

PEEL: Police effectiveness 2015 (Vulnerability)

An inspection of Hampshire Constabulary



December 2015

© HMIC 2015

ISBN: 978-1-911194-29-3

www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic

Contents

Vulnerability in numbers	3
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?	9
How well does the force initially respond to vulnerable victims?	12
How well does the force investigate offences involving vulnerable victims and work with partners to keep victims safe?	14
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?	17
Summary of findings	23

Vulnerability in numbers



Calls for assistance

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

Hampshire Constabulary

172

England and Wales

350

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

Hampshire Constabulary

15.0

England and Wales

15.8



Crime

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

Hampshire Constabulary

57.7

England and Wales

61.6

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

Hampshire Constabulary

+8.8%

England and Wales

+2.2%

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

Hampshire Constabulary

—

England and Wales

10.7%

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

Hampshire Constabulary

10.0%

England and Wales

10.0%

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

Hampshire Constabulary

+33.2%

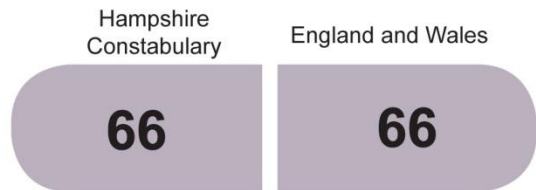
England and Wales

+20.8%



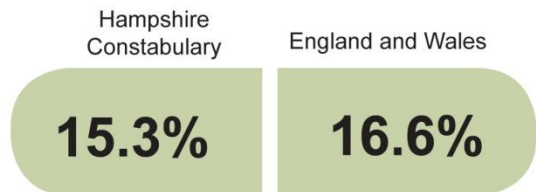
Domestic abuse arrest rate

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

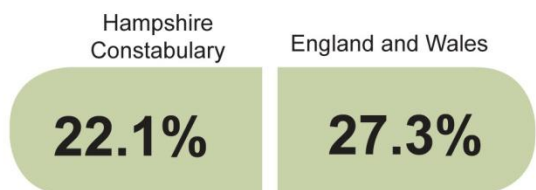


Charge rate

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

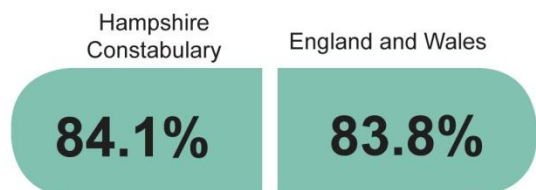


Domestic abuse charge rate as a percentage of all domestic abuse crimes recorded 12 months to 31 March 2015



Victim satisfaction rate

Victim satisfaction rate 12 months to 31 March 2015



***Hampshire Constabulary was not able to provide data for percentage of total crimes recorded as having a vulnerable victim.**

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 Hampshire Constabulary.

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

Summary



Requires improvement

Protecting vulnerable people is a stated priority for Hampshire Constabulary and in almost all of the areas that HMIC reviewed as part of this inspection, the strong commitment to protecting the most vulnerable people in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight is translating into operational reality. The constabulary is to be commended for placing more resources in areas of its business devoted to keeping the most vulnerable people safe, and the innovations it has introduced to work more effectively. The constabulary's recent major restructuring has seen increases in resources in this vital area and, most importantly, improvements in the service the police provide to vulnerable people. However, given the risk that its current practice poses to some victims of domestic abuse HMIC judges the constabulary as requires improvement.

Hampshire Constabulary would have been assessed as good in this inspection were it not for a significant weakness in the practice it has recently adopted of routinely assessing the risk to some victims of domestic abuse over the telephone through its new resolution centre. HMIC has carefully reviewed this practice and notified the constabulary of our concern that the risk to vulnerable people may not be fully assessed through this method. The constabulary is involving domestic abuse support groups, and academics in a comprehensive review of this approach while strengthening supervisory scrutiny of such cases. With the exception of this concern, the constabulary identifies and responds to vulnerable victims well and investigates crime committed against most vulnerable victims well, with the right level of expertise involved in the right complexity of investigation.

The constabulary has made progress in respect of the recommendations made by HMIC in our previous report on domestic abuse. It has volunteered to review the practice of resolving certain incidents involving potentially vulnerable victims of domestic abuse over the telephone. This is important as the current arrangements may result in risk not being fully assessed in some cases and a victim of domestic abuse (and other family members) not being appropriately safeguarded. For example, the constabulary is missing opportunities to identify physical and emotional signs of domestic abuse upon the victim (and family members, particularly children), or the condition of the home environment which may give cause for concern, not being seen.

We found a clear, structured and well-supervised process for responding to reports that children are missing or absent. The constabulary works well with partners to safeguard vulnerable people and has implemented multi-safeguarding hubs (MASHs)¹ across the constabulary area. These enhance the work done by key professionals, to keep people safe.

The constabulary has invested in dedicated resources to prepare to tackle child sexual exploitation. It has provided child sexual exploitation awareness training to its staff and is due to refresh this during autumn 2015. This inspection considered how well prepared the constabulary is to tackle investigating child sexual exploitation.

¹ A multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) brings together into a single location key safeguarding agencies to better identify risks to children (and in some areas, vulnerable adults), and improve decision-making, interventions, and outcomes. The MASH enables the multi-agency team to share all appropriate information in a secure environment, and ensure that the most appropriate response is provided to effectively safeguard and protect the individual.

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

HMIC found that Hampshire Constabulary is good at identifying those who are vulnerable, assessing the risks that they face and what is needed to keep them safe. However it needs to improve how it assesses the level of risk in respect of some domestic abuse victims that it deals with through its resolution centre.

The constabulary has trained its frontline staff to recognise why and when a person might be vulnerable, and has put systems in place to help its staff gather all relevant information and make an initial assessment of risk. Assessments of risk are reviewed by specialist staff or senior officers to ensure that the initial judgement remains valid, and that appropriate actions are taken to safeguard² vulnerable people.

Identifying those who are vulnerable

Hampshire Constabulary is good at identifying vulnerable victims when they first contact the police.

HMIC found that staff working in the police enquiry centres (PECs) where the majority of emergency and non-emergency calls are received, and those working in station front counters, have been trained to recognise and respond to vulnerable people.

Computer systems used by staff taking calls automatically flag up a repeat caller based on the location from where the call is made. The computer system also allows staff to apply a flag to identify if the caller is vulnerable. Staff conduct further checks on a separate computer system to provide more detailed information, including access to mental health and child protection plans where applicable. The constabulary recognises that the process is inefficient and is improving its computer systems to eliminate the need for further searches. However, call-takers have access to a comprehensive range of information on which to base their decisions to deploy an officer or to allocate the incident to the telephone-based resolution centre.

The resolution centre receives all incidents assessed by the control room to not require the attendance of an officer. Following an assessment process based on the risk to the victim and the nature of the incident, staff within the resolution centre will either deal with the matter entirely on the telephone or refer to another team, which may involve an officer subsequently visiting the caller. Decisions are overseen by supervisors, and staff in the centre have received specific training for this role.

² The term safeguarding means providing protection and support to ensure the safety of the vulnerable person and prevent further harm.

Thirteen percent of all domestic abuse incidents reported to Hampshire Constabulary are dealt with in this way by staff in the resolution centre who contact the victim, and complete a risk assessment. In some cases staff also conduct an investigation over the phone, or, if this cannot be done over the telephone allocate the case to an investigator from the police investigation centre. Victims assessed at high-risk are visited by a safeguarding officer and a safety plan developed within 24 hours. Those assessed as medium risk receive a similar visit within 72 hours by a neighbourhood officer, while those assessed as standard risk will not generally receive any follow-up visit. There is a further review of all these initial risk assessments, which in some cases raises the level of assessed risk to the victim, or increases the level of support the victim receives from the constabulary or its partners. The number of victims who reported an incident of domestic abuse but did not receive a visit from a police officer is small compared to the numbers of incidents reported, but is still around 500 cases during a six-month period. To assess the level of risk that conducting domestic abuse risk assessments over the telephone may pose to victims we reviewed a sample of 18 domestic abuse incidents referred into the resolution centre for initial risk assessment. We found in some cases there were delays in vulnerable victims receiving safeguarding support. In others we found that decisions regarding the risk assessment, investigation and safeguarding appeared to be based on that specific incident rather than considering the wider circumstances and history of the abuse being reported. In these circumstances, the force may miss the opportunity to escalate the level of risk to the victim.

The proportion of crime recorded which involves a vulnerable victim varies considerably between forces, from 0.03 percent to 34.3 percent. There is no standard way in which forces are required to record on crime recording systems whether a victim is vulnerable and forces do this differently. Hampshire Constabulary was one of eight forces that were unable to quantify the number of recorded crimes with a vulnerable victim for the total time period of the data collection. The constabulary was able to provide the data from April 2015 onwards.

Forces define vulnerability in different ways. The majority of forces use either the definition from the government's Code of Practice for Victims of Crime³ or that referred to in ACPO guidance.⁴ Nine forces use their own definition or a combination of these definitions.

³ *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

⁴ 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*, NPCC, 2012, is available from www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/vulnerable-adults/

Hampshire 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.”

Assessing levels of risk and need

Hampshire Constabulary has provided training to staff recently on a structured assessment based on the levels of threat, harm, risk and vulnerability (THRIVE) faced by the victim. This is a positive step and means that staff will be better equipped to determine the appropriate level of response to a call, based on an accurate assessment of risk rather than the type of incident or crime being reported.

HMIC found that staff taking calls had a good understanding of vulnerability. The constabulary has provided staff with ‘drop-down menus’ on their computers which prompt them to ask particular questions for missing persons, and domestic abuse reports. This ensures that staff record all the information needed to make an accurate assessment of vulnerability and generally deploy the right people to deal with the right incidents. The constabulary also has a quality assurance process which involves PEC supervisors dip-sampling calls to ensure that staff are effectively identifying vulnerability and providing an appropriate response.

The constabulary also holds specific meetings three times a day during which incidents involving a high risk of vulnerability are discussed and action is taken to ensure that such matters receive an appropriate response.

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

HMIC found that in Hampshire, staff and officers understand the requirements of vulnerable groups although as highlighted we are concerned about its response to some victims assessed as standard risk, and dealt with through the resolution centre.

Hampshire Constabulary has a good understanding of the needs of those who are missing or absent. We found that the initial assessment of risk was good, and there was a clear line of response and supervision. The constabulary understands the risk posed to victims of child sexual exploitation and has identified and is addressing areas where it needs to increase its knowledge.

The constabulary has reorganised recently and it is working to place protecting vulnerable people at the heart of its new structure. To develop its understanding of the risk faced by vulnerable groups it has prioritised areas of the constabulary dedicated to protecting vulnerable people, and has in place several departments to

do so. These include a central referral unit (CRU) that receives, assesses and allocates for action – to police or partner agencies – all reports concerning vulnerable people and MASHs.

In addition, the constabulary has dedicated safeguarding teams that provide safeguarding to victims assessed as high-risk. It also has specialist domestic abuse single points of contact working with investigation teams to improve compliance with the code of practice for victims of crime and to ensure that victims receive access to specialist services.

To deal with the abuse of children, the constabulary has a dedicated team to tackle child sexual exploitation (Operation Goldstone),⁵ based within the MASHs identifying young people at risk and specialist investigation teams for child abuse (CAIT) and online grooming (ICAT).

Finally, the constabulary has intelligence staff who identify and assess intelligence reports relating to vulnerable people and ensure that this information is passed to the right people within the constabulary. They work closely with dedicated missing person officers who are responsible for identifying longer-term trends, people who repeatedly go missing and for working with partner agencies to reduce missing occurrences. The constabulary also has partnership and neighbourhood officers who identify and work with vulnerable victims and work with local schools and care homes to prevent children becoming victims of crime through education.

How well does the force initially respond to vulnerable victims?⁶

Hampshire Constabulary generally responds well to vulnerable victims. It has provided training to its staff and has risk assessment processes for domestic abuse, missing persons, vulnerable children and adults, stalking and harassment and anti-social behaviour to help staff identify and address risks. The constabulary monitors activity on areas of vulnerability relating to child sexual exploitation, domestic abuse, hate crime and anti-social behaviour as part of its performance monitoring arrangements and provides police district commanders with the 'top three' locations for vulnerability in their policing areas. This assessment is based on frequency rather than the level of risk and would be enhanced if it incorporated an assessment of vulnerability so that incidents involving higher risk but lower incidence receive the required priority.

⁵ Operation Goldstone is the constabulary's response to child sexual exploitation which is staffed by one sergeant and eight constables.

⁶ 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 response to vulnerable victims, rather than the overall police response to vulnerable victims.

Response officers

HMIC found that the police officers who respond to vulnerable people are able to identify the extent of their vulnerability and take action to keep them safe. The constabulary has trained all frontline staff in how to identify vulnerability, and in the use of the national decision making model (NDM).⁷ HMIC looked at a number of risk assessments that had been completed by staff and we found that vulnerability had been identified, and appropriate measures put in place to keep people safe. However, HMIC found that some response officers were unclear as to the specific training they had received in respect of vulnerability. This suggests that it needs to refresh its training.

The constabulary intranet contains a section dedicated to vulnerability which staff use to access help and advice about any issue related to identifying and supporting vulnerable people. As a consequence frontline staff are aware of the immediate safeguarding options available to them to help victims of domestic abuse. These include installation of panic alarms, internet sites they can signpost victims to and the allocation of mobile phones to enable victims to contact the police quickly. The site also contains details of local support groups for victims of domestic abuse and in reality testing we found that officers were aware of, and used this site. Despite this we found some inconsistency in knowledge of these services and the constabulary should consider reminding staff where to access this information, which might be supported by the consistent provision of information leaflets for victims.

Most frontline staff also have access to body-worn video cameras which they use when dealing with incidents involving vulnerable people. The constabulary has been at the forefront of the use of such technology, which it uses to good effect gathering evidence at the time from vulnerable victims that can be presented subsequently to a court.

Supervision of the response to vulnerable victims

While supervisors check a proportion of risk assessments completed by their staff and have a responsibility to review three incidents a month, the constabulary recognises that more needs to be done to improve the immediate supervision of the risk assessment process for domestic abuse incidents. It is exploring steps that it can take to achieve this, particularly as this was one of the recommendations from HMIC's domestic abuse inspection in 2014.

⁷ National decision model (NDM) is specific to policing. It provides a consistent framework in which decisions can be examined and challenged, both at the time and afterwards. It is composed of six key elements: the police code of ethics being central to the decision; gather information; assess threat and risk; consider powers and force policy; identify options; and, take action and review what happened.

The CRU checks risk assessments and the actions taken after these have been completed and submitted by the attending officer. Further action is then allocated to specialist resources, such as the safeguarding team, or back to the officer for further work if required.

This is an efficient process although we found that on occasions there was a difference of opinion between the officer attending, staff in the CRU and the safeguarding unit as to the level of risk. The constabulary would benefit from understanding what is behind this, as it will identify learning to ensure that the assessment of risks faced by victims is as accurate as possible.

How well does the force investigate offences involving vulnerable victims and work with partners to keep victims safe?⁸

HMIC found that overall the action taken by Hampshire Constabulary is good, as is its work with partners to investigate crimes committed against vulnerable people and to keep them safe. The constabulary has recently restructured and incorporated its public protection department into a partnerships and neighbourhoods command. This is another example of the constabulary's innovative approach to protecting vulnerable people. It underlines a commitment to maintaining a presence in neighbourhoods and means that all partnership resources are combined with safeguarding, public protection and neighbourhood officers.

HMIC found that the constabulary has sufficient specialised staff with responsibility for investigating the most serious offences.

Investigation of crimes involving vulnerable people

HMIC reviewed 40 completed investigations, 24 of which were identified as involving a vulnerable person.⁹ We found that the constabulary was good at identifying vulnerability at an early stage of an investigation and carried out safeguarding activity when necessary, including referrals to partners and voluntary organisations. Safeguarding actions generally continued throughout the investigation. This included attempts to provide assistance even if the victim refused to work with the police.

⁸ 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.

⁹ 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.

Safeguarding in relation to cases involving child abuse or child victims was very good.

HMIC found evidence that the constabulary deployed a specialist officer in the majority of cases where one was required.

However, HMIC has concerns about the quality of investigation and decision-making in some domestic abuse cases identified as suitable to be initially risk-assessed over the phone by the resolution centre. For example, in one case a statement was taken by an investigator over the phone from a 17-year-old female victim regarding continuing stalking and harassment by her mother's ex-partner. In another case an officer from the resolution centre left a warning message for an offender on his mobile phone voicemail and then filed the case as resolved.

Compliance with the code of practice for victims of crime

All police forces have a statutory duty to comply with the code of practice for victims of crime, which sets out the service victims of crime can expect from all parts of the criminal justice system. The code states that all victims of crime should be able to make a victim personal statement,¹⁰ which they can use to explain how the crime has affected them. HMIC found that while officers explain this scheme to victims, many are not taking the opportunity to explain to the court how a crime affected them. The constabulary is taking steps to promote an awareness of how important this provision is in these cases, but it needs to understand why, despite the constabulary complying with this provision, victims are not making use of it.

The constabulary should also update victims about the progress of their case. HMIC saw crime reports that contained personalised victim's needs assessments and records of the updates that had been provided to victims. We found that the constabulary is committed to compliance with the code and has placed specialist officers within the investigation teams as single points of contact for victims of domestic abuse to ensure that they are kept updated. In many ways this is positive but HMIC learnt that this now means that five different people will contact the victim during the course of the investigation and subsequent safeguarding. This number of different contacts can be problematic for victims and potentially lead to the victim withdrawing from the offered services.

¹⁰ 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 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.

Working with partners

The constabulary works well with a number of different organisations to protect those people who are vulnerable and to support victims. There is a county-wide MASH structure with locations at Fareham, Southampton and Portsmouth. There are some variations in respect of which organisations are in each MASH, but representatives from the police, children's and adult social care and health are present in each and share information to make decisions that safeguard children and adults. These structures are not yet fully mature in all locations across the county. Work is ongoing to provide sufficient accommodation and IT provision in Southampton and Portsmouth for all the Hampshire Constabulary MASH staff. This means that while the majority of police resources are already co-located and working within the hubs, the process will not be entirely complete until early 2016.

Senior officers from the constabulary are actively involved on strategic-level groups with external agencies in respect of domestic abuse, children and young people and those missing, exploited and trafficked people. There are sub-groups in place who have responsibility for joining up this multi-agency work at an operational level and to ensure that information is shared about individual cases.

Hampshire holds multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs)¹¹ with professionals from other bodies to safeguard those considered to be at the highest risk of harm. In the previous 12 months these meetings have considered over 3,500 cases. Some partner agencies spoken to by HMIC felt that this was a high number and could lead to a standardised response to all cases, which could mean that the most vulnerable do not get an appropriate service. However, HMIC observed two conferences and found that discussions were focused with good participation by those present. We saw evidence that MARACs safeguard victims and children through information-sharing and joint action-planning. The constabulary plans to incorporate MARACs into the MASHs as they mature which they believe will provide a more dynamic assessment of risk and implementation of multi-agency safeguarding measures.

The constabulary refers vulnerable victims to independent domestic abuse and sexual assault advisors (IDVAs), the numbers of which have been increased following HMIC's domestic abuse inspection in 2014. At a district level, the constabulary and local partners have access to a standalone shared IT facility called safety net. This provides a single source of information about vulnerable people in an area.

¹¹ MARACs (multi-agency risk assessment conferences) – local meetings where information about high-risk domestic abuse victims (those at risk of murder or serious harm) is shared between local agencies.

This can be both populated and updated by all participating agencies. HMIC was impressed to see how it is used at local management meetings to track actions and their impact on individual vulnerability. We encourage the constabulary to explore how to engage partners more effectively in its use.

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 constabulary identifies those that are vulnerable, the response that is provided to them and what action Hampshire Constabulary takes to investigate crimes and to work with partners to keep victims safe. This question looks specifically at how the constabulary 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

The constabulary responds well to missing and absent children in a clear, structured and well-supervised manner. When children are reported as missing, effective systems are in place to assess their risk. Constabulary staff who take calls in the PECs complete a standardised risk assessment that helps them to assess the vulnerability of people who go missing. This risk assessment includes additional questions in respect of missing people under the age of 18. Local supervisors oversee proactively such incidents, directing resources and actions. These procedures are well-understood, and senior officers review regularly cases of vulnerable missing people.

The constabulary has dedicated missing person's officers who review all reports of missing children, ensure that repeat missing persons are identified and that appropriate safeguarding action is taken. Reports and actions taken in relation to missing children are recorded on an electronic records management system. This is not designed specifically for such enquires and requires a manual search to identify if necessary investigative actions have been completed. This means that reviewing an enquiry can be time-consuming and carries greater risk of error. The constabulary intends to introduce a new missing persons system later in 2015.

All children who go missing are seen by a response and patrol officer upon their return, who carry out a safe and well check. All these staff are trained in the identification of CSE and will document the result of the safe and well check on a referral form, monitored on a daily basis by missing person co-ordinators.

In the Southampton and Portsmouth areas, representatives of Barnardo's carry out an additional return interview with children who have been missing to gain a better understanding of the reason for their absence, and to assess their risk of being groomed for child sexual exploitation. Elsewhere in the constabulary area the missing person coordinators carry out this function. A team within Hampshire children's services, known as the willow team, focuses on engaging with young people who go missing and work with any children identified through these visits to be at high risk of sexual exploitation. The willow team shares details with officers from Operation Goldstone.

Preparedness to tackle child sexual exploitation

The constabulary has invested time and effort to become more prepared to tackle child sexual exploitation. This inspection has focused on actions and activities the constabulary has taken to understand and identify the extent to which children are at risk of child sexual exploitation and the policies, practices and procedures it is putting in place to tackle this. It did not test the quality of how the constabulary 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.¹²

Hampshire Constabulary has made tackling child sexual exploitation its highest priority. The constabulary has a detailed child sexual exploitation action plan in place, and has created and refreshes regularly an analytical profile which documents its understanding of the scale of child sexual exploitation. Over the last 12 months the constabulary has identified over 100 more children at risk of child sexual exploitation. There are multi-agency groups in each of the policing areas of the constabulary, who work together to manage the risk to young people who are vulnerable to child sexual exploitation. These report to a single constabulary-wide Missing, Exploited and Trafficked (MET) group chaired by the assistant chief constable.

The constabulary has recently established Operation Goldstone, a dedicated team to identify those involved in or vulnerable to child sexual exploitation. The team includes additional intelligence analysts and is enhancing the current child sexual exploitation analytical profile to incorporate a wider range of partnership data. It anticipates that this will provide a more sophisticated picture of the threat from child sexual exploitation.

At the time of the inspection, this team had been in place for two months, and the early signs are encouraging. It has identified 12 individuals believed to be at risk of child sexual exploitation, and provided intelligence to inform patrols of hotspots by

¹² HMIC's National Child Protection Inspections, available from: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/our-work/child-abuse-and-child-protection-issues/national-child-protection-inspection/

child sexual exploitation 'guardian angels'. These are volunteers who patrol areas where intelligence indicates those vulnerable to child sexual exploitation may be present and seek to engage with them.

The constabulary is raising public awareness of child sexual exploitation through a campaign called 'you are not alone', which is aimed at young people at risk of child sexual exploitation and the providing to schools of a presentation called 'Chelsea's Choice' that raises awareness of this issue.

The constabulary models its response to offences of sexting¹³ on the latest national guidance and seeks to deal with such matters in a proportionate way, taking the needs and vulnerabilities of those involved into account. Many of these cases are managed through, or by the constabulary's telephone-based resolution centre where police officers use their professional judgment and experience, along with guidance on the vulnerability intranet site, to decide how to deal with such matters.

The constabulary does not have a process in place over and above routine supervisory arrangements to review systematically the quality of the investigations or safeguarding actions that occur following a sexting incident. Given the potentially serious impact of this type of offending, and that some cases are dealt with entirely over the telephone, the constabulary should satisfy itself that it is providing an appropriate response in each case.

The constabulary has provided awareness training to frontline staff to assist them in recognising child sexual exploitation and an internal marketing campaign called "are you ok?", which details what to look for when identifying child sexual exploitation. The constabulary has also made additional information available for staff on its intranet site. Staff from Operation Goldstone have also provided child sexual exploitation investigation training to supervisors, and the constabulary was intending to provide this training to all officers in the autumn of 2015.

Constabulary leaders are committed to tackling child sexual exploitation. The constabulary has made a good start to creating and resourcing structures to develop its capability and capacity, and this is starting to produce results.

¹³ The sharing of self-taken images of a sexual nature through photograph, text message, email or other electronic means.

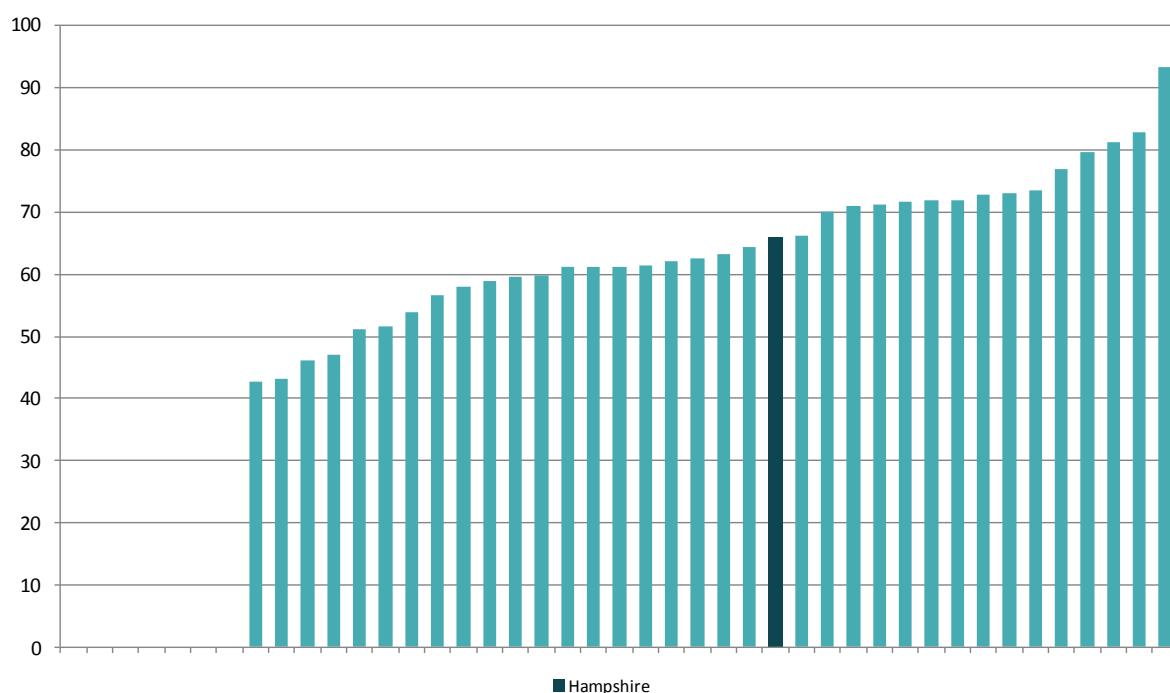
Domestic abuse

In the 12 months to 31 March 2015, recorded domestic abuse increased by 33 percent against the previous 12 months and accounted for 10 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.

The constabulary believes that more robust crime recording practices may be behind its increased crime levels, as levels of reported domestic abuse are now in line with the national average. The constabulary views increased reporting as a success.

As shown in figure 1, for every 100 domestic abuse crimes recorded Hampshire Constabulary made 66 arrests.

Figure 1: The number of arrests per 100 domestic abuse crimes by force, for the 12 months to 31 March 2015



Source: HMIC data return

The constabulary has reviewed how it responds to victims of domestic abuse within its new operating structure. Neighbourhood officers now have responsibility for domestic abuse cases that are assessed as medium risk and will visit victims within 72 hours of an offence to ensure that appropriate safeguarding measures are put in place. Most neighbourhood staff have already received a 'Neighbourhood Excellence' course designed to equip them to perform this role. This new structure has only been in place since April 2015, and HMIC will be interested to see its impact on the constabulary's protection of vulnerable people as it matures. Those assessed as high-risk are managed by safeguarding teams based in the MASHs and visited within 24 hours. We heard from the constabulary that this has increased the

numbers of victims of domestic abuse, who receive a more detailed safeguarding assessment along with greater support from around 2,500 to 11,000 per year.

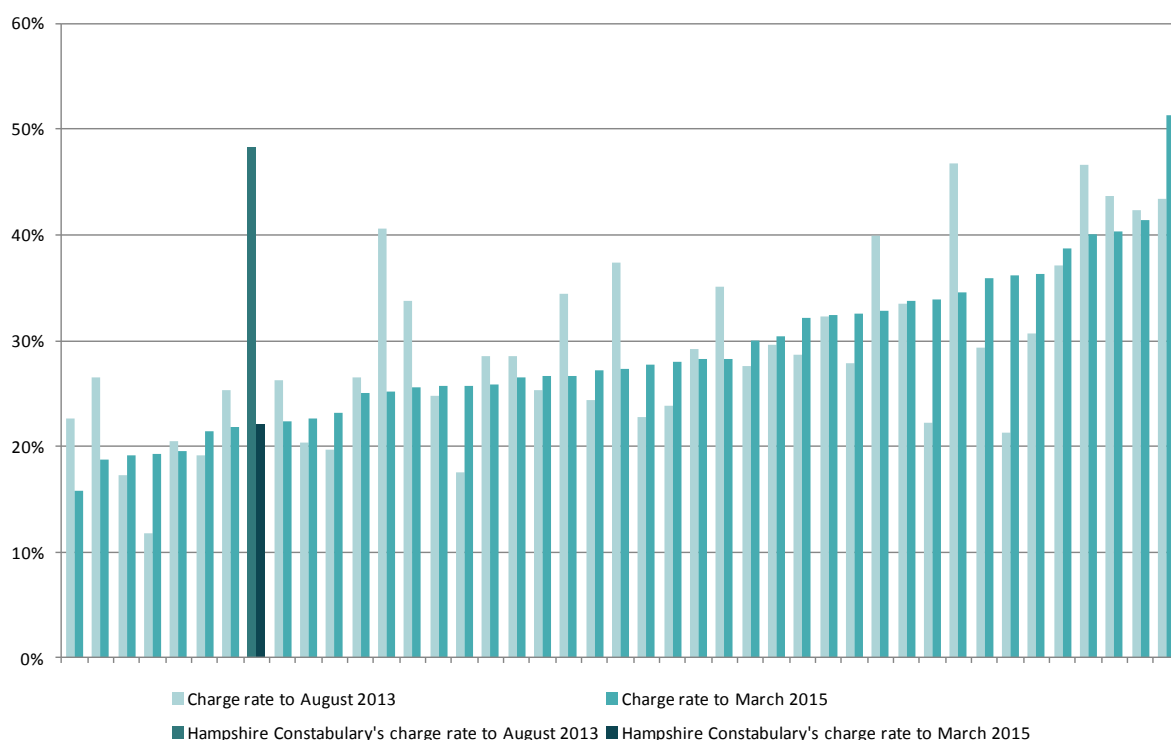
However, we found that the constabulary's approach to dealing with some incidents of domestic abuse through the resolution centre and phone based investigations is inconsistent with its overall approach to protecting vulnerable people. HMIC is concerned that the formal domestic abuse risk assessments are, on occasions, being completed over the telephone without an officer seeing the victim in person. While there may be subsequent police attendance at an incident, it is not always the case. This may result in risk not being assessed fully and a victim of domestic abuse (and other family members) not being appropriately safeguarded. For example, the constabulary may miss opportunities to identify physical and emotional signs of domestic abuse upon the victim (and family members, in particular children), the condition of the home environment which may give cause for concern, or initiate urgent safeguarding measures by police and other partners including domestic abuse support organisations.

We have raised these concerns with the constabulary and it is reviewing comprehensively this practice, involving partner agencies, domestic abuse support groups and academics in the review. While this takes place the constabulary is increasing supervision and management of this practice to minimise any risk to victims. Hampshire Constabulary had a positive domestic abuse report from HMIC in 2014. It has incorporated the seven recommendations we made into a domestic violence action plan. The constabulary is in the process of addressing four recommendations, it has fully discharged one, another has been superseded by actions from its change programme and it is awaiting a response from the College of Policing in respect of the seventh recommendation. We encourage the constabulary to maintain this focus to address all issues fully.

The constabulary demonstrates effective immediate and longer-term safeguarding measures to protect victims of domestic abuse, including a positive action approach to arrest as demonstrated in figure 2 below.

The constabulary's charge rate for domestic abuse recorded crimes for the 12 months to 31 March 2015 was 22 percent, compared with 27 percent for England and Wales. This is a decrease since the last HMIC domestic abuse inspection in 2014 when the constabulary rate was 48 percent for the 12 months to 31 August 2013, compared with 30 percent for England and Wales.

Figure 2: 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

While the numbers of domestic abuse perpetrators dealt with by means of charge or caution has remained similar to last year, the overall percentage of cases that result in an outcome through the criminal justice system such as a charge or caution has reduced significantly since the HMIC domestic abuse inspection in 2014. The constabulary is aware of this and has put in place a robust process to review all domestic abuse investigations where an arrest has been made.

HMIC also examined the constabulary'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 constabulary began using DVPOs in May 2014; it made 47 applications to magistrates' courts for their use, of which 45 were granted. Ten 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 22 percent compared with the England and Wales rate of 17 percent.¹⁴

¹⁴ The England and Wales figure is based on data provided by 35 forces.

The constabulary has made good use of the domestic violence disclosure scheme (DVDS)¹⁵ providing information to people potentially at risk from a domestic abuse offender. However it could use domestic violence protection notices (DVPNs)¹⁶ more effectively. This would allow victims of domestic abuse time away from the perpetrator to properly consider what they wish to do. HMIC also found that levels of knowledge and confidence in relation to DVPNs needs to be improved among frontline staff.

HMIC was interested to learn that the constabulary plans to extend a project operating in one area of the constabulary. This project (Project CARA), is another example of the constabulary's innovative approach, provides a conditional caution to domestic abuse perpetrators eligible to participate. This is conditional on attending workshops designed to address the underlying reason behind their offending. The pilot scheme has been evaluated by Cambridge University who identified a 60 percent reduction in offending among attendees, compared to a similar group who had not participated. We will be interested to see over a longer period of time what effect this has on overall offending behaviour.

Summary of findings



Requires improvement

Hampshire Constabulary would have been assessed as good in this inspection were it not for a significant weakness in its practice of assessing the risk to some victims of domestic abuse over the telephone through its new resolution centre.

The constabulary is generally good at identifying vulnerable victims and responding to them appropriately. It investigates crime committed against most vulnerable victims well, with the right level of expertise involved in the investigation.

The constabulary works well with partners and has implemented multi-safeguarding hubs (MASHs) across the constabulary area.

Hampshire has made progress in respect of the recommendations made by HMIC in our previous report on domestic abuse. We found a clear, structured and well-supervised process for responding to reports that children are missing or

¹⁵ The domestic violence disclosure scheme, also known as Clare's Law, allows the police to disclose information about previous violent offending by a new or existing partner where this may help protect someone from further violence.

¹⁶ DVPNs (domestic violence prevention notices) may be issued by an authorised police officer to prevent a suspected perpetrator from returning to a victim's home and/or contacting the victim. Following the issue of the DVPN the police must apply to the magistrates for a domestic violence prevention order (DVPO). The DVPO will be granted for a period of up to 28 days.

absent. The constabulary has made good preparations to tackle child sexual exploitation with awareness training to its staff.

Causes of concern

The constabulary's response to victims of domestic abuse is a cause of concern to HMIC. Risk assessments are on occasions being completed over the telephone without an officer seeing the victim in person. This may result in the risk not being fully assessed and a victim of domestic abuse (and other family members) not being appropriately safeguarded. HMIC has concerns about the quality of investigation and decision-making in relation to some domestic abuse cases referred to the resolution centre.

Recommendation

To address this cause of concern HMIC recommends the constabulary should carry out a comprehensive review of its arrangements in this regard. In any event the constabulary should take immediate steps to ensure:

- it reviews the approach to assessing risks to victims of domestic abuse without the attendance of an officer and takes steps to ensure any changes deemed necessary to protect victims are implemented; and
- investigations, including those conducted within the resolution centre, are conducted to appropriate standards with effective supervision.