

# PEEL – Police effectiveness 2015

An inspection of Gloucestershire Constabulary



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# Overview – How well does the force keep people safe and reduce crime?

## Overall judgment<sup>1</sup>



Requires improvement

Overall Gloucestershire Constabulary is judged to require improvement at keeping people safe and reducing crime. Working closely with partner organisations, the constabulary is good at preventing crime and anti-social behaviour. However, standards of investigation require improvement; expectations of staff are not clear, supervision is poor for some crime types and the service to victims is inconsistent. Improvements are also needed to protect the vulnerable properly, including domestic abuse victims and missing children. Additionally, more needs to be done to understand and respond effectively to serious and organised crime. This is the first year HMIC has graded forces on their overall effectiveness so a year-on-year comparison is not possible.

## Summary

Overall Gloucestershire Constabulary is judged to require improvement at keeping people safe and reducing crime. The service it provides with partner organisations to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour is good. The constabulary understands the public demand for its services and has recently reshaped its operating model; the new model ensures that the commitment to early interventions and the prevention of crime in communities will remain at the fore of the constabulary's activities. HMIC found a well-motivated and experienced workforce working hard to prevent crime, manage anti-social behaviour and keep people safe.

Despite evidence that significant efforts are being made to raise standards, Gloucestershire Constabulary's approach to investigating crime requires improvement. Shortcomings in the required service are evident with no clear understanding in the way crimes are allocated and some officers investigating crimes that they believe lie beyond their level of experience and training. Documented supervision and records showing contact with victims need to be more consistent. These areas have been highlighted in previous HMIC inspections and while the constabulary recognises the importance of providing a good service to victims, it needs to maintain its focus in this area.

The constabulary works with partner organisations in a joint safeguarding hub to protect the vulnerable and provide a better service to victims. The constabulary's

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<sup>1</sup> Outstanding, Good, Requires improvement or Inadequate – see Annex A for definitions.

contribution to this joint venture is highly regarded by practitioners but some of the constabulary's internal procedures are sub-standard. Assessments of the risks faced by domestic abuse victims are not completed consistently and there are delays in referring victims to the safeguarding hub. Improvements are required in this area.

The constabulary would also benefit from an improved understanding and 'whole force' response to tackling serious and organised crime. It is in the early stages of completing a serious and organised local crime profile, and is currently researching opportunities with partners for multi-agency problem solving and oversight.

Successful implementation and increased scrutiny would provide the constabulary with a more complete understanding of the threat posed by serious and organised crime, and strengthen its ability to limit its proliferation.

If the constabulary continues to improve its understanding of threats from serious and organised crime it will be able to demonstrate that it is well prepared to counter all six of the national threats articulated in *The Strategic Policing Requirement*. In particular, the constabulary has invested heavily in its ability to understand and respond to cyber-crime putting it in a strong position to tackle this emerging threat.

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



**Good**

Gloucestershire Constabulary is good at working to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and keep people safe. The constabulary understands the public demand for its services and has recently reshaped its operating model; the new model ensures that the commitment to early interventions and the prevention of crime can be maintained.

Inspectors found a well-motivated and experienced workforce working hard in support of these aims. Project Solace's mandate to address anti-social behaviour linked to housing in the private rental sector has been acclaimed nationally.

### **How effective is the force at investigating crime and managing offenders?**



**Requires improvement**

Gloucestershire Constabulary's approach to investigating crime requires improvement. The constabulary has a triage facility (the investigation assessment unit – IAU) to help manage demands upon its services to investigate crime. However, high workloads and delays in reviewing some crimes requiring further assessment in the IAU could present risks for the constabulary and for victims.

HMIC also has concerns that some officers are investigating crimes that are beyond their level of accreditation and experience.

Additionally, the joint working of 'Great expectations as part of the government's 'troubled families' strategy makes a positive impact.

In Gloucestershire's neighbourhoods, community safety partnerships provide a successful platform to address problems that really matter to local people.

Additionally, strategic partnerships such as the integrated offender management programme which addresses the threat posed by prolific criminals are also effective.

Examples of 'evidence-based policing', an assurance that police tactics have been evaluated as being effective are limited. The identification and dissemination of best practice is an area where more could be done.

Partner organisations are complimentary on the lead the constabulary takes in bringing public services together at all levels. The benefits are meaningful to victims, vulnerable groups and all the communities that Gloucestershire Constabulary serves.

While the constabulary can demonstrate that investigations in specialist teams are of a good standard, elsewhere there are a number of shortcomings; investigation plans, which HMIC would expect to be directing investigations, are rarely used and there is little evidence of supervisory activity being endorsed on crime reports. The constabulary has no published policy to explain how crime is allocated to investigators or to set out the minimum standards required for investigations.

There have been marked improvements to the service victims receive although procedures to encourage compliance with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime require improvement. Many of these deficits have been published in successive HMIC inspections over the last two years; the constabulary needs to maintain its focus to successfully address these areas.

More positively, the constabulary works closely with partner organisations to manage prolific and dangerous offenders. HMIC is also complimentary of the constabulary's efforts to examine forensically an increasing number of Smartphone's and other devices in support of investigations.

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



Requires improvement

Gloucestershire Constabulary generally provides a good service in identifying vulnerable people and responding to protect them from harm. However, there are several areas where improvement is needed to ensure that service is consistent and the most vulnerable people are kept safe. Given the risk that is posed to some of the most vulnerable people, overall HMIC judges that the constabulary requires improvement.

The constabulary effectively identifies repeat and vulnerable victims and responds to them well. It has improved its response to missing and absent children with the introduction of new procedures, but risk assessment and management of missing and absent investigations is not consistent.

Work between professionals in the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) is effective in keeping people safe, but there were delays in high risk domestic abuse cases being referred to them for action.

The constabulary has made its response to child sexual exploitation investigations a priority and the investment of resources into operations to investigate such

## How effective is the force at tackling serious and organised crime, including its arrangements for fulfilling its national policing responsibilities?



Requires improvement

Gloucestershire Constabulary requires improvement in how it tackles serious and organised crime. This is the first year HMIC has graded forces on their effectiveness at tackling serious and organised crime, including a force's arrangements for ensuring that it can fulfil its national policing responsibilities, so no year-on-year comparison is possible.

The constabulary's strategic understanding of the threat presented by serious and organised crime and its impact in communities could be improved. To achieve this, the constabulary needs to engage meaningfully with partner organisations to share information and deepen understanding.

Firm leadership from the top of the organisation is needed to place the management of organised crime groups in line with national best practice; most importantly the expectations of individuals assigned as 'responsible officers' need to be made clear. Working practices within the serious and organised crime team need to be more inclusive. More thought needs to be given to how it works with partners and the impact this might have. Furthermore

offences is evident across the constabulary. This inspection only considered how well prepared the constabulary is to tackle child sexual exploitation.

the relationship it has with the regional organised crime unit needs to be more clearly defined.

As the constabulary improves its understanding of the threats from serious and organised crime it will be able to demonstrate that it is well prepared and has satisfactory arrangements in place to meet the national policing responsibilities and address the high-level national threats articulated in the Strategic Policing Requirement. In particular, the constabulary's state of readiness to manage a cyber-crime attack is well developed.

## Force in numbers



### Calls for assistance

Calls for assistance per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2015

Gloucestershire Constabulary

**252**

England and Wales

**350**



### Crime

Crimes recorded (excluding fraud) per 1,000 population 12 months to 30 June 2015

Gloucestershire Constabulary

**48.6**

England and Wales

**63.0**

Crimes recorded (excluding fraud) per 1,000 population 12 months to 30 June 2014

Gloucestershire Constabulary

**47.4**

England and Wales

**60.3**

Changes in recorded crime (excluding fraud) 12 months to 30 June 2014 against 12 months to 30 June 2015

Gloucestershire Constabulary

**+2.5%**

England and Wales

**+4.5%**

Changes in recorded crime (excluding fraud) 12 months to 30 June 2010 against 12 months to 30 June 2015

Gloucestershire Constabulary

**-17.9%**

England and Wales

**-12.6%**



### Charge rate

Charge rate as a percentage of all crimes recorded (excluding fraud) 12 months to 30 June 2015

Gloucestershire Constabulary

**14.6%**

England and Wales

**16.0%**





## Anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour incidents per 1,000 population 12 months to 30 June 2015

Gloucestershire Constabulary

**40.2**

England and Wales

**32.9**

Anti-social behaviour incidents per 1,000 population 12 months to 30 June 2014

Gloucestershire Constabulary

**42.0**

England and Wales

**36.2**



## Domestic abuse

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

Gloucestershire Constabulary

**9.5%**

England and Wales

**10.0%**

Domestic abuse as a percentage of all recorded crime (excluding fraud) 12 months to 31 March 2014

Gloucestershire Constabulary

**6.6%**

England and Wales

**8.5%**



## Organised crime groups

Organised crime groups per million population as at 30 June 2015

Gloucestershire Constabulary

**22.9**

England and Wales

**74.7**



## Victim satisfaction rate

Victim satisfaction rate 12 months to 31 March 2015

Gloucestershire Constabulary

**81.7%**

England and Wales

**83.8%**

## Introduction

The public expects their local police force to:

- Prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and, when crime occurs, to investigate it properly and provide support to victims.
- Use appropriately trained officers and staff and approved practice when investigating crime, gathering evidence and building cases to ensure offenders are brought to justice.
- Support victims of crime by responding to calls for service, identifying and putting in place the right help at the first point of contact, keeping them informed and consulting them about the possible outcomes of their case.
- Ensure that vulnerable people who might not have been a victim of crime are identified and given appropriate support, for example people at risk of domestic abuse, children at risk of sexual exploitation and missing or absent children.
- Understand and be prepared to respond to threats beyond their own force boundaries, including national threats such as terrorism, serious and organised crime and cyber-crime.
- Work effectively with local partner organisations and other bodies to prevent all types of crime and re-offending and to protect the public.

HMIC's annual inspections into police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL) consider whether forces keep people safe and reduce crime (how effective a force is), whether these activities are being carried out at the most appropriate cost (how efficient a force is), and how forces are ensuring they have the confidence of their communities (the public legitimacy of a force).

All forces are subject to significant cost reductions; this is reflected in our efficiency reports published in October 2015. The judgments we are making in this effectiveness report are made understanding the financial challenges forces are facing. Reports on the efficiency and legitimacy of Gloucestershire Constabulary are available from the HMIC website ([www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/](http://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/)).

HMIC's effectiveness inspections make an assessment of how well forces are preventing and investigating crime and anti-social behaviour; tackling serious and organised crime; and protecting victims and those who are vulnerable. These are the most important responsibilities for a police force, and are the principal measures by which the public will judge the performance of their force and policing as a whole.

Our effectiveness inspection focused on the overall question: "How effective is the force at keeping people safe and reducing crime?"

To answer this question we looked at four in-depth questions, three of which are discussed in more detail within this report:<sup>2</sup>

1. How effective is the force at preventing crime and anti-social behaviour, and keeping people safe?
2. How effective is the force at investigating crime and managing offenders?
3. How effective is the force at protecting from harm those who are vulnerable and supporting victims?
4. How effective is the force at tackling serious and organised crime, including its arrangements for fulfilling its national policing responsibilities?

During our inspection, we collected data from forces, reviewed case files and surveyed the public to seek their views on the effectiveness of the force. We also surveyed and interviewed representatives from partner organisations to gather evidence about the effectiveness of their working relationships with the force. We interviewed chief constables and chief officers and held focus groups of officers and staff at all grades and ranks. We also made numerous unannounced visits to police stations to talk to frontline officers and staff about their work. This report sets out the findings from this wide-ranging inspection of Gloucestershire Constabulary.

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<sup>2</sup> HMIC inspected forces on questions 1, 2 and 4 between September and November 2015. Question 3 was inspected between June and August 2015, and a separate report was published in December 2015 (available from: [www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/publications/police-effectiveness-vulnerability-2015-gloucestershire/](http://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/publications/police-effectiveness-vulnerability-2015-gloucestershire/)). In 2014, in preparation for the PEEL programme, forces were inspected to assess how effective they are at cutting crime (available from: [www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/publications/crime-inspection-force-reports/](http://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/publications/crime-inspection-force-reports/)).

## How effective is the force at preventing crime and 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 can be cheaper and more effective than investigating crime, and it makes society a safer place. The police cannot prevent crime on their own; other statutory and non-statutory bodies have a vital role to play. Police effectiveness in this matter is therefore dependent on their ability to work closely with other partner organisations to understand local problems and have access to a wide range of evidence-based interventions to resolve them.

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

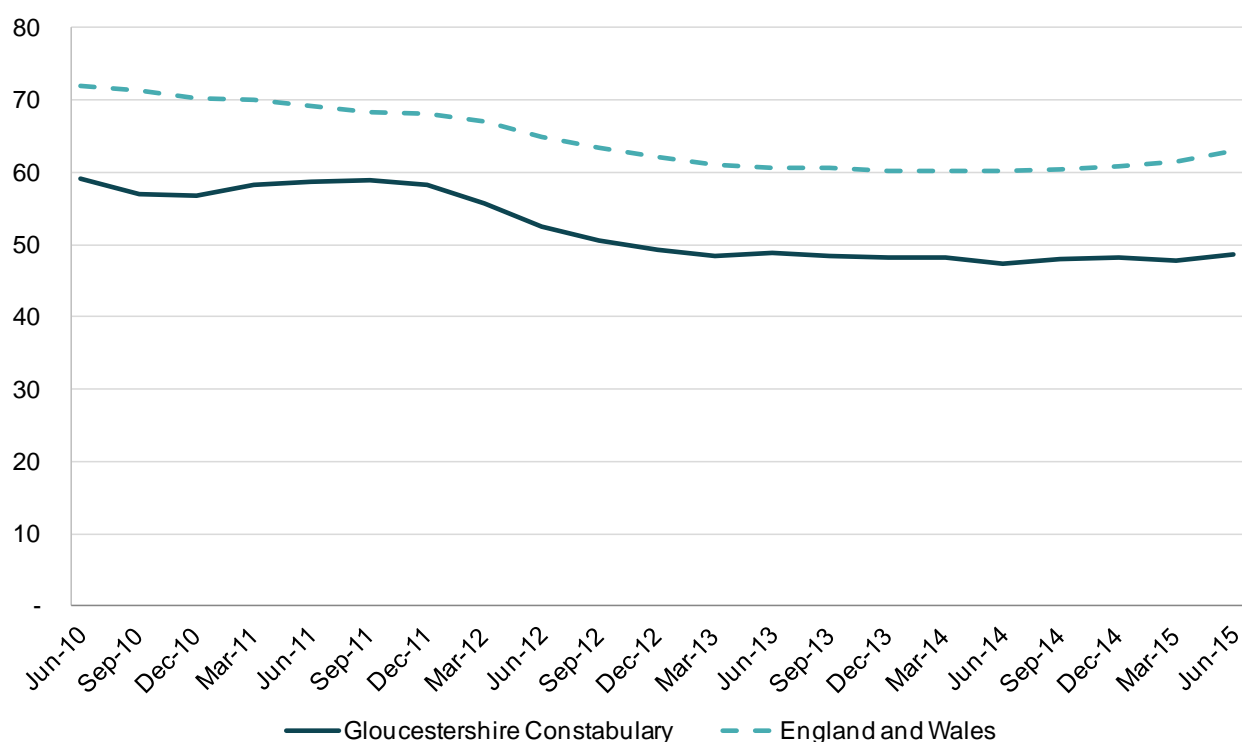
Although police recorded crime is by no means a complete measure of the totality of demand for calls on its service that a force faces, it does provide a comparable indication of performance across all forces. Crime rates are reported as a number of crimes per 1,000 population in each force area to enable comparison between areas. Total recorded crime is made up of victim-based crime (e.g. theft) and non victim-based crime (e.g. possession of drugs). More than two-thirds of forces showed an annual increase in total police recorded crime (excluding fraud) in the 12 months to 30 June 2015. 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 national inspection of crime data in 2014.

In 2010 the Home Secretary set a clear priority for the police service to cut crime. When compared with the 12 months to 30 June 2010, police recorded crime (excluding fraud) for the 12 months to 30 June 2015 fell by 18 percent in Gloucestershire compared with a reduction of 13 percent across all forces in England and Wales.

Over this same period, victim-based crime (i.e. crimes where there is a direct victim such as an individual, a group, or an organisation) decreased by 15 percent in Gloucestershire, compared with a reduction of 12 percent across England and Wales.

When compared with the previous year, police recorded crime (excluding fraud) in Gloucestershire increased by 2 percent for the 12 months to 30 June 2015. This is compared with an increase of 4 percent across England and Wales over the same period.

**Figure 1: Police recorded crime rates (per 1,000 population) for the five year period to 30 June 2015**



**Source: Home Office data**

The volume 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.

Figure 2 shows crime and anti-social behaviour rates in Gloucestershire (per 1,000 population) compared with England and Wales.

**Figure 2: Police recorded crime rates (per 1,000 population) for the 12 months to 30 June 2015**

Rates per 1,000 population	Gloucestershire Constabulary	England and Wales
Recorded crime (excluding fraud)	48.6	63.0
Victim-based crime	45.2	56.0
Sexual offences	1.1	1.6
Assault with injury	5.2	6.3
Burglary in a dwelling*	8.0	8.4
Anti-social behaviour incidents*	40.2	32.9

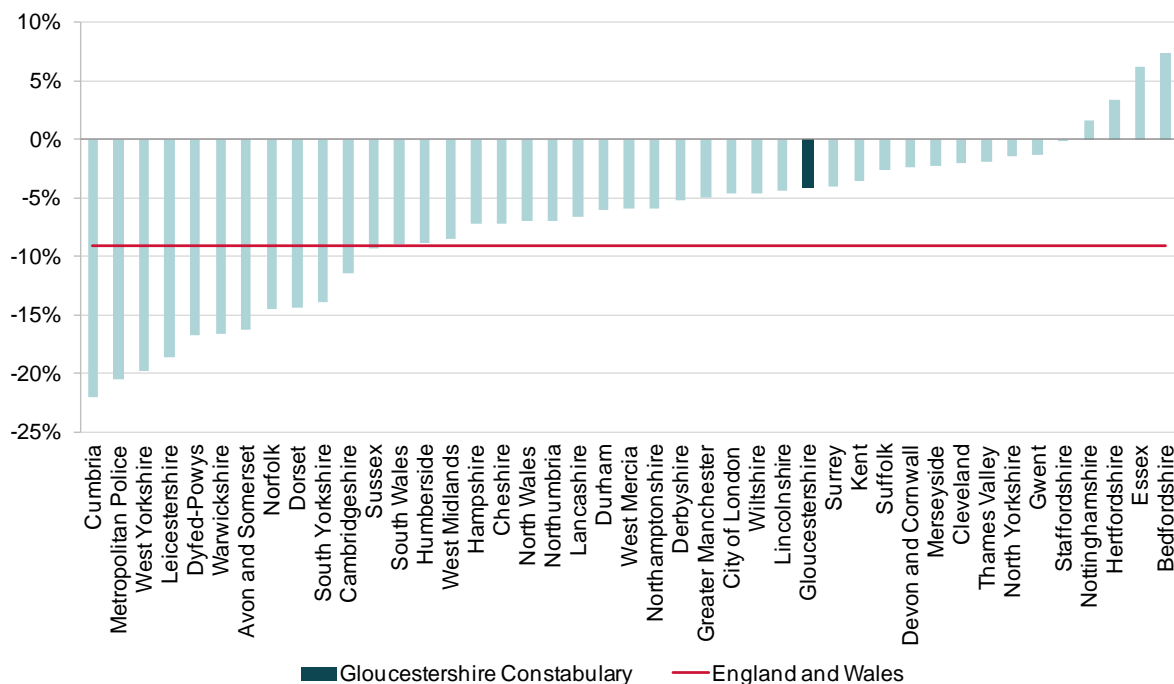
**Source: Home Office data, HMIC data return**

\*Anti-social behaviour data is from the constabulary's data return and the rate for burglary in a dwelling is the rate per 1,000 households, not population.

HMIC has chosen these types of crime to indicate offending levels in the constabulary area. We are not judging the effectiveness of the constabulary on police recorded crime rates only.

In the 12 months to 30 June 2015, Gloucestershire Constabulary recorded 24,589 incidents of anti-social behaviour. This is 4 percent fewer incidents than the constabulary recorded during the previous 12 months. When considering all forces across England and Wales, there were 9 percent fewer incidents in the 12 months to 30 June 2015, than recorded during the previous 12 months.

**Figure 3: Percentage change in the volume of anti-social behaviour incidents, by force, comparing the 12 months to 30 June 2015 with the 12 months to 30 June 2014**



Source: HMIC data collection

## How well does the force work to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour, and keep people safe?

### How well is the force prioritising the prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour?

The headlines of the police and crime plan set the tone for policing priorities in Gloucestershire. The vision of ‘less crime, more peace and good order’ reflects the police and crime commissioner’s (PCC’s) investment priorities. In support of this vision, the constabulary prioritises the reduction of burglaries in people’s homes, protecting the vulnerable and safeguarding victims<sup>3</sup> as its core activity.

<sup>3</sup> The term safeguarding means providing protection and support to ensure the safety of a vulnerable person and prevent further harm.

HMIC found that prevention is considered as part of everyone's daily duty. From the constabulary's crime operations department where the reduction of burglary is prioritised to frontline neighbourhood teams who tackle anti-social behaviour, individual expectations are clear.

The workforce is knowledgeable, well prepared and kept up to date with current patterns of offending and victimisation. The constabulary's crime mapping system, Javelin, is a simple and accessible application that is routinely used by supervisors to brief staff on current trends. HMIC found evidence of the system both informing and driving day-to-day activity in line with priorities.

One area where prevention activity could be more prominent is among incident resolution teams (IRTs). These teams are comprised of officers who initially respond to calls from the public. The constabulary is advised to assess their potential capacity for preventative roles in addition to their responsibilities as responders.

The focus on the prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour starts at top of the organisation and it translates right through to service delivery in neighbourhoods.

#### **How well are resources allocated to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour?**

The constabulary has implemented a new model which has centralised local policing for Gloucester under a leaner management structure which is currently being evaluated. Extensive work has been conducted in analysing demand for core services of which the prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour are a key consideration.

The new model will be structured on IRTs providing initial response; neighbourhood officers assigned to communities; local investigation teams managing high volume crime; and specialist investigators.

The mainstay of preventative activity will be the responsibility of neighbourhood teams who will work with community safety partnerships on medium and long-term problem solving. It is envisaged that much of this work will focus on the identification of problem areas where repeated calls are made for public services; the constabulary will then work with other service providers to resolve enduring problems and reduce demand.

HMIC has some concern about the number of officers that are being removed from neighbourhoods for other duties at present. This may well be a symptom of teething problems associated with the new operating model. It would be advisable for the constabulary to keep this under constant review to ensure that the commitment to neighbourhood teams taking forward preventative activity is not undermined.

#### **How well is the force using a broad range of effective tactics to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour?**

Neighbourhood officers use a range of tactics to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour. These include high visibility patrolling in crime hotspots, leafleting homes with crime prevention advice and 'cocooning' when burglaries occur. Cocooning

involves the establishment of priority protection zones in which residents are alerted to burglaries near to their homes and advised of security measures.

HMIC also saw excellent multi-agency work to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in Great Expectations (formerly known as Operation Avenger). This project supports young people on the periphery of crime; it involves the constabulary's youth engagement officers, Gloucester City Homes, HM Prison Service, the probation service, the county council's Families First programme and social care. Together they provide a programme of education, prevention and diversion to assist young people in making the right choices in life and so avoid a potential life of crime.

The constabulary is in the process of developing the Javelin crime mapping application to include vulnerability data from partner organisations. This will facilitate a multi-agency geo-mapping function that will be available to frontline staff. This is innovative and should enable the constabulary and its partners to focus resources better to prevent offending and reduce the risk of harm in communities.

The constabulary is encouraging staff to use 'what works' and trialling methods that are evidence based. For example, an initiative using forensic marking had a significant impact on burglaries in the area it was piloted. However the dissemination of best practice is an area where the constabulary could do more. The lack of a shared database means that officers do not have a repository of problem-solving solutions to draw upon. The introduction of a facility to allow staff to learn from the evidence of past successes would maximise opportunities to improve and share organisational learning.

## **How well does the force work with partners to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour, and keep people safe?**

### **How committed is the force to working with partner organisations?**

The constabulary works well with partner agencies to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour. The community safety partnership (CSP) is the main forum for establishing, maintaining and driving joint working at a local level. There are six CSPs in the constabulary covering the geographic areas governed by local councils; sub-groups work to the individual CSPs dealing with specific, persistent issues of community concern. These CSPs work well and are characterised by a healthy exchange of information and productive relationships built on mutual respect and effective joint working.

Partner organisations also spoke highly of the constabulary's contribution to strategic partnerships to manage offenders and support victims. These include the management of prolific offenders in the integrated offender management (IOM)



programme and the support provided to high-risk domestic abuse victims through multi-agency forums known as MARACs.<sup>4</sup>

The constabulary is also one of a number of forces that has taken the lead in developing a multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH).<sup>5</sup> The MASH brings together the Gloucestershire County Council's children's services, the adult safeguarding team, education services as well as the police, Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Support Service (GDASS) and the health community to improve decision-making, interventions, and outcomes. Although HMIC's inspection of vulnerability last year highlighted some concern about the capacity of the constabulary to make referrals to the MASH, the safeguarding hub itself is considered to be a valuable asset in support of the prevention of harm in Gloucestershire.

The abstraction of neighbourhood officers for response team duties has raised some concerns for the constabulary's partners; nevertheless the constabulary shows a sustained commitment to working with partners in the county council, within unitary and district council jurisdictions as well as neighbourhood levels.

### **How well does the force share and use information with partners to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour?**

The constabulary shares information with partners effectively to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour. The legal basis for these arrangements is established through crime and disorder legislation and information sharing agreements consolidate the effective exchange of information as routine business.

In a number of different settings constabulary staff are co-located with other service providers and have access to multiple databases. A good example of this is a joint venture with Gloucester City Homes and Gloucester City Council that is known as Project Solace. A representative from Gloucester City Homes manages the joint unit and its remit is to tackle anti-social behaviour in the private rental sector. The effective and swift service the joint team provide has attracted national acclaim and been recognised with a number of awards from private landlord and other representative bodies.

Other areas of police activity which are dependent on a sharing of information and intelligence are supported by the constabulary's central referral unit. This unit was established as a single portal through which requests for third party information, either to or by the constabulary, can be passed on through a secure channel.

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<sup>4</sup> A MARAC is a forum at which information about domestic abuse victims who are at risk of serious harm is shared with local partner agencies to ensure that comprehensive safeguarding measures are put in place.

<sup>5</sup> A MASH brings together into a single location key safeguarding agencies to better identify risks to children (and in some areas, vulnerable adults), and improve decision-making, interventions, and outcomes. The MASH enables the multi-agency team to share all appropriate information in a secure environment, and ensure that the most appropriate response is provided to effectively safeguard and protect the individual.

Established arrangements exist to share information with partners to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour in Gloucestershire. These exist either through the daily work of joint agency teams or are provided for by the central referral unit which provides an effective communication channel.

**How well is the force working with partner organisations to keep people safe and tackle anti-social behaviour in local neighbourhoods?**

In addition to Project Solace and Operation Avenger, there is an array of other grass roots initiatives that give an insight into the constabulary's dedication to address anti-social behaviour.

The Aston Project in Cheltenham and Gloucester works with young people by identifying their interests and engaging them in constructive activity through which they can build credits towards a reward. Working with partner service providers, the constabulary is actively engaged in encouraging the benefits of this project elsewhere in Gloucestershire.

In another effective programme inspired by the constabulary, staff are introducing young people who are at risk of offending to inmates in HMP Leyhill. An insight into prison life and a dialogue with people the youngsters can relate to is helping them turn away from crime and live a more positive lifestyle.

In recognition of the fact that anti-social behaviour on social housing estates can lead to escalating friction, a specific working group of the community safety partnerships has been established to address this. Here the constabulary is taking a lead in new anti-social behaviour legislation. Criminal behaviour orders are applied for when individuals who are known to persistently harass or annoy local residents are convicted at court. The cumulative effect of these orders is to restrain the behaviour of well-known troublemakers; in turn this improves the quality of life in these neighbourhoods.

## Summary of findings



**Good**

Gloucestershire Constabulary is good at working to prevent crime, anti-social behaviour and keep people safe. The constabulary understands the public demand for its services and has recently reshaped its operating model; the new model ensures that the commitment to early interventions and the prevention of crime can be maintained.

Inspectors found a well-motivated and experienced workforce working hard in support of these aims. Project Solace's mandate to address anti-social behaviour linked to housing in the private rental sector has been acclaimed nationally. Additionally, the joint working of Great Expectations as part of the government's 'troubled families' strategy makes a positive impact.

In Gloucestershire's neighbourhoods, community safety partnerships provide a successful platform to address problems that really matter to local people. Additionally, strategic partnerships such as the integrated offender management programme which addresses the threat posed by prolific criminals are also effective.

Examples of 'evidence-based policing', an assurance that police tactics have been evaluated as being effective are limited. The identification and dissemination of best practice is an area where more could be done.

Partner organisations are complimentary on the lead the constabulary takes in bringing public services together at all levels. The benefits are meaningful to victims, vulnerable groups and all the communities that Gloucestershire Constabulary serves.

### Areas for improvement

- The constabulary should ensure that the prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour is a routine part of neighbourhood policing activity.
- The constabulary should use evidence of 'what works' drawn from other forces, academics and partners to continually improve its approach to the prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour. There needs to be routine evaluation of tactics and sharing of effective practice.

## How effective is the force at investigating crime and managing offenders?

When a crime occurs, the public must have confidence that the police will investigate it effectively, take their concerns as victims seriously, 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. The risk posed by those who are identified as being the most prolific or dangerous offenders must also be properly managed (in partnership with other organisations), to minimise the chances of continued harm to individuals and communities.

HMIC referred to national standards and best practice in examining how well the force allocates and investigates both complex and non-complex (e.g. burglary, robbery and assault) crime. This included the full range of ways police officers and staff can gather evidence to support investigations (these include the more traditional forensics, such as taking fingerprints, as well as digital sweeps to find evidence of online abuse, for instance).

We also looked at how well the force works with partners to identify vulnerable offenders and prevent them from re-offending, and how well it identifies and manages repeat, and dangerous and sexual offenders.

## 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 'sanction detections', the new outcomes framework gives a fuller picture of the work the police do to investigate and resolve crime. The new broader framework (now containing twenty 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.

Given the work involved in amending police force crime-recording systems to accommodate fully the new outcomes framework, two forces have not yet been able to provide a full year of data for all new outcomes types. Gloucestershire Constabulary, however, has been providing the Home Office with full data since April 2014. The complete range of new outcome types will be used in future HMIC inspections, once all forces have provided a full year of data. Figure 4 shows only those outcome types for which full data is available for all forces in England and Wales.

**Figure 4: Outcomes recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2015 for all police recorded crime (excluding fraud)<sup>6 7 8</sup>**

Outcome type/group	Gloucestershire Constabulary Number of outcomes	Rate	England and Wales Number of outcomes	Rate
<b>Charged/Summoned</b>	<b>4,326</b>	<b>14.6</b>	<b>577,678</b>	<b>16.0</b>
<b>Taken into consideration</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>21,318</b>	<b>0.6</b>
<b>Out-of-court (formal)</b>	<b>1,065</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>165,384</b>	<b>4.6</b>
Caution - youths	237	0.8	19,703	0.5
Caution - adults	702	2.4	115,000	3.2
Penalty Notices for Disorder	126	0.4	30,681	0.8
<b>Out-of-court (informal)</b>	<b>955</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>159,915</b>	<b>4.4</b>
Cannabis/Khat warning	214	0.7	41,964	1.2
Community resolution	741	2.5	117,951	3.3

**Source: Home Office crime outcomes data**

Outcomes are likely to differ from force to force for a number of reasons. Certain offences are more likely to be concluded without offenders being prosecuted; typically including types of crime such as cannabis misuse. If this type of crime is particularly prevalent in a force then it is likely that the level of 'cannabis/khat<sup>9</sup> warning' outcomes would be greater.

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. Gloucestershire Constabulary has one of the highest rates for 'taken into consideration' of all forces in England and Wales.

<sup>6</sup> Rate based on number of outcomes recorded in 12 months to 30 June 2015 divided by number of offences recorded in 12 months to 30 June 2015.

<sup>7</sup> For a full commentary and explanation of outcome types please see *Crime Outcomes in England and Wales 2014/15*, Home Office, London, July 2015. Available from [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/445753/hosb0115.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/445753/hosb0115.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Community resolutions are an out-of-court disposal the police can use to deal with anti-social behaviour and low-level crime. *Taken into consideration* is when an offender admits the commission of other offences in the course of sentencing proceedings and requests those other offences to be taken into consideration.

<sup>9</sup> 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.

## **How well does the force investigate crime and keep victims safe and informed?**

### **How well does the force initially investigate and allocate cases?**

It is important that when the police are called to an incident they respond in a timely manner, with officers or staff who are trained and competent to keep people safe, and who can take steps to apprehend offenders and investigate the circumstances if a crime has occurred. An effective initial response by the police increases the likelihood of a successful outcome for both the victim and the criminal justice system. Subsequent investigation by detectives and other specialist police staff also needs to be well managed and resourced.

Calls for service to the constabulary are graded by call handlers to determine if an immediate attendance is necessary. The constabulary prioritises the response to callers into categories. Urgent calls are directed to the IRT for immediate deployment, those where a delayed or 'scheduled' response is appropriate are referred to neighbourhood teams and others are referred directly to local investigation teams. Those that do not fall in these categories are managed by the Incident Assessment Unit (IAU), the IAU act as a triage centre to ensure that the response from the constabulary comes from the appropriate department.

HMIC is reassured about the abilities and experience of the staff working in the IAU; inspectors saw good examples of interventions to ensure the public receive the correct level of service. However, staffing levels are of concern.

Following first contact with the constabulary and initial attendance by officers, the IAU also make further assessments on incidents that have been resolved, may require further resolution or re-allocation. It is not uncommon for the queue of incidents awaiting a re-assessment by IAU staff to rise to 2,000, taking weeks to clear. Many of these incidents require no more than an administrative input before they are filed. For example, an entry by a supervisor certifying that no useful enquiries can be made and that the incident can therefore be closed. However, they can also include crimes that need to be re-assigned to a more qualified investigator. Furthermore HMIC did not find a clear process to prioritise crimes waiting in the re-assessment queue. The crime system – UNIFI – does not allow this, meaning that staff are required to carry out manual searches of any crime requiring further investigation or re-allocation. The inability to prioritise easily in the IAU and delays caused by high caseloads has a number of implications for the constabulary. Victims may not receive the service they are expecting and confidence in the constabulary may be adversely affected.

The allocation of crime for investigation is also an area where improvements can be made. It is important that the skills and experience of the investigator are well matched to the needs of the victim; the lack of documented policy in the constabulary of how this should be achieved means that some staff are unclear about what they should or could investigate. Although senior officers can articulate

how crimes should be allocated and who ideally should investigate them, this was not understood by the staff that HMIC spoke to.

This was reinforced by observed behaviour of how crime was allocated during the course of the inspection. Instead of this allocation being determined on the basis of the threat of harm to victims as HMIC would expect, the availability of staff was the overriding factor. This means that on occasions sexual offences and serious assaults are investigated by officers who have basic levels of investigative training. These staff can have more serious investigations allocated to them, but it was evident they did not feel confident that they could be as effective as specialist investigators. These and other concerns articulated by staff were corroborated by HMIC inspectors, who found an absence of investigatory plans and supervisory reviews.

Staff spoken to by HMIC are uncomfortable with this position; they also believe that the opportunity to prosecute offenders is sometimes being lost because of their lack of skills and expertise.

More positively, where IRT officers are deployed immediately to victims of crime the standards of service are good. These officers are knowledgeable of the vital steps to take when first arriving at the scene of a crime. Priorities include the preservation of a scene, recording details of all witnesses and securing CCTV footage. The police service refers to these priorities as the 'golden hour' principles.

### **How well does the force investigate different types of crime?**

Crime is investigated by IRT officers, neighbourhood staff, local investigation teams or specialist teams of detectives. Standards of investigation vary with underlying themes of inconsistency in terms of supervisory standards and an unreliable service to victims. These are not new features of investigations in Gloucestershire. In HMIC's inspection of crime in 2014 the quality of investigations was criticised and the service to keep victims up to date with the progress of enquiries was found to require improvement.

HMIC recognises that some progress has been made and the constabulary is committed to improve this position. The establishment of a number of specialist teams in the last twelve months has made a difference to the service provided to victims of the most serious offences. Equally, crimes which have a high impact on victims such as burglary are now being investigated by trained detectives. Their expertise, increased oversight and innovative tactics have contributed to a fall in this type of crime.

A criminal justice review has been completed and is being implemented to drive up investigative standards. The constabulary has identified failings in initial evidence gathering and interviewing, and will be introducing an evidence review officer in April to enable improvements. Other measures include an investigation quality and development board that is introducing processes to assess statements and interviews and manage bail cases. However, the constabulary should translate these into operational effectiveness as quickly as is practicable.

An examination of case files in other specialist teams, for example rape investigations, showed a marked improvement in the general standard. A combination of the fact that officers responded immediately to these types of crime and the availability of specialists assures improved standards. HMIC also noted that an effective use of forensic specialists is available to support investigations. The attendance of forensic experts at the scene of crime is prompt and all opportunities are exploited to identify offenders through fingerprints, DNA and other forensic science.

However HMIC still has concerns about the investigation of non-complex crime but also some serious crime. This predominantly involves high-volume, frequently occurring crimes that are investigated by non-specialists. These investigations often lack compliance with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime, which sets out the service that victims can expect from all organisations, including the police, which have a role in the criminal justice system. There is no systematic procedure to document whether officers are fulfilling their obligations under the code. In particular it is impossible to track the constabulary's performance in updating victims of the progress of enquires. Most of these investigations also lack investigation plans. These plans are normally agreed between supervisors and investigators and represent key lines of enquiries to be progressed and deadlines for investigations to be completed. The supervisors themselves acknowledge that they rarely endorse crime reports or give guidance when they review progress.

Such inconsistency in standards can give the constabulary little assurance that the needs of the victim are being met or the quality of investigations is adequate. The constabulary should have made more progress than it has in improving standards of investigations and its services to victims.

### **How well does the force gather digital evidence?**

Increasingly, crime in England and Wales is committed online and through the use of digital devices such as tablets, computers or mobile phones. All forces have to retrieve data from these devices and examine them for evidence; staff, in what may be known as high tech crime units (HTCUs), carry out these examinations.

The constabulary recognises that effective investigations are increasingly reliant on digital evidence.

It can demonstrate that it prioritises forensic examinations based on both the seriousness of the offence and risks posed to the public. In addition to the digital forensics teams' workload, a number of frontline officers have been trained to recover digital evidence from Smartphone's in straightforward investigations.



The constabulary has also invested in technology to make onsite examination of mobile phones possible.

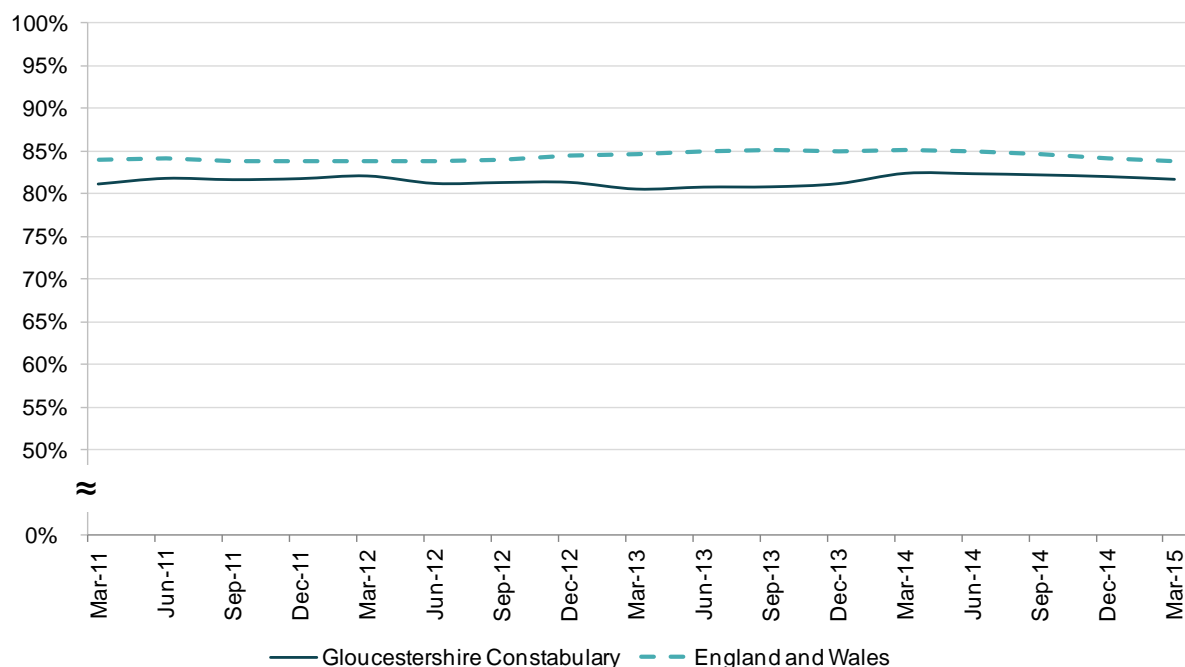
The constabulary takes a sound, pragmatic approach to this new dimension of criminal investigations. The constabulary has invested heavily in its capacity and capability to retrieve digital evidence from devices and performs strongly in this area.

### How satisfied are victims of crime with the service provided by the force?

Of those who have been the victim of a crime in Gloucestershire in the 12 months to 31 March 2015, 81.7 percent were satisfied with their whole experience with the police. This is lower than the national victim satisfaction rate of 83.8 percent over the same time period. The victim satisfaction rate in Gloucestershire for the 12 months to 31 March 2015 is broadly in line with both the previous year's rate and the rate for the 12 months to 31 March 2011.

Gloucestershire Constabulary has carried out research into its victim satisfaction levels through its serving the public programme and has a better understanding of why satisfaction among victims is less than that in the rest of England and Wales. This team also has a role in ensuring greater compliance with the *Code of Practice for Victims of Crime*. HMIC encourages this activity to explore whether stricter compliance with the code is likely to increase satisfaction in the area of victim follow-up.

**Figure 5: Percentage of victims satisfied with the overall service provided by the police, for the four year period to 31 March 2015**



Source: Home Office data provided by forces

## **How well does the force identify and manage offenders to prevent re-offending?**

### **How well does the force divert offenders away from crime?**

There is a commitment to diverting offenders away from crime at all levels of the organisation. Project Aston, Project Solace and Great Expectations all have access to officers who are trained in restorative justice and community resolutions. All of these schemes provide alternatives to court appearances and allow officers to use their professional judgment to conclude cases informally. Frequently this involves offenders making amends to victims or the wider community.

Restorative Gloucestershire, an effective alliance of statutory and non-statutory bodies, brings resilience to this approach in Gloucestershire. As well as providing restorative interventions, the organisation provides training to build restorative justice capacity and promotes the benefits of restorative practice to other service providers.

Firm links have been established between the constabulary's integrated offender management programme (IOM) and Restorative Gloucestershire. This is an important development as it facilitates the transfer of the IOM methodology to offending behaviour beyond the cohort of offenders that the IOM team manages itself. It is HMIC's position that the IOM principles bring practical benefit to the management of offenders at all levels, including lower level neighbourhood crime.

In line with the constabulary's commitment to early intervention and rehabilitation, HMIC found effective partnerships working well in this area.

### **How well does the force deal with repeat offenders?**

The constabulary has effective processes in place to identify and manage repeat offenders. The IOM unit is a mature partnership which brings together the police, the probation service, the Community Rehabilitation Company and other service providers; the team operates from a shared location, while access to a range of criminal justice data means that case management is up to date and that interventions correspond to individual needs. Personalised action plans are focussed and subject to constant review, they provide a range of intensive measures to address the prolific nature of offending in the IOM cohort. Interventions are various and range from electronic tagging, counselling and intensive drugs and alcohol treatment therapy.

The programme manages approximately one hundred offenders of which eighty percent are involved in 'acquisitive' crime, namely offences which involve stealing. The cohort is selected in accordance with a national scoring matrix and any organisation can refer an offender to the programme for consideration for his or her inclusion.

The whole emphasis of the programme is to provide a stable environment for individuals in the programme and help them rebuild their lives. However, should

offenders fail to comply with court orders, robust measures are taken to place them back before the courts.

### **How well does the force deal with sexual and other dangerous offenders?**

The constabulary has well-established procedures for dealing with dangerous criminals and sexual predators. The multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPAs)<sup>10</sup> are firmly embedded and there are clear and well-understood overlaps between MAPPAs and the IOM programme.

The constabulary is monitoring 455 sex offenders, of which 58 are considered high or very high risk. It is also monitoring 11 offenders who are considered high-risk through the MAPPAs.

Registered sex offenders and other dangerous offenders are managed by the constabulary's public protection bureau. An established routine is in place to share intelligence with partner organisations on a weekly basis; this is an effective measure in the prioritisation of case management. Important links are maintained between this unit and frontline officers; this makes them aware of the presence of supervised offenders in local communities and any particular risks pertaining to them. These links are reinforced through constabulary bulletins and other briefing materials to raise awareness of matters of interest.

MAPPAs and sex offender management are subject to strong governance by the nominated lead officer. This reaffirms the effective arrangements in place to manage high-risk offenders.

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<sup>10</sup> Multi-agency public protection arrangements is the name given to arrangements in England and Wales for the 'responsible authorities' tasked with the management of registered sex offenders, violent and other types of sexual offenders, and offenders who pose a serious risk of harm to the public.

## Summary of findings



**Requires improvement**

Gloucestershire Constabulary's approach to investigating crime requires improvement. The constabulary has a triage facility (the investigation assessment unit – IAU) to help manage demands upon its services to investigate crime. However, high workloads and delays in reviewing some crimes requiring further assessment in the IAU could present risks for the constabulary and for victims. HMIC also has concerns that some officers are investigating crimes that are beyond their level of accreditation and experience.

While the constabulary can demonstrate that investigations in specialist teams are of a good standard, elsewhere there are a number of shortcomings; investigation plans, which HMIC would expect to be directing investigations, are rarely used and there is little evidence of supervisory activity being endorsed on crime reports. The constabulary has no published policy to explain how crime is allocated to investigators or to set out the minimum standards required for investigations.

There have been marked improvements to the service victims receive although procedures to encourage compliance with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime require improvement. Many of these deficits have been published in successive HMIC inspections over the last two years; the constabulary needs to maintain its focus to successfully address these areas.

More positively, the constabulary works closely with partner organisations to manage prolific and dangerous offenders. HMIC is also complimentary of the constabulary's efforts to examine forensically an increasing number of Smartphones and other devices in support of investigations.

### **Areas for improvement**

- The constabulary should ensure that all crimes are allocated promptly to investigators with the appropriate skills, accreditation and support to investigate them to a good standard.
- The constabulary should ensure that all investigations are completed to a consistently good standard, and in a timely manner.
- The constabulary should ensure that there is regular and active supervision of investigations to check quality and progress.

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

This question was inspected between June and August 2015, and the full report was published in December 2015.<sup>11</sup> The following is a summary of the findings.

### Summary of findings



Requires improvement

Gloucestershire Constabulary generally provides a good service in identifying vulnerable people and responding well to protect them from harm. However, we found several areas where improvement is needed to ensure that service is consistent and the most vulnerable are kept safe. Given the risk that is posed to some of the most vulnerable people, overall HMIC judges that the constabulary requires improvement.

HMIC acknowledges that the constabulary prioritises its resources to provide a high quality service to the public on the basis of threat, risk and harm. The constabulary has identified vulnerability as one of three primary strategic objectives and police officers and staff understand this commitment.

The constabulary effectively identifies repeat and vulnerable victims and responds to them well. It has improved the response to missing and absent children with the introduction of new procedures, but risk assessment and management of missing and absent investigations is not consistent. Work between professionals in the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) is effective in keeping people safe, but HMIC found that there were delays in high-risk domestic abuse cases being referred to the MASH for action. Given the levels of vulnerability of some of these cases the constabulary needs to ensure that priority is given to protect those most at risk.

The constabulary has made its response to child sexual exploitation crimes a priority. Its investment of resources into operations to investigate such offences is evident across the force. This inspection only considered how well prepared the constabulary is to tackle child sexual exploitation.

During HMIC's crime inspection in 2014, HMIC identified that the constabulary needed to improve the quality of victim service and contact. The constabulary provides regular messages to frontline staff regarding the *Code of Practice for Victims of Crime*, with a particular emphasis on the importance of keeping the victim updated in line with their requirements.

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<sup>11</sup> PEEL: Police effectiveness 2015 (Vulnerability) – Gloucestershire Constabulary, HMIC, December 2015. Available from: [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/police-effectiveness-vulnerability-2015-gloucestershire/](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/police-effectiveness-vulnerability-2015-gloucestershire/)

However, the constabulary has identified that it is failing regularly on this commitment. Our file review showed that although there was some evidence of victim contact and care, this was not recorded consistently, and there was little evidence of any formal assessment of the needs of the victim being done unless specialist officers were involved.

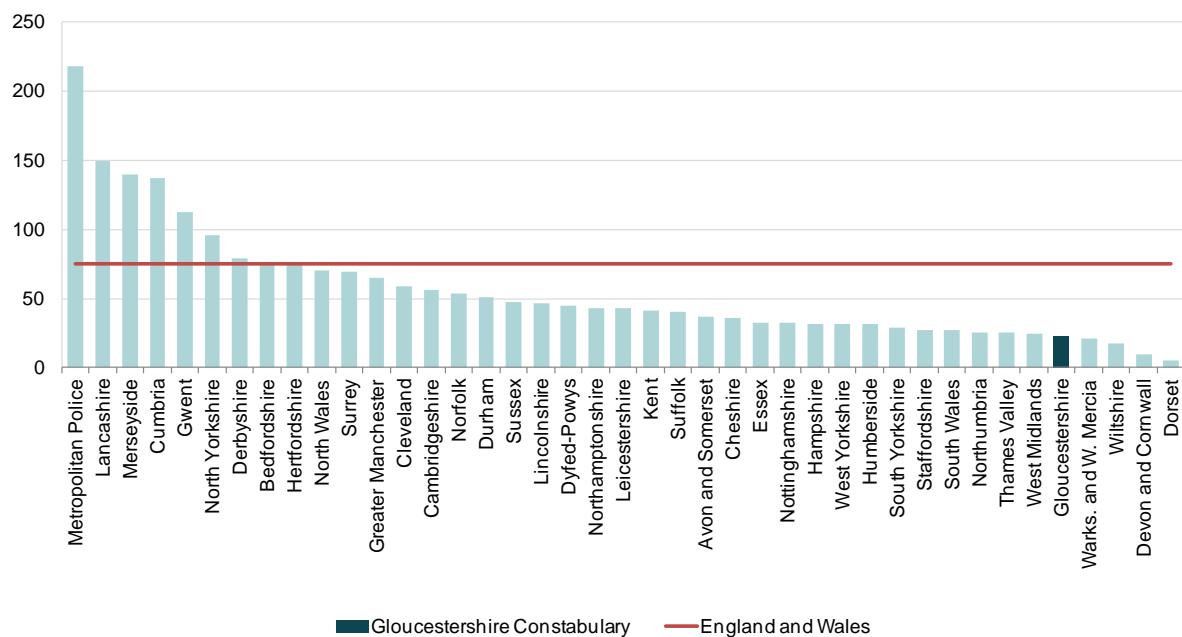
## **How effective is the force at tackling serious and organised crime, including its arrangements for fulfilling its national policing responsibilities?**

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 play a critical role in tackling serious and organised crime alongside regional organised crime units (ROCU), the National Crime Agency (NCA) and other partner organisations.

Police forces that are effective tackle serious and organised crime not just by prosecuting offenders, but by disrupting and preventing organised criminality at a local level. They also use specialist capabilities (for example surveillance and undercover policing) where appropriate in order to protect the public from highly sophisticated and rapidly changing organised criminal threats. A number of forces within a regional area often share specialist capabilities as this provides better value for money and is a more efficient way of working.

As at 30 June 2015, Gloucestershire Constabulary was actively disrupting, investigating or monitoring 14 organised crime groups (OCGs). This represents 23 OCGs per one million of the population, which is low compared with other forces in England and Wales.

**Figure 6: Organised crime groups per one million population, by force, as at 30 June 2015<sup>12 13</sup>**



**Source: HMIC data collection**

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, this indicates their most common characteristic. 'Drug activity' was the predominant crime type (71 percent) of the OCGs managed by Gloucestershire Constabulary as at 30 June 2015. 'Drug activity' was also the most common predominant crime type recorded by all forces in England and Wales<sup>14</sup>, with 64 percent of all OCGs classified in this way.

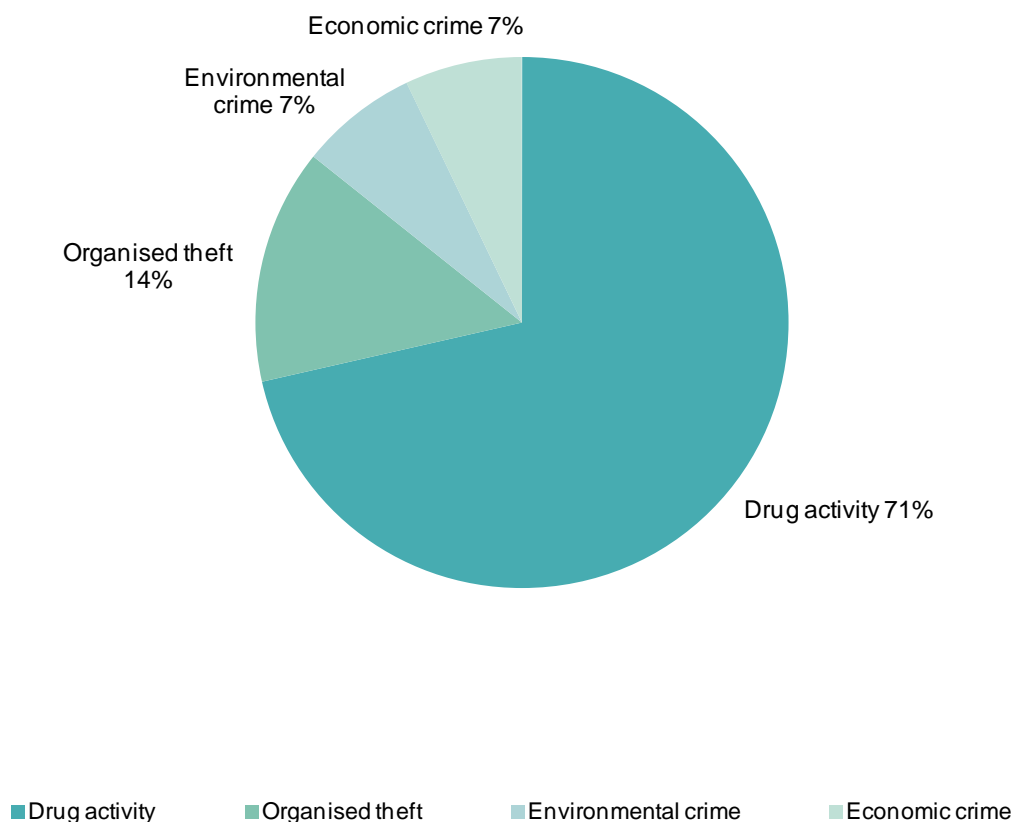
<sup>12</sup> City of London Police data has been removed from the chart as its OCG data is not comparable with other forces due to size and its wider national remit.

<sup>13</sup> 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.

<sup>14</sup> The Metropolitan Police Service is not included in the England and Wales figure because it does not categorise in the same way as other forces; by the predominant form of criminal activity.



**Figure 7: Force organised crime groups by the predominant crime type, as at 30 June 2015<sup>15</sup>**



**Source: HMIC data collection**

Serious and organised crime is one of six national threats specified within *The Strategic Policing Requirement*.<sup>16</sup> These are terrorism, serious and organised crime, national cyber-crime incidents, threats to public order or public safety, civil emergencies, and child sexual abuse. These are complex threats which means that forces must work together to respond to them effectively. It is beyond the scope of this inspection to assess in detail whether forces are capable of responding to these national threats.

<sup>15</sup> Figures may not sum to 100 percent, due to rounding.

<sup>16</sup> *The Strategic Policing Requirement*, Home Office, March 2015. Available from: [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/417116/The\\_Strategic\\_Policing\\_Requirement.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/417116/The_Strategic_Policing_Requirement.pdf)

The Home Secretary issues the SPR annually, 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.

Instead, HMIC has checked whether forces have the necessary arrangements in place to test their own preparedness for dealing with these threats, should they materialise.

## **How well does the force understand the threat and risk posed by serious and organised crime?**

Organised crime is not a large-scale problem in Gloucestershire, however it is HMIC's position that the constabulary has been slow in building on its understanding of this type of offending. In turn this has inhibited the development of partnership engagement which will enhance the ability of operational teams to tackle serious and organised crime effectively.

The constabulary does not currently have an embedded process to assess the threat from serious and organised crime. In other forces, HMIC have seen analysis of serious and organised crime forming part of strategic assessments. Strategic assessments are high-level research and analysis documents that articulate crime patterns, emerging threats and other items of interest in a force area.

In November 2014 government guidance was issued in relation to the introduction of serious and organised crime local profiles. These enable forces and their strategic partners to understand the threats they face and the impact that organised crime is having in local communities. These profiles should support local serious and organised crime partnerships in developing multi-agency action plans for tackling serious and organised crime. At the time of the inspection Gloucestershire Constabulary had not produced any local profiles or formed any partnership boards, but was in the early stages of conducting research and developing its approach with the office of police and crime commissioner.

When a police force identifies a group of individuals whom it suspects may be involved in organised crime, it goes through a nationally standardised 'mapping' procedure. This involves entering 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 (OCG). It also places each OCG into one of several 'bands' which reflect the range and severity of crime in which a group is involved as well as its level of capability and sophistication. OCG mapping is used by forces, ROCUs, the National Crime Agency and a number of non-police organisations such as Border Force.

Despite the use of standard software and methods, OCG mapping is carried out inconsistently by forces and there is significant variation the number of mapped organised crime groups per head of population across England and Wales. This inconsistency is partly due to the unavoidably subjective nature of some aspects of the mapping procedure, which relies on human judgment as well as computer algorithms. Groups exhibiting similar characteristics are sometimes scored in different ways, and forces do not always use the full range of information available to

generate OCG scores which can compromise their accuracy and usefulness. For these reasons, HMIC has recommended that regional organised crime units assume responsibility for OCG mapping on behalf of their constituent forces.<sup>17</sup>

There is evidence that Gloucestershire Constabulary maps OCGs it identifies in accordance with national guidance, but not all of these groups are re-scored or reviewed as frequently as they should be. Once mapped, this information is collated by the regional organised crime unit (ROCU). The constabulary is currently not working closely on shared objectives with this unit as the priorities of the ROCU and constabulary differ. Closer alignment with the ROCU on strategic priorities in relation to serious and organised crime may increase the support that is offered and improve joint working. Further engagement with partner organisations to develop an enhanced appreciation of the extent and type of offending both locally and regionally will complement this approach.

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

The above reservations do not imply that there is no activity in the constabulary to tackle serious and organised crime. The constabulary has a well resourced operational capacity by virtue of its dedicated serious and organised crime team to deal with the most serious organised crime groups. However; operational activity to target lower priority groups to disrupt and deter offenders lacks assurance. The serious and organised crime team focuses on pursuing dangerous offenders and its dedicated approach would be further enhanced by working more closely with partner organisations.

The constabulary does not consistently operate to the government's 'four Ps'<sup>18</sup> model in which best practice is categorised into pursuit of offenders, preventative activity, preparedness and the protection of communities. The government's *Serious and Organised Crime Strategy*<sup>19</sup> was published in 2013 yet the constabulary is still circulating and working from guidance that significantly predates this. The Constabulary has recently engaged with the National Crime Agency (NCA) whose

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<sup>17</sup> *Regional Organised Crime Units: A review of capability and effectiveness*, HMIC, December 2015. Available from: [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/regional-organised-crime-units.pdf](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/regional-organised-crime-units.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> The *Serious and Organised Crime Strategy* uses the framework developed for counter-terrorism and has four components: prosecuting and disrupting offenders (Pursue); preventing people from engaging in this activity (Prevent); increasing protection against serious and organised crime (Protect); and reducing the impact of this criminality where it takes place (Prepare). *Serious and Organised Crime Strategy*, HM Government, October 2013. Available from: [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/248645/Serious\\_and\\_Organised\\_Crime\\_Strategy.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/248645/Serious_and_Organised_Crime_Strategy.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

four Ps co-ordinator will present on the template they operate. This may present further opportunities for improvement.

While HMIC found some evidence of a tiered approach to tackle organised crime groups, this could be refined. Activity aimed at tackling lower risk groups is disjointed. This activity should be initiated, driven and managed by a lead responsible officer (LRO), but some LROs are not clear about their responsibilities, ownership or accountability. The constabulary is introducing a role for a trained detective to ensure there is a better understanding and clarity of requirements. The development of a menu of tactical options and the support of staff in their use, will better address the full spectrum of offending.

HMIC identified that little or no activity has taken place against some mapped OCGs, although recently introduced meetings should improve the scrutiny of operations and provide greater focus in this area.

A high-level drugs investigation was reviewed and it was found to have met its objectives. Successful prosecutions were achieved for the main protagonists, allied to some associated partnership work involving the Great Expectations team. However, stronger relationships could be forged with other agencies that can support these types of investigations.

## **How effectively is the force working with partners to prevent serious and organised crime?**

HMIC found effective work with others to prevent serious and organised crime could be developed further, with a greater understanding of the benefits to those who tackle it. As already highlighted in this report, Great Expectations, the Aston Project and Project Solace are highly acclaimed initiatives in Gloucestershire to prevent local offending and anti-social behaviour. Great Expectations is a good example where a whole force approach is being developed. This project evolved from a team originally responsible for tackling gang crime in 2013 and it has more recently focussed on creating preventative strategies and helping at risk youngsters to avoid trouble in the first place. By further embedding and communicating these programmes, the constabulary could apply them more widely to serious crime.

Within neighbourhood policing where work does exist with partner organisations, this tends to reflect a reactive response to specific type of criminality rather than a structured approach to reduce this type of offending. Examples include neighbourhood officers engaging with housing providers to develop intelligence about individuals or access being made to the International Criminal Conviction Exchange to understand more about foreign nationals. However, a more structured approach could be taken to partnership and preventative work in this area.

More positively, the serious and organised crime team communicates well with the public about operational successes and engages the local press and media. Coverage has become increasingly visible in the local press and HMIC believes this

could be exploited still further on the constabulary's intranet site and reinforced through neighbourhood teams.

In other forces, HMIC has seen high level strategic boards which bring chief officers together with council chief executives, the ROCU, the NCA, the probation service and other service providers to understand more about serious and organised crime. Where this has worked best, an exchange of information has led to a common understanding of the extent of the problem; this in turn has developed a deeper insight into how the problem can be contained and the expected contribution of each organisation to achieve this.

In Gloucestershire, operational activity against OCGs is currently focused on drug-related crime. Although previously there is evidence that the constabulary has been involved in operations to tackle a range of criminal threats increased high-level joint working with partners may reveal more of the hidden threats and leave the constabulary better equipped to protect its communities.

## **How effective are the arrangements in place to ensure that the force can fulfil its national policing responsibilities?**

It is beyond the scope of this inspection to assess in detail whether forces are capable of responding to the six national threats. Instead, HMIC has checked whether forces have the necessary arrangements in place to test their own preparedness for dealing with these threats, should they materialise.

As the constabulary improves its understanding of the threats from serious and organised crime it will be able to demonstrate that it is well prepared and has satisfactory arrangements in place to satisfy all six of its national policing responsibilities. This is particularly so in relation to its preparedness to respond to cyber-crime and in its role in the Local Resilience Forum (LRF).

The constabulary has a prominent role in bringing partner organisations together in the LRF; the LRF has a remit to build joint capability in response to civil contingencies, develop crisis management and other emergency procedures. The forum has a programme of exercises to test the operational response. The forum also effectively managed floods in 2014 and more recently the badger cull.

The constabulary has developed its cyber-crime capability and is regarded as a centre of excellence. The digital capabilities unit is at the forefront of capabilities and threat discovery and organised crime threats have been discovered through new technology. In addition, an investment has been made in the training of staff which includes joint development work with the Government Communication Headquarters (GCHQ). The constabulary works in a consultancy capacity for other forces, government departments and is working with the ROCU to develop an understanding of the threats in the region. All forces have a standing commitment to mobilise officers for deployments in the event of major incidents or events that are beyond the capacity of a local force. Gloucestershire Constabulary has effective

measures in place to test these mobilisation arrangements alongside other forces in the southwest region.

## Summary of findings



Requires improvement

Gloucestershire Constabulary requires improvement in how it tackles serious and organised crime. This is the first year HMIC has graded forces on their effectiveness at tackling serious and organised crime, including a force's arrangements for ensuring that it can fulfil its national policing responsibilities, so no year-on-year comparison is possible.

The constabulary's strategic understanding of the threat presented by serious and organised crime and its impact in communities could be improved. To achieve this, the constabulary needs to engage meaningfully with partner organisations to share information and deepen understanding.

Firm leadership from the top of the organisation is needed to place the management of organised crime groups in line with national best practice; most importantly the expectations of individuals assigned as 'responsible officers' need to be made clear. Working practices within the serious and organised crime team need to be more inclusive. More thought needs to be given to how it works with partners and the impact this might have. Furthermore the relationship it has with the regional organised crime unit needs to be more clearly defined.

As the constabulary improves its understanding of the threats from serious and organised crime it will be able to demonstrate that it is well prepared and has satisfactory arrangements in place to meet the national policing responsibilities and address the high-level national threats articulated in the *Strategic Policing Requirement*. In particular, the constabulary's state of readiness to manage a cyber-crime attack is well developed.

### **Causes of concern**

It is a cause of concern to HMIC that essential processes are not in place in Gloucestershire to understand the threat from serious and organised crime or to provide an effective multi-agency response to this type of offending.

### **Recommendation**

The constabulary should immediately take steps to:

- establish a structured approach to threat assessment at a strategic level;
- develop a serious and organised crime local profile in conjunction with partner organisations, and maintain joint oversight through a multi-agency board;
- embed an approach to tackling serious and organised crime based on the 'four Ps' as set out in the Serious and Organised Crime Strategy;
- ensure that all mapped OCGs are subject to regular scrutiny and oversight, enabling it to routinely identify and pursue opportunities for disruption and investigation; and
- engage routinely with partner organisations in order to disrupt and investigate serious and organised crime.

## Annex A – HMIC judgments

### Our judgments

The judgment categories are:

- outstanding;
- good;
- requires improvement; and
- inadequate.

Judgment is made against how effective the force is at keeping people safe and reducing crime; it is not an assessment of the overall effectiveness of policing. In applying the categories HMIC considers whether:

- the effectiveness the force is achieving is good, or exceeds this standard sufficiently to be judged as outstanding;
- the effectiveness of the force requires improvement, and/or there are some weaknesses; or
- the effectiveness of the force is inadequate because it is considerably lower than is expected.