

PEEL: Police effectiveness 2015 (Vulnerability)

An inspection of Gwent Police



December 2015

© HMIC 2015

ISBN: 978-1-911194-28-6

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic

Contents

Introduction	5
How effective is the force at protecting from harm those who are vulnerable and supporting victims?.....	7
Summary	7
How well does the force identify those who are vulnerable and assess their level of risk and need?	8
How well does the force initially respond to vulnerable victims?.....	11
How well does the force investigate offences involving vulnerable victims and work with partners to keep victims safe?	12
How well does the force respond to and safeguard specific vulnerable groups (missing and absent & victims of domestic abuse), and how well prepared is it to tackle child sexual exploitation?	15
Summary of findings	20

Vulnerability in Numbers



Calls for assistance

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

Gwent Police

England and Wales

351

350

Domestic abuse calls for assistance per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2015

Gwent Police

England and Wales

19.8

15.8



Crime

Crimes recorded per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2015

Gwent Police

England and Wales

62.9

61.6

Change in recorded crimes (excluding fraud) 12 months to 31 March 2015 against 12 months to 31 March 2014

Gwent Police

England and Wales

+3.1%

+2.2%

Percentage of total crimes recorded (excluding fraud) as having a vulnerable victim 12 months to 31 March 2015

Gwent Police

England and Wales

8.1%

10.7%

Percentage of total crimes recorded as domestic abuse 12 months to 31 March 2015

Gwent Police

England and Wales

11.8%

10.0%

Change in domestic abuse recorded crime 12 months to 31 March 2015 against 12 months to 31 March 2014

Gwent Police

England and Wales

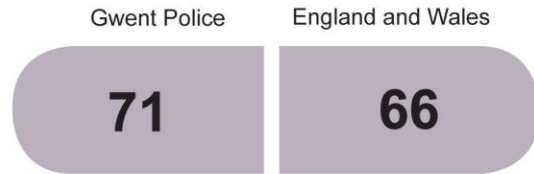
+17.6%

+20.8%



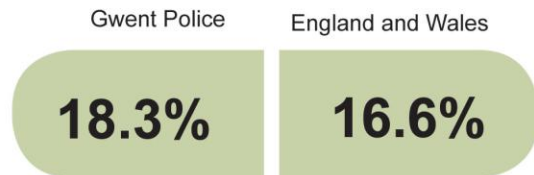
Domestic abuse arrest rate

Number of domestic abuse arrests per 100 domestic abuse crimes recorded 12 months to 31 March 2015

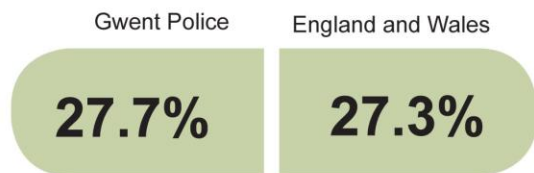


Charge rate

Charge rate as a percentage of all crimes recorded (excluding fraud) 12 months to 31 March 2015

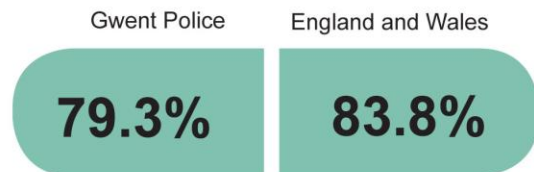


Domestic abuse charge rate as a percentage of all domestic abuse crimes recorded 12 months to 31 March 2015



Victim satisfaction rate

Victim satisfaction rate 12 months to 31 March 2015



Data: for full details on the data used in this graphic see annex A in the vulnerability national report.

Introduction

The public expects their local police force to support victims of crime by responding to calls for help, putting in place the right support and keeping them informed. It is particularly important that vulnerable people, whether or not they have been a victim of crime, are identified early and receive the support they need.

As part of its annual inspections into police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL), HMIC's effectiveness programme assessed how well forces keep people safe and reduce crime. Within this programme, HMIC's vulnerability inspection examined the overall question, 'How effective are forces at protecting from harm those who are vulnerable, and supporting victims?' We have considered in depth how forces respond to and support missing and absent children and victims of domestic abuse, and assessed how well prepared forces are to respond to and safeguard children at risk of sexual exploitation.

We have looked at four areas:

- How well does the force identify those who are vulnerable and assess their level of risk and need?
- How well does the force respond to vulnerable victims?
- How well does the subsequent police action and work with partners keep victims safe?
- How well does the force respond to and safeguard specific vulnerable groups (missing and absent children & victims of domestic abuse); and how well prepared is it to tackle child sexual exploitation?

At the heart of this inspection is the protection of people who are vulnerable. A force may therefore be judged as requiring improvement by HMIC where it exhibits shortcomings in one of these areas, even if its performance in other areas is strong, and even if there are many elements of its service that HMIC considers to be good.

This inspection follows up our 2014 domestic abuse inspection and reviews forces' progress on implementation of their action plans following that inspection. A national domestic abuse report summarising the findings across 43 forces is being published at the same time as this report.

During our inspection we collected data and plans from forces, conducted a review of case files and observed multi-agency meetings. We heard from victims of domestic abuse through a number of focus groups across England and Wales and conducted an online survey with practitioners, including Independent Domestic Violence Advocates, outreach and refuge workers, to gauge views on what has changed since the 2014 inspection and inform local practitioner focus groups.

During the in-force inspection, we interviewed chief officers in each force and held focus groups with officers, staff and partners, and made unannounced visits to police stations, force control rooms and specialist teams.

We also worked with the force missing person coordinator (or equivalent) to review cases of missing and absent children, including children considered to be 'repeat absent' and 'repeat missing' and children shown to be at risk of child sexual exploitation.

All forces are subject to significant cost reductions and these issues have been reflected in our efficiency reports published in October 2015. The judgments we are making in this vulnerability report are made understanding the financial challenges forces are facing.

This report sets out the findings from this wide-ranging inspection of Gwent Police.

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

Summary



Good

Gwent Police is effective at supporting victims and protecting from harm those who are vulnerable. It is clear to HMIC that vulnerability is a high priority. The force is good at identifying repeat and vulnerable victims, and has clear processes in place for assessing risk. Gwent staff consider carefully the appropriate level of police response and its officers work well with partners to manage the risk to victims. For these reasons the force's operational procedures to protect vulnerable people and support victims are considered to be good.

However, the force has not yet developed a comprehensive analysis, sometimes known as a problem profile,¹ for all key areas of vulnerability. As a consequence, it does not fully understand the extent of vulnerability in some areas.

Gwent Police has worked hard to develop a culture where vulnerability is considered at all points of contact with the public. The force's introduction of a new operating model has brought with it a safeguarding champion on each shift to professionalise the service it provides to victims. HMIC found that the use of these well-trained officers with additional skills is bringing the force's values to the front line. Officers are receiving advice and guidance and as a consequence there is an enhanced service to victims.

The force makes good use of information sharing with partner organisations. The force shares a missing persons case management system with external service providers. This gives officers access to up-to-date intelligence of previous episodes of an individual's disappearance and enables a head start in the force's search for them.

Additionally the force works closely with a charity that helps young people returning home after being missing. This has been invaluable in revealing to the force these victims' potential exposure to child sexual exploitation and identifying perpetrators.

¹ A problem profile is intended to provide the force greater understanding of established and emerging crime or incident series, priority locations or other identified high-risk issues. It should be based on the research and analysis of a wide range of information sources, including information from partner organisations. It should contain recommendations for making decisions and options for action.

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

Identifying those who are vulnerable

Forces define vulnerability in different ways. The majority of forces use either the definition from the government's Code of Practice for Victims of Crime² or that referred to in ACPO guidance.³ Nine forces use their own definition or a combination of these definitions.

Gwent uses the definition from the ACPO guidance and defines a vulnerable adult as:

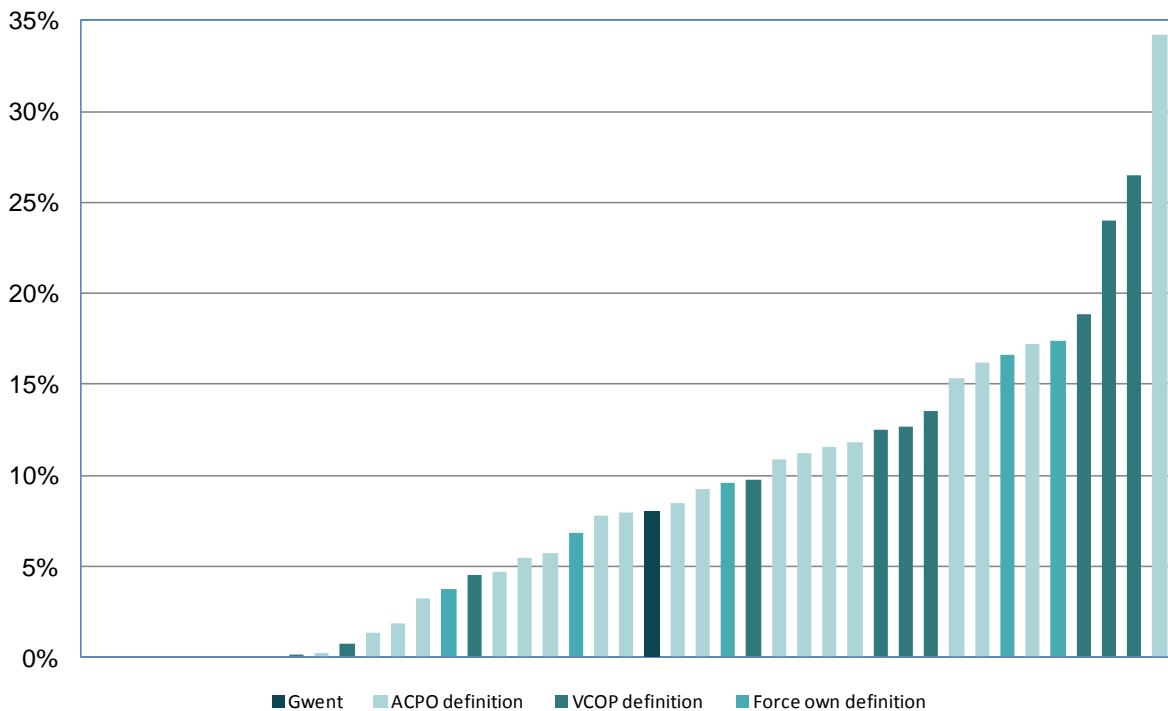
“Any person aged 18 years or over who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental, physical, or learning disability, age or illness AND is or may be unable to take care of him or herself or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.”

The proportion of crime recorded which involves a vulnerable victim varies considerably between forces, from 0.03 percent to 34.3 percent. For the 12 months to 31 March 2015, 8.1 percent of all recorded crimes in Gwent Police were identified as involving a vulnerable victim. Eight forces were unable to provide this data at the time of data collection. There is no standard way in which forces are required to record whether a victim is vulnerable on crime recording systems and forces do this differently.

² *Code of Practice for Victims of Crime*, Ministry of Justice, 2013. Available from www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/254459/code-of-practice-victims-of-crime.pdf

³ The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) is now the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC). *ACPO Guidance on Safeguarding and Investigating the Abuse of Vulnerable Adults*, NPIA, 2012, is available at www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/vulnerable-adults/

Figure 1: The proportion of police recorded crime with a vulnerable victim identified, by force, for the 12 months to 31 March 2015



Source: HMIC data return

Assessing the levels of risk and need

Vulnerability is a high priority for the force. During our inspection it was clear that staff are victim-focused and understand the importance of identifying vulnerability.

However, the force has identified that it has a limited understanding of the extent of some areas of vulnerability. The force acknowledges these gaps within its strategic assessment, a research document that considers offending patterns and victimisation, and is seeking to address these weaknesses, for example:

- sexual offences against children;
- vulnerable anti-social behaviour victims;
- victims of domestic abuse in black and minority ethnic communities; and
- abused males.

Some of these shortcomings stem from limitations in technology. For example, the form used to assess the vulnerability of victims, the victim risk assessment form (VRA), holds useful data in relation to all types of vulnerability across the force. However, HMIC found in Gwent Police no central quality assurance or ability to analyse data contained within the VRA. This potentially means that the force is

missing opportunities to identify offending patterns or understand more about an individual's susceptibility to victimisation.

Despite this, HMIC found that vulnerability is nevertheless a driving force for policing in Gwent. Localised profiling of crime trends of anti-social behaviour, violent crime and domestic abuse are available to officers through an interactive software programme known as Qlikview. We found that Gwent uses Qlikview to bring its workforce up to date with current intelligence and structure its activity to target offenders and protect victims.

Gwent Police is generally good at identifying repeat and vulnerable victims when they first contact the police. The force completes a victim risk assessment for every victim of crime or anti-social behaviour, to assess the caller's level of vulnerability and history of victimisation. HMIC found that staff who answer calls can describe vulnerability and also demonstrated how they search force databases during the call for any historical information which may add to an understanding of the caller's vulnerability. This represents progress since HMIC's crime inspection in 2014 which criticised the force in this area.

Understanding the risk to victims and ensuring they are protected and supported

HMIC found that Gwent Police understands well the requirements of vulnerable victims. The force shares a missing persons database with partner organisations, which ensures that the force has immediate access to what is known by all service providers in the course of investigations. The force has put in place innovative support measures for its most vulnerable victims. Should they feel intimidated or exposed to harm they can quote a unique number to call handlers which gives immediate access to their case history. In line with times of peak domestic abuse offending, emergency response officers now work jointly with Women's Aid workers on Friday and Saturday evenings which ensures a dynamic response to the safeguarding needs of victims.

HMIC also acknowledges the force's resolve to invest in new investigative teams and adjust operating procedures to ensure that emerging threats and the priority to support vulnerable victims are properly resourced. Examples include Gwent Police's joint venture with social services, NHS Wales and charity organisations in Newport which provides comprehensive support to young people who may be exposed to child sexual exploitation. The force has established a joint victims hub in conjunction with the police and crime commissioner, including services from Victim Support, Umbrella Gwent (a sexual orientation and gender identity group) and Women's Aid, to address the needs of victims. Gwent Police has also assigned dedicated officers to attend all case conferences with councils in Gwent in the interests of supporting victims and other vulnerable people.

How well does the force initially respond to vulnerable victims?⁴

Emergency response officers are equally as committed as control room staff to put the victim first and prioritise the needs of vulnerable people. HMIC believes that the force's strategic prioritisation of vulnerability is translated routinely into its operational activity. This is to the extent that it is recognised that these values have now become part of the culture of the force.

Response officers

HMIC found that frontline staff are well-prepared to deal with initial scene attendance and investigation of cases involving vulnerable victims. The force's response officers are well-trained and, on attendance at incidents, reappraise routinely the risk assessments that are initially made by control room operators. The domestic abuse, stalking and harassment (DASH)⁵ risk assessment is used by staff in domestic abuse cases to determine the level of risk of harm to a victim. DASH assessments facilitate a structured calculation of risk factors, but additionally HMIC found evidence of officers being encouraged to use their professional judgment to determine the level of risk. In other cases the victim's risk assessment (VRA) is used in a similar fashion. HMIC believes that the consistent approach to the assessment of risk provides a firm platform to consider the needs of victims in Gwent.

Officers we spoke to during our inspection demonstrated an empathetic approach towards victims and had a good understanding of the force's domestic abuse policy, including the need to take positive action. Officers articulated consistently that their priority was the initial safeguarding of the victim and then to commence an investigation.

The force is exploring avenues to enhance its evidence gathering and investigative capability for crimes such as domestic abuse. It currently has a small number of officers trialling the use of body-worn video cameras, with a view to extending this to the whole force within the next year. These devices have proved to be of evidential benefit elsewhere by recording injuries to victims and the behaviour of perpetrators, as a consequence increasing successful prosecutions.

⁴ The question within the PEEL inspection methodology asks "How well does the force respond to vulnerable victims?" HMIC has amended the heading in this report to make it clear to the reader that this section focuses on the initial police response to vulnerable victims, rather than the overall police response to vulnerable victims.

⁵ Most forces use the domestic abuse, stalking, harassment and honour-based violence risk identification, assessment and management model (DASH): www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/domestic-abuse/risk-and-vulnerability/#approaches-to-risk-assessment

Supervision of response to vulnerable victims

Supervisory procedures for the initial contact with victims are clear. DASH and VRA risk assessments are presented to sergeants for ratification and HMIC saw examples of the assessment being changed to reflect concerns raised by supervisors.

HMIC also saw effective follow-up interventions to pursue known offenders and protect vulnerable people. In the force's two policing areas, officers are detailed to track down high-risk domestic abuse offenders who have not been arrested and complete any new lines of enquiry relating to missing persons on a daily basis.

The force manages these interventions at daily management meetings in which HMIC saw clear and robust accountability mechanisms. Nevertheless, we considered the meetings would benefit from an increased consideration of repeat victims of crime and antisocial behaviour.

How well does the force investigate offences involving vulnerable victims and work with partners to keep victims safe?⁶

Investigation of crimes involving vulnerable people

The strategic and senior lead for protecting vulnerable people from harm and supporting victims is the head of the public protection unit (PPU) in Gwent. The PPU lead is responsible for determining policy and setting standards. Following restructuring, the force has set up PPUs in each of its policing areas, which are responsible for investigations and their officers report to local policing commanders.

HMIC examined the case files of a sample of investigations⁷ in which vulnerable victims were identified. HMIC also interviewed investigators in specialist investigative units and frontline officers who also investigate crime.

The force has a clear policy to allocate crime in line with threat, risk and harm. This builds well on the identification of vulnerability by call handlers at the first point of contact with the force. Traditionally vulnerability has been associated with the type of crime where it is obvious that the victim is vulnerable, for example child abuse or

⁶ The question within the PEEL inspection methodology asks "How well does the subsequent police action and work with partners keep victims safe?" HMIC has amended the heading in this report to make it clear to the reader that this section focuses on the investigation of offences involving vulnerable victims, rather than the police's initial response to vulnerable victims.

⁷ HMIC reviewed a sample of rape, burglary, offences of serious violence and actual bodily harm cases. In most forces the review consisted of 10 cases from each crime category but in some larger forces the sample was increased to 15. The file review was designed to provide a broad overview of the identification of vulnerability and the effectiveness of the investigation.

domestic abuse. The use of victim risk assessments show that Gwent Police now consider the vulnerability of all victims. HMIC found good evidence of burglary victims who, because of complex social needs, were struggling to live independently and were referred to social services.

The case files HMIC examined showed that specialist officers were allocated criminal investigations in line within these criteria at an early stage. The force rigorously supervises major and complex crime investigations, it uses forensics effectively and in general terms deals with offenders expeditiously. Allegations of rape are subject to periodic review by senior supervisors although we found some variance in the amount of detail recorded on crime reports.

Gwent Police takes a structured approach to the investigation of crime and uses the mnemonic CARES (contract with the victim, assessment of the needs of the victim, report of the investigation, end of investigation and supervision) to standardise its investigations. However the headings of CARES do not correspond to mandatory fields on the crime-recording database and as a consequence compliance with the model is inconsistent. Aligned with this, we found a tendency for crimes which occur more frequently and are investigated by non-specialists are subject to lesser supervision.

Compliance with the codes of practice for victims of crime

All police forces have a statutory duty to comply with the code practice for victims of crime. The code sets out the service that victims can expect from all organisations, including the police, which have a role in the criminal justice system.

The priority to update victims of crime on the progress of investigations is set by the chief constable himself. This is laudable and there are signs that this is having a positive impact on victim satisfaction levels and public confidence in Gwent.

Awareness of the responsibility to victims is good. Inspectors found regular use of 'contracts' showing the victim's preferred method of being updated and the frequency of contact he or she expects. This is encouraging as HMIC's crime inspection in 2014 found this service to require improvement.

We found that officers understand how to use victim personal statements.⁸ These statements make courts aware of the psychological impact of becoming a victim and in Gwent we found that officers routinely take them.

⁸ The Victim Personal Statement (VPS) gives victims an opportunity to describe the wider effects of the crime upon them, express their concerns and indicate whether or not they require any support. Provisions relating to the making of a VPS and its use in criminal proceedings are included in the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime (Victims' Code) which was published on 29 October 2013 and came into force on 10 December 2013.

HMIC found it difficult to assess how the force meets the requirement of the code for witnesses to receive special measures in certain circumstances, such as a facility to give evidence on a video link rather than attending court. This was difficult for HMIC to assess because the force does not record routinely its safety plans for victims during investigations. Gwent Police may wish to address this, to give greater assurance that it is considering all of the needs of victims.

Working with partners

Gwent Police has well-developed partner relationships and joint working practices to support vulnerable people and address victim needs. HMIC found the force to be influential in the development of policy and operational practice in the county's children and adult safeguarding boards.⁹

The force hosts a number of units which include representatives from statutory partner organisations and the voluntary sector. These include;

- the multi-agency public protection arrangements team which manages registered sex offenders and violent offenders;
- the domestic abuse safeguarding unit;
- the missing persons team; and
- the child sexual exploitation team.

HMIC found that these arrangements have improved the timeliness and quality of information-sharing and they lend themselves well to formulation of safety plans to support victims. The force is in discussions with key stakeholders to take these arrangements a step further and develop a multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH). The success of the current joint teams leaves the force well placed to promote a persuasive case for a MASH and bring together all services to support victims into one place.

⁹ Local safeguarding children boards and local safeguarding adult boards have a statutory duty to co-ordinate how agencies work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective.

How well does the force respond to and safeguard specific vulnerable groups (missing and absent & victims of domestic abuse), and how well prepared is it to tackle child sexual exploitation?

The first three questions have explained how the force identifies those that are vulnerable, the response that is provided to them and what action the force takes to investigate crimes and to work with partners to keep victims safe. This question looks specifically at how the force deals with three specific areas of vulnerability: domestic abuse, missing and absent children and its preparedness to deal with child sexual exploitation.

Missing and absent children

HMIC spoke with partners about Gwent Police's approach to dealing with missing and absent children and the response was unanimously positive. The force has a comprehensive missing persons policy which draws on national police-approved professional practice and Home Office guidance. It is strengthened by the All Wales child protection procedures and missing persons protocol. The force gives clear guidance to operational staff, which spans from the moment an individual is reported as missing to the point when the person returns and the circumstances of the disappearance are discussed with a view to providing support to the. Partners' perceptions are that Gwent Police has improved its response in tackling this issue, they were praiseworthy of the officers they worked with and stated that information-sharing was very good.

At a strategic level we found a real drive within the force to reinforce this cultural shift and continue to improve the way the force deals with repeat episodes of missing children. To support this, Gwent Police has established a joint missing persons team which brings together child practitioners from the council's child social care unit, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board and a charity to fully consider the needs of missing children.

HMIC also saw evidence of call-handlers and frontline officers making good use of a shared database known as the missing persons risk assessment framework (MIRAF). All members of the joint missing persons team enter details of their interventions in support of missing children on the database. This enables Gwent Police, should a child be missing repeatedly, to quickly identify where the child was previously found, whom he or she was with and why he or she was there. This gives the force a head start in developing plans to search for missing children.

At the time of the inspection the MIRAF database was available to all front line officers with over 600 officers trained in its use. The MIRAF is also available to social services teams in the five local authority areas, health, education safeguarding leads and local authority children's homes. In addition to this, the Missing Children's Team Manager chairs a bi-monthly Residential Unit Manager's Forum which is attended by all of the residential homes in the force area. Training has also been delivered to staff in every children's home with a view to reducing missing episodes.

Preparedness to tackle child sexual exploitation

This inspection has focused on actions and activities the force has taken to understand and identify the extent to which children are at risk of child sexual exploitation and the policies and practices it is putting in place to tackle this. It did not test the quality of how the force conducted these complex investigations with other agencies such as children's services as these issues are covered in HMIC's rolling programme of child protection inspections.

Child sexual exploitation is a clearly-identified priority for the force with governance and accountability at all levels. HMIC found that significant efforts had been made to raise the awareness of frontline officers. We also found better recognition of problems occurring locally and greater understanding of the risks presented by vulnerable missing and absent children in relation to becoming a victim of child sexual exploitation than had previously been the case.

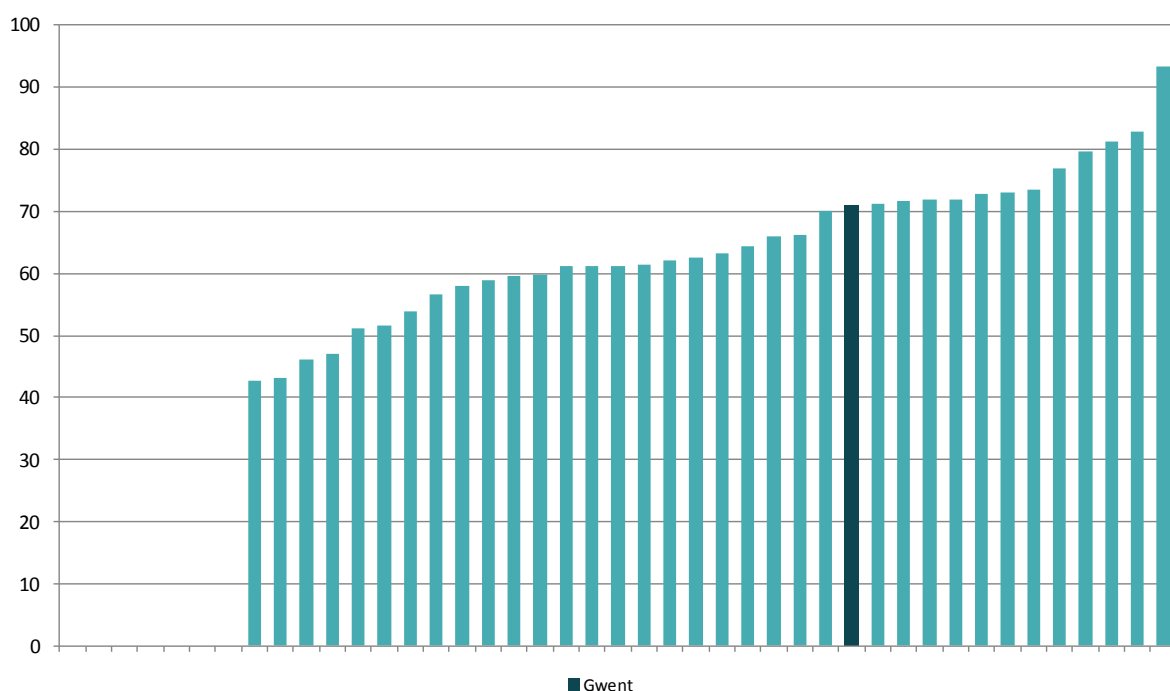
HMIC found that the force has completed specific profiling work for missing children linked to child sexual exploitation within the Newport area. This has been led by the child sexual exploitation team who work alongside the multi-agency missing persons team. This continuing work is focused on the top ten missing children, their risk of child sexual exploitation and their links to perpetrators. This has already led to co-ordinated activity to keep these children out of harm's way. This innovative use of joint working to safeguard vulnerable children in Newport has considerable potential benefit for the rest of the force area.

Domestic abuse

In the 12 months to 31 March 2015, recorded domestic abuse increased by 18 percent against the previous 12 months and accounted for 12 percent of all police recorded crime. Across England and Wales during the same period there was a 21 percent increase, with domestic abuse accounting for 10 percent of all police recorded crime.

As shown in figure 2, for every 100 domestic abuse crimes recorded Gwent Police made 71 arrests.

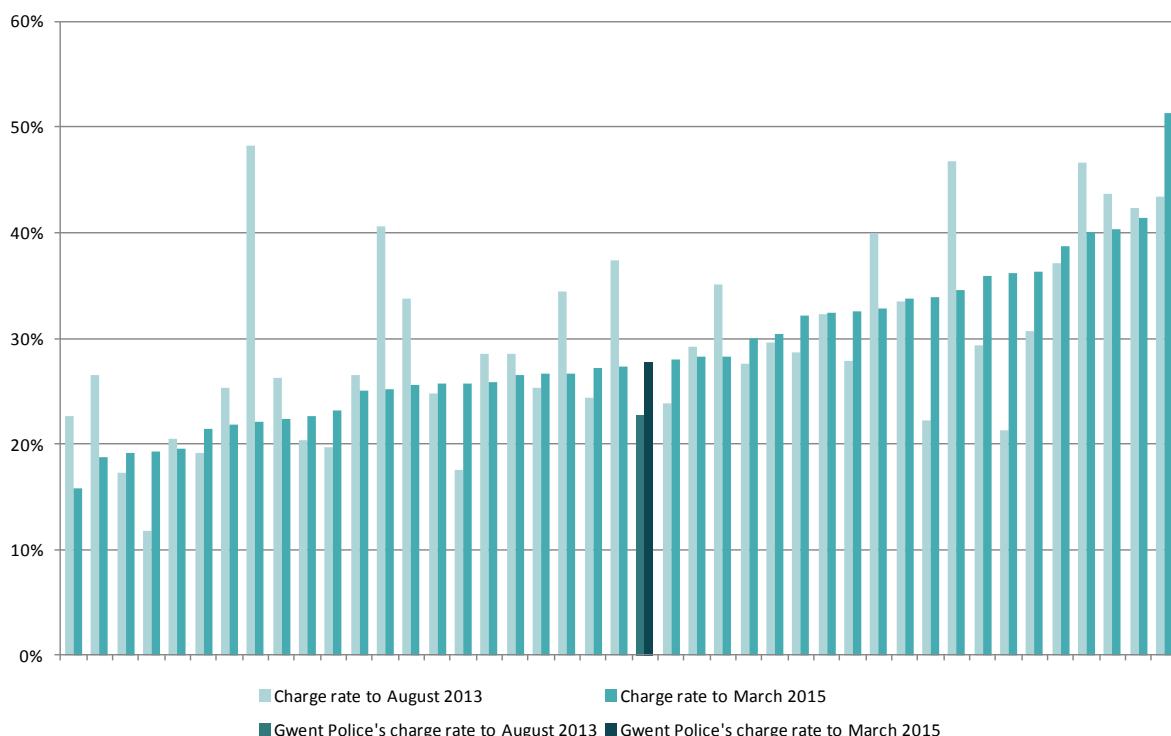
Figure 2: The number of arrests per 100 domestic abuse crimes by force, for the 12 months to 31 March 2015



Source: HMIC data return

The force's charge rate for domestic abuse recorded crimes for the 12 months to 31 March 2015 was 28 percent, compared with 27 percent for England and Wales. This is an increase since the last HMIC domestic abuse inspection when the force rate was 23 percent for the 12 months to 31 August 2013, compared with 30 percent for England and Wales.

Figure 3: Domestic abuse charge rate for the 12 months to 31 March 2015 compared to the 12 months to 31 August 2013



Source: HMIC data return

HMIC also examined the force's use of new legal powers to protect victims. Domestic violence protection orders (DVPOs) were introduced in England and Wales in 2014 to prevent a suspected offender from returning to a victim's home or contacting the victim. The force began using DVPOs in September 2014; it made 33 applications to magistrates' courts for their use, of which all were granted. Six DVPOs have been breached. Breaches occur when the offender fails to comply with the condition of the order and is taken back before the magistrates' court. This represents a DVPO breach rate of 18 percent compared with the England and Wales rate of 17 percent.¹⁰

HMIC found good evidence of the force making service delivery improvements since the last domestic abuse inspection. These improvements form part of a service improvement plan which the force has developed following gap analysis in all the business areas of public protection. Of 13 recommendations made in the previous inspection, 10 have now been completed and 3 remain as work in progress.

We found that positive outcomes are apparent, such as the force now having a prosecution rate for domestic abuse which is greater than the national average. HMIC is satisfied that progress is being made against the recommendations of the previous domestic abuse inspection.

¹⁰ The England and Wales figure is based on data provided by 35 forces.

For example, the force now transfers details of each incident to a shared database to ensure that immediate safeguarding arrangements can be put in place by external domestic abuse service providers.

Domestic abuse is very clearly a priority for the force and is clearly important to frontline staff. A review of the telephone call recordings and incident logs relating to high-risk domestic abuse cases found that the calls were dealt with sensitively and appropriately; risk assessments were completed and patrol deployments were based on the prevailing risks and threats in each case. Response officers understand their responsibilities with regard to the DASH risk identification process and there is a very clear focus to take positive safeguarding action at the scene of incidents.

Standards of investigations are good and the force now focuses on prolific abusers by considering the whole range of criminality they are involved in.

Daily domestic abuse conference calls enable partner service providers to put in place safeguarding measures rapidly. HMIC found that other domestic abuse professionals who work alongside Gwent Police acknowledged the progress the force has made in recent times.

Concerns were raised to HMIC about the working relationship between the force and domestic abuse advocates (IDVAs).¹¹ The restructuring of the PPU to a devolved operating model in the force's two policing areas appears to have disrupted direct lines of communications between IDVAs and the force. IDVAs have an important role in co-ordinating safety plans for high-risk victims and the force is encouraged to rectify this position.

¹¹ IDVAs (independent domestic abuse advisors) are advocates who work separately from the police to address the safety of victims (and their children) who are at high-risk of harm from intimate partners, former partners and family members.

Summary of findings



Good

Gwent Police has made good progress putting in place clear processes to identify repeat and vulnerable victims. The force makes accurate assessments of the risks victims face and their needs. Gwent's response to victims is consistent and the force's performance is judged to be good.

The force shares information effectively with partner organisations. This takes place either through the force's referral unit or in the multi-agency teams established to support missing children and protect young people who are susceptible to sexual exploitation. The force's response to missing children is good and HMIC found established arrangements to identify and tackle child sexual exploitation.

The standards of investigations have improved since they were last examined in HMIC crime inspection in 2014. Supervision is generally better and the force considers carefully the vulnerability of all victims, irrespective of the nature of the offence. Domestic abuse is a clear priority for the force, which has made good progress against its domestic abuse action plan.

As part of its wide-ranging service improvement plan, the force has also reinforced its commitment to victims. The force now updates victims with the progress of investigations routinely and additional support is put in place by partner service providers when necessary.