

PEEL

Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy 2018/19

An inspection of Northamptonshire Police



Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| What this report contains | 1 |
| Force in context | 3 |
| Overall summary | 4 |
| Effectiveness | 8 |
| Force in context | 9 |
| How effectively does the force reduce crime and keep people safe? | 11 |
| Summary | 11 |
| Preventing crime and tackling anti-social behaviour | 12 |
| Investigating crime | 16 |
| Protecting vulnerable people | 23 |
| Tackling serious and organised crime | 28 |
| Armed policing | 34 |
| Efficiency | 36 |
| Force in context | 37 |
| How efficiently does the force operate and how sustainable are its services? | 38 |
| Summary | 38 |
| Meeting current demands and using resources | 39 |
| Planning for the future | 45 |
| Legitimacy | 50 |
| Force in context | 51 |
| How legitimately does the force treat the public and its workforce? | 53 |
| Summary | 53 |
| Treating the public fairly | 54 |
| Ethical and lawful workforce behaviour | 57 |
| Treating the workforce fairly | 59 |
| Annex A – About the data | 65 |

What this report contains

This report is structured in four parts:

1. Our overall assessment of the force's 2018/19 performance.
2. Our judgments and summaries of how effectively, efficiently and legitimately the force keeps people safe and reduces crime.
3. Our judgments and any areas for improvement and causes of concern for each component of our inspection.
4. Our detailed findings for each component.

Our inspection approach

In 2018/19, we adopted an [integrated PEEL assessment](#) (IPA) approach to our existing PEEL (police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy) inspections. IPA combines into a single inspection the effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy areas of PEEL. These areas had previously been inspected separately each year.

As well as our inspection findings, our assessment is informed by our analysis of:

- force data and management statements;
- risks to the public;
- progress since previous inspections;
- findings from our non-PEEL inspections;
- how forces tackle serious and organised crime locally and regionally; and
- our regular monitoring work.

We inspected all forces in four areas:

- protecting vulnerable people;
- firearms capability;
- planning for the future; and
- ethical and lawful workforce behaviour.

We consider the risk to the public in these areas important enough to inspect all forces every year.

We extended the risk-based approach that we used in our 2017 effectiveness inspection to the efficiency and legitimacy parts of our IPA inspections. This means that in 2018/19 we didn't inspect all forces against all areas. The table below shows the areas we inspected Northamptonshire Police against.

| IPA area | Inspected in 2018/19? |
|--|------------------------------|
| Preventing crime and anti-social behaviour | Yes |
| Investigating crime | Yes |
| Protecting vulnerable people | Yes |
| Tackling serious and organised crime | Yes |
| Firearms capability | Yes |
| Meeting current demands | Yes |
| Planning for the future | Yes |
| Treating the public fairly | Yes |
| Ethical and lawful workforce behaviour | Yes |
| Treating the workforce fairly | Yes |

Force in context

| | | |
|--|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| | Northamptonshire rate | England and Wales rate |
| 999 calls per 1,000 population 12 months ending 31 March 2019 | 156 | 175 |
| | Northamptonshire rate | Most Similar Forces rate |
| Recorded crime per 1,000 population 12 months ending 30 September 2018 | 77 | 83 |

Northamptonshire workforce

| | FTE in post on 31 March 2019 | FTE in post on 31 March 2014 | Percentage change |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Police Officer | 1,186 | 1,239 | -4% |
| Police Community Support Officer | 92 | 134 | -31% |
| Police Staff | 793 | 774 | 2% |

| | | |
|---|------------------------|-------------------------|
| | Northamptonshire spend | England and Wales spend |
| Spend per head of population 2018/19 projection | £159 | £192 |

Overall summary

|  | Effectiveness |  | Last inspected |
|---|---|--|-----------------------|
| | | Requires improvement | |
| | Preventing crime and tackling anti-social behaviour |  Requires improvement | 2018/19 |
| | Investigating crime |  Inadequate | 2018/19 |
| | Protecting vulnerable people |  Requires improvement | 2018/19 |
| | Tackling serious and organised crime |  Requires improvement | 2018/19 |
| | Armed response capability | Ungraded | 2018/19 |
|  | Efficiency |  | Last inspected |
| | | Inadequate | |
| | Meeting current demands and using resources |  Inadequate | 2018/19 |
| | Planning for the future |  Requires improvement | 2018/19 |

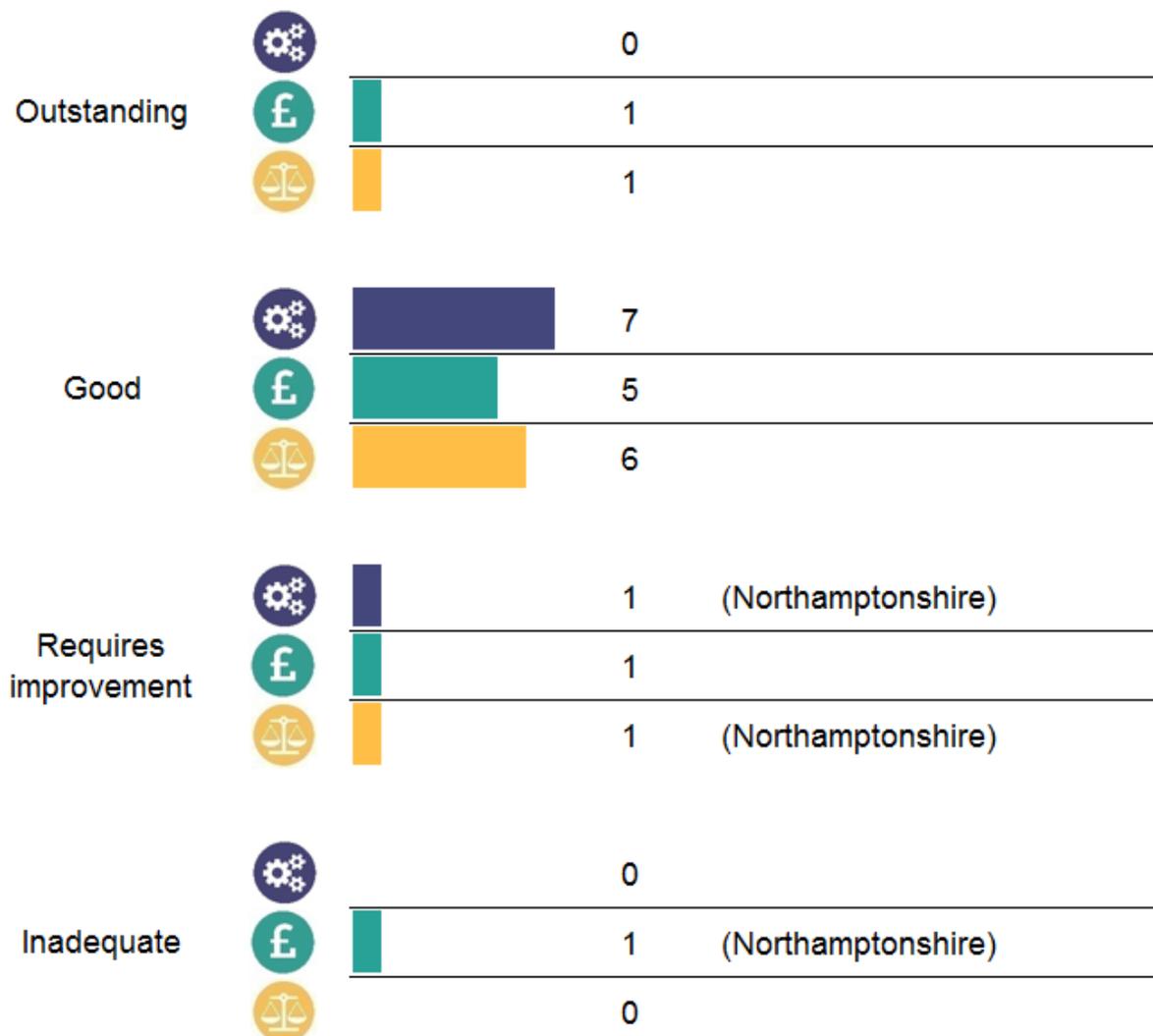
|  | Legitimacy |  | Last inspected |
|---|--|--|-----------------------|
| Fair treatment of the public |  Requires improvement | 2018/19 | |
| Ethical and lawful workforce behaviour |  Good | 2018/19 | |
| Fair treatment of the workforce |  Requires improvement | 2018/19 | |

How does the force compare with similar forces?

We compare Northamptonshire Police's performance with the forces in its most similar group (MSG). MSGs are groups of similar police forces, based on analysis of demographic, social and economic factors. [For more information about MSGs, see our website.](#)

Northamptonshire Police's MSG forces are Cheshire Constabulary, Derbyshire Constabulary, Staffordshire Police, Kent Police, Avon and Somerset Constabulary, Essex Police and Nottinghamshire Police. We haven't yet inspected Derbyshire Constabulary, Staffordshire Police and Avon and Somerset Constabulary as part of IPA 2018/19, so use their graded judgments from our previous PEEL assessment for comparison.

Figure 1: Pillar judgments for Northamptonshire Police, compared with forces in its MSG



HM Inspector's observations

I have concerns about the performance of Northamptonshire Police in keeping people safe and reducing crime. I am especially worried about the force's efficiency, and how effectively it investigates crime and protects [vulnerable people](#). In view of these findings, I have been in regular contact with the chief constable because I am aware how much needs to improve.

The force needs to improve how it prevents crime and [anti-social behaviour](#), and how it engages with communities and partner organisations to solve local problems.

The force is not investigating crime effectively. I am concerned about the standard of investigations and the lack of scrutiny by supervisors and senior managers. The force doesn't always respond to vulnerable people quickly enough, so it could miss opportunities to [safeguard](#) people at risk.

The force's limited understanding of demand for its services is worrying. It needs to remodel processes that suppress or hide demand. It needs a much clearer understanding of its workforce's skills, and those it will need in the future. This will help the force plan how to use its resources more efficiently.

The force continues to uphold an ethical culture and promotes standards of professional behaviour well. But I am concerned that it doesn't always comply with legislation when it detains people in custody. It should make sure it is accountable for detention facilities and that they are well governed, including relating to the use of force.

My overall assessment is that Northamptonshire Police's performance has declined since our last inspection.



Zoë Billingham

HM Inspector of Constabulary

Effectiveness



Force in context

| | Northamptonshire proportion | England and Wales proportion |
|---|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Proportion of officers in a neighbourhood or response function in post on 31 March 2019 | 37% | 40% |

Victim-based crime per 1,000 population

12 months ending 30 September 2018

| | Northamptonshire rate | Most Similar Forces rate |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Violence against the person | 24 | 28 |
| Sexual offences | 3 | 3 |
| Theft Offences / Robbery | 34 | 30 |
| Criminal damage and arson | 9 | 10 |

Crime Outcomes

12 months ending 30 September 2018

| | Northamptonshire proportion | England and Wales proportion |
|--|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Proportion of crimes where action was taken | 13% | 13% |
| Proportion of crimes where suspect was identified | 47% | 46% |
| Proportion of crimes where victim did not support police action | 22% | 23% |

Outcomes for crimes flagged as domestic abuse

12 months ending 31 March 2018

| | Northamptonshire proportion | England and Wales proportion |
|---|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Charge/summonsed | 15% | 16% |
| Evidential difficulties: suspect identified; victim does not support | 52% | 49% |

How effectively does the force reduce crime and keep people safe?



Requires improvement

Summary

Northamptonshire Police is improving its approach to crime prevention. It needs to better analyse the information it has so it can allocate resources more effectively. It should also build on working more closely with communities to make it more effective in preventing crime and [anti-social behaviour](#).

The force has improved its approach to problem solving since our last inspection. However, there is still more work to do in this area. Better and more consistent processes would help the force prevent more crime.

Northamptonshire Police doesn't have the resources to investigate crime effectively enough. This has resulted in a backlog of crimes being allocated to investigators. There are plans for improvements, but the force has been slow to put these in place.

The force doesn't support victims as well as it should. This is down to a lack of resources in some cases, and policies and standards not always being in place in other cases. The force doesn't manage offenders effectively, which can sometimes present a risk to the public.

Northamptonshire Police needs to better understand the nature and scale of [vulnerability](#). Since our last inspection, the force has got better at identifying vulnerability. However, it doesn't consistently support all vulnerable victims.

Tackling [serious and organised crime](#) (SOC) is one of the force's six priorities. It has developed a better understanding since our last inspection and continues to make improvements.

Preventing crime and tackling anti-social behaviour



Requires improvement

Northamptonshire Police has made some positive changes in its approach to crime prevention since our last inspection. It now has dedicated local policing teams working more closely with communities and organisations. It also has new plans, setting out clear objectives, which will build on this success. Crime prevention needs to be a priority when assigning tasks, and senior staff need to monitor this. Training should also be reviewed and updated when necessary.

We were pleased to see more of a focus on identifying hidden threats since our last inspection. The force now needs to tackle other threats, including cybercrime. There is evidence that the force has plans to do this.

Northamptonshire Police needs to use social media more effectively to engage with communities. This will help it work better with harder to reach communities.

New approaches to problem solving, including working more with other organisations, means the force has improved in this area since our last inspection. There now needs to be more consistency across the county. This includes analysing the effectiveness of activity and supervision, and sharing information with other organisations.

An early intervention pilot hub is offering good support to vulnerable children and their parents. A new initiative to divert young people from gang violence has also been introduced. Both schemes appear very promising and we look forward to the results.

Areas for improvement

- The force should improve how it analyses information and intelligence. This will help it better understand crime and anti-social behaviour in Northamptonshire. It will then be able to target activity more effectively.
- Local policing teams should communicate with communities regularly. The force should also problem solve with other organisations to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour.
- The force should share what it does well internally and with external organisations it works with. This would help improve its approach to preventing crime and anti-social behaviour.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the force's performance in this area.

Prioritising crime prevention

Northamptonshire Police understands the importance of crime prevention, and its neighbourhood policing has improved since our last inspection. The force now has local policing teams dedicated to working with neighbouring organisations. This helps prevent crime and anti-social behaviour, and solve problems in local communities.

While the number of officers and [staff](#) working in these teams has reduced, they are no longer redeployed elsewhere to carry out other work. This means they are now able to spend almost all their time on their main tasks. These are community engagement, problem solving and crime prevention.

Crime prevention is not a consistent part of the force's task assignment processes. Senior staff overseeing of prevention activities is limited. This means the force may be missing chances to prevent crime. Most neighbourhood officers and staff have had some problem solving and crime prevention training. For some, however, this was over 18 months ago, and may need refreshing.

Neighbourhood policing teams have developed new plans to prevent crime. The main objectives include:

- making the best use of information;
- working with other organisations and problem solving;
- research and development; and
- improving neighbourhood policing.

This new approach invites the public to work with neighbourhood policing teams to identify and resolve local problems. The focus is on working with the public, rather than simply providing a service. During our fieldwork, the strategy had just been launched and the workforce was not yet achieving all the objectives.

The force plans to introduce a [continuing professional development](#) scheme for neighbourhood policing teams. This will help to build their skills and knowledge, making them more effective.

Protecting the public from crime

Northamptonshire Police has improved its understanding of the threats communities face. We were pleased to see evidence of up-to-date beat profiles. Neighbourhood teams can now access these from their mobile devices. The profiles include:

- specific information and summaries about recently reported crimes;
- details of known offenders; and
- potentially vulnerable people.

The force analyses some of these threats. It now needs to do more to build a more detailed picture. A focus should be on threats that are often less visible, such as modern slavery.

The force is targeting activity to better understand hidden threats. For example, it takes part in meetings with various agencies to tackle [cuckooing](#). This is when drug dealers take over the home of a vulnerable person to use it for drug dealing. The force

now needs to work with agencies to better understand how to tackle other threats, such as cybercrimes. The force has plans to do this. It will then be able to give clearer guidance to neighbourhood teams.

Neighbourhood teams talk to the public and organisations informally to get a better understanding of threats faced by communities. This helps local supervisors understand problems affecting some communities. Yet it isn't clear how this is used to provide a county-wide picture. Local engagement is inconsistent, which means that neighbourhood teams don't fully understand their communities. This includes harder to reach groups and those less likely to contact the police. The teams use online surveys and carry out some local activities.

The force isn't using social media effectively enough in its work with communities. It has a single Facebook page that provides information, but there is limited dialogue. This means that the force is missing opportunities to engage with harder to reach communities, which may reveal hidden harms.

Northamptonshire Police's approach to problem solving has improved since our last inspection. However, it still isn't up to the standard its communities should expect. Northamptonshire Police uses the [OSARA](#) model for problem solving (objective, scanning, analysis, review and assess). There were examples of plans in this area, with some involving other organisations and residents. These plans are reviewed and supervised on a local level, but they are not overseen by a [senior officer](#) or force-wide.

The force has recently introduced a 'problem solvers group', involving other organisations. Its aim is to analyse the effectiveness of tactical activity, and share lessons learned and what is being done well.

There isn't enough capacity to analyse problem-solving approaches to tackling long-term crime problems, or to test the effectiveness of efforts to address them. When teams need extra specialist resources, they are not getting the support they need because the processes that are in place aren't effective enough. As a result, the force is missing opportunities to prevent crime from occurring in the first place.

There is an inconsistent approach to involving other organisations in problem-solving activities. The police carry out activity in some communities, but not in all parts of the county. Some of these plans are shared via E-CINs, a web-based case-recording system. But most activity is only on the force's crime and intelligence system (Niche RMS).

Most plans shared with other agencies are about specific individuals or known problem addresses. There is limited evidence of joint working to tackle long-standing crime or anti-social behaviour hot spots. In some parts of Northamptonshire, the force regularly shares information with other groups. Teams go to council and local parish meetings, and work with the community safety or stronger safer neighbourhood partnerships. However, the approach is inconsistent across the county.

We were pleased to see the Wellingborough neighbourhood team's work with a local joint action group. However, the approach is inconsistent across the county because these aren't established in all areas. This means that the force may be missing

opportunities to tackle the underlying causes of crime problems. Sharing information and working with others could help the force improve its problem solving.

The workforce's use of wider powers to tackle anti-social behaviour is inconsistent. Officers and staff displayed a reasonable knowledge of the powers available to them, but they don't routinely make full use of them. As a result, the use of these powers has fallen.

Northamptonshire Police uses early intervention appropriately to reduce harm in communities. We visited the force's early intervention pilot hub. It has long-term objectives to reduce harm in communities. The hub provides a comprehensive service to [safeguard](#) vulnerable children and families. It is a significant investment in police time. With support from other partners, we examined evidence of wide-ranging help being given to vulnerable children and their parents:

In one case we reviewed, children had been referred by staff at their primary school. This instigated a home visit by a police community support officer (PCSO) from the hub, who identified a wide range of issues that needed multi-agency attention.

The family's housing was inadequate for their needs. The PCSO worked with a registered social landlord (RSL) to move the family from private rented accommodation to an RSL home.

The PCSO also organised for immediate help from a local food bank. The family then received an emergency food parcel delivery and weekly food supplies.

The mother and children were in fear of the father who had recently been released from prison for domestic abuse offences. The force worked with the relevant authorities to find a different school and GP surgery. This kept the chances of the children or mother seeing the father to a minimum.

The PCSO also worked with the troubled families officer from the Department for Work and Pensions. The officer made sure the mother was receiving appropriate benefits and was enrolled in jobseeker programmes.

We were also briefed on the new gang intervention programme – Community Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV). Both the early intervention hub and CIRV schemes appear very promising and we look forward to the results.

Investigating crime



Inadequate

The force can't manage investigative demand effectively. Investigative demand exceeds capacity and capability, and during our inspection there were large backlogs in crimes yet to be assigned for investigation. We are concerned about the effect this is having on the service to the public.

Senior officers need to oversee and supervise investigations more, and standards need to be scrutinised. Investigations allocated to the criminal investigation department (CID) or specialist teams are generally well investigated, but this isn't the case for volume crime investigations.

There are several different teams handling telephone investigations, which is inefficient. Call handling is good, but risk assessments are not always properly recorded.

While police attend emergency calls within the target timescales, this isn't the case for 'prompt' graded calls. The lack of clarity about target timescales needs to be addressed.

The force is aware that it needs more trained investigators and is trying to address this. In the meantime, hundreds of cases are still waiting to be allocated and workloads are too high.

Victim care, support and safeguarding need to improve. Some victims wait for appointments for up to ten days and victims are not always kept updated on the status of their investigation. The force is changing its structures and practices to address these problems, but they weren't in place when we inspected.

The force's approach to suspect and offender management is not good enough. Arrangements to identify and apprehend suspects and offenders lack senior oversight.

Investigators would benefit from having a better understanding of their [disclosure](#) obligations. Improving the use of post- and pre-charge [bail](#) would improve criminal justice outcomes for victims.

Cause of concern

The force can't manage current demand effectively. It doesn't have enough capacity or capability to investigate crime as effectively as it should. This is affecting the service too often.

Northamptonshire Police is failing to respond appropriately to some vulnerable people. This means it is missing some opportunities to safeguard victims and secure evidence.

Recommendations

To address this cause of concern, we recommend that within 12 months the force should do the following:

- To improve the effectiveness of its investigations, it should:
 - make sure senior officers clearly and effectively oversee crime investigations and standards;
 - make sure all crimes are allocated quickly to investigators with the appropriate skills, accreditation and support. They will then be able to investigate them to a good standard, on time;
 - make sure it is fully compliant with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime;
 - make sure it can retrieve digital evidence from mobile phones, computers and other electronic devices quickly enough to avoid delaying investigations;
 - make sure it uses bail and 'released under investigation' correctly to keep the public safe; and
 - make sure that people listed as 'wanted' on the Police National Computer are quickly located and arrested.
- To improve its approach to protecting vulnerable people, it should:
 - improve call response and initial investigation for all vulnerable victims;
 - improve its response to missing and absent children by categorising information correctly, and regularly and actively supervise missing person investigations to properly safeguard victims; and
 - analyse information held on systems to better understand the nature and scale of vulnerability. It should then act on its findings relating to missing people, domestic abuse, human trafficking, modern slavery and child sexual exploitation.
- To make sure it can meet demand, it should develop plans to address its current capacity, capability and efficiency problems. It should:
 - change its operating model to remove inefficient practices;
 - create a central record of the skills available within the existing workforce;
 - reorganise the workforce to make sure officers have the skills needed to meet demand; and
 - carry out a thorough assessment of current and future demand, covering all elements of policing.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the force's performance in this area.

Investigation quality

Northamptonshire Police doesn't have enough capacity or capability to investigate crime as effectively as it should. This often affects the service that it offers. Too often, senior staff aren't overseeing investigations. And there is a lack of effective scrutiny or audit systems in place to make sure that investigations are of a good standard and not delayed. The force has plans to improve investigative standards, but it has been slow to put these in place.

Investigations allocated to CID or specialist teams (such as the domestic abuse prevention and interventions team – DAPIT – and Operation Solar, which investigate some rapes) are generally well investigated. This isn't the case for investigations of other crimes such as burglary, sexual assault, some violent crimes and thefts. As investigative demand exceeds capacity, we found large backlogs in crimes yet to be allocated to investigators. This is affecting the service the force offers to the public.

There are too many teams handling telephone investigations. At the time of our fieldwork, there were at least three units carrying out desktop investigations. This is inefficient and offers a poor service. The force aims to carry out desktop investigations for 43 percent of crimes. This is where a person's needs are assessed over the phone. People are then offered appointments in cases where the risk assessment considers it appropriate. These are handled by the managed appointments unit (MAU).

The MAU doesn't have enough supervisors, and some victims can often wait for appointments for between five and ten days. This means investigations go on for longer than they should, and lines of enquiry and opportunities to safeguard victims are being missed.

Call handling is generally effective. The operators show empathy and gather relevant information quickly. Staff use the [THRIVE](#) model (threat, harm, risk, vulnerability, engagement) to assess appropriate police response. On some occasions, this isn't properly recorded on the force's command and control system (STORM) or Niche RMS.

Police usually attend emergency graded calls within the target timescale. However, calls graded as 'prompt' are rarely attended within the force's one-hour target arrival time. There is a lack of clarity about target times for attending 'prompt' graded calls. It would be helpful for attendance times to be included in the force's call handling policy. In most incidents, appropriate resources are allocated. And 'golden hour' actions (the initial hour at the scene of an incident for collection of evidence) and handovers are good in most cases.

Northamptonshire Police is making reasonable efforts to increase its investigative capability. This includes trying to make the role more desirable by paying for study books and granting study leave. The force doesn't have enough trained investigators. Currently, 81.7 percent of posts are filled. We found examples of crimes being allocated to staff who didn't have enough training, or those with workloads that were already too high. Many officers and staff we spoke to were

working on between 20 and 30 investigations. At the time of our inspection, there were over 300 cases awaiting allocation. Some of these were almost six months old.

Student officers start their policing career working on uniformed response policing teams. In Northamptonshire, student officers rotate into the force investigations team for several months during their first two years. We found examples of these students returning to the team at the end of this period with caseloads of up to 30 crimes.

The force can't consistently and effectively investigate crime and support victims. Before our fieldwork, we examined 60 closed files and highlighted to the force several concerns. Twenty of these files were referred to the force for immediate attention and action. Reasons included unresolved lines of enquiry, a lack of supervision, or delays in investigations that may affect outcomes. Only 37 cases had been investigated effectively. During this file review, we found a burglary involving a vulnerable victim that had been allocated to a student special constable to investigate. During fieldwork, we found many more cases where lines of enquiry hadn't been followed up. This included tracing and interviewing named suspects.

At the time of our inspection, investigators couldn't quickly examine a mobile phone using a kiosk. A swift digital examination of a mobile phone while someone is in custody can open new lines of enquiry and influence charging decisions. There were also delays in carrying out CCTV enquiries, including seizure and examination. And we found examples of summary cases expiring because so much time had passed. Summary-only cases are normally tried at magistrates' courts. In general, proceedings must be commenced within six months of the criminal act being complained of. Here are some examples of cases we found during our fieldwork:

We reviewed a case of racially aggravated threatening behaviour involving neighbours. The initial report was received in mid-May 2018, and it was graded for priority attendance within one hour. Yet police didn't attend that day. This was despite the victim's concerns about his family, given that the alleged perpetrator was a neighbour. An appointment was made, and full details taken eight days later. The case wasn't allocated to an investigating officer for another five weeks (late June 2018).

There was no investigative action and the victim wasn't updated for a further six weeks (mid-August 2018). This means it had taken almost three months from initial reporting to the investigation starting.

The suspect was booked in for a voluntary interview in November 2018, six months after the alleged incident, but refused to attend. A decision was made not to arrest the suspect. This was despite clear provisions stated in the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984 to "arrest a suspect to enable the prompt and effective investigation of the offence".

In late November 2018, a supervisor carried out a serious crime review. This should have happened within two days of the offence being reported. A further seven-day review by a detective inspector was not done at all. The case was suitable for summons, but no action was taken. The case was classified as 'no further action' by the Crown Prosecution Service and the victim was updated in mid-December 2018.

We reviewed a common assault case reported in March 2018 between two people who didn't know each other. Following a verbal argument, one male assaulted another male outside a supermarket. He then left in a vehicle. Police attended and collected the evidence within the 'golden hour'.

Initial investigations identified the registered keeper of the vehicle (early April). The driver was then identified. The case was reallocated to a different investigating officer in late May 2018. They incorrectly assumed the CCTV didn't show the assault, and that it wasn't in a viewable format. The new investigator tried to get a duplicate copy of the CCTV. The officer who viewed it wasn't asked to give a statement. During mid-June, the investigator made attempts to contact the suspect.

There was no activity in this case until a supervisory review in early October 2018, when the investigator was off sick. There was no other evidence of supervisory review.

By November 2018, the prosecution time limits had expired. The investigating officer then updated the victim by leaving a voicemail, telling them that the case was now closed. The suspect in this case was dealt with for different offences in April and October 2018. Both occurred before the date of this investigation expired.

Too often, the lack of effective supervision is a critical factor in the force failing to effectively investigate crimes. Fewer than half of the investigations we examined had been properly supervised. This included investigation plans, reviews, safeguarding plans and crime finalisation. Some hadn't benefited from any meaningful investigative activity for many months.

Examples include a domestic burglary that was initially dealt with by response officers. There was no evidence of a supervisor overseeing it before it was handed to CID. There was also a theft case that hadn't been progressed or reviewed by a supervisor in more than four months.

The delay in investing in ICT equipment to examine seized devices for evidence is causing significant backlogs. This is affecting the force's performance and public satisfaction. There is a plan to reduce the backlog in the high-tech crime unit (HTCU), which the force has been trying to tackle for several years.

The wait time is currently 18 months and not expected to be in line with the national average (six months) for at least another year. Not having enough digital storage capacity is also a major reason for the backlog. The force has been slow to address this problem. The wait time for examining exhibits means that offenders aren't quickly brought to justice. Staff in several units voiced their frustration about the wait time.

There are shortcomings in the standard of victim care and support. Victim personal statements are rarely obtained and there is poor compliance with the [Code of Practice for Victims of Crime](#). The way investigators record victim contact or care on Niche RMS is inconsistent. Sometimes these records are only found on the back of the witness statement.

There is a lack of understanding and compliance with the Victims' Code. We reviewed a sexual assault case that after three months still hadn't been allocated to an investigating officer. The victim had only received one update, four days after making the initial report.

In situations where victims didn't support further police action, there was often no further investigation. This was despite there being clear lines of enquiry available. At times, this led to the investigator not considering the wider risks posed by the suspect before closing the investigation. The force is developing new crime allocation and investigative standards policies. At the time of our inspection, it wasn't clear when these would be put in place.

Catching criminals

Since 2015, our inspections have identified that the force needs to improve how it manages suspects. It has developed a new policy for dealing with 'wanted' suspects, although this hadn't been fully put in place at the time of our fieldwork.

The force doesn't actively manage the number of outstanding named suspects and there is little supervision in daily management meetings. In 2018, Northamptonshire Police had 1.33 wanted records per 1,000 population on the [Police National Computer](#). This is similar to the England and Wales rate of 1.10. The force's approach to managing foreign offenders is inconsistent.

[ACRO](#) manages the UK Central Authority for the Exchange of Criminal Records (UKCA-ECR), which exchanges conviction information with other EU member states. Within Northamptonshire Police, submissions have reduced. This means there are missed opportunities to manage offenders and protect the public.

There are limited governance arrangements to manage and prioritise policing activity and locate 'wanted' suspects. The force needs to make sure that there are clear measures in place to help managers understand organisational and operational risk, and allocate and co-ordinate resources.

There isn't a good enough understanding of post- and pre-charge bail among the workforce. We reviewed several live and closed cases and found an over-reliance on [releasing suspects under investigation](#) (RUI) rather than using bail. This was due to a lack of knowledge.

We reviewed an indecent assault case on a 17-year-old victim. We identified that there was a linked crime involving a different victim, plus a previous historic allegation of abuse involving the suspect's younger sister. Bail was granted with conditions, but no application was made to extend it beyond 28 days. This was because the suspect had complied with his bail conditions and lived a distance from the victims. This failed to consider the continued safeguarding and care of the victims. This was also evident in other cases we examined. A lack of supervisory intervention made these problems worse.

Rape investigators make regular use of [voluntary attendance](#). This means they miss opportunities to grant bail conditions following arrest. Where bail conditions had been used, they were often replaced with RUI after 28 days if the suspect hadn't contacted the victim. There was also child sexual exploitation (CSE) cases where the team hadn't used bail conditions to manage those arrested for CSE offences or to support the victims. This means that victims may not be properly safeguarded and may be at risk of intimidation.

There is a lack of understanding about disclosure obligations. There hasn't been any specific disclosure training for investigators, other than a generic e-learning module. Many trained investigators we spoke to had never drafted a disclosure schedule. Investigators rely heavily on caseworkers preparing disclosure schedules, and accredited investigators have limited disclosure knowledge. This is because the force gives this responsibility to a specialist criminal justice team.

Northamptonshire Police's approach to managing forensic hits has deteriorated since our last inspection. In 2017, the force introduced a co-ordinator role to manage all cases where there was a forensic hit or link. Since July 2018, the post holder has been moved to other duties. During that time, there hasn't been an audit of the progress of these forensic hits or the outcomes for the named suspects.

A recent investigation highlighted significant issues with how the force monitors forensic identifications. One example was when a suspect was not arrested for a sexual offence forensic hit. The same suspect went on to commit a second sexual offence. This led to an [Independent Office for Police Conduct](#) (IOPC) investigation and internal misconduct proceedings.

There is a plan to use Niche RMS to help audit the process to prevent this happening again. At the time of our fieldwork, there were no mechanisms in place to make sure this doesn't happen again. This means that opportunities to detect crimes and prevent further offending are being missed.

Protecting vulnerable people



Requires improvement

Northamptonshire Police is committed to protecting vulnerable people. However, it doesn't understand well enough the nature and scale of vulnerability. Officers and staff identify vulnerable people but could do more to act on their findings to help them provide appropriate support and protection. The force is leading an early intervention scheme, focusing on children of primary school age. If successful, this could be extended throughout the force.

Some vulnerable victims are affected by the delays in crime investigations. Several victims hadn't been contacted and didn't know when they would be. This means that they may not be properly safeguarded.

The force's arrest rate for domestic abuse is higher than the rate for England and Wales. Yet the charge rate is lower than the national average. This may mean that victims are not receiving an effective service. Northamptonshire Police should use its own analytical findings to make improvements.

A team of specialist investigators aims to support the highest-risk domestic abuse victims. Yet they don't have enough resources to support all high-risk victims. The force needs to introduce measures to improve victim care and safeguarding.

Northamptonshire Police works alongside mental health nurses to support people in mental health crisis and to reduce the number of people detained in police custody.

The force's approach to identifying and reducing cases involving missing children needs to improve. Some children have repeatedly gone missing for extended periods and have been at risk of serious harm.

We are pleased to find the force has improved its approach to managing registered sex offenders (RSOs).

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the force's performance in this area.

Understanding and identifying vulnerability

Northamptonshire Police is committed to protecting vulnerable people. However, it doesn't understand well enough the nature and scale of vulnerability. We were pleased to see that it has commissioned [problem profiles](#) on domestic abuse, missing people, CSE, human trafficking and modern slavery. However, it hasn't acted on the findings to make sure that the workforce has a good understanding of the scale of vulnerability and can deal with the problem.

The force uses the [College of Policing](#)'s definition of vulnerability and the workforce has a basic understanding of the definition. Officers and staff submit many public protection notices (PPNs). These summarise the vulnerabilities of victims and witnesses, and neighbourhood teams have knowledge of some vulnerable victims in their area.

Officers and staff appear to recognise their role in recording when they encounter vulnerable people. However, we found very few examples of them proactively looking to identify vulnerable people or get a better understanding of vulnerability. For example, not all neighbourhood officers are aware of the children's care homes in their area. This means that the force may be missing opportunities to protect vulnerable children.

Within the control room, identifying vulnerability has improved since our last inspection. Vulnerability and repeat flags on STORM help prioritise vulnerability and repeat victims at first contact. At the time of our inspection, a team in the force control room was piloting a scheme, led by the College of Policing. It included carrying out desk-based investigations for some low-level domestic abuse incidents. We look forward to seeing the results of the pilot.

The force works with a range of external agencies to identify and safeguard potentially vulnerable people. We were briefed about some [county lines](#) operations that social workers have attended with police who have warrants. This helps to identify people who may be being exploited by criminal groups and need safeguarding.

The force is leading an early intervention pilot initiative with the local authority and NHS. It covers the north-east part of Northampton and focuses on children of primary school age. It aims to support those who have had adverse childhood experiences.

The hub receives referrals from schools, partner agencies and the [multi-agency safeguarding hub](#) (MASH) via PPNs. These referrals are assessed and can instigate support services intervening. There has been an interim evaluation by the University of Northamptonshire, and a final evaluation was under way when we inspected. Depending on the findings, the approach will be rolled out across the rest of the force area, targeting high-risk schools.

Vulnerability issues are not effectively identified within the unallocated crime queues (crimes that have been reported and recorded but not yet allocated to an investigator). We found cases at the Criminal Justice Centre in Northampton where vulnerable people hadn't been contacted and didn't know when they would be. This means that victims may not be properly safeguarded.

Responding to incidents

Northamptonshire Police attends most emergency calls on time. And it consistently attends emergency calls (grade 1 – immediate) involving vulnerable victims within the target response time of 15 minutes in urban areas and 20 minutes in rural locations. However, it doesn't consistently attend prompt calls (grade 2) within the target time of one hour. This means that some vulnerable people don't get the service they need and may be put in danger.

The force needs to improve how it responds to domestic abuse incidents and safeguarding victims. Response officers carry out immediate safeguarding of high-risk domestic abuse victims. But the approach to long-term safeguarding is inconsistent, particularly around standard- and medium-risk incidents, and other non-domestic vulnerability cases.

The force made 3,409 domestic abuse arrests in the 12 months to September 2018. This means its arrest rate is 40 percent, which is above the national average of 32 percent. Of cases where the force uses arrest or voluntary attendance, it will use voluntary attendance 3.24 percent of the time. This is below the England and Wales rate of 9.25 percent.

A detailed domestic abuse problem profile was published in 2018. It isn't clear what changes the force has made because of it. The profile sets out an increase in response times for grade 2 domestic abuse incidents. These account for 40.3 percent of all domestic abuse incidents. The analysis reveals that the average time from the first call to first dispatch of a resource is over three hours. The average time between dispatching the resource and its arrival is 61 minutes. This means that police attendance is sometimes four hours after the initial call. This is far slower than the force's own target of one hour. The profile also identifies that the longer it took officers to arrive at a scene of a domestic incident, the less likely an arrest would be.

This highlights the possible negative effect on outcomes, with more likelihood of outcome 16 (evidential difficulties and victim declines to prosecute) when an arrest hasn't occurred. Outcome 16 was recorded in 52 percent of domestic abuse cases in Northamptonshire, compared with 33 percent nationally. The force has one of the lowest charge rates for domestic abuse incidents. It is 16.3 percent compared with the national average of 22 percent. This means that victims of domestic abuse may not be receiving an effective service. The force should make sure that it uses the findings from analytical reports to improve the service it provides.

Investigative and safeguarding responses to most domestic abuse incidents are inconsistent. Response officers or the force investigations team deal with most standard-risk domestic abuse cases. Many of them don't have enough training and have very heavy workloads.

Specialist investigators are based in the DAPIT. The team's objectives include identifying repeat victims and perpetrators. However, there aren't enough resources to investigate all high-risk domestic abuse incidents. This means that domestic abuse victims, including some high-risk victims, aren't getting the standard of service they need.

Northamptonshire Police works with organisations to provide specialist safeguarding to vulnerable people. Officers have access to support from mental health professionals through Operation Alloy. The operation is a mental health triage scheme set up in partnership with a mental health trust. Mental health nurses work with officers attending incidents that involve people with mental health conditions. Officers we spoke to said that the scheme is positive because they are better informed about the correct course of action to take. This means vulnerable people get a better service. The scheme generally operates between 8.00am and midnight. And the University of Northampton's Institute for Public Safety, Crime and Justice is evaluating it.

The force has also begun a 12-month pilot scheme called the 'high intensive network Northamptonshire'. It supports the main users of mental health and police services. This should reduce the number of [section 136](#) mental health detentions. People who use the service sign a voluntary agreement to promote independence. Progress is tracked and there has been initial success that has seen less contact from the service user with the NHS and police. Feedback is used to improve services.

The force works with agencies to identify and respond to cases of CSE. There is a multi-agency reducing incidents of sexual exploitation (RISE) team. It investigates allegations of CSE, targets offenders, manages and develops intelligence, and engages with vulnerable children and young people.

The RISE team is made up of police, social workers and a specialist nurse. Agencies can refer a child at risk of exploitation to the team. Staff then carry out a thorough risk assessment of the case. The assessment considers information from:

- missing episodes;
- school concerns;
- misuse of substances;
- carer relationships;
- accommodation concerns;
- abusive/exploitative behaviour;
- engagement with appropriate services;
- sexual health;
- associations with gangs/criminals or adults who pose a risk; and
- social media.

A review panel then agrees a risk management plan and sends a referral to other agencies. This process is overseen by the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board.

Northamptonshire Police's approach to dealing with missing people is not always effective. We found examples of missing children, who are at risk of exploitation, being categorised as absent or 'missing – no risk'. Policies state that this shouldn't happen. Yet we found 107 cases of missing children being dealt with under the category 'missing – no apparent risk (absent)' between January 2018 and January 2019. These records relate to 76 separate children. Fifteen of these have been reported missing on more than one occasion, and six children had three or more absent records during this period. In one recent case, a 17-year-old female was recorded as 'missing no risk/absent' for over 48 hours.

The force has improved its understanding of the nature and scale of some missing people cases since our last inspection, although it hasn't yet acted on its findings. It now has a problem profile for missing people under the age of 18. This includes some detailed analysis of the problem and makes several recommendations for next steps.

We found limited evidence of the force working with other agencies to problem solve and address the underlying issues in cases where children go missing regularly.

Information relating to missing people is often only held on the missing persons ICT system (Compact). The information isn't routinely transferred onto Niche RMS. This means that opportunities to develop intelligence on connected SOC problems may be missed. For example, some children who repeatedly go missing may be vulnerable to CSE or being 'groomed' into joining gangs or organised crime groups (OCGs).

Some forces create plans, known as 'trigger plans', for people who repeatedly go missing. These include places where the person has been found before, people they are known to associate with, and other information already known about the missing person. Northamptonshire Police doesn't have any equivalent trigger plans for the most frequently missing children, although it intends to create these and add them to a Niche RMS record.

In 2018, the force's national child protection inspection (NCPI) made several recommendations relating to missing children. These haven't yet been addressed. The inspection identified poor risk assessment processes in the force control room. This resulted in risks to children being assessed incorrectly. This means that vulnerable children may not be adequately protected from harm.

Supporting vulnerable victims

Neighbourhood teams are aware of the RSOs and dangerous offenders in their area. They would benefit from working consistently with the management of sexual or violent offenders team. This means that opportunities to gather intelligence may be missed.

Northamptonshire Police has an effective [multi-agency risk assessment conference](#) (MARAC) process. MARAC involves regular local meetings to address domestic abuse issues. Police referrals follow the charity SafeLives' recommendations. Of all referrals to the MARAC, 86 percent are from the force. The national police referral rate averages 66 percent. There have been 167 [domestic violence protection orders](#) granted between January 2018 and December 2018.

The force uses legal powers to protect victims of domestic abuse. The provisions available through [Clare's Law](#) are managed well, with regular weekly panel meetings that make sure information is shared promptly, when appropriate.

The force has adopted [Operation Encompass](#). This aims to safeguard and support children and young people who have been involved in, or are affected by, domestic abuse-related incidents. If a child has been affected by an incident, a school's 'key adult' is contacted by 9.00am the next day and told about the incident. Arrangements are then made to support the child at school. The force doesn't specifically ask for feedback from vulnerable victims to improve its services.

The force works with agencies to make sure that vulnerable people are safeguarded. The force's MASH deals with children's safeguarding matters. A different team deals with safeguarding adults. The children's MASH exchanges information between agencies. Officers who attend incidents complete a PPN. This summarises the vulnerabilities of victims and is then sent to the MASH. Staff in the MASH share PPNs with social care, who also send the information to agencies if certain criteria are met. At times when social workers aren't available, deciding if a case meets the

threshold for a strategy meeting can be inconsistent. This means that opportunities to safeguard some children may be missed.

The force is proactive in identifying those who share indecent images of children online. It has achieved positive results in the past from the cases initiated by the National Crime Agency's child exploitation and online protection team.

The force monitors the relevant systems daily but not all notifications are acted on. This may present a risk to children. Investigators in the HTCUC review and classify digital images of abuse. The police online investigation team (POLIT) then take enforcement or disruptive action. This has increased the HTCUC's workload and created backlogs in their cases awaiting action. It also means that opportunities to safeguard victims may be being missed.

HTCUC investigators are given counselling every six months to support them in this difficult area of policing. The force is aware of the capacity problems within the HTCUC. It plans to review the working arrangements with the POLIT to improve the service it provides.

Northamptonshire Police adequately manages and assesses the risks posed by dangerous and sex offenders. We were pleased the force had reduced the backlog of visits to RSOs since our last inspection. There were over 300 outstanding visits back then. During this inspection, there were 44 outstanding visits to RSOs. These consisted of two very high-, 11 high-, 15 medium- and 16 low-risk offenders.

The force uses its powers effectively to protect the public. It is managing 366 individuals subject to [sexual offences prevention orders](#), 283 [sexual harm prevention orders](#) and four sexual risk orders. The force should continue to make sure that it has a sustainable solution to manage the risks posed by RSOs.

Tackling serious and organised crime



Requires improvement

Northamptonshire Police has improved its approach to tackling SOC, but there is still more work to do. The force remains heavily focused on prosecuting those taking part in SOC, but it plans to improve its prevention, protection and preparation capabilities.

The force has a better understanding of SOC particularly for county lines, firearms and gang violence. The force shares information with other agencies more regularly. This will further enhance the force's understanding of all SOC threats.

Northamptonshire Police lacks capability to be fully effective at tackling SOC. This is due to limited knowledge and skills around a range of tactics, particularly covert options. The force receives some tactical advice and support from the [regional organised crime unit](#) (ROCU), but it should draw on this support more often. The force would benefit from using financial tactics more to tackle SOC. It is now raising awareness of this subject among staff.

Northamptonshire Police has some initiatives in place to identify those at risk of being drawn into SOC and deter them from offending. The force has also run some operations to tackle county lines with other agencies to safeguard vulnerable people and to encourage joint working.

The force needs to improve its approach to managing organised criminals with other organisations to reduce re-offending. The force has only basic arrangements in place to manage some organised criminals' activity in prison and on release.

The force uses social media and leaflet drops to raise the public's awareness of SOC. It would benefit from targeting activity in areas where it needs more information from the public. The force aims to review its SOC investigations to inform future activities.

Areas for improvement

- The force should develop a more detailed understanding of all threats posed by serious and organised crime. To do this, it needs to define what information it needs from other agencies. It should reduce the backlog of intelligence submissions awaiting evaluation and analysis. This would make sure it identifies and acts on all important information quickly.
- The force should enhance its approach to the 'lifetime management' of organised criminals. This would minimise the risk they pose to local communities. This approach should consider additional orders, the powers of other organisations and tools to deter organised criminals from continuing to offend.
- The force should better understand of the impact of its work on serious and organised crime across the 'four Ps'. It must use learn to maximise the force's disruptive effect on this criminal activity.
- The force should assign capable lead responsible officers to all active organised crime groups. This must be part of a long-term, multi-agency approach to dismantling them. Lead responsible officers should take a balanced approach across the 'four Ps' framework and have a consistently good knowledge of available tactics.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the force's performance in this area.

Understanding threats

Northamptonshire Police has recently set out its vision and policing priorities. SOC is one of its six priorities.

The force has developed a better understanding of SOC since our last inspection, particularly in relation to county lines, firearms and gang violence. The force now has a structured approach to identifying and prioritising those involved in SOC through its new serious crime matrix.

The force intelligence bureau (FIB) developed the matrix. It scans force ICT systems for new crimes and intelligence potentially relating to organised crime and criminals. These include firearms, knives, noxious substances, modern slavery, human

trafficking, child exploitation, cuckooing, drugs, serious sexual offences, PPNs and threats between criminal groups. FIB analysts then apply [MORILE](#) scoring to information from the matrix. This helps the force when it allocates resources every fortnight. The force is developing the matrix so that it can use data from other agencies. This will provide more detailed intelligence.

The force has completed a problem profile on CSE. This is being assessed and developed by the county council analyst. It will give the force and county council a better understanding of the problem. They can then develop joint plans to tackle it.

The serious crime matrix is used to assess threats posed by OCGs, [urban street gangs](#) and those involved in county lines offences. Neighbourhood teams use up-to-date information from beat profiles and the force intranet (Force Net). This is giving them a better awareness of county lines and other serious and organised criminals.

Good-quality analytical products are now used by analysts and intelligence teams. A good-quality local SOC profile is supporting the force's work with other agencies. This profile is updated every quarter and published internally and externally. It is also sent to [independent advisory groups](#).

The force has tried to gather intelligence from other partners through the SOC partnership board. However, analytical products currently rely heavily on police data. This means that intelligence isn't as complete as it could be.

At the time of our fieldwork, there was a backlog in processing intelligence reports submitted by officers and staff. There is a robust triage process in place to make sure vulnerability and force priorities, such as SOC, are processed on time. There are delays, however, in some intelligence being acted on. Until the information is processed, it isn't visible to everyone who may need it. The force has a plan to reduce and manage this backlog. In the meantime, opportunities to understand and tackle SOC may be being missed.

Northamptonshire Police shares data with other organisations about SOC. It understands where there are gaps in intelligence and requests information from other agencies. At a tactical level, police officers, staff and teams in other agencies spoke highly of the cuckooing partnership group in Northampton. The group exchanges information and has multi-agency intervention plans in place.

The force also accessed Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority data. This helped inform its human trafficking and modern slavery problem profile. Healthcare practitioners attended visits where there were concerns about potential slavery.

More could be done strategically when gathering intelligence on OCGs. The force asks for information from agencies (often using E-CINs). However, there isn't a mechanism for agencies to share information regularly. This means it is difficult to get a full understanding of all SOC threats, particularly for cybercrime.

The force intends to address this in several ways. It plans to:

- publish a strategic threat assessment;
- allocate resources strategically every quarter; and
- launch a new intelligence requirement. This should help agencies better understand how the information they hold may help the police. Agencies will then be better able to gather new information to support the police to tackle SOC.

The force doesn't identify and assess all OCGs consistently. As of 1 April 2018, Northamptonshire Police had [mapped](#) 29.7 OCGs per one million of the population. This is below the rate for England and Wales. It is a reduction compared with 1 July 2017, when the figure was 32.7 OCGs per one million population.

A high proportion of mapped OCGs are involved in supplying drugs. This indicates that the force doesn't fully understand or manage OCGs involved in other types of criminality. By not proactively identifying and mapping all OCGs, the force is limiting its own understanding of SOC. It is also undermining the regional and national threat picture.

The force receives some tactical advice from the ROCU. This gives it a better understanding of OCGs in the county. The force should draw on regional support more often.

Northamptonshire Police uses a structured approach to assess urban street gangs, county lines and other criminal networks. This helps the force understand the threat they pose. It now needs to be more consistently proactive in its approach.

Information relating to missing people is often only held on the missing persons system (Compact). It isn't routinely transferred onto Niche RMS. This means that opportunities to develop intelligence on connected SOC problems may be being missed. For example, some children repeatedly going missing may be vulnerable to exploitation or may be being 'groomed' into joining gangs or OCGs. This means that the force doesn't have a full understanding of SOC.

Serious and organised crime prevention

Northamptonshire Police has some initiatives in place to identify those at risk of being drawn into SOC and deter them from offending. The new gang intervention programme, CIRV, is based on a programme used in Glasgow, Cincinnati and Boston (USA). It has Home Office funding for two years. Other cities that have taken part have seen a fall in gang violence and offending. Employment has also increased among those involved in such programmes. This is a new project for the force and we look forward to seeing the results.

The force is also running an early intervention pilot in one part of the county. This involves working with schools to identify children at risk of becoming involved with, or victims of, crime at the earliest opportunity. The University of Northamptonshire is evaluating it.

The force doesn't have an effective approach to [managing lifetime offenders](#) with other organisations. This isn't helping to reduce organised criminals re-offending. The force has only basic arrangements in place to manage some organised criminals' activity in prison and on release. And these arrangements aren't used consistently.

The force is told about prison releases six months before the date, but people only receive minimal monitoring when they are released. And there isn't any continued work with the ROCU to monitor offenders' activities in prison.

The force is managing four [serious crime prevention orders](#) (SCPOs) – all instigated by the ROCU. The force hasn't initiated any SCPOs in the past 12 months and there is little evidence that the current SCPOs are being monitored or enforced. These orders can restrict offenders' abilities to plan, fund and commit serious crime in future. The force recognises that it needs to improve in this area.

The force has some innovative ways to raise awareness among the public of SOC. It has created the Operation Viper brand, which promotes police activity against SOC. This is carried out through social media and traditional ways such as leaflet drops.

There have been many SOC press campaigns. These include Operation Bling, which raised awareness about unexplained wealth. The head of corporate communications is a member of the county partnership media board. The board has worked with the community safety partnerships on knife crime linked to SOC. This activity could be more targeted to where there are gaps in intelligence.

The force has co-hosted a series of events with the community engagement charity, ROC. The aim is to encourage community involvement in tackling SOC. Officers and the youth offending service staff visit primary and secondary schools to talk about county lines, CSE and violence.

Disruption and investigation

Northamptonshire Police prioritises activity that tackles SOC. It uses analysis and MoRiLE scoring to support its decisions.

The force identifies OCGs according to national guidance. It then shares these with the ROCU to be mapped, with appropriate tiers allocated. The force has a better relationship with the ROCU since our last inspection. This is helping to tackle SOC.

There is an active force-wide SOC partnership board. The two community safety partnerships are responsible for governing the SOC strategy. The partnership board reports into these. We found examples of the force working well with agencies to tackle SOC. For example, social workers join policing teams carrying drug supply warrants to identify vulnerable people who may need access to social care services.

[Lead responsible officers](#) (LROs) have been appointed since our last inspection. They have some training on crime disruption tactics, but most would benefit from more training to make knowledge and skills more consistent across departments.

The force regularly reviews plans to tackle SOC and uses the national framework known as [4Ps](#) (pursue, prevent, protect and prepare). The force also reviews threat assessment scores at a monthly OCG management board meeting. The board governs the force's approach to tackling SOC, holding the LROs to account on how they manage OCGs across the 4Ps. It also considers resources and capability to tackle these offenders. Some of the 4P plans show improvements since our last inspection. They reference signposting vulnerable individuals into the early intervention hub or cuckooing groups.

The force remains focused on prosecuting people taking part in SOC. It plans to improve its prevention, protection and preparation capabilities. To help achieve this, it has appointed a superintendent who will make sure that effective senior leadership supports the force's approach to tackling SOC.

Northamptonshire Police lacks capability to be fully effective at tackling SOC. This is because of limited knowledge and skills around a range of tactics, particularly covert options. The force is training the proactive and SOC teams to use covert techniques.

The force is also reviewing its roads policing capability to establish whether this is enough to tackle SOC and county lines. We identified some good examples of departments working together to tackle SOC and county lines, such as Operation Saxon. The force is also working more closely with other agencies, including the Metropolitan and West Midlands police forces.

The force has made an impact on SOC across the 4Ps. It regularly reviews 4P plans and threat assessment scores. The force records disruptions of OCGs and individuals in line with national guidance. A disruption moderation panel is used to achieve this.

The force doesn't routinely review its SOC investigations to encourage learning. And there is no evidence of good practice or holding post-operation debriefs to identify 'lessons learned'. The force is addressing this by developing the moderation panel to not only review the impact of disruptive activity but also to act as a learning forum for SOC. Colleagues from the ROCU attend panel meetings. There are plans for learning and development colleagues to evaluate its potential.

The force makes limited use of financial investigation tactics to tackle SOC. Financial investigators are allocated to some SOC investigations but not all. It is raising awareness among the workforce, through training, of the role of financial investigators. It is too early to know what the impact will be.

Northamptonshire Police has recently received the findings of a [National Police Chiefs' Council](#) (NPCC) and Home Office peer review. It mirrors our findings and makes several recommendations.

Armed policing

We have previously inspected how well forces provide armed policing. This formed part of our 2016 and 2017 effectiveness inspections. Subsequent terrorist attacks in the UK and Europe have meant that the police service maintains a focus on armed capability in England and Wales.

It is not just terrorist attacks that place operational demands on armed officers. The threat can include the activity of OCGs or armed street gangs and all other crime involving guns. The [Code of Practice on the Police Use of Firearms and Less Lethal Weapons](#) makes forces responsible for implementing national standards of armed policing. The code stipulates that a [chief officer](#) be designated to oversee these standards. This requires the chief officer to set out the firearms threat in an [armed policing strategic threat and risk assessment](#) (APSTRA). The chief officer must also set out clear rationales for the number of armed officers (armed capacity) and the level to which they are trained (armed capability).

Understanding the threat and responding to it

The force has a good understanding of the potential harm facing the public. Its APSTRA conforms to the requirements of the code and the [College of Policing guidance](#). The APSTRA is published annually and is accompanied by a register of risks and other observations. The [designated chief officer](#) reviews the register frequently to maintain the right levels of armed capability and capacity.

The force also has a good understanding of the armed criminals who operate in Northamptonshire and neighbouring force areas. Northamptonshire Police is alert to the likelihood of terrorist attacks and has identified venues that may require additional protection in times of heightened threat.

All armed officers in England and Wales are trained to national standards. There are different standards for each role that armed officers perform. Most armed incidents in Northamptonshire are attended by officers trained to an [armed response vehicle](#) (ARV) standard. However, incidents sometimes occur that require the skills and specialist capabilities of officers who are more highly trained.

Northamptonshire Police currently works with Leicestershire Police and Lincolnshire Police to provide all aspects of armed policing. Recently, agreement has been reached to change this relationship to one that only focuses on delivering consistent standards of training and command of armed operations in all three forces.

Northamptonshire Police has enough ARV capability and has plans to increase this further during 2019 in response to changes to existing working arrangements agreed with regional colleagues.

We found that Northamptonshire Police has good arrangements in place to mobilise officers with enough specialist capabilities in line with the threats and risks identified in its APSTRA.

Working with others

It is important that effective joint working arrangements are in place between neighbouring forces. Armed criminals and terrorists have no respect for county boundaries. Therefore, armed officers must be prepared to deploy flexibly in the knowledge that they can work seamlessly with officers in other forces. It is also important that any one force can call on support from surrounding forces in times of heightened threat.

Northamptonshire Police has enough ARV officers and specialist capabilities in line with the threats set out in the APSTRA. Until recently, Northamptonshire had joint arrangements in place with Leicestershire and Lincolnshire police forces to provide armed policing. The three forces have agreed to continue to share training facilities, which helps to standardise procedures as well as reducing costs. The governance of these new arrangements is, however, still developing. We will monitor progress closely.

We also examined how well-prepared forces are to respond to threats and risks. Armed officers in Northamptonshire Police are trained in tactics that take account of the types of recent terrorist attacks. Also, Northamptonshire Police has an important role in designing training exercises with other organisations that simulate these types of attack. We found that these training exercises are reviewed carefully so that learning points are identified and improvements made for the future.

In addition to debriefing training exercises, we also found that Northamptonshire reviews the outcome of all firearms incidents that officers attend. This helps ensure that best practice or areas for improvement are identified. We also found that this knowledge is used to improve training and operational procedures.

Efficiency



Force in context

| | Northamptonshire spend | England and Wales spend |
|---|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Spend per head of population 2018/19 projection | £159 | £192 |

Spend per head of population by category

2018/19 projection

| | Northamptonshire spend | England and Wales spend |
|------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Visible frontline | £46 | £65 |
| Non-visible frontline | £61 | £62 |
| Frontline Support | £13 | £17 |
| Business support | £35 | £41 |
| Other | £5 | £8 |

How efficiently does the force operate and how sustainable are its services?



Inadequate

Summary

Northamptonshire Police is reactive in its approach to policing and has a limited understanding of demand. Demand analysis is out of date and needs to be refreshed, and the force doesn't understand its workforce capabilities well enough. Work has begun to address this, but there needs to be wider analysis to get a fuller picture of demand.

There aren't enough resources to cope with investigative demand. As a result, there are backlogs of crimes not allocated to investigators. A new change programme has been set up to change the force's operating model to better meet demand and be more efficient. The force has invested in new technologies that offer opportunities for the workforce to become more efficient and visible through mobile working.

The force is committed to joint working. It benefits from working with other agencies but can't quantify this in terms of cost savings or added resilience. Northamptonshire County Council is currently restructuring to become two unitary authorities. This means there is significant uncertainty about future partnership arrangements.

Northamptonshire Police has sound financial plans. And the finance team is more rigorous in budget setting than when we last inspected.

The force's understanding of future demand is limited. It intends to better understand current demand first. It will then be able to better predict and plan for future demand.

The force has an ambitious vision to improve its services. It acknowledges that its current plans aren't enough to achieve this.

Meeting current demands and using resources



Inadequate

Northamptonshire Police doesn't understand current demand well enough. While the force has carried out some analysis of demand, the last detailed analysis was in 2017. The force did some work to better understand hidden demand in 2018, but there hasn't been any more done since then. The force's operating model is not efficient enough, with multiple handover points between units. Not being able to meet demand leads to delays in services to the public. The force has commissioned work to get a better understanding of current and future demand. It plans to change its operating model to enable it to better manage demand.

The force has plans to improve how it oversees and scrutinises the benefits resulting from changes and improvements. It also has plans to factor in expected benefits to financial plans.

The force uses the multi-force shared service (MFSS) for HR and finance. MFSS is also used by Cheshire Constabulary, Nottinghamshire Police and the Civil Nuclear Constabulary. MFSS isn't bringing the benefits that it could because staff aren't sufficiently trained or supported to use the system. This means that the force only has a limited understanding of the resources and workforce skills available to it. The force plans to address these problems. The service will then be able to bring the benefits and savings that are expected.

Recent ICT investments include new laptops, mobile phones and [body-worn video](#) cameras. The force now needs to make sure that the workforce uses ICT systems more efficiently and effectively.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the force's performance in this area.

Assessing current demand

Northamptonshire Police has a limited understanding of demand and is highly reactive in its approach. The force recognises that the nature and complexity of crime is changing. Senior leaders have identified that public welfare and [safeguarding](#) demand have increased. This places greater demands on specialist public protection services.

The force is monitoring trends in types of crimes and incidents. However, the last comprehensive analysis of demand formed part of the force's 2017 change programme, the service delivery model (SDM). This is now out of date and hasn't yet been updated.

Since our fieldwork, the force has established a new change programme (Futures Project 2020 [FP20]). This is updating the demand profile and reviewing the force's operating model. FP20 will also determine the most appropriate shift patterns for the core functions of response, investigations and neighbourhoods. This will help manage demand.

The force has commissioned limited analysis and activity to uncover, and understand trends in, hidden demand. While the force has done some work to better understand the nature and extent of modern slavery and human trafficking through a [problem profile](#) produced in October 2018, there has been no new or broader analysis of hidden demand since our last inspection.

The force recognises the importance of understanding demand and has invested in demand modelling software (Process Evolution). Because there isn't enough capacity in business support teams, it hasn't been able to maintain a comprehensive analysis.

The force has commissioned a 'response review'. This forms part of FP20 to build a more comprehensive and up-to-date understanding of current demand. While the response review may identify opportunities for change, it must form part of a wider assessment of current and future demand. This will make sure that any changes to the force's operating model consider all elements of policing.

Understanding factors that influence demand

Northamptonshire Police has some processes that sometimes suppress or hide demand. The force's plans to address these problems aren't sufficient.

At the time of our fieldwork, investigative demand was outstripping capacity and there were large backlogs in crimes yet to be allocated to investigators. Many teams were conducting telephone investigations or resolution, with some victims being passed between these units. This is inefficient and provides the public with a poor service.

The force aims to – and successfully completes – triage or conduct desktop investigations for 43 percent of crimes. It offers appointments to the public in cases where the risk assessment indicates that is appropriate. The MAU handles these.

While there has been a good take-up by the public, the MAU completes only minimal tasks and doesn't see cases through to the end. This has created work for other departments and generates more, and unplanned, handovers between departments. While the public may be happy that they have seen a police officer relatively quickly after reporting some crimes, the service is inefficient. At the time of our fieldwork, there were at least two other units carrying out some sort of desktop investigation.

The force is aware of the inefficiencies and has developed plans to address some of these problems. But it has been slow to put in place meaningful change. This means that some ineffective practices have become established.

Since our fieldwork, the force has established FP20. It has also appointed a detective chief superintendent to lead a team to bring about necessary changes.

Working with others to meet demand

Northamptonshire Police is committed to joint working and has extensive regional collaboration arrangements.

The force works closely with Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service. The focus is largely on public safety initiatives and arson investigations. The [police and crime commissioner](#) took on fire service governance in early 2019. A focus now is to find new ways for the police and fire service to work together. A new board is overseeing this work. It is starting with considering the impact of agile working at future sites for police and fire and rescue services.

The force has some officers and [staff](#) based in Northamptonshire County Council (NCC)'s offices. The council is going through a restructure to become two unitary authorities. Its financial and governance problems could put more demand on police services when other services are cut.

The future local government reorganisation is likely to make these arrangements more complicated. The force has allocated a [senior officer](#) to work closely with the council. This is to make sure that there are suitable impact assessments of proposed changes on local policing services.

While Northamptonshire Police is committed to joint working, it doesn't have the resources to manage demand efficiently across agencies. It has a long history of working with the East Midlands Operational Support Service (EMOpSS) and the East Midlands Special Operations Unit (EMSOU). The force reports that it benefits from these partnerships. It recognises that it can't prove whether they provide tangible benefits in either cost savings or more resilience.

We are pleased that the force is reviewing the service received through EMOpSS and EMSOU. It has already made some changes to allocating resources.

Innovation and new opportunities

Northamptonshire Police is searching externally for examples of innovation and good practice to help manage demand. Examples include the new [gang](#) intervention initiative CIRV. The force also reviewed Devon and Cornwall Police's approach to wellbeing. It is putting in place Avon and Somerset Constabulary's data analytics tools (Qlik). We are pleased that these initiatives are being used by Northamptonshire Police. The approach now needs to be more co-ordinated.

The force doesn't have a recognised resource to develop new technologies to improve efficiency. Business cases for improving existing systems or new systems are brought by individual business units.

The [chief officer](#) team invites feedback and encourages frontline officers and staff to put forward ideas. However, there is no structured method for workforce ideas to be developed. The force needs to make sure that operational and business support teams work closely with technology services. This will identify suitable system improvements or replacements to improve efficiency.

Investment and benefits

Northamptonshire Police demonstrates a basic understanding of the benefits that can result from investments. It understands what technology can offer policing and is prepared to invest to improve productivity and services to the public.

The force has invested in digital technologies such as new laptops. And it has given officers access to police systems on force mobile devices to encourage agile working and to speed up the time it takes for information to be added to force computer systems. The workforce has started to make good use of the technologies, but it can't show the return on that investment yet.

The force aims to make cashable savings through increasing productivity. Officers having direct access to force systems on their mobile devices will mean the force can reduce some administrative support functions. It will also be able to make some cashable savings by switching off some old computer systems to reduce licence costs.

The force recognises that it needs to better monitor benefits from change programmes. To achieve this, it has made changes to scrutinise and oversee changes. A new post in the corporate services team will support this work. The expected benefits haven't yet been factored into the force's [medium-term financial plans](#). The force has plans to do this.

The force is preparing to join the new national single online home platform, and it is an early adopter. It is waiting for clarification on costs and benefits from the national team. Benefits will include making it easier for the public to access services. This may increase demand for some policing services. There may also be efficiency savings if some demand can be managed online. The force has costed plans for airwave radio replacement. The current handsets can be used when services are switched over to the new emergency services network.

Prioritising different types of demand

The force prioritises activity on an ad hoc basis, with little understanding of demand or public expectations. The analysis carried out for the SDM is now out of date. Changes that were made as a result of the analysis haven't been formally evaluated.

Staff in many departments referred to the current operating model as not being fit for purpose. We found extensive backlogs in the crime allocation process that have come about since SDM changes. There are varying assumptions about the reasons for the model not being fit for purpose and/or functioning as anticipated. At the time of our fieldwork, there was no clear understanding of where and how to make changes to improve its effectiveness.

The force's new change programme (FP20) is developing a new operating model. The force is working toward ambitious timescales to implement changes during 2019.

Assigning resources to demand and understanding their costs

Northamptonshire Police's financial plans are based on sound assumptions, which have been developed with operational leads. The 2019/20 budget-setting process is now complete, with the finance team now taking a more rigorous approach. It worked closely with enabling services, such as the resources and planning teams, and operational colleagues to set budgets.

The force has just completed a [zero-based budget](#) for all budgets over £10,000. Financial and workforce planning is more regulated, and the force has a better understanding of workforce gaps. The recent outcome-based budgeting (OBB) exercise is a positive step forward. It should provide the force with a solid evidence base for resourcing decisions. At the time of our inspection, less than 20 percent of spending had been reviewed. And it hadn't resulted in any significant reallocation of resources to priorities, although there are plans to do this.

The exercise identified some areas where savings could be made, including special constable recruitment. It also established where reinvestment will be necessary. When we inspected, the exercise had achieved approximately £250,000 worth of savings. The force plans to continue the OBB approach alongside a wider review of its operating model. It will also address the areas for improvement we have found.

Workforce capabilities

Northamptonshire Police has a very limited understanding of the workforce's skills. It doesn't have a central record of the skills available and it isn't able to predict the skills it will need in the future. The force is aware that it doesn't have enough cyber skills within the workforce. It doesn't yet have a plan to address this. The force is using external apprenticeship levy funding to help it fill some roles where there are skills gaps.

The force is also using this funding for some police staff roles. The intention is that the police staff will achieve a leadership qualification. Some analytical roles would be particularly suitable because the force has had difficulty recruiting for these. The leadership qualification should help attract and retain good-quality candidates.

If the force had a better understanding of the workforce's skills, it could target its recruitment initiatives more effectively. It is missing the opportunity to fill some skills gaps and make sure that the workforce is equipped to react appropriately. An audit of tactical and operational skills for police officers is under way. This builds on an operational skills audit from 2016 but is not expected to be complete until 2020.

The force has no plans to have a comprehensive skills audit covering the whole workforce and non-operational skills. It has conducted a 360-degree supervision audit. This has helped understand some of the workforce's strengths and weaknesses in its current and future leaders. The lack of a wider understanding of current skills and capabilities means it doesn't have a good understanding of future needs.

The force hasn't yet effectively assessed its future workforce requirements based on its skills and capabilities gaps, and on changing demand. And there isn't enough capacity, with many staff off sick and officers on restricted duties for extended periods. The force has been attempting to address both sickness and restricted numbers. Progress has been very slow, with little evident in the past 12 months.

More efficient ways of working

Northamptonshire Police doesn't clearly measure the benefits of working with other forces and constabularies.

Problems with the MFSS HR and finance system aren't helping the force to work more efficiently. Poorly performing back office systems and processes are acting as barriers to progress.

When the force put MFSS in place in 2010, it reduced its human resources (HR) and finance teams by 31 percent because the system is self-service. This meant that supervisors did some tasks themselves, such as recording sickness. However, they didn't have enough training to do this. Without enough training or confidence in using the system, the workforce isn't using it as it should be used. At the same time, not enough staff remain within HR to support the workforce with MFSS.

As a result, the workforce is using locally created spreadsheets instead of the MFSS system. The spreadsheets contain some information on workforce skills, deployments and sickness. This is inefficient and inconsistent, and means data from MFSS can't be seen throughout the force or trusted for reporting purposes. There are plans for the system to be upgraded. These development costs will be on top of the existing system costs. The force is reviewing its longer-term options because it hasn't been able to make sure that the MFSS collaboration brings the benefits and savings expected.

Working with others

The force has a basic understanding of where contributions from other agencies are likely to reduce. There has been some work to identify and respond to these.

NCC was recently considering withdrawing the social workers based within the [MASH](#) and moving them to a virtual MASH. The force has worked closely with the council to complete an impact assessment of this proposed change. It has been agreed that the current co-located children's MASH should remain as it is. This will make sure that the effective service the public receives remains.

The force has some plans to work with other agencies to reduce demand collectively. It has invested significantly in police officer and PCSO resources in the early intervention hub pilot scheme. This is a long-term crime prevention initiative. It targets children exposed to adverse childhood experiences and chaotic lifestyles. The aim is to prevent them from becoming involved in gangs, crime and youth offending.

This is a good example of the force working with education, adult and children's services, NHS partners and private industry. The University of Northampton is evaluating the scheme, before any plans to broaden it are considered.

Using technology

There are still some weaknesses in the capabilities and cost-effectiveness of some enabling services. There has been a lack of capacity in ICT and HR services in recent years as teams explored joint-working ventures with other forces and constabularies. The decision not to take part in a tri-force ICT initiative with Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire Police has left the force with limited capacity. The force is now trying to address this capacity shortage.

Northamptonshire Police now has a high-level ICT strategy. It has made significant investment in mobile technologies for frontline officers. This includes new laptops, mobile devices with access to force systems, and body-worn video cameras. The force is not yet able to show the return on this investment.

Northamptonshire Police has some good ICT capability and agile working in place. However, there are inefficiencies in the way the workforce uses some of its computer systems. This is most obvious with the crime, intelligence, custody and case preparation system (Niche RMS) and MFSS.

The force needs a clear plan to address these inefficiencies and introduce changes in its systems and processes. This will help it use its ICT more effectively.

Planning for the future



Requires improvement

Northamptonshire Police has a limited understanding of future demand. The force has invested in demand modelling software, but there are not enough trained staff to make effective use of it. The force is addressing this problem. Its focus, initially, is on understanding current demand and becoming more efficient. It has set up FP20 to define and implement a new operating model.

The force is struggling to meet demand. It plans to change its operating model and recruit more officers, which will help address this problem. The force has updated its policing priorities to make sure that the workforce and the public are clear about the force's vision.

The force is making progress in its financial planning, but it still has work to do in this area. For example, financial, estates and workforce plans aren't fully co-ordinated yet. And joint working plans with other agencies are limited.

While the force has some ways to identify talented members of staff, there are no formal talent management processes. There is some succession planning, but this is limited. There is a process for senior leaders to understand the potential among supervisors and managers. The force has made some improvements since our 2017 inspection, but these aren't wide-ranging enough.

The force plans to communicate more with the public to better understand expectations. It will use this information in its planning for the future. And work is under way to build on joint working with the fire service.

Areas for improvement

- The force should make sure it understands the demand for its services, and what the public expects, are kept up to date by regularly reviewing the information it has. This should be carried out alongside local authorities, other emergency services and partner organisations. This will make sure that it takes the necessary steps to meet current and likely future demand.
- The force should make sure that workforce planning covers all areas of policing and that there is a clear rationale, based on evidence, to reorganise staff to meet current and future demand.
- The force should make sure that the additional staff resulting from the growth in council tax precept are allocated to areas of greatest risk, demand and to address skills gaps in the workforce.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the force's performance in this area.

Assessing future demand for services

Northamptonshire Police has a limited understanding of future demand. The comprehensive demand analysis carried out as part of the SDM is now over 18 months out of date. The force recognises the importance of understanding demand. It has invested in demand modelling software (Process Evolution). A lack of capacity in business support teams has meant that it hasn't been able to maintain thorough analysis. The force is aware of this and has established FP20. This will update the demand profile and predict future demand.

The force's priority is dealing with current demand. Until current demand is under better control, it can't make meaningful predictions about future demand. It has commissioned limited analysis and activity to uncover and understand trends in, hidden demand. This means that the force can't evaluate what likely future demand could be. The force plans to build this capability into its future operating model.

Understanding public expectations

Northamptonshire Police has some understanding of what the public expects. However, it isn't clear on how these expectations are changing.

The force has recently set out its policing priorities, and officers and staff understand and value these. However, it has made little attempt to understand how public expectations are changing. There is minimal evidence of the force working with the public to understand people's expectations. However, the force has now developed an online tool to do this.

Technology has transformed the way some crime is carried out and how the public want to work with the police. The force's prevention capability is heavily geared towards traditional prevention activity. This approach needs to be updated to address the changes in this area.

The force is preparing to join the single online home platform (being developed by the national digital policing portfolio). Dates of implementation weren't known when we inspected. When in place, this will offer the public more ways to contact the force. This includes providing more information online. This will mean that some processes will need to adapt to make sure that all information is assessed and handled appropriately. The force's strategic change board is managing these changes.

Prioritising

Northamptonshire Police has recently set out its vision and policing priorities. A new policing plan was published in January 2019. It states six priorities as being:

- [serious and organised crime](#);
- child abuse and exploitation;
- rape and sexual violence;
- preventing/reducing road fatalities and serious injury;
- residential burglary; and
- domestic abuse.

There are also two sets of overlapping themes. These are the 'impact of drugs' and '[vulnerability](#)'; and 'mental health' and a force strapline of 'fighting crime, protecting people'.

Staff have welcomed the updated priorities because they give them more clarity. However, the priorities aren't based on a thorough enough understanding of future demand or changing public expectations.

The force is facing a range of challenges in managing current demand. This is especially true within crime investigation. The force is developing plans to better manage current and projected demand. The police, fire and crime commissioner has approved an increase in precept. This will mean the force can have more staff to help address some of these problems.

Future workforce

Northamptonshire Police needs to improve its workforce plans. We are pleased that it has recruited 149 more police officers in the past 12 months. Yet there was a limited plan for where and how these officers would be deployed. The force also underestimated the scale and impact of the support these new officers would need in their first two years. The new officers bring the force up to its planned establishment figure. It should make sure that future workforce plans reflect demand. It must also consider the support these new officers will need.

The force is making some efforts to tackle inequalities in rank mix and diversity. The lack of a detailed skills audit limits how effective recruitment, training, workforce development and planning can be. The force makes use of external recruitment and national schemes such as [direct entry](#), [Police Now](#) and apprenticeships. However, these aren't tailored to address skills gaps.

It is important that the extra staff are allocated to areas of greatest risk and demand, and to address skills gaps in the workforce.

Finance plans

Northamptonshire Police is facing significant financial challenges in the medium term. The latest plans show a serious financial challenge facing the force over the next four years. The force also has a budget deficit of around £2m in 2019/20. This is expected to rise to around £7m by 2023/24.

The force can't rely on [reserves](#) to balance the budget because these are already allocated for other uses, including redeveloping the Wootton Hall headquarters estate. The force is also exploring borrowing options to support this redevelopment.

The force is developing plans for balancing the budget from 2019/20 onwards. Continuing to use OBB will form part of this. The force acknowledges that the usefulness of the first phase of OBB was limited. This was due to a lack of capacity in the change team and not enough rigorous review by managers. However, lessons have been learned. The force is putting more staff in the change team and it plans to better prepare its leaders in the business skills they need. Leaders will then be able to make sure that similar activities in the future generate the savings or changes to working practices needed. The force is committed to addressing its financial challenges and future financial planning forms part of FP20.

Financial, estates (buildings and facilities) and workforce plans are not currently fully co-ordinated. The force has reduced its estate and associated running costs. It is also exploring opportunities to make the joint working arrangements with Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Services more effective.

There are limited plans for new collaborative working arrangements. This is mainly due to the uncertainty around the prospects for local authority partnerships. The force is missing opportunities to harness the funding available under [section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#). It recognises it can make better use of these grants as the local population is increasing and house building continues.

Leadership and workforce development

The force has some methods to develop its leaders for the future. And it is aiming to build diversity within its leadership teams.

The force now uses a 360-degree feedback questionnaire to understand management capabilities. All potential leaders go through this as part of a leadership programme. This is helping senior leaders to understand the potential among their supervisors and managers.

There are no formal talent management processes, and succession planning is underdeveloped. The force is yet to establish a comprehensive and well-publicised system to identify talented individuals across all ranks, grades, roles and departments.

There is some succession planning for police officers because there are defined career pathways. However, there is no proactive strategy for this that would help police officers to prepare. There is no structure in place for staff who have very limited opportunities for development. And there is limited succession planning. This affects the force's capability when police leave specialised roles or senior positions. The force

is missing opportunities to identify members of the workforce with potential to become senior leaders.

Ambition to improve

Northamptonshire Police has a strong ambition to improve the service it provides. The chief officer team acknowledges that the force's current plans aren't enough to address the problems it faces.

Since our last inspection, the force developed plans to address some of the problems we found in 2017. While most of these are evidence-based, they don't cover all aspects of policing. The force has been slow to make meaningful changes.

During our fieldwork, we found many inefficient practices, not enough capacity and capability to manage current demand, and a limited understanding of future demand. Chief officers recognise the scale of the challenge ahead and the force is now developing more detailed plans to address the problems. The new chief constable has instigated a review of the force's operating model. He has also redefined the force's priorities and has changed operational and strategic governance arrangements.

The force recognises it may need to change or reduce its services. It is aiming to communicate with the public more. This will help better understand expectations, which will help inform future plans.

An options appraisal of the HR and finance system (MFSS) has also been commissioned to address the problems and to determine long-term options.

The force is committed to joint working with local organisations. However, it is uncertain if these partnerships will continue and how much extra demand the police may face as a result.

The force is working closely with local authority colleagues during the NCC restructure. The force is assessing options for how it can best work when the two new unitary authorities are in place from April 2020. NCC has already made funding cuts. The significant cuts are to the trading standards and non-statutory safeguarding budgets. This may affect demand for policing services.

The police, fire and crime commissioner has established a team to develop joint working between the police and fire service. The team has an ambitious vision for the future.

Legitimacy



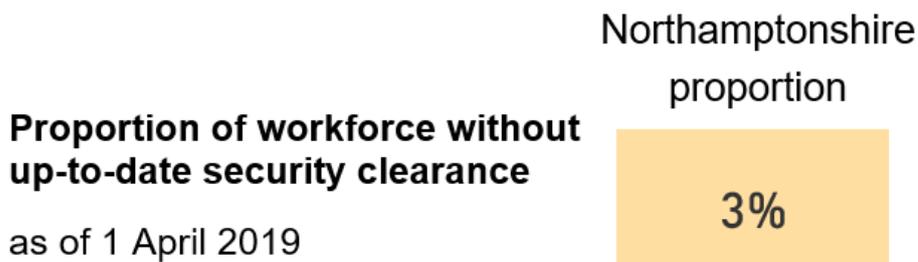
Force in context

Comparison of Northamptonshire workforce ethnicity with local population

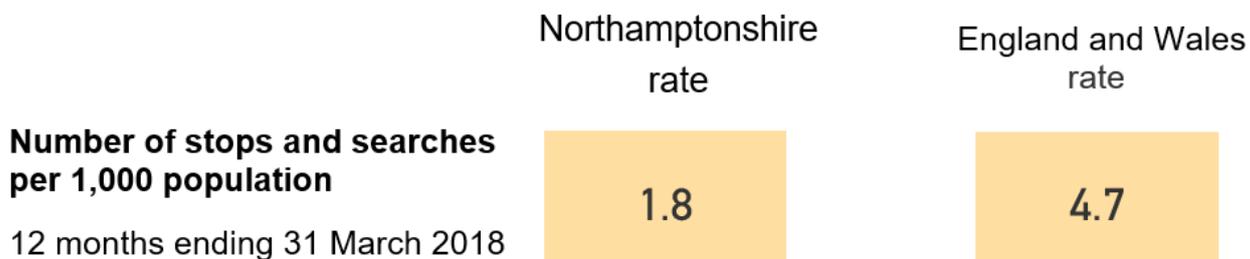
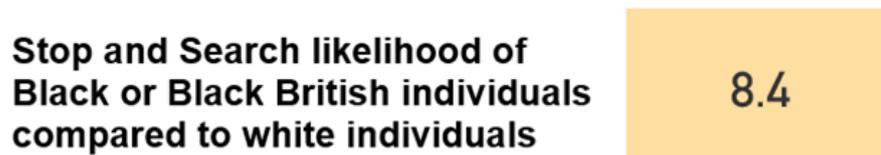
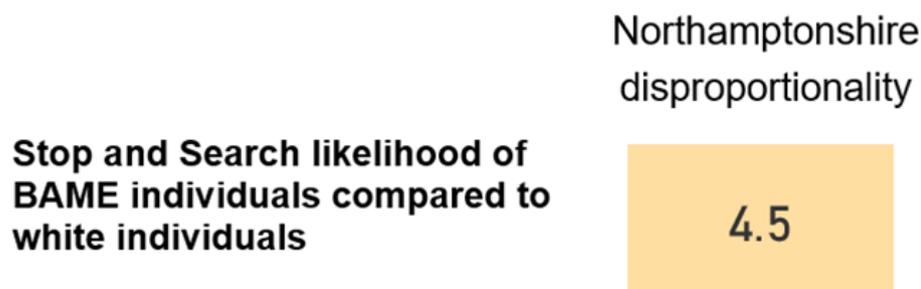
as of 31 March 2019

| | Northamptonshire proportion | Local population proportion |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Black, Asian and minority ethnic as % of those with stated ethnicity | 3.5% | 8.5% |
| White as % of those with stated ethnicity | 96.5% | 91.5% |
| Not Stated as % of total | 4.5% | |

| | Northamptonshire proportion | England and Wales proportion |
|---|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Proportion of female officers in post as of 31st March 2019 | 33% | 30% |



Stop and search by ethnicity
12 months ending 31 March 2018



How legitimately does the force treat the public and its workforce?



Requires improvement

Summary

The force doesn't consistently seek feedback from the public to improve its approach, although we did see some good examples of force leaders working with communities.

The force understands how to use force appropriately. Officers use [stop and search powers](#) appropriately. And the force is committed to continue to learn and improve in this area.

Northamptonshire Police behaves ethically and lawfully. Effective anti-corruption measures are in place. Leaders publicise their expectations and the force's values well throughout the workforce.

The force has a reasonable understanding of workforce diversity. It has made some improvements since our last inspection. This includes recruiting an equalities and positive actions officer.

It needs to be more aware of levels of wellbeing among its workforce. It will then be able to offer more, and better, support to staff. Plans are in place to improve the situation and staff have already seen positive changes.

There are limited talent management programmes or structured ways to develop both officers and [staff](#). Poor performance is not always tackled. The workforce doesn't perceive as fair the processes for performance, talent management and promotion. This is having a negative effect on workforce morale and productivity.

There is a new leadership programme for supervisors and we are pleased to find that most staff now have regular meetings with their staff. The workforce is feeling optimistic about the future and is positive about the vision of the new chief constable.

Treating the public fairly



Requires improvement

Northamptonshire Police needs to be more consistent in how it communicates with the public. It doesn't consistently seek public feedback to improve its approach and the force could make more use of social media. The force would also benefit from focusing on harder to reach groups, and those less likely to contact the police. The force makes some good use of its cadets, volunteers and special constables.

The force complies with recording requirements relating to use of force. It uses lessons learned to improve its approach in this area. The force doesn't yet externally scrutinise the use of force but has plans to introduce this.

The force's reasonable grounds panel has improved recording standards around stop and search, but the panel isn't seen as a support function by the workforce. This means that some officers are reluctant to use the power. The force would benefit from promoting the benefits of the panel among the workforce.

There is an external scrutiny group for stop and search, although membership doesn't fully represent all communities. The force has started to better understand the disproportionately high numbers of black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) groups being stopped. The force is now improving its practice as a result.

Areas for improvement

- The force should improve the way it communicates with the different communities it serves.
- The force should make sure it has effective external scrutiny on stop and search.
- The force should make sure it has effective external scrutiny on the use of force.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the force's performance in this area.

Treating people fairly and respectfully

Some – but not all – leaders demonstrate an understanding of the value of working with communities, [procedural justice](#), and treating the public with fairness and respect. The force needs to be more consistent in how it communicates with the public. It would benefit from focusing on harder to reach groups, and those less likely to contact the police.

The force doesn't consistently seek public feedback to improve its approach. There is an over-reliance on traditional methods, such as community alerts and beat surgeries. We found some positive examples of force leaders responding to community

concerns – for example, recognising that communities would like a more robust response to burglary. This approach isn't yet consistent.

The force could make more use of social media. It is currently only used by the corporate communications department to post information. The force has two community engagement officers who attend events, such as faith centre days, and work with community leaders. These officers are carrying out meaningful work and building relationships with some communities, but they can't be expected to service the whole county. The force needs to make sure that neighbourhood teams communicate more often and consistently with the public. It needs to tailor its work to meet local needs.

Northamptonshire Police strives to promote the use of its cadets, volunteers and special constables. The force uses volunteers in many ways. These roles include chaplains, volunteers on horseback and emergency service cadet leaders. Plus, there are around 100 Street Watch volunteers.

There are about 250 special constables. They are in traditional roles of response policing or supporting pre-planned events, such as football matches. Only 52 special constables can carry out independent patrols. The force is looking into also using them in other specialist roles, such as tackling cybercrime. Some special constables work with neighbourhood teams. The force should consider building on this.

Knowledge and understanding of [unconscious bias](#) are generally good among the workforce. However, some of those we spoke to weren't able to say how this knowledge had positively affected their communications with the public. This training hasn't been provided to police staff, but it is scheduled for 2019.

Using force

The workforce understands how to use force and record it appropriately. It complies with the [NPCC](#)'s recording requirements. The force has an officer safety training package. It has recently been amended to include [tactical communications](#), based on learning from a complaint case.

The force has an internal 'use of force' monitoring group. The group has started to analyse variations in the use of force. It doesn't yet externally scrutinise the use of force. It does, however, have plans to introduce this.

The force doesn't routinely review [body-worn video](#) footage to assess the use of force. However, it is viewed by the [professional standards department](#) (PSD) if there is a complaint.

Use of force incidents taking place in custody are dip-sampled and cross-checked against CCTV. Being more proactive through wider dip-sampling of body-worn video camera footage may identify where lessons can be learned.

Using stop and search powers

Officers understand how to use stop and search appropriately and the use of the power is well supervised. This means that the force shows a commitment to continual learning around stop and search. Unfortunately, there is a reluctance among some officers to use the power. The force's reasonable grounds panel has been broadly effective in improving recording standards. But, although the panel is designed to be a supportive and learning process, it is not perceived as such by officers.

The panel process is contributing to the fall in the use of stop and search powers. To address this, the force should promote its benefits to officers. The force plans to provide a one-day training package during 2019 for uniformed officers and special constables on stop and search and unconscious bias. The aim is to encourage its use and ensure effective recording practices.

We reviewed a representative sample of 100 stop and search records to assess the reasonableness of the recorded grounds. Eighty-eight percent of those records contained reasonable grounds. Our assessment is based on the grounds recorded by the searching officer, and not the grounds that existed at the time of the search.

In the sample we reviewed, we also discovered many searches involving suspicion of possession of drugs, rather than supply of drugs. This is unlikely to fit with force priorities.

In our [2017 legitimacy report](#), we recommended that all forces should:

- track and analyse detailed stop and search data to understand reasons for variations;
- take action on those; and
- publish the analysis and the action by July 2018.

We found that the force has complied with some of these recommendations. However, it doesn't identify the extent to which [find rates](#) differ between people from different ethnicities or across different types of searches (including separate identification of find rates for drug possession and supply-type offences). Also, it isn't clear that the force monitors enough data to identify the prevalence of possession-only drug searches. Or the extent to which these align with local or force-level priorities. We reviewed the force's website. There was no obvious mention of analysis to understand and explain reasons for variations, or any subsequent action taken.

Northamptonshire Police has an internal stop and search monitoring group. The group is provided with detailed data to identify patterns and trends. The group has started to better understand the disproportionately high numbers of BAME groups being stopped. The force is now improving its practice as a result.

The force has recently instructed that body-worn video cameras are used for all stop and search encounters. The internal scrutiny group reviews this footage to identify lessons that can be learned.

There is also an external scrutiny group for stop and search. It is chaired by a chief inspector and community representatives attend. The group meets quarterly and listens to community feedback. However, members aren't provided with fully

comprehensive data to help them understand the issues. And membership isn't fully representative of communities. The police officer chair reduces the independence of the group.

Ethical and lawful workforce behaviour



Good

Northamptonshire Police behaves ethically and lawfully. The workforce understands expected standards of behaviour and is aware of its obligations associated with business interests, reportable associations, gifts and hospitality.

All officers and staff have up-to-date vetting appropriate to their role. The force has enough resources to fully vet its workforce and recent system upgrades have made the vetting unit more efficient. The force complies with its obligations for barred and advisory lists.

The force uses feedback from its workforce when developing policies. It would benefit from promoting more awareness of its [ethics committees](#) among its workforce.

[Abuse of position](#) is well publicised throughout the workforce and is recognised as serious corruption. The force asks for information about corruption from a variety of sources and an anonymous public reporting line will be available soon too. The force provides appropriate support to staff and officers who report wrongdoing, and investigations are conducted promptly.

Northamptonshire Police has raised awareness of potential corruption among its workforce and has trained supervisors to look for the signs. It works to reassure the public by publishing cases.

Areas for improvement

- The force should monitor its vetting decisions to identify disparities and disproportionality (e.g. BAME groups), and act to reduce them where appropriate.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the force's performance in this area.

Maintaining an ethical culture

Northamptonshire Police's workforce behaves ethically and lawfully. Leaders communicate their expectations well and there is a good understanding of these expectations across the organisation, championed by the [chief officer](#) team. Staff discuss difficult ethical issues. Some ask the PSD for advice.

Leaders promote the four values expected of officers and staff – honesty, fairness, reliability and approachability. These values have been widely promoted, and

awareness among the workforce is good. Most leaders understand the importance of acting as ethical role models, and to foster a no-blame culture.

Force policies are accessible and equality impact assessments are in line with the [Code of Ethics](#). The force equality adviser reviews all policies, and the force involves the staff unions. This makes sure that the force's policies and procedures are properly evaluated.

Acceptable and unacceptable behaviours are communicated well. The force circulates the results of misconduct hearings and meetings. And the PSD circulates a monthly 'Lessons learned' bulletin. These activities support acceptable, and reduce unacceptable, standards of behaviour. They will also improve future performance.

The force has internal and external ethics committees, with the chief constable chairing the internal panel. The internal committee recently used a staff survey to identify which ethical issues to raise. The promotion system was amended as a result, although many officers and staff are not aware of these committees, their purpose, or how to use them. The ethics committees don't play enough role in ethical communications across the force. More could be done to make the workforce aware of these groups and share what was discussed.

Northamptonshire Police complies with all aspects of the vetting code and [authorised professional practice](#). It also fulfils its obligations to provide details to the [College of Policing](#) for the barred and advisory lists. These lists stop people who have left the service under investigation, or have been dismissed, from re-joining or working in law enforcement.

The force has enough resources available to fully vet the workforce. New software has recently replaced the previous system in the vetting unit. This has made the unit more efficient and allows better maintenance of vetting through annual reviews. This work reduces the chances of the force employing an inappropriate member of staff. It will soon start to review cases where individuals fail vetting to identify any inconsistencies or unfairness.

Officers and staff understand the standards of behaviour that are expected of them. And they are aware of their obligations associated with business interests, reportable associations, gifts and hospitality policies. The workforce trusts the various reporting methods. The force makes good use of the integrity registers and monitors compliance. This work will reduce the likelihood of corruption within the force.

Tackling corruption

Northamptonshire Police has enough capability and capacity to address corruption issues. It has an effective anti-corruption strategic assessment, and a satisfactory governance and refresh process. The force collects and analyses data from several sources to identify early any corrupt behaviour or vulnerability to corruption. It intervenes early to reduce this risk.

Abuse of position is in the force's anti-corruption strategic assessment. It has raised awareness among its workforce through PSD 'Lessons learned' bulletins. It also reassures the public by publicising cases and encouraging the reporting of inappropriate behaviour.

In 2017, the force submitted a plan to address our 2016 national recommendations about the abuse of position for a sexual purpose. This is now in place. The force recognises and records the abuse of position as serious corruption. It refers cases to the [IOPC](#) as required. We reviewed 60 cases – 16 needed IOPC referrals. These were made in all but two cases and the force accept that these cases should have been referred. Complying with the referral criteria is likely to increase the public's trust that serious corruption is dealt with appropriately.

The force has passive monitoring systems in place across almost all its ICT equipment. This includes the new mobile devices.

The force asks its workforce for information about corruption and organisations that support [vulnerable people](#). This provides it with good corruption intelligence. An external reporting line will soon launch. The workforce reports business interests and notifiable associations. There are minimal backlogs and information is gathered on time.

The force ensures that all intelligence and allegations involving potential criminal behaviour by officers and staff are fully investigated. It needs to consider how it protects those who report wrongdoing. The workforce knows it must report notifiable associations and there is a good awareness of the confidential reporting line (called 'Bad Apple'). However, many said they felt nervous about using it because they were concerned they wouldn't remain anonymous.

Treating the workforce fairly



Requires improvement

There are examples of the force inviting feedback from staff. These include an 'Ask the chief' section on the intranet, and staff network groups are involved in plans for change. Decisions are sometimes made in isolation – for example, changing a shift pattern based on the feedback from one team. This may have a negative impact on the effectiveness of demand management force-wide.

The workforce is feeling optimistic about the future and positive about the visibility and vision of the new chief constable. The last staff survey was in 2017 and we look forward to seeing the results of the one planned for 2019.

The force needs to better understand wellbeing issues. Sickness absence across the workforce is high. Occupational health provision doesn't meet demand, and the force only operates a limited range of preventative measures to improve workforce wellbeing. There is now improved support for those on maternity and paternity leave. Wellbeing services that are available aren't publicised enough. Levels of support should improve when more permanent staff have filled temporary roles. Wellbeing is a priority in the new leadership programme, which should help address the problem.

The force needs to better support supervisors to tackle poor performance. It has plans to address this. There is a new leadership programme for supervisors and we are pleased to find that most now have regular meetings with their staff.

Outside national schemes, there are limited talent management programmes or structured ways to develop both officers and staff. The workforce doesn't perceive as fair the processes for performance, talent management and promotion. This is having a negative impact on workforce morale and productivity.

Areas for improvement

- The force should improve the way it communicates with the workforce to increase trust and confidence in its leaders. It should communicate the action it takes in response to issues identified by the workforce.
- The force should make sure that it has effective processes in place to identify and understand the causes of potential disproportionality, and to take effective action.
- The force should improve its provision of preventative healthcare measures for the workforce and ensure that wellbeing is considered in decisions around managing demand resource allocation. This should include making sure it provides suitable training, support and capacity for its supervisors so that they have the necessary time to recognise the signs and provide the necessary early intervention response for managing wellbeing issues.
- The force should improve how it manages individual performance and identifies talent within the workforce.
- The force should tackle the workforce perception of unfairness in Northamptonshire Police through ensuring that its performance, talent management and promotion and selection processes are accessible and perceived by the workforce as fair.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the force's performance in this area.

Improving fairness at work

There are some systems and processes in place for leaders to get feedback from the workforce about fairness and how to treat staff. These, however, are limited. There is some evidence of senior leaders demonstrating changes that had been made because of staff feedback. For example, the force has recently reviewed the fairness at work policy. The policy defines the approach for handling grievances. The review involved benchmarking with other forces. And the force got feedback from interested parties such as focus groups.

The review led to many recommendations. These included improved training for line managers, better record keeping and a process to learn lessons from grievances raised. The chief constable has a regular video blog where he invites feedback. There is also an 'Ask the chief' section on the force's intranet pages. This is where the chief constable or a nominated representative responds to questions within a set timeframe.

Those responsible for managing change communicate regularly with the different staff networks. The staff networks represent different groups within the workforce. Representatives from these groups confirmed that they felt they were suitably

consulted on change plans. However, there is a lack of awareness of these consultation activities among the wider workforce.

The force asks for feedback and challenge from staff networks. It aims to use this to inform future plans. The force hasn't carried out a staff survey since 2017. The next one is planned for 2019. We look forward to the findings.

Officers and staff feel optimistic about the future. And many made positive comments about the visibility of, and messages from, the chief constable, who started in August 2018.

Decisions are sometimes made in isolation, following feedback from individuals or small groups. For example, the force changes the shift patterns of some investigators based on feedback from officers and staff working in those teams. Some of the workforce may feel pleased they have been listened to. However, the shift patterns have been designed to meet the demand profile of the SDM. Changes to shift patterns may also affect the force's ability to manage demand or have other consequences.

Northamptonshire Police handles grievances well. We examined ten cases, and all had been resolved in line with the [ACAS Code of Practice](#). The force acts quickly to address areas of perceived unfairness. This minimises the stress involved for those raising grievances.

The force doesn't consistently track the underlying causes of workforce complaints. If it had a better understanding of the reasons behind grievances, it would help to identify problems, and learn from them.

Northamptonshire Police has dedicated leads for their diversity objectives. These include:

- community engagement;
- hate crime;
- stop and search;
- equality impact assessments;
- representative workforce; and
- a supportive and inclusive environment.

The force has a reasonable understanding of workforce diversity and acknowledges that diversity within its workforce varies. Since our last inspection, it has recruited an equalities and positive actions officer. The officer is supporting the force's diversity strategy to address inconsistencies within the workforce.

The force collects data for age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion and ethnicity. This is scrutinised at the equality and diversity board. A chief officer oversees the board, which meets quarterly.

Data is recorded on its Centurion system. This means the force can identify and analyse inconsistencies in how it treats officers and staff who face complaint and misconduct allegations. It doesn't yet carry out this work. This may affect the way some officers and staff are dealt with during complaint and misconduct processes.

The delays in forensically examining digital devices in the HTCUI is a factor in prolonging misconduct cases. This may have a negative impact on the wellbeing of those involved and affect outcomes.

The force doesn't analyse the information it has on people applying for roles. This means it can't identify whether there are reasons stopping people from joining that may be affecting the workforce profile.

The force doesn't ask the people leaving why they are going. It does carry out exit interviews, but only if someone asks for one. It is missing opportunities to better understand, and respond to, the reasons why some people leave. This will be affecting retention levels.

There is a perception among the workforce of unfairness and a culture of favouritism. Staff don't feel that recruitment, retention and progression processes are fair. The force doesn't use information it has about those applying for promotion to find out if there are any inconsistencies.

Officers and staff we spoke to referred to a culture of favouritism. Examples included some people getting promoted while other credible candidates were overlooked. The force needs to tackle these perceptions of favouritism. Until this happens, fairness can't be truly embedded.

Supporting workforce wellbeing

Although leaders promote wellbeing, Northamptonshire Police doesn't have a consistent and accessible wellbeing service for its workforce. The service isn't valued among the workforce and related activities don't follow good practice.

The force has a limited focus on wellbeing and staff aren't fully aware of the services on offer. The force doesn't adequately identify and understand wellbeing issues as well as it could. There has been little progress on understanding wellbeing issues since our 2017 inspection.

Leaders aren't briefed enough to carry out for their wellbeing responsibilities effectively. The force now routinely reviews sickness, and the reasons. However, it doesn't consider other factors that may affect wellbeing, productivity and morale.

The force recognises the impact high workloads have on workforce wellbeing. It plans to review its operating model and services it provides. This will help it better manage workforce pressure and improve wellbeing. The force plans to use support from the national police wellbeing service.

The force's approach to wellbeing is reactive. There are only limited examples of early intervention or preventative action. The force does, to a degree, address the wellbeing needs of its workforce when staff are absent from work through ill health. People with physical health problems and those who have suffered trauma receive broadly effective support.

The force can't routinely identify early signs of stress or address its causes. This would minimise the number of officers and staff unable to work because of ill health. There is an employee assistance programme available. This offers

confidential counselling, financial advice and other such support. Levels of take-up among the workforce aren't clear.

Supervisors have some information to help them recognise the warning signs. This helps them intervene early to prevent wellbeing concerns escalating. The high number of temporary supervisors means that there is a lack of consistency. Around a quarter of sergeants and half of inspectors were temporary at the time of our fieldwork. The force has promotion campaigns planned to fill these posts permanently. This should mean supervisors can provide consistent, good-quality supervision and support.

The force should consider how often it monitors and analyses its own management information. It should also consider the methods it uses to better understand any threats and risks to wellbeing.

Wellbeing features heavily in the new leadership programme and we were pleased that most staff now have regular one-to-one meetings with their supervisor. The workforce values this. Officers and staff we spoke to said there had been a significant change in the past 12 months. Supervisors now better understand their teams' wellbeing, workload, welfare and performance needs. This means supervisors can better support them.

The force isn't making effective use of its intranet to promote and understand the wellbeing needs. The intranet could be used to raise awareness or signpost staff to support services.

Sickness absence across the workforce is high. A group has been set up to tackle the issue. The force is trying to better understand the reasons behind high sickness levels, but it hasn't yet been able to reduce the level. During our fieldwork, occupational health provision didn't meet demand. There is now better support for those on maternity and paternity leave. A 'maternity buddies' support group has been set up.

The force has plans to improve wellbeing support to the workforce and intends to have developed the [Blue Light Charter](#) by autumn 2019.

Managing performance and development of officers and staff

Northamptonshire Police has made limited progress to manage and develop workforce performance since our last inspection.

A new [personal development review](#) (PDR) system is part of a planned upgrade to the force's HR and finance system (MFSS). This, however, has been delayed. In the meantime, the force is manually completing PDRs. This means that there are no accurate force-wide data about completion rates or their quality.

The force doesn't have a way to routinely:

- identify talented officers and staff;
- develop or improve individual performance;
- support career development; or
- improve wellbeing.

PDRs are essential, but staff don't see them as useful or effective unless they are seeking promotion. Without a proper PDR system, the force recognises that it is difficult to identify and develop talented staff or carry out effective succession planning.

The force needs to make sure that supervisors feel supported when tackling poor performance. Many supervisors reported that they are reluctant to manage poor performance because they fear a grievance may be raised against them.

HR advice hasn't been effective. We were briefed on cases where poorly performing staff were moved around rather than the poor performance tackled. Members of the workforce we spoke to were concerned that poor performance isn't tackled effectively. This is seen as being due to a lack of HR support and weak leadership to deal with underperformance. The force recognises that supervisors who challenge underperformance don't get enough support when taking robust action. It is striving to tackle this.

Northamptonshire Police doesn't do enough to identify talent within its workforce. Aside from national schemes, there are limited ways to develop both officers and staff. The force needs to do more to make sure that officers and staff have access to talent management schemes.

Since our last inspection, the force now uses the [competency and values framework](#) to recruit, develop and keep officers. This will help it identify talent. The force supports candidates by identifying as early as possible when boards and other promotion processes will take place. This helps candidates plan, and to arrange relevant mentoring and coaching support. This is a positive step for police officers. However, there is no equivalent system for police staff. Some police staff feel they are not valued. The force may be missing opportunities to develop and keep some police staff.

The workforce doesn't feel that the processes for performance, talent management and promotion are fair. Promotion processes have been reviewed, but the perception of unfairness remains. This will mean that some people don't apply for promotion because they don't think they will be fairly treated. Senior leaders are aware of this perception and are working to address it. The force needs to identify and remove barriers to promotion.

Annex A – About the data

Data in this report is from a range of sources, including:

- Home Office;
- Office for National Statistics (ONS);
- our inspection fieldwork; and
- data we collected directly from all 43 police forces in England and Wales.

When we collected data directly from police forces, we took reasonable steps to agree the design of the data collection with forces and with other interested parties such as the Home Office. We gave forces several opportunities to quality assure and validate the data they gave us, to make sure it was accurate. For instance:

- We shared the submitted data with forces, so they could review their own and other forces' data. This allowed them to analyse where data was notably different from other forces or internally inconsistent.
- We asked all forces to check the final data used in the report and correct any errors.

We set out the source of this report's data below.

Methodology

Data in the report

British Transport Police was outside the scope of inspection. Any aggregated totals for England and Wales exclude British Transport Police data, so will differ from those published by the Home Office.

When other forces were unable to supply data, we mention this under the relevant sections below.

Most similar groups

We compare each force's crime rate with the average rate for forces in its most similar group (MSG). MSGs are groups of similar police forces, based on analysis of demographic, social and economic factors which relate to crime. We could not identify any forces similar to City of London Police. Every other force has its own group of up to seven other forces which it is most similar to.

An MSG's crime rate is the sum of the recorded crimes in all the group's forces divided by its total population. All of the most similar forces (including the force being compared) are included in calculating the MSG average.

[More information about MSGs can be found on our website.](#)

Population

For all uses of population as a denominator in our calculations, unless otherwise noted, we use ONS mid-2018 population estimates.

Survey of police workforce

We surveyed the police workforce across England and Wales, to understand their views on workloads, redeployment and how suitable their assigned tasks were. This survey was a non-statistical, voluntary sample so the results may not be representative of the workforce population. The number of responses per force varied between 0 and 920. So we treated results with caution and didn't use them to assess individual force performance. Instead, we identified themes that we could explore further during fieldwork.

BMG survey of public attitudes towards policing (2018)

We commissioned BMG to survey public attitudes towards policing in 2018. Ipsos MORI conducted a similar version of the survey in 2015–2017.

The survey consisted of about 400 respondents for each of the 43 forces. Most surveys were completed online, by members of online research panels. However, a minority of the surveys (around 750) were conducted face-to-face. These face-to-face surveys were specifically targeted to groups that are traditionally under-represented on online panels. This aimed to make sure the survey respondents were as representative as possible of the total adult population of England and Wales. A small number of respondents were also surveyed online via postal invites to the survey.

Results were weighted by age, gender, ethnicity and indices of multiple deprivation to match population profiles. The sampling method used is not a statistical random sample and the sample size was small, which may be more problematic for larger force areas compared to small ones. So any results provided are only an indication of satisfaction rather than an absolute.

[The findings of this survey, and previous surveys, are available on our website.](#)

Review of crime files

We reviewed police case files for these crime types:

- theft from person;
- rape (including attempts);
- stalking;
- harassment;
- common assault;
- grievous bodily harm (wounding); and
- actual bodily harm.

Our file review was designed to provide a broad overview of how well the police:

- identify vulnerability;
- conduct investigations; and
- treat victims.

We randomly selected files from crimes recorded between 1 May and 31 July 2018 and assessed them against several criteria. We reviewed 60 case files in each force, except for the Metropolitan Police Service where we reviewed 90.

For our file review, we only selected a small sample size of cases per force. So we didn't use results from as the only basis for assessing individual force performance, but alongside other evidence.

Force in context

999 calls

We collected this data directly from all 43 police forces in England and Wales.

Recorded crime and crime outcomes

We took this data from the July 2019 release of the Home Office [police recorded crime and outcomes data tables](#).

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

Police-recorded crime data should be treated with care. Recent increases may be due to forces' renewed focus on accurate crime recording since our 2014 national crime data inspection.

Other notable points to consider when interpreting outcomes data are listed below.

- Crime outcome proportions show the percentage of crimes recorded in the 12 months ending 30 September 2018 that have been assigned each outcome. This means that each crime is tracked or linked to its outcome. So this data is subject to change, as more crimes are assigned outcomes over time.
- Under the new framework, 37 police forces in England and Wales provide outcomes data through the HODH every month. All other forces provide this data via a monthly manual return.
- Leicestershire, Staffordshire and West Yorkshire forces participated in the Ministry of Justice's out of court disposals pilot. As part of the pilot, they stopped issuing simple cautions or cannabis/khat warnings and restricted their use of penalty notices for disorder for adult offenders. These three forces continued to follow these procedures since the pilot ended in November 2015. Later, other forces also limited their use of some out of court disposals. So the outcomes data should be viewed with this in mind.

For a full commentary and explanation of outcome types please see the Home Office statistics, [Crime outcomes in England and Wales: year ending March 2019](#).

Domestic abuse outcomes

In England and Wales, 29 police forces provide domestic abuse outcomes data through the Home Office data hub (HODH) every month. We collected this data directly from the remaining 14 forces.

Domestic abuse outcome proportions show the percentage of crimes recorded in the 12 months ending 31 March 2018 that have been assigned each outcome. This means that each crime is tracked or linked to its outcome. So this data is subject to change, as more crimes are assigned outcomes over time.

Workforce figures (including ethnicity and gender)

This data was obtained from the Home Office annual data return 502. The data is available from the Home Office's published [police workforce England and Wales statistics](#) or the [police workforce open data tables](#). The Home Office may have updated these figures since we obtained them for this report.

The data gives the full-time equivalent workforce figures as at 31 March. The figures include section 38-designated investigation, detention or escort officers, but not section 39-designated detention or escort staff. They include officers on career breaks and other types of long-term absence but exclude those seconded to other forces.

Spend per head of population

We took this data from the [HMICFRS value for money profiles](#).

These profiles are based on data collected by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, through the Police Objective Analysis. The spend over time figures are adjusted for inflation. The population figures are ONS mid-year estimates, with the 2018/19 value calculated by assessing the trend for the last five years. [More details on this data can be found on our website](#).

Stop and search

We took this data from the Home Office publication, [Police powers and procedures, England and Wales, year ending 31 March 2018](#). Stop and search totals exclude vehicle only searches and searches where the subject's ethnicity was not stated.

Vetting data (workforce without up-to-date security clearance)

We collected this data directly from all 43 police forces in England and Wales.

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