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South Yorkshire Police's response to the funding challenge

July 2013

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South Yorkshire Police: Executive summary

South Yorkshire Police faces a more difficult challenge than some other forces. Although spending on policing is lower than in most forces and staff costs higher, South Yorkshire has not embraced the level of change or achieved the savings seen elsewhere.

The force still has £9.6m to find by March 2015. HMIC is concerned that this outstanding financial gap means that South Yorkshire Police will find it very hard to make any further savings required in the future.

Financial challenge

South Yorkshire Police has identified that it needs to save £49.3m over the four years of the spending review (i.e. between March 2011 and March 2015).

While as a proportion of its overall budget (16%) this savings requirement is broadly in line with most other forces, HMIC considers that South Yorkshire Police faces a particularly difficult challenge. This is because the amount of money it spends on policing is lower than most other forces, [REDACTED] The amount it spends on each officer and staff member is also higher than most other forces.

Progress in making savings

South Yorkshire Police has planned how it will save £39.6m. It therefore still has £9.6m¹ to find. Most other forces have worked out how they will make all the required savings; South Yorkshire Police's funding gap is therefore a concern.

How the force is making savings: 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.² South Yorkshire 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, it is planned there will be 256 fewer police officers in the South Yorkshire Police. This means the number of police officers is planned to reduce by 9% between March 2010³ and March 2015; this is a smaller reduction than in most other forces.

There is evidence that South Yorkshire Police is successfully protecting frontline posts as it makes these cuts: between March 2010 and March 2015, the proportion of police

1 The amount to save may not add up to the total due to rounding.

2 See *Adapting to Austerity*, HMIC, London, July 2011, p13. Available from 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.

officers in frontline crime-fighting roles is planned to increase from 91% to 93%. 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, it is planned there will be 555 fewer police staff in the South Yorkshire Police. This means the number of police staff is planned to reduce by 23% between March 2010 and March 2015; this is considerably higher than in most other forces. South Yorkshire intends to maintain its police community support officer (PCSO) numbers compared to a reduction in most other forces.

However, with an outstanding funding gap the force may need to make more workforce reductions than it is currently planning.

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 victim satisfaction surveys which all forces conduct.

Over the first two years of the spending review, recorded crime (excluding fraud)⁴ fell by 9% [REDACTED]. Victim satisfaction remains high at 85.4%⁵ [REDACTED]

Future challenges

South Yorkshire Police faces a more difficult challenge than some other forces to save the necessary money. The force also still has £9.6m to find by March 2015.

HMIC is concerned that South Yorkshire has not embraced the level of change or achieved the savings seen elsewhere. With an outstanding financial gap to close South Yorkshire Police will find it much more difficult to make any further savings required in the future.

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

5 ± 1.4%

The challenge

Over the four years of the spending review (March 2011 to March 2015), South Yorkshire Police identified that it needs to find savings of £49.3m, which equates to 16% of its total expenditure⁶ (which in 2012/13 was £268.6m). Across England and Wales a 17% reduction in total expenditure is required.

Progress in making savings: Years 1–2

The force successfully made 53% (£26.1m) of the total savings required by March 2015 in the first two years of the spending review period. It achieved this by: not recruiting any new police officers; reducing the number of police staff it employs (which it started to do in 2010); and restructuring how the force delivers elements of its policing, e.g. centralising human resources, finance and procurement.

Plans for Year 3–4

The force has plans in place to achieve further savings of £6.8m in 2013/14, and another £6.7m in 2014/15. This leaves a funding gap of £9.6m at the end of the spending review period. This differs from most other forces in England and Wales which have developed plans for how they will make all the necessary savings.

Looking beyond the current spending review

The force has started to consider what savings it might need to make after March 2015. The challenge for South Yorkshire Police in preparing for future funding pressures will be much greater if the existing savings plans are not achieved or they take longer to deliver.

⁶ Based on a gross expenditure baseline in 2010/11.

The scale of the challenge in South Yorkshire Police

While as a proportion of its overall budget its savings requirement of 16% is broadly in line with that of most other forces, South Yorkshire Police faces a particularly difficult challenge because:

- it spends less per head of population than most other forces in England and Wales; but

[REDACTED]

- the cost of police officers and police staff per head is higher than 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.

12 months to March 2013	South Yorkshire Police	England and Wales
Emergency and priority calls per 1,000 population	116	[REDACTED]
Victim-based crime per 1,000 population	62.1	[REDACTED]
Prosecutions (charges) per 1,000 population	10.6	[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

How difficult is the challenge?

It is HMIC's assessment that South Yorkshire Police faces a more difficult challenge to save money, as it spends less on policing, has more officers, and expenditure on pay costs are higher than most other forces.

Response to the challenge

Forces deliver their response to the savings requirement through a change programme. Over 80% of a police budget (on average) is spent on staff costs,⁷ and it is not surprising that the change programmes of 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.

South Yorkshire 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 91% of its spending review savings requirement from its pay budget. This is much higher than most other forces and indicates South Yorkshire Police has not borne down on expenditure on goods and services to the same degree as 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.⁸

	31-Mar-10 (baseline)	31-Mar-15	Change	South Yorkshire Change %	% Change for England and Wales
Police Officers	2,953	2,697	-256	-9%	-11%
Police Staff	2,408	1,853	-555	-23%	-16%
PCSOs	328	328	0	0%	-17%
Total	5,688	4,878	-810	-14%	-13%
Specials	227	650	+423	186%	+60%

Overall, the table shows that South Yorkshire Police plans to lose fewer officers but more police staff than in other forces; and will maintain the number of PCSOs. However, the outstanding funding gap means that the force will need to make more workforce reductions than it is currently planning.

Changes to the proportion of workforce on the front line

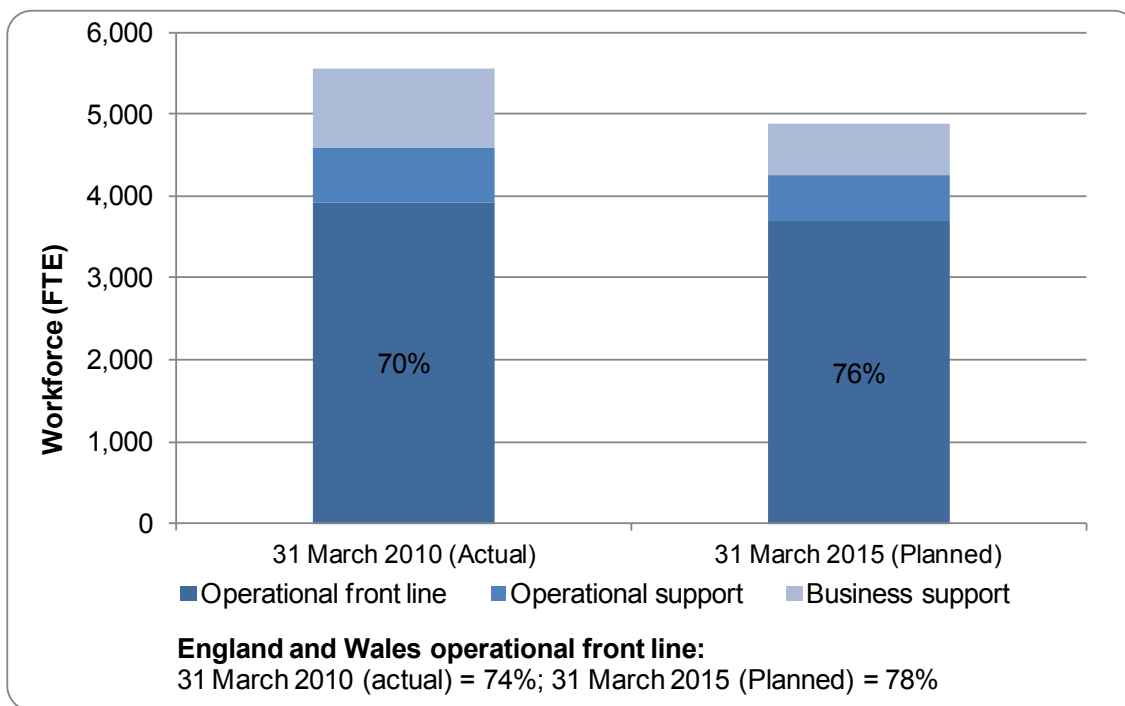
HMIC defines the people who work on the police front line as: *“those who are in everyday contact with the public and who directly intervene to keep people safe and enforce the law”*. It is important that as forces reconfigure their structures and reduce workforce

⁷ See *Adapting to Austerity*, HMIC, London, July 2011, p13. Available from www.hmic.gov.uk

⁸ Workforce figures for March 2010 show the actual number of people working for the force in permanent posts on the 31st 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.

numbers, they focus on maintaining (or if possible increasing) the **proportion** of people in these crime-fighting roles.

The following chart shows the change in the workforce frontline profile in South Yorkshire Police⁹.

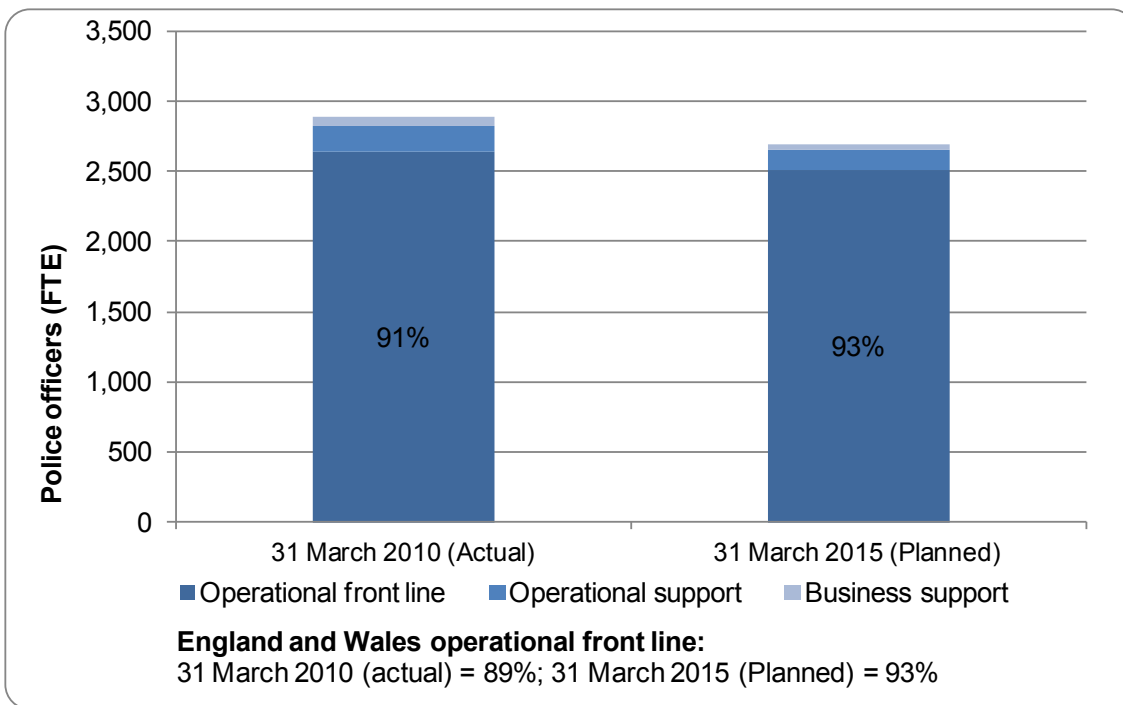


The **number** of officers, PCSOs and staff (i.e. of the force’s total workforce) working on South Yorkshire’s front line is planned to reduce by 6% between March 2010 and March 2015 (from 3,918 to 3,690).

Over the same period, the **proportion** of South Yorkshire’s total workforce allocated to frontline roles is planned to increase from 70% to 76%. This compares with an overall increase across England and Wales from 74% to 78%.

9 From 2010, Gwent, the MPS, 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.

The **number** of South Yorkshire’s police officers in frontline roles is planned to reduce by 5% from 2,640 in March 2010 to 2,510 in March 2015, as the following chart shows. The **proportion** of those remaining on the frontline is planned to increase from 91% to 93%. This compares to an overall increase across England and Wales from 89% to 93%.



Collaboration

HMIC monitors forces’ progress on collaboration¹⁰ because it offers the opportunity to deliver efficient, effective policing and help achieve savings.

HMIC found that the force has actively pursued collaborative opportunities at a local, regional and national level which have resulted in a number of policing services being delivered with other forces. The four forces in the Yorkshire and Humber region, of which South Yorkshire is one, currently collaborate on services such as marine and underwater; firearms; procurement; and forensic support services.

In addition to the four-force collaboration, South Yorkshire is working closely in partnership with Humberside Police. They currently share a single HR structure headed by a chief officer and have a single information systems/information technology department.

The election of the Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) in November 2012 has introduced a new layer of scrutiny of these arrangements. The PCCs of Humberside and South Yorkshire have taken the opportunity to review these current two-force arrangements. A review of human resources (HR) and information systems (IS) was commissioned by the South Yorkshire PCC and was carried out by the College of Policing. Its observations and recommendations are currently being considered.

Despite this, in 2014/15 the force expects only to spend only 7% of its total expenditure

¹⁰ 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”.

on collaboration, which is lower than the 11% figure for England and Wales. Overall, collaboration is expected contribute to 4% of the force's savings requirement, which is lower 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 transformation¹¹ which can help maintain or improve the service they offer to the public and prepare for future funding reductions.

The force's strategic approach to the spending review has purposely been incremental based on strong financial management of resources e.g. holding budget holders to account, controlling expenditure and reviewing budget allocations. In particular, reductions in the workforce through the use of voluntary redundancies and natural wastage to achieve the required savings. The overall framework for the reductions has been to maintain a 'balanced force' built essentially around existing structures, albeit with fewer staff and by centralising business support and related functions. The broad approach follows three steps: remove, reduce and reconfigure.

Organisational change and savings are delivered through South Yorkshire Police's Diamond Programme. The Diamond Programme oversees a number of targeted reviews of identified functions to reconfigure how they are delivered and match them against the new resource levels in line with the staff reductions. To date reviews have been conducted in a number of functions including human resources and finance; front counters; canteens; and operational planning. During 2013/14, Diamond is to review major incident teams; operational support; and call handling. It is anticipated by the force that savings could be made in these areas, which should enable it to reduce the current outstanding savings gap for 2014/15.

The force recognises that as it looks to the end of the current spending review and beyond, it will need to take a more strategic and integrated approach to changing the organisation to achieve the required savings and ensure effective service delivery. The force is currently developing a strategic vision for the force which will deliver the requirements of the PCC's Police and Crime Plan (which sets the strategic direction for the force and the PCC's ambitions) and will shape a new structure for the force. Core to this vision is the delivery of local policing (police and staff who respond to calls from the public and who patrol local communities) will be undertaken in four policing areas, supported a small corporate centre and working with other forces to provide specialist functions such as traffic; firearms; dogs; and the investigation of serious and major crime.

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

Staff reported good early communication of the force's response to the spending review and the results of early Diamond reviews and changes that were being made to the force.

¹¹ Transformation is a process of radical change that orientates an organisation in a new direction and takes it to an entirely different level of effectiveness. It implies a fundamental change of character, with little or no resemblance to the past configuration or structure.

The relationship between both officer's staff associations and staff unions with the chief officer group is strong. Regular meetings are held to discuss plans and issues from across the force.

A 'Questions for the Chief' facility allows staff to raise concerns directly. The questions and answers are published on the intranet for all staff to read. The Chief Constable also produces a short monthly video, which is published via the intranet where he can address any issues and send out simple messages across the force.

The force also has a staff suggestion scheme. Staff may make suggestions on anything they think may benefit the force. This can be about areas such as performance as well as savings.

More recently, staff members describe less proactive engagement and greater reliance on staff actively searching the intranet for news, developments and results for themselves. Operational demands mean that staff do not always have time to locate this information and update themselves.

The force has conducted a staff survey, which shows staff are uncertain about the depth of future cuts and the ability of the force to continue to perform with a much reduced budget.

As South Yorkshire Police looks to achieve future savings the force will need to consider how it continues to communicate with, engage and involve staff on the challenges that lie ahead.

How effective has the response been?

The force's strategic approach to the spending review has been to undertake a series of reviews of individual reviews supported with strong financial management. While this approach can deliver savings it does not provide a sustainable approach for the future. This is now recognised by the force.

HMIC is concerned that South Yorkshire has neither embraced the level of change nor achieved the savings seen elsewhere. With an outstanding financial gap to close, South Yorkshire Police will find it much more difficult to make any further savings required in the future.

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.¹² HMIC therefore examined how far the changes being implemented by the force had affected the visibility of the police on the streets of South Yorkshire.

In March 2013, South Yorkshire Police allocated 60% of its police officers to visible roles. This is the same proportion as it allocated in 2010,[REDACTED]).

Police visibility is further enhanced by PCSOs who principally support community policing. Looking at the proportion of police officers and PCSOs, the South Yorkshire Police allocates 65% to visible roles. This is one percentage point higher than it allocated in 2010 [REDACTED].

HMIC conducted a survey¹³ 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 South Yorkshire, 10%¹⁴ 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, 69%¹⁵ said they felt either as safe or safer in the areas where they live compared with two years ago. This is lower than the figure for most other forces which is 75%.

Calls for service

¹² See *Demanding Times*, HMIC, London, 2011. Available from www.hmic.gov.uk

¹³ 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, www.hmic.gov.uk or from force websites.

¹⁴ ± 5%

¹⁵ ± 5%

HMIC examined whether South Yorkshire 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 2010/2011 and 2011/2012, South Yorkshire Police had maintained the same target response time of attendance within 15 minutes for calls classed as ‘emergency’ (also known as grade 1) and within 60 minutes for calls classed as ‘priority’ (also known as grade 2). The force did not set a target response time for the year 2012/2013.

Over the periods 2010/2011 and 2011/2012, the force met its target response time for ‘emergency’ calls 95% of the time. It met its target response time for ‘priority’ calls 87% of the time in 2010/2011 and 86% of the time in 2011/2012.

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), South Yorkshire Police has reduced recorded crime by 9% [REDACTED] Over this period victim based crime (that is crimes where there is a direct victim – an individual, a group, or an organisation) has reduced by 8% [REDACTED]

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 South Yorkshire (per head of population) compared with the rest of England and Wales.

12 months to March 2013	Rate per 1,000 population in South Yorkshire	England and Wales rate per 1,000 population
Crimes (excluding fraud)	68.0	[REDACTED]
Victim based crime	62.1	[REDACTED]
Burglary	12.5	[REDACTED]
Violence against the person	7.7	[REDACTED]
Anti-social behaviour incidents	59.9	[REDACTED]

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

South Yorkshire Police’s sanction detection¹⁶ rate (for crimes excluding fraud) for the 12 months to March 2013 is 26.1%. [REDACTED]

We have chosen these types of crime to give an indication of offending levels in South Yorkshire. For information on the frequency of other kinds of crimes in your area, go to

¹⁶ 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 included are: charges, cautions, penalty notices, offences taken into consideration (TICs) and cannabis warnings.

Victim satisfaction surveys

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 March 2013, 85.4%¹⁷ of victims were satisfied with the overall service provided by South Yorkshire Police. [REDACTED]

Changes to how the public can access services

Forces are exploring different ways in which the public can access policing services. South Yorkshire Police is planning to close 13 front counters¹⁸ and 30 police stations between 2010 and 2015.

However, they are making more use of the internet and social media to communicate with the public and developing different mechanisms for the public to contact the police.

¹⁷ ± 1.4%

¹⁸ A police building open to the general public to obtain face-to-face access to police services.

Conclusion

While South Yorkshire Police faces a more difficult financial challenge than some other forces, it has not embraced the level of change nor achieved the savings seen elsewhere. The force still has £9.6m of savings to find by March 2015.

Over the spending review period the force has not achieved the levels of crime reduction achieved elsewhere and continues to have higher crime per head of population than in other forces. HMIC is concerned that with this outstanding financial gap South Yorkshire Police will find it very hard to make further savings without impacting on performance and service delivery. In addition it will be much harder for the force to make any additional savings that may be required in the future.

We will continue closely to monitor progress made in implementation of South Yorkshire's savings plans, in particular how it will close the gap and improve performance and service delivery. A further inspection will be undertaken later this year to review the ongoing achievement of the planned savings.

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 the 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.

This report provides the findings for South Yorkshire Police.