



Promoting improvements
in policing to make
everyone safer

PEEL: Police effectiveness 2016

An inspection of Thames Valley Police



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Introduction

As part of our annual inspections of police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) assesses the effectiveness of police forces across England and Wales.

What is police effectiveness and why is it important?

An effective police force is one which keeps people safe and reduces crime. These are the most important responsibilities for a police force, and the principal measures by which the public judge the performance of their force and policing as a whole.

To reach a judgment on the extent of each force's effectiveness, our inspection answered the following overall question:

- How effective is the force at keeping people safe and reducing crime?

To answer this question HMIC explores five 'core' questions, which reflect those areas of policing that we consider to be of particular interest and concern to the public:¹

1. How effective is the force at preventing crime, tackling anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe?
2. How effective is the force at investigating crime and reducing re-offending?
3. How effective is the force at protecting those who are vulnerable from harm, and supporting victims?
4. How effective is the force at tackling serious and organised crime?
5. How effective are the force's specialist capabilities?

HMIC's effectiveness inspection assessed all of these areas during 2016. More information on how we inspect and grade forces as part of this wide-ranging inspection is available on the HMIC website (www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/peel-assessments/how-we-inspect/). This report sets out our findings for Thames Valley Police.

Reports on the force's efficiency, legitimacy and leadership inspections are available on the HMIC website (www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/peel-assessments/peel-2016/thames-valley/).

¹ HMIC assessed forces against these questions between September and December 2016, except for Kent Police – our pilot force – which we inspected in June 2016.

Force in numbers



Calls for assistance

Calls for assistance per 1,000 population 12 months to 30 June 2016

Thames Valley Police England and Wales

238

240



Crime (excluding fraud)

Crimes recorded per 1,000 population 12 months to 30 June 2016

Thames Valley Police England and Wales

55

68

Change in recorded crime 12 months to 30 June 2015 against 12 months to 30 June 2016

Thames Valley Police England and Wales

+6.1%

+7.8%

Change in recorded crime for the 5 years to the 12 months to 30 June 2016

Thames Valley Police England and Wales

-21.3%

-3.4%



Crime outcomes*

Charged/summonsed

Thames Valley Police England and Wales

12.5%

12.1%

Evidential difficulties: suspect identified but victim does not support action

Thames Valley Police England and Wales

9.0%

10.6%

Investigation completed but no suspect identified

Thames Valley Police England and Wales

48.9%

47.4%

*Figures are shown as proportions of outcomes assigned to offences recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016.



Anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour incidents per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2016

Thames Valley Police England and Wales



Anti-social behaviour incidents per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2015

Thames Valley Police England and Wales



Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse calls for assistance per 1,000 population 12 months to 30 June 2016

Thames Valley Police England and Wales



Domestic abuse as a percentage of all recorded crime (excluding fraud) 12 months to 30 June 2016

Thames Valley Police England and Wales



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

Thames Valley Police England and Wales



Organised crime groups

Organised crime groups per million population as at 1 July 2016

Thames Valley Police England and Wales



Victim satisfaction rate

Victim satisfaction with the overall service provided by the police 12 months to 30 June 2016

Thames Valley Police England and Wales



For further information about the data in this graphic please see annex A

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

Overall judgment²



Thames Valley Police is good at keeping people safe and reducing crime, our overall judgement is the same as last year when we judged the force to be good. It should be commended for the actions it has taken to address areas for improvement identified by HMIC’s 2015 effectiveness inspection.

The force is good at preventing crime and anti-social behaviour and it generally investigates crime well. It is good at protecting vulnerable people and provides the right support to them in conjunction with partner organisations. It tackles serious and organised crime effectively and is well prepared to respond to national threats.

Overall summary

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

How effective is the force at investigating crime and reducing re-offending?  **Good**

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

How effective is the force at tackling serious and organised crime?  **Good**

How effective are the force’s specialist capabilities? **Ungraded**

Thames Valley Police is good at keeping people safe and reducing crime. It has addressed many of the previous areas for improvement which HMIC identified during previous inspections.

Levels of crime and anti-social behaviour in the Thames Valley Police area remain low. The force understands the problems which affect its communities and it works well to keep people safe. It is generally good at investigating crime and at

² HMIC judgments are outstanding, good, requires improvement and inadequate.

considering the needs of the victim. It works well with other public services to reduce offending and protect the public from dangerous offenders, but it could do more to address the other types of harm that offenders can cause, including domestic abuse.

The force is good at protecting vulnerable people. Officers and staff are trained to recognise when a person is vulnerable and there are good systems in place to assess and address risks to vulnerable people. The force has progressed its proud history of working with partner organisations to establish multi-agency safeguarding hubs which specifically address the needs of vulnerable victims.

The force is generally effective at tackling serious and organised crime. Organised crime groups are mapped, scored and managed in line with national guidance. The force has completed a large amount of work where it has used law enforcement powers to disrupt the activities of criminal gangs. It is good to see how the force includes partner organisations in some of these disruption tactics, but this is an area that would benefit from more consistent partnership involvement and, in particular, better sharing of information. In other forces, organised crime partnership boards have been used effectively to include partner organisations in the fight against organised crime. Thames Valley Police should consider establishing a partnership board structure to address this.

The force has good arrangements in place to ensure that it can fulfil its national policing requirements. A chief officer is responsible for each of the threats specified within the *Strategic Policing Requirement*, and for testing and checking that the arrangements are in place. The force is well prepared to respond to an attack which might require an armed response. It carried out a thorough assessment of its requirements following the attacks in Paris. The force's assessment is that its capabilities need to be increased in this area, and interim arrangements are now in place while it develops a long-term solution.

How effective is the force at preventing crime, tackling 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 is more effective than investigating crime, stops people being victims in the first place and makes society a safer place. The police cannot prevent crime on their own; other policing organisations and organisations such as health, housing and children's services have a vital role to play. Police effectiveness in this matter therefore depends on their ability to work closely with other policing organisations and other interested parties to understand local problems and to use a wide range of evidence-based interventions to resolve them.

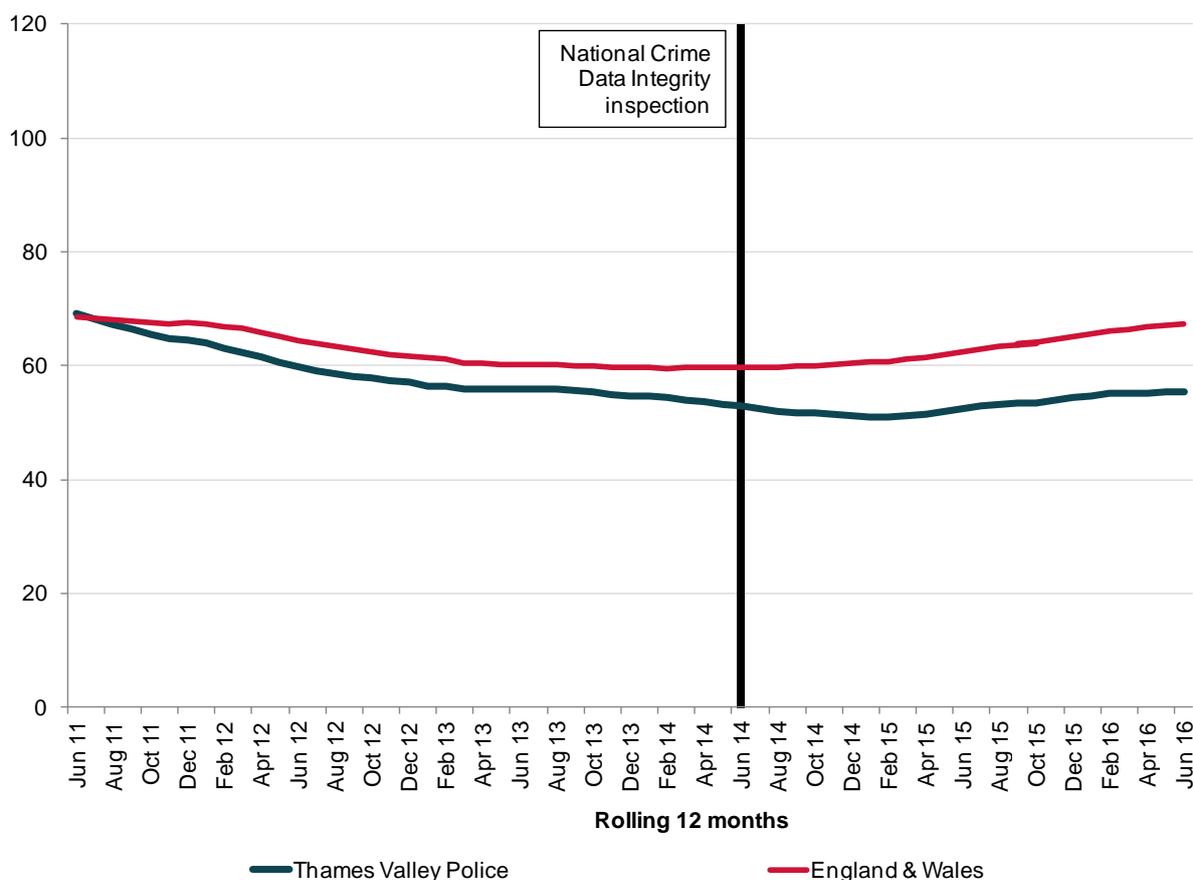
How much crime and anti-social behaviour is there in Thames Valley?

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 partial indication of performance across all forces. Crime rates are reported as the 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 (crimes involving a direct victim such as an individual, a group, or an organisation) and other crimes against society (e.g. possession of drugs). In the 12 months to 30 June 2016, the majority of forces (39 out of 43 forces) showed an annual increase in total police-recorded crime (excluding fraud). 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 2014 inspection of crime data in all forces across England and Wales.

In 2010 the Home Secretary set a clear priority for the police service to cut crime. Figure 1 shows how police-recorded crime has fluctuated over the longer term. When compared with the 12 months to 30 June 2011, police-recorded crime (excluding fraud) for the 12 months to 30 June 2016 has decreased by 21.3 percent in Thames Valley compared with a decrease of 3.4 percent across all forces in England and Wales.

Over this same period, victim-based crime decreased by 18.2 percent in Thames Valley, compared with a decrease of 0.5 percent for England and Wales as a whole.

Figure 1: Police-recorded crime rates (per 1,000 population) in Thames Valley, for the five year period to 30 June 2016



Source: Home Office data

For further information about these data, please see annex A

More recently, when compared with the previous 12 month period, police-recorded crime (excluding fraud) in Thames Valley increased by 6.1 percent for the year ending 30 June 2016. This is compared with an increase of 7.8 percent across all forces in England and Wales over the same period.

The rate 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. Figures 2 and 3 show crime rates (per 1,000 population) and the change in the rate (per 1,000 population) of anti-social behaviour in Thames Valley compared with England and Wales.

HMIC used a broad selection of crime types to indicate crime levels in the police force area during the inspection. We are not judging the effectiveness of the force on police-recorded crime rates only. The figure below shows police-recorded crime rates in the force area for a small selection of crime types.

Figure 2: Police-recorded crime rates (per 1,000 population) in Thames Valley, for the 12 months to 30 June 2016

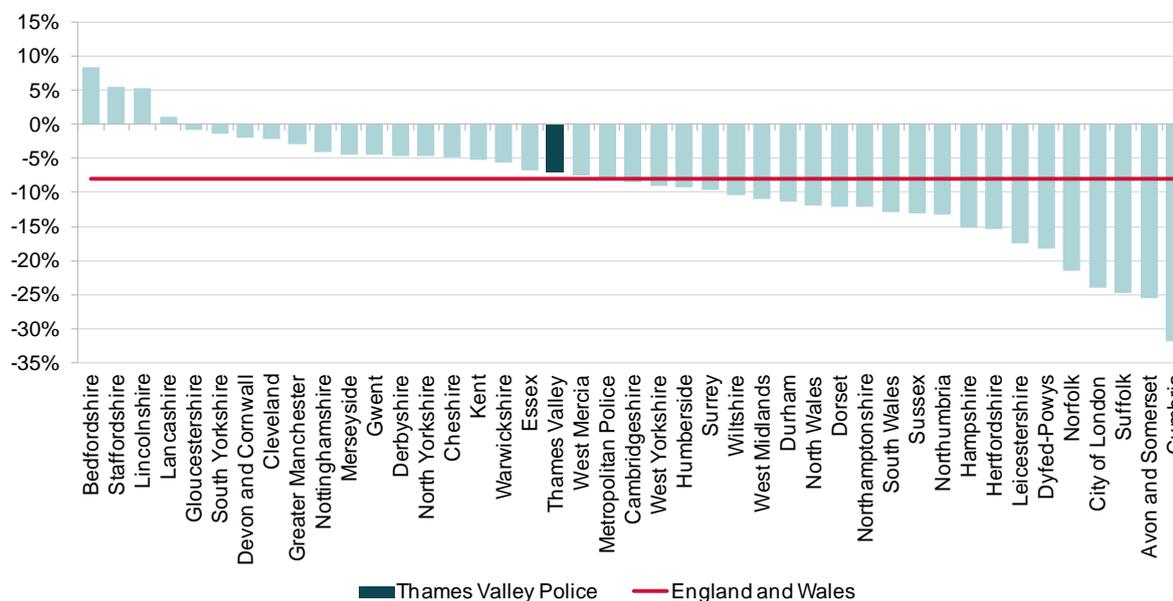
Rates per 1,000 population	Thames Valley Police	England and Wales
Recorded crime (excluding fraud)	55.5	68.2
Victim-based crime	50.2	60.4
Sexual offences	1.8	1.9
Assault with injury	5.0	7.0
Burglary in a dwelling*	4.8	8.1

* The rate of burglary in a dwelling is the rate for 1,000 households, rather than population

Source: Home Office data

For further information about these data, please see annex A

Figure 3: Percentage change in the rate of anti-social behaviour incidents (per 1,000 population), by force, comparing the 12 months to 31 March 2016 with the 12 months to 31 March 2015



Source: Home Office data

For further information about these data, please see annex A

In the 12 months to 31 March 2016, Thames Valley Police recorded 15 incidents of anti-social behaviour per 1,000 population. This is 7 percent fewer incidents per 1,000 population than the force recorded during the previous 12 months. In England

and Wales as a whole, there were 8 percent fewer incidents per 1,000 population in the 12 months to 31 March 2016, than were recorded during the previous 12 months.

How effectively does the force understand the threat or risk of harm within the communities it serves?

It is vital that forces have a detailed understanding of the communities they serve in order to protect them from harm. This understanding should include those communities which may – for a variety of reasons – need the police to work differently to understand their requirements, for example migrant communities, elderly people or groups which might be mistrustful towards the police. A good understanding of what matters to these communities helps the police to gain their confidence and create safer neighbourhoods for citizens.

In order to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour, police forces need to understand the threat and risk faced by communities. Forces must also operate a model of local policing in which police officers and police community support officers (PCSOs) have sufficient time for community engagement, visible targeted foot patrols and working with other policing organisations and other interested parties to promote resolutions that protect communities and prevent crime. Successfully undertaking these three activities leads to crime reduction and increased public confidence.

Does Thames Valley Police understand the risk posed to its communities?

In order to understand the threat and risk faced by communities and to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour successfully, police forces need an effective model of local policing. The model should ensure that police officers and PCSOs can devote sufficient time to community engagement, targeted foot patrols and work with partners to protect communities and prevent crime. It is the successful undertaking of these three activities that leads to crime reduction and increased public confidence.

Thames Valley Police has good processes in place to understand the threat, risk and harm facing the communities it serves. It has achieved this by developing guiding principles for community engagement. These set out how each local policing area (LPA) should engage with, understand, and respond to community concerns and priorities. It has developed this guidance in conjunction with academics and the College of Policing. A recent self-inspection of the expectations set out in the guidance is favourable, and is being used as the basis for further improvements.

The force has good systems in place to collect and disseminate data through a facility known as the demand and vulnerability matrix (DAVM). This identifies both the people and the places which most frequently need the help of the police. DAVM is based on call centre data and is used effectively to concentrate the work of officers and Police and community support officers (PCSOs) in the places where they are most needed.

At a more strategic level, the force also has a good understanding of its communities. Service providers such as local authorities and the fire service share information with the force. This provides a greater understanding of demographics and socio-economic factors which are combined with police data to give a more sophisticated understanding of where the demand for services lies. In turn, this facilitates decisions which are made about budget planning and resourcing, to ensure that the service provided in communities is in line with their differing needs.

How does Thames Valley Police engage with the public?

The force has a range of methods of engaging with the public. These are adjustable and scalable according to circumstances or local needs. We saw good examples of Neighbourhood Action Groups³, 'Have Your Say' and the Thames Valley Neighbourhood Alert being used to communicate effectively with local people. In one area of the force there is a pilot project where officers and PCSOs also use apps on smart phones to identify places where engagement with the force has, in the past, been infrequent. This enables them to intensify efforts to establish a relationship with the public in these areas.

We saw other notable examples of what the force is doing to understand problems that affect particular groups. Good progress is being made with homeless people and street sex workers. In both of these cases the force involved members of the voluntary sector to carry out targeted outreach work to learn more about how often these people become victims of crime, or are subjected to intimidation.

Although in general the force understands the communities across its area well, we found that access to information about these communities is less assured. Many different ICT platforms are used to store this information and, on occasions, the understanding of a community does not extend beyond the personal knowledge of important members of staff. This has the potential to prevent everyone who works for Thames Valley Police from acquiring a collective understanding of all the communities which the force serves. It could also undermine effective community engagement in support of operational policing.

HMIC found that the staff in safer neighbourhood teams are sometimes taken away from their communities to cover staff shortages in other areas of the force. This can have a detrimental effect on community policing. In Thames Valley Police we found that neighbourhood team staff are deployed away from their core role periodically, although this does not happen routinely. In some areas concerns about a higher than average rate of staff being transferred in this way was identified through a survey of members of neighbourhood teams, in which around half of all respondents from neighbourhood teams indicated that they had performed duties away from this role at

³ Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAGS) are groups of local people who regularly meet the police to discuss issues of crime and antisocial behaviour which are of local concern.

least once in the previous week. We were reassured to hear that a new operating model for neighbourhoods will bring a greater certainty of a continued police presence in communities.

How effectively do force actions and activities prevent crime and anti-social behaviour?

Effective forces use a range of options to prevent crime, tackle anti-social behaviour and keep people safe. They use structured approaches to solving local problems which aim to rid communities of criminal and anti-social behaviour. They also use a range of legal powers and specific tactics which vary depending on the situation. HMIC expects forces to review their activity as well as other sources of evidence in order to improve their ability to protect people over the long term.

Does the force have a problem-solving approach?

The force is good at preventing crime and anti-social behaviour. There are low crime levels in the force area and its recorded rate of anti-social behaviour is half the rate in England and Wales per 1,000 population. It works well with partner organisations to solve problems with robust methods in place to measure the impact of problem-solving work but we found that its use of these methods was inconsistent. In some areas problem-solving was of an exemplary standard, in others it was infrequently used.

There are good structures in place across the force to facilitate the sharing of information and joint work with partner agencies. Of particular note are the Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) and the Joint Tasking and Co-ordination (JTAC) groups in which a variety of local service providers are represented, and work effectively together to tackle problems of crime and anti-social behaviour. These include instances of violence, intimidation and disorder associated with late-night entertainment venues.

The DAVM ensures that neighbourhoods which and people who are subject to repeated targeting and victimisation are accurately identified. The matrix also has a facility to record all the actions which are taken by local policing area and neighbourhood staff. The DAVM can also analyse and evaluate the effect of the action which has been taken.

Does the force use effective approaches and tactics to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour?

In developing tactics to combat crime and anti-social behaviour the force makes reference to National Police Chiefs' Council Crime Prevention strategy to ensure that nationally validated tactics are used. For example, it has created a problem-solving team of five advisors to promote the benefit of preventative tactics. At the time of

inspection, the force was conducting a public awareness campaign to heighten the awareness of cyber-crime as part of this approach.

At a local level there is a problem-solving champion on each LPA who is responsible for sharing expertise with staff. Most neighbourhood staff have been trained in problem-solving. People who have been trained in these skills can recommend the best ways to do things. As well as the most relevant tactics to use in any given circumstance, HMIC noted that officers in Thames Valley make more use of powers to tackle anti-social behaviour than any other force in England and Wales. For example dispersal orders and temporary restrictions on gatherings in areas known for anti-social behaviour are used frequently, and to good effect.

Does the force use evidence of best practice and its own learning to improve the service to the public?

Problem-solving techniques undoubtedly have the potential to be a strength in the force and, in particular, the results of problem-solving projects are routinely evaluated. However their impact is undermined by an inconsistent application of the techniques in some areas. Also, the case management of problem-solving operations is recorded differently across the force area or is solely dependent on the knowledge of individual officers. This limits the overall impact of problem-solving in terms of its wider benefits for the force.

The force is keen to incorporate the concept of ‘evidence-based policing’ in the services it provides to the public. This type of policing relies on tactics, which through thorough research, have been found to be both effective and good value for money. Careful reference is made to national guidelines in the development of police operations. A network of best practice champions is having an increased impact in communities, and recent work with the Jill Dando Institute at University College London is providing further academic validation of problem-solving techniques.

Summary of findings



Good

The force is good at preventing crime and anti-social behaviour, and at keeping people safe. It has low crime levels and its recorded rate of anti-social behaviour is half the England and Wales rate per 1,000 population. It has used the College of Policing guidance and academic research to inform its neighbourhood policing review and principles of community engagement.

We found good examples where the force works innovatively to learn about problems which affect the public, including with disadvantaged groups. As a result there are good processes in place for the public to influence policing priorities and

the force has a good understanding of its communities and the problems which are of concern to them. However, it needs to make sure that this knowledge is retained in a way that it is accessible to the entire workforce.

The force uses problem-solving techniques well and has good arrangements with partner organisations to share information and to work together to solve difficult problems. Neighbourhood staff have a good level of knowledge of problem-solving techniques, although levels of this activity are not consistent throughout the force.

HMIC also found evidence that the force is committed to researching which policing tactics work best in any given circumstances. Frequent reference is made to the National Police Chiefs' Council, the College of Policing and academic bodies to ensure that the tactics which are used are, as a matter of routine, the best tactics for the job.

Areas for improvement

- The force should adopt a structured and consistent approach to problem-solving to enable it to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour more effectively.

How effective is the force at investigating crime and reducing re-offending?

When a crime occurs, the public must have confidence that the police will investigate it effectively, take seriously their concerns as victims, 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. In co-operation with other organisations, forces must also manage the risk posed by those who are identified as being the most prolific or dangerous offenders, to minimise the chances of continued harm to individuals and communities.

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 'detections', the outcomes framework gives a fuller picture of the work the police do to investigate and resolve crime and over time all crimes will be assigned an outcome. The broader outcomes framework (currently containing 21 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.

Outcomes are likely to differ from force to force for various reasons. Forces face a different mix of crime types in their policing areas, so the outcomes they assign will also vary depending on the nature of the crime. Certain offences are more likely to be concluded without offenders being prosecuted; typically these include types of crime such as cannabis misuse. If this type of crime is particularly prevalent in the force then it is likely that the level of 'cannabis/khat⁴ warning' outcomes would be greater. Other offences such as those involving domestic abuse or serious sexual offences, are unlikely to result in a high usage of the 'cautions' outcome.

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.

It is also important to understand that not all of the crimes recorded in the year will have been assigned an outcome as some will still be under investigation. For some crime types such as sexual offences, the delay between a crime being recorded and

⁴ 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.

an outcome being assigned may be particularly pronounced, as these may involve complex and lengthy investigations.

Figure 4: Proportion of outcomes assigned to offences recorded in Thames Valley Police, in 12 months to 30 June 2016, by outcome type^{5,6}

Outcome number	Outcome type / group	Thames Valley Police	England and Wales
1	Charged/Summoned	12.5	12.1
4	Taken into consideration	0.4	0.2
	Out-of-court (formal)	3.7	3.2
2	Cautions - youths	0.4	0.4
3	Cautions - adults	2.5	2.3
6	Penalty Notices for Disorder	0.8	0.6
	Out-of-court (informal)	3.0	3.6
7	Cannabis/Khat warning	0.7	0.9
8	Community Resolution	2.3	2.8
*	Prosecution prevented or not in the public interest	1.1	1.8
	Evidential difficulties (victim supports police action)		
15	Suspect identified	7.7	8.3
	Evidential difficulties (victim does not support police action)	9.8	13.8
16	Suspect identified	9.0	10.6
14	Suspect not identified	0.7	3.2
18	Investigation complete – no suspect identified	48.9	47.4
20	Action undertaken by another body / agency	1.8	0.6
21	Further investigation to support formal action not in the public interest	0.1	0.1
	Total offences assigned an outcome	89.0	91.3
	Not yet assigned an outcome	11.0	8.7
	Total	100.00	100.00

*Includes the following outcome types: Offender died, Not in public interest (CPS), Prosecution prevented – suspect under age, Prosecution prevented – suspect too ill, Prosecution prevented – victim/key witness dead/too ill, Prosecution time limit expired

Source: Home Office crime outcomes data

For further information about these data, please see annex A

⁵ Dorset Police is excluded from the table. Therefore figures for England and Wales will differ from those published by the Home Office. For further details see annex A.

⁶ 'Taken into consideration' is when an offender admits committing other offences in the course of sentencing proceedings and requests those other offences to be taken into consideration.

In the 12 months to 30 June 2016, Thames Valley Police's use of outcomes was in line with those in England and Wales as a whole. However, any interpretation of outcomes should take into account that outcomes will vary dependent on the crime types that occur in each force area, and how it deals with offenders for different crimes.

In Thames Valley Police the proportion of crimes where the outcomes includes action being taken against suspects slightly exceeds the proportion of crimes in England and Wales. The force also arrests and prosecutes a greater proportion of offenders than elsewhere.

How effective is the force's initial investigative response?

The initial investigative response is critical for an effective investigation. From the moment victims and witnesses make contact with the police the investigative process should start, so that accurate information and evidence can be gathered. It is important that forces record evidence as soon as possible after a crime. The longer it takes for evidence-recording to begin, the more likely it is that evidence will be destroyed, damaged or lost. Recording this evidence is usually the responsibility of the first officer who attends the scene. After the officer has completed this initial investigation the case may be handed over to a different police officer or team in the force. This process must ensure that the right people with the right skills investigate the right crimes.

Control room response

Thames Valley Police's initial investigative response to reports of crime is good. The levels of supervision and attention to the care of victims are generally reliable. There are effective processes in place to ensure that when a crime is first reported, it is properly recorded, and that the victim receives a professional service.

Most crime reports are received over the telephone, by staff in one of the police enquiry centres (PECs). The staff give initial advice about the preservation of evidence, and, in most cases record details of the crime on the force crime recording system. These reports are then allocated for further investigation following consideration of the circumstances of the allegation. If the likelihood of tracing an offender is remote, or enquiries are likely to be unproductive, allegations are assigned to the office based research team⁷ (OBRT). Other crime is allocated to LPA staff.

⁷ The OBRT is a team responsible for classifying telephone-based enquiries as less serious crimes where there is no indication that a vulnerable person is involved, and no urgent investigative actions are needed.

We found that in almost all cases, investigations were allocated to investigators with the appropriate levels of skills, training and experience to undertake the enquiry and support the victim. Guidelines for the allocation of crime for investigation are clear and well understood.

These arrangements enable the force to manage more investigations without having to send officers to the scene of every reported crime. This has the benefit of making the best use of front line officers, particularly when their attendance is not necessary. It also ensures that the victim receives a prompt and professional service.

However, the force should review the workload in the OBRT. At the time of the inspection, each person's workload was too high for him or her to be able to work effectively. Some cases wait for up to four weeks before any active investigations begin. There are some assurances that all of these crimes are reviewed by supervisors when they are first recorded. This reduces the risk that investigations which, for some reason, need escalating might be overlooked. This might occur when, for example, it is established that the victim is vulnerable or has other pressing needs.

Nevertheless a backlog of this scale might mean that important lines of enquiry are lost. It will also certainly mean that members of the public will lose confidence in the police's ability to investigate crime effectively.

In addition to these processes to allocate crime for investigation, we also observed a number of daily meetings at which senior managers review the events of the last twenty-four hours. More serious crimes were discussed at these meetings, and we found that they were allocated to the appropriate specialist officers.

How well do response officers investigate?

HMIC conducted a review of 60 police case files across crime types for: robbery, common assault (flagged as domestic abuse), grievous bodily harm (GBH), stalking, harassment, rape and domestic burglary. Files were randomly selected from crimes recorded between 1 January 2016 and 31 March 2016 and were assessed against several criteria. Results from the file review have not been used singularly to assess force performance but alongside supporting evidence gathered during fieldwork.

HMIC found that in almost all of these cases officers carried out satisfactory initial investigations gathering relevant evidence, which included digital evidence. In addition the quality of information passed to other officers to continue the investigation was good.

How effective is the force's subsequent investigation?

Every day police forces across England and Wales investigate a wide range of crimes. These range from non-complex crimes such as some burglary and assault cases through to complex and sensitive investigations such as rape and murder. HMIC referred to national standards and best practice in examining how well forces allocate and investigate the full range of crimes, including how officers and staff can gather evidence to support investigations. These include the more traditional forensics, such as taking fingerprints, as well as more recently developed techniques like gathering digital evidence from mobile telephones or computers to find evidence of online abuse.

Quality of the investigation

Despite delays in the OBRT, overall the force investigates crime well and keeps victims at the centre of its investigations. During our fieldwork we saw that serious crimes are allocated to specialist officers who have received the right level of training. Investigations receive appropriate levels of support from forensic and intelligence officers, and there are effective out-of-hours on call arrangements for specialist staff.

Support to investigations

In HMIC's Effectiveness inspection report in 2015, we reported that the force should improve its ability to retrieve evidence from mobile phones, computers and other electronic devices to ensure that investigations were not delayed. This year, we noted that the force has taken positive steps to ensure it has greater capacity to manage digital device examination. It has achieved this by addressing the high turnover of staff in this specialist area. Terms and conditions have been improved, more staff have been trained in these techniques, and some of the workload has been outsourced.

The force prioritises digital examinations in line with the seriousness of the crime that has been committed, and the harm to which the victim is exposed. During our effectiveness inspection last year, we found that there was a backlog of eight months for the forensic examination of some items. The steps taken by the force have brought about a reduction in this backlog, although delays of five months still exist for some items. This means that some investigations will be unnecessarily protracted and the service to victims is being adversely affected. Further improvements are clearly necessary.

Supporting victims

Supervision of the progress of investigations and the service provided to victims is effective in most cases. Officers that we spoke to had a good general knowledge of the *Code of Practice for Victims of Crime*.⁸ The code sets out the service that victims can expect from all organisations, including the police, that have a role in the criminal justice system. However, knowledge of the entitlements of certain victims, for example the right to give evidence by video link rather than attend court, was uncertain. There were also occasions when the obligation to keep the victim informed about the progress of enquiries had been overlooked.

The force's crime recording system does not provide automated data to show the rates of compliance with the code of practice. To address this staff within the criminal justice department monitor the quality of investigations and the extent to which the code of practice has been adhered to. When necessary, they provide advice to LPA staff about the best ways of undertaking work to help them to improve their performance in this area.

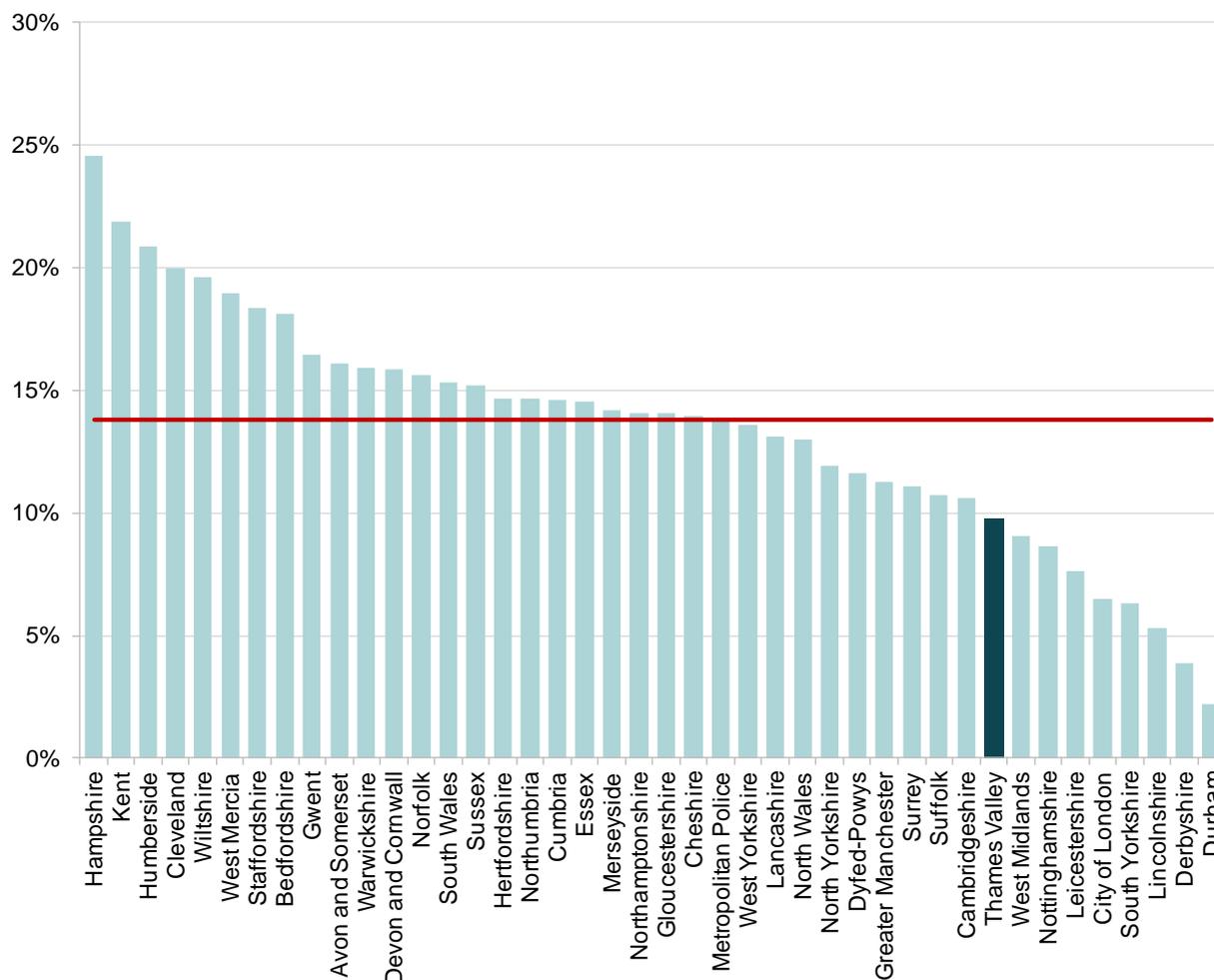
The percentage of victims of crime whose overall experience of the force is satisfactory is higher than the England and Wales average. The force has also taken additional steps to understand the experiences of specific groups of victims. In particular, the force is using feedback from rape and domestic abuse victims to improve its services.

The new outcomes framework introduced in 2014 includes some outcomes where there were evidential difficulties,⁹ which had not previously been recorded. This was to gain an insight into the scale of crimes that the police could not progress further through the criminal justice process due to limited evidence. Furthermore, these outcomes can be thought of as an indicator for how effective the police are at working with victims and supporting them through investigative and judicial processes, as they record when victims are unwilling or unable to support continued investigations or when they have withdrawn their support for police action.

⁸ All police forces have a statutory duty to comply with the *Code of Practice for Victims of Crime*. The code sets out the service that victims can expect from all organisations, including the police; that have a role in the criminal justice system. The code of practice for victims of crime, among other things, requires that officers provide regular updates to victim of crime on the progress of investigations: www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-code-of-practice-for-victims-of-crime

⁹ Evidential difficulties also includes where a suspect has been identified and the victim supports police action, but evidential difficulties prevent further action being taken.

Figure 5: Percentage of 'Evidential difficulties; victim does not support action' outcomes assigned to offences recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, by force^{10,11}



Source: Home Office crime outcomes data
For further information about these data, please see annex A

For all offences recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, Thames Valley Police recorded 9.8 percent as 'Evidential difficulties; victim does not support police action'. This compares with 13.8 percent for England and Wales over the same period. However, it should be noted that not all of the offences committed in the 12 months to 30 June 2016 were assigned an outcome and consequently, these figures are subject to change over time.

¹⁰ Percentages of evidential difficulties can be affected by the level of certain types of crime within a force, such as domestic abuse related offences.

¹¹ Dorset Police is excluded from the graph. Therefore, figures for England and Wales will differ from those published by the Home Office. For further details see annex A.

How effectively does the force reduce re-offending?

We assessed how well the force works with other policing authorities and other interested parties to identify vulnerable offenders and prevent them from re-offending, and how well it identifies and manages repeat, dangerous or sexual offenders.

How well does the force pursue suspects and offenders?

Thames Valley Police takes a positive approach to apprehending people who pose a risk to the public. There are fewer people who are wanted and awaiting arrest in the force area than the rate per 1,000 population in England and Wales as a whole.

When people fail to answer bail, or are identified as having committed an offence, officers in LPAs are notified, and make efforts to arrest them. Local commanders are also held to account for the number of offenders who are at large in their neighbourhoods. HMIC saw good use of innovation in tracking down these offenders. This included the force's comprehensive coverage of automatic number plate readers which is used to alert patrol officers about criminals who are using the road networks.

The force also has good processes in place to identify foreign nationals who have been convicted for offences in other countries. The force makes good use of the Association of Chief Police Officers Criminal Records Office (ACRO) through an IT system that automatically makes a request for information to ACRO for information about all foreign nationals who are arrested by the force. ACRO was founded in 2006 and helps the exchange of criminal records with European and other signatory nations. It is important that forces make use of this service when foreign nationals are arrested. If a person's offending history in other countries is not known to police forces in England and Wales, it is difficult to make an accurate assessment of the likelihood that they might re-offend or of the level of harm that they might present to the public.

Automated enquiries forms are now submitted when a foreign national is arrested in the force area, and additional checks are made with UK Visas and Immigration. Thames Valley Police arrests fewer foreign nationals than other forces. It is encouraging that the force is able to check the offending history of 80 percent of all foreign nationals who are arrested.

How well does the force protect the public from the most harmful offenders?

In relation to the most prolific offenders, the force recognises that a coordinated approach from all organisations involved in criminal justice is important. The force has long-established integrated offender management (IOM) arrangements in place with the probation service, housing and drug support workers and other organisations in order to reduce offending behaviour. In most cases members of the

IOM team work in the same buildings as probation service staff, and the inspection team was impressed with the passion and commitment of team members. Knowledge of current offenders in the IOM programme was good amongst operational staff. Briefing materials are routinely available to inform front line staff about the offenders who are most active in local areas.

In line with many IOM units in England and Wales, some of the offenders in the Thames Valley Police area are burglars, robbers, and shoplifters. Members of the CSPs working with the force were aware of the work of the IOM programme, but questioned the concentration on these particular criminals. Other forces we have inspected successfully manage a broader range of offenders, including domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour perpetrators. We encourage the force to take the opportunity to review how the group of offenders is selected and how success is measured. This should involve taking an approach based on a wider view of threat harm and risk than currently exists.

The force currently manages more than 1,700 dangerous and sexual offenders as part of nationally recognised multi agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA). Good use of preventative legislation is made to prevent reoffending. This includes the issue of sexual offences prevention orders (SOPOs) and sexual harm prevention orders (SHPOs). These are prohibition orders which are issued by the courts on application by the police. The police can apply for conditions to be placed on individuals, to restrict their movements, or to stop them from associating with people who might be at risk, in order to prevent predatory sexual behaviour.

Knowledge of dangerous and sexual offenders is less certain amongst front line staff. Officers we spoke to knew how to submit intelligence reports about the activity and lifestyles of offenders, but some officers were unaware of dangerous offenders in their neighbourhoods.

The overall workload of each offender manager is in line with England and Wales rates, but some staff said that they had a high workload. They said that this was the reason why visits to offenders in their homes were less effective than they might be. The force is reviewing how the scheme operates. It is exploring more efficient working practices and has plans to increase the numbers of offender managers, as well as involving more neighbourhood officers and special constables in the monitoring of offenders. It is important that the force monitors its current arrangements closely as it makes this transition, in order to ensure the robustness of its arrangements.

Summary of findings



Good

Thames Valley Police's initial investigative response to reports of crime is generally good. It has effective processes in place to make sure that reports of crime are recorded correctly and allocated to suitably skilled investigators.

Most allegations of crime are allocated for investigation in a timely fashion but the workload of the OBRT at the time of the inspection was too high. This has led to unacceptable delays, and has undermined the service provided to victims. The force usually meets its obligations to victims under national codes of practice but this needs to become more consistent.

Integrated Offender Management (IOM) arrangements generally address the needs of persistent offenders well. However the force should do more with partner organisations to broaden the range of offenders included in programmes. IOM should be extended to include serial domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour perpetrators in recognition of the harm that they can cause.

The force manages dangerous and sexual offenders through nationally recognised public protection arrangements. It makes good use of court orders to prevent offenders from committing more crimes. Some staff expressed concerns to us about their workloads, and the force is reviewing its current arrangements to boost its capacity in this crucial area.

Areas for improvement

- The force should ensure that the capacity in the office-based research team is adequate, so that criminal investigations can be undertaken in an effective and timely manner.
- The force should review its capacity to retrieve digital evidence from mobile phones, computers and other electronic devices to ensure that investigations are not delayed.
- The force should ensure that it is fully compliant with the *Code of Practice for Victims of Crime*.
- The force should consider widening its approach to integrated offender management to include a broader range of offenders. There should be clear measures of success which enable the force to evaluate how effectively it is protecting the public from prolific and harmful offenders.

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

Protecting the public, particularly those who are most vulnerable, is one of the most important duties placed on police forces. People can be vulnerable for many reasons and the extent of their vulnerability can change during the time they are in contact with the police. Last year HMIC had concerns about how well many forces were protecting those who were vulnerable. In this section of the report we set out how the force's performance has changed since last year.

Has the force improved since HMIC's 2015 vulnerability inspection?

The force has made good progress improving some areas of its work to protect vulnerable people since our previous inspections.

In response to HMIC's PEEL Effective Inspection 2015, Thames Valley Police has reduced excessive workloads in the Child Abuse Investigation Teams and increased the use of Domestic Violence Protection Orders. These orders protect victims from further intimidation by abusive partners.

The force has made similarly good progress in its ability to investigate so-called honour-based abuse (HBA). It has created an operational group which has provided training and heightened awareness of this type of crime. The group has also created new operational guidance to help officers provide effective protection to people who are vulnerable to this type of abuse. This has resulted in higher levels of identification of HBA within the Thames Valley area.

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

In order to protect those who are vulnerable effectively forces need to understand comprehensively the scale of vulnerability in the communities they police. This requires forces to work with a range of communities, including those whose voices may not often be heard. It is important that forces understand fully what it means to be vulnerable, what might make someone vulnerable and that officers and staff who come into contact with the public can recognise this vulnerability. This means that forces can identify vulnerable people early on and can provide them with an appropriate service.

Understanding the risk

Our inspection revealed that officers and staff in Thames Valley Police have a good understanding of vulnerability, but the percentage of recorded crimes and other incidents involving vulnerable victims is slightly less than the England and Wales rate. The force has a firm basis of effective partnership working, information sharing and robust internal processes to identify gaps in knowledge and drive forward organisational improvements.

Since our last inspection Thames Valley Police has implemented multi agency safeguarding hubs (MASH),¹² across the entire force area. The MASH structure brings together local authorities and victim support professionals to develop risk-management plans for vulnerable victims. All reports about vulnerable victims are channelled through one of these hubs and shared between the partner organisations. This helps the police, local authorities, and other professionals to make a joint assessment of the risks to vulnerable people, and also helps them to identify victims who are at risk of further harm. We were impressed to see the level of analysis which is undertaken in the Oxfordshire MASH into the risks to missing children. Information is exchanged effectively, and each child is carefully screened to establish whether he or she is likely to be exploited by sexual predators.

The effective exchange of information also helps the force to improve its understanding of the main areas of vulnerability. Detailed research documents, known as problem profiles, have been completed for child sexual exploitation and so-called honour based abuse (HBA). The value of the contributions that partner organisations have made to this improved understanding of vulnerability is especially evident where HBA is concerned. The expertise of the support group, Karma Nirvana, has been crucial in raising awareness which has led to an increasing number of victims being identified by front line staff.

At a strategic level, Thames Valley Police makes improvements in the service provided to vulnerable people through its 'vulnerabilities strategic co-ordination group'. The group is led by a chief officer, and is supported by operational staff representing eleven important areas of vulnerability including domestic abuse and child sexual exploitation.

Frontline officers display a good knowledge about how to identify a vulnerable person. An enhanced training course, known as safeguarding, vulnerability and exploitation (SaVE), has ensured that their knowledge of vulnerability has increased.

¹² A multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) brings together the main safeguarding organizations in one building. This enables the police, social services, and other professionals to identify the risks to individuals more effectively. It also helps them to improve the way they make decisions, and the way that they intervene when this is necessary. The MASH enables the multi-agency team to share all appropriate information in a secure environment, and ensures that the most appropriate response is provided to safeguard and protect the individual effectively.

SaVE training also encourages front line staff to place a vulnerable person's needs at the centre of all police work.

In the PEC and force control room (FCR), the training is reinforced by the use of checklists on the force computer systems which help staff to assess the vulnerability of the caller. We found that call handlers dealt with callers in an appropriate manner, and checked all relevant force IT systems to identify callers who had contacted the force in the past. There is also good supervisory oversight of their decisions about vulnerability.

Forces define a vulnerable victim in different ways. This is because there is not a standard requirement on forces to record whether a victim is vulnerable on crime recording systems. Some forces use the definition from the government's *Code of Practice for Victims of Crime*,¹³ others use the definition referred to in ACPO guidance¹⁴ and the remainder use their own definition.

Thames Valley Police uses the definition from the ACPO guidance and defines a vulnerable adult as:

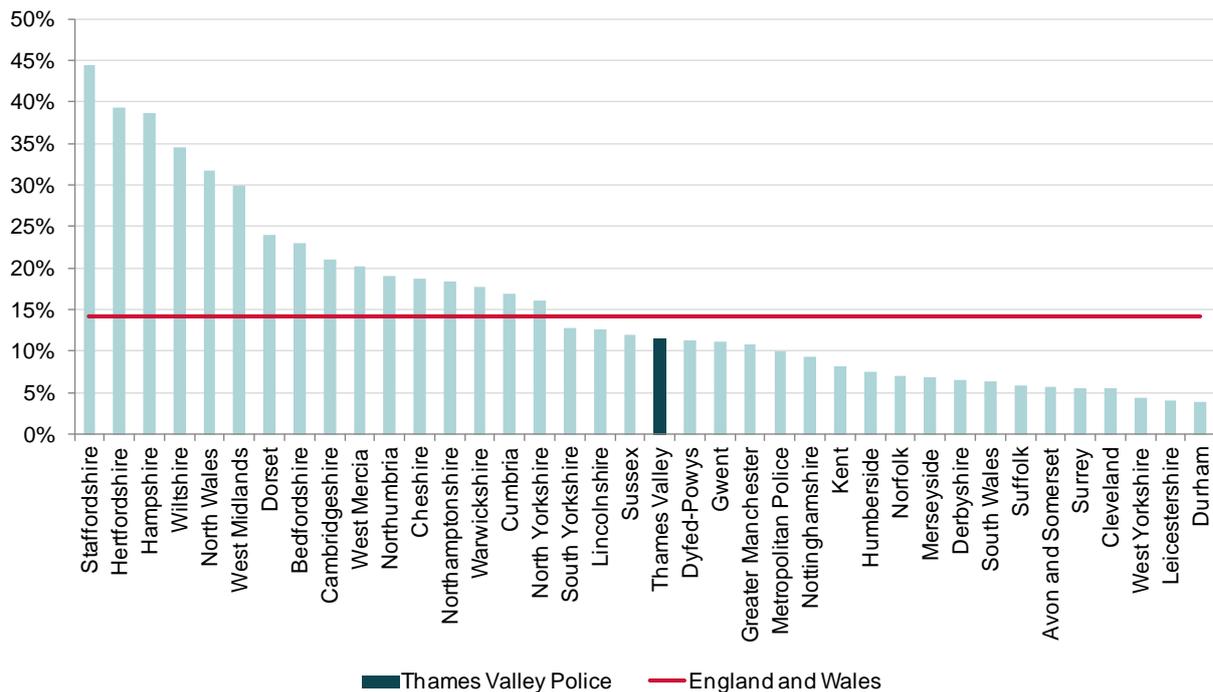
“any person aged 18 years or over who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental, physical, or learning disability, age or illness AND is or may be unable to take care of him or herself or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation”

Data returned by forces to HMIC show that in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, the proportion of crime recorded which involves a vulnerable victim varies considerably between forces, from 3.9 percent to 44.4 percent. For the 12 months to 30 June 2016, 11.5 percent of all recorded crime in Thames Valley was identified as having a vulnerable victim, which is broadly in line with the England and Wales figure of 14.3 percent.

¹³ *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-practicevictims-of-crime.pdf

¹⁴ 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, NPIA, 2012. Available from: www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/vulnerable-adults/

Figure 6: Percentage of police-recorded crime with a vulnerable victim identified, by force, for the 12 months to 30 June 2016¹⁵



Source: HMIC data return, Home Office data

For further information about these data, please see annex A

How effectively does the force initially respond to vulnerable victims?

The initial work of officers responding to a vulnerable person is vital, because failure to carry out the correct actions may make future work with the victim or further investigation very difficult. This could be the first time victims have contacted the police after suffering years of victimisation or they may have had repeated contact with the police; either way, the response of officers is crucial. The initial response to a vulnerable victim must inspire confidence that the victim’s concerns are being taken seriously as well as provide practical actions and support to keep the victim safe. The officer should also assess the risk to the victim at that moment and others in the same household, and collect sufficient information to support the longer-term response of the force and other partner organisations.

¹⁵ City of London, Devon and Cornwall, Essex, Gloucestershire and Lancashire forces were unable to provide data for recorded crimes with a vulnerable victim identified. Therefore, these forces’ data are not included in the graph or in the calculation of the England and Wales rate.

Do officers assess risk correctly and keep victims safe?

Thames Valley Police has excellent processes in place to identify and assess vulnerability and to put in place safeguarding actions as soon as an investigation begins. In particular the force has a good track of responding to victims who need urgent help. Officers make full use of the criminal law to arrest perpetrators whenever possible.

The force uses risk-assessment reports for victims of anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse and so-called honour-based abuse to consider the risks which the victims face. Officers use these reports to set out the initial safeguarding measures that have been put in place, and then send the reports to the MASH for further assessment by specialist staff. All risk-assessments of domestic abuse cases, including the details of initial safeguarding actions, are quality-assured by a supervisor before they are sent to the MASH.

Specialists in the force's domestic abuse unit (DAIU) manage both the safeguarding of high and medium-risk domestic abuse victims, and the investigation of offences involving high-risk victims. The safeguarding of standard risk victims is managed by the attending officer and the action taken is recorded on a domestic abuse referral form submitted through the officer's supervisor to the multi agency safeguarding hub. The hub can then provide further support for the victim such as putting victims in touch with specialist domestic abuse advisors. (IDVAs.¹⁶)

Local neighbourhood officers are also responsible for the continuation of safeguarding measures. These include domestic abuse repeat incident meetings (DARIMs) which are chaired by a senior officer. The DARIM is a forum in which officers can ask for support from external domestic abuse professionals in order to help victims.

HMIC noted that the force does not have a consistent system for telling schools about pupils whose parents have been involved in domestic abuse. The force recognises that this is a gap as only those MASHs in the force where there is an education department employee are able to exchange this information. The force is planning to pilot a process known as Operation Encompass¹⁷ later this year and intends subsequently to implement this across the entire force.

¹⁶ IDVA – 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.

¹⁷ The system whereby schools are alerted prior to a child's attendance at school of any domestic abuse incident it has been involved in.

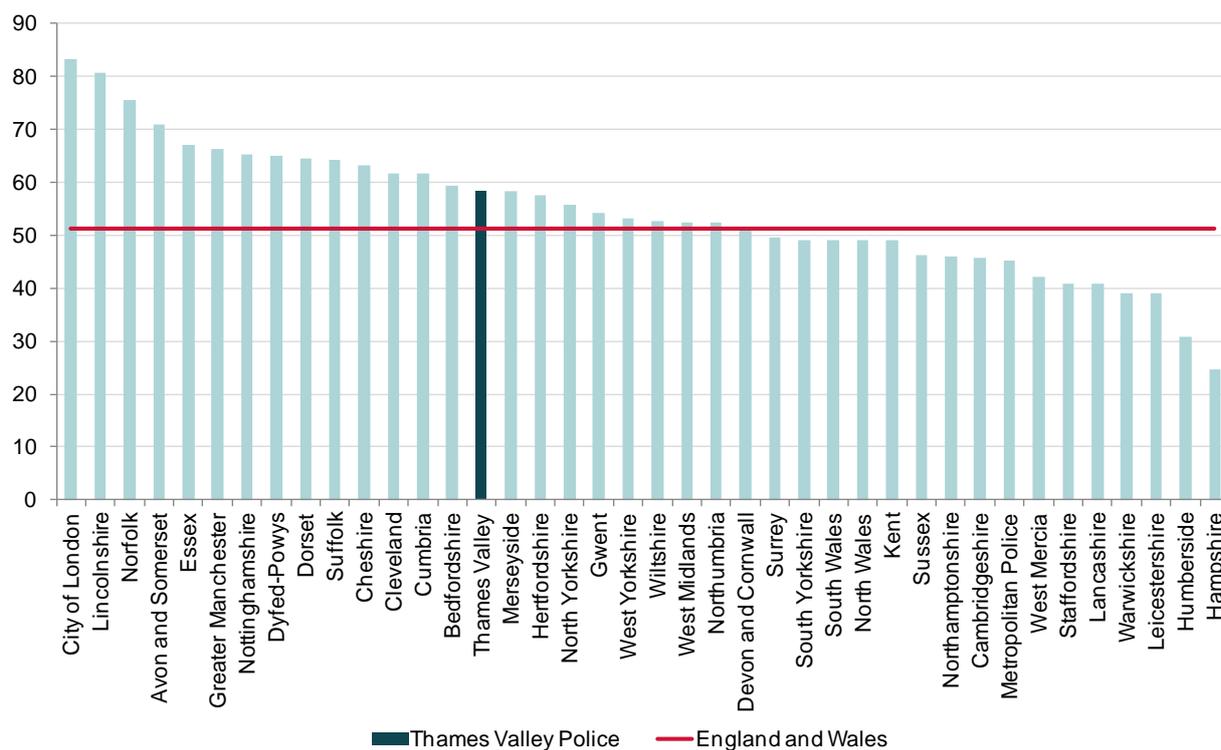
There are robust and effective policies in place to identify links between missing children and child sexual exploitation (CSE). Missing person co-ordinators examine the cases of children who go missing repeatedly, and convene a forum with external child-support professionals to protect these children from harm.

The Home Office has shared domestic abuse related offences data, recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, with HMIC. These are more recent figures than those previously published by the Office for National Statistics. These data shows that in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, police-recorded domestic abuse in Thames Valley increased by 22 percent compared with the 12 months to 31 March 2015. This compares with an increase of 23 percent across England and Wales. In the same period, police-recorded domestic abuse accounted for 10 percent of all police-recorded crime in Thames Valley, compared with 11 percent of all police-recorded crime across England and Wales.

The rate of arrest for domestic abuse offences can provide an indication of a force's approach to handling domestic abuse offenders. Although for the purpose of this calculation arrests are not directly tracked to offences, a high arrest rate may suggest that a force prioritises arrests for domestic abuse offenders over other potential forms of action (for further details, see annex A). HMIC has evaluated the arrest rate alongside other measures during our inspection process to understand how each force deals with domestic abuse overall.

In Thames Valley Police, for every 100 domestic abuse related offences recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, there were 58 arrests made in the same period.

Figure 7: Domestic abuse arrest rate (per 100 domestic abuse crimes), by force, for the 12 months to 30 June 2016¹⁸



Source: HMIC data return, Home Office data

For further information about these data, please see annex A

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

Those who are vulnerable often have complex and multiple needs that a police response alone cannot always meet. They may need support with housing, access to mental health services or support from social services. Nonetheless, the police still have an important responsibility to keep victims safe and investigate crimes. These crimes can be serious and complex (such as rape or violent offences). Their victims may appear to be reluctant to support the work of the police, often because they are being controlled by the perpetrator (such as victims of domestic abuse or child sexual exploitation).

Thames Valley Police operates across an area which covers three counties and sixteen local authorities. It is to be commended for the energy that it has invested in creating the various strategic and operational partnerships which protect vulnerable people. Of particular note is its role in the creation of the MASHs and the

¹⁸ Derbyshire, Durham and Gloucestershire forces were not able to provide domestic abuse arrest data. Therefore, these forces' data are not included in the graph or in the calculation of the England and Wales rate.

standardisation of practices within them. It also works well with partner organisations to protect people from domestic abuse, through the work of the multi agency risk assessment conferences MARACs.¹⁹ These conferences draw together social services, housing authorities, drugs and alcohol treatment providers, the NHS and education authorities, to consider the best way of supporting vulnerable victims. The number of cases discussed in the conferences is lower than the England and Wales average. However the force's position is that other structures, such as the DARIMs, are effective and are reducing the caseload that is referred to MARACs.

The force generally investigates crimes against vulnerable victims well. In most cases it has the right number of officers and staff with the specialist skills that are needed to investigate crimes associated with vulnerable victims. However some staff in the DAIU were critical that they only received domestic abuse training some months after they had started work in the unit. Workloads of specialist staff are closely monitored, and the force has successfully reduced the high workloads in the child abuse investigation unit (CAIU) which HMIC commented on in 2015. This monitoring of workloads identified to the force that more resource is required in the DAIU, and at the time of the inspection the force was part way through a process of bringing in and training the additional staff needed. Despite good progress made in this area, the demand in these specialist areas will require continuing monitoring by the force, as it anticipates that demand in both child and domestic abuse investigation will continue to rise.

In the twelve months prior to 30 June 2016, Thames Valley Police issued 2,245 police information notices (PINs) to protect people from incidents of stalking and harassment. As part of the inspection we reviewed a sample of these cases and found that supervision could be improved. Whilst most of the PINs were issued correctly, the management of risk to the victim was not always considered and some of the incidents leading the issue of PINs were not properly recorded as criminal allegations.

Victims of domestic abuse

In the course of this inspection, HMIC paid particular attention to the service provided to domestic abuse victims. A programme has begun to gather direct feedback from victims. The force is confident that officers will be able to provide a better service to victims if officers can learn more about victims' experiences. Also, greater use is being made of prohibition notices (DVPOs²⁰ and DVPNs²¹). These

¹⁹ MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) – is a forum where information about domestic abuse victims who are at risk of serious harm is shared with local partner agencies to ensure that comprehensive safeguarding measures are put in place.

²⁰ DVPO - 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.

²¹ DVPN – 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.

measures restrain an offender from contacting a victim or returning to a victim's home.

We considered the safeguarding arrangements in place for victims both at the time when the abuse took place and also during the course of the investigation. The force often uses legal powers to arrest perpetrators and protect victims. In addition, effective arrangements are in place with partner organisations, such as the DARIMs, the MASHs and the MARACs, to provide effective and continuing support to victims.

HMIC is also encouraged by the determination of the force to prosecute offenders even in the most difficult cases. It is not uncommon that in domestic abuse cases victims are reluctant to testify. Victims often fear that they will be subject to escalating intimidation and often feel traumatised if they have to re-live their experience in court. We saw a number of cases where careful evidence-gathering has ensured that offenders had been taken before the courts, even though their victims had declined to give evidence. This bears testament to the force's firm resolve to support vulnerable victims.

HMIC's 2016 legitimacy inspection examined how forces manage the risk of individuals who might be subjected to predatory acts of unwanted sexual attention by officers and staff. A part of this inspection considered how the force supports victims if this type of serious misconduct is identified. We established that the needs of the victims are handled effectively, and on a case-by-case basis.

In April 2015, the Home Office began collecting information from the police on whether recorded offences were related to domestic abuse. Crimes are identified by the police as domestic abuse related if the offence meets the government definition of domestic violence and abuse.²²

The rate of outcomes recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016 for domestic abuse offences is shown in figure 8. Domestic abuse crimes used in this calculation are not necessarily those to which the outcomes have been assigned and are only linked by the fact that they both occur in the 12 months to 30 June 2016. Therefore, direct comparisons should not be made between general outcomes in figure 4, where each crime is linked to its associated outcome (for further details see annex A).

²² Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.

Figure 8: Rate of outcomes recorded in 12 months to 30 June 2016 for domestic-related offences in Thames Valley Police²³

Outcome type / group	Thames Valley Police	England and Wales
Charged / Summoned	24.4	23.2
Caution – adults	4.5	5.6
Caution – youths	0.4	0.3
Community resolution	0.3	1.4
Evidential difficulties prevent further action; victim supports police action	22.9	24.1
Evidential difficulties prevent further action; victim does not support police action	41.0	35.4

Source: HMIC data return, Home Office data

For further information about these data, please see annex A

In the 12 months to 30 June 2016, Thames Valley Police's use of 'community resolution' was among the lowest in identified domestic abuse cases in England and Wales. However, any interpretation of outcomes should take into account that outcomes will vary dependent on the crime types that occur in each force area, and how it deals with offenders for different crimes.

However, despite the steps the force takes to support and protect victims, figure 8 shows that the rate of victims of domestic abuse who do not support police action is higher than the rate for England and Wales. The force needs to understand the reasons behind this, and make sure that its arrangements to give victims of domestic abuse the confidence to support investigations are as comprehensive as possible.

Summary of findings



Good

Thames Valley Police has a good understanding of vulnerability and works effectively with partner organisations to share information, to support vulnerable people and to find ways of ensuring positive results for victims. It has robust internal processes to identify gaps in knowledge, and it drives through improvements in the ways in which it identifies and protects vulnerable people.

²³ Dorset Police and Nottinghamshire Police were unable to submit domestic abuse outcomes data. Therefore, these forces' data are not included in the graph or in the calculation of the England and Wales rate.

Police officers and staff have been trained to recognise signs which indicate that a person might be vulnerable and the force has excellent processes in place to safeguard victims. Risk assessments are routinely completed for victims of anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse and so-called honour-based violence. This enables support programmes for victims to be put in place by multi agency safeguarding hubs.

There are robust policies in place to support children who go missing and to assess whether they are likely to be victimised by sexual predators.

The force has specialist investigative teams to manage offences associated with vulnerable victims. It has taken steps to ensure that the workloads of child abuse and domestic abuse investigators are manageable. These have largely had a good effect, but some domestic abuse investigators still express concern about their individual caseloads. We note the steps that the force is taking to increase staffing in this area, which is encouraging, but the force should continue to monitor workloads to make sure that it has sufficient resource in place to manage offences associated with vulnerable victims.

Thames Valley Police has worked hard to develop multi-agency safeguarding hubs which work consistently well across several local authority jurisdictions. Frontline officers are making good use of referral processes to ensure that the hubs consider the individual needs of victims and put measures in place to support them.

How effective is the force at tackling serious and organised crime?

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 have 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 in this area of policing tackle serious and organised crime not just by prosecuting offenders, but by disrupting and preventing organised criminality at a local level.

How effectively does the force understand the threat and risk posed by serious and organised crime?

In order to tackle serious and organised crime effectively forces must first have a good understanding of the threats it poses to their communities. Forces should be using a range of intelligence (not just from the police but also from other partner organisations) to understand threats and risks, from traditional organised crime such as drug dealing and money laundering to the more recently-understood threats such as cyber-crime and child sexual exploitation.

As at 1 July 2016, Thames Valley Police was actively disrupting, investigating or monitoring 29 organised crime groups (OCGs) per one million of the population. This compares to 46 OCGs per one million of the population across England and Wales.

This low number could mean that despite complying with relevant national guidance and its growing understanding of the threat from serious and organised crime, the force might not be identifying all active organised crime groups. This could in turn mean that its understanding of serious and harmful criminality is incomplete and HMIC will be interested to see whether this number increases in the year ahead as the force's processes and partnership arrangements mature.

The force has a developing understanding of the risks posed by serious and organised crime, and has a growing appreciation of new and emerging types of criminality. It now needs to build on its levels of knowledge by using information from a wider range of sources.

The force takes account of the National Crime Agency (NCA) strategic threat assessment and local policing priorities in its assessment of the risk presented by organised crime. It uses a risk-assessment process known as MORILE (management of risks in law enforcement) to identify which OCGs present the greatest threat to communities in the Thames Valley region.

In developing its understanding of organised crime, the force uses the Government Agency Intelligence Network (GAIN). This network helps organisations to share information in order to enforce the law. Organisations which take part include HM Revenue and Customs, the Department for Work and Pensions, and Action Fraud. The force also has staff in its intelligence bureau who research social media, the offending history of prominent criminals and prison release dates in order to identify likely trends in criminality. It also works closely with adjoining forces to assess the impact of transient criminal groups.

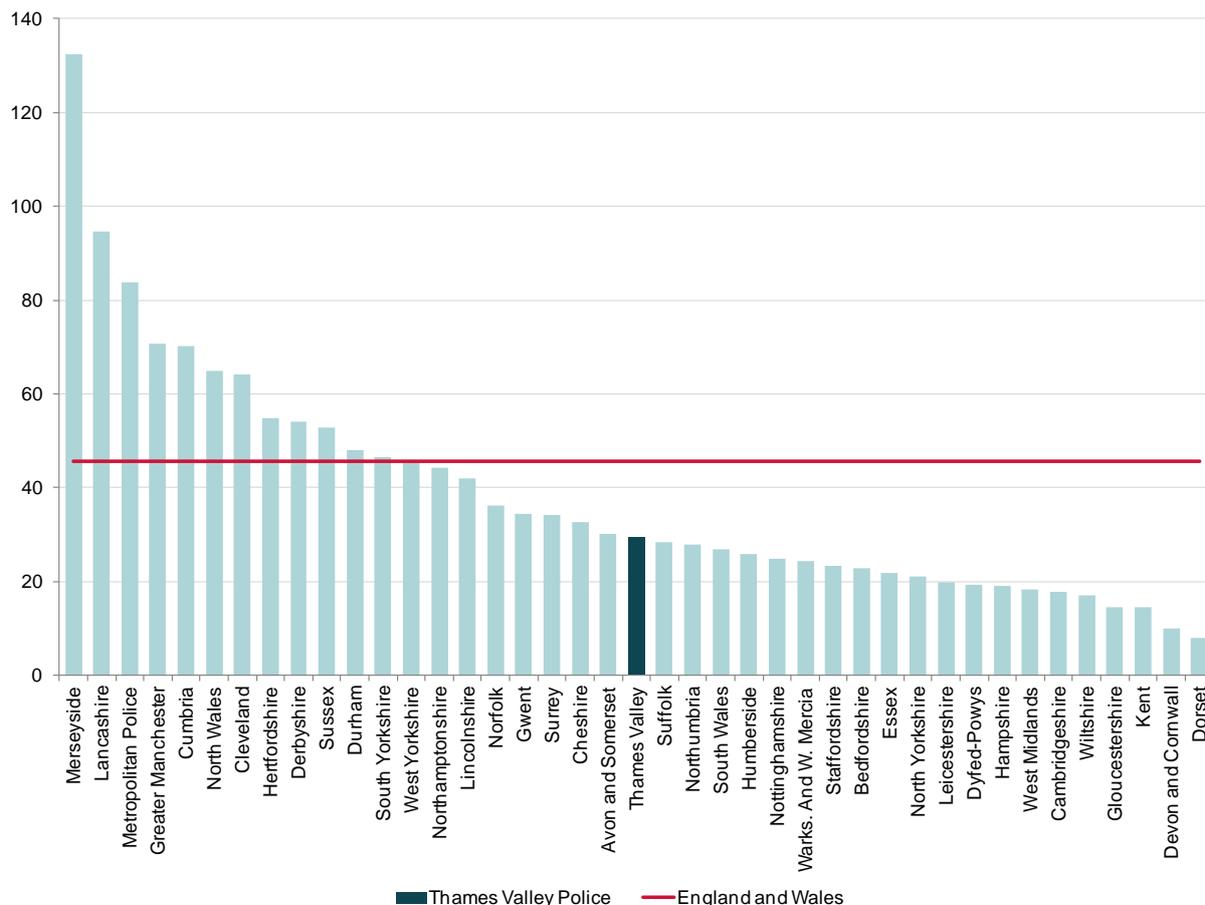
The force complies with national guidance in respect of how it maps, scores and re-scores OCGs. We also noted that LPA staff identify groups of criminals who are referred to as Problem Crime Groups (PCGs). PCGs present a threat which is not thought to be so serious as to justify OCG mapping, but nevertheless needs the attention of local officers. The force should review its approach in this area as its current approach means that it does not have a single overall view of the nature of all these groups. This could mean that some criminals could be overlooked in circumstances where their activity would warrant more detailed investigation.

Thames Valley Police has produced a serious organised crime local profile which has been shared with the Chief Executives of local authorities across the Thames Valley area. However, to date, the profiles have largely depended on information which the force already had, rather than an assessment based on a range of data sources. This constrains a full understanding of the threat of organised crime and effective enforcement action.

Similarly, third party involvement in law enforcement is infrequent. For example, we saw good examples of the force exchanging information about OCGs with non-law enforcement agencies such as Trading Standards, but this was almost exclusively limited to specific operations where the other agencies could play a role, rather than as part of a wider programme.

HMIC also considers that the involvement of neighbourhood officers in tackling organised crime needs to be expanded. When specialist detectives need support for particular investigations local officers become involved, but their involvement is infrequent and their general knowledge of, or contribution to, the containment of organised crime is limited.

Figure 9: Organised crime groups per one million population, by force, as at 1 July 2016²⁴



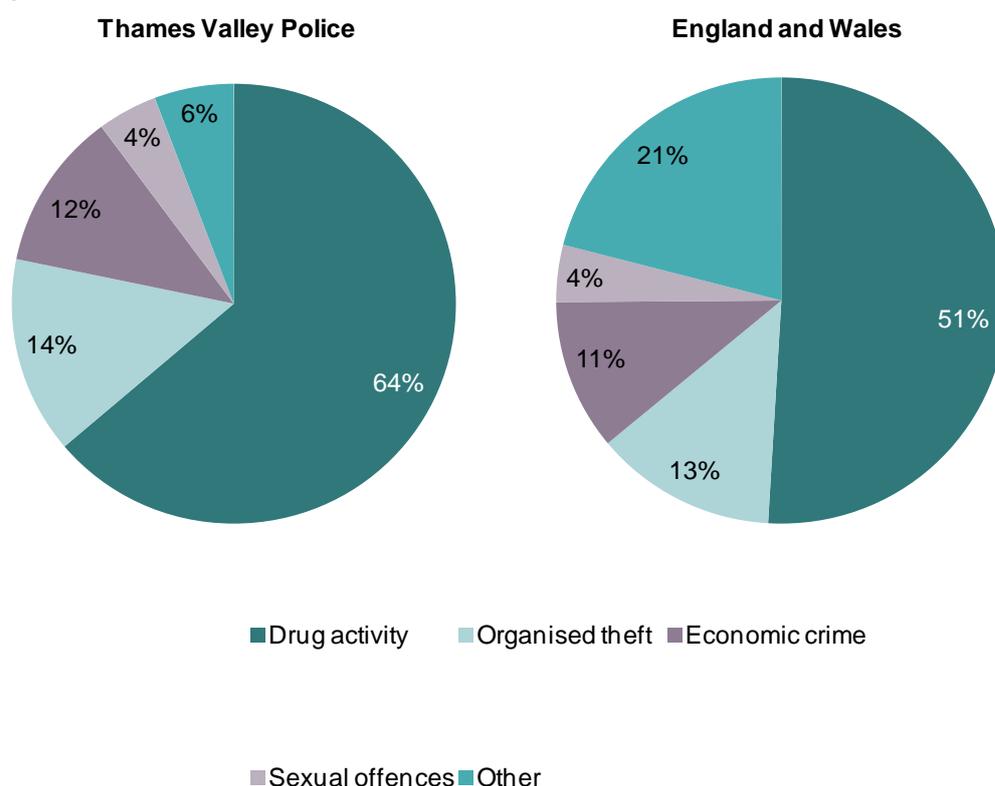
Source: HMIC data return

For further information about these data, please see annex A

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 (for example groups supplying drugs may also be supplying firearms and be involved in money laundering), this indicates their most common characteristic. 'Drug activity' was the most common predominant crime type of the OCGs managed by Thames Valley Police as at 1 July 2016. This was also the most common OCG crime type recorded by all forces in England and Wales.

²⁴ City of London Police data have been removed from the chart and the England and Wales rate as its OCG data are not comparable with other forces due to size and its wider national remit.

Figure 10: Active organised crime groups by predominant crime type in Thames Valley, as at 1 July 2016



Source: HMIC data return

Note: Figures may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding. For further information about these data, please see annex A.

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

An effective force will pursue and prosecute offenders and disrupt organised criminality at a local level. The force will use specialist capabilities, both in the force and at regional level, and non-specialist capabilities such as its neighbourhood teams. While it can be complex for a force to assess the success of its actions against serious and organised crime, it is important that the force understands the extent to which it disrupts this crime and reduces harm.

The force generally responds effectively to organised crime, but it could improve results by making more effective use of partner organisations and by taking a longer-term view of OCG management.

The force prioritises action against OCGs based on threat, harm, and risk identified through the OCG mapping process. Action plans reflect the national guidance on the

management of OCGs. The plans are based on the '4P'²⁵ model of pursue, prevent, protect and prepare to tackle serious and organised crime. Local responsible officers (LROs) are appointed to oversee developments. However the LROs we spoke to during our inspection did not receive any specific training to equip them for this role and although many were competent, levels of knowledge about how to tackle organised crime are not consistent. This means that some may be over-reliant on specialist staff to provide them with tactical advice.

We were encouraged to see that in some areas, LPA officers and the CSPs have started to work together to tackle organised crime. It is HMIC's position that this could be developed still further if a strategic partnership board for the force were to be developed. As well as promoting joint work with CSPs, there is greater scope to work with the business sector and academic bodies to develop an increased understanding of the problem.

The force takes frequent action to disrupt OCGs, and has undertaken 98 successful disruptions from 1 January 2016 to 30 June 2016. Operations to disrupt OCGs have been largely driven at local level and this is an area where partner organisations and local officers have been far better engaged.

There is some evidence that the force works with the South East Regional Organised Crime Unit SEROCU to tackle organised crime. This is principally through the regional intelligence meeting, and the SEROCU facilitates access to intelligence held by HM Prisons and the GAIN. An HMIC recommendation made in a previous report required Thames Valley Police, in conjunction with its partners in South East Regional Organised Crime Unit (SEROCU), to produce an action plan by June 2016. Together with Hampshire, Sussex and Surrey forces, Thames Valley Police has been working together to produce that plan to improve its collaboration arrangements. The current action plan, however, is more of a structured review of current arrangements with recommendations for actions that are expected to be agreed by December 2016. The force needs to ensure that the plan is agreed with the other forces and actions addressed appropriately.

HMIC learnt from the force that it does not routinely pass all of its highest risk OCGs to the SEROCU and uses its own resources to tackle some of the highest risk OCGs it has identified. The force should review this approach as it means that its capability to tackle less serious organised criminality within the force area is reduced.

The force records and scores disruptions of OCGs in line with national guidance, and reviews the effects of disruptions using an impact assessment. We saw some evidence that the force reviewed operations in detail in order to identify learning and

²⁵ Pursue, Prevent, Protect and Prepare is a structured approach in line with the Serious and Organised Crime Strategy, HM Government, October 2013, Cmnd 8715, www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/248645/Serious_and_Organised_Crime_Strategy.pdf

to share good practice, but this does not appear to be routine practice. Officers told HMIC that resources were more likely to be concentrated on assessing the next threat, rather than on assessing the impact of a previous operation. The force should consider implementing a simple review process at the end of any operation against OCGs to identify main learning points.

How effectively does the force prevent serious and organised crime?

A force that effectively tackles serious and organised crime needs to be able to stop people being drawn in to this crime. Many of these people may be vulnerable and already involved in gang and youth violence. It should also be using a range of approaches and powers to prevent those known criminals continuing to cause harm. HMIC expects a force's approach to prevention to be a significant element of its overall strategy to tackle the harm that serious and organised crime causes communities.

Thames Valley Police works well to prevent people from being drawn into organised crime. It has improved its performance in this area since our last inspection, but there is still more to be done.

There are well-established arrangements both within the force and across its partnerships to identify and divert people who are vulnerable to child sexual exploitation away from this sort of exploitation. The force has appointed a specialist to lead the 'Ending Gang and Youth Violence' programme, and a number of peer reviews are being undertaken in the force. The programme has provided guidance about how the force and its partners can implement intervention projects, protect vulnerable people and divert young people away from organised crime. The force is also working with the Troubled Families' Programme²⁶ to support siblings in households where criminal lifestyles are common.

The force makes good use of ancillary orders to prevent organised crime, and the number of Serious Crime Prevention Orders (SCPO)²⁷ used by the force is in line with the rate for England and Wales per 100 mapped OCGs. These orders place restrictions on the lifestyle of offenders to prevent them re-offending.

²⁶ Troubled Families is a Government-led partnership programme which aims to bring local agencies together to work with a small number of the most troubled families, offering targeted and focused packages of support, in order to help them to become more independent.

²⁷ An SCPO can prevent involvement in serious crime by imposing various conditions on a person; 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.

The force has recently appointed a new Lifetime Offender Manager (LOM) who assesses what the force should do when it deals with convicted OCG members. Arrangements have been put in place to determine which orders should be applied for, and to check the ways that these are monitored and enforced. Although this development is to be welcomed, HMIC believe more should be done to monitor the behaviour of OCG members in prison. New criminal relationships are often formed in prison, which means that OCG members might be released from prison having made new criminal associates. This means that newly-released OCG members might pose an immediate threat to the public.

The force is good at communicating with the public about organised crime. Schools officers work with children from primary school age, and provide information and education about the negative consequences of breaking the law. The force runs frequent publicity campaigns to undermine the superficial attractions of a criminal lifestyle. The force also publicises the dangers to the public which are posed by cyber-attacks and other internet based crime.

Summary of findings



Good

Thames Valley Police is generally effective at tackling organised crime. It identifies, scores and reviews organised crime groups (OCGs) in accordance with national guidance. Action against OCGs is a strategic priority for the force and operational activity is in line with national best practice guidelines.

Partner organisations and neighbourhood officers are regularly involved in operations to disrupt OCG activity and the force makes good use of preventative legislation to curb the offending lifestyles of criminals. Publicity campaigns are used effectively to prevent people from becoming victims of this type of crime. Cyber attacks and other crime committed on the internet are good examples of this.

However the force needs to do more to embed a longer-term approach to dealing with organised crime. More involvement of executives in other public organisations and the business sector would be of benefit. The force is advised to establish a strategic partnership board to develop this.

Additionally the involvement of local policing area officers is too restricted. Although they are involved in activity to disrupt OCGs, few officers that we spoke to were aware of organised crime in their local area. In other forces, local officers play a more prominent role in preventing the proliferation of organised crime.

Areas for improvement

- The force should further develop its serious and organised crime local profiles in conjunction with partner organisations to enhance its understanding of the threat posed by serious and organised crime and inform joint work aimed at reducing this threat.
- The force should engage routinely with partner agencies at a senior level to enhance intelligence sharing and promote an effective, multi-agency response to 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.

How effective are the force's specialist capabilities?

Some complex threats require both a specialist capability and forces to work together to respond to them. This question assesses both the overall preparedness of forces to work together on a number of strategic threats and whether forces have a good understanding of the threat presented by firearms incidents and how equipped they are to meet this threat.

How effective are the force's arrangements to ensure that it can fulfil its national policing responsibilities?

The *Strategic Policing Requirement* (SPR)²⁸ specifies six national threats. These are complex threats and forces need to be able to work together if they are to respond to them effectively. These include serious and organised crime, terrorism, serious cyber-crime incidents and child sexual abuse. 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 made the necessary arrangements to test their own preparedness for dealing with these threats should they materialise.

The force has good arrangements in place to test its preparedness to deal with national threats. An update of the force's preparedness in respect of each of them is reported to the police and crime commissioner every four months. The deputy chief constable chairs the continuity board which has created plans to sustain the national policing requirements even if there is a major disruption to services. The force regularly tests the resilience of its IT systems, although it has not assessed the vulnerability of its computer network to deliberate criminal acts.

Comprehensive exercise and testing regimes are in place at a force, regional and national level. Each of the SPR areas has an appointed chief officer lead with responsibility for overseeing force preparedness. Much of this activity is strategically

²⁸ The SPR is issued annually by the Home Secretary, 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. *The Strategic Policing Requirement*, Home Office, March 2015.

Available at:

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/417116/The_Strategic_Policing_Requirement.pdf

directed by the local resilience forum (LRF),²⁹ a joint emergency services panel, which is chaired by the chief officer.

How well prepared is the force to respond to a firearms attack?

Following the terrorist attacks in Paris on 13 November 2015, the government allocated £143 million to the 43 England and Wales police forces to increase their armed capability. This funding has enabled some forces to increase the number of armed police officers able to respond to a terrorist attack. These attacks include those committed by heavily armed terrorists across multiple sites in quick succession, as in Paris. These attacks are known as marauding terrorist firearms attacks. The funding is for those forces considered to be at greatest risk of a terrorist attack. This also has the effect of increasing the ability of the police service to respond to other forms of terrorist attacks (and another incident requiring an armed policing response). Forces have begun to recruit and train new armed officers. This process is due to be completed by March 2018.

The force has made plans in respect of its required firearms capacity, basing its projected needs on a well-researched armed police strategic risk assessment. It has already started to provide the required increase in its capacity to respond to an attack requiring an armed response.

Following the Paris attacks in October 2015 Thames Valley Police and Hampshire Constabulary reviewed their joint armed policing threat and risk assessment. The geography of the two forces was overlaid and the likely response times of armed response vehicles were fully considered. The learning from this assessment has enabled both forces to identify changes required to their armed capacity.

The learning from this assessment has enabled both forces to identify shortfalls in their capacity to withstand this type of attack. Measures are now being put in place to accredit more officers in firearms skills, and to reassign them from other duties if necessary. Both forces are now making full use of their training facilities to accelerate the firearms training programme. Furthermore, the officers who take on

²⁹ The Local Resilience Forum brings together emergency services and other statutory bodies involved in crisis management and disaster recovery. The forum has a number of responsibilities including joint operational planning and developing a programme of exercise planning to test the force's state of readiness and response to major incidents.

the extra responsibilities associated with this type of work are being rewarded with additional personal payments. This helps to ensure that more officers are attracted to this work as well as helping the force to retain them in this important role.

During the inspection HMIC learned that the force has taken part in various exercises and events involving other forces and partners to test its firearms capabilities. These exercises include elements for making sure that arrangements for managing these sorts of incidents, including the way that the force works with other organisations, are robust.

Summary of findings

Ungraded

The force has good arrangements in place to test its preparedness to deal with national threats, which include oversight from a chief officer. There are comprehensive testing and exercising arrangements in place which include the contributions of partner organisations. The force's state of preparedness to address the threats set out in the *Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR)* are reviewed by the Police and crime commissioner every four months. There are also continuity plans in place to help the force meet its national policing requirements in the event of a major disruption to services.

The force has assessed and responded to threats requiring an armed response. After the terrorist attacks in Paris, the force reviewed its firearms capabilities in the light of the new methods and weapons which the terrorists had used. The force has ensured its capabilities meets this type of extreme threat.

Closer joint working with Hampshire Constabulary has helped to boost the training capacity, and increasing numbers of officers are being trained to nationally accredited armed response vehicle standards. The force has developed a number of assumptions of likely terrorist scenarios and has tested its ability to respond in simulated training exercises.

Next steps

HMIC assesses progress on causes of concern and areas for improvement identified within its reports in a number of ways. We receive updates through our regular conversations with forces, re-assess as part of our annual PEEL programme, and, in the most serious cases, revisit forces.

HMIC highlights recurring themes emerging from our PEEL inspections of police forces within our national reports on police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy. These reports identify those issues that are reflected across England and Wales and may contain additional recommendations directed at national policing organisations, including the Home Office, where we believe improvements can be made at a national level.

Findings and judgments from this year's PEEL effectiveness inspection will be used to direct the design of the next cycle of PEEL effectiveness assessments. The specific areas for assessment are yet to be confirmed, based on further consultation, but we will continue to assess how forces keep people safe and reduce crime to ensure our findings are comparable year on year.

Annex A – About the data

The information presented in this report comes from a range of sources, including published data by the Home Office and Office for National Statistics, inspection fieldwork and data collected directly from all 43 geographic police forces in England and Wales.

Where HMIC has collected data directly from police forces, we have taken reasonable steps to agree the design of the data collection with forces and with other relevant interested parties such as the Home Office. We have given forces several opportunities to check and validate the data they have provided us to ensure the accuracy of our evidence. For instance:

- We checked the data that forces submitted and queried with forces where figures were notably different from other forces or were internally inconsistent.
- We asked all forces to check the final data used in the report and correct any errors identified.

The source of the data is presented with each figure in the report, and is set out in more detail in this annex. The source of Force in numbers data is also set out below.

Methodology

Data in the report

The British Transport Police was outside the scope of inspection. Therefore any aggregated totals for England and Wales exclude British Transport Police data and numbers will differ from those published by the Home Office.

Where other forces have been unable to supply data, this is mentioned under the relevant sections below.

Population

For all uses of population as a denominator in our calculations, unless otherwise noted, we use Office for National Statistics (ONS) mid-2015 population estimates. These were the most recent data available at the time of the inspection.

For the specific case of City of London Police, we include both resident and transient population within our calculations. This is to account for the unique nature and demographics of this force's responsibility.

Survey of police staff

HMIC conducted a short survey of police staff across forces in England and Wales, to understand their views on workloads, redeployment and the suitability of tasks assigned to them. The survey was a non-statistical, voluntary sample which means that results may not be representative of the population. The number of responses varied between 8 and 2,471 across forces. Therefore, we treated results with caution and used them for exploring further during fieldwork rather than to assess individual force performance.

Ipsos MORI survey of public attitudes towards policing

HMIC commissioned Ipsos MORI to conduct a survey of attitudes towards policing between July and August 2016. Respondents were drawn from an online panel and results were weighted by age, gender and work status to match the population profile of the force area. The sampling method used is not a statistical random sample and the sample size was small, varying between 331 to 429 in each force area. Therefore, any results provided are only an indication of satisfaction rather than an absolute.

The findings of this survey will be shared on our website by summer 2017:

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/data/peel-assessments/

Review of crime files

HMIC reviewed 60 police case files across crime types for: robbery, common assault (flagged as domestic abuse), grievous bodily harm (GBH), stalking, harassment, rape and domestic burglary. The file review was designed to provide a broad overview of the identification of vulnerability, the effectiveness of investigations and to understand how victims are treated through police processes. Files were randomly selected from crimes recorded between 1 January 2016 and 31 March 2016 and were assessed against several criteria. Due to the small sample size of cases selected, we have not used results from the file review as the sole basis for assessing individual force performance but alongside other evidence gathered.

Force in numbers

A dash in this graphic indicates that a force was not able to supply HMIC with data.

Calls for assistance (including those for domestic abuse)

These data were collected directly from all 43 forces. In 2016, the questions contained a different breakdown of instances where the police were called to an incident compared to the 2015 data collection, so direct comparisons to the equivalent 2015 data are not advised.

Recorded crime and crime outcomes

These data are obtained from Home Office police-recorded crime and outcomes data tables for the 12 months to 30 June 2016 and are taken from the October 2016 Home Office data release, which is available from:

www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-recorded-crime-open-data-tables

Total police-recorded crime includes all crime (excluding fraud offences) recorded by police forces in England and Wales. Home Office publications on the overall volumes and rates of recorded crime and outcomes include the British Transport Police, which is outside the scope of this HMIC inspection. Therefore, England and Wales rates in this report will differ from those published by the Home Office.

Figures about police-recorded crime should be treated with care, as recent increases are likely to 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.

For crime outcomes, Dorset Police has been excluded from the England and Wales figure. Dorset Police experienced difficulties with the recording of crime outcomes for the 12 months to 30 June 2016. This was due to the force introducing the Niche records management system in Spring 2015. Problems with the implementation of Niche meant that crime outcomes were not reliably recorded. The failure to file investigations properly meant that a higher than normal proportion of offences were allocated to 'Not yet assigned an outcome'. During 2016, the force conducted additional work to solve the problem. In doing so, some crime outcomes from the 12 months to 30 June 2016 were updated after that date and are reflected in a later period. This makes Dorset Police's crime outcome data inconsistent with that provided by other forces. HMIC has decided not to use Dorset Police's outcome data in the interests of consistency of data use and to maintain fairness to all forces.

Other notable points to consider when interpreting outcome data are listed below and also apply to figure 4.

- For a full commentary and explanation of outcome types please see Crime Outcomes in England and Wales: year ending March 2016, Home Office, July 2016. Available from:
www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/539447/crime-outcomes-hosb0616.pdf
- Crime outcome proportions show the percentage of crimes recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016 that have been assigned each outcome. This means that each crime is tracked or linked to its outcome.
- These data are subject to change, as more crimes are assigned outcomes over time. These data are taken from the October 2016 Home Office data release.

- Providing outcomes data under the new framework is voluntary if not provided directly through the Home Office Data Hub. However, as proportions are used, calculations can be based on fewer than four quarters of data. For the 12 months to 30 June 2016, Derbyshire Constabulary and Suffolk Constabulary were unable to provide the last quarter of data. Therefore, their figures are based on the first three quarters of the year.
- Leicestershire, Staffordshire and West Yorkshire forces are participating in the Ministry of Justice's out of court disposals pilot. This means these forces no longer issue simple cautions or cannabis/khat warnings and they restrict their use of penalty notices for disorder as disposal options for adult offenders, as part of the pilot. Therefore, their outcomes data should be viewed with this in mind.
- It is important to note that the outcomes that are displayed in figure 8 are based on the number of outcomes recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, irrespective of when the crime was recorded. Therefore, the crimes and outcomes recorded in the reporting year are not tracked, so direct comparisons should not be made between general outcomes and domestic abuse related outcomes in this report. For more details about the methodology for domestic abuse outcomes please see explanatory notes below, under figure 8.

Anti-social behaviour

These data are obtained from Office for National Statistics data tables, available from:

www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/policeforceareadatatables

All police forces record incidents of anti-social behaviour reported to them in accordance with the provisions of the National Standard for Incident Recording (NSIR). Incidents are recorded under NSIR in accordance with the same 'victim focused' approach that applies for recorded crime, although these figures are not subject to the same level of quality assurance as the main recorded crime collection. Incident counts should be interpreted as incidents recorded by the police, rather than reflecting the true level of victimisation. Other agencies also deal with anti-social behaviour incidents (for example, local authorities and social landlords); incidents reported to these agencies will not generally be included in police figures.

When viewing this data the user should be aware of the following:

- Warwickshire Police had a problem with its incident recording. For a small percentage of all incidents reported during 2014-15 and 2015-16 it was not possible for the force to identify whether these were anti-social behaviour or other types of incident. These incidents have been distributed pro rata for

Warwickshire, so that one percent of anti-social behaviour in 2014-15 and two percent of anti-social behaviour in 2015-16 are estimated.

- From May 2014, South Yorkshire Police experienced difficulties in reporting those incidents of anti-social behaviour that resulted from how it processed calls for assistance, specifically for scheduled appointments. In November 2016, South Yorkshire Police resolved this problem and resubmitted anti-social behaviour data to Office for National Statistics. HMIC has used corrected data for South Yorkshire Police which are available in the November 2016 release of anti-social behaviour incidents data in the link above.
- Bedfordshire Police resubmitted anti-social behaviour data to Office for National Statistics for the 12 months to 30 June 2016. This was because data had been double counted for the second quarter of the financial year. HMIC has used corrected data for Bedfordshire Police which are available in the November 2016 release of anti-social behaviour incidents data in the link above.

Domestic abuse

Data for domestic abuse flagged offences were provided by the Home Office for the 12 months to 30 June 2016. These are more recent figures than those previously published by Office for National Statistics.

Data relating to domestic abuse arrests, charges and outcomes were collected through the HMIC data collection.

Further information about the domestic abuse statistics and recent releases are available from:

www.ons.gov.uk/releases/domesticabuseinenglandandwalesyearendingmarch2016

Organised crime groups (OCGs)

These data were collected directly from all 43 forces. City of London Police is excluded from the England and Wales rate as its OCG data are not comparable with other forces due to size and its wider national remit.

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.

OCGs which are no longer active – for example because they have been dismantled by the police – can be archived. This means that they are no longer subject to disruption, investigation or monitoring. From 1 September 2014 to 31 December 2015, forces were given a directive by the National Police Chiefs' Council to suspend archiving, pending a review of OCG recording policy. This directive was removed on

1 January 2016, but resulted in many forces archiving more OCGs than they otherwise would have in the 12 months to June 2016. Therefore, direct comparisons should not be made with OCG figures from previous years.

Victim satisfaction

Forces were required by the Home Office to conduct satisfaction surveys with specific victim groups. Force victim satisfaction surveys are structured around principal questions exploring satisfaction responses across four stages of interactions:

- initial contact;
- actions;
- follow-up;
- treatment plus the whole experience.

The data used in this report use the results to the question relating to the victim's whole experience, which specifically asks, "Taking the whole experience into account, are you satisfied, dissatisfied, or neither with the service provided by the police in this case?"

The England and Wales average is calculated based on the average of the rates of satisfaction in all 43 forces.

Figures throughout the report

Figure 1: Police-recorded crime rates (per 1,000 population) for the five year period to 30 June 2016

Please see 'Recorded Crime and Crime Outcomes' above.

Figure 2: Police-recorded crime rates (per 1,000 population) for the 12 months to 30 June 2016

Please see 'Recorded Crime and Crime Outcomes' above.

Figure 3: Percentage change in the rate of anti-social behaviour incidents (per 1,000 population), by force, comparing the 12 months to 31 March 2016 with the 12 months to 31 March 2015

Please see 'Anti-social behaviour' above.

Figure 4: Proportion of outcomes assigned to offences recorded, in 12 months to 30 June 2016, by outcome type

Please see 'Recorded Crime and Crime Outcomes' above.

The outcome number has been provided to improve usability across multiple publications and is in line with Home Office categorisation.

For these data, we state whether the force's value is 'one of the highest', 'one of the lowest' or 'broadly in line with' all forces in England and Wales. This is calculated by ranking the usage of outcomes and then highlighting the top and bottom 25 percent of forces. All other forces will be broadly in line with England and Wales. However, any interpretation of outcomes should take into account that outcomes will vary dependent on the crime types that occur in each force area, and how the force deals with offenders for different crimes.

This methodology is not comparable with figure 8, so direct comparisons should not be made between the two tables.

Figure 5: Percentage of 'Evidential difficulties; victim does not support action' outcomes assigned to offences recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, by force

Please see 'Recorded Crime and Crime Outcomes' above.

In addition, it is important to understand that the percentages of evidential difficulties can be affected by the level of certain types of crime within a force, such as domestic abuse related offences. The category of evidential difficulties also includes where a suspect has been identified and the victim supports police action, but evidential difficulties prevent further action being taken.

Figure 6: Percentage of police recorded crime with a vulnerable victim identified, by force, for the 12 months to 30 June 2016

Please see 'Recorded Crime and Crime Outcomes' above.

The number of offences identified with a vulnerable victim in a force is dependent on the force's definition of vulnerability.

City of London, Devon and Cornwall, Essex, Gloucestershire and Lancashire forces were unable to provide data for the number of recorded crimes with a vulnerable victim identified. Therefore, these forces' data are not included in the graph or in the calculation of the England and Wales rate.

When viewing this data the user should be aware of the following:

- Suffolk Constabulary was only able to provide eight months of vulnerability data to the 30 June 2016 due to transferring to a different crime management system. Its previous system did not record vulnerability. Therefore, these are the most reliable data it can provide.

Figure 7: Domestic abuse arrest rate (per 100 domestic abuse crimes), by force, for the 12 months to 30 June 2016

Please see 'Domestic abuse' above.

Derbyshire, Durham and Gloucestershire forces were unable to provide domestic abuse arrest data. Therefore, these forces' data are not included in the graph or in the calculation of the England and Wales rate.

The arrest rate is calculated using a common time period for arrests and offences. It is important to note that each arrest is not necessarily directly linked to its specific domestic abuse offence recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016 in this calculation. It is also possible to have more than one arrest per offence although this is rare. In addition, the reader should note the increase in police-recorded crime which has affected the majority of forces over the last year (39 out of 43). This may have the effect of arrest rates actually being higher than the figures suggest. Despite this, the calculation still indicates whether the force prioritises arrests for domestic abuse offenders over other potential forms of action. HMIC has evaluated the arrest rate alongside other measures (such as use of voluntary attendance or body-worn video cameras) during our inspection process to understand how each force deals with domestic abuse overall.

When viewing this data the user should be aware of the following:

- Cambridgeshire Constabulary identified a recording issue and that it could only obtain accurate data from a manual audit of its custody records. This means its data may indicate a lower arrest rate. However, at the time of publication this was the most reliable figure the force could provide for the 12 months to 30 June 2016. The force plans to conduct regular manual audits while the recording issue is resolved. HMIC will conduct a further review to test this evidence when more data are available.
- Lancashire Constabulary experienced difficulties in identifying all domestic abuse flagged arrests. This affected 23 days in the 12 months to 30 June 2016. The force investigated this and confirmed that the impact on data provided to HMIC would be marginal and that these are the most reliable figures it can provide.

Figure 8: Rate of outcomes recorded in 12 months to 30 June 2016 for domestic-related offences

Please see 'Domestic Abuse' above.

Dorset Police is excluded from our data for the reasons described under 'Recorded Crime and Crime Outcomes' above.

Nottinghamshire Police has been excluded from domestic abuse outcomes data. The force experienced difficulties with the conversion of some crime data when it

moved to a new crime recording system. This means that the force did not record reliably some crime outcomes for domestic abuse related offences. The force subsequently solved the problem and provided updated outcomes figures. However, this makes Nottinghamshire Police's outcomes data for domestic abuse related offences inconsistent with that provided by other forces. HMIC has decided not to use Nottinghamshire Police's outcomes data for domestic abuse related offences in the interests of consistency of data use and to maintain fairness to all forces.

In April 2015, the Home Office began collecting information from the police on whether recorded offences were related to domestic abuse. Crimes are identified by the police as domestic abuse related if the offence meets the government definition of domestic violence and abuse:

“Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.”

In figure 8, the rate is calculated by the number of each outcome recorded for domestic abuse flagged offences in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, divided by the total number of domestic abuse offences recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016. The domestic abuse-related crimes used in this calculation are not necessarily those to which the outcomes have been assigned. Therefore, direct comparisons should not be made between general outcomes in figure 4, where each crime is linked to its associated outcome, and domestic abuse outcomes in figure 8.

For these data, we state whether the force's value is 'one of the highest', 'one of the lowest' or 'broadly in line with' all forces in England and Wales. This is calculated by ranking the usage of outcomes and then highlighting the top and bottom 25 percent of forces. All other forces will be broadly in line with England and Wales. However, any interpretation of outcomes should take into account that outcomes will vary dependent on the crime types that occur in each force area, and how the force deals with offenders for different crimes.

Figure 9: Organised crime groups per one million population, by force, as at 1 July 2016

Please see 'Organised Crime Groups' above.

Figure 10: Active organised crime groups by predominant crime type, as at 1 July 2016

Humbersonside Police was unable to provide the full data for predominant crime types in the time available. Therefore, this force's data are not included in the graph or in the calculation of the England and Wales proportion.

Numbers may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding.