



Promoting improvements  
in policing to make  
everyone safer

# PEEL: Police effectiveness 2016

A national overview

March 2017

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## Foreword

This report sets out the national themes that HMIC found in its 2016 inspection of police effectiveness.

As last year, the effectiveness inspection is very broad, covering the wide mission of policing – from preventing crime and anti-social behaviour to tackling the most serious elements of criminality that can blight our communities.

We have assessed and graded each of the 43 forces in England and Wales on how well they prevent crime and anti-social behaviour, how effectively they investigate crime, catch criminals and manage offenders, whether they are protecting those people who are particularly vulnerable, and how well they are tackling serious and organised crime. To make our judgments, we have collected a vast range of data, scrutinised operational practice and found out what members of the public, including victims, think of the service they receive.

The public can be reassured that overall most forces are doing a good – and in one case an outstanding – job of keeping people safe and preventing crime. We are particularly pleased to see how many forces have responded to our concerns on how they protect vulnerable people. More forces are improving their performance in this vital aspect of policing than in any other. But in some forces, the focus on vulnerability, while entirely welcome, may have been at the expense of some other important areas of policing.

This year we have seen further evidence of the erosion of preventative policing in our neighbourhoods. Today, the police service is not as well equipped to stop crime happening in the first place as it has been in the past. This is a significant concern. HMIC is recommending that new national guidance is designed with the aim of preserving neighbourhood policing as the cornerstone of the policing model in England and Wales, and that all forces should then ensure that the service they provide meets that guidance. With so much crime now being carried out online, the police service needs further to extend its preventative presence into the cyber-world too.

While commending the police service for the many improvements it has made, this report also raises a large and deep-red warning flag. HMIC has discovered an increasing number of unwelcome practices in some forces which, too often, have the effect of artificially suppressing the demand for the police to take prompt and effective action. For instance, too often emergency calls are reclassified as less urgent when there is a shortage of officers to respond and, on occasions, decisions are taken to reclassify high-risk victims of domestic violence to medium risk. This is because, in too many respects, existing support systems are overwhelmed. On occasions, gangs of violent and dangerous criminals are not formally classified as organised crime groups because this would further stretch the resources available to

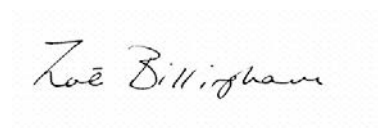
manage and pursue high-end criminals. These types of practices are poorly understood by forces – they tend to occur under the radar and are seemingly the unintended consequence of changes that forces have made, often in response to the challenge of austerity.

A worrying consequence of this approach is that, in some forces, the police are simply not doing some of the basic things they should do. For example, police officers are arresting fewer people, some crimes are apparently being shelved without proper investigations taking place and too often suspects wanted in connection with crimes are not being tracked down relentlessly. It is vital that police leaders take action to address these emerging problems, so that the public are properly protected.

Building on areas we have highlighted for action in previous reports, this year we recommend that there is a nationally co-ordinated response to the crisis generated by the shortage of qualified detectives and investigators.

We have made five recommendations designed to encourage improvement in the areas where we have major concerns. There are actions that forces can take, supported by other national bodies including the College of Policing, the National Police Chiefs' Council and the Home Office. We look forward to continuing to work with forces and police and crime commissioners as the police service becomes ever more effective in the service that it provides to the public.

Once again, I would like to thank all the forces for welcoming and supporting our inspection teams, and I pay tribute to the work of the police officers, police community support officers and police staff who protect us and our friends, families and communities. We see countless examples of their high professionalism and very great dedication during the course of our inspections.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading 'Zoë Billingham', written in black ink on a light-colored background.

**Zoë Billingham, HM Inspector of Constabulary**

## Effectiveness in numbers



### Calls for assistance

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

England and Wales

**240**



### Crime (excluding fraud)

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

England and Wales

**68**

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

England and Wales

**+7.8%**

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

England and Wales

**-3.4%**



### Crime outcomes\*

Charged/summonsed

England and Wales

**12.1%**

Evidential difficulties: suspect  
identified but victim does not  
support action

England and Wales

**10.6%**

Investigation completed but  
no suspect identified

England and Wales

**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

England and Wales

**31**

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

England and Wales

**34**



## Domestic abuse

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

England and Wales

**16**

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

England and Wales

**11.1%**

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

England and Wales

**10.0%**



## Organised crime groups

Organised crime groups per million population as at 1 July 2016

England and Wales

**46**



## Victim satisfaction rate

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

England and Wales

**83.3%**

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

## Summary and main findings

Our inspection found that most forces provide a largely good service to the public. We judged two forces to be outstanding at crime prevention and four to be outstanding in the way they tackle serious and organised crime. Slightly more forces than last year are good at providing an effective service to the public. Police leaders, police officers and staff should be commended for this. HMIC welcomes in particular the considerable improvement in how effectively forces are protecting vulnerable people and keeping them safe. However, we are concerned that, despite this broadly positive overall picture, there are some worrying practices in some police forces and risks to the public in the service that is being provided.

A small number of police forces are struggling to respond to shrinking resources. All forces face the need to change their services so that they can better protect those who are vulnerable and meet changing demand.

HMIC has three main areas of concern:

- some forces' attempts to suppress demand are putting people at risk;
- in some cases, police officers are not carrying out sufficiently well their main activities of preventing crime, keeping people safe and catching criminals; and
- police capabilities that are needed now and will continue to be needed in the future, such as skilled investigators and neighbourhood policing, are insufficient or being eroded.

Some forces which are struggling to meet the demand for their services are finding ways of artificially suppressing that demand. This could be by downgrading the severity category of calls for assistance from the public to justify a slower emergency response, by setting a quota for the number of cases that get referred for specialist assistance, or by not analysing and recording all the organised crime groups in a local area.

In this time of rapid change in policing, HMIC is concerned that some of the fundamental actions and activities that police officers should be doing to reduce crime and keep people safe are simply not being carried out to the requisite standard. We found evidence of fewer arrests, too often wanted suspects not being pursued and apprehended, and, in some forces, a large number of crimes in effect written off rather than pursued to an appropriate conclusion for the victim and the community.

Some capabilities that forces need to cope with today's pressures and will need to manage tomorrow's problems are either weak or underdeveloped. Some forces are currently struggling to recruit and retain sufficient numbers of detectives and to



retrieve evidence quickly from electronic devices such as mobile phones and laptops. We have seen a number of policing functions such as neighbourhood policing and some areas of investigation suffer from lack of intelligence support, as the result of a steady decline in investment in this critical capability.

## Overall performance

HMIC has graded all forces as outstanding, good, requires improvement or inadequate for their overall effectiveness. Each of the four areas that make up the overall judgment has also been graded.<sup>1</sup> Also, HMIC has considered how well prepared forces were to respond to serious threats, including a firearms attack. There is no graded judgment for this question, but force performance is described in each individual force report.

It is positive that overall most forces are good and slightly more forces have improved than have declined this year. This overall improvement has been brought about in part by a considerable improvement in forces' response to protecting vulnerable people, which is very welcome. However, this improvement has been at the apparent expense of other areas of policing. In particular, it has meant reduced investment in local policing, leading to an overall decline in the quality of preventative work.

	Inadequate	Requires Improvement	Good	Outstanding	Declined	Improved
Crime prevention	1	10	30	2	11	3
Crime investigation	0	17	26	0	8	6
Protecting vulnerable people	5	16	22	0	6	14
Serious and organised crime	1	9	29	4	7	5
Overall pillar grade	1	13	28	1	9	10

<sup>1</sup> Forces received graded judgments against four areas relating to: 1. preventing crime and anti-social behaviour; 2. investigating crime and managing offenders; 3. protecting those who are vulnerable; and 4. tackling serious and organised crime.

Despite the overall improving picture on vulnerability, there are still five forces which are inadequate in this area. In these forces, there have been common failings in identifying risk to victims at the point of first contact and in ensuring that victims at high risk of harm receive timely and appropriate responses. This problem is discussed in more depth later in the report. We found cases in all these forces where victims had not been swiftly protected (including domestic abuse victims and children).

One force, Durham Constabulary, is outstanding overall. A number of other forces are outstanding in some elements of the service they provide to the public, such as Norfolk Constabulary, Derbyshire Constabulary, Merseyside Police and Greater Manchester Police. Only one force, Bedfordshire Police, is inadequate overall. However, there are a number of other forces with poor performance: Gloucestershire Constabulary has three requires improvement grades and one inadequate grade (in serious and organised crime); Northamptonshire has requires improvement grades across the board, as it had last year. A number of forces have three out of four grades at requires improvement (South Yorkshire Police, Sussex Police and Staffordshire Police), and the Metropolitan Police Service has one inadequate grade and two at requires improvement.

## **Local policing and crime prevention**

HMIC is increasingly concerned that local policing is being eroded. A visible local policing presence that has the trust and confidence of the local community and maintains a detailed understanding of the risks and threats within the community, is critical in preventing crime and anti-social behaviour. Effective local policing teams are also valuable assets in the fight against organised crime and fulfil a pivotal role in keeping safe those in the community who are most vulnerable.

We found that the position on crime prevention and local policing continues to deteriorate. In our assessment, local policing is the area of operational policing that shows the greatest decline in performance. The public has noticed the lack of investment in local policing. There has been a considerable drop in the percentage who report seeing a uniformed police presence in their area. Only 19 percent of the public reported seeing a foot patrol at least once a month (compared to 26 percent last year) and only 42 percent reported seeing a vehicle patrol at least once a month (compared to 48 percent last year).

HMIC understands that forces have to make difficult decisions about where best to allocate their reduced resources. This should not result in forces providing one aspect of vital policing services at the expense of another. Many forces have chosen to increase their investment in supporting vulnerable people, which we welcome. But high-performing forces have also maintained a local policing presence, even against the backdrop of reductions in resources. This has allowed them to preserve important elements of crime prevention and engagement with the public, using

structured and evidence-based approaches to tackling local problems and providing preventative and targeted foot patrols. These elements have been proven to prevent crime and build public confidence.

Many forces have failed to redefine their local policing models to fit today's reducing budgets, changes in demands on their service, and changes in communities. As a result, local policing is not on the same footing as other elements of the service provided to the public by police forces. Local policing lacks the national guidance and standards which apply in other areas of policing. In some forces, short-term decisions to preserve the reactive areas of policing – those that respond to immediate high risks – are putting the future of local policing in jeopardy. It is time for the service to take decisive action by describing and committing to a model of highly professional community-based policing that is fit for today and tomorrow.

Where dedicated local policing teams exist, too often the warranted police officers on them are routinely taken away from their local policing duties to handle immediate tasks elsewhere. That leaves police community support officers (PCSOs) as the mainstays of these teams. As the number of PCSOs in England and Wales has reduced by 35 percent since 2010 and further reductions are planned, HMIC has significant concerns about the sustainability of this approach.

The work of local policing teams can thus be inconsistent, unstructured and ineffectively supported by other parts of the force. This has resulted in the following problems:

- A variable understanding of threat, harm and risk within communities as a result of a lack of analytical provision and little exploitation of data from other public services, such as housing and education.
- A general lack of clarity on how to engage and communicate with, and seek the views, of local people. While there are pockets of good creative work, these are often not joined up or supported by force resources, and there is variable exploitation of the opportunities presented by social media to communicate with the public.
- An inconsistent approach to tackling local problems in a structured way, and one which is not always based on approaches where there is evidence of effectiveness. Many forces do not apply routinely tried and tested methods, nor do they evaluate their own approaches to see what works and then provide this information to other people in the force and the wider police service.
- Ad hoc self-planned activity, with officers and PCSOs deciding priorities for themselves each day, rather than activity that is routinely directed by intelligence and analysis.

- Inconsistent use of powers to tackle anti-social behaviour.<sup>2</sup> There is a large and unexplained variation in the extent to which forces use powers to tackle anti-social behaviour, with some forces using these powers ten times more than others, proportionate to their relative sizes.

In too many respects, the police service still does not routinely base its practice on an evidence base, nor does it evaluate its approaches to add to that body of knowledge. This risks inefficient and ineffective approaches to policing, which the service cannot afford in an era of continuing budget pressures and growing demand and complexity. Urgent action is needed in many forces to ensure that a proactive and preventative element to policing is maintained, and Recommendation 1 addresses this matter.

## **Investigating crime**

In the 12 months to June 2016, the police in England and Wales recorded 4.6 million offences, which equates to 12,600 crimes each day. Police forces have to build the investigative capabilities of their workforces and allocate the investigative workload appropriately.

There is currently a national crisis in the severe shortage of investigators, such as detectives. Some forces are coping with considerable increases in the number of complex crimes (such as serious sexual offences) but in other forces there are not enough qualified detectives and other investigators to meet the demand effectively. In addition, there is little, if any, capacity for forces to assist one another through the temporary loan of detectives or other investigators where this is necessary. There are many reasons why some forces are struggling to recruit and develop detectives. In too many respects, this is leading to excessive workloads and stress among those currently in the roles and to complex investigations being led by those who lack the appropriate skills and experience. The police service recognises the problem and is taking steps to address the shortage through changes to the career path for detectives and other investigators, and an examination of the reward and recognition arrangements for these skilled roles. However, it will take time to build the capability and capacity of a new cadre of detectives. It is vital that police leaders and the College of Policing work with rank-and-file officers to assure themselves that current activity is moving fast and far enough to address this issue, and Recommendation 2 sets out a process for this.

For some time, HMIC has been concerned about the supervision of criminal investigations. Poor or inconsistent supervision means that too many cases do not make the progress that they should and too many of those investigating crimes do not develop their skills sufficiently. Good supervision is also vital for staff welfare.

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<sup>2</sup> There are a number of civil orders which police and other local organisations can use to tackle anti-social behaviour.

There is a particular lack of supervision over less specialist investigations. This is a problem, as the investigating officers for such cases often have lower levels of skills and experience than their more specialist colleagues.

Officers can be trained in supervision as part of their professionalising investigative practice training, and this can be supplemented by online training modules on investigative supervision. However, continuing professional development, particularly for those officers investigating crimes in local teams, is very much seen as a personal responsibility. Forces take an inconsistent approach on the extent to which supervisors should be experienced and trained, which is adversely affecting the quality of their work. This issue is more fundamental than simply one of access to training. The way that officers progress into supervisory ranks and the development of supervisory roles throughout a range of policing functions (for example, criminal investigation, response and neighbourhood policing) must take sufficient account of the need for the effective supervision of investigations.

The range of investigations conducted by the police and the increase in reporting and recording of particular crime types, such as domestic abuse and sexual offences, mean that forces are reconfiguring their investigative structures to ensure that the right people investigate each crime. At the time of the inspection, many forces were changing, had just changed or were about to change their policing models. Both the complexity of the crime and the vulnerability of the victim need to be considered in deciding which officer should investigate. For example, a so-called low-level crime such as criminal damage or common assault may involve a vulnerable victim and thus require a greater level of specialist support. HMIC is pleased to see that a number of forces no longer allocate crimes simply according to the type of crime that has been committed – for example, all theft and burglary attracts a detective but common assault is passed to a non-specialist uniformed officer – but make some assessment of risk and complexity and then allocate the investigation to the most appropriate team.

HMIC is still very concerned that too often police officers without the right skills and experience are investigating particular crimes. While this is not widespread in all forces, where it does happen it can have serious consequences for the victim. In some cases, complex investigations with vulnerable victims are conducted by non-specialist uniform officers rather than detectives. This is often the result of a lack of capacity in specialist investigation units or the failure to spot complexity or risk. It is vital that the structure the police force introduces puts a sufficient number of people with the right skills into the right units or departments to match the number and complexity of the crimes that they will investigate. Too many forces are still getting this wrong. In too many cases, they are not learning sufficiently from their previous mistakes or the mistakes of other forces.

Forces continue to scrutinise their performance in investigations through the use of the outcomes framework. This new system, introduced by the Home Office in 2013,

is designed to show to the public and others how well police forces carry out their investigations by reference to the nature and quality of the result achieved. The new system has exposed a problem that is of very serious concern to HMIC about the extent to which forces are not taking investigations further because the victim does not support police action. In some forces, more than one in five cases is not investigated fully for this reason. The figure is even higher for domestic abuse offences. It is disturbing that, in five forces, over half of domestic abuse offences have this outcome type, whereas in a different five forces, less than 20 percent of offences are deemed to fall within this type.

Overuse of this outcome is likely to mean that far too many perpetrators of extremely harmful domestic abuse crimes are not being brought to justice and victims are being failed by the police. Worryingly, in too many cases, the forces with high proportions of this outcome do not understand the reasons behind its use. HMIC has significant concerns that too often officers are electing to use this outcome to justify an investigation being completed, rather than engaging well with victims or pursuing cases on their behalf, even though the victim may be reluctant to proceed (often for complex reasons such as their own vulnerability or due to intimidation). The reasons for closing cases with this outcome need to be understood better as a matter of urgency, and assurance must be given to the public that this outcome is not just being used because it is quick and convenient and avoids a difficult and time-consuming investigation. Recommendation 3 says that the use of this outcome type should be urgently reviewed. HMIC also recommends that the six forces<sup>3</sup> with high rates of this outcome type compared to other forces, take urgent action to understand why the rates are so high and to take steps, as appropriate, to reduce those rates.

## Online crime

Technology is increasingly an integral part of our lives. However, HMIC remains concerned that police forces are not keeping pace with how technology is transforming the lives of citizens and changing how they experience crime. Many people are affected by online crime. Last year, one in ten adults was a victim at least once of fraud and computer misuse. Offenders are also increasingly using online methods to commit crime. Last year, 30 percent of blackmail offences, 45 percent of obscene publication offences and 11 percent of both stalking and harassment and child sexual offences were committed online in full or in part.<sup>4</sup> This is a problem that

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<sup>3</sup> Cleveland Police, Kent Police, Hampshire Constabulary, Humberside Police, Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police.

<sup>4</sup> *Crime in England and Wales: Year ending Sept 2016*. Office for National Statistics, 19 January 2017, section 3. Available at: [www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingsept2016](http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingsept2016)

worries the public: 82 percent think online crime is a big problem and 68 percent think the same about online anti-social behaviour. However, 42 percent do not feel confident that their local police could deal with online crime. It is important that this lack of public confidence is addressed.

Technology also provides the police with opportunities to investigate crime and apprehend suspects. In too many cases, forces are unable to exploit digital investigative opportunities because they have insufficient capacity or capability to do so. Digital forensic capability and capacity is not keeping up with demand. Forces have taken steps to shorten the time taken to examine devices such as mobile phones and laptops for evidence. At the time of our inspection, just over 16,000 digital devices were still awaiting examination. Some 75 percent of devices had been waiting for less than three months, and there were far fewer devices that had been waiting for over 12 months (5 in total).<sup>5</sup> However, some of the ways in which forces have achieved these improvements, such as using overtime to tackle backlogs of work, are not sustainable. There is still variation in the extent to which forces have backlogs in digital examinations, with four forces having considerably higher levels of backlog than the rest.

Considerable work is going on with police leaders, supported by bodies such as the College of Policing, on the capability required to retrieve and manage digital evidence, including the need to recruit and train the police workforce for the digital future. However, at the time of our inspection, there was not the evidence to suggest that the service has an established and achievable approach to ensuring that it can meet this increasing demand.

## **Catching criminals**

People suspected of a crime need to be swiftly located to protect the public, reassure victims and maximise the chance of a successful investigation. For many crimes, the opportunities to identify suspects may be limited, since there may not be forensic evidence or witness accounts. Suspects are identified in only half of crimes recorded in England and Wales and a large number of these identified suspects are still at large. HMIC has serious concerns that in too many forces there is a lack of grip, supervision, active management, pursuit and tracking down of wanted suspects.

In order to maximise the chance of catching offenders who may have moved between different force areas, those who are wanted in connection with a crime are put on the police national computer (PNC) so that all forces are aware of them. There are inconsistencies in how quickly forces send details of wanted suspects to the national system. It is understandable that forces may wish to make their own enquiries and to make initial attempts to apprehend suspects, particularly those

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<sup>5</sup> Not all forces could provide a breakdown of how long devices had been waiting for examination. The breakdown relates to 12,800 digital devices.

wanted for more minor offences. There are 67,000 people suspected of committing crime whose details are not on the PNC. There may be very good reason for this, but HMIC is concerned that there is considerable variation between forces in the length of time that elapses before details of suspects are placed on the PNC. It is also disturbing that twelve forces were unable provide HMIC with the number of people suspected of committing a crime whose details had not been put onto the PNC. There should be a clear national requirement that entries are placed on the PNC in a timely manner.

As at 11 August 2016, there were 45,960 wanted suspects on the PNC,<sup>6</sup> a larger number than in 2014.<sup>7</sup> We understand that there may be problems with the quality of the data,<sup>8</sup> but notwithstanding this, HMIC has concerns that in too many cases forces are taking insufficient action to actively track down wanted suspects once their details have been circulated on the PNC. While the largest proportion of records for wanted suspects are in respect of theft offences, suspects are also wanted for offences including terrorism, murder, rape and firearms offences. Twenty percent of records relate to theft. The next largest category, however, is for offences broadly categorised as violence with injury (12 percent). There are an appreciable number of records relating to rape (1012, or 2 percent) and to homicide (343, or 1 percent). Some 15 percent of the suspects on the PNC are wanted for bail offences, which means that the police had apprehended them at some point but had since lost track of them.

There is limited evidence that all forces are actively pursuing and tracking down wanted suspects, or identifying which ones are likely to cause the most harm. Some of those suspects that pose a high risk, such as prolific domestic abuse offenders, are made a priority for action. However, generally we did not find a systematic and sustained approach throughout forces to catching those who are suspected of crimes. We would expect a clear and timely process for entering suspects on the PNC, regular attempts to track down those individuals and evidence that someone in the force reviews the progress made towards catching the suspects.

Those people who are wanted for offences may well continue to cause harm until they are caught. Given the lack of a systematic and sustained approach to catching these suspects in some forces and the severity of the crimes that some are wanted for, Recommendation 4 says there should be a tighter set of national standards

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<sup>6</sup> This number relates to those wanted by Home Office forces.

<sup>7</sup> In September 2014, we published a report about wanted suspects were included on the PNC database. *Core Business: An Inspection into Crime Prevention, Police Attendance and the Use of Police Time*, HMIC, London, September 2014. Available at: [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/core-business/](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/core-business/)

<sup>8</sup> There may be people who are no longer resident in this country or who have died but are still on the database.



relating to apprehending suspects and clearer expectations of the reasonable steps that all forces should be taking.

## **Preventing reoffending**

A relatively small proportion of offenders are responsible for a high proportion of total crime and harm. Forces have a responsibility to work with other organisations, such as the probation service, prison service and drug and alcohol services, to protect the public from further harm and to address the underlying causes of offending behaviour. Within this general preventative work, there is a specific focus on the most prolific offenders, which is known as integrated offender management (IOM).

Our inspection found that there are inconsistencies in the extent to which the IOM model is applied to reduce harm rather than just to reduce the volume of offences. In many forces, there is still too much of a focus on theft, robbery and burglary, rather than on reducing threat, harm and risk. However, the picture has improved since last year: for example, offenders being managed through IOM now include domestic abuse perpetrators and gang members. Measures of success are limited, however, and the data that do exist are often of limited quality. For example, recorded reoffending rates are in a range from over 90 percent to under 10 percent; this suggests that forces treat the measure differently. The evidence which relates to longer-term outcomes is limited and often non-existent.

HMIC is concerned about the extent to which the public is being put at risk because of the limited capacity within many forces to manage the risk posed by the most dangerous offenders. Some individuals are so dangerous that they require a multi-agency response through a process known as a multi-agency public protection arrangement (MAPPA); individuals managed through this process will be subject to a multi-agency risk assessment. Some forces are struggling in too many cases to co-ordinate and contribute to such assessments, which involve substantial levels of resource from a range of organisations.

HMIC is also concerned about the workloads of the teams supervising registered sex offenders (RSOs). On too many occasions, unacceptably high workloads mean that police visits to registered sex offenders to assess the full risk that they pose to the community are being delayed. In some forces, there are also too many significant delays in carrying out supervisory visits to those offenders, visits that are required in order to keep communities safe. In six forces, over 10 percent of the RSOs had yet to be assessed at the time of our data collection; in one force, this figure was 30 percent. Throughout England and Wales, the risk represented by some 2,700 registered sex offenders had yet to be assessed. In too many respects, many forces are thus failing to understand and manage the risk posed to the public.

## Keeping vulnerable people safe

The police service has recognised that its response to those who are the most vulnerable is not always good enough. Police leaders and police and crime commissioners are committed to improving the police response to vulnerable people. Officers we spoke to at all ranks and throughout a range of forces told us that safeguarding and protecting vulnerable people are priorities for their forces. We have seen forces change their structures, realign their spending and resources, adapt their promotion approaches and redesign how they work to reflect these priorities. This year, it is encouraging that 14 forces have improved in their graded judgments on how they support vulnerable people and keep them safe.

HMIC does not underestimate the effort and commitment that it has taken to achieve this improvement. We also understand that demand has continued to increase in this area. Between August 2013 and June 2016, the police recorded a 61 percent increase in domestic abuse crimes. Increases in other crime types involving vulnerable victims – for example, recorded sexual offences have doubled since 2013 – also add to the demand in this complex and specialist area of investigation.

Despite this very welcome effort and improvements in many forces, HMIC is still finding some weaknesses in how forces keep vulnerable people safe. There are still 16 forces which HMIC judges to require improvement and 5 which are inadequate.

Forces are finding different ways to deal with increasing levels of demand with fewer resources. In some instances, these approaches are inappropriate, as they lead to failings in the force's ability to identify, or to respond effectively to, vulnerable victims, in particular to victims of domestic abuse. Examples include forces not always responding immediately or promptly to vulnerable victims, or sometimes inappropriately assessing risk over the telephone rather than face to face. We found that practices in a small number of forces were too often putting vulnerable people at serious risk of harm. HMIC urgently recommended that those dangerous practices be stopped at once. Often these practices are driven by the need to reduce the demands faced by the forces (such as by not sending officers to domestic abuse incidents) rather than by the needs of the public or the victim. This demand suppression is of serious concern to HMIC; it is vital that the forces' responses to resource pressures do not put the public at risk.

The variation in the extent to which forces use their powers and pursue criminal justice outcomes is currently unexplained. Forces must ensure that powers of arrest and the criminal justice system are used appropriately to support and protect current and potential future victims of offending behaviour. The number of arrests in domestic abuse crimes has fallen in about half the forces and across England and Wales, the rate at which domestic abuse perpetrators are being arrested has fallen by 15 percentage points. There is still a considerable variation in arrest rates between forces, from only a quarter of perpetrators of domestic abuse crimes being

arrested in some forces to over three-quarters in others. In some forces, the use of arrest as a way to support and protect victims has reduced to disturbingly low levels. On too many occasions, formal and informal police action to protect victims and deter offending is not being carried out.

As discussed earlier, investigations in about a third of domestic abuse cases do not progress because the victim does not support police action. In five forces, this figure is more than half of all domestic abuse cases. HMIC has significant concerns that police officers' discretion over their workload and a well-intentioned belief in victim-led policing mean that officers are not always properly discharging their responsibilities to keep people safe and to bring offenders to justice.

While forces have been reprioritising the work of their specialist investigative resources to protect vulnerable people, in too many respects HMIC still found that these units are under strength and, in some places, almost overwhelmed by the workload. Forces are trying a range of different approaches to ensure that there are sufficient specialist resources, particularly in light of the increases in demand in relation to domestic abuse and sexual offences. However, in many forces these approaches have yet to succeed in ensuring that workloads in specialist units are acceptable.

The continuing lack of capacity in these units means that, in some forces, on too many occasions, backlogs of risk assessments wait to be verified, cases are not allocated in a timely way to specialist investigators (or are allocated to inexperienced or unqualified investigators), and there are delays in referrals to other agencies. This means that victims may not get the right level of support or protection quickly enough, including from other services such as social care and health. This could mean that they and their children are at risk of further harm.

## **Tackling serious and organised crime**

Most forces are good at tackling serious and organised crime: 29 forces are judged to be good and 4 are outstanding. Forces' ability to pursue organised criminals is well established, their understanding of the threats they pose is growing, and, in many parts of the country, there is evidence of an increasing emphasis on working with other agencies and on prevention. However, a shift in approach is needed if forces are to maintain and improve this level of effectiveness, as organised crime and approaches to tackling it become more complex. For example, cyber-enabled crime is highly technical and specialist.

Most forces' understanding of serious and organised crime is improving. They have worked, with support from regional organised crime units (ROCUs), at identifying non-traditional threats, such as from child sexual exploitation and cyber-crime. They have developed approaches to assess the risk, threat and harm that these crimes pose to their communities. Even in relation to more traditional forms of organised

crime, such as drug trafficking and dealing, forces are recognising and responding to the vulnerable people who are involved. However, in common with other areas of policing, many forces have yet to incorporate properly into their assessments data from organisations such as health services, Immigration Enforcement, HM Revenue and Customs, and education services. Doing so would greatly enrich the understanding of serious and organised crime, both in the forces themselves and in those other organisations, allowing them all to tackle it more effectively.

When a force identifies an organised crime group, it assesses the group's criminal intent and capability by carrying out a nationally standardised procedure known as mapping. Mapping enables forces to understand the threat posed by organised crime groups and informs decisions about which groups to tackle first and which tactics to use.

However, in too many respects the mapping process is still used inconsistently in forces. HMIC is concerned that inconsistent mapping means that the police service does not have a coherent national picture of the threat posed to communities by organised crime. On too many occasions, forces are failing to map organised crime groups once they have been identified. It is unacceptable that some large urban forces with a high threat from serious and organised crime have relatively fewer mapped criminal groups than small rural forces. In some cases, this is because forces find other methods easier to apply or more helpful in informing operational decision-making. In others, it is because of a reluctance to map groups which forces then do not have the resources to investigate or disrupt.

Two things need to happen for there to be a much-needed clear national picture of the threat from organised crime, and these are the subject of Recommendation 5. The first is for forces to transfer the mapping function to regional organised crime units. HMIC recommended this in 2015; it is happening too slowly (or not at all) in most regions. It is crucial that the pace of this work is accelerated so that there is more consistent mapping throughout all forces.

The second is an overhaul of the mapping process itself to make it more fit for purpose. The police service is aware that, while mapping provides a helpful structure for assessing many aspects of organised crime, it is poorly suited to assessing the intent and capability of groups involved in newer threats such as cyber-crime or organised child sexual exploitation. The process therefore needs updating. Some work is under way in the police service and the National Crime Agency to achieve this.

The vast majority of forces respond effectively to organised crime groups, but many remain too heavily focused on catching and convicting organised criminals, rather than on preventing serious and organised crime from happening in the first place. The pursuit of organised crime groups and those individuals causing the most harm is a vital role of the police, who have the law enforcement and coercive powers.

However, while much of the current work is excellent, there needs to be a fundamental shift in approach if the police service and partner organisations are to reduce permanently the serious and organised criminality that blights many communities. The need for this shift is most acute in some large metropolitan forces; these forces cannot rely solely on enforcement to protect the public from organised crime.

The approach within forces needs to change. There needs to be improvement in the extent to which local policing teams are engaged meaningfully in tackling serious and organised crime. We have seen some good work in some forces but there is still further to go. Forces must have a long-term approach to managing existing offenders so that those offenders are constantly thwarted in their attempts to continue their criminal activities. This approach should include the use of preventative powers which place highly restrictive conditions on organised criminals on their release from prison. Finally, there should be a better understanding of the effect of force activities in reducing serious organised crime.

A greater emphasis on working with others is also vital. Forces cannot fight serious and organised crime successfully in isolation. They need information and intelligence from other organisations and they need these organisations to use their assets and powers to disrupt organised crime groups. They need to work more closely with regional organised crime units to make sure that they understand the full extent of organised criminal networks, rather than simply targeting mid-level criminals whose roles are often filled quickly by others if they are caught and imprisoned. There is a richer set of intelligence sources at regional level that can help to understand broader criminal networks. There are also more specialist capabilities, such as undercover teams, specialist surveillance and witness protection. Other agencies are also crucial, both in supplying intelligence and in bringing different powers and sanctions to bear to disrupt and dismantle these groups. For example, Immigration Enforcement, HM Revenue and Customs and National Trading Standards all have powers which can disrupt the work of organised criminals.

Although some improvements need to be made at force level, many require national effort and co-ordination. In too many respects, the system in its current form makes it difficult for forces and ROCUs to operate to their fullest potential. A new, nationally consistent approach to assessing the threat posed by serious and organised crime should be developed by the police service, the National Crime Agency and the Home Office. This would enable a true picture of risk, lead to the better alignment of resources at all levels to the most serious threats, produce a much clearer national

picture of the effect of law enforcement on organised crime, and, in short, facilitate a national system for tackling organised crime groups which is commensurate with the threats that they pose.

## **Specialist capability**

HMIC also inspected forces' specialist capabilities. The results of this inspection will be published shortly. There was a particular focus on the work that forces had done to be ready to respond to a firearms attack, including a terrorist attack similar to the tragic events in Paris in 2015. We have found that, following this event, all forces reviewed the threat posed to their communities from a firearms attack. Alongside the comprehensive national programme to increase firearms capability and capacity, which is on track, forces have considered whether, in light of the risks faced, they need to strengthen further their response in this area. Given the severity of the threat faced, HMIC will be recommending some specific national requirements to ensure that all forces assess the risk and plan their response as thoroughly as possible. These issues will be explored further in a later report.

# Recommendations

## Cause of concern

HMIC found that neighbourhood policing continues to be eroded. The police service is no longer consistently implementing elements of neighbourhood policing known to be effective in preventing and tackling traditional crime, and has not yet applied these to 21st century threats (online crime and so-called hidden and complex crimes).

## Recommendation 1

- By December 2017, the College of Policing, working with the National Police Chiefs' Council and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, should review the existing evidence about what makes effective neighbourhood policing, and develop and issue national guidance setting out the essential elements of neighbourhood policing which all forces should provide. This guidance should cover, but not be limited to:
  - public engagement to inform preventative policing activity;
  - targeted intelligence-led preventative activity and patrolling;
  - effective problem-solving policing to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour;
  - effective involvement of neighbourhood policing in tackling serious and organised crime, in preventing violent extremism and in keeping the most vulnerable members of communities safe;
  - effective multi-agency approaches to local problems;
  - analytical capability to support effective and targeted preventative policing; and
  - capability to review and assess the effectiveness of the action taken, to learn what works and to implement that effectively across the whole force area.
- Immediately after the national guidance has been issued, all forces should review their own approach to neighbourhood policing to determine whether the service they provide to local communities meets these guidelines. As soon as practicable thereafter, they should put into effect any necessary changes to implement the national guidance.

### **Cause of concern**

HMIC found a severe shortage of qualified detectives and other investigators and has concluded that this now constitutes a national crisis. Some forces are coping with significant increases in the number of complex crimes (including serious sexual offences) but in other forces there are not enough qualified detectives and other investigators efficiently and effectively to meet the demand. In addition, there is little, if any, capacity for forces to assist one another through the temporary loan of detectives or other investigators where this is necessary or expedient. While the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), working with forces, is already taking steps to tackle the national shortage, it is vital that this activity is of sufficient pace and scale to solve the problem.

### **Recommendation 2**

- By June 2017, the National Police Chiefs' Council, working with the College of Policing, should review what is currently being done at both force and national levels to tackle the national shortage of qualified detectives and other investigators. By June 2017, they should provide a report to HMIC and the Home Office as to whether the steps now being taken are sufficient to tackle the shortfall and, if they are not, as to what further steps are necessary in that respect.
- By December 2017, the National Police Chiefs' Council, working with the College of Policing, should establish and immediately put into effect and expeditiously pursue a national action plan to remedy the shortfall in numbers of detectives and qualified investigators. The action plan should state the respective responsibilities of individual forces, the NPCC, the College of Policing and the Home Office in this respect, and contain a specification of the steps to be taken by each and the timescale according to which those steps should be taken.



### **Cause of concern**

HMIC found that there is an unacceptable and poorly-understood variation in the extent to which forces assign to investigations the outcome type (see annex for further details): 'Evidential difficulties: victim does not support police action'.

### **Recommendation 3**

- Each force that has assigned to appreciably high levels of investigations (when compared with other forces) the outcome type (Cleveland Police, Kent Police, Hampshire Constabulary, Humberside Police, Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police) 'Evidential difficulties: victim does not support police action' should:
  - by 1 May 2017, produce and submit to HMIC an action plan that sets out: how it will undertake a comprehensive analysis of the use of this outcome type across the force area in order fully to understand why it is an outlier; how it will review the extent to which the force's use of this outcome type is appropriate; and, as is likely, the steps that it will take to improve its service to victims by reducing the extent to which investigations are assigned to this outcome type;
  - immediately thereafter put that action plan into effect; and
  - by 30 June 2017, submit to HMIC a report on the results of the comprehensive analysis of the use of this outcome type.
- By September 2017, the Home Office, working with the National Police Chiefs' Council and police forces, should determine whether any further guidance should be issued regarding the use of this outcome type or whether more significant changes are required to the outcomes framework, and if necessary issue further guidance in this respect to forces as soon as practicable thereafter.

### **Cause of concern**

HMIC found that in many forces there is a material lack of focus, grip and effective activity directed to apprehending wanted suspects. There are too often inconsistencies and weaknesses in how rapidly forces circulate information about wanted suspects on the Police National Computer (PNC), and too often inadequate efforts are made to apprehend these individuals once the information has been circulated.

### **Recommendation 4**

- Immediately, all forces should review their current procedures for apprehending wanted suspects, assess the number of wanted suspects on the PNC and those whose details have yet to be circulated on the PNC, and take prompt and effective action to apprehend those suspects.
- By September 2017, the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) should develop clear guidance for forces on the requirements and process for entering the details of suspects on the Police National Computer and the reasonable steps forces should take to apprehend those wanted individuals once their details have been circulated. The NPCC should work closely with forces to develop this guidance.
- In its PEEL effectiveness inspection 2017, HMIC will test forces' readiness to comply with the established approach.

### **Causes of concern**

HMIC found that the current approach to mapping organised crime groups is applied by forces in an unacceptably inconsistent way, giving an incomplete and inaccurate picture of the national threat. Given the severity and nature of organised crime, a more coherent and consistent approach is critical.

### **Recommendation 5**

- Immediately, the responsibility for mapping organised crime groups should be transferred from individual police forces to regional organised crime units, and this transfer should be completed no later than September 2017.
- By September 2017, in order to improve the consistency of organised crime group mapping, the National Crime Agency should lead a comprehensive review of the suitability of the current mapping approach for assessing and tackling the broad range of threats posed by serious and organised criminality (including organised crime groups, urban street gangs and other criminal networks) and, if necessary, issue guidance on a revised national approach as soon as practicable thereafter.

## Preventing crime and anti-social behaviour

The mission of policing is broad and complex, encompassing a wide range of functions, which are often linked to those of other agencies. The public expects the police not only to catch offenders but also to work effectively, and in partnership, to understand and find sustainable solutions to a variety of social problems that are common in communities. It is an integral part of the police's job to be proactive in identifying such problems, along with the causes of crime and anti-social behaviour.

Neighbourhood policing built around problem-solving and crime prevention helps to keep people and communities safe. It builds trust, reduces the fear of crime and leads to greater confidence and more reporting of crime. When done properly, crime prevention and problem-solving are cost effective: they are cheaper than the investigation of committed crime and can reduce demand not only for the services of the police but also for other public services.

HMIC assesses how effective forces are at preventing crime and anti-social behaviour and examines how well they:

- use intelligence to identify the threat, risk and harm to communities;
- work with local communities to understand policing priorities;
- use an evidence-based approach to tackle local problems (problem-solving<sup>9</sup>);
- use tactics and interventions to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour; and
- review their own performance and take action to improve their services.

Our findings are organised under these headings in the rest of this chapter.

### **What models have forces adopted to provide neighbourhood policing and how effective are they?**

HMIC has graded 2 forces as outstanding, 30 forces as good, 10 forces as requires improvement and 1 force as inadequate. This is a deterioration from last year's results, as more forces now require improvement. HMIC found evidence that the service is suffering from the reduction in neighbourhood-based teams. This is a consequence of forces giving priority to addressing vulnerability and risk and on occasion broader budget reductions; these factors have resulted in the design and implementation of new operating models. In some force this has meant that resources have been shifted away from neighbourhoods.

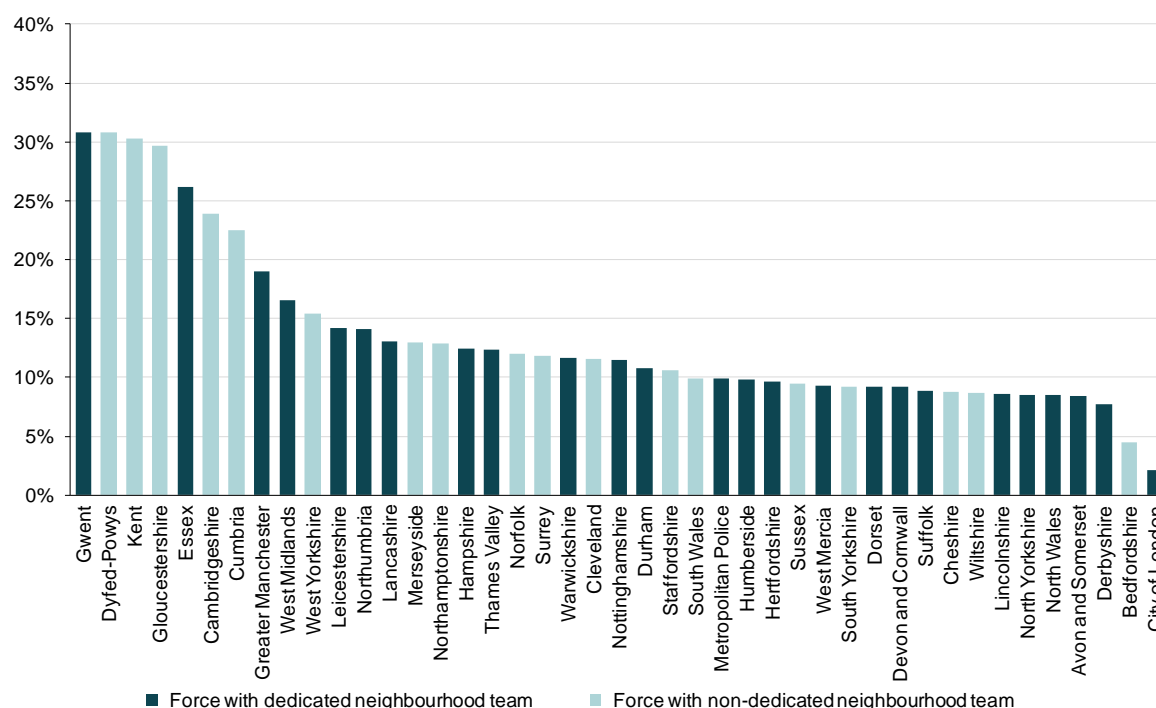
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<sup>9</sup> Problem-solving policing is a structured approach to addressing specific problems; it aims to apply rational and evidence-based analysis of problems and their solutions in a policing context.

All forces allocate at least some resources to the prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour through neighbourhood or local policing teams, and in some forces this investment is considerable. HMIC found several different models for such teams: 25 forces had a dedicated neighbourhood model, 12 a partially integrated model, 3 a fully integrated model, 2 a prioritised model, and 1 force did not specify.<sup>10</sup> This finding supports HMIC's concern there is now a varied and inconsistent approach to neighbourhood policing across the service. HMIC understands that different local circumstances might require a service to be provided in a different way, for example in a rural area neighbourhood teams may be more likely to mix a preventative proactive role and one which is focused on emergency response, as they will be the closest people to the incident.

The data shows a very mixed picture of spending on neighbourhood policing, but, regardless of their chosen model, over two-thirds of forces now allocate less than 13 percent of their total overall budget to it.

**Figure 1: Percentage of force expenditure allocated to neighbourhood policing**



**Source: Police Objective Analysis data**

<sup>10</sup> Dedicated model – staff time spent mainly on engagement, problem solving and prevention activity in a specific location; fully integrated model – neighbourhood and response functions are combined with some investigation; partially integrated model – neighbourhood and response staff have separate functions but neighbourhood staff respond and investigate when demand is high; prioritised model – a fully integrated model but in specific areas has dedicated staff performing neighbourhood functions. These numbers are based on figures supplied by forces to the HMIC 2016 effectiveness data collection.

HMIC has previously been concerned that resources for dedicated neighbourhood policing are starting to diminish as forces balance competing and challenging demands and that even if officers allocated to neighbourhood teams they are taken away from their preventative neighbourhood policing duties. To gain a more accurate picture of this risk, HMIC conducted a voluntary survey of neighbourhood officers across the service to understand how often they were taken away from their neighbourhood roles to work on other priorities, how suitable the tasks that they were assigned were, and the effect of increased workloads (for further details see About the data, Annex A). The findings indicated that between half and two-thirds of constables with a neighbourhood role had been taken away from their normal duties once or more a week, with around one-fifth being taken away three times or more. The survey also indicated that around one-third of police community support officers were taken away from neighbourhood duties every week, with around one in ten being taken away three times or more often. This was often to perform functions not associated with crime prevention or community engagement, such as supervision of people in cells or hospitals or transporting detainees. This information supports HMIC's findings on inspection that, in reality, officers who are apparently dedicated to neighbourhoods are increasingly not able to police their neighbourhoods as communities expect.

HMIC understands that forces need to balance proactive and reactive policing, and that in some cases it is necessary to take neighbourhood officers away to deal with particular but non routine events where a large number of officers present is required, for example a football match. However, management of the way in which neighbourhood policing resources are used outside their designated area is unclear and a cause for concern. HMIC discovered that some forces do not have a clear understanding of the extent to which their neighbourhood officers are taken away for other duties or what neighbourhood officers do. Twenty-two forces do not have a suitable policy for managing the process of taking neighbourhood officers away for other priorities (an abstraction policy). In those forces that did have a policy, HMIC found very limited evidence of any assessment or understanding of the effect that taking officers away was having. HMIC is encouraged that a few forces are starting to take steps to understand the consequences of their abstractions. For example, Cleveland Police has initiated 'Operation Impact', which is a force-wide initiative to ensure neighbourhood staff are deployed to the right place, at the right time as determined by repeat victims, locations and anti-social behaviour trends.

Neighbourhood policing responsibilities are becoming wider and more varied. HMIC found evidence of neighbourhood officers doing more investigations. While, in some cases, this was appropriate, in others the crime investigation required was often protracted and complex. As a consequence, officers are not always available to undertake dedicated crime prevention work in their neighbourhoods, and the work of neighbourhood teams, across the service, is becoming more irregular, unstructured, and is supported ineffectively by other force resources.

The public have noticed these changes to neighbourhood policing. A recent public survey, conducted by Ipsos MORI on behalf of HMIC (see annex A for further details), examined public attitudes towards police effectiveness across England and Wales. Results indicated that the levels of perceived effectiveness of local policing across different aspects of the service are lower than last year, with only 30 percent of the public rating their local police force as effective on crime prevention and 37 percent rating them as effective on tackling anti-social behaviour.<sup>11</sup> When asked whether local policing had got better or worse, the percentage of respondents stating that services had deteriorated was 20 percent, whereas only 5 percent said the service had improved. While 70 percent felt that crime and anti-social behaviour levels within their communities had remained the same as last year, 17 percent felt levels had increased and only 6 percent felt levels had fallen.

HMIC remains concerned that in too many places the police service is in danger of becoming too reactive. The extent to which neighbourhood teams are diverted to other work is too often detracting from neighbourhood policing and limiting problem-solving opportunities. HMIC encourages forces to find ways to provide resources for preventative policing. Effective neighbourhood policing can produce valuable local information to help the police to reduce and prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and to safeguard the public from risk.

## **Use of intelligence to identify the threat, risk and harm within communities**

To be effective operationally, it is vitally important that the police are able to gather information from various sources, including the community. Intelligence can be used to prevent crime, drive proactive policing and produce profiles based on research and analysis to support problem-solving.

To assess how appropriately forces make use of intelligence to understand the level of the threat, risk and harm present within their communities, HMIC interviewed police officers and staff at a range of operational levels. HMIC looked for reference to, and knowledge of, strategic assessments, local profiles or plans and other force documentation to support an intelligence-led approach to preventing crime and anti-social behaviour. HMIC also considered whether force priorities reflected crime prevention and how well such approaches were prioritised.

During our inspection work HMIC found that all forces had intelligence-based strategic assessments and over half had specific crime prevention strategies, although the two were not often linked. In over half of forces, it remains unclear how such information informs a preventative approach or how it reaches the front line to have the most effect and enable neighbourhood teams to serve and protect

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<sup>11</sup> Around a third of respondents did not express a view.

effectively those communities most at risk. To support this concern, HMIC found a variable understanding of threat, risk and harm, at a local operational level. While most officers had a good understanding of the importance of preventative activity, HMIC did not find evidence to suggest that prevention of crime is a consistent focus of all neighbourhood teams. Where dedicated neighbourhood teams existed, HMIC did find some examples of excellent work, often with other local services, and officers demonstrated strong operational understanding of the communities they served, but this was often knowledge retained by officers and not centrally stored or recorded by forces. However, HMIC is concerned to find that many forces have a poor local understanding of their rapidly changing and extremely diverse communities.

In just over half of forces, HMIC was unable to find evidence that neighbourhood policing teams used intelligence to become actively engaged in problem-solving on problems created by organised crime groups (OCGs). While some neighbourhood teams took responsibility for, and proactively managed, OCGs, HMIC found that involvement in disruption activity was often based on the needs of the moment and the link between some criminality and criminal groups was poorly understood by neighbourhood officers. This was partly the result of OCGs being either managed elsewhere in the force or not properly assessed and mapped, but mainly because of a lack of communication between different teams and ineffective dissemination of OCG intelligence to neighbourhood officers.

An important element of forces' understanding of crime prevention and anti-social behaviour is derived through use of neighbourhood profiles.<sup>12</sup> These are identified as an essential part of local policing in the College of Policing's Authorised Professional Practice for community engagement.<sup>13</sup> Profiles should be used to enable both the police and their partner organisations to identify risk and vulnerability and then target it appropriately through a dedicated problem-solving approach. HMIC recognises that forces may use other approaches to gaining insight into local communities and giving this insight to frontline officers.

At the time of our inspection HMIC found an inconsistent use of neighbourhood profiles, or alternative analysis, to support problem-solving in local communities. Although 36 forces stated that they use such products, their use was not always apparent. Too often, HMIC discovered outdated neighbourhood profiles which were no longer being used. Where profiles did exist, in some cases they had not been kept up to date or used effectively to support crime prevention. HMIC found evidence that many of the profiles contained only existing police information and lacked

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<sup>12</sup> Neighbourhood profiles are an effective way of compiling a range of police and partnership data to assist in the understanding of neighbourhood's and the people living and working in them.

<sup>13</sup> *Authorised Professional Practice - Engagement and communication*, College of Policing, 2013. Available from: [www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/engagement-and-communication/?s](http://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/engagement-and-communication/?s)



partnership data. A small number of forces had no profiles at all and no evidence was found to suggest that those forces used alternative methods to understand their communities.

In over three-quarters of forces, HMIC found evidence that crime prevention and problem-solving at a neighbourhood level are used routinely because of a lack of analytical support. Analytical provision and intelligence resources tended to be used for more reactive or time-critical policing operations instead. Neighbourhood teams are too often failing to take a targeted approach to dealing with local crime and anti-social behaviour. The analytical capacity of many forces has reduced, meaning that their ability to process intelligence and continually to improve their approaches to crime prevention has also reduced.

As analytical resources across the service are apparently shrinking, HMIC encourages forces to make better use of opportunities available through new and emerging technology. Innovative analytical techniques should be used to help the service to make decisions about where to target resources. HMIC found that most forces have not yet explored fully the use of new and emerging techniques and analysis to direct operational activity at a local level. Forces need to develop a greater awareness of the benefits available from sophisticated crime-mapping software and enhanced analysis in predicting and preventing crime within local communities. Intelligent use of such technology could improve effectiveness, release officer capacity, and is likely to be cost effective.

## **Work with local communities to understand policing priorities**

Good community engagement is central to the provision of problem solving; an active community will influence local priorities and help to increase police effectiveness. Findings from the Ipsos MORI survey indicated that the public has a high interest in knowing what their local police are doing, (75 percent of respondents). Engagement should be a principal, clear and unambiguous police activity, and neighbourhood teams are uniquely placed to lead it. However, HMIC found a limited and confused picture of engagement in most forces.

While the police service recognises that community engagement needs to evolve, in many forces HMIC found a general lack of clarity or understanding about how this should be done. HMIC often found poor knowledge of how to engage and communicate with communities. This runs the risk that the views of some people, especially those who are more reluctant to trust or engage with the police, migrant communities and older people, might not be heard. Also, HMIC is concerned that the service is not developing co-ordinated engagement strategies quickly enough to meet the needs of such communities. Good engagement should help shape and inform local priorities, enabling forces to provide a service that is designed to meet the community's needs fully.

Where dedicated neighbourhood teams existed, their efforts to engage their communities were varied. Fewer people now feel informed about local policing issues. The Ipsos MORI survey findings in 2016 highlighted a three percentage point drop in this figure compared to 2015. There was also a four percentage point drop in the number of people who stated that they had been asked their views about local crime and anti-social behaviour priorities within the last 12 months, although as we have noted earlier in the report their interest in being involved in local priorities remains high.

In over two-thirds of forces, HMIC discovered widespread evidence that officers continue to engage using traditional methods such as the force website, meetings, leaflet drops and surgeries. While such conventional methods can be of benefit to some, in many cases forces are not seeking more innovative ways to engage with their communities. This is despite growing acknowledgement that communities are changing fast and becoming more transient and more diverse. More inclusive and sophisticated methods of engagement should be developed to enable forces to establish a better understanding of their communities, so that they can serve them effectively and keep people safe.

HMIC considered how forces engage through social media and discovered an inconsistent approach, although there were some innovative practices in some forces. There were many positive examples of neighbourhood teams having dedicated Facebook pages, but these were often limited in content and were local initiatives rather than having the support of the wide force. Forces were not routinely using social media in a structured way to gauge the public's views, seek feedback or help create priority areas, although a number of forces including Staffordshire and Devon and Cornwall are starting to explore the public perception of police social media engagement and how this can be improved.

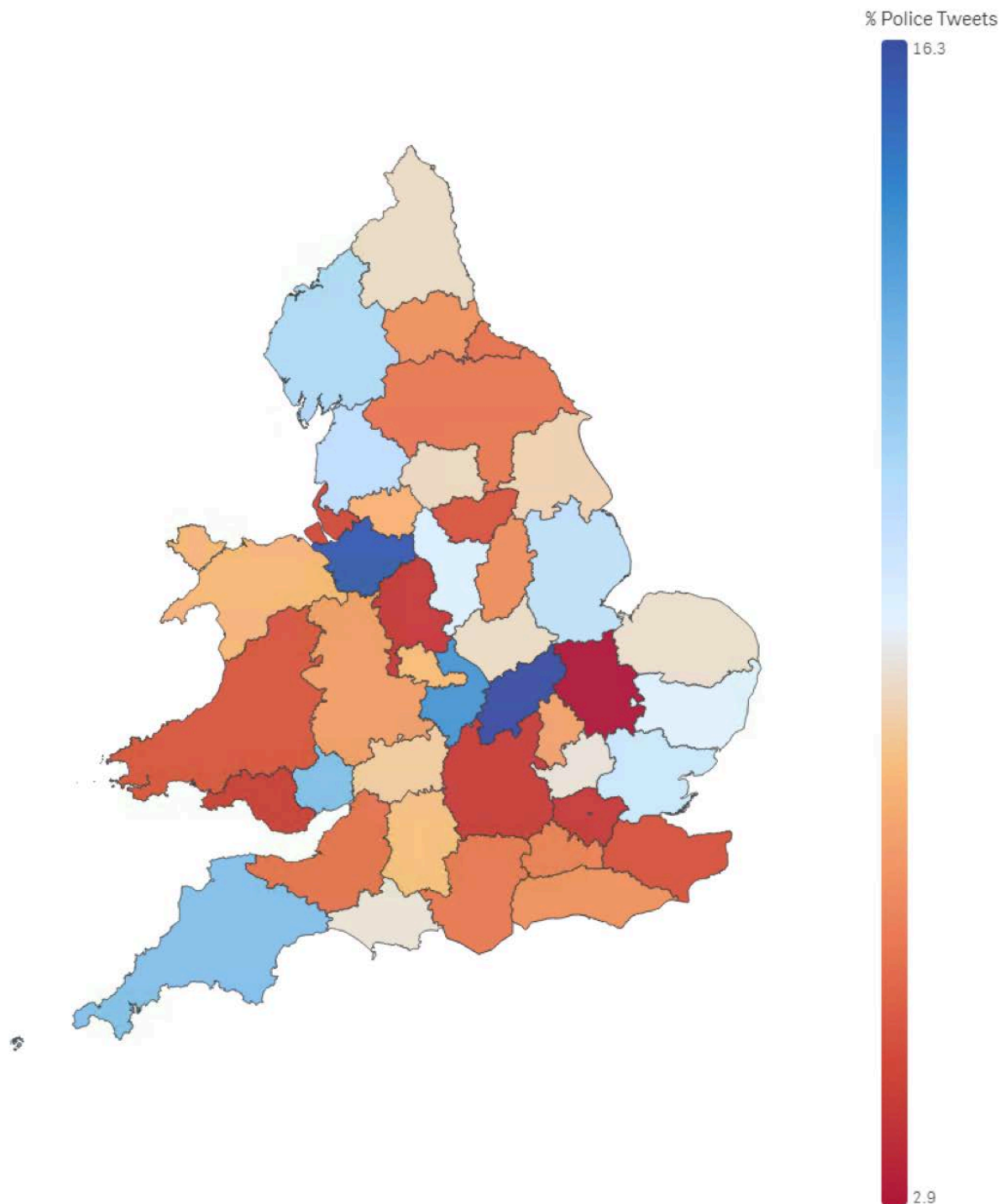
Findings produced by CASM Consulting LLP for HMIC regarding the use of Twitter indicated that there was considerable daily discussion about crime and public safety across England and Wales, running at about 7,800 tweets relating to this topic per day.<sup>14</sup> As a method of engagement, Twitter provides an opportunity for forces to gain valuable insight into what the local online public is talking about, including on crime prevention and anti-social behaviour. HMIC understands that Twitter is not the only way that forces communicate with and engage the public, and plans further research to consider other social media approaches such as Facebook.

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<sup>14</sup> This research was conducted for HMIC by CASM Consulting LLP. The research involved the continuous collection of 50 days of Twitter data that contained discussion about 11 crime types agreed in consultation with HMIC. In order to organise the data for statistical analysis all tweets were sorted into the police force area they were sent from, and then further processed into relevant discussions about crime and disorder. There are number of caveats that need to be considered when using this data; data collection limitations, the accuracy of the algorithms that processed the data, and the representativeness of Twitter data

The prominence of a police voice in such discussions is varied across the service, and opportunities to use social media so the public can influence local priorities are rare. Closer examination of the findings revealed that a police voice was evident in only 6.2 percent of the discussion. Proportionally, the information and discussion originating from police Twitter accounts varied from 16.9 percent of the total in Northamptonshire to 2.9 percent in Cambridgeshire.

**Figure 2: Percentage of police-originated tweets**

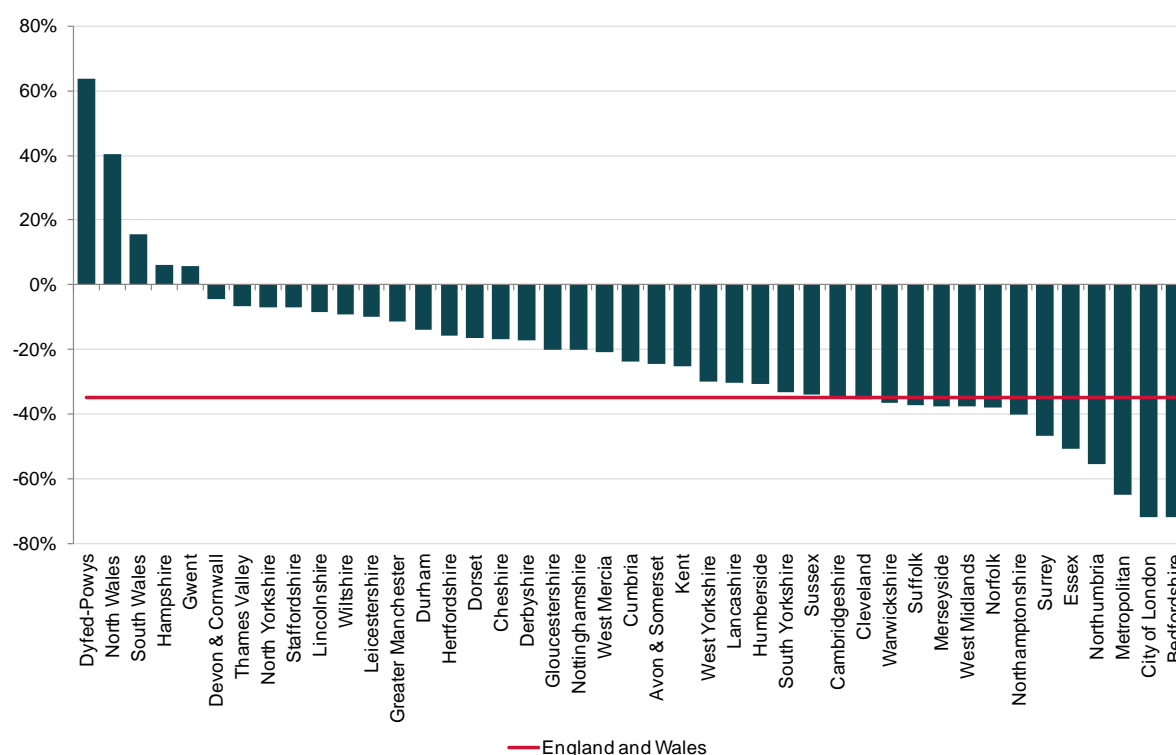


Source: CASM Consulting LLP

HMIC found that the police service is still learning how to make best use of digital engagement, that is using online methods to engage with the public, through varied use of a range of social media networks. There is scope for forces to explore opportunities in this area, especially as growing numbers in society now live more of their lives online. It is important that forces assess the benefits of online visibility, or how this may look in the future. The public still wants the reassurance of a physical police presence, and foot patrols are an important element of effective neighbourhood engagement. Forces are not yet considering, the extent to which an online presence fulfils this function and they are not exploiting fully or consistently the opportunities to engage online.

In the majority of forces the presence of police community support officers (PCSOs) is still the main way in which the police are visible and accessible within communities, with PCSOs sometimes undertaking tasks traditionally associated with police officers. In a small number of forces, some PCSOs responded to emergency incidents and conducted crime investigations. In England and Wales, the service has seen a 35 percent decrease in PCSOs since 2010 and numbers are expected to continue to decline.

**Figure 3: Change in number of PCSOs (full-time equivalents) from 31 March 2010 to 31 March 2016**



**Source: Home Office Police workforce statistics**

HMIC is concerned about this reduction in community-based resources and the effect it will have upon engagement and public confidence. There has been considerable drop in the percentage who report seeing a uniform presence in their area. Only 19 percent of the public reporting seeing a foot patrol at least once a

month (compared to 26 percent last year) and 33 percent of respondents stated they saw a uniformed presence less often than in 2015. This combination of fewer resources, a reduced uniformed presence which is noticed by the public, and inconsistent engagement which HMIC found evidence of, is having an effect on public satisfaction. There was a four percentage point drop compared to 2015 in those who were satisfied with uniformed police presence in their communities.

If neighbourhood police are to maintain their vital links with the public, then forces need a better understanding of the local issues to enable the appropriate allocation of resources dedicated to crime prevention and to provide a service to meet the community's needs. To achieve this, the service needs to act quickly to adopt new methods of engagement, especially as budgets and resources reduce.

It is clear to HMIC that community engagement presents problems to many forces. A lack of quality engagement poses a risk to communities, through the police having a poor understanding of local problems and an inability to respond appropriately. A more structured and wider approach to understanding communities is needed. In the face of continued significant change, HMIC believes that the service must seek opportunities to develop innovative methods of engagement and keep a problem-solving approach at its heart, in order to meet the needs of communities first time around.

## **Using a problem-solving approach**

Intelligence-led and problem-solving policing are two of the most developed and effective approaches to reducing crime and anti-social behaviour. Problem-solving approaches have a positive effect on crime and anti-social behaviour and are a critical element of neighbourhood policing. There is documented evidence that problem-solving approaches have a positive effect in terms of reducing the level of crime and anti-social behaviour in an area.

HMIC looked for evidence of where problem-solving is clearly understood and established in forces. We were disappointed to find that in over 30 forces problem solving was either inconsistent and unstructured or virtually non-existent. There was limited evidence of both established and new problem-solving models. While neighbourhood officers in three-quarters of forces demonstrated knowledge of models such as the SARA model,<sup>15</sup> their use was not widespread.

HMIC is concerned that problem-solving initiatives based on data analysis and local information are not being used frequently by forces. As discussed earlier in this chapter, there is a decline in forces using analysis to produce high-quality neighbourhood profiles to help identify where crime and anti-social behaviour occurs.

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<sup>15</sup> SARA is a commonly used problem-solving method and stands for scanning, analysis, response and assessment.

HMIC found some pocket of good practice in terms of the use of profiles at a local level: for example, Durham Constabulary had a clearly defined and informed process for the management of problem-solving plans, which included a good structure, partnership involvement, regular review by supervisors and analysis of any outcome. Nonetheless, in general, detailed problem-solving plans were not always evident in the majority of forces during our inspection work. Those that did exist were not regularly reviewed by a supervisor and no formal evaluation method was applied to assess the value and effect of the operational activity that was undertaken.

HMIC remains disappointed that, despite the evidence that a structured approach to problem-solving works, progress in this area has not been sustained across the service. In some forces, this effective approach risks being lost due an inconsistent application of problem solving models and officers' lack of knowledge. We are now seeing an inconsistent approach to tackling local problems in a structured way, and one which is not always based on approaches where there is evidence of effectiveness. Many forces do not apply tried and tested methods, nor do they evaluate their own approaches to see what works.

Despite its concerns, HMIC was pleased to find that there remains widespread understanding of the benefits of working with other partners, such as local authorities, social services and health. There was evidence of positive partnership arrangements in all forces, and this is generally withstanding the resource pressures across the public service. Although a joint objective to try to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour was not always clearly defined, some forces have started to use the problem-solving approach with other local public services and are beginning to operate with other agencies in a more integrated way.

## **Use of tactics and interventions to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour**

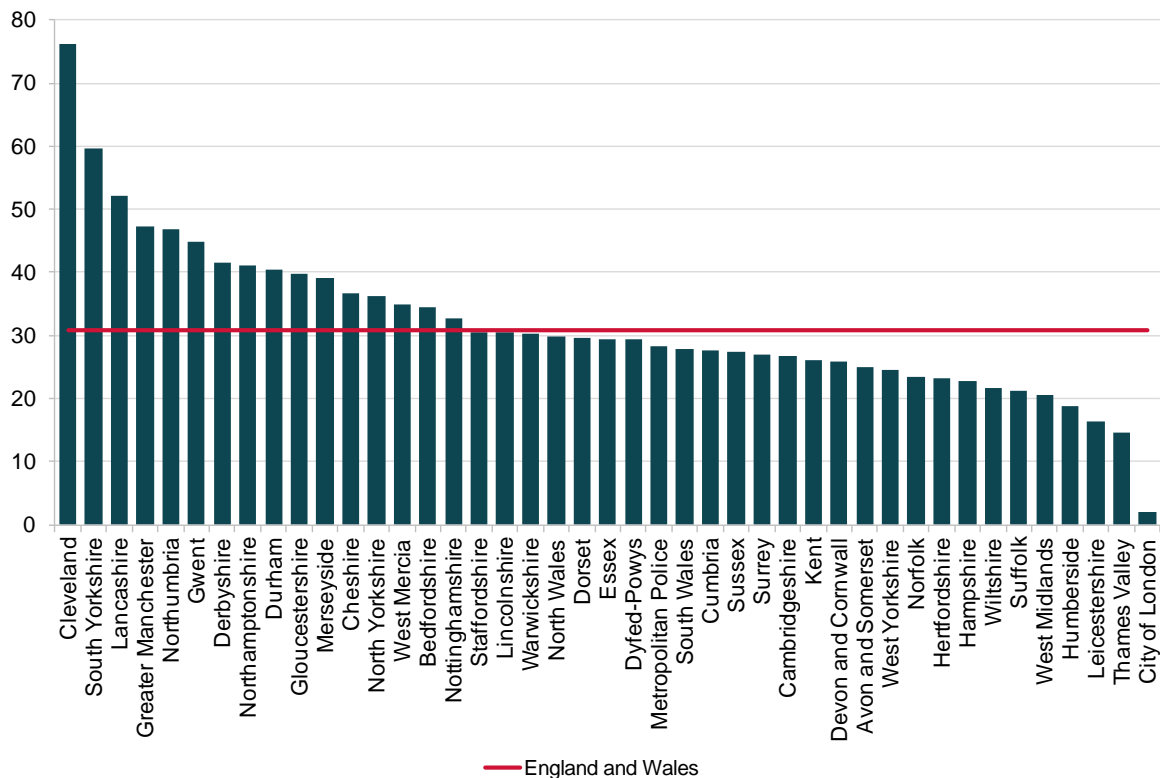
Previous HMIC inspections of the police's response to anti-social behaviour have shown a continuously improving picture. HMIC's 2014 effectiveness report found evidence of 'a sustained and impressive improvement in the way forces tackle anti-social behaviour'. However, HMIC is now concerned that, in the face of competing demands, some forces are no longer prioritising tackling anti-social behaviour. HMIC examined the use of anti-social behaviour powers<sup>16</sup> and was disappointed to find a large variation in forces' use of these powers and orders as an effective crime prevention tool. All forces were able to provide some evidence of using basic tactics to tackle anti-social behaviour, such as targeted patrols in hot-spot areas, but this use was not complex or sustained and was not used in combination with the powers to tackle anti-social behaviour.

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<sup>16</sup> Six anti-social behaviour powers: the civil injunction, criminal behaviour order, community protection notice, public spaces protection order, closure power, and the dispersal power.

Recorded incidents of anti-social behaviour have fallen, but the recording of such incidents also varies from force to force which means that care should be taken when comparing rates of anti-social behaviour incidents between forces and over time.

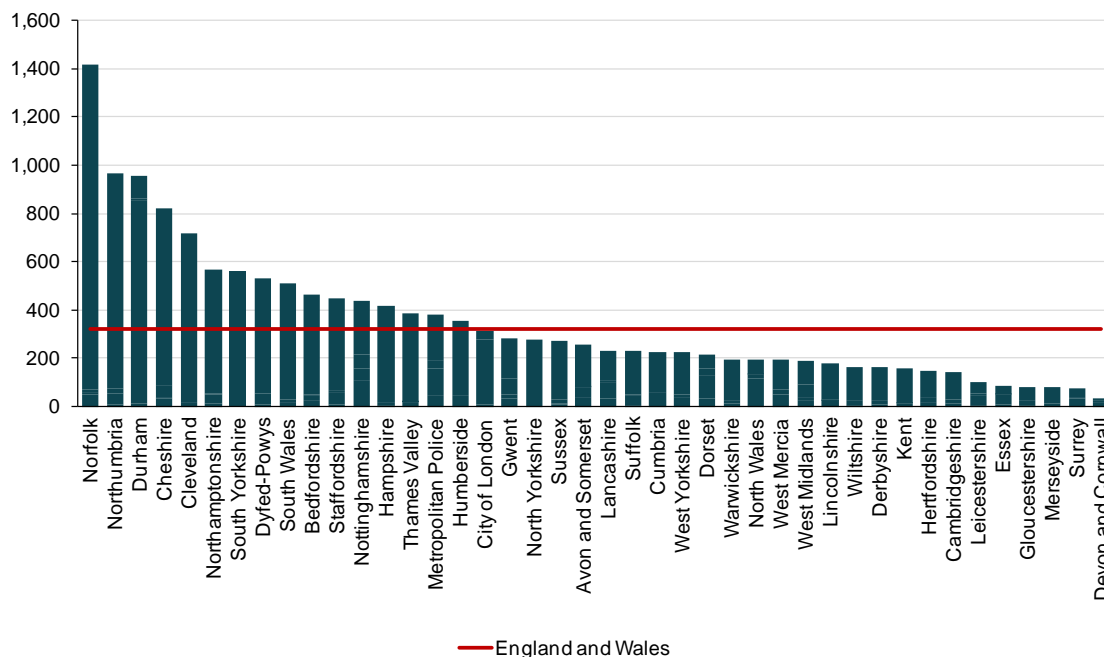
**Figure 4: Recorded anti-social behaviour incidents per 1,000 population for forces in England and Wales in the 12 months to June 2016**



**Source: Home Office Anti-Social Behaviour Incidents 2016**

HMIC considered this information alongside the use of anti-social behaviour powers per one million population as set out in Figure 5 below. Differences in the use of anti-social behaviour powers can be explained partly in terms of differing levels of anti-social behaviour incidents between forces, but such differences are not, in themselves, sufficient to account for the variations in the use of these powers; this suggests there is a variation and inconsistency in the tactical use of anti-social behaviour powers across the service and it remains unclear why.

**Figure 5: Use of anti-social behaviour powers per million population<sup>17</sup>**



**Source: HMIC 2016 effectiveness data collection**

Reasons for such widespread variation and under use could be partially attributed to the fact some powers are used, independently of the police, by proactive local authorities. However, throughout our inspection work HMIC found inconsistent, and often poor, levels of knowledge, training and awareness amongst neighbourhood officers of how to use anti-social behaviour powers. HMIC is concerned that too often neighbourhood officers do not have the necessary skills and knowledge to carry out preventative anti-social behaviour work effectively.

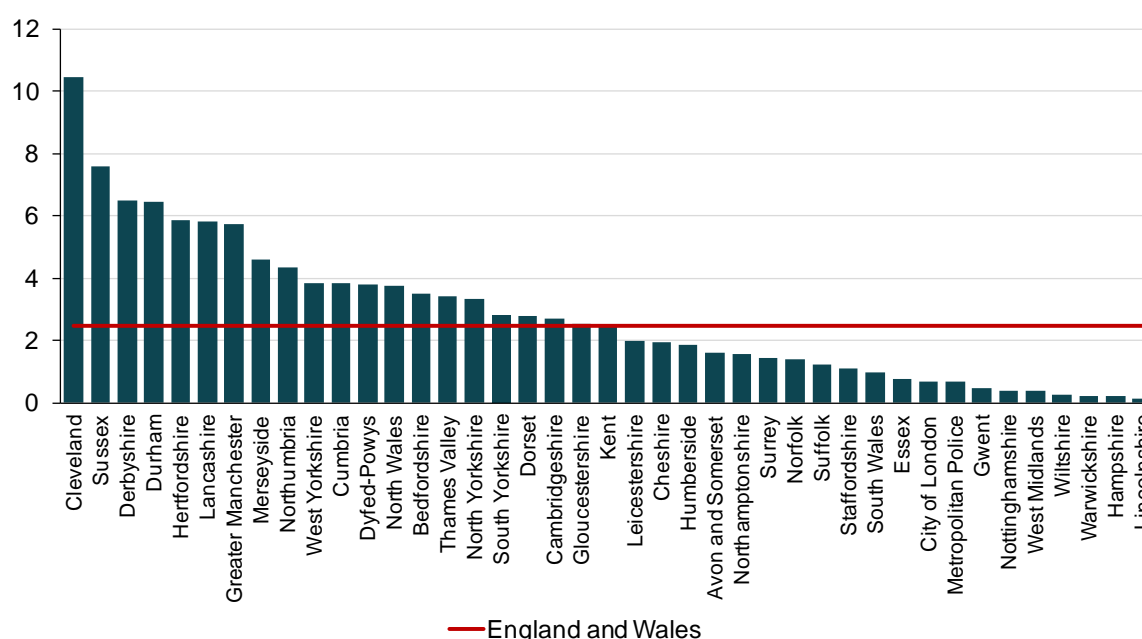
In the majority of forces, neighbourhood officers do not receive continuing professional development or training to refresh their skills and knowledge base. In half of forces HMIC found an over-reliance on e-learning-based training, with officers reporting little time to complete it. A number of forces such as South Wales, Surrey, Merseyside and Durham now provide mandatory 'master class' training, often in conjunction with partners focusing on problem solving plans and the use of anti-social behaviour powers and appropriate tactics. HMIC encourages all forces to invest in better ways to develop the skills of neighbourhood officers. The use of such powers to address anti-social behaviour will be successful and will increase if officers know what to do and what is required of them, but this is dependent on adequate training. HMIC is encouraged that a very small number of forces have introduced specific crime prevention training into student officer courses to try to and ensure that there is a problem-solving approach to policing at the earliest stage.

<sup>17</sup> Greater Manchester Police did not submit data on anti-social behaviour powers; therefore, they have been excluded from the graph and from the England and Wales rate.



HMIC is concerned that some forces are still unable to flag repeat victims of anti-social behaviour effectively and there is a notable variance between forces. Understanding repeated incidents of anti social behaviour is important as the victims of this behaviour could be vulnerable and this repeated anti social behaviour can rapidly escalate. Neighbourhood policing teams are vital in supporting and protecting those people who are vulnerable. Examples include visiting domestic abuse victims to ensure they are safe in their homes and working with schools to discuss risky behaviours with young people and approaches to keeping them safe online.

**Figure 6: Rate of flagged repeat victims of anti-social behaviour incidents per 1,000 population, by force, in the 12 months to 30 June 2016<sup>18</sup>**



Source: HMIC 2016 Effectiveness Data Collection

## Reviewing performance and taking action to improve services

As the police service continues to face changes, it is essential that it takes steps to create a sustainable culture of evaluation and learning. Reducing budgets must not be used as a reason to stifle innovation or the sharing of best practice. The police service still does not routinely base its practice on evidence, nor does it assess or evaluate its approach to add to that body of knowledge. This risks inefficient and ineffective approaches to neighbourhood policing: this cannot be afforded in times of continued budget reductions and growing demand and complexity.

<sup>18</sup> Devon and Cornwall and West Mercia forces were unable to provide data on repeat victims of anti-social behaviour; therefore, they have been excluded from the graph and from the England and Wales rate.

HMIC was pleased to find a number of forces are working with academic institutions who evaluate the effectiveness of a range of policing activity. However, HMIC found that this is rarely focused on crime prevention. Policing should, however, be increasingly focused on preventative activity.

Although there is growing evidence of 'what works', HMIC found gaps in the ability of forces to assess their performance, evaluate outcomes and circulate any learning or best practice more widely. While HMIC discovered some excellent examples of innovative work in forces, in many cases this is not consistently made available to other people the wider force itself. In addition, there is often no central mechanism or repository for sharing or learning from this more widely across forces.

During our inspection HMIC found that the majority of forces and neighbourhood officers had a very patchy knowledge of the College of Policing's 'What Works' crime reduction toolkit, despite it giving access to the best available research evidence on what works to reduce crime in communities. It is unclear to HMIC why forces have not made better use of the available tools to support best practice in problem-solving: HMIC found that less than a quarter of forces provided formal problem-solving training to staff. Where training does occur, for most neighbourhood officers, it is often based online or arranged by the officers themselves. Nationally, there is currently no authorised professional practice to support the provision of neighbourhood policing, and national accreditation is not required to become a dedicated neighbourhood officer. This has caused a knowledge gap and a risk to the service which few forces have recognised.

HMIC is disappointed to find that limited progress has been made in addressing the persistent finding from HMIC's previous years' effectiveness reports that forces do not routinely evaluate their approaches and practice. Many forces still have only a limited knowledge of the demand for their services, what works and how effectively they are operating. Forces need to prioritise, evaluate and allow access to effective practice, both amongst themselves and with partner organisations to be able to improve, and routinely implement effective approaches to the prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour. The risk is that with a lack of training, engagement and evaluation, forces will provide what they think is right rather than that which they know is both efficient and effective.

If forces are to improve their approach to preventing crime and anti-social behaviour, they need to have mechanisms and training in place to be able to understand and assess the effect of what they are doing. In that way, they can reflect on and learn from it to ensure that they are providing a quality service to the public.

## Effective investigations and offender management

The police have a number of services to provide to the public, one of which is to bring offenders to justice. The public expects the police to investigate crime well, take account of victims' needs and concerns throughout the investigation and, ultimately, bring offenders to justice. In order to achieve this, a number of steps<sup>19</sup> need to be taken. The first step to ensure that offenders are brought to justice is for an effective investigation to take place.

Effective investigations are underpinned by clear plans and actions and good victim care, all carried out by appropriately skilled and experienced investigators who take account of threat, harm and risk.

In assessing force performance in investigations and offender management, HMIC asked the following questions:

- How effective is the force's initial investigative response?
- How effective is the force's subsequent investigation?
- How effectively does the force reduce re-offending?

### **How do forces investigate crime and how effective are they overall?**

In 2016, 26 forces have been graded as good in terms of how well they investigate crime and reduce re-offending. This is the same number that were graded good last year, but there has been a large degree of movement, with the performance of a number of forces improving and that of others deteriorating. Only 19<sup>20</sup> forces have held their position from 2015. We have also seen a greater range of problems and weaknesses in crime investigation and offender management than last year, including: the need for investigative supervision that covers initial or first contact through handover to the final aspects of an investigation; the management of registered sex offenders; the management of digital evidence backlogs and forces'

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<sup>19</sup> These include meeting the Crown Prosecution Service's charging standards in matters to be brought before a court; and providing evidence capable of supporting a charge and an admission of guilt in matters dealt with by out-of-court disposals such as penalty notices for disorder, formal cautions and community resolution options.

<sup>20</sup> Dorset Police, Gwent Police, South Wales Police, Warwickshire Police, West Mercia Police, West Midlands Police, Wiltshire Police, Derbyshire Constabulary, Kent Police, Norfolk Constabulary, Nottinghamshire Police, Suffolk Constabulary, Thames Valley Police, Cheshire Constabulary, Cleveland Police, Lancashire Constabulary, Merseyside Police, North Yorkshire Police and City of London Police.

ability to retrieve digital evidence from digital devices such as mobile phones and laptops; and the pursuit of people wanted by the police. All of these weaknesses are discussed in more detail in this chapter.

HMIC has seen concerted efforts across forces to focus on vulnerability. In order to protect vulnerable people, forces have increased staff resources in relevant areas and have improved the quality of investigations, as discussed later in the report. This is a good thing. However, it is important to understand the effect that this prioritisation has had on investigation and offender management as a whole.

This performance in how well forces investigate crime has taken place against the background of a 7.8 percent increase over the last year in the overall level of police-recorded crime (excluding fraud), with the majority of forces showing an annual increase. 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. Within this overall increase in recorded crime, there have been some changes in particular crime types. The increase in sexual offences (up 16 percent) is thought to be driven by an increased willingness of victims to come forward, as well as by improved crime recording. Some 26 percent of sexual offences recorded were non-recent; the offence had happened some time (at least one year) before it was reported.

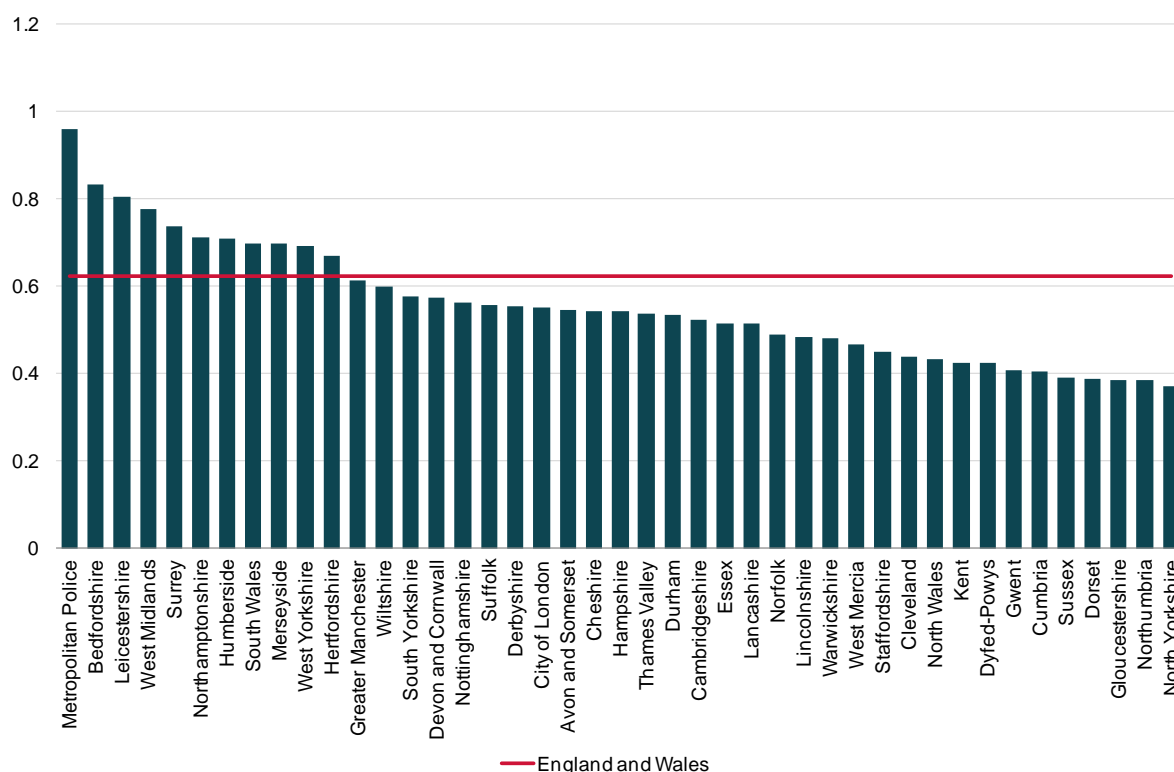
All forces provide an emergency response to their communities through what are often called response or patrol officers. These officers will generally be first to a crime scene. They will conduct an initial investigation and may then carry out further investigations. As described in the previous chapter, some forces have separate neighbourhood or local policing teams, which may also carry out investigations of crimes. In some forces, these neighbourhood teams also have a response function.

All forces will have specialist investigators – detectives and police staff investigators – in dedicated investigation departments (often called criminal investigation departments or CID) and in other specialised investigative teams, such as those dealing with major crime (murder and kidnap) or forms of serious and organised crime. Qualified investigators have to pass examinations, attend training and commit to continuing professional development.

Forces decide which officers in which team will investigate each crime. This process is known as crime allocation. The basis on which a crime is allocated to a particular officer varies from force to force. It can be based on crime type, or on an assessment of threat, harm and risk to the victim.

HMIC found that forces had adopted varying structures and processes to support the investigation of crimes, in a climate of reduced resources and changes in demand. This is unsurprising, as forces have different demands and different financial positions. Figure 7 shows a variation in the investment that forces have made in central investigation functions.

**Figure 7: Numbers of police officers and staff in investigative functions, per 1,000 population – 2015/16 estimates**



**Source: Police Objective Analysis**

During the inspection fieldwork, HMIC found that many forces were changing, had recently changed or were about to change their policing model, that is their structures, processes and resources. This often included their approach to investigation. For many, this was a means to improve how they supported vulnerable people, with forces ensuring that staffing levels in those units which deal with vulnerable people and the safeguarding of victims and vulnerable witnesses were prioritised. Those units handle investigations of serious sexual offences such as rape, domestic abuse-related investigations and investigations of child sexual exploitation. For many forces, the investment in those units has, however, created greater pressures on other investigative units.

## Fraud

In the last year, there was a 5 percent increase in the number of fraud offences recorded in England and Wales (a total of 627,825). However, this figure is likely to be an underestimation of the actual level of fraud, as the Crime Survey for England and Wales<sup>21</sup> shows that over the same period adults aged 16 and over experienced an estimated 3.6 million incidents of fraud, with just over half of these being cyber

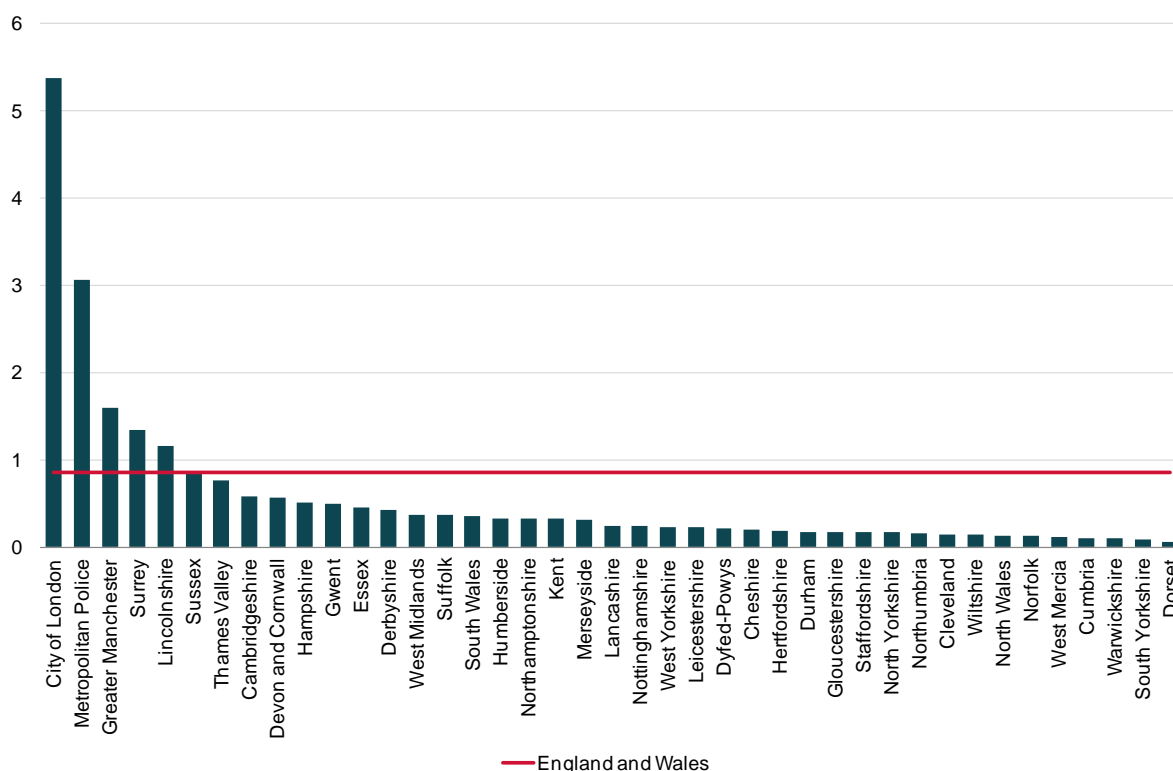
<sup>21</sup> *Crime in England and Wales: year ending Sept 2016*. Office for National Statistics, 19 January 2017, Section 11: What's happening to trends in fraud? Available from: [www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingsept2016](http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingsept2016)

related. Individuals are six times more likely to be a victim of plastic card fraud than a victim of theft from the person.

HMIC understands that, for many people, fraud (and particularly that committed online) is a major concern.

During this inspection, we collected a modest amount of data relating to fraud, and during the course of our inspection came across a number of examples of force policy and practice designed to tackle it. We also looked at the level of referrals from ActionFraud<sup>22</sup> to each force and tested how individual forces then investigated these cases. As the City of London Police is the national lead for economic crime, its rate of referrals is atypical. However, the data demonstrates that there is considerable variation in the number of cases that ActionFraud refers to individual forces.

**Figure 8: ActionFraud referrals in the 12 months to 30 June 2016<sup>23</sup>**



**Source: HMIC 2016 effectiveness data collection**

<sup>22</sup> ActionFraud is the UK's national fraud and cyber-crime reporting centre, providing a central point of contact for information about fraud and cyber-crime. Some cases reported to ActionFraud are assigned to individual forces for investigation.

<sup>23</sup> Avon and Somerset and Bedfordshire forces were unable to submit data for the number of Action Fraud referrals; therefore, they have been excluded from the graph and from the England and Wales rate.

We found a very mixed picture with regard to fraud investigations. Many forces struggled to monitor how ActionFraud referrals were dealt with and to provide a clear picture of how these crimes were allocated for investigation. Investigations could be carried out by a range of different officers in the force. These might not always be experienced investigators but were sometimes uniformed neighbourhood or response officers who had limited investigative experience and were ill equipped to deal with the complexities arising from fraud investigations. The particular problems that forces are grappling with are: the technology-enabled element of fraud; the fact that cases spanned force boundaries, so that the perpetrator might be in another force (or indeed country); and the fact that victims may not report for a range of reasons (including not fully appreciating that they have been a victim of crime and feeling embarrassed about the circumstances that led them to be defrauded). HMIC will revisit these problems next year in greater depth as part of our annual police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL) assessment of police forces in England and Wales.

## **How effective is the force's initial response?**

HMIC considers the investigative process to begin when the member of the public contacts the police, whether that is by a phone call to 101 or 999, or in person to an officer in the street or at a police front counter. It is therefore essential that all staff engaged in so-called first contact roles see this initial contact as the opportunity to adopt an investigative approach in their dealings with the public, to assist with preserving and securing evidence and to identify those who may be vulnerable and in need of safeguarding.

Many forces use the THRIVE<sup>24</sup> process to guide the first contact with a member of the public. This is used as a risk-assessment tool to help the force to understand the threat, harm and risk posed to an individual, business or organisation. Rather than focusing on crime type, this approach assists in the decision-making process by addressing the threat, harm and risk to the victim and prioritising the response accordingly. Some forces use a particular set of questions in order to help assess the needs of the caller. Not all forces use a formalised process, but the vast majority use the principles of THRIVE when interacting with callers. HMIC found that call handlers who used a THRIVE-based approach, structured or otherwise, tended to identify vulnerability and safeguarding problems at the earliest possible opportunity and before the deployment of officers to the incident or the allocation to an officer for further investigation.

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<sup>24</sup> The threat, harm, risk, investigation, vulnerability and engagement (THRIVE) model is used to assess the appropriate initial police response to a call for service. It allows a judgment to be made of the relative risk posed by the call and places the individual needs of the victim at the centre of that decision.

As part of the inspection, HMIC reviewed 2,701 criminal investigations in a 43-force crime file review (for further details see Annex A). Some 15 percent of these investigations were reported to police by means other than by phone or the call was not available for review. In 29 percent of cases – handled by call handlers – HMIC deemed that advice in relation to the preservation of forensic evidence or crime prevention was not necessary. In the remaining 56 percent of cases – i.e. those that were handled by call handlers and where advice in relation to the preservation of forensic evidence or crime prevention was deemed by HMIC to be necessary – we found that call handlers had provided such advice in only half the cases.

Given resource pressures and an increase in police-recorded crime, forces are considering alternative and more cost-effective ways of investigating crime. A number of forces are increasingly dealing with calls for service over the phone or in a police station, rather than deploying police officers to visit the victim. Some forces are dealing with over 40 percent of calls for service from the public in this way. While this may be an effective method of managing demand, there is a risk that, without effective supervision, some investigations may be either delayed or allocated to someone without the correct skills for the investigation.

The HMIC 43-force crime file review found that, in the majority of the investigations (86 percent) initiated by a call to the police, call handlers acted appropriately and in accordance with force policies and/or guidelines (i.e. on vulnerability, repeat victims, attendance and allocation). In 94 percent of cases, we found evidence of call handlers assessing reported incidents thoroughly, recording accurate information and evidence and deciding the appropriate response, such as the use of specialist resources or staff to progress the investigation.

Later in this report, we raise some concerns about the extent to which forces have been managing their demand by not responding to calls for service from the public in a timely fashion, or indeed at all. HMIC has concerns that this is putting victims at risk. This is a disturbing development, but it is not a widespread practice. Most forces are still attending incidents within the target time and, in the majority of cases where this did not happen, HMIC's 43-force crime file review suggests that there had not been an adverse effect on the victim.

The first officer at a crime scene has a number of crucial responsibilities. Many of these relate to keeping the victim safe and are discussed in a later chapter. There are also vital elements of the investigation which must be carried out: evidence should be secured as soon as possible after a crime is committed. This is known as the golden hour principle. Failure to conduct these tasks properly at the outset is inefficient, as the work will have to be done at a later point, but is also ineffective as the evidence might not be present at a later date.

The majority of initial investigations are conducted by uniformed response officers. These officers will have had limited formal training on how to investigate crime, apart



from that contained within initial training, and our inspection found that, while they generally had a good working knowledge of important points such as the golden hour principles, this tended to be developed from experience gained on the job rather than acquired through formal training.

There were a number of other crucial areas of support that these officers could access:

- Some forces have local policies in place, for example requiring specialist detectives to attend certain crimes, so there is a more experienced investigator available.
- Many forces have a facility which operates between 7.00am and 11.00pm for response officers to speak to crime scene investigators and intelligence departments should the need arise for advice or attendance.
- Increasing numbers of frontline response officers now have access to mobile data terminals, which means that crimes can be logged quickly and intelligence checked. We are also seeing increased use of body-worn video as a way of securing evidence, although our 43-force crime file review found a number of cases where the use of body-worn video camera would have been appropriate, but it had not been used.

Response officers told HMIC that, on occasions, they struggled to complete a thorough initial investigation because of other demands on their time. This was qualified by those officers saying that, if it was a serious job, they were allowed the time to remain and secure evidence. Generally, response officers felt that they were being sent to the right crimes, based on threat, harm and risk, and that they could get additional time to deal with the investigation if necessary.

Through our 43-force crime file review, we found some evidence that time pressure might be limiting the quality of investigations. In the majority of cases, opportunities to secure evidence were taken in a timely fashion, but in one in five cases this evidence was not secured. The identification of witnesses and conducting house-to-house enquiries were the activities that were most often not carried out. These are standard investigative techniques and the evidential opportunities that they present should not be overlooked.

Inconsistency in the quality of the initial investigation may also result from the subsequent responsibilities of response officers. Some forces have a purely response function, through which officers will attend an incident, deal with the situation, arrest as appropriate and secure evidence before passing the case over to an investigator. In other forces, the officers who attend an incident and arrest the suspect then retain responsibility for the investigation, including any preparation for

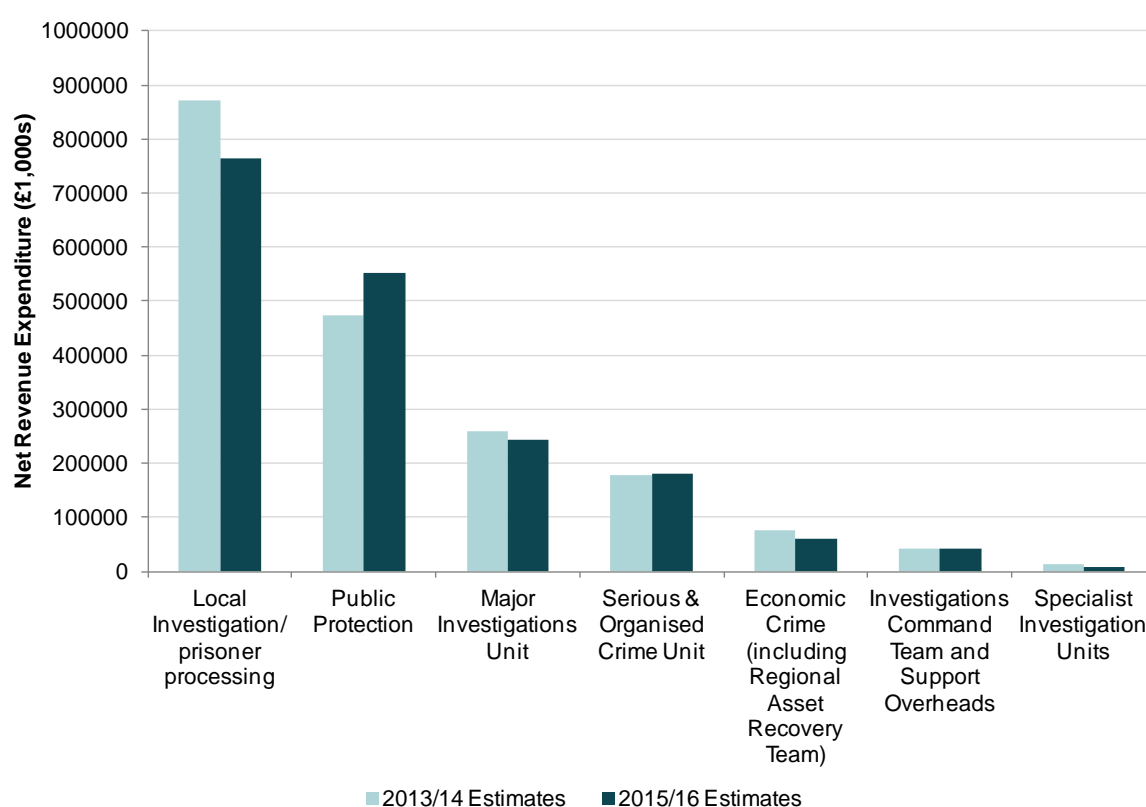
court. Some forces have developed the latter approach as the basis of their investigative model, in an attempt to improve the quality of the initial investigations by the response officers by making them responsible for the later stages too.

## How effective is the force's subsequent investigation?

A wide range of crimes might be investigated by a uniformed constable, a detective constable, or a police staff investigator, depending on the complexity of the case and the level of training they have received. Serious and more complex matters tend to be investigated by detectives. Forces across England and Wales have had to consider where best to place their specialist and more experienced investigators as they balance the demands on their force.

As set out earlier, there has been an emphasis on moving experienced detectives into investigative roles in units working with vulnerable victims (often described as public protection). This has had an effect on other investigative teams in the force. The graph below sets out the changes in investment in these various teams.

**Figure 9: Net Revenue Expenditure - 2013/14 compared to 2015/16 (projected) on investigative functions**



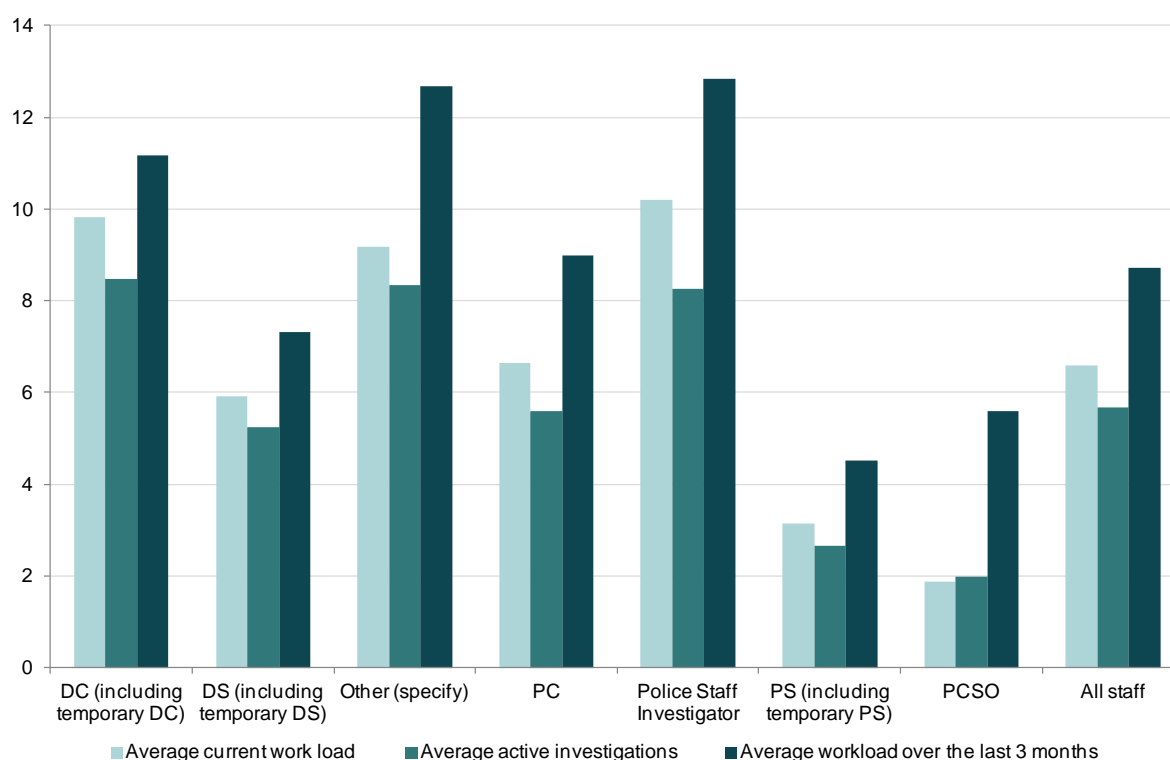
**Source: Police Objective Analysis data**

The graph suggests that spending on public protection has risen by 16 percent, at the expense of local investigations/prisoner processing which has reduced by 12 percent over the same period. The police service has also seen the introduction of

spending on cyber-crime, which is a new area in its own right. Further spending on cyber-crime is anticipated in the future as many forces are becoming increasingly focused on tackling crime committed online.

While HMIC recognises the improvements that have flowed as a result of investing resources in the investigation of complex crimes where the victim is vulnerable, it is important to understand the effect that this might have across the force. Because of a shortfall in the number of qualified and experienced detectives, other investigative functions have in too many respects been squeezed. Too often, workloads for officers in central investigation units are high and in some cases staff covering positions in these functions may lack detective accreditation (although in many cases they are working towards it). HMIC's survey of officers showed that the workloads (that is cases that an officer was currently investigating) on detectives tended to be higher than those on uniformed colleagues. This is to be expected, as uniformed colleagues would have other responsibilities in addition to investigating crimes, such as responding to 999 calls.

**Figure 10: Average investigative workload, by rank<sup>25</sup>**



**Source: HMIC Staff Survey**

In order to relieve pressure on these central investigation units, some of the investigative workload may be given to uniformed officers. In many cases, this may be entirely appropriate. However, HMIC did find examples in forces where:

<sup>25</sup> DC is detective constable, DS is detective sergeant, PC is police constable and PS is police sergeant.

- uniformed officers were investigating crimes that they did not have the skills or experience to handle (for example, complex fraud and sexual offences);
- excessive investigative workloads were taking neighbourhood officers away from their community work, and police community support officers (PCSOs) were being used in low-level investigations such as shed burglaries where no suspect had been seen; and
- investigations conducted by busy response officers were not being progressed at the pace necessary, due to shift patterns (that is, a response officer who works long hours on a number of consecutive days and then may not be back at work for three or four days) or pressure of immediate response work.

### **Shortage of investigators**

HMIC found a severe shortage of qualified detectives and other investigators and has concluded that this now constitutes a national crisis. Some forces are coping with the considerable increases in the number of complex crimes (such as serious sexual offences), but in other forces there are not enough qualified detectives and other investigators efficiently and effectively to meet the demand. In addition, there is little, if any, capacity for forces to assist one another through the temporary loan of detectives or other investigators where this is necessary or expedient.

A number of reasons have been put forward to explain why this shortage has arisen. Significant growth in specialist areas such as counter-terrorism, and more recently sexual abuse and other investigations involving vulnerable people, has resulted in a need for more qualified and specialist investigators. These investigations require officers with the highest levels of skills and competence, which take the longest to acquire.

There have been a number of reasons why the police service has struggled to keep pace with the increase in demand for investigative capacity.

- There appears to be some reluctance among officers to follow a detective pathway. Some of the reasons given for this include high workloads, mentors not being as accessible as they should be to support a trainee detective constable throughout their training programme, problems relating to working patterns and pay, and the intense scrutiny individuals are under should there be some form of investigative failure. We also consider in the next chapter some of the pressures that are experienced by detectives in public protection roles.
- It takes time to replace investigative skills and experiences. As described earlier, becoming a qualified detective requires officers to invest a considerable amount of time in training. Also, forces now face further

difficulties in retaining investigators. For example, trained financial investigators are proving hard to retain, as there are many opportunities outside policing for them, such as working in the financial sector.

- In order to balance budgets, forces have reduced police staff positions, including civilian investigators. This has increased the pressure on detectives.

Not all forces are suffering from a shortage in qualified detectives or investigators but the pressure in some forces is acute and cannot currently be alleviated effectively through the temporary loan of detectives by other forces: there is simply not the capacity across the police service for this. In addition to the pressure on individual forces, the police service has struggled to identify sufficient numbers of detectives to support major investigations such as the inquiries into child sexual abuse.

Forces have adopted different approaches to increasing their investigative capacity and capability, and a number of initiatives are underway:

- In October 2016, the Metropolitan Police Service ran a direct entry special constable to detective recruitment campaign for serving special constables who had at least six months' service and had achieved independent patrol status.<sup>26</sup> The force is also developing an external recruitment process to bring people in from outside policing alongside the special constable recruitment.
- A number of forces, led by Durham Constabulary, are developing clearer approaches to career progression for police staff who work as investigators.

The police service accepts that it has a severe shortage of detectives and investigators and is working to increase both capability and capacity in this regard. However, this will take time. It is vital that police leaders and the College of Policing work with rank-and-file officers to assure themselves that current activity is moving fast and far enough to address this problem, and Recommendation 2 sets out a process for this.

### **Supervision of investigations**

HMIC's findings regarding the quality of supervision are consistent with previous inspections. Unsurprisingly, there is less supervision of so-called volume crime (such as common assault and criminal damage) than of more serious and complex investigations. Volume crime investigations are more likely to be supervised by those with little investigative experience because previous policing models involved those officers losing investigations after the initial response stage (as previously described).

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<sup>26</sup> This is different programme to the direct entry for inspectors and superintendents:

<http://recruit.college.police.uk/Officer/leadership-programmes/Direct-Entry-Programme/Pages/Direct-Entry-Programme.aspx>

There is a potential area of risk to investigations, particularly at the point of handover from one investigator to another, because in too many respects supervision is inconsistent. In addition, some conversations between supervisors and investigating officers are not being documented, making it more difficult than it should be for a new investigating officer to pick up the thread of the investigation.

The professionalising investigation programme, or PIP<sup>27</sup> as it is commonly referred to, is applicable to all officers. All police officers are a minimum of PIP1. Developing skills and experience in supervision is an important part of the continuing professional development of the PIP programme. Additional training is available online on how to supervise investigations, but it is not mandatory for officers to undertake this, with the result that level of take-up is mixed.

Forces' attitudes to supervision are varied, with some forces empowering staff more to make decisions on the appropriateness of an investigation rather than to rely on supervision. Ensuring adherence to investigative standards is part of everyday supervision and enshrined in current investigation guidance (authorised professional practice on investigation). Discussions about adherence to investigative standards are one of the tools available to supervisors to help them to ensure that staff performance is where it should be. Such discussions are also one way of checking staff workloads and welfare. Finally, they are crucial in helping supervisors to identify and tackle corruption.

HMIC's 43-force crime file review highlighted variations in the application of THRIVE principles by call-handlers, in how well vulnerability was identified and managed, in the quality of investigations and in how well they were supervised, and these findings were further supported by our inspection fieldwork.

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<sup>27</sup> The aim of the professionalising investigation programme (PIP) is to ensure that staff are trained, skilled and accredited to conduct the highest quality investigations. The PIP structure involves a series of levels: PIP level 1 – priority and volume crime investigations, PIP level 2 – serious and complex investigations, PIP level 3 – major investigations, and PIP level 4 – strategic management of highly complex investigations. PIP identifies learning and development for investigators in new or specialised roles, and standards of competences in investigation and interviewing. These are now established within a suite of national occupational standards. Available from [www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/investigations/introduction/#pip](http://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/investigations/introduction/#pip)

Figure 11: Supervision of case files

How well supervised was the investigation?	Number of case files	Percentage of case files
Well supervised	1353	50%
Limited, but appropriate level of supervision	657	24%
<b>Total of well supervised and limited, but appropriate supervision</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>74%</b>
Not well supervised	691	26%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2701</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: HMIC 43-force crime file review

### Investigative support

HMIC considered how well supported those conducting investigations were by services such as intelligence, traditional forensics (which focuses on processing crime scene evidence such as fingerprints and potential forensics sources of DNA) and digital forensics (the capability which can extract evidence from digital devices such as smartphones or laptops).

There has been a 3 percent reduction in intelligence spending nationally from 2013/14 to 2015/16, and many forces have reduced their local intelligence functions. As a result, in many cases staff conducting local investigations have become increasingly reliant on conducting their own intelligence research as part of these. As discussed in the previous chapter, intelligence departments are increasingly focused on high-risk and time-critical investigations, with the result that some of the work linked to proactive neighbourhood policing or to lower-risk investigations is increasingly undertaken by staff who have to conduct their own research rather than have it supplied by those in intelligence departments. On a positive note, HMIC found that access to information through intelligence systems was adequate. Staff were generally provided with clear systems and protocols to enable them to access intelligence systems and conduct their own research.

Technology is increasingly part of our daily lives. It poses an increasing crime threat but also an investigative opportunity. Last year, we reported that, in line with previous HMIC reports, there were still concerns that the forensic support services available to officers had not kept pace with the ways in which crimes are committed. In particular, we outlined that, for the past two years, there had been unacceptable delays in receiving results from the units that examine and retrieve evidence from digital devices (often called high-tech crime units or HTCUs). Last year, we said that 18 forces needed to take steps to reduce unacceptable backlogs in retrieving and examining evidence from digital devices.

This year, we have seen forces across the country make a concerted effort to improve this situation. We found evidence that additional staff and money have been directed to digital forensic units and that outsourcing has been widely used to reduce waiting times and backlogs. This is a positive development, but it is important that forces develop sustainable approaches to meet the demand that digital forensic opportunities create.

Forces are also looking into other ways to manage this demand. Threat, risk and harm assessments are being introduced to ensure that priority cases are being dealt with appropriately. Trained staff are attending crime scenes to ensure that only relevant equipment is seized; this reduces the risk of adding to the backlog with devices which do need to be examined, as they would provide little forensic benefit.

However, for many forces, their backlog was so great a year ago that, even with these initiatives, it will take a while to get back to a more manageable level. In 14 forces HMIC was so concerned about the remaining backlog that these forces were given a specific 'area for improvement'. A considerable backlog still remains, as the information below shows.

**Figure 12: Number of digital devices awaiting examination**

	<b>Under 3 months</b>	<b>3 to 6 months</b>	<b>6 to 12 months</b>	<b>Over 12 months</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>High Priority</b>	2708	945	189	1	3843
<b>Medium Priority</b>	2923	1036	191	4	4154
<b>Low Priority</b>	3534	738	150	0	4422
<b>Total</b>	<b>9496</b>	<b>2763</b>	<b>530</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>16162</b>

\* Cambridgeshire, Greater Manchester, Northamptonshire, Northumbria and North Yorkshire forces were unable to provide a breakdown of the total number of devices; therefore, the total number of devices awaiting examination will not sum to the totals of each priority group.

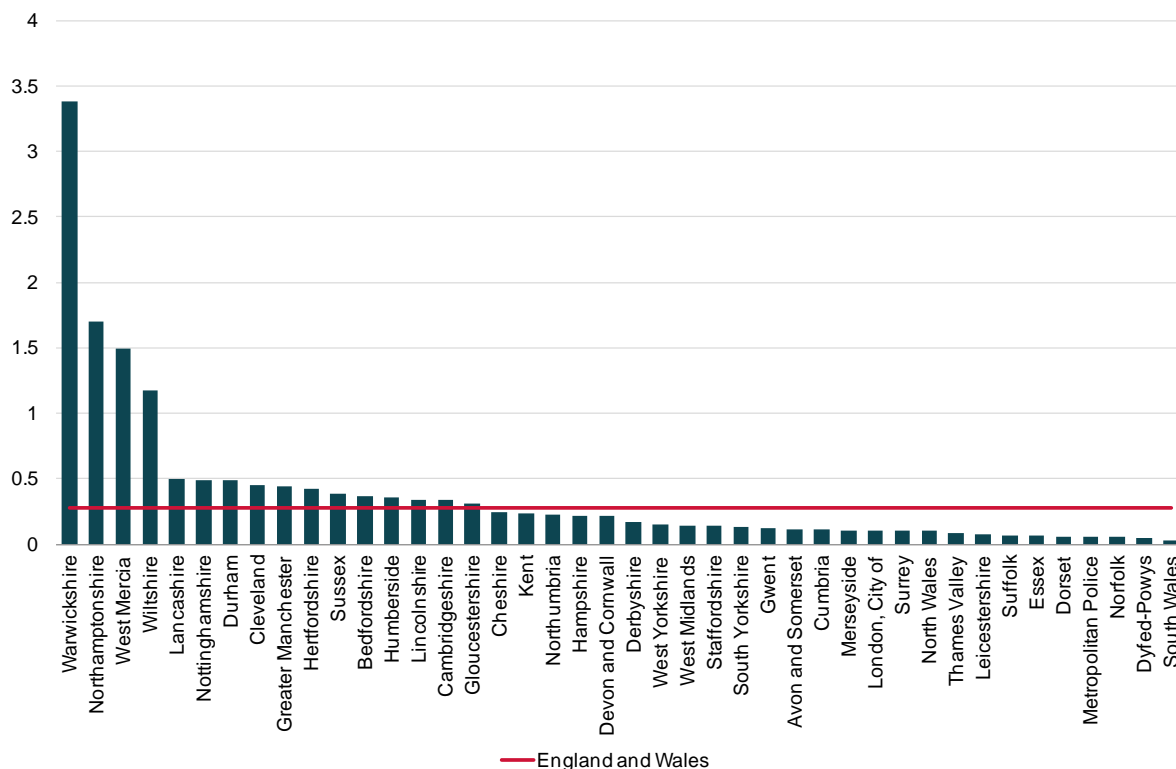
**Source: HMIC 2016 effectiveness data collection**

Of those devices where the period of delay in examining the device was provided (12794), the great majority (74 percent) had been waiting for less than three months.

HMIC has still found some variation in the extent to which forces are experiencing backlogs in digital examinations.



**Figure 13: Digital backlogs per 1,000 population<sup>28</sup>**



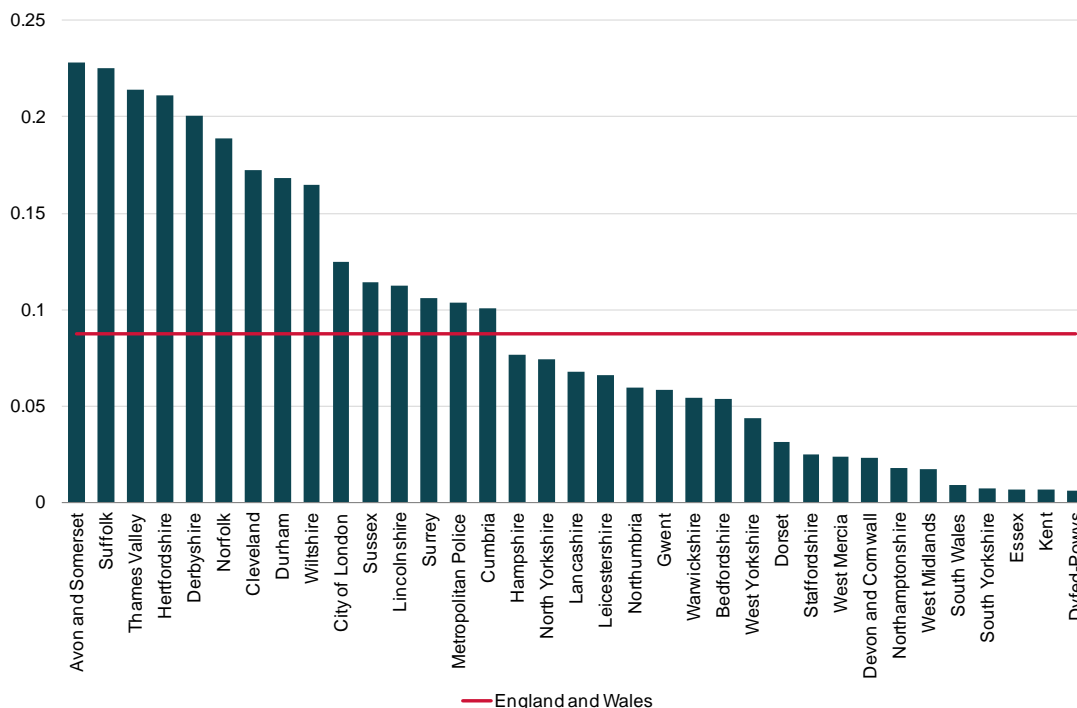
**Source: HMIC 2016 effectiveness data collection**

A number of forces have recognised that different approaches are needed to meet the demand presented by digital forensics. These forces are considering how best to recruit and train police workforces for the digital future, including the use of and access to digital media investigators. Digital forensics is one of the fastest-growing areas of business, and people with skills in this area are sought by a number of organisations and companies. Many forces have introduced additional digital forensic capability through kiosks<sup>29</sup> which allow trained officers to recover evidence from devices such as mobile phones rather than submitting them to the HTCU. A digital forensic kiosk is a smaller facility for the retrieval of forensic information from digital devices so can be situated in police stations and custody suites. However, as Figure 14 shows, there is still wide variation in the extent to which forces have embraced this approach.

<sup>28</sup> North Yorkshire was unable to provide data for digital devices awaiting examination; therefore, they have been excluded from the graph and from the England and Wales rate.

<sup>29</sup> A digital forensic kiosk is a smaller facility for the retrieval of forensic information from digital devices so can be situated in police stations and custody suites

**Figure 14: Number of people trained to use kiosks per 1,000 population, per force<sup>30</sup>**



Source: HMIC 2016 effectiveness data collection

## Measuring success in investigating crime – the outcomes framework

Since April 2014, police forces in England and Wales have been required to record how investigations are concluded in a new way, using an outcomes framework. Replacing the detections framework, 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 contains 21 different types of outcomes (for further details, see annex A). HMIC was unable to draw a direct comparison with 2015 data, as not all forces had moved fully from the former detections framework to outcomes at the time of the data collection and not all types of outcome had been in use for a sufficiently long period.

The outcomes framework is designed to show to the public and others how well forces carry out their investigations, by reference to the nature and the quality of the result achieved. It also provides some valuable insight into how forces could improve their performance in particular areas. For example, 14 forces cannot make progress in 10 percent or more of their investigations because of evidential difficulties, despite the fact that they have the support of the victim in the case and a suspect has been

<sup>30</sup> Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, Gloucestershire, GMP, Humberside, Merseyside, North Wales and Nottinghamshire all excluded from this graph as data not supplied.

identified. Forces should invest time in understanding what is preventing cases from being resolved and may then be able to achieve better outcomes for victims and communities.

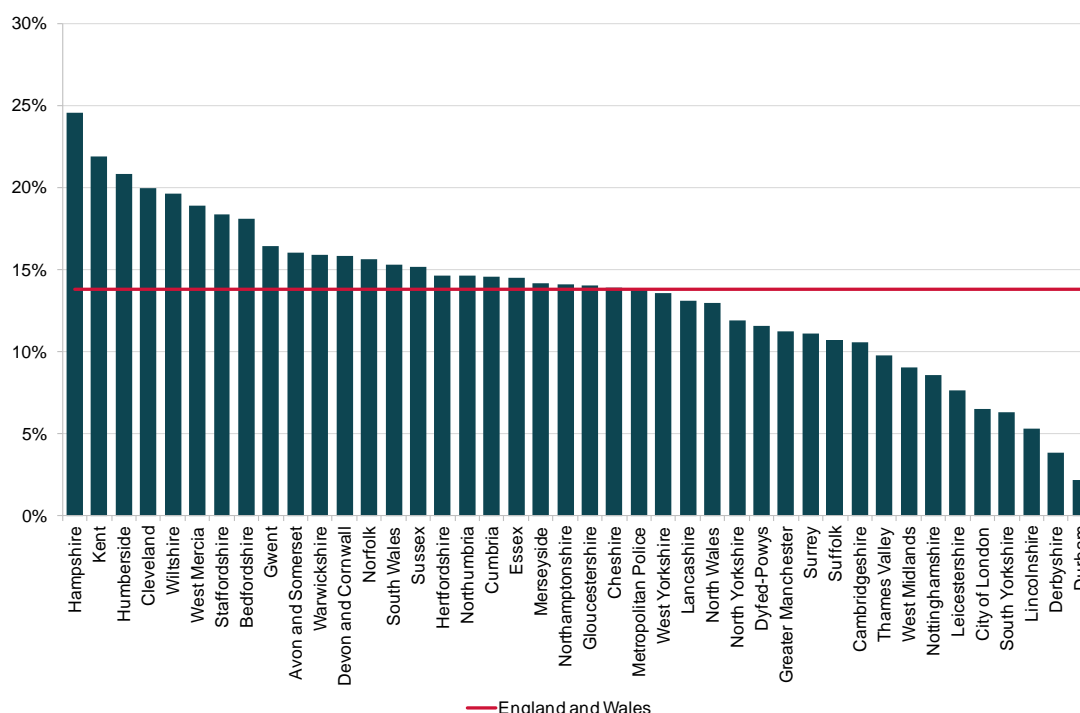
The new system has exposed a problem that is of very serious concern to HMIC in the extent to which forces are not taking investigations further because apparently the victim does not support police action. Outcome type 16,<sup>31</sup> which is described as 'Evidential difficulties: victim does not support further action' is used where the victim has withdrawn support for police action, despite a suspect being identified. This particular outcome type demonstrates how vital the relationship is between the police and the victim. In England and Wales in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, the proportion of outcomes assigned to this category, for crimes recorded in the same year, was 10.6 percent. HMIC found that there was considerable variation between forces. Three forces assigned one in five investigations in this way. This means that the investigations were concluded without the offender being brought to justice. Later in the report, we look at how often this outcome is applied in domestic abuse cases, which is also of considerable concern.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Outcome 16: Evidential difficulties: suspect identified; victim does not support further action. [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/560132/pprc-user-guide-oct16.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/560132/pprc-user-guide-oct16.pdf)

<sup>32</sup> See Annex A for more details about how these rates are calculated.

**Figure 15: Rate of evidential difficulties: victim does not support further action for the 12 months to 30 June 2016<sup>33,34</sup>**



**Source: Home Office crime outcomes data**

HMIC has a number of concerns about this outcome type and how it is being used in practice:

- The language of “victim does not support further action” is unhelpful. The reasons that victims may not support police action are complex and varied. In some cases, it is because they are vulnerable and unable, rather than unwilling. The onus should be on the criminal justice agencies to seek justice on behalf of the victim, rather than on the victim to support the actions of the police and other agencies.
- High proportions of this outcome type might indicate that the force is not sufficiently supporting victims or is causing them in some way to be less likely to work with the police than they are in other forces.
- Another explanation might be that this is a convenient category to use to stop an investigation. Officers with high workloads and limited time to pursue lines of enquiry may, on occasions, use this category to clear some of their cases.

<sup>33</sup> This graph includes outcome codes 14 and 16, suspect not identified and identified respectively when there are evidential difficulties and the victim does not support further action. See Annex A for more details.

<sup>34</sup> Dorset Police were unable to supply outcomes data; therefore, they have been excluded from the graph and from the England and Wales rate.

Our inspection found that forces with high proportions of outcomes in this category did not have a good understanding of why this was the case. We have asked Cleveland, Kent, Hampshire, Humberside, Warwickshire and West Mercia forces to conduct a review of their use of this outcome type and to provide HMIC with an analysis as to why it is used so frequently. Recommendation 3 sets out in full how, following this analysis, the Home Office working with the National Police Chiefs' Council and police forces, should determine whether any further guidance should be issued or whether more significant changes are required to the outcomes framework.

## **Offender and suspect management**

For the purposes of this report, offender management covers three distinct areas. The first is how forces proactively apprehend and manage wanted persons. The second is how forces use integrated offender management (IOM<sup>35</sup>) programmes to reduce re-offending. The third is how forces manage the risk posed by dangerous and sexual offenders under multi-agency public protection MAPPA<sup>36</sup> arrangements and the arrangements for managing registered sexual offenders.

### **Wanted suspects**

HMIC has serious concerns about how those wanted by forces in connection with offences are being apprehended. In too many forces, there is a lack of grip, supervision, active management, pursuit and tracking down of wanted suspects. Timely apprehension of these suspects is vital for a number of reasons. The case in connection with which the suspect is wanted cannot be progressed or concluded without a suspect being apprehended, and the suspect may pose a risk to the public and may go on to cause further harm. Suspects may also create further demand for the force to manage, as they may be reliant on illegitimate means for income as wanted individuals.

It is positive that suspects are being identified, and improved investigative techniques will have contributed to this. However, HMIC found that too often there is limited grip on the pursuit of suspects, beyond the initial response to high-risk or high-harm offenders through force processes such as daily management meetings and shift briefings.

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<sup>14</sup> Integrated offender management (IOM) is an approach in which multiple local public services work together to identify and manage the most persistent and prolific offenders who are causing the most crime or harm in their communities.

<sup>36</sup> Multi-agency public protection arrangements are in place to ensure the successful management of violent and sexual offenders. Agencies involved include the police, probation trusts and prison service. Other agencies may become involved, such as the Youth Justice Board.

In order to maximise the chance of catching offenders who may have moved between different force areas, details of those who are wanted in connection with a crime are put on the police national computer (PNC) so that all forces are aware of them. Forces' policies and practices vary on how quickly the details of wanted suspects are entered onto the PNC. While we expect that forces will make some enquiries themselves and information about suspects wanted in connection with some more minor offences may not be circulated on the PNC, it is important that suspects' details are entered onto the PNC so that all forces are aware that these individuals are wanted by the police.

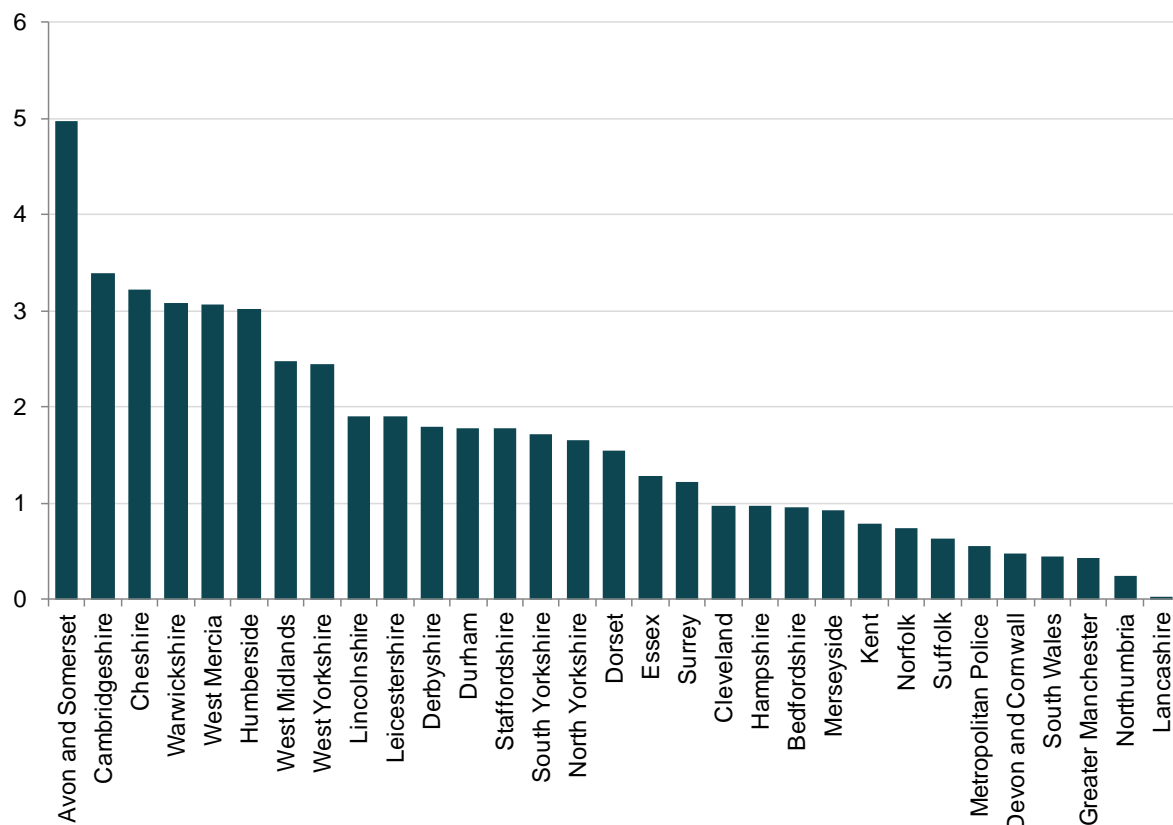
HMIC asked forces to tell us how many people suspected of a crime were not circulated on the PNC and then looked at how many people who were wanted for various crimes had had their details circulated on the PNC but had not been apprehended by forces. These data must be treated with caution, and the two figures cannot be added together to arrive at the actual numbers of people outstanding; some forces struggled to extract information about suspects whose details had not been circulated on the PNC and there is a risk that the same suspects may be in the both sets of figures. It is important that forces better understand who is suspected of a crime or wanted in connection with a crime but has yet to be apprehended by the police.

Data from 31 forces indicate that, as of 30 June 2016, there were a total of 67,069 persons suspected of crimes who had not had their details circulated on the PNC.<sup>37</sup> HMIC found some forces with high levels of suspects whose details had not been circulated on the PNC for some time after they became wanted. Other forces may have information that could help apprehend these suspects and these forces may also need to take steps to protect their communities or indeed their workforce against these individuals.

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<sup>37</sup> Cumbria, Dyfed-Powys, Gloucestershire, Gwent, Hertfordshire, City of London, Northamptonshire, North Wales, Nottinghamshire, Sussex, Thames Valley and Wiltshire forces could not provide this data.

**Figure 16: Number of outstanding suspects per 1,000 population on force-based systems<sup>38</sup>**



**Source: HMIC 2016 effectiveness data collection**

Once suspects' details have been entered on the PNC, HMIC found that in many forces and in too many cases limited effort was invested in tracking them down. Activity is often poorly co-ordinated and limited to the initial pursuit of high-harm offenders, and IT systems are disjointed, which complicates forces' ability to understand the level of severity of wanted suspects. Those factors have prevented some forces from reducing the number of their offenders who have not yet been apprehended. This is a risk area if it is not gripped and co-ordinated action taken.

In over a quarter of forces, HMIC has drawn specific attention to the fact that there are insufficient processes for tracking down wanted persons. Our observations of force briefings and management meetings and interviews with frontline officers and those in more senior positions revealed limited or unstructured approaches to catching wanted persons.

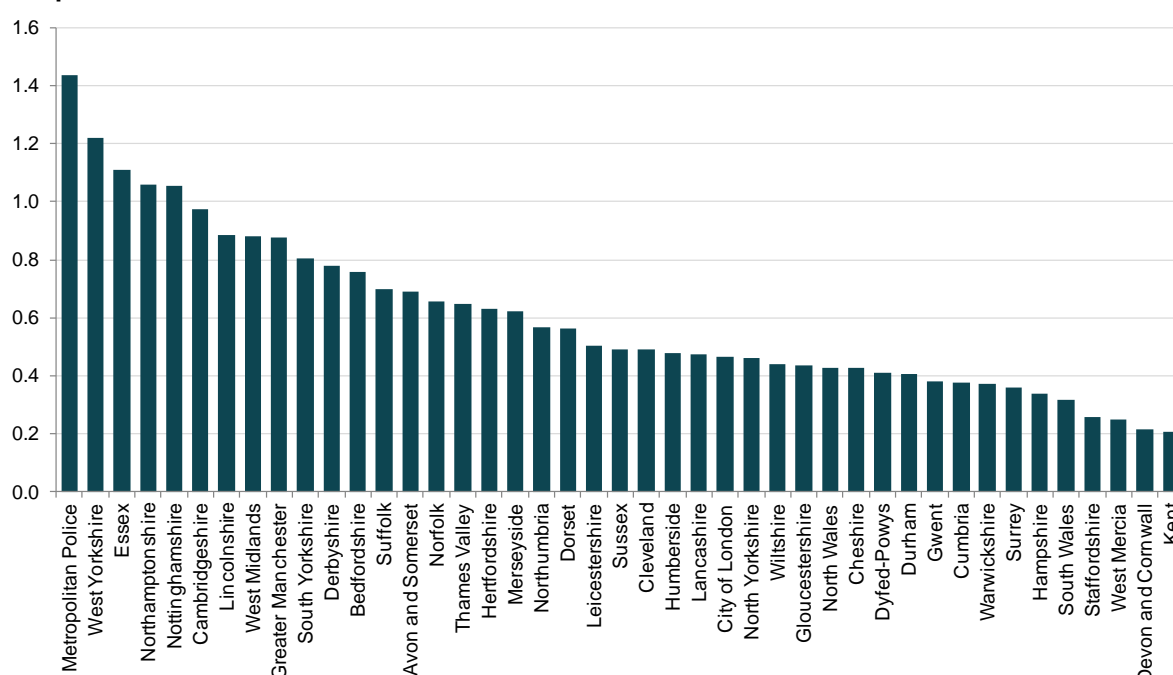
HMIC has analysed records on the PNC relating to people who are wanted and has a number of concerns. There are over 55,000 records on the PNC relating to 45,960 wanted persons. Some of these records will relate to the same individuals, who may

<sup>38</sup> Cumbria, Dyfed-Powys, Gloucestershire, Gwent, Hertfordshire, City of London, Northamptonshire, North Wales, Nottinghamshire, Sussex, Thames Valley and Wiltshire forces were unable to provide data on the number of outstanding suspects on force-based systems; therefore, they are excluded from this graph.

be wanted for multiple offences or by multiple forces. Twenty percent of records relate to theft. However, the next largest category (12 percent) is for offences broadly categorised as violence with injury. There are an appreciable number of records relating to rape (1012, or 2 percent) and to homicide (343, or 1 percent). Some 15 percent of the suspects on the PNC are wanted for bail offences, which means that the police had apprehended them at some point but had since lost track of them.

There is also a considerable variation among forces in the extent to which they have apprehended wanted persons. Some forces have a far greater number of wanted persons than others, even when allowing for the difference in force size. This may imply different force policies or practices in apprehending these individuals.

**Figure 17: Number of records of wanted persons per 1,000 population on Police National Computer database<sup>39</sup>**



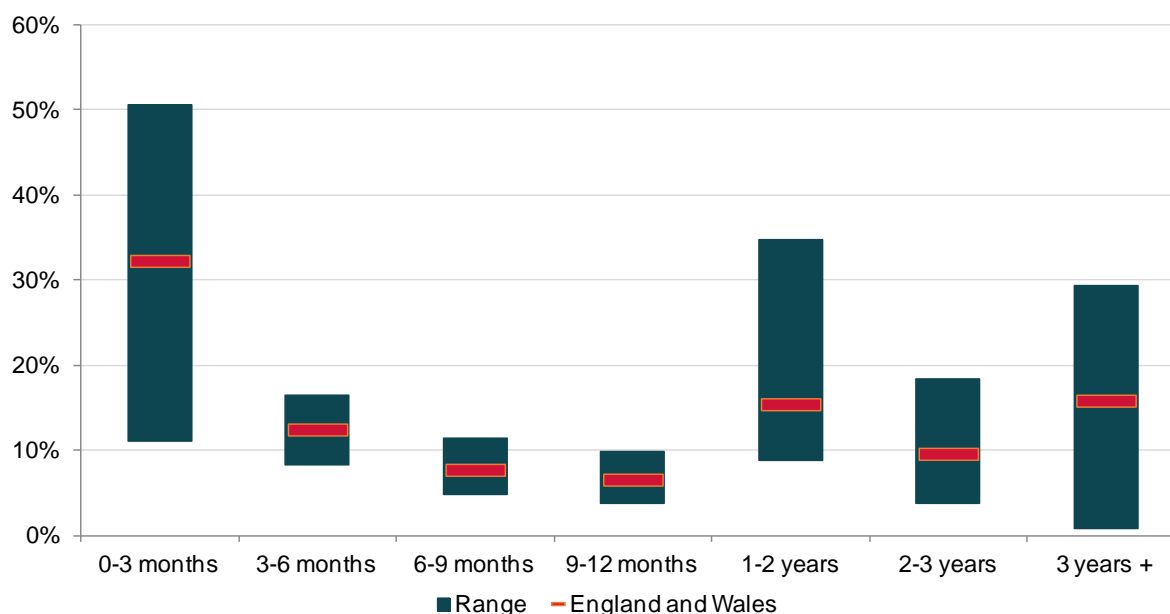
**Source: Police National Computer data**

Some people have been wanted for significant periods of time. Figure 18 shows how the records are distributed and how this varies between forces. The majority of people wanted have been on the PNC for less than three months, but there are a considerable number of records for suspects who have been wanted for far longer.

<sup>39</sup> These data are taken as at 11 August 2016



**Figure 18: Wanted persons – by length of time on the PNC<sup>40</sup>**



**Source: Police National Computer data**

HMIC analysed a number of records on the PNC relating to particular individuals, and these highlighted the risk of not swiftly apprehending the suspect. Some of the cases we considered related to suspects who were wanted for some time by one or more forces for particular offences, and who then became wanted at a later stage by another force for subsequent offences, in some cases more serious than the original offence. This is of particular concern as, if the suspect had been apprehended in the first place, further crime could have been prevented and a victim could have been spared a traumatic ordeal.

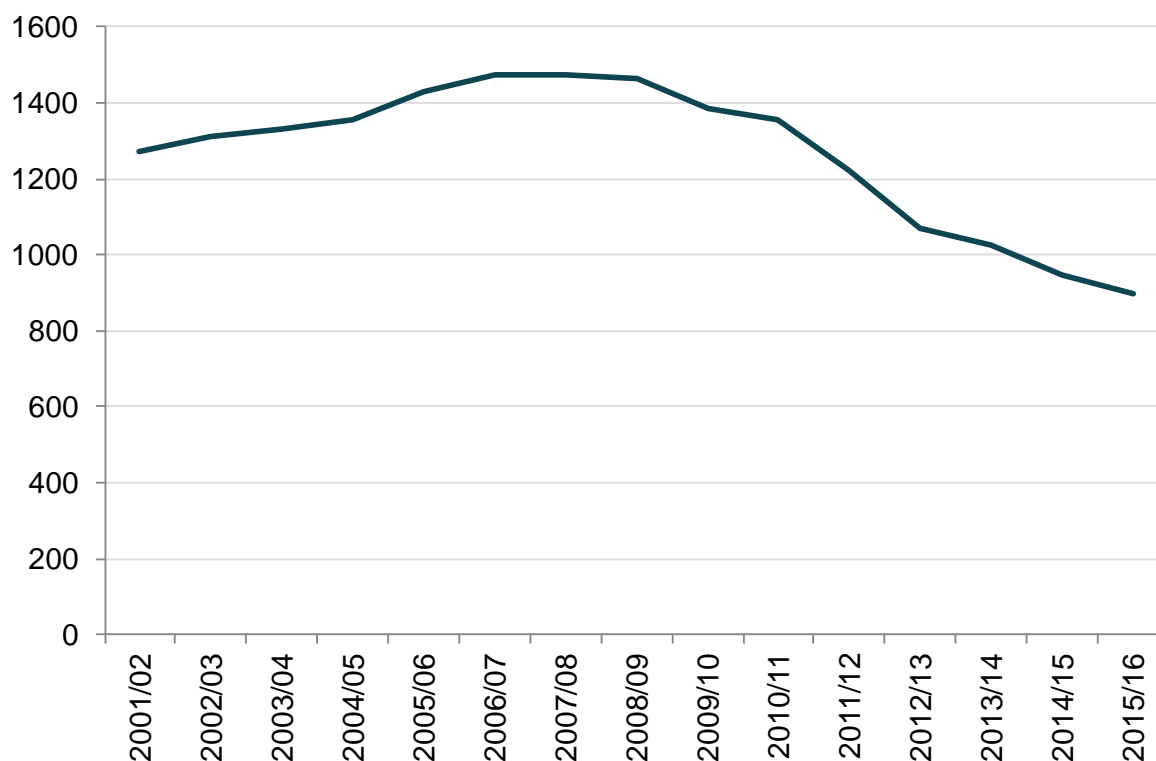
### **Wanted suspects – arrests**

Linked to the problem of apprehending suspects who are wanted in connection with a crime is the extent to which forces are arresting those suspects at the earliest opportunity, and therefore ensuring that they are apprehended. HMIC has been concerned for some time about the variation among forces in the arrest rates for domestic abuse-related crimes. In this inspection, we have looked more closely at arrest rates for all crime types.

Figure 19 shows that there has been a fairly steady decline in arrests nationally since 2007/08, with a sharper decrease in 2009/10.

<sup>40</sup> This chart shows the proportion of outstanding suspects circulated on PNC, in England and Wales, and the length of time since those suspects were circulated. These data are subject to change, as more suspects are put on the system over time. These data are taken as at 11 August 2016

**Figure 19: –Number of arrests (in 1,000s) per year, for the 12 months to 31 March<sup>41</sup>**



**Source: Home Office data**

There are a number of factors which may have contributed to this reduction, and HMIC's inspection this year has not identified one – single – cause. One possible reason links to resourcing pressures, for example centralisation of custody suites (meaning officers may have to travel greater distances to take someone to custody and may be less likely to do this on a busy shift), and an increased use of voluntary attendance<sup>42</sup> to smooth demand and make it more manageable. Another may be an increased use of voluntary attendance due to a more stringent application of the necessity test. This test was introduced in 2012 under PACE Code G<sup>43</sup> and provides that, for an arrest to be lawful, there must be reasonable grounds for believing that the arrest is necessary. Officers have told us that this has also contributed to the increased use of voluntary interviews as an alternative to arrest. There are also

<sup>41</sup> *Police powers and procedures England and Wales year ending 31 March 2016*, Home Office, Statistical Bulletin 15/16, 27 October 2016. Available from: [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/562977/police-powers-procedures-hosb1516.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/562977/police-powers-procedures-hosb1516.pdf)

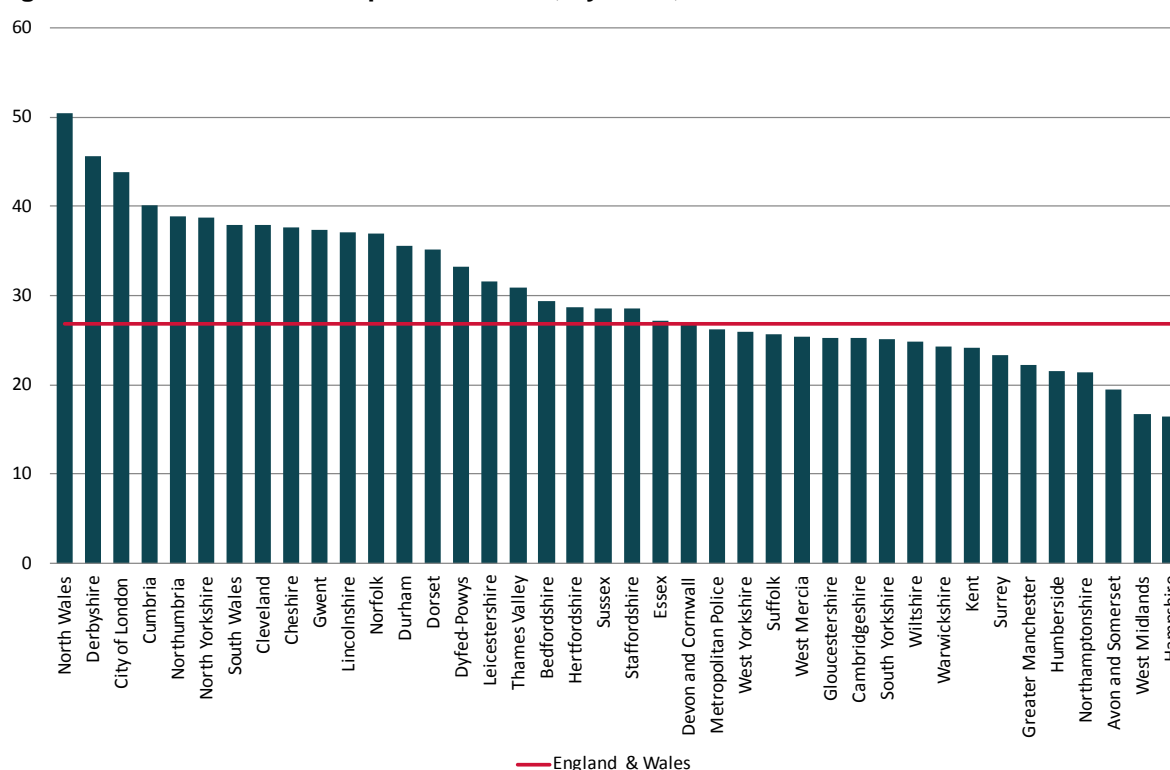
<sup>42</sup> Voluntary attendance is where a person attends voluntarily at a police station or at any other place where a constable is present or accompanies a constable to a police station or any such other place without having been arrested for the purpose of assisting with an investigation.

<sup>43</sup> Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE). Code G Revised Code of Practice for the Statutory Power of Arrest by Police Officers. Available from: [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/117583/pace-code-g-2012.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/117583/pace-code-g-2012.pdf)

cultural reasons, such as a push to give officers more discretion in deciding how to do the job as part of a move away from requiring officers to meet targets imposed from the centre.

There is considerable variation in how often police officers in forces arrest suspects. The number of arrests in each force has been set against overall crime levels in the figure below. The data suggest that different policies and practices are being adopted by forces. While HMIC understands that reducing the number of arrests can be positive in some circumstances, for example when a police officer is diverting an offender from the criminal justice system, there is concern that forces should understand the reasons for such variation and the effect it may have in apprehending suspects, progressing investigations and bringing offenders to justice.

**Figure 20: Number of arrests per 100 crimes, by force, for the 12 months to 30 June 2016**



Source: HMIC 2016 effectiveness data collection

## Offender management – Integrated Offender Management

Integrated offender management (IOM) is an approach in which multiple local public services work together to identify and manage the most persistent and prolific offenders who are causing the most crime or harm in their communities.<sup>44</sup> Many offenders have complex personal problems, such as substance misuse and mental

<sup>44</sup> More information on Integrated Offender Management is available on gov.uk at [www.gov.uk/integrated-offender-management-iom](http://www.gov.uk/integrated-offender-management-iom)

health problems and housing and employment difficulties, which can have an effect on offending behaviour. This year, HMIC's inspection focused on the types of offences managed through IOM and how well forces are measuring success.

HMIC found variation in how forces select subjects for inclusion in IOM and therefore there was a difference in the types of offences managed in each force. The vast majority of IOM subjects are still selected on the basis of their serious and acquisitive crime history.

**Figure 21: IOM numbers – as at 1 July 2016**

	Count
<b>Total number of offenders on IOM programme</b>	<b>20152</b>
<b>Number on the IOM programme for:</b>	
Acquisitive crime offences	10749
Violent crime offences (not related to domestic abuse)	1648
Violent crime offences (related to domestic abuse)	1135
Both violent and acquisitive crime offences	4046
<b>Number on the IOM programme who are mapped organised crime group members</b>	<b>668</b>

\* Not all forces were able to provide a breakdown of crime type; therefore, the total number of offenders on the IOM programme is not the sum of each crime type group.

Source: HMIC 2016 effectiveness data collection

However, the profile of those offenders managed by IOM programmes has changed since our inspection last year. Forces are increasingly including offenders who cause high levels of harm rather than only those who are responsible for a large volume of offences. For example, there has been an increase in the number of forces that now include domestic abuse offenders among those who are managed under IOM.

**Figure 22: IOM numbers and offence types – 1 July 2015 compared to 1 July 2016**

	01/07/2015	01/07/2016	Percentage change
<b>Total number of offenders on IOM programme</b>	16948	16382	-3.3%
<b>Number on the IOM programme for:</b>			
Acquisitive crime offences	8842	7044	-20.3%
Violent crime offences (not related to domestic abuse)	698	947	35.7%
Violent crime offences (related to domestic abuse)	214	868	305.6%
Both violent and acquisitive crime offences	2228	2574	15.5%
<b>Number on the IOM programme who are mapped organised crime group members</b>	183	392	114.2%

\* These totals exclude four forces which were unable to provide IOM data in 2015. Therefore the figures for 2016 do not match those in Figure 21.

Source: HMIC 2016 effectiveness data collection

As we reported last year, some forces have unclear measures of success and there are inconsistencies in how IOM teams define, measure and evaluate the success of their work. The only measure which is consistently used is reoffending rates. However, given that reoffending rates range from 10 percent to 90 percent of individuals who have been on an IOM programme, HMIC has concerns as to whether rates are being measured in the same way and whether they offer any meaningful comparisons.

### **Offender management – dangerous and sexual offenders**

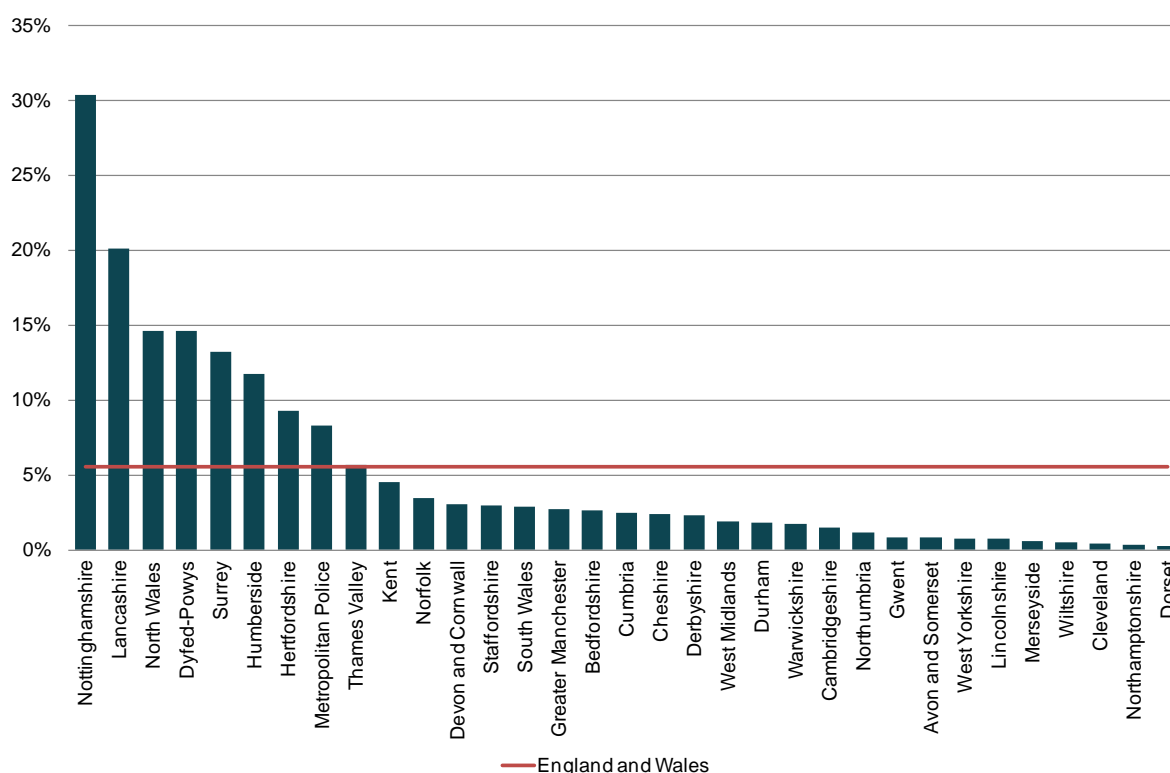
The management of dangerous and sexual offenders is for the most part a specialist area of policing. Staff involved in the management of these offenders work with a number of other agencies, such as local authorities and the prison service. This is a complex and high-risk area of policing and one that requires coordinated efforts from specialist staff, frontline officers and neighbourhood staff.

The police service in England and Wales has a statutory duty, in conjunction with agencies such as the probation service and prison service, to manage the risk posed by the most dangerous offenders. HMIC has inspected MAPPA arrangements in previous PEEL inspections and has found there to be good knowledge and understanding of them at senior level. We have seen changes in the overall number of people subject to MAPPA arrangements and changes in the level of risk they pose. Risk-assessing MAPPA subjects can be a time-consuming and resource-intensive process, and some forces told us that this was leading to delays in completing these assessments.

HMIC also considered force arrangements for managing registered sex offenders. There is a statutory duty to manage those offenders who have been convicted of a sexual offence which warrants them being placed on the sex offenders' register and subject to continuing management and scrutiny. Not all such offenders are assessed as posing sufficient risk to be managed under MAPPA as well, although this can happen.

As with last year, we found that workloads are generally high for those specialist teams which have responsibility for managing registered sex offenders (RSOs). Too often this has resulted in delays in risk assessing RSOs (as set out in Figure 24 below). At 1 July 2016, there were 2,700 RSOs yet to be assessed, and HMIC has concerns about the level of unknown and potentially unmanaged risk that these individuals may pose to communities. We are also concerned that, too often, relevant activity, such as visits to RSOs, is not being routinely carried out. While forces were able to complete scheduled visits, some forces had difficulty in managing regular unannounced visits to RSOs.

**Figure 23: Proportion of registered sex offenders awaiting assessment, as a percentage of those currently managed as registered sex offenders in force – as at 1 July 2016**



**Source: HMIC 2016 effectiveness data collection**

Forces are aware of the increasing workloads and are trying to spread the load and associated risk across different teams. In particular, forces are aiming to ensure that neighbourhood policing teams can play a part in managing these offenders. This approach can take a number of forms:

- Some forces have a process of assigning work in relation to each RSO which allows community officers to take a more active part in managing the offender.
- Some forces have already moved from a centralised management approach to RSOs and, after a review of threat, risk and harm, low-to-medium risk RSOs are now the responsibility of community teams.

This is early days for some forces, but already there are benefits from increased intelligence submissions and from the community team having a better understanding of who is in their area. Most forces are using their briefing systems effectively, so that the RSO and any current or relevant intelligence relating to this offender are routinely updated.

There are still too many examples, however, where neighbourhood or response officers do not know about an RSO who lives in their area or which court orders, such as Sex Offender Prevention Order, apply to this offender. This tends to occur when an RSO is managed by officers in a central unit and there is little involvement of other parts of the police force.

## Protecting from harm those who are vulnerable, and supporting victims

Those who are vulnerable<sup>45</sup> are at the greatest risk of harm and they should be at the heart of the service provided by police forces. Given the range of reasons why people may be vulnerable, and the breadth of skills and resources required to ensure an appropriate response, the police need to work closely with partner organisations to be effective. The demand on the police to respond to vulnerability continues to grow and accounts for a considerable amount of police time in responding to calls for service.

To assess how effectively forces protect those who are vulnerable from harm, HMIC evaluated how well they:

- identify those who are vulnerable, and assess their level of risk and need;
- respond to vulnerable victims; and
- take subsequent action and work with partner organisations to keep victims safe.

### **How effective are forces at protecting from harm those who are vulnerable and supporting victims?**

The police service has recognised that its response to those who are most vulnerable is not good enough, and police leaders and police and crime commissioners are committed to improving the response to vulnerable people. Many forces are changing their structures, realigning their spending and resources and re-designing how they work to reflect this priority. As set out earlier in the report, public protection expenditure to protect vulnerable people has increased by 16 percent between 2013/14 and 2015/16.

This year, HMIC has judged 22 forces as good at protecting vulnerable people, 16 forces as requires improvement and 5 forces as inadequate. This is a considerable improvement in grades from 2015, when 12 forces were assessed as good, 27 as requiring improvement and 4 as inadequate. We have found that forces continue to focus on improving their response to domestic abuse and acting on the recommendations in last year's reports.

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<sup>45</sup> A person who is in need of special care, support or protection because of age, disability or risk of abuse and neglect.



### **How have forces improved since HMIC's 2015 vulnerability inspection?**

Since the 2015 inspection, HMIC has seen an improvement in how forces support vulnerable people. Across England and Wales, a strong commitment from chief officer teams to the importance of protecting from harm those who are vulnerable has led to an increase in staff within many of the safeguarding units. Forces have moved staff to provide a more focused response to different types of vulnerability and are continuing to invest in public protection resources to enhance capacity and capabilities.

Forces have ensured that training has been provided to staff to enhance their knowledge and understanding of vulnerability, particularly the link between missing children and child sexual exploitation. Many frontline officers and supervisors have increased their understanding of their roles and responsibilities regarding missing children. Many forces have improved how they recognise vulnerability in their control rooms to ensure a more effective response at the point of first contact. HMIC is pleased to report that there has been a huge investment in training on aspects of vulnerability, including training on coercive control, mental health, domestic abuse, child sexual exploitation and missing children.

HMIC has noted that partnership working is strong and improving. Many forces now have effective partnership arrangements in place to deal with missing children and those who are repeat victims and/or at high risk of becoming victims of child sexual exploitation. Forces are working closely with care homes and partner organisations to improve their response to persistently and repeatedly missing children, in order to reduce overall demand and provide real focus on those children who are most at risk.

However, there is still a lot of progress to be made. In this inspection, five forces are deemed to be inadequate at protecting those who are vulnerable, and overall there are still more forces that require improvement or are inadequate than in the other areas HMIC has inspected. Forces are not always getting the early identification of vulnerability correct; many are still trying to understand the demand it creates and how best to respond to it; and the response is still not as timely and effective as it should be.

## Identifying those who are vulnerable, and assessing levels of risk and need

### Identification

The first stage of an effective police response is to identify accurately and reliably whether a caller is vulnerable in some way, in order to ensure an appropriate police response.

In 2015, HMIC reported a lack of consistency in how vulnerability was defined by forces. While awareness of vulnerability has improved since 2015, and vulnerability is now widely recognised as a priority by officers and staff at all levels, its recording is still inconsistent across the country. Forces continue to define a vulnerable victim in different ways. This is because at present there is not a standard requirement on forces to record on crime recording systems whether a victim is vulnerable, nor is there a standard definition of vulnerability to be used by all forces.

Some forces use the definition from the government's Code of Practice for Victims of Crime,<sup>46</sup> others use the definition referred to in ACPO guidance<sup>47</sup> and the remainder use their own definition. Victims continue to receive different levels of service depending on where they live, as a victim who is identified as vulnerable by one force may not be assessed as such in another. HMIC recommended last year that there should be a consistent approach to defining when a person is vulnerable and to collecting data on how effectively vulnerable people are identified. The College of Policing have developed an approach to ensuring that vulnerable people are consistently identified and plan to train a number of forces in this approach in 2017/18.

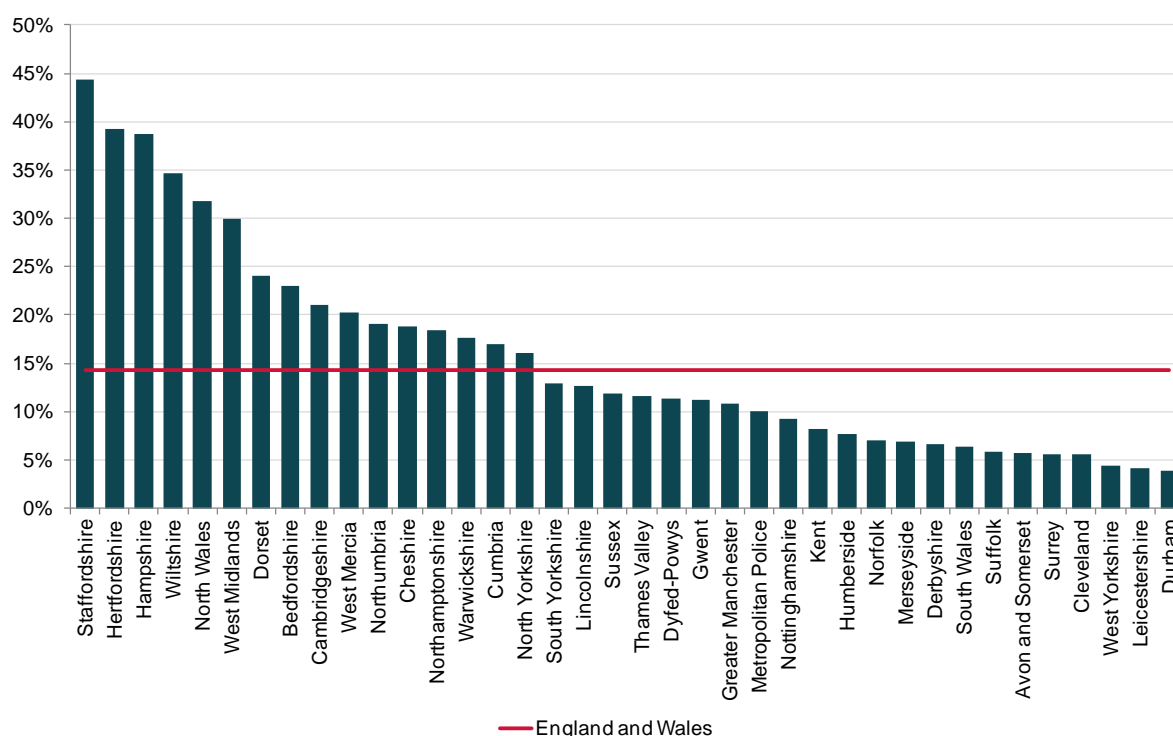
The proportion of police-recorded crime involving a vulnerable victim is extremely varied across forces, and some forces are still unable to provide this information. Data returned by forces to HMIC show that, in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, the proportion of recorded crime which involves a vulnerable victim varies considerably between forces, from 3.9 percent to 44.4 percent.

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<sup>46</sup> *Code of Practice for Victims of Crime*, Ministry of Justice, October 2015. Available at [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/254459/code-of-practice-victims-of-crime.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/254459/code-of-practice-victims-of-crime.pdf)

<sup>47</sup> *ACPO Guidance on Safeguarding and Investigating the Abuse of Vulnerable Adults*, NPIA, 2012. Available at <http://library.college.police.uk/docs/acpo/vulnerable-adults-2012.pdf> The National Police Chiefs' Council replaced the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) on 1 April 2015.

**Figure 24: Percentage of police-recorded crime with a vulnerable victim identified, by force, for the 12 months to 30 June 2016<sup>48</sup>**



**Source: HMIC 2016 effectiveness data collection and Home Office data return**

**For further information about these data, please see annex A**

HMIC is concerned that too often the quality of the data relating to vulnerable victims is unacceptably poor. Forces should put measures in place to ensure that their systems and staff accurately record when they are dealing with vulnerable victims. The identification of vulnerability is vitally important, enabling forces to plan effectively and be in a position to respond effectively to calls for service. Forces that do not have a full understanding of vulnerability and the level and type of demand it creates are less likely to have the correct resources allocated to meet this demand.

HMIC is pleased to report that forces have improved their development of problem profiles and action plans for crimes with vulnerable victims, such as child sexual exploitation and domestic abuse. The increased use of data from other organisations, such as education and social services, to assist forces in better understanding the scale of the problems is particularly welcome.

Data and information about crimes involving vulnerable victims reveal how demand is increasing.

Between August 2013 and June 2016, the police recorded a 61 percent increase in domestic abuse crimes. This appears to be a positive step as it could indicate that

<sup>48</sup> The 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, they have been excluded from this graph and from the England and Wales rate.

more victims of domestic abuse are reporting crimes to the police and that domestic abuse crimes are being identified and recorded with greater accuracy. This issue will be explored further when HMIC publish a more detailed report on domestic abuse later in the year.

This is at a time when the police service is under a range of pressures across several crime types. The Crime Survey for England and Wales<sup>49</sup> highlights that police-recorded sexual offences increased by 12 percent from October 2015 to September 2016 (although the proportion of adults saying that they had been a victim of such crimes in the crime survey itself remained relatively stable). Recorded sexual offences have doubled since 2013, and this is an extremely time-consuming and resource-intensive area of business for the police service. Managing the increase in demand, not just from domestic abuse and sexual offences, but across all areas of vulnerabilities, has presented significant problems to the police service.

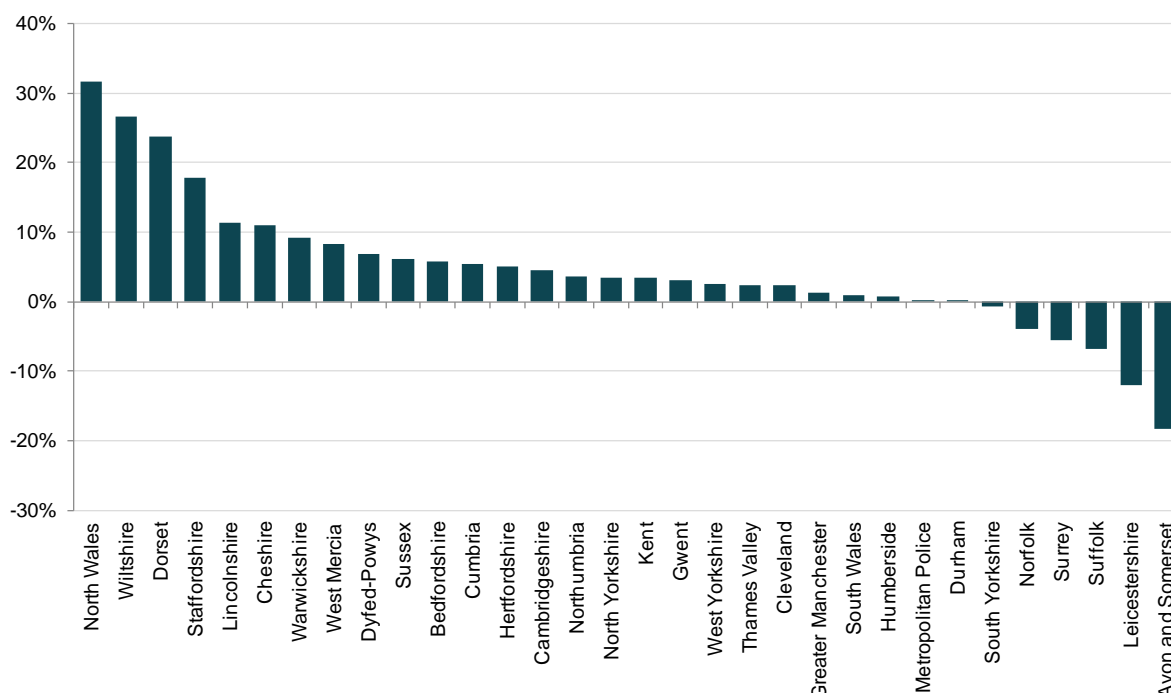
In the 12 months to 31 March 2015, 10.7 percent of recorded offences in England and Wales were flagged to identify a vulnerable victim. In the 12 months to 30 June 2016, this increased to 14.3 percent<sup>50</sup>. As the graph below indicates, a considerable number of forces have seen an increase in the numbers of recorded crimes with a vulnerable victim identified.

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<sup>49</sup> *Crime in England and Wales: year ending Sept 2016*. Office for National Statistics, 19 January 2017, Section 9. Available at: [www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingsept2016](http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingsept2016)

<sup>50</sup> Figures across years should be compared with caution, as different forces were able to provide this data across both years (for further details see annex A).

**Figure 25: Percentage point change in the percentage of police-recorded crime with a vulnerable victim identified, by force, for the 12 month to 31 March 2015 compared to 12 months to 30 June 2016<sup>51</sup>**



Source: HMIC 2016 effectiveness data collection, Home Office data

## Initial contact

Control rooms, where forces respond to calls from the public, continue to improve their early identification of vulnerability. They use systems to identify whether a caller is a repeat victim, intelligence staff within the control rooms who can check any relevant history across a number of force systems and databases, and technology to ensure that responding officers have a clearer understanding of the call for service that they are attending. In addition, the majority of call-handling systems have checklists to help call handlers to ask the right questions, so that they can identify properly the level of risk and decide on the appropriate response.

Improvements still need to be made in the data held by forces on vulnerable victims; a number of forces were unable to provide data on the percentage of calls involving a vulnerable victim, for instance. HMIC still found some specific areas of concern relating to initial contact with victims. These were predominantly about the ability of call handlers to assess vulnerability when victims first make contact, and the timeliness of the response victims receive.

<sup>51</sup> In 2016, 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. In 2015, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Lancashire, Merseyside, Northamptonshire and West Midlands forces were unable to provide this data. These forces have been excluded from the graph as a percentage change could not be calculated.

We still found examples of call handlers not correctly identifying or categorising the level of risk associated with incidents involving vulnerable people. This is for a number of reasons. Some computer systems used by call handlers do not automatically flag up whether a caller is already known to the police as a vulnerable person. This means that the call handler may miss important information about an individual's vulnerability, and therefore not understand fully the risks involved. This in turn means that the call handler may not give the response the priority it needs, and the response officers may not be fully aware of the situation when they make their judgments on risk and safeguarding at the scene. In addition, repeat callers may only be identified by location or phone number. If they call from a different address, they will not therefore be identified as a repeat caller and will not necessarily receive an appropriate response.

### **Use of THRIVE**

As discussed earlier in the report, the Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigation, Vulnerability and Engagement (THRIVE) system is now being used in control rooms in many forces. It provides a structured way of assessing the threat, harm, risk and investigation opportunities associated with a call, the vulnerability of the victim, and the level of engagement that is required to support and protect the victim.

HMIC considers the use of a THRIVE-based approach to be an effective way to identify vulnerability and safeguarding needs at the earliest possible opportunity. Many forces were able to demonstrate an effective focus on vulnerability at the first point of contact when using THRIVE.

However, in 2015 HMIC reported a concern that staff in some forces were using the model as a means of rationing police resources, and therefore either delaying sending an officer to an incident or not sending one at all. In 2016, this continues to be a theme and we have identified that it has posed serious risk to the public on a number of occasions. Systems that were designed to identify and respond to vulnerability are being used a tool to reduce the workload for busy response officers, with considerable and unacceptable associated risks. HMIC found that, in some forces, many domestic abuse calls were left without any officers allocated to attend, or were scheduled for attendance some time in the future, resulting in unnecessary delays and risk.

### **Assessing risk and sending officers**

The identification of vulnerability and the accurate assessment of risk should underpin the speed of response, who should respond to the victims, and any immediate safety measures needed to protect them.

In 2015, risk assessments were highlighted as an area in which many forces needed to improve, and, while it is a slightly improving picture in 2016, they remain a concern. We found some examples of initial assessments of risk that were so poor that members of the public had been put at risk.

The particular areas of concern in some forces were:

- large numbers of unallocated incidents in the control room which had not had an immediate (usually within 15 to 20 minutes) or even a prompt response (usually within one hour) but had been waiting for several days to be allocated to someone in the force to respond;
- high levels of risk revealed by a dip-sampling of these unallocated cases: for example, they included domestic abuse cases and potential child neglect; and
- evidence that the initial risk assessments made by call handlers had been downgraded, because of a lack of available response officers to respond to calls immediately.

This is just one example of the way in which in too many cases some forces are suppressing demand because they have insufficient people available to respond to calls.

## **The police response**

### **Initial response**

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 a victim has contacted the police after suffering years of victimisation, or they may have had repeated contact with the police.

Since HMIC inspected the police response to vulnerability in 2015, forces have invested in training to improve the knowledge and understanding staff have of different types of vulnerability, including child sexual exploitation and domestic abuse. Most forces are in the process of providing further training on coercion and control within a domestic abuse environment, and on mental health. As a result, HMIC found that overall response officers were more knowledgeable, with the ability to identify vulnerability and respond appropriately, thus providing a better service to victims.

However, in many forces, the initial response is still hampered by the equipment available to gather important early evidence. In 2015, HMIC highlighted the need for all forces to ensure that response officers have access to equipment that enables them to collect photographic or video evidence at the scene of an incident. Many forces are in the process of trials in relation to body-worn video cameras, but the use

and availability of such equipment are still not widespread. Body-worn video cameras are used force-wide by 26 forces, and 7 forces use body-worn video cameras as part of a pilot. As many as 10 forces stated that they do not use body-worn video cameras.<sup>52</sup> HMIC's 43-force crime file review found that the use of body-worn video cameras as an investigative opportunity would have been applicable in 373 cases. However, there was evidence that body-worn video cameras had been used for investigative opportunities in only 182 of these cases, just 49 percent of those deemed appropriate for the technology.

While forces claim to be in differing positions in terms of their ability to invest in body-worn video cameras, the point that compelling evidence can be gathered by body-worn video cameras cannot be ignored. The randomised controlled trial research carried out in Essex by the College of Policing in 2014 showed that issuing police officers with body-worn video cameras could be highly effective in increasing the proportion of outcomes that resulted in a criminal charge by 9 percent.<sup>53</sup> Officers frequently mentioned the evidence-gathering benefits of the cameras, particularly for capturing context, comments and emotion accurately.

During this inspection, HMIC has identified a concern over the number of cases that were assigned outcomes with no further action to be taken where the victim did not support police action (see previous chapter). The use of body-worn video cameras is likely to be an important investigative tool that could be used to reduce the number of investigations assigned this outcome, particularly in domestic abuse cases.

### **Attending officers – risk assessment**

Those officers who are the first to respond to a call from a member of the public have to make an assessment of how much danger the victim they are responding to may be in. It is important that they do this correctly, so that they can do what is necessary to keep them safe but also so that subsequent support and investigation is provided by the right people, from the right agencies and with the right skills.

Forces generally have effective processes to identify and assess vulnerability at first response. The evidence gathered by HMIC in this inspection shows that officers assess the vulnerability of, and the risk to, those involved in incidents and are aware of where they can refer those in need of support from other organisations.

Forces use different methods to assist frontline officers to assess vulnerability. For example, officers in the Metropolitan Police are required to complete a vulnerability assessment across five areas to identify any vulnerability when they come into

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<sup>52</sup> Gloucestershire, Humberside, Norfolk, South Wales, South Yorkshire, Suffolk, Surrey, Warwickshire, West Mercia and Wiltshire.

<sup>53</sup> *The Essex Body-Worn Video Trial: The impact of body-worn videos on criminal justice outcomes of domestic abuse incidents*, Owens, Mann and McKenna 2014. Available at: [http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Documents/BWV\\_Report.pdf](http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Documents/BWV_Report.pdf)



contact with an adult member of the public. In Sussex, the force uses a single combined assessment of risk form (SCARF) to assess vulnerability, and in Surrey a risk assessment tool known as SNAPPER (this considers the following elements: sexual, neglect, any exploitation, physical, professional and emotional factors) is used for any person under the age of 18 or an adult who might be considered vulnerable in some way. While a more consistent identification across England and Wales would be preferable to the different methods used by forces, HMIC is pleased to find that generally responding officers are well equipped to identify different forms of vulnerability when dealing with victims.

However, we did still find a few instances in some forces where frontline staff were not appropriately skilled to make accurate assessments of risk and where the assessments were not made in the best interests of the victim.

Despite concerns raised in 2015, in too many cases some forces are still not using the domestic abuse, stalking and harassment (DASH) risk assessments appropriately.<sup>54</sup> HMIC has found examples where officers are allowed to use discretion as to when the form is completed, which does not necessarily allow risks to be identified appropriately. In some forces, DASH forms are regularly being submitted without all or any of the questions being answered, without the attending officer's observations or views, and without any additional commentary being recorded.

HMIC is still concerned that, in two forces, domestic abuse risk assessments were in too many cases conducted over the telephone from the force's resolution centre when the call taker judged that there was not an immediate risk to the victim. This practice did not fully establish the risk that victims were facing, and sometimes led to ineffective investigations. While this practice has now ceased, it is a concern that demand management appeared to have taken precedence over the accurate assessment and response to risk. As forces face increased demand for their services for vulnerable people, it is critical that this practice does not spread across other forces.

## **Arrests and domestic abuse**

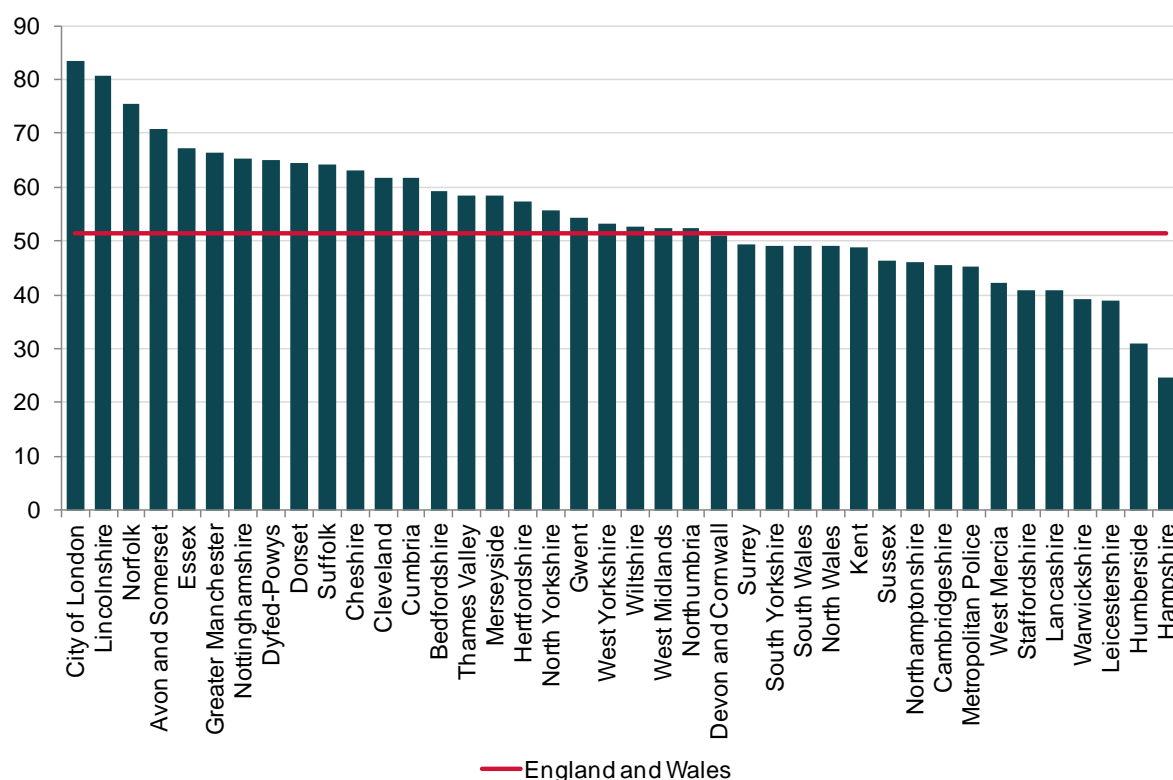
HMIC continues to have concerns about the falling levels of arrest in domestic abuse cases and the extent to which this varies from force to force. The force with the lowest domestic abuse arrest rate has seen a decrease from 66 arrests per 100 domestic abuse-related incidents in the 12 months to 31 March 2015 to 25 arrests per 100 in the 12 months to 30 June 2016. HMIC will be publishing an update on police forces' responses to domestic abuse later this year, and this issue will be examined in further detail then.

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<sup>54</sup> DASH is an identification, assessment and management model for domestic abuse, stalking and harassment, adopted by UK police forces and partner agencies in 2009; helps frontline practitioners identify high-risk cases of domestic abuse, stalking and so-called honour-based violence.

In some forces, the number of arrests for domestic abuse has fallen, despite the overall level of recorded domestic abuse increasing. As this report discusses earlier, there has been an overall reduction in arrest levels. It is important that the police service understands why this is and can assure the public that the powers of arrest are still being used when necessary to keep victims safe and to bring perpetrators to justice.

**Figure 26: Domestic abuse arrest rate (per 100 domestic abuse crimes), by force, for the 12 months to 30 June 2016<sup>55</sup>**



**Source: HMIC 2016 effectiveness data collection, Home Office data**  
**For further information about these data, please see annex A**

## Action taken and work with partners

### Investigation

Since the 2015 report, forces have made responding to vulnerability a priority that is passionately promoted by many chief officers and has been passed on effectively to all officers and staff. In many forces, this has led to an increase in officers deployed to specialist units working with vulnerable people.

However, HMIC is concerned that, despite these increases in staffing, many forces still have high vacancy rates at detective level within specialist units. Given the

<sup>55</sup> Derbyshire, Durham and Gloucestershire forces were not able to provide domestic abuse arrest data; therefore, they have been excluded from the graph and from the England and Wales rate.

increase in demand and vacancy factors, too many specialist units are still under-resourced and overwhelmed with demand, which in many cases leads to delays in service to some of the most vulnerable victims. Police officers and staff working in these units are also dealing with complex and distressing cases. It is still too often the case that the volume and nature of the work can affect the well-being of people working in these units, causing them to suffer stress and anxiety and further reduce the strength of the units.

As a result of this, HMIC has found that:

- In some cases where vacancies have been filled, the officers are yet to be trained appropriately for the role that they have been allocated.
- In a small number of forces, high-risk cases, such as those involving serious sexual offences and high-risk domestic abuse, are still too often being allocated to response officers who do not have the necessary training or experience to deal with them. This means that in too many cases vulnerable victims are still not receiving the level of service that they need, with safeguarding measures being overlooked.
- At times, the workloads of specialist investigators are too high to ensure a high-quality service to victims, and the investigations are not always subject to regular and active supervision. The timeliness of some investigations and safeguarding may be compromised as a result.

These findings are not new, nor are they only HMIC's. Recent work by the Police Superintendents' Association for England and Wales highlighted that just under half the heads of public protection units that they surveyed had no prior experience of public protection and 82 percent had not had any training or form of development for taking up the role. Problems relating to workload, stress and anxiety were also raised.<sup>56</sup> Forces report that the recruitment and retention of skilled detectives is a significant difficulty, and this lack of detective capability is seen by HMIC as a considerable national risk that needs to be addressed urgently by chief officers.

However, investigation of domestic abuse offences is of a high quality. Forces are clearly focused on providing an effective service for vulnerable victims, and this is an improving picture. In HMIC's 43-force crime file, in the 447 files reviewed in relation to domestic abuse cases, the effectiveness of the investigation and quality of victim care compare favourably to those in the other files.

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<sup>56</sup> See the results of the survey in this article: [www.policchiefmagazine.org/wp-content/uploads/PoliceChief\\_February-2017-WEB.pdf](http://www.policchiefmagazine.org/wp-content/uploads/PoliceChief_February-2017-WEB.pdf)

**Figure 27: HMIC's 43-force crime file review – domestic abuse (common assault) files compared to all files reviewed**

	<b>Domestic abuse (common assault) files</b>	<b>All files</b>
<b>Total number of offences reviewed</b>	<b>447</b>	<b>2701</b>
<b>Effective investigation</b>	89%	83%
<b>Good victim care</b>	89%	85%
<b>Effective supervision</b>	50%	50%
<b>Appropriate or effective supervision</b>	85%	74%

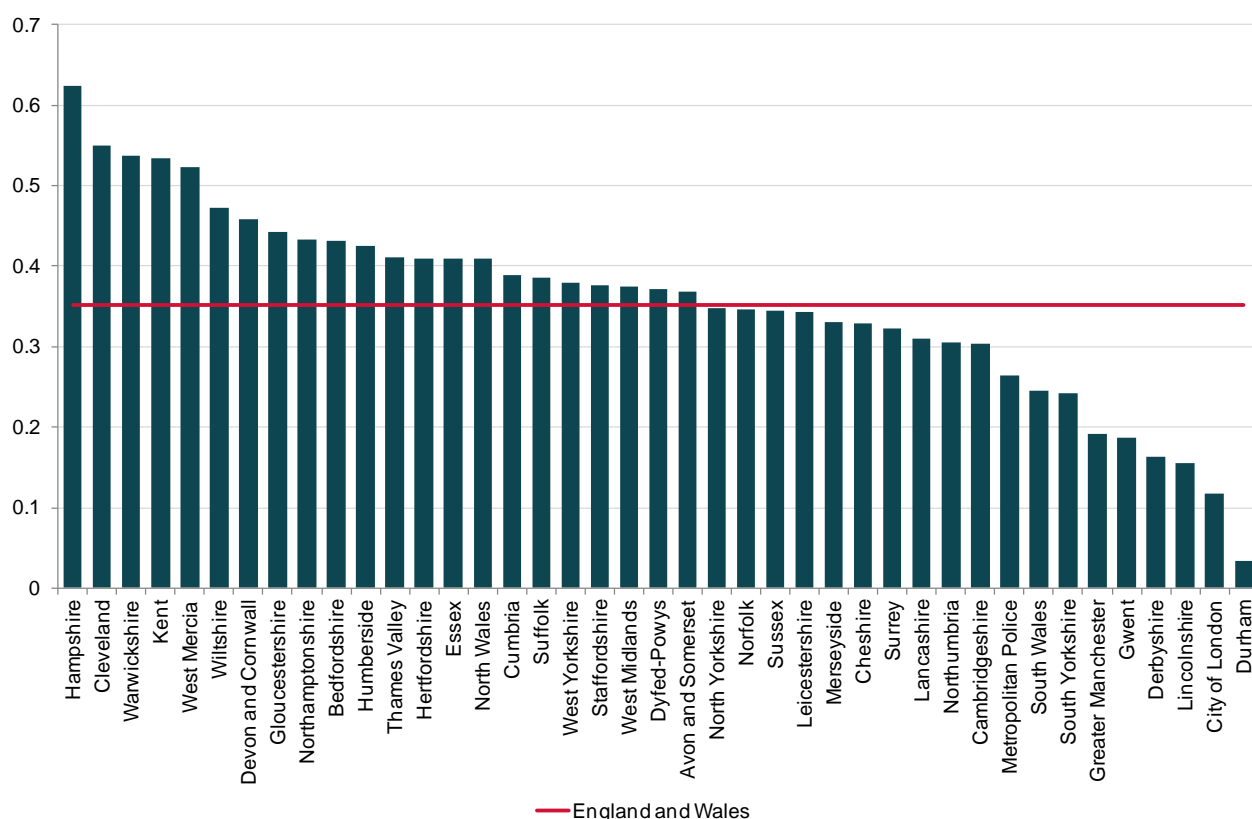
Source: HMIC 43-force crime file review

### **Domestic abuse investigations – outcomes and use of powers**

The use of the outcome category of 'evidential difficulties: victim does not support police action' is discussed earlier in this report. HMIC has a serious concern that, in just over a third of all reported domestic abuse crimes in the 12 months to June 2016, the victim did not support any further police action, despite in many cases knowing the identity of the perpetrator. In some forces, this rate was considerably higher. Some forces appear to be finalising investigations under this category at a very early stage in too many cases, which is clearly unacceptable and does little to safeguard victims effectively.

HMIC is concerned that, in some forces, as many as half of all domestic abuse crimes are being finalised in this way. It is necessary to ensure that victims are properly supported and criminal justice outcomes are pursued; it is not clear why there is such a variance across England and Wales, but those forces with a high proportion of cases in this category need to urgently review this position to understand why this is the case and whether any change in approach is needed.

**Figure 28: Rate of ‘Evidential difficulties: victim does not support action’ outcomes recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016 for domestic abuse-related offences<sup>57</sup>**



**Source: HMIC 2016 effectiveness data collection, Home Office data**

Domestic violence prevention notices<sup>58</sup> are the initial notices issued by the police to provide emergency protection to an individual believed to be the victim of domestic violence. Domestic violence protection orders<sup>59</sup> are designed to provide protection to

<sup>57</sup> Dorset Police and Nottinghamshire Police were unable to submit domestic abuse outcomes data; therefore, they have been excluded from the graph and from the England and Wales rate.

<sup>58</sup> A domestic violence prevention notice is initial notice issued by the police to provide emergency protection to an individual believed to be the victim of domestic violence; must be authorised by a police superintendent, contains prohibitions that effectively bar the suspected perpetrator from returning to the victim's home or otherwise contacting the victim; may be issued to a person aged 18 years and over if the police superintendent has reasonable grounds for believing that: the individual has been violent towards, or has threatened violence towards an associated person, and the DVPN is necessary to protect that person from violence or a threat of violence by the intended recipient of the DVPN.

<sup>59</sup> A domestic violence protection order is designed to provide protection to victims by enabling the police and magistrates courts to put in place protection in the immediate aftermath of a domestic abuse incident; where there is insufficient evidence to charge a perpetrator and provide protection to a victim via bail conditions; can prevent the perpetrator from returning to a residence and from having contact with the victim for up to 28 days, allowing the victim time to consider the options and get the necessary support.

victims by enabling the police and magistrates courts to put in place protection in the immediate aftermath of a domestic abuse incident.

HMIC has found that many forces are not using these powers to full effect, with low numbers or inconsistent use. This also appears to be the case for the domestic violence disclosure scheme, also known as Clare's Law.<sup>60</sup> Forces should review their use and promotion of the legislation to ensure that they are making best use of these powers to safeguard victims of domestic abuse.

The inconsistent approach to using these powers, the variation in the extent to which investigations do not proceed further and the use of the power of arrest by police forces are all aspects of a broader concern that HMIC has that in too many cases officers are not using their powers or exercising their primary duties to keep people safe and bring offenders to justice in this area. We will explore this issue in more depth when we publish our domestic abuse update later in the year.

### **Victim contact and its effects**

All forces have a statutory duty to comply with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime<sup>61</sup> (referred to as the Code), which sets out the service that victims can expect from all parts of the criminal justice system.

We found that forces vary not only in the consistency and quality of victim contact but also in how this is monitored in order to ensure positive outcomes for victims. While the monitoring of victim contact in itself is no guarantee of a positive outcome, the Code sets out the parameters for the minimum level of contact that victims can expect from those involved in the criminal justice process. HMIC found that some forces were unable to monitor compliance easily.

All forces appeared to be aware of the need to keep victims updated and at the centre of the investigation. How well this is done, however, varies. There are 29 forces which have a structured system in place and can be said to be complying with the Code. Of these, the majority are also well supervised in this respect.

Some forces show an awareness of the need to comply with the Code, and our fieldwork found that they are carrying out the relevant activities, but they do not have a structured approach in place. In too many cases, staff are therefore doing what they think they should do in order to keep the victim updated, rather than working to

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<sup>60</sup> Clare's Law increases protection for domestic abuse victims by allowing them access to information about a partners' history of violence and enables the police to better identify domestic abuse perpetrators; for more information, see: [www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/domestic-abuse/leadership-strategic-oversight-and-management/#domestic-violence-disclosure-scheme-clares-law](http://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/domestic-abuse/leadership-strategic-oversight-and-management/#domestic-violence-disclosure-scheme-clares-law)

<sup>61</sup> *Code of Practice for Victims of Crime*, Ministry of Justice, 2013. Available from: [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/254459/code-of-practice-victims-of-crime.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/254459/code-of-practice-victims-of-crime.pdf)

a plan. They can be hindered by computer systems that either do not automatically remind the officer of the need for victim contact, so it may get missed, or make it difficult to record the fact that it has been done.

We found that some forces still did not have a clear approach on the most appropriate time to take victim personal statements<sup>62</sup> – whether this should be at an early or later stage in the investigative process. It is important that victims are offered this at the earliest opportunity; the statement can always be amended or updated later.

### **Working with partners**

An effective response to vulnerable victims requires both statutory and voluntary sector organisations to work together to undertake risk assessments and safety planning to address their often complex needs and the needs of their children or other dependents.

Forces continue to develop their working relationships with partner organisations to ensure that appropriate safeguarding arrangements for vulnerable people are in place. Safeguarding is predominantly conducted through the multi-agency safeguarding hubs (MASHs)<sup>63</sup> that are located in each local authority area. MASHs are now well developed across much of England and Wales and this is a positive development.

In 2015, HMIC identified variances which led to inconsistent safeguarding between forces. This continues in 2016: the structure, responsibilities and processes in the MASHs vary within a force area, and not just across force boundaries. Of the 43 forces, 32 have their whole policing area covered by one or more MASHs. The police are the major MASH organisation, with police membership in 142 of the 143 MASHs in England and Wales.

A group, led by the Home Office, has been commissioned to collate effective practice principles for multi-agency working on domestic abuse. The principles are on track for publication in spring 2017.

Wider partnership working to support vulnerable people is also improving; forces remain committed to Operation Encompass, the information-sharing protocol between the police and schools for when a child has been exposed to an incident of domestic abuse. Some 22 forces currently use Operation Encompass or a similar

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<sup>62</sup> An opportunity for victims to express the wider effects that the crime has had on them, any support/assistance they may need and any concerns they may have.

<sup>63</sup> A multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) brings together staff from police and partner agencies (such as children's social services, health, education, probation, adult social services and housing) who work from the same location, sharing information and ensuring a timely and joined-up response to protect children and vulnerable adults.

scheme, and many of the remaining forces reported plans to introduce a scheme in the future. In addition, forces are working more closely with partners in response to child sexual exploitation, and the risk associated with children missing from care homes.

Given the rise in reported domestic abuse cases, it is unsurprising to see many forces reporting a rise in the number of cases discussed at multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs),<sup>64</sup> and police involvement in the MARAC structure remains strong. There is a variation in the number of cases going to MARACs against the Safelives<sup>65</sup> recommendation of 40 cases per 10,000 of the adult female population, with some forces sending very few cases.

HMIC found other areas of concern:

- In one force, HMIC noted a triaging process before the MARACs which is putting domestic abuse victims at risk. Variations in information sharing across the force mean that domestic abuse victims are not getting a consistent service, and HMIC has recommended that the force should review the referral process to the MARACs to ensure that victims of domestic abuse are not being placed at risk as a result. In a neighbouring force, high-risk cases are reviewed and approximately 50 percent downgraded to medium risk, again having a severe effect on the number of cases referred to the MARAC.
- Some forces are still struggling to cope with the increased demand and do not have fully effective processes in place. Some MASHs have particularly heavy workloads, which at times is resulting in backlogs of cases and delayed referrals to MARACs. A small number of forces have backlogs in referrals to other agencies at many stages, and completed risk assessments are not always added to forces' systems. These forces have been asked to take steps to reduce the backlog and to put effective processes in place for the sharing and recording of information.

### **Vulnerable people and mental health**

Many forces have shown improvements in their understanding and response to mental health vulnerability in the community. Examples of good practice are those forces which have introduced a street triage mental health response patrol car, which is jointly staffed by a police officer and a mental health practitioner, and those where mental health practitioners are based in the control room.

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<sup>64</sup> MARACs are regular local meetings where information about high-risk domestic abuse victims (those at risk of murder or serious harm) is shared between local agencies.

<sup>65</sup> Safelives is a national charity dedicated to ending domestic abuse. They work with the whole family to enable local services be more effective in their response to domestic abuse.



Forces' response to mental health begins with the training provided to staff. HMIC found examples of forces working well with local mental health professionals to provide training to frontline staff. This training includes how to identify signs of mental illness and how to respond to people displaying potential mental health problems.

However, understanding of mental health vulnerability does not appear as advanced as for other areas of vulnerability across England and Wales, and, while training is being rolled out, the necessary scope and scale needs to be better understood. Forces need to assure themselves that mental health incidents are being flagged as accurately as possible to enable them to understand fully the demand that this presents.

A more detailed consideration of how well forces are responding to people who are vulnerable due to mental health problems will form part of next year's PEEL assessment for all forces in England and Wales.

### **Missing and absent children**

Responding to reports of missing and absent children<sup>66</sup> places a high demand on police officers. This response can take considerable resources and time, but the consequences of not investigating cases can be extremely serious, leaving some children at risk of exploitation and/or significant harm.

Calls relating to missing persons are increasing year on year. In 2015/16, police forces in England and Wales received more than 375,000 calls linked to missing persons.<sup>67</sup> Children account for more than half of missing incidents, although they only account for 21 percent of the population, indicating that they are disproportionately more likely to be reported as missing than adults.

Although not every child who goes missing is at risk of sexual exploitation and not every child who is at risk of sexual exploitation goes missing, often the two are interlinked. It is often the most vulnerable children who are sexually exploited and who are targeted by those who intend to commit crimes against them.

It is important to acknowledge that most children who go missing are found, or return of their own accord, safe and well, and the police response in most cases is timely, proportionate and appropriate. In our 2016 inspection, we found that the response to

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<sup>66</sup> The National Police Chiefs' Council definition of missing person is: Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character or the context suggests the person may be subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another. The definition of an absent person is: A person not at a place where they are expected or required to be and there is no apparent risk.

<sup>67</sup> National Crime Agency missing persons bureau – [www.missingpersons.police.uk/en/resources/missing-persons-data-report-2015-16](http://www.missingpersons.police.uk/en/resources/missing-persons-data-report-2015-16)

missing and absent children had continued to improve from 2015. Among frontline staff, there is in many cases a better understanding of children at risk of sexual exploitation; the link between missing children and child sexual exploitation is better understood, and awareness and knowledge of the signs of child sexual exploitation have also improved.

When the police receive a report that a child is missing, they can choose to categorise him or her using the National Police Chiefs' Council definitions of missing and absent. This determines the level and urgency of the response. A categorisation of absent denotes that the child is considered to be at 'no apparent risk'. This normally means that the force takes no immediate action, but should keep the case under review. Cases in the missing category receive an active police response, with the level determined by a further assessment of whether there is a low, medium or high risk of immediate harm.

During the inspection, we found that not all forces use these definitions of missing and absent. Some forces have created their own definitions, and 15 forces do not use the absent category for children and record all incidents as missing, as they believe all children who are not in the place should be require an active police response. A new authorised professional practice (APP) on missing persons has been published by the College of Policing, which still contains both categories.<sup>68</sup>

The response to missing and absent children is improving across England and Wales, with most forces investing in training for frontline staff and call handlers. HMIC found numerous examples of good practice, with effective and timely investigative activity to find missing children. Generally, supervisors are monitoring the quality of response, increasing appropriately the resources to locate a missing child and regularly and effectively reassessing and amending risk assessments.

Many forces are also working in concert with partners to reduce missing episodes and the risk associated with them. Forces are proactively engaging with care providers to encourage them to assist the police in the management of missing children. In Cheshire and Merseyside, the police automatically refer all incidents of missing children to Catch 22, a child sexual exploitation support service that undertakes return home interviews for all children and child sexual exploitation screening, assessments and interventions. This process is planned jointly with children's social care and is a good example of partnership working to reduce the incidences of missing children and the related risks.

However, a small number of forces had areas for further improvement:

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<sup>68</sup> *Major Investigation and Public Protection: Missing Persons*, College of Policing, November 2016. Available at: [www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/missing-persons/](http://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/missing-persons/)

- In some areas, there is still an inconsistent approach to the management of risk for missing and absent children. Not all missing persons' cases are reviewed in accordance with policy, and a missing record is not always created on a specialised database.
- In too many respects, officers are not using trigger plans<sup>69</sup> consistently or effectively to ensure that any necessary safeguarding actions are taken without delay. The rationale for decisions is not always recorded in sufficient detail.
- Some forces require improvement in the procedures in the control room regarding absent and missing children to ensure that the cases of children who are categorised as absent are always investigated properly. If vulnerable children are wrongly assessed as absent rather than missing, there is a risk that there will be delays in ensuring an appropriate and timely police response to keep them safe.

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<sup>69</sup> A trigger plan is a list of immediate tasks that police officers or care home staff need to consider when a vulnerable child goes missing. These include attending places or persons the missing child may be visiting, the level of risk the child should be recorded as, and the appropriate resources and supervision allocated to the investigation.

# Serious and organised crime

## Introduction

Serious and organised crime affects communities across England and Wales. According to the National Crime Agency (NCA), over 6,000 organised crime groups were active in the UK towards the end of 2015, consisting of almost 50,000 individuals.<sup>70</sup> These groups are involved in illegal drug activity, human trafficking, child sexual exploitation, money laundering and other types of offending which causes considerable harm – both social and economic – to communities. Their motive is often – but not always – financial gain, and their methods are often both sophisticated and diverse.

The nature and scale of serious and organised crime demand a collective response which involves multiple law-enforcement agencies as well as local authorities, government departments and many other public, private and voluntary sector bodies. Police forces are a vital part of this response. Their work is crucial in bringing organised criminals to justice, but also in working with those partner agencies to protect the public and prevent people becoming involved in organised crime in the first place.

HMIC assesses the ability of all forces in England and Wales to tackle serious and organised crime. This part of our assessment consists of three principal components:

- how well forces understand the threat posed by serious and organised crime;
- how effectively forces investigate and disrupt serious and organised crime; and
- how effectively forces prevent serious and organised crime.

## Understanding the threat

In order to tackle serious and organised crime effectively, forces must first have in place a good understanding of the threat posed by organised criminals, encompassing both traditional (drugs and acquisitive crime) and non-traditional (child sexual abuse and cyber-crime) types of offending. A good understanding of the threat should be built on a foundation of structured risk-assessment processes, systematic intelligence sharing with multiple organisations within and beyond law enforcement and a rigorous approach to identifying and mapping organised crime groups.

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<sup>70</sup> *National Strategic Assessment of Serious and Organised Crime 2016*, National Crime Agency, 2016, page 12. Available from: [www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/publications/731-national-strategic-assessment-of-serious-and-organised-crime-2016/file](http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/publications/731-national-strategic-assessment-of-serious-and-organised-crime-2016/file)

Overall, forces have a good understanding of the threat posed by serious and organised crime. The vast majority of forces are familiar with the types of organised crime which occur most commonly in their area, and work with partner organisations to assess the nature and scale of those threats. There has been a clear convergence in the threat-assessment methods which are used by forces, regional organised crime units (ROCUs) and the NCA. In particular, the MoRiLE method<sup>71</sup> has been adopted by many forces and ROCUs. MoRiLE is not the only risk-assessment method which can help forces to improve their understanding of serious and organised crime, but it has made it easier for them to compare threats and make informed decisions about which to prioritise. It has also led many forces to identify child sexual exploitation, modern slavery and organised immigration crime as their highest priorities. Intelligence gathering in these areas has been stepped up as a result. This is allowing the police gradually to build a better understanding of these crimes, which are often hidden and highly complex. However, differences remain in the ways in which MoRiLE is used, and some forces are still using other methods, which is hindering their ability to make clear comparisons. One force lacks basic threat-assessment processes for serious and organised crime.

An important component of forces' understanding of serious and organised crime is the use of local profiles, which forces have been encouraged to produce by the Government's Serious and Organised Crime Strategy<sup>72</sup> (and subsequent guidance).<sup>73</sup> Local profiles bring together crime data, demographic information and other analysis to produce a detailed picture of the threats linked to serious and organised crime in a particular area. All forces have now produced at least one local profile, and some of these are of good quality, particularly those which cover a specific local neighbourhood rather than an entire force area. In many force areas, they are increasing the force's understanding of serious and organised crime and helping agencies to join together in the fight against it.

However, too many serious and organised crime local profiles still do not include information from other organisations such as local authorities, Immigration Enforcement, HM Revenue and Customs and the Department for Work and Pensions. HMIC examined local profiles from all 43 forces in England and Wales. Of

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<sup>71</sup> MoRiLE: the 'management of risk in law enforcement' process developed by the National Police Chiefs' Council. This tool assesses the types of crimes, which most threaten communities and highlights where the force does not currently have the capacity or capability to tackle them effectively.

<sup>72</sup> *Serious and Organised Crime Strategy*, HM Government, October 2013, Cmnd 8715. Available at: [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/248645/Serious\\_and\\_Organised\\_Crime\\_Strategy.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/248645/Serious_and_Organised_Crime_Strategy.pdf)

<sup>73</sup> *Serious and Organised Crime Local Profiles: A Guide*, HM Government, November 2014. Available from: [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/371602/Serious\\_and\\_Organised\\_Crime\\_local\\_profiles.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/371602/Serious_and_Organised_Crime_local_profiles.pdf)

these, 19 did not contain data from any other agencies, and several others included information only from the ROCU and the NCA. This means that forces are failing fully to exploit the range of information available to help them to develop a comprehensive, shared, understanding of serious and organised crime. All forces should ensure that their local profiles draw on data from other organisations and are regularly updated to maximise their usefulness. At the time of our inspection, fewer than half of all forces had established local organised crime partnership boards to promote a collaborative response to understanding and tackling serious and organised crime (or had adapted existing partnership structures to serve the same purpose). This lack of engagement at senior level with other organisations may explain why some forces have not been able to obtain data from other agencies to improve their understanding of serious and organised crime. All forces should establish and maintain these partnership structures to maximise their ability to harness the intelligence, tactics and powers of other organisations in the fight against serious and organised crime.

At a regional level, intelligence sharing with other organisations is generally good. Organisations such as HM Revenue and Customs, Immigration Enforcement and the Crown Prosecution Service have staff based in ROCUs to provide advice, support and access to information. This is not full co-location or integration, but is operationally beneficial. HMIC found evidence in ROCUs of constituent forces exchanging intelligence with other law-enforcement agencies and non-law enforcement organisations, although the extent of this varies across the country. This integration and information sharing should continue in all ROCUs to enable them to spearhead the regional effort to understand complex and changing threats, using the latest techniques.

In many respects, forces are developing their understanding of newer threats such as organised child sexual exploitation, modern slavery and human trafficking. Some forces have created specific teams dedicated to enhancing their understanding of these threats, and force documents reviewed by HMIC showed that 38 of 43 forces have analysed human trafficking and modern slavery within their serious and organised crime local profile, although fewer contained analysis of organised immigration crime, cyber-crime or online child sexual exploitation.

Forces increasingly recognise potential victims of human trafficking. All but four forces used the national referral mechanism (NRM)<sup>74</sup> at least once in the year to June 2016, although data collected by HMIC suggested that usage correlates with the number of OCGs predominantly involved in organised immigration crime. Forces

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<sup>74</sup> The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is a framework for identifying victims of human trafficking or modern slavery and ensuring they receive the appropriate support. More information is available from [www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/about-us/what-we-do/specialist-capabilities/uk-human-trafficking-centre/national-referral-mechanism](http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/about-us/what-we-do/specialist-capabilities/uk-human-trafficking-centre/national-referral-mechanism)

should continue their efforts to identify and protect those who may be at risk – whether at the hands of organised criminals or not – and ensure that they receive the best possible support.

HMIC observed meetings in the nine ROCUs and found evidence in all of them of steps being taken to improve understanding of newer threats such as child sexual exploitation, foreign national offending, modern slavery and cyber-crime. ROCUs have also supported efforts directed at tackling child sexual exploitation by recruiting dedicated co-ordinators. We found a number of ROCU-led operations against OCGs which were predominantly involved in cyber-crime, money laundering and economic crime. The highest proportion of ROCU-led operations was drug-related, although this does not necessarily mean that they did not also involve aspects of other offending types. Only six OCGs under investigation at the time of our inspection were predominantly involved in human trafficking, although this is a snapshot and may not be representative. There is a fuller discussion of ROCUs later in this chapter.

The more widespread adoption of the MoRiLE method has allowed forces to direct resources at understanding hidden types of crime, which are generally understood less well by the police than drug activity and violence. Figures provided by forces as part of HMIC's data collection suggest that the number of OCGs active in England and Wales has reduced by more than 500,<sup>75</sup> with more than 70 percent of this reduction accounted for by OCGs predominantly involved in drug activity. However, this has not coincided with a proportionate increase in the small number of OCGs predominantly involved in either organised immigration crime or sexual offences. The decline in drug-related OCGs therefore does not necessarily indicate a deliberate move by forces to tackle emerging threats as a priority, or to deprioritise drug activity. It may simply mean that most of those OCGs that were assessed as inactive had been predominantly involved in drug activity. Nor is a move away from tackling drug-related crime desirable, since it is frequently linked to other types of organised crime such as money laundering, modern slavery or human trafficking. What is crucial is that forces and ROCUs continue to advance their collective knowledge of – and ability to respond to – serious and organised crime in all of its guises, including those which are most difficult to understand due to their hidden and complex nature.

HMIC's more detailed analysis suggests that drug-related crime as a proportion of mapped OCG activity has remained broadly flat between 2013 and 2016. This analysis takes into account the fact that many OCGs are involved in several types of criminal activity, and to varying degrees. A similarly stable pattern is evident in other crime categories, with very little change over time in the small proportion of mapped OCGs activity represented by, for example, immigration crime, environmental crime

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<sup>75</sup> Exclusive of the Metropolitan Police Service, which was unable to breakdown OCGs by their predominant crime type as part of HMIC's data collection in 2015.

or sexual offences.<sup>76</sup> What is crucial is that forces and ROCUs continue to advance their collective knowledge of – and ability to respond to – serious and organised crime in all of its guises, including those which are most difficult to understand due to their hidden and complex nature.

There are also signs that forces are beginning to understand the links between organised crime and the exploitation of vulnerable people. We found numerous examples of forces recognising and addressing problems such as drug addicts' homes being taken over by organised criminals and used temporarily as a pop-up location for drug dealing. Similarly, forces are gaining a greater understanding of online or courier fraud<sup>77</sup> targeted at elderly people. This type of offending sometimes attracts ROCU support because of its widespread geographical effect and high cumulative value. The small number of forces which have a good understanding of gang crime are becoming more aware of the ways in which people, including children and young women, are often exploited by gang members. This is discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

### **Identifying organised crime groups**

Recent research led by Durham University<sup>78</sup> suggests that the composition and activity of organised crime groups are evolving. Many are now large, international or online networks, whose membership and offending patterns change rapidly and continually. This is in stark contrast to the more static, hierarchical organisations, which tend to live and operate in one place and depend on loyalties built up over time. The boundaries between organised crime, gang crime, drug-dealing networks or 'county lines'<sup>79</sup> and other forms of group offending are also becoming more blurred. Many OCG members are also part of, or closely associated with, one or more gangs (and vice versa). The majority of forces recognise that these changes are occurring and are shifting their threat-assessment processes. More work is needed, however, in particular to continue the development of digital methods for detecting serious and organised crime taking place (or being facilitated) online.

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<sup>76</sup> These figures were obtained by analysing forces' raw OCG mapping data from 30 June 2016.

<sup>77</sup> Courier fraud is the criminal act of posing as a bank to persuade a person to provide their card details over the telephone, and later sending a courier to collect the card in person. Fraudsters use the card to withdraw money from the victim's bank account. More information is available at: [www.actionfraud.police.uk/fraud-az-courier-scam](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/fraud-az-courier-scam)

<sup>78</sup> *How organised crime in the UK has evolved beyond the mafia model*, Durham University, May 2015. Available at: [www.dur.ac.uk/research/news/thoughtleadership/?itemno=24781](http://www.dur.ac.uk/research/news/thoughtleadership/?itemno=24781)

<sup>79</sup> The term 'county lines' describes organised drug-dealing networks expanding – usually from large cities into smaller towns – in order to exploit new markets and evade police detection. This activity is often accompanied by violence and intimidation as new groups compete with locally established drug dealers.



There is a fuller discussion on the identification and management of gangs later in this chapter.

There are many different ways in which a new OCG may come to light. Local policing teams remain hugely important, as they often notice suspicious activity or a change in behaviour among groups within their communities. In its 2015 effectiveness report, HMIC found that a number of forces were failing to involve local policing teams in the fight against organised crime as part of a whole force approach. Doing so is vital, as local teams are often best placed to collect intelligence about OCGs, disrupt their activity and communicate with communities to offer reassurance and advice. In 2016, we found that there was better harnessing of local teams in most forces, with more routine consideration given to their role in the long-term disruption and dismantling of OCGs. The best forces have achieved a virtuous circle of briefing local policing teams, more intelligence collection, more disruption opportunities and a greater long-term ability to spot the signs of potential organised crime at an early stage.

However, in some forces, local policing teams are insufficiently resourced (or too frequently diverted from their main responsibilities) to fulfil a meaningful role in detecting signs of potential organised crime, gathering intelligence and contributing to the disruption of OCGs. Other forces remain wedded to an approach which deliberately excludes local policing teams from tackling serious and organised crime, on the basis that sharing intelligence or covert policing tactics with them increases the risk that these will be compromised. While there are occasions when knowledge of sensitive information needs to be confined to a small group of people for security reasons, there is no justification for a blanket decision to exclude local policing teams from activity aimed at tackling serious and organised crime. Whether deliberate or otherwise, a failure to harness the full potential of local policing teams means that forces are missing opportunities to maximise their understanding of – and disruptive effect on – organised criminals.

### **Organised crime group mapping**

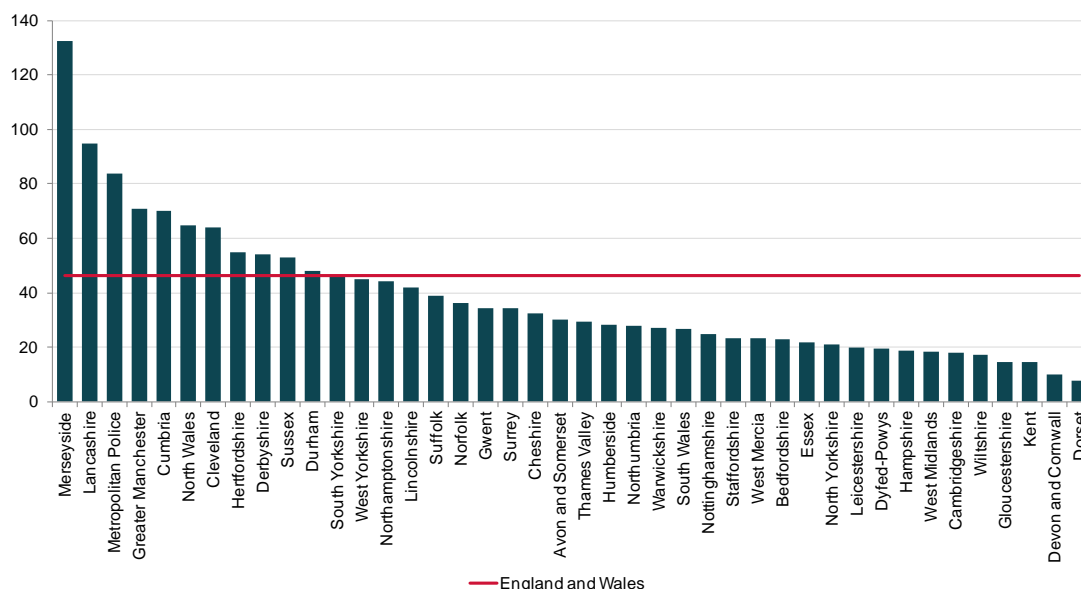
Once an OCG has been identified, forces should promptly initiate a nationally standardised mapping procedure to assess the criminal intent and capability of each group. The mapping process assigns a numerical score to OCGs and places them in one of several bands depending on the seriousness of the criminal activity that they are known or suspected to be involved in. The score and the band should be considered as part of a decision-making process which determines the most appropriate way of tackling each OCG.

Organised crime group mapping is not the only tool used by forces to assess the threat posed by organised criminals – MoRiLE is an example of a method which forces often use to complement it. However, organised crime group mapping remains the principal means of assessing threats and informing operational decision-making. HMIC has reported previously on inconsistent use of OCG mapping by

forces,<sup>80</sup> and this remains the case in 2016. There are still worryingly large variations in the numbers of OCGs per million of population mapped by forces.

Some of these variations are due to differences in criminal behaviour in different parts of England and Wales. It is plausible that organised criminals form a higher proportion of large metropolitan populations such as London and Merseyside than rural populations such as Dorset, Devon and Cornwall. There are also some force areas which have very small populations, and the numbers therefore look artificially high. For example, Cumbria Constabulary maps a high number of OCGs per head of population compared to other forces, but this is affected by the very small size of its population. However, these data suggest that some forces are not mapping all the organised crime groups which are active in their area. For example, West Midlands Police, Hampshire Constabulary and Kent Police map a low number of OCGs per million population despite having relatively large populations.

**Figure 29: Number of mapped OCGs per one million population, as at 1 July 2016**



**Source: HMIC effectiveness data collection 2016 and ONS population data**

This variation is the result of differences in mapping practices by forces as well as differences in regional populations. Although a national definition of an OCG exists,<sup>81</sup> in practice forces interpret this differently and apply a different threshold when deciding whether to map a criminal network that they have identified. For example,

<sup>80</sup> *Regional organised crime units: A review of capability and effectiveness*, HMIC, 2015, pages 36–38. Available from: [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/regional-organised-crime-units/](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/regional-organised-crime-units/)

<sup>81</sup> The NPCC defines an organised crime group as “individuals, normally working with others, with the intent and capability to commit serious crime on a continuing basis, which includes elements of: planning/control/coordination/structure/group decision-making”.

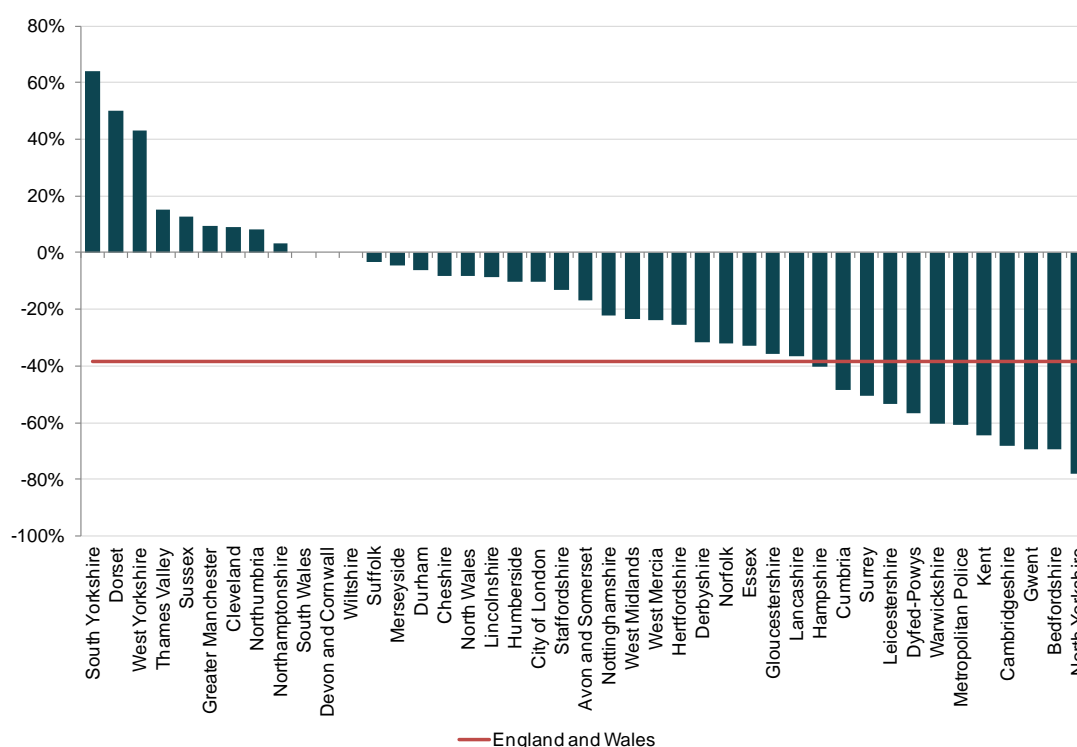
some forces choose to map urban street gangs,<sup>82</sup> which are distinct from OCGs, while most do not. A degree of subjectivity is also involved when assessing whether a group is sufficiently organised in its behaviour and involved in sufficiently serious criminal acts to warrant classification as an OCG. There is no evidence that mapping consistency has improved substantially since 2015. This means that the police service does not have a coherent national picture of the threat posed to communities by organised crime and does not provide a reliable platform for prioritising activity aimed at disrupting and dismantling it.

There are also large variations in the numbers of OCGs mapped per million population by forces in 2016 compared to 2015. This effect is mainly due to archiving, which happens once an OCG is no longer active, for example because it has been completely dismantled by a police operation, has ceased to commit crime, or disbanded of its own accord. Archiving means that an OCG is no longer subject to monitoring or disruption by any police force or other agency. Throughout 2015, forces were directed by the NPCC not to archive OCGs. This directive was lifted in January 2016, at which point many forces archived a number of OCGs later – and in higher volumes – than would ordinarily have been the case. This is normal and to be expected. However, some forces have reduced the number of OCGs they monitor or disrupt by an extremely high proportion (up to 78 percent in North Yorkshire). Three forces have, principally through archiving in the first half of 2016, reduced the number of OCGs they manage by more than 50 percent. During the same period, the Metropolitan Police Service has reduced the number of OCGs it manages by over 1,100. This is disturbing, as it suggests that far too many groups were previously classified as OCGs, or, more worryingly, that some forces may have archived prematurely OCGs which were in fact still active.

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<sup>82</sup> A relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of young people who (1) see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group, and (2) engage in a range of criminal activity and violence. They may also have any or all of the following features: (3) identify with or lay claim over territory, (4) have some form of identifying structural feature, (5) are in conflict with other similar gangs. HM Government, 2011, page 17.

**Figure 30: Change in number of OCGs managed, as at 1 July 2015 compared with 1 July 2016**



**Source: HMIC effectiveness 2015 and 2016 data collection**

As well as inconsistencies in mapping and archiving, HMIC found that too many forces – including some of the largest – are failing to map OCGs once they have been identified. In some cases, this is because forces find other methodologies such as MoRiLE easier to use, and more helpful in informing operational decision-making. In other – more disturbing – cases, it is because of a reluctance among forces to map OCGs which they lack the resources to investigate or disrupt. This means that some forces may not have a full understanding of the intent and capability of the OCGs which are active in their area. As a result, these OCGs may not attract the same level or intensity of police activity as elsewhere, and communities may be at greater risk of harm and exploitation.

A further consequence is that information about these groups is not given to other forces on a systematic basis to allow them to understand and respond to the threat posed by those groups which operate across force boundaries. At a national level, it means that OCG mapping data provides only a partial picture, obscuring the true extent of serious and organised crime. This poses a difficulty for forces, ROCUs and the NCA, because national threat assessments and prioritisation decisions rely heavily on OCG mapping data. These decisions may be flawed if they are based on an incomplete and inconsistent picture of the threat.

These problems are often compounded by a lack of analytical capacity at force level. The mapping function is often carried out by a single person, even in large metropolitan forces. HMIC found numerous occasions when mapping was not

carried out until after an OCG had been subject to enforcement activity or investigation. In urgent cases this is to be expected, but otherwise it means that routine decisions about which OCGs to prioritise for intervention are not informed by important information, largely negating the primary purpose of mapping.

The mapping method helps forces to structure their approach to tackling serious and organised crime, but, although it has been subject to a number of updates, it is several years old and poorly suited to assessing the intent and capability of groups involved in cyber-crime and other types of offending which have emerged or evolved in recent years. Many forces are struggling to keep up with the administrative requirements of the mapping process, such as re-assessing groups at regular intervals. It is also slow to use, and more difficult to apply to groups whose membership, activity or location changes quickly; by the time the mapping process has been completed, groups have sometimes disbanded, reformed or relocated. The mapping method used also attaches more weight to drug activity and violence than to other crimes; entering intelligence about these activities on the system raises substantially the numerical score assigned to each group. This can have the effect of directing resources disproportionately towards these activities. Forces and ROCUs take account of this by using complementary methods (including MoRiLE) and applying their professional judgment. However, mapping data could be used much more effectively if this weighting were adjusted to reflect other forms of harm more accurately.

HMIC recommended in 2015 that responsibility for mapping OCGs should be transferred to ROCUs by June 2016 in order to improve the quality and consistency of the process. ROCUs have access to a wider range of confidential international and partner agency intelligence than forces. At the time of our 2016 inspections, only two of the nine ROCUs had implemented fully this recommendation. Some of those which have not done so have recruited mapping co-ordinators to quality assure the mapping carried out by their constituent forces. This may go some way towards achieving greater consistency, but may not achieve better quality: for example, it will not address the problem of forces not identifying or mapping OCGs in the first place. Some other forces have decided to retain the mapping function wholly in-house because they do not want to relinquish control over it or lose staff. These concerns are understandable, but HMIC's position remains that the best way to improve the quality and consistency of OCG mapping – as well as to encourage the innovation needed to enhance the mapping method itself – is fully to transfer responsibility for mapping OCGs to ROCUs. Under this arrangement, forces should continue to play their part in the initial identification of OCGs, intelligence collection and longer-term management in communities.

## **Disruption and investigation**

Once forces have understood the threat posed by serious and organised crime, they need to respond to it by disrupting it and investigating criminal activity. In order to target their resources in the most effective way, forces must supplement rigorous threat-assessment and mapping processes with a structured approach to decision-making and task-assignment. This approach needs to allow some flexibility for urgent cases but preserve a degree of objectivity to ensure that force activity is focused as effectively as possible.

### **Management and prioritisation**

HMIC found that the vast majority of forces have a clear method for deciding which OCGs are the priority for intervention and what the intervention should be. In many forces, particularly those with high levels of organised crime, there are correspondingly high levels of scrutiny to check progress of investigations and hold those responsible for leading them to account. Most forces use appropriate methods and information (including OCG mapping) to decide on the most suitable type of response for each OCG, which can range from intelligence monitoring through local disruption activity to specialist covert operations.

The lead responsible officer (LRO) role is critical to a force's response to serious and organised crime. Typically, an LRO takes responsibility for disrupting and dismantling an OCG once it has been identified and mapped. The LRO should adopt a long-term, multi-agency, approach that draws on different teams within (and outside) the force and exploits a range of suitable tactics. Different forces have implemented different LRO models, with some opting to nominate LROs exclusively from within their intelligence departments. This often has the advantage of improving central control and co-ordination, and LROs can benefit from being part of the same unit and therefore more able to exchange knowledge and suggestions. In forces which have implemented this model, HMIC found that this improved central co-ordination sometimes comes at the expense of links with local policing teams, which are often well placed to assume the long-term responsibility for managing OCGs. Other forces have opted to give local policing teams the LRO responsibility, making neighbourhood inspectors or chief inspectors LROs for some OCGs. This helps forces to maximise the potential of local policing teams, but sometimes weakens co-ordination and can leave LROs isolated, with little tactical or operational support from other parts of the force.

Some of the highest-performing forces on serious and organised crime – for example, Merseyside Police – use a hybrid model. Under this model, LROs within the intelligence department take responsibility for OCGs which are subject to intelligence collection or monitoring, local policing teams are responsible for OCGs subject to a local disruption plan and specialist teams are responsible for OCGs subject to full covert investigations. It is for forces to decide which model works best

for them, based on their organised crime threat assessment, but they should consider the benefits and mitigate the risks associated with whichever model they select, in order to provide the best possible response.

All forces should ensure that LROs understand their responsibilities. In some cases, HMIC found that this is not the case, and a minority of LROs have little awareness of what the role ought to entail. Some have a low level of knowledge of the OCGs for which they are responsible, including in cases where the OCG was deemed sufficiently serious for responsibility to be transferred to a ROCU for specialist intervention or tactical support. This sometimes occurs without force LROs being kept fully updated, limiting their ability to plan ahead and ensure that communities are protected.

We found that most LROs set clear objectives for tackling OCGs and have a good awareness of the tactics available to them. They make some use of partner-agency powers, although there is scope for partner-agency involvement to be considered more routinely. It is often the case that partner agencies hold valuable information about an OCG or possess the powers which are most likely to disrupt their activity. Failing to involve them, even in a minority of cases, may lead to missed opportunities and could allow OCGs to continue to cause avoidable harm in communities.

Although we found some evidence of broader tactical thinking by LROs and a growing understanding of partner-organisation powers, OCG mapping data suggests that there has not been a dramatic change since 2013 in the main tactics used by forces to tackle OCGs. Only a subset of mapped OCGs is actively tackled by the police at any one time. Around 20 percent of that activity is covert operations, 50 percent is reactive investigation and 30 percent community policing.

LROs should base their approach to tackling OCGs on the four Ps (pursue, prevent, protect, prepare) set out in the Government's Serious and Organised Crime Strategy. Written management plans, with a named LRO, should be in place for all active OCGs. HMIC found that named LROs are assigned to OCGs and that management plans exist in most cases, although the plans are of variable quality. We examined a small sample in each force and found that some had not been kept up to date. Many plans contained a strong pursue element, but lacked meaningful content under prevent, protect or prepare. LROs interviewed by HMIC often cited a lack of understanding or a lack of time as the main reasons for this. It may also be the result of a persistent pursue culture in many forces. In many ways, this is entirely understandable and appropriate; much of what the police do necessarily involves the pursuit of dangerous criminals. However, many forces are still too heavily reliant on pursuit, both in relation to the way they tackle individual OCGs and, at a force level, in relation to their overall approach. At a time when serious and organised crime is

growing in complexity and continuing to occur on a large scale, with police (and partner agency) resources becoming more scarce, it is vital that forces embrace an approach which encompasses prevention, protection and preparation as well as pursuit.

## **Regional organised crime units**

Some specialist policing capabilities, such as complex cyber-crime investigation, undercover policing and specialist surveillance, are provided through regional organised crime units. These units are staffed by officers drawn from the constituent forces they represent. They are funded partly by police and crime commissioners and partly through a central government grant. HMIC inspected ROCUs in 2015 and found most to be highly effective, although some had yet to develop the minimum set of 13 capabilities such as undercover policing, specialist surveillance and cyber-crime investigation.

HMIC revisited ROCUs in May 2016 and found real improvements since our 2015 inspection. At the time of our inspection, all but two ROCUs had implemented all of the minimum capabilities, with work under way to develop the remainder. We also found that the majority of forces are making regular use of ROCU capabilities as part of their approach to tackling serious and organised crime. The West Midlands ROCU, previously one of the least advanced, has grown considerably, adding operational teams to the range of capabilities it provides to constituent forces. The most mature ROCUs operate as extensions of their constituent forces, rather than separate entities which work in isolation. This type of relationship tends to result in more effective operational practices, and better protection for the public from the most serious and organised criminals.

The vast majority of forces outside London describe their relationship with their ROCU as good. All forces have processes in place for drawing on regional capabilities when they are needed. We found good examples of OCG investigations being escalated to ROCUs for the pursue phase of surveillance or other covert activity. The London ROCU was disbanded in 2016 following a reduction in its funding. The Metropolitan Police Service and the City of London Police have access to one another's specialist capabilities, although we found scope for improvement in the sharing of intelligence and co-ordination of activity between the London forces.

Duplication of specialist capabilities at force level has reduced. Several forces which previously maintained their own confidential intelligence units have now joined regional arrangements to ensure that they can share sensitive intelligence effectively and appropriately. Outside London (which no longer has a ROCU), almost every force now provides the functions of undercover policing and specialist surveillance exclusively through its ROCU rather than at force level. This has the advantage of



being more efficient, as well as concentrating knowledge in a smaller pool of expert practitioners – making training, accreditation and continuing professional development much easier.

However, some duplication of ROCU capabilities still exists. In some instances there is a justification for this, particularly in forces where organised crime is particularly prevalent. However, in forces where this type of demand is lower, the justification is weaker. For example, Kent Police and Essex Police have opted to provide undercover policing, prison intelligence, specialist surveillance and several other functions either at force level or through a joint serious crime directorate. Work is under way to assess the necessity of this arrangement, as these functions are also provided by both the Eastern and the South East ROCUs. It remains HMIC's expectation that specialist capabilities should be provided once, rather than several times, across a region.

Despite progress in many areas, some forces are still not making the fullest possible use of ROCU capabilities. Data collected by HMIC for the year to March 2016 suggest that some forces have made only a handful of formal requests for support to their ROCU. Meetings we observed in some of the ROCUs reinforced this. In a minority of these, no bids for support were submitted and no operations (or very few) were adopted. In some cases, this is because service-level agreements or other arrangements exist which means that bids are deliberately not submitted through a formal process. However, it is not evident in some regions that forces are putting forward all the operations which could benefit from regional support. This means that some investigations may not be treated with the seriousness they deserve. Some staff we spoke to as part of our inspections reported that OCGs would occasionally not be passed to a ROCU even if this were the most appropriate response, perhaps because of a desire among forces to retain responsibility for tackling organised crime groups. In some cases, this type of argument was used to justify the retention of specialist teams or equipment in forces, which makes little operational or financial sense.

Although there has been progress, many forces are still not sufficiently advanced in the process of deciding how they can make best use of ROCU functions and minimise duplication at force level. In 2015, HMIC recommended that all forces should produce an action plan setting out how they will maximise their use of ROCU capabilities, minimise duplication and introduce an effective means of prioritising activity across their region. Some 14 forces failed to produce an action plan before our 2016 inspections. Of the plans that were produced, many were of poor quality and provided only a description of current arrangements rather than a clear explanation of how forces would make progress in exploiting regional capabilities. These plans need to be improved to indicate clearly how forces will implement regionalisation of specialist capabilities and minimise the extent to which these capabilities are duplicated within forces.

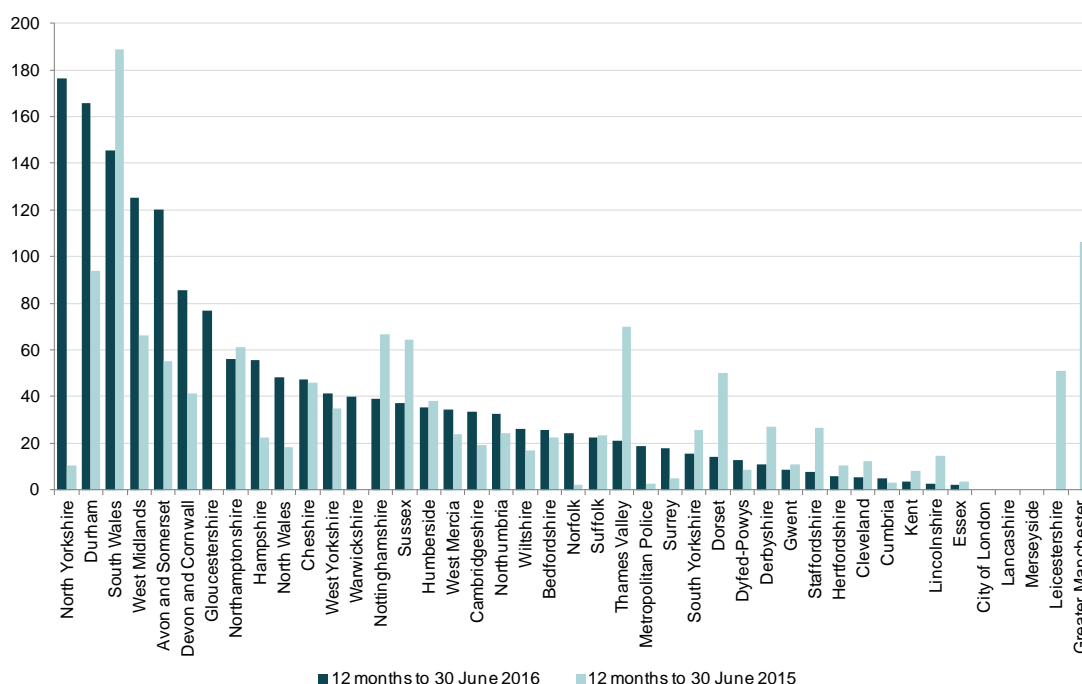
One of the capabilities provided by ROCUs is the Government Agency Intelligence Network (GAIN). HMIC has previously reported that GAIN is underused by many forces, and underpowered as a national intelligence-sharing platform.<sup>83</sup> GAIN provides forces with access to valuable intelligence held by organisations such as Trading Standards and the Environment Agency. A new GAIN operating model has been developed which encourages forces to make more targeted use of partner intelligence rather than aiming to make as many referrals as possible. This is partly because a high proportion of GAIN referrals have not yielded any valuable intelligence. The referral system is heavily administrative and some partner agencies are reluctant to share information because of resource constraints or data-sharing concerns.

Data collected by HMIC suggest that, while some forces appear to be making more targeted use of GAIN in 2016, others have dramatically increased the number of referrals they make per 100 OCGs. Some previously high users of GAIN, on the other hand, have stopped making GAIN referrals altogether. In some cases, inspectors found that this is because forces have introduced local arrangements for sharing intelligence with partner organisations. This may be sensible, although it raises a question about why a network has been constructed at a regional level. HMIC acknowledges the difficulties associated with obtaining partner agency intelligence, but this should prompt wider thinking and innovation with partner organisations rather than an acceptance that information belonging to other bodies is not worth seeking. All forces should ensure that they consider using GAIN in appropriate circumstances.

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<sup>83</sup> *Regional organised crime units: A review of capability and effectiveness*, HMIC, 2015, pages 31–33. Available from: [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/regional-organised-crime-units/](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/regional-organised-crime-units/)

**Figure 31: Government Agency Intelligence Network referrals per OCG – 12 months to 30 June 2016**



Source: HMIC effectiveness 2016 data collection

## Understanding the effect on serious and organised crime

Forces and ROCUs frequently have a major disruptive effect on the organised crime groups which they target. In many forces, OCGs are disrupted on a daily basis, and many investigations result in lengthy custodial sentences for organised criminals. We also found examples of successful preventative activity. Some OCGs are completely dismantled as a result of the activity of the police and partner agencies.

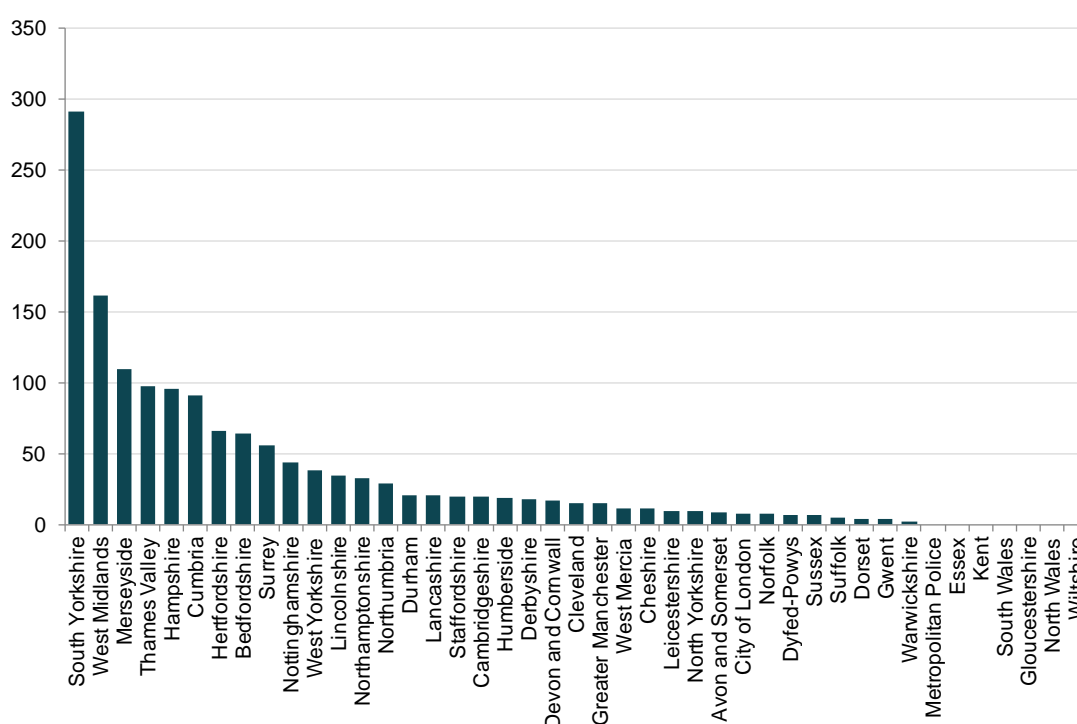
However, most forces and ROCUs have a relatively poor understanding of the disruptive effect of their activity on serious and organised crime, particularly over the long term, and this has not improved markedly since 2015. In some cases, forces can demonstrate some understanding of the short-term effect of their activity, although in too many cases this is fragmented and held in different formats. This makes it harder for forces and ROCUs clearly to demonstrate their collective and cumulative effect on serious and organised crime. Many forces and ROCUs consider their effect on OCGs at regional meetings, although this often relates to short-term tactical disruptions and is largely focused on pursuing criminals. Regular, structured threat assessments can show whether a threat has increased or diminished over time, but it can be difficult to pinpoint the extent to which changes are the result of police activity.

OCG mapping is used by some forces to assess their effect on OCGs, as numerical scores assigned to each OCG change over time. This is an imperfect measure of

disruptive effect, however, as scores often increase or decrease as a result of new intelligence or other developments besides the effect of police enforcement activity. HMIC analysis of OCG mapping data suggests that there have been small reductions in the total and average OCG scores since 2013, although the extent to which this can be attributed directly to police force operations cannot be inferred from this data.

At the time of our data collection, all but seven forces had adopted a new national scale to measure their disruptive effect on organised criminals. Under this method, forces categorise each disruption as either major, moderate, minor, none or negative (for example, because a covert operation is compromised). This measurement method is new, and forces are still developing their approach to recording disruptions in a way that enables them to see whether communities are more or less at risk of serious and organised crime. Work is also under way at a national level to provide a clearer understanding of the effect of police and partner activity on serious and organised crime, without introducing excessive bureaucracy. Forces' ability to assess the disruptive effect of their activity should improve as the new model becomes more established and force processes grow more mature.

**Figure 32: Positive disruptions per 100 OCGs – recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016**



Source: HMIC effectiveness 2016 data collection

## **Preventing serious and organised crime**

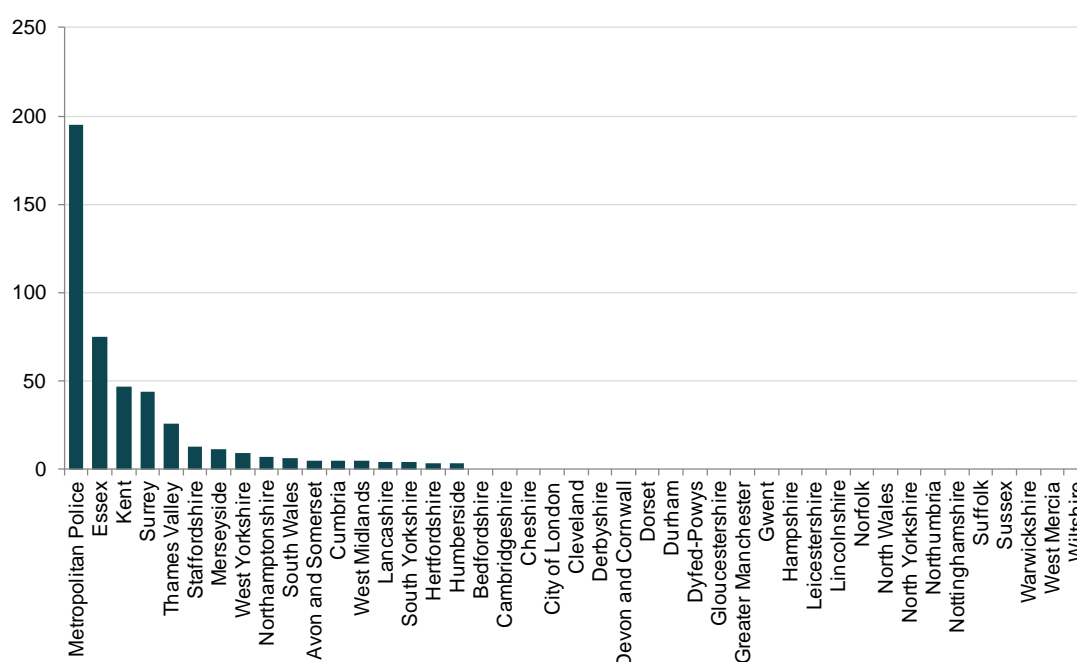
Earlier sections of this chapter have alluded to the importance of preventing serious and organised crime from happening in the first place, as well as responding when it occurs. Forces which are effective at tackling serious and organised crime recognise this and invest in preventative activity alongside reactive investigation as part of a balanced approach. This is especially critical for large metropolitan forces, which monitor and disrupt hundreds of OCGs. Even the largest forces can only sustain full operational responses to a small number of OCGs at any one time. The remainder of the OCGs may not pose an immediate threat, but must nonetheless be carefully monitored to ensure that they do not increase their activity. There are two specific aspects to prevention which this inspection explored. The first is the extent to which forces prevent people, for example young people on the periphery of gangs, from being drawn into serious and organised crime. The second is how effectively forces deter existing organised criminals from continuing to offend.

Many forces have prevention initiatives in place specifically targeting those at risk of being drawn into serious and organised crime. These may, for example, be designed for the partners or siblings of members of OCGs.

### **Gang-related crime**

Although some forces have effective measures, including joint work with other agencies and educational initiatives, aimed at tackling gang-related crime, this is an area which is still poorly understood by many forces. We found a widespread lack of recognition of gangs: 26 forces informed HMIC that, as of 1 July 2016, they did not manage any urban street gangs or were unable to specify the number. Even some large metropolitan forces informed HMIC that they were responsible for a very low number of gangs. These included forces which cover large cities, such as Greater Manchester Police, Nottinghamshire Police and Hampshire Constabulary. These forces cover places where gangs certainly exist and where we found examples of gang-violence initiatives, many of which were effective. Our inspection findings suggest that there are various reasons for this. Some of these relate to the different definitions used by forces to describe gangs and other criminal groups which do not meet the definition of an OCG. A small number of forces choose to map urban street gangs as if they were OCGs, and therefore do not also classify them as urban street gangs. In a number of forces, there is no structured approach to assessing or managing gangs. This needs to improve to provide forces with a sound understanding of gang activity, and a structured, systematic means of assessing the threat they pose to communities.

**Figure 33: Number of identified urban street gangs, per force, as at 1 July 2016**



**Source: HMIC effectiveness 2016 data collection**

The Metropolitan Police Service is the most advanced force in terms of its ability to recognise and respond to gang-related crime. It has a systematic approach to assessing gang activity, and all gangs (and gang members) are recorded on a central gangs' matrix. This gives the force a clear understanding of the problem and a firm platform from which to respond. A dedicated team (known as Trident) was established several years ago and remains focused on tackling gang violence in London, particularly gun and knife crime. Innovative work with academic partners has allowed the force to expand its understanding of the ways in which gangs operate, how they are changing and, for example, how they exploit social media to threaten rivals.

Some other forces recognise the nature and scale of the problem in their areas. In Greater Manchester and in Nottinghamshire, for example, officers routinely spend time in schools to educate young people about the dangers associated with gang membership. Nottinghamshire Police and the West Midlands Police also engage effectively with the parents of young potential gang recruits as part of their preventative approach. Kent Police is one of several forces which have used sport as a means of diverting young people from gangs. Although these sorts of initiatives are not normally subject to detailed evaluation, it is clear that they help forces to identify those at risk of being drawn into serious and organised crime and divert them from being drawn into offending. Even in large cities, however, diversionary work normally occurs on a small scale and is focused on particularly deprived areas. Only a small proportion of those who are potentially at risk can therefore be successfully diverted.

HMIC also found that gang injunctions<sup>84</sup> are being used very little, even in forces with high levels of gang-related crime. At the time of our data collection, only six forces had sought gang injunctions in the year to June 2016. Of these, only Merseyside Police, with 31 injunctions, had been granted more than a small number. Gang injunctions may not be appropriate in all circumstances, but they give forces the ability to impose a range of restrictions, for example preventing gangs from gathering in certain areas of disputed territory. Merseyside Police has been able to demonstrate a positive effect from this measure. All forces should ensure that they consider seeking gang injunctions where they may prove similarly effective.

### **Lifetime offender management**

Forces should take a long-term approach to tackling serious and organised crime. This needs to involve careful monitoring and management of members of OGCs beyond the operational phase of the police response; the scale of organised crime is such that forces cannot simply catch and convict the people involved and then turn their attention elsewhere. Many continue to offend once they are in prison, establishing new networks with other inmates as well as continuing to facilitate organised criminal activity in which they were previously involved. Even after their release, many such criminals continue to pose a risk to the public and frequently revert to their offending behaviour, re-establish relationships with old contacts and seek to settle scores with rivals.

HMIC found some good examples of lifetime offender management, with excellent involvement with partner organisations. A small number of forces and ROCUs have trained specialist staff or created dedicated lifetime management teams. However, in too many cases, lifetime offender management is poorly established. Inspectors found clear evidence of arrangements for managing the movement of OGC criminals between prisons, and preparation for their release, in only 29 of 43 forces. The concept of lifetime offender management is poorly understood by some LROs, as well as other officers and staff. Many of those we spoke to as part of our inspection were unable clearly to describe what lifetime management should entail, or who was responsible for it. Some ROCUs have taken on lifetime-management roles, but we found that this sometimes caused confusion about whether the ROCU, the LRO or another team within the force was responsible for producing lifetime-management plans and monitoring offenders within and beyond prison.

Serious crime prevention orders (SCPOs) give forces the ability to impose a wide range of restrictions on criminals convicted of very serious crimes as part of a lifetime-management approach. They are therefore a powerful means of preventing

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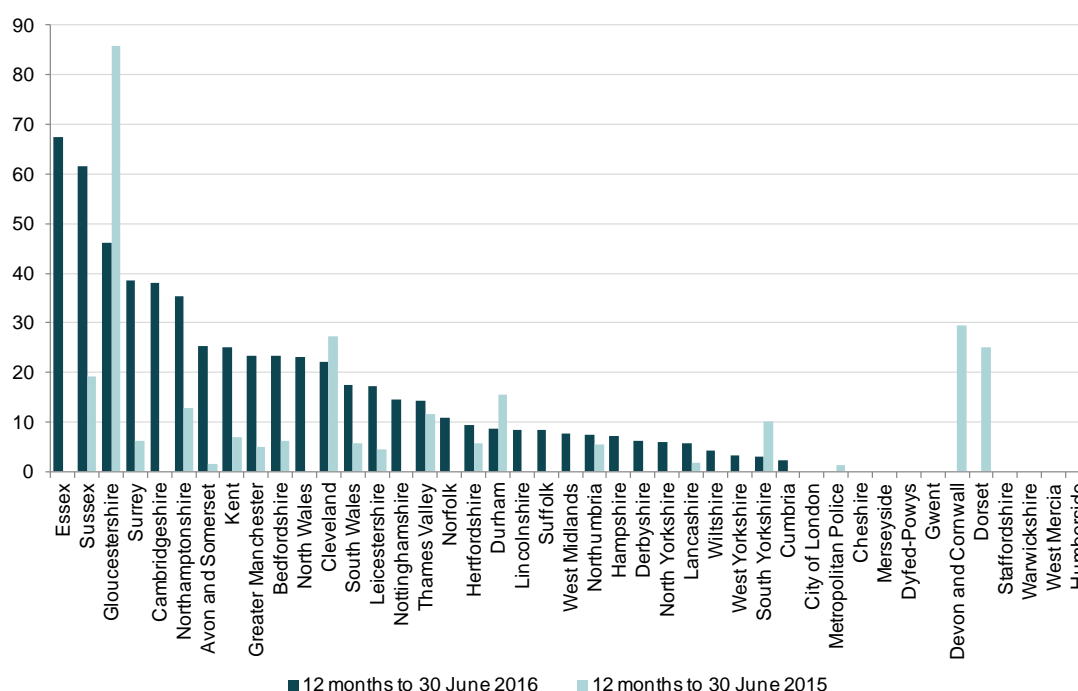
<sup>84</sup> Gang injunctions are a civil tool that allows police forces and local authorities to apply to a court to impose requirements and restrictions on individuals to prevent their involvement in gang-related violence. More detail is available from:

[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/431337/Fact\\_sheet\\_-\\_Gang\\_Injunctions\\_-\\_Amendment\\_on\\_Gov-UK\\_-\\_01062015.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/431337/Fact_sheet_-_Gang_Injunctions_-_Amendment_on_Gov-UK_-_01062015.pdf)

organised criminals from re-offending. Breach of an SCPO is a criminal offence which can result in a prison sentence of up to five years and an unlimited fine.

Use of SCPOs by forces is increasing: in the year to June 2015, just 123 were obtained across all 43 forces, according to data collected by HMIC; in the year to June 2016, that figure was 338. However, it remains the case that most forces make limited use of SCPOs. Twelve forces secured no SCPOs in the year to June 2016 (or were unable to provide figures), and across forces in England and Wales the average number of SCPOs obtained over the same period was fewer than eight per force. Forces obtained 16 SCPOs for every 100 OCGs, although we found a considerable range among forces that have used SCPOs, with Essex Police having obtained 67 per 100 OCGs and Cumbria Constabulary just over 2.

**Figure 34: Serious crime prevention orders issued per 100 OCGs – 12 months to 30 June 2015 compared with 12 months to 30 June 2016**



**Source: HMIC effectiveness 2015 and 2016 data collection**

In some cases, the low use of SCPOs is the result of a lack of understanding among forces of how to go about seeking them or how to present them in court.

Arrangements for monitoring compliance with SCPOs are also unclear. Inspectors found evidence of clear monitoring arrangements for SCPOs in only 13 of the 43 forces. In some forces, we also found a perception that SCPOs are difficult to obtain because courts are reluctant to grant them. However, the fact that some forces are managing to obtain relatively high numbers of SCPOs suggests that, if the applications are carefully targeted, then forces can be successful. All forces should consider seeking SCPOs routinely as part of a lifetime approach to managing organised criminals that provides the public with the best possible protection.



## Glossary

Term	Explanation
anti-social behaviour	conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any person; conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person's occupation of residential premises
capability	the ability to carry out a particular function
capacity	the resources available to carry out a particular function
Clare's Law	disclosure under the Domestic Abuse Disclosure Scheme which allows sharing of specific information with partners or a third person for the purpose of protecting them from domestic abuse; see also Domestic Abuse Disclosure Scheme below
Code of Practice for Victims of Crime	issued under of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004, section 32; sets out the service victims of crime can expect from all parts of the criminal justice system; states that all victims of crime (or, where these have died, their relatives), should be able to make a personal statement, which they can use to explain how the crime has affected them; states also that victims should also be kept updated about the progress of their case; all police forces have a statutory duty to comply
community resolution	alternative to formal criminal prosecution; a way of dealing with less serious crimes, allowing officers to use their professional judgement when dealing with offenders; can be used for offences such as low level public order, criminal damage, theft, and minor assaults; community resolution will enable victims to have quick resolutions and closure to their crime, offenders will receive speedy justice
control room	police control or communications room manages emergency (999) and non-emergency (101) calls and sends police officers to these calls
crime scene investigator	police staff who work alongside uniformed and plain clothed police officers during the investigation of a crime to locate, record and recover evidence from crime scenes

Crown Prosecution Service	principal prosecuting authority in England and Wales, acting independently in criminal cases investigated by the police and others – for further information see the CPS website: <a href="http://www.cps.gov.uk/index.html">www.cps.gov.uk/index.html</a>
CSI	crime scene investigator
DASH assessment	identification, assessment and management model for domestic abuse, stalking and harassment, adopted by UK police forces and partner agencies in 2009; helps frontline practitioners identify high-risk cases of domestic abuse, stalking and so-called honour-based violence.
DVDS	Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme
DVPN	Domestic Violence Prevention Notice
DVPO	Domestic Violence Protection Order
domestic violence disclosure scheme	increases protection for domestic abuse victims by allowing them access to information about a partners' history of violence and enables the police to better identify domestic abuse perpetrators; also known as Clare's Law; for more information, see: <a href="http://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/domestic-abuse/leadership-strategic-oversight-and-management/#domestic-violence-disclosure-scheme-clares-law">www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/domestic-abuse/leadership-strategic-oversight-and-management/#domestic-violence-disclosure-scheme-clares-law</a>
domestic violence prevention notice	initial notice issued by the police to provide emergency protection to an individual believed to be the victim of domestic violence; must be authorised by a police superintendent, contains prohibitions that effectively bar the suspected perpetrator from returning to the victim's home or otherwise contacting the victim; may be issued to a person aged 18 years and over if the police superintendent has reasonable grounds for believing that: the individual has been violent towards, or has threatened violence towards an associated person, and the DVPN is necessary to protect that person from violence or a threat of violence by the intended recipient of the DVPN
domestic violence protection order	designed to provide protection to victims by enabling the police and magistrates courts to put in place protection in the immediate aftermath of a domestic abuse incident; where there is insufficient evidence to charge a perpetrator and provide protection to a victim via bail conditions; can prevent the perpetrator from returning to a residence and from having contact with the victim

	for up to 28 days, allowing the victim time to consider the options and get the necessary support
front line	members of police forces who are in everyday contact with the public and who directly intervene to keep people safe and enforce the law
GAIN	Government Agency Intelligence Network
Government Agency Intelligence Network	large network of partners, including all police forces in England and Wales, which shares information about organised criminals
high risk	term used when, following a risk assessment, there are identifiable indicators of risk of serious harm; the potential event could happen at any time and the impact would be serious
incident	record created by the police before a decision has been made as to whether a crime has been committed when a member of the police calls for police assistance, or a police officer observes or discovers a possible crime
integrated offender management	management of the most persistent and problematic offenders by police and partner agencies
IOM	integrated offender management
local profile	document analysing the threat from serious and organised crime within a local area
MAPPA	multi-agency public protection arrangements
MARAC	multi-agency risk assessment conference
MASH	multi-agency safeguarding hub
MoRiLE	management of risk in law enforcement
multi-agency public protection arrangements	arrangements put in place to ensure the successful management of violent and sexual offenders

multi-agency risk assessment conference	locally-held meetings where statutory and voluntary agency representatives come together and share information about high-risk domestic abuse victims; any agency can refer an adult or child whom they believe to be at high risk of harm; the aim of the meeting is to produce a co-ordinated action plan to increase an adult or child's safety, health and well-being; agencies that attend vary, but are likely to include the police, probation, children's health and housing services;
multi-agency safeguarding hub	entity in which public sector organisations with common or aligned responsibilities in relation to the safety of vulnerable people work; comprise staff from organisations such as the police and local authority social services, who work alongside one another, sharing information and co-ordinating activities to help protect the most vulnerable child and adults from harm, neglect and abuse
management of risk in law enforcement	assesses the types of crimes which most threaten communities and highlights where the force does not currently have the capacity or capability to tackle them effectively; developed by the National Police Chiefs' Council
NPCC	National Police Chiefs' Council
National Police Chiefs' Council	organisation which brings together 43 operationally independent and locally accountable chief constables and their chief officer teams to co-ordinate national operational policing; works closely with the College of Policing, which is responsible for developing professional standards, to develop national approaches on issues such as finance, technology and human resources; replaced the Association of Chief Police Officers on 1 April 2015
neighbourhood policing	activities carried out by neighbourhood teams primarily focused on a community or a particular neighbourhood area, also known as community policing
organised crime	serious crime that is planned, co-ordinated and conducted by people working together on a continuing basis; often motivated by financial gain and characterised by violence or the threat of violence
organised crime group	group of individuals suspected by a police force of being involved in organised crime; the force should then go through a nationally standardised 'mapping' procedure which involves entering details of the group's known and suspected activity, associates and capability on computer software, which assigns a numerical score

	to each OCG and placing each OCG into one of several 'bands' which reflect the range and severity of crime in which a group is involved as well as its level of capability and sophistication; this helps the force to make informed decisions about how to prioritise its activity
partner organisation	in relation to a police force, a public, private or voluntary sector entity, such as one concerned with health, education, housing, social care or the management of offenders, which from time to time works with the force to attain their common or complementary objectives
PCC	police and crime commissioner
PCSO	police community support officer
PEEL programme	HMIC's police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL) assessment; an annual programme of all-force inspections that reports on how well each force in England and Wales cuts crime (effectiveness), provides value for money (efficiency), and provides a service that is legitimate in the eyes of the public (legitimacy)
police and crime commissioner	elected individual for a police area, established under Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, section 1, responsible for securing the maintenance of the police force for that area and securing that the police force is efficient and effective; holds the relevant chief constable to account for the policing of the area; establishes the budget and police and crime plan for the police force; appoints and may, after due process, remove the chief constable from office
police community support officer	uniformed non-warranted officer employed by a territorial police force or the British Transport Police in England; established by the Police Reform Act 2002
police officer	Individual with warranted powers of arrest, search and detention who, under the direction of the chief constable, is deployed to uphold the law, protect life and property, maintain and restore the Queen's peace, and pursue and bring offenders to justice
regional organised crime unit	provide police forces with access to a standardised range of 'capabilities' to help them tackle serious and organised crime; these capabilities encompass specialist areas such as undercover policing, surveillance and cyber-crime investigation; the regional provision of these capabilities can reduce or remove

	the need for forces to maintain specialist capabilities of their own, many of which are expensive to maintain and only required on relatively rare occasions
response function	uniformed police patrol officers whose primary role is to attend incidents when first reported to the police; in everyday contact with the public and intervene directly to keep people safe and uphold the law
risk assessment	process to assist in making decisions on appropriate levels of intervention based on expected or forecast levels of harm to individuals, the public, offenders, or property
safeguarding	the process of protecting vulnerable people from abuse or neglect
serious and organised crime	includes human trafficking, drug trafficking, organised illegal immigration, high value fraud and other serious financial crimes, counterfeiting, organised theft, burglary or robbery and cyber-crime; perpetrated by groups of people (organised crime groups or OGCs) operating collaboratively on a continuing basis, typically in order to realise substantial financial gain and sometimes involving serious violence
serious crime prevention order	court order used to protect the public by preventing, restricting or disrupting a person's involvement in serious crime; 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
THRIVE model	threat, harm, risk, investigation, vulnerability and engagement model used to assess the appropriate initial police response to a call for service; it allows a judgment to be made of the relative risk posed by the call and places the individual needs of the victim at the centre of that decision
volume crime	any crime which, through its sheer volume, has a significant impact on the community and the ability of the local police to tackle it; often includes priority crimes such as street robbery, burglary and vehicle-related criminality, but can also apply to criminal damage or assaults
vulnerable person	condition of a person who is in need of special care, support or protection because of age, disability or risk of abuse and neglect

## Annex A – About the data

The information presented in this report comes from a range of sources, including data published 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 with 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.

### 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.

#### Population

For all uses of population as a denominator in our calculations, unless otherwise noted, we use Office for National Statistics 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 in our calculations. This is to account for the unique nature and demographics of this force's responsibilities.

#### 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 and 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 published on our website by summer 2017:

[www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/data/peel-assessments/](http://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 (when flagged as domestic abuse), grievous bodily harm, stalking, harassment, rape and domestic burglary. The 43-force crime 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 considered them 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 general 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](http://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:

- 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](http://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.
- 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.

- 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, outcomes data should be viewed with this in mind.
- It is important to note that domestic abuse outcomes mentioned elsewhere in our report 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. That means that 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 'Domestic abuse' and 'Domestic abuse arrest rate'.
- 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.

## **Anti-social behaviour**

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

[www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/policeforceareadatatables](http://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 1

percent of anti-social behaviour in 2014/15 and 2 percent of anti-social behaviour in 2015/16 are estimated.

### **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](http://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 under 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, and this 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.

## **Other notable data throughout the report**

### **Vulnerable victims identified, for the 12 months to 30 June 2016**

Please see 'Recorded Crime and General Crime Outcomes' above.

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

In 2016, 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 30 June 2016 owing 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.

In 2015, Derbyshire, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Lancashire, Merseyside, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire and West Midlands forces were unable to provide data for the number of recorded crimes with a vulnerable victim identified.

Owing to the differences in the forces that were able to provide this information over the last two years, any direct comparisons between the statistics across years should be made with caution.

### **Domestic abuse arrest rate (per 100 domestic abuse crimes), 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 that meant 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 effect on data provided to HMIC would be marginal and that these are the most reliable figures it can provide.

### **Rate of outcomes recorded in 12 months to 30 June 2016 for domestic abuse-related offences**

Please see 'Domestic Abuse' above.

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

The domestic abuse outcomes 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, where each crime is linked to its associated outcome, and domestic abuse outcomes.

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.

## Annex B – Overall pillar grades

	<b>Crime prevention</b>	<b>Investigation</b>	<b>Vulnerability</b>	<b>Serious and organised crime</b>	<b>Overall</b>
<b>Avon &amp; Somerset</b>	Good	Good	Good	Requires Improvement	<b>Good</b>
<b>Bedfordshire</b>	Inadequate	Requires Improvement	Inadequate	Requires Improvement	<b>Inadequate</b>
<b>Cambridgeshire</b>	Good	Requires Improvement	Good	Good	<b>Good</b>
<b>Cheshire</b>	Good	Good	Good	Good	<b>Good</b>
<b>City of London</b>	Requires Improvement	Good	Good	Requires Improvement	<b>Good</b>
<b>Cleveland</b>	Good	Good	Requires Improvement	Good	<b>Good</b>
<b>Cumbria</b>	Good	Good	Requires Improvement	Good	<b>Good</b>
<b>Derbyshire</b>	Good	Good	Good	Outstanding	<b>Good</b>
<b>Devon &amp; Cornwall</b>	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Good	Good	<b>Requires Improvement</b>
<b>Dorset</b>	Good	Good	Good	Good	<b>Good</b>
<b>Durham</b>	Outstanding	Good	Good	Outstanding	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Dyfed-Powys</b>	Good	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Good	<b>Requires Improvement</b>
<b>Essex</b>	Good	Good	Requires Improvement	Good	<b>Good</b>
<b>Gloucestershire</b>	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Inadequate	<b>Requires Improvement</b>
<b>Greater Manchester</b>	Good	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Outstanding	<b>Good</b>
<b>Gwent</b>	Good	Good	Good	Requires Improvement	<b>Good</b>
<b>Hampshire</b>	Good	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Good	<b>Requires Improvement</b>
<b>Hertfordshire</b>	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate	Good	<b>Requires Improvement</b>
<b>Humberside</b>	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate	Good	<b>Requires Improvement</b>
<b>Kent</b>	Good	Good	Good	Good	<b>Good</b>
<b>Lancashire</b>	Good	Good	Good	Good	<b>Good</b>
<b>Leicestershire</b>	Good	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Good	<b>Requires Improvement</b>
<b>Lincolnshire</b>	Good	Good	Requires Improvement	Good	<b>Good</b>
<b>Merseyside</b>	Good	Good	Good	Outstanding	<b>Good</b>
<b>Metropolitan</b>	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate	Requires Improvement	<b>Requires Improvement</b>
<b>Norfolk</b>	Outstanding	Good	Good	Good	<b>Good</b>
<b>North Wales</b>	Good	Good	Requires Improvement	Good	<b>Good</b>
<b>North Yorkshire</b>	Good	Good	Good	Requires Improvement	<b>Good</b>
<b>Northamptonshire</b>	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	<b>Requires Improvement</b>

<b>Northumbria</b>	Good	Requires Improvement	Good	Good	<b>Good</b>
<b>Nottinghamshire</b>	Requires Improvement	Good	Inadequate	Good	<b>Requires Improvement</b>
<b>South Wales</b>	Good	Good	Good	Good	<b>Good</b>
<b>South Yorkshire</b>	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Good	<b>Requires Improvement</b>
<b>Staffordshire</b>	Good	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	<b>Requires Improvement</b>
<b>Suffolk</b>	Good	Good	Good	Good	<b>Good</b>
<b>Surrey</b>	Good	Requires Improvement	Good	Good	<b>Good</b>
<b>Sussex</b>	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Good	<b>Requires Improvement</b>
<b>Thames Valley</b>	Good	Good	Good	Good	<b>Good</b>
<b>Warwickshire</b>	Requires Improvement	Good	Requires Improvement	Good	<b>Good</b>
<b>West Mercia</b>	Requires Improvement	Good	Good	Requires Improvement	<b>Good</b>
<b>West Midlands</b>	Good	Good	Requires Improvement	Good	<b>Good</b>
<b>West Yorkshire</b>	Requires Improvement	Good	Good	Good	<b>Good</b>
<b>Wiltshire</b>	Good	Good	Good	Good	<b>Good</b>

For further information, please see: [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/peel-assessments/peel-2016/](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/peel-assessments/peel-2016/)