



Inspecting policing  
in the public interest

## **Warwickshire Police's response to the funding challenge**

**July 2013**

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# **Warwickshire Police: Executive summary**

Warwickshire Police faces a more difficult challenge to save the necessary money than most forces. It is a small force with one of the biggest percentage cuts in its budget of any force and it already spends less on policing per head than most forces.

It has responded well and made good progress in an ambitious and ground-breaking alliance with neighbouring West Mercia Police. The force has plans to find all the savings it needs to make, and the alliance places it in a better position to face future challenges.

## **Financial challenge**

Warwickshire Police has identified that it needs to save £27.6m over the four years of the spending review (i.e. between March 2011 and March 2015).

While as a proportion of its overall budget (27%) this savings requirement is considerably higher than most other forces. HMIC considers that Warwickshire Police faces a difficult challenge in finding these savings. This is because the amount of money it receives<sup>1</sup> is comparatively low, given the size of the population in Warwickshire and the costs of its police officers which is lower than elsewhere making it more difficult to achieve further savings. There are some opportunities to find further efficiencies from the amount it spends on police staff and police community support officers (PCSOs), which is higher than in other forces.

## **Progress in making savings**

Warwickshire Police has planned how it will save all of the £27.6m required by March 2015. There will be no outstanding gap in its budget at the end of this period.

## **Changes to the workforce**

All forces spend most of their money on staff costs (such as wages and overtime), and so have focused on reducing this expenditure in order to cut costs.<sup>2</sup> Warwickshire Police is no exception.

It is reducing police officer numbers by limiting recruitment and holding vacancies; as a result, by the end of the spending review period, there is planned to be 176 fewer police officers in Warwickshire. This means the number of police officers in the county is planned to reduce by 18% between March 2010<sup>3</sup> and March 2015; this is a bigger reduction than in most other forces. However, the alliance with West Mercia Police and the combining

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1 From the central police funding grant, and from other sources such as council tax.

2 See *Adapting to Austerity*, HMIC, London, July 2011, p.13. Available from [www.hmic.gov.uk](http://www.hmic.gov.uk).

3 We use 2010 as our baseline as many forces started to make staff reductions in anticipation of the spending review.

of the resources of the two forces means that Warwickshire Police will have access to greater overall capacity.

There is evidence that Warwickshire Police is successfully protecting frontline posts as it makes these cuts: between March 2010 and March 2015, the proportion of police officers in frontline crime-fighting is planned to increase from 87% to 94%. This compares to an overall increase across England and Wales from 89% to 93%.

The force has also made some police staff redundant and not replaced others as they have left (e.g. through retirements and resignations); as a result, by the end of the spending review period, there is planned to be 169 fewer police staff in Warwickshire. This means the number of police staff is planned to reduce by 22% between March 2010 and March 2015; this is a greater reduction than in most other forces. Again the alliance with West Mercia Police has enabled the two forces to combine support functions and make better use of fewer resources. Warwickshire Police plans to decrease the number of PCSOs by 47%; which again is a greater decrease than most other forces.

## **Impact on the public**

HMIC expects forces to make savings without damaging the service provided to the public. We monitor whether they are achieving this by examining crime rates and the results of the user satisfaction surveys which all forces conduct.

Over the first two years of the spending review, recorded crime<sup>4</sup> (excluding fraud) fell in Warwickshire by 9%, which is less than the figure for England and Wales (13%). Victim satisfaction remains high at 83.5%<sup>5</sup> – this is broadly in line with other forces.

This performance indicates that Warwickshire Police has been able to make savings without having a detrimental effect on the service it provides to the public.

## **Future challenges**

Warwickshire Police's funding reduction of 27% of its overall spending for this spending review period is considerably higher than for other forces in England and Wales and has resulted in higher than average cuts to both police officer and police staff numbers. It is a relatively small force and without the benefits of the alliance with West Mercia Police would have found the future challenge of even more spending cuts very much harder to face.

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4 Crime excluding fraud, as per the new crime classifications released in July 2013 by the Office for National Statistics.

5 ± 1.8%.

# The challenge

Over the four years of the spending review (March 2011 to March 2015), Warwickshire Police identified that it needed to find savings of £27.6m, equating to 27% of its total expenditure<sup>6</sup> (which in 2012/13 was £100.2m). Across England and Wales a 17% reduction in total expenditure is required.

## Progress in making savings: Years 1–2

The force successfully made 62% (£17.2m) of the total savings required by March 2015 in the first two years of the spending review period. It made an early start in advance of the spending review and restructured the force to provide a smaller operating model that enabled it to make reductions to the workforce. The alliance with West Mercia Police has provided opportunity for even greater efficiency savings by combining senior management posts and support services.

## Plans for Year 3–4

The force plans to achieve further savings of £7.1m in 2013/14, and another £3.3m in 2014/15. This leaves no funding gap at the end of the spending review period.

## Looking beyond the current spending review

The force has started to consider what savings it might need to make after March 2015. The force's medium-term financial plan looks further forward to 2017/18 and there are a set of strategies that sit behind the change programme which provide assurance that the change can be effectively managed. There are five year strategies for the combined estates and ICT and the remodelling of the vehicle fleet for both Warwickshire and West Mercia over a four year period.

## The scale of the challenge in Warwickshire

Warwickshire Police faces a difficult challenge because:

- it needs to reduce its overall spending by 27%, which is among the highest cut of any force;
- it already spends less per head of population than most other forces in England and Wales; and
- it has a below average number of police officers per head of population and the cost of police officers is also below average.

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<sup>6</sup> Based on a gross expenditure baseline in 2010/11. We use 2010 as our baseline as many forces started to make staff reductions in anticipation of the spending review.

However, the cost of PCSOs and police staff per head is higher than in most other forces in England and Wales.

## Demand

Forces face different levels of demand for the service they provide to the public. This section looks at three of the key indicators of demand to provide an overall impression of the challenges each force faces:

- the number of calls the force receives from the public;
- the number of crimes the force deals with, and
- the number of prosecutions (suspects charged with offences) the force brings.

<b>12 months to March 2013</b>	<b>Warwickshire Police</b>	<b>England and Wales</b>
Emergency and priority calls per 1,000 population	96	134
Victim-based crime per 1,000 population	48.6	54.5
Prosecutions (charges) per 1,000 population	5.9	10.2

This table shows that, in 2012/13, Warwickshire Police received fewer emergency and priority calls from the public, had slightly less crimes than other forces; and supported fewer prosecutions.

## How difficult is the challenge?

It is HMIC's assessment that Warwickshire Police faces a more difficult challenge, because its needs to find more savings than most while its income is lower than other forces.

# Response to the challenge

Because over 80% of a police budget (on average) is spent on staff costs, it is not surprising that forces across England and Wales plan to achieve most of their savings by reducing the number of police officers, police community support officers (PCSOs) and police staff employed.

Warwickshire Police is no exception. It made an early start on this in 2010, when it slowed its recruitment of new police officers and police staff, and reduced the number of police staff. The force plans to make 80% of its spending review savings requirement from its pay budget. This is a higher proportion than in most other forces.

## Changes to workforce numbers

The following table shows the force's planned changes to workforce numbers over the spending review period, and compares these to the change for England and Wales.<sup>7</sup>

	31 March 2010 (baseline)	31 March 2015	Change	Warwickshire change %	Change for England and Wales %
Police Officers	973	797	-176	-18%	-11%
Police Staff	765	596	-169	-22%	-16%
PCSOs	138	73	-65	-47%	-17%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,876</b>	<b>1,465</b>	<b>-411</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>-13%</b>
Specials	212	350	+138	+65%	+60%

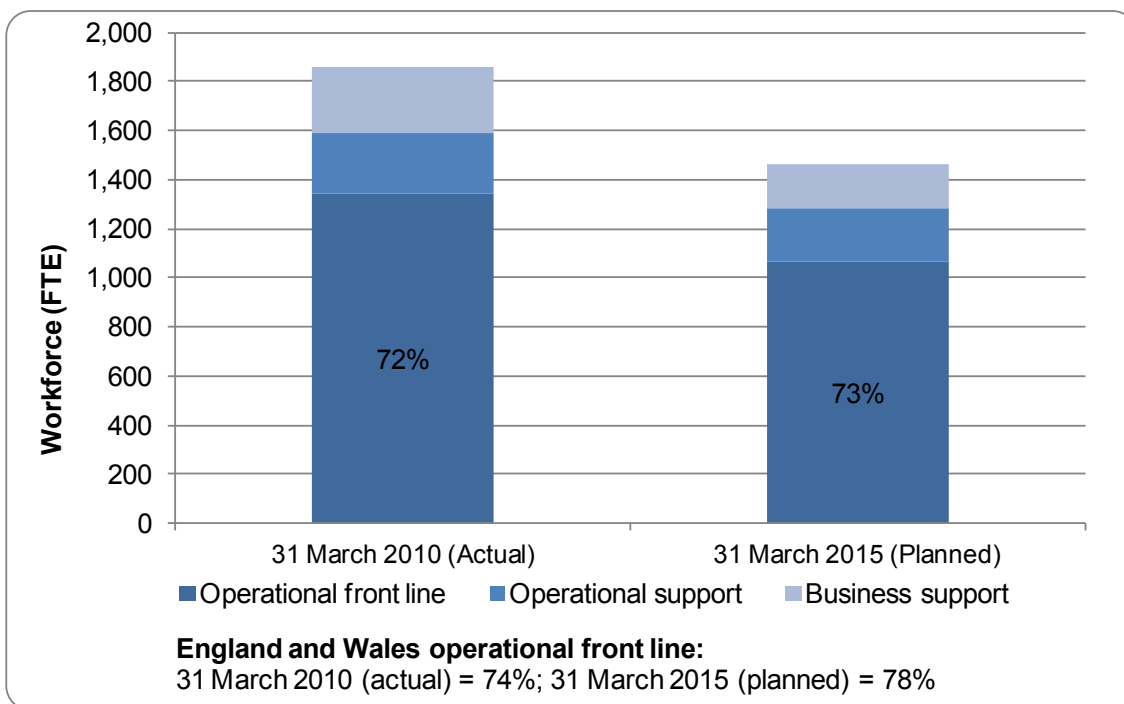
Overall, the table shows that Warwickshire Police plans to lose proportionally more officers and staff than in other forces. PCSO numbers will also reduce significantly.

## Changes to the proportion of workforce on the front line

HMIC defines the people who work on the police front line as: *“those who are in everyday contact with the public and who directly intervene to keep people safe and enforce the law”*. It is important that as forces reconfigure their structures and reduce workforce **numbers**, they focus on maintaining (or if possible increasing) the **proportion** of people in these crime-fighting roles.

<sup>7</sup> Workforce figures for March 2010 show the actual number of people working for the force in permanent posts on the 31 March in that year. People on long-term absences (such as maternity leave) are included in these 'actual' figures, but vacant posts are not. Workforce projections for March 2015 are for budgeted posts, so the actual number of people who will be working for the force at that point in reality may be different, because some posts will be vacant or filled by temporary staff. Forces' projections may also exclude people who will be on long-term absences. The difference between actual workforce numbers and projected numbers should therefore be taken as an approximate expected change.

The following chart shows the change in the workforce frontline profile in Warwickshire.<sup>8</sup>



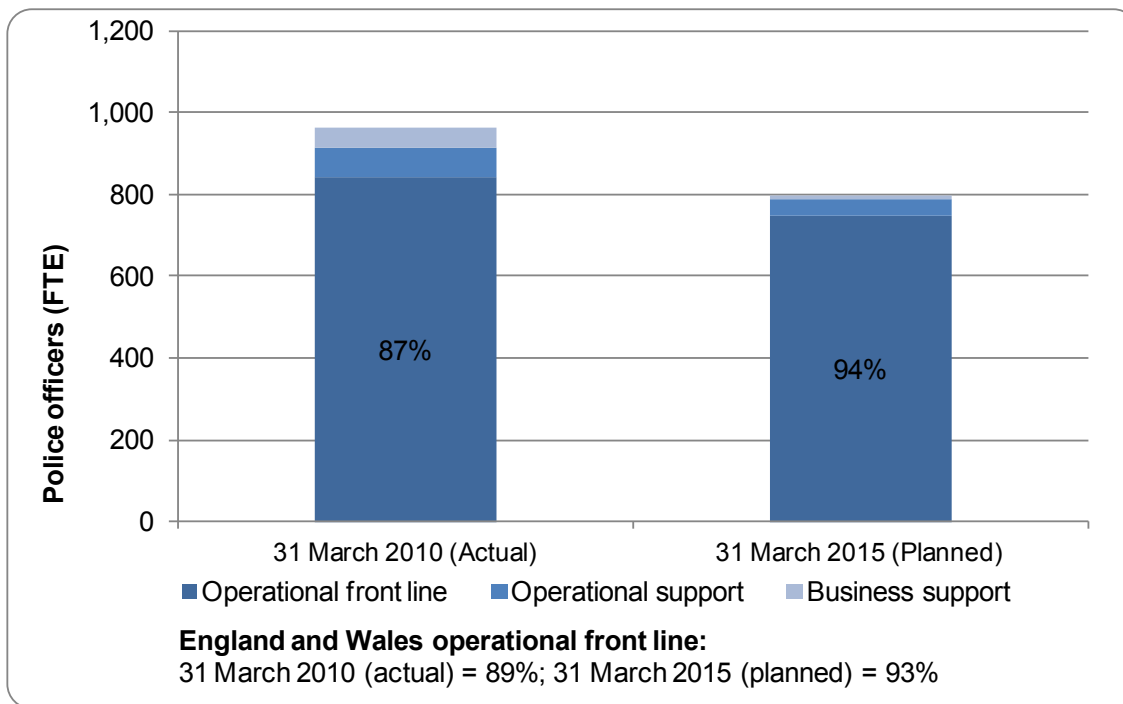
The **number** of officers, PCSOs and staff (i.e. of the force's total workforce) working Warwickshire's front line is planned to reduce by 20% between March 2010 and March 2015 (from 1,341 to 1,066).

Over the same period, the **proportion** of Warwickshire's total workforce allocated to frontline roles is projected to increase slightly from 72% to 73%. This compares with an overall increase across England and Wales from 74% to 78%.

The number of Warwickshire's police officers in frontline roles is planned to reduce by 11% from 842 in March 2010 to 749 by March 2015, as the chart on the next page shows. The proportion of these remaining on the front line is planned to increase from 87% to 94%. This compares to an overall increase across England and Wales from 89% to 93%.

<sup>8</sup> From 2010 Gwent, the Metropolitan Police Service, Wiltshire and North Wales police forces chose to code those officers and staff who are on long-term absence from duty due to maternity/paternity leave, career break, full-time education or suspension, and those on long-term leave, to their normal working role. This has the effect of inflating their workforce and frontline figures by up to 1% compared to other forces.





## Collaboration

HMIC monitors the force’s progress on collaboration<sup>9</sup> because it offers the opportunity to deliver efficient, effective policing and help achieve savings.

HMIC found that Warwickshire Police has embarked on one of the most ambitious and extensive collaborations in the country with its strategic alliance with West Mercia Police. In 2011 the Chief Constables and Police Authorities of Warwickshire and West Mercia formally agreed to form a strategic alliance. They had identified that they could achieve significant efficiency savings and resilience by jointly delivering their service. The programme of work to achieve full collaboration is set out in a framework called ‘The Blueprint’. The principle of the alliance is that under the direction of the two respective Police and Crime Commissioners all the resources of both forces (with some minor exceptions) are combined within the alliance; all staff below the rank of Deputy Chief Constable are shared and the associated budgets are pooled and jointly managed. The alliance costs and resources are apportioned back to the two forces on the basis of a 69/31 (West Mercia/Warwickshire) split.

The Alliance does not exclude other collaborative opportunities. Warwickshire Police also continues to work with other forces in the region, for example in regional intelligence and asset recovery teams, which provide the capacity to deal with the threat from serious and organised crime.

Warwickshire, however, does not contribute to the Central Motorway Police Group, which provides a regionalised policing service for the motorways of the West Midlands, West Mercia and Staffordshire force areas.

<sup>9</sup> HMIC defines collaboration as “all activity where two or more parties work together to achieve a common goal, which includes inter force activity and collaboration with the public and private sectors, including outsourcing and business partnering”.

Largely as a result of the alliance with West Mercia, in 2014/15 the force expects to spend 75% of its total expenditure on collaboration, which is considerably higher than the 11% figure for England and Wales. Overall, collaboration is expected to contribute 75% of the force's savings requirement, which is again considerably higher than the 7% figure for England and Wales.

## **Managing change**

Reductions in police budgets have inevitably led to a shrinking workforce. HMIC expects forces also to have an eye within their change programmes on the longer term transformation which can help maintain or improve the service they offer to the public and prepare for future funding reductions.

The alliance with West Mercia and the 'Blueprint' framework to achieve collaboration are at the core of the force's change programme. At the heart of the alliance is a commitment from both forces to deliver the best possible policing service in their areas and make the best use of resources available now and in the future. The implementation of the alliance has given both forces an exceptional opportunity to review the roles and responsibilities of all the staff and design an operating model that will realise savings, support local priorities and provide capacity and resilience.

The Blueprint provides the detailed framework to direct and manage the change programme across both forces. The People Movement Plan guides the implementation of pooled staffing budgets. All senior manager posts below Deputy Chief Constable are now operating as alliance posts. The bulk of the workforce changes will start in 2013/14 and finish in 2015/16. The force has already rationalised the pay and conditions of those police staff who work under the governance of the alliance. Warwickshire officers will still retain their individual force insignia and identity.

## **How is the force engaging police officers, PCSOs and staff in the change programme?**

HMIC found Warwickshire Police has made strenuous efforts to develop the necessary cultural change within the workforce to support the alliance and to enable a smooth transition.

In order to properly manage the cultural differences of bringing two organisations together, effective communication is essential to minimise uncertainty, allay concerns and provide clear and accurate information to minimise any adverse impact of low morale on the performance of the force. The force developed an engagement strategy that is both internally and externally focussed. It conducted stakeholder mapping and identified risks, which have been mapped out. Work continues to mitigate them.

The senior managers of the force were involved in the design of the workforce model and the chief officer team has continually communicated the progress to the staff. The chief officer team held open sessions for all staff and used the force intranet to circulate information about the model.

The staff associations have been fully engaged in every aspect of the change programme. HMIC found that they were content with their involvement but had some concerns about

the impact of the changes in working locations for their staff. Officers and staff told us that they did not feel engaged in the process and would have liked more detailed information that was relevant to them; they did not feel involved in the consultation. There were also concerns amongst Warwickshire officers and staff that as West Mercia force was so much larger, their force would lose its identity and would be subsumed within the larger force.

The concerns of the workforce and the potential loss of skilled police staff due to some of the changes in the estates strategy are a risk to the force. Low morale could affect service delivery and some staff will not be retained as the relocation of their workplace will result in longer journey-to-work time and higher travel costs. Concerns about the changes are already having an impact with a considerable increase in sickness absences due to work related stress. The force does have a strategy in place to support and manage the absences.

## **How effective has the response been?**

In HMIC's assessment, Warwickshire Police has responded well to the challenge it faces. It has taken bold decisions to pool resources with West Mercia Police. The force has put the needs of the community it serves at the heart of the change programme. At chief officer level they have sacrificed some of their autonomy to ensure an effective policing service and to minimise any reduction in service due to the funding cuts. The forces are worthy of recognition for their willingness to develop the most far-reaching collaboration between forces in England and Wales, which balances individual identity and delivery of local policing with benefits of economies of scale and removal of duplication. There is undoubtedly learning for other forces in Warwickshire's approach.

The force is planning for the period beyond this spending review and by working as an alliance will be better placed to make further savings through greater efficiency.

# Impact of the changes on the public

The challenge for forces is not just to save money and reduce their workforce numbers, but to ensure the choices they make in deciding how to achieve this do not have a negative impact on the service they provide to their communities. HMIC therefore looked for evidence that the force had kept a consideration of the effect on the public at the heart of their choices.

## Visibility

The work done by police officers and staff in visible roles (such as officers who respond to 999 calls, deal with serious road traffic collisions or patrol in neighbourhoods) represents only a part of the policing picture. Chief constables need to allocate resources to many other functions in order to protect the public, such as counter terrorism, serious and organised crime, and child protection (to name just three).

That being said, research shows that the public value seeing visible police officers on patrol in the streets, and that those who see police in uniform at least once a week are more likely to have confidence in their local force.<sup>10</sup> HMIC therefore examined how far the changes being implemented by the force had affected the visibility of the police on the streets of Warwickshire.

In March 2013, Warwickshire Police allocated 50% of its police officers to visible roles. This is 11 percentage points lower than it allocated in 2010, and less than the figure for most other forces (which was 54% across England and Wales).

Police visibility is further enhanced by PCSOs, who principally support community policing. Looking at the proportion of police officers and PCSOs, Warwickshire Police allocated 56% to visible roles. This is 10 percentage points less than it allocated in 2010 and lower than the 59% figure for England and Wales.

HMIC conducted a survey<sup>11</sup> of the public across England and Wales to assess whether the public had noticed any difference in the way their area is being policed. Of those people surveyed in Warwickshire, 12%<sup>12</sup> said that they have seen a police officer more often than they had 12 months ago; this is broadly in line with the 13% average across all survey respondents in England and Wales.

Of those people surveyed, 73%<sup>13</sup> said they felt either as safe or safer in the areas where they live compared with two years ago. This is broadly in line with the figure for most other forces which is 75%.

## Calls for service

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<sup>10</sup> See *Demanding Times*, HMIC, London, 2011. Available from [www.hmic.gov.uk](http://www.hmic.gov.uk).

<sup>11</sup> A YouGov survey was carried out during a four-week period during March 2013. Satisfaction and confidence surveys are also carried out at a national level by the Crime Survey of England and Wales. These use larger sample sizes and are carried out quarterly over a rolling-year period. Some forces also carry out their own surveys of the general public. More information can be found at [www.crimesurvey.co.uk](http://www.crimesurvey.co.uk), [www.hmic.gov.uk](http://www.hmic.gov.uk) or from force websites.

<sup>12</sup> ± 5%.

<sup>13</sup> ± 5%.

HMIC examined whether Warwickshire Police was taking longer to respond to calls for help, as a result of its workforce reductions and other changes designed to save money. Forces are not required to set response times or targets and are free to determine their own arrangements for monitoring attendance to calls, so information between forces is not comparable.

In the three years from 2010 to present, Warwickshire Police had maintained the same target response times of: within 10 minutes for calls classed as 'emergency' in an urban setting; and within 20 minutes for calls classed as 'emergency' in a rural setting. Over the same period, calls classed as a 'priority' had a target response time of within 60 minutes.

The force met its target response time for urban 'emergency' calls 80% of the time in 2010/11, 70% of the time in 2011/12, and 80% of the time in 2012/13. The force also met its target response time for rural 'emergency' calls 88% of the time in 2010/11, 81% of the time in 2011/12 and 87% of the time in 2012/13.

For 'priority' calls, the force met its target 80% of the time in 2010/11, 76% of the time in 2011/12 and 90% of the time in 2012/13.

As can be seen over the spending review the force has maintained and improved its response to emergency and priority calls.

## Crime

In 2010 the Home Secretary, Theresa May, set a clear priority for the police service to reduce crime.

Between 2010/11 and 2012/13 (the first two years of the spending review) Warwickshire Police reduced recorded crime (excluding fraud) by 9% compared 13% in England and Wales. Compared to other forces, this was amongst the lowest reductions seen over the period. Over this period, victim-based crime (that is, crimes where there is a direct victim – an individual, a group, or an organisation) reduced by 8% compared with 12% in England and Wales.

By looking at how many crimes occur per head of population, we can see how safe it is for the public in that police area. The table below shows crime and anti-social behaviour rates in Warwickshire (per head of population) compared with the rest of England and Wales.

<b>12 months to March 2013</b>	<b>Rate per 1,000 population in Warwickshire</b>	<b>England and Wales rate per 1,000 population</b>
Crimes (excluding fraud)	53.0	61.4
Victim-based crime	48.6	54.5
Burglary	8.1	8.2
Violence against the person	7.7	10.6
Anti-social behaviour incidents	37.3	40.7

It is important that crimes are effectively investigated and the perpetrator identified and brought to justice. When sufficient evidence is available to say who has committed a crime, it can be described as detected.

Warwickshire's sanction detection<sup>14</sup> rate (for crimes excluding fraud) for the 12 months to March 2013 is 20.9%. This is below the England and Wales sanction detection rate of 27.0%

We have chosen these types of crime to give an indication of offending levels in Warwickshire. For information on the frequency of other kinds of crimes in your area, go to [www.hmic.gov.uk/crime-and-policing-comparator/](http://www.hmic.gov.uk/crime-and-policing-comparator/)

## **Victim satisfaction surveys**

An important measure of the impact of changes to service delivery for the public is how satisfied the public are with the overall service they receive when they seek police assistance.

In the 12 months to March 2013, 83.5%<sup>15</sup> of victims were satisfied with the overall service provided by Warwickshire Police. This is broadly in line with the England and Wales figure of 84.6%.<sup>16</sup>

## **Changes to how the public can access services**

Forces are exploring different ways in which the public can access policing services. At the time of inspection, the force was developing plans to reconfigure its buildings and premises it uses, which may include police stations and front counters<sup>17</sup>.

The force shows a strong commitment to the policing of local communities. The plan is to establish a network of community policing posts where safer neighbourhood teams can work alongside other public sector agencies.

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14 A sanction detection is a 'solved crime' where a suspect has been identified and notified as being responsible for committing that crime and what the full implications of this are, and has received an official sanction. Official sanctions include charges, cautions, penalty notices, offences taken into consideration (TICs) and cannabis warnings.

15  $\pm$  1.8%.

16  $\pm$  0.2%.

17 A police building open to the general public to obtain face-to-face access to police services.

## Conclusion

HMIC considers that Warwickshire Police has responded well. We found that the force had made good early progress to make savings but it is the alliance with West Mercia and the 'Blueprint' framework to achieve collaboration which is at the core of the force's change programme and which will enable the force to meet its savings target by 2015. The alliance is one of the most extensive and far-reaching police collaborations in England and Wales. The two forces have agreed to pool all of their budgets, (with only minor exceptions) and to jointly manage the combined resources.

There is strong and unambiguous support from the PCCs and the chief officer groups for the alliance. At the heart of the alliance is a commitment from both forces to delivering the best possible policing service to their communities and make the best use of resources available, now and in the future.

In spite of undergoing a period of unprecedented transformation, making significant savings and working with a reduced number of police officers and staff, crime has continued to fall in Warwickshire. The force demonstrates a strong commitment to local policing and is planning to increase the proportion that work on the front line to 94% by 2015.

In October 2010, the Government announced that central funding to the Police Service in England and Wales would reduce by 20% in the four years between March 2011 and March 2015.

HMIC's Valuing the Police Programme has tracked how forces are planning to make savings to meet this budget demand each year since summer 2011. This report identifies what we found in this third year.

Our inspection focused on three questions:

1. How is the force responding to the budget reduction?
2. What is the impact for the workforce and the public?
3. How is the force managing current and future risks?

To answer these questions, we collected data and plans from forces, surveyed the public to see if they had noticed any changes in the service they receive from the police as a result of the cuts, and conducted in-force inspections. We also interviewed the Chief Constable, Police and Crime Commissioner and the chief officer leads for finance, change, human resources and performance in each force, and held focus groups with staff and other officers.

National findings and patterns across all 43 forces are given in our thematic report, *Policing in Austerity: Rising to the Challenge*, which is available from [www.hmic.gov.uk](http://www.hmic.gov.uk).

This report provides the findings for Warwickshire Police.