

# PEEL: Police effectiveness 2015

An inspection of Sussex Police



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

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



Good

Sussex Police is good at keeping people safe and reducing crime. The force is committed to preventing crime and anti-social behaviour, but recent changes in its neighbourhood policing teams means there is now less focus on crime prevention. It continues to work well with others to keep people safe, including protecting victims and the most vulnerable people.<sup>2</sup> The quality of crime investigation is good, and the force works well to stop re-offending. It is good at tackling serious and organised crime and fulfilling its national policing responsibilities. This is the first year HMIC has graded forces on their overall effectiveness so a year-on-year comparison is not possible.

## Summary

Sussex Police is good at keeping people safe and reducing crime. The force is committed to preventing crime and anti-social behaviour. It has fully developed neighbourhood policing teams that work well with partner organisations and has made good progress over recent years in its priority to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour. However, staffing numbers in the neighbourhood policing teams are reducing, in advance of the introduction of a new way of working for local policing. This is limiting the force's capacity to translate its priority into action. Many staff are now unclear as to where their priorities should lie in the face of many competing demands.

Sussex Police's approach to investigating crime and managing offenders is good. When a crime occurs, the force carries out high quality investigations generally. This includes making sure victims are safe, although they are not always kept informed as they should be.

The force has invested in more staff and resources in its safeguarding investigation units to ensure high-quality investigations and continued improvement of support to vulnerable people.

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

<sup>2</sup> A vulnerable person is someone who is in need of special care, support, or protection because of age, disability, or risk of abuse or neglect.

The force continues to build strong partnerships with other organisations, and works constructively with them to ensure victims get the services they need to protect and support them.

The force has a good understanding of the threat posed by serious and organised crime. As well as having its own dedicated capability to tackle serious organised crime, it is well supported by high skilled and experienced staff from the South East Regional Organised Crime Unit, which provides specialist skills and resources to disrupt the organised crime groups that operate at a regional level. The force leadership has strong oversight of the force's ability to respond to national threats, such as terrorism, national 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 good.

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



**Good**

Sussex Police is generally good at preventing crime and anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe. However, the changes the force is making to the way it organises neighbourhood policing are reducing its ability to maintain the former level of its focus on preventive activities. As this was previously an area of strength for the force, HMIC will monitor the continuing impact of the new ways of working.

Sussex has lower levels of crime and anti-social behaviour than in England and Wales as a whole, and the county has seen good reductions in incidents of anti-social behaviour over recent years. The force and the police and crime commissioner have made crime and anti-social behaviour prevention priorities in their high-level plans. Neighbourhood

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



**Good**

Sussex Police's approach to investigating crime and managing offenders is good. HMIC is encouraged that the force has made good progress in improving its approach to crime investigations. Processes for the initial investigation and allocation of most crimes work well. The standard of investigations has improved as well as the workloads carried by investigators being more manageable.

Forensic and digital specialists are used effectively to support successful investigations. However, despite the force having taken some steps to improve the situation, delays continue in the forensic examination of digital devices in criminal investigations. There are still large backlogs in the high tech crime unit, which means that some

teams use a broad range of tactics to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and keep people safe. However, there is a lack of clarity among staff about how important their preventive policing activities are, compared other force priorities and calls on their time. The force also needs to do more to understand what works when using different tactics.

As part of the force's response to managing with reduced funding, it developed a new way of working. There will be a significant reduction in the resources dedicated to neighbourhood policing. The force has begun a phased implementation of its new local policing arrangements. Vacancies in neighbourhood teams are not being filled when staff leave, and officers are regularly being taken away from neighbourhood duties to support other police work, with preventive work being seen as less of a priority. The force needs to consider how best to ensure that policing services can continue to achieve the force priorities during this period of change.

victims are not getting the level of service they need as prosecutions are being delayed.

The force identifies vulnerable offenders and works well with partner organisations to divert them from further offending. The force's processes for working with partner organisations to identify, monitor, and work with repeat and dangerous offenders to stop them re-offending also generally work well.

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



**Good**

HMIC found that Sussex Police provides a good service in identifying vulnerable people and responds well to them, so the public can be confident that the police in Sussex provide good services that protect and support many victims. We found a clear commitment to protecting vulnerable people from both the force and the police and crime commissioner. The force has effective processes in place to ensure that it identifies vulnerable people as soon as possible and consistently assesses the risks posed to vulnerable victims well.

Sussex Police has invested in more staff and resources in its safeguarding investigation units to ensure high-quality investigations and continued improvement of support to vulnerable people. The force has continued to build strong partnerships with other organisations, and works constructively with them to ensure victims get the services they need to protect and support them.

Officers see keeping people safe as a priority and understand the importance of their role in properly assessing and managing the risks posed to victims, especially with those who are particularly vulnerable such as victims of domestic

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



**Good**

Sussex Police is generally good at identifying and tackling serious and organised crime in its area. This is the first year HMIC has graded forces on their effectiveness at tackling serious and organised crime, including its arrangements for ensuring that it can fulfil its national policing requirements, so no year-on-year comparison is possible.

The force has a good understanding of the threat posed by serious and organised crime. It has developed local serious organised crime profiles, which it has shared with partner organisations, the force recognises that the profiles would be enhanced by greater input from information from partners and is planning to develop them further. There is effective multi-agency involvement when responding to organised crime groups. This approach could also be used when preventing people from becoming involved in serious organised crime

Sussex Police has access to an extensive range of specialist policing capabilities provided by the South East regional organised crime unit, as well as retaining some of its own capacity. It is seeking to enhance its ability to prevent serious and organised crime by participating in a peer review of how it

abuse and children. This inspection has only considered how well-prepared the force is to tackle child sexual exploitation. The force has made a good start in ensuring it is well prepared to tackle child sexual exploitation and must now build on this initial approach.

tackles gang and violence.

The force has robust arrangements in place to satisfy itself that it is fulfilling its national policing responsibilities.

## Force in numbers



### Calls for assistance

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

Sussex Police

**330**

England and Wales

**350**



### Crime

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

Sussex Police

**55.4**

England and Wales

**63.0**

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

Sussex Police

**51.4**

England and Wales

**60.3**

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

Sussex Police

**+7.9%**

England and Wales

**+4.5%**

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

Sussex Police

**-6.0%**

England and Wales

**-12.6%**



### Charge rate

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

Sussex Police

**15.2%**

England and Wales

**16.0%**





## Anti-social behaviour

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

Sussex Police

England and Wales

**30.9**

**32.9**

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

Sussex Police

England and Wales

**34.1**

**36.2**



## Domestic abuse

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

Sussex Police

England and Wales

**10.2%**

**10.0%**

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

Sussex Police

England and Wales

**8.0%**

**8.5%**



## Organised crime groups

Organised crime groups per million population as at 30 June 2015

Sussex Police

England and Wales

**47.3**

**74.7**



## Victim satisfaction rate

Victim satisfaction rate 12 months to 31 March 2015

Sussex Police

England and Wales

**82.5%**

**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 Sussex Police are available from the HMIC website ([www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/](http://www.justiceinspectorates.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>3</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 Sussex Police.

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<sup>3</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.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/police-effectiveness-vulnerability-2015-sussex/](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/police-effectiveness-vulnerability-2015-sussex/)). In 2014, in preparation for the PEEL programme, forces were inspected to assess how effective they are at cutting crime (available from: [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/crime-inspection-force-reports/](http://www.justiceinspectorates.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 Sussex?**

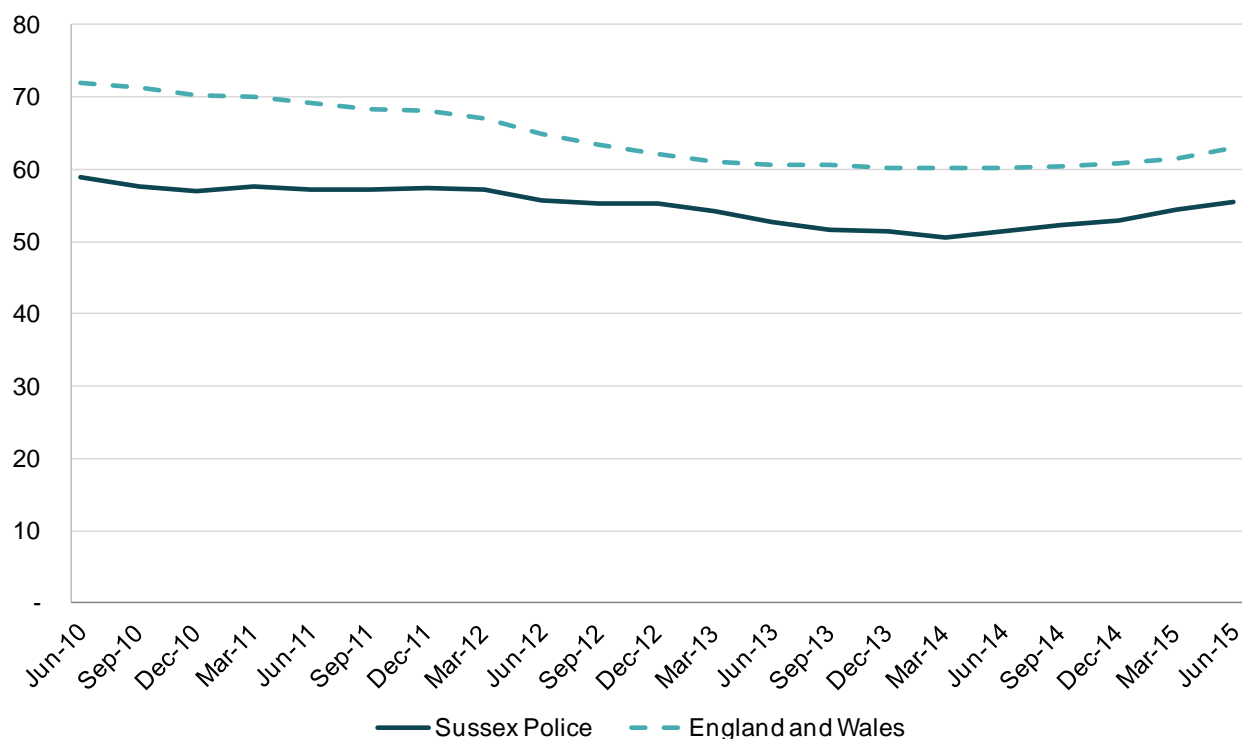
Although police recorded crime is by no means a complete measure of the totality of demand for calls on its service that a force faces, it does provide a comparable indication of performance across all forces. Crime rates are reported as a number of crimes per 1,000 population in each force area to enable 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 6 percent in Sussex 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 8 percent in Sussex, compared with a reduction of 12 percent across England and Wales.

When compared with the previous year, police recorded crime (excluding fraud) in Sussex increased by 8 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 Sussex (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	Sussex Police	England and Wales
Recorded crime (excluding fraud)	55.4	63.0
Victim-based crime	48.5	56.0
Sexual offences	1.6	1.6
Assault with injury	6.0	6.3
Burglary in a dwelling*	4.8	8.4
Anti-social behaviour incidents*	30.9	32.9

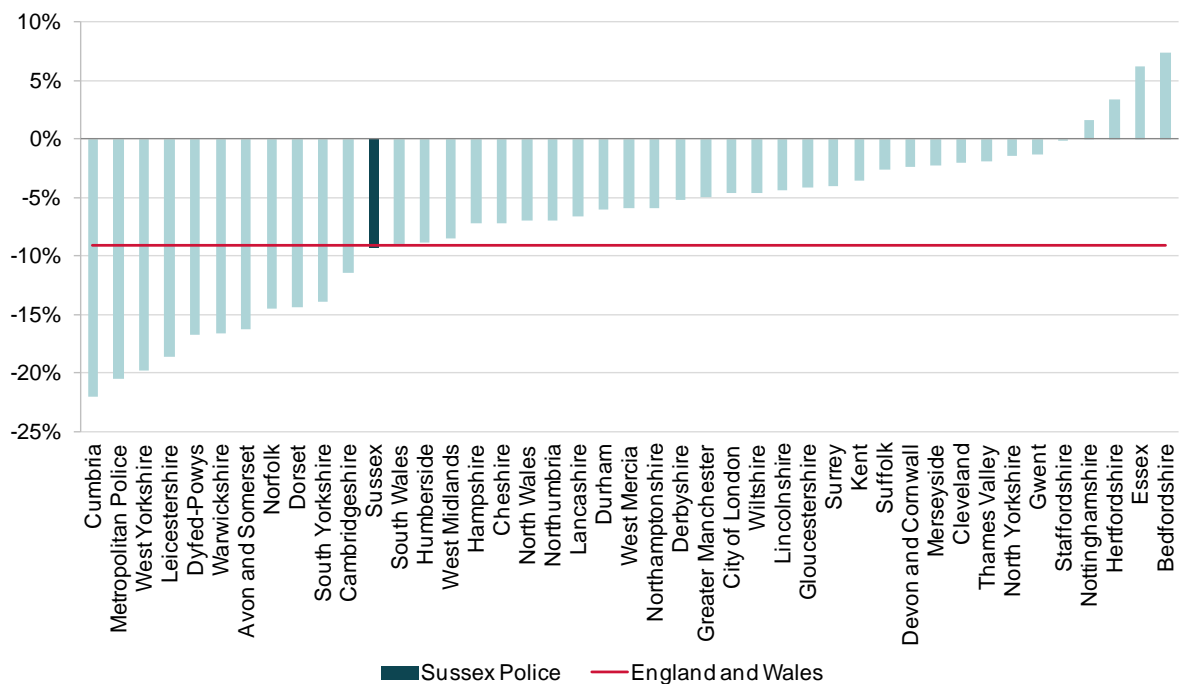
**Source: Home Office data, HMIC data return**

\*Anti-social behaviour data is from the force'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 force area. We are not judging the effectiveness of the force on police recorded crime rates only.

In the 12 months to 30 June 2015, Sussex Police recorded 51,001 incidents of anti-social behaviour. This is 9 percent fewer incidents than the force 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 chief constable has set out his operational delivery plan for 2014-17, which reflects priorities set in the police and crime commissioner’s (PCC’s) police and crime plan for Sussex. These include a commitment to reduce crime and prevent offending, protect those at greatest risk of harm, and tackling anti-social behaviour. However, there is a lack of clarity among the staff about how preventive activity should be maintained in the light of other competing priorities for their time.

The force leadership sees the importance of prevention activity in reducing crime and anti-social behaviour. It places an emphasis on this priority to ensure that prevention work is an important aspect of the service delivered by all teams of Sussex Police.

The chief officer team is clearly committed to these priorities, but there is a lack of understanding among staff as to what their priorities should be and how they should direct day-to-day activity. This lack of clarity means that the force cannot be confident that resources are consistently targeted at effective preventive work and tackling the most important priorities for Sussex. In HMIC's crime inspection in 2014, we had similar concerns that, in the absence of a clear force-wide plan, crime prevention activity was fragmented. Given previous successes, particularly in reducing anti-social behaviour, the force should consider how best to ensure sustained focus on these priorities.

These priorities are set out against a background of the force undergoing significant changes over the next four years, which include reductions of up to 1000 staff and officers. As part of the force's response to managing with reduced funding, it has developed a new model for future policing with fewer resources, known as Sussex 2020. This is now beginning to have an impact on the force's ability to provide effective neighbourhood policing as the force is holding vacancies as staff leave, but before it puts the new ways of working in place. The force is clear that in the future there will be a greater focus on the accessibility, as opposed to visibility, of what will be a significantly reduced number of staff.

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

Well-developed and well-established neighbourhood policing teams in Sussex have been at the forefront of the force's work to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour. The teams have been well-resourced and have formed good relationships with partner organisations to join up local problem-solving activity to make best use of collective resources. However, HMIC is concerned that, as the force moves to a new way of providing policing, its capacity to sustain effective preventive work is being undermined.

Neighbourhood activity in Sussex has traditionally been effectively targeted, based on good local knowledge of risk and harm, and on working with partners and communities to identify and solve short and long term problems relating to a variety of victims, offenders and locations. This includes responding to early signs of potential criminal and anti-social behaviour, so that prompt action can help to prevent problems escalating. Examples of this include working with several initiatives in Brighton within the night time economy, working with door staff, taxi drivers and licensed premises to reduce vulnerability, as well as work to reduce open space violence.

In the Sussex 2020 model, dedicated teams will continue to provide neighbourhood policing, but from July 2016 they will operate with fewer officers and staff and cover

larger areas. The force is planning a reduction of 137 police community support officers (PCSOs) which amounts to more than a 40 percent reduction. The number of police officers within neighbourhood policing teams will also significantly reduce with 259 of the current 391 officers being taken out of neighbourhood teams, a reduction of over two thirds. To lessen the impact on these teams, the force is consulting on expanding the PCSO role, which will mean them undertaking more investigative activities, for example taking of witness statements and undertaking house to house enquiries. There is a risk that there will be a reduced capacity to undertake local problem-solving and preventive work as PCSOs take on greater investigative responsibilities.

We found evidence of pressures emerging as some of the posts in neighbourhood teams are being held vacant as officers leave. Vacancies are not being filled as they arise, but the new model and revised working practices that aim to enable the teams to continue with less staff have not yet been introduced. For example, in Brighton, where an interim model is in place, staff report that they now have less time for local problem solving. Police officers are routinely taken away from local neighbourhood duties to support needs elsewhere, such as attending emergency calls, leaving less time to undertake their normal preventive work. The force needs to ensure that it closely monitors and responds to the impacts of staffing reductions during this period of change and implementation of the new model; so that it can ensure that it maintains an effective level of service in this important area of local policing. The force acknowledges that there will inevitably be a reduced service provided with less visibility, but it envisages that the smaller number of staff will be better equipped and more focused on the priorities. HMIC will continue to monitor the impact of these changes.

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

Neighbourhood teams use a broad range of tactics to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and keep people safe including anti-social behaviour powers, disruptive tactics, advice and equipment, such as cameras installed in the homes of people at risk of being a repeat victim. This also includes restorative justice<sup>4</sup> interventions to tackle offending behaviour, reduce opportunities for crime, and improve victim satisfaction. Good use has been made of anti-social behaviour powers<sup>5</sup> such as 'premises closure' powers. This ranges from closing commercial premises in Eastbourne to the closure of a house used for illegal drugs activity.

There has been limited work to evaluate the impact of various preventive tactics and techniques. Understanding which tactics work best, in which circumstances,

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<sup>4</sup> Restorative justice brings together people harmed by crime or conflict with those responsible for the harm, to find a positive way forward.

<sup>5</sup> Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. Available from: [www.gov.uk/government/collections/anti-social-behaviour-crime-and-police-bill](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/anti-social-behaviour-crime-and-police-bill)



known as evidence-based policing, helps to ensure that future activity can be planned better and is more likely to be successful. In Sussex, we found limited evidence of the effective use of analytical tools in respect of anti-social behaviour to either pinpoint problem areas or undertake analysis to understand better what works. The exception to this was Brighton and Hove, which has a dedicated analyst. This input to policing operations was highly regarded within the division.

The force recognises that it needs to do more to understand what works. It has secured funding from the College of Policing to establish an 'evidence-based champion' role to work with project teams to develop the evidence base of what works. The force has carried out an exercise to map all vulnerable locations (harm spots) and this information is helping to inform where in future, officers, or another non-policing resource such as local authority wardens should be deployed. The force is also piloting the 'what works' web site from the College of Policing.

## **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 force understands that prevention activity can only be fully effective when undertaken jointly with partner organisations, and it invests significant time and energy in doing so. Partner organisations were consulted extensively in respect of the force change programme and are well-engaged in helping to inform the future policing model.

The force is an active member of a number of partnerships across Sussex. This includes the Surrey and Sussex criminal justice partnership, which is chaired by the Sussex PCC. At the local level, neighbourhood inspectors routinely attend meetings with partner organisations to share information, and to make joint working and joint problem-solving possible. Local inspectors are empowered to make decisions and provide effective support to partnership activities.

This investment of time and resource in working with partner organisations, with their additional skills, powers and resources, means the force can be more effective at keeping people safe, preventing crime and anti-social behaviour and solving problems as and when they occur.

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

Good arrangements are in place to share information with partner organisations to assist in better joint working to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour. The force has established and effective ways of working to collect, share and act on partner information. As well as information sharing agreements, the force and partner organisations share an online case management IT system to pool information, co-ordinate responses and provide data for analysis. Force representatives also meet partner organisations regularly at a local level to discuss cases and agree joint preventive activity.

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

HMIC saw good examples of effective problem-solving with partner organisations to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and keep people safe, including:

- Anti-social behaviour risk assessment conferences (ASBRACs) which include opportunities for partnership resolution and support to reduce risk to, and provide support for, victims of anti-social behaviour, as well as holding perpetrators to account;
- Operation Reduction, a Brighton and Hove based operation focused on tackling drugs and their impact. This includes opportunities to place drug users into treatment via dedicated, community safety partnership-funded, substance abuse workers;
- Effective joint working with the local authority to reduce public space violence which has been awarded 'Beacon' status;
- Integrated offender management (IOM)<sup>6</sup> teams which are co-located with community rehabilitation companies, (formerly part of the probation service); and
- Use of a range of powers to keep people safe in public places, including dispersal orders to tackle potential violent behaviour in town centres.

The force also works well with partner organisations to promote resolutions that protect communities and victims once crime and anti-social behaviour has occurred.

The force employs three restorative justice co-ordinators as part of the IOM partnership hubs in each division, which also include Victim Support and other charitable organisations who focus on mentoring offenders and diverting them from committing crime.

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<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.

## Summary of findings



Good

Sussex Police is generally good at preventing crime and anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe. However, the changes the force is making to the way it organises neighbourhood policing are reducing its ability to maintain the former level of its focus on preventive activities. As this was previously an area of strength for the force, HMIC will monitor the continuing impact of the new ways of working.

Sussex has lower levels of crime and anti-social behaviour than in England and Wales as a whole, and the county has seen good reductions in incidents of anti-social behaviour over recent years. The force and the police and crime commissioner have made crime and anti-social behaviour prevention priorities in their high-level plans. Neighbourhood teams use a broad range of tactics to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and keep people safe. However, there is a lack of clarity among staff about how important their preventive policing activities are, compared other force priorities and calls on their time. The force also needs to do more to understand what works when using different tactics.

As part of the force's response to managing with reduced funding, it developed a new way of working to provide policing in the future. This has a significant reduction in the resources dedicated to neighbourhood policing. The force has begun a phased implementation of its new local policing arrangements. The impact of staffing reductions is already being seen, with fewer staff covering larger areas. Vacancies in neighbourhood teams are not being filled when staff leave, and officers are regularly being taken away from neighbourhood duties to support other police work, with preventive work being seen as less of a priority. The force needs to consider how best to ensure that policing services can continue to achieve the force priorities during this period of change.

### Areas for improvement

- The force should ensure that the prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour is a routine part of neighbourhood policing activity.
- The force 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 should 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. Sussex Police, 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>7 8 9</sup>**

Outcome type/group	Sussex Police Number of outcomes	Rate	England and Wales Number of outcomes	Rate
<b>Charged/Summoned</b>	<b>13,856</b>	<b>15.2</b>	<b>577,678</b>	<b>16.0</b>
<b>Taken into consideration</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>21,318</b>	<b>0.6</b>
<b>Out-of-court (formal)</b>	<b>5,207</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>165,384</b>	<b>4.6</b>
Caution - youths	705	0.8	19,703	0.5
Caution - adults	3,849	4.2	115,000	3.2
Penalty Notices for Disorder	653	0.7	30,681	0.8
<b>Out-of-court (informal)</b>	<b>4,810</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>159,915</b>	<b>4.4</b>
Cannabis/Khat warning	840	0.9	41,964	1.2
Community resolution	3,970	4.3	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>10</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. When considering all crimes recorded (excluding fraud), outcome rates for Sussex Police are broadly in line with most other forces in England and Wales.

<sup>7</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>8</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>9</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>10</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 force has a good process for initial investigation and subsequent allocation of crimes for further investigation. When a call is received, trained staff in the police contact centre make an assessment and decide the most appropriate police response. This is based upon a range of factors including the type of crime and whether the victim is particularly vulnerable.

The initial investigation process begins immediately the call is received. The call is an opportunity to obtain accurate and relevant information, collect evidence, ascertain if a crime has occurred and give reassurance and guidance to the caller, for example about the preservation of forensic evidence. In Sussex, call-takers follow a structured approach to investigation using a framework known as VOWSIO (victim, offender/suspect, witness, scene ,intelligence, other) which prompts the right questions to be asked and helps reach an assessment of the most appropriate resource to send if required. There is a clear crime allocation process, which details which department will deal with the crime.

Again as part of Sussex Police's plans to ensure it can continue to provide effective policing with fewer resources, it is implementing plans to manage demand better so that it can ensure the most effective use is made of police officer time. The new 'resolution centre' to be opened in late 2015, is expected to 'filter out' those incidents reported which can be dealt with effectively without sending a police officer to attend. Incidents and reports of crime will continue to be assessed against an investigative framework, which will take account of the vulnerability of the victim. With reductions in staffing over the next four years, the force clearly needs to prioritise the resources that it has available. The intention is that some crimes, for example a low-value shop theft for which there is a known suspect, may no longer be responded to routinely unless it is a repeat occurrence. How this is communicated to the public, not only by the resolution centre, but also by frontline staff, will be crucial in maintaining community confidence.

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

HMIC is encouraged that the force has made good progress in improving its approach to crime investigations. In HMIC's crime inspection in 2014, we found that Sussex Police was not investigating offending as well as it should; we found insufficient allocation of resources and officers undertaking investigations that they were not trained or accredited to do. Since that inspection, the force has responded well to the findings with a clear action plan, and recently fulfilled its commitment to create a new role of head of crime with a clear focus on overseeing investigative standards.

Once allocated, the force undertakes investigations into volume crimes effectively. These are the most frequent and less complex types of crimes like burglary, robbery and assault. The response investigation team (RIT), which is attached to the CID and includes both accredited detectives and uniformed officers, deals with some of the less complex of these. The unit works well, and is used to give staff from across the force, and at different ranks, experience of interviewing suspects, preparing case files and working with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).

Investigative staff are generally appropriately trained or working towards accredited status. Investigative opportunities are followed up in a timely fashion. Most of the crime cases reviewed by HMIC had clear investigation plans, set by a supervisor to direct the actions for the investigator and to ensure they consider and complete all investigative opportunities. Cases are recorded and well documented on the force's crime recording system. However, recording of supervision is, on occasion, still inconsistent.

More serious and complex crime cases are generally allocated to specialist units staffed by officers with the specialist skills and training required to conduct complex investigations. Cases reviewed by HMIC also had clear investigation plans, and strong and consistent evidence of effective supervision.

There is a clear demarcation of regional and force responsibilities in relation to serious and complex crime investigation. The Surrey/Sussex major crime team, a joint team made up of officers from both forces, investigates all serious crimes such as murder or kidnap.

The force works collaboratively with Surrey Police in the provision of crime scene investigators (CSIs). There is a common approach for attendance, although discretion can be used where it is justified. There is an effective, appropriate and consistent use of forensic specialists to support investigations and the full range of forensic opportunities are considered with 24-hour call-out for specialist forensic support if required.

## **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.

In HMIC's crime inspection in 2014, we found that the HTCU had considerable backlogs. We recommended that the force should review the resourcing and process for prioritising the examination of telecommunication and computer equipment that has been seized, and by March 2015 have in place an action plan to improve prioritisation and timeliness. Progress has been made but there is still more work needed, as the force has only addressed this partially.

The force has trained over 100 local officers and staff to carry out simple mobile phone downloads using self-service kiosks situated at a number of bases across Sussex. This has gone some way to limit the demands on the HTCU.

However, we found that the HTCU has a high level of vacancies, and the force has struggled to recruit people with the right level of skills and experience. The unit has a three month backlog for examination of telephones and computers. An oversight group has been set up, chaired by the head of crime, to address the reduction.

In an attempt to clear the backlog by March 2016, the force entered into an outsourcing arrangement with an external provider. However, the company is only processing between one quarter and one third of what it committed to, due to concerns regarding the quality of the examination. It is therefore unlikely that the force will succeed in improving examinations times in the immediate future.

HMIC found the triaging process in place to prioritise requests did not appear to be effective. The current process requires supervisors to consider the necessity of all submissions, but requests are rarely rejected. We were informed of the intention to overhaul the submissions process, in line with what HMIC previously recommended. The force should ensure that the submissions process is robust and intrusive. This would avoid valuable time being wasted conducting unnecessary examinations, for example where sufficient evidence to prove or disprove the involvement of an offender in a crime already exists.

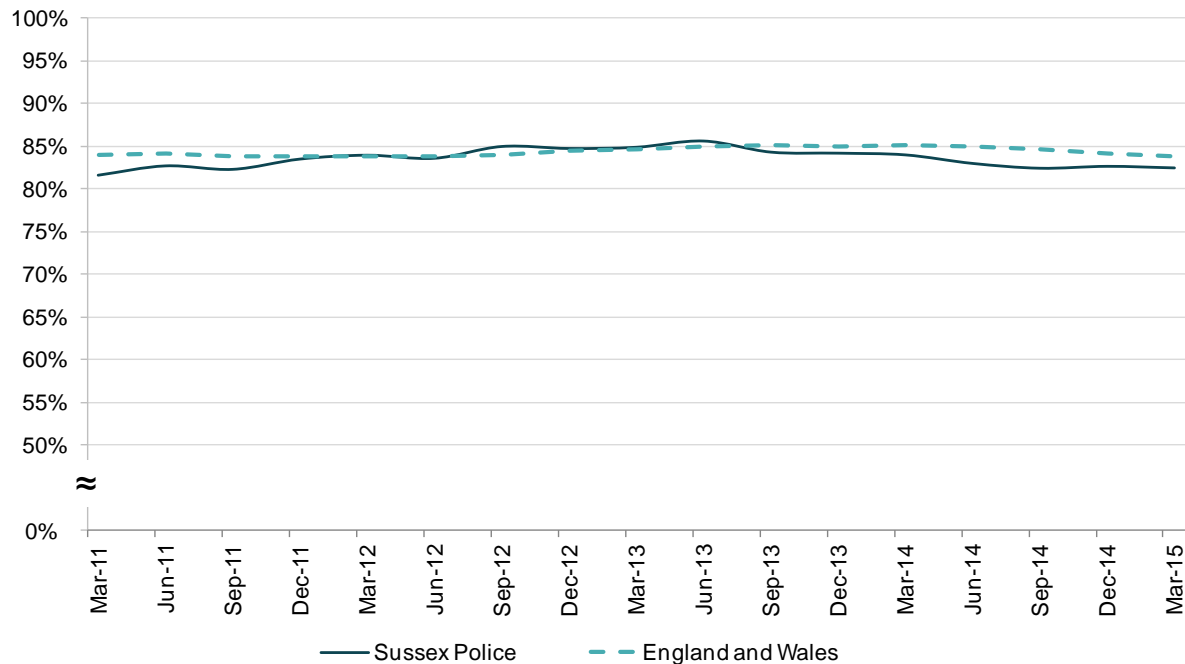
## **How satisfied are victims of crime with the service provided by the force?**

Of those who have been the victim of a crime in Sussex in the 12 months to 31 March 2015, 82.5 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 Sussex for the 12 months to 31 March 2015 is significantly lower than the previous year's rate, while it is broadly in line with 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

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

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

The force identifies and diverts vulnerable offenders out of the criminal justice system, where appropriate, to prevent further offending. There is an alcohol and drugs arrest referral scheme, which operates from custody centres and can refer people for help and treatment. In addition, the force is an active partner in a multi-agency diversion service. This is carried out by specialist mental health professionals to help identify interventions and provide support services for people with mental health problems, which can help to divert them from further offending.

The way the force monitors investigations is effective and ensures an early arrest. There is a good level of awareness of outstanding suspects and proactive management and action being taken to locate and arrest them. We saw reviews and scrutiny taking place at the daily management meeting chaired by a senior officer, and again the same afternoon to check on progress.

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

The force has effective processes in place to identify repeat offenders and prevent them re-offending. Like most forces, Sussex has several groups of offenders ranging from serious sexual and violent offenders to prolific burglars.

Offenders on the IOM scheme are predominantly perpetrators of theft, burglary and robbery. The scheme's focus on these crime types limits its ability to support force

priorities to keep people safe, as serial violent perpetrators (for example, repeat domestic abuse offenders) are not commonly included. Although there is some active management of those domestic abuse offenders assessed as posing a high risk, the lack of co-ordinated activity with other violent offenders gives limited opportunity for early intervention by police and partner organisations to prevent them re-offending. The scheme might also be improved with greater clarity over how success for individuals on the scheme is defined.

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

The force recognises the risk from dangerous offenders who are suitable for the multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPAs) process.<sup>11</sup> MAPPAs are used by the force and partner organisations including the prison and probation service to monitor those offenders assessed as presenting a high risk to the public, and to stop them re-offending. The force has five dedicated teams across Sussex, co-located with colleagues from the probation service, responsible for managing and monitoring dangerous and sexual offenders. Staff use appropriate plans to reduce the risk from registered sex offenders, with clear supervision and monitoring arrangements.

Offenders assessed as presenting the highest level of risk require co-ordinated action with partner organisations to reduce the risks posed to the public from these offenders. Violent and sexual offenders are managed well by the dedicated teams with information being shared between the police, probation service and the prison service effectively, improving the quality and timeliness of risk assessments and of interventions to prevent offending and assist rehabilitation.

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<sup>11</sup> Multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPAs) are in place to ensure the successful management of violent and sexual offenders. Agencies involved include as responsible bodies the police, probation trusts and prison service. Other agencies may become involved, for example the Youth Justice Board will be responsible for the care of young offenders.

## Summary of findings



**Good**

Sussex Police's approach to investigating crime and managing offenders is good. HMIC is encouraged that the force has made good progress in improving its approach to crime investigations. Processes for the initial investigation and allocation of most crimes work well. The standard of investigations has improved as well as the workloads carried by investigators being more manageable.

Forensic and digital specialists are used effectively to support successful investigations. However, despite the force having taken some steps to improve the situation, delays continue in the forensic examination of digital devices in criminal investigations. There are still large backlogs in the high tech crime unit, which means that some victims are not getting the level of service they need as prosecutions are being delayed.

The force identifies vulnerable offenders and works well with partner organisations to divert them from further offending. The force's processes for working with partner organisations to identify, monitor, and work with repeat and dangerous offenders to stop them re-offending also generally work well.

### **Areas for improvement**

- The force should ensure that all those carrying out investigations are provided with appropriate training and support.
- The force should improve its ability to retrieve digital evidence from mobile phones, computers and other electronic devices quickly enough to ensure that investigations are not delayed.

## 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>12</sup> The following is a summary of the findings.

### Summary of findings



**Good**

Sussex Police provides a good service in identifying vulnerable people and responds well to them. HMIC found a strong commitment to protecting vulnerable people from both the force and the police and crime commissioner (PCC) and this is one of the strategic objectives in the PCC's police and crime plan. The force has sound processes in place to ensure that it identifies those who are vulnerable as soon as possible, it consistently assesses the risks posed to vulnerable victims well and responds well to those at high risk of harm. The force has invested in more staff and resources in its safeguarding investigation units to ensure high-quality investigations and continued improvement of support for vulnerable people. The force has continued to build strong partnerships with other organisations. In respect of protecting vulnerable people from harm and supporting victims, HMIC judges that its performance is good.

Officers attending incidents involving vulnerable people have a good understanding of how to assess risk and keep victims safe. Officers see safeguarding as a priority and understand the importance of their role in properly assessing and managing the risks posed to victims.

Sussex Police takes effective action, and works well with partner organisations, to keep victims safe. The force's investigations of crimes against vulnerable people are well-run, with a strong focus on making sure the risks are properly managed to ensure victims are kept safe. HMIC recognises that the force has committed extra resources and effort through a variety of communications to improve staff awareness and response to missing and absent children and child sexual exploitation. Staff understand well the need for effective and timely risk assessment and response.

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<sup>12</sup> *PEEL: Police effectiveness 2015 (Vulnerability)* – Sussex Police, HMIC, December 2015. Available from: [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/police-effectiveness-vulnerability-2015-sussex/](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/police-effectiveness-vulnerability-2015-sussex/).

The force's commitment to dealing with domestic abuse ensures it responds positively to victims who need safeguarding and continues to use opportunities such as victims' surveys and feedback from agencies to improve its response from initial contact through to investigation and final outcome.

The force has made a good start in ensuring it is well-prepared to tackle child sexual exploitation and must now build on this initial approach. This inspection considered how well prepared the force is to tackle child sexual exploitation.

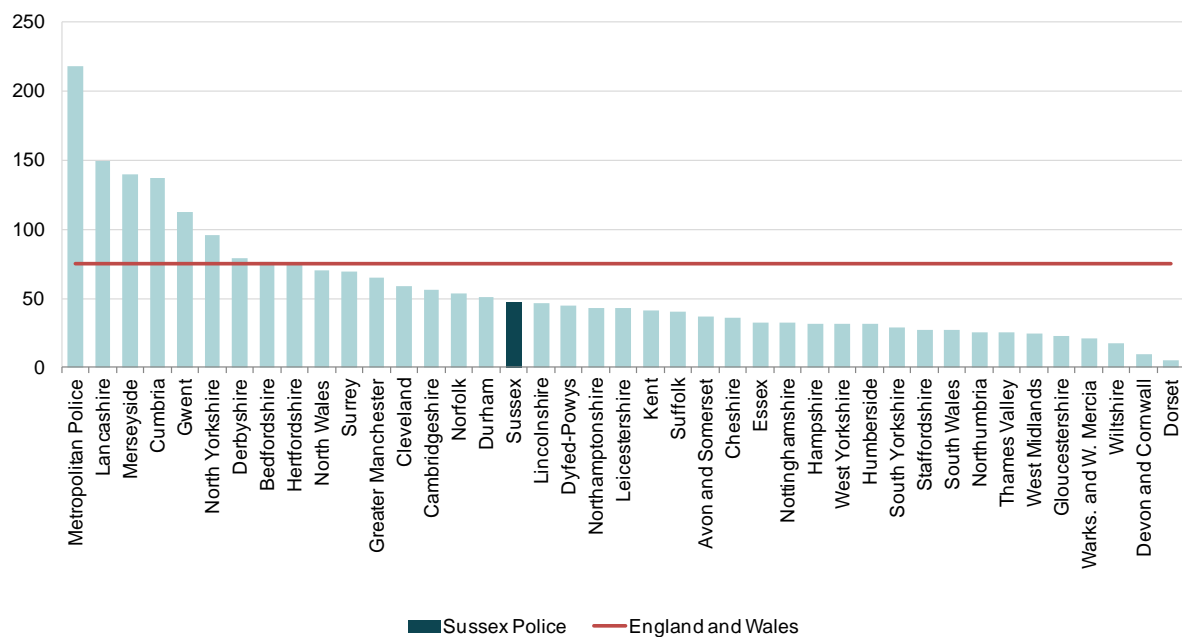
## **How effective is the force at tackling serious and organised crime, including its arrangements for fulfilling its national policing responsibilities?**

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, Sussex Police was actively disrupting, investigating or monitoring 78 organised crime groups (OCGs). This represents 47 OCGs per one million of the population.

**Figure 6: Organised crime groups per one million population, by force, as at 30 June 2015<sup>13 14</sup>**



**Source: HMIC data collection**

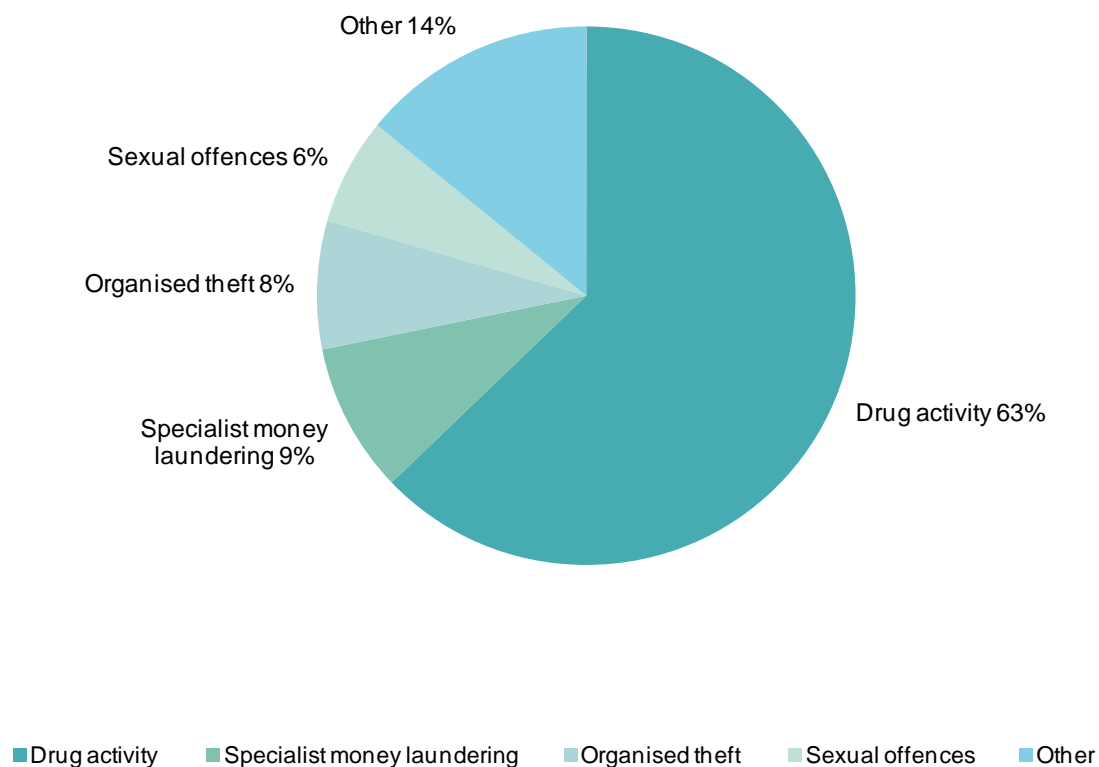
Forces categorise OCGs by the predominant form of criminal activity in which the group is involved. Although OCGs are likely to be involved in multiple forms of criminality, this indicates their most common characteristic. 'Drug activity' was the predominant crime type (63 percent) of the OCGs managed by Sussex Police as at 30 June 2015. 'Drug activity' was also the most common predominant crime type recorded by all forces in England and Wales,<sup>15</sup> with 64 percent of all OCGs classified in this way.

<sup>13</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>14</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>15</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>16</sup>**



**Source: HMIC data collection**

Serious and organised crime is one of six national threats specified within *The Strategic Policing Requirement*.<sup>17</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>16</sup> Figures may not sum to 100 percent, due to rounding.

<sup>17</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?**

Generally, the force is good at assessing the threat posed to its communities by serious and organised crime. It has effective mechanisms to collect and assess intelligence about serious and organised crime throughout Sussex. This intelligence informs the force's strategic threat and risk assessment, and allows it to develop an effective plan to target its resources at priority areas, a plan known as the 'control strategy'. The information is also used to produce local profiles,<sup>18</sup> which provide information about the nature of serious and organised crime and its involvement at a local level.

The force is an active participant in the local organised crime partnership panel, chaired by the deputy PCCs for both Surrey and Sussex. Local serious and organised crime profiles detailing the threat from serious organised crime are used to brief the local authority chief executives of these areas as well as the wider community safety partnerships. However, the local profiles are predominantly based on police data only, and therefore the picture of serious and organised crime in Sussex is not as complete as it could be. HMIC is encouraged to learn that the force intends to build on these to include partner information and to develop local partnership serious and organised crime action plans.

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. Police forces, ROCUs, the National Crime Agency 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.

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<sup>18</sup> SOC profiles are reports that outline the threat from serious and organised crime within a specific local area. Available from:

[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/371602/Serious\\_and\\_Organised\\_Crime\\_local\\_profiles.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/371602/Serious_and_Organised_Crime_local_profiles.pdf)

For these reasons, HMIC has recommended that ROCUs assume responsibility for OCG mapping on behalf of their constituent forces.<sup>19</sup>

The force uses a nationally approved matrix or template to 'score' OCGs according to the threat that they pose. This allows the force to make informed decisions about how to prioritise its activities to target and disrupt OCGs. Such activity against them is reviewed frequently at fortnightly divisional and force planning meetings, so that resources can be made available as required. In addition, OCGs are re-scored every month and after every police operation to disrupt them.

In Sussex OCGs are mapped and scored by intelligence staff based on all available information and a decision is taken, dependent on the nature of the criminality as to whether responsibility for managing the risks, disrupting and dismantling the group will sit at a local, force or regional level. The force has clear criteria to guide this process with the decision as to whether an OCG is adopted based on priorities in the control strategy or an emerging crime trend, which is identified as priority. If not adopted and pursued, the OCG will be monitored by the divisional intelligence unit and subject to three monthly or annual reviews depending on the type of response which is in place. If subsequent intelligence leads to a change in the threat a risk associated with a particular OCG, it will be reviewed and re-scored as necessary.

In order to exploit the benefits of OCG mapping, data must be shared locally, regionally and nationally within and between partners. The force makes good use of the Government Agency Information Network (GAIN)<sup>20</sup> to build its understanding of serious and organised crime threats in Sussex. It is an active participant in the regional serious and organised crime meetings and there are good examples of sharing intelligence with a range of other law enforcement agencies and other police forces in the region. This close working with others enables the force to tap into regional intelligence and add to its understanding of the scale and nature of serious and organised crime in and around Sussex. It has also used these relationships to support enforcement activity.

The force needs to improve how it involves local neighbourhood teams in its fight against serious and organised crime. We found frontline officers have limited awareness of the OCGs in their communities, despite the information provided to them. Some staff display good knowledge about serious and organised crime in their area, while others are unclear about their role in identifying and tackling it.

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<sup>19</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>20</sup> The Government Agency Intelligence Network (GAIN) is a large network of partners, including all police forces in England and Wales, which shares information about organised criminals.

The force must ensure that officers and staff are briefed effectively on the intelligence and information that is available and understand their role in disrupting and dismantling OCGs, and in identifying emerging OCGs.

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

Sussex Police responds well to serious and organised crime. Activities to tackle OCGs are well-led and given sufficient priority. The force intelligence function is centrally managed and provided locally through divisional intelligence units headed by a detective superintendent. The unit's head is also responsible for serious and organised crime. In addition to the specialist resources available through the South East regional organised crime unit (SEROUCU), Sussex Police maintains its own serious and organised crime unit which is able to support the regional resources providing additional capacity for the county in areas such as surveillance, cyber-crime and asset recovery.

The process to access support from the SEROUCU works well, HMIC saw good examples where the management of OCGs had been escalated from force to regional level due to new intelligence.

In many cases the responsibility for managing OCGs rests with the divisional chief inspector, known as the 'Lead Responsible Officer'. When OCGs are managed at force level there is a clear link and liaison between the Divisional Intelligence Unit detective inspector and the central unit. There are both overt and covert tasking meetings and a joint Surrey/Sussex quarterly OCG panel chaired by a chief officer where all disruption activity across both counties is reviewed.

HMIC found that there is a good level of activity aimed at disrupting the activities of OCGs and after each disruptive activity, the force re-scores the risks that remain using the national matrix, in order to assess the impact that the police activity has had.

All active OCG investigations are effectively co-ordinated through a management plan based on the 4Ps approach (prevent, pursue, protect, prepare) set out in the national serious and organised crime strategy.<sup>21</sup> However although there is active involvement of partners during the reactive phase of disruption there is more limited evidence of partnership involvement in a structured approach to the prevention of serious and organised crime.

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<sup>21</sup> *Serious and Organised Crime Strategy*, HM Government, October 2013, Cmnd 8715. 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)

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

Sussex Police adopts a proactive approach to deterring people from serious and organised crime. Whilst the SEROCU is developing a lifetime offender management resource, the force also has its own capacity within the serious organised crime unit. Serious crime prevention orders (SCPOs)<sup>22</sup> are used appropriately and police staff work together with CPS specialist crime staff to protect the public.

The force is keen to learn from what works and is planning a peer review of its organised crime fighting activity as part of the 'ending gangs and violence programme'. It hopes that this will allow it to identify good practice that it can use to reduce the threat from OCGs and assist it in focusing its efforts on expanding diversionary activities based on what has been shown to have most impact.

The force has awareness of the risk from internal corruption posed by serious and organised criminals and reviews newly mapped OCG networks to identify any associations with the force. It should build on this by raising staff awareness of when to recognise approaches and how to avoid the circumstances that may make them vulnerable to infiltration attempts.

The force has been proactive in publicising successes in respect of a number of significant operations targeting serious and organised crime. This helps to raise awareness and reassure the public that the police are targeting this type of criminality.

## **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.

The force collaborates with Surrey Police with a joint chief officer responsible for overseeing the development of the necessary arrangements to ensure that both forces collaborate to fulfil their national policing responsibilities. Responsibilities for leading on each of the threats set out in *The Strategic Policing Requirement* are allocated to individual chief officers at both force and regional level.

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<sup>22</sup> A serious crime prevention order is a court order that is used to protect the public by preventing, restricting or disrupting a person's involvement in serious crime; for example, restricting who he or she can associate with, restricting his or her travel, or placing an obligation to report his or her financial affairs to the police. Available from: [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/415969/Fact\\_sheet\\_-\\_SCPOs\\_-\\_Act.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/415969/Fact_sheet_-_SCPOs_-_Act.pdf)

Appropriate assessments have been conducted of national policing threats and the two forces have put in place good procedures to test their preparedness to respond to civil emergencies and public order events. These have been tested in real emergencies on several occasions such as with the floods in Surrey during 2013 and the Shoreham air crash in 2015; officers are routinely deployed across both forces when major incidents such as these occur.

## Summary of findings



**Good**

Sussex Police is generally good at identifying and tackling serious and organised crime in its area. This is the first year HMIC has graded forces on their effectiveness at tackling serious and organised crime, including its arrangements for ensuring that it can fulfil its national policing requirements, so no year-on-year comparison is possible.

The force has a good understanding of the threat posed by serious and organised crime. It has developed local serious organised crime profiles, which it has shared with partner organisations, the force recognises that the profiles would be enhanced by greater input from information from partners and is planning to develop them further. There is effective multi-agency involvement when responding to organised crime groups. This approach could also be used when preventing people from becoming involved in serious organised crime.

Sussex Police has access to an extensive range of specialist policing capabilities provided by the South East regional organised crime unit, as well as retaining some of its own capacity. It is seeking to enhance its ability to prevent serious and organised crime by participating in a peer review of how it tackles gang and violence.

The force has robust arrangements in place to satisfy itself that it is fulfilling its national policing responsibilities.

### 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.
- The force should improve the awareness of organised crime groups among neighbourhood teams to ensure that they can reliably identify these groups, collect intelligence and disrupt their activity.

## 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.