

PEEL

Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy 2018/19

An inspection of Northumbria Police



Contents

What this report contains	1
Force in context	3
Overall summary	4
Effectiveness	8
Force in context	9
How effectively does the force reduce crime and keep people safe?	11
Summary	11
Preventing crime and tackling anti-social behaviour	12
Investigating crime	15
Protecting vulnerable people	19
Tackling serious and organised crime	26
Armed policing	27
Efficiency	29
Force in context	30
How efficiently does the force operate and how sustainable are its services?	31
Summary	31
Meeting current demands and using resources	31
Planning for the future	38
Legitimacy	44
Force in context	45
How legitimately does the force treat the public and its workforce?	47
Summary	47
Treating the public fairly	48
Ethical and lawful workforce behaviour	52
Treating the workforce fairly	57
Annex A – About the data	58

What this report contains

This report is structured in four parts:

1. Our overall assessment of the force's 2018/19 performance.
2. Our judgments and summaries of how effectively, efficiently and legitimately the force keeps people safe and reduces crime.
3. Our judgments and any areas for improvement and causes of concern for each component of our inspection.
4. Our detailed findings for each component.

Our inspection approach

In 2018/19, we adopted an [integrated PEEL assessment](#) (IPA) approach to our existing PEEL (police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy) inspections. IPA combines into a single inspection the effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy areas of PEEL. These areas had previously been inspected separately each year.

As well as our inspection findings, our assessment is informed by our analysis of:

- force data and management statements;
- risks to the public;
- progress since previous inspections;
- findings from our non-PEEL inspections;
- how forces tackle serious and organised crime locally and regionally; and
- our regular monitoring work.

We inspected all forces in four areas:

- protecting vulnerable people;
- firearms capability;
- planning for the future; and
- ethical and lawful workforce behaviour.

We consider the risk to the public in these areas important enough to inspect all forces every year.

We extended the risk-based approach that we used in our 2017 effectiveness inspection to the efficiency and legitimacy parts of our IPA inspections. This means that in 2018/19 we didn't inspect all forces against all areas. The table below shows the areas we inspected Northumbria Police against.

IPA area	Inspected in 2018/19?
Preventing crime and anti-social behaviour	Yes
Investigating crime	Yes
Protecting vulnerable people	Yes
Tackling serious and organised crime	No
Firearms capability	Yes
Meeting current demands	Yes
Planning for the future	Yes
Treating the public fairly	Yes
Ethical and lawful workforce behaviour	Yes
Treating the workforce fairly	No

Our 2017 judgments are still in place for the areas we didn't inspect in 2018/19.

Force in context











	Northumbria rate	England and Wales rate
999 calls per 1,000 population 12 months ending 31 March 2019	164	175
	Northumbria rate	Most Similar Forces rate
Recorded crime per 1,000 population 12 months ending 30 September 2018	110	105





Northumbria workforce

	FTE in post on 31 March 2019	FTE in post on 31 March 2014	Percentage change
Police Officer	3,081	3,646	-15%
Police Community Support Officer	194	234	-17%
Police Staff	1,419	1,412	0%

	Northumbria spend	England and Wales spend
Spend per head of population 2018/19 projection	£184	£192

Overall summary

	Effectiveness		Last inspected
		Requires improvement	
	Preventing crime and tackling anti-social behaviour	 Requires improvement	2018/19
	Investigating crime	 Good	2018/19
	Protecting vulnerable people	 Requires improvement	2018/19
	Tackling serious and organised crime	 Good	2016
	Armed response capability	Ungraded	2018/19
	Efficiency		Last inspected
		Requires improvement	
	Meeting current demands and using resources	 Requires improvement	2018/19
	Planning for the future	 Requires improvement	2018/19

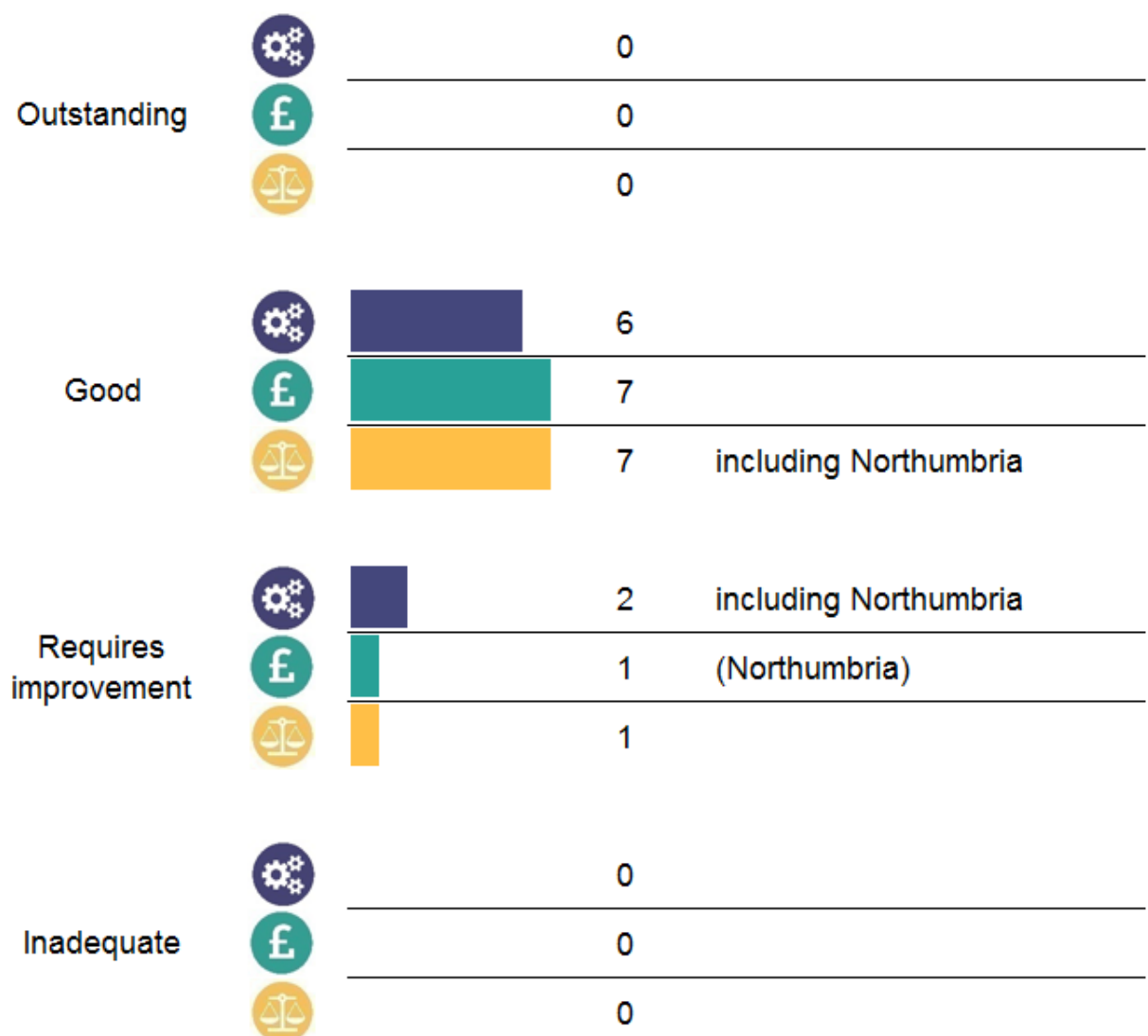
	Legitimacy	 Good	Last inspected
Fair treatment of the public	 Requires improvement	2018/19	
Ethical and lawful workforce behaviour	 Good	2018/19	
Fair treatment of the workforce	 Good	2017	

How does the force compare with similar forces?

We compare Northumbria Police's performance with the forces in its most similar group (MSG). MSGs are groups of similar police forces, based on analysis of demographic, social and economic factors. [For more information about MSGs, see our website.](#)

Northumbria Police's MSG forces are South Wales Police, West Yorkshire Police, Lancashire Constabulary, South Yorkshire Police, Humberside Police, Gwent Police and Cleveland Police. We haven't yet inspected West Yorkshire Police, Lancashire Constabulary, Gwent Police and Cleveland Police as part of IPA 2018/19, so use their graded judgments from our previous PEEL assessment for comparison.

Figure 1: Pillar judgments for Northumbria Police, compared with forces in its MSG



HM Inspector's observations

I have concerns about the performance of Northumbria Police in keeping people safe and reducing crime, and in particular regarding its effectiveness at protecting [vulnerable people](#).

The force is good at investigating crime. However, it needs to improve how it prevents crime and [anti-social behaviour](#) through better engagement with its communities and a more consistent, structured approach to solving neighbourhood problems.

The force needs to improve how it understands current and future demand. This should help it develop more robust finance and workforce plans to make sure that it uses its resources effectively.

I am reassured that the force continues to uphold an ethical culture and promote standards of professional behaviour well. However, I am concerned that the necessary systems are not in place to reassure the public that, each time an officer uses force, that it is done legitimately.

My overall assessment is that Northumbria Police's performance has declined since our last inspection.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phil Gormley', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

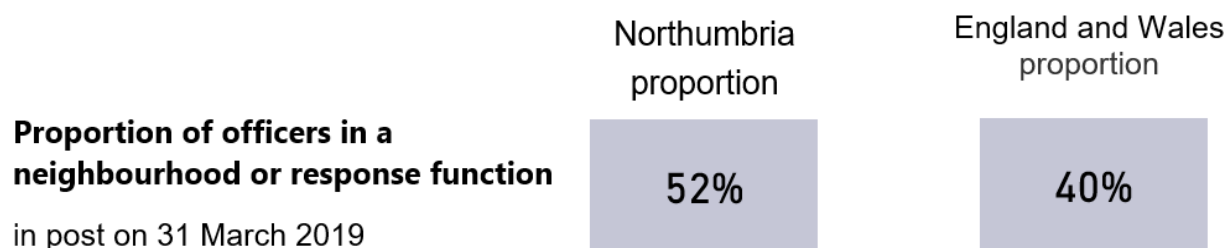
Phil Gormley

HM Inspector of Constabulary

Effectiveness

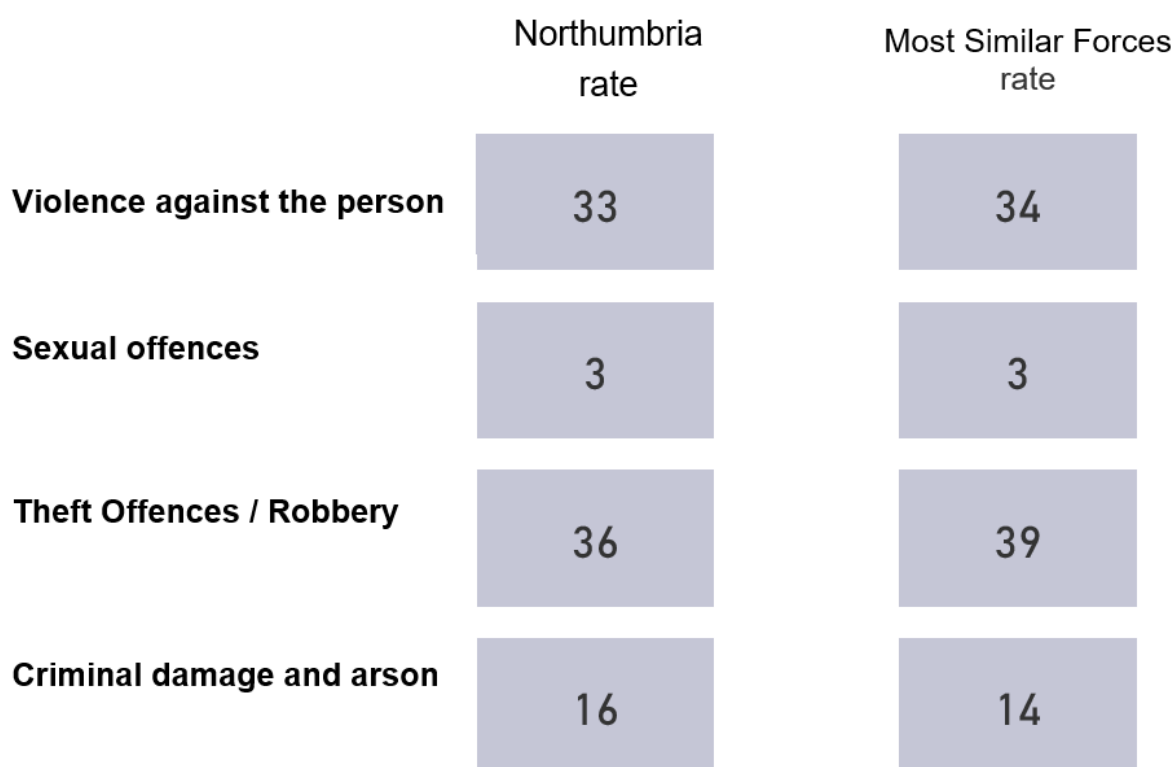


Force in context



Victim-based crime per 1,000 population

12 months ending 30 September 2018



Crime Outcomes

12 months ending 30 September 2018

	Northumbria proportion	England and Wales proportion
Proportion of crimes where action was taken	14%	13%
Proportion of crimes where suspect was identified	49%	46%
Proportion of crimes where victim did not support police action	29%	23%

Outcomes for crimes flagged as domestic abuse

12 months ending 31 March 2018

	Northumbria proportion	England and Wales proportion
Charge/summonsed	14%	16%
Evidential difficulties: suspect identified; victim does not support	58%	49%

How effectively does the force reduce crime and keep people safe?



Requires improvement

Summary

Northumbria Police requires improvement in how it reduces crime and keeps people safe.

The force needs to improve how it tackles crime and [anti-social behaviour](#). Its training for neighbourhood teams could be better to ensure that they have the skills needed to be effective. It has invested in neighbourhood policing and has new approaches to tackle the causes of local problems. The local approach to understanding communities and what they expect from their police force could be more consistent.

The force makes sure that it uses anti-social behaviour powers proportionately. It is working with partner organisations on early intervention programmes, such as the troubled families programme. But this approach differs between area commands and relies on partnership relationships.

The force is good at investigating crime and reducing re-offending. Investigators are suitably trained, and all staff are focused on giving victims good care. They are aware of the need to gather evidence as early as possible.

The force needs to improve how it protects [vulnerable people](#) from harm and supports victims. At times, Northumbria Police doesn't have enough officers available to respond appropriately to vulnerable victims. The force undertakes good work around domestic abuse, but the quality of its risk assessments should improve.

Not all calls are correctly graded, and officers don't always attend within the target time. To keep victims safe, the force should respond based on the initial risk assessment, and not on officer availability.

The force is good at tackling [serious and organised crime](#).

Preventing crime and tackling anti-social behaviour



Requires improvement

Northumbria Police's overall approach to crime prevention needs to improve. The force has invested in neighbourhood policing, keeping teams in place across Northumberland and Tyne and Wear. But [staff](#) and officers in neighbourhood teams do not always have the skills and knowledge they need to fulfil their roles effectively. The force has reintroduced its problem-solving approach, aiming to tackle the root causes of local problems, but it hasn't given enough formal training to support staff in implementing this.

At a strategic level, the force is good at assessing threats to the public. It makes good use of products such as [MoRiLE](#), a tool for assessing the types of crimes that most threaten communities. But the picture is less positive at a local level, where the force's approach can be disjointed. Neighbourhood teams don't consistently use data to understand their communities, and there is little understanding and application of the force's strategy for engaging with the public to find out what they expect from their police force.

The force uses a range of powers to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour. However, no central repository exists to search for which types of problem-solving intervention have worked, which means the force can't learn from its past experiences.

Areas for improvement

- The force should review the process for the commissioning and analysis of problem profiles to make sure complex, emerging and hidden threats are fully understood.
- The force should make sure that the structured and consistent problem-solving process it is implementing to enable it to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour more effectively is fully understood and used by its officers and staff.
- The force should evaluate and share effective practice routinely, both internally and with relevant external organisations, to continually improve its approach to the prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour.
- The force should work with local people and with other organisations to improve the consistency of its engagement approach (including those that are less likely to communicate with the police) and further improve its understanding of communities.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the force's performance in this area.

Prioritising crime prevention

Northumbria Police's overall approach to crime prevention requires some improvement. This must make sure that neighbourhood policing staff and officers have the right skills and knowledge to be fully effective in their role in crime prevention and problem solving.

The force has five strategic priorities: community engagement work; responding to the public; vulnerability; investigation; and prevention and problem solving. It has invested in neighbourhood policing, seeing it as an integral part of its work, and has kept neighbourhood teams across Northumberland and Tyne and Wear. It has a neighbourhood policing strategy based on the principles set out in the Home Office's 'Modern crime prevention strategy', and the [National Police Chiefs' Council](#) (NPCC)'s 'Policing vision 2025'. In 2016, the neighbourhood policing model was redesigned to be more focused and accessible, with an emphasis on supporting vulnerable people, collaborative problem solving and patrolling local areas. Neighbourhood policing teams are aligned to local authority wards and partnership working arrangements. Every ward within the force area has a dedicated neighbourhood policing officer.

Since 2016, the force has improved its understanding of demand and capacity in neighbourhood policing. It analysed demand in 2017, reviewing crime and incident data, holding staff focus groups, and engaging and consulting with staff and officers. The review found that neighbourhood policing officers had some extra capacity and, starting in September 2018, they were given responsibility for managing low- and medium-risk registered sex offenders (RSOs). The [management of sexual offenders and violent offenders](#) (MOSOVO) unit provides them with scrutiny and expert advice. To give officers in the neighbourhood teams time to do this, police community support officers (PCSOs) have received a two-day course to enhance their initial training, which includes managing domestic abuse offenders, problem solving and an improved understanding of child sexual exploitation.

The force seeks to identify crime and disorder problems early, preventing and tackling the root causes by using a problem-solving approach. It reinforced three force priorities in autumn 2018, known as 'VIP' (vulnerability, investigation and problem solving), to make sure it has a problem-solving culture across the whole force, not just in neighbourhood policing.

But neighbourhood policing staff and officers don't always have the right skills and knowledge to be fully effective in their roles. We spoke to neighbourhood policing officers and staff across all areas during the inspection and our preparatory work, and it was clear that most hadn't received structured training in neighbourhood policing. This should equip them with the basic skills and knowledge for them to be effective in problem solving and crime prevention. Initial training for officers working in neighbourhood policing seems to be reliant on 'on the job' training and mentoring by other members of the team.

The force should consider providing more focused training to make its use of problem solving more consistent. The recently introduced [continuing professional development](#) days for neighbourhood inspectors and sergeants are a positive step forward. The force should review the current training for neighbourhood officers and staff to

make sure that they have the necessary skills and knowledge they need to carry out their role effectively.

The force should also review its local governance arrangements. It needs to make sure it has consistent ways of holding staff to account for effective crime prevention work. Current supervision and scrutiny vary across the force.

Protecting the public from crime

How well the force understands its communities needs to improve. At a strategic level, the force is effective at assessing threat, harm and risk to the public. It makes good use of products such as MoRiLE. We did find some good examples of the force working with other organisations to share information and work together on local issues. This includes meeting with the local authority every fortnight in Gateshead to review partnership data. The force is also working with Nottingham Trent University to develop a richer picture of issues such as deprivation and community vulnerabilities.

At a local level, however, neighbourhood teams don't consistently use data and analytical products to understand the threats and risks to their communities, and the force's approach can be disjointed. These products include, for example, a problem or neighbourhood profile. This profile can give a greater understanding of established and emerging crime or incident series, priority locations or other identified high-risk issues. Staff we spoke to during the inspection had limited knowledge of these products, although some did refer to the [problem profiles](#) produced by the community engagement teams. Some staff didn't understand the problem-solving approach or the structured approach of OSARA, which is a model based on outcomes, scanning, analysis, response and assessment. When teams do use problem solving, there tends to be a lack of analysis or assessment about the reasons for problems, and an over-emphasis on response.

The launch of VIP priorities is a positive step forward on this issue. However, there is still a lack of consistency in the recording of problem-solving work, and in the application of problem-orientated policing plans and harm reduction plans. Where teams do make problem-solving interventions, they haven't evaluated them thoroughly enough to identify good practice and learn from mistakes. The force has recognised some of these problems and has developed a plan to resolve them. This involves introducing continuing professional development events, and a formal review process of all problem-orientated policing plans.

We saw some good examples of the force's work with vulnerable groups, such as Operation Dignity, which was aimed at teenage girls in Ashington, and Operation Ridge in the Meadowell Estate in North Shields. Some areas of the force have policing and communities together (PACT) meetings. These aim to allow communities to identify policing priorities and to hold the police and other organisations accountable. But in areas where these aren't happening, there is no formal engagement work on community issues. There is no clear overall engagement strategy for neighbourhood policing teams. Engagement at local level is disjointed, with no formal process in identifying public priorities and local policing concerns.

The force uses a range of tactics and interventions to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour. All neighbourhood officers and staff have received multi-agency training about the new anti-social behaviour legislation. The force has successfully used closure orders, civil injunctions, [criminal behaviour orders](#), dispersal notices and community protection notices, and these are now accepted operating practices within its neighbourhood teams.

The force ensures that the use of anti-social behaviour powers is appropriate and proportionate. There is more consultation through the local multi-agency problem-solving groups and community safety partnerships. For the 12 months to 30 June 2017, the force had issued 18 criminal behaviour orders, 84 community protection notices and 23 civil injunctions, and had used section 34 dispersal powers 1,411 times. Use of anti-social behaviour orders had increased by 11 percent on the previous year.

The force is working with partner organisations such as local authorities and health on early intervention initiatives, such as the troubled families programme. The approach differs between area commands and is heavily reliant on partnership relationships. Central to the new [safeguarding](#) operating model is the development of [multi-agency safeguarding hub](#) (MASH) arrangements within all six local authority areas. This aims to give vulnerable children and adults a rounded response based on both their individual needs and those of the whole family.

The force exchanges information with partner agencies about long-term problems and takes part in partnership forums. However, no central repository exists for problem-solving plans and partnership initiatives where staff could search for what works. This means the force can't internally share and learn from its past experiences. To improve its approach to preventing crime and anti-social behaviour, the force needs a standardised way of evaluating and circulating effective practice across the three area commands, both internally and with partner organisations.

Investigating crime



Good

Northumbria Police investigates crime effectively. Its investigators are suitably trained, and crimes are generally allocated to the right people. It has plans to recruit enough staff to meet future demand.

Calls from the public are assessed using the [THRIVE](#) process (this assesses threat, harm, risk, investigative opportunity, vulnerability and opportunity for engagement). Some crimes are investigated over the telephone, and the force makes sure that only appropriate incidents are dealt with in this way.

Investigators pursue all lines of enquiry, and officers attending incidents are aware of the need to gather evidence at the earliest opportunity. The force has improved how it supervises investigations, with sergeants now required to set investigation plans and conduct regular reviews.

All staff are focused on giving victims good care. The force has a lead for victim care, which means that it can put the right support in place to help victims.

The force has a consistent approach to circulating suspects on the [police national computer](#) (PNC), and it works well with immigration partners to manage foreign national offenders (FNOs).

The workforce has a good understanding of the changes in [bail](#) legislation and uses bail and [released under investigation](#) (RUI) powers appropriately. The force has taken a proactive approach to national concerns about how well the police comply with [disclosure](#) rules.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the force's performance in this area.

Investigation quality

Northumbria Police investigates crime effectively and has good plans for the future. It has a workforce plan that details how many investigators it has now, and how many it will need to recruit in the next year. In the past 18 months, it has recruited 85 percent of the additional investigators it needs, and it has plans in place to address the remaining capacity gap.

The assistant chief constable responsible for crime investigation chairs a monthly strategic meeting. In this meeting, leaders from the crime department, area commands, criminal justice, training and other areas are held to account for the force's performance and progress in investigating crime and supporting victims. This ensures that everyone stays focused on investigating crime well.

Most of those people investigating serious and complex crime are suitably trained. The force supports officers who are keen to develop their investigative skills. Uniformed officers and supervisors are encouraged to complete the initial crime investigator development programme and are seconded to the criminal investigation department (CID) to help them complete it. The force believes this will raise the overall standard at all levels of investigation, because the quality of supervision should be better.

Crimes are generally allocated to appropriately trained staff. The force has recently changed the way it assesses and allocates crime investigations, to make sure its decisions are consistent. Officers and staff record their initial assessment of the vulnerability, severity, complexity and solvability of a crime on the crime report. The quality, standards and delivery team reviews all recorded crime in the force daily. It assesses the quality of the initial investigation and decides whether there are further lines of enquiry. It considers how serious and complex the crime is, and the needs of the victim, before allocating it to the appropriate officer. This new approach had just been introduced at the time of our inspection, so we will continue to monitor how it develops.

Most officers in response teams and in CID felt that their workloads were just about manageable. But the demands of other aspects of their roles, such as responding to live-time incidents, meant that they struggled often to find the time to conduct their enquiries. The demand on CID in each area command varies across the

force, and there appears to be an imbalance in how resources are allocated. This is something the force may wish to review to satisfy itself that it has created the capacity in the right places.

Call handlers use the THRIVE process to assess calls. Some crimes are investigated over the telephone, which is an efficient way of resolving crimes in which it is immediately apparent that there are no viable lines of enquiry. The force deals with 34 percent of incidents by telephone, which is in line with the England and Wales rate. As part of our inspection, we reviewed a small number of telephone investigations. We found that, in all cases, investigation over the telephone was the most appropriate means of investigation and that there was good victim care.

Although we only examined a small number of files in our crime file review, we found that in most cases (52 out of 60 files) investigators had pursued all lines of enquiry. Officers attending incidents are aware of the need to gather evidence at the earliest opportunity and supervisors provide appropriate support. An example of this is clear in a file we reviewed about a report of a man having been attacked with a machete. A sergeant had been to the scene to supervise the initial investigation. Attending officers preserved the crime scene, gathered forensic evidence, made house-to-house enquiries to see if there were any other witnesses, and seized CCTV. They prepared an information package for CID officers to continue the investigation.

The force has made significant improvements in how investigations are supervised. Our initial crime file review found that there was effective supervision in just 18 out of 60 cases. The force has since made changes to its crime management processes. Sergeants now set investigation plans and conduct reviews regularly. We found some variation across the force in the way that frontline sergeants approached the management of crime within their teams, but were pleased to see that sergeants understood their responsibilities. In most of the investigations we reviewed during our inspection, there was appropriate supervisory input.

Officers investigating crimes are focused on giving victims good care. Our file review found that this was the case in 50 out of 60 cases. During our inspection, we spoke to officers across the force and reviewed some of their current investigations. All had a clear focus on supporting the victim. Their contact with victims and the supporting measures they had put in place were recorded on the crime report. We found that there were enough officers who were trained to interview victims, so they could obtain the best evidence.

Force leaders recognise the importance of supporting victims and are working hard to improve the care that victims receive as their case progresses through the criminal justice system. The force has a lead for victim care, who is working with criminal justice partners such as the Crown Prosecution Service, the courts and judiciary to understand why victims don't always see a case through to court. This means that the force will be able to put the right support in place to help victims in the future.

The force is improving its outcomes for victims. It has an improvement programme to raise the standards of investigations. It produces an interactive magazine that contains advice and guidance on investigating crime and supporting victims and is mandatory for officers to read. The chief constable's blog, briefing items, posters and media communications all emphasise that the priorities for the force are vulnerability,

investigation and problem solving (VIP). Everyone we spoke to during our inspection understood this.

A big focus of the raising investigation standards programme has been on increasing staff awareness of evidence-led investigations. This means that, from the point a call is received, officers are thinking about how to obtain the best evidence. As a result, the force has seen an increase in the use of [body-worn video](#) cameras to record evidence. This gives any subsequent prosecution a better chance of succeeding at court, even if the victim decides not to support it.

Catching criminals

The force takes a consistent approach to the circulation and management of suspects on the PNC. All suspects for crime are risk-assessed, which means that the force is taking proportionate action to arrest those offenders who pose the greatest risk to the public.

High-risk offenders are discussed at the daily management meeting that takes place in each area command. A member of the senior management team always chairs this meeting. The meeting reviews the main incidents and demands on the area over the previous 24 hours, and makes sure that there are enough resources in the right places to deal with demand in the next 24 hours. This means that there is daily focused work on arresting high-risk suspects. As a result, the force has seen a reduction in the number of outstanding suspects who are wanted by police.

Each officer carrying out an investigation, whether a response officer or CID officer, is responsible for finding and arresting outstanding suspects. Our inspection found that team supervisors were making good use of spreadsheets to monitor and manage the outstanding suspects on their officers' workloads.

The force has improved its [ACRO Criminal Records Office](#) submission process, which checks whether a suspect in the UK has criminal convictions in other countries. It is managed by a sergeant in the intelligence department, who reviews all the rejected forms and feeds them back to the relevant officers. Training for officers and custody staff, supported by an aide memoire, has also reduced the rejection rate. This process is increasing the quality of submissions, which means that the force has a better understanding of the risk posed by an FNO who has been arrested. The force reported that by December 2018 the rejection rate had decreased by almost 30 percent because of the increased scrutiny.

The force works well with immigration partners to manage FNOs. It has a dedicated FNO unit made up of investigators, a researcher, an international liaison officer and an immigration officer. The FNO unit has access to immigration intelligence systems. This means that there is a better exchange of intelligence between the different agencies. The FNO unit works with the complex investigations team to mitigate the threat from organised crime groups (OCGs) who prey on vulnerable people, committing offences such as child exploitation, human trafficking and modern-day slavery.

The FNO unit also supports force and regional operations relating to FNOs and conducts investigations with immigration officers. Successful joint operations include Operation Lancia, which was an investigation into human trafficking offences by a

Romanian OCG in Newcastle. Operation Kestrel focused on modern-day slavery and exploitation, using a multi-agency approach that has been studied by some other police forces as an example of good practice in investigating organised crime involving foreign nationals.

The force monitors performance in the use of bail and RUI powers. The force has a bail manager whose responsibilities include quality assurance and compliance monitoring of bail and RUI. The performance data is published monthly. It provides a detailed breakdown of RUI by individual and team and is sent to inspectors, so they can make sure that investigations are progressing on time.

Each area command has a chief inspector who is responsible for criminal justice performance. They hold monthly performance meetings with their inspectors to make sure that criminal justice matters are being properly managed. However, each has developed their own local performance framework, so there is no corporate approach.

The workforce has a good understanding of the changes in bail legislation and uses bail and RUI powers appropriately. For example, one officer explained that, in dealing with an offence of possessing indecent images of children and deciding the appropriate power to use, they considered the risks to the victim and any potential future victims; potential harm to the suspect; and the timescales for obtaining the digital evidence in the case. We found that sergeants who were supervising investigations were managing the use of bail and RUI well and updating crime reports regularly.

The force has responded to concerns raised nationally about compliance with disclosure rules by giving 42 officers enhanced disclosure training. They act as disclosure champions, giving advice and guidance. As part of the raising investigation standards programme, officers must complete a learning programme about disclosure. Most officers understand their disclosure obligations and know who to ask if they need advice.

An operational delivery group, led by the assistant chief constable, analyses outcome data at strategic level. Area command performance meetings examine outcomes for victims. This analysis helps the force to focus its efforts on giving victims the best service. For example, the force identified a need to improve its charge rate for domestic abuse and serious sexual assaults. The assistant chief constable holds a fortnightly meeting to discuss performance.

Protecting vulnerable people



Requires improvement

We are concerned about the force's ability to respond appropriately to vulnerable victims. There often aren't enough officers available and, in many cases, incidents involving vulnerable people aren't attended quickly enough. Calls are often incorrectly graded by the control room, and officers don't attend within the target time.

Supervision is of variable quality. Some incidents were poorly supervised and hadn't been prioritised for immediate action even though there was clear risk to victims. In some cases, supervisors failed to detect the risk, or to question a previous decision to delay the response. The force needs to do more to understand the nature and scale of vulnerability in its communities.

The force uses a range of powers to deal with domestic violence. It has a clear commitment to [Clare's Law](#), under which anyone can ask the police to check whether a partner has a violent past, and Sarah's Law, which allows parents, carers and guardians to check whether someone has a criminal record for child sexual offences. Officers have received specialist training in how to tackle domestic abuse, and now have access to body-worn video.

Although the force is doing good work around domestic abuse, we have concerns about the quality of its risk assessments, many of which have been downgraded.

Northumbria Police recognises the benefits of intervening early to support people and families with complex needs. In October 2017, it launched a nine-month early intervention pilot, in which seven PCSOs in Sunderland and Northumberland worked with other agencies to support families. It is now considering the extension of this project.

Causes of concern

The force's ability to assess vulnerability when victims first make contact, and the timeliness of the response they receive, are causes of concern. Northumbria Police needs to be certain that there are officers available to respond to their needs.

Recommendations

- In order to keep victims safe, the force's response to incidents must be determined by the initial assessment of risk rather than the availability of response officers.
- Any decision to delay a response to a vulnerable victim must be fully justified and subject to objective supervision.

Areas for improvement

- The force should continue to develop its understanding of the nature and scale of vulnerability within its local area through improving the data quality and information contained within its command and control system.
- The force should review its domestic abuse risk assessment grading policy to make sure it is compliant with the MARAC guidelines recommended by the national domestic abuse charity, SafeLives, with regards to escalation and repeat incidents. All changes need to be clearly communicated to staff.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the force's performance in this area.

Understanding and identifying vulnerability

How the force understands and identifies vulnerability needs to improve. It has done a lot of work on analysing and understanding vulnerability. However, its IT systems don't easily support a thorough assessment of performance at all levels. The force gathers data, but its IT systems are not well linked or cross-referenced. This hampers the process of turning raw data into actionable intelligence. In turn, this leads to difficulties in identifying threats and vulnerabilities. The force needs to improve the quality of its data on the nature and scale of these problems and patterns of offending across the force area, and geographically map areas of greater vulnerability. The force's command and control system uses both flags and markers on incident records to identify repeat victims and offenders. This is also used to identify high-risk domestic abuse victims, those at risk of child sexual exploitation, incidents involving people with a history of mental health crisis, and incidents involving a child with a child protection marker.

Northumbria Police has a clear definition of what vulnerability is: "A person is vulnerable if as a result of their situation or circumstances, they are unable to take care of, or protect themselves or others, from harm, exploitation or other adverse impact on their quality of life." Its policies give clear and unambiguous guidance on safeguarding children, young people and adults.

Child sexual exploitation, domestic abuse and serious sexual offending are three of the six priorities in the force control strategy 2018/19. Officers and staff generally have a good understanding in this area. This has been underpinned by training and regular communication from leaders about the importance of vulnerability, and by the focus on VIP.

The force has a strategic governance board focused on protecting vulnerable people. The assistant chief constable responsible for vulnerability chairs this. It meets monthly to discuss the force's handling of rape, serious sexual assaults, mental health crisis, domestic abuse and people who have gone missing from home.

Each force usually produces a strategic threat and risk assessment (STRA) every year, as well as the self-assessment it gives to us (the [force management statement](#)). To produce these two reports, Northumbria Police has worked to understand the nature and scale of vulnerability in its area. The force STRA includes more work that was done as part of the safeguarding project focusing on emerging crime areas and 'hidden' harm, such as domestic abuse, child sexual exploitation, cyber crime, and controlling and coercive behaviour. It also sets out how the force has engaged with harder-to-reach groups. For example, it has worked with Karma Nirvana, a national charity supporting victims of so-called honour-based abuse and forced marriage, and the local Bangladeshi community.

In our 2017 effectiveness inspection of Northumbria, an area for improvement was for call handlers to apply the THRIVE decision-making model consistently to assess incidents involving vulnerable people. There has been real progress on this. The force has trained control room staff and call takers, and produced detailed guidance on call grading linked to vulnerability. During the inspection, we found that call handlers had a comprehensive understanding of the THRIVE principles. When we reviewed audio

calls, we found that call handlers were polite, professional and respectful, despite several callers being intoxicated and agitated.

Responding to incidents

Although THRIVE is well established in the control room, it hasn't yet been adopted across the whole organisation. The force needs to make sure that officers and staff are also using the THRIVE assessment when they make deployment decisions. The force doesn't always have enough officers available to respond to vulnerable victims. At the time of the inspection, pressures in resourcing meant that only about 70 percent of grade 1 (emergency response within 10 minutes) and grade 2 (priority response within an hour) incidents were being deployed to within the target time.

At the time of the start of the inspection, the force also had a 'grade 3 response' – deployment within four hours. During the inspection fieldwork, we found that many incidents involving vulnerable people had been inappropriately given a grade 3 response, including reports of domestic abuse, assaults, harassment, concern for welfare, sexual offences and extreme vulnerability, and in some instances the force also wasn't meeting the four-hour target. Often officers weren't deployed for several hours, and in some cases not until days later. The force brought forward implementation of a decision to remove grade 3 deployment from its policies during the fieldwork. Although this is a positive step, deployment decisions should be made in line with the needs of victims, not dictated by resourcing levels.

We were also concerned about the quality of supervision, and particularly the reassessment of incidents that hadn't been deployed to within the target time. Some incidents were poorly supervised and hadn't been prioritised for immediate action even though there was clear risk to victims. In some cases, supervisors failed to detect the risk, or to question a previous decision to delay the response.

The force has improved frontline officers' awareness of the importance of protecting vulnerable people and identifying risks to others in the household at domestic abuse incidents. This has included communication from the chief constable through his blog, regular briefing items and an interactive magazine called 'Raising investigative standards', which included a powerful video on a domestic abuse incident seen 'through the eyes of a child'.

Supervisors take an active role in discussing vulnerability and risk with officers who are attending domestic abuse incidents. It is force policy to attend all domestic abuse incidents in person. The sergeant supervising will record information against the acronym RESPOND (review incident; evidence-led approach; safeguard the victim; positive action; outside agency referrals required; needs of victim; and domestic abuse [authorised professional practice](#) (APP) from the [College of Policing](#)). Officers are required to complete the investigative assessment framework in cases involving a vulnerable victim.

The supervisor creates an investigation plan and the initial investigating officer will assess what can be done for immediate safeguarding, using the 'RARA' mnemonic – remove risk, avoid risk, reduce risk and accept risk. Officers submit [DASH \(domestic abuse, stalking and harassment\) forms](#) for all domestic abuse incidents, and complete them face to face with the victim. The DASH form also has a list of agencies to

support victims. Any previous history related to a victim's telephone number and address is automatically downloaded onto the incident log on the force's call handling system, to help the attending officer with a risk assessment. The attending officer also assesses the needs of the victim.

In our 2017 effectiveness inspection, we found that body-worn video cameras weren't always available to officers attending incidents involving vulnerable victims. The force has since invested in body-worn video devices and has made available the first wave of approximately 2,300 single-issue devices to frontline officers. All new devices should be in place across the organisation by the end of September 2019. The use of body-worn video for domestic abuse incidents has increased from 47 percent to 69 percent, giving officers more opportunity to present admissible evidence.

Another positive development is the fact that photographs from the force's smartphones can now be uploaded to a digital media repository. Northumbria Police is the only force that can give all digital media evidence to the Crown Prosecution Service and the wider criminal justice service.

The force works with Northumberland and Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust to provide a mental health [street triage](#) team. This partnership has developed nationally recognised training for professionals involved in mental health crisis care, which sets out clear roles and responsibilities for all agencies involved. The street triage team was launched in April 2018, supported by considerable research about the importance of earlier intervention by mental health practitioners in police-related incidents. It runs with a nurse and a police constable between the hours of 10.00am and 3.00am, seven days a week, and focuses on giving a prompt response to incidents. It is designed to give advice, assessment and access to services.

The triage team offers advice and support to criminal justice staff and can check whether someone is known to mental health services. It carries out face-to-face screening assessments outside a custodial setting and completes risk assessments. When appropriate, the team helps people with mental ill health to access other services.

The force has given training and information to staff about the use of [voluntary attendance](#) in domestic abuse incidents. This is a police station interview when a suspect offers to attend voluntarily to help the police with an investigation and they aren't under arrest. Voluntary attendees have the right to access independent legal advice and are free to leave the police station at any time unless and until they are arrested. The force actively monitors performance in this area. There is accessible information on the intranet on appropriate use of voluntary attendance and the force has worked with custody staff to help make the best use of custody time.

The force has held focus groups with frontline officers to check their understanding of arrest and use of voluntary attendance in domestic abuse incidents, and performance in this area is scrutinised monthly. Domestic incidents are reviewed by inspectors and sergeants while officers are on their way to an incident, reminding them to use body-worn video and take the most appropriate action in response to the incident. In the 12 months to the end of September 2018, the force's voluntary attendance rate was 6.1 percent compared with the England and Wales rate of 9.3 percent.

Supporting vulnerable victims

The force supports vulnerable victims very well in many ways and is doing a lot of good work around domestic abuse. However, we had concerns about the quality of its risk assessments. A disproportionately high number of domestic abuse reports in the force area were flagged as high risk (at the beginning of 2019, the force was assessing 24 percent as high risk against a national average of 7 percent). To address this concern, the force is auditing risk assessments and it implemented a new procedure for downgrading domestic abuse incidents in November 2018. At the time of our inspection, 284 cases initially graded at high risk had been downgraded since January 2019. We would expect that any downgrading of domestic abuse risk assessments is in line with the SafeLives guidance. The force also needs to make sure that it communicates clearly to staff any changes in this policy.

We were impressed with neighbourhood officers' awareness of both vulnerable people and offenders in their area. At the area command daily management meeting, there are standing agenda items related to vulnerability, including domestic abuse, 'missing from home' reports and people linked to OCGs. Risk and resourcing are discussed, and tasks given to neighbourhood policing teams. For example, the meeting might ask teams to visit addresses around the scene of a recent crime to give support (this is known as 'cocooning'). Under Operation Signature, neighbourhood teams visit victims of fraud and assess their vulnerability. Officers are often sent to visit victims of domestic violence to complete a harm reduction plan. A criminal justice liaison worker now works within each area command, supporting victims by acting as the link between domestic abuse specialists and neighbourhood policing teams, and giving advice to officers on applying for orders. 'Victims first Northumbria' is a charity delivering the gateway to victims' support services. Specialist staff, such as independent domestic violence advocates and independent sexual violence advisers, support victims by giving practical guidance and acting as their voice.

When prosecution isn't possible or practical, Northumbria Police makes use of alternative powers such as [domestic violence prevention notices](#) (DVPNs), which can be issued by officers to prevent a suspected perpetrator contacting a victim or returning to their home, and domestic violence protection orders (DVPOs), which are issued by magistrates and last for up to 28 days. Currently the force has the fourth highest rate of DVPOs and DVPNs in England and Wales (12 months to September 2018).

Both the force and its partner agencies, such as social services, have a clear commitment to Clare's Law, under which anyone can ask the police to check whether a partner has a violent past, and Sarah's Law, which allows parents, carers and guardians to check whether someone has a criminal record for child sexual offences. In each MASH, we found that the most appropriate agency was handling domestic violence disclosures. The force has recently run a public media awareness campaign about Clare's Law, aimed at increasing the number of applications.

The appropriate use of bail and RUI is important in protecting vulnerable victims, because releasing a suspect from custody without bail conditions can put them at risk. The force has given its officers training in 'raising investigative standards', which focuses on domestic abuse, including the correct use of powers, voluntary attendance, bail and RUI. It has also improved its performance management to make sure that

officers enforce bail conditions. There are regular audits on usage of RUI and bail, the findings of which are discussed in management meetings. The force recently launched a three-month domestic abuse pilot, in which all domestic abuse offenders being considered for bail or RUI are subject to review and the authority of an inspector.

Six MASHs, based in all six local authority areas, are central to Northumbria Police's safeguarding operating model. They aim to provide a rounded response to vulnerable children and adults based on their individual needs and the needs of the whole family. The force has also invested in the [multi-agency risk assessment conference](#) (MARAC) process across the six local authority areas to deal with high-risk domestic abuse cases. A detective sergeant working within the MASH reviews all DASH forms and the associated risk level to make sure they have correct gradings, taking into account the history of the case and the number of incidents within a specified timeframe. All high-risk victims of domestic abuse are considered for referral to the MARAC. The MARAC reviews all high-risk domestic abuse assessments, in line with the SafeLives guidance.

The force works with other organisations in the Gateshead local authority domestic abuse hub, which is collaborating with the charity Barnardo's on [Operation Encompass](#). This is a national scheme in which schools are informed when one of their pupils has been affected by domestic abuse. Historically, the force has forwarded Encompass cases to schools without follow-up. Under a new scheme, the domestic abuse hub now includes Encompass cases in its morning child concern triage meeting. The agencies involved then decide whether they need to contact the school to help make decisions about how best to support the child. The MASH team can access the Encompass spreadsheet and dip-sample cases to make sure that they are being handled appropriately.

The force also plans to employ 12 new school safeguarding liaison officers, who will support schools in dealing with domestic abuse. They will run drop-in sessions at which parents, children or school staff can ask the officers for advice and support.

Northumbria Police recognises the benefits of intervening early to support people and families with complex needs. In October 2017, it launched a nine-month early intervention pilot, in which seven PCSOs in Sunderland and Northumberland worked with other agencies to support families. The pilot aimed to shift the focus from a reactive to a more preventative service, and to reduce demand on police resources in the long term. Following a review and evaluation of the pilot, consultation is planned with all remaining local authorities in the Northumbria Police area to consider the extension of this project.

To become more effective in investigating cyber-stalking and harassment and supporting victims who may have disengaged from supporting a prosecution, the force is trialling an innovative approach to dealing with domestic abuse, harassment and cyber crime. It is piloting this in the Sunderland area, where the specialist team reviews all domestic abuse cases to see if there is a cyber element to the offending, which they can then investigate. Fieldwork was completed in February 2019. The pilot was to be evaluated externally in April 2019 and is funded until June 2019. We look forward to reviewing progress with this initiative in our next inspection. Subject to the evaluation, the force will consider how it might continue to fund this work.

The force has implemented multi-agency tasking and co-ordination (MATAC), using Home Office funding. The MATAC team identifies the highest-harm serial perpetrators of domestic abuse using a recency, frequency and gravity (RFG) tool. The RFG is run once per month and the supervisor selects which cases to put through to the panel, which then considers housing, substance misuse and mental health needs. The aim is to alter a perpetrator's behaviour and make sure they do not offend again. The force can manage some 60 to 70 cases per month under MATAC, and the project has seen some early successes since its launch. It has been formally evaluated and has subsequently been promoted and recommended for other forces to emulate. Performance monitoring has identified that 70 percent of offenders have seen a reduction in RFG score (from the point of intake compared with six months after departure from the cohort).

Since the neighbourhood teams took over management of low- and medium-risk sex offenders, the force has seen an increase in intelligence submissions. The teams are trained in sex offender behaviour and risk assessment. This has led to more RSOs being reassessed as high or very high risk. The force is reviewing capacity and capability in the MOSOVO team to make sure it can manage with these increased numbers.

There is limited performance data about the number of outstanding assessments for RSOs. The force needs to find out how many assessments are completed outside the six-week time target, and understand the reasons for any delay. It may also need to review whether it is working effectively with the probation service.

The force seeks feedback from vulnerable victims in several ways. It conducts surveys with them to improve the service, and the results are fed back to staff at both team and individual level. The force and the office of the [police and crime commissioner](#) (OPCC) work with third sector support agencies to ask service users about their experiences. The OPCC uses this information when deciding which services provide the best support to domestic abuse and vulnerable victims. Northumbria Police also conducts a criminal justice survey with victims following a final court outcome. This victim consultation focuses on the standards of service given against the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime, which gives victims a legal right to receive a minimum standard of service from the criminal justice system.

Tackling serious and organised crime



Good

This question was not subject to detailed inspection in 2018/19, and our judgment from the 2016 effectiveness inspection has been carried over.

Armed policing

We inspected how well forces provide armed policing as part of our 2016 and 2017 effectiveness inspections. Subsequent terrorist attacks in the UK and Europe have meant that the police service maintains a focus on armed capability in England and Wales.

Armed officers don't only deal with terrorist attacks: they also help to tackle OCGs, armed street gangs and all other crime involving guns. The [Code of Practice on the Police Use of Firearms and Less Lethal Weapons](#) makes forces responsible for implementing national standards of armed policing. The code stipulates that a [chief officer](#) be designated to oversee these standards. This requires the chief officer to set out the firearms threat in an [armed policing strategic threat and risk assessment](#) (APSTRA). The chief officer must also set out clear rationales for the number of armed officers (armed capacity) and the level to which they are trained (armed capability).

Understanding the threat and responding to it

Northumbria Police has a good understanding of the potential harm facing the public. Its APSTRA conforms to the requirements of the code and the [College of Policing guidance](#). The APSTRA is published annually and is accompanied by a register of risks and other observations. The [designated chief officer](#) reviews the register frequently to maintain the right levels of armed capability and capacity.

Last year we identified one area in which the force's APSTRA could be improved: it didn't include details of how rapidly its [armed response vehicles](#) (ARVs) respond to incidents. This is important to determine whether the force has enough armed officers to meet operational demands. The most recent APSTRA includes this detail.

All armed officers in England and Wales are trained to national standards. There are different standards for each role that armed officers perform. Most armed incidents in Northumbria Police are attended by officers trained to an ARV standard. However, some incidents need the skills and specialist capabilities of more highly trained officers. Northumbria Police has good arrangements in place to mobilise specialist officers when necessary, and has enough specialist capabilities to handle the threats and risks identified in its APSTRA.

Because of the terrorist threat, Northumbria Police has received Home Office funding as part of a programme to boost armed policing in certain parts of England and Wales. The force has fulfilled its commitment to the programme by increasing the availability of ARVs.

Working with others

It is important that effective joint working arrangements are in place between neighbouring forces, because armed criminals and terrorists don't operate within county boundaries. Armed officers must be prepared to deploy flexibly and work seamlessly with their counterparts in other forces. All forces need to be able to call on support from neighbours in times of heightened threat.

Although Northumbria Police has enough ARV officers and specialist capabilities, it would benefit from building closer collaboration arrangements with

neighbouring forces. In particular, it should consider developing joint specialist capabilities with other forces in the region. This would provide greater assurance that officers with the right skills are on hand to manage the highest threats anywhere in the region.

The force's armed officers are trained in tactics that take account of the types of recent terrorist attacks. Also, Northumbria Police has an important role in designing training exercises with other organisations that simulate these types of attack. It reviews these exercises carefully to learn from any mistakes and make improvements to response.

Northumbria Police reviews the outcome of all firearms incidents that its officers attend and identifies good practice and areas for improvement. It uses this to improve training and operational procedures.

Efficiency



Force in context

	Northumbria spend	England and Wales spend
Spend per head of population 2018/19 projection	£184	£192

Spend per head of population by category

2018/19 projection

	Northumbria spend	England and Wales spend
Visible frontline	£82	£65
Non-visible frontline	£46	£62
Frontline Support	£16	£17
Business support	£31	£41
Other	£9	£8

How efficiently does the force operate and how sustainable are its services?



Requires improvement

Summary

Northumbria Police requires improvement so that it operates efficiently and its services are sustainable.

The force needs to improve its understanding of demand for its services, including hidden demand. This should help it to make best use of its resources to meet the needs of the public. Its new operating model and command and control system should help address these problems. The force will need to manage the move to these new ways of working carefully.

The force also needs to do more to understand what the public wants from its police force and how it may wish to interact with the force in the future.

The force requires improvement in the way it plans for the future. It works well with other organisations to meet demand but doesn't do enough to analyse data from these partners.

Northumbria Police should audit the skills of its workforce, including leadership skills. This would help the force to understand capacity and capability, and to improve its understanding of the workforce skills needed for the future.

Meeting current demands and using resources



Requires improvement

The force knows that its current operating model isn't effectively meeting an increased demand for its services. Some cases involving [vulnerable](#) victims aren't being handled with enough urgency, and there is a backlog in digital forensics. The force recognised that it didn't have enough trained investigators, and that this had a negative effect on the quality of investigations and on outcomes, particularly in the areas of domestic abuse and rape. But in the last 18 months it has recruited 85 percent of the additional investigators it needs, and it has plans in place to address the remaining capacity gap.

The force's understanding of demand is limited by its IT system, which isn't fit for purpose. It has done some basic analysis of demand – for example, how busy periods match the number of staff available. However, it needs to think more carefully about hidden demand. It also needs to do more to understand what the public wants from its police force.

To address these problems, the force is introducing a new operating model and is modernising its IT infrastructure. This was due to launch in May 2019, but has since been delayed. It is also changing its command and control system. It will need to manage the transition of these two new ways of working carefully.

The force works well with other organisations to meet demand. However, it hasn't done enough to analyse data from partners. It hasn't fully assessed, for example, how reductions in social care resources might influence police work. As a result, it doesn't have a firm evidence base for its ambitious change plans.

The force hasn't done a skills audit and lacks a thorough understanding of its workforce's skills and capabilities.

Areas for improvement

- The force should undertake further work to gain a better understanding of current demand for its services, including hidden demand. This is so that it can make best use of its resources to meet the needs of the public.
- The force should conduct a workforce skills audit that will allow it to understand workforce capacity and capability.
- The force should ensure that its resource allocation allows it to respond appropriately to urgent calls for service particularly for incidents concerning vulnerable persons.
- The force should make sure it is fully aware of officer and staff workload when allocating and deploying resource.
- The force should make sure that its understanding of the demand for its services demonstrates an awareness of the impact that partner agencies have on its demand; it should have a system in place to make sure that this impact is managed; and it should have a way of making sure that the force shares sufficient data to take the necessary steps to meet current and likely future demand.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the force's performance in this area.

Assessing current demand

The force is struggling to cope with increased and different demand. Over the past year, it has experienced an increase in calls, with 14 percent more emergency calls and 11 percent more 101 calls. Over the longer term, the emergence of social media and cyber crime has brought increases in stalking and harassment and the introduction of new offence types, such as sending letters or social media messages with intent to cause distress or anxiety.

Some cases involving vulnerable people aren't being dealt with quickly enough. For example, there has been a significant rise in incidents related to vulnerability that have gone into the grade 3 (attendance within 4 hours) and grade 4 scheduled appointment 48 or 72 hours) queues. This means that they aren't allocated to an investigator as soon as possible, as they should be.

The force is developing a new operating model to address the problem of increased and different demand. As part of its stepped approach to introducing change and improvement through its new operating model, the force launched a new call handling structure in April 2019. The main changes included:

- the creation of a primary investigation centre to deal with all incidents and crimes that have not been graded as immediate or priority;
- an increase in the communications and operations department, to support the primary investigation centre; and
- allocating four-hour slots for the telephone investigation unit to resolve a call.

We look forward to assessing the new model in our next inspection.

Better community intelligence should help the force to understand hidden demand. It has done some work on this: for example, neighbourhood teams are asked to make enquiries about modern-day slavery and human trafficking, officers are designated as single points of contact for black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) groups, and initiatives are implemented such as Operation Vienna that deals with communities less likely to report crime, such as sex workers. The force has also retained the role of missing persons co-ordinators. With West Yorkshire Police and academics from Manchester University, the force is part of the N8 consortium (a collaboration of the eight most research-intensive universities in the north of England, which aims to enable and foster research collaboration that will help address the problems of policing in the 21st century and achieve international excellence in policing research and impact).

Understanding factors that influence demand

The force doesn't fully understand all the factors that influence demand. It has done some analysis of demand: for example, reviewing when its busy periods are compared with the staff available, the crime types and the grades of incidents. However, the force's IT systems aren't fit for purpose, which limits its ability to understand data in depth. The performance management tool, QlikView, provides some analysis of day-to-day data, but it is bringing in new systems, such as Qlik Sense, that should help with this. The force also needs to look more carefully at hidden demand and inefficiencies in its working practices.

The force is in the process of analysing the demand for specific teams and undertaking shift pattern analysis to inform the new operating model. It is assessing the demand associated with the new ways of working for neighbourhood teams that are now managing the RSOs. Additionally, the force is examining data on live cases per detective sergeant and comparing this across the three command areas to see what the demand is around investigation.

The force seeks to understand how its own internal processes create unnecessary or hidden demand. To avoid creating more demand, its approach to implementing change is to take small steps and a sequenced approach rather than a 'big bang' approach. An example of this is its work with North Yorkshire Police to establish an evidence base to pilot a new rural policing model (rather than embark on wholesale change).

However, the force doesn't always understand the things that affect demand and present risk. Inefficient ways of working can suppress or hide demand. For example, when we visited the control room and reviewed incidents containing vulnerabilities, we found that response times for grade 2 incidents (attendance as soon as possible and in any case within one hour) had been missed. In one instance, we found that the grade 2 response time was met by a phone call within the hour to arrange a future appointment. And the lists of the grade 2 incidents don't effectively highlight vulnerability. In those we sampled, 50 percent failed the grade 2 response times. This means that the force may be inadvertently suppressing demand.

Working with others to meet demand

The force works well with other organisations to meet demand. In all six local authority areas, Northumbria Police works with partner agencies, including health, children's services and local authorities. Gateshead, Newcastle, Northumberland and North Tyneside each have a [MASH](#), where the services collaborate on protecting vulnerable people. South Tyneside has an integrated [safeguarding](#) intervention team, and Sunderland has an integrated contact and referral team.

The safer neighbourhood partnership is a meeting at which the force works with other agencies to tackle local problems. For example, the partnership recently adopted a new approach to managing street begging, which was previously seen solely as a police matter. The local authority has now taken responsibility for dealing with it, chairing the meetings and leading the work. The mental health [street triage](#) car is another successful collaboration.

Collaboration has also helped the force to identify hidden demand. For example, it worked with private landlords and housing officers on preventing cannabis cultivation. Recently, it identified property ownership by an OCG member where cannabis was being cultivated. For one of the properties, because of a licensing issue, the force was able to disclose to the licensing team that this person owned additional properties and so could afford the increased fine for not disclosing ownership (fined £60,000). Because of the property ownership, the individual was prosecuted and this prevented the cannabis cultivation.

The force and its partner agencies, such as local authorities, have worked together to involve local communities in solving problems. For example, they used a survey in the Bensham area to ask residents what their local problems were. The force then worked with environmental officers from the council to carry out street clean-ups, removing litter, fly tipping, vehicles, bin bags, etc. In 'World Café' events, the force questions focus groups of local residents on what is good about their area, and asks for suggestions about how problems could be resolved. The force has carried out seven of these events, with four in the central area command.

However, the force hasn't done enough to analyse data from its partners to understand demand. It hasn't fully assessed, for example, how reductions in social care resources might affect police work. As a result, the evidence base underpinning some of the force's change plans isn't as robust as it should be.

Innovation and new opportunities

The force has changed its processes and policies to increase its efficiency. It has streamlined processes for out-of-court disposals and in the youth offending team. It has introduced a new investigative assessment framework to ensure proportionate investigations, and supplied officers with new equipment including [body-worn video](#) cameras and tablets.

The force has involved the workforce in tackling wasteful demand. For example, following consultation with staff, it changed its policy on shoplifting so that, if a supermarket leaves a beer promotion in an unsecure foyer, officers won't be deployed and any shoplifting won't be investigated. The idea is to give officers more time to deal with vulnerable people. Following the 2016 staff survey, the force introduced a staff feedback mechanism, and it is now using a commercial employee feedback platform.

The force has also been innovative in dealing with domestic abuse. It is developing an early intervention programme, which involves investing in schools' liaison officers and working with academics to understand how childhood experiences cause people to become abusers later in life. The force will be the first to start recording incidents involving adult to parent violence and abuse. This should provide opportunities for early intervention and breaking the cycle at an earlier stage.

Investment and benefits

The force makes investment decisions to achieve savings and change the way it works. The savings it has achieved from March 2010 to March 2018 have been mainly made by a 28 percent reduction of the workforce. Following consultation with the public, the [police and crime commissioner](#) (PCC) approved an increase in council tax for 2019/20, which will be invested in policing including new officers and [staff](#). Savings and efficiencies will be delivered wherever possible to sustain the investment in policing and continue to support local policing services in the face of a challenging financial situation. The force has a Transformation 2025 programme to achieve change in how it works. Based on its analysis of demand, it plans to invest in extending cyber crime capabilities, providing support to victims of crime, protecting the most vulnerable people in its communities, preventing child sexual exploitation and modern-day slavery, and developing anti-terrorism and firearms capabilities.

The force has made an important investment in keeping its neighbourhood policing model. Its activity analysis showed that neighbourhood officers spent most of their time providing safeguarding, engaging with communities and undertaking a range of non-neighbourhood tasks such as backfilling for response police officers. PCSOs spent a large proportion of their time on crime prevention activities and engaging with communities. The activity analysis also found opportunities to create capacity within the existing neighbourhood teams by providing greater role clarity and prioritising tasks, improving inefficient working practices and reducing resource abstractions to backfill response policing. It also showed that the capability of the

teams could be enhanced by ensuring that tasks that do not need warranted powers are undertaken, when possible, by PCSOs. With investment in the right support and training, the upskilling of PCSOs created capacity for neighbourhood policing teams to take responsibility for the management of low- and medium-risk sex offenders.

Prioritising different types of demand

The force doesn't prioritise demand effectively and its response to higher-priority incidents is inconsistent. There are differences in performance from one territorial command to another in how they are meeting attendance targets around grade 1 incidents (emergency) and grade 2 (attendance within an hour). For example, performance figures in November 2018 for the southern area command showed it was attending only 66 percent of its grade 2 incidents within the target of one hour. Some response teams routinely delay attending grade 2 incidents because there isn't anyone available.

Although call takers use the [THRIVE](#) model to assess risk, there is no clear rationale behind the grade 3 status, which requires attendance within four hours, other than instances where a caller won't accept an appointment. In our dip-sample of incident logs, we found several calls in which the caller in a grade 3 incident waited longer to be seen by a police officer than if they had been graded 4 (which requires a scheduled appointment with attendance within 48 hours unless the caller requests a later appointment, in which case attendance is deferred to 72 hours). During our inspection, the force brought forward its decision to remove grade 3 deployment from its policies.

The force performs better on grade 4 incidents. Appropriate incidents to this category include criminal damage; auto crime; thefts; neighbour disputes; and complaints about driving. The appointment system isn't appropriate for incidents in which officers need to gather forensic evidence.

Assigning resources to demand and understanding their costs

The force has a good understanding of the cost of services. Members of the [chief officer](#) team are conscious that the force has low financial [reserves](#) and makes decisions accordingly. The force has a strategic resourcing board and the medium-term financial strategy is based on workforce numbers. It can show flexibility in how it allocates resources. Examples of this include the increase in safeguarding capacity and the move of six police constable posts into the MASHs.

Workforce capabilities

Northumbria Police knows that its current operating model isn't the best way to meet demand. The [force management statement](#) shows that neither the workforce composition nor the shift system is aligned to demand. It has reviewed its ways of working and is introducing a new operating model.

Under the new operating model, response teams will be responsible for attending grade 1 and grade 2 incidents providing initial investigation and as specialists in providing immediate safeguarding. Further investigative capacity will be provided by [PIP](#) level 1 and PIP level 2 police officers and police staff investigators.

Response teams, investigation teams and neighbourhood teams will be moving to a new demand-led shift pattern. Neighbourhood teams will be 'ring fenced' under the new model, with neighbourhood staff able to concentrate on problem solving. Beat managers will assume responsibility for the management of low-level RSOs – something that has already been piloted. The model will also have centralised telephone resolution, investigation and allocation teams.

When designing the new operating model, the force visited Thames Valley Police to review its current operating model. Northumbria Police has involved a consultancy firm in the remodelling programme and has already consulted the workforce on the proposed changes. This programme will run independently of the proposed purchase of a new command and control system. The force believes that implementing both these major changes as one overall programme would be too complex.

The force will therefore have to manage this transition very carefully. There are risks in introducing it at the same time as the new command and control system. Other concerns include the potential de-skilling of response officers and the possible subsequent failings in primary investigation standards because officers can only respond to grade 1 and 2 incidents and do not go on to investigate. The force will need to think about how to maintain current performance levels in the remaining months of the existing operating model. Because the new model was due to be in place after our inspection, we look forward to assessing its progress and impact.

The force hasn't done a force-wide skills audit. There is a well-resourced training plan that includes [disclosure](#), firearms capability, investigative skills and family liaison. In some areas of the force, managers are good at identifying career pathways and succession planning. However, in the medium- and long-term, the force needs to develop a better understanding of its workforce's leadership skills. It should consider not only 'hard skills' like command and control but also broader qualities and values and what it wants from its leaders.

More efficient ways of working

The force has carried out some cost-benefit analysis, including work on the benefits of increasing the number of detective sergeants in CID. This aimed to make sure that everyone knows what effect this has had and that it is truly worth the investment.

The force co-ordinates and undertakes evaluation activity on new projects and has dedicated evaluation staff and strong relationships with its local universities and the N8. The collaboration seeks to establish and formalise a regional network of research and innovation in policing. It will provide a platform for collaboration between universities, PCCs, government, police forces and other partners working in policing policy, governance and practice. Benefits realisation for change will be reported at the force governance meetings.

Working with others

Northumbria Police works well with others. Police are co-located with partners in all areas except Newcastle. This approach brings the relevant professionals together to facilitate early and better-quality information sharing, analysis and joint decision making, and co-ordinated intervention to safeguard the vulnerable.

However, the force doesn't evaluate or understand the benefits of its collaborative working. Benefits realisation is a gap: for example, the MATAAC / [integrated offender management](#) / [MOSOVO](#) benefits realisation is immature. The force intends to fill the gap by recruiting a transformation change manager. It has put a lot of resource into its change team without being clear about its purpose. So a big part of the new manager's role will be to provide the outcomes data the force needs to assess benefits realisation. The force is also looking to learn from West Midlands and Avon and Somerset police forces.

The force is considering how its partnership and collaborative work supports its proposed future operating model. An assistant chief constable has the task of evaluating what effect the changes in the operating model might have on what the force needs from partners. This is to be done by assessing the effect of change, the effect of change on communities and then working with partners to fill any service gaps. This presents an opportunity to develop new partnerships and be shrewder in partnership working by developing the force strategy to look two to three years ahead in each area of policing. The force should consider the new operating model, understand the gaps and work with partner organisations to make sure those gaps are filled.

Using technology

The force needs better IT to make its service more efficient and effective. Technology is a crucial part of the force's restructuring programme. It has an ambitious IT strategy, with £27m of capital investment allocated to the medium-term financial strategy for technology over the next four years.

An important element of the strategy is the replacement of the force's bespoke crime management system (Northumbria Police Integrated Computer and Communications System, or NPICCS). A 2012 review recommended retaining NPICCS but modernising it. In 2016, another review found that it had many weaknesses and gaps that made it unfit for purpose. It collects data but doesn't allow the force to make links or cross-reference information. This makes it difficult to turn raw data into actionable intelligence, or to identify threats and vulnerabilities.

The force wants to transform its capabilities using technology. Its plans cover many areas. These include, for example, digital investigation and intelligence, case management, information sharing, extended use of mobile technology and a refresh of all user devices.

Planning for the future



Requires improvement

Northumbria Police needs to improve its planning. Its ability to assess current and future demand for its services could improve. It needs to do more work to fully understand the demand picture in Northumberland and Tyne and Wear, including making use of partnership information and data.

The force's crime management system isn't designed to identify, record or extract data on the range of current threats. This means that projected hidden and newly emerging crimes, such as threats posed by changing technology, aren't understood.

The force's current operating model is being reviewed because resources and demand are not aligned. The capacity and capability of frontline officers should be aligned to demand so that the force is able to respond within target times to calls for service from the public. Limited career pathways and succession planning are in place and the force needs to improve its understanding of the skills of the workforce needed for the future.

The force's financial plans are based on sound planning assumptions. Much change is planned within the force over the next two years, including the implementation of a new operating model and two major IT systems. The force will need to manage these complex changes very carefully. It has not consulted with the public about this change, so it doesn't fully understand how public expectations are changing and how the public may wish to interact with the force in the future.

Areas for improvement

- The force should carry out more work to make sure its assumptions in relation to future demand are based on sound evidence and analysis so that resources can be best allocated.
- To enable the force to effectively manage current and future demand it should ensure that its ICT planning is closely aligned with its future plans and wider change programme arrangements.
- The force should ensure its strategic plans are aligned with financial planning and that the force's medium-term planning is sustainable to provide financial security and investment in service improvement.
- The force should conduct a leadership skills audit that will allow it to understand leadership capacity and capability.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the force's performance in this area.

Assessing future demand for services

The force's ability to assess future demand is limited. Its IT system is antiquated and doesn't record all the necessary information. The force uses all the data it can access, including information from partner agencies, to build up its understanding of emerging crime types. It could do more, however, to work with others to build a comprehensive picture of future demand.

The force's strategic risk assessment lays out the current, emerging and long-term threats posed by a wide range of criminal and illegal activities, including digital and cyber crime, foreign national offending, drugs, firearms and burglary. It recommends action to mitigate those risks and identifies four wider areas it needs to improve: technology; the crime management system (NPICCS); data quality; and training.

The strategic assessment is based on many sources of information, including environmental scanning, various national reports, local authority priorities, plans and surveys, and changes in crime types and patterns. Along with the police and crime plan, the strategic assessment is used to define the force control strategy for the year ahead. The control strategy for 2018/19 outlines the six priority areas for the force:

1. [anti-social behaviour](#);
2. child sexual exploitation, domestic abuse and serious sexual offending;
3. counter-terrorism and domestic extremism;
4. signal crime (any emerging crime types where threat, risk and harm have the potential to have an impact on the public);
5. organised crime; and
6. cyber crime.

These priorities have been communicated to the workforce in several ways, including on posters on the walls of stations and on screen savers.

The strategy includes an assessment of the threats and opportunities presented by technology. The document points out that technology facilitates almost every crime type. It can be difficult for the force to identify, record and investigate incidents that cross geographical boundaries. There is also great pressure on specialist resources such as the digital forensic unit.

The force's NPICCS was designed during the mid-1980s. It is an antiquated system that isn't designed to identify, record or extract data on the range of current threats. It records crime types but doesn't include information about activity and factors that support and enable crime such as cyber, vulnerability, drugs and alcohol. Officers have to record this in databases and spreadsheets, which makes it difficult to develop a good intelligence picture. Many crimes and incidents are not correctly flagged on the system, either because officers aren't aware of the problem or because there are too many different flags to choose from. As a result, Northumbria Police has based its future planning on imprecise information.

Understanding public expectations

The force hasn't consulted enough with the public on the new operating model. It needs to review how it is using its engagement and consultation strategy to make sure that it understands the changing needs of the community. The information obtained from such engagement should inform and shape its future plans, including how public expectations are changing and how the public may wish to interact with the force in the future.

The OPCC periodically consults the public on crime priorities for the area and changes to any precept contribution. The force uses this information to shape its plans.

The force will be implementing a 'single online home' as part of a national initiative to offer the public a consistent way of accessing police services digitally. There will be a standard platform for all 43 forces across England and Wales, which will allow people to report crimes of various types and to be updated on progress. In partnership with the six local authorities, the force has also rolled out an application called 'My Street

Northumbria', which directs users to the right agency to deal with their problem. It has developed its use of social media, including Twitter, Facebook and online reporting of incidents.

Prioritising

The force needs to do more work on its strategic planning framework to make sure that financial resources and the workforce plan are aligned to the force's understanding of demand. The force already knows that its current operating model is out of kilter with current demand. Staff and officers aren't aligned to demand in the workforce composition or shift systems and the force needs more detectives. As a result, the force has commissioned a change programme to bring in a new operating model during 2019. This is in three phases through to 2021 and includes the 2018 launch of the customer service centre to handle non-incident calls, and the six MASH hubs and MOSOVO. It covers all aspects of the way the force works, its use of technology, training and data.

Future workforce

The force has identified the skills it needs to develop its workforce and has a well-resourced training plan. Training requirements are linked through to the strategic assessment where an evaluation of skills is undertaken as to what skills will be needed in the future. This is then linked through and recorded on the human resources management system. The human resources department keeps a record of training and development, and a skills database that is monitored monthly.

The force is aware of capability and capacity gaps: for example, the lack of investigators trained to take on serious crimes. As part of the force's raising investigation standards programme, it has targeted training and development to bridge this gap. This includes developing career pathways for investigators.

All senior posts are advertised externally. The force currently takes part in [Police Now](#) and [direct entry schemes](#) for inspectors, and is considering doing the same for superintendents. Through these schemes and the apprenticeship framework, the force is hoping to increase workforce diversity in areas such as investigation and safeguarding where there is a requirement to increase levels of capacity and capability.

However, it needs to do more work to fully understand the future workforce requirements because it hasn't yet finalised the numbers and the skill set required for the workforce in the new operating model. The force also needs to plan how to manage the workforce through a significant period of change.

Finance plans

Financial plans are built on realistic, sound assumptions about future funding levels, inflation and council tax levels, which are agreed with the OPCC, but more could be done to make sure that financial plans are better aligned with the change programme and future demand. Northumbria Police has benefited from an increase in the council tax precept of £24 for band D properties in 2019/20.

The force has been using its reserves to cover funding gaps since 2010. General reserves reduced from £71.0m in 2010 to £9.4m in March 2018, a reduction of 87 percent. The force understands that the use of reserves isn't a sustainable option, and that this strategy must change. A recent survey by the Police and Crime Commissioners Treasurers' Society (PACCTS)'s technical support team found that, in 2018, Northumbria held the second lowest levels of all forces in England of both earmarked and general reserves (as a percentage of net revenue expenditure).

The force has a four-year medium-term financial strategy to achieve the savings needed to operate within available funding.

Leadership and workforce development

The force must do more work to develop its understanding of its workforce's leadership skills and capabilities in the medium and long term. With the forming of the people service directorate, there is an opportunity for the force to review its approach to leadership and develop a strategy to improve the leadership effectiveness across the workforce.

The standard of behaviour expected of officers in Northumbria Police is described in its [competency and value framework](#) as well as in the [Code of Ethics](#). The framework now drives people processes including recruitment, selection, promotion and development. The force is increasingly putting more emphasis on personal development review (PDR) conversations that aim to support it in moving towards a learning organisation with a focus on personal responsibility and performance management.

For the past year, the force has been running a leadership programme – the Achieve Programme. This includes induction and leadership development for newly promoted sergeants, inspectors and police staff. Additional management courses, the LEAD Scheme (accredited by the Chartered Management Institute), 360-degree feedback, and mentoring and coaching are available for anyone looking to develop and improve their leadership and professional development. There is a push to embrace supportive leadership and the force has used the programme to embed that.

Development for police staff is done more on an individual and team basis rather than as a comprehensive force-wide approach. The force is trying to include staff more through initiatives such as the management toolkit. Work has been undertaken with teams to help them develop, for example, [continuing professional development](#). It is still in its infancy and is reactive. The plan is to roll it out across the force, but it was recognised that the force needs to invest more resource because the current structure doesn't have the capacity. The feedback to date has been positive. There is a leadership and talent strategy and the force is building awareness and understanding of skills, strengths and aspirations.

Succession planning for senior leaders within the organisation could be improved. Senior leaders at superintendent, chief superintendent and police staff equivalent levels would benefit from a more structured formalised development programme focusing on developing ability and leadership skills.

Ambition to improve

The force has shown that it has the ambition to improve. The new operating model aims to transform the way it provides services, maximising effectiveness and efficiency, while supporting the wellbeing of its people. Different areas of the plan have been reviewed by the [College of Policing](#), private sector organisations and peer reviewers including Durham and Cleveland police forces. The force has also visited other forces while designing the operating model and brought in transferees at a senior level. It now wants to bring in an experienced manager to oversee the change programme and has decided to accept direct entry from private industry. With a dedicated team working on this, the force clearly wants to develop a better understanding of demand, capacity and capability gaps, and innovative solutions.

In 2018, the force changed its priorities regarding income generation and collaboration. Previously, the decisions were about meeting short-term needs and, as a result, the force felt these efforts tended to be fragmented and unsustainable. It now approaches collaboration opportunities for long-term success using a growth matrix, which identifies the type and maturity of these partnerships. Using the collaboration matrix, the force plots future potential, and explores opportunities to grow communication and information sharing to become a collaboration where all partners are altering activities; changing how they do things for the better; and sharing resources, such as skills and equipment – all for a mutual benefit. As an example, with the emergency services collaboration group, the force plotted purely statutory and emergency services collaborations on a sub-matrix to help prioritise efforts, as well as to help decide on how far they hope to progress some of the opportunities to work together.

Even though the force is increasing its change capacity, it needs to make sure that plans for the future are based on a clear understanding of future demand, workforce capacity and capability, and all achieving the strategic vision.

Legitimacy

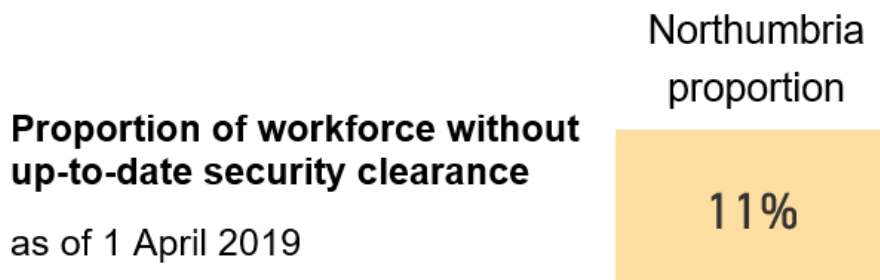


Force in context

Comparison of Northumbria workforce ethnicity with local population

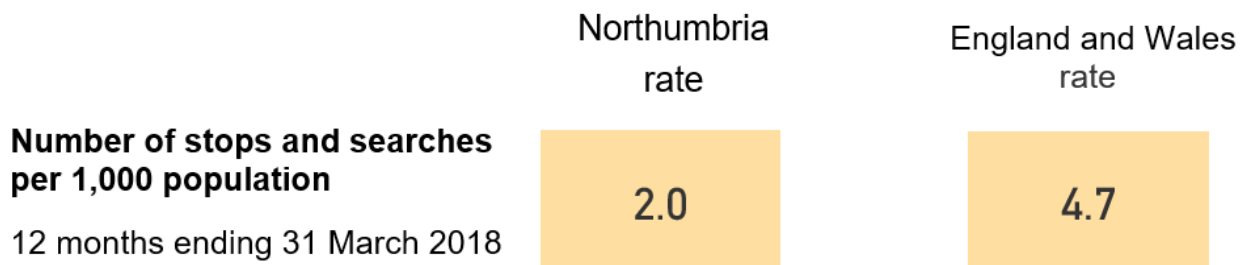
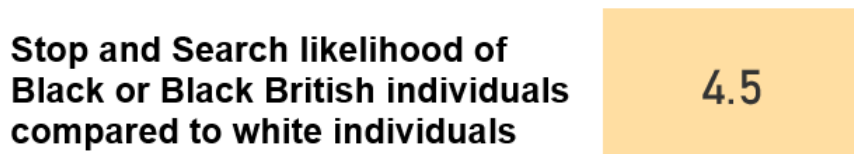
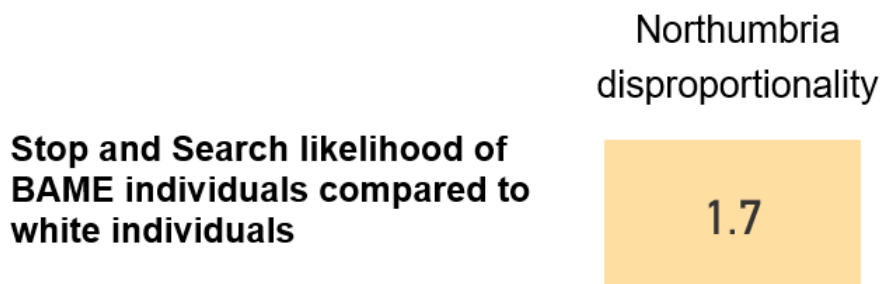
as of 31 March 2019

	Northumbria proportion	Local population proportion
Black, Asian and minority ethnic as % of those with stated ethnicity	1.6%	5.4%
White as % of those with stated ethnicity	98.4%	94.6%
Not Stated as % of total	4.7%	
	Northumbria proportion	England and Wales proportion
Proportion of female officers in post as of 31st March 2019	30%	30%



Stop and search by ethnicity

12 months ending 31 March 2018



How legitimately does the force treat the public and its workforce?



Good

Summary

Northumbria Police is good at treating the public and its workforce legitimately.

Although the force is committed to treating the people it serves with fairness and respect, it requires improvement in this area. Community engagement is generally good, and relationships have been built with local community groups. But the force should make sure that its staff, especially those with [stop and search powers](#), properly understand [unconscious bias](#).

Northumbria Police keeps good records of when it uses force. It needs to make better use of this data to understand how force is being used.

The force is good at behaving ethically and lawfully. Ethical behaviour is important to the whole organisation, but we found they could do more to create an ethical culture. Workforce vetting has greatly improved, with vetting complete or in progress for almost all staff.

Northumbria Police staff should know how to report potential corruption or inappropriate behaviour in confidence. There are systems for reporting by telephone or online, but the force needs to ensure that staff know about them.

Reaction to corruption enquiries is good. But Northumbria Police should make sure that its [counter-corruption unit](#) has the capacity and capability to be proactive in its work.

The force is good at treating its workforce fairly.

Treating the public fairly



Requires improvement

Northumbria Police is committed to treating the people it serves with fairness and respect. Its values include being 'proud to serve', and this is often referenced in force documents, such as the community engagement plan.

However, some staff aren't able to demonstrate an understanding of unconscious bias, or how their prejudices might unknowingly affect how they treat people. In 2017, we recommended that forces should make sure that all officers who use stop and search powers have been trained in unconscious bias. Northumbria Police hasn't fully complied with this recommendation.

The force generally performs well on overall community engagement. It has community engagement teams (CETs) in each of the three area commands, and the force also consults local communities through a range of meetings and activities.

Northumbria Police lacks both internal and external scrutiny to make sure that officers and teams are using force appropriately. While its policies aim to make sure that any use of force is fair, it doesn't analyse the data to check what is happening on the ground.

The force records and monitors information about stop and searches, and this data is thoroughly reviewed both internally and externally. There has, however, been a reduction in the number of stop and searches conducted by the force. Some officers told us they didn't have time to conduct stop and searches because of other demands, and others said they were reluctant because of increased scrutiny. The force is working on developing new guidance for officers.

Causes of concern

Northumbria Police is failing to monitor adequately the way it is using force. This is a cause of concern.

Recommendations

- The force needs to ensure it improves its understanding of how force is being used. It should use this understanding to identify trends, issues and disparities.
- The force should ensure that it has effective internal and external processes and governance to analyse and scrutinise a comprehensive range of use of force data. It should use the outcomes from this to improve the way that force is used.

Areas for improvement

- The force should ensure that all members of its workforce receive training in, and understand, unconscious bias.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the force's performance in this area.

Treating people fairly and respectfully

Northumbria Police prioritises treating the people it serves with fairness and respect. The force's 'proud' values – which include being 'proud to serve' its communities – are constantly referenced in force documents and emphasised by senior leaders when communicating with the workforce. The force has taken fair and respectful treatment of the public into account when making strategic decisions. We found examples of this in the policing of local protests and the force's response after terrorist attacks in other parts of the country. An ethics advisory group gives feedback on new policies and processes.

However, the force needs to do more to make its workforce aware of unconscious bias. The force told us that its workforce had received training in unconscious bias, aimed at making officers aware of how prejudices might be unknowingly informing the way they treat people. However, many of the officers and [staff](#) we spoke to across many roles and departments couldn't explain what unconscious bias was (although in one unit we were pleased to find a very good understanding). The force doesn't provide further training or guidance in communications skills, such as empathy and active listening. [Tactical communications](#) skills are part of officer safety training, but this focuses on de-escalating conflict.

In 2017, our national recommendation relating to stop and search said that forces should ensure that all officers who use stop and search powers have been provided with, and understand, training in unconscious bias. This should have been achieved by July 2018. Northumbria Police hasn't fully complied with this recommendation.

The force generally performs well on overall community engagement, which is central to fair and respectful treatment of the public. The recently restructured communications team now contains a community engagement sub-team. This is in the process of standardising engagement materials and neighbourhood information, which were inconsistent. Improvements to the website and the force's use of social media should also help the force to engage better with communities.

The force has invested in CETs in each of the three area commands. The neighbourhood policing team pages on the force's public website provide information about the officers working in each neighbourhood, how to contact them and what the local priorities are. The CETs have built up relationships with people from [protected characteristic](#) groups, such as the Bangladeshi and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities. The force also consults local communities through pop-up PACT meetings, parish council groups and joint engagement groups. It is currently setting up a scheme called Village Hall champions, in which volunteers in small rural communities will act as a single point of contact for the exchange of

information between the residents and the police. From all this, the CETs create neighbourhood profiles. These profiles include information gathered about important locations and people within a neighbourhood area. However, it is unclear what the purpose of these profiles is, because many of the neighbourhood officers we spoke to hadn't read them.

The force's public insights team conducts surveys with both service users and the general community. The feedback influences service provision and the setting of policing priorities. The surveys are completed over the telephone, via the website and sometimes face to face at community events such as Pride. Members of the public can also use the internet to send feedback directly to the local neighbourhood teams.

In the force's engagement plan, the public is encouraged to support the force through volunteering and to be 'proud to serve'. This can be done through formal routes such as the special constabulary, cadets and police service volunteers. The force has recruited several cyber crime volunteers with an expertise in social media, who also liaise with businesses and support them to mitigate online risk. There are other less formal volunteering opportunities such as the mini-police scheme (involving school children), a variety of 'watch' schemes, litter picking, street pastor patrols and the night-time safe haven provision where volunteers talk to people, pass on safety information and give medical assistance when required.

Using force

Northumbria Police has policies on the use of force and it keeps good records. However, it doesn't analyse this information well enough to make sure that force is being used appropriately and fairly. It doesn't know how its use of force may be affecting minority groups, and it lacks both internal and external scrutiny to make sure that officers and teams are behaving appropriately. The force needs to improve its understanding of how force is being used.

The force provides a two-day training course in personal safety to those who have roles in which they are likely to use force. These sessions include guidance on how to record use of force. The information the workforce records is compliant with the [NPCC's](#) use of force recording requirements.

The force also monitors the submission of use of force forms and measures them against arrest figures, identifying those officers who might have under-recorded their use of force. The information is available on the intranet as part of the performance dashboard accessible to all line managers. One randomly selected form per area command is reviewed each day by the specialist operational training department, and feedback is provided to officers and staff. Submission rates compare favourably with other police forces. The force is focusing on improving the quantity and quality of information recorded, an important element of the process. Disappointingly, however, the force hasn't fully analysed the data it has recorded but relies instead on dip-sampling. The use of force lead superintendent presents a summary about use of force each quarter to the confidence and standards board, chaired by the deputy chief constable. The outcomes of the dip-sampling process supplement the data.

But while the force monitors complaints about excessive use of force, it doesn't routinely and regularly scrutinise [body-worn video](#) camera footage or custody CCTV of the use of force to make sure that it is being used fairly, legally and proportionately. The force currently lacks any external scrutiny of the use of force, but there are plans to involve the strategic [independent advisory group](#) in the future.

We have concerns about the lack of internal monitoring of the use of force. Only limited data is provided to the superintendent lead for use of force. There is no analysis of the tactics used by the workforce, such as handcuffing or baton strikes. We were told that the force doesn't extract this information from the recorded data because of a lack of time. The force is now investing in new software that will automate the process.

The lack of analysis means that the force doesn't understand how well it uses force and doesn't identify trends and problems (including disparities). It isn't clear how it makes sure that force is used fairly on groups such as BAME people, those with disabilities and young people. The force doesn't monitor officers or teams that use force frequently. Neither does it monitor the effect of different types of force.

The force needs to use data better to understand trends, issues and disparities so that it can act to improve how it uses force. It also needs effective internal and external processes and governance to analyse and scrutinise a comprehensive range of use of force data, and to use the outcomes from this to improve the way that force is used.

Using stop and search powers

The force is good at treating the public fairly during stop and search encounters. We reviewed a representative sample of 207 stop and search records, and 88 percent of them had reasonable grounds recorded. Our assessment is based on the grounds recorded by the searching officer and not the grounds that existed at the time of the search.

In our [2017 legitimacy report](#), we recommended that all forces should:

- monitor and analyse comprehensive stop and search data to understand reasons for disparities;
- take action on those; and
- publish the analysis and the action by July 2018.

The force has complied with almost all this recommendation. It monitors and analyses the [find rates](#) of different types of searches by ethnicity and publishes these on its website in an annual report. However, the analysis doesn't break down the find rates for drug possession and drug supply separately, nor does it acknowledge or seek to explain the disparities in the find rates between black people and white people for drugs searches and stolen property searches. The force has recently started to identify drugs possession searches, as opposed to those for drugs supply, to determine if they align with force and local priorities.

Each officer (including special constables) has an annual two-day training session that includes stop and search. It is provided by training staff and is in accordance with the [College of Policing](#) guidance. The force also has a process to audit all stop and search records. A single point of contact (SPOC) in each area command reviews

every record. They then send feedback to individual officers and their supervisor when the grounds recorded may not be enough to justify the search.

The stop and search lead chairs a monthly stop and search internal monitoring meeting. This is attended by the SPOCs, area command representatives and members of the central area community engagement team. This meeting reviews overall force stop and search performance and then breaks that down into the stops carried out in area commands. It also discusses any feedback it has received from the external groups that monitor stop and search (see below). Searching officers receive feedback from stop and search reviews, but the benefits from this scrutiny would be improved if feedback were disseminated across the whole workforce. Every quarter, the stop and search lead presents the outcome of these meetings to the confidence and standards board.

The force has more than one external group scrutinising stop and search records. The strategic independent advisory group currently reviews records and body-worn video footage every two months, and in future this will be monthly. We were pleased to see that there are other, smaller, local community groups participating, including Northumbria University social sciences department students, the black African community, Newcastle Youth Council and African Community Advice North East. These groups all review and give feedback on a sample of stop and search records as well as reviewing the body-worn video footage. Minutes of their meetings are available on the force's website and any feedback is passed onto the searching officer. The meetings would be improved by access to more comprehensive data on stop and search.

Ethical and lawful workforce behaviour



Good

Northumbria Police's policies and procedures comply with the national policing [Code of Ethics](#) and the Equality Duty. The force treats ethical behaviour as an issue for the whole organisation, and it is monitored by several boards and advisory groups.

The force has made a good start in promoting an ethical culture, particularly through a series of short videos on the intranet, which have also been used across the northern region because they were seen as a good learning tool. It is trying to promote a blame-free culture, in which the organisation can learn from mistakes.

It has made great improvements in vetting the workforce, with vetting either complete or in progress for almost all staff.

The force is good at tackling corruption and has improved how it assesses risk. It uses information it holds on its officers to help those at risk of corruption before force integrity is affected. But the force needs to review how it evaluates staff interventions.

Too few officers have a regular PDR that includes an [integrity health check](#). And although there is a confidential reporting online and telephone system for staff, few officers we spoke to knew about it.

The force has the capacity and capability to react well to corruption enquiries but not enough to pursue corruption proactively. It has fully implemented its plan to address our 2016 national recommendation on [abuse of authority for a sexual purpose](#).

Areas for improvement

- The force should ensure its counter corruption unit has the capability and capacity to be effective in its proactive approach to counter corruption – and has full information technology (IT) monitoring to effectively protect the information contained within its systems.
- The force should ensure its mechanism for the workforce to report potential corruption and inappropriate behaviour of colleagues confidentially is effective.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the force's performance in this area.

Maintaining an ethical culture

Northumbria Police's policies and procedures comply with the national policing Code of Ethics and the Equality Duty. But the force has more work to do in creating and maintaining an ethical culture.

The workforce has received training on the Code of Ethics, and ethical decision making and behaviour. One of the superintendents acts as a Code of Ethics lead, working outside the [professional standards department](#). This is a conscious decision to treat ethical behaviour as an issue for the whole organisation. The Code of Ethics lead chairs an internal [ethics committee](#). The role of this committee is to advise staff on ethical dilemmas, and people can submit dilemmas for feedback. The committee has a good spread of representation, including police officers and police staff from different departments and levels. But some people we spoke to during our inspection were not aware of it. The force should review the effectiveness of the ethics committee to make sure that there is an awareness of this forum and its work across the organisation.

There is also a quarterly Code of Ethics advisory group, which includes external members. Part of the role of this group is to consider the ethical effects of strategic and policy decisions. The confidence and standards board, which is chaired by the deputy chief constable, receives an evaluation of recent Code of Ethics work at every meeting.

The force is considering and developing innovative ways to promote the Code of Ethics, including working with academia. It has made a series of short videos that incorporate real case studies. These are available to all officers and staff via the intranet and are used in staff briefing sessions as a discussion basis for ethical dilemmas. The videos aim to encourage staff to discuss ethical issues and to foster an ethical culture. The force has also published several straightforward easy-to-read guides on difficult ethical areas, such as the use of social media, and has developed a training programme, the 'PROUD of you' course, to develop a feeling of empowerment and confidence. It includes material on standards of behaviour,

expectations and values. It has been provided to new recruits and as part of leadership development programmes.

The force is trying to promote a blame-free culture in which, rather than holding individual people responsible for mistakes, the organisation can learn lessons and communicate them to others for training purposes. After a recent [Independent Office for Police Conduct](#) (IOPC) investigation into how a different force dealt with a victim of sexual offences, guidance was issued throughout the force about what could have been done differently.

There is detailed information on the force's intranet about policies and procedures on business interests, notifiable associations, and gifts and hospitality. Staff and officers' annual PDR should now include an 'integrity health check', although this didn't appear to be happening consistently.

The force has achieved the 2016 HMIC recommendation that all the workforce should be vetted by December 2018. At the time of our inspection, vetting was in progress for 204 police officers, staff and PCSOs. In a workforce of approximately 4,800, there were only 23 cases in which vetting hadn't started. The retrospective vetting programme began in June 2017, aiming to make sure that every employee was vetted to the appropriate level. All retrospective vetting, except for a few that can't be started because of long-term sickness or maternity leave, have either been completed in full or are in progress.

The force has the resources and IT systems in place to fully vet the workforce, including high-risk posts, contractors and volunteers. Vetting is a standing agenda item for the confidence and standards board, which makes sure that the force complies with the national Vetting Code of Practice and APP. It also complies with its obligation on the identification and forwarding of staff for the College of Policing's barred and advisory lists.

The vetting unit doesn't, however, monitor its decisions to identify any disproportionality in decision making, concerning BAME groups or other protected characteristics. The human resources department does monitor the effect of vetting decisions on the recruitment of new police officers and reports its analysis to the OPCC. The force should improve how it monitors disparities in vetting to make sure that this isn't limiting its ability to recruit a diverse workforce.

The confidence and standards board also reviews the work of the professional standards department and reviews all recent misconduct hearings. It communicates any lessons learned to the wider workforce. Most of the officers and staff we spoke to were aware of the Code of Ethics and the expected standards of behaviour, but some didn't know that the force circulated the results of misconduct cases. The force's communication and training could be improved in this area.

Tackling corruption

Northumbria Police has a local strategic counter-corruption threat assessment in place. The assessment draws on national and local information to identify local threat and risk, according to National Crime Agency counter-corruption categories. It identifies three areas of corruption risk:

- access and disclosure of information;
- undeclared notifiable inappropriate associations; and
- abuse of authority for sexual purpose.

From this, the force's counter-corruption strategic control strategy identifies six areas of risk: access and disclosure of information and misuse of force systems; notifiable inappropriate associations; abuse of authority for a sexual purpose; corruptors; abuse of authority (other); and controlled drug use or supply.

At the time of the inspection, the strategic assessment had recently been revised. It is now providing more detailed and comprehensive analysis. Because of this revised assessment, the force has commissioned further research and analysis on the abuse of position for a sexual purpose, and has drawn up plans for counter-corruption control, an intelligence requirement and an intelligence collection plan. These documents set out clear governance plans for tackling corruption.

The force uses the information it holds on its employees to identify those at risk of corruption. It does this by looking for people who are poorly performing, have excessive debts, numerous public complaints, etc. to see if there are any underlying issues. If any are identified, the person is assisted until the problems have been resolved before there are any risks to the integrity of the force. This isn't currently managed through a co-ordinated meeting structure and there is no formal evaluation of any of the methods of intervention. This is an area the force should review.

The force makes good use of the integrity registers involving notifiable associations, business interests, and gifts and gratuities. It doesn't, however, monitor well enough people's compliance with its decisions regarding notifiable associations – leaving this to line managers. Our inspection of the register highlighted that notifications hadn't been reviewed since 2014. This is too long a gap.

Staff and officers' PDRs should include an 'integrity health check'. However, some staff have either missed a PDR or had one without the integrity health check. The force should review this process to make sure that all supervisors understand the importance of including these checks, and their responsibility in this area.

We reviewed 60 items of intelligence relating to alleged police corruption to check how well the force was dealing with such risks. When early interventions were used, they were all done in appropriate circumstances. On receipt of intelligence regarding police corruption, the items should be categorised in line with national corruption categories. There were only five items of intelligence from the 60 reviewed that did not follow this guidance. Intelligence was generally acted upon in a timely manner and dealt with effectively. Eleven cases required referring to the IOPC and, of these, nine were appropriately referred.

The force works well with external partners to identify intelligence related to officers who abuse their authority. The counter-corruption unit has specific liaison officers who talk to groups such as Victims First Northumbria. They talk about how to identify potential abusers. Operation Jameson was set up by the force in response to those incidents where officers and staff abuse their position to take sexual advantage of someone, but it has a wider remit. The force has created a joint engagement group, which is a group of force representatives from community engagement and [safeguarding](#) who work alongside external partner agencies such as the six local authorities, mental health police liaison, sex workers, independent domestic violence advisers, independent sexual violence advisers and probation. It meets monthly to share information, and between meetings the force uses liaison officers who work directly with vulnerable communities to provide additional information when required. The force also has good relationships with, and has provided training to, sex worker liaison officers.

The force has a confidential reporting system for staff to report internal wrongdoing. During the inspection, the staff we spoke to had no knowledge of either the online confidential reporting tool or the telephone number. We were told that officers and staff would report issues of concern directly to their supervisors. However, the force needs to improve the knowledge of its staff about how to report confidential information regarding potential wrongdoing by colleagues.

Corruption intelligence is held locally on a standalone system, but this isn't up to date and the data isn't fully searchable. Some cases were documented on other systems while other information was also found in paper records. The main corruption intelligence system appeared to be used as a document filing system rather than a database for recording what had been done. The force is now able to monitor some of its IT systems and the data contained within them to check that employees' use of data is appropriate and lawful, but it doesn't use this capability to proactively search for any inappropriate behaviour.

The force has enough capacity and capability to address the current level of reactive enquiries and proceed to the investigation stage. IT monitoring went live in December 2018 and this should improve the capability to pursue corruption proactively that the force needs to focus on.

The force recognises the abuse of position for a sexual purpose as serious corruption and this is reflected in its local counter-corruption strategic threat assessment. The force submitted a plan in 2017 to address our 2016 national recommendation regarding the abuse of position for a sexual purpose, and it has fully implemented this. The force has a [problem profile](#), a detailed analytical report, to assist in identifying staff who might abuse their position, and these staff are subject to checks and monitoring.

The force uses the [National Police Counter Corruption Advisory Group](#) strategy to address the issue of the abuse of position for a sexual purpose. It provides officers and staff with material and briefings to make sure that they are aware of the issue. It has also produced a poster – ‘knowing your boundaries’ – to provide guidance to staff. Supervisors receive training about the warning signs that suggest someone is abusing their position for a sexual purpose. The force releases full statements to the press in the event of a dismissal for this type of offending, setting out clearly that the force won’t tolerate this type of behaviour.

Treating the workforce fairly



Good

This question was not subject to inspection in 2018/19, and our judgment from the 2017 legitimacy inspection has been carried over.

Annex A – About the data

Data in this report is from a range of sources, including:

- Home Office;
- Office for National Statistics (ONS);
- our inspection fieldwork; and
- data we collected directly from all 43 police forces in England and Wales.

When we collected data directly from police forces, we took reasonable steps to agree the design of the data collection with forces and with other interested parties such as the Home Office. We gave forces several opportunities to quality assure and validate the data they gave us, to make sure it was accurate. For instance:

- We shared the submitted data with forces, so they could review their own and other forces' data. This allowed them to analyse where data was notably different from other forces or internally inconsistent.
- We asked all forces to check the final data used in the report and correct any errors.

We set out the source of this report's data below.

Methodology

Data in the report

British Transport Police was outside the scope of inspection. Any aggregated totals for England and Wales exclude British Transport Police data, so will differ from those published by the Home Office.

When other forces were unable to supply data, we mention this under the relevant sections below.

Most similar groups

We compare each force's crime rate with the average rate for forces in its most similar group (MSG). MSGs are groups of similar police forces, based on analysis of demographic, social and economic factors which relate to crime. We could not identify any forces similar to City of London Police. Every other force has its own group of up to seven other forces which it is most similar to.

An MSG's crime rate is the sum of the recorded crimes in all the group's forces divided by its total population. All of the most similar forces (including the force being compared) are included in calculating the MSG average.

[More information about MSGs can be found on our website.](#)

Population

For all uses of population as a denominator in our calculations, unless otherwise noted, we use ONS mid-2018 population estimates.

Survey of police workforce

We surveyed the police workforce across England and Wales, to understand their views on workloads, redeployment and how suitable their assigned tasks were. This survey was a non-statistical, voluntary sample so the results may not be representative of the workforce population. The number of responses per force varied between 0 and 920. So we treated results with caution and didn't use them to assess individual force performance. Instead, we identified themes that we could explore further during fieldwork.

BMG survey of public attitudes towards policing (2018)

We commissioned BMG to survey public attitudes towards policing in 2018. Ipsos MORI conducted a similar version of the survey in 2015–2017.

The survey consisted of about 400 respondents for each of the 43 forces. Most surveys were completed online, by members of online research panels. However, a minority of the surveys (around 750) were conducted face-to-face. These face-to-face surveys were specifically targeted to groups that are traditionally under-represented on online panels. This aimed to make sure the survey respondents were as representative as possible of the total adult population of England and Wales. A small number of respondents were also surveyed online via postal invites to the survey.

Results were weighted by age, gender, ethnicity and indices of multiple deprivation to match population profiles. The sampling method used is not a statistical random sample and the sample size was small, which may be more problematic for larger force areas compared to small ones. So any results provided are only an indication of satisfaction rather than an absolute.

[The findings of this survey, and previous surveys, are available on our website.](#)

Review of crime files

We reviewed police case files for these crime types:

- theft from person;
- rape (including attempts);
- stalking;
- harassment;
- common assault;
- grievous bodily harm (wounding); and
- actual bodily harm.

Our file review was designed to provide a broad overview of how well the police:

- identify vulnerability;
- conduct investigations; and
- treat victims.

We randomly selected files from crimes recorded between 1 May and 31 July 2018 and assessed them against several criteria. We reviewed 60 case files in each force, except for the Metropolitan Police Service where we reviewed 90.

For our file review, we only selected a small sample size of cases per force. So we didn't use results from as the only basis for assessing individual force performance, but alongside other evidence.

Force in context

999 calls

We collected this data directly from all 43 police forces in England and Wales.

Recorded crime and crime outcomes

We took this data from the July 2019 release of the Home Office [police recorded crime and outcomes data tables](#).

Total police-recorded crime includes all crime (except fraud) recorded by all forces in England and Wales (except BTP). Home Office publications on the overall volumes and rates of recorded crime and outcomes include British Transport Police, which is outside the scope of this HMICFRS inspection. Therefore, England and Wales rates in this report will differ from those published by the Home Office.

Police-recorded crime data should be treated with care. Recent increases may be due to forces' renewed focus on accurate crime recording since our 2014 national crime data inspection.

Other notable points to consider when interpreting outcomes data are listed below.

- Crime outcome proportions show the percentage of crimes recorded in the 12 months ending 30 September 2018 that have been assigned each outcome. This means that each crime is tracked or linked to its outcome. So this data is subject to change, as more crimes are assigned outcomes over time.
- Under the new framework, 37 police forces in England and Wales provide outcomes data through the HODH every month. All other forces provide this data via a monthly manual return.
- Leicestershire, Staffordshire and West Yorkshire forces participated in the Ministry of Justice's out of court disposals pilot. As part of the pilot, they stopped issuing simple cautions or cannabis/khat warnings and restricted their use of penalty notices for disorder for adult offenders. These three forces continued to follow these procedures since the pilot ended in November 2015. Later, other forces also limited their use of some out of court disposals. So the outcomes data should be viewed with this in mind.

For a full commentary and explanation of outcome types please see the Home Office statistics, [Crime outcomes in England and Wales: year ending March 2019](#).

Domestic abuse outcomes

In England and Wales, 29 police forces provide domestic abuse outcomes data through the Home Office data hub (HODH) every month. We collected this data directly from the remaining 14 forces.

Domestic abuse outcome proportions show the percentage of crimes recorded in the 12 months ending 31 March 2018 that have been assigned each outcome. This means that each crime is tracked or linked to its outcome. So this data is subject to change, as more crimes are assigned outcomes over time.

Workforce figures (including ethnicity and gender)

This data was obtained from the Home Office annual data return 502. The data is available from the Home Office's published [police workforce England and Wales statistics](#) or the [police workforce open data tables](#). The Home Office may have updated these figures since we obtained them for this report.

The data gives the full-time equivalent workforce figures as at 31 March. The figures include section 38-designated investigation, detention or escort officers, but not section 39-designated detention or escort staff. They include officers on career breaks and other types of long-term absence but exclude those seconded to other forces.

Spend per head of population

We took this data from the [HMICFRS value for money profiles](#).

These profiles are based on data collected by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, through the Police Objective Analysis. The spend over time figures are adjusted for inflation. The population figures are ONS mid-year estimates, with the 2018/19 value calculated by assessing the trend for the last five years. [More details on this data can be found on our website](#).

Stop and search

We took this data from the Home Office publication, [Police powers and procedures, England and Wales, year ending 31 March 2018](#). Stop and search totals exclude vehicle only searches and searches where the subject's ethnicity was not stated.

Vetting data (workforce without up-to-date security clearance)

We collected this data directly from all 43 police forces in England and Wales.

September 2019 | ©HMICFRS 2019 | ISBN: 978-1-78655-866-4

www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs