reported ASB in Thames Valley during September 2009. They were asked a range of questions about their perceptions of ASB generally and their experience in reporting ASB to the police.



This chart shows that those surveyed in Thames Valley were much more likely than the national average to be satisfied that their call to the police about ASB was well handled. This is a good result for the force.

