PEEL: Police effectiveness 2016

An inspection of Essex Police

Contents

Introduction

As part of our annual inspections of police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) assesses the effectiveness of police forces across England and Wales.

What is police effectiveness and why is it important?

An effective police force is one which keeps people safe and reduces crime. These are the most important responsibilities for a police force, and the principal measures by which the public judge the performance of their force and policing as a whole.

To reach a judgment on the extent of each force's effectiveness, our inspection answered the following overall question:

- How effective is the force at keeping people safe and reducing crime?

To answer this question HMIC explores five 'core' questions, which reflect those areas of policing that we consider to be of particular interest and concern to the public:[1]

1. How effective is the force at preventing crime, tackling anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe?

2. How effective is the force at investigating crime and reducing re-offending?

3. How effective is the force at protecting those who are vulnerable from harm, and supporting victims?

4. How effective is the force at tackling serious and organised crime?

5. How effective are the force's specialist capabilities?

HMIC's effectiveness inspection assessed all of these areas during 2016. More information on how we inspect and grade forces as part of this wide-ranging inspection is available on the HMIC website (www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/peel-assessments/how-we-inspect/). This report sets out our findings for Essex Police.

Reports on the force's efficiency, legitimacy and leadership inspections are available on the HMIC website (www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/peel-assessments/peel-2016/essex/).

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[1] HMIC assessed forces against these questions between September and December 2016, except for Kent Police – our pilot force – which we inspected in June 2016.

Force in numbers

Calls for assistance

Calls for assistance per 1,000 population 12 months to 30 June 2016

Essex Police	England and Wales
218	240

Crime (excluding fraud)

Crimes recorded per 1,000 population 12 months to 30 June 2016

Essex Police	England and Wales
64	68

Change in recorded crime 12 months to 30 June 2015 against 12 months to 30 June 2016

Essex Police	England and Wales
+12.9%	+7.8%

Change in recorded crime for the 5 years to the 12 months to 30 June 2016

Essex Police	England and Wales
+10.9%	-3.4%

Crime outcomes*

Charged/summonsed

Essex Police	England and Wales
9.7%	12.1%

Evidential difficulties: suspect identified but victim does not support action

Essex Police	England and Wales
8.8%	10.6%

Investigation completed but no suspect identified

Essex Police	England and Wales
44.5%	47.4%

*Figures are shown as proportions of outcomes assigned to offences recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016.

Anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour incidents per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2016

Essex Police	England and Wales
29	31

Anti-social behaviour incidents per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2015

Essex Police	England and Wales
32	34

Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse calls for assistance per 1,000 population 12 months to 30 June 2016

Essex Police	England and Wales
16	16

Domestic abuse as a percentage of all recorded crime (excluding fraud) 12 months to 30 June 2016

Essex Police	England and Wales
11.6%	11.1%

Domestic abuse as a percentage of all recorded crime (excluding fraud) 12 months to 31 March 2015

Essex Police	England and Wales
10.6%	10.0%

Organised crime groups

Organised crime groups per million population as at 1 July 2016

Essex Police	England and Wales
22	46

Victim satisfaction rate

Victim satisfaction with the overall service provided by the police 12 months to 30 June 2016

Essex Police	England and Wales
72.8%	83.3%

For further information about the data in this graphic please see annex A

Overview – How effective is the force at keeping people safe and reducing crime?

Overall judgment[2]

●●●○ **Good**

Essex Police is good at keeping people safe and reducing crime. Our overall judgment is an improvement on last year, when we judged the force to require improvement.

The force has an effective approach to preventing crime and anti-social behaviour, investigating crime and tackling serious and organised crime. The force has greatly improved the way it protects vulnerable people, including victims of domestic abuse, but still needs to do more in this area.

Overall summary

How effective is the force at preventing crime, tackling anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe?	●●●○	**Good**
How effective is the force at investigating crime and reducing re-offending?	●●●○	**Good**
How effective is the force at protecting those who are vulnerable from harm, and supporting victims?	●●○○	**Requires improvement**
How effective is the force at tackling serious and organised crime?	●●●○	**Good**
How effective are the force's specialist capabilities?		**Ungraded**

Essex Police is good at preventing crime, tackling anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe. It understands the communities it serves and the threats they face. The force regularly seeks the views of the public and acts on this feedback to prioritise its activities.

Every neighbourhood has a community policing team made up of police officers and police community support officers (PCSOs) who spend most of their time carrying out community engagement and prevention activity. The force has a structured and collaborative approach to problem solving and there are good examples of

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[2] HMIC judgments are outstanding, good, requires improvement and inadequate.

partnership working, such as with local councils. The force learns from best practice to provide better services for the public, although it could do more to develop its evidence base on the most effective ways to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour.

Essex Police is good at investigating crime and reducing re-offending. The force uses a structured approach to assess whether calls require an officer to attend. Officers ensure evidence is collected and preserved effectively. However, the force needs to promote awareness of its local digital media investigators and improve its ability to retrieve digital evidence quickly.

The force has made improvements in how it tracks and arrests those people who pose a risk to the public, including those who are wanted and outstanding suspects. It has a well-established integrated offender management scheme that includes some domestic abuse offenders. The force is under pressure to deal with increasing numbers of registered sex offenders and is piloting a new approach in this area; however it must ensure that its management of these offenders is appropriate at all times and minimises the risk to the public.

The force has greatly improved its response to people who are vulnerable since 2015, but more still needs to be done. There are clear systems and processes in place to direct officers in their actions and the force has removed the absent classification for children which has provided greater clarity for the force in the approach and response to these individuals. However, it should make better use of data from partner organisations to ensure it has the fullest possible understanding of risks to those who are vulnerable. The force also lacks an effective county-wide multi-agency safeguarding hub, although it is working hard to bring other partners on board.

The public can have confidence in the force's ability not just to pursue and disrupt organised criminals but also to prevent organised crime from taking root in its communities. The force works with Kent Police to tackle the most serious and harmful organised criminals, but combating serious organised crime is increasingly the responsibility of all frontline officers. The force is taking a longer-term approach to tackling organised crime groups and although it regularly seeks serious crime prevention orders it has been successful in a very few.

Essex Police's work with street gangs is proving to be effective. It also works with communities to help prevent young people from being drawn into gangs or organised criminality, and it is increasing its work in this area.

Essex Police has good plans to mobilise in response to the threats set out in the *Strategic Policing Requirement*. It undertakes exercises with partner organisations, such as other forces and the military, and amends its plans in response to lessons learned. The force is well prepared to respond to a firearms attack and continues to train authorised firearms officers to keep numbers at the required levels.

How effective is the force at preventing crime, tackling anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe?

The police's ability to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and to keep people safe is a principal measure of its effectiveness. Crime prevention is more effective than investigating crime, stops people being victims in the first place and makes society a safer place. The police cannot prevent crime on their own; other policing organisations and organisations such as health, housing and children's services have a vital role to play. Police effectiveness in this matter therefore depends on their ability to work closely with other policing organisations and other interested parties to understand local problems and to use a wide range of evidence-based interventions to resolve them.

How much crime and anti-social behaviour is there in Essex?

Although police-recorded crime is by no means a complete measure of the totality of demand for calls on its service that a force faces, it does provide a partial indication of performance across all forces. Crime rates are reported as the number of crimes per 1,000 population in each force area to enable comparison between areas. Total recorded crime is made up of victim-based crime (crimes involving a direct victim such as an individual, a group, or an organisation) and other crimes against society (e.g. possession of drugs). In the 12 months to 30 June 2016, the majority of forces (39 out of 43 forces) showed an annual increase in total police-recorded crime (excluding fraud). This increase in police-recorded crime may have been affected by the renewed focus on the quality and compliance of crime recording since HMIC's 2014 inspection of crime data in all forces across England and Wales.

In 2010 the Home Secretary set a clear priority for the police service to cut crime. Figure 1 shows how police-recorded crime has fluctuated over the longer term. When compared with the 12 months to 30 June 2011, police-recorded crime (excluding fraud) for the 12 months to 30 June 2016 has increased by 10.9 percent in Essex compared with a decrease of 3.4 percent across all forces in England and Wales.

Over this same period, victim-based crime increased by 12.2 percent in Essex, compared with a decrease of 0.5 percent for England and Wales as a whole.

Figure 1: Police-recorded crime rates (per 1,000 population) in Essex, for the five year period to 30 June 2016

National Crime Data Integrity inspection

Essex Police   England & Wales

Rolling 12 months
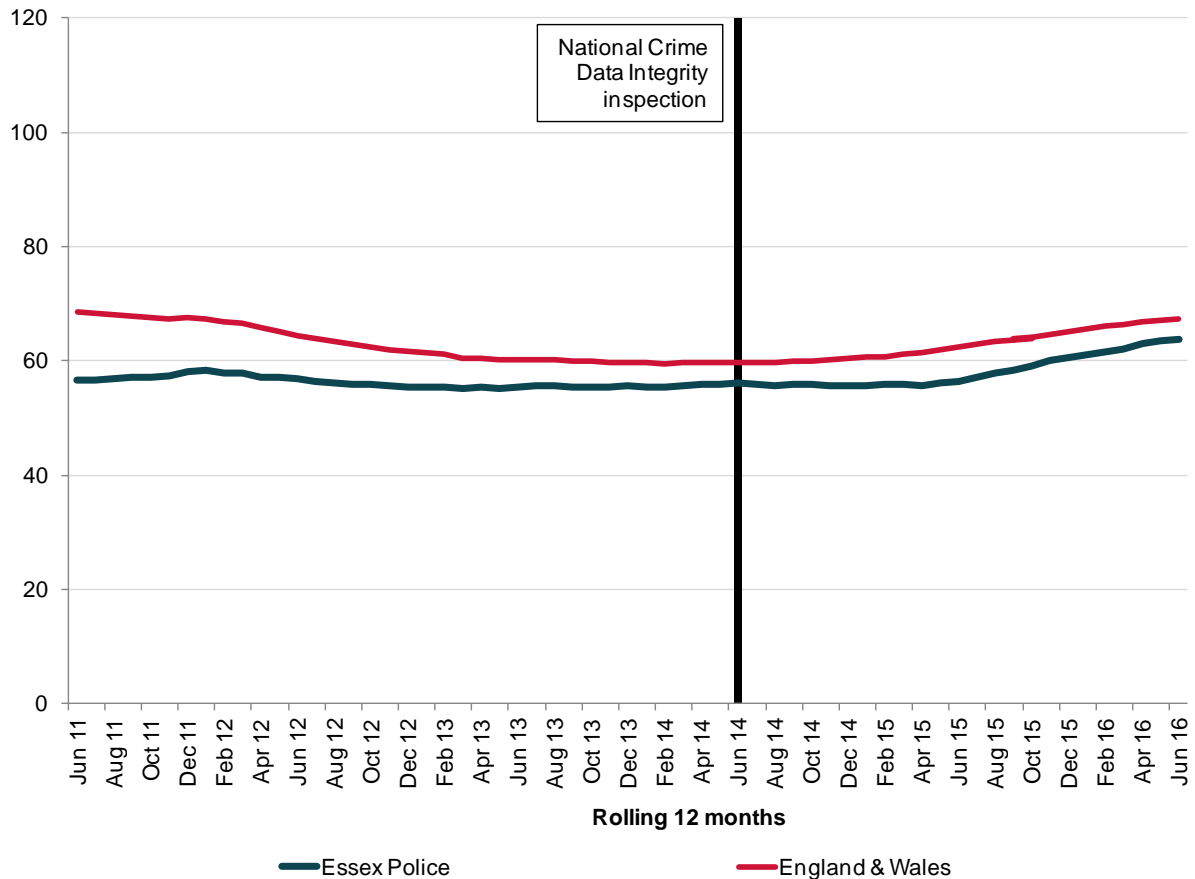
Source: Home Office data
For further information about these data, please see annex A

More recently, when compared with the previous 12 month period, police-recorded crime (excluding fraud) in Essex increased by 12.9 percent for the year ending 30 June 2016. This is compared with an increase of 7.8 percent across all forces in England and Wales over the same period.

The rate of police-recorded crimes and incidents of anti-social behaviour per head of population indicates how safe it is for the public in that police area. Figures 2 and 3 show crime rates (per 1,000 population) and the change in the rate (per 1,000 population) of anti-social behaviour in Essex compared with England and Wales.

HMIC used a broad selection of crime types to indicate crime levels in the police force area during the inspection. We are not judging the effectiveness of the force on police-recorded crime rates only. The figure below shows police-recorded crime rates in the force area for a small selection of crime types.

Figure 2: Police-recorded crime rates (per 1,000 population) in Essex, for the 12 months to 30 June 2016

Rates per 1,000 population	Essex Police	England and Wales
Recorded crime (excluding fraud)	63.7	68.2
Victim-based crime	56.9	60.4
Sexual offences	1.6	1.9
Assault with injury	6.4	7.0
Burglary in a dwelling*	9.2	8.1

* The rate of burglary in a dwelling is the rate for 1,000 households, rather than population
Source: Home Office data
For further information about these data, please see annex A

Figure 3: Percentage change in the rate of anti-social behaviour incidents (per 1,000 population), by force, comparing the 12 months to 31 March 2016 with the 12 months to 31 March 2015
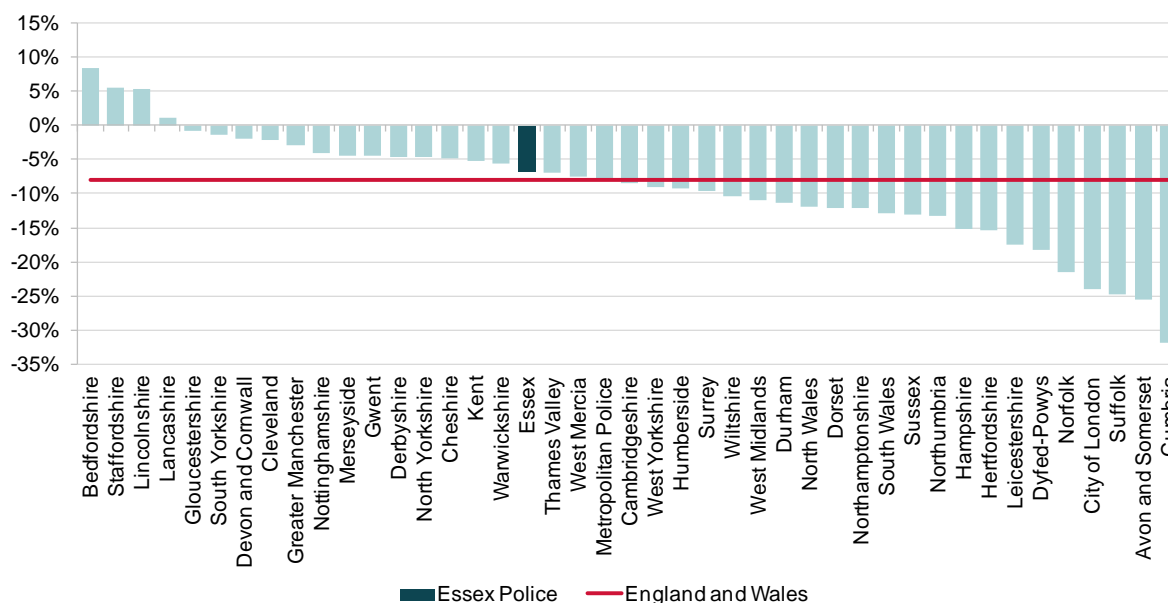
Source: Home Office data
For further information about these data, please see annex A

In the 12 months to 31 March 2016, Essex Police recorded 30 incidents of anti-social behaviour per 1,000 population. This is 7 percent fewer incidents per 1,000 population than the force recorded during the previous 12 months. In England and

Wales as a whole, there were 8 percent fewer incidents per 1,000 population in the 12 months to 31 March 2016, than were recorded during the previous 12 months.

How effectively does the force understand the threat or risk of harm within the communities it serves?

It is vital that forces have a detailed understanding of the communities they serve in order to protect them from harm. This understanding should include those communities which may – for a variety of reasons – need the police to work differently to understand their requirements, for example migrant communities, elderly people or groups which might be mistrustful towards the police. A good understanding of what matters to these communities helps the police to gain their confidence and create safer neighbourhoods for citizens.

In order to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour, police forces need to understand the threat and risk faced by communities. Forces must also operate a model of local policing in which police officers and police community support officers (PCSOs) have sufficient time for community engagement, visible targeted foot patrols and working with other policing organisations and other interested parties to promote resolutions that protect communities and prevent crime. Successfully undertaking these three activities leads to crime reduction and increased public confidence.

Does Essex Police understand the risk posed to its communities?

Essex Police has a good understanding of the risks and threats posed to its communities. The understanding is supported by the force's dedicated local policing model. This means that in every neighbourhood a named community policing team made up of police officers and PCSOs spends most of its time carrying out community engagement and prevention activity. Essex has a high expenditure on neighbourhood policing (£39 per head of population) compared with England & Wales (£25 per head of population). Community policing team officers spend most of their time doing vital community engagement and prevention activity. HMIC conducted a short survey of police staff across forces in England and Wales, to understand their views on workloads, redeployment and the suitability of tasks assigned to them. This survey was voluntary, so results were explored further during fieldwork rather than being used to singularly assess force performance. In Essex, 186 officers and staff responded to our survey. The survey, and visits to neighbourhood teams to talk to and observe officers, confirmed that the force has a variety of management approaches, including de-briefing staff to ensure it understands how its officers spend their time.

The force is good at analysing traditional threats (such as burglary and robbery) and it has produced bespoke crime profiles for new and emerging threats. These documents include much background information and highlight Essex Police's understanding of these threats, but they hold very little information from partner

organisations, which the force has been seeking to address for more than a year. There are good examples of partner organisations working in local policing areas, in particular in the community safety hubs where officers are co-located with partner agencies, such as probation and local authority staff at Southend and Clacton, but this does not lead to the production of analytical information. Three police analysts have been recruited recently to work with local authority analysts to support the community safety hubs with the initial task of identifying what partner organisation information is available. A multi-agency demand analysis group has also been set up across Essex with the aim of increasing data-sharing agreements and drawing in more partner organisation information. When partner organisation data has been available, the force has produced good-quality assessments; the Southend child sexual exploitation assessment is an example of this.

Since HMIC's 2015 effectiveness report,[3] Essex Police has continued to improve its understanding of the risks faced by its communities by introducing a more sophisticated approach to assessing individual risk (these can be for crime types ranging from burglary to child sexual exploitation). This approach also assesses how likely these threats are to affect the communities of Essex and what level of harm they would cause. The force uses this approach at executive level but is planning to use the approach across the organisation in the future. The force is in the process of merging its neighbourhood profiles with serious and organised crime local profiles, so that one document for each neighbourhood covers a range of problems and information that will help increase understanding of local neighbourhoods in an easy-to-read format. The force makes effective use of its own intelligence to identify threat or risk of harm within communities, using traditional national intelligence model products to map local crime trends. It is also using predictive policing[4] to identify crime and anti-social behaviour hotspots and then deploy officers, sometimes with active citizens who are volunteers who work alongside officers, to these locations. The force will soon be able to monitor officer attendance at these hotspot areas using its new mobile phone technology.

How does Essex Police engage with the public?

The force regularly uses a range of methods to seek the views of the public to understand what matters to them, and acts on this feedback to prioritise activities. The force understands the importance of involving the public and uses a range of methods to do so. These include online methods such as Twitter and Facebook and more traditional face-to-face meetings which primarily take the form of monthly local community meetings that are advertised on the force's website and local

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[3] *PEEL: Police effectiveness 2015 – A national overview*, HMIC, February 2016. Available from: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/police-effectiveness-2015/

[4] Analysing crime trends (such as time-bound and seasonal trends) to identify and understand where most crime is occurring ('hotspotting'), and in some cases predict where crime and anti-social behaviour is most likely to occur.

noticeboards. The force has a very strong online presence, with 126,831 followers on Facebook and very active Twitter accounts. Essex Community Messaging, which enables the public to receive and pass information to the force, has 15,000 members and the force is now exploring the use of the smartphone instant messaging service WhatsApp to gain a wider audience. It is clear that the force works with local communities to understand their policing priorities, but the co-ordination of this work could be stronger. The force is improving this by recruiting a head of engagement, and a further three staff members are working on an action plan to develop public contact, service improvement and public engagement.

The community policing teams are central to community work and public engagement. These teams of officers and PCSOs work closely with the public and gather information, act on local priorities and report back to the public using local meetings and social media. The force's website includes the name and contact details of their local officer or PCSO, the local priorities and upcoming meetings. The force has also developed a volunteer active citizen scheme that encourages people to help the force in local activities like patrol work with PCSOs and crime reduction initiatives, such as distributing crime-prevention advice. The concept was piloted in Colchester and is now being rolled out across the county, with each area having a single point of contact officer in place. These single point of contact officers were found to be highly enthusiastic and effective at attracting members of the public to the scheme. The force also has a vibrant volunteer scheme and community safety accreditation scheme (CSAS).[5] A volunteer co-ordinator has been recruited to co-ordinate and manage these schemes to ensure community volunteers are used effectively and that their numbers increase.

HMIC commissioned Ipsos MORI to conduct a survey of attitudes towards policing between July and August 2016. The survey indicated that there has been a decrease in public satisfaction with Essex Police. Some 401 people were interviewed and 44 percent were very or fairly satisfied with local policing in their area. This is a 11 percent decrease on 2015.[6]

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[5] CSAS is a voluntary scheme under which chief constables can choose to accredit employed people already working in roles that contribute to maintaining and improving community safety, with limited but targeted powers. These roles include neighbourhood wardens, hospital security guards, park wardens, shopping centre security guards and train guards.

[6] For further details, see annex A.

How effectively do force actions and activities prevent crime and anti-social behaviour?

Effective forces use a range of options to prevent crime, tackle anti-social behaviour and keep people safe. They use structured approaches to solving local problems which aim to rid communities of criminal and anti-social behaviour. They also use a range of legal powers and specific tactics which vary depending on the situation. HMIC expects forces to review their activity as well as other sources of evidence in order to improve their ability to protect people over the long term.

Does the force have a problem-solving approach?

HMIC's 2015 effectiveness report[7] identified four areas for improvement regarding anti-social behaviour and problem solving: identifying, supporting properly and providing an effective level of service to victims of anti-social behaviour; ensuring prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour becomes a routine part of neighbourhood policing activity; adopting a structured and consistent problem-solving process to help it to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour more effectively; and lastly, using evidence of 'what works' drawn from other forces, academics and partner organisations to continually improve its approach to the prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour and routinely evaluating its tactics and its sharing of effective practice.

In this inspection, we found that Essex Police has made reducing and preventing anti-social behaviour a force priority, and that it has consequently made rapid improvements against all four areas for improvement. The focus of the force's approach to problem solving and crime and anti-social behaviour reduction and prevention is the community safety hubs. These hubs are becoming highly effective, especially where they are fully co-located, such as at Southend and Clacton, and not virtual, where the partner agencies are not actually working within the same premises. The hubs are designed to increase visible collaboration between community safety partner organisations to address local concerns, and these organisations report significant improvements in the way the force understands local issues and works with them. Partner organisations spoken to were very complimentary about the force's efforts to work with them and the efforts of the assistant chief constable with responsibility for local policing, who was seen as being a keen supporter of the partnership approach. This has helped to build relationships at a senior level.

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[7] *PEEL: Police effectiveness 2015 – An inspection of Essex Police*, HMIC, 2016. Available from: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/police-effectiveness-2015-essex/

The force is able to identify, support and offer an effective level of service to victims. It has a structured and collaborative approach to problem solving through using the SARA[8] model, with regular analysis and response to patterns of repeat victims, callers and locations for anti-social behaviour and crime. All problem-solving profiles are completed on a form (ASB9) and then entered into the force's IT system, Athena. The ASB9 records a summary of the problem and an action plan following the SARA model, but also includes elements of the 4Ps[9] approach. This means that the plans are very effective and those plans reviewed by HMIC inspectors were of good quality, and had been reviewed by supervisors, and most had been assessed for effectiveness at the close of the investigation. We found evidence of this effective problem-solving approach through an operation in Rochford in which the force tackled escalating anti-social behaviour and related criminal damage that was attracting considerable negative media and was damaging local relationships. Officers worked with other interested parties to agree plans that would reduce risks of continued offending and possible targeting of people who were vulnerable and address the problem; these included the use of volunteers to engage with the youths involved and diversion opportunities such as involvement in a fishing project for some of the youths.

Does the force use effective approaches and tactics to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour?

Essex Police uses a range of tactics and interventions to prevent crime and tackle anti-social behaviour. It routinely shares information with partner organisations, for example in relation to long-term problems affecting communities, and has processes that prioritise activity with partner resources against the most pressing issues. The force deploys specially trained crime-prevention advisers in the community safety hubs, some of whom hold an advanced certificate in environmental design crime prevention. It uses a predictive patrol model (Operation Insight) to reduce crime and disorder in identified locations in which officers are deployed to areas where crimes are likely to occur. We found examples of problem-solving and preventative tactics, based on relevant and up-to-date intelligence; for instance, when officers are given their instructions for the day, they may be instructed to visit the scene of a reported public nuisance.

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[8] An acronym for scanning, analysis, response, and assess. The process is aimed at identifying legal and ethical solutions to policing problems, such as anti-social behaviour.

[9] 4Ps provides a national framework for tackling serious and organised crime that has been developed for national counter-terrorist work and has four thematic pillars, often referred to as the 4Ps:
– Pursue – prosecuting and disrupting people engaged in serious and organised crime;
– Prevent – preventing people from engaging in serious and organised crime;
– Protect – increasing protection against serious and organised crime; and
– Prepare – reducing the impact of this criminality where it takes place.

We found evidence of multi-agency plans to prevent people becoming victims of crime and anti-social behaviour, including for vulnerable people who were being targeted by gangs, anti-social use of vehicles in car parks, burglary, domestic abuse and child sexual exploitation cases. For high-risk domestic abuse cases, one of the crime-prevention advisers carries out research into the offender and victim and completes a risk assessment to inform a joint police and fire service response, with victims being offered a security assessment and equipment, such as door wedges and door handle alarms, designed to give the victim time to ring 999 in an emergency. Examples of the force engaging with its communities include the 'Lift it, Lock it or Lose it' video used to promote crime prevention following an increase in house burglaries, and the Essex hotel watch scheme designed to reduce the use of hotels for crime and, in particular, child sexual exploitation and human trafficking. As part of this work, 100 taxi drivers and hotel employees received anti-slavery training from the force, which was very well received.

The frontline officers we interviewed had a good understanding of crime-prevention advice and could support the community with advice on how to avoid becoming a victim of crime. Control room staff have had training and are giving advice to callers about online crime and how to stay safe; however, more training for officers is needed on how to advise people about staying safe online.

Training has been provided for officers and staff on problem solving, and legislation and powers to reduce and prevent anti-social behaviour, such as criminal behaviour orders, dispersal orders and exclusion notices. This has also been provided to partner organisations working within the community safety hubs. However, in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, Essex Police used anti-social behaviour powers 83 times per 1 million population, which is well below the level for forces in England and Wales. The force may want to make sure that it is maximising the use of these powers.

Does the force use evidence of best practice and its own learning to improve the service to the public?

Essex Police has improved and continues to improve how it learns from best practice and existing evidence in order to provide better services for the public. The force has a comprehensive crime prevention strategy and we found evidence of staff using the College of Policing's 'What Works' website. It adopts recognised and best practice in neighbourhood policing; for example, it follows national guidance[10] to ensure that it deploys PCSOs appropriately. We found no evidence of PCSOs being taken away from their work in communities to conduct other activities such as inappropriate investigations. The force has significantly improved its performance management and review processes and has developed a holistic approach that takes into account

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[10] *Guidance on Police Community Support Officers*, 2007, Association of Chief Police Officers of England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

quantitative and qualitative elements, with strong governance provided by the strategic crime prevention board. The board is currently overseeing a number of tactical plans to assess their effectiveness, including digital crime, gangs, domestic abuse, mental health and violence suppression prevention plans. Despite these improvements, more could be done to record what works, although some innovative case studies are collated within the new force 'Evidence Library'. This library is not a good practice database but rather a means of recording good evidence for future HMIC inspections. The force IT system, Athena, is recognised as the logical location for a good practice database and the force awaits the delivery of the relevant update to the system.

Summary of findings

Good

Essex Police is good at preventing crime, tackling anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe. The force has a satisfactory understanding of the communities it serves and the threats they face. It is good at analysing traditional threats (such as burglary and robbery) and it has also produced profiles of new and emerging threats. Community policing teams are central to community work. These teams of officers and PCSOs work closely with the public, gathering information and acting on local priorities. There are good examples of working with partner organisations in local policing areas, in particular in the community safety hubs where officers are co-located with these organisations. However, more needs to be done to obtain data from partner organisations to better inform crime and anti-social behaviour prevention.

The force has made reducing and preventing anti-social behaviour a priority and so the prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour has become a routine part of neighbourhood policing activity. It has a structured and collaborative approach to problem solving and it deploys specially trained crime-prevention advisers.

The force has improved and continues to improve how it learns from best practice and the established evidence in order to provide better services for the public. However, it could do more to develop its evidence base on the most effective ways to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour.

Area for improvement

- The force should evaluate and share effective practice routinely, both internally and with partner organisations, to continually improve its approach to the prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour.

How effective is the force at investigating crime and reducing re-offending?

When a crime occurs, the public must have confidence that the police will investigate it effectively, take seriously their concerns as victims, and bring offenders to justice. To be effective, investigations should be well planned and supervised, based on approved practice, and carried out by appropriately-trained staff. In co-operation with other organisations, forces must also manage the risk posed by those who are identified as being the most prolific or dangerous offenders, to minimise the chances of continued harm to individuals and communities.

How well does the force bring offenders to justice?

Since April 2014, police forces in England and Wales have been required to record how investigations are concluded in a new way, known as 'outcomes'. Replacing what was known as 'detections', the outcomes framework gives a fuller picture of the work the police do to investigate and resolve crime and over time all crimes will be assigned an outcome. The broader outcomes framework (currently containing 21 different types of outcomes) is designed to support police officers in using their professional judgment to ensure a just and timely resolution. The resolution should reflect the harm caused to the victim, the seriousness of the offending behaviour, the impact on the community and deter future offending.

Outcomes are likely to differ from force to force for various reasons. Forces face a different mix of crime types in their policing areas, so the outcomes they assign will also vary depending on the nature of the crime. Certain offences are more likely to be concluded without offenders being prosecuted; typically these include types of crime such as cannabis misuse. If this type of crime is particularly prevalent in the force then it is likely that the level of 'cannabis/khat[11] warning' outcomes would be greater. Other offences such as those involving domestic abuse or serious sexual offences, are unlikely to result in a high usage of the 'cautions' outcome.

The frequency of outcomes may also reflect the force's policing priorities. For example, some forces work hard with partners to ensure that first time and low-level offenders are channelled away from the criminal justice system. In these areas locally-based community resolutions are likely to be more prevalent than elsewhere.

It is also important to understand that not all of the crimes recorded in the year will have been assigned an outcome as some will still be under investigation. For some crime types such as sexual offences, the delay between a crime being recorded and

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[11] A plant native to Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, the leaves of which are frequently chewed as a stimulant. The possession and supply of khat became a criminal offence in England and Wales in 2014.

an outcome being assigned may be particularly pronounced, as these may involve complex and lengthy investigations.

Figure 4: Proportion of outcomes assigned to offences recorded in Essex Police, in 12 months to 30 June 2016, by outcome type[12,13]

Outcome number	Outcome type / group	Essex Police	England and Wales
1	**Charged/Summonsed**	**9.7**	**12.1**
4	**Taken into consideration**	**0.1**	**0.2**
	Out-of-court (formal)	**2.6**	**3.2**
2	Caution - youths	0.4	0.4
3	Caution - adults	1.9	2.3
6	Penalty Notices for Disorder	0.3	0.6
	Out-of-court (informal)	**4.8**	**3.6**
7	Cannabis/Khat warning	0.6	0.9
8	Community Resolution	4.2	2.8
*	**Prosecution prevented or not in the public interest**	**1.3**	**1.8**
	Evidential difficulties (victim supports police action)		
15	Suspect identified	6.2	8.3
	Evidential difficulties (victim does not support police action)	**14.5**	**13.8**
16	Suspect identified	8.8	10.6
14	Suspect not identified	5.7	3.2
18	**Investigation complete – no suspect identified**	**44.5**	**47.4**
20	**Action undertaken by another body / agency**	**0.7**	**0.6**
21	**Further investigation to support formal action not in the public interest**	**0.1**	**0.1**
	Total offences assigned an outcome	**84.6**	**91.3**
	Not yet assigned an outcome	**15.4**	**8.7**
	Total	**100.00**	**100.00**

*Includes the following outcome types: Offender died, Not in public interest (CPS), Prosecution prevented – suspect under age, Prosecution prevented – suspect too ill, Prosecution prevented – victim/key witness dead/too ill, Prosecution time limit expired

Source: Home Office crime outcomes data
For further information about these data, please see annex A

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[12] Dorset Police is excluded from the table. Therefore figures for England and Wales will differ from those published by the Home Office. For further details see annex A.

[13] 'Taken into consideration' is when an offender admits committing other offences in the course of sentencing proceedings and requests those other offences to be taken into consideration.

In the 12 months to 30 June 2016, Essex Police's use of outcomes was in line with those in England and Wales as a whole. However, any interpretation of outcomes should take into account that outcomes will vary dependent on the crime types that occur in each force area, and how it deals with offenders for different crimes.

Although Essex Police is broadly in line with the rate for England and Wales in terms of outcomes, they are slightly above the England and Wales rate for evidential difficulties (victim does not support action) at 14.5 percent against the England and Wales rate of 13.8 percent.

How effective is the force's initial investigative response?

The initial investigative response is critical for an effective investigation. From the moment victims and witnesses make contact with the police the investigative process should start, so that accurate information and evidence can be gathered. It is important that forces record evidence as soon as possible after a crime. The longer it takes for evidence-recording to begin, the more likely it is that evidence will be destroyed, damaged or lost. Recording this evidence is usually the responsibility of the first officer who attends the scene. After the officer has completed this initial investigation the case may be handed over to a different police officer or team in the force. This process must ensure that the right people with the right skills investigate the right crimes.

Control room response

Essex Police is good at providing an initial investigative response. The force uses the THRIVE[14] approach in its control room, and all staff have received training in applying it effectively. The THRIVE assessment is recorded on the incident and all incidents are subject to appropriate re-assessment during the lifetime of the incident. Of those incidents reviewed, we found that appropriate officers were dispatched based on the vulnerability of the caller and the level of threat and risk. The force's grading policy has been in place for a long time and makes sure that officers are sent quickly if they are needed. All the force's intelligence systems are available in the control room to help in assessments. We found that call handlers almost always give appropriate guidance to callers about the preservation of forensic evidence, crime prevention and safeguarding.[15]

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[14] THRIVE is a structured assessment based on the levels of threat, harm, risk and vulnerability faced by the victim, rather than simply by the type of incident or crime being reported, in order to help staff determine the appropriate level of response to a call.

[15] The term safeguarding is applied when protecting children and other vulnerable people. The UK Government has defined the term 'safeguarding children' as: 'The process of protecting children from abuse or neglect, preventing impairment of their health and development, and ensuring they are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care that enables children to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully.'

Some incidents are dealt with over the phone by the crime bureau and there are guidelines in place to identify those cases that are suitable for telephone resolution. There is an excellent working relationship between the control room and the crime bureau, with regular staff interchange between the two units. Any incident assessed by the crime bureau as being inappropriate for telephone resolution will be returned to the control room for deployment of an officer. It is clear that domestic abuse cases and cases where a person is assessed as being vulnerable are retained in the control room for an officer to be deployed and that they are not sent to the crime bureau. We reviewed some cases in the crime bureau and found them to be of good quality.

How well do response officers investigate?

The knowledge of 'golden hour' (the time immediately after a crime has occurred when evidence retrieval is more likely) principles is good among frontline officers and we found evidence of them considering forensic preservation, safeguarding considerations, house-to-house visits to locate witnesses, and suspect identification. However, many of the officers we spoke to said there was pressure from control room staff to move on to the next incident without them always having enough time to complete all their enquiries. They were clear that no pressure was brought to bear in serious incidents, and there are systems in place to ensure effective activity at more serious incidents in the 'golden hour'. The force has body-worn video camera capability but it does not currently have enough for personal issue, however there is an expectation that, where it is available, officers use it for appropriate incidents including domestic abuse incidents. Officers reported that the quality of the sound and picture is excellent, but that downloading the evidence takes too long as the computers they use to do it are very slow. This is leading to officers leaving the cameras downloading when they finish duty, meaning the cameras are then not available for others to use.

The quality of the handover of cases between units is generally good and improving, with valuable evidence recorded by those officers who first attend the scene. The force has moved to electronic handover packages on its IT system. Supervisors monitor the handover packages, which include a checklist that details enquiries undertaken so far, enquiries that still need to be undertaken, whether searches have been conducted, what exhibits have been seized, and whether there was any CCTV footage.

The way in which the force decides who will continue the investigation after the first officers have been to the crime scene ensures that a crime is quickly passed to the most appropriate officer to investigate it. Our inspection found that the force's management of crime allocation was very good and that the right teams with the correct level of skills and experience are investigating the right crimes. Overall, Essex Police's gathering of evidence, initial investigation and allocation for subsequent investigation is good.

How effective is the force's subsequent investigation?

Every day police forces across England and Wales investigate a wide range of crimes. These range from non-complex crimes such as some burglary and assault cases through to complex and sensitive investigations such as rape and murder. HMIC referred to national standards and best practice in examining how well forces allocate and investigate the full range of crimes, including how officers and staff can gather evidence to support investigations. These include the more traditional forensics, such as taking fingerprints, as well as more recently developed techniques like gathering digital evidence from mobile telephones or computers to find evidence of online abuse.

Quality of the investigation

Overall, Essex Police investigates crimes effectively. HMIC reviewed 60 police case files across crime types for: robbery, common assault (flagged as domestic abuse), grievous bodily harm (GBH), stalking, harassment, rape and domestic burglary. Files were randomly selected from crimes recorded between 1 January 2016 and 31 March 2016 and were assessed against several criteria. Due to the small sample size of cases selected, we have not used results from the file review as the sole basis for assessing individual force performance but alongside other evidence gathered.

Our review of a sample of files found that generally the force investigates crimes well, across a range of crime types. So-called volume crimes,[16] such as theft, burglary and common assault, are effectively investigated, with support from more experienced supervisors. In the vast majority of the files we reviewed, investigative opportunities such as the photographing of injuries, collection of CCTV, house-to-house enquiries and the attendance of a crime scene investigator were taken in a timely manner. Some response officers are being allocated lower-level fraud cases and report that they are struggling to investigate these because they do not have the skills or training. Of the 60 files we reviewed, we assessed the majority as having effective investigations and effective or limited but appropriate supervision. This finding of mostly effective investigations and supervision was supported by those further files we reviewed during the inspection fieldwork.

Specialist detectives investigated more complex cases effectively, including those with specialist technical elements, such as online child sexual abuse. Of those stalking and harassment files reviewed, we judged that most had effective investigations.

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[16] Any crime which, through its sheer volume, has a significant impact on the community and the ability of the local police to tackle it. Volume crime often includes priority crimes such as street robbery, burglary and vehicle-related criminality, but can also apply to criminal damage or assaults.

Support to investigations

In HMIC's 2015 effectiveness report, we identified a significant backlog in the examination of computers and other digital devices. On this inspection, Essex Police has had 340 computer submissions and 2,629 phone submissions. There is no backlog for the phones and all have been examined within the seven-day service level agreement[17] between the hi-tech crime unit and the local policing areas. For computers, there is a backlog of 85 (26 percent) awaiting assessment. The computers in this backlog come from cases assessed as being of a standard risk; cases assessed as being high risk are examined quickly and within 30 days. The computer awaiting examination longest was seized on 6 July 2016 and related to a priority case in which the computer should be examined within 60 days. However, overall this is a substantial improvement on our findings in 2015. The picture for more traditional forensics is also positive. The force made 22,310 DNA and fingerprint forensic recoveries in the 12 months to June 2016 and only 385 (around 2 percent) were awaiting examination.

In 2015, the force, in collaboration with Kent Police, restructured its digital forensic unit with the aim of increasing resilience across both forces, and reducing risk in the area of computer analysis. The proposal set out to create a centre of excellence in an analytical hub at Kent Police headquarters, based in Maidstone, and a satellite site for exhibit handling, data preparation and remote viewing, based at Essex Police headquarters in Chelmsford. However, it has become clear that these collaborative arrangements have not delivered the appropriate allocation of analytical resource to Essex digital casework. As a consequence, it is proposed to base a digital forensics supervisor permanently within the Essex satellite to support operational requirements, provide direction and guidance to resolve local issues and manage workflow effectively between the satellite and the hub. In addition, it is clear that permanent local digital forensic analysts are essential to support the development of digital investigations and provide an agile response to both urgent and operational needs, and so the force is recruiting analysts to work at the Essex satellite site to provide this capacity.

Essex Police has introduced 15 local digital media investigators to support investigations, but we found that other staff do not know who they are or what they do. It also has phone triage kiosks, where staff can download and assess mobile phone data, although many staff spoken to did not know about them or about the 81 staff trained to use them. The force is working in collaboration with the Metropolitan Police Service to have further phone triage kiosks installed at key location police stations and more staff trained to use them. To ensure the success of these initiatives, the force needs to promote their existence and benefits across the workforce.

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[17] The service-level agreements for the examination of computers by the high-tech crime unit are high priority (30 days), priority (60 days), standard (90 days) and low (no timescale).

Supporting victims

The new outcomes framework introduced in 2014 includes some outcomes where there were evidential difficulties,[18] which had not previously been recorded. This was to gain an insight into the scale of crimes that the police could not progress further through the criminal justice process due to limited evidence. Furthermore, these outcomes can be thought of as an indicator for how effective the police are at working with victims and supporting them through investigative and judicial processes, as they record when victims are unwilling or unable to support continued investigations or when they have withdrawn their support for police action.

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[18] Evidential difficulties also includes where a suspect has been identified and the victim supports police action, but evidential difficulties prevent further action being taken.

Figure 5: Percentage of 'Evidential difficulties; victim does not support action' outcomes assigned to offences recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, by force[19],[20]
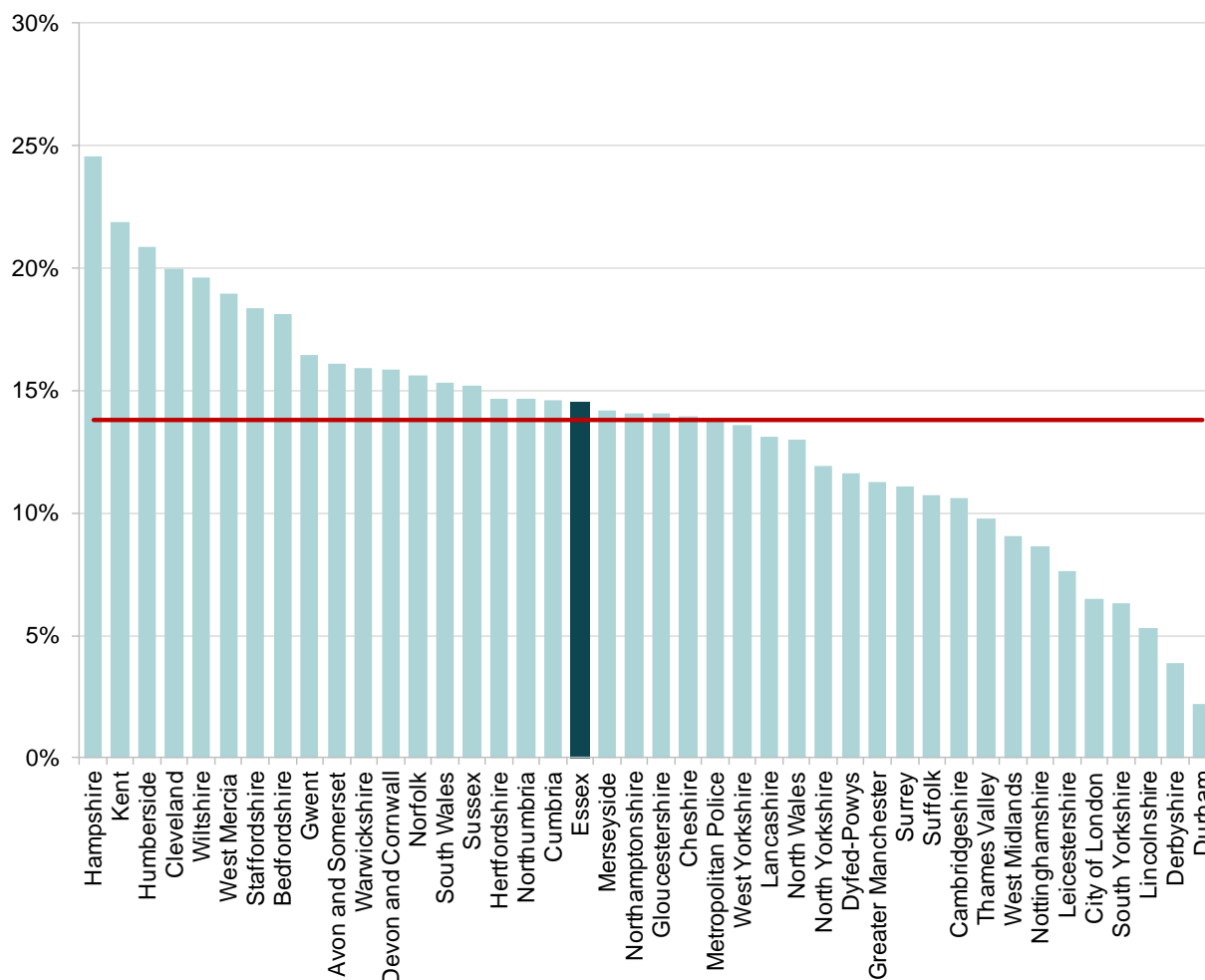
Source: Home Office crime outcomes data
For further information about these data, please see annex A

For all offences recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, Essex Police recorded 14.5 percent as 'Evidential difficulties; victim does not support police action'. This compares with 13.8 percent for England and Wales over the same period. However, it should be noted that not all of the offences committed in the 12 months to 30 June 2016 were assigned an outcome and consequently, these figures are subject to change over time.

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[19] Percentages of evidential difficulties can be affected by the level of certain types of crime within a force, such as domestic abuse related offences.

[20] Dorset Police is excluded from the graph. Therefore, figures for England and Wales will differ from those published by the Home Office. For further details see annex A.

The force has improved how it supports victims. Last year, HMIC identified that the force could improve its compliance with the *Code of Practice for Victims of Crime*,[21] in particular offering and completing victims' personal statements. For instance, the force has introduced:

- a quality of service team to support victims when necessary and enhance the service provided;

- an automated victims' code element in the force IT system, Athena, that generates compliance and supervisor overview requirements; and

- a victim care card that advises victims of their rights under the code, which officers give to victims.

The force is now better at making sure it offers victims the opportunity to make a victim personal statement, which means victims can explain how the crime has affected them and strengthen their voice in the criminal justice system.

Of those who have been the victim of a crime in Essex in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, 72.8 percent were satisfied with their whole experience with the police. This is lower than the England and Wales average of 83.3 percent over the same period. There has also been a large fall in victim satisfaction between 30 June 2011 and 30 June 2016 in Essex. In addition, in 14.5 percent of investigations the victim did not support police action and the investigation did not progress. This is slightly higher than the England and Wales rate and the force needs to ensure that supporting and engaging with victims is not deteriorating.

How effectively does the force reduce re-offending?

We assessed how well the force works with other policing authorities and other interested parties to identify vulnerable offenders and prevent them from re-offending, and how well it identifies and manages repeat, dangerous or sexual offenders.

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[21] All police forces have a statutory duty to comply with the *Code of Practice for Victims of Crime*, which sets out the service victims of crime can expect from all parts of the criminal justice system. The code states that all victims of crime should be able to make a personal statement, which they can use to explain how the crime has affected them. Victims should also be kept updated about the progress of their case. For more information see:
www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/254459/code-of-practice-victims-of-crime.pdf

How well does the force pursue suspects and offenders?

In HMIC's 2015 effectiveness report, we said that Essex Police should introduce a clear process to ensure that it arrests swiftly those who are circulated as wanted on the police national computer, those who fail to appear on police bail and named suspects identified through forensic evidence. The force has made improvements in how it tracks and arrests those people who pose a risk to the public, including wanted persons and outstanding suspects. However, it has more to do.

During our inspection we found that the force had 4,615 people who were wanted for a variety of crimes. Of these, 2,331 have been circulated on the police national computer and 2,284 have not. This is broadly in line with other forces in England and Wales. In response, the force has improved its management of wanted person data and has introduced a number of initiatives to reduce the number still wanted. The number of outstanding suspects has continued to reduce; outstanding domestic abuse suspects fell to 225 as at 30 November 2016 from 283 on 19 August 2016. The most effective of the initiatives to reduce outstanding suspects is being run in the southern local policing area (Operation Titan), where the numbers of outstanding suspects and wanted persons has reduced faster than in the other local policing areas. The force should ensure that the good practice identified in the southern local policing area is taken up by the other areas.

Officers are sometimes placing wanted persons onto the police national computer without first completing sufficient local enquiries to apprehend the person. This would appear to be a default position with some staff: many said that they are too busy and that they are not given the time to carry out all lines of enquiry before placing a person onto the police national computer. Supervisors should ensure that all appropriate local enquiries have been completed before details are circulated on the police national computer, and the force should ensure this is happening.

In the 12 months to 30 June 2016, the force made 1,707 arrests of foreign nationals. The force's policy is that all arrested foreign nationals should be subject to an ACRO check,[22] which provides enhanced information on criminality and allows the force to better identify and manage risk. The force does not complete repeat checks on foreign suspects who have been subject to an ACRO check previously. The force is in the process of implementing the ACRO Business Solution tool, which automates the checks so that these do not have to be completed manually by custody staff, thereby freeing up officer time.

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[22] ACRO Criminal Records Office manages criminal record information and is able to receive/share information with foreign countries in relation to foreign offenders arrested within the United Kingdom.

How well does the force protect the public from the most harmful offenders?

The force has a well-established integrated offender management (IOM)[23] scheme, comprised of 18 officers who work closely with, but are not co-located with, partner agencies such as probation. At the time of our inspection there were 315 people on the IOM scheme. In 2015 the scheme only included people involved in acquisitive crime such as burglary and theft; this has now changed and the scheme is beginning to better reflect the force's priorities around vulnerability. The scheme now has 24 violent offenders linked to domestic abuse and 76 linked to acquisitive crime but also violence. However most of the cohort (203) are linked to acquisitive crime. In order to better manage domestic abuse and violent offenders, IOM staff have received training in abusive relationships and family disturbance. With the probation service, consideration is also given to attaching a requirement for an offender to attend the Thinking Skills Programme[24] and Building Better Relationships scheme.[25] The force is seeking to further develop the IOM scheme by including offenders linked to organised crime and gangs, thereby strengthening the scheme's links with force priorities.

Offenders join the scheme only after a multi-agency discussion and agreement at the IOM partnership management meeting. All of those on the scheme are reviewed on a two-weekly basis, and the IOM team shares information with colleagues and partner organisations on a daily basis, including information on offenders who are descending into chaotic behaviour, thereby increasing the risks of them re-offending. We found examples of excellent partnership work, including a Friday church drop-in at Basildon, where those on the IOM scheme can seek help and guidance when they are facing a crisis or problems that might cause them to re-offend. Partner organisations saw this type of initiative as being very helpful.

The force identifies and monitors those who pose the greatest risk to the community. However, the high number of registered sex offenders is creating pressures within the team of officers who are trained to manage these offenders. The force reports that it is receiving about one new registered sex offender a week to manage.

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[23] Integrated offender management brings a multi-agency response to the crime and re-offending threats faced by local communities. The most persistent and problematic offenders are identified and managed jointly by partner agencies working together.

[24] This addresses thinking and behaviour associated with offending through a sequenced series of structured exercises designed to teach inter-personal problem-solving skills.

[25] A programme for male perpetrators of violence and abuse within (heterosexual) intimate relationships. The scheme is run within prison and community delivery sites and aims to increase understanding of motivating factors in domestic violence, reduce individual risk factors linked to violence and develop pro-social relationship skills.

The force employs 37 MOSOVO[26] officers and staff to manage the 1,245 registered sex offenders in Essex. We found these officers are skilled and accredited, and that they develop clear plans to reduce the risk from registered sex offenders, with supervision and governance arrangements.

Of the 1,245 registered sex offenders, two are very high risk and 149 are high risk.[27] In our recent child protection inspection (September 2016),[28] we found a significant number of overdue visits (400) to sex offenders across the force; the previous inspection, in 2015, identified 50 overdue visits. Due to the pressures and risks, the deputy chief constable is actively involved in monitoring and directing activities. As part of the efforts to address the issue, the force is taking part in a National Police Chiefs' Council pilot. This seeks to base visits to registered sex offenders on an assessment of threat and risk, rather than a strict schedule of visiting all offenders at regular intervals, and will thereby focus on those posing the greatest risk. As part of the pilot, all outstanding low-risk visits have been cancelled and those outstanding medium risks delayed. In the future, all medium-risk offenders will be managed by local officers and staff and, should a low-risk offender come to notice by their behaviour or by offending, they will be re-assessed and subjected to interventions as appropriate. The pilot is being monitored at a board meeting chaired by the deputy chief constable. However, HMIC has concerns regarding this approach and the potential risks to the public of disengagement with registered sex offenders, and will assess this area in future inspections.

Sexual harm prevention orders (SHPOs)[29] are designed to protect the public from serious sexual harm from an offender by detailing a series of prohibitions designed to protect the community from future offending. For example, an order may prohibit certain activities on the internet or a particular type of employment, such as the tuition of young people. Breach of an SHPO is a criminal offence. In the 12 months to 30 June 2016, Essex Police issued 91 SHPOs, and reports that 23 of these orders have been breached. Those sex offenders who have certain restrictions placed on them which require enforcement (for example, not going to certain addresses or associating with certain people) are featured in briefings to officers, with instructions

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[26] MOSOVO: management of sexual offenders and violent offenders. The police have a shared responsibility for the management of sexual offenders and violent offenders when they are released from prison into the community, in partnership with probation and prison staff and other agencies.

[27] Data correct to 1 July 2016.

[28] *National Child Protection Re-Inspection – Essex Police*, HMIC, 2017. Available from: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/our-work/child-abuse-and-child-protection-issues/national-child-protection-inspection/

[29] Sexual Harm Prevention Orders (SHPOs) can be applied to anyone convicted or cautioned for a sexual or violent offence. They can place a range of restrictions on individuals depending on the nature of the case, such as limiting their internet use, preventing them from being alone with a child under 16, or preventing travel abroad.

to conduct compliance checks. We found that local officers have knowledge of those high-risk sex offenders living within their neighbourhoods, but very limited knowledge of low and medium-risk sex offenders.

Essex Police's multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPAs)[30] are under pressure. MAPPA arrangements are used by the force and partner organisations, including prisons and probation, to monitor those offenders assessed as presenting a high risk to the public and to stop them re-offending. Partner organisations within MAPPA considered that the current workloads are not realistic and that the processes may need to be changed. There are three formal MAPPA categories of offenders: level 1, all registered sex offenders; level 2, violent or other sex offenders not subject to notification requirements; and level 3, other dangerous offenders. In Essex, partner organisations are considering only reviewing level 2 cases and reducing the number of MAPPA meetings to help ensure greater attendance from all partner agencies. HMIC will follow any developments in the MAPPA arrangements in Essex closely and will report on them in future.

Summary of findings

 Good

Essex Police is good at investigating crime and managing offenders. The force is good at providing an initial investigative response. The control room ensures evidence is collected and preserved effectively and it uses a structured approach to assess whether calls require an officer to attend. Generally, the force investigates crimes well across a range of crime types. Despite investment in digital evidence collection, officers are unaware of what support is available to them.

The force has worked hard to improve the service it offers victims, in particular complying with the *Code of Practice for Victims of Crime* and the completion of victims' personal statements.

Essex Police has made improvements in how it tracks and arrests those people who pose a risk to the public, including wanted persons and outstanding suspects. It has a well-established integrated offender management scheme which includes some domestic abuse offenders; importantly, staff have received training in how to manage these offenders.

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[30] Multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPAs) are in place to ensure the successful management of violent and sexual offenders. Agencies involved include as responsible bodies the police, probation trusts and prison service. Other agencies may become involved; for example, the Youth Justice Board will be responsible for the care of young offenders.

The force is under pressure to manage increasing numbers of registered sex offenders and while it is piloting a new approach to these offenders it must ensure that their management is appropriate at all times. It has good processes in place and works well with other organisations to manage the most dangerous offenders and registered sex offenders, but these processes are also under pressure because of increased demand.

Areas for improvement

- The force should promote the existence and benefit of its local digital media investigators and its phone triage kiosks and trained staff. This will improve its ability to retrieve digital evidence from mobile phones, computers and other electronic devices quickly enough to ensure that investigations are not delayed.

- The force should ensure that the risks posed by registered sex offenders are managed effectively. It should review its pilot in the management of registered sex offenders as soon as possible to assess if it is a viable approach.

How effective is the force at protecting those who are vulnerable from harm, and supporting victims?

Protecting the public, particularly those who are most vulnerable, is one of the most important duties placed on police forces. People can be vulnerable for many reasons and the extent of their vulnerability can change during the time they are in contact with the police. Last year HMIC had concerns about how well many forces were protecting those who were vulnerable. In this section of the report we set out how the force's performance has changed since last year.

Has the force improved since HMIC's 2015 vulnerability inspection?

In HMIC's 2015 effectiveness (vulnerability) report, we assessed Essex Police as inadequate because we had two causes of concern about the force's response to victims of domestic abuse and child sexual exploitation: a lack of understanding of vulnerability; and a lack of effective and reliable force processes to respond to and safeguard victims. We also identified three areas for improvement: its initial response to incidents; its initial investigation of cases involving vulnerable victims, particularly officer access to photographic and video-recording equipment; and its response to missing and absent children.

We revisited the force in March 2016, and judged that the force had made significant progress against the two causes of concern and three areas for improvement. We found that although there was still much work to do, there had been a complete change of mindset and approach to vulnerability across the force, with children and vulnerable people central to its work.

The improvements seen in March 2016 have continued and we found that knowledge of vulnerability is good and that control room staff are good at identifying risk when someone calls the police. There are clear systems and processes in place to assess and respond to victims and people who are vulnerable.

However, the force has more work to do in the management of outstanding suspects, as good practice and results are not being replicated across all areas. There are instances of officers undertaking roles and investigations for which they are not qualified or trained and with little or no identified support.

The force has not been able to develop a county-wide multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) with partner organisations and so has resorted to developing a public protection operations centre to complete as much of the work of a MASH as it can without the co-location of partner agencies within it.

> The force's response to domestic abuse continues to improve and the support to victims of high-risk domestic abuse is good. Essex Police has improved since HMIC's 2015 inspection. In this inspection, we judge the force to require improvement in how it is protecting those who are vulnerable from harm, and supporting victims.

How effectively does the force identify those who are vulnerable and assess their level of risk and need?

In order to protect those who are vulnerable effectively forces need to understand comprehensively the scale of vulnerability in the communities they police. This requires forces to work with a range of communities, including those whose voices may not often be heard. It is important that forces understand fully what it means to be vulnerable, what might make someone vulnerable and that officers and staff who come into contact with the public can recognise this vulnerability. This means that forces can identify vulnerable people early on and can provide them with an appropriate service.

Understanding the risk

Forces define a vulnerable victim in different ways. This is because there is not a standard requirement on forces to record whether a victim is vulnerable on crime recording systems. Some forces use the definition from the government's *Code of Practice for Victims of Crime*,[31] others use the definition referred to in ACPO guidance[32] and the remainder use their own definition.

Essex Police uses its own definition of a vulnerable victim, which is:

> "The Statutory framework introduced under the Care Act applies to any person aged 18 or above who: (1) Has needs for care and support (regardless of need and whether or not the local authority is meeting any or those needs (2) Is experiencing, or is at risk of abuse or neglect, and (3) As a result of those needs is unable to protect themselves against the abuse or negletct or the risk of it."

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[31] *Code of Practice for Victims of Crime*, Ministry of Justice, 2013. Available from www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/254459/code-of-practicevictims-of-crime.pdf

[32] The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) is now the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC). ACPO Guidance on Safeguarding and Investigating the Abuse of Vulnerable Adults, NPIA, 2012. Available from: www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/vulnerable-adults/

Data returned by forces to HMIC show that in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, the proportion of crime recorded which involves a vulnerable victim varies considerably between forces, from 3.9 percent to 44.4 percent. Essex Police was one of five forces that were unable to provide vulnerable victim data.

Essex Police has an understanding of the nature and scale of vulnerability in its local areas but this is based primarily on police data. The force has developed several problem profiles for vulnerable people, such as those at risk of child sexual exploitation and domestic abuse; however, there is no missing person problem profile, although it is covered to some extent in the child sexual exploitation profile. A problem profile uses intelligence and information to better understand a particular crime type or emerging issues. The force needs to do more to ensure its problem profiles are comprehensive. Bringing together data and intelligence in a problem profile can help the force in identifying possible victims, intelligence gaps and prevention or reassurance opportunities. There is a good child sexual exploitation profile for Southend that uses partnership data, but this is not replicated across the force. The force does recognise the need to record and use partnership data more effectively and has recently employed an analyst to improve this.

The force continues to use its own definition of a vulnerable victim taken from the Care Act 2014. Beyond this, the force has worked hard to raise its staff's understanding of the 14 strands of vulnerability[33] and has produced a booklet covering all the strands. It has also developed and provided to staff a three-day public protection course that covers vulnerability in detail. We found that the 14 strands were displayed on large screens in the control room.

Essex Police has developed a revised domestic abuse action plan for 2016/17, which has 28 individual actions to be undertaken, covering initial contact with domestic abuse victims to supporting victims and managing offenders. Each action has a nominated person responsible for it and a delivery date. The actions are all appropriate and illustrate the force's ambition to further improve its response to domestic abuse; however, many of the identified actions are yet to be progressed. HMIC will review progress of this action plan in future inspections.

The force's recognition of mental health problems is good; the officers and staff we spoke to were very aware of the issue. In the 12 months to 30 June 2016, some 1.1 percent of incidents in Essex were identified as having a mental health element. This is below the 2.4 percent rate for England and Wales. The force does not have a mental health expert within its control room, but it does have a mental health street

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[33] The 13 strands of vulnerability as determined by the College of Policing are: domestic abuse, adult sexual exploitation, stalking and harassment, missing and absent, female genital mutilation, managing of sex and violent offenders, adults at risk, child abuse, honour-based abuse, modern slavery and trafficking, forced marriage, serious sexual offences, and child sexual exploitation. Essex Police has also included hate crime as a strand.

triage process with healthcare colleagues. This is currently available for eight hours a day but the force is hoping increase this to 16 hours a day. Officers assisting mental health street triage have gone on a training course, and all officers receive training on mental health during mandatory first-aid training.

Staff in the control room are trained effectively to identify risk through a structured process known as THRIVE. They also have access to the force's computer system, which contains additional information including warning markers on individuals, so they can use a wide range of information when deciding whether someone is vulnerable. Control room supervisors complete secondary checks and have vulnerability at the forefront of their work, and the risk-intervention team within the control room proactively scans incidents to check vulnerability is being responded to appropriately.

The force has specific flags on the incident management system to allow the easy and quick identification of repeat victims and people who are vulnerable. There is also a flag for child sexual exploitation on both the incident management system and the crime system. In the 12 months to 30 June 2016, Essex Police flagged 4.2 percent of calls as involving a vulnerable victim. This is in line with the 3.8 percent rate for England and Wales.

At the time of our inspection, there were 32 unresolved open domestic abuse cases in the control room. None of these were high-risk cases and the cases were found to be well managed and under constant review. The oldest case was a week old and activity was evident on the log, with the force attempting to work with the victim, who was proving difficult to engage. Overall, the number of unresolved incidents in the force continues to fall. In HMIC's 2015 effectiveness (vulnerability) report, we identified 1,000 such incidents, which meant some victims were receiving a poor response from the outset and the force could not offer them the level of service that they needed. The number of unresolved incidents has now fallen to around 500 and continues to reduce. This is partly a consequence of the roll-out of mobile devices to officers, which means that they can update information on incidents and crime without having to return to a police station. These unresolved incidents are made up of low-risk cases and are often where the force is struggling to make contact with the victim and/or informant.

We found that the force has robust processes in place to continually re-assess and manage any risk held within these incidents, including the identification and review of all incidents involving children, with processes to expedite referrals and safeguarding if required, and a review of incident levels and required activity within the force daily management meeting, when resources are allocated.

The force is establishing a public protection operations centre; this currently provides a vulnerability-focused intelligence analysis, assessment and triage function. This appears to be working well and we received good feedback from officers as well as

partner agencies. We found evidence of domestic abuse incidents being reviewed by the public protection operations centre, and intelligence being passed back to the control room. However, sometimes the control room is inappropriately delaying sending officers to an incident while they wait for the intelligence package from the centre. This has been recognised by supervisors in the public protection operations centre, who are actively addressing the issue with control room staff and managers. A post-implementation review of the public protection operations centre will be conducted in March 2017 to assess progress and success and should help inform further development work.

We found that beyond the infrequent delay described above, the force deploys resources appropriately to incidents that involve people who are vulnerable, and its grading policy for incidents is directly linked to the THRIVE assessment conducted by staff.

How effectively does the force initially respond to vulnerable victims?

The initial work of officers responding to a vulnerable person is vital, because failure to carry out the correct actions may make future work with the victim or further investigation very difficult. This could be the first time victims have contacted the police after suffering years of victimisation or they may have had repeated contact with the police; either way, the response of officers is crucial. The initial response to a vulnerable victim must inspire confidence that the victim's concerns are being taken seriously as well as provide practical actions and support to keep the victim safe. The officer should also assess the risk to the victim at that moment and others in the same household, and collect sufficient information to support the longer-term response of the force and other partner organisations.

Do officers assess risk correctly and keep victims safe?

Essex Police effectively identifies and assesses vulnerability and risk at initial response. Awareness and understanding of vulnerability has improved significantly since last year. All officers and staff we spoke to knew that it is a priority and they could describe examples of what might constitute vulnerability. The officers' guide to vulnerability booklet is seen as good practice and is already being considered by other forces. The three-day public protection course undertaken by over 1,000 staff so far has also been very well received. The force has established processes to ensure that officers' response to vulnerable victims is appropriate and reflects their needs. These include the procedures within the public protection operations centre, whose role it is to share information quickly and efficiently with partner agencies. The understanding of the link between missing children and the risks of child sexual exploitation and human trafficking is much improved across the force as a consequence of the training given to staff. Processes to report child sexual exploitation have been improved, with the support of partner agencies, but more

needs to be done to ensure that all relevant information, such as the full details of referrals to child social care and of what information has been shared, is appropriately recorded on force systems.

Frontline staff follow a clear process when assessing risk and addressing the nature of a victim's vulnerability. Staff identify safeguarding measures through the DASH[34] form, which officers complete at all domestic abuse incidents. The form requires a 'risk to victim' report, with actions noted to remove, avoid, reduce or accept the risk. Children are expected to be recorded on the same form to enable suitable consideration and safeguarding of their needs. The forms are subject to supervision and scrutiny to ensure accuracy, including by the domestic abuse team (Juno) sergeants.

There are clear systems and processes in place in the control room for the categorisation and subsequent review of missing persons. The removal of the absent classification for children has provided greater clarity for the force in the approach and response to these individuals. The introduction of the missing person's liaison officer role and child sexual exploitation team in the public protection operations centre provides stronger links and better co-ordination of effort, particularly around persistent missing looked-after children, who are children living in care and foster homes. The missing person's liaison officers review the daily updated missing persons list, checking the risk assessments, sourcing any intelligence, contacting other agencies and considering what action may need to be taken to find the person. These officers are also making regular visits to care homes to build relationships with staff and better understand the children in their care.

Officer and staff recognition of the links between missing episodes and child sexual exploitation has vastly improved. The force effectively contributes to multi-agency work with external partner organisations to safeguard children who go missing and attends the monthly missing and child sexual exploitation meetings with partner agencies to discuss cases and share information. A missing and child sexual exploitation multi-agency conference has also been held to increase awareness across the force and partner organisations.

The force has invested in body-worn video cameras and continues to increase the number of officers wearing these cameras. Currently, 411 devices are deployed, and a further 890 are planned to be deployed. There are some considerable issues with the time it takes to download evidence, but the further deployment of body-worn video cameras will help improve the quality of evidence gathered at the scene of domestic abuse incidents.

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[34] DASH (domestic abuse, stalking and harassment) is a risk identification, assessment and management model adopted by UK police forces and partner organisations in 2009. The aim of the DASH assessment is to help frontline practitioners identify high-risk cases of domestic abuse, stalking and so-called honour-based violence.

The Home Office has shared domestic abuse related offences data, recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, with HMIC. These are more recent figures than those previously published by Office for National Statistics. These data shows that in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, police-recorded domestic abuse in Essex increased by 24 percent compared with the 12 months to 31 March 2015. This compares with an increase of 23 percent across England and Wales. In the same period, police-recorded domestic abuse accounted for 12 percent of all police-recorded crime in Essex, compared with 11 percent of all police-recorded crime across England and Wales.

The rate of arrest for domestic abuse offences can provide an indication of a force's approach to handling domestic abuse offenders. Although for the purpose of this calculation arrests are not directly tracked to offences, a high arrest rate may suggest that a force prioritises arrests for domestic abuse offenders over other potential forms of action (for further details, see annex A). HMIC has evaluated the arrest rate alongside other measures during our inspection process to understand how each force deals with domestic abuse overall.

In Essex Police, for every 100 domestic abuse related offences recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, there were 67 arrests made in the same period.

Figure 6: Domestic abuse arrest rate (per 100 domestic abuse crimes), by force, for the 12 months to 30 June 2016[35]
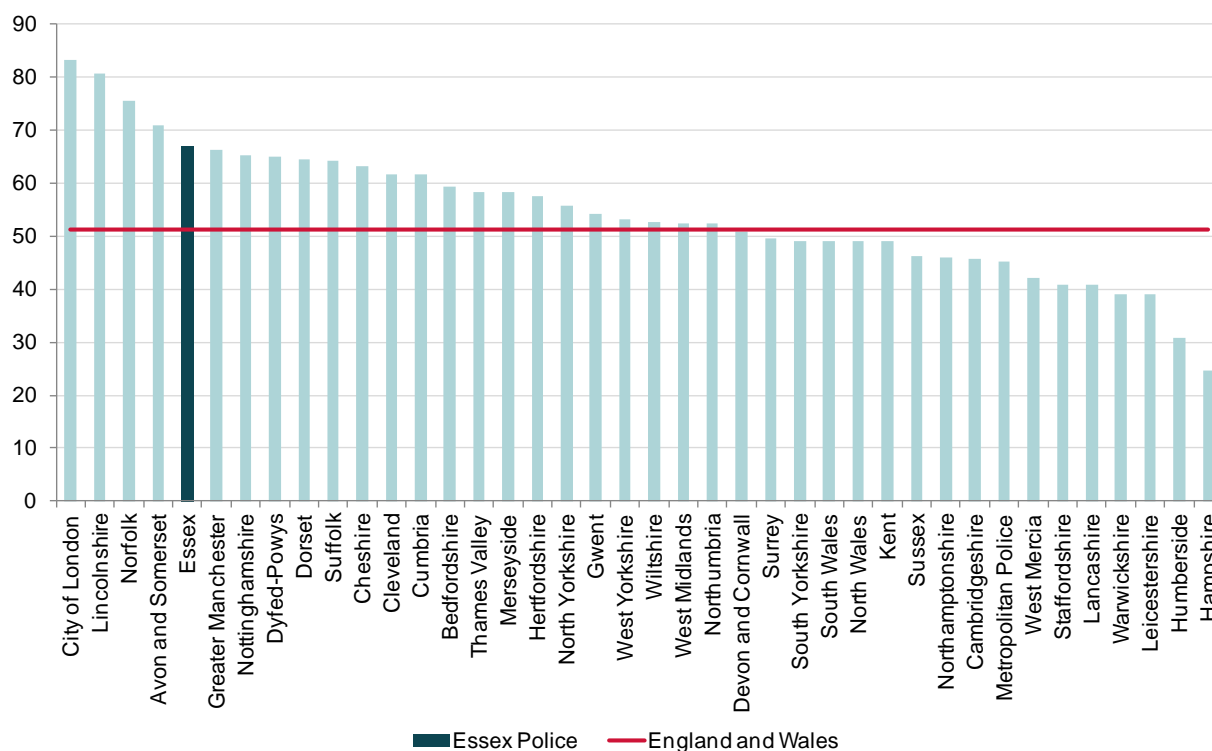
All safeguarding for high-risk cases is completed by the central referral unit, which produces safety plans and makes appropriate referrals to partner organisations. Quality assurance of medium and standard-risk domestic abuse DASH forms is completed by a supervisor. Medium-risk domestic abuse safeguarding is completed by the Juno teams and standard-risk cases by response officers.

On 21 January 2016, the force introduced a new single child abuse referral form, with the full agreement of partner agencies. The form (PP57) is designed to provide an effective and efficient means by which referrals to children's social care are made by officers. It was identified quite quickly that children's social care could not cope with the demand this created. As a result, while officers always complete a PP57 relating to a child, they now apply a threshold test so that only high and medium-risk cases are referred to social care. The officers' vulnerability pocket guide gives guidance on this, however the force may wish to evaluate these referrals to ensure that there is consistency in the referrals.

The quality of handovers has undergone close scrutiny by the force, with training being provided to officers on the standard required. The introduction of a form titled

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[35] Derbyshire, Durham and Gloucestershire forces were not able to provide domestic abuse arrest data. Therefore, these forces' data are not included in the graph or in the calculation of the England and Wales rate.

'The case action plan – investigation minimum standards' (PP60) is central to supporting better handover packages. The form contains a number of prompts in relation to four areas: safeguarding, investigation, victim considerations, and suspect management. Our review of a number of these forms found them to be useful and informative.

The force has recruited a very proactive modern-day slavery and human trafficking co-ordinator to help with ongoing development work. The co-ordinator has been providing awareness training sessions since June 2016, which include elements on indicators and what to consider, both within other crime types and 'hidden crimes' such as domestic abuse. It also covers where to go for advice and guidance and how to make best use of partnership working. The role is seen by the force and partner organisations as a very positive initiative.

How effectively does the force investigate offences involving vulnerable victims and work with external partners to keep victims safe?

Those who are vulnerable often have complex and multiple needs that a police response alone cannot always meet. They may need support with housing, access to mental health services or support from social services. Nonetheless, the police still have an important responsibility to keep victims safe and investigate crimes. These crimes can be serious and complex (such as rape or violent offences). Their victims may appear to be reluctant to support the work of the police, often because they are being controlled by the perpetrator (such as victims of domestic abuse or child sexual exploitation).

In HMIC's 2015 effectiveness (vulnerability) report, we judged the force to be inadequate because it was failing to properly support and safeguard vulnerable people. However, on a re-visit in April 2016, we saw significant progress and a complete change of mindset and approach to vulnerability across the force, with children and vulnerable people central to its work. The force remains good at investigating high-risk domestic abuse and serious sexual offences and safeguards victims effectively.

Public protection and domestic abuse investigative teams appear to be sufficiently resourced and their workloads appear to be, in general, appropriately allocated and manageable. These units include a mixture of detectives, trainee detectives and uniform constables on development secondments. Although the level of training has improved since last year, the force needs to ensure that it balances these teams with sufficient experience and supervision. We visited a child abuse investigation team and found that of the two detective sergeants posts allocated to the team, one post was vacant and the other was being filled by a detective constable who was not qualified to fulfil the role. In a domestic abuse investigation team, we found two

probationers who were on a short secondment to the unit and who were about to deal with a high-risk domestic abuse offender without any obvious support or suitable training. Of the public protection crime records examined during our fieldwork, in the main, there was evidence of structured investigation and risk management plans, regular updates, victim contact and supervisory oversight.

Force policies or local guidelines on stalking and harassment are important because their purpose is to clarify local implementation of national guidance. Essex Police has a good force policy on stalking and harassment, which has been revised in November 2016. To facilitate effective and early consultation between the Crown Prosecution Service and the police, all police forces and all Crown Prosecution Service areas should have in place single point of contact officers for stalking cases. Essex Police has a single point of contact officer for stalking cases, as required, at the inspector rank, from within the public protection operations centre. However, this was a very new appointment and it is too early to say what the impact of the post will be. Our review of stalking and harassment case files found that the investigations in these cases were mostly effective, but we found that police information notices (PINs) are being issued inappropriately in some cases. The force is aware of the inappropriate issuing of police information notices in cases of domestic abuse and has been providing training to officers about coercive and controlling behaviour. We also found a number of different versions of the police information notices in use, one of which was a very old form containing the name and address of the victim, which in different circumstances might have left them open to further victimisation. The force is taking action to address this.

In the year to 30 June 2016, 215 domestic violence prevention notices (DVPNs) were authorised. Applications for 215 domestic violence prevention orders (DVPOs) were made, with 186 being granted by the courts. The force reports that 76 DVPOs were breached in the 12 months to 30 June 2016. The force's use of DVPNs and DVPOs has decreased over 2016 and it now averages around 20 DVPNs a month, but it remains above the rate for England and Wales.

Essex Police also uses the domestic violence disclosure scheme (Clare's Law).[36] In the 12 months to 30 June 2016, the force used the right to ask if a partner has a violent past 17 times; the force reports that it received 89 applications for right to ask, but that only 17 met the criteria for disclosure. In the 12 months to 30 June 2016, the force used the right to know 179 times; the force reports that it received 1,076 referrals for the right to know but that only 179 have received a disclosure and a further 50, having had a disclosure authorised, are in the process of having the disclosure passed over. Clare's Law applications are received and reviewed by the

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[36] Clare's Law increases protection for domestic abuse victims and enables the police to better identify domestic abuse perpetrators. For more information, see: www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/domestic-abuse/leadership-strategic-oversight-and-management/#domestic-violence-disclosure-scheme-clares-law.

central referral unit within the force before being submitted for authorisation to a panel that includes partner agencies.

The force has not yet been successful in creating an effective multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) across the county in order that victims receive the best multi-agency help available; there is a fully established children's MASH in Thurrock. The force's public protection operations centre has been designed to complete as much of the work of a MASH as it can without the co-location of partner agencies within it. A county MASH, with co-located partners, would streamline processes and improve services. The public protection operations centre has been live since September 2016 and will be subject to a post-implementation review in March 2017 to assess progress; this will inform further development work. The children's MASH at Thurrock was visited during inspection fieldwork and it was found to be effective, with 17 contributing partner organisations and clear processes to understand, assess and respond to children potentially at risk. It was found that not all activity undertaken within the MASH is shared across all partners, which means that not all agencies have the most up-to-date information on cases; a simple feedback process would resolve this issue.

The force's police online investigation team (POLIT) is effective. The team's role is: to manage the force's response to crimes of production, distribution and storage of indecent images of children; to develop intelligence and identify individuals looking to exploit and abuse children; and to deploy proactively to prevent offences (rape and serious sexual offences) and arrest those planning, preparing or engaging in such offences. Caseloads for officers in the POLIT are acceptable, at around 15 per officer. We reviewed a number of cases in the POLIT and found them to be of good quality, and it is clear that regular discussions are taking place between the investigating officers and their supervisors, including on changing risk levels according to circumstances. However, the documenting of these discussions and any evidential review is inconsistent. We found no backlog in cases awaiting review and the oldest case was from May 2016, which is a significant improvement from our previous inspections. There is an issue in how the force examines digital media. Digital forensics are provided in collaboration with Kent Police, and the standard process for the digital forensics unit is not to examine deleted data on the first submission of the seized media, but rather assess live data and then return the media to the POLIT. Examination of deleted data on the first submission would fall in line with the practices of other forces and would reduce bail time and increase efficiency. The matter has been raised with the digital forensics unit, but to date deleted data is not subject to early examination.

There are high levels of demand from cases of child grooming, incitement and indecent images. As a result, those low-risk cases, where police checks have revealed the suspect does not have access to children, are assigned for investigation to detectives based in the local policing areas and not to the POLIT. All such cases are first assessed by the POLIT and a package provided to the local

detective officer assigned with the investigation; this includes an investigation plan, initial advice and direction to contact the POLIT for additional and ongoing advice. There is also a single point of contact officer in each local policing area, who co-ordinates cases and is able to offer advice and guidance.

Victims of domestic abuse

Essex Police's response to domestic abuse continues to improve and the support to victims of high-risk domestic abuse is good, with positive action at the scene, structured joint agency safeguarding and good outcomes for victims. The confusion previously identified in HMIC's 2015 effectiveness (vulnerability) report over who held responsibility for victims has mostly been removed. Policy and procedures are explicit about where responsibility lies at all times, and officers we spoke to understood this important area. The domestic abuse investigation teams manage all high-risk and most medium-risk cases, with response officers investigating standard risk cases. Of those cases we reviewed, it was not always clear that investigation plans had been set and although supervisor reviews were evident and timely, they did not always add much direction or substance to the investigation. The force is aware of this through its own audit work and has implemented training for supervisors, led by a superintendent.

The central referral unit undertakes additional work with acute victims of domestic abuse. The unit identifies those at highest risk of further harm and each victim is allocated a domestic abuse safeguarding officer who contacts them monthly, refers them to the most appropriate services and arranges a multi-agency strategy meeting. The initiative has been running for over a year and currently has 51 high-risk victims. This initiative appears to add value and enhance the safeguarding of victims, but a review of the impact of the approach has not yet been completed.

We found evidence of delays in the control room deploying resources to domestic abuse incidents because they were waiting for the public protection operations centre to supply the intelligence package. The centre has challenged some of these cases, making it clear that officers should be deployed in line with force deployment processes and that the intelligence pack is intended to inform the attending officers of the risk posed to the victim as well as the risk posed to the officers before or as they attend, and that it is not part of the initial response grading process.

The force is broadly in line with the rate for England and Wales in outcomes for domestic abuse. It is below the rate for the use of community resolutions, which reflects the force's good approach to taking positive action in cases of domestic abuse. For domestic abuse related crimes, the outcome rate for 'evidential difficulties where the victim does not support police action' is 41.0 percent which is slightly higher than the rate for England and Wales at 35.4 percent. The force is not fully aware of what these evidential difficulties are and may benefit from a greater understanding so that any problems can be addressed. The arrest rate for domestic abuse crimes has fallen from 72.7 percent in the 12 months to 31 March 2015 to

67.1 percent in the 12 months to 30 June 2016. Over the same period, the charge and summons rate for domestic abuse cases has fallen from 33.8 percent to 24.5 percent. The force was not able to provide any reason for these reductions at a time when the focus of positive action was, and still is, so clearly at the forefront of its approach to domestic abuse.

The force runs Operation Shield, which has a small number of staff working effectively with domestic abuse offenders. The team is highly effective at targeting high-risk domestic abuse offenders and arresting them. Their work can also include house searches and seizures of evidence and the processing of offenders through custody. Further work includes the responsibility for putting safeguarding arrangements in place for victims when an offender is released from prison. We saw an example of a comprehensive action plan for a victim where the offender was due to be released from prison. This included details of the victim's car being circulated to officers and detailed actions for the control room to follow in the event of an incident occurring.

The force is taking steps to support children and young people who witness domestic abuse. It runs a domestic abuse notification scheme (Operation Encompass)[37] through which it notifies schools about children who are in households where domestic abuse incidents have been reported. This is a positive approach that has recently been rolled out across the entire force.

In April 2015, the Home Office began collecting information from the police on whether recorded offences were related to domestic abuse. Crimes are identified by the police as domestic abuse related if the offence meets the government definition of domestic violence and abuse.[38]

The rate of outcomes recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016 for domestic abuse offences is shown in figure 7. Domestic abuse crimes used in this calculation are not necessarily those to which the outcomes have been assigned and are only linked by the fact that they both occur in the 12 months to 30 June 2016. Therefore, direct comparisons should not be made between general outcomes in figure 4, where each crime is linked to its associated outcome (for further details see annex A).

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[37] A project, in operation across 15 police force areas, which aims to safeguard and support children and young people who have been involved in or affected by incidents involving domestic abuse. Following such an incident, a school's 'key adult' is contacted by 9am the next day and made aware. Arrangements can then be put in place to support children during their school day.

[38] Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.

Figure 7: Rate of outcomes recorded in 12 months to 30 June 2016 for domestic-related offences in Essex Police[39]

Outcome type / group	Essex Police	England and Wales
Charged / Summonsed	24.5	23.2
Caution – adults	5.2	5.6
Caution – youths	0.4	0.3
Community resolution	0.4	1.4
Evidential difficulties prevent further action; victim supports police action	25.0	24.1
Evidential difficulties prevent further action; victim does not support police action	41.0	35.4

Source: HMIC data return, Home Office data
For further information about these data, please see annex A

In the 12 months to 30 June 2016, Essex Police's use of outcomes for domestic abuse flagged offences was in line with those in England and Wales as a whole. However, any interpretation of outcomes should take into account that outcomes will vary dependent on the crime types that occur in each force area, and how it deals with offenders for different crimes.

Summary of findings

Requires improvement

Essex Police has made significant improvements in the way in which it recognises and responds to people who are vulnerable. The force has an understanding of the nature and scale of vulnerability in its local areas, but this is based primarily on police data. Staff understanding of vulnerability continues to improve and control room staff are good at identifying risk when someone calls the police. All frontline staff follow a clear procedure to address risk and vulnerability and understand the need to take positive action in cases of domestic abuse. However, sometimes response to domestic abuse cases is delayed while control room staff wait for the production of an intelligence pack.

There are clear systems and processes in place for the management of missing persons, and the force has removed the absent classification for children, which has provided greater clarity on the approach and response to these individuals.

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[39] Dorset Police and Nottinghamshire Police were unable to submit domestic abuse outcomes data. Therefore, these forces' data are not included in the graph or in the calculation of the England and Wales rate.

Public protection and domestic abuse investigative teams appear to be sufficiently resourced, but we found instances of officers undertaking roles and investigations for which they were not qualified or trained and with little obvious support from more experienced colleagues. The force has more work to do in the management of outstanding suspects because good practice and results are not being replicated across all areas.

The force has not yet been able to convince partner organisations to join them in effective multi-agency safeguarding hubs (MASH). Without these, victims may receive a poorer level of service than they otherwise would as provision of help is not as co-ordinated as it could be. The force's public protection operations centre is very similar to a MASH but without the co-located partner agencies, and it would be a significant step forward if the force was able to get all its partner organisations to accept the effectiveness of a county MASH.

The force's response to domestic abuse continues to improve and the support to victims of high-risk domestic abuse is good, with positive action at the scene, structured joint agency safeguarding and good outcomes for victims.

Areas for improvement

- The force should include data and information from partner organisations within its problem profiles and strategic assessments to enhance its understanding of vulnerability and provide a fuller picture of crime and anti-social behaviour in Essex. It should also consider developing a missing person problem profile.

- The force should ensure that officers undertake roles for which they are qualified and trained, and if, for practical reasons, an officer is required to undertake a role without such qualifications and training, that suitable support is available to them at all times.

- The force should ensure that processes to reduce outstanding offenders are consistently applied so that the processes are effective and efficient across the whole force.

- The force should continue to develop an effective county multi-agency safeguarding hub so that victims are offered the best possible multi-agency service.

How effective is the force at tackling serious and organised crime?

Serious and organised crime poses a threat to the public across the whole of the UK and beyond. Individuals, communities and businesses feel its damaging effects. Police forces have a critical role in tackling serious and organised crime alongside regional organised crime units (ROCUs), the National Crime Agency (NCA) and other partner organisations. Police forces that are effective in this area of policing tackle serious and organised crime not just by prosecuting offenders, but by disrupting and preventing organised criminality at a local level.

How effectively does the force understand the threat and risk posed by serious and organised crime?

In order to tackle serious and organised crime effectively forces must first have a good understanding of the threats it poses to their communities. Forces should be using a range of intelligence (not just from the police but also from other partner organisations) to understand threats and risks, from traditional organised crime such as drug dealing and money laundering to the more recently-understood threats such as cyber-crime and child sexual exploitation.

Essex Police and Kent Police tackle serious and organised crime in collaboration, through their joint serious crime directorate. Essex Police is good at assessing the threat posed to its communities by serious and organised crime and has produced a new control strategy that features emerging threats, including child sexual exploitation, gangs, human trafficking and modern slavery. National Crime Agency and strategic partnership information is used to formulate the control strategy. The force's serious organised crime local profiles[40] cover a wider range of crime types, including gangs, cyber-crime, modern slavery, organised immigration groups and organised crime groups, however National Ballistics Intelligence Service[41] information is not used. This means that local profiles do not include information about current trends in the criminal use of firearms.

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[40] A local profile is a report that outlines the threat from serious and organised crime within a specific local area. SOC local profiles are available from:
www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/371602/Serious_and_Organised_Crime_local_profiles.pdf

[41] The National Ballistics Intelligence Service provides fast-time forensic intelligence as well as tactical and strategic intelligence to tackle all aspects of firearms-related criminality within the UK.

The force's control strategy and local profiles are built on the 4Ps[42] approach, and there is a 4Ps plan in place for every local organised crime group (OCG). The profiles contain information from local authorities, Essex County Council, housing, and to a limited degree, health and mental health services. The force recognises that the flow of intelligence needs to improve so that its partner agencies can contribute more to the local profiles, which at present mainly hold police-generated information. In response, the force has employed analysts to work with the community safety partnerships and will identify what partner information may be available.

The force acknowledges that it could improve its intelligence on serious and organised crime by making better use of the Government Agency Information Network (GAIN).[43] It made only one referral to GAIN in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, although it does have direct access to intelligence from partner organisations. Many forces in England and Wales successfully exploit GAIN, so we consider that Essex Police should make better use of it.

Essex Police uses a range of intelligence sources to increase its understanding of serious and organised crime, including neighbourhood, community, partner agency and digital intelligence. Significant intelligence about gangs, especially from frontline officers, is received and the force has introduced a structured approach to assessing this information to identify which individual gang members are causing the most harm. The force is taking steps to better understand so-called newer threats, such as human trafficking and cyber-crime. We found evidence of structured intelligence collection, in conjunction with partner organisations, to help mitigate these threats and of operations against organised crime groups engaged in these types of criminality.

When a police force identifies a group of individuals it suspects may be involved in organised crime, it goes through a nationally standardised 'mapping' procedure. This involves entering the details of the group's known and suspected activity, associates and capability into a computer system, which assigns a numerical score to each organised crime group and places each organised crime group into one of several bands reflecting the range of severity of harm the group can cause.

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[42] 4Ps provides a national framework for tackling serious and organised crime that has been developed for national counter-terrorist work and has four thematic pillars, often referred to as the 4Ps:
– Pursue – prosecuting and disrupting people engaged in serious and organised crime;
– Prevent – preventing people from engaging in serious and organised crime;
– Protect – increasing protection against serious and organised crime; and
– Prepare – reducing the impact of this criminality where it takes place.

[43] The Government Agency Intelligence Network (GAIN) is a large network of partners, including all police forces in England and Wales, which shares information about organised criminals.

The force's approach to mapping organised crime groups is good. It has taken steps to ensure that all organised crime groups are mapped and scored appropriately and consistently using the national assessment tool and also that they are re-scored at intervals in accordance with national guidelines. The force is improving its mapping by increasing the intelligence from partner agencies and others in order to obtain the fullest picture. The community safety partnerships now consider organised crime groups as a standard part of their business.

As at 1 July 2016, Essex Police was actively disrupting, investigating or monitoring 22 organised crime groups (OCGs) per one million of the population. This compares to 46 OCGs per one million of the population across England and Wales.

The force acknowledges this and has launched wide-ranging actions (Operation Scorpion) to improve its identification of OCGs. A key action involves raising staff awareness of organised crime group activity and how to report it. At the time of our inspection, 85 percent of operational staff, including neighbourhood, response and CID, had been given face-to-face briefings by the Operation Scorpion team. We found that officers' knowledge of organised crime groups, what to look for and how to report it was mostly good. The force has also appointed a dedicated organised crime group adviser with whom officers can discuss referrals. The force is expecting increased identification of organised crime groups in the near future.

Figure 8: Organised crime groups per one million population, by force, as at 1 July 2016[44]
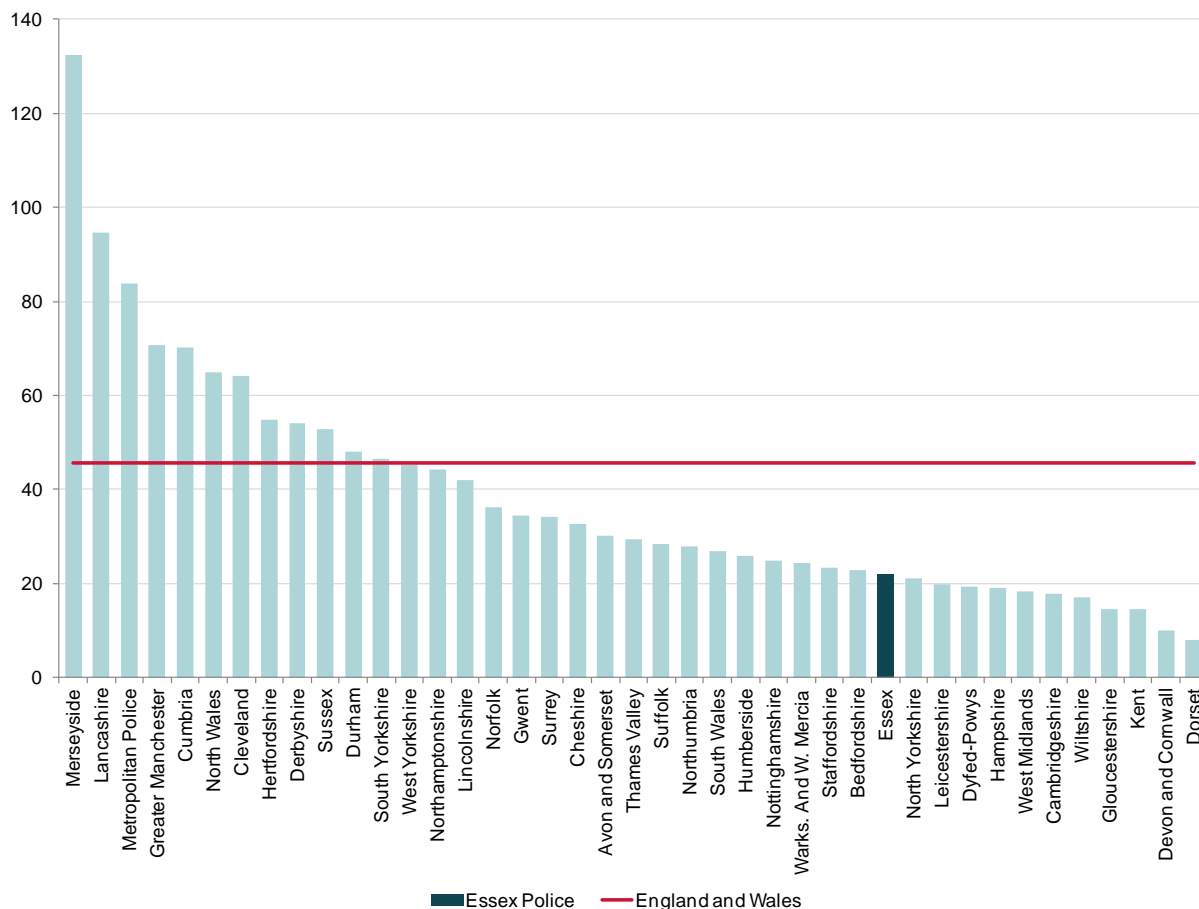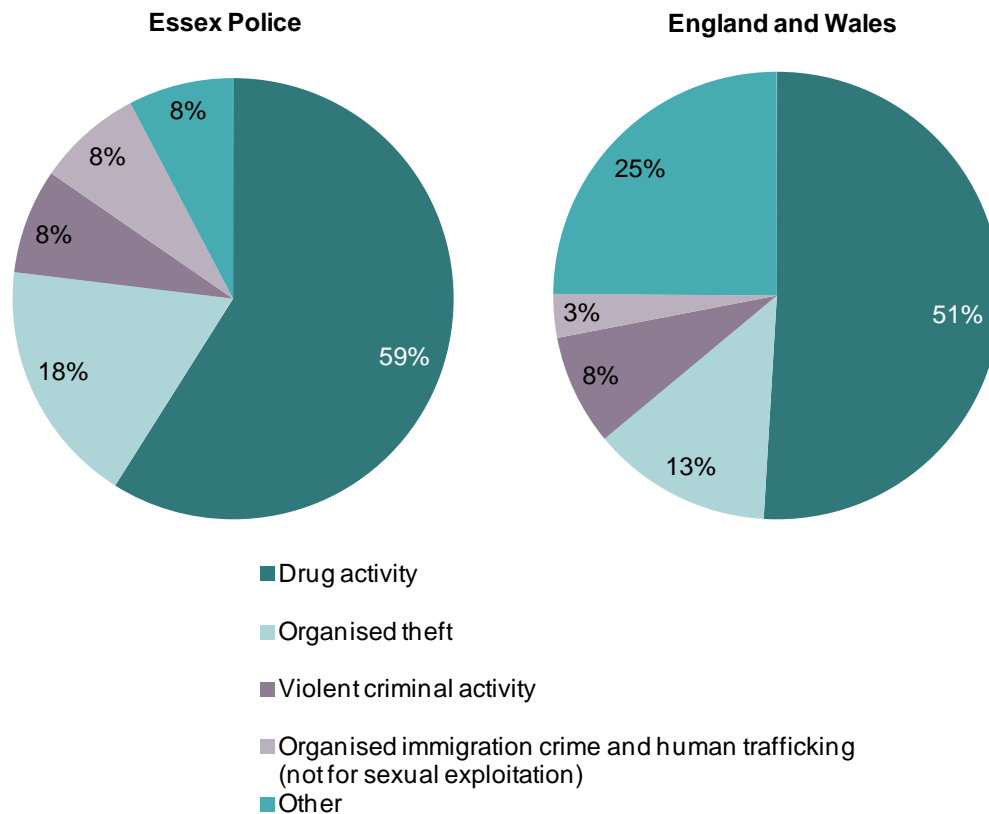
Forces categorise OCGs by the predominant form of criminal activity in which the group is involved. Although OCGs are likely to be involved in multiple forms of criminality (for example groups supplying drugs may also be supplying firearms and be involved in money laundering), this indicates their most common characteristic. 'Drug activity' was the most common predominant crime type of the OCGs managed by Essex Police as at 1 July 2016. This was also the most common OCG crime type recorded by all forces in England and Wales.

Many of the drugs organised crime groups in Essex are also involved in sexual offences, human trafficking and other newer threats. Three organised crime groups in Essex have been identified as organised immigration and human trafficking groups. Six of the 18 organised crime group operations that the serious crime directorate commissioned between January and June 2016 targeted newer threats such as human trafficking and cyber-crime. The force uses the gang-related incident tracker system (GRITS) to map gangs, and it currently has 75 recorded gangs. The GRITS scores individual gangs and gang members on the matrix, based on violence

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[44] City of London Police data have been removed from the chart and the England and Wales rate as its OCG data are not comparable with other forces due to size and its wider national remit.

and weapons, and intelligence which creates a harm score; the individuals are then graded as red, amber and green. These details are fed to the GRITS matrix, where the identification of the harm caused by the gang collectively is measured. Gangs are then ranked to indicate which are causing the public the most harm. The force has invested in three analysts to manage GRITS in support of each of the three local policing areas.

Figure 9: Active organised crime groups by predominant crime type in Essex, as at 1 July 2016

Essex Police   **England and Wales**

■ Drug activity

■ Organised theft

■ Violent criminal activity

■ Organised immigration crime and human trafficking
   (not for sexual exploitation)
■ Other

Source: HMIC data return
Note: Figures may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding. For further information about these data, please see annex A.

How effectively does the force respond to serious and organised crime?

An effective force will pursue and prosecute offenders and disrupt organised criminality at a local level. The force will use specialist capabilities, both in the force and at regional level, and non-specialist capabilities such as its neighbourhood teams. While it can be complex for a force to assess the success of its actions against serious and organised crime, it is important that the force understands the extent to which it disrupts this crime and reduces harm.

Essex Police has a strong and effective response to serious and organised crime. Every month it reviews organised crime groups. This is supported by analytical reports that score the organised crime groups against national criteria to assess the risk and harm they could cause to communities. On a weekly basis, the force meets to consider where it needs to allocate resources (both officers and technical equipment) in order to tackle the criminal and harmful behaviour of organised crime groups. In local policing areas, organised crime groups are managed by lead responsible officers who oversee and direct local activity. In addition, work to ensure that all 1,200 organised crime group members are flagged on the Athena intelligence system is under way and this will ensure that all organised crime group related activity is recorded more effectively. Athena is a fully integrated single policing database incorporating the principal policing functions of intelligence, investigation, custody and case file preparation. The system aims not only to provide an improved IT platform for each of the nine forces involved, but also instant cross-border data access. This will improve service to the public and set the foundations for future IT-enabled cross-border efficiency and effectiveness.

The force has previously been successful with an approach which disrupts organised crime groups and prosecutes offenders. In the last 12 months, this approach has changed to a more inclusive focus, including preventing people from joining organised crime groups in the first place, but more work is required.

An assistant chief constable chairs a monthly force strategic serious and organised crime board that oversees progress in tackling organised crime groups. This is a police service meeting and partner agencies are not involved. The force is developing partnership board oversight at a strategic level through the Safer Essex forum. At a local level, community safety partnerships review their partnership profile every six months so they are aware of emerging organised crime group activity, risks and intelligence and are able to respond more effectively. The force intends to develop an organised crime group partnership meeting structure at the community safety partnership level throughout the force area, which will enable a more cohesive county response to the issue. We found examples of the force working effectively with partner agencies to disrupt organised crime groups; in Operation Perceptional, the force worked with a voluntary organisation to disrupt an organised crime group involved in trafficking women to work in brothels in the force area. The organisation provided safe houses and care for the identified victims. The force is actively engaged in numerous initiatives to divert young people from becoming involved in gangs and in offering those already involved with gangs a way out. For example, it is working with the fire and rescue service to develop the Firebreak scheme, which is a cadet programme aimed at former gang members. It also works with the St Giles Trust, a charity operating across the force area which works with gang members to develop pathways out of organised crime, and the Abianda charity, which is working

with the force to provide support to women affected by gang violence. In addition, schools liaison officers visit schools across Essex to give presentations that include information about the dangers of gangs.

The force has also developed its proactive response to gangs by deploying teams (Operation Raptor) in each local policing area to disrupt and pursue gangs and gang members, as well as using Community Protection Notices[45] to tackle gang activity. HMIC found that these teams are well led and knowledgeable and that they are having an effect on gangs in Essex. The force has an exceptional full-time modern-day slavery[46] and human trafficking co-ordinator who is ensuring the police and other local partner organisations have a co-ordinated response to this particular criminal activity. This a joint project between the force, Essex County Council Youth Service, the Children's Society and Anglia Ruskin University. It aims to raise awareness among professionals and within the community of modern slavery and child exploitation and to support those who have been most adversely affected. It is expected that 80 young people will benefit each year from high-intensity victim support and that 60 young people a year will attend targeted therapeutic group work sessions to help improve their emotional and mental health. The initiative addresses the key national objectives of reducing vulnerability to exploitation, improving victim support and recovery, and improving overall knowledge of the area. The co-ordinator has carried out awareness-raising sessions since June 2016, providing these sessions to 900 frontline professionals, including hoteliers, taxi drivers, councillors, MPs, social workers, foster carers, safeguarding boards, policing teams, healthcare professionals, embassies, business representatives, farmers, media such as BBC Essex and BBC Kent, students from the University of Essex, and Neighbourhood Watch members. The role is seen as crucial to the force's and its partner organisations' response to modern-day slavery and human trafficking.

Evidence was found of the impact of this approach, including considerable efforts to raise awareness of staff working in hotels in the force area about the use of such premises for sexual exploitation. On 27 November 2016, police were notified by staff at the Premier Inn in Thurrock that a man had dropped off four girls aged between 13 and 16 at the hotel. It was discovered that the four were vulnerable missing persons from the Surrey area. They were taken into police protection and a man was arrested for matters related to child sexual exploitation, which led to the identification of a new organised crime group.

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[45] A community protection notice is aimed to prevent unreasonable behaviour that is having a negative impact on the local community's quality of life. Any person aged 16 years or over can be issued with a notice, whether it is an individual or a business, and it will require the behaviour to stop and, if necessary, reasonable steps to be taken to ensure it is not repeated in the future.

[46] Modern slavery includes forced and bonded labour, child slavery, early and forced marriage and all forms of trafficking in persons. This includes, but is not limited to, for the purposes of forced prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour, forced begging, forced criminality, the removal of organs and domestic servitude.

Specialist support to disrupt organised crime groups is provided by the serious crime directorate to policing divisions. The Eastern Region Special Operations Unit (ERSOU) also provides a range of specialist capabilities in areas such as intelligence as well as specialist policing tactics and approaches like surveillance work. This regional team can enhance the force capability; for example, it can add intelligence to that held by the force, perhaps from other forces and partner organisations. This helps the force to produce a more accurate and detailed picture of serious and organised criminality. As a consequence of the close collaboration between the forces through their joint serious crime directorate (SCD), at the time of our inspection Kent Police was intending to move from the South East Regional Organised Crime Unit (SEROCU) to become part of the ERSOU early in 2017. There is also an extensive project in place to enable this move, which involves not just Kent Police but also the joint serious crime directorate. There is oversight by a change board chaired by the head of the joint serious crime directorate. Kent Police and Essex Police have a substantial investment in money and people in the SCD and it is much larger than ERSOU. As such, many of the ERSOU capabilities are already held by the SCD and the forces are aware of the need to ensure that there are clear lines of responsibility so that there is no duplication of effort, and this work is being undertaken within the project work.

Essex Police is beginning to better exploit the full potential of regional capabilities and those provided at national level through the National Crime Agency (NCA). We found evidence of the force seeking support for operations from the ERSOU and the NCA, such as the NCA-led Operation Perceptional, where the rescued victims' details were passed to the National Referral Mechanism.[47]

The force has recently begun to follow the national policy on organised crime group disruption; although it is developing this area, it still has more to do. Since the beginning of October 2016, daily management meetings have considered disruption activity, mainly arrests, against organised crime groups. We consider that overall the force has been effective in disrupting organised crime groups, including some involved in child sexual exploitation and human trafficking.

How effectively does the force prevent serious and organised crime?

A force that effectively tackles serious and organised crime needs to be able to stop people being drawn in to this crime. Many of these people may be vulnerable and already involved in gang and youth violence. It should also be using a range of approaches and powers to prevent those known criminals continuing to cause harm.

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[47] The National Referral Mechanism is a framework for identifying victims of human trafficking and ensuring they receive the appropriate protection and support.

HMIC expects a force's approach to prevention to be a significant element of its overall strategy to tackle the harm that serious and organised crime causes communities.

Essex Police already works with communities to help prevent young people from being drawn into gangs or organised criminality, and is increasing its work in this area. County-wide governance arrangements have recently come into place with partner organisations, and there is a monthly Operation Raptor meeting that has a focus on gang issues, which is attended by between 10 and 15 partner organisations. The force has several effective initiatives in place to deter people from becoming involved in serious and organised crime. This includes a recent knife amnesty. There are also several initiatives to prevent children from becoming involved in child sexual exploitation. Importantly, the integrated offender management (IOM) cohort has been extended to include gang members. The force is involved in the Troubled Families programme,[48] work that is being led by its public protection command. The force also continues to use a variety of media, including social media and more traditional means, to raise public awareness of the successes it has had in dealing with organised crime groups.

The force is seeking to make its management of organised crime offenders more effective. It is taking a longer-term approach to organised crime group management. Rather than simply carrying out a short-term investigation and dismantling of a group by prosecuting some of its members, after such a prosecution the force is now continuing to monitor such groups. Its briefing for frontline officers includes principal named organised crime group members and the issues on which officers could gather useful intelligence, such as the locations and associates of these people. The force also works regularly with prison intelligence units and receives updates when such individuals are due for release. This information is passed on to local officers. In the 12 months to 30 June 2016, the force has considered making applications for 29 serious crime prevention orders (SCPOs),[49] but only one has been successfully applied for. Work has been commissioned with the Crown Prosecution Service to understand what can be done to make the force more effective and efficient in this area.

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[48] A programme of targeted intervention for families with multiple problems, including crime, anti-social behaviour, mental health problems, domestic abuse and unemployment. Local authorities identify 'troubled families' in their area and usually assign a key worker to act as a single point of contact.

[49] SCPOs were introduced by Part 1 of the Serious Crime Act 2007. These are court orders that are used to protect the public by preventing, restricting or disrupting a person's involvement in serious crime. An SCPO can prevent involvement in serious crime by imposing various conditions on a person; for example, restricting who he or she can associate with, restricting his or her travel, or obliging him or her to report financial affairs to the police.

Last year, we reported that many frontline officers we spoke to in Essex Police had little knowledge or understanding of local organised crime groups, and most could not recall being given specific tasks related to disruption, intelligence collection or identification of organised crime group activity. During this year's inspection, we found that frontline officers now have a much better knowledge of local organised crime groups. Officers have received guidance and direction and local arrangements have been altered so that several organised crime groups are now the responsibility of local policing areas (not solely the serious crime directorate). In order to assist in this, the force has designated an officer in each policing division as the lead responsible officer.

Summary of findings

Good

Essex Police is good at tackling serious and organised crime. It is improving its response to newer organised crime threats, such as human trafficking, cyber-crime and child sexual exploitation. The force tackles high-level serious and organised crime in collaboration with Kent Police through a joint unit which allows both forces to combine specialist capabilities. This ensures well-managed investigations. It also enables the force to target the most harmful organised crime groups with a range of activity from prosecuting organised crime group members to making it harder for the organised crime group to operate.

The force has improved how it gathers and uses intelligence, particularly that held by other relevant partner organisations, such as HM Revenue & Customs and Border Force. Essex Police ensures that it applies the most resources to the organised crime groups which cause the most harm. Its policy on how it scores these organised crime groups for the harm they cause and how often it re-visits this scoring is now consistent with national guidance.

Frontline officers have a good knowledge of local organised crime groups, which should assist the force in preventing organised crime, for example identifying those who are at risk of being drawn into organised crime, and also assist working with other policing authorities and other interested parties.

The force is taking a longer-term approach to organised crime group management and it regularly seeks serious crime prevention orders, although it has been successful in very few. Work has been commissioned with the Crown Prosecution Service to understand why the failure rate is so high and what can be done to make the force more effective and efficient in this area.

Areas for improvement

- The force should develop further its serious and organised crime local profile, in conjunction with other policing authorities and other interested parties and organisations, to enhance its understanding of the threat posed by serious and organised crime and to inform joint activity aimed at reducing this threat.

- The force should engage routinely with partner agencies at a senior level to enhance intelligence sharing and promote an effective, multi-agency response to serious and organised crime.

How effective are the force's specialist capabilities?

Some complex threats require both a specialist capability and forces to work together to respond to them. This question assesses both the overall preparedness of forces to work together on a number of strategic threats and whether forces have a good understanding of the threat presented by firearms incidents and how equipped they are to meet this threat.

How effective are the force's arrangements to ensure that it can fulfil its national policing responsibilities?

The *Strategic Policing Requirement* (SPR)[50] specifies six national threats. These are complex threats and forces need to be able to work together if they are to respond to them effectively. These include serious and organised crime, terrorism, serious cyber-crime incidents and child sexual abuse. It is beyond the scope of this inspection to assess in detail whether forces are capable of responding to these national threats. Instead, HMIC has checked whether forces have made the necessary arrangements to test their own preparedness for dealing with these threats should they materialise.

Essex Police has the necessary arrangements in place to ensure that it can fulfil its national policing responsibilities. The force conducts analysis on all the national threats at both force and regional level, and identifies and assesses vulnerabilities in a document called a problem profile. At force level, the profiles bring together intelligence and make sound assessments, although the force recognises that data from local partner agencies will improve its understanding of the threat, and it is currently addressing this.

The assistant chief constable responsible for this area has established a governance board to oversee this work; this is important because three different chief officers lead on the various parts of the SPR. HMIC found evidence of the force undertaking regular exercises and deployments to ensure that it is ready to meet the requirements demanded of it. The force has conducted large-scale exercises in recent years, including Exercise Falmouth in 2015 in Colchester, involving personnel

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[50] The SPR is issued annually by the Home Secretary, setting out the latest national threats and the appropriate national policing capabilities required to counter those threats. National threats require a co-ordinated or aggregated response from a number of police forces. Forces often need to work collaboratively, and with other partners, national agencies or national arrangements, to ensure such threats are tackled effectively. *Strategic Policing Requirement*, Home Office, March 2015. Available at:
www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/417116/The_Strategic_Policing_Requirement.pdf

from Essex Police and military personnel from Colchester Garrison. The force deployed public order trained officers to the recent Bedford Prison riot, and it continues to conduct local testing of its ability to supply officers at short notice.

How well prepared is the force to respond to a firearms attack?

Following the terrorist attacks in Paris on 13 November 2015, the government allocated £143 million to the 43 England and Wales police forces to increase their armed capability. This funding has enabled some forces to increase the number of armed police officers able to respond to a terrorist attack. These attacks include those committed by heavily armed terrorists across multiple sites in quick succession, as in Paris. These attacks are known as marauding terrorist firearms attacks. The funding is for those forces considered to be at greatest risk of a terrorist attack. This also has the effect of increasing the ability of the police service to respond to other forms of terrorist attacks (and another incident requiring an armed policing response). Forces have begun to recruit and train new armed officers. This process is due to be completed by March 2018.

Essex Police completes an annual armed policing strategic threat and risk assessment (APSTRA) to enable it to understand and respond to identified threats. The force updated its APSTRA after the Paris marauding terrorist firearms attack in 2015 and has specifically considered the threats that similar attacks would pose. The force's threat assessment used appropriate intelligence sources to assess threat and risk and we found clear involvement of senior officers. The assessment was in line with the national guidance and codes of practice. Essex Police is aware of its broader national responsibilities to support other forces in response to national threats. The force has focused on understanding the threat posed by a firearms attack; this understanding is based on recent and relevant information.

The force is not part of the national armed policing uplift programme. It has lost authorised firearms officers who have transferred to armed policing roles in the Metropolitan Police Service and City of London Police. The force continues to train officers as authorised firearms officers in an effort to keep numbers at the required levels. The chief constable has also approved an increase in the South Eastern Regional allowance for each authorised firearms officer, which may reduce the number of these officers transferring to the Metropolitan Police Service. There are also mature continuity plans in place for training additional firearms commanders to replace those who are retiring.

Essex Police has conducted numerous training exercises to test preparedness for an attack requiring an armed response, including Exercise Dark Horizon at Stansted Airport, which tested the interoperability between Essex Police, the National Counter Terrorist Network and the military. A large-scale exercise was also undertaken at Lakeside Shopping Centre with numerous partner organisations, including the

Suffolk and Norfolk Joint Firearms Command. The force works with neighbouring forces, including the Metropolitan Police Service, to provide mutual support in the case of a terrorist incident.

Summary of findings

Ungraded

Essex Police has good plans to mobilise in response to the threats set out in the *Strategic Policing Requirement*. The force regularly tests these plans and makes amendments following the lessons learned. Operational deployments in support of regional colleagues have been successful.

The force is well prepared to respond to a firearms attack. It has recently reviewed its assessment of threat, risk and harm and this now includes the threats posed by marauding firearms terrorists. Essex Police is not part of the national armed policing uplift programme but is working to retain its capability in this area.

Next steps

HMIC assesses progress on causes of concern and areas for improvement identified within its reports in a number of ways. We receive updates through our regular conversations with forces, re-assess as part of our annual PEEL programme, and, in the most serious cases, revisit forces.

HMIC highlights recurring themes emerging from our PEEL inspections of police forces within our national reports on police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy. These reports identify those issues that are reflected across England and Wales and may contain additional recommendations directed at national policing organisations, including the Home Office, where we believe improvements can be made at a national level.

Findings and judgments from this year's PEEL effectiveness inspection will be used to direct the design of the next cycle of PEEL effectiveness assessments. The specific areas for assessment are yet to be confirmed, based on further consultation, but we will continue to assess how forces keep people safe and reduce crime to ensure our findings are comparable year on year.

Annex A – About the data

The information presented in this report comes from a range of sources, including published data by the Home Office and Office for National Statistics, inspection fieldwork and data collected directly from all 43 geographic police forces in England and Wales.

Where HMIC has collected data directly from police forces, we have taken reasonable steps to agree the design of the data collection with forces and with other relevant interested parties such as the Home Office. We have given forces several opportunities to check and validate the data they have provided us to ensure the accuracy of our evidence. For instance:

- We checked the data that forces submitted and queried with forces where figures were notably different from other forces or were internally inconsistent.

- We asked all forces to check the final data used in the report and correct any errors identified.

The source of the data is presented with each figure in the report, and is set out in more detail in this annex. The source of Force in numbers data is also set out below.

Methodology

Data in the report

The British Transport Police was outside the scope of inspection. Therefore any aggregated totals for England and Wales exclude British Transport Police data and numbers will differ from those published by the Home Office.

Where other forces have been unable to supply data, this is mentioned under the relevant sections below.

Population

For all uses of population as a denominator in our calculations, unless otherwise noted, we use Office for National Statistics (ONS) mid-2015 population estimates. These were the most recent data available at the time of the inspection.

For the specific case of City of London Police, we include both resident and transient population within our calculations. This is to account for the unique nature and demographics of this force's responsibility.

Survey of police staff

HMIC conducted a short survey of police staff across forces in England and Wales, to understand their views on workloads, redeployment and the suitability of tasks assigned to them. The survey was a non-statistical, voluntary sample which means that results may not be representative of the population. The number of responses varied between 8 and 2,471 across forces. Therefore, we treated results with caution and used them for exploring further during fieldwork rather than to assess individual force performance.

Ipsos MORI survey of public attitudes towards policing

HMIC commissioned Ipsos MORI to conduct a survey of attitudes towards policing between July and August 2016. Respondents were drawn from an online panel and results were weighted by age, gender and work status to match the population profile of the force area. The sampling method used is not a statistical random sample and the sample size was small, varying between 331 to 429 in each force area. Therefore, any results provided are only an indication of satisfaction rather than an absolute.

The findings of this survey will be shared on our website by summer 2017:

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/data/peel-assessments/

Review of crime files

HMIC reviewed 60 police case files across crime types for: robbery, common assault (flagged as domestic abuse), grievous bodily harm (GBH), stalking, harassment, rape and domestic burglary. The file review was designed to provide a broad overview of the identification of vulnerability, the effectiveness of investigations and to understand how victims are treated through police processes. Files were randomly selected from crimes recorded between 1 January 2016 and 31 March 2016 and were assessed against several criteria. Due to the small sample size of cases selected, we have not used results from the file review as the sole basis for assessing individual force performance but alongside other evidence gathered.

Force in numbers

A dash in this graphic indicates that a force was not able to supply HMIC with data.

Calls for assistance (including those for domestic abuse)

These data were collected directly from all 43 forces. In 2016, the questions contained a different breakdown of instances where the police were called to an incident compared to the 2015 data collection, so direct comparisons to the equivalent 2015 data are not advised.

Recorded crime and crime outcomes

These data are obtained from Home Office police-recorded crime and outcomes data tables for the 12 months to 30 June 2016 and are taken from the October 2016 Home Office data release, which is available from:

www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-recorded-crime-open-data-tables

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

Figures about police-recorded crime should be treated with care, as recent increases are likely to have been affected by the renewed focus on the quality and compliance of crime recording since HMIC's national inspection of crime data in 2014.

For crime outcomes, Dorset Police has been excluded from the England and Wales figure. Dorset Police experienced difficulties with the recording of crime outcomes for the 12 months to 30 June 2016. This was due to the force introducing the Niche records management system in Spring 2015. Problems with the implementation of Niche meant that crime outcomes were not reliably recorded. The failure to file investigations properly meant that a higher than normal proportion of offences were allocated to 'Not yet assigned an outcome'. During 2016, the force conducted additional work to solve the problem. In doing so, some crime outcomes from the 12 months to 30 June 2016 were updated after that date and are reflected in a later period. This makes Dorset Police's crime outcome data inconsistent with that provided by other forces. HMIC has decided not to use Dorset Police's outcome data in the interests of consistency of data use and to maintain fairness to all forces.

Other notable points to consider when interpreting outcome data are listed below and also apply to figure 4.

- For a full commentary and explanation of outcome types please see Crime Outcomes in England and Wales: year ending March 2016, Home Office, July 2016. Available from: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/53944 7/crime-outcomes-hosb0616.pdf

- Crime outcome proportions show the percentage of crimes recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016 that have been assigned each outcome. This means that each crime is tracked or linked to its outcome.

- These data are subject to change, as more crimes are assigned outcomes over time. These data are taken from the October 2016 Home Office data release.

- Providing outcomes data under the new framework is voluntary if not provided directly through the Home Office Data Hub. However, as proportions are used, calculations can be based on fewer than four quarters of data. For the 12 months to 30 June 2016, Derbyshire Constabulary and Suffolk Constabulary were unable to provide the last quarter of data. Therefore, their figures are based on the first three quarters of the year.

- Leicestershire, Staffordshire and West Yorkshire forces are participating in the Ministry of Justice's out of court disposals pilot. This means these forces no longer issue simple cautions or cannabis/khat warnings and they restrict their use of penalty notices for disorder as disposal options for adult offenders, as part of the pilot. Therefore, their outcomes data should be viewed with this in mind.

- It is important to note that the outcomes that are displayed in figure 7 are based on the number of outcomes recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, irrespective of when the crime was recorded. Therefore, the crimes and outcomes recorded in the reporting year are not tracked, so direct comparisons should not be made between general outcomes and domestic abuse related outcomes in this report. For more details about the methodology for domestic abuse outcomes please see explanatory notes below, under figure 7.

Anti-social behaviour

These data are obtained from Office for National Statistics data tables, available from: www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/policeforceareadatatables

All police forces record incidents of anti-social behaviour reported to them in accordance with the provisions of the National Standard for Incident Recording (NSIR). Incidents are recorded under NSIR in accordance with the same 'victim focused' approach that applies for recorded crime, although these figures are not subject to the same level of quality assurance as the main recorded crime collection. Incident counts should be interpreted as incidents recorded by the police, rather than reflecting the true level of victimisation. Other agencies also deal with anti-social behaviour incidents (for example, local authorities and social landlords); incidents reported to these agencies will not generally be included in police figures.

When viewing this data the user should be aware of the following:

- Warwickshire Police had a problem with its incident recording. For a small percentage of all incidents reported during 2014-15 and 2015-16 it was not possible for the force to identify whether these were anti-social behaviour or other types of incident. These incidents have been distributed pro rata for

Warwickshire, so that one percent of anti-social behaviour in 2014-15 and two percent of anti-social behaviour in 2015-16 are estimated.

- From May 2014, South Yorkshire Police experienced difficulties in reporting those incidents of anti-social behaviour that resulted from how it processed calls for assistance, specifically for scheduled appointments. In November 2016, South Yorkshire Police resolved this problem and resubmitted anti-social behaviour data to Office for National Statistics. HMIC has used corrected data for South Yorkshire Police which are available in the November 2016 release of anti-social behaviour incidents data in the link above.

- Bedfordshire Police resubmitted anti-social behaviour data to Office for National Statistics for the 12 months to 30 June 2016. This was because data had been double counted for the second quarter of the financial year. HMIC has used corrected data for Bedfordshire Police which are available in the November 2016 release of anti-social behaviour incidents data in the link above.

Domestic abuse

Data for domestic abuse flagged offences were provided by the Home Office for the 12 months to 30 June 2016. These are more recent figures than those previously published by Office for National Statistics.

Data relating to domestic abuse arrests, charges and outcomes were collected through the HMIC data collection.

Further information about the domestic abuse statistics and recent releases are available from:

www.ons.gov.uk/releases/domesticabuseinenglandandwalesyearendingmarch2016

Organised crime groups (OCGs)

These data were collected directly from all 43 forces. City of London Police is excluded from the England and Wales rate as its OCG data are not comparable with other forces due to size and its wider national remit.

The number of OCGs in the Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police force areas is a combined total of OCGs for the two force areas. The OCGs per one million population rate is based upon their areas' combined population figures.

OCGs which are no longer active – for example because they have been dismantled by the police – can be archived. This means that they are no longer subject to disruption, investigation or monitoring. From 1 September 2014 to 31 December 2015, forces were given a directive by the National Police Chiefs' Council to suspend archiving, pending a review of OCG recording policy. This directive was removed on

1 January 2016, but resulted in many forces archiving more OCGs than they otherwise would have in the 12 months to June 2016. Therefore, direct comparisons should not be made with OCG figures from previous years.

Victim satisfaction

Forces were required by the Home Office to conduct satisfaction surveys with specific victim groups. Force victim satisfaction surveys are structured around principal questions exploring satisfaction responses across four stages of interactions:

- initial contact;

- actions;

- follow-up;

- treatment plus the whole experience.

The data used in this report use the results to the question relating to the victim's whole experience, which specifically asks, "Taking the whole experience into account, are you satisfied, dissatisfied, or neither with the service provided by the police in this case?"

The England and Wales average is calculated based on the average of the rates of satisfaction in all 43 forces.

Figures throughout the report

Figure 1: Police-recorded crime rates (per 1,000 population) for the five year period to 30 June 2016

Please see 'Recorded Crime and Crime Outcomes' above.

Figure 2: Police-recorded crime rates (per 1,000 population) for the 12 months to 30 June 2016

Please see 'Recorded Crime and Crime Outcomes' above.

Figure 3: Percentage change in the rate of anti-social behaviour incidents (per 1,000 population), by force, comparing the 12 months to 31 March 2016 with the 12 months to 31 March 2015

Please see 'Anti-social behaviour' above.

Figure 4: Proportion of outcomes assigned to offences recorded, in 12 months to 30 June 2016, by outcome type

Please see 'Recorded Crime and Crime Outcomes' above.

The outcome number has been provided to improve usability across multiple publications and is in line with Home Office categorisation.

For these data, we state whether the force's value is 'one of the highest', 'one of the lowest' or 'broadly in line with' all forces in England and Wales. This is calculated by ranking the usage of outcomes and then highlighting the top and bottom 25 percent of forces. All other forces will be broadly in line with England and Wales. However, any interpretation of outcomes should take into account that outcomes will vary dependent on the crime types that occur in each force area, and how the force deals with offenders for different crimes.

This methodology is not comparable with figure 7, so direct comparisons should not be made between the two tables.

Figure 5: Percentage of 'Evidential difficulties; victim does not support action' outcomes assigned to offences recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, by force

Please see 'Recorded Crime and Crime Outcomes' above.

In addition, it is important to understand that the percentages of evidential difficulties can be affected by the level of certain types of crime within a force, such as domestic abuse related offences. The category of evidential difficulties also includes where a suspect has been identified and the victim supports police action, but evidential difficulties prevent further action being taken.

Figure 6: Domestic abuse arrest rate (per 100 domestic abuse crimes), by force, for the 12 months to 30 June 2016

Please see 'Domestic abuse' above.

Derbyshire, Durham and Gloucestershire forces were unable to provide domestic abuse arrest data. Therefore, these forces' data are not included in the graph or in the calculation of the England and Wales rate.

The arrest rate is calculated using a common time period for arrests and offences. It is important to note that each arrest is not necessarily directly linked to its specific domestic abuse offence recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016 in this calculation. It is also possible to have more than one arrest per offence although this is rare. In addition, the reader should note the increase in police-recorded crime which has affected the majority of forces over the last year (39 out of 43). This may have the effect of arrest rates actually being higher than the figures suggest. Despite this, the calculation still indicates whether the force prioritises arrests for domestic abuse offenders over other potential forms of action. HMIC has evaluated the arrest rate alongside other measures (such as use of voluntary attendance or body-worn video cameras) during our inspection process to understand how each force deals with domestic abuse overall.

When viewing this data the user should be aware of the following:

- Cambridgeshire Constabulary identified a recording issue and that it could only obtain accurate data from a manual audit of its custody records. This means its data may indicate a lower arrest rate. However, at the time of publication this was the most reliable figure the force could provide for the 12 months to 30 June 2016. The force plans to conduct regular manual audits while the recording issue is resolved. HMIC will conduct a further review to test this evidence when more data are available.

- Lancashire Constabulary experienced difficulties in identifying all domestic abuse flagged arrests. This affected 23 days in the 12 months to 30 June 2016. The force investigated this and confirmed that the impact on data provided to HMIC would be marginal and that these are the most reliable figures it can provide.

Figure 7: Rate of outcomes recorded in 12 months to 30 June 2016 for domestic-related offences

Please see 'Domestic Abuse' above.

Dorset Police is excluded from our data for the reasons described under 'Recorded Crime and Crime Outcomes' above.

Nottinghamshire Police has been excluded from domestic abuse outcomes data. The force experienced difficulties with the conversion of some crime data when it moved to a new crime recording system. This means that the force did not record reliably some crime outcomes for domestic abuse related offences. The force subsequently solved the problem and provided updated outcomes figures. However, this makes Nottinghamshire Police's outcomes data for domestic abuse related offences inconsistent with that provided by other forces. HMIC has decided not to use Nottinghamshire Police's outcomes data for domestic abuse related offences in the interests of consistency of data use and to maintain fairness to all forces.

In April 2015, the Home Office began collecting information from the police on whether recorded offences were related to domestic abuse. Crimes are identified by the police as domestic abuse related if the offence meets the government definition of domestic violence and abuse:

"Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality."

In figure 7, the rate is calculated by the number of each outcome recorded for domestic abuse flagged offences in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, divided by the total number of domestic abuse offences recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016. The domestic abuse-related crimes used in this calculation are not necessarily

those to which the outcomes have been assigned. Therefore, direct comparisons should not be made between general outcomes in figure 4, where each crime is linked to its associated outcome, and domestic abuse outcomes in figure 7.

For these data, we state whether the force's value is 'one of the highest', 'one of the lowest' or 'broadly in line with' all forces in England and Wales. This is calculated by ranking the usage of outcomes and then highlighting the top and bottom 25 percent of forces. All other forces will be broadly in line with England and Wales. However, any interpretation of outcomes should take into account that outcomes will vary dependent on the crime types that occur in each force area, and how the force deals with offenders for different crimes.

Figure 8: Organised crime groups per one million population, by force, as at 1 July 2016

Please see 'Organised Crime Groups' above.

Figure 9: Active organised crime groups by predominant crime type, as at 1 July 2016

Humberside Police was unable to provide the full data for predominant crime types in the time available. Therefore, this force's data are not included in the graph or in the calculation of the England and Wales proportion.

Numbers may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding.