

## HMI Zoë Billingham's assessment of Essex Police – Transcript

Hello. I'm Zoe Billingham and I'm Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary for Essex Police. I am one of five inspectors of constabulary, and our role is to inspect police forces on behalf of the public. Each year we produce an annual assessment of how each force is performing.

I am satisfied with some aspects of the performance of Essex Police in keeping people safe and reducing crime, but there are some areas of serious concern that need to be improved in order to provide a consistently good service. In view of these findings, I have been in regular contact with the chief constable and I am reassured by the way in which the force has acknowledged and responded to the issues we have raised. However, I do not underestimate how much improvement is needed.

I am particularly concerned by the force's approach to protecting some of the most vulnerable people. HMIC found a lack of effective and reliable processes to respond to and safeguard victims of domestic abuse; and we also found serious weaknesses in the force's response to child sexual exploitation. However, I am reassured that the force has immediately set about addressing both of these issues.

I am satisfied that the financial management of the force is sound. The force is developing a good understanding of the demands placed on its services and is reallocating the workforce to the areas of most need. The force's approach to achieving the future savings involves a very significant reduction in the number of PCSOs.

The force will need to satisfy itself that its provision of neighbourhood policing remains effective.

I am impressed by the range of means by which the force engages with the people of Essex. I am also pleased by the strong ethical culture within the force, and the support for staff welfare.

In the year ahead, I will be particularly interested to see how the force responds to vulnerable victims, particularly those involved in domestic abuse and children subject to, and at risk of, child sexual exploitation and abuse.