

# **PEEL 2021/22**

An inspection of the east midlands regional response to serious and organised crime

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# Introduction

## About our inspection

As part of our police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL) inspections, we inspected how well police forces tackle [serious and organised crime \(SOC\)](#). In 2022, we changed how we inspect this aspect of policing, to incorporate inspections of the ten regions, as well as the nine [regional organised crime units \(ROCU\)](#) throughout England and Wales, and the 43 police forces. This improves our understanding of how well forces and ROCUs work together to tackle SOC.

## About us

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) independently assesses the effectiveness and efficiency of police forces and fire and rescue services, in the public interest. In preparing our reports, we ask the questions that the public would ask, and publish the answers in an accessible form. We use our expertise to interpret the evidence and make recommendations for improvement.

## About our report

This report includes sections on the following:

- Regional findings – a summary of inspection evidence that identifies good or poor performance within the region; in other words, involving or relating to the ROCU and constituent forces. The performance of the region is not given a graded judgement. Instead, we highlight areas for improvement, [causes of concern](#), good practice and innovations in this section, where applicable.
- The ROCU and individual forces – the ROCU and each individual force are given a graded judgment, with a summary of the findings from our inspection and highlighted sections for areas for improvement, causes of concern, and innovative and promising practice.

## About ROCUs

Each ROCU serves between three and seven constituent forces (see map in [Appendix 1](#)).

The [Strategic Policing Requirement \(SPR\)](#) defines ROCUs as:

The primary interface between the NCA (National Crime Agency) and policing, supporting the co-ordination and tasking of the collective effort against the serious and organised crime threat.

The Government's [2018 SOC strategy](#) states that ROCUs should:

Lead the operational response to serious and organised crime on behalf of forces within their regions, taking tasking from the NCA on national priorities, and working together in a more networked way, allowing capacity and capability to be shared where appropriate.

Police forces should work closely with ROCUs, following the objective set out in the national [Serious and Organised Crime Strategy](#) to achieve a 'whole system' approach to tackling SOC. ROCUs provide a range of [specialist capabilities](#) to forces. These include the [regional organised crime threat assessment units \(ROCTAs\)](#), surveillance, undercover policing, sensitive intelligence units, regional asset recovery teams, cybercrime teams, the [Government Agency Intelligence Network \(GAIN\)](#), prison [intelligence](#) units and others.

ROCUs are set up under collaboration agreements (made under section 22A of the Police Act 1996) between the chief constables and [police and crime commissioners \(PCCs\)](#) in each region. ROCUs are not statutory bodies. They rely on forces to supply the administrative and support functions they need, including human resources, finance and IT. As a result, each ROCU is set up differently, under different terms of collaboration.

Each ROCU's financing is largely provided by chief constables and PCCs, with additional financing from the Home Office. In each region, forces negotiate their financial contribution to the ROCU.

## **Changes to how SOC threats are managed nationally**

Our previous PEEL inspection reports have referred to how well forces have managed and mapped or assessed [organised crime groups \(OCGs\)](#).

In this report, we refer to SOC threats, which encompasses OCGs, SOC priority individuals and SOC vulnerabilities.

This reflects changes introduced nationally in response to the SOC strategy's goal to provide a "single picture of demand". This has been achieved by establishing a national database of SOC threats, which holds information from the NCA, ROCUs, police forces and government agencies that tackle SOC. This database is referred to as the SOC master list and is used to assess which SOC threat is a priority for each agency or force.

# Regional findings

The east midlands consists of five forces (Derbyshire Constabulary, Leicestershire Police, Lincolnshire Police, Northamptonshire Police and Nottinghamshire Police).

## Area for improvement

### **East Midlands Special Operations Unit and its constituent forces should improve how the region works together to tackle serious and organised crime (SOC)**

East Midlands Special Operations Unit (EMSOU), with constituent forces, should:

- improve consistency in managing regional priorities, in accordance with national minimum standards;
- improve how SOC disruptions are recorded across the 4Ps, to accurately reflect regional performance;
- improve the effectiveness of the lead responsible officer role; and
- recognise and promote effective and efficient practice at a force and national level.

EMSOU manages its priorities through a defined meeting structure and 4P management plans. These meetings and the associated plans should involve close collaboration of relevant staff from EMSOU and the constituent forces, to achieve the national minimum standards for SOC governance.

We were told by officers and staff that meetings organised to discuss and decide SOC priorities were often cancelled because members from constituent forces weren't able to attend. This makes it harder for the region to progress 4P plans for priority areas.

In March 2022, EMSOU conducted a review of these meetings, setting out a plan to improve the meeting structure and the regional response to highest harm threats. We are not able to comment on whether this review had the desired effect, as we had concluded our inspection work.

There are some distinct differences in how forces tackle SOC, and the extent to which they work with EMSOU and the other forces in the region. For example, the lead responsible officer role has been central to managing the response to organised crime groups for over ten years, but some forces in the region still fail to support this function adequately. We also found that force performance varied widely across the east midlands region, from requires improvement to outstanding.

The SOC strategy states that all ROCUs should lead the regional response to SOC. While we found evidence that EMSOU was providing some of this leadership, this has yet to result in the coherent, consistent and connected approach that is expected.

### **The effectiveness and efficiency of EMSOU is constrained by different force policy and procedures**

In EMSOU, officers and staff are seconded from the five forces in the region. These officers and staff are managed under the policies used by the force they are seconded from. We were told by supervisors across EMSOU that secondment policy requires them to adopt some of the policies and procedures of the different constituent forces to manage officers and staff. This means that there are differences in, for example, how staff and officer performance is managed. To do so, supervisors have to use different force IT systems to access and record performance information. This complicates line management and is time-consuming.

### **The region could be better at understanding how it performs**

EMSOU's existing performance framework isn't comprehensive. It is developing a new performance framework, using Microsoft Power BI to visualise data, which will make understanding performance easier.

During our inspection of the constituent forces in the region, we also found that Leicestershire Police and Derbyshire Constabulary were using Microsoft Power BI to help understand and manage performance and to help in operational deployment. We found that EMSOU and these forces were working independently of each other. The region could work together to achieve a more consistent approach to measuring and managing SOC performance using Microsoft Power BI.

# East Midlands Special Operations Unit (EMSOU)

## Inadequate

EMSOU is inadequate at tackling serious and organised crime.

### **Understanding SOC and setting priorities to tackle it**

#### **There is governance in place to manage regional strategic priorities**

EMSOU revises the strategic assessment and control strategy in a 12-month cycle, with a mid-year review to refresh relevant intelligence. Priorities are defined in line with the NCA model, under the headings vulnerability, prosperity and commodity. Each of these three areas has an intelligence ‘threat desk’ to make sure the threats are continually monitored and understood. Strategic governance groups and tactical delivery groups are in place to manage these strategic priorities. At the time of inspection, EMSOU was reviewing how well these groups work.

#### **EMSOU is overly focused on traditional SOC threats**

EMSOU’s stated priorities include modern slavery and human trafficking and organised immigration crime. But it mostly tackles drugs and firearms.

As part of our inspection, we reviewed an operation concerned with organised immigration crime. This was the highest priority operation that EMSOU was dealing with. The investigation hadn’t progressed enough in the 18 months it had been running. In the 12 months prior to 31 May 2022, there were no disruptions recorded against this operation.



Officers and staff from EMSOU told us that there were several reasons why senior investigators and staff had gravitated towards firearm and drug investigations.

These include:

- lack of experience and skills;
- lack of training in investigating certain types of crime, such as organised immigration crime;
- lack of an effective tasking and co-ordinating process; and
- lack of intelligence and referrals by forces.

We were told by EMSOU senior personnel that they have tried to encourage constituent forces to refer different types of investigation to EMSOU. But forces continue to refer traditional investigations, rather than investigations of the highest threat. This was evident in the EMSOU tasking documents sent to us, which showed that the operational teams were largely asked to support investigations relating to drug and firearms crimes. We encourage EMSOU to continue working with constituent forces to tackle this issue.

EMSOU has provided some training in less traditional crime types. For example, the vulnerability co-ordinator has provided investigative awareness sessions on modern slavery and human trafficking, organised immigration crime, and county lines investigations. Five members of the operational teams have also been trained in dealing with modern slavery and human trafficking investigations. We urge this work to be continued and expanded to further units within EMSOU.

On 1 February 2022, EMSOU was managing 16 identified SOC threats. This is the smallest number of threats mapped for any ROCU nationally, despite EMSOU being one of the largest ROCUs. As of 1 February 2022, the second lowest number of threats mapped was 31, in the South West ROCU. Of the 16 SOC threats mapped by EMSOU, 9 were identified as OCGs and 7 of these were linked to drugs or firearms. EMSOU reported that it is also managing a further 33 SOC threats. However, these weren't recorded on the SOC master list, due to technical issues concerning national recording practices. As they don't appear on the SOC master list, we are unable to comment on the nature of these threats.

Analysis of disruption data for the year ending 31 May 2022 shows that 128 (24 percent) of the disruptions that EMSOU led were against threats of drugs and firearms. This proportion is comparable with most ROCUs across England and Wales. However, the disruption of threats such as child sexual exploitation and abuse, and modern slavery and human trafficking, are low in EMSOU; it led 14 disruptions against these threats in the same period.

We have looked at the disruptions that EMSOU has conducted to support other forces. EMSOU supported nine disruptions on modern slavery and human trafficking threats, which is still low. EMSOU performed better on support disruptions for child sexual exploitation and abuse threats, supporting 150 disruptions of this threat type. This was 62 percent of all its support disruptions.

### **EMSOU isn't releasing intelligence gathered during investigations early enough**

EMSOU uses a case management system to record the progress of its investigations. This system isn't linked to any regional or force intelligence system. Officers have to extract intelligence from the case management system and put it onto the relevant force intelligence system.

This process of updating intelligence systems is slow and time-consuming. In some cases, it isn't done by officers or is updated too late to be relevant to investigations. Furthermore, intelligence should be uploaded at regular intervals by forces onto the police national database. This intelligence is then accessible to all forces in England and Wales. If EMSOU isn't routinely uploading all intelligence onto intelligence systems, then it isn't visible or accessible to all forces.

Some EMSOU personnel we interviewed told us of examples where EMSOU finalised some operations, which were reallocated to forces for local management. Sometimes, the intelligence from the operation hadn't been transferred to the force intelligence system. In these instances, the forces wouldn't have had access to all available intelligence. One way to fix this is to assign an officer from the investigation team to regularly transfer intelligence onto the intelligence system, as the investigation takes place. This ensures that when an operation is concluded, all relevant intelligence is contained in the relevant force intelligence system. We have seen this work in other forces and ROCUs.

### **The current regional sensitive intelligence unit arrangement isn't effectively informing regional threat assessment**

All ROCUs have a sensitive intelligence unit (SIU), which forms part of a sensitive intelligence network across the UK. Most forces don't have their own SIU and rely on the regional SIU. An SIU manages and analyses intelligence collected by covert methods. For it to work effectively, the unit needs access to all intelligence from across the region, as well as intelligence collected by other agencies.

In 2021, we inspected the sensitive intelligence network. We made several recommendations, including one to [improve how sensitive intelligence is used to inform SOC threat assessments](#).

During this inspection, we found that EMSOU's SIU wasn't routinely incorporating all available sensitive intelligence when it assessed individual SOC threats. We also found that its SIU didn't regularly use sensitive intelligence to assess the SOC threats in constituent forces. This means that not all available intelligence is being used consistently to understand the regional threat picture. This was attributed to insufficient resources in the SIU, a lack of IT connectivity and not having a systematic process.

EMSOU has created an additional level of security within the SIU, which prevents some SIU staff from accessing the most sensitive intelligence. This isn't an effective or efficient way of running an SIU.

The SIU is more effective when personnel from other SOC partner agencies are co-located within it, such as personnel from the NCA, His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC), Border Force and the Department of Work and Pensions. EMSOU personnel told us that the officer from HMRC who was based in the SIU didn't have direct access to HMRC's sensitive intelligence systems. Also, Border Force and the Department of Work and Pensions have withdrawn officers from the SIU. SIU personnel told us that they still have contacts within these agencies and can request access to intelligence. This isn't as effective as being co-located within the unit.

## Resources and skills

### Cause of concern

We found several concerns in East Midlands Special Operations Unit (EMSOU) that prevented it from being effective and efficient. These concerns are mainly the result of management decisions made in the east midlands region. We found that the section 22 collaboration agreement hasn't been reviewed since 2019.

This agreement needs to be updated to help EMSOU work more effectively with its constituent forces.

It is important to note that although this cause for concern contributes significantly to the inadequate grade given to EMSOU, this doesn't mean that all aspects of EMSOU performance were inadequate. In fact, we were impressed with some other areas of operational performance.

Our main concerns include:

- The chief constables in the east midlands region were asked to consider a move to a three-year funding model for EMSOU. This was in light of HM Treasury approving a three-year funding formula for serious and organised crime, as a result of the cause of concern we reported regarding the problems arising from short-term arrangements to fund regional organised crime units. The chief constables couldn't agree to a three-year settlement, so the proposal wasn't adopted. As a result, the senior management team in EMSOU will continue to face the uncertainty of yearly funding.
- Each of the constituent forces contribute a different percentage to the EMSOU budget. Some forces are translating this into a quota of how many personnel they should release to work in EMSOU. Once some of these forces reach their perceived quota, they restrict recruitment into EMSOU. This issue causes the EMSOU senior management team significant challenges in managing resources.

- In September 2021, EMSOU identified fraud as the highest priority threat to the region. At the time of our inspection, EMSOU had one part-time post dedicated to tackling fraud. This lack of resources has led to a regional gap in fraud capability. The senior leadership team explained that there were plans to increase the number of specialist investigators to deal with this type of crime. At the time of inspection, we were informed that 20 posts would be created. This has since been revised down to 15. The new fraud capability will be located on Northamptonshire Police premises.
- EMSOU's processes for replacing some capital assets are inefficient. EMSOU currently has capital replacement funds for approximately half of its fleet (150 vehicles) This leads to two different processes for replacing vehicles. It would be more efficient if EMSOU had a single capital replacement budget for the vehicles it controls. There are also opportunities to make savings by adopting a regional approach to the procurement of technical surveillance equipment.

### **Recommendations**

- By 1 March 2024, the chief constable responsible for the EMSOU collaboration should revise the section 22 collaboration agreement. The revision should make clear that there is no real or perceived staffing quota and that forces shouldn't limit the number of staff provided to the ROCU.
- By 1 July 2023, chief constables and police and crime commissioners should make sure they give funding in line with HM Treasury's three-year settlement. They should also provide a sufficient capital replacement budget.

### **Area for improvement: There is insufficient intelligence resource within the East Midlands Special Operations Unit (EMSOU) to meet all the demands placed upon it**

EMSOU is the only regional operational crime unit that has major investigation teams. The teams are hosted on behalf of its constituent forces. The forces rely on EMSOU to provide intelligence support to major crime investigations. This arrangement is set out in basic terms within the section 22 collaboration agreement.

This means that the regional intelligence unit, and the sensitive intelligence unit (SIU) within it, are responsible for providing intelligence support to both the major investigation teams and the serious and organised crime (SOC) teams within EMSOU.

EMSOU has been very successful at providing support to major crime investigations. We [previously highlighted](#) that the SIU can't contribute to the assessment of all SOC threats identified across the east midlands region. Potential future changes to the way that the SIU supports force SOC investigations are likely to lead to further demands on this unit.

At the time of our inspection, the levels of overtime in the SIU were high. Combined with the fact that the unit is struggling to meet demand, this shows that either more resources or a change in regional intelligence unit processes is needed.

### **EMSOU is striving for a motivated and diverse workforce**

In 2021, EMSOU conducted a survey to measure aspects of workforce satisfaction, professional development and leadership. It found that 80 percent of respondents were satisfied in their job, which was a 24 percent increase on a survey in 2018. EMSOU invited the College of Policing to review its workforce position. This exercise highlighted areas for development, including improving culture and diversity. EMSOU has embraced this work, integrating it into its equality, diversity and inclusion delivery plan.

### **Tackling SOC and safeguarding people and communities**

For the year ending 31 May 2022, EMSOU was responsible for 47 percent of all SOC disruptions in the east midlands region. Twenty-six percent of EMSOU's disruptions were assessed as having a major or moderate impact. And 67 percent of disruptions that EMSOU led were categorised as pursue activity. In comparison to other ROCUs, the proportion of prevent, protect and prepare disruption recorded by EMSOU was low.

EMSOU also supported 243 disruptions that were led by other forces. The proportion of its pursue support disruptions (72 percent) was within a normal range compared to other ROCUs. However, its prevent disruption proportion was the second highest among ROCUs (22 percent of its support disruptions were prevent disruptions).

### **Area for improvement: Senior investigating officers should improve how they involve specialist units in planning and managing investigations**

Staff and officers told us that senior investigations officers should set investigative plans with other specialist units in East Midlands Special Operations Unit, such as the undercover online unit. However, representatives from these specialist units weren't always routinely invited to planning meetings or were asked for their advice too late in the investigation. As such, senior investigating officers may be missing opportunities to use tactics that would improve investigative planning.

### **Innovative practice: East Midlands Special Operations Unit (EMSOU) is driving innovations to improve efficiency**

EMSOU is driving innovations in a number of areas to improve efficiency. The work it is doing can't be described in detail, as it involves sensitive methods that could compromise criminal investigations, if the detail was widely known.

EMSOU has worked in collaboration with Amazon Web Services and other software providers to automate processes to analyse vast amounts of data. For example, text, image and call data. This has led to a substantial reduction in the time it takes for investigators and analysts to manually process this data. In one example, the time taken to process data had been reduced from days to a matter of minutes.

EMSOU has developed a technical solution to conduct radio frequency surveys more efficiently. Radio frequency surveys gather data about mobile locations to a forensic and evidential standard. The technique is an important tactic in collecting evidence to support serious crime convictions, such as murder and kidnap, and SOC investigations. Radio frequency surveys used to take many hours to complete. EMSOU has developed a new method that significantly reduces the time needed. This practice has been shared with other ROCUs.

### **EMSOU isn't using undercover tactics effectively**

EMSOU doesn't have enough specialist undercover officers and the undercover tactic is under-used across the region. Undercover units across England and Wales are classed as a networked capability, which means that undercover officers from one region are deployed to other regions across the country. This helps to protect the identity of these officers. EMSOU isn't contributing enough undercover officers to the networked capability.

Personnel we interviewed told us that EMSOU has used undercover tactics on a low number of operations over the last five years.

EMSOU is reliant on its constituent forces for providing intelligence and administrative support to undercover investigations. EMSOU management told us that they had tried to promote the use of undercover tactics with its constituent forces, but there had been a low uptake from some of the forces.

### **EMSOU is tackling SOC offenders in prison but needs more support from partners and constituent forces**

Between 1 June 2021 and 31 May 2022, the regional prison intelligence unit (RPIU) in EMSOU led interventions against organised crime that resulted in 211 disruptions. This is the third highest number of disruptions across all ROCUs during the same period.

The RPIU has enough staff to manage the offenders it is responsible for in prisons across the region. The RPIU is purely an intelligence function and doesn't have investigators to act on the intelligence gathered by the unit. Some personnel that we interviewed felt that constituent forces don't always appreciate that the RPIU relies solely on them to do any subsequent investigation. It is sometimes difficult for the RPIU to persuade forces to take these investigations on. The RPIU gets some support from His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service to disrupt criminal offending within the prison estate. But RPIU personnel felt that this help isn't always as easy to access as it should be.

There are 15 prisons within the east midlands region. We were told by RPIU personnel that, by 2025, the number of prisoners within the east midlands prison estate will increase sharply because of the Ministry of Justice prison expansion plan. This will place greater demand on the RPIU. EMSOU is planning to increase capacity in the RPIU to meet this demand.

The RPIU, His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service and constituent forces across the east midlands region could improve how they manage intelligence in the prison system. The RPIU has no control of intelligence assets in prison. It is likely that the placement of intelligence assets isn't maximised to gather quality intelligence about the most active SOC offenders in prison.

At the time of our inspection, EMSOU was managing four offenders under the [multiagency response to regional crime](#) (MARSOC) programme. The MARSOC team told us of several successes in disrupting these offenders. This included work to identify family members who were complicit in criminal activity and the subsequent issuing of warrants at their home addresses. Another example was the targeting of a MARSOC nominal released from prison to evidence a breach of their license conditions, resulting in a recall to prison. A MARSOC nominal is an offender who has been designated as high risk and is managed in prison or on release accordingly.



# Derbyshire Constabulary

Adequate

Derbyshire Constabulary is adequate at tackling serious and organised crime.

## Understanding SOC and setting priorities to tackle it

### **Innovative practice: The force has introduced a data and analysis tool to understand serious and organised crime (SOC) threats**

The force has invested in Microsoft Power BI, a data visualisation tool, to enhance its understanding of SOC threats. It has also used this tool to direct the activity of covert teams working on SOC disruption activity.

Force personnel told us that this tool has achieved clear efficiency savings, by reducing the hours that personnel spend on researching and analysing this type of information.

### **There are some gaps in how the force understands local SOC threats**

The force has identified SOC as a priority in the force strategic assessment and control strategy, and there are clear links to the NCA strategic assessment. The force also has a dedicated SOC strategy, which sets out a four-year plan to tackle SOC between 2021 and 2025.

The force created a [SOC local profile](#) in 2019, which gives an overview of SOC threats within the force area. The profile is very focused on areas such as illegal drugs, firearm and knife crime, and modern slavery and human trafficking. However, it doesn't sufficiently describe what is happening with SOC at a local level or determine potential vulnerabilities in the local community. We were told by the force that it is planning to update the SOC local profile.

The force doesn't routinely produce problem profiles around SOC threats. Specific profiles, such as county lines profiles, can be commissioned if needed. These are time-consuming for analysts, which restricts commissioning across broader themes. Analysts told us that most of these profiles are looked at from a public protection perspective.

The national SOC strategy advocates a 'single whole-system' approach to make sure that there is a collective approach to address the increasing volume and complexity of SOC. Although the force has a series of strategic and tactical meetings with partners, such as the local authority, we found this approach to be inconsistent. The force plans to address this through the reintroduction of the annual SOC conference, [described further below](#).

The relationship with local authority partners varies across the force. The force needs to make improvements in governance processes and structures at a more strategic level to improve consistency. We found that the way Derbyshire Constabulary's area is divided into local authority, district and borough councils causes some confusion. There are different processes in operation across the different boundaries.

## Resources and skills

### **Area for improvement: Lead responsible officers (LROs) need more support from the force to tackle serious and organised crime effectively**

Two weeks prior to our inspection, the force changed the roles and responsibilities of the LRO from detective inspectors to detective chief inspectors in the force divisions. The LROs we interviewed didn't know why they had been appointed this role. They showed little understanding of what was expected of them as an LRO and hadn't been given training. They also felt they had little ability to effectively manage the serious and organised crime threats allocated to them and were concerned about their wider workloads.

Since our inspection, the force has addressed this feedback by appointing more LROs from specialist roles to address specific threats and vulnerability linked to serious and organised crime. We are unable to assess whether new lead responsible officers are adequately trained or have enough capacity to perform the role effectively.

## **The force has an analytical structure that is disconnected**

The force has recently split its analytical resources into three distinct disciplines – tactical, strategic and performance analysis.

Tactical analysts support operations and intelligence collection, while strategic analysts produce documents, such as strategic assessments and SOC local profiles. Tactical analysts are heavily committed to providing analysis of evidential material to support police operations and present their work in court. Due to this demand, analysts have little time to analyse intelligence more broadly to determine new and emerging threats.

Strategic analysts also work on other force priorities, which affects their ability to produce SOC-related products. One consequence of this is that the force doesn't currently have a drugs market problem profile.

Performance analysts deal with understanding how well the force is performing across all of its priorities.

For this model to be effective, the analytical teams should work together to make sure information and analysis are shared. But we were told that this isn't the case. Police officers and staff said that the restructuring of the analytical resources into three distinct disciplines introduced a risk of analysts being unable to produce critical products.

The force determines how much analytical support is given to an SOC operation based on the priority status of the operation. This leaves investigators who are working on lower priority investigations without enough or any analytical support. We were also informed that the force doesn't have any researchers to support the analysts and compile documents for lower priority operations.

In time, some analytical demand will be eased with the use of Microsoft Power BI tools. However, the force still needs specially trained analysts to supply complex and meaningful analysis.

## **The force needs to give comprehensive and consistent training to SOC specialists**

There is no comprehensive training programme for personnel working in SOC teams. We found that officers that are new to the SOC teams weren't given a 'foundation' course to make sure they understand this complex area of investigation.

We were told by specialist SOC teams that the force used to host an annual SOC conference that included partner agencies. This event provided training and the opportunity for practitioners to share good practice around SOC. In 2021 and 2022, the conference was suspended because of COVID-19. In 2023, the annual SOC conference is due to be reintroduced and should promote a culture of evidence-based policing, which would support a more consistent approach to tackling SOC.

## **Tackling SOC and safeguarding people and communities**

On 1 February 2022, the force was managing 73 SOC threats, the largest number in the region. In the 12 months prior to 31 May 2022, the force had recorded 127 disruption events.

### **Area for improvement: The force should adopt a more consistent approach to serious and organised crime (SOC) across its two basic command units**

The force is separated into two geographical areas, known as the north and south divisions. Each division is managed by a chief superintendent.

We spoke to teams in both divisions and found that there was a significant contrast in how each division tackled SOC.

Teams in the south division showed:

- a good understanding of SOC and organised crime groups at neighbourhood level;
- sufficient appreciation of their roles and responsibilities in tackling SOC;
- a proactive approach to establishing and reducing local SOC threat; and
- a designated team to progress prevent, protect and prepare activity.

In the north division, we found:

- staff considered SOC "other people's business" and didn't fully understand their role in tackling SOC;
- staff were less proactive and often driven by specific taskings;
- staff didn't always keep up to date with briefings on SOC threats; and
- staff reported a disconnect between the activity of specialist SOC teams and local policing.

The force should improve the approach to tackling SOC within its north division.

Since our inspection, the force has reviewed its operating model and planned to centralise its crime and intelligence directorate in January 2023. This will see all specialist SOC resources managed by a detective chief inspector. At the time of writing this report, it isn't possible to assess whether this will improve the consistency of how the two basic command units operate.

### **The force should improve how it tackles economic crime across its two BCUs**

At the time of our inspection, Derbyshire Constabulary's Economic Crime Unit (ECU) had the necessary processes and structures in place to effectively seize, retain, store and sell criminal assets. Officers are encouraged to pursue criminal assets. When an SOC threat is found, a financial investigator is allocated to the investigation to identify such assets.

We found that most investigations referred to the ECU came from the south division. Financial investigators stated that they have strong links with the south division county lines team and are used to investigating potential confiscations under the [Proceeds of Crime Act 2002](#). This wasn't the case with the north division SOC team. Officers and staff in the ECU were concerned that the north division SOC team is missing out on opportunities to find and target criminal assets.

We were told by staff that the team in the ECU, which deals with confiscation of assets, are at capacity and will need to prioritise work from now on. The force is planning to review and increase the capacity in the ECU, using some funds from the Proceeds of Crime Act confiscations to pay for this increase.

### **The force should improve staff training to manage digital forensic demand more effectively**

The force struggles to manage some of the demand around digital forensics and the download of mobile devices. The force told us that the average waiting time for a standard mobile phone examination is nine months. This means many suspects must be released under investigation while forensic examination results are pending. This could present a risk of continued offending. The force has committed to increasing the capacity of the Digital Forensics Unit, with more roles now in place, to meet current and future demand.

## **The force should take a more standardised approach to prevention and protection around SOC**

When the force creates an SOC 4P plan, a safeguarding officer is appointed to support the 4P approach. This makes sure that safeguarding is a priority for the force in the context of tackling SOC, which is very positive.

The south division has a multi-agency disruption team within its dedicated SOC team. The team has officers dedicated to finding vulnerable people that need safeguarding. These officers gave us several examples of the work they are involved in to divert people away from SOC, such as the Choose Life, Drop the Knife programme and working with local theatre companies to raise awareness around gang culture and knife crime in schools. The officers' work involved collaborating with members of the community and partners such as the local authority and NHS.

There is no multi-agency disruption team in the north division. However, the force plans to centralise its crime directorate. This should see a standardisation of these teams across both divisions, which would bring a more consistent approach to protecting victims and preventing SOC.

The force gave further examples of specific initiatives designed to divert people away from the threat of SOC. In 2020, the police and crime commissioner started work with the local authority and the third-sector organisation [Catch 22](#) to identify young people at risk of being exploited and protect them. The force also works with the charity [Safe and Sound](#) to identify and support victims of exploitation.

# Leicestershire Police

## Outstanding

Leicestershire Police is outstanding at tackling serious and organised crime.

### **Understanding SOC and setting priorities to tackle it**

#### **The force has an integrated approach and effectively manages SOC**

The force has an integrated approach to tackling SOC, exploitation and violent crime. It focuses on these three problems with a whole-system approach. This approach is effective for several reasons.

- The force has a culture of taking a 4P approach to tackling SOC. This stems from an executive level through to frontline policing.
- The assistant chief constable chairs strategic meetings. This makes sure that there is consistent oversight and accountability for the execution of the force SOC strategy.
- The director of intelligence is responsible for tactical-level management of SOC. This role involves direct line management of core personnel, including lead responsible officers (LROs).
- County lines and urban street gangs are managed to the same standard as OCG and other SOC threats. This means that there is a consistent approach to managing all SOC threats.
- There is an operational plan for the force intelligence function that outlines the resources and processes that the force carries out to continually scan, identify and manage SOC threats. The plan also outlines how the force responds to these threats.
- Each OCG is allocated an LRO, who is also supported by an intelligence officer to ensure effective intelligence collection and development.
- The force takes a trauma-informed approach, involving partners, such as those involved in public health, to find and divert people who are vulnerable to being influenced by organised criminals.

## **The force uses analytical work to achieve successful outcomes**

We found that analytical staff's skills were used effectively to tackle SOC.

The analysts routinely apply their professional skills to direct LROs towards disruption activities using a 4P approach. An example of this was crime pattern analysis of an emerging trend of thefts. The force then worked with third-sector bodies to give the community advice on how to protect themselves from this type of crime.

We were told that the force was able to secure convictions against OCGs on several operations using only the analysis of telecommunications data. This avoided the use of other covert tactics, which can be expensive.

## **Resources and skills**

In general, the force has enough resources to deal with the workload created by SOC. However, we found two notable exceptions.

At the time of our inspection, there were a large number of intelligence reports that hadn't been processed due to a lack of staff. This resulted in a backlog of reports. Force intelligence staff told us that all intelligence was assessed for risk and actioned accordingly, regardless of whether it was processed onto the force intelligence system. As such, the force is managing the risk.

Since our inspection, the force has added two new staff posts in the intelligence department. This has significantly reduced intelligence backlogs. The remaining unactioned intelligence logs have all been triaged and assessed as low risk.

Staff in the covert authorities bureau reported that the demand on the unit increased significantly during the pandemic, with a large number of communications data applications awaiting authorisation. The force was quick to adapt to this increased demand by providing more resources. It also introduced enhanced training to improve the quality of submissions. The force is recruiting staff into the covert authorities bureau to make sure it can cope with any future increase in demand.



## Tackling SOC and safeguarding people and communities

### **Innovative practice: The force lead responsible officers (LROs) are effective in managing and co-ordinating 4P activity**

Each organised crime group (OCG) within the force has an LRO allocated to manage the serious and organised crime threat.

The force has four LROs; these are detective inspectors based within their intelligence unit. We found that these LROs were crucial to the force's success in co-ordinating the approach to OCGs. The LROs have developed excellent working relationships within the force and with external agencies.

We found that LROs showed strong leadership and:

- had extensive knowledge of the intelligence related to the OCGs they manage;
- worked closely with neighbourhood commanders and their teams to manage local OCGs more effectively;
- had sound awareness of covert tactics that can be used to tackle OCGs, including those available in the ROCU;
- worked well with senior investigating officers to design and develop effective 4P plans; and
- had a comprehensive understanding of prevent and protect initiatives available across the force.

### **Promising practice: Leicestershire Police is innovative in identifying and tackling foreign national offenders**

In October 2020, the force developed a methodology (Operation Orbis Linea) to perform bulk data searches and analysis. The force applied this methodology to its own systems and national and international databases to find vehicles used by foreign national offenders. An identified vehicle is then marked on the police national computer with an instruction for any force that comes across it to stop the vehicle and investigate.

The force reports that since October 2020, the operation has resulted in:

- 801 vehicles stopped;
- 520 vehicles seized;
- 209 individuals arrested;
- approximately £9m in criminal assets seized;
- 90 European arrest warrants sought; and
- 10 high-risk sex offenders from overseas identified and under investigation.

The force often finds vehicles that aren't operating in the force area and vehicles have been stopped in other areas of the UK, as well as in France.

In January 2021, the National Police Chiefs' Council [International Crime Co-ordination Centre](#) conducted an independent evaluation and labelled the methodology as national best practice. The evaluation concluded that the force achieved its operational objectives, and that the methodology could be adapted by other forces across England and Wales. In light of the success of this operation, the force has increased staffing within its intelligence unit to continue disrupting this type of offending.

### **The force effectively pursues organised criminals by targeting their assets**

There appeared to be enough personnel within the force ECU to carry out effective financial investigations. Personnel in the unit were confident that confiscation orders were sought in relevant cases.

We were told that each SOC investigation is allocated a financial investigator. The financial investigators work closely with LROs and intelligence officers to inform 4P plans. Financial investigators also attend SOC management meetings to advise on potential opportunities to seize criminal assets.

The force established that there is a problem with criminals exploiting people to launder money on their behalf, sometimes referred to as [money muling](#). So, the force has appointed a dedicated protect officer and a police community support officer within the ECU to tackle this type of crime. The role of these officers is to find and support vulnerable victims of economic crime.

The force has established an online eBay account to dispose of criminal property that is forfeited. The money this approach raises is returned to the force through the Government's asset recovery incentivisation scheme. It is used to pay for the administration of the eBay account and any excess funds are reinvested into the force.

**Promising practice: The force has designed a campaign to raise awareness of child criminal exploitation and improve how it works with partners to identify and safeguard vulnerable children**

In November 2020, the force released a film titled *Are you listening?* across social media platforms and ran workshops with trusted adults. The aims of this campaign were to help people spot the signs of child criminal exploitation and increase the number of young people referred to local child criminal exploitation teams.

The effectiveness of the campaign was evaluated 12 months from the release date and showed the following successes:

- The film has been viewed by 4.8m people.
- The workshops were attended by 2,300 trusted adults.
- Referrals to child criminal exploitation teams have tripled.
- In December 2021, the film received the Royal Television Society Midlands Award for Best Promotional Content.
- The campaign has been adopted by other forces, including West Yorkshire Police and Gloucestershire Constabulary, and adapted for their local contexts.
- The force has taken the findings from the evaluation to continue to develop this campaign.

**The force works closely with partners to prevent people from being drawn into organised crime**

Protected persons notices (PPNs) are used by Leicestershire Police and their partner agencies to highlight people who may be vulnerable. PPNs are sent to a joint safeguarding hub, where staff from other agencies, such as health and children's services, also work.

All juveniles entering custody undergo PPN referral. One member of force staff said that "the PPN is the key to all referrals and the way to highlight OCG members and peripherals". LROs, SIOs and other personnel understood that PPN could be used to engage partners in safeguarding hubs. They also understood that they would be held accountable if they didn't submit PPNs.

The force told us about several programmes and other activities that help prevent and protect people in relation to organised crime.

- The ENGAGE process is an out-of-court disposal framework for young adults on their first entry into the criminal justice system. A key worker is allocated to try and intervene at the outset of their criminality to stop continued offending.
- The force leads a series of groups that are highly effective in meeting its strategy to tackle modern slavery. Partners include Barnardo's, the British Red Cross, Hope for Justice, the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority and the Health and Safety Executive. The range of partners helps the force to tackle organised crime with a 4P approach (preventing, pursuing, preparing, and protecting the most vulnerable).
- The force gives frontline staff guidance and training on the [national referral mechanism](#) and how it should treat potential victims of slavery, for instance, in cannabis factories.
- The force effectively uses a range of methods to tackle local SOC activity. For example, the force addressed activity in gangs primarily made up of Somalian nationals. Neighbourhood policing team officers were responsible for tackling the criminality of these gang members and conducted visits to their homes and their families. The force also worked with community leaders and set up training about gang activity, which was led by a community group. Officers patrolling in the area took a zero-tolerance approach to drugs and weapons. The force reported that this reduced offending linked to this gang, leading to several members of the gang having their risk assessments downgraded.

# Lincolnshire Police

Requires  
improvement

Lincolnshire Police requires improvement at tackling serious and organised crime.

## **Understanding SOC and setting priorities to tackle it**

### **The force doesn't adequately understand the threat from SOC**

During our inspection, we found that the force didn't have the necessary resources, processes or information systems to assess SOC intelligence effectively. As a result, the force doesn't understand the scale and threat posed by SOC and is unable to effectively prioritise their approach. This doesn't just affect the force's understanding of SOC but also their ability to understand and manage the threat from all force priorities.

Lincolnshire police didn't have a force control strategy for several years. It introduced one in the 18 months following our inspection, under the new command team. The strategy includes SOC as a force priority. The lack of a control strategy meant the force didn't have a clear plan on its priorities and intelligence requirement, or for how to deploy resources. It is difficult to understand how a force can provide an effective approach to SOC without this plan in place.

We also found that the process to prioritise and co-ordinate the force approach to SOC was ineffective. Force tasking and co-ordination meetings lacked detailed plans to tackle priorities, and there were no intelligence requirements set out to make sure that information gaps were filled. There were limited bids, during these meetings, for force resources to tackle the problems raised.

**Area for improvement: The force needs to increase its resource and capability to effectively analyse the threat from serious and organised crime (SOC)**

The force has limited analytical resources. Analysts are carrying excessive workloads and are unable to complete analysis to find new and emerging SOC threats. As a result, the force can't understand the future threat or demand from SOC.

The force IT systems are difficult to work with. Some staff we spoke to described them as antiquated. We were told that the data and information held within force systems are incomplete or inaccurate. As the systems aren't integrated, analysis and research must be done across multiple systems. Also, mapping and analytical software is out of date. Some people we interviewed expressed frustration at how inefficient the systems are.

The force gathers limited, and sometimes poor quality, data from partners such as the local authority. This further limits its assessment and analysis of SOC threats.

**Area for improvement: The force should update the serious and organised crime (SOC) local profile to help it, and its partners, to better understand the SOC threat and the approach needed**

In 2017, the force produced a SOC local profile, as promoted by the national SOC strategy. But they haven't reviewed or updated the profile since then. This means that the force can't show an adequate understanding of the threats and vulnerabilities its communities currently face from SOC. They don't have a plan to tackle SOC with partner agencies. While some people in the force recognised the benefits of developing this profile, there aren't enough analysts to do the work.

## Resources and skills

In the section above, we stated that the force doesn't have enough analytical capacity to assess the threat from SOC.

**Area for improvement: The force should ensure that the lead responsible officer (LRO) role is delegated to a wider group of officers with the time and expertise to do it effectively**

The LRO role was given to three detective inspectors based within the central intelligence function. The LROs manage all of the serious and organised crime (SOC) threats across the force, which is a considerable amount of work for three officers. Their capacity to develop relationships with local authority partners to prevent SOC and protect victims is limited, which impairs their effectiveness to tackle SOC in a holistic way.

Senior leaders accepted that the LRO role is better assigned to a wider group of officers. This should incorporate the role of policing inspectors and detective inspectors at a local level. The force plans to address this in early 2023.

Most frontline officers and staff we spoke to showed some level of knowledge of the SOC threats faced by their communities. However, we found that the level of knowledge was inconsistent. In one area of the force, officers and staff were able to describe their role in tackling SOC. But their line manager didn't have the same level of knowledge and wasn't aware of county lines or the national referral mechanism for vulnerable victims. The force needs to do more to make sure frontline officers and staff have better awareness of their roles and responsibilities in tackling SOC.

## Tackling SOC and safeguarding people and communities

**Area for improvement: The force should improve how it records serious and organised crime (SOC) threats and disruptions on the national database**

On 1 February 2022, the force had 30 SOC threat assessments. Of these, 20 were mapped OCGs. The other ten related to county lines and had been mapped as SOC vulnerabilities. We were concerned that some of these hadn't been correctly mapped to categorise them as organised crime groups involved in county lines drug supply. This would affect levels of recorded disruption, which are only measured against mapped organised crime groups.

Lincolnshire Police had the lowest number of disruptions nationally, at 39 in the 12 months to 31 May 2022. Of these disruptions, 36 were pursue events, 2 were prevent and 1 was protect.

### **The force proactively targets criminal assets**

The force economic crime command has the necessary skills, resources and commitment to maximise financial disruptions around SOC. The unit supports officers to exploit illicit finances and has set up processes to maximise opportunities to confiscate criminal assets. One example of this is the seizure of £2.5m of cryptocurrency linked to a major fraud investigation.

### **The force should promote a whole-system approach to SOC across the workforce**

We found that it was often difficult for LROs to get support from other police units and departments in developing and executing 4P plans. Force SOC specialists reported that there was inconsistency in who attended SOC planning meetings. They felt that some units would only attend if they had an interest in a particular issue. SOC practitioners felt that there isn't a sense of shared responsibility or a whole-system approach to tackling SOC in the force.

### **The force conducts some operational activity inefficiently**

The force has chosen to rely on mobile surveillance capability provided by the ROCU. It contributes to funding the regional surveillance teams. This means the force can't carry out surveillance on lower-level threats that may exist in its force area. Despite the strategic decision on surveillance, we were told of cases where Lincolnshire Police had asked for support from other forces. This approach to surveillance is expensive.

### **The force is doing some good work to prevent SOC and protect victims**

NPTs that we visited all described their involvement in tackling county lines and being part of the safeguarding response to victims of [cuckooing](#). However, some NPT officers' knowledge was limited and appeared reliant on training rather than practical experience.

Lincolnshire Police is a member of a local multi-agency intelligence network. This network includes partners, such as the local authority and private sector housing providers. Those involved share information and find ways to reduce the harm caused by SOC. The force also works in partnership with government bodies and the private sector. In one example, the force was able to find and execute warrants at several premises linked to criminal activity because of intelligence work with the Ministry of Defence.

The force has staff within the multi-agency child exploitation team that find children and young people at risk of child criminal exploitation. All children that come to its notice are assessed and given a vulnerability score, which is updated monthly. This assessment informs how vulnerable children are safeguarded.



We were particularly impressed with the force's work to introduce a training package for taxi drivers, helping them recognise the signs of county lines activity. The training package must be completed by all newly licensed taxi drivers.

Another good example of partnership work involves the force establishing which hostels and poor-quality rental accommodation typically house people who are vulnerable to forms of exploitation, such as cuckooing. The force and local housing partners intervene by sourcing more suitable housing for vulnerable people.

# Northamptonshire Police

## Adequate

Northamptonshire Police is adequate at tackling serious and organised crime.

This force was inspected under the previous SOC inspection programme. The findings from this can be found in the force [PEEL 2021/22 inspection report](#). The highlighted section below is taken from this report.

### Areas for improvement

**The force should improve its approach to serious organised crime by providing lead responsible officers with the skills, training and support they need to perform their roles effectively**

[Lead responsible officers \(LROs\)](#) have been appointed to manage organised crime groups (OCG) and account for their actions at relevant tasking meetings. But there is no specific process to support LROs in formulating plans. The force needs to make sure that all of the '4Ps' are considered (prevent, pursue, protect and prepare). OCG management plans detail investigative and intelligence tactics, but prevention activities are less comprehensively considered. An LRO should formulate a tactical 4P plan, generally with advice from specialists, and should be able to allocate work from the plan for others to carry out. The LRO should then be able to take a step back from the investigation and make sure that the 4P approach is being managed. LROs would benefit from others being involved at the planning stage, such as other law enforcement partners, covert advisors, the [Government Agency Intelligence Network](#) and local partners. This would improve the range of resources and tactics aimed at tackling OCGs.

### **The force should make full use of financial investigators to identify and disrupt offenders engaged in organised crime**

The force needs to make better use of financial experts to identify and disrupt people who facilitate organised crime. Financial investigators aren't routinely tasked to support LROs or [senior investigating officers](#) (SIOs) to tackle organised crime.

There is a lack of awareness around how the Economic Crime Unit can support tackling serious organised crime. The unit plans to host an awareness event for LROs and SIOs to address this lack. Increased use of financial experts in the fight against serious and organised crime will present more opportunities to target and seize money that has been obtained criminally.

# Nottinghamshire Police

## Adequate

Nottinghamshire Police is adequate at tackling serious and organised crime.

### Understanding SOC and setting priorities to tackle it

#### The force has effective governance to prioritise its approach to SOC

The force assesses threat and risk consistently. It uses [management of risk in law enforcement \(MoRiLE\)](#) and OCG mapping in an efficient way. MoRiLE also informs the decision-making process for resource allocation. We found that the force's strategic assessment took account of national and regional assessments.

The force has established meeting structures to prioritise its approaches to SOC. In addition to a monthly tasking and co-ordinating meeting, there are meetings and structures where partners, such as the local authority, are involved. This includes a monthly OCG mapping meeting where intelligence is shared with partners.

Each territorial division has an SOC local profile. Established strategic boards and sub-groups at city and county levels are responsible for progressing the findings and recommendations from these SOC local profiles.

The force has a good level of resourcing to effectively assess threat, risk and harm. The operational approach appears effective. But, because it has no performance framework to make sure it records disruption activity, there is no objective way to measure how effective it is.

### Resources and skills

#### **Area for improvement: The force should make sure that its serious and organised crime (SOC) task force has enough staff to meet SOC demand**

At the time of our inspection, 10 of the 33 posts in the SOC task force were vacant. This was seriously undermining the effectiveness of the team's approach to tackling SOC. We were told that the force is aware of the problem and it is trying to fill the current vacancies.

### **The force doesn't have enough trained investigators**

Like many other forces, Nottinghamshire Police doesn't have enough trained investigators to cope with the demand from SOC. This has led to some uniformed officers being allocated complex or serious investigations inappropriately. Generally, uniformed officers don't have the training or time to complete lengthy and complicated investigations. As such, they struggle to progress SOC-related investigations.

The force accepts the problem and is trying to increase the number of trained investigators. It plans to run more Professionalising Investigation Programme 2 training courses, but this alone is unlikely to have any meaningful effect. The force should develop a more comprehensive plan for increasing the number of investigators.

### **The force is struggling to resource some specialist staff roles**

In common with other forces, Nottinghamshire Police is finding it difficult to retain police staff who work in some specialist SOC roles. This is most acute in financial investigation and cybercrime, where trained and accredited staff are pursuing better-paid careers with other local organisations. This continual need to recruit and train new staff creates inefficiencies.

The force doesn't have enough trained staff and technology to effectively examine digital devices in a timely way. It also doesn't have enough staff trained to conduct drug field testing. However, the force is now increasing the number of officers and staff who are trained to do this work. And it is investing in new technology to allow mobile examination of digital devices.

### **The force should make sure that personnel understand the importance of taking a 4P approach to tackling SOC**

We found an inconsistent approach to the use of LROs within the force. In some cases, we found that SIOs were also performing the LRO role. This may be necessary in some cases. But it has the potential to make disruption activity focused on pursue activity, to the detriment of the other elements of a 4P plan. Wherever possible, the SIO and LRO roles should be distinct and separate.

We found some neighbourhood police officers had limited knowledge of what SOC disruption meant, despite awareness training being provided for county lines and child sexual exploitation and abuse. Officers had little knowledge of 4P plans to undermine organised crime, and the focus appeared to be on enforcement activity. This was predominantly given through Operation Reacher, [which is discussed later in this report](#). Adopting a predominantly pursue approach reduces the opportunities to disrupt and prevent SOC and keep the public safe.

## Tackling SOC and safeguarding people and communities

### **Area for improvement: The force should improve how it records disruptions on the national database**

In the 12 months to 31 May 2022, The force recorded 113 disruptions on the national database. All the disruption events were recorded as pursue activity; there were no prevent, protect or prepare disruptions recorded.

However, we found evidence that the force had been involved in prevent and protect activities, which weren't being recorded as disruptions. The Operation Reacher teams have a separate database for recording their activity, but we weren't confident that this activity was categorised and properly recorded as disruptions on the national database. This means the force may be involved in more disruption activity than is being recorded. The force's own performance management regime doesn't appear to have highlighted this problem, which may show a lack of an effective performance review process.

The force should raise the awareness of what serious and organised crime disruption activity is and how it should be recorded. This will help to better understand its performance in tackling serious and organised crime.

### **The force effectively disrupts SOC in local communities**

In 2020, the force created 12 Operation Reacher teams, following a pilot in one area of the force. The Operation Reacher teams are made up of uniformed officers but are focused on addressing intelligence that needs immediate action. The teams have the skills, numbers and time to effectively target SOC threats. They obtain and execute search warrants, carry out arrests and, when appropriate, partake in co-ordinated overt enforcement activity, including working with other agencies.

The work of these teams is designed to help the force build community confidence in areas where OCGs have historically established themselves. This includes using social media to effectively publicise its enforcement and wider patrol activities. The force has published the Operation Reacher successes, with achievements that include more than 2,000 arrests, 4,000 stop searches and 500 search warrants executed. The Operation Reacher teams also monitor the activity of SOC offenders who are subject to serious crime prevention orders, carrying out enforcement around breaches. We were impressed with the force's commitment to investing in this operation.

## **The force needs to improve how it seizes, stores and disposes of criminal assets**

We found evidence of criminal assets not being seized or being inappropriately returned to suspects because of insufficient storage facilities. People we interviewed told us that some officers didn't understand their powers to seize criminal assets, resulting in missed opportunities to disrupt organised crime. The force doesn't have an effective process for managing and disposing of criminal assets, which is adding to storage problems.

The force is aware of the problem and the missed opportunity to generate income that can be reinvested in policing. The force is considering ways to improve, including the creation of an eBay account.

## **The force uses a range of tactics to disrupt SOC**

The force uses ancillary orders and serious crime prevention orders effectively to manage the criminal behaviour of offenders. Nottinghamshire Police is also one of a few forces that have sought a gang injunction with the local authority, to limit the behaviour of known gang members. We encourage further use of this legislation, where it is justified and appropriate.

We found some evidence that Nottinghamshire Police tackled OCGs involved in modern slavery and human trafficking. One example is Operation Pintail, which saw the arrest and prosecution of eight individuals involved in this type of criminal exploitation. The operation also resulted in the seizure of significant criminal assets including multiple properties.

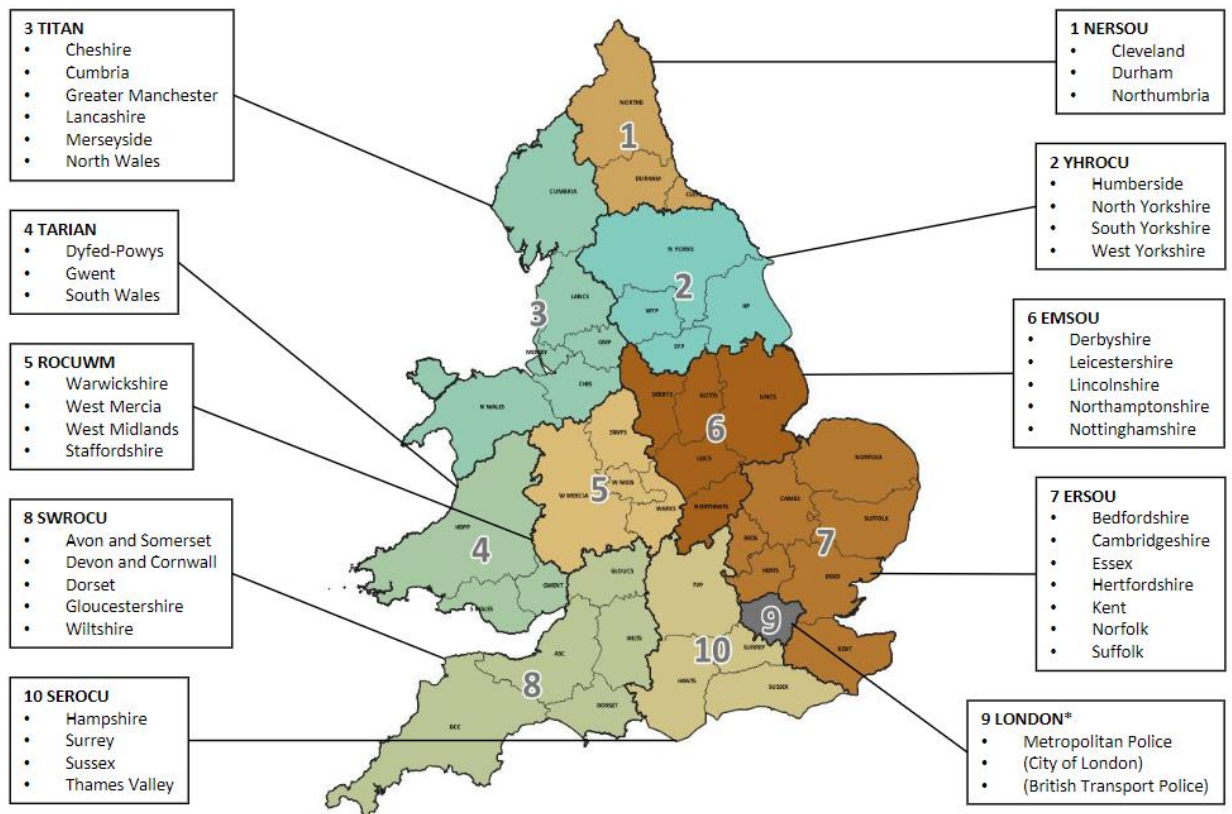
## **The force actively works with partners to prevent people being drawn into SOC**

The force's approach to county lines drug dealing has changed. There is now greater emphasis on safeguarding vulnerable people who may have been groomed, exploited or coerced into committing organised crime. The force works with the local authority and some charities to support those vulnerable people identified as at risk. Increasingly, these individuals are being recognised as victims, not perpetrators.

The force and its aforementioned partners have a child criminal exploitation panel and a serious youth violence panel. The purpose of these panels includes the sharing of information to help find those most at risk of exploitation by OCGs and putting diversionary action in place.

The force considers people involved in [urban street gangs](#) to be those who may become involved in OCGs later in life. The force uses early diversionary tactics to work alongside local authority partners with these individuals and their families. The force and its partners commission the work of two charities, the Chayah Development Project and The Pythian Club, to supply outreach workers to support young people caught up in organised crime and defuse inter-gang tensions when they arise.

# Appendix 1: Map of regional organised crime units



There are ten ROCUs in England and Wales:

1. The North East Regional Special Operations Unit covers Cleveland, Durham and Northumbria.
2. The Yorkshire & Humber Regional Organised Crime Unit covers Humberside, North Yorkshire, South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire.
3. The North West Regional Organised Crime Unit covers Cheshire, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Lancashire, Merseyside and North Wales.
4. Tarian covers Dyfed-Powys, Gwent and South Wales.
5. The Regional Organised Crime Unit for the West Midlands Region covers Warwickshire, West Mercia, West Midlands and Staffordshire.
6. The East Midlands Special Operations Unit covers Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and Nottinghamshire.



7. The Eastern Region Special Operations Unit covers Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Kent, Norfolk and Suffolk.
8. The South West Regional Organised Crime Unit covers Avon & Somerset, Devon & Cornwall, Dorset, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire.
9. The Metropolitan Police Service, City of London Police and British Transport Police work collaboratively in the London region.
10. The South East Regional Organised Crime Unit covers Hampshire, Surrey, Sussex and Thames Valley.

There is a separate collaborative arrangement for the London region, incorporating the constituent forces of the Metropolitan Police Service, City of London Police and the British Transport Police. The forces share some ROCU capabilities. For the purposes of this inspection the London region has been inspected, but as it is not conventionally considered a ROCU, it has not been awarded a ROCU grading.

## Appendix 2: Data methodology and caveats

The data used in this report was extracted from the national database: the Agency and Partners Management Information System (APMIS).

APMIS contains data that is recorded by police forces throughout England and Wales, ROCUs, the NCA and other organisations (such as HMRC and Home Office Immigration Enforcement).

This data includes:

- The SOC master list, which contains all MoRiLE assessments for the SOC threats identified by forces and organisations.
- Event-based disruption data ('disruption data') that is recorded following national minimum standards. At the time of our inspection, minimum standards stipulated that disruption data should only be recorded against organised crime groups, and not [priority individuals](#) or SOC vulnerabilities.

MoRiLE assessment data was extracted from APMIS on 1 June 2022 and therefore any changes made to assessments since that date will not be accounted for in the analysis. The following filters were used on columns to extract this data: Type is Tactical, Moderation status is Moderated, SOC is SOC, Tier is not Tier 5 and Phase is not contains closed.

Disruption data was extracted from APMIS in June 2022 and includes all disruptions made after 1 June 2021. The following filters were used on columns to extract this data: Disruption type is Lead Disruption, Record data is greater than 1 June 2021 and Assessment Category is Major, Minor and Moderate.

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