

# PEEL: Police effectiveness 2015

An inspection of Suffolk Constabulary



February 2016

© HMIC 2016

ISBN: 978-1-78655-006-4

[www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic)

# Contents

<b>Overview – How effective is the force at keeping people safe and reducing crime?</b> .....	<b>3</b>
Overall judgment.....	3
Summary .....	3
<b>Force in numbers</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>How effective is the force at preventing crime and anti-social behaviour, and keeping people safe?</b> .....	<b>11</b>
How well does the force work to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour, and keep people safe? .....	14
How well does the force work with partners to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour, and keep people safe?.....	16
Summary of findings .....	19
<b>How effective is the force at investigating crime and managing offenders?....</b>	<b>20</b>
How well does the force investigate crime and keep victims safe and informed? .	22
How well does the force identify and manage offenders to prevent re-offending? 26	
Summary of findings .....	28
<b>How effective is the force at protecting from harm those who are vulnerable, and supporting victims?</b> .....	<b>29</b>
Summary of findings .....	29
<b>How effective is the force at tackling serious and organised crime, including its arrangements for fulfilling its national policing responsibilities?.....</b>	<b>31</b>
How well does the force understand the threat and risk posed by serious and organised crime? .....	34
How effectively does the force respond to serious and organised crime? .....	36
How effectively is the force working with partners to prevent serious and organised crime? .....	37
How effective are the arrangements in place to ensure that the force can fulfil its national policing responsibilities? .....	37
Summary of findings .....	38
<b>Annex A – HMIC judgments</b> .....	<b>39</b>

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

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



Good

Suffolk Constabulary is good at reducing crime, keeping people safe and preventing crime and anti-social behaviour. There are some areas for improvement in services to keep vulnerable people, particularly children safe. Generally, the constabulary has a strong focus on preventing crime and keeping people safe with a commitment to visible local policing. It works well with partner organisations to investigate crime and manage offenders, including those involved in serious and organised crime. This is the first year HMIC has graded forces on their overall effectiveness so comparison of their year-on-year effectiveness is not possible.

## Summary

HMIC judges Suffolk Constabulary to be good at reducing crime and keeping people safe. There is a clear commitment from both the constabulary and the police and crime commissioner to the importance of preventing crime and anti-social behaviour. Suffolk Constabulary works well with partner organisations. Despite financial constraints, the constabulary has retained a strong local policing presence to work alongside local communities and partner organisations to understand and tackle local concerns but it could do more to systematically understand and share what works to ensure it uses its reducing resources in the most effective way.

Suffolk Constabulary generally provides a good service in identifying and supporting vulnerable people and responds well to them. However, there are several areas where improvement is needed to ensure the service is consistent and that vulnerable people, particularly children, are kept safe. It now needs to build on the good work it is doing to ensure that it results in a consistently high quality service.

Suffolk Constabulary's approach to investigating crime and managing offenders is good. The constabulary investigates crimes effectively, ensuring it has the right people with the right skills to fight crime and bring offenders to justice but needs to do more to ensure that staff are appropriately trained to continue providing an adequate level of service to victims. There is a focus on diverting offenders away from crime and there are good examples of partnership working.

---

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

The constabulary has a good understanding of serious and organised crime and is working well to tackle it. The leadership has strong oversight of the constabulary's ability to respond to national threats, such as serious cyber-crime incidents and child sexual abuse. Its own arrangements for ensuring it can meet its national obligations in this regard (such as planning, testing and exercising) are effective.

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



**Good**

HMIC judges that Suffolk Constabulary is good at preventing crime, anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe. This is consistent with the findings of the 2014 crime inspection. Suffolk remains a low crime area when compared to the rest of England and Wales.

There is a clear commitment from both the constabulary and the police and crime commissioner to the importance of preventing crime and anti-social behaviour. It works well with partner organisations both at the constabulary-wide level and in local neighbourhoods. There is a strong culture of preventative policing in Suffolk and a commitment to proactively engage and work with partners to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour.

Despite financial constraints, the constabulary has retained a strong local policing presence to work alongside local communities and partner organisations to understand and tackle local concerns but it could do more to systematically understand and share what works to ensure it uses its resources in the most effective way.

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



**Good**

Suffolk Constabulary's approach to investigating crime and managing offenders is good. This is consistent with the finding of HMICs 2014 crime inspection. There are examples of effective services and some minor areas where the constabulary could improve its effectiveness.

Processes for the initial allocation and investigation of crimes work well, generally the right people with the right skills are used to investigate crimes and support victims. We found that the quality of subsequent investigations is good with effective supervision.

The constabulary has a wide range of accredited specialists to support more complex investigations and has introduced a career pathway for detectives. The constabulary needs to ensure that it has the ability to train future investigators to ensure an appropriate level of service to victims.

Multi-agency arrangements for dealing with sexual and other dangerous offenders work well with specialist staff reducing the risk they pose, through clear supervision and governance

It effectively shares information with partners to keep people safe, although the constabulary needs to ensure partners are effectively engaged in their plans for the future policing model.

HMIC found inconsistencies in the approaches taken by different neighbourhood teams to understand local communities and the way problems are solved. The constabulary could do more to ensure consistency across the county.

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



#### **Requires Improvement**

Suffolk Constabulary generally provides a good service in identifying vulnerable people and responds well to them. However, there are several areas where improvement is needed to ensure the service is consistent and that vulnerable people, particularly children, are kept safe.

The PCC and chief officer team has made protecting vulnerable people a clear priority for the constabulary, and police officers and staff understand and share this commitment. It has invested additional resources in the parts of its organisation which supports those who are vulnerable and keeps them safe.

Overall, the constabulary effectively identifies repeat and vulnerable victims

arrangements. Forensic and digital specialists support investigations well, and investment in staff and technology has reduced delays and improved the quality of service.

The constabulary works well with partner organisations to identify and divert vulnerable offenders out of the criminal justice system and with repeat and dangerous offenders to stop them re-offending.

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



#### **Good**

Suffolk Constabulary is generally effective at identifying and tackling serious and organised crime groups in its area. 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 works effectively in collaboration with Norfolk Constabulary to pool resources and provide a better service. It has a good understanding of the threat posed by serious and organised crime, it responds well to tackle it and is continuing to develop the

and responds to them appropriately. It also investigates those crimes committed against the most vulnerable victims well, and generally assigns the right level of expertise relative to the complexity of investigation. However, the current caseload within the teams who deal with rape and child abuse investigations are on occasions unacceptably high, and can become unmanageable, therefore leading to delays in investigation and a reduced service to the victim.

The constabulary needs to do more to ensure it provides a consistent and co-ordinated response to missing and absent children. It has made a good start in ensuring it is well prepared to tackle child sexual exploitation. Officers attending domestic abuse incidents know how to assess risk and keep victims safe.

involvement of partner organisations in its response. There are some good examples of effective work to disrupt organised crime and to protect vulnerable communities from being targeted by organised crime groups. It also has access to an extensive range of specialist policing capabilities provided by the Eastern Region Special Operations Unit.

HMIC's crime inspection in 2014 identified the need to involve frontline officers more in its fight against serious and organised crime. The constabulary has made some progress towards this and needs to continue this work.

There are robust arrangements to oversee the constabulary's national policing responsibilities, and to test its responses.

## Force in numbers



### Calls for assistance

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

Suffolk Constabulary      England and Wales

**242**

**350**



### Crime

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

Suffolk Constabulary      England and Wales

**55.0**

**63.0**

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

Suffolk Constabulary

England and Wales

**48.6**

**60.3**

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

Suffolk Constabulary

England and Wales

**+13.3%**

**+4.5%**

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

Suffolk Constabulary

England and Wales

**-11.7%**

**-12.6%**



### Charge rate

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

Suffolk Constabulary      England and Wales

**17.2%**

**16.0%**



## Anti-social behaviour

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

Suffolk Constabulary

England and Wales

**26.2**

**32.9**

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

Suffolk Constabulary

England and Wales

**26.9**

**36.2**



## Domestic abuse

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

Suffolk Constabulary

England and Wales

**9.6%**

**10.0%**

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

Suffolk Constabulary

England and Wales

**8.4%**

**8.5%**



## Organised crime groups

Organised crime groups per million population as at 30 June 2015

Suffolk Constabulary

England and Wales

**40.6**

**74.7**



## Victim satisfaction rate

Victim satisfaction rate 12 months to 31 March 2015

Suffolk Constabulary

England and Wales

**87.2%**

**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 Suffolk 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 those who are vulnerable from harm 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 Suffolk Constabulary.

---

<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-suffolk/](http://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/publications/police-effectiveness-vulnerability-2015-suffolk/)). 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 Suffolk?

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 12 percent in Suffolk compared with a reduction of 13 percent across all forces in England and Wales.

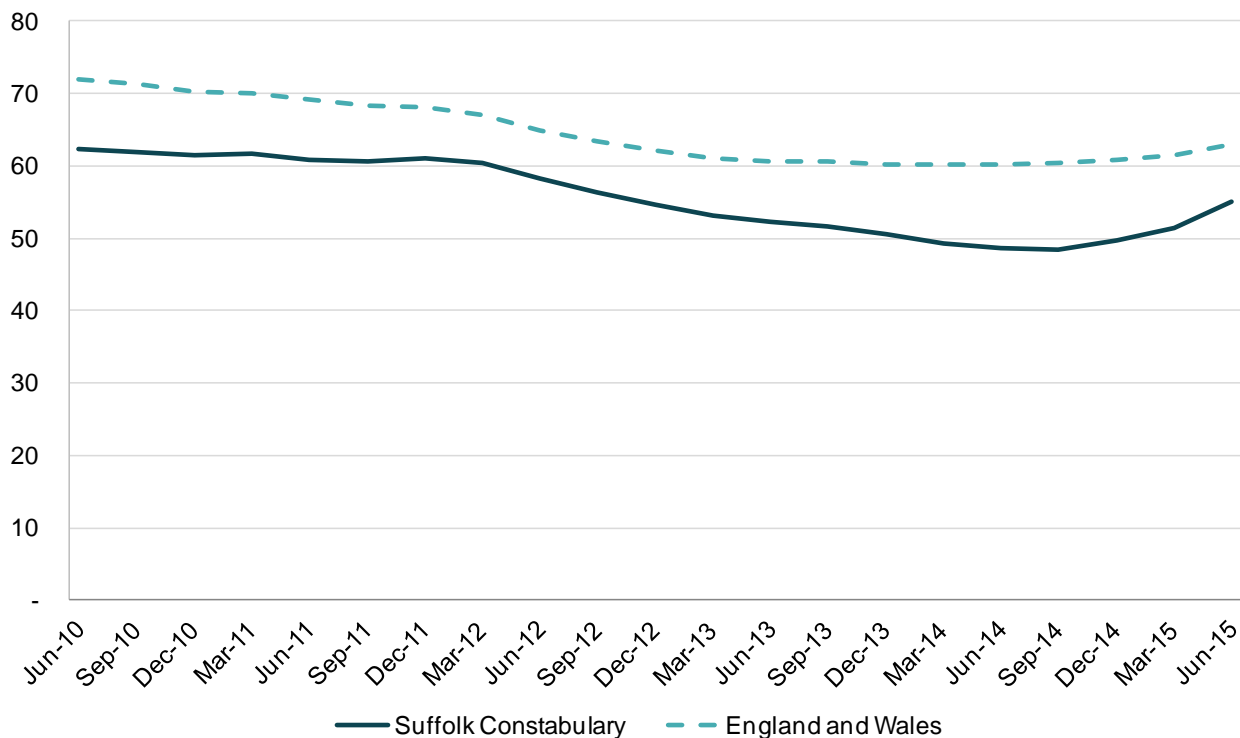
Over this same period, victim-based crime (i.e. crimes where there is a direct victim such as an individual, a group, or an organisation) decreased by 13 percent in Suffolk, compared with a reduction of 12 percent across England and Wales.

When compared with the previous year, police recorded crime (excluding fraud) in Suffolk increased by 13 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.

Suffolk remains a safe place to live, work and visit despite the recent increase in recorded crime. The constabulary attributes this increase to a renewed focus on accurately recording crime following HMIC's Crime Data Integrity inspection, published in August 2014. During this inspection, we reviewed 99 incidents reported to Suffolk Constabulary and found that the constabulary recorded 74 out of 86

crimes correctly.<sup>3</sup> The constabulary has responded to our findings and improved the way it records crimes reported by the public. The constabulary has also been proactive in its attempts to encourage vulnerable victims, such as those experiencing domestic abuse, to report incidents to police.

**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 Suffolk (per 1,000 population) compared with England and Wales.

<sup>3</sup> *Crime Data Integrity: Inspection of Suffolk Constabulary*, HMIC 2014. Available from: <http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/crime-data-integrity-force-reports/>

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

Rates per 1,000 population	Suffolk Constabulary	England and Wales
Recorded crime (excluding fraud)	55.0	63.0
Victim-based crime	47.7	56.0
Sexual offences	1.8	1.6
Assault with injury	5.5	6.3
Burglary in a dwelling*	4.8	8.4
Anti-social behaviour incidents*	26.2	32.9

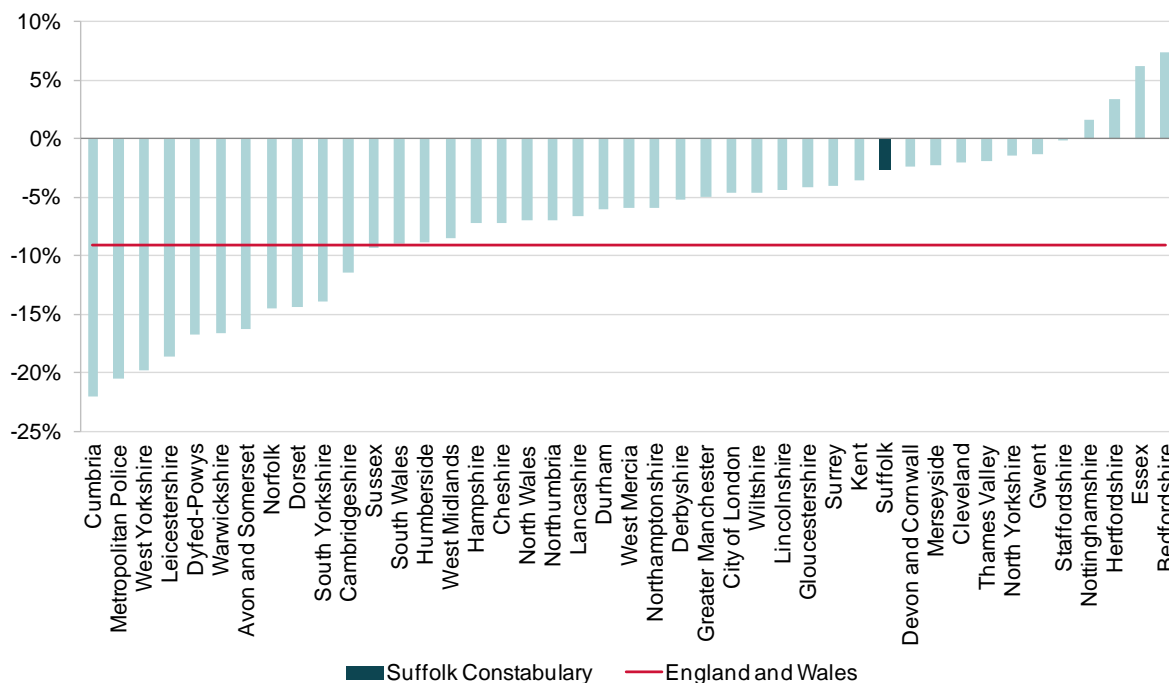
**Source: Home Office data, HMIC data return**

**\*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, Suffolk Constabulary recorded 19,376 incidents of anti-social behaviour. This is 3 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?

Suffolk Constabulary demonstrates a strong commitment to preventing crime and anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe. Preventing and reducing crime and anti-social behaviour, caring for victims and vulnerable people and solving crime are priorities in the police and crime commissioner’s (PCC’s) police and crime plan for Suffolk. Senior police officers work constructively with other organisations, to develop joint plans to tackle crime, anti-social behaviour and issues of community concern.

We found a very clear focus on identifying and supporting the most vulnerable within the county. Officers and staff are clear about the importance to the constabulary of protecting vulnerable victims and preventing crime and anti-social behaviour. They are involved in a wide variety of prevention activities involving numerous partner organisations across Suffolk.

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

Despite severe financial constraints, Suffolk Constabulary has worked hard to maintain local resources to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour. Local policing is provided through 29 safer neighbourhood teams (SNTs) and three operational partnership teams (OPTs) across the county. Together they provide a local and visible presence within the community and work alongside local communities and partner organisations to better understand community priorities and concerns. This enables the constabulary to jointly agree and set local priorities, and ensures that pooled resources are used to best effect in tackling crime and anti-social behaviour in each neighbourhood.

Suffolk Constabulary is in the process of reviewing how it provides services to the people of Suffolk – against the backdrop of reduced funding – through the Suffolk local policing review. Consultation has been undertaken with the public and partners to seek their views on the future of Suffolk Constabulary and it has undertaken analysis of the range of demands on the police to help shape its future services. Reducing budgets will inevitably lead to reductions in the size of the workforce; HMIC will monitor the impact of future changes on the ability of the constabulary to continue to effectively prevent crime and anti-social behaviour.

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

There is a strong culture of crime prevention in Suffolk, and the constabulary uses a broad range of tactics to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and keep people safe. SNTs and OPTs are actively involved in a range of activities and initiatives, using effectively the wide range of police powers and tools to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and keep people safe. These include anti-social behaviour powers, provision of specialist advice, the deployment and use of CCTV, crime prevention officers, restorative justice interventions, tackling offending behaviour and work to reduce re-offending.

The constabulary assesses the risk presented by incidents of anti-social behaviour which are discussed daily within SNTs and resources allocated towards prevention. Incidents involving higher levels of risk or needing longer term engagement with partners are referred to the OPTs who are able to engage a wide range of partners to help in resolving problems. For example enlisting the help of local authority enforcement powers and working with housing providers to enforce tenancy provisions. HMIC saw particularly good evidence of OPT staff working effectively with mental health professionals, local housing providers and local councils to resolve local issues.

There has been some improvement in the way the force understands and learns from what works, but more needs to be done to ensure that tactics and initiatives are evaluated. HMIC's crime inspection in 2014 found some areas for improvement in the way the constabulary reviewed and evaluated the benefits of crime fighting and anti-social behaviour initiatives. Similarly, HMIC recommended that more needed to

be done to share learning and good practice across the constabulary and with partners. Some learning is now shared and we found examples of where local staff were working well with partners and the community to resolve issues of local concern. However, there is still an absence of any systematic process to evaluate or share learning across the organisation. This means, the constabulary cannot be confident it learns from which approaches and tactics work best to both fight and prevent crime and anti-social behaviour, to ensure it uses its resources in the most effective way.

HMIC acknowledges that Suffolk together with Norfolk Constabulary has recently entered into a three year contract with the 'better policing collaborative'<sup>4</sup> which includes training for staff to conduct evidence-based evaluations and undertake research to better understand which tactics lead to the best outcomes and whether or not they provide value for money. This will enable the constabulary to focus its resources based on evidence of what works.

The constabulary plans to share its learning with the College of Policing to enable other forces to benefit from the research.

## **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?**

Suffolk Constabulary has strong and well-developed relationships with a wide range of partners, who are jointly committed to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and to keep people safe. It engages at both the constabulary-wide and local level with a broad range of partners and voluntary organisations.

There are clear governance structures with chief officers overseeing partnership work and joint prevention activity through the community safety, local safeguarding and criminal justice boards. The constabulary has recently introduced a new governance board to ensure effective co-ordination of these various groups.

During our fieldwork we received feedback from some partner organisations expressing concern over proposed changes within the constabulary. Some partners have noticed a reduction in attendance by the police representatives at partnership meetings. Partners perceived that they were not as informed about future changes as they would like to be. The constabulary needs to ensure that it is engaging effectively with partner organisations as it continues to develop future plans for the force; and it fully understands the impact of these changes on partners and on joint working arrangements.

The constabulary recognises the benefits of physically locating police staff alongside representatives from partner organisations to get more effective information sharing

---

<sup>4</sup> The 'Better Policing Collaborative' is a joint venture of a number of universities as well as the organisation Skills for Justice.



and joint working. Officers and staff currently work alongside other agencies within the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH),<sup>5</sup> the integrated offender management team (IOM)<sup>6</sup> and the OPTs. This investment in time and people in working alongside partner organisations, with their additional skills, powers and resources, means the constabulary is able to work together with others to solve local problems and keep people safe.

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

Suffolk Constabulary is effective at sharing information with partners including; formal meetings such as multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs),<sup>7</sup> through the MASH and community safety partnerships (CSPs), SNTs and OPTs. This effective sharing of information with partners helps to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and keep people safe.

As part of our field work, HMIC observed two MARACs and found good partner representation and information sharing. There is effective information sharing and joint working within the MASH which contributes to safeguarding victims and children through information sharing and joint working. HMIC also found good examples of effective information exchange and joint working within the IOM programme, known locally as the '180 scheme'.

The constabulary already has a range of partners working alongside police officers and staff. This positive approach to co-location of various organisations means that information is shared quickly among a wide range of agencies. Locally, OPT officers share information and updates on activity against joint initiatives with partners through a shared computer system. This allows police and partners to share information and work together to address local issues.

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

Suffolk Constabulary works effectively with partners to keep people safe and tackle anti-social behaviour in local neighbourhoods. There are fewer incidents of anti-social behaviour per head of population in Suffolk than in England and Wales as a whole. There were 3 percent fewer incidents over the 12 months to 30 June 2015. While some of this reduction in incidents of anti-social behaviour can be explained by

---

<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.

<sup>6</sup> IOM brings a multi-agency response to the crime and reoffending threats faced by local communities. The most persistent and problematic offenders are identified and managed jointly by partner agencies working together.

<sup>7</sup> MARACs are local meetings at which information about high-risk domestic abuse victims (those at risk of murder or serious harm) is shared between local agencies.

more accurate crime recording by the constabulary, as a result of improved compliance of with the national recording standards, some can be attributed to the fact that local policing arrangements work well, and enable staff in SNTs and OPTs to focus on preventing crime and anti-social behaviour in local neighbourhoods.

Staff recognise the importance of their role in intervening early to prevent the escalation of incidents of anti-social behaviour; incidents requiring more specialist skills or the involvement of other agencies are referred to the OPT who work with partners, utilising their specialist skills, additional powers and joint resources to resolve issues.

Although local staff understand the communities they serve and their concerns, we found inconsistencies in the approaches taken by SNTs to achieve this. Some SNTs maintain detailed profiles of their communities, while others have been told that they were no longer required. We also found inconsistencies in the way local officers and staff approached solving local problems. This means that the constabulary cannot be assured that it is consistently using the most effective methods to understand communities and solve problems throughout the county.

The constabulary participates in a wide range of effective local partnership activities and joint initiatives to prevent crime, anti-social behaviour and keep communities safe; examples include:

- 'Lowestoft rising', an impressive multi-agency initiative which brings together a number of organisations to address a range of social issues often associated with crime and anti-social behaviour;
- working with partners to end youth gangs and violence;
- working with the voluntary sector to support the homeless, reduce street drinking and incidents of anti-social behaviour;
- working with the 'Troubled Families' programme to jointly tackle the issues experienced by a small number of families with complex problems;
- supporting families through the Suffolk family focus multi-agency forum; and
- working with licensed premises to prevent crime and reduce anti-social behaviour.

## Summary of findings



**Good**

HMIC judges that Suffolk Constabulary is good at preventing crime, anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe. This is consistent with the findings of the 2014 crime inspection. Suffolk remains a low crime area when compared to the rest of England and Wales.

There is a clear commitment from both the constabulary and the police and crime commissioner to the importance of preventing crime and anti-social behaviour. It works well with partner organisations both at the constabulary-wide level and in local neighbourhoods. There is a strong culture of preventative policing in Suffolk and a commitment to proactively engage and work with partners to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour.

Despite financial constraints, the constabulary has retained a strong local policing presence to work alongside local communities and partner organisations to understand and tackle local concerns but it could do more to systematically understand and share what works to ensure it uses its resources in the most effective way.

It effectively shares information with partners to keep people safe, although the constabulary needs to ensure partners are effectively engaged in their plans for the future policing model.

HMIC found inconsistencies in the approaches taken by different neighbourhood teams to understand local communities and the way problems are solved. The constabulary could do more to ensure consistency across the county.

### **Areas for improvement**

- The constabulary should routinely evaluate tactics and share effective practice – both internally and with partners – to continually improve its approach to the prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour.

## 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, including 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. Suffolk Constabulary, however, has been providing the Home Office with full data since July 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>8 9 10</sup>**

Outcome type/group	Suffolk Constabulary Number of outcomes	Rate	England and Wales Number of outcomes	Rate
<b>Charged/Summoned</b>	<b>6,970</b>	<b>17.2</b>	<b>577,678</b>	<b>16.0</b>
<b>Taken into consideration</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>21,318</b>	<b>0.6</b>
<b>Out-of-court (formal)</b>	<b>1,827</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>165,384</b>	<b>4.6</b>
Caution - youths	278	0.7	19,703	0.5
Caution - adults	1,339	3.3	115,000	3.2
Penalty Notices for Disorder	210	0.5	30,681	0.8
<b>Out-of-court (informal)</b>	<b>3,463</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>159,915</b>	<b>4.4</b>
Cannabis/Khat warning	471	1.2	41,964	1.2
Community resolution	2,992	7.4	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>11</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. Suffolk Constabulary has one of the highest rates for 'community resolution', of all forces in England and Wales.

<sup>8</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>9</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>10</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>11</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.

The constabulary is good at allocating cases appropriately and conducting an effective initial investigation. The constabulary has a clear and well-understood way of ensuring crimes are investigated by those with the necessary skills and expertise to investigate them, with a clear focus on supporting the victim as well as bringing the offender to justice.

HMIC also found in its 2014 crime inspection that Suffolk Constabulary was good at investigating offending with an emphasis of putting the victim at the heart its investigation. In preparation of our inspection, we reviewed 39 investigations and found that overall; investigations are of a good standard with a clear process for allocating and investigating crimes. Investigation plans are well-documented with evidence of effective supervision, although decision making is not always documented in less serious offences. It is clear that supervisors reallocate more serious crimes if it is thought a different investigating officer would be more appropriate and investigations are promptly allocated to those with the necessary skills and experience. The resulting investigations are of a high standard, and clearly focused on the needs of the victim.

An investigation starts when the information is received by police, usually via a telephone call into the constabulary's contact and control room. The constabulary introduced recently an assessment process known as THRIVE (threat, harm, risk, investigation, vulnerability and engagement) within the contact and control room. The technique provides the staff receiving calls for police services with a way of making a fully-informed decision about the relative risk to the individual victim, the level of threat, and the opportunities to investigate a crime. This is a positive step and recognises that some victims are more vulnerable than others. It enables the constabulary to make a decision on the police response needed based on the needs of the victim rather than the type of crime being reported.

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

Suffolk Constabulary is good at investigating different types of crime. It has local dedicated investigation teams (CID), providing a skilled and professionally trained investigative capability in each of the districts. The crimes they investigate are appropriate to their skills and experience and workloads are manageable. In addition to this, each custody centre includes a custody investigation unit. The staff in these units are experienced and take over the investigation of non-complex crimes, allowing response officers who provide the initial police attendance to more quickly return to other response duties, once they have arrested and brought an offender into custody.

HMIC reviewed a sample of files and continuing investigations, and found that overall, the non-complex crime investigations carried out by officers from the safer neighbourhood teams; response and local CID are of good quality. Our review of non-complex investigations showed that investigators possessed the appropriate skills and training to conduct the investigation and enquiries were followed up in a timely fashion. All crimes we reviewed contained an investigation plan which varied in detail depending on the complexity of the crime being investigated. Supervision is good, with evidence that supervisors are actively involved in setting appropriate investigation plans for the investigating officer to follow; and overseeing cases as they progress.

More complex and serious crimes are allocated to specialist investigators who have received additional training. We found that these too are allocated appropriately to officers with appropriate skills and training. Again all were well-supervised with evidence of involvement from a supervisor. All the cases reviewed had a clear investigation plan with evidence of effective supervision and supervisory involvement in decision making.

In HMIC's 2014 crime inspection of Suffolk Constabulary, although the constabulary was generally good at investigating offending with a strong focus on the victim, we found there was a limited focus on improving the quality of investigations or on developing professional investigative skills among officers. There have been some improvements in this area. The constabulary has developed a clear career structure with a professional training and accreditation programme for staff wishing to become detectives. However, we found a significant waiting list of staff and supervisors who have been waiting in some cases as long as 19 months for their initial investigators' course.<sup>12</sup> The constabulary has yet to secure a provider for these courses. The constabulary needs to do more to ensure that it has the necessary training in place to provide investigators with the appropriate level of training.

---

<sup>12</sup> Initial Crime Investigators' Development Programme (ICIDP)

During our *PEEL: Police effectiveness (Vulnerability) inspection of Suffolk Constabulary*<sup>13</sup> in June 2015, HMIC was concerned that the high workloads within the specialist teams, investigating rape and child abuse, were leading to delays and a reduced service to victims. We revisited those teams during this inspection and found that the constabulary has already responded positively and increased the number of staff working within those units to tackle this problem.

Suffolk, in collaboration with Norfolk Constabulary, provides forensic services through a joint unit serving both constabularies. Crime scene investigators and the forensic department provide a good level of service to victims of crime and have clear timescales in relation to attendance and examination. The constabulary monitors performance at regular intervals against a range of criteria such as attendance and the number of people identified by their fingerprints or DNA.

HMIC found that the constabulary makes effective, appropriate and consistent use of forensic specialists to support its investigations, with clear evidence of the full range of forensic opportunities being considered to secure the best outcome from an investigation. We found effective supervision, with clear supervisory involvement in decision-making and prioritisation. The constabulary forensic examination and reporting is timely and supports investigations well.

### **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 (HTCU), carry out these examinations.

The constabulary has invested in its own technology to support the recovery of digital evidence from devices such as mobile phones. Each of its custody suites and districts now has access to a device. This has significantly reduced the time taken to obtain evidence in more routine enquiries as investigators can recover evidence themselves without needing to wait for specialist support from the HTCU. The provision of these devices has also reduced the time victims are without their mobile phones, thereby improving the level of service provided by Suffolk Constabulary.

Suffolk has a joint HTCU with Norfolk Constabulary. This joint unit has also recently invested in resources and new technology to download data and information from computers and other devices. Since this investment, the unit has been meeting the national standards for the time taken to examine these devices. HMIC acknowledges the progress that both constabularies have made in reducing backlogs within the unit to improve the service it provides in supporting investigations.

---

<sup>13</sup> *PEEL: Police effectiveness (Vulnerability) inspection of Suffolk Constabulary*, HMIC, December 2015. Available from: [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/police-effectiveness-vulnerability-2015-suffolk.pdf](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/police-effectiveness-vulnerability-2015-suffolk.pdf)

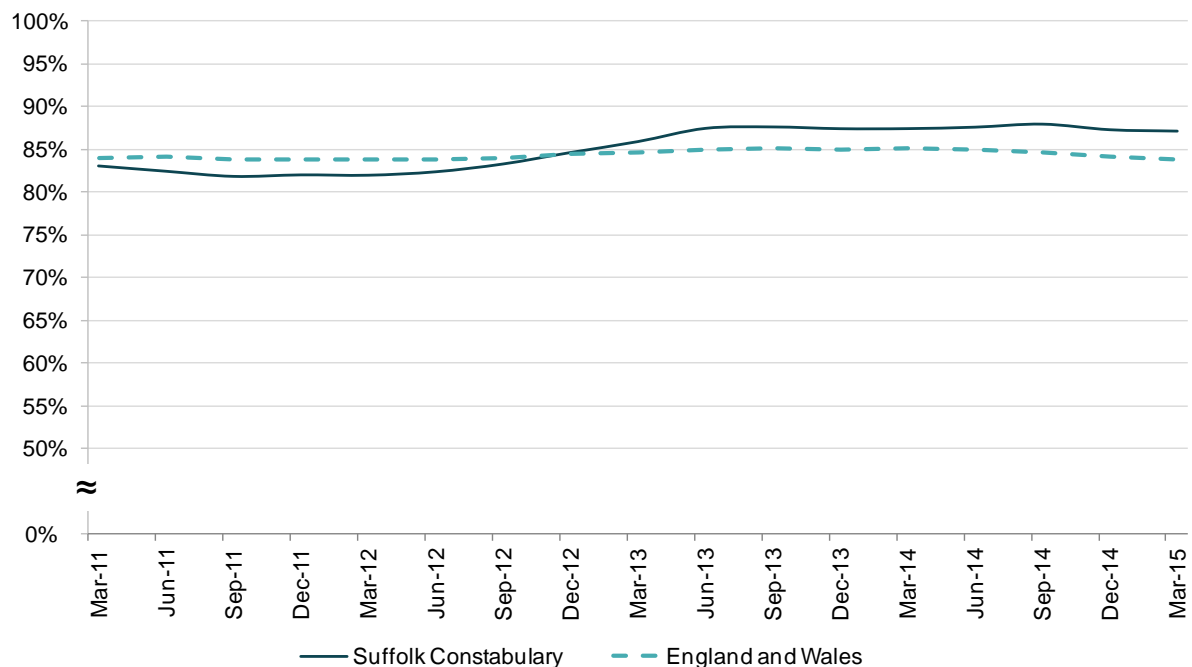


Digital evidence is also gathered by the constabulary’s online investigation team (OLIT) which investigate offences such as the making, taking, possessing and distribution of indecent images of children under the age of 18 years old.

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

Of those who have been the victim of a crime in Suffolk in the 12 months to 31 March 2015, 87.2 percent were satisfied with their whole experience with the police. This is higher than the national victim satisfaction rate of 83.8 percent over the same time period. The victim satisfaction rate in Suffolk for the 12 months to 31 March 2015 is broadly in line with the previous year’s rate, while it is significantly higher than the rate for the 12 months to 31 March 2011.

**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**

The police and crime commissioner routinely monitors public satisfaction and regularly holds the chief constable to account at the bi-monthly public accountability and performance panel meetings. The constabulary seeks feedback on the service it provides from various groups including victims of violent crime and anti-social behaviour. The results of which are used to improve the service delivered to the public.

Suffolk, together with Norfolk Constabulary, is conducting a joint public survey to understand better the service it needs to deliver. This will be repeated in around three years’ time and will enable both constabularies to assess how far the action taken has improved public satisfaction.

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

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

Suffolk Constabulary identifies and deals with offenders in a timely fashion and has good partnership arrangements in place to effectively identify and divert vulnerable offenders out of the criminal justice system, where appropriate, to prevent further offending.

HMIC found that those arrested are dealt with quickly and consistently with some offenders being dealt with by voluntary interviews under caution. Those suspects who are eliminated from enquiries are informed without delay and their bail cancelled. It is evident that officers utilise the full range of intelligence or evidential sources to quickly progress an enquiry.

Community resolution is an alternative way of dealing with less serious crimes which allows officers to use their professional judgment when dealing with offenders, and enables victims to have quick resolutions and closure to their experience. Suffolk Constabulary has one of the highest community resolution rates in England and Wales.

The constabulary provides advice and guidance to staff on the use of community resolution and staff are encouraged to use their professional judgment to make appropriate use of it. Officers are required to consider the views of the victim and authorisation is required from a supervisor to ensure the scheme is used appropriately. The constabulary's approach has been independently reviewed by the College of Policing who confirmed it was being used appropriately.

Suffolk and Norfolk constabularies both use the Suffolk and Norfolk criminal justice liaison and diversion service which operates from the custody centres across both counties. The service involves police and partner agencies who help individuals by providing them with the necessary support to change their behaviour and prevent them re-offending.

The constabulary also works with the youth offending service through the 'challenge for change' programme aimed at diverting young offenders under the age of 18 away from crime and the criminal justice system by addressing their behaviour and preventing them from reoffending or becoming involved in more serious criminality.

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

Suffolk Constabulary effectively identifies repeat offenders and works well with other organisations to prevent them re-offending.

Suffolk and Norfolk constabularies work together to reduce offending among the most persistent and problematic offenders through their integrated offender management scheme, known as the '180 scheme'. The scheme involves police officers and police staff working alongside the national probation service, the community rehabilitation company with links to housing, drugs and alcohol workers.

The most persistent and problematic offenders are identified and effectively managed jointly by partner organisations working together enabling early action to be taken to prevent further offending.

The constabulary monitors the effectiveness of the scheme including how many times participants re-offend. The force's own monitoring shows that the IOM scheme demonstrated a 24 percent reduction in crime committed by participants on the scheme. The constabulary is in the process of developing a range of more sophisticated measures to better assess the effectiveness of the scheme.

While the number of people the constabulary has referred to the scheme is increasing, there are proportionately fewer Suffolk offenders on the scheme than in other force areas. In addition there is a strong focus on offenders who commit serious acquisitive crime,<sup>14</sup> rather than on the broader spectrum of offending, which is not in line with the constabulary's priorities. To address this, the constabulary plans to review the scheme, ensuring that it supports the organisation's focus on protecting vulnerable people and the development of a range of performance indicators to better reflect the contribution of the scheme.

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

The constabulary has well-defined processes for identifying and monitoring sex offenders, through its specialist public protection team and the multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPAs)<sup>15</sup> in place in Suffolk. Skilled and accredited staff use appropriate plans to reduce the risk from registered sex offenders, with clear supervision and governance arrangements.

The constabulary reports that the total number of registered sex offenders (RSOs) in the county has increased by 8 percent in the 12 months to 1 July 2015. However the number and proportion of these identified as very high risk has decreased, from 33 offenders to 11, during the same period. The constabulary attributes the reduction in the number of high risk offenders to the implementation of a new national assessment tool.<sup>16</sup> The overall increase in RSOs is attributed to increased public confidence in reporting historic sex offences, and to the fact that there are two bail hostels within the county which accommodate offenders from other areas.

The workload within the team supervising RSOs is manageable with staff managing approximately 50 offenders each, supported by six trained special constables. There

---

<sup>14</sup> Serious acquisitive crime is defined as domestic burglary, car crime (theft of a vehicle and theft from a vehicle) and robbery.

<sup>15</sup> 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.

<sup>16</sup> Active Risk Management System (ARMS): a structured risk assessment process that takes account of changes in an offender's life as they happen.

are established plans in place for the public protection unit and the local safer neighbourhood teams to effectively manage the risk posed by RSOs.

Suffolk Constabulary uses Sexual Harm Prevention Orders (SHPOs), formerly called Sexual Offence Prevention Orders (SOPOs), to protect people from harm. In the 12 months to 30 June 2015 the constabulary issued 69 such orders of which nine were breached.

## Summary of findings



**Good**

Suffolk Constabulary's approach to investigating crime and managing offenders is good. This is consistent with the finding of HMICs 2014 crime inspection. There are examples of effective services and some minor areas where the constabulary could improve its effectiveness.

Processes for the initial allocation and investigation of crimes work well, generally the right people with the right skills are used to investigate crimes and support victims. We found that the quality of subsequent investigations is good with effective supervision.

The constabulary has a wide range of accredited specialists to support more complex investigations and has introduced a career pathway for detectives. The constabulary needs to ensure that it has the ability to train future investigators to ensure an appropriate level of service to victims.

Multi-agency arrangements for dealing with sexual and other dangerous offenders work well with specialist staff reducing the risk they pose, through clear supervision and governance arrangements.

Forensic and digital specialists support investigations well, and investment in staff and technology has reduced delays and improved the quality of service.

The constabulary works well with partner organisations to identify and divert vulnerable offenders out of the criminal justice system and with repeat and dangerous offenders to stop them re-offending.

# 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>17</sup> The following is a summary of the findings.

## Summary of findings



**Requires improvement**

Suffolk Constabulary generally provides a good service in identifying and responding to the needs of vulnerable people. The public can be confident that in most cases the constabulary supports victims well. However, in several areas improvement is needed to ensure the service is consistent and that vulnerable people, particularly children, are kept safe. Given the scale of the challenge in this area and the inherent risk to some of the most vulnerable people in society, overall the constabulary requires improvement.

HMIC acknowledges that the constabulary is committed to improving the quality of service it provides to vulnerable people and victims. The chief officer team has made protecting vulnerable people a clear priority for the constabulary, and police officers and staff understand and share this commitment. In order to translate this priority into practice, the constabulary has invested additional resources in the parts of its organisation which supports those who are vulnerable and keeps them safe. It now needs to build on this investment and the good work seen in some areas by HMIC. This should ensure that the risk of harm to vulnerable people is identified early and that this promising work results in a consistently high quality service.

Overall, the constabulary effectively identifies repeat and vulnerable victims and responds to them appropriately. It also investigates those crimes committed against the most vulnerable victims well, and generally assigns the right level of expertise relative to the complexity of investigation. However, the current caseload within the teams who deal with rape and child abuse investigations are on occasions unacceptably high, and can become unmanageable, leading to delays in investigation and a reduced service to the victim. The constabulary needs to ensure that caseloads are manageable and service provision is not being compromised. Frontline staff do not always have access to photographic and/or video recording equipment which means that evidence of injuries and scenes could be lost.

---

<sup>17</sup> *PEEL: Police effectiveness 2015 (Vulnerability) – Suffolk Constabulary*, HMIC, December 2015. Available from: [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/police-effectiveness-vulnerability-2015-suffolk/](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/police-effectiveness-vulnerability-2015-suffolk/).

The constabulary needs to do more to ensure it provides a consistent and co-ordinated response to missing and absent children and has recently revised how it investigates such incidents. The current policy providing guidance to staff is out of date and needs to be updated to reflect these changes.

The constabulary has in place a specific risk assessment process for those who go missing and victims of domestic abuse. However, the application of this process is often inconsistent and supervision could be improved. The constabulary needs to ensure that these assessments accurately reflect the risk to ensure an appropriate response by police and partners.

Work between professionals in the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH)<sup>18</sup> helps keep children safe, and makes sure that, should there be higher levels of risk, the response is then increased.

The constabulary has made a good start in ensuring it is well-prepared to tackle child sexual exploitation. It must now build on this initial approach and have confidence that its ambition translates into consistent operational practice. This inspection only considered how well-prepared the constabulary is to tackle child sexual exploitation.

Officers attending domestic abuse incidents have a good understanding of how to keep people safe and routinely assess the risk faced by victims. They can refer to a helpful booklet and checklist produced by the constabulary although supervisory oversight of this process could be improved. Those cases assessed as high or medium-risk are well-supervised. The constabulary has made some progress against the recommendations made in its last domestic abuse inspection in 2014.

---

<sup>18</sup> The 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.

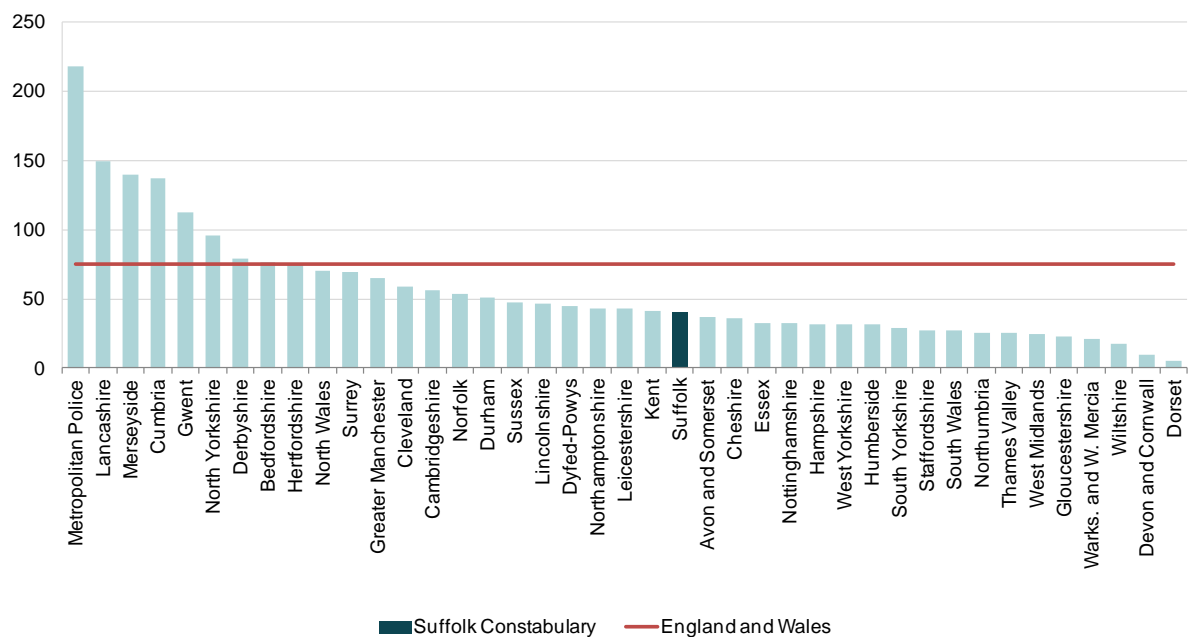
## **How effective is the force at tackling serious and organised crime, including its arrangements for fulfilling its national policing responsibilities?**

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, Suffolk Constabulary was actively disrupting, investigating or monitoring 30 organised crime groups (OCGs). This represents 41 OCGs per one million of the population.

**Figure 6: Organised crime groups per one million population, by force, as at 30 June 2015<sup>19 20</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 (57 percent) of the OCGs managed by Suffolk 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>21</sup> with 64 percent of all OCGs classified in this way.

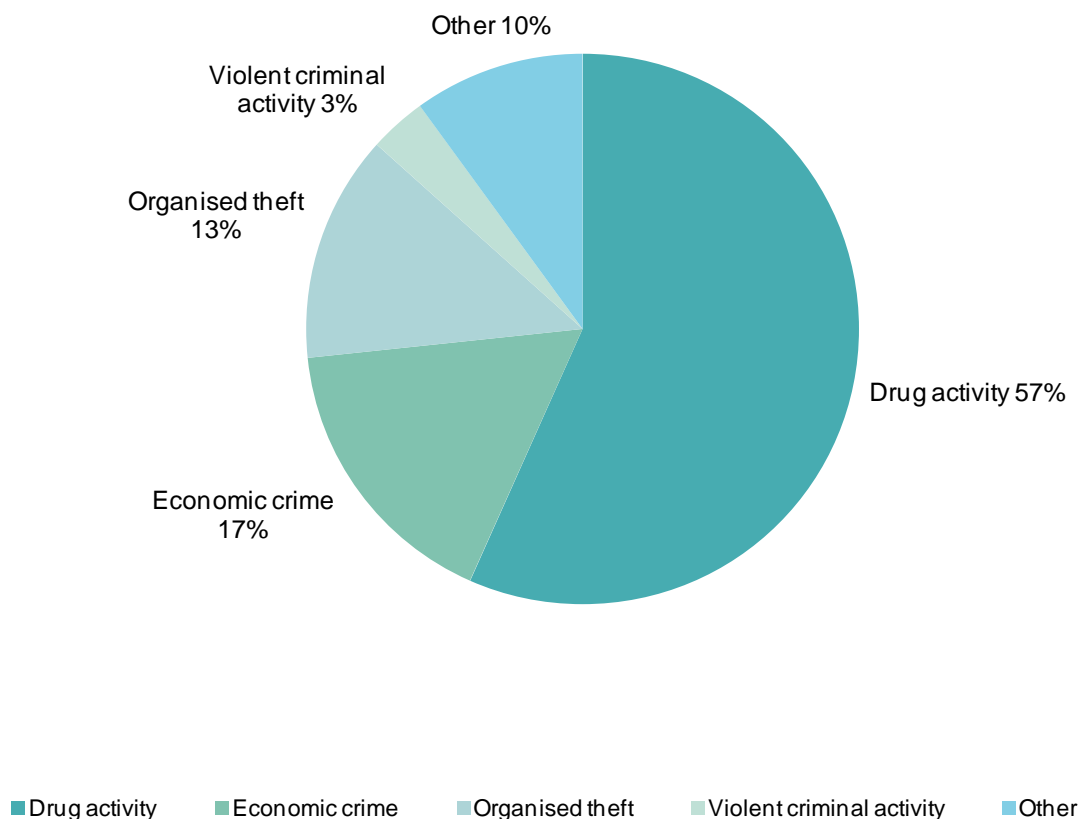
<sup>19</sup> City of London Police data has been removed from the chart as its OCG data is not comparable with other forces due to size and its wider national remit.

<sup>20</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>21</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>22</sup>**



**Source: HMIC data collection**

Serious and organised crime is one of six national threats specified within *The Strategic Policing Requirement*.<sup>23</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. 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.

<sup>22</sup> Figures may not sum to 100 percent, due to rounding.

<sup>23</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.

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

Suffolk and Norfolk constabularies work together under the leadership of an assistant chief constable in providing an effective and developing joint response to tackling serious and organised crime.

Suffolk Constabulary has a good understanding of the threat and risk posed by serious and organised crime in the county. Suffolk and Norfolk constabularies have undertaken joint analysis to better understand the threat, risk and harm posed by serious and organised crime in the communities of both counties.

In line with national guidance, this analysis is contained within a serious and organised crime local profile. This enables both constabularies to effectively plan and allocate the right level of resources to tackle serious and organised crime. However, this local profile is primarily based on law enforcement data and would benefit from greater input from information held by local partner organisations.

Understanding of OCGs is still very much led by Suffolk and Norfolk constabularies, although a recently-established local organised crime partnership board may assist in developing a wider understanding of the threat posed by serious and organised crime, enable information-sharing to develop a more accurate picture of the threat posed by these groups, and support joint responses.

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 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. Police forces, ROCUs, the National Crime Agency (NCA) and a number of non-police organisations, such as Border Force, use OCG mapping.

Despite the use of standard software and methods, forces carry out OCG mapping inconsistently and there is significant variation in the number of mapped OCGs 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. Sometimes, groups exhibiting similar characteristics are 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 ROCUs assume responsibility for OCG mapping on behalf of their constituent forces.<sup>24</sup>

The constabulary has access to the intelligence held by other government agencies through the government agency information network (GAIN) although it has made relatively few referrals to GAIN when compared to other forces in England and Wales. The constabulary makes use of the intelligence held by other agencies to help disrupt organised crime groups via GAIN and the number of referrals is in line with the number of OCGs being mapped by the constabulary. The role of the GAIN co-ordinator was praised both in raising awareness of the GAIN process and in increasing support among partners. While improving, the constabulary needs to ensure it is making the most of the available intelligence to tackle organised crime.

The constabulary is an active participant in the regional police meeting which shares intelligence on OCGs affecting the East of England. It gathers information from the NCA and internationally from EUROPOL, as well as other police forces.

Suffolk Constabulary is developing its understanding of organised crime groups involved in human trafficking and modern-day slavery. For example, Operation Putt and Operation Aback are bringing the police together with a range of other organisations including; Immigration Enforcement, DWP, HM Revenue and Customs, the Red Cross and the Salvation Army. Through sharing intelligence, the agencies contact local businesses thought to be exploiting eastern European workers, to identify human trafficking or modern slavery offences and build relations and contacts with the eastern European community to gather further intelligence.

The constabulary recognises that its current IT systems are unable to highlight easily individuals suspected of involvement in organised crime to frontline staff.

It anticipates that a new IT system being introduced in October 2015 will solve this problem.

In HMIC's 2014 crime inspection of Suffolk Constabulary, we found there was limited involvement of staff from neighbourhoods and response teams in identifying and managing organised crime groups. During this inspection we found that the constabulary has raised awareness of serious and organised crime within local teams by nominating senior officers within local teams as 'local responsible officers' (LROs), who are responsible for developing intelligence on OCGs operating in their areas and supporting activity to disrupt them, briefing and involving local staff where appropriate.

The constabulary needs to continue this work and ensure that all frontline staff are contributing in the fight against OCGs that are causing harm to the people and communities of Suffolk.

---

<sup>24</sup> *Regional Organised Crime Units: A Review of Capability and Effectiveness*, HMIC, December 2015. Available from: [www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/regional-organised-crime-units.pdf](http://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/regional-organised-crime-units.pdf)

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

Overall, the constabulary works effectively in response to serious and organised crime. It has effective processes in place to prioritise, manage and monitor both visible and undercover enforcement activity against OCGs. To make best use of resources it has collaborated with Norfolk Constabulary to provide a joint response across both counties under the leadership of a single chief officer.

Suffolk is supported by the regional organised crime unit made up of staff from the police forces in the Eastern region, namely; Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk. This unit was established in 2010 to identify, disrupt and dismantle organised crime groups whose activities impact on the Eastern Region.

There are clear lines of accountability and responsibility between the constabulary and the regional unit with an established process to identify and co-ordinate activity across a range of forces and organisations. These arrangements provide the constabulary with access to a wide range of specialist teams and tactics to effectively tackle serious and organised crime.

The constabulary reviews existing and emerging OCGs each month to ensure that it prioritises and co-ordinates activity to tackle them. Again this is done in collaboration with Norfolk. The constabulary reviews activity against each group as part of its plan to disrupt and ultimately dismantle these groups. It also discusses and agrees future activity, seeking specialist resources where appropriate. We found an effective process to allocate limited specialist resources through both the joint constabulary and the regional organised crime unit serving all forces in the Eastern region.

Suffolk Constabulary has recently invested additional resources to tackle the threat posed by cyber-crime and restructured its surveillance team to align with the regional way of working.

Suffolk Constabulary uses the national assessment model to assess the impact of its activity once organised crime groups have been disrupted or dismantled, ensuring that it applies the appropriate level of oversight and scrutiny. The constabulary reviews its tactics regularly to improve future operations and predict costs more accurately. This will allow the constabulary to better understand what works and how much various tactics cost so that it can ensure it is achieving best value for money in using its resources.

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

Suffolk Constabulary works with other forces, law enforcement agencies and other organisations to prevent serious and organised crime.

The constabulary has undertaken joint operations with other organisations to keep people safe from organised crime groups. An example being 'operation volcanic', set up to tackle the problem of London drug gangs who travelled to Ipswich and began operating from premises occupied by vulnerable people. Initially this operation focused on disrupting the gangs themselves but evolved to identify and support those vulnerable occupiers, thus making it harder for the gangs to operate. This approach involved a number of agencies coming together to tackle and prevent organised crime.

Successes in tackling serious and organised crime are publicised on the websites of Suffolk Constabulary ([www.suffolk.police.uk](http://www.suffolk.police.uk)) and the Eastern Region Special Operations Unit ([www.ersou.org.uk](http://www.ersou.org.uk)), for example the jailing of an organised drugs gang for a total of 24 years on 31 July 2015. This serves to reassure the community that the police are effectively fighting organised crime and also sends a warning to criminal groups operating in the area.

## **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.

Suffolk Constabulary has effective processes in place to ensure that it can fulfil its national policing responsibilities. The constabulary jointly manages its response to the SPR in collaboration with Norfolk Constabulary, with clear lines of responsibility and accountability. The constabulary works with the national police co-ordination centre (NPoCC) to test its response which is reviewed every three months.

The constabulary has carried out a strategic assessment of the six SPR threats and each one has a nominated chief officer lead, taking responsibility to ensure that the force can meet its obligations at county, regional and national levels.

In June 2015, the constabulary tested its response to a crashed military aircraft. This was a large scale exercise requiring the full implementation of emergency procedures across a wide range of agencies including the fire and rescue service, ambulance service, military, local authorities and other partners. The constabulary, with partners, has a structured process to learn the lessons of such exercises.

In addition, the constabulary regularly reviews its responsibilities to provide specially trained officers to respond to national public order incidents. The constabulary is required to provide seven fully trained and equipped public order units but trains more to ensure that it has the capacity to meet this requirement.

## Summary of findings



**Good**

Suffolk Constabulary is generally effective at identifying and tackling serious and organised crime groups in its area. 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 works effectively in collaboration with Norfolk Constabulary to pool resources and provide a better service. It has a good understanding of the threat posed by serious and organised crime, it responds well to tackle it and is continuing to develop the involvement of partner organisations in its response. There are some good examples of effective work to disrupt organised crime and to protect vulnerable communities from being targeted by organised crime groups. It also has access to an extensive range of specialist policing capabilities provided by the Eastern Region Special Operations Unit.

HMIC's crime inspection in 2014 identified the need to involve frontline officers more in its fight against serious and organised crime. The constabulary has made some progress towards this and needs to continue this work.

There are robust arrangements to oversee the constabulary's national policing responsibilities, and to test its responses.

### **Areas for improvement**

- The force should add relevant data from partner agencies to its serious and organised crime local profile, and ensure that it has a local partnership structure in place with responsibility for tackling 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.