

PEEL 2025–27

Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy

An inspection of Suffolk Constabulary

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Overall summary

Our judgments

Our inspection assessed how good Suffolk Constabulary is in nine areas of policing. We make graded judgments as follows:

Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires improvement	Inadequate
	Preventing and deterring crime	Developing a diverse and inclusive workforce	Leadership and force management	Safeguarding children and adults
		Responding to the public	Police powers and public treatment	Providing a safe custody environment
		Investigating crime	Managing fraud	

We set out our detailed findings about things the constabulary is doing well and where the constabulary should improve in the rest of this report.

We also assess the constabulary's performance in a range of other areas, and we report on these separately. We make graded judgments for some of these areas.

PEEL 2025–2027

In 2014, we introduced our police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL) inspections, which assess the performance of all 43 police forces in England and Wales. Since then, we have been continuously adapting our approach.

We have moved to a more [intelligence](#)-led, continual assessment approach, rather than the annual [PEEL inspections](#) we used in previous years. We assess forces against the [characteristics of good](#) performance, set out in the [PEEL assessment framework 2025–2027](#), and we more clearly link our judgments to [causes of concern](#) and [areas for improvement](#).

It isn't possible to make direct comparisons between the grades awarded in this PEEL inspection and those from the previous cycle of PEEL inspections. This is because we have increased our focus on making sure forces are achieving appropriate outcomes for the public. We have also changed the aspects of policing we inspect and added new areas.

Terminology in this report

Our reports contain references to, among other things, 'national' definitions, priorities, policies, systems, responsibilities and processes.

In some instances, 'national' means applying to England or Wales, or England and Wales. In others, it means applying to England, Wales and Scotland, or the whole of the United Kingdom.

About the data

For more information on data and analysis in this report, please [see the 'About the data' section of our website](#).

HM Inspector's summary

The constabulary has made improvements in how it responds to the public and how it secures positive investigation outcomes for [victims](#). And it continues to be effective at preventing and deterring crime and [antisocial behaviour](#). But I have concerns about how the constabulary is keeping victims of [domestic abuse](#) safe, its strategic understanding and tolerance of risk, custody handovers and leadership behaviours.

In our [2023–2025 PEEL inspection](#), I issued a cause of concern to the constabulary. This related to the way it managed non-emergency calls to the [control room](#) and the time it took to answer emergency calls. Since then, it has increased its staffing levels, reduced the number of non-emergency calls where a caller hangs up before police answer the phone, and improved how quickly it answers 999 calls.

In the year ending 30 April 2026, 11.6 percent of callers to the non-emergency number hung up before their call was answered. And, in the year ending 31 March 2026, 89.8 percent of 999 calls were answered within 10 seconds.

Due to this improvement, I have closed this cause of concern.

The way the constabulary protects [vulnerable people](#) is still a concern. There are significant backlogs related to its [Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme](#). The constabulary hasn't improved its [risk assessment](#) process in [safeguarding](#) domestic abuse victims. And, under the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme process, we found an escalated risk to victims of domestic abuse where a traceable record of police contact was being left. Due to the significant risk posed to victims, I have issued an [accelerated cause of concern](#).

Since our last inspection, there has been a lack of progress in how the constabulary manages and understands all levels of risk in domestic abuse cases. This is an enduring area for improvement and has resulted in a further cause of concern being issued.

The constabulary has adequate governance in place. It has clear strategic plans informed by accurate information and a detailed performance framework. Its funding is within the typical range for forces in England and Wales. However, the constabulary has failed to consistently identify or address poor leadership behaviour. And it needs to improve how it provides recognition to its workforce and records career ambitions.

The constabulary has effective oversight and scrutiny of [stop and search](#). But it needs to improve its oversight and scrutiny of use of force and continue work to address [disproportionality](#) across both stop and search and use of force.

[Neighbourhood policing teams](#) identify and address community problems effectively to prevent crime and reduce antisocial behaviour. The constabulary has a well-established neighbourhood policing team with the number of [officers](#) within the typical range for forces in England and Wales. It is using digital technology to improve how it works with [seldom heard groups](#). For example, by using virtual-reality technology to educate young people about knife crime.

The constabulary needs to make sure that it allocates investigations to officers with appropriate skill sets and that supervisors effectively oversee investigations, so that victims get the service they deserve. It also needs to make sure that it assigns the correct outcome to crime investigations when they are finalised.

The constabulary doesn't sufficiently understand the impact of fraud on its communities and it doesn't always manage fraud investigations well. It often gives complex cases to non-specialist teams that lack experience. The constabulary should improve how it trains its investigators to deal with fraud and how it responds to victims.

I am concerned about the lack of effective leadership and oversight of the constabulary's custody suites. And there isn't an effective and safe detainee handover process. I have therefore issued a cause of concern for this area.

Custody records don't always record detention reviews sufficiently. However, there is a positive relationship with the independent custody visitor scheme and the constabulary is open to effective external scrutiny.

I am concerned about some areas of performance of Suffolk Constabulary due to the issues I have outlined in this summary. I have given the constabulary specific recommendations that set out the areas it needs to focus on, and I will continue to monitor performance.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'RW' or 'Wilsher'.

Roy Wilsher OBE QFSM

His Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary

Leadership and force management

Requires
improvement

Suffolk Constabulary's leadership and force management require improvement.

Areas for improvement

The constabulary needs to make sure that governance arrangements appropriately identify and resolve areas of risk and under-performance

During our inspection, we found that the constabulary had a clear governance structure. We observed a range of performance meetings and found, with a few exceptions, that these meetings included an effective use of performance and management information to inform decision-making. In many meetings, leaders were held to account effectively and actions were tracked between meetings to make sure improvements were made.

Despite this, we found that the existing arrangements didn't always provide sufficient scrutiny or challenge. And there is limited evidence the constabulary addresses under-performance promptly.

For example, in our [2023–25 PEEL inspection](#), we identified an [area for improvement](#) about the constabulary's lack of a secondary review process for standard risk [domestic abuse](#) cases. In this inspection, we found that the constabulary hadn't appropriately resolved this, and we have therefore issued a [cause of concern](#).

In May 2026, we issued an [accelerated cause of concern](#) related to how the constabulary manages the [Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme](#).

The constabulary had a backlog of over 500 outstanding applications and wasn't aware of the associated risks.

We are concerned that, in this case and others, the constabulary may have relied on generic assurances instead of thoroughly interrogating performance and management information.

In other areas, the constabulary has also seen declining performance and under-performance. The constabulary should make sure that it uses its governance and performance structures to appropriately identify and resolve areas of risk and under-performance.

The constabulary should assure itself that it is appropriately identifying and resolving occasions when leadership behaviours fall below expected standards

We found that, while the constabulary had defined values and leadership expectations, it didn't consistently identify or act on behaviours that undermined these standards. In some cases, there is insufficient challenge, and concerns aren't escalated or addressed in a timely and transparent way.

The constabulary provides cultural training programmes and an anonymous pathway for reporting concerns. During our inspection, we carried out a workforce survey open to all [officers](#) and [staff](#) between Monday 12 January and Friday 6 February 2026. We received 699 responses, which we estimate to be 26.0 percent of the workforce at the time of the survey. The results were generally positive about the behaviours of leaders and the culture in the constabulary. For example, 69.0 percent of respondents (482 of 699) agreed that Suffolk Constabulary's senior leaders demonstrated the standards, behaviours and culture expected from the police. And 78.4 percent of respondents (548 of 699) agreed that they made an effort to improve these standards, behaviours and culture in Suffolk Constabulary.

But, during the inspection, we heard some examples of poor behaviour from frontline leaders. Officer and staff networks told us that some female members of the workforce had experienced unequal treatment, such as being given mundane duties, and concerns they raised weren't always dealt with appropriately. This was reinforced by some of the frontline [personnel](#) we spoke to, with officers in response teams telling us they had concerns about poor culture in custody. Custody officers and staff also told us that female officers, particularly those young in service, would be given disproportionate scrutiny. As a result of this, supervisors needed to supply additional officers to support female officers who were dealing with detainees in custody.

While these concerns were limited to certain individuals, and the constabulary has investigated reports and has a new training package, it didn't do enough to identify or resolve them. On one occasion, an issue was perceived as resolved because the member of the workforce concerned retired. The issue wasn't escalated further so the impact of the negative behaviours on the wider workforce couldn't be identified.

The constabulary should make sure that it identifies and deals with issues of poor behaviour promptly.

The constabulary should review and strengthen its approach to risk management

The constabulary's existing governance arrangements don't always support the effective identification, assessment and mitigation of risk.

We found that while the constabulary used performance and management data to identify risks, there was an overly permissive attitude to some risks once they were identified. In some cases, risks weren't routinely reviewed or escalated, which creates the potential for issues to remain unaddressed. A clear example of this was the backlog in [Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme](#) applications. This was identified as a risk on the constabulary's risk register but classed as 'tolerated'. This meant that the backlog was allowed to continue with insufficient scrutiny or mitigation, compounding the risk to [victims](#).

We also identified issues in the custody handover process. The constabulary was aware of these and had previously received an Independent Office for Police Conduct recommendation about custody handover records. Despite this, it wasn't managing the risks effectively.

This was reflected in the constabulary's [force management statement](#), which contained inconsistent detail about mitigation and limited information on what it was doing to address performance gaps.

The constabulary should make sure that risks, once identified, are subject to sufficient management.

Promising practice

The constabulary has an in-house process for developing artificial intelligence and automated solutions

In [our 2023–25 PEEL inspection](#), we found that the constabulary should improve its approach to artificial intelligence and robotic process automation. In this inspection, we found the constabulary had made improvements.

Most significantly, the constabulary has developed an in-house solution to developing its own artificial intelligence and automation processes.

In collaboration with Norfolk Constabulary, the constabulary's development team has a secure environment to propose, test and implement new projects.

This means that the two constabularies aren't reliant on third-party providers and can provide targeted and specific solutions to artificial intelligence and automation performance gaps.

For example, the constabulary was able to automate the analysis of a vast array of vehicle telematic data. This included when vehicles were in use and driver behaviours before and after specific incidents, such as a collision.

The constabulary was able to determine which behaviours contributed to safe or less-safe driving. And it could identify when this happened; for example, whether driving behaviour was affected by how long officers had been on duty or the time of day. This helps the constabulary understand driver behaviour. And it makes sure the constabulary is aware when driver well-being might be affected by long shifts so it can intervene.

Using automation means that the constabulary can carry out what was a lengthy manual process efficiently and effectively.

Main findings

In this section, we set out our main findings that relate to how good the constabulary is at leadership and force management.

Officers and staff generally understand performance expectations, but the constabulary could do more to effectively communicate with its workforce

We found that the constabulary consulted with its workforce about change.

For example, it uses focus groups to understand the impact that proposed changes might have. We saw the results of these focus groups referred to in constabulary meetings and documents. The constabulary also asks officers and staff of various ranks to consult on proposals, including in challenge panels in its outcome-based budgeting process.

In our workforce survey, 78.7 percent of respondents (550 of 699) agreed that, when making strategic decisions, Suffolk Constabulary's senior leaders considered the needs of the local community and 65.5 percent of respondents (458 of 699) agreed that senior leaders considered the needs of the police workforce.

This is positive, but we found that some officers and staff didn't think the constabulary effectively consulted with its workforce. For example, we were told that change consultation could appear more focused on updating officers and staff about decisions already made, rather than asking for views about alternatives.

We also found examples where changes were made that didn't effectively consider feedback given. For example, officers and staff told us they weren't consulted when the constabulary changed to 12-hour shifts for custody personnel, and concerns they might have had about these changes weren't identified or considered. The change in this shift pattern had a significant effect on how certain aspects of custody management, including debriefing between shifts, were carried out. More effective consultation with the workforce could have helped the constabulary better understand the negative effects of these changes.

The constabulary communicates its strategic priorities and performance expectations to its workforce. Officers and staff told us that they generally understood constabulary priorities and the performance framework. This means that officers and staff can understand how their duties contribute to constabulary objectives.

However, the constabulary could do more to improve this. We found that it wasn't effectively using professional development reviews to communicate and reinforce constabulary objectives. This means that career and performance conversations may not link effectively into strategic objectives.

The constabulary is using predictive analysis to inform its force management statement, and it is using this to improve operational planning and resource allocation

During our inspection, we found that the constabulary was using predictive analytics to inform its force management statement. By using historical crime data, call logs, demographic trends and environmental factors, the constabulary is creating predictive models to forecast future demand with greater accuracy. These models identify patterns such as peak times for incidents, high-risk locations and seasonal fluctuations in crime rates. This proactive approach has helped the constabulary to distribute officers, staff and resources more efficiently.

The constabulary uses predictive analytics to highlight emerging crime trends and also support its strategic planning. This allows it to develop targeted interventions and community policing initiatives. When integrated with real-time data systems, these insights can also inform the constabulary's dynamic deployment strategies. It can make sure police presence aligns with actual demand.

The constabulary can show effective use of demand data to inform workforce planning

We found that the constabulary was effectively using demand data to help allocate resources efficiently and effectively. It combines data insights from incident trends, response times and geographic crime patterns to make sure it deploys officers and staff where they are most needed. This approach helps to align HR data on officer and staff skills with specific operational needs. Whether in neighbourhood policing, investigation or emergency response, it makes sure officers and staff with the right skills are in the right places.

This includes the use of a [demand forecasting tool](#) to map incoming demand to its response and neighbourhood functions. This helps the constabulary to allocate its resources to meet demand.

In our 2023–25 PEEL inspection, we issued an area for improvement about how the constabulary records workforce skills. In this inspection, we found the constabulary was now better able to record skills such as officer safety, first aid, public order, firearms, custody and [professionalising investigations programme](#) accreditations.

The constabulary has also created a skills dashboard to compare the availability of skills with the duty management system. This allows it to quickly identify what skills it has available and how many officers are trained in the different skills areas to make sure this meets the minimum requirements it has identified. The constabulary has plans to continue developing this dashboard to incorporate a wider range of skills.

This has helped the constabulary understand how different functions can support one another and to better plan the deployment of the workforce. The constabulary is drafting a strategic workforce plan. Despite this still being in draft, we found workforce management meetings used data effectively to determine how and where to deploy resources.

The constabulary has effective systems to gather intelligence to make sure it can anticipate and respond to current and future demand

During our inspection, we found the constabulary had an effective [intelligence](#)-gathering function that made sure it could assign resources appropriately. This means that the constabulary can meet its strategic priorities and both current and future demand. The constabulary is using real-time data, predictive analytics and collaborative information-sharing networks. These help it to proactively identify emerging threats, allocate resources efficiently and prioritise operations based on risk and impact. This intelligence-led approach makes sure that the constabulary's decision-making is based on evidence and is responsive. This helps it to anticipate criminal trends and community needs.

We attended daily management meetings and found that these effectively recorded information about demand and performance and held attendees to account for the day-to-day operations of their operational areas. For example, we found these meetings identified opportunities to move resources in the constabulary [control room](#) to better meet surges in demand, identified officers who might need support following assaults on duty and made sure priority issues, such as significant crimes, incidents of [antisocial behaviour](#) and [missing people](#), were identified and considered for resourcing.

The constabulary has digital transformation plans that show how it uses technology to improve operational efficiency

We found that the constabulary's digital transformation plans were centred on using advanced technologies to enhance operational efficiency and service provision. By integrating tools such as artificial intelligence, cloud storage systems and data analytics, the constabulary is making workflows more efficient, improving decision-making and increasing productivity. This will enhance public safety and trust through more transparent and responsive policing.

In our 2023–25 PEEL inspection, we issued an area for improvement for the constabulary to make better use of technology to improve productivity. During this inspection, we found that the constabulary had significantly improved its approach to automation to aid productivity. As well as [promising practice](#) in its approach to developing automation in-house, the constabulary has invested in robotic process automation in various areas. It is using automated processes, or 'bots', to enhance productivity in HR and sickness recording. Additional bots are available, or in development, to support [firearms licensing](#) and other administrative functions. The constabulary aims to have further bots operational by the end of 2026. It has also piloted an automated process to produce [Domestic Violence Protection Notices](#). The constabulary told us this process reduced 3.5 hours of officers' time to two hours.

We found the constabulary continued to use technology to make data accessible to the workforce. We observed officers and staff using Microsoft Power BI dashboards to monitor outstanding suspects, [Code of Practice for Victims of Crime \('the Victims' Code'\)](#) compliance, incidents of antisocial behaviour and other important performance measures. We also spoke to supervisors who could more effectively monitor their team's work through dashboards.

Not all members of the workforce were positive about the constabulary's approach to technology and productivity. Frontline officers and staff told us that, due to the constabulary providing them with mobile phones rather than laptops, they couldn't do meaningful work remotely. For example, response officers said that typing lengthy victim and witness statements on a mobile phone was challenging. We were also told that the constabulary's systems required an entry before a crime report could be filed, which could result in a rushed effort from the officer. Officers also felt that phones were generally unsuited to more complex administrative tasks. This meant they returned to the station to use desktop computers. This isn't an efficient use of officers' time.

The constabulary had consulted with its workforce before deciding to supply mobile phones rather than laptops, but many officers and staff we spoke to were unhappy with the final result.

Leaders can show the benefits of collaborations and partnership working

The constabulary has a long-standing collaboration with Norfolk Constabulary, operating several productive functions together. For example, they work in partnership to improve the standards of investigations.

Both constabularies monitor the value these functions provide. We observed governance meetings where Norfolk Constabulary had shown more progress across several performance measures. As a result, the chair commissioned further analysis to evaluate the return on investment and determine whether Suffolk Constabulary was receiving appropriate benefits from the collaboration.

This is positive, but the constabulary could do more to understand how effective the collaboration is. It doesn't carry out a full analysis of all collaborative functions and products, and there is no annual review process. Greater scrutiny of benefits and performance would help the constabulary to better understand if collaborations are achieving their aims and how they might improve.

The constabulary also makes positive use of partnership data to enhance its understanding of demand. We observed local meetings that used partnership data. The constabulary, along with other local organisations, also shares data with the Suffolk Office of Data and Analytics. This independent body then provides combined data, analytics and reviews.

The constabulary demonstrated the use of this in the evaluation of [Right Care, Right Person](#). The Suffolk Office of Data and Analytics produced a report in December 2025 which demonstrated:

- a decrease in welfare and mental health calls to the police; and
- changes in the number of:
- ambulances dispatched for psychiatric reasons;
- 111 calls;
- mental health setting referrals;
- A&E attendances; and
- referrals to adult and [child](#) support services.

This gave a compelling insight into the performance of the programme and helped the constabulary to consider its impact.

The constabulary can show how it aligns finances to its priorities and how it decides if its expenditure offers value for money

We found the constabulary's finances and priorities were aligned. It clearly links its budget allocations to strategic objectives and operational needs. This involves transparent financial planning that shows how it uses resources in important areas such as investigations, neighbourhood policing and technological innovation. The constabulary uses regular performance reviews and audits to help assess whether its spending leads to measurable outcomes and makes sure it is using public funds efficiently. The constabulary uses [benchmarking](#) and cost-benefit analyses, and adopts best practices in procurement and resource management to further support value for money. By maintaining this alignment and accountability, the constabulary can create public confidence in its financial leadership and operational effectiveness.

The constabulary has a detailed and comprehensive medium-term financial plan. Its reserves are sufficient and borrowing is sensible. The constabulary's financial plans are affordable and sustainable and while it needs to make further savings year-on-year, the continued focus on productivity supports the constabulary's assertions that these savings are achievable. For this reason, we found that the constabulary understood its spending and focused on value for money. It also considers income generation and, at the time of our inspection, had an underspend that could support internal borrowing or further income generation.

In the year ending 31 March 2025, the constabulary received around £193 million in total funding. As with other forces in England and Wales, this is a combination of local revenue generated from the [police precept](#) and a core grant from central government. The precept income to the constabulary that year was around £74 million. This is equivalent to around £93,803 per 1,000 population, which is within the typical range forces in England and Wales receive from the precept.

For the year ending 31 March 2026, the constabulary received an increase of £14 in the police precept per band D property, which was forecast to provide an extra £1.1 million of funding.

Attracting, developing and retaining the workforce and creating a diverse and inclusive workplace

Adequate

Suffolk Constabulary is adequate at attracting, developing and retaining its workforce and creating a diverse and inclusive workplace.

Area for improvement

The constabulary needs to make sure its professional development review process is effective

In the year ending 31 March 2025, only 72.6 percent of the constabulary's workforce had a performance development review (PDR). And in our workforce survey, only 62.4 percent of respondents who had a PDR in the past 12 months (309 of 495) agreed that PDRs were valuable for their development.

During our inspection, [officers](#) and [staff](#) told us that the PDR process supported promotion opportunities, but otherwise they didn't see it as beneficial to their development. Officers and staff don't always receive professional discussions with supervisors, and the process isn't effectively used to identify talent or record development ambitions.

The constabulary has recognition programmes in place and senior officers regularly recognise good work. The constabulary also has plans to introduce a talent management process into its PDR system. While these are positive steps, the constabulary needs to improve the rate of PDR completion, how it recognises good work and how supervisors record development discussions. It should make sure ambitions are recorded and used to guide development. Increasing the use and effectiveness of the PDR system will make it more valuable to officers, staff and the constabulary.

Main findings

In this section, we set out our main findings that relate to how good the constabulary is at attracting, developing and retaining its workforce and creating a diverse and inclusive workplace.

The constabulary provides officers and staff with the right training to carry out specialist work

Investigators told us that they felt well trained to carry out their roles. As at 31 March 2026, the constabulary had 226 full-time-equivalent [professionalising investigations programme \(PIP\) 2](#) investigators in post compared to 303 who should be in post. This means 74.6 percent of PIP 2 investigator posts were filled. The constabulary is working to address the shortfall and, as at 31 March 2026, there were 93 full-time-equivalent PIP 2 trainees.

In its governance meetings, the constabulary monitors the number of PIP 2 trainees it has. However, it needs to develop a comprehensive investigator resilience action plan to show understanding of its current and future investigative demand.

The constabulary has introduced the [College of Policing's neighbourhood policing programme](#). Suffolk Constabulary collaborates with Norfolk Constabulary and their data is combined on the [College of Policing](#) dashboard. This shows that, as at 28 April 2026, 396 individuals had completed the first part of the programme. This is higher than the 314 neighbourhood officers and police community support officers eligible and required to complete the training in both constabularies. This is due to factors such as training additional roles or officers moving to other roles and functions.

The constabulary told us that it monitored its compliance with the College of Policing's neighbourhood policing programme. It told us that, as at 27 February 2026, 93.9 percent (169 of 180) of officers and staff eligible and required had completed the first part of the programme.

The constabulary provides effective training and support for volunteers in specialist roles. We heard that volunteer horse riders received training in how motorists behave on roads. And volunteers in garages have driving assessments, which frees up police officer time by moving police vehicles to locations where they are needed. Special constables have opportunities to develop specialist skills in public order, and speed gun and roads policing.

The constabulary has a clear understanding of the well-being challenges of its workforce

The constabulary has a comprehensive well-being plan, which is clearly aligned with the five main areas of the '[National Police Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2024–26](#)'. It communicates with its workforce and acts on information and feedback to improve its well-being.

Twice a year, the constabulary runs its staff survey called The People Opinion Survey. This helps the constabulary identify well-being challenges and how effectively leadership communicates with the workforce. Senior leaders are expected to develop action plans to address any concerning themes identified from the survey. This is an effective tool to gather feedback from officers and staff.

In our workforce survey, 73.1 percent of respondents (511 of 699) said that the constabulary took their well-being into account when setting their working pattern, and 80.5 percent of respondents (563 of 699) said that their line manager actively checked that their workload was manageable. Police officers and staff we spoke to during our inspection also said that they had manageable workloads and a good work-life balance.

The constabulary should continue to improve its occupational health provision, especially for those in high-risk roles

The constabulary provides an annual psychological assessment questionnaire to some officers working in high-risk roles. Completing the questionnaire isn't mandatory and the constabulary couldn't tell us if completion rates were monitored.

Better communication around the assessment, its purpose and why only certain departments receive the offer would help the workforce to understand why some teams aren't asked to complete it.

During [our 2023–25 PEEL inspection](#), we identified an [area for improvement](#) that the constabulary should quickly implement the findings of an internal [occupational health](#) review. The constabulary has since made changes to its occupational health provision and policies. It has moved away from contractual staffing and directly hired additional nurses and medical staff. This provides more capacity and control of the service. In July 2025, the constabulary hired a psychotherapist who provides counselling to officers and staff exposed to trauma. The constabulary told us that by hiring occupational health staff directly and increasing the number of staff in the team, it could provide more appointments. We have closed the area for improvement. However, despite this, the constabulary still experiences delays with its occupational health appointments. It told us that between 1 October and 31 December 2025, the wait time averaged 44 days, and between 1 January and 31 March 2026, the wait time averaged 22 days. The constabulary should continue to work on reducing this.

The constabulary has processes in place to encourage officers and staff to stay in its workforce

The constabulary checks on the satisfaction of its workforce through surveys and collects workforce data. It uses [stay interviews](#) to identify concerns and discuss how it can encourage people to stay in its workforce. It has an effective and transparent exit interview process, which is independent of the line management chain. In our workforce survey, 72.9 percent of respondents (433 of 594) said that they wanted to stay in Suffolk Constabulary for at least the next three years, and 80.7 percent of respondents (564 of 699) agreed that they would recommend Suffolk Constabulary as a great place to work.

The constabulary identifies the challenges raised by those from [under-represented groups](#). Networks for officers and staff and other associations have clear communication channels with senior leaders and can raise concerns. It offers supportive measures and incentives to overcome these issues, such as reverse mentoring where more junior members of the workforce mentor senior leaders. The constabulary also offers support such as reasonable adjustments to the working environment, menopause support and mediation.

The constabulary is effectively gathering reasons for people leaving the workforce as part of the [National Police Chiefs' Council](#) national leavers framework, which is designed to improve the data collection on reasons for officers leaving police forces in England and Wales.

The constabulary takes positive action to represent the community it serves

The constabulary has a [positive action](#) strategy, which sets out its intention to build a workplace where people from all backgrounds feel valued, supported and able to succeed.

In the year ending 31 March 2025, 2.7 percent of the constabulary's workforce were from an ethnic minority background compared to 6.9 percent of the local population of Suffolk. The constabulary is aware of these statistics and has processes in place to attract diverse candidates for recruitment. The constabulary has evaluated its recruitment and identified that it attracts a more diverse candidate pool when recruiting from the [Police Now](#) graduate programme. The constabulary told us it had committed to recruiting ten new candidates through this route.

The constabulary works with the local community, partner agencies, schools and colleges to spread awareness of police recruitment. It takes positive action to support applicants from minority communities with bespoke workshops and webinars. The constabulary has an effective governance board process to monitor its progress.

Using powers fairly, appropriately and with justification

Requires improvement

Suffolk Constabulary requires improvement at using its powers fairly, appropriately and with justification.

Areas for improvement

The constabulary needs to improve how it records and governs its use of force

In the year ending 31 March 2025, the constabulary recorded 4,784 use of force incidents. This is a decrease of 17.9 percent compared to the previous year.

[Officers](#) are expected to record every use of force to make sure it is transparent and accountable. This includes recording low-level use of force such as handcuffing a compliant person and higher levels of force such as the use of a baton or [conducted energy device](#) (Taser). Where more than one officer uses force on an individual, each officer must submit their own use of force report.

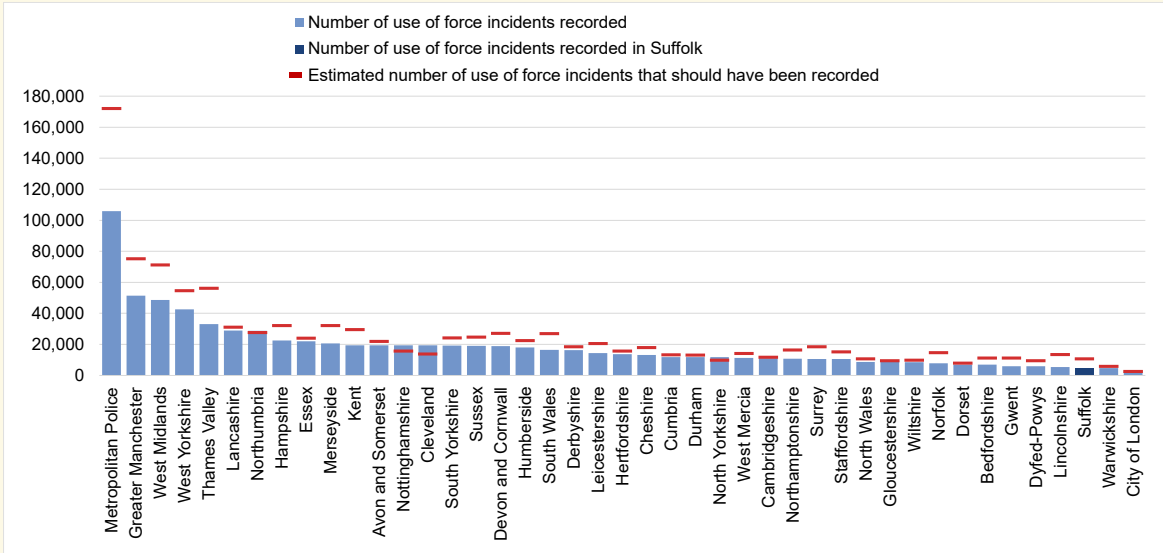
To determine if the constabulary was recording use of force appropriately, we reviewed two different measures. We firstly examined the number of arrests and compared this to the number of recorded use of force reports. We expect the number of use of force reports to be at least as high as the number of arrests. Most arrests involve the use of handcuffs and multiple officers may have used force during the arrest. In the year ending 31 March 2025, the constabulary carried out 7,926 arrests and recorded 4,784 use of force reports. This means it under-recorded its use of force by at least 3,142 incidents.

We then reviewed the overall expected number of use of force records compared to the actual recorded number. The expected number is estimated based on the average number of uses of force associated with each recorded arrest.

We estimate that, in the year ending 31 March 2025, the constabulary should have recorded 10,693 use of force incidents. It actually recorded 4,784 incidents. This means it likely under-recorded its use of force by 5,909 incidents. This shows a deterioration in recording use of force compared to the previous year when, based on this estimation, it didn't record 4,266 use of force incidents.

During our inspection, officers told us they weren't always recording their use of force and that the constabulary's recording system was difficult to use. Before our inspection, the constabulary had identified that its recording process was too slow and it was already taking steps to improve this. We found that the constabulary had less understanding of its performance for use of force than it did for other powers such as [stop and search](#). This is a barrier to effective governance.

Figure 1: Number of use of force incidents that forces in England and Wales recorded and the estimated number that should have been recorded in the year ending 31 March 2025



Source: [Police use of force open data tables](#) and [arrests open data tables](#) from the Home Office

Chart description: A combination chart showing the number of use of force incidents that all forces in England and Wales recorded (represented by columns) and the estimated number of use of force incidents that should have been recorded (represented by red target lines) in the year ending 31 March 2025. Suffolk Constabulary recorded 4,784 use of force incidents. This was lower than the estimated 10,693 use of force incidents it should have recorded.

[The accessible data table for figure 1 is available on our website.](#)

Note: To understand how well forces record their use of force, we compare the number of incidents they recorded with the estimated number they should have recorded. To estimate the number of use of force incidents forces should have recorded, we use the number of recorded arrests and the number of recorded use of force incidents linked to an arrest.

The constabulary needs to safeguard children who are subject to use of force or stop and search

The constabulary told us that all [children](#) subject to a use of force or a stop and search power should have a [safeguarding](#) referral submitted to their [multi-agency safeguarding hub](#) for review.

During our inspection, we found that [officers](#) and [staff](#) had good knowledge and understanding of these processes. However, the constabulary doesn't monitor compliance effectively. The constabulary told us that it had started manually reviewing stop and search records and found that, in January 2026, 56 percent of relevant records had a safeguarding referral completed. In February 2026, only 46 percent of safeguarding referrals were completed. At the time of our inspection, the constabulary had no method in place to monitor compliance with use of force records.

The use of a police power on a child could be a result of circumstances that indicate a child needs safeguarding, such as exploitation. The use of a police power can be traumatic and have a negative impact on a child requiring ongoing support. The constabulary recognises this. But it needs to improve its low compliance levels, which are likely causing it to miss opportunities to safeguard children.

The constabulary needs to expand and refresh its external scrutiny panel

The constabulary works in partnership with Ipswich and Suffolk Council for Racial Equality to review and provide external scrutiny into the constabulary's use of [stop and search](#) and use of force powers. We found this process was effective at holding the constabulary to account and providing valuable feedback.

The external process feeds into an internal review board that allows [officers](#) and [staff](#) to consider the findings and discuss how they can improve their use of powers. During our inspection, officers who had been involved in these processes told us they found them beneficial and informative.

Despite the positive framework for scrutiny being in place, the external process isn't observing enough incidents. The constabulary told us that in the year ending 31 March 2026, the external panel had reviewed footage from 8 stop and search records and 11 use of force records. This is too few for the constabulary to identify wider themes for learning and development. The external panel relies on a small number of vetted individuals to review [body-worn video](#) and doesn't have a process to rotate the people on the panel, which means that different viewpoints aren't discussed.

At the time of our inspection, the constabulary was exploring options to increase the amount of external scrutiny it receives. We will continue to monitor how it implements this.

Main findings

In this section, we set out our main findings that relate to how good the constabulary is at using its powers fairly, appropriately and with justification.

The constabulary needs to make sure it collects accurate data to allow it to understand how fairly stop and search and use of force is being used

Good-quality data on self-defined ethnicity (how individuals define their ethnicity) allows the constabulary to understand the rate at which it uses stop and search on people from ethnic minority backgrounds in the local resident population.

As part of our review of stop and search, we asked the constabulary to provide 12 months of stop and search data from 1 January to 31 December 2025. We found that self-defined ethnicity information was unknown (not recorded, not stated or refused) for 26.3 percent of stop and search records. In the year ending 31 March 2025, self-defined ethnicity was unknown for 23.0 percent of stop and searches that the constabulary recorded. This is higher than the England and Wales average of 18.0 percent for that same year ending period.

In our review, we found that in only 2 of 20 stop and search encounters filmed on body-worn video, officers asked for self-defined ethnicity. Officers should make sure they ask for this data to allow the constabulary to more accurately identify any [disproportionate](#) use of the power.

The constabulary told us that in the year ending 31 March 2026, 28.0 percent of use of force records had ethnicity listed as 'not stated'. It said it believed this was because officers weren't always asking for the information. The constabulary is addressing this with better workforce communications and closer monitoring of compliance.

When officers ask for this data, the constabulary can better understand the demographics of those it stops and searches and those who it uses force on. With analysis, this could help the constabulary more accurately identify any disproportionate use of the powers.

The constabulary understands how it is using stop and search but needs to do more to understand how it uses force and to reduce disproportionality

In the year ending 31 March 2025, people from a Black ethnic minority background were 5.0 times more likely than White people to be the subject of a stop and search by the constabulary. In our review of stop and search records of people from an ethnic minority background, we found that 11 of 11 had reasonable grounds.

The constabulary carries out analysis of its disproportionate use of stop and search powers to help it understand why this exists. For example, the constabulary has made use of partner data to understand how often its disproportionate use of search powers differs for Suffolk residents and those travelling into the county from other communities.

In the year ending 31 March 2025, people from a Black ethnic minority background were 4.9 times more likely than White people to be subject to use of force. This suggests that force is used disproportionately on people from ethnic minority backgrounds. The constabulary's use of data and monitoring for use of force powers is less well developed than its processes for stop and search. The constabulary doesn't carry out enough analysis into its disproportionate use of force to help it understand why it exists. It needs to better understand and explain its disproportionate use of force and take action to reduce it.

The disproportionate use of both stop and search and use of force has increased compared to the year ending 31 March 2024. The constabulary needs to continue working to understand and reduce this.

Officers understand how to use stop and search powers fairly and appropriately

During our inspection, we reviewed a sample of 52 stop and search records from 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025. Based on this sample, we estimate that 100 percent (+/- 0.0 percentage points) of stop and searches the constabulary carried out during this period had reasonable grounds recorded.

This is a statistically significant improvement compared to the findings from our previous review of records from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022. In that review, we found that 95.2 percent (+/- 2.8 percentage points) of stop and searches had reasonable grounds recorded.

The constabulary makes use of a model called See, Know, Suspect to formulate search grounds. This helps officers break down their understanding of a situation and provides a framework for them to consider the information they have available. Officers told us that they felt this approach had helped them to think more widely about and record what was contributing to establishing reasonable grounds for a stop and search. As a result, we found officers were more confident in when to use their powers.

The constabulary uses stop and search sufficiently

In the year ending 31 March 2025, the constabulary carried out 2,476 stop and searches of people. This equals 3.1 stop and searches per 1,000 population. This is within the typical range for forces in England and Wales.

The number of stop and searches the constabulary carried out decreased by 7.5 percent compared to the year ending 31 March 2024. This isn't in line with the overall picture for forces in England and Wales in which, on average, the number of stop and searches decreased by 1.3 percent.

In the year ending 31 March 2025, the constabulary had an overall [find rate](#) of 33.5 percent from stop and search encounters. This was made up of 29.4 percent [linked finds](#) and 4.1 percent not linked finds.

Linked finds are when one or more items, which the officer suspected a person had in their possession, are found and were the reason for the search. Not linked finds are when items are found that a person may have been in unlawful possession of but weren't the reason for the search.

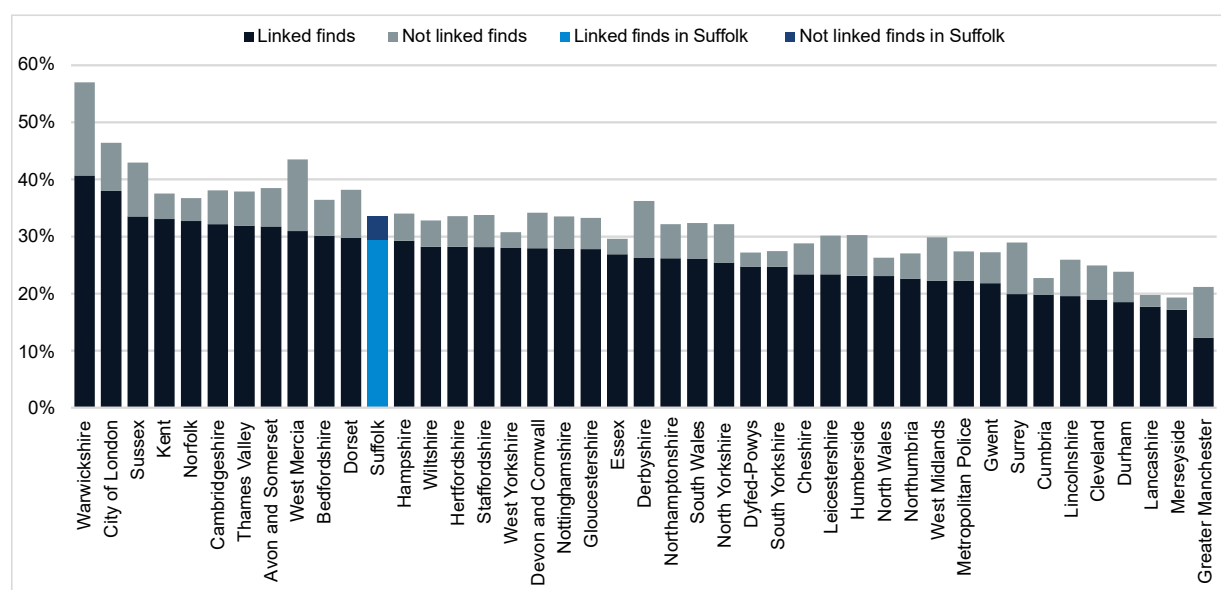
The constabulary's linked find rate was within the typical range for forces in England and Wales. The linked find rate for the constabulary decreased by 0.5 percentage points compared to the year ending 31 March 2024.

We examined:

- the number of searches the constabulary carried out;
- the number of searches that had reasonable grounds; and
- the percentage of linked finds.

The results of this review show that the constabulary is using its stop and search powers well.

Figure 2: Percentage of stop and search encounters resulting in linked and not linked finds for forces in England and Wales in the year ending 31 March 2025



Source: [Stop and search open data tables](#) from the Home Office

Chart description: A stacked column chart showing the percentage of [stop and search](#) encounters where the item found was and wasn't linked to the reason for the search for all forces in England and Wales in the year ending 31 March 2025. In Suffolk Constabulary, 29.4 percent of stop and search encounters resulted in a [linked find](#) and 4.1 percent in a not linked find.

[The accessible data table for figure 2 is available on our website.](#)

Note: In the calculation, we have excluded records where it isn't known whether the item found was linked to the reason for the search. We have also excluded records where it isn't known whether the [officer](#) found any items. If the percentage of linked or not linked finds isn't included in the chart for some forces, it is because they haven't supplied it.

The constabulary's quality assurance of use of force reports is leading to organisational learning

The constabulary's training department audits use of force encounters. These cases are randomly selected and trainers review the completion of use of force forms. They then review the accompanying body-worn video assessing whether the force used was proportionate and in line with training standards. They record the results of these reviews and add a pass or fail to each record. Failures are managed through feedback and reflective practice and referrals to the [professional standards department](#).

The constabulary told us that in the year ending 31 March 2026 it completed 767 reviews. We found that learning from these reviews was included in training scenarios.

Preventing and deterring crime and antisocial behaviour, and reducing vulnerability

Good

Suffolk Constabulary is good at preventing and deterring crime and [antisocial behaviour](#), and reducing [vulnerability](#).

Main findings

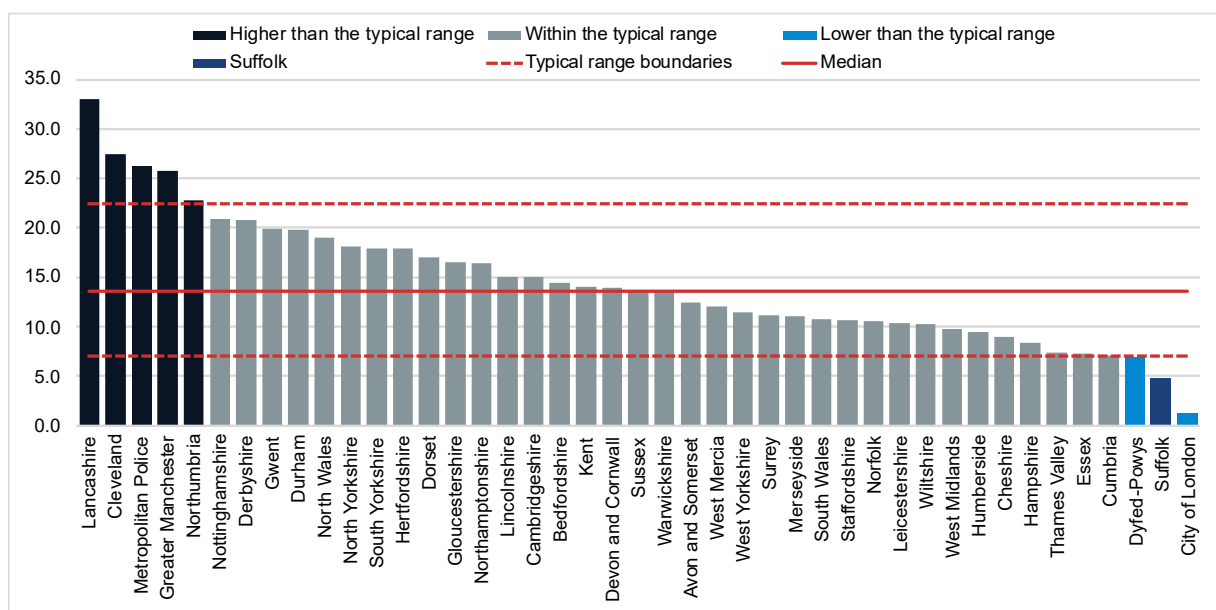
In this section, we set out our main findings that relate to how good the constabulary is at preventing and deterring crime and antisocial behaviour, and reducing vulnerability.

The constabulary understands the causes of antisocial behaviour and vulnerability in its communities

During our inspection, we found the constabulary had a clear understanding of antisocial behaviour and related vulnerability in its communities. The constabulary has taken steps to understand trends in its antisocial behaviour reporting and the underlying causes. We found that community teams had local information-sharing arrangements in place with partner agencies such as health and social care and the NHS in West Suffolk. But the constabulary could make use of wider partnership data with the support of the Suffolk Office of Data and Analytics to better understand community vulnerabilities.

The constabulary has one of the lowest levels of antisocial behaviour incidents in England and Wales. In the year ending 31 March 2025, it recorded 4.8 antisocial behaviour incidents per 1,000 population. This is lower than the typical range for forces in England and Wales.

Figure 3: Number of antisocial behaviour incidents per 1,000 population that forces in England and Wales recorded in the year ending 31 March 2025



Source: [Police-recorded antisocial behaviour incidents data](#) and [population estimates for England and Wales](#) from the Office for National Statistics

Chart description: Column chart showing the number of [antisocial behaviour](#) incidents per 1,000 population that all forces in England and Wales recorded in the year ending 31 March 2025. Suffolk Constabulary recorded 4.8 antisocial behaviour incidents per 1,000 population, which was below the typical range for forces in England and Wales. The typical range, represented by dashed red lines on the chart, is between 7.0 and 22.4 antisocial behaviour incidents per 1,000 population. The median value of 13.6 per 1,000 population is presented as a solid red line.

[The accessible data table for figure 3 is available on our website.](#)

The constabulary understands the reasons for differences between the number of antisocial behaviour incidents per 1,000 population and those recorded in other forces. This will help it develop strategies to tackle the causes of the antisocial behaviour, allocate resources where they are most needed and keep its communities safe.

However, the constabulary doesn't record enough crimes that have occurred when [victims](#) report [antisocial behaviour personal](#). In our [quality service review](#), we found that in the cases we examined, it recorded 16 of 25 antisocial behaviour personal crimes correctly. The constabulary needs to improve how it identifies and records [harassment](#) crimes. From the same cases, we found seven harassment crimes hadn't been recorded at all. At the time of our inspection, the constabulary told us it had introduced additional steps to review incoming reports of antisocial behaviour to improve the response and its recording of crimes.

The constabulary is using preventative and protective orders effectively to help it tackle antisocial behaviour

During our inspection, we found that [neighbourhood policing teams](#) worked closely with local authority antisocial behaviour teams, housing providers and other partner agencies, such as the NHS and local libraries, to help address the underlying causes of antisocial behaviour. This is supported by an effective antisocial behaviour group, which is attended by various partners and the constabulary's county partnership and prevention hub.

In our quality service review, we examined 19 antisocial behaviour incidents and any crimes recorded from them. We found that in 16 of these records, the constabulary used or considered antisocial behaviour legislation to help it tackle the root causes of antisocial behaviour.

During our inspection, the [officers](#) we spoke to told us they were confident in applying for and using tools such as [Criminal Behaviour Orders](#) and civil injunctions, particularly in more complex or persistent antisocial behaviour cases.

We found that officers were using antisocial behaviour legislation effectively to prevent community problems from escalating. For example, a neighbourhood team told us that it had worked with local authority partners to secure a [Public Spaces Protection Order](#) to address vehicle-based antisocial behaviour in local car parks. In the year ending 30 September 2025, the constabulary issued 265 preventative and protective orders, which equals 0.3 orders per 1,000 population. This is within the typical range for forces in England and Wales.

This indicates that officers understand antisocial behaviour legislation and the range of powers available to them. They can use these powers to help them tackle the underlying causes of antisocial behaviour more effectively. For example, after the constabulary identified gang-based violence was associated with antisocial behaviour in the Ipswich area, it created Operation Hull to disrupt antisocial behaviour and criminality through enforcement. And the constabulary told us it issued approximately 30 Criminal Behaviour Orders to those involved, which has resulted in a decrease in incidents being reported.

The constabulary doesn't consistently record problem-solving

The constabulary manages problem-solving from its county partnership and prevention hub. The constabulary uses two methods to record and address problem solving: the [OSARA model](#) and a less intensive model known locally as a prevention activity log.

In our quality service review, we found inconsistencies in how problem-solving plans were managed. We found that sufficient information was included in the scanning phase of OSARA in ten out of ten plans reviewed. However, there was only evidence of partnership information being used in one of ten plans and community information being considered in two of ten plans reviewed.

Officers we spoke to could demonstrate how they were carrying out problem-solving in their local communities, but many weren't recording this on local systems. They weren't consistently recording or updating the prevention activity logs and there was confusion around which model to use.

It is important that forces record problem-solving so they can identify recurring issues in the community, learn from the effectiveness of their interventions to inform future practices and to improve standards.

The constabulary educates children about the dangers of knife crime

The constabulary uses virtual-reality headsets in schools to educate [children](#) about knife crime. The sessions, known as virtual decision workshops, place children in virtual environments where they follow an educational storyline about knife crime. They can interact with other characters and make decisions. There is then a guided discussion to inform children about the dangers of carrying knives and related topics such as social media, influencing others and police search powers.

The constabulary told us that since it began using the equipment, it had held 20 virtual decision knife workshops, involving at least 220 children aged between 10 and 18 years old. The scheme hasn't been formally evaluated, but the constabulary told us that initial feedback had been positive, with children and partner agencies describing the sessions as more engaging than a typical classroom presentation.

The constabulary has invested in the capacity and capability of its neighbourhood policing teams

In the year ending 31 March 2025, 7.4 percent of the constabulary's officers were in dedicated neighbourhood policing roles. This is within the typical range for forces in England and Wales.

The constabulary has invested resources in its neighbourhood policing teams to provide them with the capacity needed to provide a regular and visible presence in its local communities. It has invested in resources to help neighbourhood policing teams to focus on visible patrols, preventative activity, problem-solving and addressing local priorities. During our inspection, neighbourhood policing teams told us they had enough officers and [staff](#) to work effectively in their communities and with partner agencies to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour.

The constabulary has also taken steps to improve the capability of its neighbourhood officers and staff through training and development of essential skills and the knowledge needed to carry out their roles effectively. This includes building confidence in community liaison, working with partners, problem-solving and tackling antisocial behaviour. It has a consistent and structured approach to training and developing its neighbourhood teams.

The constabulary needs to develop how it monitors when neighbourhood teams are visible in their communities

Neighbourhood police officers are responsible for building relationships with communities, solving problems and working with partners to prevent crime and antisocial behaviour. This requires local officers to be visible and have meaningful communication with those communities. However, they can be diverted from these duties to support other areas of policing, which is referred to as [abstraction](#). If this happens regularly and isn't monitored by the constabulary, it can affect the ability of neighbourhood officers to carry out their main roles in their communities.

In our workforce survey, 26.5 percent of respondents involved in neighbourhood policing (35 of 147) said that they were abstracted from their main neighbourhood policing duties on a monthly or more frequent basis. However, during our inspection, officers told us this didn't happen regularly or affect their ability to carry out core duties such as patrols, getting local communities involved and preventative work.

The constabulary has an abstraction policy setting expectations for neighbourhood teams. However, it hasn't defined clear standards for how much time officers should spend on visible patrol or getting communities involved, or how this should be measured. Without defining an acceptable level and developing processes to measure performance against it, the constabulary can't assure itself that its neighbourhood officers are spending sufficient time addressing local issues in their communities.

The constabulary communicates well with its diverse communities to better understand their needs and help set its local priorities

During our inspection, we found that neighbourhood policing teams were regularly communicating with local people to understand their concerns and help them feel safe. We also found that neighbourhood policing teams had made efforts to reach communities that traditionally have less contact with the police or may have lower levels of trust and confidence. Some teams were tailoring their communication to include [under-represented communities](#). For example, a neighbourhood team described planning its community events so it could gather feedback from the older people in the local area.

We also found examples of two-way communication methods with the public, such as local meetings and online platforms. In October 2025, the constabulary introduced Suffolk Connected to gather the views of the community and provide updates about local priorities. At the time of our inspection, over 5,000 residents had signed up for the platform. We were told that the constabulary had used this system to good effect, particularly to maintain contact with rural communities.

Responding to the public

Adequate

Suffolk Constabulary is adequate at responding to the public.

Area for improvement

The constabulary needs to effectively supervise all outstanding sources of demand

During our inspection, we found that the constabulary prioritised outstanding calls for service in line with its graded response policy. In this policy, C grade calls are calls that require attendance but not within 24 hours. Despite being a high source of demand, there is no service level agreement defining how quickly the constabulary should deploy to C grade calls.

We found local area teams managed this category of call. They told us they didn't always have the capacity or time to effectively supervise the calls. We found an example of a [domestic abuse](#) allegation not resourced for six days and other calls for service waiting over two weeks for deployment without effective supervision or oversight. We also found some supervisors didn't understand if a reassessment of risk was needed for calls with delayed deployment. Outstanding sources of demand may face changing or escalating risk, particularly when there are delays in deployment. Effective supervision is required to monitor any changing circumstances and to effectively prioritise deployment and to prevent harm to the public.

The constabulary has reacted quickly to this feedback and has introduced Operation Resolute to provide clearer expectations for managing C grade calls. We will continue to monitor how effective this process is when it is fully established.

Main findings

In this section, we set out our main findings that relate to how good the constabulary is at responding to the public.

The constabulary identifies repeat and vulnerable victims at initial point of contact

Effectively identifying repeat [victims](#) and [vulnerability](#) means individual circumstances can be considered when the constabulary decides how to respond.

It is vital that the constabulary has effective structured [risk assessments](#) at the initial point of contact to identify risk, repeat victims and vulnerability. As part of our [quality service review](#), we found that call handlers used a structured triage approach to assess risk in 40 of 42 cases. And the initial prioritisation of the call was appropriate in 49 of 51 cases.

During our inspection, we found that the constabulary used data effectively to identify sources of repeat demand and vulnerability. We found that in 19 of the 19 cases we examined, information regarding repeat victims was used effectively. There were checks for vulnerable victims and other vulnerable people in all 42 cases and information regarding vulnerability was used effectively in 23 of 24 relevant cases.

In our workforce survey, 42 respondents reported being involved in contact management and, of these, 26 reported that they had received [threat, harm, risk, investigation, vulnerability and engagement \(THRIVE\)](#) training. Of those who received the training, almost all agreed that it helped them understand how to identify repeat callers and vulnerability at first point of contact.

The constabulary uses information about sources of repeat demand and vulnerability in local and constabulary-wide tasking processes to inform enforcement and [safeguarding](#) activity where appropriate.

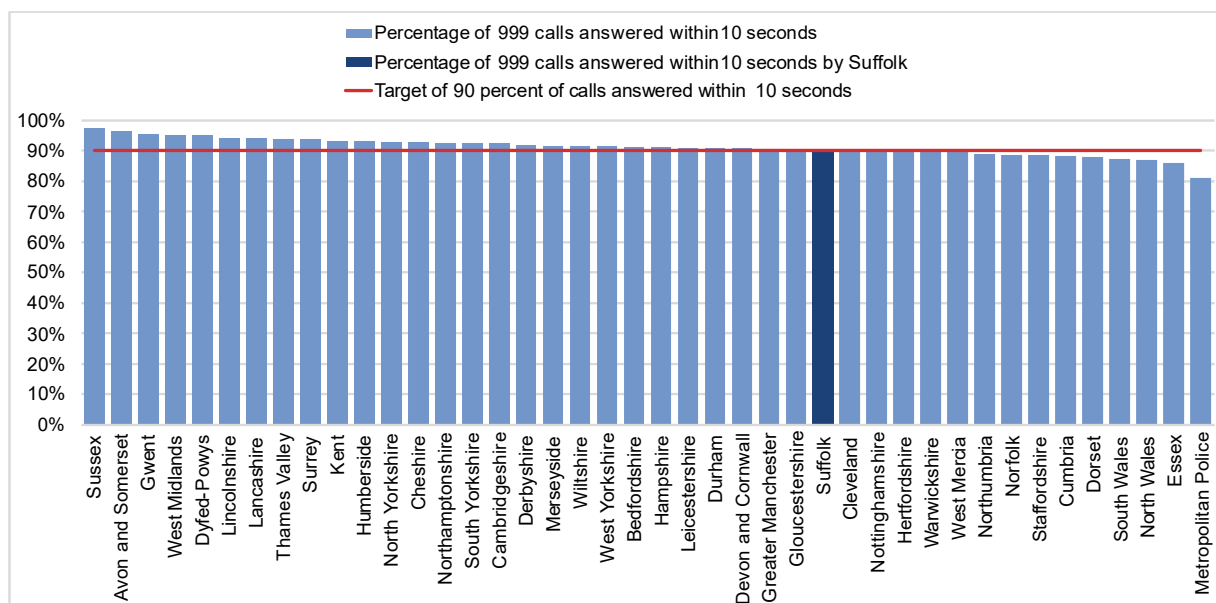
The constabulary answers emergency calls quickly enough

In [our 2023–25 PEEL inspection](#), we issued a [cause of concern](#) about the time the constabulary was taking to answer emergency and non-emergency calls. We reported that in the year ending 31 March 2023, the constabulary answered only 76.6 percent of 999 calls within 10 seconds.

In this inspection, we found the constabulary had improved how quickly it answered emergency calls.

In the year ending 31 March 2026, the constabulary received 142 emergency 999 calls per 1,000 population. This was within the typical range for forces in England and Wales. It answered 89.8 percent of the 999 calls it received within 10 seconds. This was just below the standard expected of forces in England and Wales of answering 90.0 percent of 999 calls within 10 seconds. This suggests that the constabulary puts the victim at the centre of its decision-making, which provides the foundations for an effective response.

Figure 4: Percentage of 999 calls that forces in England and Wales answered within 10 seconds in the year ending 31 March 2026



Source: 999 call answering times from BT

Chart description: Column chart showing the percentage of 999 calls that all forces in England and Wales answered within 10 seconds in the year ending 31 March 2026. Suffolk Constabulary answered 89.8 percent of the 999 calls it received within 10 seconds. This is below the expected standard of 90 percent for forces in England and Wales, which is marked with a solid red line on the chart. Fifteen forces were below the expected standard.

[The accessible data table for figure 4 is available on our website.](#)

Note: Call answering time is the time taken for a call to be transferred from BT to a constabulary and then answered by that constabulary.

The constabulary needs to reduce the number of non-emergency calls that callers abandon because they aren't answered

In the year ending 30 September 2025, the constabulary received 267 non-emergency [101](#) calls per 1,000 population. This was within the typical range for forces in England and Wales. The constabulary told us that in the year ending 30 April 2026, 11.6 percent of calls to its non-emergency 101 facility were abandoned. While there is no formal national standard for how non-emergency performance is measured, the constabulary's performance isn't at an acceptable level. But it is a significant improvement since our 2023–25 PEEL inspection, when we found 36.9 percent of calls were abandoned.

The constabulary attends calls for service within the agreed timescales

The constabulary has a graded response policy with published targets for incident attendance times, including:

- grade A urban target: 15 minutes
- grade A rural target: 20 minutes
- grade B1 target: 60 minutes
- grade B2 target: 24 hours.

In our [quality service review](#), we found that in 30 of the 32 cases we examined, the time to respond to the incident was within the required attendance time. This was regardless of whether the incident was downgraded or not. Sometimes incidents are regraded because of updated information or reassessed risk, which may increase the response time. We also found in our quality service review that 32 of 36 cases had effective supervision in response deployment.

Leaders monitor attendance closely at daily management meetings at local and constabulary level, and move resources to meet emergency demand. This means callers most in need of emergency support receive a prompt service.

The constabulary uses a system that monitors outstanding incident times. It provides a visual display to show how long an incident has been outstanding and uses a colour system to highlight if an incident is approaching the end of its service level agreement deployment timeframe. This system, known locally as Orcon, is a useful tool to identify delays that may need management intervention and helps to manage outstanding demand.

The constabulary has made improvements providing appropriate advice on safeguarding, evidence preservation and crime prevention

In our quality service review, we found call handlers gave appropriate advice on preserving evidence in 23 out of 24 cases, on crime prevention in all 20 relevant cases and on safeguarding in all 21 relevant cases.

In our workforce survey, 22 of 26 respondents were confident in giving crime prevention advice, while 23 of 26 respondents were confident in giving scene preservation advice. And 23 of 26 respondents were confident in advising on safeguarding.

We found that call handlers received training from specialist and forensic investigators, which has led to a high level of confidence in providing appropriate advice to the public.

The constabulary performed well in this area during our 2023–25 PEEL inspection and has continued to make improvements.

The constabulary needs to use a structured risk assessment to manage delayed attendance

The constabulary has effective processes in place to initially risk assess incidents using the THRIVE model. But we found there was no expectation that incidents would be subject to additional risk assessments if attendance was delayed beyond service level agreements.

A lack of an established process means that the constabulary doesn't always update victims when attendance is delayed. And the constabulary may not become aware of changing circumstances or risk that might change the initial prioritisation.

The constabulary acted on our early feedback and introduced supervisor reviews for delayed deployments. The constabulary should make sure that the new process to reassess risk is structured and that it keeps victims updated and records new information that may change the risk level.

Investigating crime

Adequate

Suffolk Constabulary is adequate at investigating crime.

Areas for improvement

The constabulary needs to improve supervisory reviews of investigations, including investigation plans and finalisation

In our [quality service review](#), we found that investigations were only appropriately supervised throughout the course of the investigation in 59 of 74 cases, investigation plans were only followed and updated in 59 of 66 cases and crime finalisation had effective and appropriate supervision in 59 of 81 cases.

The constabulary should set expectations that supervisory reviews are meaningful and set timescales for when supervisors should do their reviews.

When supervision isn't effective, investigation quality is also less effective, and this means the service given to [victims](#) is poorer. The constabulary audits its investigative standards to inform governance, but this hasn't improved supervisory standards. The constabulary should focus on monitoring and improving how it supervises investigations at all stages to improve the service to victims.

The constabulary needs to gather victims' views, so they are considered before finalising an investigation

While the constabulary has improved its compliance with the [Code of Practice for Victims of Crime \('the Victims' Code'\)](#), it still needs to improve how it asks for and acts on the views of [victims](#) in its investigations.

In our [quality service review](#), we found victims' views were considered before crime finalisation in 47 of 65 cases and there was an auditable record of victims' views in 11 of 19 cases. The correct outcome was applied in 67 of 79 cases, which is a decline in performance since [our 2023–25 PEEL inspection](#).

Effectively engaging with victims increases the quality of service provided. It helps give victims the confidence to support investigations and gives investigators and supervisors an important understanding of the victim impact when making appropriate outcome decisions.

Main findings

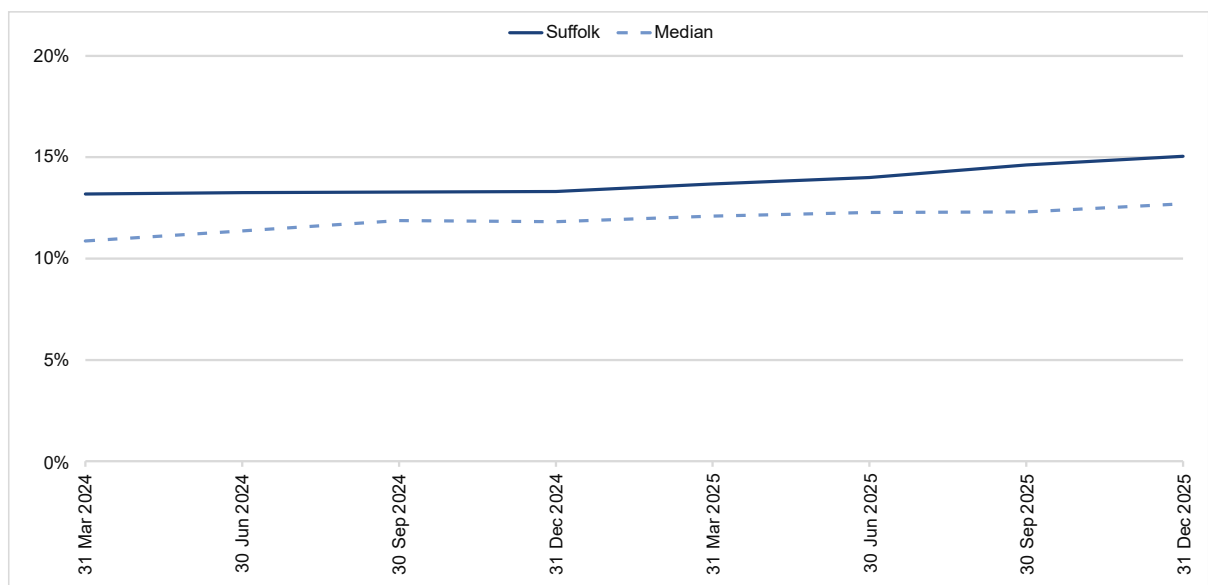
In this section, we set out our main findings that relate to how good the constabulary is at investigating crime.

The constabulary consistently achieves appropriate outcomes for victims

The constabulary has shown a meaningful and sustained improvement in its [positive outcome](#) rates for victims of crime in the past two years.

In the year ending 31 December 2025, 15.0 percent of all [outcomes](#) that the constabulary assigned to [victim-based crimes](#) were positive outcomes.

Figure 5: Percentage of positive outcomes that Suffolk Constabulary and all forces in England and Wales assigned to victim-based crimes between the year ending 31 March 2024 and the year ending 31 December 2025.



Source: [Police recorded crime and outcomes open data tables](#) from the Home Office

Chart description: Line chart showing the percentage of [positive outcomes](#) that Suffolk Constabulary assigned and the median for forces in England and Wales for each year from the year ending 31 March 2024 to the year ending 31 December 2025. The chart shows that 15.0 percent of [outcomes](#) that Suffolk Constabulary assigned to [victim-based crimes](#) were positive in the year ending 31 December 2025, compared to the median of 12.7 percent for forces in England and Wales. It also shows that the percentage of positive outcomes that Suffolk Constabulary assigned has been slowly increasing since the year

ending 31 March 2024. And the median percentage of positive outcomes for forces in England and Wales has been slowly increasing in the same period.

Note: The percentage of positive outcomes that forces assign is calculated from all outcomes they assign in a given period. Victim-based crimes include all police-recorded crimes where there is a direct [victim](#), such as an individual, an organisation or a corporate body. For a detailed description of crime and outcome types, please see the [Home Office statistics](#).

Figure 6: Percentage of unresolved, resolved and positive outcomes that Suffolk Constabulary and all forces in England and Wales assigned to victim-based crimes in the year ending 31 December 2025

Outcome types	Force percentage [%]	Median percentage [%] for forces in England and Wales
Unresolved crime outcomes (Outcomes 11–18)	75.5	83.9
Resolved crime outcomes (Outcomes 5, 9, 10, 20–22)	9.5	3.2
Positive crime outcomes (Outcomes 1–4 and 8), of which:	15.0	12.7
1 – Charged/summonsed	10.3	9.3
2 and 3 – Caution – youths and adults	1.3	0.8
4 – Taken into consideration	0.5	0.1
8 – Community resolution	3.0	2.4

Source: [Police recorded crime and outcomes open data tables](#) from the Home Office

Note: The percentage of unresolved, resolved and positive outcomes that forces assign is calculated from all [outcomes](#) they assign in a given period. [Victim-based crimes](#) include all police-recorded crimes where there is a direct [victim](#), such as an individual, an organisation or a corporate body. For a detailed description of crime and outcome types, please see the [Home Office statistics](#).

In the year ending 31 December 2025, of all the crime outcomes the constabulary assigned to victim-based crimes, 8.7 percent were Outcome 20 (further action, resulting from the crime report, will be undertaken by another body or agency subject to the victim being made aware of the action to be taken). This is higher than the typical range for forces in England and Wales. The constabulary hadn't scrutinised use of this outcome type and we found that it wasn't always being used appropriately. During our quality service review, we found that Outcome 20 was correctly applied in 12 of 17 relevant cases and cases weren't always closed with the appropriate

safeguards or auditable records of actions taken or results. The constabulary should review its use of this outcome code.

The constabulary isn't always completing a victim needs assessment

In 49 of 58 relevant cases we reviewed, we found that the constabulary had recorded victim needs assessments. This means that investigators hadn't assessed whether the other victims needed support, what type of support they needed or whether they were [vulnerable](#) or intimidated. We also found in 39 of 44 relevant cases we reviewed that the constabulary had updated victims on the progress of investigations in line with an agreed victim contract. Victims being assessed for needs and victims being updated are two of the rights in the Victims' Code. It is essential for the constabulary to comply with the Victims' Code to give victims a high-quality service.

The constabulary monitors file quality against national file standards to identify common issues. It uses this information to identify good practice and areas of learning and to provide feedback to investigators.

The constabulary has improved its compliance with the Victims' Code

During our 2023–25 PEEL inspection, we identified an [area for improvement](#) for the constabulary to make sure victim contracts were completed where appropriate. In our quality service review, we found an appropriate victim contract was completed in 44 of the 49 cases reviewed. Victim personal statements were also considered in 13 of 14 cases. This is an improvement on our last inspection where 40 of 50 victim contracts were completed in the cases reviewed.

While the constabulary has improved how it communicates with victims during an investigation, it could continue to strengthen how it asks for victim feedback to improve its services. At the time of our inspection, the constabulary's main method for gathering feedback from victims was by surveying those who attended court. This misses the experiences of victims whose cases haven't resulted in the charging of a suspect or have felt unable to support a prosecution. Understanding all victim experiences is important so that improvements can be made whether a case goes to court or not. The constabulary should look to expand its victim feedback process to include all victims.

The constabulary prioritises high-risk outstanding suspects

In 46 of 48 relevant cases we reviewed in our quality service review, we found that appropriate suspect checks were completed. And in all 31 cases, an arrest or interview was completed at the earliest opportunity.

During our inspection, we found that supervisors had access to quality data to monitor their teams' outstanding suspects. They were able to triage suspects by time delay, offence type and risk. The constabulary has a process known locally as Red Viper,

where investigators and supervisors can highlight high-risk outstanding suspects and ask for support from the wider constabulary.

While the constabulary is good at apprehending and managing high-risk suspects, we observed less robust scrutiny for those people flagged as wanted on the [Police National Computer](#) system. The constabulary should make sure it has processes in place to continue monitoring and taking action to locate suspects who haven't been apprehended during initial arrest efforts.

The constabulary doesn't consistently allocate crime appropriately

In December 2025, the constabulary introduced a new crime allocation policy. This is a positive step towards the constabulary effectively identifying which of its outstanding investigations carry complexities that would be more appropriately managed by specialist investigators.

During our inspection, we found that some [officers](#) and supervisors weren't aware of the policy. Specialist teams often make allocation decisions based on their individual [risk assessments](#), and this is leading to frontline officers investigating crimes above their skill level and accreditation. Escalation policies aren't widely understood or followed.

The constabulary should make sure its crime allocation policy offers clear guidance and that its workforce understands this. It should also allocate crime to investigators with the appropriate training and accreditation to provide the best chance of a positive outcome for victims of complex and high-risk crime.

The constabulary could get more benefit from its investigation auditing

During our inspection, we found that the constabulary had an effective auditing regime to monitor the quality of its investigations. The constabulary told us that inspectors were assigned five investigations per month to audit. Findings are collated centrally. We were told that when learning was identified from individual cases, officers and [staff](#) were given feedback and their supervisors made aware to assist in their development.

The constabulary is generating a significant amount of data from this process to understand and scrutinise its investigative performance. We saw limited evidence that learning from this data was being fully exploited or used to inform professional development. Long-term data sets from investigation auditing can highlight training gaps or common mistakes in evidence gathering. The constabulary should make full use of this data to continue improving the service it offers to the public.

Safeguarding children and adults at risk of harm

Inadequate

Suffolk Constabulary is inadequate at [safeguarding children](#) and [adults at risk of harm](#).

Causes of concern

The constabulary doesn't make prompt safeguarding risk assessment and information disclosures to help keep vulnerable people safe

This is documented in an [accelerated cause of concern](#) that we [issued to the constabulary on 1 May 2026](#).

The constabulary must make sure it identifies, assesses and mitigates risk to safeguard vulnerable people

During [our 2023–25 PEEL inspection](#), we issued an [area for improvement](#) that the constabulary needs to make sure it has an appropriate secondary review process in place for all [domestic abuse](#) incidents. We found it needed to make sure [vulnerable people](#) were being referred for support at the earliest opportunity.

In this inspection, we found the constabulary hadn't made sufficient progress to address this area. It doesn't have any secondary review process in place for standard-risk domestic abuse cases. This means the constabulary can't be sure the right support has been offered.

The constabulary doesn't have a process where multiple calls will trigger an escalation in risk level. Medium-risk cases are quality assured but any identified changes in risk level aren't consistently applied to police systems. For example, changing medium-risk cases to high risk. High-risk cases are subject to supervisory review by detectives but carry a high rate of downgrade.

The constabulary told us that in the year ending 31 January 2026, it recorded 616 cases of domestic abuse as high risk. Of these, 238 cases were later downgraded to medium and 20 downgraded to standard risk. This means 41.9 percent of [high-risk domestic abuse](#) cases were downgraded to a lower risk level. The constabulary hasn't scrutinised this data to understand if these downgrades are appropriate.

The constabulary's crime allocation policy directs that high-risk cases should be investigated by accredited detectives. However, during our inspection we found domestic abuse cases that had been inappropriately downgraded from high risk and then passed to non-accredited investigators who may not have the training to adequately progress them.

The constabulary uses a domestic abuse research document to supplement risk-based decisions for medium and high-risk cases. However, we found that the constabulary had completed an audit in July 2025 which showed that only 42.0 percent of high-risk cases it reviewed had a research document in place.

The constabulary doesn't understand its [risk assessment](#) processes. These aren't consistently completed and when safeguarding risk issues are found, they aren't adequately recorded or addressed to inform ongoing safeguarding decisions.

At the time of our inspection, the constabulary had recently introduced new governance board processes for safeguarding activity. It should make sure that this provides sufficient oversight to identify failing processes and take steps to improve how it identifies and addresses risk.

Recommendations

Within three months, the constabulary should:

- introduce systems to assess, manage and accurately record the risk of harm to [victims](#) throughout the constabulary safeguarding referral processes;
- develop effective governance and performance data to understand and manage the risk of harm to vulnerable people that it actions through its safeguarding referrals;
- make sure it has the capacity and capability to support its domestic safeguarding referral processes to assess risk accurately to signpost people to the right support; and
- make sure its safeguarding systems and processes support the provision of police-held information and [intelligence](#) to inform appropriate allocation of investigations.

Areas for improvement

The constabulary should improve how it monitors preventative orders

The constabulary uses preventative orders and schemes to manage risk and protect [vulnerable people](#). In three of four cases we reviewed, the constabulary considered preventative orders to reduce the risk of further harm to victims.

These include [Domestic Violence Protection Notices](#), [Domestic Violence Protection Orders](#), [Domestic Abuse Protection Orders](#) and [Stalking Protection Orders](#). This shows that the constabulary is considering available tools to [safeguard](#) victims.

However, in [our 2023–25 PEEL inspection](#), we identified an [area for improvement](#) for the constabulary to make sure it had processes in place to check and prioritise breaches of protective orders.

It has started to improve in this area and has recently introduced a new role to provide oversight of orders across the county. It is also assigning operational responsibility for orders to different departments across the constabulary with the expectation that they are checked for compliance.

However, at the time of our inspection, these changes weren't all live or well established. The constabulary still lacks a structured process to manage preventative orders. And compliance isn't proactively checked. There is a reliance on [victims](#) to report any concerns or breaches.

The constabulary needs to make sure its new processes, once established, allow for the effective policing of preventative orders and that departments assigned responsibility have sufficient capacity to complete the required activity.

The constabulary should make sure that governance arrangements and systems are in place to record, issue and implement organisational learning from statutory reviews

During our inspection, we found that the constabulary had several statutory learning reviews in place. But it didn't have any governance in place for the review process. This means it lacks strategic oversight of the reviews and recommendations to make sure lessons are learned. The agreed recommendations from reviews didn't have assigned owners to provide updates or put learning in place.

Without effective governance and accountability in how these recommendations are implemented, there is a risk that the constabulary won't learn from previous failings and may miss safeguarding opportunities. The constabulary does have plans in place to move statutory review learning into a newly developed governance process, but this wasn't in place at the time of our inspection.

Innovative practice

The constabulary is using artificial intelligence to support preventative order applications

The constabulary has developed an artificial intelligence programme to assist with applications for [Domestic Violence Protection Notices](#) and [Domestic Violence Protection Orders](#). The process uses artificial intelligence to research the domestic history of individuals involved and uses this information to populate the necessary application paperwork with supporting evidence from police systems. This process requires careful human monitoring for accuracy, and applications are then completed by investigators.

At the time of our inspection, the constabulary was still trialling this technology, although it had been used in live cases for the public. The constabulary told us it had used artificial intelligence in 19 cases, 12 of which had successfully transitioned from Domestic Violence Protection Notice to Order when presented at court. It said that applications took [officers](#) 3.5 hours to complete on average and the use of artificial intelligence had lowered completion time to two hours. The constabulary is continuing to expand and evaluate its use of this product and expects it to continue to improve completion time while improving application quality.

Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to how good the constabulary is at safeguarding children and adults at risk of harm.

The constabulary doesn't always record crimes committed against vulnerable victims effectively

The constabulary doesn't always record crimes committed against vulnerable victims. In our [quality service review](#), we examined 50 records involving referrals made to the constabulary about vulnerable adults and child protection cases, 32 incidents involving victims of domestic abuse, 50 reported incidents of rape and 17 decisions to cancel crimes of rape. We found the following:

- Vulnerable adult and child protection cases: 24 crimes should have been recorded and 22 were recorded correctly.
- Domestic abuse incidents: 16 crimes should have been recorded and 11 crimes were recorded correctly.
- Reported incidents of rape: 1 crime of rape should have been recorded but this wasn't recorded.
- Cancelled crimes of rape: 16 out of 17 crimes were cancelled correctly.

It is especially important that the constabulary accurately records crimes involving vulnerable victims. It is equally important to cancel crimes only when it is certain that no crime was committed. Recording and cancelling crimes correctly helps to make sure victims receive the service and support they expect and deserve from the police. If the constabulary doesn't record or cancel crimes correctly, offenders may go on to commit further crimes against their victims or against other vulnerable victims.

The constabulary safeguards missing people

The constabulary's policy on managing [missing persons](#) makes sure it gives a structured and proactive response. During the missing person triage process, the constabulary assesses risk and gathers important information. In all 20 cases we reviewed, all relevant information was recorded. In all ten cases, the risk grade was appropriate for the information known at the time. And in 7 of 11 cases we reviewed, officers attended within the required time frames.

The constabulary carries out thorough investigations to locate missing persons. In all four cases we reviewed, officers followed the investigation plan, made relevant enquiries and recorded updates of their efforts to locate the missing person.

In all seven missing children cases we reviewed, social care was notified of the missing episode. This means that children were assessed for the welfare support they may need.

The constabulary works well with multi-agency partners to safeguard and reduce the risk of harm to vulnerable people

Multi-agency working is an important part of the constabulary's safeguarding strategy. The [multi-agency safeguarding hub](#) (MASH) includes a wide range of partner agencies covering both child and adult safeguarding.

In 21 of 23 relevant cases we reviewed, the constabulary shared information with appropriate agencies, which allowed for a co-ordinated response to safeguarding. The constabulary processes multi-agency referrals promptly, with no backlogs reported.

However, we also found that while new people joining the MASH had [specialist child abuse investigation development programme](#) training, the only MASH induction training they received was a half-day presentation. The constabulary told us it recognised this was an area for development. If new [personnel](#) aren't properly trained for a role, this could potentially lead to inappropriate or unsafe practices going unaddressed. We recommend the constabulary introduces training as soon as possible.

The constabulary has systems and processes in place for promptly notifying schools of pupils living with domestic abuse ([Operation Encompass](#)). In 10 of 11 relevant cases we reviewed, officers notified schools about children exposed to domestic abuse. This means children may have received the required support in school.

The constabulary needs to make sure it refers only appropriate cases to the multi-agency risk assessment conference

The constabulary takes part in a [multi-agency risk assessment conference](#) (MARAC) steering group, which gives it an opportunity, alongside partner agencies, to review the effectiveness of its MARAC arrangements and to make improvements. We found that actions from the steering group were tracked and monitored for progress.

During our inspection, we found that when cases were discussed at MARAC, they were dealt with effectively and there was strong partnership representation. Police representatives are knowledgeable about discussed cases and actions were appropriately allocated between partners. But not all cases are referred. The constabulary doesn't always consider all appropriate ways to safeguard vulnerable people and challenge offenders. In both relevant cases we reviewed, the constabulary didn't refer the case to the MARAC. This means that the constabulary and its partners couldn't create a multi-agency plan to reduce the harm to high-risk domestic abuse victims or their children and manage the risk from offenders.

The constabulary told us that a high proportion of its referrals to MARAC were rejected. In 2025, it told us that 39.9 percent of referrals didn't meet the threshold. The constabulary has taken action to address this, including additional training to officers who used the [domestic abuse, stalking, harassment and honour-based violence](#) and [Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment](#) documents, and given feedback on why cases had been rejected. We were further told the rejection rate for the year ending 31 March 2026 was 48.3 percent. The constabulary hasn't fully reviewed these decisions to understand whether referrals were being made appropriately. It considers that many of the rejected cases may have been assessed as medium risk rather than high risk.

The constabulary should consider whether its processes for assessing domestic abuse risk, including the use of secondary risk assessments, are leading to a different interpretation of risk compared with partner organisations.

In the year ending 30 September 2025, the Suffolk MARAC considered 930 cases. This is below the [SafeLives](#) expected level of 1,060 cases.

When a case is discussed at MARAC, the constabulary doesn't have an effective process to inform officers that they are working with high-risk MARAC victims or offenders. This means officers may be unaware of safeguarding activity already taking place or what level of intervention they need to take to keep the parties safe from further harm.

Managing fraud

Requires
improvement

Suffolk Constabulary requires improvement at managing fraud.

Areas for improvement

The constabulary needs to adequately train investigators and call handlers to respond to fraud

During our inspection, we found that investigators weren't adequately trained to investigate fraud outside fraud specialist departments. In our workforce survey, only 21.9 percent of those who identified fraud as being part of their role (30 of 137) had been trained. We also found that most fraud investigations were handled by [officers](#) who weren't sufficiently skilled or knowledgeable in fraud, which could result in poor quality investigations. And in our [quality service review](#), we found that only 8 of 12 fraud investigations reviewed were effective.

Although the constabulary provided training to call handlers when they joined the team and followed this up with some [continuing professional development](#) events, call handlers didn't feel they were equipped to deal with fraud calls. This finding was supported by our quality service review. In only three of seven calls reviewed, the caller was given the correct information regarding [Report Fraud](#).

The constabulary needs the capacity to review, allocate and investigate fraud effectively

The constabulary has created a new team called the fraud assessment unit that reviews and allocates its fraud for investigation. This unit's purpose is also to review fraud investigations every 28 days and provide training to the wider constabulary. The fraud assessment unit also carries out some complex investigations. In our [quality service review](#), we found that in 9 of 12 cases we reviewed, fraud investigations were allocated promptly. And in 6 of 10 cases reviewed, the [fraud investigation model](#) was used. During our inspection, we found that this unit didn't have sufficient capacity to complete these tasks. This means that there are minor delays in the allocation of investigations, the 28-day reviews aren't being completed and training is inconsistent.

The constabulary needs to improve how it responds to victims and protects the community from fraud

During our inspection, we found that [victims](#) of fraud weren't always given adequate advice on [safeguarding](#) and protecting themselves from fraud. We also found that not enough was being done to protect the communities of Suffolk from fraud.

In our [quality service review](#), we found that, in six of nine cases, call handlers gave safeguarding advice to victims of fraud. Call handlers didn't know where to look for advice to help with fraud calls.

The constabulary visits [vulnerable](#) victims to provide additional safeguarding and fraud prevention advice. And we found that the constabulary did some work to educate its communities using radio, social media and presentations to groups such as schools and colleges. However, this activity isn't directed by the local threat picture, and the constabulary doesn't effectively measure the impact of the work it completes.

The constabulary does work with some partners, such as Women's Aid England, to help victims of fraud. However, in our quality service review, we found that only three of eight cases reviewed had adequate referrals made to partner agencies. And in only 7 of 18 cases the victim received an adequate service.

The constabulary has recognised these issues and is creating a protect network to protect the public from the risk of fraud across the constabulary. It is also working to create a new multi-agency meeting to help in targeting fraud jointly with partners.

Main findings

In this section, we set out our main findings that relate to how good the constabulary is at managing fraud.

The constabulary has accountability processes for fraud, and it understands the threat of fraud in its communities

During our inspection, we found the constabulary had assessed the threat from fraud and understood how this affected its communities. This assessment shows the local and national threat picture for fraud, and the constabulary treats fraud as a strategic priority. The constabulary's fraud policy is clear and consistently gives direction for allocating fraud investigations. The constabulary has a named fraud lead and has clear governance at both a strategic and an operational level.

The constabulary effectively monitors performance in relation to fraud at a constabulary-level performance board. But this is a new process and, at the time of our inspection, it hadn't yet had time to take effect.

Providing a safe and lawful custody environment

Inadequate

Suffolk Constabulary is inadequate at providing a safe and lawful custody environment.

Cause of concern

The constabulary doesn't have an effective and safe detainee handover process

[Authorised professional practice \(APP\)](#) states that [custody officers](#) and [staff](#) should carry out shift-change handovers together and communicate information in person. During our inspection, we highlighted to the constabulary that its remote written handover process was insufficient and increased the risk to detainees and [personnel](#). The constabulary responded by introducing a handover video recording where the outgoing custody officer reads out their written handover into a recording, which is then played back by the incoming officers. But this process still doesn't allow for in-person clarification and risk discussion to support detainee welfare and safety.

During our suite observations, we saw instances where risk information was missed during handover. The constabulary had introduced a 12-hour shift pattern and this has reduced capacity for a safe and APP-compliant handover. During the inspection, we told senior leaders about our concerns. And, while the constabulary has started to review potential longer-term solutions, the immediate risk hasn't been sufficiently mitigated and still remains.

Recommendations

Within three months, Suffolk Constabulary should:

- introduce an in-person handover process between outgoing and incoming custody [personnel](#) that allows for clarification of detainee risk information between shifts, in line with APP; and
- introduce a quality assurance process for the handover procedure so that the constabulary can assure itself that risk is sufficiently managed.

Areas for improvement

The constabulary should make sure that it has effective governance and quality assurance processes to manage detainees' safety and well-being

[Personnel](#) told us they felt the lack of strong leadership had led to some poor behaviours and cultures being allowed to persist in the custody suites. In particular, arresting [officers](#) who were younger or female reported poor experiences. At the time of our inspection, senior leaders were unaware of this behaviour.

The constabulary has some oversight of its custody performance through monthly and quarterly performance meetings. But it should enhance existing quality assurance of custody records and qualitative measures to make sure it can use this detail to help make improvements to custody services. There is no auditing or internal quality assurance, which means practice is inconsistent and issues aren't identified, unless these are fed back through partnership processes.

At the time of our inspection, the constabulary had recently introduced a new 12-hour shift pattern for custody personnel. But there were no regular training days included in this pattern. The constabulary needs to make sure that its workforce receives a regular training day so they can carry out their duties and are supported in their continuous professional development. At times there aren't enough trained officers and [staff](#) to provide custody services.

The constabulary should make sure reviews of detention are carried out and recorded in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984

The constabulary doesn't always follow the [Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984](#) and its codes of practice when carrying out reviews of detention.

Reviews of detention were sometimes completed early without providing a reason for this. And reviewing officers didn't always record if they had considered the needs of [children](#) and [vulnerable](#) adults.

Reviews of detention can be carried out when detainees are sleeping but, where this happens, detainees must be informed at the earliest opportunity. However, in our audits we found that this didn't always happen. We also found that, on some occasions where a sleeping review had taken place, the detainee was awake at the time of the review. This indicates that inspectors didn't always check that detainees were actually asleep. This process doesn't allow the detainee the opportunity to make representations about their continued detention.

Reviewing officers don't consistently make detailed records of reviews that reflect each detainee's circumstances; instead, they rely too much on generic templates without adding or removing text. This can lead to confusing or contradictory entries. Reviews that are completed late don't always record a reason for this.

Main findings

In this section, we set out our main findings that relate to how good the constabulary is at providing a safe and lawful custody environment.

The constabulary is open to effective external scrutiny

The constabulary is open to effective external scrutiny. It could show that external bodies regularly visit the custody suites and work with custody officers and staff. The constabulary was able to show how it documents and responds to feedback from external bodies such as the [Independent Custody Visiting Association](#), the [independent advisory group](#) and scrutiny panel.

The constabulary understands its responsibilities under the [public sector equality duty](#). It monitors custody data to identify [disproportionality](#). Some custody officers and staff told us that they had received training in supporting detainees with mental health difficulties and/or neurodivergent conditions but not all those we spoke to could recall this training.

The constabulary protects detainees from neglect and harm

We visited the custody suites and found that they were clean and well maintained. But the physical environment doesn't provide enough privacy for detainees, especially women, due to the shower doors being too low and the position of the showers in relation to the cells. We found potential [ligature points](#) in cells, mainly in the toilets, and some of the cell doors also had potential ligature points. Custody officers and staff carry out daily cell checks in line with APP and deal with repairs quickly. The custody environment is generally safe, but custody personnel were concerned that the installation of new lighting created potential risks to detainee safety and well-being.

Custody officers and staff treat detainees with dignity and respect and use available technology to assist with explaining custody processes and facilities. Detainees are provided with appropriate care that meets their individual needs. For example, there are adaptations for detainees with mobility issues, or hearing or sight difficulties, and religious materials are available for detainees to practise their faith. Food to meet most dietary needs is available, and the constabulary considers the specific needs of female detainees.

The constabulary only arrests children as a last resort. Children spend as little time as possible in police custody. The constabulary makes every effort to keep children separate from adult detainees, with child-friendly cells reserved specifically for use by children. Decisions to detain children overnight are appropriate and clearly recorded. Custody officers request suitable [alternative accommodation](#) that the local authority provides. Robust training and quality assurance structures are in place to monitor this.

The constabulary and partner agencies such as the Independent Custody Visiting Association provide effective oversight of children in custody, but the constabulary could improve its internal quality assurance processes for children. Female children aren't always allocated a female member of staff to oversee their care, but it is unclear if this is a process or recording issue.

There are [safeguarding](#) measures in place to protect vulnerable adults and children. Provision of an [appropriate adult](#) for children and vulnerable adults is available and effective, but the lack of provision for vulnerable adults after 10pm leads to longer detention times for those detainees.

Detainees can exercise their legal rights

Custody officers authorise detention appropriately and explain the booking-in process. We observed staff and officers building rapport with detainees in a polite and respectful way. And we saw custody officers spending additional time to make sure vulnerable detainees understood the reasons for their arrest and detention. However, in our audit we found the circumstances and necessity of arrest relayed by officers at the booking-in desk weren't consistently or accurately recorded.

Custody officers clearly explain rights and entitlements and provide written notices setting these out. Both suites have easy-read and Braille versions of these notices. The constabulary has created a video which can be played to detainees in cells that explains rights and entitlements in an easy-to-understand way.

For detainees who don't speak English, custody officers provide translated documents and arrange interpreters.

Detainees can speak with their legal representatives in private, either in person or on the phone. However, we were told it could be difficult to obtain legal services between the hours of midnight and 7am. This could delay the timely release of detainees. If detainees waive their right to legal advice, custody officers explore the reasons why.

The constabulary doesn't always effectively assess, manage and regularly review risk throughout detention and on release

The constabulary has an effective booking-in procedure that helps custody officers to identify and manage risk. Custody officers clearly explain their [risk assessments](#) and consider all relevant information about the detainee. However, they don't always give a rationale for the setting and re-assessment of observation levels. In our audits, we saw examples where detainees were placed on a lower observation level without a rationale to justify this decision. Detainees who are intoxicated are set to level 2 observations with rousing checks as per APP. But some rousing checks aren't recorded as required in APP. Cell visits are sometimes carried out late, especially around detention officer lunch breaks and handover periods. Key management is good with a well-established system of key security.

When a detainee is ready to be released, custody officers don't always carry out a thorough pre-release risk assessment in the presence of the detainee. In particular, we saw this was missed for detainees being transferred to court. Pre-release risk assessments don't always provide sufficient detail of the risk presented by the detainee and the mitigation that has taken place while in custody to address this risk. Custody officers make sure an accurate person escort record is completed for detainees who are transferring to court.

Use of force and strip search in custody is mostly lawful, necessary and proportionate but isn't subject to sufficient scrutiny

We reviewed 18 custody records involving 25 use of force incidents, as well as CCTV footage in 13 cases, to make sure that when force is used in custody, it is proportionate, necessary and justified. Most records showed relevant detail that accurately reflected incidents. Custody officers were present during incidents and gave direction to officers to keep detainees safe. However, we saw three incidents, two of which involved children, where detainees were held in restraints for excessive periods of time. In these cases, there was a lack of supervision and recording by

custody officers to justify the necessity and proportionality for this continued use of force.

Officers who use force in custody don't routinely submit individual use of force forms. We asked for use of force forms for the incidents we reviewed but we received only 23 of the 59 we expected.

The constabulary's use of force quality assurance processes don't always allow it to identify the issues we found and therefore it can't be assured that use of force in custody is necessary, justified and proportionate in all cases.

We found that most custody officers and staff were up to date with their officer safety and first aid training, and those who weren't had a date booked for their refresher course.

We reviewed 15 cases involving strip searches authorised under [section 54 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984](#). Custody officers recorded appropriate grounds for these searches and carried them out well. We reviewed 19 cases where clothing was removed for safety reasons. Not all custody officers assessed risk or recorded appropriate grounds for these searches as per APP.

There is effective healthcare provision for detainees with sufficient oversight from the constabulary and NHS England

The constabulary has a contract with Mitie to make sure detainees' healthcare needs are met. The constabulary and NHS England effectively monitor the contract for all health provision for detainees. Healthcare staff are available in the custody suites and carry out timely assessments of detainees' healthcare needs. They assess detainees in an appropriate clinical space that protects their privacy and dignity. Health staff gain appropriate consent from detainees to access medical records.

Detainees have access to appropriate medicines while in custody, including those to manage withdrawal from substances.

Clinical rooms are generally clean and adequately equipped with emergency medical equipment and medicines. Senior healthcare practitioners carry out weekly checks.

The constabulary has arrangements with an independent doctor who carries out weekly checks to monitor the standard and quality of the custody healthcare provision. This added layer of scrutiny is positive.

During their hours of operation from 8am to 6pm, [liaison and diversion \(L&D\)](#) teams provide a comprehensive service across the constabulary. However, the service is limited outside these hours. L&D practitioners are based in custody suites and provide support to vulnerable detainees with a range of needs. Detainees can access support for substance misuse needs while in custody.

Custody officers identify mental health concerns and make appropriate referrals to healthcare and L&D practitioners. Where needed, Mental Health Act assessments take place reasonably promptly. But, due to the lack of bed capacity in the area, detainees then face long waits in police custody for beds to become available. During our inspection, we found there were gaps in joint working with mental healthcare partners. Suffolk Constabulary told us it was considering how it could improve this.

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