

## Cleveland Police records its lowest ever crime figures

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By Graeme Hetherington

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CLEVELAND Police has recorded its lowest ever crime figures, according to data released by the force.

The results for the financial year April 2012-March 2013 show that publicly recorded crime was reduced by 9.4 per cent compared to the previous financial year, which means about 3,500 fewer victims of crime.

Total crime, which includes crimes that the police proactively generate, showed a 9.2 percent reduction.

The results have been praised by Temporary Assistant Chief Adrian Roberts and the chairman of the force's police federation Steve Matthews.

However, the federation raised concerns about the prospect of the force being able to continue reducing crime when they are facing decreasing numbers of officers.

Mr Roberts said: "Whilst any crime is one too many, these major reductions in crime and anti-social behaviour are a testament to the hard work of all those fighting crime in Cleveland – be they the Force's own staff, our partner staff, community safety colleagues and the public.

"That there are 35,000 fewer victims of crime than in 2003/04 is an achievement in which we can all take pride.

"To have had 300 fewer house burglaries, one of our key priorities is a particular welcome – we know burglary has a real impact on victims and we have been relentless in our efforts to tackle it."

And antisocial behaviour (ASB) which is repeatedly raised as a priority by communities across the Force has reduced by almost 20 per cent, with criminal damage also down nearly 15 per cent.

Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland Barry Coppinger said: "I welcome this significant fall in overall crime and antisocial behaviour and the determined efforts of everyone working for the Force, partners and local residents to ensure these excellent results."

However, Federation chairman Steve Matthews warned the improvements may not be sustainable.

He said: "It's a tremendous effort from all the police officers but I have a real concern that as we move forward, we will not be able to continue to make these improvements.

"As police officer numbers continue going down, and it is only likely to get worse, I fear that officers will be unable get these results because there is only so much you can do with the resources that we have."

[Back](#)

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